

I. VERMEER

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Inspired by true events

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A GRASSHOPPER

pinched between two grubby fingers, flits its head from side to side - trapped. A pair of scissors, swift as death, slide in and snip the head from its body.

Fingers release and the carcass falls into a small ceramic bowl, piled high with other insect parts.

A wooden spoon crushes the bugs into a paste.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - DAY

HAN MEGEEREN - an eagle-eyed man in his late thirties, full of concentration - sits in his art studio crushing the bugs.

INSERT TITLE CARD: *Holland, 1933.*

A bay window lights the cramped room - a large wooden table taking up the center. Shelves littered with painting supplies, tools and hundreds of jars cover the walls.

Easels hold canvases turned away from us.

Han sits on a stool in the sunlight, carefully working his magic over the paste. He adds a pinch of powder from the table and mixes it in - studying its greenish-brown tint.

Satisfied, he teases the liquid onto the hair of a tiny, hand-made brush and begins to paint - we do not see what he paints, but only that he paints with utmost concentration.

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOME - SAME TIME

A single story home in the countryside watches over a bright and beautiful woman in her late twenties - JOSEPHINE MEGEEREN - Han's wife.

She pulls a carrot from her garden, washes it, and then breaks it into pieces with her hands. She places them onto a tray - complete with milk, meat and bread - and carries it across the yard to a tiny two-story carriage house.

She opens the door and ascends the stairs.

INT. - CARRIAGE HOUSE STAIRWAY

As Josephine reaches the top, the door flies open. Han hurries out with his jacket and a large case under his arm.

HAN
I ate. I ate.

He tries to edge by her but there's not enough room.

JOSEPHINE
Where you off to so late?

HAN
Berghoff's. He wants to see it
right away.

JOSEPHINE
You finished? Let me see.

HAN
After Berghoff - if I catch
him.

Josephine makes a sandwich with the meat and bread.

JOSEPHINE
Eat, or you'll wither away.

EXT. - TOWN STREET - EVENING

Han gulps down his sandwich and hustles past shop windows.

INT. - PINE TREE PUB

LEO WILTSHIRE - a suave, good looking man in his early
forties - talks business with CHARLIE and BERGHOFF.

LEO
I told her the surrealists were
making quite an impression
these days - and without ever
seeing a single painting, she
bought all three of his works.

CHARLIE
All three?

LEO
Ask Berghoff.

BERGHOFF
I never would have believed it.
At my gallery, people usually
see the art before they invest
- but opportunities do arise...

Out the pub window, Leo sees Han rushing down the street.

LEO
They certainly do. Excuse me,
gentlemen... Berghoff.

EXT. - STREET - EVENING

Leo chases after Han.

LEO
Han! Slow down.

HAN
Can't. Don't want to miss
Berghoff.

Leo pulls on Han's jacket and manages to stop him.

LEO
Whoa. You missed him already.
Berghoff's in Paris.

HAN
Paris? For how long?

LEO
A week, I think. Why?

HAN
I told Berghoff he'd be the
first. Bugs, the whole canvas.

LEO
Very surreal. One big bug?

HAN
Thousands. It's all bugs.

LEO
You have piqued my curiosity,
Han. Let me have a look.

HAN
No. Berghoff said I'd have a
show if he likes it. I can't
just show it to you, Leo.

LEO
Fine. When is your show? I'll
be the first through the door.

HAN

I don't know. He wants to see the work before he commits.

LEO

Oh, he could decline? I see. That's a shame. I'll have to give the space to someone else.

Leo turns the corner and walks away - Han following.

HAN

What space?

Leo puts his arm across Han's shoulder and they walk down the street together as if they were old buddies.

LEO

Well, I need an artist for a show, but I have to know today.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Leo lowers a canvass from in front of his face, shaking his head. Han and Josephine watch Leo for his reaction.

LEO

I thought you said you were painting bugs - this is the same stuff you've always done.

On every easel - either a landscape or a still life.

HAN

No. The paints... they're made from bugs. Thousands of them. A landscape of bugs.

LEO

Everybody does landscapes.

HAN

Not with bugs.

Dejected, Josephine leaves the studio.

LEO

But nobody *knows* that it's bugs.

Han rubs at a section of his picture. Disturbed, he takes a brush from his shelf and begins to touch it up.

Leo waits patiently for Han to continue, but then realizes that Han has finished the conversation and lets himself out.

EXT. - CARRIAGE HOUSE DOORWAY - NIGHT

Josephine catches Leo on the bottom stair.

JOSEPHINE

Mr. Wiltshire, I know you were expecting something grand, but-

-

Leo's hand finds her cheek and brings them eye to eye.

LEO

What is it?

JOSEPHINE

Han would never ask... his work. Nobody... his work needs to be seen and you... you said you'd do a show for him...

LEO

Of course.

She smiles, relieved. He leans over and kisses her cheek.

JOSEPHINE

Thank you.

LEO

The pleasure is mine.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

Han's body has not moved, only his hands... working the paint, the brush... his mind. He nods, assuredly.

INT. - LEO'S WILTSHIRE GALLERY - NIGHT

Black-tied guests fill the gallery. Waiters roam with wine and hors d'oeuvres. Above the doorway hangs a banner - *"The Wiltshire Gallery - Works of Han Van Megeeren"*.

Josephine walks with her hand on Leo's arm as they mingle.

JOSEPHINE

Oh Mr. Wiltshire... Leo, tell me, what do you think - really?

LEO

Critics make the artist, my
dear - not the curator. But if
you'd really like to know...

Leo guides her to a corner, away from everyone else.

LEO

I think people need to open up
to experiences - other stimuli.
Landscapes, landscapes... the
world has other things to
offer.

Leo stares deeply at Josephine but she is oblivious.

JOSEPHINE

For instance?

Leo rests his hand on her hip, but is interrupted by
JONATHAN GLASS - a distinguished man in his fifties.

JONATHAN

For God's sake, Leo.
Landscapes?

She turns to Jonathan and Leo's hand rolls from her hip.

LEO

Right. Jonathan, allow me to
introduce Josephine Megeeren.

JONATHAN

Oh. Beg your pardon. How do
you do? Jonathan Glass.

LEO

Leading critic for Art World
magazine.

JOSEPHINE

And you're not very fond of
landscapes, Mr. Glass?

JONATHAN

I suppose I was, once...
(turning to Leo)
I thought you said something
about bugs.

JOSEPHINE

Mr. Glass, each piece must
speak for itself. For
instance---

JONATHAN

Of course they have to speak
for themselves, dear girl, your
husband's nowhere to be found.

Josephine looks around the gallery, searching for Han. She
walks off to find him, Jonathan watching her as she goes.

JONATHAN

Well, at least he has an eye
for beauty. She's exquisite,
yes?

EXT. - BACK ALLEY OF THE WILTSHIRE GALLERY - SAME TIME

Han leans against a brick wall, working a cigarette from
his pocket. The back door flies open. Josephine - with a
drink in her hand.

JOSEPHINE

You're supposed to be inside.

HAN

Why? I know what they look
like. It's their turn now.

She hands her drink to Han and takes his cigarette in
exchange. He takes a sip.

JOSEPHINE

Like the drink? It belongs to
Jonathan Glass.

Han chokes and hands it back to his wife.

HAN

*The Jonathan Glass?! He's
here, at my show? What did he
say?*

JOSEPHINE

What do you mean, what did he
say? He said, "Hello. The
work is grand, where's your
husband?"

HAN
Oh, my god...

Han smooths his hair and walks inside. Josephine inhales the cigarette and takes a sip of her drink.

INT. - GALLERY

Han lifts a glass of champagne from the waiter's tray and tries to blend into the crowd.

HAN
Cheers.

ANNA GLASS - an attractive, sophisticated woman in her early forties - turns and smiles politely...

ANNA
Cheers.

...and turns away. She studies one of Han's paintings.

Han's eyes search the crowd - his free hand grabbing for a cigarette. Anna peeks back at him.

ANNA
Looking for your date?

HAN
No. A cigarette.

She hands him a smoke, and he lights it.

ANNA
So, what do you think?

HAN
Cheap Dutch trash.

ANNA
No, the paintings.

HAN
Perhaps I was talking about the paintings.

ANNA
Well, then you would be a fool.
And you don't strike me as a
fool, Mr....?

HAN

Oh. Botere. Carl Botere.

She turns back to the painting.

ANNA

I think Megeeren has something
- so delicate and... exact.
This one's my favorite. It's
very---

HAN

Serene?

ANNA

Sexual.

HAN

This one?

ANNA

Please, Carl, I think we both
know what we're talking about.

A hand rests upon Anna's shoulder - her husband, Jonathan.

JONATHAN

My dear, how am I ever going to
interview this man if you
monopolize all of his time?

Han smiles a mischievous grin.

ANNA

How silly of me. Mr. Megeeren,
nice to make your acquaintance.
More champagne, dear?

Anna kisses Jonathan's cheek as she melds off into the
crowd.

BACK ALLEY OF WILTSHIRE GALLERY

Josephine blows the last trail of cigarette smoke out into
the night. Turning to the door, she finds Leo watching
her.

LEO

Beautiful.

JOSEPHINE

Excuse me?

Leo steps out of the doorway and into the night air.

LEO

How you take care of him. How we both... take care of him. He's talking with Glass right now. But who takes care of you?

JOSEPHINE

Han takes care of me.

She tries to lead him inside, but they wind up face to face.

LEO

Does he? Up there, painting landscapes. And where are you, then? Too distracting for you to watch him work. What do you do when he leaves you all alone?

JOSEPHINE

My presence is not a distraction.

She turns away.

LEO

My dear, are you unaware of the affect you have upon a man?

JOSEPHINE

No, Mr. Wiltshire - but I am aware of the affect champagne has upon them.

Josephine tries again to enter the gallery but Leo steps in front of her... challenging her words.

She looks around for a way to leave and sees the dark alley way. Leo sees her concern, but smiles.

LEO

Choices. Choices. Life is full of them my dear.

With that, she turns and walks down the alleyway.

INT. - WILTSHIRE GALLERY

Han points to one of his paintings, lecturing a bored Jonathan Glass.

HAN
A monarch, for instance...

JONATHAN
Like England?

HAN
No. A butterfly... see? This
orange, so delicate. Innocent.
The evening sunset...

Jonathan yawns.

EXT. - WILTSHIRE GALLERY, FRONT ENTRANCE

Josephine exits the dark alleyway and heads for the front door when she is immediately descended upon by NIGEL THICKET - a runny nosed milksop out for a smoke.

NIGEL
Getting some fresh air, my
dear?

JOSEPHINE
No, it's not any fresher out
here it seems.

Nigel closes in.

NIGEL
Pity. So... here you are.

JOSEPHINE
Yes, here I am... Mr...?

NIGEL
Thicket. Nigel Thicket...
And, here you are. And, here I
am.

JOSEPHINE
Yes....?

NIGEL
Well...

Josephine prepares for another come on.

JOSEPHINE
Well what, Mr. Thicket?

NIGEL

Well, I would like to buy one
of your husband's paintings.

A warm smile melts across her face as she offers him her
arm and leads him back inside.

JOSEPHINE

Indeed.

INT. - PINE TREE PUB - NIGHT

A piano plays above the clamor of people squeezing to the
bar.

In back, Han sits without Josephine, at a table crowded with
Berghoff, Charlie, their wives and a smattering of friends.

BERGHOFF

(to Han)

But, that's Leo for you - sell
his mother's false teeth if he
could get the right price.

HAN

Mr. Berghoff, I didn't know you
were still in town...

BERGHOFF

It's not your fault, that's
what I'm trying to tell you.
In fact, I thought you were
making paintings of bugs not
with them. I don't know what
I'd have said.

HAN

But the technique---

BERGHOFF

So, here's to Han and his first
critical review!

ALL

Here! Here! Cheers!

CHARLIE

Han, tell us what you told that
arse hole critic at your show.

BERGHOFF

He won't know what he said
until he reads it - it's J. G.
Glass for Christ's sake.

They chuckle. Han sees Anna Glass entering the bar by herself, and abruptly rises from the table.

