

CARNIVAL ROW

Pilot by

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Based on the Feature by Travis Beacham

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE TYPHONIC STRAITS - NIGHT

A quarter moon rises over a calm, flat sea. Flotsam from a wrecked sailing ship dots the water's surface. A scrap of hull reveals its name - *Deliverance* - ironic, given her fate.

A lone survivor clings to a snapped-off portion of the mast. We'll come to know her as VIGNETTE STONEMOSS.

Matted hair frames her face. Her eyes are closed, her features still. We can't tell if she's dead or alive until -

SHE'S JOLTED AWAKE

when the mast she's clinging to bumps into something. Or rather, something bumps into *it*. She catches glimpse of a dark shape, moving fast just under the surface of the water.

And then it's gone. Maybe she imagined it. Maybe she's finally losing her mind after two days on the open sea.

Until the mast is suddenly jolted hard once more. The dark shape just under the surface is circling her now. Sizing up its prey.

Terrified, she hoists herself out of the water and onto the mast as best she can. And now the creature stalking her breaches the surface. Not a shark or whale but -

A SEA SERPENT OF YORE

Massive jaws perched atop a long, sinuous neck. Its eyes lock onto her. With a sibilant hiss it strikes at her like a snake.

She gets to her feet - balancing precariously on the mast's shaft - and starts running, the creature snapping at her heels.

A dozen steps and she's run its length - there's nowhere to go, but she keeps going anyway, her feet skipping lightly atop the water's surface as

A PAIR OF GOSSAMER WINGS SPROUT FROM HER BACK

Vignette Stonemoss is a faerie.

The points of her ears reveal themselves as the wind whips her hair back from her face, now contorted with the effort it takes to stay aloft in her weakened condition.

With nothing but sea visible before her, it seems only a matter of time before she succumbs to exhaustion and an eventual watery demise...

Over this we now hear a man's sonorous VOICE...

VOICE

*And so it came to pass that the
land of the faer-folk was besieged
by the fires of war...*

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND COUNTRY MANOR - DAY

The voice belongs to an older gentleman we'll come to know as RUNYAN MILLWORTHY. A knot of well-dressed children sit cross-legged on the floor, listening raptly as he narrates the action of -

A PUPPET SHOW

A little boat teeters atop painted wooden waves. Inside it are a pair of small puppets, one depicting a FAERIE, the other a FAUN.

MILLWORTHY

Many fled, both Pix and Puck alike,
and came to the land of Men.

The tiny boat reaches "shore" - the two puppets disembark and do a celebratory little dance.

The odd thing is there doesn't seem to be anyone operating these puppets. They're not marionettes, as no strings are visible, nor are they stick or even hand puppets.

Yet there they are, moving just the same, the Faun puppet stepping to center stage now as Millworthy continues -

MILLWORTHY (CONT'D)

The Puck, strong and stout...
(a conspiratorial aside)
If not terribly bright...

Knowing titters from the gathered children - a FAUN BUTLER, his face framed by horns that curl like a ram's, stoically ignores the slight.

MILLWORTHY (CONT'D)

- found work plowing the fields and
working the factories...

And now the Faerie puppet takes center stage...

MILLWORTHY (CONT'D)

While the Pix, gay and silly as children, tend to our homes and families...

One of the Uniformed FAERIE MAIDS tending to the children cuts a silent look to the other.

MILLWORTHY (CONT'D)

This is the story of a very special Pix with a very special destiny...

The CAMERA comes around him and

BEHIND THE PUPPET THEATER

revealing how Millworthy is accomplishing all this. His puppets aren't puppets at all, they are in fact

SMALL CREATURES KNOWN AS KOBOLDS

About nine inches tall, with disproportionately large faces presently obscured by the masks they wear.

There are half a dozen of them in all, the ones not in view of the children are doing backstage work - prepping props, manning pulleys - all are in costume and masked, standing-by to enter as their characters at the appropriate time.

MILLWORTHY (CONT'D)

It starts, as stories are wont to do, at the beginning...

A FRECKLED KID in the front row - the birthday boy - whispers to the little girl next to him.

FRECKLED KID

I wonder what they look like underneath...

With that he reaches out and snatches one of the kobolds from the stage -

MILLWORTHY

Careful you'll hurt him!

FRECKLED KID

I just want to see...

And with that he yanks the mask off, revealing

THE KOBOLD'S GNARLED LITTLE FACE UNDERNEATH

Hideous, vaguely insectoid somehow, made all the more disturbing by the creature's evident displeasure at being thus handled -

- it hisses at the boy and bites his hand with all its might, eliciting a howl of pain and causing

THE PARENTS

gathered at the back of the room to rush forward in alarm -

EXT. GRAND COUNTRY MANOR - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The children have been let out to play on the grounds, which are situated on a bluff OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN, seen in the distance.

A Policeman we'll come to know as CONSTABLE CUPPINS - a truculent fireplug of a man - has been called to the scene and is at the door talking to the Lady of the House.

Millworthy looks on worriedly from the front drive, where the theater has been folded and packed onto a large cart.

The six kobolds, now without costumes or masks, clamber about the pile of stage-goods battening everything down.

CUPPINS

Very good, M'um. As you say.

He crosses to Millworthy.

CUPPINS (CONT'D)

The Lady's agreed not to press charges. She just wants you gone.

MILLWORTHY

Very gracious indeed.

Said with a tip of his hat her way. From atop the cart, one of the kobolds chimes in with a series of CLICKS AND CHIRPS that Millworthy evidently understands.

CUPPINS

What's the little bugger on about?

Millworthy translates with a smile as apologetic as it is hopeful.

MILLWORTHY

He's wondering whether we're going to be paid for our performance...?

CUPPINS

Go on! You're lucky not to be arrested.

Just then from out on the grounds where the children are playing a piercing cry of alarm -

FRECKLED KID

Mummy, come quick!

Both Lady of the House and Cuppins waste no time rushing to see what's wrong -

One of the kobolds asks Millworthy what's happening in their strange language -

MILLWORTHY

I've no idea, but let's not wait around to find out.

With that he hoists the rails of the cart and starts huffing it down the driveway.

CUT TO:

THE FRECKLED KID

as his Mother and Cuppins arrive at his side -

CUPPINS

What is it, lad?

He directs their attention to a figure splayed face down on the grass nearby, faerie wings sagged atop her sodden frame.

It's Vignette, who we now know made it ashore, if only barely.

Cuppins steps forward and nudges her with a foot to see if she's alive, eliciting a soft moan.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Vignette sits slumped in the back of a Police Paddywagon, her wings folded around her body against the chill.

She takes note of the fact that Cuppins, perhaps lulled by the clip-clop of hooves and the gentle rocking of the coach as it's pulled along, has nodded off in his seat.

Presently a voice from off-screen -

VOICE

Fresh from Tirnanoc, are you?

It takes us a moment to place where the voice came from as there's no one else present, except for the horse pulling the coach, who we now discover isn't a horse at all, but rather -

A CENTUAR

And a chatty one at that, with a distinctly working-class accent. We'll come to know him as -

FENNIMORE

How'd you get across the Straights, then? You can't've come all that way on wing.

Numb from her ordeal, she answers in flat tones.

VIGNETTE

We were two days out when the storm came up. We might've have had a chance if the boat hadn't been so packed full. The ones who didn't drown the sea-wyverns got.

FENNIMORE

All lost but you?

VIGNETTE

Two score. The boat was only meant for half that, but at twenty guilders a head they stuffed as many of us aboard as they could.

FENNIMORE

Well, you learned the first thing there is to know about Men: there's not much they won't do if it puts gold in their pockets...

(on the bright side)

Still, here you are. Against all odds.

Said as the coach rounds a bend revealing

A CITY IN THE DISTANCE

An urban hodgepodge of packed buildings, grimy belfries, and smoke-stained spires. Chimneys and smokestacks pump towers of soot into a stone grey sky.

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)

Welcome to the Burgue, where men-folk and faer-folk live tooth-to-jowl in peace and prosperity.

After having given up so much, risked so much, to finally have the fabled city in her sight is a bit overwhelming. Until Fennimore bursts the bubble with a derisive snort -

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)
What a load of bollocks...

EXT. CITY STREET - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The paddywagon is now making its way along an upscale cobblestone street lined with shops: a haberdashery, a chemist, law offices, a bank. Women with their hooped dresses and parasols, the men with their gloves and hats.

FENNIMORE
 Posh, idn't it? Finistere Crossing, you won't find a finer neighborhood in the entire city. You also won't find the likes of us. Unless it's a Pix doing the shopping for her Mistress...

She follows his gaze to the sidewalk, where a FAERIE piled high with groceries trudges up the steps to a townhouse.

