

1 INT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT 6 1

Robin is curled on the sofa with the TV on.

ON THE TELEVISION:

An arts programme has an INTERVIEWER in conversation with Andrew Fancourt.

FANCOURT

Love is a mirage. A delusion. We don't love each other, we love the idea that we have formed of each other.

INTERVIEWER

For all your protests, Andrew, I thought your depiction of this relationship was full of love. And brave, too, given your proximity to the subject matter.

Close on Fancourt.

FANCOURT

You're referring to my first wife's suicide?

INTERVIEWER

Yes.

FANCOURT

So. Let me say this.

Closer still.

FANCOURT (CONT'D)

When Effigy--

(beat)

When Ellie died...

Fancourt moves his hand to conceal his eyes. He is crying.

FANCOURT (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM:

It's as if a bolt of lightning has passed through Robin.

Robin is quickly on her phone.

ROBIN
It's me. Are you awake?

2 INT. STRIKE'S BEDSIT - NIGHT 6

2

STRIKE

Take it you caught the train?

INTERCUTTING:

3 INT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT 6

3

Robin has her eyes on the TV even as she talks. The programme -- muted -- has moved on to covering a new art exhibition.

ROBIN

Ten seconds to spare. But listen, I've just seen a programme with Andrew Fancourt. When he's asked about his first wife I'd swear he calls her Effigy.

4 INT. STRIKE'S BEDSIT, BEDROOM - NIGHT 6

4

Strike returns to the manuscript. He reads:

STRIKE (V.O.)

"Bombyx had arrived at the bedchamber of Vainglorious, most famed of that country's many writers..."

5 INT. BOMBYX, VAINGLORIOUS ROOM - HALF-LIGHT

5

Vainglorious, a dwarf with Andrew Fancourt's head, stands with Bombyx/Quine in a dungeon-like chamber.

They watch a pale young woman, chained to her desk, typing endless pages.

VAINGLORIOUS

Effigy? Read your words aloud.

The young woman picks up her latest page. As she turns to read, we see she is Ellie Fancourt. The woman we earlier saw commit suicide by gas oven.

Branding irons lie in a fire, becoming white hot.

EFFIGY / ELLIE

"Her love for him was like that of a pertinacious gudgeon, hooked on a line made entire from--"

VAINGLORIOUS
The words are no good! We must give
her new words!

Effigy weeps sorrowfully and returns to her typing.

Vainglorious seizes an iron from the fire. It bears the word "lust". With a thin, reedy laugh Vainglorious presses it into the flesh of Effigy's back.

She SCREAMS even as she types onwards. Bombyx is horrified.

TITLES

6 INT. HOLLAND PARK FLAT - DAY (MEMORY) 6

Charlotte and Strike are mid-argument.

CHARLOTTE
I never bloody see you, you're
bringing in next to no money - *

STRIKE
Fuck's sake, I told you it would be
tough at first getting an agency up
and running, why are you - *

CHARLOTTE
(furious about it)
I'm pregnant. *

On Strike: shocked, not pleased.

7 INT. STRIKE'S BEDSIT - DAY 7 7

Strike wakes to the sound of his phone RINGING.

The grey disappointment of reality settles on him.

8 EXT. DENMARK STREET - DAY 7 8

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS throng Strike's doorway as he exits -- a blizzard of camera flashes. Evidently the news has broken.

PRESS
Any comment, Mr Strike?

PRESS 2
Did the wife do it?

Strike pauses.

Normally he'd never say anything. But today--

STRIKE

I think Leonora Quine is innocent.
I'd bet my remaining leg on it.

A half-smile as he leaves. That'll secure a headline.

9 EXT. WOMEN'S PRISON - DAY 7

9

A sombre Strike and ILSA approach the prison visitors' entrance.

STRIKE
How's Nick?

ILSA
Depressed about babies. Or-- well, you know what I mean.

STRIKE
It's early days, though..?

ILSA
Nearly two years.

They walk on.

STRIKE
You know that Leonora's innocent.

ILSA
(with a smile)
All my clients are innocent, Corm.

10 INT. WOMEN'S PRISON, VISITOR'S ROOM - DAY 7

10

A PRISON GUARD shows Ilsa and Strike into a small meeting room where Leonora is already seated waiting for them.

STRIKE
Hi Leonora.

Leonora bursts into noisy tears.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
This is Ilsa Herbert. She'll represent you.

ILSA
We have limited time so, provided you feel able...?

LEONORA
When can I go home?

ILSA
We do need to get through some questions. Did anyone else have keys to the house on Talgarth Road?

LEONORA

Andrew does. We had spares cut when there was repairs on the roof but I can't find 'em.

ILSA

Has anyone else ever handled the keys? Even for just a day?

LEONORA

It got rented out sometimes, so I suppose there's people who've been through there. That house has been a nightmare. We can't sell it and Andrew makes sure nobody can make money off it, just 'cos of him not liking Owen. In the end Owen said better to forget about it.

STRIKE

Did anyone ever change the locks?

LEONORA

No. Never since Joe left it to 'em. Joe died there. Liz found him on a mattress in the main room.

ILSA

Can we talk about the credit card?

LEONORA

I told 'em I don't know anything about any of that!

ILSA

A burqa, ropes and overalls... all bought six months ago on your family credit card and delivered to Talgarth Road.

STRIKE

Is there any scenario in which your husband might have bought those things for himself?

LEONORA

I don't know... The ropes maybe...

She looks down, embarrassed.

LEONORA (CONT'D)
He liked being tied-up. He just
told me what to pay off and I did.
I never went over things with him.

ILSA

And the burqa? Could that have been
fetish-wear?

LEONORA

I don't know! I got no idea! I
don't even see why I'm here!

ILSA

Did Owen ever discuss *Bombyx Mori*
with you?

LEONORA

He said it was going to be a book
about how a silkworm gets boiled
alive like he has been by the
critics. That's it.

ILSA

The prosecution will present that
as evidence you were aware of
elements of the manuscript.

LEONORA

(to Strike)

How's this helping?

STRIKE

Ilsa's doing her job.

LEONORA

I've answered all these questions
already though.

ILSA

Yes, but the police were asking
those questions with a different
agenda to me. I'm asking you them
to try and keep you out of prison.

LEONORA

I didn't do anything! Isn't that
enough?

ILSA

The ugly truth is it might not be.

Leonora's panic is rising...

LEONORA

(to Strike)

What does she mean, "it might not
be"? What's that about?

ILSA
We need to--

LEONORA
You shut up! I don't know you! I
know him.
(to Strike)
You were meant to keep me out of
here. You promised.

STRIKE
Ilsa's a friend. She's very good at
her job and I trust her. You need
to trust her as well. I know you're
frustrated. I know you're scared.
But we're on your side.

Leonora, beaten and despondent, turns to face Ilsa. Finally
looking her in the eye.

LEONORA
I just want my Dodo.

Leonora is visibly shrinking into herself.

11 EXT. MASHAM - DAY 7

11

Robin is out jogging, on her way back to the house.

