



A COMPETENT WITNESS

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Based on
A Competent Witness by Judith Nickels

FADE IN:

INT. COURTHOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

SUPER: TRIAL, 1895

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GEORGE GRAHAM (40s), clean-cut, dark brown hair, a frustrated scowl etched across his face, strides down the narrow hall. He checks his watch and quickens his pace.

With one hand, he adjusts his tie and straightens his glasses. The other grips tightly to a brown leather briefcase.

Two large wooden doors loom in front of him.

Written above the doors: MAIN COURTROOM

MUFFLED CHATTER from the other side of the doors.

Graham swings the doors open to reveal:

INT. COURTHOUSE/COURTROOM - DAY

Reporters, observers, and family members crowd the gallery as they attempt to get a view of the defendant.

INDISTINCT CHATTER fills the room.

Graham pushes his way through the crowd.

OBSERVER 1

Do you think she was in on it? His wife? She had to have known.

OBSERVER 2

Without a doubt. How could she have traveled with him for what, two years, and not even suspected it? It just doesn't make sense.

He continues to squeeze past people, knocking into the preoccupied BAILIFF, who is too busy to make note of the slight transgression.

BAILIFF

Sir, there's no standing on the benches. Please step down or I'll have to ask you to leave the room.

Graham reaches the rail and passes through the short swinging door that divides the public mass from the courtroom floor.

BALIFF

Order in the court. Court is now in session.

JUDGE

Would Mrs. Georgiana Howard please approach the witness stand.

A veiled woman, dressed in a tightly-fitted black dress, steps out onto the floor and up to the stand. She sits, proper, hands folded over her lap.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Please remove your hat, Mrs. Howard.

Blonde, well-kept, and reserved, GEORGIANA HOWARD (20s) does as she's told, revealing a pale, youthful face befitting of her years. Her dark brown eyes, however, look as if they were twice as old. They flit over to the defendant's table.

Staring back at her is a man whose face, despite being paired to a prison jumpsuit, exuded such an aura of charismatic confidence that it stood out more than even his styled, walrus moustache. He flashes her a smile that feels somehow both warm and inviting, yet oddly unnerving as well.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Howard, please raise your right hand.

She looks back to the Judge, her lace-covered hand coming up.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Howard, do you swear that the testimony you are about to give in this arbitration is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

GEORGIANA

I do.

JUDGE

Mr. Graham. You may proceed with your questioning.

GRAHAM

Thank you, your honor.
(to Georgiana)

Mrs. Howard, before we begin, is it safe for me to assume that you are fully aware of your current situation?

GEORGIANA

Yes. I am.

GRAHAM

Very well. Then allow me confirm the validity of this statement. Over the past two years, save the occasional business trip, you have constantly and consistently been in the company of the accused?

GEORGIANA

Yes. I have.

GRAHAM

And is it feasible to say that during said time, you were wholly unaware of the details of his work?

GEORGIANA

I never bothered to inquire much. I always thought it to be much too over my head.

GRAHAM

Well, my dear, it seems rather unlikely that in the two years you were together, there was nothing that aroused your suspicion.

GEORGIANA

No. He was always a good man and a better husband around me. I can assure you that these findings came as--quite a shock.

BOOS and JEERS from the crowd.

The BANG BANG of the Judge's gavel silences them.

JUDGE

Mr. Graham, I trust there is more to these questions?

GRAHAM

Apologies, your honor. I am here to discern whether or not Mrs. Howard was in any way involved in or knew of the wrongdoings of the accused. Or if she was merely a victim of gross psychological manipulation.

JUDGE
(nodding)
As you were. Carry on.

GRAHAM
Just because you believed him to be a good man, does not mean he always was one, Mrs. Howard. Maybe there was in fact, something overlooked. Perhaps if we retrace your steps, we may yet find information that will prove valuable in resolving this case.

Georgiana lets out a heavy breath.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
When, precisely, did you first meet Dr. Howard?

GEORGIANA
I don't remember the exact date, but it was some time in March, 1893. Near the big Siegel Cooper store on State Street in Chicago where I worked...

FADE TO:

EXT. CHICAGO - DAY

SUPER: CHICAGO, 1893

INDISTINCT CHATTER, TRAIN HORNS, and the sound of CONSTRUCTION DRILLS.

A bustling city, full of life. Amidst the numerous buildings, massive tents and other pop-ups can be seen as the denizens of Chicago prepare for the World Fair.

EXT. UNCLE ISAAC'S APARTMENT - DAY

A frazzled Georgiana dashes out the door down the steps of the run-down apartment building.

GEORGIANA
(calling out)
Bye Uncle! I'm heading out!

ISAAC (O.S.)
Be safe!

GEORGIANA

Always!

EXT. CHICAGO/STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Georgiana grins as she runs down the streets of Chicago, taking in the sights. Her eyes wander out across the street to a newspaper vendor, to the horse-drawn carriage making its way down the street, to the--

BAM.

She collides headfirst into a man smoking a pipe. The collision knocks the pipe out of his hands and onto the street.

GEORGIANA

Sorry!

HENRY HOLMES (30s), the same charismatic face as in the courtroom, only now dressed in a bowler hat and dapper brown suit, brushes himself off, turning to face Georgiana.

He stares at her for a moment before breaking out into a soft smile.

HOLMES

Not to worry. It was my fault for not paying enough attention to get out of the way in time.

He picks up the pipe, dusting it off with a handkerchief. Sticking the pipe back into his mouth, he notices Georgiana clutching her elbow.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

GEORGIANA

Yes, yes. I'm perfectly fine! I just wanted to make sure you weren't hurt.

HOLMES

Rest assured, I am not. Although you seem to be in quite the rush. Please, don't let my presence hold you up.

GEORGIANA

(rushed)

I'm very sorry again.

She notices the dirtied handkerchief.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Oh! If you have time, please come visit me at the Siegel Cooper store. It's the big brick building over there, if you were unsure.

(pointing)

I work in the handkerchief department. I'll make it up to you with a free sample.

She runs off before Holmes can respond.

He watches Georgiana run up the steps into a large building rubbing his left middle finger in between the forefinger and thumb of his right hand.

INT. SIEGEL COOPER/HANDKERCHIEF DEPARTMENT - DAY

Rows of various fabrics, colors, designs, and patterns line the walls and shelves.

Standing behind the counter wearing brown and white Siegel Cooper uniforms are NETTIE (20s) and TILLIE (20s).

NETTIE

Well I personally have always had a particular fancy for those young lads down by the docks. They may not be rich but hoo-wee, I could watch 'em work all day long.

TILLIE

I don't care much for looks, so long as he can take care of me, makes a decent wage, and wants raise a family together.

NETTIE

You say that now. But trust me, when you gotta stare at some ugly mug every single day, you're gonna wish he was easier on the eyes.

Nettie leans in to Tillie's ear.

NETTIE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Plus the sex is better.

TILLIE

Nettie!

NETTIE

What? I'm just saying.

Georgiana appears from the door behind the two, struggling to tie the apron behind her back.

Tittle moves to help her.

NETTIE (CONT'D)

What about you Georgiana? What kind of man gets you all hot and bothered like?

GEORGIANA

Huh? Oh I'm not looking to find someone right now. I'm much too busy to even think about marriage.

NETTIE

That's what they all say.

She pulls the knot tight. Georgiana lets out a small YELP, motioning for Tillie to undo it a little.

GEORGIANA

(strained)

Too tight. Can't breathe.

Tillie loosens it. Georgiana EXHALES.

NETTIE

Come now, we're not asking you to get married tomorrow. We just wanna know the sort of male specimen you find attractive.

TILLIE

Do you have to phrase it like that?

Georgiana begins cleaning up the counter, talking as she works.

GEORGIANA

Well, if you must know.

(thinking)

I suppose firstly they'd have to be well-off, dress nicely, passionate about their work, a good smile--

TILLIE

--By golly Georgiana, and I thought I was picky. You'll never find anyone with those standards.

NETTIE

That's like looking for a--what's that phrase? Horseshoe in a haystack?

GEORGIANA

Needle.

NETTIE

Horseshoe in a needle?

TILLIE

Needle in a haystack. C'mon Nettie even I know that one.

The two make faces at each other as Georgiana continues to clean.

GEORGIANA

Why are you so curious about my preferences anyhow?

NETTIE

You mean you haven't noticed?

GEORGIANA

Noticed what?

CUT TO:

INT. SIEGEL COOPER/LUNCHROOM

Male admirers stare at Georgiana from various tables around the room. They wink and flash toothy smiles in her direction.

Among them, HARRY CHAPMAN (20s), young and brash, with a certain fire in his eyes, stands over Georgiana's table, fixated on her.

HARRY

Come now, Miss Yoke. Look at these suffering minions. You've broken a dozen hearts this week alone.

Georgiana looks at Nettie.

GEORGIANA

Is this what you were talking about?

Nettie shrugs.

HARRY

All we're asking for is a chance.
One good, genuine shot to sweep you
off your feet.

GEORGIANA

"We're"? Are you speaking on behalf
of everyone here or just yourself
Mr. Chapman?

Harry eyes the room. A good dozen or so other men watch the
table like vultures.

HARRY

(clearing his throat)
Myself. I am asking for a chance.

GEORGIANA

And why should I be inclined to
give you one?

HARRY

(chuckling)
You've got quite the barricade set
up, don't you, Miss Yoke.

GEORGIANA

It comes in handy in times like
these.

HARRY

Well then what's a fellow to do
when you take none of us seriously?

GEORGIANA

I'll take you seriously when you
start acting serious. When I see
ambition in someone proportionate
to the opportunities of this city.
But what do I see here? Shirkers,
one and all.

JEERS of disapproval and denial from the men.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

If you regarded your work with even
half as much passion as you gaze at
me with, I might've thought to
consider it.

Nettie and Tillie, sitting at the same table, SNICKER at the
unexpected insult.

HARRY

How can you say that when I was here last night until eleven? You leave before dark, how can you know how long and hard I work?

GEORGIANA

I've heard occasion aplenty, it is nigh even nine-thirty before you are at the dance hall. And the liquor saloon after that!

HARRY

Those charges are denied!

GEORGIANA

And what is this I hear you do every Sabbath in summer, but go swimming in that ice cold lake up north? Who could take seriously anyone who does that?

HARRY

Perhaps everyone was getting baptized. Did you stop to think of that possibility my dear?

GEORGIANA

Once you've been, why go back every week? What sort of sinners are you?

HARRY

Actually, there's a purely practical reason for it, if you must know. It spares us the trouble of our Saturday night bath, you see, if we're all cleaned up by the lake on Sunday.

GEORGIANA

Oh please, don't make me contemplate your likeness in the bath.

LAUGHTER around the room, followed by the DING of a bell.

HARRY

Alas, let us continue this conversation another time. Regrettably, our lunch break seems to have already passed us by.

GEORGIANA

So it would seem. I suppose a good rest of the day to you then, Mr. Chapman.

HARRY

To you as well, Miss Yoke.

A tip of his hat and the two go separate ways, back to their respective departments.

Harry turns back to get one last glimpse of Georgiana before he rounds the corner.

INT. SIEGEL COOPER/HANDKERCHIEF DEPARTMENT - DAY

Holmes peruses the aisles, taking his time to observe the subtle differences in colors, feeling the various textures of fabrics, and every so often, looking over toward the girl standing at the counter as she interacts with customers.

A moment arrives where she is left alone, and Holmes moves to the register.

GEORGIANA

Good afternoon, sir. Are you here to pick up an order? Or is there something else I can help you with?

HOLMES

I'd like to claim my free sample if the offer still stands.

GEORGIANA

(recognizing)

Oh! It's you again. I wasn't expecting you to visit so soon.

HOLMES

I would have come earlier, had I not been forced to take care of some unavoidable business.

GEORGIANA

Well I'm pleased you showed up. I'd have felt awfully guilty if you didn't.

Holmes smiles.

HOLMES

Is it possible to have the sample embroidered?

GEORGIANA

Hm? Oh. Yes, that's not a problem.
What would you like embroidered?

HOLMES

The letters HH. Like this.

He pulls out his dirtied handkerchief, showing the small HH,
sewn into the bottom right corner.

GEORGIANA

I'll see to it that it's taken care
of personally.

HOLMES

Many thanks Miss--
(reading nametag)
--Georgiana.

GEORGIANA

You're quite welcome.

Holmes pulls out a business card from his suit pocket.

HOLMES

Here is my card, I'd be most
grateful if you could have it sent
to this address.

Georgiana accepts the business card.

GEORGIANA

"Dr. Henry Holmes".

HOLMES

No relation to either Sherlock or
Oliver Wendell.

He winks at Georgiana, causing her to momentarily forget
herself and what she was doing.

GEORGIANA

(blushing)

I--uh, I'll make sure these are
sent out as soon as they're
finished. No later than Thursday.

She smiles as Holmes turns to leave.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Have a good day.

Holmes grins, vanishing back into the aisles and out the
door.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Stained glass windows. Rows of wooden benches. A large cross behind the main altar. By all standards, a very ordinary church.

The seats are filled with CHURCH-GOERS, whose hands are folded and heads lowered as a PASTOR (50s) prays.

Among the patrons, Georgiana sits beside Uncle Isaac at the edge of one of the middle rows.

PASTOR

--We thank you God, for all of the gifts you have so graciously given us. We thank you for bestowing upon our lives joy and peace. And as we close this meeting, we ask you, Lord, to walk with us and guide us. Give us strength and wisdom so that we may not err in our life's journey. Through Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

ALL

Amen.

Heads lift and people begin to rise. Uncle Isaac nods to Georgiana and the two stand and move to exit the building.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Georgiana and UNCLE ISAAC (50s), an older man, who, despite his age and somewhat large size, walk briskly down the stairs of the church, amidst the crowd of worshippers exiting the church.

ISAAC

I must say it is rather enjoyable to have someone accompanying me to church. It gets rather dull when one is alone for too long.

