

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"Siege"

by

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HOUSE DRAFT

June 25, 1987

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FADE IN:

EXT. AN ALLEY - WITH VINCENT - NIGHT

Vincent is on a foraging run, searching for useable cast-offs in an alley behind an old apartment building. He pulls a broken rocking chair from a dumpster, checks it out. A couple of broken rungs and its wicker seat is torn, but talented hands will soon make it right. He moves down the alley toward another dumpster, then stops, listening... The faint strains of CLASSICAL MUSIC drift from a transom window. Intrigued, Vincent approaches the window, kneels and peers through the grimy glass...

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

An old man sits at an upright piano, his fingers dancing across the keys. He plays beautifully, passionately... a Mozart concerto he keeps in his head with hundreds of other pieces. His name is MICHA LANGER. The passing years haven't stripped him of his dignity; there's an almost tangible strength of character about him.

VINCENT

listens, caught up in the beautiful music... now the SOUND of a VEHICLE approaching... Vincent reacts, darting for cover just ahead of the slash of HEADLIGHTS that knifes down the alley...

MICHA

breaks off his playing abruptly when he sees the HEADLIGHTS through the transom window. He quickly douses the lights and hides behind some storage crates, obviously frightened.

IN THE ALLEY - THE CAR

rolls to a stop; TWO MEN climb out. The interior light goes on when the door opens; we see the DRIVER clearly. Early 50's, hard-eyed... The door slams.

THE TWO MEN - VINCENT'S POV

The move toward the transom windows. Both are carrying bottles with rags stuffed into the necks. One of the men flicks a cigarette lighter; the rags catch fire. The men kneel, hurl the bottles through the transom window, then race back to the car as FLAMES mushroom inside the basement. The car takes off, tires squealing, fishtails out of the alley and speeds away...

VINCENT

dashes from cover, kneels at the window, trying to see through the flames...

IN THE BASEMENT - MICHA

is trying desperately to get to the door, but the fire pushes him back.

MICHA
(over the flames)
Help me! Someone help me!

ANOTHER ANGLE - VINCENT

struggles through the window, shielding his face with his cloak, and drops to the floor. He doffs the cloak, then uses it to beat at the flames. Micha pulls a canvas drape off a pile of furniture and joins in the battle. The two of them fight the flames furiously, and finally gain the upper hand.

Vincent, certain that the old man is safe, quickly shields his face and tries to go back out the window. Micha notices, reacts, grabbing Vincent's arm.

MICHA
I owe you my life --

ANOTHER ANGLE

Vincent turns; Micha gasps and steps back as if slapped. Vincent tries for the window again, too used to this kind of reaction to be hurt. But Micha takes his arm, turning Vincent back around to face him.

MICHA
Please ...
(holding up his wrist)
I know what it's like to be
hunted, to be afraid...

Vincent looks at the FADED NUMBERS tattooed on MICHA'S WRIST.

MICHA
(continuing)
Without your help, those punks
would have done what the Nazis
couldn't... killed us all.

VINCENT
All?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

MICHA

The other tennants. There are still some left, those who refuse to run, to be bought off. We are survivors. All of us.

Micha moves to his precious piano, examines it. He's relieved, sits at the keyboard and begins to play.

MICHA

(continuing)

Auschwitz, Dacchau, Buchenwald... we survived.

VINCENT

The men that did this... Why do they try to drive you from your homes?

MICHA

(a wry smile)

Like trees planted by the water... we shall not be moved.

(a beat)

What is your name?

VINCENT

Vincent.

MICHA

I am Micha. I think maybe we'll be friends.

CLOSE ON THE OLD MAN'S HANDS

moving across the ancient keyboard...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. A MANHATTAN GALLERY - MATCHING CUT OF BLACK HANDS ON A KEYBOARD - NIGHT

The classical music washes into cocktail piano; we hear the sounds of a large party OVER: laughter, conversation, etc.

ANGLE WIDENS to reveal a handsome black man in a tux at a baby grand, playing background music for a very large, very exclusive gallery crowd. The pianist should bear a striking resemblance to Bobby Short... CAMERA PANS off the pianist, across the glitzy, black-tie-and-diamonds crowd to FIND CATHY and EDIE sipping champagne and admiring the art work on display.

CLOSER - CATHY AND EDIE

Eddie's not all that impressed with what she's seeing, but she likes Cathy's company. Both women look absolutely stunning.

EDIE

(looking at the modern art)

I see better stuff than this on walls in Avenue C. Ug-lee...

CATHY

(amused; shushing her)

The artist might hear you.

EDIE

He's loose? Oughta have him in rubber reception over at Bellevue.

(adjusting her dress)

I wish you'd gain some weight. I love this dress, but it's tight in all the wrong places.

(glancing around; reacting like a starstruck kid)

That's him! He's coming right at us!

CATHY

The artist?

