



Holly Gramazio and Brendan Adkins
with apologies to Rafael Moreu

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Title card: DIDSBURY, 1863. A group of MOUNTED POLICEMEN haul a shackled young boy, YOUNG DAEDELUS, onto a horse.

MRS. MURPHY

Stop! What are you doing? Where are you taking my son?

POLICEMAN

I'm Officer Richard Gill of the Manchester Constabulary. Are you Lauren Murphy of 12 Millgate Lane?

MRS. MURPHY

Yes...

GILL

Your son Daedelus is under arrest for--

Cut to a COURTROOM. YOUNG DAED is seated with his parents, while the PROSECUTOR coolly addresses the JUDGE.

PROSECUTOR

--criminal mischief and destruction of property. The defendant possesses a malicious cunning, which he has used to wreak havoc on the industry of his elders and betters. His "self-replicating automata," engraved with his signature alias "Arctic Pole," dealt brutally with the delicate workings of one hundred and fifty machines in the cotton mills which are the pride of our city, stripping them for parts and building more of themselves. We estimate that he has cost the owners a full month's profits.

JUDGE

Daedelus Murphy, I hereby fine you one thousand pounds sterling.

Gasps from the crowd.

Should you be unable to summon sufficient funds, you or your surrogate will be sentenced to debtors' prison until such time as he has repaid it in full. In addition, you are prohibited from owning or operating a wrench, geartrain, pocketwatch or clock of any kind so long as you reside within this county.

GAVEL.

Title card: 5EVEN Y3ARS LA+ER

DAED, now a teenager, and MRS. MURPHY ride alone in a carriage on the outskirts of London.

MRS. MURPHY
You should be resting, dear.

DAED
I'm watching the silhouette against the sky.

MRS. MURPHY
Oh. Yes, I suppose the buildings look quite imposing from here.

DAED silently watches as the skyline transforms to an outline of springs, cogs and levers. A series of rotary characters click and whirr into the legend

CLOCKERS

Cut to that night, DAED alone in his small bedroom, pulling on thick working gloves and a pair of black rubber goggles. A knock at the door.

MRS. MURPHY
Daed? Whare are you doing?

DAED
I'm... getting ready to break into the local Public Recorded Music Amplifier.

MRS. MURPHY
Very funny. Do finish up and get some sleep.
You're due at the University first thing tomorrow.

DAED pulls on a thick black coat and slips out the window, then uses a long-handled wrench to open a manhole and drop down into it.

DAED
Now let's see if these flash "roulettes" are worth the bother...

He puts on a pair of rollerskates and heads off down the tunnel, stopping at a slowly rotating tower of linkages and gears, illuminated by gaslamps. Echoing down from above is a tinny, music-box version of Haydn's *Le Soir*.

DAED

Looks like the control arm is a double-join on
the rocker... so we jam the spindle here,
grease up the spool and lock the repeating
chain... hey presto!

The music comes to a grinding halt, then resumes--this time
it's a lively, raucous recording of Liszt's *Hungarian
Rhapsody No. 1*.

DAED

Flash!

The music halts again, replaced by a rhythmic clanking on the
copper pipes around the tunnel.

DAED

Is that... telegraph code? "You... have...
tread upon my domain and... now must suffer,
stop. Who are you, stop." Well! I'll just
tap back and say I'm Arc... tic... No, wait.
Um. "Catastrophe... Overclock, stop. Who
wants to know, stop..." Hmm... "Vitriol
Soot?"

VITRIOL SOOT calls down from above in a low, hoarse voice.

VITRIOL

Leave before you are expunged, sir!

DAED

After you, sir!

DAED leaps up to a higher platform and cranks another gear;
the music switches back.

VITRIOL

You gulpy macer, I'll snap you like a
toothpick!

DAED

Mess with the best, die like the rest!

The music switches back and forth repeatedly as DAED gives
chase. Finally, as they reach the interior top of the tower.

DAED

Got you now!

VITRIOL

Sorry, little man. *Terminus est.*

The gaslamps are all suddenly extinguished. DAED is alone in the dark.

DAED

Well doesn't that just take the Huntley.

The staff kitchen of the Liberty house, where the Murphies are living. MRS MURPHY is chopping onions. DAED enters, sleepily.

MRS MURPHY

Good Morrow. Have you unpacked your belongings yet?

DAED

Mm-hmm.

MRS MURPHY

Oh, Daed, you were up all night again, weren't you?

DAED

Can this wait until both my eyes are open, please?

MRS MURPHY

Shall I get rid of the cats so the mice live long enough to eat the candles? Maybe then you'd sleep proper godly hours. You've been playing with your wrench all night for an entire week. You haven't been doing anything foolhardy, have you?

DAED

No, I haven't. And I'm not going blind either.

MRS MURPHY

Daedalus Murphy! You've been making those horrible monkeys again, haven't you? Daedalus! The London courts aren't as forgiving as Didsbury, young man, if you make the same mistake again it'll be the Tower for you!

Look, I'm sorry we had to move, but there just isn't as much work in the country these days, you know that. You're going to love London! This city now doth, like a garment, wear the beauty of the morning, silent, bare, Daed. Now hurry up and get ready, you don't want to be late for your first day at a new university.

Cut to University College London. It's an office, or something.

DAED
Excuse me?

KID
Yo, get wintry, I'm flying the blue pigeon.

DAED
I'm sorry, I was just looking for the bursar's office.

KID
Sorry, I can't help you, all right?

GIRL
You. Do you have your enrolment chit?

DAED stares at her. This is because he thinks she is very pretty.

GIRL
It's a relatively straightforward question.

DAED
Er...

GIRL
Do you speak English?

DAED
Sorry, you wanted...?

GIRL
Your enrolment chit.

DAED
Sorry, yes, here.

GIRL
Thank-you. Are you coming, then? I have to show you to the tutorial rooms.

DAED
Right. Yes. Sorry. How did you recognise me?

GIRL
With a coat like that, coming from Didsbury is the only excuse, and it's not a very satisfying one. The halls of residence are through there, and that's the gymnasium.

DAED
Lovely. Polar.

(pause)

What's your name?

KATE

Miss Liberty. Miss Katharine Liberty. And this is your tutor's room.

DAED

My... tutor's room. You mean I'm not in your tutorial?

KATE

Good lord, Mr Murphy, most certainly not.

A COVE walking past notices DAED.

COVE

Hello there. Are you new?

DAED

Yes.

COVE

Tell him about the baths, Katharine.

DAED

Baths?

KATE

Yes, of course, there are swimming baths up on the roof. Take the stairs over there.

DAED

Oh, how wonderful. Won't you show me?

KATE

Not I, I'm afraid, my mother forbids it. She finds the baths indelicate. Ankles as far as the eye can see. Do go ahead, though.

DAED

Thank-you for your help, Miss Liberty. Up here? There seems to be a ladder at the top...

KATE

Yes, just through the trap-door at the top to the baths, Mr Murphy.

DAED climbs up the ladder, through the trap-door, and onto the roof. It falls shut behind him. There are no baths.

DAED
No swimming baths. I see.

He tries to open the trap door, and then bangs on it.

DAED
Miss Liberty! Miss Liberty, I demand that you open this trapdoor!

Hello? Hello! Somebody!

Look, it's starting to rain! Let me back down immediately! Miss Liberty!

KATE (opening the trapdoor)
Gracious, Mr Murphy, you are wet. In London it's considered fashionable to change into a bathing costume before commencing your swim, you know.

Inside the university clockworks laboratory. The LECTURER is droning on, while DAED is working on a little robot. The KID from earlier is watching him.

LECTURER
Consequently, the design of the time train for clock movements (as opposed to the power train) requires a consideration of three related factors. These comprise (1) the number of teeth in the escape wheel, (2) a pendulum of suitable length, and (3) the reduction ration between its rod and that of the minute hand. Now, how often must the latter rotate? Can anyone tell me? Yes, very good, once per hour.

Now, considering the reduction ratio between the escape wheel rod and that of the minute hand...

KID
Yo, that is one downy automaton. What's its action?

DAED
Shhh.

KID
Come on, you can tell me. I can help you, too. I saw you talking to Miss Liberty before, I can introduce you. Are your intentions honourable?

DAED
Is homicide honourable?

KID
Come on, what's the 'maton for?

DAED releases it; it scurries away.

KID
You can trust me, I'm the Phenomenon!