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)
 Or a Trow sweeping shite off the cobbles.

Said just as a hulking, yak-shaggy creature steps in behind Fennimore with a dustpan and a baleful expression.

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)
 (shrugs)
 Wasn't me, mate.

Which is when he notices something about Vignette -

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)
 Oy. Do us a favor, would'ya? Tuck away them wings.

He gestures to a FAERIE NANNY herding a pair of toddlers on the sidewalk - her wings, like every other Pix visible on the street we now notice, are folded away.

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)
 It's the law, I'm afraid - whole Burgue is a no-fly district.

Vignette looks stricken - being banned from the sky cuts to the very marrow of a Pix's being...

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)

I know, like asking a fish not to swim, idn't it?

She tucks her wings away, the realization hitting her for perhaps the first time that life here is going to be even more vastly different than she imagined.

Fennimore guides the coach toward a low stone Bridge -

EXT. CARNIVAL ROW - MOMENTS LATER

Its narrow, twisty streets are clotted with life. On one corner a NAGA (a komodo-man) peddles roasted beetles from a cart.

On another a FAUN hands out copies of *The Banshee*, an underground broadsheet popular with the Critch for its fiery stance against the human-dominated status quo.

On yet another corner a bedraggled FAERIE with wilted wings begs passersby for change.

FENNIMORE

They call this Carnival Row. Only Men you'll find here are either too poor to get out... or they're up to something dodgy.

She follows his gaze to a fancy coach parked nearby, inside its darkened cabin we glimpse the FACE of a well-dressed man, lit by the GLOW OF A LIXER PIPE he holds to his lips.

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)

By and large, we all stick to our own kind here in the Burgue. Let's be honest, there's no love lost between us faer-folk. You Pix think the Puck are priggish scolds, they think you're tramps and thieves. You both look down your noses at the Trow, and believe me you don't want to know what my kind has to say about the lot of you. The fuck of it is, to Men? We're all the same. We're all just Critch.

(off her uncertain look)

As in Creatures.

(shoots her a wink)

Wait to you hear what we call them.

As they continue onward...

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)
 Any kin, anyone to help you get
 settled?
 (shakes her head)
 Then you shouldn't have come.
 Work's hard to find. And you'll go
 hungry unless you do.

VIGNETTE
 Couldn't be worse than what I left.

FENNIMORE
 Fair enough.

EXT. POLICE CONSTABULARY - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The paddywagon comes to a stop in front of a towering granite
 building stained with soot.

FENNIMORE
 And here we are. The Metropolitan
 Constabulary, Central Division.
 (nudging him)
 Oy.

Cuppins startles awake -

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)
 We're here, guv'nor.

The Constable shakes off the cobwebs and disembarks, motions
 for Vignette to do the same. As she's led away -

FENNIMORE (CONT'D)
 Good luck to you, Pix. Wings
 tucked, eyes open.

INT. CONSTABULARY - DAY

Burled wood and marble, Uniformed Officers move about with
 military precision.

Cuppins has hauled Vignette in front of the DESK SERGEANT,
 his perpetual frown framed by a meticulously groomed
 horseshoe moustache.

CUPPINS
 - she made it ashore just south of
 Cape Tairn, which is where we found
 her.

DESK SERGEANT
 Another Pix mouth to feed, just
 what this bloody city needs.
 (MORE)

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 (to Vignette)
 Name?

VIGNETTE
 Vignette Stonemoss.

DESK SERGEANT
 Not yours, ya daft thing, the
 sodding ship that went down.

She can't help but be cowed by his annoyance.

VIGNETTE
Deliverance, I think it was...

DESK SERGEANT
 (to Cuppins)
 Find out who it's registered to and
 fob her off on them.

CUPPINS
 Straight away, sir.

As Cuppins leads Vignette away, another CONSTABLE rushes
 over...

CONSTABLE
 Sergeant!

DESK SERGEANT
 What now...?

CONSTABLE
 A body. On Carnival Row.

DESK SERGEANT
 Critch?

CONSTABLE
 No sir. A woman. A lady by the
 looks of her. Washed up in the
 docklands.

DESK SERGEANT
 Best get Philo on this.

He moves to a tangle of brass tubes jutting from a nearby
 wall and barks into one of them -

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Inspector Philostrate.

INT. HALLWAY - CONSTABULARY - CONTINUOUS

The Sergeant's voice from a brass horn mounted on the wall.

VOICE

Please report to the Sergeant
Major's desk.

CAMERA finds INSPECTOR RYCROFT PHILOSTRATE (early 40's, hard face but kind eyes), whose reaction upon hearing his name is a muttered -

PHILO

Shite.

Why? Because he's currently -

JIMMYING OPEN A DOOR

stenciled with the words: EVIDENCE LOCK-UP. With a glance down the hall to make sure no one's seen him, he slips inside.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Philo navigates the rows of sagging wooden shelves stacked high with dusty boxes until he finds the one he's looking for, from which he retrieves a small -

VIAL OF AMBER LIQUID

He unscrews the top, dips a finger to taste the viscous fluid inside. His reaction tell us whatever it is, it's the good stuff. He slips it into his coat pocket and heads off.

INT. CONSTABULARY - FRONT DESK - DAY

The Desk Sergeant frowns to himself, is about to cross back to the brass intercom horn to page Philo a second time when -

PHILO

Here I am, Sergeant, at your
service.

Said with such ease you'd never think he'd just pilfered drugs from the evidence lock-up.

EXT. THE DOCKLANDS - SHORELINE - DAY

Constable BOTTOM, a portly fellow with mutton-chop sideburns and a cockney accent, leads Philo toward a body on the sand.

BOTTOM

No identification on her, looks to be about forty years of age.

PHILO

Let's have a look.

Bottom prepares to pull aside the sheet covering the body, but not before warning Philo -

BOTTOM

Brace yourself. You'll not have seen worse, even during the war I'd wager.

PHILO

(simply)
I doubt it.

Bottom pulls the sheet aside. There's blood from the woman's mouth and nose, even her eyes are rimmed with it. Her skin is mottled, every capillary underneath ruptured.

Bottom wasn't exaggerating, it's a grisly sight indeed. Philo bends to look closer, seemingly unperturbed by all the blood.

BOTTOM

There are no bruises that I can see, no wounds of any kind. Poison maybe?

PHILO

(shakes his head)
Pupils are normal, there's no sick in her throat.
(noticing something else)
Odd.

BOTTOM

Inspector?

PHILO

A lock of hair is missing.

Not at all what Bottom was expecting him to say.

But sure enough, Philo points out a small nick in the hair framing her face, where a lock was taken.

BOTTOM

He took himself a memento.

PHILO
 (trying to make sense of
 it)
 Usually you only see that with
 crimes of a carnal nature...

He stands, surveys the surroundings.

PHILO (CONT'D)
 Who found the body?

BOTTOM
 That cranky old bird over there.

He points to an ancient crone leaning on a crooked walking stick, patches of grey hair sprout from her bulbous cranium like roots from a turnip. We'll come to know her simply as the HARUSPEX.

Philo crosses toward her, Bottom in tow -

PHILO
 A word please.

She meets him with rheumy eyes.

PHILO (CONT'D)
 I'm Inspector Philostrate. I
 understand you found her.

HARUSPEX
 Two hours ago now. Been made to
 stand here ever since.

Said with an annoyed look Bottom's way, seems he wasn't exaggerating about her disposition.

PHILO
 Just tell me what happened.

She raises a taloned finger and points toward the shore.

HARUSPEX
 I was there - in the shallows. I
 saw a shape in the sand. Came
 closer to look. There she was.
 Dead. That's what happened.

PHILO
 Did you notice anyone else about?

HARUSPEX
 Nay. Can I go now?

PHILO

One more question. It's a mite cold to be out on the shore, what were you doing here.

HARUSPEX

Foraging for colyst. When ground, their shells yield a tincture that calms the nerves.

(hollow empathy)

Just the thing for our Burgue in these torrid times.

PHILO

You're an Apothecary.

HARUSPEX

And Seer.

Philo shares a smirk with Bottom.

PHILO

Then perhaps you can spare us the trouble and tell us who killed her?

HARUSPEX

What ought to concern you isn't who - it's what. I've seen much death in my day, but ne'er such as that. Something new to these shores has come upon us all. You'd do well to find it before it kills again.

And with that dire warning she shuffles away. Bottom looks to Philo and frowns.

BOTTOM

Something *new*? Can't say I like the sound of that...

CUT TO:

EXT. APOTHECARY SHOP - CARNIVAL ROW

In the window are displayed dusty jars full of strange roots and who knows what else. The Haruspex approaches, keys in hand. Unlocks the door and lets herself in.

