

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"The Alchemist"

Story by

Richard Setlowe

Teleplay by

Howard Gordon & Alex Gansa

Directed by

Thomas J. Wright

WITT/THOMAS PRODUCTIONS
956 North Seward Street
Hollywood, CA 90038
(213) 856-0589
(213) 856-4994

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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"The Alchemist"

ACT ONE

1 OVER BLACK 1

we hear a quick adhesive TEAR, and.

CATHY (O.S.)

-- Ouch.

The blackness is LT. CLAUDE SOLNIK's broad, flak-jacketed back. And as he steps aside, we are:

2 INT. SWAT VAN - NIGHT 2

Claude carefully re-applies a strip of surgical tape to Cathy's bare midriff, securing a wire there. With her hair pulled back and with a touch more make up than we've seen, she has never looked sexier -- or more uncomfortable. And not just because she's in such close quarters, half-dressed before Claude, MAXWELL, and another SWAT Sergeant, GIORDANO. It's definitely tense in here.

CATHY

(to Solnik)

I'm glad you didn't go into neurosurgery.

MAXWELL

Not as glad as his patients.

CATHY

Speaking of patience --

SOLNIK

(overlapping)

Almost done here, so relax.

Cathy exhales some of her tension. Maxwell notes this. Then:

SOLNIK

All set.

And Cathy lets fall a gorgeous, strapless evening gown that she's been holding up around her chest. It fits her like a glove. Maxwell notes this as well. Solnik's PTP radio SQUAWKS.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

MAN'S VOICE

(futzted)

Two and three in position.
Waiting for your go, number one.

This disembodied voice has a sobering effect on them.
Solnik addresses Cathy now: no-bullshit.

SOLNIK

Remember: once it goes down,
you're gonna have to get to the
fire door, open it for us.

CATHY

(irritated)

I know, I know. We've been over
it a dozen times.

Beat. Maxwell is really concerned about her.

MAXWELL

Nervous?

CATHY

Not as bad as when I was in the
sixth grade --

(off Maxwell's quizzical
look)

I had the lead in the school play:
Joan of Arc.

Maxwell smiles, although he's still troubled. He shakes
his head.

MAXWELL

If you ask me, putting yourself
on the line like this isn't worth
twenty-five hundred a month.

CATHY

I'm not asking you.

(then)

Besides. I know you want this
one as much as the rest of us.

(softly emphatic)

We have to stop him...

Maxwell regards her, full of concern and admiration and
the knowledge that she is right.

MAXWELL

Just be careful in there, huh?

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

Cathy nods, punctuating the moment. And as she picks up a gun-metal gray case that's a little larger than a cigar box, we:

CUT TO:

3 THE VAN DOOR

3

is slammed shut by Giordano, leaving Cathy alone on the rain-slicked street. The side of the van is marked "Mooney & Sons Electricians." Cathy takes a deep breath, then releases it. Her heels echo against the asphalt as she crosses the street diagonally, toward:

4 EXT. FUSCHIA - CONTINUOUS

4

Several limos are parked at the curb of this upscale New York club. Even the crowd waiting to get in are among Manhattan's elite: uniformly attractive, well-groomed, and expensively dressed. This is the kind of place you'd find Norman Mailer or Princess Caroline on a Tuesday night.

JIMMY MORERO -- 35, lean and handsome -- is selecting a lucky couple for admission when Cathy strides through the lingering group. She enters the club without losing step. Jimmy turns with a flash of recognition, and is about to say something, but keeps quiet instead. This one definitely belongs inside.

CUT TO:

5 INT. FUSCHIA - BACK OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

5

Spacious. Stylish. An illuminated wall of glass blocks. Furnished minimally, industrial style.

Standing before a thick glass table with a lightweight concrete base is a man of sixty, dressed in a dark Nehru-type suit. Upon the table he carefully sets a worn leather pouch. From it he delicately removes several large, dehydrated mushrooms and other odd-shaped fungi -- each of which glows with an incredible, variegated phosphorescence. The man is PARACELSUS. And while his expression remains severe and unsmiling, his eyes dance with inner amusement.

His audience is TYLER BUCKMAN: late-twenties, designer suit, GQ face, Harvard MBA. He watches Paracelsus intently, seated behind the expansive desk. Also present: some of the most finely groomed gun and muscle in town: TREVOR and GARRET.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Paracelsus has removed the last of this strange crop. With his hands hovering over the pile, he claps once, sharply -- and the mushrooms fall into a pile of fine powder. Its eery phosphorescence is reflected in Paracelsus' eyes. After a moment:

TYLER

Is that all?

PARACELSUS

For now, yes.

TYLER

I'm not meeting demand. Not even close.

PARACELSUS

Then raise your price.

TYLER

I'm already up to a grand a gram, wholesale. Next time I want more.

PARACELSUS

(non-negotiable)

You'll take what I bring.