GEORGIANA

I'm glad my presence is welcomed. I was afraid you might have found my tagging along to be a nuisance.

ISAAC

Not at all, my dear. Au contraire, I haven't been this chipper in ages.

They make their way to the sidewalk and begin heading down the street.

EXT. CHICAGO/STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The sidewalk is moderately crowded, with people coming and going as they please.

GEORGIANA

Surely that's more God's doing than mine own.

ISAAC

Nonsense. Unless it is to say that you are here because of the Lord.

GEORGIANA

Of that I'm sure. Everything is as he planned.

As they continue to walk, a familiar-looking man stands observing a lamp post ahead of them, his back to the pair.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

(noticing)

Is that--

The man turns.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

--Dr. Holmes? What are you doing here?

HOLMES

Good morning Miss Yoke.

ISAAC

Now who might this young man be?

GEORGIANA

This is Dr. Holmes, an acquaintance I made through work. Dr. Holmes, this is my Uncle Isaac.

HOLMES

How do you do, sir?

ISAAC

Very well, very well.

HOLMES

Are you both returning home at the moment?

GEORGIANA

Yes, we are.

She gestures.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Uncle Isaac's apartment is just down the street there.

HOLMES

Would you mind if I tagged along? It just so happens that I'm heading that way as well.

ISAAC

By all means.

Holmes beams as the trio begin strolling down the street, with Georgiana in between the two men.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

So you're a doctor then? Do you by chance know a man by the name of Woodruff? Albert Woodruff?

GEORGIANA

Is that the man who came with you when you visited us back home for Thanksgiving that one year?

ISAAC

Mmhmm. My old racquetball partner. Haven't heard from him in a while, but I hope he's doing well.

Holmes rubs the crook of his hand.

HOLMES

I'm familiar with the name. I believe I knew his wife. Pray, do you also know Master Curt and his father, Mr. Renault?

ISAAC

Why yes I do. I happened to meet them once at a dinner party over on the East side. Young Curt is studying to be a dentist is he not?

HOLMES

I've heard the same. Truly, what a small world we live in, wouldn't you agree?

ISAAC
Yes, it is.

The two continue to chat as Georgiana's head swivels back and forth between the two, trying to keep up with their banter.

EXT. UNCLE ISAAC'S APARTMENT - DAY

As they reach the entrance to Isaac's apartment, Georgiana extends a gloved hand.

GEORGIANA
Well, it was nice to see you, Dr. Holmes. Perhaps you'll be shopping with us again soon.

A smile.

Holmes takes her hand with a gentle squeeze before turning and giving Isaac a hearty shake.

HOLMES
Perhaps I will.

He winks at her and places an envelope in her hands.

She opens it.

INSERT ENVELOPE:

Inside are two tickets.

END INSERT.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
For you both to enjoy.

GEORGIANA
Look uncle! Tickets to the orchestra tomorrow.

Isaac grabs the envelope and hands it back to Holmes.

ISAAC
I'm sorry, but we can't accept these.

GEORGIANA
Why not?

ISAAC

Well we've only just met. To receive such an expensive gift after twenty minutes of knowing one-another is hardly proper Georgiana.

GEORGIANA

(under her breath)
I've known him longer.

HOLMES

Please, I insist. I myself am unable to go and would much rather they be used than left to waste.

ISAAC

Well--

HOLMES

--You would be doing me a favor.

Isaac thinks for a moment.

ISAAC

Alright.

He takes the envelope in both hands.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Thank you, doctor. We appreciate it very much.

HOLMES

I do hope you enjoy the show. Perhaps some time later, Miss Georgiana might tell me about it over dinner at the Palmer House?

GEORGIANA

Y-yes. That sounds lovely.

HOLMES

I will look forward to it then.

Holmes gestures for the two to head inside.

GEORGIANA

Thank you again, doctor.

HOLMES

My pleasure.

He watches as Georgiana and Isaac walk up the stairs. Once out of sight, he checks his pocket watch and starts to walk back the same way he came.

INT. UNCLE ISAAC'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

A set of cushioned chairs and wooden coffee table seem to be the only furnishings in the modest room.

Georgiana sits opposite Isaac, who skims through the morning paper.

GEORGIANA

I wonder how he got these tickets if he couldn't go. I'm sure they weren't cheap.

Isaac looks up over the newspaper.

ISAAC

I recon he's taken a fancy to you. How did you say you met him again?

GEORGIANA

At work. But for a man of his renown I'm sure he has plenty of other women far more desirable than me to choose from.

ISAAC

Well I doubt he gave all of them tickets. Lest he bought out the whole place himself.

GEORGIANA

A statement like that seems preposterous for the average person. But curiously, I could imagine Dr. Holmes having actually done so. Isn't that funny. Although I doubt it's the truth.

ISAAC

Is there something you'd like to tell me, Georgiana?

GEORGIANA

What do you mean?

ISAAC

It sounds to me like you're interested in him as well.

GEORGIANA

I never said anything of the sort.

ISAAC

I don't think you needed to.

He chuckles.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

In any case, I'm very much looking forward to this. I can't remember the last time I saw the orchestra.

GEORGIANA

It will be quite the experience.

She continues to stare at the tickets.

INT. THE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

VIVALDI, THE FOUR SEASONS, AUTUMN - I.

The mesmerizing harmony of strings, brass, and organ. Happy, upbeat, brisk.

Georgiana sits mesmerized as she listens intently to the sounds of the music.

As the movement winds to a close, we:

FADE TO:

EXT. CHICAGO/ALLEY - NIGHT

VIVALDI, THE FOUR SEASONS, AUTUMN - II.

Two men. Dressed in suits, pulling an unusually heavy garbage bag down the alley. With some effort, they drag the bag in front of a door.

The two relax. One of the men offers his hand, a gold watch on his wrist. The other shakes it and turns to leave.

As he walks out, he passes under a small lamp. The light highlights a scar on his left cheek. The man quickly readjusts his blazer and disappears into the night.

The other man watches him go, rubbing the crook of his hand. After a moment, he opens the door and drags the bag inside.

In time with the music, the door behind swings shut with a THUD.

CUT TO:

INT. PALMER HOUSE - NIGHT

VIVALDI, THE FOUR SEASONS, AUTUMN - III.

A fancy restaurant, dim lighting, elegant glassware.

Holmes sits opposite Georgiana.

GEORGIANA

I don't think I've ever dined at such a fancy establishment before.

HOLMES

I hope it meets your expectations.

GEORGIANA

I'm sure it will. Thank you for the invitation. And the tickets.

HOLMES

You're most welcome.

A WAITER (20s) approaches the table with two menus. He places them in front of the pair.

WAITER

Here are your menus. Tonight's special entrée is beef bourguignon over handmade pappardelle pasta. Our soup of the day is cream of mushroom, and dessert is New York style cheesecake. I will give you a few minutes to look over the menu and be back to take your order shortly. If you have any questions feel free to ask me.

HOLMES

Thank you.

The waiter leaves.

INSERT MENU:

Various dishes, all with French names. The prices of which have been omitted.

END INSERT.

GEORGIANA

Hmmm.

HOLMES

Is something the matter?

GEORGIANA

(reading)

Petit B-boche a la Re-reine.

HOLMES

Would you like some help?

Georgiana blushes.

GEORGIANA

Perhaps you'd be kind enough to order my meal doctor? I must confess, this menu is--quite beyond me.

HOLMES

Certainly. And please, call me Henry.

(taking the menu)

What do you like to eat?

GEORGIANA

My physician advises me to eat seafood whenever possible.

The WAITER, recently returned, stands beside the table, his eyes flitting between the two.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

But I'm not a picky eater, I enjoy trying new--

HOLMES

--Two Lobster Newberg.

The waiter writes down the order.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

And bring another fork. This one has a spot.

Holmes offers the fork to the waiter.

The waiter takes the fork, a flash of embarrassment runs across the waiter's face.

WAITER

Yes, sir. Sorry, sir. I'll bring a new one right away.

He leaves.

HOLMES

So I take it you enjoyed the Auditorium?

GEORGIANA

It was like Ali Baba opened up his cave to the public. I can't imagine a more gorgeous space or more wonderful music.

HOLMES

It truly is a marvel to behold. You must understand the incredible feats that such a building has accomplished. The acoustic quality is unrivaled in this city, if not the best in the nation. Everything from the design of the ceiling to the seat positioning to the material of the walls has been carefully considered. The architects, Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan, both remarkably intelligent and inspiring. Even my own work has taken influence from them. The hydraulic lifts, for example. 26 of them rest underneath the main stage, allowing individual sections to be raised and lowered as needed--

GEORGIANA

--Are you sure you're a doctor, not an architect?

HOLMES

You'll find I have quite a number of hobbies and passions.

Holmes smiles mischievously.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

But yes. I'm sure. If you'd like me to prove it, might I inquire as to how old you were the first time you had symptoms of goiter?

GEORGIANA

How did you know?

HOLMES

You said you were recommended a diet of seafood. Most likely to counteract an iodine deficiency. Which, as you must know, is the key cause of goiter.

GEORGIANA

Well, it seems you are a doctor after all. Consider me impressed.

HOLMES

Has it worked? Eating seafood?

GEORGIANA

For the most part. Occasionally I will still experience an attack. But nothing like before.

HOLMES

What happens when you do? Have an attack that is.

GEORGIANA

My eyes will bulge, my heart pounds and I feel faint.

HOLMES

Hm. Your doctor was a good man. Excellent diagnosis. I'm rather impressed a small down doctor would be up on the latest treatment.

Georgiana smiles as she takes another bite of lobster.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

When do you generally feel the symptoms?

GEORGIANA

Sometimes standing at work for long periods of time I get dizzy, but I can hide it.

HOLMES

What about the Fair? Are you well enough to walk in the heat?

GEORGIANA

Oh yes, of course! The Fair is why I moved here, after all.

HOLMES

I do hope the music program pleases you as much as the orchestra did.

GEORGIANA

They'll have to be truly extraordinary to be better than the orchestra. I can only recall one other time when music affected me as much as that night.

HOLMES

Really? And when might that other time have been?

GEORGIANA

It was a Methodist gathering. There was a man, a gypsy. He played a song on the violin. It was such a sad and beautiful song. I cried.

HOLMES

The music brought you to tears?

GEORGIANA

Yes, and I shan't ever forget it. One of the best memories I have.

Another bite.

HOLMES

Well then let us hope that there will be many more moments like that in your future.

He raises his glass. They CHEERS.

EXT. CHICAGO/STREETS - NIGHT

The scarred man from before walks down the road, a briefcase in his hand. He slips through the crowd, avoiding walking under the street lights or in view of anyone on the road.

He passes by the Palmer House. As he does, for the briefest of moments, he seems to make eye contact with Holmes.

No acknowledgement from either party, and the scarred man continues walking out of sight.

FADE TO:

EXT. CHICAGO/STREETS - NIGHT

The soft glow from dotted street lamps along the sidewalk and the light of the moon illuminate the cobblestone street outside the restaurant.

Georgiana and Holmes walk out side-by-side. The night is chilly, and their breath visible with every exhalation.

GEORGIANA

Henry?

HOLMES

Yes?

GEORGIANA

There's something I've always wanted to ask of someone like you.

HOLMES

Someone like me?

GEORGIANA

A successful businessman. Who always seems to be working.

HOLMES

Ah. And what might your inquiry be?

GEORGIANA

What is it that motivates you? What do you have that others don't? How come everyone can't seem to do what you do?

HOLMES

(chuckling)

You continue to surprise me, Miss Yoke. Although I can't say for sure what the answer to that question is.

GEORGIANA

But surely there's something?

HOLMES

That drives me?

GEORGIANA

Yes, something that--ignites the fire in your heart and pushes you to reach for the stars.

Holmes CHUCKLES.

HOLMES
Quite the poet.

GEORGIANA
I try.

HOLMES
Well, if I had to say one thing.
One sort of reason. I suppose--yes.
Appreciation.

GEORGIANA
Appreciation?

HOLMES
Appreciation for what the world has
to offer.

GEORGIANA
How so?
(beat)
I'm sorry for asking so many
questions, it's just that I find it
all so interesting to hear such a
new perspective.

HOLMES
Not to worry. I enjoy it when
someone is curious about my
thoughts.

He stops under a street light.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Take this street lamp for example.
For it to be here, right where we
are standing now, think about all
of the things that had to have
taken place.

Holmes circles around the pole as he talks, his index and
thumb rubbing the inner crook of his opposite hand.

He clears his throat with a COUGH.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
First, someone had to invent the
light bulb.

GEORGIANA
Edison!

HOLMES

Very good. Then, someone had to take the light bulb and make it into a street lamp.

(off Georgiana's look)

Yablochkov. That one I didn't expect you to know.

He winks at her.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Then, a city planner had to think to put the lamp right here, taking into consideration the distance between each one, the strength of the light, and the number of people who would benefit from it. After deeming it a viable location, ultimately, a construction company then built this street lamp for us to make use of. And here's the thing--

(beat)

--we take it completely for granted. Without it, we would be walking in complete darkness right now or forced to hold a lamp as we stumbled down the road.

Georgiana's eyes are glued to Holmes. His face glows under the light, as if he were being blessed by the Heavens.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

The street lamp completely revolutionized the way we go about our daily lives, but far too few people seem to recognize that fact. The difference between me and any other average fellow is a matter of appreciation.

His fingers continue to rub together as they resume walking.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

And what motivates me is the desire to get people to appreciate the process. The work that goes into the product. Whether it's architecture or medicine or something else entirely.

GEORGIANA

But must you always have to work in order to achieve a goal like that?

(MORE)

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

I'd hate to think that your entire life would pass you by that way.

They stop again, standing outside, in front of Isaac's apartment.

HOLMES

You miss the point. Life is not meant to be about where you end up. It is the journey that leads you there that is most important.