EDIE

Elliot Burch! Don't look! My lord, the richest man in the hemisphere... He's gorgeous...

ANOTHER ANGLE - ELLIOT BURCH

and a small entourage is moving toward Cathy and Edie, admiring the exhibits and chatting. Edie averts her eyes, embarrassed to be caught looking, but Cathy gets caught mid-stare. Burch, a handsome, dapper man in his early 40's, smiles at her and raises his glass to her in salute; color comes to her cheeks.

Elliot Burch is one of the world's richest, most powerful men, a legendary titan of industry. His empire and influence is global in scope, with tentacles stretching into real estate, media, manufacturing, etc. He's also a jet-setting playboy, one of the world's most eligible bachelors.

Cathy tries to concentrate on another painting, but he's on his way over to introduce himself. CAMERA IN as he and his party reach Cathy and Edie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ELLIOT
 (to Cathy)
 I don't believe I've had the
 pleasure. I'm Elliot Burch.

CATHY
 Catherine Chandler... my friend
 Edie Tyler...

ELLIOT
 (as he shakes hands)
 Ms. Chandler... Ms. Tyler...

EDIE
 (he's dazzling)
 It's 'miss'... both of us, I mean
 you can call us 'ms.' if you want,
 but neither of us is 'mrs.'...
 someone stop me...

ELLIOT
 (a nice laugh)
 Two beautiful single women... I
 lead a charmed life.
 (he touches Cathy's
 elbow, guiding her to
 the next art work)
 Excuse us, please...

His charm is magnetic; Cathy's literally being swept away by
 this man. Edie watches them go, sighs...

EDIE
 The glass slipper never fits my
 foot...

WITH CATHY AND BURCH

They pause before another painting.

BURCH
 This is really marvelous... such
 passion... a hint of danger...
 (a look at her)
 I sense both qualities in you,
 Cathy. Perhaps that's why I find
 you so attractive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CATHY

(she's a bit
overwhelmed; his
directness is
unsettling)

Not much for small talk are you,
Mr. Burch?

BURCH

Elliot, please. If I've offended
you, I'm sorry. But I find the
ritual of courting antiquated.

(a warm smile)

I was never any good at it.

Cathy returns his smile, more at ease with him now. There's an almost boyish quality to the man that's unexpected, and very appealing. They're moving to the next painting when a portly, distinguished man intercepts them. He's Burch's attorney, ARTHUR LEWIS.

LEWIS

Excuse me, Elliot, but it's most
urgent. If I could have a
moment...

BURCH

I'm sorry, Arthur, but as you can
see, I'm not available.

LEWIS

But Elliot --

BURCH

-- Later.

LEWIS

Of course.

He goes off as Burch plucks a couple of glasses of champagne from a passing waiter's tray, gives one to Cathy.

BURCH

Arthur's my attorney. A
professional worrier.
(touching his glass to
hers)

To our first sunrise.

CATHY

You're moving too fast for me,
Elliot. I'm very flattered, but
I don't think...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2)

BURCH
(the good smile again)
Don't you?

His eyes are challenging; she can't seem to pull away from them...

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND OLD APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A light burns in the transom window; classical MUSIC drifts in the stillness.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Micha is still playing and telling Vincent about the situation at the building.

VINCENT
You've been to the police?

MICHA
They tell us there's nothing they can do, that we should hire our own guards. We're all on pensions here. Where would we find money for guards? So we stay inside behind locked doors, like frightened children. Now they turn off our heat, break the elevator, stop up the plumbing...

Vincent hears something; he waves at Micha to stop playing. We hear FOOTSTEPS above, coming down the stairs.

OLD WOMAN'S VOICE
Micha? Are you all right? Micha?

MICHA
Sophie. My neighbor. A good woman, but such a gossip! If she sees you...

Vincent rises, goes to the window. Micha gives him a hug of gratitude.

VINCENT
Something will be done, Micha.
I promise you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

SOPHIE'S VOICE
 (outside the door)
 It's freezing down here! You'll
 catch your death...

Micha helps Vincent get back out the window. SOPHIE comes IN just as Vincent disappears. She's a small, frail woman, totally devoted to Micha.

SOPHIE
 And not even wearing a sweater!
 Cold enough to hang beef and not
 even a sweater... You should bring
 your piano upstairs again.
 Rosencratz and Gildenstern moved
 out, who's left to complain...
 Your face, what is that on your
 face, soot?
 (she looks around at
 the area blackened by
 the fire)
 My God, Micha! What...

MICHA
 (coming to comfort her;
 she checks his burned
 face)
 I'm fine. A sunburn hurts worse.
 A gas bomb through the window...

SOPHIE
 Monsters! When will it stop, when
 will they leave us in peace?