LECTURER
So a shaft of the sliding pinion can be extended to carry a pinion meshing, according to the sense in which the control stem is operated, either with a wheel belonging to a correcting gear train of one of the supplementary indicators, or with a pinion belonging to a correcting gear train of another supplementary indicator. We'll be covering this in more detail next week, so make sure to bring your supplementary indicators with you, Mr Caraway, since we won't be able to rely on the university to provide enough for everyone. Thank you and good afternoon.

DAED leaves, and starts walking along a corridor. The PHENOMENON phollows him.

PHENOMENON
The Phantom Phenomenon? The king of pinions? I know you play the game.

Another kid, younger and female, runs up to DAED and the PHENOMENON.

JOSEPHINE
Phenomenonenonenonenonenonenonenon,
dudedudedudedudedude... I gotta...

PHENOMENON (slaps Josephine)
Josie, Josie...

JOSEPHINE
What? Whatwhatwhat?

PHENOMENON
One more "dude" out of you and I may have to slap your cannister out to the colonies, all right? Now I'm trying to save you from yourself but you gotta stop dressing out of the dollyshop, haybag!

(To Daed)
Look at this...

JOSEPHINE (interrupting)
I need a flash-patter name, man. No flash-patter name, no identity.

PHENOMENON
You know, you're right about that.
(to Daed)
This Friday...

JOSEPHINE
Okay, how about I call myself... The Mistress of Distress.

PHENOMENON
You're hopeless, haybag, utterly hopeless. See you Friday, Mr Murphy.

PHENOMENON walks away.

JOSEPHINE
The Mechanical Animal!
(desperate)
Cosmorama!

DAED rides into SYNAESTHESIA, which has a ramp entrance. There's a mechanical string quartet. There is also some sort of billiards-y mechanical-y game, which KATE is playing.

DAED
That's nicely done, for a young lady such as yourself, Miss Liberty.

KATE
Do you think you could do better?

DAED
I'll try not to shame myself.

KATE hands the cue to DAED, who begins playing. Kate's boyfriend, CURTIS, watches from a mezzanine several feet above.

CURTIS
Is this ruffian pestering you, Miss Liberty?

DAED
May I have a little more space?

CURTIS
I'm sure you can. Miss Liberty, will you give

me the honour of this dance?

KATE

Of course, my lord, one moment.

She stays to watch DAED.

CURTIS

Gad, the scoundrel plays well.

DAED

Better than some.

He has just beaten KATE'S score.

KATE

Come, my lord, let us dance.

PHENOMENON

Congratulations, Mr Murphy, nobody's ever beaten her before. You may have made yourself an enemy for life.

DAED

Who's the dude?

PHENOMENON

That's Lord Curtis.

DAED

What does he do?

PHENOMENON

That's him in his entirety; he just says "gad" and looks dashing all day.

DAED

Enough of this. I'm going home. I have work to do.

PHENOMENON

What work?

DAED

You'll see next week.

Next week! Back at University College London. It's half-past nine. DAED is standing in a corridor, with an umbrella. PHENOMENON sees him, and comes up to him.

PHENOMENON

Hey, catcove. Did you get your work done?

DAED
We'll see in a minute.

PHENOMENON
Why, what's going to happen?

There is a scritchetting noise as half a dozen crab-shaped automata with large bellies begin running upside-down along the ceiling. I think maybe this scene should be cut? Anyway, PHENOMENON looks up.

PHENOMENON
Oh, those are nipping, what're they for?

DAED opens his umbrella as water starts spraying out of the bellies of the crabs.

PHENOMENON
Ohh. That is some fine wiring. That is so cool it's hyperborean, that is just *snowing*.

DAED
No, it's raining.

More people run by, getting wet. KATE walks up to him.

KATE
Mr Murphy.

DAED
Miss Liberty.

KATE
And just what, pray tell, is going on?

DAED
The swimming baths must be leaking.

KATE
(glares)
You know, a *gentleman* never unfurls his umbrella.

DAED
Oh, this isn't mine.

Now it's a tutorial. DAED, KATE and a couple of other students are writing on individual blackboards.

TUTOR
Miss Liberty, would you care to share the quotation you've chosen with us?

KATE

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."

Jane Austen.

TUTOR

I'm not certain your aunt qualifies as a significant author of the nineteenth century.

KATE

Her last book sold two thousand copies.

TUTOR

And Miss Murphy?

DAED

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,

Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue.

TUTOR

Tennyson. Very nice.

KATE

He's not in this tutorial.

DAED

I think you'll find I am.

KATE

He's not supposed to be in this tutorial. I demand he be removed immediately. Why, he's a man!

DAED

You noticed.

TUTOR

I'm afraid she's on my list, so she can't be a man.

KATE

What?

TUTOR

As you point out, Miss Liberty, it would be most inappropriate for young men and women to be schooled together; the administration of the university would never permit it. Once we have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

KATE

I demand to see your list.

TUTOR

Certainly, Miss Liberty. Next student?

KATE

(Who has examined the list)

But... well, if he isn't a man then, then he's most inappropriately dressed and I demand that he leave, that she leave until she sees fit to return wearing a dress.

(She looks triumphantly at Daed.)

TUTOR

Now, Miss Liberty, you know we are a modern establishment here. As long as the decencies are preserved our students can dress as they will. Why, you yourself aren't wearing a corset!

KATE

This is disgraceful!

TUTOR

I must insist that you calm yourself, Miss Liberty. Next student, please.

SNACK

Sprockets are grey, dilly dilly, sprockets are black,
When you are king, dilly dilly, I'll be the Snack.

TUTOR

I'm sorry?

SNACK

I wrote it myself!

TUTOR
What is your name?

SNACK
Um, Emmanuel Goldstein, sir?

TUTOR
You, however, are not on my list.

SNACK
Whoa, this isn't apprentice woodwork?

Later, back at SYNAESTHESIA.

PHENOMENON
Hoy, Daed, come here, I want you to meet
someone. This is Snack the Ripper.

SNACK grins spacially at him and puffs on an unidentified pipe.

DAED
Seriously?

PHENOMENON
He knows the life.

JOSEPHINE
Come on, blokes, blokes, listen to me, listen
to me. I'm rolling around the tubes, and I
find this--

PHENOMENON
Snack, did you bring those books?

SNACK
Yeah, the absinthe rainbow. Here's the green
one...

He hauls a green leatherbound book from his bag.

JOSEPHINE
What is that? What is that? Let me see it.
What are these?

DAED
International conversion tables, Imperial gear
radii to French and Chinese.

SNACK
What's this? Luscious orange?

DAED
Key machining standards.

SNACK
This?

DAED
Gear Shits book, so named for a famous
misprint on the title page. Principles of Cog
Power.

SNACK
This?

DAED
Dragon Book. Linkage bible.

SNACK
And that?

DAED
Devil Book. Secret London tunnel maps. Also
known as the "Ugly Red Book That's Too Big For
A Shelf."

JOSEPHINE
Anyway, lads lads lads, come on. I find this
linkup, right? So I'm looking about, looking
about, pulling switches, I don't know where it
leads or what it does. It's like... it's
flash! It's just lovely, okay? I spend four
hours in there, and finally I figure out...
it's a bank. So this morning, I nick a paper,
says the bank down the street from me? The
automaton teller apparatus spits out forty
quid into the middle of the street!

SNACK
'S all right.

JOSEPHINE
That was me. I did that!

DAED
You did this within sight of your crib?

PHENOMENON
What are you, lushed or glocky? You never
clock a moneylender's where the bluebottles
can leg it back to you!

SNACK
Stupid, kid. Universally stupid.

JOSEPHINE

You lot always think I should know everything,
but you never tell me anything!

PHENOMENON

All right, what are the four most common
maintenance pass codes for getting into a
clock?

JOSEPHINE

"Dry work," "secret word" and, uh, "dollymop."
But... not necessarily in that order, yeah?

SNACK

Don't forget "God save the Queen." High-level
maintenance love to use that. It's that whole
middle class thing.

PHENOMENON

Look, you want to be elite? You gotta do a
righteous clock. None of this accidental rot.

SNACK

Oh yeah, you want a seriously righteous clock,
you score one of those Bigbens, man. You
know, superclocks they use to wind trains and
springships?

PHENOMENON

Unlikely, jack, security's too tight. The big
iron?

DAED

Maybe. But if I were going to clock some
heavy metal, I'd, uh, work my way in as low-
level maintenance, try the back door.

