

WONDERLAND

Written by

Ted Wilkes

Based on characters from
Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

4pagesormore@gmail.com

"Every attempt to establish a familiar basis of identity creates only the sense of being lost – absolutely lost. Alice becomes, to the reader, a mistreated, misunderstood, wandering waif ...

... Death never seems to be far away in Wonderland."

Dr Catrin Kynan, Down the Rabbit Hole of Identity in Wonderland

ALICE: How long is forever?

WHITE RABBIT: Sometimes, just one second.

Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

BLACKNESS

RABBIT (V.O.)
They always run...

INT. KITCHEN, CHINESE RESTAURANT, WONDERLAND - NIGHT

Steam. Dirt. SHOUTING.

A TOAD washes pots. A CAT cuts onions in the corner.

RABBIT (V.O.)
... It's the amygdala. The place
where we get all our emotional
signals from.

CRASH...

A PERP races through, knocking stuff over. Hopes it will slow
down -

RABBIT WHITE -

fur matted together. Bedraggled.

Tired of this shit.

CHASING -

PANTING -

POUNDING feet -

shoulder down -

SMASH -

straight over the top of the SOUS CHEF thrown in his way.

The pair continue on... Are SPAT out the back into a --

DARK ALLEY

Gas light strains through the thick fog. Swirls into a
cocktail of urban grime.

Two shadows race up the wall.

The Perp sprints to a fence.

CLATTER -

begins to climb...

barely half way up.

Rabbit leaps. Yanks him down.

CRUNCH -

real nasty.

Doesn't phase the perp. Springs up -

too late -

Rabbit is on top of him. Wrestling arms together -

produces some ancient cuffs -

SLAPS them onto one wrist.

Fights to get the other one on.

STRUGGLE.

Closed fists thrown both ways -

elbow pressured onto a throat -

GASPING. The Perp has -

eyes like cracked billiard balls. Junked up on something.

Gives him new strength. Strains...

PERP

I know where she is.

Stops Rabbit. Blinks - *pardon?*

Releases his windpipe. A wry smile from the Perp.

PERP (CONT'D)

Alic...

Rabbit tees off. Primal.

Flesh moulds into a shape it shouldn't take.

Teeth SHATTER. Eye sockets. Sharp. Doesn't care.

INT. BULLPEN, WONDERLAND POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Hands flex. Bloodied and bruised.

Everything scored in long bands of white from the light
leaking past slatted blinds.

Blues booking in criminals left right and centre. Ignore Rabbit.

Fed up. Moves a rolled up smoke from behind his ear. Pushes it between his lips. Strikes a match.

Vapour rises up his nose.

Rounding the corner. A face like thunder. HARRY 'MAD HATTER' HARRINGTON. More folders to add to the clutter on the desk.

Spies Rabbit.

HATTER

Can't do that here anymore, White.

Rabbit searches around. *Where do I put it?*

Hatter throws himself into his chair, waistcoat working overtime to hold in the middle-age spread.

RABBIT

Where's the...?

HATTER

(interrupting)

Like I said, can't do that here anymore. Why the heck would we need cessations?

There's a china tea pot. *It'll do.* One more drag. SIZZLE.

HATTER (CONT'D)

Just like you can't go giving perps complimentary dental work.

One of the manilas is opened...

The Perp's mugshot. One hell of a Picasso.

HATTER (CONT'D)

If the guy was a bludger or a nipper diddler then I could brush this under the carpet, but the warrant was for vagrancy. The D.A sees this file...

RABBIT

(interrupting)

It's never getting that far, Hatter.

HATTER

You have no idea what it's like now
you've left, not that you did
anything close to paperwork...

(cuts himself off)

He even had all his papers in
order. Belonged here.

RABBIT

You set me on him.

HATTER

And, if he had all his dominoes and
didn't sport a right eye slinged up
you'd be getting your tin and be on
your way. You're a man out of time,
Rabbit. Help me help you.

It's almost like he's ashamed...

RABBIT

He was going to say her name.

HATTER

Ichabod Yeshua Emmanuel. Not this
again. She got out before the cull.
Most of the dreamers here without
the proper orders shuffled
themselves off home.

RABBIT

She would have come and said
goodbye.

HATTER

Really? The way she warped her
noodle like that? I'm surprised she
remembered her own name, let alone
yours. It was just some jolly in
fantasy-land to her. You've got to
let it go.

Rabbit measures himself. TAPS the desk.

RABBIT

Tin.

HATTER

Listen, I didn't mean it like that.

RABBIT

(shouting)

You can keep the shunting hilltop
literature to yourself.

The whole place snaps to silence.

A ridged attention falls on them. Curtain's up, ready for the show.

Hatter reaches into the drawer. Tosses a coin purse down.

Rabbit grabs it.

The station *slowly* returns to normal proceedings.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
It's light.

HATTER
You're scaping right?

Does it look like I am?

HATTER (CONT'D)
I had to take forty to keep him
stum.

Sliding the chair back, Rabbit makes his escape.

HATTER (CONT'D)
(shouting)
It's for your own nanty, White.

Rabbit is only focused on leaving.

Pops another smoke in his mouth. Lights it.

EXHALES.

RECEPTIONIST
Sir... sir... Excuse me, sir. You
can't do that in here anymore.

Falls on deaf ears.

Rabbit reaches into his waistcoat. Pulls out a baroque pocket watch.

The TICKING overpowers the hustle and bustle.

OFF SCREEN: Trumpets build -

a big band -

joined by a SIREN'S SONG --

INT. 'THE LUCKY CAT' - NIGHT

The band continues.

A spotlight slices through the stage -

wraps -

CESHIRE CHESSUR in a hallowed glow. Sultry SINGING.

The slit of her red dress goes so high up her body it nearly meets the one exposing her cleavage. It's hardly worth her having it on.

Eyes - big and blue.

Everyone in the crowd bound around her little finger.

Rabbit is front and centre. Woozy.

Cheshire saunters towards him.

Singles him out -

PURRS the RACY PART just for him.

Slowly lifts herself onto his lap. Feline in her movements.

Lets him feel the warmth between her knees.

Leans in - Rabbit reciprocates...

The promise of tonight leaves her.

She slides off him and tries the same thing with another sap.

Knows exactly what she's doing.

INT. 'THE LUCKY CAT' - LATER THAT NIGHT

A MUSICAL INTERLUDE.

Cheshire propped at the bar fixing her face. Really -

surveying the room -

in her silver vanity mirror. Cracked.

Rabbit stumbles next to her. Steaming.

She lets him kiss her on the cheek.

RASPS excitedly.

CHESHIRE
How you been, bunny?

RABBIT
Nanty, Cheshire.

She's already back to the mirror.

CHESHIRE
Well, you can tell that to your
reflection, because it seems he
hasn't heard the ragings about
that yet.

RABBIT
Long day.

CHESHIRE
Is that right?

RABBIT
You want to rig this top?

She takes him in. Notices the bruising on his knuckles.

The painted smile fades.

The act drops a touch.

Pushes the hair from his face.

Stops herself -

puts the act back on.

CHESHIRE
But luna is still going strong,
darling. I can't be going anywhere
whilst the club is swinging.

RABBIT
What if I waited?

CHESHIRE
I don't think that's a nanty idea
tonight, honey.

RABBIT
Tomorrow?

Cheshire turns. Almost dangerous.

CHESHIRE

Listen, I'm telling you this before
I have the brunos come move you on.
The longer we stay here lousing
like this, the less likely one of
these gents are going to take me
home. Find someplace else to be.

She's right. In the corner, several WELL HEELED GENTS have
noticed their interactions. Are gawping.

RABBIT

Wheezing one of them makes you a
full-time wendybird?

Rabbit finishes his drink. SLAMS it onto the bar.

Cheshire is ice.

CHESHIRE

I'm a magpie. I need shiny things
in my nest.

Rabbit pulls his collar up. Heads out. Cheshire is -
back in the mirror. Looks beyond the split down the middle.

EXT. 'ABSOLEM'S OPIUM HOUSE' - LATER

SMASH - SMASH - SMASH -

Rabbit pounds on a wooden door.

A small knocker shaped like a caterpillar you'd miss if you
weren't looking the right way.

Rain streams out of the sky.

Strung out bodies lie in the gutter.

No answer. HAMMERS the door again.

A shutter slides across the peep hole.

Two impossibly large eyes fill the gap.

They recognize Rabbit stood there sodden and drunk.

RABBIT

Open the door you gong farming
insect.

The shutter is closed.

The FIDDLING of hundreds of locks -
turning of many more keys.

Rabbit darts inside --

'ABSOLEM'S OPIUM HOUSE'

The ceiling is so low that Rabbit stoops to navigate around.
A haze of sticky sweetness fills the air.

ABSOLEM crawls around the back of the small counter. Large.
Cumbersome. Many legs. Begins to roll a -

BALL OF SYRUPY BLACK TAR.

Glancing down into the -

DEN

Rabbit spies -

three DREAMERS lined up in a row across wooden beds.

All impossibly beautiful. No business being here.

Their eyes dart from left to right under closed eye lids.

RABBIT

Topping up their dreams for them?

ABSOLEM

Must've got turned around on the
way to the garden, so I made one
for 'em here in the wheezing they
recollect how to get home.

RABBIT

They got papers?

You think I asked?

RABBIT (CONT'D)

You ponder on where they come from?

ABSOLEM

Just so long as they head back with
all the limbs they carried here
with 'em, I couldn't care less.

RABBIT

Why do you wonder they stay? This
place is one long nightmare.

ABSOLEM
Probably the same reason you do...

Pardon?

ABSOLEM (CONT'D)
... They got something to run from.

SLAM. The 'goods' are deposited on the counter.

An ornate pipe is slid beside it.

Rabbit lunges - Absolem pulls everything away -

unfurls three of his hands on the left and points at the palm(s) with three index fingers on the right.

Rabbit tosses the coin purse down.

Tries to snatch his purchases from under Absolem's grip.

Stopped.

ABSOLEM (CONT'D)
Go easy Rabbit. Maybe some things
are best forgotten this luna.

Rabbit shrugs him off.

Meanders his way into the --

DEN

Deposits himself onto a vacant bed opposite the three dreamers.

Watches as a naked foot TWITCHES in staccato.

Breaks off from it. Wipes his nose with the back of his hand.

Settles down.

Packs the pipe.

Lights up.

Closes his eyes.

INHALES. Holds it --

lets it out -

opens his eyes -

pupils. Deep black saucers.

Grins a wide smile.

The pipe CLATTERS to the floor.

Rabbit's body goes limp.

It's Hit. Him. Hard.

Smile widens further.

An arrhythmic BEAT. PUNCTUATES. THROUGH.

It's just what he wanted.

Closing his eyes -

he's off somewhere else --

EXT. MEADOW - MORNING [DREAM SEQUENCE]

The most wonderful colours stretch on forever.

Everything's not quite right. The world would slip off the edge if something weren't stopping it.

A MANICURED HAND grazes the top of tall rhubarb stalks.

That BLUE DRESS.

Rabbit opens his eyes. Sees -

rolling clouds. Sapphire sky. SINGING birds.

Contentment.

LAUGHTER brings him round.

Turns his head. *He sees her* --

ALICE LIDDELL (late teens). Flowing blonde hair with the bow in. The heart shaped face and those buckled shoes.

She's smitten. So is Rabbit.

Jumping up, he bounds after her.

Wobbly on his feet. He stumbles. Falls.

ALICE

Keep up. We're going to be late.

Getting to his knees, Rabbit sees where Alice is heading -

a DARK FOREST filled with gnarled trees.

RABBIT

Alice, no, wait. Stop. Don't go in there.

Too late -

she's disappeared into the shadows.

Rabbit tears off after her into --

THE DARK FOREST

Sprints through the branches.

They claw at him.

Pull him back.

Shrugs them off -

keeps going.

ALICE (O.S.)

Come on Rabbit, you don't want to be late. We're going home.

The BRANCHES don't stop -

twist their way around Rabbit's arms and legs -

hook into his skin -

puncture his flesh -

envelop him -

cover his arms and mouth.

He tries to SCREAM.

Stifled.

Hoisted into the air like a morbid marionette -

looks around frantically -

tries to find Alice...

There! Ducking down. Looking into a burrow at the base of a tree.

She scurries into the dark hole.

RABBIT
Alice! Alice, stop!

Rabbit's mouth is overtaken by branches -

force themselves down his throat.

He finds strength from somewhere.

RIPS himself away from his living prison.

Horrific wounds on his body - long gashes on his face. Arms.
Legs.

Charges after Alice -

the branches snake behind him.

He's too quick. Slides his way down into --

THE DARKNESS OF THE RABBIT HOLE

It's a struggle for Rabbit to fit.

Crawls on his hands and knees.

Stops.

Fires up his lighter. A weak flame.

RABBIT
Alice. Alice, where are you?

Nothing...

Arrogant darkness.

He drops his head. EXHAUSTED. Tries to wriggle further.
Can't. Defeated. Then -

A SCREAM. Blood curdling. PANICKED.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
I'm coming Alice. Hold on. Try and
hold on.

THE WALLS - tighten -

tighter -

tighter.

Trapped.

ALICE (O.S.)
Come find me Rabbit. Find me.

Rabbit scrambles in the dark. Scrapes with fingernails. Blood mixes with dirt. Tries to get purchase. Kicks out.

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You have to find me Rabbit.

Struggle. Push. Strain.

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Find me.

One last effort. Useless.

RABBIT
I'm trying.

Rabbit admits defeat.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
I'm trying to.

Breaks down -

the flame extinguishes.

CRIES -

tears that can only be mustered up when it's the end of the road.

INT. RABBIT'S BEDSIT - MORNING

BANG-BANG-BANG -

Rabbit stirs. He's a mess. Crimson. Dirt. Soaking.

BANG-BANG-BANG -

He plummets towards the door. Opens it slightly. Keeps the chain on. There's a -

YOUNG COPPER. Swamped by his three-sizes-too-large uniform. Lacks calcium.

RABBIT
You got a warrant?

YOUNG COPPER
No, sir.

Goes to shut the door. A tiny foot stops him.

YOUNG COPPER (CONT'D)
 'Atter sent me, Mr White. Loused
 about how you're gonna' want the
 first chuftu at this.

A change of heart. *Maybe.*

YOUNG COPPER (CONT'D)
 Been a bludge. 'Atter says you'll
 get ten ticks before 'e calls it
 in. Then the blues will be
 trampling over the evidence and the
 butcher will take the snivey. She's
 propped up at the far end of Canal
 Street.

