

MASON CITY

By

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Double Yellow Line Films

06-13-2021

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INT. MASON'S HOME OFFICE - DAY - THE REAL WORLD

In the corner of the room, a work bench and table. Upon the table is a miniature city, complete with miniature apartment buildings, homes, city parks and more. It's the equivalent of a model train set without the model train.

Building the city is MASON. 40 something year-old novelist, rumpled look, shaggy hair and beard.

He places a tiny plastic human figure on a bar-room cabaret stage in the center of the miniature model city.

The tiny plastic character slowly dissolve into...

INT. CAFE - THE CITY - A MODERN NOIR

A cabaret style stage, the audience at small tables with white linen, cocktails and cigarettes.

It's poetry night at the cafe and MASON is on stage.

MASON

This poem is a riddle. See if you
can guess the answer.

What am I? I've existed since the
beginning. I wasn't born. I'll
never die and I'm older than
history. I've seen destruction and
misery yet with me, everything gets
better. Sometimes I'm on your side
and I'm all you've got. What am I?

A guy from the audience shouts out.

GUY (O.S.)

Time. You are time.

MASON

Yeah, that's right. Time.

Okay. Thank you.

He walks off stage to polite 'snaps' from the audience, as the MC of the night comes back on stage.

MC

Lets give it up for Mason Monroe.
(*more snaps*) Okay, our next poet is
gentle on the ears and sweet on the
eyes. Please welcome Carla
Cantella.

(CONTINUED)

Carla Cantella comes to the stage with her Tenor Saxophone, leans in to the microphone, seductively whispers...

CARLA
Music... is my poetry.

She licks her lips, **gently** curls them around her instrument and begins to play. The cool, sultry saxophone fills room.

Meanwhile, Mason sits down at a table across from ARLO and ELISABETH.

Arlo, a hustler with a kind heart who always wants to impress the ladies thinks he's on a date with Elisabeth.

Elisabeth is a no nonsense, first rate classy broad who just about always gets what she wants.

ARLO
Mason, I want you to meet
Elisabeth.

Elisabeth puts out her hand to shake. Mason takes it.

Almost immediately there's chemistry.

MASON
Elisabeth Drake. You write for the
Daily Harold, I read your column.
You got a way with words. Nice to
meet you.

ELISABETH
Likewise. I liked your poem.

MASON
It was too easy. Next time I'll
bring something harder.

ELISABETH
What do you do Mason?

ARLO
He's a private detective.

MASON
No, no.. not really. I dabble.

ELISABETH
Then what would you say you do?

(CONTINUED)

MASON
Me? I'm retired.

ELISABETH
From what?

ARLO
Pro Boxing.

ELISABETH
Boxing? You're a boxer?

MASON
It was a long time ago.

ELISABETH
I don't believe it. You don't have
the nose of a boxer.

MASON
I agree, I got lucky.

ARLO
55 pro fights, only six losses.
Dubbed the Boxing Professor, both
because he is the first pro fighter
to earn a college degree and for
the boxing lessons he gave in the
ring to his opponents.

ELISABETH
You teach them how to fight you?

MASON
Yeah, sorta, I could always see
what they were doing wrong and I
would tell them how to win. Nobody
ever listened to me they just got
mad. And that was enough to throw
them off so I could knock em down.

ELISABETH
Boxing is so brutal, how is it that
a college educated guy like you is
dumb enough to get in the ring?

ARLO
Hey, try not to insult my friend.

ELISABETH
Relax Arlo, he's a fighter, he can
take it.

She looks back at Mason, wanting a answer.

(CONTINUED)

ELISABETH CON'T

So?

MASON

Why I get in the ring? It keeps my mind quiet.

ELISABETH

Somebody punching you in the head keeps your mind quiet?

MASON

Sorta. Ever since I was a kid my brain is runnin around trying to solve problems that don't exist. In turn sorta *creating* problems that don't exist. I see the world like a puzzle, each piece to have it's own place, and for it all to mean something.

ELISABETH

The world is like a riddle and you're trying to solve it.

MASON

Yeah, that's right.

ELISABETH

News flash, the world doesn't want to be solved.

MASON

Tell me about it, it's chaos.

ELISABETH

And it's never gonna be anything but chaos.

MASON

Still, that doesn't stop my brain from trying to put it all together.

ELISABETH

And that's why you get in the ring?

Mason nods.

MASON

There are only a few things that keep it quiet. Getting hit in the head is one of them.

Mason motions towards the stage.

(CONTINUED)

MASON CON'T
And Poetry. Coming up with the
poems keeps my mind at work.

ELISABETH
Poetry and boxing. Anything else?

MASON
Oh yeah, absolutely... there is one
other thing.

He throws her a devilish grin. And In case it's not clear,
he's talking about sex.

Arlo doesn't get it.

But Elisabeth clearly does.

ELISABETH
You wanna get outta here?

MASON
What about Arlo?

She looks to Arlo.

ELISABETH
Sorry Arlo.

She takes Mason by the hand and leads him out.

A waiter comes by and drops the bill.

ARLO
Don't worry, I'll get the check.

INT. MASON'S APARTMENT - LATER - THE CITY

Mason and Elisabeth burst through the door. They can barely
keep their hands off each other.

However, sitting in the corner of the room is ZOEY. A little
rough around the edges, outspoken, reckless and a tad
sarcastic.

Mason doesn't notice her but Elisabeth does and stops.

MASON
What's wrong?

Elisabeth points to ZOEY.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

By all means, continue.

MASON

You gotta be kidding me. Get out.

ZOEY

I came to say hello.

MASON

How did you get in? Never mind, I don't wanna know. Once a thief, always a thief.

ZOEY

Wouldn't you say introductions are in order?

MASON

No. Get out.

Zoey turns to Elisabeth.

ZOEY

Pleasure to meet you I'm Zoey.

ELISABETH

Are you his..... wife?

MASON

No.

ZOEY

No.

MASON

She's my sister.

ZOEY

Younger sister.

Elisabeth extends her hand to say hello.