BERGHOFF

It was a joke, Han. Cheers!

They continue on without him, swept up in the celebration.

THE BAR

Han slides up next to Anna as she takes a cigarette out. He lights a match and offers it to her.

HAN

Hello, again.

ANNA

Congratulations.

HAN

Thank you. Um. How did your
husband like the show?

ANNA

I don't know what gives my
husband pleasure. Certainly,
you're aware of that.

HAN

Certainly. But, you have read
the article?

ANNA

My husband's business... gives
me no pleasure, Han. And what
does give me pleasure... is
none of my husband's business.

She lays a seductive hand on top of his own.

LEO (OS)

Han!! Han!! It's here!

Leo pushes through the crowd, holding a stack of Art World magazines high above everyone's heads. Han pulls away.

HAN
Care to join us?

Anna smiles and politely shakes her head.

HAN
Suit yourself.

ANNA
Oh, I usually do.

THE TABLE

Leo offers the magazines around - the last to Berghoff.

LEO
What are you doing here?

BERGHOFF
Celebrating, Leo. I just
returned from Paris - heard
about my friend's good fortune.

LEO
It wasn't fortune, I planned
the show for weeks.

BERGHOFF
I said *friend* Leo, not *fiend*.

Charlie finds the review as Han arrives.

CHARLIE
Here it is: page six.

LEO
Han, will you do the honors?

HAN
Wait. Where's Josephine?

LEO
She'll be here.

He nudges Han to begin reading to the table.

HAN
"Megeeren - An Old Type of New
Show by Jonathan P. Glass."

Han looks to the bar and sees Anna studying him in return.

HAN

"Van Eyck, Van Dyke, Van Gogh, Vermeer. Holland's history is rich with talent; for centuries, Dutch masters have toiled to perfect their skills..."

CHARLIE

What a bore! Get to the good stuff.

Berghoff, reading ahead, lowers his eyes from the oncoming tragedy.

HAN

Okay: "Megeeren represents an attitude that can be seen in the works of most new artists, and that attitude is - arrogance."

BERGHOFF

All critics should be hung!

THE BAR

Anna watches Han's face turn from pride to embarrassment. Then, Josephine enters the pub carrying a large shoulder bag.

THE TABLE

Faces of his friends show the disappointment in Han's voice.

HAN

(struggling)

"Although bizarre in concept and somewhat pleasing to the eye, his work is hackneyed and trite. Megeeren's time is better suited to painting calendar covers than by ruining canvas.

Josephine reaches into her bag - producing a calendar with one of Han's landscapes on the cover.

JOSEPHINE

Ta dah! The National Activities Calendar. Look!

Humiliated, Han walks from the table as Josephine excitedly passes out copies of the calendar. She looks up and sees Han on his way to the bar.

JOSEPHINE

Han, get me a sherry, please?
And let me see this article!

Josephine picks up a magazine and begins to read aloud.

JOSEPHINE

"Van Eyck, Van Dyke, Van Gogh,
Vermeer. Holland's history is
rich with talent..."

Berghoff points to a paragraph further along.

JOSEPHINE

"...like so many moppets
painting calendars in our city
parks... better serve his time
in museums studying the Masters
- from which he so shamelessly
steals and gives nothing in
return."

Finally understanding, Josephine looks up to see that Han has gone - Anna's place too, is vacant.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Anna sits in the dark - studying one of Han's paintings by moonlight. DRUNKEN FOOTSTEPS fall on the stairs.

Anna recedes into the shadows before Han appears in the doorway with an issue of Art World in his hand.

HAN

Burglars, get out! There's
nothing worth stealing in here.

Anna emerges seductively from behind a canvas.

HAN

Looking for one of your
boyfriends, Mrs. Glass?

ANNA

No, a cigarette.

Anna reaches to a box and removes its last cigarette.

Han walks up, sees the empty box and swipes it from her.

HAN
Your husband crucified me.

ANNA
Really? And what's this,
Emmeus?

HAN
Who?

ANNA
Emmeus - the first place Christ
went after His resurrection.
Or are you still recovering?

Anna walks closer to a confused Han.

ANNA
After His resurrection, Christ
walked until He came to the
city of Emmeus. There, people
mistook Him for a beggar and
invited Him into their house
for food.

HAN
Well, I ain't hungry.

Anna re-takes the cigarette, lights it.

ANNA
Jesus didn't tell them who he
was. He listened. And he
heard His own words from the
mouths of strangers. They
asked Him to say grace. And
when he broke the bread it was
as if a veil had been lifted...

Anna puts the cigarette back in Han's mouth.

ANNA
...and the people recognized
they were in the company of
God.

HAN
Quite a trick.

Anna picks a painting from his stack.

ANNA

You have great talent, Han - I wonder why you hide it.

A voice rings up from downstairs.

JOSEPHINE (OS)

Han?! Han, are you up there?

Hurried STEPS up the stairs. Han closes the door, locking it.

JOSEPHINE (OS)

Han?! Are you all right? Open the door.

Han rests his head against the closed door.

HAN

No. I want to be alone.

Anna leans her arm over Han's shoulder and places the cigarette in his mouth.

JOSEPHINE (OS)

I thought we were celebrating.

Anna caresses Han face. He stubs out the cigarette.

ANNA

Your talent - it needs to be nurtured.

Anna leans over and kisses him squarely on the lips.

JOSEPHINE (OS)

We made a lot of money from the sale.

Han jerks his head away from Anna.

HAN

I don't care about the calendar!

JOSEPHINE (OS)

I know I know! The hell with Glass, but... Han, you did it.

ANNA

She'll stifle you...

HAN
Why didn't you tell me that
bastard was going to put my
work on a god damn calendar?

Han holds Anna at arm's length, listening to Josephine.

JOSEPHINE (OS)
It looks nice. Did you see it?

HAN
I know what it looks like. I
painted it!

JOSEPHINE (OS)
Darling, I know you painted it.
That's why I...

ANNA
Get rid of her.

JOSEPHINE (OS)
I love you so much and...

Han sits Anna on the stool and motions her to stay quiet.
He then walks to the light switch and turns out the light.

JOSEPHINE OUTSIDE THE DOOR

Small tears speckle her face.

JOSEPHINE
...and I didn't know what to
do.
I... I'm sorry. I should have
told you first.

The door opens and Han walks out from the darkness.

HAN
I'm sorry, too. I shouldn't
have left.

JOSEPHINE
Don't ever leave me again.

She throws her arms around him and they kiss.

INT. - MEGEEREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Han and Josephine make love in serene, yet classic style -
in bed, in the missionary position.

They move together but he looks out the window and sees Anna creeping from his studio.

He falters... loses concentration and Josephine pulls him down to her. Han lays in her arms.

JOSEPHINE

What's wrong?

HAN

They crucified me.

She kisses him and they embrace, kissing back and forth. He relaxes, rolling onto the pillow.

JOSEPHINE

Maybe we should try something new. You know... besides landscapes.

She tries to rekindle the sexuality, rubbing his shoulders... caressing him but he doesn't understand.

HAN

Yes... something besides landscapes, something new...

He drifts off, leaving her to stare off into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. - MEGEEREN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Josephine rolls over to find herself alone.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

A whistling Han unpacks new parcels. He fills his box with cigarettes, fresh fruit into a basket, and a new palette.

As Han refills a flask with whiskey, the cap rolls onto the floor. He bends and sees the crumpled issue of Art World, carefully, peeling back pages until he greets the face of Jonathan Glass in his hands.

HAN

I've been thinking about you.

Then, he props the magazine up on the table, giving the photo full view of his new possessions. Han resumes his work.

Han locks his door and returns to the packages. He pulls out jar after jar - each with different powders, liquids, resins.

After showing them to Jonathan, he lines a variety of antique hair brushes upon the table. Then, a bunch of lilacs, an antique water pitcher, and a pouch of Lapis gem stones.

HAN

Sorry, you old screw. Even moppets have their secrets.

Han throws the magazine away and removes his final item from the package - an old painted canvas, folded into quarters.

A BANGING at the door stops him cold.

JOSEPHINE (OS)

I love you.

HAN

I love you, too. But I'm busy.

Han unfolds the canvas, showering the floor with paint chips.

JOSEPHINE (OS)

Come on a walk with me.

HAN

Sorry. Already been..

Han looks at the canvas - creased and cracked beyond repair. Han spreads the painting flat upon the floor.

JOSEPHINE (OS)

I need some money. I want to take it to the bank.

Han leans down and overturns a few loose floorboards. From underneath, he pulls a wooden box and carries it to the door.

He opens the door just a crack.

JOSEPHINE

Another landscape?

HAN

Something new.

He takes money from the box and hands it to Josephine.

JOSEPHINE

All of it.

HAN

That is... all of it.

JOSEPHINE

Han, that's nearly half!

HAN

I've been buying... supplies.
This painting - you'll see.
I'm trying something different.

INT. - CARRIAGE HOUSE STAIRWAY

The door closes on Josephine and she looks at the money. Disturbed, she prepares to knock again, but the SOUND OF A CAR ENGINE takes her down the stairs.

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOUSE - DAY

Leo drives up in a fashionable car. Josephine walks into the yard with a frown, tucking the money into her pocket.

LEO

Does money always make you
so... happy? Or is it just me?

JOSEPHINE

Han makes me happy. Is there
anything wrong with that?

LEO

More landscapes?

JOSEPHINE

What do you want?

Leo gets out of the car and walks to the carriage house.

JOSEPHINE

He's busy. He can't see you.

LEO

We'll see about that.

INT. - CARRIAGE HOUSE STAIRWAY

Leo ascends the stairs and looks down into the yard - Josephine's shadow creeps to the side of the door, listening.

Taking advantage of the situation, Leo grins and KNOCKS.

HAN
Busy! Go away.

LEO
Han, it's Leo. Open up. I have
a message from a secret
admirer.

JOSEPHINE

soaks in every word. Then she hears the DOOR OPENS and SLAM shut. She peeks around and sees only the empty stairway.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

Han holds Leo against the wall by his throat.

HAN
What are you doing? Where's my
wife, you lying snake?!

LEO
Don't worry. She's in the
garden. She couldn't hear.

Han looks out the window and sees Josephine walking out of the yard and down the road.

HAN
I don't like your jokes, Leo.

LEO
I don't joke and I don't lie -
not when it comes to money.
Listen, remember Anna Glass?

Han shrugs, lights a smoke and begins to clear away the canvas - hiding his work.

HAN
What about her?

LEO

She's rich, and she likes
you... your work at least.
Must not have read her
husband's review.

HAN

She does it to spite him.

LEO

Explain criticism, not
compliments. She wants to
support your next show - at my
studio, of course.

HAN

I can't do another show for you
- I promised Berghoff. Tell
Mrs. Glass that her assistance
is not required.

LEO

And so, what should I tell your
wife - that you don't want the
money, or should I just tell her
about Anna's infatuation?

EXT. - CARRIAGE HOUSE

Leo tumbles down the stairs and out into the dirt.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

Han kneels down and rips the canvas into quarters.

CROSS CUT
WITH:

EXT. - MAIN STREET - DAY

Josephine enters a doctor's office on foot. And...

INT. - DOCTOR'S OFFICE

is greeted by a handsome, thirty-five year old DOCTOR
BRUNWALDUS, who leads her into his office.

HAN

repeatedly wipes a clear liquid across one of the canvas quarters. The paint thins a little more with each wipe until the entire picture has dissolved away.

JOSEPHINE

watches Dr. Brunwaldus cut into a dead rabbit's abdomen, inspecting the sexual organs.

HAN

cuts the long bristles from antique hair brushes and ties them to sticks, creating new paint brushes.

JOSEPHINE

leaves the doctor's office, smiling to ENSEL - the florist - who cuts fresh lilacs by his stand.

ENSEL

Happy birthday, Mrs. Megeeren.

JOSEPHINE

It's not my birthday.

A look of nervous embarrassment crosses Ensel's face.

HAN

crushes the lilacs with a mortar and pestle.

JOSEPHINE

strides through the park - hell bent.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - DAY

An enraged Josephine storms into the unoccupied studio.

JOSEPHINE

Buying supplies, were you?!

