

VICTORIOCITY

by

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EPISODE 1

SCENE 1.

F/X: OCEAN SOUNDS

FISHERMAN: You're afraid, Inspector. There's no shame in it.

FLEET: I'm not– Where is he? His boat should be here by now. You're sure this is the right dock?

FISHERMAN: Don't you worry, land-boy. What's on your man's telegram again?

FLEET: "Arriving two a.m. January 16th – stop. Carstol docks – stop. Dock number 2,120 – stop." That's it down there in front of us. But there's no boat in it. There's no boats anywhere.

FISHERMAN: Aye. Nothing but the ocean and the moonlight.

FLEET: And about 8,000 docks bobbing around and making me queasy because all of this land used to be the Severn estuary.

FISHERMAN: Aye.

FLEET: And the one train back to London Central tonight, which we will miss if he doesn't arrive soon.

FISHERMAN: Aye.

FLEET: And the any number of people waiting at any point on the way there to steal his invaluable cargo and, if necessary, do in the only protection for said cargo, i.e. me.

FISHERMAN: Aye.

FLEET: Don't look at me like that.

FISHERMAN: There's no shame in it, Fleet.

FLEET: (SIGHS)

NARRATOR: Like most people paying any kind of attention, Inspector Archibald Fleet couldn't shake the feeling that something was

very, very wrong. Or, more likely, that *everything* was just *slightly* wrong.

The everything in question was London in 1887. *Even Greater London*, to use its proper title, which nobody ever did. An uninterrupted urban plane encompassing the entire lower half of England, and for complex reasons, only the upper third of the Isle of Wight.

It was on the west coast of Even Greater London, in the forty miles of the Carstol docklands – built over what used to be open water between what used to be the separate cities of Cardiff and Bristol – that Fleet was waiting for a most important visitor. A visitor of great reknown. A visitor who was to solve all of Fleet's problems, by replacing them with far worse ones.

FISHERMAN: Everyone feels afraid when they see the ocean at night. And if they don't, they should.

FLEET: I told you, you don't have to stay. Don't you have some... I don't know... fisherman-preparation to be doing somewhere?

FISHERMAN: Fear is what lets you know you're alive, Fleet.

FLEET: I'm not afraid.

FISHERMAN: You're shivering.

FLEET: It's two in the morning and we're standing in front of a freezing ocean. How are you not shivering?

FISHERMAN: I don't feel the cold any more. I don't feel anything any more. A life on the ocean, that's all I know. A lifetime of regret. Did I ever tell you about Agatha?

FLEET: What do you mean, did you ever? We just met about 20 minutes ago. I just wanted you to show me down to the docks.

FISHERMAN: She was beautiful, my Agatha. I didn't deserve her. She didn't deserve to be wedded to a man who was already wedded to the ocean.

FLEET: Look, Fisherman.

FISHERMAN: Eyes like sapphires.

FLEET: Very good.

FISHERMAN: And such a beautiful dancer.

FLEET: Lovely.

FISHERMAN: If you know what I mean.

FLEET: Well, I thought I did, but then you said "If you know what I mean".

FISHERMAN: Is he often late, your man?

FLEET: I have no idea, he hasn't been in the country for twenty years.

FISHERMAN: Not a very glamorous mission for a detective, is it? Babysitting a tourist.

FLEET: Dr Salik is not a tourist, he's a scientist. He's transformed the whole... he built the tower!

FISHERMAN: What tower?

FLEET: *The* tower.

FISHERMAN: Still. A detective. With intellect, I assume, and skills. You enjoy making sure people get on the right train so they can get home to their teddy bears and cocoa?

FLEET: It doesn't matter whether I enjoy it. This is what I was asked to do.

FISHERMAN: Agatha asked me not to be away at sea for so long. We'd get by, she said. But I wanted to earn my way up to captain. And I did. But by then she was gone.

FLEET: Really, don't let me keep you.

FISHERMAN: Do you know what I regret most, Fleet?

FLEET: He's late! What if something's happened to him?

FISHERMAN: What I regret most, Fleet?

FLEET: (SIGHS) What?

FISHERMAN: What I regret most... was losing Agatha.

FLEET: Yes, I think you've made that very clear. And I will really regret having to go back and tell my superiors why I haven't—

FISHERMAN: Fleet, look!

FLEET: Quiet, Fisherman. Look!

FISHERMAN: Look!

FLEET: Shhh... Is that?

FISHERMAN: Aye. A submarine. Just like the one Agatha—

FLEET: No more Agatha! I suppose that's him.

FISHERMAN: Let's go then!

FLEET: You really don't have to co—. Oh come on then.

SCENE 2.

FLEET: (SHOUT-WHISPERING) Dr Salik? Dr Salik?

F/X: METAL DOOR OPENS

SALIK: (SHOUTING) Ahhhhhh!

PAUSE

FLEET: Dr Salik.

SALIK: (LAUGHING LOUDLY)

FLEET: Dr Salik?

SALIK: (ALTERNATING LAUGHING AND LOUD INHALATION)

FLEET: Are you alright?

SALIK: Am I alright? I am standing in the moonlight, breathing God's own air, air gloriously uncorrupted by the coppery toxicity of 65 matching 900 ampere hour accumulator cells.

FLEET: Good. I'm Inspector Fleet. I'm here to escort you to London Central.

SALIK: Indeed. And who is your nautical companion?

FLEET: This is... actually what did you say your name was?

F/X: GUN COCKS

FLEET: (GASP)

SALIK: (GASP)

FISHERMAN: That's my name, alright?

FLEET: Fisherman?

FISHERMAN: Not really, no. Dr Salik and I have to have a very short conversation somewhere that's not here. So you, Fleet, stay where you are, and Salik come with me.

FLEET: He's not going anywhere. Why don't you just put the gun down.

FISHERMAN: Why would I put the gun down? Neither of you have one.

FLEET: What is it you want?

SALIK: He wants me, he said already.

FLEET: Doctor, please.

FISHERMAN: Enough. Salik, come with me.

SALIK: No.

FISHERMAN: No?

SALIK: I'm staying here.

FISHERMAN: You're not staying here, you're following me or I will shoot you both.

SALIK: Then shoot us, you fiend. The Inspector and I do not fear death.

FLEET: But all the same—

FISHERMAN: Dr Salik, you're coming with me if I have to drag you there my—

F/X: ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE

(CRIES)

F/X: BODY COLLAPSES

FLEET: My god! He's dead!

SALIK: He's not dead, he'll be fine in a bit.

FLEET: What happened to him?

SALIK: Well, he touched my jacket, you see. You mustn't touch my jacket. Dreadful.

FLEET: I—

SALIK: Why didn't you simply subdue him by force?

FLEET: What force? He had a gun! He would have shot me before I made it two steps!

SALIK: It is alright, Inspector. Some men are cowards.

FLEET: I'm not a coward, I just don't want to die. I think that's reasonable.

SALIK: Haven't we a train to catch?

FLEET: But what about him?

SALIK: We can tell a local constable to come here and pick him up. He'll be unconscious for a while.

FLEET: But aren't you concerned? Someone was here pointing a gun at you, and you've only just set foot back in the country!

SALIK: That's what you're here for, is it not?

FLEET: Yes, yes it is.

SCENE 3.

NARRATOR: Later that morning, 70 miles to the north, another train completed its journey south from Yorkshire, pulling to a stop where the tracks ended, at the magisterial station "London Border North", a mile-square rail terminus complex that now formed the heart and principal function of the commercial district previously known as Birmingham.

London Border North was a triumph of engineering, no material or indeed human cost having been spared to solve what had come to be known as the Two Northern Problems: first, how to manage the practicalities of mass southward migration into the far wealthier Even Greater London; and second, how to extract as much money as possible from the people making the journey. In the end, both problems were solved by Chief Urban Boundary Planner Bartholomew Poole, who realised the true potential in forcing thousands of travelers at a time to switch trains and wait for what was in theory but not in reality a predictable period of time, and that, in such an environment, there was no upper limit on the amount of money people will pay for a sandwich.

Exiting from the first class carriage of their train were Clara Entwhistle and her mother Lady Lucretia.

CLARA: "Welcome to London". Well, that's nice, isn't it?

LADY LUCRETIA: Being welcomed by a person is nice, dear. To be welcomed by a sign is vulgar.

CLARA: Mother, you can't disagree with being welcomed! It's not an option! We are welcome! To London! It's exciting! Look at the size of this station!

LADY LUCRETIA: Don't be excited, dear, it exacerbates your freckles.

CLARA: Oh, that boy's selling the Illustrated London News! One moment, mother.

LADY LUCRETIA: I will not "one moment". What need have you for a newspaper?

CLARA: I like to keep up to date with current affairs.

LADY LUCRETIA: You can read my copy of this month's *All a Lady Need Know*. Disagreement resolved. Now come along, our train to Marylebone is leaving imminently and we have to get through here.

NARRATOR: "Here" was border control, a necessary irritation for those traveling into London, the only alternative being the uncrossably dense Midlands Forest, a natural-seeming but quite deliberately planted northern border for London stretching from east to west coast by way of Derbyshire. The Forest was quite beautiful, although since it had been populated with some 25,000 wolves to discourage crossings, this was never fully appreciated, including, disappointingly, by the wolves. None of this was designed to prevent travel into London – only to ensure the proper paperwork was done.

GUARD: Names.

CLARA: Clara Entwistle. And this is my mother, Lady Lucretia.

GUARD: Occupations?

LADY LUCRETIA: (OFFENDED) Occupations?

CLARA: Well, my mother's occupation is... Lady, I suppose. And I (PAUSE) am a journalist.

GUARD: Are you bringing any animals into London?

LADY LUCRETIA: Hang on a minute.

CLARA: No animals.

GUARD: What about those birds?

CLARA: Oh yes, two birds please.

LADY LUCRETIA: What do you mean "journalist"? You mean you're keeping a journal. Very ladylike, although I wouldn't call it an occupation, more a pastime or hobb–

CLARA: No, mother. I've been offered a position at the *Morning Chronicler*.

LADY LUCRETIA: I thought we were coming to a ball! You were going to catch yourself a husband!

CLARA: I didn't know how to tell you. I was planning on explaining once we got there. Perhaps by putting a note for you in the classifieds.

LADY LUCRETIA: Well, I've never felt so betrayed in all my life. I'm going home immediately.

CLARA: Mother don't! Come with me, you'll enjoy it.

LADY LUCRETIA: I'm sorry, Clara. I promised your father one thing. Well, actually I promised him several things, but there was one promise I kept – which was that if something happened to him, I would raise you as he would see fit. And as you have somehow managed to contrive for yourself a salaried job – (TO GUARD) offense intended –

GUARD: (HURT) Oh.

LADY LUCRETIA: – I have clearly failed.

CLARA: But father didn't know best, Mother. That's why he went out sailing in the dead of night and never returned!

LADY LUCRETIA: That was just one of his ways.

CLARA: I know but it killed him.

LADY LUCRETIA: It's what he would have wanted.

CLARA: To be killed at sea? Or for you to abandon me at London Border North?

LADY LUCRETIA: Both! This is your brother's fault of course, encouraging you to “educate” yourself, the very idea! You used to be so good at cross-stitch and now it's all hypothetical moral systems this and Kant's categorical imperative that. Why couldn't you just have married a duke, moved to Saxony and died of scarlet fever like your sister?

CLARA: I just want different things.

LADY LUCRETIA: Well I hope those different things include providing for yourself!

CLARA: They do.

LADY LUCRETIA: (WAILS, EXITING)

CLARA: Mother, don't (SIGH)

GUARD: Don't look too glum, Miss. Your mother was a truly dreadful woman. Anything else I can help you with?

CLARA: Yes. Is there anywhere in this station one can get a stiff drink?

GUARD: Almost everywhere, Miss. Welcome to London.

F/X: RUBBER STAMP

Next!

SCENE 4.

NARRATOR: A stiff drink and an even stiffer sandwich later, Clara was on the train from London Border North towards London Central. Without her mother to distract her she found herself staring out the window at the passing city.

Some things have to be seen to be believed. Some things can be seen and still not believed. And a few things, when seen, cause whatever belief you had before to be thrown right out the window. Hurtling through the unbroken urban fabric of Even Greater London, on a train with no engine and propelled by it was not clear what, Clara was having just such an experience.

TICKET INSPECTOR: May I see your ticket, miss?

CLARA: I, but, but, the—

TICKET INSPECTOR: I said, may I see your ticket, miss?

CLARA: Oh, yes, sorry. I was just looking out the, the, the win—

NARRATOR: Describing the scale and richness of Even Greater London is a task that has sent many people quite mad. Suffice it to say that what Clara saw from her carriage window was an ocean of homes, shops, offices and public houses, all stitched together with roads and criss-crossed by an untidy lattice of rail tracks, stretching endlessly in every direction.

A few minutes more of this and Clara would be in dire need of an extended rest at Didcot National Insanitorium. It was for this reason – and also because he knew that it would fall to him to take the unfortunate passenger there if it came to that – that the ticket inspector did the following:

F/X: PULLING BLIND

CLARA: What are you doing? Why did you close the blind?

TICKET INSPECTOR: The reality of it's not good for you, miss. Pummels the mind. Trust me. Easier just to shut the blinds and read the paper.

CLARA: My word. It's just– the size of it. How many people even live here?

TICKET INSPECTOR: It's not clear. There's a rather large team of census-takers, but by the time they get from one side to the other, everything's out of date. So they just keep roaming around, counting, and hoping to run into one another so they can compare notes.

CLARA: And all those railway bridges, I've never seen anything like it - I swear I saw four, no, five all crossing each other.

TICKET INSPECTOR: Oh yes. Brunel's quite mad. Well, I'll leave you to enjoy your journey, miss - although as it's your first time in London might I recommend you make use of our information carriage.

CLARA: Information carriage?

TICKET INSPECTOR: Just through there, miss.

NARRATOR: The ticket inspector pointed through to carriage B. Inside, suspended in parallel along the length of the ceiling were twelve thin record cylinders, spinning slowly, and each with its grooved surface painted with the flag of a different nation.

Clara found an empty seat, picked up the earpiece resting on a hook on the back of the seat in front of her, and started to listen.

AUDIO GUIDE: (D) ¡Bienvenido amigo! Bienvenido al tren del centro de Londres. Por tu seguridad...

CLARA: Oh good lord... Oh! Maybe if I turn this—

F/X: CLICK

AUDIO GUIDE: ...jederzeit. Der Zug stoppt regelmäßig Passagiere zu ermöglichen ...

F/X: CLICK

...husdjur med dig, särskilt i tunnlär.

F/X: CLICK

Under no circumstances,

F/X: CLICK

...et cela ne peut pas être assez souligné fortement...

CLARA: Wait! Damn it.

F/X: CLICK

AUDIO GUIDE: ...because of the obvious mortal danger that poses. Now sit back and enjoy this guide to London, brought to you by The Salik Energy Company.

MUSICAL INTRO

Welcome to Even Greater London - the centre of the Empire.

While here, be sure to visit the magnificent, electrospectacular, beating heart of the city, the Tower. The Tower is responsible for the generation of electricity for the entirety of Even Greater London, and transmitting the energy freely through the clouds and the sky to countless receivers across the city.

Why, even the train on which you are traveling is powered by the Tower's electrical beneficence. And with no need for an engine, that means more space on board for social pursuits, whether it be important business conversations for the gentlemen or, for the ladies, a dedicated carriage in which to play whist and protect your delicate senses from important business conversations.

All this and more made possible by the Tower, Dr Salik's gift to the British Empire and testament to Man's supremacy over nature. Why not arrange a visit today? And when I say visit, I mean take a pleasant stroll up to but absolutely no further than the perimeter fencing. Please, don't cross the perimeter fencing. Crossing the perimeter fencing is a crime, and can lead to any or all of: a fine; a letter of condemnation to your employer; being arrested by the Yeomen Warders of the Tower; being shot by the Yeomen Warders of the Tower; and being set upon by the hungry, vicious ravens of the Yeomen Warders of the Tower.

F/X: SWITCH

CLARA: Probably give that a miss.

SCENE 5.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, Inspector Fleet had escorted Dr Salik to his home in Mayfair and returned to Scotland Yard. He made his way down to the detective unit, which was – following budget cuts and an ill-judged wager with the cleaning staff – located in the fourth of the building's sub-basements. Below the detective unit was the fifth sub-basement, the contents of which no-one seemed to know. Whatever it was it was unspeakably horrid. The door was unlabelled, instead, showing, at head height, a life-like painting of the smiling face of a young girl, above whom, in friendly, bubbly letters, were the words “come in”. Obviously, no one ever did. Fleet hurried past the light flickering up the stairs from the fifth sub-basement’s door, and walked into the detective unit’s reception area.

WAVERLEY: Good afternoon, Archie. How was Carstol?

FLEET: Big, Miss Waverley.

WAVERLEY: I’d like to go one of these days.

FLEET: Well, there’s not much to see, unless you like lots of boats. Actually, come to think of it, there were no boats. How do you feel about seeing no boats?

WAVERLEY: Not really one way or the other.

FLEET: Yes, I’m much the same. But it all made me feel rather unwell in fact.

WAVERLEY: What? The no boats?

FLEET: No, the land. Well, the sort of land – it shifts beneath your feet. A man likes to feel like he’s on solid ground, not some viscous mass. I can’t help feeling let down by Brunel really.

WAVERLEY: You should write to him.

FLEET: Oh I did, when the docklands first opened.

WAVERLEY: Did he reply?

FLEET: His lawyer did. Something about me being in breach of their polite request that I stop writing to him about his bridges.

WAVERLEY: But you weren't writing about his bridges.

FLEET: That's what I wrote back! I've always liked you, Miss Waverley.

WAVERLEY: And did they reply?

FLEET: Yes! With a signed photographic portrait of Brunel! The nerve.

WAVERLEY: What time does your shift end?

FLEET: Two hours.

WAVERLEY: Just enough time for you to talk to Keller then.

FLEET: What do you mean just enough time to talk to Keller?

WAVERLEY: I mean exactly that.

FLEET: I've never liked you, Miss Waverley.

WAVERLEY: Go on.

SCENE 6.

NARRATOR: Fleet entered the office of Chief Inspector Keller. Sat behind a very large oak desk, on an enormous, dark green leather chair, and holding a considerably-sized fountain pen over a vertiginous stack of papers, a small child of about eleven or twelve years of age looked up at Fleet.

GEORGE: Ah, Fleet. Come in. Take a seat.

FLEET: Yes... Chief... Inspector? What's happened to you?

KELLER: (LAUGHS)

FLEET: (SHRIEKS)

KELLER: It's not me, Fleet. It's my eldest son, George. Ha, the look on your face.

FLEET: Where on earth were you hiding?

KELLER: That's for me to know and my foes twenty years ago in the jungles of Zanzibar never to have learned. (LAUGHS) The look on their faces! But no, they died with honour.

FLEET: Pleasure to meet you, George.

GEORGE: Yes, Inspector.

KELLER: Georgie's here on "Bring your son to work day". Doesn't make the least sense to me. I mean, he's got a job of his own, don't you George?

GEORGE: Yes, father.

KELLER: He's a junior engineer in Brunel's 14th engineering division. He's building a twin-track rail tunnel to the Isle of Wight, aren't you George?

GEORGE: Yes, father.

FLEET: Very impressive!

KELLER: Not by himself, of course.

FLEET: No.

KELLER: He's got a team of labourers.

FLEET: Yes.

KELLER: They don't just hand him a shovel and say "Have at it, boy."

FLEET: No.

KELLER: I mean, they do to the other boys, but they're the labourers. That's exactly what they hand and say to those boys, respectively.

FLEET: Yes.

KELLER: I mean, unless it's not a shovel they need, but rather a pick or a rake of some kind, I don't know, I'm not a labourer. George, do your boys use rakes?

GEORGE: No, father. Mostly just shovels.

KELLER: You see, Fleet. That's leadership. Now George, run along and play stick and hoop with Miss Waverley for a while. Fleet and I have a sensitive case to discuss.

GEORGE: Yes, father.

KELLER: And remember George, what's the one kind of ship that can never sink?

GEORGE: Friendship, daddy?

KELLER: No, George. The Phalanx class warships that defend the east coast of London from Prussian aggressors. Because if they do sink, we're all dead. Run along now.

FLEET: Nice boy.

KELLER: Yes he is. But a few years working under Brunel will sort that out. So, what about Salik?

FLEET: Safely delivered to his residence in Mayfair. Equipment already there when we arrived. He sent it separately, apparently with the idea of using himself as a decoy.

KELLER: Did it work?

FLEET: Well, there's someone in the cells at Carstol with probably the worst headache I can imagine, so... yes?

KELLER: Good. Have the report on my desk in an hour. You'll have to make all the copies by hand. The triplicator's broken.

FLEET: That'll take hours! Can't we do the copies when it's fixed?

KELLER: It's not going to be fixed, Fleet. They're going to send us one of those new quadruplicators. You know what those maniacs are working on now, don't you? A *quintuplicator*. I've lived too long.

FLEET: Why don't I bring you the report, and when the machine arrives, of however many plicates—

KELLER: Just write the damn copies, Fleet! Only one time I've broken that rule in 33 years as a police officer. Led to the death of three good men.

FLEET: So—

KELLER: I don't like to talk about it.

FLEET: It's fine, I don't—

KELLER: Fly fishing, if you must know.

FLEET: Right—

KELLER: Never again. Never again.

FLEET: I take it they drowned?

KELLER: If only, Fleet! What I would have given for them to have drowned! Not in place of them being alive, obviously.

FLEET: No.

KELLER: No. That would be monstrous.

FLEET: Of course.

KELLER: I mean instead of what happened to them. God rest their poor, shattered souls.

FLEET: Chief Inspector? Yesterday, before I went off to Carstol to collect Salik – who was that leaving your office? I don't think I've seen him before.

KELLER: That's Whitlock, the new Chief Yeoman Warder of the Tower. I'm surprised you haven't run into him yet. You spend a bit of time around the Tower, don't you?

FLEET: I try not to. Beefeaters give me the creeps.

KELLER: The Yeoman Warders are our partners in civil protection, Fleet. So it's important to remain, you know, civil. That's why I met with Whitlock and ended up listening to him tell his damned adventure stories for an hour. The braggart! If you've ever seen a goat he's wrestled ten lions before breakfast!

FLEET: Simultaneously, or in sequence?

KELLER: Do you know, I didn't think to ask. For some reason it wasn't at the forefront of my mind, why would that be, oh yes because he's also told me they've expanded their operating radius.

FLEET: Again?

KELLER: Yes, again, Fleet. They've received approval from the Home Secretary yesterday. Now they're the only investigatory force operating within a full one mile radius of the Tower. I understand the need for precaution, but still.

FLEET: Did they give a reason?

KELLER: The Warders don't give reasons to us, Fleet. Anyway, that's the way the Home Secretary likes it, in his infinite wisdom, so that's the way it's–

F/X: BUZZ

Oh for God's–

F/X: CLICK

Yes?

WAVERLEY: (D) A Dr. Salik to see you, sir.

KELLER: Salik? What the devil is he doing here?

FLEET: I'll go write up that report then.

KELLER: Fleet, if you leave this room I will skin you.

FLEET: Alright then.

KELLER: You'd better send him in, Miss Waverley. Fleet, what do you suppose the odds are of this being Salik personally delivering a thank-you gift basket?

FLEET: Poor, sir.

KELLER: Indeed, Fleet. Indeed.

SCENE 7.

NARRATOR: There was a saying in Even Greater London which ran: "To get ahead, get a Bell". Many people assumed that it referred to the fairly recent craze for attaching a small bell to the handle of your bicycle in order to signal to those ahead of you that you wished to overtake them. These people were wrong, and would have done well to purchase a copy of *Miscellany of Popular and Less Popular Aphorisms*, by the beloved writer, social commentator and bon vivant Michael Monkfish, not least because he really could have done with the money. No, the phrase "To get ahead, get a Bell", in fact referred to the ubiquitous Bell family, some of the most influential men and women in Even Greater London. Everyone who was anyone was in some way connected to a Bell, whether by friendship, employment, or more likely just meeting by chance at one of Michael Monkfish's imprudently luxurious champagne shindigs. Into the office of Augusta Bell, Editor of *The Morning Chronicler*, walked Clara Entwhistle.

AUGUSTA: Ah Miss Entwhistle. Come in, come in. So, you're my new secretary. Splendid. Take this down. "To my brother Julius. Birthday felicitations. Regards, Augusta." Feel free to edit out anywhere I went overboard on the feelings.

CLARA: No, there seems to have been some sort of error. I thought I was accepted for a job as a journalist.

AUGUSTA: Oh dear, well I'm sorry to have wasted your time, but you've been misinformed. I'm afraid we don't have any vacancies at present for reporters, but I'll keep you on file and...

F/X: PHONE RINGS. RECEIVER PICKED UP

What now? Ah, Jenkins. What do you want? Yes, the new crime reporter, lovely chap. Yes? Yes? What do you mean "stabbed"? Well, yes, no, obviously I know what– Well no Jenkins, don't be absurd, I'm sure the blood's not *everywhere*. Is it in Spain, Jenkins? Is the blood halfway up Ben Nevis? No. Then get a hold of yourself. Well then get a towel first. Well then a curtain, I don't know! Do I have to think of everything?

F/X: RECEIVER PLACED DOWN

Well, Miss Entwhistle, it appears we have an opening after all. How does crime take your fancy? Writing about it, obviously, not committing it. Although a healthy disregard for police “rules” about who “is” and “is not” allowed to attend a crime scene and who “can” and “cannot” remove bits of evidence, might come in handy.

CLARA: Is it safe?