SNACK

Yeah, but oh, lads,

He begins rubbing his own nipple in mock sexual excitement.

wouldn't you just looove to score one of those
Bigbens, baby? Oooh!

PHENOMENON

Oi, who ate all my asparagus?

SNACK hesitates.

SNACK

Josie?!

JOSEPHINE

What? No, nononono, I didn't touch your asparagus! I did not touch your asparagus.

PHENOMENON

Snack, you owe me a pot.

SNACK

It was her, man!

PHENOMENON

You're cooked. You need to give up that filth.

SNACK (to Josephine)

I'm gonna hit you!

Cut to JOSEPHINE, stomping up to a bored guard at the gate behind a massive clock: the Ellingson Counting-House Bigben. She wears large boots, a hood and a gas mask. HAL is standing guard.

HAL

Passcode?

JOSEPHINE (hoarsely)

God save the Queen.

HAL opens the door. JOSEPHINE enters, turns a corner and dashes into the small door at the base of the clock.

JOSEPHINE

Cor... it's bloody huge... You could do anything with these parts and they'd never notice the difference. All right, Lucies, let's you and me find something to show those boys we were here.

She begins to yank pieces out of the works, assembling boxy automata which she sends rolling out into the dimly-lit recesses of the clock.

Back outside, HAL is shouting into a speaking-tube.

HAL

Hello, Mistress Belford?

PLAGUE

My name... is The Plague.

HAL

Mistress The Plague, there's a problem down here. I let a maintenance man in with an old

passcode and it sounds like the Bigben's working really hard now. I think we have ourselves a clocker.

JOSEPHINE

What's this? Good girl, what have you got? Right out of the rubbish, looks like... Some sort of plans? Right, it's got the Ellingson watermark on it, that's good enough. Go fetch the rest! Go, go!

The PLAGUE, on a wheeled sled, rolls into the guardhouse imperiously.

PLAGUE

Never fear... I is here.

HAL

I've narrowed the sounds of activity to shaft twenty-three.

PLAGUE

(leaning up to a speaking-tube)

Let's echo twenty-three, see what he's on about.

JOSEPHINE

(in an echoey voice)

Rubbish... rubbish... rubbish...

PLAGUE

Your "maintenance man" is a girl, you mouth-breather. Send out the security automaton, bring her in.

JOSEPHINE

What's that sound? Clanking? Hello, is someone else in here? It's getting louder... shit! I've been caught out! Sorry, Lucies, time for me to scamper off!

The clanking automaton follows her down into a sewer tunnel and out of a grate. JOSEPHINE runs up steps from the riverbank and disappears into the mazelike tenements near her home. The automaton, slowing down as its spring runs out, extends an accordion-style camera and takes a slow picture of the nearest house.

Back at the guardhouse:

PLAGUE

Did it trace the route? And a luminograph?
... Good.

Cut to DAED and PHENOMENON, rouletting up to the servants' entrance of LAIRD NIKON'S manse.

DAED
This bloke is your friend?

SNACK
He's our patron. Paul Laird Nikon.

DAED
He's actually a laird?

SNACK
Let's just say some automata are better at getting into the house of records than others.

DAED
Hey, speak of, do you know a clocker called Vitriol Soot? Know who he is?

SNACK
No... don't know who he is. So, nice place here, huh?

DAED
What's it called?

NIKON
(opening the door himself)
Clockstock.

SNACK
Nikon! Laird Nikon, this is...

DAED
Catastrophe Overclock.

NIKON
Never heard of ye. Done anything?

DAED
Well... no.

NIKON slams the door. SNACK yells and bangs on it.

NIKON
Och, did your mummy buy the wee bairn a wrench for his Michaelmas? (to Snack) Does he ken the life?

SNACK
Sure, gov. He's elite.

NIKON
(sighing)
Very well. Come on in then.

SNACK
Uh, Nikon... can I... can I crib here
tonight?

NIKON
Again?! Oi, sure.

SNACK
En garde!

NIKON
Oi, put your dukes up, bastard!

DAED
You read this in the paper? "Major Richard Gill of the Her Majesty's Guard spoke to your correspondent just after a triumphant arrest this morning. He has been tasked with rooting out the insidious menace known as 'clocking' and rendering all its perpetrators unto the fullest measure of the law."

SNACK
Clocker nemesis first class. You're a Nebuchadnezzar, Gill!

DAED
"Clockers penetrate and ravage delicate public and private works, filthying them with unauthorized automata, stripping them of valuable materials. They are mongrels, and deserve no better than mongrels."

NIKON
Leave off, it's time for the tube show!

He jams a gramophone horn into a speaking-tube in the wall, amplifying it. SNACK rolls back one sleeve, revealing an arm covered in enormous wristwatches.

NIKON and SNACK
4... 3... 2... 1...

RAZOR/BLADE
(from within the tube)
Clock the planet!

NIKON and SNACK
CLOCK THE PLANET!

RAZOR
For those late night operations, try Mrs.
Havisham's Injectable Refreshment.

BLADE
The cocaine dissolution of the elite clocker.

DAED
That's... that's just one person speaking
with a funny voice sometimes.

NIKON
Och, that's Razor and Blade, man.

BLADE
You've all heard of how the new underground
trains will revolutionize commuting within the
city... for those who can afford it.

RAZOR
But the fare is a solid sixpence! A bit rich
for my taste.

BLADE
That's why we have managed to obtain for
ourselves a lady's stocking.

RAZOR
Yes, a stocking belonging to one of us.

BLADE
But we're not telling you which!

RAZOR
Should you wish to gain entrance, simply drop
your coin into the toe, then insert it into
the ticketing automaton.

BLADE
Once the ticket is dispensed, pull sharpish on
the other end and retrieve both toe and
tanner.

RAZOR
Remember, clocking isn't just a crime... it's
a survival skill!

Cut to JOSEPHINE, sweating out an interrogation in a prison
cell.

GILL
We know you left something behind in the

Ellingson Bigben. Something that could be very dangerous.

PLAGUE

But our security men don't have time to search the whole thing, and they wouldn't know what to look for if they did.

JOSEPHINE

I have no idea what you're talking about!

PLAGUE

We know you must have plans for your little automaton somewhere. Tell us where they are and we'll reconsider your sentencing.

JOSEPHINE

Gov, I swear on my mother's grave, I didn't leave nothing! I never been near the place!

GILL

We'll see what you say about that after a few nights in here.

He and PLAGUE leave, slamming the door behind them.

GILL

You're sure she's the right one?

PLAGUE

We asked every petty thief in that dump who the bright girl with the wrench was. They led us straight to her.

GILL

Let's listen to the cylinder again.

PLAGUE drops a needle onto a wax recording and cranks the handle.

RECORDING

(absurd Italian accent)

Unless five thousand Swiss francs are transferred by courier to a location I will specify in seven days, the Ellingson Counting-House Bigben will be turned to my purposes and inflict all manner of horrors upon your city. Your humble servant, Leonardo Da Vinci.

PLAGUE

She could have had anyone say it. It's the plans that matter.

GILL

But we've plundered that tenement and found nothing like what you described.

PLAGUE

She's either very cunning... or she worked with an accomplice.

GILL

We'll give her a couple of days to think it over and then let her go. She may lead us right to him.

Cut to SNACK and PHENOMENON walking by the LIBERTY household to drop DAED off.

SNACK

Hey, Phantom, can I crib your place tonight?

DAED

What's with this bloke?

PHENOMENON

His parents are goldgoose merchants and he's trying to balance the equation. Did you hear about Josie?

SNACK

Probably had something to do with that bank automaton.

PHENOMENON

You think she could clock a Bigben?

DAED

Did you talk to her?

PHENOMENON

No. They let her out this afternoon, I'm meeting her at the park tomorrow. Hey, what about the soiree tonight?

DAED

The what?

PHENOMENON

The exclusive entertainment provided by Miss Katharine Liberty. You know, here? Where you live? And can let us in the back?

DAED

Not likely.

PHENOMENON

Are you saying you won't be there watching?

(Pause.)

Thought so!

SNACK (dancing lewdly)

Little Nancy... Little Judy! Little Nancy...
Little Judy!

DAED, smiling, walks upstairs to his room. As soon as he enters he is grabbed and thrown on his bed by GILL.

DAED

Shit!

GILL

Turns out you and I have a history, young man.