ELISABETH

Elisabeth.

ZOEY

Charmed.

MASON

Zoey, get out!

Zoey ignores him.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Elisabeth, you got family?

ELISABETH

Two brothers and a sister who lives
at home with our parents.

ZOEY

Lucky you. Mason and I, are all we
got, both of our parents are gone,
and we rarely ever see each other
so you can imagine how important
these little family reunions are.

ELISABETH

Of course, by all means.

ZOEY

And private.

MASON

No.

ZOEY

Yes.

ELISABETH

Are you saying you want me to
leave?

ZOEY

Thank you for understanding.

MASON

No. Stay. Zoey, get out!

ZOEY

I have something you have to see.

MASON

It can wait.

ELISABETH

I should go.

MASON

No, please stay. (to Zoey) I said
get out.

ZOEY

Why? She already agreed to leave.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

I don't care! Every time it's
always about what *you* want, what
you need.

ZOEY

(sarcastic)

Why that's complete balderdash.

ELISABETH

It's okay, I can go. We can pick
this up another time.

Elisabeth politely shows herself out.

MASON

No, please don't.

ELISABETH

I can see this is important.
Another time.

She kisses him on the cheek and goes out the door.

Mason, who is pissed, turns back to Zoey.

ZOEY

What can I say, family first.

DING DONG

Mason turns to open the door, nobody is there.

DING DONG

Still. Nobody there. Then Mason figures it out...

MASON

Damn it.

INT. MASON'S HOME OFFICE - THE REAL WORLD

Mason is still sitting at his small model city.

DING DONG

He gets up and crosses to his front door.

We see his apartment in more detail. Framed awards for
writing. A Series of books on the shelf titled "THE CITY"
written by "Mason Monroe".

(CONTINUED)

MASON
Who is it?

OTTO (V.O.)
It's me.

Mason opens the door to reveal Otto, dressed in a black suit.

Mason turns away, knowing Otto will show himself in.

OTTO CON'T
Are you ready to go?

Otto sashays into the place, notices Mason's clothes.

OTTO CON'T
Man, you're not even dressed yet.

MASON
I don't wanna go.

OTTO
You ain't gotta choice, now dig up
a suit and lets go, we're gonna be
late.

Mason crosses to his kitchen table and pours a drink from a small Whiskey bottle.

MASON
You go on without me.

OTTO
I'm not going anywhere without
you.

Otto notices an URN on the kitchen table. He approaches it with reference.

OTTO
Is that...?

MASON
That is.

Otto nods and gives respect to the URN.

Mason drops a few ice cubes in the whiskey.

OTTO
(referring to the drink)
What the fuck are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

MASON

You expect me to go sober?

Otto considers arguing this, but decides not.

OTTO

I expect you to get dressed.

Otto turns away, goes to the model city for a closer look.

Mason stirs his drink with his finger.

MASON

I'm not going.

OTTO

Yes you are.

MASON

No, I'm not.

OTTO

You are, get dressed.

MASON

You can't make me.

OTTO

I don't have to, you'll come willingly.

MASON

You sound certain about that.

OTTO

I am.

MASON

Why?

OTTO

She's going to be there.

MASON

Who?

OTTO

Who? Who do you think? Her.

Otto points to a wedding photo hanging on the wall of Mason and Elisabeth.

(CONTINUED)

MASON
Why would she be there?

OTTO
Because she's a good person and
wants to pay her respects. And
obviously, she still cares about
you.

Mason swirls his whiskey ready to drink. Then opts not to
and sets it down on the table.

INT. MASON'S APARTMENT - THE CITY

Zoey and Mason are alone.

MASON
What do you want?

She opens her bag and takes out a small wooden box with
glass covering one side.

Through the glass we see gears, switches, wires, buttons and
an few sticks of dynamite.

MASON
It's a riddle box.

ZOEY
Just like when we were kids.

MASON
I don't remember playing with
dynamite when we were kids.

ZOEY
This is an adult version.

Mason takes a closer look.

MASON
Break the glass...

ZOEY
... and it explodes. Get the
combination wrong...

MASON
... and it explodes.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

The only way to open it is to figure out the right combination.

MASON

Seems a little risky.

ZOEY

I don't mind risk. Like I always say, I'd rather choose the way I go then be surprised by it.

MASON

Well this seems like a pretty dumb choice. Where did you get it?

ZOEY

Showed up on my doorstep.

MASON

Who sent it?

ZOEY

Isn't it obvious?

MASON

No.

ZOEY

Mom and dad used to give these to us when we were kids.

MASON

Not with dynamite.

ZOEY

A minor detail.

MASON

Mom and dad are dead.

ZOEY

Their bodies were never found.

MASON

You got an answer for everything don't you?

ZOEY

They sent us something familiar so we would know it's them. Figure out the combination and I'll open it.

(CONTINUED)

MASON
I already did.

ZOEY
You did?

MASON
It's very easy which is why I don't
think mom and dad sent it.

ZOEY
What is it?

MASON
14. 12. 36.

ZOEY
You sure?

He nods.

She turns the combination.

14 12 36

After the last number is entered, another door opens with a new combination lock. Now there is a timer counting down from 25 seconds, 24.. 23...

MASON
That's better.

ZOEY
Did you get it wrong?

MASON
No. This is more like mom and dad,
a second part of the riddle. Give
me a minute.

ZOEY
You don't have a minute!

He works it out fast.

MASON
33. 22. 11.

She spins the wheel.

33 22 11

The clock stops.

(CONTINUED)

The glass door slides open.

Mason takes out the box, lifts the lid to reveal **A KEY**

He picks up the key to examine it, It's not familiar.

Attached to the key is a **KEY RING** with an street **ADDRESS** engraved into the metal.

EXT. MASON'S HOME - THE REAL WORLD

Both men now dressed in black suits walk out of Mason's home and into Otto's beatup 1982 Jaguar convertible.

Mason carries with him the URN.

OTTO
You look good, man. Almost as good
as me.

MASON
Can we put the top down?

