

THE IMAGINARIUM
OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS

by

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(Based on A PAINFULLY ORIGINAL IDEA)

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LONDON 2007.. NOW

1 EXT NIGHT URBAN TERRACE

1

A row of rundown terrace houses. Some are boarded up. Not all the street lights work. Those that do cast shadows of parked vehicles glistening in the rain.

A front door opens and DON appears with rubbish which he puts in a bin. He hears something and looks up to see four big horses pulling a hulking great wagon down the middle of the street. The wagon is a gigantic windowless box. The horses are harnessed and there are reins but no sign of a driver. It's a very weird sight. DON, unable to take his eyes off this amazing apparition shouts back into the house from where light from a TV flickers.

DON
Carol!... Carol!

CAROL (V.O.)
What?

DON
Come here! Quick!

CAROL (V.O.)
What is it?

DON
Quick!

CAROL (V.O.)
(irritated)
I'm trying to watch this! It's the last episode!

DON
(annoyed)
Come here!!!

CAROL appears in the doorway.

CAROL
What is it?

But the wagon and horses have gone.

DON
It's gone!

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

CAROL, disgusted, swats him on the head with the flat of her hand and goes back inside.

2 EXT/INT NIGHT PARKED CAR IN STREET

2

A YOUNG COUPLE are snogging in the back of a parked car. Music is playing on the radio.

They are interrupted by heavy vibrations and the terrifying sight of the huge looming horse-drawn box as it trundles past.

3 EXT NIGHT THE TOWN HALL CLOCK

3

The clock shows and strikes 2am.

4 EXT NIGHT A DINGY BACK STREET

4

The wagon has stopped. The back begins to open, top, bottom and sides, like a dark menacing flower unfolding its petals.

Shadowy FIGURES manoeuvre the side panels and begin to raise the roof.

While this is happening THE CAMERA tracks around to reveal a garishly lit club across the street.

A group of DRUNKEN YOUTHS emerge from the club, staggering, laughing, shouting, drinking, breaking bottles, and throwing up. The LADS grope the GIRLS. Everyone's having "a great time".

They see the wagon and stop, unsteadily, in their tracks.

MARTIN

What the...!

We now see what they see. The wagon has been converted into a stage. We're looking at an old fashioned and very shabby travelling theatre. Electric footlights are powered by a clanking generator. The pediment above the stage carries the words: THE ASTONISHING IMAGINARIUM OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS.

PERCY, a dwarf, dressed as a medieval demon and rigged out as a one-man band plays a fanfare introducing a young man (ANTON, 18-19 years old) who emerges from the back of the stage dressed as MERCURY, the messenger of the gods, with wings on his helmet and sandals.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON/MERCURY

Ladies and Gentlemen... Step up!
 Step up!... I, Mercury, the
 messenger of the gods, invite
 you... tonight, for one night
 only... at this very venue... to
 enter the mind, the very great
 mind, of Doctor Parnassus!

PERCY does a roll on the drum as a curtain behind
 ANTON/MERCURY rises to reveal DOCTOR PARNASSUS - he appears
 to be an Indian holy man - long scraggly beard, chalk white
 make up, a large red circle on his bald head, a crown of
 yellow flowers, strings of beads, and partially covered in a
 loose-fitting swath of white cloth - apparently levitating
 several feet above the stage. (He's sitting on a glass
 plinth). DOCTOR PARNASSUS is seemingly in a trance. A bronze
 tripod containing burning incense stands beside him.

ANTON/MERCURY (CONT'D)

Doctor Parnassus... as old as
 time... yes, ladies and gentlemen,
 more than a thousand years old ...
 he has the power to empower your
 mind. A secret learned in the
 mystic East. Let Doctor Parnassus
 open your imagination. Let him
 guide and transport you to worlds
 and possibilities you never dreamt
 of... If you dare. But... Beware...
 there are dangers. You will have to
 choose. Will your soul fly?... Or
 will it be dashed on the rocks of
 darkness? The choice is yours and
 yours alone. Transcend the heights
 on Beauty's wing.

A young woman, VALENTINA, (wearing a wig of long blonde hair
 and a white, flowing costume which gives her prominent hips
 and breasts) stands facing an elaborately framed full-length
 mirror nestled upstage amongst cut-out trees representing a
 forest... This is 'Beauty'. She turns and steps forward.

ANTON takes her hand. They make a couple of dance steps
 together. They look enchanting and enchanted.

ANTON/MERCURY (CONT'D)

(to the audience)
 Or, if you must...

Now PERCY, in demon costume, leaps from behind the scenery .

(CONTINUED)

ANTON/MERCURY (CONT'D)
... scour the squalid depths with
Putrid's brother, Stench!

PERCY indicates a ticket dispenser attached to the front of
the stage.

PERCY
Take a ticket and join the queue!
Only five quid a go! There's no
greater bargain on planet earth!

A beer bottle lands on the stage

The DRUNKEN YOUTHS cheer.

ANTON/MERCURY
You choose... Fulfilment, grace and
light or... Waste, filth and
darkness.
(under his breath,
watching the drunk,
MARTIN, with contempt)
No prizes for guessing what you'll
do.

MARTIN has begun, with difficulty, to clamber onto the stage.

His MATES laugh and shout encouragement.

ANTON
(not in character.. he
stutters)
No. Sorry. That's n-not allowed.
You have to t-take a t-ticket
first.

ANTON tries to prevent MARTIN from getting on stage. But
MARTIN thumps ANTON and pulls him into the 'audience'.

MARTIN'S drunken MATES laugh and applaud.

MARTIN is now on stage and heading for DOCTOR PARNASSUS who
is still in a trance.

PERCY tries to head him off but MARTIN shoves PERCY off the
stage. PERCY lands on the ground with a crash.

More laughter from the MOB.

(CONTINUED)

MARTIN
 (drunkenly to PARNASSUS)
 Hey you...I wanna audition. I
 wan... I wanna be a star... I
 wanna...

MARTIN is on the verge of tweaking DOCTOR PARNASSUS' nose or pulling his beard when VALENTINA diverts him.

VALENTINA
 Stop! Get off the stage!

MARTIN turns his bleary focus to VALENTINA.

MARTIN
 Thas a nice pair of jugs.

MARTIN'S mates roar their approval.

VALENTINA
 Get off the stage!

MARTIN
 No. I wan you... I wan you...

MARTIN lunges at 'Beauty' who retreats up stage.

MARTIN blunders into the scenery as he pursues 'Beauty' who stays just out of reach. She takes cover behind a cut-out tree.

ANTON and PERCY climb back onto the stage as MARTIN continues to chase 'Beauty'. VALENTINA evades him by ducking through the mirror (made of flexible reflective material slit down the middle). MARTIN crashes after her.

ANTON and PERCY exchange worried looks. They look at DOCTOR PARNASSUS. Should they wake him from his trance? They decide not to but it's a difficult decision.

The stage set, which was clearly only a few feet deep, now seems much deeper and to contain many more cut-out trees.

'Beauty' weaves in and out of the 2 dimensional trees as MARTIN chases her further into the increasingly magical forest. Beauty's costume has been transformed into something wonderful. (A rainbow studded with diamonds?)

VALENTINA comes into view. MARTIN is in hot pursuit.

(CONTINUED)

MARTIN

Come here you little sexpot!

VALENTINA stops, turns, smiles sweetly and slams her fist hard into MARTIN'S gut. He doubles up. VALENTINA pauses for a moment, contemplating doing some serious damage, before striding off.

MARTIN staggers to his feet.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Come back! You bitch!

He rushes after her but, trips on a root (a real 3 dimensional tree root) and pitches face first to the ground. Recovering, he looks up. Shock. He is surrounded by a dark, terrible, and very REAL forest. 'Beauty' has vanished.

EXT THE STAGE NIGHT

VALENTINA, 'Beauty', slips back on stage through the mirror. Her costume has reverted to its original state. She examines her knuckles on the hand with which she punched Martin.

ANTON looks at her. She shrugs. DR. PARNASSUS is still in a trance, his lips moving soundlessly. ANTON watches DOCTOR PARNASSUS in awe. 'Beauty' sighs. She's had enough.

INT/EXT MAGICAL FOREST

MARTIN is lost and terrified in the dark forest.

MARTIN

Mum...Mum!...

His voice echoes through the giant trees. But his cries are interrupted by another sound...a Tarzan-like howl.

MARTIN spins around. Strange creatures are swinging on vines through the giant trees. They are all around him. They look like HANDS... with little heads and arms where the wrists should be. They are all howling and jabbering.

From behind, a HAND CREATURE swings down and grabs MARTIN by the collar, hoisting him high into the air.

Clearing the trees, MARTIN sees he is not alone. There are many other people - all in the clutches of HAND CREATURES swinging on "vines".

(CONTINUED)

But, the "vines" are actually long, slim tentacles... dangling from enormous, luridly coloured JELLYFISH that float through the dark, frightening, sky.

From some of the tentacles, bottles of booze dangle - just out of reach of the struggling crowd - all desperate for a drink.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Please... I'll never...! Never again!. Honest!... From now on... I swear!.. Not a drop!

With a smile of satisfaction, the HAND CREATURE stops jabbering and let's go of MARTIN'S collar.

Down he plummets. The ground rushes up. MARTIN is as good as dead. But when he hits the ground, rather than going SPLAT!!, he bounces high in the air, turns a couple somersaults and lands on his feet.

He can't believe what has just happened... and then he hears music. Beautiful, ethereal music.

In the distance a light is glowing. It's the sun, rising above a majestic mountain pass. Cut into the rock, is a long stairway winding up to the summit.

The HAND CREATURE swings down, gives MARTIN the "thumbs up", and points encouragingly toward the stairway.

Reformed and determined, MARTIN heads for the stairs. But on reaching them he discovers that each one is 6 feet high. The stairway is ridiculously steep and difficult. Letters are carved into the first stair..."THE 12X12 STEP PROGRAM...GOOD LUCK". This is going to be tough.

The sound of a honky-tonk piano makes him turn. Behind him the sky is dark. A roadside bar/nightclub with flashing neon lights has appeared. He hesitates. He could use a drink before the long climb. He heads for the club.

The door to the club is opened by a mechanical fairground figure of a jolly smiling man (MR NICK) distinguished by a bowler hat and a red waistcoat.

MR NICK

Hi there. C'mon in. Looks like you could use a drink.

(CONTINUED)

MARTIN, relieved and reassured by the welcome, steps inside. The door closes followed by the sound from within of much gaiety and laughter.

THE CAMERA pulls back as the nightclub suddenly EXPLODES IN A BALL OF FLAME.

The sound of police sirens. We are back outside in front of the theatre.

DR. PARNASSUS rises unsteadily, coming out of his arduous trance.... 'Beauty" moves to support him as, exhausted, he loses his balance and snaps out of his trance.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(holding his head)
Valentina...

VALENTINA
(indignant)
He was chasing me.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(angry)
You don't go through the mirror.

VALENTINA
I had to get away.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
You hit him.

VALENTINA
Self defence.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
You're out of control. Ever since
your mother died...

VALENTINA
When I was three!

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
I don't want to talk about it!

VALENTINA
(indignant)
You brought it up!

DOCTOR PARNASSUS turns on ANTON.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
We don't accept drunks!

ANTON
We c-couldn't stop him.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
People must be in their right minds
when they make the choice.

ANTON
I know. I'm s-sorry.

DRUNKEN GIRL (V.O.)
Martin!...

The POLICE are dealing with a drunken mob of nightclub
REVELLERS, making arrests.

A distraught, hysterical, DRUNKEN GIRL is looking for MARTIN.

DRUNKEN GIRL (CONT'D)
Martin!... Martin!...

She sees 'Beauty'.

DRUNKEN GIRL (CONT'D)
He went with that cow! I'll scratch
her eyes out!

A POLICEWOMAN grabs the DRUNKEN GIRL and drags her,
struggling, into police van.

MARTIN'S FRIENDS are searching for him around the stage.

FRIEND OF MARTIN
Marty!? Marty, where are you?
(a POLICEMAN grabs him)
Oi! Leave off..it's them..they've
got our mate back there.

POLICEMAN
(to PARNASSUS)
You! Gunga Din! What do you think
you're playing at!?

DR. PARNASSUS
'Playing'? We don't 'play'! What we
do is deadly serious!

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS pushes aside the mirror to reveal a door in the back wall of the shallow stage. It is swinging open.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Gone. Will we miss him? I don't think so.

The POLICEMAN looks and frowns.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

(to the POLICEMAN
condescendingly)

Don't worry if you don't understand it immediately.

PERCY, wisely, decides to head off conflict. He steers DOCTOR PARNASSUS away from the POLICEMAN.

PERCY

(to POLICEMAN)

He's doing his bit to save the human race. He thinks it's got a future. Quaint, eh? I keep telling him to get a proper job.

(shaking his empty
collection cup)

Check it out.. another night with nothing in the kitty.

POLICEMAN

I want you freaks out of here. Now. If I ever see you in this parish again I'll do you.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS bows exaggeratedly, with a hint of mockery.

The POLICE OFFICER suspects that DOCTOR PARNASSUS is taking the piss, but decides not to press it. Instead, he knees MARTIN'S struggling friend to the ground.

The sky is grey with the first light of dawn. The wagon rolls off down the dark street as a dustcart rumbles into view and its CREW begin emptying bins and picking up rubbish.

Shooting galleries. Music. Loud aggressive rides. PEOPLE milling around.

(CONTINUED)

The wagon is parked at the edge of the fair. The stage is set. ANTON dressed as Mercury is trying to attract an audience, without much success.

ANTON
Step up! Step up! For one night
only! The Imaginarium of Dr.
Parnassus! Not to be missed!

On stage is DOCTOR PARNASSUS, 'levitating' and in a trance, as before. Incense smoke swirls around him.

ANTON (CONT'D)
Test your imagination! Envisage the
sublime. Let Doctor Parnassus be
your guide. Discover the heights of
Wisdom...

VALENTINA dances forward, looking fabulous as 'Wisdom'.

ANTON (CONT'D)
... Or, if you will, visit the
doldrums with all that's vile and
stinks.

PERCY steps forward, once again in his mediaeval demon costume.

PERCY
(indicating ticket
machine)
Take a ticket and wait your turn.
Twenty quid a go, reduced to five
for one night only!

ANTON
The world is full of wonders,
beauty, enchantment, for those with
eyes to see...

He magically produces a bouquet of flowers. Throws it into the air.. it transforms into beautiful doves.

This impressive trick is totally ignored by a group loudly arguing just in front of the stage - THE FAMILY FROM HELL.

LINDA
(aged 7)
Mum... Mum... I want to go on the
wall of death?

(CONTINUED)

MUM

Stop going on, Linda! You're not old enough!

DAD

They won't let you, darling.

LINDA

But I want to!!! I want to!!!

MUM

LINDA!

DR. PARNASSUS stirs from his trance. He's had enough of this.

DR. PARNASSUS

Excuse me! Excuse me! Would you mind...

LINDA

It's not fair.

UNCLE BOB

It's the fair, but it's not fair!

UNCLE BOB laughs uproariously. LINDA pushes him into AUNTY FLO.

AUNTY FLO

Ow! Bloody hell!

Diego - aged 9 and absorbed in his portable video game wanders away from the family.

MUM

LINDA! BEEHAVE YOURSELF! I'M WARNING YOU!

DAD

Leave her alone!

DR. PARNASSUS

Please! This is The Imaginarium! It requires respect, concentration... Kindly go elsewhere and take your detritus with you?

MUM

Is he insulting us?

(CONTINUED)

DAD
 (to the DR. PARNASSUS,
 threateningly)
 Oy!

PARNASSUS ignores him and resumes his trance.

Unnoticed by all, DIEGO has somehow managed to climb onto the stage and is peering at the mirror.

MUM
 (looking around)
 Diego!? Where's Diego?

DAD
 DIEGO!?

VALENTINA turns her head just in time to see DIEGO vanish through the mirror.

She starts to go after him, then hesitates.

VALENTINA
 (trying to get ANTON'S
 attention)
 Pssst!

ANTON looks across the stage to her. She mimes that a certain someone has gone into the mirror. ANTON considers waking DOCTOR PARNASSUS but thinks better of it. Instead he heads off upstage and through the mirror in pursuit of Diego. VALENTINA takes over the pitch.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
 Ladies and Gentlemen, let Dr.
 Parnassus be your guide...

11 INT/EXT MAGICAL LANDSCAPE 11

ANTON moves through the cut -out trees and into a fantastic, brightly coloured landscape of Dr. Seuss-like hills and valleys. The sky is full of cloud-sized soap bubbles.