GEORGIANA

I don't think that's true.

HOLMES

Yet here you are, a schoolteacher from Indiana--

He takes a slow step toward Georgiana.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

--now living in Chicago. Working as a department store saleswoman--

Another step.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

--who just dined at the best restaurant in the city. With a man she's only known short of a month--

One more step.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

--yet whose heart she's somehow--

He stops, his body almost right against hers. His face, centimeters away from Georgiana's.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

--captured.

Georgiana instinctively shuts her eyes.

Holmes lingers for a moment before retreating back, smiling again.

Another beat before Georgiana opens her eyes.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Would you like to come inside?

Georgiana turns around to see:

EXT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Three stories tall, a monument to Victorian architecture.

GEORGIANA

Is this--

HOLMES

My hotel. Fondly referred to by the locals as "The Castle".

GEORGIANA

It's beautiful.

HOLMES

Purchased and renovated years ago. I myself sleep in one of the hotel rooms often.

GEORGIANA

It must've cost a fortune.

HOLMES

That it did. But I think it to be quite the worthwhile investment.

Holmes repeats his initial question.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Did you want to take a look inside?

A beat, as Georgiana considers it.

GEORGIANA

Another time. If that's quite alright with you. I'm rather tired, and wouldn't want to impose.

HOLMES

(nodding)

I understand. Shall I walk you back to your Uncle Isaac's then?

GEORGIANA

If it's not too much trouble.

HOLMES

None at all.

He guides her away from the building, his eyes lingering on the Castle for a moment after, before turning back to Georgiana.

FADE TO:

EXT. UNCLE ISAAC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Holmes and Georgiana arrive at the bottom of the steps leading to the apartment door.

GEORGIANA

Thank you. For tonight. It was lovely.

HOLMES

I'm glad you enjoyed yourself.

A moment of silence. Georgiana searches the ground, looking for the courage to speak.

GEORGIANA

Henry?

HOLMES

Yes?

GEORGIANA

Are you, by chance, free this weekend?

HOLMES

I am.

GEORGIANA

Would you like to go to the Fair with me? I haven't the chance to go yet and as you know, its the reason why I came to Chicago in the first place. I would go alone, but I thought that maybe company might be nice as well. And since you seem to be so knowledgeable on so many different topics, I thought that you might--

HOLMES

--I'd love to.

Georgiana beams.

GEORGIANA

Really?

HOLMES

Shall I come by around noon on Saturday? That way we have plenty of time to explore and such.

GEORGIANA
Yes, I'd like that.

HOLMES
It's a date.

GEORGIANA
(echoing)
It's a date.

HOLMES
Good night, Miss Yoke.

GEORGIANA
Good night Henry.

Georgiana opens the door and enters the apartment, leaving Holmes alone.

He rubs the crook of his finger as he turns and walks off.

EXT. WORLD'S FAIR - DAY

MUSIC and CHATTER fill the air.

Bright colors, vibrant decorations. Every stall showcasing something unique and wonderful. Hand-carved masks and talismans from Africa, bamboo-woven furniture from Asia, the latest technologies and inventions from Europe.

Georgiana's mouth hangs agape as she takes in the sights.

GEORGIANA
This is incredible! I've never seen anything like this before!

HOLMES
Wait until you try some of the food.

Georgiana looks up at him, her eyes wide in anticipation.

EXT. WORLD'S FAIR - DAY (MONTAGE)

--Georgiana and Holmes walk through a different area of the fair, where vendors sell trinkets, souvenirs, and other merchandise.

--An Egyptian belly dancer performs on a stage as Holmes and Georgiana watch with great amusement.

--Holmes stands in line for a food stall as Georgiana reads the menu. She points to a dish on the menu called "koobideh"

--At a wooden table, the couple try the various foods they purchased. Holmes feeds Georgiana a bite of curry.

--The two stand, looking out on the ocean at three full-scale reproductions of Christopher Columbus' ships. Georgiana rests her head on Holmes' shoulder.

END MONTAGE

EXT. WORLD'S FAIR - DAY

Georgiana and Holmes sit at a bench near the edge of the fair. The sky behind them is a wonderful blend of orange, red, and purple as the sun slowly sets over the water.

GEORGIANA

I've never been so happy, yet so tired before. My legs refuse to move, and I've been smiling like a child the whole day.

Holmes takes his hat off, staring directly at Georgiana.

HOLMES

Would you like to travel with me across the country?

GEORGIANA

Huh? What do you mean?

HOLMES

I know this is a bit abrupt. But I'll be leaving the city soon. I have plans that will take me as far as Fort Worth or perhaps even California.

GEORGIANA

Why?

HOLMES

For business. For the future. Inventions, ideas I'm working on that I want to share with the world. But more importantly, I want you to come with me.

A pause, as Georgiana processes his words.

GEORGIANA

I-I can't just run away with you
and leave everything else behind so
suddenly. How absurd.

HOLMES

What if I gave you a reason to do
so?

Holmes produces a small box from his pocket, hiding it behind
his back.

Georgiana's eyes widen as Holmes brings into view the box.

CUT TO:

INT. SIEGEL COOPER/LUNCHROOM - DAY

Nettie and Tillie stare at Georgiana in shock.

NETTIE AND TILLIE

What?!

GEORGIANA

He proposed to me. Yesterday after
the fair. Oh you should have been
there it was the most romantic
thing.

NETTIE

What did you say?

TILLIE

You didn't say yes did you? You
barely know him.

GEORGIANA

I didn't give him an answer. He
told me to take a day to consider
it so as to not make a hasty
decision.

TILLIE

I think it's far too early for
this. I mean really, you've gone on
what? Four dates?

NETTIE

So much for "I'm not looking for
anyone".

GEORGIANA

I know. I know. But there's just something about him that makes me want to say yes.

NETTIE AND TILLIE

No!

NETTIE

It's a bad idea. Trust me.

TILLIE

There must be a reason why he asked so soon.

GEORGIANA

He said he's planning on leaving the city. If I say no, I don't think I'll ever see him again.

(beat)

Oh, it's just all so sudden.

The bell signaling the end of lunch RINGS.

NETTIE

I suppose if he really means that much to you.

GEORGIANA

It could work, right?

Georgiana doesn't wait for an answer as she get up and heads out of the room.

Nettie and Tillie give each other the same, knowing look.

CUT TO:

INT. UNCLE ISAAC'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Isaac stands opposite Georgiana, the table in between them. By the looks of it, the two were halfway done with dinner.

ISAAC

Absolutely not. It's too soon.

GEORGIANA

What? Too soon?

ISAAC

Yes.

GEORGIANA
How do you know?

ISAAC
(searching)
I just do.

GEORGIANA
That's not--

ISAAC
--This isn't a discussion.
(beat)
Georgiana. Think about it. You're talking about marriage. This isn't some game. It's a lifelong commitment.

GEORGIANA
I have and I know. There are plenty of couples who marry without having ever met one another and they work out fine. If I think he's the one, why can't this be any different?

Isaac massages his temples.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
You had the chance to meet him, talk to him. And you liked him then did you not? He's a good person.

ISAAC
Georgiana, you must realize there is a great difference between judging someone as a friend and as a husband. It's not as easy as just saying yes when I know your entire future is at stake.

GEORGIANA
But if you had to choose--

ISAAC
--I would err on the side of caution. You don't know this man well enough yet. He could be a child molester or a bank robber.

GEORGIANA
Nonsense. I know Henry is a good man. He cares.

ISAAC
Cares about what? His job? His
wealth? His connections?

GEORGIANA
Me. He cares about me.

ISAAC
How can you be so sure?

GEORGIANA
Because...because--

Isaac crosses his arms.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
--Because God sent him to me for a
reason.

Isaac slams down his fork into the table.

ISAAC
Don't you bring the Lord into this.
How dare you claim his will to
justify your actions.

Georgiana goes silent.

A long, drawn out pause.

Isaac EXHALES, collecting himself.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Look. I know it's hard. But it's
for your own good. I'm trying to
protect you, you know that right?

A small nod from a teary-eyed Georgiana.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Whatever your choice is, I will
support you. Even if I don't like
it. It's your life, your decision.

He walks over and hands her a tissue.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Just be sure you know the
consequences.

Isaac leaves the room.

Georgiana quietly wipes her tears and returns to eating.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Georgiana sits alone in the church, hands folded, eyes closed. She PRAYS to herself, under her breath.

Her eyes open. She stares up at the cathedral ceiling. Then the stained glass windows. The rows of benches. Her eyes finally landing on the worn Bible in front of her.

She pulls it out and holds it for a moment.

She flips it open to a random page.

GEORGIANA

(reading)

*"So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your
God. I will strengthen you and help
you; I will uphold you with my
righteous right hand."*

She closes the book and sits back, a smile spreading slowly across her face.

EXT. CASTLE - DAY

Holmes emerges from the building, sweaty. His hands and clothes stained with some unidentifiable, dark liquid.

Georgiana stands, PANTING, about ten feet away, her face giddy with excitement.

Holmes notices her as he brushes his hands off on a towel.

HOLMES

Miss Yoke! What are you doing here?
I didn't expect to see you so early
in the morning.

GEORGIANA

Ah, sorry, am I interrupting
something?

Holmes tosses the towel aside.

HOLMES

No, not at all. To what do I owe
this unexpected visit?

Georgiana catches her breath.

GEORGIANA

I've made my decision.

HOLMES

Oh?

GEORGIANA

My answer is yes.

HOLMES

Are you sure?

GEORGIANA

Yes. I want to see the country,
live a life of excitement. By your
side.

Holmes looks down at his shoes, sheepishly.

HOLMES

Well, I must apologize for being a
little under prepared for this
moment. Had I a few more minutes, I
could've changed into something a
bit more proper.

Georgiana lets out a LAUGH.

GEORGIANA

I don't mind at all.

Holmes's face turns serious.

HOLMES

There is something else you must
know though, before you say yes.

GEORGIANA

Hm?

HOLMES

Truth be told, I've been married
before. Twice in fact. Both times I
was swindled and left for other,
more handsome and successful men.
It has made it quite difficult for
me to open up and may damper your
impression of me, but for your
sake, I want to be fully honest
with you. If it is too much to
bear, I understand if you no longer
wish to marry me.

GEORGIANA

I don't care.

HOLMES

Not at all?

GEORGIANA

We can't let our past dictate our future or our scars mar our beauty. You're the most incredible man I've ever met Henry. And I would stay by your side until the day I died.

She smiles warmly.

Holmes smiles with her and pulls out the ring.

HOLMES

In that case. Ahem.

(clearing throat)

Miss Georgiana Yoke, will you do me the honor of becoming my woman, to accompany me on this great life journey together as my one and only companion, and to stay with me through thick and thin so long as we both shall live?

GEORGIANA

Yes, I will.

Holmes moves to slide the ring on Georgiana's finger as we...

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Chaos in the room as members of the crowd CRY OUT, standing, SHOUTING, while the Baliff does his best to quell them.

OBSERVER 1

She's delusional! It's all lies!

OBSERVER 2

Give us proof! We don't want your made up stories!

The BANG BANG of the gavel.

JUDGE

Order in my court!

The room quiets down.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Now, Mr. Graham. Do you have evidence to back the claims made by Mrs. Howard?

GRAHAM

Yes, your Honor.

He pulls out a manila folder and hands it to the Judge.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Here are written testimonies from her co-workers, Nettie Price and Tille Queens, as well as her uncle, Isaac Yoke, that confirm Mrs. Howard's recollection of the events involving them as true.

Graham then pulls out a bag containing the ring Holmes proposed to Georgiana with.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

In addition, I have here the engagement ring gifted to Mrs. Howard and worn by her during the extent of her marriage to Dr. Howard as well as their official marriage certificate.

He shows the ring to Georgiana.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Mrs. Howard, can you confirm that this is indeed the ring you wore?

GEORGIANA

It is. I gave it to Mr. Graham when he requested it.

Graham offers the ring to the Judge who inspects it with the other members of the bench along with the testimonies and certificate.

JUDGE

Very well, the court has deemed the submitted items as admissible evidence. As you were, Mr. Graham.

GRAHAM

Thank you, your Honor.
(turning back to
Georgiana)

(MORE)

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Now, Mrs. Howard, other than what you have described to us, how well would you say you knew the daily whereabouts of Dr. Howard?

GEORGIANA

Not that well, really. Much of our time was spent apart and I knew better than to stick my nose where it didn't belong.

BOOS and JEERS from the crowd. A ROWDY ONLOOKER hurls a bottle at Georgiana. It crashes against the witness stand, shattering into hundreds of small fragments and leaving a sizeable dent in the wood.

ROWDY ONLOOKER

Go to Hell! Liar!

The same BANG BANG.

JUDGE

Order. Order!

The Baliff drags the Rowdy Onlooker outside as the room quiets down.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

As you were Mr. Graham.

GRAHAM

(nodding)

Mrs. Howard, following your marriage to Dr. Howard, would you please recount for us the details of your travels with him?

GEORGIANA

Of course.

FADE TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

SUPER: INDIANA, 1893-1894

Georgiana sits alone with her luggage in the cabin of a train. She stares out the window where lush green fields and foliage whiz by.

The low RUMBLE of the train drones on in the background.

In her hands is an opened letter.

INSERT LETTER:

Cursive words, written in black ink, fill the space.

HOLMES (V.O.)

My dearest Georgiana, it is my hope that by the time you read this letter, you are safely and speedily on your way home to Franklin.

END INSERT.

Georgiana continues to stare out the window at the rolling hills, distant mountains, and clear, blue sky.

HOLMES (V.O.)

When you do arrive, please tell your mother that I anticipate our meeting with great enthusiasm. My business here in Indianapolis has unfortunately been delayed by some time. I implore you to think of me not unlike a rainbow in these circumstances. Our separation is but a rainstorm soon to pass. And when it does, I will be once more by your side. In the meantime, I wish the best for your grandmother. Should she show signs of significant decline in health, I suggest mixing turmeric into her morning tea. This is not a permanent solution of course, but should be enough to keep her well until I arrive. I miss you more than words can say and find myself counting down the seconds until I can hold your hand again. With undying love, yours truly, Henry.

