

HOW THE MARQUIS GOT HIS COAT BACK

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Dramatised by
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(IN STUDIO)

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EXT. LONDON STREET. EVENING

(REPRISE OF FINAL SCENE IN 'NEVERWHERE' ...)

FX: NIGHT SKYLINE. THE SOUND OF BRICKWORK RECONFIGURING INTO A DOORWAY.

MARQUIS

You knocked?

RICHARD

Marquis!

MARQUIS

Well? Are you coming?

RICHARD

Is it dangerous?

MARQUIS

In ways you couldn't possibly imagine.

THEY LAUGH

MARQUIS (CONT'D)

Let's go!

FX: RICHARD STEPS INSIDE.

INT. CHAMBER, ECHOY

FX: BRICKWORK CLOSES. DRIPPING. BIG BEN, EVER SO DISTANT.

RICHARD

Where's Door?

MARQUIS

I am alone.

RICHARD

You did that with the bricks? On your own?

MARQUIS

I've picked up a thing or two about making things open.

RICHARD

Er - sure. So, where are we going?

MARQUIS

We?

RICHARD

You said, "Let's go".

MARQUIS

It was a figure of speech. You made the choice. The rest is up to you.

A BEAT. RICHARD TAKES A DEEP BREATH. HE FEELS ... HAPPY.

RICHARD

I couldn't live up there. I couldn't function. Couldn't give a toss about securities, or spreadsheets, or stock options. Not after being down here, and meeting Door, and you, and us defeating Islington ... You told me London Below was for the people who fell through the cracks in the world ... and I've become one.

MARQUIS

You are Richard Macduff, Warrior who Felled The Beast. The Earl gave you the Freedom of the Underside.

RICHARD

(new resolve)

Yes. I belong here. In the sewers and the magic and the dark. I will find Door. We have unfinished business -

MARQUIS

- Ye-es, that's the impression I got.

RICHARD

- There will be adventures, and quests, and - What happened to your voice?

MARQUIS

Well, having one's throat cut has its consequences. Though I'm told I sound like my younger self.

RICHARD

But something else is different about you ... Oh - you haven't got your coat.

MARQUIS

(Richard is on thin ice)

No. It was stripped from my corpse and sold. I was robbed of my life by Croup and Vandemar and of my coat by the Sewer People. I am peeved about it, and not a little discommoded.

A BEAT

RICHARD

(chuckle)

Y'know -

MARQUIS

What?

RICHARD

- that poncho looks more like -

MARQUIS

(jumping in)

- it look likes a blanket. Because I am
wearing a blanket. With a hole cut in it.
By the Temple and the Arch, I am the
Marquis de Carabas and I am wearing a
blanket with a hole in it and it does not
make me happy!

A BEAT, AS THE ECHOES FROM THE OUTBURST EVAPORATE.

RICHARD

So ... where is it? The coat?

MARQUIS

I don't know. But I will, once I've found
where tonight's Floating Market is being
held.

RICHARD

Ah. Right. Sorry, can't help you there.
But maybe you can tell me how to get to
the House Without Doors.

MARQUIS

I'm not a Tour Guide. You'll have to find
the Lady Door yourself. But remember what
you have learned about London Below.
Don't trust anybody, don't accept any
gifts, and Mind The Gap.

RICHARD

I remember.

MARQUIS

Fare well, Richard.

A SWIFT, FIRM HANDSHAKE.

RICHARD

(exiting one way)

Good luck, Marquis.

MARQUIS
(exiting the other)
I prefer to rely on subterfuge and
bribery.

GRAMS: MAIN SIG

VOICE
How The Marquis Got His Coat Back, by
Neil Gaiman. Dramatised by Dirk Maggs.

EXT. ROOFTOP, ST PAULS

FX: BIRDS CHITTER AS OLD BAILEY FEEDS THEM.

OLD BAILEY
All right all right, form an orderly
queue ... You Starlings! Behave!

FX: ROOK CAWS

OLD BAILEY (CONT'D)
And none of your beak, old man rook.
Bugger off back to the Tower and do yer
job, they feed you well enough there.

FX: ROOK CAWS AGAIN

OLD BAILEY (CONT'D)
You're only here for the jokes? I'll tell
you a joke. Fresh Rook Pie! Ha! Laugh at
that, pal. Eh? Who's that?

FX: MARQUIS FOOTSTEPS, OFF

MARQUIS
Old Bailey.

OLD BAILEY
Oh, here comes trouble. I saved yer life
din't I Marquis? What more d'ye want?
Can't you leave me in peace to feed my
birds?

MARQUIS
I need information.

OLD BAILEY
Information. Roof-maps? History? Secret
and mysterious knowledge? If I don't
knows it, it's probbly better forgot.

MARQUIS

Just tonight's Floating Market. Where it's being held. That's all.

OLD BAILEY

That's all? It'll still cost yer. Tell you what, I'll throw in a joke, make it worth yer while. Now, there's this bloke -

MARQUIS

Old Bailey. You are not, intrinsically, one of those people put in the world to tell jokes.

OLD BAILEY

Eh?

MARQUIS

A shaggy dog story ending in a weak pun is not a joke.

OLD BAILEY

I've never told a joke to a dog in my life.

FX: ROOK CAWS

OLD BAILEY (CONT'D)

Thank you, Mr Rook.

MARQUIS

What did he say?

OLD BAILEY

He says my jokes is deep and philasophical paribbles of deep and penetrating insights into what it means to be human. Not that he knows a flipping thing about humans. Now, stop me if you've heard this one before -

MARQUIS

- I've heard them all before. Listen. It is the market day after the worst week of my life and things do not seem to be getting any better.

OLD BAILEY

You're alive, in't yer? Thanks to me.

MARQUIS

And I have thanked you.

OLD BAILEY

Well, that's got to help, innit?

MARQUIS

True. But there are definite downsides to having been recently dead, especially with regard to missing property. So. The Floating Market?

OLD BAILEY

Who are you looking for, then?

MARQUIS

Not 'Who'. 'What'. I'm looking for my coat.

OLD BAILEY

Yer coat. Hm. Fine feathers do not make fine birds, do they lads?

FX: CHORUS OF AGREEMENT FROM ASSEMBLED FEATHERED BRETHREN

OLD BAILEY (CONT'D)

It's just a coat.

MARQUIS

It's not "just a coat". It is beautiful. It is remarkable. It is unique. It has thirty pockets, seven of which are obvious, nineteen of which are hidden, and four of which are more or less impossible to find - even, on occasion, for me myself. It has magnificent sleeves, an imposing collar, and a slit up the back. It is the colour of a wet street at midnight, and, more important than any of these things, it has Style.

A BEAT

OLD BAILEY

Well, you can get another can't yer? Clothes do make the man, as people say.

MARQUIS

And mostly they are wrong. But as a boy, when I put that coat on for the very first time, and stared at myself in a looking-glass, I became a man. No mere youth, no simple sneak-thief and favour-trader. Although it was too large for me, it reminded me of an illustration from a book I once saw, of a miller's cat standing on its two hind legs.

(MORE)

MARQUIS (CONT'D)

A jaunty cat wearing a fine coat and big, proud boots. It gave me my name -

OLD BAILEY

- Marquis de Carabas?

MARQUIS

- At your service.

OLD BAILEY

Look, I'm busy. I've got the starlings to feed up Cheapside and they're regular gannets. For starlings.

MARQUIS

What I am telling you is that coat is irreplaceable. Now. I can repay you for any information - once I have got my coat back.

OLD BAILEY

(sigh)

Well it's hardly a sekrit. Tonight the Market's being held in that Tate Gallery.

MARQUIS

Ah. At last.

(going off)

Thank you.

OLD BAILEY

(calls after him)

I'll be along there later meself. Oh, if yer hungry, the food court's in the Pre-Raphaelite Room. Horrible bunch of daubs. Give me a nice watercolour by John James Audubon. That's art, that is. Eh? Tchah, he's gone.

INT. TATE GALLERY

FX: MARKET IN FULL SWING.

MARKET BARKER

Roll up Roll up for the finest Floating Market ever put on at the Tate! Welcome to the gallery, all you Bravos, Carneys, Velvets and Sewer Folk! Try the wares, barter your goods, look at the poncey pictures, make merry, you whey-faced Underdwellers! Roll up! Roll up!