Micha has no answer for her...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF CATHY'S BUILDING - NIGHT

A stretch limo glides into the curb...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CATHY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cathy and Elliot come off the elevator, come down the hall toward CAMERA. They are smiling and laughing, loose and easy with each other. They reach her door; she gets out her key and unlocks the locks, opens it. Now the moment of truth...

CATHY
 It's been a lovely evening,
 Elliot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ELLIOT

It doesn't have to end.

CATHY

Tonight it does. I've got to be in court bright and early... and I have the feeling you might keep me up very late.

ELLIOT

It goes against my grain, but I guess I'll have to say good night.

He leans to kiss her... It's the first time she's been kissed since meeting Vincent, and she's a bit hesitant, uncertain of her feelings. He breaks the kiss, traces her cheek with a fingertip, kisses her again... This time she kisses back...

ON CATHY'S TERRACE - WITH VINCENT

He's waiting in the shadows, and his empathic powers are giving him some unsettling feelings... ones he's not familiar with.... almost painful...

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She's saying a final good night to Elliot.

ELLIOT

I'm walking away from your door,
Cathy... but not out of your life.
Good night.

CATHY

Good night...

He moves OUT of SHOT; she closes and chains the door, sets the locks, then leans against it a long beat, trying to make sense of her feelings. Now she reacts to a faint TAPPING on the terrace door. Excitement registers as she instinctively pats her hair, preens... for Vincent...

ON THE TERRACE - VINCENT

steps from the shadows as Cathy steps out, calls his name.

CATHY

(softly)
Vincent...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VINCENT

Catherine... how lovely you look.

He can't gaze at her too long; she's achingly beautiful. He looks out at the city lights, slightly angry with her and not fully understanding why.

VINCENT

What is his name?

CATHY

Who?

VINCENT

The man who brought you home.

CATHY

Elliot Burch. We met at the gallery opening. He's --

VINCENT

(sharply)

I know the name.

Cathy steps closer to him, but he won't look at her. She feels strange, almost guilty, as if she's done something wrong. She puts her hand on his arm; he still won't meet her eyes.

CATHY

Vincent, is there something wrong?
You seem so distant...

VINCENT

(masking his feelings)

It's nothing.

(beat)

I met an old man tonight... He and his friends are being terrorized, driven from their homes...

He turns to look at her, and she notices his singed face for the first time.

CATHY

You're hurt! Burned, cut... Let me help you...

VINCENT

I'm not the one who needs your help, Catherine. These people are old, terrified... The building would have burned tonight.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2)

VINCENT (Cont'd)

The've been beaten, robbed, their homes vandalized... Will you talk to them?

CATHY

Of course. You can tell me about your friends after I put some salve on those burns.

VINCENT

It's not necessary...

But she goes back into the apartment for the first aid supplies.

IN HER BATHROOM

She's searching through the medicine cabinet, finds salve and bandages. She goes OUT of SHOT.

ON THE TERRACE - WITH CATHY

as she comes INTO SHOT...

CATHY

We'll have you fixed up in no time... Vincent...?

PANNING THE TERRACE - CATHY'S POV

He's gone. But he's left a BOOK of poetry behind.

RESUME CATHY

She goes to the railing, looks over... but he's gone. She kneels to pick up the book, opens it... a sheet of folded paper is inside. She opens it, reads the scrawled name and address.

CATHY

(reading)

Micha Langer...

Off her thoughtful look,

CUT TO:

EXT. A RUNDOWN BUILDING IN THE BOWERY - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

This place should have been razed years ago. A real eyesore.
OVER THIS:

LEO BURNS' VOICE

Look, I don't know what happened.
The place should have gone up like
a haystack. I saw the flames
myself...

CUT TO:

INT. LEO BURNS' OFFICE - NIGHT

A small, dingy office that would gag Mickey Spillane. A man we recognize as the driver of the firebomb car sits behind the desk, cradling a phone receiver against his cheek as he twists the cap off a pint of whiskey, pours a dose in a coffee cup. His name is LEO BURNS.

BURNS

I know that... yeah... Look, I
know what you're paying me for,
okay? Next time out we'll connect.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - A STRETCH LIMO - NIGHT

cruises toward and past CAMERA...

MAN'S VOICE

See that you do, Mr. Burns.
There's a great deal of money at
stake here.

CUT TO:

INT. STRETCH LIMO - TRAVELLING - NIGHT

We're in TIGHT on a man's MOUTH against the receiver of a car phone. We can't see the man's face.

MAN

Don't bore me with the details.
Just do it. There won't be any
more chances. You try my patience,
Mr. Burns, and I'm not a patient
man.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

We PAN WITH the LIMO as it disappears into light traffic, then TILT DOWN to a street GRATE... PUSH IN...

CUT TO:

INT. FATHER'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Father is doctoring Vincent's burns; Vincent winces as the salve is applied.

FATHER

You could have been killed...

VINCENT

More than my life was at stake.