She looks back down at the letter, a twinge of disappointment etched across her brow.

The TOOT of the train.

Georgiana folds the letter and stuffs it into her pocket.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Georgiana steps down from the train onto the station concrete. A slight misstep as she tumbles forward, catching herself at the last moment.

GEORGIANA

Oh!

Her suitcase follows her down with a THUMP THUMP, hitting the ground as she loses her grip on it.

Isaac, walks over, a toothy smile plastered over his face. He gathers up his rounded belly before bending down and picking up the luggage.

ISAAC

Surprise.

GEORGIANA

Uncle Isaac? What are you doing here?

ISAAC

I took the morning train ahead of you. Got here just shy of five hours ago.

GEORGIANA

I didn't think you would--

ISAAC

--would what? Show up since I didn't approve of your choice? I thought I made it clear I would support you no matter what.

(beat)

So here I am.

Georgiana smiles, tears forming in her eyes.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Don't cry. Or I'm going back to Chicago. And this way too, I'll be here in case anything does go wrong.

He winks as he wipes away Georgiana's tears and pats her cheek.

GEORGIANA

Thank you, uncle.

ISAAC

Don't mention it.

(beat)

Or do. I could use a few more of those thank you's now that I think about it.

They share a LAUGH and head up onto the carriage.

INT./EXT. FRANKLIN/CARRIAGE - DAY

Horseshoes CLICK rhythmically against the ground. Isaac and Georgiana sit atop the carriage as it rolls down the paved road.

ISAAC

I'm sure you've notice something--
different about the ride?

GEORGIANA

Should I have?

Isaac's eyes flit down to the paved road.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Ah, the road's been paved.

ISAAC

Indeed. Apparently it took two
months to get it all done. The
farm's actually changed quite a bit
since you were last here. Even more
since I was.

GEORGIANA

What else?

ISAAC

Mostly little things here and
there. But that--

Isaac points toward a distant train passing by. It TOOTS.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

--they extended the track all the
way down to the border. Whole
family went out to watch the first
day it came through. Or so I'm
told.

He lets out a SIGH.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Such is progress I suppose.

As they ride, a large, red farmhouse slowly comes into view.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

And speaking of progress, where is the good doctor? I thought you two would've come together.

GEORGIANA

Henry had some things he needed to take care of in Indianapolis. He'll be here once he finishes.

ISAAC

You sound disappointed.

GEORGIANA

(defensive)

No, I'm not. It's not that.

She scrunches her face.

ISAAC

Then what?

GEORGIANA

I just--

ISAAC

--It's not too late to change your mind.

GEORGIANA

No. I'm standing by my decision.

ISAAC

Good. At least you aren't fickle. But if you ever do have a change of heart, know that I'll always be here, waiting with open arms.

Georgiana nods.

The carriage stops at the front gate as Isaac dismounts to unlock it.

INT. FARMHOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The interior is cozy; dark wood flooring and walls, with cowhide mats, fur rugs, and matching wooden furniture.

Reclining in a rocking chair, eyes closed, is GRANDMA ISABELLE (80s).

Georgiana approaches her, tapping Isabelle on the shoulder.

Nothing.

Another tap.

She stirs, her eyes slowly opening and focus on Georgiana.

ISABELLE
Georgiana dear is that you?

GEORGIANA
Yes, Grandma, it's me.

ISABELLE
Oh it's so good to see you again.
I've missed you so much.

GEORGIANA
I missed you too.

ISABELLE
Come, give your Grandma Isabelle a
nice big hug.

Georgiana does as she's told, embracing Isabelle, taking care not to accidentally hurt her.

She steps back after the hug.

Isabelle begins COUGHING and WHEEZING.

ISAAC
Mom, are you alright?

She nods, her COUGH dying down just enough for her to speak.

ISABELLE
Where is he?

GEORGIANA
Hm?

ISABELLE
Your new husband. I thought we were
going to be meeting him today.

More COUGHING.

Isaac moves to bring Isabelle a glass of water and slowly pats her on the back.

GEORGIANA
I already told Uncle Isaac. Henry's
still in Indianapolis.
(MORE)

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Some business things he had to do before he came here. He should be arriving in a few days time.

ISABELLE

Ah. That's...unfortunate. I was looking forward to it. Let's hope I'm still around by the time he does arrive.

She manages a small LAUGH in between her COUGHING fits.

GEORGIANA

Grandma...

ISAAC

Don't say that.

Isabelle sips the water.

ISABELLE

I'm sorry sweetie. That you have to see your Grandma Isabelle in such a poor state.

GEORGIANA

No, no. Don't apologize.

She hugs her again.

ISABELLE

(hugging back)

Aww, don't go all soft on me now.

Georgiana wipes away tears.

ISAAC

Let your grandmother rest, Georgiana. Help me get dinner started.

Georgiana nods and follows Isaac into the kitchen.

INT. FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Georgiana rolls dough at the island while Isaac chops fresh vegetables behind her.

ISAAC

Pass me the squash would you?

GEORGIANA

Here.

She hands him two yellow squash.

Isaac begins peeling and cutting them.

ISAAC

Mom was really looking forward to meeting him y'know.

GEORGIANA

I--I know.

ISAAC

You sure it's business?

GEORGIANA

What do you mean?

ISAAC

Why he's in Indianapolis. And not here with us. With his wife.

GEORGIANA

What else would he be there for?

ISAAC

Beats me. But I can think of a few reasons why a man might want time to himself.

GEORGIANA

No. Never. He's not that kind of person. Henry wouldn't.

ISAAC

Mmm. Well, if you say so. I trust your word.

GEORGIANA

He--wouldn't.

Isaac slides the chopped vegetables into a bowl and walks over to the stove, igniting it.

ISAAC

All I'm saying, Georgiana, is be careful. You never know what life will throw at you next.

A WHOOSH as the flames from the stove burst up. Isaac places a large pot over the stove and slides the vegetables inside. As they PLOP into the simmering water...

FADE TO:

INT. CASTLE/DUNGEON - NIGHT

Chunks of flesh are dropped into a large, bubbling vat. The dark, viscous liquid inside seems to devour the meat as it falls in.

A shadowed male figure finishes tossing in the last piece before returning to a small desk, illuminated by a small lamp, The only source of light in the room.

A pile of clothes sits on the floor: a blazer, pants, shoes, and a woman's undergarments. Pinned to the blazer is a name tag.

The figure dips a quill into a pot of ink and begins writing a letter. His motions are smooth, fluid. Art-like.

Another dip. As he finishes, he slides the letter into an envelope and seals it with a small wax stamp.

INSERT LETTER:

In the center of the wax: the letter H.

END INSERT.

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Georgiana, Isabelle, Isaac, and his outspoken wife, AUNT EMILIA (50s), sit around the dining table, their plates filled with eggs, bacon, and biscuits. Beside each plate, a cup of coffee.

An unopened envelope rests on the table by Georgiana.

EMILIA

What's with the letter hun?

GEORGIANA

Oh it's from Henry. It arrived this morning. I was waiting to open it.

ISAAC

Waiting for what?

GEORGIANA

I'm not sure.

EMILIA

Go on and open it now then. See what sorta sorry excuse your husband's givin' us for not showing up.

ISAAC

Be nice, Emilia.

EMILIA

I'm not the one who stood up my spouse's family.

Isaac shoots Emilia a glare.

ISAAC

Em. Please.

As the two argue, Georgiana opens and reads the letter.

GEORGIANA

Oh, good news. He'll be arriving tomorrow afternoon.

EMILIA

Pfft. Took him long enough.

ISABELLE

Who's arriving?

GEORGIANA

My new husband, grandma. Remember? The one you wanted to meet?

ISABELLE

Yes, yes. Is he here?

GEORGIANA

He's on his way.

Isabelle smiles at Georgiana.

EMILIA

She's havin' another one of those-- what'd the doctor call it? Relapse?

ISAAC

Relapse.

EMILIA

Yeah. That. One day she'll be fine, the next, she won't 'member a damn thing.

A look of pity from Georgiana.

ISAAC

Happens with age. Pretty soon Aunt Emilia and I'll be there too.

EMILIA

Not a chance. This woman'll be in a grave long before she gets to that point, I guarantee you that much.

They all LAUGH.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

Well I s'pose we should finish up and start gettin' the house ready for tomorrow. Your mother should be here in the mornin' and Dolph, Johnny, Nan and her bum-of-a-husband William are coming to visit as well.

GEORGIANA

Really? I haven't seen the boys since they were toddlers.

EMILIA

They've grown just a wee bit since you last saw 'em.

Emilia grins.

INT. INDIANAPOLIS BANK - DAY

Holmes stands with Jephtha Howe (40s), a well-dressed, shifty-eyed man at one of the clerk counters.

The CLERK (20s), a young, doe-eyed girl, smiles as she counts out fifty dollar bills for them.

CLERK

Three-hundred and fifty. Four-hundred. Four-fifty and five. There you are sir.

HOLMES

Thank you my dear.

The Clerk slides the money toward Holmes. He takes it, making note to brush his hand over hers as he does.

The Clerk's cheeks turn rosy as Holmes flashes a smile at her.

HOWE

Are you quite finished? We have a job to do.

HOLMES

Don't rush me Howe. These things take time.

HOWE

Maybe you shouldn't have spent so long in Chicago then.

Holmes glares at Howe. His eyes are cold, merciless.

HOWE (CONT'D)

Alright, alright. Let's just get this done already.

Holmes finishes putting the money away into a suitcase and the two men move to exit the building.

As Howe turns, he reveals a small scar on his left cheek.

EXT. FARMHOUSE/ENTRANCE - DAY

A bright, sunny afternoon.

Georgiana stands with MARY (50s), her loving mother, and Emilia as Isaac rides up the road. Beside him sits Holmes, dressed proper in a full mahogany suit, despite the mid-autumn heat. A gold watch glistens on his wrist.

EMILIA

By golly what is he wearin'? And I though you were overdressed Mary.

MARY

To dress like that in this weather. Dear me, he must be hot as an oven.

She fans herself with a straw hat.

GEORGIANA

At least you know he's committed.

EMILIA

I suppose that's one way of lookin' at it.

The carriage stops short of the trio. Isaac and Holmes hop down, the latter embracing Georgiana in a tight hug.

HOLMES
Hello Georgiana.

GEORGIANA
Hi Henry.

HOLMES
I missed you.

GEORGIANA
I missed you too.
(beat)
Henry, I'd like you to meet my
mother, Mary. And my aunt, Emilia.

HOLMES
How do you do. It's an honor to
meet the mother of such an amazing
and beautiful woman. I see now
where she gets it from.

Georgiana turns away in embarrassment.

ISAAC
(chuckling)
Runs in the family.

Emilia SCOFFS and turns to Mary.

EMILIA
(whispering)
If he thinks this flattery will get
him anywhere he's sorely mistaken.

HOLMES
(to Isaac)
I must say, you have quite the
taste in women yourself, Uncle. Had
I not fallen head over heels for
Georgiana already, I might've
thought to steal Missus Emilia here
right from under your very nose.

Georgiana GIGGLES as Emilia blushes.

EMILIA
Well. I'm not sure where you found
the nerve to say such a gaudy
statement, but--I'd like it very
much if you could point Isaac in
that direction.

GEORGIANA

Henry always seems to know the right thing to say. I think it's a natural talent of his.

Holmes WINKS at Georgiana.

Emilia suddenly grabs Henry's arm and pulls him toward the farmhouse.

EMILIA

Come inside doctor. I've got a fresh batch of lemonade waitin'. I'll go ahead and pour you a glass. Isaac honey, will you bring his bags in for him?

Georgiana LAUGHS again as Emilia drags him into the farmhouse.

INT. FARMHOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

On the table, an assortment of dishes: maple-glazed ham, freshly-baked sourdough bread, homemade butter, hand-picked vegetables, and Emilia's pitcher of lemonade.

Isaac, Emilia, Mary, Georgiana, Isabelle, and Holmes are joined by JOHNNY (16), AUNT NAN (50s), UNCLE WILLIAM (60s), and DOLPH (14) for the feast.

CHATTER and LAUGHTER.

HOLMES

...and it just so happened that Georgiana took a particular interest in one dish. *Koobideh*. A skewer of minced meat, Persian in origin. But no matter how hard she tried, the pronunciation of the word eluded her. To this day I do not think she ever got it down.

GEORGIANA

I admit foreign words have always been a point of struggle for me.

WILLIAM

You hear that Dolph? A full college education and she can't even pronounce that. Better for you to just stay home and work the farm.

NAN

Well I'd like to see you try an'
pronounce it then.

(off William's look)

Besides we already agreed that the
choice of whether or not he was to
go would be his. Right?

WILLIAM

Yeah, yeah.

DOLPH

Koobideh.

GEORGIANA

Oh? Dolph was that you?

ISAAC

Hey, that sounded right to me. Say
it again son.

DOLPH

Koobideh.

Looks of surprise from the table.

HOLMES

I'm impressed. I'd say you'd make a
fine linguist when you're older.

Dolph beams.

JOHNNY

Kebudubuh.

LAUGHTER.

WILLIAM

Think you might need to work on it
a bit more there Johnny.

HOLMES

Georgiana, why don't you try again.

GEORGIANA

Oh, no, really I'm fine. I already
made a fool of myself once.

WILLIAM

Nonsense, we're all family, right?

GEORGIANA

I know, but still it's quite
embarrassing. I'd rather not.

HOLMES
You can do it.

Georgiana looks at Holmes, who gives her a nod of encouragement.

She takes a deep BREATH.

GEORGIANA
Koobdibeh.