Tyler backs off and glances at Garret, who sets four paper-wrapped coin rolls on the table. Paracelsus immediately tears open one roll. Twenty-five Gold Eagle coins cascade onto the glass. He breaks open the remaining rolls, until a hundred coins shimmer in a pile. And as Paracelsus sweeps the coins into his pouch, we:

CUT TO:

INT. FUSCHIA - SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS - NIGHT

Over the following, we hear loud, pulsing techno-pop:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | A) The BARTENDER exchanges a hundred dollar bill for a small silverfoil packet. | 6 |
| 7 | B) A man and woman <u>seriously going at it</u> , unabashed and oblivious to the crowd around them. | 7 |
| 8 | C) A woman dances wildly, lets down her long hair. | 8 |
| 9 | D) CU: a woman's manicured hand holds a tiny glass container, perfume sample size, half-filled with the glowing powder. | 9 |

- 10 E) Three people laughing uncontrollably. 10
- 11 G) The dancing woman begins unbuttoning her silk blousee. 11
 And from the bar, Cathy is watching this latter day Sodom and Gomorrah with a cool sort of fascination. The metal case is tucked like a purse under her arm. With Cathy, we now see the geography of this place: which is very much in sync with Tyler's office. Cathy is scanning when something O.S. catches her attention.
- 12 HER POV 12
 Jimmy wending his way through the crowd toward her.
- 13 RESUME CATHY 13
 as she instinctively straightens, and whispers, as if to herself.
- CATHY
 He's coming.
- 14 INT. SWAT VAN - INTERCUT 14
 Maxwell, Solnik, and Giordano, listening. Maxwell now has on his own flak vest -- and a .38 snug in a shoulder holster.
- CATHY (V.O.)
 I should be inside in about a minute.
- As Solnik removes his shotgun from the rack.
- MAXWELL
 Yeah: right inside the lion's den.
- SOLNIK
 Let's go.
- And as Giordano slides open the van door, we:
- 15 INT. FUSCHIA - INTERCUT 15
 Jimmy has come up to Cathy.
- JIMMY
 (inscrutable)
 He's ready to see you.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

Cathy follows Jimmy through the throng of beautiful people, and along the perimeter, into:

16 A LONG DARK CORRIDOR 16

which dampens the sound. At the end of the corridor is a door through which they pass, and:

17 INT. FUSCHIA - BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 17

When Cathy and Jimmy enter, Tyler is sitting at the glass table, scribbling something into a leatherbound ledger. He looks up at Cathy, then closes the ledger. He likes what he sees. A lot.

Tyler
(a thin-smile dismissal)
Thank you, Jimmy.

Beat before Jimmy nods, then leaves, closing the door behind him. Trevor is pouring some scotch over ice at a deco bar. Tyler hands the ledger to Garret, although he keeps his eyes on Cathy. There are mind games going on between them as they feel each other out.

CATHY
(cool)
I'm Cynthia Rhodes. Eric sent me.

For a moment, Tyler maintains a poker face: we don't know how he's going to react. Neither does Cathy. Then:

TYLER
How is Eric?

CATHY
He told me you want to do business.

Trevor serves Tyler the scotch.

TYLER
I'm a businessman.
(sips, then)
What kind of business do you have in mind?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

CATHY

Distribution. I have a solid client base, and they're getting curious about the new product. I want to keep them happy.

18 EXT. FUSCHIA - ADJACENT ALLEY - INTERCUT

18

Solnik and Giordano, armed hard, stay close to the wall as they move along the darkened alley. Close behind is Maxwell, on whose PTP we hear.

TYLER (V.O.)

(on wire; futzed)

That's noble, Cindy. Real noble.

(beat)

What kind of money are we talking about?

19 EXT. FUSCHIA - ADJACENT ROOFTOP - INTERCUT

19

Where a pair of SHARPSHOOTERS are positioned, also listening.

CATHY (V.O.)

(on wire; futzed)

Twenty-five thousand.

20 INT. FUSCHIA - BACK OFFICE - INTERCUT

20

Cathy has walked to the edge of the table and slides the metal case halfway between them. Tyler reaches for the case and tries to open it before he realizes the damn thing is locked.

TYLER

How do I know the money's in here?

CATHY

How do I know you have the product?

Tyler nods and smiles, appreciative of this woman's shrewdness. He rises with the case, and moves around the table, close to Cathy. From his jacket pocket he produces a glowing quarter kilo wrapped tightly in thick plastic. He places it on the table. Cathy removes a key from her pocket, which Tyler takes to open the case. Inside, there's twenty-five grand. Cathy is reaching for the packet when Tyler's hand claps down hard over it.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

TYLER
Why the rush?

Something is very wrong here. Cathy stays cool: glances past Tyler.

21 HER POV 21

the fire door way across the room.

22 RESUME SCENE 22

as Tyler touches Cathy's cheek: then runs his finger gently down her neck.

23 EXT. FUSCHIA - ALLEY - INTERCUT 23

Maxwell flashes Solnik a worried look -- What's going on? Why the silence? They're waiting just outside the fire door.

24 EXT. FUSCHIA - BACK OFFICE - INTERCUT 24

Tyler's face suddenly turns evil. He yanks the wire out of her bra, and Cathy uses his momentum to spin him around, and trip him. As she wheels around and dives for the fire door, Garret and Trevor pull out their respective .50 handguns, and:

25 THE FIRE DOOR (OVERCRANK) 25

flies open, framing Maxwell and Solnik, armed and ready. Maxwell throws Cathy out of the line of fire, while spinning to fire himself. Solnik discharges a round which knocks Trevor off his feet. A bullet explodes behind Maxwell, whose shot tears into Garret's shoulder.