Diego is in the distance using his game controller to make the bubbles bang into each other...trying to burst them.

We can hear VALENTINA trying to continue the pitch in the face of the family from hell. Their baby has now started wailing.

Cracks in the ground begin to appear under ANTON'S feet.

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA (V.O.)
Beauty, Truth, Wisdom, Justice...
without imagination all are dead.

MUM (V.O.)
DIEGO!!!

DAD (V.O.)
DIEGO!!!

LINDA (V.O.)
DEGSY!

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.)
OH FOR CRYING OUT LOUD! SHUT UP!

The landscape, in response to DR. PARNASSUS' rage suddenly
rips apart, fragmenting and spinning with ANTON inside it.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(enraged)
AAAHHHH!!! DAMN AND BLAST!!!

Things fly in all directions.

ANTON, recovering, struggles out from between giant blocks of
stone. The world has gone dark.

He hears DIEGO crying somewhere in the distance and starts to
clamber over the shattered monoliths..

Reaching the top, ANTON sees DIEGO on the peak of a distant
rocky pinnacle surrounded by bottomless chasms. There are
what appear to be two suspension bridges spanning the void on
either side of the pinnacle.

CUT TO DIEGO who is in a state of confusion and terror. Is he
lost inside a video game he can't control? He presses the
buttons on his gaming device - to no avail.

One of the bridges leads to a bluff where war games are under
way... all very video-game-like. Thrilling aggressive music
blares forth.

MR NICK appears, still in red waist-coat and bowler hat, but
this time in the form of a CUT-OUT shooting target with a
bull's-eye on his chest.

MR NICK

Come on laddy, cross the bridge!
Join up! Be a man. Kill the enemy.
Impress your dad. Unlimited ammo.
Great fun. Pow! Pow! Pow!

As he speaks bullets fly. Each time MR.NICK gets shot and is knocked flat, he pops back up continuing his spiel.

The other bridge appears to be made of black and white piano keys and looks very rickety and unsafe. The piano key bridge descends into a great cavern where hundreds of BOY AND GIRL PIANISTS are practising on hundreds of pianos, all playing the same tune - the tune DR. PARNASSUS is humming, but with stern, demanding, PIANO TEACHERS in attendance.

PIANO TEACHERS

No, no, start again! Again! From
the top! Again! Practice! Practice!

DIEGO doesn't know what to do.

Behind him rises a strange Mongolfier balloon. DR. PARNASSUS's face is repeated again and again around its circumference. ANTON'S in the basket.

DIEGO catches sight of ANTON.

DIEGO

Help!
(indicating gaming device)
It doesn't work! It's broken!

ANTON

What?

DIEGO

The game!

ANTON

What g-g-game?

DIEGO

The game! The video game! The one
we're in!

ANTON

I d-d-don't know what you're t-t-
talking about.

DIEGO

Help me!

(CONTINUED)

ANTON
(miserable)
I c-can't.

DIEGO
What?

ANTON
I'm n-not supposed to be here.

DIEGO
What am I going to do?

ANTON
That's the p-point. It's up to you.

DIEGO
(dismayed)
But... Don't leave me! Don't let me
die!

But ANTON has gone.

DIEGO, terrified, tests the bridge to the war games.

MR NICK
Attaboy, sonny. Join the men.
Nothing to it. Hup two, hup two...

He hesitates...the music from the pianos seems to have an effect on him. He comes to a decision. He drops his gaming device then very hesitantly steps onto the extremely wobbly piano keys.

The CUT-OUT shooting target MR NICK isn't happy.

MR NICK (CONT'D)
No, wait! That's the wrong choice!
That bridge leads to failure and
despair. You'll be dead before
you're thirty. This is the one.
This is the bridge to manhood!

DIEGO looks uncertain, unnerved. For a moment we think he might change his mind, but he presses bravely on across the piano bridge.

13 EXT A HOLIDAY FAIR NIGHT

13

At last, finally, there's a bit of a crowd around the theatre, but drawn only by the FAMILY FROM HELL who are making a lot of noise.

MUM

(hysterical)

He's been kidnapped! They've taken him! It's that weirdo up there! Do something, Dad, do something!

LINDA

I want my brother! I want my little brother!

On stage DR. PARNASSUS, continues to hum in his trance-like state. INSPECTOR OF FAIRS rattles on.

INSPECTOR

You cannot perform here without appropriate authorization.

Getting no response from DR. PARNASSUS he pulls out his mobile phone and dials.

INSPECTOR (CONT'D)

(with phone to ear)

It's me. I need some support. We've got trouble.

ANTON steps out of the mirror. He produces an inflated balloon which he releases and which then flies, zig-zagging out over the audience.

DR. PARNASSUS, wakes in time to see the balloon.

DR. PARNASSUS

(delighted with Anton's 'message')

Ha,ha! Success! One little devil out of the fire... makes it all worthwhile!

He magically produces a Tarot Card from the startled INSPECTOR'S ear.

INSPECTOR

Where did you say you're from?

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS

I didn't.

He lifts his arm with a flourish whereupon a gloriously painted canvas sky unrolls from the top of the set disgorging DIEGO as it reaches the stage.

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

Hooplah!

DIEGO rolls out, tumbles across the stage and lands next to the rest of his FAMILY. He's beaming, laughing, full of wonder, transformed by his experience.

MUM

Diego! Where have you been? I've been worried sick!

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

(descending from his glass
plinth)

And so... a glimmer of hope...
Perhaps eternity has not been in
vain!...

DAD smacks DIEGO round the back of the head.

DAD

And you can wipe that silly
expression off your face, you
little poof.

LINDA

(gleefully)
You're in big trouble! You're in
big trouble!

UNCLE BOB

You've upset your mum.

AUNTY FLO

He's spoilt our evening.

DAD

And where's your gamer? He's lost
his bloody gamer! Another fifty
quid down the drain. You're not
getting another one! Bloody kids!
Why do we bother?

THE FAMILY FROM HELL moves off.

(CONTINUED)

DIEGO, full of wonder and oblivious to his family, looks back at PARNASSUS and gives the old man the thumbs-up.

PARNASSUS smiles and raises his thumb in response.

The INSPECTOR OF FAIRS is joined by a POLICEMAN and POLICEWOMAN.

POLICEMAN

What's the trouble?

DR. PARNASSUS

Ah, the fuzz.

POLICEMAN

What did you say?

DR. PARNASSUS

(charmingly)

Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear, Fuzzy Wuzzy
had no hair, Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't
fuzzy wuzzy?

The POLICE and the INSPECTOR exchange dark looks. Clearly they're dealing with a dangerous trouble-maker.

INSPECTOR

(to Parnassus)

Next time I find you doing business
without a permit I'll impound your
wagon.

POLICEMAN

(to Parnassus)

I'll be doing worse than
that...now, bugger off!

DR. PARNASSUS

With pleasure.

He bows mock graciously.

Valentina, half-undressed, is struggling out of her 'Wisdom' costume while at the same time looking at pictures of beautiful homes and gardens in a very battered copy of 'Homes and Gardens'. Without make-up and costume she appears much younger.

(CONTINUED)

A movement of something reflected in the dressing-room mirror catches her eye.

In the mirror we see MR NICK, not a CUT-OUT, but the real thing.

VALENTINA
 (startled, guiltily hiding
 'Homes and Gardens')
 Oh!

She turns, holding her dress to cover her modesty. There's nobody there.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
 Who's that? Who's there?

15 EXT EDGE OF FAIR / THE WAGON CONTINUOUS 15

ANTON and PERCY are packing-up and closing the wagon.

DR. PARNASSUS, out of his make-up and costume, is smiling and humming to himself as he removes the feed bag from one of the horses.

The horse lifts its head and DR PARNASSUS recoils in shock and horror. Standing directly behind the horse is MR. NICK... a huge grin splitting his face.

MR NICK
 Hello Parnassus... It's been a
 while hasn't it?

PERCY, winding a rope onto a cleat, hears distant laughter and looks up.

CUT TO PERCY'S P.O.V. where we see, some distance away and in a relatively secluded spot, MR NICK rocking with laughter while DOCTOR PARNASSUS looks stricken. He clutches at the back of a park bench to steady himself.

CUT TO PERCY who looks thoughtful and worried. He heads off to help DOCTOR PARNASSUS as the latter slumps onto the bench. MR NICK has vanished.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
 (distraught)
 He's come to collect.

PERCY
 I thought so.

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS

What can I do?...

PERCY

(grimly)

Nothing.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

There must be something!

He looks over to where VALENTINA is helping close the theatre. PERCY follows his gaze.

PERCY

You're going to have to tell her.

The wagon makes its way through city streets.

PERCY is sitting on the roof driving. ANTON is lying on the roof looking up at the stars. VALENTINA is sitting next to him lost in thought.

ANTON

Look at that moon.

(no response from
Valentina)

I've n-never seen it so b-big. And
the stars...It's so c-clear.

PERCY holds his hand out, palm up.

PERCY

(sardonically)

Rain.

ANTON

(sotto voce)

Valentina?

VALENTINA

(irritated)

Val... Val.

ANTON

I c-c-can't call you Val, P-
Parnassus d-doesn't like it.

VALENTINA

He's not here is he? He's inside
getting pissed.

ANTON

Are you happy?

VALENTINA

(ironic)
Ecstatic.

ANTON produces an old beaten-up copy of 'Beautiful Homes' and
starts thumbing through it.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

Hey! That's mine!

She tries to snatch it from him. He flutters it out of her
reach.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

Give it me!

She wrests it from him and hides it just as PERCY looks back
at them.

ANTON

(sotto voce)
Would you really be happy in one of
those p-places?... N-not me.
Well... m-maybe....with you.
(suddenly urgent)
Let's run away. Make a new life
together. I'll retrain. Computers.
Stocks and bonds. We could be
happy. Just the two of us.

VALENTINA

(sotto voce)
Anton?

ANTON

What?

VALENTINA

Shut up.

ANTON

Why d-do you always have to p-
pretend to be so b-brutal?

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA
I'm not pretending.
(coquettishly)
Anyway... I'm under age.

ANTON
(exasperated)
Valentina.

VALENTINA
(knowingly, teasing)
I shall be twelve on Wednesday.

ANTON
Don't be ridiculous.

VALENTINA
Percy? How old will I be on
Wednesday?

PERCY
Twelve.

VALENTINA
See? Parnassus says so too. Are you
saying he's ridiculous?

ANTON
No...

VALENTINA
(teasing)
Yes you are. I'll tell him.

ANTON
He knows I worship him....

VALENTINA
He takes advantage.

ANTON
I don't mind. He's extraordinary...
Like you.

VALENTINA
Puhlease.

ANTON
You are.

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

Parnassus is a pain. Okay he's extraordinary but I'm not. I don't want to be like him. I want to be like other people. Like them. (gesturing to the passing city) You know... normal. Ordinary. You're so lucky.

ANTON isn't sure how to take this.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

(half apologetically)
You know what I mean.

She gets up, kisses ANTON on the top of his head and climbs down into the hatch.

Anton looks thoughtful, bruised.

PERCY glances back.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

(popping her head back up)
Actually, I'm going to be sixteen. Shall I tell Parnassus I know? I think he knows I know. Silly man. Sweet sixteen.

She disappears down the hatch, then quickly pops back up.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

(mischievously)
The age of consent.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS' cabin is tiny. It's packed with books and memorabilia; Egyptian/Assyrian/Greek/etc., magic trick paraphernalia, and much else.

A hanging lantern suspended from the ceiling throws moving shadows.

DR. PARNASSUS is slumped despondently on a cramped bed. A plate of untouched food sits on a table in front of him.

He has laid out tarot cards. To the right - The Magus.. to the left - The Devil. The next card is The Maiden. He places it carefully beneath The Magus.

(CONTINUED)

He picks up an open bottle of spirits and takes a swig.
Clearly he's already had a few drinks.

VALENTINA O/S
(cross with him)
You haven't eaten anything.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(startled)
Valentina...

She comes in.

VALENTINA
I go to all this trouble and you
leave it.

DR. PARNASSUS
I'm not hungry.

VALENTINA
Are you ill?

DR. PARNASSUS
(anguished)
Valentina... my miraculous child..
I have something to tell you.

VALENTINA
Now what?

She starts tidying up.

DR. PARNASSUS
(avoiding the question)
I should never have brought you
into this rotten bloody world!

VALENTINA
(she's heard this before)
Oh for God's sake!

DR. PARNASSUS
What was I thinking of!

VALENTINA
Percy liked the soup.

DR. PARNASSUS
(agitated)
Why does everybody want to live
forever?

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

That's normal isn't it?

DR. PARNASSUS

Immortality's a curse! Any fool can tell you that!

Valentina picks up Parnassus' nearly empty bottle.

VALENTINA

You know it doesn't agree with you.

DR. PARNASSUS

(in difficulty)
Valentina...

VALENTINA

(losing patience)
And I'll be sixteen on Thursday, so let's not have any more tosh about that.

DR. PARNASSUS

Listen to me!

VALENTINA

You think you're so clever and that everybody else is an idiot! You can't stop me growing up just by lying about my birthday! It's ridiculous!

DR. PARNASSUS

Shut up! Shut up and listen to me! Listen to me! I need to tell you something, before it's too late!

DR PARNASSUS reaches up and plucks a glass paperweight out of the air. It's that kind that contains little models which are engulfed in a snow storm when the paperweight is shaken.

DR. PARNASSUS shakes the paper-weight and watches the 'snow' swirl about.

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

One dark winter's night... Many years ago...?

VALENTINA

Is this going to take long?

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS
QUIET!

THE CAMERA closes in on and 'enters' the paperweight.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Many centuries ago, as a matter of
fact...

18 EXT INSIDE THE PAPERWEIGHT NIGHT 18

A HOODED RIDER moves slowly through the snowstorm, the horse picking its way carefully across a field of virgin snow.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.)
... I was visited... by someone I
had hoped never to meet.

In the distance, rising like a dark mountain, is a strange monastery. Dim light comes from a couple of windows.

We can hear, from far away, the indistinct droning voice of the story teller, a younger DR. PARNASSUS.

THE CAMERA moves up over and way ahead of the HOODED RIDER, continuing through the snowstorm, over fields, forests, valleys, rocks, until it reaches the monastery, high on a rugged hill. Here it enters one of the dimly lit monastery windows, taking us into a dining hall.

19 INT MONASTERY DINING HALL NIGHT 19

Entering via a window and looking down into the monastery dining hall, we see DOZENS OF MONKS sitting at a long refectory table. They are eating their supper and listening to a young DR. PARNASSUS who is sitting on a dais at the far end of the hall, his eyes closed, in a trance, telling a story.

A log fire burns in a big fireplace.

DR. PARNASSUS
... Having captured the wind and tamed the storm ... the Chief Steward, laying down to take his rest, had a disturbing dream... He dreamt that a hooded rider was approaching across the snow-swept plain.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

A rider who would challenge the
very foundations of the world...

The door to the refectory swings open with a crash.

The MONKS look up.

Standing on the thresh-hold is the hooded figure, covered
with snow.

He throws off his hood. It's MR NICK.

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

... The Steward woke and remembered
his dream. What manner of man had
he dreamt of, and what did it
signify?

INT MONASTERY DINING HALL LATER

DR. PARNASSUS and MR NICK are sitting at the fire.

Behind them, in the hall, MONKS come and go.

On the dais, a MONK continues with the story. This monk is a
younger PERCY.

PERCY

... And as the waters rose... the
people's need for stories grew.
Stories that would feed a great
hunger. A hunger for more than just
understanding...

PERCY continues telling the story in the background.

MR NICK

What exactly do you do here?

DR. PARNASSUS

We tell the eternal story.

MR NICK

Oh.... What's that?

DR. PARNASSUS

The story that sustains the
universe. The story without which
there is nothing.

(CONTINUED)

MR NICK

Nothing? Really. Are you telling me that if you stop telling a story...

(waving in the direction of Percy)

This story... something you made up, a fiction... that the universe ceases to exist?

DR. PARNASSUS

You make it sound so simple.

MR NICK

And you believe it?

DR. PARNASSUS smiles.

MR NICK (CONT'D)

Incredible. It's just incredible to me that you can believe something that can be so easily disproved.

DR. PARNASSUS

(complacently)

I don't think so.

MR NICK turns and throws a spell at PERCY who goes rigid like a statue - struck dumb. The story stops.

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

(alarmed)

No!

Another MONK, sitting at the table, immediately continues the story.

SUBSTITUTE MONK

..having been brought to the limit of his endurance...

MR NICK freezes him too, stopping him from speaking.

A third monk continues.

THIRD MONK

...yet the forces of evil could not prevail, and...

