

THE LAST EXPRESS

Screenplay by

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Based on the video game
"The Last Express"

Heroes and Villains Entertainment
(323) 850-2990

FADE IN:

THE FIRES OF A FORGE.

MUSIC is mystical, ominous. We're in the presence of something momentous, possibly supernatural.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP MONTAGE

The making of a Fabergé Egg. Of the craftsman we see only his white-gloved hands. We HEAR a HEARTBEAT, growing LOUDER.

- Red-hot metal withdrawn from the flames.
- Beaten into shape.
- Filed to precision.
- Fitting moving parts together, testing mechanisms.
- Soldering delicate gold filigree.
- Setting a sapphire.
- Lining a box with velvet.

At last, the lid of a black lacquered chest closes on this gift fit for a king. The craftsman's work is done. Painted on the lid are exquisite images of a Russian Firebird, prince and princess: miniature scenes from a fairy tale.

As the HEARTBEAT reaches its peak of intensity...

THE WHITE-GLOVED HAND

is forced down on a table.

A SWORD,

raised high, catches the light... then DESCENDS. The IMPACT is joined by an unearthly, hawklike SHRIEK as we...

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES ON BLACK SCREEN:

1914

EUROPE IS AT PEACE

(MOSTLY)

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Poor. If Doctors Without Borders existed in 1914, this is the kind of place they'd send volunteers to.

TITLE: DUBLIN

And here comes that volunteer. Tired at the end of a long day, carrying his black bag. A 30-year-old American, handsome, bearded: DR. ROBERT CATH.

Passing a NURSE in nun's garb on his way out...

CATH
Get some rest.

NURSE
It's you who needs rest, Doctor.

EXT. DUBLIN STREET - DAY

Cath leaves the hospital, walks through the worst neighborhood in Dublin. Underfed children throw rocks, breaking windows. Cath steps over a placard lying in the street: "Free Ireland."

A BLACK CAR slams to a stop. PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMEN in dark coats jump out, run after TWO YOUNG IRISHMEN. The men flee, climbing over fences. They're as quick as alley cats, and on their own turf; it's good odds they'll get away.

Cath keeps walking. It's none of his business.

EXT. CATH'S STREET - DAY

As Cath enters his apartment building, a DELIVERY BOY on a bicycle stops him.

DELIVERY BOY
Dr. Cath! Telegram.
(impressed)
From Paris.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Cath opens the telegram, reads it as he walks up the stairs. He looks annoyed. Crushes it in his hand.

About to unlock his door, he notices the lock's been broken.

He looks down. Sees drops of BLOOD on the floor.

Before he has time to process it... THE DOOR FLIES OPEN.

INT. CATH'S APARTMENT - DAY

THREE FENIANS (Irish revolutionaries) pull Cath inside, roughly.

REDHEAD FENIAN

He said you'd help us. He said
you were a friend of Tyler.

Cath looks at the "he" in question...

BADLY WOUNDED FENIAN LEADER

lies on Cath's bed. The sheets are soaked with blood. He
MOANS, half-conscious.

CATH

takes in the situation. In case it wasn't clear that refusing
isn't an option, a SHORT FENIAN points a gun to his temple.

TALL FENIAN

If the cops get hold of him, he's
done. He shot --

CATH

Don't tell me.

Cath picks up his black bag. Moves to the wounded man's side.

CATH (CONT'D)

Bring me towels. From the
kitchen.

Redhead and Tall Fenian spring to help.

SHORT FENIAN

moves to the door. Stands guard, pistol drawn, listening.

CATH

checks the man's eyelids, takes his pulse. Unwinds the
makeshift bandage from his chest, REVEALING a bullet wound.

CATH (CONT'D)

Hold him.

Tall Fenian pins the man's shoulders. Cath wipes the wound
clean; the hole re-fills with blood. The man GROANS.

CATH (CONT'D)

He needs a hospital.

REDHEAD FENIAN

No hospital!
(no choice)
We've got you, Doctor.

Off Redhead's look, Cath lays out surgical implements: Clamp,
forceps, scalpel.

CUT TO:

A METAL BUCKET,

its sides coated with blood drippings. Bloody towels litter the floor. Cath's apartment has become an operating theater.

CATH,

shiny with sweat, sews up the wound while Redhead watches.

SHORT FENIAN,

listening at the door, hears NOISE downstairs.

SHORT FENIAN

They're here.

FOOTSTEPS of men coming upstairs. Cath freezes mid-stitch.

REDHEAD FENIAN

You'll finish that later.

Redhead guides Cath to the door. Urgent, tense...

REDHEAD FENIAN (CONT'D)

Get rid of them. They'll take your word, Doctor. You're a respected man. A do-gooder.

His tone is oddly bitter, even sarcastic, for reasons we don't know. All three Fenians draw guns, move out of sight.

EXT. LANDING - DAY

Two Plainclothes Policemen seen earlier KNOCK. Cath opens.

POLICEMAN

Dr. Cath?

CATH

Yes, what is it?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

showing the Fenians hiding behind the door, guns drawn.

POLICEMAN

Some persons of interest were seen entering this building.

CATH

I've seen no one.

The Policemen notice the blood on Cath. They try to peer around him into the apartment.

POLICEMAN

May we come in?

A GROAN from inside.

CATH

I'm with a patient. It's not a good time. Excuse me.

He starts to close the door. The policeman blocks it.

POLICEMAN

One moment, doctor...

What he might have said, we'll never know. Short Fenian KICKS the door open and FIRES on the Policemen.

CATH

No!!

Tall Fenian joins in FIRING. Both Policemen fall.

Cath is left aghast, staring at the bodies sprawled on the landing.

He looks at his hand. It's BLEEDING, grazed by a bullet.

REDHEAD FENIAN

Stitch him up. Finish it. Now!

EXT. BLACK CAR - MOVING - DAY

Speeding through Dublin, Cath crammed in with four Fenians, one wounded. Cath's hand is bandaged.

SHORT FENIAN

What do we do with him?

Redhead appraises Cath impersonally, deciding his fate.

TALL FENIAN

He helped us.

SHORT FENIAN

He's seen our faces.

CATH

Drop me at the docks. I'll be in France by morning.

The Fenians exchange glances. Doubting him.

They're startled by a raspy VOICE from the back seat...

FENIAN LEADER

Tyler... Helped us...

(with immense effort)

These are... our troubles... Not his.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

The car slams to a stop. Discharges Cath. And PEELS OUT, leaving him on the docks. A drunken SEA SALT stares at him.

INT. CATH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Uniformed POLICEMEN sift through the crime scene. The IRISH POLICE CHIEF addresses the man who's really in charge: GEORGE ABBOT (40s), a plainclothed Englishman.

IRISH POLICE CHIEF

I don't know about his politics.
But the sisters say he's a
Godsend. That hospital was just a
place to die before he came.

ABBOT

I'm told you captured a shipment
of guns last spring, in crates
marked "medical supplies." Were
they by chance meant for that
same hospital?

The Police Chief is stumped. The connection hadn't occurred to him. He looks at the dead bodies on the landing.

ABBOT'S AIDE (30) finds the crumpled telegram. Unfolds it.

AIDE

Sir.

He brings it to Abbot. Abbot reads the telegram.

INSERT - FAST SCANNING CLOSE-UPS

Key words and phrases from the telegram we don't have time to read in full (it's several lines long): **MEET ME / ORIENT EXPRESS / PARIS / 24 JUNE**

End on signature at bottom: **HUCKLEBERRY FINN.**

ABBOT

grimaces in frustration.

ABBOT

Paris.

EXT. NORTH SEA - BOAT - DAWN

Irish Skipper at the helm, Cath shivering on deck.

MOVE HIGHER, isolating the little boat in the rough sea...

And HIGHER STILL... SHOOTING UPWARD into a
SATELLITE VIEW

of western Europe. We SEE England, France, the globe slowly rotating beneath us.

Suddenly we're DIVING DOWN, as fast as we ascended, into the dark green wilderness of eastern Europe...

EXT. SARAJEVO - BIRD'S-EYE VIEW - DAY

A town comes into view; we glimpse a church, mosque, bridges. As we SMASH TO GROUND:

EXT. QUAY - DAY

A pompous, stuffed AUSTRIAN ARCHDUKE and his WIFE ride in an open car down the boulevard lined with a grim, unsmiling Bosnian crowd. Men wear the fez, women colorful head-scarves.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLES:

JUNE 28

AUSTRIAN ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND VISITS SARAJEVO

A 19-year-old SERB REVOLUTIONARY steps out of the crowd and hurls a bomb at the Archduke's car. It bounces, EXPLODES under the following car.

BYSTANDERS

down the quay react to the NOISE. Among them is a second revolutionary, PRINCIP (20). He gleams with zealous hope.

His hopes are dashed as the Archduke's car ZOOMS past. He pushes through the crowd, fumbling for his PISTOL -- too late.

THE BOMB SITE

is chaos, bystanders wounded by shrapnel.

POLICEMEN close in on the failed first assassin. Desperate, he climbs onto the wall and jumps into the river.

Alas, it's four inches deep. He lands with an ignominious SPLAT. Police haul him out and collar him.

PRINCIP

watches his comrade's arrest from a distance. Pale, he turns and walks away through the crowd.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Dazed, Princip sits down at a sidewalk café. As he orders coffee from the waiter, the Archduke's car returns, turning into that same side street. Princip gapes.

IN THE CAR

The OFFICIAL riding shotgun hits the driver on the shoulder.

OFFICIAL

(in German)

*What are you doing, you idiot!
We're supposed to take the quay!*

(Note: There'll be a lot of nationalities in this movie. In the script, italics indicate when characters speak a language other than English, SUBTITLED if necessary.)

The royal car brakes to a stop. Backs up. It's about to pass Princip a third time.

PRINCIP

stands, draws his PISTOL. His hands shake as he points it. SOUND falls away; we HEAR his HEARTBEAT.

THE ROYAL CAR,

backing up, STALLS right in front of Princip.

The Archduke turns. Stares at the schoolboy-assassin with incredulous disdain. Princip looks stricken; he doesn't seem nearly ruthless enough to pull the trigger. Then...

Princip FIRES twice into the stopped car, hitting the Archduke and his Wife, who throws herself across his body.

ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE. Bystanders tackle Princip, wrest the gun from his hand just as he's putting it to his own temple.

CAMERA SHOOTS UP, higher and higher, back into

SATELLITE VIEW

of Europe, slowly rotating.

Like a bird of prey, we pause... then DIVE AGAIN:

EXT. PARIS - BIRD'S EYE VIEW - NIGHT

SMASHING DOWN into the heart of Paris, avenues crowded with motorcars and horse-drawn carriages.

TITLE: **PARIS**

INT. THEATRE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES - NIGHT

The Russian Ballet performs to a packed house. Black-and-white tails, sparkling tiaras and silks fill the plush Art Nouveau theatre.

ON STAGE

A tribe of Russian Pagans stamp and jerk spasmodically to the propulsive rhythms of Stravinsky's RITE OF SPRING.

CATH,

in black tie, watches fascinated. He's in the minority. The monocled and bejeweled society crowd around him doesn't get it. BOOING and CATCALLS begin.

BOURGEOIS
(AD LIB, in French)
*It's a disgrace!... Barbarians!
Go back to Russia!*

BOHEMIANS in the audience SHOUT DOWN the haters. Cath is delighted by the battle; it's more fun than the ballet.

A hand is placed on his shoulder. He turns to see...

TYLER WHITNEY

grinning at him. He's Cath's age -- 30, clean-shaven, with the boyishly dissipated look of a university student who's been out all night.

TYLER
Brother, you made yourself hard
to find!

Ignoring Cath's cold stare, Tyler envelops him in a hug.

TYLER (CONT'D)
I sent you a telegram in Dublin.

CATH
I got it.

His tone is icy. Tyler's grin dims. He looks around as if noticing their surroundings for the first time.

TYLER
What is this racket?

CATH
It's the Russian Ballet.

A FISTFIGHT breaks out in the row behind them. Onstage, the pagan dance continues. The MANAGER desperately flashes the house lights to quiet the audience.

Tyler notices FRENCH POLICEMEN hurrying in from the exits. He takes Cath's arm.

TYLER

Let's go someplace we can talk.
The "Rally" -- my treat.

WIDE ANGLE - CONCERT HALL

Cath and Tyler join the huffy socialites heading for the doors. Behind them, the audience is degenerating into a RIOT, police trying to restore order as the orchestra and dancers bravely carry on.

EXT./INT. PARISIAN CAFÉ - NIGHT

The café is "Le Rallye." Tyler lifts a glass.

TYLER

"May the roof above us never fall
in -- and may we below it never
fall out."

He drinks. Cath doesn't.

TYLER (CONT'D)

What's the news in Dublin? How is
the hospital?

Cath looks at his hand: The bullet scratch almost healed, only a small bandage now.

CATH

You picked a good time to leave.
Not so good for those you left
behind.

TYLER

I'm sorry I fell out of touch.
You wouldn't believe the year
I've had. These Serbs -- they're
the most incredible people.

As Tyler speaks, Cath notices a SEEDY CHARACTER at the bar eyeing them over his shoulder. The man quickly turns away.

TYLER (CONT'D)

They live so deeply, with such
passion. They have nothing, yet
they'd give you the shirts off
their backs.

Grabbing Cath's attention back from Seedy...

TYLER (CONT'D)

I've been a month away from
Belgrade and I can't wait to get
back.

(MORE)

TYLER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 (re: their surroundings)
 Paris is a city of posturing
 hypocrites. You have to meet my
 friend Milos...

CATH
 Not interested.

TYLER
 Cath, they're fighting for their
 freedom. Their lives. This tiny
 country. They've stood up to the
 Turks, now the Austrians.

CATH
 Your friends are the people who
 shot the Archduke in Sarajevo?

TYLER
 That was a schoolboy, some crazy
 kid. Austria's claiming Serbia
 was behind it, because it gives
 them the excuse they need to
 invade. To crush Serbia out of
 existence. The only ones who'll
 help Serbia are the Serbs.

CATH
 And you want to help them, how?
 By running guns?

TYLER
 (winces)
 I made mistakes in Ireland, I'll
 admit it. The Balkans is a fresh
 start. Everything we've been
 searching for is there. Real
 life. The beauty, the poetry.

CATH
 Tyler, don't you think we're
 getting a little old for fairy
 tales?

Tyler looks around. Leans forward. Quiet, intense:

TYLER
 Not all fairy tales are myths. I
 found something. You won't
 believe it; it's straight out of
 a storybook. I'll show you. On
 the train.

Cath shakes his head...

TYLER (CONT'D)

I've paid for a double compartment. Will you hear me out over dinner? It's the Orient Express -- one of the best kitchens in Europe.

(grimacing at his glass)

And better wine.

(persuading)

We came here to do good.

Remember? This is our chance. If it's still no, you can get off at Munich in the morning and be back in Paris tomorrow.

As Cath considers, the WAITER stops by.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Put it on my tab.

WAITER

No credit.

Tyler looks pained. Checks his tuxedo pockets.

TYLER

I've no small change. Do you mind...?

Cath tosses coins down. Stands.

Tyler realizes Cath is leaving. He rises to stop him. For the first time, Tyler's facade cracks.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Cath, there's no one else I can trust. Please don't make me do this alone. I've never said please before.

CATH

You always could charm the birds off the trees. And someone else always ends up paying.

As Cath walks away, Tyler gives him an awkward, full-on hug. (He slips something into Cath's pocket, which we don't see.) Tyler speaks into Cath's ear...

TYLER

It's not goodbye.

Cath extricates himself and goes. Tyler looks after him.

THE SEEDY CHARACTER

sees Cath leave. He pays quickly, slips out after him.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Different neighborhood. Cath walks down the street to a cheap boarding-house.

THE SEEDY CHARACTER

follows Cath at a distance. He watches Cath enter the hotel. Then he hurries off.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cath loosens his tie. Emptying his pockets, he's surprised to find a paper. He unfolds it.

CLOSE-UP - TRAIN TICKET

It's a first-class ticket for the Orient Express.

CATH

tosses the ticket into the fireplace; it lands among cold ashes. He yanks off his tie.

Just then he HEARS THE LANDLADY'S VOICE raised in shrill complaint below -- quickly shushed. Then, SILENCE.

Cath goes to the window. Looks out.

ANGLE - STREET BELOW

Two Policemen and the Seedy Character from the café, waiting. He bolts for the back.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Cath opens a small window onto the roof. Clearly, he's pre-considered his escape route.

Halfway out the window, he stops. Comes back in.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cath rushes to the fireplace, snatches up the train ticket, and runs out again.

CATH

Tyler, God damn it!

Moments later, the DOOR BURSTS OPEN. THREE FRENCH POLICEMEN enter with Abbot and his Aide (from Dublin).

EXT. ROOFTOPS/ALLEY - NIGHT

Tuxedoed Cath climbs over rooftops, down a drainpipe, drops into the alley below. Winces as he LANDS awkwardly, turning his ankle. For an action hero, he's out of practice.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Cath emerges from the alley and joins the flow of people on the sidewalk, limping slightly as he walks away.

INT. GARE DE L'EST - NIGHT

ECHOING din of trains and passengers. Tyler Whitney walks toward the platforms, a French PORTER wheeling his luggage cart. He ignores the newspaper hawkers.

PARISIAN NEWSBOY
Austrian ultimatum to Serbia!
Read about it in Le Figaro!

Tyler passes a group of newly minted FRENCH SOLDIERS, splendid in red-and-blue kepi, being seen off by families and sweethearts.

ANGLE - STATION ENTRANCE

Abbot and Aide enter, accompanied by a FRENCH POLICE CHIEF and officials -- and the Seedy Character from the bar.

TYLER

reaches the Orient Express platform. He looks around (hoping to see Cath) as the TRAINMASTER takes his ticket.

TRAINMASTER
Monsieur Whitney, welcome to the
Orient Express.

Tyler and his Porter pass through onto the platform.