Silence. Josephine looks out the window just as smoke starts to pour from their kitchen. She rushes out, yelling.

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOUSE - DAY

Smoke billows from the kitchen window.

JOSEPHINE

Han! Han!

Han carries out a smoking square of canvas and throws it on the lawn, next to three uncharred squares painted a brilliant blue - each with deep cracks cutting through the dried paint.

HAN

(hacking)

I'm all right. I'm all right.

JOSEPHINE

Good.

She pulls back and SLAPS him.

JOSEPHINE

That's for not painting landscapes! And for having Leo deliver love letters when you won't even see your own wife!

She beats at his chest again... and again.

JOSEPHINE

And for buying lilacs on someone else's birthday!

Han grabs her arms and pulls her to him. Pointing her toward an uncharred blue section

HAN

Look. Blue paint...? Lilac blue, paint? From lilacs.

Josephine looks at Han.

HAN

I may burn the house down, but adultery?

JOSEPHINE

But I heard Leo say...

HAN

A woman?

Josephine nods.

HAN

Anna Glass - the critic's husband. She wants to give money to my next show, but I told Leo to forget it.

Josephine continues to nod in agreement, but tears break through and she starts to sob again.

JOSEPHINE

Forget it? Why? What were you cooking in there, money?

HAN

Schemes, my love. I'm cooking up schemes. Why are you crying?

JOSEPHINE

Because we're going to have a baby, Han.

HAN

A baby? But that's...

JOSEPHINE

Maybe you should tell them you've changed your mind.

She begins to cry harder - laughing and holding Han tightly.

Han shakes his head in bewilderment and looks down at the smoldering blue canvas laying in the grass.

INT. - BERGHOFF'S GALLERY - DAY

Berghoff examines paintings stacked against a back wall. Han stands next to him, empty handed.

BERGHOFF

Han, I can't give you an advance for a show six months from now. What are you working on?

HAN

Remember Glass's article? He was right... I listened to him. I've found inspiration to create something... historical.

Berghoff finds the painting he was looking for.

BERGHOFF

Historical? Fine. Create it,
then show it to me so I can
judge for myself.

HAN

My work isn't for you to judge.

Berghoff turns, realizing he has misspoken, but it's too late - Han has stormed from the gallery.

INT. - PINE TREE PUB - DAY

Leo sits at the bar with friends. Han walks right up to Leo.

HAN

I'll do your show. I need six
months and money to get
started.

Han's bluntness turns a few heads. Leo takes it in stride.

LEO

Fine. I'll just speak with---

HAN

No! I don't want you to
mention this to anyone.

Han looks at Leo's associates, lowers his voice to a whisper.

HAN

Understand? If you want to do
my show, you have to have faith
in me.

LEO

Fine. I'll see what I can do.

And with that, Han walks out of the pub.

FRIEND

Who the hell was that? What
does he do?

LEO

You, my friend, will just have
to come to the show now, won't
you? You'll see.

FORGERY MONTAGE SEQUENCE #1 OF 3

Han builds a brick oven in his back yard. Josephine
watches from the house as he places the bricks one by one.

Leo pulls up as Han completes his oven. He hands Han an
envelope of money, which Han stuffs into his pocket.

Using solvent Han removes layers of paint from another old
painting. Josephine brings lunch, but Han will not let her
enter. Instead, Han hands her the envelope full of money -
much thinner than when Leo gave it to Han.

With the blank canvas before him, Han grinds ingredients to
make paint - insects, flowers, even gem stones - with mad
precision and attention. He fills jar after jar after jar.

CUT TO:

INT. - RILKESMUSEUM - DAY

Leo and Anna stroll in front of works of the Masters -
Vermeer among them. She leads him like a hungry dog and
stops in front of Vermeer's Woman Holding a Balance.

ANNA

She's lovely in that light.
The tilt of her head, the way
she touches the table -
immaculate.

Behind the painted woman's head, hangs a picture with
angels.

ANNA

The painting behind her head,
where is it from?

LEO

Degas?

ANNA

Quite a compliment to Degas, I would say. No. The picture does not exist. Well... it does, of course, we're looking at it. But it only existed in Vermeer's mind. He never did religious works - none that have ever been found.

LEO

Perhaps I'll clean my cellar, in case I over looked one or two.

Anna smiles a wry grin and the two move on to another room.

As they leave, we see Han watching them from a far corner.

FORGERY MONTAGE SEQUENCE #2 OF 3

Han pores over art books in the library - religious works, history of the Masters, critiques of Vermeer, Degas, DeHoogh.

Han carefully examines the brush strokes of Woman Holding a Balance in the museum. A museum guard asks him to move back and they begin to chat about the piece.

Han imitates the brush strokes from Vermeer's work on a scrap of canvas. Josephine, now quite pregnant, knocks at the door and leaves dinner outside. Han doesn't even budge.

CUT TO:

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOME - DAY

Josephine makes her own depressed way from the carriage house and finds Leo staring at her from the garden.

LEO

How is your husband?

She toughens up, pressing out a smile.

JOSEPHINE

He's working very hard, so I try not to disturb him.

LEO

And how is the work coming?

JOSEPHINE

He's working very hard.

She deflects her gaze from him but when it returns, he holds a flower out to her and she takes it.

JOSEPHINE

Thank you... Leo.

LEO

Here, sit down.

He sits her on the woodpile and gazes at the protruding belly beneath her dress. She feels his stare and looks to him.

LEO

Han isn't the only one working hard creating something... beautiful. I think...

He kneels between her legs - staring at her stomach.

LEO

I think you are an artist in your own right. And if I could put this on display for all the world to see...

He frames his hands around her stomach.

Leo moves his hands the final few inches and lays them on the bulge beneath her dress. He lightly moves them, caressing the fabric against her skin.

She looks to him but he is entranced, never taking his eyes from his hands. Josephine leans back and relaxes. His hands lightly work their way around her stomach.

He slips a finger between the buttons and touches her skin. He looks for her reaction - eyes closed, she places her hand with the flower on top of his.

The other hand undoes a button... then another... he slides his hands inside her dress and rubs the skin upon her belly.

She arches her back, warm sun shining on her body. Leo leans over and places his lips onto her skin.

Instantly, her eyes pop open - the spell broken. She looks at Leo, who casually stands as if nothing were out of place.

LEO

Thank you.

She draws her buttons closed, looking up to her seducer.

Leo turns and walks back to his car.

FORGERY MONTAGE SEQUENCE #3 OF 3

Han, more disheveled with an unkempt beard, paints with passion - delicately working his brushes across the canvas.

He toasts himself with a dirty cup of wine. He sits back and admires his work amongst the dank and corrupt studio.

Han removes his canvas from its antique frame, careful to save the ancient nails. He then carries it out into the backyard under the cover of darkness.

Slowly, carefully, Han slides the painting into his hand-made oven - a small glow of embers leaking from the oven door.

His face glows like a madman as he watches the embers inside do their magic. Then, he raises his foot and closes the oven door with it - throwing his grin into darkness.

INT. - HALLWAY TO HAN'S STUDIO - DAY

Leo's hand tries the door. It's locked, so he KNOCKS.

HAN (OS)

Busy.

Leo throws his shoulder against the door and is abruptly stopped. He tries again but the door does not budge.

LEO

Open up, Han. It's been six months now. I gave you my faith now give me something in return!

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

Han moves a barricade from in front of the door.

HAN
Are you alone?

Leo hears the BUMPING AND THRASHING inside.

LEO
Are you?

The door opens a few inches. Han's hollow eyes dart from side to side, as he backs into the darkness and lets Leo in.

The shades are drawn - the only light from candles. Han scurries around, gathering things in the dark.

LEO
Let some air into this place.
It smells like a wine cellar.

HAN
No! Don't touch anything.

Leo pulls up a stool and sits in the shadows.

LEO
So, tell me, how many pieces do
we have for your new show?

Han steps out of the darkness, startling Leo with his appearance - he has not shaved in some time. His hair is matted and his eyes are hollow caves on a dirty face.

HAN
Just one.

LEO
One? Very funny... the world's
smallest show - one painting.

Han brings his canvas out into a pool of light. He hands it to Leo but we, the audience, never see the picture.

HAN
And I want to destroy it - rip
it into a thousand pieces
before their eyes.

Leo's eyes dart back and forth between the painting and Han.

LEO
You painted this...?

Han nods. Then, ever so slowly, a smile creeps across Leo's face as if he just got the punchline to some colossal joke.

LEO
Who have you shown this to?
Josephine? Friends?

HAN
Nobody. That would defeat the
purpose. Wouldn't it?

Han begins to chuckle at his own remarks - a hacking, wheezing kind of sickly laugh. Leo joins in - louder.

Han responds with more laughter - deep, rich, authentic - until the two men lose control of themselves.

INT. - MEGEEREN HOUSE, KITCHEN

Making her way outside, an extremely pregnant Josephine stares jealously at the window - LAUGHTER SINGING down.

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOUSE

Leo carries one of Han's painting cases out of the carriage house and places it into his car. Josephine approaches him.

JOSEPHINE
How are the paintings?

Leo slams the car door, locking the painting away.

LEO
I don't know... I'll have to
see if there's even going to be
a show, my dear.

JOSEPHINE
But you gave him an advance---

LEO
Good night, Josephine.

Leo gets into his car and drives away.

Josephine turns and sees Han smoking in the doorway.

HAN
What did he say to you?

She approaches and lays his worries to rest with a kiss.

JOSEPHINE

He wouldn't tell me anything.
Said it was fantastic...

Han rubs her tummy. She puts her hand on his and smiles.

HAN

We did it. We painted
perfection.

He laughs, despite himself - giddy and somewhat drunk.

JOSEPHINE

Show me. Show me how we did
it.

She takes his hand and leads him up the stairs.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

Josephine sits on the stool, picking a paintbrush from the easel. She holds it ready, about to paint on air.

JOSEPHINE

Show me what it feels like.

Smiling at the challenge, Han slides a stool behind her and sits astride his wife. He takes her hand in his and dips the brush into his glass of wine. The paint mixes with the red.

HAN

Close your eyes... *you* create
the painting, not the paint.
See the picture in your mind.

She shuts her eyes and sinks back into his arms.

HAN

Good. Now, find the color that
you want.

JOSEPHINE

Blue... I want blue.

He guides her hand and dips it softly into the air.

CROSS CUT WITH:

CLOSE ON WORKSHOP BENCH

A small pile of yellow resin receives a drop of water and turns magically into paint - a paintbrush following... dabbing and mixing it - as if following Han's instructions.

The brush raises and Han's mad eyes follow it to the canvas.

HAN (OS)

Now, remember - you only paint one tiny bit at a time... never the whole painting. Take a little piece... just a kiss.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

He kisses her neck and she melts into him - their hands painting together in the air.

HAN

And move your hand as if the color were attached to your fingers. Stroke the canvas... touching just the place you want...

JOSEPHINE

The blue...

His free hand slides around to her stomach. He kisses her again and slides his hand inside her blouse.

HAN

Yes. And find another place... and another place and another...

CLOSE ON WORKSHOP BENCH

The brush, paints - droplet by droplet with utmost care.

HAN (OS)

What are you painting?

JOSEPHINE (OS)

The sky...

HAN (OS)

The sky... that's beautiful.

JOSEPHINE (OS)
I need more paint.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

Josephine writhes beneath her husband's kisses - their free hands exploring one another.

He swirls the brush again into his wine, clouding the glass.

HAN
Pick another color.

JOSEPHINE
Pink... like the sunrise.

CLOSE ON WORKSHOP BENCH

Onto an aged and cracked canvas, the yellow paint begins to resemble a pattern - the letter 'I'.

HAN (OS)
Yes. And then find the place
and softly... softly place the
color where you want it...

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

Han and Josephine kiss like young lovers, entwined around two stools and her pregnant stomach.

JOSEPHINE
Oh, it's beautiful... it's...
it's just what I wanted...

HAN
Good... good, then put the
brush down and... and we'll let
the canvas dry... dry for a
while...

Suddenly, Josephine looks up and they both stop.

Water starts to trickle down Josephine's leg.