HOLMES
Close. *Koobideh.*

GEORGIANA
Koo-bideh.

HOLMES
All together. A little faster.

GEORGIANA
Koobideh.

HOLMES
There you go.

The table APPLAUDS.

WILLIAM
See. That wasn't so bad. *Kobeday.*

Nan smacks William as the rest of the table bursts out LAUGHING again.

FADE TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The lights have been turned off and the room is eerily quiet.

The sound of CREAKING WOOD and FOOTSTEPS as a shadowed figure carefully makes its way through the room. A small candlelight flickers in front of the figure.

As the figure reaches the table, suddenly:

ALL
(singing)
Happy Birthday to you! Happy
Birthday to you! Happy Birthday
dear Georgiana! Happy Birthday to
you!

APPLAUSE as the lights come back on.

GEORGIANA

Oh you guys! I had completely forgotten it was my birthday!

In front of her, holding a cake with a single candle is Holmes. He sets it down in front of Georgiana and kisses her on the cheek.

Georgiana closes her eyes and blows out the candle.

CHEERS from her family. Georgiana and Holmes share an intimate stare.

INT. INDIANAPOLIS BANK - NIGHT

DETECTIVE FRANK GEYER (20s), a young, keen-eyed cop, sits alone with the Clerk.

A crude drawing of what looks to be Howe and Holmes on the table beside him.

FRANK

You're sure these are the two men you saw?

CLERK

I think so. It's rather hard to tell. Those drawings are a bit--vague.

FRANK

Can you describe the men? Their behaviors? What they did here?

CLERK

Um, one was withdrawing money. He was very handsome, a real charmer.
(beat)
The other seemed to be in a hurry. No clue what for though.

Frank writes down everything into a journal, paying close attention to the Clerk.

FRANK

Notable features. Markings, tattoos, scars?

CLERK

Not that I can remember.
(beat)

(MORE)

CLERK (CONT'D)

Wait, the second man did have something on his cheek I think. A scar maybe?

FRANK

Anything else you can tell me?

The Clerk pauses, thinking.

CLERK

The first man. On his wrist. A gold watch. I don't know what brand.

Frank finishes penning the note and closes the journal.

FRANK

Thank you for your time. Apologies for keeping you so late.

CLERK

No problem.
(beat)
Mr. Detective Sir?

FRANK

Hm?

CLERK

What exactly did those men do?

Frank hesitates for a moment.

FRANK

I think it better not to tell you. For your sake. And safety.

The Clerk nods and Franks exits the building.

INT. FARMHOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Holmes inspects an oil portrait of Georgiana hanging above the fireplace.

Mary enters from the kitchen.

MARY

It's quite well done, don't you think? I like her eyes the best.

HOLMES

Where did she sit for it?

Mary thinks for a moment.

MARY

A traveling artist came through town, over in Edinburgh. When her class was graduating high school. For what I thought was a reasonable price, he was able to take the likeness from a photograph and paint the face on a background. I thought with Georgiana leaving for school, and at the time who knew when I'd see her again, it would be nice to have the portrait, in color, rather than just a mere photograph to remember her.

HOLMES

It's remarkably well made for an amateur work.

(beat)

But not nearly so beautiful as the original subject I'm afraid.

Johnny and Dolph GIGGLE and pretend to faint, clutching their hearts as if struck by Cupid's arrow.

Georgiana, sitting with Nan across the room, flushes red.

GEORGIANA

Oh behave you two.

Holmes has meanwhile, settled himself into a chair, next to Mary. He pats her hand gently as he speak.

HOLMES

Now, Mary, Georgiana has told me something of your husband's sufferings. What a trial it must have been. Was there truly nothing to be done?

Georgiana turns, listening in on the conversation.

MARY

Oh it was terrible. The only thing I could do was give him laudanum. I hated to, of course, but he would cry out and couldn't get any sleep unless he was drugged.

HOLMES

I saw a case similar to this back in Chicago some years ago actually. It was an ordeal to say the least.

MARY

Did you? Were you able to cure the patient?

HOLMES

As much as I would have liked to, no. There was nothing to be done. We even tried amputating.

Georgiana notices a picture sitting on the bookcase. She picks it up, taking in the details of the photo.

INSERT: PHOTO

Mary and John standing in front of a chapel. Their wedding day. Mary wears a flowing white dress. John is in a tuxedo. Both are smiling.

HOLMES (V.O.)

But it was no use. Whatever the disease was, it had already spread.

MARY (V.O.)

So there truly was nothing to be done. Oh John...

END INSERT.

HOLMES

In my entire medical career, that case was one of two I never figured out the cause.

Georgiana places the photo back.

Holmes watches Georgiana as he rubs the crook of his hand in between his fingers.

ISAAC (O.S.)

What was the other?

Isaac walks into the room, plopping down on one of the cushioned chairs.

Holmes turns, the briefest look of surprise flashing across his face.

It disappears as quickly as it comes and Holmes recollects himself in no time.

HOLMES

A woman--in her twenties. Suddenly went blind. Then deaf. Then mute. No preexisting conditions.

(MORE)

HOLMES (CONT'D)

A perfectly healthy girl, rendered wholly incapacitated within a week.

MARY

That's awful. What became of her?

HOLMES

She died not long after. Believed to be suicide.

GEORGIANA

How terrible.

Georgiana sits on the group by Isaac's feet, listening to Holmes's story.

HOLMES

I can only imagine how difficult it must've been for her.

ISAAC

What was her name?

HOLMES

Pardon?

ISAAC

Her name.

A slight uneasiness permeates throughout the room.

HOLMES

Why do you ask?

ISAAC

Just in case I knew her. As you know I was rather well acquainted in Chicago.

GEORGIANA

(whispering)

Uncle Isaac, why are you being so nosy? That's personal information.

Mary smiles awkwardly.

HOLMES

It was Dupreet. Abigail Dupreet.

Georgiana and Mary wait for a reaction from Isaac.

He stares into Holmes eyes, as if challenging him.

ISAAC

Guess I don't know the name after all. Apologies.

MARY

Well, look at the time. It's getting quite late and I think it best we all retire for the night. Don't you agree Georgiana?

GEORGIANA

Yes. I think that's a lovely idea.

Georgiana escorts Holmes out of the room.

MARY

(whisper)

What was that about?

ISAAC

Something's fishy. I don't know what it is, but the good doctor is most definitely hiding something.

MARY

Be careful. That's your niece's husband you're talking about.

ISAAC

I know. All the more reason to be concerned.

The two watch from afar as Georgiana and Holmes smiles and chat as they make their way up the wooden staircase.

FADE TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE/STUDY - DAY

Holmes sits at an ornate wooden desk, writing on a piece of parchment with a feathered quill. His hand flicks across the page as he hastily writes sentence after sentence in a familiar cursive style.

The only thing legible is a name at the top: "Howe".

Georgiana enters, holding a warm cup of tea. She places it on a coaster in front of Holmes.

GEORGIANA

Is something the matter?

HOLMES

I received a troubling telegram from my lawyer when I went into town today. I'm afraid I will have to take care of some business out of state before we set off together.

Her face scrunches.

GEORGIANA

Oh. I see.

(beat)

Will you be long?

HOLMES

I don't know. I hope not, but this time it's far less certain than the last.

(beat)

Will you be okay staying here for a while? Until I am able to remedy this issue?

GEORGIANA

Can't I go with you?

HOLMES

Not for this.

GEORGIANA

Why not?

HOLMES

Georgiana.

The tone of his voice urges Georgiana to back down.

GEORGIANA

Okay. I'll stay here.

A relieved SIGH from Holmes.

HOLMES

You truly are the greatest blessing to have ever come into my life. I will write to you everyday.

A quick kiss.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Thank you for understanding.

Georgiana takes one last look at Holmes before turning and leaving the room.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Holmes sets off with Isaac on the carriage. Mary, Emilia, and Georgiana stand watching as they go.

EMILIA

Isn't there a sayin'? "Ya can't cage a wild bird"? Or somethin' like that? I suppose it seems to be quite true in this case. Your husband don't like to stay in one place for very long, do he?

GEORGIANA

The life of a businessman.

MARY

Barbara's daughter. The one from church. She married a businessman but all he ever does is laze around at home. Their family can't get him to go out.

GEORGIANA

(rephrasing)

Successful businessman.

EMILIA

I still think he should put his wife before his work. Even if he is a charmer, it's no good if he ain't ever around.

GEORGIANA

I'm sure he'll be back soon.

EMILIA

Y'know Isaac mentioned somethin' to me last night. Said he felt uneasy. That he thinks your husband's hidin' somethin'. Like he got a big secret he don't want no one findin' out about.

MARY

Georgiana knows better than to mingle with those kind of folk. Right Georgie?

Silence.

The two older woman turn to look at Georgiana.

Her expression is blank, distant, watching as the carriage grows smaller and smaller as it rides away into the distance.

GEORGIANA
(distracted)
R-right.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. FARMHOUSE/STUDY - DAY

Georgiana sits at the desk, writing a reply to the now-unfolded letter most recently sent by Holmes.

GEORGIANA (V.O.)
(writing)
Dear Henry, it's hard to believe a month has already passed by since you left. I miss you more and more each day. If it weren't for your letters, I do not know what I would do with myself.

Georgiana dips the quill in an inkwell, letting the excess drip off before returning to writing.

GEORGIANA (V.O.)
(writing)
Grandma Isabelle passed away a week ago in her sleep. Although I miss her much, I am glad she was able to leave us peacefully. I pray she is in a better place now. Still, the farmhouse isn't the same without her. But I know she is still watching over us from Heaven. Keeping us safe. Protecting us.

Another dip into the inkwell.

GEORGIANA (V.O.)
(writing)
I hope we will be reunited again soon. Until then, I will continue to think about you, every waking moment I can. Yours forever, love, Georgiana.

She sticks the quill back into the inkwell.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL/ROOM - NIGHT

Soft MOANS and the sound of lips pressing together.

Faint moonlight peeks through the window, just enough to outline the shape of a man, facing the wall. His arms are wrapped around a woman in front of him.

It's the Clerk from the bank. Her body is pinned to the wall as the man's hands wrestle and grope her.

The MOANS evolve into HEAVY BREATHING. Sensual at first, but gradually becoming sharper, faster, more strained.

The eyes of the man. Eerily glowing under the light of the moon.

The man backs away, turning and opening a drawer.

CLERK

(panting)

Do you need some help, doctor?

She shines a light on the man, illuminating him.

It's Holmes. Shirtless, casually inspecting a knife.

HOLMES

Why yes, darling. I do.

His eyes flit back to the woman and he smiles, slowly stepping toward her.

EXT. HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The light inside the room goes out.

A SCREAM. The high-pitched shrill piercing through the night, filled with pain and fear.

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

The SCREAM blends and fades into the sharp HISSING of a kettle on the stove. Emilia pulls it off of the stove and pours the boiling water inside into a ceramic mug.

Georgiana appears, carrying a suitcase out to the front of the house.

EMILIA

Did you get everythin'?

GEORGIANA

I believe so. My hope is that if I have forgotten something, it was not of enough importance for me to have bothered remembering.

ISAAC

That's one way of looking at it.

Isaac sits at the kitchen table, drinking a cup of coffee.

EMILIA

Where's Mary?

GEORGIANA

Outside with the carriage getting the horses ready.

EMILIA

(to Isaac)

Well go help her!

Isaac SCOFFS as he gets up and leaves the room.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

(to Georgiana)

Whatever happens, promise me you'll stay safe.

GEORGIANA

I will.

NAN

It's a big world out there. Full o' people tryin' to take advantage of you. Be careful.

GEORGIANA

I know.

Emilia smiles.

EMILIA

Don't forget to write. Your ma especially. She gets real worried when she don't hear from you.

GEORGIANA
I promise I won't forget.

Georgiana and Emilia hug.

EXT. FARMHOUSE/ENTRANCE - DAY

Georgiana waves her good byes to the rest of the family as Isaac whips the reins of the carriage and sets off down the dirt road.

The SQUEAK of the carriage wheels and CLOP CLOP of horseshoes on dirt fill the silence as Georgiana and Isaac sit atop the carriage, staring at the vast farmland around them.

Eventually, Isaac breaks the quiet.

ISAAC
Is something on your mind?

GEORGIANA
It's nothing. Nerves, I think.

ISAAC
If somethings bothering you, now's the time to say it.

Georgiana is silent for a moment as she contemplates.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
What is it?

GEORGIANA
I don't know. I was just thinking about what you told Aunt Emilia.

ISAAC
What, that I had a bad feeling?

GEORGIANA
Yeah.

ISAAC
Do you not believe me?

GEORGIANA
No.
(beat)
Or at least I keep telling myself I don't.

Isaac stops the carriage.

ISAAC

Like I said before. It's not too late. If you want to change your mind--

GEORGIANA

--No, I'm still going to go. If nothing more than to prove you and my doubts wrong.

(beat)

I have to go.

She looks out into the distance.

Isaac pats her head.

ISAAC

Okay.

He whips the reins and the carriage starts to move again.

FADE TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE/COURTROOM - DAY

Georgiana sips from a glass of water. Amongst the crowd of onlookers, Mary, Isaac, and Emilia sit together, watching Georgiana with pained expressions.

Graham and the prosecution DISCUSS amongst themselves as they read over a table of scattered documents.

Mary gives Georgiana a thumbs up of encouragement.

Georgiana produces the smallest of smiles and a short, restrained nod.

GRAHAM

Mrs. Howard, would you by chance happen to still have in your possession the letters sent to you by Dr. Howard while you were staying at home in Franklin?

GEORGIANA

No, they are no longer in my possession.

GRAHAM

May I inquire as to what happened to them?

GEORGIANA

They were--

Georgiana makes eye contact with Holmes, who smiles.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

--deposed of.

WHISPERS from the onlookers.

A LAUGH from Holmes.

GRAHAM

By yourself?

GEORGIANA

Yes.