INT. APOTHECARY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

She flips over the "closed" sign hanging in the window, muttering to herself.

HARUSPEX
Half a day's trade lost...

Shelves line the walls, stocked with all manner of dried herbs, vials of multi-hued liquids, shards of bone, mummified animal claws.

BIRDS CHATTER FROM AN ORNATE CAGE

hanging from a stand in the corner. She tosses them some seed from a bag, and with a weary sigh, crosses behind a counter that runs along the back wall.

She hangs her walking stick from a peg and rummages until she she finds a small BOWL made of hammered bronze.

Now she reaches into her cloak and retrieves something from within its folds, which she then sets into the bowl.

A LOCK OF HAIR

Same color as the victim's, stained with her blood.

It was the Haruspex who clipped it from the victim, not the killer.

For what purpose we don't yet know, and the answer will have to wait - because just now the front door chimes and a NAGA pushes his way inside. Her first customer of the day.

INT. A SEEDY BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Millworthy stands at the front desk, behind which sits the PROPRIETRESS, an older woman with frazzled hair and rotten teeth.

A sign behind her announces the establishment's NO CRITCH ALLOWED policy.

PROPRIETRESS
 It's just yourself, is it?

MILLWORTHY
 (fishing coins from his
 pockets and counting
 them)
 Just myself.

A rustling sound from the large SUITCASE at his feet in which the Kobolds are hiding. He gives it a surreptitious kick to silence them.

PROPRIETRESS

No guests, no lixer smoking. Room
is 30 stivers a night.

Said just as Millworthy realizes he's come up short - he
snaps his fingers as if suddenly remembering something.

MILLWORTHY

That's it! I've been standing here
trying to work out who it is you
remind me of. Penelope Chartress!

PROPRIETRESS

The actress? Go on.

Despite herself she can't help but reach up to run a hand
through her frazzled hair.

MILLWORTHY

No, it's true. I should know. I
had the privilege of sharing a
stage with her, back when we were
both starting out.

PROPRIETRESS

(all but primping now)
Do you really think so?

MILLWORTHY

It's uncanny. Twenty stivers you
said?

She takes the money - completely forgetting she asked for 30.

PROPRIETRESS

(handing over the keys)
Just up the stairs to your left.

INT. BOARDING ROOM - DAY

Peeling wallpaper, threadbare furniture. Millworthy puts the
suitcase on the bed and opens it to let the kobolds out.
They instantly scatter to investigate their surroundings.

MILLWORTHY

(shushing them)
Quiet, the lot of you. I just
spent our last stiver. If we get
thrown out it's the street for all
of us.

INT. CONSTABULARY - MAGISTRATE FLUTE'S OFFICE - DAY

*

Philo reports to his superior, MAGISTRATE FLUTE, in his 50's, with a gin-blossom nose, the last tuft of hair left to him carefully folded over his bare pate.

FLUTE

Tell me it was a Puck. Or a Trow.
Or a Naga that killed this woman.
Just don't tell it was some sort of
new sodding bloody fucking Critch
that done it!

PHILO

Unfortunately, Magistrate, it does
appear -

Flute cuts him off as he comes out from behind his ornate desk -

FLUTE

You're not hearing me, Inspector!
This cannot be! The Critch have
caused the good people of this city
enough trouble already. Something
like this would test their
forbearance too far. I just came
from Balefire Hall. The
Chancellor's enemies are circling.
His Majority hangs by a thread. If
he goes I go. And if I go you go.
Do you see how that works? How
shite flows down stream?

PHILO

I see, Magistrate. Most clearly.

FLUTE

A Puck. A Trow. A Naga. I don't
care which. Do you understand me?

PHILO

Perfectly, sir.

A curt bow of his head and Philo takes his leave.

MAN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)

Our city is in crisis!

CUT TO:

INT. BALEFIRE HALL - DAY

The Burgue's Parliament. A long hall with benches running on each side, one for the Majority party, the opposite for the Minority.

Chancellor ABSALOM BREAKSPEAR, a great bear of a man with a mane of dark hair, sits at one end of the hall, smoldering silently as he listens to the Minority Opposition Leader, TYTUS HAVENHURST, hold forth.

HAVENHURST

The Critch are changing the very fabric of our society. And not for the better! They don't share our values. They bring vices - wantonness, the scourge of lixer addiction, the worship of strange gods. Since they came to our shores crime has risen, whole boroughs have become off-limits to decent citizens. The people look to their Chancellor for relief - what do they find instead? A Majority content to do nothing.

Huzzahs of approval from Havenhurst's allies - countered by dismissive harumphs from the Chancellor's.

BREAKSPEAR

It would seem that good Proctor Havenhurst has forgotten why the faer-folk were forced to flee their lands in the first place -

A civil enough beginning, but now Breakspear stands and THUNDERS accusatorily -

BREAKSPEAR (CONT'D)

- because the party he leads chose to abandon the fight for Tirnanoc!

Now it's Breakspear's allies who shout their approval -

HAVENHURST

Let's not forget who dragged us into that misbegotten adventure in Empire-making!

The two men are all but shouting over each other now, cheered on by their backers -

BREAKSPEAR

A war we could have won, should
have won -

HAVENHURST

At what cost in blood and treasure?

BREAKSPEAR

But now instead of Tirnanoc's
riches we have her refuse instead!

HAVENHURST

Ah but you've found a way to line
your pocket with this mess just the
same!

Havenhurst changes tack, abandoning direct confrontation with
the Chancellor to address the crowd at large -

HAVENHURST (CONT'D)

My fellow Proctors, ask yourselves
who it is that profits from having
these creatures among us? Who
profits when the good citizens of
this city can't find honest work
because the Critch are happy to do
their jobs for a pittance? Who if
not Breakspear and his
industrialist cronies!

Havenhurst's allies are on their feet now, stomping and
clapping. Breakspear raises a hand, waits for the tumult to
crest.

BREAKSPEAR

I would remind the Opposition that
it is the task of this august
chamber to *make* the laws of this
city, it is my task to see that
they are duly enforced.

HAVENHURST

(under his breath)
*Apparently that doesn't include the
law against consorting with Pix
harlots...*

A BREAKSPEAR BACKER

(objecting)
See here!

A HAVENHURST ALLY

(snorts)
Ha!

If Breakspear heard Havenhurst's comment, he pretends not to
have. Though the effort seems to cost him, his voice rumbles
from his chest like a volcano threatening to blow.

BREAKSPEAR

If Proctor Havenhurst wishes to send the faer-folk back whence they came, let him amass the necessary votes. Until then, I've had quite enough of his bloviating for one day.

And with that he storms from the chamber.

INT. BREAKSPEAR'S PRIVATE CHAMBER - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Breakspear's wife PIETY, tall and regal, listens as he rants.

BREAKSPEAR

That pissant piker thug! The audacity! To challenge me so brazenly! To impugn my family honor!

PIETY

Impugn? How?
(Breakspear waves her off)
Tell me.

BREAKSPEAR

His slurs matter not, the Breakspear name is above reproach.

PIETY

Even so. Havenhurst is surely well-founded in one matter: the streets are angry, every day there's more unrest. Unrest he's all too happy to exploit to further his ambition. Be careful, husband, you hold the Majority by but a blade's margin.

BREAKSPEAR

Your appraisal of the situation, my dear Piety, is as always, adept. My path forward *is* precarious. The slightest misstep could cost me the Chancellorship. Even the smallest whiff of scandal.

Just then the HUGE DOORS at the end of the great hall open and their son, JONAH, enters. Early 20's - shockingly handsome, even in his present disheveled and hung-over state.

He's returning only now from the night prior's debauch. His shirt is open, lipstick traces on his neck.

His parents stand in stony silence as he crosses gingerly past, each footstep exacerbating his pounding headache. He offers them a squinty smile

JONAH
Good morning, Father.

Piety turns to Breakspear and mouths incredulously:

PIETY
Morning?

But he can't seem to bring himself to chastise his son.

BREAKSPEAR
(tight)
Jonah.

JONAH
Hello, Mother.

She maintains her icy silence until he reaches the other side of the hall and closes the door behind himself.

PIETY
(pointed)
Above reproach, indeed, husband.

And with that she leaves Breakspear to stew.

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

A nearly windowless building distinguished primarily by the trio of smokestacks on its roof spewing shafts of soot into the sky.

INT. FACTORY - OFFICE - DAY

RITTER LONGERBANE, his lanky frame perched at his opulent desk, peers disapprovingly over his spectacles at the afternoon NEWSPAPER.

In the background, the thrum of machinery bleeds in from the factory floor.