JEWELLERY HAWKER

(off)

*Jewellery! Finest polished transistors!
Circuit Board bangles! Satellite dish
Salvers!*

BOOK HAWKER

(off)

*Books! Almanacs, Atlases, Apocryphas and
Concordances!*

CLOTHES HAWKER

(off)

*Clothes! Jerkins, Tabards, fine chain
mail. Cloaks, bodices and shifts!*

TATTOOIST

(off)

*Tattoos! Show yer fealty. Baronial,
Colonial, Matrimonial, be known where 'er
you voyage.*

FLOATING DENTIST

(off)

*Get yer teef drilled here! Extractions -
get one, have one free! Fillings what
don't drop out! Here we are - ooh, that's
nasty - where's my pliers - right - hold
steady - (effort) - uhhh -*

FX: SNAPPING SOUND

PATIENT

- *Arrrgh!*

HAMMERSMITH

(off)

*Horses shoed! Manacles forged! Shackles
riveted! Come to Hammersmith and I'll
bang it up in no time!*

FOCUS IN ON THE SEWER PERSON DUNNIKIN, WHO IS HOLDING UP
VARIOUS UNSAVOURY ITEMS OF SALVAGE FROM HIS STALL.

DUNNIKIN

(yell)

Come on, Ladies and Gents, what am I bid
for this dead cat? Lovely bit of moggy
fur to trim yer robes. Be the talk of the
Floating Market, lady, eh? What? Don't
wander off!

(voice down)

Stuck up cow. Bloody Velvets.

MARQUIS

As I was saying -

DUNNIKIN

- You still 'ere?

MARQUIS

Yes. I'll start again. You sold my corpse. These things happen. You also sold my possessions. I want them back. I'll pay.

DUNNIKIN

Sold them. Just like we sold you. Can't go getting things back that you sold. Not good business.

MARQUIS

We are talking about my coat. And I fully intend to have it back.

DUNNIKIN

'Course you do. 'Scuse me.

FX: DUNNIKIN SORTING THROUGH JUNK ON THE STALL.

DUNNIKIN (CONT'D)

(yell)

Get yer previously loved goods 'ere!
Straight from the sewers!

MARQUIS

To whom did you sell it?

DUNNIKIN

(threat)

I'm busy. I really have to get on.

MARQUIS

I can get you perfumes. Glorious, magnificent, odiferous perfumes. You know you want them.

DUNNIKIN

No, I don't.

MARQUIS

Believe me, Sewer Dweller: You Want Them.

DUNNIKIN

Like you're wanting your throat cut again Marquis?

DUNNIKIN MAKES SKRRKKKK! NOISE - FINGER ACROSS THROAT

MARQUIS

As gestures go, that one was in
appallingly bad taste.

DUNNIKIN

Croup and Vandemar may be gone, and your
neck may be healing, but knives is
everywhere. Sharp knives, used for dark
business, dumped into my sewers, still
with a nice edge. Like this one, here.

FX: KNIFE DRAWN

MARQUIS

That was Vandemar's.

DUNNIKIN

Well, he don't need it where 'e went. A
good evening to you, Marquis.

MARQUIS

(sighs)

Very well. Which way is the food court?

DUNNIKIN

Through there, in the Pre-Raphaelite
exhibition. Bunch of fairy nonsense.

MARQUIS

And a good evening to you.

WE TRACK WITH THE MARQUIS AS HE MOVES ON THROUGH THE
MARKET

DUNNIKIN

(off)

Come and get your heart's desire -
plucked fresh from the sewers ...

POKEFINGER

(calls, as Marquis passes)

Evening, Marquis. Have you tried one of
my exceedingly good sausages? Still one
or two left.

MARQUIS

I tried one last year, Mr Pokefinger, and
I have a firm policy of never
intentionally making the same mistake
twice.

POKEFINGER

(passing into background)

Please yourself ...

MARQUIS

... which is a policy I do subscribe to.
Goodbyeee.

MUSHROOM MAN

(calling as Marquis
approaches)

The Mushroom. The Mushroom On Toast. Raw
the Mushroom.

MARQUIS

Ah, the Mushroom People. Well met. I'll
have some of The Mushroom On Toast.

MUSHROOM WOMAN

You looks hungry, sir. I'll cut a thick
slice of puffball for yer.

MARQUIS

And I want it cooked properly all the way
through.

MUSHROOM WOMAN

Be brave. Eat it raw. Join us.

MARQUIS

I have already had dealings with the
Mushroom raw. We came to an
understanding.

MUSHROOM WOMAN

As you will.

MUSHROOM MAN

Mushroom tea, sir?

MARQUIS

Yes, why not.

FX: TEA POURED, UNDER:

MUSHROOM MAN

May I be so bold as to ask if you're de
Carabas? The fixer?

MARQUIS

I am the Marquis de Carabas.

MUSHROOM WOMAN

(off)

The Market's afire with talk about you.

MARQUIS

So it should be, ma'am.

MUSHROOM MAN

I hear you're looking for your coat. I was there when the Sewer Folk sold it. Start of the last Market it was. On HMS Belfast. I saw who bought it, too.

MARQUIS

And ... what would you want for the information?

MUSHROOM WOMAN

(off, scornful)

What indeed.

MUSHROOM MAN

Go serve the customers, Chanterelle.
(CLOSE) There's a girl I like as won't give me the time of day.

MARQUIS

A Mushroom girl?

MUSHROOM MAN

Would I were so lucky. If we were as one both in love and in the body of the Mushroom, I wouldn't have nothing to worry about. No.

FX: PLINK!

MUSHROOM MAN (CONT'D)

Oop. Sorry, let me fish that one out for you. I must harvest this clump under me nose, they're dropping everywhere.

MARQUIS

Ye-es. I'll do without the tea.

MUSHROOM MAN

Now this girl. She's one of the Raven's Court. But she eats here sometimes. And we talk. Just like you and I are talking now. Over a cup of mushroom tea.

MARQUIS

And yet she does not return your ardour. How strange. What do you want me to do about it?

FX: MAN PULLS SANDWICH-BAGGED LETTER OUT OF POCKET

MUSHROOM MAN

I wrote her a letter. More of a pome, you might say, although I'm not much of a poet. To tell her how I feels about her. But I don't know that she'd read it, if I gived it to her. Then I saw you, and I thought, if it was you as was to give it to her, with all your fine words and your fancy flourishes...

MARQUIS

With my help, she would read it and then be more inclined to listen to your suit.

MUSHROOM MAN

This old thing? 'S just a duffel coat.

FX: PLATE PUT DOWN, WITH CUTLERY.

MUSHROOM WOMAN

Here's yer Mushroom on toast. Sit you down at our trestle, sir. Look, there's a nice Burne-Jones opposite, to gaze upon while you eat. Bon appetit.

FX: MARQUIS SITS. MUSHROOM POKED, WITH A FORK.

MARQUIS

Are you sure this is cooked all the way through?

MUSHROOM WOMAN

'Course it is.

MARQUIS

No active spores?

MUSHROOM WOMAN

Why would you worry about a bit of fungus?

MARQUIS

I'm too selfish for symbiosis.

MUSHROOM WOMAN

Try a bite. Its delicious.

FX: MARQUIS CUTS A SLICE AND EATS.

MARQUIS

(mouth full)
You're quite right.
(swallows)
(MORE)

MARQUIS (CONT'D)

Ah. Swallowing's still rather painful ...
Not your fault.

MUSHROOM MAN

So what about it, sir?

MARQUIS

(while eating)

All you want is for me to make sure she
reads your missive of yearning?

MUSHROOM MAN

My letter? My pome?

MARQUIS

I do.

MUSHROOM MAN

Well, yes. And I want you to be there
with her, to make sure she doesn't put it
away unread, and I want you to bring her
answer back to me.

MARQUIS

(finishing his food)

Well. You're not an unhandsome fellow,
with those remarkably blue eyes. Washed
and cleaned up and significantly less
fungal, you could be a catch. I'll do it.

MUSHROOM MAN

Thank you. Now. I put the letter in a
sandwich bag. So it doesn't get wet on
the way.

MARQUIS

Very wise. Now, tell me: who bought my
coat?

