

TURPIN:THE NOTORIOUS

by Alastair Hagger

A script in four episodes -

Episode 1: Turpin the Butcher

Episode 2: Turpin the Rogue

Episode 3: Turpin the Highwayman

Episode 4: Turpin the Thief

"Many of the specific details I've described are invented. The actual details were more complicated and less dramatic, as actual events always are, so I have taken liberties to make a better narrative. I've told a story in order to make a case for the truth. I recognize the contradiction here."

~ Ted Chiang, *The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling*

"In plain terms, gentlemen - I am everything."

~ Dick Turpin, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, 1738,
from the witness deposition of William Harris

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EPISODE 1: TURPIN THE BUTCHER

*"Send your noble Blood to Market,
and see what it will buy" ~ Gnomologia*

BLACK SCREEN -

TURPIN (V.O.)

It is supposed the world naturally enquires after persons that
have in any manner been rendered either famous...

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

TITLE - YORK, APRIL 10TH 1739

TURPIN (V.O.)

Or infamous.

A grey, pre-dawn darkness; the bobbing light of a carried lamp. Sleet falls on the window pane of a garden shed. A hand wipes away the condensation. Through the misty glass we see a body: a mess of black hair, a torso wrapped in cloth.

The wooden doors of the greenhouse are opened by a man, simply clothed, who raises the lamp and stares into the gloom of the garden shed. He beckons; another man appears in view. They are two TOWNSMEN, kerchiefs across their mouths.

1ST TOWNSMAN

(whispered) So that's him.

They look at each other. The 1st townsman rubs his jaw, sets the lamp down.

1ST TOWNSMAN

Head or feet?

He jimmies the shed's lock, smothering the sound. The 2nd townsman looks around, shivering.

The two men enter the shed and lift and carry out a long board, covered in straw, on which rests the pale corpse. The cloth partly covers the face; we see the unruly black hair. The two men pant and swear under their breath as they manoeuvre the board across the garden and into the street. The 1st townsman looks up as the second suddenly halts.

1ST TOWNSMAN

Keep moving!

The 2nd townsman stares over the 1st townsman's shoulder. The 1st turns to see a CONSTABLE standing in the street behind him, hands on hips, flanked by two assistants with lamps.

1ST TOWNSMAN
'Morning to you sir.

CONSTABLE
Gentlemen. Let's take a breath.

There is a shout from the garden. A tall thin man in a nightgown, a SURGEON, is striding towards them, carrying a bone saw.

SURGEON
Stop! This is my land! And that -

He points to the corpse.

SURGEON
- is my property!

1ST TOWNSMAN
So you're the surgeon. The butcher.

He nods at the saw.

1ST TOWNSMAN
Leave him be. Defile one of your own.

2ND TOWNSMAN
We'll take him now. Put him to rest.

The two men back away with the board. As they move, an arm dangles loose from the cloth.

SURGEON
I paid for that cadaver.

The surgeon steps forward, saw trembling; the townsmen hold their ground.

SURGEON
Listen to me. A criminal like this can be useful in death.
His life will not have been wasted.

He lowers the saw, and approaches the corpse, eyes on the townsmen. He strokes the arm, manoeuvres it carefully back onto the board, and tucks in the cloth.

SURGEON

Constable, you assured me...

1ST TOWNSMAN

(to constable) You are party to this? Then you are as damned.

The townsmen men back away with the board into the street. The constable steps forward to stop them, reaches for the board; the townsmen lurch away with the board into the

STREET

where two more townsmen arrive, out of breath.

3RD TOWNSMAN

Came as fast as we could.

He appraises the scene.

3RD TOWNSMAN

Ah. So we have company.

The surgeon stares from the constable to the townsmen, and back again.

SURGEON

Well???

The constable and his assistants rush the townsmen.

A fight ensues. We watch from above as punches are thrown, clothes are ripped, candles are lit in the surrounding houses, and people start to fill the street.

In the melee, the body rolls from the board into the dirt. The bitter tussle rages around it.

We zoom slowly down to the corpse, and a beautiful tattoo at the base of a thumb, which reads:

R1:8

BLACK SCREEN -

The sound of something hanging, creaking.

EXT. INN GARDEN - DAY

An inn sign, with a crudely painted bluebell below the letters 'THE BLUE BELL', swings in the spring breeze.

TITLE - **HEMPSTEAD, ESSEX, 1715**

Beyond, in a dirt circle surrounded by a ring of trees, a ragged cockerel is tied to a stake by the ankle. It flaps in distress, avoiding a large thrown stick which lands in the dirt. A small group of drinking men, crouched around this rudimentary cockpit, laugh and heckle the error. There is blood in the dust.

A second man takes his turn, slinging the stick hard. There is a squawk of pain, claps of encouragement.

In the boughs of an overhanging tree, a boy watches from behind a branch. His hair is curly and black. A girl's voice calls up to him.

DOLLY (O.S.)
Richard?

The boy, RICHARD TURPIN, stares at the cockerel; its leg is broken, and it spirals in the dust to avoid the next throw.

DOLLY (O.S.)
Richard?

The cockerel collapses, talons clawing the air.

DOLLY (O.S.)
Richard?

Turpin jumps down from the tree. He is hit hard around the head, five times. One. Two. Three. Four. Five.

JOHN
Dick.

He is dragged away from the cockpit by the hair, and then aggressively released, by this burly, red-faced man - his father, JOHN TURPIN. John holds a brace of dead chickens in his free hand.

Turpin walks with John past his pouting younger sister, DOLLY. She holds the hand of their little brother, CHRIS, who carries a toy wooden rooster.

DOLLY
I was calling you.

Turpin follows his father to the garden, where a smart, composed young man, JAMES SMITH, waits on a bench at a wooden table. John roughly sits Turpin down on the facing bench.

JOHN
Kept you waiting, James.

SMITH
It's no bother, Mr Turpin.

Smith looks at the boy, searching his expression.

SMITH
All in good time. Eh Richard?

JOHN
Born to hang, that one.

Turpin looks down, fingers playing with a knot in the wood of the table.

JOHN
But you, James... Your father says you're off to the excise soon?

SMITH
They have yet to realize their error.

JOHN
Nonsense. You've worked hard for the opportunity.

He glowers at Turpin.

JOHN
Be sure to make the most of it.

SMITH
Thank you. Thank you, sir.

JOHN
I've you to thank, James. For reforming this idiot.

He stares at Turpin; Turpin squints back at him.

JOHN
Come to the kitchen later before you leave; a beer on the house. And Dick -

His father hands him the brace of dead chickens.

JOHN
When you're done with your schooling, pluck these and bring them to the kitchen. Properly this time, or you'll be eating the heads.

John stares again at Turpin, and pours out the dregs from a discarded tankard. He nods at Smith, and tramps back towards the inn.

The two boys stare at each other, and burst into laughter. Smith playfully grabs Turpin by the throat.

SMITH

Born to hang! "Little villains must submit to fate..."

Turpin gurgles and rolls his eyes. They separate, settle.

SMITH

Well?

Turpin looks back at him, blank.

SMITH

Your passages.

TURPIN

Oh.

Turpin pulls a tattered piece of paper from a pocket, and smooths it flat on the table. Lines of calligraphy. Smith takes it, smooths it out further, reads.

Turpin looks up to gauge Smith's reaction; he is met with a big, surprised smile.

SMITH

Richard... That's tremendously good. Really it is.
Here - read it to me.

TURPIN

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty..."

I want to ask something.

SMITH

Then ask.

TURPIN

How can you be both the beginning and the end?

SMITH

(laughing) That's a good question, Richard. God is saying "I am everything". All that you see around you.

TURPIN
Even the Blue Bell?

SMITH
Especially the Blue Bell.

TURPIN
Even me?

SMITH
You, I'm not sure about.

Turpin looks back towards the cockpit, and at the brace of chickens next to him on the bench.

TURPIN
Even dead things?

Smith watches him.

SMITH
Let me show you something.

Smith pulls a penknife from his pocket, and rips a feather from one of the chickens. He starts to cut away the filaments as Turpin watches, then begins carving at the base of the quill.

SMITH
This is how a pen is made. Good ones cost a lot of money.
But if you can make them yourself...
Here.

Smith passes him the knife. Turpin carves the quill, following Smith's directions.

SMITH
Good. In your own time.

Smith watches him work, lets him become absorbed.

SMITH
You know Richard... You have choices.
You can decide what to become.
You can shape your life into what you want it to be. Now that
you can write, and write well -

Smith notices a child running towards them across the garden. This is BETH, the Smith family's maid.

SMITH
Beth? What is it?

BETH

(breathless) James, Mr Smith wants you home for supper this evening sir.

SMITH

Wants to have *me* for supper, you mean.
While we chew over my new life as an exciseman.

Smith notices Beth staring over at Turpin, who is engrossed in his quill-carving.

SMITH

Richard? I think someone wants to meet you. This is our maid, Beth Millington.

TURPIN

Like Elizabeth. That's my mother's name.

Turpin looks up at her. She curtsies. He makes a face, sticks out his tongue, and returns to his quill. Beth wrinkles her nose.

SMITH

Richard. That's no way to behave to a lady.

Turpin ignores them.

SMITH

Is it, Beth?

BETH

Rude.

SMITH

Richard, tell your father I've been called home.

Smith begins walking away with Beth, then remembers his penknife. He sees Turpin is lost in concentration in his new world, turns, and continues walking. Beth has a last look.

BETH

Bye Richard!

We watch Turpin as he slices thin strips from the quill. A cheer from the drinking men at the cockpit makes him turn; he winces as his grip slips, and a trickle of blood runs down his thumb. He watches the rivulet of blood work its way down his knuckle, and then licks it off.

He stares at the ruined quill, its filaments jagged, and stabs the penknife hard into the garden table.

CUT TO -

a needle punching through cloth

in the inn's PARLOUR

where a woman - ELIZABETH TURPIN - sits by a dead hearth, darning holes in clothes. She wears a small silver cross at her neck. Dolly watches her intently, and tries to thread a needle. The room is sparse; the simple living quarters of an ordinary family, save for a painting of some bluebells above the hearth.

ELIZABETH

You be careful with that needle now,
Dolly.

Dolly struggles with the threading of the needle; she is distracted by the painting.

ELIZABETH

Always looking at the bluebells.
When the bell of a bluebell rings, it calls all the hidden
people!

Dolly giggles.

ELIZABETH

(whispered) Pixies! But...

Elizabeth leans in close to her.

ELIZABETH

If a person hears the bell, the pixies take them away...

Elizabeth laughs at Dolly's ashen face, pinches her cheek.

ELIZABETH

But those are stories, Dolly. Stories are just stories.

Turpin stands in the garden doorway, the brace of chicken carcasses in his hand.

ELIZABETH

What is it, Richard my love?

TURPIN

I can't.

ELIZABETH

Give them here.

She strokes his face.

ELIZABETH

Been sitting in the sun? My handsome boy.

Elizabeth takes the chickens, and laughs at the unfinished, bedraggled plucking.

ELIZABETH

Watch.

She raises a chicken by its feet, takes a feather in her fingers, and deftly rips downwards, freeing the feather. She plucks three more in quick succession. Turpin stares back at her, morose.

Elizabeth, mood cooling, hands the chickens back to him at his chest.

ELIZABETH

Now go back outside and get it done like your father told you.

Turpin scuffs his way out into the garden. Elizabeth shakes her head and rolls her eyes at Dolly.

We follow Turpin through the

GARDEN

back to his table, now in shade. He stops for a moment, wincing, and touches his throat and perspiring forehead. He wipes his brow, raises the chicken, and rips out a feather with aggression.

CUT TO -

the bar, and eggs frying in a pan. John is busy serving punters.

Chris sweeps the inn floor with a broom too big for him. John bellows into the garden.

JOHN

Dick!

A drinker approaches the bar to pay.

JOHN

Chris? Fetch your brother from the garden.

We follow Chris into the twilight of the

GARDEN

where he approaches the table, stops.

Turpin is slumped over, a half-plucked chicken still in his hand. His eyes are half open, the whites showing; his skin is drenched in sweat.

INT. BEDROOM, BLUE BELL INN - NIGHT

Water is squeezed from a cloth. Turpin and his little brother Chris lie feverish, skin blotchy with small boils. Elizabeth gently mops their foreheads. Turpin thrashes, mumbling, but Chris is still, his breathing laboured and tight. John stands watching from the other side of the room, Dolly clutched to his leg.

Elizabeth sings to the boys, her mouth close to their faces; her fingers caress the cross at her neck.

DOLLY

Are the pixies taking them?

John looks at her and laughs, throat tight, eyes stunned and uncomprehending, Chris' toy rooster gripped in his hand.

EXT. CHURCHYARD - DAY

Dolly places bluebells on two freshly covered graves in the woods at the rear of a churchyard, away from the other gravestones. John hugs Turpin and Dolly to him as muffled church bells ring. Crows caw. Turpin struggles, frees himself from his father's embrace, and walks away, alone, ignoring his father's call to return. We see Turpin's grieving face, marked with scabs.

CUT TO -

INT. BLUE BELL INN

where John takes down the painting of the bluebells and gives it to Dolly. He stares at Elizabeth's empty chair, and places Chris' wooden rooster on the mantel.

We follow Dolly and Turpin into their

BEDROOM

where Turpin takes a mirror off the wall at the head of Dolly's bed.

TURPIN

Why here?

Turpin puts the painting on the wall in the mirror's place. He sits down with the mirror on his bed opposite, and looks over at a third bed in the corner.

Turpin stares at his own reflection; we see his face in the mirror, ravaged with pockmarks. Then we are pulled deeper into Dolly's view of the painted bluebells, vivid and clear, as if real.

DOLLY (O.S.)
So they can come back.

INT. BLUE BELL INN - DAY

A brawny Turpin, now in his teens, sweeps the floor of the bar, sour and reluctant. He stops, fingers the ugly scars on his face.

John mechanically serves his customers; he pours a large measure for himself, and drinks. Dazed, he throws feed to the chickens, which are now wandering freely around the bar.

Dolly, also no longer a child, eyes him while she prepares food.

John calls to his son; then a second time. We don't hear him. He shouts loud enough for the customers to stop and stare.

JOHN
Dick! See me in the back.

Turpin trudges through the bar, meeting the stares of the drinkers with a sneer.

He follows his father to a cold stone

ABATTOIR

where carcasses hang on hooks from a wooden beam. There are knives, boards, white china bowls. Plucked chickens, rabbits, a pig's head. Turpin looks around, eyes dead to it all.

JOHN
In here, dawn, tomorrow. You start your apprenticeship with me.

Turpin looks at the pig's head, at his father, back at the pig's head. He stares. The pig stares back.

John takes out a bottle, two glasses. He pours a large measure of gin for himself, a smaller one for his son. He hands Turpin the glass, raises it. Turpin stares at the liquid in the glass.

JOHN
To the 'prentice.

John downs his gin in one. He waits for Turpin to do the same. Turpin takes a gulp; he grimaces, shudders, but doesn't cough.

Turpin looks around. A set of knives catches his eye. He reaches for one, hesitates.

JOHN
No, go on boy. Take her.

Turpin handles the knife, admires the blade, the handle.

JOHN
No penknife, that. John Nowell. Sheffield. The best knife you can lay your hands on.

Turpin holds the knifepoint close to his eyes, where it shines, reflected.

INT. BUTCHER'S SHOP, THAXTED, ESSEX - DAY

A fly on greying meat.

Blood is washed from muscular forearms into a bucket of water. Turpin, now a heavy-set, pockmarked young man, black hair still unruly, dries his arms on a cloth.

He is alone in this dirty, ramshackle butcher's shop, a honing steel hanging from a belt on his hip. He dips his fingers in a cup of blood, and smears it on the cuts of beef, giving them shine. He wipes his bloody fingers on the cloth. He uncorks a bottle, drinks, stoppers it. He flicks the cloth at the errant fly. He picks up his father's gifted knife and unhooks the honing steel, and begins absent-mindedly sharpening the blade, but without focus.

A smiling young woman in a maid's dress pokes her head through the door. Turpin stops his knife-sharpening. He stares.

Then he smiles broadly, his shoulders relaxing.

TURPIN
We're closed.

BETH
Pity. Was going to ask if you had any rump.

TURPIN
Get over here.

They embrace, kiss. Turpin roughly grabs her backside. Beth smooths her dress, looks out into the road.

BETH
Dick! Your customers!

TURPIN
What customers?

She pulls away from him, takes his face in her hands.

TURPIN
It's not that bad. Your governor's keeping me afloat.
He kisses her, steps back behind the counter, straightens his apron.

TURPIN
Now, Miss Millington. What can I get you for Mr Smith's kitchen?

She looks around, and then at the floor.

BETH
That's what I really come about. Smith has told me to get our meat elsewhere.

She takes a small step back.

BETH
It's only till you turn things round, till you...

TURPIN
Learn the trade?

BETH
It's just...

Beth winces at the meagre, poorly-prepared meats on display.

BETH
He says there's better cuts around. For the money.

Turpin returns to sharpening his knife, eyeing her.

BETH
I'm sorry, Dick.

She moves towards him, but he shrugs her off. He nods at the door.

TURPIN
Go on. We'll talk.

She smiles at him as she leaves. In the doorway, she almost bumps into a hard-featured young man who is standing and watching. He makes room for her to exit, takes his hat off to her, and steps into Turpin's shop.

He is JASPER GREGORY: angular, rakishly dressed, rough around the edges. He plays with the hat in his hand, and then swaggers to the counter, a sack over his shoulder.

JASPER
Hard times?

TURPIN
What's it to you?

JASPER
Nothing to me, sir. Nothing. But could be a lot to you, if you know your business.

Jasper looks over his shoulder, places the sack on the counter, and opens it to reveal a large, bloodstained paper package. Turpin lifts a corner of the paper with his knife.

TURPIN
And what business would that be?

JASPER
(whispered) The King's very best.

TURPIN
Venison?

JASPER
Shhhhh!
(whispered) Red Epping venison. 'Black mutton', to you and me.

He closes the sack, pushes it across the counter to Turpin.

JASPER
Take this one on faith, my friend. Jasper at your service.
Jasper Gregory. Look for me in the Red Lion.
In case of a sudden demand.

He looks around the empty shop.

JASPER

And don't work too hard.

He bows with a flourish, puts on his hat, and leaves. Turpin follows, looks out of the butcher's, left and right, at the

QUIET ESSEX LANE

and steps back into the shop behind the counter. He sharpens his knife, stares at the sack on the counter.

INT. BEAR PIT, WHITECHAPEL - NIGHT

The furious roar of a ferocious brown bear, chained to a stake, under attack by three stocky, snarling bulldogs. One has its teeth clamped on the bear's ear, ripping; the other two snap at its hind legs. The bear howls. In its open jaws we glimpse teeth, filed flat. It is a whirlwind of pain and aggression, sawdust kicked up all around it.

A drunk and unruly crowd is baying at the scene below from wooden benches, tiered in rows. Some are throwing stones or apples at the bear, at the dogs, or at each other. Shouted bets are placed. A beer bottle hits the bear full in the face; it reels and snarls. The human culprit is quickly and aggressively removed.

A vulpine young man in the crowd, JONATHAN WILD, screeches with laughter, eyes shining, and takes a long drink from his flask. There is a young woman either side of him; they fuss over who gets the flask next. The man laughs harder at their squabbling, holds the flask above their grasping hands. One of the women is missing an ear.

Turpin and his father sit in the row behind them. Turpin is transfixed - not by the bear fight, but by this charismatic man and his women. John watches his son watching Wild.

Down in the pit, the bear catches one of the dogs in its jaws; it shakes the animal from side to side and flings it dead into the crowd. People scatter, screams and obscenities are hurled, money is exchanged.

Turpin keeps his eyes on the man in front.

JOHN

They've roused the thing now son. You watch. They'll call back those dogs any minute.

Turpin is not listening. John follows the line of his gaze.

JOHN

Dick. That man in front of you has his sticky fingers in a lot of very rotten pies.

TURPIN

He is living his life, that I grant him. Who is he?

JOHN

His name is Jonathan Wild. One of them lights that burns very bright and very fast. And then there's nothing but smoke.

The dogs in the pit circle the bear, wary now of its power.

JOHN

The 'thief taker'. That's his trick. His boys steal your goods, 'find' them, then hand them back. For a price.

The women on either side of Wild are now pulling at each other's hair as they fight for the flask. One of them sinks her teeth into the hand of the other.

JOHN

And when his enemies won't work for him - he turns them in to be hanged.

In the pit, one of the last two dogs yelps as the bear clamps down hard on its belly.

Turpin stares at Wild.

JOHN

Son, that's not a life. It's just a shortcut to the gallows.

In the pit, two large men have stepped in to rescue the last dog; one of the men pacifies the bear with a thrown hunk of meat.

JOHN

Dick. You've a trade now. An honest trade, a foundation -

TURPIN

'Shortcut to the gallows'? You know what will get me hanged? Fencing the black mutton I have to shift just to delay my eviction.

The crowd is booing, and starting to disperse. John grabs his son's collar.

JOHN

Venison? No. No. That road... it ends in death.
The Black Act says -

Turpin easily pries his father's hands off his collar.

TURPIN

And what would you have me do? Starve? Because that's what us
"wicked and evil-disposed persons" deserve?

The crowd disperses. Turpin and his father follow the flood of
people out onto a

BUSY WHITECHAPEL STREET

full of the drunk, the angry and the euphoric. A house lies in
rubble, collapsed in the street; the adjacent house is propped
up with wooden beams. Children sort through the rubble,
collecting usable bricks. Skinny dogs weave in and out of the
human activity.

One of these hungry dogs nudges Turpin, who shoves it aside with
his knee and walks with solemn determination towards the warm
inner light of the Red Lion inn. All ahead of him move out of
his way. His father struggles to keep up, and slaloms behind him
through the flow.

JOHN

Buckhurst Hill.

TURPIN

What of it.

John follows his son through the door of the inn, into a

LANTERN-LIT TAVERN

full of drinkers. Turpin shouts for gin and two glasses, pushes
himself onto a nearby table, and makes space for himself and his
father - to the consternation and annoyance of the other
drinkers, who snap insults at him, like the dogs circling the
bear. Turpin stares them down; they make more space.

A barmaid heavily sets down the bottle of gin and the glasses.
Turpin leers at her. She rolls her eyes, and saunters away.
Turpin pours two drinks, drains and refills his own. His father
leaves his untouched.

JOHN

An inn. The Stag. Butchery in the back. Cellar.

TURPIN

Why not the Blue Bell?

JOHN

Because there's life in me yet, son. But this will be all yours. A fresh start.

Turpin puts down his drink, and looks long at his father. But then his eyes harden, and focus over his father's shoulder on the corner of the tavern.

His father turns around and sees two men staring back with a predatory magnetism. He looks again at his son, eyes imploring. He's losing him. He stands, pats Turpin to follow.

JOHN

Come on. Finish that. Let's get back to the Bell for supper, have some rabbit, talk this over.

Turpin keeps his gaze locked on the two men.

TURPIN

Rabbit. What does it say in the Act, father?

"...Shall unlawfully rob any warren or place where conies or hares are usually kept..."

John looks at the men, and at his son.

TURPIN

Tomorrow. We'll 'talk it over' tomorrow.

Turpin drains his glass, pours another. John squeezes his shoulder.

JOHN

Tomorrow then.

As John leaves, Jasper walks over to Turpin's table. He sits, drains John's glass of gin, pours another.

TURPIN

Help yourself.

JASPER

So. Shift it quick?

TURPIN

In a day. Had some myself.

JASPER

I bet you did. Big lad like you, healthy appetite. More where that came from.

TURPIN
Is that right.

JASPER
Thing is, the devil needs more idle hands.

TURPIN
You mean more boots and more dogs, making even more noise?
Jasper runs his tongue across his front teeth. Then he smiles.

JASPER
The bigger the knot, the stronger the rope.
Turpin shrugs at him.

JASPER
Knot. Gang?
Jasper leans back in his chair.

JASPER
Oh! Going to have to teach you the cant, aren't we!
The bigger the 'gang', the more we can take. There *is* a demand.
As you're now aware.

TURPIN
Gang? And who's the leader? You?
Turpin looks him up and down, laughs harshly, drinks. Jasper
stares back over into the gloom at the other man in the corner.

TURPIN
You think I'm sitting in Waltham Forest at dawn, freezing my
bollocks off, waiting for the King to come hang me?

JASPER
Little bit more to it than that.

TURPIN
Whatever.
I'll shift your black mutton. Inn at Buckhurst Hill.
Give it a week. We'll make an arrangement.

He stands, gestures at the barmaid with his purse. He looks over
at the man in the corner, then at Jasper.

TURPIN
Regards to your bashful friend.

Turpin removes the gin bottle from Jasper's hand, and wanders

towards the barmaid. In the corner, we see the face in the shadows - a long scar stretches down the right cheek. The eyes are soulless, unblinking; the man's hands tap a short, repeated rhythm on the table.

EXT. INN, BUCKHURST HILL, ESSEX - DAY

A perspiring fiddler plays in the sunshine of a hazy summer day. The Turpin family and friends are gathered around tables in the garden, drinking, eating. A celebration.

Turpin leads Beth by the hand back into the

INN PARLOUR

Where they kiss, hard and happily. They are interrupted by pointing, giggling children. Turpin roars and chases them outside, then returns to his new wife.

BETH

You'll be good with them.

TURPIN

With what? Ours?

Beth taps her tummy. They kiss again. And are interrupted, by a cough. Smith stands embarrassed at the door.

BETH

Time enough for this. Talk to your friend.

Beth passes Smith at the door, curtsies.

SMITH

Congratulations, Beth.

She blushes, re-joins the party outside. Turpin goes behind the bar, brings out two glasses, and pours them both a gin, despite Smith's protests.

SMITH

It's gin, Richard, I just don't -

TURPIN

You'd refuse a man on his wedding day?

Smith laughs, bows, takes a sip, coughs, splutters. Turpin downs his, smacks his lips, pours another.

TURPIN

You're an excise man. Isn't gin your life now?

SMITH

The taxes. Not the consumption.

TURPIN

Ah yes. Taxes.

There are a few moments of awkward silence; they are both men now, not young teacher and pupil.

Smith looks around, impressed; he makes an expansive gesture with his hands. Turpin laughs.

SMITH

"Et domus sua cuique est tutissimum refugium."

TURPIN

Common law. "Each man's home is his safest refuge."

SMITH

You were a good student, Richard.

TURPIN

It's 'Dick' now. I left Richard at the Blue Bell.

Smith shows the palms of his hands in surrender.

SMITH

A man chooses his own reputation.

'Dick Turpin' it is.

Oh... I nearly forgot.

Smith reaches into his pocket and retrieves something. He hands it to Turpin.

SMITH

A wedding present.

Turpin turns it over in his hands - an ivory whistle with a leather strap.

Turpin is lost for words for a moment; then slaps Smith on the shoulder.

SMITH

For luck, for the inn. And in life.

Turpin holds the whistle up to the light - a beautiful, intricate carving of a man rolling a barrel of beer. The face of the ivory

figure grins with the toil of honest work.

SMITH
Here. Let me.

Smith ties the whistle around Turpin's neck. They embrace.

TURPIN
Now. I think it's time we teach you how to drink.

EXT. TYBURN, LONDON - DAY

Faces of gin-crazed mania in a heaving crowd. People pushing, scrambling over each other to glimpse something in the distance. A man tries to sell fruit from a barrow in the chaos; he is helpless to stop the pilfering. There is drinking, groping and aggression; a roiling mass of filth and heightened expectation. A cat is hurled, keening, high over the crowd, to enormous merriment beneath.

We follow a compact, earthy woman with piercing green eyes, MARY BRAZIER, as she adeptly navigates the maelstrom. She is dressed modestly; only her eyes make her difficult to ignore. She keeps her head bowed.

Her fingers are swift and nimble. She rummages quickly in pockets, taking damask and cambric cloths, handkerchiefs, purses, stuffing her gains down the front of her dress. Her appetite is ravenous, indiscriminate, like the net of a fishing vessel. She eyes a woman in the mud, wearing an eye-catching necklace, who is drunkenly attempting to rise to her feet. She crouches close to the sick woman, feigning concern, as she begins searching for the clasp of the necklace at the nape of the woman's neck. We rise up over her and the crowd, and see a

CART, PULLED BY HORSES

where Jonathan Wild sits, hands shackled, drooling, an open Bible on his lap. He stares at the pages. Two other condemned men sit beside him, trembling; the three are pelted with stones. A rock hits Wild flush in the face; his forehead streams blood.

A phalanx of soldiers clears a way forward for the cart. A voice booms over the mocking abuse of the gleeful crowd: a fat, rosy-cheeked CRIER.

CRIER
To all the thieves, whores, pick-pockets...

Mary looks up, as if called. She returns to the fiddly work of

disrobing the drunk woman.

CRIER (O.S.)
...family felons, et-cet-er-a,
in Great Britain and Ireland...

Wild is swaying in the cart, eyes rolled back in his head; he shakes his head and stares, glassy-eyed, around him.

BYSTANDER 1
The mighty Thieftaker General!

BYSTANDER 2
Scum! Thieving scum!

Wild's face is waxy and pale, his eyes bloodshot. The 2nd bystander stoops into the cart to spit at him, covering the Bible with spittle.

BYSTANDER 2
He's taken laudanum!

CRIER
...You are hereby desired to accompany
your worthy friend, ye pious Mr
Jonathan Wild...

Mary is struggling with the clasp; the drunk woman is coming to her senses and weakly batting her hands away.

The cart comes to a standstill in front of the scaffold. Missiles and detritus fly. Nooses are placed around the necks of the three condemned men, and tightened. A chaplain reads something aloud. For a brief moment, Wild registers the hangman; the hangman stares back at him from the gallows.

CRIER
...To ye Triple Tree, where he is to make his last exit!

Wild and the other two men's hands are unshackled.

Mary struggles with the clasp.

The three men in the cart reflexively reach for the rope around their necks.

Wild attempts, without strength, to cling to the man beside him. A horse is whipped, the cart pulls away, and the three men are jerked from the cart with a sickening jolt. The Bible falls into the mud. The men kick the air as they hang.

Mary smiles as she at last frees the necklace; there is a roar of approval from the crowd as they see the three men swing.

Mary turns with her prize, but the now half-naked woman reaches out a hand, and grabs her heel. Mary is stuck. She looks up to see an angry group in front of her - the victims of her pickpocketing. She kicks the woman in the face, retreats into the crowd, and is quickly lost within.

We see Wild swinging, lifeless, as the two other men twitch and writhe in the air.

Turpin watches all this from the periphery. He takes a long drink from a bottle, wipes his mouth, and then lobbs the bottle high and hard into the baying spectacle.

INT. STAG INN, BUCKHURST HILL, ESSEX - DAY

A laughing baby is caught, thrown gently, caught. Turpin holds his daughter up in the air, and smiles a wide-eyed smile. The baby pukes onto his shirt.

Beth rushes over to remove the infant.

BETH

What's he done now, my peach?

She clutches the child from Turpin, whose stammering response is interrupted by delighted cackles from a corner of the room.

JASPER

The effect he has on women!

BETH

You had her too tightly swaddled Richard.
I've shown you how to do this a hundred times.

JASPER

Yes, 'Richard'.

Turpin glares at Jasper; Jasper theatrically stifles laughter with his hand.

BETH

(to Turpin) Thought I told you the likes of him wasn't welcome here? We have a child now.

As Beth leaves, Jasper hands her a child's toy, a small wooden horse.

JASPER
For the new Turpin.

Beth snubs the gift. Jasper tosses it to Turpin, who examines it in his hands, and raises it in gratitude.

Turpin and Jasper walk together out to the

GARDEN

and take a seat on a bench. It's a sticky late summer afternoon. Jasper uncorks a bottle of red wine, swigs, and passes the bottle.

Turpin drinks, is surprised.

TURPIN
Good claret.

JASPER
Bordeaux's best.
I'll have my boys drop off a case for you.
Jeremy's... indisposed.

TURPIN
Jeremy?

JASPER
My brother. One of them.

TURPIN
Christ almighty. There are more of you?

JASPER
Jeremy's the cooper. He'll fix you up. Special price for a friend.

TURPIN
My birthday's in September.

JASPER
Still that bad, eh?

Jasper takes the bottle back, drinks.

JASPER
Offer's still open.

TURPIN
Fool's game. Told you.

Jasper laughs, shakes his head. He looks into the woods beyond, inhales the dusk air, closes his eyes. We are transported to

WALTHAM FOREST - DAWN

The forest at dawn, in washed-out colour, as if prehistoric.

JASPER (V.O.)

You sit there in the trees, waiting, just the mist around you.

A group of men, faces blackened, masked with kerchiefs, and armed with flintlock pistols and rifles, crouch in the grass. One of the men lowers his kerchief to breathe the morning air. It's Jasper.

Another man slaps him hard across the face with a gloved hand. We see the soulless eyes from the Whitechapel tavern. This is SAMUEL GREGORY. Reprimanded, Jasper pulls the kerchief back over his face.

JASPER (V.O.)

Then you see 'im. There in that mist.
Prince of the morning.

The group are still; they have all seen the gigantic stag. Samuel holds up a hand to halt any movement from them.

JASPER (V.O.)

But he hasn't seen us! Oh no. You enjoy those last few seconds my love, that last taste of His Majesty's grass! Savour every green blade!

At the leader's signal, the group rises as one, splitting off, moving slowly and silently to surround the stag, with synchronicity and skill.

JASPER (V.O.)

Those black eyes...
They see everything and nothing...

Samuel raises his rifle. Jasper, across from him on the stag's other flank, raises his.

JASPER (V.O.)

Steady now...

Jasper claps his hands. Turpin doesn't flinch. He takes back the bottle and swigs hard.

JASPER

Where then, Dick? Where do you finish him?

TURPIN
Head.

JASPER
No! Too difficult a shot. Even for me.
And its head is hard, see?

He bangs on his own head for emphasis with his knuckles.

The rifles are perfectly still in the air. There is the purest silence in the mist. The stag suddenly startles, rears, but then with a percussive crack is shot in the chest from two sides.

JASPER
Lungs!

The majestic animal reels, falls, and wheezes its last struggling breaths, panicking black eyes wide open.

The group move quickly to retrieve the animal. There is no talking or celebration. We watch the antlered head fade into the mist as the deer is dragged through the dewy grass.

TURPIN
Poetry.

JASPER
Nothing better.

TURPIN
Except that's not what it's like. Is it?

Jasper frowns at him, smiling.

Now we see the reality - a deer flees towards a large net it hasn't seen, pursued by a rabble of men with their lurchers, greyhounds and mastiffs, which strain at their leashes, whimpering with bloodlust. The dogs are released, and tear after the deer, saliva dripping from their jaws.

The deer becomes trapped in the net; the dogs snap and slash at its hindquarters. The gang struggle to pull off the hungry dogs. Samuel armlocks the deer's head and messily cuts its throat.

Jasper takes the bottle back, drinks.

JASPER
Told you. Lung shot. Perfect lung shot.

TURPIN
God sends meat...

JASPER
(laughing) And the devil sends cooks.

The two sit quietly, enjoying the onset of evening, sharing the bottle.

EXT. CHELMSFORD PRISON COURTYARD, LONDON - DAY

The wet screech of a lashing whip. Mary's green eyes are bright with indignation. We hear a TURNKEY counting off the strokes as she is whipped, facing a wall, alongside a male prisoner, who screams at each lash. Mary just snarls and grimaces in furious outrage. At the rear of the backyard, a group of men, the Court of Governors, watch this grisly spectacle, expressions betraying their hidden enjoyment.

CUT TO -

INT. CHELMSFORD PRISON CELL

In a crowded cell, where men are lounging, or playing dice, two prisoners leer through the bars as the turnkey leads a limping Mary to the cell opposite. They are the portly, middle-aged JOSEPH ROSE and the smallest and wiriest of the Gregory brothers, JEREMY GREGORY. Mary glowers back, defiant, sucking her front teeth.

TURNKEY
Hope this won't spoil the view.

The turnkey unlocks the cell, pushes Mary inside, and locks the grate behind her. She stumbles, recovers, and spits through the grate at the turnkey, to riotous laughter from the two men opposite. Mary makes an obscene gesture to all of them. Other women in the cell back away. Mary retreats to a corner, lifts her bloody dress, and pisses loudly into a pot, eyes on Rose and Jeremy.

The two men guffaw with disgust.

JEREMY
Changed my mind, Rose. She's all yours.

ROSE
She'll scrub up alright.
Give us a smile, my purest-pure!

Rose is spattered with thrown piss.

There are moans of disgust from further back in the cell. Mary stands at her cell bars with the half-empty pot in her hand, maniacally beaming. Jeremy, outraged, shakes urine off his clothes. Rose wipes his face, laughing.

JEREMY

This one is brimstone.

Mary retreats again back to the corner of her cell, registers some female murmurs of approval from her cellmates. She turns around, and lowers her dress half way, revealing livid, bloody whip marks. The men whistle with admiration. She pours the remainder of the contents of the pot over her shoulder onto the wounds, carefully pulls her dress back up, then turns to the wall to sleep.

JEREMY

What you in for, brimstone?

ROSE

Didn't your brother tell you never to ask that?

JEREMY

A lovely spring flower like you? Whoring. It's always whoring.

Mary turns from the wall, gasping at the pain of the sudden movement.

MARY

This whore will be out before you two.
Strange, though. Never saw you lovebirds at the bawdy-house.
Must have had your faces on. A bit of auxiliary beauty.

Jeremy frowns. Rose claps.

ROSE

Joseph Rose. My lovely virgin bride here is Jeremy Gregory.

JEREMY

What?

MARY

You've done well at your age. She's fresh as a spring turnip.

Jeremy looks from one to the other, completely lost, but insulted nonetheless.

ROSE

And about as bright. But you can't have everything, can you?
"Though love is blind, yet 'tis not for want of
eyes."

Rose squeezes Jeremy's face and kisses his cheek. Mary smiles.

JEREMY

Wouldn't think it so funny if you knew why we was in here.

MARY

You're a Gregory. You kill deer.
Someone 'peached you for the forty pounds.

She tuts.

MARY

Can't trust no-one these days.

ROSE

Well this is cosy. You are?

MARY

Brazier.

She assesses him. Something about Rose reassures her.

MARY

Mary Brazier.

ROSE

Mary Brazier the fence? Well well.

Jeremy strums the cell bars.

JEREMY

Not a very good one.

MARY

No thieves without receivers.

ROSE

Dangerous business.

Rose raises a hand, revealing a branded 'T' near the thumb.

MARY

You could say that.

Mary does the same. There is a long stare of recognition between them.

She rearranges her body against the wall, trying to find a position free from the agony of the lashes on her back.

MARY

Chaos, ever since Wild. But I'm not like Wild. I work for myself.

ROSE

Perhaps you just need to be an equal partner.

He pats his ample belly.

ROSE

Expand your operation.

