

**MAGICIAN & SON**

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**Shortened draft**

OVER BLACK, an orchestrated "ta-dahh!", then rousing applause- \*

MANUEL (O.S.)  
--yes, yes, thank you! \*

A silent film IRIS IN reveals -- \*

THE OVERJOYED, WONDROUS FACE OF SANTIAGO (6) -- \*

--gazing from the wings upon the brightly-lit stage. \*

Delicate hands hold his shoulders. He and his yet unseen  
mother, PALOMA, watch his father-- \*

INT. STAGE - UPSCALE THEATER - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT (1895)

--"MANUEL THE MAGNIFICENT" (32), clad in his magician's  
ensemble, removing his top hat, and placing it on the small  
table beside him. \*

Mischievously rubbing his hands together, he prepares the  
glowing audience for his next marvel-- \*

MANUEL  
Now, you're not here for those mere  
trifles, are you?

Amused chuckles from the crowd. Manuel cups an ear, sharing  
in the joke. Grins, quietly-- \*

MANUEL  
For my next trick...I give you... \*

Anticipation is killing the audience -- wait for it--

MANUEL  
...the Disappearing Ma--

Before the words pass his lips -- THE AUDIENCE IS ON THEIR  
FEET, CHEERING! Beaming, this is what Manuel lives for. \*

Tilting his head toward the table -- a "get outta here", the  
table's legs suddenly SPROUT TO LIFE, scampering off, spider-  
like, into the wings-- \*

Mother and son reflexly twist their hips sideways to let the  
table by. Santiago yanks the hat off the table, giddily  
peering inside-- \*

Out POPS an adorable black and white colored rabbit, his nose  
wiggling curiously. This is-- \*

SANTIAGO

Lucero!

PALOMA

Shhhh -- watch...

Santiago "shh's" the rabbit. Manuel circles the empty stage--

MANUEL

Now, this trick is no mere trick,  
ladies and gentleman. It was  
learned on my many travels of the  
world -- wait--

(dramatic pause)

--did I say which world exactly...?

The audience laughs. Manuel's charming, child-like smile  
spreads as he gestures over his shoulder.

Stretching his long arms, his bony fingers contort into  
lightning shapes. A seemingly normal door and jamb appears--

Instantaneously, the background lights fade dramatically.  
A spotlight hits Manuel, his tone suddenly cautious--

MANUEL

A word to the wise, ladies and  
gentlemen: if there are children  
present here tonight, know this is  
not to be trifled with at home.

(grandly points)

I present...the Portal...

Repressing a Cheshire Cat grin, he steps toward the door--

THEATER ANNOUNCER BOY (O.S.)

See "Manuel the Magnificent"!  
Barcelona's most famous magician!  
Maybe the world!

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - THEATER - NIGHT

Posters of a toothy "MANUEL THE MAGNIFICENT" adorn the front  
entrance. A thin wet banner is MOPPED over his face, reading  
"SECOND PERFORMANCE SOLD OUT!"

On the street, CHAOS. Eager customers storm the box office,  
demanding a ticket, as a squeaky-voiced THEATER ANNOUNCER BOY  
lumbers past, wearing a sandwich board--

THEATER ANNOUNCER BOY  
 See the famous Disappearing Man!  
 What are his secrets? Extended  
 tonight to a third performance!

**"THE DISAPPEARING MAN" MONTAGE BEGINS --**

EXT. GOTHIC BARCELONA - NIGHT (1895)

Above a bustling cafe, a warm, inviting light draws us near--

INT. FAMILY FLAT - SAME (1895)

Overflowing with props, old posters, toys, dusty antique knickknacks. Wonderfully loving, eccentric people live here.

INT. KITCHEN - FAMILY FLAT - SAME (1895)

The tiny space is limited to cooking and cleaning essentials, while the center is reserved for the supper table.

Around that, Paloma serves dinner, as Manuel entertains little Santiago with a story. Everyone has their reserved place: three chairs, no more.

Like any six-year old, Santiago howls at the punch-line a little too long--

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - DAY (1895)

A SNOOPING POV, around a corner, observes Manuel multi-tasking between a worn notebook and balancing a series of balls in mid-air. Nearby, an UNSEEN MAN busily sifts through dusty Disappearing Act doors leaned against a wall.

Lucero hops around, threatening to be smushed. Without a beat missed, Manuel bypasses him by inches.

The hidden Santiago mimes his father's every move. When Manuel balances the balls, Santiago does likewise. But doesn't quite get it.

The balls fumble from his palm, bouncing off some invisible surface nearby, before one rolls out into the open--

Manuel curiously picks up the ball, and playfully arches his head around the corner, loudly posing as a pouncing monster--

MANUEL  
GOT YOU!

The kid's eyes go wide as he almost falls backward-- \*

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS OF THE ACT (1899) \*

The trick continues. Manuel, now 36, addresses the audience-- \*

MANUEL  
Now! The portal is nothing more  
than a form of transport-- \*

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - DAY (1895) \*

MANUEL (V.O.)  
--like a bicycle or street car,  
save for the magical element that  
only I know. \*

Manuel wraps the magician's cape around his son's shoulders,  
steps back inspecting with Unseen Man -- the kid swims in it. \*

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS OF THE ACT (1899) \*

From the wings, Paloma watches, enchanted. \*

MANUEL (O.S.)  
To prove its worth, my lovely  
assistant will NOT be joining me  
this evening...! \*

The male audience groan amorously. Unfazed, Paloma peers over  
her shoulder-- \*

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - DAY (1895) \*

Manuel tussles his son's hair, begins teaching him the  
opening steps of the act-- \*

MANUEL (V.O.)  
...instead -- I'll need my new  
assistant... \*

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS OF THE ACT (1899) \*

--Santiago, now 10, attempting to juggle balls in the air  
with fellow vaudeville performers. \*

MANUEL (O.S.)  
 ...my son...Santiago...the Great!

"Ta-dah" music, then the audience applauds.

Flinching at his name, Santiago's brain goes blank, dropping the balls, his inherited smile spreading-- \*

SANTIAGO  
 Huh?

Paloma yanks him by the collar--

INT. STAGE - THEATER - SECONDS LATER (1899)

Holding a "presenting pose" as his son stiffly skids to a stop on the stage edge, Manuel leads him center-stage-- \*

MANUEL  
 My son, Santiago, will now inspect the door and its surroundings for any mishandling's.

Gives his son a slight push off toward the door. \*

EXT. OLD BATTLEMENT - MONTJUIE CASTLE - DAY (1899) \*

The family walk the battlements of the enormous Montjuie Castle, once a military fortress dating back to the 1600's, now a beautiful tourist destination. \*

Paloma chases Santiago to the edge of the wall, overlooking a phenomenal view-- \*

--atop the Tibidabo mountains, where, past the small, uneven hills overlooking Barcelona, they take in the glistening beauty of the Mediterranean. \*

Wide-eyed, Santiago gazes at his mom. She brightly smiles, before CRYING OUT -- Manuel has grabbed her, embracing her in a loving spin. \*

From behind his back, Manuel presents a large bouquet of flowers, soiled stems protruding. Grinning, she leaps into his arms. \*

Santiago watches, enchanted, memorizing this moment-- \*

EXT. GARDEN - MONTJUIE CASTLE - SAME (1899) \*

Meanwhile -- the proud CASTLE GARDENER happily smells one bed  
of flowers after another, until he gets to a gap. Opens his  
eyes. The flowers have been plucked--! \*

INT. THEATER - THE DISAPPEARING ACT - CONTINUOUS OF THE ACT -  
NIGHT (1902) \*

Now 13 and gawky, Santiago inspects the door. With the  
spotlight beaming on him, he looks more confident, more  
rehearsed in his movements. \*

Grips the door jamb -- and pushes!! As if weightless, the  
door spins! Amused, the audience laughs. \*

Very subtly, a small blurred figure is pulled into the spin --  
then disappears. Very blink and you'll miss. \*

Santiago clutches the jamb, mid-spin, righting it's position-- \*

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - THEATER - NIGHT (1902) \*

Post-performance. Manuel is giving his son notes as they pass  
through a congested crowd of fans and autograph seekers. \*

MANUEL

--all's I'm saying, you missed step  
14 in the routine. Important to-- \*

SANTIAGO

--there's more than one way to  
conjure magic, Papa.

MANUEL

Yeah, my way and the wrong way--

Amongst the crowd, a TROUBLED BOY, about 9, dark eyes and  
shabby clothes, approaches Manuel, tugging at his coat. \*

Manuel turns and smiles. At his side, Santiago observes. \*

TROUBLED BOY

I'm sorry...Manuel the Magnificent,  
sir. Can you show me...I-I mean I  
really want to learn your-- \*

--he's roughly YANKED out of frame by his unseen FATHER. \*

TROUBLED BOY'S FATHER (O.S.)

He don't have time for you, he's  
not a charity!

Manuel and Santiago, helpless to intervene, watch as the  
Troubled Boy is pulled away. Santiago and the Boy lock eyes,  
sharing a child-like sympathy.

EXT./INT. BOOKSTORE - GOTHIC BARCELONA - NIGHT (1902)

Manuel leads Santiago into an anonymous-looking bookstore,  
striding past the bored girl behind the counter, nose in a  
book. This is MARIA, also 13.

MANUEL

Ah, little Maria!  
(nudging Santiago)  
Say hello, say hello--!

Santiago holds out an awkward hand to shake -- he likes her.

MARIA

(teen angst aglow)  
Ugh...! You know the way, senor.

With a snicker, Manuel stops at the dusty book shelves in  
back, poises his nose close to the hardback leather, and  
blows -- dust particles sprinkling on Santiago.

Catching Maria's eye out of his peripheral, his nose  
wrinkles, and proceeds to stifle back a sneeze -- not cool.

The shelf itself TEARS IN HALF, shaking the very bookstore.  
Without looking, Maria lifts her cup to avoid spilling.

The shelf opens, revealing a dark passage. They step in--

INT. PASSAGEWAY - MOMENTS LATER (1902)

Through the catacomb-like labyrinth, they emerge into--

INT. SECRET SOCIETY LODGE - CONTINUOUS (1902)

--an impossibly large cavernous space. Torches penetrate as  
much darkness as possible. Ancient books and old props are  
strewn about -- think a Goth kid's messy room.

Dressed in black robes, wise older men of different cultures  
and races intermingle solemnly.



Despite this being old hat, Santiago finds himself still  
awestruck-- \*

Like hawks, the old men turn in unison, spotting Santiago,  
and sprint toward the kid, transforming from wise-old men-- \*

--into annoying Uncles, PINCHING Santiago's cheeks into  
contorted shapes, shoving coins in his face, Dad jokes, etc.-- \*

SOCIETY MEMBERS (OVERLAP)  
PULL MY FINGER/Stop growing, will  
ya?/You wanna shiny Euro/You hear  
the one about the fiesta burrito  
that came out the wrong end--?!

Amused, Manuel cringes, meeting his son's pleading eyes.  
A BOOMING VOICE echoes throughout the cavern-- \*

ARMANDO (O.S.)  
Leave him be, brothers!

All heads swivel to the darkest corner. Out steps an  
authoritative, imposingly sharp, yet warm, man similar to  
Manuel's age -- ARMANDO. \*

Santiago wrestles free, embracing a laughing Armando with all  
his might-- \*

SANTIAGO  
Help!

ARMANDO  
How are you, my boy! Looking after  
your father?

Armando regards Manuel, as they exchange the "secret society"  
handshake. \*

ARMANDO  
Been too long, Manuel. All we hear  
about Barcelona is the name "Manuel  
the Magnificent." So proud-- \*

MANUEL  
Welcome back from your travels, my  
frie--GAHH!! \*

Armando yanks Manuel into a bear hug. It's Santiago's turn to  
cringe-- \*

LATER

Like any secret society lodge, there's drinking, merrymaking  
and general busying themselves, perfecting new tricks, etc. \*

Santiago observes with a judgmental, but amused smile --  
these guys are his annoying, extended family. \*

HIS POV -- finds Manuel and Armando, discussing matters  
privately in a corner. Things look unusually confrontational. \*

MANUEL AND ARMANDO

ARMANDO

--begging you, please be careful  
with what you're attempting. It's  
too unstable.

MANUEL

The Magician's World--

Santiago catches those words above the noise. \*

ARMANDO

--is a dangerous place, yes. And  
also a myth, I'm afraid.  
(gently, reading Manuel) \*  
Where's the proof? Ask any of our  
brothers: every time they perform  
the trick, it brings them "there", \*  
yes? But it's like amnesia: they \*  
forget everything upon the return. \*

Distracted, Manuel pulls his notebook out, making a quiet  
note. Armando studies him, emphatic-- \*

ARMANDO (CONT'D) \*

Shangri-la is more tangible, my old  
friend. Bring an artifact back -- \*  
share your wisdom with us. \*

Manuel senses eyes, turns to his watching son, stepping away  
from the conversation. \*

Maria has appeared beside Santiago, he wheezes with nerves-- \*

MARIA

Ugh! Just cuz my Uncle and your  
Father are "lodge buddies" doesn't  
mean we have to be friends!

SANTIAGO  
I-I didn't say--

MARIA  
Fine, let's be friends--

She socks him HARD in the stomach. As he doubles over,  
gasping for breath, she sweetly-- \*

MARIA (CONT'D)  
"My" friend's punch.

--and walks away with a girlish laugh. Out of frame, a pained  
Santiago groans, then lets out an amorous sigh-- \*

EXT. GOTHIC BARCELONA STREET - NIGHT (1902) \*

Santiago nurses his wounded gut as he and a troubled Manuel  
walk home. On the horizon, rumblings of a storm-- \*

SANTIAGO  
Papa...what is the Magician's  
World? \*

Manuel stops. Santiago paces ahead, turns to see his father's  
face brightening -- he's been waiting years for this. A low,  
distant thunder-- \*

FLASH CUT -- CLOSE ON a younger Manuel, bathed in pure white,  
standing awestruck at an unseen ethereal beauty before him. \*

INT. SANTIAGO'S BEDROOM - FAMILY FLAT - NIGHT (1902) \*

Outside the window, the rain is pounding hard. Dark, ominous. \*

Sitting close to the bed, Manuel holds his notebook open for  
Santiago to a drawing of a small figure facing an infinite,  
impossible landscape. \*

As Manuel speaks, he flips the pages -- more drawings of the  
same beautiful place. \*

MANUEL  
It's exactly what you imagine: a  
magical place made of your wildest  
dreams and darkest misfortunes.  
Created so long ago, its origins  
have been forgotten. Generations of  
magicians have passed down its  
telling--  
(stinging beat)  
Armando and the others don't  
remember or choose not to believe  
its existence. \*

Santiago studies his father. He's miles away-- \*

MANUEL (CONT'D) \*

To visit would be too short a stay-- \*

The boy is doubting, yet still intrigued-- \*

SANTIAGO

How does one get there? \*

Manuel shuts the book. \*

MANUEL

Well, maybe some day -- you'll see  
it for yourself. \*

INT. THEATER - THE DISAPPEARING ACT - CONTINUOUS OF THE ACT -  
NIGHT (1902) \*

Santiago turns the handle. As he opens the door, a beaming  
Paloma is seen through the frame. \*

Intrigued by its powers, he closes the door, eyeing the knob.  
Something compels him to try again. Reaches out-- \*

--Manuel's hand intervenes. Nary missing a beat, he addresses  
the audience-- \*

MANUEL

Now, you'll see with your own eyes,  
ladies and gentlemen, a man will  
disappear into thin air behind this  
door.

(loudly, to Santiago)

Take a bow, son! \*

Santiago awkwardly does, returning to the wings. Paloma  
welcomes him with open arms, holding back a cough. \*

**Magical part with the special words (think of this later).**

INT. WINGS - CONTINUOUS (1902) \*

PALOMA

You did so well! \*

Santiago blushes with pride, absentmindedly looking about-- \*

SANTIAGO

Where's Lucero? He was just here... \*

She retrieves a stopwatch, hands it to him. \*

PALOMA  
...30 seconds...

Tick...tick...tick...

INT. STAGE - THEATER - SAME (1902) \*

The door and jamb are a flat parallel to the audience, easy  
to see the other side. Manuel dramatically steps forward-- \*

Tick...tick...tick... \*

A beat as we move from the door -- past the (now-less-than-  
full) audience as they GASP happily at what has happened off-  
screen, toward the wings to-- \*

Tick...tick...tick...

An excited Santiago, thrilled by the trick. Over his shoulder  
-- a COUGH. Shrouded in darkness, Paloma is coughing harder  
now-- \*

...the ticking slows...

Confused, he runs to her, leaving the door and the empty  
stage behind-- \*

INT. MANUEL & PALOMA'S BEDROOM - FAMILY FLAT - DAY (1902) \*

An ugly rain falls outside. Bed-ridden, Paloma is surrounded  
by Manuel, Santiago, a dour DOCTOR. Armando and other society  
members hold vigil outside the door. \*

Shaking his head solemnly, the Doctor gives the family some  
privacy, closing the door behind him. \*

Only Manuel and Santiago remain. They manage a smile through  
sorrowful tears, each rubbing one of her hands. \*

With some effort, she gently releases their hands, and  
instead -- joins their's together. Paloma smiles weakly,  
a final request. \*

Father and son hold her, embracing one last time as a family.  
The ticking has stopped-- \*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY- DAY (1902) \*

Old and overgrown. On a distant hill, both loved ones,  
distant family, and society members surround the coffin. \*

Still in a state of shock, Manuel and Santiago are front and  
center. \*

Manuel produces a bouquet of flowers from behind his back,  
places them on the casket. Turns to his son, blurred with  
grief, and speaks bluntly-- \*

MANUEL

You, son, have the ability to  
conjure real magic -- I know this  
because-- \*

Leans and whispers something into his son's ear.

**WHAT DOES HE WHISPER? SOMETHING THAT WILL COME INTO EFFECT  
LATER (DUH)**

Santiago's face slackens, then hardens in one beat. \*

EXT. CEMETERY PATH - LATER THAT EVENING (1902) \*

Santiago haunts the quiet path, Manuel lags behind, head low. \*

A gust of picks up a pile of leaves, Santiago senses, and  
turns -- his father has again vanished. With deadened eyes,  
Santiago continues on alone-- \*

INT. KITCHEN - FAMILY FLAT - DAYS LATER (DAWN - 1902) \*

Unwashed dishes pile in the sink. Santiago eats alone. \*

A rustling at the front door. Mid-bite, he looks up. Manuel  
bursts through the door with renewed energy-- \*

MANUEL

Son! Come and give papa a hug!

Confused and bitter, Santiago finishes chewing. Rises and  
coldly embraces his father-- \*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BARCELONA PARK - DAY (1903) \*

Santiago and Maria enthusiastically pour over a home-made science experiment on the grass. Maria side-glances him, sympathetically, a friendship growing. \*

...the ticking of his mother's stopwatch returns...and won't stop until noted... \*

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - DAY (1903) \*

A hand shoots up. Santiago answers the question his TEACHER asked the class. The teacher smiles proudly.

On the black board, a fancy sign is posted: "SCIENCE FAIR NEXT WEEK!" \*

INT. THEATER - THE DISAPPEARING ACT - THE PAST (1903) \*

The solitary door on the stage. In the wings, stopwatch in hand, Santiago doesn't appear fazed. \*

INT. SANTIAGO'S BEDROOM - FAMILY FLAT - NIGHT (1903) \*

Under a blanket, Santiago secretly constructs his experiment. \*

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - DAY (1903) \*

While kids play outside, Santiago is putting the experiment to the test. \*

BOOM! The experiment explodes, blackening his face. Heads for the blackboard, checking the equation. Erases the problem-- \*

Tries again, cringing with anticipation--! \*

INT. SCIENCE FAIR - SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY (1903) \*

A First Place ribbon is held up! Surrounded by well-wishers, Santiago stands proudly beside his winning experiment. \*

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - FAMILY FLAT - DAWN (1904) \*

At the table, Manuel eats alone. \*

INT. WINGS - THEATER - NIGHT (1905) \*

:30 seconds. A hand clicks the stopwatch-- \*

INT. THEATER - THE END OF THE DISAPPEARING ACT - PRESENT  
(1905 GOING FORWARD) \*

BANG! The door swings open. Manuel bursts out, nose in the  
air, posing for the applause. A more diluted "Ta dah..." \*

Halfhearted, scattered claps greet him. His eyes blink open --  
the audience is sparse, three or four vagrants, some snoring. \*

His face drops, peers to the wings. Santiago is no longer  
there, only a bored STAGE HAND, lowering the curtain. \*

Dismayed, he retreats backstage, just as the curtain hits him  
at an angle. Kicking it aside, keeps walking-- \*

In the oily darkness -- intense blue eyes watch Manuel  
descend. A silhouette, tall and rather lanky, follows -- \*

"THE DISAPPEARING MAN" MONTAGE ENDS -- \*

EXT. VARIOUS AROUND BARCELONA - DAY \*

The city is a hubbub of anticipation and preparation. Banners  
are raised across a street, "La Merce in 2 weeks!" \*

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Walking, a nervous hand flips over a sealed envelope,  
University logo embossed on the creased corner. The other  
hand pushes a bicycle. A feminine hand grabs for it-- \*

MARIA (O.S.)

Oh, for the love of God, give it--! \*

REVEAL -- tense 16-year old Manuel, sporting a thin bohemian  
beard, staring wide-eyed, as he walks with his now-  
girlfriend, Maria, from school. \*

Our boy is now handsome without trying, looking more like his  
mother. Maria is more beautiful without caring -- big, brown  
eyes, pretty black hair. \*

SANTIAGO

No, it's mine--! \*



Yanking it out of reach. With a roll of her eyes, she slugs him. Doubling over, he dangles it up for her. \*

She takes it with a girlish giggle, tears it open, eyes darting as they walk-- \*

EXT. BARCELONA STREET - CONTINUOUS \*

--and stops, a smile forming. \*

MARIA

You're in...they accepted you...

Despite the pain, his head pops up and snatches it away, reading with fevered excitement-- \*

MARIA (CONT'D) \*

You passed the Selectividad with flying colors -- top of the class -- what did you expect? You should be proud.

(beat) \*

He would be also.

His smile fades, eyes drifting over her shoulder to a newsstand, where amongst newspapers, a science journal hangs, proclaiming "Einstein's Theory of Relativity Proposed!" \*

She turns, knowing-- \*

MARIA (CONT'D)

You want to be a scientist, your father will understand. Try him. \*

EXT. STREET - GOTHIC BARCELONA - EVENING

Sounds and aromas of restaurant patrons sharing food, wine, and niceties sweep out into the street. \*

Knapsack slung over his shoulder, lost in thought, comes Santiago on his bicycle, failing to see-- \*

UP AHEAD, an usually long leg stretching around a corner, directly in the his path-- \*

HE FLIPS UP AND FORWARD -- the bike buckling underneath! Comes down -- CRASH! LANDS HARD, the bicycle bouncing sideways to a stop. \*

Contents of the knapsack SCATTER. Textbooks, papers, the envelope-- \*

The restaurant patrons pay no mind -- their echoed  
 conversation has devolved into something more sinister-- \*

Santiago takes an injured beat, then slowly picks himself up.  
 A deep, seductive voice rings out-- \*

BELTRAN (O.S.)  
 Here...allow me... \*

A long shadow envelopes him, followed by a black gloved hand. \*

Dazedly blinking as he is helped up, Santiago gets his first  
 glimpse at-- \*

The young man's intense blue eyes, heavy bags droop below.  
 His mopped hair flattened by a tight, pointed fedora.  
 This is BELTRAN. He looks like a wet vulture. \*

Discomforted, Santiago drops to his knees, scooping up his  
 books and papers. The young man helps him-- \*

SANTIAGO  
 No, thank you, I have-- \*

Amongst the debris, spies the acceptance letter, reaches --  
 the gloved hand SNATCHES it first -- and STOPS, letting drop  
 everything else -- the letter is what matters. \*

Santiago's eyes dart between the man and the letter-- \*

BELTRAN  
 Well, congratulations...acceptance  
 to university to study...science? \*

The young man side-glances Santiago intently-- \*

BELTRAN (CONT'D)  
 Are you not the son of Manuel The  
 Magnificent? \*

SANTIAGO  
 --and you are? \*

BELTRAN  
 Beltran. An admirer of your father. \*

SANTIAGO  
 You're the one-- \*

BELTRAN  
 Don't jest. Your father's abilities  
 are of the highest--

SANTIAGO

Think you've got the wrong guy--

Santiago tries snatching the letter, but Beltran yanks it just out of reach--

BELTRAN

Do I? Being a magician, especially one of your father's caliber, would be an honor to follow, not an insult. He's no mere magician, mind you, but a sorcerer.

Santiago carefully pulls the letter from Beltran's pinched, bony fingers, pockets it. Goes about snapping up his remaining possessions, before setting the bike upright--

Intensely studying his prey, Beltran's eyes never blink, spying the science journal amongst the possessions.

BELTRAN

Why do you hate him?

SANTIAGO

What do you want, kid?

BELTRAN

Information--

SANTIAGO

--don't have any.

BELTRAN

His notebook. Every trick he's ever performed is in there. Never goes anywhere without--

Pushing the bicycle past--

SANTIAGO

Want it? Steal it yourself--

BELTRAN

He hurt you. You want to hurt him--

--Santiago stops, this stranger voicing his inner feelings.

BELTRAN (CONT'D)

A scientist of all things? Sounds like you want to be as little like him as possible.

They're face to face now. Complete honesty.

BELTRAN

He denied you. He denied me -- an  
apprenticeship...

\*

Bitterly shaking, Santiago bows his head--

\*

SANTIAGO

This is my father, no--

\*

BELTRAN

Taking something most precious from  
the world's greatest magician, who  
has treated you as less-than? Your  
potential is out there--

\*

\*

(a wicked smile spreads)

--not at your father's knee.

\*

A long, contemplative beat. Santiago nods slightly, then  
cycles past without another word.

BELTRAN

You'll see me again--

\*

INT. KITCHEN - FAMILY FLAT - LATER THAT NIGHT

CLOSE ON -- Santiago's studious eyes, distractedly serving  
dinner at the counter.

\*

\*

Grips something in his pocket -- the letter, no doubt.

\*

Footsteps echo, something flops down, then recedes.

\*

HIS POV -- Manuel disappears into the other room, having left  
his coat over the back of his chair. Protruding from the  
pocket -- the notebook.

\*

\*

\*

Santiago pulls the letter out, quickly stuffing it under his  
napkin at the table. Eyes the notebook. Footsteps return --  
not yet.

\*

\*

\*

Manuel returns, unshaven and worn, sipping a drink, shuffling  
hand-written notes as he sits in his coat-draped chair.

\*

\*

Without a word, Santiago sits, begins serving himself--

\*

SLAP! Santiago JOLTS as hand-written notes are flopped onto  
his empty plate, looks up. A half-crazed grin greets him--

\*

\*

MANUEL

We need to woo the crowds back,  
mejo. I know where I went wrong.

\*

(MORE)

MANUEL (cont'd)

I'm updating the Disappearing Man  
for a new generation.

SANTIAGO

No--

MANUEL

--now, this will take two people. \*  
Manuel The Magnificent...and now... \*  
Santiago the Great-- \*

Santiago nervously slides the letter into view. A tuned-out \*  
Manuel shuffles his notes-- \*

MANUEL (CONT'D) \*

--this will take some months. \*  
You've completed your studies. That \*  
nonsense over, we can now-- \*

Sighing despondently, Santiago slides the letter away, and \*  
feigns interest. His eyes glaze past his unaware father, to \*  
the protruding notebook-- \*

EXT. RUN DOWN THEATER - NIGHT

A less desirable side of town. The marquee reads a cluster of \*  
acts -- "Manuel The Magnificent" is at the bottom. \*

INT. DRESSING ROOM - RUN DOWN THEATER - MOMENTS LATER \*

The notebook is shuffled among other personal items in the \*  
vanity drawer as it's shut by an out-of-breath Manuel, doing \*  
last-minute prep on his stage makeup in the cracked mirror. \*

MANUEL

--like trying to wake the dead out \*  
there. Need to try something else. \*

Turns to Santiago for approval, "I look okay?" Solemnly \*  
observing against the door, masking his ambivalence, he fixes \*  
his father's disheveled hair-- \*

SANTIAGO

Looks good, Papa.

Nodding with a reassured smile, Manuel nods, side-steps \*  
something unseen in the middle of the room, and rushes out. \*

Left alone, Santiago's head drops sadly. Fighting his nerve, \*  
he strides forward, right for the vanity drawer-- \*

CRASH! He stumbles wildly, tripping on...uh, nothing. \*  
 Collapsing, he cries out, nursing his bruised shin, violently \*  
 flinging something away-- \*

A savage CRASH against the wall. An invisible chair, of \*  
 course-- \*

Using the vanity, he pulls himself up. Yanks the drawer open-- \*

The notebook is gone.

Doubting his eyes, he digs frantically, shoving contents \*  
 aside-- \*

MANUEL (O.S.)

Think me a fool? \*

At the open door, Manuel holds the notebook up-- \*

INT. BACKSTAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - MOMENTS LATER \*

Angle on the closed dressing room door -- muffled screams \*  
 from within. Various talent and stagehands pass, their \*  
 attention awkwardly gravitated toward that door-- \*

INT. DRESSING ROOM - RUN DOWN THEATER - SAME

Exhausted, father and son eye each other from opposite ends \*  
 of the tight room. Their shouting match has just ended-- \*

MANUEL

I would have remembered you \*  
 mentioning about university-- \*

SANTIAGO

Before or after you attended all \*  
 those science fairs and \*  
 competitions? Think I grew those \*  
 ribbons? \*

(beat, sighs)

You've ignored me long enough. I'm \*  
 leaving. Living a normal life would \*  
 be the only sane thing left to do. \*  
 Away from this silly "magic".

MANUEL

(stoically hurt)

That "silly magic" put food in your \*  
 belly, little boy. Clothes on your-- \*

SANTIAGO CONJURES A FLAME FROM THE TIP OF HIS FINGERS. Manuel is unimpressed-- \*

MANUEL  
The Flaming Tip, yes, I--

SANTIAGO  
Know how it's done? \*

**(scientific explanation  
for this trick)**

MANUEL  
I'm proud you know the science, son. I am. You've become wiser than I ever hoped to be. You just don't see your true potential, what I've seen. Some people can't perform real magic. \*

SANTIAGO  
--yes, but there's more than one way! \*

MANUEL  
Look, I'm no fool -- I know some would try to steal these secrets from me. It's a form of jealousy and flattery. I don't care who put you up to it-- \*

Santiago sighs. Manuel is trying to reach him-- \*

MANUEL (CONT'D)  
Son, I've taught you a trade. Something you could use-- \*

SANTIAGO  
Illusions, tricks! All fake, Papa! I stopped practicing as soon as I learned how easy they were performed! Who cares?! \*

MANUEL  
(pointing toward the door)  
They...care--!! \*

SANTIAGO  
They! Don't care. They've moved on! There's no magic left. Not for me. \*

A spark has left Manuel's eyes, leaving a shell of pain-- \*

MANUEL

There's magic here. You'll see it  
again. \*

Quick knock at the door. A STAGEHAND pokes his head in-- \*

STAGEHAND

Manuel The Magnificent, last act  
swallowed too many bees, stung to  
death from the inside. You're on.

--and is gone. A sobering beat-- \*

SANTIAGO

You asked me if I thought you a  
fool? You are a fool, papa.

Santiago walks out-- \*

INT. BACKSTAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS \*

--guilt-ridden and bitter. \*

Beltran materializes from the shadows, watching. \*

INT. DRESSING ROOM - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Manuel studies himself in the cracked mirror, all enthusiasm  
drained from his face. Opens a small pocket frame of Paloma.  
With decisive finality, he closes it. \*

INT. WINGS - RUN DOWN THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

His face a mask, Manuel steps to the wings as the MASTER OF  
CEREMONIES announces him-- \*

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (O.S.)

And now, returning for his encore  
performance of mystery and the  
unknown, "Manuel The Magnificent!" \*

The tinny orchestra plays "Ta dah!" Manuel strides forward. \*

EXT. BACK ALLEY - RUN DOWN THEATER - SAME

Santiago aggressively shoves his way out the back exit. \*



INT. STAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - SAME

Manuel studies the sparse crowd -- bored, some nap, teenagers make out. One TOOTHLESS OLD MAN watches with interest. A thin smile appears, Manuel performs for that man--

MANUEL

Ladies and gentlemen, the  
Disappearing Man!

Without moving, the door appears behind him. Raising his arms, the footlights are extinguished--

Off stage, TECHNICIANS are confused--

EXT. STREET - SAME

Santiago savagely kicks a can down a storm drain, observing its descent -- stops short. Something feels amiss. Peers back to the theater--

INT. STAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - SAME

Manuel grips the spinning door, setting it profile with the audience.

MANUEL

This is the moment. I will now step  
through this door to--

Trails off, his eyes go slack. From the shadows, Beltran observes with curiosity.

INT. LOBBY - RUN DOWN THEATER - SAME

Santiago plunges past the THEATER MANAGER and the TICKET  
TAKER.

THEATER MANAGER

Sir, it's a euro! You're  
interrupting the performance--

Santiago yanks a coin from behind the Manager's ear, and is gone. The coin bounces wildly, the Manager fumbles to catch it--

INT. AUDITORIUM - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Santiago sprints along the back row, toward backstage,  
peering at the stage. There, Manuel faces the door-- \*  
\*

INT. BACKSTAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Santiago rushes the stage, pushing STAGE HANDS aside-- \*

INT. STAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

The knob is twisted, opened to reveal--

INT. WINGS - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

--an out-of-breath Santiago arriving in the wings. Through \*  
the open frame, Manuel spots his son. Not surprised, he emits \*  
a whisper-- \*

MANUEL

Goodbye...

Manuel steps through the frame, DISAPPEARING BEFORE HIS SON'S \*  
EYES. The door begins to drift closed-- \*

Santiago fumbles through his pockets, finds his watch -- eyes \*  
darting between the closing door and the timepiece. \*

Before the door latches shut, he spies through the closing \*  
sliver, on the other side of the stage -- Beltran. \*

Tensely arching his head around the door -- was it his \*  
imagination? Grips a wall, eyes dart to the watch-- \*

--30 seconds tick by-- \*

Nothing. The door stands firm, no movement. \*

--45 seconds--

The tiny orchestra, awaiting their cue. The CONDUCTOR peers \*  
at the pocket watch on his stand, seconds ticking by--

The Master of Ceremonies stands beside Santiago, whispering \*  
through gritted teeth--

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Where is he?!

The audience murmurs. Finally, the Toothless Old Man shouts-- \*

TOOTHLESS OLD MAN  
Well, where'd he go?!

1:10 seconds. Tense and unsure, Santiago rushes the stage-- \*

INT. STAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

--immediately ripping the door open, slams it shut. Repeats, \*  
but nothing happens. Concerned murmurs alert the audience. \*

Slowly panicking, Santiago mumbles incoherently-- \*

SANTIAGO  
You...never showed me...what do I  
do...papa...

A flummoxed Theater Manager roughly brushes past The Master \*  
of Ceremonies, addressing the audience-- \*

THEATER MANAGER  
Ladies and gentleman, stay calm! It \*  
seems there has been an accident-- \*  
(whispering, to Santiago) \*  
Bring him back, damn you...!

Santiago ignores him, on his knees studying the knob, the \*  
jamb-- \*

AUDIENCE MEMBERS (VARIOUS)	THEATER MANAGER
We want a refund! Si, we	(to unseen Stagehand)
don't pay a euro for this	Okay, lower the curtain! L-
shoddy--where'd he go--?!	lower it, you imbecile!

Flippant, the STAGE HAND "accidentally" lets slip the rope. \*  
The tattered curtain plummets on the Manager's head, \*  
flattening him to the floor.

SMASH CUT TO: \*

MOMENTS LATER

The bruised Theater Manager grips Santiago by the lapel. The \*  
audience is jeering, calling for refunds-- \*

THEATER MANAGER  
Where is HE?!

Santiago is wide-eyed -- actually scared. \*

SANTIAGO

He-he adjusted the Reveal to appear  
someplace in the theater -- revamp  
the act. We need to find him--

\*  
\*  
\*

THEATER MANAGER

YOU need to find him! Manuel! Needs  
to pay me--

\*

Santiago's eyes dart to the darkened wings, wait? -- rips  
away from the Manager's grip--

\*  
\*

THEATER MANAGER (CONT'D)

Call the authorities, the son is a  
suspect! He knows something!

\*

INT. WINGS - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Ignoring the screams, Santiago frantically searches the  
growing crowd of concerned stagehands and talent.

\*  
\*

Just above the crowd, he spies a pointy fedora -- Beltran.  
Shoving through--

\*  
\*

SANTIAGO

Stop him!

The pointy fedora is on the move. Santiago is closing in--

\*

Coming to the edge of the crowd, finding an empty space.  
Whips around--

\*  
\*

A lanky leg and the brim of a hat turn up a flight of stairs.  
Echoed footsteps. Santiago lunges after--

\*  
\*

INT. STAIRCASE - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

--climbing two steps at a time, breathing hard, determined.  
Footsteps just around the corner--

\*  
\*

INT. STORAGE SPACE - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

\*

Santiago stomps hard on the landing, expectant--

\*

SANTIAGO

Ah-ha!

--instead, comes face-to-stomach with a GIANT GRINNING CLOWN!  
HIGH PITCHED GIGGLING!!

\*  
\*

Santiago stumbles in shock. Darts around-- \*

Several devilish faces surround him, laughing maniacally!! \*

Frightened, his logic returns. Reaches out, touches the  
clown's arm -- wood, flat, splintered. Old props. \*

Laughs despite himself as he stands. Beat. Elsewhere,  
breathing -- he's not alone. \*

Side-eyeing the clown as he pushes it aside, then another,  
making a path toward the back of the darkened room. \*

SANTIAGO

Why run? What do you know?

The cracked wooden faces peer menacingly as he passes. \*

His outstretched hands searching. The breathing intensifies.  
He's close-- \*

His fingers press against brick -- the breathing stops short.  
Santiago turns, realizing, he's alone. \*

INT. STAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Two detectives, both hardened veterans, ALTO and BAJO -- one  
short and squat, the other rail thin and tall, listen to an  
off-screen Santiago, puffing their cigars -- in unison. \*

SANTIAGO (O.S.)

--he would stand here presenting,  
then -- POOF, be gone-- \*

Reveal -- a ranting, overexerted Santiago pacing the now  
taped-off door. Police search the surroundings. \*

SANTIAGO

It's a trick of the eye, nothing  
more. He's in hiding...somewhere.  
I'm relying on you, senors-- \*

Alto and Bajo side-eye each other, nodding slowly, then-- \*

DETECTIVE ALTO

(a child's Falsetto)

Don't worry, mejo. We're on the  
case-- \*

DETECTIVE BAJO  
 (a deep Bass)  
 --we'll speak to any wrong-doers  
 meaning to do your father harm.  
 C'mon Alto!

The detectives start to work. Mouth agape, Santiago suddenly  
 feels dispirited--

**MONTAGE BEGINS - INT./EXT. - THE FOLLOWING DAYS/WEEKS**

-Copies of Manuel's photo are printed on a primitive printer,  
 a Santiago invention.

-Santiago hands out photos on the street.

-Police, volunteers knock on doors, Alto and Bajo lead  
 detectives. Only met with shaking heads: no luck--

-C/U, a spinning newspaper, the headline reading "SECOND  
 MYSTERIOUS WEEK FOR MISSING MANUEL THE 'MAGNIFICENT'!!"

-Alto and Bajo question a distracted MAGICIAN, mid-  
 performance, as he sees his lovely assistant in half -- A  
 HEART-STOPPING SCREAM -- the detectives' eyes pop!

MAGICIAN  
 --NOT AGAIN!!!

-The search brings Santiago to the bookstore. Through the  
 window, a sympathetic Armando watches. Grateful, Santiago  
 nods, moves on--

-Maria sits with a clearly distracted Santiago. Chases after  
 someone who fits Manuel's build. It's not him.

-On stage, Santiago works out the beats of the act from  
 memory. Opens the door -- empty. Hangs his head, not ready to  
 confront his father's irrational side of things--

**MONTAGE ENDS.**

INT. BOOKSTORE - GOTHIC BARCELONA - DAY

Santiago's haggard face is inches from the dusty books. After  
 a beat, blows, waves the dust away as it spreads, spitting.

INT. SECRET SOCIETY LODGE - MOMENTS LATER

The secret society faces a slumped-shouldered Santiago,  
 throwing his hands up in defeat--

SANTIAGO

It's no secret, you know why I'm here: authorities have found noth--  
I've found -- nothing. I need your guidance.

\*  
\*  
\*

HUGO, an old blind magician, hobbles out on a cane, circling Santiago. His cloudy, white eyes are intimidating--

\*  
\*

HUGO

You defied your father, boy. You've openly mocked him and his trade.

\*

SANTIAGO

Senor, I apologize if I've--

\*  
\*

HUGO

Heh, you've probably mocked his brethren. Your "science" hasn't helped you, why should we now?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Darts toward Santiago -- the blind man's eyes are now a striking green, yet still clouded over. Santiago recovers.

\*  
\*

SANTIAGO

If not for me, help Manuel the Magnificent. He's one of you--

\*  
\*

A long silence, then the society members converse amongst themselves -- the topic has been dropped.

\*  
\*

From the fray, steps Armando, patting a warm hand on Hugo's shoulder. With a huff, Hugo leaves. Santiago nods, relieved.

\*  
\*

ARMANDO

Where do you think he is?

SANTIAGO

(sotto)

Afraid to say it out loud.

\*  
\*

ARMANDO

Manuel believes in his Magician's World. Somewhere deep down, so do we. If I've been there, I don't recall.

\*  
\*

(beat)

I believe in my friend, and will help you find him -- in the only way possible.

\*

Santiago's spirits rise slightly, a joining of forces--

\*

ARMANDO (CONT'D)

Wherever he is, no matter what, you  
must believe, boy.

\*  
\*

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY/NIGHT

\*

Detectives Alto and Bajo interview various "crazies" that  
have come out of the woodwork. Their frustration reaching  
fever pitch--

\*  
\*

INT. BACKSTAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - DAY

Santiago and Armando face an ominous shape draped in a velvet  
drop cloth, tucked to the side, its perimeter taped off.

\*  
\*

With a pull of the cloth, the disappearing door stands like a  
monolith.

\*  
\*

INT. STAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Armando sets the door center stage, studying--

\*

ARMANDO

Manuel once told me it was a simple  
trick, with a hundred little  
intricate sleight of hands.

\*

SANTIAGO

Did you ever conjure it yourself?

\*

They share an amused look. Armando gestures--

ARMANDO

Have a try.

Santiago shifts his weight, approaches, then hesitates. His  
mind searching out the equation. Armando sighs.

\*  
\*

ARMANDO

You cannot see this through  
science. It's folly--

\*  
\*

**SERIES OF IMAGES - LEARNING THE TRICK**

-Santiago opens the door, over and over. Nothing changes.

-Sometimes, opens it to an empty view--

-while others, Armando is there to smack him! Santiago  
recoils.

\*  
\*



ARMANDO (V.O.)

You've tried that! Magic is beyond explanation. It's an ability.

-Santiago conjures a flame through. BOOM! As the smoke clears, both are covered in soot. The door remains intact.

ARMANDO (V.O.)

The door's not the issue, boy. Your papa's not in the wood, but out there!

-Santiago meditatively feels the open door frame -- nothing. His head drops in frustration.

-He childishly throws magic cards through the frame.

-Bangs his head repeatedly against the closed door, until--

**END SERIES OF IMAGES**

EXT. SEA WALL - BARCELONA - DAY

CRASH, the waves thunder high against the sea wall as Alto and Bajo run after an UNIFORMED OFFICER, pointing ahead.

UNIFORMED OFFICER

There!

They stop before a mangled pile of seaweed. On the nearby sand, a spilled billfold blows in the wind.

Inspecting closer, Alto and Bajo grow horrified--

INT. STAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - DAY

Confidence wavering, Santiago leans against the jamb, pushes it open. Holds his hand out, digs deep, muttering under his breath--

SANTIAGO

Abracadabra.

A faint flicker of light appears in space before him. Blinks quickly -- wants to do it again, is ready--

DETECTIVE BAJO (O.S.)

Mejo--

Concentration broken, he angrily scoffs, turning--



Santiago turns away. Can't do this anymore-- \*

ARMANDO (CONT'D)

You saw something through that door  
today -- see it again. \*

Utterly spent, he meets Armando's gaze. \*

INT. STAGE - RUN DOWN THEATER - MORNING

Footsteps echo through the darkened theater as Santiago  
wearily circles the door once more-- \*

SANTIAGO

I must be nuts.

ARMANDO (O.S.)

Believing in the impossible? \*

Armando appears from the wings, gesturing toward the door-- \*

*In the morgue, Armando watches from afar as Santiago stares  
at the covered sheet on the slab. Alto turns to Bajo, sotto-- \**

DETECTIVE ALTO

*We're done. Call off the search--*

*Armando notes this, bows his head--*

BACK TO SCENE. \*

Santiago pushes the door open with a dramatic flourish-- \*

*Mid-performance, Manuel fingers contort clenched shapes  
toward the open door-- \**

MATCH CUT TO: \*

BACK TO SCENE. \*

Santiago mimics the same, blinks confidently, hesitating-- \*

SANTIAGO

If-- this works. Tell Maria, I-- \*

ARMANDO

She will be fine. You have my word.

SANTIAGO

Merely a few steps-- \*

Intensely, he commands--

\*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

\*

Abracadab--

The light sparks before him once more. He pauses, crooked smile -- did he actually do that? -- takes another step--

\*

\*

Then -- somehow another? Right away, he realizes he's no longer in the theater, but a space-less environment -- HOW?

\*

\*

Ahead, a pin of light shines, growing in brightness at an exponential rate, RIGHT AT HIM, then--

\*

\*

A FLOODED BLAST OF OVERWHELMING ILLUMINATION!!

\*

THE LIGHT DROWNS HIM! Instinctively, he covers his ears, clenches his eyes shut, emitting short gasps of air--

\*

\*

SANTIAGO

Armando--! Turn off--stage lights--  
can't breathe-- stop this--!

\*

For a long moment, the energy around him changes -- slowly. His nerves begin to calm, his breathing deepens.

\*

\*

Pulls his hands from his ears, his eyes open, widening into saucers, looking upon--

\*

\*

A PANORAMA OF THE MAGICIAN'S WORLD -- IN ALL ITS' LUSCIOUS, COLORFUL, UNIMAGINABLE BEAUTY--

\*

\*

SANTIAGO

Papa...you were right...

Somehow he's still standing on the rundown theater stage. His eyes drift down the middle aisle, into the distance. Something seems "off". "Heightened" is a better word.

\*

\*

\*

Santiago turns, peering through the open door--

\*

SANTIAGO

Armando?!

Steps around, finding only swaying, tattered velvet curtains.

\*

He's not perplexed, but downright awestruck. About that time, something unexpected happens--

\*

\*

A GIANT SMILE SPREADS AS HE DASHES DOWN THE AISLE LIKE A FREE CHILD -- JOYFUL!!!

\*

\*

SANTIAGO  
 WOOOOHOOO--!!!

Busting through the front door right into--

EXT. BARCELONA STREET/RUN DOWN THEATER - MAGICIAN'S WORLD -  
 CONTINUOUS \*

TECHNICOLOR ON DRUGS. Its enormity stretches in all  
 directions toward the infinite -- familiar Barcelon-ian  
 landmarks strewn throughout, a mirror image of his hometown. \*

Santiago sprints down the street, pausing in awe, his mind  
 trying to make sense of it-- \*

SANTIAGO  
 Papa!

A DISTANT FFFFT BOOM ANSWERS! stopping him dead. Swings on  
 his heel, and stands frozen.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D) \*

Wha--what?

ANOTHER FFFFT BOOM, YET CLOSER--

SANTIAGO (CONT'D) \*

Okay, let's figure this--

FFFT BOOM! Hightails for cover, emitting only gibberish-- \*

INT. BLOWN OUT CHURCH - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS \*

Stumbling through the rubble, Santiago huddles behind a wall  
 of debris, light seeping through broken stain windows. \*

FFFT BOOM, FFFFT BOOM! Clenching his eyes shut to think-- \*

SANTIAGO \*

Think, think. Where are you, Papa?

EXT. BLOWN OUT CHURCH - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

A BOUNCING, STALKING POV APPROACHES, grunting, heavy  
 breathing-- \*

INT. BLOWN OUT CHURCH - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Putting it together, Santiago's eyes pop open, peering through the broken window-- \*

Even here, Montjuie Castle is right where it should be, atop the Tibadabo Mountains. \*

EXT. OLD BATTLEMENT - MONTJUIE CASTLE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Enchanted Young Santiago watches Manuel grab Paloma, kissing her in a loving spin-- \*

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BLOWN OUT CHURCH - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS OF PRESENT

His eyes fall slightly, doubt and anger permeating briefly. \*

HEAVY BREATHING IN HIS EAR-- \*

Santiago braces against the debris wall. Whatever it is -- it's inside-- \*

SCRATCHING, GNARLING.

On the jagged debris wall, a FURRY PAW slowly appears, CLENCHING THE WALL -- YANKING IT AWAY LIKE IT'S NOTHING! \*

Terrified and exposed, Santiago screams, contorting into a fetal position! The scream is long and whiny. \*

Close heavy breathing. Opens his eyes, peers up-- \*

In silhouette, a GIANT MONSTER APPROACHES -- Santiago squints. Did -- he just see a floppy ear? \*

SANTIAGO

What the...?

From the shadow, A GIANT PAW PLUMMETS DOWN, READY TO SHAKE THE VERY EARTH -- Santiago raises his hands, bracing-- \*

Instead -- A TINY furry paw impacts a small debris mound, upsetting a few particles of rubble-- \*

Waiting for imenient death, Santiago tilts his head to the giant monster, then down, REVEALING-- \*

Lucero the Rabbit in all his small, adorable glory!

LUCERO

What took you so long?!

Santiago jumps back in shock, then -- simple confusion-- \*

SANTIAGO

Lucero?! How? Are you here--?!

Picks up the bunny, inspecting. Lucero winces in his grasp-- \*

LUCERO

Put me down, mejo!

Santiago puts him down, breathes a considered moment-- \*

SANTIAGO

Okay -- sorry. You talk--? \*

LUCERO

Can we hurry this--? I had a  
 thing going with that lady  
 magician's rabbit --  
 I can here. Keep up--

SANTIAGO

--but you never spoke before.  
 I'm very confused right  
 about now--  
 How...?

Sarcastically pointing in every direction-- \*

LUCERO

Magic world. Thought you were the  
 brain. There are more important--

Santiago paces, gears turning.

SANTIAGO

--but how? We thought you ran away  
 years ago. \*

The rabbit rubs a dramatic paw over his beady eyes-- \*

FLASH WHITE TO:

INT. THEATER - THE DISAPPEARING ACT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

LUCERO'S POV bounces curiously from the wings, finds giants  
 Manuel and Santiago on stage, mid-act, spinning the door. \*  
 Arches back to the wings -- Paloma doesn't notice him. \*

Meanwhile, the force of the spin unlatches the door -- \*  
 creating a violent, tornado-like pull-- \*

Caught unaware, Lucero feels himself pulling backward. \*  
Nervously digs his claws into the floor, nothing works-- \*

The latch on the door gives -- then FLAPS OPEN WILDLY. WHITE \*  
LIGHT POURS OUT! THE VORTEX OF DOOM AWAITS!! \*

The pull yanks him! Panicked and bug-eyed, he digs into \*  
ANYTHING!! SCRAAPPE!!! FLIES BACKWARD through the door, \*  
toward the white light-- \*

WE FLY WITH HIM -- the old world disappearing, until -- he \*  
lands HARD on foreign soil. \*

Gaining consciousness, he peers about numbly -- where is he? \*  
A mirrored world of the theater he was just in-- \*

Desperate, he scrambles to get back. A dense fog has settled \*  
in, obscuring the door. Scratching furiously, the fog \*  
disapates-- \*

He's scratching at a stone wall. His ears drop, scared and \*  
alone-- \*

INT. THEATER - THE DISAPPEARING ACT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) \*

Unaware, Santiago catches the frame, righting its position-- \*

INT. BLOWN OUT CHURCH - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - BACK TO SCENE \*

Lucero plants his cotton tail on a dirt mound. Santiago sits \*  
with him, petting his ears, comforting. \*

LUCERO

Heard your Papa go on about this \*  
place a million times, but I-I \*  
never believe it. You're the first \*  
face that's stayed for more than a \*  
second. \*

(thinking)

Yeah, how'd you do that?

SANTIAGO

Didn't realize it was an option.

EXT. THE DOOR WALL = MAGICIAN'S WORLD - DAY

An infinite wall of lined doors, all different shapes. \*  
Different era STAGE MAGICIANS step through, staring in awe at \*  
the new world-- \*



LUCERO (V.O.)  
 Not to regular magician hacks! They arrive, catch a glimpse, and--

--the doors suck them back like a vacuum!

VIKING MAGICIAN  
 Argh, nooo!

COWBOY MAGICIAN  
 What in tarnation--!

MIME CLOWN MAGICIAN  
 Oooh, dear--!

Back they go, following them through their respective doors--

INT./EXT. DIFFERENT ERAS - DAY/NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

--dropping them back in their own time. Despite the applause they receive, some scratch furiously at the doors like cats.

LUCERO (V.O.)  
 --ZIPPP! Gone-o.

INT. BLOWN OUT CHURCH - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - BACK TO SCENE

LUCERO  
 Once I found your papa, I hoped to catch a ride back, but nada--  
 (beat)  
 That's why you're here? To find him?  
 (sotto)  
 And just between us good looking guys, this place has gone a little off-rails.

Santiago shakes his head -- what? Lucero peers around a broken wall, out onto the deserted street.

LUCERO (CONT'D)  
 There's something dark here, not just happy thoughts. Things -- have been coming out of the woodwork.

LUCERO SUDDENLY GROWS TWENTY FEET TALL -- KNOCKING A HOLE IN THE CEILING--

Terrified, Santiago scrambles for safety under a toppled pew, debris raining down--

LUCERO

Oop, yeah! Forgot to mention: can't  
entirely control that.

\*

A puff of smoke, then BAM! Lucero's back to normal size.  
Petrified, Santiago crawls out--

\*

\*

SANTIAGO

Warn me next time!

Dusting himself off, Santiago stands, determined--

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Okay. I know my Papa. I know where  
he is--

\*

\*

--and leads the way out. Doubtful, Lucero calls after him--

\*

LUCERO

What--? You don't know this place!

\*

SANTIAGO (O.S.)

I'm not afraid, come on!

We slowly float through the destroyed roof, onto the street--

\*

Sighing, Lucero follows, catching up. They pass an ABSTRACT  
SHAPE changing colors as they lock eyes, both startled--

\*

\*

LUCERO

Gah! This place is getting buggy--

SANTIAGO

We need to hurry--

MATCH DISSOLVE:

EXT. BLOWN OUT CHURCH - BARCELONA - NIGHT

--over the abandoned church. La Merce Festival preparations  
are well underway along the streets.

\*

The abstract shape becomes a mangy dog scrounging for food,  
passing a NEWSPAPER BOY as he holds the late additions over  
his head, shouting--

\*

\*

NEWSPAPER BOY

Extra! Renowned Manuel the  
Magnificent found dead after weeks  
long search! Authorities on hunt  
for wrongdoers!

\*

The headline reads "MISSING MANUEL THE MAGNIFICENT FOUND --  
IN MORGUE". \*

An ominous shadow HOVERS PAST. The dog starts to growl-- \*

NEWSPAPER BOY (CONT'D)  
Newspaper, sir? Hey--!

--violently knocking the boy down, scattering his papers.  
Confused passerby's help him up. \*

A passing BEAT COP stops, cautiously following the threat-- \*

EXT. ALLEYWAY - BARCELONA - CONTINUOUS

At the alley's dead-end, empty. Look left, then right -- a  
whiff of black smoke -- suddenly Beltran is front and center,  
breathing deep, grasping onto the stone wall-- \*

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)  
You did well...

A swirling, DISEMBODIED VOICE envelopes him. Pained, Beltran  
shakes his head. \*

BELTRAN  
No--no more. This shouldn't have  
worked-- \*

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)  
Enough blubbering! We have them  
both right where we want them. The  
boy is tracking the father, soon  
they will meet. They couldn't be  
destroyed here. In that world,  
things are a little different --  
they're not alone! \*

Unbeknownst to Beltran, the Beat Cop peers into the alleyway-- \*

BEAT COP  
Hey, you down there...!

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)  
It is there, hunting their every  
move. Thanks to my conjuring, it  
obeys my command. Its' lust for  
blood is just beginning-- \*

Beltran's pained eyes can't be hidden. The Beat Cop steps  
closer, cautiously gripping a bataan-- \*

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)

I saw it clearly: a rejected boy,  
begging -- but NOW! "Beltran the  
Magnificent!" OOhhh, yes, quite the  
ring to it. Out with the old relic,  
in with the toast of Barcelona!

\*  
\*  
\*

The Beat Cop is now ten feet, and closing. Beltran still  
fails to notice--

\*  
\*

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)

That fake body in the morgue did  
the trick: leaving the boy alone  
and exposed. Now the real plan  
begins--

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Beltran's bloodshot eyes open, focused and sharp --

\*

BEAT COP

Senor, are you--?

\*

BELTRAN TURNS, WHIPPING HIS CLOAK OVER THE SURPRISED BEAT  
COP'S HEAD -- VANISHING UNDERNEATH--

Theatrically spinning the cloak around his arm, Beltran peers  
up, oozing confidence.

\*  
\*

Some fifty feet in the air, the Beat Cop stirs in confusion,  
hanging from the tip of the roof by his collar.