FATHER

What about our lives, Vincent?
You endanger us all every time you
go above. You know that!

Vincent brushes Father away, rises and crosses the chamber. He's troubled and moody; Father senses it.

FATHER

(a sigh)

I'm proud of you... but worried
as well.

(beat)

You've something on your mind.
Share it with me.

VINCENT

I'm very tired...

FATHER

It's the woman, isn't it? I'm not
so old that I've forgotten what
jealousy does to a man's heart.

VINCENT

(an edge)

But I'm not a man, am I? I have
no claim on Catherine. She has
her own life... as I have mine.

Vincent rises, moves away from Father, unable to meet his eyes. A long moment...

FATHER

Nothing can ever change that,
Vincent. She'll only bring you
pain. Surely you must know that...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VINCENT
(staring hotly; his
anger becomes sadness)
I know she's a part of me. And
nothing will ever change that.

Vincent leaves the chamber, Father staring after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CATHY'S TERRACE - DAWN

Cathy stands at the balcony railing, watching the sun rise over the sleeping city. She's in her nightgown and robe, but she hasn't slept. An emotional storm is brewing, and the tides are rough. She opens the book that Vincent left for her... softly reads aloud a poem by John Malcomb Brinnin...

CATHY
'Never seek to tell thy love Love
that never told can be; For the
gentle wind does move Silently,
invisibly.

Soon after she was gone from me
A traveller came by, Silently,
invisibly: He took her with a
sigh.'

She closes the book, holds it against her breast as we

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN DISTRICT COURT - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Stock, if possible.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A trial has just been recessed; people are streaming from the courtroom. CAMERA FINDS CATHY and DEPUTY D.A. JOE MARTELL amid the crowd and MOVES IN to FRAME THEM as they walk toward the elevators.

JOE

Nice goin' in there, Radcliffe.
I couldn't have slammed the cage
on that sleazeball without the
dirt you dug up. C'mon, I'll buy
you lunch. We'll go someplace
fancy, with napkins.

CATHY

(they reach the
elevators, wait for
the car)

Can I take a raincheck? I've got
some business on the lower east
side.

JOE

(teasing)

Uptown girl like you? It's gotta
be business. What case?

CATHY

(the car gets there;
as they go IN)

No case -- yet. I guess you could
say I'm prospecting.

The elevator doors close on CAMERA and we

CUT TO:

EXT. AN OLD APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The flip side of the building we saw at the top of the show.
Old, but well maintained; the people that live here are proud of
their home.

CLOSER ANGLE

A moving van is parked in front, and the Movers are hauling furniture out of the building. A small crowd of old people has gathered near the truck. We recognize MICHA and his friend SOPHIE among them. Micha is pleading/arguing with an old man named HERMAN, trying to talk him out of moving. Herman's face is swollen and bruised; he's been badly beaten.

MICHA

Don't do this, Herman! Don't let them drive you out, this is your home! More than thirty years... you raised your children here...

HERMAN

I got a good price, plus a new condo in Jersey. That's so terrible a fate?

MICHA

You got scared, that's what you got! You let them buy you, like the others!

Herman's wife, SYLVIA, comes down the steps INTO SHOT, cradling a couple of prized possessions in her arms. She's heard enough; her eyes blaze at Micha.

SYLVIA

Look at his face! They nearly killed him, and you call him a coward! You're fools, all of you! Is this place worth dying for?

A few arguments break out, everyone hollering and finger waving...

AN ND SEDAN

rounds the corner, finds an empty space at the curb in front of the building, and parks. Cathy climbs out and walks toward the group, which is beginning to break up. Cathy speaks to Herman, who's supervising the loading of the van.

CATHY

Excuse me... I'm looking for Micha Langer...

HERMAN

(a disgusted nod)
Over there... the one with the big mouth.

FAVORING MICHA AND CATHY

He's on his way up the steps when Cathy catches up with him.

CATHY

Mr. Langer? I'm Catherine Chandler, special investigator for the District Attorney's office. We received an anonymous tip --

MICHA

(loudly, to the others)
This girl is from the D.A.! Maybe she'll listen to us!

(back to Cathy as the others gather round)
These people must be stopped, made to pay for what they've done! They send punks to rough us up, vandalize our apartments...

SOPHIE

The elevators have been broken a week, they won't fix them! We have to climb --

OLD MAN #1

-- Now we have no hot water, the cheap, miserable --

OLD WOMAN #1

-- Two knocked me down, took my purse, my check is gone... how do I live?

CATHY

(waving for silence;
they slowly quiet down)
Please, one at a time. You'll all get a chance. Mr. Langer, is there somewhere we can all sit down together?

OLD MAN #1

(pointing OS)
There! He's the boss, the one that sends the punks!