MARY

Got unlucky this time. That's all it was. Overfilled my pockets.

Rose licks his lips.

ROSE

I like a girl with a bit of ambition.

INT. ABBATOIR, STAG INN, BUCKHURST HILL, ESSEX - DAY

A knife glides through fat and tendons. The fat cleaves and separates.

JOHN

See? Use the table for leverage. The tendons are tough.

The hunk of meat separates cleanly. John holds it up with one hand.

JOHN

There. One beef shank. Not difficult.

He slides the remainder of the carcass across the table.

JOHN

Now do the topside. Show me.

Turpin takes his knife and starts hacking at the tough fat on the carcass.

JOHN

Find the cap, peel it away. Like I taught you. Have you even been sharpening your knives?

Turpin labours, struggling.

JOHN

Just flick the blade. Look for the seams. God help us, give it here -

Turpin slams his knife hard into the carcass and kicks a stool across the abattoir.

JOHN

These are the skills, Dick. You learn, you practise, you actually sell some fucking meat.

TURPIN

And I fucking told you. They don't show up for fucking shanks and topsides.

JOHN

Not when the cuts look like yours.

Turpin jabs the knife towards him.

TURPIN

Makes no difference! Those London jobbers control it all now anyway. Everything. They blindside us.

Beth and the child appear in the doorway, drawn by the shouting.

TURPIN

Not now Beth. Leave us!

The child starts to cry; Beth leads her away, comforting her.

JOHN

Then sit the farmers down at your bar and get them drunk and don't let them leave until they've shaken your hand.

TURPIN

What's the point? When I can make ten times the money on a leg of venison? Daintily prepared or not?

JOHN

The point, Dick, is not getting hanged.

TURPIN

We keep it quiet.

JOHN

We? There is no 'we' with those men.
One goes down, he rats out the rest of you.

TURPIN
I'll take my chances.

JOHN
Not with my money. Enough.

Turpin rips his knife back out of the carcass.

TURPIN
Then do whatever you need to do.

JOHN
Dick...

Turpin's knife lands in a bucket with a clatter as he walks away.
John sighs, runs his fingers over the carcass.

TURPIN (O.S.)
And you can shove your shanks and topsides up your arse.

EXT. COUNTRY FAIR, ESSEX - DUSK

An enormous bull lows with power at a heliotrope sky of emerging stars.

JASPER (O.S.)
That, Mr Turpin, is a 'bene mower'.

We zoom out to take in a teeming, lamp-lit spring fair, of paddocks, stalls, games, music, and a jovial, strolling crowd. Jasper, debonair in a modish coat and hat, points with his cane from animal to animal.

JASPER
'Grunting-cheat.'

TURPIN
A pig is a 'grunting-cheat'? You're taking the piss.

A goose waddles past. Jasper traces its course through the stalls with his cane.

JASPER
There goes the 'tib of the buttery'.

Turpin sprays drink in mid-swig.

TURPIN
The what?

Walking with them through the busy frivolity is a tall, pallid man in a white wig: HERBERT HAINES.

HAINES

A woman of loose morals.

JASPER

Who tells you she'll lie with you on Saint Tibb's eve.

HAINES

The evening of the day of judgement.

TURPIN

Which never comes.

Jasper tips his hat to him.

JASPER

Haines knows a bit about women with loose morals. Don't you Haines?

HAINES

Falsehoods, Dick. 'Clankers.'

Jasper, your own day of judgement now accelerates toward you.

JASPER

Married women. He's what we call a 'mutton monger'.

HAINES

I prefer 'Son of Venus'.

Two smart, heavily made-up young women pass, smiling demurely.

JASPER

Or 'Father Stone-dead'. Whiter than the lead wash on their faces.

They pass a PAMPHLETEER, reading at volume to a small but rapt audience.

PAMPHLETEER

"...Such is the present state of the moral world among us..."

The pamphleteer gestures at the surrounding fair.

PAMPHLETEER

"That nothing but a zealous reformation of manners can prevent our ruin, and divert the impending judgments of God from falling upon us..."

Haines takes Jasper by the shoulder and shoves him towards the audience.

HAINES

Take heed, Jasper! Take heed!

Laughing, Jasper slashes at Haines with his cane, as if wielding a sword. Haines re-adjusts his own wig.

HAINES

Not a wig-wearer, Dick?

TURPIN

Got hair of my own.

Jasper puts an arm round him.

JASPER

No no. This won't do. Haines here is a periwig maker.

HAINES

And barber. Leave it to me.

A larger crowd is gathered around a vivid puppet show, and the men stop to watch. Puppets of PUNCH and a HANGMAN squabble in a painted booth, as a drummer and violinist standing at either side provide stabs of musical drama.

The hangman puppet angrily places a scaffold down in front of Punch, who slides backwards in alarm to the rising sound of the violin. The audience laughs.

HANGMAN

By the British and foreign laws of this and other countries... You are to be hanged by the neck 'til you are dead, dead, dead!

PUNCH

What, am I to die three times?

The puppets scuffle, the audience laughs again.

JASPER

Fair warning, gentlemen. Pies?

Jasper approaches a pie stall.

PIEMAN

Mutton or beef?

JASPER

(winking at Haines) Mutton!

Haines and Turpin purchase beers at an adjacent stall.

As he takes out his purse to pay, Jasper is elbowed out of the way by an imposing BRUTE.

BRUTE
Beef.

Jasper pushes the tip of his cane at the brute's nose, forcing it upwards like a pig's.

JASPER
Back in your sty, grunting-cheat.

The brute snatches the cane, breaks it in half, and lunges at Jasper. He is blocked by Turpin, who sweeps his legs, forces him to the ground, and brings his butcher's knife to his throat.

TURPIN
Just take this one as a loss.

The brute nods a surrender. Turpin releases him. As the brute dusts himself down and begins to walk away, Turpin grabs his collar.

TURPIN
Forget to settle your accounts?
(to the pieman) Three mutton, three beef.

Turpin kicks the brute towards the pieman. Jasper and Haines hand Turpin his beer, and raise theirs.

JASPER
Seems our butcher can handle his merchandise, Haines.

CUT TO -

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

The glistening whites and blues and pinks of warm viscera; they spill from the open cavity of a deer hanging from a tree. They are pulled into a bucket by Samuel and a rangy, black-haired man - FIELDER. Their dog snuffles and whimpers in expectation.

The dog abruptly swivels, snarls at something behind them, and is shot at close range. Samuel and Fielder turn, bloody arms raised. They are outnumbered and surrounded, guns aimed at their heads, by a furious WILLIAM MASON - the forest keeper - and his men.

Fielder and Samuel share a glance; something is understood.

Fielder bolts into the trees. The men fire, but his silhouette is quickly lost in the mist.

MASON
Let him go.

Mason aims his rifle at Samuel's head.

MASON
This is the one we want.

INT. BARBER'S SHOP, SHOREDITCH, LONDON - DAY

Turpin reflected in a large mirror, as if a painted portrait. Behind him, Haines finishes cutting Turpin's hair. Turpin runs his hands over his newly-cropped scalp; they laugh together.

Haines makes an extravagant reveal of Turpin's new, light-coloured wig. He places it ceremoniously on Turpin's head, adjusts it. He then covers Turpin's face with a cloth, and puffs powder onto the wig. He removes the cloth.

Turpin leans towards the mirror for a better look. He smiles wide.

EXT. BUTCHER'S SHOP, THAXTED, ESSEX - DAY

A rudimentary illustration of a boxer, fist raised, above a newspaper advertisement which reads:

THE GENTLEMAN'S ART OF BOXING
EVERY NIGHT - THE FIERCEST AND BRAVEST OF FIGHTERS
AT THE CELEBRATED
FIGG'S AMPHITHEATRE, MARYLEBONE

Turpin stands outside his shop, drinking. He raises his head from his newspaper at a screeching sound coming closer. A KNIFE GRINDER pushes his cart towards him, holding a knife to a turning bobbin in the cart. A stray dog whimpers at the sound, and cowers off.

KNIFE GRINDER
Knives or scissors to grind?

Turpin waves him away. The knife grinder approaches, cautious.

KNIFE GRINDER
(whispered) Any black mutton?

TURPIN

In short supply.

But come inside, have a look at these cuts of -

The knife grinder has already turned away and begun pushing his noisy cart down the lane.

A woman with a basket passes; Turpin steps to the side of the shop doorway and beckons her inside. She scowls at the shop, and at him, and hurries on her way.

Turpin takes a drink. He looks at the newspaper advertisement. He looks at his scrawny horse, hitched at the side of his shop. He looks at the shop.

TURPIN

Fuck this.

He pockets the newspaper, and finishes his bottle, tosses it. He unhitches his horse, mounts, and drives it hard into a gallop through the village, causing the woman with the basket to leap, shrieking, to avoid him.

INT. AMPHITHEATRE, MARYLEBONE - DUSK

A bloody tooth is spat into sawdust. The boxer shakes his head, and rises from his knees to again face his assailant; they circle each other on a raised stage surrounded by a riotous crowd. The wounded boxer, taller and bulkier, has a red ribbon tied around a giant bicep; his wirier opponent has the same in blue.

Turpin squeezes his way closer to the stage, a bottle in hand. A muscular man with a pugilist's face, JACKIE, makes space for him. Turpin raises his bottle in thanks.

JACKIE

That's my brother. Blue ribbon. Randolph. 'The Licker.'

Turpin pushes his own nose to the side with his thumb.

TURPIN

I can see the resemblance.

JACKIE

The hazards of gainful employment, my friend.

He offers a hand.

JACKIE
Jackie.

TURPIN
Turpin. 'The Licker'?

Randolph lands a rapid volley of sharp punches around his opponent's eyebrows, which open up bleeding lacerations. The crowd brays with satisfaction.

JACKIE
There. Death by a thousand cuts. Watch.

The opponent staggers backwards, blood streaming into his eyes.

JACKIE
Hoodwinked!

Randolph raises his fist high and opens it to reveal a coin to the crowd, to huge cheers; he closes it tight again, and advances.

JACKIE
Each fighter holds a half-crown. First to drop his, loses.

We focus on Turpin's face as he follows the fight; the boxers are indistinct streaks of light and shadow in his pupils.

JACKIE (O.S.)
Wallop. See that? Right under the ear, below the jaw...

The crowd gasps.

JACKIE (O.S.)
The blood at his nose? Randy shocked his heart, reversed the river...

The defeated boxer collapses in front of them, like a massive felled tree. There is a crescendo of noise.

JACKIE
And goodnight.

The boxer's hand lolls open at the edge of the stage; the half-crown rolls away from him, where Turpin catches it, and holds it up for the crowd to see. A thunderclap of cheers and applause.

JACKIE
Ill-gotten gains!

TURPIN
Then let's spend it...

CUT TO -

EXT. AMPHITHEATRE

where a very drunk Turpin, Jackie and Randolph sing loud, joyfully and hoarse, punctuating the words with pantomime:

ALL

"I'm first on the wrong-side, and then on the right,
Today I'm a Jack, and tomorrow a Mite,
I for either king pray, but for neither dare fight,
Which nobody can deny, deny, which nobody can deny..."

They stagger away from the amphitheatre, past the prostitutes and musicians and the flotsam of the night. They swig from bottles, arms round each other for support, and lurch into the early dawn light of the fields beyond.

EXT. STAG INN, BUCKHURST HILL, ESSEX - DAY

A furiously buzzing wasp destroys a writhing crane fly, mandibles snapping it into pieces as it methodically and efficiently finishes its murder.

Turpin watches this, crouched near the bush, with unsteady focus, a tankard in his hand. He is bloated, sunburned, with a look on his face of hostile boredom.

There is an air of defeat and decay in the still, late summer air. There is no sign of Beth or the child. Turpin sits down on the garden bench. The wasp circles his head, buzzes his face, and settles on the bench. He ignores it, motionless. Then he takes a huge vertical swing with the tankard, crushing the wasp against the bench with a clang. He looks in the empty tankard, tosses it. He stares at the treeline with fermenting, red-eyed despair.

A horse's neigh breaks the silence. Smith, on horseback, leads a second horse, a grey mare, into the inn garden.

SMITH
Dick?

Smith dismounts. He quiets the mare, pats her, leads her in front of Turpin's bench. Turpin is unmoved by the creature's dappled coat; the horse is unsettled by him, turns, shakes its head.

SMITH
Woah there.

Turpin's tongue is dry in his mouth.

TURPIN
Is it Sunday?

Smith attends to the horse, but takes in Turpin's dishevelment.

SMITH
Unless I'm mistaken.

Turpin puts his head in his hands.

SMITH
You remember, you said you were in need of a better horse?
She's skittish, a bit wilful...
But I thought you'd be just the man to -

Turpin runs his fingers through his hair.

SMITH
Of course, I wouldn't hear of taking any payment until you'd
spent some time with her... made sure she was worthy?

Turpin stands, gruff. He looks the horse over.

TURPIN
She'll need to be worked a while. I can take her off your
hands. Make sure she gets a good run-out.

Smith plays along, nods. He looks over at the inn, at its hollow
silence. The toy wooden horse lies in the grass.

TURPIN
They're at the Bell.

SMITH
Of course. A blessed hour or two of peace for you on a Sunday.

Moments of quiet as they watch the mare, which has calmed.

Turpin sits back down, in the middle of the bench, leaving no
room for a companion.

Smith thinks of something to say, but then thinks better of
saying it. Their friendship hangs in the air, arbitrarily
lifeless. Smith offers his hand; they shake, but Turpin remains
seated. Smith pats the horse, mounts his own, and canters away.

He turns back to look at Turpin, who is staring ahead, the
horse's hitching rope held lightly in his hand.

INT. COURT, CHELMSFORD PRISON - DAY

A rowdy, hot, sweaty summer assizes court session. A stern and overheated JUSTICE flicks through his ledger, and consults a CLERK, who takes notes.

Standing in the dock are Jeremy and Rose, who mimic the serious chatter and chin scratching of the prosecutors before them.

The turnkey gives them both a remonstrative shove in the back. They straighten, feigning sincerity, like two naughty schoolboys.

The justice looks around, peers over his glasses at the men in front of him, consults again with the clerk.

JUSTICE

The indictment is that Jeremiah Gregory and Joseph Rose did shoot at a keeper of Waltham Forest, Henry Deakins, now deceased, a victim of said injury. Mr Gregory, Mr Rose... While your sentence for deer-stealing has now been served, you are faced with the more serious charge of murder, for which the sentence, if you are found guilty, dependent on the statement of two witnesses who -

The clerk shakes his head.

JUSTICE

Who we still wait upon in this court, but whose appearance is expected, will be death.

The justice scans the courtroom.

JUSTICE

(booming) Would our two
aforementioned witnesses, Mr Rogers...

CUT TO -

INT. CELLAR

The gagged mouth and terrified eyes of a naked man, ROGERS, who is tied to a chair. One eye is puffy and bruised. Jasper is holding the point of a stiletto knife to the corner of the man's other eye, which weeps.

JUSTICE (V.O.)
and Mr Hyde...

We see HYDE in a similar state, tied to a chair next to him. The two men stare at each other, moaning through their gags. Watching

in the lamplight around the cellar are Mary, who is perusing items of the men's clothing; Haines, who sighs at its questionable quality; Fielder, who stares, head cocked, unmoving; and Turpin, who leans against the wall, arms folded. Jasper inserts the tip of a butcher's knife into Hyde's ear. There are muffled screams.

JUSTICE (V.O.)
...make themselves immediately known
to the court?

We return to the

COURTROOM

where the justice looks at his watch, and at the rabble of prisoners behind Jasper and Rose still waiting to be processed. He then frowns at the clerk, who shrugs and holds up his hands.

Rose and Jeremy grin at each other.

TURNKEY
In good time. We'll be watching your faces when they pull the
cart away.

The two mime distress, pawing at each other like Wild in his last moments.

TURNKEY
(whispered) And they've got your
Samuel.

This hits as fresh news, and the pantomime ceases immediately.

TURNKEY
Oh! No-one thought to tell you?
Caught with his hands in a hind's insides.
Red-handed, you could say!

Jeremy simmers.

TURNKEY
Building the pillory now in Epping. For two days hence.
Make an example of him before he hangs.

Jeremy opens his mouth to speak, but Rose shakes his head.

ROSE
Not now. Think.

The turnkey's eyes shine with triumph.

CUT TO -

EXT. CHELMSFORD PRISON - DAY

Rose and Jeremy walk free as a heavy gate closes behind them. They are angry, not elated.

JEREMY

Two days. Need to get the boys together.

ROSE

And Mary?

JEREMY

She'll have reached Jasper by now.

We return to

the CELLAR

where Mary holds up a blue-grey coat.

MARY

Oooh. Yes. This is rum rigging. Got Dick's name on it, no?

She presents the coat to Haines for comment.

JEREMY (V.O.)

But we'll need more muscle.

Turpin steps from the shadows. Jasper tosses him his knife. He crouches in front of Rogers.

We see Turpin's face in close up as he stares at Rogers. He taps the blade against his own lips.

TURPIN

Not a word about us. To anyone. Do you understand?

CUT TO -

EXT. STAG INN

The inn stands empty, as if abandoned. We hear distant screams from the cellar below.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE, EPPING VILLAGE, ESSEX - DAY

Grey and black clouds billow in darkening skies, like ink in water. Despite the drizzle, an eager crowd gathers.

On the periphery of the market square several soldiers circulate, idly fingering the straps of their muskets, casually sampling food from the covered market tables. Their presence feels incongruous, until we pan through the market to the source of an obscene chorus of laughter.

Horse dung hits the face of Samuel, who is locked in a pillory. He spits it away, unperturbed. He stares at the two laughing dung-flingers opposite, who drunkenly take turns scooping the dung from a bucket. A growing crowd around them eggs the two men on. One, emboldened, smears his handful down Sam's face, patting his lips.

A soldier standing behind the rabble smiles in approval, jokes with another soldier.

Sam spits the excrement from his mouth and narrows his eyes, scanning the periphery of the crowd.

People bring the two dung-flingers other potential missiles - rotten fruit, fish carcasses, rocks. The dung-flingers consider these options.

We hear a female scream, somewhere off in a corner of the market. The two soldiers jog off, reluctantly, to investigate.

The other soldiers dotted around the market begin milling around in search of this phantom threat.

Somewhere, a shot is fired. The nearest soldier runs towards the smoke. The two soldiers chasing the scream stop in their tracks, torn between which sound to prioritize. There is another female scream, which makes up their minds - they run to its source.

We follow a soldier chasing the source of the gunshot, who finds only pistol smoke. He looks around, anxious.

Back at the

PILLORY

there is a ripple of confusion in the crowd, but reassured by the movement of the soldiers they return to the work of tormenting Sam.

The rain falls harder now; the air chills.

A market table is overturned; there is shouting. Another soldier, on his way to the pillory, turns back towards this new outcry.

The dung-flingers stand and make a show of weighing the rocks in their hands, estimating their range. The squall builds.

A braying, wide-eyed grey mare rears up in front of them, blocking their view.

At the back of the pillory, tools work at the bolts, in the hands of Rose and Jeremy.

SAMUEL

Will you get a fucking move on and have me out of these nut-crackers.

He eyes one of the dung-flingers, who backs away.

JEREMY

Patience brother. And you're welcome.

The mob scatters from the thrashing hooves of the grey mare. Its rider steadies his mount: it is Turpin, in a pale wig and blue-grey coat, collar turned up against the rain. We see the ivory whistle at his neck. He stares down an approaching soldier, who aims his musket.

He is knocked off his aim by one of the fleeing dung-flingers, who slips and empties the bucket all over the soldier's red coat.

At the

REAR OF THE MARKET

the soldier investigating the overturned table peers down over its edge, and is booted in the chest by Jasper. He stumbles backwards straight into Fielder - who turns him around and head-butts him in the face.

There is another gunshot, and a soldier races past to the puff of pistol smoke. Haines retreats with his smoking pistol, behind a cart. The soldier follows.

Through the cart, under its cover, Haines raises his second pistol at the soldier's head.

In the

STREET

at the back of the market square, two soldiers discover Mary, bedraggled, shoeless, screaming and laughing. They are exasperated by this time-wasting distraction.

A horn blows. The crowd begins dispersing. The soldiers run back to the

PILLORY

where the dung-flingers hang, each locked by a foot in one of the armholes. Their heads and faces are bloody, and covered in dung.

The soldiers see a grey horse galloping away, two men on its back. One aims his musket - which misfires in the rain. The soldiers look at each other, hapless and humiliated.

In a

SIDE STREET

Mary puts on her boots and runs to meet the waiting Rose; they kiss. They are joined by Fielder, Jasper and Jeremy; then Haines, wearing a soldier's red coat. They mount horses, high with their triumph.

INT. STAG INN, BUCKHURST HILL - NIGHT

Through a window pane we see the rain pouring outside, distorted in the darkness.

In the bar, near the warmth of the fire, Turpin passes out drinks: to the Gregory brothers; to Rose and Mary, who cling together; to Haines and Fielder. Samuel, naked from the waist up, tattoo across his chest, raises a hand, shushes the group.

SAMUEL

Never in doubt.

Everyone takes long drains of their tankards, refills each other's from jugs. Samuel nods at Turpin. Turpin nods back, gestures at Samuel's chest with his tankard.

TURPIN

Quite a story you have there.

Samuel opens his arms to reveal the full tattoo; a man with a drawn sword in one hand, a pistol firing in the other, and the legend "God damn you, stand!" adjacent to the figure's mouth.

TURPIN

A highwayman. Change of career?

SAMUEL

Ha! Not yet. From fame to infamy is a beaten road.

JASPER

But we are ready to diversify.

Samuel taps his own chest.

SAMUEL

India ink. This bit anyway. And gunpowder.
I'll show you how one day. If you can suffer the pain.

TURPIN

Suffering for a friend doubles the friendship.

Samuel turns open-armed to the rest of the room, impressed with this humility. He then raises a hand, as if to make some announcement of great import. The room quietens.

SAMUEL

Since the knot is all here, we should make it official.

He offers his hand. Turpin meets it with his own in a strong embrace.

SAMUEL

Welcome to the Gregory Gang...
(whispered) Dick Turpin.

There is delighted uproar.

EPISODE 2: TURPIN THE ROGUE

*"If you save a Rogue from the Gallows,
he will rob you that same Night" ~ Gnomologia*

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A line of trees, grey in the night like iron bars. A horse's breath in the cold autumn air; a chewed bit. Several more horses emerge from the treeline, their breathy snorts the only sound.

TITLE - WOODFORD, ESSEX, 1734

We tilt up from the horses' bodies to the silhouettes of their riders.

A close up of the kerchief-masked face of Sam, eyes focused on something on the horizon. He beckons the others forward. They dismount, and track quietly towards a

COTTAGE

glowing with candlelight from within. They circle the perimeter.

Inside the cottage is a

WORKSHOP

- a simple room with no obvious signs of affluence. There is a vat of gently bubbling fat. An old couple, MR & MRS SPLIT, and a younger woman, their daughter ALICE, are making candles; the women tie string to sticks, which are passed to the old man, Split, who bobs the sticks in the fat and then lays them on a rack to dry. It is calm, careful work; they seem content in their shared silence, which is broken by a thumping at the door.

Split holds a palm up for the women to stay where they are.

SPLIT

Probably that rabble from The Loggerheads. Told them last week we didn't want their custom here past sunset.

MRS SPLIT

Then why do we sell brandy? We're candle makers.

SPLIT

Probably just run out again.

MRS SPLIT
Of brandy?

SPLIT
Of candles!

He closes the workshop door behind him, walks through the parlour and opens the door to Sam, who stands silent and staring. Split's bluster evaporates.

SPLIT
I've told the landlord that if he wants more candles he should buy for the month, rather than bothering -

Sam pulls down his mask, smiles. Split gawks at his scar.

SAMUEL
Brandy.

SPLIT
But we're...

SAMUEL
Not candles. Brandy. Heard you have brandy.

Samuel takes off his hat, dusts it, looks around, puts it back on again.

SAMUEL
Well? Thirsty. Half pint of brandy.

Split steals a look towards the workshop in the back, a glance Samuel catches.

Panicking, Split starts fussing with a glass and a stoppered jug from a cupboard. Samuel leans over the glass while Split shakily pours, as if examining for proper technique.

SAMUEL
Very good sir!

He claps Split too hard on the shoulder; Split winces. Samuel toasts him, downs the brandy, smacks his lips.

SPLIT
Come back tomorrow, it's late... Have this one on me. If you want candles in the morning, I -

SAMUEL
Candles, he says. Candles, candles, candles.

Samuel looks again towards the closed workshop door, sniffs the air. Split is now distressed.

SAMUEL

That stench. Is that you? Or is that mutton?

He makes a show of following his nose to the closed door, takes down a lit candle from a sconce on the wall, examines it.

SAMUEL

Ah. Mutton tallow. Exceptional quality, those candles. Not a splutter, not a murmur...

He kicks open the workshop door. Mrs Split and Alice cower in the corner. He swings a foot at the pot of fat, deliberately missing. The women scream and run past him. Samuel wolf whistles, and the women stop and cover their ears. The rest of the gang, masked, spill into the cottage like rats, save Haines, who stands guard outside. Jasper sends a questioning stare at Sam's kerchief, which is below his chin; Sam sneers back with a shrug.

Samuel pushes Split backwards to Turpin, who brings his knife point to Split's temple.

SAMUEL

Six more glasses.

HAINES (O.S.)

Seven!

SAMUEL

You heard him.

Split stutters; Samuel roughly grabs his face, squeezing his jaws.

SAMUEL

Serve us our brandy.

Turpin releases Split.

As Split, trembling, prepares the drinks, Mary, Jeremy, Jasper and Rose roots through the family's possessions. Fielder stirs the vat of tallow, while Jeremy watches, hypnotised. Samuel looks around.

SAMUEL

You made your fortune from candles?

Jasper laughs at this.

SAMUEL

My, my, brother. It appears we are in the wrong business.

Samuel stares at Alice.

SAMUEL

But why keep your most prized possession hidden away like that?

Split freezes. Turpin, impatient, snatches the jug of brandy from Split, lowers his kerchief, and takes a long swig, eyes on the women. He does not cough. He finishes pouring the drinks, passes them out.

Mary declines hers; she moves busily, organizing, directing the sorting of the plunder on the floor. Rose savours his, grimacing at its warming strength, before bringing to Mary some items of little obvious worth; Mary shoves them back at him, exasperated. Jasper laughs. Mary glares at him, increasingly irritated.

MARY

Make yourself useful.

Jasper gives Rose a sympathetic wink. He finds a sack of grain and rips open the threads, spilling the contents at the feet of the women. He begins filling the sack with Mary's choices: modest plate, cutlery, a little money, a set of linen head cloths. Alice sees the cloths and jumps to her feet.

Samuel looks her up and down, assessing her. He strokes her hair.

ALICE

Please. I made them myself. They are all I own. Please.

Samuel is baffled by this, amused. He takes the head cloths from the sack and shoves them down inside Alice's smock. She is weeping, but does not back down. Samuel juts his face close to hers.

SAMUEL

Platter-faced jade.

She stares back.

SAMUEL

(to the room) Right, my knot! Time to take rattle!

Turpin shoves Split over to his family as the others file past Haines, waiting

OUTSIDE

JASPER

(to Haines) Mutton. In the candles.

HAINES

Where's my drink?

while

INSIDE

Samuel approaches Split.

SAMUEL

Sleep on this. We'll be watching the cottage.

Samuel grabs a bundle of candles from a shelf.

SAMUEL

A memento of our lovely time together.

Samuel exits. Turpin follows him, spearing the handle of the brandy jug with his knife as he backs away from the family. He mocks them with a sad face.

Split comforts his family, his face filled with angry resolve.

In the

WOODS

the gang stash their bounty on their horses and ride away, whooping, exhilarated, to the

LOGGERHEADS INN

which sits isolated, on a dark hill, like a glowing ember on black ash. They dismount, hitch their horses. They are drunk with success, except for an exasperated Mary, who robustly bats away Rose's affections. We follow them into the

BAR

where they requisition quieter tables at the back. Sam catches the landlord's eye.

SAM
Beer. Bread.

Turpin looks around, pulls Samuel to one side.

TURPIN
Sure about this?

SAMUEL
Relax. The candle man sleeps tonight.

The gang sit, providing a screen for Mary. She sorts through their takings, but with little enthusiasm.

MARY
Dead cargo, Tom.

She is next to a short, slight, red-faced man, whose ugly skin almost rivals Turpin's. This is TOM ROWDEN. Mary passes anything metallic of value to him for inspection.

Turpin turns outwards from the circle, scanning the room. He notices a skinny teenage boy eyeing them from the corner: JAKE WHEELER. Turpin stares hard; Wheeler looks away, but does not leave. He looks over again. Turpin approaches him.

The landlord brings bread and drinks. The group begins its quiet refuelling as Mary and Rowden mentally price their haul of goods from the Split house.

ROWDEN
Not much bacon. Ha! This won't fadge. Or that.

Rowden looks at something from the sack, a cheap trinket, shows it to Mary. They both laugh.

Samuel scowls in annoyance that the gang's efforts have yielded so little.

He looks over at Turpin and Wheeler. Turpin beckons him with a tilt of the head. Samuel pulls up a stool, hands Turpin a tankard, bread.

SAMUEL
Who's the chittiface?

Wheeler stares at Samuel's scar, awestruck.

TURPIN
(to Wheeler) Manners.

WHEELER

Jake Wheeler sir. I'm local.

Samuel looks him over, at his poverty, at his grubby face, at his split and tattered shoes.

SAMUEL

So?

WHEELER

I know people.

SAMUEL

Oh do you now? The kinchin 'knows people', Dick.

WHEELER

I do. A servant at the gentleman Woolridge's mansion.

Wheeler pauses, as if the rest is obvious.

SAMUEL

(cycling his hands) And?

WHEELER

They're away, in town. Tonight. It's just the servant, but he told me - you know - he's a heavy sleeper.

Samuel strokes his scar.

WHEELER

He won't yelp. He hates Woolridge. Says he's a miser, like all of them. I know where it is. I could take you.

TURPIN

Who is he? This Woolridge?

WHEELER

The servant says he works at the Tower.
And that he keeps guns.

Samuel sits back at this, arms folded. He looks over at his crew. Rose is attempting affections with Mary, who is fighting him off, but with less resistance. Rowden examines some pewter with an eye glass. Jasper has Jeremy in a rough but playful headlock. Fielder and Haines are asleep, or close to it.

SAMUEL

(to Wheeler) And how do we know you won't 'yelp'?

TURPIN

Tell him what you were, Wheeler.

WHEELER

I was an apprentice. To a shoemaker.

Samuel looks at the worn shoes on Wheeler's feet, laughs.

WHEELER

He beat us. Starved us. So I ran away. And my father won't let me come home. The landlord here lets me muck out the stables sometimes, lets me sleep there. But I can do more. I can help people like you.

Wheeler looks over at Mary.

WHEELER

Help you find things.

Samuel looks at Turpin. Turpin nods; then he tears off a chunk of bread and tosses it to Wheeler. Wheeler wolfs it down.

SAMUEL

Well, kinchin? Where is this 'mansion'?

INT. MANSION, WOODFORD, ESSEX - NIGHT

A scene of unbridled pillage. Members of the gang are drunkenly delivering armfuls of brass and pewter items to the centre of a spacious, plush, high-ceilinged parlour. Curtains are being torn down to create makeshift sacks. Even beds have been dragged from the bedrooms. Some members sprawl on the beds; Mary and Rose are undressing each other. Everyone is drinking from Woolridge's expensive bottles of brandy and wine.

Samuel, pleased at this upturn in fortunes, squeezes the face of Wheeler, who looks over in apology at the SERVANT, who sits bound and gagged against a wall. Samuel hands Wheeler a bottle of something and tousles his hair. Wheeler drinks, coughs, and gapes at Rose and Mary, who are now copulating under an exquisitely-patterned silk curtain. Mary rides Rose, wearing his wig.

Samuel laughs at Wheeler's titillation.

SAMUEL

There's a sight, Wheeler! The dragon upon St George!

A swaggering Turpin arrives from upstairs, carrying an armful of pistols, carbines and muskets, and a pair of leather riding boots slung over his shoulder. There are cheers and applause.

He dumps the weapons onto the carpet, and throws the boots to Wheeler.

Jeremy lobs a bottle over at the amorous Rose and Mary; it smashes close to them. Mary pretends to be livid, and javelins a bottle back his way; she's a better shot, and it hits him square in the chest, wounding him. Soon there are various missiles flying across the room, smashing against walls, paintings and furniture.

Turpin ducks the ordnance and approaches a large oil portrait of Woolridge on the wall. He is in vermilion uniform, handsome, a flintlock pistol in each hand, arms crossed to form an 'X'. Turpin stares at the painting, chin raised, admiring. He makes the 'X' shape with his arms, and holds the pose for Wheeler, who is watching him.

As the debauch around him progresses, Wheeler drinks, afraid and ecstatic. He looks over again at the servant, whose eyes are wet with terror.

EXT. WALTHAM FOREST, ESSEX - DAWN

Sleet lashes down on a figure making its way through the trees. It is Mason, the forest keeper, armed with a blunderbuss. A dog trots sniffing ahead of him.

They exit the trees into a clearing. The dog barks, excited.

MASON

What you got there, Rookwood?

The dog sniffs around the body of a deer, its nose reflected in the deer's glassy open eyes.

Mason crouches to examine the dead deer. Angry, he shakes his head.

MASON

Hang them all. Such a waste.

Mason looks for a wound; he recoils at some oozing buboes around the animal's belly. He pulls the dog away.

He stands, and steps away from the body. We zoom out to see from above more carcasses lying ahead of him in the frosty mud.

INT. STUDY, BARKINGSIDE, ESSEX - DAY

The sleet and rain fall hard outside, hitting a window with soft crescendos; watching are an old farmer, AMBROSE SKINNER; his son, SKINNER JR.; and their maid, LILY KING.

They look at each other, observe the military paintings and books around the room, and fiddle with the cups of tea on their laps. Lily has finished hers. Her saucer rattles against the cup, which slips.

A tall, well-dressed older man, MARTIN BLADEN, steps quickly to catch the cup.

BLADEN

Let me take that for you, miss.

Bladen hands the cup and saucer to his servant, who collects the others' cups on his tray. Bladen watches Lily, aware.

He takes his seat behind a large mahogany desk and waves away the servant. He notices Ambrose turn again to watch the sleet outside.

BLADEN

Rotten weather.

The three guests look embarrassed, unhappy.

BLADEN

Tough farming on days like this, Mr Skinner.

AMBROSE

They're all tough days now, sir.

BLADEN

Heard we've had the rinderpest back again. A lot of Waltham deer falling foul. I trust your cattle have been spared?

AMBROSE

As of yet, sir. As of yet.

BLADEN

Sorry business. And at Christmas.

He looks at Lily. She looks at the floor.

BLADEN

On top of your other hardships. As Justice of the Peace let me assure you we will catch the men who assaulted your home. You have my word.

Ambrose sighs, smiles, looks out at the sleet, looks back at Bladen.

AMBROSE

Cleaned us out. A hundred and fifty pounds. More. All our silver, all our best cloth.

SKINNER JR.

And... My wife's undergarments, sir.

AMBROSE

Even the periwigs!

Lily is blushing furiously, eyes wide, staring hard at the floor.

AMBROSE

Mr Bladen, unless some stop be put to these outrageous violences, in such great bands and combinations, it will be impossible for any of His Majesty's good subjects in this neighbourhood to be secure, either in their lives or fortunes.

Bladen takes a sip of his tea.

BLADEN

I understand from the clerk you have made your sworn statement?

Ambrose nods, still agitated. Bladen looks at some papers on his desk, and seems satisfied.

BLADEN

But I'd like to hear it again with my own ears.
Miss King, isn't it?

LILY

(whispered) Lily.

AMBROSE

On Thursday the nineteenth of December, about the hour of five in the evening, as I was -

Bladen smiles at Ambrose, looks back at Lily.

BLADEN

Let's hear from Lily.

(to Lily) Why don't you tell me what you remember.

Lily looks over at Ambrose, seeing reassurance. Ambrose and Skinner Jr. nod sternly as one.

LILY

My master and I being in the house...

Lily distresses her fingernails.

BLADEN

Go on. Just tell me what you told the clerk.

In Lily's memory - She watches Turpin inside an

INN

where he is celebrating something with the rest of the gang; he breaks off to walk over to her.

LILY (V.O.)

My master and I being in the house, several persons armed and disguised entered. And having bound my master and me and shut us up in an upper room, ransacked the house.

Turpin and Lily are drinking, laughing, heads close. She leads him

OUTSIDE

to the back of the tavern. He turns her around, pushes her against a wall. Their sex is rough and urgent; his hand is on her throat.

LILY

They broke open a great number of chests and trunks and took from thence money, goods and plate. To a very considerable value.

AMBROSE

A hundred and fifty pounds!

Turpin and Lily climax together, shouting. She turns around and slaps his face, hard, laughing. He grabs her tightly by the wrists and pulls her to him, then pushes her away again. Eyes closed, she takes a deep, smiling breath, exhales.

She fixes her clothes, and follows Turpin back inside the tavern.

Lily's eyes focus again on Bladen. He holds her gaze.

BLADEN
Mr Skinner?

Ambrose stares at Lily, and takes a breath.

AMBROSE
On Thursday the nineteenth of December, about the hour of five in the evening, as I was going to shut the door of the hall in my house, which was then unlatched...

Lily quietly unlatches the gates and doors in her master's house. She steps out into the darkness with a lamp, expectant, eyes excited.

AMBROSE (V.O.)
...a gang of armed men unknown to me with their faces muffled and disguised rushed in upon me with violence...

Behind a door frame, Lily watches as the masked men roughly prod their carbines and pistols at Ambrose's chest, winding him as he staggers backwards. Turpin whispers a threat, and puts his gloved finger to the farmer's lips. Then he turns, catches Lily's eye, and winks.

AMBROSE (V.O.)
...Whereupon I having at that time no other person in the house but Lily here, my maidservant...

Lily covers her face at this; Skinner Jr. moves to comfort her, but she shrugs off his touch.

AMBROSE
...I only thought it the safest way to submit to their pleasure and accordingly, without any resistance on my part...

Turpin removes Ambrose's garters and binds his hands with them. He widens his eyes at Lily, who, remembering her role, feigns surprise as she rushes into the room and screams. Ambrose shakes his head at her, and attempts a kind smile.

Turpin walks over to Lily, blocking Ambrose's view. He rips off her apron and loosely binds her hands with it. He puts the tip of his pistol to her lips. She flicks it with her tongue.

With a flintlock to his head, Ambrose leads the gang from room to room, pointing out valuables. They find locked trunks, which they break open. They leave Ambrose and Lily bound in an upstairs room. Turpin blows Lily a kiss as he shuts the door. Ambrose looks at her with confused alarm; she pretends disgust, and comforts him.