\*  
\*

BELTRAN

Tell me more about this -- Beltran  
the Magnificent...?

\*  
\*

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. LEDGE - TIBIDABO MOUNTAIN - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - LATE  
AFTERNOON

BOOM! A flat palm lands on a rocky surface. Having climbed  
for hours, Santiago collapses, exhausted. Pulls a ruffled  
Lucero up with his other hand, plopping him down.

\*  
\*  
\*

SANTIAGO

Don't...remember these hills being  
so difficult...in Barcelona...

Rolls on his side, staring up -- the castle is high on the  
mountain, obscured by a grey curtain of fog.

\*  
\*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D) \*

Truth is...haven't been there since  
my mother died. Was probably-- \*

Lucero flops over, righting himself, then stops-- \*

LUCERO \*

Wait...what? \*

Santiago observes in silent anguish -- Lucero wasn't aware.  
The rabbit slumps down, not knowing how to take this  
information-- \*

LUCERO (CONT'D) \*

Mejo, I'm so sorry. Your mother  
was...one in a million. Always  
slipping me extra treats, even when  
Manuel the Magnificent said no. \*

Both contemplate in silence. Lucero arches his head-- \*

LUCERO \*

Really think your father's up  
there? \*

Santiago stares long and hard, nods.

SANTIAGO \*

Not the morgue, better place than  
any. \*

Reaches for a low hang, grips it an instant, but slips,  
landing on his backside with a thud. As he dusts himself off-- \*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Some magic world. You think you'd  
be able to transport yourself  
anywhere fast...and less painful.

Tries the low hang again, gets a grip, tilts his head to  
Lucero. He climbs up Santiago's back, holding on.

A MOANING ROAR!

Santiago lets loose his grip -- both falling hard. The ROARRR  
echoes! They turn to a nearby cave entrance-- \*

LUCERO

Wasn't me.

Lucero's ears shrink back, realizing, a terrified whisper-- \*

LUCERO (CONT'D) \*

Oh, dear Lord, please don't let it  
be what I think it is.

Curiously, Santiago takes a step toward the cave-- \*

LUCERO \*

L-let's think this out: dark cave,  
scary monster-type lurking--

SANTIAGO

Lose your backbone? You can puff  
up, remember?

An earthshaking MOANING ROAR vibrates toward them-- \*

LUCERO

Don't know when that's gonna  
happen, mejo, and hey--!

--Santiago has already disappeared, swallowed up by the dark.  
Eyes darting, Lucero twitches nervously-- \*

LUCERO (CONT'D) \*

We need to go -- yeah, safer out  
here, that's for s-- \*

Nearby, a gentle twig SNAPS. Lucero flies in--! \*

INT. CAVE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

Pitch black. Somewhere, Santiago's footsteps echo, feeling  
his way through. Suddenly, he hears quick hopping motions --  
then a sudden SCREECH. Not fazed-- \*

SANTIAGO

Took you so long?

LUCERO \*

I...uh--

ROARRR!! Santiago lunges to cover his ears. Lucero's ears  
flop shut-- \*

A second ROAR, this one more pained -- then a distant,  
answering ROAR-- \*

SANTIAGO

There's more than one... \*

Lucero emits a whimper in response. Santiago squints, spotting something ahead -- a wall bathed in light, pouring in from around a corner--

EXT. NESTING GROUNDS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

They step into the light, blinking to their new surroundings, and both cringe--

THEIR POV -- a desolate enclosed valley of dust and smoke. Skewed about, picked over animal remains, surrounding a giant bird's nest.

On the outer circle, a series of hanging nets. Inside, cowering animals: birds, a family of bulls, a tiger.

Horrified, then angry, Santiago strides forward, as Lucero cowardly motions toward the cave--

LUCERO

Well! Mustn't keep your papa--

Without looking, Santiago grabs Lucero by the ears, planting him right where he was--

SANTIAGO

Follow me, stay low...

LUCERO

(whispered hysterics)  
Wait a cotton pick-- explain the GIANT bird's nest for me. Something left will return. Pray it's not what I think--

Santiago eyeballs the skies for a tense moment, then smirks--

SANTIAGO

Then we'll be real quiet.

Moving stealthily, Santiago quietly unlocks one cage after another. Lucero unlocks the bird's cages -- ducking as they flutter past!

Larger animals cautiously eye the liberating human, before nudging at their cage doors. Newfound hope propels them to EXPLODE from their enclosures.

Santiago moves to the Tiger's cage, but it won't budge. Shakes it roughly, nothing. Disheartened, he meets the Tiger's gaze--

SANTIAGO

Let me just--

The Tiger's wise eyes gently dart to the door's edges.  
Santiago's eyes follow, then bursts into action -- searching  
for weaknesses--

Bangs at the bars, feels along the hinges -- nothing.

Lucero approaches, covered in bird feathers.

Sighing heavily, Santiago shuts his eyes -- trying something  
he hadn't thought of.

Contorts his hand over the cage lock, like his father would,  
concentrating. From the center of his palm, a faint bead of  
light grows, reflecting in the Tiger's eyes--

Santiago feels it, a surprised smirk spreads--

THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN, nearly beaming him -- he leaps out of  
the way just in time! Not

Not wasting a moment, the tiger darts past his rescuers,  
climbing up the enclosed wall.

Exhausted, all they can do is watch as the animals flee--

SANTIAGO

You're welcome!

The Tiger pauses, turns his mighty head, and menacingly  
glides back toward his tensed-up rescuers--

LUCERO

Uh-oh...

With swift grace, the Tiger pauses mere inches from them,  
slowly sniffing his prey. He blinks, turning to Santiago--

THE TIGER

I know of you, I recognize your  
scent, Santiago, the off-spring of  
Manuel the Magnificent. We are  
grateful for your rescue.

They exchange surprised glances -- of course he speaks too.  
The Tiger turns, grimacing at his surroundings--

THE TIGER (CONT'D)

We were captured, by the host of  
these grounds.

(MORE)



## THE TIGER (cont'd)

He once was an ally, but lately, an ancient evil has stirred, infecting him with dark magic. The host lingers in the skies now, searching -- on his master's behalf--

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

## LUCERO

Oh no--please don't say it--don't--

## THE TIGER

--Quemar. A beat, or a dragon in your common tongue.

\*  
\*

Alert suddenly, Santiago eyeballs the skies. The Tiger reads his expression--

\*

## LUCERO

(un-convincingly stoic)  
We've avoided him so far. Been here waayy too long, haven't seen him yet--

\*

## SANTIAGO

"Lately"? What's happening here?

\*

## THE TIGER

What's happening in your world? An event?

INSERT CUT: A celebration in full effect on the Barcelona streets. The merrymakers move with an unsettling glee--

## SANTIAGO

The La Merce--?

## THE TIGER

These worlds are linked, yours and this one. Something happens there, it's even more bizarre here--

\*

A uncomfortable beat, Santiago's mind reels. Lucero inches a tense paw toward the cave entrance.

\*  
\*

## LUCERO

We need to leave -- now.

## THE TIGER

He's right, make haste. You are a talented magician. You make your father proud.

\*

Santiago's eyes lower. The Tiger jumps on a high cliff ledge, and is gone. Lucero nervously makes for the cave entrance.

\*  
\*

INT. CAVE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

A suspicious Santiago follows, squinting in the dark-- \*

SANTIAGO  
La Merce--? Wha--?

Purposely distracting himself, Lucero stops at a fork-- \*

LUCERO  
It was this way. I know--

Santiago's fingertips burst into flame, illuminating the \*  
surroundings. At first the rabbit is shocked, but knowing the \*  
trick, sighs heavily-- \*

SANTIAGO  
What's wrong here?! \*

LUCERO  
This place here, it's sacred. Next \*  
to impossible for any magician to \*  
stay long, much less remember it. \*  
Only one has done it, and bad \*  
things are hunting him. What makes \*  
Manuel so special? \*

Extinguishing his fingertips, a spooked sensation hits  
Santiago, realizing at long last--

INSERT CUT: From flame and shadow, a pair of eyes stare  
directly at us--

SANTIAGO  
Beltran. Quemar serves Beltran? \*  
He's the master. What happens if we \*  
stay too long? \*

LUCERO  
The Tiger is right: something \*  
happens there, it effects here. \*  
Think an empty water balloon, \*  
slowly filling -- the more water, \*  
the more the balloon expands-- \*  
(grim beat) \*  
--eventually -- BOOM. Both worlds \*  
are stable, under they're not. \*

SANTIAGO  
The festival--?

LUCERO

Something about it will make  
everything unstable--

\*

Lucero hops on, leaving Santiago to question the worst--

\*

EXT. LEDGE - TIBIDABO MOUNTAIN - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - NIGHT

We fly up some five hundred feet from the cave entrance, past  
a narrow piece of ledge -- something there, keep going up --  
wait, what? Back down to the narrow ledge--

\*

EXT. NARROW LEDGE HIGH UP - TIBIDABO MOUNTAIN - MAGICIAN'S  
WORLD - CONTINUOUS

--where, nothing looks out of ordinary, but the softened  
edges suggest an invisible shroud is there. Into the  
invisible shroud, we indeed find--

\*

\*

\*

INT. INVISIBLE SHROUD - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

--Santiago senses Lucero's tiredness as he stares into the  
small fire. Gently lays the rabbit closer to the burning  
embers, before--

\*

\*

\*

--turning away to rub his eyes, a mixture of confusion and  
nerves. Finally, recognition--

\*

\*

Tilts his head, cracking his neck, and holds his hands out,  
as if holding an invisible ball, mumbling the magic words--

\*

\*

A pin of light suspends between his hands. By mumbling more,  
the light grows brighter, larger--

\*

\*

A smile forms, an intuition--

\*

The suspended light shakes with jittered impatience, waiting  
for Santiago to finish the spell--

\*

\*

Lucero's eyes open, eavesdropping, rolls on his side--

\*

Santiago stutters, motions to finish, but can't remember the  
rest. His anxiety building, the light begins fading--

\*

\*

SANTIAGO

No, no, no -- abracadabra!

\*

Panting, Santiago stares at the empty hole between his hands--

\*

LUCERO (O.S.)  
Couldn't remember the last part?

SANTIAGO  
If there's something after us, we --  
there's more than one way to do  
something!

LUCERO  
Your father was--

SANTIAGO  
--the damned fool that got himself  
into this!

Lucero cowers, averting his eyes. Santiago slumps down--

SANTIAGO  
Just once, once, I want to do  
things my way. The sooner we get  
him home...well then, sooner I can  
leave him for good.

He turns over, shutting Lucero out also--

SOCIETY MEMBER (V.O.)  
You sent him into that unknown!

INT. SECRET SOCIETY LODGE - BARCELONA - NIGHT

Armando calmly faces the angry society members--

SOCIETY MEMBERS (OVERLAP)  
You've doomed them both!/  
He was just a boy! No one knows  
what's there!/  
The place could  
destroy them both, if they're not  
dead already!

From afar, a tearful Maria locks eyes with Armando--

ARMANDO  
My brothers, listen--

Hugo stomps his cane with a thunderous CLANG. All turn--

HUGO  
There was a strict consensus: we do  
not help the boy. You have defied  
us!

ARMANDO  
Where does this fear come  
from in helping--?

SOCIETY MEMBER  
Yes, he's right! Where does  
this end?!

ARMANDO  
MY FRIENDS!

His voice booms over the enormous space, echoing. Maria pins  
her ears shut. Silence-- \*

ARMANDO (CONT'D)  
The boy said it himself: Manuel is  
a part of this society, a proud  
brotherhood. Our trade, this magic, \*  
is dangerous. Malevolence can come \*  
in smiles, a friendly nod. We must \*  
be ever vigilant. Our oath teaches \*  
us to look after one another.  
Santiago has chosen to fulfill that  
oath. Do you trust my oath? \*

Society members exchange glances. Hugo defiantly curls his  
lip, then nods sharply. Armando side-eyes Maria-- \*

ARMANDO (CONT'D)  
He's been well mentored, well  
equipped. I trust his rescue will  
be a safe one.

EXT. SUMMIT - TIBIDABO MOUNTAINS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - MORNING

Wind pushes low-hanging fog off the cliff's edge. \*

From below, two long ears slowly rise, para-scope-like -- one \*  
direction, then another. Rising further, Lucero's sneaky, \*  
surveying eyes are revealed-- \*

SANTIAGO (O.S.)  
Hurry, my arm's killing me!

LUCERO  
Hmm, all clear...we need to be  
stealth here. Real--AAHH!!

Lucero launches skyward, landing hard! \*

Santiago's dusty, beaten hands clutch the cliff top, then  
collapse from exhaustion-- \*

Ignoring Lucero's death glare, Santiago dusts himself off,  
looking about, then stops, his jaw open wide-- \*

--THE GOTHIC MAJESTY OF MONTJUIE CASTLE IMPOSES OVER THEM. \*  
 From the battlements atop the high walls, the pulled-up draw \*  
 bridge, to the murky moat -- there's real danger here. \*

Most commanding of all, its size has grown exponentially-- \*

SANTIAGO

Don't remember it being this -- \*  
 imposing. \*

EXT. GROUNDS NEAR MOAT - MONTJUIE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Trudging along the overgrown, swampy moat, Lucero's head is \*  
 craned up toward the deserted battlements. Santiago spies \*  
 insects in the brush, fighting to the death, grimacing-- \*

LUCERO

Thought it would be less -- \*  
 imposing? Like oil poisoning the \*  
 water in the balloon. If there's \*  
 good magic exists, who's to stop \*  
 bad magic too? \*

Grimly considering this, Santiago arches his head, side- \*  
 glancing Lucero with a smirk-- \*

SANTIAGO

If only that dragon were here to \*  
 lend us-- \*

LUCERO

DON'T EVEN THINK THAT! We just--

Lucero cuts himself off, eye twitching in disbelief. Santiago \*  
 smiles confidently. \*

SANTIAGO

I know you can do this--

EXT. CASTLE WALL - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MOMENTS LATER

BOOM! A giant furry paw grabs onto a window ledge, revealing \*  
 a Puff-Up Lucero, straining as he scales the castle. \*

Holding tight and praying is Santiago, legs dangling off the \*  
 rabbit's back-- \*

SANTIAGO

Just think giant rabbit thoughts-- \*  
 not as bad as the cliff-- \*

Santiago looks down -- never mind. \*

LUCERO  
Tell my back that, you--! \*

Something WHOOSHES past their noses. Stunned, they glance  
down in unison-- \*

EXT. GROUNDS NEAR MOAT - MONTJUIE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

--with a STRINGGG, the object impacts the soil. A madly  
shaking arrow-- \*

EXT. CASTLE WALL - MONTJUIE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

They glance up in unison to the battlements -- nothing. Wait-- \*

WHOOSH, WHOOSH, WHOOSH! Arrows rain down in a furious volley! \*

Despite his beefy size, Lucero dodges arrows, switching one  
paw and a time, while holding tight. Santiago clutches fur-- \*

LUCERO  
Gotta go back--! \*

SANTIAGO  
NO!

WHOOSH! SCRAAPE!! An arrow grazes Lucero's fur. Santiago  
reacts-- \*

SANTIAGO  
Lucero!!

Lucero eyeballs the wound, a nasty, bald streak has replaced  
fluff -- ouch. \*

Grumbling, his eyes narrow, he peers up, positions one paw in  
front of the other, AND CLIMBS!!, dodging the WHOOSH, WHOOSH  
of arrows left and right-- \*

Santiago screams and hold on!

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - SAME

Faceless hooded figures hand off something large, black and  
round down a line (a boiling, popping sound emits), leading  
to the castle's ledge-- \*

There, archers send volley's down on the invaders below. They \*  
make way for A MASSIVE CAULDRON-- \*

The last hooded figure in line snickers slightly, then STANDS \*  
ON THE BRINK, LIFTING THE CAULDRON OVER ITS HEAD-- \*

EXT. CASTLE WALL - MONTJUIE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Lucero is twenty feet from the top, sees the cauldron, gasps \*  
in horror, CLIMBING FASTER! \*

Eyes shut tight, Santiago holds on for dear life-- \*

We fly ten feet further up the wall -- a loose piece of stone \*  
rests in their path-- \*

INTERCUT TO: \*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS/CASTLE WALL - MONTJUIE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS \*

CLIMB, CLIMB, CLIMB! Lucero's not stopping--

Liquid drips off the cauldron lip-- \*

Lucero, almost there -- FASTER, FASTER! \*

Back paws prepare to jump. A front paw snags the loose stone - \*  
- EYES BULGE IN TERROR -- SLIPPING, BACK PAWS SCRAMBLING-- \*

Liquid streams from the cauldron, leaving an ugly tail-- \*

Instinctively, Lucero's free paw reaches up -- back paws push \*  
backward, completing the jump--!

Liquid runs down -- a mass of fur -- THE CAULDRON IS SHOVED \*  
ASIDE, UPSETTING ITS TRAJECTORY! Fur burns, sizzles -- \*  
a spackle on human flesh-- \*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - CONTINUOUS \*

Lucero tackles the surprised figure, pinning him HARD to the \*  
ground -- other hooded figures back up defensively. \*

Battered, Santiago lays there, grasping his burned arm. \*

Adrenaline flowing, Lucero pounces menacingly-- \*

LUCERO

Thought we wouldn't make it?! Who's \*  
next, huh?! Haa-haa--! \*



Maniacally laughing, eyes closed. Suddenly, he begins  
diminishing in size -- his cackling becoming a squeak as he  
shrinks--

The hooded figures share glances.

Lucero stops, and realizes, uh-oh. Santiago dashes over--

SANTIAGO

You ok--?

The figures menacingly approach, forming a tight circle.  
Circling back to back, Santiago thinks quickly--

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Senors, you must know -- I-I'm  
Santiago, the son of Manuel the--  
might any of you gentlemen know--

LUCERO

These aren't lodge buddies--

WITH A PRIMAL SCREAM, SANTIAGO SHOVES HIS PALMS INTO THE  
CLOSEST FIGURE'S CHEST, PINNING HIM TO THE GROUND--

He's met with a plume of smoke, as the figure suddenly loses  
shape -- the robe is empty.

Uncomprehending, Santiago whirls around. The figures form a  
line of intimidation. Options low, he puffs out his chest--

SANTIAGO

Who's next?

Exchanging comic glances, they step forth. Santiago breathes  
deep, poses in stance, ready to unleash his elementary magic--

VOICE (O.S.)

You can do better than this, mejo.

Voice in his head? Shaking it off, a doubting realization--

SANTIAGO

Shouldn't have to save him. Where  
was he when I needed him?

A robed figure pounces from behind. Instinctively, he spins,  
igniting the torch hand trick, singeing the robe's sleeve--

A HIGH-PITCHED SCREAM erupts from under the hood, the figure  
wildly slapping his sleeve. In the process, the hood falls  
away, revealing the back of a panting human head.

Incredulous, Santiago stops-- \*

The hood-less figure plops a palm to his exposed head --  
the jig is up. Sighing, the figure makes himself presentable,  
turns and faces Santiago-- \*

His father-- \*

Lucero's eyes go wide. Santiago's wall comes down for an  
instant-- \*

SANTIAGO

Papa... \*

In unison, the surrounding figures drop, leaving Lucero  
covered in the pile-- \*

Manuel embraces his shocked son, LIFTING THEM BOTH OFF THE  
GROUND, clutching him in a tight, if awkward embracing spin. \*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Wha-okay--? \*

Pushing the robes aside, Lucero angrily hops at them-- \*

LUCERO

Hey, get down here!