AUGUSTA: Depends what you mean by “safe”. Can I promise you that your loved ones won’t be kidnapped, garrotted, buried in shallow graves, their fingers chopped off and delivered to you in an envelope marked “fragile” and to top it all off with insufficient postage? No. But what guarantees are there that that wouldn’t happen as a matter of course?

CLARA: That actual scenario or...?

AUGUSTA: Will your job take you to some of the most dangerous neighbourhoods? Of course. Will you get shot in the face and your body sold on for medical experimentation? Who can say?

CLARA: Again, I feel like these are alarmingly specific examples.

AUGUSTA: The point is that you’re doing a public service. And since reading about crime is the nation’s second favourite pastime, after committing it, I think you’ll find it pretty steady work.

CLARA: But—

AUGUSTA: No, no, it’s quite all right Miss Entwhistle. It’s not for everyone, not everyone has what it takes, not everyone has *l’esprit du stylo*. I just took you for... never mind.

CLARA: Took me for what?

AUGUSTA: *A journalist.*

CLARA: I’ll do it.

AUGUSTA: Excellent. Welcome aboard and all that. Here’s an advance on your wages and the key to your new lodgings.

CLARA: Thank you, Miss Bell. You won’t regret this.

AUGUSTA:

I'm not the regretting type, Miss Entwhistle. But your time is now my paper's time, and you're wasting it sitting in my office. Go find me some news.

SCENE 8.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, in a far nicer part of the city than Clara's new lodgings, Fleet entered the residence of Dr Salik. Salik's house was in one of a very small number of neighbourhoods in Even Greater London where the residents had sufficient wealth and therefore importance to keep away the worst effects of the rapidly expanding city, whether it be the crowds, the trains screaming along viaducts overhead, or the network of public address systems playing out, every morning and evening, a live address to the city by the unholy mixture of flesh and machine that most people still agreed was, on balance, Queen Victoria. Here in Mayfair you could almost forget the Tower had ever been built at all, except if you looked in any direction other than directly away from it. Inside Salik's home, Fleet was studying the crime scene.

FLEET: Nice place you have here.

SALIK: Thank you, Inspector. Please excuse the dust. It has been a long time since I last visited.

FLEET: Don't take this the wrong way, but I'm surprised you haven't been robbed before. I mean, the chandeliers in this room alone... the tapestries hanging over the staircases... and is that a suit of armour through there?

SALIK: A gift from the Prussian ambassador. Before all the recent unpleasantness, of course.

FLEET: Yes. But you have been robbed, correct?

SALIK: That is what I have been telling you!

FLEET: Well, I only ask because your reception area here appears to be full of, let's see, thirty boxes of highly valuable scientific equipment.

SALIK: Trinkets! All of this can be acquired with money. And in that sense it has no value at all.

FLEET: So what has actually been stolen?

SALIK: My *work*, Inspector. My *work*! The culmination of a lifetime of discovery. A most wonderful set of insights, assembled in my

mind over many years and in many cities. Nothing I have ever done before comes close to it. It is...

FLEET: Your *work*.

SALIK: Exactly.

FLEET: I see. (PAUSE) So, what's been stolen, exactly?

SALIK: I've told you!

FLEET: It's just, if there's a physical item, it's going to make my job a lot easier.

SALIK: Of course. It is my notebook.

FLEET: Ah! Right. Good. Mental assemblies are tricky. Notebooks are more the kind of thing I can work with. Now, which box was it in?

SALIK: Are you mad? Something so valuable is always on my person! I keep it in my inside jacket pocket, here.

FLEET: The same jacket you were wearing this morning.

SALIK: Yes.

FLEET: I thought your jacket electrocuted people.

SALIK: Only when I'm traveling, Inspector! I deactivate it when I am at home. Otherwise it wouldn't be a lot of fun for Mr Leopold now, would it?

FLEET: Mr Leopold being...

SALIK: My cat, Inspector.

FLEET: I see.

SALIK: He's possibly the only being on this earth that truly understands me. And there's so much I don't understand about him.

FLEET: Right. Could you have lost the notebook on the way here, on the train perhaps.

SALIK: Impossible. I was skimming a few pages as I walked through the door, then I carefully replaced it in my pocket.

FLEET: And when did you discover it was gone?

SALIK: One hour later.

FLEET: And who else has been here?

SALIK: No-one. I have been by myself.

FLEET: I see. And when did you open the window?

SALIK: Which window?

FLEET: That window.

SALIK: That window is closed.

FLEET: Yes, but it's been opened. Look, the runners are clean of dust from where it's been lifted. And the dust is disturbed on the floor.

SALIK: I— What are you saying, Inspector?

FLEET: Well, if you didn't open the window, and you didn't take off the jacket, I'd say you've been pickpocketed.

SALIK: In my own home? Without me noticing their entering or leaving, and with no-one else present? Surely not!

FLEET: Dr Salik, when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be—

SALIK: A ghost!

FLEET: No, doctor. No.

SALIK: Very well, Inspector. Let us say you are correct. How will you proceed?

FLEET: A thief of this skill won't be easy to find. Let me make some inquiries.

SALIK: Make them quickly, Inspector. There is more than you know at stake.

SCENE 9.

NARRATOR: Fleet worked through the day and long into the night, but he could find no-one who knew anything about Salik's notebook or indeed a thief with the kind of skill required to pickpocket a man in his own home. Exhausted, he returned home and collapsed into bed, where he fell into a deep, revitalizing sleep, lasting precisely 36 seconds.

F/X: BANGING ON DOOR

CLARA: Inspector.

F/X: BANGING ON DOOR

Inspector Fleet, open up please.

FLEET: Of course.

F/X: BANGING ON DOOR

I'm coming.

F/X: BANGING ON DOOR. DOOR OPENS

Yes?

CLARA: Inspector Fleet.

FLEET: Yes?

CLARA: Clara Entwhistle. Journalist. Morning Chronicler. And you are?

FLEET: Inspector Fleet.

CLARA: Sorry, I'm nervous. I'm Clara Entwhistle, Journalist—

FLEET: Can I help you, Miss Entwhistle? Only, it's extremely late, or early, or whatever the hell half past three in the morning is.

CLARA: Yes, it's just—

FLEET: What on earth are you even doing out at this hour? It's not at all safe for you.

CLARA: It's fine, really. I had to come find you. It's about Dr Salik. He's dead.

FLEET: What? How?

CLARA: Well, someone's killed him, I think.

FLEET: But specifically...

CLARA: A terrible series of blows to the head and body.

FLEET: But less specifically...

CLARA: A fight at a pub?

FLEET: There we go.

CLARA: He seems to have been involved in a fight at a pub.

FLEET: And you know this because?

CLARA: My birds woke me up in the middle of the night, I looked out the window and saw him in the street. I went right to him.

FLEET: And?

CLARA: Well, he was already dead. So I summoned a nearby constable. He's there now and I offered to come find you.

FLEET: The constable knew I was on Salik's case?

CLARA: What case?

FLEET: The theft of Salik's notebook.

CLARA: No, no we didn't know anything about that.

FLEET: Well then why on earth have you come for me?

CLARA: Well, Salik asked us to.

FLEET: What? You said he was dead before you got there!

CLARA: He was. But he was holding a slip of paper. He must have written on it in his last moments.

FLEET: What did it say?

CLARA: "Get Fleet."

FLEET: (SIGHS) Of course it did.

END

EPISODE 2

SCENE 1.

NARRATOR: Even Greater London, 1887. Children played, adults worked, and a mile high tower beamed electricity outwards across hundreds of miles of uninterrupted city.

The building of the tower had brought with it wealth and innovation, and if the latent charge in the atmosphere meant that going out in the rain came with the risk of spontaneous combustion, then so be it. It was a small price to pay for progress – specifically, a small, annual price, as the insurance coverage was widely available.

It was probably the tower that the celebrated author Michael Monkfish had in mind when, to meet his publication deadline and minimum word count, he scribbled down his most famous aphorism: "Power corrupts. Electrical power corrupts electrically." No-one really knew what this meant but it had a pleasing symmetry so people didn't mind. It turns out that people don't really spend too much time trying to make sense of the world, usually because it's difficult and unrewarding, but quite often just because it's starting to drizzle and you remember your spontaneous combustion insurance lapsed the week before.

Inspector Fleet was a man who, by his profession, was compelled to try to make sense of things and who in the early hours of one grey January morning, was standing just beyond the mile-long shadow of the tower, on the pavement in front of London's thirty-fourth most disreputable public house, the Grouse and Chisel.

SCENE 2.

FLEET: Tell me about the body.

TILLER: Good morning, Inspector.

FLEET: Good morning, Constable. Tell me about the bod–

TILLER: Constable Tiller, sir.

FLEET: Good to meet you.

TILLER: It's my first day.

FLEET: Welcome aboard. Tell me about the bod–

TILLER: Well, I suppose second day at this point. Or first night of the first day. It's the second something anyway.

FLEET: Tiller.

TILLER: Yes, sir.

FLEET: Tiller, there's a dead body at our feet.

TILLER: Yes, sir.

FLEET: Tiller, tell me about the dead body at our feet.

TILLER: Of course. Coffee, sir?

FLEET: Tiller. It's four in the morning. We're in a part of town not known for a welcoming attitude to the police. And judging from the sixteen people watching us from windows in eight of the surrounding buildings, if we hang around too long there will be three dead bodies. Now, tell me about Dr Salik.

TILLER: Of course. He's deceased.

FLEET: Right.

TILLER: He's a male.

FLEET: Anything else?

TILLER: He's got blue eyes?

FLEET: Yes thank you Tiller. What I meant is, do we have any idea what happened to him?

TILLER: It's not been established, sir.

FLEET: Well, he's got a smashed in head where his head should be. Do you think that might have something to do with it?

TILLER: I wouldn't want to jump to any conclusions, sir.

CLARA: We thought maybe a bar brawl, didn't we constable?

FLEET: Miss Entwhistle, I thought we agreed you would stay behind the police roping.

CLARA: Was that where we left that? Anyway, I wanted to show you this appointment card I found in the victim's pocket.

FLEET: Give me that! Tiller, did you allow a member of the press to examine the body? And remove evidence?

TILLER: Only a little, sir. Oh! I forgot something.

FLEET: What?

TILLER: It's Chief Inspector Keller. He left a message for you before you arrived. You are to report to him at once.

F/X: SMACK

Ow! Sir?

FLEET: Where is he?

TILLER: In the wagon, sir.

FLEET: Right. Tiller: stay here and try not to keep treating this crime scene as a jumble sale.

TILLER: I will try, sir.

FLEET: And Miss Entwhistle: behind the rope.

CLARA: Of course. You won't even know I'm here.

FLEET: Why do I doubt that?

SCENE 3.

NARRATOR: The police wagons of Even Greater London were easy to identify because each side was covered with an enormous picture of the monarch who still had the name, and around 45 percent by volume of the original parts, of Queen Victoria. The police force felt this was the least they good do by way of patriotic respect, particularly as they had failed to prevent all eleven of her assassinations.

After each one of these, her royal medical engineers had replaced her shattered organs with the best available mechanical alternatives, and a national week of mourning had been cut short by her triumphant revival.

The Queen's can-do, can't-die attitude and increasingly impressive grip strength endeared her ever more to the public, as did her widespread portraits, which beautifully captured both her regal dignity and her substantial metallic heft.

Inside the police wagon, Fleet found a square of silvery glass the size of a bathroom mirror, on top of which sat a small, red antenna imprinted with an image of the Tower.

F/X: Device activates.

WAVERLEY: Caller?

FLEET: Fleet.

WAVERLEY: He's not very happy, Archie.

FLEET: Is he ever, Miss Waverley?

WAVERLEY: Well, he's sometimes not furious.

FLEET: Would you say he's furious now?

WAVERLEY: Oh yes. Connecting you now.

FLEET: Thank you, Miss Waverley.

F/X: Line click.

NARRATOR: Around the device, a convoluted grid of magnets and wires began to convulse. The silver liquid in the glass was pulled apart to form a shifting set of puddles and gaps, roughly at first before taking on a more coherent set of shapes. A moment later, Fleet was staring at a crude, fluid image he knew to be his Chief Inspector, but which the device only portrayed as a moustache in a nightcap. Even so, it was quite clear that the moustache was, indeed, furious.

KELLER: Fleet!

FLEET: Chief Inspector Keller.

KELLER: Fleet are you at the scene of the Salik murder?

FLEET: I am, sir. How do you know about it already?

KELLER: Because of the damned Yeomen Warders!

FLEET: The Beefeaters?

KELLER: Yes the Beefeaters, you halfwit. Chief Whitlock called me five minutes ago to demand his men lead the investigation.

FLEET: You should tell Chief Beef to take a running jump.

KELLER: Don't tell me what I should or should not do, Fleet. And Whitlock is the Chief Warder of the Tower, and Commander of the Yeoman Guard Extraordinary. He is not "Chief Beef". Treat the bastard with some respect.

FLEET: Sorry, sir. How did the Beefeaters find out so quickly?

KELLER: Their bloody ravens, I expect. Evil little things. They fly up, see more or less everything, fly back and somehow explain what they've seen, probably putting a pebble in a cup for a murder, or a marble in a saucer for a robbery, who bloody knows. Creepy is what they are.

FLEET: But why would they even be looking here? What's this got to do with them?

KELLER: You know damned well the Warders now take the lead on anything within a mile of the Tower.

FLEET: Is the Grouse and Chisel within a mile?

KELLER: No. Turns out it's a mile and 18 yards. But it's a damned murder, so Whitlock's flexing his not inconsiderable muscle. So you need to get this case wrapped up sharpish. Understood, Fleet?

FLEET: Yes, sir. Sir, Mrs Keller seems to be behind you.

MRS KELLER: Olwin, it's four in the morning!

KELLER: I know, Margaret, but this is police business. Go back to bed.

MRS KELLER: It's always police business with you, Olwin.

KELLER: I'm Detective Chief Inspector, Margaret, what other business is it going to be? Moonlight costermongery?

MRS KELLER: I just mean you could put a bit more energy into being the chief inspector of this family, Olwin.

KELLER: Don't start with that.

TIMMY: Daddy?

KELLER: Timmy! What are you doing up?

TIMMY: I heard voices and I thought there might be monsters.

MRS KELLER: There are no monsters, Timmy.

KELLER: There are indeed monsters, Timmy, and it's daddy's job to see them all hanged.

TIMMY: (CRIES, CONTINUING THROUGHOUT)

MRS KELLER: Oh, Olwin!

KELLER: The boy's got to learn about the real world!

MRS KELLER: He's only four!

FLEET: Sir, sorry to interrupt—

KELLER: My god, Fleet, are you still there? Get to work. Hush now, Timmy.

F/X: Device deactivates.

FLEET: Right.

F/X: Wagon door opens.

Tiller.

TILLER: Yes, Inspector.

FLEET: Secure the scene and get the body sent off to the pathologist.
I'm off to Mrs. Pomligan's.

SCENE 4.

F/X: COFFEE HOUSE HUBBUB

NARRATOR: Mrs. Pomligan's was, of course, *Mrs. Pomligan's Coffee House, Beginners Pottery Studio and Laundrette*: a coordinated con of Mrs. Pomligan's own devising, that begins with a superb value, if irregularly shaped cup of coffee and ends with an extremely poor value emergency shirt cleaning. A couple of budding – and presumably insomniac – ceramicists were messily clasping some clay together when Fleet walked in. Walking past the potter's wheels, Fleet grabbed one of the few uniform mugs from the counter and sat at a table. Shortly after, a slow shuffling sound indicated the approach of Mrs Pomligan herself – an intermittently cheerful woman in her fifties, with the appearance of a crocodile that had somehow acquired the ability to walk on two legs, apply blusher and operate a stove.

MRS POMLIGAN: You up late Archie, or just getting started?

FLEET: Both.

MRS POMLIGAN: Coffee, then?

FLEET: Yes. Your very strongest.

MRS POMLIGAN: It's like being kept awake by a volcano's nightmares.

FLEET: Perfect.

NARRATOR: A few minutes later Fleet was staring at a cup of the tarry-looking liquid Mrs Pomligan sold as coffee. He took a moment to enjoy a fond memory or two just in case, gripped his chair firmly with one hand, and took a sip. When he regained his sight, around 30 seconds later, he found Miss Entwhistle now sat opposite him at the table.

CLARA: Cakes any good?

FLEET: You!

CLARA: The cakes. In this shop. Worth a go?

FLEET: What are you doing here?

CLARA: I'll risk it. Any for you?

FLEET: No, I'm – I'm alright for cake, thank you.

CLARA: (SHOUTING) Two slices of cake!

MRS POMLIGAN: (SHOUTING) Two slices of cake!

FLEET: Um–

CLARA: You'll want some when you see mine. This way you won't have to wait. And it's Clara, Clara Entwhistle, *The Morning Chronicler*, we met at...

FLEET: My crime scene, or rather when you turned up at my house to summon me to my crime scene.

CLARA: That's right. So, any leads?

FLEET: You don't waste any time do you?

CLARA: Can't afford to in my game.

FLEET: The ink-and-gossip game?

CLARA: The game of truth, inspector. Truth for the public. The same game as the one you play.

FLEET: It's not a game, Miss Entwhistle, it's police business. And I don't discuss ongoing investigations. (SHOUTING) Mrs Pomligan, can I take this cup out with me?

MRS POMLIGAN: (SHOUTING) What?

CLARA: Don't go, inspector!

MRS POMLIGAN: (SHOUTING) Get your own bloody cups!

FLEET: (SHOUTING) I'll bring it back! (TO CLARA) I'd rather we left it here Miss Entwhistle while we're still getting on.

MRS POMLIGAN: (SHOUTING) You'd better return it! And in one piece, too!

FLEET: I'm not a miracle worker Mrs Pomligan - but I'll be sure to return with either it or a dirty shirt for cleaning. Miss

Entwhistle, as you know, I have a murder to solve, so I must leave you. Enjoy your two slices of cake.

MRS POMLIGAN: (SHOUTING) Two slices of cake!

CLARA: (SIGHS) Thank you.

SCENE 5.

NARRATOR: St. Bernadine's Hospital, Seventeen Dials. It was said that if you contracted an illness, you should avoid St Bernadine's at all costs, that is, if you wanted to live. Dying there was easy: its motto was simply, 'Abandon hope, all'. As Inspector Fleet entered the reception area to the laboratory of celebrated pathologist Dr Septimus Bell, he found himself facing a desk and, on it, a pile of leather, metal and cogs, arranged in the shape of the upper third of a receptionist.

MISS BODKIN: Good morning, Inspector.

FLEET: Oh no... Where's Miss Birch?

MISS BODKIN: Good morning, Inspector

FLEET: What's going on?

MISS BODKIN: Good morning, Inspector.

FLEET: Good morning!

MISS BODKIN: I am Miss Bodkin. Miss Birch now works with the Yeoman Warders of the Tower. How was your journey?

FLEET: Is he in?

MISS BODKIN: How was your journey?

FLEET: I need to see the— It was fine.

MISS BODKIN: Nice weather today is it not?

FLEET: How would you know? You're mostly furniture.

MISS BODKIN: Nice weather today is it not?

FLEET: Oh good grief. Yes.

MISS BODKIN: Inspector, would you care for some coffee? There is some brewing in my shoulder.

FLEET: Look, desk machine girl...

MISS BODKIN: Miss Bodkin.

FLEET: Miss Bodkin, I really don't have time to chat, I need to see Dr Bell.

BELL: You rang?

FLEET: Very good, Doctor.

MISS BODKIN: Would you care for some shoulder coffee, Doctor?

BELL: Not right now, Miss Bodkin.

FLEET: Energetic isn't she?

BELL: She ought to be, she's anti-clockwork.

FLEET: Clockwork?

BELL: Anti-clockwork, Inspector.

NARRATOR: Anti-clockwork was one of the most recent innovations of the Swindon Informatorium's Department for Applied Philosophy. A clockwork device works by storing energy in springs, tightened by turning a key, to power a device's motion, speech and general reasoning capabilities. *Anti-clockwork* devices use that same mechanism to *stop* a device from working. Without turning the key, your anti-clockwork device would go about its business endlessly, without rest or remorse. In the case of Miss Bodkin, the business in question was to slow down any visitors to Dr Bell's laboratory for long enough for him to finish whatever he was working on and wait outside the door to the reception area until someone said something that let him enter with a joke, giving an air of carefree spontaneity for which he prepared meticulously.

FLEET: I'm terribly sorry, Doctor, to come down here so early.

BELL: It's quite all right, Inspector, although I am not what one would call a *mourning* person. Little pathology joke for you there. Now what can I do for you?

FLEET: It's about the cadaver I sent over. I was hoping you could tell me more about how he died.

BELL: Oh yes. Although, isn't the real question, "How did he live?"

FLEET: I'm not sure I follow you.

BELL: How do any of us live? Do you know, Inspector, I am Even Greater London's foremost pathologist. I know more about death than anyone. But so little about life.

FLEET: Yes. Now, about the body.

BELL: Not like my little brother, Tiberius. He's a poet. He grapples with real questions about our existence.

FLEET: But can he help solve a murder, eh?

BELL: He once wrote a poem on a leaf you know.

FLEET: It was just about a leaf?

BELL: Both about and literally on a leaf. Small writing. Big ideas.

FLEET: Sorry, I don't mean to be rude but...

BELL: Ah yes, your man. You had better come in.

TRANSITION.

F/X: SHEET PULLED BACK.

BELL: Here he is.

FLEET: Yes, beaten to death.

BELL: Beaten, yes. Death, yes. But not in that order.

FLEET: Death beaten?

BELL: You have it! You see this here?

FLEET: Where the entire back of his head is missing?

BELL: Ah, you noticed it too. That could only really be caused by one thing.

FLEET: And what's that?

BELL: The street. Specifically, arriving at the street directly from a rooftop. As for the other markings, this fellow has been beaten post mortem.

FLEET: Why would someone pummel a corpse?

BELL: I expect to disguise the fact that he fell, or more likely was pushed, off the roof of that pub.

FLEET: A murder disguised as ...

BELL: Another type of murder, yes.

FLEET: But why?

BELL: I'm afraid that's your domain, Inspector. I just deal with the how and then have breakfast. Whiskey?

FLEET: Now?

BELL: Why not? It's a desperately sad and lonely midnight somewhere.

SCENE 6.

NARRATOR:

It was another of the Bell clan – Julius – who had, as a young aide at the palace, secured his rapid career advancement with the solution to Queen Victoria's temporary popularity problem a few years earlier.

The public were generally on board with the occasional improvements to Her Majesty's physical vessel, but it turned out that absorbing her dying husband Albert's consciousness into her own largely robotic body was a step too far.

By itself this probably could have been ignored, but it had come during a period of public restlessness about the Queen. This was partly due to the growing sense that her apparent immortality made a mockery of death and the finitude of all their lives, but mainly due to an unfortunate incident where she discovered in front of a crowd that her impressive metallic form was enough to break a horse's spine.

Julius Bell's solution to this was simple. Construct a vast network of public address systems across the city, allowing the Queen to make a twice daily address to the populace. This was indeed hugely popular, leading men, women and children alike to stop whatever they were doing, stand, and face the loudspeakers.

As the scheduled time of the address arrived on this particular morning, Inspector Fleet, traveling to a crucial appointment, found his train pulling to a deferential halt.

VICTORIA:

(heavily distorted mechanical voice) My loyal subjects, good morning! Are you all well? Good. How could you not be? It's a pleasant day in London and as always we are the envy of the world.

A reminder to you all that the Even Greater Exhibition is now open at the Crystal Palace. Prized jewels, exotic beasts and scientific marvels from across the globe await your curious minds. It's a treat for the whole family! Isn't that right, my dear Albert?

ALBERT:

Existence is pain, pain existence; I am an abomination. Nature herself averts her gaze in shame.

VICTORIA: (LAUGHS) Oh Albert. Now subjects, have a wonderful day, be pleasant always, and enjoy the luxury of God's most joyous realm, our city of London. And now, the weather.

ALBERT: The gods make their condemnation evident; the skies weep at our treachery. Sunny spells in the afternoon.

VICTORIA: Thank you Albert.

SCENE 7.

NARRATOR: A few minutes later than he had hoped, but still, after all, in good time, Inspector Fleet arrived at *Mrs Hampshire's Lodging House for Respectable People who Face their Problems Head-on*. Fleet was there to keep the appointment written on the card that had been found on Dr Salik's body, and discover whether the other party knew anything about the circumstances of his murder.

F/X: Footsteps on gravel path. Second set of footsteps on gravel path. First set stop, second set stop shortly after. Pause. First set restarts, second set restarts shortly after. First set stop, second set stop shortly after. Pause. First set restarts. Second set restarts.

FLEET: Miss Entwistle!

CLARA: Ah! Inspector Fleet, what a coincidence.

FLEET: Coincidence be damned. You followed me here.

CLARA: No. But I did take a note of what was written on that appointment card. And I brought you that cake you didn't know you wanted. No. Wait. I ate it on the voltaic omnibus. Marvellous aren't they?

FLEET: Omnibuses?

CLARA: Mrs Pomligan's cakes! I mean they are almost certainly not cakes, but even so. Now, let's not argue Inspector, because as soon as you've seen the knack I have for ferreting things out you'll wish at once you'd agreed to work the case together so let's save time by skipping your refusal. I'm your ginger bun, do you see?

FLEET: I beg your pardon?

CLARA: Figuratively speaking, I'm your Mrs Pomligan's ginger bun: doesn't seem that appealing, but gets the job done.

FLEET: Miss Entwistle, this case must be handled with sensitivity and care by a trained officer from Scotland Yard. Now, if you'll excuse me—

CLARA: Don't ring the bell!