Han watches a puddle of fluid form beneath his wife - she, laughing as Han did when he was with Leo. Pure creation - her water has broken.

HAN
The baby?

All she can do is nod - and laugh - the two of them together.

INT. - PARIS BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

Leo carries Han's painting case and is greeted by DR. KARL BOON - an elegant Swiss man in his fifties.

BOON

It's been a long time, Leo.

LEO

It certainly has. But I have something which may be of interest to you.

They shake hands dryly as Boon closes and locks the door.

INT. - MEGEEREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dr. Brunwaldus bring Josephine's baby into the world and hands it to a delighted Han and Josephine.

INT. - BREDIUS' LIBRARY - NIGHT

MARCUS BREDIUS, a frail old man in his late eighties sits in his armchair drinking a brandy. Dr. Boon stands before him.

BREDIUS

Of course, in Paris there is always a fine balance between what you do and why you do it.

BOON

My dear Bredius, the how and the why should not concern you.

BREDIUS

You concern me, Dr. Boon. Your clients concern me. And your ethics concern me.

BOON

Please, keep my clients out of this.

An ASSISTANT enters the library and holds the door. Two boys, taking special care, deliver Han's painting case inside. Bredius and Boon walk to either end of it.

The Assistant slides the painting from its container - the front facing Boon, the back facing Bredius. Bredius paces behind it, removing a pen from his pocket.

He taps the pen against a rusty nail. The Assistant removes the nail with pliers and places it in an empty jar.

Bredius taps a small corner of canvas which the Assistant snips and puts in the jar.

BREDIUS

Thank you. I will send word.

BOON

I hope you found everything to be most satisfactory?

BREDIUS

Show Dr. Boon to the door and take those samples to Milkwood.

Bredius walks around to see the painting for the first time. His eyes grow wide, having not expected what he sees.

BREDIUS

My God! We've found one.

INT. - MEGEEREN HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

A vibrant Josephine nurses her three week old daughter - NADINE - while sitting at the kitchen table. A man we assume to be Han stands at the sink, mixing a liquid concoction.

A car pulls up outside. Leo knocks and enters in one grand gesture - his new suit, one of the finest in Europe. In his hand he holds another suit and a dazzling evening gown.

LEO

Han! Josephine! Get dressed - we're celebrating!

Josephine covers herself and the man turns - revealing himself to be Dr. Brunwaldus, the doctor from town.

BRUNWALDUS

Well, my friend, you seem to be a little late for that - about three weeks, I'd say.

(to Josephine)

Here, drink it - it's vitamins.

He rubs his gentle hands over the crown of the baby's head. Turning back to Leo, they look like the perfect couple.

BRUNWALDUS

I'm Dr. Brunwaldus -
Josephine's physician. And I
must say that such rambunctious
behavior---

Leo flings the dress across a chair and runs back outside.

INT. - STAIRCASE

Leo bounds up the stairs and POUNDS on the door.

LEO

Han! Open up! It's Leo - open
up! We're celebrating! Han!

HAN (OS)

It's open!

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO

The curtains are drawn, but the place is well lit with
candles and oil lamps. Off to one side, a small, single
canvas stands on an easel, facing the wall.

Han washes his hands in a back sink and dries them on his
paint splattered shirt as he walks to greet Leo.

HAN

Thought you'd run away with it.

LEO

I did. I took it to Paris.

HAN

Paris?

But the meaning is lost to him. He turns to the canvas.

HAN

Look at this.

Han turns the canvas from the wall and shows it to Leo -
The Head of Christ; a life sized replica of a single head,
lit from an unseen source on the right.

HAN

We can show this one, too. I haven't had time to age it yet but... you're right, a single painting for my show is... a little pompous, right?

Leo begins to laugh and walks toward the table.

HAN

And besides, when I tear one to pieces, the other will still be there to sell. It'll be a show to end all shows!

LEO

There's not going to be a show.

HAN

What are you talking about? Why not? Where's my painting, Leo?!

LEO

Here. Here's your painting!

Leo removes stack after stack of money from the suit he carries. He places it on the table and Han flips through it.

HAN

You sold it?! But that wasn't the plan! I'm supposed to---

LEO

£175,000 wasn't part of the plan either.

HAN

£175,000? Jesus...

Holding the money, it hits Han for the first time that he's rich. He lets the money fall from his fingers and begins to laugh. He laughs and Leo laughs with him.

HAN

You did it! You did it, I'm...

LEO

You did it, Han! Come on - let's go celebrate. Dinner, drinks, the works - I'm buying.

HAN
Dinner, yes! Drinks. But
wait, divide it. Fifty-fifty,
right?

Han returns to the money and starts dividing bundles.

LEO
No, Han. It's been divided.
175 - that's your half.

Han is stunned, but then elated. He shovels the money into
a box, sticking some into his pockets.

LEO
And a new suit... it's French.

INT. - MEGEEREN HOME, KITCHEN

Josephine and Dr. Brunwaldus sit at the table, quietly
discussing dietary habits, while baby Nadine sleep nearby.

Han burst in with Leo - Han dressed in his suit, but still
wearing work boots.

HAN
Josephine! Get dressed, Leo's
taking us out to---

Josephine and Dr. Brunwaldus turn with sour looks. The
baby starts to cry and Josephine picks her up to calm her.

JOSEPHINE
Oh, honey... I can't just dash
out - we have a baby now...
And what are we celebrating -
your show? There'll be time
for that. When is the show,
Leo?

HAN
There's not going to be a show.

BRUNWALDUS
Then I would say your
celebration is somewhat
premature.

Han stands in the doorway, looking at his wife, his child
and Dr. Brunwaldus, thinking of something to say. Nothing
comes.

LEO
Come on, Han.

Josephine shushes the baby while Han turns away, leaving with Leo, still wearing his boots and a fine suit.

INT. - FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Han and Leo enjoy their meal as Leo pours more wine.

LEO
Let me ask you something.
Would you rather be rich, or
would you rather be famous?

HAN
I'd rather know who bought my
painting.

LEO
Can't be done.

Leo sips his wine - until Han SLAMS his hand on the table.

HAN
Leo!

Heads turn, including that of Anna across the restaurant. Her husband excuses himself - ignorant of the clamor.

HAN
The painting was only half of
the artwork...

LEO
I see, and you expect more
money when you tear the canvas
in front of its new owner? Is
that it? They should pay
another bundle for the other
half of the show? Listen, they
liked the painting... so they
bought it.

HAN
Which century?

LEO
What do you mean?

HAN
You know what I mean.

Leo waves Han off, just as Anna Glass arrives.

ANNA

I should have known - an
artist's temper and alcohol
always gives rise to flair and
argumentation. Hello Han, Leo.
Are you attending the ceremony
this evening?

She bends over and gives Han a kiss on the cheek.

HAN

Did you purchase my work? Are
you the one?

LEO

Han---

Anna looks to Leo, uncertain of how to answer. Leo gives
her no assistance, and she turns back to Han.

ANNA

No. I simply gave...
encouragement. That's all.

Han stares at Leo.

HAN

Encouragement? How much...
encouragement?

Han pulls bills from his pocket.

HAN

That much? THAT much?! I
don't need any encouragement
from you!

He shoves a fistful of bills into Anna's hand just as
Jonathan Glass arrives at his wife's side.

JONATHAN

Really. What seems to be the
problem, my dear?

ANNA

I wouldn't know.

She drops the bills onto the table.

ANNA

He seems to think that I favor
his work - you remember
Megeeren; paints with bugs?

Jonathan sweeps a slow disdainful look across the table.

JONATHAN

Yes... Hit the lottery, did you
boys? Bugs, indeed.

He fishes into his pocket and adds a few more bills to the
pile already on the table.

JONATHAN

Here. Buy yourself a pair of
shoes to go with the suit.
Come, darling. we'll be late
for the event

HAN

What event?

He leads his wife away, but then turns back one final time.

JONATHAN

You provincial artists are all
the same - head in the sand and
all that. Try the museum some
day - they've found a new
Vermeer, hidden. Show you what
true art really is.

And with that, he leads his wife from the restaurant.

Han sits back, publicly humiliated again. Leo watches him,
waiting for a reaction. Then, it comes.

Han looks up - realizing what Jonathan was saying. Anger
builds inside the man; the money laid out before him, Leo
in his new suit. It all becomes clear.

LEO

Han. Don't listen to him.

Han rises to his feet and hurries from the restaurant.

Leo leaps up, but can't abandon the money. He picks at the
bills, leaving no more than is necessary.

EXT. - FANCY RESTAURANT

Han bursts outside. He surveys the lay of the land and then strikes out on foot in a dead sprint.

Leo runs out moments later. Missing Han's direction, Leo hands his keys to the Porter - who fetches his car.

EXT. - STREET

Han runs through the street, a slight snow coming down. Out of breath, he stops at a corner and sees before him:

EXT. - THE RILKESMUSEUM

Guests trickle into the museum's front entrance. Umbrellas keep a light snow from the black-tied patrons.

Han jogs up the steps to join them.

INT. - RILKESMUSEUM, FRONT ENTRANCE

A soggy Han tries to meld in with the last few arrivals.

Museum Assistants take people's coats and umbrellas, offering face-towels to anyone who brandishes an invitation.

Han takes a towel and shoves money into the boy's hand.

ASSISTANT

Excuse me sir, I need to see
your invi--- Thank you, sir!

Han continues unmolested - following the stream of people.

THE GRAND ROOM

Hundreds of guests stand around a stage beside a shrouded picture on the wall. Dignitaries sit on the stage, including Bredius and Anna Glass. Anna sits next to an empty seat - her husbands. Jonathan Glass speaks from the podium.

JONATHAN

And in today's age of
modernity, the subtle nuances
of art... true art, have
mysteriously disappeared.

Han makes his way into the room, patting his hair with a towel and trying, unsuccessfully, to keep up appearances.

FRONT ENTRANCE

Leo hurries into the museum, presenting an invitation.

JONATHAN (OS)

But tonight, we have the honor
of unveiling a true masterpiece--
-- Lost for centuries...

THE GRAND ROOM

Anna sees Han from her seat. She watches him press against the back wall - transfixed by Jonathan's words.

JONATHAN

...ladies and gentlemen, it is
my proud honor to introduce to
you - Marcus Bredius - art
historian and the man
responsible for uncovering the
only religious work by the
Dutch Master, Jan Vermeer of
Delft.

Bredius rises and walks to the podium. Jonathan at his side.

Leo enters, looking around, searching. He sees Han.

Anna watches Leo make his way toward the unsuspecting Han.

BREDIUS

For my entire adult life, which
has been a long one, I have
held fast to the belief that
Jan Vermeer of Delft had
painted religious works at one
point during his life. Now my
dream has finally come true. I
can see with my own eyes, the
beauty which he painted in
God's name. It is perhaps, one
of Vermeer's finest works.

The veil drops - and finally we see:

THE PAINTING

There, for all the world to see, stands Han's painting - Jesus at a table breaking bread in the sunlight with three others, veiled in epiphany, staring at their savior.

The crowd begins to applaud and murmur amongst itself. Leo forcing his way through them, across the room.

Cracks of age cover the beautiful piece of work - it truly looks like a painting hundreds of years old.

Han rubs his sweaty palms against his pants and prepares to speak out to the room full of people. Leo closes in.

Eyes wide, the crowd gazes at the painting... the subtle details... the emotion of the subjects' faces... even the six little letters of yellow resin painted in the lower right corner - **I.V.Meer** - the signature of Jan Vermeer of Delft.

BREDIUS

I give to you, Christ at
Emmeus.

Anna looks at the painting - struck by its title - then, zeros her attention in on Han, who erupts.

HAN

It's a fake! Baked in an oven!
I can prove it! It's---

Leo dives for Han and pushes him to the floor. Han scrambles to his feet - all attention drawn to the men.

LEO

That man took my wallet!
Thief!

HAN

No. I--- Tear that painting to
pieces! It's a sham...!

LEO

Thief! Liar!

Leo grabs Han to shut him up. The wrestle and Han is unable to continue. And before he can break free, guards descend and shuffle Han from the room.

