

THE INVENTION OF HUGO CABRET

Screenplay

By

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Based on the book

By

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INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - DAY

From far above it looks like a great clockwork.

We are looking down on the Grand Hall of the Paris Train Station.

It is crowded.

People bustle back and forth.

Like the gears and wheels of a clock.

A precise, beautiful machine.

We float down...

Under the great iron girders...

Moving through the station...

Past kiosks and shops...

Weaving among commuters...

We stop at a clock set into the station wall.

Behind the ironwork dial we see a face peering out.

HUGO CABRET looks at us. He is a serious-looking boy of around 12. Long hair.

It is 1931.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - DAY

Hugo turns away from the dial and moves through the tunnels behind the clock.

A serpentine maze of passageways.

Behind the walls.

Hugo's secret world.

He moves quickly up and down spiral staircases ... ducking through tiny openings ... swerving in and out of dark passages ... up and down, back and forth...

Like an elaborate game of Chutes and Ladders.

He finally stops. Peers through another clock dial into a different part of the station.

He sees...

A TOY BOOTH.

Bedraggled and struggling. A counter filled with windup toys, dolls and little games.

GEORGES, a grim old man with a white goatee, sits at the counter of the booth.

Hugo watches.

ISABELLE appears from inside the booth and talks to the old man. She has a book under her arm.

She is a lively, imaginative girl about Hugo's age. She has a charming Louise Brooks haircut.

Isabelle argues a bit with Georges. He snaps at her. Upset, she hurries off.

Hugo watches her go.

Then he turns his gaze to the toys on the counter.

He sees the old man aimlessly wind a TOY MOUSE. It skitters across the counter. The old man crosses his arms. Falls asleep.

Hugo stares at the toy mouse.

Then he moves.

He skitters through a series of passages and opens an air vent. He carefully climbs out, into the station...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TOY BOOTH - DAY

Hugo creeps to the Toy Booth.

The toy mouse is there on the counter.

Georges still appears to be asleep.

Hugo stops.

Waits.

Looks around.

Carefully reaches for the toy mouse--

But--

Georges' eyes snap open--!

He grabs Hugo--!

Hugo drops the toy mouse--

It falls and breaks--

Hugo struggles. Georges holds him firm.

GEORGES

Got you at last, my little thief.
Quick, empty your pockets!

HUGO

You're hurting me!

GEORGES

Empty your pockets or I'll call the
Station Inspector! Do as I say!

The threat of the Station Inspector terrifies Hugo.

He quickly empties his pockets. Dozens of objects. Screws.
Nails. Bits of metal and glass. Tiny pieces of clockworks.
Cogs and wheels.

GEORGES

And the other one.

HUGO

There's nothing in it!

GEORGES

(Starts to call)
Where's the Station Inspector...?!

Hugo empties his last pocket. Reluctantly giving up a
precious object:

An old cardboard NOTEBOOK.

Georges flips through it--

He sees words, pictures, engineering diagrams, schematics,
clockwork drawings--

Then he suddenly stops flipping--

Shocked--

It is like he has seen a ghost--

He stares at a page of the notebook--

A drawing of a MECHANICAL MAN man with clockwork innards. An elegant and complex mechanism.

But it is the face of the mechanical man that transfixes. Strangely passive and yet expressing a sort of sadness. Or wisdom.

It is a haunting face.

Georges thumbs through a few pages of the notebook.

It is like an old *FLIPBOOK*.

The mechanical man's face changes perspective as the pages flip past. Like primitive animation.

Georges stops.

Slowly closes the notebook.

GEORGES
(whispers)
Ghosts...

He turns to Hugo. Sadness turning to rage.

GEORGES
Did you draw these pictures?!
(no response)
Did you draw these pictures?!

Hugo tries to pull away.

Georges' grip is iron.

GEORGES
Where did you steal this?!

HUGO
I didn't steal it!

GEORGES
A thief and a liar.

Georges releases Hugo.

GEORGES
Get out of my sight.

HUGO
Give me my notebook!

GEORGES

It is no longer your notebook, it is my notebook and I'll do with it what I want. Maybe I'll just burn it.

HUGO

No!

GEORGES

Then tell me who did the drawings.

Hugo glares at him. Says nothing.

Georges suddenly SLAMS his fist down on the counter. All the toys jump.

GEORGES

GET OUT OF HERE, YOU LITTLE THIEF!

His shout echoes around the station...

Reverberating from walls ... ceiling ... girders ... windows ... all around the cavernous station...

To the ears of...

MAXIMILIAN -- an enormous Doberman Pinscher.

His ears perk up. His head tilts dangerously. He glares. Listening. Alert.

THE STATION INSPECTOR, his master, glances down at him.

The Station Inspector is a tall man in a bottle-green coat, flamboyantly frightening ... Made even more menacing by a squeaking metal brace that bolts around one leg. He's like a partly mechanical man.

He and Maximilian are twin figures of implacable severity.

STATION INSPECTOR

Maximilian? ... What do you hear?
... Do you hear ... malfeasance?!

The dog growls dangerously.

Strains at his leash.

The Station Inspector smiles.

STATION INSPECTOR

GO!

He releases the terrible hound--

Maximilian bolts--

The Station Inspector follows -- he is remarkably agile with his iron-shrouded leg, moving like an elegant spider--

Maximilian tears through the station--

People leap aside in shock and terror as the ferocious dog sweeps past--

The Station Inspector spiders after him, his boots pounding over the polished floors, his leg brace squeaking wildly--

Maximilian's nails slips as he rounds a corner, he almost spins out, but doesn't--

For ahead he sees--

Hugo.

At the toy booth.

Hugo sees the dog and sprints--

Running away in desperation--

Maximilian pursues--

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - DAY

The chase is on!

Huge weaves through pedestrians -- whips around corners -- races down and up stairs -- leaping over luggage--

Maximilian on his heels--

The Station Inspector follows relentlessly--

Insane whirlwind momentum as the station zips past--

Hugo pants for air, glancing back in panic--

Maximilian is closer and closer--

The Station Inspector spiders after them -- his leg brace screeching -- his green coat flaring out behind him like bat's wings--

Hugo speeds through a CAFE, agilely weaving between the little tables and the sniffy French waiters--

Maximilian follows, not quite so agilely, upsetting tables and waiters--

Chaos--!

MADAME EMILIE, the shy older woman who runs the cafe, screams and clutches her beloved little DACHSHUND to her chest--

The dachshund barks furiously at Maximilian--

Hugo loops around a table--

Where a man who looks suspiciously like James Joyce is having a demitasse with a man who looks suspiciously like Salvador Dali--

They are agog as Hugo races around them ... followed by Maximilian ... followed by the Station Inspector--

Hugo finally sprints away from the cafe.

Tearing through the crowded terminal again.

The Station Inspector calls after him:

STATION INSPECTOR
STOP THAT CHILD! -- APPREHEND!

MONSIEUR FRICK, the shy older gentleman who runs a NEWSPAPER KIOSK across from the cafe, makes a half-hearted grab for Hugo--

But Hugo suddenly--

Dives--

Sliding on the polished floor between Monsieur Frick's legs--

Then he's up and gone--

Monsieur Frick looks up, alarmed, leaps to the side as--

Maximilian thunders past--

The Station Inspector follows -- by now Hugo has disappeared around a corner--

The Station Inspector and Maximilian rip around the corner at top speed--

INT. TRAIN STATION -- CORRIDOR -- DAY

But Hugo is gone--!

And ahead -- a MATRONLY WOMAN and her two UNIFORMED VALETS, carrying towers of boxes from the most exclusive stores in Paris--

The Station Inspector and Maximilian try to stop -- but can't -- momentum too great -- collision inevitable--

BAM!

Boxes flying everywhere -- Valets knocked aside -- Matronly Woman bellowing like Margaret Dumont -- the Station Inspector and Maximilian tangled!

We move away from the chaos...

Toward a wall...

To find Hugo ... Safe behind an air vent ... Watching.

He sees the Station Inspector pull himself up. Squeak his leg brace once in anger. Thwarted.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - DAY

Hugo weaves through the tunnels.

Comes to an iron door and enters...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- SECRET APARTMENT - DAY

It is like stepping into the heart of a mechanical toy.

Wheels and gears hang everywhere. There are rows of jars filled with cogs, screws and bits of toys. Tools. Scavenged furniture.

Hugo's home and makeshift workshop.

He sits on a battered old trunk for a moment. Disheartened.

He pulls out a large POCKET WATCH. Looks at it.

Takes a deep breath.

Time to go to work.

He picks up a bucket of heavy tools and goes.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - DAY

Huge moves through the tunnels.

Stops behind a large clock. He can see the station through the clock face. He checks the time on his pocket watch.

Then he uses tools from the bucket to wind the clock's mechanism.

Then he continues on.

Opens a hatch and climbs down a rickety ladder...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- HANGING CLOCK - DAY

He climbs down into a large clock that is suspended from the ceiling of the Grand Hall. Clock dials and intricate works surround him on all four sides.

While he winds all four clockworks, he looks out into the station below...

He sees Madame Emilie, the shy older woman who runs the cafe, cooing to her little dachshund.

He sees Monsieur Frick, the shy older gentleman who runs the newspaper kiosk, watching her.

Monsieur Frick summons up his nerve. Timidly approaches her. Bows rather formally. She is delighted. He tries to pet the dachshund. The dog snaps at him. Madame Emilie is mortified. Monsieur Frick retreats.

Hugo climbs up, out of the clock...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - DAY

Hugo continues on.

Climbs a ladder to a narrow passage that overlooks a platform...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- PLATFORM CLOCK - DAY

Hugo moves along a narrow passage above a station platform.

He must kneel to wind this clock, which is at his foot level.

Through the clock he sees...

MONSIEUR ROULEAU is a flamboyant young artist. He is painting at an easel. He is a Surrealist.

His painting is wildly abstract.

Some SUBURBAN COMMUTERS stop to look. They ridicule the painting. Monsieur Rouleau tries to ignore them.

Hugo feels bad for him.

Hugo completes winding the clock and goes...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TOWER STAIRS - DAY

Hugo climbs and climbs and climbs. His bucket of tools is heavy.

An endless staircase inside a high tower.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- CLOCK TOWER - DAY

Hugo emerges at the very top of the station.

An enormous clock. The motors and gears of the mechanism are huge, bigger than he is. Hugo puts a crank into the works and uses all his strength to turn it.

It is like something out of METROPOLIS.

And beyond the clock...

Paris.

A panoramic view.

Somewhat unreal.

Like an exquisite toy model.

Exhausted, Hugo finally completes winding the clock.

He takes a moment to look over the majestic city.

And we fade to...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TOY BOOTH - EVENING

The Grand Hall is almost empty.

Georges, in his hat and coat, is closing up the shop. Pulling down a heavy grate.

Hugo stands silently behind him.

GEORGES

(not turning)

I know you're there ... What's your name, boy?

HUGO

Hugo ... Hugo Cabret.

GEORGES

Stay away from me, Hugo Cabret, or I'll drag you to the Station Inspector's office and he'll lock you up in his little cell and you'll never get out and you'll never go to school and you'll never get married and have children of your own to take things that don't belong to them.

Georges completes locking the gate and goes.

Hugo follows.

They walk through the echoing station.

HUGO

Give me back my notebook.

GEORGES

I am going home to burn your notebook.

Georges sweeps through the doors, leaving the station.

Hugo stops at the doors, hesitates for a moment.

He is extremely uncomfortable at the idea of leaving the station. It has become his whole world. Everything beyond is threatening.

But his need now is great. He steels himself, takes a breath and pushes through the doors, following Georges.

EXT. STREETS - EVENING

Georges walks through the dark streets of Paris.

Hugo follows.

It is the spirit of the great city we see, not the real thing. Shapes and silhouettes of buildings. Architectural details. Sounds. Illusion.

Like a lovingly crafted 1930's movie set.

HUGO
You can't burn my notebook.

GEORGES
And who's to stop me?

Hugo wasn't prepared for leaving the station. It's cold. He has no winter coat. He pulls his clothes tightly around him.

Later...

Georges walks on.

Hugo follows. A little closer.

Later...

Georges walks under a street lamp.

Hugo follows. A little closer still.

Later...

Georges walks over a bridge.

Hugo follows. A little closer still.

Later...

Georges moves through a sinister alley.

Hugo, scared, is walking right next to him now.

Georges ignores him.

Snow begins to fall.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Georges and Hugo walk through a graveyard.

Twisted trees. The shape of tombstones. Like Lean's GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

Snow continues to fall.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Georges walks to a decrepit apartment building. Right across from the graveyard. Shabby part of town.

The old man stops and unlocks the chipped front door with a large key.

Hugo waits.

Georges enters the building and, without a glance, slams the door shut behind him.

Hugo stands there.

Snow falls.

Hugo steps back, studies the building.

He sees Georges enter an upper floor apartment. Sees a handsome older woman -- his wife -- greet him. They disappear from view.

Huge scans the other windows. He sees Isabelle, the girl from the Toy Booth, in another room of the apartment.

She is reading by the window.

Hugo watches her.

Snow collects on his head.

He finally tosses a pebble up at the window. Isabelle looks down. Sees him.

She stares at him quizzically.

He motions for her to come down.

She is intrigued but unsure.

He motions. Begs. Please.

Isabelle smiles.

She loves nothing more than an adventure.

She disappears from the window.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Hugo stands shivering.

Isabelle runs to him.

ISABELLE
Who are you?

HUGO

Your grandfather stole my notebook.
I need to get it back before he
burns it.

ISABELLE

Papa Georges isn't my grandfather
and he isn't a thief! He told me
all about you, young gentleman.
You're nothing but a ... a
reprobate!

She is delighted with the word. He doesn't understand.

HUGO

Can you help me get inside?

ISABELLE

No. You have to go.

HUGO

Not without my notebook--

ISABELLE

Why do you need it so badly?

HUGO

(hesitates)

I ... I can't tell you.

ISABELLE

Is it a secret?!

HUGO

Yes.

ISABELLE

Good! I love secrets! Tell me this
instant!

HUGO

No!

ISABELLE

If you won't tell me you have to
go.

HUGO

Not without--

ISABELLE

I'll get in trouble. Just go home!

He won't budge.

ISABELLE

All right! I'll make sure he
doesn't burn your notebook.

He looks at her.

ISABELLE

Trust me.

He looks at her.

He nods.

He runs off.

She watches him go.

What a strange boy.

She smiles.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- SECRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hugo enters. Still cold.

He strikes a match. Lights a few candles.

A golden glow fills the strange chamber.

Hugo takes out his pocket watch and hangs it on a special
hook by the bed.

Then he moves to a corner...

There is something covered in an old sheet...

He pulls off the sheet to reveal...

The AUTOMATON.

An amazing mechanical man. A couple feet tall. Exposed gears
and levers. Clockworks and springs. In a state of disrepair.
We recognize the strange, haunting face from the drawings in
Hugo's notebook.

The Automaton sits at a little desk. Pen poised to write
something.

Hugo stares at the passive face of the Automaton.

And remembers.

HUGO (V.O.)
What is it...?

HUGO'S FATHER (V.O.)
It's called an Automaton.

The color fades as we go six months back in time...

INT. FLASHBACK -- CABRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

The memory has the quality of a *SILENT FILM*. Black-and-white. Simple images. The flickering, glowing luminescence of early movies.

Hugo and his FATHER live in a poor, cramped garret. Big skylight. Paris beyond. An enormous full moon beyond that.

The Automaton -- now in much worse condition, battered and rusty, missing parts -- sits before Hugo and his Father.

HUGO
An Automaton...

HUGO'S FATHER
I found him abandoned in the attic of the museum.

HUGO
What does he do?

HUGO'S FATHER
(tinkering with it)
He's a windup figure, like a music box ... This is the most complicated one I've ever seen by far. You see? This one can write.

HUGO
(transfixed)
Who built him?

HUGO'S FATHER
I would think a magician.

HUGO
A magician!

HUGO'S FATHER
That's right. Magicians used machines like this when I was a boy. No one could figure out how they danced or walked or sang.
(MORE)

HUGO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

But the secret was always in the
clockwork.

HUGO

Can we fix it?!

HUGO'S FATHER

Oh, I don't know, Hugo, it's
awfully rusted and finding the
parts would be...

He sees Hugo's disappointment.

HUGO'S FATHER

Of course we can fix it! We're
clock makers, aren't we! ... But
only when I've gotten through all
my work at the shop and at the
museum, you understand?

Hugo hugs him. His father smiles.

The Automaton seems to watch them.

INT. FLASHBACK -- CLOCK SHOP - DAY

Music.

Hugo sweeps up as his father works fixing clocks.

The tiny, cramped shop is a jumble of clocks, watches, gears,
movements, springs, dials.

INT. FLASHBACK -- MUSEUM - EVENING

Music.

Hugo's father winds and oils clocks in an old museum filled
with Victorian curiosities.

INT. FLASHBACK -- CABRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

Music.

Hugo and his father work on the Automaton together. They
huddle at the workbench.

Hugo's father patiently teaches him. Hugo learns eagerly.

Hugo's father stops to make a note.

We realize he is writing in the NOTEBOOK, the one Georges took.

INT. FLASHBACK -- MUSEUM - NIGHT

Music.

Hugo's father is working on a stubborn clock at the museum.

Then...

The music stops...

Hugo's father slowly turns...

Curious...

He moves to a stairway...

Looks down...

He sees...

A PILLAR OF FLAME.

Raging right up at him.

INT. FLASHBACK -- CABRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

It is very late.

Hugo is working on the Automaton.

The door opens.

He turns eagerly:

HUGO

I fixed the gears in the--

But it is not his father.

It is his UNCLE CLAUDE. Unshaven. Greasy. Crude. Huge.

HUGO

Uncle Claude...?

UNCLE CLAUDE

There was a fire. Your father's dead. Pack your things quickly. You're coming with me.

Hugo stares.

EXT. FLASHBACK -- STREETS - NIGHT

Hugo lugs the heavy Automaton, covered in a sheet, as he follows Uncle Claude through the empty streets.

Hugo struggles to keep up with Uncle Claude's huge gait.

UNCLE CLAUDE

You'll be my apprentice. You'll live with me and I'll show you how to take care of them clocks.

(Takes a swig from a flask)

I'm getting too old to be climbing through them tunnels.

They turn a corner.

And ahead of them...

The Train Station.

INT. FLASHBACK -- TRAIN STATION -- APARTMENT - NIGHT

Uncle Claude and Hugo enter the secret apartment. It is filthy and rank. Dickensian.

Hugo sets down the Automaton. Looks around.

UNCLE CLAUDE

They built these apartments for them who ran the station, years ago. Everyone's forgotten they're here. You sleep in the corner.

Uncle Claude plops down. Drinks.

UNCLE CLAUDE

Get some sleep. We start work at five.

HUGO

What about school?

UNCLE CLAUDE

You're finished with school. There won't be time for that once you're in them walls ... You should thank me.

Uncle Claude clears his throat. Takes a drink. Looks away.

Hugo carries the Automaton to his corner.

He sits.

Dazed.

Absolutely forlorn.

Then he pulls the sheet off the Automaton.

He looks into the Automaton's face.

His only friend.

They sit together.

EXT. FLASHBACK -- GRAVEYARD - DAY

Funeral tableau.

Hugo and Uncle Claude at the grave site. Uncle Claude drinks from his flask.

Hugo bows his head. Tears beginning to fall.

Color gradually returns as we leave the past and return to...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hugo sits, looking at the Automaton.

Alone. Despondent.

We fade to...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - MORNING

Hugo peers out from behind an air vent.

Waiting. Watching.

Madame Emilie is opening her little cafe. Her dachshund hovers protectively.

Monsieur Frick approaches cautiously. Bows gallantly and offers her a newspaper from his kiosk. Madame Emilie is charmed. The dachshund attacks this time! It chases Monsieur Frick away. Madame Emilie follows in horror.

Hugo seizes his opportunity--
 He scrambles quickly from the air vent--
 Races to the cafe--
 Grabs a croissant and bottle of milk--
 Runs off--
 Disappearing into the crowd of morning commuters.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - MORNING

Hugo moves through the grown up world, eating the croissant.
 No one notices him.

He sees the imposing Station Inspector and the ferocious
 Maximilian approaching!

Hugo moves next to a woman. Falls into step. Acts like her
 son. She doesn't notice.

The Station Inspector passes.

Hugo continues on.

But Maximilian stops. Turns. Sniffs.

STATION INSPECTOR
 What is it?

He looks. Sees nothing.

STATION INSPECTOR
 We shall be alert, my friend ... We
 shall be ... vigilant.

He and Maximilian go.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TOY BOOTH - MORNING

Georges is opening the Toy Booth.

Hugo stands silently behind him.

GEORGES
 I thought I might see you today.

HUGO
 I need my notebook.

GEORGES

Why do you need it so badly?

HUGO

To help me ... fix something.

GEORGES

What?

Hugo doesn't answer.

Georges hands Hugo a handkerchief tied up into a bundle. Hugo unties it.

Ashes. It is filled with ashes. Burned paper.

Hugo looks at the ashes. Horror and disbelief. Tears sting his eyes.

He can't breathe.

The ashes fall...

Cascade and swirl delicately down...

Over Hugo's shoes...

To the floor.

Hugo looks up at Georges.

He is shocked to see there are tears in Georges' eyes as well.

GEORGES

Go away ... Please just go away.

Hugo wipes his eyes with his dirty, ashen hands, leaving long black smudges on his face.

He backs away.

Then he turns and runs off. Tears flowing freely now.

He races around a corner and--

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - MORNING

--Bang!

He runs right into Isabelle. She was hiding, waiting for him.

ISABELLE

Hey!

HUGO

Sorry -- I--

ISABELLE

I saw. Are you crying?

HUGO

No!

ISABELLE

Hold still.

She uses her handkerchief to dry his eyes and clean his face as:

ISABELLE

There's nothing wrong with crying. Sidney Carton cries. And Heathcliff too. In books they're crying all the time.

HUGO

(grabs handkerchief)

I can do it!

ISABELLE

I have to talk to you. It's terribly important. But not here. We're too ... exposed.

She dramatically grabs his hand and pulls him off.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - MORNING

Hugo continues to clean his face as they move through a different part of the station. She is carrying a book.

HUGO

Where are we going?

ISABELLE

Only to the most wonderful place on earth! Neverland and Oz and Treasure Island all wrapped up into one.

They are approaching Monsieur Rouleau. He is at work on his Surrealist painting.

ISABELLE
Good morning, Monsieur Rouleau.

MONSIEUR ROULEAU
Morning.

She stops and looks at the abstract painting.

ISABELLE
Oh, it's coming along marvelously!

HUGO
What is it?

MONSIEUR ROULEAU
It's the station ... How I see it
anyway ... Do you like it?

Hugo looks at the painting. Takes it seriously. Isabelle appreciates this.

HUGO
You know, I think I do ... Yes, I
like it very much.

Monsieur Rouleau is pleased.

ISABELLE
We have to go ... Well done,
Monsieur Rouleau!

Hugo and Isabelle go.

ISABELLE
He's a Surrealist.

HUGO
Mm.

ISABELLE
That's a kind of painter.

HUGO
I know what a Surrealist is. I'm
not an idiot.

ISABELLE
Ah, here we are!

Ahead of them...

Her secret realm ... Wonderland and Oz and Treasure Island
all wrapped up into one...

A used bookstore.

They enter.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- BOOKSTORE - MORNING

A little bell jangles when they enter.

MONSIEUR LABISSE, the shop owner, is perched high on a stool at the front of the store like the Caterpillar from ALICE IN WONDERLAND, peering over a stack of dusty books.

He is a slight, sad sort of man. He brightens when he sees Isabelle. But he is extremely suspicious of Hugo.

ISABELLE

Good morning, Monsieur Labisse, may I present Monsieur Hugo Cabret, a very old and dear boon companion.

MONSIEUR LABISSE

(bows)
Monsieur Cabret.

HUGO

Hello.

ISABELLE

(handing him book)
Thank you for this. I think I'm halfway in love with David Copperfield ... Photography?

MONSIEUR LABISSE

(points)
Back corner left, top shelf.

ISABELLE

Thank you.

Monsieur Labisse watches them go. Hugo's dirty clothes and long hair convince him he must be a shoplifter -- or worse.

Isabelle leads Hugo deeper into the store.

It is a world of books. Stacked in every direction. To the ceiling. Rivers of books. Mountains of books. Gloriously cluttered.

HUGO

Listen, what's so important?

ISABELLE
 Papa Georges still has your
 notebook. He didn't burn it. That
 was all a trick.

HUGO
 Why?

She climbs a ladder in search of a book:

ISABELLE
 I don't know. The notebook made him
 very upset. He and Mama Jeanne
 stayed up late talking about it. I
 think he was crying.

Hugo thinks about this. How strange.

HUGO
 It's a mystery.

ISABELLE
 I know!

HUGO
 Why are you helping me?

ISABELLE
 Because this might be an adventure!
 I've never had one, outside of
 books.

She grabs a book. Comes back down the ladder.

ISABELLE
 I think we should be very ...
clandestine.

HUGO
 Okay.

ISABELLE
 By the way, my name's Isabelle ...
 Do you want a book? Monsieur
 Labisse lets me borrow them. I
 could get one for you.

HUGO
 No.

ISABELLE
 (horrified)
 Don't you like books?!

HUGO

No, I do ... My father and I used to read Jules Verne together...

He stops.

She senses his strong emotion. Respects it.

They move to Monsieur Labisse at the front counter.

ISABELLE

(re: book)

May I?

MONSIEUR LABISSE

Of course. Good day, Isabelle.

Monsieur Labisse watches Hugo with suspicion as they leave the shop.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - MORNING

They move through the bustling station.

HUGO

How do I get my notebook back?

ISABELLE

I think you should stand up to him. He'll respect that ... Don't tell him we talked. I'll help you if I can ... Be steadfast!

She disappears into the crowd.

He watches her go.

Be steadfast? What a peculiar girl.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TOY BOOTH - DAY

Georges is sitting at the counter. Evenly staring at something.

He aimlessly cuts and re-cuts a deck of cards with one hand as he stares.

We finally see what he is staring at...

Hugo stands there on the other side of the counter. Staring back at him. Steadfast.

It is like a showdown.

Finally:

HUGO

I don't believe you burned my notebook.

GEORGES

You don't? ... Well, maybe I did and maybe I didn't. You'll never know, will you?

Hugo holds his ground.

GEORGES

Shall I call the Station Inspector?

Hugo holds his ground.

GEORGES

Go ... away.

Hugo holds his ground.

Georges glares at him.

Hugo glares back.

A long beat.

Gunfighters.

Neither blinks.

Then...

Georges slowly reaches under the counter...

He pulls something out...

Something covered in a handkerchief...

He sets it on the counter...

With the panache of a magician, he pulls off the handkerchief to reveal...

The toy mouse that Hugo broke earlier.

GEORGES

Fix it.

Hugo looks at him.

GEORGES
I said, fix it.

HUGO
I need my tools.

Georges pulls out a canister of tiny screwdrivers, pliers, files and hammers.

GEORGES
I know you've been stealing parts from the shop ... Might as well use those you haven't stolen yet.

Hugo looks at the broken toy mouse. Then at Georges.

HUGO
If I fix it, do I get my notebook?

GEORGES
We'll see.

A challenge.

Hugo starts to work.

He uses the tiny tools ... hammering ... screwing ... adjusting ... tinkering...

Georges watches.

Hugo fixes the spring ... fits the key ... hammers the body...

Finally he sets the toy mouse down on the counter.

Georges looks at it.

He winds it.

The toy mouse skitters playfully across the counter.

Georges is impressed, tries not to show it.

HUGO
Give me my notebook.

GEORGES
You've got a bit of talent. But you'll have to prove there's more to you than being a thief ... You can earn your notebook.

HUGO

How?

GEORGES

Come to the booth everyday. I'll decide how long you must work for each item you stole, and it will be up to me to decide when you have earned your notebook, if ever.

HUGO

I already have a job.

GEORGES

Thief is not a job, boy.

HUGO

I have another job, but I'll come when I can.

GEORGES

You begin tomorrow. Go away.

HUGO

I'll begin now.

Hugo bravely goes into the booth and gets a broom.

Starts sweeping up.

Georges watches him.

Across the station, a little DANCE BAND is starting up at Madame Emilie's cafe.

A few couples dance.

An afternoon tea dance.

A lovely, bygone image. Couples dancing under the massive iron ribs of the great train station.

The music echoes throughout the Grand Hall.

The music from the band takes us to...

INT./EXT. - MONTAGE - DAY/NIGHT

Dance band music as...

... Hugo works at the Toy Booth. Across the booth, Georges does a card trick. Hugo watches the trick closely. Georges notices.

... Isabelle and Hugo walk through the bookstore, chatting. Monsieur Labisse eyes Hugo with suspicion.

... Georges teaches Hugo how to do the card trick.

... Hugo demonstrates the card trick to the Automaton.

... Hugo repairs a broken toy in the booth. Isabelle is there, chatting to him. He ducks away when the Station Inspector and Maximilian pass. She is intrigued.

... Georges watches Hugo demonstrate the card trick to a customer. He hides a smile.

... Hugo works on the Automaton. It looks done: polished, cleaned, beautiful and ready. But for one thing. We now see that there is HEART-SHAPED KEYHOLE in the back.

... Hugo tries a bit of bent metal in the keyhole. Doesn't fit. He adds it to a collection of scavenged items he has tried. Nothing fits.

... Isabelle and Hugo playfully dance to the band at the cafe with other couples.

... Georges watches them dance. Content.

... The band dance ends the song with a flourish. Hugo bows to Isabelle. She laughs.

The montage ends.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - DAY

Hugo is waiting for Isabelle outside the book shop.

He sees the Station Inspector and Maximilian cutting through the crowd. Hugo ducks around a corner and watches nervously.

But the Station Inspector has another quarry today.

A young STREET KID, around Hugo's age, is loitering near another shop.

The Station Inspector stalks him and then sweeps down like a bird of prey. The Street Kid makes a move to bolt--

But the Station Inspector releases Maximilian, who leaps, crouches and snarls in front of the terrified Kid--

The Station Inspector grabs the Kid brutally. Shakes him.

STATION INSPECTOR
Where are you parents?! Answer me!

STREET KID
(terrified)
Got none.

Without another word, the Station Inspector drags him away, his leg brace squeaking ominously. Maximilian loping after them.

Hugo darts into an air vent.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- NARROW PASSAGE/INSPECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Hugo is in a cramped passage that overlooks the Station Inspector's office, peering through a clock face.

The Street Kid is in a tiny, awful cell. He is sobbing. Maximilian sits alert, glaring in at the Kid.

The Station Inspector is oiling his leg brace as he talks on the phone:

STATION INSPECTOR
(on phone)
... yes, another one. Useless waste
of an orphan by the looks of it.
Come get it.

Suddenly--

Maximilian turns. Looks toward Hugo, ears perked.

Hugo sinks back into the darkness.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - DAY

Hugo watches through a clock face.

He sees the Station Inspector dragging the Street Kid through the doors of the station and throwing him into a police truck. The truck roars off.

The Station Inspector comes back inside.

He stands looking over his domain. Maximilian at his side. Imperious.

Hugo disappears back into the tunnels.

We linger for a moment with the Station Inspector. His eyes scan the terminal. Then he stops.

He watches LISETTE. A beautiful and shy girl who runs a little flower stall. She's organizing bunches of flowers. They surround her: an explosion of vibrant color in the terminal.

The Station Inspector gazes at her. He's besotted, has been for a while.

He gets up his nerve ... Puts on an awkward smile ... He begins to approach...

But then his leg brace squeaks sharply. It echoes through the terminal. He stops. Embarrassed.

He gives up. Moves off with Maximilian.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- BOOKSTORE - DAY

Hugo and Isabelle move through the bookstore.

ISABELLE

... I'm still looking for your notebook. I have to be very circumspect.

She loves the word.

HUGO

You better not look inside.

ISABELLE

If I find it I should be able to look inside it.

HUGO

Then don't look for it!

ISABELLE

I'm trying to help. Why are you being so mean?

To Hugo she suddenly looks very grown up. She is disappointed in him. His heart sinks.

HUGO

Just ... Promise me you won't open it.

ISABELLE

Fine.

They wander deeper into the store.

Monsieur Labisse, perched on his high stool, keeps an wary eye on Hugo.

Hugo picks up a copy of ROBIN HOOD, smiles.

HUGO

I saw this movie! With Douglas Fairbanks. Did you see that?

ISABELLE

I've never seen a movie.

HUGO

What?!

ISABELLE

Isn't it appalling?!

HUGO

You've never seen a movie? Not ever?

ISABELLE

Papa Georges won't let me. He's very strict about it.

HUGO

(excited)

I love movies! My father always took me for my birthday.

Hugo is surprised he suddenly spoke about his father. He does not regret it though.

They wander through the teetering piles of books in silence.

ISABELLE

Is your father dead?

HUGO

I don't want to talk about it.

A beat.

She takes his hand for a quick moment, then releases it.

A gesture of support. Friendship.

They continue strolling.

Hugo stops. An idea. He looks at her.

HUGO

Isabelle ... Do you want to have an
adventure?

Her eyes light up.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

Again, the suggestion of Paris.

A movie theatre facade. An Art Deco marquee. A green neon
sign: Silent Movie Festival.

Isabelle and Hugo stand looking up at the theatre.

She looks at him. Beams.

He nods his head and nonchalantly leads her down an alley
next to the theatre...

EXT. ALLEY NEXT TO THEATRE - DAY

They move down the alley ... passing a series of fading movie
posters ... Keaton ... Lon Chaney ... Doug Fairbanks...

He stops at a side door and begins to deftly pick the lock
with one of his tools.

ISABELLE

We could get into trouble.

HUGO

That's how you know it's an
adventure.

Click.

He opens the door and peeks in. Coast is clear.

He looks at her.

Yes or no?

She's game.

They sneak in.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

The flickering light above.

The glowing screen.

Iridescent.

Hugo and Isabelle are sitting at the back.

The famous Harold Lloyd film SAFETY LAST is playing.

Isabelle's eyes are wide.

She's transported.

The magic of motion pictures.

She's never seen one before. Life captured on the screen.
Living, moving history.

The iridescent glow from the screen illuminates her face.

Hugo glances to her.

Her enchantment touches him.

He smiles.

The light flickers above them.

Time passes...

It's the climax of SAFETY LAST.

Isabelle is wrapped up in the movie.

Can barely watch.

Can barely breathe.

Harold Lloyd is climbing dangerously around the outside of
the skyscraper. Acrobatic stunts still hair-raising after all
these years. Harold Lloyd grabs the big clock face. It
springs open--!

Isabelle grabs Hugo's arm in horror--!

Hugo looks at her. Amused.

Harold Lloyd clings to the hands of the clock and then
continues to climb around the building.

Then...

From the darkness behind Hugo and Isabelle...

Two huge white hands slowly descend...

Like the Frankenstein Monster's mitts...

Grabbing them on the shoulder...

They jump!

The THEATRE MANAGER looms over them.

THEATRE MANAGER
How did you two rats get in here?!

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

The Manager dumps them outside.

THEATRE MANAGER
And I better not see you in here
again!

He closes the doors.

Hugo and Isabelle laugh and run off.

EXT. BANK OF THE SEINE - DAY

It is chilly. Fog.

Hugo and Isabelle walk home along the Seine.

The silhouette of bridges. The sound of lapping water. The shape of boats moving past. Radio music from a houseboat.

Hugo tightrope walks along the edge of the bank, like Harold Lloyd on a ledge from SAFETY LAST.

HUGO
Why doesn't Papa Georges let you go
to the movies?

ISABELLE
I don't know. He never said. I bet
my parents would have let me. I'm
sure they were very aesthetic.

HUGO
What happened to them?

ISABELLE
They died when I was a baby. Papa
Georges and Mama Jeanne are my
godparents, so they took me in.
(MORE)

ISABELLE (CONT'D)

They're very nice about most everything, except the movies.

HUGO

My father took me to the movies all the time. We saw Tom Mix and Lon Chaney. But Douglas Fairbanks was my favorite.

Hugo sword fights along the bank for a moment.

A beat as they walk.

ISABELLE

What was he like?

HUGO

He loved the movies ... Ever since he was a kid and the movies were new. He told me about the first one he ever saw. He went into a dark room and on a white screen he saw a rocket fly into the eye of the man in the moon.

(smiles)

He said it was like seeing his dreams in the middle of the day.

A beat as they walk. He speaks quietly.

HUGO

The movies were our special place. It was just us ... We'd go in and watch something ... and for a little while we didn't miss my mom so much.

She's touched by his honesty.

ISABELLE

You think about him a lot.

HUGO

All the time.

A beat as they walk.

ISABELLE

Who looks after you?

HUGO

My uncle was supposed to ... But he started going away a lot. Drinking.

(MORE)

HUGO (CONT'D)
Staying out all night ... One day
he didn't come back.

ISABELLE
So you're all alone?

HUGO
Not completely.

A beat as they walk.

She stops.

ISABELLE
Hugo ... Where do you live?

He stops.

Looks at her.

Should he tell her?

Should he trust her?

Yes.

He points.

HUGO
There.

She looks...

Across the river...

The Train Station.

INT.. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - DAY

Hugo and Isabelle move through the crowd.

She is incredulous.

HUGO
... My uncle taught me how to run
the clocks. So I just keep on doing
it ... Maybe he'll come back one
day, but I doubt it.

ISABELLE
But ... Aren't you afraid someone
will find out?

HUGO
Not as long as the clocks keep on
working and no one sees me.

ISABELLE
What do you do for money?

HUGO
Don't need any.

A beat as they walk.

ISABELLE
Can I see it?

HUGO
What?

ISABELLE
Where you live! In the walls.

HUGO
Maybe.

ISABELLE
Maybe?

Hugo suddenly sees...

The Station Inspector and Maximilian...

Walking right toward them...

HUGO
Act natural.

ISABELLE
What?

HUGO
Just keep walking. Act natural.

ISABELLE
(perplexed)
How am I acting now?

Then she sees the Station Inspector and Maximilian.

She understands.

They put on an elaborate show of "acting natural" as they
walk toward the Station Inspector.

They pass him.

A sigh of relief.

But...

The Station Inspector stops.

Turns. His leg brace squeaks like a rifle shot.

STATION INSPECTOR
Hey! You two.

Hugo and Isabelle freeze.

STATION INSPECTOR
Come ... here.

Hugo is about to bolt.

Isabelle sees it in his eyes.

With a look, she cautions him against it.

She will handle this another way.

She drags him back to the Station Inspector. Puts on her sweetest face:

ISABELLE
Good day, Monsieur!

STATION INSPECTOR
(icy)
Where are your parents?

ISABELLE
I work with my Papa Georges at the Toy Booth, surely you've seen me there. And this is my cousin from the country, Hugo.
(Whispers)
You'll have to forgive him, he's a little simple-minded. Doltish, really. Poor thing.

The Station Inspector leans in.

Peers closely at Hugo.

Hugo gives him a simple-minded look.

Maximilian noses right up to Hugo.

Sniffing. A low growl.

STATION INSPECTOR

It seems Maximilian disapproves of you, little creature ... Why would he disapprove of you?

HUGO

I ... don't know...

ISABELLE

(to the rescue)

Perhaps he smells my cat?!
Christina Rossetti's her name,
after the poetess! Would you like
me to recite? "My heart is like a
singing bird/Whose nest is in a
watered shoot--!"

STATION INSPECTOR

All right, all right ... Go on then
... But remember, in my terminal
children are not permitted to run
amok ... Not ever.

He gives them a last chilling glare and goes. They see him go into this office, shut the door. They're free of him for the moment.

Hugo looks at Isabelle.

HUGO

Doltish?

ISABELLE

It worked didn't it?

They continue on.

ISABELLE

Now since I just saved your life
how about letting me see your
covert lair?

HUGO

My what?

ISABELLE

Where you live in the walls!

HUGO

I can't understand what you're
saying half the time.

ISABELLE

That's because I am so gigantically literate.

HUGO

I'll tell you what ... I'll let you see my "covert lair" if you do one thing...

ISABELLE

What's that?

HUGO

You have to...

ISABELLE

Yes...?

HUGO

Catch me!

And he is off like a shot--

Isabelle laughs and pursues--

A wild chase through the station.

It is nice to see Hugo enjoying himself. His usually sober face is smiling. His serious personality gives way to simple play.

He's just a kid now.

Having fun with his friend.

Hugo tears through the station...

Past the cafe...

Leaping over Madame Emilie's yapping dachshund...

Careening around Monsieur Rouleau's easel...

Barreling through the terminal...

Isabelle follows. Laughing.

This is all from a child's perspective. We cut past towering adults. Weaving in and out. Diving under platform gates. Scrambling over benches.

And at top speed.

Sliding and skidding wildly on the polished floors.

Carefree.

Then Hugo diverts quickly through a door into--

INT. TRAIN STATION -- LUGGAGE ROOM - DAY

Hugo sweeps past towers of luggage--

He jumps and climbs over a cart piled high with luggage and steamer trunks--

Isabelle follows gamely, laughing, bouncing after him--

They slam through a door to--

INT. TRAIN STATION -- CROWDED CORRIDOR - DAY

Suddenly--

A tight corridor. Scores of passengers moving swiftly. A great crowd. Too many.

Hugo and Isabelle are unexpectedly caught in the mob of passengers. The passengers are hurrying. Late. In a rush.

Too many big people pushing them back and forth, crowding them, jostling them.

Isabelle trips!

She falls.

Amidst the pounding crush of feet.

Scary.

Hugo turns.

His face.

Concern.

He pushes back.

Reaches for her.

His hand stretches out.

She takes his hand.

Her face.

Grateful.

He pulls her up to safety.

The crowd thins out around them.

But he is staring at something, amazed.

In the action, a necklace has emerged from her collar. A key on a piece of string.

A distinctive heart-shaped key.

HUGO
Where did you get that?!

ISABELLE
None of your business.

She tucks the key away.

HUGO
I need it.

ISABELLE
What for?

HUGO
I just need it.

ISABELLE
Not unless you tell me why.

He looks at her.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - DAY

Hugo leads her through the tunnels.

ISABELLE
This is marvelous! ... I feel like Jean Valjean!

HUGO
I used to imagine I was the Phantom of the Opera. Like in the movie.

ISABELLE
It was a book too. You know sometimes things are books before they're movies!

He leads her through the iron door to...

INT.. TRAIN STATION -- SECRET APARTMENT - DAY

Hugo lights some candles.

She takes the apartment in. The cramped quarters. The chaos of tools and machine parts hanging everywhere. She loves it!

ISABELLE
Oh, this is superlative!

Hugo pulls a sheet off the Automaton.

She is instantly captivated by the wonderful machine.

ISABELLE
What is it?

HUGO
It's an automaton ... My father was fixing it before he died.

ISABELLE
Why would my key fit your father's machine? ... That doesn't make any sense.

They look at the Automaton for a moment.

ISABELLE
He looks sad.

HUGO
I think he's just waiting.

ISABELLE
For what?

HUGO
To work again. To do what he's supposed to do.

ISABELLE
What happens when you wind him up?

HUGO
I don't know.

She takes off her necklace.

Hands it to him.

He fills the Automaton's little inkwell with ink.

He puts a fresh piece of paper on the little writing desk.

It's ready.

Hugo pauses.

ISABELLE
What's the matter?

HUGO
I know it's silly but ... I think
it's going to be a message from my
father.

ISABELLE
Do you want me to go?

He shakes his head.

A beat.

Then he carefully inserts the key.

And winds the Automaton.

Steps back.

The world hangs in suspense.

Nothing happens.

He looks at her.

She doesn't know what to say.

He looks back at the Automaton.

Nothing.

But...

Then we go...

INSIDE the Automaton's body:

Things begins to move...

A cascade of perfect movements, with hundreds of brilliantly
calibrated actions...

A spring connects to a series of gears...

The gears extend down to the base of the figure and turn
brass disks...

Two little hammers come down and trail along the edges of the disks...

The little hammers translate motion back up through a series of rods...

The rods silently turn other intricate mechanisms in the figure's shoulder and neck...

The shoulder gears move...

Engaging the elbow...

Setting off a chain reaction of movements down to the wrist...

And finally...

The hand.

OUTSIDE again:

Hugo and Isabelle watch.

The Automaton's hand moves slightly. Just a twitch.

They gasp.

Hugo and Isabelle lean forward, wide-eyed with wonder.

The miniature hand begins, very cautiously, to move.

Hugo and Isabelle hold their breath.

The Automaton dips the pen into the ink and begins to write.

It draws a small line. The hand moves. Another small line. The hand moves. Another small line.

Hugo and Isabelle lean closer.

The Automaton continues to move. Dip the pen. Draw a line. Move. Draw a line. Dip the pen. Move. Draw a line.

But it is meaningless.

A series of scratches and lines without order.

Nothing.

Hugo stares.

His heart sinking.

Then the Automaton stops.

Finished.

Hugo is devastated.

HUGO

What an idiot -- Thinking I could
fix it--

ISABELLE

Hugo--

HUGO

It's broken. It'll always be
broken!

Anguish beyond tears.

She doesn't know what to do.

She goes to him. Trying to comfort.

ISABELLE

Hugo ... You can still--

HUGO

You don't understand. I thought if
I could fix it ... I wouldn't be so
alone.

He buries his head in his hands.

A long beat.

Then she notices something.

The Automaton is moving again.

ISABELLE

Hugo ... Hugo, look -- look!

He glances up.

ISABELLE

It's not done! It's not done!

They rush back to the Automaton.

It is moving more quickly now. All the gears and wheels
spinning perfectly. Draw-move-ink-draw-move.

Hugo realizes:

HUGO
It's not writing ... It's drawing!

Indeed it is.

Faster and faster. A blur of ink. Lines forming together. Shading and cross-hatching. Draw-move-draw-move-ink-draw-move-draw.

An image begins to emerge.

We don't see it entirely.

We see bits and pieces. Something familiar about it.

Hugo and Isabelle stare.

Finally the Automaton stops.

It waits.

Pen poised.

Hugo and Isabelle exchange a glance.

And we finally see the image in full...

And recognize it instantly...

A TRIP TO THE MOON.

The round face of the man in the moon. Rocket protruding from his right eye.

Hugo's father's favorite movie. The very image he told Hugo about.

Hugo is trembling.

Suddenly--

The Automaton starts moving again--!

Hugo and Isabelle jump--!

The Automaton dips the pen and moves its hand into position.

And signs the drawing:

"Georges Melies."

A flourish under the signature and then the Automaton is done.

ISABELLE
 "Georges Melies" ... That's Papa
 Georges' name! Why did your
 father's machine sign Papa Georges'
 name?

HUGO
 I don't know...

ISABELLE
 And why does my key fit it?

Hugo shakes his head.

He just looks at the Automaton.

He smiles.

HUGO
 Thank you.

He turns to her.

HUGO
 It was a message from my father ...
 Now we have to figure it out.

She is delighted. A mystery!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

The sun is sinking.

Hugo and Isabelle approach the apartment building.

Hugo, who has watched it so often from outside, hesitates at
 going in.

ISABELLE
 Come on.

They enter.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Impoverished gentility.

A few small rooms. Neatly kept. Old furniture. Fading
 wallpaper.

MAMA JEANNE, Georges' wife, is sewing in a corner. She wears
 heavy reading glasses. She is a handsome older woman.

Isabelle and Hugo enter.

MAMA JEANNE
Isabelle...?

ISABELLE
(kisses her)
Mama Jeanne, we have to talk to you
... This is Hugo Cabret.

HUGO
Good evening, ma'am.

MAMA JEANNE
Very good manners for a thief.

HUGO
I'm not a thief.

Jeanne considers him coolly over her glasses. Removes them.

MAMA JEANNE
What's going on, Isabelle?

ISABELLE
(excited)
Oh, well, it's a terribly long
story, filled with circumlocutions!
It all began several weeks ago when
I was...

Hugo stops her:

HUGO
Wait.

He pulls something from inside his coat.

A piece of paper. Folded over.

He hands it to Mama Jeanne. She unfolds it.

It is the picture the Automaton drew. The image from A TRIP
TO THE MOON.

She stares down at it.

A complex range of emotions pass over her features ... shock
... nostalgia ... sadness ...

When she looks up at them there are tears in her eyes.

Isabelle is struck by the sight.

MAMA JEANNE
Children ... What have you done?

ISABELLE
Mama Jeanne...?

Mama Jeanne dries her eyes with a little handkerchief.

Isabelle finds there are tears in her eyes as well.

Hugo sees Isabelle's tears. Feels awful.

MAMA JEANNE
Where did you get it?

HUGO
You'll call me a liar.

MAMA JEANNE
No, child.

HUGO
A mechanical man drew it.

MAMA JEANNE
You have him?

HUGO
My father found him in a museum. No one wanted him. We fixed him.

MAMA JEANNE
But it needed ...
(She realizes. Looks at
Isabelle.)
My key.

Isabelle removes the key.

MAMA JEANNE
The key I gave you...

A beat as it all sinks in.

Then she stands.

She hands the drawing back to Hugo.

MAMA JEANNE
Please, take it away. We can't dredge up the past now. And whatever happens, don't let Papa Georges see it.

HUGO
Please tell us what's going on!

She begins to lead Hugo to the door.

MAMA JEANNE
It's no business of yours. You must
forget all this.

Hugo stops. Holds his ground.

HUGO
We worked hard to fix it, my father
and me, and ... it's all I have
left of him ... I need to know what
it means.

A beat.

Mama Jeanne looks at him.

Moved by his passion and need.

She looks at him seriously. Speaks with great compassion.

MAMA JEANNE
There are things you are too young
to understand ... You should not
yet know such sadness.

Then...

They hear someone climbing up the stairs to the apartment.

ISABELLE
It's Papa Georges!

MAMA JEANNE
He can't know you're here. This
way...

She quickly leads them through the apartment to the master
bedroom...

INT. APARTMENT -- MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

Mama Jeanne hurries them in:

MAMA JEANNE
Just keep quiet. I'll find a way to
get him out of the apartment. Not a
noise from either of you.

She inadvertently glances toward a large armoire. Hugo and Isabelle both notice.

Then she quickly goes. Shutting the door.

A long beat.

Hugo and Isabelle look at each other.

They hear the muffled sounds of Mama Jeanne and Georges talking in another room.

Whispers:

HUGO

She looked at the armoire.

ISABELLE

I already searched it when I was looking for your notebook.

HUGO

I'll look again. You stand guard!

ISABELLE

Splendid!

Hugo opens the armoire and searches through it.

Isabelle, meanwhile, goes to the door.

Peeks through the keyhole.

Through the keyhole: Georges and Jeanne are across the apartment, in the kitchen. She is pouring coffee. She steals a nervous glance to the bedroom door.

Hugo rifles through the armoire. Clothes. Sheets. No clues. No treasure. Nothing.

Hugo steps back, studies the outside of the tall armoire.

He notices something:

A decorative panel at the very top of the armoire has two thin parallel cracks in it.

HUGO

Look!

ISABELLE

We have to investigate!

He carries a chair to the armoire.

ISABELLE

Let me, I'm taller.

She climbs up on the chair and examines the decorative panel. She has to stand on her tiptoes to reach it.

He makes a gesture for her to knock on it.

She does so.

It sounds hollow.

They are both excited.

She carefully grips the edges of the decorative panel. She pulls. She pulls again. The panel comes off in her hands! Revealing...

A hidden compartment at the top of the armoire!

A large box is inside the compartment.

Isabelle hands down the panel to Hugo. Then she begins to pull the box out. But it is heavy. She struggles a bit.

He holds the chair steady.

She almost has the box out now...

But it is ungainly, she was unprepared for the weight, and she is still balancing on her tiptoes...

As she pulls the box out...

She loses her balance...

The chair lurches...

She almost falls...

But miraculously gets her balance...

Shoots a relieved glance down to Hugo...

But...

Then a leg of the chair SNAPS--!

She falls--

Shrieks--

Hugo catches her--

The box falls--

CRASHES to the floor--

SMASHING open--

Sending up a cyclone of paper--

Hundreds of pieces of paper of every shape and size scatter across the floor and fly through the air--

Hugo and Isabelle are surrounded by a tornado of paper, it swirls around them--

On the paper--

Wonderful drawings. Fanciful and imaginative. Dragons and devils. Spaceships and submarines. Fairies and fish. Elaborate landscapes of fantasy...

One of the drawings seems to slow as it whirls past Hugo...

The man in the moon, a rocket protruding from his right eye...

The swirling papers finally descend to earth...

Revealing...

Georges.

Standing in the doorway. Mama Jeanne behind him.

Georges looks at the carpet of drawings spread out before him.

GEORGES

(whispers)

Back from the dead ...

His quiet anguish gives way to anger--

He wades into the drawings--

Grabbing handfuls--

Tearing them up--

Shredding them violently--

Flinging them away--

Mama Jeanne grabs him:

MAMA JEANNE

Stop it, Georges! Stop! This is
your work!

GEORGES

My work?! -- What am I? Nothing but
a penniless merchant! A broken
windup toy!

He spins on Hugo in fury:

GEORGES

I trusted you -- and this is how
you thank me?! You cruel -- cruel--

Suddenly he can't speak--

Something's wrong -- he gulps for air--

Mama Jeanne sits him on the bed. He is exhausted, gasping for
breath.

His sad eyes gaze over the chaos of drawings.

He whispers.

GEORGES

An empty box, an old rocket, a lost
monster ... nothing, nothing,
nothing...

MAMA JEANNE

I'm sorry, Georges ... I'm so
sorry...

Isabelle takes Hugo's arm and gently pulls him out.

He glances back.

Sees Mama Jeanne tenderly holding her disconsolate husband.

Hugo is haunted by the poignant image.

EXT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Evening. Street lamps are coming on, illuminate the scene.

Isabelle is at the front door.

A beat.

ISABELLE

I should go back.

HUGO

Okay.

A beat.

ISABELLE

I've never seen him cry before.

Hugo takes her hand.

A comforting gesture of friendship.

She acknowledges it.

A faint smile.

She starts to close the door. Stops.

ISABELLE

Thank you for the movie today ...
It was a gift.

She shuts the door.

Hugo walks down the street.

He stops under the street lamp for a moment. Gazing back up at the apartment.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - EVENING

Hugo enters. Deep in thought. Head down.

He's not looking and accidentally bumps right into--

The frosty Monsieur Labisse! Labisse drops a few books he was carrying. Hugo quickly picks them up:

HUGO

Oh, I'm sorry, sir!

He notices one of the books is the ROBIN HOOD he was looking at before. He smiles when he sees it.

MONSIEUR LABISSE

You know that volume?

HUGO

I used to read it with my father...

MONSIEUR LABISSE

Hm ... It was intended for my
godson.

(MORE)

MONSIEUR LABISSE (CONT'D)

But now I think it is intended for
you.

(slight formal bow)

Monsieur Cabret.

Labisse goes, leaving Hugo with the book. Hugo is shocked by his unexpected act of kindness.

A voice:

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

Things aren't always what they
seem.

Hugo turns. Monsieur Rouleau is working on his painting nearby. Hugo goes to him.

HUGO

Why would he give it to me?

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

Because you needed it.

Hugo looks at Monsieur Rouleau's Surrealist painting. It is like Magritte or Dali. But the images echo Hugo's story. A robot. A train. A clock...

HUGO

I recognize the clock. But it's
different.

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

Sitting here, day after day, I
watch things. I watch them change
in the light. A clock becomes a
wheel becomes a train becomes a
rocket becomes a robot ... It's
like a story.

HUGO

How does it end?

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

I don't know. The story's not over
yet.

There's something gently magical and mad about Monsieur Rouleau, touched and touching.

He mixes some paint on his palette.

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

But it'll be surprising.

HUGO

Because things aren't always what they seem?

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

Well, look around you ... Not all clocks run forever ... not all little boys live in houses ... and not all messages are written on paper.

Hugo is struck by his words.

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

Quick, behind the canvas!

Hugo sees the Station Inspector approaching. He ducks behind Monsieur Rouleau's large canvas.

The Station Inspector arrives.

STATION INSPECTOR

Monsieur Artiste. How goes the painting? May I look?

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

(stops him)

Not ready yet. Soon ... Things must happen at the opportune moment.

The Station Inspector looks across the terminal to the lovely Lisette at her flower stall. The object of his affection.

He sighs.

STATION INSPECTOR

If we only knew when that moment was...

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

For the heart, there is only now, my friend.

STATION INSPECTOR

Do you think?

MONSIEUR ROULEAU

Of course! Go say hello to her ... Go on, give me your best smile.

The Station Inspector tries out his best and brightest smile: sort of a pained grimace.

MONSIEUR ROULEAU
Ahh ... Radiant!

The Station Inspector is encouraged. He steels himself and walks away toward Lisette.

Hugo emerges from hiding.

HUGO
Thank you, sir ... Your painting is going to be magnificent.

Hugo scurries off.

Monsieur Rouleau watches him go.

MONSIEUR ROULEAU
So is yours.

Meanwhile...

The Station Inspector heads toward Lisette at the flower stall. She's arranging a breathtaking bunch of blue irises, like a vision from Monet.

He freshens his maladroit smile and "casually" arrives.

STATION INSPECTOR
Mademoiselle Lisette, a very gracious good evening to you.

LISETTE
(shy)
Monsieur Inspector.

STATION INSPECTOR
Hm. Yes ... Those are lovely posies there.

LISETTE
They're from Gourdon. They come in on the overnight train.

STATION INSPECTOR
Ah, Gourdon. Splendid country that. All the ... cows and such ... Do they have a smell?

He leans in to sniff the irises. This causes his leg brace to squeak awkwardly. He stiffens.

She glances to his brace. He sees her glance.

A moment between them.

He nods stiffly. Turns to go.

Walks a few steps.

But then he stops ... No. He will not be ashamed ... He returns to her.

STATION INSPECTOR

You see I was injured in the war.
It will never heal ... Good evening
to you, Mademoiselle.

He turns to go. But...

LISETTE

I lost my brother.

STATION INSPECTOR

Where?

LISETTE

Verdun.

His eyes are sympathetic. He was there. He knows.

A beat.

Neither is sure what to do. How to proceed.

Then she smiles shyly, snaps off a blossom, and tucks it into his lapel.

LISETTE

Good evening, Monsieur Inspector.

STATION INSPECTOR

(bows)

Good evening, Mademoiselle Lisette.

He goes. His leg brace squeaking proudly.

And we fade to...

EXT. FILM ACADEMY BUILDING - DAY

A wide boulevard.

Fine motorcars.

Magisterial buildings.

A part of Paris we have not seen before. Wealth and privilege.

Hugo and Isabelle look particularly small standing in front of the most august building on the street: The French Film Academy.

Two great stone lions flank the entrance. The lions gaze balefully at them, as if annoyed at their presumption.

They summon their courage and enter...

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- LOBBY - DAY

Hugo and Isabelle's heels click as they cross an enormous marble void to the reception desk.

The RECEPTIONIST -- a stern dragon of a woman -- watches their approach as balefully as did the lions outside.

They finally reach her.

ISABELLE
Excuse me, Madame--

She stops -- her voice echoes in the massive chamber -- continues more quietly:

ISABELLE
Excuse me, we would like to use the library.

She looks them up and down.

RECEPTIONIST
No.

ISABELLE
No?

RECEPTIONIST
You're too small and too dirty.
Goodbye.

She returns to her paperwork.

They stand for a moment.

Isabelle starts to go. Hugo stops her.

He addresses the dragon receptionist:

HUGO
Excuse me. I thought the library was open to all Frenchmen.

RECEPTIONIST
Not small and dirty ones.

HUGO
In that case ...
(clears his throat
nervously)
I would like to see your superior.

She looks at him. Daggers.

RECEPTIONIST
What kind of dreadful little
Jacobin are you?

HUGO
The kind that wants to use the
library.

He holds his ground.

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- LIBRARY - DAY

Hugo and Isabelle move through a lovely library.

Two stories. Shining brass fixtures and rich wooden shelves.
Neats rows of books.

They go to the circulation desk. The bored STUDENT manning
the desk doesn't even glance up from his book.

HUGO
Excuse me, sir, we're looking for a
book about very early movies.

BORED STUDENT
(points without looking)
Rene Tabard. THE INVENTION OF
DREAMS. Row Four. Section Three.
Top shelf.

ISABELLE
Much obliged. What are you reading?

Hugo hauls her away.

They move through the stacks to find Row Four, Section Three.
They pull down a large book from the top shelf.

They go to a library table and look at the book:

THE INVENTION OF DREAMS: THE STORY OF THE FIRST MOVIES by
Rene Tabard.

Hugo runs his hands over the cover.

He glances to Isabelle.

This could be it. The answer to their quest.

He opens the book.

They begin to read:

HUGO (V.O.)

"In 1895, one of the very first films ever shown was called A TRAIN ARRIVES IN THE STATION, which showed nothing more than a train coming into a station..."

We see the little film of the train steaming into the station.

ISABELLE (V.O.)

"But when the train came speeding toward the screen, the audience screamed because they thought they were in danger of being run over. No one had ever seen anything like it before."

Hugo smiles to her:

HUGO

No one had ever seen anything like it before.

They turn the page...

And we go with them...

INTO THE BOOK...

Flickering images from the very first movies...

Fragile fragments of life captured forever...

A stream of factory workers leaving work ... Two Edison technicians dancing ... Skyscrapers in New York ... London street scene ... a boxing match ...

HUGO (V.O.)

"What began as a sideshow novelty soon grew into something more as the first filmmakers discovered they could use the new medium to tell stories..."

And now we see storytelling and narrative replacing the quaint real life images...

Edison's THE KISS ... THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY ... THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI ... INTOLERANCE ... Buster Keaton ... Louise Brooks ... William S. Hart ... Doug Fairbanks ... Jean Renoir...

The splendid, magical, romantic, lost world of silent movies flickers past...

And then...

The culmination of the whole sequence...

We end at one iconic image...

Glowing with light...

A TRIP TO THE MOON.

The man in the moon with a rocket protruding from his eye.

Hugo and Isabelle stare at the image.

They share an excited glance.

ISABELLE

(reads)

"The filmmaker Georges Melies was among the first to realized that film had the power to capture dreams..."

HUGO

(reads)

"This great pioneer of early cinema died during the Great War--"

ISABELLE

Died...?

HUGO

(reads)

"Died during the Great War."

They stop. Stunned.

Unbeknownst to them, a tall and imposing figure has been looming over them. Observing.

PROFESSOR RENE TABARD is a formidable presence. Stern and uncompromising.

TABARD
You're interested in Melies?

The kids jump -- slam the book shut almost guiltily.

HUGO
Yes, uh--

ISABELLE
It's allowed.

TABARD
Is it?

A long, cool, appraising stare.

Then Hugo realizes something -- he nudges Isabelle -- the photo on the back of the book shows the author:

Rene Tabard. The same man who is standing before them.

TABARD
Come with me.

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- TABARD'S OFFICE - DAY

A door opens into ... the world of Georges Melies.

Professor Tabard's office is something of a shrine to Melies.

Tattered old movie posters, film stills and handbills for magic shows line the walls.

Mountains of books, photographs and archival records. Also a few props and costume pieces lovingly preserved.

Tabard shows Hugo and Isabelle some of the photographs and artifacts:

TABARD
Here he is at work in his studio
... And this is a handbill
advertising his stage act ... And
this is one of his actual cameras!

ISABELLE
Why do you have all this?

TABARD
Your godfather is a passion of
mine. He was a great filmmaker.

HUGO
 (looking at a photo)
 He was a magician?

They look at a photo of showing a YOUNG GEORGES on a stage doing a magic trick:

TABARD
 Yes, he began on the stage.

ISABELLE
 How did he start making movies?

TABARD
 No one really knows.

Hugo has been studying the old photographs and Daguerreotypes. Something special strikes him about them...

HUGO
 Look how happy he is...

Indeed, the joy and passion on Young Georges' face is a marked difference to the moody old man we know.

Isabelle turns to Tabard with a smile.

ISABELLE
 Professor Tabard ... Would you like to meet him?

TABARD
 Oh, but you see, I have met him.

He smiles. The color fades as we go into Tabard's memory...

As with Hugo's flashback earlier, this has the quality of a *SILENT FILM*. The flickering, glowing luminescence of early movies...

EXT. FLASHBACK -- GREENHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

In the country, outside Paris.

YOUNG TABARD is with his Brother. Young Tabard, around ten, is staring at something, awed at what he is seeing.

TABARD (V.O.)
 My brother worked as a carpenter building sets for Melies. One day he took me to visit the studio...

We see what Young Tabard has been gazing at:

George Melies' film studio.

The studio is an absolutely astounding sight. A great greenhouse-like collection of glass rooms. A soaring castle of glass:

TABARD (V.O.)

It was like something out of a dream. The whole building was made of glass ... In reality this was to let in all the sunlight necessary for filming, but to my eyes it was nothing short of an enchanted castle ... a palace made of glass...

Young Tabard and his Brother go into the studio...

INT. FLASHBACK -- GREENHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

A dragon!

A great mechanical puppet, writhing and attacking, jaws snapping, articulated by puppeteers. They're trying to get it to work for the shot: a battle with some knights.

Young Tabard is engulfed in the filming of one of Georges' movies. It's a joyous chaos of wildly dressed performers, fantastic sets, explosive special effects, technicians, filmmakers.

In the background we see flats and set pieces from other Melies movies: moons, suns, monsters, great fish, castles.

And at the camera ... his back to us ... is YOUNG GEORGES himself. Lining up the shot. Fiddling with the camera.

Young Tabard sits quietly in a corner and watches as the technicians try to get the dragon to work properly.

Young Georges finally turns from the camera and we see his face ... Vital. Alive. Happy ... A marvelous twinkle in his eye.

He glances over to Young Tabard. Sees the enchanted look in the boy's eyes. Smiles.

YOUNG GEORGES

If you've ever wondered where your dreams come from, just look around. This is where they're made.

A technician calls to Young Georges:

TECHNICIAN

Think we got it.

YOUNG GEORGES

(calls back)

Very good ... But we need to change
the scene...

He glances back to Young Tabard.

YOUNG GEORGES

We need to add one ... more ...
knight.

Later...

Young Tabard is now costumed as a knight, bravely fighting
the mechanical dragon alongside other actors.

He is having the time of his life.

He will never forget this moment.

Young Georges watches from the camera. Pleased.

Georges looks into the camera ...

Then we go into the camera ... we see the film zipping
through the camera ... the image of the dragon battle being
recorded ... then the film being processed ... an emulsion
bath ... the film being dried ... finally the film running
through a movie projector...

And the completed movie glowing from a screen...

Young Tabard sits in a theatre, watching as the dragon battle
is projected.

His face. Amazed. Delighted.

We leave the past as color returns and we are again at...

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- TABARD'S OFFICE - DAY

TABARD

In the end, he made over 500 movies
... He was phenomenally popular in
his day.

ISABELLE

But why did he stop?

TABARD

Up until today, I believed that he died in the war, like so many others.

HUGO

Can we watch some of his movies?

TABARD

I wish you could ... But time hasn't been kind to old movies...

He goes to his desk. Unlocks a drawer. Reverently removes a cannister of film.

TABARD

This is the only one that we know of that survived ... Out of hundreds ... One.

Tabard is moved, looking at the single sad cannister of film.

He looks up at them.

TABARD

And still ... it is a masterpiece.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- HANGING CLOCK - AFTERNOON

Isabelle is accompanying Hugo on his rounds as he winds the clocks.

They climb down the long ladder into the large clock suspended from the ceiling of the Grand Hall. He has his bucket of tools.

Clock dials surround him on all four sides.

HUGO

... I think it's the only way. He'll be excited. Why wouldn't he be?

He checks his pocket watch, then uses a little screwdriver to tinker with one of the clocks.

Isabelle stays above on the ladder, pokes her head down:

ISABELLE

Do you think I should tell Mama Jeanne?

HUGO

No, it has to be a surprise, like a magic trick. We have to have some ... panache.

ISABELLE

(impressed with the word)
Well done.

Just then--

Through one of the clock faces--

Hugo sees the Station Inspector and Maximilian!

Approaching. Stopping.

Standing directly below the clock!

Hugo urgently gestures up to her to be quiet:

HUGO

Shhh!

He points down.

She sees the Station Inspector.

A long beat.

Hugo doesn't dare breathe.

The Station Inspector stands there, looking over the terminal. Then he starts to go.

Hugo exhales. Safe.

But...

Then...

The clock ticks over to 4:00 pm...

The minute hand clicks straight up...

Knocking Hugo's little screwdriver away...

It falls...

Hugo grabs for it...

Isabelle watches in horror...

Hugo misses...

The screwdriver falls...

It hits the bottom of the clock with a resounding...

CLINK!

The Station Inspector stops.

Turns. Looks up.

STATION INSPECTOR
Monsieur Claude? Are you up there?
... Monsieur Claude?

Hugo looks up to Isabelle in panic.

What should he do?!

She mimes grabbing her throat: act like you have laryngitis.

Hugo puts on a deep, scratchy voice:

HUGO
(deep voice)
Monsieur?

STATION INSPECTOR
Is all well up there?

HUGO
(deep voice)
Yes, sir.

STATION INSPECTOR
You're not ... inebriated, are you?

HUGO
(deep voice)
No, sir ... I have a sore throat.

STATION INSPECTOR
Hmm. Well, be sure to check the
clock on platform seven. By my
calculation it is three minutes
fast ... I will not have time
running amok in my station.

HUGO
(deep voice)
Right away, sir.

The Station Inspector goes. Maximilian gives a nasty glance
back, but follows.

Hugo looks up at Isabelle.

That was close!

INT. TRAIN STATION -- PLATFORM CLOCK - AFTERNOON

A clock over platform seven.

Hugo kneels to wind the clock, which is at foot level.
Isabelle sits next to him.

HUGO

... It's the only way we'll find
out everything ... Papa Georges
will see that there are people who
remember him. How can that be
wrong?

ISABELLE

(hesitant)
I don't know...

HUGO

Please, Isabelle ... My father, the
Automaton, Papa Georges, it's like
a puzzle ... When we put it all
together, something's going to
happen.

ISABELLE

A message from your father?

He doesn't look at her.

HUGO

Maybe.

ISABELLE

I just hope ... you won't be
disappointed.

A beat as he works on the clock.

Through the clock face she notices Monsieur Rouleau putting
away his brushes for the day. His Surrealist painting is
coming along well.

She sees a passing WEALTHY COUPLE commenting unfavorably on
his painting. Monsieur Rouleau ignores them with dignity.

ISABELLE

Poor Monsieur Rouleau ... He works so hard. People just don't understand.

HUGO

He keeps at it though. He's got a real ... purpose.

ISABELLE

What do you mean?

HUGO

(points)
Could you hand me that?

She hands him a tool from the bucket.

She flops over on her back, looking up at him as he continues to work on the clock:

HUGO

I mean ... Did you ever notice that all machines are made for some reason? They make you laugh, like Papa Georges' toys, or they tell time, like the clocks ... Maybe that's why broken machines always make me sad, because they can't do what they're meant to do.

She looks up at him. From her perspective, he is beautifully framed by the intricate clockwork.

HUGO

Maybe it's the same with people. If you lose your purpose ... it's like you're broken.

ISABELLE

Like Papa Georges.

HUGO

Maybe we can fix him.

He continues to work on the clock.

A beat as she watches him.

ISABELLE

Is that your purpose?

HUGO

What?

ISABELLE
That. Fixing things.

HUGO
I don't know. It's what my father
did.

ISABELLE
I wonder what my purpose is?

HUGO
I don't know.

A long beat as she thinks about it.

It seems to make her sad.

ISABELLE
Maybe if I had known my parents I
would know.

She gazes out over the terminal, a little lost.

He looks at her. Senses her sadness.

A beat.

HUGO
Come with me.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- CLOCK TOWER - EVENING

The enormous clock.

The majestic view of Paris.

The lights of the city are twinkling on. It is magical. The
whole city seems to move and flow like an elegant, perfect
machine.

Hugo and Isabelle look over the city.

HUGO
Right after my father died, I would
come up here a lot ... I would
imagine that the whole world was
one big machine. Machines never
have any extra parts, you know.
They always have the exact number
they need. So I figured if the
entire world was a big machine I
couldn't be an extra part, I had to
be here for some reason ...

(MORE)

HUGO (CONT'D)

And that means you have to be here
for some reason, too.

She is touched.

Paris sparkles below. Like it is made of stars.

The only sound is the steady, rhythmic pulse of the clock's
machinery.

She gently takes his hand.

A huge full moon is rising.

They are silhouetted before the glowing moon.

And above them the solar system is spinning away in perfect
order. The spheres in harmony. Like a great clockwork
mechanism.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TOY BOOTH - EVENING

Georges is closing up the shop. His movement are slow and
leaden.

Hugo and Isabelle are hiding around a corner:

HUGO

I'll bring them at seven o'clock
tomorrow night. Don't say anything.

ISABELLE

Are you sure about this?

HUGO

Not really ... But I think it's the
only way...

ISABELLE

To fix him.

He nods.

A beat.

She impulsively gives him a quick kiss on the cheek.

He is shocked.

Then she runs to Georges at the Toy Booth.

Hugo slips away.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - EVENING

Hugo watches from behind a clock face.

He sees Georges and Isabelle leaving the station.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- SECRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

Candles are burning.

Hugo is getting ready for bed. Carefully winding his big pocket watch. Hanging it on its special hook by the bed.

He looks at the Automaton.

The Automaton looks back at him.

Hugo blows out the candles and settles into bed.

He is nervous about tomorrow.

Can't sleep.

The Automaton watches him.

We hear the steady tick ... tick ... tick of Hugo's pocket watch.

The image melts to...

INT./EXT. SURREALIST NIGHTMARE - DAY/NIGHT

... tick ... tick ... tick ...

We are inside Monsieur Rouleau's Surrealist painting.

There is nothing vague or fuzzy about this nightmare. It has the crystal-clear clarity of Magritte. The crisp, bold colors of Michael Powell.

Hugo moves through the station tunnels, but they are distorted and endless. An insane maze with insane angles and impossible perspectives. *

As Hugo weaves through the maze he sees some familiar faces... *

Down one tunnel ... Madame Emilie's little dachshund runs past in the foreground ... as Monsieur Labisse moves past in the background, reading aloud... *

Down another tunnel ... Monsieur Frick dances past with *
Madame Emilie on the ceiling ... while below Monsieur Rouleau *
paints blazing animated flames on the wall... *

They are all trapped in this endless labyrinth of tunnels. *

Then Isabelle appears to offer guidance.

Hugo smiles, goes to her.

She offers her hand.

He takes it.

He looks up at her face.

But it is not her!

It is Georges. Ferocious and angry! *

Then--

Hugo is suddenly alone. Back in his apartment.

He sits up on the edge of his bed.

The nightmare is over.

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

He hears the comforting sound of his pocket watch.

But something is wrong.

He glances over. The pocket watch isn't hanging from its hook anymore.

He listens intently...

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

The sounds appears to be coming from...

From him!

He pulls his shirt aside to reveal--

His guts are a ticking, spinning clockwork--

He bolts up--

He is a machine!

An Automaton!

And the apartment around him is now an ENORMOUS MACHINE. Loud and horrible. He is utterly surrounded. POUNDING pistons. GRINDING gears. SPINNING wheels.

Then Hugo's face--

Starts to melt away--

Beginning to be replaced by the impassive features of the Automaton--

INT. TRAIN STATION -- SECRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

--Hugo jerks awake.

Panting for air.

He gets out of bed. Lights a candle.

Sits.

He won't sleep anymore tonight.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT -- SEINE - MORNING

Two young BOHEMIANS, living on a dilapidated houseboat on the Seine.

The Young Man writes a poem, mouthing the lines to himself. The Young Woman lazily dangles a fishing line into the river and smokes a pipe. Very Gertrude Stein.

Her lines catches. Ah, breakfast.

She reels her catch in ... it's heavy ... she lazily peeks over the side of the boat ... and sees...

Uncle Claude!

His lifeless face staring up!

She screams. People on the banks come running.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Hugo waits nervously outside Georges' building. He checks his big pocket watch. It is just after 7:00.

Professor Tabard approaches. He carries something in a large wooden box.

TABARD
Good evening.

HUGO
This way, sir.

He leads Tabard into the building.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isabelle is pretending to read.

Mama Jeanne is across the room, sewing. Georges is nowhere to be seen.

There is a knock at the door.

Isabelle gives a little yelp and jumps up:

ISABELLE
I'll get it!

Jeanne removes her heavy glasses, curious, as Isabelle hurries to the door and opens it.

ISABELLE
Oh, what a surprise! Come in, come in...

Hugo and Tabard enter.

MAMA JEANNE
What is the meaning of this, Isabelle?

ISABELLE
Please don't be mad.

MAMA JEANNE
That young man is not welcome here.

HUGO
We found out who Papa Georges is.

A beat as she stares at them.

The imposing Rene Tabard steps forward, polite and formal.

TABARD
I deeply apologize, Madame. I thought you were expecting us. I will leave immediately and return upon your request.

MAMA JEANNE

Please, keep your voices down, my husband is sleeping. He hasn't been well ... I ... I'm afraid you will not be invited back.

ISABELLE

Don't make them leave...

TABARD

I don't want to impose on you, Madame Melies, but if this is to be the only time we meet, please let me express to you the profound debt of gratitude I owe your husband.

She looks at him.

TABARD

When I was boy I saw all his films. They inspired me ... Your husband is a very great artist.

She is touched.

MAMA JEANNE

I'm pleased that you remember my husband's films with such fondness, but he's become so fragile ... It only hurts him to remember the past.

TABARD

(bows)

Then we will take our leave, Madame ... And I do hope you'll forgive me for saying, you are as lovely now as you were in the movies.

Hugo and Isabelle are stunned.

ISABELLE

Mama Jeanne...?

HUGO

You were in the movies?

TABARD

She appeared in almost all of his films.

ISABELLE

You were an actress?!

MAMA JEANNE

That was a long time ago, children.
Another life ... I was another
person.

TABARD

Would you like to meet her again?

Mama Jeanne looks at him, curious.

TABARD

We have a film.

MAMA JEANNE

One of Georges' films...? But
that's not possible. They're all
gone.

TABARD

May we show you?

Hugo and Isabelle implore Mama Jeanne:

HUGO

Oh, please...

ISABELLE

Please, Mama Jeanne...

Mama Jeanne glances quickly to the closed bedroom door.

MAMA JEANNE

Be quick with it.

Rene Tabard opens the wooden box. It contains a portable
movie projector. He sets it up, plugs it in, and threads a
film, as:

ISABELLE

An actress! A cinema actress! It's
impossibly romantic!

MAMA JEANNE

It wasn't like that. We weren't
movie stars like they have now ...
(a certain twinkle in her
eye)
But we did have fun.

Tabard has finished. The projector is ready to go. Facing a
blank wall.

TABARD

Madame Melies?

She nods.

Tabard turns on the projector.

Flickering white light.

A TRIP TO THE MOON.

We see selections from the fantastical Georges Melies film, giving us a sense of this delightful movie.

For Mama Jeanne the emotion is overwhelming. Like seeing the past come to life. Her eyes fill with tears.

The wizard-like Astronomers argue in the great hall.

The rocket is constructed in a busy workshop. The huge cannon is tested. Then it is time for the rocket to be launched.

Pretty girls line up and usher the five voyagers into the rocket.

During this sequence one particular girl is featured.

She is in the foreground. Lovely.

ISABELLE

Mama Jeanne ... it's you!

MAMA JEANNE

Yes...

The great cannon is fired.

Then the famous sequence. We zoom toward the moon. The face of the man in the moon appears. The rocket hits him in the right eye! He reacts.

Once we reach the moon, the movie is in color. Lovely and diffused. Pale pastels.

HUGO

It's color!

MAMA JEANNE

We tinted the film ... Painted it by hand.

The voyagers move around the lunar surface. The earth rises over the horizon. Fantasy images of comets shooting past, stars, planets, constellations. Then it snows and the voyagers go into a crater.

Inside the moon, a weird landscape. Bizarre Moon Creatures appear. The voyagers battle them. The Moon Creatures disappear magically in puffs of smoke.

The voyagers escape into the rocket. It is pulled off the edge of the moon.

The rocket soars back to earth. It splashes into the ocean and goes underwater. An enchanting bottom-of-the-sea setting.

The rocket is finally towed back to shore.

The movie ends.

The film tail flips around.

The white light flickers.

A beat.

Mama Jeanne is drying her eyes.

Isabelle takes her hand.

ISABELLE

You were so beautiful.

A voice, from behind them:

GEORGES (O.S.)

She still is.

They turn.

Georges is standing in the doorway. He has seen it all.

GEORGES

I would recognize the sound of a movie projector anywhere.

Mama Jeanne goes to him and holds him closely.

She helps him to sit.

He is emotionally drained.

She looks at Georges deeply.

MAMA JEANNE

Georges ... You've tried to forget the past for so long, and that's brought you nothing but unhappiness ... Maybe it's time to remember.

She takes his hands in hers.

MAMA JEANNE

I remember the man I fell in love
with ... I don't want to lose him
forever.

A long moment between them.

Georges kisses her hands.

He turns, studies Hugo.

GEORGES

You want to know?

HUGO

Yes.

A beat.

So be it.

GEORGES

Like you ... I loved to fix
things...

The color drains from the scene as Georges remembers...

INT. FLASHBACK -- MAGIC THEATRE - NIGHT

Like the flashbacks earlier, Georges' story has the quality
of a *SILENT FILM*.

Flickering gaslight. We see YOUNG GEORGES on stage. YOUNG
JEANNE is his assistant. They do a magic trick.

GEORGES (V.O.)

I started out as a magician, and
Mama Jeanne was my assistant. We
were very successful, I must say.
We even had our own theatre...

INT. FLASHBACK -- THEATRE/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Young Georges is tinkering with something mechanical we don't
see.

GEORGES (V.O.)

But I was always tinkering with
machines.

(MORE)

GEORGES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I had my own workshop at the theatre where I could invent new illusions ... Once I even built a working Automaton. Ah, he was a particular treasure. I put my heart and soul into him...

We see that Young Georges has been working on the Automaton...

EXT. FLASHBACK -- CIRCUS GROUNDS - NIGHT

Young Georges and Young Jeanne enjoy a night at a traveling circus. They move past sideshow tents.

GEORGES (V.O.)

Then one night, Mama Jeanne and I went to visit a traveling circus. We were walking past the sideshow tents when I noticed something ... Something strange ... Something wonderful...

In the distance, Young Georges sees bright light flickering magically from one of the sideshow tents. The light draws him like a moth to a flame...

INT. FLASHBACK -- SIDESHOW TENT - NIGHT

Young Georges and Young Jeanne are in the sideshow tent. Watching a very early movie. Both are transported.

GEORGES (V.O.)

The Lumiere brothers had invented the movies. I fell in love with their invention. How could I not be a part of it? It was like a new kind of magic...

INT. FLASHBACK -- THEATRE/BACKSTAGE - DAY

Young Georges uses spare pieces from the Automaton to make a movie camera. It is a beautiful and elaborate creation.

GEORGES (V.O.)

I asked the Lumiere brothers to sell me a camera, but they refused. You see they were convinced the movies were only a passing fad and didn't want me to waste my money!

...

(MORE)

GEORGES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 So I built my own camera using
 leftover pieces from the
 Automaton...

EXT. FLASHBACK -- GREENHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

In the country, outside Paris. Young Georges and Young Jeanne pose proudly in front of their new studio as a photographer exposes a picture.

GEORGES (V.O.)
 We risked everything ... We sold
 the theatre and everything we had
 so we could build our own movie
 studio...

INT. FLASHBACK -- GREENHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

Filming one of Georges' movies.

He's a bundle of energy. Currently perfecting a special pyrotechnic effect scene, with himself as the star.

Young Jeanne tries to keep order in the chaotic studio.

GEORGES (V.O.)
 And so the great adventure began! I
 wrote, designed, directed and acted
 in hundreds of movies. Magic tricks
 and illusion became my specialty;
 the world of imagination ...

Georges does a simple special effect: he poses, a puff of smoke in front of him, the camera stops, he leaves the set, the camera starts: a disappearing man.

Young Jeanne laughs and helps clean the black powder off his face:

GEORGES (V.O.)
 My beautiful wife was my muse, my
 star, and we couldn't have been
 happier ... We thought it would
 never end. How could it?

Suddenly--

More pyrotechnics -- but different now -- the EXPLOSION OF BOMBS -- flashes of light -- trenches and barbed wire -- the horrible rattle of machine guns -- iconic images of the First World War--

Taking us to...

EXT. FLASHBACK -- STREET - DAY

Rain. Sodden flags. Georges, older now, watches a line of French soldiers march off to war. Like tragic toy soldiers.

GEORGES (V.O.)

But then the war came, and youth
and hope were at an end ... The
world had no time for magic tricks
and movie shows...

INT. FLASHBACK -- MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

Georges stands at the rear of a theatre. One of his fanciful movies is playing. Many veteran soldiers are in the audience. Smoking. Making out with girlfriends. Bored.

GEORGES (V.O.)

The returning soldiers, having seen
so much of reality, were bored by
my films ... Tastes had changed,
but I had not changed with them...

INT./EXT. FLASHBACK -- GREENHOUSE STUDIO - DAY/NIGHT

TIME LAPSE ... the beautiful greenhouse studio decays ... the windows crack and break ... weeds spring up ... the gorgeous set pieces rot ... the roof falls ... rain splashes in ... the studio is boarded up and abandoned...

GEORGES (V.O.)

No one wanted my movies anymore.
Eventually I couldn't pay the
actors or keep the business running
... And so my enchanted castle fell
to ruin ... Everything was lost...

EXT. FLASHBACK -- GREENHOUSE STUDIO - NIGHT

Georges stands in the ruins of his studio.

A great bonfire is roaring. We see a huge painted version of the famous moon face from A TRIP TO THE MOON burning.

Georges, in anguish, is tossing costumes into the pyre.

GEORGES (V.O.)

One night, in bitter despair, I
burned all my old sets and costumes
... I was forced to sell my movies
to a company that melted them down
into chemicals used to make shoe
heels...

A sudden flare from the bonfire--

Transforms to--

A reel of old movie film -- bursting into flames, blazing --
then melting--

The liquid is poured into a mold -- a shoe heel emerges from
the mold -- it is nailed onto a shoe--

The shoe walks past the Toy Booth in the Train Station...

INT. FLASHBACK - TRAIN STATION -- TOY BOOTH - DAY

Georges is in the Toy Booth. It looks much the same, only
newer. It is like a prison.

GEORGES (V.O.)

With the little money I made from
selling my films I bought the toy
booth ... And there I have
remained...

Georges sits at the counter.

He stares out. Lost. Dead-eyed.

The color gradually returns...

And Georges' face ages to now...

As we return to...

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

... Georges's face.

He concludes the story:

GEORGES

The only thing I couldn't bring
myself to destroy was my beloved
Automaton. I gave him to a museum,
hoping he would find a home.

(MORE)

GEORGES (CONT'D)

But they never put him on display.
And then the museum burned ... It's
all gone now. Everything I ever
made ... Nothing but ashes and
fading strips of celluloid.

He looks at Hugo deeply.

Proceeds with difficulty:

GEORGES

My life has taught me one lesson,
Hugo ... Not the one I thought it
would ... Happy endings only happen
in the movies.

HUGO

The story's not over yet.

He stands. Excited.

HUGO

I'll be right back!

He shares a secret look with Isabelle and then runs out.

Georges is mystified.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Hugo races through the streets.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - NIGHT

Meanwhile, the train station is bustling.

Monsieur Frick is walking through the Grand Hall. He carries
a large picnic basket and has a rather crafty expression.

He approaches Madame Emilie's cafe.

Madame Emilie is pleased to see him. Her dachshund is not. It
begins to growl menacingly.

This time, however, Monsieur Frick is not deterred.

He approaches bravely.

The dachshund growls more. About to attack.

Then...

Monsieur Frick reaches into the picnic basket...

And removes...

Another little dachshund.

With a pink ribbon around its neck.

Madame Emilie's dachshund is instantly smitten. The two dogs nuzzle affectionately.

Monsieur Frick, the conquering hero, steps forward boldly, takes Madame Emilie's hand and kisses it. She blushes.

Just then, Hugo appears.

He is moving quickly toward one of the air vents past the cafe.

But he ducks to the side when the Station Inspector and Maximilian approach the cafe ... Lisette wanders over from the flower stall to join them.

Hugo, hidden nearby, overhears:

STATION INSPECTOR

There has been ... a disquieting development.

MONSIEUR FRICK

What is it?

STATION INSPECTOR

The man who winds the clocks, Monsieur Claude, has been found -- deceased.

Lisette gasps.

Hugo stiffens, listens intently.

STATION INSPECTOR

They found his body in the Seine. He's been down there for months it seems. Amongst the fishes. And such.

MADAME EMILIE

Oh dear, oh dear.

Meanwhile, the two dachshunds are sniffing around.

They wander over to where Hugo is hiding. He tries desperately to shoo them away.

Maximilian notices the dachshunds. He pulls at his leash to investigate. The Station Inspector restrains him.

STATION INSPECTOR

I can't say I'm surprised this was his mortal culmination. He was an inebriant of the highest order. Time and again I had to warn him about it ... These are the wages of sin!

MONSIEUR FRICK

But if Monsieur Claude has been dead for months...

STATION INSPECTOR

Yes...?

MONSIEUR FRICK

At the bottom of the river...

MADAME EMILIE

Yes...?

MONSIEUR FRICK

Then who has been winding the clocks?

Just then -- the dachshunds begin BARKING like crazy at Hugo--

Maximilian pulls free--

The Station Inspector sees Hugo--!

Hugo bolts, but not fast enough--

Maximilian bounds -- leaps in front of him -- snarling ferociously--

Hugo freezes, terrified--

*

The Station Inspector grabs him.

*

Captured. At last!

*

INT. TRAIN STATION -- CORRIDOR/INSPECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

*

The Station Inspector drags Hugo through the corridor/stairs and into his office...

*

*

HUGO

*

You don't understand -- I have to go!

*

*

STATION INSPECTOR
 You'll go nowhere until your
 parents can be found.

HUGO
 I don't have any parents!

STATION INSPECTOR
 Then it'll be straight to the
 orphanage with you, little vermin.

He flings Hugo into the dreadful little cell and slams the
 door shut with a resounding clang. Hugo clings to the bars.

STATION INSPECTOR
 You and your kind. Spreading
 disorder everywhere you go. WELL
 NOT HERE! THIS IS MY STATION, DO
 YOU UNDERSTAND?! -- AND I WILL HAVE
ORDER!

The Station Inspector's fury echoes around the office. He
 turns away to his desk...

Hugo quickly pulls out the lock-picking tool he used
 before...

The Stations Inspector picks up the phone, taps the cradle
 for a connection...

STATION INSPECTOR
 Yes, hello? hello? ... Connect me
 with the Orphanage Bureau. Quickly.
 I need to arrange a...

He glances back to Hugo--

The cell door is open! Hugo is gone!

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - NIGHT

Hugo clatters down the stairs outside the Station Inspector's
 office--

The Station Inspector appears and follows, remarkably agile
 down the stairs, using the handrails to swing--

STATION INSPECTOR
 (calls)
 Maximilian!

Hugo reaches the floor of the terminal--

Maximilian, who is with the two dachshunds, bolts after him-- *

The dachshunds takes off as well-- *

Hugo weaves wildly through the terminal. *

But the Station Inspector is gaining, spidering quickly after him, his leg brace squeaking. *

The dachshunds race along. Barking madly. Maximilian following. *

Hugo cuts a path through a crowd of commuters. *

The Station Inspector nears, a step or two away-- *

He reaches for Hugo-- *

But Hugo has unexpected allies. *

Monsieur Labisse "accidentally" steps in front of the Station Inspector, stopping him-- *

MONSIEUR LABISSE

Oh, do pardon me!

Hugo speeds away.

Shoots Monsieur Labisse a thankful glance.

The Station Inspector rights himself and races after Hugo.

Maximilian and the yapping dachshunds follow close at Hugo's heels.

But Hugo has another unexpected ally.

Monsieur Rouleau, munching on a baguette as he walks through the station, sees the situation--

He tosses his baguette like a bowler--

It slides across the floor--

Hugo leaps over it--

The dachshunds, being dachshunds, instantly veer off, pursuing the food--

Hugo's free of them. He disappears around a corner.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

The Station Inspector and Maximilian round the corner after Hugo--

But Hugo has disappeared!

Then the Station Inspector notices a manhole cover in the floor is slightly ajar.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TURNTABLE - NIGHT

Hugo is swiftly climbing down a ladder. He jumps down to a large mechanized turntable: where entire streetcars and metro trains pull in and are rotated to face different tunnels.

Tunnels shoot off in six directions.

Hugo hears the Station Inspector clattering and squeaking down the ladder after him.

Hugo looks around. Sees an access panel leading down under the turntable, into the workings of the machine.

He climbs through the access panel and disappears just as the Station Inspector spiders down the ladder after him.

Beneath: Hugo is surrounded by the great gears and cogs of the turntable mechanism: huge wheels and springs and pistons, like a gigantic clock. He can see the Station Inspector right above. Looking for him.

Incredible suspense as the Station Inspector searches.

Hugo is silent ... Artfully slipping between the mammoth gears as the Station Inspector looks down through open slats in the floor, hunting for him ...

The Station Inspector peers down ... Hugo silently crawls between great cogs to stay hidden ... The Station Inspector doesn't see him...

But then -- the Station Inspector sees that a train is coming into the turntable!

He quickly moves to the ladder and climbs out.

But Hugo can't. He's trapped.

The train or streetcar rumbles in right above him. Hugo covers his ears at the seismic roar. Ashes and sparks rain down. The train stops.

Hugo waits.

Then...

The turntable starts to move.

The great gears turn ... the pistons stab ... the cogs grind ... Hugo dives to avoid the pistons ... slithers between the cogs and gears that engulf him, like teeth trying to devour him--

It's like Chaplin in MODERN TIMES. Hugo's is trapped inside a huge machine as it grinds and pounds and turns -- threatening to crush him from every side...

He slips, slides, jumps and maneuvers. Just managing to avoid being crushed...

Then it's over. The turntable stops. The train rumbles off down a different tunnel.

Hugo finally dares to peek through the access panel. No sign of the Station Inspector. He climbs up.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - NIGHT

Hugo moves through the tunnels.

Then he hears a sound echoing ominously ... a low growl ... Maximilian ... No idea where it's coming from...

Hugo stops. Looks.

The growl is closer now! But from where?!

Hugo looks around in desperation. Tunnels in every direction.

Hugo is by the long stairway leading up to the tower. He decides to escape that way. He disappears up the stairway.

Just as the Station Inspector and Maximilian round a corner.

They stop. Look in various directions. Which way did he go?

Maximilian sniffs. He indicates the steps up.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TOWER STAIRS - NIGHT

Hugo's feet pound. His legs pump. He pants for air.

Climbing, climbing, climbing.

The long stairway seems to stretch out wildly below. Like VERTIGO.

The Station Inspector and Maximilian pursue. Churning up the long stairway below Hugo.

INT./EXT. TRAIN STATION -- CLOCK TOWER - NIGHT

Hugo emerges at the very top of the station.

He looks around in panic.

He hears the Station Inspector and Maximilian coming up the stairs. Huffing and puffing. Feet pounding. Nails clicking. Leg brace squeaking. Closer and closer.

Hugo's trapped.

Or is he?

He takes a deep breath.

Then...

He climbs through the enormous clock face.

Until he is clinging to the outside of the clock!

A deadly drop below.

Just like Harold Lloyd in SAFETY LAST.

Inside, the Station Inspector and Maximilian appear.

The Station Inspector Looks around. Puzzled.

Maximilian sniffs. Confused.

Then, outside...

The enormous hour hand that Hugo is clinging to...

Lurches...

Almost breaks...

Hugo clings to it desperately, echoing the iconic image from SAFETY LAST.

The abyss below is terrifying.

Hugo doesn't dare cry out.

Inside, the Station Inspector grunts.

STATION INSPECTOR
Must have gone the other way. Come!

He leads Maximilian back down the stairs.

Outside, Hugo carefully pulls himself to safety. He sits on a ledge for a moment. Getting his breath.

He looks over Paris.

Shakes his head.

What a night!

He climbs back through the clock.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - NIGHT

Hugo is lugging the Automaton, wrapped in a blanket, through the terminal.

It is slow going, but he does his best.

He keeps a wary eye out for the Station Inspector and Maximilian.

He sees the two villainous dachshunds at the cafe.

He chooses to avoid them.

Goes in another direction.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- PLATFORM - NIGHT

Hugo moves along a platform.

A train has just arrived.

Scores of commuters are climbing off the train and scurrying along the platform.

They jostle Hugo.

He continues on.

Then...

Behind him...

We see...

A bottle-green coat.

The Station Inspector.

Following.

Oddly, no sign of Maximilian.

Hugo shifts the heavy Automaton, trying to make it easier to carry as he pushes through the crowd.

The Station Inspector nears...

Hugo doesn't see him...

The Station Inspector reaches out for Hugo...

But then Hugo sees the Station Inspector's image, reflected in a window of the train.

Hugo cleverly nips into the train--

INT. TRAIN STATION-TRAIN COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Hugo pushes through the crowd of people inside the train--

The Station Inspector pursues, calling:

STATION INSPECTOR
Stand aside!

Hugo nips out the other side of the train--

INT. TRAIN STATION -- PLATFORM - NIGHT

He emerges to the platform--

Where--

Maximilian is waiting!

Hugo lurches to a stop--

The Station Inspector lunges from the train, grabbing Hugo's arm--

Swinging him around--

Hugo loses his grip--

The Automaton flies from Hugo's arms!

Time slows as...

The beautiful machine falls through the air...

Tumbling end-over-end...

Falling slowly toward the empty train tracks of the next platform over...

Finally...

Crashing down!

And there's a train coming along these tracks--

Barreling out of the station--

Picking up speed--

Hugo doesn't hesitate--

He jerks his arm free--

Jumps down--

Onto the tracks!

The train is nearing. Coming straight at Hugo. Just like the early movie we saw before, A TRAIN ARRIVES IN THE STATION.

The train gets bigger and bigger as it approaches.

Hugo grabs the Automaton.

The train's whistle howls. Someone screams.

A hand reaches down for Hugo.

The train. Closer and closer.

The metallic screech of the train's brakes.

Hugo thrusts his hand up.

The Station Inspector clasps his hand.

At the last possible moment, Hugo is yanked off the tracks to safety. He still clings to the Automaton.

A shower of sparks from the train's wheels as it passes.

Hugo and the Automaton fall awkwardly to the platform.

The Station Inspector and the crowd are stunned. They press in. Questioning. Scolding. Poking. Talking.

Hugo only cares about the Automaton. It is broken and battered. Hugo pulls it to him. Clings to it desperately.

STATION INSPECTOR
You demented animal! What were you thinking?!

Before Hugo can respond the Station Inspector hauls him away - - stomping off, cutting through the crowd -- dragging Hugo -- Hugo still clinging to the Automaton--

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - NIGHT

They move through the busy Grand Hall. Hugo struggles to free himself from the Station Inspector.

STATION INSPECTOR
We'll let the orphanage deal with you!

HUGO
No! -- I don't belong there!

STATION INSPECTOR
Where do you belong then? A child has to belong to somewhere and to someone!

Hugo finally wrenches himself free. Holds the Automaton to his chest.

His emotion is overwhelming. Tears choking him.

HUGO
Please ... Please listen to me ...
You have to let me go ... I don't
understand ... why my father died
... why I'm alone....

*
*

He clings to the Automaton.

HUGO
This is my only chance ... To work.

He glances at the Station Inspector's leg brace.

HUGO
You should understand.

By now a little crowd has formed around them ... Monsieur Frick ... Madame Emile ... Lisette...

And two new arrivals:

Georges and Isabelle. Georges has heard everything.

GEORGES

I do ... I do understand.

He looks at the Station Inspector.

GEORGES

Monsieur ... This child belongs to me.

The Station Inspector looks at him.

And then the Station Inspector smiles. A kind and effortless smile.

He releases Hugo.

Hugo crosses to Georges and Isabelle.

He still holds the Automaton to him closely:

HUGO

I'm sorry ... He's broken...

GEORGES

No he's not ... He worked perfectly.

He embraces Hugo.

And then we see them from high above...

Hugo, Georges, Isabelle, the Automaton...

The train station swirling around them ... Passengers moving to and fro...

Like the gears and wheels of a clock...

A precise, beautiful machine.

Then we iris down to black.

A title appears:

SIX MONTHS LATER.

We iris back up again to...

The famous man in the moon face from A TRIP TO THE MOON...

INT. FILM ACADEMY - THEATRE - NIGHT

... Which is painted on the curtain of the impressive Film Academy theatre.

The theatre is filled with elegant guests. A buzzing crowd. A gala event.

Hugo, Isabelle and Mama Jeanne sit together.

Hugo has had a haircut. His new, short hair is combed neatly into place. He is wearing a tuxedo. Very handsome.

He looks almost grown up.

Isabelle, next to him, is bewitching in a formal dress.

The lights dim.

Rene Tabard steps to the stage, in front of the curtain.

TABARD

Honored guests, I am proud to
welcome you to this gala
celebrating the life and work of
Georges Melies.

Applause.

Mama Jeanne begins to cry. Isabelle takes her hand.

TABARD

For years most of his films were
thought to be lost. Indeed,
Monsieur Melies believed so
himself. But we began a search. We
looked through vaults and long-
forgotten archives, through private
collections, barns and catacombs.
Our work was rewarded with old
negatives, boxes of prints, and
trunks full of decaying film, which
we were able to save ... We now
have over eighty films by Georges
Melies!

Applause.

TABARD

And tonight their creator ... and
the newest member of the Film
Academy faculty ... is here to
share them with you.

He turns and bows.

The magnificent man-in-the-moon curtain parts to reveal...

Georges.

Standing center stage. A movie screen behind him.

His hair and beard have been neatly trimmed. He wears an
elegant tuxedo and looks extremely distinguished.

The audience erupts in cheers and applause.

Finally they are quiet.

GEORGES

Ladies and gentlemen ... I am
standing before you tonight because
of one very brave young man...

He finds Hugo's face in the crowd.

GEORGES

He saw a broken machine. And
against all odds, he fixed it ...
It was the kindest magic trick I
have ever seen.

Hugo is moved.

Isabelle looks at him, proud.

GEORGES

Now, my friends, I address you all
tonight as you truly are: wizards,
mermaids, travelers, adventurers,
and magicians ... Come and dream
with me.

He turns toward the movie screen...

The lights dim...

A flickering projector's light shines...

And we enter the joyous world of Georges Melies.

It is a cornucopia of images from a golden horn. A phantasmagoria of...

Undersea kingdoms...

Magic tricks...

Wildly dancing devils...

Mysterious submarine journeys...

Gigantic monsters...

Beautiful damsels...

Soaring palaces...

Wondrous balloon voyages...

Knock-about slapstick...

Expanding heads...

Frolicking skeletons...

Lovely star-like angels...

And...

A trip to the moon.

Hugo is barely watching the screen. He is looking at something else:

Georges stands to the side of the stage, watching.

The glow from the screen illuminates Georges' face.

He is like a man reborn.

Hugo looks at him.

Smiles.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A party. After the gala.

The small apartment is crowded with well-wishers and friends.

We float through the party...

Georges is talking closely to Rene Tabard. Film students and other fans crowd around Georges ... He winks to Mama Jeanne across the room. She winks back...

We continue on...

Monsieur Frick and Madame Emilie sit together. The dachshunds happy on their laps...

We continue on...

Monsieur Rouleau talks to Monsieur Labisse about books and art. Monsieur Rouleau's completed painting hangs on a wall.

We continue on...

The Station Inspector sits with Lisette and Maximilian. Actually, Maximilian sits between them. He's unsure what to make of this new-found romance.

We continue on...

To find...

Hugo is dominating a corner of the party, doing wonderful cards tricks. The crowd around him is impressed.

He glances over, smiles to Isabelle across the room.

She smiles back.

A beat as she watches him.

Then we go with Isabelle as she moves to a quiet corner. She looks over the party for a moment.

Then she sits and begins to write in a notebook.

ISABELLE (V.O.)

Once upon a time, I met a boy named
Hugo Cabret. He lived in a train
station...

We move away from Isabelle...

Past Hugo...

Past Georges and Mama Jeanne...

ISABELLE (V.O.)

Why did he live in a train station?
You might well ask ... That's
really what this book is going to
be about...

We move into Hugo's room...

The Automaton, nicely repaired, is watching from a corner.

We go to the Automaton...

ISABELLE (V.O.)

And about how this singular young
man searched so hard to find a
secret message from his father...

The Automaton's face...

Looking through the open doorway into the party...

ISABELLE (V.O.)

And how that message lit his way
... all the way home.

The Automaton watches Hugo.

You would swear it was smiling.

The End.