

The Triangle

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FADE IN:

INT. CARGO HOLD - NIGHT

Weak lamp light flickers in creaking darkness.

The sick and crippled lay packed together in stifling squalor. People cough and moan. They cry out in their foreign tongues for god or family.

A FRAGILE GIRL rubs her eyes awake.

Able bodies gather around the porthole windows, "ooing" and "ahhing" at the sight beyond the thick glass.

She rises from her sleeping mother's embrace and tries to see but she's too short to catch more than bursts of light.

The girl squirms through the gawkers choking the stairwell, their voices an awed garble of Russian and Yiddish.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY HARBOR, 1909 - NIGHT

A city ablaze with light. Booming explosions fill the sky.

A towering monstrosity looms over the ship. The girl recoils in fright.

Fireworks explode over the city, revealing a giant metal angel holding a torch aloft: Lady Liberty.

As the ancient cargo ship rattles toward the pier, the girl gapes at the passing statue, its face brightening and darkening with the boom and crack of celebration.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY HARBOR - NIGHT

Booming fireworks illuminate the brilliant red hair of a solitary WOMAN, face unseen, staring out at the black harbor.

Her fingers drum on the railing. Calculating. Planning...

Hard knocking on a heavy wooden door.

EXT. SPEAK EASY - NIGHT

The door opens onto FRANCES PERKINS (30's), an elegant and educated woman utterly out of place in the dank and seedy neighborhood. She stares up at a beefy DOORMAN.

(CONTINUED)

DOORMAN

Yeah?

FRANCES

I want to see Charles Murphy.

DOORMAN

Sure, lady. I'll let him know.

The door closes and Frances stands looking at it uncertainly.

From beyond the door, she hears the doorman's muffled voice followed by a roar of laughter from several others.

Gathering her courage, Frances pounds on the door. The doorman opens it again and his smile droops.

FRANCES

Charles Murphy.

DOORMAN

You don't see Silent Charlie.
Silent Charlie sees you.

The doorman begins to close the door but Frances stops him.

DOORMAN (cont'd)

Look lady, Charlie ain't here.

FRANCES

Who is here?

DOORMAN

The MacManus.

FRANCES

The MacManus?

DOORMAN

Yeah. That one.

FRANCES

Then I'll speak to him.

The doorman scratches his beard, then shrugs and opens the door. Frances steps past him into...

THE MAIN HALL--

A trite Native American theme runs throughout a large room where the wooden walls have ears and furtive conversations drift beneath the haze of cigar smoke.

(CONTINUED)

TAMMANY MEN, New York's political underbelly, hush and glare at the intruder as she's led toward a back room.

DOORMAN

Wait here.

The doorman knocks and then slips into the room.

Frances waits, trying not to shiver as dozens of hostile eyes creep up her back.

The door opens and the doorman nods Frances into...

THE MACMANUS'S OFFICE--

Several thuggish BODYGUARDS stare at her. Dwarfing them all is the large, bearded man at the desk, THOMAS "THE" MACMANUS. He eyes Frances for a long, uncomfortable moment.

MACMANUS

You're a long way from home, aren't you miss...?

FRANCES

Perkins. I... I'm from Philadel--

MACMANUS

It hasn't occurred to you that perhaps there's a reason he's called *Silent* Charlie?

FRANCES

I... I need his support. For a piece of legislation. I was told it can't pass without his--

MACMANUS

Go home, Miss Perkins.

Meeting over. MacManus takes a cigar from a box on his desk and casually slices off the ends.

FRANCES

There is one other thing.
(off his surprised look)
A young man named Kalman Downic was arrested in a brawl. I would like him bailed out. His mother is an alcoholic and he's her sole means--

MACMANUS

Does he vote in my district?

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES
I--Yes, I believe so.

MACMANUS
(smile of a wolf)
Well... I'm always glad to help
anybody in trouble.

FRANCES
I see... Thank you, Mr. MacManus.

EXT. SPEAK EASY - MOMENTS LATER

Frances exits and takes several unsteady steps into the night. She stops to fight off tears and trembling.

The door opens and Frances swings around in fright.

The doorman fixes her with a hard look.

DOORMAN
Don't go asking for Charlie again.
Not anywhere. Not for any reason.

FRANCES
His is the only name I know.

The doorman takes a drag of his cigarette, debating.

DOORMAN
Al Smith.

FRANCES
Thank you.

DOORMAN
(shrugs)
I got a cousin married a girl from
Philly.
(afterthought)
Your friend, the Jew brawler?
Where's he work?

He exhales a cloud of smoke into the night. Frances looks back at him through the haze.

FRANCES
The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

Sunlight peeks over the hazy New York skyline.

(CONTINUED)

People bustle along: sanitation workers shovel horse manure; shoppers eye storefronts; beat cops tip their hats at passersby. An automobile hoots its way through the carriages.

A street sign stands on the busy corner of Washington Place and Greene Street. The ten-story Asch Building (towering at the time) looms over it.

A large black sign clings to the side of the eighth story: A white triangle on a black background beneath the words "TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST COMPANY".

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 8TH FLOOR - DAY

Hands flatten frames of tissue paper over colorful fabrics.

SUPERIMPOSE: NEW YORK CITY, 1909

Immigrants flood into the city by the millions.

Starving Italians evacuate their drought-stricken homeland.

Russian Jews flee Tsar Nicholas II's murderous pogroms.

...One quarter work in the city's garment industry.

The crisp ring of shears fills the dust-choked room.

WORKERS slice cloth with practised strokes. Wire-framed tissue patterns hang from clothes lines stretched overhead. Hands brush scraps into slatwood bins surrounding each table.

A haggard RECEPTIONIST pushes a buzzer on her telautograph and begins to scrawl figures onto the note pad as the apparatus' mechanical arm transmits the message upstairs.

A FOREMAN with a face like an anvil, bellows at the CUTTERS.

FOREMAN

God's sake! If I clean those bins
and find anything wider than my
finger, I'll gut you!

RACHEL LANSNER (18), brittle-looking but for the eyes of a survivor, grabs a full basket and moves toward the exit.

Suddenly the Foreman bowls her over-- dashes past, grabbing a water bucket and dousing a small flame growing on the floor.

He bends down and picks up the soggy remains of a cigarette. Silence gags the room as he slowly walks along the line of workers. He stops at a CUTTER and sniffs the man's breath.

(CONTINUED)

He hauls the man past Rachel and tosses him at the stairs.

Everyone stares as the Foreman storms back in and bats aside piles of fabric, exposing a grimy NO-SMOKING sign. He pants at his workers in anger, then motions them to get to work.

Rachel picks herself up and slips past the foreman through a cramped partition to the Greene Street doors.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, GREENE STREET STAIRS - DAY

A slight breeze catches Rachel's hair and she pauses for a second to relish it.

She ignores a sweaty NIGHT WATCHMAN leering at her as she trudges up the stairs to the ninth floor, stopping at the sound of a muffled voice on the other side of the door.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - DAY

MAX BLANCK (42), the pie-faced owner, faces a few hundred (mostly female) WORKERS crowded at row after row of sewing machines. A few translate his words into Yiddish and Italian.

BLANCK

--formed the Triangle Employees
Benevolent Association, whose
officers will be comprised of the
very salt of this factory.

Tables clog the room, almost invisible under piles of fabric.

In the rear of the room, mounds of waists (blouses) block the windows where INSPECTORS examine workmanship. Several WORKERS stand stoically next to upright button-hole punchers.

Blanck nods to his rodent-faced co-owner, ISAAC HARRIS (43).

BLANCK (cont'd)

Now, I think you will agree that
Mr. Harris and I are granting you
an unprecedented indulgence the
likes of which you won't find
elsewhere. For this reason, the
employment of anyone found
selfishly colluding with a
competing union, will be terminated
immediately.

Blanck holds a half dollar up to the light, inspecting its shine as one would a diamond.

(CONTINUED)

BLANCK (cont'd)

Conversely, anyone brave enough to
come forward and expose such
cowardly schemes will be rewarded.

(pockets the coin)

That is all.

The machinery roars to life as Blanck, Harris, and an older, bespectacled ASSISTANT, turn to go. A blond BOOKKEEPER grabs a key off a nearby hook and unlocks the door for them.

Scores of sewing machines chew stitches into waists, their gears slavering grease. Sweat glistens on the girls' faces. A CONSUMPTIVE WORKER coughs violently into her work.

Rachel's big sister EVA grits her teeth as she turns back to sewing lace. Dark circles tug at intelligent eyes and sweat drips from a face men adore, women envy, and she resents.

Rachel just avoids being bowled over by the owners as she ducks into the dim filth. She steps over a gawky REPAIRMAN wrenching at a broken machine.

Eva slips a NOTE into the folds of her work as Rachel takes it. Rachel glares at her but Eva ignores her.

Rachel turns and hesitates as she sees KALMAN DOWNIC (21), a shy buttonhole puncher with a black eye and swollen lip.

Kalman looks up as Rachel takes his work to VINCENZA PINELLO, (19), a lion-eyed Italian with a smile that could take God's breath away, at the inspection table.

Kalman peeks out to watch Vincenza scrutinize his work. She looks up with bold eyes and Kalman quickly disappears back into the obscurity of his buttonhole puncher.

Rachel smiles at his shyness.

A shrill scream cuts through the noise.

Workers glance up without ceasing their work. Blood gushes from the hand of a HYSTERICAL GIRL.

A FEMALE FOREMAN rushes over and quickly escorts the girl toward door but she struggles back toward her machine.

The repairman plucks the girl's finger from the gears. Her wedding ring falls off the finger and the repairman picks it up, bringing both to her as she's led out.

Several women shake their heads knowingly. Eva glances at her own wedding ring perched on the sewing machine bobbin.

(CONTINUED)

The foreman examines the blood-stained fabric and curses.

Rachel moves past her, picking up a load of blouses on her way past Vincenza and through the Washington Place doors.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, WASHINGTON PLACE STAIRS - DAY

The elevator rises with Rachel as she starts up the stairs.

RACHEL

Race you, Joe.

The ELEVATOR OPERATOR, a slight man with his dark hair slicked to one side of his head, grins. The passenger, an OBESE SALESMAN, ignores them.

ELEVATOR OPERATOR

I'm feeling lucky today!

Rachel crests the stairs and pushes into the 10th floor as the operator slides open the gate for the salesman.

RACHEL

Better luck next time.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR - DAY

Rachel enters the reception area where a humorless secretary crunches numbers out loud as she types up bills.

The telautograph next to the secretary buzzes. Without looking, she tears a spent piece of paper out from under the electric pen and adds it to her to-do pile.

The pen begins to crawl across the fresh sheet, trailing numbers behind it.

BLANCK

Emile! How well you are looking!

Rachel flattens herself against the wall as Blanck bulls past her, jostling her bundle.

Eva's note flutters to the floor.

Rachel stoops to get it but a shiny leather shoe traps it.

Isaac Harris smiles at the approaching salesman, oblivious to the terrified girl at his feet.

Finally, Harris steps away... with the note stuck to the sole of his shoe!

(CONTINUED)

Rachel snatches it, nearly tripping Harris.

RACHEL

Sorry, Mr. Harris! So clumsy of me.

He gives her a sour look and continues on.

She pockets the note and continues past the offices, turning into the sweltering pressing floor.

Sunlight rains through a skylight, shooting miniature rainbows through the puffs of steam rising from ironing boards and the tangle of tubing feeding the irons.

Rachel slides past the packers and shippers, depositing her bundle by the window.

Life teems outside, so close and yet impossibly far away.

One of the packers sorts through the bundle and gives Rachel a questioning look. She shrugs and turns back into the steam.

EXT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Frances Perkins steps out of a horse-drawn carriage and looks up at the opulent structure; a five-story blend of various Renaissance architectures that resembles a French chateau.

SUPERIMPOSE: STATE CAPITOL BUILDING. ALBANY, NEW YORK.

INT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING, HALLWAY - DAY

Voices echo in the cavernous hallway. Frances interrupts three men engaged in conversation.

FRANCES

Excuse me? Where might I find Al Smith?

MAN #1

(pointing down the hall)

Look for the only man reading every word of the morning docket.

INT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING, ASSEMBLY CHAMBER - DAY

Granite pillars support the ceiling where splendid murals depict New York history. Dark mahogany furniture faces the podium. Stained glass blesses the incoming light.

(CONTINUED)

Frances's eyes fall upon a storkish man just shy of his forties seated at one of the desks. His pronounced nose hovers over his paperwork, eyes devouring each word.

FRANCES

Mr. Smith?

AL SMITH looks up at his name and sees Frances. A warm smile softens his studious features.

FRANCES (cont'd)

Al Smith? My name is Frances Perkins.

He extends his hand over the brass rail that separates the public from the lawmakers.

AL

Miss Perkins. New to Albany?

FRANCES

I just enrolled in the New York School of Philanthropy actually.

AL

Studying to become a lobbyist then.

FRANCES

No, my ambitions are of a far more unsavory nature, I'm afraid.

AL

More unsavory than lobbying? I didn't know there was such a thing.

FRANCES

Yes, well, I suppose I'm what you'd call a social scientist.

AL

A lobbyist with a conscience then. You're right, that is worse.

GUIDE

I'm here seeking to gain support for a law that will shorten the work week for women and children.

AL

The fifty-four hour bill?

FRANCES

Why, yes.

(CONTINUED)

AL

I'm afraid your bill has been cast
into the legislative purgatory
known as "committee."

FRANCES

Where I suppose it will stay?

AL

Oh, yes. Indefinitely... Unless,
say, a state assemblyman were to
ask for a hearing, of course.

FRANCES

And what would it take for, say, a
state assemblyman to ask for a
hearing?

AL

An appointment for starters. Now,
if you'll excuse me, Miss Perkins?

An appreciative smile spreads across Frances' face as the
assemblymen gather to begin session.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, ROOF - DAY

The sun rides high during a short lunch break. The repairman
plays a spirited tune on the violin while Rachel dances with
several of the girls.

A portly ITALIAN GIRL girl starts into some boisterous
drinking song, coaxing the musicians to pick up the tune.

Kalman approaches Vincenza and hesitantly tugs on her sleeve.
She turns to him with that radiant smile and he pales.

Petrified for a moment, Kalman extends his lunch cake to her.

KALMAN

You-- eh, food... is well.

He weakly mimes eating and offers the cake to her. A bit
taken by the gesture, she accepts and takes a bite.

VINCENZA

Grazie... mmm, gustoso!

Vincenza hands back the cake but he gestures her to keep it.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENZA (cont'd)
 Grazie. Come dici? Eh, you name?
 (pointing to herself)
 Vincenza... you? Name?

KALMAN
 Da! Eh--Kalman.

She gestures at his bruised eye. Lost for words, Kalman can only blush. Vincenza softly plants her fist against his face and they share a smile as Kalman nods.

Rachel glances over and sees the smiling... and her dancing falters.

Kalman and Vincenza stand awkwardly for a moment before Kalman points at the buildings around them.

KALMAN (cont'd)
 New York City.

VINCENZA
 Sì, New York City.

The whistle blows, calling everyone back to work.

Gangly Rachel pines for Kalman as Eva approaches her.

EVA
 I'm sorry about the notes. It's--

RACHEL
 (shrugs)
 It's thanks to you I have this job--

EVA
 Don't think of it that way, please.
 (off Rachel's silence)
 It's just for a little while
 longer. I promise.

Rachel nods in understanding and heads downstairs.

In the neighboring building, a WEALTHY GIRL sits at a window, focus wandering from a college lecture. Her eyes meet Eva's.

Eva looks away to a commotion in the street far below. She glances around conspiratorially and follows Rachel inside.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, DAY

A REBELLIOUS YOUNG WOMAN no more than five feet tall with baby-faced features, preaches to passersby.

(CONTINUED)

REBELLIOUS WOMAN

Max Blanck and Isaac Harris didn't want my skill! They paid me to breathe their poisons! They paid me to shed my dignity and shut my mouth! They paid me to turn a blind eye to their cruelty!

The RED-HEADED WOMAN from the opening, face still unseen, watches from an alley, fingers lightly tapping the bricks.

Her head tilts as she looks up at the factory high above.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR - HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Max Blanck stares out the window at the commotion far below. Behind him, Harris pins swatches of fabric to a dummy.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - DAY

Eva slips on her ring while the female foreman distributes paychecks. Workers gab as they line up at the exit, the night watchman inspecting purses for stolen goods.

Rachel receives her check and hesitates for a moment, considering.

She shyly approaches the bullish foreman, check in hand.

RACHEL

Sir? Mr. Bernstein, sir? There's been a mistake.

BERNSTEIN

You're in training. We pay for working, not training.

RACHEL

I think I should talk to someone.

BERNSTEIN

Take it upstairs.

EVA

(secretively)
Won't do you any good.

Rachel scowls at her, then heads for the door. Eva watches her go with a worried, protective look.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR - DAY

Rachel eases into the hallway.

The secretary doesn't even glance up. Men's muffled voices travel from further down the hall.

Rachel starts to say something...

...and spooks as Harris comes out of his office. He strides away from her, face in a ledger as he goes.

RACHEL
(forcing herself)
Mr. Harris!

He turns, eyes boring into her.

Breathless, Rachel takes the note out of her pocket.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Bells clang and sirens wail as flames leap into the night from a three story apartment building. Panicked figures dash about inside.

A crowd watches below, their breath tight in their throats.

A woman teeters on a window ledge for a moment, then leaps.

The crowd gasps in shock as the woman falls to earth...

...and bounces nimbly off of a net and onto her feet.

The ACROBAT draws a rose from seemingly out of nowhere and presents it to THE FRAGILE GIRL from the steamer. The crowd laughs and applauds as more CLOWNS tumble into the net.

Spectacles and amusements crowd Coney Island. Children race about underfoot.

A row of VENDORS hawks gooey confections. One extends a caramel apple to Rachel who pays with...

...a shiny half dollar. She receives her change and bounces off with juice dribbling from her grinning lips.

INT. NIGHT SCHOOL - NIGHT

A rabbinical TEACHER blocks Kalman's entrance to a classroom.

(CONTINUED)

TEACHER (SUBTITLE)
I'm sorry, but the rules are clear.

Pencil and notebook in hand, Kalman glances past him at a smirking student with a battered face.

STUDENT (SUBTITLE)
Rabbi, how do you ask for booze in English? I must know. In case my mother gets thirsty.

Kalman's fists clench as the rabbi holds him back.

TEACHER (SUBTITLE)
Enough!
 (to Kalman)
I'm sorry.

The teacher closes the door. Kalman walks away with a scowl.

TEACHER (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
 (muffled)
Enough already! Let's hope your jokes are funnier when you learn to say them in English.

INT. ITALIAN QUARTER, CATHOLIC CHAPEL - NIGHT

Martyrs stare out of faded paintings at the dim silence. Paint flakes off of the wooden statue of the Virgin Mother where Vincenza prays.

Suddenly she giggles. She crosses herself and apologizes but more laughter bubbles up. The harder she tries to stifle it, the more she laughs.

EXT. EAST FOURTH STREET - NIGHT

Apartment houses sit on top of quiet businesses: a bakery, a brewery, a small bowling alley, a couple of Chinese laundries. Stuffed in between them sits a modest theater.

People exit the theater in clusters, gabbing back and forth in conspiratorial voices-- whispers of "union" and "strike."

Eva exits with the soapboxing rebellious woman.

EVA
Rose says we must wait to win--

(CONTINUED)

REBELLIOUS WOMAN

Rose Schneiderman is a bookkeeper,
not a believer!

EVA

But she's won before. Rosen
Brothers--

REBELLIOUS WOMAN

The empire that men like Blanck and
Harris have built upon the backs of
the workers will topple the moment
those workers rise up. You tell
that to Rose.

The woman marches away in a huff. Eva watches her go before
heading off into the night.

Deep in thought, she never notices two MEN separate from the
shadows and casually follow her.

She turns a corner and suddenly bumps into a THUG emerging
from an alley. His blunt face sneers down at her.

THUG

Hello, Eva.

The thug hauls back and punches Eva full in the face.

Blood spurts from her nose and lip, sending droplets onto the
brick wall. The two men following her grab her and throw her
out of sight into the trash-strewn alley.

The sound of rhythmic stomping thunders over music.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Hands clap to a dizzying beat. Bodies whirl about a worn,
wooden dance floor. Tired shoes hug the feet inside them.

Rachel draws near, a smile spreading across her face at the
sight of such boundless joy. She shrieks with laughter as a
young man rushes up and sweeps her into the throng.

EXT. HEBREW QUARTER - NIGHT

Kalman turns down the alley between two crumbling tenements.

KALMAN

(practicing from his
notebook)

I liff... in Noo Yoork Cee Tee.

(CONTINUED)

He knocks on a side door and a BARMAN answers. The barman sees it's Kalman and disappears inside for a moment.

Kalman glances around, embarrassed.

The barman returns with KALMAN'S MOTHER, once beautiful but health and body now destroyed by drink, singing loudly.

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
(still singing)
Kalman! My boy, my beautiful boy!

Kalman steadies her as they continue into the street.

EXT. ITALIAN QUARTER, WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Tenement buildings huddle together drunkenly near the docks where garbage scows gather in the water. Sounds of the city echo off the river.

Vincenza picks her way through mounds of junk, crafting some small figure out of the odds and ends she collects.

IN THE ALLEY--

The thugs hold Eva and pummel her. She tries to yell-- tries to strike back. They toss her into a pile of trash.

IN THE DANCE HALL--

Rachel spots Kalman-- sees it's someone else. The pounding of feet intensifies, drowning her laughter.

IN THE HEBREW QUARTER--

Kalman eases his mother up a rusty fire escape crowded with the moldering belongings of impoverished immigrants.

KALMAN
I work... in te fecktoory.

ON THE WATERFRONT--

Vincenza eats Kalman's cake, humming to herself while she works, feet dangling over the city reflecting on the water.

VINCENZA
New York City...

IN THE ALLEY--

The thugs run off. The leader lingers long enough to spit on Eva before walking away.

(CONTINUED)

IN THE HEBREW QUARTER--

Kalman climbs out the window as his mother sleeps peacefully on a makeshift bed on the floor of the cramped apartment.

ON THE WATERFRONT--

Voices.

Vincenza peeks over the garbage she sees a young ITALIAN MAN questioning an OLD DRUNK. The drunk shakes his head.

The young man looks around and Vincenza ducks out of sight.

IN THE DANCE HALL--

Rachel twirls around and finds herself alone in a sea of couples. Her smile falters until a young man rescues her.

IN THE HEBREW QUARTER--

Kalman eases a brick from the wall. Glancing around, he reaches into the hole and removes a fruit tin full of cash and adds his week's pay to it.

KALMAN

I. Em. En. Ameriken.

IN THE ALLEY--

Eva wheezes in pain, blood bubbling from her mouth. She pulls herself through moldering garbage and collapses, her focus dying on the Statue of Liberty off in the distance.

EXT. HEBREW QUARTER - NIGHT

The whir of a thousand sewing machines echoes from the candlelit tenements. Old boxes and washtubs clog the fire escapes. A few weary residents roam the cluttered street.

Rachel hums to herself as she skips around a dead horse in the street. She steps over children sleeping uncomfortably on the stoop and descends into a slouching apartment building.

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

A converted cellar, cramped and clammy. Sounds from the surrounding apartments drip into the room: babies shrieking, couples quarrelling, and above all, constant coughing.

The door bursts open and Rachel enters, flushed and beaming.

(CONTINUED)

MR. LANSNER sits at the only chair, shelling nuts. Rachel's BROTHER (10) sleeps in a pile of clothing on a small table.

Eva inspects her battered and bloody face in a grimy mirror.

RACHEL (SUBTITLE)
(going pale)
Eva? My god, what happened?!

EVA (SUBTITLE)
They knew my name.

Rachel freezes-- quickly retrieves a small sewing box and begins tending to Eva's wounds.

Mr. Lansner watches for a while, shelling in silence.

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
When one schemes, God laughs.

Eva rolls her eyes. Rachel tries not to look guilty.

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
Do you remember when we came to this country? You were just children. I warned you then that when afflictions appear on the horizon, not to run to meet them. It must be a comfort to know that when that day comes, at least you will not have a job to afflict you--

EVA
Papa!

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
No food, no shelter, true. But thankfully, mercifully, no job--

EVA (SUBTITLE)
They have no right to treat their workers the way they do--

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
If that is true, the workers may leave anytime. This is not Egypt--

EVA (SUBTITLE)
They will find the same wherever they go--

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
So, you have burdens. God gave you shoulders--

(CONTINUED)

EVA (SUBTITLE)
Papa, you do not understand. These things are complicated--

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
Oh, complicated! What does an old Jew know of complicated things--!?

EVA
 Oh, Papa--

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
 (becoming agitated)
No, you are right. I do not understand. I am old, I am an immigrant, I am a Jew - I am many things and none of them understand. And yet, there lies your brother sleeping soundly. Like children should! Here, in this place, we fear only God! What is there to understand besides this? What--

Mr. Lansner slams his fist against his leg, upsetting his work. He stares at his lap in tearful silence.

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
I miss your mother.

The sisters look at each other with the same burden of grief.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Vincenza dodges between a group of WORKERS unloading beer barrels off of a horse-drawn wagon. She spots Kalman, staring at a store front with a "FOR RENT" sign in it.

VINCENZA
 Kalman!... KALMAN!

He looks around, eyes going wide as they land on Vincenza.

She holds up a tiny figurine with wings and a halo carefully hand-stitched into place and perches it on his shoulder.

VINCENZA (cont'd)
 Eh-- angel... is protect.
 (he accepts it reverently)
 New York City. Many dangerings.

(CONTINUED)

She throws a slow punch and he blocks it with the angel. She nods and walks away with a laugh like sunshine.

KALMAN

Very thank!

VINCENZA

Very happy to make welcomes!

Kalman mouths her words as he watches her go, entranced.

Rachel rounds the corner, helping Eva along. Kalman turns and nearly bumps into them.

Rachel looks at him with her breath in her throat.

RACHEL (SUBTITLE)

Good morning to you, Kalman.

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)

(seeing Eva's condition)
Please allow me to help you.

EVA (SUBTITLE)

Thank you--

Kalman sweeps Eva into his arms. Rachel blushes. Eva notices.

The trio walks in uncomfortable silence.

EVA (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)

You are Kalman, yes?

He nods.

EVA (cont'd)

(in deliberate English)
Thank you for helping me.

KALMAN

H-happy to make welcomes.

The sisters hide their smiles.

EVA

You speak English?

KALMAN

(humbly)
I am have Ameriken class but is...

EVA (SUBTITLE)

It's over?
(off his nod)

(CONTINUED)

EVA (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
*My sister could help you. She
 taught me. I know a place where you
 could listen and she could
 translate for you. You could go
 tonight even?*

Kalman hesitates-- looks back and forth between the two.

KALMAN
 (nodding)
 Very thank.

RACHEL
 (correcting)
 Thank you, very much.

KALMAN
 Happy to make welcome.

Rachel bites back a smile as they turn the corner and see...

THE ASCH BUILDING--

A crowd of a few dozen huddle outside, gawking at a note
 nailed to the door.

Kalman sets Eva down and shoulders his way to the door.

Eva already knows what it says-- turns to Rachel.

EVA
 I need you to do something for me.

A congregation sings a Hebrew hymn.

INT. BIALYSTOCK SYNAGOGUE - DAY

A door opens in the rear and Rachel skulks in.

The RED-HEADED WOMAN sits apart, fingers drumming her lap.
 Rachel eases onto the bench behind her and taps her arm.

The woman cocks her head to listen. Fingers stop drumming.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

A few hundred clamor outside the factory doors. In their
 midst, the rebellious woman preaches on a soapbox in Yiddish.

(CONTINUED)

REBELLIOUS WOMAN (SUBTITLE)
*These are Jericho's walls! And we -
 WE - are the trumpets that will
 bring them down!!*

The crowd roars and breaks into boisterous singing.

LEONORA O'REILLY (30s), a tall Irish woman with mischievous eyes, muscles her way through the crowd to meet Rachel and ROSE SCHNEIDERMAN - the striking red-head from the synagogue.

LEONORA
 Welcome to the apocalypse, love!

ROSE
 What *exactly* did they say?

LEONORA
 "No work until further notice."

RACHEL
 That's not--The busy season is just starting!

LEONORA
 Splendid news for the girls in off the next boat!

REBELLIOUS WOMAN
 (seeing Rose and Leonora)
 It' finally happening!

LEONORA
 Clara Lemlich, you daft cow, do you have any idea what you're on about? This isn't just some factory!

CLARA
 No, this is where the heart of oppression beats! When it dies, the rest will die with it!

LEONORA
 Aye, I'm sure Blanck and Harris are soiling themselves as we speak!

CLARA
 Of course they are! They know the real power lies with the workers. You'll see. The rich are weak!

LEONORA
 By God, they can afford to be!

(CONTINUED)

Rose pulls Leonora away as Clara joins the singing.

LEONORA (cont'd)
Like a wee burning bush, that one!

ROSE
We knew this was coming.

They take it all in, realizing that it's beyond stopping.

ROSE (cont'd)
Get the men out of here. There
aren't enough to make a difference
and we're going to need the
sympathy--
(to Eva)
And find Mary and the others!

EVA
What do you want me to tell them?

ROSE
Tell them we're on strike.

Rachel looks for Kalman and finds him staring at the note tacked to the door. Eva touches him on the arm and mouths a few words to him.

His eyes find Rachel--seem to look right into her. And then look away--drifting toward the factory high above.

INT. BLANCK TOWNHOUSE, DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Felted hammers strike piano strings. Classical music rises timidly from the vessel, filling a large drawing room.

Max Blanck watches his eleven-year old angel HENRIETTA play, moved despite her halting fingers.

The doorbell rings. Henrietta strikes a false note and Blanck winces.

Footsteps echo in the hallway and a door opens. Voices murmur on the other side of the wall.

Henrietta stumbles again as a porter enters and whispers something to Blanck.

BLANCK
Have him wait in the hall.

Henrietta falters again... and again... and stops.

(CONTINUED)

Blanck rises, floor creaking as he walks to his daughter, kisses her gently on the head, and pats her reassuringly.

Henrietta begins to play again as her father goes into...

THE HALLWAY--

...and find finds no one there.

He hears a child's giggle beyond a heavy wooden door.

INT. BLANCK TOWNHOUSE, STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Five-year old MILDRED BLANCK, all curls and dimples, giggles as she plays jacks on the floor in front of the desk. A man squats in front of her, all but hidden by the leather chair.

The man's hand bounces the ball, snatches up several jacks, and catches the ball.

MAN

See? As easy as you please.

Mildred sees her father and bounds toward him.

MILDRED

Papa! Look what Mr. Cantilion gave me!

The man stands and turns toward Blanck...

And it's the thug who beat Eva!

BLANCK

How nice of Mr. Cantilion. Why don't you take them into the parlor and play there?

Mildred bounds out. Blanck watches her through the cracked doorway.

CANTILION

(pouring himself a drink)
Sweet kid.

BLANCK

Do you have children, Mr. Cantilion?

(CONTINUED)

CANTILION

Five going on fifteen. Can't hardly
kiss the wife goodbye in the
morning without coming home and
finding another one's on the way.

BLANCK

Is there anything you wouldn't do
for them?

CANTILION

Heh. This is some fine liquor
you've got here, Mr. Blanck. Not
like the swill they serve down at
the pub. What is that? Hennessey?

Blanck closes the door and goes to his desk drawer.

BLANCK

There is a rumor that a strike is
fomenting outside my factory doors.

CANTILION

Nasty things rumors.

BLANCK

I prefer that this one not spread.

He takes an envelope out of the drawer and plops it down.

CANTILION

That's what I like about you, Mr.
Blanck. Rumors are the devil's
tool. But charity...
(waves the envelope)
...never faileth.

BLANCK

May I recommend the pour souls
toiling in the Bowery?

CANTILION

No better place.

Cantilion sets his hat and leaves Blanck listening to the
halting sound of the piano plunking through the walls.

OLDER ACTOR (PRELAP)

But you are a Jew!

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

A YOUNGER ACTOR, his face rouged with makeup, turns from a stage window and meets the painted glare of an OLDER ACTOR. Gas lights hiss audibly in the rapt silence.

OLDER ACTOR

If she was the daughter of fifty barons, you cannot marry her. It is the call of our blood through immemorial generations.

YOUNGER ACTOR

You say that! You who have come to the heart of the Crucible, where the roaring fires of God are fusing our race with all the others.

OLDER ACTOR

Not our race.

The Younger Actor stares meditatively past the working-class audience sitting on wooden benches in the cramped theater.

In the very back, Rachel sits next to Kalman, translating.

YOUNGER ACTOR

What immunity has our race? The pride and the prejudice, the dreams and the sacrifices, the traditions and the superstitions, the fasts and the feasts, things noble and things sordid— they must all into the Crucible.

OLDER ACTOR

The Jew has been tried in a thousand fires and only tempered and annealed.

YOUNGER ACTOR

Fires of hate, not fires of love. That is what melts.

Rachel stumbles over her nerves as she translates this.

A patron in front shushes her with a curse.

Instantly, Kalman is on his feet, fists clenched. Rachel grabs him by the arm. Other patrons glare at them. One of the actors falters at his lines.

RACHEL (SUBTITLE)

Kalman! It's okay! It's nothing!

(CONTINUED)

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)

He should not speak to you that way.

RACHEL (SUBTITLE)

I will move closer. And speak more quietly.

Kalman looks at her and her breath leaves her... until he nods and looks back toward the stage.

Rachel softens her grip on his arm and inches closer, lips near his ear, dreaming through touch.

OLDER ACTOR

Your dreams are mad. The Jew is hated here as everywhere! You are false to your race!

YOUNGER ACTOR

I keep faith with America. America will keep faith with us.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

Elegant, feminine, and fashionable, The Gibson Girl stares down at the street from a towering billboard.

The fragile girl from the steam ship stares up at it.

Suddenly, an overly made-up woman in gaudy clothing jostles her, one of many in a procession of BOWERY PROSTITUTES. The fragile girl watches the gang continue down the street.

Twelve factory girls picket at the corner of Washington Place and Greene Street, their breath visible in the brisk air.

Everyone follows Rachel's questioning gaze to the end of the street where the prostitutes advance toward them.

A TALL PROSTITUTE sidles forward casually toward Rachel.

Eva sees the intent and steps in front of her. The prostitute reels back and slugs Eva in the stomach.

The other strikers watch in shock as the tall prostitute hitches up her skirt and brutally kicks Eva in the face.

The prostitutes charge the strikers with a shriek.

The strikers stand rooted, too overcome with disbelief to adequately defend themselves.

(CONTINUED)

One FAT PROSTITUTE jerks Vincenza back by the hair.

A SKINNY PROSTITUTE flails at Rachel who hits back hard enough to stun. The woman lashes out, grabbing at Rachel's blouse and tearing it from collar to waist.

Rachel recoils in horror, trying to cover herself.

A few COPS arrive, including one perched on horseback...

OFFICER CANTILION-- Eva's attacker and Blanck's lackey.

Shrill whistles bring the fighting to a reluctant halt.

CANTILION

Alright, that's enough! Break it up!... Yeesh, women. Like cats!

Cops chuckle as Cantilion surveys the weeping strikers.

CANTILION (cont'd)

Well, best arrest them.

Cantilion turns away and the officers begin to round up...

The strikers.

Eva, blood trailing down her chin, staggers forward.

EVA

Why are you arresting us? It was--

One of the prostitutes trips her and she stumbles against Cantilion's horse. Cantilion stares down at her.

CANTILION

What's your name?

EVA

Eva... Lansner.

CANTILION

(no recognition)

Eva Lansner, you're under arrest for attempting to assault a police officer just now. Ladies.

Cantilion tips his hat to the laughing prostitutes and pauses to look up at the top floors of the Asch Building.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - DAY

Blanck stands expressionless at the grimy window, staring at the street far below. The factory sprawls out behind him, hoards of fabric piled up in the cavernous silence.

INT. AL SMITH'S OFFICE - DAY

Frances Perkins waits patiently in the plush office with a large gift-wrapped box in her lap.

Bursts of muffled laughter punch through the wall.

The door opens and several POLITICIANS file out, chuckling as they go. Al stops in the doorway and spots Frances.

AL

Miss Perkins, was it?

FRANCES

Was and still is.

AL

(checking his watch)

Seems you made that appointment.

FRANCES

Some months ago now, in fact.

AL

What can I say, Miss Perkins? The opposite of progress is Congress.

Al takes the box from her and escorts her into...

AL'S OFFICE--

Al chomps down on a fresh cigar as Frances looks from the book-lined shelves to stunning view of the world outside.

AL (cont'd)

It's a long way from the Lower East Side, isn't it?

FRANCES

That's where you're from?

AL

The Brooklyn Bridge and I grew up together. You won't believe this, but my first job was gutting fish.

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES

You're right. I don't believe it.

AL

My father died when I was thirteen. So, instead of going to school, I went to the docks. Learned more there anyway. About people. Old man Fulton looked me over and put a knife in my hand.

FRANCES

How does one go from gutting fish to working for Silent Charlie?

AL

(hesitates, uncomfortable)
Running errands. Lamp oil, firewood, bail money. Lots of kids did it. That's just the way it is in the Fourth Ward. You vote for those who take care of you. Charlie took an interest.

(indicating the box)

So, what have you brought me here?

FRANCES

Read the card.

AL

There's nothing on it.

FRANCES

Oh? May I borrow a pen?

Al hands her one and she reads out loud as she writes.

FRANCES (cont'd)

To my friend, Al Smith. Good luck!
Warm regards, Frances Perkins.

AL

Good luck for what?

FRANCES

You'll see when you open it.

Al stands up and tears open the package. Inside he finds several binders full of documentation.

AL

(baffled)
You'll have to forgive me.

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES

It's the latest thing. It's called "data."

AL

I've heard of it. Terribly dull if I remember.

FRANCES

Oh, no. I think it will replace Christianity some day as the primary means of making people more Christian.

AL

And what does this data tell me?

FRANCES

Well, I hate to spoil a good read, but it's essentially everything you need to know about why one should vote a certain fifty-four hour bill into law. A bill that has been getting killed for the past two years. And now, thanks to the canners wanting more amendments than law, will get killed again!

(wilting)

I could have come to Albany with moral philosophy in one hand and the Sermon on the Mount in the other, but instead I came with facts. Ridiculous, isn't it? I see the folly of it now.

AL

(offering a handkerchief)

The canners want eighty hours from their employees in the high season for fear of spoilage.

Frances throws up her hands and Al regards her sympathetically for a moment.

AL (cont'd)

I'll get you your hearing.

(her eyes brighten)

Oh, don't look at me like that Miss Perkins. I'm only doing it so you'll take back your data and get me something nicer.

Frances snickers, comforted. Al smiles warmly.

EXT. JAIL - DAY

A JAILER opens a shrill outer gate. Eva, Rachel, and other strikers trudge out into the morning light.

A clanging noise startles them-- the jailer banging his baton against the bars with a wolfish grin.

JAILER

You degenerates behave now.

Rachel stalks away, clutching her shredded blouse tight.

EVA

Rachel...? Rachel!

Rachel ignores her, leaving Eva to limp behind.

Vincenza heads the other direction... toward the Triangle.

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - DAY

Rachel goes straight behind a curtain of laundry and strips off her torn blouse for a whole one.

JACOB

Rachel?

Her brother peeks out from a shroud of raggedy blankets.

RACHEL

(hastily buttoning up)
Where's papa?

JACOB

Getting more nuts to--

He cuts off in a fit of coughing.

RACHEL

Shh-sh... Hush. Take this.

Rachel sits on the bed and spoons oily medicine into his mouth, noticing how little is left in the bottle.

She hums to him while smoothing his hair away from his eyes.

Eva stands in the doorway, watching. She starts to speak--

Rachel silences her with a look while continuing to hum and soothe her brother. Eva glares back.

(CONTINUED)

EVA
 (mouthing)
 We have to go!

Rachel shakes her head.

EVA (cont'd)
 They need us!

Rachel holds up the nearly empty bottle of medicine.

Eva sees how little is left and softens. She goes and sits at the head of the bed facing Rachel.

EVA (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
It will be better in the long term--

RACHEL (SUBTITLE)
 (indicating Jacob)
How long? Hm?!

EVA
 (arguing over each other)
 If we stand up for our rights--

RACHEL
 One of us must be working--

EVA
 Our *worker's* rights--

RACHEL
 We can't survive without--

EVA
 We will be able to afford--

RACHEL
 Money! We have no money--

EVA
 Better medicine!
 (a step too far)
 After Sylvan, I promised myself
 never again. *Never again!*

RACHEL
 This isn't like that.

EVA
 It's exactly like that!

RACHEL
 What about papa?

(CONTINUED)

EVA
Papa is still grieving.

RACHEL
Are you not?

Hurt, Eva fidgets with the wedding ring on her finger.

EVA
Anyway, what else will you do?

RACHEL
I'll get another job.

EVA
And who will hire a Triangle worker
now? We're strikers.
(off Rachel's silence)
Come with me. Help me show them
that we are not afraid.

Rachel looks in the mirror... at her fearful reflection.

RACHEL
How do you know they will give in?

EVA
What are they going to do? Hire a
bunch of scabs?

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - DAY

Vincenza looks up from inspecting as Blanck escorts several REPORTERS through the chaos. Other scabs labor at nearly every machine.

BLANCK
As you can see, we are operating at
full capacity.

TIMES REPORTER
So, this strike--

BLANCK
Please, if it can even be called
that.

POST REPORTER
What would you call it if not a
strike?

(CONTINUED)

BLANCK

From where I'm standing? A childish spectacle.

TIMES REPORTER

So, you deny that there was ever a lockout of Triangle employees?

BLANCK

You're not blind, Phillip. There's the production line, unmolested--

MILDRED (O.S.)

Papa!

Blanck turns as Millie runs into his open arms, followed by Henrietta. Their prim GOVERNESS smiles joylessly.

BLANCK

Millie! What a pleasant surprise! Gentlemen, these are my daughters. Mildred...

Mildred giggles and hides her face in her father's shoulder. Henrietta smiles politely.

BLANCK (cont'd)

And this lovely angel is Henrietta.

The reporters all tip their caps and smile awkwardly.

BLANCK (cont'd)

Girls, these gentlemen are reporters for the newspapers!

BERNSTEIN

(looking at his watch)
Lunch time!

The machines halt as tired women scrape back their seats.

Blanck pinches Mildred's cheek with a salesman's enthusiasm.

BLANCK

Ah, and now for the fun part!

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, ROOF - DAY

Blanck puts the needle down on a sturdy Victrola and canned violin music pipes out of the large cone. The reporters watch as many of the girls begin to dance with each other.

(CONTINUED)

BLANCK

Dancing, gentlemen! A harmless means of revitalizing the humors.

POST REPORTER

So, what of the claims that your factory is unsafe?

BLANCK

What claims? Union claims? Nothing more than three or four East Side gentlemen who want to step in and tell us how to run our business. You see my children, yes? Would I bring them here if it was not safe? This is a modern building. There is light, bathrooms, every convenience affordable and more. Most of these girls will have none of that when they go home tonight. It's even fireproof, for God's sakes! Do any of you fine gentlemen have daughters? You, Phillip?

The *Times* reporter looks up from his notebook and sees Vincenza watching the strike below. He gives Blanck a smile.

TIMES REPORTER

Three boys.

EXT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

WILLIAM SHEPHERD, a young keen-eyed reporter, strides out the glass doors into the hectic city.

ROSE (O.S.)

William Shepherd?

William turns and sees Rose, almost hidden within the bustle.

WILLIAM

Do I know you?

ROSE

I hear you're an honest reporter.

WILLIAM

There's no such thing. Sorry to disappoint you, Miss...?

ROSE

Schneiderman.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

So I do know you. Rosen Brothers,
wasn't it? And how are things down
at Local Twenty-five?

ROSE

Funny you should ask, Mr. Shepherd.
No one else has.

WILLIAM

Strikes aren't news, Miss
Schneiderman. They're just--

INT. UNION HEADQUARTERS, UPPER OFFICE - NIGHT

ROSE

--Business as usual.

Rose fogs the window pane with her breath and absently draws
a line of skirted stick figures holding hands.

Worn wooden floors groan under foot as MARY DREIER (30s), a
matronly woman with intelligent eyes, shrugs into a shawl.
Leonora pours over a ledger nearby.

MARY

Well, "Bowery prostitutes break
picket line" *is* more of a punchline
than a headline, I should think.

LEONORA

It's to be expected. Newspapers
come from factories, too.

MARY

If you ladies don't need anything
further, I'll see you tomorrow.

LEONORA

Good night, Mary.

Mary exits. Leonora sees Rose staring at nothing outside and
goes to stare at it with her.

LEONORA (cont'd)

You feel that?... Any day now.

ROSE

(distracted)
Hm?

(CONTINUED)

LEONORA

Snow. I heard someone say once that every snowflake is different. Individual like. You heard that?

ROSE

How much?

LEONORA

(hesitates)

Five dollars.

ROSE

Against the Triangle.

LEONORA

How many prostitutes you think five dollars would fetch us, eh--?

ROSE

That's not funny--

LEONORA

Who's laughing? Not those Bowery tarts once we salt the line with a few of those south side Italians, that's certain. I hear those doxies go straight for the eyes.

ROSE

We should have waited--

LEONORA

We didn't wait for Rosen Brothers--

ROSE

And now all the large manufacturers are ready for us. Besides, the moment that strike ended almost every worker left the union.

LEONORA

Well, that's garment workers. Damn fine strikers, no question. Piss poor unionists.

ROSE

We should have waited--

LEONORA

Until when--?

ROSE

Until we could win!

(CONTINUED)

LEONORA

Oh, of course. Very sensible--

ROSE

Nora! Can you not see how this will unfold?

LEONORA

Ruinously, I expect.

ROSE

We have no money--

LEONORA

Aye--

ROSE

No press--

LEONORA

None at all--

ROSE

And if we did it wouldn't matter because for every girl on strike there are ten more lined up behind her begging to take her job!

LEONORA

Cap makers are a dime a dozen--

ROSE

Oh, you're impossible!

LEONORA

Only one thing for it, love. March that fiver down to the pub and bend the elbow til we're right langered.

ROSE

What do you want from me, Nora?! We can't beat--

LEONORA

(suddenly scary)

I want you to make them *bleed*...! For what they've done to us. For what they've *all* done to us. To you! We can't beat them? Fine. But we can *fight* them. We fight them and we draw what blood we can. Whatever blood's in them, we make them shed it because we've shed ours, by God!

(CONTINUED)

LEONORA (cont'd)

We fight to win or we fight anyhow!
 (composing herself)
 Now, Max Blanck and Isaac Harris
 send Bowery prostitutes to break
 the line. Why?

ROSE

To... to prove a point.

LEONORA

Which is?

ROSE

That the line can be broken.

LEONORA

Good. Will they do it again?

ROSE

Of course they will! They'll send
 anything that money can buy to
 break the line over and over again
 until it stays broken! We cannot
 stop them from breaking it--!

Leonora sees the sudden spark in Rose's eyes...

ROSE (cont'd)

We cannot stop them from breaking
 it...

...and a smile passes across Leonora's lips.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

Cantilion yawns as he watches SCABS exit the building,
 skulking past the strikers.

Bernstein steps out and sees Mary Dreier speaking urgently
 with one of the SCABS. He rushes over and shoves Mary back.

BERNSTEIN

Hey! HEY! You're a dirty liar!

MARY

(turning to Cantilion)
 You saw that? You heard the
 language that man addressed to me?
 Am I not entitled to your
 protection?

(CONTINUED)

CANTILION

How do I know that you are not a
dirty liar?

MARY

The same way I know that you are
not an honest policeman.

CANTILION

(stunned)

Let's you and me take a walk, lady.

Cantilion leads her away, unaware of her slight smile.

Eva watches them pass, then sprints away.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

William Shepherd scribbles madly on a note pad. Behind him, a
NEWSBOY points him out for Eva.

EVA

Mr. Shepherd? From Rose
Schneiderman.

William perks up at her name and takes the folded piece of
paper. A smile creeps across his face as he scans it.

WILLIAM

Atta girl.

INT. MEN'S CLUB RESTAURANT - DAY

Isaac Harris eats in a corner booth of the plush restaurant.
Max Blanck enters and slaps the morning paper on the table.

The headline reads "UNION PRESIDENT ARRESTED ON PICKET LINE."

Harris barely glances at it as Blanck slings his coat and hat
into the arms of a PORTER and sits in a huff.

BLANCK

Have you seen this? It's front page
in four major papers! God damned
fool! How could he be so stupid?

HARRIS

Because no one expected the union
to be that clever. And now they've
managed to schedule a rally with
several prominent union heads.

(CONTINUED)

BLANCK
They'll call for a mass strike.

HARRIS
And may succeed. Which is why we
must bolster our defenses.

BLANCK
Tammany Hall?

HARRIS
Tammany's wounded. First the
elections and now this business
with the police. No, Max, we must
look to the union's example.

The porter returns with coffee. Blanck sips thoughtfully
while Harris eats without concern.

BLANCK (V.O.)
Gentlemen...

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, WASHINGTON PLACE - DAY

Strikers sing in the brisk morning as a PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER
motions for them to bunch together. Eva hugs Rachel close and
smiles brightly as the photographer ducks under the camera.

BLANCK (V.O.)
You are aware of the agitation that
is now going on in our shops.

The women stand proudly together as the camera shutter opens.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - DAY

Above the strike, Vincenza gazes at the window as a PRIEST
scolds the Italian workers during a lunch break.

CATHOLIC PRIEST (SUBTITLE)
"Six days shalt thou labor!"

BLANCK (V.O.)
Our satisfied workers are being
molested and interfered with...

EXT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

The fragile girl from the steam ship trembles against the
cold and feebly tries to sell matches to passersby.

(CONTINUED)

A line of people rounds a windowless brownstone building and descends the cellar steps.

BLANCK (V.O.)
...and the so-called union...

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

A low-ceilinged auditorium packed full of immigrant workers gaze up at Clara as she pounds the pulpit.

CLARA (SUBTITLE)
*I have no further patience for
talk...*

Rose watches, lost at the back of the crowd as the auditorium explodes into applause. The roar comes together in booming chants of "*STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE!*"

BLANCK (V.O.)
...is now preparing to call a
general strike.

INT. DIAMOND SHIRTWAIST FACTORY - DAY

A clock on the wall ticks toward 2:00. 3... 2... 1...

A sewing machine comes to a sudden stop in mid stitch.

The SEAMSTRESS looking at the clock stands up with her coat and hat in hand.

All down the work line, sewing machines grind to a halt.

INT. CIRCLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY - DAY

Steam clings to the damp walls as it rises off the unattended machines. A FOREMAN watches in surprise as WORKING WOMEN rise from their seats and start for the exit.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Workers file out of factories. PEOPLE stare out of cafe windows and stop on the sidewalk to gawk.

The procession marches past alleys clogged with lines of laundry flapping like flags in a parade.

INT. UNION HEADQUARTERS, RECEPTION - DAY

Chaos rules. Striking workers choke the room, each shouting to be heard. Mary argues with a man while Leonora sorts through sheaves of documents. Rose points more girls toward the exit, instructing them in Yiddish.

ROSE

NEXT!

Two FACTORY OWNERS step forward, out of place with their nice clothing and sullen faces.

BLANCK (V.O.)

In order to prevent this irresponsible union in gaining the upper hand, let us know as soon as possible...

ROSE

(absently)

Where do you work?

EDMONSSON

The Edmonsson and Gable Company.

ROSE

And what are your names?

The factory owners share a defeated look.

EDMONSSON

Edmonsson.

GABLE

And Gable.

Rose looks up, sees their expressions, and fights a smile.

BLANCK (V.O.)

...if you are willing to enter into an alliance against them.

INT. BROADWAY CENTRAL HOTEL, BALLROOM - DAY

Max Blanck and Isaac Harris sit prominently among a large number of FACTORY OWNERS in the opulent ballroom.

FACTORY OWNER 1

(pounds fist on the table)

Seventy!

(CONTINUED)

FACTORY OWNER 2

In two days.

FACTORY OWNER 1

In two days! Who can say how many more factories will give in today!

FACTORY OWNER 3

It was a panicked response by the smaller companies.

FACTORY OWNER 4

That is only so reassuring in light of the fact that we are all here.

FACTORY OWNER 1

We underestimated them and now we're paying for it!

FACTORY OWNER 2

Please! The girls who come into my shop barely know needle and thread as it is.

FACTORY OWNER 3

I say we sit back and let the union exhaust itself.

FACTORY OWNER 4

Max? Isaac? You called this meeting. Where does the Triangle stand?

Blanck and Harris share a look before Blanck rises.

BLANCK

I fled Russia when I was twenty-two years old. My home. Beatings, massacres, homes and shops broken and burned... these were common things in the land I left behind. I earned everything I have with hands that came to this country with nothing in them. Now this union - workers who work less and make more than I ever did - comes and tells me how I must do things. They tell me that I am the oppressor! These workers came in search of a job and we gave them one. If they want a better life... then let them make one for themselves just as I did!

Applause and shouts of "Hear! Hear!" echo in the great space.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIS

Three things are imperative. First, we must put an end to the panic and prevent any further capitulation to the union. Second, we must withstand the strike. Third, and most important...

(presenting a document)

...the union must be crushed.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

Cops, including Cantilion, arrest a handful of strikers.

Vincenza hides her face as she exits the building and skirts the commotion.

Two young Italian men, one with the eyes of a VULTURE, the other the face of a BULLDOG, turn from the crowd and follow.

Vincenza senses someone gaining on her and glances over her shoulder. She gasps in fright and bolts.

The men easily catch her and throw her up against an alley wall. Vincenza fights--then freezes in shock as Vulture slaps her once-- twice.

VULTURE (SUBTITLE)

Six months! Six months we look for you! We fear you are dead! And where do you go?!

(slaps her again)

To the fucking Jews--?!

Out of nowhere-- Kalman barrels into Bulldog-- grabs Vulture and tears him away from Vincenza.

Kalman and Vulture grapple, locked together, bodies twisting like wild dogs snapping at each other.

Bulldog grabs Kalman in a headlock-- pulls him back-- pries at the fingers clinging to Vulture.

In Vulture's hand-- a straight razor-- twisting his wrist to swipe at Kalman's face.

Vincenza-- suddenly on Vulture's back, biting his ear like an animal. He screams but she only gnashes down harder.

He flails at Vincenza with the razor.

Kalman roars-- kicks Vulture in the stomach--

(CONTINUED)

Bulldog drags Kalman back-- Kalman lunges against the alley wall, smashing the back of his head against Bulldog's face--

Again--

And again--

Bulldog lets go, dazed-- gropes blindly--

Kalman throws himself at Vulture-- hands around his throat-- sees the razor and grabs it.

VINCENZA

Kalman?

Kalman looks at her-- bloodlust drains from his eyes as he sees her bloody fingers pressed against her neck.

Kalman takes Vincenza's hand and runs from the alley.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - GREENE STREET

Kalman senses Vincenza fainting. Picks her up like a bundle of cloth and runs toward the Triangle.

He stops, eyes desperately searching the busy street for someone who can help.

Cops and strikers are gone. Pedestrians avoid him.

Frantic, Kalman dashes into the Asch building.

INT. ASCH BUILDING - LOBBY

Kalman hurries to the humming elevator shaft only to find the compartment moving somewhere in the stories high above.

He vaults up the stairs, taking them two at a time, Vincenza limp in his arms.

INT. ASCH BUILDING - GREENE STREET STAIRS

Kalman pushes himself up flight after flight, blind to his own burning legs and labored breathing.

He senses something-- The elevator descending, only one flight above.

KALMAN

(in broken English)
Please! Please to good!

(CONTINUED)

Faces peer down at him through the grating. The operator...
...and Max Blanck.

KALMAN (cont'd)
(showing Vincenza to them)
Please?!

BLANCK
Take her to a hospital. Or the
police.

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
*She was attacked! I beg of you! I
can help her! I only need a needle
and thread!*

Blanck looks up at Kalman as the elevator continues down.

KALMAN (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
I beg of you...

INT. ASCH BUILDING - 9TH FLOOR

Needle clenched in his teeth, Kalman runs a piece of waist fabric under water. Vincenza glances the other way.

Blanck hovers nearby, watching. Expressionless.

Kalman readies the cloth-- realizes what it is-- and stops. He looks at the owner.

Blanck nods his consent.

Kalman gently cleans the wound, then tries to thread the needle. His hands shake from the adrenaline, the anxiety...

BLANCK
Here. Let me.

Blanck throws his coat over a chair and sits next to Vincenza. She looks nervously at the factory owner as he skillfully threads the needle.

He reaches into his coat and removes a flask, dripping the liquor over the needle. Vincenza bites her lip as Blanck then pours some onto her wound.

Kalman watches as Blanck tilts her head and sinks the needle into her neck. Tears spring to her eyes but she makes no sound. Just stares at Kalman who stares right back.

(CONTINUED)

BLANCK (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
 (in Yiddish)
What is her name?

KALMAN
 Vincenza.

BLANCK (SUBTITLE)
Does she work for me?

KALMAN
 Da.

BLANCK (SUBTITLE)
Do you?

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
 (hesitates)
I do.

BLANCK (SUBTITLE)
A cutter?

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
I make button holes.

Blanck bites the thread and ties off the stitches. He grabs a nearby spool of lace and fashions an attractive bandage.

VINCENZA
 Very thank.

Blanck nods and throws the bloody cloth into the garbage.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A woman's shirt waist sits in a store window display.

Vincenza inspects her stitches in the window's reflection. Her eyes move from the wound to Kalman, standing behind her.

KALMAN
 I sorry you... bad.

VINCENZA
 Familia... is my brother and...
 (searching for the word)
 ...hu-husband. But no husband.
 (in Italian)
They can't make me marry him.

Kalman hasn't understood a word. Vincenza smiles and shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENZA (cont'd)
 You? Familia? Familee?

KALMAN
 Ah! Yes. Mah-mahth-momther.

Vicenza bursts into laughter at his struggle.

Kalman stares at her-- the brightness of her-- and smiles.

VINCENZA
 You and I English no good!

KALMAN
Is good! We very good!
 (reciting)
 I work in the fecktory.
 (prompting her to repeat)
 I work in the fecktory.

VINCENZA
 I wohrk een ta factoorry.

KALMAN
 I liff in Noo York City.

VINCENZA
 I leev een New York Ceetee.

KALMAN
 Yes? I am Americken.

VINCENZA
 I em Amereeken.
 (smiling)
 You is good English.

He points at a nearby store front with a FOR RENT sign.

KALMAN
 Fecktory. I make good fecktory.
 (nodding at the store)
 You work in the fecktory?

She doesn't understand-- shrugs and smiles. She brushes the hair out of his eyes.

VINCENZA (SUBTITLE)
 (in Italian)
Why are you so kind to me? Can you not see what your kindness is doing to me? How unhappy I will be...
 (in broken English)
 Good night, Kalman.

(CONTINUED)

She trails her fingers across his face with a sad smile and walks away. Kalman watches her go, full of hope.

KALMAN
Good night, Vincenza.

EXT. MAGISTRATE'S COURT - NIGHT

Rose and Leonora make their way through the crowds of lewd drunks, rowdies, lechers, and thieves. Rose tries to be invisible while Leonora rails back at the hecklers.

A gavel pounds.

INT. MAGISTRATE'S COURT - NIGHT

BAILIFFS haul a DRUNKARD out as Rose and Leonora enter and seat themselves in the back. Leonora's eyes drift to a WOMAN in an enormous feathered hat sitting off to the side.

LEONORA
Holy Mary and all the saints...
Wake your reporter, love.

ROSE
You know her?

LEONORA
Everyone does.

INT. MAGISTRATE'S COURT - NIGHT

Three STRIKERS are brought before the magistrate as William Shepherd slinks in the back next to Rose and Leonora.

WILLIAM
(hushed voice)
It's three in the morning, ladies.

LEONORA
News never sleeps, Mr. Shepherd.

WILLIAM
It's a big pond, Miss whatever-your-name-is, and these are small fry...

He trails off as his gaze finally lands on the woman in the feather hat. He frantically gets out pencil and pad.

LEONORA
O'Reilly... and you're welcome.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE

(to the strikers)

For this disturbance of not only the peace, but also the prosperity of hard-working citizens, you are remanded to the county lock-up for five days. Can you pay your bail?

STRIKER

We don't have any money, sir.

JUDGE

Five days then. So ordered until or unless bail is procured.

ALVA BELMONT (O.S.)

I can give my house.

Eyes go to the woman in the feather hat, ALVA BELMONT, a brazen and extravagant woman in her middle fifties.

JUDGE

Your house, madame?

ALVA BELMONT

Yes, number four-seventy-seven Madison Avenue. As surety for these poor girls.

JUDGE

Madame, the bail is four hundred dollars in total.

ALVA BELMONT

Sir, my house is valued at four hundred *thousand*.

EXT. MAGISTRATE'S COURT - NIGHT

A chauffeur readies the door for a huffing Alva Belmont as William hustles next to her, pencil scribbling.

ALVA BELMONT

There will be a different order of things when we have women judges on the bench.

(getting into her car)

Let me assure you, too, that the time is not far away when we *will* have women judges.

INT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING, HEARING CHAMBER - DAY

Al Smith sits with other MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY, imposing men peering over spectacles. The ASSEMBLY CHAIR, a jowly, hard-eyed man, pounds his gavel.

ASSEMBLY CHAIR

The committee will now be pleased to hear from Miss Frances Perkins of the Consumer's League.

Trembling, Frances comes forward. She sets several folders on the dais, barely catching one as it slides off.

FRANCES

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the assembly. G-good morning. I come before you today concerning a matter of grave importance.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

Strikers gather outside the Triangle, their anger puffing into the frigid air as they chant "COME OUT YOU SCAB!"

Rachel chants halfheartedly, distracted by a vendor some distance away selling steaming rolls.

She tears her eyes away and sees Kalman, skulking in an alleyway. She can't help but smile at the sight of him.

Kalman straightens and Rachel follows his gaze...

...to Vincenza, arriving for work.

Rachel sets her jaw and starts toward the Vincenza, still carrying her picket sign, walking faster, fists clenched.

Suddenly, A BODYGUARD steps forward and punches Rachel in the chest.

Rachel crumples.

The bodyguard grabs Vincenza by the arm and escorts her toward the building.

Cantilion strolls over, lifts Rachel to her feet, and begins to cuff her.

RACHEL

(struggling to breathe)
Wh...what are you d-doing? That man attacked m-me!

(CONTINUED)

CANTILION

I saw. Just after you assaulted
that young woman trying to do an
honest day's work.

Rachel spits in face, surprising both of them.

Cantilion answers with a blinding backhand.

CANTILION (cont'd)

Now, you'll come along quietly--

Rachel's sign whistles around and breaks against Cantilion's
head. His cry of surprise is swallowed by Vincenza's yell as
she jumps on his back and tears at him.

Pandemonium erupts. Strikers charge the strike breakers.
Loitering COPS ditch their smokes and rush into the fray.

Cantilion throws Vincenza to the ground and kicks her--

Kalman slams into him-- hammers him with his fists.

VINCENZA AND RACHEL

KALMAN!

He stops as Rachel tugs him away from the dazed Cantilion.

Kalman crawls toward Vincenza but Rachel keeps pulling him.

RACHEL (SUBTITLE)

*You can't! You can't be arrested
again! They'll lock you away!*

VINCENZA

Go! Kalman, GO!

RACHEL (SUBTITLE)

*You won't see your mother! You
won't see anyone! KALMAN!*

Something breaks through. Kalman looks around, frantic, and
sprints off down an alley.

FRANCES (PRELAP)

The long hours and unsanitary
conditions result in severe health
complications for many women.

INT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING - HEARING CHAMBER - DAY

Frances still stands before the committee, well into her
presentation. She has settled into something of a monotone.

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES

Poor ventilation has resulted in numerous cases of tuberculosis, not to mention the ever present danger--

Glancing up, she sees that almost everyone in the committee is distracted or disinterested.

FRANCES (cont'd)

-- um... in danger from the possible outbreak of fires. Further research--

AL

Miss Perkins?

FRANCES

(surprised)

Yes?

AL

Were you there?

FRANCES

I-I'm sorry?

AL

Were you there, Miss Perkins? Have you actually seen these things?

FRANCES

Yes. Of course.

AL

Perhaps you could tell us what you've seen.

Frances blinks, unsure exactly what is being asked of her.

AL (cont'd)

Miss Perkins, if I were to walk into one of these factories or laundries, can you describe for me what I would see based on your own experience?

FRANCES

Well, I... the first thing is the heat. I am never quite prepared for it myself. The air is stale. Everything is dim, even in these large - the so-called modern factories.

(CONTINUED)

AL

And the people, Miss Perkins? What do the people look like?

The committee begins to show interest. Frances grows bolder.

FRANCES

May I be completely honest, Mr. Smith?

AL

Please.

FRANCES

They look hopeless, sir.

ASSEMBLY CHAIR

Hopeless?

FRANCES

Yes, sir. I have seen consumptive bakers coughing into the dough that makes your bread. But they can't take the time to recover or they'll lose their jobs. So, they look hopeless because such is their situation. I have seen basement laundries full of women deformed from spending endless hours with their arms immersed in hot starch. They can no longer stand up straight and they weep from the terrible pain in their legs and bones but they continue to work because they must. I have seen young girls, faint with hunger, carrying their weight in clothing home so that they can continue to work even after they've already spent as many as sixteen hours in the factory that day. I have seen five-year old children with fingers lost in the industrial machinery of a candy factory. *A candy factory!*

A uncomfortable silence settles over the assembly.

AL

Well, that is certainly a very troubling account to any who calls himself a Christian, Miss Perkins. As troubling as it is, however, what this assembly requires in order to act on it... is data.

(CONTINUED)

AL (cont'd)
 (off her surprised look)
 Can you provide us with data, Miss Perkins?

FRANCES
 Yes, Mr. Smith, I most assuredly can.

Al nods, all innocence as Frances fights to hide a smile.

INT. UNION HEADQUARTERS, UPPER OFFICE - DAY

Alva Belmont stares out of the front page of a newspaper beneath the headline "MRS. O.H.P. BELMONT CALLS FOR ACTION!"

Clara is a ball of fury. Rose barely contains her temper. Leonora and Mary watch.

CLARA
 A nicer building full of richer people. But the same lies!

ROSE
 We need their money and the publicity that comes with it!

CLARA
 Publicity?! Parties and love affairs and sins of extravagance? You would have that become the face of the union!

ROSE
 If Belmont or any other socialite is not too proud to offer help, I am not too proud to accept it!

CLARA
 Pharaoh made Joseph a king... and his children slaves.

ROSE
 I don't recall Karl Marx being the one to free them!

MARY DREIER
 Ladies--

CLARA
 You think they will help us? I say you will open the newspapers and see their sparkling gentile faces and wonder who really helped whom!

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I am trying to feed twenty-thousand
unemployed shirtwaist makers!

CLARA

And I am trying to free working
Israel! But why have equality when
you can have table scraps courtesy
of Rose Schneiderman, the people's
capitalist!

Clara storms out, slamming the door behind her.

Leonora shakes with the effort to contain her laughter.

MARY DREIER

What's so funny?

LEONORA

Karl Marx? I was like to piddle
when I heard that one, love!

The other two women begin to laugh in spite of themselves.

A shriek emanates from downstairs, followed by violent
commotion and footsteps. Eva bursts in, panic in her eyes.

INT. UNION HEADQUARTERS, RECEPTION - DAY

Rose, Leonora, and Mary follow Eva into the reception area
where a bruised Cantilion and other cops conduct a raid.

MARY DREIER

What in God's name do you think
you're doing?

CANTILION

Upholding the law.

LEONORA

Keeping the city safe from orphans,
cripples, and starving women are
you, Officer Cantilion? God bless
and keep you for it! Bless you with
twice the brains now in your skull
and keep you content knowing you'd
still only have half a head full.

CANTILION

Still insulting the law?

(CONTINUED)

LEONORA

The law? Gracious no, sir! Just
cops.

CANTILION

(to one of the cops)
Sergeant! I want you to arrest...
that woman.

Cantilion points at Eva. Eva looks back in fear as the sergeant herds her out. Cantilion signals the others to go, tipping his hat to Rose and the others on his way out.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Rachel sits with a dozen other strikers, one eye swollen nearly shut. Scowling thugs, addicts, and harlots glare at them from the surrounding cells.

Vincenza cups her hand outside the barred window, slurping the cold rainwater that runs down her arm.

A scabby PROSTITUTE sneers at her from an adjacent cell.

PROSTITUTE

Hey! Porca puttana!
(spreads her legs)
I got something you can drink.

The prostitute cackles and the other cells join in.

PROSTITUTE (cont'd)

(off Rachel's shock)
What are you looking at, you one-
eyed kike!

Rachel looks away, brushing angry tears from her eyes.

A door opens and a GUARD enters with Eva. He opens the cell and turns her around to face him. She shivers as he gropes her breasts... and then shoves her into the cell.

Vincenza throws herself at the bars, cursing in Italian.

Rachel helps her sister off the floor and holds her.

EVA

Everything will be alright. Rose
will come. She--

She stops at the sight of her finger with no ring on it. A glimmer catches her eye as she see's the prostitute reach through the bars and pick it up. Eva rushes over.

(CONTINUED)

EVA (cont'd)

My ring!

PROSTITUTE

My ring... husband gave it to me!

The cells bray with laughter. Tears begin to stream down Eva's trembling face and she fights to calm her desperation.

EVA

It belonged to his mother. His grandmother before her. It was the only thing of value he brought with him to America. We were at the pier and he slipped it on my finger. He said... said it would honor him if I... if I would... He said that. Sylvan said that. His name was Sylvan... please... please...

The prostitute weighs Eva's tears and finally plops the ring into her outstretched hand. Eva slips it on her finger and bursts into tears.

Rachel takes her sister into her arms and comforts her.

Vincenza watches them... then stares back out the window.

EXT. HEBREW QUARTER - NIGHT

Kalman launches himself up the rickety fire escape and pulls the brick that hides his fruit tin.

He opens it up-- sees his savings tucked within.

Sniffling inside the apartment. Kalman looks inside and sees his mother sitting at her bedside, weeping in the darkness as she stares at the wall.

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)

Mother?

Kalman climbs into the room and tenderly wipes her nose and cheeks with a handkerchief.

KALMAN (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)

Mother, you must not cry. I am going to take care of you--

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)

You already take care of me--

(CONTINUED)

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
*We are going to live in a house
 like in the old country. And you
 are going to be so happy, mother. I
 promise. I want you to be happy.*

She looks at him-- really sees him for the first time-- and gives him a sad smile.

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
*My son.
 (sees the fruit tin)
 Is that supper?*

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
 (awkward)
It is nothing--

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
There's money in there--

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
Mother, listen to me--

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
 (filling with hope)
We could go to--

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
This is for our future--

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
It would be nothing. A few dollars--

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
Mother, no!

Her pale face contorts into miserable tears. Kalman tries to wipe her cheeks again but she avoids him like a child. He sighs and retreats out the window.

KALMAN (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
I will take care of you.

Holding his money close, he climbs down the fire escape while his mother cries in the darkness.

EXT. HIPPODROME - NIGHT

An elevated train barrels past the mammoth amphitheater where several American flags flutter in the breeze.

(CONTINUED)

Hundreds mill about outside as police officers turn them away from the doors. Band music hums through the air.

INT. HIPPODROME - NIGHT

A military band plays patriotic music. Thousands gather within the sprawling theater.

Club and party flags hang from the balcony railings. Large blue banners with white writing adorn the side walls:

"VOTES FOR WOMEN!" and "GIVE WOMEN THE PROTECTION OF THE VOTE!"

74 Swallowed up in them all is the Women's Trade Union League.74

Alva Belmont, ever-lavish in appearance, swoops down on Leonora with an athletic-looking, bold-eyed SOCIALITE (mid 30s) at her shoulder.

ALVA BELMONT

(shouting to be heard)

Miss O'Reilly! Miss O'Reilly! Isn't it wonderful, my dear!? The whole city is rallying behind us now! Except for those Tammany fools. Not a single one accepted my invitation to be here tonight! Not the mayor, the district attorney, the archbishop. Not one!

LEONORA

Surely they were having trouble finding someone to tailor them a shirt for the occasion.

The joke takes a moment to sink in before Belmont laughs.

ALVA BELMONT

Oh! A tailor! How wonderful! Who knew the Irish could be so droll?

(noticing Rose)

My dear, may I have the very great pleasure of introducing my good friend, Miss Anne Morgan, of the J.P. Morgans.

The socialite at Belmont's shoulder steps forward.

ANNE MORGAN

Alva and I have decided that your little troop must join us for lunch at the Colony Club.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE MORGAN (cont'd)

I know many of our members would be eager to hear from all of you.

ALVA BELMONT

Anything other than a "yes" is out of the question.

LEONORA

Mrs. Belmont, we're overwhelmed. You've done so much already.

ALVA BELMONT

Nonsense, my dear. A cause such as ours knows no end to sacrifice.

LEONORA

And which cause is that, Mrs. Belmont?

ALVA BELMONT

Why, equality, of course. There is a bond between us women, Miss O'Reilly. When women unite, progress is achieved. Like tonight. Imagine what we could do for these poor young girls if we had the vote to fight with!

LEONORA

Yes, I can picture it. Twenty thousand striking voters.

ANNE MORGAN

What Mrs. Belmont means is that the natural compassion of women might prevent such measures if recognized at the ballot box.

LEONORA

If that were true, then the ballot would do for women what it has never done for men.

Mrs. Belmont blinks uneasily before recovering with a laugh.

ALVA BELMONT

Who knew the Irish could be so droll? Oh, my dear, men are such ungainly creatures. I would know. I married two of them!

Belmont and her entourage laugh. Leonora can only smile.

(CONTINUED)

ALVA BELMONT (cont'd)
 And where is our lovely Miss
 Schneiderman?

LEONORA
 Rose is... among thorns.

INT. MAGISTRATE'S COURT - COURTROOM - NIGHT

Rose sits in the back of the gallery, beyond notice. She looks as the door opens and a breathless Kalman, holding a small fruit tin, eases in and sits down nearby.

Vincenza, Rachel, Eva, and others stand before the MAGISTRATE, a pious and droopy-eyed curmudgeon.

MAGISTRATE
 --In light of the evidence against
 you and given the unruly and
 troublesome nature of strikers in
 general, I find all of you guilty.

Rose readies a scrip of money--

MAGISTRATE (cont'd)
 Normally I would levy the standard
 fine and have done with you. But it
 seems this system will only be
 abused by some charitable person
 who will pay these fines and put
 you right back out on the picket
 line where your disregard for
 civility can only be emboldened. I
 therefore see no other alternative.
 You are hereby committed to the
 workhouse on Blackwell Island.

One of the strikers faints as the gavel bangs. Rose and Kalman both shoot to their feet.

ROSE
 Cannot this sentence be mollified?

MAGISTRATE
 It most certainly cannot! Strikes
 and strikers are an offense in the
 eyes of God.

Eva glares at the magistrate through tears of anger as a bailiff escorts them from the courtroom.

(CONTINUED)

MAGISTRATE (cont'd)

For in the garden He commanded: "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, 'til thou return unto the ground. For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return!"

EXT. BLACKWELL ISLAND - DAY

The gangplank hits the deck and a cluster of prisoners begin trooping off the ferry. Small, fearful, and wide-eyed, Vincenza, Sonya, Eva, and Rachel step onto the island.

Sullen prisoners populate the drab and joyless island, performing a multitude of back-breaking chores.

GUARD

Keep it moving!

The girls shrug into their pitiful coats and walk forward.

INT. BLACKWELL ISLAND - LAUNDRY - DAY

A fat LAUNDRY WORKER hands folded jumpsuits to each of the girls amid the din of washing and cleaning.

INT. BLACKWELL ISLAND - SEWING ROOM - DAY

A burly MATRON opens a heavy metal door with a metallic thud.

The four girls enter, their prison clothes outreaching their hands by several inches, the pant legs bunched at the heels.

A few pedal sewing machines sit atop tables buried beneath clothing and other sewing essentials.

MATRON

If it has a tear, stitch it. If it has a hole, patch it. If it can't be stitched or patched, use it for patching the stuff that can. Dinner's at six o'clock. If these piles are finished, you can eat.

The matron closes and locks the door. The girls stand there, looking at the piles of clothing. Rachel begins to sniffle.

Vincenza begins to laugh. The other two stare at her.

A smile spreads over Eva's face and she begins to giggle.

(CONTINUED)

LEONORA (PRELAP)
 In many of the places the girls are
 known by numbers.

Rachel can't help herself and her tears turn to laughter.

LEONORA (PRELAP) (cont'd)
 Italians will be placed side by
 side with Jews, and race antagonism
 worked on to keep the girls at
 dagger's points.

INT. COLONY CLUB GYMNASIUM - DAY

William Shepherd scribbles notes in a pad. He looks up at the
 gathering of one hundred and fifty HIGH SOCIETY WOMEN, the
 very cream of New York, all politely listening.

LEONORA (O.S.)
 There will be created a distinct
 feeling against any sort of
 organization and fellowship. Girls
 will work side by side for weeks
 without knowing each other's names.

Mary, Clara, Rose, and others sit at a table apart. Leonora
 stands at a lavishly decorated pulpit.

81 LEONORA (cont'd) 81
 Many girls in this fight have come
 to know each other's names and to
 know a sisterly feeling for the
 first time in their lives.

Leonora gazes out at the crowd for a moment, then sits down.

From the middle of the congregation, one RICH WOMAN, rises.

RICH WOMAN
 Miss O'Reilly, what do the strikers
 need most?

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Rose watches, hiding amid a crowd of cheering ONLOOKERS as
 some dozen lavishly decorated automobiles glide through the
 garment district, Anne Morgan waving in the lead convertible.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, LOBBY - DAY

Max Blanck strides into the waiting elevator. The operator closes the door and the platform begins its slow ascent.

AT THE PARADE--

Vincenza, Rachel, and Eva wave from another car, wearing large bronze medals and sashes labelled "WORKHOUSE."

Vincenza, overwhelmed, spots Kalman in the crowd and waves. Kalman sees her and waves back.

IN THE ELEVATOR--

Blanck stares ahead expressionless as the elevator rises past the 8th floor, humming with the activity of the cutters.

AT THE PARADE--

Vicnenza laughs and throws her arms in the air.

VINCENZA

Kalman! Noo York Ceetee!

KALMAN

New Yoork City, yes!

Rachel sees the joy in Kalman's face and looks away, fights tears to keep smiling as she continues to wave.

IN THE ELEVATOR--

The elevator crests the 9th floor where the roar of a hundred sewing machines floods the senses.

AT THE PARADE--

Kalman fights the crowd to stay even with the car. Vincenza twists to look back at him.

VINCENZA

I work een ze fahktory! I em good
English, yes!

KALMAN

Very good English!

He watches the car continue on, takes a deep decisive breath, and sprints off as snowflakes begin to fall.

IN THE ELEVATOR--

(CONTINUED)

Blanck steps out of the lift as it stops on 10, the sound of steam presses hissing as he walks down the hallway and into--

INT. ASCH BUILDING, BLANCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Blanck sheds his coat as his assistant enters with coffee.

BLANCK
I'd like to write a letter, Eddie.

ASSISTANT
(readying for dictation)
Ready when you are, Mr. Blanck.

BLANCK
(hint of a smile)
To Miss Anne Morgan...

EXT. HEBREW QUARTER - NIGHT

Kalman launches himself up the rickety fire escape and pulls the brick that hides his fruit tin.

The tin is gone.

Panicked, Kalman feels in the depression-- tears his little world apart looking--

And stops.

He goes to the window, opens it, and looks inside.

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
Mother?

Her bed lies empty.

INT. SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

Kalman bursts into a dim world of smoke and stained floors. He squints through DRUNKS laughing and crying and singing Jewish songs of celebration.

Kalman's mother hoists a cup at the sight of her son.

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
Kalman! Join us! Come come!
(to the others)
This is my son. He speaks English!

The drunks toast him as Kalman approaches in an anxious daze.

(CONTINUED)

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
Mother? What have you done?

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
*Always so glum. I want you to be
 happy! Life is good! Life is--*

She stops as he sees the tin on the table. He slowly picks it up... and sees only a few bills remain inside.

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
Kalman. My son, I--

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
Mother!... What have you done?

She tries to laugh-- to smile-- and bursts into drunken sobs.

Kalman stands beside her, trembling, torn between striking her and consoling her. After a long moment he sits beside her and tenderly hugs her as one would a penitent child.

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
*I'm sorry, my son. I just wanted to
 be happy and now, now you hate me!*

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
You are my mother and I love you.

KALMAN'S MOTHER (SUBTITLE)
I just wanted to be happy!

KALMAN (SUBTITLE)
I know, mother... I know...

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - DAY

Eva drips water into Jacob's medicine bottle, shakes it thoroughly, and pours the diluted solution into a spoon.

She sits down next to Jacob and works the medicine into his mouth. He coughs - his breath rattling with tuberculosis.

Mr. Lansner, sleeping on the floor nearby, stirs.

MR. LANSNER
Sadie?

EVA
No, papa.

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
I was dreaming about your mother.

(CONTINUED)

EVA (SUBTITLE)
It was a good dream then?

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
I am already forgetting it. Was I smiling?

EVA (SUBTITLE)
For a moment.

Rachel enters with a few pitiful sticks of firewood and places them in the stove.

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
I thought your zeal for the strike would warm us surely.

EVA (SUBTITLE)
Most of the factories have given up. Girls are going back to work.

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
You are here.

EVA (SUBTITLE)
Our factory still does not recognize the union.

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
But they will soon?

Eva looks at Rachel, then nods. Mr. Lansner stares at his daughters for a long while--

Suddenly, Rachel gasps.

Mr. Lansner and Eva look--

Jacob eyes stare half-lidded back at them, dimmed by death.

LEONORA (PRELAP)
 On the matter of a twenty percent increase in pay for all factory employees, we are agreed.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The Lansners and a few others grieve over a small plot in a pauper's field tucked in an alley between tenement buildings.

(CONTINUED)

LEONORA (V.O.)

On the matter of working hours not exceeding fifty-four per week, we are agreed.

Mr. Lansner, sleepless and tearless, stares at nothing.

Eva weeps inconsolably.

Rachel's tears move between sadness-- and anger.

LEONORA (V.O.)

On the matter of overtime pay during the busy seasons, we are agreed.

Rachel looks up and sees Kalman at the back of the gathering, watching her tenderly.

LEONORA (V.O.)

On the matter of giving advanced notice of layoffs during the lean seasons, we are agreed.

Rachel turns and walks away.

EXT. HOFFMAN HOUSE - DAY

Snow chokes the nooks and corners of the Hoffman House, a fashionable hotel braced against the blizzard.

LEONORA (V.O.)

On the matter of improved sanitation and safety conditions, we are agreed.

INT. HOFFMAN HOUSE - DAY

Rose stares at the cold city outside the luxurious room.

Anne Morgan reclines on one of the lavish couches. A porter arrives and pours tea for her while a second follows with cake, throwing Leonora as she tries to read.

LEONORA

(reading)

But on the matter of union--of union recognition, the so-called closed shop, we stand firm in our rights to hire any worker we deem fit, regardless of their standing with this or any other union...

(CONTINUED)

LEONORA (cont'd)
Signed, Max Blanck and Isaac
Harris, Triangle Shirtwaist
Company.

The wailing wind is the only relief from the heavy silence.
Leonora shares a look with Rose-- the only answer she needs.

LEONORA (cont'd)
No.

ANNE MORGAN
No? I don't understand.

LEONORA
We will discuss nothing less than
full recognition of the union.

ANNE MORGAN
Miss O'Reilly, they are offering
everything the union asked for.

LEONORA
They are offering a bribe.

ANNE MORGAN
You can't mean that. Surely you--

LEONORA
The strikers voted unanimously,
Miss Morgan. Without a closed shop,
we have no guarantee that owners
will abide by these conditions.

ANNE MORGAN
Oh, how absurd--!

LEONORA
Nothing will have changed--!

ANNE MORGAN
To think that after everything that
we have given--

LEONORA
We should compromise as a show of
gratitude?! Tell me, Miss Morgan.
When you stood on that picket line,
did you skip breakfast that
morning? Or did you skip lunch
afterwards? Did you wear your
finest coat and warmest shoes?

(CONTINUED)

ANNE MORGAN

You have a responsibility to do
what is best for these girls--

LEONORA

We have a responsibility to break
faith you mean--?

ANNE MORGAN

If it keeps them from starving!

ROSE

Then we will starve to win, Miss
Morgan... or we will starve anyhow.

ANNE MORGAN

Can you hear yourself? You sound
like the very trumpet of socialist
fanaticism.

LEONORA

Perhaps if you had ever known a day
of hunger in your life, Miss
Morgan, or faced eviction from a
one room hovel, or given more than
your excess for a cause, you might
understand why we must keep faith.

ANNE MORGAN

(preparing to leave)

I admire your words, Miss O'Reilly,
But I see them now for what they
are... Words.

Anne strides out the door. Leonora goes to the window and
watches with Rose as the socialite climbs into an idling
limousine.

Leonora sighs as the porter enters and removes the tea tray.

LEONORA

There goes The Times, The Post, The
American, and every other newspaper
that's been covering the strike.

ROSE

The face of the union.

Suddenly, Rose begins to cry. Leonora swiftly embraces her.

LEONORA

We never were going to win, love.
You know that.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE
I know, Nora, I know... but I
wanted to make them bleed.

Leonora smiles tearfully and continues to comfort her friend.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

Christmas decorations whip in the harsh wind.

Snow flurries assault bundled PEDESTRIANS and create impenetrable piles on sidewalks and in alleys.

Several VAGRANTS shovel snow under the gaze of two shivering POLICEMEN.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

REPLACEMENT WORKERS cinch down scarves and burrow into their coats as they exit the building into the blustery cold.

A handful of forgotten STRIKERS huddle together, stamping their feet for warmth, their voices lost in the howling wind.

Eva shivers miserably, her eyes drifting up toward the factory hidden in the winter mist.

BERNSTEIN (PRELAP)
Five dollars a week.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - DAY

A dejected Eva looks up at Bernstein in surprise. Bernstein ignores her as he scowls over paperwork.

EVA
Five?

BERNSTEIN
Minus a dollar a week for supplies
and to pay for your machine.

EVA
Th-thank you, Mr. Bernstein.

BERNSTEIN
Find an open seat.

Eva trudges through the deafening factory; past Vincenza's inspection table; past Kalman punching buttonholes; and finds a seat.

(CONTINUED)

She sees Rachel across the factory. Their eyes meet for a bitter moment before Rachel returns to her work.

Eva removes her ring and sets it on the bobbin. Swallowing her grief, she grinds her machine to life and begins to sew.

Church bells toll

AL (PRELAP)
Come in.

EXT. CHURCHYARD - DAY

Al Smith hustles through the cold with a few other late parishioners toward a chapel tolling the morning mass.

His eyes fall on Frances waiting on the steps.

AL
(surprised)
Miss Perkins?

FRANCES
Mr. Smith! My apologies for intruding on your sabbath. I only came to say goodbye.

AL
You're leaving?

FRANCES
I'm going to Europe with some friends.

AL
If anyone has earned it, you have.

FRANCES
I also wanted to thank you. I don't know what I would have done without all of your help.

AL
You would have survived, Miss Perkins. I'm sure of it.

FRANCES
Mr. Smith, I... I wanted to ask a favor of you... The legislative session is almost over. We have the votes in the Senate and the House. They are all pledged.

(CONTINUED)

AL

Yes, I know.

FRANCES

Mr. Smith, as you are in favor of this bill, can you give me some assurance that it will be voted on?

AL

(weighs his answer)

You go and do as you please. The bill is not going to be passed.

FRANCES

(stunned)

Why?

AL

There's a lot of good Democrats who don't believe in this sort of thing.

FRANCES

The Democratic party had a kind resolution in favor of it at the last convention--

AL

It was a front, Miss Perkins. It sounded good because the Republicans didn't have such a thing. Your people agitated enough. The Democrats couldn't vote against it so they voted for it.

FRANCES

That doesn't mean it won't pass. How can you know that, Mr. Smith? How can you possibly know that?

AL

I had a talk with Charlie.

(hesitant)

He is good friends with the owners of the Shuyler Candy Factory.

FRANCES

(stunned... and simmering)

All this time... All your help... You were still just a Tammany man--

AL

Miss Perkins--

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES
 Good Mr. Smith, with all your talk
 of helping others--

AL
 I was elected to this office
because I helped others--!

FRANCES
 With lamp oil and bail money?!

AL
 With whatever they required!

FRANCES
 Of course, Mr. Smith, you are quite
 right. I forgot. Please forgive
 me... and thank you for your help.

AL
 Miss Perkins!

Frances storms away. Al watches her go as the church bells
 fall silent.

FADE OUT.

SUPERIMPOSE: *ONE YEAR LATER*

FADE IN:

INT. ASCH BUILDING, WASHINGTON PLACE STAIRS - DAY

The narrow stairway descends in a dizzying square spiral.
 Beside it, a mechanical hum grows louder. Light and shadow
 crawl across the roof of the elevator as it toils upward.

The ninth floor door opens and Rachel, in a spring blouse
 with her hair off her neck, trudges up the stairs.

RACHEL
 Race you, Joe.

Rachel pushes into tenth floor as the obese salesman exits
 the elevator.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR - DAY

The telautograph scrawls numbers onto a pad of paper on the
 secretary's desk. She glances up at the clock as Rachel
 glides past...

(CONTINUED)

4:36.

The bespectacled assistant emerges from a side room.

ASSISTANT

Good afternoon, Mr. Teschner! I'll
let Mr. Blanck know you're here.

The assistant raps on Blanck's door and pokes his head in.

Blanck entertains his daughters at his desk while their
governess watches detachedly.

ASSISTANT (cont'd)

Mr. Blanck? Mr. Teschner is here.

BLANCK

Thank you, Eddie.

Closing the door, the assistant continues through a curtain
of steam to the main floor. He stops a MESSENGER and gives
him a pouch of letters.

The messenger grabs his coat and hat and hurries out the
Greene Street doors with a glance at the clock on the wall...

4:37.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, GREENE STREET STAIRS - DAY

The messenger skips down the stairs, catching up with Rachel
and opening the ninth floor door for her with a polite smile.

The roar of machinery engulfs all as Rachel brushes past him.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - DAY

Rachel sweeps in and glances up at the clock...

4:38.

A frail GOFER hustles through the chaos where Eva works
feverishly and Kalman works the buttonhole puncher.

The female foreman takes a key off the wall and unlocks the
door. Vincenza looks up as the gofer walks out and casts a
quick glance at the clock...

4:39.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, WASHINGTON PLACE STAIRS - DAY

The gofer smiles at the golden-haired bookkeeper as she passes him on the stairs. He sneaks a peek back up as her swishing skirt disappears back into the ninth floor.

Hurrying on, the gofer enters the eighth floor.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 8TH FLOOR - DAY

The ring of shears fill the room as the gofer hurries over to the receptionist's desk where Bernstein scrutinizes the fragile girl from the steam ship.

BERNSTEIN

Three dollars. Three!
(noticing the gofer)
What?!

The gofer hands him a bundle of paychecks. Bernstein glances at the Greene Street exit where the night watchman peeks in the handbags of women lining to leave in the narrow exit.

The watchman's eyes flicker up at the clock as the minute hand strikes 40.

WORKER (O.S.)

Fire!

Bernstein looks and sees a WORKER running toward him, her finger pointing back toward a smoking cutting bin.

WORKER (cont'd)

Mr. Bernstein, there's a fire!

A whisper of flame peeks out of the bin. Bernstein breaks into a jog, pushing aside workers who wish to distance themselves from the danger.

The Greene Street elevator arrives-- the operator throws the gate open for the first cluster of women.

Another worker opens the Greene Street stairwell door.

Air rises through the throat of the building, exhaling into the 8th floor and breathing explosive life into the fire.

Whips of fire lash out of the bin just as Bernstein arrives, sending him shying back.

Urgency seizes the 8th floor as shrieking women quickly bottleneck at the Washington Place and Greene Street exits.

(CONTINUED)

A few women open a window and climb out onto the fire escape.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, FIRE ESCAPE - DAY

The rusty metal squeals in protest. Women crowd the window, pushing those in front. The first woman takes the rickety rail in hand and steps down the steep, narrow descent.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

The female foreman and bookkeeper distribute paychecks. Vincenza watches Kalman sadly pocket his pay.

ON THE 8TH FLOOR--

Bernstein beats at the flames to no avail. The plume of smoke extends through the bin toward the rear of the building.

BERNSTEIN

Louis! Get me the hose! Quickly!

The gofer fights past women clogging the Greene Street exit.

GOFER

Girls! Girls, let me past!

The receptionist recovers and slams the telautograph buzzer.

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

The secretary closes her eyes, murmuring calculations as she casually reaches over and clears the telautograph pad.

Unseen, the pen begins to scrawl across the paper:

FIRE!!

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

The female foreman kills the power.

The hum of machinery dies, replaced by the scrape of chairs on the floor and the sudden buzz of conversation.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 6TH FLOOR - DAY

A window shatters into an empty factory. A woman climbs in from the fire escape and runs to the Washington Place doors.

The doorknob refuses to yield.

(CONTINUED)

More women spill in, rushing to the exits and finding them all locked. They pound on the doors, screaming for help.

ON THE 8TH FLOOR--

The gofer grabs the hose and darts back toward Bernstein.

Flames rise out of the bin spanning the length of the factory floor and begin to sniff at the brittle tissue paper.

Bernstein reaches over the nervous women and takes the hose.

Bernstein braces as the gofer frantically spins the valve.

Nothing happens.

BERNSTEIN

Open the valve, god dammit!

GOFER

It *is* open!

Bernstein's eyes fall on the blazing flakes of tissue paper drifting onto the floor, onto the tables, and into the bins.

He abandons the hose and begins shoving women through the Greene Street exit.

BERNSTEIN

Go! Go! Go, girls! Get out!

(to the gofer)

Get them out as quick as you can!

The gofer dashes off toward the Washington Place doors.

One GIRL shoulders back toward the factory.

GIRL

I forgot my pocketboo--

Bernstein slaps her and shoves her toward the door.

BERNSTEIN

For god's sake, get out of here!

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE - DAY

Cantilion draws on a cigarette. His eyes focus past the glowing end on a CHILD staring off in the distance.

Cantilion follows his gaze to the top of the Asch Building as other people begin to point.

(CONTINUED)

Cantilion drops the smoke and spurs his ride toward the fire, racing past William Shepherd as he goes.

Shepherd watches him race toward the Asch Building...

...where smoke belches out of the 8th floor windows.

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Rachel hums as she frets over her makeup. The girl next to her starts singing the words to the song.

GIRL

*Ev'ry little movement has a meaning
all its own...*

ON THE 8TH FLOOR--

The receptionist looks at the empty telautograph pad and picks up the phone, frantically dialing.

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

The phone next to the secretary rings.

She pinches her eyes shut in concentration, ignoring the phone as she fills in the last few lines of the paperwork.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

Cantilion reaches the Asch just as an 8th floor window shatters. The gaping hole begins sighing smoke.

The glass rains onto the street, spooking a horse and sending it galloping off with its riderless wagon.

Cantilion struggles to gain control of his mount before dismounting and rushing into the lobby.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

All of the girls join in the singing as they gather their belongings, the smoke unseen beyond the filthy windows.

ON THE 8TH FLOOR--

Bernstein forcefully shoves women out the Greene Street exit.

The gofer shoulders his way to the Washington Place doors and tries to unlock them. Jostled, he drops the key.

(CONTINUED)

Frantic girls crowd the exits as the receptionist clings to the phone.

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

The secretary finishes her typing and reaches for the phone.

SECRETARY
Triangle Shirt--

A voice, muffled by chaos in the background, cuts her off.

SECRETARY (cont'd)
What?... Dinah, I can't hear a word
you're saying.

ON THE 8TH FLOOR--

Flame crackles to life all around the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST
GET EVERYBODY OUT, NOW!

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

The secretary's eyes stumble over to the telautograph and the warning clawed into the white paper:

FIRE!

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.) (cont'd)
THERE'S A FIRE! A FIRE!!

ON THE 8TH FLOOR--

The receptionist yells into the phone.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)
You have to warn everyone on nine!
I don't have a connection! Hello!?

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

The phone lies abandoned on the desk as the secretary hurries toward the offices, passing the assistant.

SECRETARY
Eddie, call the fire department.

ASSISTANT
The fire de--

SECRETARY
Go!

(CONTINUED)

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

The singing becomes more boisterous now, more playful.

A soft smile crosses Vincenza's face as she watches Kalman. He looks at her and quickly looks down at his buttons.

Flames climb up through the thin alley at the rear of the building, hidden behind stacks and stacks of shirtwaists.

ON THE 8TH FLOOR--

The key to the Washington Place doors enters the lock.

The gofer hardly cracks the doors before women flood out.

Flames chew up the pillars and blossom across the ceiling.

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

The secretary KNOCKS urgently on Harris's office door and quickly goes to Blanck's.

HENRIETTA

Can we look at hats, papa--?

SECRETARY

Mr. Blanck, we have a fire!

BLANCK

We-- A what?

Harris answers his door to shouts of "FIRE." The secretary looks at the far window where flames peek over the ledge.

People rush to the exits. A few start to chance the stairs but see flames crawling across the ceiling of the 8th floor.

The elevator operator throws open the gate and Harris impotently tries to help as people pack themselves inside.

The operator closes the gate and tugs the center cable. People begin to pack into the second elevator as the first begins its sluggish descent.

HARRIS

You come right back, Joe!

ELEVATOR OPERATOR

I will, Mr. Harris!

HARRIS

If you don't... y-you're fired!

(CONTINUED)

ELEVATOR OPERATOR
Yes, Mr. Harris!

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

The room darkens slightly. A few people stop singing and look toward the windows.

IN THE STREET--

The Asch Building belches smoke.

A BYSTANDER tears open a fire box and throws the alarm.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Eva slides on her coat as the singing around her dies.

Kalman looks up at the ceiling as it rattles with the sound of stampeding feet.

Flames burst through the rear window, swallowing bales of garments to the sound of startled shrieks.

Women scatter away from it toward the Greene Street exit.

Windows throughout the 9th floor whine and blast inward, showering the room with shards of glass. Vincenza shields herself as women around her scream in terror.

The hungry flames moan, reaching into the 9th floor.

Hands grope at the Washington Place doors, twisting at the locked knobs, pounding on the thick wood.

ON THE WASHINGTON PLACE STAIRS--

Cantilion meets a flood of women coming down. He fights past them, pulling a stumbling GIRL back onto her feet.

CANTILION
ORDERLY, GIRLS! ORDERLY! ONE AT A
TIME! QUICKLY NOW!

Cantilion helps her a few steps, then races back up.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, STREET - DAY

Fire wagons howl their approach. Sturdy horses snort under driver's whips, fire trolleys thundering at their heels.

They roar past Rose, who to watches them pass, her eyes drifting up to the column of smoke rising in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

A look of horror crosses her face as she walks-- then jogs-- then breaks out into a full sprint toward the fire.

INT. NEIGHBORING BUILDING, NYU LECTURE HALL - DAY

A large but genial PROFESSOR, with a shock of red hair, lectures in front of his class.

PROFESSOR

In the matter of Bartelby v. The
State of New York, however, the
jury sided--

Approaching fire bells cut through the lecture. The professor ambles over to a window and looks out.

Flame laps out of the Asch Building just a couple of stories below. Women trickle down the fire escape.

IN THE STREET--

Cops hold back a crowd of gathering bystanders.

FIREFIGHTERS drop from the wagon and expertly attach a stand pipe to a nearby fire hydrant. Buckles fall away as ladders are prepped for action.

The first wave of evacuees pour out of the lobby as firefighters shoulder past them.

CHIEF

Get some water up there! Cool them
off!

Nozzles angle into position and water jets into the sky. It rains onto the cornice, gliding down and dripping as no more than a cruel, ineffectual mist.

Rose rushes upon the scene and stops in horror.

Vines of fire caress the top of the building on all sides.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Rachel cries frantically as Eva pounds on the Washington Place door. Movement catches everyone's eye and they rush to the rising elevator.

RACHEL

Joe?! JOE, PLEASE!

They clutch at the operator's feet as he rises past them.

(CONTINUED)

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

The elevator arrives and women sweep inside before the operator can fully open the gate.

Jostling bodies sweep Mildred Blanck in with them.

MILDRED

DADDY!

BLANCK

MILLY!

Blanck seizes his daughter's hand and drags her out. He hugs her close, paling as he looks back at the thickening smoke.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Screaming workers watch as the elevators packed with women from the 10th floor descend toward safety.

RACHEL

JOE! Joe, for the love of God!

ELEVATOR OPERATOR

I'll come back for you! I'm coming back!

Kalman forces his way through and begins throwing his shoulder against the Washington Place doors.

ON THE 8TH FLOOR--

Bernstein ushers the last woman out and scans the hazy floor.

He follows the sound of coughing to the receptionist, still clutching the phone. Bernstein grabs her and shelters her.

BERNSTEIN

Dinah, get out!

Bernstein helps her out...

ON THE GREENE STREET STAIRS--

The receptionist coughs and points upward.

RECEPTIONIST

I couldn't... The ninth floor!

Bernstein looks up into the flaming black.

BERNSTEIN

Go! Keep going!

(CONTINUED)

The receptionist nods and lurches down the stairs.

Covering his mouth with his arm, Bernstein dashes upstairs.

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

Eager eyes peer down the elevator shaft.

A sick splintering sound draws Henrietta Blanck's eyes to the rear window. The panes shatter and flame pours into the room.

ON THE GREENE STREET STAIRS--

Bernstein arrives at the 9th floor but the heat forces him away from the door. He gropes up the stairs, eyes pinched shut as he gags for clean air.

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

Fearful faces turn expectantly to Blanck and Harris.

Blanck stares at the flames, petrified, urine leaking onto his shoes. Trembling, Harris looks over his workers.

HARRIS

Girls, let's go up on the roof. Get
on the roof! Hurry!

They hustle to the Greene Street door, now wreathed in fire.

The assistant takes Mildred from Blanck and starts to follow.

ASSISTANT

Come along, Mildred. Eddie's got
you. There's a brave girl! Come
along, Mr. Blanck... Mr. Blanck?!

Blanck pulls his frightened eyes away from the fire.

ASSISTANT (cont'd)

We'll be safe on the roof, sir.

Harris cowers toward the door, shielding his face. Suddenly the door crashes open, smoke and heat pushing everyone back.

Bernstein, blistered and bloody, bursts in.

BERNSTEIN

You've got to get on the roof!
There is no other way!

A GIRL grabs a shirtwaist from a nearby table and wraps it around her head and shoulders. Bernstein steers her up the stairs as she runs past.

(CONTINUED)

Others swiftly follow and disappear into the smoky stairway.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Terrified women try to bull their way to the elevators.
Rachel and Eva struggle to breathe in the crush of bodies.

Several women see legs descending the fire escape outside.

They run through a gap in the fire to the window, shouldering
each other aside on the way.

Vincenza falls in the crush and feet begin to bloody her.

Kalman scoops her up. She looks at him through dazed eyes...

...and smiles.

ON THE FIRE ESCAPE--

The narrow lifeline sways with the horde of bodies cascading
down it, causing the anchors to shiver in the wall.

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, ROOF - DAY

The roof door bursts open and coughing girls stagger out,
tearing the burning shirtwaists away from their faces.

Henrietta stumbles out and looks around hopelessly.

To the north and west, a pair of buildings rise, just out of
reach. She stumbles to the roof's edge and looks down.

Flames claw at the side of the building, climbing higher.

Below, great crowds gather around a cluster of fire wagons.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Women scream in fear and pain as the elevator rises to a
stop. The operator throws open the doors and women pour in.

Eva squeezes in. Rachel reaches for her--

RACHEL

EVA!!

Eva tries to pull her sister in but the crowd is too much.
She looks into her sister's terrified eyes...

...and forces herself back out of the elevator. Another woman
takes her place as Eva embraces her sister.

(CONTINUED)

The operator tugs the line and the elevator starts down, those left behind screaming in terror and desperation.

ON THE WASHINGTON PLACE STAIRS--

Cantilion passes the last evacuee and grabs the gofer.

CANTILION
Is that everyone?!

Pounding-- nearby. He rushes to the door and finds it locked. The gofer uselessly throws his shoulder into it.

CANTILION (cont'd)
Here!

He sets his feet against the bottom of the stairs and braces his back against the door. The gofer joins him.

ON THE FIRE ESCAPE--

Girls shield themselves from flames licking out of the 8th floor as they barrel down the steep stairs.

A metal shutter bangs open, the long latch bar dropping and wedging itself into the stair, trapping those above.

ON THE 6TH FLOOR--

The Washington Place doors groan. Girls back away as the door splinters open. Cantilion scrambles to his feet and begins ushering them down the stairs.

The gofer helps women climbing in the window.

ON THE FIRE ESCAPE--

The top-heavy fire escape groans as it fills with bodies blocked off from continuing downward by the steel shutter.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Kalman forces his way to the window and helps Vincenza out...

ON THE FIRE ESCAPE--

A portion of the fire escape twists away, jerking anchors out of the wall like a line of stitches ripped from fabric.

Vincenza reaches out, shrieking. Kalman grabs her hand.

The fire escape folds over itself with a deafening whine.

(CONTINUED)

The great mass wilts, jarring against the wall as it falls in tangled pieces. Dozens of women plummet toward the basement skylight; toward the spiked fence; toward death.

Vincenza tears her eyes away from the horrid sound of so many screams ending so suddenly as Kalman hauls her back into the blazing 9th floor.

ON THE 10TH FLOOR--

Bernstein and Harris rush the last of the women out the door.

BERNSTEIN

Go, Mr. Harris!

Harris obeys. Bernstein lifts an unconscious woman over his shoulder and starts toward the exit.

The fat salesman stands on a chair and pokes at the skylight with a broom handle. Bernstein jerks him down and herds him toward the stairs, flames searing them as they run out.

ON THE ROOF--

Bernstein bursts into daylight, hacking up smoke.

HARRIS

Samuel, what do we do next?!

BERNSTEIN

I-I don't know!

Women huddle together. Some stumble about, looking for escape. Others watch the spectacle in the street below.

Henrietta clutches her governess while the assistant soothes Mildred.

Blanck sits against the cornice, weeping.

Harris stares at the closest building, so close...

Jaw set, he starts to jog, then breaks into a run. His foot sets on the cornice and he leaps across the narrow chasm.

He slams against the wall, air driven from his lungs. Reaching out, he clutches a wire strung along the building.

Women race to the edge of the Asch Building and watch as the Triangle factory owner gropes and claws his way up.

ON THE GREENE STREET STAIRS--

(CONTINUED)

Firefighters reach the 8th floor. The floor above them sighs as flame crawls across the ceiling and walls.

One FIREFIGHTER unravels the hose and tightens it to the building's connection.

IN THE STREET--

Water rushes into the standpipe attached to the fire hydrant.

ON THE GREENE STREET STAIRS--

Firefighters brace themselves as the hose yawns open. Water launches out, scarring the mindless inferno.

ON THE ROOF--

Harris pulls his trembling body over the cornice of the adjacent building while his workers watch anxiously.

He runs to the roof access door and finds it locked.

Desperate, he goes to the skylight and bashes it with his fist. On the second try, the glass shatters and Harris cries out in pain as blood flies from a deep gash in his hand.

An alarmed JANITOR stands on a ladder looking up at him.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Eva and Rachel huddle together as waves of fire roll across the ceiling, forcing everyone away from the elevators.

Kalman and Vincenza cough as they search for a way out.

ON THE ROOF--

Workers stare at the adjacent roof, waiting...

Suddenly, the janitor's ladder slides over the edge. A cry of relief goes up from the workers.

HARRIS

Samuel! You have to help them over!

Bernstein gets up on the cornice and reaches for the ladder. Harris and the janitor stretch it toward him.

Bernstein grabs it, his balance faltering.

Several girls grab his pant legs, steadying him.

He works to position the ladder, angling it from the Asch building cornice to the nearby window ledge.

(CONTINUED)

Stepping out onto the ladder, he clammers over.

Halfway across, he looks down and sees the bloody aftermath of the doomed fire escape. Bodies sprawl on the pavement, one arched back where the spiked fence has impaled her.

He fights the bile in his throat and gains the ledge, motioning for the girls to follow.

BERNSTEIN

Okay girls, come on now! There
ain't nothing to it! Don't push!
Look at me now! That's it!

One girl trembles as she eases out over the yawning chasm, the next girl a mere foot behind her.

Bernstein takes the girl's hand and hoists her up. Harris and the janitor reach down and pull her up to safety.

Mildred clings to the assistant who crosses on quaking knees.

ASSISTANT

Hold tight, now. Good girl, Millie.

BLANCK

Go on, Millie! That's it! Oh God,
hold on to her, Eddie!

Bernstein takes his hand and pulls him the rest of the way. Together, they boost Mildred up.

BLANCK (cont'd)

Oh, thank God. Go on, Etta. Go!

Blanck shelters his daughter from the jostling and urges her onto the ladder. She begins to cross, stiff with fright.

She clears the smoke and the alley carnage opens up to view.

Henrietta pales. Her stomach clenches, vomit bubbles out of her mouth, and her eyes roll back into her head.

BLANCK (cont'd)

ETTA!

Bernstein lunges out and grabs Henrietta by the hair. Bracing himself, he drags her over to the ledge.

Harris and the janitor pull her listless body onto the roof and she collapses into her sister.

Other women begin to cross. Terrified women in the back wait their turn when a thump draws their attention.

(CONTINUED)

A long ladder descends from the roof of the neighboring university building to the top of the skylight.

The professor and several students start down toward the Asch, another ladder in their arms.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

The roof of the elevator crests the floor and over a hundred women surge through blistering heat.

Eva and Rachel rush toward it.

The elevator fills in an instant. Rachel gets one last spot, only to have a STRONGER WOMAN pull her aside and take it.

The operator tugs the cord and the elevator disappears back down into the smoke.

The sisters look at her each other, beyond terrified. Eva screams as Rachel suddenly leaps blindly out into...

IN THE ELEVATOR SHAFT--

She strikes the cable-- grabs it, shredding her skin as she slides down onto the roof.

Others jump as flames push them into the shaft.

RACHEL
Eva! JUMP, EVA!

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Eva balks, possessed by fear. She closes her eyes...

...and jumps.

IN THE ELEVATOR SHAFT--

She strikes the roof with a sickening thud. Rachel drags her to the edge, bloody hands staining the Eva's clothing.

The operator flinches as the weight strikes the top of his elevator. Looking up, he sees flames engulf the 9th floor.

Dead eyes lurch into his vision as flames eat away at the corpse's hair. The operator cries out.

Rachel watches flame stretch across the ceiling of the elevator shaft. Looking down, she sees Eva struggling to focus, blood oozing from the back of her head.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

(CONTINUED)

One WOMAN points down at the street.

WOMAN

Help! Help is coming!

Women rush to the windows, peering out at the spectacle.

A ladder from one of the fire wagons rises slowly skyward.

ON THE ROOF--

Harris and the janitor pull Blanck up onto the roof.

On the other side of the Asch, a chain of women climb one ladder to the top of the skylight, and another over to the top of the university building.

The ladder groans under the salesman's weight as he wobbles over to the ledge. Bernstein exerts all his strength to hoist him up. Harris, the janitor, and several others pull.

BERNSTEIN

Dammit, Emile, you fat bastard!

The fat salesman finally slumps over the cornice to safety.

HARRIS

Samuel! You're going to have to go to the other side. Go!

Bernstein nods and crosses back over the ladder.

Students wave him on as he climbs the ladder onto the skylight, the hungry blaze swirling beneath the glass below.

IN THE STREET--

A solitary FIREFIGHTER clutches the top of the ladder as it slowly carries him up toward the captives.

Terrified and relieved, the women clamor and call for him.

Rose watches firefighters crank the apparatus.

The ladder suddenly comes to an abrupt stop.

Bystanders shout "HIGHER!" Rose looks back at the fire wagon and sees the ladder extended as far as it can go.

High above, the fire rages.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Kalman tries to find a way to climb down the outside wall.

(CONTINUED)

Vincenza watches the fire consume all. It rolls across the floor like liquid, spiralling up the pillars like a fountain. Sheets of flame blanket the walls.

Vincenza sees the fragile girl from the steam ship, staring out the window at a cloudless sky.

FRAGILE GIRL (SUBTITLE)
God, forgive me...

Tears glistening in her eyes, she steps toward the window.

INT. AL SMITH'S OFFICE - DAY

Al shrugs into his coat on his way out the door.

AL
Good-night, Emily.

AL'S SECRETARY, a spinsterish looking woman, musters a smile as she answer the ringing phone.

AL'S SECRETARY
Alfred Smith's office...? Who...?
Just one - Mr. Smith? It's an
officer Cantilion?

Al sets his hat on the desk and picks up the phone.

AL
This is Al Smith...? I'm sorry,
you'll have to slow down. Did you
say a fire...? Hello? Hello?!

EXT. ASCH BUILDING - DAY

Al Smith's voice burbles out of the forgotten phone, now dangling limply in Cantilion's hand.

The fragile girl's frozen stare looks back up at the flames. Blood pools away from her body.

The crowd gawks up as dozens of girls fill the window ledges. Mouths move, powerless prayers falling out of them.

Rose watches, hand pressed to her throat.

ON THE ROOF--

Bernstein grapples onto the roof to find the women all clustered at the edge of the building. He eases through them and stares as women crowd the 9th floor ledges of the Asch.

(CONTINUED)

IN THE STREET--

Firefighters keep frightened women in the lobby to shelter them from the bodies falling outside.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Women make the decision, some as the flames begin to lick at their hair and clothing. One girl pulls herself away from the embrace of a friend and throws herself out the window.

Kalman looks at Vincenza, then makes up his mind and steps onto the ledge.

She watches as he holds out his hand and begins helping women step off the ledge as if stepping out of a carriage.

One by one, by twos, by threes, girls step off the ledge.

IN THE STREET--

People stop in horror as bodies, some flaming, begin to fall.

BUSINESSMEN and WOMEN crowd the windows of adjacent buildings, the falling flames reflecting in the windowpanes.

The crowd gapes, some trying to take action. WEEPING WOMEN point upward in confusion.

ON THE 9TH FLOOR--

Kalman reaches back and helps the next woman onto the ledge.

Vincenza.

Tears spring to their eyes as their hearts break together. She smiles and gently kisses him. He takes her hand and looks down into the roiling black.

Hand in hand, they step into the air together.

IN THE ELEVATOR SHAFT--

Rachel weeps as she cradles Eva amid a cluster of bodies both dead and alive.

Eva's lifeless eyes stare up at the fire raging overhead.

OUTSIDE THE ASCH BUILDING--

Rose looks away from the fire.

Her eyes fall on Cantilion, surrounded by broken bodies, face frozen on the sky. William Shepherd watches nearby.

(CONTINUED)

Tears trickle from Rose's eyes as she scans the dead, her gaze resting on Kalman and Vincenza, somehow holding hands.

Water runs red past the feet of the living and into the gutter, carrying with it Kalman's "guardian angel."

Dozens of bodies fill the air, angels floating toward the earth as water and fire rain down from the Triangle.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, WASHINGTON PLACE - NIGHT

A string of gas lights illuminate dozens of burned and broken corpses littering the street. WORKERS labor in the greenish glow, gently loading bodies into carts.

FADE TO:

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, ALLEY - NIGHT

The ghostly lights glow above workers as they take down the fence and remove the bodies around the mangled fire escape.

FADE TO:

INT. ASCH BUILDING, BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dusty light weighs on workers in the basement, reverently lifting twisted bodies out of the blood and glass.

FADE TO:

INT. ASCH BUILDING, ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The chalky green lights stare up at the workers as they ease the blackened dead off of the elevator roof.

FADE TO:

EXT. ASCH BUILDING, NIGHT

The spectral gas lights silhouette police officers as they tenderly pass covered bodies along a pulley system down the side of the building.

FADE TO:

INT. ASCH BUILDING, 9TH FLOOR - NIGHT

A solitary gas light hisses in the charred cavern of the 9th floor. Machinery deformed by heat sags on the table frames.

Something sparkles on a ruined bobbin and a hand takes it.

Al Smith examines the object through red rimmed eyes.

EVA'S WEDDING RING.

In quick succession, the rigged lights all puff out.

Al's feet shuffle him through the darkness to the window.

New York City blazes before him like a jewel, life and light as far as the eye can see.

Reverent footsteps announce the FIRE MARSHALL behind him.

FIRE MARSHALL

Mr. Smith? Sir? I didn't realize
you were still up here.

(off Al's silence)

It's past midnight, sir. I'm sure
your wife is wondering after you.

AL

How many?

FIRE MARSHALL

(hesitant)

One hundred forty-one, sir.

(stepping into the room)

Sir, we have yet to perform a
thorough inspection. It could yet
be quite unsafe. The ceiling--

AL

(bitter laugh)

Oh no, it's quite safe. I read
about it in the Times. This is a
modern building.

(stares at the city)

Have you ever seen the city at
night like this?

FIRE MARSHALL

I'm sure I have, sir.

AL

Mm. I for one, never have.

(turning from the window)

(CONTINUED)

AL (cont'd)
 Let's go then. Before this place
 collapses on top of us.

EXT. CHARITIES PIER - NIGHT

Hundreds gather outside the fence, clamoring to get into the makeshift morgue, crying out the names of a hundred beloved dead.

A cordon of COPS escort Al through the crowd to the gate.

Kalman's mother grabs his coat with fingers like iron, wailing at him in Yiddish, repeating the word "Kalman."

AL
 I'm sorry! I--

The cops free him and wedge him through the gate.

Cantilion closes it and stops Al with a tortured look.

CANTILION
 For god's sake, get me a drink!

Al turns from the mourners and enters a large iron-frame enclosure...

INT. CHARITIES PIER, WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Reverent stillness drowns out the crowd outside as Al steps into the sprawling black of the warehouse interior.

Faint light from the rafters above barely reaches the floor.

Al nods at an OFFICER near the door holding a lantern against the thick darkness and walks by the first open coffins.

A few coffins down, another OFFICER stands with another lantern. Al steps solemnly through the murky light.

He continues past row after seemingly unending row as lantern-bearing OFFICERS stand sentry over a hundred plus coffins.

EXT. CHARITIES PIER - NIGHT

Al steps outside where the rows continue to the end.

The glow of the city reflects off the black water, slapping against the stout timbers of the pier

(CONTINUED)

Al stands before the very last coffin, looking out to sea. A young POLICE OFFICER approaches him.

POLICE OFFICER
Chief's about to start letting 'em
in, Mr. Smith.

Al nods and returns with the officer...

INTO THE WAREHOUSE--

Al removes his hat and waits near the entrance as a few more OFFICERS escort fifteen MOURNERS toward the sea of coffins.

AL
(impotently)
I'm Al Smith... of the state
assembly... If there's anything--
anything I can do... to help...

Rachel supports Mr. Lansner as they all pass Al without seeing him, grief-stricken anticipation in their faces.

MR. LANSNER (SUBTITLE)
*Where is Eva?! Is that her? Oh God
of Israel, is that my child?!*

Al watches as the man arrives at one of the coffins, sobbing as he cradles the body within.

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS--

Al weakly greets wave after wave of mourners--

Keeps himself together as they grieve beside him--

Holds the hand of a small BOY along the rows, searching--

Looks wearily over the endlessness of it all--

HARRIS (V.O.)
At no time were the doors on the
ninth floor ever locked.

INT. BLANCK TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

The Times reporter sits in the drawing room. Harris, his hand swathed in a heavy bandage, paces back and forth.

HARRIS
The notion that they ever were is
ridiculous. You have to print that!

(CONTINUED)

TIMES REPORTER
It won't do any good--

HARRIS
It's the truth!

TIMES REPORTER
What does that have to do with
anything...?
(off Harris's look)
You really don't understand, do
you?

INT. BLANCK TOWNHOUSE, STUDY - NIGHT

Blanck sits on a plush leather couch, still blackened,
staring at nothing as he cradles both of his daughters.

The shouting in the next room bleeds into the study.

TIMES REPORTER (O.S.)
Do you know where the majority of
those bodies on the ninth floor
were found? Piled up on top of each
other at the exits. In fact, there
were so many of them, the firemen
couldn't open the door!

HARRIS (O.S.)
It wasn't locked!

TIMES REPORTER (O.S.)
It doesn't matter!

HARRIS (O.S.)
You tell the public--

TIMES REPORTER (O.S.)
All the public will hear is that
people died because they were
trapped in your "modern building!"

HARRIS (O.S.)
Someone has to tell our side of the
story! We need you!

TIMES REPORTER (O.S.)
No, Mr. Harris, you need a lawyer!

Blanck gently kisses his daughters and holds them tighter.

INT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - DAY

A shrill whistle announces the arrival of a large locomotive as it squeals to a halt.

Frances steps off the train into a sea of people engrossed in newspapers.

She tips a porter to retrieve her baggage and lets her gaze wander to the other side of the platform where another train prepares to depart.

Al Smith speaks emphatically to the CONDUCTOR. Next to Al is the small BOY from the Charities Pier.

Frances watches as the conductor nods in understanding and takes a small suitcase from Al. Al squats down and speaks gently to the boy, pulling a few coins from his ears.

The conductor takes the boy's hand and escorts him onto the train. Al watches as if in a trance.

FRANCES (O.S.)

Mr. Smith?

Al, face haunted by exhaustion, turns and sees Frances.

AL

Miss Perkins? What brings you here?

FRANCES

The eight fifteen from Albany.

They stand awkwardly, unsure of what to say to each other.

AL

Well, I don't know where it is you have a mind to go, but if I may offer a ride to wherever it is, I would be grateful for your company.

Frances considers for a moment.

INT. HANSOM CAB - DAY

Frances watches Al as he stares out the window, all silent but for the city and the steady clip-clop of horses' hooves.

FRANCES

I heard you were at the Charities Pier.

(CONTINUED)

AL

(dismissive)

I did it just as I would if they had died of anything else. You go to see the father and mother or whomever to.. try to help.

FRANCES

It was a human, decent, and natural thing to do.

AL

Yes, very decent. Very human.

(silent for a while)

Did you know the little boy? At the train station? Arlo Maltese?

(Frances shakes her head)

His sister Lucia was on the ninth floor. As was his sister Rosari... and his mother, Catherina. When they didn't come home after two days, he left their apartment to look for them. When Arlo showed up at Misery Lane all by himself, I helped him look for them. We found Catherina and Rosari. They had jumped. But Lucia... had not. We spent most of the night looking for her. Up and down those horrible rows, over and over. We finally found the body of a girl with a darn in her stocking and he decided it was Lucia.

Al struggles against his surfacing emotions. Tears of sympathy stream unimpeded down Frances's face.

AL (cont'd)

He was such a good boy, the whole time. So determined not to cry until I told him it was okay because Jesus had cried so he could too. He has a cousin living in Boston. Presumably. The only family he has left...

(openly weeping)

What was I to do, Miss Perkins? I had to do something. His family lived in my district, for God's sake!

Al composes himself and looks back out at the passing city.

(CONTINUED)

AL (cont'd)
Dear God... a darn in her stocking.

EXT. FRANCES'S RESIDENCE - DAY

The cab draws up to modest apartment building and Frances exits. She offers Al a sad smile and starts walks away.

AL
Miss Perkins!
(with resolve)
You make the recommendations. I'll
fight for them.

Frances looks at him a moment, then nods.

Al taps the roof of the hansom cab and Frances watches as it wheels off down the street.

SPEAKER (PRELAP)
We will get an investigation!

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Frances eases her way into the standing crowd at the back of the house. Working class LOWER EAST SIDERS fill the galleries while UPPER CLASS (mostly women) fill the boxes.

SPEAKER
We will get an investigation that
will result in a law being referred
to a committee that will report in
1913. And by 1915 a law will be
passed-and after that our grafting
officials will not enforce it!

The speaker strides off stage to applause as a MODERATOR steps up, passing Rose and Leonora waiting in the wings.

MODERATOR
Thank you, Mr. London. It will now
be our privilege to hear from a key
organizer of the strike against the
Triangle Shirtwaist Factory...

Rose trembles uncontrollably, holding a small piece of paper. Leonora looks at her with concern.

LEONORA
Are you certain?

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

No.

LEONORA

(considers a moment)

There's nothing to it, love. Only one thing to do...

(leaning in)

Make 'em bleed.

The moderator's voice drifts into her reverie.

MODERATOR

--Miss Rose Schneiderman!

Raucous applause meets Rose as she makes the long walk across the stage and steps up to the podium.

All eyes - including those of Frances - fix on her.

With quivering hands, Rose unfolds the piece of paper-- the newspaper clipping with the photo of the Triangle strikers.

ROSE

(halting)

I-I would be a traitor to those poor burned bodies, if I were to come here to talk good fellowship. We have tried you good people of the public and we... we have found you wanting.

Uneasy murmurs ripple through the audience.

ROSE (cont'd)

The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred! There are so many of us for one job it matters little if one hundred and forty odd are burned to death.

(anger rising)

We have tried *you*, citizens! We are trying you now, and you have a couple of dollars for the sorrowing mothers and brothers and sisters by way of a charity gift. But every time the workers come out in the only way they know to protest against conditions which are unbearable, the strong hand of the law is allowed to press down heavily upon us. Public officials have only words of warning for us.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE (cont'd)

Warning that we must be *intensely* orderly and must be *intensely* peaceable. The strong hand of the law beats us back when we rise - back into the conditions that make life unbearable.

(intimate)

I can't talk fellowship to you who are gathered here. Too much blood has been spilled. I know from experience it is up to the working people to save themselves.

With the audience left gaping, Rose strides away from the podium, her footsteps echoing on the stage.

Suddenly, the clapping begins. It becomes thunderous as the audience rises to its feet.

Frances watches, the wheels spinning behind her eyes.

INT. UNION HEADQUARTERS, UPPER OFFICE - DAY

Rose sleeps with her face on the newspaper clipping of the strike. A hand touches her shoulder and she starts awake.

LEONORA

Rose? Some people are here to see you, love. I think you'll want to hear what they have to say.

Rose blinks away the sleep and sees Al and Frances standing before the desk.

FRANCES

Miss Schneiderman, I'm Frances Perkins. I'm with the Consumer's League. This is Mr. Al Smith of the state legislature.

ROSE

Mr. Smith, Miss Perkins. You'll have to forgive me. I wasn't prepared to receive visitors.

FRANCES

No, Miss Schneiderman, we're intruding. We only need a minute of your time.

Rose nods and Leonora gestures for Al and Frances to sit.

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES (cont'd)
 I'll come to the point. The governor has just signed a law creating a Factory Investigating Commission with Mr. Smith here as its vice chair. Among the Commission's many powers is the right to choose its own members. We would like you to join.

ROSE
 In what capacity?

FRANCES
 Inspector.
 (off Rose's stunned look)
 You're familiar with the factories. All their dirty little tricks. We want to be shown everything, Miss Schneiderman.

Rose stares at the clipping photo, then turns her blazing eyes on Al.

ROSE
 And once the dust has settled, Mr. Smith; once everyone has forgotten all about the Triangle, how do I know that you'll keep faith?

Al removes an envelope from his coat pocket, sets it on the desk, and gently slides it toward Rose.

AL
 There's more where that came from.

He ushers Frances to the door and dons his hat.

AL (cont'd)
 It was a pleasure meeting you, Miss Schneiderman, Miss O'Reilly. I apologize if we wasted your time.

He closes the door softly behind him.

Rose opens the envelope and Eva's blackened wedding ring slides into her hand.

INT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING, HEARING CHAMBER - DAY

A gavel pounds and Al Smith looks determinedly at the entire New York legislature gathered in the chamber.

(CONTINUED)

AL
 The Commission being present and ready to proceed, we will now hear from counsel.

INT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING, HEARING CHAMBER - DAY

The stern and stately chief counsel for the commission turns toward the witness stand.

CHIEF COUNSEL
 What is your business or profession?

INT. EMPIRE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY - DAY

A stern-faced FOREMAN inspects a blouse and hands it back to Rachel with a nod of approval.

LEONORA (PRELAP)
 My business is shirtwaist maker...

IN THE HEARING CHAMBER--

Leonora sits boldly on the witness stand.

LEONORA (cont'd)
 My profession... labor agitator.

Leonora winks at Rose who watches from the back with a smile.

SUPERIMPOSE: ROSE SCHNEIDERMAN AND LEONORA O'REILLY SPENT THE REST OF THEIR LIVES IN PUBLIC SERVICE AND BECAME KEY FIGURES IN HELPING WOMEN ACHIEVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE.

INT. DIAMOND SHIRTWAIST FACTORY - DAY

A FACTORY FOREMAN gapes at an officious document.

DIAMOND FACTORY FOREMAN
 Surprise Inspection? We weren't told about no surprise inspection!

Rose sweeps past him with Frances, Al, and a couple of UNIFORMED OFFICERS.

IN THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER--

Frances Perkins stands at the pulpit, reading forcefully.

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES
Based on the findings of the
Factory Investigating Commission...

INT. CIRCLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY - DAY

In a dingy high-rise factory, Al moves one of many shipping boxes blocking the route to a rickety fire escape.

SUPERIMPOSE: AL SMITH SERVED FOUR TERMS AS GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK AND IN 1928 BECAME THE FIRST CATHOLIC EVER NOMINATED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL TICKET. HE LOST TO HERBERT HOOVER.

INT. BIALYSTOCK SYNAGOGUE - DAY

Rachel sits with her expressionless father as the congregation sings the Yigdal. Tears leak from her eyes and she hastily wipes them away as she tries to sing.

FRANCES (V.O.)
It is recommended that the
following measures be adopted into
law immediately...

IN THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER--

FRANCES
...and permanently.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - DAY

Al looks about in horror at the sight of twenty-plus people - a few of them children - sorting hair in a cramped apartment. Frances looks on, moved but not surprised.

FRANCES (V.O.)
First, prohibition of all work in
tenements.

SUPERIMPOSE: FRANCES PERKINS SERVED IN THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF TWO GOVERNORS AND EVENTUALLY BECAME SECRETARY OF LABOR UNDER PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. SHE WAS THE FIRST WOMAN IN AMERICAN HISTORY TO HOLD A CABINET POST.

INT. NIGHT SCHOOL - NIGHT

Rachel sits near the front devouring the lecture, one of a small handful of women in the class.

IN THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER--

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES

Second, limiting the working hours
of women to forty-eight per week.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A JURY FOREMAN blanches as he looks at the judge.

JURY FOREMAN

Not guilty.

EXT. COURTROOM - DAY

Several guards escort Blanck and Harris out of the courtroom.
A mob of victims' families tear at them, most holding
pictures of those killed, Kalman's mother among them.

FRANCES (V.O.)

Third, a pension for all pregnant
mothers at work.

*SUPERIMPOSE: THE FAMILIES OF TWENTY-THREE TRIANGLE FIRE
VICTIMS EVENTUALLY SETTLED CLAIMS AGAINST THE ROYAL INSURANCE
COMPANY FOR \$75 PER VICTIM.*

IN THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER--

FRANCES

Fourth, a commission to investigate
the question of a minimum wage in
sweated trades.

INT. CLOVER SHIRTWAIST FACTORY - DAY

Rose tears an OUT OF ORDER sign off of an elevator and nods
at one of the uniformed policemen with her.

The officer muscles open the elevator door.

Al and the others squat down to see beneath the roof of the
elevator as it sits between floors.

Several dirty, frightened children stare out from within.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Blanck gets the door shut and the car pulls away from the
vindictive mob. Blanck and Harris sit in fearful silence.

(CONTINUED)

SUPERIMPOSE: MAX BLANCK AND ISAAC HARRIS RECOVERED OVER \$200,000 - THE EQUIVALENT OF \$400 PER VICTIM - FROM THE SAME CARRIER.

EXT. MANHATTAN LYCEUM THEATER - DAY

Clara preaches to passersby while Rachel hands out fliers.

FRANCES (V.O.)
Sixth, inspections to be carried
out according to the trades...

INT. CANDY FACTORY - DAY

Frances smiles at a young five-year-old GIRL with curly hair.

Al tenderly takes the girl's hands and notices three of her fingers missing.

FRANCES (V.O.)
Fifth, an increased number of women
inspectors in New York City.

He looks up at the multitude of small children working as industrial machinery shrieks and thunders about them.

IN THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER--

FRANCES
Seventh, protection from employers
for women...

INT. EMPIRE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY - DAY

Rachel argues with the foreman, shaking her check angrily.

FRANCES (V.O.)
...who wish to come forward and
testify about work conditions and
present violations.

INT. TRUMPET SHIRTWAIST FACTORY - DAY

A small sign with the words "FIRE ESCAPE" scratched into it sits above a crawl space. Al squats and looks through it at a rotted, ice-covered ladder.

IN THE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER--

Frances forgets her papers and looks up at the assembly.

(CONTINUED)

FRANCES
 Finally, laws protecting workers
 from danger in case of fire.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Rachel turns a corner and stops.

Far in the distance, the burned-out Triangle Factory sits
 lifeless against the sky.

She stares at it for a long time, then turns and walks away.

*SUPERIMPOSE: THE TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST COMPANY NEVER FULLY
 RECOVERED FROM THE EVENTS OF MARCH 25, 1911. BY THE END OF
 WORLD WAR I, IT HAD ALL BUT VANISHED FROM PUBLIC RECORD.*

FADE OUT.

SUPERIMPOSE: THREE YEARS LATER

Hard knocking on a heavy wooden door.

FADE IN:

INT. TAMMANY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The door opens onto Frances. A beefy PORTER looks at her.

PORTER

Yes?

FRANCES

I want to see Charles Murphy.

The porter stares at her as if she's an idiot.

FRANCES (cont'd)

Frances Perkins...

PORTER

One moment.

The door closes. Frances stands for a while in the plush
 sanctum of Tammany Hall's most powerful man. The door opens,
 wide this time, and the porter gestures her in.

IN THE ANTECHAMBER--

The porter escorts Frances through the quiet chambers. The
 cool stares of the few TAMMANY MEN have no effect upon her.

(CONTINUED)

The porter knocks on an ornate wooden door, pauses, and opens it for Frances. She walks through into...

SILENT CHARLIE'S OFFICE--

The door closes behind her.

Seated at the lone desk sits SILENT CHARLIE, an inscrutable man in his fifties with rimless glasses and brush-cut hair.

SILENT CHARLIE
Miss Perkins.

FRANCES
Mr. Murphy.

SILENT CHARLIE
You wanted to see me?

FRANCES
Yes. Some new reform legislation is coming before the state Senate. I want your support behind it.

SILENT CHARLIE
What kind of legislation?

FRANCES
Provisions for healthy drinking water, proper ventilation, and seats for female employees. Work hours for children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen prohibited to no more than eight per day or at any time after six o'clock in the evening.

SILENT CHARLIE
You are the young lady, aren't you, who managed to get the fifty-four-hour bill passed?

FRANCES
I admit that I am.

SILENT CHARLIE
Well, young lady, I was opposed to that bill.

FRANCES
Yes, I am aware, Mr. Murphy.

(CONTINUED)

SILENT CHARLIE

(silent a moment)

It is my observation that it made us many votes. I will tell the boys to give all the help they can to this new bill. Goodbye.

FRANCES

(thunderstruck)

Thank you, Mr. Murphy.

She turns to go--

SILENT CHARLIE

Miss Perkins... are you one of these women suffragists?

FRANCES

(unflinching)

I am.

SILENT CHARLIE

Well, I am not... But if anybody ever gives you the vote, I hope you will remember that you would make a good Democrat.

Frances smiles, opens the door, and walks out.

EXT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Frances makes her way up the great stone steps.

Thomas MacManus descends past her, stopping in recognition.

MACMANUS

Miss Perkins, isn't it?

(off her look)

You may not remember me. Thomas--

FRANCES

The MacManus.

MacManus grins as he removes a cigar from his coat pocket and lights it.

MACMANUS

You look well, Miss Perkins. How have you been?

FRANCES

Busy, Mr. MacManus.

(CONTINUED)

MACMANUS

Very busy... Well, it was a
pleasure to see you again.

(starts to leave)

Oh, Miss Perkins? Rumor has it
there's a factory in my district
sewing phony labels into their
garments carrying the seal of an
approved workplace.

FRANCES

What's the name?

MacManus smiles as he blows a puff of smoke into the air.

MACMANUS

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory.

FRANCES

(smiles)

Well, I'm always glad to help
anybody in trouble.

He chuckles as he turns and heads down the steps.

Frances starts back up the steps and disappears through the
majestic facade of the Capitol Building.

SUPERIMPOSE:

*THE TRIANGLE FIRE USHERED IN AN ERA OF SWEEPING REFORM THAT
REDEFINED THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA...*

...PROPONENTS CALLED IT "THE NEW DEAL."

FADE OUT.