

EPISODE 1 - ACTION

Written by

Stephen Hall

+44 7983 510775
shsc21441@gmail.com

www.hereandback.co.uk/screenplay

OVER BLACK: EDINBURGH. MARCH 1828

EXT. LEITH DOCKYARD - DAY

Burke and Hare are within a large group of men surrounding the FOREMAN [45]. They are all talking amongst themselves. The foreman is a square jawed, burly man with a thick moustache. He hold a piece of paper. To his side stands his ASSISTANT [30].

FOREMAN

Alright boys! A bit of silence if you don't mind.

The men quieten and give the foreman their attention. The foreman looks at the piece of paper then at the men.

He begins pointing at one man after another.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

You. You. You and you. Yard 51.

The chosen men step out from the crowd and are handed a token from the foreman's assistant. The foreman continues.

HARE

(whispers)

If that bastard passes us again, I'm gonna speak my mind.

BURKE

(whispers)

I don't think he likes our kind.

Hare holds his gaze firmly on the foreman as he allocates jobs until, eventually, he begins to fold up his piece of paper.

FOREMAN

Right. That's it for today.

The remaining men grumble as they begin to disperse, while the foreman turns to leave.

HARE

(to the foreman)

You have a problem with us?

The foreman and his assistant pivot towards Burke and Hare.

FOREMAN

In what way...paddy?

Hare walks towards the foreman followed by Burke.

HARE
 Weeks we've been coming here and I
 can count on one hand the times
 we've got work.

FOREMAN ASSISTANT
 We've -

HARE
 Us two worked on the Union Canal.
 We worked hard. Got the job done.

Hare is almost in the foreman's face.

HARE (CONT'D)
 Yet you seem to think maybe we're
 not up to it?

FOREMAN
 Round here, it's our own first.
 When we need the Micks, we'll let
 you know.

HARE
 Is that right?

Suddenly a fist from Hare slams into the cheek of the
 foreman who staggers back before falling to the ground.
 Burke is surprised at first, then bursts into laughter. The
 foreman's assistant reels back in fear.

BURKE
 Yeah.

Hare bends down towards the foreman.

HARE
 I ain't no Mick, Jock.

Burke and Hare turn and walk away as the foreman groans on
 the ground.

HARE (CONT'D)
 (to Burke)
 He had it coming.

Hare feels a hand on his shoulder. He pivots to receive a
 fist to the face, causing his legs to buckle and fall to the
 cobbled ground. The foreman turns to Burke.

FOREMAN
 You want the same paddy?

Burke answers with two blows in quick succession. The foreman staggers back in shock then a third blow floors the foreman.

In the distance a group of men spot the incident and begin running towards them, shouting.

Burke glances at Hare who is rising to his feet while rubbing his bruised face.

BURKE

We need to go.

Hare sees the advancing men. He raises two fingers into the air and laughs.

HARE

Feck you, ya bastards!

The two men run to escape the scene, laughing with pride.

INT. SURGEONS HALL/KNOX'S STUDY - DAY

DR. ROBERT KNOX [37] stands between a desk and the window as daylight crosses the dark oak panelled room.

A painting of The Death of Major Peirson by John Singleton Copley adorns the wall with bookshelves lined along one side. A globe is positioned in the corner. The room emits an educated life.

Opposite the desk, ARCHIBALD JOHNSON [28] leans forward from his chair, clasping his pencil and notes, with a frown on his face.

MR. JOHNSON

(confounded)

But your science doesn't comply
with this age of enlightenment.

Knox responds with a voice as stiff and erudite as his posture, sneering at his inquisitor.

KNOX

(indignant)

You refute my objectives?

MR. JOHNSON

(defensive)

Only the means.

KNOX

(anger)

Our government does little to help
the cause of the Anatomist with
this infernal Murder Act that
stymies and stifles our
understanding of the human body.

Knox turns round to face Johnson. Dressed in black with a red scarf cravat, he wears spectacles, one lens tinted to hide his disabled eye. He holds his pipe in one hand and a business card in the other. He looks at the card.

The card reads:

Mr. Archibald Johnson, Journalist, Edinburgh Courant

(an address is in small print)

KNOX (CONT'D)

But perseverance, is a skill I have
had many years to hone.

Knox places the card on the desk. Johnson is scribbling notes.

Like the goddess Theia, it shines a
light on the path of my deliverance
to blight the illls and disease the
people of these islands suffer.

There is a knock at the door.

KNOX (O.C.) (CONT'D)

(robust)

Enter!

The door opens and DAVID PATERSON [35], Dr Knox's assistant, enters.

MR PATERSON

Sir, your students await for class
to begin.

Knox walks around the desk and looks down at Johnson, who waits for some prompt.

KNOX

Would you care to accompany me to
where my work is appreciated?

Johnson leans down and retrieves a satchel to which he places his notebook and pencil. He remains seated waiting for Knox to lead the way.

MR. JOHNSON

I would be delighted, sir.

KNOX

Then follow me.

Johnson rises but remains behind Knox as they advance to the doorway.

EXT. WEST PORT STREET - SAME TIME

Facing away, BURKE [28] and HARE [29], with a noticeable bruise under his eye, walk along the cobbled street lined with buildings that have seen better days. This is the cramped, destitute quarter of the West Port, where the poor and desperate live a daily life of survival. Dressed in well-worn clothes the thin, wispy Hare walks side by side with Burke, thick jowled and broad shouldered.

Burke spits a glob of flem onto the roadside to the disgust of passers-by.

As they continue, Hare helps himself to an apple from a crate outside a fruit and veg shop and crunches into it.

INT. SURGEON'S HALL/CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Paterson walks in front of the two men, passing medical illustrations that hang on the walls of the wide corridor.

KNOX

I am no believer of the faith but
like Moses climbing Mount Nebo, I
have spent many years striving to
reach my own Promised Land.

The three men continue along the hallway. Knox looks straight ahead while Johnson watches him.

KNOX (CONT'D)

From tending to the wounded at
Waterloo, my climb to the peak has
taken me to Paris and London,
working with the greatest minds.
Here I am, acknowledged as the
'primus et incomparabilis'.

At the end of the hallway they take a left turn. A lady dressed in nursing attire steps out of a door.

NURSE
Good day doctor.

Knox nods in acknowledgement but does not speak to her.

MR. JOHNSON
Does that mean you have achieved
all that is possible?

Two suited young men walk past in the opposite direction. They acknowledge Knox with a nod. Knox reciprocates.

KNOX
Far from it. There is much work
still to be done before the name Dr
Knox will be synonymous with
anatomy a hundred years from now.

MR. JOHNSON
That is indeed a bold statement.

Knox stops in his tracks and looks at Johnson, perplexed.

KNOX
There is nothing bold in
acknowledging the skills one
possesses.

Knox points to a picture on the wall of "The Anatomy of Dr Willem Roell"

KNOX (CONT'D)
Understanding the human body is my
passion. Leading others into that
light is my elixir. That is not
bold. That is fact.

Johnson is impressed. He looks closer at the painting and the body on the table.

EXT. WEST PORT STREET - CONTINUOUS

Burke and Hare approach a general store called Rymer's that sells food, alcohol and utensils. Barrels of grain and crates of vegetables line the front of the shop, its window peppered with leaflets and posters.

MR. JOHNSON (V.O.)
What about the appropriation of the
bodies?

Hare stops to look in the window, gripping the shoulder of Burke to draw his attention to something on display in the shop.

KNOX (V.O.)
What about it?

As Burke and Hare look in the window, Hare throws away the remainder of the apple into the street then proceeds towards the doorway of the shop followed by Burke.

MR. JOHNSON (V.O.)
Your lectures seem unaffected by the restriction of bodies, yet hallowed ground is repeatedly parted to take those who rest in peace.

As Burke and Hare enter the doorway of the store, Hare looks back, his face in full view. He possesses the look of a man with evil in his veins.

KNOX (V.O.)
You refer to those body snatchers, do you not?

Hare holds his gaze then, with Burke, he pivots and enters the shop.

INT. SURGEON'S HALL/CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Johnson and Knox stand face to face.

MR. JOHNSON
I have reported such incidents on too many occasions to count.

KNOX
(abrupt)
All across these lands, charlatans attempt to obtain, by any means, subjects for their cause.

MR. JOHNSON
And you do not fall into that category?

KNOX
(indignant)
I do not dig bodies in the middle of the night.

MR. JOHNSON
 (apprehensive)
 But do you facilitate it?

EXT. WEST PORT STREET - CONTINUOUS

Burke and Hare exit the shop with each holding a jug of whisky. Hare has a lit cigarette between his lips.

They stop at the doorway. With his free hand, Hare grips the cigarette and exhales.

KNOX (V.O.)
 (aloof)
 I am an anatomist. It is not for me
 to investigate every subject that
 comes my way.

Burke and Hare take a few steps to the close adjacent to Rymer's which (above the entrance) reads "Tanner's Close".

MR. JOHNSON (V.O.)
 But from somewhere, they come.

Burke and Hare begin to make their way down the close.

INT. SURGEON'S HALL/CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Paterson, Knox and Johnson stand at a set of double doors behind which can be heard the murmur of voices.

KNOX
 (jovial)
 If you care to follow Mr
 Paterson...

Knox gestures to a side door. Knox smiles menacingly.

KNOX (CONT'D)
 ...you will witness the wonders of
 the anatomist.

Paterson grins. He opens the door for Johnson to enter.

KNOX (CONT'D)
 Good day, Mr. Johnson. I look
 forward to reading what you have to
 say.

INT. SURGEONS HALL/LECTURE THEATRE - MOMENTS LATER

Rows of students form a semi-circle around the focal point of a plinth where a dead body lies under a white sheet.

Facing the audience with his arms outstretched, a scalpel in his right hand Knox dramatically pulls the sheet to reveal a body lying on the table for his audience of students to view while Johnson watches.

KNOX
Shall we begin?

There is a rapturous response from the students with clapping and whooping.

EXT. GRASSMARKET - DAY

Through the street of the Grassmarket we hear the clapping and cheering of an audience watching a puppet show. The street is busy with hawkers and stalls. Men buy and sell cattle, while coaches and horse-drawn carts pass by.

Moving through the street, the sound of people slowly dissipates as we enter the West Port.

An old man can be seen bent over, walking slowly up towards Tanner's Close.

The man turns into the close and proceeds down into the dimly lit lane. Sewage runs downhill past the tenement doorways.

EXT. TANNERS CLOSE - CONTINUOUS

The sound of voices singing can be heard from inside the house as OLD DONALD [72], dressed in worn, bedraggled clothes walks towards the door of the house,

Grey-faced, he reaches for the handle with his shaking hand while emitting a throaty cough. Jovial voices can be heard inside. He slowly opens the door.

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - CONTINUOUS

The room is sparse with a simple bed, chair and a stool occupied by Burke, who is stuffing a hole in his shoe in front of an unlit fireplace.

Hare dances on the spot in the middle of the room holding a jug of whisky.

MARGARET HARE [33] sits on the chair, breast feeding an infant with her back to the others.

HELEN MCDUGAL [24] sits on the floor facing the fireplace drinking whisky from a jar.

The Hares and Burke speak with an Irish drawl, while Helen McDougal sports a Scottish accent.

HELEN MCDUGAL

Ah Donald, you've decided to join us after all?

DONALD

Aye, but I'm feelin' richt poorly and will no be havin any o' that whisky this day.

The old man shuffles over to the vacant bed. Hare stands and watches Donald cross the room.

HARE

Just remember you still owe us rent old man?

Donald, slightly bent over, coughs persistently.

DONALD

(gruff)

Aye, well my pension will mend your troubles come two days from now.

Hare advances towards Donald with a sense of intent.

MARGARET HARE

(abrupt)

Leave him be. The old man is poorly.

Hare stops and turns to Margaret.

HARE

There are times, woman, when you remind me of me old army sergeant.

Margaret removes the child from her breast and pulls over her shawl.

MARGARET HARE

(firm)

Well Old Donald is good to his word and just remember who's lodging this is.

HELEN MCDUGAL

You landed on your feet with this place Maggie.

MARGARET HARE

Aye, I did that.

HARE
 (sardonic)
 Maybe Helen would like to know how
 you came by this palace.

INT. FLASHBACK TO: MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - DAY

Superimpose: One Year Earlier

The lodgings look cleaner as a fire glows in the hearth.

Hare and Margaret are making love in the bed. In joint exultation Hare pulls himself away and rolls onto his back next to her. Margaret turns and kisses him on his shoulder.

MARGARET HARE
 When will you be back?

HARE
 The canal work is nearly done. Two
 months, I reckon.

She leans over and reaches for her pipe and matches.

HARE (CONT'D)
 You gonna miss me?

She leans over and kisses him on the lips.

MARGARET HARE
 You know damn fine.

HARE
 Then we can seek what's rightly
 ours.

MARGARET HARE
 You promise?

Margaret lights her clay pipe.

HARE
 If you stay true to our covenant we
 can be away from here in time.

Hare, naked, gets out of the bed. He turns to Margaret.

HARE (CONT'D)
 But no conditions.

She nods as he walks over to the fireplace and grabs a jug from which he takes a drink remaining silent with his back to her. The room is silent as Margaret studies him.

HARE (CONT'D)
I better get going soon.

Margaret pats the bed with her free hand.

MARGARET HARE
Come here.

He turns and smiles then walks towards the bed.

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - LATER

Margaret is kneeling by the fireplace, preparing food. The door opens and an older man enters. It is her husband PETER SULLIVAN [45].

MARGARET HARE
You're late.

Peter Sullivan removes his jacket and drops it on the floor near the window and doorway.

PETER SULLIVAN
Spillage in the yard. The place
needed cleaning.

He walks over to the chair by the fireplace and sits down handing three coins to Margaret.

PETER SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
This was all I could get.

Margaret looks unimpressed.

MARGARET HARE
You remember what you promised when
we were married?

He leans back, tired.

PETER SULLIVAN
Not now Maggie.

MARGARET HARE
I remember. We'd be far away from
here. To the countryside. That was
your words.

PETER SULLIVAN
I provided this place. It's no
palace but it's ours. Bought with
honest work.

MARGARET HARE

I was twenty-two and here we are.
Ten years later. This.

PETER SULLIVAN

You never were one who was easily
pleased. Were you?

Margaret rises and picks up a bowl which she begins spooning
food into.

PETER SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

(mocking)

Look at them. See what they have. I
deserve better.

With the bowl and spoon, she picks up a jug and hands them
over to her husband.

MARGARET HARE

This was not how it was supposed to
be.

Peter accepts the bowl and jug.

PETER SULLIVAN

We don't always get what we want in
life Maggie but I've given you my
all.

Peter begins eating from the bowl.

She advances towards the main door and opens it before
turning to face her husband who continues to eat and drink
from the jug. He looks disdainfully at her.

MARGARET HARE

Not everything.

She exits the room, closing the door behind. Peter shakes
his head in disbelief as he continues to eat.

Within a few moments he feels a choking sensation. His
stomach wrenches and he bends forward. The bowl falls to the
floor. He tries to cough as his face reddens. His left hand
trembles and he lunges forwards onto his knees on the floor.
Within moments his life ebbs away as he lies on the floor, a
saliva froth dripping from his face.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The sun is rising in the early hours of the morning as Margaret, dabbing her eyes with a hanky, stands by a grave. A catholic minister recites the Lord's Prayer, while a grave digger stands to one side leaning on his shovel as two men lower the coffin into the ground.

INT. BACK TO PRESENT: MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS

MARGARET HARE
(sombre)
Maybe another day.

HELEN MCDUGAL
(to Burke)
Did you find any work to earn a bob
or two?

Burke shakes his head.

BURKE
We were down at the docks. Soon as
they hear our tongue, they pass us
over.

HELEN MCDUGAL
(whispers)
What we have won't last much
longer.

BURKE
Aye, it's getting desperate.

Burke shakes his head.

BURKE (CONT'D)
I don't know.

Hare reaches down for the jug then sits down on the floor as he drinks from the jug. The others watch him intently. He belches before smiling innocently.

HARE
(to Margaret)
Come woman. I'll sing a song of the
Emerald Isle and you can join me in
a wee jig. Forget our troubles.

INT. GENTLEMAN'S' STUDY - NIGHT

Dr Knox is gathered with his assistants, FERGUSON [25], JONES [23] and MILLER [23] (wearing a red, white and blue neckerchief) in the company of Dr ALEXANDER MONRO [55] and PROF JOHN WILSON [43].

Monro puffs satisfyingly on a cigar as they sit around a roaring fireplace in a large thick carpeted room occupied by other professional men reading newspapers or in quiet conversation.

WILSON

I didn't think you would be joining us today, Robert, what with that board meeting taking place earlier.

KNOX

Thankfully it didn't run on as long as I expected. They can be damned dull affairs.

WILSON

I remember many a meeting left me losing the will to live.

KNOX

Hopefully it will not be long before one of these chaps takes the baton.

He turns to the young men sitting beside him.

WILSON

(laughs)

So he has brought you young men into this inner sanctum?

Ferguson looks around in admiration.

FERGUSON

It is a fine place indeed.

Wilson chuckles.

WILSON

And where your learning truly begins.

Munro laughs. He directs his words to the young assistants.

MONRO

Now there speaks a professor of moral philosophy.

Wilson raises his glass to Monroe and smiles.

WILSON

We have all been there Alexander.

The men sit quietly for a moment as the fire crackles.

MONRO

I hear your class was as full to the brim as the glass you hold?

Knox looks at the glass he holds and raises it in acknowledgement.

KNOX

The board are aware I require a larger theatre to accommodate the demand.

WILSON

Are your lectures not losing you money? Seven hundred pounds in costs for each class is as much as other lecturers gain in a year.

KNOX

I can assure you, that both the University and the bank are more than pleased with the income I afford them.

FERGUSON

I applaud the resources and ingenuity Dr Knox brings to this city, professor. Three classes each day yet demand would double that.

JONES/MILLER

Here, here.

Monro leans forward and flicks his ash into a tray on the low table they sit around.

MONRO

(piqued)

Still, it leaves many of us struggling to find much to fill specimen jars, never mind tables, to satisfy our students.

Monro leans back in his chair and sips his drink.

MONRO (CONT'D)

At the rate your deliverance of
'subjects' arrive, there will be
nothing left but dogs!

Knox is amused.

KNOX

Should that moment arise, perhaps
our streets will surely become the
healthiest in all of Europe?

Wilson looks to Monro knowingly then back at Knox.

WILSON

(gruff)

And the end of our careers.

Knox tries to diffuse the discussion.

KNOX

(jovial)

There will always be subjects to
acquire John.

Jones nods his head in approval.

JONES

(supportive. affirming)

Many indeed.

Munro puffs on his cigar blowing the smoke towards Knox.

MONRO

I applaud your dedication, Robert.
Never have I known a man so
committed.

Knox forcibly smiles in recognition while Munro leans back
and sips his drink.

MONRO (CONT'D)

(dry)

But the need to educate our future
anatomists should not lie in the
hands of a minority, wouldn't you
say?

A waiter advances. The men remain silent.

WAITER

Would any of you gentlemen care for
another?

Wilson looks up at the waiter without checking with any of the others.

WILSON
A bottle of the malt.

The waiter nods and exits.

KNOX
I wholeheartedly agree. That is why our University provides such a depth of knowledge by such esteemed gentlemen as yourself.

Monro throws the remainder of his cigar into the fireplace.

MONRO
(slightly put out)
Who struggle to obtain the volume of subjects you have little problem acquiring.

MILLER
(cautious)
We do work tirelessly in finding them, professor.

KNOX
All part of their learning, is it not?

Miller nods in agreement.

MONRO
(to Miller)
I do not doubt your enthusiasm. More the method.

Monro casually takes a sip of his drink while Knox stares hard.

KNOX
I have no problem sleeping at night I can assure you.

Monro laughs and knocks back the rest of his drink. Knox watches him. The others sit tight lipped as the waiter returns with a bottle on a tray.

MONRO
(jovial)
Look at us. So serious. Let us wash away these long faces with another round, eh?

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - NIGHT

Douglas is fast asleep in the bed. A fire has been lit and offers the only light in the room. Empty jugs lie scattered around the floor.

Margaret and Hare are doing a jig in the middle of the floor. Hare stumbles and falls over.

MARGARET HARE
(laughing)
You might have two left feet but
your dancing is improving!

Hare staggers to his feet as Burke and Helen sit sniggering and watching.

HARE
The whisky loosens me up just nice.

Helen leans over to Burke and kisses him who responds with a slight smile.

Hare struggles to bend down and pick up the jug, shaking it to discover it is empty.

HARE (CONT'D)
(sighs)
Right, I'll head up to Rymer's and
get us another fill o whisky.

The others watch as Hare advances towards the door.

MARGARET HARE
Bring some bread to accompany the
drink. We can't live on liquor
alone!

Hare pulls out some coins from his pocket.

HARE
This is all I have.

He shows her the coins.

MARGARET HARE
(angry)
Me belly aches with hunger.

HARE
I'll get money the morrow, then we
can eat.

MARGARET HARE
(livid)
Hare!!

Burke rises and hands Hare some coins.

BURKE
Here, take this.

Hare walks over to Burke, grinning at Margaret.

HARE
(softly)
See Maggie. A man cut of the same
cloth. Our kind always stick
together.

MARGARET HARE
Go get it then, man, before we fade
away.

Hare exits.

EXT. - TANNER'S CLOSE - MOMENTS LATER

HARE is walking back down the close carrying a jug of whisky
and a loaf of bread. MRS. CONNOWAY [61], a cheery soul and a
bit of a gossip, steps out of the door next to the lodgings.

Still intoxicated, he catches sight of her before she
notices him and his demeanour changes from a hard look to an
affable smile.

HARE
Evening, Mrs. Connoway. How be you
this fair night? Looking as radiant
as ever.

Mrs Connoway, surprised, pivots to face him as she closes
the door.

MRS. CONNOWAY
(surprised)
Oh, Mr Hare. Oh dear. I didn't see
you.

She fixes her hair and smiles.

MRS. CONNOWAY (CONT'D)
I am in good spirit, thank you.

Composed, he advances towards her.

HARE
 (softer)
 That is good to hear. Spring will soon be upon us and the colder nights will be but a memory for another year.

She nods in agreement.

MRS. CONNOWAY
 The winters do not get any easier the older I get.

HARE
 I could well believe that, but as long as you have a good fire and food in your belly you will be fine.

MRS. CONNOWAY
 How true.

She glances down at the lodgings then back at Hare.

MRS. CONNOWAY (CONT'D)
 (curious)
 So your new lodgers have settled in? It must be a good few weeks they've been here.

HARE
 They have.

MRS. CONNOWAY
 (surprised)
 And a fellow Irishman from what I heard?

Hare laughs.

HARE
 He is that. Birds of a feather, eh?

MRS. CONNOWAY
 Nothing wrong in that. Good, hard-working men are a rarity. The more the merrier.

HARE
 That's very kind of you. Some folk don't take too kindly to us lot coming over to earn a wage.

MRS. CONNOWAY
Aye, well they'd be the kind with a
mind as narrow as this close.

HARE
Aye you're right there.

Hare is about to step past but stops as Mrs Connoway continues.

MRS. CONNOWAY
And his lass seems a bonnie woman?

HARE
Aye, he found a wee diamond there,
he did.

There is momentary awkward silence.

HARE (CONT'D)
And where would you be off to this
night?

MRS. CONNOWAY
Just nipping yonder to see Mrs Law
for a wee natter before the night
ends.

She thumbs in the direction of the top of the close. Hare nods as he wipes his dry mouth.

HARE
Catching up on the day's events?

MRS. CONNOWAY
Aye there's always something
happening round these parts.

HARE
(gruff)
Aye, well I hope we don't end up
part of your talk.

MRS. CONNOWAY
Of course not, Mr Hare. What kind
of neighbour do you take me for?

Hare leans forward with a wry smile.

HARE
The kind that minds her own
business, I hope.

She smiles innocently before chuckling.

MRS. CONNOWAY

Don't you have any concerns about that, Mr Hare. What goes on in your home is of no concern to me.

Hare nods and grins.

HARE

Wise words. You have a good night, now.

Hare starts walking towards the lodgings.

MRS. CONNOWAY

And you.

Mrs. Connaway walks up the close as Hare advances to his front door.

INT. GENTLEMAN'S' STUDY - NIGHT

The same men as before remain in their seats but the room is sparse. Glasses are near empty suggesting the gathering is all but over. The bottle on the table stands half full.

Knox pulls out his pocket watch to establish the time.

KNOX

Well gentlemen, I believe it is time for me to depart this convivial gathering, for I have another busy day tomorrow.

As he rises from his chair, his assistants follow suit.

FERGUSON

Yes, it has been a most enjoyable evening.

Wilson leans back smiling and raises his half glass.

WILSON

It has been a pleasure seeing you again Robert.

Monro is slightly intoxicated. He leans forward and his arm slips on the rest. He composes himself.

MONRO

And your entourage.

He grimaces at Knox's assistants and half-heartedly raises his near empty glass.

Knox side steps the low table and pats Monro on the side of his upper arm as he smiles at Professor Wilson then begins to leave.

KNOX
(stoic)
An enlightening evening it has
been.

All four men depart the scene leaving Monro and Wilson.

Once Knox and the others are out of sight, Monro leans over to Wilson.

MONRO
Did you see the way he looked at
me?

WILSON
(dismissive)
Nothing that should raise the
hackles.

MONRO
I'd say I hit a nerve.

Monro leans forward and grabs the bottle and proceeds to pour a drink.

MONRO (CONT'D)
Sleeps well at night? Ha! No doubt
counting bodies being pulled from
the ground till he slumbers.

Wilson shakes his head in disbelief.

WILSON
Come, come. Surely you don't mean
that?

MONRO
He is up to no good, I swear.

Monro tries to light a cigar but his hand shakes in agitation. He tuts, the match sparks and he lights the cigar, throwing the match in disgust into the fireplace while reaching for his drink.

MONRO (CONT'D)
Rumour has it he is well accustomed
to the industry of the
resurrectionists.

Wilson calmly takes a sip from his glass. He looks around to see a couple of men talking, then turns to Monro. He leans over.

WILSON
(softly)
Everyone is aware of that dark
trade Alexander. It is not
exclusive to Knox alone.

MONRO
(indiscreet)
No it is not, but I know he outbids
all like a man possessed.

Wilson signals to Munro to keep his voice down.

WILSON
(whispers)
Be careful what you say, man.

Monro looks over, puffing aggressively. He is unimpressed.

Wilson places a reassuring hand on Munro's arm.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Be concerned only with the path you
walk. Remember, only fools rush in
where angels fear to tread.

Monro looks at Wilson in frustration.

MONRO
While we are reduced to squabbling
over bodies like pigs in a trough?

WILSON
I fear your frustrations do not lie
with Knox but with your own
predicament.

Monro looks surprised.

MONRO
What are you suggesting?

WILSON
Do you join the stampede or bide
your time?

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - NIGHT

Embers glow in the fireplace and the four members sit around singing and laughing.

BURKE

That was a fine song. You women
sing sweetly but, Hare, you sure
know how to kill a tune.

MARGARET HARE

He could clear the High Street with
one verse!

The others laugh.

HELEN MCDOUGAL

You're being unfair Maggie. He
could clear the CITY!

Laughter ensues among the group apart from Hare who finds
the mockery not to his taste.

HARE

Aye yer a feckin bunch of
comedians, ye are.

Hare staggers to his feet.

HARE - (CONT'D)

Christ I need a piss.

He advances towards the door adjacent to the foot of the bed
that leads to the side entrance.

HARE

That old man could sleep for
Scotland. He hasn't moved in hours,
the old sod.

Hare leans down and nudges him.

HARE (CONT'D)

Hey, you old soldier. You're
missing all the fun.

Margaret, giddy with the drink, waves away at Hare.

MARGARET HARE

Leave him be. If he's unwell then
sleep is the best thing for him.

Hare nudges him again.

HARE
Douglas?

Hare ponders as he studies the unresponsive old man.

MARGARET HARE
What are you doing?

Hare continues to look at Douglas. The others in the room are silent. They watch Hare.

HARE
He's not breathing.

MARGARET HARE
What?

Hare prods Old Donald.

HARE
I said the old sod is dead.

Margaret drunkenly gets to her feet and meanders towards Hare as he leans down and starts rummaging through the old man's pockets.

MARGARET HARE
(shocked)
What are you doing?!

HARE
(anger)
He owed us rent! I told you not to trust the bugger.

Flapping her arms wildly, she tries to move Hare aside but he pushes her away.

MARGARET HARE
He didn't die to dodge his debt, you fool.

HARE
(very angry)
We needed that money.

Margaret steps back. She places her hands on her waist.

MARGARET HARE
(condescending)
And you're solving that problem?

Hare isn't listening as he is too busy turning the body over to remove a belt.

HARE
 (to himself)
 We can sell that.

Hare pulls the belt of with force.

Margaret realises the severity of the situation and grabs Hare's shoulder.

MARGARET HARE
 (stern)
 In my house I get a share!

HARE
 You've changed your tune.

MARGARET HARE
 If this is our lot then it'll have
 to do. A dead man brings nothing to
 the table.

Burke, watching, belches, shaking his head in disbelief.

BURKE
 (dismissive)
 You'll get other lodgers.

Margaret turns and points to the front door.

MARGARET HARE
 They're not lining up out there,
 you know.

Hare steps back and studies the body as Burke mumbles incoherently. The room falls silent as Margaret studies the coins in her hand.

Margaret turns to Hare, perplexed, while Hare rubs his chin in thought.

HARE
 He might still be worth something.

Margaret pushes him in the shoulder.

MARGARET HARE
 To who?

Burke's sniggering stops when Helen elbows him in the ribs. He grimaces at her, but she offers a hard stare.

BURKE
 You going simple?

Hare turns to face them all.

HARE
The University.

Burke appears preoccupied as he fumbles for a jug, but Helen and Margaret have his attention.

BURKE
What you saying?

Hare tries to compose himself as he walks towards the fireplace. Reaching the mantelpiece, he leans to, placing a hand to steady his weight watching the flames dance.

HARE
I've heard they pay for bodies.

He glances over at the body then back to Burke.

HARE (CONT'D)
(to Burke)
Help me and there'd be something in
it for you.

Helen places a hand on Burke's arm and looks at him with caution. He returns the glance.

BURKE
I'm not so sure Hare. There's no
shortage of space in Calton Jail
for such ideas.

HELEN MCDUGAL
Isn't it illegal?

HARE
No. They take them all the time and
they pay well.

Burke's interest is piqued. He rubs his face with his hands in a vain attempt to sober up.

BURKE
How well?

HARE
You won't need to mend shoes for
one.

Margaret, coming to her senses, looks at Hare.

MARGARET HARE
Pay for the lodgings?

Hare confidently nods his head.

HARE

And get us out of this hell hole.

Burke, warming to the idea, turns to Helen.

BURKE

We could do with the money.

Helen, the least drunk of the four, nervously rises.

HELEN MCDOUGAL

How are you going to get -

Helen points to the body.

HELEN MCDOUGAL (CONT'D)

- that out of here?

Hare, stands upright and glances between the two women.

HARE

There's coffins down the yard we could use and there's the cuddy and cart to take him.

Helen tries to comprehend what he is suggesting.

HELEN MCDOUGAL

And you're just going to saunter up to the doctors and hand it over? Just like that?

Hare nods confidently as the idea grows in his head.

HARE

I know someone from the tavern who works there. David Paterson just round yonder.

He gestures in a direction to where he means, while Helen appears agitated.

HARE (CONT'D)

I could go round and speak to him.

HELEN MCDOUGAL

(incredulous)

Is this madness?

Burke rises carefully to his feet.

BURKE
If this Paterson refuses then
nothing more comes of it, but if he
accepts then me and Hare can take
him up.

Burke looks directly at Hare who nods reassuringly then
turns to Helen.

BURKE (CONT'D)
(softly to Helen)
It'll work.

The room is silent as their shadows flicker across the walls
to the glow of the fire.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
On one condition.

BURKE
(soft)
What?

HELEN MCDOUGAL
We get a priest.

BURKE
(surprised)
At this hour?

Hare rubs his stubbled face, stretching the tendons of his
neck as he ponders the moment.

HARE
You religious?

Hare holds Helen's attention, raising an eyebrow and seeking
confirmation.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
(determined)
It's the least he deserves.

Hare holds his gaze at the woman then slowly nods.

HARE
So be it, if it'll shut your mouth.

FADE TO: BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. GENTLEMAN'S' STUDY/FOYER - NIGHT

Professor Munro and Professor Wilson are handed their overcoats by the doorman as Archibald Johnson sits watching the men as they prepare to leave. As they approach, he rises.

MONRO

It has been a fine evening John
even if the company has been
rather...trite.

The doorman advances to the door and opens it for the two men.

WILSON

(sighs)

Come Alexander. Leave him be. Your
time will come. I am sure.

MR. JOHNSON (O.S.)

Professor Munro.

The two men turn to face Johnson.

MONRO

Sir?

Johnson smiles and holds out a business card.

MR. JOHNSON

May I have a moment of your time?

John Wilson looks perplexed at Alexander Munro, who takes the card and reads it.

MONRO

It is late Mr....Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON

I will be brief, sir.

John Wilson pats Professor Munro on the upper arm affectionately.

WILSON

I must be on my way.

He briefly looks at Johnson.

WILSON (CONT'D)

(to Munro)

We will catch up soon, I am sure.

Munro nods as Wilson departs. The doorman closes the door and exits.

MONRO
Make it quick if you will.

MR. JOHNSON
Then I shall cut to the chase.

Johnson glances around the foyer to ensure they are alone.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
(softly)
I believe there are misdeeds taking place within the auspices of these hallowed walls.

Munro sighs.

MONRO
What the students do in their own time is none of my business.

MR. JOHNSON
Not the students, sir. [pauses] The lecturers.

Munro looks surprised.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
And one in particular.

MONRO
Be careful what you say man, for I am such that you speak of.

MR. JOHNSON
If there was bedevilment amongst your number would it not raise your concern?

Munro shows no reaction, his face stiff with pomposity.

MONRO
You have someone in mind?

MR. JOHNSON
Doctor Knox -

Munro contains a stifled chuckle as he raises his hand to stop Johnson proceeding.

MONRO
You speak to the wrong audience.

MR. JOHNSON

But -

MONRO

Say no more, sir.

Johnson looks disappointed as Munro pulls out a cigar from his inner jacket pocket

MONRO (CONT'D)

When I was a young man...many moons ago...my father would often take me down to the Nor Loch for a spot of fishing.

He proceeds to light the cigar. Clouds of smoke engulf the two men.

MONRO (CONT'D)

"Alexander", he would say,
"Patience and determination are the foundations of any good catch."

Munro chuckles to himself as he reminisces before drawing from his cigar.

MONRO (CONT'D)

Then he pointed to the water. "But as silent as they are, even the fish will give themselves away."

Munro pauses.

MONRO (CONT'D)

And I looked down to where he was pointing then I saw what he meant. Bubbles rising to the top.

Johnson listens intently with a calm demeanour.

MONRO (CONT'D)

You, Mr Johnson, have arrived at that loch. You just need to look harder.

Munro advances towards the doorway, bellowing smoke as he departs.

MONRO (CONT'D)

It is not for me to catch your quarry.

Johnson watches as Munro departs.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - NIGHT

In the candlelight, the four residents stand around the coffin in the middle of the room as JOHN INGLIS [55], the local minister, is down on one knee completing the last rites while another man hammers the last nail on the lid.

A tea chest can be seen in the background stuffed with hay. John Inglis stands up and shakes his head in sorrow.

HARE

Thank you for coming at short notice father.

JOHN INGLIS

We are available at any time, my son.

Inglis surveys the room.

JOHN INGLIS (CONT'D)

I expect a pauper's funeral will suffice?

HARE

As you can see we are a family of few means.

Inglis nods sympathetically.

JOHN INGLIS

I understand.

The coffin nailer picks up his bag and waits in the brief silence.

HELEN MCDUGAL

I hear some families do bequeath to the University?

JOHN INGLIS

Ah. They do indeed.

Hare stares hard at Helen.

HARE

(to Inglis)

But as a family we agreed Donald deserved even a simple funeral.

Inglis is oblivious to the tension as he smiles appreciatively.

JOHN INGLIS
Our Lord never intended we should
be treated like specimens in a jar.

HELEN MCDUGAL
Still, it is not illegal?

An air of awkward silence fills the room.

MARGARET HARE
Father, my sister is a believer in
the sciences.

She turns to Helen.

MARGARET HARE (CONT'D)
Which we do not berate.

She returns her gaze to Inglis.

MARGARET HARE (CONT'D)
But as a family we always agreed a
burial was for the best. Didn't we
Helen?

Helen appears tight lipped as she nods.

JOHN INGLIS
(to Helen)
My dear, don't be burdened by such
thoughts.

He smiles reassuringly.

JOHN INGLIS (CONT'D)
Leave this talk of science to
others and let God embrace your
loved one.

In thoughtful contemplation, Inglis looks down at the coffin.

JOHN INGLIS (CONT'D)
For he shall go forth unto the
wisdom of our Lord.

Hare is getting restless.

HARE
Will we have time to sit with
Donald before his coffin is taken?

Inglis gathers himself.

JOHN INGLIS
Of course. I will return when the
sun rises, to collect him.

HARE
(curt)
Thank you.

Inglis, clasps his hands together and gently nods his head
before making for the door.

JOHN INGLIS
Until tomorrow then.

Hare follows the priest and his associate towards the door.
After the men have left, the door is closed followed by a
palpable release of tension amongst the tenants.

MARGARET HARE
(to Helen)
What are you thinking?

Margaret advances towards the others.

MARGARET HARE (CONT'D)
(irritated)
We agreed!

HARE
(urgently)
Shut up! We have no time to lose.

WIPE TO:

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - LATER

Burke and Hare have the nails removed and the lid of the
coffin on the floor next to the tea chest, as the two women
enter dragging two sacks each. Breathless and sweating they
drop the sacks and close the door. Helen leans back in
discomfort, her hands pressing the base of her back to ease
the pain, while Margaret eyes the body in the coffin.

HARE
(to the women)
Get the bark in it.

He pivots towards Burke.

HARE (CONT'D)
Deal with him while I see this
Paterson.

Burke nods in acknowledgement as Hare urgently leaves the room.

WIPE TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

In the darkly lit street, nothing stirs as Hare knocks on the door. For a moment there is no sign of life until a light slowly rises through the closed curtain in the lodgings, which rustles as a face briefly peers out. Hare raises a hand in acknowledgement and the curtain closes. Following the sound of a lock turning, Hare can see the door handle twisting then the door slowly creaking ajar, for the face of DAVID PATERSON [35], to appear.

MR PATERSON
Sir, what time is this to be
chapping one's door?

HARE
My apologies for disturbing you, Mr
Paterson, but I am told you are in
the employ of the doctors who take
bodies?

Paterson opens the door wider to reveal himself dressed in a black suit, white collar and matching black tie, as if prepared to be somewhere else. He glances in both directions to ensure no-one is around.

MR PATERSON
(whispers)
Who are you, sir, and why do you
ask such a question?

Hare steps closer to Paterson.

HARE
I am William Hare, sir, and have
come into possession of a suitable
body. His deliverance can be
secured this night, if it is
suitable.

Paterson is unimpressed.

MR PATERSON

This is a most inconvenient time to be approaching oneself on business matters.

HARE

Death was sudden and the family have no means for a proper burial.

MR PATERSON

See me tomorrow and we can make arrangements.

HARE

(urgent)

Sir, the body lies awaiting in a coffin.

Paterson eyes him suspiciously as Hare advances till they are almost nose-to-nose.

HARE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

If it is not gone tonight the priest will have it.

There is a moments silence.

MR PATERSON

You know the Surgeons Hall?

Hare nods.

MR PATERSON (CONT'D)

Be there in half an hour.

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - NIGHT

As Burke stuffs hay over the body into the tea chest, the women are placing the bark from the bags into the coffin to add weight.

HELEN MCDUGAL

That should be enough to give it weight?

Margaret nods in agreement.

The door opens and Hare enters. In the background a cart can be seen through the open door. Hare closes the door and advances towards the tea chest to check their handiwork.

HARE

Good.

MARGARET HARE

Did you speak to the man?

HARE

Aye.

MARGARET HARE

How much will we get?

HARE

He didn't say.

MARGARET HARE

Did you not ask?

HARE

(angrier)

Woman, we'll get something. Don't you worry.

MARGARET HARE

All this running around better not be for a shilling or two.

HARE

Whatever we get will be better than nothing.

He glances towards Burke

HARE (CONT'D)

We need to be quick.

EXT. TANNERS CLOSE - CONTINUOUS

Burke and Hare carry the tea chest out into the pitch black close and place it on the awaiting cart, ready to be pulled by the horse.

BURKE

(whispers)

You lead the cuddy and I'll steady the goods.

Hare gives a gentle tug of the reigns and the horse's hooves clack up towards the main street with the two men.

EXT. WEST PORT STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Slowly, they make their way through the sleepy street, nervously looking around for no signs of life. Somewhere, a dog barks but otherwise nothing stirs.

BURKE

I never thought that here I'd be lugging a dead body through the streets of Auld Reekie with ya.

He chuckles to himself.

HARE

I don't think Old Donald will be any the wiser for his predicament.

Burke is apprehensive. Looking around.

BURKE

Can't say I'd be resting easy if I was watching me body being carted through the night to make the acquaintance of the scalpel.

HARE

He'll have made his piece with the Lord.

BURKE

(laughs)

Aye it might be respectful to raise a glass to the old man the morrow so there's no hard feelings.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. GREYFRIARS GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Meanwhile, three shadowy men walk silently through the graveyard carrying the tools of their grave robbing trade.

They stop at a fresh grave and survey the burial ground. One of them looks around, as if to be sure no-one else is following.

As they drop their tools to the ground, one of them advances to the headstone and leans towards it to read the engraving.

An owl hoots.

Two of the grave robbers pick up their shovels and prepare to dig.

GRAVE ROBBER #1
(whispers)
This one?

The third man pulls out a piece of paper and reads it.

GRAVE ROBBER #2
Wait.

He walks away towards another grave while the others stand watching. One of them kicks the fresh dirt in boredom.

GRAVE ROBBER #3
(whispers)
You'd think he'd know which one.

The man who has walked away whistles at them. They look to where the sound is coming from. They watch as he advances back towards them, ripping the piece of paper he is holding and dropping it to the ground. The slight breeze carries the pieces of paper away.

GRAVE ROBBER #2
Leave it. That one over there.

He points over to another headstone.

GRAVE ROBBER #2 (CONT'D)
It's fresh.

The two men pick up their tools and walk towards the designated grave.

EXT. STREET SCENE/LANE - DAY

Meanwhile, with Hare leading the horse and Burke to the rear they continue on along the street. Hare turns to check Burke just as a figure steps out of the shadows, lurching towards them in a drunken stupor. Burke spots the figure.

BURKE
Someone's coming.

Hare turns to look.

HARE
Shit.

The figure re-appears staggering towards them, fumbling in his pockets.

DRUNK/PORTER
 (to himself)
 Ish no up tae yoo ya big wally.
 Haud yer tongue before ah -

He looks up to see the two men advancing.

DRUNK/PORTER (CONT'D)
 - Uh hello shtrangers. Oot fir a
 wee shtroll thish fine night?

Hare eyes the drunk.

HARE
 You had a wee parde to yerself this
 night?

The drunk wanders closer towards them.

DRUNK/PORTER
 Ach a wee drink or two to ease my
 sorrows. It's been an awfy day.
 Awfy.

The drunk reaches the men, who come to a standstill, his eyes glazed as he offers a toothless grimace.

HARE
 Sorry to hear.

DRUNK/PORTER
 Nae job. Nae hoose. Nae wife.
 Kicked oot by a'body. Nae fuckin
 hope.

Hare points over to a tenement across the street.

HARE
 There's beds at the hostel just
 over there.

DRUNK/PORTER
 (whispers)
 It's a doss house for the bums and
 I'm no bum.

The drunk shakes his head vigorously.

DRUNK/PORTER (CONT'D)
 Is that what it's come to?

HARE

A good nights sleep and you never
know what tomorrow will bring, eh?

The drunk tries to compose himself as he pats the neck of
the horse.

DRUNK/PORTER

(forceful)

You think?[hiccups] Shafted by
those I trusted and those I loved.
Thieves and whores. The lot of
them.

Burke scans the surrounding street nervously.

BURKE

We need to be going.

DRUNK/PORTER

How can you have any faith in
humanity when you're treated like a
worthless bag of bones?

HARE

There's no understanding some folk.

DRUNK/PORTER

Aye, I suppose.

The drunk studies the cuddy.

DRUNK/PORTER (CONT'D)

That's a right nice cuddy you have
there. Bit late for taking it oot,
mind you.

HARE

Night shift. Delivery.

The drunk walks towards the tea chest.

DRUNK/PORTER

Oh aye. Ah see. A richt big box ye
have there.

The drunk studies the box with "Tea" printed on the side.

BURKE

(angry)

Hare!

DRUNK/PORTER
 (disbelieving)
 Tea? Who the fuck drinks tea?

HARE
 We've got to -

DRUNK/PORTER
 If it disnae kill ye, the water
 will.

Echoing through the street, the drunk's laugh cuts through the silence as he slams his hand against the side of the tea chest.

BURKE
 (aggressive)
 Careful there mister. It's valuable goods.

DRUNK/PORTER
 (indignant)
 Aye everything's valuable to these fuckin toffs o'er that way in their big hooses and their fancy clothes.

The drunk steps towards Burke.

DRUNK/PORTER (CONT'D)
 (dejected)
 Takin' ma job. Ma dignity. Ma hope.

Hare is on edge as his eyes follow the movements of the drunk. His gaze meets Burke's and he shakes his head as the stranger stops inches away, the smell of alcohol snaking around his presence.

BURKE
 (softly)
 We need to go.

Resigned, the stranger shrugs his shoulders and sighs. In the quiet street, his eyes begin to water as he looks at Burke.

DRUNK/PORTER
 (whispers)
 Aye, I suppose you do.

The man composes himself, resiliently sniffs the air and walks away, as the two men's eyes follow him before Burke and Hare look at each other then continue their journey.

FADE TO: BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. SURGEONS HALL/LANE - NIGHT

Not long later they reach the rear door to the Surgeons Hall, midway up a cobbled lane, where David Paterson waits under a gaslight, apprehensive and vigilant, as he watches the two men approach.

MR PATERSON

In here.

SWIPE TO:

INT. SURGEONS HALL/MORTUARY - MOMENTS LATER

Tables and trolleys occupy the room and work benches are populated with tools of the trade. A gas light flickers.

Knox's hands are clasped behind his back as he stands authoritatively with Ferguson, Jones and Miller behind him watching the men carry the tea chest into the large room.

He advances towards them and looks down at the cargo.

KNOX

You have a subject?

Nervously, Hare removes his cap and nods, to which Burke follows suit.

HARE

Aye. Old Donald's death - sudden, you know. Family - ah -

BURKE

Too poor, sir. Sad, it is.

HARE

Very sad.

Hare glances at Burke.

HARE (CONT'D)

Such is life.

Burke nods in agreement.

BURKE

Aye.

Knox carefully removes some of the hay to reveal the body then nods with satisfaction. He eyes the men meticulously before pivoting and walking around the table, an air of tension permeating the room.

KNOX
(stoic)
Remove and strip the subject, then
place him on this table.

HARE
Aye, sir.

As Burke and Hare remove the body, Knox turns to his assistants.

KNOX
Be sure the theatre is ready for
tomorrow.

FERGUSON
I'll check, sir.

Ferguson heads for the door, leaving his colleagues to watch their mentor at work.

KNOX
(to Paterson)
You may leave.

MR PATERSON
Aye sir.

Paterson exits as Burke and Hare lift the naked body and place it onto the table retreating back to allow Knox and the remaining assistants to supervise.

KNOX
You understand what is done with
the bodies that are brought here?

HARE
I do sir. But it is for a good
cause, is it not?

Knox gently handles the head of Douglas, moving it from side to side as he speaks with an authority that indicates who is in charge.

KNOX
Without such subjects men cannot
learn.

HARE
The family will be encouraged.

Hare nudges Burke.

BURKE
Aye.

Knox continues to study the body, all the time being watched by the others in the room.

KNOX
Nothing broken. Reasonable muscle for a man of his age.

HARE
Ex-soldier, sir.

KNOX
Hmm. Some teeth there. Good cranium.

HARE
Is - Is he of use?

Knox turns to Burke and Hare and nods.

KNOX
He will do.

HARE
(pleased. upbeat)
Grand.

Knox circles around the table to his suppliers, reaching into the inside of his jacket and pulling out his wallet.

KNOX
For your trouble.

Hare's eyes widen as he enthusiastically accepts the payment.

HARE
That is kind of you, sir. Much appreciated, sir.

Knox looks back at the body.

KNOX
Hmm.

Knox turns back to Burke and Hare and studies them for a moment.

KNOX (CONT'D)
I did not get your names.

Hare bows very slightly in reverence.

HARE
Hare, sir.

Hare glances at Burke.

BURKE
Burke, sir.

Hare smiles.

HARE
At your service.

Knox is unmoved. The two assistants stand silently behind, watching.

KNOX
Well, gentlemen, similar payments
are guaranteed should you happen
upon other subjects.

Suddenly the mood is relaxed as Knox smiles in appreciation.

HARE
We'll keep that in mind, sir.

KNOX
Excellent. Till the next time?

HARE
Indeed.

The two men pivot to depart.

KNOX
Mr Hare.

Hare turns back to face Knox abruptly.

HARE
Yes, sir.

KNOX
Take the box with you.
We do not collect them.

Hare subserviently nods and lifts the box before leaving with his partner.

EXT. SURGEONS HALL/LANE - MOMENTS LATER

The two men stand in the lane revelling in the cash they possess.

BURKE
(excited)
Never have I seen so much for one
job. A year's wages, easily, in one
night!

HARE
Nor I partner.

They place the box onto the cart and begin the journey home, walking on either side of the cuddy.

HARE (CONT'D)
I think we may have stumbled on
work that offers good rewards to
fill our pockets.

BURKE
This is a blessing for sure.

The men lead the horse down the lane.

HARE
What an opportunity this business
offers.

BURKE
It was a one-off Hare. We -
Hare raises a hand to interject.

HARE
It doesn't have to be -

Burke shakes his head and tries to pull the cuddy's cheek strap to continue walking but Hare stops.

HARE (CONT'D)
- and I'm not living on scraps of
hope anymore.

The men continue into the main street in thoughtful silence.

HARE (CONT'D)
My eyes have been opened partner.

They are silent as they make their way ahead.

HARE (CONT'D)
 We've both seen service. We've both
 done things...for king and country.

Burke says nothing but looks ahead in thought.

HARE (CONT'D)
 And the dead do not talk.

Burke turns and studies his partner, looking for any sign
 that this is just talk in jest or a serious proposition.

BURKE
 You serious?

Burke ponders on Hare's words.

HARE
 Very much.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. KNOX NEWINGTON RESIDENCY/FOYER - DAY

The following day and the sun shines brightly before the
 Georgian house owned by Dr Knox. His sister MARY KNOX [26]
 stands in the foyer at the front door receiving mail from a
 delivery boy.

MARY KNOX
 (to mailboy)
 Thank you.

She closes the door and turns, thumbing through the letters
 then places them all on a side table apart from one, which
 she opens. As she is walking, she is reading the letter. It
 is good news.

MARY KNOX (CONT'D)
 Oh Jessie! Jessie!

INT. KNOX NEWINGTON RESIDENCY/SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mary rushes into the room waving the letter to her sister
 JESSIE KNOX [24] who is sitting drinking from a cup.

MARY KNOX
 We have been invited to the next
 charity bazaar.

Mary reads the letter.

MARY KNOX (CONT'D)
"to raise funds for the unfortunate
in this fair city"

Jessie rises and advances to Mary, gesturing to see the letter.

MARY KNOX (CONT'D)
"inviting Miss Knox and companion"

Mary hands the invitation and accompanying letter to her sister in contained excitement who proceeds to read from the card.

JESSIE KNOX
How delightful. I shall donate some
of my cakes.

Jessie reads more from the letter.

JESSIE KNOX (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
It states that Sir Walter Scott
will partake in a reading. How
exciting!

Jessie is animated as she crosses the floor.

She pivots.

JESSIE KNOX (CONT'D)
By all accounts, he is an
impressive orator who can hold an
audience in the palms of his hands
with his fine words.

MARY KNOX
Imagine if we were able to meet
him.

JESSIE KNOX
Oh my, that would be wonderful.

Dr Knox enters the room.

KNOX
(calm)
Good morning sisters. There is
excitement in the air?

Jessie is beaming.

JESSIE KNOX

We have received an invitation to a charity bazaar which promises to be quite an event.

Mary corrects her.

MARY KNOX

I, Jess.

JESSIE KNOX

(sheepish)

Well. Yes. But I will be accompanying you?

Mary laughs as her sister shows Knox the letter, which he reads.

KNOX

(to Mary)

I have never known two ladies to be consumed with the activities of society quite like you two.

He hands the letter back to Jessie.

JESSIE KNOX

Robert, you sound so pompous! There is more to life beyond the lecture theatre.

KNOX

(unimpressed)

No doubt your friends in the New Town will be enthralled by this social event.

Mary advances to stand beside Jess, in support.

MARY KNOX

But?

KNOX

Is it not about keeping up appearances?

Knox crosses the room to collect his medical case.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Not that my opinion should preclude you from enjoying the company of your friends.

JESSIE KNOX

You are such a grump, Robert. Many there would be interested in hearing about your work should you care to offer your presence.

MARY KNOX

She is quite right, brother. If Sir Walter Scott can be enticed, I am sure someone such as yourself would be more than welcome.

Knox walks towards the doorway.

INT. KNOX NEWINGTON RESIDENCY/FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Knox walks across the foyer towards the front door, followed by his sisters.

KNOX

I have no time for such trivial escapades.

As he retrieves his coat, his sisters look at each other and suppress giggles.

JESSIE KNOX

You are so dismissive. Isn't he Mary?

MARY KNOX

(air of pomposity)

Well, we will enjoy the moment when it comes.

KNOX

I'm sure you will. Now, if you will excuse me, my carriage awaits.

MARY KNOX

You are leaving so early?

KNOX

I wish to see Susan before the first of my lectures.

JESSIE KNOX

She -

Jessie is apprehensive to ask.

JESSIE KNOX (CONT'D)

- keeps well?

He puts his coat on, refraining from eye contact, appearing preoccupied.

KNOX
For one with child? Yes.

MARY KNOX
We have not seen her in some time.
Does it embarrass you to have us in
her presence?

Knox glances towards his sister.

KNOX
You know that is not the case.

A sudden tension rises between the three.

JESSIE KNOX
Mary -

MARY KNOX
Yet since you purchased that
property we have not crossed paths
with her.

Knox attends to checking the contents of his bag, avoiding eye contact with his sisters.

KNOX
It was better for all of us.

MARY KNOX
Hmm. Better for you?

Irritated, he turns to her.

KNOX
What do you infer?

JESSIE KNOX
She is just saying we should have
everyone together one afternoon.

Jessie nudges Mary.

JESSIE KNOX (CONT'D)
(to Mary)
Don't you?

Their brother closes the bag and prepares to leave.

KNOX
 (dismissive)
 If you so wish.

Knox turns and exits.

SWIPE TO:

EXT. LILLYPUT COTTAGE - DAY

In a country lane lined with trees and hedgerow, Dr Knox steps out of the carriage and stands looking satisfied at the cottage in front of him, then begins to walk towards the garden gate and eventually to the front door, with the carriage and driver remaining parked for his return.

INT. LILLYPUT COTTAGE/LIVINGROOM - CONTINUOUS

Knox enters a small living room decoratively adorned with comfortable furniture. Compared to his town residence, it is not palatial but it retains all the comforts of one with an affordable income.

SUSAN KNOX [30], clearly in the latter stages of pregnancy, looks up from her needlework and smiles welcomingly.

SUSAN KNOX
 My dearest. You surprise me. I did not expect you home until the weekend.

Knox, with his hat and coat removed, advances. Susan turns her head for him to stiffly peck her on the cheek.

KNOX
 I wanted to be assured you are in good spirit and of sound health.

He sits at the chair next to her, crosses his legs and methodically smooths his thigh to remove any particles on his trouser leg.

SUSAN KNOX
 I am resting regularly and eat well for two.

KNOX
 Good.

He looks around the room.

KNOX (CONT'D)
 Does these new surroundings accommodate all your needs?

She places her needlework on the side table.

SUSAN KNOX

Yes, the peace and tranquillity
does wonders for us.

KNOX

Good. It pleases me to see you
looking so radiant.

SUSAN KNOX

The air is refreshing here. So
inviting to take regular walks
without disturbance.

Her husband nods approvingly.

KNOX

More conducive to the raising of a
family.

SUSAN KNOX

Lillyput Cottage is perfect and
will provide a good home for all of
us.

He leans back in the chair.

KNOX

Compared to the foul air that
suffocates the city streets, it is
a godsend.

Susan offers a supportive smile as he reaches forward to
take her hand.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Here, our children will be afforded
a life that promises much.

SUSAN KNOX

Your words are heartening.

Their hands separate as Susan shuffles her body into a more
comfortable position.

SUSAN KNOX (CONT'D)

Talking of family, how are your
sisters?

KNOX

They ask kindly of you and hope to
see you soon.

SUSAN KNOX
 (surprised)
 Do they?

KNOX
 It might surprise you that they are
 keen for us to gather in
 celebration.

She raises an unconvinced eyebrow.

SUSAN KNOX
 How so?

KNOX
 For our child, of course.

SUSAN KNOX
 Despite their reservations of my
 family?

Knox rises and approaches the glass drinks cabinet to pour
 himself a drink.

KNOX
 It is not as simple as that.

SUSAN KNOX
 Still, I'm sure affording them a
 roof can dispel such judgements.

KNOX
 They mean no harm.

SUSAN KNOX
 No? You need to be stronger with
 them as you need to be at the
 university.

Knox takes a sip from his glass.

KNOX
 Work is progressing without cause
 for concern.

SUSAN KNOX
 (calm but cutting)
 You have said before that Munro has
 plans to become Chair of Medicine
 and Anatomy. A role you are more
 than able to command. Yet you allow
 him to whisper his bile thoughts to
 anyone who would listen.

KNOX

He blames me for his lack of lectures.

SUSAN KNOX

Then you need to ensure the Board are not swayed by his grievances.

KNOX

He can howl at the moon for eternity, but it is I who commands the respect of the students. The Board know this.

SUSAN KNOX

Be sure it remains that way.

Susan rises carefully from her chair, wincing from the discomfort of her state.

SUSAN KNOX (CONT'D)

Deny him that what he needs most.

Knox delays placing the glass to his lips as he looks at his wife in anticipation as she walks towards him and pecks him on the cheek.

SUSAN KNOX (CONT'D)

Bodies.

SWIPE TO:

EXT. GREYFRIARS GRAVEYARD - DAY

Johnson is walking along the path that leads to the entrance of the parish. Ahead is John Inglis, the minister, with his back to Johnson, as he closes the main door of the parish church.

He turns round to see the reporter advancing.

JOHN INGLIS

Good morning, sir.

MR. JOHNSON

Morning pastor.

JOHN INGLIS

Can I be of assistance?

MR. JOHNSON

I was informed of a disturbance in your grounds last evening?

JOHN INGLIS
News does travel fast in these
parts. May I ask who you are and
why your interest in such matters?

MR. JOHNSON
My name is Archibald Johnson in the
employ of The Courant, sir.

He hands the minister a business card.

JOHN INGLIS
A newspaperman?

Johnson nods affirmatively.

JOHN INGLIS (CONT'D)
A purveyor of gossip?

Johnson ignores the jibe.

MR. JOHNSON
The body snatchers' work
proliferates at an alarming rate.

He indicates the surrounding graveyard.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
It has happened again?

Inglis relaxes, sighing in resignation.

JOHN INGLIS
Sadly, yes. Hallowed earth has been
disturbed once more.

The priest is followed by the reporter as they pass gated
mausoleums and graves protected by iron grids. The priest
points to the protections that are installed to secure the
dead.

JOHN INGLIS (CONT'D)
We live in dark times Mr. Johnson,
when we sleep uneasy, worrying our
dearly departed may not rest in
peace.

Up ahead a police officer and a grave digger are talking by
an empty grave. There is a moments silence as they advance.

JOHN INGLIS (CONT'D)

There is only one place where these stolen bodies are destined, sir, and it is but a stone's throw from where we tread.

MR. JOHNSON

The university?

JOHN INGLIS

What other place has the need for such activity?

The two men near the police officer and gravedigger.

MR. JOHNSON

Everyone knows but nothing is done.

The police officer and gravedigger turn to look at Johnson and Inglis.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(softly)

The law turns a blind eye. Petty crime is their limit.

JOHN INGLIS

Men of principle in cahoots with heathens of greed.

MR. JOHNSON

Very much. And a university that wields influence beyond our reach.

JOHN INGLIS

What chance do we have of ridding ourselves of this blight?

Silent, Johnson nods sympathetically.

They reach the grave. One empty coffin remains in the grave, the other has been discarded on the grass to one side with the lids showing signs of forceful entry.

JOHN INGLIS (CONT'D)

Well, here is your story for what it is worth.

Johnson acknowledges the police officer.

GRAVE POLICEMAN

You have an interest in this?

JOHN INGLIS
(to the officer)
He is a newspaperman.

Inglis turns to Johnson.

JOHN INGLIS (CONT'D)
Only by catching them in the act or
some willing witness, will these
criminals be brought to justice.

MR. JOHNSON
In all these years, such informants
are hard to come by.

JOHN INGLIS
Not surprising since they would be
risking their lives to even
consider talking to the police.

The officer is unimpressed by his words as Johnson circles
the grave followed by Inglis.

MR. JOHNSON
By shining a light on the
resurrectionists, it might
encourage all concerned to hold the
perpetrators to account.

JOHN INGLIS
Indeed.

MR. JOHNSON
How many robberies have you
suffered within your parish?

JOHN INGLIS
Too many but, as you can see, more
are being protected by these caged
lair.

Johnson studies the grave.

MR. JOHNSON
Did you find any evidence?

GRAVE POLICEMAN
What would you expect to find? A
calling card?

MR. JOHNSON
Two bodies?

JOHN INGLIS
Both recent.

Johnson surveys the area. Something catches his attention and he proceeds to leave the others, careful not to step on any graves, all the while being watched by the priest as the officer prepares to depart the scene of the crime.

GRAVE POLICEMAN
I'll report this to the sergeant back at the station, father, but there's nothing much I can do here.

Inglis turns to the police office.

JOHN INGLIS
Thank you officer.

EXT. GREYFRIARS GRAVEYARD - CONTINUOUS

About a hundred yards from the others, Johnson stands at a grave that has been disturbed. In the distance the police officer can be seen walking away as Inglis advances towards the reporter. The reporter bends down and picks up a piece of paper just as Inglis appears behind him.

JOHN INGLIS
What have you there?

Johnson studies it.

MR. JOHNSON
It looks like the remains of a note.

Written on the paper are the words "aterson", "Hall" and "night".

JOHN INGLIS
You think it has some meaning?

Johnson looks back towards the empty double grave then down at the disturbed earth at his feet.

MR. JOHNSON
It is possible this grave was to be the target.

He crouches down to study the mound of earth.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
See how the earth has been disturbed? A footprint.

He looks up at Inglis.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Two bodies are better than one.

Johnson rises and circles the grave.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
I believe the perpetrators
discovered a double burial and left
this spot for that.

Inglis looks down at the grave then over to the empty grave.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
And this note may be some
instruction.

JOHN INGLIS
Would it not be foolhardy of these
lawbreakers to be leaving such
items?

MR. JOHNSON
I suspect they are not renowned for
their intelligence or care.

JOHN INGLIS
Then hopefully you will garner some
information from this clue.

Johnson folds the piece of paper and slips it in the coat.

MR. JOHNSON
Thank you for your time, father. I
should be on my way.

JOHN INGLIS
Good luck in your investigations,
Mr. Johnson. May justice prevail.

Mr. Johnson exits the graveyard.

FADE TO: BLACK

FADE IN

INT. BLUE BLANKET INN - DAY

The inn is sparsely occupied and relatively quiet. It is mid-morning. Burke, Hare and their women sit opposite each other in a corner.

Each has a goblet of beer on the table in front of them with plates of food.

MARGARET HARE
(sighs)
Some decent food at last.

Burke gulps down his drink and wipes his mouth with his sleeve.

BURKE
We earned well from it.

Margaret rips her food with her hands, stuffing it in her mouth.

MARGARET HARE
A king's ransom.

Burke raises his tankard in celebration and salutes.

BURKE
Here's to Donald!

Burke and Margaret raise their tankards in salute.

MARGARET HARE
May he rest in peace.

Helen is quiet, picking her food and sipping her drink.

BURKE
(to Helen)
Are ye still frettin, lass?

He places a sympathetic hand on her shoulder but she is unmoved.

BURKE (CONT'D)
We have coins for plenty. Be grateful for our lot.

He gestures at the food and drink in front of them as Helen nods reluctantly in agreement.

MARGARET HARE
(sympathetic to Helen)
We got the minister like you wanted.

HELEN MCDUGAL
He should have had a burial.

Hare, who has been silent in contemplation rears his head.

HARE

Aye well beggars can't be choosers
and right now none of us are in any
position to get sentimental.

Burke nods his head in agreement as Hare leans in towards
the centre of the table, drawing the others towards him.

HARE (CONT'D)

But the question is: What happens
when the money runs out?

MARGARET HARE

We struggle again no doubt.

HARE

Aye, but what if me and Burke were
to fix things our way?

Helen faces Burke.

HELEN MCDUGAL

What way?

Burke raises a finger to his lips, indicating to Helen to be
quiet.

HARE

Supply the doctor with what he
needs...our way.

MARGARET HARE

Your way?

Hare leans his elbows on the table and clenches his fists.

MARGARET HARE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

That's gallows talk.

HARE

(whispers)

Look at us. Look where we are. Piss
and shit runs through the streets.
Scraping by on morsels. Clothes
hanging off us. You talk of
gallows. I say we're already dead.

Helen turns to Burke who nods back in agreement with what
his partner says.

BURKE
 (to Helen)
 Desperate times.

Margaret thinks about it as she slowly picks up a piece of food and chews. She looks over at Helen.

MARGARET HARE
 (to Helen)
 We're running out of options.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
 So it seems.

Helen takes a drink from her tankard.

HELEN MCDOUGAL (CONT'D)
 And if you're found out?

HARE
 Round here no-one cares who you are
 or what you do.

MARGARET HARE
 (to Helen)
 He's right, you know.

BURKE
 And before winter comes we'll be
 done and gone from here.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
 You better be right.

MARGARET HARE
 (to Hare)
 And where will this plan transpire?

HARE
 The lodgings.

Margaret clenches her teeth and stares hard at her partner.

MARGARET HARE
 Then whatever you earn, one pound
 goes to me before the rest is
 split.

Hare looks at her incongruously.

MARGARET HARE (CONT'D)
 It is my lodgings.

HELEN MCDUGAL
 (to Burke)
 I will deny all knowledge if you
 are caught. You understand?

Burke nods in agreement.

HARE
 (whispers)
 It seems we are in agreement.

Helen grabs her tankard and drinks from it while Margaret pulls out a clay pipe and begins to light it. Hare looks over at Burke and nods to Burke.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - NIGHT

Hare sits abreast an old woman while Burke pins down her legs. She struggles.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL WALL

A dank prison cell wall. Slowly a single line appears as if scratch in by an invisible hand.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - NIGHT

Burke drops a body into a tea chest.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL WALL

On the same prison wall, a second scratch appears.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - NIGHT

Burke and Hare carry a tea chest out of the house while Helen and Margaret stand by the fireplace watching.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL WALL

A third scratch appears on the wall.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. TANNERS CLOSE - NIGHT

Burke and Hare lead their cuddy and cart with a tea chest up the dark close.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL WALL

A fourth scratch appears on the wall.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. GRASSMARKET - DAY

The following day at the corner of a crowded street, Burke, casually smoking his clay pipe, and Hare, survey their surroundings looking for their next unsuspecting victim.

In front of them people are passing going about their daily business unaware of the pairs intentions. A hokey pokey ice cream seller is loudly offering his wares attracting a group of excited children. The noise of clacking hooves, from the melee of horses pulling carriages and wagons, fills the street. A police officer saunters past looking at the two men who remain relaxed.

Moments later, Burke nudges Hare and nods in the direction of an old man, frail and hobbling with a stick walking towards them.

HARE

Aye.

The old man is nearing them. Burke and Hare take a step forward when a stranger steps out from a doorway to greet the old man. They stop in their tracks. The moment is lost. Burke eyes someone else. He nudges Hare.

BURKE

(to Hare)

There.

Further ahead he can see an OLD LADY [65] holding the hand of a YOUNG BOY [4] as they walk towards them weary, unkempt and dishevelled and looking lost.

The lady appears to be looking for a landmark. The murderers walk towards the unaware pair. As they get closer, the lady's eyes meet with Hare. He smiles.

HARE

I'm sorry to bother you ma'am but you haven't seen a wee scraggy dog wandering around here by chance?

The lady looks surprised.

IRISH WOMAN

No. Can't say I have.

HARE

Ach. He's nothin' but a pure menace, he is. He'll be the end of me if I don't find him.

The woman smiles but appears preoccupied as she looks around.

HARE (CONT'D)

(laughs)

Looks like we're both looking for something?

Her attention is brought back to the men.

IRISH WOMAN

Sorry. Yes.

Burke bends down to the young boy and ruffles his hair.

BURKE

(softly)

How are you there, laddie?

She watches Burke then turns to Hare, apprehensive.

IRISH WOMAN

(to Hare)

If I see your dog, I'll be sure to take it to the police if that would help.

HARE

Ah you're a kind lady. That would indeed be grand.

Burke, still crouched down with the boy, looks up.

BURKE
 (to Irish woman)
 And what part of Ireland would you
 be from?

IRISH WOMAN
 Donegal.

BURKE
 Well what do you know? I thought I
 recognised your brogue.

Burke stands up and offers a hand.

BURKE (CONT'D)
 I'd be from the same fine land.

He laughs in an attempt to defuse the moment.

BURKE (CONT'D)
 Mind you, it's a long time since
 I've been back.

The lady smiles feeling more at ease.

IRISH WOMAN
 Oh lad, it was a sad day when I
 left those shores.

BURKE
 (sympathetic)
 Aye. I know how you feel. I tell me
 missus many a time how it'd be
 grand to visit. Even just once.

The lady nods in agreement.

IRISH WOMAN
 Me grandson here might never get
 that chance.

Hare shakes his head, looking at the boy.

HARE
 Aye.

He turns to the lady.

HARE (CONT'D)
 (upbeat)
 Anyways. We have a stupid wee dog
 to find and we've taken up enough
 of your time.

The men are about to turn and head off.

IRISH WOMAN
Wait. Maybe you can help us.

They stop and pivot back to the lady.

HARE
For sure.

IRISH WOMAN
I'm looking for friends to take in
the boy, but can't seem to find the
place.

HARE
You have an address?

IRISH WOMAN
Aye but they've long gone from
there.

BURKE
Hmm. Not so good.

HARE
(to Burke)
We could put the word out for her
and find them, couldn't we?

Burke looks at the lady then back at Hare, rubbing his chin
in thought. He nods.

BURKE
Aye. We could.

The old lady looks pleased.

IRISH WOMAN
Could you?

HARE
Of course. No bother.

IRISH WOMAN
Oh that would be a godsend. We've
walked for days and we're spent.

Burke ruffles the hair of the boy.

BURKE
It'll take us a few days to spread
the word and find them. Have you
got somewhere to stay?

IRISH WOMAN

No. I'm having to beg just to eat.

HARE

We can't be having that! Our women
can prepare some food and you'll
have a roof over you till we find
your friends.

The old lady is ecstatic. She looks down at her boy and
smiles.

IRISH WOMAN

Oh that would be grand!

There is an unspoken understanding between the two men as
their eyes meet.

HARE

Come. Let's meet our women and we
can break bread.

They begin to walk along the busy street. The woman and
child follow in tow.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - LATER

Helen McDougal is sitting in front of the unlit fireplace
smoking a pipe while Margaret paces back and forth gently
rocking the baby to sleep. Suddenly the door opens to reveal
their partners, holding jugs of whisky, followed by the
woman and boy.

HARE

And here they are.

The Irish woman smiles.

IRISH WOMAN

Good day to you both.

Margaret stops in her tracks and eyes up the old woman and
boy.

MARGARET HARE

(to Hare)

A child?

Hare crosses the room nonchalantly, pecks Margaret on the cheek then advances to where some food has been placed on a small stool next to a chair. He picks up the bread and tears a piece. Margaret places the baby in the cot.

HARE
Annie here, is staying a few
nights.

Burke walks towards Helen. He grabs her from behind and kisses her on the neck.

BURKE
(to Helen)
Till we find her friends.

HARE
(softly to Irish woman)
Take a seat.

Hare hands her the bread and the woman rests her feet.

HARE (CONT'D)
Here.

The woman gratefully accepts the bread, which she tears, and hands some to the small boy as Margaret advances to Hare who pivots. They are almost nose-to-nose. She cocks her head.

MARGARET HARE
(whisper)
Really?

Hare kisses her on the lips.

HARE
(softly)
She's an old woman and she's tired.

He turns to the old woman.

HARE (CONT'D)
Aren't you pet?

The woman and boy are eating the bread. Ignorant of the atmosphere.

IRISH WOMAN
I'm so grateful ma'am. Me bones are
weary from days of walking.

HARE
(jovial to Margaret)
See?

Helen, clearly uncomfortable, and Burke are whispering in the background.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
The other four had no children.
What's with this one?

BURKE
Hare said he could sort that out.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
How?

BURKE
I don't know. Orphanage?

HELEN MCDOUGAL
(anger in her whisper)
Orphan -

She's in disbelief. She looks over at the woman talking to Hare.

HELEN MCDOUGAL (CONT'D)
Have you lost your senses?

She pokes him in the forehead.

BURKE
(shrugs)
Maybe he'll hand him to someone.

Hare takes a swig from a jug and passes it to the old woman.

HARE
This'll do you well.

The old woman enthusiastically accepts.

IRISH WOMAN
Lovely.

Helen rises and crosses to Margaret, grabbing her and pulling her away, passing the bed/door and into the stairwell.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
You fine with this?

MARGARET HARE
They've done each shot fine so far.
Leave them be.

Helen looks through the gap in the door then back at Margaret.

HELEN MCDOUGAL

But -

Margaret places a finger at Helen's lips.

MARGARET HARE

(calm but firm)

We've chosen our path and we're better for it. Let the men do what they need to do or -

She points to the passage leading out into the street.

MARGARET HARE (CONT'D)

- there's where you can go. A pauper and alone.

HELEN MCDOUGAL

Burke wouldn't leave me.

MARGARET HARE

Don't be so sure.

Helen is silent in thought. She looks through the gap in the door. Burke can be heard laughing.

BURKE (O.S.)

Have yerself another!

MARGARET HARE

Are we done here?

Helen nods in resignation.

MARGARET HARE (CONT'D)

Then let's join the parde.

FADE TO: BLACK

FADE IN

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE OF THE COURANT - NIGHT

Charles Bradshaw, editor of the Courant, sits in his cluttered, dusty office, behind a large desk awash with sheets of papers and documents.

Dressed in a thread bare suit, he has the look of a man who has had a long day.

Under gaslight, he reads a document as he smokes a cigarette, while the distant chuntering of a printing press can be heard.

His glass panelled office door opens to reveal Johnson entering.

CHARLES BRADSHAW
(disgruntled)
You're late.

Johnson advances towards his desk and slaps a leather-bound folder on top of the mound of papers.

MR. JOHNSON
The Knox interview. Just as I said.

Bradshaw flicks his cigarette ash on the floor, places it between his lips and reaches over to the folder. He grunts in acknowledgement and begins to unfold and peruse the written material.

CHARLES BRADSHAW
I'm surprised he entertained your request.

MR. JOHNSON
Every narcissist needs an audience.

CHARLES BRADSHAW
Every audience needs a story.

He turns over a leaf and continues reading.

CHARLES BRADSHAW (CONT'D)
What's his?

Johnson retreats to close the office door for privacy away from the staff milling around the factory floor.

MR. JOHNSON
An insatiable desire for bodies.

Bradshaw leans back in his chair, drags long and thoughtful on his cigarette and exhales.

CHARLES BRADSHAW
He's a surgeon. What's new?

MR. JOHNSON
He obtains more bodies than the rest of the university put together.

CHARLES BRADSHAW
And what concern is that to us?

MR. JOHNSON
More pertinently I'd ask what
concern is it to families who are
robbed of their deceased.

Bradshaw leans back in his chair.

CHARLES BRADSHAW
I detect a note of chagrin to my
words?

Johnson's face is stoic as he stands in the middle of the
room.

MR. JOHNSON
I too have fallen foul of these
desperadoes with the recent loss of
my mother.

He takes a step forward and looks down at the folder.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
So I feel the pain that others
suffer.

Bradshaw silently considers Johnson's words then moves aside
papers to find an ashtray and stubs out his cigarette. He
taps his finger on the folder.

CHARLES BRADSHAW
This can go in tomorrow's edition.
You intend to pursue further?

MR. JOHNSON
He may be respected but there's a
devil in his heart.

FADE TO: BLACK

FADE IN

Over black: The sound of singing.

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - NIGHT

Everyone is sitting around the glowing fireplace. The
sleeping boy is curled up on the floor next to the Irish
woman with a large coat over him. Spirits are high and
everyone is relaxed.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
Burke, pass over that jug.

HELEN MCDOUGAL (CONT'D)
(to Irish woman)
Your boy sleeps soundly. The sound
of bagpipes wouldn't waken that wee
soul by the looks of it.

IRISH WOMAN
(slurring)
It's no surprise, after all the
walking he has done these past
days.

HELEN MCDOUGAL
You'll be done in yourself.

IRISH WOMAN
Aye, my body is weary but the drink
does ease the pain in these old
bones.

BURKE
For sure.

MARGARET HARE
You're welcome to use that bed when
it takes your fancy.

HARE
A good night's sleep will have you
refreshed to seek these folk you
talk of.

The Irish woman has one hand on the floor to keep herself steady. She doesn't notice a brooch she is wearing falling off her shawl. Stealthily, Margaret bends down, picks it up and places it in her pocket.

MARGARET HARE
Are you alright?

The old woman offers a glazed look and nods.

IRISH WOMAN
I'll be fine.

The room falls into silence but for the crackle of the fire to which Hare places another log before returning to his chair. Margaret brings out her pipe and begins filling it to light. Her eyes meet Hare's. Helen and Burke share a jug as they watch while the old woman leans back and takes a drink from her jug.

The old lady lets out a long yawn.

HARE

Take the bed.

The Irish woman struggles to get to her feet, initiating Burke to stand up and assist her.

BURKE

Let me help you there, lass.

IRISH WOMAN

You're a good man.

Burke helps her to the bed where she lays down gently then he returns to the others.

The room, shadows dancing from the orange glow of the fire, falls into silence as the old lady and child sleep soundly, watched over by their keepers.

FADE TO: BLACK

FADE IN

INT. MAIN ROOM IN HARES' LODGINGS - LATER

The fire slowly dies with the passing of time in the darkening room with only a few candles shedding limited light. Margaret taps her pipe by the fireplace and begins to refill. Hare slowly and silently rises and walks over to the sleeping woman. He looks down at her then turns to the others.

Burke rises, placing his jug carefully to one side all the time being watched by the two women.

Helen leans down and checks the boy who appears sound asleep.

Burke quietly advances towards Hare. They look down at the sleeping woman who emits the odd snore while Margaret lights her pipe and calmly watches them before throwing the lit match into the fireplace.

The men's movements are quick and sudden as Hare mounts the old lady with his knees over her shoulder as he instantly covers her mouth and nose with his hands while Burke drops his body over her, pinning down her legs and grabbing her arms to disable any chance of her fighting back.

Instantly her eyes open as she stirs to life, but is completely trapped despite her struggle, as she attempts in vain to break free.

Hare's eyes pierce into those of the terrified lady, bulging in horror with the realisation that her life is at stake. Her back arches but the weight of Hare makes any attempt futile as her hands clench and release with every breath she tries but cannot take.

Margaret slowly rises and exhales the smoke from her lungs, her eyes fixed on the murder taking place before her while Helen leaves her chair and walks to the window where she looks out, trying to ignore the mumbles of resistance from the victim.

Hare's nostrils exhale into the dying face of the old lady.

HARE
(whisper)
Shhh lass. Your bones will never be
weary again.

Her eyes turn bloodshot with the pressure her body is forcing to fight back, then one red tear exposes itself to her murderer and slowly trickles down her face before her body gives in and lies limp on the bed.

For a moment, no-one moves and the only sound that is heard is from Hare as he sighs with success. Silence falls.

BOY (O.S.)
Gran?

Helen turns round in shock. The boy is standing witnessing the scene.

CUT TO:BLACK