GRAHAM

Why?

GEORGIANA

Are you suspecting me now, Mr. Graham?

GRAHAM

I never said anything of the sort. I merely found it curious that these letters, which would have made deducing the whereabouts of Dr. Holmes during his travels far easier and justified the claims made against him, were so quickly destroyed.

OBSERVER 2

She knew all along!

OBSERVER 3

It's obvious she was in on it!

The BANG BANG of the gavel.

GRAHAM

What do you have to say for yourself, Mrs. Howard?

GEORGIANA

Well...I argue that if the accusations made against Dr. Holmes are indeed true, these letters would have, at best, provided no benefit to the indictment, and at worst, mistakenly proven his innocence.

GRAHAM

Oh? And how might that be so?

A smug smile crosses over Graham's face.

GEORGIANA

I cannot speak for you, but if I were a master of deceit and manipulation, the last thing I would do is blow my cover by sending a letter to my strongest alibi with genuine information. Much more likely is the notion that his letters were sent from locations different than where he actually was at the time.

GRAHAM

You mean to say that, for example, he may have used an address in St. Louis for a letter, but not have actually sent it until he was in Fort Worth?

GEORGIANA

Yes.

WHISPERS in the crowd.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

And if that were indeed the case, then the contents of the letters too, would be useless as it is impossible to know how much of it was truth, and how much was fiction.

Holmes CLAPS softly, continuing to stare at the woman who once called him husband.

GRAHAM

You make an impressively convincing point Mrs. Howard. Your Honor?

JUDGE

The bench agrees with Mrs. Howard's position. Please continue with your questioning Mr. Graham.

GRAHAM

Thank you, Your Honor.

(to Georgiana)

Following your departure from Franklin, you joined Dr. Holmes on his travels, yes?

GEORGIANA

Yes.

GRAHAM

And so this is perhaps the point in which you would have had the most exposure and knowledge of his doings and whereabouts, correct?

JUDGE

No leading questions, Mr. Graham.

GRAHAM

Apologies. Allow me to rephrase. Were you more involved in the daily life of Dr. Holmes during this period?

GEORGIANA

Yes, but not much more. Our time spent together was still limited to mostly meals and the occasional night spent together.

(beat)

Although if I do remember correctly, quite early into our journey there was something he confessed to me. It was a lie, of course, but it did serve to put my mind at ease. At the time anyway.

GRAHAM

I see. In that case, I believe it would be in our best interest to continue recounting and perhaps from it, we may glean something we may yet find useful.

The Judge nods.

FADE TO:

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

SUPER: The Everywhere Journey, 1894

Light snowfall colors the station and sky a soft white.

Holmes rapidly paces back and forth along the platform. His breath visible in the cold, crisp air.

Georgiana watches from a ways away, two suitcases rest on the ground beside her. Her arms are wrapped tightly around her body as she does her best to keep warm.

HOLMES

That flighty girl. Why did I trust her to buy her own ticket?

GEORGIANA

Who?

HOLMES

Minnie Williams. My secretary. She was supposed to meet us here.

GEORGIANA

I didn't know you had a secretary.

HOLMES

Ack, perhaps there was some confusion about the reservation. Georgiana, honey, would you mind waiting here while I check the ticket office?

GEORGIANA

S-sure.

HOLMES

I promise I won't be long.

He takes off his own coat and wraps it around her before storming down toward the ticket office.

Georgiana pulls the coat around her as she watches him go.

GEORGIANA

Minnie Williams...

FADE TO:

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Georgiana walks in small circles around the luggage.

Holmes reappears, red-faced and out-of-breath.

HOLMES

You'll never believe it! The damn girl eloped last night! She left a message for me in the office.

He lets out an exasperated SIGH.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

I'm sorry dear, I hate for you to see me like this.

GEORGIANA

Is it that much of an inconvenience? Can we not go without her?

HOLMES

We will have to, it seems.

GEORGIANA

If you'd like, I could do my best to fill in her place. I might not be as capable, but surely I'll do my best.

HOLMES

No. No wife of mine will work.

Georgiana shrinks away.

Holmes notices her dejection.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Well, on second thought...perhaps there is something you can do.

Her face brightens again.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

I need you to keep a daily journal of every place we stop. Make note of the hotel, how long we stay, and so on.

GEORGIANA

What for?

HOLMES

Book-keeping. In case we need to refer to such records later on.

The TOOT of the train.

Holmes grabs the suitcases and carries them toward the train car.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

But you need not worry about such trivial matters. Come, it's time for us to finally embark on our long awaited adventure together.

The two step up, and after showing the conductor their tickets, enter the train.

FADE TO:

INT. BROWN PALACE/GEORGIANA'S ROOM - DAY

The hotel room is cozy, tidy. A single bed and basic furnishings. A faded floral print covers the walls.

Georgiana sits propped up against the bed frame, her legs and feet stretched out across the bed as she reads.

She flips the page, and again, and again. Her pace is far too quick to be reading everything on the page.

The quiet peace of the sunny Denver afternoon serves only to further highlight Georgiana's anxious behavior.

The door opens and Holmes steps inside. Georgiana immediately sits up, her head turning in anticipation.

GEORGIANA

Were you able to sort everything out? Will we be leaving for Fort Worth soon?

HOLMES

(shaking head)

Georgiana, my dear, I must admit I haven't been completely truthful with you.

He lays his coat onto a chair and sits down on the bed next to Georgiana. A solemn expression on his face.

GEORGIANA

What happened?

Holmes lets out a deep SIGH.

HOLMES

Before I begin, I want you to know that if by the end, you resent me and wish to return home to Frankin, I won't stop you.

GEORGIANA

What is it?

Her voice quivers every so slightly as she asks.

Holmes avoids her eyes.

HOLMES

In truth--
(beat)
--I'm a fraud.

A look of confusion on Georgiana's face.

GEORGIANA

A fraud?

HOLMES

Yes. A fraud.
(beat)
To put it simply--I'm broke.

GEORGIANA

What?

HOLMES

Despite my seemingly lavish tastes and expensive clothing, truthfully, I have barely a penny to my name.

Georgiana sits in silent shock.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

You see, a few years ago, I mistakenly partnered with a dirty, conniving individual by the name of Donald Lyman. We were going to start a printing company together, and we did. But as our success grew, so did his greed. Eventually he took everything from me and fled. My money, my company, even my first wife.

GEORGIANA

I had no idea...

HOLMES

Ever since, I've done my best to hold up this façade. I've accumulated quite the debt taking out loans now as well. I thought that if I pretended long enough, tried hard enough, things would go back to the way they were.

A tear rolls down Holmes's cheek.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Then I met you. On the street, in the store. You were the most beautiful woman I'd ever laid eyes on. And I let my selfishness get the better of me. I'm so sorry Georgiana. I never meant to lie to you. But I knew you'd never accept me if you knew the truth. Your family could see right through me. But you defended me and I took advantage of you. I'm a monster.

GEORGIANA

Henry.

Holmes wipes away the tear.

HOLMES

I realize now what a fool I've been. The lies I've lived and told. It makes me sick!

Holmes hurls a pillow across the room.

Georgiana grabs onto him.

A long, drawn out silence.

Holmes's rage slowly subsides. His gaze softening as he turns to Georgiana.

She intertwines her fingers around his, holding his hand.

GEORGIANA

What you did wasn't right. But it doesn't mean you're a bad person, Henry. You just lost your way for a while. But telling the truth is the best way to get back on track.

(MORE)

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." John 1:9.

Holmes lays his other hand on top of hers.

HOLMES

Thank you, Georgiana. For loving me unconditionally. I don't know what I'd do without you.

GEORGIANA

Good thing you won't ever have to find out.

They share a smile.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

So what now?

HOLMES

Well, my plan initially was for us to stay with my uncle at his residence in Forth Worth. However, I just received news that he had passed away some time ago.

GEORGIANA

How come you're only hearing about it now?

HOLMES

Let's just say we weren't very close.

(beat)

But his passing has put me in a rather difficult spot.

GEORGIANA

How so? Did something happen with the rest of your family?

HOLMES

No, no, nothing of that sort. But you see, as unfamiliar as we were with each other, we had met on occasion and apparently he must've thought rather fondly of me.

Georgiana tilts her head and scrunches her eyebrows.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

You see, he has actually left his entire Forth Worth estate to me.

GEORGIANA

What?

HOLMES

I was taken aback as well when I heard the news. Especially given my--current financial situation.

GEORGIANA

Well that's wonderful then. This could solve a lot of problems.

HOLMES

Yes, but there was a condition.

GEORGIANA

A condition?

HOLMES

For me to officially accept the deed, I would need to change my name to his. Surname, that is.

Holmes rubs the crook of his hand and COUGHS.

GEORGIANA

I don't understand. He wanted you to change your name?

HOLMES

This uncle of mine was actually the husband of my mother's sister, my aunt. And because he was an only child, and they themselves never had children, my guess is that he wants to continue his family's legacy in some capacity. If not by blood, then at least by name.

GEORGIANA

So then what do you have to do?

HOLMES

I--we, would have to register our names with the state officials not as Dr. And Mrs. Holmes, but as Dr. And Mrs. Howard.

GEORGIANA
(to herself)
Mrs. Howard.

Her face scrunches. She stares at a crack in the wall as she digests the situation.

HOLMES
I know after everything I've said that I'm in no position to request anything of you. And I completely understand if this is too much. You have every right to return home to your family.
(beat)
This is nothing but a last-ditch resort for me to salvage some sort of self-worth. But your happiness is much more important to me, so--

GEORGIANA
--Okay.

Holmes stops mid-sentence. He blinks a few times and stares at Georgiana. An amused smile slowly creeps over his face.

HOLMES
Okay?

GEORGIANA
Let's do it.

HOLMES
Are you sure?

GEORGIANA
No. Which is why you should hurry up and get on with it before I change my mind.

She smiles back as Holmes' grows even wider.

HOLMES
And here I used to think my life was complete without you. You never cease to amaze me, Georgiana.

He pushes up against her, their faces centimeters apart. A peck on the lips. Georgiana reciprocates.

The two toss and turn on the bed, the afternoon sun shining rays of white-orange light into the room through the window.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

Fancy glass lighting and modern furniture contrast harshly with the drab, gray walls. Signs of refurbishment are evident throughout the building.

Georgiana and Holmes stand at the counter. Holmes finishes signing a document and slides it back to the RECEPTIONIST (30s).

RECEPTIONIST

Thank you. One moment please.

The Receptionist copies down a few notes onto another sheet and files the original away. She signs a certificate and hands it to Holmes.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Congratulations. As of this moment, you are now officially Dr. and Mrs. Howard!

Holmes smiles and takes the certificate.

HOLMES

Wonderful. Thank you so much for your help, miss.

RECEPTIONIST

My pleasure.

Georgiana and Holmes walk arm-in-arm out the building.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Cloudy, even at midday, the sun is nowhere to be found.

GEORGIANA

So that's it? Now we can claim your uncle's property?

HOLMES

(holding her hand)

Yes, we can.

(beat)

But before that, how about we celebrate? Dinner at The Chateau?

GEORGIANA

The Chateau? That sounds awfully expensive. Are you sure? Even bread and butter would be fine with me. As long as I'm with you.

HOLMES

Don't worry. I happen to know the owner. Courtesies of my last trip here. He owes me a favor.

GEORGIANA

What about attire? I have nothing fancy enough to wear to such a place.

HOLMES

Nonsense. Anything you wear will be more than enough. You'd still be the prettiest woman in the room.

GEORGIANA

Are you sure?

HOLMES

Positive.

Holmes's trademark smile returns.

GEORGIANA

Okay. Let's go then.

HOLMES

Shall we?

Holmes holds out his arm. Georgiana wraps hers around it as they walk off down the street.

INT. THE CHATEAU - NIGHT

Despite the crowded dining room, the restaurant is relatively quiet. The occasional sound of utensils or glasses CLINKING, and low, soft CHATTER in the background.

The interior is Victorian in style, complete with a hanging chandelier and red velvet carpet.

Most patrons are dressed in formal attire, suits and dresses. It is evident these are the more well-off denizens of the modest city.

Georgiana and Holmes sit at a table in the corner by a window. Georgiana wears a modest dress. Holmes is in his usual mahogany suit.

A shrimp pasta, garnished with cilantro rests in front of Georgiana, a medium-rare steak in front of Holmes.

As they eat, every so often, Holmes glances out the window, as if looking for something. Or someone.

EXT. DENVER/STREETS - NIGHT

Holmes and Georgiana walk down the street. The stars twinkle above, and a brisk wind cuts through the air.

A few people populate the street, scattered here and there.

GEORGIANA

I know I said before that I would be satisfied with bread and butter. But that shrimp pasta was simply magnificent. I could almost taste the ocean.

She looks at Holmes, her face obviously expecting a reply, but he ignores her, staring down the street.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Henry? Is something wrong?

HOLMES

Huh? Oh, I'm sorry dear. I thought for a moment I--nevermind. It's nothing. What were you saying?

GEORGIANA

Are you sure you're alright? You seem anxious.

HOLMES

I'm fine.

GEORGIANA

If you say so.

A moment of silence. Holmes continues to stare down the street.

HOLMES

Georgiana, you know how to get back to the hotel on your own, yes?

GEORGIANA

I think so. I follow this road, make a left after the bridge, then another left right before the bakery, and it's the third building on the right.

HOLMES

Good. I'd like you to head back on your own.

GEORGIANA

What? Why?

Georgiana looks in the direction Holmes is facing.

She notices a suspicious-looking man in an overcoat and fedora walking toward them from afar.

HOLMES

No time to explain right now. I'll tell you everything back at the hotel. But I need you to trust me on this.

GEORGIANA

What is it? Who is that? Are you sure everything is alright?

HOLMES

Please Georgiana. I'll tell you everything at the hotel.

Holmes pushes Georgiana in the direction of the hotel.