26 TYLER (NORMAL SPEED) 26

scrambles to the front door, when Maxwell comes from behind and forearms him hard at the base of the neck, pinning him to the wall. Adrenalin furor.

MAXWELL
Where is he? Where's the man?

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

On Tyler's unglued face, then on Cathy, as she pushes herself up in a great rush of relief.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

27 EXT. NYPD PRECINCT - ESTABLISHING - DAY

27

28 INT. NYPD PRECINCT - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

28

The assembled group of this ad-hoc task force sit around a large conference table. It's comprised of six men and two women -- including Cathy, Maxwell, Solnik, Giordano, and Jimmy, who leans back in his chair, arms crossed. CAPT. GEORGE FARELL sits beside Maxwell, addressing the group. He's fifty, black, no-nonsense. Behind him is a large map of Manhattan with various concentrations of colored push pins.

FARELL

About last night, you people have a lot to be proud of -- both support and front line. The Commissioner asked me to send his congratulations to all of you.

(to Cathy)

Especially to Miss Chandler --

General smiles and nods at the Commissioner's acknowledgement, favoring Cathy, who accepts it in stride. Then:

FARELL

The suspect, Tyler Buckman, is a major distributor and both the Commissioner and I feel that in conjunction with new surveillance, he'll help send us all home on this one.

Farell looks to Maxwell for comment.

MAXWELL

From our end, Buckman took his lawyer's advice and accepted immunity. Miss Chandler conducted the first round of interrogation this morning.

FARELL

Anything interesting?

(CONTINUED)

CATHY

Beyond the fact that he's not too fond of me, Buckman was pretty cooperative. We have this composite --

From a manilla envelope, Cathy removes a mounted police sketch, holds it up. It's a decent likeness of Paracelsus.

CATHY

-- so at least we have some idea of what he looks like.

SOLNIK

General circulation?

MAXWELL

I don't think so. We might scare the creep into permanent hiding.

FARELL

(nods)

Yeah.

(to Cathy)

What else?

CATHY

Frankly, there wasn't a whole lot he could tell us. No names, numbers, or contacts. Buckman was always reached by messenger on the day before.

(beat)

One thing struck me, though: the supplier insisted on being paid with gold coins.

CLAUDE

Sounds like a major nut job.

Now Farrell notices Jimmy, and it becomes clear at once that there's no love lost between these two.

FARELL

You have something to add, Detective Morero?

JIMMY

(beat)

No, sir.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

FARELL
 (overlapping, baiting)
 I mean, if you're not interested
 in what we're trying to do here,
 you're welcome to go.

The look Jimmy gives Farell is pure ice. Then Jimmy rises, leaves. Cathy looks to Maxwell for some explanation, but Maxwell shrugs. He has no idea. So Cathy gets up and takes off after Jimmy.

CUT TO:

29 INT. NYPD PRECINCT - SQUAD ROOM - MOVING - DAY

29

with Cathy, as she leaves the Briefing Room and catches up to Jimmy, who's walking fast.

CATHY
 What happened in there?

Jimmy continues walking, and Cathy keeps pace.

JIMMY
 I don't know. Everyone's too busy
 slapping each other on the back
 to admit we screwed up.

CATHY
 What do you mean? Buckman gave
 us some solid information --

JIMMY
 (overlapping)
 Buckman we could've busted any
 time in the last two months. We
 were supposed to nail the supplier
 while he was there.

Cathy can't deny him this one, but:

CATHY
 It still doesn't change the fact
 that you acted like a jerk in
 front of Captain Farell.

They've reached Jimmy's desk. He regards Cathy, softens.
 And after a remorseful beat:

JIMMY
 You're right...

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

Jimmy plops down heavily in his chair, combs his hand through his hair.

JIMMY

I'm just frustrated, Chandler.
That's all.

CATHY

You're not the only one.

JIMMY

I'll apologize to the Captain
first thing.

An understanding smile spreads over Cathy's face.

CATHY

Good.

JIMMY

Yeah, yeah.

On Jimmy's desk, Cathy notices a framed 5x7 photograph of a dark-skinned beauty with a drop dead smile. She tilts it up to see, her interest obviously piqued.

JIMMY

(smiles)
Carmen. My fiancée.

CATHY

She's lovely.

JIMMY

Isn't she?
(then, heartfelt)
Best collar I ever made.

The moment between them is interrupted by forensic technician ZEKE DANIELS, late twenties, a real character. He holds a manilla folder.

JIMMY

Zeke: this is Chandler. She's with
the D.A.

Zeke is a little uncomfortable around Cathy. He gives her a cursory, somewhat askance nod, then turns to address Jimmy, handing him the folder.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

ZEKE

It's the analysis you asked for.
 (as Jimmy peruses
 reports)

It was as unadulterated a sample
 as we've seen. Definitely
 organic. Some kind of fungal
 hybrid or psilocybin derivative.

JIMMY

How come it glows in the dark?

ZEKE

We thought the phosphorescence
 might be some synthetic additive,
 but it's bacterial. The kind that
 occurs in caves or at ocean depths
 where there's no light.