12 EXT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY 7

12

Matthew reads the papers in the early sunlight. Robin's phone
BUZZES. After a beat, Matthew scoops it up.

MATTHEW
Robin's phone, Matt speaking. Can I
take a message?
(beat)
Sorry, did you say mud?

13 EXT. WOMEN'S PRISON - DAY 7

13

Strike and Ilsa are walking away together.

ILSA
It looks bad. Access, motive, this
credit card thing... And the way
she talks to the police, she's her
own worst enemy.

STRIKE

All the credit card proves is that
she's being framed. 'Scuse me.

Strike pulls out his phone.

A text message from Charlotte.

Whatever you thought, it was yours.

ILSA

Corm? Everything alright?

STRIKE

Fine. Just Charlotte.

Ilsa gently takes Strike's face in her hands.

ILSA

No relapsing.

STRIKE

Yeah, Nick was clear on that as
well. I'm fine.

14

EXT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY 7

14

Robin stretches post-run. Perhaps catches the glassy look in
Matt's eyes as he offers her phone to her.

MATTHEW

You got a call about extra cleaning
for a car you hired? What's that
about?

Robin freezes.

ROBIN

I was driving a hire car yesterday.

MATTHEW

Where?

ROBIN

In... Devon. We had to interview a
suspect and Cormoran can't drive.

MATTHEW

That's why you couldn't help out
with the funeral? You were being
his taxi?

ROBIN

No, I...

Too late. He walks away.

15 EXT. ANSTIS' HOUSE - DAY 7

15

Anstis opens the door -- is palpably surprised to see Strike there. Not pleased, either.

STRIKE

I need to talk to you.

ANSTIS

Is it more headlines about me locking-up the wrong person? That wasn't very helpful.

STRIKE

The headline I saw was "Wife accused of murder trained as butcher."

(beat)

She's being framed, Rich. Just ask yourself this: are you saying she's clever enough to pull together this complicated murder, leaving nothing for forensics, no useful witnesses, no credible leads, nothing... but she's also stupid enough to put her disguise on the credit card?

ANSTIS

Bob, I like you as a man and I owe you my life, and that goes a long way. But on this one you're just plain wrong, mate.

STRIKE

Andrew Fancourt had a key to the property. He hated Quine long before Quine's manuscript came out. Quine stood to profit off the publicity he'd get tarnishing Fancourt. Why aren't you knocking on his door? It's because compared to the killer you're severely lacking in imagination.

Anstis' jaw works as he processes the insult.

ANSTIS

I'm going to chalk this up to you having a bad day, Bob.

Anstis closes the door on Strike.

16

INT. ROBIN'S PARENTS' HOUSE, ROBIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 7 16

Robin is sitting on the bed beside Matthew.

MATTHEW

I thought you were meant to be in the British Library?

ROBIN

I was... but plans changed. And then the seats on the earlier trains were booked--

MATTHEW

Worst case scenario it'd be two hours standing up. I used to do that all the time coming back to visit you. I'd sit in the gangway, because it was you and you were in a shitty place and I loved you.

ROBIN

I know I should have come earlier.

MATTHEW

I don't want your boss anywhere near our wedding. If he can't let you off for a day or two when my mum dies, what kind of a man is he? That's an arsehole by definition.

A long silence.

ROBIN

Matt, this isn't Cormoran's fault. I've wanted to be an investigator since I was tiny. It's what I've always wanted to do. It's the whole reason I chose to study psychology. I felt it had been taken away for a while... but, this is what I want. And I know you don't like it, and that's why I lied to you.

(MORE)

ROBIN (CONT'D)

I'm worried that's going to be a real problem for us because more and more I'm going to have to work weekends and there'll be risks sometimes as well.

MATTHEW

Any upsides?

ROBIN

I love the job and I want your support.

MATTHEW

(beat)

I know.

Beat.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Of course I want you to be happy.

ROBIN

Thank you. And I'm really sorry I wasn't here sooner.

MATTHEW

Let's just settle on saying it couldn't be helped.

A new speck of grit in their relationship that won't budge.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

When are you going back?

17

INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - DAY 8

17

Strike is surprised to find Robin at her desk.

STRIKE

It's Sunday.

ROBIN

I know. I think we should start taking a closer look at Andrew Fancourt, don't you?

Strike smiles. Knows she's trying to prove herself.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Come on then. I haven't come in on
the weekend to pay the utility
bills.

18

EXT. HAMPSTEAD RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY 8

18

Strike and Robin walk up a leafy residential street. Big houses -- very few artists left here now; it's almost all City money and minor oligarchs...

They reach an address. A big semi-detached place. Strike surveys the area.

STRIKE

He'd have been taking a big risk going inside dressed in a burqa.

ROBIN

What if he took it off around the corner?

STRIKE

Britain's most-celebrated novelist stripping out of a burqa on a London side-street?

ROBIN

Yes, okay. Might attract attention.

STRIKE

He could have just worn it to get off Talgarth Road then changed in a car or something. Let's try and have a look at the back. See if he could have buried the guts back there.

19

EXT. ROAD AT REAR OF FANCOURT'S HOUSE - DAY 8

19

Strike and Robin find that the brick wall is slightly too high to see over.

ROBIN

Do you want to give me a leg-up?

STRIKE

(beat)

I should be alright, thanks.

Strike jumps and grabs the top of the wall and pulls himself up, shoes scrabbling for purchase. Robin has to restrain herself from helping.

Strike manages to get up and peer over the wall -- long enough to see a rather plain grassy garden, some ornaments, a small shed. Some freshly-dug beds.

He slips back down and lands a bit too hard on his stump.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
Ah! Shit. Shit.

ROBIN
Are you okay?

STRIKE
Fucker doesn't bend. Christ. No,
I'm fine. Just...

Gritting his teeth, Strike adjusts himself. White with the pain of the jarring...

Strike takes an awkward step. It clearly hurts.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
Bloody thing.

ROBIN
Lean on me.

STRIKE
I'll be fine.

ROBIN
You're obviously not. Just put your weight on my shoulder. There's a pub round the corner.

STRIKE
Bribery?

ROBIN
Motivation. Come on.

Robin takes his arm and puts it around her shoulder, supporting his weight on his amputated side.

STRIKE
Sorry, Robin.

ROBIN
Don't be ridiculous.

STRIKE
I'm not exactly light.

ROBIN
You're not going to break me. Come on.

They begin making hobbling progress down the road...

20

INT. HAMPSTEAD PUB - DAY 8

20

An open fire and lots of polished wood.

Strike has his leg up and his prosthesis off. Robin -- bringing two pints from the bar back for them -- tries not to stare at it. Or at his trouser leg, empty from the knee down.

STRIKE

The amount of stuff you're meant to do it to keep it healthy. Creams and powders and baths...

ROBIN

(raising a pint)

Happy birthday.

STRIKE

How did you know?

ROBIN

It comes up on paperwork all the time. I know your passport number by heart as well.

They clink glasses.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Many happy returns, Mr Cormoran
Blue Strike.