OTTO
Come on man, don't fuck with me,
you know it's broken.

Otto fires up the car and drives off down the street.

EXT. KEY RING ADDRESS - THE CITY

Mason holds up the **KEY RING** with the address. It matches the building in front of them.

Mason and Zoey walk up to the door. He hands the key over to Zoey and stands back.

MASON
Just in case it explodes I wanna be
at a safe distance.

She puts the key in the door, turns and opens...

INT. KEY RING ADDRESS - CONTINUOUS - THE CITY

It's dark save a single light casting a dim glow.

In the center of the room is a table with a Gypsy fortune teller woman sitting under cobwebs and dust. Her eyes shut, she looks dead.

(CONTINUED)

Mason and Zoey approach with caution.

On the table a small money box with a sign "**Fortune \$20**"

MASON

Twenty bucks? That's a little steep.

Zoey pulls cash from a pocket and drops it in.

Creepy CARNIVAL MUSIC plays.

The old woman opens her eyes and comes to life as her rickety bones deal from a deck of **tarot cards**.

In a weirdly ominous and hair-raising voice...

GYPSY FORTUNA

The drowned Phoenician Sailor,
Those are pearls that were his eyes.

Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
The lady of situations.

Here is the man with three staves,
and here the Wheel,

And here is the one-eyed merchant,
and this card, Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
Which I am forbidden to see.

I do not find The Hanged Man.

Fear death by water.

One must be so careful these days.

The music stops and she stops moving, frozen.

MASON

This is fucking weird.

ZOEY

Shut up.

Zoey turns back to the woman.

ZOEY CON'T

What does this mean? What are you trying to tell us?

She doesn't move.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

I think it's a riddle.

ZOEY

You think everything's a riddle.

MASON

She said, "I do not find the hangman" but look there he is.

Mason points to the card of the hangman on the table

ZOEY

Maybe she's blind.

MASON

Or it's a riddle.

ZOEY

Give it your best shot Sherlock.

MASON

Okay... The story of the Hanged Man is... A guy goes to a tree to find clarity. After nine days he hangs upside down and when he does, all his money falls out of his pockets and onto the ground. In that moment he finds clarity. He doesn't see money, he only sees bits of metal. The moral is you have to sacrifice control to gain an understanding of something greater than yourself.

ZOEY

You wanna translate that so I can understand what the fuck you're talkin about?

MASON

It means we have to sacrifice something in order to find meaning.

ZOEY

Sacrifice what?

MASON

I don't know.

ZOEY

Another twenty bucks?

He shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

Zoey counts out the remainder of her cash.

ZOEY
Gimme twelve.

Mason rolls his eyes.

ZOEY CON'T
I'm good for it, I'll pay ya back.

Reluctantly, Mason fishes out twelve bucks from his wallet.

Zoey waves the cash in the Gypsy's face, drops it in the box.

Creepy Carnival Music plays again and the Gypsy reveals a piece of parchment, rolled up like a SCROLL.

Zoey takes it from her and unrolls it to reveals a bunch of squares, numbers and symbols. She shows it to Mason.

MASON
(*excitedly*)
Another riddle.

ZOEY
Not now, lets get out of here.

Zoey rolls up the scroll, puts it in her bag and stands.

Mason looks closer at the Gypsy woman.

MASON
She looks so real.

ZOEY
She is real.

MASON
No way, she's gotta be some kind of machine or something.

The Gypsy opens her eyes. Looks directly at Mason.

Then opens her mouth bearing her old rotten teeth, and leaps towards Mason, to bite his face!

He falls back to the ground as the woman attacks.

MASON
Get her off me!

(CONTINUED)

Zoey comes round to help pull the Gypsy woman away but as she does, the woman swings her fist back, knocking Zoey down.

Mason pushes the woman off him and rolls to his feet, putting up his fists ready to fight.

MASON

Back off lady, I am not afraid to
knock your ass to next Tuesday.

BAM! The front door is kicked in!

The Gypsy scurries away into the dark and hides.

Three imposing figures walk into the room.

One of the figures, VIKTOR, is a huge man, built like a tank.

The woman TERRA MISU is deadly, cold and efficient. Italian.

Their leader steps into the light to reveal his face.

MASON

I should have known.

OTTO

Looks like we've stumbled upon a
family reunion.

MASON

What are you doing here?

OTTO

I'm here to protect my interest.

MASON

I thought your only interest was
being a asshole.

OTTO

Oh no, I have many others. In fact
your sister is here to steal at
least one of them.

Mason turns to Zoey.

ZOEY

I have no idea what this douchebag
is talking about.

Mason turns back to Otto.

(CONTINUED)

OTTO
I can't let you walk outta here
with that scroll.

MASON
How do you know about that?

OTTO
Your sister isn't telling you the
whole truth.

MASON
What are you talking about? (to
Zoey) What's he talking about?

ZOEY
I hate to be redundant but again, I
have no idea what this douchebag is
talking about.

OTTO
The money she wants you to find
doesn't belong to you.

MASON
Money? (to Zoey) What money?

ZOEY
I don't know!

Otto holds out his hand.

OTTO
Give me the scroll.

Zoey holds her bag tight, not letting go.

ZOEY
I'd rather watch you suck a bag of
dicks.

Otto's face turns to disappointment. He looks over his
shoulder to VIKTOR the big one.

OTTO
Viktor. Take it from her.

Viktor approaches Zoey. He's intimidating, massive in size,
Russian accent.

VIKTOR
Give Scroll to me.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Whoa.. you smell like Beef
Stroganoff.

She moves away, hiding behind Mason.

Viktor cracks his neck side to side.

VIKTOR

The Boxing Professor. I've always
wanted to meet you.

MASON

Well if you call my secretary we
can schedule something next week.

He gets a little too close for Mason.

MASON

Okay okay... back the fuck up.
Otto, call off the orangutan.

OTTO

No can do old friend, either hand
over the scroll or Viktor will take
it from you.

Mason looks at Viktor, envisions a long and tiresome fight
ahead... turns to Zoey.