Something dawns on Cathy: cognition spreads slowly over
 her face, as we:

CUT TO:

30 INT. THRESHOLD TO TUNNEL WORLD - NIGHT

30

CAMERA MOVES along a tunnel and then FINDS Cathy and
 Vincent at the threshold. Vincent has turned away from
 her, troubled.

VINCENT

We trust so few with our secret...
 They are all friends, helpers...
 Each knows the responsibility he
 bears.

CATHY

I'm not accusing them... or any
 of your people.

Vincent pauses, and then pivots to face her.

VINCENT

I know you're not.

CATHY

But, Vincent, our lab has
 identified certain mineral
 properties of the plant that
 suggest it's grown underground...

(beat)

And this supplier... he's like
 a shadow...

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

Vincent considers this. Then:

VINCENT

You said you brought a sample of
the plant...

Cathy fishes in her purse for the bagged sample. She gives it to Vincent, who examines it, and then stores it in the folds of his cloak.

CATHY

Thank you.

She makes ready to leave.

VINCENT

Catherine...

She turns. This is difficult for Vincent.

VINCENT

Last night...

CATHY

Yes?

VINCENT

(tentative)

... you took another great risk.

Cathy silently acknowledges this.

VINCENT

(gently)

Catherine... what happened to
you... before -- when I found you
in the park -- it doesn't mean
you have to keep proving
yourself... facing your fear again
and again. You survived once,
and that's all that matters --

CATHY

(flashing)

I'm not doing this for me,
Vincent.

(then)

The danger is there, yes, but
that's not what draws me...

VINCENT

(beat)

Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2) 30

ON Cathy's face, betraying her doubt, weighing the truth of Vincent's words.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT 31

A cloaked figure navigates the deserted streets -- staying close to walls, preferring the pockets of shadow and concealed areas. Nevertheless, he can't avoid a pool of yellow light from a street lamp, and we see that it's Paracelsus. In the instant we recognize his face, he is already gone -- disappearing down an alley.

32 ANOTHER ANGLE - IN THE ALLEY 32

shows Paracelsus descending through the cellar door of an abandoned building.

CUT TO:

33 INT. TUNNELS - NIGHT 33

MOVING with Paracelsus along an uncharted and dank stretch of tunnel. He emerges into a small chamber where the tunnel forks -- one tunnel lighted with a soft and inviting golden glow, the other dark and slime-dripping. Paracelsus studies the lighted tunnel for a moment, his eyes registering scorn but also a trace of longing. He jangles the gold coins in his pocket. This comforts him, and he vanishes into the blackness...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

34 INT. FATHER'S CHAMBER - DAY

34

Father crosses to his desk and lays the plant sample down. Vincent stands at the far end of the desk.

FATHER

What else did Catherine tell you?

VINCENT

That this man... in exchange for the plant, will accept only gold.

Father's concern deepens, his hand reaching for the chair. He sits down heavily.

VINCENT

What is it, Father?

FATHER

I can't be certain...

VINCENT

Tell me...

But Father remains mute.

VINCENT

Even if you only suspect... you must share what you know. The drug is powerful... it inspires violence...

(beat)

We have... a moral imperative.

FATHER

I'm aware of the implications, Vincent.

VINCENT

Father... who can it be?

After a thoughtful beat:

(CONTINUED)

FATHER

A man. No one you know. We banished him from this place... years before you were born. It was our first real test of government.

(beat)

His name was John Pater. But he called himself by another name: Paracelsus.

VINCENT

The Alchemist...

FATHER

John's model: philosopher, scientist, magician.

(then; with admiration)

And John was all of those things... A large part of what we created here, we owe to him.

VINCENT

What happened?

FATHER

(wistful)

What happened... Many things. I've never known exactly why. Somehow in seeking knowledge, he began to desire power.

VINCENT

And he was exiled?

Father nods: the memory is a difficult one.

FATHER

At first, he wouldn't go. Finally, he was forcibly taken beyond the perimeter.

VINCENT

And now? Do you know where he is now?

Father hesitates, his eyes forming a tight line with Vincent's. He nods once, as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

35 INT. NYPD PRECINCT - BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

35

It's past business hours. Way past. Cathy sits opposite Jimmy at the table, each reviewing a file from one of the several stacks between them. Cathy closes her folder and glances up at Jimmy.

CATHY

How does a hamburger and a beer grab you?

JIMMY

(looking up)

Huh?

CATHY

You know: food. Come on. I'm buying.

Jimmy checks his watch.

JIMMY

I don't think so. I have to meet a friend in an hour.

CATHY

At one o'clock in the morning?

JIMMY

He's a night person.

CATHY

Why do I have a feeling you're not telling me the truth?

JIMMY

Chandler, I don't know what you're talking about.

CATHY

I've never heard you say no to a hamburger and a beer.

(beat)

And, you're a lousy liar.

Now Jimmy closes his file, and regards Cathy with a wry smile.

JIMMY

It's only because I like you.

CATHY

Then tell me what's going on?

Jimmy lets out a breath. He's torn about revealing this to her. Then:

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

JIMMY

I got a lead. One of my blabs
says he knows about some deal.
I don't know: it's a longshot --
but it's all I got.

CATHY

When is this supposed to happen?

JIMMY

(beat)
Tonight.