PLAGUE

One hundred and forty cotton millers? A name like "Arctic Pole" tends to lodge in the mind of the arresting officer.

DAED

One hundred and *fifty*.

GILL

So my friends back in Didsbury let me know when a known clocker comes to town. You know what they say... as thick as a thief.

PLAGUE

An automaton has been planted in the Ellingson Bigben. You were our prime suspect, until we tossed your things and found no trace of the plans it would require.

GILL

However, a young Miss Josephine Pardelli may be involved. Recognize that name? She or someone she knows may have the plans. We want you to help us find them.

PLAGUE

A moment, Officer Gill?

GILL withdraws, glaring at DAED. PLAGUE, alone with him, holds up a small monkey-like automaton.

PLAGUE

I can't believe you were only eleven when you built this. It's quite a nice little monkey. Daedelus, I know how you might feel about playing turncoat to your mates, but we're clockers. For us, there exist no such concepts as family or friends. We are sovereign nations with temporary alliances... and conflicts. I'd like to sign a treaty with you.

DAED

Who are you?

PLAGUE

I'm the one who understands you. Now, can we be allies?

Pause.

DAED

Sorry, this mongrel doesn't switch packs.

PLAGUE

Very well.

She tears the head off the brass monkey-machine and stomps it to bits on the floor.

Be cautious in choosing which packs you do run with. A history like yours could get you kicked out of College--no work, no prospects, nothing but the poorhouse and the slums. Exiled from everyone and everything you love.

She opens the door to leave.

We're done, Officer Gill. Daed--I'll be in touch.

DAED

Pucker my nancy.

PLAGUE (genuinely)

Thank you!

Later that night, KATE'S soiree. Elegantly dressed young ladies and gentlemen twirl through an intricate dance to the music of a string quintet. DAED, in an ill-fitting waistcoat and cravat, quietly opens the French doors to the ballroom; SNACK and PHENOMENON enter in finery that they appear to have scrounged off of expensive corpses.

PHENOMENON
Cheers, gov.

DAED
Isn't that Nikon conducting the quartet?
Couldn't he just let you in?

SNACK
Sure he could, we just wanted to see if you'd
do it.

DAED
... Wait, so why doesn't he have any sheet
music?

PHENOMENON
Our Laird's got a memory like a luminograph.

SNACK
He says it's a curse, but I tell you, I
wouldn't mind a perfect recollection of those
ankles.

PHENOMENON
Speak of, anyone feel like a free ride on this
Underground Rail?

DAED
You actually believe Razor and Bl--er,
Razorblade's tipoff?

PHENOMENON
Bet Kate's got some hosiery we can use to
verify...

The three of them sneak into KATE'S bedroom. While SNACK tries to fiddle open her puzzlebox wardrobe, PHENOMENON and DAED are drawn to the complicated brass workings set up on a massive desk.

DAED
How does she afford all this gear, anyway?

PHENOMENON
Mother married money. Apparently her aunt does all right writing books about country houses and prospects, but don't mention that, rumor has it there's a grocer not too far back in the tree.

DAED
Hell's teeth, I'd trade a country house for an adjustable spanner like this.

PHENOMENON
I want it.

SNACK
I want to be inside it.

Pause as PHENOMENON and DAED try not to picture this.

PHENOMENON
Er... oi, are those trained glowworms?
You're supposed to use them to light up a
works from the inside...

DAED
Bet it looks flash in the dark.

SNACK douses the gaslamps and returns to huddle over the desk with them.

DAED, SNACK and PHENOMENON
Oooh.

KATE and CURTIS LORD CRAVEN stumble in breathlessly and collapse onto the bed, fumbling with the bindings of her dress.

DAED
What the--

PHENOMENON
Shh!

SFX: twangings and sproings from KATE'S clothing.

DAED (whisper)
Was that her corset?

PHENOMENON (whisper)
One-handed. Difficulty rating?

SNACK lowers the loupe from KATE'S desk onto one eye and peers through it.

SNACK (whisper)
Seven.

PHENOMENON (whisper)
Looks like Soot's wetware matches her hardware...

DAED (loudly)
Soot!

KATE and CURTIS scramble up and flip on the lights.

CURTIS
What in blazes--

KATE
What are you lot doing in here?

SNACK
It's frigid, it's frigid, we're just angling
for a cool at your flash kit!

PHENOMENON
Oi, it's ream swag you've got in here, twist.

SNACK
Ream like a toffer.

KATE (reluctantly)
Yeah... Yeah, it is, isn't it?

She walks over to join them, re-tightening girths.

KATE (warming up)
I want to add a self-winder to the spring
assembly...

CURTIS
Kate, you're not actually about to discuss
this automatated rubbish in the middle of our
courtship!

KATE
Erm, hang about... see, the new needles are
quartz-tipped...

CURTIS
Very well. Wilkins will deliver a curt note
from me come Monday.

He huffs out.

SNACK (mocking)
"Wilkins will deliver a curt note from me and
mummy!"

DAED
Quite a specimen of manhood.

KATE (finally noticing him)
Mister Murphy. Shouldn't you be scrubbing
pots somewhere?

DAED
You're Vitriol Soot? You left me blind and
stranded in the PRMA!

KATE
I beg your pardon?

DAED
Catastrophe Overclock, at your service.

KATE
I should have suspected you were the cur
sniffing for scraps at my table.

DAED
One must admit, it is a spectacular bit of
sniff.

They lock eyes for a long moment, then his flick to the desk.

KATE
It's too much machinery for you.

One-handed, without looking at it, DAED starts assembling a simple monkeylike automaton with startling speed.

KATE
One hopes you don't court so hastily.

DAED's work suddenly slows to a crawl.

DAED
Your soldering iron is practically a lucifer.

KATE
P6 model, hexagonal silica heating core.

DAED
It's not just the core, it's got a lead slurry
pump... but you knew that.

KATE
Indeed. Swiss architecture is going to change
everything.

DAED
Swiss is good.

DAED finishes the monkey, which bangs together a pair of tiny cymbals and runs off out of the room.

DAED

Are you certain this "ream swag" isn't going to waste?

KATE

Methinks I spy a glove on the floor.

DAED

Name your stakes, madame.

KATE

When I win this absurd little dispute, you'll be my boy.

DAED (intrigued)

Your boy?

KATE

You grossly mistake my meaning, Mr. Murphy. You'll act as a proper servant in this house-- polish my spanners, muck out the stalls, clean the mud from my boots.

DAED

And if I win?

KATE (laughing)

I'll consent to be shipped off to the Colonies.

DAED

Make it your consent to my courtship.

KATE

Mr. Murphy, my engagement is already assured... but so is my victory, so I agree.

DAED

And when I come calling, you have to smile.

KATE

Should we do something appropriately vulgar to seal the bargain?

DAED and KATE spit in their hands and shake.

Cut to PLAGUE, opening a hatch in her lair to admit a centipedian automaton with a sheaf of paper clutched in its jaws.

PLAGUE

Welcome home, poppet. I knew I could count on you... let's see what information Officer

Gill thinks is too privileged to share with Ellingson Security, shall we?

She withdraws a sheaf of papers from the automaton's jaws.

There certainly is much more to this Daedelus Murphy than we expected! Father died in debtor's prison, mother petitioned tirelessly to get him into the University... and first succeeded in doing so at Cambridge? But he chose to follow her to London and try his luck here instead! Hmph! Poor taste, young Daed. But it tells us what we need, doesn't it, poppets? Get the mother, get the boy...

She cackles for a while. Back to DAED, SNACK, NIKON and KATE at SYNAESTHESIA.

NIKON

Let it hereby be swearn, that the terms of this contest are the followin': to visit all manner of annoyance, bother, crivenin', hasslement and general mischief upon Richard Gill of Her Majesty's Guard, in return for his own persecution of the lass Josie Pardelli.

SNACK

The duel will last until we declare a winner. Use only the tools, books, secrets and passcodes in your possession--you can't ask for any help from us.

NIKON

Any questions?

KATE

Yes. Do you have a family plot, Mr. Murphy, or shall we consign your corpse to a potter's field?

SNACK and NIKON

Oooh.

SNACK

Pinking dindee!

Cut to KATE, releasing whirlybird automata from her bedroom window as the guys look on. They zoom unerringly to the center of the city.

GILL

And tell them not to bother the Tower ravens again! I say, what are those things?

The automata buzz around his head, blades extended.