THE ORIENT EXPRESS

stands ready for departure. A magnificent wooden train, its nine varnished teak cars bearing the Wagons-Lits insignia in gleaming brass. Uniformed conductors wait along the red carpet.

Tyler touches the Porter's arm.

TYLER
Wait a minute...

Porter stops, looks at Tyler. At that moment, a uniformed baggage handler (SALKO) pushing the cart of TWO SERBS (MILOS and VESNA) quickly transfers a WRAPPED PARCEL from their cart to Tyler's. (Tyler and the Serbs are in cahoots.)

Despite Tyler's attempt to distract him, the alert Porter sees what Salko has done.

TYLER'S PORTER
(in French)
What's this?

SALKO
(thick Serbian accent)
Was falling from cart. I fix.

TYLER'S PORTER
You dumb gypsy, you think I don't know what's on my own cart? What are you trying to pull?

Tyler intervenes, calming the Porter...

TYLER
It's mine. It fell.

The Porter, loath to contradict his client, is forced to swallow his outrage.

ANNA WOLFF (mid-20s), an elegant European beauty carrying a violin case -- and leading a Russian wolfhound, MAX -- notices the commotion as she passes by with her own porters and cart. She gives Tyler an interested glance.

HEAD OF PLATFORM

The Police Chief arrives with Abbot, Aide and Seedy; he speaks in French to the Trainmaster taking tickets, while Seedy scans the passengers on the platform.

ABBOT
Do you see him?

SEEDY
No.

AUGUST SCHMIDT (40s), portly and balding, arrives. He hands a ticket to Trainmaster, who greets him in German:

TRAINMASTER
Herr Schmidt, nice to see you again. Welcome to the Orient Express.

ANGLE - STATION ENTRANCE

Cath enters the station. Scanning his environs as he walks toward the trains. Suddenly he stops.

He SEES Abbot, Aide and Seedy stationed at the head of the Orient Express platform.

Cath grimaces: Bad news for him.

He looks around: Is there another way to get on the train?

ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS PLATFORM

Tyler boards the train, past Milos and Vesna, who watch him. Milos is 30, bearded, darkly handsome, with military bearing; Vesna is a tough young woman in a man's jacket and cap.

VESNA
(in Serbian, SUBTITLED)
*What if he doesn't keep his
promise?*

Milos has no answer; that's what worries him too.

A TURKISH HAREM boards the Pullman car at the rear of the train, under the watchful eye of a sword-wearing EUNUCH. Behind the Pullman is a special private car: the "SATURN." It's midnight blue, decorated with a gold-painted sun.

The STATIONMASTER storms up to CONDUCTOR JACQUES (60, mellow):

STATIONMASTER
(re: the Harem)
*Is it true? They have no
paperwork?*

Conductor Jacques shrugs.

STATIONMASTER (CONT'D)
*All passengers must be listed. I
don't care if this is the private
car of the King of England!*
(an afterthought)
Whose car is it?

Jacques whispers in his ear; Stationmaster blanches.

STATIONMASTER (CONT'D)
Why didn't you say so?

CATH

reconnoiters the platforms. The track next to the Orient Express holds an empty LOCAL TRAIN that's just arrived.

Cath edges around a group of train workers, then walks down the nearly-empty local platform. He has a plan.

ABBOT,

scanning the station from his vantage point, doesn't see Cath.

INT. ORIENT EXPRESS - TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Tyler hangs up his jacket while the porter brings in his bags -- including the controversial parcel.

TYLER

Set it down there.

The porter leaves it.

Tyler opens the window, leans out to scan the platform.

HIS POV - THE PLATFORM

The last Orient Express passengers are boarding.

TYLER

looks anxious: there's not much time left.

ON THE PLATFORM

Trainmaster BLOWS A WHISTLE, announces...

TRAINMASTER

*Orient Express to Strasbourg,
Munich, Vienna, Budapest,
Belgrade, and Constantinople! All
aboard!*

Down the length of the train, conductors close the doors. With a HISS of steam, the locomotive wheels start to turn.

TYLER

despairs. Cath hasn't shown. He shuts the window.

EXT. LOCAL PLATFORM - NIGHT

Cath, lingering deliberately at the end of the platform, sees the Orient Express start to move.

He seizes the moment. Climbs down onto the tracks.

Bad luck: A TRAIN WORKER spots him.

TRAIN WORKER

Hey you! Get off the tracks!

ABBOT AND AIDE

turn toward the shout.

CATH

freezes on the tracks. He could run to the train. But...

Train men and POLICE are running toward him. If they see him climb aboard, they'll know where to find him.

Cath runs away from the Orient Express, crossing the tracks to the side wall of the station. Police pursue him.

ABBOT AND AIDE

hurry toward the commotion. They're in time to see Cath climb the wall. Seedy points...

SEEDY
That's him!

CATH CLIMBS THE WALL,

police in pursuit. Hoists himself over.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT

Cath drops from the fence into the street. Sees a MOTORCYCLE parked outside a tobacco shop. He climbs on, REVS it.

A DELIVERY MAN runs out of the shop, sees Cath disappearing on his stolen motorcycle. He sprints after the bike.

DELIVERY MAN
Stop thief!

Police drop from the fence and join the chase -- too late.

CATH,

on the bike, grits his teeth. Accelerates.

EXT. GARE DE L'EST - EVENING

Abbot and Aide burst out of the station, where a group of anti-war demonstrators is drawing JEERS from bystanders:

FRENCH BYSTANDER 1
If the Germans want war, let them have it!

FRENCH BYSTANDER 2
We'll take back the Alsace -- and the Lorraine!

The demonstrators are swamped by the crowd's CHEERS: "Long live France! Long live the army!"

POLICE CARS pull up. Abbot turns to the French Police Chief:

ABBOT
What's the Orient Express's first stop out of Paris?

FRENCH POLICE CHIEF
Epernay, monsieur. But he did not get on the train!

ABBOT
I'm beginning to know our Doctor
Cath. I wouldn't be so sure.

EXT. PARIS OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

Cath rides the motorcycle through rutted dirt streets. The train tracks run parallel, below him to his right.

INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - MOVING - NIGHT

Tyler draws the window shade. Locks the compartment door.

He unwraps the parcel, revealing the BLACK FIREBIRD CHEST from the opening sequence. There's something uncanny, ominous about it. Tyler is mesmerized.

As if under a spell, he starts to lift the lid...

A KNOCK snaps him out of it.

TYLER
(sharply)
Who is it?

WAITER (O.S.)
Restaurant service.

Tyler covers the chest with his jacket. Opens the door.

A WAITER enters with a champagne bucket.

TYLER
I didn't order champagne.

WAITER
I'm sorry, monsieur. I was told...

Tyler notices a folded note on the tray.

TYLER
It's all right. Leave it.

He waits impatiently while the waiter sets up the champagne.

WAITER
Does monsieur wish anything else?

TYLER
Yes, privacy. Thank you.

As soon as the waiter's gone, Tyler reads the note. He smirks ("should have known"), puts it down.

Tyler uncovers the chest. Lifts the lid, blocking our view. Eagerly, he reaches into the chest... as we

TRACK PAST TYLER

into a CLOSE-UP of the door handle behind him. It's unlocked; he forgot to re-lock it when the waiter left.

EXT. PARIS COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Green woods, rolling hills. Cath stops at a crossroads.

He looks, sees a plume of smoke, HEARS the train approaching.

He kickstarts the bike. Veers right, toward the tracks.

EXT. ORIENT EXPRESS - MOVING - NIGHT

The loco barrels through the French countryside, ENGINEER at the helm, FIREMAN shoveling coal. A magnificent, unstoppable industrial-age machine of gleaming power.

CATH'S BIKE

surges out of the woods, pulls up alongside the train.

EXT. ORIENT EXPRESS - MOVING - NIGHT

Cath swings one leg over the saddle so he's standing -- a delicate balancing act. Getting ready to jump onto the train... he draws even with one of the doorways...

Cath JUMPS. Grabs both doorway handrails, clings to the train as the bike SPINS OUT into the woods.

INT. ORIENT EXPRESS - VESTIBULE - NIGHT

Cath closes the door behind him, shutting out train noise. He's in a narrow vestibule at the end of the car. He adjusts his tie, unaware that he's covered with soot.

About to open the door to the corridor, he freezes at the sight of his sooty face reflected in the window. He can't show himself like this. Through the glass he SEES a woman coming up the corridor toward him.

Cath steps aside, bends over to tie his shoe as Anna Wolff ENTERS hurrying through to the next car (carrying her coat with something bundled in it).

Cath glances over his shoulder after Anna. He can't help noticing her with admiration.

He wipes his face as best he can. Then enters the corridor, through the door Anna came out of.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 1 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cath strides down the carpeted corridor. Windows along one side, doors to private compartments along the other.

He checks the numbered plaques against his ticket until he reaches Tyler's compartment. He enters without knocking.

INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Tyler lies face down on the floor. Bloody slashes on his hands and torn shirt sleeves suggest he fought for his life to the end.

CATH

Tyler.

Cath kneels, turns him over. Horrific sight: Tyler's eyes gouged out, his throat slashed open, a mass of blood.

Cath is staggered.

He doesn't hear the CONDUCTOR COMING until it's almost too late. Just in time, Cath dives for the door, shuts and locks it. A moment later comes the KNOCK.

CONDUCTOR RENÉ (O.S.)

Monsieur Whitney? It's the conductor to make your bed.

Cath is still in shock, staring at Tyler's body.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

CONDUCTOR RENÉ (40) waits outside the door. After a pause, he KNOCKS again.

CATH (O.S.)

(muffled)

Not now. Come back later.

CONDUCTOR RENÉ

As you wish, monsieur.

INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Cath notices the note by the knocked-over champagne bucket, ice melting into the carpet. He picks up the note.

CLOSE-UP - NOTE

It reads: "I will be in the dining car at nine. S."

CATH

checks his watch. It's almost nine.

Cath flips open the green velvet couch, revealing the bed the conductor wanted to make.

He wraps Tyler tightly in the sheet, like a mummy. Straps him into the bed, along with his own bloody jacket, with which he mops up the blood from the floor as best he can. He closes the couch; the evidence disappears from view.

Cath surveys the compartment.

He lifts the lid of the black chest. It's empty. Two velvet-lined hollows suggest what was removed: One is egg-shaped, ten inches long; the second is much smaller.

Cath opens Tyler's suitcase. Shirts, toiletries kit, razor.

INT. WASHROOM - NIGHT

The small washroom adjoining the compartment. Cath lifts his face from the basin, stares dripping into the mirror.

He opens the straight razor; the blade GLINTS.

Carefully, he begins shaving off his mustache and beard.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING CAR - NIGHT

Low hum of conversation, clink of crystal and silver. Dinner on the Orient Express.

Cath enters: clean-shaven, hair combed like Tyler's, wearing Tyler's clothes.

He slowly scans the restaurant, trying to figure out who sent the note:

CATH'S POV - DINERS

- A FRENCHMAN sitting alone, reading his newspaper.
- August Schmidt, tearing into a bloody steak.
- Anna Wolff, feeding Max (her Russian wolfhound) under the table. Cath is struck by her beauty. She meets Cath's gaze for a moment before glancing away.

CATH

hesitates between Schmidt and the Frenchman. The Frenchman looks tougher, more of a player. Cath starts toward him...

Just then, the Frenchman is joined by his WIFE and SON (a small boy in a sailor suit).

Cath reconsiders. Sits with Schmidt instead.

The WAITER brings Cath a menu.

WAITER
(in French)
Welcome, monsieur. You are...?

CATH
Tyler Whitney. Compartment one.

Milos and Vesna, at a nearby table, glance up sharply.

WAITER
Very good, monsieur.

The waiter leaves. Schmidt continues eating without acknowledging Cath. Just as Cath is starting to think he's picked the wrong table...

SCHMIDT
(without looking up)
You're late.

CATH
That was a good bottle of
Champagne you sent to my
compartment. I hated to leave it.

SCHMIDT
To begin a business one should
meet face to face, at least once.
Yes?

The waiter returns with a wine bottle.

WAITER
Herr Schmidt, the Lafite '70.

Cath registers the name. The waiter fills their glasses.

CATH
So far I have no complaints about
your taste in wine.

SCHMIDT
One can do good, and still do
well. Your whole career proves
this, does it not, Herr Whitney?

Schmidt gives an insinuating, repellent chuckle. Cath chuckles along; but his eyes are cold.

SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
(getting to the point)
I will, of course, need to see
the gold.

CATH
Of course, the gold. And I'll
need to see... what I'm buying.

SCHMIDT

(gapes)

To see it? You know that is impossible! The merchandise will be loaded on the train at Munich, as we agreed.

CATH

(smoothly adjusting)

That's my point. You show me mine, and I'll show you yours -- in Munich.

Schmidt sizes Cath up. A waiter brings Cath his first plate.

ANGLE - ANNA WOLFF

has her eye on Cath. He's piqued her interest.

CLOSE-UP - ANNA'S HANDS

Under the table, she starts untying Max's leash from its post.

CATH AND SCHMIDT

As the waiter leaves...

SCHMIDT

Young men with too much confidence make trouble. They brag and bring attention on themselves -- and others.

CATH

Attention is the last thing I want. You can be sure of that.

Just then, Max comes charging toward their table -- Anna behind him.

ANNA

(in Viennese German)

Max! Come back here! Sit!

To everyone's horror, Max's jaws snatch the bloody steak from Schmidt's plate. Anna pulls him away.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Max! Drop it!

(to Schmidt)

I'm terribly sorry!

(to Max)

Bad dog!

Max ignores her, devouring the steak. The HEADWAITER arrives with a waiter and burly Serb BUSBOY.

ANNA (CONT'D)
It's my fault.

HEADWAITER
I am sorry, madame. We made an exception, but -- a dog this size, he will be better in the baggage car.

ANNA
(surrendering)
He'll need food and water.

HEADWAITER
I will check on him myself.

Anna reluctantly hands over the leash. She bends to give Max an affectionate goodbye.

Meanwhile, Milos and Vesna leave their table, upset. Vesna glares over her shoulder at Cath as they exit the restaurant.

The busboy takes the wolfhound uptrain. Anna turns back to Schmidt.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry about your dinner.

SCHMIDT
(courtly)
No apology is necessary from you,
Fräulein Wolff.

ANNA
Have we met?

SCHMIDT
You played the Beethoven Violin Concerto in Strassburg; I was in the front row. My name is August Schmidt.

An offscreen WHIMPER from Max draws Anna's glance. Uptrain, the Serb busboy and a waiter struggle to get him out through the door.

ANNA
He hates the baggage car.

CATH
The luggage will be safe, with him on guard.

Anna turns to Cath. Her eyes on his. Waiting to be introduced.

SCHMIDT
May I present Herr, ah...

CATH
Whitney. Tyler Whitney.

SCHMIDT
Traveling companions, sharing a
table. We have only just met for
the first time.
(trying to reclaim Anna's
attention)
Strassburg... Never have I heard
Beethoven with such passion, such
feeling!

It's a lost cause. Anna's eyes are locked with Cath's,
assessing him.

ANNA
Are you going to Constantinople?

CATH
Just as far as Belgrade. At least
that's what my ticket says.

ANNA
Your ticket? Do you mean you
might change your mind?

CATH
I've been known to act on
impulse. It's possible, on a
train.

ANNA
Not for me. I must get off in
Budapest, because I am playing a
concert there. They paid for my
ticket.

She hold's Cath's gaze. August tries again...

AUGUST
Hungarians are fine musicians.
But there is a certain spirit, a
charm that only the Viennese
possess.

ANNA
I'm so glad to have met you. The
time goes faster with good
company.

To Schmidt's surprise, and Anna's, Cath stands up.

CATH
I have reading to catch up on.
Herr Schmidt, Miss Wolff, it's
been a pleasure.

ANNA
We can walk together.

She joins Cath. Schmidt is left with no dinner companion -- and no dinner.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cath and Anna walk back to the compartments.

ANNA
You don't really have to walk with me. If I'd stayed, he would have invited me to sit down. People gossip.

CATH
But I'm safe?

ANNA
You're American. Have you got a cigarette?
(off his surprise)
For later. I'm only scandalous in private.

Amused, he gives her one. She slips it into her handbag.

They step aside as a pair of prim-and-proper upper-class YOUNG WOMEN walk by, giving Anna and Cath the once-over.

ANNA (CONT'D)
You see? If we were in Vienna I'd already be in trouble. That's why I like traveling. On a train, the rules don't apply.

CATH
Rules?

ANNA
You know: "This person's all right; that one we can do business with, but we can't have him to dinner." Vienna is very conservative.

CATH
And you're not?

ANNA
Oh, but I am. When I'm in Vienna.

With a flirtatious twinkle, she enters her compartment, CLOSING the door behind her, leaving Cath bemused.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 1 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cath enters the downtrain sleeping car. (Note: There are two sleeping cars, each with nine private compartments. Cath's compartment is in the first car, Anna's in the second.)

Cath walks back to his compartment, smiling, his mind still on Anna. He doesn't notice Vesna as he passes her... or Milos, loitering further down the corridor.

As he opens his compartment door, it suddenly BASHES him in the face -- pushed by Milos on the other side. Vesna grabs Cath from behind and shoves him into the compartment, followed by Milos.

INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Milos forces Cath down on the couch. Vesna locks the door, pulls a KNIFE, holds it to Cath's throat.

MILOS

You are not Tyler. Who are you?

CATH

Who are you?

Milos PUNCHES Cath, making him groan. Pointing to the black chest --

MILOS

Where is Bird? Talk, or Vesna cut!

CATH

My name is Cath, Robert Cath.
Tyler asked me to come.

MILOS

Liar! He said nothing about you.
Where is Tyler?

CATH

We're sitting on him.

Milos freezes.

He yanks Cath off the couch. Vesna holds the knife on Cath while Milos opens the couch, EXPOSING...

Tyler's sheet-wrapped corpse, the white sheet now soaked through with blood.

MILOS

(in Serbian)

Murderer!

