

THE INVENTION OF HUGO CABRET

Screenplay

by

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Based on the novel 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

Then turn it inside out. Or should
I get the Inspector?

(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 quickly--

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 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!

Hugo turns and races away.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - DAY

Hugo is back in the tunnels. He weaves through them quickly. Catches his breath. He is fighting tears.

He continues on more slowly.

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.

Dries his eyes.

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

Hugo 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.

Slithers into a narrow passage...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- NARROW PASSAGE - DAY

Hugo crawls on his belly through the cramped passage and uses tiny tools to wind a very small clock that overlooks an office...

It is a forbidding office. Small desk. Grey walls. A cell in the corner.

The STATION INSPECTOR enters.

Hugo freezes.

The Station Inspector is a hulking man in a bottle-green coat. He is a frightening figure. Without humor. Without warmth. A creature of ice.

Hugo holds his breath.

The Station Inspector gets something from his desk and goes.

Hugo allows himself a breath.

He quickly slithers out.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - DAY

Hugo 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...

MADAME EMILIE is a shy older woman who runs a small cafe. She has a little dachshund.

MONSIEUR FRICK is a shy older gentleman who runs a newspaper kiosk across from the cafe.

Hugo watches them as he works.

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 wind a clock 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.

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. 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 small 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.

EXT. FLASHBACK -- SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Music.

Hugo tells his friends about the amazing Automaton. Imitating it.

INT. FLASHBACK -- CABRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

Music.

The automaton is coming along very well. Hugo's father watches proudly as Hugo works on it alone.

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 up at him.

INT. FLASHBACK -- CABRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

It is very late.

Hugo is working on the Automaton.

The door opens.

He turns.

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 the 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 the people who ran the station, years ago. Everyone's forgotten about them. You can 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 the 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.

Hugo is sobbing.

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. 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 in his bottle-green
coat 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.

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 breath.

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, peers from 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.

HUGO

Hello.

ISABELLE

Do you want a book? Monsieur
Labisse lets me borrow them. I
could get one for you.

HUGO

No.

ISABELLE

(horrorified)
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.

HUGO

All right.

ISABELLE

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.

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 my tools.

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 moves through the tunnels. Winds a clock.

... 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 watches Hugo with suspicion.

... Hugo ducks around a corner, avoiding the Station Inspector.

... Hugo labors to wind the big clock in the tower.

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

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

... Hugo watches from behind a clock face as Georges and Isabelle leave the station one night.

... Hugo stands hidden in the graveyard, watching Georges' family through the windows of their apartment.

We pause for a moment at...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- SECRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hugo is with the Automaton. Looking at it sadly.

Without the notebook, Hugo isn't sure how to proceed.

A beat.

Hugo stares at the inner workings of the Automaton...

Then...

Something seems to shift in Hugo's head ... Something makes sense ... he sees it now... gears line up ... a beautiful clarity begins to emerge...

Hugo picks up a screwdriver, begins to tinker.

Then to work in earnest.

Without the notebook.

The Automaton seems pleased.

The dance band music continues and we are back to...

INT./EXT. - MONTAGE - DAY/NIGHT

Dance band music as...

... Hugo repairs a broken toy in the booth. Isabelle is there, chatting to him.

... Hugo works hard on the Automaton. It is coming along well. Almost fully repaired.

... Hugo climbs down into the hanging clock to wind it.

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

... Hugo steals food.

... Hugo works on the Automaton, making new clothes for it. We now see that there is a hole for a HEART-SHAPED KEY in the back.

... 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 approaching, 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. He grabs the Street 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.

Hugo darts into an air vent.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- NARROW PASSAGE - DAY

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

The Street Kid is in the tiny, awful cell. He is sobbing.

The Station Inspector is on the phone:

STATION INSPECTOR

(on phone)

... yes, another one.

(MORE)

STATION INSPECTOR (CONT'D)
Useless waste of an orphan by the
looks of it. Come get it.

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, imperious, looking over his domain.

Hugo sinks back and disappears into the darkness of the
tunnels.

INT.. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - DAY

Isabelle is now waiting for Hugo outside the book shop. He
hurries to her.

ISABELLE
You're late!

HUGO
Sorry. I ... never mind.

He goes into the shop quickly, not wanting to be exposed to
the dreadful Station Inspector. She follows.

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.

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.

The bell on the door jangles.

ETIENNE, a young man with sweet face and a patch on his right
eye, enters.

ISABELLE
Etienne!

ETIENNE
Hello, Isabelle.

ISABELLE
Etienne, this is my friend Hugo
Cabret.

Hugo is pleased with the "friend."

ETIENNE
(shaking hands)
Sir.

HUGO
Sir.

ISABELLE
Etienne works at the movie theatre
near my home. He sneaks me in
because Papa Georges won't let me
see any movies.

HUGO
Why not?

ISABELLE
I don't know -- it's a mystery!

ETIENNE

I always take pity on people who
love the movies. I can't help it.

HUGO

My father always took me to the
movies for my birthday.

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

ETIENNE

Come by on Saturday and I'll sneak
you in. We're having a silent film
festival. They're so wonderful.

(He disappears deeper into
the shop)

Like forgotten dreams...

Hugo and Isabelle are alone.

The moment settles.

They wander through the aisles 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.

ISABELLE

I have to go.

HUGO

Promise you won't look in the--

ISABELLE

I promise! You're insufferable.

(she calls to Etienne)

Goodbye, Etienne. See you on
Saturday!

She goes.

Hugo roams for a bit. Looking at the teetering piles of
books. Thinking about his father.

He wanders deep into the back of the shop.

A shaft of light cuts across the store from a skylight. The light illuminates the spine of a book. The book catches his eye.

He goes to it.

A PRACTICAL MANUAL OF CARD MAGIC AND ILLUSIONS.

Hugo is excited. He loves magic.

He pulls the book out and thumbs through it.

Like a *FLIPBOOK* again. Pages flip past magically. Like primitive animation. We see wonderful period illustrations. Magic tricks. Card illusions. Rabbits from hats. Disappearing women.

Hugo is transfixed.

He must have this book.

He looks around.

No one is watching.

He tucks it into his coat.

Is about to walk out.

But then he sees sad Monsieur Labisse sitting at the counter. He is Isabelle's friend. Hugo doesn't want to steal from him.

He removes the book from his coat.

He is walking back to return the book when he passes Etienne.

Etienne is reading, perched high on a stool like the Caterpillar from *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*.

ETIENNE

What do you have there?

Hugo shows him.

ETIENNE

Hmmmm. Magic ... Do you know what's under my eye patch?

HUGO

(unsure)

Your eye?

ETIENNE

No, I lost my eye when I was a kid
playing with fireworks. A
Portuguese Rocket flew into it.

HUGO

Oh.

ETIENNE

So, do you want to know what's
under my eye patch?

HUGO

Okay.

Etienne reaches beneath his eye patch and pulls out a coin.
Hands it to Hugo.

ETIENNE

The only magic trick I know. Go buy
the book.

Hugo looks at him.

Smiles.

Hugo goes to buy the book.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- SECRET APARTMENT - NIGHT

The magic book is open on a table.

Pieces of loose paper with Hugo's notes are scattered around
the book: drawings of trick mechanics; sketches of illusions;
etc.

Across the room, Hugo is at work on the Automaton.

It looks finished.

Polished, cleaned, beautiful and ready.

But for one thing.

Hugo studies the distinctive heart-shaped keyhole in the back
of the figure.

He tries a bit of bent metal. It doesn't fit. He adds it to a
collection of scavenged items he has tried. Nothing fits.

He faces the Automaton.

HUGO

Where is it...? Where's the key...?

The Automaton looks at him.

Hugo sighs.

A beat.

He smiles to the Automaton.

HUGO

I think I have another friend.

He goes.

The Automaton watches. Seems pleased.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

Again, the suggestion of Paris.

A movie theatre facade. An Art Deco marquee. A green neon sign.

Hugo approaches the theatre.

Looks for Isabelle. Doesn't see her.

Goes down an alley next to the theatre...

EXT. ALLEY NEXT TO THEATRE - DAY

Hugo moves down the alley.

He passes a series of fading movie posters that line the alley ... Chaplin ... Keaton ... Lon Chaney ...

Isabelle is waiting by a side door.

HUGO

Where's Etienne?

ISABELLE

He's not here. The Manager told me.
He got fired for sneaking kids in.
Isn't that appalling?

She turns to the door and begins to pick the lock with a bobby pin.

He watches, amazed.

HUGO
How did you learn to do that?

ISABELLE
Books.

Click.

She opens the door and peeks in. Gives him a nod.
They sneak in.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

The flickering light above.

The glowing screen.

Iridescent.

Hugo and Isabelle sneak into seats at the back.

The Disney cartoon A CLOCK STORE is playing.

Hugo's eyes go wide.

The magic of motion pictures.

The whimsically animated clocks on the screen remind Hugo of his father's shop and his own secret workshop.

Isabelle laughs.

He enjoys the sound of her laughter.

He laughs as well.

The light flickers above them.

Time passes...

The famous Harold Lloyd film SAFETY LAST is now playing.

Hugo 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. He grabs the big clock face. It springs open--!

Hugo grabs Isabelle's arm in horror---

Isabelle looks at him. 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 artistic.

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. 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.

He smiles.

HUGO

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

A beat as they walk.

ISABELLE

You miss him a lot ... Does your mother tell you about him?

Hugo doesn't answer.

She understands.

A beat as they walk.

ISABELLE

Who looks after you?

HUGO

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

(MORE)

HUGO (CONT'D)

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...

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.

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.

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.

STATION INSPECTOR

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.

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...

Down a ramp...

Up a stairway...

Careening around Monsieur Rouleau's easel...

Ripping around corners...

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 down a long stairway leading to one of the platforms. He leaps and bounds down the stairs. Three at a time.

Isabelle follows gamely, bouncing down after him...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- PLATFORM - DAY

Hugo and Isabelle race down the platform.

An enormous train is just pulling in.

Clouds of steam.

Scores of passengers emerge swiftly from the train. 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.

A long beat.

He nods.

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.

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.

ISABELLE
This is such a boy place.

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...

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.

Hugo gasps.

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!

He flings himself to his bed. 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 at this!

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.

Enchanted.

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 tall, 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.

MAMA JEANNE

The boy who's been working for Papa
Georges?

HUGO

Yes, 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 the mechanical man?

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

ISABELLE
You know about him?

MAMA JEANNE
Oh yes ... 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.

HUGO

It is. My father fixed the mechanical man.

ISABELLE

Hugo's father is dead.

MAMA JEANNE

I am sorry to hear it. But you must forget all this.

Hugo stops. Holds his ground.

HUGO

We worked hard to fix it, my father and me, and ... I just want to know what it means ... It has to mean something!

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 over at the armoire.

ISABELLE

I know.

HUGO

There must be something in it.

ISABELLE

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

HUGO

Search it again!

ISABELLE

Don't tell me what to do!

She pulls a bobby pin from her pocket and begins picking the lock to the armoire.

Hugo, 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.

Isabelle finishes picking the lock. Click.

They search through the armoire. Clothes. Sheets. No clues. No treasure. Nothing.

Hugo steps back, studies 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--

She 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 ... 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?! My work?! -- Who am I? 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.

Tears come.

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 - NIGHT

Night. Street lamps 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 them cry before.

Hugo takes her hand.

A comforting gesture of friendship.

She acknowledges it.

A faint smile.

She closes the door.

Hugo walks down the street.

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

And we fade to...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - DAY

Hugo walks through the Grand Hall, deep in thought.

He notices Monsieur Frick, the newspaper vendor, walking in front of him. Monsieur Frick goes to Madame Emilie's cafe.

Her dachshund growls at him.

Monsieur Frick reaches into his coat and -- with the panache of a magician -- voila! -- pulls a sausage from his coat.

The dachshund is intrigued.

It accepts the peace offering. Tail wagging.

Hugo is happy for Monsieur Frick.

But then Monsieur Frick dares to approach Madame Emilie. The dachshund attacks. Monsieur Frick retreats.

Hugo continues on.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- BOOKSTORE - DAY

Hugo summons his nerve. Goes to Monsieur Labisse at the counter. Monsieur Labisse regards him with his usual suspicion.

HUGO

Good morning, Monsieur Labisse. Do you have books about the movies?

MONSIEUR LABISSE

I might...

HUGO

What about the very first movies? My father saw a movie when he was little that he always remembered. It had a rocket going into the eye of the man in the moon. Do you have something about that movie?

MONSIEUR LABISSE

Why would you need such a book?

HUGO

I want to learn.

The simplicity and honesty of Hugo's answer strikes Monsieur Labisse. He considers Hugo more thoughtfully.

MONSIEUR LABISSE

That book about magic ... I saw you. You were going to steal it but you changed your mind. Why?

HUGO

You're Isabelle's friend. I couldn't.

MONSIEUR LABISSE

Hmm ... A book about movies, you say?

HUGO
Please, sir. It's very important.

MONSIEUR LABISSE
Suppose we could take a quick look.

Later...

In a back corner of the shop.

Hugo and Monsieur Labisse are surrounded by books. They are searching diligently through many dusty volumes.

HUGO
I feel like Isabelle.

MONSIEUR LABISSE
What?

HUGO
Surrounded by all these books.

MONSIEUR LABISSE
Mmm. She does love to read ... But then she's had a lot of suffering in her life.

Hugo looks at him. Doesn't quite understand.

MONSIEUR LABISSE
(explains)
Books can be a wonderful escape, when you're unhappy.

Hugo wonders if Monsieur Labisse is unhappy.

Monsieur Labisse flips through a final title.

MONSIEUR LABISSE
I don't appear to have anything about early movies ... But you might try the Film Academy library. They're sure to have something.

HUGO
Thank you.

Hugo is about to go. Stops.

HUGO
If you ask me, this shop is a wonderful escape.

He goes.

Monsieur Labisse smiles. A little less unhappy.

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 looks 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 Hugo, as if annoyed at his presumption.

Hugo summons his courage and enters...

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- LOBBY - DAY

Hugo's heels click as he crosses an enormous marble void to a reception desk.

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

He finally reaches her.

HUGO
Excuse me, Madame--

He stops -- shocked to find his voice echoing in the massive chamber -- continues more quietly:

HUGO
Excuse me, I would like to use the library.

She looks him up and down.

RECEPTIONIST
No.

HUGO
No?

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

She returns to her paperwork.

Hugo stands for a moment.

Starts to go. Stops. Returns to her.

HUGO

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.

Then, a familiar voice:

ETIENNE

Hugo? Is that you?

Etienne approaches from another room, carrying some books.

HUGO

Etienne!

RECEPTIONIST

You know this filthy child?!

ETIENNE

Of course, this is my friend Hugo.

RECEPTIONIST

Then he's your responsibility! I
want nothing more to do with the
dreadful little Jacobin! Hmmp!

She returns to her paperwork.

Etienne, amused, leads Hugo away.

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- LIBRARY - DAY

Hugo and Etienne move through a lovely library.

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

HUGO

I'm sorry about your job in the theatre.

ETIENNE

It worked out well, actually. When I was fired I had just started classes here and they were able to give me a job here in the library ... I'm studying to be a cameraman.

Hugo glances at Etienne's eye patch.

Etienne smiles as he leads Hugo up a spiral staircases to the second level:

ETIENNE

Having an eye patch actually makes it easier to look through a camera -
- I don't have to close one eye like everyone else.

Now on the second level, Etienne takes Hugo to a shelf and pulls out a book.

ETIENNE

I think this might be what you're looking for ... One of my teachers wrote it, Rene Tabard ... That's him down there...

Hugo glances down to the first level.

RENE TABARD is a formidable presence. Stern and uncompromising.

He marches through the library. The students part like the Red Sea before Moses. He leaves a wake of stares and trembling.

Etienne leads Hugo to a library table. Hands him the book.

ETIENNE

I'll be down at the desk if you need me.

Etienne goes down to the first floor, where he mans the circulation desk.

Hugo looks at the book.

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

Hugo runs his hands over the cover.

This could be it.

The answer to his quest.

He opens the book.

Begins 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 as:

HUGO (V.O.)

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

Hugo smiles.

HUGO

No one had ever seen anything like it before.

He turns the page...

And we go with him...

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 ... a Paris park ... men playing cards...

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 ... DeMille ... Jean Renoir...

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 stares.

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- LIBRARY - DAY

We see Hugo talking intently to Etienne and the imposing Professor Rene Tabard at the circulation desk. Hugo is trying to convince them of something. They are skeptical.

HUGO (V.O.)

"The filmmaker Georges Melies was among the first to demonstrate that movies didn't have to reflect real life. He realized that film had the power to capture dreams..."

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- LOBBY - DAY

We see Hugo walking past the dragon Receptionist, the book under his arm.

HUGO (V.O.)

"Melies is widely credited with inventing many of the film tricks that changed the face of movies forever. He was the father of cinema fantasy..."

INT. TRAIN STATION -- GRAND HALL - AFTERNOON

We see Hugo moving through the crowded station.

HUGO (V.O.)

"A TRIP TO THE MOON, Melies most famous film, followed a group of explorers as they went to the moon, battled moon creatures, and returned to Earth again..."

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TOY BOOTH - AFTERNOON

We see Hugo, from hiding, getting Isabelle's attention. Georges is sitting sullenly at the counter. He looks grey, sickly.

HUGO (V.O.)

"If one day far in the future, mankind is truly able to fly to the moon, we will have Georges Melies and the movies to thank for helping us understand that if our dreams are big enough, anything is possible..."

Isabelle sneaks away from the Toy Booth to join Hugo.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- SECRET APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Hugo concludes, reading aloud to Isabelle:

HUGO

"The great pioneer of early cinema, Georges Melies, died sometime after the Great War, and many, if not all, of his films are lost."

He shuts the book.

ISABELLE

Died...?

Hugo nods.

ISABELLE

Papa Georges made movies? ... He
won't even let me go to the movies!

HUGO

I wonder why he stopped? And why do
they think he's dead?

ISABELLE

And how did he end up here?

They look at each other.

More mysteries.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - AFTERNOON

Hugo leads Isabelle through the tunnels. He carries his
bucket of tools. Time to wind the clocks.

HUGO

I told Etienne all about Papa
Georges, then he introduced me to
his teacher, who wrote the book.

ISABELLE

What happened?

HUGO

They didn't believe me ... Stay up
here.

He takes a few tools, opens the hatch and climbs down the
rickety ladder into...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- HANGING CLOCK - AFTERNOON

The large clock suspended from the ceiling of the Grand Hall.
Clock dials surround Hugo on all four sides.

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

Isabelle stays above, pokes her head down:

ISABELLE

They thought you were lying?

HUGO

Or that I made a mistake. I told them about the Automaton and everything but they still didn't believe me, so I ... well...

He hesitates..

ISABELLE

What did you do?

HUGO

I invited them to come to your apartment.

ISABELLE

You what?!

Just then--

Through one of the clock faces--

Hugo sees the Station Inspector!

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 bare breathe.

The Station Inspector just stands there, looking over the terminal.

Then...

The clock ticks over to 6:00 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 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 ... drinking, 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.

Hugo looks up at Isabelle.

That was close!

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - EVENING

Hugo and Isabelle continue through the tunnels.

ISABELLE

But why did you invite them to our apartment?

HUGO

It was the only way! They didn't believe me ... Professor Tabard wants to meet your godfather for himself.

ISABELLE

Mama Jeanne will never allow it.

HUGO

Then we can't tell her.

ISABELLE

Hugo, this is a very bad idea ... When are they supposed to come?

HUGO

Tomorrow.

She stops, shocked.

He quickly escapes, climbing up the ladder to the narrow passage that overlooks the platform.

She follows...

INT. TRAIN STATION -- PLATFORM CLOCK - EVENING

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

ISABELLE

Tomorrow?

HUGO

It's the only way we'll find out everything ...

(MORE)

HUGO (CONT'D)

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 ... I have to know
what this is all about.

She nods.

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 ... And 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

Then what's my purpose?

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.

A beat.

ISABELLE

The people I read about in books, they always have a purpose ... But maybe I don't.

She gazes out over the terminal, a little lost.

He looks at her.

A beat.

HUGO
Come with me.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- CLOCK TOWER - EVENING

The enormous clock.

The majestic view of Paris.

Again, vaguely unreal. Like an exquisite toy model.

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 ... 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.

They are silhouetted before the glowing city.

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.

ISABELLE

Thank you.

She 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.

HUGO

Will it work?

The Automaton looks back at him.

Hugo blows out the candle 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 landscape of Monsieur Rouleau's painting.

His anxiety manifests itself.

Images from Hugo's life combine to torment him:

He sees his Father in the distance. A tender and supportive figure.

Hugo moves toward him happily.

Then--

The pillar of fire from the museum. Engulfing his Father. Terrible.

Hugo tries to get to him. Can't. The distance is suddenly too far. The world has expanded.

The raging pillar of fire swirls into dreadful, grey falling ashes.

Which then swirl into falling snow.

The graveyard outside Georges' house.

Hugo is alone.

Snow falling on him.

He looks up at the Melies family through the windows of their apartment across the street.

But then we see he is not alone. The two stone lions from outside the Film Academy are stalking Hugo. They move with the wonderful jerkiness of early *STOP-MOTION ANIMATION*, like early Ray Harryhausen.

Hugo turns. The lions snarl. Hugo backs up. One of the lions leaps! Jaws opening wide!

Devouring Hugo--

Devouring us--

Darkness.

The darkness of the tunnels.

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

Like Escher.

Like *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI*.

There is no up. There is no down. Hugo will spend the rest of his life lost in these mad tunnels.

He finds he is not entirely alone.

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

Madame Emilie's little dachshund runs past ... Monsieur Labisse moves down a passage, reading aloud ... Monsieur Frick dances with Madame Emilie on the ceiling ... Down another passage, Monsieur Rouleau paints flames on one of the walls ... Down a different passage, the Automaton does card tricks.

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 it is Uncle Claude. Cruel and drunken. Then it is the Station Inspector. Imperious and threatening.

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.

Etienne and Rene Tabard approach. Etienne carries something
in a large wooden box.

TABARD

Good evening.

HUGO

This way, sir.

He leads them 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, Etienne and Rene Tabard enter.

MAMA JEANNE
(stands)
What is the meaning of this, Isabelle?

ISABELLE
Please don't be mad, Mama Jeanne.

MAMA JEANNE
That young man is not welcome here
... Who are these people?

HUGO
We found out who Papa Georges is.

A beat as she stares at them.

ISABELLE
Please, Mama Jeanne. They want to help. They love Papa Georges' movies.

The imposing Rene Tabard steps forward, polite and formal.

TABARD
I deeply apologize, Madame. We thought you were expecting us. We 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 wish my goddaughter had told me about your visit. 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 gave me a great gift. And he is a very great artist.

She is touched.

MAMA JEANNE

I am 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. I don't want him hurt.

TABARD

(bows)

Then we will take our leave, Madame ... Goodbye.

ETIENNE

Goodbye, Madame Melies, and I 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?

ETIENNE

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.

ETIENNE

Would you like to meet her again?

Mama Jeanne looks at him, curious.

ETIENNE

We have a film.

MAMA JEANNE

One of Georges' films...?

ETIENNE

Yes.

MAMA JEANNE

But that's not possible ... They're
all gone...

ETIENNE

We found one ... Forgotten in the
basement of the Film Academy ...
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.

Etienne and Rene Tabard open the wooden box. It contains a
portable movie projector. They set it up, plug it in, and
thread a film, as:

ISABELLE

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

MAMA JEANNE

(smiles)

It wasn't like that. We weren't
movie stars like they have now ...
But we did have fun.

(MORE)

MAMA JEANNE (CONT'D)
(a certain twinkle in her
eye)

The studio where we made the movies
was like a giant greenhouse, a
building all made of glass. When
the sun shone through the glass, it
was like a palace in a fairy
story...

Hugo and Isabelle are entranced.

Etienne and Tabard have finished. The projector is ready to
go. Facing a blank wall.

ETIENNE
Madame Melies?

She nods.

Etienne 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. Tall and 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.*

The rocket lands on the moon.

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. The voyagers sleep. 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. They are chased across the surface of the moon.

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 was ... She 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.

Fragile.

He finally looks up at Hugo, anger growing in his eyes.

GEORGES

This is your doing.

HUGO

Yes...

GEORGES

Why would you do this to me?

HUGO

I didn't mean to--

GEORGES

Why do you want to hurt me?!

ISABELLE

He was only trying to help--!

ETIENNE

Monsieur--

GEORGES

All of you, get out of here! I want
no part of this madness!

(snaps at Hugo)

And you -- once and for all --
leave me in peace! I never want to
see your face again!

MAMA JEANNE

Stop it!

Her sharp, firm words silence everyone.

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 ... The man I chose to spend
my life with ... He's still there.
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 Hugo's flashback earlier, Georges' story has the quality
of a *SILENT FILM*. Luminous black-and-white. Simple images.

Flickering gaslight. We see YOUNG GEORGES, 20's, on stage. He
is a Magician. YOUNG JEANNE is his assistant. They do a magic
trick.

GEORGES (V.O.)

I started out as a professional
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. Couldn't help myself. I had my own workshop at the theatre where I could invent new illusions ... Once I even built a working automaton...

We now 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 and 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 immediately fell in love with their invention. I had to 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 gimmick, a passing fad, and didn't want me to waste my money! ... So I built my own camera using leftover pieces from the Automaton...

EXT. FLASHBACK -- 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.

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

GEORGES (V.O.)

We risked everything ... We sold the theatre and everything he had so we could build our own movie studio ... It was like an enchanted castle, a palace made of glass...

INT. FLASHBACK -- STUDIO - DAY

A whirlwind!

Filming one of Georges' movies. A 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, dragons, great fish, castles.

Young Georges is everywhere at once. Racing from the camera to the set and back again. Acting. Directing. Young Jeanne tries to keep order.

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 ... My beautiful wife was my muse, my star, and we couldn't have been happier...

An elaborate pyrotechnic effect on the set. Flame and smoke. Everyone enjoys it.

GEORGES (V.O.)

Whenever we had visitors I would say, "If you ever wondered where your dreams come from, just look around. This is where they are made."

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 -- STUDIO - DAY/NIGHT

TIME LAPSE ... the beautiful greenhouse studio building 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. My investments came to
nothing ... And so my enchanted
castle fell to ruin .. Everything
was lost...

EXT. FLASHBACK -- 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...

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
... And there I have endured.

Georges sits at the counter.

He stares out. Lost. Dead.

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 the
Automaton. I gave it to a museum.
But they never put it on display
... And now the museum itself has
burned ... It's all gone now.

Hugo and Isabelle exchange a glance.

GEORGES

Is that the story you want to hear,
Hugo? ... I'm sorry I couldn't
give you a happy ending. I think
you deserve one.

HUGO

The story's not over yet.

He stands. Excited.

HUGO

I'll be right back!

He shares a secret smile 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 just past the cafe.

But he ducks to the side when the Station Inspector approaches the cafe.

Hugo, hidden nearby, overhears:

STATION INSPECTOR
There has been ... a disturbing
development.

MONSIEUR FRICK
What is it?

STATION INSPECTOR
The man who winds the clocks,
Monsieur Claude, has been found --
dead.

Madame Emilie gasps.

Hugo stiffens, listens intently.

STATION INSPECTOR

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

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.

STATION INSPECTOR

I can't say I'm surprised he ended
up falling into the river. He was
an awful old drunkard. 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?

A long beat as they look around suspiciously.

Hugo freezes.

The dachshunds are persistent, nosing at him.

STATION INSPECTOR

I'm afraid there is only one
possible answer...

(he pauses dramatically)

THE STATION IS HAUNTED!

Madame Emilie gives a little scream--

The dachshunds begin BARKING like crazy at Hugo--

The Station Inspector sees him--!

Hugo bolts--

Not fast enough--

The Station Inspector grabs brutally him by the collar.

STATION INSPECTOR
And what have we here?

HUGO
(struggling)
Let me go!

STATION INSPECTOR
Hold still!

MADAME EMILIE
Don't hurt him...

HUGO
I have to go!

STATION INSPECTOR
You'll go nowhere but the cell in
my office 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. Come along...

He starts dragging Hugo away by the collar of his jacket.

Hugo twists out of his jacket and runs!

The Station Inspector takes off after him!

The dachshunds takes off after both of them!

And the chase is on.

Hugo weaves wildly through the terminal.

But the Station Inspector is gaining. He is large and fast.

The dachshunds race along. Barking madly.

Hugo cuts a path through a crowd of commuters.

The Station Inspector nears--

Swings for Hugo--

Almost has him--

But at the last second, Hugo dives and slides across the polished floor -- under a bench -- bolts up and continues on--

The Station Inspector swerves around the bench and follows.

STATION INSPECTOR

Stop that boy!

An INTERFERING COMMUTER decides to help the Station Inspector. He turns to capture Hugo--

But Hugo has allies too.

Monsieur Labisse "accidentally" knocks the interfering commuter aside--

MONSIEUR LABISSE

Oh, do pardon me!

Hugo speeds past.

Shoots Monsieur Labisse a thankful glance.

The Station Inspector races after Hugo.

The dachshunds follow.

Hugo tears aside an air vent and goes into the tunnels.

The Station Inspector follows.

The dachshunds, however, have had enough. They stop at the vent.

INT. TRAIN STATION -- TUNNELS - NIGHT

Hugo speeds through the tunnels.

The Station Inspector follows. His big feet pound the floor, echoing like the massive machines in Hugo's nightmare.

Hugo is starting to panic.

He twists and turns almost blindly in the maze of tunnels. Up and down stairs. In and out of passages. Faster and faster.

And still the relentless Station Inspector pursues.

Finally Hugo zooms up the long stairway in the tower...

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.

Still the Station Inspector follows. 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 coming up the stairs. Huffing and puffing. Feet pounding. 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 appears.

Looks around. Puzzled.

Then, outside...

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

Lurches...

Almost breaks...

Hugo clings to it desperately.

The abyss below is terrifying.

Hugo doesn't dare cry out.

Inside, the Station Inspector grunts.

Then he goes 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.

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.

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

Hugo runs.

Pushing through the mobs of people. Fighting to get ahead.

The Station Inspector pursues.

Hugo, still lugging the Automaton, forces his way through the crowd as best he can. But it is congested and he can't seem to get ahead of the swarm of commuters.

The adults are a huge wall around him, pressing in, pushing, knocking, jostling.

It is claustrophobic.

And the Station Inspector is nearing.

Finally...

Hugo sees an opening, puts his head down, and powers through the crowd.

He emerges near the opposite, empty track of the platform.

But carrying the Automaton has slowed Hugo, and the Station Inspector is quick--

He lunges forward, 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...

Finally...

Crashing down!

Landing on the train tracks--

And a train is coming--

Barreling into the station--

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 looks at the Automaton. It is battered, but okay.

The Station Inspector grabs Hugo brutally. Hauls him into the air. Shakes him in fury:

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 glances back in panic--

The Automaton! Lying there. Broken and abandoned--

Then Hugo sees Monsieur Rouleau appearing through the crowd,
picking up the Automaton. He nods to Hugo. It's safe. He will
take care of it.

Hugo struggles to free himself from the Station Inspector.

STATION INSPECTOR

We'll let the orphanage deal with
you!

HUGO

No! -- You can't.

STATION INSPECTOR

Can't I?

HUGO

I don't belong there!

STATION INSPECTOR

Where do you belong then?

They are lost in the crowd.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Georges waits with Mama Jeanne and the others. He is deep in
thought.

Isabelle is talking to Georges intently:

ISABELLE

... Don't you understand? He did it
all for you. Everything. All he
wanted was for you to be happy
again. He believed in you.

GEORGES

Isabelle--

ISABELLE

You know he lives there at the station. He steals to eat. That's his life ... He has no one but us.

GEORGES

How was I to know?

ISABELLE

Just look at him.

There is a knock at the door.

She hurries to the door, swings it open:

ISABELLE

Hugo---!

But it is not Hugo.

She recoils. Steps back.

The Station Inspector fills the doorway.

Then we see he is holding Hugo by the shoulder.

STATION INSPECTOR

Excuse me, Monsieur Georges. I was taking this child to the orphanage ... But then he said you knew him.

Georges slowly stands.

A beat as he considers Hugo. Hugo is bloody and battered from the chase through the station. He is shaking, crying. His world is about to end.

He looks up at Georges.

A long look between them.

GEORGES

This child does not belong in an orphanage ... He belongs here.

Hugo's eyes shoot wide.

GEORGES

This is his home.

Georges holds out his arms.

The Station Inspector releases Hugo.

Without a word, Hugo crosses to Georges. Into his waiting arms. He sobs as Georges holds him.

A moment.

A family.

Then we iris down to black.

A title appears:

SIX MONTHS LATER.

We iris back up again to...

INT. APARTMENT -- HUGO'S ROOM - EVENING

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.

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

A desk is filled with magic books, tricks and drawings. A work bench is crowded with clocks, watches and mechanical inventions.

He hears Isabelle's voice, from the door:

ISABELLE (O.S.)
Hurry up, we have to go!

He turns.

And almost faints.

Isabelle is standing at the door. Looking absolutely beautiful in a formal dress. He is speechless.

She enters, straightens up his messy bow tie:

ISABELLE
Look at you ... Like you're still
living at the station ... There,
that's better. You look very...

She doesn't complete the sentence.

Just smiles.

Bewitching.

She goes.

Hugo grabs his pocket watch, puts it into his vest pocket.

Then follows her.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Hugo and Isabelle join Mama Jeanne. She is beautifully dressed as well.

MAMA JEANNE

Come along you two! The car is waiting!

She bustles them out.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

A gleaming motorcar is waiting. They climb into it.

EXT. FILM ACADEMY BUILDING - EVENING

The august facade of the Film Academy building is glowing with light. Lovely motorcars pull up and exquisitely dressed guests go into the Academy.

A red carpet. Photographers. A gala event.

A huge banner hangs over the front of the building. It shows the famous man in the moon face from A TRIP TO THE MOON.

INT. FILM ACADEMY -- THEATRE - EVENING

Hugo, Isabelle, Mama Jeanne and Etienne sit together.

The theatre is filled with elegant guests.

The lights dim.

Rene Tabard steps to the stage. There is a large movie screen behind him.

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 starting with the one film we found in our own basement, 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.

Georges steps onto the stage.

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 sad and broken machine. And against all odds, overcoming every obstacle, he fixed it ... It was the kindest magic trick I have ever seen.

Hugo is deeply 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 his 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 and Etienne. 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...

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...

To the Automaton...

It looks through the open doorway into the party...

ISABELLE (V.O.)
 And about how this singular young
 man finally found his way home.

The Automaton watches Hugo.

You would swear it was smiling.

The End.