At the

FRONT DOOR

Skinner Jr. and his wife return home. There is a pile of plunder on the floor in front of them, which Haines and Fielder are in the middle of adding to. There is a frozen moment - the couple stare open-mouthed at their possessions as the two burglars stare back. The silence is interrupted by Wheeler emptying a sack of cutlery onto the pile with a clatter. Wheeler frowns quizzically at Haines and Fielder and turns to follow their gaze.

Skinner Jr. is about to speak when Samuel strides through the front door and presses two pistols, one in each hand, into the backs of the couple's heads.

SKINNER JR.

...And they took away from thence whatever they thought fit in money, plate and clothes, not leaving me nor my wife nor my father any other wearing apparel but those upon our backs.

As the Skinners comfort each other, sadly sorting through their rifled, broken property and assessing the loss and damage, Lily creeps

OUTSIDE

to watch the gang galloping into the indigo horizon. The night is deepening, and the sound of their whooping and laughing carries across the fields.

Lily is flushed, euphoric.

BLADEN

Lily?

Lily gathers herself.

LILY

May I have some more tea?

INT. BAWDY-HOUSE - DAY

The Gregory Gang, sans one, are sprawled out on cushions. Large plates of half-finished meals are scattered around them. Turpin, Samuel, Jasper, Rowden, Mary and Wheeler are focused on some committed drinking. Fielder sleeps, sitting upright. Rose gnaws on a large poultry drumstick, and digs in his backside with his other hand.

HAINES

Worms?

ROSE

No. Grogham breeches. Mohair.

Haines raises an eyebrow, and returns to his newspaper.

Suddenly inspired by drink, Turpin reveals and unhooks an ornate flintlock pistol from his butcher's belt.

MARY

More guns? After Woolridge?

TURPIN

Different class. Just look at this tomboy.

JASPER

(whistling) French?

MARY

Thuraine of Paris, to be exactement. Recognize the filigree.

TURPIN

That woman knows her weapons, Rose.

Rose nods and smiles, mouth full of poultry.

JASPER

Turpin spending his wages all at once. Like my brothers.

SAMUEL

Shut it.

Samuel unholsters one of his own pistols, laying it next to Turpin's. It's inches longer. Rowden pretends to measure it with an imaginary tape. Samuel grins.

MARY

Hmmph! Prussian.

Samuel lays down another. Mary's eyes shine.

MARY

Oh yes. Oh yes, me whipjacks.
That's a sea captain's, to be sure.

The others huddle round. Mary points out the details.

MARY

Brass barrel? Silver mount?

There is silence.

MARY

Steel don't last long in the salty air.
Cods' heads, the lot of you.

Turpin takes out another pistol, places it gently down as if it were a baby, and fans his palms in reverence. Mary handles it, looks down the barrel.

MARY

Now this... Walnut stock, very nice. Tutaneg mounts.
Stronger than silver, before you ask.

She examines the butt of the pistol and gasps.

MARY

And a pineapple pommel! Turpin wins.

ROSE
For a pineapple?

MARY
Ever seen a pineapple? No? Me neither. And that's as close as
you'll ever get.

The two squabble. Samuel turns to Turpin.

SAMUEL
A word.

Samuel and Turpin head for a corner. Rowden and Mary coo over the
weaponry.

MARY
Tom, You and I will from today focus our attentions on
appraisal instead of acquisition.

ROWDEN
Agreed.
(whispered) I'm not really built for housebreaking...

Mary feels his upper arm, nods.

Across the room in the

CORNER

Turpin and Samuel drink together.

SAMUEL
To Jeremy!

TURPIN
Otherwise engaged?

SAMUEL
Could say that. He's in Bridewell Prison.

TURPIN
Poaching?

SAMUEL

Hunting, you mean? No. Assault and robbery. For fourpence!

TURPIN

So much for the Bordeaux.

SAMUEL

Given six months beating hemp for our...

Samuel makes a knotting and throttling motion at his neck.

SAMUEL

...Hempen cravats. Now look.

Samuel takes out a small pouch and an iron needle.

SAMUEL

Give me your hand.

Turpin does nothing; Samuel grabs his hand.

SAMUEL

Relax. Watch.

Samuel takes a small pinch of black powder from the pouch, spits into it, mixes it with a finger. He dips the needle in this fresh ink, turn Turpin's palm, strokes the base of the thumb.

SAMUEL

You ever get a feeling here? In the thumb. When you drink. A goatish feeling. A pricking...

Turpin stares back at him.

SAMUEL

Well? How shall I prick you, then?

TURPIN

An 'R'. Start with an 'R'.

SAMUEL

(laughing) I can't read, Dick.

He pulls back his shirt.

SAMUEL

There's no 'R' in mine.

TURPIN

Then I'll learn you.

SAMUEL

Will you now.

Samuel punctures the skin.

Meanwhile, Haines folds his paper to a story, and waves it to get Jasper, Rose and Wheeler's attention.

HAINES

Gather round, children.

"Last Friday, a barber..." Oh no.

He peers over the newspaper for effect.

HAINES

"A barber in Fleet Street laid a wager that he drink four half pints of gin in eight minutes."

ROSE

I'll take that wager.

HAINES

"And at drinking the second half pint, dropped down dead."

ROSE

Poor technique. Only credible reason.

In the corner, Samuel hands Turpin his tattooing kit. Turpin holds up his hand to look at the small corner of a letter on his thumb.

SAMUEL

Now you know how.

He looks over at the others.

SAMUEL

Listen, Dick. There's deer rot in Waltham. And with all that Black Act blood money about...

TURPIN

Like I told Jasper. Fool's game anyway. You got lucky this time. Besides, lease is up soon on the Stag. I won't even have a shop. For beef, never mind venison.

SAMUEL

Then we kill two birds with one stone.

TURPIN

You mean more 'assault and robbery'?

Haines continues to hold court across the room.

HAINES

And now, for dessert...

"Last Wednesday, the skin of a man's head and face was found nailed against the wall on Puddle Dock side of Blackfriars Church."

Wheeler blanches; Rose picks his teeth.

HAINES

"Part of the head-skin was shaved, and the right ear cut off."

ROSE

What times we live in, eh Jake? The price of disloyalty in this day and age.

Haines folds the paper.

HAINES

At a good table, gentlemen, we may go to school.

Wheeler is still ashen and aghast; Rose squeezes him tight around the shoulders.

In the corner, Samuel pulls Turpin closer to him, conspiratorial.

SAMUEL

Hainault Lodge.

TURPIN

Mason? The forest keeper?

SAMUEL

Plus wife, uncle, one servant. Easy. Because he thinks we wouldn't dare.

TURPIN

And he's right. He'd bring the world down upon us. It's insane.

SAMUEL

Listen. There are scores to settle. He's been putting hunters away for years. Not just me.

Turpin looks over at Wheeler, who is now squeezed between Rose and Mary. Rose is whispering to him; Mary is playing with his hair.

TURPIN

You want to send a message.

SAMUEL

A big one. With a big knot. All of us.

Turpin absorbs this.

SAMUEL

Be honest. What else have you got?

Samuel raises a glass. Turpin regards it a while. He then raises his, but without enthusiasm.

Two female BAWDS, their painted faces decorated with small black beauty patches, enter with more bottles of gin. They then clap for attention, and begin to graphically perform a ballad:

BAWD 1

(as a knight on horseback) One evening then amongst the rest,
He came to visit the good man,
But needs must know where Clara was,
(squeezing her breasts) And heard she was a milking gone.

BAWD 2

Then called he for his pampered steed,
(picking up two flintlocks) With pistols at his sadie bow,

And to the meadow rode with speed,
(bending over) Where she was milking of her cow.

BAWD 1

(fondling the other woman) Her pretty hands that stroked the
teats,
(pretending to drink) From whence the milk down streaming came,
Informed his thoughts of other sweets,
(tilting a pistol upwards) That more increased his raging
flame.

SAMUEL

Ha! Here we go, my vixens!

BAWD 2

(with a flourish) Then off he lights, and ties his horse,
(holding her crotch) And swore she must his pain remove,
If not by fair means, yet by force,
Since he was dying for her love.

Samuel is hungrily snatching at the women's feet while they perform, rather spoiling the performance.

BAWD 1

The pearly tears now trickling fall,
(staring sourly at Samuel) That from her bashful eyes do flow,
But that he heeded not at all,
(shoving pistol between legs of other woman) But does her
straight his pistols show.

Samuel lunges at them.

SAMUEL

Yes my romps!

Bawd 2 kicks Samuel backwards. The mood chills in an instant. Silence. He takes the pistols from them, throws one to Turpin. Turpin lays the pistol down, uninterested. Samuel points the other pistol at the woman's head.

SAMUEL

On your knees.

Bawd 2 pushes her forehead harder against the muzzle, eyes hard on Samuel's.

MARY

(to Bawd 2) Take no heed, love. There's no primer in his pistol anyway.

The others laugh. Bawd 2 is confused; she is unsettled by the gun at her head, but the rest of the party seem unperturbed.

SAMUEL

No. I am ready charged.

Samuel unsheathes a knife from his belt and steps behind the woman in one movement. The gun is now at her temple, and the knife is at her throat.

SAMUEL

Choose your weapon.

See how cold they are? Feels real, doesn't it?

Trembling, Bawd 2 lowers herself slowly to her knees. Samuel moves back around to face her.

Mary stands up, quickly and unsteadily. Rose tries to prevent her involvement but she pushes him away with a snarl.

MARY

Sam.

Samuel tosses the pistol to Turpin and begins unbuckling his belt with his free hand. Turpin lays down the pistol.

Turpin stands, placing himself between Samuel and Bawd 2 and grabbing Samuel's knife hand. Samuel resists. Bawd 2 scrambles backwards.

TURPIN

(continuing the song) A thundering oath then out he sent,
That she should presently be dead...

Turpin and Samuel stare at each other as Turpin twists Samuel's wrist.

TURPIN

For were his heart not eased, he meant...

There is the compressed tension of an arm wrestle.

TURPIN

Point blank to shoot her through the head.

Turpin prevails and takes the knife. He turns it handle up and offers it to Samuel.

There is fire in Samuel's eyes. Then the mood breaks:

SAMUEL

(finishing the song) Look out, and see who comes and goes...

With a conductor's swing of the arms, Mary hurriedly encourages the two bawds to join in.

MARY

And you shall quickly have your will...

Samuel takes the knife.

MARY, BAWD 1, BAWD 2

(strained) For if my father nothing knows,
Then I shall be a maiden still.

Mary anxiously applauds the room. The crisis has passed, but Turpin and Samuel still stand face to face.

Mary signals Rose urgently with her eyes and a flick of the head.

ROSE

More genever, ladies! Then another song for us! Yes?

The bawds gratefully scurry away for more gin. Mary rolls her eyes and sits down again with Rose.

TURPIN

Show your pistols straight, Samuel.

Samuel retreats. Jasper rises to escort him to a cushion. With fury, Samuel pushes Jasper's arm away.

SAMUEL
Leave it.

Jasper persists. Samuel lifts him by the lapels, and slams him against the wall. Jasper slides to the floor; Samuel swings hard slaps at him as he protects himself, foetal.

SAMUEL
I. Said. Fucking. Leave. It.

Turpin pours himself a fresh glass, sits. The rest of the gang stare at the cowering Jeremy, who makes no move to help his brother, and then at Turpin, imploring, in a silence punctured by the sound of repeated blows.

TURPIN
Brothers.

He drinks.

TURPIN
Let brothers be brothers.

EXT. STAG INN, BUCKHURST HILL - DAY

A bunch of keys is passed from one hand to another. The receiving hand closes around it.

OWNER
You let me know if your circumstances change.

Turpin lifts and stows a bundle of belongings onto his horse, and mounts.

TURPIN
Don't hold your breath.

The owner watches him leave.

CUT TO -

EXT. BLUE BELL INN

where Beth laughs, running after her child as the toddler chases a clucking chicken across the garden. Turpin watches on horseback from the road, just out of sight. He lingers a moment, and retreats.

CUT TO -

More keys passed between hands.

Turpin ducks as he steps inside a small

ATTIC GARRET

and the landlady closes the door behind him, leaving him alone.

There is a rhythmic high clang of metal on metal. Turpin stoops to investigate the view from the window: the spiky, uneven Whitechapel skyline hovers above a trench between houses, crossed with boards, where a man squats and defecates into a rudimentary latrine. Pigs snuffle in the filth. The man turns his head, looks up at Turpin, and scowls. The clang persists; through an open window Turpin sees a man hammering a sheet of copper in a workshop.

Turpin sits on the small bed by the window. He stares at a large cobweb in the corner of the ceiling, studded with the black sarcophagi of dead flies. He begins unpacking his belongings; he pulls out the butcher's knife, strokes its blunt blade. He rests it in his lap, looks around his cramped new home, and sighs.

INT. DINING ROOM, TRUMPET TAVERN, WESTMINSTER - NIGHT

Port is poured into a crystal cut glass. A group of wealthily-dressed men are drinking and eating; the mood is rowdy. Jokes are being told, backs are slapped; there is lots of nudging and winking.

A young man, JOHN TYLNEY, enters from a night of stormy gales. He approaches the table, eager to speak to one of this group, who is tucking into a pie. Tylney hesitates.

The man notices him staring, and beckons him over. This is NEWCASTLE (Thomas Pelham-Holmes, Duke of Newcastle and Secretary of State).

NEWCASTLE

Tylney the Younger! Come man, sit! Stalking me like a Waltham Black!

There is laughter.

NEWCASTLE
You'll hang, my friend!

More laughter. Newcastle offers him a chair; Tylney squeezes in at the table.

NEWCASTLE
Someone get this sodden rogue some linen. And a kit-kat! Can't call yourself a member of the Kit-Kat Club without a kit-kat!

TYLNEY
A 'kit-kat', sir? I...

NEWCASTLE
Mutton pie, boy, mutton pie! (winking) Mind you I'm more partial to the black mutton, myself...

TYLNEY
'Black mutton', sir?

NEWCASTLE
Goodness gracious, Tylney! A newly-minted earl who doesn't know his meats!

Tylney looks around, wounded and uncomfortable.

NEWCASTLE
(to the room) A toast to good meat!

GENTLEMAN 1
To Lady Montagu, then!

There is outraged laughter and applause.

GENTLEMAN 2
Nay, to Teresia Constantia! Lamb, squire, not mutton!

Lusty applause and approbation.

Tylney is utterly lost.

NEWCASTLE
(whispered) Black mutton is venison, Tylney. Venison.

Newcastle looks for an attendant; Tylney protests with a raised palm. Newcastle passes him a glass and pours him a port.

NEWCASTLE

(to the room) To *black* mutton, then, and I will hear no more of it!

He winks at Tylney; Tylney sips his port, and unfolds a letter.

Newcastle shakes his head in disapproval.

NEWCASTLE

Tylney. Not here, man! Drink!

TYLNEY

It's a matter of some urgency, sir. The robberies in Essex. Mason, my own Keeper in Waltham...

Newcastle stops eating, and stares at his plate. He pushes it away.

NEWCASTLE

Yes, I had heard.

My jest was in poor taste. Forgive me. Mason has recovered?

We see a flashback: the Gregory Gang, kerchief-less, faces instead smeared with black and white pigment, approach an impressive

LODGE - NIGHT

in the forest.

SAMUEL

Where is Turpin?

ROSE

He's floored, Sam. Cup-shot. Left him at the alehouse.

We see Rose trying to rouse Turpin from his slumber; Turpin, still face down, raises a pistol at Rose's head.

Samuel is livid, but focuses again on their present business. Samuel, Rose, Haines, Fielder and Wheeler approach the lodge. Jasper, still smearing chalk and soot on his face, jogs to catch up.

JASPER

Masks were easier.

Inside, before an open fire, a family sit playing a card game. This is Mason, MRS MASON, their teenage daughter ELSIE, and a WIDOW. A SERVANT enters.

SERVANT

I'm setting the table for dinner, sir.

MASON

Thank you, Charles. We'll be in presently.

MRS MASON

(to Elsie)

Off to wash your hands, little lady.

There is a hard knock at the door. Elsie listens at it on tiptoes.

ELSIE

Who goes there?

SAMUEL

A message for the Keeper.

Alarmed, the servant runs to the door with a candle, moves Elsie behind him, and opens the door. He recoils at the grotesque painted faces that greet him.

SERVANT

My master is not -

Samuel knifes his face, slashing across his cheek and mouth. He spots Mason, and fires a pistol in the air.

SAMUEL

Come away, for by God we have got him!

The gang rush in. Elsie flees to her family. The servant, holding his bleeding face, runs to a staircase. Shots follow them. Mason takes a gun off the wall, and readies it, but is swarmed and knocked down cold by Rose and Jasper. Elsie screams; she runs through the house, furniture and china splintering from the shots that explode around her. She runs into Fielder, who holds her by the throat. Wheeler is frozen, paralyzed by the sickening reality of this new escalation.

Samuel strikes Mrs Mason with the butt of his pistol; Mason tries to protect her, but is savagely beaten by Samuel, who is screaming in a frenzy of rage, spitting out words.

SAMUEL

'This is the one we want.' We will murder you!

Elsie wails. Distracted, Samuel breaks off from beating Mason.

SAMUEL
The servant!

The servant scrambles up the stairs, dripping blood. Fielder hesitates; Elsie twists, and bites down hard on his hand.

FIELDER
Cloven jilt!

Infuriated by the spiralling chaos, Samuel lopes up the stairs after the servant. Mrs Mason, the widow and Elsie stumble to the front door. Fielder stretches for the widow and pulls her down before she can escape. Elsie turns back for her, but Mrs Mason pulls her screaming out of the front door and away past Haines, standing guard; Mrs Mason shoots him a glare of loathing. Haines looks back at the lodge, and watches them flee.

In the

GARRET

the bloody-faced servant frantically breaks through the roof tiles with his fists, with Samuel gaining. He makes it out onto the moonlit roof, and scrambles down it, sending tiles flying. Samuel discharges a shot, scattering more roof tiles. He watches as the servant jumps down into the yard and runs away across the fields. Samuel stares after him, makes a decision, and descends the stairs.

Fielder and Samuel stand over the widow while Rose and Jasper search and turn over furniture in the gloom. Wheeler is fixed in place, watching, petrified.

SAMUEL
You will show us where there are candles, and then you will show us where your master keeps his coin.

The widow stares back at him, jaw set. Several seconds pass.

SAMUEL
Candles.

Samuel lifts the widow to her feet and starts to push her towards the fire. She resists, but is no match for his strength. He lowers his face close to hers.

SAMUEL

I swear to you, old scab, when they find what's left of you
they will take it for roast mower...

*The widow's eyes implore Wheeler to intervene. Samuel stares
Wheeler down.*

Wheeler retreats, begins desperately searching cupboards.

*Samuel pushes the widow so close to the fire that her dress
begins to smoke; she cries out.*

*Wheeler opens a cupboard, finds a bundle of candles. He says a
silent prayer.*

WHEELER

Candles!

(breathless) They have candles...

CUT TO -

*The gang explore the house with lit candles in their hands,
smashing furniture and looting cash, silver, and guns.*

*Samuel fires a pistol to focus their attention. He gestures for
everyone to be silent.*

SAMUEL

Hark at that. Outside.

*We hear the controlled sobbing of the widow, and then, in the
distance, hounds barking.*

*The panicked face of Haines appears in the doorway. The gang
look to one another, rigid in a tableau. Samuel looks at the
unconscious Mason; he curses his lost opportunity.*

SAMUEL

Take rattle! Mason's whisks are upon us!

The gang snuff their candles, gather their haul, and drag it

OUTSIDE

where they hurriedly load their horses.

*As they ride away, a mob of armed men with torches appear on
the horizon, too late to apprehend them.*

TYLNEY

We have descriptions. They appear to be organised by a gang known as the Gregory brothers.

Newcastle sucks his teeth and leans back in his chair.

NEWCASTLE

You will pass on my thoughts to Mason and his family.

TYLNEY

I will. Thank you.

They are recovered - as well as can be expected.
Sir... this is merely the freshest in a series.

NEWCASTLE

Who is our man there? Bladen?

Tylney offers him the letter.

TYLNEY

He asked me to deliver this to you personally...

NEWCASTLE

Paraphrase, if you will.

TYLNEY

(scanning) He entreats you to desire His Majesty to issue his royal proclamation, with promise of pardon and reward, to any of the persons concerned in these robberies, that shall discover his accomplices, or the receivers of the goods by them stolen.

NEWCASTLE

At what premium?

TYLNEY

50 pounds per head, sir. He asks that the pardon might extend to all offences committed before the time of discovery.

NEWCASTLE

All offences?

TYLNEY

They are known deerstealers, sir.

NEWCASTLE

Deerstealers. Ah.

Thus my jest was of double the injury.

TYLNEY

There is no injury to my person. But the terror these robberies have struck into the country people...
Bladen finishes with "and your lordship cannot do an act of greater charity, than to endeavour to deliver them out of it".

NEWCASTLE

Leave this to me. If His Majesty concurs.

Tylney sighs, relieved.

NEWCASTLE

But Tylney...

TYLNEY

Sir?

He tops up their glasses.

NEWCASTLE

An earl must know his venison from his black mutton.

They clink glasses.

NEWCASTLE

King and country!

EXT. NINE PIN AND BOWL TAVERN, EDGWARE, LONDON - DAY

Hooves on frost. Samuel and Jasper, on one horse, and Rose and Wheeler, on another, trot up to a country tavern, the Nine Pin and Bowl. The weather is clear and crisp; we see the steamy breaths of the horses in the cold.

ROSE

'Bowl and Skittle', he says.

Rose and the Gregorys laugh. Wheeler, sulking, squints up at the sign.

WHEELER

Always known it as the Bowl and Skittle.
Never learned my letters.

ROSE

"If drawn by business to a street unknown,
Let the sworn porter point thee through the town;

Be sure observe the signs, for signs remain
Like faithful landmarks to the walking train."

They dismount and tie up their horses. They enter the

TAVERN BAR

where Fielder and Turpin are drinking at a table. The LANDLORD
eyes them as he brings them beer.

LANDLORD

The sorrel, the brown, and the bay in the yard?

TURPIN

Ours. And the grey.

LANDLORD

They'll want feeding?

SAMUEL

They will.

(to Wheeler) We have a distance to go yet.

The landlord nods.

SAMUEL

And bacon and eggs for the other animals here.

(to Wheeler) A man needs his cackling-farts.

Rose splutters into his beer, laughing. Wheeler looks to Turpin
for reassurance.

SAMUEL

Haines?

TURPIN

With his married bundle-tail, I suspect.

SAMUEL

And you. Glad you could grace us, Sir Quibble-Queere. Not too
early for you?

Turpin drinks, expressionless.

SAMUEL

Never took you for a hector.

WHEELER

(to Rose) What's a hector?

ROSE
(sotto voce) Coward.

TURPIN
Mason was your business, not mine.

SAMUEL
Hark at that, gentlemen!
(fey) Picking and choosing, like Mistress Princum-Prancium at
the market!

TURPIN
The genever in Whitechapel was more diverting than your black
mutton drama. And you've got people talking.

SAMUEL
'Black mutton drama.' The butcher's a word-pecker to boot!
Samuel twirls fingers at his temples.

SAMUEL
(to Wheeler) Windmills in the head...
Turpin and Samuel stare at each other, smiles cold.

FIELDER
The zlouch was my business n'all. And Rose's. And Jeremy's.
Had us all up in Chelmsford gaol for cloying harts not two
years past.

TURPIN
My god. It speaks.

ROSE
Where's that bacon and eggs, eh Jake?

The Landlord arrives with their food and breaks the tension.
They eat; Samuel has his eyes on Wheeler throughout.

SAMUEL
Talking, are they? People.

TURPIN
In the papers. The house-guttings. And your brother's escape.

SAMUEL
My Jeremiah, Head Cully of Bridewell!
(to Wheeler) An upright man, Wheeler. An upright man.

He points at Turpin with his fork.

SAMUEL
Rare thing these days.

TURPIN
Well. Here's hoping your upright man kept his mouth shut.

Samuel stands, eyes enraged. Jasper, face bruised, stands with him, but is returned to his seat by Samuel's stare. Still chewing, Samuel stoops to Turpin.

Samuel swallows, lets his eyes roam over Turpin's pockmarks, and makes a show to Wheeler of pretending to vomit.

He sits, and shoves his plate towards Wheeler.

SAMUEL
Lost my appetite. Eat up.

ROSE
Leave him, Sam...

SAMUEL
(to the landlord) Genever!

Wheeler, distressed, stares at the plate. Rose rescues him by taking the plate and scraping the food onto his own.

SAMUEL
(to Wheeler) Look at this fat old gundiguts.

Rose, complicit, makes a clownish show of gobbling his food. Wheeler laughs. Rose winks at him.

Samuel snatches the plate and fork back from Rose and slams them down in front of Wheeler. Wheeler looks at the mess of egg and meat.

SAMUEL
That's good peckidge. Just try not to look at Dick's face while you eat.

He points with a knife to the scar on his own cheek.

SAMUEL
I didn't get mine from the pox, Wheeler. No.

TURPIN
Mother likes it rough, does she?

SAMUEL

Well, Dick, yours promised to suck my nutmegs, but I couldn't drag her snout out the trough!

Rose puts his face in his palms.

SAMUEL

Was shoeing a mare. A rum prancer, she was.

We see Samuel at his anvil, whistling, hitting the steel with skill and a short, repeated rhythm. A handsome horse stands ready to be shod.

SAMUEL (V.O.)

But you see Wheeler, you can't trust them. They bite, they bully. Got to remind them who they belong to.

We see him lift the hind leg; the horse is uncomfortable and resists. Samuel roughly tries to straighten the leg.

SAMUEL (V.O.)

Just another highte-tity!

Samuel struggles with the horse's leg; the horse kicks him flush in the face. He staggers upright, blood streaming from a gory wound gaping on his cheek. He touches his face, feels the texture of the blood on his fingers. Then he picks up an iron, flips and catches it, and strides towards the whinnying horse.

SAMUEL

No education in the second kick of a horse, Wheeler.

He caresses his scar.

SAMUEL

And on the subject of rum prancers. How is our dear Mrs Turpin? And the littl'un?

TURPIN

With family.

SAMUEL

My commiserations to her too then.
(to Rose) And our delightful fencing-gully?

ROSE

Mary? Delightful, as you say. Less delighted with our pickings. Sifting them with Rowden.

SAMUEL

She returns us ebb water.

ROSE

Because we bring her dust, Sam.

SAMUEL

Stow your whidds and plantem, for the cove of the ken can
cantem. We'll be flush after tonight.

Jasper opens his mouth to translate; Turpin waves it away.

TURPIN

So. Tell us why we're here. This Earlsbury farm?

SAMUEL

Shod farmer Lawrence's horses. All of 'em. Pays his people
warm. The man is very well equipped.

Samuel remembers Wheeler.

SAMUEL

Eat.

WHEELER

I'm not hungry. Need the privy.

As Wheeler stands, Samuel pushes the table closer with his
boot, pinning him. Wheeler attempts to slide out sideways;
Samuel's foot hooks another table across to block his exit.
Fielder laughs; Rose and Jasper exchange a look of despair.

TURPIN

Leave him be.

SAMUEL

No Dick. It's time for school. You know what this is,
Wheeler?

He traces the perimeters of Wheeler's entrapment with his
hands.

SAMUEL

This is called an 'enclosure'. And everything in it belongs
to me. The Black Act says so. Our parliament decided. So you
are now sitting on my land, eating my food. You know what
happens to people sitting on my land eating my food?

TURPIN

Let the boy piss.

Turpin pulls the table clear, freeing Wheeler, who skulks off
to the privy.

SAMUEL

These are important lessons.

The gin arrives, with glasses. The landlord, frowning, removes Wheeler's plate.

Samuel pours large measures for everyone, and holds his glass high.

SAMUEL

To the white ewe, the fair roebuck - Madam Geneva!

They down their drinks; only Samuel and Fielder savour theirs. Samuel refills them all.

Samuel eyeballs Turpin as he downs his glass in one. He reaches for the bottle. Turpin stops his hand, sinks his own glass, and refills them both.

In the doorway, unseen, Wheeler watches them all.

EXT. FIELD, MIDDLESEX - DUSK

Rolling fields, celadon-green in the late afternoon. A SHEPHERD BOY looks out at his sheep. He calls and whistles; they peel off from their grazing and begin to follow. He coaxes them home with a crook.

We follow him in the dying light to the sheepfold; he counts the sheep in, and bolts the half-door behind him as he settles them. There is noise of something butting against the gate. He turns, confused, to let the last sheep in; he must have miscounted.

He opens the half-door but finds nothing; he looks behind at each side of the sheepfold.

He turns again and is confronted by the giant, swaying Fielder, face clumsily blackened, who points a pistol at his forehead.

FIELDER

Hush there like these bleating-cheats.

Fielder pulls off the boy's garters and ties his wrists with them. Samuel, Jasper, Turpin, and Rose enter the barn. Their faces are also crudely and lazily camouflaged with dirt; their eyes are intoxicated, sullen. Wheeler is last. He is both terrified and

nauseous from drink, and leans on Rose for support. His legs buckle.

Turpin pulls him upright. Wheeler's knees knock.

TURPIN
Stamp.

Wheeler stares at him, eyes questioning.

TURPIN
Like this.

Turpin stamps his boots hard, one by one. Wheeler does the same.

TURPIN
Good.

Drawn by the noise, one of the sheep stubbornly approaches; Samuel forces it backwards by pushing it hard in the head with his gun.

SAMUEL
(with romance) Not tonight, my purest-pure.

TURPIN
How many in the house?

SHEPHERD BOY
My master..., Pate the servant..., Miss Dorothy, our maid...

SAMUEL
How old is the maid?

There is a moment of collective confusion at this.

SHEPHERD BOY
Seventeen, I think, I don't know...

The boy's eyes meet Wheeler's; Wheeler looks away.

Samuel turns his pistol on the boy.

SAMUEL

(snarling) That's four souls, counting you. There is also a son.

SHEPHERD BOY

Master Thomas is away on business until tonight...

SAMUEL

Tonight? You expect him tonight?

Turpin grows impatient.

TURPIN

(to the boy) You will go to the farmhouse door and knock.

The boy starts to protest; he looks at his tied hands. Turpin glares at Fielder, who shrugs. Turpin unties the boy's hands, opens his palm and presses a coin into it.

TURPIN

A baubee for your trouble. Now go.

CUT TO -

INT. SCULLERY

A young maid, barely a woman, is churning butter. She is softly singing. This is DOROTHY STREET. She hears something in the distance, stops, listens for a moment. Silence. She continues.

DOROTHY

"When cold bleak winds do roar,
And flowers can spring no more;
The fields that were seen,
So pleasant and green,
By winter all candid o'er:
Oh how the town lass,
Looks with her white face,
And her lips of deadly pale..."

Meanwhile at the

FARMHOUSE DOOR

the boy approaches. The others creep, out of sight, at his sides.

He raises a fist to knock, but is shaking so violently he can't find the resolve. His breeches darken with urine.

SAMUEL

Cork-brained little colt-bowler.

Samuel pushes the boy to the side; Fielder grabs him, and ties his hands again, with a triumphant sneer at Turpin.

SAMUEL

(distinguished) Mr Lawrence?

The door is unbolted and opened. The servant, PATE, readies a smiling welcome, but his face falls as his eyes widen with understanding. Pistols raised, the gang rushes in to the farmhouse

PARLOUR

pulling the door shut behind them.

Fielder drags the boy to the floor by the fire, yanks a tablecloth from a table, and throws it over the boy's head. Samuel begins tying Pate's hands with his breeches.

SAMUEL

Answer directly, damn your blood. Where is the money kept?

Pate gapes like a fish. Exasperated, Samuel lifts the tablecloth and pushes Pate under it next to the boy.

The farmer, LAWRENCE, enters; he is old and frightened. Samuel pulls Lawrence's neck cloth up and over his eyes.

Samuel stops suddenly, listening like a cat.

DOROTHY (O.S.)

(distant) "But it is not so,
With those that go,
Thro' frost and snow,
With cheeks that glow..."

Rose has spotted an old gun on the wall; he brings it hard down on a table, smashing it in two. Samuel turns to him, staring, incredulous. Rose looks down at the two halves of the gun in his hands and drops them, sheepish.

CUT TO -

SCULLERY

DOROTHY

"To carry the milking pai - "

Dorothy freezes at the sound from within and drops her candle, which burns on the scullery floor with a flickering light.

Samuel enters the scullery with a candle, head cocked. He sees the butter churn, opens it, digs inside with his hand, and sucks the fresh butter from his fingers.

Dorothy hides under the table. She watches Samuel's legs and boots, closes her eyes in supplication.

When she opens them, she sees his face, leering at her in victory; he has crouched down and discovered her. He wipes his greasy mouth on the back of his hand while he stares.

In the

PARLOUR

Turpin quietly interrogates Lawrence while Fielder, Jasper and Wheeler open cupboards. Jasper finds wine, and glasses. Rose, seven sheets to the wind, attempts a fumbling repair of the gun.

Samuel escorts Dorothy into the room, arm around her shoulder. She cowers from him in disgust.

Turpin, calm, lifts Lawrence to his feet, and begins searching his pockets.

TURPIN

Time is short. So we mean to murder you unless you tell us the location of your valuables. You understand me, old man?

Lawrence, still blindfolded, can only make guttural noises of fear. Turpin, pulling harder at his clothes, finds silver coins and a gold guinea in his pockets; buttons break off, and Lawrence's breeches slide down. Turpin pats his face. He scrutinises the coins.

TURPIN

(whispered) There now. That's a start.

Fielder makes a show of counting the number present, and pours out a glass for everyone. He passes them around, placing the glasses in their hands. Rose drinks his immediately.

ROSE

Oh yes. Elderberry.

Fielder lifts the tablecloth enough to force Pate and the boy to drink. Turpin downs his glass, pours another, and empties it into Lawrence's mouth, who sputters.

Samuel entwines his arms with Dorothy's, forcing her to drink with him from each other's glasses.

SAMUEL

Drink.

He stares at her face as he drinks. She sips hers, coughs.

Samuel breaks from her, grabs the bottle and refills everyone, exhilarated now. Samuel, Jasper, Fielder, Turpin and Rose gleefully clink glasses. Wheeler backs away, sensing the rising menace.

Lawrence tries to shuffle out of the room, breeches at his ankles.

TURPIN

Brothers of the blade, I fear we have a deserter.

Rose forms the shape of a hunting horn with his hands, and makes a strident trumpeting sound. Turpin and Gregory laugh a drunken, hollow laugh. But their eyes are wild.

TURPIN

To where are we deserting, lobster? From the desert to the sea?

Jasper applauds this wit.

Turpin pulls Lawrence back by the collar, hooks his nostrils, and leads him to the fire. He kicks his knees, forcing Lawrence to crouch with his buttocks close to the flames. Lawrence wails.

Dorothy squirms free and attempts an escape, but Samuel catches her by the hair and pulls her to him.

TURPIN

The lobster is over-roasting! Bring water, cook! Water!

Rose and Jasper double over with cackling laughter. Wheeler, close to tears, stands helpless. Fielder spies a billhook in the corner, retrieves it, and begins turning it in his hands.

SAMUEL

(to Wheeler, pointing) Scullery.

Wheeler runs to the scullery. Turpin holds the struggling Lawrence to the fire. Lawrence moans. Wheeler returns with a kettle of water.

TURPIN

You are saved, lobster!

Turpin empties the kettle over Lawrence's head, and begins beating his bare buttocks with his fists.

TURPIN

Out, fiery lobster, out!

Wheeler begins to cry, but hastily wipes his eyes.

Turpin lifts Lawrence again by the nostrils. Emboldened, Jasper places the point of a knife at Lawrence's throat; Fielder stoops to hold the edge of the billhook against his shins.

LAWRENCE

The bedrooms... Please, just spare my servants...

TURPIN

The grand tour! Lead on.

Turpin, Jasper and Fielder drag Lawrence out into the

HALL

and Turpin turns to look at Samuel, then at Dorothy, then at Samuel again.

Dorothy implores him with her stare. Turpin looks hard in her eyes, then looks away. Dorothy's eyes stay locked on him.

Turpin spits at Samuel's feet. Wheeler watches him leave, with despair; Rose turns from Wheeler's desperate gaze to tinker with the broken gun.

SAMUEL

(to Wheeler) Take care of our guests.

Wheeler looks at the shapes under the tablecloth; the jutting hands of Pate and the boy still hold glasses of wine.

SAMUEL

(to Dorothy) Your garret?

Dorothy leads him from the room, her hair bunched in his fist, a pistol at her forehead.

Wheeler lifts the tablecloth. Pate's eyes stare back, huge. The boy's are clamped shut. Wheeler gently takes their glasses and lowers the tablecloth again.

In a downstairs

BEDROOM

Turpin, and Fielder torment Lawrence, as Jasper stamps on the bedding, seeking hidden valuables. Turpin juts his ear close to Lawrence's face.

TURPIN

Tell me.

LAWRENCE

The dresser...

TURPIN

He says the dresser, ladies.

Jasper and Fielder tip the dresser over with a crash.

Up in the

GARRET

Samuel releases Dorothy, who backs away to her bed, cowering and crying.

SAMUEL

Now I swear I will lie with you.

DOROTHY

Please. I'm just a girl. I know nothing of these matters.

Samuel bolts the door. He lays a pistol on the bedside table. He shakes his head, puts a finger to her lips, and strokes her hair.

SAMUEL

If you cry out, I will shoot you.

He strokes her face with another pistol, and lays it next to her on the bed.

SAMUEL

If you do not yield, I will kill you.

He starts unbuttoning his breeches.

CUT TO -

DOWNSTAIRS

where Turpin, Jasper and Fielder are ransacking the house and bundling their loot in sheets, which they dump in front of Wheeler. Rose claps Wheeler on the shoulder. They then drag in Lawrence, who drops to his knees and hides his head in his arms.

ROSE

(to Lawrence) Before you retire - any more of that elderberry?

Turpin throws him a bottle from the cupboard, which Rose opens and swigs.

Turpin rips the tablecloth off Pate and the boy.

ROSE

(burping) They'll see us.

TURPIN

Think we're past that now.

(to Pate) When is the son of this house expected?

PATE

Any hour... He said he hoped to return before nightfall...

TURPIN

(to the room) Start loading the horses.

Rose vomits copiously and noisily down his own front, and then swigs again from the bottle. Jasper, Fielder and Turpin begin dragging loot outside.

TURPIN

(to Wheeler) Watch them.

Dorothy enters, limping. She is crying silently. She sits on the floor next to Pate.

WHEELER

He beat you?

DOROTHY

No. But he has lain with me.

Wheeler moves to comfort her, but she pulls away from him, eyes furious.

DOROTHY

And he pushed as hard as ever he could for the life and soul of him.

Samuel enters. He looks at Dorothy and Wheeler, and smirks. He kisses the air at them.