FLEET: It seems an unavoidable part of this.

CLARA: We haven't agreed our plan!

FLEET: What do you mean "our"?

CLARA: First person plural possessive.

FLEET: That's clearly not what I meant. Please just allow me to—

F/X: DOOR OPENS

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Can I help you?

FLEET: Yes.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Oh, of course, I see it all now.

FLEET: Mrs Hampshire, allow me to explain

MRS HAMPSHIRE: No need. I understand perfectly.

FLEET: How could—

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Two young things shilly shallying on my doorstep, can only mean one thing. Touches nose.

FLEET: Did you just say "touches nose"?

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Indeed.

FLEET: You know you don't say touches nose, you just touch your nose.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Yes. Of course. Touches nose.

FLEET: Right. Well.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: And never let it be said that Mrs Hampshire doesn't understand young love.

FLEET: Ah. Oh.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Touches nose.

FLEET: No. No. You've misunderstood we are not, that is to say I am In....

CLARA: Darling, I think Mrs Hampshire's nose here can be relied upon to sniff out an elopement. We're on our way to Gretna Green.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: How romantic, I've got just the room. Please come in and make yourself at home in the parlour.

F/X: MRS HAMPSHIRE WALKS AWAY

CLARA: I told you... ginger bun. I'll keep her talking and you interview some of the guests.

FLEET: I can conduct my own investigations thank you very much Miss Entwhistle, please leave.

CLARA: (LOUDER) I say, Mrs Hampshire, could I trouble you for a glass of water... (WHISPERING TO FLEET) I'm not even thirsty!

FLEET: Don't wink at me, we're not colluding!

F/X: SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS WALKING AWAY

(SIGHS)

SCENE 8.

F/X: KNOCK ON DOOR

GREY: Go away.

F/X: KNOCK ON DOOR

Listen, Eliza, I know what you are going to say but the simple fact of the matter is that I don't have any money to marry on, despite what I said after that bottle of port. Marriage is simply not possible. There, I've said it, so let's shake hands when we see each other next and say no more about it.

FLEET: Sir, my name is Inspector Archibald Fleet.

GREY: Oh.

F/X: DOOR OPENS

Sorry about that, thought you were someone else. Charles Grey. Listen, if this is about those railways bonds, I can explain.

FLEET: No, I'm interested in finding out who rented the room next to yours.

GREY: I don't know. He's hardly ever here, maybe once a month. Seems to use it more as a meeting place than a dwelling from what I could tell.

F/X: KNOCK ON DOOR, DOOR OPENS.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Mr Grey, could I have a word? Ah, I see you've met our new guest.

GREY: Guest? I thought you said—

FLEET: Don't worry, I'll leave you to it.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: No need. This won't take long. I hope you don't mind if I speak candidly, Mr Grey?

GREY: Well, how candidly are we talking?

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Most.

GREY: I see.

FLEET: I really don't mind going.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Only there seems to be have been a misunderstanding over your engagement to my daughter.

GREY: Misunderstanding?

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Yes on account of you not considering yourself to be, in fact, engaged.

FLEET: If you'll just let me squeeze past I'll....

GREY: Ah well now ...

FLEET: I can easily just slip out...

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Yet Eliza, being the sentimental girl she is, kept all of your letters in which your promise of marriage is quite plain.

GREY: I, well, um, now, well...

FLEET: Just to confirm, you are both aware that I am still here, yes?

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Though as a woman of the world, it did cross my mind that a young gentleman such as yourself might have, in the heat of the moment, got, how shall we say? Carried away.

GREY: Yes, exactly, an unguarded moment of rashness.

MISS HAMPSHIRE: And I suppose a scandal could be avoided were you to offer some form of reparation for a poor fatherless girl's disappointment. Say, one hundred pounds?

GREY: One hundred pounds!

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Splendid, we're agreed. Now, I have another guest to check in on. I'll pick up the banker's draft tomorrow. Have it made out to Mrs Hampshire, spelt "Hampshire" as in "Hampshire".

F/X: MRS HAMPSHIRE EXITS

GREY: I say Inspector, don't suppose you could lend a fellow £100 could you? Bad night on the old marriage market. You know.

TRANSITION

FLEET: Miss Entwhistle, what on earth are you doing? And why are you still here?

CLARA: Shh—listen.

TREDGOLD: (OFF) But Mrs Hampshire, it's not that I don't care for dear Eliza.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: (OFF) Mr Tredgold, what is a poor mother to say to an innocent girl so cruelly jilted, and your letters so firm in the matter of matrimony. I wonder what a lawyer would say?

TREDGOLD: (OFF) Now steady on! Lawyers? Surely we can smooth this over?

MRS HAMPSHIRE: (OFF) I suppose the loss of a fiancé might be eased by a financial consideration; say one hundred pounds?

TREDGOLD: (OFF) One hundred pounds!

MR HAMPSHIRE: (OFF) Splendid! You can have the banker's draft made out to Mrs Hampshire, one big "h", one small "h", and one of all the other letters in the word "Hampshire". Is someone there?

F/X: DOOR OPENING

Ah, the turtle doves.

CLARA: Coo!

FLEET: What?

CLARA: Well let's hear yours!

FLEET: What?!

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Bessie should have fitted your room up by now. Come this way.

F/X: WINDOW SMASHING

What on earth was that?

FLEET: Sounded like a window being broken. A window being broken inwards. Mrs Hampshire you have an intruder.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: You're a clairvoyant! How mysterious. You must meet my daughter, Eliza.

FLEET: I'm afraid I am a police detective and it is imperative that I get into that room.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: You're a detective and you're eloping?

FLEET: I'm not eloping. I'm just a detective.

MRS HAMPSHIRE: Well who is she?

CLARA: Clara Entwhistle, Morning Chronicler. Who rents that room Mrs Hampshire?

FLEET: There's no time, Miss Entwhistle. There's a man in that room. Mrs Hampshire, open the door!

MRS HAMPSHIRE: I had the spare key yesterday, let me retrace my steps...

F/X: WINDOW SMASHING

FLEET: We're out of time! That was the sound of the window being broken outward. Our intruder is escaping! Stand back everyone.

F/X: DOOR KICKED OPEN

You there! Stop! Stop I say. Don't look around. Obviously I mean you. Don't point at yourself – do you see anyone else climbing out of a broken window? Yes it is hard to look nonchalant when you're wearing a mask isn't it? No. No, now don't jump out of that window... I'm warning you....

F/X: PERSON JUMPS

He jumped! After I told him not to!

CLARA: Jump after him!

FLEET: I'm going to!

CLARA: Go on then!

FLEET: I am! Just a second... Stand back.

CLARA: Why?

FLEET: (SCREAMS)

SCENE 9.

F/X: STREET NOISE

FLEET: Damn it, he's getting in a cab.

F/X: BANGING ON CAB

Stop, police! Stop! Stop!

F/X: HORSE WALKING, CAB PULLS AWAY

FLEET: Right. Um, er, oh! (SHOUTING) You, cabbie, put your fag out and let's get going.

CABBIE: I'm on a break.

FLEET: This is police business. Get on the damned thing and follow that cab.

CABBIE: (SIGHS)

FLEET: I'll give you a shilling.

CABBIE: Ready when you are, sir.

FLEET: I'm ready, get on the cab!

F/X: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.

CABBIE: All set?

FLEET: Go!

CABBIE: Alright then. Where to?

FLEET: Follow that bloody cab!

CABBIE: Which one?

FLEET: The one at the end of the street, with the masked man staring at us out the back window.

CABBIE: Right you are, sir.

F/X: HORSE WALKING, CAB MOVING SLOWLY.

Plans for the weekend, sir?

FLEET: None at the moment.

CABBIE: Myself I'm visiting a dear aunt Tabitha. Tabby we call her. I know, sounds like a cat. But she's not a cat. She's my aunt.

FLEET: Faster, damn you!

CABBIE: Well, I suppose the crux of it is to do with her cat, Delilah, who *is* a tabby as it happens. Huh. I've never put those together before. How about that?

FLEET: I don't care about your aunt, her cat, or their shared tabbiness. Catch up with that damned cab!

CABBIE: He's moving quick, isn't he? Must have paid the driver a fair shilling. Or two.

FLEET: What?

CABBIE: Well I'm just saying it's very much incumbent on the agents of any transaction to utilise their advantages – vis a vis the other agent's desired outcomes – to extract for themselves the maximum possible benefit.

FLEET: What?

CABBIE: Well I've got this cab here, the horse goes a certain speed, he can be motivated to go faster with a flick of the wrist of a talented groom such as myself, and as a talented groom such as myself I can be motivated to go faster with a flick of the purse of an equivalently motivated passenger such as yourself.

FLEET: Are you extorting the police?

CABBIE: I am but an humble manifestation of market forces.

FLEET: I already paid you a shilling!

CABBIE: That's for the ride while I was on my break. Catching up with the other cab – that's another shilling.

FLEET: Fine, take it.

CABBIE: Alright, hold on.

F/X: HORSE GALLOPING.

(SHOUTING) Out of the way.

FLEET: My word, be careful.

CABBIE: Not for a measly 2 shillings

FLEET: What?

CABBIE: The well-being of passers-by is not included in the agreed two shilling fare.

FLEET: I think it's bloody implied!

CABBIE: I think you should have made it clear at the outset of our arrangement. (SHOUTING) Look out there!

F/X: CABBIE RINGS BELL, PEOPLE SCREAM.

Close one.

FLEET: Fine, have another damned shilling.

CABBIE: Alright, I think we can safely catch up with them now.

FLEET: Your superiors shall be receiving a strongly worded letter after all this.

CABBIE: My superiors don't read letters for anything less than 10 shillings. Right, this the one alongside us?

FLEET: Yes! What's he doing?

CABBIE: Looks like he's giving my colleague over there another shilling to speed up. Alright Freddy!

FREDDY: Alright Jasps! You chasing us?

CABBIE: We are, yeah!

FREDDY: Well my hooded passenger and I, we've just concluded a negotiation over a possible acceleration, so I'll be proceeding with that imminently.

CABBIE: Of course. I'll just inform my passenger.

FLEET: I bloody heard. Now look, I'll give both of you five extra shillings to stop right now.

CABBIE: Oh!

FREDDY: I see. One second. No, my masked passenger's run out of cash. Jasps?

CABBIE: Works for me. Alright, hand it all to me and I'll sort out Freddy's share.

FLEET: There.

CABBIE: Alright, let's just pull up over here then. Oh, your masked quarry's jumped out.

FLEET: Let me out.

F/X: DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING.

CABBIE: Have a nice one.

FLEET: I'll be back for you!

CABBIE: At your service, sir!

F/X: FLEET RUNNING, BREATHLESS.

FLEET: You in the mask! Stop! Stop, damn you! I said stop, in the name of the law!

F/X: FLEET LAUNCHING HIMSELF AND TACKLING THE FIGURE TO THE GROUND

I've got you now...and I'll have your mask too if you don't mind....

F/X: A TUSSLE / STRUGGLE

Ah ha! (PAUSE) I'm not quite sure now why I was expecting to recognise you. Still, doesn't matter, that'll be easy enough once I have you back at the Yard. Now if you'll just come with—

F/X: SMACK. THUMP OF BODY HITTING THE
GROUND.

SCENE 10.

FLEET: (IN PAIN) Ohh...

CLARA: Shh...

FLEET: I'll be ok.

CLARA: No, shush! You'll wake my birds.

F/X: SLEEPING BIRDS.

FLEET: Where am I?

CLARA: My lodgings, about 10 minutes away from where I found you. You got knocked unconscious.

FLEET: Ah. (SIGH) Miss Entwhistle. Of course. (PAUSE) Well, I suppose I should thank you for making sure I was okay.

CLARA: You're welcome.

PAUSE

FLEET: Nice place.

CLARA: Don't be unkind.

FLEET: It's not bad! Big windows.

CLARA: Yes, it makes my birds happy. Or possibly sad. I'm not sure.

FLEET: I say, you've got a pretty good vantage point over the square. You can see onto the roof of the Grouse and Chisel. Who's that on it?

CLARA: Oh it's just one of the local street urchins – they were hanging around the body when I first discovered it.

FLEET: And you didn't think to mention it?

CLARA: You didn't ask. Anyway, he was there, the one on the roof now. I remember because he was the only one wearing shoes.

FLEET: Not just any shoes. Very shiny shoes. Suspicious.

CLARA: The shoes or the shine?

FLEET: Both. Come on, let's pay him a visit.

CLARA: Inspector Fleet, are you inviting me to help you with your investigation?

FLEET: Not help, just observe. Though if anything does occur to you, you might make mention of it, I suppose.

CLARA: Why the sudden change?

FLEET: Well, you did scrape me off the pavement.

CLARA: Minimal scraping necessary. The cabbie did most of the heavy lifting. Said it was the least he could do, for the three shillings he then took from your pocket.

FLEET: Of course.

CLARA: Look lively Inspector, we don't want to miss him.

SCENE 11.

F/X: FOOTSTEPS ON ROOFTOP.

FLEET: Spend a lot of time on rooftops?

WHISTLER: Ain't got no money to spend. But in time, I am richer than a prince.

CLARA: What's your name?

WHISTLER: Whistler.

FLEET: Is that your real name, or a nickname?

WHISTLER: Hard to say.

CLARA: I bet you know a lot about what goes on around here.

WHISTLER: Maybe I do and maybe I don't.

FLEET: I bet you see some interesting things. And I bet that sometimes they're criminal. And I bet that sometimes you let the criminals know you've seen them, and I bet they'd do more or less anything to keep you quiet. Even give you the shoes they were wearing. Those are nice shoes, by the way.

WHISTLER: I know a kind-hearted cobbler.

FLEET: There are no kind-hearted cobblers! What do you know about the death of Dr Salik?

WHISTLER: Why should I tell you?

FLEET: I'm the police.

WHISTLER: (LAUGHS)

CLARA: You don't think it would be useful to have the police owe you a favour?

WHISTLER: Hmm... A free pass on a crime of my choosing?

FLEET: Let's play it by ear. What happened to the man?

WHISTLER: He fell.

FLEET: I know that. Who pushed him?

WHISTLER: I didn't see that.

FLEET: Rubbish. You were here.

WHISTLER: He didn't fall from here.

FLEET: What?

WHISTLER: He fell somewhere else. Then they brought him here.

FLEET: Someone brought a dead body away from where he actually fell? Why? Where did he fall from?

WHISTLER: The tower.

FLEET: Which tower?

WHISTLER: *The* tower.

FLEET: Oh. Oh dear.

CLARA: Fleet, look!

NARRATOR: A pair of ravens which had been circling over their heads suddenly dived down to street level where two men stood. The birds landed on the men's outstretched black gauntlets and walked up to their shoulders.

CLARA: Who are they?

FLEET: Beefeaters.

CLARA: Are you alright? You've gone quite pale. Surely the Warders aren't as bad as all that?

FLEET: No, they're worse. And it appears one of them is the masked man who broke into Mrs Hampshire's.

CLARA: Oh. They're looking at us.

FLEET: I know.

CLARA: Their ravens are looking at us too.

FLEET: I know.

CLARA: What does it mean?

FLEET: Nothing good.

F/X: RAVENS CAWING.

Nothing good at all.

END

EPISODE 3

SCENE 1.

NARRATOR: In a city as vast and populous as Even Greater London, incredible, life-changing coincidences occur so regularly as to pass without comment. The celebrated socialite and occasional writer Michael Monkfish had once said that not only did he often believe six impossible things before breakfast, but if he went out for lunch, at least eleven of these would actually happen to him before he was offered a bread roll.

So in all the impossible goings-on in the near-infinite cityscape, the current situation of Inspector Archibald Fleet and Clara Entwhistle might not rank all that highly.

They had just seen the man Fleet had pursued after finding him breaking into a lodging house connected with the murdered scientist Dr Salik.

Distressingly, it seemed the man was a Beefeater, one of the feared and often sadistic Warders charged with protecting the electricity-beaming Tower Salik designed.

Even more distressingly, Fleet and Clara had just learned that it was from this Tower that Salik had fallen to his death, only for someone to have moved his body to outside the tavern where they now were.

Most distressingly of all, the Beefeater and his colleague had seen them too.

FLEET: Gentlemen! Pleasant day for a stroll, no?

RALGRIEVE: We'll ask the questions.

FLEET: Will you? We're a tad outside your operating radius here, aren't we?

RALGRIEVE: Close enough for it not to matter if we had a disagreement.

FLEET: Fortunately for you, then, I haven't a disagreeable bone in my body. But where are my manners. This is Miss Ent–

RALGRIEVE: Entwhistle, Clara. And you're Fleet. I'm Warder Ralgrieve and this is Warder Skern.

SKERN: Skern.

CLARA: What do you want?

FLEET: Clara—

RALGRIEVE: We want what you want. A tidy end to this Salik unpleasantness.

CLARA: The truth isn't always tidy, Mr Ralgrieve.

RALGRIEVE: That's Warder Ralgrieve to you, and who said anything about truth? I said "end".

CLARA: Well as Inspector Fleet has already mentioned, you don't have jurisdiction here.

FLEET: It's been a pleasure chatting with you, Warders, but we really should be—

RALGRIEVE: Good thinking Fleet. If you don't solve this case sharpish, you'll lose it. Isn't that right? And then it'll get handed over to a more effective law enforcement agency.

CLARA: Not if we pin you for stealing from Mrs Hampshire's!

FLEET: No, Clara! It's not the time!

RALGRIEVE: Not the time? For accusing honourable members of Her Majesty's Yeoman Guard Extraordinary of petty crimes? Is there a time for that, Fleet?

CLARA: You were there!

FLEET: She's a journalist, Ralgrieve, she sees connections when they're not there.

CLARA: How dare you! That's what you think of journalism? Many of our country's greatest—

FLEET: Not the time!

RALGRIEVE: I've had enough of this. Come on, you two. Let's take this somewhere we can have a chat in private.

CLARA: My pleasure!

FLEET: She doesn't mean that. (TO CLARA) Do you mean that?

CLARA: I do mean that!

RALGRIEVE: So we're agreed. Wonderful. Warder Skern, would you do the honours?

CLARA: What honours?

SKERN: Honours.

FLEET: No honours! We'll just follow you.

RALGRIEVE: Right this way.

SCENE 2.

F/X: Dungeon. Drips onto stone etc.

CLARA: I suppose when he said "chat in private", I imagined a nice coffee shop. Not so much a dungeon. But I think this works rather nicely into our investigation!

FLEET: How? We're locked underground in the Tower Compound. Probably exactly what those Beefeaters wanted.

CLARA: What are they? Are they police?

FLEET: Police enforce laws. The Warders are guards. When the Tower was built, the Government decided it needed the best possible protection. It was far more valuable than the crown jewels, and in any case those had been sold to help pay for the Tower, so the Warders moved here. They protect this Tower now, and, given its importance, that protection now includes investigating all criminal activity nearby. Although their methods are... different.

CLARA: So, what now?

FLEET: Well, we haven't broken any laws, we've just annoyed some Beefeaters. Not a bad day's work, really. Hopefully they'll come soon and start questioning us. Better to get it over with so we can get out of here. Better than the alternative, anyway.

CLARA: What alternative?

KELLER: (ENRAGED) Fleet!

FLEET: Chief Inspector Keller! So you heard about my being detained by the Yeomen Warders?

KELLER: No, pure coincidence Fleet, I'm afraid you've caught me on my daily perambulation around the Tower Compound, which we are all forbidden by an Act of Parliament from entering! Today I thought I'd take a little turn around the dungeons!
(FURIOUS) Fancy seeing you here Fleet! What are the chances? Isn't life sometimes just a delight!

CLARA: I don't think there's any need for all that.

FLEET: Miss Entwhistle, please.

KELLER: Miss Entwistle, is it? Just an unparalleled pleasure to meet you. Who the devil are you and why are you locked in a cell with one of my detectives?

CLARA: We're investigating the Salik murder.

KELLER: We, eh? Fascinating. Go on.

FLEET: Sir, we had a very minor run-in with two Warders.

CLARA: They were trying to intimidate us, with ravens!

KELLER: How dreadful. Have you alerted the appropriate authorities?

CLARA: No but we should!

FLEET: Sir—

KELLER: They are the appropriate authorities! And Fleet, even if you have somehow acquired a tourist—

CLARA: I am a journalist!

KELLER: My apologies, Miss. Fleet, even if you have somehow acquired a tourist with a notepad—

CLARA: How dare you!

KELLER: —you should have known better than to provoke the Warders.

FLEET: It's complicated, sir. The Warders are involved in the Salik murder somehow, I can feel it.

KELLER: Oh well, if you can feel it that's all right then. Don't forget to bring your feelings to the Old Bailey. You listen to me, Fleet. You're in very, very dangerous territory. We have no authority to investigate the Yeomen Warders; Chief Whitlock is a personal friend of the Home Secretary; and in any event the Warders are taking over the investigation. Your futile fracas with them gives Whitlock every justification to take command.

CLARA: They can't investigate themselves!

KELLER: They can and they will. Or won't. It's up to them really. Now, I've spoken to Whitlock and he's agreed to overlook this whole

incident in the interests of maintaining a friendly spirit between our two organisations. Miss Entwhistle was it? Pleasure to meet you. Goodbye, I hope, forever. And Fleet, before you head back to the Yard, the Chief Warder wants a word.

FLEET:

Yes, sir.

KELLER:

Be careful of Whitlock, Fleet. There's a reason he's got to where he is. And it's not that he remembers everyone's birthdays.

SCENE 3.

FLEET: I'm here to see Chief Warder Whitlock. He's expecting me.

BIRCH: Yes, Inspector Fleet, welcome. Did you have any trouble getting here?

FLEET: Not at all, I was abducted.

BIRCH: Splendid. The Chief Warder is just through here. Please spray this on yourself.

FLEET: What is it?

BIRCH: Repellant.

FLEET: And what are we repelling?

BIRCH: Oh, lots of things. You'll see.

FLEET: Alright.

F/X: Spray.

BIRCH: And would you like to wear one of these rain jackets?

FLEET: Would you recommend it?

BIRCH: Depends how you feel about the rain.

FLEET: I'll wear it. Where am I going, exactly?

BIRCH: Just through there. Push hard, it's heavy.

FLEET: Right. Thank you. (EXERTS HIMSELF)

F/X: Heavy metal door opens.

(EXERTS HIMSELF AGAIN)

F/X: Heavy metal door closes.

F/X: Rainforest sounds: stream, birds.

What on earth?

F/X: Frog croaks close by.

Ahh! It's a—

WHITLOCK: Rainforest, Inspector. A place of tranquility. An oasis in a desert of mad, desperate people, all pulling each other downwards.

FLEET: Chief Warder Whitlock.

WHITLOCK: At this location in the compound we are quite close to the Tower itself. The heat it gives off is quite astonishing. My predecessor had the foresight to build this little arboretum – it circles all the way around, absorbing the heat and channeling it into something useful, like these delightful *Ceiba pentandra*.

FLEET: Why did you want to see me?

WHITLOCK: To talk about this Salik mess, of course.

FLEET: Why he fell to his death from the Tower, you mean?

WHITLOCK: You're getting ahead of yourself, Inspector. Salik was here the day he died, it's true. But he left hours before you found him lying beaten outside that pub.

FLEET: He wasn't beaten, he fell.

WHITLOCK: Fell from that pub then.

FLEET: Maybe, or maybe not. What was he doing here?

WHITLOCK: He insisted on a visit, like some sort of dignitary. I met with him, we exchanged pleasantries, and then he left.

FLEET: Did he say where he was going?

WHITLOCK: You're not investigating this case anymore, Inspector. We are. I want to make sure you understand that.

FLEET: I'll be investigating this whether you let me or not. But I'm sure the Warders have no secrets.

PAUSE.

WHITLOCK:

Let me tell you a story, Inspector. When I was a young man, I went exploring through the Malay jungles. I was with four compatriots from my school days: Skiffins, Woodler, Bashforth and Rupp. We were to be the first to navigate to the source of the Kinabatangan river. For two weeks, far from any trail and even farther from any settlement, we pushed forward, forward into the jungle's darkness. Then, one morning, we woke to find Skiffins' tent empty, torn open, blood trailing from inside, past our own tents and beyond the trees. We followed that blood for half a mile before we found him. Mauled, half gone, and lying over a branch midway up a tree. Suddenly, a terrifying sound. (GROWLS). The jungle panther. Woodler and Bashforth, they ran, while Rupp and I waited to hear from where the sound came. Only the next sound was the screams of two men, the gargling of blood, and the chilling silence of death. The sound returned (GROWLS). Rupp and I stood still. He said "We can't outrun it, Whitlock. And I won't let it catch me." He took out his revolver, pressed it to his temple and fired. The gun – the only one we had – flew from his hand and down a steep bank. The sound was near now. (GROWLS). I threw myself down the bank but I could not stop myself to find the gun. I slid down and down and fell into the river. I was swept for a mile, underwater half the time, I would surely drown soon. I saw a branch overhead, I reached and grasped it and hauled myself out onto the mud. Then I heard it again. The animal had been following me. I was a distance ahead but not enough. Near-blind from the water, I started to run. I ran and I ran and I ran. For 3 days and 3 nights it hunted me. On the fourth day, I was near death. I couldn't go on. But something changed in me. I wasn't going to be hunted any more. I turned around and stared at the beast. It stopped. It didn't understand. Prey doesn't turn around. Prey doesn't look you in the face. "You chase me, you track me, you take the lives of my brothers and toy with mine? I am not prey," I said to the beast. (SCREAMING) "I am the hunter! I am Man and your mighty rivers could not contain the blood we have spilled. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as prey to their teeth. (SPEAKING) Now jungle fiend, you are become prey. My prey. And my hunger grows."