CATHY

(realizing)
You're not going alone.
(off his stoic face)
Call for some back up --

JIMMY

(overlapping)
No.

CATHY

Jimmy --

JIMMY

(overlapping)
It took me two and half months
to get inside that club. Me --
not Farrell, not you, not anyone
else. And when it came down to
the bust, Farrell wouldn't listen
to me. Insisted on doing it his
way -- and he blew it.

(beat)

I won't let that happen again.

CATHY

(trying to digest this)
How do you know you're not being
set up?

JIMMY

I don't.

Cathy feels helpless, searches for some response. Then:

CATHY

At least let me go with you.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: (2)

35

JIMMY

(shakes his head)

No way, Chandler. That's not your job.

(placating)

Look. I only told you because I trust you. Gimme the same, huh?

(assuring smile)

I'm no rookie...

But Cathy's not terribly assured.

36 INT. FORK OF THE TUNNELS - NIGHT

36

Father materializes out of the golden light, walking slowly, determinedly, into the small chamber. There, before him, gapes the mouth of the black, slime-dripping tunnel. He studies it for a moment, considering what lies beyond. Then, ducking his head, he enters.

DISSOLVE TO:

37 INT. TUNNELS - NIGHT

37

Father proceeds in the near-blackness. The earth sucks and squishes beneath his feet. Turning a corner, he disrupts a coven of bats. Wheeling and flapping their wings, they scatter around him. Father shields his face with his arm, and then continues forward. Up in the distance, a grainy light glows, and his pace quickens...

DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT. PARACELUSUS' GARDEN CHAMBER - NIGHT

38

Father enters the huge subterranean greenhouse, though it's anything but green. The plants are all roots, twisted, ingrown, confused -- a metaphor for Paracelsus's own brain. They are housed on aisles of long tables, glowing as if irradiated. Father begins down the aisles... until finally he sees Paracelsus, his hands gloved, clipping some of the root, and then placing it in a satchell at his feet.

FATHER

(calling softly)

John?

Paracelsus straightens. The surprise on his face lasts only a second -- quickly transplanted by suspicion.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

PARACELSUS

How did you find me?

To counter Paracelsus's defensiveness, Father is completely candid.

FATHER

We've always known where you were.
We've looked in on you from time
to time...

PARACELSUS

Your compassion will kill you one
day, Jacob.

FATHER

It wasn't compassion. It was
self-interest. So you'd never
try to return.

PARACELSUS

Oh, no need to worry. I'm quite
happy here.

FATHER

I'm glad.

Paracelsus shifts to another plant and begins clipping.

PARACELSUS

So they call you Father now?

Father acknowledges this:

PARACELSUS

I've heard it over the pipes.
(self-congratulatory)
Ingenious idea: communicating on
those pipes.

FATHER

It was ingenious of you, John.

Long beat.

PARACELSUS

(musing)

Father... I'll bet you like that.
It gives you all the authority
you need... without making you
sound like a despot.

Father doesn't respond.

(CONTINUED)

PARACELSUS

Underneath everything, you're no different from me.

FATHER

I am different.

PARACELSUS

You're a leader. By nature, yours is a position of strength.

FATHER

No, John. It's one of tolerance.

PARACELSUS

What was your idea?

(scornful laugh)

"A family of individuals living according to a higher standard." How uninspired, Jacob. How small-minded. We could have been like Gods, you and I.

Paracelsus eyes Father, and then stoops down to pick up his satchell. Father follows him to another section of the garden -- a laboratory of sorts, where the root is dried and processed. Paracelsus dumps the contents of the satchell onto the table.

PARACELSUS

So, why did you come?

FATHER

You know why I came.

(beat)

Your activity threatens to draw attention to the tunnels.

PARACELSUS

(ironic)

Ah: the first commandment... But they'll never catch me. I'm much too clever for them.

FATHER

John, you're not listening. I can't let you continue.

Paracelsus considers this. Then:

PARACELSUS

Am I wrong... or is this place beyond your influence? Isn't that why I'm here... in exile.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (3)

38

FATHER

I'm only asking that --

PARACELSUS

(overriding)

Tell me, what right do you have to ask me anything? What power do you bring here? Will you tear me from my home again? Will you inform the police... and risk me exposing your precious world?

(beat)

No. If you want me to stop, there is only one solution. This time, you'll have to kill me...

(then; with ironic emphasis)

Father.

ON Father's face, reflecting both the truth and the nightmare of this, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

39 EXT. TRIBEKA ALLEY - NIGHT

39

Paracelsus opens the cellar door and steps up into the night. Pulling his coat close against the cold, he starts down the alley. As he crosses beneath a street lamp, he is suddenly confronted by Jimmy who steps out of the deep shadow, gun drawn, flashing his badge.

JIMMY

I'm a police officer. Keep your hands where I can see them.

Paracelsus is frozen. Jimmy returns the badge to his pocket.

JIMMY

I'm going to have to look inside your bag.

And now Paracelsus assumes the identity of a defenseless and weak old man -- the antithesis of the John Pater we met in the previous scene.

PARACELSUS

I'm sorry? I don't hear so good. I'm lost.

JIMMY

What is in the bag?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

PARACELSUS

The bag? Oh, my crystals, the family crystals. They're very old. I sell them so I can eat.