Strike knocks back half his pint.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Are you going to tell me where that's from?

STRIKE

Nope.

ROBIN

I got you this.

Robin unzips her bag and hands over a cellophane-wrapped gift basket. He opens it out -- bottled ale, chutney, fudge, mustard...

ROBIN (CONT'D)

It's billed as the Taste of Cornwall. But you'll be the judge.

STRIKE

(holding the beer)

I grew up two miles from where this
is made. It's good.

Really, he's absurdly touched.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Robin, this is... I really like it.
Thank you.

ROBIN

Many happy returns. Can I get you
anything else?

STRIKE

A stick?

Robin LAUGHS.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

When it gets swollen like this...

Rather than finish his thought, Strike opens the fudge and
offers her a piece.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Made from Cornish cows' milk.

ROBIN

Eating nothing but Cornish grass
and looking at Cornwall.

STRIKE

(chewing)

This is exactly what the whole of
Cornwall tastes like.

Robin LAUGHS.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Fancourt lives next to Hampstead
Heath. It's a cruising ground. Easy
enough for Fancourt to go into the
woods at night without raising
suspicion. He could have buried the
guts there.

ROBIN

Have the police checked him over?

STRIKE

They won't. They've got Leonora.

ROBIN

But Fancourt's in *Bombyx Mori*.
You'd have thought--

STRIKE

Not sure the Met's literary
criticism unit was called in for
the case...

ROBIN

He's got the imagination for it,
hasn't he? Lots of the profile
pieces you read about him talk
about how he writes violence.

STRIKE

I'd like to find Fancourt tomorrow.

ROBIN

Will your leg be alright for that?

STRIKE

(with an edge)
I'll be fine.

21

INT. NICK AND ILSA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 8

21

Nick, Ilsa and Strike sit taking the lids of at least a dozen containers of curry.

NICK

How's your case?

STRIKE

I don't know. Ilsa, how's my case?

ILSA

If you're trying to keep her out
prison, pretty terrible.

STRIKE

Have you met her daughter yet?

ILSA

No.

STRIKE

Sweet kid. She's not really built
for this world.

NICK

This nasty old world?

ILSA

Some of it is.

(beat)

Who's your assistant? Leonora says
she's very pretty.

STRIKE

Are there any more of those
chutneys? They're always tiny.

NICK

Not everyone treats the chutneys
like a curried soup for dunking.

ILSA

(laughing)

We had this exact same argument
last year!

22 INT. STRIKE'S BEDSIT - DAY 9

22

Strike tries walking on his prosthesis. It hurts.

He slaps the wall in frustration and reaches for the hated
crutches.

23 INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - DAY 9

23

Strike enters on crutches.

STRIKE

My morning's free after all.

ROBIN

Why?

She realises...

ROBIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

I could tail Fancourt?

STRIKE

You haven't been trained.

A long beat.

ROBIN

I want to do it. I'll be careful.

23Aa EXT. FANCOURT'S HAMPSTEAD HOME - DAY 9 23Aa

Robin watches as Fancourt leaves his house. She waits a moment and then follows....

23Ab EXT. HAMPSTEAD STREET - DAY 9 23Ab

Still trailing Fancourt, Robin skulks down the street. She watches as he emerges from a shop, then heads in the direction of the distant Heath.

23A INT. *PESCATORI* RESTAURANT - DAY 9 23A

Strike limps in to join Liz, who is already seated.

Liz looks pale, unhealthy. She is still suffering from a brutal, raw-sounding cough.

STRIKE

Can I get you some water?

LIZ

I'm perfectly able--

(cough cough)

Yes. Please.

Strike waves over a WAITER.

STRIKE

Could we get some water, please?

LIZ

I'll have the soup.

STRIKE

Cod and chips for me, thanks. And a beer. Liz? Drink?

LIZ

Just the water.

The Waiter departs.

LIZ (CONT'D)

How's Leonora?

STRIKE

You heard about her arrest?

LIZ

Yes.

STRIKE

Well. It's as you'd expect.

LIZ

Orlando's half the reason I kept Owen on. I hope she'll be looked after.

STRIKE

I'm not sure they had any other family.

LIZ

Well she won't be left to starve, will she? This is England. We're still halfway civilised.

(beat)

Is Leonora paying you?

STRIKE

She expects to pay me out of a life insurance policy.

LIZ

What did the police make of that?

Strike looks at her evenly.

STRIKE

I don't know.

LIZ

The Quines barely have anything. I've had to give them a lot of help over the years.

STRIKE

Did the police ask you about that?

LIZ

They asked me about everything. Isn't that what they're supposed to do?

(beat)

I work. I have no personal life to speak of. I am the very definition of a blameless spinster. Do you share your information with them?

STRIKE

Sometimes.

The Waiter returns with water for Liz and Strike's beer.

LIZ

You know, it's easy to sympathise with Leonora. She comes across as a simple little thing, but she's got a foul temper. Owen complained to me several times that she hit him.

STRIKE

I hadn't heard that.

(beat)

Can we talk about Andrew Fancourt?

LIZ

(beat)

Why?

STRIKE

I gather he and Quine fell out.

LIZ

That was a long time ago.

STRIKE

You were all friends together at one point, is that right?

LIZ

I represented them both.

STRIKE

Must have been quite a coup having Andrew Fancourt as a client.

LIZ

He hadn't won anything major when I took him on. We were friends.

STRIKE

At Oxford together.

LIZ

That's right. We studied Jacobean literature, very much Andrew's tastes: revenge and rape and cannibalism. At the time we both wrote, though of course he became Andrew Fancourt and I stopped. He called my efforts "lamentably derivative". No doubt correctly.

STRIKE

Why did he leave your agency?

Beat.

LIZ

Andrew cut me out of his life - cut me out entirely - because Owen wrote a parody of his wife's novel and I refused to sack him over it. I abhor censorship and I dislike being threatened. Andrew forced me to choose and so I did.

STRIKE

You didn't think that maybe after Fancourt's wife killed herself over that parody, that Fancourt had a right to--

LIZ

Anyone who kills herself over a little criticism has no business writing. Do you know how many people think they can write? I face mountains of dreck. Billions of wasted hours. Ellie Fancourt should never have... Or Andrew ought to have at least read the work and stopped it. Roper only published it as a sop to Andrew. He did her no favours.

(beat)

Andrew and I haven't had a relationship for a long time. He's going to be at... Roper Chard are having a dinner for my client Larry Pinkelman. It can't be cancelled. I'm dreading it.

Their food arrives. Liz sips at her soup and winces as she swallows.

LIZ (CONT'D)

My throat's still very tender.

STRIKE

I won't offer you a chip then.

Liz stares at Strike witheringly, like he's some great dull ape. Returns to her soup with another wince.

25

EXT. HEATH - DAY 9

25

Robin follows Fancourt as he moves through the trees.

25A INT. PESCATORI RESTAURANT - DAY 9

25A

As before.

STRIKE

This parody of Ellie Fancourt's novel. Why did Quine write it?