JONATHAN

Ahem. What some people won't
do for a little attention.

BREDIUS

Yes, yes. Well, I can assure
all of you that comprehensive
tests have been performed...

Anna's eyes lock with Leo's and hold him for a moment, like a deer trapped in headlights. Then, Leo breaks away and runs after Han as Bredius continues his speech.

RILKESMUSEUM, HALLWAY

Han struggles against his escorts as they lead him past Master works hanging on the museum wall.

BREDIUS (OS)

...not only on the age of the canvas and its wooden stretcher, but on the consistency and make up of the paints themselves.

EXT. - TRASH LADEN ALLEYWAY

Han is pushed out a back doorway and into a pile of garbage.

BREDIUS (OS)

The blues were made of authentic lilacs. We even tested the age of the nails. Believe me, Christ at Emmeus was not painted by anyone of this day and age.

Leo sticks his head out the door.

LEO

What in the hell were you trying to do there? You want to give back all that money? You'll wind up in prison, you ingrate.

And he closes the door on Han.

HAN

I'd rather be in jail than have this kind of fame... you shit.

EXT. - MEGEEREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Han stumbles drunkenly home, with a wine bottle in his hand.

HAN (OS)
Josephine.... Josephine! Would
you rather be rich... or would
you rather be famous?

He is answered by the WAIL of his baby daughter.

INT. - MEGEEREN HOME, KITCHEN

Josephine stumbles from the dark, Nadine over her shoulder.
She sees Han, still standing in the open doorway, trying to
unhook his suspenders caught from the doorknob.

JOSEPHINE
What are you doing?

He grabs the dress Leo left for her, still sitting on the
table. He holds it in one hand, the option for "rich".

HAN
Would you rather be rich? Or
would you rather be famous?

The "famous" hand, already full with the wine bottle.

JOSEPHINE
You're drunk - and you're
scaring your daughter.

HAN
Would she rather be rich... or
would she rather be famous?

Han stumbles and drops the dress to the floor.

HAN
Famous it is.

He toasts her with the bottle - but this is too much. She
starts to push him out the door, but he bolts upright.

HAN
You can't kick me out my own
house - this is my own house.

JOSEPHINE
You're a grown man, Han.
You've got a child for Christ's
sake. This is our house too!

Han walks outside. A few steps away he turns back around.

HAN

But, would you rather be---

The dress hits him in the face. The wine bottle falls.

JOSEPHINE

Neither - if this is what I
have to put up with!

The door SLAMS and Han walks across the lawn to his studio.

EXT. - HAN'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Anna emerges from the shadows, startling Han and making him
drop his keys. He bends to pick them up.

ANNA

It's locked.

HAN

Yes. I know.

ANNA

Keeping secrets?

HAN

No, I just don't like
surprises.

ANNA

Oh that's right. You're
married. And you have a child,
for Christ's sake.

HAN

You are married as well.

Han stands to find himself nose to nose with Anna.

ANNA

As well as you? I doubt it.
After all, marriage is just a
mirage...

She kisses him softly. Then softer, longer.

ANNA

... a fake... a forgery...

She kisses his neck, his ears, his chin.

ANNA
Partner?

HAN
What?

ANNA
Do you need a partner?

Their lips find each other again, but then Han breaks away.

HAN
My marriage is not a forgery.
Goodnight, Mrs. Glass.

Han unlocks his studio and thunders up the stairs.

ANNA
Goodnight, Mr. Vermeer.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Han tries to make himself comfortable on the wooden floor, but he's cold and caked with dirt.

Softly, footsteps creep up the stairs and open the door.

A drunken Han watches two feet approach him and then Josephine kneels down holding baby Nadine in her arms.

Josephine drapes a blanket over Han's body and sits at his head to rest a pillow on the floor. He takes her hand in his and kisses it gently.

HAN
We were celebrating.

JOSEPHINE
Your show? When is it?

HAN
Never.

Tears come to his eyes.

JOSEPHINE
Never? But Leo said he'd...

Han reaches starts pulling money from the table. They flutter down like the tears from Han's eyes.

HAN

Would you rather be rich... or
would you rather be a
painter..?

He smirks at his own Freudian slip.

HAN

I mean famous...

She watches all the money flutter to the floor - a
seemingly endless supply. She smiles and rubs Han's cheek.

JOSEPHINE

It looks like we can do
whatever we want. Oh God...
Han! Where did all of this
come from?

Josephine looks down but Han has fallen asleep. She
smiles, looking around at all the money. And she kisses
Nadine.

CUT TO:

PARIS MONTAGE 1 OF 3

Han opens wide the curtains to his new studio - the Eiffel
Tower standing proudly in the distance.

Han's Paris studio is much larger, cleaner... better, as
are his clothes. Around him, his supplies lay in various
stages of being unpacked. Han opens one of many crates.

He pulls out an easel and sets it up. Then a stretched
virgin canvas, which he sets upon the easel.

Next, he pulls out Head of Christ - still unbaked and very
modern in textural appearance. He hides the painting in a
secret space beneath the floorboards - next to his money
box.

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOME - DAY

Dr. Brunwaldus, out on a crisp, morning bike ride, glides
past Leo's parked car and rests his bicycle against the
side of the Megeeren home. He knocks, and lets himself in.

In new clothes, Leo walks from Han's studio, searching. He
opens the carriage house doors, revealing it to be empty.

Dr. Brunwaldus exits the home, and seeing Leo rooting around in the empty garage, and walks up to him.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

Excuse me. Would you happen to know...

LEO

Where in the hell are they?

In a huff, Leo gets into his car and drives away.

The front door creaks open, revealing an empty house.

CUT TO:

PARIS MONTAGE 2 OF 3

Han stands in a cavernous art gallery surrounded by impressionist and surrealist works. He holds his newest painting before two well dressed owners of the gallery.

The owners shake their heads and Han puts his Paris Park painting back into its carrying case and exits the building.

Outside, Josephine waits in the back of a chauffeur driven automobile - exquisitely dressed, holding Nadine in her arms. Han gets into the car and they drive off.

They drop him in front of a new gallery. Han kisses his wife and carries his painting inside as the car drives away.

Inside, Han talks with the receptionist and as he turns to wait, he sees a table full of Art World magazines - J.G. Glass's pompous face smiling up from the cover. Han turns and leaves with his painting.

Han flings his painting down, into a river and watches the delicate landscape float away.

INT. - GLASS HOME, SITTING ROOM - DAY

Anna has a cup of tea while looking through a business ledger. Leo stands just inside the entrance of the room.

ANNA

Paintings, too?

LEO

Everything.

ANNA

That's not "missing", Leo.
That's "moved away".

(bating Leo)

How odd. And just before his
show, too.

LEO

Oh, yes. The show. Six
hundred pounds, was it? Well,
I'll erase that little debt.

Leo pulls out a scrit pad from his coat and walks to Anna's table, beginning to write. She rests her hand upon his hand.

ANNA

Leo. Sit down. I think you
owe me a little more than six
hundred pounds... eh, partner?

She smiles a devilish grin, and Leo doesn't know how to respond. He simply squirms and smiles painfully.

CUT TO:

PARIS MONTAGE 3 OF 3

Han, in his studio, looks into his money box - a quarter piled with money, the rest empty.

Han takes two stacks and greets Josephine at the door. She takes the money, pecks his cheek and turns back around.

Han replaces the wooden box, and sees the Head of Christ peeking out at him from the hiding place. He takes the painting out and replaces the floorboards.

In the middle of the night, Han removes Head of Christ from the kitchen oven - it now covered with the cracks of age. He rubs the corner of the painting - the letters **I.V.Meer** rise out of the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. - MEGEEREN MANSION, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Months have passed. Han stands in front of a mirror, straightening the tie to his tuxedo. He sports a fashionable goatee. Anna walks from the bathroom in a striking dress.

HAN

But I don't feel like meeting anybody - especially dressed in a monkey suit.

JOSEPHINE

Oh, both the women seem charming, and I'm sure their husbands are just as nice.

Josephine leaves the room, heading off, and Han follows her throughout the house, giving us a tour of their new mansion.

THE HALLWAY

lined with mirrors and a few of Han's finer landscapes.

HAN

Just as nice as what?

JOSEPHINE

As their wives... silly. And you know, I've been thinking...

DEN

A mahogany sitting room complete with ornate desk and fireplace. A portrait of the Megeerens above the mantle.

JOSEPHINE

...wouldn't one of your paintings be just grand right here on the wall?

HAN

Josephine, they're all through the house...

She turns and kisses him.

JOSEPHINE

It's not a house - it's a mansion. And they deserve to hang everywhere.

Josephine smiles and walks on.

KITCHEN

JENE - one of the servants - warms a baby bottle on the stove. Nadine, now over a year, lays in a cradle on the table.

HAN (OS)

...the next one I do, I'll hang it right there.

Josephine attends to Nadine. Han enters with their coats.

JOSEPHINE

The next one? You finished one more than a month ago, I thought. Where is it?

HAN

Where is it? I threw it away.

JOSEPHINE

Clever.

(to Jene)

Put her to bed shortly after you feed her. Then, you may have the night off... but listen in case she cries.

Han slips Josephine's coat over her shoulders and opens the door as they step out into

EXT. - MEGEEREN MANSION, FRONT GARDEN - NIGHT

He leads her through the garden and out the front gate.

JOSEPHINE

You know... I'm on to your... little secret, don't you?

FRONT SIDEWALK

Holding the gate, Han looks worried as Josephine steps from the garden and straight into their waiting car - chauffeur at the door. Han follows, the door shutting behind him.

HAN

No. What little secret?

INT. - MEGEEREN CAR

Josephine wraps her arms around her husband and the car drives off into the night.

JOSEPHINE

Han, I know this money didn't
just fall from the sky...

Han looks out the window, avoiding her questions.

JOSEPHINE

One of your paintings sold for a
lot of money, here in Paris.
That's what happened, isn't it?

HAN

Yes. That's what happened.

Han turns, about to come clean, but is met by her soft
lips.

JOSEPHINE

I knew you could do it. I knew
people would buy your work.

HAN

But... it wasn't... it wasn't a
landscape... or a portrait...

She smiles at his embarrassment, snuggling up to him.

JOSEPHINE

I know. That's why you hide
them from me - and tell me that
you threw them away.

Han stares out the window...

JOSEPHINE

Julienne dabbles in the Paris
art circles... all of them.

HAN

Who?

JOSEPHINE

Julienne Duthmore - she's
hosting the dinner. Really,
Han. You never listen...

HAN

And what did Julienne Duthmore
say?

JOSEPHINE

Nothing. She just said that
pornography is... all the rage.

Josephine relaxes, finally having gotten the secret out
into the open. Han cannot think of a response.

EXT. - DUTHMORE MANSION - NIGHT

The Megeeren car arrives before a spectacular front
entrance.

INT. - DUTHMORE HOME, KITCHEN

A dozen cooks, maids and butlers scurry through the kitchen
- clearing the main entree and preparing for the next
course.

We follow a butler as he leads us out to

THE DINING ROOM

where the Megeerens sit with JULIENNE & HERBERT DUTHMORE -
their refined hosts. BERTA & PAUL MAXWELL - close friends
of the Duthmores - round out the table of six.

BERTA

A truly exquisite meal,
Julienne. Wonderful.

JULIENNE

Thank you dear. More wine,
Josephine?

JOSEPHINE

Mmmm. Just a drop, please.

A waiter appears immediately with wine for Josephine and
the other women, then moving on to the far end of the
table, to replenish the men's glasses.

PAUL

Hell's bells, Herbert! The
appearance of an invasion is
quite different than an
invasion itself. The
appearance helps business,
while the actuality---

HERBERT

Well, Hitler is no Mussolini.
Is he, Han?

Han sips his wine while caught in a day dream.

HAN

What? No, he's not.

HERBERT

Certainly won't affect our
lines of work, eh?

Herbert gives Han a sly wink and turns to Paul.

PAUL

And what is it that you do,
Megeeren?

HAN

I... I sell things.

Herbert finds this incredibly funny.

HERBERT

Ha. Yes, indeed. And oddly
enough, Paul sells things as
well. Don't you Paul?