SAMUEL

What a pretty young couple.

We see Dorothy's eyes in close-up, the irises a maelstrom of pain and outrage.

CUT TO -

the legs of horses galloping across a field, kicking up mud.

While at the

FARMHOUSE

a man arrives on horseback. He dismounts, and stands at the open farmhouse door.

THOMAS LAWRENCE

Father?

EXT. BUSY STREET, WESTMINSTER - DAY

We follow Wheeler, sliding like an eel through the bustling street currents of a vibrant capital economy. Black smoke hangs in the air. There is the clop of hooves, the chink of iron pattens, the squeaky rattle of coach wheels on stone. Chairmen jostle for space. Pedestrians step to avoid dunghills and vegetable detritus, and duck under the shop signs that jut into the street like sudden punches. Criers yell to make themselves heard above the din.

BEGGAR

Remember the poor prisoners!

Wheeler stops to look at a man selling small, bright birds in cages.

BIRD SELLER

Buy a fine singing bird!

A handful of feathered quills is shoved in his face from another direction.

INK SELLER

Fine writing ink!

Ahead, some people are gathered around a genial NEWSPAPER SELLER.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

Daily Journal!

Wheeler watches as they buy and read. He has the glassy stare of the shell-shocked; he clutches provisions and a bottle to his chest.

The seller notices, takes pity.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

You gonna buy one, or take your chances at thieving it?

Flustered, Wheeler gives him a coin. The seller passes him a paper, but seeing the sadness in Wheeler's eyes, gently takes it back.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

Alright. I'll throw in something extra for free.

He opens out the newspaper. Some more passers-by stop in expectation.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

(scanning) This bit's about them robberies. Terrible. It's a proclamation from Holles Newcastle. Know who he is?

Wheeler shrugs.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

Secretary of State... Anyway.

The seller straightens his back, coughs.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

"Hear thee, hear thee. His Majesty..."

He quickly scans lines, mumbling.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

"...is pleased to promise his most gracious pardon to any one of the said persons who shall discover his accomplices...
... a reward of fifty pounds for every one of the criminals who shall be discovered and apprehended."

Wheeler is now rapt. The seller returns the paper to him with a flourish. The passers-by applaud.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

Thanking you.

Wheeler takes the paper, and walks away in an exhilarated daze.

NEWSPAPER SELLER

Daily Journal! Day-lee, Jour-nal!

CUT TO -

INT. GARRET

Mary is in bed, in peach sunlight, looking over items of loot spread on the blanket in front of her and making notes in a ledger. Laundry hangs on a diagonal line across the ceiling. Rose snores piggishly beside her. She inspects watches, chains, rings.

Wheeler enters.

MARY

Did you get me grub and belch?

Wheeler tosses her items on the bed.

WHEELER

And the paper.

She checks everything is there; she is satisfied.

MARY

Your offerings please me.

She resumes sorting the loot. She gasps at a silver-framed picture of Charles I, and kisses it to amuse Wheeler, whose face is a mask. She checks the points on a pair of silver spurs, pretends to prick herself, and melodramatically sucks her thumb. She mimes drinking from a silver punch ladle, comically feigns drunkenness, and points to the slumbering Rose next to her. She begins putting on necklaces, one after another, until her neck is submerged; she makes melodramatic choking sounds. There are so many rings that she begins grotesquely threading them onto all her fingers, humming a happy melody and admiring her hands.

Wheeler smiles, despite himself.

Mary spots inscriptions on two of the rings.

MARY

"God did decree our unity."

(looking at Rose) Ha!

"Love entire is my desire."

(at Wheeler, and playing with her hair) Oooooooh! Well I never!

Wheeler chuckles.

MARY

A fair array of baubels and gingambobs. Here.

She holds out some money for Wheeler, who counts it, and places it in a box by his bed. He sits in the corner on his crib, arms around his knees.

Mary reaches into the wrapper of provisions and tears a hunk of bread off with her teeth. With her free hand, she snaps the newspaper open.

Wheeler watches to see where in the print she tarries. She reads for a while in silence, brow furrowed.

MARY

(chewing) Hmmmmmm.

WHEELER

What is it?

MARY

Ask no questions and hear no lies.

Oh... But hark at this.

"These villains..."

She points again at Rose, scrunches her face.

MARY

"These villains are called the Irish Clan, and have made it their practice to go in a body and rob several of the most noted farmhouses in Kent, Essex and Middlesex, and it is said they consist chiefly of haymakers."

(laughing) There is our notoriety writ large, Jake. They think we're bog-landers!

WHEELER

They're looking for us.

What will they do... What will they do to us if they find us?

MARY

They won't.

WHEELER

But what if they do?

MARY

Jake. We're letting things cool off for a bit. Since you and the boys have been hitting these...

(rolling her eyes) ...'noted farmhouses', especially this last one, I can bring in some decent coin for us. Just keep your gob shut and your cock clean.

Mary laughs in surprise at the bawdiness of her own joke.

She folds the paper, checks her ledger, and returns to the business of sorting the loot.

MARY

Now make yourself useful. Go on ahead to the Punch Bowl and let the others know me and the arch grunter here are on our way.

Mary notices him shooting a worried glance at the newspaper as he leaves. She slides over to the box next to Wheeler's cot, reclaims some of the money, and pads back to bed.

Mary elbows the mound next to her with some force. Rose, red-faced and sleepy, emerges confused from under the sheet. He reaches for the bottle on the nightstand, but Mary slaps his hand away, thrusts the paper in his face and points at a paragraph.

MARY

The good news is they think we're five Irish bang straws.

Well no, they think you're five Irish bang straws.

There's no mention of this here duchess.

The bad news is this:

"1. A tall black man, with his own black hair."

ROSE

Fielder?

MARY

"2. A middle-sized man with a large scar on his right cheek."

ROSE
Oh god.

MARY
"3. A middle-sized man disfigured with the smallpox."

ROSE
Hardly 'middle-sized', but Turpin.

MARY
'Disfigured.' Harsh but true.
"4. A middle-sized man."

ROSE
(laughs) Another one? That's the rest of us.

MARY
Wait for it: "5. A fresh-coloured lusty man, between 40 and 50
years of age."

ROSE
(head in hands) Fuck!

EXT. PUNCH BOWL INN, BLOOMSBURY, LONDON - DUSK

Horses noisily feed from meal sacks in a yard outside the inn; they are the distinctive set from Edgware, including Turpin's dappled grey.

Thomas Lawrence watches them, with three other men. He glances at something in the *Daily Journal*, looks again at the horses, and nods to the men. The men approach the horses, and double-tie their reins to their hitching posts, pulling the knots tight.

At a table in the rear of the

BAR

Turpin, Fielder, Rose and Wheeler sit around Mary, who is passing out money. All are nervous save her; they eye the door, but the inn is quiet. They serve themselves punch from a large bowl in front of them that hides Mary's activity.

MARY

Where's our scar-faced captain?

TURPIN

With Jeremy. Jasper has been taken.

There is a solemn hush.

TURPIN

For a robbery in Chingford December last. They have him at Chelmsford Gaol.

MARY

Again? Those boys can't get enough of the place. Alright, well Samuel will get his twelve pounds when he surfaces.

WHEELER

(shouted) Twelve? But mine was four!

The sour looks of the others shush him.

TURPIN

You get an apprentice's cut until we say otherwise.

Wheeler bristles with the injustice. Turpin passes him a glass.

TURPIN

Drink.

Wheeler knocks the glass out of Turpin's hand. It smashes.

The landlord crooks his neck to investigate the disturbance, but his attention is distracted by four men who enter and take seats, two on either side of the door. Turpin eyes them; they order drinks, exchange banter with the landlord.

WHEELER

I take the same risks. Can't sleep of a night for the things I've seen.

ROSE

Jake.

WHEELER

And what Sam done to the maid. No-one deserves that.
Just a girl. He took her -

Turpin grabs the leg of Wheeler's stool and drags the stool, with Wheeler, towards him.

ROSE

Jake. Go and ask the 'lord for a broom.

Wheeler stands, tearful. He slouches off towards the landlord. Rose waves her newspaper at Turpin.

ROSE

You seen this? Descriptions.

FIELDER

And of the horses.

MARY

(with venom) That true? About the maid?

Turpin directs their eyes to Wheeler, who is talking to the three men and shaking his head. Thomas Lawrence has a hand on Wheeler's shoulder. The men look over.

Turpin fingers the whistle at his neck. He drinks, stands, and steps backwards and away, out of their line of sight.

Mary calmly starts putting away her things, and leaves the table.

MARY

Call of nature.

Fielder and Rose watch these movements with incredulity; it's as if time has slowed to a trickle of amber.

Mary walks dead-eyed past Wheeler and the three men towards the inn door, tipping her hat at Thomas Lawrence as she leaves. One of the men moves to block her way; Thomas Lawrence gestures for him to let her pass, and redirects the men's attention back to the table she has vacated.

ROSE

(breathless) Mary?

Wheeler, panicking, looks over at Rose and Fielder, and begins backing away from the men towards them.

Thomas Lawrence stretches to grab his collar. Wheeler is open-mouthed with fear as he begins to struggle.

CUT TO -

EXT. YARD

where Turpin frantically saws at his horse's reins with his butcher's knife.

CUT TO -

INT. INN

and the midst of a frantic scramble: Rose and Fielder fumble for their pistols but the three other men rush them, with the landlord. The punch bowl is pushed to the floor, smashes. The fight is raw, desperate, like clashing packs of hostile predators. Fielder uses his height and power to sling one of the men across the room; the landlord is upon him from behind, dragging him down with a chokehold. His victim recovers, and delivers a running stamp to Fielder's midriff.

CUT TO -

EXT. YARD

and the snapping of the last fibres of the reins against Turpin's blade.

CUT TO -

INT. INN

Rose swings his fists, possessed, but he is quickly winded and punched hard into submission. Wheeler, snarling and screaming, is slapped down repeatedly by Thomas Lawrence, who finally pins him to the ground with his knee.

Wheeler stares from the floor in dizzy astonishment at the melee, and at the open window near the group's table.

CUT TO -

the exhilarated face of Turpin, who is racing away on his grey horse through the thronging Bloomsbury evening, the shortened reins bunched in his fists. Pedestrians scatter. A man pulling a cart, crossing the alley, blocks his way. Turpin pulls back on the reins; the horse sets itself for the leap. With a shout, Turpin spurs the horse, which jumps the cart, clipping it with its hooves, sending a spray of corn spilling onto the cobblestones. The horse lands heavily, recovers. Then, at a gallop, Turpin and his horse are gone, swallowed up and lost to the hectic London streets.

EPISODE 3: TURPIN THE HIGHWAYMAN

"The Highway is never about" ~ Gnomologia

INT. OFFICE OF JUSTICE - DAY

A grandfather clock, clunkily ticking.

A stern Justice, SIR ROBERT HIND, stares hard, one by one, at three bruised and bloodied men standing before him in shackles - Wheeler, Rose, and Fielder - and waits.

TITLE - BLOOMSBURY, LONDON, 1735

MRS HIND stands behind the Justice in a corner of the room; her eyes are fixed on Wheeler, who fiddles with the shackles on his wrists. Wheeler feels her gaze; he looks away.

HIND

Gentlemen let me exhort you again. And remind you that the decision before you is a grave one. Confess to your participation in these robberies and the country may extend to you some small measure of its mercy.

The men fidget. Fielder stares back at Hind with defiance; Rose puffs out his cheeks and looks at the ceiling. Wheeler looks at the faces of these two men, his own face desperate.

HIND

Maintain this silence, however, and I will have no hesitation in promptly signing your mittimus.

Mrs Hind approaches her husband and whispers something in his ear. He nods, reproached. He looks specifically at Wheeler.

HIND

Your mittimus... is a warrant that will condemn you to Newgate - that "emblem of hell itself".

Wheeler's nose flares as he fights back tears.

HIND

And, thereafter, to your fate. As if hell were not enough.

He smiles thinly at this wit to Mrs Hind, who does not acknowledge it. She looks only at Wheeler.

Mrs Hind frowns at Wheeler with a tiny, searching shake of the head, her eyes kind. Wheeler's eyes shine with the terror of a prey animal.

Hind archly sighs in exasperation.

HIND

"The mischief that one man can do as a thief is a very trifle to what he may be the occasion of as an agent or concealer of felons."

More silence.

HIND

So be it.

CUT TO -

the STREET

outside, where guards hold back a bristling mob from a cart, horses and driver in the street. Wheeler, Rose and Fielder are led by other guards to the cart, but their path is blocked by the mob, and they are heckled and spat on; a few blows land. Hind and Mrs Hind watch at their door.

Rose and Fielder are manhandled into the cart; they duck and sway to avoid missiles, bump against each other, and push each other away.

ROSE

(to driver) Get us to the block house, princeton!
(to Fielder) Open to the janizaries like a pair of carted whores!

Fielder points towards the mob's edge.

FIELDER

Wheeler.

Wheeler has become separated from the other two, and driven back towards the Hinds.

The driver widens his eyes over the crowd at Hind, awaiting instruction. As the mob flail at Wheeler, Mrs Hind snatches his sleeve and pulls him towards her and behind her guards.

Rose notices this with alarm, and begins to panic.

ROSE

The old scab has him.

Rose and Fielder stare at each other, anxiety rising.

ROSE & FIELDER
Jake!!!

Wheeler looks from the cart to Mrs Hind, back and forth, torn and afraid.

Rose is hit hard in the face with a thrown apple, retrieves it, and lobs it weakly with shackled hands back into the mob.

ROSE
Jake!
(pounding chest) This is *clan*, boy! Clan!

MRS HIND
(to Wheeler) Listen to me.

HIND
Get the boy in the cart for God's sake.

Mrs Hind glares at her husband, and takes Wheeler's face in her hands.

MRS HIND
Jake. If you get in that carriage to Newgate with those men, you will die.

Wheeler stretches to see Rose's face. Rose makes a locking motion at his lips.

ROSE
Jake! Stand buff, boy! Stand buff!

MRS HIND
There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

ROSE
Think of Mary! Mary will hang, Jake! She'll hang!

Wheeler pulls his face away from Mrs Hind's hands. His eyes meet and hold Rose's for a moment.

MRS HIND
You have a choice, Jake.

ROSE
(roaring) Wheeler!!! You will never sleep sound! Never!

Rose and Fielder watch as Mrs Hind leads Wheeler back towards the house. She turns and looks back at Rose, who is silenced by this finality.

Hind signals to the driver, and the cart breaks from the mob towards Newgate. Wheeler turns to watch it disappear into the chasing crowd.

EXT. 'THIEVING LANE', WESTMINSTER - NIGHT

Damp wood spits in a crackling bonfire lit against the cold. Women drink from jugs and bottles; men tear and snap spokes from the wheel of a broken cart and feed them to the fire.

The ochre glow illuminates a barber's window. Within, in dim candlelight, the barber holds a patron's nose and begins shaving his moustache with an enormous straight razor.

A chamber pot is emptied from above. The men and women around the fire scatter and curse as the effluent splashes around them; the fire hisses.

Inside a

CHANDLER'S SHOP

Mary drinks punch in a corner. LLOYD, the owner, looks out at the street through his window at the sound of the kerfuffle outside.

He pours Mary more punch.

LLOYD

Where my wife goes, trouble follows.

MARY

Been gone a good while.

LLOYD

Married a good while. Sick of the sight of me.

Mary sucks her teeth, narrows her eyes.

LLOYD

Checking in on her mother, like I said...

Mary eyes the window, then a group of drinkers at the next table. One of them takes off his tricorne hat and adjusts his wig, scratching hard. He places the hat beside him. Mary drinks, watching.

Back outside in

THIEVING LANE

Thomas Lawrence strides with his group of men towards the chandler's shop, led by a boy with a lighted rush for a torch. A plump woman, MRS LLOYD, struggles to keep up.

THOMAS LAWRENCE
You are certain?

MRS LLOYD
Those eyes? Yes. Like a cat, she is. And the way she looks at Mr Lloyd...

The group's path is blocked by the bonfire; a drunk woman swoons at Lawrence and paws his clothing. He bats her hands away and pushes an aggrieved drunk man in the chest, sending him cascading backwards. The group presses on through the clearing rabble, stepping over prone sleeping bodies and debris from the cart.

Inside the

CHANDLER'S SHOP

Lloyd registers something at the window. He turns to address Mary.

LLOYD
Here she -

Mary's corner is empty; her spilled punch cup rolls across the table onto the floor.

In the

LANE

Thomas Lawrence and the group stop at the door to the chandler's shop. Mrs Lloyd hides behind them.

Leaving, a small man bumps into Lawrence, and tips his tricorne apologetically, catching his eye.

Thomas Lawrence steps into the doorway, freezes, looks back into the street at the small man, and with one fluid motion grabs his coat collar and spins him around.

Mary cocks her head to one side and grins. She holds a pistol at Lawrence's chest. Lawrence slides his thumb between the hammer and the frizzen.

Thomas Lawrence wraps her collar in his fist and pulls her face towards his.

Mary hisses.

THOMAS LAWRENCE
(hissing back) Where are the others?

EXT. CAVE, WALTHAM FOREST - DUSK

Midges crisscross the smoky fire light at the mouth of a forest cave. Turpin, Samuel, Jeremy, and Haines sit exhausted, faces filthy. They empty and pass out meagre bundles of loot: bread, full bottles, paltry trinkets, a bundle of shirts. Rowden tends the fire. They break bread, open the bottles.

Turpin throws Rowden a shirt.

ROWDEN
That's it? Camesas? You stripped the ken and all you got is comesas?

SAMUEL
If you're not going to be at the sharp end with us you can keep your mouth shut.

ROWDEN
Someone had to watch the cave.

TURPIN
The farmer ran us off with his dogs.
Besides. You'll be in want of a fresh shirt soon enough.

JEREMY
He's in want of one now. Stinking hog-grubber.

TURPIN
Make yourself comfortable. This is home until the hunt turns cold.
Rowden coughs on his drink.

ROWDEN
And then?

TURPIN
Back to the city. But separate. They know we're a crew.

JEREMY
Wheeler. *Whiddler*.

Jeremy spits into the fire.

JEREMY
Little turncoat.

SAMUEL
We go back for Jasper.

TURPIN
Madness.

SAMUEL
He's our brother.

TURPIN
He's *your* brother. Chelmsford? With this heat on us?
It's not Newgate. And you, sirrah, are no Jack Sheppard.
You'll hang. Together.

ROWDEN
With Rose and Fielder. And Mary.

TURPIN
Marinated - to the Americas - if she's lucky.

JEREMY
To Mary-land.

The men ignore his pun.

HAINES
(to Samuel) I'm with you.

Samuel slaps his shoulder.

SAMUEL
So there *is* one gentry cove among us. Rowden?

ROWDEN
I'll ride with Turpin.

TURPIN
(laughing) Will you now.

The Gregory brothers stare at them, eyes like ice. Rowden is flustered. Turpin winks at him.

TURPIN
And after Saint Samuel performs this...
(crossing himself) Miracle of Chelmsford?

JEREMY
Boulo -

Jeremy is cut off by a hard slap to the face from Samuel.

TURPIN
Boulogne! Is it indeed!

Haines sits upright, interest piqued.

HAINES
(to Samuel) Really?

TURPIN
Mais oui, Monsieur 'Aines, mais oui!

Rowden laughs. Samuel's stare extinguishes his amusement.

TURPIN
Haines. I propose an exchange. That red coat for mine.

Haines considers.

HAINES
I did always prefer the collar on yours.

Turpin claps his hands, begins taking off his coat.

HAINES
But no.

The brothers laugh. Turpin slides his coat back on.

TURPIN
Got plenty of coin for full passage from Sussex then, have we?

Jeremy looks at his brother.

SAMUEL
The priority, you fucking by-blows, is Jasper.

TURPIN
Bon chance!

Turpin smiles, drinks. Samuel sneers, throws an arm around Jeremy's shoulder, and raises his bottle to Turpin.

SAMUEL

And may the road rise with you.
'Brother.'

INT. CELL, NEW PRISON, CLERKENWELL, LONDON - DAY

The letters 'JW', being scratched onto a wall with a fragment of flagstone, held by Wheeler. He sits alone in the corner of a dank cell. He tunelessly hums the bawdy-house ballad.

He ceases his chiselling at the sound of keys in the cell door.

GAOLER

Look lively, wheedler.

WHEELER

Sir?

GAOLER

Visitor.

Wheeler brightens, until he sees his visitor step into the cell. The visitor is carrying a stool, a bottle, and two cups.

Mason sets his stool down in front of Wheeler, cornering him. He pours two cups, and offers one to Wheeler.

MASON

Drink.

WHEELER

People always telling me to drink.

He takes a sip.

WHEELER

What we did, Mr Mason, I'm -

MASON

No, no. Shhhh. I'm here for information.

Wheeler hesitates, drains his cup, shudders. Mason refills it.

WHEELER

They talked about it all the time. About killing you.

MASON
The Gregorys?

WHEELER
Sam mostly. He bears a grudge. He doesn't forgive.

MASON
Ah. 'Bears a grudge'. Against me and my family?
For protecting the King's property?

WHEELER
Sam says it's everyone's property.
That we're starving - in our own country. Not even allowed to
snare conies.

MASON
And is that what you were doing, Jake? Snaring conies?

WHEELER
No... I never went on the hunt with them...

MASON
And yet together you saunter like nobility into my home.
Threatening and beating my wife and daughter.
My servant - sliced to ribbons like a pig.

The gaoler steps into the cell at the sound of Mason's anger. Mason
raises his hands at the gaoler in apology.

GAOLER
As you were.

The gaoler leaves. Mason refills Wheeler's already overflowing cup.

MASON
The Black Act protects us all Jake. Parliament protects us all.
From thievery. From idleness.

Wheeler shrugs, runs his fingers over his engraved initials.

MASON
Where do we find them? The brothers. Turpin. Haines. Rowden.

WHEELER
I already told the Justice everything. Turpin talked about a cave.
In Waltham Forest. Haines always follows the brothers.
Rowden, I don't know. Mary holds our stash in Dawes Street in
Westminster. I told Hind he should start there.

MASON
Mary Brazier is in Newgate, Jake.

Wheeler closes his eyes, strokes the wall.

Mason looks at Wheeler for a long time. The faint music of internment echoes around the cold stone walls: yells, cries, the remembered line of a ballad, the detested name of a sworn enemy.

WHEELER

They were family. I've got nobody else.

Mason exits with his stool, but leaves the bottle. Wheeler returns to his etching.

WHEELER

I've got nothing.

EXT. WALTHAM FOREST - DAY

Two horses crash from the forest into the free expanse of an open field. Both are ridden hard; one carries two men.

A third horse storms from the forest in pursuit.

The rider of the third horse, a STEWARD, aims his pistol. Samuel, passenger of the leading horse, sees this, flinches, and curses its rider.

SAMUEL

Move, Jeremy!

Haines arcs his horse away from the brothers and fires at their pursuer.

STEWARD

That horse - is the property - of the Earl of Suffolk!

SAMUEL

Hoof it, brother!

The brothers are higher than kites; on gin, at the chase itself, and at the quality of their prize. Haines, on a lesser horse, falls behind.

SAMUEL

Rattle, Mr Haines! Squeeze that willing tit till it's dry!

A farmhouse rears up on the horizon. The Gregorys and Haines veer away towards more distant fields. Some workers see the approaching drama and begin shouting as they run back towards the farmhouse.

Seeing this farmhouse, the steward drives his horse hard to divert the thieves back towards it, and fires. Samuel ducks, the shot tears Jeremy's tricorne off his head, and Samuel roars with delight. Jeremy squeals with shock.

The steward draws and cocks another pistol, and fires, aim unsteady. The Gregorys' horse collapses to the ground, throwing the brothers onto their faces.

Haines lurches his horse around to protect them as they retrieve their pistols.

The prone horse screams and kicks, its haunches covered in blood.

The steward angrily wheels around them at a distance; he struggles to handle his two pistols as he attempts to load both, and one is dropped.

SAMUEL

He has but one shot, boys.

The brothers stand clapped back-to-back, a pistol in each hand; Haines orbits them tightly as the steward circles, aiming.

The horse whinnies in pain. Jeremy points a pistol at its head.

STEWARD

No!!!

Samuel nods towards the farmhouse.

SAMUEL

Save your bullets, brother.

Three farmhands armed with billhooks and pitchforks run towards them. Samuel crouches behind his brother, and places a pistol on the ground next to the horse's head. He strokes its head, calming it, fascinated by its agony.

SAMUEL

Shhhhhhhh.

HAINES

Samuel... They are upon us...

Samuel pulls a knife from his coat, strokes the horse's face, runs the tip of the knife up and down its neck, and then plunges it hard into its throat, twisting. He is splattered in blood. The horse brays, kicks, and is still.

Aghast, the farmhands jog to the side of the steward. A tense stand-off now: Haines, Jeremy, the steward and the farmhands all have weapons raised.

Samuel wipes his bloody face and rises, a pistol again in each hand.

SAMUEL
Little bit of a misunderstanding.

STEWARD
That horse is the property of -

SAMUEL
Was. The property of The Earl of Sussex. Yes. Heard you the first time?

STEWARD
Lay down your pistols!

The farmhands step closer with their weapons. Samuel raises his eyebrows at them, licks his lips, points both his pistols at them. He looks at Jeremy and Haines, who register his intention, and point their own weapons away from the steward and at the farmhands.

There is a ripple of unease and confusion amongst the farmhands; they stare at the steward for instruction.

The steward's pistol remains pointed at Samuel.

SAMUEL
Now. We have five shots aimed on these innocents here.

HAINES
Six...

SAMUEL
H, H! Let's be gentlemen about this. I'm sure Suffolk here can count. Can't you, Suffolk?

Haines, flustered, drops one of his pistols.

SAMUEL
Five shots pointed at these good people, Suffolk. Is the Earl a gambling man? What would he make of those odds?

Smiling, Samuel looks at the steward, nods at the ground next to his mount, and looks at the steward again. The steward looks at the farmhands, considers, looks at the sky, and dismounts.

CUT TO -

The Gregorys, on the steward's horse, scream with Haines in joy and triumph, riding hard to their escape.

The farmhands watch them ride off into the distance, stare at the dead horse, and then stare at the steward, open mouthed.

The steward stares back, shrugging.

STEWARD
What?

CUT TO -

At a safe distance, the Gregorys and Haines slow to a canter. Haines claps hands with each brother.

HAINES
My bene coves.

Haines exhales, overcome by the moment.

I'm to Gravesend. I've a wife there can get me to Holland.
Jasper is...

SAMUEL
(to Jeremy) Jasper is a dead man.

They look at each other, in sombre recognition of the hard facts. Samuel cuffs Jeremy on the shoulder.

SAMUEL
(to Haines) A wife. Not your own, I wager!

HAINES
Not mine own.

The Gregorys tip their hats to him. Haines takes a moment, then spurs his horse and spins away.

Jeremy whistles at his brother's bloody face.

JEREMY
You need a bath.

Samuel looks out at the horizon.

SAMUEL
What I *need*, brother, is more *sport*.

Samuel laughs, his eyes alive with frenzy.

EXT. EDGWARE ROAD, LONDON OUTSKIRTS - DAWN

A still, solemn, yellow-white dawn. Turpin and Rowden, on horseback, stare upwards, their faces covered with kerchiefs - for disguise, but also against the stench. The silence is broken by the cawing of crows, and a metallic creaking. The horses paw the dusty road, unsettled.

Three skeletal bodies swing and turn in iron gibbets hung high above the ground. Their names are engraved on iron plates on the posts. Crows squabble over the decomposing flesh.

TURPIN

(pointing) Rose. Fielder. Jasper.

Rowden shakes off his nausea.

ROWDEN

The riveting is first rate. And the ironwork. Custom made. They've even studded the posts. Though why anyone would want to steal -

TURPIN

And no tarring.

The bodies. They spared no expense on the gibbets, but no tarring. So that we rot. They want everyone to taste it.

Turpin nudges his horse closer. Rowden anxiously watches the road.

Turpin pulls his kerchief below his chin and inhales, eyes closed.

TURPIN

Know what they say about us in the papers, Rowden?

What was it...

"Would they but be industrious, they might avoid being made shameful spectacles!"

Rowden spies horses and riders trotting closer in the distance.

ROWDEN

Turpin...

Turpin turns his horse back to Rowden, reaches into his coat, and passes him a small folded poster.

TURPIN

From the last turnpike.

Rowden hesitates to read, wary of the approaching horses.

TURPIN
Read it.

Rowden unfolds the poster, squints, and reads with difficulty, an index finger his guide.

ROWDEN
"The persons - undermentioned are charged upon - oath for committing several robberies in Essex, Middlesex..."

Turpin makes a circling gesture with his finger to hurry him.

ROWDEN
"... for each of whom a reward of £50 is advertised..."

The two horses and their riders pass, covering their mouths. Turpin pulls his kerchief back over his mouth.

TURPIN
(to the riders) Terrible business! A lesson to us all.
(to Rowden) Find yourself in the notice.

ROWDEN
"...Thomas Rowden is a little man, fresh coloured and full faced, pock-marked..."

Rowden touches his cheeks.

ROWDEN
"A pewterer by trade... Wears a green coat and a light wig..."

Rowden looks at his coat sleeves, and anxiously eyes the road again. Turpin scrutinises his own attire.

TURPIN
Should have taken Haines' coat. Seems we are in need of some reinvention.
A pewterer, were we?

ROWDEN
We were all something else once.

Rowden returns the poster. Turpin stares, fascinated, at the corpses in the gibbets above.

EXT. JETTY, GRAVESEND, KENT - NIGHT

A moth batters a lamp, wingdust exploding into the night. A sloop, marked *The Chandos*, sits moored at a jetty. There is candlelight within. A woman's loud, ecstatic moans travel across the water.

Inside a

CABIN

Haines and the woman, MRS CARROLL, make love with gusto. Laughing, Haines cups a hand over her mouth to muffle her sighs. She playfully bites his hand.

HAINES

You'll bring the whole port to the show!

Haines continues thrusting, and Mrs Carroll moans louder.

Outside near the

JETTY

two men approach the sloop in a rowing boat. They are the woman's husband, CARROLL, and his recruit for the ambush, FREELAND.

FREELAND

And you have this Haines in your employ?

CARROLL

Odd jobs, as a journeyman. Never warmed to the man. Pale as death, he is. Never liked his familiarity with my wife.

They hear the moans from the sloop.

FREELAND

She does seem entertained.

Carroll scowls.

They tie up the rowing boat and step on to the sloop - Freeland ahead, Carroll skulking - but their way is barred by the burly CHIEF MATE.

CHIEF MATE

Gentlemen?

FREELAND

We require a sight of passengers.

CHIEF MATE

To what purpose? We are about to set sail.

FREELAND

To apprehend a wanted man. Herbert Haines.

Freeland attempts to pass; the chief mate blocks him with a giant arm.

CHIEF MATE

No one by that name on the manifest.

CARROLL

The couple. The noisy... couple.

MRS CARROLL (O.S.)

Oh god YES!

CHIEF MATE

The amorous couple is the Butlers. Newlyweds.
Very happily married.

FREELAND

This Mr Butler. Is he pale?

MR CARROLL

Like death?

The chief mate looks at them in turn, chewing his inner lip.

CUT TO -

The door of the

CABIN

flying open. Mrs Carroll and Haines scramble to cover their modesty.

FREELAND

Herbert Haines?

HAINES

Fifty pounds! Fifty pounds for a blind eye. A fair price for our escape!

Haines rummages in his belongings. Freeland pins his hand to the floor with his boot.

CUT TO -

Freeland leads Haines from the boat in an armlock, twisting his head forward as he attempts one final glance at Mrs Carroll.

Carroll reaches out to Mrs Carroll. She looks him up and down and sneers.

EXT. A COCK PIT, PETERSFIELD, HAMPSHIRE - DAY

Two spurred, mangled and torn cockerels slash and peck at each other in a flurry of dust, blood and feathers. A rowdy audience jostles, yells encouragement and exchanges bets. Tobacco smoke drifts above them. Watching eagerly from the benches are Samuel and Jeremy.

SAMUEL

Have 'im, Sir Cackler. Have that little capon.

An ARTIST sits sketching the scene with his pug dog, which follows the action intently and licks its muzzle. The artist notices a group of small boys, who appear thrilled by the gruesome spectacle.

ARTIST

And tortured victims bleeding show the tyrant in the boy.

The owners of the cockerels separate them momentarily to survey the damage.

Samuel gets the attention of a BOOKIE.

SAMUEL

Two guineas on Sir Cackler there.

Samuel's coat flaps open as he pays, revealing a pistol in his belt. Two watching young SAILORS notice the weapon. The first sailor indicates to the other, on his own cheek, Samuel's prominent scar.

The cockerel owners resume the fight. Sir Cackler tears at its opponent, inflicting a grievous wound.

JEREMY

Yes Sir!

A murmur of interest in the brothers has spread around the cockpit from the sailors. As Jeremy enjoys the final stages of the cockfight, Samuel notices the gathering unease and hurries the Bookie for his winnings.

BOOKIE

There is fight in the other yet.

SAMUEL

He's finished, man!

The bookie shrugs. Seething, Samuel looks around him. More and more eyes are now staring back. Samuel stands.

SAMUEL

(to Jeremy) Show's over.

Jeremy, outraged, points to the carnage in the pit.

JEREMY
Our two guineas?

Samuel indicates their present danger with the flick of his eyes. They leave in haste.

The two sailors watch them leave, and slowly rise to follow.

EXT. FIELD - DUSK

A meadow stretches behind to infinity. Ahead there are woods, and bluebells cover the ground, leading into the trees. Turpin crouches to pick some of these flowers; he crushes the petals, inhales their scent from his fingers. He looks up a sky bruised with violet, cobalt.

He stands, feels a tug on his fingers. He looks down to see Chris, who is holding his hand, smiling back at him. Chris holds up his toy rooster for Turpin to see.

CHRIS
Have you finished plucking the chickens?

TURPIN
Do what?

From the woods ahead, there is the sound of bells: a soft ringing, like silver striking silver. He stands and walks towards the treeline. In the darkness beyond the trees, inchoate figures approach. He hears female voices, neither adult nor child, hidden in the bells, calling his name. The sky darkens to crimson.

VOICES
Richard?

CUT TO -

The clanging of a fork against a metal cup. Turpin wakes in a

MEADOW - DAWN

with Rowden standing over him, cup and fork in hand.

ROWDEN
Dick? Wake up. Food.
And I made some bullets.

Rowden nods to a bullet-mould on the ground, and returns to stirring something in a pot over a fire. Turpin sits up; a bottle rolls from his blanket. He looks around, dazed, half his mind still lost in the dream.

EXT. FLYING BULL ALEHOUSE, HAMPSHIRE - DUSK

On the sign for the Flying Bull alehouse, a comically impressive horned bull with wings leaps gleefully into the air.

BULL LANDLORD (O.C.)
Refreshment for our travellers?

Inside the

BAR

Samuel approaches the counter.

SAMUEL
Beer, ham and eggs.

He looks around, assesses the patronage.

SAMUEL
And a room?

BULL LANDLORD
You're in luck.

Samuel brings beers to Jeremy, who has found the dimmest corner of the tavern.

SAMUEL
Bed for the night.

JEREMY
Should have made more distance.

Samuel softly drums a repeated rhythm on the table.

SAMUEL
We made plenty. At dawn we rattle. We're alright here 'til morning. These are country people. No bother.

JEREMY
Country people talk. The cockfight? It's you who left our two guineas behind.

SAMUEL

Gamblers are excitable. These are farmers. Horse people.
Trustworthy.
(winking) Like me.

JEREMY

God help us.

SAMUEL

To Jasper.

JEREMY

Jasper.

They take deep drafts of their beers.

Across the room, unseen, the two sailors drink and watch. They exchange looks with the Bull landlord, who eyes the Gregorys and twists a rag hard inside a tankard.

INT. BEDROOM, FLYING BULL ALEHOUSE - DAWN

The Gregorys slumber, snoring, limbs across each other, like two warm and blissful toddlers.

Samuel wakes, stretches and rouses Jeremy. They dress. Samuel looks out of a small window at a misty sunrise.

They descend the stairs.

Waiting at the bottom are the landlord, the two sailors, and two farmers.

The landlord points a shotgun; strapped over his shoulder is a munitions bag. The sailors are armed with a pistol and cutlass each; the farmers carry shotguns.

BULL LANDLORD

Surrender yourselves lads. There are more men outside.

The brothers scramble back up the stairs. The landlord sends a volley of lead into the staircase. The landlord reloads.

The Gregorys barricade themselves in the room with a chair, but scatter as another shot blows a hole in the door.

Shots are exchanged through the hole. One of the farmers is hit, and tumbles back down the staircase.

The first sailor smashes through the door into the room. Samuel lunges, and tackles him to the floor. Enraged, Samuel manages to grapple the cutlass around and towards the sailor, and begins pushing the edge of the cutlass into his throat.

Jeremy fumbles with a reload, and is shot by the second farmer in the groin. He wails as his breeches stain with blood, and shuffles backwards onto the bed.

Distracted, Samuel loses his grip of the cutlass and is kicked backwards by the first sailor. He rises, dizzy, sees the wounded Jeremy, and is about to leap at the second farmer when he is slashed full and deep across the face by the second sailor's cutlass. The blow stuns him, and he staggers. The tip of his nose is gone, and blood streams from a gaping cut on his left cheek.

The landlord aims his shotgun close at Samuel's forehead. Exhausted, Samuel raises his arms in surrender.

Jeremy whimpers in pain on the bed.

SAMUEL

(gurgling) Good morning, gentlemen. Any chance of some breakfast?

INT. COURTROOM, OLD BAILEY, LONDON - DAY

Mary's emerald eyes.

She stands in the dock, squinting at the daylight hitting her face from a mirrored reflector above her. She struggles to focus her gaze on Wheeler, who waits, fidgeting, in the witness dock. Thomas Lawrence watches from the stalls.

A voice booms from one of the JUDGES before her, his face fuzzy in the shadows.

JUDGE

Mary Johnson otherwise Brazier...

Mary raises her shackled hands.

JUDGE

Otherwise Rose widow afterwards...

Mary ducks and swerves the sunlight to glare at Wheeler, who stares ahead at the judge.

JUDGE

...To wit on the sixteenth day of February at the parish of St Margaret Westminster the said silver picture of King Charles the first washed with gold, the said mourning ring with a cypher...

The judge's voice fades from Mary's attention as he reads the bill of stolen goods. Wheeler catches her eye, holds her gaze.

JUDGE

Mr Wheeler?

Wheeler jumps at the judge's raised voice.

WHEELER

After we had robbed Lawrence, we carried the goods to Joseph Rose's lodging near the Black Horse Inn in the Broadway. We laid the goods on the table and appraised them among ourselves. Rose agreed to take them at the price and to pay us our shares.

He points at Mary.