JIMMY

Lemme see the bag.

Paracelsus begins to comply, lifting the pouch off his shoulder. As he hands the pouch to Jimmy, it falls to the ground. Keeping his eyes on the old man, Jimmy bends down to pick it up. But the moment Chris's concentration shifts to the pouch, Paracelsus cocks his wrist, and out springs a dagger with a twisted blade. Jimmy reacts, but it's too late. With a surprisingly agile move, Paracelsus stabs him in the chest. For a moment the two are joined in death. Then Paracelsus withdraws the blade, and Jimmy slumps to the pavement, his eyes fixed and lifeless. Paracelsus is left staring down at him, unmoved and remorseless, as we:

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

40 EXT. TRIBEKA STREET - ADJACENT TO ALLEY - NIGHT

40

A pair of paramedics slide the gurney with Jimmy's bagged corpse into the back of the waiting ambulance, slam the door. Emergency vehicles throw whirling blue light over the scene. Uniformed officers are everywhere -- behind garbage cans, transoms -- searching for clues with high powered lanterns. Maxwell, freshly yanked from bed, is talking to a plain-clothes detective, when Cathy approaches him, her face etched with fearful expectation.

CATHY

Joe...

MAXWELL

(to detective)

Excuse me.

He ushers her gently to the side. She regards him imploringly.

CATHY

Joe, what happened?

MAXWELL

It's Jimmy --

CATHY

Tell me.

MAXWELL

(with difficulty)

He's dead.

Cathy half-knew this on her way over here, but hearing it has squeezed out the last drop of hope. Her face reflects the deepest kind of pain.

CATHY

No... oh my God -- Joe...

She accepts Maxwell's strong embrace, burying her face in the warm crook of his shoulder. A long, powerful moment of commiseration. Then:

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

MAXWELL

(soft; assuring)

We don't know what happened, but
we're gonna find out. I promise.

Cathy lifts her face, wiping tears, choked.

CATHY

Jimmy had a lead. He was
following up on it -- alone. He
-- he wouldn't listen to me...

She breaks off, unable to continue.

FARELL (O.S.)

Miss Chandler --

She turns, and:

ANGLE - TO INCLUDE FARELL

who is also clearly devastated by what's happened.

FARELL

I just wanted to let you know:
me and Jimmy... we made our peace.

He turns and walks off. Cathy watches him.

CUT TO:

41 INT. SUB-BASEMENT - NIGHT

41

Cathy descends the rung-ladder into the transition
chamber. Vincent is waiting for her in the half-light.

CATHY

I came as soon as I found your
message.

Vincent regards her tenderly.

VINCENT

All night... I've shared it with
you --

(indicating his gut)
-- here. A sense of...
inevitable loss and despair.

CATHY

A cop on the task force was
murdered tonight.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

VINCENT

The current of your feeling runs deep. He must have meant a great deal to you.

CATHY

He was a friend. Somebody I worked with. I didn't know him apart from that... He was engaged to be married.

VINCENT

I'm sorry...

After a beat:

VINCENT

(continuing)

Catherine... the man who grows, and supplies the drug... you were right... he lives below.

CATHY

What?

VINCENT

Father knows him.

CATHY

Vincent, my friend was investigating this man when he was killed.

(then; vehement)

You must give him up.

VINCENT

I can't...

(beat)

If we surrender him to the police... he promises to betray our secret.

Cathy considers this.

CATHY

Then he must be punished to the full extent of your laws... I'll help, I'll document what he's done.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

41

VINCENT

Catherine... the ultimate punishment is already imposed. He was expelled from our world... years ago. And now... he lives outside our authority.

CATHY

But he's still your responsibility.

VINCENT

We're struggling to find a solution...

CATHY

I can't wait! A man was murdered! By waiting for you, I put other lives in danger.

A beat.

VINCENT

Catherine... you must do what your conscience tells you... I will accept whatever decision you reach...

Vincent's eyes speak to her of the consequences of what she is considering. After a moment, he slowly turns away. Cathy remains behind, troubled, watching him go.

CUT TO:

42 JUSTICE BRONZE

42

eternally weighing her decision. CAMERA PANS and we are:

43 INT. FATHER'S CHAMBER - DAY

43

where Vincent, Father, Winslow, and Pascal sit at a round table, debating.

VINCENT

If we let him continue, our world remains safe. But the destruction above will continue... and increase.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER

It is awful...

(beat)

But we need to remind ourselves that what happens above, however terrible, is not our concern.

(then)

Even if we were to inform the police, you're all aware of the consequences...

WINSLOW

Exactly why we have no choice.

(t Father)

Paracelsus told you himself: if we want to stop him, we have to kill him.

Looks are exchanged. Vincent remains impassive. Father is incensed as Winslow continues:

WINSLOW

We could do it by lottery --

FATHER

(flashing)

Would you be the executioner?

Put on the spot like this, Winslow considers answering, but stays silent, a little ashamed.

FATHER

We're here to discuss viable options.

WINSLOW

Yeah, well discussing the problem won't make it disappear.

VINCENT

I does seem that the more we talk, the more elusive the solution becomes.

PASCAL

Except, there is this to consider: if Paracelsus exposes us, he exposes himself.