RABBIT
 Bludge doesn't pay well. Tell him
 to find a regular boy scout.

YOUNG COPPER
 'E says you'll want a goosey. Says
 it's one of them like she were.
 Spitting likeness of her too.

If looks could kill, Rabbit is giving one.

YOUNG COPPER (CONT'D)
 It's just what 'e loused on, Mr
 White. 'E said you'd be ran-tan and
 I-were to scarper once you were
 'eadin in that d'rection.

RABBIT
 Sensible advice.

The Copper makes his get away. SLAM -

Rabbit closes the door.

Heads over to the bedside dresser and mixes up a terrifying
 cocktail from the vials there - the base -

adds one last ingredient. Two drops of laudanum.

Stirs it with a grubby finger. Down the hatch it goes.

Catches him straight away. Grips the dresser for ballast.

Regains himself. Smooths his hair back. Closes his eyes.
 Tries not to look at something -

too late. His eyes wander to the back wall...

A tapestry of police evidence tacked up against yellowing paper. Red string connects cases together.

Clippings:

'MISSING DREAMER',

'DREAMER'S BODY FOUND MUTILATED',

'NAVY DEPLOYED TO RESETTLE THE DREAMER POPULATION'

Right in the middle of it all -

one lone picture --

ALICE LIDDELL.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
Ichabod wept.

Marches to gather his crumpled shirt off the floor.

Sweeping it up, he notices something underneath -

A BLACK ENVELOPE. Gold trim around it.

Picks it up. Prises a card out.

Simply says: 'DON'T BE LATE.'

In the bottom corner, a picture of a masque. Dark holes where the eyes should be.

Turns the card over. Stares. Nothing else.

EXT. ALLEY, CANAL ST - MORNING

The part of town for those who are forced to live in depravity.

THE BODY isn't the spitting image of Alice, but it could easily be her sister.

JUMP ROPE GIRLS chant further down the street. Rabbit examines the scene.

JUMP ROPE GIRLS (O.S.)
Down in the valley
where the green grass grows,
there sat Janey
sweet as a rose.
Along came Johnny
and kissed her on the cheek.
(MORE)

JUMP ROPE GIRLS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
How many kisses
did she get this week?

Abrasions across her wrists. Corners of her mouth worn down.

Powderings crudely plastered on by amateurs.

Rifling through his pockets, Rabbit pulls out two copper coins. RUBS them together.

Places them on the ground close to her hand.

D.A HEART (O.S.)
This was always where you did your
best work, White. You and the
others with a snifter for the
sawney. Once those Crusaders got
dropped off city hall.

Rabbit GRIMACES. Turns. Sees -

D.A SAMANTHA HEART, sucking out what little atmosphere there is in the thin passage. Smart red suit. Wide shoulder pads.

Flanked on each side by some TOUGH-LOOKING COPPERS.

D.A HEART (CONT'D)
I always thought your little
guilder fixation was strange.
Constantly pushing them into the
hands of all the sniveys you find.

RABBIT
If they can't pay, the boatman
won't take them.

D.A HEART
So full of it Rabbit. I bet the
dreamers you meet *lap-it-up*. Must
be easier ways to dance them into
dab.

RABBIT
Isn't this a case for the beat?

D.A HEART
The rags get interested when it's a
dreamer. I can see it. It'll make
for a great strap... *'Another
Dreamer doesn't make it Home.'*

RABBIT
Making sure they quote you
correctly?

D.A HEART

I'm here to offer a wealth of knowledge to my fantastic officers on what I thought would be a difficult case for them. But I suppose that we might as well call this now seeing as all the evidence is coming together so nantly.

RABBIT

Still looking for ways to put innocents in the stir, Chief Heart?

D.A HEART

Occam's razor. The most obvious solution is usually the right one. And that's D.A Heart to you now.

Pulling at an invisible petticoat, Rabbit performs a trite curtsy.

RABBIT

Do excuse me, your majesty.

D.A HEART

So, indulge me. Why are you here?

Rabbit lights a smoke. Looks to the mountains of men on either side of her. Three of Rabbit and the rest.

One CRACKS meaty knuckles. The other unsheathes a 'Jocked Holy-water Sprinkler' as big as a tree trunk. TAPS it thrice on an open palm.

RABBIT

This a formal questioning? If so, I want an ink-slinger.

D.A HEART

You only need one of them if you're guilty. Surely you know that?

RABBIT

I was out for a morning constitution. Came across her.

Ditches the cigarette into the distance. Removes his jacket. Rolls up his sleeves.

D.A HEART

You're sticking with that?

RABBIT

It's my holy word.

CLANGING of police bells. Thundering HOOVES. The cavalry coming.

D.A HEART

Get him.

The goons in uniform advance.

EXT. CANAL ST - SAME

A police wagon. Muscular horses. Impressive speed. People scatter.

SCREECHES to a stop.

Others join.

A metal step unfurls.

Tooled up COPPERS pile out. Sticks. Shields. Helmets.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME

One hell of a brawl.

Rabbit gives as good as he gets.

Trades fists.

Forearm high.

Flush headbutt. Right in the nose. Eruption of crimson.

Sinks his teeth into a neck.

The pair of them are too big though.

Wrestle him to the floor.

REINFORCEMENTS arrive - not much to do -

plant a few on Rabbit for good measure.

Kidneys. DIGGED. Head. BATTERED. Hands. CRUNCHED.

Cuffs forced on.

Refuses to go quietly.

Rabbit's face is a state. Swelling jaw. A cut above his eye leaks red into the grooves of the cobbles. Rivers of blood.

D.A HEART
 Rabbit White, you are under arrest
 for bludge in the first degree. You
 have the right to remain
 endacotted...

Rabbit isn't listening.

Two feet arrive in the alley -

HATTER.

Those restraining Rabbit have to work overtime.

RABBIT
 How could you do this to me? We
 were partners. I'm going to break
 every bone in your skilamalink
 body, *one-by-one*...

D.A HEART
 (interrupting)
 He knows the rest.

WHAM - a truncheon slams down -

HARD TO BLACK:

A VOID OF EMPTINESS...

Time to think.

One Hundred Bottles of Beer on the Wall...

SPLASH -

EXT. PATHWAY UNDER A BRIDGE, THE DOCKS - DAY

Rabbit is brought out of his enforced slumber.

Groggy. Sore. Wet.

There, in front of him -

Hatter holding a pail.

Rabbit sets about him straight away. No small task. Still
 clapped in iron.

Charges. Misses. Hits the ground. Face first.

HATTER
 Rabbit, please. Stop.

Not listening. Gets to his knees.

RABBIT
Why did you do it?

HATTER
I know what it crows like...

RABBIT
(interrupting)
Pigrot.

HATTER
I had no reckoning she was going to
be there.

Rabbit stands. Tries to focus. Struggles to see.

RABBIT
Why tell me about the snivey then?

HATTER
I don't want to shake a flannin.
You came in yesterday spouting off
about Alice...
(stumbles)
Then a dreamer dewskitching up
rotting mort. I thought that there
might be a connection...
(hesitates)
Plus, you know more about them than
anyone. You'd've chuftied things
others would...
(fades)
I was pratering. Do you know how
dander dreamers croaking in my
precinct looks?

RABBIT
You believe me now then?

HATTER
I'm not lousing on that, Rabbit.
This is different. We've got a
snivey this time. Actual evidence
of some shady work. It's not some
looney spoutings to say that this
one didn't make it home.

Rabbit NODS - *it's a start.*

HATTER (CONT'D)
You gleam anything from the scene?

A little calmer now, Rabbit is able to be rational.

RABBIT

She had some bruising on her wrists. No need to tie her up there. Suggests she might have been dumped afterwards.

HATTER

It's a once-upon-a.

RABBIT

Do you think that he could have done it?

HATTER

Who?

RABBIT

The vagrant last luna?

HATTER

He was just a junkie who'd pickled his pink. Probably heard some chinwag on the streets about you asking around town about her and thought he'd turn the screw.

RABBIT

What now then?

Hatter's hands go to his hips. SIGHS.

Takes out a small bunch of keys. Unlocks the cuffs.

HATTER

I can fob them for forty-eight hours. Say you took off in another direction. After that... You'll be our only yack.

RABBIT

You mean you're not going to be working it back at the station?

HATTER

This isn't the Old West, Rabbit. I have a boss. She wants this one closed quick. She found you at the scene. Your giggle-mug is the only thing that the W.P.D is going to be seeing. Give them something else to barney with and...

He trails off. Rabbit is locked on him.

RABBIT
You-bescumber-toke.

Advances on Hatter. Fists clenched into weapons.

Hatter cowers until he can go no further. Huddles against the brickwork. Hopes it might absorb him.

HATTER
No one forced you. You wanted
this...
(pause)
... Well not this, but you wanted
this case...
(pause)
Back in the day you would have
walked... no, inched... through
yards of broken glass just to see
the manillas...
(desperate)
I'm all-overish about this. I
really am, but I don't know what
else to do.

It's about to boil over. Be something that can't be taken
back. Then -

Rabbit notices something behind Hatter.

A BLACK AND GOLD poster pasted to the wall. Masque. 'DON'T BE
LATE.'

Rabbit spins Hatter to face the wall. Shoves his head next to
it.

RABBIT
What is this?

HATTER
A poster... a wall... I don't know.
What are you getting at? Please...
don't stick me here.

PRESSURE. SQUEAL.

RABBIT
What's it for?

HATTER
Knaves' Ball. Big shindig the well
to do in Wonderland have every
year. Really masonic...
(MORE)

HATTER (CONT'D)
 Invite only... Always scroby.
 Duchess probably behind it... Never
 been able to prove it though.

More PRESSURE. SQUEAL.

RABBIT
 Duchess?

HATTER
 How many other ones do you know?
The Duchess...

RABBIT
 I woke up this morning with a card
 in my pocket just like this.

HATTER
 That's impossible. There's no way
 that they'd invite someone like...

Scrape... Brickwork to forehead. YELP.

RABBIT
 Do you know where it's held?

HATTER
 Sure, because if they wouldn't
 invite you, I'm certain to be
 higher up the list.

Rabbit lets go of Hatter. He flies round expecting a flurry
 of knuckles.

RABBIT
 What about when it is?

HATTER
 They've burned all our leave in two
 days time. Someone must know
 something. I'd put a deaner on it
 being then.

RABBIT
 Alright... Find out if that vagrant
 I brought in the other day has a
 fixed abode. Might be work a poke.

HATTER
 Are you ran-tan? I can't ream that
 flash pull. It'll...

RABBIT
(interrupting)
I think that it's the least you
could do.

Hatter SIGHS.

HATTER
Fine. I can't cackle tub on it
though.

Rabbit CRACKS his neck. SNAPS his fingers. Rolls his wrists.

Opposite, Hatter bounces on the spot. WAILS. SLAPS himself
hard.

HATTER (CONT'D)
Make it look convincing.

RABBIT
That's not going to be a mitting.

Eyes narrow -

Hatter WINCES.

EXT. PATHWAY UNDER A BRIDGE, THE DOCKS - LATER

Hatter - face down at the waters edge.

Taken quite the beating.

Rabbit walks away from the scene. Brushes his hands down his
waistcoat. Finds -

his pocket watch - flicks it open - smashed.

Still works - just - TICK-TICK-TICK.

Starting to slow now though - TICK -- TICK...

Even slower now --- TICK --- TICK...

STOPS.

INT. CORRIDOR, RABBIT'S BEDSIT - EARLY EVENING

Rabbit heads towards his door. Cheshire is -

sat outside. Smoking. A small slip. Bare feet.

Butts discarded all around her.

A real shiner on her right eye.

CHESHIRE
How you been, bunny?

Stands. He lets her kiss him on the cheek.

Reaches past her. Opens up his room. Steps into --

HIS BEDSIT

Cheshire loiters at the door.

Rabbit sits down. Rummages under the bed -

pulls out the medical kit. Rifles through. finds a -

NEEDLE and THREAD.

Cheshire joins him. Shuts the door.

Relieves him of the implements. Joins the two together.

Rabbit discovers a bottle of murky looking liquid. Has a mouthful.

Hands it to Cheshire. She takes a pull. Splashes some on the wound above his eye.

Begins closing the gash. Deft. Accurate.

Rabbit sparks a smoke.

CHESHIRE (CONT'D)
It was a nanty thing I came by.
You're shilly when you do it on
your own. It leaves such terrible
scars on your gigglemug.

Finishes. Ties the thread off. Snips the end.

Takes a moment.

Kisses Rabbit above the cut. Tender.

Takes the smoke from his hands. Helps herself to a drag.

Standing, Rabbit searches the room for a change of clothes.

RABBIT
I've got to see Duchess.

Cheshire is elsewhere. Locked on the picture of Alice in the middle of the wall.

Examines every detail of the girl's face.

CHESHIRE

There's a place not far from here.
A ma and pa are missing their girl.
One day she'll head back. She'll
gulp down years of missed sleep all
at once. Come sunrise there'll be a
table heaving with spoils. They'll
give thanks. Then she'll get to the
decade of forgotten routines.
They'll cry. She'll cry. But it
won't matter. Because she'll be
home.

Nothing from Rabbit.

CHESHIRE (CONT'D)

You really amored her didn't you?

He continues searching the room. SILENT.

CHESHIRE (CONT'D)

I can see why.

Finished with the smoke, Cheshire puts it out on the floor.

Bright red LIPSTICK smudged across the filter.

CHESHIRE (CONT'D)

What would you say to her if you
got to see her again?

Rising off the bed, she advances on Rabbit. Presses herself
against him.

RABBIT

I made her a promise. Something I
couldn't do.

She kisses his bare chest.

Moving her lips up, she begins to bite at his neck.

CHESHIRE

I can be her you know? We can do
the things the two of you used to.

It's hard for Rabbit not to be into it. MOANS a little -

Cheshire's heavy BREATHING -

undoes his belt.

Holds him in her hand.

RABBIT

I need to go to the club.

She quickens the rhythm of her strokes.

CHESHIRE

It won't be open for another few
hours. We have plenty of time.

Slips the dress off her shoulders. It falls. Exposes her
entire body.

Pastel skin shimmers.

Slides back onto the bed. Beckons Rabbit forward.

He obeys.

Pushes himself inside her.

She GROANS. Arches up -

her head contorting against the bare mattress.

It's passionate. Visceral. Animalistic.

CHESHIRE (CONT'D)

Say her name.

Rabbit stays quiet.

She doesn't like that.