GEORGIANA

Okay. I'll wait for you in the room.

A SIGH of relief from Holmes.

HOLMES

Thank you, dear.

GEORGIANA

Whatever it is, please just promise me you'll be safe.

HOLMES

I promise.

Georgiana quickly makes her way down the street alone.

She rounds the corner and disappears from Holmes's view.

Georgiana turns back and looks around the corner, but Holmes and the suspicious man are nowhere to be seen. She hesitates for a moment before starting off again toward the hotel.

FADE TO:

INT. BROWN PALACE/GEORGIANA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Georgiana paces back and forth across the small hotel room. She tries sitting down, but immediately stands back up.

Her eyes wander toward the door.

She throws on her coat and goes to reach for the handle when the door swings open.

Georgiana SCREAMS as a drenched Holmes stands in front of her.

HOLMES

Shhh. Shhh. It's okay. It's me.

GEORGIANA

What happened? Where did you go?
And why are you wet? That's not
blood is it?

HOLMES

No, no, it's just water. It started
raining a few minutes ago and lapse
of judgement left me umbrella-less.

GEORGIANA

What's going on? Why were you gone
for so long? Are you hurt?

Georgiana begins to HYPERVENTILATE as questions spew from her mouth.

HOLMES

Georgiana, dear, please. Calm down.
Everything is fine. Take a breath.

Georgiana takes a DEEP BREATH.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Better?

A nod.

Holmes climbs onto the bed and pats the spot next to him.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Come. I promised I'd tell you.

Georgiana makes her way onto the bed and rests her head against Holmes chest.

FADE TO:

INT. BROWN PALACE/GEORGIANA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Georgiana sits upright on the bed. Holmes stands by the coat rack, hanging his suit blazer to dry.

GEORGIANA

Why would they go after you?

HOLMES

Not everyone shares the same support of my endeavors as you do my dear. And I admit I have not always been perfectly courteous when it comes to business. There are plenty of enemies who would gladly see me rid of. Lyman included.

GEORGIANA

Does it have something to do with your debt too?

HOLMES

That is a part of it, yes. But these people are truly the rotten filth of our nation. They wrong the just and bully the weak. Alas, not much is there to be done about them.

GEORGIANA

I'd have them all tried and jailed if I could.

HOLMES

So would I. The difficulty, however, lies in determining friend from foe. All too often they are mistaken for one another. Which is why I need you to promise me that you will never trust anyone unless I tell you they are safe. You never know who could be a spy.

GEORGIANA

A spy?

Holmes removes his tie and wraps it around the blazer.

HOLMES

The police especially. All too often they're swayed by the prospect of money and power. Avoid them at all cost.

GEORGIANA

Are the police really that bad? I'd hardly like to believe that our justice system is so corrupt.

HOLMES

It's worse than you can imagine. I've seen many a good man wrongly locked away, destined to suffer in prison for merely stealing a loaf of bread.

GEORGIANA

But even then, surely they are just as apt at catching the real culprits?

HOLMES

If only. The problem is, those who are already bad have no qualms enacting further misdeeds to cover others or escape themselves. Bribery, blackmail, extortion. These are weapons sharper and deadlier than any blade or gun.

(beat)

Should the police ever try to interrogate you, give them nothing. Say not a single word. The Constitution allows you that right and it is perhaps the only defense you have against them.

Georgiana nods.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Our livelihood may one day depend on it.

Holmes pulls out a note from his blazer and slips it into his pants pocket.

EXT. DENVER - DAY (MONTAGE)

--Georgiana and Holmes ride a carriage down the streets. Their luggage is stored behind them.

--At the ticket box, Holmes hands over payment for two train tickets. He looks around, as if trying to spot a spy.

--The pair hand their tickets to a conductor and board a train. A sign above reads: "Denver to Forth Worth".

FADE TO:

EXT. FORT WORTH/RESTAURANT - DAY

The restaurant is plain, with minimal decorations. Function over form was evidently the priority.

Georgiana sits alone at a table, a glass of water and menu in front of her.

Holmes walks in and sits down across from her.

HOLMES
(shaking his head)
More bad news.

GEORGIANA
What is it this time?

HOLMES
I received a message from my uncle's assistant. Squatters, a gang of very tough men, have apparently seized possession of my uncle's ranch.

GEORGIANA
What will you do? Can we not call the police for something like this?

HOLMES
No. The law here is weak. Even if they wanted to, they wouldn't be able to do anything.

GEORGIANA
So what do you plan to do?

HOLMES
Confront them I suppose.

GEORGIANA
Henry, this sounds dangerous. I don't want you to get hurt.

HOLMES
Perhaps I'll send a message to my lawyer. Jeptha Howe.

(MORE)

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Although I doubt he'll be able to do much from a distance. I'll still need local help with the matter.

The two eat in silence for a time.

Eventually, Holmes sets his utensils down and looks up at Georgiana.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

For the time being, everywhere in Fort Worth we'll give our names as Mr. and Mrs. Pratt. Just until I'm able to sort out this mess.

GEORGIANA

Why?

HOLMES

I don't want to arouse any unnecessary suspicion.

GEORGIANA

But I was just getting used to Howard. Are you really sure we need to do this?

HOLMES

I thought you had more faith in my judgment.

Georgiana steps back at Holmes's sudden hostility.

GEORGIANA

O-of course I do, but it just feels so strange to me, having three different names in less than a week.

HOLMES

You might show a little more understanding. These fellows are surely armed. I'm only thinking of my safety, and yours.

Silence again. The sharpness of Holmes' words is reflected on Georgiana's face as she looks around the restaurant to see if anyone overheard their conversation.

GEORGIANA

I'm sorry. You're right.

Holmes relaxes at her words.

HOLMES

I'm sorry too. I didn't mean to speak so harshly. This whole ordeal has placed me under a great deal of stress lately. Thank you for understanding--

(beat)

--Mrs. Pratt.

Holmes grins.

FADE TO:

EXT. FORT WORTH/HOTEL - DAY

Georgiana steps out from the hotel main entrance into the morning Fort Worth sun, shielding her eyes with her hand.

Her stomach RUMBLES as she looks around for a nearby restaurant or market.

MRS. WILSON (40s), a beaming, somewhat larger woman, see Georgiana and rushes over to her. In her arms is a basket filled with groceries.

MRS. WILSON

Ah, Mrs. Pratt! Perfect timing!

GEORGIANA

Good morning Mrs. Wilson. How are you today?

MRS. WILSON

Just splendid. I saw your husband earlier this morning. He asked me to cook you a special breakfast today so I went to the grocery market to pick up a few ingredients.

GEORGIANA

Did he? How thoughtful.

MRS. WILSON

Come, come back inside and I'll have breakfast whipped up in a jiffy.

Georgiana follows Mrs. Wilson back into the hotel.

INT. FORT WORTH/HOTEL - DAY

In the kitchen, Mrs. Wilson scrambles a couple of eggs, sautés some seasonal vegetables, and fries a fresh fish fillet.

Georgiana sits at the table, legs crossed as she waits.

MRS. WILSON

It surprises me that we haven't had the chance to chat since you've arrived. It's been a week already, yet this is perhaps the most we've spoken.

GEORGIANA

Sorry. I'm normally not very sociable. Especially in new environments.

MRS. WILSON

I understand, and your husband always seems to be out and about working too. Oh how nice it is to be young. You found a good one, y'know.

GEORGIANA

Pardon?

MRS. WILSON

Your husband. Very respectable of him to put so much care into keeping his wife comfortable. Not many men I know would go to such lengths.

GEORGIANA

He's definitely one-of-a-kind. I couldn't imagine spending my life with anyone but him.

MRS. WILSON

How romantic. What does he do for work, Mrs. Pratt?

GEORGIANA

It's Mrs. How--

She stops herself, biting her tongue before she can blow her cover.

MRS. WILSON

What was that honey?

GEORGIANA

Uh, nothing, nothing. He has many enterprises. He's uh, in the medical industry. He owns a-- pharmacy business.

MRS. WILSON

Wow, fascinating? He must be a doctor too then?

GEORGIANA

Yes--er, no. A pharmacist, but not a doctor.

Georgiana does her best to sell the lie.

MRS. WILSON

Still, how I envy those with such success.

GEORGIANA

Well, not everything should be considered a success. I suppose he just wants to try his hand at many things while he's still young and settle into one or the other later on.

MRS. WILSON

Mmmm, I see. In that case, might I inquire about what brings you two to Forth Worth of all places?

GEORGIANA

We're--looking for a place to open up a factory. For producing pharmaceuticals.

MRS. WILSON

What kind?

GEORGIANA

It's, er, rather complicated to explain. I'm not sure exactly on the details. My husband only tells me so much.

MRS. WILSON

Of course, I don't mean to be nosy about it. I just think it's all so interesting heard about other people's lives.

GEORGIANA

I agree completely. What about you?
Have you lived in Forth Worth your
entire life?

Mrs. Wilson brings over the food on a large tray, setting it
down in front of Georgiana.

MRS. WILSON

Actually I grew up in Louisiana.
Came here when I was sixteen.
(beat)
Coffee? Tea?

GEORGIANA

Tea.

Mrs. Wilson goes to pour a cup, but realizes the kettle is
empty. She fills it up with water and sets it on the stove.

MRS. WILSON

It'll be just a minute. Have to
boil more water.

GEORGIANA

Thank you.

Mrs. Wilson nods and returns to the table.

MRS. WILSON

Unfortunately for me, I've lived a
rather quiet life. Save the rare
happening around these parts. Say,
have you heard anything by chance
about a missing woman?

GEORGIANA

Pardon?

Mrs. Wilson sits down next to Georgiana and speaks in a
hushed tone.

MRS. WILSON

A young woman, quite close in age
to yourself, went missing a couple
of days ago. She was staying at the
hostel across the street.

GEORGIANA

Really? I had no idea.

MRS. WILSON

I figured, but it doesn't hurt to
ask.

(MORE)

MRS. WILSON (CONT'D)

She was apparently quite the catch.
Not as pretty as yourself Mrs.
Pratt, but attractive enough.

GEORGIANA

Do you know anything else about her
disappearance?

MRS. WILSON

No, I had only overhead a few of
the boys chatting about it at the
bar. They suspect she was
kidnapped.

GEORGIANA

I hope not. Why do they think that?

MRS. WILSON

There didn't seem to be any other
possibility apparently. She had no
family to go home to, no other
reason to suddenly leave. And all
of her stuff seems to still be here
as well.

GEORGIANA

That's very disturbing news if it's
true.

MRS. WILSON

Indeed. I'd be careful going out if
I were you Mrs. Pratt. Especially
at night.

GEORGIANA

I appreciate the advice. Luckily
I'm used to staying inside.

MRS. WILSON

Good. I'd hate to see something
happen to you too.

Mrs. Wilson looks out the window, as if expecting to see the
kidnapper.

The kettle on the stove begins to WHISTLE. The high-pitched
noise sounds almost like a cry for help.

FADE TO:

INT. FORT WORTH/HOTEL - DAY

Georgiana sits at the desk in her room, writing a letter to her mother.

A KNOCK at the door.

Georgiana stops writing.

Another KNOCK, then the JIGGLE of the door handle.

GEORGIANA

Who is it?

LYMAN

I'm looking for Holmes.

A beat.

GEORGIANA

The doctor isn't here. I'll take a message for him.

LYMAN

Tell him Donald Lyman is looking for him. And that I have something I need to discuss with him as soon as possible. He'll know how to reach me.

Georgiana's eyes go wide at the mention of his name.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS walking away.

Georgiana stands, her whole body frozen in fear.

INT. FORT WORTH/HOTEL - NIGHT

Georgiana, now in a nightgown, lays in bed. Holmes appears from the washroom.

GEORGIANA

Henry.

HOLMES

Yes dear?

GEORGIANA

What was the name of the man you did business with? The one who wronged you?

Holmes's face goes dark.

HOLMES

Lyman. Why?

GEORGIANA

Earlier today. A man knocked on the door, looking for you. He called you Holmes and said he wanted to meet.

(beat)

He said his name was Donald Lyman.

Holmes is silent.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

What should we do? How did he know we were here?

No reply.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Henry? Henry.

Holmes suddenly starts grabbing his belongings and tossing them into his suitcase.

HOLMES

I think it's time we left this city.

GEORGIANA

What about your uncle's estate?

HOLMES

I will return at a later date to take care of it. There isn't much I can do about the thugs right now anyway.

GEORGIANA

Are you sure?

HOLMES

Yes.

GEORGIANA

Where will we go?

HOLMES

Anywhere but here.

He continues furiously packing, grabbing toiletries, notebooks and journals, shoving everything into the luggage.

GEORGIANA

Henry stop.
(beat)
Henry please!

He stops and turns.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

What is going on? Ever since we left Chicago, it seems like there's always something new. First the delay in Indianapolis, then everything in Denver, now this. Is there something else you're not telling me?

HOLMES

I've told you everything. These are the same people who wronged me before and are trying to take advantage of me again.

GEORGIANA

But--

HOLMES

--You're supposed to be on my side. Why does it feel like you're questioning my every move?

GEORGIANA

Henry no, it's not like that.

HOLMES

Do you not trust me?

A pause.

GEORGIANA

I-I do.

HOLMES

Then let's--

A KNOCK on the door prevents Holmes from finishing.

FRANK (O.S.)

This is Detective Frank Geyer of the Chicago Police Department. We know you're in there Dr. Holmes. You've been ordered down to the police station for questioning.

GEORGIANA

Police?

HOLMES

Quickly, in the bathroom.

He shoves her into the bathroom and closes the door, careful not to make a noise.

Georgiana hides behind the shower curtain.

Outside the door, she can hear muffled talking.

FRANK (O.S.)

...suspected murder...few
questions...preliminary
screening...prime suspect.

A few moments later, the sound of the front door SLAMMING shut.

Georgiana squeezes her eyes shut and collapses into a ball.

