VIDOCQ: The First Detective

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by

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VIDOCQ
The First Detective

by
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(Based on the life of Francois Eugene Vidocq)
The brutalities of progress are called revolutions. When they are over we realize this: that the human race has been roughly handled, but that it has advanced.

~ Victor Hugo
A PUNCH AND JUDY PUPPET THEATER

On the curtain, Paris beautifully drawn, the half-finished Arch de Triumph at the center of the city.

SUPER: Paris, March 1813

V.O.
The French revolution saw the collapse of a monarchy that had ruled France for centuries.

The curtain rises on a crowded town square, a guillotine in the center. THWACK. A puppet’s head rolls. The crowd RIOTS.

V.O.
There were two warring factions. The Royalists who wanted a monarchy, and the Jacobins, who wanted a free society. Much blood was spilled over it.

Napoleon appears. Powerful. Famous hat. He knocks both parties on the head in classic Punch and Judy style then marches off stage. His army follows.

V.O.
When Napoleon became emperor, order was restored but war with Europe kept him away for months at a time. Crime in Paris was rampant.

The scene changes. Puppets pick pockets and whack each other. Police enter the melee. Try to restore order but it’s chaos.

V.O.
The police did their best but their methods were crude and old-fashioned. Police work needed to be brought into the nineteenth century. And there was only one man in Paris who could do it.

A strapping male puppet in a brocade coat and elaborate hat enters. The puppets stop fighting and look at him in awe.

PUPPET
Vidocq.
EXT. PARIS - SUNSET


SUPER: PARIS, MARCH 1813.

MOVE IN to a bank building on an empty street.

A PLACQUE reads: DE ROTHSCILD FRERES.

SERIES OF SHOTS under TITLES

INT. BANK VAULT - NIGHT

A TREASURE TROVE of gold bars, safe deposit boxes, trunks of gold and silver coins.

JAMES ROTHSCILD, young, closes the heavy vault doors under the watchful eye of his guard, LANDIER (35)

EXT. DE ROTHSCILD FRERES BANK - NIGHT

Rothschild exits the bank with Landier and locks the front doors. Landier takes his place at the doors.

ROTHSCILD
Good night, Landier.

GUARD
Good night, Monsieur Rothschild.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT

Rothschild walks down the street. Carts, covered with dark cloth, lumber by.

CU CART the contents under the dark cloth RATTLE.

A HUMAN ARM, just bones now, falls over the side. Swings.
TWO MEN, shadowy, walk behind. One man tucks the arm back in. Nervous glance at his friend. They both look UP AHEAD at Rothschild alone on the sidewalk.

A POLICE OFFICER rounds a corner. The men duck. The officer tips his hat at Rothschild and disappears down the street.

The two men, furtive glances, sprint to Rothschild. WHACK. They drag him to the cart and lift the black tarp.

HUMAN BONES fill the cart. Rothschild is thrown in and covered. The cart continues down the street.

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

VITU (50), fat, red faced, and sweaty, huffs and puffs out a pitiful orgasm. EMELIE (25), breasts falling out of a lace bustier, rolls off of him.

Vitu squints at Emilie lying next to him. He closes his eyes. He reopens them. A MAN now stares back. Vitu jumps but a handkerchief is clamped over his mouth by two men.

Emelie watches as they spirit Vitu away. She pulls a pouch of money from between her breasts.

EXT. BRIDGE - THE SEINE - NIGHT

ALLARD (45) thin and distinguished, buys a newspaper from a street kiosk. He watches a boat move under the bridge.

A MAN strolls by. A quick glance around then WHOOSH. Allard lands in the water. The man disappears.

ALLARD
Help! I can’t swim.

A small boat pulls up. Two MEN pull Allard in.

ALLARD
Thank God. If you could just put me down over there.

He points to shore but they continue up the river.

ALLARD
What are you doing?
At the river’s edge, a policeman strolls. Allard opens his mouth but a PISTOL, now shoved in his side, shuts him up.

INT. CHURCH - PARIS - NIGHT

Cavernous. Candlelight flickers against ancient stone walls. A wooden confessional, open curtain. TULARD (60) kneels. He crosses himself, rises and steps into the church.

A COFFIN blocks his way. WHACK. Tulard pushed in.

EXT. PATISSERIE - NIGHT

Expensive pastries and cakes line a shop window. WATRIN (55) emerges balancing cake boxes. A nearby carriage. A DWARF guards the door. Watrin starts to walk. It happens fast. A man bumps into him. He flies over the dwarf and into the carriage. It takes off.

END TITLES

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT

Five MEN dash down a dark street then duck into an alley. UP THE STREET

Two POLICE OFFICERS run around the corner, stop, look around, then take off in the opposite direction.

THE MEN. Shabby clothes, dirty faces, up to no good. They peek out of their hiding place. GAFFRE (62) the ring leader, waits for the cops to disappear.

GAFFRE
Those bastards.

JULES (37) striped sailor shirt, swigs from a whiskey bottle.

JULES
(slurring)
Where is this job anyway?
REMI (30) scarred and tough, joins them. He stares at Jules. Recognition flashes across his eyes but Jules lunges first.

JULES
You bastard!

REMI
I could say the same to you!

Punches are thrown.

GAFFRE
Keep it down! The police.

JULES
This bastard got me thrown in jail for two years.

REMI
You’re crazy.

GAFFRE
Remi’s alright, Jules. I bet that bastard Vidocq nabbed you.

A hush falls over the crowd. A BOY speaks up.

BOY
Who’s Vidocq?

REMI
The devil himself. Works for the police. Quick change artist. This morning he might be dressed like you and at midday someone else. Only yesterday I met him dressed as a general but I wasn’t taken in...

GAFFRE
(to Jules)
Pull yourself together, man.

Jules scowls at Remi, but nods.

GAFFRE
Good. We’ll split up. Being seen together will cause suspicion. Thirty Rue Claire. Ten minutes.

One by one, the men take off. Gaffre’s turn.
GAFFRE
I tell you Jules, I’m getting too old for this game.

He takes off. Jules waits then hits the SIDEWALK. A folded NOTE lands. The sound of FOOTSTEPS. EXPENSIVE SHOES. A thin hand reaches in and grabs the note.

EXT. HOUSE - PARIS - NIGHT

INT. HOUSE - PARIS - NIGHT
The thieves, lit by the full moon, fill their bags with loot. Jules looks out a window.

THE STREET

EXT. HOUSE - PARIS - NIGHT
Front door opens a crack. A head pokes out and looks around. The gang tumbles down the steps onto the street.

Gaffre, out of breath, bends over. Jules, at his side.

JULES
What is it?

GAFFRE
Nothing. Don’t keep Sauvelet waiting.

Jules glances up the street then takes Gaffre’s bag.

JULES
I’ll take care of it. Go.

Jules points to an alley. Gaffre, grateful smile, takes off.

A ROAR of horses hooves on COBBLESTONE and two carriages appear. Cops swarm the street. The thieves scatter.
Jules ducks into a dark doorway.

The cops stuff the thieves into the carriages and take off. The street is quiet again.

A PATCH OF MOONLIGHT on the sidewalk. Jules steps into it. He pulls off his wig and whiskers.

EUGENE FRANCOIS VIDOCQ (37) handsome and charismatic, rubs his chin.

COCO (35) small, effeminate, in expensive shoes, appears. He holds the note.

    COCO
    Your handwriting is appalling, Vidocq. I could barely read this.

    VIDOCQ
    I’ll work on that, Coco.

INT. POLICE PREFECTURE – NIGHT


INT. OFFICE – POLICE PREFECTURE – NIGHT

Vidocq pulls off his shirt. Coco, perched on a desk, tries not to look. He studies a heavy silver frame with longing.

    COCO
    Exquisite piece. Such detail.

    VIDOCQ
    Saunlec’s waiting to fence this stuff. What do you say we surprise that bastard?

    COCO
    What do you say we keep something?
    A tiny souvenir? For our efforts.

Vidocq grins. Stuffs the frame back in the bag. Coco shrugs.

    COCO
    We’ll need permission for Sauvelet’s. Yvries is on tonight.
VIDOCQ
To the delight of the thieves and pickpockets of Paris.


INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - PREFECTURE - NIGHT

A table. A PRISONER sits, confused and distressed.


GUY (25) also in uniform, young, clear-eyed, eager, watches.

YVRIES
(to prisoner)
You are wasting our time, Monsieur.
We have witnesses. I will ask you again. Where is the money?

The prisoner shakes his head.

VIDOCQ O.S.
Now, what have we here?

Yvries spins around. Vidocq and Coco stand in the doorway. Yvries bristles with hatred.

YVRIES
This is no concern of yours Vidocq.

COCO
A payroll stage was robbed.

Vidocq sizes the prisoner up. Frail. Underfed. Poor.

VIDOCQ
If he’s a highwayman, I’m Napoleon’s mistress.

COCO
You could be with that hat.

Vidocq LAUGHS, booming, contagious. Yvries ignores him.

YVRIES
(to prisoner)
I’m prepared to stay here all night, Monsieur.
Vidocq studies the man. Then realization hits. He wanders over to the table and bends over the poor wretch.

**YVRIES**
Get lost, Vidocq.

**VIDOCQ**
(to prisoner)
I hear your sister has slept with half of Paris. Do you think she’d like me?

Yvries and Guy GASP. Coco grins. That’s his boss.

Vidocq stares into the man’s eyes. Studies his face.

**YVRIES**
Leave the interrogation to the professionals, Vidocq.

**VIDOCQ**
I know all I need to know, Yvries.

Vidocq moves behind the prisoner and takes out a pistol.

**YVRIES**
What? What are you...

Vidocq points at the ceiling and FIRES. All eyes dart to the prisoner. He sits quietly. He hasn’t heard a thing.

**VIDOCQ**
Deaf and dumb, Yvries. How do you think he robbed that stage? Held up a sign?

Guy LAUGHS. Yvries shoots him a look. He shuts up.

The door BURSTS open. JEAN HENRY (45) serious, kind eyes.

**HENRY**
What the hell is going on in here?

He spots Vidocq.

**HENRY**
Oh, Vidocq. Of course.

**VIDOCQ**
Sir.
Vidocq helps the prisoner to the door.

**YVRIES**
Vidocq is interfering with my interrogation, Monsieur Henry.

**VIDOCQ**
Full time job protecting the innocent from you, Yvries.

Yvries, red-faced. Henry nods and the prisoner leaves.

**YVRIES**
You’re letting him go? On the word of a felon who should be back in jail where he belongs?

**VIDOCQ**
The jails are filled with honest men, Yvries, while bastards like you run free. Sometimes these bastards can even be found disguised as police officers.

Yvries swings at Vidocq but Vidocq ducks.

**HENRY**
Five thousand pick pockets in Paris at last count, gentlemen. Surely you can find something to do.

**VIDOCQ**
Yes. Food, I think. I’m famished. Coco, how does roast duck sound?

The two men take off.

**YVRIES**
(to Henry)
He’s a lout and a criminal.

**HENRY**
Who gets results. I’d wager he’s more honest than you, Yvries. Watch yourself.


**YVRIES**
What are you looking at?
INT. TAVERN - PARIS - NIGHT

Dark, NOISY and teeming with raucous diners. Vidocq and Coco enjoy a hearty meal at a corner table.

VIDOCQ
My disguises are stretched thin, Coco. I was almost recognized tonight.

COCO
Out of disguises? The brilliant Vidocq?

VIDOCQ
This broken system, Coco. What we need is an undercover crime division. A surete. With trained agents not morons like Yvries.

COCO
You’re serious. Why join them? The police have made your life hell.

VIDOCQ
Exactly. The corruption must end. We’ve got laws now thanks to Napoleon, but they still need enforcing.

COCO
Well, you can count me out. What did you do, anyway? Couldn’t have been that bad. You’ve still got your head.


EXT. RESTAURANT - PARIS - NIGHT

Vidocq and Coco roll out of the restaurant onto the dark street and part ways with a wave.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT

Vidocq passes a dark alley where two shadowy shapes, a MAN and a WOMAN, have sex against a wall.
FLEURIE (25) walks by them, slowing a bit as she passes. She passes Vidocq but he grabs her wrist. Her hand opens

A GOLD WATCH lies in her palm.

FLEURIE
Monsieur!

Vidocq pulls the struggling girl down the alley. Taps the man on the shoulder and dangles the watch in front of him.

VIDOCQ
I believe this is yours.

The man raises his arm to strike his date. Vidocq grabs it.

VIDOCQ
Get going.

The guy pulls up his trousers and disappears. MANON (25) and Fleurie start to run but Vidocq grabs them. They struggle.

MANON
Please, Monsieur, please don’t call the police.

FLEURIE
If we’re caught again they’ll send us away forever.

VIDOCQ
(slight bow)
But I am the police, Mademoiselles. Eugene Francois Vidocq. At your service.

The two women MOAN. He peers into their beautiful faces.

VIDOCQ
Are you...twins?

Off their look -

INT. VIDOCQ’S ROOMS – PARIS – NIGHT

A pre-Victorian lair of books and odd experiments. The RUSTLE of fabric. HEAVY BREATHING and GIGGLING fills the air.

FLEURIE
Oh, yes! Yes!
MANON O.S.
Once more, please!

THE BED, messy but empty. Nearby, Vidocq and the two sisters, scantily dressed, practice picking pockets.

MANON
Of course, they don’t feel a thing when their trousers are around their ankles.

She places a coin purse in his pants pocket.

FLEURIE
Okay. Close your eyes.

The two sisters perform an elaborate ballet of stealing the purse. Vidocq finds it in another pocket. LAUGHS.

VIDOCQ
I could use your talents, ladies.

He produces his card. The sisters read.

MANON
Work for the police?

FLEURIE
You must be crazy, Monsieur.

They return his card.

VIDOCQ
You’d be working for me. A more secure line of work than your present occupation.

He slips the card into Manon’s bodice. She grins at him.

A RAT scurries by. Vidocq chucks a shoe at it. Three more follow. More shoes. The rodents disappear into the wall.

VIDOCQ
Bastards. If they get any bigger I’ll have to charge them rent.

The women GIGGLE and pull him into bed.
INT. FRONT DESK - POLICE PREFECTURE - DAY

The lobby swarms with Paris low-life. Yvries and Guy, at the front desk, listen to a ragged MAN.

YVRIES
Okay, slow down, old man, and start from the beginning. Who’s dead?

MAN
Georges.

YVRIES
Georges who?

MAN
He was fine yesterday. Just fine. And now he’s dead.

Yvries and Guy exchange looks. Another lunatic.

YVRIES
A name. Give me a name, Monsieur.

Vidocq and Coco, dressed to the nines, approach the desk.

Yvries watches them as he listens to the old man.

YVRIES
(to old man)
Who did you say died?

Yvries LAUGHS but shuts up when Vidocq walks by. Yvries winks at Guy and grabs Vidocq’s arm.

YVRIES
Oh, Vidocq. There’s been a murder.

Vidocq perks up and grins at Coco. Coco yawns.

VIDOCQ
A murder! Where?

Yvries points to the crazy man.

VIDOCQ
This gentleman will answer all your questions on the way.

Vidocq goose steps the old guy to the front doors. Coco follows.
Yvries and Guy smirk.

EXT. THE PARIS ZOO - DAY

A group of stone buildings in a lush park. A carriage pulls up and deposits Vidocq, Coco and the little man in front.

VIDOCQ
(to Coco)
This is the zoo.

COCO
I just do what I’m told.

MAN
Through here.

The trio moves past cages of lions, tigers, bears, antelope. People, rich and poor, admire at the animals.

A POSTER on a wall: A drawing of a giraffe. Headline reads: On Friday 19 March 1813 he’ll call Paris home.

COCO
There was time in the not too distant past where these animals would be in someone’s cooking pot.

Vidocq shoots him a look. Coco shrugs.

VIDOCQ
When you tired of eating cake, Coco?

COCO
Something like that.

The man stops in front of a cage. Puts a key in a lock.

MAN
He’s in here.

Off Vidocq’s and Coco’s look -

INT. CAGE - PARIS ZOO - DAY

A DEAD MONKEY lies motionless on a stone floor. He’s covered in vomit and excrement. A violent, ugly death.
Coco holds a lace hanky to his mouth.

COCO
That bastard, Yvries.

VIDOCQ
Let him have his little joke, Coco.

Vidocq and Coco turn. The man stops them.

MAN
He was like a son to me, Monsieur. Wasn’t sick a day in his life. And now this. He was murdered.

VIDOCQ
Why would someone want to murder a monkey, Monsieur?

COCO
Perhaps the price of bananas went up?

Coco pokes at a puddle of frozen vomit with his cane.

MAN
Go ahead and laugh. He was more clever than all of you.

VIDOCQ
I’m sure you’re right...Okay, tell us what happened.

MAN
George was fine during the little emperor’s visit yesterday.

COCO
Napoleon’s son was here?

MAN
Yes. George was in good form and the little boy laughed and laughed.

VIDOCQ
I assume the zoo was closed for this royal visit?

MAN
Just the boy, the Empress, a governess, and a few guards. (MORE)
Later that night George wouldn’t eat his evening meal and at midnight he started vomiting. He died in my arms at dawn.

The man breaks down. Vidocq puts his arm around him.

VIDOCQ
I’m afraid there’s not much we can do, Monsieur. Surely you know this.

Vidocq pulls some coins out of his pocket.

VIDOCQ
Give him a nice funeral.

Vidocq and Coco move towards the door.

MAN
That’s all? After all the pleasure my little monkey has given the citizens of Paris?

Vidocq pretends to investigate. He bends down and sniffs the monkey’s breath. Coco watches, aghast.

VIDOCQ
Could he have eaten bad food?

MAN
Never. I fed him. No one else. And it was good food too, fruits, vegetables, better than my meals. The Emperor saw to that. His son loves the zoo and the Emperor is our biggest patron. A giraffe from Africa arrives this Friday.

COCO
Could it be the plague?

VIDOCQ
His death was too sudden and his skin is clear. There are no sores or rashes. Besides, monkeys don’t get the plague.

Vidocq pulls a knife and an ebony box out of his pocket. He stoops over the puddle of frozen vomit. Coco grimaces as he hacks a chunk of frozen barf off and puts it into the box.
COCO
Honestly, Vidocq. This is not what I signed up for.

VIDOCQ
(to the man)
Surely monkeys get sick much like people do, Monsieur, suddenly and violently, but we will keep our ears open. I promise you.

They stride out and the little man bends down to his monkey.

EXT. PARIS ZOO - DAY
Vidocq and Coco pass the giraffe poster.

COCO
You know, they’re walking that giraffe across Africa.

VIDOCQ
Hope they don’t make any wrong turns or he’ll end up in Russia.

COCO
Perfect. The Russians can return him when they invade us.

VIDOCQ
They’re not going to invade, Coco.

COCO
You place too much faith in Napoleon.

VIDOCQ
He saved France. Where would we be without him? Still in the dark ages that’s where...

SCREAMS from a nearby carriage. It bounces up and down.

VIDOCQ
There.

They sprint. Vidocq flings the door open.

INSIDE CARRIAGE a NOBLEMAN humps a young scullery MAID.
VIDOCQ
Release her! Now!

The man casts a lazy eye in Vidocq’s direction but continues to hump the terrified young woman.

NOBLEMAN
Who the devil are you?

Vidocq draws his sword and points it at the man’s dick.

NOBLEMAN
What is the world coming to? Absolutely no respect for privacy anymore.

VIDOCQ
Get out.

The nobleman stares at him, shocked, but climbs off the girl. She tidies herself up.

NOBLEMAN
Do you know who I am?

VIDOCQ
I don’t recognize your face but a prick that small would be hard to forget.

The girl scrambles out.

VIDOCQ
You can bring charges against him at the prefecture, Mademoiselle.

She shoots him crazy look then bolts. Vidocq grabs the man.

VIDOCQ
Get going.

NOBLEMAN
Have it your way. But I can’t stay long. I take luncheon at one.

EXT. POLICE PREFECTURE – PARIS – DAY

Vidocq pulls the nobleman out of the carriage.
INT. POLICE PREFECTURE - PARIS - DAY

Yvries at the front desk. Vidocq appears with the nobleman.

VIDOCQ
We found this animal at the zoo.

Yvries smirks at Vidocq then notices the nobleman. Stands at attention. Henry appears.

HENRY
What’s all this, Vidocq? Oh, Count Renaud.

NOBLEMAN
Vidocq. Doesn’t exactly roll off the tongue, does it?

Yvries smirks. Vidocq, vice grip on the count’s arm, glances at Henry. Henry nods. Vidocq releases the count.

COUNT
Well, good day, gentlemen. Vidocq.

He bows and leaves.

VIDOCQ
(to Henry)
I capture criminals. And you release them.

HENRY
You know it would go nowhere.

VIDOCQ
Damn this archaic system.

YVRIES
The system is fine.

VIDOCQ
To Royalist scum who’ve inherited their jobs.

YVRIES
An anarchist and a criminal.

LANDIER O.S.
I need to speak to the Prefect.

Landier, James Rothschild’s guard, holds a note.
HENRY
What is it?

Henry scans the note then hands it to Vidocq.

VIDOCQ
Rothschild? The banker?

LANDIER
Madame Rothschild is waiting.

INT. OFFICE - DE ROTHCHILD FRERES BANK - PARIS - DAY

BETTY ROTHSCHILD young, tear-stained face, sits. Henry, Yvries, and Landier nearby. Vidocq prowls the ornate office.

BETTY
I thought he was working late again. He’s been so busy lately and I didn’t dare disturb him but when he hadn’t shown up this morning I knew something was wrong so I came here looking for him.

HENRY
(to Landier)
You were the last person to see him?

LANDIER
We checked the vault and locked up together as usual. He walked up the street. That was the last I saw of him.

VIDOCQ
Is anything missing?

LANDIER
No.

VIDOCQ
Has anyone contacted you?

Landier and Betty shakes their heads.

YVRIES
(smirks)
Well, I’m sure he’ll turn up, Madame. They always do.
Everyone glares at his bad taste.

    BETTY
    (red faced)
    We are newly wed, Monsieur.

Vidocq steps between Betty and Yvries.

    VIDOCQ
    (to Betty)
    Have you checked the hospital?

    LANDIER
    Yes. He’s not there.

    VIDOCQ
    (to Betty)
    Describe your husband to me.

INT. FOYER - ROTHCHILD AND FRERES BANK - PARIS - DAY

A PAINTING of five brothers, strong family resemblance. Vidocq, Henry, and the rest of the group study it.

    VIDOCQ
    (whispers to Henry)
    I don’t believe I’ve seen a more handsome group of thieves.

    BETTY
    That is James.

She points to JAMES ROTHCHILD a stocky, dark-haired young man. Vidocq memorizes his face.

    VIDOCQ
    And his brothers.

    BETTY
    Yes. Amschel, Salomon, Calman, and Nathan.

    VIDOCQ
    With banks in Germany, Austria, Italy and England.

    OLD MAN O.S.
    What has happened? Why are the police here?
Two bank customers, an old MAN and his WIFE, terrified. Other customers join in with a cacophony of worried questions.

MAN
Is our money safe?

HENRY
Yes, yes. Go about your business. There is nothing to worry about.
(to Betty)
Let us know if you hear anything.

EXT. DE ROTHSCHILD FRERES BANK - PARIS - DAY

A waiting carriage. Yvries and Henry climb in. Vidocq, Landier at his side, studies the street.

VIDOCQ
(to Landier)
Did you see anything unusual last night?

LANDIER
No. There is practically no traffic on this street at night. Oh. Except for the cemetery carts. They take this route sometimes on the way to the Catacombs.

INT. CARRIAGE - PARIS STREET - DAY

Vidocq, Henry, and Yvries bounce along in back.

HENRY
So what do you make of it?

YVRIES
If he hasn’t run away with his mistress I’d say it’s a robbery.

VIDOCQ
One problem with that theory, Yvries. Nothing’s been taken.

Yvries looks at him with undisguised hatred.

HENRY
Your thoughts, Vidocq?
VIDOCQ
Nothing is missing. No demands have been made. Until we find a body it’s hard to know exactly what is happening here. But I don’t think money is the motive.

HENRY
One of the most influential bankers in all of Europe has gone missing and it doesn’t involve money?

VIDOCQ
This is bigger than money.

Vidocq plops his dirty boots next to Yvries and stares out the window, deep in thought.

EXT. PREFECTURE - PARIS - DAY

Henry, Yvries, and Vidocq emerge from the carriage.

VIDOCQ
How many banks are there in Paris?

HENRY
Five? Six? Why?

VIDOCQ
There will be more abductions. The men who head these banks must be warned.

HENRY
Yvries, pull together a list of...

YVRIES
Ridiculous...

MADAME VITU O.S.
I’m looking for the Prefect.

MADAME VITU (52) heavyset, rushes up. Her FOOTMAN follows.

HENRY
Madame.

MADAME VITU
My husband has disappeared, Monsieur.

(MORE)
I have had no word from him since he left for work yesterday morning.

VIDOCQ
For which bank?

MADAME VITU
How did you...? The Bank of France.

Vidocq takes her arm.

INT. PREFECTURE - PARIS - DAY
Vidocq, Henry, Yvries and Madame Vitu enter the foyer. MADAME WATRIN (30) stands there.

INT. HENRY’S OFFICE - POLICE PREFECTURE - PARIS - NIGHT
Vidocq leads a tearful Madame Watrin to the door then flops into a chair in front of Henry’s desk.

HENRY
Five prominent bankers have gone missing overnight. Why?

VIDOCQ
One could be a robbery. But five is a conspiracy.

HENRY
Revenge? The Bank of France has been swallowing the smaller independent banks for years.

VIDOCQ
But three of the missing bankers, Allard, Watrin, and Tulard, own independent banks. But whatever the reason these abductions must be kept secret. A run on the banks, especially in this time of war, would be a disaster. In fact, it may be the motive for these crimes. More reason for discretion.

DUBOIS O.S.
Hard at work, I see, gentlemen.

DUBOIS (45) elegant and vacant, enters the room. Henry rises.
Dubois eyes Vidocq. Vidocq sits on Henry’s desk, cocky.

DUBOIS
I know I don’t need to tell you how quickly this situation needs to be resolved.

Dubois glances at Vidocq.

DUBOIS
(to Henry)
Doe he have to be here?

HENRY
Yes.

DUBOIS
Is this wise, Henry? We’re dealing with polite society here.

VIDOCQ
The same society that starves peasants to death while making sure their white silk gloves aren’t soiled, Dubois?

DUBOIS
Absolutely no respect for authority.

VIDOCQ
Only authority that earns my respect.

A KNOCK on the door and Coco appears. He waves some papers.

COCO

Dubois sizes Coco up. Another one.

DUBOIS
And a notorious pickpocket. Henry...
Vidocq jumps up and grabs Coco.

VIDOCQ
While you’re discussing our pedigrees we’ll be off solving this crime.

He disappears with Coco. Dubois looks at Henry.

DUBOIS
He’s a criminal.

HENRY
Surely you haven’t forgotten the Empress Josephine’s emerald necklace, Dubois? Vidocq saved the Emperor, his regime, and possibly his life.

DUBOIS
A fluke.

HENRY
The police searched for weeks. Vidocq found it in twelve hours.

DUBOIS
Probably because he stole it.

HENRY
If you’re questioning my judgement...

DUBOIS
No, no, Henry. Just a friendly reminder.

HENRY
It takes a thief to catch a thief, Dubois.

EXT. THE CATACOMBS - PARIS STREET - NIGHT

Vidocq and Coco stand in front of an unassuming doorway.

VIDOCQ
According to Landier three cemetery carts passed the bank at the same time James Rothschild left last night.
COCO
Whacked on the head then hidden.

VIDOCQ
Exactly.

EXT. THE CATACOMBS - PARIS - SUNSET

A BLACK CLOTH whipped off reveals a pile of HUMAN BONES. A SKULL tumbles out and lands by expensive shoes.

THE SHOES belong to Coco who now stands with Vidocq by a cemetery cart. Vidocq picks up the skull. Coco, spooked.

COCO
There’s nothing here. Let’s go.

Vidocq flies the skull at Coco’s face.

VIDOCQ
Boo!

COCO
(jumps)
If you’re going to act like a child, Vidocq...

Coco wanders over to a tree and watches men unload a cart. A WORKMAN passes carrying a bag of bones.

VIDOCQ
Monsieur!

The man turns suspicious eyes on Vidocq.

VIDOCQ
Did these carts pass the Rothschild Bank last night?

WORKMAN
Who wants to know?

Vidocq, powerful, stares at him. The workman nods.

VIDOCQ
What time?

WORKMAN
Around six.
Coco wanders back.

VIDOCQ
See or hear anything unusual?

WORKMAN
As a matter of fact I did.

Vidocq and Coco perk up.

VIDOCQ
What?

WORKMAN
The sound of silence.

Glances at a pile of skulls in a cart.

WORKMAN
These poor sods don’t make great conversation.

CHUCKLING, he disappears into the catacombs.

Vidocq pokes around the carts. A NOISE makes him spin around. Nothing. Something shiny under a cart catches his eye.

VIDOCQ
Coco!

Vidocq unearths a BLUE SATIN SHOE. Coco joins him.

VIDOCQ
I doubt this is Cinderella’s.

A hand snatches the shoe out of Vidocq’s grasp.

VIDOCQ
Hey!

A dark figure, shoe in hand, runs up the street. A gendarme appears. The figure turns and dashes into the catacombs. Vidocq starts after him but Coco grabs his arm.

COCO
No, Vidocq! You’ll never find your way out. Remember what happened to Philibert Aspairt.

VIDOCQ
Who?
COCO
Doorkeeper at the Val-de-Glace hospital. Got lost. They found his body eleven years later three feet from the exit.

VIDOCQ
Guard this entrance.

INT. CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Vidocq sprints into the darkness and winds his way down spiral stairs. A THUD from below.

Vidocq reaches the bottom, a cavernous room lit by candles. Three tunnels shoot off into darkness.

MIDDLE OF THE ROOM a WORKMAN dwarfed by a pile of bones, works on a stunning sculpture of skulls and femurs.

VIDOCQ
Which tunnel did he take?

WORKMAN
Who cares? They all lead to the same place.

Vidocq, puzzled.

WORKMAN
(crazy laugh)
Eternity.

A SCREAM. Vidocq grabs a candle.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

Vidocq enters a tunnel. The candle flickers. Air. He grabs a skull and puts the candle in it. A make-shift lantern.

VIDOCQ
(calls)
What will you do with one shoe, Monsieur?

Vidocq moves in the darkness. Every few feet he pulls a skull off a wall and leaves it in the path.
He comes to an ALCOVE. Peers in. The remnants of a meal, a ragged blanket. A RAT jumps out at him. He GASPS. He shines the lantern into a dark corner.

VIDOCQ
I just want to ask you a few questions. I will pay you.

A dark shape springs at Vidocq. The skull lantern hits the ground and shatters. The candle fizzes. Darkness. The sound of FOOTSTEPS disappearing down the tunnel.

VIDOCQ
You fool! How far do you think you’ll get in this labyrinth? Your loyalty is touching but are you really going to lose your life protecting some rich bastard?

SILENCE. The footsteps stop. HEAVY BREATHING.

VIDOCQ
I’ve marked the way out and I’m leaving now.

Vidocq starts down the tunnel.

MAN
Wait!

FOOTSTEPS. He joins Vidocq.

VIDOCQ
Give me the shoe.

Sound of the SHOE being pulled out of a pocket.

VIDOCQ
This way.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

Darkness. Up ahead, a lighted doorway. The thief sprints for it. Vidocq chases him. Tackles him in the cavern. They wrestle dangerously close to the sculpture.

VIDOCQ
Who hired you?
The workman, on a ladder, places a skull.

WORKMAN
(to Vidocq)
If you bastards touch this, it’ll be your heads on top.

Vidocq grabs the thief and marches him to the stairs.

VIDOCQ
Get going.

They start up the stairs.

The workman climbs down. A rat runs by. He JUMPS back into the sculpture. It collapses in a heap of bones.

EXT. CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Coco waits by the entrance. Vidocq and the thief emerge.

VIDOCQ
(to thief)
You abducted James Rothschild last night in front of his bank.

The man turns white.

MAN
He didn’t tell me...

VIDOCQ
Who didn’t tell you?

MAN
I told you. I don’t know. I’d had a few pints and there was this man. He gave me a purse of gold coins. How could I say no?

VIDOCQ
Where was this?

MAN
Chez Claude’s.
I know the place.
The thief sprints across the street. Coco looks at Vidocq.

Let him go. He can’t help us.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the BLUE SATIN SHOE.

INT. THE ROTHSCILD HOUSE - PARIS - NIGHT

CU BLUE SATIN SHOE

Betty Rothschild nods through her tears.

Vidocq stands before Betty. Nearby, Landier watches as Coco examines expensive knick knacks.

Did your husband have any known enemies, Madame?

Betty stops crying.

He was a banker, Monsieur.

So, everyone in France, then.

Fresh tears. Vidocq shoots Coco a look but hides a grin.

Is this necessary, Vidocq?

Vidocq glances at Coco just as he pockets a gold snuff box. Vidocq rises and moves towards Coco.

(to Landier)
Have you alerted his brothers?

Vidocq bumps into Coco, picks his pocket and returns the snuff box to the table. Coco shrugs.

A FRAMED DRAWING of James catches Vidocq’s eye.
LANDIER
We’ve sent word but with the embargo it will be difficult for Nathan to reply.

VIDOCQ
The English embargo on France.

LANDIER
Yes. It’s rumored that Nathan controls the British purse strings.

VIDOCQ
(indicates drawing)
May I take this?

Betty nods. Vidocq pockets the sketch and studies James’ shoe. Off the shoe -

INT. BLUE BEDROOM - CHATEAU - NIGHT

A STOCKING FOOT. No shoe The other in a blue satin shoe with silver buckles.

James Rothschild sits on a bed. He rises. Goes to a window.

OUTSIDE

A lawn, lit by the moon, rolls down into a forest of trees.

A SERVANT enters with a tray of food and a pair of shoes followed by TOMBEAU (28) strong with intelligent eyes.

JAMES
Tell your boss his tactics won’t work.

TOMBEAU
Your silence communicates that.

The servant sets the food and shoes down and scurries out.

Tombeau stares at James then leaves. James throws a shoe at the door.

INT. YELLOW BEDROOM - CHATEAU - NIGHT

Allard paces. Moves to the French doors and tries the handle. Locked. THUD. Rothschild’s shoe from the room next door.
The door opens. The servant and Tombeau enter.

ALLARD
Be reasonable, monsieur. You can’t keep me here forever.

TOMBEAU
That’s up to you.

EXT. CHATEAU - NIGHT
Five windows on the second story glow with candlelight. Shadowy figures pace, one in each room.

The servant and Tombeau enter the third room. The servant lays the table and a banker argues with Tombeau.

INT. RED BEDROOM - CHATEAU - NIGHT
Vitu, near the door, lies in wait. It opens and the servant enters. Tombeau follows. Vitu jumps him. They struggle.

VITU
I demand to be released.

Vitu punches Tombeau. Tombeau pulls out a gun.

TOMBEAU
I’ve had enough of you, Vitu. Sit down.

Vitu takes a seat at the dining table. Sips his wine. Tombeau trains his gun on him.

UNDER THE TABLE Vitu holds a knife.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT
A BLAZING FIRE in the fireplace. A well-dressed MAN, from the back, stares into it, then picks up a hot poker.

Near a desk, Tombeau, face bloody, watches with fear.

The man, poker in hand, strolls towards Tombeau.

MAN
Do you know what is at stake here?
TOMBEAU

He jumped me...

The man, in front of Tombeau now, holds the poker close to his bloody face.

MAN

I could kill you and no one would know.

Tombeau, rigid with fear.

The man drops the poker on the oriental rug. It SIZZLES. He sits at the desk, inks a quill and writes on a piece of paper. He hands it to Tombeau.

PAPER READS: 1

MAN

That was your last mistake.

EXT. ALLEY - PARIS - NIGHT

BRUNO (20) ragged, goes through the garbage behind a restaurant. Cart wheels CREAK over cobble stones.

Bruno hides behind some barrels.

THE CART passes the stone building next door.

A PLAQUE READS: Bank of France.

The cart stops. Moonlight on the driver. Tombeau.

Bruno shrinks behind the barrels then peeks out.

Tombeau jumps out of the cart and goes to the back. He grabs a dark sack-like shape.

Bruno gets a good look at Tombeau. Dark eyes. Bloody face.

Tombeau chucks the sack against the barrels.

THE DEAD EYES of VITU the banker stare back.

Bruno GASPS. Tombeau freezes. Bruno holds his breath.

Tombeau pulls a knife out of his coat.

Bruno cowers.
Tombeau places a piece of paper on Vitu’s chest then plunges the knife into it.

PAPER READS: 1

Tombeau climbs into the cart and takes off.

Bruno emerges from his hiding place. He spots Vitu’s shoes.

CU SHOES black satin with gold buckles.

CU BRUNO’S FEET wrapped in dirty cloth. He puts on Vitu’s shoes and runs, knocking over a barrel of putrid garbage.

GARBAGE drips onto Vitu’s face. Rats scurry up his chest, across the note towards his face.

EXT. CHEZ CLAUDE TAVERN - PARIS - NIGHT

Shabby. Rats the size of dogs eat garbage in the street.

INT. CHEZ CLAUDE TAVERN - PARIS - NIGHT

Dark, raucous, teaming with petty thieves and pickpockets.

VIDOCQ, DISGUISED as JULES the sailor again, smokes a pipe. A WOMAN at his side fidgets with her corset.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Stop fidgeting.

COCO
I can’t breath.

Coco, in drag and not happy about it.

JULES/VIDOCQ
But the blue brings out that gold fleck in your eyes.

COCO
What are we looking for?

JULES/VIDOCQ
Someone with more money than sense.

COCO
You just described everyone in this room.
ACROSS THE ROOM

RIBOULET (28) a bear of a man, SINGS, his arms draped over two women. He finishes his song and lumbers over to Vidocq’s table, his women in tow.

RIBOULET
Jules! My old friend.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Riboulet.

RIBOULET
(whispers in his ear)
Help a man out in his time of need?

Vidocq hands him some coins.

RIBOULET
You are a prince among men, Jules.
(to the women)
Ladies.

They head for the bar.

JULES/VIDOCQ
(to Coco)
Broke as usual. We can eliminate Riboulet.

Nearby, LUC (25) thin, dull eyes, drinks with his friends. A dwarf stands on a table next to him.

Luc grabs a passing waitress. Sabine (25) soft and curvy.

LUC
More wine, Sabine.

SABINE
Money first. Then wine.

Luc produces a purse filled with GOLD COINS. Stuffs a couple in her bodice. She bites one and smiles.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Tombeau, collar up, cap pulled down over his eyes, watches Luc flash his cash. He scowls.

Vidocq watches Sabine flirt with Luc. Luc spots him.
LUC

JULES/VIDOCQ
(to Coco)
And here he is. Handed to us on a silver platter. Luc Foussard, petty thief. Emphasis on petty. Looks like his luck has changed. Come on.

Vidocq guides Coco through the crowd.

LUC
Jules! And who is this beauty?

Coco blanches.

JULES/VIDOCQ
This beauty is Coco.

LUC
Enchante, Coco.

He kisses Coco’s hand. Sabine appears with wine. Luc pulls out his pouch again.

Tombeau narrows his eyes.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Discretion, Luc.

LUC
There’s more where that came from.

Sabine fills Vidocq’s glass, flirts. The dwarf, on Coco’s lap now, snuggles against him. Coco cringes. Vidocq amused.

LATER

Wine bottles fill the tables. SNORES from passed out patrons.

Vidocq and Luc drain their glasses. Coco and the dwarf sleep in each other’s arms. Luc knocks his drink back and rises.

LUC
I bid you good night.

He salutes Jules, grabs the dwarf and weaves to the door.

ACROSS THE ROOM
Tombeau rises and follows Luc.

Vidocq shakes Coco. He wakes up.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Come on.

EXT. CHEZ CLAUDE - PARIS - DAWN

Vidocq and Coco emerge onto the street.

UP THE STREET

Tombeau follows Luc.

Vidocq and Coco follow Tombeau. Tombeau stops to tie his boot. Vidocq and Coco are forced to pass him.

VIDOCQ
Damn it.

Vidocq pulls Coco into a doorway then peeks out.

Tombeau walks towards them.

Vidocq takes Coco in his arms.

COCO
What the...?


VIDOCQ
Maybe in my next life, Coco.

EXT. STAIRWAY - PARIS - NIGHT

LUC reaches a stairway flanked by buildings. He puts the dwarf on his shoulders. In the shadows, Tombeau waits.

Nearby, Vidocq ducks into an alley and reappears at the top of the stairs. He hops onto a balcony.

Luc climbs the stairs, the dwarf on his shoulders. Tombeau follows.

Luc passes Vidocq. Vidocq snatches the dwarf and sets him down on the balcony.
LUC
What the...?

Tombeau appears and lunges at Luc.

TOMBEAU
You fool. You want to take us all down?

Vidocq jumps on Tombeau. They struggle. Swords are pulled. Luc and the dwarf flee.

A FLASH of swords. Vidocq and Tombeau fight. Vidocq knocks Tombeau’s sword from his hand. Slams him against a door.

TOMBEAU
I am a poor man, Monsieur.

Vidocq, confused, lowers his sword. Tombeau rushes into a HOUSE

He sprints down a hallway, Vidocq hot on his heels.

VIDOCQ
I’m not trying to rob you, Monsieur.

TOMBEAU
Then why are you chasing me with your sword drawn?

He dashes up a flight of stairs.

VIDOCQ
To stop you from robbing my friend.

The man pushes over a large vase of flowers.

TOMBEAU
I wasn’t robbing your friend. You were lying in wait to rob me.

Vidocq jumps over the vase. Tombeau flies into a BEDROOM

Vidocq follows. FLASH of swords.

A MAN and WOMAN, in bed, hold each other in terror.
Tombeau moves to the window and looks

OUTSIDE

Bushes and soft grass below.

VIDOCQ
No!

Tombeau jumps. Vidocq dives after him.

The man and woman shrug. Go back to sleep.

EXT. STAIRS - PARIS STREET - NIGHT

From below. Tombeau runs down the stairs, Vidocq behind him. He trips, tumbles, and lands in a heap at the bottom, out cold. Vidocq, at his side now, pulls off his cap. Coco appears.

COCO
Who is he?

VIDOCQ
Never seen him before. And I know all their faces as well as my mother’s.

Vidocq pulls a purse out of Tombeau’s pocket. GOLD COINS. Vidocq opens his papers.

PAPERS READ: Percival Tombeau.

VIDOCQ
Percival?

COCO
Le roast beef. He’s English.

Tombeau MOANS. Vidocq returns the items then disappears.

Tombeau sits up then checks his pockets. Everything’s there. He looks around, confused.

INT. LUC’S ROOM - PARIS - NIGHT

Luc flung in a broken chair. Coco and the dwarf sit on a lumpy bed. VIDOCQ still disguised as JULES, paces.
LUC
Thieves. Everywhere. What’s the world coming to, Jules?

JULES/VIDOCQ
You never have more than five francs on you, Luc. Who paid you and for what?

LUC
I pushed some old geezer over the Pont Neuf. Skinny. Went over the bridge like a bird.

JULES/VIDOCQ
(to Coco)
Allard.

Coco fights off the dwarf’s advances.

JULES/VIDOCQ
(to Luc)
What happened next?

LUC
I don’t know.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Did he drown?

LUC
No. A boat picked him up.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Who hired you?

LUC
I don’t know. A man. At Chez Claude.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Was he there tonight?

LUC
Don’t think so.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Damn it, Luc. Think.
LUC
He wasn’t there tonight. Why are you asking me all these questions, Jules? He bought me a drink a few weeks ago. Seemed easy enough. Five-thirty at the Pont Neuf. Thin man, nice clothes. Over the bridge, and voila, a purse full of gold.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Did he recruit anyone else?

LUC BURPS. Vidocq grabs a vase. Luc hurls into it then passes out. Vidocq SIGHS.

DWARF O.S.
Yes. He recruited someone else.

Vidocq turns. The dwarf holds up a coin purse.

DWARF
Me.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT
The street is quiet. The shops dark. Vidocq and Coco walk.

JULES/VIDOCQ
They played only minor roles in the abductions. Luc in Allard’s and your little friend in Watrin’s.

Coco shoots him a look.

JULES/VIDOCQ
The abductions appear to have happened simultaneously. That means at least ten people were involved. This takes money and planning. Chez Claude has a private room and a large clientele more than happy to help.

COCO
They wouldn’t risk going back there.
JULES/VIDOCQ
Luc did. You over estimate the intelligence of the criminal class, Coco, especially when gold is involved.

EXT. CHEZ CLAUDE - NIGHT
Dark and quiet now. Sabine emerges and locks the door. Then waits.
Vidocq and Coco step out of the shadows.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Mademoiselle Sabine.

Sabine jumps. Brings her hand to her mouth. An ENGAGEMENT RING sparkles on her ring finger.

SABINE
You startled me, Monsieur. Oh, you were with Luc tonight.

JULES/VIDOCQ
My name is Jules. I met with someone in your private room last week and left my cap. I was wondering if you’d seen it?

Suspicion floods Sabine’s eyes.

COCO
(high voice)
What a lovely ring, Mademoiselle.

Sabine shows him her ring. SAPPHIRES and PEARLS surround a small DIAMOND.

COCO
Exquisite. He must love you very much.

She smiles and adjusts her shabby shawl.

SABINE
(to Jules/Vidocq)
I’ll have a look for your hat tomorrow, Monsieur. Good night.

She disappears down the street.
VIDOCQ
She was waiting for our assailant.

COCO
How do you know?

VIDOCQ
Because he was the only man in Chez Claude she didn’t flirt with tonight.

EXT. ALLEY - PARIS - DAY

A WOMAN SCREAMS.

A scullery maid stands over Vitu’s body. She SCREAMS again.

VITU’S FACE, or what’s left of it, a mass of blood and flesh, eaten down to the bone.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - PARIS - DAY

Coco vomits into a garbage can.

Vidocq stands over Vitu’s body. Uniformed POLICE swarm.

Yvries, in the background, talks to the kitchen staff.

Coco wipes his mouth with a lace hanky and joins Vidocq.

VIDOCQ
Vitu. Bank of France.

COCO
How do you know it’s Vitu?

Vidocq nods at The Bank of France next door then stoops and pulls out Vitu’s papers. He hands them to Coco. Coco nods.

Vidocq considers Vitu’s face. Coco, pale, looks away.

COCO
Why destroy his face?

Vidocq holds a magnifying glass up to the bloody mess.
VIDOCQ
The flesh has been eaten away. By rats. Poetic justice, Coco. A glutinous, insatiable rat feasted on by his fellow rats. See here? Teeth marks.

COCO
I’ll take your word for it.

Vidocq notices Vitu’s shoeless feet.

VIDOCQ
Shoes again.

Yvries appears with Guy. They’ve walked right through the crime scene.

VIDOCQ
Damn it! Footprints everywhere. And all police boots.

YVRIES
How dare you speak to me like that. I’m the superior officer here...

VIDOCQ
(to officers)
No one near this body until I say so. Coco, some rope.

A uniformed officer approaches Yvries.

POLICEMAN
We’ve found something sir.

Yvries glances at Vidocq, who now speaks to the scullery maid. He pulls the officers out of Vidocq’s earshot.

YVRIES
What is it?

Two police officers appear with Bruno. He’s terrified and shaking and wears Vitu’s shoes. Yvries glances at Vidocq.

YVRIES
(to officers)
This way.

AROUND THE CORNER
Yvries leads them away from the crime scene. Guy follows.

POLICEMAN
We found him sleeping in some bushes across the street.

BRUNO
I didn’t kill him, Monsieur. I swear. But I saw the man who did.

Guy studies Bruno. He believes him.

Yvries looks down at Bruno’s feet.

YVRIES
 Nice shoes. Who’s your cobbler?

BRUNO
It was cold last night. He didn’t need them anymore.

Yvries nods at one of the policemen.

YVRIES
Arrest this man.

GUY
But sir...

Yvries glowers at him.

YVRIES
Yes, Guy?

GUY
Nothing.

The two policemen march Bruno to a police carriage.

ACROSS THE WAY
Tombeau, hidden in some bushes, watches. Bruno spots him.

BRUNO
That’s him! That’s the man I saw.

Tombeau slides away. The cops turn but Tombeau’s gone. They shove Bruno into the carriage.

POLICEMAN
Get in.
Yvries pulls the cops aside.

YVRIES
Not a word to Vidocq.

GUY
But...

Yvries turns on him.

YVRIES
If you know what’s good for you, you’ll keep quiet.

VIDOCQ O.S.
Guy!

BY THE BODY

Vidocq and Coco help four officers load the body on a stretcher. Guy joins them.

VIDOCQ
(to Guy)
Get the cart.

Guy opens his mouth, thinks better of it, then nods.

Vidocq and Coco stare at the note stabbed in Vitu’s chest.

COCO
Number one.

VIDOCQ
Not much of a note but it sends a strong message. If there’s a number one, there will be a number two.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

A BODY, covered in a white sheet. Five people surround it: Vidocq, Yvries, Madame Vitu and her FOOTMAN, DR. BERNARD (57) a bearded man in black. A GUARD stands by the door.

All eyes on a composed Madame Vitu.

VIDOCQ
If you wish your servant to identify him for you, Madame...
MADAME VITU
Nonsense. Show me.

Dr. Bernard pulls the cover and reveals Vitu’s naked body.

MADAME VITU
Same hair.

VIDOCQ
Any identifiable marks on his body? Scars, moles?

MADAME VITU
I haven’t seen my husband’s naked body in years, Monsieur. You’d have to direct that question to his many mistresses.

The men exchange looks.

VIDOCQ
Where can we find these women?

Madame strides to the door, servant in tow.

MADAME VITU
In every brothel in Paris.

She gets to the doorway. The guard hands her a package.

GUARD
Your husband’s effects, Madame.

MADAME VITU
Burn them. Or keep them. It makes no difference to me. Good day.

She stomps out followed by her servant.

COCO
I believe she has what you call a motive, Vidocq.

VIDOCQ
All wives have a motive, Coco. It’s a miracle half the husbands in Paris are still alive.

Vidocq turns to the Dr. Bernard.
VIDOCQ
Have you determined the cause of death, Bernard?

DR. BERNARD
Who cares? He’s dead.

VIDOCQ
A dead body can sometimes tell us more than a living one. You just have to ask the right questions. Mind if I have a look?

DR. BERNARD
Be my guest.

Bernard smirks at Yvries as Vidocq examines the corpse.

VIDOCQ
His skull is crushed suggest a blow to the head.

Vidocq examines the corpse’s torso.

VIDOCQ
Extensive, though. Broken ribs. You know, Coco. One day this will be a science. The subtle shades of the blood. Palm prints used as identification.

Coco, across the room, back to the dead man.

COCO
Thrilling. Can we go now?

Henry enters, black cape, walking stick.

VIDOCQ

HENRY
Vitu?

VIDOCQ
Yes. This information is not to leave this room. Is that clear, everyone?
Solemn nods. Vidocq rubs his eyes.

HENRY
When did you last sleep? Go. He’s not going anywhere.

INT. VIDOCQ’S ROOMS – DAY

Golden curls on a pillow.

Vidocq, nestled in the arms of a beautiful WOMAN, sleeps. A BANGING on the door.

COCO O.S.
Open up, Vidocq.

Vidocq opens the door. Coco bursts in holding a newspaper.

COCO
Read this.

NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: Banker Murdered. Four Others Missing.

Vidocq scans the article. Coco glances at the beautiful young woman in Vidocq’s bed.

VIDOCQ
The note. The state of his face. Where did they get this information?

Coco shrugs.

VIDOCQ
Wouldn’t put it past that bastard Yvries to plant it.

Vidocq pulls on his trousers.

VIDOCQ
But why? Pay a visit to the Gazette nationale. Get to the bottom of this. I’ll see you back at the prefecture.

Coco leaves. Vidocq dressed now, kisses his date and heads out the door. She SIGHS.
EXT. PARIS STREET - DAY

People on the street read newspapers. Vidocq pushes through them. SNIPPETS of CONVERSATION.

   BAKER
   I’d bet my last franc the Royalists are at the bottom of this.

   GROCER
   No. It’s another Jacobin plot.

EXT. ROTHSCHILD AND FRERES BANK - PARIS - DAY

Hysterical crowd at the front door. Landier holds them back.

   MAN
   My money! I demand my money!

   LANDIER
   The bank is closed. Come back tomorrow.

Vidocq appears.

   VIDOCQ
   I am the police. There is no need to panic. Go home.

Vidocq and Landier make it inside. Secure the doors.

INT. ROTHSCHILD AND FRERES BANK - PARIS - DAY

Vidocq and Landier lean against the heavy doors.

   VIDOCQ
   Is there enough money to cover their deposits?

Landier wipes his brow with a handkerchief.

   LANDIER
   No.

   VIDOCQ
   Why not?

   LANDIER
   I’m not at liberty to say.
VIDOCQ
That’s against the law, I believe.

LANDIER
I am just an employee, Monsieur Vidocq. I don’t make the rules.

EXT. THE GAZETTE NATIONALE - PARIS - DAY

PLAQUE READS: The Gazette nationale.

INT. THE GAZETTE NATIONALE - PARIS - DAY

Coco sits across the desk of the newspaper’s EDITOR, a nervous, rotund man. He eats. Coco holds the newspaper.

EDITOR
And why should I give that information to you?

COCO
Because I am the police.

The editor looks him up and down.

EDITOR
This is their new look, the police?

COCO
Just answer my question.

A PIECE OF PAPER peaks out of a pocket in the editor’s jacket. His hand goes for it but he stops himself. Coco sees.

EDITOR
I can’t reveal my sources.

COCO
And why not?

The editor, terrified, sweats.

EDITOR
Must I state the obvious? No one would trust me. It’s bad enough I have the government reading everything I print before I print it.
A KNOCK at the door and a SECRETARY, appears.

SECRETARY
The notes for the Toulouse story?

The editor nods at a locked box on a table by the door.

SECRETARY
I don’t have the key.

The editor produces the keys and works on the lock.

Coco moves to the door.

COCO
If you change your mind, you know where to find me.

Coco bumps into him.

COCO
Pardon.

EXT. EDITOR’S OFFICE - PARIS - DAY

Coco bounds down the stairs. At the bottom he removes the paper he picked from the editor’s pocket. He grins.

INT. VIDOCQ’S ROOMS - NIGHT

THE NOTE three paragraphs of floral handwriting. Vidocq examines it with a magnifying glass.

Vidocq at a table filled with vials, jars, chemicals, stuffed animals, odd gadgets.

THE EBONY BOX that holds the monkey vomit sits on the table. Coco opens it.

FROZEN MONKEY VOMIT still slushy, not yet melted.

Coco grimaces then places the open box back down on the table. He neglects to shut the lid.

VIDOCQ
We’re being toyed with Coco. Whoever wrote this note made no attempt to disguise his status.

(MORE)
VIDOCQ (CONT'D)
It’s written with the finest paper
and ink available in Paris. The
penmanship is perfect. It matches
the one found on the body.

Coco examines various oddities on the table. Vidocq holds up
the paper stabbed into Vitu’s body.

VIDOCQ
And the contents. He knows
everything. The note found on the
body, the state of Vitu’s face,
even the time of death. Nine
o’clock the night before.

Coco peers into a jar with an ear floating in it. Ugh.

COCO
Someone watched us.

VIDOCQ
Yes. And reported back. The note
was written and delivered to the
gazette in time for the afternoon
edition. This is what he wanted. A
run on the banks. But why?

COCO
To create fear and chaos?

VIDOCQ
Paris has been in a constant state
of fear and chaos since the
revolution. But this is political.
I’m sure of it. Maybe an
assassination plot of some kind?

COCO
Of the bankers?

VIDOCQ
No. The Emperor. Get me the records
of all the assassination attempts
on Napoleon in the last twenty
years.

COCO
And how do I transport them? In a
dozen carriages?

LATER
Vidocq, at his desk, reads through a stack of folders.

LATER

Vidocq, still in his clothes, sleeps, half the documents still unread.

A POUNDING on the door and three MEN charge in. Vidocq grabs his sword. They grab it and drag him out.

VIDOCQ
Sorry, I didn’t catch your names.

EXT. VIDOCQ’S ROOMS – DAWN

The men march Vidocq into the street. An elegant carriage waits at the curb.

VIDOCQ
Nice.

The men push him in.

INT. CARRIAGE – PARIS STREET – DAWN

Vidocq and the three men, sardines. Vidocq checks them out. Tough but well-dressed. IDENTICAL leather BOOTS.

VIDOCQ
How sweet. Identical boots. Was it planned or just a happy accident?

But they’ve lost interest in him now.

MAN 1
Who’s doing the zoo today?

MAN 2
Germain but he hasn’t turned up.

MAN 3
Another tart?

MAN 1
Hope she’s a woman of means because he’s going to be out of a job if he keeps this up.
VIDOCQ
May I ask you gentlemen a question?

They turn dark eyes on him.

VIDOCQ
Where are you taking me and why?
Because, due to our abrupt departure, I didn’t relieve myself and if it’s going to be a long journey, I’m afraid...

Vidocq goes for his fly.

THE MAN by the window sits at attention. The carriage stops. A uniformed SOLDIER looks in. Scans the men then nods.

The carriage takes off again. Vidocq looks OUT THE WINDOW

THE TUILLERIES PALACE

Guards march in front of Napoleon’s home.

EXT. THE TUILLERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY

The carriage pulls up. Vidocq emerges. Takes in the palace.

VIDOCQ
Correct me if I’m wrong, but it seems I have been summoned by the emperor himself.

He shakes off his captors. The balance of power shifted, they now escort him up the steps.

INT. HALLWAY - THE TUILLERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY

Vidocq strides down the arched hallway.

NAPOLEON’S OFFICE

The guards push Vidocq into the room. Gilt and opulence assaults the senses.

Henry sits on a couch. Next to him, Delors (40) tall and distinguished, holds papers.
VIDOCQ

Henry?

A horse WHINNIES and SNORTS. Vidocq spins around.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (43) imposing in full dress uniform, sits on a tan colored horse.

NAPOLEON
We meet again, Monsieur Vidocq.

VIDOCQ
Your excellency.

Vidocq stares at the horse.

NAPOLEON
A mustang. From America. Small, compact, hardy.

He pats the horse then trots around the room as he speaks.

NAPOLEON
How long has it been since you found my first wife’s necklace, Vidocq? Four years? A brilliant piece of detection. Could have put me in a difficult position with our foreign enemies, that emerald trinket. I’ve been told since then you’ve been busy helping the police with their inquiries.

(nods to his aide)
Delors.

DELORS
These recent abductions. What are your conclusions, Monsieur Vidocq?

VIDOCQ
I have come to no conclusions yet.

NAPOLEON
Unacceptable!

The horse reacts. Napoleon calms it.

DELORS
This is unacceptable, Monsieur.
VIDOCQ
Apparently. How’s this? I will find the criminals and bring them to justice.

NAPOLEON
Henry speaks highly of you, Monsieur Vidocq.

Still on his horse, the emperor picks a carrot from a bowl.

NAPOLEON
We are at war. I need to leave Paris immediately. But I can’t leave it in financial chaos.

Napoleon glances at an official document on the desk. A quick look at Delors. Delors’s imperceptible nod.

NAPOLEON
You’ve proven I can trust you.

Napoleon picks up the document.

NAPOLEON
A declaration of war from Prussia. Sweden sent one last week. Why am I here, still, when I should be en route to Germany? Because some faceless lunatic wants money?! An assassination attempt would be easier to deal with. God knows there have been enough of them. Yet, here I am.

He resumes his ride, guiding the horse around his office.

NAPOLEON
I closed the gulf of anarchy and brought order out of chaos. I rewarded merit regardless of birth or wealth. I abolished feudalism and restored equality to all regardless of religion. I fought the decrepit monarchies of the Old Regime because the alternative was the destruction of all this. I purified the Revolution. And still I am plagued by small-mindedness. (MORE)
NAPOLEON (CONT'D)
We must always look to the future, Monsieur Vidocq. Only progress will save us in the end.

Napoleon stops the horse in front of Vidocq. It SNORTS.

NAPOLEON
I am placing guards at all the banks to protect the deposits. People may withdraw money but it will be a capped amount. The governors of the bank will figure out the sum.

HENRY
We will do everything in our power.

NAPOLEON
With those morons posing as officers of the law at your prefecture? Henry, please.

Henry shrugs. He makes a point.

NAPOLEON
I’d get better results if I asked my mother-in-law to take the case and she’s dead.

VIDOCQ
Excellency. I have a solution.

HENRY
Vidocq...

NAPOLEON
Let him speak.

VIDOCQ
A separate undercover division of the police. A Brigade de la Surete.

NAPOLEON
And who would head up this division?

Napoleon gets it. He grins at Henry.

VIDOCQ
I could hand pick and train my agents to be the best in France.
Napoleon considers this. Glances at Delors.

NAPOLEON
A peasant with a badge, eh?

Vidocq grins. Napoleon jumps off the horse. A STABLE HAND appears and takes the reigns. He leads the horse out.

NAPOLEON
What did your father do for a living, Vidocq?

VIDOCQ
He was a baker.

NAPOLEON
My father was a lawyer. We’ve had to struggle, Vidocq, you and me, to get where we are. These rich, entitled louts who’ve had everything handed to them. What do they know of hard work, dedication, and honor? Give a poor man a job and you’ll see it done properly.

VIDOCQ
I agree.

NAPOLEON
What do you think of this idea, Henry? Can it be set up quickly?

HENRY
With Vidocq at its helm...

NAPOLEON

VIDOCQ
A national surete...

NAPOLEON
National? Who said anything about national? Local. Paris. Let’s not get ahead of ourselves here. If it’s successful, we’ll talk again.
EMPERESS MARIE-LOUISE (21) enters as the horse leaves. She holds NAPOLEON II, a squirming toddler.

NAPOLEON JR.

Papa!

Napoleon scoops the little boy up in his arms.

MARIE-LOUISE

He wanted to show you his giraffe.

The little boy holds up a stuffed giraffe.

NAPOLEON JR.

See, Papa? He has a very long neck.

NAPOLEON

To eat tender leaves from the highest branches. Soon the real animal will be here in Paris, my little monkey. We’ll have to build a very tall cage for him, won’t we?

NAPOLEON JR.

Yes.

MARIE-LOUISE

We’re going to the zoo.

NAPOLEON

(to son)

Say hello to the monkeys for me, my little monkey.

Napoleon looks at Henry and Vidocq. They bow.

NAPOLEON

Keep me informed, Henry.

HENRY

(bows)

Excellency.

Delors escorts Henry and Vidocq to the door.

NAPOLEON

And Vidocq.

Vidocq turns.
NAPOLEON
Mother France is counting on you.

INT. HALLWAY - THE TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY
Delors leads Vidocq and Henry out.

DELORS
Good luck, Monsieur Vidocq.

Vidocq and Henry stroll down the hallway.

HENRY
I fear our emperor has made a terrible mistake.

VIDOCQ
The Surete?

HENRY
You. You’re going to be even more impossible to live with.

Vidocq LAUGHS his booming, contagious laugh.

HENRY
Number 6 Quai de Orfevre, near the prefecture. I believe it’s available.

EXT. LA SURETE HEADQUARTERS - PARIS - DAY
A three story house on a residential street. A cart filled with furniture parked in front.

A CRUDE SIGN READS: BRIGADE DE LA SURETE, PARIS

INT. LA SURETE HEADQUARTERS - PARIS - DAY
Vidocq directs the placement of furniture. Coco reads a list.

COCO
Justin, Gervase, Boulanger...

VIDOCQ
No, no...NO!
COCO
Gaffre.

VIDOCQ
Possibly. What about Riboulet?

COCO
The man’s an ox.

VIDOCQ
Useful animals, oxen. Come on.

INT. GAFFRE’S ROOM - PARIS - DAY
Gaffre, the old thief from the first burglary, sits at a table filled with stolen loot. He argues with three THIEVES.

THIEF 1
It’s not an even cut.

GAFFRE
That was our deal. Mine’s a bit more because without me there would be nothing on this table to argue about.

THIEF 2
Merde!

He brandishes a silver candlestick.

EXT. HALLWAY - GAFFRE’S ROOM - PARIS - DAY
VIDOCQ, DISGUISED as JULES, moves up a dark staircase with Coco. A CRASH from above.

JULES/VIDOCQ
What the...?

Vidocq races up the stairs.

INT. GAFFRE’S ROOM - PARIS - DAY
Vidocq flies in. Gaffre takes a beating.

Vidocq pulls the men off Gaffre and sends them sailing out the door. Helps the bloody Gaffre to a chair.
GAFFRE
Jules. Thank God.

JULES/VIDOCQ
Your gratitude may be premature.

Gaffre, puzzled. Vidocq removes his wig and mustache.

VIDOCQ
Jules is not my given name.

GAFFRE
Vidocq! You bastard!

Gaffre lunges but collapses.

VIDOCQ
Water and bandages, Coco.

Vidocq pours a glass of wine for Gaffre.

LATER

Gaffre, wounds now bandaged, at a table with Vidocq.

GAFFRE
I’d rather piss blood than work for the police.

VIDOCQ
You may get your wish with those injuries. This sense of honor amongst thieves...is that what they showed you tonight, Gaffre? Honor? Will you be able to fight them when you’re seventy, eighty years old?

Gaffre listens.

VIDOCQ
You’d be undercover. No one would know. A retirement plan for the future, Gaffre. Think about it.

INT. BROTHEL - PARIS - DAY

Riboulet, the singer at Chez Claude, bonks a prostitute, his GRUNTS like THUNDER. The terrified woman endures it.
VIDOCQ O.S.

Ahem.

Riboulet stops. Vidocq and Coco at the side of the bed.

RIBOULET

Who the hell are you?

He jumps off the relieved woman and lunges at Vidocq. Lifts him in the air. Shakes. Coco sits and watches, amused.

VIDOCQ

Stop. Riboulet. Wait.

Vidocq puts on Jule’s sailor cap and pipe. Riboulet confused.

RIBOULET

Jules?

VIDOCQ

No. That bastard Vidocq.

Riboulet ROARS and grabs him again. Vidocq holds up a purse.

VIDOCQ

Do you know what this purse contains, Riboulet?

Riboulet, thick as a brick, shakes his enormous head. Vidocq opens it. GOLD COINS.

VIDOCQ

Many, many nights of love.

INT. LA SURETE HEADQUARTERS - PARIS - DAY

A crude incident room. Drawings of the abducted bankers, Rothschild’s shoe, Vitu’s portrait.

Vidocq briefs Coco, Gaffre, and Riboulet.

VIDOCQ

Our strongest lead is Sabine at Chez Claude with a ring only a duke could afford. Follow the money.

COCO

I’m not wearing that dress again.
VIDOCQ
If you have a better idea let’s hear it.

MANON AND FLEURIE O.S.
How about the real thing?

Manon and Fleurie, the twins Vidocq caught in the alley, wander in. The men watch, mouths open.

MANON
You must think women are very stupid, Monsieur.

FLEURIE
Do you really think we can’t spot a man disguised as a female?

VIDOCQ
Manon and Fleurie, Coco, Riboulet, and Gaffre.

MEN
Enchante.

VIDOCQ
Manon and Fleurie are identical twins.

FLEURIE
Not quite identical, Monsieur. Manon has a beauty mark on her left cheek.

All eyes on Manon’s flawless face.

RIBOULET
But your skin is flawless, Mademoiselle.

MANON
Not that cheek.

The women burst into ribald LAUGHTER. A floorboard CREAKS. All eyes on the door. Vidocq throws it open.

Guy stands in the hallway.
The Brigade de la Surete is not yet a day old and already Yvries sends his spy. Get lost, weasel.

I’m not a weasel or a spy, Monsieur Vidocq. Yvries has arrested someone for the murder of the banker Vitu.

What?! I’ll give you a two minute head start. Trust me, you don’t want Yvries to know you were here.

Guy takes off. Vidocq grabs his hat.

Coco, Riboulet, Gaffre. Come with me. Ladies? Make yourselves at home. We won’t be long.

The women remove their hats.

Yvries and Guy, back at the front desk, business as usual. Vidocq and his agents rush past.

Vidocq! Stop!

Dank cells hold ragged prisoners. Vidocq, Coco, Riboulet, and Gaffre move down a dark passage.

Vidocq stops at a cell. A GUARD, stands at attention.

Bruno, bloody and shaking, cowers in the corner.

(to guard)

Open it.

The guard hesitates. Vidocq grabs his keys and throws the door open. The guard takes off.
BRUNO
I didn’t kill him. Please don’t hit me again.

Vidocq motions to Coco for water, then stoops down to Bruno.

VIDOCQ
We only want to ask you some questions.

Coco returns with water and bread. Bruno drinks then shoves bread into his mouth.

Yvries appears, out of breath.

YVRIES
Get out, Vidocq. This is my prisoner.

Vidocq nods at Riboulet. Riboulet picks Yvries up.

YVRIES
What are you doing? Put me down you stupid oaf.

Riboulet disappears with Yvries.

VIDOCQ
What’s your name, boy?

BRUNO
Bruno.

VIDOCQ
Tell me exactly what happened, Bruno.

LATER
Alone now, Bruno and Vidocq talk.

VIDOCQ
This man who dumped the body. Would you know him if you saw him again?

BRUNO
Yes.

Vidocq helps him up. Bruno still wears Vitu’s shoes.

Yvries rushes in followed by Riboulet, Coco, and Gaffre.
YVRIES
He’s not going anywhere.

Yvries bars the way.

VIDOCQ
Get out of my way, Yvries.

Yvries stands firm.

VIDOCQ
This man did not kill Vitu, Yvries. The crime is that you know it.

YVRIES
It hasn’t been proven.

GUY O.S.
Monsieur Vidocq!

He rushes up out of breath.

GUY
Monsieur Vidocq. There’s been another murder.

VIDOCQ
Proof enough for you Yvries? Unless he’s a magician and can be in two places at once.

YVRIES
The shoes.

SHOES on Bruno’s feet.

YVRIES
Stolen. That’s theft.

Vidocq hands Bruno to Coco.

VIDOCQ
(to Bruno)
Go with Coco. Go on.

The agents disappear with Bruno. Vidocq and Yvries alone now.

VIDOCQ
You’re a bully and a scoundrel, Yvries. Thank god your kind is a dying breed.
Vidocq throws some coins at him.

    VIDOCQ
    This should take care of the theft.

Yvries picks up coins. Vidocq SLAMS the cell door. Locks it.

    YVRIES
    What are you doing! Let me out!

EXT. PHARMACY - PARIS - DAY

A BLOODY FACE. Someone covers it with a newspaper.

IN THE NEWSPAPER: A picture of the giraffe and the headline: He’s here!

Vidocq and Coco bend over the body. A piece of PAPER with the number 2 on it is stabbed into its chest.

Vidocq glances at the crowd. Riboulet holds them back.

    VIDOCQ
    Cordon off this area and get rid of these people.

Yvries appears with his men.

    VIDOCQ
    My first stalker.

Monsieur Henry appears. Nods at Yvries.

    HENRY
    It’s under control here, Yvries. You’re needed at the prefecture.

Yvries, seething, leaves.

    HENRY
    Any idea who this is?

    VIDOCQ
    He’s at least fifty so he’s not Rothschild or Allard. That leaves Watrin or Tulard.

Vidocq goes through the corpse’s pocket. Comes up empty.
VIDOCQ
Hmm...Nothing in his pockets.

HENRY
Time of death?

Vidocq moves the corpse’s arm.

VIDOCQ
My guess is last night. What’s this?

The dead man’s HAND. Large and calloused.

VIDOCQ
Callouses. Didn’t know counting money was such hard work.

Vidocq scans the site. Over-turned barrels. Vomit.

VIDOCQ
A fight, maybe? But after a meal of roast duck, pear tart, a nice Pinot Noir and after-dinner chocolates.

Henry, amused grin, shakes his head.

HENRY
I’ll be at the precinct.

INT. PHARMACY - PARIS - DAY

Glass jars, medicines, boxes of cough sweets and chocolates. Gaffre guards the back door. Pops a chocolate into his mouth. Vidocq joins him.

GAFFRE
The pharmacy is owned by Stephan Chevalier. His sister, Charlotte, found the body.

VIDOCQ
Question the neighbors. Find out if they saw anything last night.

Vidocq grabs the box of chocolates from Gaffre and throws some money on the counter. He pockets the box.
INT. PHARMACY BACK ROOM - PARIS - DAY

A dark store room with a large work table.

STEPHAN CHEVALIER (28) tall and gaunt, comforts his sister, CHARLOTTE (23) who sits sobbing in a chair.

Vidocq strolls in.

VIDOCQ
Monsieur Chevalier, I am Monsieur Vidocq of the Surete, and I’d like to ask you both a few questions.

Charlotte looks up. She’s breathtaking. Vidocq, smitten.

Vidocq notices her WEDDING RING.

VIDOCQ
Tell me what happened. Who found the body?

CHARLOTTE
I did. I went out back. He was lying there behind the barrels.

VIDOCQ
When was this?

CHARLOTTE
We reported it immediately. His face, monsieur. Horrible.

She hides her face in her hands.

VIDOCQ
(to Stephan)
Do you live here?

STEPHAN
Yes. Upstairs. We both do.

VIDOCQ
And your husband, Madame?

CHARLOTTE
My husband is dead, Monsieur. He was killed last year in Russia.
VIDOCQ
My sincere condolences...Did either of you see or hear anything unusual last night or early this morning?

STEPHAN
I wasn’t here last night. Choir practice. Charlotte was alone.

CHARLOTTE
I went to bed early. I heard nothing. And nothing this morning either, I’m afraid. Is he one of the abducted bankers?

VIDOCQ
Why do you ask?

CHARLOTTE
It’s similar to the accounts in the newspaper, no?

VIDOCQ
Do you have a problem with rats?

STEPHAN
What?

VIDOCQ
Rats. Do you have them?

CHARLOTTE
Paris is overrun with rats, Monsieur. Some of them even have fur.

Vidocq, amused, gives her his card.

VIDOCQ
Please let me know if you think of anything that may be of value. Even the tiniest piece of information could be useful.

A ROAR of horses and the sound of CHEERING.

THROUGH THE WINDOWS
Two royal carriages stampede by. People on the street cheer.
A GLIMPSE of the Empress and Napoleon Jr. Then they’re gone.
STEPHAN
The Empress and the future Emperor.
They stopped here on Monday on the way to the zoo. For cough sweets.
You’d think it was the second coming of Christ the way people carried on.

Vidocq watches Riboulet load the body on a cart. Gaffre appears.

GAFFRE
The old hag next door...

VIDOCQ
Woman, Gaffre. The woman next door.

GAFFRE
She heard screams at around ten but the stupid cow...

Off Vidocq’s look -

GAFFRE
...lady...didn’t think anything of it. There’s a pub around the corner. Heats up around that time every night.

VIDOCQ
Have Coco alert the families of Watrin and Tulard and tell him to meet me at the morgue.

Gaffre takes off. Vidocq starts to walk away then stops. He turns to Stephan.

VIDOCQ
Which church?

STEPHAN
Pardon?

VIDOCQ
Where does your choir practice?

STEPHAN
Saint-Merri.
VIDOCQ
And the other members in this choir...do they also happen to be Jacobin anarchists?

Stephan avoids his eyes.

VIDOCQ
Stop wasting my time, Monsieur Chevalier. I will find out.

STEPHAN
Yes, it was a political meeting but I was there. I didn’t kill anyone.

VIDOCQ
No talk of it at this meeting of yours? Or assassination plots?

STEPHAN
Jacobins. Royalists. What difference does it make when we have an emperor who blows with the political wind? He’s bankrupting this country with his constant wars. He won’t stop until every young man in France is dead and buried. Look what he did to my poor sister. Killed her husband and child. He destroyed her life.

CHARLOTTE O.S.
Stephan, please.

Charlotte appears. Touches his arm.

CHARLOTTE
Come inside, Stephan.

STEPHAN
When we got the news of Raoul’s death Charlotte miscarried their first child.

Vidocq sees the pain on Charlotte’s face. She retreats back into the shop.

STEPHAN
I meet with others who have the future of France in mind.

(MORE)
We are concerned citizens, Monsieur Vidocq, not barbarians.

Vidocq strides towards a waiting carriage.

AT THE WINDOW Charlotte watches him leave.

INT. MORGUE - PARIS - DAY

MADAME TULARD shakes her head.

CUT TO:

MADAME WATRIN shakes her head.

VIDOCQ
You are positive, Madame?

MADAME WATRIN
Yes.

VIDOCQ
(to the corpse)
Who are you?

INT. HALLWAY - MORGUE - PARIS - DAY

Vidocq, Coco, and Gaffre walk down a dank hallway.

VIDOCQ
Five abducted bankers. One dead. Yet no demands.

COCO
You mean two dead, don’t you?

VIDOCQ
No. This murder is unrelated.

GAFFRE
But why would someone go to all that trouble to copy it?
VIDOCQ
To hide his identity.

Vidocq walks fast. The men run to keep up.

VIDOCQ
You abduct five men of great wealth who own banks, hide them somewhere, kill one of them immediately, but make no demands for the release of the others when you have a dead body for leverage and demands will be heard. It doesn’t make sense. If creating a run on the banks to make the emperor look bad was your goal it achieved just the opposite.

COCO
It made him look like a hero.

VIDOCQ
Napoleon said he couldn’t leave Paris until this was resolved. Could that be it? Could someone have abducted these men to keep Napoleon here in Paris?

GAFFRE
What about the dead banker?

VIDOCQ
Maybe it wasn’t murder.

INT. LA SURETE HEADQUARTERS - PARIS - NIGHT
Coco, Gaffre, Riboulet watch as Vidocq becomes Jules.

VIDOCQ
Why would someone want to keep the Emperor in Paris?

GAFFRE
An assassination plot?

VIDOCQ
But why go to all this trouble and expense? Why not just shoot them in their beds and be done with it?
COCO
Personal reasons?

VIDOCQ
An expensive personal vendetta.

COCO
Maybe they’re dead and we just haven’t found the bodies yet?

Vidocq considers this as he DISGUISES himself as JULES.

Bruno appears. Cleaned up and in new clothes. He hands Vidocq a jar of make up.

VIDOCQ
Could it have something to do with the war?

GAFFRE
I don’t believe in war. Very bad investment.

Vidocq stares at him. A glimmer of an idea crosses his eyes.

Manon appears in the doorway in a black wig. Vidocq tosses the pot of brown make-up at her. She dirties her face.

VIDOCQ
(to Bruno)
Let’s go.

BRUNO
(smiles)
Me?

VIDOCQ
Yes, you. Come on.

INT. CHEZ CLAUDE – PARIS – NIGHT

Pulsing and raucous. VIDOCQ, DISGUISED as JULES, sits with Manon at a dark table. Vidocq glances

ACROSS THE ROOM

Sabine serves a table of ruffians.
JULES/VIDOCQ
(to Manon)
Just follow my lead.

MANON
What do you mean?

JULES/VIDOCQ
You’ll see.

He glances at Sabine then grabs Manon. She GASPS.

JULES/VIDOCQ
You were with Rocco last night.
Don’t you lie to me, you slut. He told me everything.

He pulls her close and whispers in her ear.

JULES/VIDOCQ
(whispers)
Struggle harder.

Manon fights him. She gets into it. Claws his face. Surprise lights his eyes then a quick grin.

MANON
Rocco is a liar.

JULES/VIDOCQ
I’ll show you what it’s like to be kissed by a real man.

Vidocq kisses her. She sags with pleasure for a moment then slaps him. They struggle.

Everyone stares. Sabine glances at the BARTENDER, a burly monster. He makes his way towards Vidocq and Manon.

Vidocq tries to kiss Manon again. She claws at him. He tips the table over. Wine bottles and glasses crash to the floor.

The bartender grabs Vidocq.

BARTENDER
That’s enough out of you.

He marches the struggling Vidocq towards the door.

Manon bursts into tears. Patrons right the table. Sabine appears with a handkerchief.
SABINE
Don’t waste your tears, ma chere. He’s not worth it.

MANON
But Jules is all I have in the whole world.

SABINE
Don’t be silly.

LATER
Manon and Sabine talk like old friends.

SABINE
There are wonderful men in the world.

MANON
I wouldn’t know. My life has been one romantic disaster after another. If only women had more choices. Right now it’s either marriage or prostitution. The same thing in my opinion.

SABINE
You’re much too young to feel this way.

Manon gazes at Sabine’s ring.

MANON
You’ve found your man.

She smiles then glances around the tavern.

SABINE
Soon, I will be Madame Tombeau, married woman, living far, far away from here.

MANON
When are you leaving?

SABINE
I’ll see the back of this place tomorrow. And good riddance to it.

Paranoid, she glances around.
SABINE
Don’t breath a word. They don’t know I’m leaving.

Sabine rises and smooths her hair.

SABINE
Well, I’m off. I see my fiance tonight. A word of advice. Stay away from that Jules. I don’t trust him. He has shifty eyes.

Manon stifles a laugh.

EXT. CHEZ CLAUDE - PARIS - NIGHT

Manon exits the tavern onto a deserted street. An OLD MAN appears and bumps into her.

MANON
Oh!

OLD MAN
Pardon...Manon.

MANON
Vidocq!

He pulls her into a dark doorway.

VIDOCQ
Did Sabine talk?

MANON
She’s engaged to someone named Tombeau.

VIDOCQ
Ah. Percival. We meet again.

MANON
He’s coming tonight.

VIDOCQ
Good work. Now go home and get some sleep.
MANON
I meant to ask you...Fleurie and I find ourselves temporarily in need of...

VIDOCQ
There are bedrooms upstairs. Pick out a nice one.

He fishes some keys out of his pocket.

VIDOCQ
If I’m not back by tomorrow. Call the police.

He LAUGHS. She watches him disappear and SIGHS.

EXT. CHEZ CLAUDE - PARIS - NIGHT

Sabine, by the back door, glances up the dark street.

Vidocq, himself again, crouches behind some barrels with Bruno.

A cart turns the corner.

VIDOCQ
(to Bruno)
Have a look at him and stay put. Go back to headquarters when it’s safe. You’ll know when.

The cart pulls up. The driver, Tombeau, is lit by the moon.

Bruno nods. Vidocq puts his finger to his mouth.

Tombeau and Sabine embrace.

SABINE
I thought you weren’t coming.

Vidocq creeps out. Moves to the back of the cart. The horse NEIGHS.

Vidocq freezes. But Sabine and Tombeau kiss, oblivious.

Vidocq starts to crawl under the tarp but the two lovers come up for air. He ducks under the cart.
SABINE
Take me with you.

TOMBEAU
You know I can’t.

SABINE
Then, I’ll give you something of mine to take with you.

Wicked smile. She lifts the tarp and pushes him into the cart. She crawls in with him.

Vidocq, under the bouncing cart, amused grin.

LATER
A crescendo of love. Then silence. Vidocq, relieved.

SABINE O.S.
When will you be back?

UNDER THE TARP
Sabine and Tombeau cuddle.

TOMBEAU
Midday.

The SOUND of footsteps. They freeze.

UNDER CART
A man’s LEGS in blue uniform inches from Vidocq.

A policeman, at the back of the cart, whips the tarp off. Sabine and Tombeau sit up.

OFFICER
Get out, you slut.

Tombeau jumps out of the cart, fists clenched. Sabine holds up her ring.

SABINE
This is my fiance, Officer.

OFFICER
And where did you steal this?
Tombeau tenses. Sabine squeezes his hand. The policeman scans the cart.

OFFICER
Get this cart out of here. And in the future, get a room.

He wanders up the street.

Tombeau and Sabine embrace for one last time. Behind them, Vidocq climbs into the cart and hides.

Tombeau jumps on and takes the reigns. Waves. Sabine walks away. The street goes quiet.

Bruno pops his head out from behind his barrel then runs.

EXT. CART - PARIS STREET - NIGHT

The cart makes its way through the streets of Paris. Vidocq checks his watch.

WATCH READS: 4 am

He peers through a slat of wood at the half-finished ARCH DE TRIUMPH.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The cart rolls along a country road.

INSIDE CART

Vidocq sleeps. The cart stops and his eyes fly open. He peeks out.

THE CHATEAU rosy in the morning light.

He checks his watch.

WATCH READS: 5 am

EXT. CHATEAU - DAWN

A carriage is parked in front of the main doors.

Tombeau guides the cart to the side of the house. He jumps off and moves to the back.
UNDER THE TARP

Vidocq, hand on his sword.

SERVANT
   You’re late! Hurry!

A ragged servant, at the front door, waves. Tombeau walks to the house.

UNDER THE TARP

Vidocq watches the two men enter the house.

UPSTAIRS WINDOW

James Rothschild looks out. He’s joined by a male figure in YELLOW satin.

VIDOCQ
   (to himself)
   Rothschild. You’re still alive.

Vidocq jumps out and hides in some bushes.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

A large room. Furniture covered in white sheets.

EXT. PATIO - CHATEAU - DAY


INT. HALLWAY - CHATEAU - DAY

Vidocq creeps along a hallway. The MURMUR of voices from a room up ahead. The door is ajar. He peeks inside

THE ROOM

James Rothschild sits at a desk, bruised face, legal papers in front of him. He dips a quill into a pot of ink and signs the document in front of him.

A gloved hand comes in and takes the paper. A hint of lace and a BRIGHT YELLOW sleeve.
MAN O.S.
Excellent. And this one.

Rothschild signs.

The man, dressed in YELLOW SATIN, strolls in front of the desk, his face in shadow under a flamboyant hat.

MAN
I will send your regards to your brother. He will be so pleased.

Vidocq listens. A CREAK in the hallway. He turns. WHAM. Everything goes black.

INT. STUDY - CHATEAU - DAY

Vidocq, knocked out, is pulled across the carpet.

James Rothschild and the man in yellow, from the back, watch Tombeau deposit Vidocq against a couch.

MAN
(to Tombeau)
Gather the others into the carriage. Quickly.

ROTHSCHILD
Who is he?

MAN
Nobody of importance.

ROTHSCHILD
First a thief and now a murderer.

MAN
What you think of me is no concern of mine, Monsieur Rothschild. I have what I want.

He nods to Tombeau. Tombeau leads Rothschild out.

VIDOCQ out cold.

The man opens a desk drawer and pulls out a stack of paperwork. Shoves papers into a satchel.

A LETTER. Opened. Read. Then set on fire and thrown in a silver bowl where it blackens and curls.
LATER

From the back, the man stands over Vidocq. Tombeau appears.

    MAN
    Is he dead?

Tombeau touches Vidocq’s neck. He’s out cold but alive.

    TOMBEAU
    (lies)
    Yes.

    MAN
    How convenient.

Tombeau looks up into a barrel of a pistol. BANG. He goes down. The man puts the gun in Vidocq’s hand.

The SOUND of a door closing. Then silence.

LATER

Vidocq, eyes closed, grimaces. Lifts his hand to touch his head. There’s a gun in it. He stares at it, confused.

A MOAN from nearby.

Tombeau. Bloody shirt. Vidocq helps him sit up.

    VIDOCQ
    Did I...?

    TOMBEAU
    You didn’t shoot me. He did.

    VIDOCQ
    Who?

    TOMBEAU
    I don’t know.

    VIDOCQ
    They’ve gone? All of them?

    TOMBEAU
    You must go. The police will be on their way. He set you up.

    VIDOCQ
    Why didn’t he just kill me?
TOMBEAU
I told him you were dead. No one was supposed to get hurt.

VIDOCQ
Did he recruit you?

TOMBEAU
Yes, but I never saw his face. I speak English. My father was French and my mother was English.

VIDOCQ
Percival.

TOMBEAU
Such silly names, these English. There were messages from England that needed translating.

VIDOCQ
England...Nathan Rothschild?

Tombeau nods.

VIDOCQ
Nathan Rothschild is behind this?

Tombeau COUGHS blood. He fishes in his pocket and hands Vidocq something.

TOMBEAU
Please, give this to Sabine. Pretty girl. Works at Chez Claude.

CU GOLD WEDDING BAND Tombeau gives it to Vidocq. Vidocq takes Tombeau’s arm.

TOMBEAU
No. You must leave. They’ll be here soon. There is a mail coach every morning. You may be able to catch it if you hurry.

Tombeau collapses. Vidocq touches his neck. SIGHS.

Vidocq moves to the desk. Notices the burned pieces of letter in a bowl. He takes off.
EXT. CHATEAU - OUTSIDE PARIS - DAY

Vidocq charges out the front doors and out onto the road.

IN THE DISTANCE

A mail coach bears down on him. He stands in the middle of the road and flags it down. It ROARS to a stop. The DRIVER pulls a pistol and points it at him.

    DRIVER
    I assure you this is loaded,
    Monsieur.

    VIDOCQ
    (hands up)
    I am the police.

The driver cocks the pistol. Vidocq hands him his papers.

    VIDOCQ
    I need to get back to Paris,
    urgently.

The driver re-pockets the gun and nods to the back of the coach. Vidocq jumps in.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Vidocq, wedged in with boxes of mail, bumps around in the back of the coach.

UP THE ROAD

A police coach with bars pulled by four horses approaches. Two COACHMEN in front, two GUARDS in the back.

The coach SPEEDS towards the mail coach. Passes it in slow motion.

INSIDE COACH

Yvries, two armed policemen, and Guy.

Vidocq watches it pass and grins.
EXT. ROTHCHILD AND FRERES BANK - PARIS - DAY

A ROYAL VAN insignia on the side, sits out front. Armed guards surround it. Trunks are loaded into the back.

The mail coach deposits Vidocq. He approaches a guard.

    VIDOCQ
    What’s going on here?

    GUARD
    None of your concern. Move on.

    VIDOCQ
    (pulls out his card)
    The Brigade de la Surete by appointment of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The guard points a pistol at him. CRASH a trunk falls and breaks open. GOLD bullion coins spill onto cobblestones. SPARKLE like TREASURE in the sun.

    GUARD
    You fools!

The soldiers scoop up the gold.

    GUARD
    Get that trunk loaded.

Gold coins still in the street, they chuck the trunk into the van, jump aboard and take off.

A MOB descends on the coins. Fight and claw for the money.

INT. ROTHCHILD AND FRERES BANK - PARIS - DAY

Vidocq barges in. He strides towards Rothschild’s office. Tellers and customers stare.

INT. OFFICE - ROTHCHILD AND FRERES BANK - PARIS

Rothschild embraces his wife, Betty. Landier watches. Vidocq bursts in. Rothschild stares like he’s seen a ghost.

Betty clutches her husband.
ROTHSCHILD
(to Betty)
Please. I’ll be fine. Landier?

Landier guides Betty out of the office. The door closes.

ROTHSCHILD
You’re alive.

VIDOCQ
Have the others been released, too?

ROTHSCHILD
Yes.

VIDOCQ
So, you’re a war profiteer now, Monsieur Rothschild.

ROTHSCHILD
Never! Trust me, Monsieur...

VIDOCQ
Vidocq.

ROTHSCHILD
We didn’t want to make those loans, Monsieur Vidocq. None of us did. We were pressured for months. Allard, Watrin, Tulard...Vitu.

VIDOCQ
By whom?

ROTHSCHILD
Many different people on behalf of the government.

VIDOCQ
But why? The government controls the banks.

ROTHSCHILD
These were personal loans.

The enormity of this revelation flashes across Vidocq’s face. He works out the puzzle.

VIDOCQ
Personal loans? To fund the war?
Rothschild nods.

VIDOCQ
What name appeared on the paperwork?

ROTHSCHILD
Left blank. To be filled in later.

VIDOCQ
And you signed because...?

ROTHSCHILD
We have families, Monsieur.

Vidocq paces. Rothschild sits down.

VIDOCQ
These loans to fund the next war are a bad investment, aren’t they?

ROTHSCHILD
No banker in their right mind would make this deal.

VIDOCQ
And taxes can no longer cover the price of war.

ROTHSCHILD
France’s credit rating plummeted after the revolution. Napoleon’s agenda is expensive. At this time next year, I will be surprised if he’s still emperor. The Russian campaign was a disaster.

VIDOCQ
You believe the emperor is behind this?

ROTHSCHILD
How could he not be?

VIDOCQ
Maybe the answer can be found a little closer to home.

Rothschild, puzzled.
VIDOCQ
Your brother, Nathan. A prominent English banker now. This could be a scheme cooked up between rich siblings to get even richer.

ROTHSCHILD
No! As keepers of the international bond market we have much more to gain from financial stability than from deficit-financed military adventurism. The answer lies with the emperor, Monsieur Vidocq.

Vidocq. Sick look on his face.

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY
The police coach sits in the courtyard.

The police emerge from the house carrying a stretcher covered in a blanket.

Yvries follows with Guy.

YVRIES
I’ve finally got that bastard, Vidocq. And for murder no less.

GUY
You have no proof.

YVRIES
I have the note accusing him.

GUY
Unsigned.

YVRIES
You don’t think we could track down the man who wrote it?

Guy rolls his eyes. Yvries catches him.

YVRIES
Are you interested in a career with the police, Guy? Because there are many other young men who would love your job.
The officers reach the coach. Tie the stretcher on top.


    YVRIES
    Let’s move!

The coach takes off.

EXT. LA SURETE HEADQUARTERS - PARIS - DAY

The incident room. The Surete agents sit, gloomy faces. Vidocq, at his desk, doodles on a newspaper.

HIS DRAWING: A giraffe. A newspaper headline reads: GIRAFFE IN PARIS TODAY!

    COCO
    Well, you can hardly go to the palace and arrest the emperor of France now, can you?

    VIDOCQ
    There’s no proof of his involvement.

Coco shakes his head at Vidocq’s naivete.

    FLEURIE
    Monsieur Henry was here. He wants us to police the crowds at the parade today.

    GAFFRE
    Apparently, every pickpocket in Paris will be there.

Coco SIGHS. Vidocq rises, puts on his hat and leaves. They watch him go with concern.

EXT. THE ARCH DE TRIUMPH - DAY

POSTER with a giraffe on it READS: Friday 19 March 1813.

Vidocq, in front of the Arch de Triumph, studies the marble friezes depicting Napoleon’s triumphs.
Nearby, workers put the finishing touches on a ROYAL GRANDSTAND overlooking the Champs-Elysees.

Crowds start to line the street. Vendors sell stuffed animals and candy. People wave flags.

Vidocq walks through the festivities, head down, betrayed.

EXT. THE TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY

Vidocq approaches the palace gates.

The courtyard is in chaos. Soldiers, horses, carts of artillery. Preparations for war.

Three two-story banners of blue, white and red wave in the breeze. Vidocq watches for a moment then leaves.

EXT. POLICE PREFECTURE - PARIS - DAY

The coach carrying Tombeau’s body pulls up. Yvries jumps out.

YVRIES
(to Guy)
Come on.

GUY
I’ll take the body to the morgue.

YVRIES
Suit yourself.

Yvries moves to the front door. Guy looks at the dead body. MOVEMENT under the blanket. He pulls it back.

TOMBEAU MOANS. He’s still alive.

Guy glances up. Yvries is gone.

GUY
(shouts to driver)
The hospital.

The driver hesitates.

GUY
Now!
INT. VIDOCQ’S ROOMS – PARIS – DAY

Vidocq enters then clamps his hand over his nose and flies to the window. He breathes deeply then looks around. His eyes land on his lab table.

THE EBONY BOX filled with monkey barf, open but empty. Three dead rats lie near it. Vidocq stares, puzzled.


CHARLOTTE
I’m sorry to bother you at home, Monsieur Vidocq, but they gave me your address.

VIDOCQ
Who did?

CHARLOTTE
The big man.

VIDOCQ
Ah. Of course. The big man.

He looks at the dead rats then grabs his hat.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE – PARK – PARIS – DAY

Vidocq and Charlotte sip tea. LAUGHTER drifts over from a Punch and Judy puppet theater surrounded by children.

CHARLOTTE
Don’t you find it amazing how quickly ugliness is forgotten, Monsieur Vidocq? Those children laugh now but I wonder how many of them wake up at night screaming from their dreams?

VIDOCQ
But you must have been born after the terror.

CHARLOTTE
Yes, of course. How old were you when heads rolled?
VIDOCQ
Eighteen, nineteen. But I was in jail for most of it. Although jail holds its own special terror.

His face goes black with memories.

CHARLOTTE
What was your offense?

VIDOCQ
Well, the original one was striking a superior officer. I was a corporal of grenadiers in the Battle of Valmy under Napoleon.

CHARLOTTE
Why did you do that?

VIDOCQ
He slept with my girlfriend. I know. The folly of youth. I escaped but was recaptured. Five times. Got quite good at it, escaping. But the charge that stuck was forgery. This happened in jail. There was a man who’d been there for six years for stealing grain to feed his starving family. I forged his release papers and was caught. After that, I was in and out of prison for fifteen years before I said enough. I had a choice. Be hounded by the police for the rest of my life or join them.

CHARLOTTE
I doubt that’s the only reason.

Vidocq grins.

CHARLOTTE
You’ve never been married?

VIDOCQ
I’ve never been free long enough.

CHARLOTTE
Did he go back to prison, the man you saved?
VIDOCQ
    He went back to his family.

Vidocq and Charlotte lock eyes. The waiter appears. Vidocq remembers something. Fishes in his pocket and pulls out Sabine’s ring.

VIDOCQ
    What time is it?

A BELL TOWER clock strikes one o’clock.

VIDOCQ
    I must go.

He stops.

VIDOCQ
    Why did you come to see me?

CHARLOTTE
    Go. It can wait.

He kisses her hand and dashes. She watches him, sad eyes.

EXT. CHEZ CLAUDE - PARIS - DAY

Sabine paces, anxious, her bags next to her.

A carriage rounds the corner. Sabine brightens. The carriage stops. Vidocq emerges followed by Manon and Fleurie.

Sabine confused.

Vidocq hands Sabine Tombeau’s ring. She SCREAMS and faints in Vidocq’s arms.

INT. SABINE’S ROOM - PARIS - DAY

Reeks of poverty but it’s clean. Sabine, flung on a bed, SOBS. Manon next to her.

Vidocq and Fleurie conduct a search.

Sabine glances at Manon who watches Vidocq and Fleurie. She slides her hand under her pillow and pulls out a knife. Tries to stab herself.
MANON

No!

Manon grabs her hand. Vidocq wrestles the knife from Sabine. She breaks down.

LATER

Sabine sips tea at a little table, Vidocq next to her.

SABINE

I don’t know anything, Monsieur.
Tombeau didn’t tell me his work. He said I would be safe this way.

VIDOCQ

Please, Sabine. Think. It’s important.

SABINE

Why should I tell you anything?
You’re the police. You’re scum.

She flings herself on Vidocq. Beats his chest with her fists.

SABINE

My Tombeau was worth twenty of you.

VIDOCQ

You are probably right,
Mademoiselle. He saved my life.

SABINE

All we wanted was a new life,
Monsieur. Is it a crime to want a something better?

VIDOCQ

We’re all living in the shadow of the guillotine, Sabine.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Fleurie flips through some books. Nothing. Spots a hat rack.

SABINE

Tombeau told me if something ever happened to him...

She glances at Fleurie who now examines the hats.
SABINE
The flowery one. Inside.

A LETTER tucked in the band. Fleurie hands it to Vidocq. He tears it open.

SABINE
This is the original. The man behind this has a copy Tombeau made.

MANON
What does it say?

Vidocq flies to the door. Returns and takes Sabine’s hand.

VIDOCQ
Thank you. Tombeau would be proud.

EXT. THE TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY
Courtyard still crowded with troops.

A GENERAL from behind, broad back, striking blue, white and gold uniform, moves towards the palace.

Crowds part. Men salute. He acknowledges them with a nod.

CORPORAL
(salutes)
General.

GENERAL
(nods)
Corporal.

The general reaches the front door. The guards click their heals. Pull the doors open.

INT. THE TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY
The general enters the palace and stops.

VIDOCQ adjusts his mustache. Tries to remember the way to Napoleon’s office. He makes a right.
INT. HALLWAY – THE TUILERIES PALACE – PARIS

Vidocq strides toward Napoleon’s office now guarded by two SOLDIERS. He nods at them. They open the doors.

INT. NAPOLEON’S OFFICE – TUILERIES PALACE – PARIS – DAY

Napoleon talks to Delors. Vidocq stares. Delors, in YELLOW SATIN, is the man from the chateau. Vidocq hides his face.

Conversation over, Delors moves towards the doors. A quick glance at Vidocq and he’s in the

THE HALLWAY

when he freezes. That face. That face.

DELORS
Vidocq!
(to guards)
Get the police. Now!

INT. NAPOLEON’S OFFICE – TUILERIES PALACE – PARIS – DAY

Vidocq approaches Napoleon’s desk. The emperor glances at him then returns to the map he studies.

NAPOLEON
General, this map...

Napoleon slowly raises his head.

NAPOLEON
Ah. Vidocq.

Vidocq removes his hat. The emperor grins.

NAPOLEON
I’ve just been informed that the bankers have returned home unharmed. All of France thanks you for your excellent work, Monsieur.

VIDOCQ
You used me.

NAPOLEON
This is not about you or me, Monsieur.

(MORE)

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NAPOLEON (CONT'D)
Something much bigger is at stake.
Mother France and securing her
place in the world far into the
future. A leader is a dealer in
hope, Monsieur Vidocq. And I have
such hopes for France.

VIDOCQ
An innocent man has died.

NAPOLEON
In the quest for progress innocent
people will be hurt. Unfortunate
yet unavoidable. But in the end,
for the greater good...

Napoleon strolls to a large table. A MAP of EUROPE spread out
on it. Toy soldiers dot key battlegrounds.

NAPOLEON
When I look at this map do you know
what I see?

Vidocq studies the map.

NAPOLEON
I see the United States of France.

Vidocq looks from the map to Napoleon. A charismatic,
visionary, megalomaniac.

EXT. THE STREETS OF PARIS - DAY
HORSES HOOVES fly over cobblestone streets.
The guard charges through the streets of Paris.

IN THE DISTANCE
The Police Prefecture comes into view.

INT. NAPOLEON’S OFFICE - TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY
Napoleon, at the window now, takes in the Arch de Triumph.
NAPOLEON
When a government is dependent upon bankers for money, they, and not the leaders of the government, control the situation. Financiers are without patriotism and without decency. Their sole object is gain. We are brothers, Monsieur Vidocq. We believe in the same thing.

VIDOCQ
Forcing your will on your citizens? Breaking your own laws? This is your free society. Not mine.

NAPOLEON
How idealistic you are still, after a life on the run...If I don’t get this money my empire will fall.

VIDOCQ
Your empire?

NAPOLEON
Don’t push me, Monsieur...

Vidocq hands him the incriminating letter.

NAPOLEON
What is this?

VIDOCQ
Retribution.

A COMMOTION at the door. Delors bursts in followed by Yvries and several policemen.

Delors glances at Napoleon. The emperor nods.

DELORS
(to Yvries)
Arrest this man.

The police grab Vidocq. He struggles. Yvries gloats.

VIDOCQ
As usual, you’re making a huge mistake, Yvries.
YVRIES
Best day of my life taking you back
to jail.

DELORS
Charge him with treason.

Vidocq looks at Napoleon. Napoleon ignores him. The police
drag Vidocq out.

DELORS
Well, that’s taken care of.

Napoleon holds Vidocq’s letter. DELORS recognizes it. The
color drains from his face. He backs out of the room.

EXT. A HALLWAY – TUILERIES PALACE – PARIS – DAY

Marie-Louise and Napoleon Jr. walk hand in hand. The little
boy holds his stuffed giraffe. CHATTERS about the parade.

EXT. HALLWAY – THE TUILERIES PALACE – PARIS – DAY

Vidocq, flanked by Yvries and a couple of policemen, is
escorted down the hall.

VIDOCQ
Got any retirement plans, Yvries?

YVRIES
What are you talking about? I’m not
retiring.

VIDOCQ
You will be when Henry finds out
what a cock up you’ve made of this.

EXT. NAPOLEON’S OFFICE – TUILERIES PALACE – PARIS – DAY

Delors slips down a staircase.

EXT. HALLWAY – THE TUILERIES PALACE – PARIS – DAY

Vidocq, police escort, breaks free of them and bolts.
INT. NAPOLEON’S OFFICE - TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY

Napoleon, holding the open letter, gazes out the window at his troops.

Vidocq bursts in. Yvries and his men follow. They seize him.

NAPOLEON
Let him go.

YVRIES
But your excellency...

NAPOLEON
Get out!

They release Vidocq and leave. The two men are alone. Napoleon holds up the letter.

NAPOLEON
Are you certain of this?

VIDOCQ
Yes.

Vidocq joins him at the window.

THE COURTYARD BELOW

Troops load wagons with weapons. Light artillery. Small cannons and muskets.

The enormous red banner floats by the window.

NAPOLEON
I was being kept in Paris so the British could get vast shipments of arms to Germany before I got there.

VIDOCQ
Yes.

NAPOLEON
Was James Rothschild involved?

VIDOCQ
No. His brother Nathan, possibly. But he may have been coerced by the British government.

The irony doesn’t go unnoticed.
NAPOLEON
And Delors?

VIDOCQ
Money. He played both sides.

Napoleon observes the carts of arms down below.

NAPOLEON
Well, now I know what to pack.

EXT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY

Marie-Louise and Napoleon Jr. stroll down a velvet carpet. Delors appears, grabs the boy. Marie-Louise SCREAMS.

INT. NAPOLEON’S OFFICE - TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY

Vidocq and the emperor at the window. Marie Louise BURSTS in.

MARIE LOUISE
He’s taken our son!

VIDOCQ
Delors?

Napoleon and Vidocq look down into

THE COURTYARD

The yellow clad figure of Delors dashes through the crowds. He clutches the terrified little boy.

NAPOLEON
(shouts)
Stop him!

But it’s noisy in the courtyard and his shouts go unheard. Delors jumps on a horse and gallops off. Napoleon runs for the door. A red banner floats in front of the window. Vidocq grabs on.

EXT. THE TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY

Vidocq clings to the banner. Slides down.
A HORSE stands below, unattended.

Vidocq plops on the horse, face contorts in pain. Takes off.

IN THE DISTANCE

Delors, Napoleon Jr. clutched to his chest, disappears around the corner.

Vidocq speeds after him.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS – DAY

The streets are full. People move in the direction of the Champs-Elysees. Hold stuffed animals, wear masks, wave flags.

Crowds part as Delors flies down the street. Vidocq in hot pursuit.

Vidocq gains on him.

Delors glances over his shoulder. Kicks his horse harder.

EXT. THE TUILERIES PALACE – PARIS – DAY

Napoleon, on horseback now, charges out of the courtyard and onto the street.

EXT. THE TUILERIES GARDEN – DAY

Delors’s horse enters the garden in front of the Louvre. Vidocq follows.

FROM ABOVE

The two horses charge across the spacious gardens.

IN THE DISTANCE

The Arch de Triumph.

EXT. PARIS STREETS – DAY

Napoleon, on his horse, rounds a corner. A cart pulls in front of him. He skids to a stop, blocked.
NAPOLEON

Merde!

He turns his horse around. Scans the street for a way out. He’s stuck.

FROM ABOVE

Napoleon only two streets away from Vidocq and Delors.

EXT. ARCH DE TRIUMPH – PARIS – DAY

Restless crowds line the streets.

THE ROYAL GRANDSTAND, festive, now filled with important people. Three chairs in the middle remain EMPTY.

Nearby, A real GENERAL in full dress, checks his pocket watch. Turns to his AIDE.

GENERAL

The Emperor is late.

The CROWD, restless.

GENERAL

We’d better get started or there will be another revolution. Give the order.

The aide takes off.

EXT. CHAMPS-ELYSEES – PARIS – DAY

Fleurie and Manon wander through the crowds.

UP AHEAD

a ragged man picks an old rich guy’s pocket.

The two women sprint after the thief. Fleurie bumps into him then drops her purse.

FLEURIE


He turns. She’s gorgeous. He smiles.
She bends over. Her breasts cascade out of her dress. He helps her, eyes glued to her tits.

MEANWHILE, Manon, behind him, picks his pocket.

FLEURIE
I can’t thank you enough, Monsieur.

Manon and Fleurie disappear into the crowd. Manon pulls out a GOLD WATCH. The women stare temptation in the face.

NEARBY, the rich old guy, distressed, fumbles in his pockets. Manon and Fleurie take pity. Quietly, return the watch. The old guy finds it and smiles.

A WHISTLE BLOWS and a CHEER goes up from the crowd.

A marching band strikes up a PATRIOTIC tune and moves through the arch. The parade officially starts.

EXT. ROYAL GRANDSTAND - PARIS - DAY

Coco, Gaffre, Riboulet, and Bruno scan the crowds.

GAFFRE
Unusual to be on the other side.

COCO
(sighs)
A thousand pockets. A thousand purses of gold.

The men grin. Manon and Fleurie join them.

MANON
Where’s Vidocq?

BRUNO
He hasn’t shown up yet.

The band moves down the street.

TIGERS appear, in chains, led by men in leather. The crowd goes wild. The animals, agitated by the noise, SNARL and SWIPE at the crowd. They’re delighted.
EXT. CHAMPS-ELYSEES - PARIS - DAY

Delors, still on horseback and clutching Napoleon Jr., reaches the crowd. He’s blocked. He jumps off his horse and moves into the crowd with the little boy.

Vidocq arrives a second later. Abandons his horse. Follows Delors. Loses him.

EXT. THE ROYAL GRANDSTAND - DAY

The Surete agents scan the crowds. Vidocq rushes up.

COCO
Where have you been?

Vidocq scales the grandstand to get a better view. The important people watch, shocked.

Vidocq scans the crowd. A glimpse of YELLOW. Delors tries to cross the street.

VIDOCQ
There. In yellow. Come on.

Vidocq hits the ground running. His agents follow.

IN THE CROWD

The Surete closes in on Delors. Delors spots them. He abandons the little boy on the sidewalk and takes off in the direction of the Arch de Triumph.

VIDOCQ
(to Manon and Fleurie)
Get the boy.

He sprints after Delors. His men follow.

Manon and Fleurie join the abandoned boy crying on the street. Fleurie picks him up.

FLEURIE
There, there, ma chere. The giraffe will be here soon.

He calms down. Manon watches, shocked.

MANON
Isn’t he the...
FLEURIE
Future emperor of France. Yes.

MANON
Don’t drop him.

EXT. THE ARCH DE TRIUMPH – DAY

Delors sprints under the arch.

Cages of animals pulled by horses wait their turn.

Nearby, the GIRAFFE, majestic, waits with his keeper.

Vidocq, close on Delors’s tail. Delors hits a dead end. He’s cornered.

Vidocq, Coco, Gaffre, Riboulet, and Bruno advance on him. He pulls out a pistol. They freeze. Delors climbs a ladder, his pistol aimed at Vidocq. Gets to a platform. Steadies his aim.

VIDOCQ
Come on you bastard. I dare you to shoot me.

Vidocq becomes a moving target. He jumps back and forth. Delors tries to aim but can’t.

Nearby, Coco, Gaffre, Riboulet, and Bruno watch. Delors turns the gun on Coco.

VIDOCQ
No!

Delors pulls the trigger. The gun EXPLODES. Coco goes down.

Vidocq ROARS with rage. He scales the scaffolding like a gorilla and grabs Delors. Delivers a good punch. They fight.

DOWN BELOW

An open cage on a cart moves under the scaffolding. In it, a SNARLING LION paces, agitated, hungry.

SCAFFOLDING

Vidocq and Delors wrestle. Their fight brings them in view of the crowds.

IN THE CROWD a man notices them and points.
MAN

Look. Up there.

All eyes on Vidocq and Delors as they swing and duck. A collective GASP from the crowd.

BELOW

The lion cage moves forward. Directly below them again.

Vidocq grips Delors. Delors breaks free. Spots an axe. Swings at Vidocq but loses his balance and falls against a net. He swings away from the scaffolding and over the lion’s cage.

SCREAMS from the crowd.

The rope holding the net frays. Delors drops a few feet closer to the cage.

Vidocq makes a grab for the rope but can’t reach it.

The rope, on its last strands, gives way. It breaks. Delors flies backwards through the air. Lands in the lion’s cage.

The lion ROARS. Delors SCREAMS.

SCREAMS and CRIES from the crowd.

Vidocq starts the climb down from the scaffolding.

THE CART

The lion mauls Delors. The horses, spooked, bolt. The cart flies onto the parade route toward a crowd of people.

Riboulet charges after it. Runs like a fiend and jumps on. He guides the cage down a side street off the thoroughfare.

THE BAND strikes up another tune. Distracted, the crowd settles down and the parade resumes.

BY THE ARCH

Vidocq jumps off the scaffolding and joins Gaffre and Bruno tending a bloody but alive Coco.

COCO

Bastard. What made him think he could carry off yellow satin?

Vidocq, Gaffre and Bruno grin. Look at the arch entrance.
THE GIRAFFE ready for his grand entrance, waits. The men stare at the unusual animal. For a few moments they’re captured by it’s exotic beauty.

THE ROYAL GRANDSTAND

Manon and Fleurie sit with Napoleon Jr. They dote. Feed him chocolates. Wipe his face. He LAUGHS and claps.

A TRUMPET plays a fanfare. Announces the main attraction.

A HUSH falls over the crowd. All eyes on the arch. The giraffe appears, walks forward and stops before the crowd.

THE ROYAL GRANDSTAND

Napoleon appears with Marie-Louise. He scoops his son up into his arms and holds him tight. Kisses him. Strokes his hair. The Emperor smiles at Manon and Fleurie.

They smile, bow, and back away.

Napoleon, wife at his side, places his son on his shoulders. They watch as the giraffe, led by his keeper, moves slowly down the Champs-Elysees, twelve feet higher than the tallest man. Elegant. Magical. A hush falls over the crowd.

ON THE SIDEWALK

Vidocq and Gaffre support Coco. Bruno holds his hat. They’re joined by Riboulet, Manon, and Fleurie. The Surete watches as the splendid animal moves walks slowly down the street.

EXT. PARIS STREET – DAY

NEWSSTAND POSTER READS: Vidocq Triumphant!

A man reads a newspaper while crowds of people buy papers.

NEWSPAPER DRAWINGS: Vidocq fights Delors on the Arch de Triumph. Next to it: a portrait of Vidocq.

SERIES OF SHOTS people all over Paris read of Vidocq’s triumph.

- In a park. A young couple share a newspaper.

- At a bakery. A baker and his workers stand over a newspaper on a table.
- In front of the palace. Two guards on horses share a paper.

Vidocq, dapper in hat and cape, strides by the man at the news agents. The man stares. Others notice. MURMURS as Vidocq passes.

    WOMAN
    It’s Vidocq!

INT. LA SURETE HEADQUARTERS - PARIS - DAY

Coco, open paper, reads to Gaffre, Riboulet, Bruno, and Manon. Vidocq walks in.

    COCO
    You’re a celebrity.

Vidocq grabs the paper and chucks it in a wastebasket.

    VIDOCQ
    For catching a thief named Bouchard.

He flops down at his desk and stares at the wall filled with the notes of the chemist murder.

Fleurie appears with a pot of cream and some bandages. She goes to Riboulet who hides his hands behind his back.

    FLEURIE
    Oh, don’t be a baby. I must see to your hands.

    VIDOCQ
    (to Riboulet)
    What’s wrong with your hands?

Riboulet holds them up. BLOODY and TORN.

    RIBOULET
    I’m a thief not a coachman.

Vidocq stares at his hands. Something flashes in his eyes.

    HENRY O.S.
    Well done, everyone.

Henry and Dubois stand at the door.
DUBOIS
Yes, a resounding success. You...

Vidocq shoots up, grabs his hat, and flies out of the room. Everyone stares. Henry shakes his head.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY
Vidocq, on horseback, flies through the streets of Paris.

INT. MORGUE - DAY
The body of the unknown victim, covered, on the table. Vidocq, at his feet, pulls off the sheet.

HEAVY BLACK BOOTS Vidocq stares.

FLASHBACK in the carriage to the palace. The abductors BOOTS. Exactly the same.

INT. STABLE - THE TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS
A line of carriages sits in a stable area on the palace grounds. Vidocq speaks to a COACHMAN.

    COACHMAN
    Germain hasn’t shown up all week.
    Not like him. Been the emperor’s coachman for over twenty years.

    VIDOCQ
    Has anyone checked where he sleeps?

    COACHMAN
    No need. He sleeps in there.

Nods to a back room behind the stable.

INT. ROOM - STABLE - DAY
Vidocq pokes around the tiny room. An army cot, unmade, messy, empty bottle of wine on a table, a glass. He sniffs the contents. Steps in something.


FLASHBACK dead monkey at the zoo. Covered in vomit.
Vidocq pulls Gaffre’s chocolate box out of his pocket. They match.

INT. VIDOCQ’S ROOMS – DAY

Vidocq, at his desk, pours through the assassination paperwork. Then he finds it.

SNIPPETS of key WORDS: J. CHEVALIER, CHEMIST. CHRISTMAS EVE 1800. BOMB. Rue Saint-Nicaise. EXECUTION.

He reads to the end then puts his head in his hands.

A KNOCK on the door. Henry lets himself in. Studies Vidocq like a concerned father.

VIDOCQ
That attempt on Napoleon’s life
Christmas Eve 1800.

HENRY
I remember it well. Fifty innocent were people killed or maimed.

VIDOCQ
The body in the morgue belongs to
Claude Germain, the driver of
Napoleon’s carriage that night.

HENRY
Ah, the chemist.

Vidocq, quiet, nods, but makes no move to the door.

INT. CHEVALIER CHEMISTS – PARIS – DAY

Stephan, behind the counter, hands a woman a package. She passes Vidocq on her way out. Stephan’s eyes narrow.

VIDOCQ
When the royal carriage stopped
here on Monday, did you give
Napoleon’s son something?
Chocolates perhaps?

STEPHAN
No. Just the cough sweets. But to the Empress. Why?
VIDOCQ
Because the body behind your shop belongs to the coachman who was driving that day. He also drove the carriage to the opera Christmas Eve 1800 when the bomb your father made blew up killing mostly women and children hoping to catch a glimpse of the emperor.

STEPHAN
My father was innocent. Napoleon knew that but executed him anyway because he happened to be executing Jacobins that day. Why should I kill a coachman?

VIDOCQ
The coachman was not your intended victim. Stephan Chevalier. I’m arresting you for the attempted murder of Napoleon II.

STEPHAN
The emperor’s son? Are you mad?

Vidocq grabs Stephan’s arm.

CHARLOTTE O.S.
He didn’t do it, Monsieur.

Charlotte stands in the doorway.

CHARLOTTE
I did.

STEPHAN
Charlotte! What are you saying?

CHARLOTTE
Please, Stephan. Let me speak.

Vidocq and Stephan stare at her in horror.

CHARLOTTE
When they stopped here on Monday on the way to the zoo, I gave the little boy poisoned chocolates.

VIDOCQ
And he fed one to the monkey.
CHARLOTTE
Yes. The symptoms described in the newspaper were those of arsenic poisoning.

VIDOCQ
But you didn’t know they would be stopping here.

CHARLOTTE
The poison was meant for me, Monsieur. My life ended when my husband and baby died. Perhaps earlier, when our father was executed for a crime he did not commit. Our mother died soon after. Did you know that?

VIDOCQ
Germain ate the boy’s chocolates not knowing they were poisoned.

CHARLOTTE
He came here, sick, looking for help. I had none to offer.

She doubles over. Stephan and Vidocq rush to her.

STEPHAN
Charlotte, what have you done?

He charges into the back room. Vidocq and Charlotte alone.

CHARLOTTE
(to Vidocq)
I knew you’d come.
(touches his face)
I am a bad person, Francois.

VIDOCQ
No. You are a victim of a corrupt society.

CHARLOTTE
You are too. I let it corrupt me. You didn’t.

Stephan returns. He holds a vial of poison.

VIDOCQ
No!
Vidocq holds Charlotte close. She convulses.


EXT. THE ARCH DE TRIUMPH - PARIS - DAY

Vidocq climbs. Gets to the top. The glorious city of Paris stretches out before him. He ROARS.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP

EXT. THE TUILERIES PALACE - PARIS - DAY

The palace, gray in the winter afternoon light. Snow covers the courtyard.

SUPER: December 1813. Eight months later.

Move into the window of

NAPOLEON’S OFFICE

A group of dignitaries is assembled. Before them, Napoleon, at a podium. Next to him, Vidocq wears a gold medal.

Behind Vidocq, the Surete agents: Coco, Gaffre, Riboulet, Manon, Fleurie, Guy, and Bruno. Nearby, Henry and Dubois.

NAPOLEON

...and because of their dedication and invaluable service to the city of Paris and her grateful citizens, I now declare the Brigade de la Surete to be a national security force policing all of France. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the National Brigade de la Surete.

Deafening APPLAUSE. A MOVE along the agents. Coco, Gaffre, Riboulet, Manon, Fleurie, Guy, Bruno. Each beams with pride.

Napoleon steps aside. The applause dies down as Vidocq, visibly moved, takes the podium. He struggles for words.

VIDOCQ

Thank you.
NAPOLEON

What is this? The great Vidocq at a loss for words?

LAUGHTER. Vidocq gestures to his agents.

VIDOCQ
Take a good look at these brave men and women. Memorize their faces for they are the future of France.

LATER

The agents horse around together. Riboulet examines an expensive ceramic dog on a table. Coco takes it from him and puts it back.

Vidocq, by the window, studies the Arch de Triumph. Napoleon joins him.

NAPOLEON
One day soon it will be finished. I hope to see that day.

He holds up his glass.

NAPOLEON
But if I don’t it will be here long after I am gone. To the future.

VIDOCQ
The future.

THE SKY white clouds roll across.

DISSOLVE TO:

A CLOUDY SKY

Tombeau and Sabine, hair whipping in the wind, stand at the railing of a ship.

TOMBEAU
And the president?

SABINE
Benjamin Franklin.

TOMBEAU
No! James Madison.
SABINE
Ah. I will do better when we get to America.

TOMBEAU
We both will.

They look out over the inky blue Atlantic to the future.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END