WHEELER

And then they were delivered to the prisoner. We told her where and how we got them. Rose lay with the prisoner.
(voice tight) I lay at his back.

We see Rose and Mary having sex; Wheeler lies in the same bed with them, masturbating under the blanket, frightened but ecstatic. Mary offers Wheeler her fingers, which he sucks.

Wheeler snaps out of his reverie.

WHEELER

In about two days she sold most of the goods, and paid the money to him...
(to Mary) When I was in the New Prison she broke open my box which was left in her room.

Mary looks away from him and directly into the reflected sunlight.

WHEELER

And robbed me of fifteen pounds in money.

Wheeler continues to stare at her while the judge confers with the foreman of the jury.

JUDGE

Mrs Rose, you agreed you were willing to put yourself upon your country, and have been found guilty.

Thomas Lawrence claps loudly, but is silenced by a frown from the judge.

JUDGE

You are sentenced to transportation to His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in America for a term of fourteen years. May you spend the remainder of your life demonstrating you are a fit object of this mercy.

Thomas Lawrence falls back in his seat and throws his hands up in exasperation. Wheeler's body sags in relief.

Mary stares fiercely at Wheeler. And then winks. Wheeler watches her being led away out of the sunlight, into the gloom.

EXT. WANDSWORTH COMMON, LONDON - DUSK

Into a rust-red sunset, three travellers - OMAR, VANE and BRADFORD - ride west across an open common. Omar pushes ahead, irritated at the slow pace.

OMAR

Will you not make haste?

Vane and Bradford exchange smiles.

VANE

Who waits on you? Is she that impatient?

Vane and Bradford laugh.

BRADFORD

(singing) "Tell me with what air
He approached the fair,
And how she could, with patience bear,
All he did and uttered..."

BRADFORD & VANE

(lustily) "He still addressed,
Still caressed, kissed and pressed,
Sung, prattled, laughed and fluttered..."

Omar pulls his horse around to face theirs.

OMAR

(hushed) Madness! Have you not read the new Proclamation?
They are everywhere now!
Abroad on these very commons!

BRADFORD

Yes. And I also read the new reward is a hundred pounds for discovering and apprehending such offenders.

TURPIN

Such offenders as? (O.S.)

The men turn to see the mounted Turpin and Rowden emerging from the eastern darkness.

As they instinctively spur their horses, Rowden brings his horse around to prevent their escape, pistol raised.

TURPIN

Stand, gentlemen. And bleed freely.

Their bluster abandoned, Bradford and Vane join Omar in surrendering their purses. Omar sees Turpin's pockmarks, and gawps, fascinated and afraid.

OMAR

It is you...

Turpin, caught off guard, pulls his kerchief up to his eyes.

OMAR

"Heavily marked," I read...

TURPIN

Enough! Deliver!

OMAR

"Heavily marked with the pox..."

Raging, Turpin pulls his horse alongside Omar's and puts his pistol to his head, ready to fire. Omar cowers. Rowden snatches the pistol from Turpin's hand.

Bradford and Vane look at each other, considering their options, but the moment has gone. With a nod, Rowden returns Turpin's pistol. They pocket the purses.

Turpin notices the sparkle of the gold lace on Omar's black tricorne hat. He swipes it from Omar's head, and puts it on his own.

TURPIN

Unmount.

The men are frozen with inaction.

TURPIN
(bellowing) Unmount! Or God help me!

The men dismount, recoiling.

TURPIN
Unbridle the horses.

Turpin turns the horses adrift with a shout. They gallop away, whinnying into the darkness.

TURPIN
And remember, gentlemen, how civilly we have used you!

Turpin and Rowden spur their horses westward, leaving the three travellers helpless on the common. Newly hatless, Omar adjusts his wig.

Turpin and Rowden gallop to a safe distance, and then slow to a canter.

ROWDEN
We are known now. Notorious. You will need to stay that temper.

Turpin abruptly pulls up his horse, trots alongside Rowden. There are quiet, dead seconds; then he grabs Rowden by the collar. Turpin pulls his kerchief back down to his neck.

TURPIN
(snarling) So let them know me.

EXT. COURTYARD, NEWGATE PRISON, LONDON - DAY

A phalanx of ten armed, mounted guards escorts a straight-backed convict into Newgate, also mounted. His face is bandaged across his cheeks and nose. The bandages are spotted with bloodstains. His hands are cuffed to the saddle horn; his ankles are bound with chains that cross under the horse's belly.

He is removed from the horse, and led, still cuffed and manacled, to a gloomy, empty cell, where he is chained to the floor.

SAMUEL
(looking around) A palace, brothers.

He notices a nub of a candle in a small pyramid of clay.

SAMUEL
Where are the candles when you need them, eh?

Samuel tries a quick rhythm of manacles on stone, but bores quickly. He begins gingerly removing his bandages, and starts to sing instead:

SAMUEL

"There lives an ale-draper near New-palace-yard,
Who used to jerk the bum of his wife..."

There are loud and angry entreaties for him to shut up from adjacent cells.

SAMUEL

(louder) "And she was forced to stand on her guard,
To keep his clutches from her quoiff..."

A guard lets a visitor, Thomas Lawrence, into the cell. He sits on a stone bench opposite.

SAMUEL

Had they warned me I was due visitors already I would have taken more trouble. But welcome to my new home. Needs a woman's touch, so your visit is well timed. Bring any candles?

THOMAS LAWRENCE

The guard told me your brother is already passed. My condolences.

Samuel is still peeling off his bandages, but his manacles make the task a laborious one. A livid wound is revealed on one cheek, mirroring the old scar on the other.

SAMUEL

Thigh bone shattered. At least he had gin. He didn't know me at the end. Small mercies. Either that or the noose.
Anyway. You are?

Samuel peels the last bandage from the wreck of his nose, now a large, festering hollow. Lawrence draws breath, gags.

SAMUEL

(bucolic) The promise of my beauty draws them from every corner of our land. Feast your eyes.

Lawrence grimaces.

THOMAS LAWRENCE

I am Thomas Lawrence.

SAMUEL

Ah. Yes. I shod your father's horses.

THOMAS LAWRENCE

And you repaid our generosity by robbing us, torturing my father
and raping our maidservant.

SAMUEL

Mr Lawrence, you paid everybody very well. And, therefore, I
thought you must be very rich.

Lawrence takes in this wounded creature, its glib, unrepentant chaos.

THOMAS LAWRENCE

Where did it come from? This enmity? This malice?

*We see a terrified Wheeler testifying against a bandaged Samuel in
the Old Bailey, where Samuel, foaming at the mouth with fury, is
lunging at Wheeler, and has to be restrained by several guards.*

SAMUEL

The malice of us "loose and disorderly sort of people"?

Samuel looks at his manacles.

SAMUEL

You ever seen a farrier's tools?

Lawrence stares back at him.

SAMUEL

Course you haven't. A good farrier, a really good farrier, keeps a
big set. Never know what you might need. Some jobs are easy. Some
jobs need a bit more force.

He licks his teeth.

SAMUEL

Sometimes we use a lancet.

Samuel leans forward.

SAMUEL

And sometimes, Mr Lawrence, we use a sledgehammer.

Lawrence rises to leave.

THOMAS LAWRENCE

May God have mercy on your soul.

SAMUEL

(laughing) D'you think he will?

EXT. EDGWARE ROAD, GIBBETS - DAY

Blazing sun. A small chirping bird, a blue tit, busily flutters around rusty iron; the umber streaks are like dried blood on a sword. Bodies hang and creak in gibbets.

We see Samuel's head, emaciated, jaws wide, eye-sockets empty. The remains of his tattoo is faded black lines across the torn dry skin on his ribcage, but the writing survives.

A COUNTRYMAN on horseback has stopped to look. He stretches up from his stirrups to read the name plates on the posts.

COUNTRYMAN

Jeremy Gregory. Herbert Haines.

Samuel Gregory.

"God damn you... stand..."

He is startled by the bird, which suddenly flies out from behind Samuel's desiccated head.

CUT TO -

He returns with a ladder, which he places against Samuel's gibbet-post. He takes a moment to steady his nerves, and checks the road in each direction. He climbs, wincing at the stench.

In the crook of the corpse's neck, in rags between its shoulder and ear, is a nest, where a trio of baby birds cheep in distress. The countryman shushes them, and gently removes them from the nest.

COUNTRYMAN

There there, my little angels. There there, my little pots of gold.

EXT. WATLING STREET, LONDON - DUSK

Thousands of candles light a thoroughfare of busy markets doing their final business of the day. A TRADER gives instructions to two burly porters, who ready a large crate each onto their backs, straining. They are Jackie and Randolph, the brothers from the boxing match.

TRADER

Two shillings for the quickest to return.

(laughing) Alight!

The brothers good-naturedly jostle before breaking into a jog, and swerve their way through the early-evening commotion. Jackie strides ahead of a horse and cart, which blocks Randolph's path. Jackie looks back in triumph.

His view cleared of the departing cart, Randolph trots on, smiling in defeat. Ahead of him, Jackie is rooted to the spot, looking at something ahead. He puts down his crate.

Randolph lowers his own crate. They stare in awe at two well-dressed horsemen who calmly guide their horses through the hubbub, like royalty in exile.

RANDOLPH
Turpin.

JACKIE
Then the other must be...

RANDOLPH
Rowden. You know it's -

JACKIE
A hundred pounds. Yes.

Sensing their discovery, Turpin turns and glares.

TURPIN
(to Rowden) Look lively.

ROWDEN
Friends of yours?

TURPIN
I've drunk with them. Brothers. Boxers both.

ROWDEN
Then let's not outstay our welcome.

They head east onto

LONDON BRIDGE

where Rowden slows his horse. He reaches out and pulls on Turpin's coat sleeve to halt him.

Rowden looks back at the busy Cheapside streets, and then out at the moonlit water, where lamp-lit barges navigate the Thames. St Paul's Cathedral rests like a colossal skull under the night sky, its cross glinting on the crown of the dome.

Rowden readies himself to speak, hesitates.

TURPIN
Speaking of porters - you carrying a load, Rowden?

ROWDEN

We are recognized everywhere, Dick. Everywhere. Barnes, Wandsworth, Blackheath, Epping, Hounslow. Here, in the City. Haines dead now. The last Gregorys dead.

TURPIN

Slow of mind. Careless. All of them.

ROWDEN

And look at us. Riding like conquerors through London.

TURPIN

First pewterer, now poet. They will know you as Pewter the Great.

Rowden sighs. They watch the bobbing lamps of the water traffic, listen to the calls of the watermen.

ROWDEN

I read about Sam. In the Evening Post. At Tyburn, at the end. They say he laughed during the prayers, and looked about him at the mob, without the least concern. Even when they threw dirt in his face.

TURPIN

A man of no substance.

ROWDEN

And Haines - went calmly to the gallows, and behaved there like a gentleman. Decent.

TURPIN

Weak. A fop.

ROWDEN

Dead. Decent or no, fop or no. Dead.

TURPIN

Does this sermon have an end?

ROWDEN

As he walked to the scaffold, a man gave Haines wine. Haines whispered to him, and then said, "Take care of what I told you."

TURPIN

A trifle. A message to his bitch.

ROWDEN

And if not? And does it matter? Every alehouse, every chandler's shop, every cockpit. Whispers and chancers and opportunists. It's a hundred pounds. Wouldn't you be alert to us?

Turpin takes a flask from his coat, offers it to Rowden. They share a drink, enjoy its kick.

A gruff, tight handshake.

TURPIN

Well then. Gloucestershire?

ROWDEN

Family there still. If they'll have me. You?

Turpin looks out at the water.

TURPIN

"Take care of what I told you," he says!

Turpin taps his temple with a finger, and rides away across the bridge.

EXT. COURTYARD, NEW PRISON, CLERKENWELL - DAWN

The hungry croaking of ravens. The keeper of the prison unlocks a gate, and beckons to someone standing behind him in the dark.

Wheeler, more man than boy now, steps out into the crisp daylight. He shivers.

He turns to the keeper, as if in expectation of a farewell, or an exhortation of some kind. The keeper looks him up and down, shakes his head, walks back through the gate into the prison, and locks it behind him.

Wheeler hesitates. He opens a purse, sifts through his last shillings. He hurries off into the early business of the London morning, and is gone.

EXT. DOCK, DOVER - DAWN

The whitecaps of a choppy sea lap against a docked packet boat. Passengers board as the boat gently sways. The FIRST MATE ticks names off a roll.

FIRST MATE

Name?

TURPIN

Palmer. John Palmer.

FIRST MATE
Alighting at Ostend?

TURPIN
On to Rotterdam.

The first mate collects his money, nods him aboard.

Turpin walks to the prow, and looks out at the dark bands of rain on the horizon.

CUT TO -

Turpin throws up over the side, as the boat lurches in the wind and rain. He spits, wipes his mouth. A friendly hand claps him on the back.

PASSENGER
Beter eruit dan erin, landlubber. Beter eruit dan erin.

CUT TO -

A bearded Turpin on a busy

DOCK - DAY

with sleeves rolled up high, loading crates. Seagulls cry, circling. Around him, fishermen salt herring and drop them in barrels. Dutch conversation and banter flow around him, but exclude him. He stops to rest, sits on a crate, wipes his brow.

DOCKER
Palmer!

The docker mimes a spoon to the mouth.

DOCKER
Het is etenstijd.

CUT TO -

A dockside

TAVERN - DUSK

Where groups of boisterous fisherman and dockers drink, eat, laugh.

Turpin sits alone, writing.

INT. ALEHOUSE, PUCKERIDGE, HERTFORDSHIRE - NIGHT

In a corner of a quiet village alehouse, by a window, Beth Turpin frets with an opened letter while her father, MILLINGTON, eyes the door. The landlord watches them. Millington smiles at the landlord, and lifts his tankard.

MILLINGTON
(to Beth) Put that away.

The landlord approaches with Millington's refill.

LANDLORD
Anything for the young lady?

Beth wordlessly declines.

MILLINGTON
My daughter will have a gin. Won't you Beth.

Beth shrugs an affirmative.

MILLINGTON
Holland, you say.

Beth checks the letter.

BETH
Rotterdam.

MILLINGTON
Put. That. Away.

Beth clutches the letter to her breast. The landlord places a cup in front of her. She ignores it.

MILLINGTON
(to landlord) News of her mother. Not good.

LANDLORD
Then I'll leave you to your business.

As he leaves, Millington snatches the letter from Beth's hand.

Beth, indignant, wrenches it back.

BETH
As if you could read it.

MILLINGTON
Fair penmanship. I know that much.

BETH
Smith taught him.

MILLINGTON
Now that was a fine young man. Why couldn't you have married him?

BETH
I don't remember you objecting to Richard at the time.

MILLINGTON
His father is a decent man in a decent profession and I thought
Turpin would at least amount to that.

They brood. Beth changes her mind about her gin and drains it in one.

MILLINGTON
So what's he been up to in Amsterdam?

BETH
Rotterdam.

MILLINGTON
More robbery and mayhem?

BETH
Lying low, he says. Honest work on the dock.

MILLINGTON
'Honest work.' Butchery is honest work. Running an alehouse is
honest work.

Millington smiles again at the landlord's eavesdropping.

BETH
He had a fair stab at being a butcher.
The Black Act put paid to that.

MILLINGTON
Since when did the law forbid the honest slaughter of cows and
sheep?

BETH
Those deer -

A STRANGER enters the alehouse and speaks to the landlord, hat shading his face, his back to the room. He leaves the bar with a tankard in hand, tips his hat to acknowledge Millington and Beth, and takes a seat at an adjacent table.

Beth and Millington exhale; Millington in relief, Beth in disappointment.

BETH

(voice lowered) Those deer belong to the land. They belong to the people.

MILLINGTON

King's deer.

BETH

Hundreds of years they belong to the people, and then the King decides he wants them all to himself?

MILLINGTON

If I steal what's yours,
it's no less a crime if it *ought* to be my own.

BETH

It isn't fair.

MILLINGTON

And so by rights the property of those farmers belongs to him too?
Linen and jewellery and good plate?

BETH

He was desperate.

MILLINGTON

(voice rising) He's a rogue!

Flustered, Millington smiles at the stranger and the landlord, and looks at his tankard, by way of explanation.

BETH

He just wants to see our daughter.

MILLINGTON

Safer at home. I told you. Until we've made the measure of him.

BETH

Says he's a changed man.

MILLINGTON

Indeed. For the worse.

Beth strains to look outside, but sees nothing.

BETH

(rising, whispered) He's here. I know he's here.

STRANGER
Miscreants.

MILLINGTON
Sir?

STRANGER
Forgive me, but I overheard. About the deer stealers. May I?

The stranger sits with them, removes his hat. We recognise Martin Bladen.

Millington is uncomfortable, but interested in the parlay; Beth is quietly distraught, trapped. She grips the letter tightly. She rises; Millington stays her.

MILLINGTON
Excuse my daughter's rudeness.

BLADEN
Not at all. I'd welcome her thoughts. You see, deer stealing is a natural nursery for the breeding of robbers and housebreakers. These kind of people originally set out, with a full persuasion, that the King has no property.

Millington nods his agreement. Beth steams.

Beth rises again, resolute.

BETH
(to Millington) Would you prevent a lady from using the privy?
Millington is stuck; he lets her push past.

BETH
(to Bladen) Excuse, me sir.

Bladen watches her leave.

BLADEN
Then, by an easy graduation, they soon come to believe that nobody else has any property either.

MILLINGTON
Well said, sir.

BLADEN
And when they are disappointed in the forest...
Why, then they raise contributions on the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile

OUTSIDE

Beth races to the rear of the alehouse, scanning the darkness; she turns, and is kissed.

She embraces Turpin.

BETH
I knew you'd come.

TURPIN
Our daughter is inside?

BETH
Father forbade it.

Turpin hands her a purse. He takes his letter from her hand; she protests.

TURPIN
I'll come again.

BETH
No... Stay...

They embrace; Turpin retreats into the night. Beth straightens her clothes, and walks back towards the alehouse.

She hears a snap of twigs, behind her. She turns, smiling.

BETH
You -

Two CONSTABLES point pistols at her head. She looks back towards the window. Millington looks out at her; Bladen is behind him, a pistol to Millington's temple.

INSIDE

the alehouse, at the window, Bladen speaks into Millington's ear.

BLADEN
They are certainly the most dangerous kind of thieves. Because they generally travel in gangs.

Millington closes his eyes with comprehension.

MILLINGTON
So you're Bladen. Your man said you'd let us go...

CUT TO -

OUTSIDE

where Bladen and the constables lead Millington and Beth to their horses. Beth glares tearfully at her father; he looks at his boots.

BETH

What are we charged with? Drinking gin in an alehouse?

BLADEN

You are charged with violent suspicion of being dangerous rogues
and of robbing on the highway.

Beth wails.

BLADEN

(to constable) No sign of him?

CONSTABLE

None, sir. He wasn't here.

Beth hides her surprise at this. Bladen stares into the darkness.

BLADEN

Very well. We'll bide our time. Transport them to Hertford Gaol.

CONSTABLE

Sir.

BLADEN

(to the night) Let's see what you're made of, Richard Turpin.

INT. BEDROOM, WHITECHAPEL, LONDON - DAY

A pistol on a bedside table rattles and falls onto the floor.

In the bed, Turpin is loudly, enthusiastically and aggressively servicing a woman. It is LIZA KING, a.k.a. Lily.

TURPIN

Yes... Liza...

LIZA

(breathless) Elizabeth... Call me Elizabeth...

Turpin abruptly ceases his thrusting. He rolls off.

LIZA
My duke... Don't stop...

Turpin searches for his breeches.

LIZA
What's the matter? Did I do something wrong? I'll get on top, let me ride you...

Turpin bats her hands away and collapses back onto the bed. Liza caresses his face and chest. She toys with the ivory whistle he wears on a leather strap around his neck.

LIZA
Mmmmm. What a beautiful whistle you have here.

Liza takes the whistle between her lips, blows soft staccato notes.

LIZA
This to keep you safe? Or to warn the world you're coming?

Turpin removes the whistle from her fingers. He broods.

TURPIN
'Elizabeth' was my mother.
And 'Beth' is my wife.

LIZA
I have murdered the mood.

TURPIN
Stone dead.

LIZA
Did Beth wrong you, my love?

TURPIN
With her stupidity. Or knowingly. Not sure which.

LIZA
(kissing him) Silly biddy. Hell cat.

Irritated, Turpin pushes her face away.

TURPIN
I'm no cuckold, Liza.

Liza pouts an apology.

TURPIN
Ambushed me. With her buzzard of a father. Got herself arrested.

LIZA
(hopeful) She's in gaol?

TURPIN
Her brother bailed her out. The father's still inside. Can't afford his own freedom. Sorry old shag-bag.

A door opens and closes downstairs. Turpin reaches for his pistol, finds it missing from the side table, looks at Liza with suspicion.

LIZA
I dunno! Floor?

Turpin recovers the pistol from the floor, gestures at her to be quiet, and creeps naked to the garret staircase.

LIZA
(laughing) It's only Matthew, you florence!

TURPIN
Matthew? Who's Matthew?

MATTHEW (O.S.)
(from below) Liza? Bought a ham.

LIZA
(shouting) Wake me when it's ready!

MATTHEW (O.S.)
Get your arse out of bed and this ham on the fire.

LIZA
(to Turpin) Isn't he romantic?

Liza rises, pulls on a cotton shift. She squeezes Turpin's naked loins as she passes.

LIZA
Matthew's my brother.

Turpin retrieves his clothes, dresses. Liza descends the staircase; Matthew waits at the bottom. He is pretty, and elegantly dressed.

MATTHEW
Talking to yourself?

Turpin sheepishly descends the staircase after her.

MATTHEW
Well I never. Brought another stray home.

Liza spies a fresh new loaf of bread, rips herself a piece, and bites off a chunk. She grimaces.

LIZA

Was this the best you could get? Bran and bean flour?

MATTHEW

Buy your own next time.

Liza makes a show of struggling to swallow.

LIZA

(to Turpin) Manners?

Turpin extends a hand to Matthew. Liza takes another bite of her bread.

TURPIN

John Palmer.

Liza bursts into laughter, spraying crumbs. Turpin glares at Liza. She feigns ignorance. Matthew reluctantly accepts the handshake.

MATTHEW

Matthew King.

Awkward silence.

MATTHEW

Please... 'John'. Sit.

Matthew brings a bottle and two glasses to the kitchen table. Liza brings a third glass, opens the bottle, pours one drink just for herself, relishes it, and then begins preparing the hearth for cooking.

LIZA

So we can afford a ham now all of a sudden? Praise the lord.

MATTHEW

'We'?

He pours his and Turpin's drinks.

MATTHEW

Any sisters, John?

TURPIN

Just the one.

MATTHEW
More than enough.

LIZA
Oi.

The two men toast their joke, and drink.

MATTHEW
(at Liza) So.

TURPIN
Wondering how we met?

MATTHEW
Hmmm. Alehouse?

TURPIN
I'm a butcher, by trade. Your sister's master was a customer.

MATTHEW
Was he now.
(to Liza) Skinner, wasn't it?

LIZA
That's him.

MATTHEW
House was gutted. Quite a violent business.

TURPIN
Waltham deer stealers gone rogue. So I hear.

MATTHEW
Ah. Is that what you heard.
Left you out of work, didn't it Liza? Or was it Lily?
(to Turpin) Turns up here one day like an urchin.

Matthew refills their glasses.

MATTHEW
You have to wonder how they knew.

Turpin drinks, unblinking.

MATTHEW
Eh, Liza? How they knew old Skinner had so many rich pickings.
Liza starts to whistle as she fries the ham.

Matthew leans forward, winces at Turpin's pockmarked cheeks, and taps his own cheekbones with his index fingers.

MATTHEW

Your name ain't 'John Palmer'.

Turpin places a pistol on the table, close to his free hand. Matthew places his own pistol on the table, holding Turpin's gaze.

Liza observes this, rolls her eyes. She shoves their pistols out of the way, making space on the table for plates of bread and fried ham.

They eat.

MATTHEW

You know how much our handsome visitor is worth, Liza?

She wets her lips at Turpin.

LIZA

Not much.

MATTHEW

Not much, she says! Little bit more than 'not much', sis.

Matthew scans Turpin up and down, assessing the quality of his outfit, his blue coat. He nods his approval while he chews.

MATTHEW

Looks to me like about a hundred pounds more than 'not much'.

TURPIN

Says the man in the silk waistcoat.

He looks around the room.

TURPIN

For a moneyless man, you have expensive habits.

LIZA

(to Turpin) Ham's going cold.

MATTHEW

You know who else is worth a hundred pounds - alive - to His Majesty's government? That notorious highwayman. What's his name?

Matthew searches the air with his fingers.

MATTHEW

Richard...

TURPIN
Turpin. Richard Turpin.

Matthew clicks his fingers.

MATTHEW
Turpin! That's the scoundrel.
Rumours of him in all counties at the same time.
And there's a pewterer.

Matthew savours the metallic tang of the word in his mouth.

MATTHEW
Wasn't there a pewterer, 'John'?

Turpin smiles at Matthew, shrugs. He spears a large piece of ham and tears it from his fork with his teeth.

MATTHEW
You want to know what I think, Liza?

LIZA
Never.

MATTHEW
If the notoriety of this 'Richard Turpin' is valued at a hundred
pounds... Then well.
He must be a man worth doing business with.

Turpin chews, smiling.

Liza looks from Matthew, to Turpin, to Matthew again. She shakes her head.

LIZA
Oh no. You two? *Really?*

EXT. WALTHAM FOREST - DAY

A herd of deer graze undisturbed in the dappled, late afternoon sunshine. They freeze at the squeaky whine from the wheels of an approaching coach.

An elegant couple bicker in an open chaise as the husband drives.

LADY THOMPSON stares at the large carbine pistol resting on her lap.

LADY THOMPSON
Must I still carry this dreadful thing? Are we near Epping?

CAPTAIN THOMPSON
Not far.

LADY THOMPSON
May I at least place it on the floor by your feet?

CAPTAIN THOMPSON
I need it easily to hand. Patience.

Lady Thompson strokes the carbine with a mixture of fascination and disgust.

LADY THOMPSON
Such a brutish-looking tool. Gaudy and uncouth.

CAPTAIN THOMPSON
That's English workmanship of the highest quality. And it's loaded. Do please leave it be.

Lady Thompson lowers it back onto her lap with her fingertips, shuddering.

LADY THOMPSON
Oh look! Deer! How absolutely charming!

The herd of deer scatters as the coach appears from the forest shadows. The disintegrating herd reveals a treeline. Turpin and Matthew emerge from the treeline on horseback.

Captain Thompson reaches slowly for the carbine.

CAPTAIN THOMPSON
(to Lady Thompson) Stay calm.

Turpin and Matthew approach the coach, pistols raised, Matthew at the lady's side, Turpin at Thompson's. Turpin tips his hat. Matthew notices Lady Thompson's swooning gaze on him, and returns it with a smoulder.

TURPIN
Sir. My lady. Your purses. Then you can be on your way.

MATTHEW
(to Lady Thompson) And your jewellery.

Lady Thompson is transfixed; with her eyes on Matthew, her fingers stroke her neck and ears, mechanically searching for pearls.

Captain Thompson halts the coach, and slowly reaches for the carbine from his wife's lap.

TURPIN
Or your life.

As he draws nearer, Turpin notices Thompson's resplendent red captain's coat.

TURPIN
Ah. Military man. Deliver the coat, lobster.

CAPTAIN THOMPSON
This, dog, is what I shall deliver.

Thompson raises the carbine and points it directly at Turpin's head.

There is a pop, and smoke. Lady Thompson screams. The carbine has flashed in the pan.

The smoke clears around Turpin's sneering face.

TURPIN
You have spared your 'dog', God damn you!

Turpin raises his own pistol to Thompson's head. His wife screams again in terror.

TURPIN
But I won't you.

With a shout, Thompson whips his horse into action and the coach lurches forward. Turpin fires, but the slug rips through Thompson's coat sleeve and passes between him and his wife, tearing a gaping hole in the back of the chaise.

Thompson drives the coach forward, whipping the reins furiously.

TURPIN
(to Matthew) Shoot, man! Shoot them!

Matthew aims, deliberates. He flips the pistol and grasps it by the muzzle. He pulls his horse back alongside Lady Thompson, and swings the butt of the pistol at her head.

She cowers and sways, ducking and shrieking. Thompson throws the carbine back into her lap.

CAPTAIN THOMPSON
Reload the carbine!

Avoiding Matthew's blows, Lady Thompson glares at her husband, incredulous.

LADY THOMPSON
What? How?

Buildings on the outskirts of the village of Epping appear on the horizon. In the distance, a group of people stop to stare. Furious, Turpin halts and turns his horse away, Matthew following. They ride away back into the cover of the forest.

Thompson drives the coach on towards Epping. He frowns first at the damage to his coat, then scans his wife.

CAPTAIN THOMPSON
Are you hurt?

Lady Thompson stares at the carbine in breathless shock. She looks at the holes in the back of the coach, and in Thompson's coat.

Then she claps her hands together and begins to laugh, with shrieking hilarity.

INT. INN BEDROOM, WHETSTONE, MIDDLESEX - NIGHT

Items are laid out on a table: money, rings, jewellery. Turpin and Matthew drink; they hold up and name each item with the locus of its seizure.

TURPIN
Chipping Ongar.

MATTHEW
Loughton. I think.

TURPIN
Romford.

They toast.

King cocks his fingers like a pistol.

MATTHEW
We have turned our lead to gold.

TURPIN
Ah but that coat. I wanted that fucking coat.

MATTHEW
To go with your gold-laced hat?

Turpin puts on the hat, and poses in the mirror with it, framed, arms in an 'X'.

TURPIN

What's wrong with my gold-laced hat?

MATTHEW

Nothing. If you are eager for recognition.

TURPIN

As if you dress with modesty!

MATTHEW

My elegance is less...

Matthew stands behind Turpin at the mirror, admires his own attire: he fiddles with the bow at the back of his wig and at his collar, and examines his elaborate silk brocade cuffs.

MATTHEW

...Insistent.

TURPIN

And you stink.

MATTHEW

That, sir, is ambergris from The Bahamas.

TURPIN

Smells like cat piss.

Turpin adjusts the angle of his hat. He becomes still; he stares at his ragged face. He raises his kerchief, drops it to his chin, raises it, drops it.

Turpin sits, throws the hat on the bed, drinks.

MATTHEW

That last one. Waltham. We were lucky.

TURPIN

The lobster was lucky. "For the hand of the Lord his God was upon him."

MATTHEW

You - we - are fortunate you missed.

TURPIN

I didn't miss.

MATTHEW

You're the country's most notorious highwayman, not its most wanted murderer.

TURPIN

What difference does it make?

MATTHEW

Oh, I don't know, the difference between the gallows and transportation?

TURPIN

Transportation. Ha. With Brazier. And Rowden now, they say.

We briefly see Rowden in a shop, smiling, paying for goods with clipped coins.

TURPIN (V.O.)

Done in Gloucester for counterfeiting.

Rowden turns to see a group of angry townspeople standing at the shop doorway, blocking his escape.

Turpin plays with his hat.

TURPIN

Trapped for weeks, with those two, on the next stinking boat to the colonies? Fourteen years of breaking my back picking tobacco in Virginia? I can see the stories.

'Turpin the Transported.'

Turpin drains his glass, pours another.

TURPIN

They hanged the rest. They'll hang me.

They drink in silence.

TURPIN

You hesitated. With Mrs Lobster.

MATTHEW

We don't need to kill.

TURPIN

He had that carbine between my eyes!
Can still taste the powder.

MATTHEW

Killing is cowardly. The threat itself suffices.

TURPIN

But you would prefer a coward's reputation?
"No reason to fear this Turpin and King, they carry their pistols
as ornaments"?

MATTHEW

I don't need a 'reputation'.

Turpin puts his hat back on. He goes back to the mirror and reassess
his reflection.

TURPIN

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the
First and the Last."

MATTHEW

In English?

Turpin re-adjusts his hat, is pleased, and turns to face Matthew.

TURPIN

Reputation, Matthew, is everything.

He returns to the mirror.

TURPIN

I. Am. Everything.

INT. GREEN MAN INN, LEYTONSTONE - DAY

Under a dusty, grotesque wooden carving of the face of the Green
Man, the landlord RICHARD BAYES sits behind the bar, writing in a
notebook. He pauses, his quill in mid-air.

An old drunk in the corner stares, unfocused: at him, or through
him, and joylessly swilling his drink.

BAYES

(sotto voce) "One fine morning in the month of May a horseman
rode..."

No, no. "A horseman might have been riding..."

He looks outside, and sees two horsemen trotting past.

BAYES

(inspired) "*Two horsemen* might have been riding..."

Outside in the

ROAD

Turpin and Matthew pass the Green Man on horseback. Matthew's horse brays its irritated exhaustion.

MATTHEW

Here? This nag is done.

TURPIN

Shithole. We'll push on to the Red Lion in Whitechapel. I may still have friends there.

They trot on. Turpin points ahead.

TURPIN

Well, well. Ask, and ye shall receive.

An old gentleman, MR MAJOR, approaches on Whitestockings, a magnificent chestnut horse with white fetlocks.

He passes; they exchange greetings. Matthew and Turpin share a decision with one glance.

Matthew steers his horse back in front of Whitestockings, blocking him. Turpin dismounts, and drags Mr Major from his horse into a thicket off the lane, his butcher's knife at his throat. Major mouths a protest, but fear has stolen his voice.

TURPIN

Hush now, old man. Hush.

Matthew quickly switches saddles from the nag to Whitestockings, and flees the nag with a slap to its hindquarters.

Turpin emerges from the grass with Major's purse and whip. Matthew and Turpin mount their horses. Turpin whistles at Whitestockings' beauty.

TURPIN

Well sir, I am envious.

You have upped the stakes. A racehorse no less.

Turpin looks down at his grey mare, which now appears modest in comparison.

TURPIN

This will not do.

Matthew looks back anxiously at the thicket.

MATTHEW

Is he dead?

TURPIN

The old toast is very much alive. With a new story to tell.

They spur their horses. Whitestockings races ahead. Matthew looks back at Turpin with delight.

Major staggers from the thicket, hot, scuffed and bedraggled. He limps down the lane towards the

GREEN MAN INN

and clatters through the door, wheezing. The old drunk stares, undistracted. Bayes puts down his quill and rushes to Major's aid.

MAJOR

Whitestockings. They've taken Whitestockings...

INT. HOUSE, WHITECHAPEL - DUSK

Matthew stands at the window, peering out into the street through a lifted curtain. Turpin lounges on a settle. Liza is sprawled in his lap, caressing him.

A younger man, LUKE, brother of Matthew and Liza, brings them drinks. Turpin salutes him; Liza giggles.

TURPIN

(to Matthew) Drink with us.

Matthew accepts a drink from Luke, ruffles his hair.

TURPIN

Sure you two are brothers? In Liza I see the resemblance, but...

LIZA

Luke and I take after our mother. Matthew was less fortunate.

Luke smiles at his sister. Matthew paces, returns to the window.

TURPIN

Worrying about our rum-prancer?

LIZA

Your what?

TURPIN

Our pretty Whitestockings.

LIZA

Matthew? What is he on about?

MATTHEW

Racehorse. We stole a racehorse. Stabled him with Turpin's donkey at the Red lion.

TURPIN

Donkey? Steady. "He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him..."

MATTHEW

What is that?

TURPIN

What is what?

MATTHEW

That stuff you are always mumbling. Like an old dog at common prayer.

TURPIN

That, sir, was Genesis 16.

LIZA

Ooooh! My Richard has found God?

Liza squeezes his crotch. Luke turns away in embarrassment.

TURPIN

(to Liza) And what have you just found?

MATTHEW

Where does it all come from? You carry a Bible?

TURPIN

Is that a question, King, or an accusation?

Matthew turns back to the window.

MATTHEW

All those things you say. It's just theatre. Poison in your mouth. There's nothing godly about this life we lead.

Turpin feigns shock and a wounded heart to Liza.

MATTHEW

You only remember the parts you like?

TURPIN

I remember the parts I was forced to remember.

LIZA

Forced, my love?

TURPIN

When I was learning my letters. Smith. An older boy. Made me copy out passages. He was trying to teach me something. Aside from calligraphy.

LIZA

I like him.

Turpin is silent for a moment.

TURPIN

He didn't understand that there are some things you can't teach.

LIZA

Tell me another one. The one you like best.

MATTHEW

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

Turpin claps.

TURPIN

Revelation.

You see Liza? How all the stray lambs return to my flock?

I am everything!

"Behold, he cometh with clouds!"

MATTHEW

It's a clear night.

TURPIN

(to Liza) But a storm is gathering, my rum-doxy.

Turpin grabs and tickles her.

MATTHEW

I don't like that the racehorse is at the inn. There'll be a word out.

TURPIN

I did warn you. That the old man would be off telling stories.

LIZA

What old man?

Matthew turns to face them all.

MATTHEW

We need to move. At sunrise.

Liza hugs Turpin tight.

LIZA
Already?

TURPIN
He's right. A few days in the cave. Until they've lost interest in
retrieving the horse.

LIZA
(delighted) There's a cave?

TURPIN
In Waltham Forest.

LIZA
Like the Chistlehurst Caves? Matthew took us once, didn't he Luke?
When we were little. The tunnels in the chalk. Lots of lovely
places to hide...

MATTHEW
Don't get your hopes up, Liza. This one's just a cave.

TURPIN
(to Liza) Cozy.

Matthew turns back to the window, drinks, considers.

MATTHEW
Safer to collect the horses separately. Turpin will get his now.
So we at least have one mount.

TURPIN
Turpin will think about this in the morning.

MATTHEW
No. It will be too late. Take your horse now. Tell the ostler
she's lame, that she needs a run out before morning to see if
she's fit to travel.
Luke will collect Whitestockings later. Before dawn.

LUKE
What? But he'll be expecting you. Or Turpin.

MATTHEW
We'll be close, in Red Lion Street.

Liza fidgets.

MATTHEW

Not you Liza.

(to Luke) You'll tell him your master is preparing for travel and he's sent you on this errand.

Luke readies a protest, but Matthew covers his mouth.

MATTHEW

We do these things for our brothers, Luke.

LIZA

And sister.

Liza bats her lashes. Luke eyes them all, like a cornered animal.

EXT. RED LION INN, WHITECHAPEL - NIGHT

A thick night fog has fallen, lit in patches by gampoge lamplight. Restless, the racehorse Whitestockings pulls against its reins, which are tied to a hitching post in a stable box. It snorts and whinnies, its eyes afraid.

Luke approaches the stable through the gloom. He looks back into the street: Turpin, on horseback, and Matthew, on foot, are faceless silhouettes against the stone-grey fog.

LUKE

'A clear night,' he says.

He approaches Whitestockings, strokes its face. The horse calms.

OSTLER

Fine animal.

Luke jumps, startled.