GILL

Heavens! My wig! It's fallen to pieces!

SCANDALIZED WOMAN (passing)

The wages of sin!

She strikes him with an umbrella. Cut back to DAED, clocking together another monkey automaton.

KATE

Where's this one supposed to go?

SNACK (peering at a map)

Looks like the Times offices...

DAED

Just delivering a classified advertisement.

KATE (reading it off)

"Local gentleman, known to go about with loose garters, seeks a friend of utmost discretion with whom to stroll about of an evening. Fellow gents of southwest London sought especially. Grounsils blown, Drury Lane Ague not an object."

DAED pins the message to the monkey and releases it. Cut to GILL, arms loaded with envelopes.

GILL

Yet more post? What's this say... "I wish to dine at your private restaurant." I have no such restaurant! "I'll angle for your farthings?" "You wouldst be my wife in watercolors?" "Your company should be most welcome within the chambers of my--" Augh!

PLAQUE (nearby)

How vulgar.

KATE is feeding sheets of paper to a raven-shaped automaton.

NIKON

Och, can it really reproduce a luminograph that quickly?

KATE

And the tintype below it as well.

DAED (reading)
"Wanted for crimes including raucous humming,
consorting with gypsies, and squirrel-
poaching. Should the man shown above be seen,
apprehend him and notify the London
constabulary for a reward not less than five
pounds sixpence..."

GILL is being tackled by an assortment of rough-looking men.

GILL
Hoy! I'll teach you to assault the Queen's
Guard! Back, mongrel! Ungh!

He is borne to the ground under them.

GILL (muffled)
Have you any idea who I am?!

SCANDALIZED WOMAN
The wages of sin!

She strikes him with an umbrella. DAED, SNACK, KATE and NIKON scramble up grappling hooks to the roof of the Royal Guard Quarters.

SNACK
Fly the blue pigeon!

DAED strips away roofing until he can lower a suction cup on a reel into the hole.

KATE
It looks like he's attached it to the internal
speaking-tube...

GILL (below)
Yes, I need to speak to someone immediately
regarding my wages!

DAED (gruffly)
Whose wages are those, sir?

GILL
Gill. Commander Richard Gill.

DAED
Just a moment, sir... Aha, those have been
suspended effective immediately.

GILL
And would you kindly tell me why?

DAED

Records indicate that the officer in question
is deceased.

GILL

I'm WHAT?

Back to the scoreboard at SYNAESTHESIA.

DAED

Dead.

SNACK

Dead?

DAED

Habeus corpus, rigor mortis.

NIKON

Impressive.

SNACK

Übermenschlike, even.

KATE

Don't hang about. What's the score now?

SNACK flips a tile over.

NIKON

Tied at sixty points.

KATE and DAED

NO!

NIKON

*Weel, due to the poor man's untimely passin',
I reckon you two will have to improvise the
next round there. Maybe raise the wee stakes.*

DAED

You think about it. I'm dogged, I'm going to
dowse one on the chops.

When he arrives, MRS. MURPHY hands him a parcel.

MRS. MURPHY

Getting mysterious boxes from your secret
admirers, I suppose!

DAED takes it and hurries to his room, where he rips it open.
A collapsible frame hung with brass tools springs open.

DAED

A new works? And what's this, a wax cylinder recorder?

PLAGUE (crackling)

You wanted to know who I am, Arctic Pole?
Allow me to explain the emerging system of the world. Trading companies have armies, navies and policing forces as large as the governments to whom they pay lip service, but they still need people like you and me. We are knights errant. We are cow-boys of the American West. And all the nameless hordes out there who wouldn't know a spring from a cogwheel are the cattle. Moo! Mooooo!

I need your help. You need my help. Let me help you earn your spurs... Ah, at least give it a thought. Enjoy the works, Pole. Tell me where the plans are.

At the park. JOSEPHINE sits nervously on a bench, flicking seeds at pigeons. PHENOMENON sits down next to her.

PHENOMENON

Welcome back to the daylight.

JOSEPHINE

Phantom, Phantom, Phantom, I gotta talk to you a minute, listen listen listen. I found some grotty plans in the--

PHENOMENON

Old hat. Plans in a clock are worthless, probably left over from the original linkup.

JOSEPHINE

It's from Ellingson, all right? And they keep asking me about it, see? Please take a look for me?

She passes the wadded-up plans to PHENOMENON. He looks up to notice that a man under a camera hood has been taking a picture of them for the last thirty seconds.

PHENOMENON

Cor, Josie, you've got a tapper.

JOSIE (looking up)

Blimey!

They sprint off in opposite directions; two Guardsmen follow. Back at his house, PHENOMENON stuffs armsful of plans into a

burning rubbish bin, smashes automata and buries his tools in a midden. A sudden knock at his door: he wakes up.

PHENOMENON
Did I fall asleep in my clothes?

His MOTHER enters.

PHENOMENON'S MOTHER
Ramon! Wake up. You're due at the University
any AUGH!

QUEEN'S GUARDSMEN burst in through the window.

PHENOMENON
Pucker my nancy!

GILL
Ramon Escobar, you are under arrest for
violation of the Clockwork Abuse Statutes of
1853!

PHENOMENON'S MOTHER (slapping him about)
¡Tu pequeño idiota! ¡Tu padre era el diablo y
tus hijos serán cabras! ¡Después de todos hice
para tu! Espero que violen su--

PHENOMENON
What are you waiting for? Hurry up and arrest
me!

The GUARDSMEN drag him off to a cell. As soon as they leave, he tears out a note sewn to the inside of his shirt and builds a birdlike automaton from straw and bed-rivets to carry it out the window.

KATE (reading it)
"Dimber damber, Josie wasn't telling tales!
She really clocked a Bigben... she gave me
the plans she found inside it and now I'm in
the gaol! They say I planted some automaton
called Leonardo Da Vinci? They keep asking
about you lot. Suss the plans, and do it
fast. They're in that place where I left that
thing that time?"

KATE opens a book, finds the pages cut out and the plans stuffed inside it, sighs, closes it, and hands it to a librarian.

SCANDALIZED WOMAN
Algernon Swinburne!? Hardly fitting material
for an unmarried young lady!

KATE
I'm to scourge myself with it. Part of a
penance.

SCANDALIZED WOMAN
The wages of sin!

DAED opens the door to the servants' quarters to find KATE and SNACK waiting. MRS. MURPHY peeks over his shoulder as she passes.

MRS. MURPHY
Well, now I see what the fuss was about.

KATE (muttering)
We need your help.

DAED
Er... let's talk upstairs.

He shuts the door to his room.

SNACK
'S a nice room.

DAED
Did the young lady want to make obeisances now
or later?

KATE turns to storm back out.

SNACK
Nonononono. Truce, lads and lasses. Listen,
we got a higher purpose here, all right? A
wake-up call for the opium generation. We
demand free access to the works of the world,
well, that comes with some responsibility.
"When I was a child, I spaketh as a child, I
understood as a child, but when I became a man
I put away childish things." That's
Corinthians I, chapter 9, verse fourteen--

KATE
I believe you'll find it's 13:11.

DAED
Can't you count?

KATE
Look, Phantom and Josie are wearing the broad
arrow for someone else's blag.

DAED
Miss Murphy! Such vulgar tongue!

KATE
One must speak at the level of one's audience.
We need your help to make sense out of these
plans.

DAED
I can't. Everyone who touches them gets
hauled off. I'm sorry, but I can't afford to
get arrested.

SNACK (disgusted)
Maybe I'll just use the loo.

He slumps out. KATE turns to DAED, honestly appealing.

KATE
What's the matter with you? I know we've been
playing at games, but we are ostensibly on the
same side, and we really need your help. ...
I really need your help.

DAED
I'm sorry. I can't.

KATE (defeated)
Well... I had one of my ravens duplicate the
plans. Can you keep this safe, so we have
something untouched to give to my solicitor if
Gill catches up with us?

SFX: A knock at the door.

MRS. MURPHY
Dear hearts, I just wanted to say, help
yourselves to anything in the larder. Mister
Snack already has.

KATE
Thank you, Mrs. Murphy.

DAED
All right. I'll take the duplicate.

KATE
Thank you.

She leaves. DAED closes the door and sits heavily on the bed. A batlike automaton flaps in through his window and deposits a wanted poster much like the earlier one of GILL in his lap.

DAED

"Wanted... Lauren Murphy... crimes ranging through prostitution, escaping transportation, and assault on an officer of the Queen's Guard?!"