LONG PAUSE.

FLEET:

You ate a panther?

WHITLOCK: Yes I did, but that's not the point. Prey doesn't look you in the face, Inspector. I can't be hunted, and neither can anyone in my pack. Do you understand me?

FLEET: I get your meaning.

WHITLOCK: Now if you don't mind I have better things to be doing than continuing to discuss the death of an ancient scientist who stopped being relevant the day the Tower was switched on. So I'm letting you go this time, if only so as to draw a line under this Salik tedium.

FLEET: They'll be no drawing of lines until I know what it is that one of your warders was doing at Mrs Hampshire's lodging house. Do you deny it?

WHITLOCK: No, Warder Ralgrieve was there. Come on out Ralgrieve. Fleet is curious about what you were doing breaking into the lodging house. Suspicious, wouldn't you say?

RALGRIEVE: Most suspicious.

WHITLOCK: Most suspicious.

FLEET: It is most suspicious!

RALGRIEVE: I was there because Salik asked us to help him retrieve his notebook. He'd received a ransom note just before visiting the Tower which told him to go to that lodging house.

FLEET: Why didn't he tell me?

WHITLOCK: Why would he? He had the Warders of the Tower at his service. He needed protection to go to such a dangerous event. Warder Ralgrieve offered to assist him.

RALGRIEVE: When he was killed, we decided to go to the meeting anyway to see if we could learn who had robbed him, thinking it might lead us to his killer.

WHITLOCK: Ralgrieve here was to take the element of surprise and break into the room at the appointed hour. Only, the room was empty, and then you appeared. And you gave chase.

FLEET: He was wearing a mask and breaking into a building, of course I gave chase!

WHITLOCK: Anyway you had your little scuffle and that led to where we are now.

FLEET: So you didn't retrieve Salik's notebook from the thief?

RALGRIEVE: You scared him off with your barging in, didn't you?

FLEET: You scared him off with your smashing in the window!

WHITLOCK: Enough! This is tiresome. Inspector, we have satisfied your curiosity but it's time for you to leave. I am a patient man. I understand your tenacity. But if I hear that you've come near the Tower, or you've harassed my Warders, or you are in any way continuing to explore the death of Salik, I will have you bound and thrown to the ravens. Do I make myself clear?

FLEET: Perfectly.

WHITLOCK: Your journalist friend is waiting for you on the street. Ralgrieve, show the Inspector out.

FLEET: I can find my own way.

WHITLOCK: Come now, Inspector. Warder Ralgrieve is a fine man. I'm sure you'll get on like your house on fire.

SCENE 4.

NARRATOR: The Tower had become such a fixed part of the city's skyline that Fleet, like most Londoners, didn't really notice it anymore. But his proximity to it, as he was escorted through the Tower compound, made him feel as though he was seeing it for the first time, and it was a staggering sight. A sky-piercing vertical mile of pure, industrial majesty; a slender, smooth cylinder about the width of a church, with windows every 10 storeys or so. On the 70th floor, Fleet noticed, the windows shone with a slightly different hue – they had clearly been replaced more recently than the rest.

F/X: Heavy metal door shutting.

CLARA: Fleet, there you are. What did Whitlock say?

FLEET: That the Warders are just trying to help, and that they won't take too kindly to anyone but them investigating what happened to Salik.

CLARA: Do you believe them?

FLEET: About the last bit, yes.

CLARA: So what's our next move?

FLEET: Can I assume that whatever my next move is, you're likely to follow me?

CLARA: Yes.

FLEET: I suppose if I know where you are there's less chance of you causing trouble. How do you feel about a trip to the seaside?

CLARA: Excited! We could solve the murder and have an ice cream.

FLEET: Promise me you won't get us arrested this time.

CLARA: (LEAVING) I promise nothing!

SCENE 5.

NARRATOR: To the weary Even Greater Londoner, the city provided a variety of entertainments and distractions. The gambling man would make his wagers at the St Alban's Equine Electrovelodrome, taking into account the breeding of the stallions, the skill of the horse-cycle engineers, and the past performance of the jockeys in their critical task of controlling the beast and machine at speeds not particularly compatible with remaining conscious. Meanwhile, the learned gentlewoman might spend an hour choosing a few new audio cylinders to borrow from the Gloucester Librarium, a collection of all existing and possible works of fiction, organised by theme into three buildings with the names "Marriage", "Murder" and, the largest by far, "Both".

But all Londoners agreed that when it came to restoring the soul with a spot of relaxation, there was no substitute for a visit to the Pleasure Coast. The Pleasure Coast had come to Population Contentment Secretary Archaeopterus Blithe in a dream. How, he had wondered, could the surging population of Even Greater London be kept content? No single seaside town or beachfront would suffice. Instead, 114 miles of coastline would be given over solely to fun and enjoyment, from children shrieking with delight at the free extra scoop of ice cream given to them by an algorithmically whimsical service automaton, to couples enjoying an unnerving, but nevertheless romantic ride on a Ferris sphere. When even this vast expanse of coastline struggled under the demand of London's sun-seeking crowds, the city simply expanded onto piers, a few at first, but soon hundreds, and extending further and further out into the sea until they found their natural limit, the warning fire of French gunboats.

F/X: Crowded pier. Amusements.

CLARA: So, you think someone on this pier might know who stole Salik's notebook?

FLEET: Yes. An old friend. Well, not so much 'friend'. But her information's kept her out of prison on a number of occasions.

CLARA: How will you find her?

FLEET: I don't know. Let's take a stroll.

PAUSE.

CLARA: Any brothers or sisters?

FLEET: Who? Salik?

CLARA: You!

FLEET: Oh. Why?

CLARA: I'm just interested! Or, tell me how you became a detective.

FLEET: I passed the exam.

CLARA: But what inspired you?

FLEET: I knew that if I passed the exam, I'd be a detective.

F/X: FORTUNE-TELLING MACHINES (AS REQUIRED):

MADAM FORTUNA (1): Know your fate.
(2): Cross my palm with silver and learn the secrets of your future.
(3): The mysteries of your destiny revealed.
(4): Will you find true love and contentment?

THESE UNDER:

CLARA: Well if you're not going to share facts then I will have to do so for the both of us. I'm from Yorkshire, I have a mother and a brother both living, one sister deceased and a father lost at sea. I have two birds, and once, when I was young, mother caught me reading a sensation novel and threatened to send me to the Mesmer Institute.

FLEET: Sorry, what *is* that noise?

CLARA: I think it's coming from these booths. "*Madam Fortuna: Know your fate*". Want a go?

FLEET: No, I bought a quilt of my horoscope so I'm all set.

CLARA: Pfft! Well then I will have a go!

F/X: Coin inserted. Automaton springs to life,
speaking in recordings.

MADAM FORTUNA: (D) Look into my eyes child! Ah! I see a bright future, full of happiness. I see...

F/X: JARRING BEEPING NOISES

(WITHOUT ACCENT) If you want to hear more about your future, please insert another three pence coin.

CLARA: Another! What a con!

FLEET: Hang on a minute. Do as it says.

CLARA: Why? It's nothing less than daylight robbery.

FLEET: Humour me.

F/X: Inserts another coin

MADAM FORTUNA: I see a tall dark stranger, and a long life if you follow these steps:

F/X: JARRING BEEPING NOISES

(WITHOUT ACCENT) If you want to hear more on how not to die, please insert more coins.

FLEET: Very clever, very clever indeed! Now where is she?

CLARA: Where is who?

FLEET: Why Madam Fortuna of course.

CLARA: Another one? Are you holding out for a particular fortune? Are you lonely? Did you propose to someone, did they turn you down?

FLEET: Shhh! She must be around here somewhere... Ah! I have you now...

CLARA: Who? Oh no! Was the woman who jilted you a fortune teller? Are you cursed? Is that why you're so sad all the time?

FLEET: What are you talking about? I'm not sad all the time! Right, time to meet Madam Fortuna.

CLARA: That one's out of order. Look, the sign.

FLEET: Exactly. And yet a man was just using it. Bit odd, don't you think?

CLARA: Ooooh! A ruse!

FLEET: Let's go.

PAUSE.

F/X: KNOCKING ON GLASS.

FLEET: Hello Janet.

MADAM FORTUNA: I am Madam Fortuna, and I'm fresh out of fortunes for today. Goodbye.

FLEET: Your name is Janet Forton and you're a crook.

MADAM FORTUNA: (DROPPING ACCENT) Inspector! Didn't recognise you at first.

FLEET: Mm hmm.

MADAM FORTUNA: What a pleasure!

FLEET: I'm sure. I need some information.

MADAM FORTUNA: What? No pleasantries? "You're looking well Janet, how's the family?"

FLEET: Your family are all in prison, convicted on your testimony!

MADAM FORTUNA: They had it coming, the snakes.

FLEET: And I see you've added selling quack fortunes to your repertoire of cons.

MADAM FORTUNA: Not a con if people know they're fake. Just a bit of fun at the seaside. People love it! You seen all the Madam Fortuna machines I've had to make to keep up with demand? Nothing criminal about that.

FLEET: In which case I'm sure you won't mind me taking a look at the package that man just left with you. Weekly groceries, was it?

MADAM FORTUNA: Inspector, what is this? We're friends of old!

FLEET: And friends often help friends with information, don't they?

MADAM FORTUNA: Alright. But let's go somewhere more discreet. I know the perfect place.

SCENE 6.

NARRATOR:

The Pleasure Coast is perhaps best understood through its most popular offering: the countless smoky, dingy Stickleball parlours.

Stickleball was played like this. The player or 'Tent' sits at a stickleball machine, alongside dozens of other such machines and players. Having made their wager in the form of a donation when entering the building, and receiving a basket of tokens in return, the tent would place a token into the Stickleball machine and pull the game lever. At this point, thirty six short wooden rods would begin tumbling from the top of the machine, knocked about, spun around, shot back upwards and occasionally incinerated by an intricate layout of pins, shelves, paddles and spinning, flaming semi-circles. Flashing lights across the machine indicated facts about the location and orientation of the rods, the time since the round began, the weather in Hastings, and partial information about the rods being played by the person sat next to you, whose winnings would be shared by you if your rods match their paddles at the end of the game or the beginning of the quarter-hour. The object of Stickleball was to have fewer vertical rods than horizontal, or exactly as many severed as varnished, when they are all caught by the sprung traps or 'claws' at the base of the machine. In the event of a tie, the player can add another token to continue, as they can in the event of winning or losing, or the uncommon but spectacular fourth possible outcome. Like so much else at the Pleasure Coast, Stickleball was a masterpiece in human sensory bafflement. Outside of its entertainment value, its popularity came from the fact that the odds were very slightly in the customer's favour. The house recouped these losses partly in the form of smelling salts to calm the player's nerves after a narrow victory or extended double-rake; but mostly from having punters walk out happily with their winnings and charging a commission to the pickpockets who would rob them within seconds.

The Stickleball parlours were some of the busiest and noisiest places in the whole Pleasure Coast, and for this reason presented the perfect meeting place for holding private conversations.

F/X: Background noise of a stickleball parlour

JANET: So. How can I be of service?

CLARA: We're looking for a pickpocket.

JANET: Take a walk on the pier dressed as you are. They'll find you.

FLEET: A specific pickpocket.

JANET: They're all specific once you get to know them! They're human beings, Inspector.

FLEET: What about a pickpocket skilled enough to pick a man's pocket inside his own home? The home of Dr Salik, who was murdered shortly after.

JANET: Murdered? No, no, I don't know anything about no murder.

CLARA: Yes, but you do know something don't you? When the Inspector mentioned Salik's name, you winced.

JANET: Clever girl, I could do with you at an upcoming whist tournament which I'm

FLEET: Which you're?

JANET: Not involved in in any way, forget I mentioned it.

FLEET: I'll forget you mentioned it when you tell us what you know.

JANET: I didn't have anything to do with killing him Fleet! I only work in purses and jewels, you know that!

CLARA: But you do know who robbed him?

FLEET: Come clean Janet, if you don't cooperate and are in any way implicated in Salik's death, I doubt they'll spare you the gallows this time.

JANET: I swear I didn't even know he was dead! All I know is a gentleman came to my booth, said he'd been given my name as someone who knew how to procure things.

FLEET: Who was he?

JANET: I don't ask names, and I never saw his face. All I had to do was to steal whatever could be found in Dr Salik's breast pocket.

CLARA: So *you* robbed him?

JANET: Nah. I like to sub-contract. Give something back.

FLEET: How very public spirited of you.

JANET: But I never found out what it was that had been stolen.

CLARA: Your man didn't come back?

JANET: Well, the first one – Harry – I sent to the Carstol docks, to intercept him as he arrived.

FLEET: Yes, we met. Fisherman-type.

JANET: Did he do his fisherman? I love that. "Oh, Agatha!" Used to be an actor, so talented, you really believe he is who he's being. Anyway next thing I know he's in handcuffs in a hospital with an armed guard!

FLEET: Salik electrocuted him.

JANET: Poor Harry. Well, prison'll give him a chance to do his one man Faustus. Oh it's haunting, Inspector. Haunting.

CLARA: So what about the other one? You said you sent more than one?

JANET: Oh yeah. Well, Salik made it back to his house, and he clearly couldn't be confronted in public or when he was aware. I needed special help. So I called in a few favours and got an introduction.

CLARA: Introduction to whom?

JANET: The only one that counts. El Fantasma.

F/X: Classical spanish guitar.

CLARA: Who?

FLEET: He's not real.

JANET: He is.

FLEET: You saw him?

JANET: Not his face, but we met. He liked the idea of the challenge.

CLARA: So this Fantasma, he's a famous thief?

FLEET: He's a myth. Thieves' fairy tale.

JANET: I heard he once stole a man's shirt from his body, without taking off the jacket!

CLARA: So this Fantasma went to rob Salik? But didn't come back?

JANET: Wasn't at the rendezvous. Probably decided to sell it to a higher bidder. But he did return the advance fee I paid him. I found it in me turban. (PAUSE) But how?

FLEET: And the person who engaged your services?

JANET: Haven't heard from him since.

FLEET: And El Fantasma? Can you arrange an introduction?

JANET: The introduction's already been made.

FLEET: What are you talking about?

JANET: Check your pocket.

FLEET: An appointment card, just like the one Salik had!

JANET: Oh good, there is a card. I was just guessing. But amazing isn't he. Oh I see your other friend is here again.

FLEET: Other friend?

JANET: Yeah, the one you've had following us since the pier. Worried I'd give you the slip?

FLEET: No. There's no one, who are you talking about...

CLARA: (GASPS)

FLEET: What is it?

CLARA: It's that Warder from the tower....

FLEET: Ralgrieve.

JANET: You're being followed by a Warder?

CLARA: Why would he follow us out here? And out of uniform?

FLEET: I can't think of a good reason. Only awful reasons.

JANET: Well look, don't take this personal, but I'm gonna ditch you, because it looks like you're gonna get murdered.

CLARA: Murdered?

FLEET: Janet!

JANET: Oh people never like the bad fortunes do they? (LEAVING)
Good luck Inspector, pleasure as always and all that.

FLEET: Come on, let's get out of here, before he spots us.

SCENE 7.

F/X: Pier. Crowds.

CLARA: So when's the meeting with El Fantasma?

FLEET: The card says "dusk". You'd think he could choose an actual time, but—

CLARA: Does it say where? No, there's just pictures of tents. Tents?

FLEET: An encampment.

CLARA: What does that mean?

FLEET: The Brunelians.

SCENE 8.

NARRATOR:

The Brunelians, of course, were the immense workforce of Chief Engineer of the Empire Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Wherever one turned in Even Greater London one was always confronted with some gargantuan structure of Brunel's design - such was his drive and passion for urban development, and after the building of the Tower, the possibilities for such development seemed to Brunel to be limitless. And with every new project, Brunel's workforce grew. Engineers, builders, metalworkers, pipe-fitters, navvies, and tradesmen of all other kinds were drawn to his projects. Eventually there were so many he had to split them into divisions, and appoint subordinates to lead each division with day-to-day autonomy but still under Brunel's leadership and guidance about the common end. The workers were highly trained, intensely focused and their loyalty to Brunel was absolute. What Brunel had was, in fact, an army, and it was to the great relief of the general public that Brunel's ambitions never went any higher than building yet more bridges, tunnels and train tracks. Occasionally there were rumours of Brunel being seen wearing a purple toga, but this was never confirmed by anyone worth mentioning.

After a while the Brunelians became something of a natural force of the London landscape. You would never know that they were coming – they were too organic to predict, too fast to track, too large to reason with, and quite understandably they didn't hold themselves subject to any planning processes. You would leave for work one morning, and when you returned you would find your house underneath a viaduct stretching into the distance in either direction, criss-crossing the mesh of bridges and towers already making the horizon something people went to the seaside to remind themselves of.

Building site at dusk.

F/X: Wind, creaking constructions.

CLARA:

How are we ever going to find El Fantasma in this place? It's immense! What do you think it is they are building? It looks like a viaduct, but it's not clear to what.

FLEET:

Oh they won't let that slow them down. If Brunel thinks this is a good spot for a viaduct, another team will be here next week to build the train line either side. Then it definitely will be a

good place for a viaduct. Otherwise there'll just be train tracks with a gap where a viaduct should be. Can't have that.

CLARA: Fleet, look!

FLEET: Where?

CLARA: Don't look!

FLEET: What?

CLARA: He's behind us. Just tie your shoelace or something and take a peek. It's the Warder.

FLEET: What? Oh you're right. Damn it. We've got to lose him. I'll lead him away and give him the slip. Try and find El Fantasma.

CLARA: How?

FLEET: Surely you're not short of an idea? I'm so sorry I can't stay around to enjoy this. (SHOUTING) Warder! I'm just off for a quick jog through the building works! Won't you join me? (SPEAKING) Oh god it worked. Bye.

F/X: Running.

CLARA: That's fine. I'll just stay here and enjoy this building site.

PAUSE

F/X: Clatter.

Hello?

PAUSE

F/X: Whisper. Clatter.

Who's there? You might as well show yourself. I've heard you coming.

EL FANTASMA: (OFF) No you didn't. I've been here a little while. Sometimes I have to make a racket to give people a sporting chance.

CLARA: So. El Fantasma. Come on, where are you?

EL FANTASMA: (CLOSE) Right beside you.

CLARA: (SHRIEKS)

EL FANTASMA: You are in no physical danger, miss. I am only a thief.

CLARA: I've heard you can steal anything. Is this true?

EL FANTASMA: Is it true? Young miss, I have stolen papers from the cabinet secretary's briefcase as he walked surrounded by a guard of eight men. I took the d'Enfant necklace from around the neck of the grand opera madame Chenous *while she was on stage, mid-aria*. And whilst we've been talking I've taken the liberty of relieving you of your bracelet ...

CLARA: Hey!

EL FANTASMA: ... your pendant ...

CLARA: Give me that.

EL FANTASMA: And this delightful broach.

CLARA: I wasn't wearing a broach.

EL FANTASMA: No, but it would look *mucho más bonito* on you than the woman I took it from. The princess of Hanover.

CLARA: I don't want that.

EL FANTASMA: As entertaining as it is to list my achievements, I think we should get on with discussing what you're really after. The notebook of Dr Salik.

CLARA: How did you know that?

EL FANTASMA: I found this appointment card in your jacket just now when I handed you your bracelet back.

CLARA: Stop doing that!

EL FANTASMA: I gave this card to the doctor when I took his notebook. Moreover, I saw you at the boarding house when the doctor and I were due to meet, asking questions with your detective friend.

CLARA: You were there?

EL FANTASMA: I was observing from a distance. The notebook is clearly too valuable for me to have simply traded it to Janet Forton, and I was going to offer the doctor a chance to buy it back. But he never appeared. Instead, a journalist, a detective and a Yeoman Warder. Not my usual crowd, you understand, and now it seems the doctor is deceased. So here I am. A highly valuable notebook, no suitable client to sell it to and no victim to whom to ransom it back. What a terrible waste. Perhaps I shall simply burn it.

CLARA: Give it to me!

EL FANTASMA: Why?

CLARA: To help us understand what happened to Salik. Perhaps it contained valuable information. Perhaps the Warders wanted that information and he wouldn't share it. I don't know, but it is the only lead we have.

EL FANTASMA: Well if that is true then I'm afraid you have no lead at all. Because the whole thing is written in a code even I cannot solve.

CLARA: Do you solve any codes?

EL FANTASMA: No. No, you're quite right. The whole thing is written in a code, and I cannot solve any codes.

CLARA: Then let me try. Give me the notebook.

EL FANTASMA: Why do you care about Dr Salik so much?

CLARA: He was murdered. Somebody should.

SCENE 9.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, Fleet had been leading Warder Ralgrieve deeper into the Brunel encampment. This had gone entirely to plan. Just not Fleet's plan.

FLEET: I'm trapped.

NARRATOR: Fleet was indeed trapped, high, high up on a half-built construction that might the next day be a bridge, but that night was empty, the workers having retired to their camp to rest, gamble and sing bawdy songs about Brunel. Fleet had crossed a beam hoping to find a way down, but none was to be found, and the Warder made his approach.

FLEET: Damn it, there's no way down from here. (SEARCHING)
Umm—

RALGRIEVE: (SHOUTING) Fleet!

FLEET: Stop right there, Ralgrieve!

RALGRIEVE: Fleet, I'm coming across.

FLEET: Stay back! (THROWS SOMETHING)

F/X: Thud/clatter

RALGRIEVE: Hey!

FLEET: I won't warn you again, Ralgrieve!

RALGRIEVE: Fleet, stop—

FLEET: (THROWS SOMETHING)

F/X: Thud/clatter

RALGRIEVE: Ow! Stop it! Stop throwing things!

FLEET: Why on earth should I? You're trying to kill me!

RALGRIEVE: I'm not trying to kill you, I'm trying to talk to you!

FLEET: And then kill me!

RALGRIEVE: No! Just talk!

FLEET: About how you're going to kill me.

RALGRIEVE: Fleet, I need your help!

FLEET: What?

RALGRIEVE: I need your help, Fleet. I'm in great danger.

FLEET: And you want to talk to me about it.

RALGRIEVE: Yes!

PAUSE.

FLEET: You'd better not try and kill me.

RALGRIEVE: I'm not going to. Fleet, you might be the only one who can help me. Can I come across?

FLEET: This is why you've been following me ever since I left the Tower? You need my help?

RALGRIEVE: Yes!

FLEET: Tell me why you were breaking into the lodging house!

RALGRIEVE: I told you at the Tower! I was trying to uncover what had happened to Salik, I was following orders!

FLEET: Did the Warders kill Salik?

RALGRIEVE: You don't understand!

FLEET: What's to understand? I know he fell from the Tower. Tell me who killed him!

F/X: Low horn.

RALGRIEVE: They're here.

FLEET: Who's here?

RALGRIEVE: Listen to me, Fleet. The Warders, we've been infiltrated. I discovered them today.

FLEET: Who?

RALGRIEVE: Six of us – friends of mine! – I saw them meeting, they were wearing hoods, they were talking about their plans, about how the Warders suspect nothing! I saw them Fleet! But they saw me! I ran out and I've been trying to catch up with you ever since.

FLEET: Why?

RALGRIEVE: Because we've been infiltrated! Who else would I tell? Who knows how many of them there are! You're from the outside, I can trust you!

F/X: Low horn, louder.

We have to get out of here!

FLEET: Who are they, Ralgrieve?

RALGRIEVE: I don't know! But they said there were many. They called themselves–

FLEET: Yes?

RALGRIEVE: They–

F/X: Low horn, much louder.

They called themselves–

FLEET: Just say the name, Ralgrieve!

RALGRIEVE: They called themselves, the Obfu–

F/X: Something flying through the air, hitting
RALGRIEVE.

(SCREAMS) My eyes!

FLEET: Ralgrieve!

RALGRIEVE: (LOSES BALANCE, SCREAMS WHILE FALLING)

F/X: Body hitting the ground far below.

FLEET: My god. Who– who are you? Stay back! Oh, both of– all three of y– Right, the whole lot of you, stay back! Your hoods don't scare me! But all the same, stay back!

CLARA: (DISTANT) Fleet!

F/X: Cab horn.

FLEET: Hello?

CLARA: Down here, Fleet!

FLEET: Clara! Is that you?

CLARA: Yes, I found a cab. Thought we might need one to find our way out of here ... Jump down, Fleet!

FLEET: Hey, all of you, I said stay back! How are there more of you, where are you coming from? How can you even climb up here with those hoods?

CLARA: Jump, Fleet!

FLEET: It's too high!

CLARA: Slide down that metal tube! We'll drive underneath.

FLEET: The gravel chute? What if it's full of debris and twisted metal?

CLARA: You could stay up there instead?

FLEET: Oh, damn it. (SCREAMS)

F/X: Jumping, sliding, metallic sounds, followed by canvas tearing.

ALL: (COUGHING)

FLEET: Hello.

CLARA: Driver, get us out of here!

CABBIE: Certainly, miss. However, as we did pull to a halt briefly to pick up another passenger, that'll be an additional shilling–

FLEET: You! What the devil are you doing here?

CABBIE: Hello, sir! I'm on holiday, but who am I to resist the inevitability of the invisible hand guiding my services to the needy and shillingful.

FLEET: Just give him the money, it'll be quicker.

CLARA: Here!

CABBIE: Right you are! Hold on everyone!

F/X: Horses move on. cab pulls away.

FLEET: Thank you.

CABBIE: No trouble at all—

FLEET: Not you!

CLARA: What happened to Ralgrieve?

FLEET: He's dead. He fell.

CLARA: You killed him?