LIZ

You're asking the wrong person.

STRIKE

But if he and Quine were friends...

LIZ

Never really friends. Andrew tolerated Owen. He was an amusing dirty joke.

STRIKE

Did Owen dislike Andrew?

LIZ

Envied him, probably.

STRIKE

Did you ever regret choosing to keep Quine on over Fancourt? Given Fancourt sold millions and--

LIZ

I never regretted it. I regret that Andrew forced me to choose.

STRIKE

I gather you were once in love with him.

Liz puts down her spoon.

LIZ

You seem to have very thoroughly gone over all our lives. Is there anything you want to actually ask me, or have you asked me here to watch me suffer over old memories?

STRIKE

I'm sorry?

Liz has quickly become quite emotional.

LIZ

What is the point of asking me that? I have been disappointed many times. By Andrew and by others. I live alone with a dog who's on his last legs. What are you gaining in pointing out these failings of mine?

STRIKE

I'm very sorry if--

LIZ

Rubbish.

(beat)

I had taken comfort in at least building a business but Quine has damaged that too. I have had...

Liz dabs her eyes. Then stands.

LIZ (CONT'D)

I don't deserve this.

Strike also stands.

STRIKE

I'm very sorry for upsetting you. I promise you I'm only interested in helping Leonora.

LIZ

You ask too much of people. You're cruel.

Liz grabs her bag and walks out.

Strike feels the eyes of other diners upon him.

He sits down and takes Liz's soup, placing it beside his fish and chips, and gets on with his lunch.

26

EXT. HIGHGATE CEMETERY - DAY 9

26

Robin panics as she loses Fancourt. She swiftly brings up a pair of small field-glasses... no sign of him.

She hurries forward. Running around a corner--

And then there he is.

Arriving at a graveside.

Robin ducks into some tree cover and observes Fancourt reach forward and detach a clear plastic envelope taped to the gravestone.

He reads the contents -- then crumples it up and discards it, clearly angry.

He turns and walks back--

And Robin feels suddenly exposed, found wanting. She sits and pulls a notebook from her bag... and begins to sketch the gravestone in front of her.

She keeps her head down.

Her heart sinks as she senses Fancourt approaching her.

But-- he passes by, preoccupied.

She flinches at the SOUND of a shrub moving -- wind?

When enough time has elapsed, she hurries back down the path and picks up the sheet of paper Fancourt threw away. The font alone dates it -- it's a photocopied page of a 30-year-old parody.

Robin scans it -- sees the words "pertinacious gudgeon" -- and immediately knows what she has found.

She carefully removes the plastic envelope from the grave and puts it into her pocket.

The gravestone is Ellie Fancourt's.

27 OMITTED 27

28 INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - DAY 9 28

Robin and Strike trade notes.

ROBIN

How was your lunch?

STRIKE

Very good. Soup and fish and chips.
Bit on the expensive side.

ROBIN

(beat)

Did Liz Tassel have anything to say?

STRIKE

Fancourt sounds like a man who likes to get his own way. Cut her dead after she defended Quine's right to be unpleasant.

(beat)

I spoke to Kathryn Kent's neighbour on the way back. Apparently she had a bonfire about two weeks ago. You're not allowed fires in her block, but she got quite a blaze going.

ROBIN

Can you burn guts?

STRIKE

With enough petrol, absolutely. How did you go with Fancourt?

Robin hands over the parody.

ROBIN

This is the parody Quine wrote of Ellie Fancourt's novel. It was taped to her grave for Fancourt to find. Somebody's taunting him.

STRIKE

Maybe blackmailing him, if they've got proof he did it.

(beat)

That's bloody good work, Robin.

ROBIN

No, it wasn't really. I messed up loads. I lost track of him. He walked right past me.

STRIKE

Some training'll help.

A small smile from Robin.

Robin gets home and finds the lights on.

ROBIN

Matt?

MATTHEW (O.S.)
In here.

30 INT. ROBIN AND MATTHEW'S FLAT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 9 30

Robin finds Matt ironing his way through a basket of his shirts -- and a couple of her dresses too.

MATTHEW
Just finishing up.

ROBIN
Wow. Thanks, love.

MATTHEW
Have you ever tried ironing a dress? There aren't any right-angles!

ROBIN
Well, that's the problem of breasts for you.

Robin examines his handiwork.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
This is excellent work.

MATTHEW
I'd forgotten that it's sort of calming.

Grateful, she kisses him.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Do you want to do a box-set later?

ROBIN
(breath first)
I actually need to work. Again. I'm really sorry, if I'd known you were coming back--
(beat)
Can we do it tomorrow?

MATTHEW
(beat)
No problem.

31 EXT. ROPER CHARD BUILDING - NIGHT 9 31

Establishing.

Strike and Robin approach DOORMEN. Strike limping a little, but off his crutches now.

STRIKE

We're guests of Daniel Chard.
Cormoran Strike, plus one.

ROBIN

Plus one? He's not keen on me, is he?!

32

EXT. ROPER CHARD OFFICES, ROOF TERRACE - NIGHT 9

32

A magnificent view out along the Thames from the roof garden. Strike -- who has pulled on a suit and scrubbed up rather well -- and Robin cut through the crowd.

STRIKE

They moan about declining book sales, but everyone I've met in publishing so far either has a drink in their hand or will only meet for lunch.

ROBIN

Not a bad life, is it?

STRIKE

When's Matthew coming back?

ROBIN

He's back already.

And yet -- she's here. It's noted.

Strike lights a cigarette.

STRIKE

A party where I can smoke...

Robin shivers a little in her cocktail dress. Strike takes off his jacket and puts it around her shoulders.

ROBIN

Thanks. Should have brought a cardie.

Lights of the city reflect off the water.

Daniel Chard appears and taps on a glass until the hubbub subsides.

He is not a natural speaker, but he does his best with the gathered crowd.

DANIEL CHARD

During a period of rapid change in the world of publishing, one fact remains indisputably true. Work with great writers, and your readers will come. In that vein I am delighted to tonight announce that perhaps the most-garlanded novelist in England is returning to Roper Chard after twenty years.

Andrew Fancourt!

There are GASPS and applause as Andrew Fancourt pushes through the crowd. Evidently this is a great coup...

Fancourt quietens the crowd with an indulgent hand.

FANCOURT

Thanks, Daniel. This feels like a homecoming. I wrote for Chard, and then for Roper, and they were good days. I was an angry young man... and now I'm an angry old man.

(laughter)

I look forward to raging for you.

More LAUGHTER. More APPLAUSE. Daniel Chard claps louder than everyone.

Strike and Robin overhear someone behind them say--

PERSON BEHIND THEM

I heard they paid him half-a-mil up front.

Strike looks across the crowd to see Jerry Waldegrave staring at Fancourt, his face full of unmasked dislike. Fancourt appears to spot Jerry and catch his eye -- then turns away.

Jerry turns and leaves.

More clapping. The crowd breaks back up into chattering groups.

STRIKE

(to Robin)

The man himself. Shall we mingle?