Enraged, he grabs Cath, RAMS his head and shoulders out the open window.

CATH
I didn't kill him!

TRAIN WHISTLE. Cath sees a TRAIN HEADLAMP APPROACHING on the opposite track; panics.

CATH
Tyler was my friend!

MILOS
Where is Bird?

CATH
I never saw it! The box was empty
when I got here.

The OTHER TRAIN BLASTS PAST, missing Cath's head by inches. Milos holds him in place.

MILOS
(to Vesna)
Cut him.

As Vesna steps forward with the knife...

THE TRAIN BRAKES SUDDENLY, throwing her off balance.

INT. DINING CAR - NIGHT

Plates slide toward laps. A waiter LOSES his tray.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The Orient Express BRAKES to an unplanned stop at a RAILROAD CROSSING. A TRAIN MAN who's lowered the signal waves them down; POLICE CARS are parked nearby.

INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Vesna pulls Cath inside. Milos looks out the window.

MILOS
Police!
(to Vesna)
We can't be found here.

Reluctantly, Vesna pockets her knife. They exit, glaring at Cath: they'll deal with him later.

Cath breathes in relief. But...

EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Abbot boards the train with his men.

The Paris Police Chief explains the situation to the upset Conductor and Trainmaster.

INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Cath HEARS police in the corridor knocking at other doors.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
Police. Open up, please.

Cath quickly re-closes the bed, hiding Tyler's body. Looks around the compartment.

ABBOT (O.S.)
Sorry to trouble you. This won't take a minute.

Cath goes rigid at the sound of the English voice. He's never met Abbot, but knows this is bad news.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 1 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cath exits his compartment. Sees the police check making its way up the corridor. He escapes into the next car.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 / ANNA'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

SOUND of a professional violinist running exercises. Cath knocks at Anna's door. She opens, violin in hand.

CATH
I need a favor.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Abbot and police enter the car, working their way uptrain, two doors at a time. A policeman knocks at Anna's.

POLICEMAN
Police.

INT. ANNA'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Cath and Anna react to the knock.

CATH
Just say you know me. We met in New York last year -- something like that. You can do that, can't you?

A second KNOCK at the door.

POLICEMAN (O.S.)
Police. Open, please.

Anna hesitates.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The policeman is joined in front of Anna's closed door by Abbot and his Aide, who have finished the previous compartment. Aide consults the passenger list.

AIDE
 Miss Anna Wolff. Austrian.

Abbot indicates: "Go ahead." The policeman opens the door.

INT. ANNA'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

To Cath's surprise, Anna grabs him, pulls him in for a kiss. They hastily separate as the door opens -- giving the impression they hadn't heard the knock.

ANNA
 (flustered)
 What is happening?

Her agitation and embarrassment seem genuine.

ABBOT
 Miss Wolff, my apologies. George Abbot, Home Office.
 (to Cath)
 And you are...?

Abbot is unfailingly polite. But from the moment the door was opened, he has zeroed in on Cath. (The purpose of the police check is to search for an unknown "extra passenger," male, 30, American; and Cath matches this description.)

CATH
 Tyler Whitney. Don't you people knock?

ABBOT
 I'm sorry. Routine check, passenger list and all that; mustn't skip anyone. Might I see your passport?

Cath looks surly. Hands over a document.

Anna stands by: pale, mortified.

CLOSE-UP - PASSPORT

The name: "Tyler Whitney." (In 1914, passports have no photos.)

ABBOT

looks disappointed. At his elbow, the Aide verifies that Tyler's name is on the passenger list.

CATH

Look here, by what right...

ABBOT

It's dreadfully inconvenient. But a man we're looking for may have boarded this train in Paris.

CATH

Obviously it's neither of us.

ANNA

A fugitive...?

ABBOT

A Dr. Robert Cath. An American who's in with rather a bad gang of terrorists back in Ireland, that killed a Lord and several policemen.

ANNA

Mein Gott!

She looks at Cath with awe. Abbot hands back the passport.

ABBOT

I don't suppose you'd happen to know him?

CATH

Who? No. It's funny how Europeans imagine that everyone in America knows each other.

ABBOT

Have you ever been to Dublin?

Cath just stares at him with icy disdain.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

(clears throat)

One last question. I notice you've booked a double compartment. Are you traveling alone, or expecting a friend to join you?

Cath looks at Anna. They both look at Abbot. Cath takes a threatening step forward.

CATH

Look here, what are you insinuating?

Abbot realizes how his question might be misinterpreted. As he starts to stammer...

ANNA

Mr. Abbot, I am engaged to be married. My fiancé belongs to an important family. They could not tolerate a scandal.

ABBOT

My dear lady, I didn't mean to imply -- I only meant to clarify -- the passenger list --
 (a hasty retreat)
 Thank you for your cooperation.
 I'm sorry to have disturbed you.

He ducks out. Anna looks at Cath. Smiles mischievously. She takes out the cigarette Cath gave her. Lights it.

ANNA

Don't get any ideas. I've had enough scandal for one night.
 (reproachfully)
 Doctor Cath. You didn't mention you were a murderer.

CATH

I didn't kill anyone.

ANNA

But you are running from the police.

CATH

It's complicated.

ANNA

Who is Tyler Whitney? And why do you have his passport?

CATH

He's my best friend. We went to school together. He --
 (chokes up, recovers)
 I'm sorry I brought you into this.

ANNA

You've certainly made the trip more interesting.

She smokes, then says...

ANNA (CONT'D)

If you'll make sure the conductor sees you leave?

She hands Cath a book.

CATH
Of course. Thank you.

He opens the door. Speaks loudly in the hallway, for the benefit of others...

CATH (CONT'D)
I'll read it with pleasure,
madame.

Anna, amused, watches him go.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cath exits Anna's compartment. Uptrain, Milos and Vesna glare at Cath as Abbot and police check their papers.

Grateful for the police protection, Cath heads downtrain, back to his own sleeping car.

END OF THE CORRIDOR

Abbot, police and Trainmaster regroup.

POLICE CHIEF
We have checked the entire train.
There is no extra passenger.

TRAINMASTER
Monsieur, we cannot hold up the
Orient Express any longer.

Abbot looks frustrated; he's not ready to give up.

ABBOT
I noticed an empty berth in
Compartment Six. Do you mind if I
take it?

TRAINMASTER
(dismayed)
You wish to stay on the train?

ABBOT
That's awfully kind of you. I
shan't be a bother; all I need is
a cot to lay my head.

EXT. ORIENT EXPRESS - NIGHT

The policemen descend. Abbot takes his Aide aside.

ABBOT
Look here, send a telegram to our
Embassy in Vienna. See if they've
got a file on a Tyler Whitney, or
any connection to our man.

INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

The TRAIN STARTS TO MOVE. Cath double-locks his compartment door. Tests it. Then, for extra safety, barricades it with Tyler's luggage.

INT. SERBS' COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Milos and Vesna simmer.

VESNA

Let's kill him tonight.

MILOS

How will that help us? The Firebird is gone. We have nothing!

In fatalistic wonder...

MILOS (CONT'D)

It's the curse.

INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Cath looks at the couch. Steels himself. Opens it, exposing the sheet-wrapped corpse.

EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Cath pokes his head out the window, watching the landscape.

WHISTLE BLOWS. They're approaching a bridge over a river.

Cath lifts the body, struggles it out the window.

As the train thunders across the bridge, Cath lets his burden fall. Tyler disappears into the dark, turbulent waters below.

INT. COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Cath withdraws inside. Shuts the window. With shaking hands he pours himself a stiff drink; downs it.

He looks at the black chest. The compartment's electric light flickers eerily. As if the chest is calling to him.

Cath approaches the chest. The lacquered painted Firebird draws his eye. We HEAR a faint HEARTBEAT, growing LOUDER.

THE PAINTING

depicts a scene from a Russian fairy tale. The brilliantly plumed Firebird is in a golden cage, Prince Ivan reaching out to open it. In his hand is a golden scarab key.

Only then does Cath notice a series of smaller vignettes surrounding the Firebird:

QUICK CUTS - CLOSE-UPS - MINIATURE PAINTINGS

Each vignette depicts a medieval scene of war or massacre. Piles of twisted bodies, mobs with swords and pikes.

- The sack of Jerusalem.
- Massacre of the Latins in Constantinople.
- St. Bartholemew's Day in Paris.

CATH

is mesmerized. As if in a trance, he lifts the lid...

The HEARTBEAT SOUND STOPS. The chest is empty, of course.

Cath notices the smaller velvet slot next to the large, egg-shaped hollow. Its form resembles a scarab.

A KNOCK at the door snaps him alert. Ready to flee or fight.

The handle is RATTLED from outside. A second KNOCK. An African-accented woman's voice.

KAHINA (O.S.)

Mr. Whitney?

Cath pulls himself together. He removes the luggage barricade. Unlocks the door, opens it.

KAHINA

stands outside. A striking African woman in military-style jacket and shirt, unblinking and immobile as a statue.

Kahina hands him a card, midnight blue. He turns it over. There's nothing on it but a sun symbol.

EXT. ORIENT EXPRESS - NIGHT

The powerful train blasts through the dark French countryside. We see lights on inside, Cath and Kahina making their way down the corridor toward the rear cars.

INT. PULLMAN CAR - NIGHT

Combining private compartments and a salon. HAREM GIRLS whisper, amused, as they eye Cath passing through. Their Eunuch guardian scolds them in Turkish.

INT. "SATURN" SALON - NIGHT

KRONOS, in African robes, sits at a table sorting a collection of netsuke -- Japanese ivory figurines. His salon is shadowy and sensuous, a private world apart from the Orient Express. Symbolist paintings and sculptures adorn the walls, along with cabalistic and occult symbols. A baby grand piano shines under a stained-glass skylight.

KAHINA

(entering with Cath)

Mr. Tyler Whitney.

Kronos looks startled. Then he beams. Rises from the table. His powerful presence dominates the room.

KRONOS

But no, Kahina. You are mistaken.
This is Doctor Robert Cath.

CATH

Do we know each other?

KRONOS

My name is Kronos. Please forgive
the disarray; I am a hopeless
collector.

He indicates a Bugati chair. Cath sits, uncomfortably.

Kronos takes a dossier from a drawer, pages through it.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

The colorful career of Mr. Tyler
Whitney is so intertwined with
that of his great friend Dr.
Cath. One cannot hope to
appreciate one without the other.
Ah...

He finds the photo he's looking for. Hands it to Cath.

CLOSE-UP - PHOTO

Cath and Tyler in happier days, mustachioed and sombreroed,
with a band of MEXICAN REVOLUTIONARIES.

KRONOS

recites from the dossier...

KRONOS (CONT'D)

Yale School of Medicine, class of
eight-nine. You followed Mr.
Whitney to Mexico, where he ran
guns for the Zapatistas... then
to Dublin for the Irish
Republicans...

Cath's expression becomes closed, wary.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

But not to the Balkans. Was there a falling-out? Or did you simply tire of your friend's remarkable knack for picking the losing side?

CATH

I'm here.

KRONOS

And he is not.

He closes the dossier, sets it aside.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

Forgive me, I don't mean to pry. Human nature is fascinating to me; it's my weakness. Whether it is Cath or Whitney who sits in my salon is none of my concern. My interest is to conclude a certain transaction. Perhaps Mr. Whitney mentioned it...?

CATH

He mentioned gold.

Kronos beckons to Kahina. She brings over a heavy leather briefcase and places it on the table beside Cath. Flips it open, revealing an array of ten solid gold bars.

KRONOS

Do you have it?

CATH

The Bird? I might have it, for the right price.

Kronos regards Cath with a penetrating gaze.

KRONOS

I wonder how much your friend told you of its legend. The Firebird was a gift from the Russian Tsar to Abdul Hamid, Last Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

Kronos rises, surveys his own art collection as he continues.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

The Empire swallowed whatever it touched... like a great, dark ocean. Now the waters are receding... and treasures from the deep come to light.

(offhand)

There is a companion piece.

(MORE)

KRONOS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
A golden whistle in the form of a
Scarab...?

CATH
Sure, about this big. In a black
chest, painted with miniatures. I
might have that too.

Kronos's interest quickens, encouraged that he's not wasting
his time with Cath.

KRONOS
The Tsar was impressed with his
craftsman's work. So much that
when it was done, he ordered the
man's hands cut off, to ensure
that his gifts would never serve
another master. Thereafter, it is
said the Firebird never changed
hands without staining them with
blood.

Turning to Cath...

KRONOS (CONT'D)
Was this "curse" borne out when
the Firebird passed from your
friend Mr. Whitney's hands into
yours, Dr. Cath?

In the silence we hear the rhythmic CLACK-CLACK of the train.
Cath takes the tenth gold bar from the briefcase. Hefts it.

CATH
Ten percent in advance.

KRONOS
And in return, you offer... what?

CATH
How do I know you're the one
Tyler was dealing with, not a
competitor?

Kronos draws another sheaf of photos from the dossier. Hands
them to Cath.

KRONOS
Proof, provided by Mr. Whitney. I
don't like to waste my time.

CLOSE-UP - BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOS

Cath pages through them. Trophy photos of Serbian soldiers
looting a captured Ottoman palace.

- One shows the Firebird chest.

- In another, the chest is open; a soldier holds up a ten-inch-long JEWEL-ENCRUSTED GOLDEN EGG for the camera.

KRONOS

watches Cath look at the photos.

KRONOS

I am surprised by your emphasis on the financial aspect of our relationship. The Dr. Cath in the pages of my dossier was a selfless idealist. Alive to the human, historical, and, dare I say... transcendent.

CATH

Like you said, I got tired of picking the losing side.

He hands back the photos. Pockets the gold bar.

CATH (CONT'D)

Down payment.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 1 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Kahina waits outside Tyler's compartment.

Cath brings out a re-wrapped parcel, the Firebird chest. Gives it to her.

CATH

First installment.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. TRAIN WHEELS - NIGHT

Pistons churning powerfully through the night.

MAP MONTAGE

Tracing the Orient Express route from France into Germany. As the sun rises, SUPERIMPOSE headlines: "RUSSIA PROTESTS AUSTRIAN ULTIMATUM"... "FRANCE PLEDGES SUPPORT TO RUSSIA"...

EXT./INT. MUNICH STATION - DAY

Chilly morning drizzle. August Schmidt waits grimly on the platform. Orient Express passengers are boarding, disembarking, etc. The faint sound of Anna's VIOLIN PRACTICE.

TITLE: **MUNICH**

Seeing Cath striding toward him, Schmidt's expression darkens.

CATH
Herr Schmidt. Fine morning.

Schmidt's eyes dart, cautious about being seen with Cath.

SCHMIDT
You have brought nothing.

CATH
Who says I haven't? What about you?

With a subtle glance, Schmidt indicates porters waiting beside carts loaded with a dozen large WOODEN CRATES -- stamped with the red cross and marked "Medical Supplies."

SCHMIDT
August Schmidt always keeps his word.

CATH
So do I. When it suits me.

Both men fall silent as a GERMAN OFFICIAL walks by. When he's past, Cath hands Schmidt a cloth-wrapped object from his pocket. Schmidt furtively unwraps it. Examines the gold bar.

SCHMIDT
And the rest?

CATH
There are nine more where this came from. You'll have them when the merchandise is delivered to my client.

SCHMIDT
(outraged)
You expect me to wait until Belgrade? We agreed you would pay in advance!

(Now Cath knows the destination.)

CATH
The situation has changed, as of this morning's papers. Austria could close the frontier with Serbia. We might not reach Belgrade.

SCHMIDT
Do you imagine they would turn back the Orient Express?

CATH
If they do, you'll keep your merchandise.

(MORE)

CATH (CONT'D)
 (re: the gold bar)
 This should cover your restocking costs. If the borders stay open, we have no problem.

SCHMIDT
 I want to see all the gold. Now.

CATH
 The gold is on the train. If you don't like the deal, fine; I don't like it either. I'll keep my gold and you can take those crates back where they came from.

He holds Schmidt's gaze, bluffing, unwavering.

Schmidt turns. Shouts at the porters...

SCHMIDT
Load the crates!

The porters swing into action; they SLIDE open the doors of the forward baggage car (behind the loco). Inside, Anna's dog Max has gone berserk; he BARKS and SNAPS from his cage at the men loading the crates as if he'd like to kill them.

CATH

frowns; the dog's sudden change in personality is disturbing.

While the crates are being loaded, Schmidt chats with Cath, an insinuating smirk:

SCHMIDT
 You live up to your reputation, Herr Whitney. Even with such a serious business, still you find time for pleasure.

Cath doesn't get it at first.

SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
 Fräulein Wolff is lovely, yes?

Cath's expression darkens. Before he can retort...

SCHMIDT
 Such a proper Viennese lady. A real performer! To look at her, you would never think she is Jewish.

He sniggers. Cath scowls.

MILOS AND VESNA

watch suspiciously from the platform as the crates are loaded. Milos nudges Vesna. They re-board the train.

CATH

As he returns to the train, he notices the French Trainmaster and Conductors staring. He follows their gaze to see...

ANOTHER TRAIN

leaving on the next platform. GERMAN SOLDIERS in Imperial grey hang out the windows, saying goodbye to family and friends. More soldiers jump on board at the last minute as the TRAIN PULLS OUT.

ONE SOLDIER

looks back. He resembles a young Adolf Hitler. (He is.)

FRENCH TRAINMASTER AND CONDUCTORS

watch the German soldiers with stone-cold faces.

CATH

watches the German train pull out. Then he boards the Orient Express.

ABBOT,

down the platform buying an English newspaper, looks up. He's keeping an eye on Cath.

INT. ORIENT EXPRESS - VESTIBULE - DAY

As Cath passes between cars, Milos and Vesna grab him. Vesna sticks a KNIFE in his ribs.

MILOS

You come.

Cath knows he'd better get their attention fast.

CATH

Kill me, and those crates will never make it to Belgrade.

MILOS

You lie!

CATH

And you have no idea how well. Herr Schmidt thinks I'm Tyler. He's counting on me to pay on delivery. If anything happens to me, so much for your "merchandise."

VESNA

Don't trust him! Remember the Firebird.

Milos considers. Then he tightens his grip on Cath.

MILOS

Come.

The Serbs manhandle Cath toward the sleeping cars. He can't tell if he got through to Milos or not.

EXT. MUNICH STATION - DAY

TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS. The LOCOMOTIVE hisses steam. The Orient Express pulls out of Munich station.

INT. SERBS' COMPARTMENT - DAY

The Serbs push Cath inside as the TRAIN GATHERS SPEED. Vesna locks the door, stands guard.

MILOS

Tyler spoke of "Cath." He say his friend, doctor, will come -- build hospital.

CATH

That's me.

Milos takes out a bottle. Casually...

MILOS

You like plum brandy, same as Tyler?

CATH

Tyler must have liked you, if you got him to drink that stuff. I'm surprised he didn't insist on Champagne.

Milos nods; Cath's passed the first test.

MILOS

Champagne, not so easy to find in mountains of Bjelasnica.

He fills two glasses, hands one to Cath.

MILOS (CONT'D)

In Serbia we say: "If you are not my brother, you are my enemy."

He lifts his glass, makes a toast in rapid Serbian, ending with "Crna ruka."

CATH

What does that mean?

MILOS

May man who kill Tyler choke on
his own blood.

He drinks. Cath hesitates, then drinks too.

CATH

Do you know who did it?

MILOS

Austrian pigs kill him, take
Bird. Austrians steal from
Serbian people our land. Women.
Food from children. They make us
slaves, like we were slaves under
Turks. Tyler understood this.

CATH

You think the Austrian secret
police put an assassin on board?

MILOS

Orient Express. Austrian agents,
spies, always. Maybe you.

CATH

He wasn't just killed, he was
massacred. His eyes...

MILOS

To patriots in Sarajevo they did
worse.

VESNA

*You talk too much. Don't trust
him.*

MILOS

*Shut up, woman. When I want your
advice I'll ask for it.*

(These asides don't need to be subtitled; we'll get the
gist.)

CATH

Tyler wanted me to see the
Firebird. Why? What is it?

Milos eyes Cath warily. He spits to ward off evil.

MILOS (CONT'D)

Bird is treasure we win from
Turks in great battle. Five
hundred years Turks rule Serbian
land. Now they run like dogs.

CATH

Who else knew Tyler had it?

MILOS

We give to Tyler Bird for sell,
to buy...

(a look from Vesna)

Medicine. Me, Milos, I wish I
never see this thing. Three good
men I lose because of Bird. Now
Tyler. It's cursed.

Milos leans forward, demands...

MILOS (CONT'D)

If bird is gone, how you pay
German?

CATH

With an empty box.
(Milos looks baffled)
Now if you'll excuse me...

Cath stands. Finds the door blocked by Vesna. She draws her
knife.

VESNA

*He'll betray us. We should kill
him.*

MILOS

*We need him to deal with the
German.*

VESNA

If you trust him you're a fool.

Cath reaches past Vesna to unlock the door. She looks to
Milos, but he doesn't interfere. Cath opens the door. To
Vesna, politely...

CATH

Madame.

He exits.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - DAY

Cath closes the door. Looks at his hand; it's shaking.

Kahina passes him, returning downtrain to Kronos's car. Cath
has the feeling she was eavesdropping.

INT. SMOKING CAR - DAY

Cath enters. Sees Abbot reading his newspaper at the end of
the salon. Cath sits as far away from him as possible.

WAITER

Champagne, monsieur?

CATH
Whiskey.

The waiter goes.

Anna enters. Hesitates. Then sits with Cath. Playfully, for Abbot's benefit:

ANNA
(to Cath, sotto)
Our English friend is watching us.

CATH
I can't seem to get away from him.

ABBOT: Reading his paper, but always aware of Cath.

The waiter brings Cath's whiskey.

ANNA
So early in the day!

She orders coffee in German, Viennese style. The waiter leaves. Anna leans forward, play-acting worried. Re: Abbot...

ANNA (CONT'D)
What if he tells someone, who will tell my fiancé?

CATH
Do you really have a fiancé in Vienna?

ANNA
Wouldn't you like to know. And you? Do you have a wife?

CATH
No.

ANNA
A fiancée? I already know you're a villain.

Cath sizes her up. She is charming, and extremely attractive.

CATH
You should stay away from me. I might get you into real trouble.

ANNA
Look who's talking.

After a moment, curiously...

ANNA (CONT'D)

You don't seem like a dangerous criminal.

CATH

We look just like anyone else. That's what makes us so dangerous.

ANNA

Now you're teasing me. I don't believe you're really a terrorist.

CATH

That depends on your point of view. I have a talent for being in the wrong place at the right time.

ANNA

Like my compartment, last night?

Cath acknowledges it.

ANNA (CONT'D)

What about your friend Mr. Whitney? Was he also a criminal like you?

Cath looks at her. And looks. Until Anna realizes something's wrong.

CATH

Is.

ANNA

Pardon?

CATH

I am, you are, he is. You say "was" when a person is dead.

ANNA

(flustered)

What did I say? I'm sorry, my English... You said you met at university?

Cath looks at her.

MEMORY FLASH - VESTIBULE

Anna hurrying past Cath, moments after he boarded the train. So preoccupied she doesn't notice him.

MEMORY FLASH - DINING CAR

Anna deliberately freeing Max's leash under the table. Creating a pretext to meet Cath and Schmidt.

MEMORY FLASH - CORRIDOR

Anna flirting with Cath on their way back from the dining car. Coming on too strong, too early.

BACK TO SCENE

Cath's outward behavior toward Anna doesn't change, but there's a hardness in his eyes. Answering her question...

CATH

The first week of freshman year.
Tyler took me under his wing. And
yes, he taught me everything I
know about getting into trouble.
He never could resist a charming
lady.

Anna stares back at him. Just then...

THE DOOR SWINGS. The passengers in the salon turn to stare at the newcomers.

KRONOS

enters with Kahina and three Harem Girls: veiled, exotic, gorgeous. Impeccable in Western top hat and tails, he takes his time surveying the room. Kronos knows how to make an entrance.

Suddenly he beams -- a ray of sunshine -- and heads straight to Cath and Anna, leaving the Headwaiter to seat his entourage.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

Mr. Whitney, forgive me for
interrupting your tea.

(to Anna)

Fräulein Wolff. It is a privilege
to meet such an artist. My name
is Kronos.

He kisses Anna's hand. Sits with her, ignoring the flurry of waiter/entourage activity behind him.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

My salon is equipped with a small
piano. A rather good one. I of
course am only an amateur. Yet I
hope that you might do me the
honor of joining me in a duet. To
help pass the time on this rather
long journey. I beg you to
accept.

Anna's eyes sparkle.

ANNA

There's a lovely romance by
Dvorak, in F minor. Do you know
it?

KRONOS

Or perhaps Saint-Saens, "The
Swan."

ANNA

(agreeably)

Why not?

KRONOS

Nothing too taxing. A musical
diversion.

Kronos stands, grandly addresses the entire room...

KRONOS (CONT'D)

You are all invited to a recital
in my salon.

(to Anna)

Shall we say three o'clock? Until
then, madame.

Kronos's entourage instantly gather themselves and follow him
out, leaving untouched the elaborate tea service which the
waiters have just set out.

ANNA

That was unexpected.

A delicious AD LIB BUZZ begins: "Did you see..." (These
social snobs see Kronos as a parvenu flaunting his wealth.)

CATH

You don't know him?

ANNA

Of course I know of him. I've
heard stories...

CATH

What stories?

ANNA

That he's the son of a Spanish
bishop. That he made a fortune in
the Burmese ruby trade. Or that
he gets five percent of all the
oil they pump out of the ground
in Persia. I don't know what's
really true. But, on a train...

CATH

...The rules don't apply.

(MORE)

CATH (CONT'D)
 You can accept invitations from
 people you wouldn't say hello to
 in the street.

ANNA
 (he gets it!)
 Exactly!

Cath stares at her hard.

CATH
 It just occurred to me. You might
 have seen Tyler. When you boarded
 the train in Paris. He'd have
 noticed you, for sure.

ANNA
 I didn't.

She rises.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 I need to practice. If you'll
 excuse me...

Cath watches her go.

He glances at Abbot, catches him watching him the same way.

CUT TO:

TRAIN WHEELS

CHURNING through green countryside.

MAP MONTAGE

The train crosses the German border into the vast expanse of
 Austria-Hungary. Ahead lie its two capitals, Vienna and
 Budapest. SUPERIMPOSE headline: "SERBIAN REPLY TO AUSTRIAN
 ULTIMATUM DUE TODAY"

INT. SLEEPING CAR 1 CORRIDOR - DAY

The two Conductors discuss politics in French (arguing about
 whether France could defeat Germany in a war, etc.)
 Passengers stream past them on their way to the "Saturn."

INT. "SATURN" SALON - DAY

Furniture has been rearranged for the recital. A DOZEN
 PASSENGERS mill, checking out Kronos's art collection. Some
 are shocked; some giggle.

AD LIB: English passengers blithely discuss politics:
 "...October ball in Vienna..." "But if there's war?" "There
 won't be. If there is, it'll be over by September."

Cath notices Anna flirting with Schmidt. She's stunning in a different dress. She ignores Cath.

Turning away to avoid them, Cath confronts...

A MEDIEVAL PAINTING

Knights kneel before King Louis IX, presenting him with a chest. A haloed spectral Christ presides over the event.

CATH

frowns; something about the scene seems familiar. Kronos has come up beside him.

KRONOS

The Knights of the First Crusade, returned from the Holy Land. Interesting, is it not? Scholars argue to this day what was in the box.

CATH

A gift for their King...?

KRONOS

Some say what they brought back from Jerusalem was the greatest relic of all. The Sacred Heart of our Savior, eternally beating.

CATH

Speaking as a physician, I'd call that unlikely.

Kronos smiles. Re: the painting...

KRONOS

The slaughter was terrible. Women, children. The streets of Jerusalem turned to rivers of blood.

Cath notices, with a start, that the chest in the painting resembles the Firebird chest.

His GAZE SWIVELS to the black lacquered chest itself, across the room; it's now part of Kronos's collection.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

Tell me, Doctor. In your medical opinion. What madness do you suppose makes men journey far from home to kill strangers in a land they've never seen?

Before Cath can answer, Kronos turns, addresses the crowd --

KRONOS (CONT'D)
Ladies, gentlemen, please take
your seats!

Schmidt sidles up beside Cath, murmurs slyly...

SCHMIDT
Herr Whitney, you are an art
lover?
(re: Anna)
As well as a music lover?

The guests sit. Kronos and Anna TUNE UP. Cath sits toward the
back, near the door.

The RECITAL BEGINS. A DUET for violin and piano.

Anna is spellbinding.

Cath watches her with mixed feelings.

KAHINA

waits until the piece is under way, then exits silently.

CATH

notices Kahina leave. He realizes: With passengers at the
concert, she's free to search the train. Kronos planned this.

KRONOS (V.O.)
(in Cath's memory)
A musical diversion.

ANNA AND KRONOS

continue playing.

CATH

stands. Makes his way to the exit, annoying other guests.

KRONOS AND ANNA

notice Cath leave too. Anna looks disturbed. But she's
trapped, has to keep playing.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - DAY

Cath enters. Tries Anna's compartment door. Locked. Damn.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 - VESTIBULE - DAY

Cath exits into the vestibule at the end of the car. The same
place he boarded the train. He opens the outside door.

EXT. SIDE OF TRAIN - DAY

Cath steps outside the train. Swings out onto the side of the sleeping car. He climbs along the car.

MOVING VIEW FROM TRAIN

The train barrels along the Danube, green and lush. In an Austrian town square, a military band PLAYS the patriotic song "Prince Eugen." The crowd SINGS along in German.

INT. FRENCH FAMILY'S COMPARTMENT - DAY

The French boy gapes as Cath climb past outside the window. He tugs at his father, who doesn't look up from his newspaper.

FRENCH BOY

Papa!

EXT. SIDE OF TRAIN - DAY

Reaching Anna's compartment, Cath finds the window open a crack. He gropes inside for the catch.

Another TRAIN BLASTS by, whistle SHRIEKING. Cath flattens himself against the side of the car.

INT. ANNA'S COMPARTMENT - DAY

Cath opens the window all the way. Climbs in, brushes himself off. Looks around.

He searches Anna's belongings. Rummages through trunks: clothing, jewelry.

In her handbag he finds a pistol and bullets. He puts them back.

He continues searching. On the overhead rack, a hat box. It contains a hat.

Cath looks around, frustrated. Then checks her jewelry box again. Examines it more carefully. This time he finds a double lining. He removes it to reveal a secret compartment.

Inside is a brass KEY -- and a card bearing the double-headed eagle crest of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with a government official's name in German.

MILOS (V.O.)

(in Cath's memory)

Austrian agents, spies, always.

Cath looks at the key: a conductor's passkey. (Passengers don't have keys to compartments; only conductors do.)

Just then, he HEARS someone unlocking the door. He replaces the jewelry box. Hides in the adjacent washroom.

INT. WASHROOM - DAY

Cath hides, LISTENING to someone moving around inside the compartment. He recognizes the sounds. Realizes this person is ransacking Anna's belongings, as he just did.

INT. ADJACENT COMPARTMENT - DAY

The Two Proper Young Women are busy: one is posing semi-nude in a playful Sapphic tableau, the other SKETCHING her. They both look up startled as Cath exits the washroom they share with Anna's compartment.

Cath puts a finger to his lips apologetically. He exits into the corridor.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - DAY

Cath lights a cigarette. Waits until Kahina emerges from Anna's compartment, empty-handed. She's startled to see him.

CATH
Find anything?

Kahina's eyes smolder. Just then Conductor Jacques enters the corridor, returning to his seat. From his guilty look, Cath guesses he was bribed to absent himself so Kahina could search the compartment.

Kahina passes Cath heading downtrain. If looks could kill...

INT. DINING CAR - DAY

Cath passes through the empty restaurant, the kitchen staff setting the tables for dinner.

The giant Serb busboy (who took Max to the baggage car) glances up, follows Cath with a stare.

INT. VESTIBULE - DAY

Cath reaches the end of the dining car, finds the door to the next car locked. Quick glance over his shoulder; he unlocks it with the passkey.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR CORRIDOR - DAY

Cath enters the baggage car. Passengers aren't allowed here.

Cautious, alert, he advances up the corridor...

INT. "SATURN" SALON - DAY

The CONCERT CONTINUES as Kahina re-enters.

Kronos glances up. Kahina gives a subtle negative head-shake. Kronos's expression darkens. He gives himself over to the music, PLAYING his piano part.

Anna looks uneasily from Kahina to Cath's empty seat.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR - DAY

Cath hears VOICES approaching. He ducks into a storage compartment.

TRAINMASTER AND SALKO

come down the corridor, Trainmaster instructing Salko on his duties in French.

CATH

hides in the closet until they're past.

He emerges, continues up the corridor.

He reaches the door to the main baggage compartment. Tries the handle: Locked. He unlocks it with his passkey.

INT. "SATURN" SALON - DAY

Anna, playing, feels increasingly tense, worried about what may be happening in the train. She'd better wrap this up.

She reaches for her sheet music, turns several pages at once.

And transitions straight into the FINALE.

KRONOS,

lost, shuffles his score, trying to find where Anna is. He catches up with her on the last page, in time for the finale.

ANNA AND KRONOS

finish the piece together. She ENDS with a flourish.

THE AUDIENCE

APPLAUDS. If they noticed the rough patch, they're too polite to show it.

ANNA

smiles, curtsies. Turns to Kronos...

ANNA

Thank you! What a treat!
 (apologetically)
 I have a headache. I think I'll
 rest in my compartment before
 Vienna.

Kronos is solicitous. But his eyes are cold as he watches Anna exit through the appreciative crowd.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - DAY

Conductor Jacques accompanies Anna to her compartment. Takes out his passkey, unlocks it for her. He definitely looks guilty.

INT. ANNA'S COMPARTMENT - DAY

Anna enters. Carefully puts away her violin case. Checks her handbag, makes sure her pistol is still inside.

Next she reaches under the seat cushion, is relieved to feel "something else" (which we don't see) still there.

Last, she opens the jewelry box -- and is disturbed to find the key missing. No mistake: someone took it.

ANNA

(in German)
Idiot!

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - DAY

Anna emerges into the corridor, carrying her handbag. Gives the conductor her most charming, beseeching look.

ANNA

Jacques, poor Max is locked up in the baggage car. Would it be possible to visit him?

CONDUCTOR JACQUES

Of course, madame.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Max is BARKING madly at Cath, who's using a crowbar to pry the lid off one of Schmidt's crates. Max WHIRLS, SNAPPING at his own tail. It's as if the cage is driving him insane.

CATH

Come on, Max, it can't be that bad.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR CORRIDOR - DAY

The same corridor where Cath passed earlier. Anna watches Conductor Jacques fill a bowl of water from a spigot. We HEAR MAX BARKING desperately.

ANNA

I'm sorry to be a nuisance.

CONDUCTOR JACQUES

It is natural. I had an English terrier once, a Jack Russell. He was just the same.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Cath is just lifting a crate lid when he HEARS Anna and the conductor coming. Hastily, he closes it.

CONDUCTOR JACQUES

unlocks the door for Anna. They enter.

Cath is nowhere in sight; everything appears normal. Max is BARKING MADLY.

ANNA

Oh, you poor thing!

She bends to let Max out of his cage. He shoots across the room like a rocket; turns and GROWLS. He's traumatized.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Max!, what's the matter?

CLOSE-UP - CATH

lying on the floor, hiding under a luggage pallet. From here, he can SEE Anna and Jacques' feet, but not much else.

ANNA,

tries to give Max water; he won't drink.

She looks plaintively at Jacques...

ANNA (CONT'D)

He's all upset. I know it's against the rules, but couldn't I stay with him a bit longer?