CLOSE ON THE HEADLINES

Majority Coalition Fraying

Closed-Border Platform Gains Momentum

Longerbane frowns, looks up from the paper to cast a baleful gaze at a framed DAGUERREOTYPE hanging on a nearby wall -

HE AND BREAKSPEAR

Shaking hands at some swank event, flanked by their wives.

Presently Longerbane's face registers something - or rather, the lack of something. The machine thrum from the factory floor has abruptly stopped.

Puzzled, he crosses to the door and exits to -

INT. A BALCONY ABOVE THE FACTORY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Something's wrong. Urgent shouts echo through the vast room. The foreman, BATES, runs past -

LONGERBANE

Bates, why's the line stopped?!

BATES

Dunno, Mr. Longerbane, that's what I aim to sort out!

The two men rush off -

INT. THE FACTORY FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

We make our way past enormous COGS and CRANKSHAFTS, huge VATS of molten steel.

Faun workers, sweat-stained and bone-weary, grab what brief respite they can courtesy of the temporarily disabled assembly line.

The cause of which Longerbane is determined to discover and correct forthwith.

He and Bates arrive at the epicenter of all the urgent shouting and immediately realize what's happened.

A WORKER IS TRAPPED IN THE TEETH OF TWO GIANT GEARS

Having fallen because the corroded rail of the catwalk above gave way.

LONGERBANE

Bloody hell..

Another Puck we'll come to know as QUILL crouches at the trapped faun's side.

QUILL

It's alright, we're going to get you out. Just be still.

LONGERBANE

Step aside - let me have a look...

He and Bates quickly survey the situation.

BATES

Maybe if we reverse the line...

Longerbane turns to him. Shakes his head.

LONGERBANE

It's no use. Those pinions are the only thing still holding him together.

QUILL

We have to at least try -

LONGERBANE

(to Bates)

Fire up the line.

QUILL

You'll kill him!

LONGERBANE

He's dead either way.

Bate's hesitates, his hand on the lever -

LONGERBANE (CONT'D)

Fire the line I said!

QUILL

No -

He charges Bates, but is intercepted and restrained by a pair of human Foreman. Bates throws the lever and -

THE GREAT GEARS START TO TURN

TRAPPED FAUN

Wait - please - no!

Quill can do nothing but watch helplessly as he's crushed into pulp...

THE PUCK'S DYING SCREAMS

Echo in the ears of every faun on the line - they have no choice but to turn back to the drudgery of their labors in sullen defeat, and soon the great room is filled with the thrum of machinery once more...

QUILL

(to Longerbane)

*You bastard - I'll kill you for
this!*

LONGERBANE

(to Bates)

Get him the hell out of here.

INT. CONSTABULARY - MORGUE - DAY

Gleaming white tile, bodies in drawers kept cool with blocks
of ice.

The CORONER, a dyspeptic fellow with a lazy eye, stands
across from Philo and Bottom, studying the victim's mottled
skin. He indicates her shoulder, the epicenter of the burst
capillaries: think of the way a bullet hole shatters glass.

CORONER

See how the capillaries are all
ruptured? Starting here, then
working outward?

BOTTOM

(more to himself)

Like she was killed by a touch...

Philo cuts a look his way - he was thinking the same thing.

CORONER

I'll need a day with her to get to
the bottom of this.

INT. CONSTABULARY - DAY

A determined Philo on the move, Bottom in tow.

PHILO

Wasn't a Puck, Trow or Naga done
that, no matter what Flute wants to
think.

BOTTOM

So what now?

PHILO

I've a notion who might be able to
point us in the right direction.
In the meantime, see if anyone
matching her description has been
reported missing.

As Philo heads for the front entrance we DROP OFF on the Desk Sergeant -

DESK SERGEANT
Any luck on that lost ship?

Said to Cuppins, crossing past with Vignette in tow.

CUPPINS
It was registered to a Mr. Ezra Spurnrose of 47 Finistere Crossing. I sent a man for him.

INT. SPURNROSE RESIDENCE - DAY

Not large but fashionably-appointed, the handiwork of 23 year old IMOGEN SPURNROSE, who stands at the WINDOW in an equally fashionable dress when her somewhat dandyish older brother EZRA bounds into the room.

IMOGEN
Oh. You startled me, Ezra.

SPURNROSE
Are you spying on our new neighbor?

IMOGEN
(peering out the window)
I wonder who he could be... Darcy Pembroke told me she heard Mrs. Wordenbull say he's supposedly from New Freehold...

SPURNROSE
(shakes his head)
You and your gossip...

IMOGEN
The movers have been unloading since this morning. Such fine things. He must be very rich.

SPURNROSE
He'd have to be. Sent his Solicitor to the auction and bought the place sight unseen is how I heard it.
(catching herself)
Not that I offer my ear to gossip.

IMOGEN
Sight unseen? Must be very rich indeed.

Just then the front door chimes.

SPURNROSE

Are you expecting someone, dear
sister?

EXT. SPURNROSE RESIDENCE - DAY

Spurnrose opens the door to find a Uniformed Constable standing on his doorstep. Off his surprise -

INT. CONSTABULARY - DAY

Spurnrose sits across from Cuppins, who's just broken the news.

SPURNROSE

Lost at sea... *By the Martyr.*

Said with a forlorn look toward Vignette sitting silently in the corner, hard to believe that all he was to show for his sunken ship is one bedraggled Pix.

Cuppins indicates a document on his desk.

CUPPINS

Says here she was registered as a
whaling ship.

Spurnrose nods vaguely.

CUPPINS (CONT'D)

Only we both know what she was
really about when she went down -
ferrying Critch 'cross the
Straight.

SPURNROSE

It's not illegal.
(and then, in a small
voice)
Is it?

CUPPINS

No, but it ought be if you ask me -
we've more than enough Critch here
already thank you very much.

Spurnrose hastens to point out -

SPURNROSE

I was merely a passive investor in this venture - I was approached to fund the purchase and refurbishment of the Deliverance as a passenger vessel, in return for a share of the profits earned in bringing these desperate wretches to our shores.

(still can't believe it)

Lost at sea...

CUPPINS

Surely, Mr. Spurnrose, you understood the risks involved?

SPURNROSE

Apparently not.

(wiping his brow)

I'm afraid I tied up a rather considerable portion of my family's assets in this enterprise.

CUPPINS

Then let's hope for your sake your partners in all this were clever enough not to board an overburdened vessel themselves, so that whatever monies they were paid to bring these "wretches" across are not lost at the bottom of the sea.

SPURNROSE

I pray you are right, Constable.

CUPPINS

In the meantime -

(a shrug Vignette's way)

- the Pix is yours. At least you get a Domestic out of this mess.

Spurnrose looks to Vignette and sighs, as if she were but a small consolation considering the setback that's befallen him.

*

EXT. FINISTERE CROSSING - DAY

*

A centaur-driven taxi pulls up in front of the Spurnrose residence. As Ezra pays and disembarks, he admonishes Vignette to -

EZRA

Say nothing of what has occurred to my sister.

(MORE)

EZRA (CONT'D)

She is not privy to my business dealings and I would spare her any worry, particularly since I hold out hope that the situation may still be salvageable.

IMOGEN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)

A Lady's Maid!

INT. SPURNROSE RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Imogen claps her hands together with glee at the sight of Vignette.

IMOGEN

Oh Ezra! I've not had one since poor Father died.

EZRA

And it's high time I corrected that intolerable state of affairs!

Said with as much joviality as he can muster.

IMOGEN

Thank you. And I'm sorry.

EZRA

For what, dear sister?

IMOGEN

For doubting you and your ever mysterious business ventures. Clearly you are handling our affairs most capably!

She has no way of knowing how her comment stings. He cuts a look Vignette's way, silently reminding her to say nothing.

IMOGEN (CONT'D)

What's your name, girl?

VIGNETTE

Vignette.

IMOGEN

Well, come along then, let's get you cleaned-up. I think we still have the last girl's uniform in a cupboard around here somewhere.

Spurnrose watches his sister lead her shiny new toy away, happily oblivious to the precariousness of their circumstances.

INT. BURGUE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

Philo stands with the CURATOR in the grand lobby, an improbably tall fellow with a *pince-nez* perched on his improbably large nose, through which he regards his visitor skeptically.

CURATOR

Kill with a touch? I'm afraid not, Inspector. I'm familiar with all species of faer-folk and I can tell you with complete assurance that none have such an ability.

PHILO

Something killed this woman...

CURATOR

Of that I've no doubt, but honestly, it never ceases to amaze me what people are willing to believe. *Never look a Selkie in the eye! Shut the window or a Pix'll steal the baby!* How such legends take hold is beyond me.

PHILO

Wasn't so long ago, before the first ships crossed the Straight, that the very existence of faer-folk was thought to be just that - legend.