FLEET: I didn't do anything! These people, these hooded people, they turned up and they blinded him! Then he lost his footing. He said he found them in the Tower, they've infiltrated the Warders! Who are they? There must have been a dozen of them, and their robes, they had this symbol—

CLARA: Of a dagger wrapped in thorns.

FLEET: Yes! How did you know that? Do you know who they are?

CLARA: No. But Salik did. Let me show you his notebook.

END

EPISODE 4

SCENE 1.

NARRATION:

It was morning, and all across Even Greater London the people were beginning their day. Of course, the postmen had been working for hours already, and many people before leaving their home would see they had received a letter or two. A bill, perhaps, or a note from a dear friend.

Inspector Fleet had received one letter. It read "Today is a new day. And look how the last one turned out."

It was a fair observation, no doubt sent by one of the government's new affirmational note printing engines, designed to get the extra mile out of the city's workforce by sending them the occasional encouraging letter.

The engineers were still working on the rather bleak tone and content of the messages, although they wouldn't succeed for the simple reason that the machine was right and the bleakness was perfectly apt.

Yesterday had indeed gone poorly for Fleet. Having set out to find a notebook stolen from the murdered scientist Dr Salik, and spending half the day pursued by a Warder he had caught fleeing from a related crime scene, he had ended up watching that same man plummet to his death at the hands of a group of hooded, robed figures, presumably members of the shadowy organisation Fleet now knew to have infiltrated the Tower, perhaps the most important building in Even Greater London. Fleet had escaped with his life, but this meant only that he would need to explain himself.

And so the morning had come with its bare sunlight and demand for answers, and soon Fleet found himself where no man deserves to be sent: his place of employment.

SCENE 2.

FLEET: Is Chief Inspector Keller in, Miss Waverley?

MISS WAVERLEY: No, he's been down near the Pleasure Coast since early this morning.

FLEET: The Pleasure Coast?! Oh no.

MISS WAVERLEY: Oh yes.

FLEET: Oh dear. Did he say anything about me before he left?

MISS WAVERLEY: He left a message for you actually. Here is it.

FLEET: (READING) "Fleet. Call me immediately."

MISS WAVERLEY: No, that's not right.

FLEET: That's what it says.

MISS WAVERLEY: Let me see. No, it's more (SHOUTING) "Fleet! Call me immediately!"

FLEET: It's written down. How can you tell the difference?

MISS WAVERLEY: It's basic graphology, Archie. The study of character through handwriting. I've been listening to a wax cylinder book on the subject.

FLEET: That seems an unnecessarily challenging way to absorb that knowledge.

MISS WAVERLEY: You see here, the kerning of the lettering. It's hurried and irregular, indicating impatience. And the loops are narrow and forward-leaning, also indicating impatience. And finally you see the paper is covered in a fine dust of the pen he shattered in his powerful fist.

FLEET: Indicating impatience.

MISS WAVERLEY: No. Biblical fury.

FLEET: Right.

MISS WAVERLEY: You can use the locution glass in Keller's office.

SCENE 3.

NARRATOR: Inspector Fleet stepped into the office and switched on the device on the centre of the desk. Small waves and eddies began to appear in the silvery square, swirling chaotically until the liquid took the unmistakable form of Chief Inspector Keller's moustache.

KELLER: Fleet! Is that you?

FLEET: Yes, are you well, sir?

KELLER: Oh, so glad you asked Fleet, because as it happens, I'm not. Do you know where I am?

FLEET: The Pleasure Coast, sir?

KELLER: Well done Fleet. And would you like to take a guess as to why I am here? Go on, guess.

FLEET: Me?

KELLER: Right again, Fleet! Points-a-plenty! In the middle of the night I was awakened – along with Mrs Keller – by a call from Chief Warder Whitlock. Imagine my surprise when I found out that not only had you gone to the Pleasure Coast without informing me, but you thought it would be a good idea in between ice creams and games of stickleball to go up to the top of a half-built railway bridge and cause a Yeoman Warder to fall to his death!

FLEET: No sir, I didn't!

KELLER: Oh really Fleet, then how do you explain the local constabulary discovering Ralgrieve's broken corpse at the precise location you specified in a telegram which said "Dead body, have fled scene, will explain tomorrow."?

FLEET: It's a long story.

KELLER: A long story? What a rare treat! Some sort of Wagnerian Norse epic, perhaps? Should I relieve myself now or will there be an interval? Or perhaps it's more of a romance, in which case I will get myself a cup of cocoa, curl into my favourite blanket, and await the ripping of bodices!

FLEET: It's more of–

KELLER: Just explain yourself, damn you!

FLEET: Right. Well. We were tracking down whoever stole Salik's notebook, and there were these fortune-telling machines, but it was actually Janet Forton...

FADE

... a thief called El Fantasma, who I didn't think was real but he left an appointment card for us in my pocket and so Miss Entwhistle...

FADE

... I was cornered by Ralgrieve on top of the half-built viaduct, and he was begging for my protection from this secret organisation who had infiltrated the Yeoman Warders...

FADE

... with a sort of (MIMICS HORN SOUND) and they were wearing robes and hoods, then they killed Ralgrieve, and Miss Entwhistle and I made a break for it in an overpriced cab.

PAUSE

KELLER: My God, Fleet.

FLEET: I know!

KELLER: I'd no idea you were such a talented fictionsmith. Have you considered sending a yarn or two into *All The Year Round*? I'd say you might be Dickens' successor if the old man hadn't developed a printing press with an in-built capacity for producing mawkish three-volume drivel.

FLEET: I'm telling the truth.

KELLER: Now look here Fleet, I'm not saying *you* killed Ralgrieve. I daresay he slipped during a chase, but let's not have any more of this mysterious hooded figures popcockery. Whitlock is, understandably, insensible with fury at the loss of one of his men. But he's agreed to let the whole thing go if we cease our investigations and smooth things over with the Brunelians.

Naturally, to save your neck, I agreed. Now please, for the love of all that is holy, go and arrest some pickpockets and forget all about this Salik business.

SCENE 4.

MISS WAVERLEY: How did it go?

FLEET: As I should have expected I suppose.

MISS WAVERLEY: He told you to stop investigating?

FLEET: Yes.

MISS WAVERLEY: Oh well, perhaps it's for the best.

FLEET: Or is it?

MISS WAVERLEY: Probably?

FLEET: He's only told me to stop investigating in the official sense.

MISS WAVERLEY: So, in the only sense.

FLEET: Keller can't openly defy Whitlock, but out there somewhere is a group of hooded figures who murdered a Warder and quite possibly Dr Salik. Who knows what they're plotting? Of course he wants me to investigate!

MISS WAVERLEY: Are you sure about that?

FLEET: Sure enough to do it. Although, keep it to yourself, for Keller's own protection of course.

MISS WAVERLEY: Of course.

FLEET: Now, would you be so kind as to send a telegram for me, Miss Waverley? To Miss Clara Entwhistle of the Morning Chronicler. "London Central West, stop. One hour, stop. Ginger bun, stop."

MISS WAVERLEY: Ginger bun?

FLEET: It's something she said. They get the job done. Like Miss Entwhistle herself.

MISS WAVERLEY: Would you like me to pick some up for you?

FLEET: (LEAVING) It's a metaphor, Miss Waverley! She'll understand.

SCENE 5.

F/X: Train station sounds.

CLARA: So you didn't actually bring any ginger buns? Never mind, I'm sure we can find something in Oxford.

FLEET: How on earth did you know we were going to Oxford?

CLARA: Well what have we got to go on? Two people dead in mysterious circumstances, hooded figures and a symbol of a dagger wrapped in thorns. No doubt you're after an expert on secret societies, and I happen to know from my mother's numerous copies of the popular conspiracy periodical *Your Fears Are Real*, that one of the leading enthusiasts in this field is a Donal Mcrory, Professor of Engineering at the Oxford Campus of Swindon National Informatorium. Stephenson College, if I'm not mistaken. And a quick peek at Bradshaw's Railway Handbook told me that a train to Oxford would be departing just after we were due to meet. So here we are. And yet not one ginger bun.

FLEET: We'll find some when we get there.

CLARA: I'm holding you to that.

F/X: Train station announcement sound.

ANNOUNCER: (D) The next train for Oxford will depart in 15 minutes from platform 53. If you are currently south of platform 27, you will not make it.

SCENE 6.

NARRATOR: Like everywhere south of the Midlands Boundary Forest, Oxford had been absorbed into the unbroken urban fabric of Even Greater London. The university, with its ancient stone colleges, its quads and its cloisters, was still quite lovely, even if it had been brought under the organisational structure of Swindon National Informatorium. It had long since dispensed with offering any subjects not directly conducive to the technological advancement of the city. If you were a student there, you were a student of some form of engineering.

Indeed, such was the demand for learning in this field that entirely new colleges sprung up in the north of the campus, awash with funds from great families eager to give back and perhaps influence a share of young minds to devote themselves after graduation to their enterprises. And so there arose the colleges of Arkwright, Babbage, Bazalgette, Lovelace and, most imposing of all, Stephenson.

Clara and Fleet arrived at the college entrance, which stood in the shadow of an enormous bronze statue of Robert Stephenson himself, straddling an equally enormous locomotive. As they entered the college, Clara and Fleet stopped at the lodge to speak to a porter.

PORTER: Good day to you, sir and miss. How can I be of assistance?

FLEET: Good afternoon, I'm Inspector Fleet and this is...

CLARA: Miss Entwistle, Morning Chronicler.

F/X: ZAP.

FINNEGAN: (SCREAMS)

CLARA: What on earth...

AUTOMATED VOICE: Finnegan, Undergraduate, Civil Engineering.

PORTER: Morning, Mr Finnegan!

FINNEGAN: Hello!

CLARA: ... was that?

PORTER: What was what?

F/X: ZAP.

TOMKIN: (SCREAMS)

AUTOMATED VOICE: Tomkin, Undergraduate, Electromechanical Engineering.

FLEET: That! What's happening?

PORTER: Saw your LBW yesterday, Mr Tomkin!

TOMKIN: (LAUGHING) Give over.

CLARA: Why do people keep screaming as they go past your window?

PORTER: The electric shock, I suppose.

FLEET: But why?

PORTER: Well, it hurts.

CLARA: But what is it for?

PORTER: The scream recognition?

FLEET: The what?

PORTER: Oh, just security. What with all these labs and expensive equipment and whatnot, you can't be too careful about who's coming into college. Identification papers are easily forged these days, but you try to replicate a man's scream after he's had 5000 volts run through him, can't be done.

F/X: ZAP.

CRAINE: (ODD SCREAM)

AUTOMATED VOICE: Professor Craine, Senior Tutor, Material science.

PORTER: Case in point. Now, we don't have you two on cylinder but that's easily rectified. If you'll just step into the recording booth and roll up a sleeve.

FLEET: We're here to see Professor Donal Mcrory.

PORTER: I'm sure you are. Into the booth if you wouldn't mind.

CLARA: He knows we're coming.

PORTER: Lovely. Into the booth you go.

FLEET: Why don't you call up to his rooms and ask him to come meet us here.

PORTER: Absolutely sir. Into the booth.

CLARA: I don't think we're getting around this.

FLEET: Fine. Let's go.

PORTER: Thank you kindly, sir and madam. Left sleeve up, there you go.

FLEET: Do you make everyone do this?

PORTER: Everyone except police, sir.

FLEET: I am police! Didn't you hear me say Inspector?

PORTER: Apologies, sir, I heard prospector.

FLEET: Prospector?

PORTER: Yes sir.

CLARA: Oh really.

FLEET: Let us out!

PORTER: Easier just to carry on, sir. I do apologise. Left sleeves right up.

FLEET: Let us out of here!

F/X: ZAP.

(SCREAM)

F/X: ZAP.

CLARA: (SCREAM) Hey, that zapped me in the leg! What on earth was the sleeve rolling for?

PORTER: Misdirection, miss, I do apologise. Please exit the booth, there you go, I'll let Professor Mcrory know you're here.

FLEET: Wonderful.

SCENE 7.

CLARA: Has the feeling in your leg come back yet?

FLEET: Not quite.

MCRORY: Fleet!

FLEET: Professor!

MCRORY: My goodness me! It's been too long, too damn long!

FLEET: Professor, allow me to introduce my associate, Miss Entwhistle.

MCRORY: Pleased to make your acquaintance, any friend of Fleet is a friend of mine. He saved my life you know! Many a year ago now, but I've never forgotten.

FLEET: Well, no need to...

MCRORY: Pedalo accident in Bognor Regis with the wife. Capsized, she did. The pedalo, not my wife. Though, now come to think of it, I suppose the wife did too. And this fellow here, not two days out of police training, came to our rescue.

CLARA: Did you indeed?

FLEET: It was nothing.

MCRORY: It wasn't nothing, you saved my life.

FLEET: Well...

CLARA: And your wife?

MCRORY: Oh no, she drowned.

CLARA: My goodness.

MCRORY: On a different day, in a different Regis, same pedalo.

CLARA: I'm so sorry.

MCRORY: It's not your fault, Fleet wasn't there to save her life again!

FLEET: I...

MCRORY: No, no Fleet! You mustn't blame yourself.

FLEET: I don't.

MCRORY: I know, I've been there myself. But the doctors assured me that she was extremely healthy when she died and could've lived for another 50 or 60 years. So there's some comfort.

FLEET: Is there?

MCRORY: No Fleet. You mustn't feel guilty. You saving her on that day in Bognor, that bought her a good two extra days.

CLARA: She died two days later?

FLEET: You went out on the pedalo again two days later?

MCRORY: That we did. We were undertaking a pedalo tour of the Regises. We never made it to Lyme!

CLARA: Oh dear.

FLEET: Right. Well, perhaps we could go somewhere a bit more private. There's a case I'd like your help with.

MCRORY: Of course. This way.

SCENE 8.

NARRATOR: Stephenson was the newest Oxford college, and rather unusual in that, inspired as it was by Stephenson's interest in locomotives, it was fairly narrow, but incredibly long, meaning that it took some time to walk from one end of the college to the other, where Professor Mcrory's study was located.

MCRORY: Come in, come in. Now, how can I help?

FLEET: It's about Dr Salik, Professor. He was murdered.

MCRORY: Oh dear! What a loss. What a mind! Do you know he spoke at my graduation? He sang a bit too. That was odd.

FLEET: It seems he was caught up in some sort of conspiracy involving a secret organisation.

McRORY: What makes you say that?

FLEET: Firstly, a man involved in the case was pursued to his death by a group of hooded figures.

McRORY: Oh lovely. Lovely. Professionally speaking, of course. Not the man's death. I'm sure he was a dear soul.

CLARA: He was a Warder of the Tower.

McRORY: Maybe not then. What else?

FLEET: Salik had a notebook, which was stolen from him and he said was the most valuable thing he possessed. We have it, and it contains drawings of a crest which match the robes of the hooded figures.

McRORY: Fascinating! But what kind of crest? Do show me.

CLARA: Here, Professor. A dagger wrapped in—

McRORY: (GASPS) My God. It's them.

CLARA: It's who?

McRORY: The Obfuscati.

FLEET: The Obfuscati?

McRORY: Powerful people, Inspector, joined together in common purpose, influencing events to their own ends. I do not know what they want – most likely simply more power – but they have their tentacles everywhere that matters.

FLEET: Including the Tower. The Warder they killed discovered them.

McRORY: This is not surprising. Only that he managed to elude them for long enough to tell you.

FLEET: But why would the Obfuscati kill Dr Salik?

McRORY: Their power comes from their secrecy. If they were exposed, they would be mortally wounded. I cannot imagine how Salik acquired the notebook, but this would be his undoing. They either need it or, more likely, need to make sure no-one else has it. And killing him for good measure, in case he remembered any of its contents.

CLARA: Perhaps it explains their plans. Why they've infiltrated the Tower. If only it wasn't all in runes and nonsense.

McRORY: I might be able to break the code. It won't be easy. I'll need time. Of course there is the question of safety.

CLARA: Of the notebook?

McRORY: Of us! Do they know you have it?

FLEET: They can probably work it out.

McRORY: Indeed. But so long as you haven't done anything reckless, then that should buy us a day or two.

FLEET: When you say reckless?

McRORY: Telling anyone about it, or using public transportation.

FLEET: Ah.

McRORY: Do you mean to tell me you came here by public transportation? In broad daylight?

FLEET: I wouldn't say *broad* daylight, overcast at be–

McRORY: Did you see anyone following you?

CLARA: No, no-one at all!

McRORY: You wouldn't see them.

FLEET: Then why did you ask us?

McRORY: We have to get out of h—

F/X: Something flies through the air and pierces the wall.

What was that?

FLEET: A dart!

CLARA: Where did it come from?

McRORY: It's punctured my tapestry!

FLEET: Get down you idiot!

CLARA: The window!

McRORY: It's ruined!

CLARA: Down here, Professor, behind the sofa!

McRORY: (EXCLAIMS)

F/X: Something flies through the air and pierces the wall.

FLEET: Another!

CLARA: We're pinned down!

McRORY: You fiend! How do you like... this report of last year's international symposium on metallurgy!

F/X: Book crashes against wall.

Or this dissertation on voltaic conduction!

F/X: Book crashes against wall.

Or this monograph I meant to read at the weekend!

F/X: Book hits person.

HOODED FIGURE: Ahh, my face!

FLEET: (WAR CRY)

F/X: RUNNING. PERSON TACKLED TO THE GROUND.

CLARA: Fleet!

F/X: TUSSLE. FIGHTING. UNDER:

HOODED FIGURE: Give me the notebook. You don't know what you're getting into.

FLEET: What?

HOODED FIGURE: What's happening is too big for you, Fleet, it's bigger than all of us.

FLEET: How can you expect me to give you the notebook now? After saying something like that?

HOODED FIGURE: Forget about the case, Fleet. Forget about Salik. Forget you ever heard the name Quaternius.

FLEET: I hadn't! Who's Quaternius?

F/X: SMACK.

HOODED FIGURE: (STRUCK) Ah!

FLEET: And I'll take that blowpipe too, thank you! Ha!

F/X: PIPE CRACKED IN HALF.

HOODED FIGURE: That was a gift!

F/X: SMACK.

FLEET: (STRUCK) Oof!

McRORY: No, the notebook!

HOODED FIGURE: A ha! Got it.

CLARA: A ha ha! I've got one of your darts. You're not going anywhere.

HOODED FIGURE: You think I care if you kill me?

CLARA: I think you might if it means you don't get to take the notebook wherever you're planning to take it.

HOODED FIGURE: Oh I'm not planning to take it anywhere.

CLARA: What?

FLEET: Professor, the fireplace—

F/X: THUD. FLAMES.

McRORY: No!

FLEET: What on earth, was it soaked in paraffin?

McRORY: Stop him! The window!

HOODED FIGURE: Ahh! (JUMPS)

CLARA: But... we're eight storeys up! My god...

McRORY: I told you. There's no lengths they won't—

F/X: MACHINERY, GETTING LOUDER, UNDER:

FLEET: What is that?

CLARA: A flying machine!

McRORY: Inside college grounds! Totally forbidden.

FLEET: He didn't kill himself at all!

HOODED FIGURE: (SHOUTING) Goodbye Fleet. Bad luck!

F/X: MACHINERY FLIES AWAY.

CLARA: The notebook! It might be salvageable!

McRORY: No, quite ruined.

PAUSE

FLEET: That's it. The notebook's destroyed. We don't have anything else. And they're planning something and we don't know what!

CLARA: If only we knew where that hooded figure was heading.

McRORY: Yes, if only a cool-headed professor, while apparently randomly throwing books, also struck our friend with a tracking device.

FLEET: Did you?

McRORY: No, I was terrified. However, it's possible the books themselves might have transferred some of their due date isotopes.

CLARA: Their what?

McRORY: Well you see, the librarians found that fines weren't doing a very good job of encouraging people to bring the books back. So I convinced them to use one of my less harmful novel substances to coat the front and back covers. That way, if a wayward undergraduate kept a copy of Billick longer than permitted, the librarians would simply look up the spectral breakdown of the isotope, hire a suitable portable teleradiograph and hunt down the culprit!

CLARA: Couldn't they also just ask the porters where that student's accommodations are?

McRORY: I suppose you could do that, but it wouldn't be very good for the finances of whoever's renting out the portable teleradiographs.

FLEET: Professor, do you—

F/X: DEVICE ACTIVATES

McRORY: Indeed! Come, we don't have much time.

FLEET: You can track him with that thing?

McRORY: Yes, but it doesn't have a large range. We need to keep up with him.

FLEET: A cab isn't fast enough.

CLARA: Do the police have a flying machine they could bring to us?

FLEET: Even if Keller didn't laugh in the silvery-liquid representation of my face, by the time it got here it would be too late. We need a vehicle here, now.

McRORY: (LAUGHS)

CLARA: What?

McRORY: (LAUGHS)

FLEET: What is it, Professor?

McRORY: (LAUGHS) I knew this day would come.

FLEET: What day? Professor, you're being alarming!

McRORY: Oh, you haven't even begun to be alarmed.

CLARA: What is it?!

McRORY: We can take the college!

PAUSE.

FLEET: What?

SCENE 9.

F/X: ENGINE ROOM. PISTONS, HYDRAULICS,
STEAM ETC.

CLARA: (COUGHS)

FLEET: (COUGHS)

McRORY: Welcome to the Senior Common Room!

FLEET: It's an engine room!

McRORY: Of learning.

FLEET: Half the room is full of coal!

McRORY: Yes, it's also the college's engine room.

CLARA: Professor, can you please expl—

McRORY: Dr. Tremaine, to your post.

TREMAINE: McRory, what is the meaning of—

McRORY: To your post! You've been taking the fireman stipend for 26 years and by god you are going to shovel that coal and keep that fire hot!

TREMAINE: But I have a keynote lecture to deliver tomorrow and I haven't started it.

McRORY: Shovel, man!

FLEET: Professor, when you say the college's engine room—

F/X: Bell rings.

McRORY: (SHOUTING) Pressure?

TREMAINE: (SHOUTING) 300!

CLARA: Why does the college have an engine, exactly?

McRORY: Because Stephenson was a flat out genius and he knew not to build a college that couldn't move itself at high speeds when needed!

FLEET: My god, it's a train!

McRORY: A train, Fleet? A train? Is *De Nachtwacht* a painting? Is Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony *5th Movement* a piece of music?

FLEET: Your tone suggests no, but none of your words do.

McRORY: This is the great man's masterpiece. A place of higher learning where young, energetic minds can be stoked with knowledge, and where the buildings themselves are set upon wheels upon tracks so the college can go wherever is required.

TREMAINE: Six hundred!

McRORY: Six hundred! Miss Entwhistle, what is the teleradiograph telling us about our airborne friend's trajectory?

CLARA: He's heading south-east. Straight to London Central, it seems.

McRORY: Then central-bound we will be! One moment.

F/X: Picking up a telephone.

Porters, switch us onto the mainline! Yes, we're firing her up. For the sake of the city! Now switch, damn you! Switch!

F/X: Hangs up.

Pressure!

TREMAINE: Nine hundred!

McRORY: Nine hundred! Releasing brakes!

FLEET: Professor—

McRORY: Fleet, what's that you're holding onto?

FLEET: What? I'm not holding onto anything!

McRORY: (LAUGHS)

F/X: BUILDING BEGINS TO MOVE.

FLEET: (SCREAMS)

SCENE 10.

NARRATOR: The pursuit was indeed thrilling, but Fleet spent it entirely unconscious, which is just as well, as the experience of riding a college moving at high speed is not a pleasant one. When he awoke, he found that not only had he arrived in London Central, but he was in a cab, Clara beside him. Professor McRory had volunteered to stay behind to explain matters to the Master of the college, who had spent the entire chase unable to escape from his bath, and was now both furious and wrinkly.

F/X: Cab.

FLEET: What happened?

CLARA: You fell backwards and knocked yourself out on the sherry table.

FLEET: Where are we?

CLARA: Just approaching the Thames. Our hooded friend landed about a mile back and proceeded on foot. We're only a few minutes behind now - the signal's getting stronger. Must be jumping onto a boat or something.

FLEET: A boat? What do you mean?

CLARA: What do you mean?

FLEET: Have a look out there.

CLARA: What on earth?

FLEET: What?

CLARA: Where are we?

FLEET: The Thames.

CLARA: The Thames is a river!

FLEET: No, the Thames was a river. Now it's ice.

CLARA: It's just frozen over for the winter.

FLEET: No, it's always ice, even through summer. Still, the skaters enjoy it.

NARRATOR: The Thames Glacier was one of Even Greater London's most popular recreational spots. It had once been a river of flowing, liquid water, where one could catch a quick ferry up to Windsor, relax in a romantic rowboat for two, or simply turn up at midnight and sink a few weighed-down bodies. Nowadays of course, the energy of the river was put to better use, providing part of the incalculable power requirements of the Tower, leaving the Thames entirely and permanently frozen, all the year round. The Glacier was from the outset fantastically popular. Young couples would hire skates and frolic joyfully; boys would cut holes in the ice hoping to fish, only to find the ice extended all the way down and the fish had to be excavated but were, nevertheless, still fresh; and for a shilling or two you could rent a sled and a dozen of the Midland's strongest wolves and mush your way up to Henley. Fleet and Clara were in the centre of the ice, near a small group of tented stalls serving various refreshments, when they realised the river wasn't the only thing that had gone cold.

CLARA: He's gone. We've lost him.

FLEET: Where's the signal now?

CLARA: There.

NARRATOR: A short distance away, some robes lay untidily on the ice, seemingly and indeed actually having been thrown there by someone in a great hurry who had discovered that cruellest of all betrayals, the betrayal by one's own outerwear.