CONDUCTOR JACQUES

Of course, madame. Just be sure to tell the chef de train when you leave so he can lock up.

CATH,

from his hiding place, SEES the conductor's feet walking away.

ANNA

The instant the conductor is gone...

ANNA
(in German)
*Poor Maxl, I'm sorry. We'll be
home soon.*

Max lets out a WHIMPER. Anna picks up the crowbar. Starts prying open a crate.

CATH

strains to see what Anna is doing.

MAX'S SNOUT blocks his view, BARKING and nosing under the pallet; Max knows Cath is there. Cath tries to shush him.

ANNA,

opening the crate, notices Max's odd behavior.

ANNA
Max, be quiet.

Max's BARKING becomes more frantic; he paws at the luggage pallet.

Anna realizes the dog is trying to warn her.

CATH

hears, and partly SEES, Max being returned to his cage by Anna. Max WHIMPERS and resists; she has to drag him.

The cage door CLANGS. Max's piteous BARKING resumes. Anna's feet walk right up to Cath's hiding place. A moment later, he HEARS a PISTOL COCKED.

ANNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You can come out now.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Anna waits, pistol in hand. A moment; then Cath rolls out from under the shelf.

CATH
(dryly)
Don't shoot.

He stands, dusts himself off. Anna looks exasperated. She lowers the gun.

ANNA

What are you doing here?

CATH

Probably the same as you. I thought I'd take a look inside those crates.

ANNA

(indignantly)

I came to bring water for my dog.

CATH

With a gun.

ANNA

A woman traveling alone has to be careful.

CATH

A violinist... you must travel a lot, all over Europe. Perfect cover for an Austrian agent.

ANNA

Agent?! Just because you're...

He just stares at her coldly. She realizes...

ANNA (CONT'D)

You took my key.

CATH

Did you kill Tyler?

ANNA

No!

CATH

It's hard to imagine, looking at you. But I've been wrong before.

He advances. Fearful, Anna steps back, raising the gun --

CATH (CONT'D)

What are you going to do, shoot me? Try telling the truth. You knew I wasn't Tyler the minute I walked into that dining car -- because you knew he was dead. How did you know?

ANNA

I found him.

CATH

You went to his compartment? Why?

ANNA

Because I had seen him talking to those Serbs. I wanted to know who he was. I thought I would ask him for a cigarette.

That's so plausible, it actually stops Cath for a moment.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I opened the door and -- there was blood everywhere... I couldn't get involved. I walked away.

CATH

What about the Bird?

ANNA

The what?

CATH

(less certain)

In a black box, under the window.

ANNA

I saw the box. It was empty.

Max is BARKING up a storm.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Max! Be quiet!

(to Cath)

All right -- I did come here to open those crates. Now will you help me, before the conductor comes back?

INT. DINING CAR - DAY

Milos and Vesna drink coffee in the empty restaurant. Salko (the uniformed baggage handler we saw earlier) appears in the doorway...

SALKO

(in Serbian)

Quick, before my boss gets back.

Milos and Vesna immediately follow him uptrain.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Anna and Cath open the first crate.

Anna pulls away straw... revealing boxes of bandages, medical supplies. She's momentarily set back.

It's Cath who notices that the top layer of contents are on a tray. He lifts it away, revealing...

DISASSEMBLED MACHINE GUNS.

ANNA

From Herr Schmidt's factory.
You're a doctor. Do you know what
a machine gun does? Can you
imagine these in the hands of
fanatics in the streets of
Vienna?

Cath looks like he's been punched in the stomach. Suspecting it is one thing, seeing the actual machinery of mass murder is another.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Fine business your friend was in.
A real idealist. Come, help me.

They replace the lid, hammer the nails. Cath looks anguished.

Max, who'd quieted down, starts BARKING again. Anna turns to listen. We HEAR SERBIAN VOICES approaching.

ANNA (CONT'D)

That's not the conductor.

CATH

Quick. In here.

He unlocks a door: "Personnel Only." Anna sees the passkey in his hand. She looks outraged for a moment. Then remembers her handbag is sitting on the floor -- a giveaway. She grabs it. Follows Cath into...

INT. CREW COMPARTMENT - DAY

A compartment for train crew to nap between shifts. So narrow that Cath and Anna can't avoid touching as they both put their ears to the door to listen. While, outside...

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Salko lets Milos and Vesna into the baggage compartment. Max BARKS at them. Vesna aims a KICK between the cage bars.

INT. CREW COMPARTMENT - DAY

Hearing Max YELP, Anna stiffens in outrage. Cath touches her arm to calm her.

ANNA'S HAND

finds Cath's; her fingers intertwine with his.

ANNA AND CATH

hold their breath, listening. We HEAR the Serbs outside.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Vesna guards the outer door in case anyone comes, while Salko and Milos open the crates, as Cath and Anna did.

SALKO

notices straw on the floor. A clue that the crates have already been opened. He wonders; then shrugs it off.

INT. CREW COMPARTMENT - DAY

Cath's arms enfold Anna. She leans against him. Allowing herself a moment's relief from the built-up exhaustion, fear, stress.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

The Serbs close up the crates. They've seen enough; they won't risk lingering. They exit, Salko locking up after.

INT. CREW COMPARTMENT - DAY

Anna and Cath listen.

ANNA
They've gone.

But she stays in his embrace.

CATH
What did they send you to do?

ANNA
Why do you keep asking questions?
You're like a boy with a stick,
poking a hornets' nest. You saw
what's in those crates. Do you
want to be arrested? Or end up
dead like your friend?

CATH
He asked me for help. I can't
leave it at that.

Raw, vulnerable. Anna is touched. She looks into his eyes.

ANNA
Yes, you can. And you should.

CATH

You don't understand. Tyler asked me, he begged me. In Paris, he was afraid to get on this train alone. And I --

(breaks off)

I said no. That was the last thing he heard me say.

ANNA

He was an arms dealer. That's a business where people get killed.

CATH

He was more than that. He inspired people. Before I met Tyler, I... I would have gone from medical school straight back home to Indiana.

Anna looks sorry; she can feel that Cath loved him.

ANNA

What would you do if you knew who killed him? "An eye for an eye?" You'd end up dead yourself -- or in prison.

Cath's expression suddenly hardens. He grasps her wrist.

CATH

They sent you to stop the arms shipment. Are there other agents on the train, who could have done that to him?

Anna pulls her arm away.

ANNA

There is no one -- but his Serb friends. And you should get off at the next stop.

She opens the crew compartment door.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR CORRIDOR - SUNSET

Cath and Anna emerge from the baggage compartment. Trainmaster and Salko, coming up the corridor, are startled to see them together.

TRAINMASTER

Fräulein Wolff...!

ANNA

Thank you for letting me visit my dog. You've been so kind.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)
 (to Cath)
 I haven't any money. Could
 you...?

Cath understands. He dukes Trainmaster a folded bill.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 Please, will you make sure his
 water bowl doesn't get empty?

TRAINMASTER
 Of course.

Anna smiles sweetly and goes on her way with Cath.

Salko gapes after them. Her act might have fooled his boss,
 Trainmaster -- but not him. He swallows his anger.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - SUNSET

Anna and Cath walk down the corridor to the compartments,
 Anna walks in front, talking without looking at Cath.

ANNA
 You really have no idea what
 you're doing, do you.

She reaches her compartment, opens it. To Cath's surprise,
 she holds it open.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 No idea.

INT. ANNA'S COMPARTMENT - SUNSET

Cath enters. Anna closes the door. Turns to face him. She
 kisses Cath passionately.

The kissing heats up, becomes urgent. They grope at each
 other's clothes, undoing buttons.

ANNA
 The next stop is Vienna. You
 should get off there.

Their conversation is punctuated by kisses, moans, and the
 removal of more clothing.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 The police will stop the crates
 in Budapest. If you're still on
 the train, they'll arrest you
 too.

CATH
 Why? Will you turn me in?

They start to have sex. As their passion builds to a frenzy...

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'm going to make sure... those guns... won't be used to kill Austrians. You... stay out of the way!

Bracing himself on the narrow couch, Cath's hand slips accidentally under the cushion. To his surprise...

CLOSE-UP - CATH'S HAND

encounters a small object hidden under the couch.

CATH

takes advantage of Anna's distraction, lifts his hand to see...

He's holding a GOLDEN SCARAB WHISTLE.

SHOCK CLOSE-UP - WHISTLE

Ornate, jeweled -- as

THE TRAIN WHISTLE SHRIEKS, mingling with Anna's cry.

INT. ANNA'S COMPARTMENT - SUNSET - LATER

Cath and Anna button up. Anna redoes her hair, becomes a demure and proper Viennese lady once again.

CATH

(inventing a pretext to make her look out the window)

How close are we?

Anna looks out the window. When her back is turned, Cath reaches quickly under the cushion, slips the whistle into his pocket. His eyes on her.

ANNA

Ten minutes.

CATH

All right. I'll get off in Vienna.

Anna turns, glad. She throws her arms around Cath, gives him a heartfelt goodbye hug.

ANNA

Our history... it's a chain of blood.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

It reaches deep into the past, it binds us, and it has nothing to do with you. I'm sorry about your friend.

She pulls back, looks at him earnestly, wanting him to understand...

ANNA (CONT'D)

In a war, more people would die. I volunteered to do this, because I don't want to see blood spilled. In Austria or anywhere. Can we agree on that at least?

CATH

Which were you first, a violinist or a spy?

ANNA

I've been playing the violin since I was six years old. I was a spy first.

Cath exits. Anna watches him go wistfully. She'll miss him.

EXT. VIENNA - DUSK

The Orient Express enters Vienna city, slowing as it approaches Westbahnhof station.

TITLE: VIENNA

INT. VIENNA WESTBAHNHOF - NIGHT

Cath disembarks, carrying Tyler's suitcases, accompanied by an Austrian PORTER. Making a show of leaving the train.

He scans the platform. A large CROWD is gathered around the newspaper kiosk, awaiting the arrival of the next edition. The atmosphere is electric.

INT. ABBOT'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Abbot is reading an English newspaper. (Headline: "WILL THERE BE WAR?") OVERHEAR English tourists chatting in the corridor: "Might not be a bad thing. Let the young men see a bit of action like our generation did... War pulls everyone together. Invigorating."

A young BRITISH ATTACHÉ appears in the doorway.

BRITISH ATTACHÉ

Mr. Abbot? I'm from the Embassy.

The young man opens his attaché case, hands Abbot a dossier.

INT. VIENNA WESTBAHNHOF - NIGHT

Anna walks through the station. She passes a group of AUSTRIAN SOLDIERS in new pike-grey uniforms, being blessed by an ORTHODOX PRIEST sprinkling holy water.

She passes a knot of people SINGING "Prince Eugen," a patriotic Austrian song. Many weep with emotion.

Anna enters the telegraph office.

INT. ABBOT'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Abbot opens the dossier. Starts to read.

QUICK SCANNING CLOSE-UPS

Government memos. Isolated words and phrases: **SECRET / Tyler Whitney / dangerous / subversive / sympathies / Sinn Fein**

ABBOT

frowns. Turns pages. Bypasses a photo (the same one Kronos had in his dossier, from Mexico).

MORE QUICK SCANNING CLOSE-UPS

Mexican Liberation Army / Zapata / associate Dr. Robert Cath

ABBOT

freezes. He stops. Turns back. Looks at the photo again.

CLOSE-UP - PHOTO

MOVING IN to isolate the two friends. Tyler in his sombrero. At his side, the mustachioed, serious young doctor.

ABBOT

stares at the photo. He now understands that the man who's been passing himself off as "Tyler Whitney" is Cath.

He leaps to his feet.

INT. SLEEPING CAR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Abbot strides down the corridor, followed by the young attaché. He grabs the Trainmaster.

ABBOT

The American gentleman, Mr. Whitney.

TRAINMASTER

He has just left the train.

INT. VIENNA WESTBAHNHOF - NIGHT

Abbot descends, followed by the Trainmaster. An Austrian STATIONMASTER meets them accompanied by AUSTRIAN POLICE. The manhunt for Cath is about to resume.

CATH

walks through the crowd, accompanying the porter pushing his luggage trolley. He deliberately falls back...

Then turns and walks back toward the Orient Express platform.

He passes through the crowd massed at the kiosk.

ELSEWHERE IN THE CROWD: Police search for Cath.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - NIGHT

Anna watches the clock. The TELEGRAPH CLERK behind the counter sees she's anxious about missing her train.

TELEGRAPH CLERK

*Don't worry, miss, your message
was sent. Perhaps you'll have an
answer waiting in Budapest.*

INT. TRAIN PLATFORM - BAGGAGE CAR - NIGHT

We hear Max BARKING inside. The sliding door of the baggage car stands open; Salko supervises PORTERS unloading luggage.

Cath loiters behind a luggage cart, waits until Salko's back is turned... then slips on board.

SALKO

turns around, just misses seeing Cath as he ducks behind crates.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Cath hides behind the crates as Salko slides the door closed and padlocks it.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT

Trainmaster blows the WHISTLE.

TRAINMASTER

(in German)
*Orient Express to Budapest,
Belgrade, Sofia, and
Constantinople! All aboard!*

Anna hurries back, climbs back on board -- the last passenger. She passes Abbot, who's still waiting anxiously on the platform.

The Stationmaster returns with Cath's PORTER in custody, police pushing his trolley. Stationmaster shakes his head -- they found the luggage, but not the passenger.

Abbot looks frustrated, unsure what to do.

THE WHEELS

start to turn.

ABBOT

makes his decision by instinct. He doesn't believe Cath left the train. He climbs back on board the Orient Express as it leaves Vienna station.

ANGLE - NEWSPAPER KIOSK

Just then, NEWSPAPER SELLERS arrive toting bundles of evening papers. The crowds swamp them, tear open the bundles, pass newspapers around: "AUSTRIA DECLARES WAR ON SERBIA"

The entire station erupts in excitement as the news spreads. Strangers embrace, exult, hats tossed in the air: "Hurrah! It's war!" They start SINGING "Prince Eugen."

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Cath hides behind the crates, out of sight, while Salko locks up the compartment. Max is BARKING up a storm.

Salko exits, locking the door. As soon as he's gone, Cath steps out from behind the crates.

Cath opens Max's cage. Max bolts out past him.

Cath looks inside the cage. Sees a bundle wrapped in Max's dog blanket. Cath partly unwraps it, REVEALING --

A GLINT OF GOLD. A JEWEL-ENCRUSTED GOLDEN EGG.

Max SNARLS. Crouches with ears flattened back, growling. It's the Egg that's been freaking him out.

Cath looks grim. Anna lied.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cath (coming from the baggage car) strides downtrain through the kitchen, eyes blazing. Waiters gape -- how did he get there? Cath is past caring. He's on his way to confront Anna.

INT. SMOKING SALON - NIGHT

As Cath enters the salon, Abbot steps into his path.

ABBOT

Dr. Cath. This will be easier for everyone if you come quietly.

Trainmaster and a beefy CREWMAN block Cath's escape. Abbot claps HANDCUFFS on his wrist.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

I arrest you in the name of His Majesty King George.

CATH

Listen to me. There are crates of machine guns in the baggage car.

ABBOT

Are there?

Trainmaster, Abbot and Crewman hustle Cath downtrain.

CATH

Tyler Whitney was murdered on this train. Austrian agents stole a Golden Egg from his compartment. I can show you.

ABBOT

(eyebrows raised)
A Golden Egg!

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Milos and Vesna, in their compartment, stare as Cath is manhandled down the corridor past them. Cath twists around, calling to them...

CATH

Milos! They found the crates. They're going to stop the train at Budapest. You'll be arrested.

MILOS AND VESNA

Milos stares after Cath, appalled.

VESNA

(in Serbian)
The Austrian bitch. She's a spy. Salko saw them together in the baggage car.

Milos is ashen. It's all over. Then, with dark resolve...

MILOS

Come.

He exits the compartment, heads uptrain, followed by Vesna.

CATH

is hustled past Anna's compartment. She turns pale on seeing him. Cath glares as if he'd like to rip her head off.

ANNA

is so upset, she has to sit down. She'd thought Cath was safely off the train.

INT. PULLMAN CAR - NIGHT

Abbot and crew hustle Cath through the Pullman car. The Eunuch is outraged, the Harem Girls scandalized.

ABBOT

Excuse us... just passing through.

Cath spots Kahina. Desperately...

CATH

Kahina! Tell Kronos I have the Firebird!

ABBOT

That's enough of that.

EXT. AUSTRIAN COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The Orient Express barrels through the woods outside Vienna.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Milos and Vesna pass uptrain through the kitchen. Vesna makes eye contact with a Serb BUTCHER chopping meat.

The signal passes from Butcher to other Serb kitchen workers. A DISHWASHER, a WAITER, and the giant Busboy seen earlier all quietly stop work and follow Milos and Vesna uptrain. The French CHEF takes umbrage.

CHEF

Hey! Where do you think you're going? Come back here!

The Chef grabs the Butcher. Butcher SHOVES him, sending him staggering back.

BUTCHER

I quit.

All the Serbs enter the baggage car. The Chef lunges after them to open the door. But Salko's already locked it from the other side.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

The Serb gang of seven is complete. Milos and Vesna break open one of the crates. They pass out RIFLES and ammunition.

EXT. BAGGAGE CAR - VESTIBULE - NIGHT

Between the loco and baggage car. Salko opens the outside door, showing Milos and Busboy the ladder to the roof. While they climb, Salko CUTS the brake line between the cars.

WE PULL BACK,

SHOWING that the baggage car is the frontmost car of the train, right behind the coal tender and loco. Then...

WE RACE BACK along the train's entire length, to reach

EXT./INT. CABOOSE - NIGHT

Abbot and crew hustle Cath between cars from Kronos's private "Saturn" into the baggage caboose, the last car of the train.

INT. CABOOSE - NIGHT

They drag Cath into a baggage compartment. Abbot handcuffs him, passing Cath's left arm through a brass railing for good measure. He's going nowhere.

CATH

(desperately)

Look in the baggage car. In the dog's cage. The Egg was to pay for the arms shipment. They murdered Tyler for it.

ABBOT

And three policemen and a member of the House of Lords. We'll have time to discuss all that and more, on the way back to England.

Abbot shuts the door and Trainmaster locks it.

EXT. LOCOMOTIVE - NIGHT

The Engineer and Fireman run the train... unaware of Milos and Busboy climbing over the coal tender to reach the loco.

The Fireman sees Milos first. He SHOUTS a warning in Hungarian. Swings his shovel at Milos, who ducks.

Giant Busboy jumps into the cab, grabs the Fireman and HEAVES him off the train.

The Engineer, faced with Milos's PISTOL, freezes.

INT. ANNA'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Anna, sitting on her couch, has a thought. She reaches under the couch... and discovers the whistle is missing.

She claps her hand over her mouth. Now she knows why Cath got back on the train. Why he looked at her with hate.

The train LURCHES, throwing her off balance. She rushes to the window.

EXT. APPROACHING BUDAPEST - NIGHT

WHEELS THROW OFF SPARKS as the Orient Express rockets around a curve, too fast.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Abbot and Trainmaster react. Trainmaster strides to the window, outraged. The engineer should know better.

INT./EXT. LOCOMOTIVE - NIGHT

Approaching Budapest station at reckless speed. Busboy shovels while Milos holds the pistol to Engineer's head.

ENGINEER

(in Hungarian; concerned)

We need to slow down! The city...

MILOS

Keep going!

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

The car TEETERS as it takes another curve. Munitions crates SLIDE across the wooden floor.

EXT. BUDAPEST - NIGHT

Lights flash, bells CLANG. Train workers frantically signal the approaching Orient Express to slow down.

They jump aside as it SMASHES through a signal barrier.

EXT. BUDAPEST - MAIN BOULEVARD - NIGHT

A procession of thousands fills the broad, tree-lined avenue, waving black and yellow flags in the rain. From the CROWD rise the patriotic German strains of "Prince Eugen."

TITLE: BUDAPEST

The Orient Express BLASTS past the station without stopping.

INT. DINING CAR - NIGHT

Five Serbs burst in from the kitchen, brandishing rifles. Passengers and waiters panic; women scream.

The Serb Waiter blocks the downtrain door, letting Vesna, Salko, Butcher and Dishwasher exit past him.

HEADWAITER
(to Serb Waiter)
Have you gone mad?

SERB WAITER
(in German)
Back! Everybody back!

He fires a SHOT in the air, shattering a lamp. Chaos.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Vesna, Salko and Dishwasher charge down the train, SMASHING windows with rifle butts, throwing open doors, yanking terrified passengers out of their compartments and herding them uptrain -- Schmidt among them.

VESNA
Schnell! Schnell!

Herding passengers uptrain, Vesna stops Abbot. She frisks him, takes his PISTOL. Tucks it into her belt.

ABBOT
I'll just join the queue then,
shall I?

Vesna prods Abbot with her rifle, sending him uptrain.

ANNA

sees the Serbs coming down the corridor. She flees toward the rear of the train.

INT. PULLMAN CAR - NIGHT

Anna enters the empty car. The Eunuch and Harem Girls stare.

ANNA
Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Français?

HAREM GIRL
English. Little.

ANNA
Please help me.

INT. PULLMAN CAR - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The three Serbs storm into the Pullman car. The Eunuch charges at them, sword raised to defend the harem.

Vesna shoulders Dishwasher out of the way and FIRES with the rifle, hitting Eunuch in the chest.

INT. HAREM COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Four Harem Girls and Anna huddled inside hear the GUNSHOT, as the harem girls hastily cloak and veil Anna.

Salko throws the door open. Gestures uptrain...

SALKO
Schnell!

INT. PULLMAN CAR - NIGHT

The Harem Girls hurry out, Anna disguised among them. One SCREAMS at the sight of the dead Eunuch. Salko, brandishing his newly acquired sword, hurries them on their way uptrain.

INT. "SATURN" SALON - NIGHT

Kronos and Kahina react indignantly as Vesna and Dishwasher storm into the private salon.

Kahina steps forward, ready to fight. Kronos gives her a restraining touch: not now.

Vesna gestures uptrain with the rifle.

VESNA
Schnell!

Kronos obeys, followed by Kahina. Left behind: Kronos's art treasures, the Firebird chest... and the briefcase full of gold.

INT. CABOOSE - NIGHT

Cath, his left arm hooked through the brass railing, braces his feet against the wall, strains with all his might.

The wood starts to give slightly where the railing is bolted to the wall.

INT. DINING CAR - NIGHT

Vesna and Butcher herd Kronos and the harem girls into the crowded restaurant, joining the rest of the passengers and crew. Salko and Dishwasher arrive empty-handed.

VESNA

*Why are the only two we need to
worry about, the ones who are
missing?*

Salko shakes his head -- he doesn't know.

Anna hears this. She's just a few feet away -- one of the group of "harem girls," her face concealed by a hood and veil.

VESNA (CONT'D)

*Go! Find the Austrian woman and
the American traitor!*

Butcher, Salko and Dishwasher head downtrain.

KRONOS

stares at Anna; he's noticed his harem has a new addition.

ABBOT AND TRAINMASTER

Abbot murmurs to Trainmaster...

ABBOT

Bit of a mess, this.

VESNA

Quiet!

INT. CABOOSE - NIGHT

Cath pulls harder... until the brass railing POPS out, splintering the wood. He shakes free of the railing.

INT. SLEEPING CAR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Salko and Dishwasher barge downtrain. Butcher stays behind to search the sleeping car, checking every compartment.

INT. CABOOSE - NIGHT

Cath rushes to the emergency brake, pulls it. Nothing happens. The brakes have been cut.

His handcuffs hamper every movement. He has to get them off.

Cath notices a large trap door in the baggage compartment floor. He manages to lift it, kicks it open... REVEALING RUSHING TRACKS below.

INT. "SATURN" SALON - NIGHT

Salko and Dishwasher burst into Kronos's salon, searching for Cath and Anna. Salko pauses to stare at a picture (a "lost" Picasso). He's fascinated; he's never seen anything like it.

TRACKING PAST HIM, into the next car...

INT./EXT. CABOOSE - NIGHT

...where Cath lies down on the floor of the baggage compartment. He hooks his ankle through a suitcase strap, at the bottom of a stack of luggage on a pallet.

And now we see why. Cath stretches out full length on the floor, across the open trap door. The weight of the luggage stack holds his foot in place while he reaches his handcuffed wrists down toward the spinning TRAIN WHEELS.

He means to break his handcuffs on the wheels. But he can't quite reach.

HIS FOOT,

held by the strap, strains to gain an extra inch... two...

The suitcase, pulled by his weight, is held in place by the heavier luggage stack above.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Salko and Dishwasher enter the caboose, rifles ready.

Dishwasher throws open the first baggage compartment door. No one in there.

CATH

strains his wrists closer to the wheel...

THE SERBS

find the next door (Cath's) locked. Salko unlocks it.

CATH

touches the handcuff chain to the wheel, throwing off SPARKS. Grimaces, holding it there, as the links start to heat up.

A few more seconds and he'll be free.

THE SERBS

burst into the baggage compartment. They see Cath hanging down into the open trap door.

DISHWASHER

Son of a bitch!

Salko holds Dishwasher back. Grinning, Salko deliberately yanks the suitcase out from under the stack.

CATH

realizes what's happening. Desperately, to Salko...

CATH

Don't!

He twists his upper body, trying to climb back in, as...

SALKO

KICKS the suitcase over the edge, into the open trap door.

CATH

scrabbles to catch hold of something -- anything. Misses his grasp. His feet are yanked down by the suitcase's weight.

THE HANDCUFFS

The chain luckily snags on a protruding bolt in the floor, arresting Cath's fall. One link FRACTURES.

SALKO

scowls. Draws his sword, advances on Cath.

THE SUITCASE,

dragged along the tracks below, breaks and spills its contents -- lightening the weight on Cath's foot.

CATH

kicks his legs up under the train. Clings with his feet to the underframe of the caboose, while he struggles to climb back up into the baggage compartment. To Salko...

CATH (CONT'D)

You're making a mistake!

SALKO

slashes down at Cath with his sword. A LURCH of the train knocks him down, spoiling his aim.

HIS SWORD

strikes Cath's handcuff chain -- BREAKING it on the damaged link. Cath falls backward into the open trap door.

EXT. UNDERSIDE OF CABOOSE - NIGHT

Cath grabs onto the underframe of the caboose. Clings like a monkey to the bottom of the car, with hands and feet. TRAIN WHEELS SPINNING on either side of him.

There's nowhere to go from here but even further under the car. Cath grits his teeth -- and climbs.

SALKO

looks down into the trap door. Sees Cath still there. He jabs at him with his sword; but Cath is already out of range.

Salko CURSES. Rushes out into the corridor.

EXT. REAR PLATFORM OF CABOOSE - NIGHT

Salko opens the door, emerges onto the platform at the rear of the train. He's startled by the BLAZE OF A HEADLAMP...

AN AUSTRIAN MILITARY TRAIN

is right behind the Orient Express. A loco pushing an open flatbed car filled with grey-uniformed AUSTRIAN SOLDIERS.

Seeing Salko, the soldiers OPEN FIRE.

SALKO

ducks back inside; BULLETS splinter the wood around him.

EXT. ORIENT EXPRESS - LOCO - NIGHT

On a curve, Milos looks back, sees the Austrian train on their tail. He yells at the Engineer, while Busboy shovels...

MILOS

More steam!

The Engineer nods and adjusts a valve... but we can guess from his shifty face that he's holding out.

INT./EXT. REAR PLATFORM OF CABOOSE - NIGHT

Salko and Dishwasher struggle a large cabinet out through the doorway. They'll push it off the rear of the train.

EXT. UNDERSIDE OF CABOOSE - NIGHT

Cath, under the car, climbs laboriously toward the sliver of light he can see ahead: the end of the train.

He's about to climb up onto the platform... when he sees the massive CABINET TOPPLING down on him. He ducks back under the car. The cabinet falls past him, lands on the tracks.

Moments later, the Austrian train STEAMROLLERS over it, smashing the wooden furniture like a matchbox.

INT. DINING CAR - NIGHT

Vesna prowls among the passengers, pistol in hand, scanning their frightened faces.

ANNA

retreats deeper among the harem girls as Vesna approaches.

She backs right into Kronos. He startles her by drawing her to him, enfolding her in his arms.

Vesna, passing, sees only Kronos comforting a frightened "harem girl." She continues on her way.

ANNA

(a whisper, to Kronos)
Thank you.

KRONOS

I could do still more for you,
Fräulein... if you would let me.
A certain Golden Egg.

ANNA

I don't know what you mean.

KRONOS

In unstable times, one should
choose one's friends wisely. The
American doctor is not on your
side.

He releases Anna and turns away, leaving her wondering.

INT./EXT. ORIENT EXPRESS - BETWEEN CARS - NIGHT

Salko rushes in.

Lifts metal floor plates to expose the coupling mechanism.
Sets about uncoupling the caboose.

EXT. UNDERSIDE/REAR OF CABOOSE - NIGHT

Cath, with difficulty, climbs up onto the rear platform of the caboose. He's immediately startled by the Austrian soldiers SHOOTING AT HIM.

Cath dives through the doorway as BULLETS SPLINTER WOOD around him. He escapes out the side door. Climbs the outside ladder to the roof.

He flattens himself on the roof, out of the line of fire. Starts crawling toward the front of the car.

INT./EXT. BETWEEN CARS - NIGHT

Salko uncouples the caboose from the train. The cars edge apart. Downhill momentum keeps them close for now, but the gap is widening. Satisfied, Salko heads uptrain.

EXT. TOP OF CABOOSE - NIGHT

Cath, atop the caboose, realizes something is wrong: He's crawling toward the next car, yet it's receding from him.

He gets to his feet and sprints along the roof of the caboose. Takes a running leap across the widening gap to the "Saturn." Misses, slips, catches the edge of the roof.

INT./EXT. REAR PLATFORM OF "SATURN" - NIGHT

Cath lands in the rear platform of the "Saturn" (now the last car of the train). He's met by...

DISHWASHER

He hits Cath with a sledgehammer PUNCH in the jaw, knocking him off the back of the car.

CATH

falls off the end of the "Saturn." Saves himself by grabbing onto one of the two massive iron bumpers.

Cath manages to climb to the ladder on the side of the car. Pulls himself up. Climbs across to the side doorway.

DISHWASHER

is waiting for him. Cath and Dishwasher FIGHT, trading blows in the side doorway of the train.

EXT. MILITARY TRAIN - MOVING - NIGHT

The AUSTRIAN ENGINEER sees the marooned caboose looming on the tracks ahead. His eyes widen. He slams on the BRAKES.

The loco slows down, sparks flying. Too late to avoid collision. The flatbed SLAMS into the rear of the caboose.

The soldiers are jarred -- then realize it's OK. They're still on the tracks.

The Austrian Engineer pours on STEAM. The loco gains speed, pushing the caboose in front of it.

EXT. REAR PLATFORM OF "SATURN" - NIGHT

Dishwasher KNOCKS Cath out of the doorway. Cath grabs the ladder, clings to it.

Dishwasher looks back, sees...

THEIR POV - THE CABOOSE

is APPROACHING behind them. Closing the distance.

CATH AND DISHWASHER

Dishwasher pounds Cath mercilessly, determined to knock him off the ladder. Cath clings on for dear life.

Eager to finish Cath off, Dishwasher makes the mistake of leaning out too far. Cath YANKS him out of the doorway.

Dishwasher FALLS, nearly pulling Cath off the ladder. Cath hangs on. Dishwasher manages to save himself by grabbing onto one of the iron bumpers, as Cath did before.

SALKO AND BUTCHER

appear in the side doorway. Salko's eyes bug out as he sees Cath on the ladder -- still on the train!

Dishwasher climbs back onto the ladder. He GRABS CATH.

Cath hangs on desperately, resisting Dishwasher's attempts to pull him off. The CABOOSE is approaching...

Dishwasher SCREAMS as the iron bumpers COLLIDE. His foot is CRUSHED in between. He lets go of Cath and falls.

Cath scrambles up the ladder. Salko sees him disappear up the ladder onto the roof.

SALKO
(to Butcher)
Go get him!

The Butcher climbs the ladder after Cath.

EXT. TOP OF TRAIN - NIGHT

Cath clings to the top of the train, nearly slips as the train takes a curve. He moves forward as fast as he dares, half crouching, half crawling.

Looks back. Sees the Butcher climb up after him, one car length behind, a meat cleaver tucked into his belt.

INT. DINING CAR - NIGHT

Salko bursts into the crowded room. Draws Vesna aside.

ANNA

watches. She can't understand the words, but Salko's upward pointing gesture is clear.

VESNA

*Do I have to do everything
myself?*

Vesna strides out, leaving Salko and Waiter in charge.

EXT. MILITARY TRAIN - NIGHT

The Austrian loco nudges the caboose onto a turnout. Soldiers change the points, jump back on board. The loco resumes pursuit.

EXT. ORIENT EXPRESS - TOP OF TRAIN - NIGHT

Cath crouch-crawls toward the locomotive, jumps from one car's roof to the next. Looks over his shoulder; Butcher is coming after him.

Cath sees an oncoming tunnel. Throws himself flat on the roof. Butcher does the same. THE TRAIN GOES THROUGH THE TUNNEL.

EXT. LOCO - NIGHT

Milos looks back. A curve offers a clear view of the military train, rapidly closing the distance.

EXT. TOP OF DINING CAR - NIGHT

Cath continues crouch-crawling uptrain, pursued by the Butcher.

He sees Vesna climb up onto the roof ahead. Uh-oh.

VESNA

aims her rifle at Cath, trying to get a clear shot. Butcher sees a TUNNEL coming up behind her.

BUTCHER
(in Serbian)
Tunnel!

Vesna hits the deck. So do Cath and Butcher.

TUNNEL BLACKNESS.

Emerging from the tunnel, Cath gets to his feet. He's trapped between Vesna and Butcher, closing in on him.

CATH
Don't do this.

BUTCHER

draws his cleaver and lunges at Cath. They grapple, Cath struggling to keep the blade away.

Vesna looks over her shoulder, sees another tunnel coming. Yells as she hits the deck...

VESNA
Tunnel!

Butcher and Cath flatten themselves just in time.

TUNNEL BLACKNESS.

As the train emerges, Cath gives Butcher a mighty SHOVE. Butcher rolls off the roof. Clutches desperately at the rounded edge, but can't get a grasp. He falls.

Cath is crawling back toward the end of the car. Vesna raises the rifle, FIRES at him. Misses. Cath climbs down the ladder, escapes back into the train.

INT. DINING CAR - NIGHT

Passengers shrink back as Cath bursts in: battered and bloody. He's momentarily startled to see everyone here, crowded into one place. Salko and the Waiter, holding the passengers at rifle-point, are likewise startled to see Cath.

SCHMIDT
Herr Whitney!

ANNA

reacts with glad relief: he's alive!

CATH

sees Anna. Realizes he's putting her and the other passengers in danger. He pushes through the crowd, escapes uptrain into the kitchen before Salko and Waiter can shoot.

VESNA

bursts in from the downtrain end, the same way Cath entered.

VESNA

Where is he?

Waiter points toward the kitchen. Salko spots Anna. Grabs her, rips away her harem-girl garb. The harem girls SCREAM.

SALKO

I found the Austrian spy!

Vesna seizes Anna. Outraged, Abbot and other male passengers move to her defense, but Salko and the Waiter hold them at bay with rifles. It's a dangerous moment for the hijackers. Serb Waiter SHOOTs out an ornate ceiling lamp.

SALKO AND WAITER

Get back! Get back!

Faced with two rifles, the budding passenger revolt subsides. Vesna drags Anna uptrain toward the kitchen.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR VESTIBULE/CORRIDOR - DAWN

Vesna drags Anna by the hair, pistol to her head, shouting in Serbian...

VESNA

Come out! Or your friend is dead!

INT. BAGGAGE CAR CLOSET - DAWN

Cath, hiding, HEARS Vesna's shouts -- and a CRY of pain from Anna. He turns pale.

VESNA (O.S.)

Come out or I shoot!

Cath understands she's using Anna as bait. He struggles with chivalry vs. his mixed feelings toward Anna.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR CORRIDOR - DAWN

Vesna digs in her knuckles, forcing Anna to the floor.

VESNA

Not such a fancy lady now, are you?

CATH
That's enough!

Vesna grins as Cath steps out into the corridor.

ANNA
Cath, no!

Vesna digs in, making her cry out in pain.

CATH
I'm the one you want. Leave the
passengers alone.

Vesna raises the pistol at Cath, point-blank range. Salko arrives behind him.

Anna pushes Vesna's hand as she FIRES. The shot goes wide. Vesna and Anna struggle fiercely in the narrow corridor.

Cath grapples with Salko. Salko's rifle DISCHARGES, BLASTING a hole in the ceiling. As they struggle...

ANNA VS. VESNA

Anna bites Vesna's knuckles, making her drop the pistol. Escapes up the corridor.

Vesna catches Anna. Draws her KNIFE.

VESNA
Austrian witch!

As she's about to slit Anna's throat...

BLAM! Vesna looks down, sees BLOOD soaking through her shirt. She's been hit by an accidental blast from Salko's rifle.

CATH VS. SALKO

Furious, Salko BASHES Cath with the rifle butt, knocks him to the floor. Tosses the rifle aside, draws his sword.

Cath looks up. Sees Salko raise the sword, about to skewer him...

A CRYSTAL VASE smashes Salko over the head. Salko falls unconscious, revealing Abbot, with more crewmen behind him.

INT. DINING CAR - DAWN

It's chaos -- passengers rushing downtrain toward the exit. Conductors try to divert the handful of angry people hitting and kicking the fallen Serb Waiter: mob vengeance. Schmidt resists the flow.

SCHMIDT
Herr Whitney, where is Herr
Whitney?

INT. BAGGAGE CAR CORRIDOR - DAWN

A Crewman helps Anna to her feet.

ANNA
I'm all right, thank you.

Cath finds himself facing Abbot. Tense moment: Allies or
enemies?

ABBOT
Dr. Cath, in view of the
circumstances, I shall consider
you as free on your own
recognizance... for the time
being.

CATH
That's generous of you.

Anna draws Cath aside. Urgently; this matters to her...

ANNA
I didn't kill your friend. I
swear it.

CATH
(coldly)
And I believed you. Now I know
how much your word is worth.

He turns his back on her. Anna goes pale.

Cath rejoins Abbot. Crewmen carry unconscious/wounded Salko
and Vesna downtrain past them.

ABBOT
Is that three of them down?

CATH
Five. That leaves two running the
train.

Off Abbot's look...

EXT. LOCO - DAWN

Busboy shovels coal as fast as he can. Milos glances back.
Sees the Austrian army train still on their heels.

MILOS
Faster!

ENGINEER

We are at full throttle.

Milos suddenly grabs him, puts the pistol to his head.

MILOS

Orient Express is fast train.
Maybe I have slow driver.

The Engineer gets the message. He adjusts the regulator. The train picks up speed.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 1 CORRIDOR - DAWN

Passengers stream downtrain, traumatized, eager to return to their compartments. Among them, two have a different agenda: Kronos and Kahina head uptrain, against the flow.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR VESTIBULE - DAWN

Between the baggage car and dining car. Cath lifts up the iron floor plates. Anna arrives from the dining car.

ANNA

What are you doing?

CATH

No reason to risk the passengers.

Anna hops to the uptrain side as Cath UNCOUPLES the sleeping cars. Cables stretch taut, then SNAP as the cars separate.

Schmidt bursts out of the dining car, in such a hurry that he almost falls into the gap. Kronos and Kahina are right behind him.

KRONOS

The Firebird. I need the
Firebird!

SCHMIDT

Herr Whitney, you are stealing my
merchandise!

The gap between cars is now too far to jump, and widening.

CATH

I'm not Tyler Whitney. My name is
Cath -- Robert Cath.

Kronos sees Anna standing with Cath on the other side.

KRONOS

Dr. Cath! You will pay for your
arrogance! And others will pay!

Kronos keeps shouting, but his last words are lost in TRAIN NOISE and distance.

EXT. BALKAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

The passenger train is left behind. A mini-Orient Express -- baggage car and locomotive -- roars onward.

INT. SLEEPING CAR 2 - DAWN

The corridor crowded with passengers and crew. They're bewildered to feel the train drifting to a stop.

PASSENGERS (AD LIB)
What's happening?... Why are we
stopping?

They crowd the windows, trying to figure it out. One of the Young Women looks fearful. Her partner gives her hand a reassuring squeeze.

Just then, a JOLT of movement. The train's started again.

EXT. BALKAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

The Austrian military loco is now PUSHING the sleeping cars.

INT. PULLMAN CAR - MOVING - DAWN

The French boy presses his face to the window.

FRENCH BOY
Papa, are we in Constantinople?

EXT. BALKAN TRAINYARD - DAWN

A goatherd scatters his bleating flock as the Austrian loco PUSHES the passenger cars onto a side track. They join a motley assortment of train cars and locos from various countries, some with Turkish and Cyrillic lettering.

EXT. MINI-ORIENT EXPRESS - DAY

The hijacked loco and baggage car barrel through mountainous Balkan countryside.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR CORRIDOR - DAY

Anna emerges from the baggage compartment, Max at her heels. Runs into Cath and Abbot.

CATH
Stay here.

ANNA
What are you going to do?

CATH
 I'm going to stop the train.
 (to Abbot)
 Are you coming?

Cath goes off. Abbot gives Anna a "what can I do?" look, and follows Cath.

EXT. LOCO - MOVING - DAY

Milos, shoveling coal, recognizes a distant village. Shouts to the Busboy, standing guard with the rifle on the half-empty coal tender:

MILOS
That's Voganj. We're almost home.

The giant Busboy looks happy.

MOVE BACK ALONG LEFT SIDE OF TRAIN

...to REVEAL Cath climbing up the ladder at the rear of the baggage car (now the last, and only, car of the train).

As Cath reaches the roof, Busboy sees him and FIRES at him from the tender. The bullet SPLINTERS wood.

Cath beats a hasty retreat down the ladder.

INT./EXT. REAR PLATFORM OF BAGGAGE CAR - DAY

Abbot awaits Cath, understandingly.

ABBOT
 Rifle on the coal tender?

CATH
 Do me a favor. Poke your head up.
 You know... give him something to
 shoot at.

ABBOT
 I beg your pardon?

Cath is already heading back uptrain into the baggage car.

EXT. MILITARY TRAIN - MOVING - DAY

The Austrian army train in pursuit, making up for lost time.

EXT. MINI-ORIENT EXPRESS - RIGHT SIDE OF TRAIN - DAY

Cath emerges from the doorway at the front of the baggage car, staying low.

Climbs precariously along the coal tender, just above the wheels, so Busboy won't see him.

CRANE UP to show Busboy standing guard atop the tender, watching the roof of the train.

Abbot sticks his head up at the rear of the train, as Cath did. Busboy sees him, FIRES.

ABBOT

ducks back down. That was close. Mutters to himself...

ABBOT

"Give him something to shoot at."

A moment later, he pokes his head back up again.

BUSBOY

This time he doesn't waste a shot. He and Abbot stay put.

Abbot climbs even further up onto the roof, daring him.

Busboy FIRES. Abbot scrambles back to safety with comic haste.

Cath surges up behind Busboy, locks an arm around his neck.

Busboy bends over, dragging Cath with him. They FIGHT in the half-empty coal tender.

EXT. COAL TENDER/LOCO - DAY

Busboy tosses Cath around like a rag doll, SLAMMING him against the iron sides of the tender.

MILOS,

shoveling coal in the cab, perceives something's happening in the tender. He hands the engineer the shovel.

MILOS

Keep shoveling!

Milos draws his pistol. The Engineer shovels coal as if his life depends on it.

ANGLE - ANNA

climbs from the baggage car onto the left side of the coal tender. She climbs along the tender, staying low out of Milos's sight. Tucked into her belt: a pistol. (The one Vesna dropped, formerly Abbot's.)

CATH AND BUSBOY

battle in the coal tender. The massive Busboy is beating Cath to a pulp.

Finally Cath CRACKS Busboy over the head with the rifle. The giant collapses, out cold.

Cath turns and sees Milos leaning over the top of the tender, pointing the pistol at him. Milos's eyes burn with outrage.

Cath is trapped, a sitting duck. He raises his hands in surrender. Battered, exhausted, no more fight left in him.

EXT. LOCO CAB - DAY

At gunpoint, Cath climbs out of the tender into the cab. Milos waits for him, then...

Milos PISTOL-WHIPS Cath, knocking him down. Seeing the Engineer has paused in his shoveling...

MILOS (CONT'D)
Shovel! Shovel or I'll kill you!

The Engineer redoubles his efforts.

ANGLE - ANNA

climbs quickly past the loco cab. Perches on the side of the loco, above the giant DRIVING WHEELS and connecting rods.

MILOS

hauls Cath to his feet, presses the pistol to his jugular.

MILOS (CONT'D)
You betray us! You betray Tyler!
Why you help Austria?

CATH
That's not it. I told you.

MILOS
Austrians kill Tyler! Steal Bird!
My men -- where are my men?

Cath shakes his head -- no strength to argue --

MILOS (CONT'D)
(in baffled grief)
Tyler believed in Serbia. In
freedom. And you -- do you
believe in nothing?

Milos glimpses movement out of the corner of his eye. Whirls with the pistol. Anna SHOOTs first, hitting Milos from her perch on the loco.

Cath catches Milos in his arms. But Milos isn't dead. With his last strength, he brings the pistol up to point into Cath's face. All he has to do is pull the trigger.

MILOS (CONT'D)

Now... you have... no friends.

Cath tries to hang on to Milos, but Milos stiffens and falls out the open side of the cab.

Anna climbs into the cab. Hurries to Cath's side.

ANNA

(shaken)

He was going to kill you.

Cath, bloody and beaten, shrugs her off. The Hungarian Engineer takes over the controls, starts SLOWING the train.

ENGINEER

(broken English)

Here, town! We stop!

EXT. BALKAN VILLAGE - DAY

The mini-Orient Express chugs to a gradual stop. A Balkan provincial station, a few ramshackle buildings.

Abbot steps down. Looks up into the loco cab, sees Cath, Anna and Engineer.

ABBOT

All in one piece? Well done.

GYPSIES run alongside the train, proffering their wares. Some are waving newspapers.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

Is that today's paper? I'll take one, thank you.

The gypsies mob Abbot, trying to sell him more stuff, as he opens the paper. Alas, it's in Hungarian.

ANGLE - AUSTRIAN MILITARY LOCO

comes into view, SLOWING as it approaches the stopped mini-Orient Express.

ANNA

slumps in relief at the blessed sight of the Austrian train.

CATH

sees it too. He's the only one of them who's not happy. The bitterness of Milos's last moments is still with him.

ANNA

You saved the train. The passengers.

She's trying to boost his spirits. Cath isn't having any.

ABBOT

cheerfully notes the soldiers' arrival.

ABBOT

Here comes the cavalry. Late as usual.

He brings the newspaper to the Engineer, who's stepped down onto the platform for a badly needed smoke.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

Excuse me, I don't suppose you'd happen to know what language this is...?

The Engineer's eyes pop. He points to the headline.

ENGINEER

Háború!

ABBOT

Haboru, what is that, some Bosnian dialect?

SOLDIERS

climb down from the Austrian military loco. They range out, rifles drawn, advancing along the tracks.

ABBOT AND ENGINEER

ENGINEER

Háború! Austria, Serbia.

He pantomimes shooting rifles, making "explosion" sound effects. Abbot tries to interpret the charade.

ABBOT

Guns... shooting... explosions... artillery... War?

ENGINEER

(that's it!)
War! Austria, Serbia! Germany, Russia... Háború!

Abbot looks at the newspaper. At the Austrian soldiers approaching. Realizes...

ABBOT
Good Lord!

He scrambles back up into the loco, followed by the Engineer.

EXT. LOCOMOTIVE CAB - DAY

Abbot hands Cath the shovel.

ABBOT
The situation's changed. We'd
better get across that border to
Serbia, and quickly.
(to Engineer)
Full steam ahead, please.

The Engineer looks bewildered.

ANNA

makes a sudden lunge for the pistol where she set it down.
Abbot snatches it up first. A brief tussle, ending with the
pistol in Abbot's hand.

ABBOT (CONT'D)
My apologies, Miss Wolff. If
you'd kindly stand back.
(to Engineer, sternly)
Full steam, please.

The Engineer, seeing Abbot's pistol, hastily takes the
throttle. Starts the train.

THE AUSTRIAN SOLDIERS,

on the tracks, see the mini-Orient Express START MOVING. They
run after it.

EXT. MINI-ORIENT EXPRESS - LOCO CAB - MOVING - DAY

Abbot explains to Cath...

ABBOT
It appears Austria has declared
war on Serbia... which is allied
to Russia, and therefore to
France and England. In short, we
are in enemy territory.
Considering what's in the baggage
car, I suggest you use that
shovel.

Cath understands. He starts shoveling coal into the firebox.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The soldiers chase the baggage car on foot, until it's clear it's going too fast. They run back, climb aboard the military train as it starts to MOVE again.

EXT. MINI-ORIENT EXPRESS - LOCO CAB - MOVING - DAY

Anna lunges for the valve. Pulls it, releasing STEAM in a desperate effort to slow the train. Cath grabs her. She struggles, but her fight is lost.

ANNA

Let go of me!

Anna wrests loose from Cath. She feels totally betrayed.

ANNA (CONT'D)

So now you take orders from the English?

CATH

I thought you were the one "following orders."

Anna reacts as if she's been slapped. Cath resumes shoveling coal.

EXT. BALKAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The mini-Orient Express shoots past. Moments later, so does the Austrian military train, back on their tail.

EXT. LOCO CAB - MOVING - DAY

Abbot, seeing Anna upset, tries to reassure her.

ABBOT

Miss Wolff, you have my word of honor as an Englishman you'll be well treated and returned to Austria with all courtesy.

ANNA

My God, you're as naive as he is.

Anna makes one last appeal to Cath, as he shovels.

ANNA (CONT'D)

They were ready to kill innocent people -- everyone on this train, to get those machine guns. Because they're fanatics. The generals waiting in Belgrade are the ones who sent them.

She makes a grab for Cath's shovel. Cath grabs it back before she can throw it off the train.

Anna turns to the Engineer, speaking rapidly in German:

ANNA

You are an Austrian subject. Help me stop this train. It is your duty. In the name of the Emperor.

Seeing the Engineer torn, Abbot resolves the man's dilemma by steering him away from the controls. Backs him into the corner of the cab with Anna, holding them both at gunpoint.

ABBOT

Why don't you stand right there until we're safe across the border. There's a good fellow.
(to Cath)
I don't suppose you know how to run this thing?

CATH

How hard can it be?

Cath pushes the throttle forward. The train PICKS UP SPEED.

ANNA

You're out of your mind!

Abbot approves. He takes over shoveling coal into the firebox with gusto, while Cath runs the train -- to Anna's horror.

EXT. BALKAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The mini-Orient Express blasts past, pursued by the Austrian army train.

EXT. LOCO CAB - DAY

Anna dives for the controls. Cath pushes her away. Abbot herds her back into the corner with the Engineer at gunpoint. Anna shoots Cath a venomous glance.

Cath's eyes flick ahead. Approaching in the distance: the old city of Zimony. Rivers, bridges, a castle on a hill.

ABBOT

There's the border. That's Belgrade on the other side of the river.

EXT. DANUBE BRIDGE - DAY

Serbian Army soldiers mine the bridge.

Two smoke plumes of the approaching trains can be seen in the distance.

Soldiers run and dive for cover on the Serbian side.

THE BRIDGE EXPLODES.

EXT. MINI-ORIENT EXPRESS - LOCO - DAY

All four people in the loco see the EXPLOSION ahead.

ABBOT
Dear God, the bridge.

CATH
Keep shoveling!

EXT. AUSTRIAN MILITARY TRAIN - DAY

The Austrian Engineer pours on steam. Closing the distance.

EXT. MINI-ORIENT EXPRESS - LOCO - DAY

Cath goes to full throttle. Pushing the loco to its limits. The Engineer panics.

ENGINEER
(in Hungarian)
*Pull the brake! The bridge,
they've blown up the bridge!*

ANNA
Pull the brake!

Abbot pauses shoveling. Anxiously...

ABBOT
I say, do you think perhaps...

CATH
Better shovel for all you're
worth!

Abbot understands: Cath's not stopping. Their only hope is to go very fast. He redoubles his shoveling efforts.

EXT. DANUBE BRIDGE - DAY

The bridge still stands, but it's ON FIRE.

EXT. MINI-ORIENT EXPRESS - LOCO - DAY

Abbot shoveling madly. Cath at the helm. Relentless.

TRAIN'S POV - APPROACHING THE BRIDGE

The bridge is burning.

EXT. DANUBE BRIDGE - DAY

The mini-Orient Express HURTLES across the burning bridge. The bridge shudders and COLLAPSES behind it.

EXT. MILITARY LOCO - DAY

The Austrian Captain sees the fallen bridge ahead. Shouts...

CAPTAIN
(in German)
Stop! Full brake!

Soldiers brace themselves. The engineer hits the brake. The WHEELS LOCK, throwing off sparks.

EXT. DANUBE BRIDGE - DAY

The military loco, braking to a stop, slides right to the edge...

The flatbed teeters...

And tips over the edge.

Soldiers jump out as the flatbed's weight pulls the loco over the edge and into the Danube with a mighty SPLASH.