ANOTHER ANGLE - LEO BURNS

is by the moving van, speaking quietly to Herman and his wife. The crowd, furious at the sight of him, come toward the truck. Cathy is swept along...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

MICHA

(to Burns)

We told you to stay away from here! You're trespassing!

BURNS

(over the ad-libbed threats)

Settle down, people. This is no good for your blood pressure. I just came by to congratulate Herman and Sylvia on the deal they made on their old place. They won't have any money worries for a long time, right Herman?

Herman and Sylvia look ashamed, defeated. The crowd grows even angrier: "We won't sell! Get out of here, scum!", etc.

BURNS

(continuing; with an edge)

The company has been more than accommodating to you people, but you won't be reasonable. Their last offer is just that -- the last offer. I suggest you take it... before it's withdrawn.

(waves down more angry shouts)

You want to find yourselves on the street with nothing? Is your pride going to keep you warm? Think about it. Don't gamble if you can't afford to lose.

CATHY

Are you threatening these people?

Burns gives her a long look, sizing her up, trying to figure out how she fits...

BURNS

I'm telling them the way it is.

(a thin smile)

Be careful down here, pretty lady. This part of town can get rough.

(to old folks)

You know where to reach me. Do it... while you can.

Taunts and jeers follow him back to his car.

FAVORING CATHY

She gets out a pad and pen and jots down the license plate number as Burns pulls away. Micha comes up behind her.

CATHY

Do you know his name?

MICHA

Burns. He works for the managment company that took over when the building was sold two months ago. I've dealt with his type... only then they wore the brown shirts.

(beat)

He won't stop, not until we're gone... or dead.

CATHY

Then we stop him.

They share a look; Micha smiles at her resolve. At last he's found an ally...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Cathy comes in, heads across the busy office toward her cubicle. A Clerk hands her a sheaf of messages as she passes his desk.

CLERK

Mr. Elliot Burch called. About twenty-five times. And if you want to get into your office, you'd better take a machette.

Cathy looks at him quizzically, thumbs through the message slips.

CATHY

(heading for her cubicle)

Thanks...

INT. CATHY'S CUBICLE - DAY

The small cubicle is stuffed floor to ceiling with huge floral arrangements and potted plants. Any spare space is taken up by boxes of fancy chocolates, stuffed animals, baskets of fruit, etc.

Cathy comes IN, stands in stunned silence. EDIE rises up into frame; she's been watering the plants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CATHY

What in the...

EDIE

You must be a great first date.

CATHY

(crossing to read some
of the cards; she's
pleased, but
embarrassed)

Eddie, I swear to you nothing
happened. This is unbelievable...

EDIE

(a grin)

You got that right. I expect all
the juicy details later.

She starts out; Cathy digs out her notebook and rips off a sheet
of paper.

CATHY

Okay... if you check this guy out
for me.

(Eddie reaches; Cathy
pulls the paper out
of reach)

I also need the particulars of
any real estate transactions in
that area during the last year.
It looks like someone's trying
to buy themselves a whole block
down there. I want to know who.

EDIE

I do have a job outside your case
load...

CATHY

(tantalizing her)

We drank French champagne in his
stretch limousine... of course
the partition was up, so the
chauffeur couldn't hear... We
gazed into each other's eyes...
he took me in his arms....

Eddie waits anxiously, but Cathy's done. Eddie glares at her, then
reaches and snatches the sheet of paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2)

EDIE

It's gonna be awhile. I'm swamped.
 (as she goes out)
 And this better be good...

Cathy's trying to clear off a space on her desk when her phone buzzes. She answers.

CATHY

Catherine Chandler... Yes, I'll
 hold for Mr. Burch...
 (smiling)

Good morning, Elliott... Yes, I
 got the flowers. And the fruit,
 and the chocolates, and the
 stuffed animals... What's next?
 Two turtle doves and a partridge
 in a pear tree?

(a laugh)
 Yes, I'm impressed... Tonight?
 (hesitates; this
 qualifies as a real
 date)

No, I don't have plans... I'd love
 to. Eight o'clock, then.

She hangs up, and her smile gets a little shaky. She senses the beginning of a relationship with this man... it's scary... HOLD a long beat as she mulls it, then

CUT TO:

INT. JOE MARTELL'S OFFICE - DAY

Joe is looking over Leo Burns' rap sheet. Cathy waits for his reaction.

JOE

Leo Burns... what a prince.
 Bounced off the force on a
 brutality beef in '78... Two
 arrests in '80 for assault, one
 in '81 for ADW, and again in '83
 for manslaughter. But no
 convictions. Bad and smart, that's
 a tough combination. Now he calls
 himself a security consultant.

CATHY

So where do we go from here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

JOE

(shrugs)

I take this into the boss, he ventilates my shorts for wasting his time. You've got nothing tying Burns into these punks.