A wax cylinder in the bat's body starts to rotate.

PLAGUE (crackling)

She will be dragged bodily out of your home, handled by the men of the Guard--who don't take kindly to women attacking their own--and tossed in a rank cell to wait for her trial. Since there is no record of her crimes, that trial will never come, and you, Mister Murphy, will have a matched pair of parents... The Liberty girl has the plans I need. Bring them to the Paddington Underground Rail Concourse, and arrive alone.

Later that night. DAED stands in the middle of a thick London Particular, the sheaf of plans in one hand. PLAGUE rolls up on her wheeled sled, smiling.

DAED

Should you so much as touch my mother--

PLAGUE

Don't threaten me, Pole.

DAED

Here. I brought the plans.

PLAGUE

Good boy!

DAED

Listen, Kate didn't know what these were for. She came to me to suss it out. She didn't plant anything at Ellingson--leave her alone.

PLAGUE

Relax, child. If she's innocent, she'll be safe. Have you no faith in the Queen's justice?

She snatches the plans and rolls away. DAED slumps off in defeat. Cut to KATE'S room: the clockers are poring over some plans. DAED knocks and enters.

DAED

Miss Liberty, listen...

KATE
Please, one moment...

DAED
I have to tell you something.

SNACK
Then wait!

NIKON
Have a gawk at it, it's as lean and clean as a kilt in Cornwall.

SNACK
Looks like a clocker built it.

KATE
This contraption is heaped.

NIKON
But that's poorly, lads. It's unfinished. This is going to take until the ends of the earth to decipher. I'll fetch us some coffee and coca leaves.

SNACK
Mr Murphy, would you like a turn?

DAED
I think I know what it is. It's... a mechanical worm.

NIKON
What does it eat?

DAED
It nibbles. You see this? It gathers nickels from the counting-house drawers, every night.

KATE
How much?

DAED
Well, at that wind-down rate, it could keep going for months. It could easily take a million pounds.

KATE
Whoever built this is going to need somebody else sent to the Tower for it. And that's the Phenomenon, and that's Josie, and that's us. We must find the rest of the plans, or the automaton itself, so that we can work out

where the money is going before the worm self-destructs. Otherwise, gentlemen, we have no hope of uncovering its pernicious creator.

DAED

I think I know who the pernicious creator is.

KATE

What? Who?

DAED

Ellington's security moll. I... I gave her a copy of the plans you gave me.

KATE

Fie! Mr Murphy!

DAED

I didn't know what was on it!

SNACK

Oh man. That's universally stupid, man!

NIKON

Yo, you are a right magsman, man.

KATE

But why should she come to you?

DAED

I've spent time in the salt box. I was Arctic Pole.

NIKON

Arctic Pole? Your 'matons broke down one hundred and fifty mill machines in a day? I thought you were Scots, man! Hoot, lads, this is Arctic Pole!

SNACK

That's... distant!

KATE

Well isn't that delightful. There goes my entry to the Royal Society.

NIKON

Dinnae be crabbit, this is Arctic Pole! Whooo, haha!

DAED

I'll make it up to you!

KATE

And how will you do that, pray tell?

DAED

I'll get the rest of the plans. I'll clock the Bigben.

NIKON

They'll trace you like a weech, lad. Ye'll be right clagged in.

SNACK

They're going to find you with a smoking lum.

DAED

Flatched if I care!

NIKON

Aye, right, lad. Even if you had the passcodes, it'll take ye ten minutes to get in, and then you have to find the plans, man, I mean, the poliss will have you in five minutes.

SNACK

We're so boiled, we're tripe.

KATE

Yes. And one should never eat tripe at table alone. With me, we can do it in seven.

SNACK

Then you're both wearing the broad arrow. I help, we can do it in six.

NIKON

Look at yourselves, yer great big foolish gobshites, you're mad as a house. If I help, we can do it in five minutes.

DAED

All right. Let's go shopping.

SNACK

Woo-hoo! Boom!

This is basically a montage sequence in the movie, which is a bit problematic. We'll start with DAED and KATE outside the Ellingson building.

DAED

So we're under the Ellingson building now?

KATE
This drain comes up in the courtyard.

DAED
Ladies first.

KATE climbs the ladder. DAED looks around airily.

DAED
You know, if I were to take advantage of this situation and glance up, I might see your bloomers.

KATE
Mr Murphy!

DAED
I was just pointing it out. Of course, I live by a strict code of honour, so I wouldn't dream of doing so.

KATE
I should certainly hope not.

In any case, Mr Murphy, you should be grievously disappointed if you tried. Young ladies of taste and refinement never wear bloomers.

DAED
I see. Er, metaphorically.

They emerge from the tunnel.

KATE
And here we go, right by the bins. Kitchen scraps, more kitchen scraps...

DAED
Paper. Here, help me sort.

Elsewhere:

NIKON
Come on, man, we've only got a wee while.

SNACK
You can't hurry genius. Or clockwork.
Abracadabra... wait, something's wrong.

NIKON
Yo, yer big bampot, ye've not wound it up.

SNACK
Glacial.

NIKON
Hurry up, lad.

SNACK
There we go. It'll pick up every telegraph
sent through the exchange until it winds down.

Elsewhere again. THE PLAGUE is stroking her automata, and
fiddling with them, and winding them up, and baby-talking.

PLAGUE

Come on, little ones, c'mere. Come on. Oooh,
itsy bitsy little friends. I might need to
call on you sooner than I wanted to, I'm
afraid, my loves, my doves. Ohh, Dobbin, my
Dobbin; and little Bludger, and tiny
Killcutter. I'm not blaming you, my sweets.
You're unstoppable, you are, I know you are,
to those silly civilians. Civ-illy-ans, hee
hee. But those nasty children are clockers,
so we'll have to be careful.

You don't need to worry. All we have to do is
finish converting the Bigben to do our evil-
weevil little bidding and then we can just lay
great big waste to the nasty old city, can't
we?

Ohh, don't look like that. We have to. We need
to get those nasty clockers all locked up.
Nobody's going to believe them then, are they?
Oh no they aren't! No they aren't! And then
we'll have all that money and we can just pop
across the Channel, yes we can.

What you have to remember is that there is no
right and wrong, there's only delightful and
dull. And hanging from a rope sounds very dull
to me. If someone has to do it, better them
than us, my sweets.

PLAGUE plays the wax recording again.

RECORDING
(absurd Italian accent)
Unless five thousand Swiss francs are
transferred by courier to a location I will
specify in seven days, the Ellingson Counting-
House Bigben will be turned to my purposes and

inflict all manner of horrors upon your city.
Your humble servant, Leonardo Da Vinci.

There is a knocking at the door.

PLAGUE

Now all you little friends, I'm going to put you in the cupboard while I talk to Mr Gill, but if you wait patiently, I'll get you out again. We're going to have such good fun.

PLAGUE opens the door, suddenly businesslike.

GILL

This danger is becoming unacceptable, Miss Plague.

PLAGUE

Indeed. The Bigben will be taken over tomorrow morning at half past ten, and those clockers tried to break into our tunnels again. At this point I must insist that you take more strenuous action, or the Ellingson Counting House and Bigben Manufactury will hold Scotland Yard responsible.

GILL

May I use your telegraph machine?

PLAGUE

Little Dookin? I don't usually... I mean, yes, certainly, Mr Gill.

GILL (tapping out a telegraph)

I'm putting out arrest warrants for Kate Liberty, alias Vitriol Soot; Emmanuel Goldstein, alias Snack the Ripper; Daedalus Murphy, alias Catastrophe Overclock, alias Arctic Pole; and Paul McCook, alias Laird Nikon.

SNACK, DAED, KATE and NIKON are eating jellied eels, KATE and DAED sharing some in a corner. NIKON'S has a haggis on top. A clattering noise begins.

SNACK

Yo, that sounds downy.

He goes over and listens, transcribing. NIKON follows.

NIKON

Soot, we've got a wee problem here.

KATE
Do we have time to finish eating?

SNACK (looks out the window)
Not totally.

NIKON
There's a warrant out from the poliss. Maybe we better duff our way out the window and onto the Underground.

They start to leave, climbing out the window onto a back street in a matter-of-fact way.

KATE
All right, so what do we do when we're there?
What do we have?

She pries open a manhole.

DAED
Well, we have a dozen passcodes from the bins at Ellingson, and the papers we haven't sorted through yet.