OSTLER

Not like the other one.

LUKE

The other one?

OSTLER

The lame nag. Your friend claimed her already?

LUKE

Oh. Yes. But no, we're not friends.

OSTLER

Not travelling together?

LUKE

No. Well we were. Separate ways now.

OSTLER

Is it.

Well, come in and I'll fetch us the key.

Luke hesitates.

OSTLER

Suit yourself.

The ostler heads inside the inn. Luke looks back into the street again but can make nothing out in the opaque shadows. There are two soft, rapid whistles from the darkness. Luke exhales, reassured.

The ostler reappears, key in hand, smiling. Luke follows him to the door of the stable box. Whitestockings scuffs the ground with its hooves as the ostler turns the key.

OSTLER

Really a fine animal.

Luke moves to follow the ostler but is lifted by the collar, almost off his feet, by two brawny men: HOLDWORTH, the Red Lion landlord, and SAVAGE.

They drag him towards the inn, a hand over his mouth.

In the street, Matthew and Turpin hear a muffled scuffling. Alarmed, Matthew looks up at Turpin. Turpin spits the whistle from his mouth.

TURPIN

Wait.

Luke is dragged inside the inn into the

BAR

and forced to sit at a table in front of Major and Bayes, who holds a whip. Holdworth and Savage stand behind Luke's chair and push him tight up to the table; he catches his breath as the table presses into his diaphragm. Major tuts and shakes his head at the men.

BAYES

This is Mr Major. The owner of Whitestockings, the horse to which
your friend took such a violent fancy.

But he left something behind.

Bayes pushes the butt of the whip into Luke's face, so that he is forced to read the word 'Major' printed on the leather in gold leaf.

BAYES

Horse theft is a capital offence.
Do you understand what that means?

Luke nods.

BAYES

You could hope for a partial verdict on the nag - you could argue it was a mule, for example - and your friend would be transported.

Bayes is pleased with his joke, looks to the others for affirmation, receives none.

BAYES

But you'll hang for the racehorse.

Major watches Luke's growing panic with discomfort.

MAJOR

Listen lad. Be sensible now. Someone else sent you. Didn't they?

The men watch Luke, and wait.

BAYES

We knew he'd be back.

MAJOR

Where is he, Luke?

Savage pushes hard against the chair.

MAJOR

Where is he waiting?

Luke cries out from the pain.

CUT TO -

Under the silent lion's roar of the inn sign, the men exit into the fog. Bayes carries a lantern, and is armed with a pistol. Holdworth leads Luke out tightly by the arm; Savage walks behind, a pistol to Luke's temple. Major and the ostler follow behind with sticks.

BAYES

Show us.

They walk into the street. There is just fog, and silence.

BAYES

I said show us.

Luke walks forward into the fog. He stops. He looks back once at Bayes, and then takes another step forward.

Silence. Seconds pass.

There is a shadowy movement in the near distance; the whinny of a horse.

LUKE
(screaming) Matthew! They have me!

There is a whine of velocity as a slug cuts the air and explodes into the brickwork behind the group of men.

They see a figure, on horseback, and the glint of an aimed pistol in the dark. Luke, Major, the ostler and Holdworth duck for cover.

Bayes aims his pistol at the figure. Savage shoots.

Hooves clatter. The figure on horseback veers away, but Bayes follows the glint of the pistol with his aim.

Matthew runs forward out of the darkness, his pistol aimed at Bayes. A misfire lights his face. He throws the pistol hard at Bayes, who staggers to avoid the missile. Matthew fumbles in his coat pocket.

Turpin rears his horse from out of the fog, pistol glinting, and fires.

Bayes fires.

Matthew screams in pain, reels, slams against a wall, and slides to the ground.

LUKE
No!!!

We see Turpin's eyes shine wide with shock above his kerchief. He lurches his horse in a rearing arc away from the melee, and escapes, quickly swallowed by the fog, with the percussive echo of hooves on cobblestone.

Matthew slumps onto his back. Blood darkens his shirt and floods his mouth.

Bayes cradles him and brings the lantern close to his face.

BAYES
He has shot you. You are betrayed.

Matthew coughs, spitting blood. He shakes his head in wild denial.

BAYES

You are betrayed. Tell us the coward's name.

Luke tries to reach his brother, but Holdworth and Savage pull him back.

LUKE

Matthew!

BAYES

Is it Turpin? Is it Turpin who has betrayed you?
Where will we find him?

Matthew's eyes seek his brother.

BAYES

Let us avenge you...

Matthew's eyes roll back, and close. Bayes curses.

There is silence, but for the wretched sound of Luke's breathless weeping. Bayes wipes the blood off his hands on Matthew's coat.

He turns his attention to Luke.

INT. RED LION INN - DAWN

Through an open door we see Liza and Luke mourning at the bedside of Matthew. Bayes steps out of the room into the

HALL

with a notebook; Liza watches him leave. Bayes closes the door behind him.

In the hall wait Holdworth and Savage. Bayes holds his notebook aloft, like a warrant.

BAYES

The siblings have given me his location.
Gentlemen - we have our Turpin.

INT. CAVE - DAWN

Turpin, exhausted, removes his hat and wig, and lays down his coat to rest on. He leans back on the cave wall, rubs his face. He takes a long drink from a bottle of wine. He is completely alone, his clothes the only splash of colour in the dim cave light. He breathes deeply, closing his eyes.

CUT TO -

EXT. CAVE

Bayes, Holdworth and Savage dismount, armed. Bayes halts them, a finger to his lips, and directs them to search to his left and right.

Bayes enters the cave, pistol trembling. The chalk walls cast a ghostly pallor. He steps softly, his breathing shallow, his eyes darting. He takes a moment, wipes the sweat from his palms on his coat.

There is a sound from ahead in the darkness. Bayes freezes, swallows, points his pistol.

A figure emerges. Bayes clenches his jaw.

Savage steps into view, his clothes covered in chalk dust. He shrugs.

From behind Bayes, Holdworth appears, shaking his head. Bayes bellows in frustration.

CUT TO -

EXT. WALTHAM FOREST

The forest is full with late morning birdsong. Two men pick their way through the brambles, swatting away insects. MORRIS, a servant, carries a shotgun. A HIGGLER follows him, rabbit carcasses swinging from his belt.

HIGGLER

You're sure? You're sure it's him?

MORRIS

On my life.

The higgler looks behind him.

HIGGLER

We're not, you know... undermanned? Given his reputation?
Those hunters we passed, perhaps we could -

Morris stops.

MORRIS

Which is more useful to you? Half of a hundred pounds, or a
fraction of the same?

Morris presses on. The higgler looks back, wavers for a moment, and follows.

MORRIS
(whispered) There.

He directs the higgler's gaze to a grey horse hitched to a tree, and then a cave entrance, swallowed in shadow.

Morris raises his weapon, looks at the higgler, and nods towards the horse. The higgler mops his brow.

MORRIS
Do it!

The higgler creeps his way to the horse. It shakes and whinnies. The higgler pauses, looks back at Morris. Morris glares, nods towards the horse.

As if handling a butterfly, the higgler unties the horse, and leads it away into the forest.

Morris approaches the cave entrance, shotgun aimed. His eyes widen in recognition.

There is a flash, and a bang. Dogs bark in the distance.

Morris staggers and falls back, his belly torn open. He squirms on the forest floor, coughs blood. His life leaves him with a rattle.

The higgler steps from the trees. Turpin emerges from the cave, retrieves Morris' shotgun, aims. He sees the rabbits at the higgler's waist.

As the higgler stands petrified, Turpin tuts, waves a finger, and rips the rabbits from his belt. He stares into the higgler's eyes, his face close.

TURPIN
Yes. It's me.

Turpin scans for his horse, stares at the higgler. The higgler points into the forest. Turpin bounds away through the trees.

The higgler eyes the corpse, and looks away. The baying of hounds comes closer. The higgler closes his eyes, and mouths a prayer.

Two hunters appear from the trees on horseback. The pack of dogs floods around and into the cave, snuffling through shirts and the remains of wine and food.

A scent is caught, and the hounds race into the forest, howling and snarling, their teeth bared.

EPISODE 4: TURPIN THE THIEF

"Ask my Companion, if I'm a Thief" ~ Gnomologia

EXT. HEATH - DUSK

The enchanted face of a pretty young woman, unperturbed by the light rain, her eyes on something in the distance.

LAVINIA
He. Doth. Come.

She is pulled back into the coach. Her cheek is slapped by KITTY, the female companion alongside her. Both wear elaborate, fashionable dresses.

KITTY
Ow. Slut.

Lavinia fans her cheek but continues to stare ahead.

LAVINIA
Hussy.

Kitty follows Lavinia's gaze. She catches her breath.

KITTY
He's so... Broad.

Turpin approaches slowly on horseback, face covered, pistol raised. There is a low percussive rumble of thunder in the distance from a muddy sky. The rain falls harder.

TITLE - **EPPING, ESSEX, 1737**

Lavinia whistles heartily, fingers in mouth, to get the attention of their companion MOLL, who is at the back of the coach attending efficiently to an axle. Unlike the others she is dressed in breeches, shirt and waistcoat; her hair is tied back in a plait. She wipes the rain from her face and squints at the approaching rider.

MOLL
Good lord.

The coach's horses whinny, restless. Moll soothes them, her eye on Turpin as he heavily dismounts.

A paunchy Turpin takes a long draft from a flask, wipes his mouth. He takes off his hat, nods to each woman in turn, and proffers it upturned.

TURPIN
Ladies. If you will.

Moll walks towards him, hands on hips. She stares at the offered hat, and looks at her companions. They beam back at her with glee. She looks at the hat, then at the sky, then at Turpin.

MOLL
Still thirsty?

TURPIN
Still what?

MOLL
Not sure you'll catch much in that. Rain will soak through?
Ruin that lovely gold lace.

Lavinia and Kitty squeal with delight at this banter and watch Turpin, expectant.

He stares at Moll for a beat, then points the pistol at Kitty. Lavinia removes a ruby brooch from Kitty's chest and tosses it into Turpin's hat.

KITTY
Brazen trull! That was Mummy's!

LAVINIA
Yes. Gave you the air of a lusty old spinster.

Lavinia directs Turpin's gaze to Kitty's cleavage.

LAVINIA
This is inordinately better. Isn't it, Captain Macheath?
You approve?

Emboldened, Kitty and Lavinia jump down from the coach; they laugh as the mud spatters the hems of their dresses. With Moll leading, they begin to circle him.

Turpin pivots to watch them, pistol pointed, hat still proffered.

TURPIN
'Macheath'? What is it you think I am? One of your storybook highwaymen?

LAVINIA

(sniffing) He smells good. Sandalwood. Citrus. Italian.

KITTY

Refined.

MOLL

No, no 'storybooks'. The Beggar's Opera? Ran for months and months. Lots of revivals. But I suspect instead you've been preoccupied with beating up the elderly and raping their servants?

LAVINIA

A gentleman!

TURPIN

Whatever you've heard...

Moll stares at him, assessing.

MOLL

Not 'heard'. Read.

LAVINIA

We're readers.

MOLL

Not 'storybooks' though.

LAVINIA

"Those cursed 'play-books' she reads have been her ruin!"

KITTY

Can you do that, Macheath? Read?

Angry but mesmerized, Turpin glares at them in turn as they circle him.

TURPIN

What are you?

Lavinia flutters her fan in his kerchiefed face.

LAVINIA

How hot the Captain must be under there...

Turpin grabs Lavinia's wrist and wrestles the fan from her grip; he examines the intricate painting on its paper.

LAVINIA

Oh that's Venus! And Adonis! But which is Moll?

Moll strikes two poses: masculine triumph, coquettish submission. Kitty and Lavinia wrestle.

KITTY

"He ran upon the boar with his sharp spear!"

LAVINIA

"He on her belly falls, she on her back!"

KITTY

"Adonis, your spear is engorged!"

LAVINIA

"My spear's point enters the hairy bristles!"

Turpin glowers in confusion.

KITTY

All hail, startled Macheath. He thinks us rubsters!

LAVINIA

Tribades.

MOLL

Frictatrices.

Moll snatches the hat from his hand, tosses the brooch back to Kitty, and dons the hat herself, cocking it at an angle.

MOLL

Enter... Moll Moonlight!

KITTY

Dashing!

Turpin fires his pistol in the air. The women freeze in their tableau. He pockets the pistol in his coat and draws another. He removes his hat from Moll's head, shakes it, and flips it over.

Kitty tosses the brooch back into the hat. Lavinia throws her fan after it at Turpin's nod. They remove earrings and bracelets and drop them into the hat with disdain.

Moll looks herself up and down, shrugs at Turpin. Turpin aims the pistol at her feet.

TURPIN

Buckles.

Moll removes her shoe buckles and lowers one of them, without urgency, into the hat.

MOLL

Thane of Essex. That shalt be hanged, hereafter.

Turpin points his pistol at the hat. Moll drops in the second buckle.

MOLL

Peace!

(whispered) The charm's wound up.

Turpin directs the women with his pistol to the muddy grass bank.

TURPIN

Move!

The women sit down, a huddle of colour against the rainy taupe of dusk.

MOLL

Making us late for rehearsal!

As Turpin searches the coach, they begin to sing.

MOLL

"Beneath the left ear so fit but a cord..."

KITTY

"A rope so charming a zone is..."

LAVINIA

"The youth in his cart hath the air of a lord..."

Turpin discovers an ornate silver mirror in the coach. He admires his masked profile.

WOMEN

"And we cry, 'There dies an Adonis!'"

TURPIN

One day, you will sing of how you survived me.

Moll clutches her chest, and faints into the arms of her companions.

MOLL

"May my pistols misfire, and my mare slip her shoulder while I am pursued, if I ever forsake thee!"

Their coach-horses whinny. Turpin glances back at the horses; he appraises them one by one. Moll rises to her feet, stern, but voice faltering.

MOLL

Please. Don't shoot the horses.

Turpin shakes his head in astonishment.

MOLL

That's what you do, isn't it? Men like you. So no one can follow.

TURPIN

"Men like me."

Turpin stops at the most beautiful horse; he strokes its black coat.

MOLL

Not Bess...

TURPIN

Bess? Well now. Another Elizabeth. Must be fate...
(to Bess) There, girl. I'm going to make you my heroine.

Turpin unharnesses Bess and leads her away from the coach. He saddles her from his grey horse, and mounts, reins for both horses gripped in one hand. He trots the horses over to the women.

TURPIN

I don't kill horses. I knew a man that would have. But he's dead.

Turpin tips his hat at them, and spurs the black horse to gallop away, the grey horse in tow.

Moll gathers herself. She turns to her companions.

MOLL

So? Who was that?

CUT TO -

The hooves of Turpin's horses churning the road at a gallop. Turpin's hand flings the silver mirror into the mud behind him.

EXT. BLUE BELL INN - NIGHT

A hand raps on a wooden door. John opens it, sleepy.

JOHN

At this hour.

STABLEBOY

He told me to wake you.

JOHN
"He"?

STABLEBOY
John Palmer, sir. He says he brought a gift. For you. Says it
can't wait.

John closes his eyes, exhales.

STABLEBOY
Will I ask him to come back in the morning?

JOHN
No. I'll see to him. You get to bed.

STABLEBOY
Sir... Is it your birthday?

JOHN
My what?

STABLEBOY
The gift...

John pats his hair.

JOHN
Go on now.

John lights a lamp and steps out into the yard. Two horses are newly
stabled, a black and a dappled grey. He examines them, checks their
teeth, shakes his head.

JOHN
Horses now, is it. Tired of robbing and murder?

Turpin steps from the shadows.

TURPIN
The grey mare's for you. It was Smith's.

JOHN
The things these horses must have seen.

TURPIN
You're welcome.

John turns to his son.

JOHN
"John Palmer"?

TURPIN

I am my father's son.

JOHN

And what's your legacy? Robbing in your mother's maiden name?

TURPIN

Every man robs in his own way.

JOHN

Shame on you.

John walks away inside the inn into the

PARLOUR

where Turpin takes a seat by a table near the fire. He takes off his hat and looks around, absorbing the memories. The bluebell painting is back in its original position above the hearth.

TURPIN

Dolly and her 'hidden people'.

John brings a bottle and two glasses, pours. They drink; John waits a moment, standing over his son.

Then he sits. Turpin refills their glasses.

JOHN

Rape, too?

TURPIN

Not me. One of the Gregorys.

John watches him, searching.

JOHN

And beating the old and holding their bodies to the fire?

Turpin looks away.

TURPIN

Things happen. When your blood is up...

JOHN

And your blood was 'up' when you killed that man? In the forest?

Turpin stands, checks the windows. He looks again at the bluebell painting over the fire, straightens it. He notices Chris' wooden rooster on the mantel. He picks it up, caresses it, replaces it.

TURPIN
They are hunting me.

JOHN
The others are dead?

TURPIN
Or transported. Save one. And his time will come.

JOHN
So I failed you. By trying to give you a trade.

TURPIN
Richard Turpin, 'The Celebrated Butcher'.

JOHN
An ordinary life. Nothing more precious than sleeping in peace.

TURPIN
Toil, night and day! For pennies! Fool's game.

JOHN
So instead you loot these 'fools'.
Of their pennies, their plate, their cloth...
Your wife was in jail, Dick! I paid the sureties for her release.
And her father's.

TURPIN
Nobody asked you to.

John stares at him, astounded.

JOHN
And *you're* welcome.

TURPIN
New horse outside.

JOHN
Yes. Smith's horse.

John picks up Turpin's hat, examines the gold lace.

JOHN
I heard all about you. 'The Notorious Highwayman, Richard Turpin'.

John slides the hat back to him.

JOHN
If I wasn't family... would you have robbed me too?

Turpin puts his hands behind his head, stares at the ceiling.

John closes his eyes.

JOHN

Losing your mother like that, when you did.
And your brother...

Turpin downs his drink. Pours another. He caresses the ivory whistle at his neck.

John stares at the fire.

JOHN

Almost lost you too.
Burning you were. Burning! Like molten iron.

TURPIN

But it never did take me.

JOHN

You can't ride forever, Dick.

TURPIN

The devil, always close. It breathes in my face.

Turpin gestures to his pockmarks.

TURPIN

Never takes me though. Never takes me. I am everything.

Turpin collects his hat, and stands. He touches his father's shoulder.

JOHN

Where will you go?

TURPIN

I will write. To Dolly. But here. Not to the house of that
Rivernal she married. Tell her.

JOHN

And Beth? The child? My grandchild?

TURPIN

Wait for the letter.

JOHN

Letters. So that schooling from the Smith boy didn't all go to
waste.

John laughs, with bitterness.

TURPIN
Still remember my verses.

JOHN
Their romance, perhaps. None of the wisdom.
Listen, son. Beth is attracting interest now. From other men.

TURPIN
Other men? Where is she meeting other men?

JOHN
Dick. Where did she meet you?

Turpin mulls this news for a moment, raises the glass to his father, and drains his drink. He then gets up, rummages behind the bar, and takes a new bottle.

He looks at his father, pauses.

TURPIN
Love to the family.

He retreats into the darkness.

John sits a moment at the table. He walks out to the

STABLES

and approaches the dappled grey horse Turpin has left for him. Smith's horse. He strokes its face, looks into its chestnut eyes.

JOHN
Can't ride forever.

CUT TO -

The sound of a gallop, and the sign of the Blue Bell Inn creaking in the crisp night air.

EXT. BUCKHURST HILL - DAWN

A bumblebee buzzes from buttercup to buttercup. It flies away as Turpin's black horse, Bess, chomps the flowers.

Turpin reclines, drunk, in the boughs of a giant oak, on a hill overlooking the village. He drains the last drops from a bottle, tosses it. He climbs clumsily down, drops heavily to the grass.

He steadies himself with a hand on Bess' saddle, stares at the village, and mounts his horse.

MONTAGE - THE RIDE TO YORKSHIRE

A) EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

Turpin and Bess are alone to the horizon in verdant, open countryside. Turpin's free hand drops to his side; his fingers feel the breeze.

B) EXT. ROAD - DAY

Turpin rides his horse hard on a dusty country road, under an unforgiving summer sky. Swallows swoop. Bess protests in the heat; he drives her harder. They are alone on the empty road until they are blocked by a herd of crossing sheep. Turpin nods to the shepherd; the shepherd stares, and spits.

C) EXT. ROAD - DAY

A toll-keeper snoozes in a tollhouse. He starts awake, and sees Turpin and Bess. He smiles a welcome, and leaves his chair.

Turpin stares at the turnpike gate. The toll-keeper approaches, hand extended. Turpin pats Bess' flank, trots her backwards, spurs her in the hip. Bess leaps the gate. Open-mouthed, the toll-keeper watches them gallop away.

D) EXT. ROAD - DAY

Turpin covers his nose and mouth with his kerchief as he trots Bess past lime kilns where workers heave and empty baskets, and acrid smoke spews into the air.

E) EXT. RIVER - DAY

Turpin nudges Bess forward, but she stands implacable, halfway across the river. Turpin looks backwards, and ahead; backwards, and ahead.

CUT TO -

Ducks scatter and quack as a shirtless Turpin dumps his head in the river, shakes it. He dunks and squeezes out his shirt, and glowers at Bess, who stares back at him from the opposite bank.

F) EXT. HILLSIDE - DUSK

Turpin sings, low and quiet.

TURPIN

"Of all the famous robbers
that does in England dwell,
The noted Richard Turpin
does all the rest excel..."

The setting sun bathes Turpin and Bess in saffron light as they trot towards a tavern in the distance.

G) INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

A spinning coin on a tavern table. Turpin's hand slaps it dead, spins it again, slaps it dead, spins it. Drinkers at a nearby table eye him with suspicion. He glares back at them, drinks, woozy. They look away and continue their conversation. He downs his beer, slaps another coin on the table, leaves.

H) EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Turpin vomits in the bushes. He pats the flank of his horse. We see Bess' green-blue POV: a dishevelled drunk staring glassily into her eyes. He rummages in a pocket, offers her a half-eaten apple.

TURPIN
Sorry Bess.

I) EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

In the moonlight, Bess' eyes are wild at the gallop, mouth frothing at the bit. Turpin drives her. She rears in protest, dumping him in the dust. She snorts and paws the ground. Turpin opens a bottle, pours some of its contents into his palm, and lets Bess drink. He then splashes some of the drink onto Bess' steaming hooves. He mounts, eases Bess forward, and swigs from the bottle himself.

J) EXT. FARM ROAD - DAWN

Under a canopy of trees, a giant leafy tunnel, Bess walks on the road, halts. Still barely mounted, Turpin dozes in half-sleep, head nodding. The bottle drops from his hand, rolls away in the grass.

A cockerel's cry splits the dawn and Turpin jumps in his saddle. He wipes his mouth. They trot on into the open fields. There is a barn on the horizon in the distance.

K) INT. BARN - DAWN

Turpin staggers to a pile of hay and flops face first into it.

L) INT. BARN - DUSK

A goat's face, upside-down, chewing. Turpin's wig is disappearing into its mouth. It bleats as Turpin snatches his wig back, then skitters away as he blearily rises. He examines the mutilated wig, picks straw from his coat and hat. He runs his tongue around his teeth.

M) EXT. BARN - DUSK

Turpin drinks long from a water pump, rinses his head. He stops, still. A collie sits and watches him, panting. It barks and howls.

TURPIN
No. Bad dog.

The dog howls again. Turpin blows a quick note on his whistle. Another howl. Turpin aims his pistol. The dog whimpers, lowers its tail, and scampers away. Turpin unhitches Bess, mounts, drives her at a gallop into the trees.

N) EXT. FENS - DAWN

Turpin and Bess, grey and spectral in the fog, tentatively trot through steaming marshes in the half-light.

O) EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Fields of fire. Farmers burn stubble, the smoke and embers choking the sky with black and orange. Turpin passes them on Bess, silhouetted like Death on his dark horse.

EXT. FERRY HOUSE INN, BROUGH, YORKSHIRE - DAY

Sails flap in the summer breeze. Labourers haul crates onto a ferry. There is good-natured bustle and chatter.

Turpin hitches his horse, dusts himself off, wipes his shoes. He approaches the inn. The labourers notice him, raise hands to this stranger in friendly greeting. Turpin waves, tips his hat.

He enters the

INN

where labourers and gentlemen mix and drink. There is the hum of business being done. Turpin relaxes into a chair, removes his hat, closes his eyes, smiles.

BRIAR

You're in luck.

Turpin snaps awake. A smiling, heavy-set, rosy-faced woman sets a beer down in front of him.

BRIAR

We've a room free, upstairs... You'll be more comfortable.

Turpin toasts her, drinks.

TURPIN

Wholesome beer.

Any meat? Eggs?

BRIAR

(chuckling) Now that's an accent. First time in Yorkshire?

Turpin nods.

BRIAR

Well, we eat food up here too!
Sit tight.

Turpin watches her form as she walks away. He reads the room: the wealth in the fine coats, the bright buttons, the lush wigs. He readjusts his own wig to hide the missing chunk.

He sees Briar converse with the landlord; she points at Turpin. The landlord wanders over, smiling.

HARRIS

Briar tells me you'll be staying with us?

TURPIN

If the ale's always this good...

HARRIS

Obliged. Mr...?

TURPIN

Palmer. John Palmer.

HARRIS

William Harris. Well, we brew our own.
Let me give you the tour? While Briar prepares your supper.

They walk out to the

FERRY SLIP

HARRIS

Here's where life happens. Such as it is.

TURPIN

You a tradesman?

HARRIS

Me? No. The inn is busy year-round. But I have my, you know. My interests. Lots coming in and out, south to Lincolnshire, or east to Hull. Hemp from Russia. Felt hats to Sweden, iron in return!
All sorts.

He takes out a pipe, stuffs it, lights it with a steel and flint striker.

HARRIS

Will you raise a cloud?

Turpin declines.

HARRIS

Tobacco from the Americas, pipe from Holland.

TURPIN

"For the world is mine, and the fullness thereof."

HARRIS

Aye lad!

They begin walking back towards the inn. Turpin savours the peace of this air.

HARRIS

So what business brings you to the East Riding?

Turpin scratches his jaw. Harris raises a hand.

HARRIS

We don't pry. But that's not to say your business won't be everyone else's before long. You know what they say about us up here. "Go into the country, to hear what's news in town!"

TURPIN

Sheep. Horses. I'm setting up south of the river. Thinking of bringing some prancers across.

HARRIS

Prancers! Is that what you call them. Well, you'll not be short of takers.

Harris opens the inn door, pauses.

HARRIS

Listen. We're making a trip up to Scarborough Saturday. Half a day's ride.

Turpin shrugs, interested.

HARRIS

Oh! He's never been to Scarborough! Well then, I insist. Make a new man of you. Introduce you to some of the local names.

HARRIS

Old money, mind. Big spenders.

Harris gestures for Turpin to step back

INSIDE

As Turpin sits, Briar presents his plate of hot food, and a guest book. She hands him an inked pen; he signs his name.

Briar lifts the guest book, and whistles at the calligraphy.

BRIAR

Pleasure to meet you, Mr Palmer.

TURPIN

John.

Turpin nods at Harris as he walks away. Harris chats to some men at a table; they look over at Turpin, raise their mugs.

Turpin tucks into his food. Briar turns back to steal a glance as she walks away.

TURPIN

(to Briar) You've sharpened my appetite.

INT. DINING ROOM, KENSINGTON PALACE, LONDON - DAY

A plate of rich food on ornate china is pushed away. A hand dismisses it; it is quickly collected by an attendant.

Grimacing, KING GEORGE II wipes his mouth with a napkin.

KING

Venison is not what it was.

(raising voice) Wouldn't you agree, Newcastle?

Newcastle stands in the doorway, waiting to be waved into the King's presence. A large portrait of the king in full military regalia adorns one wall.

NEWCASTLE

Still rather partial to it in a pie, Your Majesty.

KING

To each his own.

The King swills his mouth clean with a sip of wine.

KING

Come, sit, cleanse my palate with your bad news.

I hear we are censoring plays now?

NEWCASTLE

The Licensing Act has indeed passed, Your Majesty, to that effect.

KING

Well. No doubt the Prime Minister will be pleased. What was that highwayman thing that upset him? They called him Bluff Bob, alias Gorgon, alias Carbuncle?

NEWCASTLE

The Beggar's Opera, Your Majesty.

KING

That's the one! I thought it rather fun. The scoundrel Macheath! God save us from a return to puritanism, Newcastle.

NEWCASTLE

Not much of a theatre-goer myself, Your Majesty.

KING

No. Fox-hunting with you, isn't it? 'La chasse.'

NEWCASTLE

Your Majesty.

KING

And I am told le renard Turpin still alludes you? Even when we have so many soldiers idling in every town?

Newcastle looks up at the military portrait of the King, and clears his throat.

NEWCASTLE

Since adding murder to his list of crimes, Your Majesty, Turpin has committed several other felonies and robberies. We wish to offer your gracious pardon to his accomplices, so that he may be apprehended and convicted.

KING

Our fox is a veritable Macheath. Very well, very well.

NEWCASTLE

And a reward of two hundred pounds to be paid upon said conviction.

The king booms with laughter.

KING

Two hundred pounds? Is that now the cost to the treasury of your inflating embarrassment, Newcastle?

Newcastle takes a calm breath.

NEWCASTLE

Your Majesty, may I recommend this amount as an investment in the security of our roads. We believe that Turpin has his... imitators.

The King hunts in his teeth for venison with a toothpick.

NEWCASTLE

There are men robbing on our roads and on our heathlands purporting to be Turpin, and using his notoriety to strike fear into their victims. There are stories of him in Ireland, in Rotterdam... By rewarding the capture of one Turpin, we reward an end to them all.

KING

You endeavour to catch the whole pack of foxes -

NEWCASTLE

Skulk.

KING

I beg your pardon?

NEWCASTLE

Foxes plural, Your Majesty. We call it a 'skulk'.

KING

Bah! Your ungekünstelt English.

You endeavour to catch the whole... 'skulk' of foxes with one prize hound?

Newcastle opens his hands in affirmation. The King squints at him, pauses.

KING

See to it, then. Flush him out.

"Little villains must submit to fate..."

NEWCASTLE

"...That great ones may enjoy the world in state."

KING

Ha hah! Quite!

Newcastle bows, and turns to leave.

KING

Newcastle?

NEWCASTLE

Your Majesty.

KING

Where do you think our fox is skulking?

NEWCASTLE

If he has any sense, he'll be holed in some remote forest, keeping quiet...

EXT. BEACH, SCARBOROUGH, YORKSHIRE - DAY

Turpin breaches, roaring, from the surf, naked. His Yorkshire companions, also naked - Harris, GRASSBY and GOODYEAR - laugh at his abandon.

HARRIS

So how do our Northern waters compare?

TURPIN

They compare very well, sir.

GRASSBY

Drink up! Good for the melancholic spleen.

Harris drums Grassby's belly.

HARRIS

And the gout.

GRASSBY

The spa water's for drinking, not the sea!

GOODYEAR

(in mock toast) To the Montpellier of England!

Turpin looks out to sea at the ships in the bay, regal and enormous. Then he submerges, his eyes above the water, like an aquatic predator. He watches a group of women who are bathing and giggling at the shoreline, their wet shifts clinging to their bodies.

The men exchange wry glances.

GRASSBY

This man is ready for some entertainment.

As they wade back towards the beach, Turpin tarries for a moment, eyes fixed and narrowed on the women. Then he fully submerges, breaching again to chase the other men with a roar. They splash towards the beach; the watching women shriek and flee in delight.

INT. BALLROOM, SCARBOROUGH - DUSK

A well-heeled crowd mingles in a large, high-ceilinged ballroom; the warm orange of a late summer sunset streams in through the tall windows. Some guests with drinks enjoy the view of ships on the glassy sea.

Others stop to watch a clacking roulette wheel, or a high-stakes card game: cards are dealt, a hand is revealed, money is won, there are groans and claps.

Young, beautiful women prowl, eyes roaming for receptive men. Their stares settle on Turpin with regularity.

Turpin, Harris, Grassby and Goodyear sit at a table in the back. Food, wine, and bottles of cloudy water arrive. The MAID ignores Harris' smile and directs her gaze at Turpin. Turpin gazes back.

MAID
Gentlemen.

She retreats, unsettled.

Turpin stares at the cloudy water, and moves to pour the wine; Harris stays his hand, and pours him half a glass of the cloudy water, topped up with wine.

HARRIS
"According to custom, whose word is a law,
The first glass you take, you dilute it with spaw."

The men watch Turpin in anticipation, nodding. He drinks the spa water/wine cocktail, gags. They applaud.

Grassby carves the poultry, and dishes up.

HARRIS
The pheasant!

Turpin lifts a forkful to his mouth, but Harris again stays his hand; Harris lowers Turpin's fork to the plate with his own, and nimbly removes a lead pellet from the flesh with the prongs. Turpin bristles with embarrassment, and there is a beat of silence.

TURPIN
Mr Harris. You deflected the shot.

GRASSBY
Saved your teeth, at least!

The icy mood breaks, but now they watch how Turpin eats, the cutlery unfamiliar in his hands. He notices, but perseveres.

HARRIS
Pheasant... It's an acquired taste.

TURPIN
(chewing) Happy to acquire it.

GOODYEAR
Harris is fond of his fowl.

HARRIS
Finest fighting cocks in all of Yorkshire.

Turpin stops chewing.

TURPIN
You have a pit?

The men laugh at this.

GRASSBY
Doesn't need one. Partners with a man called Hall. He tours them.
Leeds, Beverly...

GOODYEAR
The money he spends!

Harris waves away the flattery.

HARRIS
You a gambling man, Mr Palmer?

CUT TO -

INT. GAMES ROOM - NIGHT

A crowd has gathered around Harris and Turpin at the Hazard table. Two ivory dice spin to a stop. The crowd around the table groan; Harris buries his face in his hands.

BANKER
Three. The caster throws out.

Turpin picks up the dice, eyes on Harris.

TURPIN
Eight.

Turpin rolls, with panache. It's a double six.

BANKER
Twelve. Caster nicks.

Cheers, then a hush.

TURPIN
Five.

Turpin rolls a seven. There are gasps.

BANKER
Chance. Caster rolls again.

Turpin rubs the dice together, eyes wide, tongue between teeth.

Turpin rolls a five. Now there are more groans.

BANKER
Caster throws out.

As people file away, Turpin opens his purse to pay. There is awkwardness as Turpin rummages; the banker sighs.

Harris adroitly pays the banker, and throws an arm around Turpin to lead him away. Turpin protests; Harris pushes his purse back towards him.

HARRIS
My treat.
(whispered) Just as well you paid Briar up front for your lodgings.

Harris pats Turpin's arm and walks ahead, making his way to a dance in the centre of the ball room, where Goodyear and Grassby are already enjoying the flirtations of two women. Harris looks back at Turpin and smiles a triumphant smile.

Turpin absorbs the humiliation as the reverie swirls around him.

INT. FERRY HOUSE INN, BEDROOM - DUSK

Turpin's face, red and enraged. He is in bed, angrily thrusting from behind, teeth clenched on the ivory whistle around his neck, which whistles gently with each breath. He shouts in pleasure and fury.

Briar's face emerges from the sheets, eyes closed in ecstasy. She balls the sheets in her clenched fists.

BRIAR
You'll. Wake. Him.

CUT TO -

INT. HARRIS BEDROOM

Harris' face, open-mouthed, snoring with gusto.

CUT TO -

INT. TURPIN BEDROOM

Turpin spits the whistle from his teeth.

TURPIN

Let. Him. Fucking. Wake!

INT. FERRY HOUSE INN, BAR - DAY

Briar's face, frowning in effort.

BRIAR

"Fla..."

TURPIN

Flagrant.

Briar squints at the newspaper in front of her, and takes a breath.

BRIAR

"...the fla-grant, undisturbed success of the infamous Turpin, who hath robbed in a manner, scarce ever known before, for several years..."

Several years? Really?

TURPIN

So they say. Go on.

BRIAR

"...and is grown so ins... ins..."

TURPIN

Insolent.

BRIAR

"...so inso-lent and imp..."

Turpin eyes the stairs as Harris descends, stretching.

TURPIN

Impudent.

Briar stops, flinching at the site of Harris. Turpin nods at the newspaper for her to continue.

BRIAR
"...so inso-lent and impu-dent as to threaten..."

HARRIS
Ah. Morning!

BRIAR
(trailing off) "...the lives and fortunes of the people of
England..."

Harris steps behind the bar and pulls Briar to him for a squeeze; he grips her longer than is comfortable.

HARRIS
(to Turpin) Well rested?

Turpin folds the newspaper.

TURPIN
A new man.

HARRIS
That's Scarborough for you. Briar fixing you some breakfast?

Turpin and Briar exchange a look. Turpin rises from his stool.

BRIAR
Mr Turpin is leaving us, Bill.
Found something more permanent, in -

TURPIN
Welton. Not far.

Harris picks up a linen cloth. He snaps it tight, and begins wiping down the bar, forcing Turpin to step back and Briar to retrieve the newspaper.

HARRIS
Welton. Is it. Nice village. Not cheap.

BRIAR
He's renting from your friend Mr Hall.

HARRIS
Is he now.

BRIAR

I've returned what Mr Palmer paid us up front.
Not all of it - he insisted.

Harris stops wiping the bar. He pulls the linen tight again.

HARRIS

Have you indeed.

TURPIN

Much obliged for your hospitality, Mr Harris.

Harris' knuckles are whitening as he pulls the linen.

HARRIS

Oh no no. It's Bill now. Bill.

TURPIN

I'll still be drinking here. From time to time. Bill.

Turpin puts on his hat, nods to both, and strolls out.

Harris turns to stare at Briar. She smiles weakly at him, and feigns remembering a chore. She notices Turpin's forgotten newspaper.

CUT TO -

STABLES

Turpin unhitches his horse; Briar runs to him with his paper.

BRIAR

Do you think they'll catch him?

TURPIN

Never.

Briar's face wrinkles in confusion.

TURPIN

They say he's in Ireland. Or Rotterdam.

He touches her chin.

TURPIN

Long gone.

Briar searches in an apron pocket; brings out a brown paper package.

BRIAR

I got you something... it's not much, I just -

Turpin opens the package; inside is a pretty maroon kerchief. He smiles at her, mounts his horse, and rides away.

Briar looks back at the inn, where Harris stands watching, cloth tight between his fists.

EXT. CHURCH, PINCHBECK, LINCOLNSHIRE - DAY

The buzz of summer insects, a cerulean sky. A carved angel crouches at the top of a church archway, frozen in white stone in the act of self-flagellation.

A young clergyman, TOWNSEND, hitches an enormous, glossy-coated brown horse, and opens the church doors. We follow him inside to the

CHURCH CHANCEL

where abstract grisaille stained glass casts a cool, mosaic light. Townsend says a quiet prayer, and begins to sweep the chancel. He turns, and sees Turpin seated in the front pew, watching.

Townsend swallows in surprise, recovers, and smiles.