CURATOR

Point taken. And if it's legend you're after I'm more than happy to oblige.

CUT TO:

A BOOKCASE

Heavy with weighty reference volumes.

CURATOR (CONT'D)

Where is it? Ah, here we are.

He pulls a dusty volume off the shelf, with rune-like writing on its spine. He searches for a half-remembered LITHOGRAPH on one of the pages, shows it to Philo.

A cowed figure hunched in the night, its skeletal face obscured in shadow, its eyes brimming with evil intent.

PHILO
What am I looking at?

CURATOR
Ghoulish, isn't it? With as many names as the faer-folk have tongues. Darkashers to the Puck, the Pix know him as the Unseelie One. By any name not something one would care to encounter alone on a dark road. Said to be able to, yes, kill with a mere touch.

Despite the Curator's amused tone as he recounts these legends, Philo studies the lithograph with great interest.

PHILO
I can't make out what the size of this thing is meant to be - are we talking Kobold or Trow here?

It's true, nothing in the lithograph imparts even a hint of scale.

CURATOR
Hm. Interesting question. Let's find out.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Row after row of shelves packed-full with all manner of boxes and crates, all tagged and labeled according to some obscure cataloging system. With Philo in tow, the Curator frowns and mutters as he searches.

CURATOR
Should be around here somewhere...

PHILO
What exactly are we looking for?

CURATOR
There's a Darkasher skeleton in one of these crates...

PHILO
I'm afraid I don't follow, if this is a creature of legend then there should be no remains.

CURATOR
(explaining)
This is where we keep the Oddities
and Curiosities. *

He pauses and opens a random box to show Philo - *

CURATOR (CONT'D)
Dragon's tongue. You can tell
because it's *charred*. What with
all the fire-breathing. *

Said with an amused titter. *

CURATOR (CONT'D)
It's the little details that matter
when one's peddling a fraud. *

PHILO
(catching on)
Meaning that even though these
Darkasher bones are fake, they'll
still give us an idea what size the
creatures are *purported* to be. *

CURATOR
Exactly.
(locating a large wooden
box on an upper shelf)
And if this crate is any
indication, its more on the Trow
side of things. Help me get it on
the ground. *

As the two men work - *

CURATOR (CONT'D)
Now, the thing about a Darkasher
that one has to keep in mind is
that they can't be killed. Not
permanently, anyway. The bones,
you see, can be brought back to
life. With the blood of the
innocent. *

(grinning as he pries open
the top)
The fair-folk are just like us in
at least one respect: they love to
scare their little ones before bed. *

He pops the top off and looks inside. What he sees causes
his features to fall. *

CURATOR (CONT'D)

I don't understand...

The crate is empty. The bones are gone. Off Philo, unsettled despite himself...

EXT. THE BURGUE - NIGHT

A quarter moon hangs above the rooftops. The streets, in the human part of town anyway, are lit by the warm glow of gas lamps.

INT. CONSTABULARY - NIGHT

The Inspector's bullpen is empty save for Philo, who sits pensively at his desk.

A cleaning crew is tidying-up. A PUCK empties trash bins while a PIX dusts the furniture.

She sings absently as she works, not having noticed Philo's presence.

Her voice is lovely, unaffected and melodious - the refrain from a faerie children's song.

SINGING PIX

*...fly high, little one
To the sky, little one*

Philo's features seem to soften as he listens, as one's might upon hearing a long-forgotten melody.

SINGING PIX (CONT'D)

*Take Mima's hand
By 'morrow we'll land
On the far side of the night*

Just then she notices Philo sitting there and falls abruptly silent.

PIX MAID

Apologies, Inspector, I didn't see you there.

PHILO

Don't stop on my account.

Expecting to be scolded, she doesn't quite know what to make of his evident sincerity.

PIX MAID

It's no matter, sir, I'm through here anyway.

And with that she scurries from the room, crossing with Bottom on his way in to see Philo. *

PHILO *

Any luck? *

BOTTOM *

Checked with every Constabulary in the city. No one matching our gal has been reported missing. *

Philo takes this in with a frown. *

BOTTOM (CONT'D) *

How about you, any luck at the museum? *

PHILO *

Just a box of missing bones... *

BOTTOM *

I don't follow - was the place robbed or something? *

PHILO *

Either that or... *

(it's too far-fetched to even say) *

It was robbed, yes. It's late, Bottom, go on home to your Missus. *

BOTTOM *

Don't you worry, gov'nor, things'll go our way tomorrow, you'll see. *

With that he takes his leave. A moment, then Philo reaches into his pocket and retrieves

THE VIAL

he filched from lock-up earlier. Turns it over in his hand with anxious fingers, much as one might expect were he jonesing for a fix after a rough day.

EXT. THE BURGUE - NIGHT

We're in the working-class part of town. Modest but well-kept. The people here can't afford Critch servants so everyone we see on the street is human.

Philo bounds up the steps of an apartment building, the ground floor of which is occupied by a pub called *The Fiddlin' Cockatrice*.

INT. MODEST FLAT - NIGHT

Philo lets himself in, calling -

PHILO
Darius, it's me!

No answer. Philo quickly searches the two small rooms that comprise the flat.

PHILO (CONT'D)
Darius?

He frowns with concern and heads back out -

INT. THE FIDDLIN COCKATRICE - NIGHT

Rough-hewn men smoke and drink, some play dice games or darts.

Behind the bar, a raven-haired girl we'll come to know as PORTIA is pouring a pint - she looks up at the sound of someone coming in.

It's Philo - and from the quick smile that flickers briefly across her lovely features, it's not hard to guess that she might just be keen on him. As he approaches the bar -

PORTIA
What'll it be, Philo?

PHILO
Have you seen Darius?

PORTIA
He was here earlier. Asked me to call him a coach.

PHILO
Where to?

PORTIA
The Row.

Which is precisely what Philo was hoping she *wouldn't* say.

EXT. CARNIVAL ROW - NIGHT

Standing in a dimly lit doorway, a skeezy FAUN studies what appears to be a MILITARY MEDAL hanging from a ribbon.

Balanced on a crutch looking on is the man who just handed it to him, DARIUS, who sports what is an unmistakably artificial leg.

FAUN
Whatsitmadeof?

DARIUS
What do you mean what's it made of -
silver.

The Faun tests the medal with his teeth - shakes his head.

FAUN
Pff.

The fact that it's not silver is news to Darius.

FAUN (CONT'D)
Not interested.

DARIUS
Come on, Mate, help us out...

FAUN
Bugger off.

The Faun shoves him away, Darius loses his balance and falls to the ground.

DARIUS
Fuck off you filthy Critch!

Which earns him a swift kick to the gut from the Faun, he's about to do it again when suddenly

PHILO IS THERE

He claps a hand to the Faun's shoulder and yanks him back, sends him reeling with a series of vicious blows -

PHILO
Go on with you then!

The Faun beats a hasty retreat down the alley - Philo helps Darius to his feet...

PHILO (CONT'D)
Come on, let's get you home..

But Darius shoves him angrily away -

DARIUS
Not til I get what I came for!

The anguish in the man's voice is palpable. Philo reaches into his coat and retrieves the VIAL.

The poor wretch's face crumples with relief at the sight of the fix he so desperately craves -

INT. DARIUS' FLAT - NIGHT

Philo watches as Darius sets the lixer alight in a glass pipe and inhales the vapors.

PHILO

Go easy...

The stuff hits Darius almost instantaneously - his shakes soon give way to a gauzy bliss.

DARIUS

You're my mate, Philo, my best mate ever...

Philo looks away, it's hard to see his friend like this.

PHILO

Your medal, Darius? Were you that desperate?

DARIUS

Please. Not even silver, wussit? Can you believe that? Lost me leg for a fuckin piece of tin.

PHILO

If you could see yourself.

DARIUS

What do you want me to say, Philo? That I'm a pile of shite. Will that make you happy?

PHILO

Darius...

DARIUS

Who are you to judge me anyhow?

PHILO

Nobody - I'm nobody.
...It's not judging, it's -

DARIUS

We both done picked up bad habits during the war. Only difference is mine followed me back.

The sharp look this provokes from Philo tells us he knows what Darius is referring to even if we don't.

PHILO

You've more strength than this.
You can beat it.

DARIUS

What if I don't care to beat it?

PHILO

Then you're going to die.

The truth of it catches both off-guard, stills them for a moment. They listen to the city outside the flat - its dulled, relentless commotion.

PHILO (CONT'D)

...All I know is I can't keep doing this.

DARIUS

You owe me - I saved your *life* over there...

But Philo just slides the rest of the vial across the table to his friend.