PAUL

Indeed.

Herbert rises from the table.

HERBERT

Come. I'll show you. Paul
just obtained a little treasure
for me - not quite your speed,
Han. but I think you'll be
able to appreciate it.

(to Julienne)

Dear, we'll be taking our
drinks in the gallery - I want
to show Han something.

JULIENNE

I see.

The men rise and walk out. Julienne nods to Josephine,
indicating that this is just the behavior she was
discussing.

HALLWAY

The men walk three abreast, Herbert in the center.

HERBERT

Han is something of a painter himself, from what I hear. Although I doubt its ever hung for public display.

(chuckling)

I shouldn't poke fun, Han. I'm sorry. It's just...

(to Paul)

Han deals in pornography - buys, sells, paints some of his own...

PAUL

Perhaps we should talk, Megeeren. I uh, dabble in the art trade myself occasionally.

HERBERT

Especially these day.

PAUL

Especially... Heil Hitler.

The men enter

THE GALLERY

Herbert opens the door for his guests and Han walks in.

HERBERT

So, have you noticed any sort of rise in your... artistic endeavors since the German's have threatened to invade, Han?

HAN

Hmmm? No. I hadn't noticed.

Han pays no attention to the pictures on the wall.

PAUL

You will. The whole art market is going underground. We don't want the Krauts snatching it all up for themselves.

HERBERT

Phenomenal bargains, too. If you stay in Paris, you'll find the field ripe for both acquisitions and trade. Here's one that Paul found for me. It's a Vermeer.

Han follows Duthmore's finger as he points to the wall. There, in the center of the gallery, hangs Head of Christ - staring back at it's creator. Han is dumb struck.

PAUL

Bought this from a second hand dealer. Very hush-hush. They had it shipped out from Italy.

HERBERT

Oh, the fascists don't appreciate art.

PAUL

Or business.

HERBERT

Especially business.

The friends grin but Han hasn't heard a word.

PAUL

So Megeeren, what do you think?

HAN

(absorbed)

What? Oh. Yes, very much.

HERBERT

Really? I didn't think you'd go in for this sort of thing; being from the shoulders up and all...

Of course I like it - the value will double over night.

PAUL

It's an investor's dream.

A polite smile veils Han's disappointment.

HERBERT

Don't take it personally, Han - perhaps Paul will dig one up for you too.

PAUL

Maybe something a more cheery for you Megeeren. This one's a little dark... too gloomy... I wouldn't hang it on *my* wall.

HERBERT

Sure you would.

PAUL

My bathroom wall. That's why I sold it to you, Duthmore. Megeeren and I know where to find real beauty - not in some over priced relic - eh, Han?

Paul pantomimes the shape of a woman's body in the air.

HERBERT

Perhaps I should take a look at your work one of these days, Han. My wife tells me you do quite a business...

A KNOCK at the door and Josephine sticks her head in.

JOSEPHINE

Han, it's getting late.

HERBERT

But he can't go now, my dear. We have business to discuss.

Han walks to his wife.

HAN

Can you wait just a few minutes, I'll be right there.

JOSEPHINE

See? I knew you'd have fun once you got here. I'm fine. Berta said she would take me home in her car. You boys stay here. I'll see you tomorrow.

She kisses Han on the cheek and excuse herself. Herbert clamps Han on the shoulder. Paul checks his watch.

PAUL

Right on time.

HERBERT

Come, Han. The night is young
- and I'll show you what it is
that I do for a living.

INT. - BROTHEL - NIGHT

The three men toast brandy glasses and smoke cigars. In their tuxedos, they look quite exquisite, until we realize that the company around them is very different.

Half dressed whores wander through a drunken, drugged out audience of soldiers and bohemian sorts.

PAUL

Here's to war.

HERBERT

Or at least the threat of it.
Look around, Han. Business
hasn't been better. When the
timid flee, the strong remain.
And the timid never spend their
money anyway.

PAUL

Here, here.

A young WHORE walks by and Herbert grabs her.

WHORE

Hello, Mr. Duthmore.

HERBERT

Turn around, sweetie.

He displays her like a head of cattle.

HERBERT

See, Han? If you ever need a
model. Look at that. And
these. Look at those hips.

WHORE

Who's your friend?

HERBERT

This is Han. He's a painter.
How'd you like to have your
picture painted?

WHORE

Sure.

HAN

Sure. We could paint her to
look like Vermeer - sell it and
we'll be rich.

HERBERT

We are rich.

The men laugh.

PAUL

She couldn't look like Vermeer.
He had a beard, didn't he?

WHORE

Who's Vermeer? Is he that bald
guy who smokes a pipe?

The men erupt in laughter - tears roll down Han's face. He
hasn't had this much fun in a long time.

HERBERT

And not nearly as beautiful.
Take a look at those lips.

Paul and the Whore exchange money for a handful of glass.

PAUL

Speaking of beauty...

Paul holds up a vial for his friends to see.

PAUL

Morphia. Liquid beauty...

Paul pours a third of the vial into each of their remaining
brandies, using his finger to cork it after each pour.

He holds the finger up to the Whore and she slides onto his
lap, taking the finger into her mouth.

HERBERT

Here's to new friends!

The men empty their glasses and Han licks his numbing lips. He places his hand on Duthmore's arm and leans into him.

HAN

I have to tell you something
about your painting... the
Vermeer...

The Whore takes Paul by the hand and leads him away.

Han looks to Duthmore as the drug begins to wash over them.

HAN

Herbermm. Wutyou thinks not
work by Vam Jermeer of Delft
Youv bin fool'd I'm Vam
Jermeer...

Herbert laughs and grabs another whore.

HERBERT

My new friend Han. There is a
time for business and a time
for pleasure. This is only one
of those times...

THE OTHER WHORE

It's business for me.

Duthmore stuffs money into her pants and grabs yet another Girl. He gives her money also and leaves with the first one.

Like a dream, the sounds of the room disappear and the Girl becomes an angelic vision. She reaches for Han's arm.

HAN

No...

BROTHEL HALLWAY

A vision of ethereal delight, the girl leads Han down a hallway. He watches Duthmore disappear behind a hallway door and then is led by the girl directly across the hallway.

She opens the door and the light swallows him whole.

WHORE'S ROOM

The now undressed Girl fondles a naked and spaced out Han, trying to get a rise out of him. He stares blankly at her ethereal beauty, trying to touch her lips and smiling...

The bored Girl takes another vial of morphine from a drawer and pours some into a glass of red wine.

WHORE

Like kissing the face of God...

She pours some past Han's lips, sending him into la-la land.

DISSOLVE TO:

HAN'S HALLUCINATION

Like an angel, she smiles down on him. But then the Head of Christ walks up behind her - with the body attached.

More people enter wrapped in biblical garb - the apostles and the Girl becomes one of them - sitting at a table.

Han sits up, staring at a recreation of The Last Supper. The Girl hands Jesus her glass of wine and He offers it to Han.

HAN

Yes...

He takes from the glass and hands it back to the Girl.

HAN

Yes...

Suddenly, Han runs naked from the room!

BURN TO WHITE

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - DAY

An immense white canvas rests on the easel. Beneath it, on the floor, lies a passed out Han still in his dinner clothes.

EXT. - MEGEEREN MANSION, HALLWAY

Duthmore, a satchel under his arm, follows Josephine down the hallway leading to Han's studio.

JOSEPHINE

...I thought he may have slept
in your guest room.

HERBERT

Quite certain. All he could
talk about was his work. He's
probably painting right now.

Reaching the door, they find it locked and give a KNOCK.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - DAY

Han comes to, his head pounding with a hang over. He looks
around, uncertain of his surroundings. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

HERBERT (OS)

Han? Open up...

HAN

Coming. Quiet, I'm coming.

He cracks the door open but Duthmore pushes it wide,
walking in. Josephine just stares at her husband's
condition.

HERBERT

I've come to continue last
evening's discussion, my
friend.

JOSEPHINE

Han...

Han tries to straighten himself up.

HAN

I got home so late... but I
wanted to paint. I... I must
have fallen asleep.

Josephine looks at the blank canvas and the lack of paint.
Instead, she sees cigarette butts and a spilled wine
bottle.

HERBERT

Josephine, be a dear and fetch
us some coffee - would you?

Josephine turns away and closes the door behind her.
Duthmore walks straight to the table and opens the satchel.

HERBERT

Half up front, right?

He pulls stacks of money from the satchel and puts them onto the table. A look of bewilderment crosses Han's sorry face.

HAN

Right...

HERBERT

And how long will it take?

Han can only stare. He walks to the money and feels it.

HAN

That depends.

HERBERT

Of course. I understand. But roughly? I mean, the world is changing, you know? Time does play a factor.

Duthmore puts the last of the money on the table.

HERBERT

There. £300,000. And three hundred more upon delivery. It sounds magnificent.

HAN

It sounds magnificent...
Herbert...

HERBERT

Han. You're not raising the price on me now, are you? We agreed last night - although I'm not used to a man's company in Ophelia's room, I must say.

HAN

About last night...

HERBERT

Oh yes, I almost forgot.

He pulls a dozen vials of morphine from his pocket. Han's eyes grow wide and Duthmore rubs his greedy hands together.

HERBERT
When does the shipment arrive?

HAN
Shipment.

HERBERT
Don't be coy. You laid it all
out for me, remember?

Duthmore checks the door, locking it.

HERBERT
Your special shipment from
Italy? Three masterpieces...
one of them The Last Supper -
Vermeer's greatest work. Tell
me again, how big is it? Big
as this window?

Duthmore points to the bay window. Han looks to the large
white canvas, nearly the same size.

HAN
That's about right. Did I
describe the disciples?

HERBERT
To the smallest detail. Han, I
felt like they were in the room
with us.

HAN
Yes...

Han is saved by a KNOCK at the door.

HERBERT
When, Han? When?

HAN
Um... six weeks.

HERBERT
Fine. Fine. Six weeks.

Herbert opens the door for Josephine holding a coffee tray.

HERBERT
I'll see you soon. Good day,
Josephine.

He presses his way out as Han hides the morphine vials.

JOSEPHINE
He's not staying?

HAN
No.

Han takes a cup of coffee from Josephine.

She starts to enter but Han keeps her at bay.

HAN
No. I have to work.

JOSEPHINE
But Han, take a shower. Eat something.

HAN
I have to work.

He closes the door on her and locks it. And as he carries his coffee back to the table Josephine throws the tray against the door with a resounding CRASH.

Han dumps the morphine into his mug, drinking hungrily.

LAST SUPPER MONTAGE #1 OF 3

Han paints like a man possessed - grinding seeds, adding wine, painting with precision brushstrokes.

A ANGRY KNOCK comes to the door then RECEDING FOOTSTEPS.

Han opens the door and picks up a tray of food. When he raises the tray, a week's growth of beard cover his face.

He places the tray onto the table amidst wine bottles, dirty glasses and empty morphia vials.

A painting begins to emerge - Head of Christ floats in the center. Next to Christ sits a feminine St. John - a remnant of the whore's girlish looks.

Han turns and another week has passed - Han that much worse for wear - whiskers, matted hair, stripped down to his pants.

KNOCKING comes as Han downs another vial of morphine.

CUT TO:

INT. - HALLWAY

Josephine talks to the door.

JOSEPHINE

Han... please talk to me. I
want to see you... Nadine wants
her father back... Han, you
can't just---

The door flies open.

HAN

Like kissing the face of God!

Josephine squints into the dank, dark room - unable to see
anything but Han's shadowy figure, which approaches.

JOSEPHINE

Han, you're killing yourself.
Come down and clean yourself
up.

HAN

I've never been more alive!

Han grabs her wrist and pulls her in. She resists.

HAN

Come. Come in. See what I do.
See what I see! I dare you...

Han starts to drag her some more but she breaks his grip
and distances herself from Han, who leans against his
table.

JOSEPHINE

Oh... Han.

From dim candle light on the table, she can make out his
ghoulish features, his skeleton of a body.

HAN

Come in. Bring your friends.
See the dead artist's work.

JOSEPHINE

No. I don't care about the
work. I care about you.