TURPIN
Vicar.

TOWNSEND
Not yet. That's my father. I'm to be ordained in December.

Townsend looks at Turpin's hat; Turpin remember his manners and removes it. He notices the wooden carvings dotted around the roof above him.

TOWNSEND
The Pinchbeck Angels.

Turpin stands as Townsend begins an impromptu tour, pointing out the carvings.

TOWNSEND
There are ten, erected by Thomas Pynchbecke. The Pynchbeckes are local people; been here for centuries. See the shields? Each angel carries the coat of arms of a branch of the family.

TURPIN
So you can buy your own angels. That's power. How old?

TOWNSEND
Around 1490, give or take.

TURPIN
250 years of fame.

TOWNSEND
See there? A lion rampant, for courage. The sable there - the
black - for wisdom. Or grief. And the stag...

TURPIN
The fighter.

TOWNSEND
If provoked. Yes.

They walk through the church, quiet.

TOWNSEND
They say there is even a Pynchbecke in Chaucer. The 'Man of Law'?
His is one of the grislier tales. An enraged mother kills her son.
At his own wedding! But his beloved, Constance, survives, trial
after trial. And her son becomes Emperor of Rome.

TURPIN
Some are born survivors.

TOWNSEND
It is her faith that helps her endure. And keeps her safe.

TURPIN
May all of us be as lucky.

TOWNSEND
Well... May we perchance trust in divine justice?
However long it takes.

Turpin nods his appreciation, and walks away.

TOWNSEND
You are welcome to rest, sir.
Stay for some quiet prayer, if you wish?

Turpin takes a last look at the wooden angels above.

TURPIN
The road is waiting.

TOWNSEND
Ah yes. The fool wanders; the wise man travels.

Turpin puts on his hat, tips it, and leaves. Townsend stares after him for a moment, then up at the wooden angels, and returns to his sweeping.

EXT. CHURCH - DUSK

The flagellating stone angel, reddening in the twilight.

Townsend locks the church doors, and walks to the tree where he hitched his horse. The horse is gone.

CUT TO -

EXT. BLUE BELL INN - DAWN

John wanders yawning into the inn's stables. Townsend's horse is hitched in one of the stalls. John closes his eyes, shakes his head, sighs.

MONTAGE - THE MARKET AND THE GROUSE HUNT

A) EXT. MARKET - SUMMER, DAY

Turpin, collar open, sleeves rolled up, talks to a gentleman, and shows off a large, impressive horse. Money changes hands; the gentleman leads the horse away. Grassby passes; they exchange nodded greetings.

B) EXT. FIELD - SUMMER, DAWN

Turpin squints as he aims. He fires. A flying grouse continues flying. A hunting dog whines; Harris, Grassby and Goodyear stifle laughter.

C) EXT. MARKET - AUTUMN, DAY

Turpin, now in his coat, is persuasively encouraging a gentleman to buy another horse, less impressive than the first. Money is given; the horse is led away. Turpin frowns at the cash in his hands. Goodyear passes; they exchange nodded greetings.

D) EXT. FIELD - AUTUMN, DAWN

Turpin squints as he aims. He fires. A flying grouse is clipped; it flies, then plummets in an arc. The dog runs after it. Harris, Grassby and Goodyear applaud, surprised.

TURPIN

She knew she was mine. She knew!

E) EXT. MARKET - WINTER, DAY

Turpin rolls his shoulders against the cold and drinks from a flask. Some gentlemen pass; we follow their gaze, to some irritable sheep in a makeshift pen. Turpin gestures for the men to take a proper

look. They sneer and continue. Harris passes; he stares at the sheep, and at Turpin, and smiles weakly. Turpin takes a long draft from his flask and glowers at the sheep. A man and his young son walk by; the man pulls the boy close to get warmer. The son chuckles. Turpin watches them pass.

F) EXT. FIELD - WINTER, DAWN

A light snow falls. Turpin squints as he aims, unsteady on his feet. He fires. A flying grouse explodes in feathers and falls from the sky. The dog howls in excitement and runs to retrieve it. Harris walks on, shaking his head in disbelief; Grassby and Goodyear laugh in congratulation, tipping their hats.

TURPIN
Merry Christmas.

Turpin drinks, staring at the back of Harris.

INT. TAVERN, HACKNEY, LONDON - NIGHT

The back of a young man, drunkenly narrating a story. People are squeezed up around him, listening. There is a growing pile of coins on the table in front of him as people chip in. One slides a drink to him; the young man stops, drinks, continues.

WHEELER

The servant opened the door and we all rushed in with pistols in our hands!

Wheeler makes pistols with his fingers, aiming at his audience.

WHEELER

We bound the old gentleman and his man and maid. Turpin pulled the old man's breeches down and dragged him into another room.

The audience mutters and gasps. Wheeler makes a fist and pulls it towards him, as if bunching someone's shirt collar.

WHEELER

He beat him to make him discover where his money was.

Wheeler takes a drink. More coins are laid in front of him.

WHEELER

Gregory took the maid up into the garret. He lay with her there.

Silence from his audience.

WHEELER

As he afterwards told us. And told us, and told us, and told us...

Murmurs of titillated disapproval.

WHEELER

We took away what money, linen, and plate we could find. I saw no more than three guineas. And if they found any more they cheated me of my share!

More sighs.

LISTENER 1

Scabs!

Wheeler hesitates, his enthusiasm dwindling. He rubs his face.

WHEELER

(quietly) And Mary... When I was in the gate-house, she broke open my box, which was left in her room, and robbed me of my linen. And fifteen pound in money.

LISTENER 2

No honour. Land pirates, the lot of them.

LISTENER 3

More about Turpin!

LISTENER 4

Where is he? Ireland?

LISTENER 1

Amsterdam.

LISTENER 3

Rotter-dam.

LISTENER 4

I tell you, he's in Ireland...

Morose now, Wheeler sweeps up the coins and pockets them; he steps away from the table, amid protest.

WHEELER

Tomorrow.

Wheeler unsteadily pushes his way to the door. Listener 1 and Listener 2 watch him leave.

Wheeler steps out into the dim, bruised, rotten lamplight of the slushy

STREET

where he retches, and staggers to a wall. He disturbs an old, seething VAGABOND, all grimaces and bulging eyes.

VAGABOND

God *fuck* King George. Fuck him!

Wheeler retches again, ready to vomit. The vagabond claws at him.

VAGABOND

(whispered) I am the notorious Turpin!

Wheeler stares at the old man. There is a flash of Turpin's face in Wheeler's mind, quickly gone. Wheeler pushes him hard. The vagabond falls backwards, upright, rolling against the wall.

VAGABOND

(hissing) Your money or your life...

The vagabond makes a pantomime of hanging himself, his tongue lolling. He laughs, and lurches away.

Wheeler braces himself with a hand against the wall, shaking his head hard. He drools, spits.

A gag is slipped across his mouth from behind. A hand holds his nostrils closed as he struggles. He vomits into the gag, choking. He spins as he is dragged to the ground, legs kicking, hands clutching at the gag.

As his body twitches and stills, hands search his pockets and purse for the coins. His boots are removed. His assailants flee out of the bright swirling motes of the lamplight and away into the mortal dark.

We zoom out from Wheeler's prone body, lying barefoot in the street.

EXT. COPSE, LONG SUTTON, LINCOLNSHIRE - DAWN

A herd of cows, running from a change in the atmosphere. A treeline; and then Turpin's dark eyes, above a tattered maroon kerchief. The whites are speckled with capillaries; the rims are red. He swigs from his flask.

Ahead in a

FIELD

a SHEPHERD BOY makes a count of a small flock. The sheep bleat as he nudges them with his crook.

Turpin watches the shepherd boy walk away across the field. Behind him, his horse brays. He takes out his butcher's knife, feeling the blade.

TURPIN
(to himself) No. Worth more alive.

He pockets the knife and removes a length of rope from his horse's saddlebag. He runs the rope through his fingers, feeling the fibres.

He hesitates, then selects one of his two pistols, checks the barrel, primes it, and holsters it at his side.

Turpin creeps from the copse, rope in hand, towards a lamb separated from the flock. It munches on grass, oblivious. Turpin fingers and adjusts the rope's noose as he edges forward.

Up ahead, he hears greetings; the shepherd boy is conversing with a CONSTABLE on horseback, carrying a staff.

TURPIN
(sotto voce) Bastard.

The lamb ceases its munching, ears erect and twitching. The flock ripples with movement. Turpin looks from the men to the lamb, calculating.

The constable waves a farewell to the shepherd boy and rides away; the shepherd boy looks back once, is satisfied, and walks off in the same direction.

The lamb is noosed, the rope drawn tight around its neck. It bleats and struggles; Turpin slips as he grapples with it, trying to hold its mouth shut.

The flock scatters and parts; at its centre is a ram, eyes fixed on Turpin.

With an arm around the lamb, Turpin begins sliding himself away on his back; with his free hand, he removes his pistol. He aims.

The ram nudges forward. The lamb bleats.

TURPIN
Hush now, you little bleating cheat. Shhhh.

The ram takes another step, rolling its head and horns. The shepherd boy stops, yells.

Turpin fires at the ram, misses. The ram and the flock disperse. The lamb bleats its misery.

Turpin drops his pistol and rises, heavy lamb in arms; he staggers towards the copse, shepherd boy in pursuit. He falls; the lamb sprints towards the shepherd boy, but is yanked back by Turpin.

CONSTABLE

Is it worth it, cur? For one lamb?

Turpin rolls on his side, still holding the rope; he sees the constable on horseback looking down at him, staff raised in the apex of a swing.

Turpin looks from lamb to the constable. The lamb bleats. Turpin sits up, rolls his eyes.

The shepherd boy removes the noose from the lamb's neck. It bleats its indignation and runs back to the flock.

CONSTABLE

(to boy) The rope.

The shepherd boy looks lost.

CONSTABLE

Tie him!

The shepherd boy comprehends, and begins looping the rope around Turpin's wrists, his hands shaking.

CONSTABLE

A pity they don't hang sheep thieves.

TURPIN

(to boy) Now who would hang the poor and hungry?

The shepherd boy is distracted. Turpin head-butts him in the face, breaking his nose, then loops the rope around his neck and pulls him towards him as a shield, the point of the butcher's knife at the corner of the boy's eye. The shepherd boy stares up at the constable, eyes pleading, nose streaming blood.

TURPIN

(to boy) Brave little lamb.

(to constable) Drop the staff.

The constable wavers. Turpin moves his fist as if to thrust the knife into the shepherd boy's eye.

The constable tosses the staff. Turpin keeps the knife pressed to the shepherd boy's face, walks the shepherd boy over to the pistol in the grass, and retrieves it; he pushes the boy away, gripping the

knife between his teeth and untying himself. The shepherd boy runs over to the constable, nursing his nose and throat.

TURPIN
(muffled) Horse.

Turpin drops the knife from his mouth into his hand. He steps towards the constable, knife raised.

TURPIN
Horse. And please don't make me fucking say it again.

The constable dismounts, and begins backing away with the shepherd boy.

CONSTABLE
Now you will hang.

TURPIN
No no.
This was a *gift*. An *exchange*. A *transaction*.
Was it worth it? 'Cur'?
One horse for two lives?

They back away, and break into a run.

Turpin is alone. He looks over at the sheep. Then he looks at Bess back in the woods, and at his new horse, and at the weapon he holds in each hand. He makes an 'X' with his arms, the knife and pistol pointing skyward, and nods to himself, grinning.

INT. FERRY HOUSE INN, BROUGH - NIGHT

A newspaper, in close up, focused on one story.

TURPIN (V.O.)
"London: On Thursday last the wife of the noted Turpin was brought to bed a son and heir, at her house near Chingford Green in Essex..."

Turpin lowers the newspaper. The grin is gone. He struggles to focus, the drunken anger rising.

TURPIN
"And a few days since, the father of this Turpin was committed to Chelmsford Gaol, for having in his possession a horse supposed to be out of Lincolnshire..."

Turpin crunches the paper into a ball in subdued fury. Grassby and Goodyear arrive at his table with tankards.

GRASSBY

Listen at the hole, and you'll hear news of yourself.

Turpin feigns amusement at the wit, and accepts the drink. Goodyear sees the crumpled newspaper.

GOODYEAR

Stories from the south?

TURPIN

Lincolnshire.

GRASSBY

So that's where you've been.

Turpin takes a long drink before easing into a new lie.

TURPIN

Family there. My sister runs my father's inn.

GOODYEAR

Sister? Well now.

Grassby looks around him at the boisterous atmosphere, laughing.

GRASSBY

Never wanted to run your own 'establishment'?

Turpin notices Briar, at the bar; her cheek is bruised. She looks away. Harris stands next to her, eyeing him.

TURPIN

What can I say. Sister's better with our father's money.

GOODYEAR

Ah.

Grassby hides his reaction behind a swig of his own drink. Turpin broods.

Harris appears; he slaps Turpin on the back, a little too hard.

HARRIS

Bit early in the proceedings for melancholy!

GRASSBY

(conspiratorial) Family woes.

HARRIS

Is there any other kind?

Harris looks over at Briar, leers.

HARRIS

It follows there must be a Mrs Palmer, then.

Harris winks at Grassby and Goodyear, who laugh and nod. They stare at Turpin in expectation of an anecdote.

Turpin drains his tankard.

TURPIN

Marriage and hanging go by destiny.

They are interrupted by some whoops of approval on another table as an exuberant gentleman, HALL, proudly shows off a magnificent, lustrous rooster.

Goodyear and Grassby join their hubbub. Harris beams mirthlessly at Turpin.

HARRIS

And every cock is proud on his own dunghill.

Turpin glowers back.

TURPIN

My Welton landlord.

Harris points at the rooster.

HARRIS

Well at least he has one tenant of distinction.
Gin?

Turpin's rolls his shoulders, ire brimming.

TURPIN

Ale.

Turpin takes a swig from his own gin flask, pockets it. He stands to get a look at the rooster under Hall's arm. Its admirers press around it, risking its beak by petting its feathers. It is black breasted, shiny with blue; its flame-feathered neck supports a crimson, reptilian head, pitted and pocked. It wears sharp, gleaming silver spurs on its feet. Its yellow eyes dart around its audience.

HALL

Gentlemen, feast your eyes on the notorious... 'Highwayman'.
Champion of East Riding. Undefeated from the day he was an egg.

GRASSBY
Magnificent.

GOODYEAR
A specimen. But he'll hang! In the end!

GRASSBY
They all do!

There is laughter. The rooster stares at Turpin, cocks its head; Turpin drunkenly stares back, swaying, fascinated.

HARRIS
Love at first sight.

Harris pulls him away, puts a bottle in his hand, and sits him back at the table. Turpin barely sticks his landing.

Turpin drinks deep, but without pleasure. He grabs Harris' coat, the kind of benevolent aggression an innkeeper is used to.

HARRIS
Steady, Mr Palmer.

TURPIN
'Mr Palmer.'
(voice rising) 'Mister. Palmer.'

Others look around at them at the increase in volume.

TURPIN
Do you know who I am, 'Mister Harris'?

Turpin interrupts Harris by placing a finger on Harris' lips.

TURPIN
I, Mr Harris, am *everything*.

Briar looks over; the other voices in the inn hush in a cascade of diminishing whispers.

Turpin stands for his new audience, kicking the table away from him.

TURPIN
I am everything. I am the beginning and the end.
And they are after me. *Me*.

GRASSBY
(to Harris) Trouble with the family business.

TURPIN

If they once catch me they will kill me. They will *kill* me.

HARRIS

Come now. It would be very hard to kill a man for debt.

Harris looks around him, smiling, recruiting goodwill to rescue a deteriorating mood.

Turpin drinks, wipes his mouth.

TURPIN

But if you go over the water with me, gentlemen, I will show you such a pair of pistols as you have never seen in your life.

Turpin makes the 'X'; his fingers are the pistols.

TURPIN

They are after me. And I do not fear them. No. Because in plain terms, gentlemen, I am everything.

GOODYEAR

(to Grassby) What is he rambling about?

Turpin slaps some coins down on the table.

TURPIN

Ale! Twenty pounds is as easily got as two pence. Briar!

Briar shoots Harris a look; Harris nods. Briar takes the coins.

TURPIN

Drink about, gentlemen, drink about.

He reels close to Harris' face.

TURPIN

Not catch me. Not have me.

But before they do, Mr. Harris. Before they do, a great deal of blood shall be spilt.

He snatches a full tankard from Briar, kisses her forehead hard, sneers at Harris.

Then he cocks a finger at Hall's rooster, 'fires', and staggers out of the inn into the dark.

EXT. FIELD, HECKINGTON COMMON, LINCOLNSHIRE - DUSK

A hand offers a turnip. A horse's mouth greedily accepts the treat, then another. A smaller mouth snuffles the hand.

TURPIN

You too, sweetheart.

Turpin gives another turnip to the foal. The horses' enthusiastic crunching is like an earthquake in the still summer evening.

TURPIN

Shhhhhh.

Turpin looks around, and leads the horses into the road. He leads them towards the distant light of an

INN

where the landlord, WHITEHEAD, collects a single glass from an outdoor table. He stops at Turpin's approach.

WHITEHEAD

Evening sir.

Turpin tips his hat.

WHITEHEAD

Here, let me.

Whitehead takes the horses. Turpin looks behind him, a gesture Whitehead notices. He leads them to a stall in the stable, hitches them.

WHITEHEAD

Some fresh hay there.

TURPIN

Obliged.

Whitehead pets the horses, glancing at Turpin.

TURPIN

I assume you have ale too.

WHITEHEAD

Heckington's best.

They walk towards the inn. Whitehead stops at the door.

WHITEHEAD
Creasy, my neighbour.

Whitehead points to the field in the distance.

WHITEHEAD
Has a mare and fowl just like these two.

TURPIN
Is that right. Bought them at a fair. Paid seven guineas.
Whitehead considers this.

TURPIN
Ale? And lodgings for the night.

Whitehead's suspicion is shelved; he shows Turpin in.

WHITEHEAD
Seven guineas, eh. Fair exchange. Mr...?

CUT TO -

EXT. ROAD, WELTON, EAST RIDING - DAY

TURPIN
Palmer.

DAWSON
Dawson.

Turpin admires CAPTAIN DAWSON's uniform. Grassby is passing on horseback; he waves to both.

GRASSBY
It's 'Captain' Dawson to you, Palmer!

Turpin bows, Dawson laughs. Dawson admires the foal, checking its teeth.

DAWSON
Seven guineas, you say?

TURPIN
Mare and foal, sir. Yes. Lincolnshire bred.

Dawson regards the mare, frowns.

DAWSON
I've no occasion for a mare, Mr Palmer.

He nods at his giant warhorse.

DAWSON
But this foal... Two guineas?

TURPIN
I'd rather sell the mare with her.

DAWSON
Three.

TURPIN
I said, I'd rather sell the mare with her.

Dawson hesitates a moment at the new aggression in the air. Turpin softens.

TURPIN
Four, Captain. An honourable man would never separate mother and child.

Dawson laughs at this.

DAWSON
I'm back to Bristol next week. But I'll let Grassby work her.
A strong handshake. Turpin watches them leave.

TURPIN
An honourable man wouldn't do a lot of things.

EXT. FIELD, WELTON, EAST RIDING - DAWN

A flare of powder at the muzzle of a gun. Grassby laughs in victory.

GRASSBY
Champion!

Grassby's dog, tail wagging, delivers the carcass of the grouse at Turpin's feet. Turpin looks sourly at the gift, and at Grassby.

TURPIN
Charity.

GRASSBY
Pay no heed, Nell. Good girl.

Turpin looks out at the fields.

TURPIN
Who owns all this?

GRASSBY
Welton Place? The Clarkes. Old money. Good friends.

TURPIN
'Old money.' Right.

Turpin crouches, picks up the dead bird, examines it, and tosses it to Grassby.

TURPIN
You drew the short straw, then.
Who keeps an eye on the vagabond Palmer.

Grassby stashes the bird, and sends his dog into the long, frosty grass with a click of the tongue.

GRASSBY
They'll come around.
You put on a show that night.

They walk on, following the dog, which rummages in the grass for a scent.

TURPIN
So I'm a curiosity.
The empty southerner amongst Yorkshire's well-equipped.

GRASSBY
It's not like that. We're not like that.

TURPIN
I'm just sport to Harris. A diversion.

GRASSBY
Agh, never mind him. Envy shoots at others and wounds itself.

TURPIN
Fuck 'em.

Grassby stops him with a hand on his shoulder.

GRASSBY
It'll all work out. The family. The debts.

Nell yelps with the discovery of a scent.

GRASSBY
Captain Dawson is pleased with his purchase.

TURPIN

It barely covers my arse.

There is a commotion in the grass, and a bark.

GRASSBY

There!

A grouse flaps squawking from the grass; Turpin shoulders his gun, following the arc of the grouse's flight, but he has missed the moment.

A second grouse breaks cover, but Turpin swivels too late, and again the chance has escaped.

TURPIN

Damn your blood!

The dog barks at Turpin's rage. Turpin points his gun at the dog.

GRASSBY

Palmer! No! Come on, now!

Grassby grabs the muzzle of the gun and directs it away from the dog. The dog's frightened barks are a cacophony.

Turpin steps back, and aims the gun at Grassby's face. Grassby raises his hands in confused horror.

With a shallow laugh, Turpin hands the gun back to Grassby.

TURPIN

It'll all work out.

Grassby is frozen, and does not take the gun.

TURPIN

Well then.

Turpin slings the gun over his shoulder with the strap. He takes out his flask, drinks. He salutes the dog.

TURPIN

Nell.

Turpin stomps away; Grassby and his dog stare at each other, two static figures in an open field.

We follow Turpin's lonely, brooding walk home through the fields. A rider waves and says hello; Turpin drinks at them.

He turns into a

LANE

abutting the field, and retrieves the key to his house from his pocket. As he turns the key in the lock, a cock crows behind him, loud and shrill. He pauses, licks his lips, and turns.

'Highwayman', the game cock, is strutting and pecking in the road. Turpin watches it, unblinking, for a long beat. It crows again, in his direction.

TURPIN
Oh really.

Turpin shoulders his gun, aims, and shoots the rooster square in the chest. There is an explosion of feathers; the rooster twitches bloody in the dust, feet clawing.

A neighbour, ROBINSON, watches.

ROBINSON
Mr Palmer?

Turpin walks over to the dying rooster, and picks it up by the neck. He brings its face close to his.

TURPIN
We all hang, Highwayman. In the end.

He kisses its beak; Robinson cringes.

ROBINSON
Mr Palmer? You would shoot your own landlord's property?

Turpin turns to him. He then lobs the rooster in a massive arc into the adjacent field.

Turpin readies the gun again.

TURPIN
Stay while I reload. So I can shoot you too.

Robinson flees; Turpin follows him with his aim until he is out of sight. Turpin opens his door, steps inside, and slams it hard behind him.

In the

FIELD

Highwayman trembles on its back, feet clawing the air, feathers twitching - and dies.

INT. HOUSE, WELTON - DAY

Turpin snores, bottle in hand. There is a loud knocking at his door. He stirs, but doesn't wake.

OUTSIDE

Hall's hand hovers before the door. He looks at Robinson, and the giant constable GILL.

Gill nudges him to one side, and hammers on the door with his enormous fist.

GILL
Mr Palmer!

The door opens. Hall and Robinson hide behind Gill like children.

A dishevelled, bare-chested Turpin squints at the sunlight.

TURPIN
Gentlemen?

GILL
We have received a report from Mr Hall, here, and Mr Robinson, that yesterday you shot and killed Mr Hall's game cock.

ROBINSON
I witnessed the murder!

Turpin laughs at him.

TURPIN
The chicken?

GILL
You can tell your story in Beverley, Mr Palmer. Get dressed.

Turpin shakes his head at them. He turns away, and looks back

INSIDE

the house at his wig, his tricorne hat, his pistols, and his butcher's knife on the table. He makes a mental calculation. Then he closes his eyes, and sighs.

CUT TO -

EXT. HOUSE

A dressed Turpin steps outside. The others wait on horseback. Turpin unhitches Bess, stares at her for a long moment.

GILL

Your horse will be taken care of.

Turpin nods, mounts, and follows the lead of the other men. We watch them trot onto an empty road, Turpin alongside Gill, the others at the rear.

As we watch them travel across the countryside, like leaves in a stream, we hear -

GEORGE CROWLE, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE (V.O.)

To the Master of the House of Correction in Beverley, whereas it appears to us, upon the informations of diverse credible persons, That John Palmer, of Welton, in the East Riding of the county of York, is a very dangerous person, and therefore we command you to receive him into your custody, until he shall be discharged by due course of law.

INT. CELL, BEVERLEY HOUSE OF CORRECTION, YORKSHIRE - DAY

A meniscus on black fluid. In the meagre light from his cell window, Turpin is puncturing the base of his left thumb with a needle, which he dips in the fluid on his forearm. There is a complete 'R'; the next figure is the beginnings of a '1'.

A turnkey opens his cell. CROWLE steps in; the turnkey provides a chair. Crowle sits, arranging his coat for comfort.

Crowle watches the tattooing.

CROWLE
Lampblack?

TURPIN
Gunpowder.

Crowle is fascinated.

TURPIN
Just a pinch.

CROWLE
Branding yourself. Saving us the trouble for after you are convicted?

TURPIN
Well. I am my own master, after all.

A clerk, APPLETON, enters with a stool, and sits at Crowle's side with paper and writing tools.

TURPIN

Here to record my likeness?

CROWLE

I am George Crowle, a Justice of the Peace for East Riding. We are here to record your account, Mr Palmer.

Turpin smears the pool of gunpowder, drying it.

TURPIN

Of? The chicken murder?

Appleton dips his pen in his well, but hesitates to write this. Turpin mimics his pause. Crowle exhales through his nose.

CROWLE

We have taken several informations, from persons of Brough, and Welton, of your frequent trips to Lincolnshire. After which you return with money. And sometimes horses.

TURPIN

What of it. I trade in them.

Appleton writes. The sound of the scratching nib fills the space.

CROWLE

I have also received a letter from a Justice of the Peace in Long Sutton, Lincolnshire. He himself had several informations that you were apprehended for sheep-stealing, but made your escape.

TURPIN

The only relevant 'informations' you'll need, Mr Crowle, are that I have family in Lincolnshire. And debts. I bought sheep. That proved rotten.

Appleton looks at Crowle.

TURPIN

So I settled in Welton. Lovely people.

CROWLE

He says that you have no relatives living in Lincolnshire, and that he has had several accusations lodged against you for horse-stealing. Sheep, then horses.

You are aware of the difference in law, Mr Palmer?

TURPIN

The law hangs the poor and it hangs the disobedient. It makes no distinction.

APPLETON

Legally speaking, that's not strictly -

Crowle interrupts him with a raised finger.

CROWLE

The new deacon of Pinchbeck. A Charles Townsend. Dispossessed of a brown bay gelding.

TURPIN

I will remember him in my prayers.

Crowle sighs.

CROWLE

Very well. I am required to ask you if you are able pay sureties for an appearance at the next assizes.

Turpin looks at their expensive coats and wigs, then at his own stolen clothes, and laughs. He spits on his hand, turns away from them back into the light, and resumes tattooing.

Crowle and Appleton exit. The turnkey locks the door behind them.

CROWLE

(to Appleton) This villain is to be conducted safe to York Castle. Immediately. See to it.

EXT. BANSTEAD DOWNS, SURREY - DUSK

Early autumn leaves scatter. A woman screams; the sound is lost in the whinnying of horses.

A black horse with a lone masked RIDER rears up ahead of a carriage containing the woman, LADY ST JOHN, and her companion, COUNCILLOR ST JOHN. The lone rider approaches the carriage, pistol raised.

Lady St John screams herself hoarse; she stares at the rider, mouth open in terror, the scream now a rasp. Councillor St John comforts her, as she gasps for breath, never taking her eyes off the rider.

RIDER

So. Do I need to tell you who I am?

The rider proffers his upturned hat. Councillor St John, fingers trembling, rummages around his and his wife's person for items of

value. His wife glowers at him now, betrayed, still screaming her silent scream.

Councillor St John drops watches and silver into the hat. The rider looks them over, nods, pockets them. He puts on his hat and pulls down his kerchief, revealing an ugly face with a giant scar running from temple to opposite jaw. He grins at Lady St John, who stares back, mouth agape.

RIDER

A story for the grandchildren. "The day we met - "

CUT TO -

INT. BLUE BELL INN - NIGHT

RIVERNAL

"- the famous Turpin."

Dolly stops still in the middle of pouring a beer for a customer, and tuts at her husband, POMPR RIVERNAL, who is seated at a table near the counter. The beer overflows and spills. Dolly grabs a cloth.

DOLLY

Don't jest.

Rivernal waves the newspaper at her.

RIVERNAL

It's the truth. It's here in the newspaper.

DOLLY

It's the truth because it's in the newspaper?

RIVERNAL

Will you just listen?

"The same afternoon, October 8th - "

DOLLY

That's just a week ago.

RIVERNAL

Yes. May I?

"...Councillor St John and his lady going over Banstead Downs in their chariot, were attacked by a single highwayman..."

There is a sudden drop in the hubbub of the inn; some punters turn to listen. Dolly beams back at them until they return to their drinking. Dolly glares at Rivernal.

DOLLY
Shhh!

RIVERSAL
(quieter) "...were attacked by a single highwayman, well mounted,
on a black gelding - "

DOLLY
Ha. Romantic.

RIVERSAL
"The person who committed this robbery had a great scar across his
face..."

Dolly sighs, continues wiping up the spillage.

RIVERSAL
"... and answered pretty exactly to the description of the famous
Turpin."

Riversal folds the newspaper in triumph.

DOLLY
People see him everywhere, Pomp. Men *become* him.
And the scar... They're confusing it for the pock marks.

RIVERSAL
Or he ran across someone who stood up to him. If that fool
Newcastle and his friends still can't catch the bastard, let him
at least discover his own ruin.

DOLLY
Pomp. Enough. He's my brother.

RIVERSAL
So why is it us here minding the Bell while your father is in
custody and your 'brother' robs on Banstead Downs?
And *kills* in Waltham Forest?

Dolly takes a bottle, two glasses. She pulls up a chair and sits
down. She rubs her face, then pours them both a drink.

DOLLY
You don't know his story. Not all of it.

Her eyes wander around the inn, remembering.

DOLLY
When he was a boy... Alright, he was a handful at first, even back
then. Hid spiders in my bed. A hedgehog, once. But just mischief.
Could never sit still.

She leans back, takes a deep breath.

DOLLY

Then our mother died. And Christopher.
I was too little to remember much. I just remember Richard's
face... He looked lost. Like he was far from home.
And then it came for him too.

Her gaze is distant.

DOLLY

Days of fever, my father says. Skin like molten iron. Scabs like
pennies. He suffered.

She looks at the painting of the bluebells. She shivers, wraps her
shawl around herself.

DOLLY

Then suddenly, Richard's awake, screaming at something nobody else
can see.

They drink in silence for a moment, watching the regulars. The
drinkers laugh at each other's jokes, pat shoulders, toast with
tankards.

DOLLY

Took part of him with it.

RIVERNAL

And he left Beth and their child with no husband and no father.

DOLLY

The learning the Smith boy gave him. You ever see him making
letters? To think that one of those awful fists could do that with
a pen.
What a wasted life, Pomp!

He sees that she is crying.

RIVERNAL

Dolly. It's his life. Our lives are ours. Must we suffer with him?
With that *boy*?

Dolly closes her eyes. She reaches for her husband's hand, shakes
her head.

DOLLY

No, Pomp. No.

She stares at the painting.

DOLLY

Richard has chosen to suffer alone.

INT. YORK CASTLE PRISON - DUSK

Snow falls on a courtyard. Watching through a barred cell window at ground level is Turpin, who strains for a view of the sky overhead. Moments pass, silent and peaceful.

Two pairs of boots crunch to a standstill outside the window. Then snow is kicked at Turpin's watching face. He stares, but does not flinch. There is men's laughter, and the boots crunch away.

Turpin is shackled at the ankles. The cell is stone, with a bench set into the wall to Turpin's left. He sits on the bench, pulling his knees up and his coat around him against the cold. Dying coals glow in a grate. He closes his eyes to sleep.

There is a rattling of the key in the iron door.

A large, doughy man, HADFIELD, also shackled at the ankles, is shoved with a straining effort into the cell by GRIFFITHS, the giant head gaoler.

GRIFFITHS

You still owe me for your garnish. Remember.

The iron door is closed heavily behind him.

Hadfield has a bundle of straw under one arm, and is holding a bread roll like a Bible in front of him. He stares at the stone bench, and then at Turpin, who stares back.

Hadfield shuffles to the window, peers out at the failing light. He sighs.

HADFIELD

Whether you boil or bake snow, you can have but water of it.

Turpin ignores him. Hadfield moves to the opposite corner of the cell, unpacks his straw, and sits. He itches; he rummages in an armpit, locates the offending louse, squeezes it between black nails, and flicks it into the coals.

He stares at his bread, and then at Turpin.

Hadfield breaks the stale bread in half with an effort, and throws one half to Turpin, who catches. Hadfield nods at him, with a trace of a smile. They eat for a while in silence.

Turpin slides a thumb around his teeth and gums, sucks his teeth loudly.

TURPIN
Palmer.

HADFIELD
Hadfield. Well met.

Turpin nods, and closes his eyes again.

Hadfield sits quietly for a while, fidgeting in the silence, trying to get warm near the grate. He marvels at the clouds of his own breath. Then he rises and shuffles to the window to look at the falling snow.

HADFIELD
Robbing?

Turpin opens his eyes.

Hadfield pats his own chest.

HADFIELD
Robbing. Seven shillings.
From a gentleman on the highway in Rothwell.
Seven shillings.
You?

TURPIN
I'm innocent.

Hadfield laughs, then registers Turpin is serious.

HADFIELD
Right you are. Of course.

Hadfield coughs. Turpin closes his eyes. Hadfield watches him.

HADFIELD
See you've inked yourself there. What does it say?

Turpin does not open his eyes.

TURPIN
Revelation 1, verse 8. When it's done.

He rolls over to face the wall.

HADFIELD
I see...

Hadfield chews his bread.

HADFIELD
Why?

There is no response.

HADFIELD
(to himself) Perhaps he's a monk.

Hadfield looks out at the snow. Seconds pass. Hadfield frowns at a thought.

HADFIELD
Innocent of what though?

Turpin opens his eyes, looks at the ceiling, and takes a long, patient breath.

He then springs from the bench, shackles jangling, and is on Hadfield in an instant, connecting with five hard punches to Hadfield's head, perfectly timed. One, two, three, four, five.

Hadfield backs into a corner, curled up, arms protecting his head. Turpin hops back onto the bench, makes himself comfortable, and shuts his eyes.

TURPIN
Thank you for the bread.

EXT. STABLES, FERRIBY, YORKSHIRE - DAY

A mare and her foal graze on fresh hay thrown down by a whistling Grassby.

GRASSBY
Appetites! Grand.

He is startled by a visitor, THOMAS CREASY, who raises his hands in apology.

CREASY
I crept up unannounced.

GRASSBY
You're alright. You don't have the look of a horse thief.

CREASY
Lot of that about?

GRASSBY
Oh yes. Well, perhaps not for these two. Bless them. The foal
maybe. But they've kept together so far.

Grassby notices Creasy staring at the horses.

GRASSBY
Something I can help you with?

CREASY
Forgive me. Thomas Creasy.

Grassby wipes his hands on his breeches, and offers a handshake.

GRASSBY
Grassby.

CREASY
Had these long?

GRASSBY
August, thereabouts. Just working them for a friend.

CREASY
Remarkable.

Grassby is baffled.

CREASY
The star on the foal's face there. The white on the mare's
shoulder. Put the word out all around the villages. For two I lost
in August, just like these? They directed me here.

GRASSBY
Come now, there's nothing remarkable about -

CREASY
Told me a 'John Palmer' had them. Shot a game cock?

Grassby rubs his head, dumbfounded.

CREASY
She's blind.

GRASSBY
The game cock?

CREASY

(laughing) Cockerels aren't female, as far as I remember.

Creasy points at the older horse.

CREASY

The mare. In the near eye.

Grassby's face falls with the realisation.

CREASY

Shall we take a ride together, Mr Grassby? To the constable, in Welton? It's not far.

INT. CELL, YORK CASTLE PRISON - DAY

The iron cell door swings open to reveal the gaoler Griffiths, who holds out a sack. Turpin takes the sack, and places the contents on the stone bench: a stoppered bottle, two cups, a bottle of ink, a quill, a nub of red wax, and a roll of writing papers, tied with string.

Hadfield greedily takes the bottle, unstoppers it, and pours a cup for himself and Turpin. He drinks without waiting, and refills his cup.

Turpin slides the string off the roll, and counts the sheets of paper. Exasperated, he scowls at Griffiths.

Griffiths shrugs, and holds out his hand. Turpin removes the buckles from his shoes, drops them into the sack, and hands the sack over to Griffiths, who takes the buckles back out of the sack, inspects them, shakes his head, and exits, locking the door behind him.

Turpin smooths out a piece of paper on the bench, inks his quill, and begins writing.

HADFIELD

A love letter. Who is she?

Turpin silently writes. Hadfield slides across to peer over his shoulder. Turpin shields the paper from his gaze.

HADFIELD

Nothing to hide. I can't read.

Turpin continues writing.

HADFIELD

Can I watch the shapes?

Turpin nods. Hadfield watches him write, fascinated.

HADFIELD

Those are beautiful words. I can tell that much.

TURPIN

I was taught well.

Hadfield returns to his corner with his cup, melancholy. He drinks. There is only the sound of Turpin's quill scratching the paper.

HADFIELD

Will I hang?

Turpin doesn't look up.

TURPIN

Are you willing to beg for His Majesty's divine mercy?

HADFIELD

They'll just transport me.

TURPIN

Better to hang, then.

Hadfield fidgets.

HADFIELD

You ever hear of Jack Ketch?

TURPIN

The executioner. Yes. Used a blunt axe. That's who I'm writing to.

HADFIELD

He will leave on you an ardent mark of his affection!

They laugh.

HADFIELD

Hanged them, too. He'd let you swing for an hour if you didn't make it worth his while.

Hadfield rubs his throat and neck.

HADFIELD

Coin. Clothes. Anything else of value on your person, even right at the end. Whatever the prior arrangement.

TURPIN

An hour. That's a long farewell.

HADFIELD

Or a quick one, if you could afford it. Then he'd be sure the rope broke your neck.

TURPIN

I know how it works.

Hadfield watches Turpin write. Turpin addresses the envelope and blows on the ink of his finished letter, satisfied. He melts the nub of wax on a coal in the hearth, lets it drip like hot blood onto the envelope as a seal. He bangs on the cell door for attention.

Hadfield is suddenly morose again in the corner.

TURPIN

Look. Just ask for mercy. It's a month on the ocean. Weevils in the biscuits, a bit of seasickness, that's all. And can America be any worse than here?

The cell door opens. Turpin hands the letter to Griffiths, who squints at the address.

GRIFFITHS

Hempstead?

TURPIN

Down south. Just fucking send it.

Griffiths slams the cell door. Turpin begins preparing another letter, but sees that Hadfield has his head in his hands.

HADFIELD

What are we? After we die.

TURPIN

(laughing) Do I look like your chaplain?

We are everything and nothing, Hadfield.

Turpin looks at his own big hands; he examines his tattoo.

TURPIN

Just meat. Another body for the surgeon to break open and explore.

HADFIELD

Oh, God.

Just pray our friends bury us in quicklime...

Hadfield moans, miserable.

TURPIN
Hadfield.

Hadfield looks up. Turpin beckons him over.

Turpin slides to one end of the bench, cross-legged. Hadfield sits opposite, the paper between them.

TURPIN
Watch.

Turpin slowly scratches out the calligraphy of an exquisite capital H. He pushes the paper over, inks the quill, and passes it to Hadfield.

TURPIN
'H.'

Hadfield stares at the quill, then at the paper.

TURPIN
For 'hangman'.

Hadfield frowns at him.

TURPIN
Alright. For 'Hadfield'.
Hadfield stares at the letter. Turpin taps the space underneath it.

TURPIN
Saddle up, squire.

Hadfield dips the quill in the ink, and laboriously copies the letter. Turpin watches him work. Hadfield looks up at him for affirmation.

TURPIN
(laughing) Go on boy, in your own time.

Turpin watches. He then looks over at the window, and beyond.

TURPIN
In your own time.

EXT. POSTAL STATION, ESSEX - DAY

A chill, grey, late winter morning at a small village postal station. A POSTMASTER passes a package of letters to a mounted POSTBOY. They exchange salutations.

The postboy shuffles through the letters, then places them in his satchel. We follow his journey on a

COUNTRY LANE

as his horse trots into Hempstead village: he passes houses and shops, exchanging pleasantries and nods of the head, delivering letters, while we hear -

TURPIN (V.O.)

"Dear Brother,

I trust you and Dolly are well. I write to you now in your position as head of the family, with myself under confinement in York Castle, accused of horse-stealing. A confusion that might be remedied with your assistance."

We see John arriving home to the

BLUE BELL INN

and hugs from Dolly and a handshake from Rivernal. They sit down with him in the garden and serve him a beer, which he drains, happy. We see him explaining something, and them smiling with relief.

TURPIN (V.O.)

"I beg you to procure any evidences to give me character, as witnesses, that I may at least get off for transportation, and not death."

The postboy arrives at the inn, dismounts, and approaches the yard.

TURPIN (V.O.)

"Do not neglect me, dear brother. I have no other hopes left but this petition and am sure to suffer at the next assizes."

Rivernal greets the postboy in the lane, who hands him a letter. Dolly appears at his side. She looks at the handwriting on the envelope. Dolly and Rivernal exchange glances; Dolly gives an almost imperceptible shake of the head.

TURPIN (V.O.)

"You will know what I mean when I say,
I am everything..."

Baffled, the postboy backs away. John joins Dolly and Rivernal in the lane but with smiles and shakes of the head they usher him through the garden.

TURPIN (V.O.)
"... and yours..."

Rivernal turns to glance at the postboy as the three head inside the inn.

TURPIN (V.O.)
"... John Palmer."

The postboy stares at the letter, as we

CUT TO -

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

and the same letter in close-up, on a table with others to the side of a counter. Staring at it is Smith. He is holding letters of his own. A CLERK, ready to serve him, watches him with concerned amusement.

CLERK
Enamoured with the calligraphy?

SMITH
The what? No... Sorry, may I?

The clerk hands him the letter. Smith examines it, turning it over in his hands and back again.

SMITH
Mr Rivernal of the Blue Bell Inn returned this unaccepted?

CLERK
I believe so. Said he knew of no correspondent in York. Refused to pay the postage.

Smith traces the 'R' of 'Rivernal' on the envelope with his finger.

The clerk coughs gently to break the silence.

CLERK
Is there anything amiss sir?

Smith looks at him, eyes alarmed.

SMITH
Who is our nearest Justice of the Peace?

INT. POST OFFICE, SORTING ROOM - DUSK

A portly older man, Justice of the Peace STUBBING, squints through his eyeglasses. He sits at a desk with Smith and the clerk.

STUBBING
You are certain?

SMITH
I know the family. Yes.

STUBBING
Very well.

Stubbing looks at the clerk, drums his fingers.

CLERK
Oh! Yes. Here.

The clerk passes him a letter opener. Stubbing cracks open the letter, adjusts his eyeglasses, and silently reads, lips moving. He passes the letter to Smith.

STUBBING
'John Palmer'?

SMITH
'Palmer' is his mother's maiden name.

STUBBING
And you are sure this is his hand?

SMITH
Justice Stubbing... I taught him to read and write.

Stubbing folds the letter and places it carefully back in the envelope. He removes his glasses.

STUBBING
Mr Smith, write me as detailed a description of this man as you can. I will send it to the Governor of York Castle in advance of your visit.

SMITH
My visit?

STUBBING
Well, the villain will need to be identified. Make preparations to leave first thing in the morning.

Smith leans back in his chair with the gravity of this instruction.

STUBBING

And listen, both of you - not a word of this yet to anyone.

Smith nods gravely. Stubbing stares hard at the clerk, who nods his enthusiastic assent.

EXT. KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS, LONDON - DAY

Swans swim in a V towards grain thrown into a pond. King George II kisses his encouragement to them as he throws more grain. Behind him stands Newcastle; attendants are in waiting.

KING

So there's been no official announcement?

NEWCASTLE

No, your Majesty. As yet we haven't identified -

KING

So why is it all over the newspapers? Is it him or isn't it?

NEWCASTLE

We're confident Turpin will be convicted at the April assizes.

KING

In London?

NEWCASTLE

In York, Your Majesty.

The King stops, turns from the swans.

KING

York? He killed a man in Essex, did he not?

NEWCASTLE

Your Majesty, there is a minor technicality.

The King rolls his eyes.

KING

Um gottes willen!

He continues his walk along the perimeter of the pond, the swans following.

NEWCASTLE

There are no witnesses to the Waltham Forest murder. However, the evidence of his horse-stealing in the north of the country is irrefutable.

The swans call.

KING

"Le cygnet chante quand le mort arrive!"

Newcastle looks at him, blank. The King laughs, claps his hands in triumph.

KING

"The swan sings when death is coming."

I own all the swans in England. Did you know that? They mark their bills - can you see? Look at that one.

So no one can eat them but me!

He throws more grain into the pond.

KING

This one's not singing about its own death. Swans taste a little bit fishy for my liking. But it's important we keep control of our property. Don't you agree, Newcastle?

NEWCASTLE

Your Majesty.

KING

Will he hang? For horse-stealing?

NEWCASTLE

We will ensure he is shown no mercy.

They walk.

KING

Do you know the legend of the knight Lohengrin? A little bit like your English 'Arthur'. He appears out of nowhere in his swan-boat, saves the fair maiden from something or other... und so weiter, und so weiter.

He says he will marry her, but on the condition she must never, ever ask him who he really is.

He kisses to the swans, throws more grain into the water.

KING

She asks him, of course. Can't resist. And then -

He clicks his fingers.

KING
He disappears!

The King turns from the pond.

KING
I don't care who this Turpin really is, where he's from, why he
does what he does.

He brushes the grain from his hands.

KING
I just want him gone.

The King smiles, and walks away with his entourage. Newcastle bows,
and turns to head back inside the palace.

EXT. YARD, YORK CASTLE PRISON - DAY

A smiling, muttering OLD MAN, with a resemblance in shape and gesture
to John Turpin, throws crumbs from a bread roll to a raven, which
pecks at the offerings. It flaps away, cawing, as a burly PRISONER
snatches the roll from the old man's hand, bites off a chunk of
bread, and walks away, chewing.

PRISONER
Let him that earns the bread eat it.

The prisoner bumps into Turpin, drunk but immovable, his hand clasped
around the roll in the prisoner's fist. Hadfield watches, swaying.

TURPIN
Hungry men think the cook lazy.

Turpin and the prisoner stare at each other, toe to toe. The prisoner
looks down at Turpin's shackles, and then assesses his unwavering
gaze. With a snarl, he releases the roll into Turpin's hand. The
prisoner retreats, spitting out his mouthful of bread.

PRISONER
Stale.

Turpin tosses the roll to the old man, who mumbles in gratitude.

Turpin and Hadfield, merry with drink, continue towards a huddle in
the corner of the yard, where men are gathering.

HADFIELD
So John Palmer is Robin Hood, as I live and breathe.

Turpin looks back at the old man for a moment.

TURPIN

Was just returning your favour.

HADFIELD

Then why didn't you give the bread to me?

Turpin laughs.

They approach a platform, where a RECTOR preaches to a small crowd of prisoners.

RECTOR

...And indeed, what is more disgraceful in itself than to see a healthy, strong young fellow, capable by his own diligence or industry, of living handsomely in the world, dragged to a gaol, and there laid in irons, as unfit for human society...

Hadfield clanks his shackles together.

HADFIELD

How dare he.

TURPIN

Shhh.

Turpin strains for a better view, grinning, with a frown of feigned interest.

CUT TO -

YORK CASTLE PRISON, INT.

The GOVERNOR hurriedly leads Smith through the prison.

RECTOR (V.O.)

... Because through sloth or idleness, he would not endeavour to maintain himself by labour, or through some other virtuous inclination...

Smith, holding a handkerchief to his face at the stench, recoils at the catcalls. He looks through open doors into cells: a man stares back at him as he coughs blood into a rag, and then reaches out a hand for money; a man and a woman have sex on a bed of straw; a DRUNK swigs from a bottle.

The drunk appraises the quality of Smith's attire, and wipes his nose.

DRUNK

At last. We always knew you'd come, Your Majesty.

The drunk salutes Smith.

DRUNK

(belched) God save the King.

SMITH

They are allowed liquor?

The governor stops, astonished.

GOVERNOR

Look around you, Mr Smith. You would detain them here fully conscious?

CUT TO -

YARD

RECTOR

... Could not be content to live upon the fruits of it, but must break open the doors or enclosure of his neighbours, to supply his sinful wants, by what perhaps they have acquired in the sweat, perhaps of their brows...

Turpin is gleefully entertained by this pompous solemnity. Hadfield tugs at his sleeve, and indicates some activity in another corner.

Griffiths is aggressively partaking in a dice game with a group of prisoners. He rattles the dice in his hand, whispers something into his fist.

HADFIELD

I believe I have a sinful want.

Turpin and Hadfield share a look.

TURPIN

A bit of deep play.

They shuffle over to the game.

GRIFFITHS

Seven.

As Griffiths is about to roll his dice, Turpin takes his whistle into his mouth and blow a barely audible 'peep'. He lets the whistle fall from his mouth and hang again at his chest.

Hadfield stares at the whistle and stifles a laugh. Griffiths, distracted, rolls a two. He rises and pivots to scan the prisoners behind him. Hadfield and Turpin are expressionless.

TURPIN

Ah. Those are downhills sir. Rotten luck.

Griffiths looks into his eyes and flexes his shoulders. Turpin blinks back. Griffiths snatches the dice from the other player.

GRIFFITHS

Scratch that. Doesn't count.

There are murmurs from the spectators.

HADFIELD

Show me that?

Hadfield examines the whistle at Turpin's throat.

TURPIN

Ivory.

Turpin points out the figurine on the whistle.

TURPIN

See him there? A landlord with his barrel of beer.

Honest work. My father's life. My life once, before all this.

In the background, behind a gate, watch the governor and Smith, who shapes to identify Turpin without being seen.

GOVERNOR

You'll understand that I can't direct you. Although I'm of a mind that it doesn't matter which one you choose.

Smith is stunned by this flippancy.

Griffiths blows on his fist again; as he is rolling Turpin blows two 'peeps' on his whistle. The crowd starts to laugh; Griffiths rages. Turpin makes a throwing action with his arm.

TURPIN

It's all in the elbow...

Griffiths takes him by the collar, sees the whistle at Turpin's neck, grabs it.

Smith spots the melee. He exhales.

SMITH
That's him.

GOVERNOR
You are certain?

SMITH
Yes. That's Turpin.

Griffiths moves to rip the whistle from Turpin's neck.

GOVERNOR
(booming) Gentlemen!

Griffiths freezes, the whistle still in his fist.

GOVERNOR
Enough sport for the day. Return to your cells.

Griffiths lets the whistle drop on its strap back to Turpin's chest. Turpin grins at him, eyes ablaze.

The governor and Smith turn around and head into the prison. Smith looks back at the dispersing crowd. The governor smiles to himself.

GOVERNOR
Don't lose any sleep.

Smith stares at the yard.

SMITH
I taught him to write.

GOVERNOR
So I gather.

SMITH
And what if I hadn't?

The governor studies Smith's face, perplexed.

GOVERNOR
And left the letter where you found it?
There are no interventions that can be made - or spared - to prevent the Turpins of this world from leaping to their demise, Mr Smith.

Smith turns away from the yard to face him.

GOVERNOR
Some men are born to hang.

INT. CELL, YORK CASTLE PRISON - DUSK

Wrists are locked into shackles. The shackles are attached to an iron belt, which Griffiths roughly locks in place. He steps back to admire his work. Turpin holds up his shackled wrists to test the strength of his new bonds.

TURPIN

And all because I offered helpful remarks on your gaming technique.

Griffiths pulls him to his feet. Hadfield watches Turpin, disbelieving.

TURPIN

Did you not pay heed to today's sermon? Gaming is not a 'virtuous inclination'. You can still save your soul.

Turpin winks at Hadfield, but Hadfield is star-struck.

Griffiths walks Turpin out of the cell.

GRIFFITHS

(to Hadfield) Courage, Hadfield. You can have Mr Turpin back in the morning. But from now on he spends nights in the salt box.

TURPIN

(laughing) Is that what they call it.

GRIFFITHS

You'll shed some tears in there.
(leaning close) They all do.

CUT TO -

INT. CONDEMNED HOLD

A heavy iron door slams shut. Turpin looks around a small cell with a barred window; there is nothing else but a bench, and straw on the floor.

He sits on the straw in the chiaroscuro light, leans back against the wall. In charcoal on the wall opposite he sees written:

YET MAN IS BORN UNTO TROUBLE, AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARD

He takes the whistle in his mouth, blows once gently: a plaintive falling note. He chuckles to himself, sighs, and takes an iron needle

and a pouch from his pocket. He drops a pinch of black powder on his hand, spits on it, punctures the skin with the needle.

CLOSE UP -

Turpin's bleeding hand, with R1:8 marked in black, the '8' close to finished.

INT. YORK CASTLE PRISON - DAY

Coins are dropped into Griffiths' palm. Griffiths stares at his palm, then back at the FEMALE VISITOR. There is a beat.

FEMALE VISITOR
Is it really him?

The female visitor strains to get a look at the cell behind the gaoler.

FEMALE VISITOR
They say he is of such a comely appearance...

Griffiths exhales through his nose.

GRIFFITHS
You might want to rein in your expectations.

She drops more coins into Griffiths' outstretched palm and is gestured to join a line of visitors waiting outside

TURPIN'S CELL

where Turpin sits with Hadfield on the bench. Grassby and Goodyear, as they search for a clean place to sit, turn in slow circles like dogs ready to defecate. Grassby looks at the bench. Turpin and Hadfield stare back, relaxed. Defeated, Grassby and Goodyear sit on the cell floor.

Turpin holds up a bottle of wine, and a large cooked ham, admiring them.

TURPIN
Much obliged for this generosity, gentlemen.

Turpin gives everyone cups, and fills them all from the bottle.

TURPIN
And now - let us bung our eyes in drink!

They drink; Turpin refills their cups. The waiting queue outside the cell grows restless.

VISITOR (O.S.)
We've paid to see him!

Grassby fidgets. Goodyear mops his brow.

TURPIN
Hadfield, these two Yorkshire bulls are Grassby and Goodyear.

HADFIELD
A pleasure.

Grassby and Goodyear ogle Turpin. There is silence, but for the sound of Hadfield chewing a large piece of ham, and the restlessness of the visitors outside.

TURPIN
You want to ask. So ask.

Goodyear clears his throat.

GRASSBY
When -

GOODYEAR
Where did you become Palmer?

Turpin
Rotterdam.

They stare, puzzled. Turpin smiles back.

TURPIN
Alright. Somewhere around Cambridgeshire, I think.

GRASSBY
They said you made the ride in one night. London to York.

TURPIN
(laughing) Sober?

Turpin moves to fill their glasses again; they demur. He cocks his head.

TURPIN
Gentlemen. Really.

They drink; he refills them.

TURPIN

No. That was another knight of the road.

HADFIELD

'Swifticks.' William Nevison. Local lad.
(sighs) Hanged in York.

TURPIN

Him. But we are all one and the same to you, aren't we?

Grassby and Goodyear fidget under his gaze.

TURPIN

No matter. You'll still be coming down to my trial in Essex to
vouch for my upstanding character.

Grassby and Goodyear look at each other, confused.

TURPIN

They won't try me here. Will they Hadfield? So my visitors have
been telling me. They'll remove me to Essex.
Where I'll have witnesses.

He looks at Hadfield, who stares into his cup. Grassby pinches his
own brow.

TURPIN

But they might try me here for my shooting! Eh Grassby?

Turpin pretends to aim, follows an imaginary target across their
heads, then claps his hands together, hard. Grassby and Goodyear
jump.

TURPIN

And where is our friend Harris?

Grassby and Goodyear search each other's eyes for assistance.

GOODYEAR

The inn has been busy, a lot of -

TURPIN

And Briar?

GRASSBY

The inn's been busy.

Turpin looks at them for several long, uncomfortable seconds. There
is clanging and clamour outside. Turpin spots the female visitor,
who is squeezing her head round Griffiths for a better view.

TURPIN
Well! I have business.

Turpin rises, waiting for the two men to take the hint.

Grassby and Goodyear abruptly rise together, brushing the straw from their coattails. There is an awkward beat. Turpin offers his handshake to them both. Grassby begins a goodbye, but words fail him. He lightly taps Turpin's shoulder. Goodyear smiles thinly.

HADFIELD
Delicious ham!

Several visitors attempt to enter the cell; Grassby and Goodyear have to squeeze past them to leave. There is a momentary crush before the bottleneck is cleared.

The female visitor spills into the cell, carrying a bottle. Turpin clears a space for her on the bench; he glowers at Hadfield until Hadfield joins him on the floor.

FEMALE VISITOR
(hushed) I brought gin.

TURPIN
I should think so.

She gives him the bottle, and a small purse of coins. They pour, toast.

The female visitor looks Turpin over.

FEMALE VISITOR
Um... You're not how I imagined?

Griffiths steps into the cell.

GRIFFITHS
Hadfield. A word.

HADFIELD
(to woman) Enjoy yourselves.

Waiting outside is the governor, who walks Hadfield away, speaking close to his ear and looking back at Turpin.

Turpin catches a glimpse of Grassby and Goodyear as they leave.

TURPIN
Remember, gentlemen! Essex!

INT. COURT, YORK CASTLE PRISON - DAY

The over-enunciating mouth of a young court CLERK.

CLERK

This is the York Lent assizes of our sovereign lord the King of his county of York held at the castle of York...

Turpin stands shackled in the dock, glaring and morose. He stares, dead-eyed, at the ceremony: at the jury of twelve men, at the King's COUNSEL, and at the scribbling amanuensis, KYLL.

CLERK

...on Thursday the twenty-second day of March in the twelfth year of the reign of our lord George the Second now King of Great Britain...

A stern, elderly man in white wig and scarlet robe takes his seat in the judge's chair.

CLERK

...before Sir William Chapple, Justice of His Majesty's said court.

JUDGE CHAPPLE gestures for everyone to sit. Turpin looks behind him for a chair.

CLERK

The prisoner will remain standing.

Turpin shuffles, his leg irons clinking. He looks behind him again, scanning the faces of the people on the benches.

The clerk coughs; Turpin, at his leisure, turns again to face him.

CLERK

The jurors for our lord the King upon their oath present that John Palmer otherwise Richard Turpin with force and arms in the county aforesaid did feloniously steal horses against the peace of our sovereign lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Turpin cracks his neck from side to side.

CLERK

How do you plead?

TURPIN

Not guilty.

CLERK
And how would you be tried?

TURPIN
By God. And my country.

COUNSEL
I call Thomas Creasy.

Creasy walks to the stand from the benches behind Turpin, ignoring his leer.

COUNSEL
Pray, sir, had you a mare and a foal?

CREASY
I did. The mare, blind in the near eye. And a star on the forehead.

COUNSEL
And when did you first miss them?

CREASY
The month of August.

Turpin stretches.

COUNSEL
And how did you come to recover them?

CREASY
There was word that a man, sent to the House of Correction at Beverly for shooting a game cock, had such a mare and foal as mine. Then I inquired of a Mr Grassby, at whose inn I was told they were stabled, if he knew of the same.

COUNSEL
And from these marks you were positive the mare and foal were yours?

CREASY
Yes. Absolutely I was.

COUNSEL
(to Turpin) Have you any questions to ask this witness? You have heard what he had to say against you.

Turpin stares unblinking at Creasy, who looks away.

TURPIN
I cannot say anything.

COUNSEL

Thank you Mr Creasy. I call -

TURPIN

I cannot say anything, for I have not any witnesses come this day,
as I have expected.

Turpin looks around, scanning the chamber again. He raises his chin.

TURPIN

Therefore I beg of your lordship to put off my trial until another
day.

There is laughter in the chamber. Kyll stops writing and looks up,
pen hovering.

JUDGE CHAPPLE

We cannot put off this affair, Mr Turpin. If you had spoken, and
desired a reasonable time before the jury was sworn, it might have
been granted you. Now you are... too late.

There is a ripple of appreciation in the chamber for this dark
humour.

JUDGE CHAPPLE

However, you have liberty allowed you to ask any questions of a
witness.

TURPIN

This witness is wrong.
Because in August I was here in York Castle.

COUNSEL

(laughing) No sir, you were not 'here in York Castle' until
October. Are you suggesting you were apprehended in August for a
crime of which this court is unaware?

Laughter in the chamber.

TURPIN

No. I was taken for shooting Highwayman.

There is a hush.

COUNSEL

You were taken for shooting highwaymen?

Kyll pauses again.

TURPIN
Highway *man*. The game cock.

Laughter.

COUNSEL.
Yes. In *October*.

More laughter. Turpin shrugs.

Judge Chapple frowns at the counsel's loss of decorum. The counsel sombrely adjusts his gown.

COUNSEL
I call Captain Dawson.

Dawson, smart and imposing in full, red-coated uniform, steps up to the stand. As Turpin eyes his coat, Dawson stares at Turpin for a long moment; this time it is Turpin who looks away.

COUNSEL
Pray sir, inform us what you know of this affair.

DAWSON
I bought that same mare and foal from the man standing there, whom I understood at the time to be called John Palmer. I told him I had no occasion for the mare but he was... pressing. I gave him four guineas. Thereafter I was obliged to return to my regiment.

COUNSEL
In which month did this take place?

DAWSON
October.

Amusement in the chamber.

COUNSEL
And who worked these horses while you were away?

CUT TO -

GRASSBY
Yes. I had leave to work the mare and stable the foal.

COUNSEL
How long have you known the prisoner?

Turpin raises his eyebrows at Grassby.

GRASSBY
About two years.

COUNSEL
What manner of visible living had he?

Grassby fidgets, discomfited.

GRASSBY
He had no settled way of living, that I know of, at all. Though he said he was a dealer in sheep and horses.

COUNSEL
And how did he live?

GRASSBY
Like a gentleman.

Grassby looks over at Turpin.

GRASSBY
And yet he was... a stranger.

Grassby steps away from the bar. Turpin puckers a kiss as he passes.

JUDGE CHAPPLE
I understand you have one final witness?

COUNSEL
I do, your lordship.

Turpin scans the chamber again, chest out.

COUNSEL
The court calls James Smith.

Turpin flinches, turns, and watches Smith walk to the dock. Smith exhales, his eyes fixed on the counsel.

COUNSEL
Do you know the prisoner, 'Palmer', at the bar?

Smith nods.

COUNSEL
Look at him. And tell what you know about him.

Smith glances at Turpin, who shakes his head, as if recovering from a blow.

SMITH

I knew him at Hempstead in Essex where he was born. I knew him when he was a child.

COUNSEL

And is his name Palmer?

SMITH

No. It is not.

COUNSEL

What is his name?

SMITH

His name is Richard Turpin.

COUNSEL

And did you not assist with his schooling?

SMITH

Yes. When he was learning to make letters, until he was about eleven or twelve years old, when I went to the excise. He worked then with his father, who was an innkeeper and a butcher.

COUNSEL

And was he himself ever set up in the butcher trade?

SMITH

Yes he was. And after, he kept a public house.

COUNSEL

And did you know him ever as a trader, of sheep, or horses?

Smith looks over at Turpin.

SMITH

I did not.

COUNSEL

How long was it since you saw him last?

SMITH

I think about five years.

COUNSEL

You say you were the one who taught him how to make his letters. Would you say he made progress?

SMITH

He did. He had an aptitude.

COUNSEL
He wrote well?

SMITH
With a distinctive hand. Yes.

The counsel holds up a letter for the court to see. He hands it to Smith.

COUNSEL
Do you recognise this letter?

SMITH
Yes.

COUNSEL
Where did you first see it?

SMITH
At the post office in Saffron Walden, in Essex.

COUNSEL
And what was so remarkable about this letter that made you take it before a magistrate to break open the seal?

SMITH
I immediately remembered the handwriting.

Noise in the court. The counsel gestures for hush.

COUNSEL
The letter was addressed to the prisoner's brother-in-law at his father's inn, was it not? In the name of 'John Palmer'?

SMITH
Yes.

COUNSEL
And this brother-in-law - a Mr Rivernal, husband of the prisoner's sister Dolly - refused receipt of said letter?

Smith looks at Turpin.

SMITH
So I was informed.

COUNSEL
Do you know a John Palmer?

SMITH
I do not.

COUNSEL

Then in whose hand was the letter written?

SMITH

The letter was written in the hand of Dick Turpin.

Hubbub in the Court. There are cries of 'hang him!'

For a moment, the sound fades for Turpin and Smith, who share a long look, a reconnection to a shared past:

We see the boy Turpin running from his family in the churchyard after Elizabeth's burial. He runs straight to Smith, buries his head in his chest, and sobs.

COUNSEL

(to Turpin) You are allowed the liberty to ask Mr Smith any questions.

Turpin rolls his shoulders, collects himself.

TURPIN

I never knew him.

More hubbub. Judge Chapple confers with the jury; the foreman makes a quick, dismissive shake of the head.

Judge Chapple stares at the noisy court, waiting for it to settle.

JUDGE CHAPPLE

Mr Turpin, have you any witnesses here?

TURPIN

I have none present...

There is laughter.

TURPIN

But tomorrow I will have them. I am sure no man can say ill of me in Yorkshire.

More laughter. Turpin looks around the court, no longer enjoying his moment.

TURPIN

And I thought I should have been removed to get my trial in Essex.

Judge Chapple frowns at him, barely containing his astonishment.

JUDGE CHAPPLE

You have deceived yourself in thinking so.
To the charge of horse theft, the jury finds you guilty.

Shouting. Cries of 'hang the bastard!', which Judge Chapple ceases with a withering glare.

JUDGE CHAPPLE

What reason do you give that the sentence of death should not be pronounced upon you?

TURPIN

It is very hard upon me my lord, because I was not prepared for my defence.

Laughter. The sound surges like a drumbeat.

JUDGE CHAPPLE

Why were you not?

You knew the time of the Assizes as well as any person present.

The hubbub pounds.

TURPIN

Several persons assured me I should be removed to Essex to be tried there, for which reason I thought it needless to prepare witnesses for my defence...

Judge Chapple waves this away, irritated.

The hubbub grows deafening.

JUDGE CHAPPLE

Whoever told you so were highly to blame.

And as your country has found you guilty of a crime worthy of death, it is my office to pronounce sentence against you.

Judge Chapple reaches for a piece of black cloth, which he places on his wig. He stands.

The court is raucous.

JUDGE CHAPPLE

The sentence is death.

Most of the court is now on its feet, cheering. Dawson glowers, Creasy gloats. In amongst the hostile faces, Turpin finds that of Smith, who looks away, disappearing from view into the crowd.

INT. CONDEMNED HOLD, YORK CASTLE PRISON - DAWN

Fat fingers twist a silver crucifix. It belongs to a CHAPLAIN, who watches Griffiths and Turpin finishing transactions.

Griffiths passes Turpin a new red coat. Turpin puts it on, is pleased with the fit, and poses for the mirthless chaplain.

GAOLER

And mourners for the cart. With hatbands, gloves.

TURPIN

I want the most handsome women in Yorkshire!

GRIFFITHS

Three pounds ten shillings.

Turpin feigns outrage to the chaplain. He drinks from a cup and smacks his lips, refills the cup from a bottle, and offers it to the chaplain, who looks at it without accepting. Turpin drains the cup himself.

GRIFFITHS

Jewellery, shoes, clogs to a Mrs Briar Harris of Brough, in the East Riding.

The chaplain stares at Turpin. Turpin rolls a tongue in his cheek.

Griffiths reaches for the whistle at Turpin's neck.

GRIFFITHS

And this?

Turpin slaps his hand away.

TURPIN

Stays with me until the end. Then to Hadfield, before he is transported.

Griffiths smiles, surprised. He opens his mouth to say something, exchanges a look with the chaplain, changes his mind.

Turpin passes him his purse. Griffiths regards him for a moment.

GRIFFITHS

Well. May it be swift.

Griffiths leaves. The chaplain sits on a stool. Turpin stretches out on the bench, toying with the whistle at his neck. The chaplain touches the silver crucifix hung low on his chest, as if in sympathy.

CHAPLAIN

Will you say a prayer with me?

TURPIN

I will not.

CHAPLAIN

And will you not confess? The robberies. The murder.

TURPIN

To what end? So you can write and sell chapbooks?
Let other people tell my story.

CHAPLAIN

The man you murdered. He had a name. He was called Thomas Morris.

TURPIN

They are hanging me for horse theft, not murder.

The chaplain pauses for a moment to regain his composure.

CHAPLAIN

You understand the necessity of regeneration?

TURPIN

I have indeed lived many lives.

CHAPLAIN

It is incumbent upon you to seek after the spiritual blessings
procured by the blood of Christ...

TURPIN

And I have grown tired of 'seeking'.

CHAPLAIN

...and the influences and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, by
whom we are renewed in our minds to holiness in the fear of God.

TURPIN

I do not fear.

CHAPLAIN

Because you believe you are everything?

He suddenly has Turpin's attention. The chaplain points to the tattoo
on Turpin's hand, 'R1:8'.

CHAPLAIN

"I am the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and
which is to come."

Why that verse?

TURPIN

I liked the words. Their power. So I learned them.
And I claimed them for myself.

CHAPLAIN

And now you are here.

Turpin looks him up and down, watches him caress his silver crucifix.

TURPIN

Nothing is given to people like me. Only taken away.
Land, rights, freedom.
So... we take it back. When and where we can.

CHAPLAIN

Yet you could have everything, be everything, if you would
surrender to almighty God.

TURPIN

(with distain) 'Surrender.'

CHAPLAIN

I understand there was a wife, a child.
What of your family, if nothing else?

Turpin laughs, then turns away, a sudden hot rush of emotion in his eyes. He recovers quickly.

TURPIN

What of them?

The chaplain sighs, stands, straightens his back. He picks up and opens a book at a saved page.

CUT TO -

TITLE - TYBURN KNAVESMIRE, YORK, APRIL 7th 1739

Turpin, shivering despite the new red coat, stands manacled in a cart under a wintry, sleeting, iron grey sky. The cart is pulled by a horse through the heaving streets of York. Five mourners in black, wearing bluebells in their hatbands, walk behind and to the sides of the cart, throwing flowers and segments of oranges. Soldiers on horseback clear a path. All human life is here: men, women, children, animals. The poor, the wealthy; rags, frocks, coats, wigs. Vendors sell food, alcohol, toys of wooden men hanging from scaffolds. People push and shove and elbow for a view of Turpin in the cart.

CHAPLAIN (O.S.)

I exhort you to prepare for death and judgment, to exercise a lively faith upon Christ the son of God, and only saviour of sinners...

Turpin raises his hand to salute the crowd. They jeer and cheer back at him in equal measure. An old woman jostles her way close to the cart.

OLD WOMAN

Ready to be twisted, sinner? Ready for your stretching? You think you've made a great noise in the world! But this will tear your voice away...

From behind the old woman, a youth rushes the cart and clambers in, scissors in hand. Turpin raises his manacled arms. The youth tries to cut off a lock of Turpin's hair, but Turpin kicks him hard off the cart, and a mourner drags the youth back into the crowd. The soldiers clear the way forward, now with more aggression.

CHAPLAIN (O.S.)

...to repent sincerely of all your sins...

Bystanders hand Turpin cups of drink, one after the other, which he greedily but awkwardly downs with manacled hands, spilling liquid on his face and chest, infant-like. More drinks come, with vigorous encouragement. The throb of voices builds.

CHAPLAIN (O.S.)

...and to pray that the love of God might be shed abroad in your heart.

A moment of calm as the cart halts. Then there is a rush of noise, a roiling wave of excitement, as the view clears: thousands of people, up to the full horizon.

A three-legged scaffold rears up ahead, framed in the slate sky like some monstrous, angular insect.

Two soldiers help Turpin off the cart, leading him to a wooden platform. He resists for a moment, staggering with the rush of alcohol to his brain, and admires and compares the red of their coats, the shine of their brass buttons.

Then he spots the magnificent black horse of one of the soldiers. He looks into its eyes, touches its muzzle, and lets it nudge his face, before a soldier pulls him away and he is manhandled onto the platform at the base of the gallows.

His manacles and shackles are struck off, and he raises his arms to the crowd, which seethes back at him.

He turns to see the chaplain, who holds an open Bible, and then, with a punch of recognition, Hadfield, who holds the noose, and is fighting back tears.

TURPIN

Ketch. Of all the people.

HADFIELD

(stammered) They offered me transportation, if I would be your topsman. Palmer, I -

TURPIN

Shhhh.

Turpin takes the ivory whistle from around his neck and carefully places the strap over Hadfield's head. Hadfield weeps.

TURPIN

Well? Where's mine?

Hadfield places the noose over Turpin's head, tightens it.

TURPIN

Good lad. Make America sorry it ever set eyes on you.

Hadfield gives him a cup; they drink. Turpin savours the taste in his mouth. The chaplain begins a psalm, which washes in and out of the baying of the crowd.

CHAPLAIN

Have mercy upon me, O God, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions...

Turpin, trembling, walks to a ladder propped up against the scaffold.

CHAPLAIN (O.S.)

...Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me...

Turpin mounts the ladder. Half way up, his leg begins to shake. He punches his thigh, struggling to balance. The sleet and hail whirl around him.

CHAPLAIN (O.S.)

...Purge me, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow...

Turpin looks out at the crowd, which quietens; he takes in their faces. Kyll, the court scribe, watches him. Turpin scans the people for activity, any sudden moment of hope, of improbable rescue.

A young woman holds his gaze, her expression cold. It is Dorothy Street, the maid Sam Gregory raped. She spits hard at the ground.

Turpin, his leg now shaking violently, stamps a foot hard on the ladder, several times. He continues his climb; Hadfield lets out more rope. Turpin stops at the top of the ladder, and opens his arms wide to the crowd.

TURPIN
(bellowed) I am Turpin: the notorious!

The crowd roars. Turpin stands, open-armed, accepting.

TURPIN
(whispered) And I am everything.

Turpin nods to Hadfield.

CHAPLAIN
...Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou
hast broken may rejoice...

Turpin leaps from the ladder. There is a jolt as he drops. He swings, kicking, his hands grasping at the noose. There is a clamour and fight below as arms from the crowd grab at his boots and pull hard on his legs. A woman is trampled, screaming. Hadfield staggers backwards in grief.

The noises of the crowd fade to a high-pitched ringing. In close-up, we see Turpin's eyes wide and wild, his mouth foaming, the sleet landing gently on his suffocating face.

ELIZABETH TURPIN (V.O.)
Richard? Richard? Richard?

The sleet falls. Now there is no sound - just the swirling sleet and the winter sky.

CUT TO -

Turpin's face, eyes half-open and glassy. He is dead. There is a livid bruise around his neck.

We zoom out and across his body, clad only in a thin smock down to his knees, the tattoo clear on the hand. The corpse slides around on straw on a board, in a

EXT. CHURCHYARD - DAWN

where the rain and sleet still swirl under a dawn iron sky. There is a small group of drunk townspeople celebrating the arrival of the corpse, which is carried on the board by two men towards an open coffin in a pit.

Turpin's body is lifted into the coffin, where it slumps asymmetrically. The townspeople fuss at the corpse, pushing its stiff limbs inside the coffin, straightening the smock. One of them fully closes the eyes, and places a coin on each lid. Some drops of gin are poured onto Turpin's lips, where they spatter. The 1st townsman crosses himself.

1ST TOWNSMAN
The quicklime?

A sack of white powder is dragged closer; the townsman is handed a spade. He digs out a spadeful of the lime, and gently pours it into the coffin.

This is repeated, until Turpin's face is swallowed by white.

CUT TO -

EXT. COURTYARD, YORK CASTLE PRISON - DAY

as Smith accepts a purse of money from an official, and is given the reins to the horse Bess, which whinnies gently. Smith stares in admiration for a moment, then pats her flank, gratified.

CUT TO -

INT. OFFICE, YORK CASTLE PRISON - NIGHT

where Kyll is writing by candlelight.

CUT TO -

INT. GREEN MAN INN - DAY

where Bayes scribbles in his notebook.

TURPIN (V.O.)

"The account of a man, who for some time past,
has been not only the terror, but the talk of this nation,
cannot be disagreeable."

Bayes looks up, inspired, and looks across at the old drunk, who swills his beer and stares vacantly back. Bayes returns to his writing.

CUT TO -

INT. PRINTER'S WORKSHOP - DAY

A typesetter arranges metal blocks in a frame: T, U, R, P, I, N.

TURPIN (V.O.)

"It is supposed the world naturally enquires..."

The typesetter rolls ink on the type, places paper over it, and closes the letterpress. Weights are placed.

TURPIN (V.O.)

"...after persons that have in any manner..."

The typesetter opens the letterpress, and removes the paper, holding it up to the light for inspection.

TURPIN (V.O.)

"...been rendered either famous..."

The typesetter lays the page out flat on a table.

TURPIN

"...or infamous."

We see on the page, in ornate font:

"The Genuine History of the Life of Richard Turpin"

THE END