MR.NICK renders him silent.

DR. PARNASSUS

Stop!

(CONTINUED)

MR NICK zaps DR. PARNASSUS and all the other MONKS. All still. None of them can speak.

MR NICK

There you are. You see. The story's stopped. No more story... And yet, we're still here, the fire's still burning...

He pushes open a window.

MR NICK (CONT'D)

It's still snowing. The wind's still blowing. Nothing's changed.

DR. PARNASSUS and the MONKS, still struck dumb, look appalled.

MR NICK (CONT'D)

Cheer up... I've freed you from this ridiculous nonsense.

MR NICK undoes the spell.

The MONKS moan. DR. PARNASSUS slumps down in despair.

MR NICK smiles and lights a cigarette. He's enjoying this.

MR NICK (CONT'D)

Now you can use your powers to do something else. Have fun, travel, learn a foreign language...

Splat! A gob of bird shit lands on MR. NICK'S head. An eagle circles overhead. It swoops across the hall and exits through a window.

DR. PARNASSUS leaps up, laughing, amazed, revived.

DR. PARNASSUS

A sign! A message! That bird was a messenger... from distant places we know not of!

(triumphant)

Other places! The point is, you're wrong! And I'm wrong! It doesn't have to be us here!

(indicating monks)

Somewhere in the world, at any given time... someone is telling a story! Sustaining the universe! Right now, it's happening.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)
That's why we're still here. You
can't stop stories being told
somewhere! You can't be everywhere!

MR NICK is furious.

MR NICK
(irritated)
A weak hypothesis!

DR. PARNASSUS
(smiling)
Yes?

MR NICK stubs out his cigarette.

MR NICK
I tell you what... You're probably
not a betting man but...

MR NICK whispers into the DR. PARNASSUS's ear.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.)
And so I made a wager with the
devil.

DR. PARNASSUS and PERCY are travelling the world with a
little theatre. Giving performances. Inviting AUDIENCE
MEMBERS onto the stage to participate.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.)
Whichever of us won ten converts
first, would win the bet... My
argument was the importance of the
story, the power of the
imagination... His, the power of
material things, the supremacy of
stuff... Naturally... I won.

CUT TO another performance. Now the 16TH CENTURY.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O. (CONT'D))
My prize...
(a voice filled with
horror)
... was ever-lasting life.

Another show...now the 18TH CENTURY

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Everlasting torment...
Everlasting... Everlasting... Times
changed. No one wanted our tales
any longer.

DR. PARNASSUS and PERCY are performing on a street corner in modern clothes. As are all the PASSERSBY who pay them no attention.

They look exhausted, like beggars...and very old.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.)
It seemed as though the Devil,
after all... had triumphed... And
then... one day....

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (played by the same actress as Valentina, but older with different coloured hair) comes into view.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
From the very first moment I saw
her, I was head-over-heels in love.
She was beautiful, enchanting,
delightful, young... But I... I was
several thousand years old! How
could I woo her? What could I do?

CUT TO a desolate cliff top where PERCY is struggling with DR PARNASSUS, trying to prevent him from throwing himself off the cliff.

PERCY
Don't be a fool! You can't die!
You're immortal! You'll just end up
broken, in the eternity ward, and
I'll be stuck looking after you!
Forever!

DR. PARNASSUS breaks free, stumbles backwards, and pitches out into space. PERCY screams.

DR. PARNASSUS V.O.
At times like these... the devil is
never far away.

23 CONTINUED:

23

DR. PARNASSUS is hanging by his coat, snagged on a branch angled out from the cliff face and held, like a fishing rod, by MR NICK who has a great grin on his face.

24 EXT. RIVER DAY

24

CUT TO a much younger DR. PARNASSUS and the BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in a row boat, picnicking, as they float down a river. They are in love, very happy to be together.

PERCY, wearing a blazer, flannels and straw boater is rowing or punting.

DR. PARNASSUS (V.O.)

The devil granted me mortality
again...and youth and great powers.
I won my bride. I was in love. But
at what price...

The boat bumps into a submerged log. DR. PARNASSUS tries to push free. Several cigarette butts float past. Looking up, DR. PARNASSUS sees a man sitting on the riverbank, fishing, smoking a cigarette. It's MR NICK .

There is a loud and ominous clap of thunder.

25 INT. PARNASSUS' DEN NIGHT

25

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

...at what price....

DR. PARNASSUS looks haggard. He closes his eyes. He sways and drops the paper-weight.

VALENTINA

Father!...

At that moment the wagon lurches to a stop and we hear frantic banging on the roof.

DR PARNASSUS is glad of the excuse not to go on.

DR. PARNASSUS

We've stopped.

VALENTINA

What do you mean 'at what price'?

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS

(turning back to his Tarot cards)

It'll wait, it'll wait. Another time. Something's happened. You'd better go and see.

VALENTINA

Typical! You insist I listen to a story and then you don't finish it!

More banging from above.

DR. PARNASSUS

Go and see!

VALENTINA turns and goes.

PARNASSUS looks miserable but, almost relieved. He turns over the next card.

It's The Hanged Man. It depicts a body hanging from a gibbet surrounded by several arcane objects.

PARNASSUS studies the card, trying to wring some meaning from it - then lays The Hanged Man in the space between the others. He takes a swig from the bottle.

EXT WAGON ON BLACK FRIARS' BRIDGE NIGHT

The wagon has stopped in the middle of Blackfriar's bridge. It's pouring with rain.

VALENTINA, wearing some sort of covering against the rain, climbs out of the hatch and onto the roof of the wagon.

Here she finds ANTON pointing excitedly down into the Thames.

ANTON

Incredible! I saw somebody dancing in the air.. under the bridge..

VALENTINA looks doubtfully at PERCY who peers morosely out from under his sou-wester and shakes his head.

ANTON (CONT'D)

It's true! There was a sh-shadow on the water, when the lightning flashed...

(CONTINUED)

Lightning flashes again.

We see what ANTON and VALENTINA see. A shadow, on the water, of someone 'dancing', hung by his neck with a rope attached to the underside of the bridge.

ANTON (CONT'D)
(triumphant)
You see! The d-dancer!

VALENTINA
(horrified)
There's someone hanging there!

ANTON
(smugly to Percy)
I t-told you!

VALENTINA
A rope! Get a rope!

27 EXT SIDE OF BLACK FRIARS' BRIDGE MOMENTS LATER 27

ANTON is 'absailing' over the side of the bridge. One end of a rope is tied around his waist, the other is attached to the bridge parapet. A lantern dangles from his waist.

VALENTINA and PERCY watch ANTON'S perilous descent.

Moments later there are two bodies hanging from the bridge, the mysterious HANGING MAN'S and ANTON'S.

The MAN is hanging by a noose around his neck, still jerking in his dance of death. His hands are tied behind his back.

ANTON can't reach the MAN.

ANTON
(shouting up)
I c-can't reach him.

VALENTINA
Try again!

PERCY
Swing in!

VALENTINA
Hurry up.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON shoots PERCY and VALENTINA a jaundiced look and with VALENTINA'S help on her end of the rope begins to swing back and forth.

Eventually, with a big enough swing, he manages to hook his foot around the HANGING MAN who has gone limp. Dead.

With extreme difficulty and great discomfort, ANTON pulls the MAN close to him, takes a knife from his pocket and cuts the MAN'S rope.

ANTON and the MAN are now swinging back and forth together on ANTON'S rope which is threatening to cut ANTON in half.

ANTON

Arghhh!!!!

VALENTINA

You've done it! Brilliant!

ANTON

Argggg!!!

PERCY

Come on, don't hang about! We're getting soaked up here!

VALENTINA, ANTON and PERCY manhandle the MAN over the parapet and onto the pavement.

DR. PARNASSUS has just stepped out onto the top of the wagon. Soaked. He's drunk and is swaying.

DR. PARNASSUS

Why are you fishing dead people out of the river? He's dead. Leave him. Let's go. Before the police turn up.

He goes, unsteadily, back inside.

VALENTINA and ANTON drag the MAN under the wagon, out of the rain.

The MAN is dressed in an expensive Saville Row suit. His jacket pockets are full of strange weights and arcane symbols have been scrawled on his forehead. He's about 30 years old and very handsome.

The MAN appears to be dead but VALENTINA decides to try the kiss of life.

ANTON is made uncomfortable seeing VALENTINA administer the kiss of life and he pulls her away.

ANTON

No! That won't work. And anyway,
you d-don't know where he's b-been.
Let me...

He brings both fists down hard on the centre of the MAN'S chest.

Boing! The 'dead' MAN coughs, sits bolt upright, spits out a little metal tube and smashes his head on the underside of the wagon, knocking himself out.

The little metal tube clatters over the asphalt.

ANTON (CONT'D)

He's alive!

VALENTINA

Thank God.

PERCY

Well, he was.

ANTON picks up the little metal tube and examines it.

ANTON

What on earth is this?

29 EXT BLACK FRIARS' BRIDGE REAR OF WAGON MOMENTS LATER 29

VALENTINA, ANTON and PERCY drag the MAN from under the wagon and carry him to the rear.

VALENTINA

Put him in the big trunk.

ANTON

B-but...

VALENTINA

Don't argue.

PERCY

The boss said leave him.

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

He thought he was dead.

They start to bundle the MAN in one of the travelling trunks attached to the back of the wagon. With the body hanging half in half out, ANTON suddenly stops.

ANTON

I d-don't like it. It's none of our b-business.

VALENTINA

So, what do you suggest, we leave him on the side of the road?

ANTON doesn't want to answer that one.

PERCY

(walking away)

Definitely.

VALENTINA, single-handedly, hefts the MAN into the trunk and carefully places a cushion under his head. An action not missed by ANTON.

30 EXT DERELICT BUILDINGS DAWN 30

The wagon stands, hidden, among deserted derelict buildings. All is quiet.

The lid of the big travelling trunk slowly opens.

The MAN struggles out. His neck is sore, his wrists ache and his head is bruised. He hasn't a clue where he is. He tries to make sense of the wagon, the grazing horses, the derelict buildings.

Some distance away a bizarre, horned and tailed CREATURE is involved in a strange contorted dance.

Hoping to avoid the CREATURE, the MAN starts to move away but is stopped by a squeaky voice behind him.

PERCY (V.O.)

Hey, you!

The MAN turns around to find PERCY looking at him.

PERCY (CONT'D)

I suppose somebody saves your life everyday of the week.

(CONTINUED)

MAN
(croaking)
What?

He can hardly speak. It hurts him to do so.

PERCY
Too much like routine to bother
with a thank you.

MAN
(with difficulty)
Who are you?

PERCY
Percival St. Antoine della Touraine
et Sansepolcro da Piemonte the
Third. If that proves too
difficult, you may call me Percy.

MAN
Where are we?

PERCY
Geographically, in the Northern
Hemisphere. Socially, on the
margins. Narratively, with some way
to go. And your name is...

MAN
(appalled)
I... I can't remember.

PERCY
That's handy.

PERCY whistles to the dancing CREATURE, who turns and
approaches. The MAN is getting very nervous.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Any credit cards?

MAN
What?..Oh..OK... you can have
whatever you want.. just don't..

PERCY
...with your name on them.

MAN
Ah...right.. good idea.
(searching his pockets)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAN (CONT'D)

My wallet... it's gone. Nothing.
I've been robbed.

PERCY

Don't look at us.

CREATURE

What's your name?

PERCY

(sceptical)

He can't remember.

Suddenly a mobile phone starts ringing. They all look at each other. It's in the MAN'S pocket. But, he doesn't move. The CREATURE takes his head off ..it's ANTON.

ANTON

Might be for you.

PERCY

They'll know who you are.

The MAN still doesn't move. ANTON reaches over and tries to find the phone in the MAN'S pockets. The MAN tries to push him off and find the phone himself. The phone is retrieved but, in the struggle to answer it, it's dropped.

A WOMAN SPEAKING RUSSIAN can be heard from the phone. As ANTON and the MAN dive for it, the MAN 'accidently' steps on it. The phone is crushed.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Pity.. I speak Russian.

ANTON and PERCY glare with deep suspicion at the MAN.

DR. PARNASSUS (O.S.)

Dammit! I told you to leave him. He
was dead.

DR. PARNASSUS, holding a cold, damp towel to his throbbing head, appears, coughing and miserable from the wagon.

PERCY

Well, we didn't and he isn't.

ANTON

He was hanging under the b-bridge.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Hanging?

(CONTINUED)

PERCY
(handing Parnassus the
noose)
By his neck. Until dead. If we'd
had any sense.

ANTON produces the bricks with strange markings that were in
the MAN'S pockets.

ANTON
We found these in his p-pockets.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS examines the bricks with great interest.

He pulls out The Hanged Man card and compares it's arcane
details - a noose, strangely marked shapes like bricks, a
metal tube - to the objects found on the MAN.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
The hanged man!

VALENTINA(O.S.)
Is he okay?

She appears from inside the wagon.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
(to man)
Are you alright?

MAN
Yes... thank you.

VALENTINA
(to PARNASSUS who is in
deep thought)
He tried to kill himself.

ANTON
With his hands t-tied behind his b-
back?

They all look at one another. Good point.

PERCY
Actually, I saw that trick
performed many years ago at....

ANTON
S-somebody was trying to k-kill
him.

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

My God... that's exciting.

ANTON

We c-can't let him stay with us.

VALENTINA

Why not?

ANTON

We d-don't know what this is about,
who he is, what he m-might have
done...

MAN

(croaking)

I haven't done anything. I'm sure.
I hope. Please... Give me the
benefit of the doubt.

PERCY and Anton exchange knowing looks.

VALENTINA

(appealing to PARNASSUS)

Father?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS, looking up from his study of the bricks and
noose, takes the MAN aside, looks closely, trying to read the
strange markings on his forehead.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

These marks... I recognize them.

MAN

(puzzled)

Marks?

The MAN wipes his hand across his forehead. Looks at his inky
hand.. confused.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

(sotto voce)

You've been sent by Mr Nick.

MAN

(puzzled)

Mr Nick?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

(impassioned)

Don't toy with me. Tell me you're
an emissary from Mr Nick.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

Tell me you've come with a proposition. Tell me what I want to hear!

TONY doesn't know what DR PARNASSUS is talking about but he grasps the fact that if he wants to be allowed to stay here he needs to play along.

MAN

Yes.

DR. PARNASSUS

Thank God! Thank God! Thank God for that!

DOCTOR PARNASSUS takes PERCY aside, shows him the Hanged Man Tarot Card and indicates the MAN with a nod.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

He's from Mr Nick.

PERCY

No he's not.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

He's come with a proposal.

PERCY

No he hasn't.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

All is not lost.

PERCY

What proposal?

VALENTINA

Father?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

(looking at the card, then to the MAN)

You're welcome.

MAN

(croaking)

Thank you.

PERCY groans and tears his hair.

VALENTINA is pleased. ANTON is not.

VALENTINA kisses PARNASSUS on the cheek.

31 INT DOCTOR PARNASSUS' DEN A LITTLE LATER 31

The MAN precedes DOCTOR PARNASSUS in the tiny room. He looks around in amazement.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
We can talk here. Sit down, sit
down.

MAN
Thank you.

He does so. DOCTOR PARNASSUS sits opposite him.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(expectantly)
So...

PAUSE

MAN
(trying to look on top of
it)
I like your study.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
The message.

MAN
(cautiously)
The message?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
The message! What's the message?
From Mr Nick. What does he want?

MAN
Ah... Well... That's the problem...

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
Problem? What problem?

MAN
Unfortunately... I've lost my
memory.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
What!?

MAN
It'll come back. I'm sure.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
You've lost your memory?

MAN
I just... it needs time... to
recover.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(incredulous)
You've come here with a message....
A vitally important message from
Mister Nick... A matter of life or
death... and you can't remember
what it is!?

MAN
Not at the moment. I'm sorry. It's
never happened before.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
AAAAARRRRRGGGGHHHH!!!
BUGGERBUGGERBUGGER!!!!

32 EXT SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT NIGHT 32

The wagon is parked in a shopping mall parking lot. The theatre is being opened up by PERCY and ANTON. There are a few late night SHOPPERS coming and going.

33 INT BACKSTAGE THAT MOMENT 33

VALENTINA, dressed as 'Beauty', is rummaging in a theatre skip, helping the MAN find something to wear for the show.

There is a slight whiff of sexual attraction in the air.

VALENTINA
He says you must work... to focus
your mind. You can help out front..
sell tickets. Ah, here we are...
(Pulling out a full
bottomed wig)
Try this. You can be 'Justice'.

The MAN tries on the wig and looks in a mirror.

VALENTINA tries not to laugh.