Throws a closed fist at his stitched eye - SPLITS - explodes
with crimson -

runs down his face onto her breasts.

Wraps her legs higher up.

Grabs his hair. YANKS.

CHESHIRE (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Say it.

Rabbit grits his teeth.

RABBIT

Alice... Alice.

She loves it.

Curves her back further.

Just before climax -
reaches up -
hangs off Rabbit's neck -
pulls herself towards him. Foreheads touch. Smeared in blood.

CHESHIRE
You'll never find her.

It only spurns him on. Fucks her harder. She lies back.
Knows exactly what she's doing.

INT. RABBIT'S BEDSIT - LATER

The amber glow of a smouldering cigarette.

REVELRY leaks through the open window.

Rabbit awake. Cheshire pretending to sleep.

He finishes the smoke.

Pours what's left of a bottle he finds down his throat.

Dresses. Takes a heavy looking trench coat from the back of the door.

Grabs something else from under the bed. 'Old Faithful' -
sawed-off barrel. A metal plate on the grip.

Heads out.

As the door closes -

Cheshire's eyes spring open.

Moves to the other side of the bed.

Draws Rabbit's pillow closer.

EXT. CANAL ST - SAME

A cigarette in Rabbit's mouth.

Bushelbubbles paraded around by a Haymarket Hector. One WINKS at Rabbit.

BUSHELBUBBY
Suck it clean for a hap'ney.

Nothing back.

A Clothman stood atop a soapbox preaching: *"Ichabod sees all.."*

Down an alley, a Shivering Jemmy slowly turning blue.

Rabbit - opens up his jacket.

CRACKS Old Faithful. Checks there are two cartridges loaded.

Pulls two more out of his pocket.

SNAPS the weapon shut.

EXT. 'THE LUCKY CAT' - SAME

A monstrous BULL spies Rabbit some distance from the club.

Unhooks the rope across the entrance.

Rabbit tosses his smoke -

spreads his arms wide.

Pat down - nothing, nothing...

Heads to the left leg. Finds it - Old Faithful -

WHAM -

doesn't get time to react.

Rabbit SMASHES a knee into his face. Lights out.

A swift hook to the jaw for good measure.

Hides Old Faithful away.

Heads inside --

'THE LUCKY CAT'

The same clientele. The same suits. The same drinks.

Less classy. White powders hoovered off reflective surfaces. Lovers dribble on one another. A huge amount of consumption.

Rabbit ignores it all.

Some GOONS cotton on. Snake their way towards him.

Rabbit moves in double time -

arrives at the stage door -

wrenches it open -

darts into the --

BACK ROOMS

Winding corridors stretch on for miles.

Stacks of barrels. Heavy looking doors. Filth.

Goons burst in.

One pulls the trigger - just misses.

Rabbit lets a leaden favour fly. Hits a GOON square in the chest.

Pins him to the back wall. Smears dark blood as he slides down.

Rabbit's second shell goes wide. The others scatter.

He moves on.

SNAP - splits the chamber.

Two smoking cartridges fly out - quickly loads the others.

Just in time...

A GOON appears with a 'Broomstick'. Tries to aim. Rabbit is quicker - CRACK -

shaves the top of his head off. CRASHES to the floor.

Rabbit rounds the corner. More resistance.

One gets a hold of the barrel of his weapon.

The pair wrestle. The GOON is winning. Points the business end of the piece towards Rabbit's face.

Gets hold of the trigger. CRACK. Discharges in the air.

RINGING. Burst ear drums.

Rabbit delivers a WALLOP of a backhander.

Still RINGING.

Another GOON charges. SLASHES a flick knife.

He overextends. Rabbit grabs his wrist. Twists. YELP. Not done. Pushes the limb up - SNAP - compound fracture. SCREAM. Suddenly, he's -

tackled to the floor.

Trades BLOW after BLOW.

Rabbit hooks his finger into the guy's mouth. Pushes on the cheek. Breaks through flesh. Tears it off his face.

WHAM - hammer fist. Like dropped concrete.

PANTING.

CRACK - a leaden hello sails through Rabbit's shoulder. A shower of claret follows.

Hits the deck.

GOONS rush over. A 'Sparky' trained on Rabbit. CLICK -

Rabbit LAUGHS. Almost a CACKLE.

RABBIT
(shouting)
Go on then! What are you legging
for?

About to pull the trigger -

TWEEDLEDEE (O.S.)
Enough!

Everything stops. At the end of the corridor - TWEEDLEDEE. As wide as he is tall. A maze of interlinking tattoos across his body.

INT. DUCHESS'S OFFICE - SAME

A gramophone CRACKLES a slow melody.

CRASH - Rabbit is dragged in. Barely conscious.

Tries to fight back. Can't.

Dumped on the floor. Worn carpet under him.

DUCHESS plays solitaire. An androgynous form. Today though, dressed up in a long blonde wig, heavy powderings and a tight governess's blouse.

Busts of Roman generals and Emperors are lined up around the room. All defaced. Bits hacked off. Shapes chiseled in. Crotches ground down to a nub.

Tweedledee places Old-Faithful on the table. Still red on the nose.

THE DUCHESS

Rather chuckaboo to be playing with
firecrackers in the house, Mr
White.

Blood seeps past Rabbit's teeth.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

Now, I can only imagine that this
petite barnyard song and dance
you've put on this luna is to get
my attention. So here I am. What
can I do for you?

Rabbit SWAYS on his knees.

RABBIT

The... girl.

THE DUCHESS

For Ichabod's sakes, man. Louse up.

Nothing from Rabbit. Broken.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

What did you do to him? Is this any
way to treat the loyal patrons of
this fine establishment? Especially
ones with such a *prestigious* career
serving this city with selflessness
and pogue.

LAUGHTER.

RABBIT

I know... I know you have the girl.

THE DUCHESS

The crooner? I can assure you, Mr
White, that was nothing to do with
me.

Bored. Duchess moves a marble. Lets it slide into the gutter.

RABBIT

Alice... where is... Alice?

Peeking interest.

THE DUCHESS

Who?

RABBIT

Alice... Liddell... The first dreamer.

Ignores it.

THE DUCHESS

If it were up to my associates you'd be wearing a nanty pair of crabshells, hookem-snivey at the bottom of a river somewhere after a rigged nap. It's the reason that they aren't in charge and...

RABBIT

(interrupting)

The Knaves' Ball... I know... you run it...

Duchess stops with the game. Purses lips.

THE DUCHESS

That will cost you.

RABBIT

I know... know... I'll find her there.

THE DUCHESS

I will never orf chump joeys like you. You have everything at your daises. Yet you chase what you cannot have and run from the things that you know will be nanty for you. Usually right into the arms of the last thing you were trying to escape. That jam you have, who is more than likely in your dab right now, could be a nanty one with a little back-o-the-hand. I bet she is *dynamite* between the sheets. Such a shame I've never had the predisposition myself.

Two GOONS hoist Rabbit to his feet. Haul him over to Duchess.

Struggles. A thumb is slipped inside the bullet hole through his shoulder. Opens it further. Hot white pain.

Arrive at the table -

pin Rabbit's hand down.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)
Shhhh... Shhhh... Calm now...
Calm.

RABBIT
Why send me... the invitation?

THE DUCHESS
I can assure you, Mr White, that a
man of your status has never, and
will never, be invited to any
shindig that I lay on.

There's a grin from ear to ear.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)
Right. So it's my understanding
that turning up to someone's abode
without a podsnappery is the height
of arbour vitae....

Duchess stands. Produces a hammer and chisel from the desk
draws.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)
... Now, I know that you don't want
to butter my buns, so I'm going to
be taking something I glim the
viewing of in lieu of chastising
you for your hideously forgetful
nature...

Lines up the chisel on the join between Rabbit's little
finger and knuckle.

Rabbit tries to WRENCH away.

Can't.

Across the table - chunks hacked out. Ground into the wood -
gristle -

dry crimson -

shavings of bone.

FEAR.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)
... Who knows. It might bring me
more fortune than it's given you.

Duchess goes to swing.

RABBIT
Tell me... Tell me where she is.

The hammer stops.

THE DUCHESS
If you were listening, Mr White,
you would comprehend that I. Don't.
Know. And as you might be able to
fathom, in my current frame of
balmy, even if I did. I wouldn't
tell you.

SILENCE -

Rabbit admits defeat. Sinks his head into his shoulder.

RABBIT
Why don't you just snuff me out?

THE DUCHESS
Snuff you out? Why would I do that?
You'd be croak... and I think
that's something you're masonically
notching for, but are too much of a
velvet purse to do it yourself. No,
Mr White. I can find. And soon will
find. Far more effective ways to
hurt you than simply destroying
your body.

Hatred seeps out of Rabbit's very pores.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)
Right.

CRUNCH.

The hammer comes down.

Rabbit's face -

SCREAMING -

CRYING out for help -

trying to pull away.

The gramophone -

DROWNS it out.

EXT. AN UPMARKET NEIGHBOURHOOD - NIGHT

DETECTIVE LARKSPUR, smoking in the middle of the street.

Looking at something in the air above him. Can't take his eyes off it.

OFFICERS trying to control a crowd forming behind a police rope...

Hatter ducks under. Stumbles to Larkspur's side.

Follows his eye line.

Produces a hip flask from deep inside his coat. Has a long pull.

HATTER

You got another one of those?

Larkspur passes the pack over.

Neither takes their eyes off whatever is up there.

Hatter lights up. Takes in a lungful.

LARKSPUR

You seen cagg like this before?

Another lungful. Hatter shakes his head.

HATTER

No... Similar, but not like this.

LARKSPUR

Is it linked to the Canal Street case?

... A bigger lungful this time.

HATTER

Probably.

LARKSPUR

They say that it's White who's doing this. Wapped rantallion. You think that the dropman will let me keep his napper? Would be one hell of a tale.

Hatter sucks the smoke right down to his fingers.

HATTER

We'll see.

LARKSPUR

You don't have to defend him. I get that he used to be your partner, but the guy was always a maltooler waiting to happen.

Finishes his cigarette. Drops it under foot. Stamps on it.

Intense FLASHES. Bulbs BREAKING.

A CHORUS of shouting from the assembled NIGHTCRAWLERS.

NIGHTCRAWLERS

D.A Heart... D.A Heart...

D.A HEART (O.S.)

Didn't we have any capable detectives on duty tonight?

Hatter INHALES. Tightens his draws.

D.A Heart, with detail in tow, approaches.

Larkspur slips away.

HATTER

We have secured the scene ma'am and are canvassing for witnesses.

D.A HEART

All well and nanty detective, but if you'd've had a stronger chin we would have our yack in the stir and this wouldn't have happened now would it?

She glances up. Hatter adjusts himself.

HATTER

No ma'am, it wouldn't.

D.A HEART

Are you any closer to apprehending Mr White?

HATTER

Not yet ma'am. He's been a spectre since he left the force.

(MORE)

HATTER (CONT'D)
Never anywhere for more than a
month or so. N.F.A on his official
file.

D.A HEART
That's odd, because my boys have an
address. They discovered a very
informative harlot who told them
everything they needed to know once
her memory was loosened.

Hatter stares at the floor. Hopes that it might swallow him.

D.A HEART (CONT'D)
I expect the premises turned over
in the morning. I'm flapping on him
wanting a long kip after his
activities tonight.

Her eyes flick up -

HATTER
Yes, ma'am.

She advances on Hatter. Controlled anger.

Grabs him by 'the stones' -
leans in real close.

D.A HEART
And if I find out there was more
than your scaldrum dodge involved
in letting him get away, there's
this salt box in the county stir...
The last three scrobies I put in
there were eaten by their bunk
mate. Took his time too. It was
well over five sunrises before he
finished with the last one...

Digs her nails in. Tightens her grip.

D.A HEART (CONT'D)
... Started with his daisies first.
Then moved onto... other things...

Twists. Drags sharply down.

D.A HEART (CONT'D)
... Understand?

Hatter WHELPS. Does. Nods.

HATTER

Yes ma'am.

She lets him go. Gives him a gentle TAP.

D.A HEART

I expect a full confession by the
afternoon.

Turns on her heel. Leaves. As she does --

THE CRIME SCENE

Is revealed.

Up on the gas lamp post is a DEAD DREAMER hung by her feet.

A violent work of art -

in various shades of red.

Split from navel to neck.

Truly hideous.

Hatter runs his fingers around his face.

Takes a LARGE BREATH.

Fixated on something specific -

THE RUBY RED LIPSTICK -

the girl has on.

HATTER

(to himself)

They never wear powderings.

FLASH. CRUNCH. Brings him out of his thought.

Turns to the assembled OFFICERS.

HATTER (CONT'D)

For zounderkite sakes, cut her down
from there.

INT. RABBIT'S BEDSIT - NIGHT

Rabbit darts in.

Shuts the door behind him. Leans against it. BREATHING hard.

Cheshire sits up in the bed. Her doe-eyes full of concern.

CHESHIRE
Bunny, what's wrong?

Rabbit grasps at his right hand. Everything stained in crimson.

Races over to the sink. Turns the faucet up fully.

Gingerly takes his hand out -

MISSING a pinky finger.

Jams the wound under the running water.

Holds in a SCREAM.

The sink fills with watered down claret.

Pulls his hand back. Wrestles his shirt off.

An ENTRY WOUND.

Examines the hole.

Cheshire arrives behind him. Places a small knife on the side.

Tenderly strokes his arms. Then shoulders. Kisses him in the middle of his back. Holds him tightly from behind.

CHESHIRE (CONT'D)
What did they do to you, Bunny?

RABBIT
Not now.

He glances to the knife.

Picks it up.

Readies himself.

CHESHIRE
Did Duchess tell you where to find her?

Kisses him again.

RABBIT
I said not now.

Plunges the blade into the cavity. Painful. Carries on.

Cheshire has wild, excited eyes. Wills him on to push the blade in deeper.

A crumpled bullet -

DROPS onto the porcelain.

Rabbit grabs his shirt off the floor. Wraps his damaged hand.

White - quickly stains red.

He leans on the sink.

CHESHIRE
You'll never find her.

Rabbit SNAPS.

RAGES. Spins. Cuts the knife through the air -

should open up her throat.

There's no one there.

Returning to the sink, Rabbit has a long look at himself in the mirror.

SEETHES -

focused on the reflection.

Throws a fist -

SMASH.

Leaves hundreds of distorted versions of himself.

Continues to stare.

Tears himself away. Grabs another filthy bottle from the floor.

Slumps into the easy chair.

Swallows the liquid.