PHILO

Consider us even.
(stands to go)
Make it last. Wean yourself. I'll not bring you any more.

And with that he turns and starts for the door -

DARIUS

Philo, wait!

As hard as it is, Philo doesn't even look back.

INT. BOARDING ROOM - NIGHT

Millworthy has dozed off with a book on his chest. LEOPOLD - *
the kobold who bit the birthday boy - finds a HOLE IN THE *
FLOOR near the radiator, through which he can see *

DOWN INTO THE ROOM BELOW

where the Proprietress is in her kitchen frying up some bacon in a pan. The smell is impossible to resist - he slips down through the hole.

The Proprietress turns away from the stove to pour herself a drink. *
The kobold takes the moment to dash forward and grab himself a slice of bacon.

UPSTAIRS

Millworthy's slumber is interrupted by a piercing scream that shatters the air - *

DOWNSTAIRS

The Proprietress has spotted the kobold and is chasing it with a spatula -

SMASH TO:

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

LANDLADY

And don't come back!

She slams the door on Millworthy and his troupe. They've nowhere to go and not a stiver in their coffers. Just to make matters worse, a light rain starts to fall...

INT. APOTHECARY SHOP - NIGHT

The Haruspex flips over the sign in her window. Mutters as she scowls out at the rain -

HARUSPEX

Wash some of the shite away...

She crosses to the bird cage in the corner. Opens a small side door and tosses in some seed. Watches as the birds scramble to feed themselves.

Quick as a cat, she uses their distraction to snatch one. Clutching it in a gnarled hand, she crosses to the counter upon which sits the bowl where she tossed the

LOCK OF HAIR

she clipped from the dead woman. She strokes the bird to calm it, then in a sudden, swift motion uses the edge of what we only now understand to be

AN EXCEEDINGLY SHARP FINGERNAIL

to slit its throat. Clutching the still-quivering carcass, she DRAINS ITS BLOOD into the bowl. Once she's collected every last drop, she sets the poor thing aside. Then turns her attention to the tangle of hair now afloat in a pool of crimson.

Watching intently as the strands slowly twist and curl, she takes note of the shapes that form, plumbing them for meanings only she can discern.

HARUSPEX (CONT'D)

Oh dearie me...

Said with a mirthless chortle.

HARUSPEX (CONT'D)

*I'd tread lightly were I you,
Inspector... lightly indeed...*

She turns the bowl this way and that, studying the tangle from different perspectives, squinting and muttering as she works...

HARUSPEX (CONT'D)

*Show me the Others in what is to
come...*

EXT. THE BURGUE - MORNING (DAY 2)

The sun rises on the city, struggling to pierce the layer of haze lying atop it like a blanket.

INT. CONSTABULARY - MORNING

As Philo arrives to work he's immediately approached by Constable Bottom -

BOTTOM

A missing persons report just came in. It's our gal, all right.

He hands the report to Philo, who quickly looks it over -

PHILO

Abigail Dunn... Who filed the report?

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Philo and Bottom sit with MRS. HORTENCIA BONIFACE in the well-appointed public room of the boarding house where she and the victim both live(d). Somewhere past 50, she struggles to maintain her composure. *

MRS. BONIFACE *

We were meant to take tea and crumpets at Harney's day before last. I thought I must've gotten the time wrong when she didn't arrive. So I slipped a note under her door. The next morning it was still there. Which is when I started to worry.

PHILO

How long have you known her?

MRS. BONIFACE

Oh. Six, seven years I should think. When she first let the flat across from mine.

PHILO

What sort of person was she?

MRS. BONIFACE

The loveliest sort, I can assure you. I can't imagine why anyone would want to harm a single hair on her head.

PHILO

Did she live alone?

MRS. BONIFACE

Most of us here do. Widows lane, they call it. The flats are well-suited in size for ladies like myself, provided for by our dear departed husbands, whose children are grown.

PHILO

Did she have children?

MRS. BONIFACE

Abigail? No. She never married.

PHILO

Family money, then?

MRS. BONIFACE

She never spoke of family. Not once, in all the time I knew her.

Said with a leading tone, prompting Philo to ask -

PHILO

She must've supported herself somehow - was she employed?

MRS. BONIFACE

No, Inspector. And thus you've arrived at the great mystery of Abigail Dunn, much speculated upon, as you can imagine, by the ladies of Widows Lane.

PHILO

Thank you, Mrs. Boniface. You've been very helpful indeed. What was Miss Dunn's flat number again?

INT. FLAT THREE - MOMENTS LATER

The door swings open to reveal Philo and Bottom standing in the hall. They step inside. The flat is not large but it is immaculate, with expensive-looking furnishings. In her wardrobe hang equally expensive clothes.

BOTTOM

She had a taste for the finer things, that's plain to see.

PHILO

Yet no employment, no family, no children to support her. So how did she pay her bills...?

Off Philo, mulling the mystery.

INT. SPURNROSE RESIDENCE - DAY

Spurnrose has summoned his solicitor, GILES BAGSTOCK, a somber-looking fellow as grave as he is fallow, to discuss the disposition of his business dealings.

BAGSTOCK

I believe I advised you against this venture, Mr. Spurnrose.

SPURNROSE

Indeed you did, Mr. Bagstock. But what's done is done. I would ask you to focus your efforts on recovering what monies you can from this ill-fated misadventure, lest my family be ruined by my folly.

BAGSTOCK

I'll do what I can, sir.

Vignette crosses past carrying a chamber pot, we pick her up and FOLLOW her into

INT. THE ADJACENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where she's immediately accosted by Imogen.

IMOGEN

I would send you on an errand. Can I count on your discretion?

VIGNETTE

Yes M'um.

IMOGEN

(handing her a small glass
bottle)

I need you to go to the Row and
have this refilled.

VIGNETTE

(the scent is
unmistakeable)

Tamphus Oil...

IMOGEN

Along with Calder root and the
Martyr knows what else. A drop
behind each ear and men take notice
of what they otherwise overlook.

(explaining herself)

I may be plain - but at least I'm
clear-eyed about it.

She hands her some coins, Vignette's reaction tells us it's a
lot of money.

IMOGEN (CONT'D)

It's quite dear, yes. My brother
would not approve of such an
expenditure. But then of course
he's not about to turn twenty-three
with few suitable prospects for
marriage, is he? Off with you.

VIGNETTE

Yes, M'um. Where am I to go
exactly?

IMOGEN

(realizing)

I haven't the faintest. The girl
before you procured it for me, I've
never set foot on the Row.

VIGNETTE

Of course not, why would you?

If there's a sardonic undertone to her remark Imogen misses
it entirely.

IMOGEN

Just ask about. And don't dally.
Rumor has it our new neighbor is
taking residence today and it's a
safe wager Darcy Pembroke already
has a new dress picked-out to
parade herself in front of him.

EXT. CARNIVAL ROW - STREET - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Vignette in the maze-like streets of the Row, peering at the storefronts she passes, no idea where to go to fulfill her task...

- a Naga food-cart peddler glances at the vial in Vignette's outstretched hand, shrugs...

- a mangy Trow tries to lure her into a dark alley, claiming to know where she might find what she's looking for, but Vignette thinks better of it and bolts...

INT. APOTHECARY SHOP - CARNIVAL ROW - CONTINUOUS

We're CLOSE ON THE HARUSPEX'S RHEUMY EYES as she murmurs softly to herself, her voice far-away, trancelike...

HARUSPEX

Show yourself... come to me...

Her face is but inches away from a CANDLE burning on the counter top...

EXT. CARNIVAL ROW - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Vignette rounds a corner only to find herself on a street she's been on before. She's walking in circles. Lost.

HARUSPEX (V.O.)

Don't dawdle... Come.

As if unconsciously steeled by the old witch's words, Vignette picks a side street and starts down it.

INT. APOTHECARY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

HARUSPEX

Closer... closer...

Woosh - she BLOWS OUT THE CANDLE - and but a moment later comes the SOUND of the door opening behind her.

She turns to regard the frazzled figure that's just stepped into her shop.

Vignette. The Haruspex's face registers mild surprise. As if maybe it wasn't a Pix she was expecting but someone else. But no matter. She affects as conversational a tone as she can manage.

HARUSPEX (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

VIGNETTE

A pray that you can. My Mistress would have this refilled.

She steps closer and proffers the Haruspex the vial. Who sniffs it and grunts with recognition.

HARUSPEX

I trust your Mistress knows what she's trifling with...

VIGNETTE

You can do it?

The Haruspex waves the question off and shuffles to the counter, starts gathering various bottles, jars and vials.

HARUSPEX

Tamphus Oil... Calder root...

As she works, she uses the opportunity to study Vignette further.