CATHY

He's terrorizing those old people!
Does someone have to die before

--

JOE

-- Penalty flag. We can't do the outraged 'the system stinks' rap.
-- we're part of it. You give me the tools, I'll do the job on him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - STOCK SHOTS - DUSK

It's twilight time... We SEE mounted Policemen... a hansom cab...

AT THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE - VINCENT

half-hidden in the shadows of the tunnel, stares out at the quiet park, watching a pair of young lovers strolling hand-in-hand...

VINCENT

(quietly)

There's nothing more you can do?

ANGLE ADJUSTS to REVEAL CATHY

leaning against the wall behind him.

CATHY

I'm not giving up, but I need time...

VINCENT

Yes... and until the authorities can act, the old ones are defenseless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CATHY
 (cautioning; she knows
 what he's thinking)
 Vincent, the risk involved...

VINCENT
 (a pointed look at her)
 Some things justify risk.
 (beat)
 They have no one else.

CATHY
 (the silence between them
 is awkward)
 There's something else troubling
 you. I feel it.

Vincent looks away, uncomfortable with these unfamiliar emotions, not knowing what to say to her...

VINCENT
 It's nothing. I must go.

He starts back into the tunnel; she takes his arm.

CATHY
 Tell me what you're feeling.
 Trust me...

VINCENT
 (quietly)
 There's a storm inside me,
 Catherine. Emotions I've only read
 about... feelings I don't know
 what to do with.

CATHY
 Because I'm seeing Elliot Burch...
 Vincent, no one can ever change
 the bond between us...

VINCENT
 A bond can become a chain.

Their eyes hold for a long beat, then he turns and disappears into darkness.

CATHERINE
 (calling)
 Vincent, wait...

But she gets no answer... Off her anguished look,

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AN EXCLUSIVE MANHATTAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It might be Sardis, '21'... A uniformed Doorman is on duty. A limo pulls up; the Doorman approaches as the Driver climbs out.

DOORMAN

Sorry, we're closed tonight.
Private party.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - ON THE ORCHESTRA - NIGHT

A small orchestra is playing an old standard. CAMERA PULLS BACK across the empty dance floor... and BACK... the floor's still empty...

CATHY AND ELLIOT BURCH

are dancing cheek to cheek on the empty dance floor. CAMERA PANS with them... they are the only customers in the place. This party is very private...

Cathy has a detached, faraway look in her eyes... and Elliot hasn't missed it.

ELLIOT

What's his name?

CATHY

(a bit startled)
I'm sorry?

ELLIOT

The man you've been thinking about all evening. Are you very much in love with him?

CATHY

It's been... a long time since I've been involved with anyone, Elliot.

ELLIOT

Then there's no one else?

CLOSE - CATHY

She can't make herself say 'no'...

CATHY

(softly)
Be patient with me...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ELLIOT

(a light edge)

You're not answering my question.
I expect commitment, Cathy.

Cathy looks up at him; she's hearing alarm bells.

HIGH SHOT - THE EMPTY RESTAURANT

We watch them dance for a long moment...

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD APARTMENT BUILDING - WITH MICHA AND SOPHIE - NIGHT

They are walking down the sidewalk toward the building. Both are uneasy about being out after dark...

SOPHIE

Thank you for coming with me. I
thought my medicine would last
til morning...

MICHA

I remember when that drug store
delivered. Nobody cares about
service anymore. Remember when
they still had the soda fountain?
Egg creams, how my Ida loved egg
creams...

ANOTHER ANGLE - TWO MEN

exit a vehicle as Micha and Sophie pass. Hard looking
characters. They fall in behind the old couple, closing the
distance. Micha hears them; he takes Sophie's arm and urges her
to hurry.

MICHA

Don't look back, just keep
walking... hurry...

But they're not fast enough. The two men catch up. One grabs
Sophie's purse, wrenches it away and slaps her to the ground.
Micha struggles with the other man, flailing at him...

MICHA

Punks! Cowards --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

The first thug pins Micha's arms behind him; the second one belts him hard in the face. Sophie's on her hands and knees, sobbing and crying weakly for help...

THUG #1

Get smart, old man. Take the money
and run...

The punk's about to hit Micha again when a deep, bone-chilling GROWL behind him spins him around. His eyes go wide with terror as

VINCENT

comes from darkness and backhands the punk, sending him sailing into the shrubbery. The second man shoves Micha into Vincent, tries to get away. But Vincent reaches to catch him by the back of his jacket. He flings the man over a parked car and into the street. Both men scramble to their feet, race toward their car.... They jump in, fire the engine, and the car roars away, tires squealing...

MICHA

(helping Sophie up;
shielding Vincent from
her view)

We're all right...

Vincent watches the taillights of the car disappear into the darkness, then gives chase...

ANGLES - VINCENT CHASING THE CAR

The sequence should be stylistic to the point of surrealism. Vincent moves with incredible, inhuman speed and grace, chasing the car...