Throws the container against the back wall - SHATTER.

Lays his head down. Closes his eyes. Gone elsewhere --

EXT. NARROW ALLEY, CANAL STREET - NIGHT [DREAM SEQUENCE]

YOUNG RABBIT waits with his hand open.

His beat uniform hangs off his wiry frame. Green behind his ears. Police whistle around his neck.

A PACKAGE exchanged.

Rabbit checks. Pockets it. Moves on.

The DEALER grabs his arm.

DEALER

You wanna' pay for that?

CRACK - Rabbit gives him a truncheon to the knee -
doubles him over -

CRUNCH - head kicked into the wall -
weakly attempts to lift it away from the brickwork -
another boot thrown at him for good measure.

Stays down.

Rabbit steps out onto --

CANAL ST

Deserted. Snow.

Hands to pockets. WHISTLING.

Slows -

notices something.

A girl walking on a high wall of a slum garden as if it were
a tightrope. Alice Liddell -

delicate like a ballet dancer. Feels for the next step with
her toes.

Rabbit darts over.

RABBIT

You! Get down from there.

She's not paying attention. Carries on.

ALICE

Impossible.

RABBIT

Nothing's impossible. Get down from there now.

ALICE

That's not true. I can think of six impossible things before breakfast.

RABBIT

You need to get off the wall now otherwise I'll nib you for breach of the peace.

ALICE

You can't arrest me. You're not a constable.

RABBIT

I am.

ALICE

Well, why did you lob crawl that cove in the alley?

Busted. Mind races. Rabbit reaches for his truncheon. Sinister.

RABBIT

Get down now.

ALICE

I shan't.

EXHALES. Exasperated.

RABBIT

I was taking things off him that he shouldn't have.

ALICE

Then you were dishonest in your intentions, which means you can't be a real constable. Just because there are dander coves in the world shouldn't mean that those who are supposed to be nanty need stoop to their level.

RABBIT

Do you know what happens to church-bells in my line of work?

ALICE

A canary croons only when she first
smells the gas. It's meant to be a
warning to nommus out of the mine
before it's too late.

SLIP -

Alice loses her footing. Looks down at the floor.

High up. Eyes shoot open. Wide. Panicked.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Why am I so large? It must have
been the tonic. The tonic made me
like this... I won't fit, and I'll
make such a terrible mess at the
shindig like this.

Something streaks across her face. Something forgotten.

ALICE (CONT'D)

The shindig... the cakes... the
cakes. I've forgotten the cakes.
The queen will cut off my napper.

Grips her stomach. LAUGHS like only someone off their nut
can.

Over-balances. Tips backwards out of view.

Rabbit sets off straight away towards --

A SLUM GARDEN - SAME

A mess of brambles and weeds.

Alice - accordioned in the undergrowth. Not moving. A milky
white fragment poking out of her leg.

Rabbit races over.

Unsheathes his truncheon.

Lines up a sticking -

right at her head.

Should be easy.

Really looks at her.

Can't bring himself to do it.

Eyes flutter open.

Rabbit hides his weapon away.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Is this the garden?

RABBIT
No.

Searching in him - noticing something strange.

ALICE
It's curious, pretending to be two
people at once, isn't it?

Reaches for his face...

Rabbit moves her hand away.

RABBIT
That's just the fall. We need to
get you to the infirmary.

Alice comes to - whatever was in her system is fading -

PAIN - BLUBBERING.

Finally. TEARS.

ALICE
I don't care for it here. I should
never have come.

RABBIT
Where are you from?

Thinks through streaming eyes.

ALICE
I can't... I can't quite remember.

A barrage of TEARS.

RABBIT
Hey... hey... don't cry. It's OK. I
can take you to the station and we
can...

Crying stops. Deathly serious.

ALICE
(interrupting)
No. You are not to take me there.

RABBIT

I have to report this.

Goes to put the whistle in his mouth.

It's seized out.

ALICE

Don't.

SIGH. Rabbit pushes his ears down.

RABBIT

Then where shall we go?

ALICE

Anywhere... anywhere... please. I
just want to go home.

INT. RABBIT'S BEDSIT - MORNING

Rabbit -

JERKS awake in the chair.

Feels last night all over his body. GROANS.

Unwraps his hand like a morbid present.

An awful sight. Flexes four remaining fingers.

Glances to the door. A note pushed under it.

Rises. Inspects.

Quickly pockets it.

EXT. CANAL ST - SAME

Police wagons SCREECH to a halt.

OFFICERS leap down. Armed to the teeth.

Last man out is -

Hatter. Places his top hat on his head.

INT. RABBIT'S BEDSIT - SAME

Rabbit at the mirror. Patched up. Hand -

swaddled in white. Gingerly holds a snub nosed 'Bulldog'.

Stares into the reflective surface.

Hundreds of faces.

Struggles. Can just about pull the trigger.

Drops his arm.

Opens the chamber. Loads a single leaden favour.

SNAPS it shut.

Back to the mirror.

INT. CORRIDOR, OUTSIDE RABBIT'S BEDSIT - SAME

Coppers flood the space.

Line up either side of Rabbit's door.

Nervous.

Ready.

One ushered to the front.

'Key to the City' in his hands. Weighty.

INT. RABBIT'S BEDSIT - SAME

Rabbit pulling on his trench coat.

NOISE outside.

Looks to --

THE DOOR

Shadows of pacing feet. Settle. Calm...

SMASH -

it SPLINTERS -

flies open.

Officers charge in - weapons drawn.

CACOPHONY of noise. Then -

SILENCE.

Hatter steps in. No Rabbit.

Probes the room. Lands on --

THE BACK WALL

AGHAST - all of Rabbit's evidence. The PICTURE of Alice.

Self-incrimination.

Hatter looks between his feet.

A cigarette butt. Ruby red lipstick around the filter.

Takes out a handkerchief. Picks it up. Examines. Dismayed.

Slips it inside his pocket.

HATTER

No one touch anything yet. I want
flashprints of everything. And then
you can take all that down and
bring it to the station.

Leaves.

EXT. 33. DARESBURY DRIVE - DAY

Rabbit - pacing down the middle of the street.

All around, WELL HEELED LADIES & GENTS 'taking the air'.

Clean. No smog. Quiet. Georgian housing.

Rabbit takes out a scrap of paper - '33 DARESBURY DRIVE' - in
cursive.

Looks to the front of a large townhouse. Run down. Ivy
swarming.

Heavy curtains block the windows.

Heads through the gate to the --

FRONT DOOR

KNOCKS. Waits.

It opens a crack.

Impossibly dark inside. Rabbit can tell though. It's -

The Perp. With a name now, DR CHARLES LUTWIDGE. Skin and
bones. Fingers of a pianist. Nails brittle and yellow.

Recognizes Rabbit -

tries to shut the door.

Rabbit's foot blocks it.

Forces his way inside --

THE HALLWAY

Cluttered with hordings. Newspapers. Books. Strange medicinal artefacts.

Charles flees. Tips the umbrella stand over.

Rabbit CRASHES to the floor.

Sees specks dance.

Charles bolts for the phone. Picks up the receiver.

Hooks his finger into the - 9 -

the dial CLUNKS back -

Rabbit is up. Limpes over -

9 - CLUNK -

Rabbit closes in -

Charles faces the wall -

screws up his eyes tight -

9 -

CLUNK -

Rabbit looms.

The call connects.

CHARLES

Please. Send assistance...

All he gets out. Rabbit rips the phone from the wall.
BLUDGEONS Charles -

HARD TO BLACK:

INT. FRONT ROOM - LATER

A Grandfather clock TICKS back and forth.

Thick curtains barely let the light in. Just enough to see -
bizarre medical curiosities around the room. Charles -

is upright in a leather chair taking an enforced nap. Tightly restrained with the phone cord. Opposite -

Rabbit leafs through scientific journals. Bulldog in the other hand.

CHIME.

SPLUTTER. Charles wakes up. Groggy.

Rabbit trains the weapon at him.

CHARLES

Violent men never usually live as long as you. The Norsemen knew that and goaded those who have your predilection towards bloodshed. They loused about croaking upon their shields and being rewarded by feasting with the Gods in the Great Hall where all desires would be met.

Rabbit heads to the curtains. Opens them a crack. Sees -
an empty street.

RABBIT

You believe that?

CHARLES

As a man of science I can neither prove nor disprove it. So, I must remain open to the idea, but quietly sceptical.

Rabbit turns back inside.

RABBIT

Why aren't the blues here yet? In a neighbourhood like this...

CHARLES

(interrupting)

I call them often... *The visions* mostly come as frightening nightmares to me. Memories best lost.

Rabbit returns to his seat.

RABBIT

And the warrant for vagrancy...

Searches the room. A certificate on the mantle. A Doctorate in Medicine awarded to: "Dr C. Lutwidge".

RABBIT (CONT'D)
... Dr Lutwidge?

A weight on Charles's shoulders. Causes him to hunch double.

CHARLES
When I dream I often find I forget
who I am. I run for miles and can't
find my way back.
(pause)
But you know how that is.

RABBIT
I do?

CHARLES
Come now. You must realize I can
see the symptoms. The sunken cheeks
and hollow eyes. The slight twitch
of the median nerve. What is it
that you want to run from?

Rabbit points the Bulldog at Charles's head.

RABBIT
Why don't you tell me first?

The weapon trained his way doesn't phase him one bit.

CHARLES
Now, that is a nanty question.

Rabbit gives the weapon some bite. Hammer back - CLICK.

RABBIT
Alice Liddel. Where is she?

CHARLES
Ah, the second of the dreamers.

What?

INT. STUDY - SAME

The Bulldog in Charles's back. Rabbit ushers him through the open door.

Gloomy. Formaldehyde jars full of strange acquisitions.

The furthest wall is bare except for a single framed picture.

Small. Impossible to see.

Rabbit prods Charles. He won't go any further. Pulls back.

Fine. Rabbit hides the Bulldog away.

Goes closer.

Clearer...

A man stood up and a girl sat down.

Within touching distance.

All clear now -

ALICE -

sat posing for a portrait. Smiling as only she can.

Behind her -

CHARLES. Stethoscope round his neck. A serious victorian line across his face.

CHARLES

My wife and I adopted her when she was only a nipper. Her mother was a patient of mine who croaked in the birthing. Her biological father had long since vanished. We never altered her surname. We wanted her to have a connection to who had brought her into the world, but she was very much our daughter...

Tears fall from Rabbit's face.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

... When I first arrived, I met a dame. She was worried that if more dreamers came here they would need assistance and said I would be perfect to provide it. Alice and I... we helped them transition...

RABBIT

(interrupting)

What about the cull? The boats?

A shake of the head.

CHARLES

She would bring the girls to me here and they would stay until I was convinced they could survive on their own. They often arrive in a terrible state. Most can't remember why they are here. Others don't want to and are repressing it, which only makes the adjustment worse. Once they accept what they have done it gets easier, but they will never be the same.

RABBIT

They've stopped coming.

CHARLES

Pigrotings. They're still here. Always will be.

Rabbit stalks him around the room. A fearsome beast.

RABBIT

So what happened? Where is she now?

Jars topple. SHATTER.

CHARLES

The dame's intentions for our enterprise turned malign... So I... I...

RABBIT

(interrupting)

What?

CHARLES

... I sent her away... didn't want her mixed up in what was occurring. What I *had* to do.

A shelf CLATTERS down. SMASH. Glass everywhere.

RABBIT

You abandoned her?

CHARLES

No. Never. The dame insisted that we needed to use tonics in order to keep them compliant as it took too long to rehabilitate them in traditional ways. I was worried she would do the same to her...

Rabbit grabs Charles by the lapels. Pushes him to the floor.
Holds on. Grip tightens. Fierce.

Frightening.

RABBIT

What did you do to her?

CHARLES

Nothing. I did nothing to the
others either... I weighed.
Measured. Assessed them...
medically, you understand? I had to
stop... it became too much.

Rabbit looses the Bulldog. Buries it into Charles's temple.

RABBIT

Why not go back? Take her with you?

CHARLES

You have to comprehend. There is no
going back for us. We had things to
run from where we were, and we kept
running and running until there was
nowhere left to go. So we ended up
here... At the bottom of a bottle,
on the end of a rope, bleeding out
in a bathtub. Knocking the
everlasting knock. Then all there
is...

SOBS uncontrollably. Purged of everything. A bulbous sore
that has been lanced.

RABBIT

I don't believe you.

CHARLES

Often, there are fantastical things
in this world that we cannot
explain, yet they come to be.

RABBIT

Did you go to the blues?

CHARLES

I tried. They took me for a fool.
Mocked me. Turned me out. She
stopped bringing them after that.

Rabbit. Incandescent. Sends a pile of books CRASHING down.

Moves onto other parts of the room. Tears into them.

RABBIT
Who is this dame?

CHARLES
I never knew the name. But there
might be...

Eyes flick up.

It's all Rabbit needs. He -
sets off.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Don't! You'll make him rorty. We
have a truce. He stays upstairs and
I stay down here...

Rabbit SLAMS the door behind him. Steps into --

THE HALLWAY

MUFFLES the protests - the SCREAMING -

CHARLES (O.S.) (CONT'D)
... Please... Stop... You don't
know what you're doing.

Rabbit ignores him. Begins to climb --

THE STAIRS

The light dips further -
and further -
into blackness.

Rabbit sparks up a lick of flame from his lighter.

Climbs higher - notices writing -
scored into the structure -

"GREEN MAN" -

over and over - the scrawlings of a madman.

SHRIEKING from downstairs...

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(muffled)

Stop! Please! Don't go any further.
He'll know you're coming.

Carries on. Sees -

religious symbols to forgotten gods nailed onto the walls -

carpeting every space -

form a large archway -

Rabbit ducks under -

presses forward. Now -

nothing but darkness.

Grabs the banister to guide him - covered in years of grime.

Kicks up DUST with each step.

Particles circle the air.

Finally at the top of the stairs. Reaches the --

LANDING

Impossibly long.

Foot down -

CRUNCH.

Hundreds of china plates - covered in rotting food -

litter the whole carpet.

Navigates his way through.

Thick with dust. Disturbs it.

Doors left and right. Peers into a --

DORMITORY

Rows of rusty beds. Soiled linen. Abandoned toys.

The mirror image on the other side.

BANG-BANG-BANG.

Snaps Rabbit back into the --

LANDING

A lone door at the end -

RATTLES back and forth. BANGING - padlocked shut.

RABBIT

Alice?