HAN
You care about me... but not
about... my work?!

Han picks up a jar of red paint and throws it at Josephine.
It smashes to the floor in front of her.

HAN
Don't care about the work?!
Then, get out! Get out!

And he throws another jar against the wall. And another.
and another until Josephine runs from the room.

LAST SUPPER MONTAGE #2 OF 3

Details of the painting emerge - large as life; the hands
of Christ, the loaf of bread, the jug of wine...

The room swims around him. He looks away from the canvas
and sees The Last Supper in human form, posing in the
corner. They offer him more wine and he accepts.

A KNOCKING from far away and the figures disappear.

CUT TO:

INT. - HALLWAY

Han opens the door but no one seems to be there. He looks
around and a voice grabs him from closer to the floor.

NADINE (OS)
Daddy?

Han looks down and sees his daughter. He leans drunkenly
against the door frame and slides down to the floor.

NADINE
Are you sick?

He shakes his head, unable to speak.

NADINE
Are you working? I want to
pick flowers but Mother won't
let me.

Han nods. He reaches into the dark floor and retrieves an
old paintbrush - the bristles skewed and crusted with red
paint - resembling a flower of sorts. He hands it to her.

She smiles and leans inside to kiss his forehead. he looks up with tears in his pitiful eyes, but she doesn't see them - instead she turns and closes the door with a smile.

HOLD on the door.

Han emerges, rough shod, with a paint splatter overcoat on and stumbles down the hallway.

INT. - BROTHEL - EVENING

Han, kept in his studio for two months, appears wayward, even in the dark parlor. The bartender greets him like an old friend. Han walks on and Herbert catches him on the arm.

HERBERT

Megeeren! God, you look terrible.

HAN

The painting's almost finished.

HERBERT

Finished?

HAN

The delivery arrangements - they're almost finished.

HERBERT

Splendid, you came to celebrate. I knew you'd like it here.

HAN

Come by in ten days. I should have it by then.

HERBERT

No, no. I'm taking your advice this time. I'm sending an authority. Ten days?

HAN

An authority...?

Han makes his way from the bar.

LAST SUPPER MONTAGE #3 OF 3

A flash outside the window lights the whole city for an instant. Then the SOUND OF THUNDER... or BOMBS?

A fire burns within Han. Flashes of light illuminate the studio while rain begins to fall on the window.

The gaunt, painted faces of Christ's disciples jut from the darkness. Squinting, Han inspects his brush strokes.

Han devours a vial of morphine and throws the empty container onto the table, littered with more of the same. Thunder.

A jar of red paint spills and a crimson river flows from the table onto the floor.

Hands, eyes, wisps of hair - Han scrutinizes every detail of the painting while a storm rages outside.

While uncorking a bottle of wine, Han's candle dies out.

Re-lighting the candle, Han's hair and beard have grown. Many days have passed. He holds a bent spoon into the flame.

Crystalline morphia liquefies and Han draws it into a syringe. Then, Han slides the needle into his vein.

Han wheels around and raises his candle, illuminating his latest work. The painting is immaculate - a majestic, life sized rendition of The Last Supper.

HAN

Like facing the kiss of God...

Han laughs uproariously, insanely... until its sheer force drives him to sit in his stool. Looking back to the painting, he begins to laugh again until he passes out on the table top, chuckling to himself.

INT. - MEGEEREN FRONT DOORWAY - NIGHT

A doorbell chimes and a frantic Josephine opens the door.

Anna Glass steps inside - the night behind her ablaze with flashes and thunderous noise.

JOSEPHINE

Yes?!

ANNA

Hello. I represent Herbert
Duthmore. I'm here to see your
husband.

JOSEPHINE

Are you crazy?! The Germans
are invading! You can't have a
meeting.

Anna gives the night sky a cursory glance.

ANNA

And when exactly would be a
good time, my dear?

NADINE (OS)

MOMMY!

Josephine heads down the hallway for her daughter.

JOSEPHINE

Get out. Come back when the
war is over. Nadine!

Josephine leaves Anna standing in the doorway. She closes
the door... from the inside and looks around.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Han raises his head from the table.

FEMALE VOICE (OS)

Mr. Vermeer?

What he sees pleases him and a warm glow bathes his face.

Jesus Christ from Han's paintings - young and angelic,
tender faced, feminine - stands in the doorway, glowing.

JESUS

You are blessed with a gift.

Hypnotically, Jesus approaches Han. Unable to bear the
weight of Christ's stare, Han hangs his head down.

HAN

It's a curse - not a gift.

His hands cradle Han's head and tilt it towards heaven.

JESUS
I'll help you.

Jesus leans over and kisses Han on the lips.

A bright flash - like lightning - blinds the room for an instant and from somewhere outside Josephine shrieks.

JOSEPHINE (OS)
Han! Han! Where are you?!

FOOTSTEPS thunder up the stairs. AIR SIRENS blare. The door swings wide revealing Han, alone, in a pair of ragged pants.

JOSEPHINE
We have to get out of here!
Get dressed. Hurry! The
Germans!

HAN
What's going on?

Han squints into the light and sees Josephine dressed in many haphazard layers of clothing. In one hand she holds a lantern, with the other she leads Nadine. Another blinding flash fills the room.

JOSEPHINE
The Germans are coming for
Paris! Listen.

Han hears the AIR SIRENS for the first time, then
EXPLOSIONS.

JOSEPHINE
Come on! We don't have time!

Josephine rushes to the table and begins gathering Han's clothes. Han, overwhelmed, rests his head in his hands.

HAN
There's no money. I bought
things... I've been working.

JOSEPHINE
We don't need money! We need
to get out of here!

Josephine hands the bundle of clothes to Han and grabs his wrist, imploring him to stand.

HAN

Darling... I'm sorry...

JOSEPHINE

I know. And I forgive you. I shouldn't have said I don't care about your work. Stand up!

Josephine notices Han's skinny, withered wrists.

JOSEPHINE

My god! You're a skeleton.

HAN

I can't leave. I'm sorry.

An explosion shakes the studio. Nadine cries out.

JOSEPHINE

What do you mean you can't leave? Why?!!

Han stumbles to the table in search of more morphine. He points a bony finger into the darkness to answer his wife.

Josephine swings the lantern light in that direction and illuminates Last Supper - with Anna Glass standing before it.

Han spins around, more surprised than Josephine. Josephine turns to Han for an explanation. Unsure how to respond, Han pours a vial of morphine into a glass of wine and downs it.

Josephine rests Nadine in the corner and walks to help Han.

JOSEPHINE

Who the hell is she?! Han!
Come on!

Josephine stops short and looks at Han, who sits on a stool and shakes his head into his hands.

She looks at Nadine - alone in the corner - then to all the vials and empty liquor bottles on the table. Finally she turns to Anna.

JOSEPHINE

What have you done to him?!

ANNA

I haven't done a thing. And
apparently, neither have you.

Another flash of light; this time accompanied by gunshots.
Nadine begins to wail. Josephine picks her up.

JOSEPHINE

Han! I love you!

He sits on the stool - equidistant from the two women.
Anna with his painting, Josephine with his child.

ANNA

If you really loved him, you'd
understand. His work. He
needs to be here.

JOSEPHINE

You don't know what love is!

Josephine storms across the room but is stopped in her
tracks by a thunderous explosion which shakes plaster loose
from the ceiling and onto Nadine.

Han looks up, his body paralyzed. Another explosion shakes
the building and Nadine cries even louder.

JOSEPHINE

Han! Please!!!

HAN

I can't... You go. Take
Nadine... I can't... I love
you... but I can't...

He puts his hands to his face and coughs uncontrollably.
Anna and Josephine lock eyes.

GUNSHOTS far off cause Josephine to look away. She grabs
Nadine and looking back one last time, carries her away
from Han, taking the lantern light with them.

Anna walks to the table and wraps her arms around Han,
pushing his face to her flesh.

ANNA

Shhh... everything is going to
be all right... shhh....

Anna raises a candle to read Vermeer's signature on The Last Supper. She smiles and pats Han's head like a child... or a small dog. The invasion of Paris continues.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - DAY

Han - clean cut, casually dressed and smoking a cigarette - observes the street from his window.

EXT. - PARIS STREET

Nazi soldiers pull up to a house and unload from a truck. They kick in the front door and soldiers rush inside.

STUDIO

Han looks back from the window.

The Last Supper rests against the wall. A new painting on the easel; Christ's image, faint in the center, lays His hands on a young woman's shoulder.

Anna walks in - all business. Han returns his gaze back

OUT THE WINDOW

Nazi soldiers stand guard outside the front door of the house. More soldiers lead a family out into the street.

ANNA (OS)

Duthmore - that coward! He won't take the painting!

HAN (OS)

What?! Why not?

ANNA (OS)

He's scared. Says the Nazis have been snatching up treasures - paintings, statues, etchings.

STUDIO

Anna joins Han at the window.

ANNA

He wants his money back but I
told him to go to Hell.

OUT OF THE WINDOW

A second, more terrified family precedes the soldiers from
the building. The father has a face of whiskers, the
children are in their pajamas.

ANNA (OS)

We should hide Last Supper with
the others.

HAN (OS)

Leave it. Gives me
inspiration.

ANNA (OS)

Paul Maxwell said everyone's
taking their collections
underground. Which means
prices are quite negotiable and
dealings are very discreet.

STUDIO

Anna inspects the new painting.

ANNA

We can sell a dozen Vermeers
and each buyer will think they
have something unique.

HAN

If there are any buyers left.

OUT THE WINDOW

The soldiers take the second family away in a truck.

ANNA (OS)

Don't worry about them, that's
my department.

STUDIO

Han turns to Anna, who removes one of his painting from
under the floorboards - Washing of Christ's Feet.

ANNA

Sloppy. But it will do.

HAN
What do you mean, "sloppy"?

INT. - STUDIO - EVENING

Anna spills a seemingly endless pile of money onto the table.

Han pulls A LONG NEEDLE from his forearm. His skin is streaked with track lines from his injections.

ANNA
Come here.

Han picks a paint brush and walks to the work, ignoring her.

ANNA
I said, come here. Don't you like me any more? Don't I take care of you?

But before he can start, Anna kisses him passionately. Then, she unbuckles his pants but he pulls his head back.

HAN
Who'd you sell it too?

ANNA
A Spaniard... Sr. Taupe...

She sits Han down on the stool like a child and, raising her dress, sits on his lap - rocking back and forth.

HAN
Did he like it?

ANNA
Did he what?

HAN
Taupe... Sr. Taupe... Did he like the painting?

ANNA
He bought it didn't he...?

She wraps her arms around his neck and gets back to business.

HAN

Yes. But did he like it? Did he like the work - the painting?

ANNA

I don't know. I didn't ask.

HAN

Why not?

She stops.

ANNA

Jesus, Han! It's not the god damn Mona Lisa - and it's not as if he had a choice, either. One painting, one price.

Han throws her from his lap and stands up.

HAN

He did have a choice. He could have left.

And Han storms from the room.

EXT. - MEGEEREN'S HOUSE (HOLLAND) - DAY

Josephine works diligently in her garden. She pulls carrots and tosses them to the pile at the end of the row.

She pulls a final carrot and takes it to Nadine, now eight, sitting in the grass playing with a sock monster.

JOSEPHINE

Is your rabbit hungry?

NADINE

Not a rabbit anymore.

JOSEPHINE

Oh. What is it?

Suddenly, Leo Black jumps from behind the house - fingers curled like claws and an evil grimace on his face.

LEO

RRRrroooowllll!!!

Josephine jumps. Nadine screams and begins to cry.

JOSEPHINE
It's all right, honey. It's
all right.
(to Leo)
You do well with children.

LEO
I'm sorry. Heard you'd come
back. Is Han around?

Nadine backs up into her mother's dress. They both stare
at Leo, and Josephine slowly shakes her head.

Leo has nothing to say. He reaches into his jacket pocket
and pulls out a small roll of canvas and some paint
brushes.

LEO
Han... your daddy left these
with me before the war...

He hands them gently to a timid Nadine.

JOSEPHINE
What do you say?

NADINE
Thank you.