MUSHROOM MAN

Not yet, Mister jumps-the-gun.

MARQUIS

It is getting very tiresome waiting for
straightforward answers to perfectly
simple questions.

MUSHROOM MAN

Ah, but you haven't asked the important
one. About my true love.

MARQUIS

(sigh)

Tell me of this vision, this paragon,
this confection of femininity.

MUSHROOM MAN

Her name is Drusilla. You'll know her
because she is the most beautiful woman
in all of the Raven's Court.

MARQUIS

Hm. Beauty is traditionally in the eye of
the beholder. Give me more to go on.

MUSHROOM MAN

I told you. Her name's Drusilla. There's
only one. And she has a big red birthmark
on the back of her hand that looks like a
star.

MARQUIS

It seems an unlikely love-pairing. One of
the Mushroom's folk, in love with a lady
of the Raven's Court. What makes you
think she'll give up her life for your
damp cellars and fungoid crevices?

MUSHROOM MAN

She liked the colour of my eyes. I know
she'll love me once she's read my poem.
We're on?

MARQUIS

We're on. Now. Tell me.

MUSHROOM MAN

The cove as bought your coat carried a
stick.

MARQUIS

Lots of people carry sticks.

MUSHROOM MAN

This one had a crook on the end. Looked a
bit like a frog, he did. Short one. Bit
fat. Hair the colour of gravel. Needed a
coat and took a shine to yours.

MARQUIS

(rising)

Useful information. I shall certainly
pass your ardour and felicitations on to
the fair Drusilla.

MUSHROOM MAN

Don't forget the letter, de Carabas.

FX: LETTER HANDED OVER.

MARQUIS

(walking off)

I'd forget my head if it hadn't been re-
attached.

INT. TATE GALLERY

FX: QUIETER AREA. HUBBUB, OFF.

OLD BAILEY

(off, getting nearer)

'Old Bailey's Birds And Information'. Get
yer birds 'ere. Rooks, ravens, starlings.
Fine wise birds, tasty birds. If you
don't need a bird I got maps, booklets,
brochures notes and mottoes. Enquire
within upon everything ... Ah, there you
is, Marquis. Did you find what yer
lookin' for?

MARQUIS

Not precisely.

OLD BAILEY

That's the Market for yer. Risky
business, asking for things at the
Market.

MARQUIS

If I take risks, They are calculated
risks.

OLD BAILEY

You can't trust just anybody. Not 'ere.

MARQUIS

I never trust anyone.

OLD BAILEYFB0B

Not even family?

MARQUIS

Least of all family - is bad for business
and could set an unfortunate precedent. I
reserve the entirety of my trust for
myself.

OLD BAILEY

Well. Glad we've sorted that out.

MARQUIS

However.

OLD BAILEY

- Or p'raps we haven't -

MARQUIS

I'm informed by the sewer folk that my coat was last seen in the possession of a person carrying a stick with a crook on the end.

OLD BAILEY

Well, there's only two sorts of people who carry crooks: bishops and shepherds.

MARQUIS

Quite.

OLD BAILEY

Why would someone from Bishopsgate need a coat? The bishops have no need of 'em. They've robes, y'know - nice, white, bishoppish robes.

MARQUIS

A Bishop's crook is decorative, non-functional, purely symbolic. I'm not scared of the bishops. The sewer folk aren't scared of bishops.

OLD BAILEY

Did yer sewer person seem ... edgy?

MARQUIS

A little. He certainly wasn't helpful.

OLD BAILEY

There's a surprise.

MARQUIS

I suppose I could visit Bishopsgate, spend a pleasant handful of days establishing that my coat is not there.

OLD BAILEY

You think it was a shepherd what took it.

MARQUIS

I do.

OLD BAILEY

So do I. But that's a whole other murder of crows, that is. You're talking about a trip to Shepherds Bush.

MARQUIS

It'll be a tricky negotiation. I have nothing that the shepherds would want.

OLD BAILEY

Say as I shouldn't, but you're not in the peak of health either, Marquis.

MARQUIS

Even in possession of my coat and with a small army at my beck and call, I still would not want to encounter the shepherds.

OLD BAILEY

So you'll give up on the coat.

MARQUIS

I certainly will not.

OLD BAILEY

Wait a minute, wait a minute. It's not just the coat, is it?

MARQUIS

You're rambling.

OLD BAILEY

(dawning realisation)

There's something in one of those hidden pockets, i'll be bound. Something particular. Special. Something ... worth a lot.

MARQUIS

It was a gift. Well, almost.

OLD BAILEY

What is it? Maybe I've seen it.

MARQUIS

A magnifying glass. A marvellous piece of work - ornate, gilt, with a chain and tiny cherubs and gargoyles. The lens has the unusual property of rendering transparent anything you look at through it.

OLD BAILEY

Wait a minute. Victoria had one like that.

MARQUIS

I do not know where she obtained it. But it became mine.

OLD BAILEY

You pilfered it from Victoria!

MARQUIS

I appropriated it as compensation for a payment which was not entirely what we had agreed, given the difficulty with which I earned it.

OLD BAILEY

So before that, you pilfered something for her ... something Important.

MARQUIS

And with an extremely dangerous owner.

OLD BAILEY

Ahh. I thought that was just stories. The diary?

MARQUIS

I was young, and foolish.

OLD BAILEY

You stole the Elephant's Diary. From the Elephant?

MARQUIS

There is only one Elephant. Obtaining his diary was not easy, nor was escaping the Elephant and the Castle once it had been obtained. I deserved proper recompense. And now I have lost my coat, and must put myself in harm's way to recover it.

OLD BAILEY

You'll need a Bonded Guide to take you to Shepherds Bush.

MARQUIS

Are they here?

OLD BAILEY

'Course. Their pen's through there.

MARQUIS

You know the damnable thing about this business?

OLD BAILEY

Go on.

MARQUIS

Out of all the hidden pockets on that coat, for the life of me I can't remember which of them I put Victoria's magnifying glass in.

INT. TUNNEL

FX: DISTANT TUBE TRAIN ANNOUNCEMENT. TWO SETS OF FOOTSTEPS.

KNIBBS

So where do you want to go first, again? Shepherd's Bush, or Raven's Court?

MARQUIS

What's your name?

KNIBBS

Knibbs.

MARQUIS

The visit to Raven's Court is a formality, Knibbs. It is merely to deliver a letter. To someone named Drusilla.

KNIBBS

A love letter?

MARQUIS

I believe so. Why do you ask?

KNIBBS

I have heard that the fair Drusilla is most wickedly beautiful, and she has the unfortunate habit of reshaping those who displease her into birds of prey. You must love her very much, to be writing letters to her.

MARQUIS

I am afraid I have never encountered the young lady. The letter is not from me. And it doesn't matter which we visit first.

KNIBBS

You know, just in case something dreadfully unfortunate happens to you when you get to the shepherds, we should probably do Raven's Court first. So the fair Drusilla gets her letter. I'm not saying that something horrible will happen to you, mind. Just that it's better to be safe than, y'know, dead.

THEY WALK ON, FOR A FEW STEPS.

MARQUIS

Raven's Court it is, then.

KNIBBS

Right you are, sir.

MARQUIS

You sure this is the way?

KNIBBS

The paths of London Below aren't like London Above: they rely to no small extent on things like belief and opinion and tradition as much as upon the realities of maps.

MARQUIS

I know.

KNIBBS

You're de Carabas, aren't you? You're famous. You know how to get places. What exactly do you need a guide for?

MARQUIS

Two heads are better than one. So are two sets of eyes.

KNIBBS

Didn't you used to have a posh coat? I've heard stories of you in a coat.

MARQUIS

I did. Yes.

KNIBBS

So why are you wearing that horrible old blanket?

MARQUIS

It's a pon -

MARQUIS STOPS. KNIBBS STOPS.

MARQUIS (CONT'D)

Oh, I've changed my mind. We're going to Shepherd's Bush first.

KNIBBS

Fair enough. Easy to take you one place as another. I'll wait for you outside the shepherds' trading post, mind.

MARQUIS

Very wise, girl.

KNIBBS

My name's Knibbs. Not girl. Here, up these steps and through this door -

FX: THEY CLIMB STEPS AND KNIBBS THROWS OPEN AN OLD WOODEN DOOR.