Breaks into a sprint.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Alice, I'm coming, hold on.

CHARGES the door - shoulder down -

doesn't budge.

Tries to wrench the padlock off -

pulls at the handle -

nothing.

Leans against the door.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Stand back from the door.

Aims at the padlock with the Bulldog. Shields his eyes.

CRACK -

the muzzle lights up -

padlock plunges to the floor. Rabbit CRASHES into the --

UPSTAIRS STUDY

-- A BLINDING LIGHT.

An uncovered window at the back of the room.

Eyes adjust.

No Alice.

Makes his way around, sweeping over heavy tomes. Then -

a pile of envelopes. Easily as high as his knee.

Opens one...

That same masque. Those same three words: 'DON'T BE LATE'.

Rifles through - pulls out more and more. All different sizes, colours and shapes. CRASH -

from downstairs. Charles is out of his prison -

DRAGGING himself down the hallway on his belly.

Rabbit takes a handful of invites.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Rabbit finds Charles leaning against the banister - SOBBING - shoulder at an oblique angle. A cut spewing red across his forehead.

Cowers as Rabbit approaches.

CHARLES

Please. It wasn't my fault. He didn't listen to me. Please...

Rabbit throws the invites at Charles

RABBIT

(interrupting)

What are these?

Looks at them through a blur.

CHARLES

Invites to that Ball. She used to send them to me, but I never went. I promise I never went.

RABBIT

You know where it's held?

CHARLES

Eastbourne Manor. Just at the edge of the city.

All Rabbit needs. Heads for the front door.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Please... please don't leave me. He'll be here any tick... The Green Man... He'll gut me...

Uncontrollable WAILING.

Rabbit ignores it.

EXT. STREET, UPMARKET PART OF TOWN - DAY

Rabbit - keen to get somewhere.

Sparks up a smoke.

Passes a telephone box. Slows.

Stops.

EXHALES.

Darts in.

Reaches into his pocket.

Produces two copper pennies.

Stares at them.

Places one into the slot. Spins the dial.

It CONNECTS.

RABBIT

There's been a stall-ender at
thirty three Daresbury Drive.

Hangs up. Moves on.

EXT. CANAL ST - EARLY EVENING

No one around. Just -

A lone GAS LIGHTER firing up the lamps.

A smoke hangs off Rabbit's bottom lip.

A SCREAM.

Rabbit immediately focuses on the source. It came from down
an alley between the slum housing.

CLATTER - the Gas Lighter is off.

Ditching his smoke, Rabbit -

tears towards the alley.

Another SHOUT - CARNAL grunting -

more SCREAMING -

Rabbit rounds the corner into --

A NARROW ALLEY

The silhouette of A VAGRANT assaulting a dreamer (TIGER-LILY) against the back wall.

Rabbit sprints towards them. Joins the projection of shadows.

RABBIT

Hey.

The Vagrant takes off. Leaves -

Tiger-Lily. Chest rising and falling. A huddled mess of clothes.

TIGER-LILY

He said that he wanted to play
croquet...

WEEPS.

Rabbit tries to get her up. She's having none of it.

RABBIT

I'm here to help.

TIGER-LILY

You all say that. Every single one
of you, but you don't... you don't
really want to help.

The CLANGING of police bells build.

Tiger-Lily immediately stops crying. Searches the air...

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)

Oh no - oh no-oh no. They'll take
me back - take me back-take me
back.

Rabbit pulls her up. Props her on his hip.

She - BURSTS into TEARS.

RABBIT

You need to keep stum.

Looks to his face. Tones down to a weak SNIFFLING.

EXT. RABBIT'S BEDSIT - SAME

Tiger-Lily under Rabbit's wing. Started to come to. Eyes dart wildly.

TIGER-LILY
Stop... Stop. Stop!

Uncouples herself. Bends double. HURLS. Toxic.
Rabbit looks to his door. Outside -
several COPPERS. Distracted. A DRUNK hurling ABUSE at them.
Striding out of the building two terrifying -
RAVENS - dressed in black leather. Beaks stuffed with posies -
evidence BOXES in hand.

RABBIT
(to himself)
Skilly.

Tiger-Lily wipes her mouth. Sees them too.

TIGER-LILY
It's them... Them from the wagons.

One Copper glances their way. Recognizes Rabbit.

COPPER
You there!

Rabbit grabs Tiger-Lily. Bolts.

RABBIT
We have to run.

Sets off. The coppers -
give chase. Frantically BLOW whistles.

INT. HALLWAY, CHESHIRE'S TOWN HOUSE - EVENING

Frosted glass door.

A place fitting a well-to-do bachelorette.

KNOCKING. No answer.

Rabbit places his fist through the glass. Unlocks the door.

Bundles in with Tiger-Lily attached.

Dumps her on the floor.

Gets to her knees. Dry heaves.

RABBIT

Wait there.

Strides up the stairs into --

CESHIRE'S BEDROOM

Dark.

Rabbit heads straight to the curtains. Throws them open...

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Get up. I need that dress shirt I
left here and you have to put on
a...

Trails off... sees - the room -

a mess. Signs of struggle. Everything broken. Then -

CESHIRE'S BODY.

A Rorschach blot of red against white satin sheets.

Throat SLIT.

Wears a macabre expression. Betrayal. Pain. Sorrow.

Eyes dart around every inch of her. *How? Why?*

Rabbit takes a silk throw and covers her up.

Her hand -

lolling over the edge of the bed. The only thing that can't
be enveloped. Rabbit looks to the bedside table -

A PICTURE FRAME. On its side.

Picks it up.

Freckled in blood. Wipes it away. Can see -

black and white. A fancy banquet. Not supposed to be of him
and Cheshire. Not their photo -

she's framed it that way.

She's laughing. He's smiling. They're holding hands above the
table.

Puts the picture back. Upright.

Sweeps his fingers across Cheshire's HAND.

Sits on the bed.

Pushes his hand into his pocket. Fishes out the last copper coin.

Stares at it. *Not enough.*

Places it in the centre of Cheshire's palm. Folds stiff fingers closed.

Holds her fist tight.

INT. CHESHIRE'S KITCHEN - SAME

Tiger-Lily propped against the wall. Clothes stained in bile.

INHALES - EXHALES. Eyes shut. Rabbit -

arrives with a handful of dresses. Deposits them over a chair.

Glances to Tiger-Lily... except...

it isn't her screwed up in the corner...

it's ALICE -

in the same pose. Wearing the same clothes. Running through the same actions.

ALICE / TIGER-LILY
What's... what's going on?

BLINK -

Alice has gone. Tiger-Lily there again.

Rabbit heads over to the drinks cabinet.

Starts decanting liquid.

RABBIT
You're safe.

TIGER-LILY
Where am I?

RABBIT
We're not squatting long.

Tiger-Lily slides up the wall. Weak. Eyes clouded over.

TIGER-LILY

I know who you are.

(pause)

The others loused about you. Made it known you were the one who'd be saving us... Said a girl called Alice storied them...

That word hits him like a train.

RABBIT

(interrupting)

You've seen Alice?

TIGER-LILY

No. Only heard her name... They penned us up separate in...

... trails off. Her head, too heavy to hold up.

Rabbit grabs the base drink off the side. Rushes over - kneels next to her. Reaches for the final ingredient - a drop of laudanum.

Frantic. Holds her head up. Makes sure she is looking.

RABBIT

What's your name?

TIGER-LILY

... Tiger-Lily.

Tries to push the glass to her lips. She's having none of it.

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)

No. No...

RABBIT

Listen, you need to drink this. It's important.

TIGER-LILY

No... I can't... It's bad.

Pushes the glass away. Rabbit holds her chin up. Makes sure she's concentrating.

Takes a large SWIG -

WHAM. It hits him hard. Remains composed.

Not convinced. She wrestles out of his grasp. Lashes out.

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)

No... no... no...

RABBIT

You have to. We don't have time for this.

Half opens her eyes. Stops resisting.

Rabbit gently holds the glass to her lips.

Takes a sip.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Where did they pen you up separately?

TIGER-LILY

In... in... the mirrored maze... amongst the lights... more...

Rabbit feeds her the drink. Receptive this time.

RABBIT

Where is the mirrored maze?

TIGER-LILY

Down... Down in the darkness... More.

GULPS down a huge mouthful.

RABBIT

And Alice. Where is Alice?

Opens her eyes. Crystal clear. Pupils enormous - fixed on Rabbit. Backs away.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Tiger-Lily, where is Alice?

TIGER-LILY

How do you know my name?

Sharp SCREAM. Throws wild hands.

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)

Help... Help!...

Rabbit breaks through the blows. Covers her mouth.

RABBIT

My name is Rabbit White. I found you in an alley and brought you here. You were about to tell me something about a mirrored maze and I really need to understand where it is.

Takes his hand away. She strains. Thinking. Useless.

TIGER-LILY

I don't... I can't remember.

Rabbit pushes off his knees. Begins to pace.

RABBIT

Get cleaned up and put on one of the togs that fit. You're going to have to help me.

TIGER-LILY

I think that I ought to be getting...

RABBIT

(interrupting)

I just saved your life.

Marches out of the room.

Tiger-Lily shuffles over to the dresses - feels at the deep red one.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Tiger-Lily contorts the dress on her body. Tries to get it to fit her frame.

Rabbit comes down the stairs. Adjusts the cuff links on his dress shirt. Scrubs up well.

TIGER-LILY

It doesn't fit.

RABBIT

It's nanty.

TIGER-LILY

And is the dame who owns this some kind of dollymop?

RABBIT

(shouting)

You are *not* to louse about her!

(MORE)

RABBIT (CONT'D)
(pause - measured)
It's fine.

Reaches past her. Removes two ornate masques hanging on the wall.

Holds one of them out for Tiger-Lily to take.

TIGER-LILY
Where are we going?

RABBIT
A shindig.

TIGER-LILY
Listen, don't fudge this wrongly,
but you aren't the sort of gent who
I imagine enjoys the sort of
shindig I think we're heading to.

RABBIT
I wouldn't be going unless I had
to.

TIGER-LILY
And you're bringing me why?

RABBIT
No one will be fixing at me if
you're close by.

TIGER-LILY
What, so you're not invited to
this?

RABBIT
Not technically.

TIGER-LILY
And I'm some kind of bait for you?

Rabbit SIGHS.

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)
Let me get this straight. You don't
want to go, you're not invited and
the only person you can think to
take to it is a girl you literally
just dragged off the streets?

RABBIT
Like I said...

Thrusts one of the masques her way.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
... I wouldn't normally be going.

TIGER-LILY
I think it's time for me to split.

Attempts to open the door. Rabbit SLAMS a firm palm down to close it.

She doesn't give up. Goes again. Pulls hard on the handle.

RABBIT
I'm close to something here and
you're now my last chance. After
this you can do whatever you want,
but right now, I need you to help
me.

... Still not interested. Back to the handle.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
Please.

Stops the struggle. Looks to him. Sees it. Desperation.

Rabbit offers the masque to her.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
Please.

Looks to the masque. Back up to Rabbit.

Reaches over to the one that he was holding for himself.

Strides out of the door.

INT. EVIDENCE LOCK UP, W.P.D - NIGHT

Hatter pours over photos, notes, newspaper clippings. Tries to put the puzzle back together.

Can't.

Sweeps things aside. Underneath everything a picture of -
ALICE.

Lifts it from the table. Studies every inch of her face.

LARKSPUR (O.S.)
You still labouring on that?

Hatter drops the photo. Spies Larkspur leaning at the door.

LARKSPUR (CONT'D)

... Sponge it out, mate. No mattter what you're wheezing on, he did 'em. Got some other stuff pinned to him now too. Mainly so that there's a backlog of cold cases that a few can get off their jiminies, but it won't make him any more croaked for it.

HATTER

It just doesn't make sense. Why keep all of this?

LARKSPUR

The ones who aren't wrapped that tight always do.

HATTER

He hated paperwork when he was taking a shilling. I don't understand why he would keep such detailed accounts of what he was up to if he actually were bludgering these girls. I mean if it were a lock of hair, or something more sinister I'd understand. But mapping the sites of where the girls went missing...

Larkspur wanders into the room. Picks up the photo of Alice.

LARKSPUR

(interrupting)

This her? The one he was foaling over?

HATTER

Yeah, that's her.

He turns the photo around.

LARKSPUR

Nurse my hoe-handle. I'd love to get up in her madge...

Tosses it back down.

LARKSPUR (CONT'D)

... I can see how she could drive a bloke ran-tan enough to bludge her.

HATTER

But that's it. He wasn't trying to.
He was scoping to find her.
Desperate to. It was all he loused
about. Every minute he had, he
ikeyed it up in here.

Larkspur is on his way out.

LARKSPUR

Me and some of the boys from
upstairs are going for a swift
arfarfan'arf. Might be some mouth-
pie too. You look like you could do
with getting away from this.

Hatter scoops the papers towards him.

HATTER

No, ta.

LARKSPUR

It'll still be here when you get
back.

With that, Larkspur leaves.

Hatter studies an article. Doesn't get far. Puts it down.

Slides his chair. Whips his jacket off the back.

Heads for the door.

EXT. EASTBOURNE MANOR - NIGHT

The house looms over Rabbit and Tiger-Lily.

It's been dressed up real nice. Still something off though.

A SECURITY detail checks GUEST'S tickets with -

a small hand-cranked box they are feeding invites through.

Rabbit helps Tiger-Lily navigate her way. Tottering on her
heels.

Masques obscure their faces.

Tiger-Lily is buzzing.

TIGER-LILY

I feel incredible. It's like I
could do anything... Have you ever
seen a flamingo?

(MORE)

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)
 They're fascinating creatures, with
 long pink necks and a bill as big
 as your fist, but these teeny-tiny
 eyes and long spindly pins...

Distracted by the stars. They shine bright here.

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)
 ... Oh Ichabod, look at the
 celestials, they're...

Rabbit subtly checks up the sleeve of his jacket -
 a tiny derringer hidden away.

Presents the invite to security. Neither of them take it.

SECURITY
 You're late. The instructions were
 clear.

Rabbit gestures behind him. Tiger-Lily staring at the stars.

RABBIT
 Dames. You know how they are.

Not convinced. Takes the ticket. Feeds it through the
 machine. Spat out the other end -

feels at raised bumps. Shoots Rabbit a glare.

SECURITY
 You want to explain this...
 Viscountess Uterine?

Eyes narrow. Rabbit -

quietly slips the derringer into his palm.

Ready to use it. Tiger-Lily -

notices. Realizes what is going on. Takes him by the hand -

forces the derringer back up his sleeve.