MASON

Are you sure?

She nods.

Reluctant, Mason turns back.

MASON CON'T

Okay, first lesson in boxing...

Viktor throws a fast punch directly on Mason's face. It
sends him back and he falls on his butt.

VIKTOR

I don't take lesson, I only give
the punishment.

Otto laughs.

Mason stands up.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Okay... suit yourself.

Mason puts up his fists ready to fight. Viktor throws a punch, Mason dodges it and throws a right hook, landing on Viktor's face.

Viktor shakes it off and comes back throwing punch after punch. Mason retaliates with a right hook, Viktor blocks and lands another hard punch, knocking him again to the ground.

Zoey makes a run for the door, but Terra Misu is faster and pulls out a gun, stopping her escape.

TERRA MISU

Not so fast pretty kitty.

Viktor crosses behind Mason and picks him up in a choke-hold and begins squeezing the life out of him.

Mason squirms to break free.

Zoey pulls the scroll out of her bag.

ZOEY

STOP!!

She holds up the scroll.

ZOEY CON'T

I'll give it to you. You can have it... just stop.

Viktor looks to Otto. Who nods.

Viktor releases Mason.

OTTO

A wise decision.

Otto holds out his hand as Zoey agrees and begins to hand over the Scroll to him...

OUT OF THE DARK Jumps the GYPSY Woman, who attacks Terra Misu like a Velociraptor, knocking the gun out of her hand and it slides towards Zoey's feet.

The Gypsy woman jumps off Terra Misu and scurries out the front door and into the night.

ZOEY

NOBODY MOVE!

Now holding the gun, Zoey owns the room.

(CONTINUED)

Mason crosses to Zoey and they move closer to the door.

OTTO
This wont end well for you.

ZOEY
We'll see about that.

OTTO
You can't take what isn't yours.

ZOEY
Shut up.

Mason gets behind Zoey as they both make their way out the door and into the night.

EXT. CHURCH - THE REAL WORLD

Otto and Mason walk up the front steps. Standing outside is Elisabeth. When she sees Mason, she walks over.

ELISABETH
Hey.

MASON
Hey.

ELISABETH
Hi Otto.

OTTO
Good to see you.

Otto leans in and kisses Elisabeth on the cheek.

OTTO
I'm gonna go inside and...

Mason hands Otto the URN.

MASON
Would you mind?

OTTO
Sure thing.

Otto takes the URN inside with him.

ELISABETH
How are you?

(CONTINUED)

MASON

I'm okay. Have you been in?

ELISABETH

No, I was waiting to see you.

MASON

Yeah, well I made it. Late as always.

ELISABETH

Probably cause you are working on another book.

MASON

Am I that predictable?

She politely smiles.

Awkward moment.

MASON CON'T

I... Uh... What if I told you the only reason I showed up today was to see you?

ELISABETH

I'd say that sounds a little crazy.

MASON

It's true. In fact, if you wanna get out of here, we could go. Anywhere. Anywhere you want. Just the two of us. Let me find a way to apologize and fix what I broke.

She takes a deep breath. This is embarrassing.

She glances down at his left hand and sees his wedding ring. She reaches over, hold his hand in hers.

MASON

I've never taken it off.

He reaches over and lifts her left hand. She is not wearing her wedding ring.

ELISABETH

I'm sorry, but I have.

He drops her hand, pulls away from her, embarrassed and humiliated.

(CONTINUED)

ELISABETH CON'T

You know what? Today is one of the most important days of your life. It's not about me. It's not about us. In the blink of an eye, everything can change. So learn to forgive and love with all your heart. You may never have that chance again.

She kisses him on the cheek.

ELISABETH CON'T

Either you can judge or you can love. The choice is up to you. I'll see you inside.

She smiles and goes into the church.

Mason turns to watch her go.

INT. HIDEOUT - LATER - THE CITY

Mason and Zoey study the scroll the Gypsy woman gave them.

ZOEY

Do you understand it?

MASON

Sort of. It's nothing I've seen before but I do see a pattern.

ZOEY

How long will it take you?

MASON

As long as it takes.

Zoey, restless and in need of a drink, rummages through her bag and pulls out a bottle of whiskey. She finds two glasses and pours one for each.

As Mason studies the scroll...

MASON

What was he talking about back there?

ZOEY

Who?

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Otto said the money doesn't belong to you. You can't take what isn't yours.

ZOEY

I have no idea, but that was some weird shit though, right!? And who was that crazy Gypsy lady!?

MASON

Don't play dumb with me. What was he talking about?

ZOEY

Honestly, Mason I don't know. All I know is that mom and dad sent us these clues. They want us to find something and whatever it is at the end of all of this, it's something mom and dad wanted us to have.

MASON

What if there isn't anything? What if mom and dad are just gone and they didn't leave anything. What if all they wanted us to have was each other?

ZOEY

So what? They send us these clues so we could just pal around together? Is that what your saying?

MASON

No. That's not what I'm... I don't know what I'm saying.

He picks up the drink and gulps it down.

INT. BACK ROOM - CHURCH - THE REAL WORLD

A glass comes back down on a table.

Mason is in a private room, having a drink by himself.

He glances out to see only a handful of people sitting in the church. We might see some familiar faces from the Cabaret Bar and AA meeting. All the characters are in each world.

A woman comes up behind him

(CONTINUED)

FORTUNA

Boo!

Mason jumps. Turns to see FORTUNA. The Priest.

MASON

Jesus Christ!

FORTUNA

Hello Mason.

MASON

You scared the Shhh...oes outta me.

FORTUNA

What are you doing hiding back here?

She picks up the bottle and eyes it, observing without judgment.

MASON

I walked in here with water but the good lord turned it into wine.

She sniffs it.

FORTUNA

I think she actually turned into whiskey.

She screws the lid back on and hands it to him.

MASON

I'm sorry.

Ashamed he puts the bottle in his pocket, diverting his eyes away from her.

FORTUNA

It's okay. *(beat)* Mason, I'm really sorry for your loss. I know how much she meant to you. All your stories, your books, you've done a great thing honoring her the way you have.

Mason nods, not quite taking the compliment.

MASON

Have you read my books?

(CONTINUED)

FORTUNA
No. But I have my sources.

A little nod up above makes Mason laugh.

FORTUNA CON'T
We miss seeing you around here, you know.

MASON
That's very nice thanks, but I sorta think this was more of a place for my parents. It's not really for me.

FORTUNA
That's okay. We will be here when you're ready.

She looks at her watch.

FORTUNA CON'T
Shall we get started?

He nods.

FORTUNA CON'T
Okay.

She walks out the the sanctuary to a podium overlooking the congregation.

INT. HIDEOUT - LATER - THE CITY

Mason studies the Scroll and Zoey drifts in and out of sleep.

MASON
I got it.

Zoey wakes herself up, crosses and stands next to him, looking over his shoulder.

MASON
It's a map. These shapes represent every building in the city. And these numbers count city blocks.

ZOEY
How did you figure it out?

(CONTINUED)

MASON

It's a Rosicrucian cipher code.
These symbols here represent
letters. It wasn't easy but once I
figured out a few symbols the rest
fell in line.

ZOEY

Of course! How could I have been so
blind!? You are brilliant!

She kisses him on the cheek in celebration. Then pours two
more glasses of whiskey. They clink glasses and she drinks.

Mason, however does not. He sits back watching her. Curious.

ZOEY

So what does it tell us? What do we
do next? Where do we go?

He doesn't answer, instead he just looks at her.

ZOEY

Mason! What's next!?

MASON

How could you have been so blind?
That sounds an awful lot like maybe
you've seen this before.

ZOEY

What?

Mason is a few steps ahead of her.

MASON

I should have trusted my instincts.

ZOEY

What are you talking about?

MASON

You lied to me. This isn't the
first time you've seen this scroll.

She can't quite keep up the charade but tries anyway.

ZOEY

Yes, it is, we saw it for the first
time tonight. Mom and dad sent this
to us.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

This has nothing to do with mom and dad and I'm beginning to get irritated at the fact you keep dragging their names through the mud.

ZOEY

Mason...

MASON

You've been playing me since the beginning.

He indicates the Map.

MASON CON'T

Whatever is at the end of this, you needed my help but instead of just asking for it, you came up with some stupid story about mom and dad.

ZOEY

No, Mason that's not true.

MASON

Stop lying. Tell me the truth.

ZOEY

I am.

MASON

You're not! Tell me the truth...

ZOEY

Mason...

MASON

Now! Or so help me God, I will burn this right here and now.

He picks up the Scroll, and with a flip of a Zippo lighter he taunts a flame at the edge of the paper.

ZOEY

Are you crazy! Stop! Don't! Mason!

He gets closer with the flame.

ZOEY CON'T

Okay! Okay.. Okay...

He lowers the flame and waits...

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY CON'T

For the last three years I worked for Otto.

MASON

Otto? Your kidding me? Why would you work for that prick?

ZOEY

He respected my skill set. Once a thief always a thief, right?

Over the following we see images of Zoey at work, being a thief, working along side Otto and doing terrible things.

ZOEY

For awhile it was good money. But I also had to do did terrible things. Things that are hard to ask for forgiveness. I just couldn't do it anymore, I wanted out but I knew they wouldn't just let me go. So I came up with a plan. You see, Otto doesn't keep his money in one place, he hides it all over the city in secret locations. And he has twenty-four Master Keys that point the direction to his money. So I stole one of those Master Keys.

She holds up the Key.

MASON

But you've seen this map before?

ZOEY

No, I've never seen that specific map but I've seen others like it.

MASON

How?

ZOEY

Who do you think stole the Mapmaker who made it?

Flashback to Zoey putting a bag over the head of the Mapmaker. In his workshop, dozens of similar maps hang on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY CON'T

You are the only person I know
capable of figuring it out.

MASON

Why not come to me and tell me the
truth?

ZOEY

That I stole a key and plan to rip
off the biggest gangster in the
city?

MASON

Before that. You should've told me
who you were working for before and
I would've helped you get out.

ZOEY

My big brother to the rescue. You
just gonna walk in and tell them
you're baby sister doesn't work
here anymore? It doesn't work like
that Professor.

MASON

We would've found a way.

ZOEY

I did find a way. This is it. At
the end of that map there's money
and with that money we can do
whatever we want. We can go
wherever we want.

MASON

They'll come after you.

ZOEY

They wont find me.

MASON

They will.

ZOEY

They won't. Trust me.

Mason, steps back curious how certain she is.

ZOEY CON'T

Look. I understand if you don't
want to go. You don't have to. Just
give me the code for the map and
I'll do it myself.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Why would I help you get yourself killed?

ZOEY

Then help me get the money.

MASON

Why are you doing this? There are other ways. There is so much more you can do. You're so smart.

ZOEY

Oh Jesus, a fucking life lesson, it's too late.

MASON

It's never too late.

ZOEY

How I choose to live my life is not your decision to make. Give me the code.

MASON

No.

ZOEY

Don't be a dick, give me the code!

MASON

Absolutely not!

Furious, she pulls out the gun and points it at him.

ZOEY

Give me the code Mason!

MASON

Jesus, sometimes your elevator doesn't go to the top floor does it. How am I supposed to give you the code if I'm dead?

Frustrated, she puts the gun down.

MASON

The worst part isn't that you lied to me about the riddle box, the key or the money. The worst part is you led me to believe that mom and dad might still be alive.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

They're gonna kill me Mason. At least with the money I have a fighting chance at starting a new life somewhere else. Please help me. If we pull it off, you'll never have to see me again.

MASON

And if we don't pull it off, nobody will ever see either one of us again.

She looks away, done trying to convince him.

Against his better judgment, Mason takes out a pen and writes on the back of the Scroll.

After he scribbles out what he knows, he slides the Scroll over the Zoey.

She picks it up and reads what he wrote.

After a moment.

ZOEY

Thank you.

INT. CHURCH - THE REAL WORLD

Fortuna takes to the podium.

FORTUNA

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Thessalonians 4:13 reads, 'Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.'

Backstage, Mason watches Fortuna. Rolls his eyes.

MASON

Oh boy.

A little too much religion for him, he turns away and quickly finds an exit.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS - THE REAL WORLD.

Mason opens the back door and steps outside. He fumbles in his jacket pocket for a silver cigarette case and opens it. Two cigarettes and a joint stare back at him. He opts for the joint.

He fires up just as ARLO comes round the corner.

MASON

Ah shit.

ARLO

I thought I saw you slip out the back door.

MASON

Don't come over here if you're gonna bust my balls.

ARLO

I wont, I promise. Just wanted to check up on ya. I can leave you alone if you want.

MASON

No, it's okay, just all that religious crap, thought I'd wait it out.

Mason offers him the joint.

MASON CON'T

You want a little?

Arlo gives him a look, 'you kidding?'

ARLO

No.

MASON

I'm sorry, I know. Old habit. Didn't wanna be rude.

ARLO

I was thinking, after all this is over, maybe we can hit up a meeting?

MASON

Come on man, you said you weren't gonna bust my balls.

(CONTINUED)

ARLO

I'm not. It's not about you. There are some people who aren't gonna make it here today and I think they would like to pay their respects.

MASON

Hey, this is happening now, if they can't make it, it's not my responsibility.

ARLO

I get that. But you know, this isn't really their kind of place. I'm sure you can relate. Anyway, think about it.

Arlo pats him on the back.

ARLO

I'll see you inside.

And turns to go.

EXT. MAP LOCATION - THE CITY

Zoey walks alone down a narrow city alley.

She keeps moving forward until she comes to a door. She looks down at the Scroll to double check the location.

She puts the key into the door, turns and enters.

INT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY

When the door opens a series of lights illuminate a long narrow corridor in front of her.

She walks forward, cautious as she walks.

She follows the corridor to a dead end.

ZOEY

Son of a bitch.

Frustrated she looks behind her, maybe she missed something? But then she spots a series of numbers in front of her.

She flips over the Scroll, tries to find any clues that might be left. Nothing.

She takes out a piece of chewing gum and starts chewing.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - MOMENTS LATER

Zoey comes out of the Warehouse, empty handed.

Waiting for her is Otto, Viktor and Terra Misu.

OTTO

Pleasure to see you again Zoey.
Where is your brother?

ZOEY

He didn't come. I told him the truth, how I got the key and he decided he didn't want anything to do with it. So I came alone.

OTTO

Hardly likely.

Otto turns to Viktor.

OTTO CON'T

Find him.

Viktor peels off to look for Mason.

OTTO

Where's the money?

She looks over her shoulder, referring to the dead end.

ZOEY

I couldn't get it. There's some kind of combination lock or something.

OTTO

Just not the smartest sibling in the family are you.

ZOEY

I guess not. But I am the fastest.

She immediately breaks off running in the opposite direction of Viktor.

OTTO

GET HER!

Terra Misu runs after her, leaving Otto all alone.

As soon as Zoey and Terra Misu are out of sight, Mason appears out of nowhere straight towards Otto.

(CONTINUED)

OTTO

Mason?

MASON

Hello Otto.

BAM! Mason punches Otto in the face, knocking him out cold.

Mason drags Otto into the warehouse and shuts the door.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Viktor looks for Mason, behind corners, under cars, in the bushes, trash cans... everywhere.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Zoey keeps a steady pace, but tiring. Terra Misu right behind her, not tired at all.

Zoey stops behind a corner, tired and out of breath. Terra Misu anticipates her and stops.

TERRA MISU

Here kitty kitty... Come to mamma
kitty kitty.

Zoey rolls her eyes, still trying to catch her breath, still continues running.

Terra Misu smiles, and follows pursuit.

INT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Mason, still dragging Otto ends up at the dead end of the corridor.

Stuck to the wall is the Scroll.

Mason takes it off the wall, revealing a long string of gum stretching behind it.

MASON

Gross.

After getting the gum off the Scroll, Mason looks at the numbers, then at the Scroll.

He turns the Scroll counter clockwise. And again....again. After a moment, he figures out the code.

(CONTINUED)

Turns the Scroll clockwise. Sees a number. And presses the corresponding number on the wall. Again counterclockwise, presses a number. And again.... Until...

A door opens and inside is a **duffel bag**.

Mason takes out the duffel bag and unzips it.

Inside: Thick stacks of **COLD HARD CASH**.

Mason takes a moment, he's never seen so much money.

Otto begins to wake up, Mason crosses to him.

MASON

Sorry Otto.

And with another cold clock to the face, knocks him out.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens and out walks Mason holding the briefcase.

Waiting for him just outside is Viktor.

VIKTOR

Hello Boxing Professor.

Mason scans the alley in both directions. They are alone.

MASON

Any chance you wanna just let me go? Nobody will know.

VIKTOR

I don't think so.

MASON

You sure? This could be really embarrassing for you.

VIKTOR

I must break you.

Viktor cracks his neck side to side as he moves in to beat the living hell out of Mason.

Mason puts a firm grip around the handle of the duffel bag and readies himself.

Viktor takes a swing but Mason moves quickly out of the way.

(CONTINUED)

MASON CON'T

I had a chance to study your moves
last time, it looks like you put
way too much attention on your
upper body strength.

Viktor comes after Mason again with a heavy right cross,
Mason again dodges the punch.

MASON CON'T

And you keep your feet too close
together. Open up that stance. You
gotta sink lower than your
opponent, get beneath my center of
gravity.

Mason shows him how to stand and keep his gravity low.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Zoey is exhausted and can't run anymore. She stops and hides
behind a wall, pulls out the gun and waits.

Terra is too smart and stops before she rounds the corner.

ZOEY

Don't come any closer, in case you
forgot I still have your gun.

Hiding safely behind a wall, Terra laughs.

TERRA MISU

Oh, I remember. But you are not the
only smart kitty, kitty.

Terra Misu reveals a machine Gun she had neatly tucked under
her jacket.

She fires off a few rounds to demonstrate.

ZOEY

Son-of-a-bitch.

TERRA MISU

I think it's safe to say my kitty
is bigger than yours.

Zoey takes the clip out of her gun and looks at the bullets
inside. What's her next move?

Zoey comes out with her hands up, holding her gun in one
hand.

(CONTINUED)

Terra Misu steps out holding her machine gun.

Zoey tosses her gun away, taunting Terra.

ZOEY
Come on, lets settle this like
adults.

Terra Misu agrees and throws her Machine Gun aside.

Takes off her jacket, ready to brawl.

Zoey might be in a little over her head but she puts up her dukes anyway, ready to fight.

The two women approach each other, Terra Misu throws a fast right jab, smacking Zoey in the face.

Stunned, Zoey stumbles back and falls on her ass.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Viktor throws another punch, Mason holds up the duffel bag and blocks it.

MASON
You gotta stay balanced. With all
that upper body weight, you're
gonna topple over with one hard
smack to the head.

Viktor throws another punch, Mason dodges it and retaliates by swinging the duffel bag to Viktor's head, knocking him back, nearly falling over.

MASON CON'T
Come on man! You had to have seen
that coming!

Infuriated, Viktor charges Mason full steam ahead. This time Mason cannot get out of the way and is tackled into a bunch of garbage cans.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Zoey swings and misses, Terra throws a right cross and lands a punch on Zoey's face.

Terra kicks and hits Zoey in the face. Zoey throws another right cross in Terra gut.

Terra quickly throws a two jab combination to Zoey's face.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Viktor picks Mason up and throws him into more trash cans.

Mason rolls off the cans and stumbles away from the Goon.

MASON

Now you are just changing the
sport. I thought you were a boxer.
Now you want to wrestle? Should I
buy you some tights?

Viktor charges again, this time Mason is ready and like a bull fighter, moves away quickly, smacking him on the head with the duffle bag as he passes.

MASON CON'T

You should learn tai-chi. It will
teach you to allow movement to flow
seamlessly. Take for example the
yin-yang symbol...

Viktor's had enough. He pulls out a knife and flips it open.

MASON CON'T

Now you wanna be a street fighter?
Come on man, I'm trying to help you
but you're all over the map.

Viktor charges Mason. Swings left. Swings right. The knife barely missing Mason's face.

Viktor comes down hard over Mason's head, however, Mason holds up the bag blocking the Knife.

Viktor stabs the knife directly into the duffel bag, lodging it firmly inside.

Mason kicks him in the belly knocking him back and leaving the knife stuck in the briefcase.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Zoey manages to get several strong punches in to Terra head.

However, it's not enough and Terra swings hard and knocks Zoey back down to the ground.

With Terra above her, ready to end this, Zoey kicks Terra in the knee forcing her over in pain. And with a solid kick to the head, Zoey sends her down to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

Both women now on the ground, Terra sees Zoey's handgun and starts crawling for it.

Zoey sees the Machine gun and starts crawling for it.

It's a race to see who gets the gun first!

Both women arrive at the same time and spin round...

However, Terra is faster and points the handgun, pulls the trigger... Click Click Click.

The gun isn't firing.

Zoey, now holding the machine Gun, reaches into her pocket and pulls out the clip from the handgun.

ZOEY

Call me kitty one more time, I dare
you.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

The Goon goes down on his butt, Mason stands above him.

MASON

Please, stay down.

But Viktor doesn't listen, he stands up and this time reaches into his pants and pulls out a long SAMURAI SWORD.

MASON

Where the fuck were you hiding that
thing? Wait, don't tell me, lemme
guess.

Viktor approaches Mason, ready to kill when they hear the sound of a machine gun.

They turn to see Zoey with the machine gun holding Terra prisoner.

Zoey pushes Terra in the direction of Viktor, holding the gun on both of them.

ZOEY CON'T

Mason, you alright?

MASON

Yeah, was just about to give a
little lesson on how to be a better
ninja.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Lets get outta here.

BAM! the door to the warehouse opens and out steps Otto, GUN IN HAND - He fires directly at Zoey.

BANG

BANG

Two shots to the chest and Zoey goes down.

MASON

ZOEY!

Otto swings his gun towards Mason.

Mason reaches for the knife stuck in the duffle bag and pulls it out.

Just before Otto can get another round off, Mason throws the knife into Otto's chest.

Otto gets off a round but misses. He falls to the ground.

Mason runs over to Zoey, holding her.

MASON

Zoey!

ZOEY

Holy shit, I've been shot.

MASON

Hold on..

He turns to Viktor and Terra Misu.

MASON CON'T

Call for help!

ZOEY

Mason...

MASON

Zoey... Don't talk.. Somebody call for help!

ZOEY

There are so many things... I haven't... So many thing...

She coughs up blood.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

No, no, no... Zoey..

ZOEY

It's okay... It's okay... I'm
sorry.

She smiles sympathetically then her eyes go somewhere else,
away from here, away forever.

INT. CHURCH - MEMORIAL SERVICE - THE REAL WORLD

Near the URN we see a picture of Zoey.

Mason is now standing at the podium. He starts to talk, but stops. From his jacket pocket he takes out a piece of paper, unfolds it. He looks like he is about to read it, but puts it down, folds it back up.

MASON

Most of the characters I write
about in my books come from people
in my life. I take from life.

And over the years I certainly took
from Zoey's life.

She was complicated. Stubborn.
Annoying at times. Always some big
thing happening in her life. Some
big adventure. She was a pain in
the ass.

We used to have this joke that
every time she got too drunk or too
high or needed to borrow money
again, she could come to me and I'd
help her. Let her crash at my place
or loan her a few hundred bucks
every now and then. Whatever she
needed. As long as it wasn't drugs
or alcohol, I'd give it to her. And
believe me sometimes I had to say
no. It was a little fuzzy at times
if I was doing good by her I
suppose, but not every request she
made was easy to know the
difference.

Anyway, the joke was that because I
kept writing about her, using her
as my inspiration, I owed her. That

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MASON (cont'd)
everything I had was because of
her. Her life gave us both life.
And she loved to hold that over my
head and use it to get what she
wanted.

And maybe not that much of a joke
now that I hear myself try and
explain it to you. But that was our
sense of humor. For us it was
funny.

He looks down at the folded paper in his hand, maybe going
to open it? He does not.

MASON CON'T
She always said she wanted to
choose the way she went rather than
being surprised by it. In a way I
guess she did get to choose. And
I'm learning not to judge her for
it.

This world isn't easy to live. I
can hardly blame her for trying to
find a way out of it.

Hell, I spend most of my time in my
imagination so I get it. In there I
get to be whoever I want. I get to
fall in love with the girl of my
dreams. And I get to spend time
with Zoey.

And although she's dead in this
world, as long as I'm still
writing, she'll live forever.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Zoey opens her eyes.

ZOEY
I'm alive!

MASON
Holy shit.

She feels better and pulls open her jacket to look for
bullets.

However, a shooting pain rushes through her whole body.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Oh, never mind, I'm still shot.

MASON

Did you think I was gonna make it
that easy for you?

Mason turns to Viktor and Terra Misu.

MASON

Did you call an ambulance?

TERRA MISU

Us? No dummy, we are the bad guys.

MASON

Fine.

He picks Zoey up in his arms.

She still has the Machine Gun in hand and points it at
Viktor and Terra.

Mason carries Zoey out of the alley for a very slow get
away.

ZOEY

Where are we going?

MASON

I'm taking you to a hospital.

ZOEY

Are you walking there? Don't be an
idiot, call a cab.

MASON

I don't have a phone, otherwise I
would have called you an ambulance.

ZOEY

You're kidding me, you don't have a
phone?

MASON

I don't like the technology.

ZOEY

Jesus, you might as well just put
me in the gutter and let me die.

(CONTINUED)

MASON
If you don't shut up I might.

EXT. CHURCH - LATER - THE REAL WORLD

Otto and Mason get in the car.

Mason has the URN once again in his lap.

OTTO
That was really... nice. What you
said back there. I think Zoey would
have really... uh... liked it.

Mason shoots him a questioning look.

MASON
She would have hated it...

OTTO
... Absolutely hated it.

They share a laugh. Otto goes to start the car then stops.

OTTO CON'T
Lemme ask you something. You say
you write from life?

MASON
That's right.

OTTO
And I'm your best friend in life
right?

MASON
That's right.

OTTO
They whey the fuck am I always the
bad guy?

MASON
You're not the bad guy, you're the
loyal opposition.

OTTO
Same fuckin thing.

MASON
No it's not. Look, the bad guy and
the good guy, at their very core,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MASON (cont'd)
are connected. The bad guy is there
to test the good guy. To bring out
his very best.

OTTO
You saying I bring out your very
best?

MASON
That's exactly what I'm saying.

OTTO
And I'm supposed to believe that
bullshit?

MASON
I'm hoping you will yeah.

Otto stares blankly back at him. Then leans in to start the
car. Throws it into drive.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Mason and Zoey are gone.

Otto gulps a big breath of fresh air, sits up with the knife
still sticking out of his chest.

OTTO
Musta missed my heart by a fraction
of an inch.

He looks up to see Viktor and Terra Misu.

OTTO CON'T
Little help... please...

Viktor and Terra Misu come over and pick him up.

INT. AA MEETING - LATER - THE REAL WORLD

Sitting in a circle are several people including Arlo and
Mason.

MASON
Hello my name is Mason. And I am an
alcoholic.

(CONTINUED)

GROUP

Hello Mason.

MASON

But I'm here today mostly for my
sister Zoey, who many of you knew.

He takes the URN out of his lap and places it in an empty
chair next to him.

MASON CON'T

Arlo thought it was a good idea if
we came by out of respect to the
friendship she had with all of you.

He then reaches in his pocket and pulls out the folded piece
of paper.

MASON CON'T

Anytime somebody dies, most often
the first question people ask is
'how did she die?'. Well... this is
Zoey's death certificate.

He opens it up and shows them.

MASON CON'T

And right here.. in this little box
it says 'cause of death' and the
answer to that question in Zoey's
case is 'chronic alcoholism'.
Doctors say alcohol caused her
aorta to rupture. That's the
largest blood vessel in the body
and it takes a lot of alcohol to
make that happen but when it
bleeds... well, it ain't good.

In the blink of an eye, everything
can change. So I'm learning to
forgive.

Either I judge or I love. And I'm
trying my best to chose love.

INT. CABARET - THE CITY

Back on stage at the Cabaret. ARLO and ELISABETH sit at a
table watching Mason on stage.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

I have a blade of jagged cut. I
Keep the quickest hand out shut.
What force and strength cannot get
through, I, with a gentle touch,
can do. Sometimes I wear a ring.
And sometimes I sing. What am I?

Some guy shouts out from the audience.

GUY

A Key! You're a key.

Mason holds up the **KEY**.

MASON

Yeah, that's right. A Key. Good
job. You got it.

He crosses back to the table with Arlo and Elisabeth.

ARLO

They keep gettin better and better.

ELISABETH

I don't know, do they? Still seems
a little too easy for me.

ARLO

Really? Cause I couldn't figure it
out and I have whole bunch of keys.

MASON

(to Elisabeth)

Maybe you should help me write one.

ELISABETH

I would like that but I don't wanna
be interrupted again by your
sister.

MASON

Impossible. She is on vacation.
Bought herself a boat and went down
to the islands.

ELISABETH

Well then, you wanna get out of
here?

MASON

What about Arlo?

(CONTINUED)

ELISABETH

Sorry Arlo.

They get up from the table and exit.

A moment later, the waiter drops the bill.

ARLO

Don't worry, I'll get the check.

THE END