Through the darkened city streets, keeping well back in the shadows...

Darting down alleys to avoid being spotted...

Cutting across vacant lots, never letting the car get more than a few blocks ahead of him...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A RUNDOWN OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

The car bangs into the curb; the two punks jump out, run up the steps and into the building.

VINCENT

stands at the mouth of an alley across the street, breathing heavily, watching...

CUT TO:

INT. LEO BURNS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Burns is at his desk going through some papers when he HEARS the ELEVATOR coming up. He opens a drawer, takes out a .38, not sure who's paying him a call...

The two men burst in, both in a state of blind panic.

BURNS

What happened? One of the old folks pull a cane on you?

THUG #1

(badly shaken)

A guy jumped us... Roared like somethin' out of the flippin' jungle!

THUG #2

It wasn't... it couldn't have been human. I never saw no man strong like that, threw me over a car like a was a mornin' paper! Hair all over his face, eyes glintin' all crazy...you see his teeth?

THUG #1

And claws! He had these big claws...

BURNS

Yeah? And a big long tail, huh?

THUG #2

(turning to show him the back of his jacket; Vincent's claws have shredded it)

What kind of man does that?

BURNS

A man with a razor. But that'd make you look like bozos. Like maybe you were afraid, like you couldn't handle a simple job like this. But a lion, a wild jungle beast... Anybody'd run from that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

THUG #1

Okay, it sounds crazy, but I'm
tellin' you it was real...

BURNS

Shut up! You think I'm stupid?
You blew it, over and out. It
happens again, you're both lookin'
for work.

The thugs don't push it... but they know what they saw...

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Vincent comes down the darkened alley toward CAMERA. He moves a
dumster away from the wall, revealing a large hole in the
bricks.... a secret entrance to the world beneath. He ducks
through the hole, then pulls the dumpster back in place as we

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

27.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - MORNING

Morning gridlock. Lots of HONKING HORNS, angry cabbies shouting insults, etc. Another morning in paradise...

A BICYCLE MESSENGER

weaves his way gracefully through traffic on a ten-speed racing bike, making death-defying moves seem easy. His head bobs in time to the rock music blasting through his walkman earphones. He darts between busses, white-lines down long rows of cars... This is BENNY, King of the Streets... He's one of the secret circle of helpers for the world below...

We FOLLOW BENNIE for a couple of blocks...

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF CATHY'S BUILDING - MORNING

Cathy exits the building and goes out to the curb to hail a cab. Now BENNIE pedals INTO SHOT, sweeping through traffic toward her...

CLOSER - CATHY

trying to wave down a free cab when Bennie rides up beside her, skids to a precise stop and flashes her a grin.

BENNIE

(Brooklyn accent)

Hiya, gorgeous.

CATHY

(smiles; reaches to lift
one side of the phones
from his ear)

Hi Bennie. I wish you'd teach me
to ride like you do. Think of the
time I'd save every morning.

BENNIE

(takes a note from his
shirt pocket, hands
it to her)

Nobody rides like Bennie. Special
delivery. Be cool...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

And he's gone, pedaling off through traffic. Cathy opens the folded paper, smiles with expectation, then hurries back into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT OF CATHY'S BUILDING - MORNING

Cathy comes down the stairs INTO SHOT, makes her way to the far wall, and pushes a stack of large cardboard boxes aside to reveal the entry point to the tunnel system. She looks around to make sure she's alone, then picks up a wrench and raps a signal on the pipes overhead. After a moment, we HEAR SOUNDS of movement, and Vincent appears at the entry point, steps through. Cathy smiles with relief. But Vincent's attitude is one of uncertainty, caution...

CATHY

Vincent... I've been so worried.
I thought you'd come last night.
When you didn't...

VINCENT

I wasn't sure you'd want to see
me. You were with him.

A long beat; this is painful, awkward for both of them...

CATHY

You know I was thinking of you,
wondering if you were all right...
There was trouble?

VINCENT

(nods)

Two men attacked Micha and his
woman friend. I... had to act.
I followed them to a building in
the bowery, the address of the
paper...

CATHY

Leo Burns' office. I can have the
police stake it out, pick them
up. Will Micha and his friend
testify?

VINCENT

They want justice.
(he turns to go;
hesitates)
Catherine...
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VINCENT (Cont'd)
I hope this man makes you happy.
Please believe that. You've been
alone too long.

CATHY
(softly)
I haven't been alone...
(touches her chest)
Not here. If I've caused you
pain...

VINCENT
Pain can make us stronger...

Vincent ducks through the hole and disappears into the darkness
as we

CUT TO:

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - CATHY'S CUBICLE - DAY

Cathy's on the phone with Micha Langer...