33

INT. ROPER CHARD OFFICE, MAKESHIFT BAR - NIGHT 9

33

Fancourt is in conversation with a COUPLE OF PARTYGOERS. Robin stands at the bar, examining the drinks menu. Waiting to be noticed which, duly, happens.

FANCOURT

I see you're struggling to choose a drink. I can tell you the champagne won't kill you. I picked it out.

ROBIN

Oh... well, that's what I'll go with then. Robin Ellacott.

FANCOURT

(shaking her hand)

Andrew.

Fancourt has a touch of the imperious predator behind his well-worn-in charm.

FANCOURT (CONT'D)

(to the Waiter)

Champagne, twice.

(back to Robin)

Now I'm going to ask you perhaps the most provocative question you can have put to you at one of these things: read anything good lately?

Robin LAUGHS.

FANCOURT (CONT'D)

Audio books don't count.

ROBIN

Well... The last thing I read, if I'm honest, was *Bombyx Mori*.

FANCOURT

Owen Quine returns to his true métier, the poison pen letter. What did you think of my depiction?

ROBIN

Have you read it?

FANCOURT

I've been told about it.

(beat)

Owen was a minor writer with a very large ego. This conversation would have pleased him enormously.

ROBIN

Can I introduce you to someone?

34

EXT. ROPER CHARD OFFICE, ROOF TERRACE - NIGHT 9

34

Robin escorts Fancourt over to meet Strike, who has been smoking and looking at the river below them.

ROBIN

Cormoran Strike, Andrew Fancourt.

FANCOURT

The one-legged detective. I've read about you, Mr Strike.

STRIKE

I've been looking into Owen Quine's death. I was hoping we'd get a chance to talk.

FANCOURT

Well. Here we are.

(re: Robin)

And may I command you for your choice of bait. I consider myself utterly reeled in.

Fancourt LAUGHS -- but it's mirthless behind the sound of it.

STRIKE

As its co-owner, did you ever run into Quine at Talgarth Road?

FANCOURT

On the spot where he was left gutted, according to reports?

STRIKE

Yes.

FANCOURT

I haven't been there in ten years.

ROBIN

You inherited it from the writer Joe Noth. Losing a friend and your wife in the same year must have hurt.

FANCOURT

(to Robin)

You have a gift for understatement. It's quite common with Northerners. I didn't lose my wife. I tripped over her body in the dark in our kitchen.

STRIKE

Did you ever confront Quine about
the parody he wrote?

FANCOURT

No.

STRIKE

But you're sure he wrote it?

FANCOURT

I am, yes.

STRIKE

Could anyone corroborate that?

FANCOURT

You know that I'm not obliged to
answer your questions, but I'll
happily have a conversation with
you. Daniel Chard did let me know
you might be here poking around. I
gather your ex-fiancée is getting
married? You come up as a footnote
in articles about her.

STRIKE

It's high praise.

FANCOURT

So tell me: Are you drawn to
troubled women? Or are you the
reason they become troubled?

(to Robin)

Maybe I should ask you?

ROBIN

We just work together.

Beat.

STRIKE

Why would Quine use *Bombyx* to deny
that he wrote the parody of your
wife's work? It was thirty years
ago. Surely the damage is done.

FANCOURT

Oh he denied it at the time.
Terrified of being ostracised for
it. Of course, that happened
anyway. Anyway, I know why Quine
wrote it and that's the crux.

Fancourt lets that dangle.

FANCOURT (CONT'D)
So why is she to be Charlotte Ross
and not Charlotte Strike?
(with a smirk)
I do prefer the second iteration.
Dickens might have chosen her name
for the victim of domestic
violence.

STRIKE
We weren't suited to each other.
(beat)
Why did Quine write the parody?

FANCOURT
Ellie thought marrying a writer
would change how the world saw her.
When that didn't work, she tried
becoming a writer herself.

(beat)
Quine wrote his parody piece
because he saw himself in her. Like
most writers he can't help writing
about himself. Quine, like Ellie,
was a failed writer, struggling for
status through his writing but
perennially in my shadow.

(beat)
As the son of Johnny Rokeby I
expect you rather know how that
shadow feels. And here you are,
reduced to pecking out a living
beyond the police force. I'm put in
mind of Ben Jonson. "I am a poor
gentleman, a soldier: one that in
the better state of my fortunes
scorned so mean a refuge."

STRIKE
"So that's how you crept up on me,
an acid eating away my guts, stole
from me everything I most treasure?
(MORE)

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Yes, alas, stole: grim poison in my
blood The plague, alas, of the
friendship we once had."

FANCOURT

(beat)

Ovid?

STRIKE

Catullus.

FANCOURT

("well done")

Bene factum.

STRIKE

("thank you")

Gratias tibi ago.

Fancourt shakes both Strike and Robin's hands.

FANCOURT

Mr Strike. Miss Bait.

And with that, he's gone.

34A EXT. JERRY'S HOUSE - DAY 10

34A

Establishing. Strike and Robin approach.

34B INT. JERRY'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY 10

34B

Jerry Waldegrave looks terrible as he ushers in Robin and Strike. Unshaven and red-eyed. Drunk, but hiding it.

JERRY

Coffee?

STRIKE

No, thank you.

34C INT. JERRY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 10

34C

It's a studiedly-Bohemian home. Jerry ushers Robin and Strike towards the sofa and collapses into an armchair.

STRIKE

Thank you for seeing us.

JERRY
Anything for Owen. Ha! Bastard!

STRIKE

I tried to catch you at the Roper
Chard party but you left after
Fancourt's speech.

JERRY

Yes.

STRIKE

What do you think of Andrew Fancourt?

JERRY

Me, personally?

STRIKE

Yeah.

JERRY

Terrific writer, absolute shit of a human being. Have you read *Bombyx*?

STRIKE

We both have.

JERRY

Spoken to people about it? You know what it all means and so on?

ROBIN

I didn't recognise you in it.

JERRY

I'm the Cutter. An editor, you see... For my cameo Quine dusted down the old rumour that Fancourt fathered my daughter. Cheers Owen! Rest in peace, old boy.

STRIKE

You were Quine's editor for nearly twenty years, is that correct?

JERRY

Despite everything, I'm sorry about what happened to him.

STRIKE

It must have hurt, what he wrote about you.

JERRY

If you want lifelong camaraderie, join the army. If you want peers who'll glory in your failure, work with novelists. No loyalty.

(beat)

No, of course it hurt me.

(beat)

Look, I'm going to have a drink.

(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

I've got precious little to be
sober for this afternoon. Join me?

STRIKE

What's under consideration?

JERRY

I think a Barolo.

STRIKE

Sounds great.

JERRY

Good man!

Jerry lumbers out of the room. Robin turns to Strike.

ROBIN

Bit early, isn't it?

STRIKE

It'll help him feel like we're on
his side... and I like Barolo.

Jerry returns with two glasses and half-full bottle. Hands a
filled glass to Strike.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

I was talking to Liz Tassel
yesterday.