HARUSPEX (CONT'D)

When did you arrive? To the Burgue, I mean.

Said casually, as if just making conversation.

VIGNETTE

Yesterday.

(self-conscious)

Didn't realize my accent was that conspicuous...

The Haruspex probes as she continues working, masking her intent with feigned chattiness.

HARUSPEX

Tell me - why did you come?

VIGNETTE

Why does anyone - to stay alive.

HARUSPEX

But you're not just anyone.

VIGNETTE

Is this the part where you try to sell me something?

HARUSPEX

Good. You have spirit. You'll need it.

VIGNETTE

(please)

To what, muck-out chamber pots - I'd rather a strong stomach.

HARUSPEX

Perhaps there's more in store for you here than you know.

Vignette shrugs, she's not the sort to buy into false hope.

VIGNETTE

We'll see.

HARUSPEX

Yes, we will, won't we...
(returning the refilled vial)
One guilder fifty.

Vignette hands her the two guilders Imogen provided her. The Haruspex makes change, comes around from behind the counter.

HARUSPEX (CONT'D)

I'll show you out.

She places her HAND TO VIGNETTE'S BACK and gently guides her toward the door, deftly using her razor-sharp fingernail to

SNIP A LOCK OF HAIR

without Vignette feeling a thing.

HARUSPEX (CONT'D)

On your way, then.

Said with a friendly lilt as she closes the door behind her.

Clutching her prize, the old witch allows herself a small smile of satisfaction...

EXT. CARNIVAL ROW - MOMENTS LATER

Vignette makes her way past the vendors hawking their wares, eventually happening upon the Carnival Row institution known to discerning gentlemen as

MADAME MAB'S BROTHEL

The place stands tightly wedged in a row of buildings packed together like sardines. A web of warped wooden beams embedded in old yellowed plaster hold the crooked thing up.

A half-naked faerie is displayed in the window, her wings unfurled in glorious defiance of the law - she uses them to entice passersby with the Pix equivalent of a fan dance.

One look at her and Vignette's face lights up with recognition -

VIGNETTE

Tourmaline...

She rushes forward and knocks on the glass to get her attention. When the dancer sees her, her face too alights with recognition -

INT. MADAME MAB'S - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Blood-red velvet tapestries line the walls. Faeries lounge on chaises, their gossamer wings beckoning seductively. The sounds of love-making drifts in from behind closed doors.

In a quiet corner we find Vignette and TOURMALINE, sitting knee-to-knee holding hands, drinking-in the sight of each other.

TOURMALINE

I can't believe you're really here.
Tell me about home. Mima Roosaan,
is she still terrorizing the new
Catechists?

VIGNETTE

I'm afraid not, the truth is...
there are no new Catechists.

TOURMALINE

None?

VIGNETTE

No Temple.

TOURMALINE

(stunned)
It's gone?

VIGNETTE

(nods somberly)
So's Mima Roosan.
(squeezing her distraught
hand)
Things've only gotten worse since
you left.

TOURMALINE

Don't tell me anymore. Let me
just... remember things as they
were.

VOICE

Tourmaline, customer!

TOURMALINE

Ask Fleury! I've got a visitor!

An awkward moment as it's brought home what exactly it is that Tourmaline does for a living. Her hand unconsciously reaches to gather the flimsy robe that alone covers her nakedness.

She changes the subject, noting Vignette's uniform.

TOURMALINE (CONT'D)

You're a Domestic then?

VIGNETTE

(nods)
A family in Finistere Crossing.

TOURMALINE

That's posh. Have they mistreated
you?

VIGNETTE

No.

TOURMALINE

(they will)
With me it started with the wife.
She didn't like the way he looked
at me. Liked it even less when he
started making good on those looks.
(the memory still stings)
Which is how I ended up here.
(MORE)

TOURMALINE (CONT'D)
 Figured if I had to put up with
 that shite I might as well make
 decent money for it.

Vignette notices a small candle-lit shrine in the corner.

VIGNETTE
 You still say your Vespers?

TOURMALINE
 Every night...

VIGNETTE
 Mima Roosaan would've liked that...

A tender moment between them, then Tourmaline reaches and touches one of Vignette's distinctive hair braids.

TOURMALINE
 Your mourning braid... you're still
 wearing it.

Said with a sense that this fact surprises her.

VIGNETTE
 (why wouldn't I?)
 Of course.

TOURMALINE
 You mean - you don't *know*...?

VIGNETTE
 Know what...?

Off Tourmaline - how does she break it to her?

CUT TO:

EXT. CARNIVAL ROW - DAY

A stricken Vignette jostles her way through the teeming pedestrian traffic, oblivious to everyone she bumps into, her mind numb from whatever it was Tourmaline has told her.

She smacks right into Millworthy coming the other way, wearily pushing the kobolds on the troupe's cart -

MILLWORTHY
 (unfailingly polite)
 Pardon me -

But she pushes past without so much as an acknowledgement - we STAY WITH Millworthy as he trudges on. A VOICE carries over the din -

VOICE

Come and know the Martyr's love!

Millworthy locates its source: a man in modest garb who stands before a mission run by the Soterite Church.

MISSION WORKER

Hot food and a warm bed! Come and share his bounty!

One of the kobolds opines that maybe they should take the offer. *

MILLWORTHY *

And have to listen to them drone on about their sodding Martyr? No thank you. *

Another kobold clicks and squeals his dismay. *

MILLWORTHY (CONT'D) *

Don't worry, we'll have a roof over our heads tonight. I know a place where no one will trouble us... *

INT. CONSTABULARY - MORGUE - DAY *

Philo and Bottom have returned to check on the Coroner's progress. *

PHILO *

You said you needed a day with her. *

CORONER *

And what a day it's been... *

The Coroner pulls her hair back to expose her ears.

CORONER (CONT'D)

See these scars?

He points to faint discolorations along the top of her ear ridge.

CORONER (CONT'D)

Her ears have been surgically bobbed...

Rolling her body over to show them a faint scar on her shoulder-blades.

CORONER (CONT'D)

And these? Where her wings used to be.

PHILO
 (gobsmacked)
 Wings? What are you saying...
 she's a Pix?

CORONER
 One who went to great lengths to
 pass herself off as one of us.

Bottom can't believe it, he's never heard of such a thing.

BOTTOM
Blimey...

INT. SPURNROSE RESIDENCE - DAY

Vignette is sweeping ashes from the fireplace while Imogen keeps vigil by the window.

IMOGEN
 Is something the matter? You've
 scarce said a word since your
 return.

Asked more out of boredom than genuine interest. Before Vignette can even begin to formulate a reply, something out the window steals Imogen's attention -

IMOGEN (CONT'D)
 A carriage! A fine one! It's him -
 it must be.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

A uniformed Footman opens the carriage door for a cloaked figure - WE SEE HIM ONLY FROM THE BACK as he bounds up the steps and disappears into the house.

BACK TO SCENE

Imogen retrieves the vial Vignette procured for her - Spurnrose enters from the other room to see what the fuss is about.

SPURNROSE
 Is everything all right...?

IMOGEN
 Our new neighbor -

She dabs a drop from the vial behind each ear -

IMOGEN (CONT'D)
 Shall we be the first to welcome
 him?

 EZRA
 (scandalized)
Imogen!

 IMOGEN
 What? It's the friendly thing to
 do.

 EZRA
 It's not proper.

 IMOGEN
 Don't be so old fashioned, this is
 the second century!

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Imogen steps outside, a moment later an exasperated Ezra
 follows -

 IMOGEN
 Oh you're coming after all?

 EZRA
 Someone has to make sure you don't
 make a spectacle of yourself.

They cross the street and approach the building's magnificent
 facade. Ring the bell. A footman answers.

 EZRA (CONT'D)
 Good afternoon. Is the master of
 the house at home?

 FOOTMAN
 Whom may I say is calling?

 IMOGEN
 Ezra Spurnrose and his sister,
 Imogen - we're neighbors, come to
 extend our hospitality.

A VOICE from somewhere behind him -

 VOICE
 Show them in, Fergus.

The footman steps back and opens the door wider, revealing

A PUCK, QUITE UNLIKE ANY WE'VE EVER SEEN

Impeccably dressed in the latest fashion, he carries himself with a confident carriage.

WELL-DRESSED PUCK

Spurnrose - I'm told your father was the finest watchmaker in the Burgue.

A tight smile from Ezra, who's not used to being addressed so familiarly by a Critch.

EZRA

We'd like to think so.

Ignoring him, Imogen returns her attention the footman.

IMOGEN

Is the master of the house available?

WELL-DRESSED PUCK

I am master here.