INT. THE BANKS OF MORTLAKE, NIGHT.

FX: LAKE LAPPIING. HUGE ECHOY SPACE.

MARQUIS

So. Mortlake. The Lake Of The Dead.

KNIBBS

I'll light a candle.

FX: MATCH STRUCK

KNIBBS (CONT'D)

Shouldn't take long to summon a boatman.

BOATMAN

(off)

Light there?

KNIBBS

Boat here. Paying customer.

FX: OARS IN ROWLOCKS, SPLASHING, APPROACHING.

BOATMAN

(closer)

In you jump sir. Mind you don't make yer blanket wet.

MARQUIS

Poncho.

BOATMAN

Very nice, sir. Fashionable, without over-emphasis on anything approaching style.

KNIBBS

Shut up. Take us to the Tyburn Ferry. And no funny business.

BOATMAN

Ain't nothing funny about the Tyburn.

FX: OARS, ROWLOCKS, SPLASHING, UNDER:

KNIBBS

Do you want to know why I become a guide? It's an interesting story.

MARQUIS

Not particularly.

FX: THE BOAT FADES INTO DISTANCE, KNIBBS PRATTLING ON:

KNIBBS

The thing about being a proper guide is that you're bonded. So people know you won't steer them wrong. You lead them wrong, you'll never work as a guide again. That's why we're bonded.

MARQUIS

I know ...

INT. TYBURN FERRY

FX: UNDERGROUND RIVER RUNNING PAST. DISTANT BUSY ATMOS, HUBBUB OF PEOPLE ON FAR SHORE.

FX: CLOSE BY, THE MARQUIS AND KNIBBS ALIGHT FROM BOAT..

BOATMAN

Tyburn Ferry. Shepherd's Trading Post on the far shore. That'll be a groat and three farthings, sir.

FX: FOUR LARGE, THREE SMALL COINS DROPPED IN PALM.

MARQUIS

There.

BOATMAN

Much obliged, sir.

FX: BOAT ROWS OFF, UNDER:

KNIBBS

(still talking)

And then I got bonded. In Bond Street.
Look - here's my chain.

MARQUIS

(trying to ignore her)

I don't see the ferryman.

KNIBBS

He'll be here soon enough. You keep an eye out for him in that direction, and halloo when you sees him. I'll keep looking over here. One way or another, we'll spot him.

MARQUIS

Hm.

KNIBBS

Now before I was a guide, when -

MARQUIS

(snaps)

You know, two heads are only better than one if the other head keeps its mouth shut and does not spend an hour telling my head things it already knows.

KNIBBS

Yeah ... Anyway, when I was just little, my people trained me up for this. They said it was the only way that honour could ever be satisfied -

MARQUIS

Look, can you just ... Wait a moment. Something's off here. Who are your people, Knibbs? Where do you come from?

KNIBBS

Somewhere you ain't welcome any more. I was born and bred to give my fealty and loyalty to the Elephant and the Castle.

MARQUIS

So - so - this is - Unf!

FX: HE IS STRUCK ON THE HEAD. HE COLLAPSES TO THE GROUND.

ELEPHANT

A Trap.

MARQUIS GROANS, UNCONSCIOUS.

KNIBBS

Did I do well, Elephant?

ELEPHANT

Tolerably well indeed, Knibbs.

INT. PUMP ROOM, LONDON SEWERS

FX: WATER DRIPPING. CONCRETE WALLS. PUDDLES ON THE FLOOR.

FX: CHAINS AND SHACKLES TYING THE MARQUIS TO A POLE.

THE MARQUIS GROANS.

ELEPHANT

Oh, don't be silly, de Carabas. I don't believe you're still out. I've got big ears. I can hear your heart beat. Open your eyes properly, you weasel. Face me like a man.

MARQUIS

Why, this is indeed an honour, dear Elephant. You really didn't have to arrange to meet me like this. Why the merest inkling that your prominence might have had even the teeniest desire to see me would have -

ELEPHANT

Sent you scurrying off in the other direction as fast as your spindly little legs could carry you.

MARQUIS

Not at all. Quite the opposite. Words cannot actually describe how much pleasure I take in your pachydermic presence. Might I suggest that you untie me, and allow me to greet you, man to, man to elephant?

ELEPHANT

I don't think so, given all the trouble I've been through to make this happen. You know, I swore when I found out what you had done that I would make you scream and beg for mercy. And I swore I'd say no, to giving you mercy, when you begged for it.

MARQUIS

You could say yes, instead.

ELEPHANT

I couldn't say yes. Hospitality abused. I never forget. These old tusks wouldn't be the colour of rust if I didn't settle old scores. You stole my diary.

MARQUIS

I was young. Commissions were scarce. Come on. This whole spending years training up a guide to betray me just on the off chance I'd come along and hire her. Isn't that a bit of an overreaction?

ELEPHANT

Not if you know me. If you know me, it's pretty mild. I did lots of other things to find you too.

MARQUIS

Perhaps if you would just unchain me from this pole - unh!

FX: THE ELEPHANT PUSHES HIM BACK WITH HIS TRUNK.

ELEPHANT

Beg for mercy.

MARQUIS

Oh, absolutely. Mercy! I beg! I plead! Show me mercy - the finest of all gifts. It befits you, mighty Elephant, as lord of your own demesne, to be merciful to one who is not even fit to wipe the dust from your excellent, tree-like, teak-coloured toes -

ELEPHANT

Did you know that everything you say sounds sarcastic?

MARQUIS

I didn't. I apologise. I meant every single word of it.

ELEPHANT

Scream.

MARQUIS

You know I've only just recovered from having my throat c-

ELEPHANT

Scream!

THE MARQUIS SCREAMS, AS LONG AND PITEOUSLY AS HE CAN.

MARQUIS

A BEAT.

ELEPHANT

You even scream sarcastically.

FX: THE ELEPHANT MOVES OVER TO FAR WALL.

FX: A RUSTY OLD WHEEL IS TURNED. A FLOW OF SLUDGY WATER STARTS TO FILL THE ROOM, UNDER:

MAROUIS

Um - what would that stopcock be discharging into this room?

ELEPHANT

Drainage overflow.

MAROUIS

Ah.

ELEPHANT

Now. Thing is, I do my homework. You keep your life well-hidden, de Carabas. You have done all these years, since you and I first crossed paths. No point in even trying anything as long as you had your life elsewhere. I've had people all over London Below: people you've eaten with, people you've slept with or laughed with or wound up naked in the clock tower of Big Ben with, but there was never any point in taking it further, not as long as your life was still carefully tucked out of harm's way. Until last week, when the word under the street was that your life was out of its box. And that was when I put the word out, that I'd give the freedom of the Castle to the first person to let me see -

MARQUIS

- See me scream for mercy. You said.

ELEPHANT

You interrupted me. I was going to say, I was going to give the freedom of the Castle to the first person to let me see your dead -

(MORE)

ELEPHANT (CONT'D)
(effort)
- body.

FX: WHEEL WRENCHED OPEN MORE. THE WATER IS NOW A TORRENT.

MARQUIS
I ought to warn you. There is a curse on
the hand of anyone who kills me.

ELEPHANT
I'll take the curse. Although you're
probably making it up, as usual. Now.
You'll like the next bit. This room fills
with water, and then you drown. Then I
let the water out, and I come in, and I
laugh. A lot.

FX: THE ELEPHANT MAKES A TRUMPETING NOISE - HIS LAUGH.

MARQUIS
You're wrong. I don't like that bit. At
all.

ELEPHANT
Farewell, Marquis.

FX: HEAVY FEET ON IRON STAIRS. A HEAVY STEEL DOOR OPENED
AND SHUT.

FX: THE WATER KEEPS POURING IN. THE MARQUIS IS NOW
SLOSHING ABOUT. IT'S UP TO HIS KNEES AND RISING.

MARQUIS
(to self, breathless)
No coat. Just when I need it most. No,
Think ... think. These shackles are
chained to an extremely rusty pole. Lift
the pole, free the chain, turn off the
water, pick the locks in the shackles,
escape the room, evade the Elephant and
any assorted thugs - - Pick the lock? No
coat - No lock picks. Water's up to my
waist.

(with efforts)
All right. First things first - lift the
pole out from its socket in the floor and
- lift it - from the socket - uhhh.

(giving up)
Well, that's not working. I'm going to
die. And I'm talking to myself.

PEREGRINE
Not necessarily.

MARQUIS

Who's there? Come round to where I can see you.

PEREGRINE

Quiet. Keep still. Lift your shackles.

FX: LOCKS PICKED IN SHACKLES.

PEREGRINE (CONT'D)

There.

MARQUIS

By the Temple and the Arch. It's you.

PEREGRINE

I heard you were having a spot of bother.

MARQUIS

No. No bother. I'm fine.

PEREGRINE

You aren't. I just rescued you.

MARQUIS

Where's the Elephant?

PEREGRINE

On the other side of that door, with a number of the people working for him. The doors lock automatically when the hall is filled with water. He needed to be certain that he wouldn't be trapped in here with you. It was what I was counting on.

MARQUIS

Counting on?

PEREGRINE

Of course. I'd been following them for several hours. Ever since I heard that you'd gone off with one of the Elephant's hirelings. I thought, bad move, I thought. He'll be needing a hand with that.

MARQUIS

You heard - ?

PEREGRINE

Look. You don't think I was going to let anything happen to my little brother, did you?

MARQUIS

I was fine. I had it all under control.
Shall we turn the water off?

PEREGRINE

And alert the Elephant to your salvation?
No. I have a crowbar.

MARQUIS

For what?

PEREGRINE

Get Ready. I think this should be our
quickest way out of here.

MARQUIS

What is it?

FX: HEAVY METAL COVER LIFTED OUT OF ITS FRAME, UNDER:

PEREGRINE

It's the -
(effort)
- drain.

MARQUIS

Bu - whurggghhhhh -

PEREGRINE

Whee --!

FX: ALMIGHTY SUCKING WHIRLPOOL DRAGS THEM BOTH INTO THE
DRAIN.

INT. SEWERS.

FX: QUIET, ALMOST TRANQUIL, SOME DRIPPING SOUNDS. THEN -

FX: WHOOSH! OF WATER AND THE MARQUIS AND PEREGRINE ARE
FLUSHED OUT ONTO A METAL GRATE.

PEREGRINE

(breathless)

There ...

MARQUIS

(breathless)

Foof ...

PEREGRINE

Fun, eh?

MARQUIS

Not really. Did I hear you shouting
'Whee'?

PEREGRINE

Of course. Weren't you?

FX: THEY STAGGER UPRIGHT, DRIPPING

PEREGRINE (CONT'D)

I hear that Upworlders pay good money for
that kind of thing at carnivals.

MARQUIS

At least they can be certain they will
survive it.

PEREGRINE

Cheer up, brother. I just saved your
life.

MARQUIS

Hm. What are you calling yourself these
days?

PEREGRINE

Still the same. I don't change.

MARQUIS

It's not your real name. 'Peregrine'.

PEREGRINE

It'll do. It marks my territory and my
intentions. You're still calling yourself
a Marquis, then?

MARQUIS

I am, because I say I am.

PEREGRINE

Your choice.

MARQUIS

Oh yes it is. When one creates oneself
from scratch one needs a model of some
kind, something to aim towards or head
away from - all the things one wants to
be, or intentionally not be. I knew who I
did not want to be, when I was a boy. I
definitely did not want to be like you. I
did not want to be like anyone at all. I
wanted to be elegant, elusive, brilliant
and, above all things, unique.

PEREGRINE
Just like me.

MARQUIS
Will you be here long?

PEREGRINE
No, I've saved your life for today. Stay
out of trouble. You don't even have to
thank me.

MARQUIS
Thank you, Peregrine. And good bye.

PEREGRINE
(going off)
Adieu, brother ...
(coming back)
Oh! Your coat. Word about the city is
that it wound up in Shepherd's Bush.
That's all I know.

MARQUIS
Oh, really? Oh I nearly forgot -

FX: PATTING SODDEN POCKETS, UNDER:

MARQUIS (CONT'D)
Letter ... letter -

FX: LETTER IN SANDWICH BAG PRODUCED.

MARQUIS (CONT'D)
- Still here. And still dry in its bag.

FX: STARTS STUFFING LETTER BACK IN POCKET.

PEREGRINE
A letter?

MARQUIS
Er - yes. I have a letter to deliver.

PEREGRINE
From whom?

MARQUIS
A lad. From the Mushroom People.

PEREGRINE
Why would a Mushroom Lad use you to
deliver a letter? To whom is it
addressed?

MARQUIS

A certain Drusilla. A member of Raven's Court.

PEREGRINE

How will you find her?

MARQUIS

She has a star on her hand.

PEREGRINE

A maiden who would give up her life at Raven's Court to live with a Mushroom person? What kind of letter would persuade her to do that?

MARQUIS

I don't know. Unless - No. No Idea.

PEREGRINE

Look. Advice. Mean this most sincerely. I know you don't like advice. Forget the letter. And the coat.

MARQUIS

A shepherd has my coat.

PEREGRINE

Listen. I met a former shepherd, on the run. I helped him to freedom across the Tyburn River. He had a short but happy life as a camp entertainer for that Roman Legion who wait on the far side for orders that never come.

MARQUIS

And this is useful information - how?

PEREGRINE

He told me this: The shepherds never make you do anything. They just take your natural impulses and desires and they push them, reinforce them, so you act quite naturally, only you act in the ways that they want.

MARQUIS

What are you saying, Peregrine?

PEREGRINE

Let it go. Just get a new coat. Honest.

PEREGRINE STARTS TO WALK OFF UP THE TUNNEL

PEREGRINE (CONT'D)
(off into reverb)
Fare well, brother.

MARQUIS
Well then.

PEREGRINE
Well. Adieu.

FX: DISTANT CLANG. A DOOR CLOSING?

A BEAT.

MARQUIS
(sigh)
Very little time left before the Elephant
discovers a room empty of water and a
corpse and comes looking for me. So. What
is my fallback plan? I always have a
fallback plan.

A BEAT.

MARQUIS (CONT'D)
I don't have a fallback plan. Not even a
normal, boring, obvious plan that I could
abandon as soon as things got tricky.

FX: FEET, SEVERAL PAIRS, SHUFFLING THROUGH TUNNEL TOWARDS
HIM, GROWS IN VOLUME, UNDER:

MARQUIS (CONT'D)
I don't even have a real plan, one that I
would not even let myself know about, for
when the original plan and the fallback
plan both go south.
(sighs)

I just have a Want. I am Planless and I
have a Want, which is the worst position
to be in. My Want is to have my Coat
Back. And I hate my brother for rescuing
me.

FX: HEAVY FOOTSTEPS APPROACH

ELEPHANT
(strangely relaxed)
Ah. There you are.

MARQUIS
(taken much aback)
Elephant! Right. I expect you're
wondering how I'm here -

ELEPHANT

There you are.

MARQUIS

Yes, I escaped -

ELEPHANT

I'm glad you're here.

MARQUIS

Well, of course you are, you've caught me.

ELEPHANT

Walk with us.

MARQUIS

What are you talking about? Why aren't you killing me?

FX: MORE FEET APPROACH, CLOSING IN

SHEEP DOG MAN

Hallo friend. We're glad you're here.

OTHERS

(off)

Hallo friend/Good day/Glad you're here.

MARQUIS

Who are you people?

SHEEP DOG MAN

I'm Shep. Are you on your own?

MARQUIS

Always. It's where I live.

SHEEP DOG MAN

Don't you miss company?

MARQUIS

At times I do. Yes, I miss company at times. What's wrong with the Ele -

SHEEP DOG MAN

- Walk with us a spell. Go on.

ELEPHANT

Walk with us.

MARQUIS

I'll walk with you, Elephant.

SHEEP DOG MAN

This way, everyone. We're glad you are here.

MARQUIS

Yes.

FX: THEY WALK.

WOMAN

(happy sigh)

I'm glad you're here.

MAN

I'm glad you're here.

MARQUIS

I'm glad I'm here, too.

ALL

I'm glad I'm here.

MAN

It's good to be together. There's safety in numbers.

MARQUIS

Yes, safety in numbers.