One rotation reveals an embarrassed Santiago, before swinging  
around to a serenely, tight-eyed Manuel holding his son-- \*

MANUEL

SANTIAGO

How'd -- you find me? Doesn't     It wasn't-- Armando showed  
matter!! You're here!!! I           me. Still not listening --  
told you it was real!               LISTEN--! Ugh, forget it--

When Santiago comes around, he's concerned and slightly hurt,  
takes Manuel by the shoulders-- \*

SANTIAGO

Going to stop you right -- LISTEN!  
Lucero's concerned about us staying  
here. Why would he think that? \*

Manuel meets his gaze, tensions rising-- BOOM! Both sets of  
feet land with a thud. The happy reunion over-- \*

MANUEL

You'd listen to a rabbit?

Santiago sympathetically scruffs Lucero's ears, calming him. \*

SANTIAGO

He talks! Here! A place that  
shouldn't exist. A talking rabbit  
tells me there's a threat coming  
from a place that shouldn't exist,  
well, you've got my attention.  
I've got concerns -- time to go.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Distracting himself, Manuel levitates, begins collecting the  
scattered robes, but can't hold back his pain--

\*  
\*

MANUEL

Concerned? You? Our last meeting,  
there was no love lost. Your being  
here couldn't be to rescue the  
father you supposedly hate?  
Surround yourself in magic that you  
claim to hate even more--?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

(stops, feigning concern)

No wait, deja vu. You're going to  
be a scientist. "This"--

\*  
\*

(re: Magician's world)

--can all be explained away by some  
formula--

\*  
\*

Santiago sighs, speaking plainly--

\*

SANTIAGO

You're the only magician, ever,  
that's stayed in this place longer  
than a second. I'm trying to  
understand. Tell me--

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Manuel's tired eyes meets his son's. A percussive BANG!,  
followed by a diluted "Ta dah"--

\*

INT. THEATER - THE DISAPPEARING ACT (FLASHBACK)

\*

BANG! The door swings shut, Manuel stands, nose in the air,  
posing as the trick ends -- now, the applause --!

\*  
\*

Instead, halfhearted, scattered claps. His eyes blink open --  
the audience is sparse, three or four vagrants, some snoring--

\*  
\*

SECONDS LATER

\*

In the oily darkness, intense blue eyes watch Manuel descend  
off-stage. A silhouette, tall and rather lanky, follows--

\*  
\*

INT. BACKSTAGE - THEATER - MOMENTS LATER (FLASHBACK) \*

Manuel yanks his jacket off in frustration, when a loud CLAP echoes. He turns -- no one. \*

Twists his head back -- Beltran, wide-eyed, is now inches from his face, CLAPPING, startling both men-- \*

BELTRAN

I'm meant not to frighten, maestro. \*  
I tend to sneak up -- your work is, \*  
well it's-- \*

Manuel waits an uncomfortable beat, before Beltran drops to his knees, bending at the magician's feet-- \*

BELTRAN

I beg you -- teach me to be a \*  
magician! I-I wont-- I tire of my \*  
old master's teaching's. Please-- \*

A spark of possibility emits in Manuel. His son isn't here-- \*

MANUEL

--no.

Beltran tilts his head, the air catching in his throat as he awkwardly stands, avoiding Manuel's eye contact. \*

MANUEL (CONT'D) \*

I have an apprentice -- my son. \*  
You'll find a new master that \*  
see's...your potential. \*

With only a sympathetic nod, Manuel steps past, failing to see the hurt and anger in Beltran's eyes-- \*

EXT. ALLEYWAY - BARCELONA - NIGHT (PRESENT) \*

An ugly dragging echoes off the tight walls -- a large door is scraping open. \*

SANTIAGO (V.O.) \*

He must have sought me out after, \*  
by no mere coincidence-- \*

INT. WAREHOUSE - BARCELONA - PRESENT \*

Beltran's long silhouette stretches as he enters, facing the  
blackness. Disembodied voices menacingly swirl about, guiding  
him toward a spiral staircase-- \*

SANTIAGO (V.O.)  
I try lifting your notebook, you  
disappear shortly after. It was a  
set up, to tear us apart -- why? \*

INTERCUT TO: \*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

Manuel's eyes drift in contemplation, before bolting to his  
feet, clasping his palms together-- \*

MANUEL  
Welp! I'm here. Can't do much now.  
I'll show you the way out--

Santiago blinks, taken aback-- \*

SANTIAGO  
You're not curious, why you're  
imprisoned here? \*

INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE - WAREHOUSE - BARCELONA - SAME \*

--as Beltran climbs with all haste. \*

SANTIAGO (V.O.)  
What this villain wants? \*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

MANUEL  
You don't think somehow I stay by  
my own volition?  
(pointing past Santiago)  
That's the past, where it belongs. \*

INT. LANDING - WAREHOUSE - SAME \*

Like an imposing statue, Beltran stands in the doorway, a  
satchel sprawled across his chest. \*

MANUEL (V.O.)

This isn't some foreign land --  
it's become home.

POOF! Scattered lamps ignite, illuminating the space,  
shedding light on an old poster, "see Manuel The  
Magnificent!" His toothy grin smiling dumbly.

It becomes sickly apparent where we are--

MANUEL

I've visited hundreds of times  
before--

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Manuel slowly shuts his eyes, dipping his head slightly.  
What's said is said. Pummelled, Santiago staggers back--

SANTIAGO

--even after Mama?

Lucero hops up, pats a sympathetic paw on Santiago's leg.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

This is something that could  
destroy this world, spill into our--

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - BARCELONA - SAME

Beltran delicately run his fingers over tools and objects  
like museum pieces, searching.

The disembodied voices swirl closer together -- becoming one,  
guiding him toward a brick wall where old props and backdrops  
are leaned.

SANTIAGO (V.O.)

--my world. How selfish can you be?

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Manuel considers this, as he offers a hand to Lucero. The  
rabbit inches closer, reluctantly taking the petting--

MANUEL

If this is true, and I'm the only  
magician powerful enough to linger  
here, where's the danger? I could  
protect you from this side.

(MORE)

MANUEL (cont'd)

(beat)

You must understand, mejo. For the first time...in a long time, I'm content. Surrounded by pure, tangible magic -- without guilt--

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - BARCELONA - SAME

SANTIAGO (V.O.)

You don't know what's hunting you!

Beltran raises his hand. From behind the old junk, something heavy DRAGGSS into view--

MANUEL (V.O.)

I'm high on a castle wall of my own conjuring! Denser beings may try.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

MANUEL

I told you, mejo -- you don't know your potential.

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - BARCELONA - SAME

As the object drags, props and backdrops drop to the floor, kicking up old dust. Beltran's eyes are alight.

MANUEL (V.O.)

Is this place finally making you see?!

The dragged object stops, shuffling upright against the wall with a loud THUD! As the dust clears, A DISAPPEARING MAN'S DOOR is revealed--

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

SANTIAGO

(disgusted)

You left me. When I needed you most.

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - BARCELONA - SAME

A round object glows through the satchel. Beltran sighs, working up his confidence--

DISEMBODIED VOICE (V.O.)  
 You are ready. Destroy them both,  
 once and for all -- BEGIN! \*

He jolts, bringing a shaken hand level. Contorts his fingers  
 with a loud, lightning-shaped crack -- dark magic. \*

THE DOOR THRUSTS OPEN WITH A BANG, the Magician's World  
 welcoming him on the other side-- \*

EXT. OPEN SKY - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

Glimpses of a massive winged beast gliding above the clouds --  
 JOLTS SHARPLY AROUND. Red eyes narrow, aware of a presence-- \*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

MANUEL  
 Whatever wrong was thrust on me,  
 was a blessing. \*

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - SAME

Beltran's long legs slowly step through-- \*

EXT. BELTRAN'S DOOR - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

--into the next world, taking in everything his awestruck  
 senses can contain. An inviting dark cloud emerges-- \*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

SANTIAGO  
 I'm done with you--

MANUEL  
 You're free to follow y--

--Manuel JOLTS toward the distance. Santiago studies his  
 father with narrow eyes and diminished empathy. \*

MANUEL  
 I know the way out--

SANTIAGO  
 The theater door--?

MANUEL  
 --is no longer an option. Another--



EXT. GOTHIC BARCELONA - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Beltran strides purposefully for the castle. Muffled moaning follow, dark shadows, as well as jagged debris and discarded trash take shape, insect-like. These are his MINIONS. \*

One Minion LIEUTENANT saddles alongside Beltran, awaiting orders. Beltran pulls his satchel off, handing it over--

BELTRAN  
Have your battalion prepare the  
weapon. Await my signal.

With a nod, the Lieutenant departs.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Tense, Manuel bounds past Santiago and Lucero toward the discarded robes, as they begin to re-manifest in shape-- \*

MANUEL  
Protectors, earn your namesakes!  
Stand and fight, form ranks! \*

Fully transformed Protectors line up in formation, weapons at the ready. Santiago blinks in surprise at his father's more confident, heroic side. Still-- \*

SANTIAGO  
What is it?!

His eyes drift to the distance below, gothic Barcelona. \*

HIS POV -- A growing plume of black smoke is rising and building -- right toward them. \*

Their eyes meet-- \*

MANUEL  
...Beltran.

EXT. TIBIDABO MOUNTAIN - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Beltran doesn't climb the narrow wall -- he floats up. Behind, Minions and the black shadows hungrily lunge up the rock-- \*

EXT. NESTING GROUNDS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Deserted. WHOOSH!! A giant gust of wind kicks up, knocking everything into a fury. Overhead, the shadow of giant wings flap violently. Quemar-- \*  
\*  
\*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIC CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Having heard the wings, Lucero shudders-- \*

LUCERO

Whatever we're doing, do it quick.

SANTIAGO

You said there's another way...

Manuel presses a confident hand on the PROTECTOR COMMANDER's shoulder, who nods proudly, then gestures Santiago and Lucero to follow-- \*  
\*

EXT. BARCELONA - VARIOUS - SAME

CELEBRATORY MERRYMAKING EVERYWHERE! Music, dancing, stacking!  
THE LA MERCE FESTIVAL HAS BEEN UNLEASHED!

INT. SECRET SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - BARCELONA - SAME \*

Members partake in drunken merriment at a long rectangular table, pints guzzling, eating ribs, dumbly licking their fingers. \*

Annoyed, Maria balances reading a textbook with pouring refreshments. \*

At the far end, Hugo senses something, stares into the ether. Nearby, a concerned Armando looks up from another conversation. Though blind, Hugo feels eyes on him-- \*

HUGO

There's cause for worry, danger -- \*  
Manuel the Magnificent -- someone \*  
has entered the realm. \*  
Him, the troublemaker-- \*

ARMANDO

Nonsense. Manuel is a skilled-- \*

HUGO  
 (stands--)  
DON'T SILENCE ME, THERE'S DANGER  
AFOOT!!

--his chair tumbling VIOLENTLY into the darkness. A measured  
 beat as the conversation fades. Done with this, Maria rolls  
 her eyes, walks out. Armando rises from his seat.

ARMANDO  
 Brother Hugo -- please conjure your  
 chair back to the table. We're all  
 friends here.

Hugo huffs, standing firm. No one moves--

ARMANDO (CONT'D)  
 Though -- I beg your pardon: how do  
 you know? They're not amongst us in  
 this world, but in one that we  
 cannot peer into.

Hugo doesn't speak--

ARMANDO (CONT'D)  
 If you see into their world -- it's  
 possible you can see in ours also.  
 (letting that sink in)  
 You seem to know things your  
 brothers simply...don't.  
 (facing the members, to  
 Hugo)  
 Something you've failed to divulge?

TIGHT ON -- Hugo's weathered face, as society members begin  
 standing, one after another. Sensing, he fumbles--

HUGO  
 Preposterous I--!

ARMANDO (O.S.)  
 You failed to support your  
 fellow brother. His son came  
 to us and you said "no".

SOCIETY MEMBERS (OVERLAP)  
 --Brother Hugo, what is he  
 saying? / What strings have  
 you been pulling?

ARMANDO (O.S.)  
 --Manuel the Magnificent has  
 long been your friend. Have  
 you betrayed him, senor?

HUGO  
 Fools, all of you! This is a  
 lie!

ARMANDO (O.S.)

Did you unleash this -- Beltran?

Hugo stumbles back, fists tightening, clouded eyes darting.  
Members encircle beside a confident Armando.

HUGO

No, no! What an accusation!

Hugo's rage erupts. Frail hands contort violently --  
Armando's eye's widen as HE IS PUMMELED INTO THE DARKNESS.

Weakened, Hugo turns, pleading--

HUGO

My efforts have always been to  
ensure this society endures--I-I--

He stammers. Shared looks taking it as admission of guilt--

VERY SUDDENLY -- A GROWING BEAD OF LIGHT SHOOTS LIKE A METEOR  
FROM BEHIND, FORCING EVERYONE TO SLOPPILY DIVE FOR COVER--

--BLASTING INTO HUGO, STUNNING HIM IN A LEVITATING SPHERE.

From the entrance tunnel, Maria runs in, breathless--

Members stumble to their feet, gazing confusedly upon the  
stunned Hugo. Approaching footsteps. In unison, they face  
inky darkness.

From light's first reveal, Armando strides forward, quietly  
chuckling, dusting himself off--

ARMANDO

Brothers--

They tense. It collectively clicks into place -- THEY KNOW.

A standoff forms, seconds count--

Hugo's levitating sphere goes unnoticed, floating like a  
balloon, toward the feast table--

No one moves, only darting, unblinking eyes--

The sphere levitates above a goblet, nudging it. The goblet  
teeters, then -- loudly CLANGS off the table, spilling ale--

ARMANDO

Now I've made a mess of things--

That's all it takes -- members raise their hands, magical calls rising -- a smirk creases Armando's face, before--

A barrier of energy cascades from his very being, pulsating across the expansive room -- STUNNING THE ENTIRE SOCIETY IN ONE FELL SWOOP--

Stepping forward, Armando twitches his left hand--

The stunned society CONTORT INTO ODD SHAPES, shrinking in size. Hugo's sphere merges with theirs -- two bubbles becoming one.

The single sphere floats toward a wall. There, a secret door opens, revealing -- yeah, a broom closet.

The sphere bounces lightly against the door frame, ill-fitting. Annoyed, Armando narrows his eyes--

Shrinking further, the sphere floats inside, stuffed amongst the mops and cleaning products.

Armando mumbles a spell in another language -- dark magic. The door slams shut with a CLANG--!

--hidden, Maria emits a muffled gasp--

Hawkish, Armando twists around -- spies Maria, eyes meeting--

Horrified, she runs up the tunnel. With a smirk, he pursues with phantom-like grace--

EXT. SUMMIT - TIBIDABO MOUNTAINS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Beltran and the Minions step over the summit, collectively facing their foe: Montjuie Castle. Amused, yet impressed, he calls without turning--

BELTRAN  
Summon the beast--!

INTERCUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Protectors line the walls, weapons aimed, ready for combat--

EXT. TIBIDABO MOUNTAINS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

QUEMAR POV -- flying menacingly up the side of the wall. A fierce ROAR and WHOOSH of wings--

EXT. SUMMIT - TIBIDABO MOUNTAINS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

--a GIANT BLACK MASS rockets over Beltran and his Minions, launching toward the castle!

One the ground, addressing his HEAD MINION COMMANDER--

BELTRAN

Commence--

An EXPLOSION OF BLACKNESS DESCENDS FORWARD -- the battle begins!! \*

EXT. ALLEYWAY - BARCELONA - SAME \*

BOOM! Fireworks light up the night sky, casting unsettling shadows about the empty alley.

Behind a discarded stack of boxes, a pair of fearful eyes peer out -- Maria's. Every pop of the fireworks makes her jump, eyes welling with fright.

MARIA'S POV -- nothing moves, only the dancing shadows, only the set of eyes suddenly peering at her -- wait, what?

She covers her mouth, silencing the screams, eyes pleadingly looking for help. In the distance, cheers of celebration are heard -- too far away.

The negative blackness behind her suddenly fills with a face - - Armando's -- wrapping his hands around her mouth, MUFFLING HER TERRIFIED SCREAMS!!

Armando listens to the BOOMS of the fireworks overhead, smiling contently--

INT. BASEMENT PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

By torchlight, Santiago and Lucero follow a mumbling Manuel as he pauses at random spots to touch the stone walls. The thundering beat above reverbs off the tight passage. \*

MANUEL

Here -- it has to be--

Santiago stops dead -- something is happening, elsewhere (Maria). Sensing the pause, Manuel shouts--

MANUEL (CONT'D)

Keep up!

They come to a fork. Manuel swings the torch uncertainly in both directions. Steps left, suddenly focusing his attention on a nondescript section of wall.

A trailing Santiago approaches--

SANTIAGO

You don't remember?

MANUEL

It's here. I know it -- ahhh!

From nowhere, a flimsy stack of doors bounce into view. Manuel starts flipping through like they were paint swatches.

Santiago and Lucero's eyebrows are raised. Wha--?

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

A WALL OF FLAMES lay waste to a sentry of Protectors! Quemar flies over, an angel of death -- his red eyes beaming in the blaze as--

EXT. GROUNDS NEAR MOAT - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

--FIRE RAINS DOWN on the Minions trying to bust the draw bridge down with axes! Another exhausted MINION COMMANDER approaches Beltran.

MINION COMMANDER

Nothing doing!! That drawbridge is too thick! Got any bright ideas--?

With a snicker, Beltran disappears before his very eyes--

EXT. COURTYARD - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD -  
CONTINUOUS

--appearing on the other side of the pulled draw bridge.  
Sending any defensive Protectors flying, Beltran pulls at the  
wheel mechanism.

With an epic spin of the wheel, the drawbridge PUMMELS DOWN  
into the moat, squashing any poor Minions in its path.

The Minion Commander locks eyes with Beltran, smiling broadly  
as he and his men file in!

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Santiago twists his head down the passage--

SANTIAGO  
We're not going to make it.  
(something meaningful that  
Armando said)  
"TBD"

The world stops. Manuel's head rises, looks at Santiago with  
a dead calm.

MANUEL  
How did you get here, Mejo?

Santiago doesn't answer. Lucero's considering his wound,  
specs of blood running-- \*

LUCERO Guys, I don't want to worry you--	MANUEL It was Armando, yes? What means did he use to get you here?
--	---

Paranoia swirls in his eyes-- \*

EXT. MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Walls tumble with an earth-shattering thud of debris and  
stone-- \*

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

--shattering through the ceiling, blocking the path not  
taken. \*



SANTIAGO  
Papa! Find the door!

Shaken with paranoia and doubt, Manuel searches, then pauses.  
Flinging the others aside, sets the chosen door upright. \*  
\*

EXT. BOOKSTORE - GOTHIC BARCELONA - SAME

We pass the pleasant, welcoming storefront just before it  
SHARPLY BOLTS SHUT-- \*

INT. BOOKSTORE - GOTHIC BARCELONA - CONTINUOUS

--toward the secret bookcase to the passage, books dropping-- \*

INT. PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

--through the collapsed passageway, past a bound and  
imprisoned Maria, helplessly watching-- \*

INT. SECRET SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS \*

--her calm, serene Uncle Armando gliding effortlessly,  
harnessing his growing power. \*

There's nothing left to stop him. \*

From the headquarter's darkest depths, a massive horde of  
snarling and vile Minions, similar to those in the Magician's  
World, approach-- \*

The leader, GERRIE THE DARKEST MINION, looks at the scattered  
chaos--

GERRIE THE DARKEST MINION  
Celebrating the festival? Wouldn't  
mind an invite once in awhi--

ARMANDO  
SPEAK!

GERRIE THE DARKEST MINION  
Yes--we--we are ready to begin, my  
lord. We just await-- \*

ARMANDO  
Long have your kind been my allies.  
You will linger in shadow no more-- \*

Gerrie nudges his buddy, NIGEL THE 2ND DARKEST MINION-- \*

GERRIE THE DARKEST MINION	NIGEL THE 2ND DARKEST MINION
Told you we didn't need	Just not sure. Don't want to
approval. All it needed--	make decisions without appro--

Gerrie smacks Nigel up the head. Nigel hisses-- \*

ARMANDO  
 (his eyes aglow) \*

--the plan...can now begin. Leave \*

my sight!!! \*

They scatter, bumping into each other as they flee-- \*

DARK MINIONS (VARIOUS)

Ah geez!/Make way!/No invite \*

again?!/Should have baked a cake--! \*

--leaving their master alone. Like an orchestra conductor, he \*

raises his palms-- \*

A natural shudder reverberates from him as a dull, flickering \*

light illuminates. He opens his eyes, facing, with perfect \*

clarity--

A God's eye view peering INTO THE MAGICIAN'S WORLD-- \*

--flying unseen past his Minions storming the castle -- past \*

the brave Protectors -- finally PLUNGING into the earth-- \*

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

--to find Manuel, speaking in magic speech to gain access. \*

The pupils in his eyes shift, sensing Armando's presence-- \*

Santiago and Lucero whip tensely over their shoulders. \*

INTERCUT TO:

INT. SECRET SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - BARCELONA - SAME \*

Armando whispers, the same voice instructing Beltran--

ARMANDO

My old friend...my dear Manuel-- \*

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

The door begins shaking, pulled between opposing forces. \*  
Barcelona peeks through the slit--

ARMANDO (V.O.) \*  
--you led yourself down this failed \*  
path-- \*

MANUEL  
(distracted)  
Shut up! Why? Why do this--?!

EXT. MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

The battle is lost. The sound is muted, through a prism.

The dark shape of Quemar disappears into the distance.

Having defeated the Protectors, sending the retreating \*  
survivors scrambling over the walls, the Minions make to \*  
pursue.

Victorious, Beltran shouts them back, pointing toward the \*  
basement--

ARMANDO (V.O.)  
Your son will suffer for your lack  
of foresight. He will be the first  
of many.

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

The door shakes madly as both magicians -- one present, the  
other remotely -- battle for control. The door itself  
splinters from the push and pull, before FINALLY -- the door  
flaps open, SUCKING MANUEL, SANTIAGO, AND LUCERO through--

EXT. INFINITE ABYSS - CONTINUOUS

--a space beyond description or thought! Everlasting darkness  
awaits them!

Off pure instinct, Manuel latches a grip on the door jamb,  
holding Santiago by the wrist, who holds a terrified Lucero  
by the ears -- a safety chain.

ARMANDO (V.O.)  
 You know this place, through legend  
 and myth--

CLOSE ON Manuel, as a deep, baritone laugh invades his ears--

ARMANDO (V.O.)  
 Mas alla del cielo -- "Past the  
 Sky". The worst nightmare any  
 magician can imagine...and I'm  
 sending you there.

(beat)

Fool. "why" you ask?

MATCH CUT TO:

CLOSE ON Armando, clenching his hand violently, preparing--

ARMANDO  
 (deathly whisper)  
Paloma...

--before he SHOVES THEM BACK THROUGH THE DOOR, INTO THE  
 PASSAGE, LANDING HARD AGAINST THE STONE WALL--! \*

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD -  
 CONTINUOUS

THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT, THEN -- BOOOM!!! AN EXPLOSIVE FORCE  
 KNOCKS THEM BACK, FILLING THE PASSAGE WITH BRIGHT LIGHT AND  
 BLACK SMOKE. Amongst the chaos, screams and uncertainty-- \*

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Beltran halts his Minions in the nick of time -- the ceiling  
 COLLAPSES, blocking them. All Beltran can do is smile--

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

As smoke begins to clear, an injured Lucero wipes soot away  
 with a furry paw to find-- \*

--the destroyed door. A muttering silhouette is fumbling at  
 the ruins -- hoping, hoping--

MANUEL (O.S.)  
 No, no, NO, NO--!!!

Recovering, Santiago senses -- all options have been lost-- \*

MANUEL

Mejo--

INT. SECRET SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - BARCELONA - SAME \*

A long beat. Maria closes her eyes, silently crying. Armando catches his breath -- exalted at his accomplishment, addressing Beltran over the gulf of space-- \*

ARMANDO

Go--

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Lit by torch, Beltran oversees his Minions flinging rubble away with intense focus, while-- \*

DOWN AT THE DESTROYED DOOR

Santiago paces up and down, frantically searching for an escape. Turns to Lucero-- \*

SANTIAGO

Break through this stone!

Licking at his wound, Lucero shakes his head, defeated-- \*

LUCERO

I--I can't--

Santiago frantically bolts past the slumped Manuel, palms pushed against the destroyed door, down the passage, searching-- \*

SANTIAGO

What are you doing?! We need to--

INT. PASSAGE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

--running face-first into the dead-end. Aggravated, he slams his fists against the wall, feeling -- a cool breeze? A dirty curtain hangs there, fluttering on the stone wall. \*

Flings it away, concealing -- a gated doorway. Arches his head, past the doorway, around a corner -- light. Similar to his path to the Nesting Grounds. \*

Lucero has followed, babying his wound. \*

Santiago pulls roughly at the bars, they're not budging-- \*

*At the nesting grounds, Santiago's light forms around the  
Tiger's cage door, before IT EXPLODES OPEN--* \*  
\*

BACK TO SCENE. \*

Santiago peacefully closes his eyes, facing the door, \*  
mumbling. Incoherent, but there's confidence. \*

The ball of light forms around the gated door's keyhole-- \*

INT. DESTROYED DOOR - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD -  
SAME

Manuel fails to hear anything, much less his son. An eerie \*  
silence flutters over him -- he's broken. \*

MATCH/INTERCUT:

INT. SECRET SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - BARCELONA - SAME \*

Armando, eyes wide, waiting with anticipation--

At that moment, Manuel knows everything--

INT. BOOKSTORE - GOTHIC BARCELONA - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) \*

A casual party of members. Paloma converses courteously with \*  
Armando, yet peers over his shoulder, finding Manuel's gaze. \*

When she turns, a loose strand of hair falls away. Armando's \*  
eyes never leave her-- \*

The hair lands gracefully on the ground. They step away -- \*  
the strand is gone-- \*

**SERIES OF IMAGES - ANOTHER DAY (FLASHBACK)** \*

--Paloma is engaged in a friendly chat with Armando, when he \*  
suddenly leans forward in a romantic gesture -- she's taken \*  
aback. As she awkwardly steps away, Armando doesn't react. \*

--Contemplating alone, Armando pulls out a handkerchief, \*  
holding it to his nose, inhaling. Folds it open -- Paloma's \*  
hair strand rests there. His eyes snap shut, knowing what he \*  
must do--

--LATER, A DRINK BEING PREPARED -- HER HAIR STRAND MIXED IN  
THE COCKTAIL. \*

--Post-performance, everyone toasts young Santiago's success  
as Manuel's assistant. \*

--Backstage, Paloma begins coughing. Santiago rushes to her-- \*

--Paloma in her sick bed, surrounded by Manuel and Santiago-- \*

--As father and son grieve her passing, an expressionless  
Armando looks on-- \*

**END SERIES OF IMAGES** \*

INT. DESTROYED DOOR - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD -  
CONTINUOUS OF PRESENT

Paralyzed with agony, Manuel pulls his attention to the far  
end of the passage-- \*

Beltran stands there, apprehensive. For a beat, both size  
each other up, before, his Minions join him. Manuel doesn't  
move a muscle-- \*

INT. GATED DOOR - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Sparks reflected in Santiago's eyes, a singed hole forms  
around the keyhole-- \*

Lucero's eyes widen -- the kid's going to do it!

In that instant, A BOLT OF LIGHT SAILS PAST THEIR HEADS, AN  
EXPLOSION ROCKS THE GATED DOOR FROM ITS HINGES.

Baffled, they both turn -- Manuel races past them up the  
steps, toward the light.

Santiago's mouth is agape, resentful in an ugly way. Grabs  
Lucero, and bolts after--

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Some distance from the devastation of Montjuie Castle, the  
Minion Lieutenant removes Beltran's satchel, approaching work  
being done OFF-SCREEN--

INT. DESTROYED DOOR - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD -  
SAME

Alone, Beltran doesn't pursue with his Minions. Studies the  
destroyed door a beat, before returning the way he came. \*  
\*

EXT. SECRET EXIT - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

Manuel shoves bushes aside that were concealing the exit. \*  
From here, the destruction is evident. \*

Distracted, carrying Lucero, Santiago follows-- \*

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Minion Lieutenant hands the satchel off to a group of Minion  
WORKERS, REVEALING their work-- \*

MINION LIEUTENANT  
We're ready? Load it.

A COLOSSAL, GRIMY CATAPULT. One Worker throws the satchel \*  
aside, REVEALING A GIANT GLASS ORB. With some help, LOADS IT-- \*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - SAME

Alone, Beltran looks over his destruction, turns outward to  
the barren field, the fleeing Manuel and Santiago, and his \*  
Minions pursuing-- \*

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Manuel's shell-shocked, distraught face. Embedded emotions \*  
surface, until one wins out -- pure rage. He looks about-- \*

They've reached a considerable distance from the burning \*  
ruins of the Castle. On the horizon ahead, the impossible \*  
line of doors Lucero mentioned earlier. \*

MANUEL'S POV finds Santiago, running toward the doors, \*  
carrying Lucero, desperate to escape-- \*

Armando's voice in Manuel's head continues to taunt-- \*

ARMANDO (V.O.)  
You had it all. I wanted it all: \*  
your success, your talent -- her. \*



EXT. BARREN FIELD - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

MINION LIEUTENANT  
--LOOSE!

The giant catapult LAUNCHES THE ORB INTO THE ETHER--

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

The pursuing Minions stop and gawk, elated with wonder.

EXT. LINE OF DOORS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Manuel, Santiago and Lucero's attention snaps to the OBJECT SHOOTING LIKE A COMET ACROSS THE SKY, eyes filled with dread-- \*

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Beltran watches the launch, his smile fading slightly--

EXT. OPEN SKY - BARREN FIELDS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

The giant ORB flies serenely, gracefully, before -- SMASHING INTO THE VERY SKY ITSELF, EMBEDDING ITSELF WITH A BIBLICAL CRASH!!! \*

The destruction is immediate -- as THE VERY SKY BEGINS TO MELT, DEFORM THE MAGICIAN'S WORLD ITSELF. We fly through the sky to the other side--

EXT. OPEN SKY - MONTJUIE CASTLE - BARCELONA - SAME \*

--mid-celebration, Barcelonians look up, slightly confused -- THEIR SKY BEGINS MELTING TOO--

EXT. LINE OF DOORS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

The impact zone growing in the background, the trio are at a loss. \*

Lucero's ears dip, licks his wound quietly.

Wide-eyed, a gutted Manuel aimlessly passes the row of doors. \*

Finds a horrified Santiago on his knees. Manuel approaches solemnly, despite his own rage, to comfort his son-- \*

SANTIAGO

Even--even when I was opening that lock, doing the magic -- my way, you had to take it from me. Again.  
(beat)  
I'm not some magician. Or a scientist. Not much...of anything. Just a lot of hot air.

Santiago finally begins to break. All Manuel can do is hold him tight-- \*

*Young Santiago watches Manuel produce a large bouquet of flowers from behind his back, kissing his beloved Paloma.* \*

BACK TO SCENE. \*

SANTIAGO

I'm not ashamed of you. I-I hated everything. The magic. Everything-- \*

We move around the two as they speak--

MANUEL

Could have been a better father, mejo. I just -- couldn't get there-- \*

--blurring past Santiago's head, the background suddenly changes--

MANUEL (CONT'D)

--you reminded me too much of her. \*

Santiago looks up. They are back in the--

INT. DRESSING ROOM - RUN DOWN THEATER - CONTINUOUS

--the night of Manuel's disappearance. Santiago desperately pulls his father into a loving embrace. \*

SANTIAGO

After -- she... things got worse.

Santiago pulls away. His father's magician's cloak is now wrapped around his shoulders. Feels the fine fabric, its comfort -- it feels like home. \*

MANUEL

Your mother will always be with  
you. She'll always be my great  
love.

Turns to his reflection in the mirror -- a perfect fit. \*  
Brimming with pride, Manuel watches his son, then turns to \*  
the drawer, opens it--

MANUEL

You'll never know how proud I was  
when you told me you were accepted  
to university. A chance to conjure  
your magic...in the real world. \*

Feeling the weight of the cloak, Santiago smiles, then it \*  
fades -- a sobering beat. \*

SANTIAGO

--wouldn't be enough for me. It was \*  
wrong to betray you. I was \*  
stubborn, ungrateful--

MANUEL

You did what you felt was right.  
I was your age once.

Santiago wants to feel comforted, but can't get there. \*

At the edges of the dressing room, lie the ruins of the \*  
Montjuie Castle, burning--

SANTIAGO

I've done nothing right. Look  
what's become of your world--

Manuel turns to his son, face to face--

MANUEL

--you did things, your way. Against  
all odds, you found me. There's  
more than one way to conjure magic.  
You found it.

Peers down. Santiago's eyes follow -- to the notebook now  
placed in his hands.

MANUEL (CONT'D)

Stage magician or not, you'll  
always be my son--

EXT. LINE OF DOORS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Lucero hops away, solemnly -- a rumbling off-screen raises his eyes. A gust of wind, a darkening shadow envelopes -- HIS JAW HITS THE GROUND-- \*  
\*

INT. DRESSING ROOM - RUN DOWN THEATER - SAME

Wiping a tear away, Santiago laughs. A sweet moment between Father and Son, before-- \*

LUCERO POPS HIS HEAD THROUGH THE DRESSING ROOM MIRROR, SCREAMING--

LUCERO  
INCOMING!!!!

ALL AT ONCE -- THE ROOM DISAPPEARS, THEY'RE BACK, FACING--

EXT. LINE OF DOORS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

--A WALL OF MINIONS ADVANCE, AND A GIANT SHADOW ENVELOPES THEM FROM THE SKY --

--TALONS REACH OUT, DROPPING DOWN!

--MANUEL, SANTIAGO, LUCERO BARELY HAVE TIME TO REACT BEFORE THEY'RE GRIPPED -- UPWARD -- LEAVING THE MINIONS IN THE DUST.

EXT. OPEN SKY - BARREN FIELDS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

Clinging to the giant talons, shock and awe can't describe it -- they're collectively terrified and elated with joy!! \*

Santiago is wide-eyed, but exhilarated!! Manuel points toward the impact zone of the melting sky, directing the mighty beast-- \*

MANUEL  
Quemar -- that way!!

The beast shifts his flight pattern.

Lucero can't believe what he heard, forcing himself a glance-- \*

REVEAL -- They're being carried by a magnificent beast -- a dragon, its expansive wings gliding effortlessly. At long last -- QUEMAR. \*  
\*

LUCERO  
YOU KNOW HIM?!

MANUEL  
Of course! He's not some mindless  
beast! His mind has only been  
twisted -- by Armando.

EXT. BARREN FIELDS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

As they soar overhead, creatures arch their heads up. Even \*  
the freed Tiger from Quemar's cave--

Elsewhere, the Minion's see, not sure how to react-- \*

--neither do the fleeing Protectors. Looking to one another, \*  
their collective body language suggest awe. \*

EXT. OPEN SKY - BARREN FIELDS - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Quemar glances down, seeing the devastation of his home world \*  
-- the demonic red eyes that were there before now blink a \*  
calm bluish brown. \*

MANUEL (CONT'D)  
Quemar only needed to see it for  
himself.

Lucero looks up at the dragon, his anxieties calmed slightly.

Quemar's giant wings sail effortlessly on the wind, above a  
giant fiery billow of smoke -- approaching the impact zone,  
when--

WHOOSH! -- a lash of oily blackness whips out of the billow \*  
of smoke, around Santiago's waist, yanking them down-- \*

MANUEL  
Mejo!!

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

Surrounded by the hellish landscape, desperation in his eyes,  
Beltran has extended both hands into whip lashings, pulling \*  
Santiago down. Gazes upon the "turned" Quemar, eyes narrowed-- \*

BELTRAN  
Traitor--

Nearby, his Minions watch the melee-- \*

EXT. OPEN SKY - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

Struggling, Santiago stubbornly resists the whip. The more he pulls, the tighter the whip coils-- \*

SANTIAGO MANUEL  
Papa!! Help!! I'VE GOT YOU!

The lashing tightens, pulling everyone earthbound. \*

Quemar struggles, SCREECHING out in anger -- Manuel loses his grip, grabbing onto Santiago's ankles, dangling helplessly-- \*

SANTIAGO  
PAPA!! Jus--just hold on--

Their eyes meet. Manuel knows this is it, calmly accepting-- \*

MANUEL  
There's still a chance to make things right, mejo. Seal the hole. Stop Armando any way you can--

--PLUNGES INTO THE CHAOS BELOW!!!

SANTIAGO  
NO -- NO!!!!

All sound drops-- \*

Lucero's mouth is agape in shock, unbelieving. Santiago has to think fast, a plan quickly forming-- \*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)  
Quemar, Lucero: get that hole open. Get the remaining Protectors. I'm going after Papa--

The rabbit nods quickly -- as they speed away. \*

SANTIAGO PLUNGES ALSO, ALLOWING THE COIL TO TAKE HIM! We plummet with him, right into the billowing smoke below!!

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS

Tracking Santiago's fall, Beltran doesn't immediately notice a Minion locking an arrow on the descending Quemar--

BELTRAN

No, go get them, you fool!

They nod, moving like a dark fog in pursuit-- \*

Beltran smiles as Santiago falls into the smoke below-- \*

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME \*

The loose coils lay dormant, just below Santiago's dangling feet -- what? \*

Santiago does something that his science cannot explain -- HE FLOATS JUST ABOVE THE SURFACE. Gasping with anticipation, even he didn't know he could do that. \*

Looking in all directions, searching for his Papa -- THE COILS WHIP BACKWARD, DISAPPEARING BEHIND THE SMOKE CLOUD AS IT CLEARS-- \*

Beltran emerges, his coils becoming lanky hands, smirks at his opponent's levitation. \*

BELTRAN

Amusing trick, your own? Who do you think you are? \*

Beltran waves his hand. Like a tidal wave, surrounding debris kick up, encompassing Santiago. \*

BELTRAN (CONT'D) \*

Not a magician like your father. \*

Not a magician at all, really-- \*

Santiago unleashes his flame trick. Another wave from Beltran, Santiago is down, wincing-- \*

BELTRAN (CONT'D) \*

One move -- pathetic. Your father was right there...for years. You learned nothing, only how to turn your back. \*

Santiago sloppily leaps, fists poised. His fists fall short -- Beltran disappears. His voice taunting Santiago-- \*

BELTRAN (V.O.) \*

Years wasted, hiding -- years wasting my true talents. My family dismissed such nonsense. I had to seek my mentor out. Your father couldn't see it. \*

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - THEATER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK - 1902) \*

Surrounded by a congested, adoring crowd, the Troubled Boy emerges from the fray, tugging at Manuel's coat. Young Santiago observes-- \*

TROUBLED BOY

I'm sorry...can you show me...I-I \*

mean, I really want to learn your-- \*

--he's roughly YANKED out of frame by his unseen FATHER. \*

TROUBLED BOY'S FATHER (O.S.) \*

He don't have time for you, he's \*

not a charity!

Young Santiago and the Troubled boy lock eyes, sharing a child-like sympathy, as he's pulled away-- \*

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS OF PRESENT

The final puzzle pieces snaps into place for Santiago, before realizing Beltran is beside him, eyes locked. Deep down, Santiago sees long-buried hurt there. \*

BOOM! Punches Santiago the old fashion way -- hard, going down like a bag of dirt--

BELTRAN

Only Armando the Magnificent saw-- \*

Regaining his senses, Santiago blinks dazedly. With outstretched arms, Beltran readies the final blow-- \*

SANTIAGO

It was you -- this isn't you.

Defensive, holds his palms up. Beltran doesn't comprehend-- \*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Once Armando has what he wants, he'll destroy you. You need a safe place, somewhere accepting. Armando can't give you that. My father was wrong to dismiss you. I won't -- ever. That little boy still exists. Don't forget him-- \*

Beltran is dubious and uncertain. Santiago waits his bated breath. Before another word can be uttered -- Beltran fades before his very eyes. Utterly alone, he hangs his head-- \*



INT. SECRET SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - BARCELONA - SAME \*

With a confident nod, Armando departs. When he's out of sight, Maria pulls at her bindings, which she's been working at secretly loosening-- \*

EXT. BARREN FIELD - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - MOMENTS LATER

Cape billowing, Santiago levitates off the ground, approaching the impact zone. Up ahead, a CRUNCHING sound--

EXT. IMPACT ZONE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - CONTINUOUS \*

The impact zone has opened a long CRACK FROM THE SKY, CLEAR DOWN TO THE SURFACE. There, Quemar pushes his weight against the elastic-type sky-- \*

Supervising, Lucero turns, finds Santiago--

LUCERO

Mejo. Your father was--I'm so--

SANTIAGO

This place is an empty balloon, Lucero. It's overflowing, fast. Once it bursts, it will spread-- \*

His eyes drift toward the approaching Protectors, led by a battered, battle hungry Protector Commander. \*

Quemar eyeballs them warily. Lucero pats his scaly leg, calming his nerves. Santiago smiles broadly. Newfound energy-- \*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D) \*

Not if we have anything to say about it--

Zen-like, Santiago presses his palm to the crack. Like a velvet curtain, the crack separates, all the while, Lucero tugs at his pants-- \*

LUCERO

Where's your science to EXPLAIN THIS?!

Santiago smiles, awaiting his first glimpse at Barcelona -- home. Through the opening, Montjuie Castle peers back-- \*

But, someone -- screams, then the BOOM OF A FIREWORK! \*

Sharing startled exchanges, Santiago cautiously steps through. Lucero and Protectors follow, coming face to face-- \*

EXT. MONTJUIE CASTLE - BARCELONA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS \*

MASS CHAOS!! Not panicked partygoers, but celebratory CHAOS gathering around their arrival-- \*

PARTYGOERS (VARIOUS)  
Don't remember that last  
year!/Blessed Mary, look at that!!

They think this is part of the festival.

Gobsmacked, Santiago can't believe his eyes--

LUCERO  
Holy sh-- I almost missed La  
Merce!!

Santiago swings around--

SANTIAGO  
Every one here is in danger -- they just don't know it. We need to barricade the hole from spreading, while stopping Armando. Split up. Both worlds must endure in their purest state.  
(to Lucero/Quemar)  
Nothing comes in or out. Up to it? \*

Lucero, battle beaten and injured, pats Quemar's side as his mischievous, buck-toothed grin spreads-- \*

LUCERO  
Oh, about twenty feet up to it!

Santiago nods, acknowledges the Protector Commander-- \*

SANTIAGO  
Commander, honor my father's memory. \*

PROTECTOR COMMANDER  
Split up, men! Find the traitor and his Minions!

A legion of Protectors flood into the city--

PROTECTOR COMMANDER (CONT'D)

We will not desert the lizard, nor  
the hare, sir!

SANTIAGO

I'll track down any loyal society  
members. We'll stop Armando!

\*  
\*

--rushes away, pushing aside the oblivious partygoers. A  
bewildered Lucero calls--

\*  
\*

LUCERO

H-how?!?

SANTIAGO

Sommehoowwwwwww---

EXT. BARCELONA STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Minions run amok unaffected, passing a silhouetted Santiago  
as he moves from shadow to shadow.

\*  
\*

INT. FAMILY FLAT - MOMENTS LATER

Digging through his father's belongings, Santiago finds  
something, quickly pockets it inside his cape.

\*

Then, spots it -- the discarded University acceptance letter.

\*

With a final, decisive nod, he RIPS the letter in two,  
smiling gratefully--

EXT. BARCELONA ROOFTOP - SAME

Celebratory screams, mass hysteria and explosive fireworks  
echo in the night. Armando surveys his manic, unblinking eyes  
over the chaos he's about to unleash--

\*

HIS POV -- scanning the city's horizon, as IT BEGINS TO SHIFT  
AT AN ANGLE -- a literal imbalance.

\*  
\*

Gerry The Darkest Minion cowers at the stairs. Without  
turning--

\*  
\*

ARMANDO

Take down the traitorous dragon,  
and his "pet". Nothing will disrupt  
my final performance--

INT. SECRET SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - SAME

Maria finishes freeing herself, exhales happily as she runs for the bookstore entrance--

MARIA

Idiot Uncle, shouldn't have shown me the stupid rope trick--

--stops herself, wait, wait! Races back toward the closet-- \*

MOMENTS LATER -- THE CLOSET DOOR \*

A tiny hook latch squeaks open -- BOOM!! AN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT AND FORCE BLOWS FROM THE CLOSET, KNOCKING MARIA AWAY-- \*

Out of the dust and debris, a giant, box-shaped silhouette morphs, movie monster-style, into stumbling human shapes. \*

Shielding her eyes, Maria peers into the blinding light, cringing in disgust-- \*

HUGO (O.S.) \*

WhhhhheeeeerreesssArrrrrmandooo?

REVEAL -- their faces have contorted into play-dough shapes. Recognizing this-- \*

HUGO \*

Ohhh? Ohhh--! Brothers! Shake!!!

They collectively wiggle their heads, jowls like rubber. Maria shakes her own head, leading them on with an eye roll-- \*

LUCERO (V.O.) \*

Folks yes, I realize what this must look like-- \*

EXT. MONTJUIC CASTLE - BARCELONA - SAME \*

Confused and frightened citizens exchange baffled looks. \*

LUCERO (O.S.) \*

--this is not part of the festivities-- \*

REVEAL -- atop Quemar, Lucero attempts to calm the surrounding crowd as the fluttering hole leading to the Magician's World billows behind them-- \*

LUCERO

--I am a talking rabbit. I don't  
know why I'm still speaking here --  
but, somehow I am. And yes, this is  
a scaly dragon. Again, whatever.  
But if you'll just stay calm,  
please return--

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

SLURRP!! SLURRPP! WHOOSH! Vacuum-like sounds, then a whoosh  
of air -- uh-oh.

\*

Lucero, Quemar, and the ever-confused crowd crane their necks  
to the fluttering billowing hole, NOW A GIANT, SUCKING TEAR--

\*  
\*

EXT. VARIOUS AROUND THE MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

\*

Tilted up, the sky turns pitch black, throwing everything  
into shadow. Violent winds erupt, pulling loose debris from  
structures. Black clouds billow--

\*  
\*  
\*

EXT. SKY OVER BARCELONA - CONTINUOUS

--into our world. Screams of citizens mix into the merry  
music of the festival. Things are going bad, to worse--

\*

EXT. MONTJUIE CASTLE - BARCELONA - SAME

\*

WHOOSH, WHOOSH, WHOOSH! Quemar flies upward along the tear,  
searching where the seams meet. Lucero holding on tight, has  
to yell to be heard--

\*  
\*  
\*

LUCERO

I can't find it!! We need to try--!

\*

The winds knock QUEMAR'S TRAJECTORY OFF-COURSE, forcing them  
upside down--

\*  
\*

Their upside-down POV, way below -- Minion's, Protectors, and  
the rescued animals stampede into our world!!

\*

LUCERO

Hold them back!!!!

Lucero harnesses Quemar upright, pointing. Like a bullet,  
Quemar shoots straight down--!!

\*  
\*

EXT. BARCELONA STREET - SAME

Gerrie the Darkest Minion lumbers down the stairs, bowing as his master floats reverently to the street.

ARMANDO  
Is construction complete?

GERRIE THE DARKEST MINION  
Every detail. Your performance is  
about to begin. \*

ARMANDO  
Then leave my sight!

GERRIE THE DARKEST MINION  
(calling behind him)  
C'MON, AMIGOS!

Gerrie and his legion of Minion's charge ahead, pummelling any bystanders aside.

Armando turns, faces a wall of timidly confused Barcelonians-- \*

BARCELONIAN PARTYGOER #1  
Are-are you part of the  
festivities, senor?

ARMANDO  
(with a smirk)  
Cute--

A HIDDEN POV -- watches the legion run past, then steps into  
sight-- \*

Armando holds up a palm, ready to lay waste, when--

SANTIAGO (O.S.)  
ARMANDO! ENOUGH!

Armando cranes his head -- Santiago stands alone.

EXT. MONTJUIE CASTLE - BARCELONA - SAME \*

The stampede of Minions, animals, and Protectors spread every  
which way--

CRASH!!! Quemar lands hard on the cobble stone, using the  
gust of his wings to toss them back. It doesn't work -- too  
many are scrambling through--! \*

The dragon pushes his weight against the tear, pushing out some, but not all. Through his scaly legs, they still come-- \*

The Protector Commander rushes ahead, leading his unit to Lucero's aide, knocking Minions aside as they go-- \*

PROTECTOR COMMANDER  
Come on, men! CHARGE!!

Amongst the chaos, a beaten Beltran slips through-- \*

EXT. BARCELONA STREET - SAME

Armando sizes up his diminutive Pupil before him. Santiago tightens his fists, rage seething. \*

ARMANDO  
Sure you want to do this, mejo? \*  
Your foolish father couldn't \*  
survive me--

SANTIAGO  
You don't have the honor of \*  
speaking about my father. Ever. \*  
Again.

Armando snickers, taking in the city's festivities -- screams of enjoyment mixing with terror. \*

ARMANDO  
No doubt you've mapped a fantastic \*  
equation in your head to stop me. \*  
But -- you're not seeing the big \*  
picture, as usual.

Launching a defensive move at Santiago -- he easily blocks it. Armando smirks, trying to hold his composure.

ARMANDO (CONT'D)  
Your mind is a conduit for science, \*  
graphs, experiments. That is your \*  
magic, boy. No mere parlor tricks.

SANTIAGO  
Surrender yourself to the Soc--!! \*

Armando attacks with a fury--

EXT. BARCELONA STREETS - SAME \*

Gerrie and the Minions charge toward the distant tear, unleashing giddy destruction as they go, when suddenly--

Gerrie is knocked off his feet in a blinding light. Confused, the Minion's stop, blocking their path -- the other legion of Protectors, clashing head-first toward them!! \*

EXT. BARCELONA - VARIOUS - REAL WORLD - SAME

Santiago blocks Armando's attacks, but on the offensive--

ARMANDO

Yes, I've done evil things, but in the name of magic--

SANTIAGO

--in your name, your way. Nothing-- \*

Magic trick here, takes Santiago by surprise. Armando stands over him, eyes full of fire--

ARMANDO

There is only my way.

MARIA (O.S.)

Ohhh, Uncle--

Footsteps approach. Armando's peers up, snorts arrogantly. Maria stands there, shaking her head-- \*

MARIA (CONT'D)

Leave my man alone--

Santiago beams, overjoyed to see her. Maria helps him up.

ARMANDO

Surly child -- just you, then?

Materializing behind her -- the secret society, led by a stern Hugo, appear like phantoms, surrounding him.

The arrogance leaves Armando's eyes. He steps into the shadow, his eyes glowing, voice deepening--

ARMANDO (CONT'D)

You think this was my plan? To have a final melee with you lowly magicians? You're mere guests to a final performance--

(MORE)

\*  
\*  
\*



ARMANDO (cont'd)

(nodding behind) \*

--there. A front row seat to the  
world's ending.

--and with that, Armando de-materializes into nothing-- \*

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BARCELONA - VARIOUS - REAL WORLD - SAME

Fireworks explode in the air, as we fly over the city, toward  
a grotesquely-lit stage, a THING TO DREAD--

Standing several feet tall, the structure is an amalgam of  
razor sharp teeth and imposing mountain -- a sickly shrine  
dedicated to the one and only Armando The Amazing! \*

ARMANDO (V.O.)

Ladies and gentleman, come see ME--

EXT. ARMANDO'S STAGE - BARCELONA SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Armed to the teeth, Minions line the perimeter, while a  
second line push a seized crowd of captured partygoers  
forward, forced to watch their master "perform". \*

Armando appears in full theatrical attire, on top of "his"  
world, addressing the crowds, mid-performance-- \*

ARMANDO

--Armando the Amazing and his once-  
in-lifetime spectacle of mystery!!

EXT. BARCELONA STREETS - VARIOUS - SAME

The tear's destruction is now causing damage throughout. \*

Tornado-like winds are kicking up debris, pieces of buildings  
ripping from foundations. Screams are rising-- \*

Emerging from the shadows like an animal, Beltran peers  
toward Armando's stage in the distance -- an unreadable face. \*

ARMANDO (V.O.)

You're witnesses to the end of all  
things!!

EXT. ARMANDO'S STAGE - BARCELONA SQUARE - SAME

ARMANDO

Comeeee nowwww...don't be shy--

Armando raises his hand -- a low hum emits. The crowd collectively lift off the ground, levitating forward-- \*  
\*

EXT. BARCELONA STREET - REAL WORLD - SAME

Head arched to the sky, Santiago falls to his knees, at a loss. Maria leans down, comforting-- \*

HUGO

We've failed. All our training, the years of knowledge -- we-we don't know how to fix this--

EXT. ARMANDO'S STAGE - BARCELONA SQUARE - SAME

A demonic, untouchable Armando, extends his arms out, conjuring surrounding buildings to collapse into one another-- \*

EXT. BARCELONA - VARIOUS - SAME

--destruction and chaos raining down on its citizens. At the tear, the imbalance violently RIPS A LARGER PORTION OF SKY-- \*

EXT. ARMANDO'S STAGE - BARCELONA SQUARE - SAME

CLOSE ON -- Armando, tears building in the corner of his dark eyes. \*

ARMANDO

If I can't have her, no one can have anything-- \*

EXT. STREET - REAL WORLD - SAME

Protectors step over Gerrie as they fight to the death--

EXT. MONTJUIE CASTLE - REAL WORLD - SAME

The Protector Commander and his men are knee-deep in Minion bodies, slicing away at any they see. They're fighting valiantly, but are losing -- the Minions keep coming. \*  
\*

Minions torch random buildings, inflicting further chaos.

Up in the air, Lucero is shouting instructions from Quemar's back-- \*

LUCERO

Ohh, there's another one! Git him!

Quemar snatches a winged minion, mid-flight. Lucero is giddy.

LUCERO (CONT'D)

Yeah, buddy! They're gonna rue the day they messed with the mighty Quemar and his plucky little frie--

BANG!!, a Winged Minion barrels into Quemar, knocking the dragon off his flight pattern. He snaps at the Minion, but is out of reach-- \*

BANG!! a SECOND MINION -- this one digging its claws into Quemar's scales. Crying out, he tries his damndest to shake him off. \*

Things go topsy-turvy. Through the clouds far below, a filtered crimson inferno of doom is forming. \*

LUCERO

Hold on, buddy. We got--! \*

BANG!! Lucero is knocked by a third Winged Minion, sending him tumbling down Quemar's back, gripping onto his tail-- \*

The second Minion, digging into the dragon's scales with every step, stalks a frightened Lucero, his grip slipping-- \*

Inches away, the third Minion moves in for the kill--

--Lucero tumbles off, plummeting toward the inferno below!!

Despite the pain, Quemar watches his friend fall. ANGER TAKES HIM, as the dragon VIOLENTLY shakes the Minion's off, dives after Lucero, but stops-- \*

Lucero vanishes through the hellish cloud. A hopeless beat-- \*

EXT. BARCELONA STREET - SAME

SANTIAGO POV -- confused partygoers continue to celebrate, their merry-making a defiance to the surrounding darkness. \*

SANTIAGO

Your Uncle is wrong, about a great many things. Mostly -- there's more than one way to conjure magic-- \*

He boldly stands. Maria stands with him, gripping his hand. \*

MANUEL (O.S.)  
You're right, mejo--

All turn -- Maria, the Secret Society, Santiago is last-- \*

Backlit, and truly heroic -- MANUEL THE MAGNIFICENT, IN ALL HIS GLORY. \*  
\*

Defying his eyes, Santiago approaches, holding onto his father for dear life. They acknowledge one another. Manuel smiles, exhausted--

MANUEL  
I won't disappear any longer. \*  
Let's give him one last trick.  
Enough is enough--

Santiago grins, his boyish smile returning--

EXT. MONTJUIC CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - SAME

Mid-air, Quemar watches Lucero disappear into the inferno cloud below, before-- \*

BOOOOOOIIIIINNGGG!!

Quemar's eyebrow cocks. Through the cloud, something is coming, AND FAST -- \*

SOMETHING HUGE!

The Winged Minions recover, turn their evil intentions back to Quemar, sense something--

THE CLOUDS EXPLODE IN A PUFF--

LIKE A BULLET, GIANT LUCERO EMERGES, HOLDING UP A FLUFFY FIST, SUPERMAN-STYLE, RIGHT AT THE WINGED MINIONS!

The Winged Minion's don't have time to react-- \*

WINGED MINION  
Ruh?

--before they're SOCKED right into the invisible barrier that separates the two worlds -- BONKING HARD. The barrier \*  
casually flicks them off, and out of sight. \*

While mid-bounce, Lucero salutes his scaly friend-- \*

LUCERO

Don't know how, don't care!! Can  
finally control it! We got this-

--before plunging in victory. \*

Mid-flap Quemar watches, licks his wounds, then shudders as  
Lucero makes the earth SHAKE below. He dives, earth bound--

Over this, an organ-grinder's "tahh-dahhh"--

EXT. ARMANDO'S STAGE - BARCELONA SQUARE - SAME

Armando's concentration is broken--

ARMANDO

Where-where'd that music come from?

The seized crowd collectively turn toward the back, as do the  
Minions. Even Armando tilts his head to see-- \*

Posed in Stage Magician garb are Santiago and Manuel, ready  
to perform for the audience!

SANTIAGO

Now, you're not here for those mere  
trifles, are you?

Amused chuckles from the crowd. Santiago cups an ear, sharing  
in the joke. Grinning, with a showman's voice-- \*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D) \*

You've seen feats of mythic  
dragons, brave hares that grow  
large before your very eyes! A  
magical world appear at your very  
feet! Mere child's play. For my  
next trick-- \*

Pulling a flimsy series of doors from his cape pocket,  
holding one specific door for all to see-- \*

SANTIAGO (CONT'D) \*

The new, improved Disappearing Man. \*

Armando is not impressed, pushes the crowd aside on his way  
to the forefront-- \*

ARMANDO

Where does it go, you fool?

Manuel seethes as he approaches. Santiago doesn't blink-- \*

SANTIAGO  
It's just for you--

MANUEL  
Dominion over the Magician's World,  
my old friend -- forever. In  
exchange, allowing this world to  
continue, unharmed. \*

SANTIAGO  
(re: Manuel)  
Now, I'll need my assistant--

Manuel is moved, smiling broadly--

Armando flippantly grabs the doors, losing track of the  
single door Santiago presented.

ARMANDO  
We'll see, boy. Once I get there,  
establishing my rightful place as  
their god, I'll decide if I keep my  
promise.

Like a mad man, Armando sorts through the doors, finding the  
right one. Manuel and Santiago share a concerned look. \*

Somewhere, amongst the edge of the crowd, a POV watches--

EXT. MONTJUIC CASTLE - REAL WORLD - SAME

Some mischievous Minions scatter, wreaking further havoc. \*  
Lucero screams madly, rampaging after them, leaving the \*  
partygoers to put out the fires themselves. \*

Using his jaws, Quemar snatches water-filled buckets from \*  
surprised partygoers, swooping over the buildings, dumping \*  
them. Plumes of steam rise from the flames. \*

Buckets dangling from his teeth, mid-air, he nods proudly. \*  
Smiles, waving hands of gratitude. Things may be okay--

The feeling is short lived. \*

Protectors are pushed back by the might of the enemy, toward \*  
the tear and the Magician's World. \*

Quemar's smile vanishes, looks up -- the sky is darkening, \*  
the tear is expanding. Eyes narrowed, he plunges down to \*  
finish them off, once and for all-- \*

HIS VISION AND BODY ARE ENVELOPED -- A GIANT NET IS FLUNG  
OVER HIM BY MISCHIEVOUS WINGED MINION'S.

WINGED MINION

Haw, haw, haw -- traitor!!

Within the netting, his wings become tangled, useless. He flops on the ground, gnawing, biting--

As Barcelonian's watch in horror, Minions crawl and jump over Quemar in demonic celebration. He snaps at them, howling--

Protectors can't help -- Minions are pushing back too hard.

The lead Minion locks eyes with the Defender Commander -- this is going to be fun--

HE'S PUMMELED OUT OF FRAME BY A FURRY BLUR!!

Everything stops! The Tiger stands mightily over the Minion, on the ground like a rag doll--

Spitting out a piece of Minion, he peers over their shoulders. The dumbfounded Minions follow his eye line--

THEY'RE ALL PUMMELED BY A STAMPEDE OF ANIMALS OF THE  
MAGICIAN'S WORLD, MINIONS SHREDDED TO RIBBONS!!

A debris cloud is all the Protectors see. Shapes of terrified Minions, claws -- that's it.

When the cloud lifts, the Protectors face AN EMPTY SPACE. Only the animals remain, delectably licking their paws.

The tiger pulls the net off Quemar with his sharp teeth. Quemar is fine, but shaken. A mutual respect between the two.

The Protectors' awed jaws are on the ground--

A distant BOINNNNG, BOINNGGG things back to reality, followed by the echoed ramblings of Lucero, as he appears, slackjawed, worked up--

LUCERO

Oh, you shoulda seen those guys,  
scared straight -- just got here.

Huh, it's quiet -- what I miss?

(scanning around)

Oh...good job--

Quemar smacks a wing to his forehead, points to the tear--!

EXT. ARMANDO'S STAGE - BARCELONA SQUARE - SAME

Armando thoughtlessly tosses doors aside with a loud crash,  
mumbling incoherently-- \*

ARMANDO

One of these--one of these--

CRASH!, a door lands hard!

ARMANDO (CONT'D)

--gets me in there--

CRASH!, another lands!

ARMANDO (CONT'D)

Manuel, that fool -- where is it? \*

CRASH!, another lands sideways, the door ajar slightly! \*

A faint glow of an unfamiliar world permeates. \*

Armando fails to see--

ARMANDO (CONT'D)

WHERE...IS...IT?!!

He's worked himself into a tizzy. Catching his breath, he  
simply peers ahead. On the ground, one final door remains. \*

Is it?

*Mid-act. Manuel the "Magnificent" circles the EXACT door.* \*

BACK TO SCENE. \*

Wide-eyed and a devilish grin forming, Armando steps forward--

MANUEL

Stop! That's not the door--

Manuel cautiously approaches. The tension is palpable.  
Pondering, Armando side-eyes the door handle like reaching  
for a gun. \*

ARMANDO

I--defeated you. Paloma, your boy--

(shakes from his stupor)

More lies--! Stop? Being what I am? \*

A trickster?! If I couldn't have

her -- uh, mold this world to my

whim, I'll bastardize yours once

and for all, just through there-- \*



Manuel conjures a non-glowing door from the discarded pile, up-righting it over Armando's chosen door.

ARMANDO  
This--?!

\*

SANTIAGO  
Sir, you'll have your chance. My assistant must inspect said door--

\*

\*

Manuel contorts his fingers, the door rises. Spins it several times, checking for posterity.

\*

Meanwhile, on the other side of the square, Maria is secretly ushering seized partygoers out through a back entrance, behind the backs of the distracted Minions.

Armando, confused and growing frustrated, grabs the door--

\*

ARMANDO  
It's inspected!

SANTIAGO  
Er, okay-- the door is ready.  
(re: Armando)  
Sir, you look like you'd like to volun--GAH--

\*

In a single motion, Armando sends Manuel crashing several feet away, while gripping Santiago menacingly by the throat--

\*

ARMANDO  
Step away, boy -- what happened today is going to be "mere child's play" to what destruction I'll unleash in your Magician's World--

\*

Gagging, Santiago nods quickly. Armando faces the door, when--

BELTRAN (O.S.)  
WAIT!

A long shadow slithers along the wall -- Beltran steps forward.

\*

\*

Father and son weren't expecting this, backing away as Beltran suddenly overwhelms the situation. Beltran casually observes the pile of discarded doors.

\*

\*

\*

A wide-eyed Armando sizes up his pupil.

ARMANDO  
 My genius conjurer. Nice of you to  
 join us. Once I've gone through,  
 destroy these traitors.

\*

Armando faces the prepared door. More ready than ever.

BELTRAN  
 Only--

All turn. Armando breathes a stressed sigh -- can't take much  
 more of this.

\*

Beltran looks down, nudges THE glowing door from the pile  
 with his foot. It lifts into the air, settling on top of  
 Armando's chosen door.

\*

\*

Armando suspiciously circles his pupil--

\*

BELTRAN (CONT'D)  
 --this is the one you seek.

\*

Manuel's eyebrow arches -- uhhh?

Armando's eyes light up. Paternally, Armando taps Beltran on  
 the cheek, a little too hard -- he winces. Armando, quietly--

\*

\*

ARMANDO  
 Conjure it, will you--?  
 MANUEL  
 Armando listen--

SANTIAGO  
 Don't do this--

ARMANDO  
DO IT!

\*

Beltran side eyes Santiago and Manuel, mumbling--

BELTRAN  
 I am sorry--

Armando passes Beltran, who faux bows to his master. With a  
 theatrical flourish, he pushes the door open--

ARMANDO  
 At last--

The door swings open--

Manuel backs away, pulling his son with him--

\*

Armando triumphantly faces the opening door, an unholy tear  
 rolling down his cheek.

\*

\*

The door widens, its secrets being revealed--

Beltran too backs away--

\*

And then--

Armando's face drops--

THROUGH THE DOOR, HE FACES THE INFINITE ABYSS OF THE MAS ALLA DE CIELO (PAST THE SKY)!!

\*

\*

CLOSE ON ARMANDO -- sudden realization allows him only a second. Twists his head to a smirking Beltran.

\*

\*

MANUEL (O.S.)

Mas alla del cielo, my old friend--

Through the door, it's like a tornado's suck zone, RIPPING HIM AGAINST THE JAMB -- CLUTCHING IT WITH ALL HIS MIGHT!!

\*

\*

On the door's opposite side, the square (now devoid of seized partygoers) pulls the remaining Minions through!

CLOSE ON -- hands, clenched together in conjuring--

\*

The stage rips from its very foundation, awning toward the door, before it--

RISES BEFORE THE VERY EYES OF the conjurer's -- the Secret Society members themselves!!!

\*

Santiago proudly stands at their side, partaking--

EXT. BARCELONA - VARIOUS - SAME

All eyes turn, every single one, toward the distance, bearing witness--

EXT. ARMANDO'S STAGE - BARCELONA SQUARE - SAME

--to the giant stage distortedly smashing its way through the door, before disappearing into the great emptiness--

Manuel glides toward Armando, fighting like hell to hold on, utterly unaffected by the chaos. They lock eyes--

MANUEL

For Paloma...

Manuel's palms rise, all of his energy surging squarely at Armando--

HE LOSES HIS GRIP -- PLUMMETING ENDLESSLY INTO THE EMPTY,  
DARK REGIONS THAT AWAIT HIM. IN LESS THAN A HEARTBEAT,  
ARMANDO DISAPPEARS FROM VIEW--

\*  
\*  
\*

THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT -- BOOOM!!! THE FORCE KNOCKS EVERYONE  
BACK, FILLING THE SQUARE WITH BRIGHT LIGHT AND WHITE SMOKE,  
SPREADING LIKE WILD FIRE--

\*

EXT. BARCELONA - VARIOUS - SAME

--THE WHITE SMOKE ENGULFS EVERYTHING, down every alley, every  
avenue, up to Montjuic Castle,--

EXT. OPEN SKY - OVER BARCELONA - SAME

The white smoke settles, begins dissipating--

\*

EXT. BARCELONA - VARIOUS - SAME

As soon as the white smoke has cleared, we see--

Nothing out of the ordinary. Confused partygoers look about,  
like woken from an amnesia-like stupor. The world looks just  
as it should once more--

EXT. BARCELONA SQUARE - SAME

Santiago rises, warily looking around. Society Members and  
Maria follow. Santiago turns, Manuel is there, gazing on his  
son, before falling into his arms -- energy spent.

\*  
\*

MANUEL

Mejo...

They share the world's most loving embrace. Santiago finally  
has his father back -- he's real.

Hugo and others' attention falls on the square's center,  
where the door was.

\*

At the foot, Beltran peers down, ashamed to face them. He  
turns, and falls to his knees, defeated, ready for their  
justice.

\*  
\*  
\*

Hugo and other Society Members approach -- a hand falls on  
Beltran's shoulder. Manuel -- seeing the young boy who asked  
for his help more than once.

\*  
\*

MANUEL

You saved our lives. Despite your past deeds -- you saved the world itself.

(to Society Members)

Brothers, we must learn to put the past where it belongs--

(meeting Beltran's gaze)

You will be trained. Properly.

\*

Beltran's face brims with joy. This is what he's wanted his entire life. Bear hugs Manuel, then pulls Santiago in--

\*

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MONTJUIE CASTLE - BARCELONA - EVENING

\*

A beautiful sunset presides over the citizens, Santiago, Manuel, Maria, Beltran, and the Secret Society as they bear witness to a strange sight--

\*

\*

A procession of animals and Protectors returning to the Magician's World through the tear. They nod in thanks as they pass Manuel and Santiago.

\*

The tiger regales them a royal bow before stepping through last.

\*

\*

Little Lucero, atop Quemar, approaches.

\*

SANTIAGO

You sure you don't want to stay after trying so long to get home?

With a knowing wink, Lucero pats Quemar's scaly back--

\*

LUCERO

My buddy and I are going to make a popular duo on the other side.

Quemar grunts a comical agreement.

SANTIAGO

Thank you for showing me the way. The right way.

LUCERO

(mock lump in throat)

You're...welcome.

A beat -- Lucero laughs like the crazy talking bunny that he is, reigns Quemar.

\*

His majestic wings flapping like helicopter blades as they take flight, circling low over the crowd -- disappearing through the tear.

The crowd edges closer to catch a glimpse--

THEY SEE the beautiful triumph of magic and possibility that is the Magician's World.

Quemar slows his flapping as he lands inside the Magician's World, facing the crowd from the other side. His jaws expand, as a bead of fire blows at them!! \*

The crowd collectively grimace, terrified!

But no -- Quemar's fire is simply soldering the tear, once and for all. \*

Arm in arm, son and father watch as their world disappears. \*

Before long, the last of the beauty is gone, and the citizens are left with a glimpse of their beloved city once more.

There's a long pause of anticipation -- anything now can happen, before -- THEY ERUPT IN GENUINE CHEER FOR THE MAGICIANS.

In the crowd, we find a long-forgotten face -- Detective Bajo, smiling happily with everyone else.

From behind, a familiar falsetto is heard -- Detective Alto, excitedly pulling something from his pocket--

DETECTIVE ALTO

Bajo, Bajo, look! I've found this key piece of evidence in that magician's disappearance. It'll crack this case wide-- \*

All the while, Bajo's smile has faded, staring at his partner with concern, before simply smacking him upside the head-- \*

Santiago and Manuel embrace, grateful for each other. \*

SANTIAGO (V.O.)

Life, somehow, returned to some semblance of normalcy...

**FINAL MONTAGE BEGINS - INT./EXT. - THE FOLLOWING DAYS/WEEKS** \*

INT. KITCHEN - FAMILY FLAT - DAY

Santiago carries a plate to Manuel at the table, where Maria now sits in Paloma's spot -- a family forming once more.

Light shines down on them. The reason being -- the roof now has a comical blown-out hole from Armando's destruction.

\*  
\*

SANTIAGO (V.O.)  
...well, normalcy for us magicians.

EXT. BARCELONA STREETS - VARIOUS - DAY/NIGHT

Bright banners adorn the theater facades as a NEW YOUNG THEATER ANNOUNCING BOY, wearing a new sandwich board, proclaims the Magic shows open!

Eager customers line the block in anticipation.

\*

INT. STAGE - THEATER - VARIOUS - DAY/NIGHT

Magicians perform their magic before enthusiastic audiences.

SANTIAGO (V.O.)  
Magic returned to our fair metropolis...there was a demand that hadn't been seen in years.

EXT./INT. BOOKSTORE - GOTHIC BARCELONA - DAY

A secret society member stands at the entrance, welcoming a long line of enthusiastic customers.

SANTIAGO (V.O.)  
The doors of the Secret Society were flung open, no longer so "secret".

\*  
\*

SOCIETY MEMBERS  
Come one, come all--! See, the Magician's in their studies, in their fields of concentration!

Passing even more eager customers into the dark tunnel, through the bookcase entrance.

INT. SECRET SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Brightly lit. Everywhere you look, magic tricks are performed and experimented before crowds. A sense of awe is felt. \*

Manuel is perfecting a new trick, working from his notebook.

Under the watchful "eye" of Hugo (looking the wrong way), Beltran confidently experiments with his own style of magic, the darkness gone from his eyes. \*

Santiago is conjuring his own, mixing his science with unknown magic that baffles the audience.

Manuel stops, and watches his son, proud yet crestfallen. \*

MANUEL

Paloma, my love, you should see him now--

**END FINAL MONTAGE.**

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

A banner hangs over the marquee: "THE RETURN OF THE DISAPPEARING MAN. PROMISE THIS TIME." \*

INT. THEATER - SAME

Packed to the rafters, a sense of anticipation.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - SAME

Manuel's cape is draped around a pair of shoulder's. Who's--?

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - SAME

Moonlight beams through the empty space. Discarded, dusty doors lean against the wall. Suddenly -- one lifts from the pile, coming to rest upright. \*

Approaching footsteps echo--

The door begins spinning, opening slightly, allowing some majestic color in-- \*



INT. DRESSING ROOM - THEATER - SAME

The wearer of the cape prepares. A knock at the door.

STAGEHAND (O.S.)

You're on--!

The figure heads for the door, avoiding the invisible chair somewhere in his path. \*

INT. BACKSTAGE - THEATER - SAME

The back of the magician as he approaches the stage wings, a wave of well-wishers parting for him. \*

A woman, her back to us, is there, positioned as Paloma once was, angled low on her back. Sensing him, she turns--

A baby bump protrudes from her stomach. The magician lovingly places his hand on her bump. She embraces it. \*

REVEAL -- a glowing Maria, eyes darting toward the crowd. \*

MARIA

You better get out there before they start eating the drapes.

REVEAL -- Santiago, smiling, kisses her hand. His features still in shadow.

SANTIAGO

Wish me luck, then.

MARIA

Be careful--

Santiago peers over his shoulder with a mischievous wink as he steps onto the stage, in the spotlight. \*

INT. STAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

The audience is on their feet with cheers. There he is--!

Arms outward and bowing is Santiago, in full regalia, beard shaved, the magician at long last. Looks every inch his father -- down to the toothy grin. \*

INT. MANUEL'S WORKSHOP - SAME

The door closes neatly with a click, leaving the empty room behind--

\*  
\*

INT. STAGE - THEATER - SAME

Santiago approaches his own door, conjured out of nowhere.

SANTIAGO

My friends, if my calculations are  
to be believed, the zero velocity  
of this next -- you know what--?

\*

(thoughtful, now the  
showman)

BEHOLD -- behold, the return of the  
-- Disappearing Man--

\*  
\*

To the audience's affections, the door spins behind Santiago.  
Without turning, raises a hand, the door stops on a dime--

\*  
\*

--then swings opens, revealing Maria in the wings, stopwatch  
at the ready. They smile--

\*

SANTIAGO

Be right back--

EXT. OPEN SKY - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - DAY

A God's eye, looking down on -- beautiful expanse of the  
Magician's World, as beautiful and free as it's ever been--

\*  
\*

--We pass the Tiger and his mighty animal friends.

\*

--At the endless row of doors, gobsmacked magician's stepping  
through, getting their first glimpses.

\*  
\*

--Giant Lucero bouncing to his heart's content as Quemar  
flies in loop-di-loops around him.

\*

Everywhere the eye looks, an untouched land of possibility.

All seen from the POV of--

\*

--a floating Santiago, effortlessly jetting his way toward  
Montjuie Castle, with purpose once more.

\*

As he approaches, the draw bridge comes down. He smiles.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD -  
CONTINUOUS

As the draw bridge flattens, a landed Santiago is greeted  
with open arms by the Protectors. He greets them in like.

EXT. BATTLEMENTS - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD -  
MOMENTS LATER

He looks about, wide-eyed. Not knowing what to expect, but  
expectant, eager. \*

Without knowing, Santiago is suddenly face to face with  
Manuel once more. Santiago begins nodding--

SANTIAGO  
Magic is real to some--

MANUEL  
(a prideful smile) \*  
Show me what you got.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - MONTJUIE CASTLE - MAGICIAN'S WORLD - EVENING

Silence. Father and son perform their various tricks -- in  
perfect sync, never missing a beat. Performing, simply for  
the love of it. \*

This moment would last an eternity if it were possible-- \*

INT. STAGE - THEATER - BARCELONA - NIGHT \*

Breath collectively held, the audience stares ahead. Maria  
has the stopwatch in hand-- \*

The door bursts opens. A winded Santiago steps through, arms  
out in presentation. \*

As the audience rise to their feet with exuberant joy-- \*

--the overjoyed wonder that once filled six year old  
Santiago's eyes has returned. \*

As he takes his bow, we-- \*

CUT TO BLACK:

A beautifully orchestrated "TA-DAH!" accompanies, as a title card slowly fades in--

**"MAGICIAN & SON"**

THE END