(CONTINUED)

MAN
(pulling a face)
Exactly. A laughing stock.

VALENTINA
Just like the rest of us.

MAN
(pulling out a carnival
mask)
I think I'll hide behind this.

VALENTINA
No face. No name. The mystery
thickens. I'm going to have to give
you a name...

She presses a metal breast-plate to his chest.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
... until you remember who you are,
I dub thee Saint George. You can
save me from the dragon. George.

GEORGE
Hold on!.. what dragon?

VALENTINA
You've met Parnassus.

Mischievously, she ties a chiffon tutu around his waist.

GEORGE
Now you are making fun of me.

VALENTINA giggles.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry but, nobody laughs at me
without paying the price....ah,ha.

He begins tickling her. She laughs uncontrollably, falling
backwards into the costume skip..

ANTON O/S
We c-can't do it. We...

ANTON enters wearing his Mercury gear. He freezes, seeing
GEORGE and VALENTINA rollicking about. They stop, look up.

VALENTINA
Hi, Anton.... what?

(CONTINUED)

ANTON

The show. We c-can't do it. It's
your father...

VALENTINA

(alarmed)
What is it? What's happened?

INT DOCTOR PARNASSUS' CABIN MOMENTS LATER

VALENTINA and ANTON arrive in the doorway, dismayed.

GEORGE hovers in the background.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS is attempting to get ready for the show but he's so drunk he can hardly stand. He's already put some article of clothing on back-to-front or inside out. PERCY is trying to help.

VALENTINA

Oh no!

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Can he remember!
(seeing Man in doorway)
Can you remember?

GEORGE

Not yet.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Bloody useless! Mr Nick sends an
emissary and he can't bloody
remember! It's a bloody disaster!

VALENTINA

You can't go on. You're drunk.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

I am not drunk! I'm under
considerable stress.

VALENTINA

(to Percy)
You'll have to do it.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

No! No understudy! The audience
won't tolerate an understudy!
There's only one Doctor Parnassus,
and I am he!

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE
 (interrupting)
 Somebody make some strong coffee.

EVERYONE looks at George.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
 Strong coffee? Brilliant!
 (sarcastically saluting
 George)
 This is why fate has brought us
 together. Don't worry about
 remembering... It's all the same to
 a man on a galloping horse!

DOCTOR PARNASSUS is on stage, floating' on his glass pillar, apparently in a trance but, humming erratically. He is flanked by VALENTINA and ANTON who stay close to PARNASSUS in case he falls. PERCY is in his medieval costume/one-man-band outfit. They all look uneasy.

ANTON
 (a bit low-key)
 For one night only... raise your
 sights... encounter the majesty,
 the beauty, the miracle that's in
 each and every one of you. Take
 this opportunity to expand your
 horizons. It's not too late.
 Experience the Imaginarium of the
 great Doctor Parnassus.

VALENTINA peers out over the 'footlights' in the hope of catching sight of GEORGE.

VALENTINA
 Where's George?

He's nowhere in sight.

ANTON
 (sarcastically)
 P-probably remembered he had a wife
 or t-two back in Russia.

VALENTINA gives him a dirty look.

36 INT SHOPPING MALL SUPERMARKET THAT MOMENT 36

GEORGE, wearing his 'romantic' Venice carnival mask is smooth-talking several middle-aged LADIES on queue at the supermarket check-out.

He's carrying the theatre's ticket dispenser.

GEORGE

Three tickets for the price of two... That's a fantastic deal. It's a brilliant show. Much better than sex.

Much ribald laughter from the flattered LADIES.

37 EXT SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT LATER 37

The shoppers have gone. The last car drives out of the car park leaving it empty except for the theatre wagon.

ANTON, VALENTINA and PERCY are on their own.

PARNASSUS, on his plinth, is asleep and snoring.

ANTON

Thank G-God... N-not a single customer!

PERCY

Let's close up quick while the going's good.

VALENTINA

(amazed)

He's never not done a show before... Maybe he's past it.

(hopefully)

Maybe it's time to retire.

PARNASSUS groans in his sleep.

ANTON

(looking out front)

Oh n-no!

ANTON sees GEORGE heading towards them with a mob of MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN in tow.

Bubbling with excitement, the mob arrives.

(CONTINUED)

EVELYN

Oh look! How fascinating.

The other WOMEN agree.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

(looking at her watch)

When does the next show start?

PERCY

There isn't a next show.

EVELYN and the other WOMEN are puzzled.

PERCY (CONT'D)

We've done all the shows we're
doing here this evening.

DEIDRE

But we've got tickets.

GEORGE looks hopefully at VALENTINA and ANTON who don't know
what to say.

We hear a crash.

THE CAMERA PANS around. PARNASSUS has fallen off his perch
and is now lying on the floor...snoring and mumbling.

VALENTINA and some of the WOMEN run forward.

SYLVIA

This man's drunk. Dead drunk.

EVELYN

Disgraceful.

VALENTINA O/S

(suddenly defensive of her
father)

He's not drunk. He's got a bad
cold....

GEORGE

But being a true professional he
tried to keep going, at
considerable risk to his health.

VALENTINA and GEORGE exchange a quick look. VALENTINA thinks
she's found a kindred spirit.

(CONTINUED)

DEIDRE

We want our money back.

GEORGE

No problem...dear ladies. No problem at all. I'm so terribly sorry. I can't apologize enough. You can have your money back or, if you like... an extra free ticket. Better yet, two extra free tickets if you buy another ticket at half price. This offer is only available today.

The WOMEN look on the verge of taking up the offer.

ANTON and PERCY exchange looks. They can't believe GEORGE'S chutzpah.

38 EXT CAR PARK A LITTLE LATER 38

The wagon rumbles across the deserted carpark.

39 INT THE WAGON THAT MOMENT 39

A large pile of coins with quite a few notes mixed in tumble onto a table. GEORGE is emptying his pockets while VALENTINA and ANTON look on..

VALENTINA

Wow! You took all that?

GEORGE

I got carried away.

ANTON

Lying through your t-teeth can do that to you.

VALENTINA

Anton!

GEORGE

(unperturbed)

Most of them were coming tomorrow.

ANTON

What tomorrow? We're gone.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE
 (shrugs)
 Okay, if it makes you feel better,
 I'll give it back.

ANTON
 (sarcastic)
 N-no, keep it. Thanks to you we can
 afford to buy Valentina a b-
 birthday cake.

VALENTINA
 (offended)
 That's enough!

ANTON storms off. GEORGE looks at VALENTINA sympathetically.

GEORGE
 Don't be angry with him. He's a
 little bit jealous. He's young.
 Insecure. I'll make it my job to
 boost his confidence.

VALENTINA smiles at George with admiration and approval.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 When's your birthday?

40 EXT SUPERMARKET CAR PARK THAT MOMENT 40

As the wagon trundles out of the deserted car park a DARK
 FIGURE hops onto the rear platform.

41 INT DOCTOR PARNASSUS' CABIN MOMENTS LATER 41

DOCTOR PARNASSUS is groaning and clutching his head. He has a
 fierce hangover. He pours some powder from a packet into a
 glass of water, stirs it with his finger and knocks it back.
 He grimaces and shudders.

A hatch/shutter on the small window behind him slides open to
 reveal the grinning head of MR NICK.

MR NICK
 You shouldn't drink, it doesn't
 agree with you.

Startled, DOCTOR PARNASSUS spins around.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

What do you want? I'll do anything.

MR NICK

(smiles)

I know.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

You're man's lost his memory! He's bloody hopeless!

MR NICK

He's not my man.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

What?

MR NICK

Tony Shepherd. Little toe-rag. He used to run a big charity. I wouldn't trust him. But then... you don't trust me do you?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

For God's sake! Tell me what you want!

MR NICK

I just thought...seeing you so upset last night...that you needed a glimmer of hope...maybe a little bet?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

On Valentina?

MR NICK

No?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

You bastard!

MR NICK

First to five?... You might win. And save her. What do you have to lose?

DR. PARNASSUS

I'll kill you!

(CONTINUED)

MR NICK
(laughs)
Now that would be something. By her
birthday then.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
What! Impossible!..you've seen the
business we're doing.

MR NICK
Things are going to pick up. As
sure as eggs is eggs.

He closes the hatch/shutter with a bang.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
Wait!

Too late. He's gone.

42 EXT DERELICT BUILDINGS DAWN

42

Back amongst the derelict buildings the Troupe is resting and
doing chores. The horses are grazing.

VALENTINA sits at a mirror fussing with various hair styles -
slyly trying to catch GEORGE's attention.

PARNASSUS, holding his aching head, sits a short distance
away sadly watching her. PERCY is with him.

PERCY
Five souls.. two days, eh!?

DR. PARNASSUS
Shh! I'm trying to think.

PERCY
I told you didn't I?

DR. PARNASSUS
What?

PERCY
That he was a wrong-un.

PERCY nods his head in George's direction.

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS

Trust in providence, Percy.
Remember the hanging man. The cards
don't lie.

PERCY

No... but they sure as hell like
being economical with the truth.

CUT TO ANTON who is painting a long-stemmed, wooden
flower...he comes over to VALENTINA with it in his hand.

VALENTINA

(looking away)
Don't talk to me.

ANTON

P-please...I'm sorry about last
night. I behaved like an idiot.

VALENTINA

Yes.

ANTON suddenly plops down on his arse in a puddle of mud.
Then spins, flips the flower high into the air and, rolling
face down onto his stomach, catches the stem with his
clenched buttocks. VALENTINA bursts out laughing.

ANTON

You must admit... even idiots have
their qualities.

CUT TO GEORGE who is peeling potatoes, badly. PARNASSUS and
PERCY come up behind him.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

George... We'd like to know who you
really are.

GEORGE

What?... Yes. Me too.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

I may be able to help.

GEORGE

Really? What?... How...?

PERCY produces a small contraption with wires from behind his
back and gives it to DR PARNASSUS.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
Hold this piece of wire.

PERCY
You won't feel a thing.

GEORGE takes the end of the wire.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
I'm going to put the tips of my
fingers on the top of your head.

He does so.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS (CONT'D)
I want you to relax and try as far
as possible to think of nothing.

GEORGE
That's not difficult... in my
condition.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS closes his eyes. He seems to be making an
effort.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
Hold your breath.

GEORGE does so.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS (CONT'D)
Very good, very good. Yes... Yes, I
see... I see... Very interesting.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS takes his hand from GEORGE'S head and gives
the contraption back to PERCY.

PERCY
You may breathe normally.

The effort seems to have tired PARNASSUS. He needs to sit
down.

GEORGE
What... ?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
Alas, this technique has its
limitations.

GEORGE
But... Did you discover anything?

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(dramatically)
Your name.

GEORGE
My name?... What is it?

PAUSE.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
Anthony Shepherd.

TONY
(stunned)
My God! That's it! You're right!
Anthony Shepherd! They call me
Tony. Tony Shepherd! That's who I
am!

VALENTINA and ANTON begin to pay attention and gather around.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
And... you used to do good works.
Something to do with charity I
think.

TONY
Yes...That's right! That's right!
But how?...

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(dismissively)
It's an ancient technique of mental
divination, but I'm very rusty and
it doesn't always work
satisfactorily.

TONY
But that's amazing! Brilliant!
(oddly concerned)
Was there anything else?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS shakes his head, no.

TONY (CONT'D)
(relieved)
That's absolutely fantastic! Thank
you. Perhaps I'll remember other
things.

PARNASSUS smiles and bows slightly ironically.

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

Charity work? I knew you were a good person.

PERCY

So what was he doing dangling under a bridge from his neck?

VALENTINA

Percy!

PERCY

(sarcastic)

Oh dear, was that a rude question? Have I put my foot in it?

TONY

That's so strange. And horrible.. it's a complete blank. But I do remember I was involved in some sort of charity.. trying to do good, to make the world a better place, you know...inspire people, give them hope....

(self deprecatingly)

What an arrogant idiot.

VALENTINA looks at him thinking 'what a sympathetic person.'

The sound of a flutey whistle distracts him. ANTON is blowing a tune on the metal tube he found on the bridge.

TONY (CONT'D)

What's that?

ANTON

(with a superior air)

Mozart's flute concerto in G.

TONY

I mean, the pipe. Where did you get it?

ANTON looks at the metal pipe.

ANTON

I found it.

TONY

It's mine.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON

Oh. You're a musician n-now.

TONY

It's not a musical instrument. May I have it?... Please.

ANTON

(teasing)

Are you s-sure it's yours?

TONY

Positive.

ANTON

Alright.

ANTON appears to offer the pipe to TONY but palms it so that when TONY reaches out to take it, it's gone.

ANTON (CONT'D)

It's g-gone.

TONY

(getting shirty)

Don't fool around.

ANTON

Ah, there it is.

TONY once more tries to take it. Once more ANTON makes it disappear.

TONY

(angry)

Give it to me!

ANTON

(derisively)

Oooooh!

VALENTINA

Anton, that's enough.

She steps forward, takes the pipe from ANTON and gives it to TONY.

TONY

Thank you.

DR. PARNASSUS, who's been watching this exchange, looks thoughtful.

43 EXT THE WAGON NIGHT

43

PARNASSUS and CO are preparing to move out and do a show.

ANTON is working near PARNASSUS and PERCY who are unaware of his presence.

DR. PARNASSUS
What's eating Anton?

ANTON pricks up his ears.

PERCY
He's in love with Valentina?

DR. PARNASSUS
(dumbfounded)
In love....?

PERCY
It happens.

DR. PARNASSUS
The little snake! I'll skin him
alive!

CUT TO ANTON who winces.

PERCY
While you're at it, don't forget
the other one.

DR. PARNASSUS looks at PERCY questioningly.

PERCY (CONT'D)
The viper, the scorpion, the
amnesiac boa constrictor. Tony.

DR. PARNASSUS
Quite another kettle of fish.

PERCY
Really?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
He's ambitious, energetic... a man
of destiny.

(CONTINUED)

PERCY

(ironic)

And he's going to help us win five souls.

DR. PARNASSUS

I think he might. Valentina sees good in him.

PERCY

She'd be better off with Anton.

CUT TO ANTON who's pleased.

DR. PARNASSUS

Perhaps I should offer her hand to whoever helps most in winning the next five souls.

CUT TO ANTON who looks puzzled.

PERCY

That's even worse than the other ideas you've had today.

DR. PARNASSUS

(sighs)

You're not wrong... Ah, Percy, what would I do without you?

PERCY

Get a midget.

CUT TO ANTON as he moves, thoughtfully, away.

The theatre, parked outside a pub, is up and running.

ANTON, as Mercury, is doing his pitch.

ANTON

Sleep no more. Procrastinate no longer. Embrace this once in a life-time opportunity. Let the mind of Doctor Parnassus be the portal to the infinite world of your imagination.

Behind the curtain, PERCY is signalling VALENTINA to see if DOCTOR PARNASSUS has been drinking. She sniffs him.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

What are you doing? Please concentrate. We've got a tremendous amount of work to do tonight. A great deal depends on it.

A roll on the drums from PERCY. The curtain rises. DOCTOR PARNASSUS 'floats' above the stage on his glass plinth.

ANTON

As old as the universe itself, the great Doctor, versed in every mystic practice known to man, and many more besides, will guide you to your destiny.

However, the AUDIENCE - a few PASSERS-BY and DRINKERS who have drifted out of the pub for a smoke - aren't much interested in ANTON. Instead they pay more attention to the masked TONY who, decked out in a stylish costume, is working the sparse crowd with his smooth charm.

ANTON, irritated, glances back at DOCTOR PARNASSUS who is worried about the lack of customers.

TONY is now surrounded by fascinated WOMEN. They laugh at one of his jokes. One pretty young woman, SALLY, in particular seems to be smitten by the handsome 'actor'. TONY smiles seductively at her.

The sight provokes ANTON. He leaps off the stage, grabs SALLY by the wrist and begins to pull her to the stage.

PERCY keeps playing.

SALLY

(laughing)

What?... Hey, what you doing?

ANTON

T-taking you to the heart of your imagination!

ANTON is trying to compete with TONY but just can't manage the charm.

SALLY

(good humoured)

Oh my god! No way!

ANTON

You won't regret it!

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE FRIEND

Go for it Sal!

SALLY

(indicating friend)

Only if she comes with me.

FEMALE FRIEND

(enthusiastic)

Now you're talking!

A few ONLOOKERS cheer.

ANTON

N-not at the same time!

ANTON is still pulling SALLY onto the stage.

SALLY

I'm not going on my own.

ANTON

Your imagination is a very special place. Doctor Parnassus will make it flower.

SALLY

I bet he will.

More laughs.

