

AUGUSTINE & EDGAR

EPISODE 1

MORGUE STREET

written by

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V 3.1

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TEASER

1

EXT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET - DAY

1

19th-century Paris - a *marvelous* version of it.

A Morris column topped by a beautiful winged gargoyle, on which a poster reads: CARNIVAL - PARIS BALL.

A flock of passersby walk through the street. In front of the red door of a working-class building, we discover...

EDGAR (35), dishevelled, Anglo-Saxon accent, in a worn-out frock coat. Usually whimsical, he looks very anxious. As does the woman he is speaking to... MARIE (35), a modest and nice seamstress.

MARIE

(with a sob)

Éléonore wasn't at home. I thought
she was with you--

EDGAR

And I, that she was taken up by her
rehearsals...

MARIE

Why would she have left? Without
telling us?!

EDGAR

(sombre)

This job at the ball means so much
to her... Maybe something happened
there. Do you know the number of
her dressing room?

MARIE

Hum... I think it's number 6...

EDGAR

Thank you, Marie. Thank you!

He fondly holds her hands, and rushes off.

MARIE

They won't let you in! Edgar!

She enters the building, while Edgar disappears at the corner of the street, the sign of which we can now see... MORGUE STREET.

2 EXT. OPERA / FORECOURT - DAY

2

ESTA. Partygoers are queuing in front of the opera...

A bunch of colourful and eccentric bourgeois. Workers dressed as grotesque monsters (Halloween style!). Ladies wearing Oriental masks, or half-moon masks. And a...

SIGN-MAN

Acrobats! French Cancan! Exotic
animals! I only have Gold Square
tickets left... 50 pennies each!

3 INT. OPERA / BALLROOM - DAY

3

Party time! MUSIC and HUBBUB. The chandeliers are shining their light. The room is decorated with cascades of white and purple flowers.

A colourful, costumed crowd fills the venue. Everyone is chatting, drinking, dancing, and laughing. And enjoying the show:

Entering the stage through a smoky "Ogre's Mouth," a soprano sings, her voice amplified by a GIANT GRAMOPHONE! Dancers surround her.

We listen to her, while following through the audience...

AUGUSTINE DUPIN (45), a vivacious redhead with a haughty bearing. A mask on her face gives her a mysterious air. And she is dressed in a military uniform, tailored to her figure... Tight red pants, thigh-high boots, a jacket with goldwork, a low-cut blouse.

Wearing a sabre, she pushes through the crowd to the foot of the stage. There, she makes sure no one notices her... And quickly slips under a curtain, disappearing beneath the stage!

4 EXT. OPERA / FORECOURT / BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

4

Edgar makes his way through the queue of onlookers, walks along the side of the building, and finds the backstage entrance... Sets. Technicians on a break. Crates. The gate is open, but guarded by a bald, taciturn, and burly thug. An ex-con? Edgar goes up to him.

EDGAR

Sir. I work for a gazette... I'm
looking for this dancer. I was told
she'd be performing here tonight.

He shows him a photo of Éléonore (35). The face of an angel. In response, the man gestures as if to say, "I'm going to slit your throat."

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Fine. But she demanded that I
interview her personally, so--

The thug grabs him by the collar and grimaces. And CUT...

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Aaaaaaah!

Edgar flies off further on the pavement! He brushes himself off and sighs, annoyed. How is he going to get home? Then he notices...

Two gentlemen chatting nearby. One has left his Grand Bi (a bicycle with a very large front wheel and a high saddle) unattended.

5 INT. OPERA / BACKSTAGE - DAY

5

A common area: wardrobes, mirrors, racks... And a row of doors leading to individual dressing rooms. A rope hangs from the ceiling beams, and down comes...

...Augustine! Once on the ground, she makes sure she's alone and takes her mask off. Then she examines the doors one by one.

She stops in front of one of them to open it, but... it's locked. Disappointed, Augustine draws her sabre and... CHOP! With one swift stroke, she slices off the doorknob!

6 EXT. OPERA / FORECOURT / BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

6

The bald man guarding the entrance is back to his post. Suddenly, he opens his eyes wide, spotting... Edgar, perched on the Grand Bi, zigzagging unsteadily toward him...

EDGAR
Careful! Make way!

The bald man tries to step in-- but jumps out of the way at the last second, rather than get hit. Edgar then enters the courtyard, jumps off the Grand Bi, and dashes into the Opera!

Furious, the thug growls, and sets off after him.

7 INT. OPERA / BACKSTAGE - DAY

7

Edgar runs down a hallway, weaving between set pieces and ropes! After briefly shaking off his pursuer, he makes a turn...into the empty common room, where he spots the dressing room doors:

EDGAR
Number 9... 5... 6!

He can hear the thug's GROWLING getting closer, echoing from the hallway. Panicked, Edgar throws himself into...

8 INT. OPERA / ÉLÉONORE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

8

Without looking to see where he is, he closes the door behind him. Then he spots two large costume trunks on the side, which he stacks up to block the door! Phew... Safe now!

Out of breath, Edgar turns around and-- against his chest is the sharp tip of a sabre, held by...

AUGUSTINE
Who are you?

EDGAR
Edgar. ... Sorry for barging in,
Ma'am. I thought this was the
dressing room of...

AUGUSTINE
Éléonore? What do you want with
her?

Feeling uneasy, Edgar glances at the steel tip pressed against his heart.

EDGAR
I'm worried about her. It's been
three days since she disappeared
without a word... to me, nor to her
friend Marie, with whom she's
staying.

AUGUSTINE
I am too. And I've come a long way
to find her.

EDGAR
Éléonore is my fiancée. And you
are...

AUGUSTINE
Augustine. Her sister.

EDGAR
Her--?? Éléonore never mentioned
she had a sister!?

AUGUSTINE
(offended and suspicious)
Neither did she mention a fiancé to
me! So prove it!

She menacingly points the tip of her weapon at Edgar's throat
-- who's not exactly reassured!

EDGAR
Hum... She never gets nervous about
dancing. She has a mole on her left
shoulder. And I've never seen
anyone eat so many cherries!

Disturbed by this mention, Augustine hesitates when-- the
THUG'S VOICE echoes in the hallway. She freezes, worried.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
I... snuck in. For free.

AUGUSTINE
Really? Hurry, then...
(she lowers her blade)
Let's see if there's something here
that can tell us where Éléonore is.

9 INT. OPERA / BALLROOM - DAY

9

On stage, the show goes on.

In the audience, a police officer elbows his way through the
crowd to a man, who is not dressed up... It's SUPERINTENDENT
GISQUET (45). Handsome, athletic, with a dandyish look.

Alarmed, the police officer speaks to him, but we can't hear
what he says... At that moment, the crowd CLAPS in unison. But
Gisquet remains unmoved, and then the two of them run toward the
exit!

10 INT. OPERA / ÉLÉONORE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

10

A cramped, windowless room. A dressing table. A mirror with an
elaborate shape. A sofa. Clothing racks. A large wicker basket.

In a rush, Augustine goes through the papers, rummages through the drawers, and so on. Edgar, meanwhile, surveys the room nonchalantly, as if in a daze. And notices on a dresser... A BIRDCAGE. Empty.

EDGAR
That's odd... Éléonore loves to listen to birds singing, but she never had a bird.

Then he spots on the floor *tiny* brown stains. Astonished.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Look at those stains...

Augustine follows the stains, which lead her to another clue... A HANDKERCHIEF, fallen under the sofa. She sniffs it. And grimaces.

AUGUSTINE
Chloroform!

EDGAR
Are you sure?

AUGUSTINE
Yes. I've treated quite a few injured people.

Edgar is surprised. Driven by the inevitable, grim conclusion...

EDGAR
So she didn't leave of her own free will... She was abducted?

11 EXT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET - DAY 11

Police WHISTLES! Gisquet and ten police officers come running into the courtyard. Led by a panicked doorman, they enter...

12 INT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET / STAIRCASE AND LANDING - DAY

The group climbs up the stairs to a landing where several residents have gathered, stunned and horrified.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
Step back! Everyone, step back!

Gisquet tries to open a door-- which is locked. Behind him, the SOUNDS OF A STRUGGLE and a woman SCREAMING!

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET (CONT'D)
 POLICE! SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET!
OPEN UP!

No answer. Without hesitation, Gisquet starts shoulder-charging the door... BAM... BAM... until... CRACK! The lock gives way.

13 INT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET / STUDIO FLAT - DAY 13

The police officers enter into a modest, ransacked studio flat. Furniture is overturned. Objects are broken. But the room is empty.

Gisquet is speechless, as he notices the only window in the place-- closed. Not a soul here. Just a deathly silence.

14 INT. OPERA / ÉLÉONORE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY 14

Edgar and Augustine are still in shock after what they've discovered...

EDGAR
 Why would someone abduct Éléonore?!

AUGUSTINE
 And how could her abductor get her out of here without being seen?!

EDGAR
 Maybe... At night, once everyone has left? Or through this trapdoor in the ceiling? Or even hidden inside this wicker basket? Or--

THE THUG'S VOICE echoes from behind the door and... BAM! He slams into it-- the trunks blocking the door are shaking.

AUGUSTINE
 I'll make something up... Run!

EDGAR
 Run where?

AUGUSTINE
 You talk too much and you don't even listen to yourself?! Through the trapdoor!

BAM! BAM! The banging grows louder. Augustine grabs a stool and pushes Edgar onto it. He then opens the trapdoor in the ceiling, the wooden panel swings open, and...

From the hole, a frightened crow takes flight! FLAP-FLAP! Cawing, it searches for a way out of the room in vain, dropping a whirlwind of black feathers onto our heroes, who stand dumbfounded.