WINSLOW

I'm no gambler. Especially not with those kinda stakes.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

A moment of general hopelessness and frustration at this impossible situation.

FATHER

Then we're still at a stalemate.

VINCENT

No.

Vincent's tone draws everyone's full attention.

VINCENT

Not as long as we can do something. We all agree that what's at stake is the greater good -- of both worlds. Some course of action, anything, is better than allowing everything we are, everything we've built, to be held hostage to one man's evil.

Father, along with the rest of the group, is visibly swayed by Vincent's argument.

FATHER

What do you propose?

VINCENT

(beat, then)

I can prevent Paracelsus from leaving the tunnels with his poison. That will give us time to decide upon a more permanent solution.

And on the willing faces of the group, one by one, we:

CUT TO:

44 EXT. NYPD PRECINCT - ESTABLISHING - DAY

44

The flag flies at half-mast.

FARELL (V.O.)

-- The memorial service will be at St. Mary's, tomorrow morning at eleven.

45 INT. NYPD PRECINCT - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

45

The joint task force is assembled here, an almost palpable pall cast over the room. Farrell reads from a clipboard.

FARELL

I expect everyone to organize your schedules accordingly, so you can save any words you have for that time.

(beat, then)

Item two: Claude has something I think we'll all find interesting.

SOLNIK

Jeff Polermo's a friend, works undercover in Street Crimes. He thinks he saw our man up by eighty-sixth and Broadway -- climbing down into a cellar. After an hour, Jeff went in, but the guy was gone.

ANGLE - CATHY

reacting, as:

SOLNIK (O.S.)

He checked everywhere, but there were no other doors or windows.

RESUME SCENE

MAXWELL

(skeptical)

What, you think he has a secret passage or something?

CATHY

A hundred transients live in the steam tunnels under the Waldorf. It could've been anyone.

SOLNIK

Jeff's as good as they come. If he says he saw someone, you can take it to the bank.

Maxwell nods at the possibility. Cathy grows increasingly uneasy.

MAXWELL

Maybe it's worth sending some of our people down there.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

CATHY

It's a waste of time to go that far. Why not just stake it out.

FARELL

Miss Chandler's right. We're stretched thin enough. But Claude, you and Joey can keep an eye out if you want.

Farell licks his finger and flips to the next page on his clipboard.

FARELL

Item three...

Cathy's face reflects her ambivalence: has she done the right thing, covering for the tunnel world?

CUT TO:

46 INT. PARACELSUS' GARDEN - NIGHT

46

Gently, almost lovingly, Paracelsus places a last handful of dried root into his pouch. He pulls the drawstring tight, slings the pouch over his shoulder, and makes his way through the garden to the chamber's exit.

CUT TO:

47 INT. FORK OF THE TUNNELS - LATER

47

At first, only the sound of dripping greasy water. Then, faintly, in the distance -- sucking-earth footsteps. They grow closer, closer, until Paracelsus emerges from the blackness of his tunnel. Without a look at the golden tunnel, he presses onward and upward...

ANOTHER ANGLE - FROM THE GOLDEN TUNNEL

We see Paracelsus leave the small chamber.

REVERSE ANGLE

revealing Vincent, as he steps from a shadow and begins to follow. He crosses into the small chamber, and swiftly angles into the tunnel, leading to the surface.

CUT TO:

48 INT. TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

48

Paracelsus hears something. He stops dead in his tracks, cocking his eye, suspicious. He glances over his shoulder.

PARACELSUS' POV - VINCENT

His massive frame fills the narrow tunnel, allowing through only cinders of light.

RESUME SCENE

Paracelsus reacts to the sight of Vincent. He slithers forward, turning a dog-leg in the tunnels and veering to the left...

VINCENT

starts after him

CUT TO:

49 INT. TUNNELS - BRICK SECTION - NIGHT

49

Vincent is gaining as Paracelsus dodges through a series of staggered brick partitions. The way straightens and narrows, and the distance between them grows smaller and smaller. In seeming surrender, Paracelsus throws himself, panting, against the wall. CAMERA MOVES CLOSER, and we see that he's actually opening a long, thin compartment... There, using his whole weight, he yanks a black lever... that sends a huge, sliding, brick wall thundering across the tunnel...

Vincent arrives just as the wall slams shut. Paracelsus sags on the other side, thinking he's finally safe. But Vincent jams his fingers into the narrow crack, and using his feet to brace against the wall, exerts all his strength and miraculously... the wall begins to budge...

On the other side, Paracelsus panics and takes off again.

Vincent manages to open the sliding wall far enough to allow him nimbly to squeeze through. After he does so, the wall thunders shut behind him, and he resumes the chase.

CUT TO:

50 INT. TUNNELS - CIRCULAR CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

50

Paracelsus ducks into this tall, cylindrical room. If he would stretch out both arms, he could touch the smooth, fissureless walls on either side. Somewhere way above, a glowing source of light gives him a ghostly transparency. Hearing Vincent's footsteps, he quickly opens his pouch and thrusts his hand inside, cupping a handful of plant. He crushes it in his fist, and scatters the drug in a wide arc over his head. He repeats the process until the phosphorescent powder begins to linger in the air, sparkling...

51 OUTSIDE CIRCULAR CHAMBER

51

Vincent approaches the arched entryway to the tiny chamber. He bows his head and steps inside. Paracelsus has vanished, and Vincent turns a tight circle in the center of the room. His hands caress the wall, searching for an egress. Nothing. Craning his neck, he gazes way up into a vastness of space -- all the while inhaling the drug, which twinkles around him like a universe of pinpoint stars...

Gradually, the powerful hallucinogen begins to take effect. Vincent looks sharply around him. His hands press into his eyes, trying to rub out what his brain tells him he is seeing. No use.

VINCENT'S POV

The entire chamber SWAYS and BENDS, the concave walls losing definition, sliding into one another. The entire room begins to contract...

RESUME SCENE

All is normal, but Vincent whirls to look at the arched entryway.

HIS POV

The entryway appears tiny, miles away.

VINCENT

presses his palms against either wall, as if keeping the chamber from collapsing. The exertion is all in his mind, but the imagined weight forces him to his knees. Finally, he can no longer stand the pressure: he releases the walls and lunges for the exit. Expecting the room to crumble around him, he is stunned to find himself

52 OUTSIDE THE CHAMBER

52

in silence. He shakes himself off, rising to his feet. All is quiet, when suddenly, his ears roar with the SOUND of a RIVER raging through the tunnels. Vincent turns to look, and we can only imagine what he sees by the terror in his eyes. He flees...

CUT TO:

53 INT. TUNNELS - BRICK SECTION - CONTINUOUS

53

Vincent races in full flight down the tunnel. The sliding brick wall blocks his path, but he doesn't break stride as he EXPLODES right through it... and staggers forward.

CUT TO:

54 INT. FORK OF TUNNELS - LATER

54

Vincent enters the small chamber, as if propelled. Now in the full throes of the drug, his bestial side has consumed him utterly. Reason has fled, and he growls and tears at imaginary objects in the room. The two tunnels appear to Vincent as huge ornate doors. Vincent opens the black door to the black tunnel first. He gazes out into a pastoral paradise: verdant trees, flowers and a woman in white on a grassy slope way in the distance, beckoning him, promising "Sleep, Sleep." He slams the vision shut. He opens the golden door to the golden tunnel: a wasteland, barking dogs, corpses, hooded figures, bursts of chilling fog...

CLOSE ON VINCENT

In his eyes, we see something that forces him to choose the golden tunnel. He shields his face, roars, and enters the fog...

ANOTHER ANGLE

shows Vincent storming into the golden tunnel, heading for the inhabited section of the underworld. His roar, echoing, echoing...

CUT TO:

55 INT. FATHER'S CHAMBER - SAME TIME

55

Father rises to his feet when he hears the horrifying roar. He braces himself, waiting... And then it comes again, this time closer. For Father there is no more terrible or sad sound. He knows what it must be, the pain it represents. He pulls himself up the stairs and hastens toward the sound.

CUT TO:

56 INT. TUNNELS - LATER

56

Father nears the source of the crazed roaring. It's just around the bend in the tunnel. He steadies himself and then turns the corner, coming upon:

VINCENT

Holding his massive head in his hands, slumped against a wall, at war with himself -- foaming at the mouth, rocking against the stone wall, crying, and raging... His head lifts up suddenly when he senses Father's presence. Slowly Father advances toward him, holding his arms out.

FATHER

Vincent... it's me...

Vincent snarls ferociously. Frightened, Father stops -- still twenty yards away. Then, he continues toward him...

VINCENT'S POV

Father's figure is wildly and grotesquely distorted -- as if in a funhouse mirror. Face horribly misshapen and deformed, body perversely and hugely amorphous. And this gruesome image comes nearer and nearer, and now it speaks (Production note: Father's voice should be as exaggerated as his appearance):

FATHER

It's me, Vincent. Your Father...

RESUME SCENE

Vincent can't tolerate this thought, and he lashes out at Father, who is only steps away. Father's chest is ripped open and he is thrown backward against the wall. Vincent moves in for the kill... when he hears shouting and screaming from the far end of the tunnel. A group of tunnel dwellers, including Pascal and Winslow, rush toward him, shoving torches in his face.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

VINCENT'S POV

The torches are like a wall of flame and the SOUND, a raging forest fire.

RESUME SCENE

Roaring, Vincent backs way from Father's body, and retreats into the shadows. Pascal and Winslow help Father up, and support him back in the direction of the chambers, as we:

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

57 INT: FATHER'S CHAMBER - DAY

57

Father, leaning against the desk, his arm in a makeshift sling, addresses Catherine.

FATHER

He's holed up... in a forgotten place, way below us -- an old section of catacombs.

CATHY

How is he?

FATHER

Still the same. We have people outside the entrance, keeping watch.

CATHY

(incredulous)

And this has gone on for two days?

FATHER

For all his strength, Vincent lives by maintaining a delicate balance within himself. I can only guess that the drug has altered that balance somehow...

CATHY

According to our tests, the effects of the drug should last only three to four hours.

Father suffers at hearing this information.

FATHER

(beat)

I can't let you get close to him. He's unpredictable. But maybe your voice -- the empathic connection you share -- will get through to him.

(then:helpless)

I don't know what else to do.

CUT TO:

