

**AGE OF REPTILES**

"Pilot"

by

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(based on the true events of the Dinosaur Bone Rush)

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## TEASER

### **EXT. BADLANDS - DUSK**

A rugged wasteland of cracked shale and steep sandstone ridges, devoid of anything but lichen and scrub and the wind.

**SUPER: Lance Creek Formation, Wyoming. 1895.**

A DUST STORM appears on the horizon, cycloning at high speed.

As it tears through the terrain, it reveals itself not to be a storm at all, but a HORSE AND RIDER galloping along.

The rider is TAHKEOME (20s), a brave of the Cheyenne people. He wears a fringed buckskin tunic and a feathered war band. Noticing something on a ridge, he reins his horse for a look.

Embedded in the strata of the ridge is a THREE-HORNED SKULL.

Two antler-long HORNS protrude from the large, tapered animal skull, while a stubbier THIRD HORN emerges near the snout.

This strange skull intrigues Tahkeome. A bison it ain't.

He dismounts and leaves his horse to nibble on grass. Hopping over a creekbed, he starts climbing the slope toward the skull.

It's rough going. He gets halfway to the skull before he SLIPS in an avalanche of shale. The slope is too steep.

He picks himself up and brushes off dirt. The horse, having finished off the meager grass, NEIGHS.

Tahkeome clucks his tongue and the horse quiets.

The brave stares at the skull. An idea strikes him. He returns to his horse and takes a COIL OF ROPE from the saddle.

He knots a loop at one end. Then he whirls the rope in the air and throws it at the snout horn...once...twice...

His third toss is perfect. He LASSOES an antler-like horn!

He yanks the knot tight and PULLS with all his might. The horn doesn't break, splinter, or budge in the slightest.

Tahkeome considers the problem at hand, then takes the colorful saddle blanket off his horse. He wraps the blanket around the rope and mounts the horse.

A kick to its flank is all the horse needs to start moving.

As the horse prances forward, the rope passes through the blanket in Tahkeome's grip so he avoids any burn to his hands.

The rope goes taut. Tahkeome kicks the horse again. The animal strides forward with a WHINNY, then there's a CRACK--

The horn BREAKS OFF the skull!

The rope goes limp and falls down the slope, the horn secured in its lasso. Tahkeome dismounts and pulls the rope to him.

He pops the horn out of the loop. It's as LONG AS HIS ARM.

He places the horn on the ground, picks up the rope, and throws it at the skull again--

On first try he lassoes the loop around the SECOND of the antler-like horns.

He smiles. He's about to get back on the horse and do the same as before to break it off when a GUNSHOT sounds.

Tahkeome releases the rope and falls, SHOT IN THE BACK!

His spooked horse gallops off.

Tahkeome lies on the ground, the first horn before him. He can't see the SHOOTER, but he can see the man's SHADOW nearing.

He reaches for the horn, grabs it--

Hearing the cock of a REVOLVER, Tahkeome rolls and PLUNGES the horn into the shooter's boot!

But that doesn't stop the shooter from pulling the trigger.

The second GUNSHOT drops Tahkeome into a pool of his own blood. He does not get up.

The shooter's hand pulls out the horn from his boot, wipes the blood on his dusty trousers, and holds it up.

Against the backdrop of the skull in the ridge, it's an extraordinary thing, this bloody fossil horn.

**END OF TEASER**

ACT ONE**INT. STUDENT BEDROOM - DAY**

A cluttered mess. Books stacked on a desk. Mustache wax containers on the floor. Clothes everywhere in heaps.

**SUPER: Lawrence, Kansas.**

In the bed, a MAN and WOMAN are nearing ecstasy.

The woman's arm hits a GLITTERING ROCK on the windowsill. It falls onto the floor, breaking in two.

The movements in the bed cease. Loud exhales, inhales. Eyes open, close, open again. Smiles.

The man is BARNUM BROWN (22), a handsome rake with curly mustachios and an undeniable charm. The woman is EDIE SNOW (19), fair-haired and freckled, with a spirit of her own.

They both look into each other's eyes. One of them is in love.

Barnum reaches over the bed to pick up the two BROKEN PIECES of the rock. He frowns, trying to fit them back together.

EDIE

Don't be upset. It's just a rock.

Barnum looks aghast, as if she's said something terrible.

BARNUM

It's not "just" a rock. It's an ammonite.

EDIE

A what?

Barnum presses the pieces together and shows her the spiraled FOSSIL SHELL that sparkles with tiny mineral deposits.

BARNUM

An ammonite--an ancient animal that had tiny squid-like tentacles and lived in the sea that covered Kansas.

EDIE

A sea...in Kansas?

(laughs)

That's absurd.

BARNUM

Not at all. Millions of years ago  
this whole state was underwater,  
swimming with ammonites, giant  
clams, sharks, and large finned  
reptiles called mosasaurs with rows  
and rows of sharp teeth, eager to  
snatch unsuspecting prey--

Barnum claps his hands like a jaw at Edie. She shrieks,  
slides back in bed--and Barnum laughs.

EDIE

Scare me again and I may have to  
tell my father about you.

BARNUM

As long as you tell him *everything*...

A KNOCK at the door interrupts them.

RIGGS (O.S.)

Barnum? I know you're in there.

EDIE

(rolls eyes)

Tell him to go.

The door knob rattles.

RIGGS (O.S.)

I can hear you through the walls.

BARNUM

I'm sleeping, Riggs. Go away!

RIGGS (O.S.)

But we have Blake's exam today!

Barnum blinks, remembering. Dammit. Riggs is right.

RIGGS (O.S.)

Do I need to use my spare key?

BARNUM

Be there in a minute!

Barnum jumps out of bed and starts to dress.

EDIE

You're just going to leave me here?

BARNUM

I can't fail this exam.

**EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - DAY**

Barnum knots his tie as he and his beanpole friend, ELMER RIGGS (26), walk past the cluster of steepled buildings that comprise the University of Kansas.

BARNUM

How do I look?

RIGGS

We're taking an exam, Barnum, not going to the Spring Ball.

BARNUM

That's precisely why I need to look my best.

Barnum steps before Riggs, who huffs and gives him a up-down look through his thick spectacles.

RIGGS

You know what you look like? A spring-heeled dandy who just woke up from a night of carnal sin.

BARNUM

Riggs...

RIGGS

You asked for my opinion.

(beat)

Who was it last night? Lily? Dottie? Emma Rose?

BARNUM

Edie.

RIGGS

Edie *Snow*? The chancellor's daughter? I thought she was engaged.

BARNUM

She told me she broke it off.

RIGGS

Did she now? Well...you're playing with fire, that's all I'm saying.

BARNUM

If man hadn't played with fire, he'd still be freezing in caves.

Barnum fixes the knot of his tie. Riggs just shakes his head.

**INT. CLASSROOM - DAY**

Rows of students work diligently, pens scratching papers.

Barnum writes out an equation as PROFESSOR BLAKE (60s), an institutional curmudgeon, walks by his desk.

The professor glances at Barnum's paper, nodding...until he sees Barnum's HAND clutching something under the desk.

Suspicious, the professor frowns. Barnum doesn't understand. Blake points at Barnum's hand.

Barnum opens his hand, revealing the two fossil shell pieces.

Blake picks them up for a look. They glitter in the light. Shaking his head, he puts them on Barnum's desk, then moves on.

Barnum crosses out what he wrote on the exam and stares at the shells. This is not going well.

**EXT. AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY**

A Gothic cathedral to science, with towers and Roman columns.

**SUPER: Manhattan, New York City.**

**INT. HALL OF FOSSIL MAMMALS - DAY**

HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN, PhD (late 30s), a paragon of the upper crust, enters the hall with his assistant, DR. JACOB WORTMAN (30s), shifty and severe, and the museum's trustees-- steel baron ANDREW CARNEGIE (60s), financier J. PIERPOINT MORGAN (60s), and Police Commissioner THEODORE ROOSEVELT (30s).

OSBORN

As you can see, gentlemen, your support has allowed me to curate this new hall devoted to vertebrate fossils and bones. First of all, we'll start with these buffalo skulls which Commissioner Roosevelt so generously donated from his travels out West.

Osborn points at some giant BUFFALO SKULLS set into the wall.

ROOSEVELT

Truth is, Edith wouldn't let me keep any more at home.

The others chuckle. Osborn nods to Wortman.

OSBORN

Next, Doctor Wortman will show us  
what he's been working on.

Wortman proudly gestures to a wide-bodied PORCINE SKELETON.

WORTMAN

I've restored an *Elotherium* specimen,  
which was a giant pig that lived in  
the Eocene and Miocene epochs. It  
still needs some work, but it's the  
first of its kind in a museum.

Roosevelt looks at the *Elotherium* skeleton with curiosity,  
but Carnegie and Morgan are less than impressed.

CARNEGIE

How long did that take to complete?

J.P. MORGAN

And how much did it cost?

WORTMAN

A few years and perhaps a couple  
thousand dollars.

J.P. MORGAN

For a *pig*?

OSBORN

For the advancement of science. But  
don't let one specimen distract you.  
I've saved the best for last.

Osborn stops before an exhibit draped in a white sheet.

OSBORN

Let me present what will be the  
centerpiece of the new hall...

With a sweep of his hand, he pulls off the sheet to reveal--

OSBORN

...a ground-breaking exhibit on the  
history and development of equines!

The three mounted SKELETONS, all missing bones, increase in  
size from that of a fox terrier to a larger, modern-day pony.

CARNEGIE

*Horse* skeletons?



OSBORN

From millions of years ago. And please remember these specimens are incomplete, though this summer's expedition to South Dakota will rectify that.

Morgan and Carnegie gape at the skeletons in dumbfounded shock.

J.P. MORGAN

This is where all our money went?

OSBORN

A wise investment, I assure you.

CARNEGIE

For the advancement of science, no doubt.

Roosevelt crouches to study the feet of the smallest skeleton.

ROOSEVELT

If this is a horse, why does it have toes? Where are its hooves?

OSBORN

Highly observant, Commissioner. The *Eohippus* didn't have hooves as we know them. In fact, what you've spotted is the primary purpose of our exhibit. The public will see, plain as day, how a horse's toes turned into hooves...

Osborn gestures from the four-toed *Eohippus*, the three-toed *Mesohippus*, to the hoofed *Pilohippus*.

OSBORN

...proving once and for all that most contentious theory--evolution.

His grand pronouncement inspires no confidence among them.

CARNEGIE

*Evolution*? That'll spark unnecessary controversy!

J.P. MORGAN

And a loss in revenue.

OSBORN

Isn't that the museum's purpose? To provoke and educate the masses?

J.P. MORGAN

No, it's for those masses to pay admission, generate attendance, and guarantee the operating budget.

CARNEGIE

I knew I should've built my own museum...

Overhearing this, Wortman raises an eyebrow.

CARNEGIE

(to Morgan)

We must speak to Jesup when he returns. I'm not paying for hoofless horses or prehistoric pigs.

J.P. MORGAN

Agreed. These will not promote attendance. Good day, Doctor Osborn.

OSBORN

Gentlemen, please--

They are already heading to the door. Roosevelt, however, remains, continuing to examine the *Eohippus* toes.

OSBORN

And what do you think, Teddy?

ROOSEVELT

While I personally find these interesting...maybe you should think of another goal for the expedition.

# **INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT (KANSAS)**

Dinner at a side table in the large hall. Riggs is chatty. Barnum spoons at his potatoes.

RIGGS

...all the questions on Lancashire boilers made my head ache...and that one about intake volume, did you get the numbers to work?

(no answer)

Barnum?

BARNUM

What?

RIGGS  
How'd you solve the intake volume?

BARNUM  
I didn't.

RIGGS  
What do you mean "you didn't"? That  
was a major part of the exam!

Barnum shrugs. Riggs is about to continue his interrogation but is distracted when a group of FEMALE STUDENTS pass by, carrying dinner plates and glasses.

RIGGS  
Aren't you glad we live in Kansas?

BARNUM  
Why on earth would you say that?

RIGGS  
Men at other colleges don't have  
the privilege of co-education.

Riggs grins at the women. They ignore him, making coy glances at Barnum instead. Barnum rises with his plate.

RIGGS  
Where are you going?

BARNUM  
Not out of Kansas it appears.

#### **EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - NIGHT**

Barnum walks slowly across campus, hands in his pockets, lost in thought. Passing a large building, he stops...

#### **EXT. SNOW HALL OF NATURAL HISTORY - NIGHT**

Nailed to the door is an advertisement that reads--

ADVENTURE SEEKERS! JOIN THE KANSAS GEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION.  
ALL EXPENSES PAID. INQUIRE WITH PROFESSOR WILLISTON.

Barnum takes paper advertisement off the nail, pockets it.

Something else catches his eye.

The street lamp shines through a basement window onto a hundred FOSSIL BONES that lay on a long work table.

**INT. BASEMENT LABORATORY - NIGHT**

Barnum enters the lab. Skulls sit on shelves. Skeletons of strange creatures are mounted on wood and wire.

Warily, Barnum looks around, then approaches the central table.

The lamplight streaming through the window illuminates the fossils. He sees part of a jawbone, a quarter of a skull, ribs, a fin, and so much more...

Barnum starts arranging them as if doing a jigsaw puzzle.

He places the largest ribs in the middle, then lays down the curved bones of the tail...adds flipper fins...fits together bits of skull for the head...then the bottom jaw and teeth...

But there's one last piece that he can't seem to fit...it's thicker, longer, not a rib, but an antler-like HORN.

At the sound of FOOTSTEPS in the corridor behind, Barnum ducks behind a nearby shelf.

CORA (O.S.)

Professor, these amber specimens we  
purchased from the Wyoming rancher--

CORA BECKER (20s), prim and bookish, a model student, enters the lab, carrying a lantern.

CORA

Professor Williston? Is that you?

She shines her lantern across the room. Her light touches the edge of Barnum's shadow, but doesn't reveal him.

Cora puts the lantern on the table and heads to the other side of the shelf that Barnum hides behind. He can see her through the open gaps.

She places a small AMBER BLOCK on the shelf, then writes something on a paper and slips it underneath the block.

When she walks away, Barnum looks more closely at the block. Something is trapped inside...an ancient DRAGONFLY.

CORA

I knew someone was in here.

Barnum's suddenly blinded by the light from Cora's lantern.

BARNUM

Hello.

Cora grabs a large ROCK PICK from a wall hook.

CORA

Who are you? You're not a student  
of Professor Williston's.

BARNUM

No. Professor Blake. Name's Brown.  
Barnum Brown.

CORA

*Barnum?* As in P.T.?

BARNUM

Embarrassing, I know, but my family  
loves the circus.

CORA

Professor Blake teaches engineering.  
What are you doing here?

BARNUM

I, ah, saw the bones through the  
window and wanted a closer look.  
Fossils are a hobby of mine. Let me  
show you.

Barnum gives Cora the two broken pieces of the fossil shell.

CORA

Ammonites. Did you steal these?

BARNUM

I found those on my family farm.  
Carbondale's hills are full of them.  
Even dug up some mosasaur bones  
like the ones on the table--

CORA

You need to leave.

BARNUM

Might I have my ammonite shells back?

Cora lifts the rock pick ever so slightly.

BARNUM

On second thought, keep 'em. I've  
got plenty on the farm.

But as he exits, Barnum slips the horn he found under his coat.

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO**EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT**

It's raining. Barnum hurries to the house where he rents a room. He goes up the porch, reaches for the door knob--

DICKINSON (O.S.)  
Brown. Barnum Brown?

BARNUM  
Who's there?

From the shadows of the porch emerges BREESE DICKINSON (20s), who has the face of a rugby player and the build of a boxer.

DICKINSON  
Breese Dickinson...Edie's fiancé.

He SLUGS Barnum in the jaw. Barnum drops off the porch and THUDS hard in the mud of flower bed.

DICKINSON  
Stay away from her, you shit-  
stinking circus rube.

Dickinson steps off the porch and KICKS--but Barnum catches his leg and PITCHES him backward. Dickinson lands with a splat.

BARNUM  
Now who stinks like shit?

Lights switch on from nearby homes. Dickinson rises, enraged.

DICKINSON  
I'm going to bury you.

BARNUM  
You took the words out of my mouth.

CHANCELLOR FRANCIS HUNTINGTON SNOW (40s), a polished New Englander with thick sideburns, comes out of a house.

CHANCELLOR SNOW  
What in the holy hell is going on?

Snow gets between the men before any punches land.

CHANCELLOR SNOW  
Breese Dickinson...and *Barnum Brown*.  
How am I not surprised?

BARNUM

Chancellor, this man attacked me  
without provocation...

DICKINSON

He's been consorting with Edie!

CHANCELLOR SNOW

*What?*

Snow glares at Brown with volcanic fury.

CHANCELLOR SNOW

I will see you in my office tomorrow.

# **INT. HALL OF FOSSIL MAMMALS - NIGHT (NEW YORK)**

Osborn wanders the hall alone. The skeletons of rodents,  
rhinos, and canines all cast long shadows in the moonlight.

When he comes to the three equine skeletons, he stops.

He looks at them with parental pride and runs his hand gently  
along their horse-like skulls.

Then he notices a CHAIR near the *Elotharium* pig. He frowns.

He goes over to move the chair to the wall. His shoe kicks  
something that rolls and leaves a DARK STREAK on the floor.

He bends down to pick up a CHARCOAL PENCIL.

CUT TO:

# **MICROSCOPIC VIEW**

of the bone structure of a FOSSILIZED HORN.

WORTMAN (O.S.)

You're right. This isn't a bison  
horn.

# **INT. MUSEUM LABORATORY - NIGHT**

Electric bulbs light a room packed with bones, broken skulls,  
plaster molds, layers of dust, and two scientists--

Jacob Wortman, who showed the trustees the pig he restored,  
peers into a microscope. His assistant, OLAF PETERSON (20s),  
sandy-haired and Swedish, stands behind, writing notes.

PETERSON  
Mammoth maybe?

WORTMAN  
Bone structure would be more porous.  
(adjusts dials)  
This is almost...reptilian.

PETERSON  
Reptilian? Like a...

OSBORN (O.S.)  
Gentlemen! You're here late. What  
are you working on?

Peterson's startled when Osborn enters the room.

PETERSON  
We're...examining the museum's new  
acquisitions, Doctor Osborn.

OSBORN  
Anything interesting?

PETERSON  
A rancher in Wyoming sent us a horn  
he claims came from a skull with  
two other horns.

OSBORN  
A three-horned beast? Intriguing.  
Might I have a look?

Osborn comes forward. Wortman looks up from the microscope.

WORTMAN  
Don't bother. This is nothing but a  
bison horn.

PETERSON  
But you said--

WORTMAN  
I had the magnification wrong.

Wortman's glance quiets Peterson from asking more questions.

OSBORN  
Then don't waste any more time on  
it. These cattle rustlers always  
think they can swindle museums.  
What I want you to do is pack for  
the expedition to South Dakota.



His directive comes as a surprise to Wortman and Peterson.

PETERSON

Now? We're not scheduled to depart  
for two months.

OSBORN

I've expedited it. You leave the  
day after tomorrow.

WORTMAN

I can't possibly leave so soon. I  
have my own research. And I'm not  
done restoring the *Elotharium*.

OSBORN

Collecting the bones for the equine  
skeletons is more important than  
that pig. I don't want our rivals  
stealing the bones we need.

Wortman frowns. This doesn't sit well with him.

WORTMAN

Does Jesup know you're sending us  
early?

Osborn narrows his eyes at Wortman. No love between these men.

OSBORN

Morris will be notified when he  
returns from his conference.

PETERSON

We'll be ready, Mister Osborn.

Osborn nods and walks out. Peterson turns on Wortman--

PETERSON

You lied to him about the horn--and  
then argued with him? You'll get us  
both fired.

WORTMAN

Start packing. I have work to finish.

Wortman returns to peering into the microscope.

**EXT. UNIVERSITY HALL - DAY (KANSAS)**

The main university building, with a bright red roof.

**INT. CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

Surrounded by portraits of his predecessors, Chancellor Snow sits across his desk from Barnum, who nurses a black eye.

BARNUM

I know I've been a thorn in your side. But this wasn't my fault. I was merely trying to defend myself--

CHANCELLOR SNOW

Edie told me everything.

BARNUM

She did?

CHANCELLOR SNOW

She said you'd been assisting her with her studies, which was why she'd been spending so much time in your company as of late.

BARNUM

That's right...and I think she'll do quite well in her exams.

CHANCELLOR SNOW

She will become a wonderful teacher--without your further help. As of now, you are no longer a student of the University of Kansas.

BARNUM

You're expelling me? For this? Sir--

CHANCELLOR SNOW

Not only have you violated the code of conduct on several occasions, Professor Blake informed me that your current academic performance does not meet our standards. Given all these, I cannot, in good faith, justify your continued enrollment.

BARNUM

Chancellor, my family spent their savings so that I could attend--

CHANCELLOR SNOW

And I'd be irresponsible if I let them waste any more. You're not meant for a university education, Mister Brown. Better you return to the farm and find your calling there.

**INT. STUDENT BEDROOM - DAY**

Barnum sifts through his wardrobe, taking out clothes. Happy as a lark, Riggs enters, tossing his hat in his hand.

RIGGS  
Lancashire boilers, hear me roar! I  
did it, Barnum--the highest grade  
on Blake's exam! I say we go and  
celebrate. Drinks are on me.

Barnum pulls out a carpetbag suitcase from the wardrobe. He starts folding his suits into it.

BARNUM  
I can't. I have to go.

RIGGS  
What? Now? We still have--  
(realizing)  
You didn't pass Blake's test, did  
you? I'm sorry...but that's no  
reason to pack up and go.

BARNUM  
That's not why.

Off the bed, Riggs picks up the advertisement Barnum took.

RIGGS  
The Kansas Geological Expedition?  
Is that the reason?

Barnum grabs the ad and shoves it into his pocket.

BARNUM  
No, I'm going home.

That's when Riggs sees the bruise around Barnum's eye.

RIGGS  
Christ, what happened?

BARNUM  
Edie's fiancé hit me from behind.

RIGGS  
Didn't I tell you you were playing  
with fire with Edie?

Barnum stuffs what he can into the carpetbag, then latches it.

BARNUM  
Move. The trolley's coming.

**EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY**

Barnum, carrying his suitcase, walks to the curb with Riggs.

RIGGS  
She's just one girl. You have plenty  
more. Lily, Dottie, Emma Rose...

BARNUM  
This isn't about Edie.

RIGGS  
Then what? Blake's exam? You can  
retake the class next semester.

BARNUM  
There won't be a next semester for  
me. Snow's given me the boot.

RIGGS  
What? Why?

BARNUM  
Do I really need to answer that  
question?

A horse-drawn TROLLEY nears.

RIGGS  
I'll talk to Snow. The Chancellor  
likes me. He'll listen.

BARNUM  
The time for character witnesses is  
over, Riggs.

The trolley DINGS and stops before Barnum.

BARNUM  
Thanks for all you've done over the  
years. You've been a good friend.

Barnum steps on the trolley. Riggs watches it roll away.

**EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY (NEW YORK)**

Museum President MORRIS JESUP (60s), flaunting gold cufflinks  
and a bushy mustache, strolls down a path with Osborn.

OSBORN  
The conference was beneficial?

JESUP

Indeed it was. Had a good chat with Professor Othniel Marsh of Yale.

OSBORN

Cantankerous as usual, I bet. Is that old fossil still trying to hawk his dinosaur bones?

JESUP

No...but I invited him to come and look at our new acquisitions.

OSBORN

Oh...well, let him come. I'll be pleased to show him our new equine exhibit.

JESUP

Speaking of the equine exhibit, I've decided to scrap it and repeal the expedition. The trustees complained they were a drain on our resources.

OSBORN

But that was years of work--and we're almost finished!

JESUP

So is this museum if we don't increase attendance. We need something big and bold that'll make front page news. A sensation that everyone--rich and poor, educated and illiterate--wants to see.

OSBORN

And what, by glory, is that?

JESUP

You tell me. You're the curator.

**EXT. SNOW HALL OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY (KANSAS)**

The new hall shows no sign of age like the bones within.

**INT. BASEMENT LABORATORY - DAY**

Cora enters. PROFESSOR SAMUEL WILLISTON (40s), a man well suited to tweed, stands at the table his back to her.

CORA

The supply wagon's off, Professor.  
Weather permitting, it should reach  
Badger a few days before our train.

Williston doesn't turn.

WILLISTON

Remarkable work, Cora. Absolutely  
remarkable. I've been trying to  
piece this together for weeks and  
somehow you've figured it out.

Cora walks over to the table...and is astonished. The bones  
have been arranged to form the skeleton of 15-foot-long  
aquatic creature with a crocodile snout--known as a MOSASAUR.

WILLISTON

When I asked you to be my assistant,  
I feared your interests were limited  
to insects. I was wrong. Your  
instincts with anatomy are brilliant.  
You're as suited to paleontology as  
you are entomology.

Cora hesitates at first, then nods and smiles.

CORA

Thank you, Professor. It's a  
magnificent specimen, isn't it?

WILLISTON

It is. The first full skeleton of  
the mosasaur *Clidastes velox*.

Williston runs his hand over the mosasaur's jaw to the snout.

WILLISTON

One bone is missing, however.

CORA

Which one? This looks complete to me.

WILLISTON

It didn't belong to the mosasaur--  
it was a horn sent by that Wyoming  
rancher. I had set it aside for  
further study.

CORA

I haven't seen it. But I'll look.

WILLISTON

It's vital we find it. It's the  
main reason we're going to Wyoming.

CORA

I thought we were there going to  
dig for the saber-toothed cat.

WILLISTON

We are, but I've intentionally kept  
quiet about the horn. Our colleagues  
at the University of Nebraska would  
be chasing us if they knew about it.

CORA

What makes this horn so special?

WILLISTON

Can I trust you to keep a secret?

**EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY**

Barnum rides the open horse-drawn trolley, looking out at  
the hotels and stores on the main street of Lawrence, Kansas.  
His gaze lingers on one in particular: ARNOLD & SONS MENSWEAR.

Here the latest fashions in men's jackets, shirts, and pants  
are on display in the store window. Barnum stares with envy.

Plodding past, eight MULES pull a COVERED WAGON. Painted on  
its canvas are the words "KANSAS GEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION."

The TROLLEY CONDUCTOR dings a bell.

TROLLEY CONDUCTOR

Last stop, Lawrence railroad station.

The trolley turns to the TRAIN STATION. A locomotive is at  
the platform. Steam billows into the sky.

Barnum looks at the train, the wagon, the train...then makes  
the decision of his life.

He grabs his suitcase and hustles to the rear of the trolley.

TROLLEY CONDUCTOR

Sir, please sit, we're about to--

The conductor watches Barnum leap off the end of the trolley,  
landing with a dust-cloud in the road.

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE****EXT. AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY (NEW YORK)**

A horse-drawn COACH halts before the museum. Osborn walks down the stairs and opens the coach's door for OTHNIEL MARSH (60s), a large-bodied man with a forked gray beard.

OSBORN  
Othniel! It's been so long.

Marsh grunts as his foot lands on the ground.

MARSH  
Show me the bones.

**INT. MUSEUM LABORATORY - DAY**

Osborn presents various bones on the workbench to Marsh.

OSBORN  
This is everything we've received  
or acquired in the last month. Let  
me know if anything catches your eye.

Marsh picks up what looks to long, curved bone. Osborn reads the notes beneath.

OSBORN  
We've identified that as half of a  
rib bone to a *Diplacodon* ungulate.

MARSH  
Looks like an *Uintatherium* to me.

Marsh puts it down and takes a toothed jawbone.

OSBORN  
That came from a crocodilian.

MARSH  
It most certainly did not. This is  
from a seabird.

OSBORN  
What seabirds have teeth?

MARSH  
The *Ichthyornis* of the Cretaceous  
period. Did Cope teach you anything?



OSBORN

How about I show you our equines?

MARSH

What I want to see are your dinosaurs.

OSBORN

Dinosaurs are yesterday's news, Othniel.

MARSH

I beg to differ--

OSBORN

You and Cope dug up every dinosaur of note twenty years ago. Now we're focusing our efforts on demonstrating the evolution of man.

MARSH

Man? *Pffhh*. Man is uninteresting.

OSBORN

On that I beg to differ--

Marsh picks up a handwritten letter and reads it.

MARSH

You were sent a horn from a three-horned skull?

OSBORN

We think it's a fraud. My assistants classified it as bison.

MARSH

The same assistants who wrongly identified all these? Let me see it.

Osborn searches the bench and a crate. Nothing.

OSBORN

I don't know where it went.

MARSH

Why don't you call your assistants?

OSBORN

That's impossible at the moment.

MARSH

You need to find it. I once misidentified a bison horn until I realized it was the middle horn of a giant, three-horned dinosaur.

OSBORN

A three-horned dinosaur?  
(chuckles)  
You'll never give them up, will you?

MARSH

If you want something special for your museum, I'm telling you, that horn--and the skull this letter mentions--could be something special. No museum in the world has a skull of a *Triceratops horridus*.

Osborn strokes his chin, beginning to reconsider...

#### **EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - DAY**

Wortman and Peterson take a hansom cab through some of the richest parts of the city.

PETERSON

This isn't the way to the station.

WORTMAN

It's the road to our future. I won't be long.

Wortman gets off the cab in front of...

#### **EXT. WALDORF HOTEL - DAY**

Thirteen stories tall. The most eminent hotel in Manhattan.

#### **INT. WALDORF HOTEL PENTHOUSE - DAY**

Andrew Carnegie reads the morning edition of the *Times* over coffee. He does not look up when Jacob Wortman enters.

CARNEGIE

Leave the breakfast on the table.  
The eggs better not be runny today.

WORTMAN

Mister Carnegie, it's me, Doctor Jacob Wortman.

CARNEGIE

Who?

WORTMAN

Henry Osborn's assistant from the museum.

CARNEGIE

I don't want anything to do with Henry Fairfield Osborn.

WORTMAN

Which is why you should hear me out.  
(beat)  
Please.

Carnegie finally peeks his eyes above the newspaper.

CARNEGIE

Then speak. My breakfast will be served at any minute.

WORTMAN

During the tour, I overheard you said you're contemplating building a museum of your own.

CARNEGIE

I contemplate many things.

WORTMAN

Well, if it's true, I'd like to be a part of it.

Carnegie laughs and only now looks up from his paper.

CARNEGIE

You? The pig restorer?

WORTMAN

I can offer you much more than a pig.

Wortman hands Carnegie an OBJECT WRAPPED IN CLOTH.

**INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY (KANSAS)**

In an upstairs hallway, Cora KNOCKS on a bedroom door.

CORA

Is anyone there? Hello?

The door to the adjacent bedroom opens. Riggs steps out.

RIGGS  
If you want Barnum, he's left.

CORA  
Where'd he go?

RIGGS  
Home. He was dismissed from school.  
You're not Lily, are you?

CORA  
Who?

RIGGS  
Dottie?

CORA  
I'm Cora.

RIGGS  
Huh. He never mentioned a Cora. I'm  
Riggs, by the way. Elmer Riggs.

She scowls and starts to twist the door knob. It's locked.

CORA  
He took something of mine.

RIGGS  
Wait a moment. I have a spare key.

#### **INT. STUDENT BEDROOM - DAY**

The door opens. The place is as Barnum left it--a mess.  
Clothes in heaps. Books on the desk. A wardrobe in disarray.

CORA  
He went home, but he left all this?

RIGGS  
His father wouldn't have appreciated  
him buying all these clothes.  
(picks up jacket)  
Think this will fit me?

Cora ignores him and starts searching through the books, the  
desk drawers, underneath the bed.

RIGGS  
What are you looking for?

CORA  
A horn.

RIGGS  
He didn't play any instruments.

CORA  
An animal horn. A fossil.

RIGGS  
*Fossil?* Why didn't you say that?