CATHY
(jotting notes)
I'll give your descriptions of
these men to the police
department. When they're picked
up, we'll need you to identify
them in a line up. You'll have
to testify when they come to
trial... Good. And Sophie feels
the same way?
(Edie pokes her head
through the door; Cathy
waves her in)
Terrific. If we work together,
we can take these thugs off the
street. I'll call the minute I
have some news.

ANOTHER ANGLE

She hangs up and Edie hands her a sheaf of computer readouts,
sits across from her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

EDIE

(as Cathy looks through
the information)

The buildings on that block are
owned by different holding
companies. The three empty ones
are scheduled for demolition, and
all that's stopping the wrecking
ball on the fourth one are your
old people that won't move out.

CATHY

I really appreciate this, Edie.

EDIE

You don't look thrilled.

CATHY

I was hoping to find a smoking
gun, a name to tie to all four
buildings. Someone's paying Leo
Burns, someone that's got big
plans for that block.

(studying the readouts)

Miami... The Cayman Islands...
Costa Rica... Bimini... Five will
get you ten these holding
companies are all a paper veil
concealing who really owns those
buildings. My hunch is it's one
company. If we could just pierce
that veil...

EDIE

(rises, gathers up the
readouts)

I love the way you say "we". I'll
keep digging.

CATHY

(a grin)

Thanks, Edie. I owe you.

EDIE

I'll put it on your tab.

CUT TO:

INT. JOE MARTELL'S OFFICE - DAY

MARTELL

(on the phone)

Right... aggravated assault...
 Hey, don't sweat it it, all right?
 You pick 'em up, my witnesses will
 tesitfy. Let me know when you pop
 these heroes, huh?

ANGLE ADJUSTS to REVEAL Cathy sitting across the desk from
 him as he bangs the phone down.

CATHY

What about Leo Burns?

MARTELL

(shrugs)

What about him? The old folks say
 he beat 'em up? We're takin' two
 hardcases off the street, that's
 better than nothin'.

CATHY

Will you deal? Let them cop to
 a lesser charge if they testify
 against Burns?

MARTELL

Now she's playin' public defender!
 You're pushy, Radcliffe... I like
 that. Let's say possible, okay?
 (looking OS)
 What the hell's goin' on out
 there?

THROUGH HIS WINDOWS INTO THE COMMON WORK AREA

A small parade is making its way toward Cathy's cubicle...
 Uniformed Waiters wheeling carts laden with covered serving
 dishes... another carrying a wine bucket and champagne...
 another with his arms full of roses... and bringing up the rear,
 ELLIOT BURCH....

RESUME SHOT

Cathy and Martell watch the parade enter her cubicle.

MARTELL

Brown baggin' it like the rest
 of us workin' stiffs, huh
 Chandler?

IN CATHY'S CUBICLE

The Waiters are setting up the feast when Cathy comes IN, more than a bit perturbed at this invansion. But Elliot doesn't pick up on her mood.

ELLIOT

You were too busy for lunch...

(a sweeping gesture)

So I brought lunch to you. I hope you like lobster.

CATHY

Elliot, it's a sweet gesture, but I really have a lot of work to do --

ELLIOT

(his smile has steel in it)

-- All work and no play makes Cathy a dull girl. Please, indulge me.

CATHY

I'm sorry, but no. Perhaps we can get together later.

ELLIOT

We're together now. If you're worried about your boss, I'll be glad to talk to him. I'm sure he can spare you for an hour.

CATHY

(she doesn't like being 'handled')

I'm afraid not. You're embarrassing me, and I don't appreciate it.

ELLIOT

(it's a slap in the face; coldly)

And I don't appreciate being manipulated. Does it give you some kind of perverse thrill to lead me on, always staying just out of reach?

She's seeing a side of him she doesn't like at all. It frightens her. This isn't the man she thought she might be falling in love with...

CATHY

I'd like you to leave now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ELLIOT
 (furious; he almost
 spits it)
 I find games tiresome, Catherine.
 But I always win.

CATHY
 Not this time. Please go.

He snaps his fingers at the waiters to pack it up, then storms out of the cubicle...

CATHY

watches after him, shaken by the confrontation and chilled to the bone...

CUT TO:

EXT. A SEEDY NEIGHBORHOOD SALOON - DAY

A shot-and-a-beer place with a low-life look...

INT. SALOON - WITH LEO BURNS - DAY

He's shooting pool in the dingy club when the Bartender answers the phone, calls to him.

BARTENDER
 Hey Leo, phone.

Burns makes his shot, puts his cue down, and picks up his beer. PUSH IN AS he goes to the end of the bar, takes the call.

BURNS
 This is Burns....

He gestures for a paper and pencil...

BURNS
 (sips his beer; begins
 jotting notes)
 Right... Five seven, brown hair...
 That with a 'K' or a 'C'?
 Right... Okay, I'll get on it,
 let you know... Hey, she won't
 be able to buy a frank without
 my knowin' what condiments she
 puts on it...

CUT TO:

