

THE MERRY MAY INCIDENT

by

Blake Stacey

Blake Stacey
Boston, MA
www.sunclipse.org

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY NIGHT

Our P.O.V. floats over a thriving metropolis. The buildings are a riot of architectural styles---epochs of the past, synthesized by the flow of light and humanity into a complex of Gothic and brutalist and Art Deco. We move in lazy swoops alternating with rapid bursts, all the while nearing ground level, entering the midst of the City as we go. Our attention is drawn to a broad plaza, ringed by graceful curves picked out by innumerable LEDs, slowly pulsing around the spectrum, like the breath of a sleeping giant. Soon we reach ground level in

EXT. BOLTZMANNPLATZ NIGHT

It is a mild summer night. A night for families, a night for lovers. Small cafés and street vendors provide foci for the clusters of people who migrate about the plaza. Shade trees shiver in the gentle breeze, their leaves making the sound of water to complement the fountain which plashes gently in the plaza's center, under the cycling colors of the lights. We approach one of the glass-and-chrome buildings on the plaza's edge, the

EXT. AUCTION HOUSE NIGHT

Our P.O.V. floats up the black marble steps. The auction house is done up with all the glamor of a movie première. Uniformed guards are positioned, discreetly, near the entrance. Guests are having their invitations checked at the door. The doorman opens the glass portal for them, and we float smoothly in their wake, entering

INT. AUCTION HOUSE FOYER NIGHT

The crowd inside is *rich*. They could gamble away in an hour what you or I would struggle to earn in a year. Nothing gaudy, everything sleek, everyone powerful. Objets d'art in secured encasements draw the attention of a few, but the main event is clearly happening in the auction hall to the side. Our P.O.V. settles on a news crew. The reporter facing the camera is dressed well enough to maintain the atmosphere, but not so expensively as to be mistaken for a bidder. She takes a microphone and, indicating a nearby display, speaks.

REPORTER

Live, from von Thyssen's on the Boltzmannplatz, we bring you this historic event, an auction where hundreds of millions will soon change hands. Elites from Europe, America and the rest of the world will soon contend for possession of unique artifacts, the likes of which have seldom been gathered together---

We move past the first reporter, into the hall where the sales are soon to be cried.

INT. AUCTION HALL NIGHT

Our P.O.V. circles and slides amongst guests taking seats, security guards listening on earpieces, artifacts set out to tantalize. One such is being gestured at by another journalist.

2ND REPORTER

Unspoken by the jet-set soon to be bidding on these lots is the controversy which has circled this auction for months. Many of the pieces coming to light here have cultural and historic value, so much that many have said they belong in museums for the public benefit, rather than locked up in the mansions of the super-rich. Behind me is just one of these irreplaceable items---

CU: DISPLAY CASE.

2ND REPORTER

Newly discovered letters from Albert Einstein to the Argentine writer Borges, on the nature of Time.

Personnel from the auction house in bespoke suits are moving to the dais. The director of von Thyssen's takes his microphone, but his voice is lost in a horrid squeal of feedback. The assembled dignitaries scarcely have time to react to this unpleasant bit of Just Not Done before the lights go out.

The interior of von Thyssen's is suffused by a blue glow just barely sufficient to make out anything at all.

Confusion is beginning to spread.

MEDIUM SHOT OF DIRECTOR AND AUCTIONEER.

INTERCUT WITH:

MEDIUM SHOTS OF GUARDS, TALKING INTO CUFF MIKES.

WIDE ANGLE FROM BEHIND SUITED MEN ON DAIS. P.O.V. UP TOWARDS SKYLIGHTS, THRU WHICH AMBIENT CITY LIGHT IS STREAMING.

Above the skylights, a cloaked figure is waiting.

Oh, yeah.

The skylights shatter in a cacophonous downpour of glass.

CU: MEN AND WOMEN DIVING FOR COVER.

WIDE ANGLE ON THE DAIS AS THE FIGURE RAPPELS INTO THE FOREGROUND.

The intruder wears a wide-brimmed hat, pulled low over their face. Their cloak or cape now appears to be a trenchcoat, black under the violet-blue illumination.

Guards move to intercept. The figure moves towards the nearest, and in a snap and flash of limbs almost too fast to follow, the guards are dispatched, their bodies crunching senseless into the fallen glass.

Others are moving into the hall from the main entrance, but the figure's glance tips in their direction, and blasts of dense smoke down from the open ceiling cut them off.

The intruder is moving in our direction, their coat swirling as they turn.

INTERCUT WITH:

GUARDS, AUCTIONEER, REPORTERS---ALL USELESS IN THE SMOKE.

CU: EINSTEIN LETTER CASE.

A nightstick or a baton comes down on the glass, breaking the case open.

EXT. PLAZA NIGHT

The noise has started to draw onlookers. We see the damaged roof of the auction hall from the outside.

LONG SHOT PAST FOUNTAIN.

Reinforcements are arriving. A dozen policemen converge on the steps of von Thyssen's.

P.O.V. UP STEPS TO ENTRANCE.

As the police advance with guns drawn, the doors fly open. The thief stands silhouetted as smoke billows out.

The first two cops up the stairs advance to meet the thief, who carries a parcel---the EINSTEIN LETTERS---under one arm. But with a parkour leap against a handrail and off a ledge, the thief is flying, and a kick to the head brings the first cop down, and a blow from the nightstick topples the second.

Blasts of noise and smoke come from within the building.

The thief is on the move.

A policeman fires, but either he missed, or---his body hits the concrete of the plaza.

The thief breaks past the police and is sprinting across the plaza. In the open, the coat is no longer black, but red.

WIDE ANGLE OVER PLAZA---CRANE SHOT.

Four police cars skid onto the plaza, two-tone sirens on full. They block the thief's path.

SHOT PAST THIEF TO COPS

Police are bounding from their cars and drawing their weapons.

The thief pauses and hops sideways, parkouring into the fountain.

More cop cars circle to the far side of the fountain. The thief pauses in the ankle-deep, rippling water.

The police start to form a circle around the fountain and move inward, but they pause momentarily as the water stops flowing.

The plaza is still a moment.

A wall of flame then flares into being, racing around the fountain, closing up on itself.

The thief's hand touches the wide brim of the jauntily-tilted hat, and with that salute, a gust of flame pours from the fountain's jets.

The plaza is still, smoke rising from amidst the stunned circle of policemen, some of whom are struggling back to their feet.

The thief is gone. A few patches within the fountain still burn, as if the water had been touched with Greek fire.

INTERCUT WITH:

MEDIUM SHOTS---ASSORTED PEOPLE ON AND AROUND THE PLAZA, DAZED.

Police run about, some heading for nearby buildings, some for the roads which access the plaza. Bystanders run the spectrum from amazement to shock.

CU: AUCTION HOUSE GUARD.

One of the guards who tried to intercept the thief at the steps is cradling his teeth in his bloody hand.

CU: STILL ON INJURED GUARD.

As the violence and pain come home to us, the quality of the image changes. It is now as if we are watching the badly injured man through a digital camera of middling resolution.

P.O.V. tracks back, and we realize we are watching a recording. Track back and back. Other video windows, playing recordings from camera phones, security tapes and the like come into view---a whole wall of them. Track back still more, and we find we are in the

INT. COMMAND CENTER NIGHT

The three walls we see are displaying videos, photographs, police reports, waveform representations of audio files.

P.O.V. floats down, and a YOUNG MAN comes into the frame from below. We first notice his wild, almost relativistic hair, dark with highlights on the short end of the spectrum thanks to the seething media walls.

His arm rises, and a tap of the remote he holds puts the media walls on pause. We see him rise from his crouching position. In tight close-ups, we get momentary impressions of his bare feet, his hunched shoulders. Under his loose, pale long-sleeved shirt, his frame is lithe and powerful.

His body bent forward with an odd intensity, the young man approaches the center of the front video wall. He raises the control again, grasping it with a pincer-like action of two fingers, and makes the video spool in reverse. We see the fireball suck back into the fountain. The thief, holding the EINSTEIN LETTERS in one hand, touches the hatbrim with the other.

We see that the thief is a woman.

The young man's other hand carries a bar of chocolate. Lifting it to his lips with the same pincer gesture, he takes a bite.

On the video wall, the frozen image zooms into the woman's face. The pixelation and the harsh light of the flames rob it of detail, making the profile we see almost cartoonish under the red fedora.

The young man takes in the image, coolly. He speaks.

L

Where in the world are you...

(beat)

Carmen Sandiego?

ROLL MAIN CREDITS.

BAM.