TIGER-LILY
 Oui, c'est moi. Quel est le
 problème ici?

The security are taken aback.

SECURITY
 Excuse me, mademoiselle. It's
 just...

TIGER-LILY
 (interrupting)
 C'est quoi? Êtes-vous, ou n'êtes-
 vous pas, dans l'intérieur?

INT. GRAND HALL - SAME

Opulence. Red. Gold. Crystal. Faces a mystery.

Hobbaedehoy take their first hit of gigglesmoke. Watercolour
 Girls bounce with their jillies out.

Tiger-Lily links her arm through Rabbit's. A regal grin
 plastered to her face.

RABBIT
 What was that back there?

TIGER-LILY
 It's not the first time I've had to
 get myself into a shindig I'm not
 invited to.

Tiger-Lily liberates a champagne flute. Pushes it to her
 lips. Rabbit -

takes it off her.

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)
 I thought I was your fixings?

RABBIT
 You are.

TIGER-LILY
 And don't you think that it's going
 to be suspicious if I'm not
 how'yah'doing?

Takes another flute. Down in one. Rabbit surveys the crowd.

There - on the imposing staircase -

Duchess - the belle of the ball. To the side -

a WOMAN in a satin blue dress. Kisses Duchess's cheek on
 demand.

All that Rabbit can look at.

Something around Duchess's neck. A lucky rabbit's FINGER.

Tiger-Lily follows Rabbit's gaze. Sees it. Looks to the hand
 it's missing from. Back again.

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)
Is that...?

RABBIT
(interrupting)
It's not going to be resident long.

Hides his hand away in his pocket.

The WOMAN uncouples from Duchess...

RABBIT (CONT'D)
(to Tiger-Lily)
Wait there and don't get into any
scrapes.

Pushes his way through the crowd.

Follows her.

She slips into a side room.

Rabbit catches up. Darts into --

THE SERVANTS' CORRIDOR

Strains to see in the darkness.

A shape emerges.

ALICE
What took you so long?

Folds herself into him. Presses every fiber against him.
Rabbit -

wraps his arms around her. Everything he's ever wanted.

Alice detaches herself. Straightens up. Wisps of grey. Thick
dark circles around her eyes. Lines of time against her face.

RABBIT
Why didn't you say goodbye?

Ignores it.

ALICE
Did you see father?

Rabbit nods.

ALICE (CONT'D)
How is he?

RABBIT

You sent me the note? Gave me the invitation?

ALICE

Uterine passed six months ago. Never came much anyway. The note was after you two didn't get along in the alley like I thought you might.

RABBIT

You put the call in on him?

ALICE

A trail of breadcrumbs to lead you out of the dark forest.

RABBIT

Six impossible things before breakfast.

She smiles. Touches his face. Weathered hands.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

He's lost his pink, but once he sees you...

Alice reaches for his hand. Tries to move him on.

ALICE

Come with me.

Stands firm.

RABBIT

No, we have to leave. Right now.

ALICE

You can't. Not until I've shown you this.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME

Gold and marble swathed in purple and blue.

Three glass cabinets. In each is a -

DREAMER - stripped bare. Disheveled. Torn up. One -

sits on the floor rocking. Another -

leans against the walls SOBBING.

Various GUESTS examine them like livestock. SHOUTING. At the back -

Rabbit stands in disbelief. Alice next to him.

ALICE

They're to be sold to the highest bidder. Duchess promises to supply the prettiest and the youngest who come here. Some will go for as much as one hundred thousand Guilders.

RABBIT

Why?

ALICE

Buying something that has no value to anyone else means you can do whatever you want with it.

A PORTLY GENTLEMAN licks his lips at a caged dreamer. Hungry.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I can't stop this on my own Rabbit...

RABBIT

(interrupting)

No. This is ridiculous. You're coming with me...

ALICE

(interrupting)

It was so hard when he left. I made a mistake. Went in too deep. Everything went dark so quickly. And then I was here. It's too late for me, but there are others who don't deserve this. *These* are the lucky ones. Most don't even make it to this place.

Rabbit stares at the girls locked up.

SLICKED HAIR GENT bangs against a cell. Causes terror.

In front of proceedings, CRICKET approaches a towering microphone. Top hat. Tails. CHIRPS his hind legs. ECHOES.

CRICKET

Ladies and gentlemen, we shall be starting the auction soon.

(MORE)

CRICKET (CONT'D)

I would like to take this opportunity to assure all of you that these cunny girls we have here this evening are all the fairest of flowers, free from all downy spring-moss and therefore we are expecting bidding to be at a premium. If...

Trails off. Background NOISE... *"Subtle. Obedient. Unspoiled."*

ALICE

When father helped me escape I found you, but I knew that I needed to run further. When I tried, Duchess found me and threatened to gut me, but eventually thought that I could be useful. The operation had grown from when they used father and me to groom the girls, but they would still be more trusting of one of their own.

RABBIT

Why let yourself be a part of this?

ALICE

It would happen with or without me. More are coming here every day and Duchess is adamant that we catch each and every one that arrives. But now I know how to take it a part from the inside.

RABBIT

You're starting to sound like the one upstairs when she's off her napper.

ALICE

The one that escaped?

RABBIT

I'm guessing so. She kept going on about a mirrored maze.

ALICE

And you left her up there? Alone?

Rabbit can't believe his own stupidity.

Sees through the masque to Alice's eyes. Distressed.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Go get her.

He takes off.

INT. GRAND HALL - SAME

Tiger-Lily - a Hobbaedehoy PAWING at her. Uncomfortable.

GROSS REVELER
Interesting, they aren't usually
allowed just to wander the
shindig...

She tries to pull away -

Rabbit advances over. Takes Tiger-Lily by the elbow.

RABBIT
(whispers)
Run...

Guests block the way. Surround them.

GROSS REVELER
Excuse me sir, but have you paid
for the girl?

RABBIT
Yes.

GROSS REVELER
Then I would care to see the
receipt.

Rabbit tries to push his way through. WHAM -
takes a fist to the face. Rabbit gives one back.

RABBIT
Run, Tiger-Lily! Run!

Others pile into the fray.

Rabbit becomes a whirling dervish. Throws blow after blow.

Tiger-Lily doesn't get far. Held up. Lashes out.

BANG -

everything stops.

Duchess, an ornate Bulldog aloft. Seething.

Menacing henchmen behind. One stands taller than the rest -
Tweedledee.

Rabbit is pinned to the floor by guests.

THE DUCHESS

How... dare you cause a fracas at
my shindig!

Points the Bulldog at Rabbit. Advances over. Behind him -
Tiger-Lily wriggling. Trying to get free. Duchess -
RIPS the masque from Rabbit's face.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

You! I thought that after
everything we loused about the last
time I saw you, I had made myself
clear...

Slowly applies pressure to the trigger -
the chamber GRINDS -
hammer CLICKS -
Rabbit accepts.

BEAT.

Alice arrives. Pushes the weapon down.

Leans into Duchess's ear.

WHISPERS.

Licks Duchess's lobe.

Duchess turns. Cups Alice's chin.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

That would be so lovely.

CLATTER - drops the Bulldog to the floor like a spoilt child.
Turns to the room.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

(shouting)

What are you all gawping at? Don't
you know where you are?

Immediately the party returns to 'normal'.

Henchmen scoop Rabbit up.

Tweedledee grabs Tiger-Lily. Pins her to his chest.

Alice brings up the rear.

INT. CORRIDOR - SAME

Rabbit, twisted into a restraint by two henchmen.

Tiger-Lily flails around in Tweedledee's arms.

Alice leading the way to a --

WOODEN DOOR

Opens her handbag...

WHAM -

shoves a small blade between the vertebrae of one of Rabbit's handlers.

Rabbit swings his free arm at the face of his second captor.

Tiger-Lily flings her head back - CRACK -

connects with Tweedledee's nose. Drops her. Rabbit -

pops the derringer. Lines up a shot at the big guy. SMACK -

the Henchman he thought he'd dealt with kicks it out of his grip -

the weapon flies down the corridor. Now -

grabs hold of Rabbit's ears. Tries to tear them off.

Tweedledee springs into action. Swings lumbering fists. Alice and Tiger-Lily go toe-to-toe with him. No match -

CRUNCH -

Alice tossed into the wall. BREAKS. Tiger-Lily -

crawls for the derringer -

Tweedledee strides over -

Tiger-Lily stretches -

nearly on her -

Seizes the weapon - turns - CRACK -

right between the eyes.

Drops to his knees. Searches for invisible phantoms inches from his face. Falls. Dead.

Rabbit delivers the last few blows. Frenzied.

Quiet lulls. Rabbit wipes bloody gristle away.

Tiger-Lily throws the derringer aside. Comes to terms with what she's done.

The brute on the floor. Still twitches. Rabbit puts a boot on the hilt sticking out of his neck. Ends him.

Races to Alice. Helps her to her feet -

she points to the door.

ALICE

In there.

Bundle inside the --

STUDY

Tiger-Lily follows.

Alice SLAMS the door shut. Braces against it. Gestures to the desk. Weak. In pain.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Here.

Rabbit and Tiger-Lily push the heavy furniture over.

Alone, Alice feels her side. Damp. Dark blood.

The table arrives. Alice props herself against it. Lights up a smoke. INHALES deeply.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Through the flue... there's a tunnel. It'll take you out at the industrial district. Duchess doesn't know.

RABBIT

I'm not leaving you.

Alice smiles. Places a hand on Rabbit's chest.

ALICE
I'm tired of running, Rabbit. We've
been doing it all our lives. It's
finally time to stop.

Gently pushes herself onto the table.

Tiger-Lily stands in the corner. Not sure what to do.

RABBIT
Then I'm staying too.

ALICE
Don't be lamb. Someone has to
finish this...

She looks to Tiger-Lily.

ALICE (CONT'D)
... She knows what to do.

TIGER-LILY
I... I don't think...

ALICE
(interrupting)
You do. It's just a case of making
lost memories real once more.

Rabbit won't take his eyes off Alice.

RABBIT
I can't lose you again.

Alice exposes her wounds.

He grasps her hands tight. Cold. Devoid of life.

SLAM - from outside -

the wood bends. But holds.

Alice digs her heels in. Pushes back.

ALICE
Go. Now!

Rabbit can't.

Must.

Heads to the fireplace. One last look from Tiger-Lily - *Thank you.*

WHUMPH - from outside. Splinters. Heels in harder. Alice -
lights up a second smoke. Glances over to -
Rabbit - ducking down at the opening of the tunnel -
WHUMPH -
smiles at him. He smiles back. With that -
he's gone. Only -
Alice now. Sucks on her smoke. Outside -
COMMOTION. All the BANGING stops. Suddenly -
CRACK - buckshot -
BURSTS through the door -
RIPS into Alice.
Thrown to the floor.
Rabbit hears it in the --
TUNNEL
Dark. Confined. Eyes widen. Knows what has happened.
Hangs his head.
Back in the --
STUDY
Henchmen WRENCH the door open. Slide the desk aside.
Duchess steps into the room holding a -
smoking Broomstick - two barrels. Lays eyes on -
Alice. GASPING. Clinging to life.
THE DUCHESS
Find the others.
Rushing in all directions.
Duchess aims the Broomstick at the body on the floor...
Alice fading away...
CRACK.

INT. EVIDENCE LOCK UP, W.P.D - LATER

Hatter stumbles back in. Unsteady on his feet. Several deep.
Bare table. Evidence - gone.

D.A Heart steps from the shadows. Leans against the chair.

D.A HEART
Care to explain, detective?

HATTER
I don't understand, ma'am.

D.A HEART
I'm pretty certain that I was very
clear about the labouring I
intended for you to do.

HATTER
I was looking into the case.

D.A HEART
A case that is *already* solved.

HATTER
That's not what the evidence points
to. Rabbit was close to something.
This is organized... someone is
using the dreamers...

D.A Heart raises her hand in the air. SILENCE.

D.A HEART
That's enough of this fantasy.

HATTER
It's hardly in the realms of
fiction. We've never been certain
of where they come from. It makes
sense there's foul play...

D.A HEART
(interrupting)
I'm going to need your stripes and
Bulldog.

TAPS the table.

HATTER
On what grounds?

D.A HEART
Continuing to work the case would
be a conflict of interest for you.

HATTER
How?

D.A HEART
As a yack you...

HATTER
(interrupting)
This is absurd.

Larkspur arrives. Leans against the door. Amused by this.

D.A HEART
Detective Larkspur, will you
relieve Mr Hatter of his things.

Larkspur steps forward. Hatter throws his Bulldog down. Then
his badge. Turns on his heel. One last look: *fuck you*.

D.A HEART (CONT'D)
Don't think about leaving town
anytime soon. There are some people
who are going to want to louse with
you. One who I know is ravenous at
the prospect.

Hatter gets it.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A single beam of moonlight breaks through the dark.

Rabbit sits on a broken chair staring into the black.

It stares back.

TIGER-LILY
What do we do now?

Snaps Rabbit back into the room. Stands. Paces.

RABBIT
I'm going to leave.

TIGER-LILY
You're running away?

RABBIT
What other choice do I have?

TIGER-LILY
We need to finish this, just like
Alice loused about.

Rabbit becomes a frightening creature.

RABBIT
I searched for her for years and
she was croaked when I found her...

TIGER-LILY
(interrupting)
She wasn't...

He turns to leave.

RABBIT
(interrupting)
Well she is now, so she might as
well have been all along.

TIGER-LILY
Why did you go looking for her?

Stops him in his tracks.

RABBIT
... I had to tell her something.

TIGER-LILY
And did you?

RABBIT
No.

TIGER-LILY
Well, do you think that she managed
to tell you what she needed you to
hear?

Rabbit carries on.

TIGER-LILY (CONT'D)
... She was right. All we do is
run. It's what got us here...

He turns to face her.

RABBIT
(interrupting)
No. It's what got you here. It's
what's been keeping me alive.

TIGER-LILY
And this is living?

RABBIT
It's all I know.

TIGER-LILY
You'll find yourself in a corner
one day Rabbit. We all do. I just
wheeze when it finally happens to
you that you'll realize it's better
to turn and face what's chasing you
rather than curling up into a ball,
waiting to croak.

RABBIT
It's not that simple.

TIGER-LILY
It really is. We all end up mort,
it's just that some of us have the
opportunity to do something that
matters with our lives.

Rabbit thinks.

RABBIT
OK.

TIGER-LILY
So what do we do now?

RABBIT
We need to make lost things real
again.

TIGER-LILY
How do we do that?

EXT. 'ABSOLEM'S OPIUM HOUSE' - LATER

BANG-BANG-BANG - that same door.

RABBIT (O.S.)
I don't think you're going to like
it.

THE PEEP HOLE -

Slides back. Two eyes. Rabbit and Tiger-Lily. LOCKS turned.

TIGER-LILY (O.S.)
Why do people do this?

INT. 'ABSOLEM'S OPIUM HOUSE' - SAME

Tiger-Lily lies on a wooden bed. Shoes off.

RABBIT (O.S.)
So they can remember what they want
to forget.

Rabbit sits at her side.

Absolem packs a pipe.

TIGER-LILY
I'm scared.

Rabbit smiles. Reassuring.

CUT TO:

Rabbit helps Tiger-Lily take a hit.

Feels it. Warm. Washes over her. Eyes slide back. Drops.

RABBIT (O.S.)
I'll be right here the whole time.

TIGER-LILY (O.S.)
Will it hurt?

SMASH TO:

BLACKNESS/TIGER-LILY'S DREAM SEQUENCE

Tiger-Lily surrounded by the void of black. Eyes closed.
Drenched from head to toe.

RABBIT (O.S.)
Only if you let it.

Opens her eyes.

Adjusts. Frightened.

Pulls herself together. Sets off in one direction.

INT. 'ABSOLEM'S OPIUM HOUSE'

Rabbit watches Tiger-Lily's foot twitch back and forth.

Absolem has his face pressed against the peep hole. Sees --

THE STREET

D.A Heart's favourite Heavies. A battalion of COPPERS beside them. ORDERED to form a perimeter.

ABSOLEM
We got company.

RABBIT
How long will the door hold?

ABSOLEM
Beef on 'em... Three ticks.

Rabbit heads to the peep hole. Sees for himself.

RABBIT
Block it up, then take her and run.
I'll hold them off.

ABSOLEM
Where?

RABBIT
Hatter. He'll have a reckoning what
to do.

Rabbit sets off to the counter.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
What you got squirreled away?

ABSOLEM
Thirty-eight and a twelve.

Rabbit drags a blanket out and unwraps the weaponry. 'Snubbed-nose Sparky' and a 'Mule Cannon'.

TIGER-LILY'S DREAM SEQUENCE

Tiger-Lily - traipsing through the dark. SHIVERS. Glances up -
a large glass obelisk reaching into an endless sky.

SCREECHING - distant. She turns. Sees -

HORRIFIC CREATURES charging towards her. Twisted. Deformed -
grab her -

drag her into the blackness. She SCREAMS. Tries to claw away -

THROWN onto a gurney -

STRAPPED in -

a terrifying head cage SCREWED on - creatures -

LEER over her -

PROD.

Take a needle. POKE into skin - drain a -

VIAL of blood - too much.

INSPECT the colour of her eyes. Roughly -

EXAMINE teeth -

PUSH an implement inside - take readings.

TEARS --

'ABSOLEM'S OPIUM DEN'

Absolem stands over Tiger-Lily. Watches her twist. Turn.

MURMUR. In pain. Looks over to see -

Rabbit, stacking things against the door.

WHAM - they're early. The door holds - just.

Absolem heads over. Liberates the Mule Cannon from Rabbit.

Rabbit tries to resist. Leaves him with the Sparky.

RABBIT

You don't have to do this.

Rabbit is overpowered. Absolem SNAPS the weapon open - checks the ammo - SNAPS it shut - looks down the sights.

ABSOLEM

It's our job to get 'em home when
they can't find a way.

CRACK - a rogue leaden parcel WIZZES through the door.
Catches Absolem in the shoulder. He -

returns FIRE. One hell of a KICK on that cannon. Rabbit -

POPS off rounds.

SILENCE.

Absolem limps to cover. Keeps the Mule on the door.

ABSOLEM (CONT'D)

Go! Get out of here!

Brings the butt of the Mule down on top of a tap connected to a large barrel -

viscous liquid GUSHES out onto the floor. He and Rabbit -

trade a look... *Ichabod speed*. A -

HAIL of gunfire. Rabbit sprints -

picks up Tiger-Lily. Lifts her into a fireman's carry --

TIGER-LILY'S DREAM SEQUENCE

Tiger-Lily. Huddled in the corner. Draped in a shredded infirmary gown. Around her -

panes of glass create a maze of corridors. Her world -

SHAKES. Around her glass -

EXPLODES. Shards fly in every direction. Fill the darkness -

with reflective dots. Almost beautiful. Suddenly -

everything turns sideways. The floor becomes a wall. Tiger-Lily -

FALLS. Tumbles backwards. Down - down - down -

SMACK - hits the bottom of the darkness. SILENCE. Then -

SMASH - pointed splinters rain down. She -

shields her face, as it -

CRASHES down around her. Fragments. Joined by -

A BODY. Makes a SICKENING THUD. Then -

lots of them. Over and over. All are -

ALICE. They begin to -

cover the ground. Envelop Tiger-Lily. She SCREAMS --

'ABSOLEM'S OPIUM DEN'

CRUNCH -

the Heavies are through the door. Absolem -

slumped against the back of the counter. Bloodied and beaten.

At the threshold, stacked bodies of COPPERS. Absolem -

pulls the trigger. CLICK. Out. Drops the weapon.

Pushes a smoke between his lips. Takes in the best lungful for a while.

Gives his 'guests' all the middle fingers he can hold up.

CRACK-CRACK-CRACK-CRACK. Unload their weapons into him.

He goes limp. The smoke falls on the floor. Hits the -

VISCOUS LIQUID. Ignites -

BOOM.

The whole place becomes a giant fireball.

INT. FRONT ROOM, HATTER'S PLACE - EARLY MORNING

A sad sight. Furniture from a hap'ney flea market. Hatter sitting in an easy chair. Sips pond water from a tea cup.

Gets up. Heads to the window. Parts the curtains to see a POLICE DETAIL standing guard outside.

Raises his cup to them. Takes a good long drink. CRASH -

a commotion at the back of the house. Hatter -

stumbles his way over to the --

KITCHEN

Sees Rabbit placing Tiger-Lily on the table. She's THRASHING about. All that Hatter can look at.

HATTER

What the gattering?

Rabbit - preoccupied. Tries to get Tiger-Lily awake.

RABBIT

Jones and Harris were watching the back. When they wake up, tell them I'm all-overish.

HATTER

And what am I...

(stops himself)

You can't be straight? You know we're *both* going down for this. Bringing one of them here only makes the whole situation worse...

Rabbit isn't interested. Continues to gently shake Tiger-Lily.

HATTER (CONT'D)

... I saw the manillas you had, but that doesn't matter. The gallows aren't going to care we were stuck up for this and you had something on the line.

Tries to intervene. Rabbit pushes him aside.

RABBIT

Well, we better find someone else to take the drop for us.

HATTER

I'm not entertaining this fopping tatt.

Hatter marches to the door. Rabbit -

raises the Sparky. Pulls the hammer back. CLICK.

Makes Hatter freeze.

HATTER (CONT'D)

It's my only wheeze.

RABBIT

It's not. I'm close to breaking this. I just have to find out what she saw.

HATTER

And I'm sure that her testimony is going to hold up in the Big Clock House.

RABBIT

Who said anything about it getting to the Clock House?

HATTER

You've got to stop running Rabbit. There are some things you have to face up to no matter the ramblings.

Hatter continues on. Rabbit -

applies more pressure to the trigger.

RABBIT

Don't make me.

Hatter goes for the handle.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

They never get to go home, Hatter.
We've been pigrotted to all this
time. Duchess has been flogging
them in some sort of kanurd market
where the highest bidder gets to do
whatever they want to them...

He goes to open the door.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

... She's mort, Hatter... All that
time searching for her... and when
I finally find her, she's taken
away... Duchess... Duchess put a
leaden favour in her...

Hatter takes his hand away from the handle.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

I'm going to end this.

HATTER

Five ticks. Then you're gone.

RABBIT

I need your help...

HATTER

(interrupting)

And I'm giving you five ticks of
it.

Rabbit sees that's all he's getting. Heads to Tiger-Lily.

Gently pulls her eyes open. Slowly drips -

laudanum onto her pupils.

WHOOSH. Bolt upright. PANICKED. CONFUSED. DISORIENTATED -

deep black eyes. She -

FLAILS. Knocks things off the table and the wall. Rabbit -

fights past limbs and grabs her face.

RABBIT

Tiger-Lily... Tiger-Lily... You're
safe.

TIGER-LILY
I couldn't... Couldn't stop it...

Trails off. Returns to her panicked state.

RABBIT
What did you see?

TIGER-LILY
A tower... large... entirely of
glass.

RABBIT
Anything else?

Her eyes unfocus. Takes her too --

TIGER-LILY'S DREAM SEQUENCE

BODIES plummet. Tiger-Lily -

looks to the side. Sees -

Alice's lifeless expression staring back at her hundreds of
times. Then -

it's joined by another body. Different.

Close to her. It's -

RABBIT.

Back to the --

KITCHEN

Tiger-Lily comes back around.

TIGER-LILY
(lying)
No. No. That's all.

Rabbit SIGHS.

RABBIT
Any ideas?

Hatter thinks through the haze.

HATTER
Sounds like the financial district.
There's a building there that's
rumoured to be owned by Duchess.
(MORE)

HATTER (CONT'D)
It's always guarded though. Never managed to get near it.

RABBIT
Nanty thing I don't have to wear my blues then.

HATTER
And how the beak do you think that you're going to get past the front gate?

RABBIT
I'm going to stand there real polite... and then blow a chaunting hole in it.

HATTER
With what?

RABBIT
The River Rats still have their *disagreement* with Duchess. Maybe they'd be willing to offload some hardware if they know where I'm going to be pointing it.

HATTER
You're a fantasist, Rabbit. This is all because some jam burrowed her way into your napper and you can't let her go. At least the noose will croak you on the fly. Anything Duchess does will take time.

Rabbit ignores it. Begins to head out the back door.

HATTER (CONT'D)
... There's not a scran she's staying here.

Rabbit looks to Hatter. *Come on, you can't be serious...*

HATTER (CONT'D)
Five ticks are through.

Heading back, Rabbit helps Tiger-Lily up. SLAMS -
the back door. Hatter -
is left alone. Looks like he needs another drink.

INT. DUCHESS'S OFFICE - DAY

D.A Heart strides through grand doors. There's an -
uneasy SILENCE as Duchess finishes up a game of solitaire.

THE DUCHESS

Madame Heart. So nanty of you to
come by.

D.A HEART

(interrupting)

You can't summon me like this. I'm
not one of your trassenos that
under-overs the moment you click
your digits.

THE DUCHESS

And yet you are here all the same.

SILENCE.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

There is this terrible ailment
afflicting me as of late that I am
welshing to shift; despite the
professionals I have spoken to
promising me that it would have
taken care of itself by now.

D.A HEART

It is in hand...

THE DUCHESS

(interrupting)

It doesn't fopping look like it.

D.A HEART

What am I meant to do? There was
nothing in our agreement about
letting the cockchafer hang them
inside out from lampposts.

THE DUCHESS

After the transaction it is not my
business what the buyer does with
their product.

D.A HEART

Well it should be. It's drawn
unwanted attention.

THE DUCHESS

And it has always been your labour
to ensure that no one is looking.
Especially those like the Rabbit.

D.A HEART

He isn't one of mine.

THE DUCHESS

Then he should have been easier to
expunge than this.

D.A HEART

We are looking at...

Duchess SCOFFS. Stops Heart short.

THE DUCHESS

You mean, once again in this
partnership, *I* am the one taking on
the risk *and* the responsibility?

D.A HEART

You are well compensated for...

THE DUCHESS

(interrupting)

No. You are the one who is allowed
to posture around Wonderland like
the saviour of the innocents as if
you personally delivered them home
yourself.

D.A HEART

Don't pretend like you give a hoot.

THE DUCHESS

I am not the one who seems to have
suddenly developed a jimminy about
the whole matter. This is a
business interest for the both of
us. One that must be vivaciously
protected.

Duchess rises. Paces around the room. Stops every so often to
examine a painting or a bust.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

Do you appreciate art, Madame
Heart?

D.A HEART

I've never had the time.

THE DUCHESS

I find it simply divine. It's always the realists who I am drawn to. Those who have poured their very soul into ensuring that the picture they craft upon the canvas is an exact replica of the very thing that they witnessed happen at that precise tick. A romantic would see uncontrollable power, unpredictability and the potential for cataclysmic extremes within nature. However, a realist is one who sees only order, structure and hierarchy...

Duchess has circled the place. Now looms over D.A Heart. Takes her hand. Strokes it -

tenderly.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

... Even within something as simple as the human digit.

Captivated by D.A Heart's fingers, Duchess -
can't stop gazing at them.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

Do you know that he ruined my shindig?

Snatches at Heart's fingers. Spreads out a wicked smile.

INT. DIVE BAR - EARLY EVENING

Hatter rocks from side to side. Drunken bliss.

Takes a healthy portion of his drink. Turns -

Larkspur slides in beside him.

HATTER

Come-to-bang-m-e up?

LARKSPUR

No. Just wanted to be all-overish about what happened at the station.

HATTER

By-gones. If-it-weren't to be-you...

(MORE)

HATTER (CONT'D)
it-would-have-been someone I liked.
Now-that would have been-a-
travesty.

LARKSPUR
I brought you a podsnappery.

Hatter SCOFFS.

LARKSPUR (CONT'D)
The blues loused on how there was
something in evidence that you were
particularly partial to back in the
day.

Eyes widen.

HATTER
A smidge--of-the marching powder?

Larkspur nods.

Hatter necks the rest of his drink. Leaps off his stool.
Makes a move towards the back exit.

HATTER (CONT'D)
Well-shall-we-move down then?

Both head into the --

ALLEY BEHIND THE BAR

Hatter flings his body towards a wall. Relieves himself.

Larkspur follows. Firmly shuts the door. Hatter turns -
looses a six shooter - was playing at being in drink. It's -
knocked out of his hand - Larkspur CRACKS him in the face.

LARKSPUR
This is nothing personal.

HATTER
You punch like a dame...

WHAM. Flush in the nose. Hatter slumps to the floor.

Spits blood. Then a tooth.

HATTER (CONT'D)
I'm speculating on this meaning the
department has some hand to play in
all of this too then?

Larkspur isn't listening. Unravels a piece of piano wire.

LARKSPUR

I'm just a hammer, Hatter. Hammers
don't get to ask questions. Neither
should alcoholics.

Hatter LAUGHS.

HATTER

Alcoholics carry those mafficking
oversize guilders around with the
years they've been dry on. I'm just
a drunk.

Another LAUGH. Larkspur -

wraps the piano wire tight against Hatter's throat. Digs a
knee in his back. Pulls up sharply.

EXT. RIVERSIDE, INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - EARLY EVENING

Rabbit and Tiger-Lily wait at the riverside.

Towers of industry belch black smog into the air. Rabbit -
cracks open a pack of smokes. Does his thing.

TIGER-LILY

Give me one.

He's reluctant. She snatches one.

RABBIT

Quite the time to start.

TIGER-LILY

Your pal seems to think this is a
suicide mission. Might as well do
everything before I check out a
second time. Imagine the place
after this.

Plucks the lighter out of his hand. Sparks up. Inhales.
Coughs.

RABBIT

Someone once told me that it's
curious, pretending to be two
people at once.

She ignores him.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

You know that you don't have to be here?

TIGER-LILY

Where else would I go?

RABBIT

Anywhere.

TIGER-LILY

Doesn't sound like my kind of place.

RABBIT

And what is your kind of place?

TIGER-LILY

Small lousing now? Really?

RABBIT

I surprise myself sometimes.

Alright then...

TIGER-LILY

I don't know. Someplace simple where I can have an honest trade. Just... you know... be happy.

Rabbit sucks in a lungful.

RABBIT

Sounds awful.

TIGER-LILY

... I can't tell if you're scaping?

RABBIT

Like I said. I surprise myself sometimes.

Tiger-Lily takes a moment. Throws the half finished smoke into the water.

A faint WHIRRING. A beaten up barge slowly makes its way up the river. Shapes -

dart around on deck. Rabbit -

ditches his smoke under foot. Crushes it.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Let me do the lousing.

TIGER-LILY
Because that worked so well the
last time.

RABBIT
They're not going to bother much if
you're a French princess.

The vessel strains into view. CREW scurry - long tails. The
largest of them - KRUICKSHANK - snaps orders.

They pull up next to Rabbit and Tiger-Lily.

KRUICKSHANK
Detective Rabbit White as I live
and bellow. Long time.

RABBIT
Not long enough, Kruickshank.

KRUICKSHANK
Now is that any way to be
addressin' someone doing ya a solid
scrooby?

RABBIT
As far as I'm concerned this is a
quid-pro-quo affair.

KRUICKSHANK
Learned yourself some nanty words
after ya left the force did'ya?

RABBIT
You got what I asked for?

Kruickshank gestures to a tarp. The crew strip it off.
Revealing a -

small armory: Broomsticks, 'Flashbangers' and a 'Cat-O-Nine'.

Kruickshank picks up the Cat-O-nine. Heavy.

KRUICKSHANK
So... Ponder on my disbelievin's
when I was footin' it over here
that I should receive a hailin'...

He SNAPS in a long train of 'Leaden Hellos'.

KRUICKSHANK (CONT'D)
... from a certain someone. As you
know, we've never seen eye-to-eye.
(MORE)

KRUICKSHANK (CONT'D)
The fruit wears too big-ger
heels...

Rabbit forces his way in front of Tiger-Lily.

KRUICKSHANK (CONT'D)
... But in this line o' work when
someone offers you somethin' for
nothin', you can't really turn 'em
away can ya?

COCKS the firing pin.

RABBIT
Let her go.

A ROAR of LAUGHTER.

KRUICKSHANK
Goin' soft in ya old age?

Kruickshank lines up the shot. The barrels of the weapon -
spin. Lead starts to slide into the chambers -

CRACK -

Kruickshank's head breaks in two -

Hatter -

beaten black and blue - Bulldog aloft. One hell of a shot.

The crew scatter. Arm themselves. Rabbit boards the ship.
Grabs the closest weaponry. FIRING. Wild. Tiger-Lily -

joins the fray. Hatter -

charges. Not done.

All three take the craft. Dispatch those left.

SILENCE.

Rabbit turns to Hatter. Places his hand on his shoulder.

INT. DUCHESS'S STUDY, TOP OF THE GLASS ELEVATOR - NIGHT

RAIN. Lashes.

Duchess looks out across the cesspit of Wonderland. D.A
Heart's -

FINGER in hand. A GOON enters.

THE DUCHESS

Well?

GOON

They're on their way. It appears
the one with the top hat stepped
in.

THE DUCHESS

Incompetence everywhere. *This -
ends - now.*

Duchess storms out BARKING orders.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

Get things ready for our guest's
arrival.

One door thrown open -

- another SMASHED down in the --

FOYER, GLASS ELEVATOR

Rabbit. Tiger-Lily. Hatter. Armed to the teeth. Confronted -
by a WELCOME PARTY. Tooled up. Everyone - pulls the trigger -
PANDEMONIUM erupts. Rabbit warms up the -
Cat-o-Nine...

CRACK-CRACK-CRACK.

Smoke blossoms. Walls fracture. Bodies slacken.

Ducking. Diving. Fighting through into --

A CORRIDOR

On either side, behind glass cases, dreamers being prepped.
Tied to gurneys. Weighed. Measured. Sterile.

ATTENDANTS flee.

Tiger-Lily looks through the glass. A dreamer has her eyes
wrenched open. WHIMPERS.

Down the end, a service elevator KICKS into life -

B - Hatter takes a BREATH -

G - Tiger-Lily adjusts the strap of her Broomstick.

1 - Rabbit ditches the Cat-o-Nine - pulls up a 'Stubby Saw'.

PING. It's here.

Suddenly. CLATTER -

Blackness.

SHOUTING. SCUFFLES.

FLASH - a discharged weapon - illuminates a tableau of violence.

FLASH - a fist at the moment of impact against a face.

FLASH - Rabbit has four henchmen on him - wriggles free.

FLASH - lashes out at those who chase him.

FLASH - Hatter fires at a knee. Takes a leg off.

FLASH - Rabbit lets one of them have it.

FLASH - Tiger-Lily trips a henchman.

FLASH - Hatter piles in. Fists like hams.

FLASH - Rabbit bodyslams a henchman to the ground.

FLASH - headbutt - down he goes.

SILENCE.

The lights come back on. Everything smeared in crimson.

Rabbit looks to the elevator.

RABBIT
Get them out of here.

Marches towards the open doors.

HATTER
Wait.

It's either he can't hear it, or doesn't want to...

Rabbit closes the grate. Pushes the button before they can stop him. Starts -

slipping from view. Locks eyes with Hatter and Tiger-Lily.

Goes down into the --

MIRRORED MAZE

CLUNK. The elevator hits the buffers.

Rabbit steps out. His footsteps reflected a thousand times over.

Heads further and further into the maze. Keeps the Stubby Saw pointed round every corner. Sees -

the body of a dreamer - echoed a hundred times over. Limp. Deformed. Abused. He -

races over. Looks around. There are others scattered across the floor. Cold. Dead.

THE DUCHESS (O.S.)

Those who didn't meet the requirements.

Rabbit points his weapon at the source of the noise.

RABBIT

Where are you?

THE DUCHESS (O.S.)

We push them into this labyrinth if it's considered they are of no use. It doesn't take long for them to realize that they are trapped here forever. It still allows for the occasional profit. There are those who enjoy the sensation of the chase. But I don't need to tell you that, do I?

RABBIT

Show yourself.

THE DUCHESS (O.S.)

It's sad really, how they end up here, but I give them a chance to make this new beginning different from their last. I rehabilitate these girls and find them a purpose that they were so desperately needing in their past lives.

Rabbit catches sight of Duchess. CRACK. SHATTER. Just a reflection.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)
 Poor show. I thought you'd know
 better than that. Did she ever tell
 you how she did it?

A leg. CRACK. Another reflection.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)
 She told me. Such a dander case.
 But she was the most perfect
 specimen that ever slumbered here
 in Wonderland. I couldn't let
 anyone else have her. She was
 always destined to be mine.

CRACK. From the darkness. A leaden promise zips through
 Rabbit. Cuts him down. Specks of crimson fly.

HARD TO BLACK:

BLACKNESS

Nothing.

RABBIT (O.S.)
 (singing)
*Ninety-nine bottles of beer on the
 wall...*

MIRRORED MAZE

Everything a blur. Can just make out ALICE standing over
 Rabbit.

BLACKNESS

RABBIT (O.S.)
 (singing)
... Ninety-nine bottles of beer...

MIRRORED MAZE

Alice heading over to him. Not Alice though. It's CHESHIRE.

BLACKNESS

RABBIT (O.S.)
 (singing)
*... Take one down and pass it
 around...*

MIRRORED MAZE

It's Alice now... definitely Alice. Smiles at Rabbit.

BLACKNESS

RABBIT (O.S.)
(singing)
... *Ninety-eight bottles of beer on
the wall...*

MIRRORED MAZE

Cheshire... Darts over to Rabbit. Distant. Ethereal.

CHESHIRE
Bunny, what happened?

BLACKNESS

RABBIT (O.S.)
(singing)
... *Ninety-eight bottles of beer..*

MIRRORED MAZE

Alice. She smiles again. Extends her hand towards him.

ALICE
Come on, Rabbit. We're going to be
late.

Can't respond. She turns. Skips away from him.

RABBIT
(weakly)
Wait. Don't leave.

She stops. Turns.

BLACKNESS

RABBIT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
... *You take one down and pass it
around...*

MIRRORED MAZE

Cheshire. Nose-to-nose with Rabbit. Alice's VOICE through her
body.

CHESHIRE / ALICE
What's the matter... Bunny?

BLACKNESS

RABBIT (O.S.)
 (singing)
*... Ninety-seven bottles of beer on
 the wall...*

MIRRORED MAZE

Now, it's Alice. Pushes the hair out of Rabbit's eyes.

RABBIT (CONT'D)
 (weakly)
 I'm sorry... Sorry I couldn't get
 you home.

She smiles at him. It's Cheshire's VOICE.

ALICE / CHESHIRE
 Don't be silly Rabbit. You tried.

Leans in to kiss him...

Alice...Cheshire...Alice...Cheshire...Alice...Cheshire...

TIGER-LILY... Not trying to kiss him. SCREAMING...

TIGER-LILY
 Get up!

Brings Rabbit round. Tiger-Lily scrambles him to his feet.
 Just in time -

another leaden parcel ZIPS past. SHATTERS a mirror. Hatter -
 laying down suppressing FIRE. He takes a -
 leaden hello to the shin - tumbles to the floor.

Rabbit pulls out two Bulldogs. SCREAMS.

Races forward. FIRES wildly into the darkness.

The mirrors in front of him CRUMBLE. Creates a path to --

A CLEARING

Rabbit on one side. Duchess on the other. Rabbit -
 pulls the trigger. CLICK. Nothing.

Duchess smiles. Pulls out a small vial from a pocket. 'DRINK
 ME' written on.

RABBIT

Give it up, Duchess. This is the end.

THE DUCHESS

On the contrary...

Knocks the thing back in one.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)

... it only just got interesting.

It takes effect right away. Duchess grows in size. Muscles bulge. Teeth sharpen. Formidable.

Rabbit flexes his hands into fists.

They go at it. Rabbit swings furious, fast hands filled with righteous anger.

Duchess connects more often than not. Causes serious damage. Knocks Rabbit to the floor -

Duchess stands over him -

about to crush him to dust. Tiger-Lily -

arrives. Cat-O-Nine high on her hip.

Unloads round after round into Duchess. Takes out large chunks of flesh.

Duchess HOWLS. Menaces towards Tiger-Lily. Swats her away.

Rabbit takes a broken piece of mirror from the floor. JAMS -

it into Duchess's open wound. Finds another -

again - another piece -

again and again -

frenziedly filling Duchess's body with more and more shards.

Rabbit stops. *Done.*

Duchess falls sideways. Begins to return to a normal size. Now a patchwork of shards.

Rabbit steps over Duchess. Snatches his finger from the necklace around Duchess's neck.

Duchess still tries to cling on.

THE DUCHESS (CONT'D)
 She's still mort, Rabbit. Alice is
 still rotting mort.

Rabbit waits - he's got all the time in the world. Finally -
 that's it. The lights go out in Duchess's eyes.

Hatter limps over.

Tiger-Lily HACKS up phlegm on the floor.

INT. EMERGENCY WARD, INFIRMARY - DAY

Rabbit and Hatter in beds opposite one another.

Rabbit is covered in bandages. Hatter is insisting on all of
 the NURSE'S attention.

A DOCTOR paces in. Heads to Hatter's bedside and closes the
 curtains around them.

Hatter and Rabbit trade a look before it shuts.

PAUSE.

RABBIT (V.O.)
 When the world starts spinning
 again. It makes you feel sick. Like
 you're going too fast all of a
 sudden...

The curtain is thrown back. Hatter looks across from him...

No Rabbit.

INT. CORRIDOR, INFIRMARY - DAY

Rabbit pulls on his jacket. Pushes up the collar.

INT. CANTEEN, ASYLUM - DAY

Charles. A bright smile and clear eyes. Scrawls away in a
 book with a long quill.

EXT. MARKET STALL, MAIN ST - DAY

Tiger-Lily sorting a display of fruit. Turns to look. Feels a
 presence close by.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Rabbit stands over an open grave. The PRIEST is the only
 other person there. Next to the headstone -

a large black and white photo of Cheshire.

Rabbit pulls a single coin from his pocket. Turns it over.
Reaches to the other pocket. Finds -

the picture of the pair of them from her bedside.

Tosses both of them into the hole.

INT. D.A. HEART'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CRUNCH - the door bursts open. A team of BURLY OFFICERS rush in. They see -

D.A Heart slumped over the desk. Her wrists opened up. Two pools of blood leaking across the wood. In her hand -

a claret stained razor blade.

INT. CORRIDOR INFIRMARY - DAY

Rabbit paces.

RABBIT (V.O.)
... You begin to feel the amygdala again. Telling you to run. Making you think that you need to pick up your daisies and find the nearest exit...

Fishes in his jacket pocket. Finds a cigarette. Places it in his mouth.

Discovers his lighter. Cups his hands around the smoke.

RABBIT (V.O.)
... It's not always to run away though. There are things...

A passing NURSE interrupts -

NURSE
Excuse me, sir. You can't do that in here anymore.

The flame. A mere flicker from the end of the smoke.

Rabbit glares her way. Grits his teeth. EXHALES -

closes up the lighter.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END.