They walk through a tunnel and drop out onto an Underground platform. SNACK shuffles through papers, trying to keep them under control as the wind from an approaching train ruffles them.

SNACK
Yo, everyone crow this out. What're the Da Vinci Automata?

DAED
The what?

They all get on the train.

SNACK
Doesn't look like a snide. It's a notice about how they're gonna respond to all the havoc that rogue Bigben wreaked on the fourteenth.

KATE
What havoc?

NIKON
Yo, yer houghin' gadgee, today's the thirteenth.

SNACK
Well this hasn't happened yet.

KATE

But wait, the fourteenth - that's the same day
the automaton runs down. Good gracious, the Da
Vinci Automata, didn't Phenomenon say that's
what he was arrested for? Look...

(She takes the memo)

"All manner of horrors" ... and they blame
clockers!

NIKON

Och!

SNACK

The game is afoot.

KATE

Our situation is grave, friends. I think I
should alight at the next stop.

NIKON

Nay, nay, Kate, where will ye be takin' us?

KATE

I think you should keep out of the way; it's
safer if we aren't all in the same place.
Maybe conceal yourselves in those asparagus
fields in Battersea. I have an idea. Mr
Murphy, are you coming?

DAED gets up.

SNACK

May the Force be with you, man.

NIKON, KATE and DAED all look at him.

DAED

The force?

KATE

Where?

NIKON

Ye surely dinnae want them arrested, laddie!

SNACK (sighing)

I mean, all for one and one for all, or
whatever, okay?

KATE

Goodbye, Snack.

In a hushed opium den.

DAED
Where are we going?

KATE
There they are!

DAED
Razorblade? She's a lushington!

KATE
They're elite! Let's get them.

DAED
There's only one of them! They're a she!

They try to follow her through the crowd.

KATE
Now we've lost them. This way.

DAED
I don't like this.

An automaton pops out, holding a knife at DAED'S throat.

Aaaugh! I definitely don't like this!

KATE
Razor! Blade! Enough of this nonsense.

There is a tapping noise.

DAED
(whispering crossly)
Morse code! This is ridiculous, she's right on
the other side of that door! When we get in do
we have to talk to her in semaphore?

KATE
Shush. What... do... you... want.

DAED (calling through the door)
To... to reap the harvest of perpetual peace.

RAZOR (muffled, through the door)
Tap it!

DAED (whispering)
She's a fat-headed dunaker!

KATE
Do as they say!

DAED taps. He's halfway through when RAZOR opens the door.

RAZOR
The wench is smart. She has spirit. I'll keep her.

BLADE
Waste the mopstick man.

KATE
Don't fret, Mr Murphy, they won't hurt you.
Now Razor, Blade, this is important. An automaton called Da Vinci will take over a rogue Bigben at half-past ten tomorrow.

DAED
It's somehow connected with the worm that's stealing the money.

KATE
We need your help to snap some of the Bigben mechanisms so we can kill the Da Vinci automaton and bring back the pieces to prove who made it.

RAZOR
She's rabid, but beyond rubies.

BLADE
See, we're very busy. A speaking-telegraph company that wishes to remain nameless has expressed interest in our writing.

DAED
Let's not bother these ladies further, Miss Liberty.

RAZOR
Wait. Nobody said no. But you are going to need more than just two crackerjacks with citywide fame like us. You need an army.

BLADE
That's it! A mechanical army! If I were us, I'd get the word out on the tubes, send a major m'aidez.

RAZOR
Clockers of the world, unite!

BLADE

How are you going to take care of the flatfeet?

DAED

I don't believe I'll allow them to imperil our progress unduly.

KATE and DAED are in an alleyway.

DAED

Nearly there.

KATE

Hurry up.

DAED

Here, hold this.

KATE

I have extensive clockly experience myself, you know, Mr Murphy, I'm quite capable of assisting with something more intricate than mere holding. Hold what?

DAED

My hand. Just to soothe my anxieties, Miss Liberty, the monkeys should be setting off any moment.

KATE

I couldn't possibly, we don't have a chaperone.

DAED

Well we'll know who to blame if this doesn't work... aha. There.

KATE

How many are there?

DAED

Only forty, but they're fast, and once a couple of carts have rolled off the road the rest of the traffic'll sloth it out to Brighton in seconds. It'll be hours before the police carts can get through, and then the monkeys are set to converge on the Ellingson security building. They should at least keep everyone distracted.

KATE

I'll send a message and tell the others to get moving.

NIKON and SNACK are walking through a park.

SNACK

Shush.

NIKON

Och, laddie, ye arnae listening to the birdies? I'd not have guessed it of yer sensitive wee heart.

SNACK

That's no birdie, you churk, it's a 'maton from Kate-on. Listen.

NIKON (deciphering)

...Victoria... Clock the Planet?

SNACK

So yo, let's slap the tracks.

Victoria Station.

KATE

Now listen, this is important. We're going through the tunnels right to the heart of the Ellingson Bigben, but we can't risk getting on the trains, so we're footing it the whole way. That means we need to be careful, and we need to be quick, and Snack, you need to take that off right now.

SNACK

Crookshanks, man.

KATE

Once we're in there, we'll be looking for the worm, and we'll need to be building our own 'matons to do that.

SNACK

Ai! Boom boom aiaiaiaiaiae! That was just to clear the air, you know you all wanted to say it.

KATE

Snack.

SNACK

Yo?

KATE
Tunnels.

SNACK
Girt and gartered.

KATE
And make sure nobody's following us.

DAED
Josie, take his wrench.

They're rouletting through the tunnels now.

JOSIE
What, me?

DAED
You're perfectly capable.

KATE
We're here.

They climb out into the Bigben.

Ready?

DAED
I think so.

KATE
Very well, then. Let's clock.

They begin building automata to search for the worm, and looking for plans. Snack enters.

SNACK
So, you'll be pleased to know that the badgers got totally stuck in the traffic and we're all alone at last, just you and me...

DAED (still clocking)
Dandy.

SNACK
You probably won't be pleased to hear that there are like twenty security 'matons in the building, and more on their way.

NIKON (distracted by clocking)
Och, they'll no be more than a wheet of worry.

SNACK

The other thing is... you feel that trembling?

KATE

Mm-hm.

SNACK

That's not my delightfulness, it's the Bigben.

KATE (looking up at last)

Is there a problem with the big screw?

SNACK

Nah, actually the big screw's working swell, for something that's just erupted from the earth on the back of a clockwork beast and is currently stomping around London destroying things.

KATE

Grog-blossom!

DAED

Which part?

SNACK

Westminster.

KATE

Could be worse.

DAED

There's spare wrenches in the cupboard, so get clocking. We'll worry about the rampage when it gets somewhere important.

In the Ellingson Security Building. PLAGUE is furiously setting more automata off, and trying to deal with a load of little mechanical monkeys. Her assistant HAL is present.

PLAGUE

Come on my sweets, I know you can do this...

HAL

These chicken-hammed spiders. They're everywhere.

PLAGUE

Deal with them.

HAL

They keep tapping out "give me a Victoria Sponge". What do I do?

PLAGUE

You give them a Victoria Sponge, you lubber.

HAL

And we have a Naught Traption attacking the doors to the main filing room.

PLAGUE

Send Snibbles after it. And pass me an aught-three cog, I'm almost done here... there! Die, lug-munkers!

HAL

There's new taps from the East. The Da Vinci monster's unscrewing the roof of St Paul's.

PLAGUE

Then the police can get up there and arrest the gad-boomed clockers! Get me a telegraph.

Back inside the Ellingson Bigben. The Clockers are clocking urgently.

KATE

It's all moving around too much, how are we supposed to find anything when the whole building keeps stopping to crush the Houses of Parliament?

DAED

Man, there's too much rubbish to sort through, I need more time.

SNACK

Telegraph coming through. It's for you, Overclock.

DAED goes to the telegraph machine to listen.

DAED

"Game's... over. Last chance to get out of this without going through Traitor's Gate. You're not good enough to triumph against me, you little... house."

KATE

She probably means louse.

NIKON

Or moose?

SNACK

Mouse.

KATE

Hard to tap clearly when you're under stress.

DAED (tapping)

Yeah.

KATE

What are you saying?

DAED

That maybe I'm not good enough. But we are.

NIKON

Och! What was that?

RAZORBLADE climbs in a window, waving a grappling hook!