EXT. MINI-ORIENT EXPRESS - LOCO - DAY

Cath eases up on the throttle, cruising toward Belgrade station, coldly satisfied. Anna glares at him in anguish.

ANNA
Maybe they won't kill you. Maybe just me.

CATH
I'm sure you'll talk your way out of it. Like always.

Anna realizes the reason for his coldness.

ANNA
You think I killed Tyler?

CATH

I still can't see you doing that to him. But I have no doubt you did your part. For Austria.

ANNA

No!

(confessing)

I lied about the Egg. I took it, and the scarab. I hid them. I was in a panic, I didn't know what to do.

FLASH CUTS: Tyler dead on his compartment floor, the scarab in his hand, the Egg lying nearby, Anna just entered...

ANNA (CONT'D)

I didn't kill him. Austria didn't kill him.

Cath stares at her. Realizing too late that he misjudged her.

CATH

Then who did?

Anna shakes her head -- she has no idea.

EXT. BELGRADE STATION - DAY

SERBIAN ARMY SOLDIERS run alongside the slowing mini-train, shouting and threatening them with rifles.

TITLE: **BELGRADE**

The loco STOPS. The soldiers pull all four occupants out of the cab, hustle them off at rifle-point.

ABBOT

I'm English! England! We're on the same side!

Anna looks back toward the baggage car -- Max is in there, among other things.

EXT. BELGRADE STATION - TRAINYARD - DAY

While Abbot attempts to establish diplomatic relations, Cath and Anna are pushed to their knees, held at rifle-point by angry Serbian soldiers.

Anna gives Cath a look: "I told you so." Cath's expression is confused, baffled -- his mind still on the mystery of who killed Tyler.

ANNA'S POV - TRAIN TRACKS

Anna notices a recently-arrived LOCOMOTIVE parked on a siding, releasing steam. Attached to it is the "Saturn" -- Kronos's private car.

A pair of SERBIAN OFFICIALS descend from the car. One is carrying the briefcase we might recognize as the one full of gold bars that Kronos showed Cath.

As Anna stares, ANOTHER TRAIN CARRIAGE is pulled onto the adjacent track, blocking the "Saturn" from view.

Anna shoots a quick glance at Cath. He didn't see it.

Anna's mind works quickly.

A SERBIAN OFFICIAL

strides over to Cath, followed by an anxious Abbot. Accusingly:

SERBIAN OFFICIAL
Serbs on train. Milos, Vesna,
Salko. Why they are not here?

Before Cath can answer, Abbot smoothly steps in...

ABBOT
I was just telling this gentleman
how they fought heroically to the
end, to get this shipment through
Austrian territory.

He begs Cath with his eyes please not to contradict this. A long beat, then...

CATH
Yes. They were heroes.

ABBOT
Perhaps you've heard of Mr. Tyler
Whitney, a well-known friend of
Serbia? He and Dr. Cath were very
close. Alas, he too perished on
the journey.

The Serbian Official stares at Cath.

SERBIAN OFFICIAL
You are friend of Tyler?

CATH
Yes.

Abbot interjects, making sure Anna is included too:

ABBOT
And the lady is his companion.

SERBIAN OFFICIAL
It is true? Tyler is dead?

CATH
Yes.

The official sighs; we get the feeling he valued Tyler. A pause... then:

SERBIAN OFFICIAL
Serbia thanks you.

He issues an ORDER in Serbian. The soldiers withdraw the rifles. Cath and Anna rise, shaken -- free. The Official strides off to confer with his colleagues.

Abbot wipes his forehead.

CATH AND ANNA

An intimate moment amid the chaos.

CATH
Come with me.

ANNA
With you, where?

CATH
To Constantinople. There's someone there who Tyler... A promise I made.
(long story)
We'll be safe there. Away from this madness. Until we can both come back.

A pause while the word "both" sinks in.

ANNA
I hardly know you.

CATH
You'd sacrifice your life for the people who sent you -- the ones in charge in Vienna. But they'll never accept you, not really. You'll never be one of them. You're like me.

She stares at him. He's serious.

ABBOT

takes Cath aside.

ABBOT

I've been thinking about that business back in Ireland. Perhaps there's more than one way to look at it.

CATH

What do you mean?

While they talk, the loco CHUGS, starting up again. The mini-Orient Express (baggage car only) starts to move, its precious cargo shepherded by soldiers onto a siding.

ABBOT

One could make the case you weren't to blame. Guilt by association... After all, you are a doctor. Hippocratic oath and all that. Frankly, we could use a fellow like you. An American who knows his way about... cool head in a tight spot... and with your connections...

CATH

You want me to be a spy.

ABBOT

The world is changing and one does need to choose sides. Surely a man of your perception must realize that Britain and America have certain common interests. Much as I hate to say it, sometimes these situations do come down to a "with us or against us" sort of problem, if you see what I mean.

Cath, distracted, looks around for Anna.

CATH

Where's Miss Wolff?

ABBOT

She was here a minute ago...

Cath races through the trainyard, searching for Anna with increasing desperation.

Abbot grabs the Serbian official and asks him. The official shrugs -- he doesn't know where she went.

ABBOT

Look here, the lady is an Austrian subject. She is to be treated with courtesy and returned to her country.

CATH

looks around frustrated, afraid for Anna.

He hears Max's distant, urgent BARKING. Spots its source: the baggage car, moving away. He intuits that Anna is on it, in danger. He runs after the train, ignoring soldiers' SHOUTS.

EXT. TRAINYARD - DAY

Cath runs along the tracks after the train, chased by soldiers yelling at him to stop. He catches up with it. Gets his hands on the back of the baggage car, pulls himself up. The train picks up speed, leaving the soldiers behind.

INT./EXT. BAGGAGE CAR VESTIBULE - MOVING - DAY

Cath struggles aboard, winded. Looks up to see...

KAHINA, pointing a pistol at his head. She pulls him to his feet.

CATH

Kahina! Where is she?

INT. BAGGAGE CAR CORRIDOR - MOVING - DAY

Kahina hustles Cath down the corridor at gunpoint. Cath can hear Max's desperate BARKING, getting closer.

Cath makes a sudden move to wrest the gun from Kahina. Mistake; she's a trained bodyguard and soldier. She dodges with ease, CLOBBERS him to the floor. Everything GOES BLACK.

INT. PARIS BISTRO, MONTMARTRE - NIGHT [DREAM]

Crowded, cheerful, bohemian. Tyler joins Cath at his table, bringing Champagne in a bucket. Cath looks up to see...

Anna enters the bistro. Lights up on seeing Cath. She pushes through the crowd. Kisses Cath, sits on the bench next to him. They snuggle, affectionate, as Tyler fills glasses.

Milos toasts them from across the room, where he sits with Vesna and Salko. Cath, Tyler and Anna toast back, friends.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Cath awakens with a start to find himself lying on the cold wooden floor. The train has stopped; it's SILENT.

Anna is beside him, sitting on the floor by Max's cage; they're prisoners. Max, locked inside, GROWLS and BARKS desperately. Kronos sits in the single chair like a king on his throne, the Firebird chest on a table in front of him.

KRONOS

Dr. Cath, I hope my servant did not hurt you. I am delighted to see you. Truly.

EXT. BELGRADE TRAINYARD / MARKET - DAY

The baggage car and stopped loco sit alone on a siding. Soldiers stand around it, keeping guard at a distance; they've been instructed not to approach closer.

We're on the outskirts of the train station. On the other side of the tracks is a MARKETPLACE, ordinary Serbian people going about their day.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Cath takes in Anna. She seems unhurt, but very scared.

CATH

Let her go. She has nothing to do with this.

KRONOS

Dare I say, Doctor, in present circumstances, Fräulein Wolff is safer under my protection than yours. I have made sure the local authorities will give us the time needed to complete our transaction. I have paid for this privilege with gold, and certain assurances.

Anna looks back at Cath, silently begging him to cooperate.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

The lady has, I believe, told us all she knows. And you have brought us the Scarab...?

Kahina stands over Cath menacingly. He gives in. Removes the scarab whistle from his pocket. Kahina takes it.

Kahina brings Kronos the whistle. He examines it appreciatively.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

Now all is clear.

He opens the chest, REVEALING the gleaming GOLDEN EGG. It's ten inches long, encrusted with jewels, a delicately crafted masterwork. Kronos places the whistle in the smaller velvet space in the chest, completing the set.

Kronos lifts out the Egg. Turns it in his hands, admiring it.

KRONOS (CONT'D)
All ends happily. As in a fairy
tale. Everyone gets his wish.

To Cath's surprise, Kronos offers him the Egg.

KRONOS (CONT'D)
Since Mr. Whitney is no longer
with us, I think it appropriate
that you should do the honors.

Cath doesn't move. Kronos looks at Kahina; she menaces Cath with the pistol. Cath stands, advances. Takes the Egg.

KRONOS (CONT'D)
Open it.

FLASH CUT: The painting on the Firebird chest. Prince Ivan with the scarab key, about to open the golden cage.

Cath looks at the Egg. Despite himself, he's curious. He turns it, seeking the catch. Finds it. Presses it.

Something mechanical STIRS deep within the Egg. A dime-sized hole opens near the base, like a camera lens aperture.

FLASH CUT - CLOSER DETAIL: Ivan holds the scarab key in his left hand. But it's his other hand that's reaching toward the lock on the cage. As if his extended finger were a key.

Cath stares at the hole. It draws him like a vortex. We HEAR a faint HEARTBEAT.

KRONOS (CONT'D)
Go on, Doctor. Your finger.

Cath inserts his index finger into the hole in the Egg. Instantly, it closes on his finger like a mouth.

The metal shell PEELS BACK, mechanically, in sections like flower petals, revealing a golden chrysalis within. The petals fold down, enclosing Cath's hand in a sort of cage/bracelet. Cath winces as the tips dig into his wrist.

THE CHRYSALIS

unfurls into a gold-plated FIREBIRD AUTOMATON. One taloned foot grips Cath's finger like a perch. A long, fine chain hangs from a golden manacle on the bird's leg, connecting it to the petal-cage on Cath's wrist.

KRONOS (CONT'D)
Ah. Yes.

THE FIREBIRD

Its eyes snap open: two gleaming red rubies. Max BARKS.

The Firebird's head swivels; its wings move. It opens its beak and SINGS.

CATH

listens fascinated to the FIREBIRD'S SONG. Its mechanical voice is eerie, haunting, a child's lullaby variation of "Prince Eugen."

EXT. BELGRADE - STREETS - DAY

The eerie FIREBIRD SONG continues over shots of denizens of Belgrade going about their lives:

- Buying fruit at the market
- Children playing
- Sidewalk café, men gathered around chessboards

EXT. RIVER - DAY

A pair of massive, iron-clad AUSTRIAN WARSHIPS speed upriver toward the unaware city.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

The SONG ENDS. Cath, Anna, Kronos and Kahina watch spellbound as the mechanical bird closes its eyes and goes still. Max subsides into a low GROWL.

KRONOS

The Tsar's goldsmith was a master. The urge to kill, to hate, is in the hearts of all men. Only a fool succumbs to it. True power and profit are for those who know how to awaken the darkness within others.

Kronos takes the golden Scarab whistle from the chest. The HEARTBEAT is LOUDER.

KRONOS (CONT'D)

Now, Doctor. Learn what you most wanted to know.

Kronos puts the whistle to his lips and BLOWS.

The Firebird's ruby eyes open. It swivels its mechanical head. Stares glitteringly at Cath. The HEARTBEAT, LOUDER.

The bird PECKS Cath's wrist, drawing blood.

Anna gasps in horror.

Cath instinctively thrusts the bird away from him. With a SHRIEK and FLAPPING of metal wings, it flies at his face. He pushes it away; its claws rake his flesh.

FLASHBACK - INT. TYLER'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

The whistle lands on the carpet. Tyler hits the floor beside it, struggling to fight off the attacking Firebird.

BACK TO SCENE

Max is BARKING, Anna on her feet. She begs Kronos...

ANNA
Make it stop!

KRONOS
It will stop when it is done. A
weapon, a gift fit for a king.

FLASH CUT - INT. SULTAN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

An OTTOMAN SULTAN lies dead, his blood soaking into an ornate Persian rug and silken pillows on the floor. Ottoman BODYGUARDS enter, horrified by the carnage. His open hand -- the bloody SCARAB WHISTLE in his palm --

BACK TO SCENE

The mechanical bird continues to ATTACK Cath relentlessly. He bats it away; it keeps coming back, attached by the long golden chain. Cath yanks at the chain. It holds fast.

Anna scans the baggage car, looking for something to use.

Her gaze lands on the SWORD Salko took from the Eunuch, propped in the corner.

Before Kronos or Kahina can stop her, she grabs it.

Kahina prepares to defend herself. But Anna isn't going for Kahina.

KRONOS
No!

Anna swings the sword -- SEVERING the chain.

The chain falls away. The Firebird is free.

KRONOS (CONT'D)
NO!

As if hearing the sound, the Firebird swivels its mechanical head and looks straight at Kronos. It FLIES AT HIM.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The soldiers standing guard are concerned by the strange NOISES coming from inside the baggage car -- mechanical flapping, SHRIEKING, BARKING --

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

The Firebird lands on Kronos, knocking him on his back.

It pecks out his eye. Kronos SCREAMS.

Kahina SHOOTs at the bird, misses. The bullet SPLINTERS wood. The Firebird's head swivels to face her -- malevolently --

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The soldiers react to the GUNSHOTS, uncertain what to do. They lift rifles. Some advance toward the baggage car.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Kahina FIRES again as the Firebird flies at her, tearing at her flesh with its beak and claws.

Cath grabs Anna.

CATH

Come on!

Anna stops to open Max's cage, letting him out.

INT./EXT. REAR OF BAGGAGE CAR - DAY

Cath pushes Anna into the vestibule; Max follows.

The outer door is locked. Cath breaks open the emergency axe case, uses it to SMASH through the door to outside.

They JUMP down from the back of the baggage car. Cath and Anna start running -- away from the car, followed by Max. Past soldiers confused by what's happening.

INT. BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT - DAY

Kronos struggles to his knees, one hand covering his eye, blood dripping through his fingers.

Kahina, fighting off the Firebird, lifts the pistol...

KRONOS

No!

Kahina SHOOTs. The bullet SMASHES into the metal bird. She FIRES again, twice. The second bullet splinters an arms CRATE.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Cath and Anna, running away from the stopped baggage car... soldiers moving toward it...

THE BAGGAGE CAR EXPLODES.

Cath and Anna are hurled to the ground by the BLAST. The force shatters windows in a nearby building.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

People in the nearby marketplace turn, reacting to the explosion on the train tracks.

A BALL OF FLAME

shoots up out of the burning baggage car. Out of it, possibly, flies a small dark object -- or did we imagine it?

CATH,

shielding Anna with his body, looks up at the sky.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

We're soaring, circling in a widening gyre, gazing down at the burning baggage car -- the trainyard and marketplace, soldiers dead, injured, others running toward the scene --

Then an unearthly SHRIEK as "we" soar off.

ANNA AND CATH

Cath gets to his feet. Stares into the sky, scanning the clouds for another glimpse of what he thought he saw.

CATH'S POV - THE SKY

There it is again. A birdlike shape, moving behind a cloud...

But what emerges out of the clouds are BIPLANES.

EXT. BELGRADE - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

In the train yard, market, café and playground, soldiers and people of Belgrade pause and stare up at the squadron of planes flying overhead. More curious than afraid. Among them: Abbot.

The planes release BOMBS.

People scream and run for cover as the first BOMBS HIT.

The bombs HIT. Destroying railroad cars, buildings. Killing soldiers, train workers.

THE TWO AUSTRIAN WARSHIPS

float into view on the river.

Their turret guns begin firing ARTILLERY SHELLS at the city.

Serbian troops run to take position, RETURNING FIRE against the warships.

CATH AND ANNA

take cover. Cath enfolds Anna in his arms until the warships and planes have passed.

He looks around. And sees with horror what will soon be a familiar sight of the twentieth century:

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

A man with his leg torn off.

A woman weeping over her child.

People dead, wounded, dazed. In the market, in the café.

CATH

hurries to the side of a wounded man in the rubble of a collapsed storefront. His friends are trying to help him, and making it worse.

CATH

I'm a doctor.

He sets about stopping the bleeding.

CATH (CONT'D)

Tourniquet.

Anna is already ripping strips of cloth. She gives them to Cath; he uses them.

ANNA

I have to go back to Vienna.

CATH

No. We'll stay together.

ANNA

This war won't last longer than a month.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)
 I'll find you as soon as it's
 over.
 (inspiration)
 We'll meet in Paris, take the
 first Orient Express.

Cath looks at her, pale. He wants to argue -- but he needs to finish with this patient --

ANNA (CONT'D)
 We'll ride all night and all day,
 get off where the mood strikes
 us. Or all the way to
 Constantinople.

She is crying. She bends swiftly, kisses him.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 You were right. I'm like you.

And then she's gone.

Cath watches her walk away, west along the tracks, Max trotting at her heels.

He resumes working diligently... as we gradually CRANE UP INTO HIGH ANGLE of the town square, REVEALING more casualties, more people hurrying to help.

We HEAR a distant thunder of explosions and artillery bombardment. SUPERIMPOSE TITLES:

THE WAR LASTED FOUR YEARS AND DESTROYED MUCH OF EUROPE.

TENS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE DIED.

The quick shadow of what might be a giant bird passes across the square, as we

MOVE HIGHER

into an aerial view of Belgrade: the wreckage in the trainyard, soldiers mobilizing.

THEY CALLED IT "A WAR TO END WAR."

TODAY, WE CALL IT WORLD WAR I.

And HIGHER STILL... into a

SATELLITE VIEW

of Europe, now darkening with thunderclouds.

A winged spectre shoots past. A shadow -- insubstantial, eternal. It SHRIEKS in triumph.

Below, the SOUNDS of bombardment continue, and the rising NOISE OF A CROWD: Chanting, marching. A mob, bringing darkness. We HEAR a HEARTBEAT.

FADE OUT.