JERRY

I hope you met her on a good day.
She can be an utter bitch. Here's
to newfound candour!

Jerry raises his glass and drinks.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Liz made a pass at Andrew after
Ellie died. Andrew told me at the
time he felt it was a badge of
honour that he couldn't get it up
for her! Prick!

STRIKE

Funnily enough she didn't tell me
that story.

JERRY

No, I can't imagine she did!
(beat)

That's right! Anyway, injured pride
is absolutely why she went with
Quine over Andrew.

STRIKE

Do you think Fancourt might have a motive to kill Quine?

JERRY

Well... Owen had given interviews about *Bombyx*. We all knew it was going to be about Andrew. That could have provoked him. And obviously there's the book's claim that Fancourt wrote the parody of his wife himself...

STRIKE

Could that be true?

JERRY

I don't think so.

Beat.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Could Fancourt kill a man? Well, look, he's very good at writing hate. That's a kind of viciousness that comes from somewhere, even if it's disguised. A writer gives himself away like that. Invariably puts himself into the text more than he knows.

STRIKE

Daniel Chard had an interesting theory about that with *Bombyx*.

JERRY

Daniel certainly didn't like what Quine said about him.

STRIKE

He thinks the manuscript might have had more than one contributor.

Jerry takes that in.

JERRY

Well, in Daniel's defence that's actually a rather interesting thought.

Jerry goes to a bureau and takes his copy of the manuscript out of a drawer.

JERRY (CONT'D)

There are lots of parts that feel like classic early Quine, all shock-value stuff, but other parts where... I mean, I edited his stuff for twenty-odd years and I never once saw him use a semi-colon. And in this manuscript there are several. It's not the kind of thing a writer embraces late in his career.

STRIKE

Thank you. This has been helpful.

Strike rises to leave and Robin follows his lead.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

(to Robin)

I need to nip to Fulham. I'll see you back in the office in a couple of hours.

35

OMITTED

35

36

INT. KATHRYN'S FLAT - DAY 10

36

Kathryn's flat is decorated in 'sensual' East Asian fabrics. Salt lamps and erotic Chinese art on the walls.

Kathryn sits opposite Strike.

KATHRYN

I'm sorry about before. If I'd known he was dead...

STRIKE

That's okay.

(beat)

I remember you'd said something about how he'd told you he'd put you in his next book? It seemed to me like you'd expected to read a very different manuscript?

KATHRYN

He told me he loved me and wanted to be with me and work with me.

(MORE)

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

And then -- and I'm a writer as well, so this was a big deal for me -- he told me he was writing a book with me in it. Said I'd be proud of it. Then I read it and he's called me "Harpy". Made jokes about my sister's cancer. Just staggeringly, staggeringly painful.

STRIKE

And you hadn't argued?

KATHRYN

He always said he loved me.

(beat)

He has this kid he couldn't leave, otherwise he would have. He said by me being in his book we'd be together.

(beat)

I burned it.

Kathryn looks utterly miserable.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Never trust a novelist. I should have that tattooed on my arm. I loved him and he's humiliated me.

37

INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE, INNER/OUTER OFFICE - DAY 10

37

Strike is on his feet, animated, Robin listening.

STRIKE

I know it sounds perverse, but it fits. Or rather, so many other pieces don't quite fit that this might be the only thing that explains it.

(beat)

Firstly, there's the title. Leonora says Quine told her silkworms are boiled, but the silkworm in *Bombyx* is cut open. Then there's the fact that the book features its hero being burned by a liquid and the site just happens to be stocked with hydrochloric acid? That's a neat coincidence. Kathryn Kent was obviously expecting a very different book.

(beat)

(MORE)

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Jerry Waldegrave and Daniel Chard both detect a foreign influence in the text.

(beat)

We keep hearing different versions of the same thing. There's something not quite right about *Bombyx Mori*. I need you to find us a literary analyst. Someone who can compare writing styles.

ROBIN

I'll get on it. What about you?

STRIKE

There's only one instance we know of where Quine actually discussed the manuscript with someone. The lunch where Liz Tassel fired him.

ROBIN

Are you going out for lunch again?

STRIKE

Needs must.

38-39 OMITTED

38-39

40 EXT. LEONORA'S HOUSE - DAY 10

40

Robin rings the doorbell.

Edna opens the front-door. She looks shattered.

ROBIN

I work with Cormoran Strike. Is it alright if I come in and have a look around?

EDNA

I could use a break, if I'm honest. Orlando's upstairs.

41 OMITTED

41

42 INT. LEONORA'S HOUSE, QUINE'S STUDY - DAY 10

42

Robin searches Quine's study. Checking down the back of radiators. Assiduous.

42A INT. CONGREVE'S RESTAURANT - DAY 10

42A

Strike meets up his half-brother, AL, who is pleased to see his sibling.

STRIKE

Good of you to do this, Al.

AL

Bruv, it's a pleasure. You're doing really well. Dad's still hoping you'll meet up with him.

STRIKE

How are you?

AL

Media bollocks, sexy girlfriend. Can't complain.

STRIKE

Look... you know the people here, don't you?

AL

Yeah, I come here a lot.

STRIKE

I need to talk to anyone who might have seen an argument in here.

AL

Frankie's on. She knows everyone.

(to a passing Waiter)

Mate, can you ask Frankie to nip over and have a word?

STRIKE

How are the rest of the siblings?

AL

The Rokeby diaspora? Yeah, all good. Dad got inducted into the Rock and Roll hall of fame. Did you see that?

STRIKE

No, that passed me by.

AL

You look around and all these guys are getting really old now.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)

Hall of DJs won't exactly have the
same vibe, will it?

43 OMITTED

43

44 INT. LEONORA'S HOUSE, QUINE'S STUDY - DAY 10

44

Orlando comes in as Robin is searching the study. Orlando is holding her monkey pillowcase full of stolen objects.

ORLANDO

Do you have a dog?

ROBIN

Yes. Well, my family does. His name's Rowntree.

ORLANDO

I want a dog.

ROBIN

What kind of dog?

ORLANDO

I JUST WANT A DOG.

Orlando rips up the drawing of a dog that she has been doing.

ORLANDO (CONT'D)

What's your name?

ROBIN

Robin.

ORLANDO

I'm a Dodo. I'm a bird. Robins are birds.

ROBIN

Can I draw you one?

Orlando nods. Robin quickly sketches a little bird on a twig.

Orlando takes it and stuff it inside her pillowcase.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

What else is in there?

ORLANDO

I can't show you inside. That's where I put things I've stolen.

ROBIN
What if I give you something of
mine to steal? Would you show me
then?

Orlando looks at Robin. Then points at Robin's necklace.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
You've got expensive tastes.

Robin unclips it and hands it over.

Orlando empties the pillowcase onto Quine's desk. Many little items and lots of scrunched-up papers.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Ooh, can I see the drawings?

Orlando nods, busy admiring her new prize...

Robin un-crumples the drawings. One of them has been drawn on the back of a typed sheet of paper. Robin quietly puts this aside. She also fishes out a typewriter ribbon cartridge.