15 INT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET / STUDIO FLAT - DAY 15

Gisquet notices a strand of hair hanging into the fireplace. Intrigued, he goes to examine it. But as soon as he touches it...

In a cloud of soot, a body falls from the flue and crashes to the floor, headfirst! It's Marie. She's dead.

ACT 1

16 EXT. ESTA. PARIS - MORNING 16

AERIAL SHOTS: The next day, the sun rises. We fly over... The rooftops of Paris. The Eiffel Tower, the steel framework of which resembles a spiderweb! A steamboat on the River Seine. And finally-- The Police Headquarters.

17 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS / HALLWAY - DAY 17

Our duo is waiting. Edgar paces like a caged lion, distraught, dejected. Wearing a chic, colourful dress, sitting on a bench, Augustine reads a gazette: THE LANTERN.

AUGUSTINE'S POV: the page she's glancing through... A drawing of Morgue Street and of her building. And the headline: MURDER ON MORGUE STREET!... POLICE TO INTERVIEW WITNESSES.

EDGAR

Éléonore abducted... Marie murdered... How awful!

AUGUSTINE

Had they been living together a long time?

EDGAR

No... But they were close friends. Marie was a seamstress.

AUGUSTINE

What about my sister? How did you two meet?

EDGAR
 (loving, sad)
 She was dancing with her company at
 the Chat Noir, last winter. I
 couldn't take my eyes off of her!

AUGUSTINE
 And she never mentioned me?

EDGAR
 No. Nor did she talk about her
 childhood. You know her... She's so
 discreet.

Conniving look. Augustine forces a smile, embarrassed.

AUGUSTINE
 I lived very far away. Her letters
 didn't make their way there.

18

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS / GISQUET'S OFFICE - DAY

18

An office panelled with wood. Gisquet is about to eat some bread
 and hard-boiled eggs while skimming through the coroner's
 report... SKETCH OF MARIE'S AUTOPSY. SKETCH OF THE CRIME SCENE.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
 'The beaten-up body had been shoved
 up the chimney.' Who could have
 hated her that much?

A knock on the door, which opens to reveal a young police
 officer... LÉOPOLD (20), mixed-race, endearing, too clumsy for
 this job.

LÉOPOLD
 Hum... Chief? There're two people
 here to see you.

CUT

Edgar and Augustine are frantic as they face Gisquet, who has
 put away his file and is eating his meal. Our duo is shouting
 themselves hoarse trying to convince him. Léopold and another
 cop are standing nearby...

AUGUSTINE
 ... forgetting about the
 crow! But in her dressing
 room, there was a
 handkerchief soaked in
 chloroform! So... you must
 look for Éléonore!

EDGAR
 ... she was taken up by her
 rehearsals... But she would
 never have left like this,
 without a word! You must look
 for Éléonore!

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

Enough!

Our heroes fall completely silent, for fear of upsetting the superintendent. Silence. Léopold steps closer and whispers in his ear...

LÉOPOLD

(in a low voice)

The Opera didn't press charges. The lady's name is Dupin. The one with the accent says he's working for a gazette. But... He won't give his name.

Augustine looks closely at the superintendent. Finds him handsome. And...

AUGUSTINE

So, are you going to help us?

Gisquet notices Augustine's intense gaze, which distracts him-- so much so that he spills egg on his jacket! He wipes it off and...

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

Look, Mr... Edgar... What's your last name?

EDGAR

Hum... It's complicated... 'Edgar.'

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

Do you know why I agreed to see you during my breakfast?

(annoyed, to the two of them)

Because, the rest of the time, I investigate murders! Not missing people!

Edgar hides his anger, and shows the gazette's headline:

EDGAR

Éléonore is in danger! And she usually lives with Marie!

AUGUSTINE

That is no coincidence--

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

If it is not, I'll figure it out. But you said so yourselves... She was away these last few days.

AUGUSTINE
Because she was abducted!

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
Really? Do you have a witness?

LÉOPOLD
(candid)
Maybe an admirer invited her to get
out of town for the weekend?

AUGUSTINE EDGAR
What?? She's my fiancée!

Gisquet also glares at Léopold, who apologises.

LÉOPOLD
I... I was just trying to help.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
(back to our heroes)
Do you know how many people
disappear each day in Paris? Dozens
of them! Running away from home,
with their mistress or lover... I
don't even have enough men to keep
count! I'm sorry... Here, we deal
with murder cases. So, no body, no
investigation.

Furious, Augustine stands up and puts her hands down on his desk. They stare at each other, close.

AUGUSTINE
So a woman who disappears... has to
die so someone will take on her
case?

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
I don't make the rules, Ma'am. And
where is your husband?

AUGUSTINE
Why? Are you also investigating
marriages?!

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
(flustered)
Hum... No. But you should--

AUGUSTINE
I arrived on the *Nossibé* on
Wednesday.
(MORE)

(MORE)

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

My husband was an officer stationed
in Madagascar. And he is still
there... Dead. Killed in action.

Oops! That took everyone by surprise. It cast a chill on
everyone. They all calm down.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

I do apologise. You're not dressed
in black, so...

(then pointing at Edgar)

Léopold. Please show the lady out.
And take this man into custody.

EDGAR

What??

AUGUSTINE

You can't do this!!

LÉOPOLD

(teacher's pet)

Article... hum... 271. Concealing
one's identity constitutes
vagrancy.

EDGAR

But I'm not concealing anything, I--

The police officers take Edgar away.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Let go of me! Let go!

(to Augustine)

Go to the Salpêtrière asylum, and
ask for Dr. Charcot! He'll vouch
for me!

On Augustine, who's surprised and dismayed to see this man, whom
she barely knows, asking her for help and then being taken away.
Then she glares at Gisquet. Who doesn't bat an eye.

AUGUSTINE

You... are the worst!

She storms out, slamming the door behind her. He gives a faint
smile, charmed by her passion. Then he goes back to his
breakfast.

19

EXT./INT. PARISIAN STREET / CARRIAGE - DAY

19

A colourful Gothic carriage winds its way down a Parisian street. The coachman cracks his whip to keep the horses moving. Inside...

Augustine is jolted by the bumpy ride, as is her seat-mate... DR. CHARCOT (60). Dapper. Grey hair. Tinted monocle. A learned psychiatrist and father figure.

COACHMAN (OFF)

Sit tight! The pavement is in bad shape!

DR. CHARCOT

Thank you for coming, Ma'am.

AUGUSTINE

Doctor, I barely know this man... Why won't he give his name to the police??

DR. CHARCOT

Edgar is quite a character!

THUD! The carriage jolts forward and the two of them tumble comically, clinging to whatever they can!

AUGUSTINE

(concerned)

He says he's engaged to my sister. But the police are suspicious of him. And you yourself run a mental asylum.

DR. CHARCOT

(hesitates, then affectionate)

Edgar doesn't have a name to give them... We found him two years ago, wandering along the riverbanks. He only spoke English. And he had no idea how he'd ended up in Paris, or who he was... Total amnesia!

AUGUSTINE

Poor man... Was he from England?

DR. CHARCOT

Most likely. The police brought him to the asylum. But I could tell he was sane. So I helped him...

THUD! The carriage lurches again... Another comical crash!

DR. CHARCOT (CONT'D)
 He learned French in just a few months, devouring every novel in my library! I suspect he had already learned our language in his past life.

AUGUSTINE
 Did he get his memory back?

DR. CHARCOT
 No. Edgar has no idea who he was before he got here.
 (impressed)
 But don't worry about your sister... This boy has no past. But he has a vivid imagination. And a good heart.

Augustine nods, troubled and moved by what she has just heard.

The carriage drives down the street. And in OVERLAP...

EDGAR (OFF)
 Thank you for letting the doctor now. They wouldn't have let me go otherwise.

20

EXT. SEINE RIVERBANK - DAY

20

Edgar and Augustine are walking, anxious. WALK & TALK...

EDGAR
 And about your husband... My deepest condolences.

AUGUSTINE
 Save it! It wasn't a marriage of love, but I kept the best of it: the alimony and the inheritance.
 (a beat)
 Dr. Charcot told me your story.

EDGAR
 There's not much to say. I don't remember anything.

His tone is lighthearted. But Augustine, feeling awkward, doesn't dare say anything else.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
 What now? What do we do?

AUGUSTINE

This Gisquet is a handsome man, but he's an idiot... I guess we'll have to fend for ourselves.

EDGAR

Éléonore. Then Marie... Who could have done such a thing?

AUGUSTINE

In any case, they have my sister. And given what they did to that girl...

Both look away, struck by the inescapable hypothesis:

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

What if it's too late?

EDGAR

(doesn't want to believe it)

No... chloroform! It's proof: they just wanted to abduct her. Right?

AUGUSTINE

True. But why? And why then murder her friend?! Did they have enemies?

EDGAR

No. But I've only known your sister for six months, and she was--

AUGUSTINE

'Discreet', I know.

A beat. They're at a loss, wondering what to do.

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

How do you investigate to find someone? You're the journalist!

EDGAR

I'm not.

AUGUSTINE

Do you even work for a gazette??

EDGAR

Yes. I'm the typesetter's assistant. I set the small lead letters for printing.

Augustine is in shock. So, not wanting to let her down...

EDGAR (CONT'D)

But I do read all the crime reports. And all the detective serials!

(enthusiastically)

It's actually what I want to do...
To write them myself, one day.

AUGUSTINE

Great. Completely useless.

EDGAR

No! Look... In novels, to find the killer, the investigator always starts in the same place!

Augustine gives an intrigued pout. And...

21

EXT. MORGUE STREET - DAY

21

From behind a cart, our duo watches the other side of the street... Léopold and another police officer are guarding the building, turning away a coal seller who wanted to go inside.

AUGUSTINE

The crime scene?! Edgar, the police will never let us in.

CLOSE SHOT on...

EDGAR

I'll speak to them. Man to man.
Éléonore is my fiancée, and this is her home. They... Augustine??

He realises she's no longer beside him! Surprised, he looks for her. And finally spots her across the street...

An alley next to the building is cluttered with clotheslines on which sheets are drying... Augustine disappears behind them.

CUT

22

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

22

Edgar makes his way through the sheets, making sure the police officers haven't seen him pass by. And finally reaches...

Augustine, standing by a window, picking up a paving stone.

EDGAR

What are you doing?!

AUGUSTINE
Hand me that rag!

Sceptical, Edgar does as he's told. Augustine wraps the paving stone in it.

EDGAR
You're not seriously going to...

With the paving stone wrapped like a bludgeon-- CLANG! She smashes the window pane near the handle, reaches in, and opens it.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Right. Of course you are...

23

INT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET / STUDIO FLAT - DAY

23

Squeak...With a creak, the door swings open to reveal Augustine and Edgar. They step over the police tape and walk in.

Stunned, they scan the studio... which is divided into two sleeping areas, with a bed against each opposite wall. And a sink-and-toilet area behind a peacock-feather screen.

Nothing has been removed, except the body... Traces of blood and the total vandalising hint at the tragedy that unfolded there.

AUGUSTINE
Such violence... He went at her mercilessly.

EDGAR
Poor Marie...

AUGUSTINE
She and Éléonore lived there the two of them? In this small room?

She feels guilty picturing her sister living here. Then pulls herself together...

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)
Maybe the murderer left a trace.
Let's hurry.

Both survey the scene, CLIPS:

— Edgar inspects the doorframe and lock, which have been smashed in.

— Augustine carefully examines bloodstains on the floor.

— Edgar examines the single window. A sash window, secured with a latch. He opens it and peers outside...

EDGAR'S POV: the courtyard, 10 meters below. And above it, the facade without gutters and the inaccessible roof.

He's thinking, when... CLANG! The faulty window flips shut on its own, nearly breaking his neck! As it slams, the latch on the bolt snaps back into place.

— Augustine notices the fireplace hearth. To get a better look, she lies down on the floor, sliding her head inside the hearth...

AUGUSTINE'S POV / ZOOM SFX: Based on what she sees, we move up to the top of the flue-- closed off by an air vent.

— Edgar surveys the bathroom area... Mirror, powder, gloves, perfumes, etc. Meh. Nothing noteworthy.

END OF CLIPPED SEQUENCE

Edgar lifts a torn curtain, fallen during the struggle. What he discovers underneath breaks his heart:

A trunk full of clothes, scattered on the floor. And books all over the place. Éléonore's belongings.

EDGAR
My Éléonore...

He kneels in front of the trunk. To give himself hope, he picks up one of his beloved's scarves and brings it to his nose. The scent that wafts from it transports him to...

24

EXT. PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

24

Edgar and Éléonore are having a picnic on the grass. They're laughing, deeply in love. And under her pink sunshade, she teases him...

ÉLÉONORE
Magpies and crows?! You have absolutely no ear for music!

They laugh again. They're gazing at each other. Then, with stage fright...

EDGAR
I have something for you. It's nothing fancy. But I hope you'll say yes.

She nods, curious. Edgar then pulls a jewellery box out of his pocket and opens it... Inside: a ring, inexpensive but pretty.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Will you... Will you marry me?

Overwhelmed by emotion, Éléonore is left breathless. Then she jumps for joy and throws her arms around Edgar to kiss him!

ÉLÉONORE

Yes! Yes! Yes! A hundred times yes!

EDGAR

We won't be able to move in together right away, of course. But I didn't want to wait any longer!

They gaze at each other with emotion. Edgar takes Éléonore's hand to slip the ring onto her finger. But suddenly--

Éléonore realises that, in her outburst of joy, she's knocked over her bag... A green velvet briefcase, from which a bundle of letters has fallen into the grass.

ÉLÉONORE

Oh...

Embarrassed, she picks them up and hurriedly puts them away.

EDGAR

Wait, I'll help you...

ÉLÉONORE

No! I'm good.

She abruptly stops Edgar's gesture-- he flinches, surprised by her reaction. Then she quickly finishes putting the letters away.

Clearly, these letters hold special meaning. But neither of them wants to spoil this magical moment.

Relieved, Éléonore smiles at Edgar and holds out her hand. He slips the ring onto her finger. And the two of them kiss.

25

INT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET / STUDIO FLAT - DAY

25

Edgar snaps out of this memory, moved. He thinks for a moment. Then he rummages through her belongings for a while, and suddenly sits up straight...

EDGAR

Augustine! The letters!

AUGUSTINE
Shhhh... Do you want us to get
caught?

Edgar holds up the green bag - which he found in the pile.

EDGAR
Éléonore never goes anywhere
without this bag... She keeps all
her letters in there!

AUGUSTINE
So what?

Edgar turns the bag upside down - it's empty. They're taken
aback.

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)
You think the murderer took them?

EDGAR
It's possible. Or they were stolen
before. But in any case--

He stops short: FOOTSTEPS make the stairs CREAK! CUT...

The next moment, Léopold appears on the threshold. Surprised to
find the door ajar, he scans the room... empty.

Still suspicious, he listens intently. Perfect silence. A cat? A
draught? He leaves, closing the door behind him...

...and thus revealing Augustine, pale, pressed up against the
wall behind it! And a second later, Edgar emerges from under one
of the beds... A sigh of relief. That was close!

26

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

26

Edgar and Augustine climb out through the broken window. And
leave, weaving their way through the drying sheets. WALK & TALK

AUGUSTINE
Well done! We nearly got trapped in
there!

EDGAR
Did you notice too?

AUGUSTINE
What? How clumsy you are?

EDGAR

The bedroom is on the fourth floor,
and the police had to break down
the door... How did the killer
manage to get out?

AUGUSTINE

(a dispirited sigh)
I have no idea. You?

EDGAR

Maybe... A secret passage? Let's
ask the neighbours.

AUGUSTINE

A secret passage?!?

EDGAR

Well, fine. But the neighbours...
They must have noticed something?
Or recognised someone?

AUGUSTINE

If we talk to them, Gisquet will
arrest you for real this time. And
me too!

Edgar shuts up, feels terrible. He can't bear how powerless
they are.

EDGAR

This man has Éléonore, he--
(has an epiphany)
That's it! We'll question the
neighbours... without questioning
them. Meet me at *The Lantern*! In an
hour!

He darts behind a sheet, leaving Augustine confused.

ACT 2

27

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

27

Bathed in light, the room is an inspiring mess... Wooden desks
and shelves. Type cases. Lead types. Presses. Posters. Printed
sheets drying on wires.

CLIIING! The front door opens and Augustine enters.

She finds Edgar bent over a table, helping the old newspaper
typesetter set the last characters of a page. She motions to
him, doesn't want to disturb them.

Done! A burly man helps Edgar and the typesetter carry the heavy plank. All three disappear into the back room, hidden by a semi-opaque glass pane... A printing shop, where one can make out the rotary presses.

Through the window overlooking the street, Augustine then spots a "newsboy" outside, selling newspapers to passersby.

NEWSBOY

Gloomy murder on Morque Street!
Revenge? A madman?

Back to the room, where Edgar returns, alone.

EDGAR

We're done with tonight's issue...
People really post all kind of
things in those classified ads!

AUGUSTINE

So that's where you work?

EDGAR

Yes. And where I live.

Edgar leads her into a corner and pulls back a curtain. Behind it... A kind of ship's cabin, cobbled together in a storage closet. A bed, a small wardrobe, a tiny desk, and a collection of illustrations from detective serials on the wall.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

To get married, we needed savings.
So Éléonore had moved in with
Marie. And I, in here.

Augustine remains silent, moved by the poetry of it all. Then her attention is caught by...

Éléonore's picture, pinned above the bed. Augustine immediately recognises her, even though her features are now those of a grown woman! She grabs the photograph and stares at it, overcome by a wave of emotion.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

(moved too)

Everything I've built here was with
your sister... She's my whole
world.

AUGUSTINE

What did you want to show me?

EDGAR

This... A phonautograph!

Edgar opens a dresser, in which a strange device sits... As big as a sewing machine, with a crank handle, a reservoir, and a speaker horn. Metal cylinders lie beside it.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

This device was invented by an engineer: Léon Martinville. Thanks to this mechanism, we can record voices on these metal reels. Then play them back.

AUGUSTINE

All you have to do is turn the crank handle?

EDGAR

His first device was sold to the police, to record the witnesses' depositions. So then all the newspapers bought it too.

Edgar gives her a mischievous look. She gets what he means...

AUGUSTINE

You keep the reels!

EDGAR

Don't tell the police archivist anything! If he has a scoop on you, he'll sell it for a song!

Edgar picks up a reel and loads it into the machine.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Yesterday's reel. Used by Gisquet.

AUGUSTINE

All you have to do is turn the crank handle.

CUT

Standing opposite Augustine, Edgar turns the crank and... tries to find the right rhythm. At first, the sound comes out either too slow or too fast...

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET (OFF)

Wheeeeen weeeeee goooooot
theeeeerrreeee iiiit had-already-
started-but...

He finds the right tempo. And while they're listening closely...

INSERT:

28

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS / GISQUET'S OFFICE - DAY

28

The residents of the building on Morgue street file past Gisquet one by one. MONTAGE...

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

The murderer... Did you see him?

HAUGHTY BOURGEOIS WOMAN

I did not. But we could hear them.
The poor girl was screaming... And
him, he was shouting.

WORKER TELLING TALL TALES

He was growling! A real demon, I'm
telling you...

DEAF CONCIERGE

I'm a bit hard of hearing, but he
was speaking French. And German.

HESITATING BUTCHER

A foreign language. Like screams...
Russian! Italian? Or Turkish,
maybe??

Gisquet sighs. None of this is making any sense.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

What about the girl living with
Marie?

HAUGHTY BOURGEOIS WOMAN

The "dancer"? Pfff... Having seen
that one in days...

PARANOID NEIGHBOUR

Before she moved in, Marie had a
boyfriend... A worker. The jealous
type.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

(suddenly intrigued)

Jealous, you said?

WORKER TELLING TALL TALES

He used to beat her. A raving
madman. One day he flew into a
rage, and it took four of us to
stop him!

HESITATING BUTCHER
Da... Damien. No, Daniel... David??

DEAF CONCIERGE
Darius! Was clocking in at the
construction sites.

BACK TO SEQUENCE 28

Not a sound comes out of the phonograph! Stunned silence.
Augustine and Edgar work the crank handle in vain.

EDGAR
End of the reel.

AUGUSTINE
It can be! We were about to-- Do
you know this "Darius"?

EDGAR
No. But if he is one of Marie's
exes, I know who'll know about
him... Her best friend. She works
at the Chat Noir.

29

INT. CHAT NOIR CABARET - NIGHT

29

A quirky room. A multicoloured stained-glass ceiling. Walls
covered with dozens of paintings, all depicting a black cat.

In the back, the empty stage is decorated with lanterns. And
a closed door is guarded by an unfriendly bouncer. But at the
tables, a motley crowd, half working-class, half chic, sets
the mood: they're shouting, laughing, singing. A joyful
party.

At the bar, our heroes chat with the barmaid, LATIFA (30),
who is putting steaming green absinthes on a tray, served in
skull-shaped glass tumblers.

LATIFA
Poor dear Marie... I just can't get
over it.

EDGAR
Me neither.

AUGUSTINE
She had a former partner: Darius.

LATIFA

You're the second ones to ask me
about him... A police officer came
by at lunch time.

Edgar and Augustine share a knowing look: Gisquet.

Latifa walks off with her tray, heading towards a table of
metalworkers who are already drunk. As she swaps their empty
mugs for full ones, one of them lifts up her skirt.

DRUNKEN METALWORKER

What are you hiding under there,
Latifa?

They giggle like idiots. She ignores them and walks off,
stepping between our two heroes to empty her tray onto the
bar.

EDGAR

And what did you tell the officer?

LATIFA

The truth... Darius was a violent
man. And a pervert. Manipulative. I
urged Marie to leave him.

EDGAR

Does Éléonore know him?

LATIFA

Don't know. Marie may have told her
about him.

AUGUSTINE

Do you know where to find him?

LATIFA

(negative)

I haven't seen him in months.

The metalworker with wandering hands appears behind Latifa,
pinning her firmly to the bar, rubbing up against her.

DRUNKEN METALWORKER

C'mon, we'll have a nice time!

EDGAR

Sir, she does not feel like it.

DRUNKEN METALWORKER

Oh yeah? And how would you know?

The bloke turns to Edgar and ostentatiously slaps Latifa's bum. Augustine sees red: she grabs a bottle from the bar and... CLANG!... smashes it on his head.

Latifa bolts. But against all odds... The metalworker takes the blow and, grimacing, turns to Augustine:

DRUNKEN METALWORKER (CONT'D)
You won't get away with this!

Cornered, our heroine is terrified. The metalworker then freezes, soaking wet: Edgar has just tipped a jug over his head!

DRUNKEN METALWORKER (CONT'D)
AAAAAAHAAAAAAAAA!!!

Furious, he turns on Edgar. But this time the bouncer steps in and shoves the metalworker towards the exit. The bloke staggers off, groggy, pointing a threatening finger at Latifa before he exits.

LATIFA
Get lost! Go sleep it off at home!

DRUNKEN METALWORKER
You louse! You'll die just like that whore with her crow feather!

AUGUSTINE
(intrigued)
What is he talking about?

LATIFA
Oh... some nasty business... A street performer. Pretty girl. She was found dead back there, three months ago, by the canal... She was clutching a crow's feather.

Augustine and Edgar exchange a stunned look.

AUGUSTINE
A crow's feather?

EDGAR
Like in Éléonore's dressing room...

Seeing how stunned they look, Latifa takes down a newspaper article pinned to the bar wall, next to other photos and drawings.

LATIFA
Here. I kept this...

EDGAR
 (reading the article)
 "June 6... A street performer
 stabbed to death." The article is
 not signed.

EDGAR'S POV: the short news item comes with an illustration:
 THE HAND OF A DEAD WOMAN, CLUTCHING A BLACK FEATHER.

They look at each other, ecstatic. They have a lead.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
 This girl... Was Darius seeing her
 too?

LATIFA
 I never saw them together.

AUGUSTINE
 What was her name?

LATIFA
 Her name!? The police didn't even
 open an investigation. Only a
 couple hacks questioned the
 neighbours.

Our heroes exchange a serious look.

30

EXT. CHAT NOIR CABARET - NIGHT

30

ESTA: the street, lit by the violet glow of the gas lanterns.
 Augustine and Edgar exit the cabaret.

AUGUSTINE
 So, here we are. A suspect who's
 nowhere to be found, and a new
 lead!

EDGAR
 Do you think this street performer
 knew Marie and Éléonore?

AUGUSTINE
 To find out, we would need to know
 her name, first.

At the corner of a building, a MENACING SILHOUETTE, wrapped in a
 black cloak, watches our heroes as they walk away.

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)
 Edgar. Can one buy old issues of
 gazettes?

EDGAR
 Yes. From the secondhand
 booksellers...

The unidentified silhouette watches Augustine and Edgar make
 a turn at the crossroads. Then disappears too. In the shadow.

31 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS / GISQUET'S OFFICE - DAY 31

The windows are open to let the air in. A leather punching bag
 has been hung from the ceiling in one corner of the room.

A bare-chested Gisquet is practising "combat cane": like a
 fencer, he delivers swift strikes with his cane, hitting the bag
 at various points. His work-out session is interrupted by...

LÉOPOLD
 Chief. We've found him on the
 Eiffel Tower construction site.

Gisquet finds his subordinate standing in the doorway, holding
 DARIUS (40) by the arm - a man with a scarred face, a Slavic
 accent, and a strangely smug air about him. Gisquet dabs his
 face with a towel and puts his shirt back on...

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
 Darius Kovacic? Sit down.

DARIUS
 Why? I have nothing to say to you.

Gisquet insists. Darius sits down. The superintendent grabs
 his cane, pacing around the suspect while he questions him.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
 Your ex. Marie L'Espenay. When did
 you last see her?

DARIUS
 When this whore dumped me... After
 all the gifts I showered her
 with...

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
 Gifts? You beat her.

Darius lets out a brief, sinister smile.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET (CONT'D)
 Where were you yesterday, at the
 end of the day?

DARIUS
I don't remember.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
You went back to see her... She
drove you away and you couldn't
bear it. You lost it... And you
killed her.

Darius doesn't bat an eye. Poker face.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET (CONT'D)
How you got out of there, though,
you'll have to explain to me.

DARIUS
Now I remember. I was at work
yesterday. You can check.

Gisquet holds Darius's defiant gaze.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
I will.

He motions to Léopold, who escorts the suspect out. Suspicious,
Gisquet watches him leave and, to vent his frustration, delivers
a violent blow with his cane to the punching bag...

Crraaak! The impact tears the leather. The superintendent sighs,
noticing the trickle of sand spilling out.

32

EXT. OPERA / FORECOURT / BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

32

The ball is over. The atmosphere is different... The posters
have been put away in a heap. Costume assistants are lugging
around clothes racks. The stagehands are changing the sets,
loading them in pieces onto trolleys, while bringing others
inside.

At the gate, the bald man keeps watch like a watchdog (see
SEQUENCE 4). While eating an apple with a knife, a menacing look
in his eye, he watches the comings and goings. Including...

Two set designers struggling to balance and get a large set
piece inside. A painted canvas depicting a forest.

The bald man looks away, unaware that... hidden behind the
canvas, Edgar is the one giving them a hand! Sneaking into...

33 INT. OPERA / PASSAGEWAYS & REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY 33

Edgar paces nervously through the corridors. He passes other technicians, but no one pays him any attention.

He walks through a large room: a training area, in semi-darkness, with ropes hanging from the ceiling. An ACROBAT (30) is rehearsing... The man twirls and performs a series of acrobatic feats, perched on a rope, several metres above the ground!

Amazed, Edgar admires his prowess for a moment. Then his attention is caught by a group of dancers in frilly skirts, heading towards the wings. He follows them...

34 INT. OPERA / BACKSTAGE - DAY 34

When we next see Edgar, he is deep in conversation with the dancers, on their break. We can't hear what they're saying, but the girls answer his questions, looking sad.

They eventually rush back to rehearsal, leaving him alone to stare at his photo of Éléonore. Sad and worried.

35 EXT. AUGUSTINE'S HOUSE / GARDEN - DAY 35

A beautiful Gothic building, framed by bushes trimmed into spirals. In its lush garden... A makeshift shooting range:

Augustine is nervous, in front of three pistols resting on a plank. And is staring, 15 metres away... Three frying pans hanging from a wire, each with a :) drawn in chalk!

She fires the pistols, one after the other... BANG! BANG! BANG!... CLING! CLING! CLING! The bullets hit their mark, but... CLING again!? The last one ricochets and strikes the gate, where is standing...

EDGAR

Do you want me dead?!

Edgar is carrying a pile of old issues of *The Lantern*.

AUGUSTINE

Oooops! Sorry!... Did you find easily?

EDGAR

Where did you learn to shoot?!

AUGUSTINE

When soldiers are at war, women
learn to do everything...

(handing him the pistol)

What about you? Do you know how?

EDGAR

(confused)

No. Hum... Maybe? I've never tried
since they found me.

He shrugs. Augustine realises... His amnesia. She is a little
embarrassed and changes the subject.

AUGUSTINE

(sombre)

I didn't sleep a wink... I couldn't
stop thinking about Éléonore.

EDGAR

Me neither. And I've been
thinking... This "Darius," he
doesn't have a motive. And in every
good novel, motive is key.

AUGUSTINE

A motive?

EDGAR

That he hated Marie and killed her,
I can buy. But why abduct
Éléonore??

AUGUSTINE

It doesn't make sense.

EDGAR

And I stopped by the Opera
earlier... The dancers haven't seen
him around. Nor at rehearsals!

AUGUSTINE

Well if it isn't him, all the more
reason to follow the lead of the
Chat Noir acrobat who got murdered.

(a beat)

But before we do... I need to tell
you something.

Her face tenses. This worries Edgar. She picks up a cleaning
brush and cleans the pistols, stressed.

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

Our father gave us a proper education. A real freedom.

EDGAR

That is very much to his credit.

AUGUSTINE

Except that after his death, and my mother's, my husband showed his true colours... He was sent to serve in the colonies.

Augustine looks down, feeling guilty.

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

Éléonore had just turned 15. And he refused to take her with us... So we sent her to a convent.

36

EXT. CONVENT - DAY - FLASHBACK

36

At the gates of a convent, two nuns stand either side of a young Éléonore (15), who is in tears and frozen with fear. She clutches a bundle and a paper bag full of cherries. Sobbing too, Augustine bids her farewell. Then, without looking back, she walks to the carriage where an officer awaits her, stern-faced.

BACK TO SEQUENCE 31. On Edgar, stunned and shocked.

AUGUSTINE

At first, we would write to each other every single day. But as the years went by, her letters became heavy with questions. With reproaches. And they stopped coming.

EDGAR

I am sorry.

AUGUSTINE

I never heard from her again. 20 years, without being able to go back. And when I finally could, I went to the convent... A nun told me Éléonore had renounced her vows long ago, to become a dancer. So I looked for her and...

EDGAR

... you ended up at the ball.

She puts the guns away in a box. And, feeling ashamed...

AUGUSTINE

That's why Éléonore never told you
about me.

EDGAR

But you didn't have a choice!

AUGUSTINE

I don't blame her... Who would want
a sister who abandoned them?

EDGAR

You're wrong... I'm sure deep down
she only wants one thing. To
forgive you.

She forces a smile, doing a poor job of hiding her sadness.

37

INT. AUGUSTINE'S HOUSE / LIVING-ROOM - DAY

37

A large drawing room, still being furnished... Crates and trunks. Mirrors and ornate furniture - some still covered with sheets. And a whole jumble of exotic decorative items piled up there, worthy of a cabinet of curiosities: a purple octopus in a glass bowl, a globe, a stuffed crocodile, and so on.

Whilst Augustine is putting the pistols away in another room, Edgar enters, carrying his stack of newspapers. Fascinated, he explores the place and notices some photos on a chest of drawers: Augustine in the Colonies... With military nurses. At the foot of palm trees, with snake charmers.

Then he notices huge piles of newspapers on a table. An enormous amount! He puts down his own pile and looks through them:

EDGAR

*The Morning... The Furet... The
Runner...*

AUGUSTINE

Issues from the last three
months! If journalists have
investigated a murder, the victim's
name has to be in there. Somewhere.

MONTAGE. Edgar and Augustine are sitting at the table, reading the newspapers. The piles are slowly getting smaller.

EDGAR

Here it is!

AUGUSTINE

Did you find her?

EDGAR

No... May, 20th. Miss Vauchel, a violin maker, is missing. Her neighbours were alerted by the cries... of a crow that had got into her home.

AUGUSTINE

May, 20th?... It's someone else.

They exchange a stunned look. The MONTAGE goes faster, switching from one to the other as they read the newspapers, cutting out relevant articles and tossing them onto the centre of the table:

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

May, 2nd. If you see this woman, contact the morgue... Found dead in the Bois de Boulogne... buried with a crow.

EDGAR

April, 16th. Her parents are looking for Anna, who is missing... Last seen on Liné Street... walking with a caged crow.

AUGUSTINE

March, 24th. Pont d'Arcole. A dead woman... A suicide, according to the police... A crow, as her only friend...

EDGAR

March, 7th. Missing woman. ... Crow feathers in her bed...

AUGUSTINE

... Eventually found dead.

END OF MONTAGE. Our heroes stand there, speechless. All around them, the floor is covered with newspapers. And on the table...

A dozen or so clippings are spread out. Some of them are illustrated with a drawing... Faces. Women.

EDGAR

Seven, eight, nine... And all around the same age as Éléonore...

AUGUSTINE

My god... What kind of monster can
do such a thing?

EDGAR

The police didn't make the
connection. The crow is no
coincidence.

AUGUSTINE

No. It's his signature.

They look at each other, at a loss. It's dizzying. Augustine
sits down, dejected, as the harrowing reality sinks in:

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

First, he abducts them... Then he
kills them.

A deathly silence. But refusing to believe the worst...

EDGAR

No. Éléonore is alive, I can feel
it!

(a beat)

20 years, and you come back when
she most needs you... It's a sign.

He smiles at her. Augustine nods, comforted by his certainty.
But as soon as she looks away, Edgar's smile seems more fragile
— as if he himself were in doubt.

He's pulled Éléonore's scarf out of his pocket (see SEQUENCE
23), which he clutches in his tight fist.

ACT 3

38

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS / GISQUET'S OFFICE - DAY

38

At his desk, Gisquet is facing a FOREMAN (50).

FOREMAN

Sorry, Sir... But it's the truth.
Darius was at the construction
site. From 8am till sunset.

Gisquet nods, looking annoyed. And the door opens to
reveal...

LÉOPOLD
 Sorry to interrupt... They are
 asking for you on Morgue Street.

39 INT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET / STAIRCASE AND LANDING - DAY

Gisquet walks up the stairs with the DEAF CONCIERGE (50)
 we've already seen in SEQUENCE 28. She uses an ear trumpet.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
 So, you wanted to talk?

DEAF CONCIERGE
 How did he talk? I told you
 already... He spoke French, but
 mixed with German. And Italian!

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
 No, not the killer... Why did you
 want to see me?

DEAF CONCIERGE
 Oh! Because I found this, as I was
 sweeping.

As they reach the landing of the fourth floor, she takes out
 a small object out of her pocket... A long brass whistle.

DEAF CONCIERGE (CONT'D)
 It was there, on the floor. With
 all the fuss, I thought one of your
 men lost it, so...

Surprised, Gisquet examines the whistle. He blows into it out of
 curiosity... HIIIII! A very high-pitched sound comes out, so
 much so that the superintendent puts his hand to his ear. Not
 the concierge...

DEAF CONCIERGE (CONT'D)
 It doesn't work?

She shrugs and walks back down. Left on his own, Gisquet puts
 the whistle away and sighs. What a waste of time.

He opens the bedroom door and, standing in the doorway, takes in
 the crime scene. Sombre. Wondering what he might have missed.

40 EXT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET - DAY

40

Edgar and Augustine walk towards Marie's building. They
 arrive to find Léopold standing at the door, on his own this
 time.

LÉOPOLD
Ms. Dupin? Sir?

EDGAR
At the headquarters they told us
that Superintendent Gisquet was
here. We need to see him. It's
urgent.

LÉOPOLD
Well... Sorry, but I can't let you
in... You'll have to wait for him.

AUGUSTINE
(acting upset)
This is regarding a "personal"
matter...

She leans in close to Léopold's ear. And in a low voice...

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)
Keep this to yourself... But
Gisquet is my lover. And he loves
having sex on crime scenes.

Léopold swallows hard, paralysed by the thought of what to do
with this secret! Augustine smiles at him and goes inside,
followed by...

EDGAR
I'm the third wheel.

Léopold nods, still in shock. Then realises he got played.

LÉOPOLD
No! No! Wait up!

41 INT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET / STUDIO FLAT - DAY

41

Focused, Gisquet scans the scene one more time, when Augustine
and Edgar burst into the room.

EDGAR
Chief! We figured it out.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
Wh-- What are you doing here??

Léopold barges in behind them, out of breath.

LÉOPOLD
They forced their way through! I--

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
I'll handle this. Get back down.

He glares at him. Feeling sheepish, Léopold walks off, grumbling.

EDGAR
It's the same man who abducted
Éléonore and killed Marie!

AUGUSTINE
And there are more victims.
Look... Every time, there's a clue
that points to a crow!

She takes the newspaper clippings out of her bag. She hands them to Gisquet, who looks annoyed as he scans through them.

EDGAR
He approached Éléonore, but she
saw right through him. He got
scared she might have told someone
about him, so he came to steal her
letters...

AUGUSTINE
But he got caught red-handed by
Marie!

EDGAR
We just haven't figured out how he
escaped yet. Maybe amongst your
men... dressed as a police officer?

Gisquet hands back the clippings and claps his hands sarcastically.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
Well done! Thank you! Thank you for
solving this case! Just one thing,
though... Do you have the name of
this "mysterious" killer? Because,
let me teach you something...

(to Augustine)

Crows are carrion feeders. Their
feathers often end up near dead
bodies!

(to Edgar)

And my men all know each other.
They would have spotted a stranger.
Or maybe you're going to suggest
one of them is the killer!

AUGUSTINE

You're so smart! Do you have a theory?! A suspect?! No--

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

You have no business being here!

AUGUSTINE

My sister is in danger! And you're still here, like a dog looking for a bone to gnaw on!

The tension is electric (like their underlying desire). And as they argue, Edgar notices something strange.

On the window pane: oblong, translucent smudges. He pauses, then rushes towards the sink-and-toilet area...

Behind the screen, he takes a bottle of perfume with a pear-shaped spray. He empties its contents into the sink. Then, finding some make-up powder, he pours it in.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET (OFF)

What do you think? That you can just do as you please!

AUGUSTINE (OFF)

Because Mister "Follow-The-Rules" is sure arresting culprits?!

As their heated exchange goes on, Edgar slips between them and returns to the window. Pressing the pump on the bottle, he sprays pink powder onto the glass...

Fingerprints appear - of apparently huge and chapped hands! Edgar is stunned. He puts the bottle down and gets back to the others, who haven't noticed what he's been up to:

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

If you were a man, I'd make you eat your words!

AUGUSTINE

You'd get a good thrashing!

EDGAR

Augustine, we should--

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

I know you two are worried about... your sister... and your fiancée. And perhaps - and I do mean "perhaps" - all this is connected. But until proven otherwise, it
(MORE)

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET (CONT'D)
remains a missing person's case. So
I don't want to see you again! Am I
making myself clear?

AUGUSTINE
Very clear... You have a massive
masculinity complex.

Gisquet sighs, annoyed. Edgar drags Augustine out.

42

EXT. MORGUE STREET - DAY

42

Augustine and Edgar walk away from the building. WALK & TALK

AUGUSTINE
What side are you on?!

EDGAR
I found fingerprints the killer
left when he fled.

AUGUSTINE
Where?

EDGAR
On the window pane. Very muscular
but chapped, calloused fingers.

AUGUSTINE
(realising)
His work is wearing his hands out!

EDGAR
Yes. A sailor, a woodworker...
Or...

Augustine comes to a halt, suddenly disillusioned.

AUGUSTINE
Wait. On the window pane?? It
doesn't add up. The killer couldn't
have escaped that way!

EDGAR
It's the only way out.

AUGUSTINE
To kill yourself...! You saw it
too: the courtyard is 10 metres
below. And there's hardly any
handhold to reach the roof.

FLASH: from SEQUENCE 23. EDGAR's POV: *leaning out of the window, he looks down at the courtyard, a 10-metre drop below. And above, the facade with no guttering, and the inaccessible roof.*

EDGAR

Maybe he went down with a rope!

AUGUSTINE

The police would have found it.

EDGAR

Or... With a flying wing!? A bat costume! Or a hot-air balloon?

AUGUSTINE

(okay...)

A balloon. That's your theory??

EDGAR

But you're saying he could've climbed, unless he is...

(a beat)

An acrobat.

Edgar freezes, stunned. In disbelief, Augustine realises he's onto something.

43

INT. BUILDING / MORGUE STREET / STAIRCASE AND LANDING - DAY

Gisquet closes the studio flat door. He is about to leave when, reaching into his pocket, he comes across...

The brass whistle. He examines it. And scans the landing where he and his men had been standing the day before. Lost in thought.

EDGAR (OFF)

We just haven't figured out how he escaped yet. Maybe amongst your men...

Worried, Gisquet puts the whistle back in his pocket. And walks down the stairs.

44

INT. OPERA / BACKSTAGE AND REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

44

Edgar and Augustine feel their way through a hallway cluttered with mannequins and monster costumes. Then, from a shadowy corner, they watch the training area.

Beneath the ropes stands the acrobat (see SEQUENCE 33). And he is behaving "strangely"... He looks around several times, pacing back and forth behind some crates. Nervously, he eventually puts away his talcum powder and leaves.

Nervously, our heroes exchange a knowing glance. It's time to go snooping! But they're cut short by...

A man in a frock coat is walking straight towards them, shouting at a subservient assistant and his notepad.

DIRECTOR

Pay that crook?! Talk about an
"animal trainer"....!

To avoid them, Edgar and Augustine hide in a corner, behind a large cage covered with a sheet.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

He didn't even show us his beast!
Get him the hell out of here, he
and his cage!

ASSISTANT

Yes, Sir.

They pass by. The coast is clear. Edgar and Augustine emerge from their hiding place and make their way to...

... the training area, where Augustine notices that the acrobat has left his jacket behind. She hurries to search it, whilst Edgar inspects the ropes, tied some 10 metres above their heads.

AUGUSTINE

No papers, no keys...

EDGAR

(sombre)

Maybe he killed Marie. And saw
Éléonore here. Every day.

He grabs one of the thick, rough ropes and runs his hand along it. It burns and his fingers are covered in scrapes!

ACROBAT (OFF)

Can I help you?

Our heroes jump. Behind them, the acrobat stares at them with a questioning look. A hook and a mallet in his hand.

AUGUSTINE

(paralysed with fear)

We... Well...

(MORE)

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

This man is writing an article...
on circus professions.

EDGAR

This... This looks dangerous.

ACROBAT

(after a silence)

We train a lot. And we protect our
hands with gloves, otherwise...

The man is wearing thin leather gloves. He takes one off and, pointing to Edgar's scratched fingers, holds out his hand to show the difference. Frightened but curious, Edgar looks: normal fingers, with no cracks! Oops.

EDGAR

(to Augustine)

Soft as baby skin...

ACROBAT

What??

AUGUSTINE

Did you leave the Opera during the
ball, the day before yesterday?

ACROBAT

Of course not, I was working!
(nice but not fooled)
What do you want with me?!

The acrobat puts his mallet down and sizes up our heroes, who, seeing his spontaneity, realise: they got it wrong.

EDGAR

Nothing, Sir. This article... It
was a mistake.

The acrobat can tell they're lying and is about to insist when--

ZOÉ

DADDY! DADDY!

A cute little girl, ZOÉ (6), comes running in, in tears. Frightened, she throws herself into the arms of the acrobat, her father.

ACROBAT

Zoé! I've been looking everywhere
for you.

ZOÉ

The ghost! I saw it! The ghost is here, Daddy... I saw it! I saw it!

ACROBAT

Shhhh... shhhh... It's nothing, Zoé. Ghosts are not real.

ZOÉ

They are. Uncle says it's the Two-Headed Devil! He comes every year to the carnival and eats women!

Touched, Augustine kneels down and smiles at her.

AUGUSTINE

Zoé, is that right? When I was your age, my sister and I were afraid of ghosts. But then, I discovered an island where all the adults believe in ghosts! They say that they are our ancestors, and that they just want to play. Especially with brave little girls.

(in a low voice)

But not with old uncles... Yuck!

This makes Zoé laugh, and she giggles. Her father laughs too.

ZOÉ

What about your sister? Is she still afraid of ghosts?

Augustine and Edgar's faces become sombre, overcome again with worry.

45

EXT. OPERA / FORECOURT / BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

45

WALK & TALK. Augustine is feeling down. Edgar remains positive.

EDGAR

Ok, so the fingerprints weren't his. But the killer still escaped through the window!

AUGUSTINE

And how, then?

EDGAR

There're my other theories left: a flying suit, or a balloon--

AUGUSTINE

This is ridiculous! And what would this prove... That the man we're looking for is a flying-device inventor??! One of the Montgolfier brothers?!

She's feeling down and on edge. He tries to reassure her...

EDGAR

We'll find a lead, eventually.

AUGUSTINE

When?! Wake up, Edgar... We know nothing! Not who he is! Nor why he killed Marie! And neither where he's keeping my sister! If...

Edgar doesn't know what to say; his usual optimism has been shattered. Augustine sighs, opens her parasol and walks away.

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

I'll go for a walk. This way. You go that way.

Edgar looks at her walk away, sorry. He too is distraught.

46 EXT. ESTA. PARIS - MAGIC HOUR

46

The sun bathes the capital in orange light.

47 EXT. PARK - MAGIC HOUR

47

Augustine walks to drown her despair. Among the few passersby she encounters, her attention is drawn to...

Two girls playing with a hoop. Two sisters. The older one, a teenager, is entertaining the little one, who is only five.

With a heavy heart, Augustine watches them, transported back to her childhood memories. At first, she smiles.

Then she suddenly "breaks down"... She stifles a sob and a tear rolls down her cheek, which she hastily wipes away. She's just managed to pull herself together when--

SARAH

How would you like to know what the future holds for you, ma'am? My cards reveal nothing but wonderful surprises!

Augustine turns and discovers... SARAH (20), cheerful, resourceful. And a fortune-teller... On a wheeled crate, she has laid out a deck of tarot cards.

AUGUSTINE
(amused)
If you say it's fun... How much?

SARAH
A penny! To find out what fortune
has in store for you!

Augustine nods. Delighted, the young woman begins the reading, turning over the first card... A SKELETON. Ouch.

SARAH (CONT'D)
The Reaper... Hum... Well, that...
In tarot, it can be very positive!
It depends on the next card.

Which turns out to be... A TWO-HEADED DEVIL. Augustine doesn't blink.

SARAH (CONT'D)
A devil... with two heads even...
We'll skip this one, too!

Quickly, she turns a third card: A MAGIC WHEEL.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(all smiles)
Here we are! Perfect! The Wheel of
Fortune... It means that despite
your fears, everything will work
out, eventually. See, you needn't
have worried, Ma'am!

Augustine smiles. The young woman's infectious cheek cheered her up a little.

AUGUSTINE
Thank you. What's your name?

SARAH
Sarah. Our fates are linked, Ma'am.
I can feel it, we'll meet again!

She seems to believe it. Augustine smiles, pays her a penny and walks away. But as she walks off, one coincidence nevertheless troubles her:

AUGUSTINE
A two-headed devil...

48

EXT. SEINE RIVERBANKS - MAGIC HOUR

48

Sitting on a bench, Edgar listens to the lapping of the river, his gaze fixed on nothing in particular. A figure snaps him out of his thoughts...

DR. CHARCOT

At the gazette, no one knew where you were, so I figured...

EDGAR

Good evening, Doctor.

Charcot sits down too. Edgar smiles affectionately at him, struggling to hide his sadness. Silently, he stares out at the Seine.

DR. CHARCOT

I've never seen you looking so down, my boy.

Edgar doesn't deny it. They know each other too well.

EDGAR

When they found me here... And in the months that followed, when, thanks to you, I emerged from the fog... I was never afraid.

(a beat)

I feel like I'm scared for the first time in my life... What if it's too late, doctor? What if he's already killed her?

Confused, Edgar looks at Charcot, who looks back at him affectionately.

DR. CHARCOT

Two things keep us alive, Edgar. Love, and hope. You still have both.

Edgar nods, determined not to give up. And they both stand up to walk.

They then pass a poster advertising the PARIS CARNIVAL... We can only see the title, not the illustration. But Edgar freezes.

He stares at it, suddenly struck dumb with amazement! Stunned, Charcot watches him, unable to understand what is happening. And...

EDGAR

I know!

ACT 4

49

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS / GISQUET'S OFFICE - MORNING

49

At his desk, Gisquet has spread the newspaper clippings Edgar and Augustine gave him in front of him (SEQUENCE 41).

He is thinking, looking serious, rolling the brass whistle between his fingers. When... KNOCK-KNOCK! Someone's at the door.

Léopold comes in, walks over and sees the articles.

LÉOPOLD

It's their "crow killer" theory?

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

(confused)

Yes. And it's true that it is a lot of coincidences... But I didn't call you in about this.

Gisquet puts the letters away in his drawer, then hands Léopold the brass whistle.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET (CONT'D)

Do you think this could belong to one of our men?

LÉOPOLD

Mmmmh... No. It's not our official whistle.

Out of curiosity, he blows it... HIIIII! They both grimace.

LÉOPOLD (CONT'D)

I've seen one of those before... They make a high-pitched sound on purpose: animals don't like it.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

Animals?

LÉOPOLD

Yes. It's for circus people... Animal trainers.

Gisquet looks intrigued. And in OVERLAP... CLING!

50

INT. NEWSROOM - MORNING

50

The door opens on Augustine. Edgar, alone, greets her with a smile. Behind the frosted glass, on the printing side, you can hear the presses and the rest of the team going about their business.

EDGAR

Ah! You got my message!

AUGUSTINE

And I want to apologise, for
yesterday.

(sincere)

I was being unfair. And I
understand why Éléonore chose you
as her fiancé... But you talk too
much!

EDGAR

Apology accepted... sister-in-law.

She stifles her urge to strangle him, smiling to seal their alliance. Edgar then leads her over to a desk piled high with newspapers, next to which he has set up a blackboard.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

I know how the killer fled through
the window!

AUGUSTINE

God you're obsessed... It's
impossible!

EDGAR

Impossible... For a human.

He shows her a newspaper, open at an advert for the PARIS CARNIVAL. The evening attractions are listed there, one of which Edgar has circled: EXOTIC ANIMALS.

Below it is an illustration of a frightening primate.

AUGUSTINE

A monkey??

EDGAR

An orang-utan!

AUGUSTINE

A-- What?! This is absurd! Has your
amnesia also messed with your
brain??

EDGAR
No, hear me out--

AUGUSTINE
Why would a monkey want to kill
Marie?? Abduct Éléonore, steal her
letters?

EDGAR
That... I don't know yet.

Augustine sighs. And moves on to something more concrete:

AUGUSTINE
I thought about what the
neighbours said. Some of them had
heard a man speaking French...

EDGAR
And others, a foreign language.

AUGUSTINE
Precisely! What if they were all
right? What if when Marie was
killed, there wasn't one, but two
people, in the room.

EDGAR
Two! Of course!

Overjoyed, Edgar rummages through a pile of newspapers, flips
through the pages, and finally tears something out.

AUGUSTINE
Hum... Edgar?? I'm losing you,
here...

EDGAR
The orang-utan wasn't looking for
something on its own... He must
have been with a trainer!

He shows her what he has torn out: an illustration of a circus
trainer. Then he turns over the blackboard:

On it, an impressive collage made up of vintage illustrations,
also cut out from various gazettes...

A drawing depicts the studio flat, with its landing and the
staircase. The screen, the door and the window that are out of
proportion! And in the mess... An engraving of a rampaging
primate. A woman in a frightened pose. A green bag. Letters.
Police officers. Etc.

AUGUSTINE

Wh--? Scrapbooking, now?!

EDGAR

Just last night. To figure it out.
And thanks to you, everything makes
sense...

What follows is a MONTAGE, alternating between moments when Edgar speaks and moments when he moves the cut-out figures around on the board.

And short CRAFT ANIMATIONS in which, in line with what he is saying, these same figures come to life on screen, moving in jerky, comical ways (in the style of *Monty Python* or *Enola Holmes*).

EDGAR (CONT'D)

All this happened when we were at
the Opera...

CRAFT ANIMATION: the studio flat is empty. Coming from the roof, the monkey comes in through the open window.

He crosses the room and opens the door for its trainer, who was waiting behind it. The man then enters, spots the green bag... and snatches the letters from it!

EDGAR (OFF) (CONT'D)

The trainer orders his animal to
climb across the rooftops. To come
in through the window. And to
unlock the door.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Once he's in, the trainer steals
Éléonore's letters.

AUGUSTINE

Why?

EDGAR

That's still to figure out. But...
(pointing at the board)
The room is not empty.

CRAFT ANIMATION: Marie's silhouette appears behind the screen. She grabs a pair of enormous scissors (!) and approaches the intruders. The monkey then lunges at her, knocks the scissors out of her hands, and gives Marie a violent blow, knocking her over.

EDGAR (OFF) (CONT'D)
 Marie takes them by surprise, and she defends herself! The orang-utan gets scared. He flies into a rage and attacks her.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
 It is so ferocious that the trainer shouts to calm his beast. But cannot manage to control it!

AUGUSTINE
 The screams alert the neighbours...

CRAFT ANIMATION: the monkey comes and goes. Marie is on the floor. The trainer flees... In *fast motion*: he rushes out, slams the door shut, which locks behind him, then runs down the stairs and vanishes! The landing is empty when, seconds later, the neighbours start to gather there, soon joined by the police. Banging on the door.

EDGAR (OFF)
 So he runs away, slamming the door behind him. The neighbours arrive after he's left. Then the police. Who try to knock the door down.

CRAFT ANIMATION: the monkey panics, grabs Marie's body and hides her in the chimney! Then the animal climbs out through the window – which slams shut behind him. Breaking the door in two, the police officers burst in... to find the room empty, with "???" appearing above their heads.

EDGAR (OFF) (CONT'D)
 The monkey gets scared, like a child. He flees through the window, which slams shut too! And when the police enters...

EDGAR (CONT'D)
 Mystery... Door. Window. Everything seems locked from the inside.

AUGUSTINE
 And the bedroom is empty.

They stare at each other, dumbfounded. Edgar is right. That explains everything.

Augustine and Edgar are with Zoé's dad, the acrobat. They show him the advert Edgar found (see SEQUENCE 50).

ACROBAT

The trainer? He was supposed to have his monkey perform, but he canceled at the last minute. The director was furious.

EDGAR

What's his name?

ACROBAT

Angélo. Between you and me, he's a right scumbag...

AUGUSTINE

Violent?

ACROBAT

Yes. He's been travelling and speaks in a funny way... Using slang from all sorts of languages.

A knowing glance between our heroes. That explains what the witnesses said.

AUGUSTINE

Do you know where he lives?

ACROBAT

In a caravan, near Pont au Double. Well, I think so...

They say goodbye to him and leave right away, but--

ACROBAT (CONT'D)

Wait! You won't find him there.

Augustine and Edgar turn around, a questioning look on their faces.

ACROBAT (CONT'D)

His monkey ran away. He's looking for it everywhere.

EDGAR

Where?

ACROBAT

Here.

AUGUSTINE

He didn't find it?

ACROBAT

No. And good for that poor creature. The way he treats it...

52 INT. OPERA / COSTUME STOREROOM - DAY

52

A spacious room. A maze of clothes racks, cupboards, screens, etc. A man moves forward cautiously, a whip in one hand, a canvas bag in the other... ANGÉLO (45), gruff, with a sullen look, wearing dirty clothes.

ANGÉLO

Scheisse... Show yourself, macaque-singe! Come on! You have my word - no lashings if you're good! *Capisce?*

Suddenly, a SQUEAK behind him. Angélo freezes. Then he spins round, lashing out violently with his whip! CLACK!

A shadow scurries away at once, knocking over a large clothes rack onto the trainer! He gets back on his feet and scans the chaos of the room, *sensing* the monkey's presence but unable to see it... Then a violent ROAR echoes, very close to him!

Frightened, the trainer panics... He pulls something out of his bag to protect himself: a large-calibre rifle.

But... Silence. The primate is gone.

53 INT. OPERA - DAY

53

CLIP. Augustine and Edgar are scouring the wings, the storerooms, the hallways, etc. A tense moment... They search everywhere, bumping into carpenters, dancers. But there is no sign of the monkey or its owner. END OF CLIP.

54 INT. OPERA / REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

54

Our heroes enter the empty, dark room where the props have been stored, when... A NOISE! Edgar stops.

EDGAR

Did you hear this?

Augustine shakes her head. And pricks up her ears. But there's nothing. She just feels a shiver run down her spine, whilst...

We, the audience, can make out a massive, hairy figure moving quietly behind a row of props!

EDGAR (CONT'D)
It came from here, I think...

Following his intuition, they move closer when...

ANGÉLO
What the hell are you doing here,
ficcanaso?! Who are you?!

Behind them stands Angélo, rifle in hand, which he points straight at them! Our heroes raise their hands, terrified.

AUGUSTINE
Hum... Angélo, I presume?

ANGÉLO
Why? What do you want with him?

EDGAR
(getting worked up)
It's your fault if Marie's dead!
Where is Éléonore?!

ANGÉLO
How do you...? *Svoloch*! I'll make
you think twice about talking!

Angélo clenches his fingers around the trigger. Edgar swallows hard. He should have kept his mouth shut! A moment of tension...

Augustine then notices that the ropes hanging over the rehearsal area are *swaying* strangely. And suddenly--

A weight bag falls from the beam... THUD! It nearly crushes the trainer, who, furious, aims upwards, and... BANG!

	AUGUSTINE	EDGAR
NO!		NO!

A HOARSE, HEART-RENDING CRY. And the ropes begin to sway in all directions, suggesting that the beast is fleeing.

ANGÉLO
Scheisse!

Our heroes are stunned to see the trainer scrutinise the beam, then dash off backstage.

AUGUSTINE
He shot it...

Our heroes run towards the wings too.

55

EXT. OPERA / FORECOURT / BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

55

With his cane, Gisquet taps the bald brute on the shoulder, who is asleep on his crate. The man jolts awake.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
Superintendent Gisquet. I'm looking
for an animal trainer. At the
Jardin des Plantes, they told me a
guy was hired here to--

Angélo runs out of the opera, holding his rifle. He turns around and puts his hand to his forehead to get a better look at the floors above and the roof of the building, searching for the monkey. When...

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET (CONT'D)
You! Over there! Police!

Spotted, Angélo panics. He tries to escape through the entrance, but Gisquet is blocking the way. The trainer then looks for another way out, dashing towards the gate to climb over it. But...

With his cane, Gisquet grabs him by the neck, then sends him flying... BLING! Amidst a shower of broken glass, the trainer smashes a stained-glass panel that had been stored there.

Gisquet pins him to the ground and handcuffs him.

ANGÉLO
I didn't kill the seamstress!
*Slych?! I didn't mean to! It's the
macaque-singe! I tried to stop it,
but--*

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
You had lost this, maybe?

Gisquet takes the brass whistle out of his pocket.

ANGÉLO
I just wanted to steal the letters,
like the *monsieur* asked!

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
Who asked you to steal them?

ANGÉLO
I don't know. I didn't see his
face. But he pays good money! And
he promised that the dancer is
alive! *Lo giuro!*

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

What?

ANGÉLO

I don't steal mail from the dead!
It's bad luck.

Gisquet is overwhelmed by hatred. He refrains himself from beating the man.

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

You're coming with me to the
station... And you're going to tell
me where these letters are.

56

INT. OPERA / BACKSTAGE - DAY

56

Edgar and Augustine cautiously look around for the primate.

Edgar notices a tuft of red hairs on the floor. And not far away, a small metal object: a hypodermic needle.

EDGAR

A syringe for putting animals to
sleep.

AUGUSTINE

That's what he shot it with?

ZOÉ (OFF)

The monster... it's not a ghost.
Chouquette and I, we saw it.

Surprised, our heroes turn around and see Zoé, holding a doll. They exchange a look of disbelief. And CUT...

We find them in a storeroom, standing in front of a large cage, covered with a sheet, the door of which seems open.

Intimidated, Edgar approaches and pulls back the sheet, revealing... The orang-utan, sitting in a corner of the cage. Breathless and groggy, his eyes are sad and clouded by the sedative.

ZOÉ (CONT'D)

It's actually kind. But it's taking
a nap!

Naive, the little girl wants to go closer, but Augustine holds her back. Through the bars, the orang-utan reaches out a hand towards them, tenderly. Then falls asleep.

Our heroes watch it for a moment, moved by his plight. A poor toy, in the hands of humans.

57

EXT. SEINE RIVERBANK / BRIDGE & CARAVAN - DAY

57

A carnival caravan, near a bridge. A shadow gets out of it...

A man, whose face cannot be made out. Wrapped up in a black frock coat, he is wearing elegant gloves and holding a bundle of letters. Calmly, he approaches...

...a metal barrel next to the caravan, like a brazier, where a few flames are still burning.

The man throws the letters in. Then he disappears under the bridge. At the other end of the riverbank, coming down the stairs...

AUGUSTINE

The acrobat said Angélo's caravan
was near the bridge...

Both spot the caravan and rush towards it. Edgar finds the door open, goes in, but is immediately disappointed:

EDGAR

No one there...

Helpless looks. Then Augustine notices the metal barrel, where the fire has flared up again. She examines it and...

AUGUSTINE

Edgar! Look!

Edgar joins her and, helpless, they both watch, powerless, as the bundle of papers is going up in flames.

Edgar runs about frantically, looking for something to retrieve the letters with. Augustine acts in haste... She kicks down the barrel, spilling the fire onto the cobblestones!

Using a stick, Edgar pulls the bundle from the blaze. Too late.

AUGUSTINE (CONT'D)

Everything was burnt... Do you
think it was Éléonore's letters?

EDGAR

Wait...

Intrigued by a detail, he rummages through the charred papers, uncovering one, protected in the centre of the pile, merely browned.

He pulls it out. It is damaged, but the text is legible.

Anxious glances. Then Edgar reads the letter, a lump in his throat...

EDGAR (CONT'D)

"Dear Éléonore... I have received your letter asking me to stop writing to you... Your silence in response to my letters should have put me on my guard... A young lady such as yourself must be so much in demand... But after our chance encounter, I cannot bring myself to picture you engaged to somebody else..."

Stunned, Edgar stops reading, hands the letter to...

AUGUSTINE

"Please keep the bird that I had delivered to you. And I want to believe that, soon, fate will bring us together. Yours forever..."

She looks at the signature, which isn't really a signature...

AUGUSTINE'S POV: a crow, stamped in black ink.

EDGAR

By asking her to marry me, I'm the one who sealed her fate...

He sits down, dazed and haunted by the thought, when--

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

You shouldn't be here!

Surprised, our heroes see Gisquet, eyeing them up with a serious look. Augustine discreetly slips the letter away.

AUGUSTINE

(aggressive)

What about you? Why are you here?!

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET

I have reasons to believe that your sister is still alive.

Augustine opens her eyes wide. Edgar springs on his feet.

EDGAR

Are you sure?

AUGUSTINE
Will you help us find her?

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
I am warning you. My superiors
won't make this a priority. But I
have enough to launch an
investigation.

AUGUSTINE
Thank you.

She and Gisquet stare at each other, their mutual attraction
is obvious. Then...

SUPERINTENDENT GISQUET
But if I see you again on a crime
scene, I'll have to arrest you.

He points to the caravan and where they are standing. Oops! A
sheepish exchange of glances between Augustine and Edgar – loud
and clear! They nod and slip away.

Gisquet watches them walk off, half-annoyed, half-touched by
them.

FADE TO BLACK.

58

EXT. AUGUSTINE'S HOUSE / GARDEN - DAY

58

Augustine and Edgar are debriefing as they walk. WALK & TALK

EDGAR
Poor Marie... Dead when she had
nothing to do with this...
(moved)
The first time I met her, Éléonore
had brought her to *The Lantern*. To
place an ad for her seamstress
work!

And as if to justify his digression...

EDGAR (CONT'D)
I have few memories, so they're all
the more precious to me.

Augustine smiles at him. Silence. Which lingers. She presses
her lips together, clearly troubled by something.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
You can ask me.

AUGUSTINE
 (fakes innocence)
 Ask you what?

EDGAR
 The question you're asking
 yourself.

AUGUSTINE
 Well, alright... But everyone must
 be asking you... How does it
 feel... Not knowing who you used to
 be? Where you come from?

EDGAR
 It's not all bad.
 (optimistic)
 My past is like... a blank page.
 And so is my future! So I can write
 anything I like on it.
 (serious)
 And what I'm sure of, is that I
 want it to be with Éléonore. So
 we're going to find her.

Moved, Augustine nods. They share a determined look, then
 keep walking in silence. Suddenly, an idea:

AUGUSTINE
 These ads, can one write anything
they want?

EDGAR
 Oh yes... You have no idea!

AUGUSTINE
 If we place one... Calling on any
 woman to come forward if she has
 been threatened or approached...

EDGAR
 ...by a man with a crow! Yes!
 That's a brilliant idea!

AUGUSTINE
 And not just in *The Lantern*... In
 all the gazettes of Paris!

Their faces light up with hope. They know how to fight.

EDGAR
 We need to find a catchy
 headline... "Looking for clues
 about... the Crow!"

59

INT. THE CROW'S MANSION / LUXURIOUS BEDROOM - DAY

59

A luxurious bedroom... A four-poster bed. Wallpaper. Gilded trim.

Looking anxious, ÉLÉONORE (35) has her hair neatly styled and is wearing a gorgeous dress. She approaches the room's only door and tries to open it, but... it is locked.

Éléonore therefore rushes to the large window. But there too... Pulling back the curtains, she discovers thick bars!

ÉLÉONORE

Help! Help! Someone help me!

Trapped inside, she pounds on the door, tears streaming down her cheeks. And suddenly... *Crrr...* A small peephole in the door slides open, through which a man's eye appears. Éléonore steps back, terrified.

END OF EPISODE 1