Imogen's smile falls - even Ezra can't keep the shock from her face. A *Critch*? Living in *their* neighborhood? It just too inconceivable to comprehend. *

INT. MADAME MAB'S - NIGHT *

The girls - including Tourmaline - lounge idly as they wait for customers.

All perk up when none other than Jonah Breakspear makes his way inside. He enters the lounge area, takes in the wares on display in various states of undress.

JONAH

How to choose? Maybe I'll just have to have you all.

He's stopped by the eponymous owner of the place, MADAME MAB. Though having long-since hung up the trade herself, she's striking still. Savvy, tough, and not unkind.

MAB

Not so fast.

JONAH

Don't fret, Mab dear, I took care of it.

MAB

Need to see for myself. Just looking out for me'girls.

With that she reaches into the folds of her dress and produces a little wooden tongue depressor to check his junk for clap. Jonah rolls his eyes and drops his trousers.

The faeries' reaction tells us he's amply endowed.

MAB (CONT'D)

Doesn't look any worse for the wear...

He hikes up his pants, turns his attention back to choosing a girl for the night.

JONAH

(a la eenie-meenie)

Ippetty-sipetty, ippetty-sap,
ipetty-sipetty, kinella kinack"

His finger ends on Tourmaline.

INT. THE FIDDLIN COCKATRICE - NIGHT

Philo pushes his was inside. Bellies up to the bar.

BARKEEP

Be right with you.

PORTIA

I've got it, Dad.

She moves past him to Philo -

PORTIA (CONT'D)

(his usual)
Pint of Bitter?

PHILO

Make it a Stout.

PORTIA

That's a first.

PHILO

It's been a day of firsts.

Portia has no way of knowing what he means, of course, but plays along gamely.

PORTIA

Coming right up.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

A SHORT WHILE LATER

*

The crowd has thinned somewhat. Philo is on his second pint. Watching Portia work when she's not looking.

A peak of cleavage when she leans to wash dishes in the sink. Her bum when she bends to place empties in a crate on the floor.

He doesn't realize that thanks to the mirrored backing on the wall where the bottles are shelved, she's been onto him the whole time. Presently she approaches.

PORTIA

I'm off in an hour.

Said with bracing frankness - and just like that, she gets back to work. Off Philo...

EXT. A HIGH STONE WALL - NIGHT

*

Millworthy pushes alongside it, the kobolds atop the cart crane their necks trying to figure out where exactly it is he's brought them.

*

*

*

Finally they come to a gap in the wall big enough from Millworthy to guide the cart through, revealing

*

*

A SEA OF CRYPTS AND GRAVESTONES

*

The kobolds protest in unison at the thought of sleeping in a CEMETERY, but Millworthy is undaunted.

*

*

MILLWORTHY

As I said, no one to trouble us.

*

*

INT. SPURNROSE RESIDENCE - IMOGEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Imogen sits at a vanity while Vignette brushes out her hair.

IMOGEN

A Puck - living here on Finistere Crossing. What is this City coming to?

She shudders, rises to her feet -

IMOGEN (CONT'D)

That'll be all for tonight, Vignette. I'll take tea here in my room at seven.

VIGNETTE

Very good, Miss.

INT. SPURNROSE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A CUTLERY DRAWER

sliding open to reveal the gleaming utensils within, their handles engraved with the Spurnrose crest.

A hand reaches in and chooses one. A knife. A sharp one.

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals the hand belongs to Vignette. Who carefully pockets the blade, then quiet as she can, steals up the stairs.

INT. SPURNROSE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Small and sparely furnished. This is where Vignette sleeps.

But not now, not tonight. She enters and starts toward the window, unfurling her wings with each step she takes.

And just like that, she slips out and flies into the night.

EXT. BURGUE STREET - NIGHT

Deserted save for Philo and Portia, getting to know each other better as they take the night air.

PHILO

So how come a pretty girl like you isn't settled down?

PORTIA

Who with? One of them lot back at the pub?

(and then)

Besides, somebody's got to take care of me old dad. What about you?

PHILO

(more by way of deflecting)

Somebody's got to take care of Darius...

PORTIA

That's not it. Someone broke your heart. Or you broke hers.

It's not hard to see from his face that she's dead on.

PORTIA (CONT'D)

A girl can tell these things.

They stop as they reach an intersection. An awkward moment -

PHILO
Would you like to keep walking?

PORTIA
Take me home.

PHILO
Of course.

A tad disappointed, he motions toward the street home -

PORTIA
Not mine. Yours.

That bracing frankness again. He takes her by the waist and pulls her close - and as they kiss, we cut to...

INT. APOTHECARY - NIGHT

The Haruspex alone in her shop. Dozens of candles burn. The carcass of a second sacrificed bird lies dead on the counter.

Vignette's hair has joined the victim's, both now afloat in the bowl of blood.

The Haruspex studies the entwined strands, squinting and muttering to herself as she tries to discern the secrets encoded therein.

Finally a look of understanding blooms across her craggy visage, something is falling into place for her at last...

HARUSPEX
And so it begins...

EXT. BURGUE STREET - NIGHT

*

Longerbane's carriage pulls up in front of his opulent townhouse.

The driver comes around to help he and his wife EMMELINE disembark, both dressed for a night at the opera.

HARUSPEX (V.O.)
The players gather...

*

*

Suddenly a figure emerges from the shadows -

*

LONGERBANE
What this then - ?

The figure raises a hand - the flash of muzzle fire and Longerbane's chest explodes with blood.

Emmeline screams in terror but the gunman has no interest in she or the driver. Who both get a good look at him before he slips back into the night -

IT'S QUILL

The death of his friend at Longerbane's hands now avenged.

INT. MADAME MAB'S BROTHEL - DAY

HARUSPEX (V.O.)
The stage is set...

*
*

Breakspear's son in *fragrante delicto* with Tourmaline...

*

...she hovers above him as he lies on the bed, his back arched, weightless on his manhood - a faerie sex maneuver for which her kind is well-renowned.

A SHORT WHILE LATER

*

A drunken Jonah makes his way down a hallway, from behind closed doors we hear giggles and the sounds of passion...

He loses his balance, almost falls, but is steadied to his feet by ANOTHER CUSTOMER.

JONAH
(slurred)
Where the hell's the bloody
pisser...

The other man leads him through a door into a NARROW STAIRWAY. Jonah follows, swaying on his feet - realizing too late that:

JONAH (CONT'D)
(slurred)
This isn't the pisser...

The next thing he knows the man is jamming a sack over his head and hustling him toward a second man waiting at the bottom of the stairs. And as they spirit the Chancellor's son away -

INT. CEMETARY - NIGHT

*

HARUSPEX (V.O.)
The curtain rises...

*
*

Millworthy and the kobolds have set up camp under the portico *
of one of the grander crypts, where sheltered from the *
elements, the little creatures sleep nestled next to him like *
so many pups. *

He's about to doze off himself when a sound gets his *
attention. Movement from the surrounding dark. *

Brigands possibly. He sits up. Cranes to locate the source. *

Which is when he sees it. A figure. Moving among the *
crypts. Cowed, its features obscured in shadow. Even *
hunched, it stands better than seven feet tall. *

*We recognize it at once from the lithograph the curator *
showed Philo in the museum. **

One of the kobolds coughs in its sleep, the sound causing the *
thing to turn. One glimpse of its skeletal features and *
Millworthy breaks into a cold sweat, so palpable is the sense *
of evil and menace that exude from it. *

For a terrible moment it seems that it's about to discover *
Millworthy and the kobolds, but instead it turns its *
attention back to what it was doing: *

*Digging up a fresh grave. **

As Millworthy watches in abject terror, the thing unearths *
the poor soul buried there - then clutching the body in its *
bony fingers, drags it to a nearby crypt. To feed. *

INT. PHILO'S FLAT - NIGHT

We come in through an open window to find Philo in bed, naked
under the sheets.

HARUSPEX (V.O.)
The Reckoning is at hand...

He stirs, rolls over - opens his eyes to find

VIGNETTE

crouched over him, a KNIFE to his throat, her wings tense and
angry. Surprise gives way to something else - recognition.

PHILO
Vignette...

VIGNETTE
I thought you were dead...

The words hiss from her mouth, the knife trembles in her hand...

Will she kill him or not?

A SUDDEN SOUND FROM SOMEWHERE OFF SCREEN

Vignette whips around to see -

PORTIA

Stepping out of the loo, wearing nothing but Philo's shirt -

HER POV

Back toward the bed - Vignette is gone. Nothing but the flutter of the curtains in the window to indicate anyone was ever there.

She smiles at the sight of Philo sitting up in bed.

PORTIA

You're awake...

OFF PHILO

unsure if what just happened was real or not.

FADE OUT:

END PILOT

*