WOMAN

It's so good that we're all travelling the same way together.

MARQUIS

We're all travelling the same way together.

ELEPHANT

There's safety in numbers.

MARQUIS

It's good to be together.

ELEPHANT

Indeed it is. It's good to be together.

MARQUIS

Indeed. You look familiar.

ELEPHANT

I'm glad you're here.

MARQUIS

I'm glad you're here. You have a trunk,
and tusks. You are big, and ugly, and you
smell ... It's good.

ELEPHANT

Yes. It's good to be together.

WOMAN

It's good to be together.

MARQUIS

It is.

SHEEP DOG MAN

(entirely reasonably)

We never want to fall out of step, do we?

WOMAN

Of course we don't.

ALL

We never want to fall out of step.

SHEEP DOG MAN

That's good. Out of step is out of mind.

MARQUIS

Out of step is out of mind. How could I
have missed knowing something so obvious,
so basic?

SHEEP DOG MAN

Keep walking. We are almost there ...

FADE OUT

INT. SHEPHERDS BUSH PITS, DAYS LATER

FX: DISTANT FIRES BURNING, LOW INDISTINCT HUBBUB OF
VOICES AND MOVEMENT.

SHEEP DOG MAN

More bodies to render here.

MARQUIS

More bodies to render here, Elephant.

ELEPHANT

More bodies to render.

MARQUIS

We have a job to do. A real job.

SHEEP DOG MAN

You do indeed. You dispose of those members of the flock who can no longer move or serve, once anything that might be of use has been removed and reused.

ELEPHANT

They no longer serve.

MARQUIS

We remove that which is of use.

ELEPHANT

Hair, and tallow-fat, and all.

MARQUIS

Drag the rest to the pit and drop it in.

ELEPHANT

Then start again.

SHEEP DOG MAN

(moving off)

Very good. Carry on.

FX: THE MARQUIS AND ELEPHANT CHEERFULLY DRAGGING BODIES, HACKING OFF LIMBS, TOSSING WHAT'S LEFT INTO THE PIT.

FX: FOOTSTEPS APPROACH.

PEREGRINE

Hey.

MARQUIS

Stand aside, friend. I need to strip this body.

PEREGRINE

(sighs, impatiently)

I followed you. I know you didn't want me to. But, well, needs must.

MARQUIS

I do not know what you are talking about, friend. Excuse me. I have to process my quota.

PEREGRINE

I've got an escape plan, as soon as I can wake you up. Please wake up.

MARQUIS

I am awake. Why do you think I am asleep? Now please go.

PEREGRINE

I'm not going without you.

MARQUIS

I must be here. Those in the flock who have been unproductive must be dismembered. It's good to work.

ELEPHANT

(background, hacking off a limb)

It's good to work.

PEREGRINE

Come on. This way.

MARQUIS

You cannot go that way. You will fall in the Pit. The pit goes down a long way.

ELEPHANT

(moving off)

The pit goes down a long way. I will get more bodies.

PEREGRINE

Right, come on -

FX: KERFLUFFLE IN FOREGROUND AS PEREGRINE TIES MARQUIS'S HANDS AND DRAGS HIM AWAY.

MARQUIS

(polite)

What are you doing?

PEREGRINE

(low, urgent)

Binding your hands and getting you out of here.

MARQUIS

Why? I will be out of step with the flock.

PEREGRINE

It's me, Peregrine. Your brother. You've been captured by the shepherds. We have to get you to safety.

MARQUIS

There is obviously some sort of mistake here. I must be in step with the flock.

SHEEP DOG MAN
(off, to ELEPHANT)
Where's your flockmate?

ELEPHANT
(off)
He went over there, Shep.

FX: HIGH PITCHED 'YIP-YIP-YIP' CALLS & HOWLS, OFF - SHEEP DOGS CORRALLING THEIR FLOCK.

PEREGRINE
Uh-oh. Keep moving.

MARQUIS
But I don't want to. I want them to come and find me and sort this all out. There is obviously some sort of mistake going on. I want to work.

FX: MANY FEET IN PURSUIT, EXCITED HUBBUB, CATCHING UP:

SHEEP DOG MAN
(running up)
You. Stop.

PEREGRINE
(pinioned)
Lud's gate!

SHEEP DOG MAN
Untie that one.

FX: MARQUIS UNTIED

MARQUIS
Thank you. I can go back to work.

SHEEP DOG MAN
No, no no. Both of you will be brought before The Shepherd.

FX: THEY MOVE OFF. HUBBUB FROM EXCITED THRONG.

INT. GREAT SHEPHERD'S QUARTERS

FX: FIRE CRACKLING. WRITING ON PARCHMENT. HEAVY KNOCKS ON WOODEN DOOR.

THE SHEPHERD
Enter.

FX: DOOR OPENS. MARQUIS, PEREGRINE & ELEPHANT PUSHED IN BY SHEEP DOG MAN AND TWO COMPANIONS. THEY GROWL AND MUTTER UNDER THE ENSUING CONVERSATION IN A DOGGY WAY.

FX: WRITING CONTINUES

SHEPHERD

What is it? I'm busy.

SHEEP DOG MAN

A stray lamb, Shepherd. And his predator.
Also his flockmate.

ELEPHANT

I must work. I am out of step.

SHEEP DOG MAN

Be quiet.

SHEPHERD

(still writing)

Why? Why do you all bother me with this
nonsense?

PEREGRINE

Because you gave orders that if ever I
were ever to be apprehended within the
bounds of the Shepherds' Bush, I was to
be brought to you to dispose of
personally. These sheep dogs of yours
have obliged.

FX: WRITING STOPS. SCRAPE OF A CHAIR.

SHEPHERD

Ah. Now I see. Hand me my crook.

SHEEP DOG MAN

Here, master.

FX: CROOK HANDED OVER.

SHEPHERD

(approaches)

Peregrine? I had heard that you had gone
into retirement. Become a monk or
something. I never dreamed you'd dare to
come back. And who is this stray lamb - ?

MARQUIS

(awestruck)

Master ...

SHEPHERD

Ah. And now I see. Who would have thought it? He is here already. And already one of ours? The Marquis de Carabas. You know, Peregrine, I had been looking forward to ripping out your tongue, to grinding your fingers away while you watched, but think how much more delightful it would be if the last thing you ever saw was your own brother, one of our flock, as the instrument of your doom.

MARQUIS

(now querulous)

Master ... ?

SHEPHERD

Yes, child?

MARQUIS

Your coat.

SHEPHERD

What of it?

MARQUIS

(*a speech in which Paterson
effortlessly morphs from
abject servitude into barely
suppressed rage*)

It's not just a coat. It is beautiful. It is remarkable. It is unique. It has thirty pockets, seven of which are obvious, nineteen of which are hidden, and four of which are more or less impossible to find. It has magnificent sleeves, an imposing collar, and a slit up the back. It is elegant. It is beautiful. It is the colour of a wet street at midnight.

SHEPHERD

Indeed.

MARQUIS

Um ... But -

SHEPHERD

But - ?

MARQUIS

I'm afraid I need to be getting along.
Can we hurry this up?

SHEPHERD

Hurry up? Why?

MARQUIS

I'm late. For something that's very important.

SHEPHERD

You've left the flock, de Carabas.

MARQUIS

It would appear so. Hello Peregrine.

PEREGRINE

Welcome back.

MARQUIS

Wonderful to see you looking so sprightly. And the Elephant. How delightful. The gang's all here.

ELEPHANT

I am loyal to the flock.

MARQUIS

Ah, bless. Wonderful meeting you, Shepherd. Delightful to spend a little time as one of your little band of serious thinkers. But I really must be tootling off now. Important diplomatic mission. Letter to deliver. You know how it is.

PEREGRINE

My brother, I'm not sure that you understand the gravity of the situation here.

MARQUIS

Oh, I do, I do. And I'm sure these nice people will let me head out of here, leaving you behind. It's you they want, not me. And I have something extremely important to deliver.

PEREGRINE

I can handle this.

SHEPHERD

(to PEREGRINE)

You have to be quiet now. I am talking.

(to MARQUIS)

Something important to deliver? What exactly are we talking about here?

MARQUIS

I am afraid I cannot possibly tell you that. You are, after all, not the intended recipient of this particular diplomatic communique.

SHEPHERD

Why not? What's it say? Who's it for?

MARQUIS

Only the threat of death could force me even to show it to you.

SHEPHERD

Well, that's easy. I threaten you with death. That's in addition to the death sentence you're already under as an apostate member of the flock. And as for laughing boy here, your brother, he's tried to steal a member of the flock. That's a death sentence too, in addition to everything else we're planning to do to him.

PEREGRINE

Can I say something?

SHEPHERD

No. And, I know I should have asked before, but what in the Auld Witch's name is this?

ELEPHANT

I am a loyal member of the flock. I have remained loyal and in step even when this one did not.

SHEPHERD

And the flock is grateful for all your hard work. I've never seen anything like you before, and if I never see another one again it'll be too soon. Probably best if you die too.

ELEPHANT

But I am of the flock.

SHEPHERD

Better safe than sorry.

(to MARQUIS)

Well? Where is this important letter?
Under this blanket?

MARQUIS

Poncho. It is beneath, inside my shirt. I must repeat that it is the most significant document that I have ever been charged to deliver. I must ask you not to look at it. For your own safety.

SHEPHERD

Hm. Come here.

FX: SHIRT RIPPED OPEN. BUTTONS FLY OFF.

SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

There is a plastic bag.

MARQUIS

For its protection, being so precious.

SHEPHERD

Ah, let me see.

FX: SANDWICH BAG LETTER REMOVED BY SHEPHERD

MARQUIS

This is most unfortunate. I must protest.

SHEPHERD

But you must be curious as to its contents.

MARQUIS

Indeed ... Er - I trust you will read it aloud to us before we die.

SHEPHERD

I may ...

MARQUIS

But whether or not you read it to us, I can promise that Peregrine and I will be holding our breath. Won't we, Peregrine?

PEREGRINE

Eh? Er - yes, yes.

FX: SANDWICH BAG OPENED, LETTER REMOVED AND OPENED.

SHEPHERD

(coughing)

There's enough dust in it to grow a cellar full of mushrooms.

(reads)

"My darling beautiful Drusilla.

(MORE)

SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

While I know that you do not presently
feel about me as I feel about you ..."
what is this ... nonsense?

THE SHEPHERD STARTS COUGHING AGAIN, ALSO THE SHEEP DOG
MAN AND HIS COMPATRIOTS.

MARQUIS

(low, tight lipped)

Walk backwards, Peregrine. Away from the
spores. Don't breathe in. Hold your
breath.

PEREGRINE

(tight lipped)

Yes. Yes. Stop talking and hold yours.

FX: THEY SHUFFLE BACKWARDS WHILE THE COUGHING CONTINUES.

SHEEP DOG MAN

(coughing)

What is it, Master?

SHEPHERD

I -- I -- (coughs)

PEREGRINE

(out of oxygen)

Is this far enough - ?

MARQUIS

(huge whooping exhale-inhale)

Yes, I think so.

PEREGRINE

What's going on? What is all that about?

MARQUIS

Our way out of this room, and our way out
of Shepherd's Bush, if I am not mistaken.
As I so rarely am. Would you mind
unbinding my wrists?

FX: WRISTS UNTIED, UNDER:

PEREGRINE

Of course. The Shepherd - he seems
transfixed. And the sheep dog ... people.

MARQUIS

Thank you. Yes, I was right about that
letter.

SHEPHERD

(off)

It is the call.

SHEEP DOG MAN

(off)

It is the call, Master.

SHEEP DOG MEN

(off)

It is the call.

SHEPHERD

(off)

We must follow.

SHEEP DOG MAN

(off)

I will follow ...

SHEEP DOG MEN

(off)

We will follow ...

THE NEXT CONVERSATION LOW, IN FOREGROUND:

PEREGRINE

Where are they going?

ELEPHANT

I'm going to kill somebody. As soon as I figure out who.

MARQUIS

Think, dear Elephant. You mean whom. And I can assure you that you aren't going to kill anybody, not as long as you was to get home to the Castle safely.

ELEPHANT

I'm definitely going to kill you.

MARQUIS

You are going to force me to say pshaw. Or fiddlesticks. Until now I have never had the slightest moment of yearning to say fiddlesticks. But I can feel it, right now, welling up inside me.

ELEPHANT

What, by the Temple and the Arch, has got into you?

MARQUIS

Wrong question. But I shall ask the right question on your behalf. The question is actually what hasn't got into the three of us? It hasn't got into Peregrine and me because we were holding our breath - it hasn't got into you because, I don't know, probably because you're an elephant, with nice thick skin, more likely because you were breathing through your trunk, which is down at ground level. But what has got into our captors? And the answer is, what hasn't got into us would be the self-same spores that have got into our revered Shepherd and his pseudo-canine companions.

PEREGRINE

Spores of the Mushroom? The Mushroom People's the Mushroom?

MARQUIS

Indeed. Spores of that selfsame mushroom. Spores sent to beguile and rob the senses of logic. To inexorably draw the recipient back to the Mushroom.

ELEPHANT

Well, saw my tusks off and call 'em poached.

MARQUIS

You see, dear Elephant, if you attempt to kill me, or to kill Peregrine, you will not only fail but you will doom us all. Whereas, if you shut up and we all do our best to look as if we are still part of the flock, then we have a chance. The spores will be threading their way into their brains now. And any moment now the Mushroom will begin calling them home. All we have to do is follow.

ELEPHANT

Then what are we waiting for.

MARQUIS

Oh, a minor thing, the least of details - but I think our tormentor will be suggestible enough for this to work - (VOICE UP) Shepherd?

SHEPHERD
(off)
Ye-es?

MARQUIS
I'll have my coat back now.

INT. TUNNELS

FX: THE SHEPHERD FOLLOWED BY HIS FLOCK AND SHEEP DOG MEN WALKS PAST US, FOLLOWED BY THE MARQUIS, PEREGRINE AND THE ELEPHANT.

PEREGRINE
The Shepherd seems entirely biddable. He handed over your Coat without demur, brother. I could never have imagined we could escape so easily.

MARQUIS
It is not unusual in Shepherds Bush to see a shepherd and part of his flock moving from place to place accompanied by several of the fiercest sheepdogs.

PEREGRINE
Thy were human, once?

MARQUIS
I assume so.

FX: THE SOUND OF A RIVER GROWS, UNDER:

ELEPHANT
None of the greater flock have paid us any mind.

PEREGRINE
If they are aware that the influence of the shepherds has waned a little, one assumes they will patiently wait for another shepherd to come and to take care of them and to keep them safe.

FX: THE COMPANY HALTS UP AHEAD ON THE RIVER BANK.

ELEPHANT
They're stopping. What is this place?

PEREGRINE
We are at the banks of the Kilburn.

ELEPHANT

What happens now?

SHEPHERD

(off)

Forward.

SHEEP DOG MEN

(off)

We follow the shepherd.

FX: THE SHEPHERD LEADS THE SHEEP DOG MEN INTO THE WATER.

PEREGRINE

I'm not wading in there after them.

MARQUIS

No need. We are free to leave. There is nothing in the Shepherd and his dog men's heads at this moment but a need to get to the Mushroom, to taste its flesh once more, to let it live inside them, to serve it, and to serve it well. In exchange, the mushroom will fix all the things about themselves that they hate: it will make their interior lives much happier and more interesting.

ELEPHANT

Should've let me kill 'em.

MARQUIS

No point. Not even for revenge. The people who captured us don't exist any longer.

ELEPHANT

(sighs through his trunk)

Talking about revenge, who the hell did you steal my diary for anyway?

MARQUIS

Victoria.

ELEPHANT

Victoria? Not actually on my list of potential thieves. She's a deep one.

MARQUIS

I'll not argue with that. Also, she failed to pay me the entire amount agreed. I wound up obtaining my own lagniappe to make up the deficit. I think I remember which pocket I put it in, too.

FX: MARQUIS RUMMAGING IN POCKETS

ELEPHANT

A lanny- what?

PEREGRINE

A little extra something. A gratuity.

MARQUIS

Here.

FX: TINKLING OF A LITTLE CHAIN, UNDER:

PEREGRINE

A magnifying glass.

MARQUIS

It was Victoria's. I believe you can use it to see through solid things. Perhaps this could be considered a small payment against my debt to you, Elephant?

FX: MAGNIFYING GLASS HANDED OVER.

ELEPHANT

Hmm. Let me see ... Oh. Oh, fine, very fine.

MARQUIS

Are we ... square?

ELEPHANT

I suppose that saving my life outranks stealing my diary. And while I wouldn't have needed saving if I hadn't followed you down the drain, further recriminations are pointless. Consider your life your own once more.

MARQUIS

Thank you. Now. Peregrine. Do you know where next month's Floating Market is being held?

PEREGRINE

I've heard it will be Derry and Toms' Roof Garden.

ELEPHANT

There's been no Derry and Toms' since 1973.

PEREGRINE

Time and space and London Below have
their own uncomfortable arrangement upon
that matter.

MARQUIS

Elephant. I look forward to visiting you
in the Castle someday.

ELEPHANT

Don't push your luck, mate.

MARQUIS

I won't.

ELEPHANT

And - oh. Where's your brother gone?

MARQUIS

Oh, he does that. Slips away. Very
irritating. But so must I.

(going off)

Adieu to you.

ELEPHANT

And to you. And Marquis?

MARQUIS

(off, pauses)

Yes?

ELEPHANT

That coat does look superb.

EXT. DERRY & TOMS' ROOF GARDEN

FX: CITY SKYLINE. HUBBUB. MUSIC.

MARKET BARKER

*Roll up Roll up for the finest Floating
Market ever put on at Derry and Toms!
Welcome to the roof garden, all you
Bravos, Carneys, Velvets and Sewer Folk!
Try the wares, barter your goods, pick up
some tie-dyes and cheesecloths, make
merry, you Underdwellers! Roll up! Roll
up!*

VINYL HAWKER

(off)

*Vinyl records! Classics and Reissues!
Nary a scratch!*

BOOK HAWKER

(off)

Books! Almanacs, Atlases, Apocryphas and Concordances!

CLOTHES HAWKER

(off)

Clothes! Loon Pants, Biba tops, kinky boots and paisley shirts!

OLD BAILEY

(emerging from the throng)

'Old Bailey's Birds And Information'! Get yer birds 'ere. Fine wise birds, tasty birds. And new in stock - Jokes! Old Bailey's guaranteed-to-wet-yerself droll stories and amusements. You'll larf fit to bust -

MARQUIS

(approaching)

I can assure you, they won't.

OLD BAILEY

The Marquis, by the Temple and the Arch. A fortnight back I heard you'd been gawn and made into a sheep. But there you are, large as life and dressed to the nines. A little bird tells me that your brother had a hand in your salvation.

MARQUIS

Oh, I expect my brother whispered that in the ear of your little bird. Peregrine likes to claim credit when he's done little to deserve it.

OLD BAILEY

Not fond of your brother, are you.

MARQUIS

He and I have nothing in common.

OLD BAILEY

Strange, that. Because what I hear coming out of his mouth one month, I hear coming out of yours the next.

MARQUIS

Tread lightly, Old Bailey ...

OLD BAILEY

You two are like a man staring at hisself in a looking glass.

(MORE)

OLD BAILEY (CONT'D)

Each one complains about what he sees,
but when the first sneezes, the second
starts to sniffle.

MARQUIS

Oh, spare me.

OLD BAILEY

I like his name though.

MARQUIS

Peregrine.

OLD BAILEY

Fine bird, that. Though, there's one
thing you've got that he hasn't.

MARQUIS

Pray proceed.

OLD BAILEY

The coat. I see you've got it back. Very
smart.

MARQUIS

Yes, I am fully restored. I am the
Marquis de Carabas again. And a force to
be reckoned with.

OLD BAILEY

Well you might like to reckon with the
young woman I met earlier - looking for
you. One of those floaty mystical types.
You can't miss her. She's got a Owl
perched on her.

MARQUIS

Sadly, I'm in something of a hurry. Deals
to make, revenge to extract, the usual.
I'm only here to talk to the young chap
whose letter I had to deliver. Can you
direct me to the Mushroom stall?

OLD BAILEY

Well I can, but I don't know about a
young fella. There's a rum looking bugger
serving today. Short, fat and frog-
looking. Hair a sort of gravel colour.

MARQUIS

Really? Hm. Thank you, Old Bailey.

OLD BAILEY

Sure you don't want to buy a joke?

MARQUIS

(moving off)

I'd rather be hacking up bodies in
Shepherds' Bush.

OLD BAILEY

Tch. All coat and no sense of humour,
that one.

MIX BACKGROUND TO FOOD MARKET.

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

(fades in - calling)

Partake of the mushroom! Taste the joy of
the fungus! Become one with the host!

MARQUIS

Slice of the Mushroom, well-grilled,
please.

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

Coming right up, sir. Anything else?

MARQUIS

No, that's all ... Do you know me?

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

I am afraid not. But I must say, that is
a most beautiful coat.

MARQUIS

Thank you. Where is the young fellow who
used to work here? Remarkably blue eyes,
about so tall?

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

Ah. You mean Vince? That is a most
curious story, sir. Somebody told the
fair Drusilla, of the Court of the Raven,
that the lad had had designs upon her,
and had - you may not credit it, but I am
assured that it is so - apparently sent
her a letter filled with spores with the
intention of making her his bride in the
Mushroom.

MARQUIS

Hm. Did she take well to the news?

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

I do not believe that she did, sir. I do
not believe that she did.

(MORE)

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

She and several of her sisters were waiting for Vince, and they all caught up with us on our way to the Market. She told him they had matters to discuss, of an intimate nature. He seemed delighted by this news, and went off with her, to find out what these matters were ...

FLASHBACK: INT. DERRY & TOMS, QUIET AREA

DRUSILLA

So ... you are here, Vince.

VINCE

Ooh - um - Drusilla ...

DRUSILLA

You and I have matters to discuss ... of an intimate nature.

VINCE

(I'm in!)

Then - you read my letter?

DRUSILLA

I ... received the ... message it bore.

VINCE

Ah ... well, that's wonderful.

DRUSILLA

And I understand it carried more than just your sentiments. I know what was in it, Vince.

VINCE

I only want to be with you, fair Drusilla. To be with you - Forever.

DRUSILLA

"For ever". Well, that can definitely be arranged ...

FLASHBACK OUT

EXT. DERRY & TOMS' ROOF GARDEN

FX: CITY SKYLINE. HUBBUB. MUSIC.

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

I have been waiting for him to arrive at the market and come and work all evening, but I no longer believe he will be coming.

MARQUIS

How remarkable. I'll er - have that to go.

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

Of course sir, I'll wrap it.

FX: FOOD WRAPPED IN PAPER, UNDER:

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD
(CONT'D)

That is a very fine coat. It seems to me that I might have had one like it, in a former life.

MARQUIS

I do not doubt it. But this particular coat? It is most definitely mine.

FX: PARCEL HANDED OVER

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

Here you are, sir.

MARQUIS

Thank you Shep - Er - goodbye ...

FX: MARQUIS WALKS OFF, WE ARE WITH HIM

MUSHROOM MAN/SHEPHERD

(receding)

Goodbye.

MARQUIS

... Shepherd.

DRUSILLA

Excuse me. Old Bailey pointed you out to me.

MARQUIS

He did - ? Oh.

DRUSILLA

You know me, don't you?

MARQUIS

I recognise the birthmark like a five-pointed star on the back of your hand. A certain, floatiness - ? - to the gown. It leads me to believe you are of Ravens Court, and your name is -

DRUSILLA

Drusilla.

MARQUIS

What remarkably blue eyes your owl has.

DRUSILLA

Yes. I think ... I owe you ... a favour.

MARQUIS

(departing)

All in due course, dear lady ...

DRUSILLA

Wait -

FX: THE MARKET HUBBUB RISES TO MASK HIS DEPARTURE.

DRUSILLA (CONT'D)

Old Bailey?

OLD BAILEY

(approach)

What is it, youngster?

DRUSILLA

I went to thank him - and he just disappeared.

OLD BAILEY

Oh, he does that, the Marquis. Slips away. Very irritating.

(going off)

Nice owl, by the way. Remarkably blue eyes.

THE END