FEMALE FRIEND

We'll do it together.

More laughs.

ANTON

(shakes his head)

No. T-two c-competing imaginations in the Imaginarium at the same time... it's n-not advisable.

FEMALE FRIEND

Eh?

ANTON

The stronger imagination will overcome the weaker and then there's n-no knowing what might happen.

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE FRIEND

That's really stupid.

SALLY

Let go!

ANTON

D-don't be afraid, d-dear lady.
You'll be safe with me.

Anton sweeps her off her feet and carries her onto the stage.

SALLY

Put me down!

ANTON

Have no fear.

FEMALE FRIEND

She doesn't want to do it on her
own!

ANTON

Only b-because she d-doesn't
realize...

FEMALE FRIEND

Let go of her you silly pillock!

VALENTINA, worried, steps forward to try and restrain ANTON.

VALENTINA

Anton...

ANTON

It's alright! It's alright!

Staggering under the weight of the struggling SALLY, ANTON
barges into DOCTOR PARNASSUS' on his glass plinth.

The plinth rocks and teeters. VALENTINA tries to stop it
falling.

ANTON, unaware of what he's done, disappears through the
mirror as DOCTOR PARNASSUS crashes head first onto the stage.
Crack!

From behind the mirror comes the sound of a woman's
terrifying, terrified screams.

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE FRIEND

SALLY! They've got her in there!
That's her screaming! SAL! They
doing something to her! SALLY!
Help, somebody! Help! Save her!

Upstage VALENTINA tends the stunned DOCTOR. He clutches his head in pain.

VALENTINA

Father! Father!

45 INT/EXT THE MIND OF DR. PARNASSUS THAT MOMENT 45

Terrified, ANTON and the screaming SALLY are spun through a black void clinging desperately to an asteroid as planets and stars spin madly around them.

Blood-red lightning bolts crackle and crash. Chaos.

46 EXT OUTSIDE PUB THAT MOMENT 46

Out front, the CROWD, larger now, is reacting badly to the dreadful screams. Sally's friends try to storm the stage.

TONY and PERCY try to hold them back.

TONY

Please. Everything's alright. It's
okay. Really. I promise you.

A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN hits him with her handbag.

TONY and PERCY are in danger of being overwhelmed. We can still hear Sally screaming from somewhere within the stage.

TONY (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen. Ladies and
gentlemen....please...

A DRUNK takes a swing at PERCY, misses, and connects with TONY.

TONY (CONT'D)

Ugh!

He falls off the stage and disappears into the angry CROWD who begin pummeling and kicking him.

(CONTINUED)

PERCY, desperate, produces a pistol and fires a couple of shots into the air.

EVERYONE dives for cover.

PERCY, taking advantage of the temporary lull, begins to race around, untying, unhooking, and pulling on ropes.

The theatre begins to close up as the horses bolt and the wagon clatters off down the street, bits falling off as it goes.

VOICE IN CROWD
Somebody call the police!

A battered TONY, chased by the enraged crowd, just manages to clamber on board, with the help of VALENTINA.

The wagon narrowly succeeds in out-pacing the fastest of the CROWD. As it disappears down the street, a figure is dumped unceremoniously out through the back door of the wagon.

It's the terrified SALLY, sent sprawling in the middle of the road.

A figure steps out from the shadows to help her to her feet. It's MR. NICK in his bowler and red waistcoat.

47 EXT. RUBBISH TIP NIGHT 47

A police siren howls as the wagon comes crashing around the corner of a great rubbish tip and clatters to a halt... the horses steaming, sections of the theatre hanging loose, broken..an utter mess. The siren fades into the distance.

48 INT/EXT THEATRE/WAGON NIGHT 48

Amongst collapsed scenery PARNASSUS lies in a heap. The others are struggling to their feet. ANTON is desperately trying to do something useful to help PARNASSUS but, VALENTINA pushes him out of the way.

VALENTINA
What were you thinking? Look what
you've done. Get out of the way!
(appealing to Tony)
Tony.

TONY, battered and bleeding, helps her lift PARNASSUS and manoeuvre him to his room.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

ANTON is mortified. PERCY pats him on the back.

PERCY
Better luck next time.

49 INT PARNASSUS' ROOM NIGHT

49

TONY helps VALENTINA get PARNASSUS comfortable.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(babbling)
This is my punishment. All is lost.
First to Five. One down.
Impossible, Valentina. First to
five. One down. No people. No time,
Valentina. We are doomed.

VALENTINA
(very concerned)
Ssshhh... Thanks, Tony. Leave us.

TONY, nods, leaves slowly. Listening.

50 EXT. WAGON NIGHT

50

PERCY is angrily banging about, trying to repair the damage.
ANTON is trying to help but, is just getting in the way.

PERCY
Do me a favour. Take a long walk
off a short pier.

TONY arrives.

TONY
Can I help?

PERCY
Bugger off!

TONY finds ANTON sitting despondently a short way from the
wagon swigging from a bottle. He sits down next to him.

ANTON
L-leave me alone.

TONY
What were you doing to that girl
behind the mirror?

(CONTINUED)

ANTON
(incensed)
What are you suggesting?

TONY
Oh, c'mon...we all heard her
screaming.

ANTON
I was screaming as well. It was t-
terrifying...

TONY
Terrifying? Why? I don't
understand.

ANTON
(reluctantly)
No, well...you wouldn't. You've n-
never been inside the D-Doctor's
mind have you?

TONY
Your not trying to tell me that
mind control stuff is real?

ANTON
You think it's some k-kind of scam,
d-don't you?

TONY
Isn't it?

ANTON
No... But I d-don't expect you to g-
get it... N-not in a million years.

TONY
Hang on.. if he can really control
people's minds, why isn't he ruling
the world? Why bother with this
crappy side show?

ANTON
He d-doesn't want to rule the world
d-does he?... He wants the world to
rule itself!

TONY
What a waste... Tell me about the
mirror. What's the point of that,
if not to razzle-dazzle the public?

(CONTINUED)

ANTON
 (smiles sardonically)
 You're way off the mark.
 (taking a swig)
 It's a b-bloody great mystery...
 wrapped in a b-brown p-paper b-bag
 enema...or do I mean, enigma...

He pulls himself up and starts to stagger off.

TONY
 Er... one more thing....Does 'first
 to five' mean anything to you?

ANTON looks at TONY with loathing.

ANTON
 I thought you were the c-clever
 one.

He walks away into the darkness.

TONY sits there busily thinking.

51 EXT RUBBISH TIP DAWN 51

The morning light suffuses mountains of domestic refuse.
 Rubbish for as far as the eye can see. Plastic sacks of
 various colours, many spilling open. A few fires are burning.

Flocks of scavenging sea gulls hover and dive, screaming blue
 murder.

On one of the many pinnacles of garbage sits a lonely figure.
 It's ANTON, depressed, angry, forlorn.

The CAMERA SWINGS ROUND to show, below ANTON, in a valley of
 waste material, the wagon.

52 EXT. THE WAGON DAWN 52

PERCY has spread out the broken scenery assessing the damage.
 In the shadow of the wagon VALENTINA is changing TONY'S
 dressings.

VALENTINA
 Thank God it's only cuts and
 bruises. I thought we'd lost you.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

If you hadn't been there...

He holds her hand. Looks deep into her eyes.

TONY (CONT'D)

Valentina, your father seems in a terrible state. Is it the police? The show? Maybe I can help.

VALENTINA

I don't know what's wrong with him, but if it's about the show...I don't care. I'm tired of it...let the police arrest us. I'm sick of living like this....

She looks miserable. TONY puts his arms around her. Holds her tightly to him.

TONY

Don't say that. What you're doing is important. Really important. It's just... maybe... it should be done in a different way.

He is about to kiss her.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS O/S

What sort of "different" way do you suggest?

DR. PARNASSUS, grim faced, head bandaged, steps from behind the wagon.

TONY and VALENTINA quickly disengage.

TONY

Oh, hello, good morning sir. How are you feeling? That was a nasty bump on the head you got..

DOCTOR PARNASSUS O/S

(beady eyed)
"Different?"

TONY

Well, sir, I've been thinking... It's clear the show's not attracting many people. Forgive me but... I see two ways of tackling this problem.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TONY (CONT'D)

Either the style of the show is at fault... or the type of audience. I would suggest changing both.

PERCY has appeared, dragging a damaged flat.

PERCY

Change the show!? Who the fizzing hell do you think you are?.....

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Shhh!

He sits down heavily.

TONY

I'm sorry but.. you're not modern. People want modern. Look.

He holds open a tattered fashion magazine to a page of beautifully photographed models in a fabulously magical setting. He thumbs through more pages of dreamy images.

TONY (CONT'D)

This is modern. It works. Trust me, I understand this world.

(with a wink)

This kind of mind control. Let's try to meet the public halfway.. the right public.. and in a better part of town.

From behind the wagon ANTON watches forlornly. Alone and unnoticed by the others.

PERCY

What about the filth?

TONY

(puzzled)

What?

PERCY

The filth. The police.

TONY

There'll be a better class of police too.

PERCY

That'll be the day.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

The trick is not to hide. Change your colours. Be bold. Go where they would least expect to find you. I think we have been brought together for a reason. I don't believe in coincidence. You saved my life. Now let me do something in return.

PARNASSUS confers with PERCY.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Our time's nearly up... This could be what we need.

TONY

(to Valentina)

This can be my birthday gift to Valentina.

VALENTINA smiles and nods to PARNASSUS.

DR. PARNASSUS

Well then...

(with a burst of energy)

For God's sake let's do it!!!

PERCY

(sighs)

Yeah, okay, but what exactly do we do?

TONY

Well... First of all, I want you to give me your money. All of it.

What?! PARNASSUS, PERCY, and VALENTINA look at each other.

Then PARNASSUS sees something beyond the wagon...ANTON, downcast, heading off through the swirling plastic bags and flying rubbish... a battered suitcase in his hand.

DR. PARNASSUS

Anton! Where are you going?

No answer from ANTON.

VALENTINA runs after him but, he marches on silently.

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

What are you doing? Didn't you do
enough damage last night?

(pummelling his back)

Anton... I'm the one who wants to
run away!

(he slows)

Are you trying to wreck my
birthday, or what?

Anton stops, still not looking at VALENTINA he slowly drops
his suitcase.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

Please. We need you.

Moved, ANTON turns to her. She smiles sweetly.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

How much money have you got?

Close up on Parnassus's glass plinth..now open-topped and
sitting on the edge of the stage... full of the troupe's
savings. A sign proclaims "Please Take Generously"

Directly behind the glass box is a half-globe with the
continent of Africa featured. Sitting on top is Percy
playing something ethnic but tasteful on a flute with one
hand...his other is held out pathetically... a beggar. He's
blackened up and dressed in rags. He doesn't look happy. He
sneaks nervous glances at the glass box of money.

The wagon, newly painted in sleek and stylish black and
white, stands in Bond Street or some similarly fashionable
street with expensive shops and art galleries. RICH WOMEN
anxious to be conspicuous in their consumption of wealth
glide past.

New signs proclaim 'The Choice Is Yours' 'The Imaginarium -
More Exclusive than ever'.

The stage, hung with soft, flowing, gauzy fabric, has been
chromatically divided in half - one side black, the other
white.

On the dark side a bloated, sun-glassed woman consuming vast
quantities of food reclines on an elaborate lounge. She is,
in fact, a very uncomfortable ANTON in full and fulsome drag.

(CONTINUED)

Center stage stands DR. PARNASSUS dressed as a stylized doctor with head reflector. In his hand is a staff with an elaborate sun on the top. He is blindfolded.

On the white side of the stage stands the mirror and a stylized Tree of Knowledge with bright red apples. Under the tree, and reflected in the mirror, sits VALENTINA as Eve...naked except for a long wig that maintains her modesty. She gracefully combs her hair.

Above the mirror is a sign proclaiming "The Naked Truth".

DR. PARNASSUS, peeking under his blindfold, is distinctly uncomfortable by his daughter's lack of attire.

TONY, in a beautifully cut white suit, and wearing his 'romantic' Venetian carnival mask sits in profile in a dreamy pose on the edge of the white side of the stage.

Nobody speaks. They pay no attention to the crowd.

A few women stop, curious. One of them takes out some money and puts it in the glass plinth and turns to go.

TONY

(retrieving the money)

Excuse me, madam. I'm afraid we can't accept this.

The woman stops, confused. Tony hands her back her money.

TONY (CONT'D)

We are here to give...not take. We are here to help those in need. If it's money you need, then here it is.

(referring to the glass plinth)

If it's the flowering of the soul you need, then here we are but, unfortunately we are booked solid at the moment. But thank you.. I can see you have a generous spirit.

TONY returns to his pensive pose. The women look at each other.

WOMAN

Excuse me but, how does this work? What does it cost?

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Cost? Money is no good in the Imaginarium. This is a refuge for hearts in need of truth. A place for souls to be purified.

WOMAN 2

How long does that take? I'm running late.

TONY

Madam, why should you care about time? What are your dreams worth in minutes?

The women grow pensive.

TONY (CONT'D)

There are hard choices to be made in life.

(he indicates the tableaux)

What about the dreams of the less fortunate in the world. Do you have time for their dreams? Or are you like I once was...do you just despair? Despair at all that is wrong in the world..

(getting to his feet)

...despair at your inability to do anything to change it.. to make it better...I despaired so much at the powerlessness of my own existence that I took the easy way out...the coward's way...I committed suicide! Yes, that's right, I killed myself. Can you understand my despair? But I was saved...saved by a miracle...The Imaginarium...and Doctor Parnassus. He brought me back from the dead. He gave me a new life. A reason to live. He has given me power to dream again... to dream of a better world.

During his speech, more and more people have gathered. Some are actually weeping. They are press forward putting money in the plinth. Tony tries to stop them but, they insist. VALENTINA, ANTON, PERCY, and DR. PARNASSUS are astonished by TONY'S performance.

(CONTINUED)

VOICES IN CROWD

Stop pushing!/Excuse me, can one
make a booking?/Are you taking
bookings?/Stop pushing at the
back!/Form a queue!

TONY

Please, I'm sorry but, we're booked
solid at the moment.

A Louis Vuitton-dressed woman (60+ years old) at the back of
the crowd shouts:

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN

Is that child up for adoption?

She points at the blacked up PERCY.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN (CONT'D)

I want to adopt that unfortunate
black child. It shouldn't be
working like this. It should be in
school.

PERCY is appalled.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN (CONT'D)

Who's in charge here?

The LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN looks around as a couple of POLICE
OFFICERS arrive on the scene.

TONY spots them too and heads off the LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN as
she makes towards them.

TONY

Madam, congratulations, you have
been chosen.

The other WOMEN gasp.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN

What?

TONY

Come forward and enter the
Imaginarium.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN

But, I haven't paid.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

We don't want your money. We want your hopes and dreams. You may make a donation later, if you wish.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN

But...

TONY

This is a rare moment. Very few are chosen. Don't miss this once-in-a-life-time opportunity. This way. Please.

He ushers the uneasy LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN onto the stage and guides her upstage. PARNASSUS goes into his trance.

TONY (CONT'D)

Believe me Madam, you're the luckiest woman in the world.

The LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN steps into the mirror. TONY hesitates..a moment of uncertainty. VALENTINA encourages him with a smile. He steps through.

Across the street a clock begins striking the hour.

CUT TO the two POLICE OFFICERS who start to move the crowd and show on.

POLICEMAN

Alright, I think it's time to move on, folks.

But on spotting the naked VALENTINA who winks at them, they agree between themselves to give the show a bit longer.

TONY and THE LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN are astonished to find themselves in the romantic, soft-focus, pastel-colour setting of a soothing, sophisticated, shampoo commercial.

Soft fabrics waft, cleansing waterfalls cascade, rose-petals float through the air, beautiful girls swing from swings attached to clouds - all in delicious slow motion.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN

(overcome)

Oh... how gorgeous...

(CONTINUED)

THE LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN takes TONY'S hand and looks at him meaningfully.

TONY, disorientated, takes a moment to regain his composure. He smiles and, with an effort, puts his arm around THE LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN'S wide waist. He looks into her eyes. She's in love.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN (CONT'D)
 (moans softly)
 Ohhh... What bliss... and I don't
 even know your name...

TONY
 Tony...

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN
 Tony. How dashing.

A bar or two of tango encourages them to take a couple of intimate tango dance steps.

Now gently wafting curtains part to reveal.. down a flower strewn path and over a bridge... a sleazy motel with a shingle over the door reads: "The One Night Stand Motel". In the office window sits MR. NICK

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN (CONT'D)
 Oh, goodness me!

She bats her eyelashes at TONY and begins, knowingly, to pull him towards the motel.

TONY
 (resisting)
 If I'm not wrong, I fear you must
 go alone.

THE LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN pouts playfully, pulling him onwards.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN
 Why would I want to go without you
 darling?

TONY
 It's one of the rules... One
 imagination at a time, free from
 the influence of another.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN
 (petulant)
 Boring.

(CONTINUED)

They have reached the bridge. Stairs descend to a stream.

TONY

Oh..look... another possibility..

Below them a gondola rests in the stream as small, flower bedecked barques float past with framed pictures of romantic heroes who died young; Keats, Shelly, Byron, James Dean, Rudolph Valentino, Marilyn Monroe, Buddy Holly, Princess Diana... the stream continues off into the distance to a dark, towering Egyptian pyramid.

TONY is as bemused as THE LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN.

TONY (CONT'D)

You must make a choice...and... actually, to be honest, I'd strongly recommend this one.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN

But... Rudolph Valentino, James Dean, Princess Di?... all these people... they're dead.

TONY

(thinking fast)

Exactly. To be reborn, first you must die. All of them have achieved a kind of immortality. And we love them all the more for it. They won't get old or fat. They won't get sick or feeble. They are beyond fear. They are forever young. They are gods. And you can join them.

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN

(softening)

You're such a wonderful speaker.

The gondola awaits...with a beautiful male model at the helm. THE LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN smiles at him.

TONY

There's not a moment to lose.

But as she hesitates a dark shadow rises over them. TONY, looking past the WOMAN'S shoulder, sees the dark waters of the stream rise up transforming into a GIGANTIC KING COBRA that towers menacingly over them. It's wearing a BOWLER HAT... and it's angry.

(CONTINUED)

TONY (CONT'D)

But your sacrifice must be pure.
You have to let go of all these
worldly goods.

He helps THE LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN remove her necklace,
earrings, bracelets, rings, broach, in double quick time and
guides her onto the gondola, blowing a kiss after her.

TONY (CONT'D)

Remember nothing is permanent...
not even death.

He turns back to see the GIGANTIC KING COBRA shrinking back
below the bridge, transforming itself back into the waters of
the stream. From under the arch of the bridge hangs a rope.
At its end.. a hangman's noose.

TONY stares at it darkly disconcerted.

TONY re-enters the stage through the mirror, looking at DR.
PARNASSUS who has just come out of his trance with
astonishment

TONY

(gobsmacked)

That was so... I had no idea...
It's just... incredible.

...And then he realizes the clock is still striking the hour
realizing that only a few moments have passed since he
entered the mirror.

TONY (CONT'D)

..how do you do this?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

(ignoring him and with a
big theatrical gesture)

Hooplah!

The LOUIS VUITTON woman reappears, sitting on a cut-out cloud
descending from the ceiling of the stage. She looks radiant.

She is weeping, completely overcome by her experience.
PARNASSUS steps forward and helps her to her feet. She kisses
his hands in gratitude.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN

Thank you, thank you, that was so beautiful, I feel so... thank you so much...

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

(graciously)

Thank YOU, dear Lady, you give me strength to continue

Born again, tearful but transcendent, the LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN produces her cheque book and begins to write a cheque.

TONY is frozen, confused. The crowd is still... stunned by the LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN's transformation as she deposits the cheque, her handbag, her expensive coat in the glass box and glides benignly through the crowd... which parts in awe.

Pause... and then the other WOMEN rush the stage. Mayhem is narrowly averted as TONY and PERCY manage to corral them into a more-or-less orderly queue.

Across the street, standing in the doorway of a shop selling luxury goods, is MR NICK. He watches events, intrigued...

...as TONY escorts a second woman through the mirror, and a third, they descend, ecstatic, emptying the contents of their handbags, their pearls, earrings and diamond rings into the glass box.

TONY pays off the cops who move on.

TONY, getting more and more flamboyant, forgets to lower his mask each time he re-enters the stage. And now a fourth woman descends. Four successes for DOCTOR PARNASSUS.

DR. PARNASSUS

(aside to Percy)

One more to go and we're free.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS spots MR NICK across the street, smiles, holds up four fingers.

MR NICK gives a little 'I'm not impressed' smirk and turns away and pretends to be interested in the luxury goods in the shop window as four large dark heavy RUSSIAN MEN, all laden with luxury shopping walk past.

One of the RUSSIANS stops..looking at the show..at TONY whose mask is sitting on top of his head. The leading RUSSIAN pulls him on.

(CONTINUED)

VLADIMIR (IN RUSSIAN) SUBTITLED
C'mon..What are you watching that
crap for.

SERGE (IN RUSSIAN)
(pointing at TONY)
It's him!

VLADIMIR (IN RUSSIAN)
Who are you talking about?
(following SERGE's pointed
finger)
Impossible.

SERGE (IN RUSSIAN)
I'm sure.

They start pushing through the crowd.

TONY, reaching down to help an elderly lady up to the stage,
looks up and sees the RUSSIANS heading through the crowd..

Panic!! He pulls the mask down and begins to back up.

But it's too late, they've definitely seen him.

He spins around and rockets upstage, past DR. PARNASSUS who
is deep into his trance.

TONY dives through the mirror much to the amazement of
VALENTINA, ANTON, PERCY.

The RUSSIANS chase after him, shoving the queuing WOMEN
aside, smashing the scenery and knocking ANTON into the
wings.

The RUSSIANS charge through the shampoo-commercial landscape.
No TONY.. Just slo-mo fashion models and soft wafting fabrics
and aromatic breezes.

VLADIMIR (IN RUSSIAN)
Where did he go?

PIOTR (IN RUSSIAN)
You tell me... It can't be him.
He's dead. We killed him.

SERGE (IN RUSSIAN)
So why did he run?

(CONTINUED)

GREGOR (IN RUSSIAN)

There he is!!

In the distance, TONY is hiding behind some billowing fabric. On being spotted, he takes off up a hill.

The RUSSIANS race toward the hill only to crash into a solid wall - painted as a landscape with TONY frozen in mid stride. Looking off to their right they see Tony heading up another hill. But as they rush in that direction another wall rises up blocking them. Again it is painted with a hill and TONY frozen in midstride. A third and fourth wall rise up.. surrounding and trapping the RUSSIANS.

There is a cell door in one wall. Like crazy animals they start throwing themselves against the door trying to break it down. It won't budge.

While the others batter the door, GREGOR, who has been somewhat affected by the soft shampoo commercial world, sits quietly in a corner picking pretty flowers.

Exhausted, the other RUSSIANS collapse on the ground.

GREGOR gently breathes in the aroma of the flowers and exhales. As he does the door swings open. The other RUSSIANS gape at him... then barrel out the door.

Outside is a new, beautiful, landscape - the sky dotted with white fluffy clouds. Extending from the ground to each cloud is an incredibly long ladder. On each ladder is a person climbing upwards.

The RUSSIANS spot Tony. He is already a hundred feet up a ladder and climbing.

Unfortunately, their way is blocked by an over-bright, hyper-active, wide-eyed sales girl.

SALES-GIRL

Hi! Hello! Today's special! Reach for the clouds! Discover your true potential! Gift certificates are available at...

The RUSSIANS roughly shove her aside. As they rush past, GREGOR pauses, hands her his flowers.

GREGOR

Relax...smell the flowers.

(CONTINUED)

Reaching the base of TONY'S ladder, the RUSSIANS start climbing.

Seeing the threat, TONY kicks hard and breaks the rungs below him.. setting off a domino effect with more rungs breaking downward towards the RUSSIANS. Snap! Crack! Rungs break in their grasp.. they fall.

The RUSSIANS land in a tangled heap as the domino effect continues down to the base of the ladder.

Laughing down at them, TONY turns to continue climbing - only to see the domino effect heading down from the top of the ladder... towards him.

THE LADDER COMPLETELY SEPARATES IN TWO.

Tony struggles to maintain his balance - and somehow manages to get his feet on the two halves of a broken rung. Then, as if he were on giant stilts, starts to stride away.

The RUSSIANS chase after him but, his giant strides leave them far behind. Smugly, TONY looks back just as one of the legs of his ladder snags on a fallen log. He loses his balance... and plunges hundreds of feet earthward.

From nowhere, ANTON (still dressed as a fat woman) appears.. running to catch the plummeting TONY. He does and Whomp!!.. is flattened. Knocked out cold. TONY is unscathed.. his fall broken by ANTON'S padding.

But, the RUSSIANS arrive, grab TONY, start to beat him up.

SERGE

You thieving scumbag! We break
every bone in your body!

They scrawl strange symbols on TONY'S forehead.

TONY

No! Wait! I can explain! Give me a
chance!

VLADIMIR

We want our money or you die again!
This time for good!

ANTON struggles to his feet.

ANTON

Stop it! L-leave him alone!

(CONTINUED)

The RUSSIANS turn and, thinking ANTON is a fat, bossy, middle-aged woman, hesitate.

ANTON (CONT'D)
Stand b-back! I'm warning you!

Foolishly, he whips off his wig and assumes a manly martial arts pose. The RUSSIANS look at each other. Then, utterly ignoring ANTON, turn their attention back to beating TONY.

GREGOR walks calmly over to ANTON who is in attack mode.

GREGOR
(bending down and picking
a flower, he offers it to
ANTON)
Relax. Smell the flowers.

Confused, ANTON takes the flower, sniffs and then... GREGOR floors him with a powerful punch on the nose

Meanwhile, the RUSSIANS have a noose around TONY's neck and have looped the rope over a tree branch. TONY struggles to pull out the metal pipe he keeps on a string around his neck. He gets it to his mouth as if to swallow it when...

... the ground erupts and a giant London policeman's helmet rises up (we are talking 20 feet tall) and revolves - revealing DR. PARNASSUS' carved and painted face beneath.

The mouth drops open and a great red tongue rolls out like a welcoming red carpet. From inside the giant mouth a smiling policeman beckons the RUSSIANS to come on in..

The terrified RUSSIANS let go of the lynching rope.

TONY drops to the ground and, with a whistle, the brass pipe flies out of his mouth.

Behind the RUSSIANS a painted backdrop unfurls..it reads "JOIN THE FUZZ.. WE LOVE VIOLENCE".. and a chorus line of LONG-LEGGED GIRLS in mini-skirted police outfits appear - high-kicking a snappy song and dance number.

The astonished RUSSIANS don't know what the fuck is going on.

Suddenly, a friendly OLD WOMAN'S VOICE is heard shouting something in Russian.

Spinning around, the RUSSIANS see an old BABOUSHKA (Russian grandmother) outside a tumble-down cottage waving gaily to them. A stunned pause. Then, pell-mell, they rush to her.

(CONTINUED)

RUSSIANS (IN RUSSIAN)

Mama! Mama! Help! Save us!

As they run toward her they get smaller and smaller. She lifts her skirts and all four disappear underneath. And then.. BOOM!.. a muffled explosion balloons the skirts outward. Smoke spews out from below.

Straightening her skirt, the BABOUSHKA looks up, and pulls off her head - revealing MR.NICK's tiny head poking out of the collar. He smiles smugly.

The giant POLICEMAN DR. PARNASSUS registers disappointment and, like a balloon rapidly deflating, spins off into the sky sending up a cloud of dust obscuring everything.

The dust clears and TONY and ANTON find themselves in a desolate, empty landscape. Nowhere. Nothing.

TONY

Did you see me!! I almost reached the clouds! I could have...it was incredible...I was almost there...

ANTON

Shut up!

Over a distant rise the wagon appears, pulled by the horses. ANTON drags Tony, babbling and stumbling, towards it.

TONY

I made my choice and I climbed... I felt so much potential. I could have done anything. I have to have another chance...another go...I need this...

The wagon is parked on waste ground. It looms out of nowhere illuminated by a light leaking from within.

We hear PERCY'S angry voice.

PERCY O/S

Maybe you were holding them upside down.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

What?

(CONTINUED)

PERCY
That cards! The bloody Tarot cards!

DOCTOR PARNASSUS O/S
(distraught and angry)
Enough, Percy! Enough!

TONY O/S
I made a mistake. A big mistake. I
know that and I'm sorry.

58 INT THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

58

The angry troupe huddles amongst the clutter of props and jumbled scenery. TONY is on trial.

DR. PARNASSUS is sitting in a corner, head in hands. He seems utterly destroyed.

ANTON
You're a l-liar. You've been lying
to us all along. Who are you? Who
were those thugs?

TONY
I am not a liar!

ANTON
No?

TONY
No! I just... didn't divulge
everything I knew.

PERCY
Comes to the same thing.

TONY
Absolutely not. Not in law.

ANTON
You stole their money.

TONY
No. I didn't.

ANTON
That's what they said.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Are you going to believe them
before you believe me?

PERCY

Why not?

TONY

Because they're irredeemably bad
people, and I'm essentially good. I
know that sounds terribly prim and
arrogant and self righteous, but
I'm trying to be honest. Look, the
truth is... in order to get my
charity off the ground I needed
capital.

ANTON looks askance.

TONY (CONT'D)

(in response to Anton)

Yes, I know, and you're right, but
that's the way the grown-up..the
real world works. You can't make
omelettes without soiling your
hands. Or should that be the other
way round? Anyway, I - with
hindsight very foolishly - accepted
a loan from people who seemed to
me, at the time, to be very decent
and sincere. There was absolutely
no way I could have known that they
were part of a ruthless organised
crime syndicate and that they
wanted to use my charity to launder
money. I made a mistake. And I have
to live with that. I'm sorry. What
more can I say?

VALENTINA wants to believe TONY. ANTON and PERCY don't.

VALENTINA

(distressed but basically
sympathetic)

Oh Tony.

TONY

But, can we not talk about me for a
moment.. I want to thank the Doctor
for letting me experience the most
sublime, inspiring

(CONTINUED)

ANTON

So why were they trying to k-kill you? "Again!" is what they said.

TONY

What?

ANTON

(answering his own question)

The first time they hung you from the b-bridge... right?... B-because you stole their money.

TONY

Stop saying that! I didn't steal it! I didn't have it. I'd had to invest in infrastructure. I needed more time. When you run a charity you have to give lots of money away. You wouldn't believe the red tape. The Charity Commission are a bunch of fascists. It's incredible. I mean... c'mon give me a break...I almost died today.. and I said I'm sorry... and anyway..... this was supposed to be a special day...it's Valentina's birthday.

He pulls out the LOUIS VUITTON WOMAN'S beautiful necklace from his pocket.

TONY (CONT'D)

Happy birthday. For a beautiful woman.

He puts it around Valentina's neck. VALENTINA smiles. ANTON glowers.

ANTON

The marks on your face...

TONY

Marks?

ANTON

They scrawled something on your forehead. Symbols... Signs...

TONY looks uncomfortable, tries to rub his forehead clean.

(CONTINUED)

PERCY

You had some of those when we
rescued you.

ANTON

Yes, what's that about?

But, before he can say anything, there's a knock on the door
which startles everyone. They exchange looks.

DR. PARNASSUS is frightened but hides this from the others.

The knock is repeated. PERCY starts to get up.

DR. PARNASSUS

(sotto voce)

No! Leave it!

PERCY sits down.

The knock comes again.

VALENTINA

(sotto voce to the DR.

PARNASSUS)

Who is it?

DR. PARNASSUS

(sotto voce)

It's too late... for visitors.

Once more someone knocks. Everyone is edgy. Particularly
PERCY.

The knock comes again.

PERCY

(sotto voce, agitated)

Please can we answer the door? I
can't stand not answering the door,
or the telephone, or whatever. It's
not in my nature. I won't sleep for
weeks if we don't answer the door!
Sorry!

DR. PARNASSUS gets up, goes to the door, opens it and steps
outside, closing the door behind him.

VALENTINA, ANTON, PERCY and TONY exchange looks.

(CONTINUED)

PERCY (CONT'D)
(embarrassed)
Sorry, I just... I've got a thing
about...

59 EXT OUTSIDE THE WAGON THAT MOMENT

59

DR. PARNASSUS and MR NICK move away from the door and go
around to the front. The stage is half-opened.

The horses are standing steaming nearby.

DR. PARNASSUS
(very down)
I know... It's over....you've
won...

MR NICK
Four rotten Russkies?

DR. PARNASSUS
And the girl..from the pub.

MR NICK shakes his head.

MR NICK
Sally doesn't count. Do you, gal?

SALLY (the woman thrown out from the wagon as they escaped
from the pub mob) steps out of the shadows, puts her arms
around NICK

DR. PARNASSUS
You're joking... toying with me.
Like a cat with a mouse... As is
your privilege.

MR NICK
Sal didn't get to make a real
choice. You were gaga. Out for the
count. Wouldn't be fair...And
you've got four, thanks to your
friend Tony. So... we're even...
it's not quite over.

He smiles, lights a cigarette, takes a deep drag...

MR NICK (CONT'D)
Not quite.
(checks his watch)
Oh,oh, look at the time...it's 11.

(CONTINUED)

...and he wanders off into the darkness with SALLY.
Somewhere, a clock strikes 11.

DR. PARNASSUS, agitated, watches him go.

VALENTINA (V.O.)

Father?

DR. PARNASSUS looks round to find VALENTINA standing next to him. He starts to round up the horses.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Valentina... my darling girl. We
must do another show! Now! Quickly!
Get ready to move out!

VALENTINA

Who was that?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Somebody asking the way. Where's
Tony?

VALENTINA

I overheard you... He wasn't asking
the way.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Please! Get everybody together.
Another show! Tony! Percy!

VALENTINA

I want to know what's going on.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

(harnessing the horses)
Not now.

VALENTINA

Yes, now! I want to know the truth!

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

The truth?

VALENTINA

What are you hiding?

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

There are more important things, at
this moment!

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

It's something to do with that
bloody rambling story you were
telling me the night we found Tony
isn't it?

PARNASSUS sighs. Stops. He checks his watch

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Yes.

VALENTINA

So tell me.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

What I told you was... the truth.
I really am thousands of years old.
I have been immortal. I have been
mortal. And I have had many
dealings with the devil. Too many.

VALENTINA

(fearful)

What are you saying?...

DOCTOR PARNASSUS

Remember the woman I was telling
you about?.. the one I was so
desperately in love with.. so in
love that I made a deal with the
devil? That was your mother...
...she was so beautiful, so
enchanting...so...

Looking at VALENTINA, DR. PARNASSUS sees her morph into the
BEAUTIFUL WOMAN appearing. He almost swoons.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

... so young. She was everything I
had ever dreamed of. I made a
choice. I bargained away my
immortality. I regained my youth...
and I won her. I did! I won her...!

The BEAUTIFUL WOMAN morphs back into VALENTINA.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

...but at a price...

DR. PARNASSUS looks haggard. He closes his eyes. He sways and
loses his balance.

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA stops him from falling.

VALENTINA
What price?

DR. PARNASSUS
(anguished)
It's too terrible...

VALENTINA
Tell me...

DR. PARNASSUS
I... The price of my obsession...
(he groans)
I can't say it.

VALENTINA
Say it.

DR. PARNASSUS
You.

VALENTINA
What?

DR. PARNASSUS
I was mortal again... on condition
that... any children I fathered...
would, on their sixteenth
birthday... belong to him.

VALENTINA
(stunned)
Him?...

VALENTINA can't take it in.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
But... didn't...

DR. PARNASSUS
Your mother never knew. She died
before I had to tell her.

VALENTINA
I don't believe this! It can't be
true. It's just another of your
wretched stories... A cruel story!

DR. PARNASSUS
If only...

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

Why do you say these things?

DR. PARNASSUS

It's true. Every word. But all is not lost.

VALENTINA looks at him.

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)

(feverishly)

A new wager... The first of five.
If I win... you're free... you're
mine again.. and we can win!
Where's Tony? We can still win!

VALENTINA

By playing games with the devil!?

DR. PARNASSUS

With one more show. The day isn't over.

VALENTINA

No!

DR. PARNASSUS

Valentina.

VALENTINA

All my life you've made me play
'Beauty', 'Truth', 'Justice'...
filled my head with dreams and high
ideals. All that crap! While... all
the time...! The devil was right!
You're arrogant! Vain and arrogant!
I'm just another one of your stupid
wagers!... You're beneath contempt.

She rushes off into the dark night.

DR. PARNASSUS

Valentina! That's not true! It's
not like that! Wait! Come back!
Valentina!

A dark silhouette stands in the shadow of the wagon. It's
TONY. What has he heard?

60 INT THE WAGON MOMENTS LATER 60

DR. PARNASSUS rushes into the wagon.

PERCY is already on his feet, having heard the DOCTOR shouting.

ANTON
What's happened?

DR. PARNASSUS
Valentina... She's... she's gone...

ANTON rushes out.

PERCY stops by DR. PARNASSUS before he exits.

PERCY
Telling the truth... Always a bad
idea.

61 EXT MONTAGE OF SCENES NIGHT 61

ANTON, running, calling for VALENTINA.

PERCY is scouring the area on horseback.

ANTON running through a newspaper-filled tip, sees a headline on one of the newspapers. Stops.

62 EXT THE WAGON A LITTLE LATER 62

PARNASSUS, a bottle in his hand, is lurching around.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
You fool! You monstrous fool! You
should be dead.

He starts to violently bang his head against the side of the wagon.

Suddenly the stage begins to unfold. PARNASSUS looks up, unable to see what or who is doing this. He drunkenly stumbles around the side to see TONY pulling ropes.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

TONY
Saving Valentina.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(befuddled)
What?... How?

TONY
I overheard you. You only need one
more to win. Me! I'll be that one.
I'll take the risk to save
Valentina and, hopefully, you sir.
We've still got a few minutes.

Tony steers DOCTOR PARNASSUS towards his glass column.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
Yes! Yes! Of course! Of course!
Thank God! Thank God!

TONY
(to himself)
How about thanking me?

DR. PARNASSUS
What?

TONY
I expect nothing in return.

DR. PARNASSUS
(trying to go into a
trance)
No. You're a saint... A saint.

TONY
Only Valentina's hand in marriage,
if she'll have me...

DR. PARNASSUS
(not listening)
Oh, my head...

TONY
And, as your son-in-law...
perhaps... initiation into the
secrets of the trance.

DR. PARNASSUS
No! I can't do it!

(CONTINUED)

TONY

But...

(realizing Parnassus is referring to his inability to go into a trance)

Why not?! What's wrong?

DR. PARNASSUS

My mind... I can't concentrate...
I'm too upset...

TONY

You must do it! You have to do it!
It's the only way to save your daughter!

DR. PARNASSUS

(distracted)
I know...

TONY

(sitting PARNASSUS down)
Concentrate. You must concentrate.
(clearing the way to the mirror)
I'll make the right choice. I'm sure of it. I can feel how right it is already.

TONY leaps back to steady DR. PARNASSUS who looked as though he were about to topple off his pillar.

TONY (CONT'D)

Oh God!... Doctor... We can save her.. you and me. I need this. We both need this. Please. The trance.

PARNASSUS quiets down. Starts mumbling.

TONY rushes to the mirror. Steps through. He finds himself standing amongst the stage scenery. Nothing else.

TONY (CONT'D)

Bugger!

He steps back out of the mirror. Goes to PARNASSUS who is weeping.

DR. PARNASSUS

It's no good!

(CONTINUED)

TONY shakes him hard.

TONY
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!... Sir.
Concentrate...or you'll have lost
her forever.

PARNASSUS slowly goes into a sobbing kind of trance state.

TONY confirms he is in a trance, then rushes to the mirror.

VALENTINA O/S
Tony...oh, Tony..

What?! TONY stops. Looks around. There in the shadows
huddles VALENTINA, sobbing.

VALENTINA
(sobbing)
It's useless... Hopeless... I
thought I was strong, but I don't
even know how to run away...

TONY hesitates.. No time! He looks back to PARNASSUS who
seems to still be in his trance. Hesitates. Then rushes to
VALENTINA.

TONY
It's alright... it's alright...
Don't cry. It's going to be
alright, believe me.

VALENTINA
This stupid theatre...!... That's
all I've ever known...! I've
always believed it was something
precious, but it's not... it's a
lie...I hate it!

TONY lifts her up, putting his arm around her.

TONY
Everything's going to be alright...
I'll take you away. I'll show you
the world. My world. The great big
beautiful world I've always dreamed
of... You'll love it.

VALENTINA, grateful, clings to TONY.

(CONTINUED)

TONY (CONT'D)

Yes?

VALENTINA

Maybe.

TONY

C'mon then.

They turn to the mirror but, an off-stage clearing of the throat makes them look round to see ANTON watching them. He's holding a torn and dirty piece of newspaper.

ANTON

Ah, there you are, Tony. Here's something m-might interest you.

(reading)

'Missing: D-disgraced head of children's charity'.

TONY

No!

TONY tries to snatch the paper but ANTON steps back.

ANTON

N-not a bad p-picture, Tony.
Listen to this Valentina... it's about Tony's b-beautiful world..

DOCTOR PARNASSUS O/S

Valentina! Where are you?

PARNASSUS is still in his trance but, mumbling.

ANTON

...Anthony Shepherd, who was arrested last week on charges of...

VALENTINA is surrounded. Confused.

TONY

(to Valentina)

Valentina, Don't listen to that.
I'm innocent. This is the work of people who are trying to destroy me! Evil people! Believe me! Look, I'll show you the truth!

TONY pulls VALENTINA towards the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON tries to stop him, but TONY pushes him back, off the stage. He crashes to the ground.

TONY (CONT'D)
(grabbing VALENTINA)
Hurry!

TONY and VALENTINA disappear through the mirror.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS
(sobbing in his trance)
Valentina! Forgive me.

63 INT/EXT DR. PARNASSUS' DRUNKEN IMAGINATION

63

Mist and rain descend as TONY and VALENTINA run through the darkened shapes of the shampoo-commercial landscape - now tattered, ragged, and wind blown. Darkness reigns.

TONY
This isn't right. This is all
wrong. Which way?

Soaked and cold they spy a welcome sight. A uniformed valet with an open umbrella stands by the door of a sleek limo.

VALET
Your car is here, Mr.Tony.

TONY
Ah, Lester, just in time.

TONY ducks under the umbrella and helps VALENTINA into the car ahead of himself.

As she slides across the seat she notices the driver - bowler hatted and smoking a cigarette.

VALENTINA
No! Tony, don't get in! Get away!

She pushes TONY back and scrambles out...dragging him back out into the dark rain.

The driver turns around. It's MR.NICK.. looking vexed.

VALENTINA and TONY struggle through the rain. Suddenly, they find themselves in deep water up to their chests. They are sinking. Through the mist they see a boat. It is the gondola that transported the LOUIS VUITTON LADY.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Help! Over here!

The boatman turns the boat in their direction. TONY tries to pull himself on board. The boatman reaches down to help.

BOATMAN

Give me your hand

It's MR. NICK. VALENTINA recoils, drags TONY off the boat.

TONY

Stop! What are you doing! We'll drown!

VALENTINA

No we won't. This is the way.

She points to jumbled rocks just visible in the darkness. They drag themselves onto them. The rocky monoliths appear to be the same as the landscape ANTON climbed over when he was searching for DIEGO, the son of THE FAMILY FROM HELL.

And, like a repeat of that experience, from behind the ridge rises the Parnassus-faced Mongolfier balloon. But, now the eyes stream tears and rain pours down. In the basket is ANTON.

ANTON

Don't d-do it. Don't g-go on. Not with him! He's all lies.

VALENTINA

Just like my father. Leave me alone. I don't care anymore. I want a new life.

TONY

Valentina...

He pulls her away..towards a little tumble-down cottage. Warm candlelight glows in the windows, smoke curls from the chimney. They run to the door. TONY bangs on it. Someone can be heard unlatching the locks inside.

A child's crying cuts through the wind.

VALENTINA turns and sees a little girl sitting on the path... among flapping laundry. She rushes to her, tries to pick her up but, the little girl resists..

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA

Tony, help me, she's heavy.

The door has just opened and TONY is halfway through. He turns, irritated.

TONY

What is it now?! Can't we just go inside and get dry.

Behind him, in the warmth, stands the old BABOUSHKA.

Seeing that VALENTINA is really struggling with the little girl, TONY reluctantly goes to help. The little girl, on seeing TONY, tries to break away but, he holds on to her.

TONY (CONT'D)

(shouting angrily)

Ostanobuite bas menshi schit!

The little girl goes quiet. VALENTINA looks at TONY with surprise. The BABOUSHKA looks angry. Suddenly a light begins to suffuse TONY and the little girl. A small orchestra can be heard playing garden party music.

VALENTINA

You did it! You made the right choice!

The light fills the screen and we find...

...TONY, sleekly groomed and immaculately dressed, holding the smiling little girl. She too has been cleaned and buffed. The sun shines. He stands in...

...a large well kept lawn covered with smart guests, BUSINESS PEOPLE, POLITICIANS, POP STARS, CELEBS...

Behind and beyond them is an impressive country house.

A small orchestra is playing. There is a marquee.

WAITERS and WAITRESSES move amongst the assembled notables bearing trays of drinks and food.

TONY is the focus of attention. A TV current-affairs/news JOURNALIST with CAMERA CREW is following him around.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Sustainability's great, if you can achieve it. The problem is, in many cases you simply can't, for a whole variety of reasons.

TONY smiles and shakes the hand of someone in a wheelchair.

A GROUP OF GUESTS burst into spontaneous applause. Everybody loves and admires TONY. He smiles boyishly.

He moves on. The TV CREW stay with him.

JOURNALIST

Aren't you running the risk of entrenching the need for charity by increasingly institutionalising it?

TONY

Look, charity, like poor little Olga...

(referring to the little girl)

...is always with us, to coin a phrase...

VALENTINA appears. She is beautifully dressed, coiffed, made-up, she looks stunning.

TONY (CONT'D)

(to VALENTINA)

Ah, there you are, my lovely.

She and TONY exchange broad smiles. They're in love. He pulls her to his side and puts his arm around her. The photographers snap away.

JOURNALIST

And what's your message to the Prime Minister?

TONY

(laughs engagingly)

I wouldn't presume to have a 'message' for the Prime Minister... Fortunately for the Foundation, I think we pretty much see eye to eye on most things.

Now we hear a distant buzzing. EVERYBODY looks up.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: (2)

64

They see a speck in the sky, it's the PRIME MINISTER'S approaching helicopter...

TONY and the posse of JOURNALISTS and PHOTOGRAPHERS rush off leaving VALENTINA standing alone.

65 EXT HELICOPTER LANDING PAD DAY

65

The PRIME MINISTER and his WIFE get out of the helicopter, followed by their AIDES. TONY and the PRIME MINISTER shake hands for THE TV CAMERAS.

VALENTINA watches from a distance..ignored.

66 INT BALLROOM NIGHT

66

A huge chandelier illuminates a grand ornate ballroom where wealthy guests, in evening dress, are being seated at tables by liveried ushers. Large beautiful photographs of the underprivileged children of the world line the walls. A great banner reads "Suffer The Little Children Benefit Ball"

The PRIME MINISTER and his WIFE are seated at the head table, facing the dais, bubbly and expectant. Security is heavy.

67 INT ENTRANCE HALL NIGHT

67

TONY is conferring with his speech writers and assistants as VALENTINA descends the staircase looking utterly stunning in a beautiful gown. TONY bows, romantically kissing her hand. He turns her to admire their reflections in a gilt mirror...the perfect, beautiful, dream couple.

TONY

You look gorgeous, my love. I knew you wouldn't let me down.

The little girl, OLGA, and a little boy are brought forward. They are dressed in ethnic clothes. TONY takes OLGA'S hand...offers the little boy's hand to VALENTINA. She takes it in her own. The four of them start to walk to the door leading to the ballroom.

TONY (CONT'D)

(looking to everyone)

This is a vitally important moment for the future of the Foundation. The children of the world are depending on us.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON (V.O.)
Valentina!

VALENTINA
Anton!?

TONY and VALENTINA look around. ANTON is nowhere to be seen but, his voice continues.

ANTON (V.O.)
All of this is false! It's nothing
to do with you! It's all him. It's
his imagination!

TONY
Call security, somebody.

ANTON (V.O.)
It's all rotten! A naked lie!
You've got to understand!

The LITTLE BOY is tugging VALENTINA'S arm. She looks down.
It's ANTON. A child-size ANTON.

ANTON (CONT'D)
Look at this...

He produces the newspaper with TONY'S photo and news story.

ANTON (CONT'D)
...'Tony Liar'..

TONY
What? How?...

TONY lunges for him but, ANTON dodges out of the way.

ANTON
(reading and dodging)
'The disgraced director of the
children's charity "Suffer the
Little Children, who was arrested
last..

Security guards have rushed in.

TONY
Stop him. Silence the little
bastard!

(CONTINUED)

ANTON

(dodging the guards)

...who was arrested last week on charges of involvement in the sale of organs from third world children to wealthy Westerners'...unghh!

TONY has grabbed little ANTON and starts hitting him.

TONY

And now he doesn't stutter! You see!? It was all an act to get cheap sympathy!

VALENTINA

(pulling TONY off ANTON)

Take your hands off him!! Stop it!

TONY

Get off me! What are you doing?
(lashing out and hitting
VALENTINA in the face)
You've betrayed me! Haven't you?
You let him in...into my world, you
bitch!?... after all I've lavished
on you...OW!!

Little ANTON has leapt on TONY's back and sunk his teeth into TONY'S ear. TONY throws him off and starts beating him.

In the glittering ballroom a children's choir sings.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

"We are the world..we are the
children..."

Behind the choir the double doors of the ballroom crash open... exposing TONY violently beating up an 'ethnic child.'

Stunned silence as the horror of this happy scene sinks in.

Then...

GUESTS

My God! Somebody stop him! He's a
monster! Get him!

As one they leap to their feet.

(CONTINUED)

TONY looks up and freezes. At the same time the walls of the ballroom begin to crack and disintegrate. TONY'S world starts to fall apart... literally.

The floor around TONY falls away into an abyss leaving only a narrow escape route. He hurls ANTON aside and dashes away as the GUESTS pursue him. ANTON avoids being trampled but, loses his footing and falls over the edge.

VALENTINA

Anton!!!

VALENTINA, fighting through the angry GUESTS, rushes to the edge of the abyss. ANTON is struggling to hold on to a broken floor joist that protrudes several feet down from the side of the cliff face.

ANTON

Valentina!..help me. Please.

His grip slips. VALENTINA reaches for him, grasps his hand.

VALENTINA

Forgive me, Anton. I was wrong.

ANTON

I know... I'm not a child.

And.. ANTON REVERTS TO HIS NORMAL SIZE...AND WEIGHT.

ANTON (CONT'D)

I love you, Valentina.

ANTON slips out of her grip, plummeting into the abyss.

VALENTINA

Noooo!

Suddenly, VALENTINA is jerked backwards by her hair.

TONY

Who's behind this!? Eh!? You didn't come up with this all on your own did you!!!???

(slapping her)

No! Someone's got at you. Someone's paid you!!!... Who!!!??? Tell me!!!

DR. PARNASSUS(O.S.)

Valentina! My darling daughter!
There you are!

(CONTINUED)

They turn to see PARNASSUS in the distance (where once the ballroom stood) stumbling towards them, drunk, desperate. As he moves forward a new landscape is created behind him.

TONY rushes towards PARNASSUS.

TONY

You old bastard! This is all your doing!

DR. PARNASSUS

(drunkenly)

All my doing?... I'm merely the facilititater, dear boy.

GUESTS (O.S.)

There he is! Stop him! Leave her alone. Get him!

Throwing his arm around TONY, PARNASSUS spins him around to face the MOB rushing towards him.

DR. PARNASSUS

I create the opportunities. Is it my fault if your not up to it?

Tony wrenches his arm free and violently shoves the drunken DOCTOR right into the path of the frenzied MOB. PARNASSUS is trampled underfoot in their rush to catch TONY.

VALENTINA

Father! No!

PARNASSUS'S body lies broken on the ground. Frantically, VALENTINA rushes to him, throwing herself on her father's battered body, sobbing hysterically.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

NO..NO NO... Please.. father..it's all my fault. What have I done?...

With siren wailing, an AMBULANCE arrives, screeching to a halt. PARAMEDICS pull VALENTINA away. They check PARNASSUS for signs of life and begin to lift him onto the gurney. VALENTINA can't control herself and tries to throw herself onto his body. The PARAMEDICS struggle with her.

PARAMEDIC

(with a severe stutter)

P-p-p-lease m-mis-s, there's-s
n-n-othing y-y-y-you c-can d-d-o,
he-he-he's d-d-dead...

(CONTINUED)

VALENTINA
NOOOOO...!!!

VALENTINA wrenches herself out of their grasp howling like an animal and rushes away out of earshot before the PARAMEDIC can finish speaking.

PARAMEDIC
...d-dead drunk.

A bottle falls from the DOCTOR'S hand and explodes in a million fragments as it hits the ground.

The shimmering fragments coalesce into a fractured mirror corridor down which a multi-reflected VALENTINA runs - sobbing like a madwoman - lashing out at her reflections, some of which are flashbacks of her flirting with TONY, irritated with ANTON, angry with PARNASSUS.

VALENTINA
(to her reflections)
You little fool! You're to blame!..
for everything... I hate you!

The multi-reflection broken mirror corridor ends at two mirrors identical to the one used in the Imaginarium. The one to the left is marked 'His' with a bowler hat, the other to the right 'Hers' with a bonnet. She hesitates.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
(laughing madly)
So this is to be my choice!!

MR NICK appears out of the "His" mirror - a burst of flame behind him.

He makes a sweeping gesture inviting VALENTINA to enter the mirror marked 'Hers'.

VALENTINA, heads for the mirror marked 'His'. MR NICK blocks her path.

MR NICK
Now, there's absolutely no need for
that. That's just plain
contrariness.

VALENTINA tries to get around him.

(CONTINUED)

MR NICK (CONT'D)
You think you deserve punishment
but you're a kid - you have no
idea...trust me.

VALENTINA feints another direction. MR NICK blocks her.

VALENTINA
(a crazed look)
Wrong. I'm 16...I'm a woman now..

She spins around him...he blocks....a kind of dance between
them begins - confusingly reflected in the mirrors. A tango
can be heard.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
...a selfish bitch, everyone I love
dies...I'm...

MR NICK
...only fit for hell? If only.

He looks at Valentina with lascivious intent. He's tempted,
briefly, but resists it.

MR NICK (CONT'D)
No... your pop would never speak to
me again. And that'd be a shame.
Let's dance.

Reflected in the swirling mirror fragments, they tango until
he spins her towards the right hand mirror. She sails through
- and, with a mad smile, throws him a kiss.

The mirror closes with a burst of flame. The briefest flash
of DR. PARNASSUS face is reflected in the mirror fragments.

DOCTOR PARNASSUS O/S
Valentina!!!!!!

MR NICK turns, realizing he has been looking into a mirror
fragment reflecting the two mirrors. The writing on the
Valentina's mirror reads "His".

MR NICK
Damn!... I've won.

69

EXT STRANGE MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE

69

DR. PARNASSUS is sitting alone on a prominent bluff (the same one he tried throwing himself off many years ago) He's distraught. Tears run down this cheeks. A distant bell tolls midnight.

MR NICK appears behind PARNASSUS...sits down beside him.

MR NICK

Funny how things work out, isn't it?

He lights a cigarette.

MR NICK (CONT'D)

It's not what I had in mind y'know... this.. Valentina, being the fifth... It doesn't seem right... She's supposed to be the prize, the star prize... not part of the bloody score... And you lumbered with eternal life all over again... What a bummer, eh?

No response from PARNASSUS. A Tarot cards drops from his hand. It is The Hanged Man.

MR. NICK points to the plain far below. Across the harsh ground, TONY is running for his life...pursued by the MOB.

MR NICK (CONT'D)

I hope they get that bastard. Tear him limb from limb... But they won't... He leads a charmed life, that one... I've been trying to nail him for years... I thought I had him this time. But, there's always some prat comes to his rescue... Talk about the luck of the Devil.

(he laughs)

Those weird markings you found on him... on his forehead... Those satanic-symbol, so-called, things... What's all that about?... Maybe they protect him in some way... I've never been into that black-magic stuff myself... Can't seem to get the hang of it... I know, pathetic isn't it?...

(CONTINUED)

PARNASSUS ignores him, sunk even deeper into despondency.

MR NICK (CONT'D)
God, I hate to see you like this.
Look, I tell you what... If you can
get the lowdown on those satanic
markings, or.. wait.. better
still, if you can wipe that self-
righteous little creep off the face
of the universe... I'll give you
Valentina back.

A beat. Slowly, PARNASSUS looks up.

MR NICK (CONT'D)
How about it?

EXT SOMEWHERE ON THE MOUNTAIN

TONY, sweating, panting for breath, is running up the mountain.

Below, the MOB is still in hot pursuit.

TONY reaches the summit. In front of him, is his salvation - an empty gibbet. A noose hangs from the crossbeam.

TONY
Thank God for that!

TONY relaxes a little.

We can hear the mob now, struggling up the mountain.

TONY digs into one of his pockets and pulls out the brass tube that he has always kept close.

TONY opens his mouth and is about to slip the tube down his throat when he spots the Hanged Man Tarot card lying at his feet. A hand from behind him snatches the tube away.

TONY, startled, turns to find himself looking up at DR. PARNASSUS.

PARNASSUS is standing on a chair with the noose around his neck. He smiles and opens his hand. The metal tube has vanished.

TONY panics. The MOB is getting closer.

(CONTINUED)

With his other hand DR. PARNASSUS produces the tube from TONY'S ear.

TONY (CONT'D)
(desperate)
Give me that!

DR. PARNASSUS gestures at the CROWD.

DR. PARNASSUS
Give us a moment, please.

The CROWD goes into very slow motion...but twice as angry.

DR. PARNASSUS teases TONY with magic.

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)
Here's your tube... Here's mine.
(producing a second tube)
But mine's just a cheap
counterfeit... Look, it breaks...
(he breaks it)
But here's another...

TONY
Stop!

DR. PARNASSUS
You're not amused?

TONY
(desperate)
You've been talking to the devil,
haven't you? Let me guess what he
said... If you manage to kill me,
he'll release Valentina. Yes? Am I
right?... I am aren't I? It's all
lies. He can't release her. And why
not? Because he doesn't have her.
He can't have her because she's the
prize.
(gaining confidence)
He doesn't have five wins. But if
you kill me he will, won't he?
You'll have lost Valentina forever!

DR. PARNASSUS does a double hand shuffle.

DR. PARNASSUS
Choose.

(CONTINUED)

TONY
This is ridiculous!

DR. PARNASSUS
Choose!

TONY chooses.

TONY
You've got to believe me! For all
our sakes!

DR. PARNASSUS
Are you sure you made the right
choice?

TONY
Look...

DR. PARNASSUS
Let's find out.

He slides the tube down his throat and kicks the chair away.

He drops... dangles from the rope...the noose tight around
his neck.

At the same moment, the MOB resumes normal speed and roars up
the mountain.

Is PARNASSUS dead?

Working very fast, TONY hoists him over his shoulder and
wrestles the noose loose. He drops PARNASSUS on the ground.
He's stunned but still alive.

The MOB is closing in.

TONY slaps DR. PARNASSUS hard between the shoulder blades.

The tube pops out of the DOCTOR'S gullet. TONY catches it.

TONY
Gotcha!

TONY swallows the tube as the MOB surge around the gibbet,
grabbing him, beating him, and then lifting him onto the
chair, tightening the noose around his neck.

(CONTINUED)

Although battered, TONY winks smugly at DR. PARNASSUS, but his mood changes when he sees DR. PARNASSUS spit out several more fake tubes, then, gagging, force the real one up and out of his gullet.

With a look of realization and horror, TONY drops to his death as the MOB kicks the chair away from under him.

The MOB cheers. Yes, he's dead.

DR. PARNASSUS tosses the metal tube to MR NICK who steps coolly out of the MOB, cigarette in his mouth.

DR. PARNASSUS

(hoarsely)

There are three cardinal rules.
One, there's no black-magic, only
cheap tricks. And... er... I forget
the others. Now, where's my
daughter?

MR NICK

How should I know? You're her
father.

(with needle)

Her loving father.

DR PARNASSUS looks askance at MR NICK.

MR NICK (CONT'D)

She's free... isn't she?

MR NICK smiles and blows smoke in PARNASSUS'S face. The smoke fills the screen and becomes...

... a dust storm. The wind is howling. The swirling dust thins to reveal DR.PARNASSUS, alone, exhausted, trudging across a vast desert.

He's tormented by his thoughts.

DR. PARNASSUS

What else could I do, Valentina?
What else could I have done... What
other choice could I have made?...
Damn!... It was the right choice...
Of course it was... Of course...
But where are you?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)
Where's my beautiful daughter?
Where's my darling? How long must I
suffer?

There is no proper road, only endless sand, but nevertheless
DR. PARNASSUS reaches a signpost which indicates two distinct
paths.

One leads to a tidy little suburban home, the other up an
dramatic mountain pass via a painfully steep staircase cut
into the rock (the same one that MARTIN THE DRUNK chose not
to climb days earlier.

DR. PARNASSUS (CONT'D)
No, no, no... No more choices,
please... No more choices...!!!

Enraged, he tries to push the sign over, but is too feeble.
Exhausted, he subsides onto a smooth protruding stone.

VOICE (V.O.)
(angry)
Hey!

DR. PARNASSUS, alarmed, rolls quickly off the stone.

Now on his knees he finds himself looking at the top half of
PERCY'S head and face. What he'd thought was a stone was, in
fact, his old companion buried in the sand.

DR. PARNASSUS
Percy!

DR. PARNASSUS, overjoyed, begins to dig PERCY out.

PERCY
About bloody time!

DR. PARNASSUS
Where have you been?

PERCY
(irritated)
Here!

DR. PARNASSUS
How long have you been here?

PERCY
How long's a piece of string? Don't
ask daft questions.

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS

Thank God I found you. I need your advice.

(indicating sign)

I've got a problematical choice to make.

PERCY

Problematical my arse! Come on... I know it's against the grain...

PERCY grabs DR. PARNASSUS'S cloak and begins to pull him across the sand in the direction of the bungalow. We can now see the sign reads 'Easy'...

DR. PARNASSUS

(on his dignity)

No! Suburban bungalows and all that they evoke are anathema to me. Dammit Percy! Stop! I've got my pride!

PERCY

Yeah, it goes just before the fall.

PERCY grabs DR. PARNASSUS'S cloak and begins to pull him across the sand in the direction indicated by the sign which we can now see reads 'Easy'..

PERCY (CONT'D)

Come on... I know it's against the grain...

PERCY pulls the reluctant DR. PARNASSUS up the drive of a suburban bungalow, past a perfect lawn and double garage, to the front door.

PERCY rings the bell.

DR. PARNASSUS tries to make a run for it but PERCY holds him fast.

The door is opened by VALENTINA. She's older and is carrying a BABY in her arms.

Both DR. PARNASSUS and VALENTINA are astonished. Neither knows what to say.

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS
Valentina...?

VALENTINA
Father...?
(recovering)
Where have you been?... All these
years... I thought you were dead.

DR. PARNASSUS
So did I. But you... I...

VALENTINA
Come in.

VALENTINA steps back and ushers her father in.

PERCY
(aside)
So far, so good.

PERCY is about to follow, but VALENTINA, focussing on her
father, closes the door in his face.

VALENTINA shows DR. PARNASSUS into the sitting-room. He sits
on the sofa.

KID'S VOICE (V.O.)
Mummy? Can I have some ice-cream?

A SMALL BOY enters from the kitchen.

KID
Mummy?

VALENTINA
Billy, this is your grandad. Say
hello to your grandad.
(to Parnassus)
I think he looks a little like you.

BILLY takes one look at DR. PARNASSUS and runs back into the
kitchen.

VALENTINA laughs.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
He's only five. And he's very shy.
Would you like some tea?

(CONTINUED)

DR. PARNASSUS nods.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
Okay, you look after Imogen.

She gives him the baby.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
She's eight months, and, so far,
fortunately, doesn't look in the
least like you.

DR. PARNASSUS is moved.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)
This is all I ever wanted... I know
it's not what you wanted for me,
but...well... there you go... I'm
happy.

ANTON enters.

ANTON
Hello Doctor.

He puts his arm around VALENTINA.

VALENTINA
We're both happy.

DR. PARNASSUS doesn't know what to say. He sits there, a
ragged old man with a baby on his knee, tears streaming down
his face.

Little cut-out cardboard figures are 'performing' in a toy
theatre.

VOICE OF TOY CHARACTER (V.O.)
It's your choice. You can stay here
and look after mum and dad, or come
with me and help fight the giant.

SECOND TOY CHARACTER (V.O.)
I'll have to think about it.

THE CAMERA pulls back to show PERCY manipulating the puppets
and giving them voices. He and DR. PARNASSUS are running a
stall selling toy theatres. Business is good.

(CONTINUED)

The audience is made up of mainly KIDS, with some ADULTS. COMMUTERS come and go.

A COUPLE OF PARENTS purchase a theatre for their son. DR. PARNASSUS takes the money and expertly wraps the theatre.

DR. PARNASSUS
Beautifully made. It'll last for
years if properly looked after.

NINE YEAR OLD SON
Does it come with a happy ending?

DR. PARNASSUS
I'm afraid we can't guarantee that.

THE CAMERA angles across the table...

In a shadowy corner stands MR NICK, smoking a cigarette.

THE END