Riggs reaches into the wardrobe and pulls out a small box.

RIGGS  
He collected them. I thought it odd,  
but everyone has their fancies.

Cora grabs the box from him and opens it. She sifts through the tiny shells and rocks, then drops the box on the bed.

CORA  
There's no horn in here.

RIGGS  
He might have taken it with him.

CORA  
Where did you say his family lived?

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

Barnum sits in the back of the Kansas Geological Expedition wagon, looking out at the surrounding fields.

For miles and miles, nothing but stalks of corn and wheat.

From his coat, he takes out the horn he found in Snow Hall. He turns it over in his hand...and notices a STAIN OF RED.

Is that blood?

The wagon comes to a fork in the road. A hand-painted SIGN on a post points the way to CARBON HILL.

Barnum pockets the horn and looks in the direction of the sign.

On a faraway hill lies a FARM...house, barn, and silo.

The wagon rolls in the opposite direction. But Barnum doesn't take his eyes off the farm until he hears a familiar voice--

DICKINSON (O.S.)  
Hey--don't you start slowing...

Barnum turns. Past stacks of crates inside the wagon, he sees the outline of the wagon driver--

It's none other than Breese Dickinson.

Dickinson CRACKS his riding crop. One of the back mules BRAYS and STUMBLES. Dickinson CRACKS the crop again.

DICKINSON

Move!

Barnum crawls through the crates up to the jockey box.

BARNUM

You can't drive them that hard.  
They're not horses!

DICKINSON

(scowls)

What are you doing here?

BARNUM

Saving our hides.

The mule scrambles its legs, then twists in the yoke and falls back near the WAGON WHEEL where it might be crushed.

Barnum grabs the reins from Dickinson and pulls to the right.

The wheels on the left side LIFT OFF the ground--which gives the fallen mule room enough space to rise and secure its legs.

Barnum jerks the reins the other way and the wheels land on the ground. The wagon rolls as before, the mule with the pack.

Barnum exhales in relief--then sees Dickinson holds a REVOLVER.

BARNUM

You'd shoot me after what I just did?

DICKINSON

Get off or I will. I won't let you sabotage this expedition.

BARNUM

I'm not sabotaging anything. I'm a volunteer.

Barnum takes out the advertisement and shows it to Dickinson.

DICKINSON

I know nothing about this.

BARNUM

Professor Williston posted it on  
the front door of Snow Hall.

Dickinson cocks his revolver.

DICKINSON

Off.

BARNUM

Do you really want to make this  
trip by yourself? I'll drive the  
mules, I'll cook. I know most of  
this route--I took it with my father  
when I was a boy. And it'll be good  
to have an extra pair of eyes when  
we go through Indian territory

DICKINSON

How can I even trust you?

BARNUM

Because I could've pushed you off  
from behind...but I didn't.

Dickinson glares at Barnum but gradually lowers the pistol.  
He reaches for the reins--

DICKINSON

I've won my share of junior cups. I  
know how to handle horses.

BARNUM

I don't question that. But mules  
aren't horses.

Barnum keeps the reins. The wagon continues down the road.

# **EXT. HALL OF MAMMALS - DAY (NEW YORK)**

Osborn and Roosevelt walk past stuffed and mounted cougars,  
bears, and other mammals. There's only a scattering of PATRONS.

ROOSEVELT

Sundays used to be busy here.

OSBORN

People are probably still at service.

A weak excuse, but Roosevelt doesn't call him on it.

ROOSEVELT

Morris said Othniel Marsh came here  
to advise on our collection.

OSBORN

He did.

ROOSEVELT

I heard he held interest in a horn.

OSBORN

Yes.

ROOSEVELT

And?

OSBORN

I've looked high and low for it. I  
think Wortman shipped it back.

ROOSEVELT

You *think*? Did you ask Wortman?

OSBORN

That's a little hard now.

Roosevelt stops and stares down at Osborn.

ROOSEVELT

You sent him to South Dakota, didn't  
you? For the horse bones.

OSBORN

Teddy...I'm so close to completion.  
I can't give up now.

(beat)

You won't tell Jesup, will you?

ROOSEVELT

No. But he'll find out. You've put  
your job in jeopardy, Henry.

Osborn notices a side door is open.

OSBORN

Did you unlock that door?

ROOSEVELT

I came through the main entrance.

OSBORN

Pardon me for a moment.



**INT. HALL OF FOSSIL MAMMALS - DAY**

A tousled-haired ARTIST sits in a chair before the *Elotharium* skeleton and draws in his sketchbook. Osborn walks in.

OSBORN

How did you get in here?

Startled, the artist drops his sketchbook, having been so focused in his work. His charcoal pencils roll on the floor.

Osborn steps back when he sees the young man's face--his right eye is glass and doesn't move under thick spectacles.

The artist uses Osborn's hesitation to run for the door.

**EXT. MUSEUM ENTRANCE - DAY**

The artist races down the stairs as Osborn comes out the doors.

OSBORN

Stop...you stop!

Osborn stumbles on a step--and is only kept from falling by Roosevelt, who grabs him from behind and holds him back.

OSBORN

We have to stop him. If he was in the new hall, he must have a key--

ROOSEVELT

Look at this.

Roosevelt shows Osborn the sketchbook the artist dropped in the hall. When Osborn opens it, his eyes widen in wonder.

ROOSEVELT

These drawings bring the bones to life, don't they?

OSBORN

They're...marvelous. Who is he?

Roosevelt flips to the front page. It reveals the owner's name.

ROOSEVELT

Charles Knight.

They both look to the artist, who vanishes into Central Park.

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR**EXT. CARBON HILL - DAY (KANSAS)**

A house, barn, and silo sit atop a hill. Two FIGURES walk up.

**EXT. BROWN FAMILY HOUSE - DAY**

WILLIAM BROWN (50s) is fixing the white picket fence when Cora and Riggs approach. Though sweaty from the work, he's handsome and friendly, the clear progenitor of Barnum's charm.

WILLIAM

I'll be damned. If that ain't the teat popper himself, Elmer Riggs.

RIGGS

(blushes)

Yessir. Nice to see you again.

WILLIAM

And who might this lovely lady be?

CORA

Cora Becker, sir.

WILLIAM

Any relation to Barnabas and Harriet Becker of Topeka?

CORA

My uncle and aunt.

WILLIAM

Wonderful people. Used to sell them coal Barnum and I mined from the hill. What might you be doing here?

CORA

We're actually looking for your son. He has something of mine.

WILLIAM

Does he now? Well, if he came back home and I didn't see him, there's only one place he could be. C'mon.

William drops the board he was nailing to the fence and leads Cora and Riggs down a path around the large family house.

CORA  
 (to Riggs)  
 Teat popper?

RIGGS  
 (embarrassed)  
 Last time I was here, they sent me  
 out to milk the cows, and well, I  
 didn't grow up on a farm...

**INT. LAUNDRY SHACK - DAY**

MELISSA BROWN (30s), a tired woman in a faded dress, scrubs  
 clothes on a board. William enters with Cora and Riggs.

WILLIAM  
 Melissa, you seen your brother?

Melissa shakes her head. Cora's attention is on the shack's  
 shelves, each displaying meticulously labeled FOSSILS.

CORA  
 Is this Barnum's collection?

WILLIAM  
 'Tis.

She walks along the walls, admiring the fossils.

CORA  
 Ammonites, nautiloids, corals...  
 trilobites, mosasaur ribs...he has  
 everything.

RIGGS  
 Told you he liked them.

WILLIAM  
 He had so many in his bedroom I  
 made him put them here. We called  
 this his museum growing up.

CORA  
 And he's studying engineering?

MELISSA  
 Not by his choice.

William glares at Melissa, who returns to her scrubbing.

WILLIAM  
 A man has to make his living. Can't  
 do that collecting rocks and bones.

CORA

You might be surprised these days.  
A rare specimen might fetch  
hundreds--even thousands of dollars.

Both William and Riggs seem stunned by that amount.

RIGGS

I...think I know where Barnum went.

**EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT**

Around a campfire, Barnum looks at the small horn. Dickinson sits on a log across from him and spoons stew from a bowl.

DICKINSON

Where'd you learn to make stew?

BARNUM

My sister, Melissa. But I'm nowhere  
near her talents.

DICKINSON

She must be a helluva cook, because  
this is delicious. Any extra?

BARNUM

Plenty.

Barnum ladles more stew from a pot into Dickinson's bowl.

BARNUM

You know, I would've stayed away  
from Edie if she hadn't told me  
she'd broken off the engagement.

DICKINSON

Is that what she said to you?

(chuckles)

I can't say I blame her. I didn't  
write her often when I was in New  
York. Eventually she quit writing me.

BARNUM

What were you doing in New York?

DICKINSON

I was Henry Fairfield Osborn's  
apprentice at the American Museum  
of Natural History.

BARNUM

Seems like Edie has an eye for us  
fossil collectors.

DICKINSON

Seems she does.

Barnum turns the horn over in his hand.

DICKINSON

That a horn?

BARNUM

Maybe you can tell me what it is. I  
don't think it's bison.

Barnum tosses him the horn. Dickinson inspects it.

DICKINSON

This is a dinosaur bone you have.

BARNUM

*Dinosaur?*

Dickinson brings the bone closer. He scratches the red stain.

DICKINSON

That's blood.

BARNUM

I noticed that too.

DICKINSON

Where'd you get this?

BARNUM

I...found it.

Dickinson doesn't push.

DICKINSON

Well, a fossil like this can fetch  
a pretty penny on the black market.

BARNUM

I'm a collector, not a speculator.

Barnum eyes Dickinson suspiciously. Dickinson notices.

DICKINSON

And I'm not a thief, don't worry.

Dickinson tosses the horn back to Barnum.

BARNUM

What's it like, New York?

DICKINSON

Like nothing here. There's a café  
on every corner, the shops sell  
anything you'd ever want, and the  
ladies...so many to choose from.

BARNUM

And yet you came back for Edie.

DICKINSON

I came back for this expedition.  
Osborn said I needed the field  
experience.

BARNUM

Then why did you attack me?

Dickinson's silence is the only answer Barnum needs.

BARNUM

You need Edie's money. Or should I  
say, her father's.

DICKINSON

What can I say? Paleontology is not  
a career for the poor.

(beat)

Might I have some more of that stew?

# **EXT. NORTHEASTERN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY**

The NEW YORK CENTRAL TRAIN steams past pastures and fields.

# **INT. PASSENGER CAR - DAY (MOVING)**

Wortman and Peterson sit across from each other in coach class.

PETERSON

(surprised)

You went to Carnegie's room yourself?

Some heads turn at mention of the name.

WORTMAN

Hush. You attract undue attention.

PETERSON

What did you two talk about?

WORTMAN  
Our travel arrangements.

Wortman hands Peterson two TICKETS from his coat pocket.

PETERSON  
These tickets are marked for Wyoming.

WORTMAN  
They are.

PETERSON  
But we're going to South Dakota.

WORTMAN  
He changed our itinerary.

PETERSON  
He can't do that. We're employees  
of the museum. We promised Doctor  
Osborn--

WORTMAN  
We're scientists, not slaves, Olaf.  
We came to the museum to break new  
ground--and finding the skull of  
the *Triceratops* would be that.

PETERSON  
*Triceratops*? Do you mean the  
mythical three-horned dinosaur?  
(laughs)  
You've lost your mind, Jacob.

WORTMAN  
Not in the slightest.

Wortman shows Peterson the cloth-wrapped horn in his pocket.

WORTMAN  
You saw the bone structure. It's  
not that of a bison.

PETERSON  
There are more tests than just  
looking at it under the microscope.

WORTMAN  
Which is why I did more research.  
Othniel Marsh has said that bison  
horns often resemble those of the  
*Triceratops*.

PETERSON

Othniel Marsh is mad as a hatter.  
No one's consulted his work in  
years. I don't want to throw away  
my career for this.

WORTMAN

You won't be throwing away your  
career, Olaf. You'll be making it.  
Just think about it. If we find  
that three-horned skull, if we  
prove *Triceratops* is real, we can  
be curators at any museum.

Peterson looks out the window, far from convinced.

**EXT. CITY SLUMS - DAY (NEW YORK)**

Osborn and Roosevelt walk through the squalor. The IMMIGRANT  
INHABITANTS see Roosevelt's police badge and give him space.

ROOSEVELT

No matter how much policing my boys  
do, the rot here only festers more.

OSBORN

Best allow natural selection take  
its course. Let the strong survive,  
while the degenerate races die out.

ROOSEVELT

Or the barbarians storm the gates.

Roosevelt halts before a shabby TENEMENT HOUSE, which is  
missing planks from its walls and glass from its windowpanes.

OSBORN

This is where Charles Knight lives?

ROOSEVELT

It's what the police residence  
records say. Top floor. Be careful.

OSBORN

You're not coming?

ROOSEVELT

I'll let the strong survive.

Taking a breath, Osborn walks through the decrepit entrance.



**INT. TENEMENT HOUSE - DAY**

Osborn ascends the stairs, stepping over DRUNKS and OPIUM ADDICTS. He comes to the top floor and KNOCKS at its only door.

OSBORN

Mister Knight? Mister Charles Knight?

No answer. Osborn tries the latch. The door CREAKS open...

**INT. KNIGHT'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The artist--whom Osborn now knows as CHARLES KNIGHT--spins from his easel, brandishing his paintbrush like a weapon and standing in front of the painting, blocking Osborn's view.

KNIGHT

Out or I'll alert the police!

OSBORN

Go ahead. The commissioner's outside.

Knight whitens, spotting Roosevelt out the window.

OSBORN

Do you know who I am? Why I'm here?

KNIGHT

All I know is I haven't done anything wrong. I had permission to be in the museum.

OSBORN

Whose permission?

Knight won't say. Osborn notices a key hanging from a hook.

OSBORN

It was Jacob Wortman, wasn't it?  
Did he give you that key?

KNIGHT

Please leave.

OSBORN

I will, after one question. Did you  
do all the animal drawings in here?

Osborn holds up the sketchbook. Knight sees it, snatches it.

KNIGHT

They're just sketches.

OSBORN  
They're extraordinary.

Because Knight moved to grab his sketchbook, Osborn now has a peek at the PAINTING.

OSBORN  
As is that...are you painting an  
*Elotharium*?

The painting is indeed of an *Elotharium*, but with mottled flesh over its bones and a warthog-like snout.

KNIGHT  
It's nothing. Just my imagining.

Knight tries to stand in front of it. Osborn goes around him.

OSBORN  
It's astounding. The flare of the nostrils, the size of the eyes, the structure of the skull...this is precisely what it must have looked like when it lived.  
(beat)  
Wortman commissioned you to do that, didn't he? That's why you were in the hall.

Knight nods reluctantly.

KNIGHT  
I was trying to sketch its hind quarters when you found me.

OSBORN  
Then you must come back to the museum and complete it.

KNIGHT  
I thought you didn't want--

OSBORN  
I detest unfinished business.  
(turns to go)  
Oh, and whatever Wortman's paying for your work...I'll pay you double.

Knight blinks in disbelief. Paint drips from his brush.

**EXT. RAILWAY STATION - DAY (KANSAS)**

Professor Williston stands on the platform as his STUDENTS board the TRAIN, carrying their luggage.

WILLISTON  
(to student)  
Have you seen Cora?

STUDENT  
Not today, professor.

Williston looks around, concerned, then spies Cora running toward him, carrying a heavy bag. He takes the bag from her.

WILLISTON  
You had me worried.

CORA  
You know I wouldn't miss this trip  
for the world, Professor.

WILLISTON  
Did you find the horn?

CORA  
I think it's on the supply wagon.

WILLISTON  
The wagon? How'd it get there?

The locomotive puffs out steam. The WHISTLE blows.

CORA  
I'll explain on the train.

The two are about to board--

RIGGS  
Wait for me!

Riggs races to the train. Cora rolls her eyes.

WILLISTON  
Who's that?

CORA  
A friend of our thief.

**EXT. GREAT PLATTE RIVER ROAD - DAY**

Barnum leads the wagon along the river. Dickinson sits beside him in the jockey box. Gray clouds line the horizon.

BARNUM

Storm's coming. We should find a place to stop soon before it hits.

DICKINSON

It's only rain. I don't want to lose a day and be off schedule.

BARNUM

Thunder might spook the mules. Better we lose a day than the wagon.

DICKINSON

I don't think we'll lose anything. We keep moving.

BARNUM

Fine. You're the leader.

A high-pitched CRY resounds over the plains. Some mules buck. Barnum struggles with the rein as--

Eight CHEYENNE INDIANS rise from the brush, armed with rifles.

BARNUM

Cheyenne.

Barnum gets the mules under control as the Cheyenne approach. Dickinson slips his hand to his holster.

BARNUM

There won't be any need for that.

DICKINSON

Tell that to the Americans who died at Wounded Knee.

The Cheyenne leader, CHIEF VOEVEHO (50s), dressed in deerskins, comes forward, reading the words on the wagon.

BARNUM

Good day.

CHIEF VOEVEHO

You are from Kansas?

BARNUM

We are. Students on a university-funded geological expedition. We're looking for rocks.

CHIEF VOEVEHO

Gold, silver?

DICKINSON  
 Nothing like that. Nothing valuable.  
 Only rocks for academic research.

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 (in Cheyenne)  
 [Hahkota, search the wagon.]

The warrior HAHKOTA (20s) nods and move toward the wagon's rear. Dickinson again reaches for his revolver--

BARNUM  
 (whispers)  
 Don't. They'll kill us for sure.

The Cheyenne go through the wagon's crates, sifting through the contents, finding canned food, tents, and digging tools.

DICKINSON  
 See? No gold. Nothing but shovels.

Hahkota reports to the chief, in low tones. Voeveho nods, then addresses Barnum and Dickinson--

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 Get off the wagon.

BARNUM  
 We're just students. We have nothing.

Three braves raise their rifles. Barnum and Dickinson obey.

The braves search them, relieving Dickinson of his gun and Barnum of the horn. The chief fumes when he sees the horn.

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 How did you get this?

BARNUM  
 It's from the university.

Dickinson eyes Barnum suspiciously.

DICKINSON  
 The university?

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 Impossible. My son had this horn--  
 and you must have killed him for it.

BARNUM  
 What? No...

**END OF ACT FOUR**

ACT FIVE**EXT. BADGER, WYOMING - DAY**

Wortman and Peterson ride from the train depot in a OX CART.  
The town's a sorry sight. Shacks along a muddy road.

PETERSON

You better be right about this.

Wortman says nothing. The OX DRIVER stops at the BADGER  
SALOON & HOTEL, a whiskey joint with some filthy beds.

WORTMAN

(to ox driver)

Tell Scroggins we're outside.

The ox driver nods and picks up a small chest.

PETERSON

We're not going in? We've been  
traveling for days.

WORTMAN

The horn's one of three--who knows  
where the other two were sent. I  
want to find that skull first.  
Every minute we have is an advantage.

SCROGGINS (60s), a rancher as weathered as the land around  
them, emerges of the saloon. He burps.

SCROGGINS

Whatcha want?

WORTMAN

We're from the American Museum of  
Natural History in New York. You  
sent us a fossil horn and said you  
knew where the skull is located.

SCROGGINS

How much you got?

Wortman pulls out a HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL from his jacket.  
Even Peterson is surprised Wortman carries that much cash.

SCROGGINS

We'll need some horses.

**EXT. CHEYENNE TRIBAL VILLAGE - DAY**

Lightning splits the sky. Thunder follows, and a torrent of rain batters the tents and teepees, made of buffalo hides.

The wagon mules BRAY, but lashed to a post, they can't run.

**EXT. CEREMONIAL GROVE - DAY**

Under a tarp with their hands bound, Barnum and Dickinson stand before the chief and five braves, one of them Hahkota.

BARNUM

I've never met your son--and I certainly didn't kill him!

CHIEF VOEVEHO

Then why do you have this horn?

BARNUM

Like I said, I took it off a table full of bones at the university.

Hahkota sneers at Barnum. Dickinson lifts his head.

DICKINSON

That's not what he told me.

BARNUM

What? Breese--

CHIEF VOEVEHO

Quiet. Let your friend speak.

BARNUM

He's not my friend.

Hahkota SLAPS Barnum across the face. Barnum winces but quiets.

DICKINSON

He told me he just "found" the horn. When I saw the blood on it, I grew suspicious, but didn't say anything.

BARNUM

I had nothing to do with that blood. It was already on the horn!

DICKINSON

(to Chief Voeveho)

Most importantly, you should know he's not a member of our expedition.

(MORE)

DICKINSON (CONT'D)

He stowed away on the wagon because  
he was expelled from the university.

BARNUM

For being attacked by you, you  
goddamned liar!

Barnum goes for Dickinson--but Hahkota kicks at his legs.  
Barnum falls and eats dirt.

CHIEF VOEVEHO

What you said is true?

DICKINSON

I swear on my soul.

The chief weighs what he's heard. Barnum rises, with a sneer.

CHIEF VOEVEHO

We Cheyenne are not a vengeful  
people. But my first son Tahkeome  
is dead and it is our custom that  
his killer must die too. His brother  
Hahkota will make the judgment of  
who we should believe.

HAHKOTA

(in Cheyenne)

[Thank you, father.]

Hahkota looks back and forth between the two men, as if  
trying to decide. At last, he draws his knife--a sharpened  
NINE-INCH-LONG FOSSIL in the shape of a--

BARNUM

Is that a tooth?

Another brave WHACKS Barnum again. He falls to his knees.  
But Hahkota walks past him, heading to Dickinson.

DICKINSON

What are you doing? I'm innocent--  
it's him you want!

The brave slashes Dickinson's bonds.

HAHKOTA

Leave, white man.

Dickinson hesitates for a moment, then realizes he's been  
freed and hurries toward the wagon.



BARNUM  
 (calls out)  
 The mules won't make it in the storm!

DICKINSON  
 Go to hell.

**INT. MUSEUM BOARDROOM - DAY (NEW YORK)**

A very important meeting. Museum President Morris Jesup sits at the head of the table, with Andrew Carnegie and J.P. Morgan on either side. Teddy Roosevelt strolls back and forth.

J.P. MORGAN  
 Henry Osborn cannot be trusted. His insubordination demands his immediate removal from his position here and a recall of the expedition.

ROOSEVELT  
 I disagree. Henry's merely trying to complete his equine study. And he sent Wortman and Peterson out before the expedition was canceled.

JESUP  
 What he failed to do was tell me he'd already dispatched them.

ROOSEVELT  
 This is his life's work, Morris! He's only trying to improve the museum's collections.

JESUP  
 And this museum is teetering on insolvency if we don't rectify the attendance. But I won't make a final decision until we hear from everyone. Andrew?

All eyes turn on Carnegie, who has been silent.

CARNEGIE  
 Yes, yes. Now I agree that Osborn can't be trusted, but I don't think we should recall the expedition.

J.P. MORGAN  
 It's costing the museum more than a hundred dollars a week!

CARNEGIE

It may be. But they're already gone,  
and we might as well let Wortman  
and Peterson find the bones.  
Otherwise, it's all a loss.

JESUP

Then the expedition stands. But I  
will dismiss Osborn tomorrow.

Morgan and Roosevelt both scowl. No one's happy.

J.P. MORGAN

Continuing the expedition  
will bankrupt the museum!

ROOSEVELT

Henry's devoted his career to  
this cause. Please reconsider!

JESUP

My decision is made, gentlemen.

# **EXT. GREAT PLAINS - DAY**

The UNION PACIFIC crosses the prairies of Nebraska.

# **INT. COACH CAR - DAY (MOVING)**

Cora and Riggs sit across from Professor Williston. Other  
students are seated on nearby benches. Luggage is everywhere.

WILLISTON

His name is "Barnum" Brown?

CORA

It is. I found him lurking in the  
basement of Snow Hall a few nights  
ago. He must've taken the horn then.

WILLISTON

But you didn't you tell me there  
was a potential thief in our midst?

CORA

At the time, I didn't think he was...

RIGGS

Barnum's not a thief. If he has the  
horn, it must be by accident.

WILLISTON

And he just hopped onto our supply  
wagon by accident too?

CORA

Riggs saw he had the notice you  
posted calling for volunteers.

WILLISTON

That notice said to inquire with me.

RIGGS

Barnum couldn't. He's been expelled.

WILLISTON

Expelled? Why?

RIGGS

For grades and...poor behavior. But  
joining the expedition would be in  
his character. Barnum adores fossils.

WILLISTON

Is that why he was in Snow Hall?

(to Cora)

Was he the one who finished the  
mosasaur skeleton?

Cora reddens in shame at the revelation.

CORA

I wanted to say something...but  
your praise got the better of me.

Williston sighs, disappointed in his star student.

WILLISTON

In any event, the fact that this  
"Barnum Brown" fit together the  
skeleton is impressive. He might be  
an asset. And I'm sure Dickinson  
will be grateful for his help  
driving the wagon.

RIGGS

Dickinson? As in *Breese* Dickinson?

WILLISTON

The very one. Is there a problem?

RIGGS

No. At least I don't think so. He  
and Barnum just...know each other.

Williston's brow furrows, sensing something's not right.

**EXT. BADLANDS - DAY**

On horseback, Scroggins leads Wortman and Peterson to the base of a sandstone ridge. Scroggins points many meters up.

SCROGGINS

Found the skull on that there ridge.

PETERSON

I don't see anything.

SCROGGINS

'Cause it's covered from the storms.  
Should've come earlier like I wrote.

WORTMAN

Who else has been here?

SCROGGINS

Now how would I know that?

PETERSON

There were three horns.

SCROGGINS

The one I cut off I sent to you  
folks. The others were already gone  
when I arrived here.

WORTMAN

Do you know who else came upon it?

SCROGGINS

Heard some Injuns may have been  
here, but they're everywhere. Now  
if we could settle our arrangement,  
I'd be much obliged.

WORTMAN

Not until I have that skull.

SCROGGINS

You aimin' to cheat me? I said it's  
on that ridge. Yer gonna have to dig.

WORTMAN

That could take weeks.

SCROGGINS

Not my problem. Pony up.

Scroggins reaches for his sidearm.

PETERSON  
(whispers to Wortman)  
Just give him the money, Jacob...

Reluctantly, Wortman hands the money to Scroggins.

WORTMAN  
If the skull's not up there, you'll  
be a sorry man.

**INT. MUSEUM PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY (NEW YORK)**

Morris Jesup crosses out lines in a ledger at his desk.  
Osborn comes into the doorway.

OSBORN  
You wanted to see me?

Jesup's pen hovers over a line in his ledger that reads:  
"Henry Fairfield Osborn." He motions Osborn into the office.

JESUP  
I've gone over the budget and I'm  
going to have to make some changes.  
Unfortunately, we can no longer  
afford a curator in paleontology.

Osborn is taken aback by his termination.

OSBORN  
You're firing me when we're opening  
a new hall? You need my assistance!

JESUP  
Wortman and Peterson will be more  
than adequate once they return from  
an expedition I explicitly did not  
approve.

Osborn closes his eyes for a moment, knowing he's been caught.

OSBORN  
I'd already sent them when you  
canceled it. I know, I should've  
told you. But I can fix this. I'll  
cable them to return immediately.

JESUP  
No. They will proceed with the  
expedition and come back only after  
they find the bones.

OSBORN  
You'd finish the exhibit without me?

JESUP  
I must do what I must do. Now make  
this easier on both of us and go.

Osborn hesitates, appearing ready to leave until--

OSBORN  
What if I could guarantee you an  
increase in attendance?

JESUP  
Henry, I respect you, but--

OSBORN  
Charles, get in here!

Knight enters, carrying an OBJECT covered in a white sheet.

OSBORN  
This is Charles Knight, an artist  
I've just hired for the museum.

JESUP  
You *hired* someone I didn't approve?

OSBORN  
Professor Marsh's visit reminded me  
what was important.

Osborn pulls the sheet off what Knight holds--revealing  
Knight's WATERCOLOR PAINTING of the pig, now fully completed.

JESUP  
What in God's graces is that?

OSBORN  
An *Elotharium*. A prehistoric pig.

Knight brings the painting closer to Jesup's desk.

OSBORN  
You like it?

JESUP  
I think it's heinous.

OSBORN  
Yet also oddly striking, right?  
Imagine many more like this covering  
the walls of the new hall.

JESUP

What's gotten into you, Henry?  
We're a natural history museum, not  
an art gallery.

OSBORN

Is there a difference? Both want to  
show visitors a glimpse of another  
world. Why do it just with bones?

JESUP

Because bones are proof. They're  
science, not art.

OSBORN

Morris, we both know that most of  
the bones in our skeletons are  
fabricated to complete the whole.  
Paintings like this are but another  
fabrication, offering a window  
beyond bones, at flesh...at  
*life...on a panoramic scale.*

JESUP

No one cares for panoramas of *pigs*.

OSBORN

Not just pigs...*anything* we have  
fossil proof that ever lived.

KNIGHT

Such as dinosaurs, sir.

Knight puts down the *Elotharium* picture to reveal another  
painting behind it...of a spiky, three-horned TRICERATOPS.

JESUP

My God...that's--

OSBORN

Magnificent, I know. Professor  
Marsh named it *Triceratops horridus*.

The painting takes Jesup's breath away. Osborn smiles.

OSBORN

And if you keep me as curator and  
let me find its skull, no museum in  
the world will match our collection.

# **EXT. CHEYENNE TRIBAL VILLAGE - NIGHT**

Smoke funnels out of a TEEPEE as rain runs down its sides.

**INT. CHIEF'S TEEPEE - NIGHT**

Hahkota pushes Barnum inside and drops him before a fire. The chief and his WIFE, holding their INFANT, sit around it.

BARNUM  
If you're going to kill me, do it.  
Just know I didn't kill your son.

Chief Voeveho ignores him and sprinkles roots and bark from a pouch into the bowl of a BLUESTONE PIPE. Stirring the bowl, he takes a stick from the fire and lights the pipe.

After he inhales, his eyes close. A smile creeps over his lips.

Barnum looks nervously at Voeveho's wife and Hahkota. Their stern faces offer no clues.

Voeveho exhales through his nose and opens his eyes. They are red. He holds out the pipe for Barnum.

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
This is *Kinnikinnick*.

BARNUM  
What?

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
No more questions. Smoke.

With his bound hands, Barnum takes the pipe to his mouth and inhales...breaking into a COUGH. Voeveho and the others laugh.

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
Small puffs. That is how. Try it.

BARNUM  
(wheezing)  
Again? I...can hardly breathe...

Hahkota draws his tooth-knife and points it at Barnum's throat.

BARNUM  
I'm doing it. I'm doing it.

Barnum inhales again, with smaller breaths. No cough this time.

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
Better. Now one big breath. Fill  
your body with its truth...

Barnum inhales...a sustained token...



CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 Let it swirl inside you...then send  
 it out...slow, like a breeze.

Barnum lets out the smoke in a long exhalation.

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 How do you feel?

BARNUM  
 (eyes fluttering)  
 Like I'm...somewhere else...

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 Look at me. What do you see?

Voeveho holds up the fossil horn.

BARNUM  
 A horn.

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 Look beyond it. What do you see?

The red stain on the horn gleams in the firelight.

BARNUM  
 Blood...

CHIEF VOEVEHO  
 My son's blood, yes? The blood you  
 spilled?

BARNUM  
 No...

Barnum's gaze shifts to the tooth-knife Hahkota holds, on  
 which he sees the SIMILAR GLEAM OF RED as on the horn...

BARNUM  
 ...the same blood as on...

On the tarp of the tent, a SHADOW forms behind Hahkota and  
 his tooth-knife--the shadow of a monstrous TYRANNOSAURUS REX.

BARNUM  
 ...your son's tooth...

Hahkota snarls. The tooth-knife plunges and the shadow T-Rex  
 chomps. Barnum CRIES OUT...

All goes BLACK.

**END OF SHOW**