ORLANDO
Are you stealing it?

ROBIN
Would you mind?

ORLANDO
No. You can steal it.

ROBIN
Thanks, Orlando. Shall we go downstairs now?

ORLANDO
No.

ROBIN
I think it might nearly be time for me to go. But it's been a really nice visit.

ORLANDO
No, you stay with me.

45 OMITTED

45

46 EXT. LEONORA'S HOUSE - DAY 10

46

Agonised wails from Orlando, who has to be physically restrained from pursuing Robin out of the door as she leaves.

ROBIN
I'll come and see you again, I
promise.

ORLANDO
Stay! Stay! Stay!

ROBIN
(to Edna)
Do you need some help?

EDNA
You better go. She's just missing
her mum. We'll be alright though,
won't we Dodo?

Edna closes the door. Orlando's wails trail Robin up the road. It quietly upsets her.

46A INT. CONGREVE'S RESTAURANT - DAY 10

46A

The waitress FRANKIE comes and joins Strike and Al.

FRANKIE
Hey, Al.

AL
Frankie, this is my brother,
Cormoran.

STRIKE
Hi.

AL
Can you spare five mins?

FRANKIE
It'll have to be a very quick five.

Strike takes photos of Liz Tassel and Owen Quine from his pocket.

STRIKE
Apparently these two had a row in
here over a fortnight ago.

FRANKIE
The police asked us about this
already. Last known sighting,
wasn't it?

STRIKE
Were you working?

FRANKIE

Oh my God, they were ridiculous. At one point he stood up and literally pointed his finger at her and shouted "The world shall know you made Fancourt's dick limp".

AL

Yeah, I can see you wouldn't forget that!

STRIKE

Did it seem like they were putting it on?

FRANKIE

He was hamming it up. Enjoying being a massive prick. She looked properly angry though, telling him to sit down and shut up. He walked out on her.

STRIKE

So he was acting?

FRANKIE

You could see his face as he walked out. Looked smug as anything. Left her to pay the bill. Charming guy. Look, I have to get back. Is that okay?

AL

We'll tip heavily next time we're in.

FRANKIE

Thanks, sweetie.

Frankie vanishes.

STRIKE

I never get called sweetie by waitresses.

AL

You're not tipping heavily enough.

Robin watches as Strike carefully unspools ribbon from the print cartridge. He shines a light through it. Sees:

(Reversed) *not what Eddie Boy had seen in Kate after all.*

Strike grins at Robin.

STRIKE

Regular names. Eddie Boy and Kate.
No baroque archetypes here.

Strike and Robin walk through into his--

INNER OFFICE

Strike and Robin stand next to SAMUEL, a text analyst. He has the parody text on the table -- next to the Bombyx manuscript -- next to a Fancourt novel -- next to a 3rd, low-budget looking student magazine open at a short story (from the early 1980s).

SAMUEL

(re: the student magazine)
You did well to get this.

ROBIN

Apparently a lot of people ask Oxford for it because it's got Fancourt's earliest published story in it.

STRIKE

How're we looking?

SAMUEL

Yes, you see here -- and here. The same unusual formulation of phrase. And here again, in this piece, the semi-colon used more frequently than usual. Our spelling mistakes often give us away, but proof readers usually catch those. We're left with... yes, look here.

Samuel pulls together the student magazine, the Ellie Fancourt parody and the Bombyx manuscript.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

An Oxford comma, across all three pieces.

Reaching for a dog-eared Quine novel nearby.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)
Here's a list. No Oxford comma.
It's the kind of thing a writer
tends to be in or out on.

STRIKE
Is it proof?

SAMUEL
No... but taken together, I would bet that whoever wrote this parody piece also wrote your *Bombyx Mori*. And probably this short story. Harder to be sure there.

STRIKE
I'd bet on it as well.

Strike straightens up. Pleased.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
It's a sophisticated revenge, isn't it? The story of their grudge in the form of a secret parody of Quine himself.

ROBIN
A book that leaves Quine's wife, and his lover and his colleagues all hating him. A very comprehensive revenge.

STRIKE
But far too complicated. That's what unpicked them in the end.

Strike makes a call on his phone.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
Mr Chard? I gather you're having a dinner for one of Liz Tassel's clients, Larry Pinkelman. Would you mind if we dropped by?

48-49 OMITTED

48-49

50 EXT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB - NIGHT 10

50

Strike and Robin arrive.

51 INT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB - NIGHT 10

51

Strike and Robin approach the RECEPTIONIST.

STRIKE

Where's the Pinkelman event taking place?

RECEPTIONIST

Dining room. I'm afraid they started awhile ago...

STRIKE

It's alright. Not especially hungry.

ROBIN

That's a first...

They head inwards.

52 INT. ROBIN AND MATTHEW'S FLAT, KITCHEN - NIGHT 10 52

Alone, Matt makes a cheese sandwich. He dials.

MATTHEW

(on phone)

Two nights in a week, love. It'd be nice to see you some time.

53 INT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB, OUTSIDE DINING ROOM - NIGHT 10 53

Seen through the glass doors, the assembled party included aged PINKELMAN, plus Daniel Chard, Liz Tassel, Jerry Waldegrave and Andrew Fancourt.

ROBIN

It's like a *Bombyx Mori* reunion in there.

Strike knocks on the door and enters the dining room with Robin beside him.

54 INT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB, DINING ROOM - NIGHT 10 54

Various heads look up as Strike enters. Robin takes an empty seat.

STRIKE

Mr Fancourt and Mr Chard, if you have a moment? It concerns *Bombyx Mori*.

55

INT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB - NIGHT 10

55

Another corner of the club. The dining party look on with undisguised curiosity as Chard and Fancourt stand with Strike.

STRIKE

I read the parody of your wife's novel, Mr Fancourt.

FANCOURT

How does it hold up?

STRIKE

What struck me was how spiteful it was.

Fancourt is thrown off. His emotion is more naked.

CHARD

But what about *Bombyx*?

STRIKE

The two pieces were written by the same person.

FANCOURT

We know that.

STRIKE

Owen Quine wasn't the author.

Liz Tassel comes and joins them.

LIZ

I couldn't hear the title of that wretched book raised and not apologise to you both.

STRIKE

Good evening, Miss Tassel. I was just telling them that Owen Quine didn't write *Bombyx Mori*. At least not the version that they've read.

Beat.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

He did write a book called *Bombyx Mori*. He intended to settle a few scores with it. Embarrass a few old sparring partners.

(MORE)

STRIKE (CONT'D)

But his anecdote about Mr Fancourt's "limp dick" doesn't appear in the text we've been given.

LIZ

What are you talking about?

STRIKE

You wrote the parody of Ellie Fancourt's novel. The one she killed herself over.

(beat)

Owen Quine knew you wrote it. Did you confide in him? Or did he guess? It's all there in the book you wrote, Miss Tassel. Your hurt when Andrew rejected your writing, and again when he rejected your love.

56

INT. BOMBYX, VAINGLORIOUS ROOM - HALF-LIGHT

56

Vainglorious/Fancourt seizes an iron from the fire.

LIZ (V.O.)

Andrew called my efforts "lamentably derivative". No doubt correctly.

With a thin, reedy laugh Vainglorious presses the iron into the flesh of Effigy's back -- only in this telling, Effigy is played by Liz. She SCREAMS even as she types onwards.

VAINGLORIOUS

She has no talent!

57

INT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB - NIGHT 10

57

Liz laughs. A high, odd, strained sound. Chard and Fancourt both watch her.

58

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

58

Ellie Fancourt pins the snipped-out parody onto the flesh-poking needle and closes the safety pin, securing it to her chest.

Blood reddens the paper.

59 INT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB - NIGHT 10

59

Liz stares at Strike.

LIZ
That is a disgusting slur.

STRIKE
You wrote a short story for an Oxford anthology. The style is a good match for both *Bombyx Mori* and the parody of Ellie Fancourt's book.

LIZ
Andrew, don't listen to this. It's absolute rubbish.

60 EXT. BOMBYX, THE ROAD ONWARDS - HALF-LIGHT

60

From a silk thread, Owen Quine as the TICK now lowers himself onto Liz Tassel's sleeping body. He buries a knife-like straw into Liz/Bombyx's shoulder and begins to sup on her blood.

STRIKE (V.O.)
Owen Quine had a price for keeping your secret. You didn't support Orlando out of pity. He blackmailed you for nearly thirty years. He forced you to choose him over Andrew as a client.

Liz/Bombyx wakes and half-turns, groaning in distress.

BOMBYX/LIZ
No! My blood is my own blood!

TICK/QUINE
I will leave you enough to live on.

The Tick digs its straw-like weapon deeper into Bombyx's flesh and she SCREAMS in agony.

61 INT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB - NIGHT 10

61

As before.

LIZ
Poor Mr Strike. So buggered for money that he scrapes the barrel.
(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

Leonora is paying you now, isn't she? I assume this is all for her benefit?

STRIKE

It was your idea that Quine make a scene in the restaurant. Shout at you and storm out. And later he'd hole up in Talgarth Road and you'd meet him there with supplies while the press picked-up on the row and his disappearance. It had worked for him in the past.

LIZ

Rubbish.

STRIKE

Afterwards you visited Leonora's house to reassure her when Quine went missing. You took the opportunity to take away every notebook in his study that contained scraps of the real *Bombyx Mori*. But you didn't manage to destroy every trace. I found pages from the real manuscript. I found an original typewriter ribbon. And the police have just pulled an electric typewriter of the model Quine uses from the millpond at your friend Dorcus' house.

Liz coughs again.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

The acid you used really ripped your throat to shreds.

Liz pauses. Then runs, hurtling for the exit.

Robin steps in front of Liz to stop her -- but Liz grabs a water jug from the bar top and whips it round onto Robin's head.

STRIKE (CONT'D)

Robin!

Robin falls, dazed -- and Liz escapes.

Robin, unsteady, forces herself to get up. To refocus. To run.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
Don't--!

Strike tries to run after Robin, but the pain is brutal.
Still, he grits his teeth...

62 EXT. CHELSEA ARTS CLUB - NIGHT 10 (CONTINUOUS) 62

Robin hits the street in time to see Liz racing away down the pavement. Robin runs in pursuit. Younger, fitter -- gaining, despite the injury from the jug.

Liz hears the footsteps and turns -- sees Robin -- darts across the road through traffic -- cars HORN-BLARING -- with Robin also weaving through cars.

Robin rugby-tackles Liz to the pavement. Liz goes down hard, but is full of adrenaline, fear and rage -- and is built strong.

She fights dirty, hammering a fist into Robin's head.

Robin manages to swing her arm, connecting a fist with Liz's throat. Liz coughs as she fights, but now Robin gains the upper hand, pinning Liz down and punching down hard -- once, twice, three times.

STRIKE
ROBIN?!

ROBIN
Over here!

Liz is spent. Coughing and wheezing.

SIRENS in the distance.

Moments later Strike arrives, out of breath.

STRIKE
You alright?

Robin is bleeding from the lip, but she nods happily.

ROBIN
I'm fine.

62A INT. STRIKE'S OFFICE - DAY 11 62A

Strike is on the phone in his office.

Robin runs through some post. She slits open a large envelope.

She takes out a large glossy photo:

Charlotte, in her wedding dress, staring into the camera. Beautiful, haunted, utterly sad.

Robin stares down at the image.

STRIKE
(calling out)
Robin?

Robin stuffs the photo back in the envelope and hurries to the doorway. Strike is grinning.

STRIKE (CONT'D)
Got some good news. Will you call us a cab?

63 EXT. WOMEN'S PRISON - DAY 11

63

Strike and Robin (her lip bruised and face scratched) are waiting for Leonora as she's released.

64 INT./EXT. BLACK CAB - TRAVELLING - DAY 11

64

Strike, Robin and Leonora riding together.

LEONORA
Where is she?

STRIKE
In prison on suicide watch.
(beat)
She kept your husband's real book.
The police found it at her house.
Daniel Chard wants to read it with
a view to publishing. This one
might even sell a few copies.

65 EXT. LEONORA'S HOUSE - DAY 11

65

The cab draws up and Strike, Robin and Leonora climb out.

ORLANDO (O.S.)
(from upstairs)
Mummy! Mummy! Mummy!

The sound of feet charging down the stairs--

Then the door is opened and Orlando flies into Leonora's arms, nearly knocking her down.

LEONORA
My Dodo...

It's a beautiful moment -- a reward to witness it.

66 EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY 11

66

Strike and Robin walk together.

ROBIN
Is Anstis talking to you?

STRIKE
Has to. I saved his life. And anyway, like most coppers he doesn't want to see the wrong person locked-up. They checked her freezer, by the way.

ROBIN
Not the guts...

STRIKE
Feeding them to her dog.

ROBIN
That's disgusting.

STRIKE
(re: Robin's face)
Is Matthew alright with all that?

ROBIN
Just about. I told him I've seen worse on him after rugby matches and claimed gender equality...

Strike smiles at her.

They have reached a junction.

STRIKE
I'm going this way.

ROBIN
Your ex sent some photos in. I opened them by accident--

STRIKE

You can chuck 'em. She's not my problem any more.

ROBIN

Right, well then, see you tomorrow.

Robin has started to leave when--

STRIKE

Robin. I got you something.

He hands over an envelope.

ROBIN

What this?

STRIKE

Open it.

She does so.

ROBIN

"Surveillance course. You find it,
I'll pay for it."

She looks at him.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Really?

STRIKE

So, then. Partners?

Robin puts her hand out to shake. Strike takes her hand and shakes it.

Then, quickly, still holding her hand, he stoops -- turns it -- kisses the back of it.

He grins at her, turns and walks away.

Robin watches him go, then turns, smiling broadly, and takes her own path onwards.

THE END.