RAZOR

Is it fashionable to be late this year?

DAED (still clocking, not looking up)

Only if you bring enough friends.

NIKON (looking out the window)

Aye, laddie, he brought enough friends.

SNACK

That's glib! There must be three hundred fly-slicers out there!

NIKON

I count four-hundred and seventeen.

SNACK

Whoa, dudes!

RAZOR

I told them we want to shut down the Bigben.

BLADE

I told them to wait until it's done Kensington but it seems like they aren't the patient type.

DAED

I've got it! I've got the worm!

SNACK

Woo!

KATE

Thank heavens! Disable it and bring the vile

thing over here, we need to figure out where it hid the money.

DAED

Doing it now. Looks like... I don't know, it's too convoluted.

KATE

It's just... Gordian.

DAED

Nikon, Snack, get over here, we need you. What do you think?

NIKON

We know the homing's controlled by the wee part we didn't see in the plans, so that's over here...

SNACK

And if it follows that frigid ratchet down...

DAED

It's taking them through... the air-vents?

KATE

Then we've lost it. We're out of 'matons, and we'd never fit through the vents.

NIKON

Hoots. We're so close.

SNACK

Maybe if I covered myself in butter...

DAED

Josie. You'd fit.

JOSIE

Me?

DAED

Go on. You're the only one. I need you to go after the hoard. It's left right left and along past two passageways, and then down a chute. Now go!

NIKON

The police have got here!

KATE

Razor. Blade.

RAZOR

Yes?

BLADE

Can we render some assistance?

KATE

Kill the Bigben.

RAZOR

Understood.

Back with THE PLAGUE.

PLAGUE

Come on you children of Hades, is that all you can do? Come on, let's see what else you think you can clock! You dare to challenge me? You dare? Well I am not amused! Hahahaha, you should have stayed in bed, you should have stayed in Bedlam! Come on!

HAL

They're... they're in the spring-room.

PLAGUE

The spring-doom more like!

HAL

And there's... something at the window?

PLAGUE

They're going to... Snibbles? Snibbles! Let him in!

HAL (looking out the window)
I can see the Bigben from here... it's fainting about like a matchgirl.

PLAGUE

Snibbles? You're... you're not Snibbles. What have they done to you?

SNIBBLES (in Daed's voice)

My dear Mistress The Plague, we seem to have got you, if you'll pardon the expression. Mess with the best, die like the rest.

PLAGUE

Little fleabroker!

HAL

It's fallen over.

Back with the clockers, emerging from the rubble of the Bigben.

NIKON

Aye!

DAED

We did it!

KATE

Shall we be off, gentlemen?

GILL

DON'T MOVE! You're coming with me.

DAED

But... but...

KATE

I'm sure there must have been a misunderstanding. We were out for a punt on the Thames, and this monstrous contraption somehow...

GILL

I said get moving.

DAED surreptitiously throws the disabled worm in a bin as they pass.

DAED

I refuse! I ref-use to come!

Because "refuse" sounds like "ref-use" as in rubbish, y'see.

DAED

Snack! I REFUSE! REF-USE! REF-USE! Clock the planet! Clock the planet!

GILL

Be quiet and get in the cart, pug!

SNACK (understanding the message)

Clock the planet! Clock the planet!

After the police have left, SNACK is sighing and looking in the first of many bins.

SNACK

"Refuse." He couldn't have hidden it in a charming flower-bed or some passing fubsey's bosom. Ten to cackling candy the worm's in the

very last bin, covered in rotgut... oh, no,
here it is.

THE PLAGUE'S office, or something, somewhere.

PLAGUE

Mr Gill. Any news?

GILL

We caught them.

PLAGUE

Good.

GILL

Red-handed. You won't be having any more
trouble from them.

GILL'S office.

DAED

Me, all right? I did it. She knows nothing
about automata. She... she's just my
betrothed.

GILL

I suggest you modify your attitude. Because
you are floating. And I'm about to form the
Metropolitan Board of Works and hire Sir
Joseph Bazalgette to design a sewer network
for central London.

AGENT BOB

You've got a Mrs Murphy to see you, sir.

GILL leaves the room.

KATE

Are you mad? What are you doing?

DAED

I'm trying to help you.

KATE

Mr Murphy... Daedalus.

DAED

What?

KATE

Thank-you for your help.

DAED
I think we can hear through the door.

GILL
Your son is in a lot of trouble. He has violated his probation and has engaged in criminal activity.

MRS MURPHY
My son happens to be a genius. He understands something happening today that you won't comprehend if you live to be a hundred, and he would never use what he knows to harm a living soul.

AGENT BOB
The newspaperman you requested is here.

MRS MURPHY
Oh good. Because I have a few things to tell him.

GILL
Your son is facing thirty counts of high treason in an ongoing investigation. You face possible arrest if you discuss this with a newspaperman without official permission.

MRS MURPHY
Mister, I don't care if I face certain death.

GILL
Mrs Murphy stays in this room.

KATE
My, she's wonderful.

DAED
Yes.

PLAGUE'S room.

PLAGUE
Yes my sweets, we're going to turn on the speaking telegraph and hear that lovely Mr Gill tell us all about those nasty little clockers.

REPORTER (on the telegraph)
...and attacked, and eventually destroyed, the Ellingson Bigben. Mr Gill, is this the last we've seen of this type of diabolical chicanery?

GILL (on the telegraph)
Well, I'm afraid not. Clockers are a grave threat to our nation and empire. This incident just demonstrates without a doubt that we need an increased force to-

RAZOR and BLADE'S room. SNACK is also there.

RAZOR
All right, nearly ready...

BLADE
Just wait for the last froglander to click into place... there we go. Grease away!

GILL (still on the telegraph)
...and furthermore, that we should-

SNACK cuts him off--the broadcast has been clocked!

SNACK
Hold on, boys and girls. It is I, Snack the Ripper, making my inaugural speaking telegraph address, across the great city of London, from Richmond to Greenwich and even beyond; I speak to you across two hemispheres! Yes, you're right, I'm here to tell you about the heinous scheme hatched from within Ellingson's very own walls. How're we doing, Kinchin?

RAZOR
Still on the tubes.

BLADE
Workin' hard to keep it that way.

SNACK
Shivery. So for what was the scheme hatched, you ask? World domination? Nay. Something far less tasteful, not nearly so in tune with our nation's global interests. An automaton called Da Vinci, that when launched would cause the Ellingson Bigben to run rogue through our fair city, was to be blamed on innocent clockers. But this automaton was really the duck decoy, right. What could be so insurmountably important that someone would create such a nasty, boot-foxed, very warm automaton?

Could it be to cover the tracks for a little worm contraption? A worm that was to steal a million pounds? The cogs for this hungry

little dishclout were custom-made for Eugenia Belford, Ellingson's very own Clockwork Security Officer.

GILL'S office.

GILL
Son of a CRAB!

SNACK (on the broadcast)
What's this I have here? Is it the key to the underground vaults beneath Belford's house where the money was moved from inside its storage place in the Bigben? I think so!

Yo. I kinda feel like God!

NIKON
That's my laddie!

DAED
Woo!

KATE
They did it!

On a train to France.

STEWARD
Here you are, Miss Lovelace. The train should take about eight hours today. Can I get you some lukewarm tea?

"Lovelace" is THE PLAGUE in disguise; she is wearing a wig and some spectacles.

PLAGUE
Just a pillow, please. Thank-you.

GILL
You're welcome. Now stand up.

PLAGUE
What? What's going on? Let go of me! Miss! Miss! I'll never travel with your rail company again!

On a rooftop swimming pool in London. DAED and KATE stand by the side.

KATE
I must admit this is very elegant, Daedalus.

DAED

It's lucky we didn't let the Bigben crush
Kensington after all. Would you care to bathe?

They walk down the steps into the water, fully clothed.

KATE

I find it most distressing that they decided
you won, you know.

DAED

They didn't, I'm afraid. They simply felt it
was the only way you'd allow me to court you.
Anyway, you're really fairly good. You're
elite.

KATE

Oh? You know, if you'd said so in the the
beginning, you would have saved yourself an
awful lot of trouble.

They get to the bottom of the steps.

DAED

I'm afraid I can't actually swim.

KATE

Oh dear.

DAED

Perhaps you'd care to hold my hand? For
safety's sake?

KATE

We're still unchaperoned, you know. But we
wouldn't want you to drown.