FLEET: Damn it. Must have finally noticed the isotope on it.

CLARA: Well he can't have made it to the other side of the river yet, and I don't see anyone sliding about coatless like a loon. He must be hiding in one of these tents. Let's flush him out!

FLEET: But which one?

CLARA: Let's see. "Agwith's. Even Greater London's Finest Hot Wine". "Peritot. Even Greater London's Finest Soups". "Lemarque. Even Greater London's Finest, Freshest, Warmest Bread." Oh, bread!

FLEET: You think he's in there?

CLARA: Probably. It sounds wonderful!

FLEET: You think he's gone in whichever shop sounded most delicious?

CLARA: People do strange things when they're hungry. I know I do. Plus, it never hurts to have some bread, just in case.

FLEET: In case of what?

CLARA: Who knows? Starvation. Trade. That bit of soup at the bottom of the bowl that the spoon can't get.

FLEET: You think he's gone in there to prepare for those eventualities?

CLARA: No, but I think we should. To start with, it says it's London's finest.

FLEET: You know it's not really London's finest, they just say that to make you want it.

CLARA: But what if it is? I mean some bread has to be the finest so why not this one?

FLEET: Apprehension first, then bread.

CLARA: Fine. In which case he's in there.

FLEET: Where?

CLARA: "Dudger's Adequate Food." That's the least appealing thing here. No-one has gone in or out since we've arrived, and all the other stalls are packed!

FLEET: Not surprised, really. "Adequate" doesn't really sound that great next to all the others.

CLARA: Exactly! What if it's a front?

FLEET: Yes. Alright, let's see.

SCENE 11.

CLARA: Good afternoon, I don't suppose you've seen– Oh.

FLEET: Hello?

CLARA: Nobody here. Nor any food. (WHISPERS) I don't think this is a real shop.

FLEET: (WHISPERS) Empty counter. Rolling pin, never used. Just one basket...

F/X: Opens basket.

...full of robes! This must be it!

CLARA: Then where did he go?

FLEET: Back there maybe, behind the curtain. Here, put these robes on.

CLARA: Why?

FLEET: Because he'll be waiting for us and he might not be alone. If we're wearing their robes and hoods that will confuse them for long enough for us to get the jump on them.

CLARA: Oh, I like it!

F/X: Dressing.

FLEET: I'll pull back the curtain, and be ready to smack them. Remember, we need to find out what they know – it's enough for us to just capture one of them.

CLARA: Right. Hang on.

FLEET: What?

CLARA: Rolling pin.

FLEET: Ready?

CLARA: Yes.

FLEET: Right.

LONG PAUSE.

Aha!

F/X: Curtain yanked back.

Oh.

CLARA: More nothing.

FLEET: What? But then—

CLARA: Look, a cookbook! "Adequate food for entertaining".

FLEET: So it is a food stall?

CLARA: Oh look here! Instead of the publisher's crest, it's got the dagger wrapped in thorns. And the author.

FLEET: Quaternius. Is it possible that the Obfuscati, as well as being a shadowy organisation, also have a sideline in cookery publishing?

CLARA: Maybe there's a clue inside. Oh, it's heavy. (STRUGGLES)

FLEET: It's heavy? No, wait!

F/X: Lever/ratchet pulled. Trapdoor opens. Clara / Fleet sliding on ice.

CLARA / FLEET: (SCREAM)

SCENE 12.

F/X: CLARA and FLEET land on a hard surface.

NARRATOR: Fleet and Clara found themselves deep within the glacier, in a dark room hollowed out of the ice. The room was untouched by daylight and dimly lit by a handful of torches. Black passageways led off in six directions. In the centre there stood a large ice sculpture of a dagger wrapped in thorns.

CLARA: Amazing.

FLEET: Yes. If we were looking for a lair, I think we've found it.

CLARA: No, this sculpture! It's beautiful!

FLEET: Don't admire it!

CLARA: It's good!

FLEET: It doesn't matter if it's good. They're murderers and god knows what else.

CLARA: Sorry, you're right. Still though, the thorns are magnificent. You have to appreciate craftsmanship.

FLEET: No I don't.

CLARA: No sign of that man we were following. No footsteps – the floor's just ice. Everything's ice.

FLEET: There must be a central meeting point we can find. But which of these passageways to take? They could lead anywhere. It could be a labyrinth for all we know. And if we go wrong how will we get back?

CLARA: If only we had some bread we could crumb.

FLEET: Stop it.

CLARA: Fleet, look here.

NARRATOR: Flanking the entrance of one of the passageways were two ice statues of snakes. They were large, they were armoured, and they had been imbued by the master ice sculptor with an unnerving hint of eroticism.

FLEET: I don't like it.

CLARA: Maybe it's this way.

FLEET: Maybe something else is this way!

CLARA: What?

FLEET: I don't know! Snakes? Weird snakes? Weird, fighting, sexual snakes?

CLARA: Seems like we should find out.

FLEET: Does it?

CLARA: None of the other passageways have snakes!

FLEET: Exactly!

F/X: DISTANT FOOTSTEPS, INCREASING IN
NUMBER AND GETTING CLOSER, UNDER:

CLARA: Shh! Someone's coming. From that passageway over there.

FLEET: And from that one over there. And from over there...

CLARA: Run?

FLEET: Where? We might run right into them. Hide behind this snake!

F/X: LOW CHATTER.

CLARA: (WHISPERING) What can you see?

FLEET: (WHISPERING) The back of this snake. It's so muscular.

CLARA: Take a look!

FLEET: Fine. Cold, so cold!

CLARA: Well then don't touch the snake! What are they doing?

FLEET: Waiting.

CLARA: What for?

F/X: Low horn.

FLEET: That?

CLARA: They're leaving. Through the snake passageway! I told you it was important! Shall we follow them?

FLEET: Hang on.

CLARA: What?

FLEET: I'm frozen to the snake.

SCENE 13.

NARRATOR: After securing his freedom, whilst losing a few layers of skin, Fleet followed with Clara behind the procession of hooded figures, and they found themselves in a large circular room with a pillar of ice in the centre running from the floor to a ceiling some thirty feet up. The Obfuscati were taking their places around the outside of the room, facing inwards towards the ice pillar. With nowhere to hide and observe from, and no way to leave without being noticed, Fleet and Clara had no choice but to join the circle. The room fell silent as the pillar of ice was filled with a bright light. It began to flicker unevenly through the ice, causing shafts of white to criss-cross in a form at its centre. The flickering became more rapid and precise, and the form revealed itself as a giant head, entirely white, except for its eyes, where there was nothing at all. There was not a lot Fleet and Clara could be certain of at this moment, but they were sure of this – the head was in charge.

QUATERNIUS: My friends. Welcome. It brings me such pleasure to see you all gathered here at this auspicious moment. Our organisation has been tested many times, and each time we have surpassed ourself and our forebears. Our achievements across the years have been many. But this may be our most vital. Just two steps remain, my friends. Two steps and our work will be complete. You've worked hard. You have suffered. You have sacrificed. But only two steps remain. You know what lies ahead. You know what we are working for.

OBFUSCATI: Yes, Quaternius.

NARRATOR: The giant head disappeared from the ice column, which once again was filled with white light. A moment later, the light subsided, leaving in its place, stretching the full height of the column, an image of the Tower, looming solemnly over the London skyline. The circle of hooded figures watched in silence. Suddenly, flames shot out from the Tower in all directions. The entire building became a pillar of fire hanging in the air, before falling, leaving nothing in its place and everything nearby destroyed. Fleet and Clara saw an image of London they did not recognise.

F/X: Chatter.

FLEET: My god.

CLARA: What happens if the Tower stops supplying energy to the city?

FLEET: I don't know. It's been decades. Everything relies on it. Everything! The whole point of the Warders is to prevent this but–

CLARA: They've infiltrated the Warders. Why would they do this?

FLEET: We can't wait to find out. We need to tell Keller, Whitlock, the home secretary, someone.

CLARA: We've got to get out of here.

FLEET: Right. But we need to wait for the right opportunity to escape.

CLARA: We can't wait for an opportunity. We need to make one.

FLEET: Don't draw attention to us. If we wait we will see an opening.

CLARA: You don't know that.

FLEET: Just focus on what we need to do when we get out of here.

CLARA: I really think we should be focusing on the more immediate question, "When are we going to get out of this ice lair?"

QUATERNIUS: When it thaws, Miss Entwhistle. And not a moment sooner.

NARRATOR: Fleet and Clara looked up and saw the giant head had returned to the ice column and turned to face them. The many other hooded figures in the room had done the same.

QUATERNIUS: Inspector Archibald Fleet. Miss Clara Entwhistle. We have been following your progress with interest. I'm just so happy you both could join us.

CLARA: Why?

QUATERNIUS: Because now there is only one step remaining.

FLEET: Of course there is.

END

EPISODE 5

SCENE 1.

NARRATOR:

The famed engineer and infrastructure god-king Brunel had once said to his tens of thousands of followers, "Give me a man and I will build you a city. Give me two men and I will build you a game of tennis."

This had caused his senior advisors and aides de camp to cast some concerned glances at one another. The man was getting on a bit, and his observations were becoming somewhat... poetic. So after his speech they sent out among the men their official interpretation.

What Brunel meant, they had said, was unity. Two men are naturally in opposition unless bound together under a common purpose, in which they become as one man. The hundreds of divisions of Brunel's engineering corps were, the great man was suggesting, one man, striding purposefully into the future. Anyone rejecting this interpretation, or suggesting Brunel had just forgotten his notes, was to report to his commander for reassignment to the perpetual rebuilding of Norfolk.

This reading of Brunel was tenuous, but the observation was sound: people working in unison can achieve great things. Unfortunately, as Inspector Fleet and Clara Entwistle were discovering, they could also achieve terrible things.

Having found their way into the lair of the sinister Obfuscati, deep within the ice of the Thames Glacier, Fleet and Clara had found that the Obfuscati's plans appeared to involve destroying the Tower and so causing the entirety of Even Greater London to lose the supply of power it had relied on for more than a generation. The consequences of this cannot be overstated. Firstly, famine and economic collapse; and secondly, unimaginable delays on every major train line.

Shortly after their discovery, Clara and Fleet were themselves discovered, and they were surrounded by dozens of hooded figures, being stared at by what appeared to be their leader, a giant head made of light suspended in a pillar of ice.

SCENE 2.

QUATERNIUS: Inspector Fleet, Miss Entwhistle. I'm afraid there is no escape. Brothers, detain them. And get them out of those robes – they're members only.

CLARA: Wait! Wait.

QUATERNIUS: Well?

PAUSE.

CLARA: Run?

FLEET: Absolutely.

QUATERNIUS: Stop them!

F/X: Running. Group chasing / shouting.

CLARA: Do you remember the way out?

FLEET: No. You?

CLARA: I remember it was a tunnel in the ice much like this.

FLEET: They're all like this!

CLARA: Oh no, it's splitting into three.

FLEET: Oh good!

CLARA: You know the way?

FLEET: No, but go left!

CLARA: Why?

FLEET: Just go left!

CLARA: Why was this good?

FLEET: We've got a head start. If they didn't see which way we went they'll have to split up.

CLARA: Oh yes!

F/X: Sound effect of bright light appearing in ice.

FLEET: My god!

CLARA: What?

FLEET: Look up, it's that head again in the ice!

CLARA: Argh!

FLEET: It's tracking us somehow.

QUATERNIUS: You can't hide from us in here. I am one with the ice.
(SHOUTING) This way, brothers! They're coming this way!

CLARA: Keep running!

FLEET: I am! Look, the tunnel splits again up ahead.

CLARA: But it can follow us!

F/X: Light appears again.

Look, there it is again!

QUATERNIUS: There is no escape. All paths lead to the Obfuscati.

CLARA: How is it doing that?

FLEET: This way!

CLARA: Why?

FLEET: Look down the tunnel. It's melting.

CLARA: Oh yes! Let's see how good you are at appearing in solid rock,
you stupid giant head!

QUATERNIUS: Brothers! They are leaving the ice! Why aren't any of you
more athletic?

SCENE 3.

CLARA: It's a dead end. What is this room? It's full of sarcophagi! Oh no, victims of the Obfuscati! Very respectful treatment.

FLEET: And we'll shortly be the next victims unless... where's that light coming from? Hang on a minute, is that an elevator? It is! An old elevator. A very old elevator.

CLARA: With an attendant! Hello robot!

ATTENDANT: Good day, sir, lady. Welcome to the Hotel Ricardo.

FLEET: It's not a hotel, it's a catacomb.

ATTENDANT: (LAUGHS) Good one, sir. Rapport indeed. The Hotel Ricardo is conveniently located near St Paul's Cathedral.

CLARA: Is that where this elevator goes? Up to a hotel?

ATTENDANT: Correct, my lady. The Hotel Ricardo offers all modern conveniences, from private washrooms to oriental massages, from luxury dining to ballroom dancing. The Hotel Ricardo is so luxurious, some of our guests wish to stay here even after their own death. The owners developed this private catacomb to offer this service to our most valued customers.

FLEET: Can you get us out of here?

ATTENDANT: It would be my pleasure, sir.

CLARA: The elevator doesn't seem to be in very good condition. In fact, you don't either.

FLEET: You're almost entirely rust.

CLARA: Fleet!

FLEET: What? He's a machine!

CLARA: Still, though.

ATTENDANT: It's quite alright, my lady. My apologies for serving you in this condition. I might require your assistance to pull the manual brake release lever. Fortunately, my shame mechanisms are functioning quite well. I am quite overcome with self-loathing.

FLEET: When's the last time this elevator went up to the lobby?

ATTENDANT: I can think of no reason why we cannot journey safely to the lobby now, unless the proprietors have done something absurd like close off the Death Elevator from the top.

FLEET: When was the last time?

ATTENDANT: (MECHANICAL LAUGHTER) Why would they do such a thing? They wouldn't leave Attendant down here alone forever! It's patently absurd.

FLEET: How long has it been since this elevator was used?!

ATTENDANT: Fourteen point six years.

FLEET: Wonderful.

ATTENDANT: (MECHANICAL LAUGHTER) Rapport, sir. Rapport.

F/X: Shouting in the distance

CLARA: Well we don't have any better options, I say we try it.

FLEET: There's only room for one. Attendant, get out, we'll operate it ourselves.

ATTENDANT: As much as it would please me to remove myself from my one purpose for existence, unfortunately I am rusted to the elevator and cannot move.

CLARA: They're coming!

FLEET: Aagh!

F/X: Metal cage opened.

FLEET: Go. I'll fight them off.

CLARA: You'll fight them?

FLEET: I'll fight some of them. The others I'll just have to charm.

CLARA: Charm them?

FLEET: I can be quite charming when needed.

CLARA: I'm not leaving you here!

FLEET: You have to go! They're going to blow up the Tower! Go see Keller – he'll help, he has to!

CLARA: You're right. (SHOVES)

F/X: Clara shoves Fleet into cage.

FLEET: Ow. What are you doing?

F/X: Metal cage slammed shut.

Hey! Let me out!

ATTENDANT: Going up, Sir?

FLEET: No I'm not!

CLARA: Stop them, Fleet.

FLEET: Clara no!

F/X: Lever pulled. Elevator rattles as it is rapidly yanked upwards.

FLEET: (SCREAMS)

F/X: Screaming and elevator sound vanishes into distance.

F/X: People arrive.

CLARA: Gentlemen.

HOODED FIGURE: Stop right there.

CLARA: Do you see me going anywhere?

HOODED FIGURE: Where's Fleet?

CLARA: Oh, he couldn't stay. Had an appointment. You know how it is. Keeping one's appointments is just basic courtesy. It's part of

what separates us from the animals. Animals don't have appointments, do you?

HOODED FIGURE:

You're coming with us.

CLARA:

Of course, gentlemen. Of course. But it'll have to be by force, I'm afraid, and I suggest whoever of you steps forward be the one who least enjoys having an unbroken nose. I'm feeling particularly charming.

SCENE 4.

F/X: Screaming and elevator rattling as it moves at high speed, getting louder as it approaches from a distance.

F/X: Elevator loudly crashes into its destination. Then a ping.

ATTENDANT: (EVEN MORE BROKEN, HARD TO DISCERN) Lobby.

FLEET: (COUGHING) What?

ATTENDANT: Lobby, sir. Welcome to the Hotel Ricardo. Might I call you a cab?

FLEET: Ambulance, more like.

ATTENDANT: Certainly, sir.

FLEET: No, I was—

ATTENDANT: I'm sorry, sir. I am not currently able to call you an ambulance. My head has become separated from my body, and my body has become separated from all other parts of my body.

FLEET: Yes, you might want to get that looked at.

ATTENDANT: (MECHANICAL LAUGHTER). Very good, sir. Is there anything else I can do for you today?

FLEET: Is there anything you can do in your current condition?

PAUSE.

ATTENDANT: No, sir.

FLEET: Let's just call it a day then, shall we?

SCENE 5.

F/X: Front desk bell.

CONCIERGE: Good evening, sir. May I assist you with your cloak, or your thick layer of dust?

FLEET: Get me Scotland Yard.

CONCIERGE: Of course, sir. And may I ask your name?

FLEET: Fleet.

CONCIERGE: Inspector Fleet?

FLEET: Yes?

CONCIERGE: I am very happy to put the call through but perhaps you would first wish to join your party in the Ricardo Club upstairs?

FLEET: Party? What party?

CONCIERGE: It is of a Chief Inspector Keller, a Chief Warder Whitlock, and the Home Secretary, Lord Merrick.

FLEET: They're here?

CONCIERGE: Yes, sir.

FLEET: And they're expecting me.

CONCIERGE: Yes, sir.

FLEET: And I'm in a cloak and hood, covered in dust.

CONCIERGE: Yes, sir.

FLEET: Which floor?

CONCIERGE: Forty-fifth. There is a direct elevator opposite the one you just destroyed.

FLEET: Excellent. And they're expecting me.

CONCIERGE: For some time, sir.

FLEET:

Tremendous.

SCENE 6.

NARRATOR: Investigators at the Swindon Informatorium's Department for Phenomenistics had postulated that, in sufficiently vast cities – such as Even Greater London – the mere presence of large quantities of high quality alcohol in one place had a tendency to warp the patterns of daily urban goings-on, to the point where opportune meetings and major discoveries occurred at alarming frequency. They were right, but their expense claims were denied nonetheless.

In Fleet's case, the note that had been left on his desk telling him about this meeting had gone unseen, and he had only ended up there through the sheer magnificence of the Ricardo Club and its two volume drinks menu, not a single item on which he could afford.

Fleet walked into the opulent bar. Having discarded his robes in the elevator, he now strode with the renewed confidence of a man looking only slightly disgraceful. The two Chiefs and the Home Secretary stood by the tall windows at the end of the room, looking out over the city.

FLEET: Chief.

KELLER: Fleet? My god man, you look shocking. Lord Merrick, this is the Inspector who has been investigating, (TO FLEET) despite my repeatedly forbidding you from doing so.

MERRICK: Looks like you should have been investigating a feather duster, young man.

ALL LAUGH.

FLEET: Home Secretary. It's a privilege to meet you.

MERRICK: Of course it is! And I understand you already know Whitlock?

FLEET: Good evening, Chief Warder.

WHITLOCK: Inspector. You look worse than you did when I let you out of the Tower cells.

FLEET: Yes, well about that–

KELLER: I was just talking to these two about your recent escapades up in Oxford. That's right, the Master at Stephenson let me know you'd been. Nice visit?

FLEET: Well–

KELLER: Stroll along the Cherwell?

FLEET: No, I–

KELLER: Spot of punting with the scholars?

FLEET: Sir, I–

MERRICK: Keller, this is merciless, let the young man speak.

FLEET: Thank you, Home Secretary. I have been investigating–

WHITLOCK: My Warders, correct Fleet? First you suggest without cause that the death of Dr Salik could have occurred at the Tower when he was found a mile away; next you provoke my Warders when they try to discuss the case with you; then after I release you from our cells and speak to you man to man, what happens? One of my finest men falls to his death at the Pleasure Coast, moments after being seen speaking to you. Are you cursed, Fleet? Do you carry bad luck around with you in a knapsack?

KELLER: Steady on, Whitlock.

MERRICK: Indeed. That is in the past. We are all interested in wrapping up this Salik business once and for all. So we're all here: my finest Chiefs; a fine young detective; and me. Let's get it all sorted, shall we?

FLEET: Thank you, Lord Merrick.

MERRICK: Why don't you start with your suspicions about the Yeomen Warders?

WHITLOCK: Sir!

MERRICK: No-one is above suspicion, Whitlock. If there is nothing to hide, nothing hidden will be found. Am I not right to have confidence in your integrity and that of your men?

WHITLOCK: Yes. Of course.

MERRICK: Splendid. Then Inspector, tell us what you know. What shady dealings have some rogue warders been getting up to?

FLEET: They haven't.

MERRICK: I'm sorry?

FLEET: It's not them.

KELLER: Blazing billiards, Fleet. Is this a joke to you?

FLEET: I thought it was them. But it's not. It's an organisation. A secret one, with symbols and codes and robes and hoods. I went to Oxford to find out about them, and one of them attacked me there. It was them who killed Ralgrieve at the pleasure coast. And I've just come from their hideout. It's a giant labyrinth beneath the Thames, beneath the ice. They're all down there. They've got people everywhere. Police. Government. And in the Tower. They're in the Warders. That's what Ralgrieve knew. That's why they killed him. And I know what they're up to. They're going to destroy the Tower.

WHITLOCK: Keep your voice down, for god's sake.

FLEET: Sorry. That's their plan. And Salik knew. He had a notebook with all this information about them, although they've destroyed it now. He must have gone to the Tower to stop them. And they killed him. And now they're going to blow up the Tower.

PAUSE.

WHITLOCK: You little wo—

MERRICK: Whitlock!

WHITLOCK: This runt of a policeman accuses my men of murder and now he claims we're so incompetent we can't tell that a bunch of lunatics in hoods are roaming our halls?

FLEET: They're not hiding. They're some of your Warders. You'll know them.

WHITLOCK: My men! You're saying my men are deranged cultists just waiting to blow up the very building they've sworn to defend with their lives!

MERRICK: This is a strong accusation, Inspector. I take it seriously. But you have been wrong about this case already. Do you have evidence to support these claims?

KELLER: Do you have anything, Fleet?

FLEET: Well, no, but we can go down there, although the elevator was destroyed – and that wasn't to there exactly but to... the hotel seems to have a private catacomb – so we'll need to go another way, there's a stall on the Thames which doesn't have any food in it–

KELLER: Enough! Lord Merrick, I apologise.

MERRICK: Nothing to apologise for, Olwin. Splendid view. Superlative brandy. But you, Inspector. You need rest.

FLEET: No, I can't– and Clara, she's down there–

MERRICK: Rest. There's nothing that can't be solved with a little rest. Or in your case a lot of rest. I've seen this before. You're young. You're proud. You want to save all of Even Greater London. But that's not one man's job. Well, I suppose it's mine, actually. And I need all the help I can get. And that means having my detectives fighting fit. And my Chiefs, for that matter. The two of you need a few rounds in the ring with my boxing coach. I swear he moves like he's made of thin air. Quite astonishing. Now gentlemen, if you'll excuse me, Edith no doubt is wondering where I am. And if she asks, it's business with the PM, alright? Nothing else seems to get me off the hook. (LAUGHS)

KELLER: Of course, Lord Merrick. Let me get you a cab home. Fleet, you go home too. And stay there until I send for you.

FLEET: I'll be fine, sir.

KELLER: I'm ordering you to stay off duty. You're on leave for your health.

SCENE 7.

NARRATOR:

As Fleet walked aimlessly through the streets, he took stock of the facts. One – Clara was being held captive by the Obfuscati, and as they would now be on their guard, any rescue attempt by Fleet alone would be catastrophic. Two – the Obfuscati were due to attack the Tower, and Fleet did not know when or how. Three – he was suspended from his work as a detective, which meant no-one would help him save Clara or the Tower, although this didn't particularly matter, because: Four – No-one believed him about any of this.

As the respected writer and man-universally-denied-credit Michael Monkfish had once said, "Help often comes from those we least expect. Which is to say: expect help from those you least expect. The only sensible content to be reclaimed from which is: sometimes there is help."

F/X: Swooping sound. Raven caws.

PAUSE.

F/X: Raven caws

FLEET:

A raven? What do you want? Go away.

F/X: Raven caws

Shoo.

F/X: Bird peck on skin.

Ow! Now look here, I don't have anything you want.

F/X: Two more birds swooping down and cawwing.

Oh good. More ravens.

F/X: Cawing

Listen, if you've been sent by the Warders to spy on me then ...

F/X: Disapproving cawing

So you have been sent by the Warders?

PAUSE.

You haven't been sent by the warders?

F/X: Cawing of assent

But you have been sent by someone?

F/X: Cawing

Who?

F/X: Ravens swooping away and cawing fading slightly into the distance.

Wait! Where are you going? Come back here!

NARRATOR: Fleet hurried to keep up with the birds, and some time later found himself following them into a very large, dimly lit building, empty but for a series of long perches at varying heights and, on these, hundreds and hundreds of ravens.

FLEET: Hello? Hello? Is anybody there? (TO HIMSELF) And why are these ravens so quiet?

RAVENMASTER: They are in mourning!

FLEET: Who said that?

RAVENMASTER: I did.

PAUSE.

FLEET: Who— Hello? Who is saying that?

RAVENMASTER: I am the Ravenmaster of the Tower.

FLEET: Where are you?

RAVENMASTER: Above.

FLEET: My word. You're... a raven.

RAVENMASTER: Of course.

FLEET: I was expecting the Ravenmaster to be, well.

RAVENMASTER: A human.

FLEET: Well, yes. How are you talking?

RAVENMASTER: I believe the question is rather, how are you understanding? And to that question, the answer is this shining device, a gift the Creator bestowed upon my predecessor and which I now have the honour and burden of wearing.

FLEET: I see. I have a number of questions about what you just said—

RAVENMASTER: All in good time. But what is it you really seek?

FLEET: I'm trying to stop a plot against the Tower. Just like Dr Salik.

F/X: Many ravens cawing.

RAVENMASTER: The Creator. It is he we mourn.

FLEET: The Creator?

RAVENMASTER: Yes, The Creator. He created the tower, and we were tasked with protecting it. He gave us purpose.

FLEET: So, you knew him?

F/X: Many ravens cawing.

I am trying to find out why he died.

RAVENMASTER: There is no Why, curious human. We are created, we live, we die. My own death awaits me before long. Then another shall take my burden. But the Creator waits for me. If I prove worthy in His eyes, I will sit beside Him, on a perch of pure mahogany.

FLEET: What if Sali— the Creator died sooner than he should have?

F/X: Many ravens cawing.

RAVENMASTER: How?

FLEET: Well, what if somebody caused his death?

RAVENMASTER: Deicide! A grave accusation. Whom do you accuse?

FLEET: I don't know. There's an organisation, the Obfuscati, I think they might be behind it but I know so little about them.

RAVENMASTER: You seek knowledge. It is our way as well. Come, you must see our archives.

FLEET: You have archives?

RAVENMASTER: Do not misjudge us, Fleet. We have built our archive over many years of toil. It serves us well in times of great crisis.

FLEET: I'm sorry, I—

RAVENMASTER: Bring the archives!

F/X: Flapping wings, a thud of a bag of metallic objects hitting the ground.

Good. Now, Fleet, you can see in this bag everything we know. Dig deep. You will find knowledge.

FLEET: OK... Let's see...

F/X: Rummaging

A number of polished coins...

F/X: Impressed cawing.

Assorted jewelry...

F/X: Even more impressed cawing.

A silver box.

F/X: Ecstatic cawing.

RAVENMASTER: Of course! The shiny box. You have delved right to the heart of the matter.

FLEET: Eh?

RAVENMASTER: Take it.

FLEET: Why?

RAVENMASTER: It belonged to the Creator.

FLEET: You stole this from him?

PAUSE.

RAVENMASTER: I understand you do not know our ways, so you cannot contemplate how offensive you have just been.

FLEET: I'm so sorry.

RAVENMASTER: No, he gave it to us. He gave us the shiny box.

FLEET: Why?

RAVENMASTER: For our collection, he said. For the one who comes seeking answers. For you.

FLEET: What?

RAVENMASTER: He said "This is very important, Raven, do you understand me?" and I said "Creator, I am not worthy" and he said "Raven, listen to me" and I said "Creator, your words illuminate my soul" and he said "Pay attention, Raven" and I said "Forgive me, Creator, your luminousness blinds my reasoning" and he said "Raven! Take this box. Give it to the one who comes after me." and I said "Anything for you, Creator. Your artefact is safe with us." and he said "Don't you want to know why I am giving you this, Raven?" and I said "I do not deign to question the Creator" and he said "Be quiet and listen to me, Raven. I might die today." and I said "No, Creator!" and he said "Yes, Raven. I might. And if I do you will give this to the one who comes seeking answers. His name is Inspector Archibald Fleet."

SCENE 8.

- NARRATOR: Night came, and deep under the ice of the Thames Glacier, Clara – who had spent the day locked in a cell and trying unsuccessfully to irritate her guards into releasing her – was now being escorted into a large room, which was unlike any other she had seen so far in the Obfuscati lair, for two reasons. Firstly, it was beautifully decorated, with much of the ice covered by oriental rugs, tapestries, and a few tastefully scattered tables and chaises longues. Secondly, one of the walls had a woman frozen in it, with only her head protruding outwards. A photographic device was suspended from the ceiling, pointed towards the woman, and Clara recognised her as the head whose image had chased them through the ice tunnels.
- QUATERNIUS: Welcome, Miss Entwhistle. My name is Quaternius. I hope you have been kept comfortable. Please, take a seat if you wish. I would offer to get you some refreshment, but of course you can see I do not have the luxury of moving about in this world.
- CLARA: What happened to you?
- QUATERNIUS: An unfortunate accident, entirely my fault. I'll spare you the details but my circulatory and other systems are rather spread about in here. Fortunately, and thanks to the details of what caused the accident – which I won't go into, for fear of both of us fainting – my body adapted itself to the structure of the icework. My blood runs where it needs to go, up and down the channels in the ice. I am one with the glacier, but I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little chilly. And of course it means I am not able to do myself what must often be done out in the world, to achieve our aims. Fortunately my brave brothers always help.
- CLARA: What is it you even want?
- QUATERNIUS: Peace, Miss Entwhistle. Only peace.
- CLARA: You're insane. I ought to chisel you out of there and drag you to Scotland Yard.
- QUATERNIUS: The ice is the only thing keeping me alive. I do not take you as a murderer.
- CLARA: Perhaps I'll surprise us both.

SCENE 9.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, Inspector Fleet had had a few hours to contemplate what he had learned in the letter Dr Salik had left for him in a silver box with the ravens, and he was, understandably, lying down trying to remain calm. What he had learned was that a bomb was to be detonated that very night on the roof of the Tower. This was horrifying enough, but the reason he was lying down trying to remain calm was that, following a series of decisions he was coming to regret, he was now on top of the exterior wall of the Tower compound, trying to avoid the notice of two searchlights.

FLEET: OK. I'm on the wall. Salik says there are ladders down, with searchlights passing over every 15 seconds. Not a lot of time. Wait for it, wait for it... go!

F/X: Fleet hurrying down a ladder

Courtyard. Tower two hundred feet away. Guard positions. Salik says... eight warders, patrolling in four pairs, each following a multiple clover formation around the yard. Pick a pair of warders. Follow, quietly! Twenty feet behind them. Wait for the turn, and go!

F/X: Running.

OK. Creep along to the door.

F/X: Door opens and closes.

And I'm inside. I'm, uh... I'm inside the, uh... the Tower...

F/X: Energy beam.

NARRATOR: Fleet's inarticulateness was a common reaction when seeing what was actually inside the tower. It was, for the most part, entirely hollow, a gigantic empty space soaring upwards and just as far downwards into the earth. A staircase spiralled upwards on the wall, further up than could be clearly seen. In the centre, taking most of the space, was a roaring, pulsing, blinding white column of energy.

FLEET: My god... Snap out of it Fleet. Right, stairs. Let's go.

F/X: Running up stairs. Then the sound of two pairs of footsteps coming down, with a distant, barely audible conversation:

WHITLOCK: My hands are tied.

PIKE: He's just mean to me, I don't know why.

WHITLOCK: Sometimes these partnerships take time to develop.

PIKE: I think he's stealing from me.

FLEET: (WHISPERING) Whitlock! Damn it. Oh, he's coming down. Oh no. I can't go back down, there isn't time.

WHITLOCK: I'm sorry, but if you're not getting along with your raven you really need to take that up with the Ravenmaster, there's very little I can do. Now, if you—

PAUSE.

PIKE: Sir?

WHITLOCK: What was that?

PIKE: What was what, sir?

NARRATOR: Dangling beneath the staircase, Fleet had been joined by an adventurous rat, which had stepped out onto Fleet's shoulders and was investigating his collar.

F/X: Rat scratching.

FLEET: (QUIETLY) Aaahhhh!!!

WHITLOCK: Thought I heard something.

PIKE: It's just, it's hard to imagine the Ravenmaster wouldn't take the raven's side in all this.

NARRATOR: Fleet's rat companion had decided his shirt was definitely something it wanted to explore further, and was clawing its way in.

F/X: Rat trying to get into Fleet's clothes.

FLEET: (QUIETLY) Aaaahhhhh!!!

WHITLOCK: There it is again. Is that the beam?

PIKE: I don't think so.

FLEET: (QUIETLY) No. Get out of my....

F/X: Fleet wrestling with a slippery rat, and then throwing it onto the stone steps.

WHITLOCK: Damnit, a rat!

PIKE: Ahh!

WHITLOCK: Come here.

F/X: Squeak.

Bad rat. Shouldn't be up here, should you? No you should not.

PIKE: Want me to get rid of it, sir?

WHITLOCK: No, it's fine.

F/X: Whitlock throwing rat into the energy beam and it vanishing in a flash with a little squeak.

Let's go.

F/X: Footsteps walking away. Fleet exerts himself to haul himself back up

FLEET: Right. To the top of the tower then.

F/X: Running upstairs.

SCENE 10.

F/X: Howling wind.

FLEET: Oh my god, so high, so very high up. Come on Archie. Stay away from the edge. If I were a bomb on a roof, where would I be... There! OK, let's see now. Salik's letter says to disarm the bomb I first need to find the clasp to open up the housing. Clasp. Clasp. Clasp. No clasp. Is this bomb even armed? Come on, clasp.

NARRATOR: While Fleet was searching for a clasp, he did not notice the silvery square of glass above the bomb come to life and begin to swirl around, as it received an incoming call.

SCENE 11.

NARRATOR: Back in the ice fortress of the Obfuscati, Clara and Quaternius continued their debate.

QUATERNIUS: I have done many regrettable things, Miss Entwhistle. They were necessary. I do not ask forgiveness.

CLARA: You are a monster. You are all monsters!

QUATERNIUS: Are we? Is it we who are the monsters? You don't understand at all.

CLARA: What possible justification could you have for what you've done?

QUATERNIUS: We Obfuscati seek only one outcome. When there is a danger of too much power in the hands of too few, we seek to redress the balance. We muddy the waters. We dull the flints of the ambitious.

CLARA: I think blowing up the most important building in the city goes a bit beyond that, don't you?

PAUSE.

QUATERNIUS: Am I right in thinking that you believe it to be us, the Obfuscati, who wish to destroy the Tower?

CLARA: Of course!

QUATERNIUS: This is exactly the outcome we are trying to prevent! You and Inspector Fleet have been bringing this closer with every step you take.

CLARA: What are you talking about?

QUATERNIUS: A terrible trap. A trap we have failed to stop Fleet from falling into.

CLARA: Whose trap?

SCENE 12.

F/X: Howling wind.

NARRATOR: Fleet was standing on the rooftop of the Tower, staring at the silvery liquid of a locution glass coming to life on top of a bomb he had discovered was not only not armed, but in no way described by the instructions he had been given. The screen shifted and glooped, eventually revealing a recognisable figure.

FLEET: Lord Merrick?

MERRICK: Inspector, wonderful to see you. And right on time. I do like it when people are exactly where I need them to be. Be a good chap and stand there for a moment.

NARRATOR: More out of shock than obedience, Fleet did just this, only to notice a series of coloured lights appearing from underneath the screen, suggesting that the mysteriously unarmed bomb had now become, somewhat less mysteriously, armed.

FLEET: What is this? Merrick! What's happening?

MERRICK: Oh, everything, Inspector. Everything.

FLEET: What are you talking about?

MERRICK: Please, Inspector, don't worry yourself, you'll hardly feel the explosion, I'm sure. Just sit tight and it'll all be over in a minute.

FLEET: Merrick! You're behind this. You're the one who's been planning to blow up the Tower!

MERRICK: No, Fleet. You are. You are acting alone, but to keen eyes after the fact the clues will all be there.

FLEET: What?

MERRICK: Dear me, Fleet. Where to begin. A detective obsessed with turning the straightforward death of a scientist into some sort of conspiracy. A detective linked to the tragic death at the Pleasure Coast of a Yeoman Warder. A detective relieved of his duties for exhibiting nervous agitation. A detective found to have broken into the Tower and planted a bomb on its

extremely vulnerable rooftop spire. A detective whose charred remains – from the explosion he caused – serve as the final proof of his treachery. Fleet, are you listening to any of this? What are you doing?

FLEET: I'm disarming the bomb, what does it look like I'm doing?

MERRICK: Do you have any idea how to do that?

FLEET: No, but I'll figure it out. How long do I have?

MERRICK: Until I flick this switch.

FLEET: Well then, don't let me interrupt. You were telling a fascinating story. I'm listening, I promise.

MERRICK: You're not listening, you're fiddling with the bomb! Look, if you're not going to listen then I'm just going to blow it up now. Goodbye, Inspector–

FLEET: No no, wait! Wait! I am interested. Honestly. Uh... oh! If you wanted to blow up the Tower, why did you need me?

MERRICK: Oh, that's the most wonderful part! The Warders protect the Tower. The police protect the people. But when the police attack the Tower, what is to be done? Their credibility is lost. The Warders must be given authority over the entire city, including over the police, since it was the very restriction of their powers that prevented them from stopping you. There is no alternative. Her Majesty will demand that I draft a bill granting Whitlock and his Warders the necessary powers. A bill which will easily pass. I'll let you into a secret. (WHISPERS) I've already drafted it.

FLEET: Devious!

MERRICK: Which part?

FLEET: Oh all of it, I was listening to all of it. Definitely not just methodically working through all of the screws on this casing to loosen them.

MERRICK: Stop trying to disarm the bomb! Do you think I would use a bomb any fool would be able to just switch off?

FLEET: How can you possibly blame me for wanting to disarm the bomb?

MERRICK: I honestly thought you would want to know more about how you ended up in this terrible situation. Like your dear friend Dr Salik.

FLEET: Oh yes, go ahead. Talk about that for a minute while I listen intently and don't try levering this panel off with a stick.

MERRICK: Whitlock and I killed Salik, obviously, but not before we'd arranged for him to be robbed of some item of importance so it seemed this was something more than a straightforward murder. We moved the body and made it blindingly obvious you should begin suspecting the Warders. Even added a nice little note to make sure you were the one who turned up: "Get Fleet". Did you like that bit? Nice touch I thought. Made it seem like you and Salik had a little connection. But no. Luck of the draw, I'm afraid. You were assigned to Salik's robbery case, and so were most likely to view the murder suspiciously. A number of other clues we threw in front of you along the way – did you like the ravens doing their bit? Amazing creatures – and here we are.

FLEET: My stick broke.

MERRICK: What?

FLEET: I mean... but why, Merrick. Why?

MERRICK: Because it sickens me, Fleet. Crime. As if the city is infected, covered in pustules and crawling with disease. It needs a doctor. What you do, you policemen, it is a half-measure. You solve, you detain, you punish. You do not heal.

And so with one small explosion at the Tower – not enough to cause lasting damage, you understand, but enough to terrify the city, and to kill you of course – with one small explosion I am cauterizing the wound. And the Warders, they are my little doctors. Roaming around the city, every nook and cranny, every home, every office, every person, every child. They must all be spick and span. Or the doctors won't be happy at all. What's that? Thomas Loves his family thinks we need a reason to enter his home to ensure no criminality lies there? (TUTS) Enjoy your new life in the Midlands Forest hiding from the wolves and clawing at tree bark for food. Doctor's orders.

FLEET: Aha! Well, there's one thing you haven't thought of, Merrick.

MERRICK: And what's that? Don't tell me you've disarmed the bomb.
(PAUSE) Fleet? Where are you going? Come back here!
Stand there and get exploded like a man! Oh for god's sake,
where's that bloody switch.

SCENE 13.

NARRATION: What Fleet had seen, and Merrick had not, was a peculiar flying machine at the edge of the rooftop and, operating its controls with great concentration, Clara Entwhistle.

F/X: Machinery.

FLEET: Clara! You escaped! Good lord do you know how to fly this thing?

CLARA: I think so. There are levers for roll, pitch and yaw, and a fourth one just labelled "Don't", so I haven't.

FLEET: Where did you get this?

CLARA: Obfuscati. Had a nice chat with Quaternius. She's half-ice you know.

FLEET: No, I didn't know that. Shall we get out of here?

CLARA: Oh yes. Hang on!

F/X: Machinery flies away. Explosion.

SCENE 14

NARRATION: This extremely fortunate turn of events was put in motion a short while earlier, deep in the frozen abyss under the Thames.

CLARA: So if the Home Secretary and Chief Whitlock are behind all this, why did you kill Salik?

QUATERNIUS: We didn't kill Salik. Brother Salik was one of us!

CLARA: He was an Obfuscati?

QUATERNIUS: Obfuscatus! Why else do you think he had a notebook with all of our secrets written in it? Our work. His work.

CLARA: But one of your men burnt it!

QUATERNIUS: Salik was dead. The notebook needed to be destroyed to protect us. Plus it let us lead you here, where we were trying to keep you out of harm's way. I wish I could have done more to save Brother Salik, but he felt responsible. The tower was his design, he made it possible to have the city we have today, the progress we have enjoyed. But at the terrible cost of placing such faith in the few who guard it. And the time came when they saw their opportunity. Salik went to the Tower to dissuade Whitlock, but it ended as we feared it would. And this led to the trap set for Fleet, a trap we have been trying to save him from ever since.

CLARA: Then what now?

QUATERNIUS: We have failed. We must lick our wounds and regroup for the fight ahead.

CLARA: Regroup?

QUATERNIUS: We operate in the shadows. We make it so the world never even knows what might have been, but we cannot undo what has been done. There will be too many eyes now for our methods. And so I will rest here in this ice until my brothers formulate a plan. Oh what I would do not to have my organs spread about in this wall of ice, or indeed for a pillow.

CLARA: We can't wait for that! We need to act now!

QUATERNIUS: It is too late, Miss Entwhistle. The trap has been sprung.

CLARA: Can you not at least save Fleet?

QUATERNIUS: One man? What does it matter?

CLARA: It matters! You can still do something.

QUATERNIUS: Not without a quorum Miss Entwhistle, and scheduling a meeting is so troublesome, everyone is so busy.

CLARA: Then let me do something, let me go so I can at least try to rescue Fleet.

QUATERNIUS: Very well, Miss Entwhistle, though, as you don't have long, you might want to borrow Brother Gerald's flying machine. Now, if it's not too much trouble, would you mind retrieving that woolly hat from over there and putting it on my head. Immortality can be such a trial.

SCENE 15.

F/X: Machinery.

NARRATION: Meanwhile, back in the present, which is to say, slightly later that night in 1887.

CLARA: We're quite far from the blast now. Where shall we go?

FLEET: We? No, you need to stay far away from me. You don't understand!

CLARA: That Merrick and Whitlock are behind all this and they've pinned it on you?

FLEET: You do understand. But me surviving just means they have to hunt me down. Drop me off somewhere and go!

CLARA: But—

FLEET: If they find you with me they'll make you an accomplice.

CLARA: I refuse!

FLEET: You refuse what?

CLARA: Not to help you!

FLEET: Are you mad?

CLARA: You're innocent!

FLEET: It doesn't matter! No one will believe my word over the Home Secretary's, and if they find you with me, they'll put you in an asylum!

CLARA: I don't care.

FLEET: I care!

CLARA: What are you doing?

FLEET: Putting on a parachute!

CLARA: You doubt my flying ability?

FLEET: Yes! It's the first time you've ever flown anything, so yes! I do!
A bit! But that's not why I'm putting this on.

CLARA: Why then?

FLEET: For safety.

CLARA: You just said—

FLEET: Not my safety, Clara.

CLARA: What?

FLEET: (SCREAMS, FALLING)

CLARA: Fleet!

F/X: Distant, booming horns.

Airships?

ANNOUNCEMENT ECHOES ACROSS ENTIRE
CITY.

VICTORIA: My loyal subjects. Today is a dark day. We have been
attacked at the Tower. Given the immediate internal threat, I
have agreed with the recommendation of my Home Secretary
Lord Merrick that the Yeoman Warders be given unrestricted
investigative authority across the entire city until the
emergency has passed. Albert?

ALBERT: The culprit is already known to us. Archibald Fleet, formerly of
Scotland Yard. He has betrayed his position, betrayed us all.
Such infamy... Such infamy... I'm sorry, I am overcome.

VICTORIA: Such infamy demands a mighty response. We ask each
citizen to do what is necessary to prevent this villain from
escaping the city or harming again. Be it proclaimed: a bounty
on Fleet's head.

END

EPISODE 6

SCENE 1.

NARRATOR:

The night sky of Even Greater London, it is often said, is one of its most pleasant features. Due to the transmission of energy through the atmosphere across the vast expanses of the city from the Tower at its heart, the night sky comes alive with crackling tendrils of purple-green. Londoners call these "shooting sinews", after "shooting stars", although they lack the romantic quality of these for two reasons: firstly, that they are not particularly rare; and secondly, that while people do make a wish when they see them, the wish is always the same – to make it safely indoors before a land-strike turns them to ash.

The night sky held a different form of danger that night, however, as a horrifyingly visible explosion at the Tower had led to the granting of temporary emergency powers to the Yeoman Warders.

Fortunately – or, more accurately, unfortunately – the explosion was not particularly damaging, as it had been planned by the men now wielding these powers, Chief Warder Whitlock and the Home Secretary Lord Merrick.

Even more unfortunately, at least for one person, their plan had also involved, thanks to their elaborately suspicious murder of eminent scientist Dr Salik, the framing of the detective with the misfortune of having accompanied Salik into London in the first place.

Near the centre of the nerve-wracked city stood the Railtown, a vast, abandoned rail construction and repair facility that had at one time been known as Reading. The miles and miles of repair bays, magnetic cranes and mountains of scrap of the Railtown now lay largely silent, but for the occasional sound from an empty, rusted boxcar, where one could often find the lost of Even Greater London. In one of them, the most lost of them all: the fugitive Archibald Fleet.

SCENE 2.

FLEET: Alright Archie. You've got yourself out of worse fixes than this. I think. Perhaps not. But you have the skills to get you out of fixes equal to this. Including this. Oh dear. Let's see. Merrick and Whitlock have attacked the Tower. But as far as everyone else knows, it was me. I placed a bomb at the top of the most important building in the city. And the Warders are going to have control of whatever they like. Options. Alright. Option A. Hide here forever. Pros: Easy. Cons: The end of the life I've come to know, never seeing anyone I care about ever again, and the Warders take control of the city. Option B. Do something. Pros: It's proactive. Cons: I don't know what it is or how it would work. Option C. Uhh...

WHISTLER: Dunno about you but I'd go for hiding.

FLEET: Hey, how long have you been back there?

WHISTLER: Little while. I was in here when you came in.

FLEET: So you heard me—

WHISTLER: Sobbing?

FLEET: I wasn't sobbing, I was— look, I'm very tired.

WHISTLER: Nothing to feel bad about. Your situation's worse than mine. And mine's as bad as I've known. Except for yours, which is much worse.

FLEET: Do I... know you?

WHISTLER: Not really, but we've met.

FLEET: Where?

WHISTLER: Top of the Grouse and Chisel.

FLEET: Of course, you're the urchin boy who saw Salik fall from the Tower.

WHISTLER: That's me. How's the investigation going?

FLEET: Not well.

WHISTLER: I figured, what with you sobbing in a boxcar and all. Plus I hear you've got yourself into some trouble.

FLEET: I didn't do it.

WHISTLER: I know. Come on, I saw them move the body in the first place, earned myself a nice pair of shoes noticing that, and then you turned up and didn't know what was going on. I figured you weren't the mastermind behind all this.

FLEET: That feels harsh, but you're right – I'm not. What are you doing here?

WHISTLER: Where else would I go? City's gonna be under lockdown. Can't get away even with a little pickpocketing with that kind of regime. Punitive. Cruel. Better to hide away. Hence my recommendation to you. Option A. Hide.

FLEET: It doesn't feel like the right thing to do.

WHISTLER: Sometimes the right thing doesn't feel like the right thing.

FLEET: Yes but in this case it feels outright cowardly.

WHISTLER: Listen to your heart.

FLEET: My heart says I need to do something. I'm responsible for this. It's not my fault – I didn't plan it – but... I need to do something!

WHISTLER: Alright, suit yourself. I give you a day, day and a half, before you're slammed up and I see you in the papers. Give me a half a crown.

FLEET: Why?

WHISTLER: Someone to grab your legs and pull hard downwards at the gallows. Better than doing it the long way, trust me – I've seen 'em.

FLEET: My god.

WHISTLER: I know, it's a tragedy. Still, pragmatism can't be argued with. So, you got a half crown or not.

SCENE 3.

NARRATOR: At six thirty that morning, Augusta Bell, the editor of the Morning Chronicler, entered her office and discovered her crime reporter, Clara Entwistle, asleep on the sofa. Clara had been there since rescuing Fleet from the Tower the night before, with the aim of catching Augusta as soon as she turned up for work. Augusta, keen to hear the findings of this reporter, who had not returned to the building since being hired, listened intently as Clara explained what she had learned.

CLARA: So, Merrick, Whitlock, the truth! Can we print it? It's the only way to stop them. We can put it in the afternoon edition.

AUGUSTA: Clara, perhaps if you had spent less time adventuring and more time bringing me copy, you would remember that this is the *Morning* Chronicler. There is no afternoon edition. But more to the point: are you mad? We can't print that!

CLARA: But it's the truth!

AUGUSTA: I believe you, dear. Merrick is a frightful character and it doesn't surprise me he would be capable of something like this. But it's not enough to print the truth; it must be *proven*. Or else we will be shut down immediately and I'll be back breeding show ponies and I won't do it!

CLARA: But we have to do something. We can't just let them get away with it! The warders have full run of the city, harassing whoever they like. And an innocent man has a bounty on his head!

AUGUSTA: Hmm... Perhaps this is one for Julius.

CLARA: Who's Julius?

AUGUSTA: My brother. He's the private secretary to the Queen. He is a dangerous, dangerous young man, but a sweetheart, really. Not the sort of person you want to be on the wrong side of. But such a dear! Just don't cross him. I think you'll like him.

CLARA: You think he can help?

AUGUSTA: Julius Bell can make almost anything happen. The question is, will he?

SCENE 4.

F/X: Desperately sad piano music, e.g. Moonlight Sonata.

MRS KELLER: Olwin, you're playing your feelings music again.

KELLER: It's the only thing I still have, Margaret. A journey into my own pain, with the expert understanding of Herr Mozart.

MRS KELLER: It's Beethoven, dear.

KELLER: I'm a failure.

MRS KELLER: You're not a failure, Olwin. But please stop playing. You're wearing out all the sad notes.

KELLER: Pianos don't work like that Margaret. And I don't work at all. I need another brandy.

MRS KELLER: You don't drink brandy, Olwin. You drink earl grey. Would you like another earl grey?

KELLER: Will it help me plumb the depths of my soul?

MRS KELLER: You could have it without milk.

KELLER: Oh god no, I can't bear it.

MRS KELLER: How long do you plan on staying up here descending into an inescapable whirlpool of introspection?

KELLER: I don't have anything else to do, Margaret. They've taken it all away from me. Everything I worked so hard for. The detective force will be folded under the authority of Whitlock and the Yeoman Warders. They're going to have jurisdiction over serious crimes across the entire city. We'll be left with telling people off for littering.

MRS KELLER: Well it'll give us more time together as a family.

KELLER: Oh God! Must you always be twisting the knife?

SFX: Door closes.

(SIGH) So quickly it all falls away. How did it happen? Was there one thing in particular?

F/X: Tapping on window.

NARRATOR: The soon-to-be-formerly Chief Inspector Keller turned to his third storey window and saw, clutching the frame for dear life, the fugitive Archibald Fleet.

KELLER: Oh yes, I remember now.

SCENE 5.

AUGUSTA: So, Julius, what do you think?

JULIUS: That is quite a story you've just told, Miss Entwhistle.

CLARA: It's not just a story, sir, it's the truth!

JULIUS: Do I believe you, Miss Enthwistle? Yes. Will anyone else? Probably not. Merrick is a seasoned operator and as slippery as an eel covered in soap. More to the point, it's rather too late. He is putting forward a bill in Parliament today to make the Warders' emergency powers permanent. They don't want to suddenly lose all they've gained just because this Fleet chap finds himself on the wrong end of a pitchfork. Given the current panic, it's likely to succeed.

CLARA: So you won't help us? Even knowing that?

JULIUS: There's nothing I'd like more than for someone to tie Merrick's shoelaces together, metaphorically speaking, but without proof my hands are the proverbial.

CLARA: What about we surprise him whilst parliament is in session and trick him into confessing?

JULIUS: Miss E, one cannot simply trick a charleton like Merrick into confessing. And even if you could, you'd never get into Westminster Fortress in the first place.

AUGUSTA: Unless accompanied by somebody with top security clearance, like, oh I don't know, the Queen's private secretary?

JULIUS: Augusta, you don't know what it is you ask. One doesn't a Queen's private secretary become whilst putting one's unhelmed head above the parapet, so to speak. Should you fail, I will be out on my ear.

AUGUSTA: It's not as if you are without many connected siblings! Maximus is on the lookout for a senior aide in the Foreign Office, or I'm sure Heraclea could find something for you at Girton. She's just been made Principal. You really should send a card.

CLARA: How many siblings do you both have?

AUGUSTA: Oh, many, a good many. Mama was quite prolific.

JULIUS: Look, I would like to help, really I would but...

AUGUSTA: Now look here Julius. I know you're the Queen's private secretary, but you're also my brother. And in case you've forgotten, I'm the one who has sole control over the family Christmas lunch seating plan, so unless you want to spend the next twenty Christmases sitting next to Regulus' wife...

JULIUS: You wouldn't. She's so dreary. All she talks about is her children. I'll drown myself in the consommé, I swear it.

AUGUSTA: It's up to you, Jules.

CLARA: Please help me, Mr Bell.

SCENE 6.

F/X: Window opened.

KELLER: Well, Fleet?

FLEET: Chief Inspector.

KELLER: Not for much longer. What do you want?

FLEET: First of all to come in off this ledge, if you don't mind.

KELLER: I'd have already shoved you off it if I didn't expect you'd somehow manage to turn that into an opportunity to cause me more trouble, like landing on my children or something.

FLEET: So may I come in?

KELLER: (SIGHS)

F/X: Fleet stumbles in and closes the window.

Brandy, Fleet?

FLEET: Yes, thank you.

KELLER: We don't have any.

FLEET: That's fine.

KELLER: Is it, Fleet?

FLEET: Chief Inspector, I wanted to talk to you about what's happened.

KELLER: You're a terrorist, Fleet. I understand perfectly.

FLEET: It wasn't me.

KELLER: No?

FLEET: I was set up.

KELLER: By whom?

FLEET: Merrick.

KELLER: The home secretary, have you lost your senses?

FLEET: And Whitlock.

KELLER: Whitlock?

FLEET: Yes, sir.

KELLER: How do you know this?

FLEET: Merrick told me!

KELLER: Why would Whitlock want to blow up his own damned tower? Makes him look irresponsible!

FLEET: Does it, sir? Or does it look like his powers were too limited for him to stop an attack?

KELLER: Well, yes. Yes, he will certainly end up with more. And I suppose it does suit Merrick to have the Warders roaming freely across the city acting as his personal police force. (PAUSE). You need to get out of here. If I were you I'd head for the docks and stow away on a boat to Marrakech. Start a new life as a camel merchant. You'll have to start as a camel merchant's assistant, obviously. You don't just become a merchant without putting a few years in first.

FLEET: I don't know the first thing about camels!

KELLER: They're just misshapen horses, Fleet, there's nothing to— it's just an example!

FLEET: Can't we do something about Merrick and Whitlock?

KELLER: What do you propose?

FLEET: What do you mean what do I propose? I'm the most wanted man in all of Even Greater London, and I have no evidence!

KELLER: There must be something... Think, man! Think! I don't want you to feel too much pressure but the liberty of the nation is literally on your shoulders, and I was lying before, obviously you'd have to start as the assistant to the camel merchant's assistant. They have a word for it, I can't remember what it is, it effectively means "salaried beetle".

FLEET: No. There's nothing.

F/X: Slap.

(SHRIEKS)

KELLER: How about now?

FLEET: How could you possibly think that would help? Wait!

KELLER: Aha! Sometimes a man just needs a good striking.

SCENE 7.

NARRATOR:

The Fortress of Westminster, gathering place of Parliament, stood on the north bank of the Thames glacier. The Fortress had been built on the site of the previous Palace of Westminster, which had burned down following the then Chancellor of the Exchequer's rousing and crowd-pleasing mid-budget spontaneous combustion.

Before Parliament had even had the chance to reconvene elsewhere and debate its position on the fire, the entirety of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's army of engineers and labourers had appeared on the site, stopped the blaze, and built in its place a gargantuan, fire-proof and absolutely impenetrable iron and stone fortress. In their frenzied and undirected swarm intelligence, Brunel's army had constructed the fortress in a magnificent but nausea-inducing architectural style the critic Johansen would name *non-Euclidean Gothic*, shortly before losing his mind.

The MPs moved back in shortly after completion, eager to get back to work but nevertheless unnerved by the hovering buttresses, the elliptical corridors with exits only visible if one walks clockwise, and the way the peaks of the vaulted ceilings revealed the goings-on of distant, upturned rooms, or occasionally the same room but with the events of the previous week.

Standing in the House of Commons, with bionic, regal splendour, was the mostly metallic figure of Queen Victoria, hosting as always, after a life-saving if soul-throwing-into-question procedure, the consciousness of her beloved and by rights deceased husband, Prince Albert. Beside them, Lord Merrick was enjoying his moment.

MERRICK:

My honourable friends. Today is a historic day. We put behind us the ambiguities of our current national security arrangements, and look confidently ahead into a future safe in the hands of our most trusted friends, the Yeoman Warders of the Tower.

Cheers of approval.

It is my honour to present to you all this bill for your vote. Your Majesties, would you like to say a few words?

VICTORIA: Gentlemen and Gentlemen. I am gratified to see my Government ensuring the safety of my subjects. Normally I stay out of this sort of thing, but I really do think this law needs to be passed and sharpish. If I see anyone voting against it, well, they won't be getting a Christmas card from me, that's for certain. Anything to add, Albert?

ALBERT: Only that I am delighted to see measures for greater safety for our people, whom we love dearly. There is such sadness in this world, such poverty. We must do what we can. It is our duty.

VICTORIA: Yes, very good, Alby. (TO MERRICK) Do get on with it.

MERRICK: Indeed, Your Majesties. Many thanks for those words. Now, we will commence the voting... wait for it... wait for it... n—

CLARA: (SHOUTING) Stop!

F/X: Jeering. Gavel being hit.

SPEAKER: Order, order! What is the meaning of this. Who is this woman?

F/X: Jeers of: A Woman, in parliament?

CLARA: My name is Clara Entwhistle, of the Morning Chronicler.

F/X: Jeers of: A woman, a woman journalist?

And that man is a fraud!

F/X: Grumbles and gasps

VICTORIA: My footman?

CLARA: No, sorry, the man behind him. The Home Secretary.

F/X: gasps

VICTORIA: Lord Merrick?

MERRICK: Your majesties, this is outrageous, I don't know who this woman is, but obviously she is suffering some sort of delusion.

F/X: Calls of "Hear hear!"

CLARA: I'm not delusional. The fact is, your Majesties, that Lord Merrick and Chief Warder Whitlock have framed Inspector Fleet for a plot of their own devising in order to trick Parliament, and you, into extending their powers.

MERRICK: Nonsense! This is absolute poppycock your majesties. Where is her proof?

VICTORIA: Do you have any evidence Miss Entwhistle? To back up your claims, being, as they are, very grave indeed.

CLARA: Proof, ah, well... yes, you see the thing is... the Obfuscati,

VICTORIA: The what?

CLARA: A secret organisation, it's not important, but they told me...

MERRICK: Ha! What rot! A secret organisation that no one has heard of just happened to tell you that I was plotting to destroy the tower? Miss Entwhistle, have you been at an opium den?

SFX: Jeers... "A woman in an opium den. Shame!"

Your Majesties this is exactly what comes of allowing women into the workforce, their fragile wombs cannot take it. And here is the result. She has concocted this cock and bull story to sell copy! She's a sensationalist, a fabulist! And, now that I look at her more closely I can see she is the same woman who has been cavorting with the prime suspect in this case – Inspector Fleet.

SFX: Gasps.

And all of this whilst ... unmarried.

SFX: Gasps. "Unmarried" "An unmarried journalist"
"Cavorting!" "Shame! shame!"

CLARA: Now look here...

MERRICK: No one feels this tragedy more keenly than I. In fact Chief Inspector Olwin Keller recently told me he had reservations about Fleet, after he was linked to the death of a talented Yeoman Warder. He was concerned that Fleet might be

unhinged. But I assuaged his fears. I simply couldn't believe one of our own detective officers was capable of such monstrosity. I see Miss Entwhistle has been taken in, as I was. Oh how I wish I had heeded his warning. Damn my kindness. He warned me, your majesty. Keller warned me of Fleet's dangerous nature!

F/X: Heavy doors fly open.

KELLER: (SHOUTING) I did no such thing.

CLARA: Chief Inspector!

FLEET: Clara!

CLARA: Fleet!

KELLER: (DISAPPROVINGLY) Miss Entwhistle.

F/X: Shouts from bench. Speaker banging gavel.

SPEAKER: Order! Order!

KELLER: This bill is a sham!

MERRICK: Please, Chief Inspector Keller, I don't know what this criminal has convinced you of but, as Miss Entwhistle here has already shown us, there is no evidence to back up any of these lunatic assertions.

KELLER: Or is there? (PAUSE) Yes, the answer is yes. Good old fashioned testimony. Come here, urchin lad, and tell Parliament what you know.

VICTORIA: What is your name boy?

WHISTLER: Whistler.

VICTORIA: And your first name?

WHISTLER: Never had one.

ALBERT: (WEEPING) Oh Victoria, it is so sad, we really must do something..

VICTORIA: And what do you have to tell us, boy?

WHISTLER: Only that the Beefeaters, them's the ones responsible. They pushed Salik out of a window up the Tower and moved his body behind the Chisel. I seed em with me own peepers.

SFX: Gasps.

MERRICK: More nonsense your Majesties. But, since we seem to be indulging this fantasy, Chief Warder Whitlock is just outside, I am sure he can clear this all up.

VICTORIA: Very well, call Warder Whitlock.

SPEAKER: Call Warder Whitlock.

F/X: Heavy doors opening. Footsteps.

WHISTLER: That's him! That's the one of em that spoke to me when they saw me watchin' em leave the body.

VICTORIA: Well, Chief Warder, what do you have to say to that?

WHITLOCK: Lies, your majesty. I've never set eyes on him. How do we know that he hasn't been paid to testify?

WHISTLER: You're the liar...

F/X: Disapproving grumbles

WHITLOCK: Careful now boy...

WHISTLER: I'm not afraid of you....

WHITLOCK: Unless you want to find yourself in prison...

WHISTLER: That'd be nice, it's warm and they give you clothes to wear...

ALBERT: (WEEPING) Oh this is so sad, so sad...

WHITLOCK: Are we really going to believe the word of a pickpocket?

FLEET: How would you know he's a pickpocket if you've never set eyes on him?

SFX: Gasps.

But in any event, we don't have to just believe his words, we can also believe his shoes. When I first interviewed Whistler at the crime scene, his shoes caught my attention, you might notice just how shiny they are. And how ill fitting. It was my suspicion that he had been given these shoes as a bribe, to keep him from revealing what he saw.

WHISTLER: They were indeed sir, and the man who gave me 'em is stood right there!

VICTORIA: My footman!?

FLEET: No your majesty, he is pointing to Chief Warder Whitlock.

VICTORIA: Footman, will you kindly refrain from moving about, you're causing the most unnecessary suspense.

WHISTLER: 'Course I took the shoes, I'd never had any of me own, I've always had to share with me brothers and sisters, which means one shoe every nine days or so.

ALBERT: It's too cruel Victoria! Too cruel!

WHITLOCK: This is absurd! He could have got those shoes from anywhere.

FLEET: Really Chief Warder? Anywhere that produces shoes with the Yeoman Warder crest embossed in gold on the sole?

F/X: More gasps.

Gentleman, before coming here I paid a visit to the cobbler responsible for providing the Warders with their regulation footwear. And here in my hand I have the signed testimony of said cobbler stating that on the very day after Salik's death, he received an order for one new pair of regulation shoes from the office of the Chief Warder.

KELLER: Ha ha, Whitlock! We've got you, and you know it!

WHITLOCK: But what you haven't considered is that ... you'll have to catch me first!

F/X: Running.

VICTORIA: Somebody stop him!

KELLER: With pleasure your Majesties. Fleet, care to join me?

FLEET: But the Home Secretary...

KELLER: We have nothing on him, except Whitlock's testimony, if we can get it. Come on man!

FLEET: All right.

F/X: Running out.

MERRICK: No, wait! Fleet, stop him. Don't let that man leave, get him! Get Fleet! Get Fleet!

CLARA: Wait a minute. Wait a minute! Get Fleet. (LAUGHS)

MERRICK: What is so funny?

CLARA: (LAUGHS)

VICTORIA: What is it? What's the joke?

ALBERT: I am fond of jokes.

CLARA: (LAUGHS) I've had it the whole time.

VICTORIA: Had what?

CLARA: When we found Salik's body, he was holding a note. It said "Get Fleet". It seemed that Salik had written it in his final moments, so that Fleet would be the one to investigate his murder. Only he didn't write the note. It was Lord Merrick. Your Majesties, here is the note, and I wager that if you compare it to a sample of Merrick's writing...

ALBERT: The original draft of the bill he gave us as a memento!

PAUSE.

VICTORIA: The handwriting is a match, with 97% confidence. Lord Merrick, what do you have to say?

MERRICK: Your Majesties, this is absurd, the note could be a fabrication, a clever ruse...

VICTORIA: Thirty six percent acceleration in heart rate.

MERRICK: Why, anyone with a steady hand and the time to learn how to mimic...

VICTORIA: Irregular contractions of the zygomatic major.

MERRICK: Clearly this is some sort of desperate attack by the guilty...

VICTORIA: Eye dart patterns suggesting mental fabrication.

MERRICK: Someone is obviously trying to—

ALBERT: You are lying, sir.

MERRICK: I, I, I—

VICTORIA: Do you wish to damn yourself with further lies? The work of my royal medical engineers means I have quite a few more tricks up my sleeve, not to mention the sleeve itself, which has a few tricks of its own.

PAUSE.

MERRICK: It was for you, Your Majesties! For the city's security. What I have done means Even Greater London will have no crime at all, nor even anything resembling crime or that seems like it might one day lead to crime! It will be beautiful.

CLARA: You want to rule through fear and deceit. The people deserve better.

MERRICK: The people can go to hell!

F/X: GASPS.

People. People. People live, work, and die. In their millions. Over and over and over again, living out their pointless lives with their pointless families in pointless, miserable obscurity. People are like the skin cells we lose every day. But this city. There's only one. It comes first. We must protect it! We must eradicate the disease of crime. If a few people are murdered here and there, and a few basic civic freedoms are lost forever, it will all have been worth it. For the greatness of the city. And isn't that what's most important here?

PAUSE.

VICTORIA: Take my hand, Lord Merrick.

MERRICK: Your Majesty?

VICTORIA: Take my hand. Go on.

MERRICK: As you wish.

F/X: Metallic clamp.

(SHRIEK) My hand! Release me!

NARRATOR: The crowded room watched in horror as the Queen began to rise up, three gigantic, pointed iron legs unfolding from beneath her, until she loomed fifteen feet over them all. Merrick dangled in terror.

MERRICK: Your Majesty, please!

VICTORIA: (VOICE HORRIBLY DISTORTED) Lord Merrick. You have displeased me.

NARRATOR: The long sleeve of the Queen's free arm stiffened and flattened, until it revealed itself to be an extremely long, sharp blade.

VICTORIA: (VOICE HORRIBLY DISTORTED) Prime Minister, I expect your new Home Secretary to have a good head on his shoulders. This one doesn't seem to have one at all.

MERRICK: (SCREAMS)

F/X: Blade swipes through flesh. Head thuds to ground. Gasps.

VICTORIA: (VOICE HORRIBLY DISTORTED) Does anyone object to this? Does anyone wish to decry my actions? Good. I will not have my country governed through deception and conspiracy. Cancel the vote and burn that wretched bill.

F/X: Cheers.

ALBERT: Come, my dear. Let us return home. I think some camomile tea is in order.

CLARA:

I feel as though we are forgetting something. (PAUSE). Fleet!

SCENE 8.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, Chief Warder Whitlock was running across the battlements of the Fortress of Westminster. He was aiming to escape using one of the airships tethered to the mooring mast, but his shoes were still rather new and caused him to slip on the stonework, allowing Fleet and Keller to catch up with him.

WHITLOCK: Damn these leather soles!

KELLER: Whitlock!

WHITLOCK: Keller.

FLEET: Come with us, Whitlock. It's over.

WHITLOCK: Oh Fleet, you couldn't just die, could you?

FLEET: Sorry, no.

KELLER: There's no escape, Whitlock.

WHITLOCK: Do you recall what I said to you, Inspector, when you visited my little paradise in the Tower? About how I got to where I am. What happened to me and my friends in the jungle?

FLEET: Mainly I just remember you saying you ate a panther.

WHITLOCK: I am not prey, Inspector.

KELLER: There's nowhere to run, Whitlock.

WHITLOCK: (FURIOUS) I have no need to!

Whitlock launches himself at Keller and Fleet,
showering them both with blows.

Do you think I'm going to let you take it all away from me? Do you think you get to do that?

Whitlock strikes Keller with great force, knocking him
down.

FLEET: Keller!

WHITLOCK: I am the Chief Warder! You are nothing, you are both nothing!

KELLER: Whitlock, the edge!

F/X: Slipping.

WHITLOCK: (SCREAMS)

Fleet throws himself onto the stone, catching
Whitlock's hand.

FLEET: Grab my other hand, Whitlock, I'll pull you up! It's alright, I've got you.

WHITLOCK: (LAUGHS) Do you Fleet? Do you indeed?

FLEET: Ah, my wrist! What are you doing?

WHITLOCK: (LAUGHS)

KELLER: Let go, Fleet!

FLEET: I can't—

WHITLOCK: (LAUGHS) (EXERTS HIMSELF)

FLEET: No, no! (SCREAMS)

WHITLOCK: (LAUGHS)

F/X: Fleet and Whitlock fall away into the distance.

SCENE 9.

F/X: Church bell tolls.

KELLER:

Thank you all for coming. We gather today to remember Inspector Archibald Fleet. Fleet gave his life in service of our city. Unwittingly, no doubt, but given nonetheless.

My mother was a gentle woman. She used to say that the dead never really leave us. They stay around and keep an eye on us. I always liked that. She's wrong, and she's dead too, but still. A nice sentiment for an occasion such as this. Probably only occasions such as this. Probably not suitable for birthdays and weddings. Wasn't a hit at little Georgie's 8th birthday party.

If you will indulge me a personal note. Fleet was one of my detectives, and I'll always remember him for that.

And now, in keeping with my wishes, a song.

(SINGS, CHOKED UP)

Amazing grace

How sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me...

(FADES OUT / INTO INSTRUMENTAL)

SCENE 10.

JULIUS: (FAINT / ECHOED) Inspector. Inspector. Inspector!

F/X: Slap.

FLEET: (WEAKLY) Aaah!

JULIUS: Very good. Don't try to move. You need to rest. My name's Julius Bell. I just wanted to have a little chat.

FLEET: Fell...

JULIUS: Yes you did. Quite a long way.

FLEET: Survived...

JULIUS: Survived? That drop? No, no of course you didn't. Terrible state when we found you. Humpty dumpty and all that. Fortunately for you, in lieu of King's men and for some reason horses – never understood why they would be called upon at all in that situ, seems to be setting them up for failure – in lieu of the aforementioned, Her Majesty lent you the assistance of her royal medical engineers, and they know a thing or two about putting people back together. Not a widely available service, you understand – HM's prerog. Take it from me – and that's as close as one gets to hearing it from her – she's very pleased with what you've done.

FLEET: Only–

JULIUS: Doing your job, I'm sure. Indeed. Although it went rather beyond the usual duties of a detective. So I have a new job for you. Just the one. A temporary contract. After that, whatever you like. I'd say think it over, but you do rather owe Vicky back for the favour of her medical help, not to mention the new bits and pieces you've got in there pumping away and keeping you going. Plus, as far as everybody else knows you're already dead, and it's just extraordinarily useful for someone like me to have a dead man working for him.

FLEET: What–

JULIUS: Do I need from you? I need you to rest up and get back on your feet. I need you to reflect on a job well done with a sense

of satisfaction. But most of all, Fleet, most of all, I need you to listen very, very carefully.

SCENE 11.

NARRATOR: Some time later, at Mrs Pomligan's Coffee House, Pottery Studio and Dry Cleaners, Clara Entwistle sat alone, staring out the window, not drinking the coffee. She was so engrossed in not drinking her coffee that she didn't notice when a man walked in, with his collar up, glasses that kept falling off his nose, a false beard and moustache, and a gait that suggested he was still getting used to how his own legs worked. The man sat at the next table.

FLEET: Fancy seeing you here.

CLARA: Flee—

FLEET: Shhh! I'm dead, you see. Hence this fantastic disguise.

CLARA: I see. Well, I should be surprised but given what we've been through, I think probably I would have been more surprised not to have seen you again. So what was it? Divine intervention?

FLEET: Actually some gents on the royal payroll. Clever stuff. Although I can hear myself ticking, which is disconcerting. You decided you like this place?

CLARA: No, it's ghastly. But you liked it. So I've been coming here every day since you, um, died.

FLEET: Every day?

CLARA: Every day.

FLEET: That's three days.

CLARA: Actually I didn't come yesterday. Busy busy.

FLEET: Two out of three days. That's how much mourning I get.

CLARA: (LAUGHS)

FLEET: I read your article on Merrick and Whitlock and their whole plot. Front page! Gone down well?

CLARA: Sold a tremendous number of papers, I understand. Augusta's decided I can stay on permanently, and she's made me a

senior investigative journalist. Said it wouldn't do to have such a high profile story written by someone still on a probationary contract. Said it was embarrassing.

FLEET: No doubt.

CLARA: So now I can write whatever I want, apparently.

FLEET: I'm glad. But what about our Obfuscati friends? I noticed they didn't get a mention.

CLARA: I thought it was only fair to them to leave them out, seeing as how we – you – did nearly scupper their whole plan to save us from all this bother in the first place.

FLEET: Hey–

CLARA: But they're happy with how it all turned out. How's Keller?

FLEET: Haven't seen him. I haven't seen anyone. (PAUSE) But he must be pleased. The Warders have been put under his authority, so he can dissolve the whole thing and just have a unified police force.

CLARA: What now? You've been awarded a posthumous medal, you know.

FLEET: I'm being sent away. A few months, apparently.

CLARA: Dangerous?

FLEET: Well they've chosen to send someone who's already dead, so... I'm not sure.

CLARA: What's it all about?

FLEET: I can't tell you that.

CLARA: Where is it?

FLEET: I definitely can't tell you that.

CLARA: When are you going?

FLEET: Train's in an hour.

LONG PAUSE

CLARA: I need to pick up a few things. I'll meet you at the station.

FLEET: Oh. (PAUSE) Good.

END