GEORGIANA

Uncle Isaac...maybe you were right
after all.

FADE TO:

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY (MONTAGE)

--INT. TRAIN - Georgiana rides alone in the train car. The only sound coming from the monotonous THUMP THUMP of the train rolling across the tracks.

--INT. FORT WORTH/POLICE STATION - Frank interrogates Holmes. Frank is visibly frustrated, Holmes completely composed.

--EXT. LAKE BLUFF CAMP - Among nuns and other religious women, Georgiana, looking much happier, relaxes by a pool, drinking lemonade and reading the Bible. On a table beside her is another of Holmes's letters.

--INT. FORT WORTH/HOUSE - Holmes storms into the house, visibly angry. He starts smashing and destroying various furniture and dining ware, yelling and screaming in a fit of rage.

--INT. FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - Georgiana spends time with her family. The family speculate on what Holmes is up to. Georgiana explains the situation. Isaac and Mary comfort Georgiana.

--INT. FARMHOUSE/LIVING ROOM - Georgiana opens a small package shipped to her from Holmes. Inside are a pair of diamond earrings. Georgiana hesitates for a moment before putting them on.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. CASTLE/DUNGEON - NIGHT

SUPER: A COMPETENT WITNESS, 1894-1895

Two POLICE OFFICERS (20s, 30s), hold up lanterns, illuminating the eerie room with a faint yellow glow.

POLICE OFFICER 1

What the--?

The large acid vat and adjacent kiln cast dark shadows against the wall. In the center of the room is an operating table.

POLICE OFFICER 2

What is this place?

Police Officer 1 places his lantern on the table, bending down and picking up a seemingly forgotten journal. He opens it and flips through a few pages.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Uh, sir? You might want to take a look at this.

POLICE OFFICER 2

One second.

Police Officer 2 notices a pile of clothes on the ground. He picks up a familiar-looking blazer. The name tag is still on it.

INSERT NAME TAG:

A name is engraved on the plate: "Minnie Williams".

END INSERT.

POLICE OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)

Call up Geyer. Tell him we found our missing person.

Police Officer 1 nods and sets the journal down, heading back upstairs.

Police Officer 2 flips through the journal. His face twists in disgust.

POLICE OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)
May the Lord be merciful.

FADE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The same diamond earrings dangle from Georgiana's ears. She sits opposite Frank, arms folded, legs crossed.

Graham stands beside Frank.

GEORGIANA
What is it you want from me?

FRANK
"What is it you want?" That's pretty rich. Young woman, your man is a swindler, a liar, and very possibly a killer. The sooner you get past your delusions about him, the better off you'll be.

GEORGIANA
He warned me about you people. The things you'd do for money. I know better than you the kind of man my husband is. He's a lot of things, but he's not a murderer.

FRANK
Abigail Dupreet, Donald Lyman, The Pietzel family. Minnie Williams. Do you recognize these names?

Georgiana's ears perk at the mention of Minnie.

GEORGIANA
And what if I do?

FRANK
Care to explain how you know them?

GEORGIANA
The first was a patient of Henry's who passed away of disease. The second was an old business partner who stole from Henry. Minnie was Henry's secretary. I don't know the other one.

GRAHAM
Sorry, did you say secretary?

GEORGIANA
Yes, Henry mentioned her before in Denver. She was supposed to join us, but ended up eloping.

Frank SCOFFS.

FRANK
Were you aware Dr. Howard had been married before?

GEORGIANA
Yes.

FRANK
Really?

GEORGIANA
Twice, in fact. Both of his previous wives were selfish and delusional. They cheated on and abandoned him.

FRANK
Is that what he told you?

GEORGIANA
Yes.

GRAHAM
And what of the estate in Forth Worth? What did he say about that?

GEORGIANA
It was his late uncle-in-law's. Entrusted to him under the condition that he change his surname to Howard to preserve his uncle's family name.

Frank LAUGHS in disbelief.

FRANK
The man is brilliant! He's a genius! I salute him. Who else could've possibly invented such a pile of rubbish?!

GEORGIANA
Excuse you. How dare you speak of Henry in such a manner.

FRANK

Mrs. Howard, I don't think you understand the situation you are currently in. Your husband is the prime suspect of mass murder. Not one, not two, but potentially dozens of victims. Including children.

GEORGIANA

Or perhaps it is you who misunderstands. My husband is being framed by people like you for crimes he didn't commit because you have nothing better to do than condemn a good man for your own shortcomings.

Frank falls back in his chair, massaging his temples vigorously.

FRANK

I don't believe this.

(beat)

Have you no sense woman? Do you not realize the implications that come with being the wife of a killer? Especially one that defends him?

GEORGIANA

Henry's not a killer.

Frank slams down Minnie's name tag on the table in front of Georgiana.

FRANK

We found this in the basement of Holmes's hotel estate in Chicago. Next to a vat of acid and a journal.

Georgiana's resolution begins to waiver.

GEORGIANA

I don't see how that has anything to do with--

Frank slides the journal over to her.

FRANK

--Open it. Before you say anything else. Read it and tell me again what you think your husband is.

Georgiana opens the journal and reads the first few pages.
Her face turns to horror.

INSERT JOURNAL:

Drawings of dissected women, various body parts, and commentary on how they were murdered. Each page, a figure. Every single one has a name written below it.

"Minnie Williams" is written below one page of drawings.

END INSERT.

GEORGIANA

No. It can't. No. He couldn't.

Georgiana gags once. And again. Before Frank can react, she hurls out the contents of her lunch onto the interrogation floor and Frank's freshly polished shoes.

FADE TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Police Officer 1 stares down into a basement. It is too dark to see inside, but he recoils at the apparent smell.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Over here! We found them.

Police Officer 2 runs over and peers down.

POLICE OFFICER 2

Or what's left of them.

He lets out a long, pained SIGH.

FADE TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Birds CHIRP as the bright morning sun shines through the kitchen window.

Georgiana sits at the kitchen table surrounded by shattered glass and dining ware.

Mary holds Georgiana from behind.

On the table are two newspapers.

INSERT NEWSPAPERS:

The Philadelphia Inquirer and the New York Times. Holmes's face clearly visible on the front covers of both.

The headline of the Inquirer: "To Murder Wife and Mother! Some Startling Evidence Discovered Against Holmes!"

The headline of the Times: "Missing Girls' Bodies Found in Toronto, Linked to Holmes!"

END INSERT.

Georgiana's face is a mess: mangled hair, puffy eyes, runny nose, evidence of a long and hard cry.

Isaac pats her shoulder gently.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE/COURTROOM - DAY

Georgiana's poise remains steadfast amidst the SHOUTING and YELLING from the onlookers.

CROWD
Murderer! Murderer!

The all-too-familiar BANG BANG of the gavel.

JUDGE
Quiet in my courtroom!

OBSERVER 2
They were only children! The Pitezels deserved better!

OBSERVER 3
Holmes is a monster! The Devil in disguise!

OBSERVER 4
Vengeance for Minnie!

JUDGE
I said quiet!

Another BANG. This one much louder and aggressive.

The NOISE in the room slowly dies down.

Georgiana looks out at the courtroom from the witness stand. Dozens of eyes stare back, filled with anger, hatred, and grief.

The Judge gestures to Graham.

GRAHAM

Mrs. Howard, do you believe your husband is the murder?

Silence. All eyes on Georgiana.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Holmes is noticeably thinner and paler than usual, but remains as well-dressed as ever.

Georgiana sits across from Holmes, a palpable separation between the two that goes well beyond the metal bars between them.

Holmes COUGHS as he rubs the crook of his hand.

HOLMES

Are you comfortable? Should I ask them to bring you a pillow?

GEORGIANA

I'm fine.

HOLMES

Are they treating you well? Do you need anything?

His eyes search for hers but Georgiana refuses to look at him.

GEORGIANA

Would you have done it?

HOLMES

Done what?

GEORGIANA

You know exactly what I'm talking about.

HOLMES

If you're referring to the nonsense these papers have written about me, I can tell you it's wholly untrue.

(MORE)

HOLMES (CONT'D)

A very big, very unfortunate
misunderstanding.

GEORGIANA

Is it?

HOLMES

Don't tell me you believe them?

GEORGIANA

Henry. Just stop.

HOLMES

You wound me. I never would've
thought a woman as smart as
yourself would fall prey to such
crude, porous schemes.

Georgiana looks directly into the eyes of the person in front
of her.

The eyes that stared back looked nothing like the man she had
fallen in love with.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE/COURTROOM - DAY

Eyes still on Georgiana. She scans the room.

GEORGIANA

I do.

WHISPERS as the crowd is aroused once more, but they are
silenced just as quickly with a single gaveled BANG.

GRAHAM

No further questions Your Honor.

Graham nods toward Georgiana and returns to his seat.

She breathes a SIGH of relief.

A COUGH. Eyes turn to Holmes, as he stands.

HOLMES

Actually, I have a few questions
for my wife, if it's all the same
to you, Your Honor.

Georgiana freezes at the sound of his voice.

JUDGE

Very well. You may proceed.

A charming smile is spread across Holmes's face and maintains the same air of confidence she had once admired so much.

HOLMES

People of the court, I, Henry Howard Holmes, born Herman Webster Mudgett, would like to ask just one question to Mrs. Georgiana Howard.

He pauses.

Holmes turns and faces Georgiana, then Graham, the bench, and the audience.

It's a long, drawn out pause, as Holmes relishes the moment where all eyes and all ears are exclusively on him.

Right before the Judge moves to grab the gavel, he COUGHS again.

He speaks slowly, making sure everyone in the room hears him.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Georgiana. My sweet, tender, loving wife.

(beat)

What would your last thought have been? If I did in fact try to kill you?

A beat, as the audience takes in his words.

Georgiana thinks for a moment.

GEORGIANA

"Oh what a fool, I must've been."

Holmes CACKLES, spinning around in place like a deranged maniac.

HOLMES

Truly, you are honest to the end.

(turning to the Judge)

It's true! I did it! All of it!
Every last one of them. I killed them all!

Now the crowd erupts. Chairs, bags, shoes are all thrown at Holmes as the courtroom explodes.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

The Pietzels! Minnie Williams! That
oaf Lyman! Abigail Dupreet! And oh
so many more!

The police step in from the sides, attempting to quell them.

BANG BANG BANG.

Holmes's LAUGHTER can be heard above the ruckus.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Hahahaha! Ahahaha!

BANG BANG BANG.

Georgiana watches the scene before her with a blank, empty
expression.

BANG BANG BANG.

The police finally get ahold of the situation and the Judge
stares down at Holmes.

JUDGE

Are you confessing to your crimes,
Dr. Howard?

HOLMES

Yes! I am!

(still laughing)

You see, I was born with the Devil
in me. I could not help the fact
that I was a murderer! No more than
a poet can help the inspiration to
sing!

He pulls out a knife and points it toward Georgiana.

The police in the room immediately spring into action,
pinning Holmes.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

I congratulate you, Georgiana
Howard. On being the only woman I
ever loved and never killed!

Holmes is lifted to his feet and disarmed. He is escorted out
of the room in handcuffs as the crowd continues to YELL and
SHOUT insults and profanities toward him.

Graham steps up to Georgiana.

GRAHAM

Miss Yoke, are you alright?

Georgiana closes her eyes.

GEORGIANA

No, I'm not.

(beat)

But I will be.

JUDGE

I suppose there isn't much left to do now. Dr. Howard will be charged for mass murder and sentenced to death. I apologize you had to endure such an ordeal, Miss Yoke.

The Judge gets up and leaves along with the rest of the bench as the crowd of onlookers slowly disperse as well.

GRAHAM

Would you like to step outside for a moment? Get some fresh air?

GEORGIANA

I think I'd like to just be left alone for a little while.

Graham takes his cue to exit.

FADE TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE/COURTROOM - DAY

The room is now completely empty, except for Georgiana, who still sits at the witness stand.

She takes off her diamond earrings and sets them on the stand.

As she gets up and begins to walk out, she turns back to the defendant table and sticks out her two middle fingers.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. COUNTRY CLUB/DINING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: MANY YEARS LATER

MRS. LAURA GILLESPIE, (50s), greets country club members at the door to the dining area.

A YOUNG WOMAN (20s) approaches her.

YOUNG WOMAN

How lovely everything looks, Mrs. Gillespie! I'm so excited to finally be a member! If my memory serves me, you were one of the founding members, correct?

LAURA

Yes, indeed.

YOUNG WOMAN

I was wondering--I have a question, that is, and I was curious if you could tell me more.

LAURA

Of course? What seems to be on your mind?

YOUNG WOMAN

The lady over there.

She gestures to a middle-aged woman, with an all too familiar poise, seated next to a man who is presumably her husband.

Georgiana and Harry Chapman LAUGH as they CONVERSE with another man at the table.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Is it true? Is she really--?

LAURA

--My husband and I have had the pleasure of a long friendship with the Chapmans. They are both wonderful people.

YOUNG WOMAN

Of that I have no doubt, but is Mrs. Chapman--is she the former Mrs. Howard? Ex-wife of the serial killer H. H. Holmes?

LAURA

Yes. She is.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh my! I remember reading about it when I was at school.

(MORE)

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

No one could talk of anything else for weeks! How does she bear it? Knowing her ex-husband murdered all of those people? Those children?

LAURA

She bears it with fortitude.

YOUNG WOMAN

Does everyone else here know?

LAURA

Of course. But we respect Mrs. Chapman enough to know not to speak of it. The memory would cause her pain and we would never wish that upon her. I'm sure anyone who joins our club would agree.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh, of course! I understand. Thank you. Say nothing more and neither will I.

LAURA

Good. I do hope you enjoy lunch. We have fresh salmon and handmade pasta today.

The Young Woman nods and makes her way inside the dining room.

As she does, Georgiana turns and looks back to Laura. She smiles happily.

FADE OUT.

THE END.