JOSEPHINE
Good girl. Now, run inside and
wash up for supper.

Nadine does as she is told, leaving Leo and Josephine.

LEO
Is he... is he dead?

JOSEPHINE
I don't know...

LEO
Oh, Josephine, I'm sorry.

Leo moves forward to console her, but she stops him.

JOSEPHINE
Good-bye, Leo.

He doesn't understand.

JOSEPHINE

Good-bye.

She picks up her gardening tools and walks inside.

INT. - HAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Anna, dressed to the nines in a gorgeous evening gown, adds her final touches - earrings and a necklace.

Han enters in a paint speckled sweater and slacks, and carries with him his newest painting - Christ and the Adulteress. Before two angry villagers, Jesus lays his hands on the shoulder of a beautiful temptress.

HAN

What do you think?

Anna begins to apply lipstick, not paying Han any mind.

ANNA

Mmm. It's nice.

Han sees another one of his paintings against the far wall - The Washing of Christ's Feet - baked for cracks of age.

HAN

is that the one you're taking tonight?

ANNA

Mmmmm Hmmm.

HAN

I'm going with you.

ANNA

No, dear. You paint them, I sell them. Remember?

Han puts his painting down and begins to change clothes.

HAN

I'm done painting.

Han takes off his sweater and dark, bruised track marks scream from his bony arms.

ANNA

Han, really. You're a mess.

Han covers his torso with a dress shirt.

ANNA

And what do you mean, you're
'done painting'? That one
still needs the oven.

HAN

I'm finished painting Vermeers.
With these two, and Last
Supper; that's more money than
we'll ever need. We can get
buy a house, get some dogs,
have kids.

ANNA

Have a drink, will you? You're
starting to babble.

Anna pulls a flask from the dresser and takes a nip before
passing it to Han, who pulls on a pair of pants.

ANNA

You may be right about Vermeers
though... do you think you
could do a Rembrandt? Or Hals?

HAN

No. I don't think I could do a
Rembrandt. Or Hals. Or a---

ANNA

Well, we'll think of someone.

She turns. Han ties his tie and stands in his new attire.

ANNA

Well, let's go. We have to be
there by eight.

Anna picks up Washing of Christ's Feet. Han opens the
door.

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOME - EVENING

Nadine turns cartwheels in the late afternoon sun. Outside
of their front door, a bicycle leans against the house.

Nadine stops playing and sees her mother preparing dinner
inside the open kitchen window.

NADINE

Mom. The sunset's almost here.

JOSEPHINE

Nadine, I'm making supper.
Aren't you hungry?

NADINE

But the sunset... you promised.

Nadine stares at the house and finally the door opens - a smiling Josephine with a small stretched canvas in her hand.

Together, mother and daughter walk off to the backyard, while a casual Dr. Brunwaldus stands in the doorway, watching.

EXT. - DUTCH HILLSIDE - SUNDOWN

Nadine sits in front of an impromptu easel. Josephine sits behind her, helping her paint a blue and pink sunset sky.

NADINE

It's changing again.

JOSEPHINE

It's okay, everything changes.
That's part of the beauty.

NADINE

Did daddy ever paint sunsets?

JOSEPHINE

Once...

Josephine remembers, stroking the hair of their child.

NADINE

How did he do it?

JOSEPHINE

I'll show you. Here. First
lean back and relax.

Nadine reclines into her mother's lap, Josephine taking the paintbrush and Nadine's hand in her own.

JOSEPHINE

Look at the sunset. Got it?
Now close your eyes. Can you
still see it?

NADINE

Mm hmm.

JOSEPHINE

Now, open them - and just
remember what you saw.

NADINE

But it's turning purple now.

JOSEPHINE

The hills are the same shape.
And the trees. Only they're
purple. But in your mind...

NADINE

(closing her eyes)
It's red.

Nadine smiles, opens her eyes, and begins to paint again.

INT. - PARIS MANSION, SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Han and Anna sit before a old, nervous Frenchman - MONIORE.
The Washing of Christ's Feet rests against a far wall.

MONIORE

Well, I am prepared to offer
you £700,000 with no questions.

ANNA

Yes, Moniore, that will be
fine. Now, it's simply a
matter of---

HAN

Do you like the painting?

MONIORE

I suppose the painting is...
more than acceptable.

HAN

More than acceptable? What do
you mean, more than
acceptable?!

MONIORE

Well, it is just... I do not
know. It is not my taste, if
you understand my meaning...

HAN

No. I do not understand.

ANNA

Han...

HAN

Are you telling me that you pay £700,000 for a painting which you *suppose* is 'more than acceptable'? Why?

MONIORE

For the same reason you are selling it, I suppose.

ANNA

Moniore, the money please.

MONIORE

Of course.

Moniore walks into a side room, closing the door behind him.

ANNA

What are you doing? I'm the one selling the painting.

HAN

I came to see my work appreciated. Christ, we could be selling furniture for all the difference it makes to this guy.

ANNA

But we'd have to make a whole lot more furniture for this kind of money.

HAN

It's not about the money, Anna.

ANNA

Don't delude yourself, Han. It's always been about the money - or you would have signed your own name to the paintings.

HAN

It was a difficult time.

Moniore returns with a satchel of money.

ANNA

There's an excuse for every action, Han. Thank you, Moniore. It was a pleasure doing business.

HAN

Perhaps you would like to choose between this and another Vermeer - to ensure you have purchased a painting you will enjoy.

MONIORE

That will not be necessary.

ANNA

Han. That's enough.

HAN

No. It's not enough. What are you, Moniore? You're not a critic and I'll be damned if you're an artist - or even someone who appreciates art.

MONIORE

I am a business man.

HAN

No, you're not. I just told you that I could find another Vermeer - and you turned me down. So you're not a business man, are you? Or maybe your just a bad business man.

VOICE

No, he is a puppet.

The owner of the voice stands in the side doorway - a high ranking Nazi OFFICER. Four soldiers enter the room - they point machine guns at Anna and Han.

OFFICER

Herr Moniore helps us to obtain items for our cause by using a little more... tact, shall we say, than the German party can muster in times like these. I agree, that he is not a very handy business man. That is obvious. What is not so obvious however, is what you are, Herr Megeeren.

Moniore closes his eyes and reclines in his chair while Han and Anna look to one another for support.

ANNA

He's---

OFFICER

Silence, fraulien. You will have plenty of time to talk. I am asking your husband a very simple question. What are you?

HAN

I... don't know... anymore.

OFFICER

You are a small man, Megeeren. Who shows things to people so you can feel big... You show them this painting... but then you say that you have another... This is not your painting. It does not have your name on it... you're a store merchant - but without a store...

HAN

No. I...

OFFICER

Silence Megeeren. I will send soldiers to your estate for the other Vermeer. Tomorrow at four o'clock. And I hope for your sake, as well as that of your wife's, that the painting is better than this one.

The officer turns and motions for the soldiers to act.

OFFICER

Your wife comes with us - an assurance of your arrival.

HAN

But...

The soldiers point their weapons at Han as they lead Anna through the side door. The Officer takes the money from the table and closes the door on the way out - leaving Han alone in the room with Moniore.

HAN

She's not my wife.

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOME (HOLLAND) - EVENING

Nadine paints in her backyard while Josephine looks on.

NADINE

Better?

JOSEPHINE

What do you think? You're the artist.

NADINE

I don't know.

Nadine tilts her head and stares up at the clouds. Josephine waits patiently but eventually walks back to the house. Dr. Brunwaldus greets her at the window, pointing to Nadine.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

Remind you of anyone?

JOSEPHINE

Nadine, do you want to take a walk with us? I'm going to walk Dr. Brunwaldus home.

Nadine squints into the sunset without answering.

NADINE

Airplanes.

JOSEPHINE

What, honey?

Nadine points at specks flying into view from the sunset.
All of a sudden, AIR RAID SIRENS blare from the distance.

JOSEPHINE

Oh my god... Oh my god!!

Josephine runs and swoops Nadine up in her arms.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

Come on. Into the cellar!!

NADINE

My painting!

INT. - CELLAR

Josephine lights a candle and hands it to a tearful Nadine.
BOMBS FALL in the distance.

Dr. Brunwaldus runs down the stairs with Nadine's canvas.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

It'll be all right, we just
have to stay down here for a
while.

Josephine grabs Dr. Brunwaldus by the shoulders. She hugs
him and tries to catch her breath.

NADINE

Mommy...?

Josephine reaches out and pulls her into their embrace.

JOSEPHINE

It'll be all right, Nadine. No
one's going to hurt us.

Dr. Brunwaldus leads them against a stone wall and sits
down. Josephine sits beside him and Nadine lays across
their laps.

JOSEPHINE

Maybe you should take a nap,
sweetheart and when you wake
up, we'll be back inside our
house.

NADINE

But I'm not sleepy.

Dr. Brunwaldus sets the canvas against the cellar wall, like a window to the backyard. He puts his arm around Josephine.

INT. - LARGE NAZI OFFICE - DAY

Behind a massive desk, veins pop from a monstrous arm - Nazi uniform rolled to the elbow. The other hand guides a needle into the vein, presses a full syringe of clear liquid into the arm and withdraws the apparatus.

Supreme commander of Hitler's Air Force, HERR REICHMARSHALL HERMAN VON GOERING places his syringe into a desk drawer.

He sits alone in the center of an immaculate and expansive office. Nazi regalia transforms what was once a parliamentary office into Goering's temporary headquarters. Washing of Christ's Feet leans against a far wall.

Goering rolls down his shirt sleeve and sags into the chair as the morphine takes effect. An intercom BUZZES.

INTERCOM

Herr Reichsmarschall? The package has arrived.

GOERING

Hurry.

Two soldiers march in. Between them they carry a crate emblazoned with Nazi insignia. The soldiers walk with marked precision, Han nervously following them into the room.

The soldiers place the crate in the center of the room, click their heels and salute Goering - "Heil Hitler". He does not respond and they march out the door, closing it behind them.

Goering stares up at Han, making him squirm.

GOERING

I have heard many things about you, Mr. Megeeren.

Silence.

HAN

Would you like to see the painting?

Han reaches over and fumbles with the locks on the crate.

GOERING

No. You are an artist.
Describe it to me.

HAN

Describe it? It's beautiful -
Christ and the Adulteress. Sun
light shines from the left,
bathing the face of Jesus.

Goering rises and Han walks to The Washing of Christ's
Feet.

HAN

A similar Jesus... the hands
especially. But the woman is
much different - reminiscent of
Vermeer's Woman with a Balance.
She faces the light, wearing a
shawl. And have you seen
Vermeer's Procuress?

GOERING

I am... familiar with it.

Han closes his eyes. Goering begins unlocking the crate.

HAN

Well, the composition is
similar. Two figures in the
background look on, unnoticed,
while the painting captures a
moment between the woman and
her savior - eyes closed - as
forgiveness is offered.

GOERING

How long have you had it?

HAN

Not long. A week or two.

The casing falls to the ground as Goering unfastens the
final hinge. The painting stares out, just as Han
described.

GOERING

The woman resembles your wife;
here, in the nose, the lips.
How long did you say you've had
the painting?

He scrutinizes Han.

HAN

Well, I've known about it for many years. It once belonged to a friend of mine---

GOERING

Yes, the Italian woman.

HAN

She's Dutch - lives in Italy.

Goering turns to his new painting.

HAN

Where's Anna?

GOERING

Perhaps you can help me with a troubling thought, Megeeren. When, in Vermeer's lifetime, do you suppose he painted his religious vein of work? The similarities are too distinct to be painted periodically, yet I cannot decipher when he would have been so devout to a cause which gathered him no attention.

HAN

An artist doesn't paint for the attention his work attracts. He paints because he must. If he's lucky, what he paints can be sold. Vermeer was lucky. He had vision, talent. And most of what he painted, he sold to support his family.

Han turns to Goering.

HAN

These were a labor of love - visions he couldn't vanquish until they took a life of their own. Maybe he gave them to a church or hid them away for only God to see. I don't know.

Goering draws a lugar from his pocket and points it at Han.

GOERING

On the contrary, Megeeren. I think you know perfectly well that these paintings are most likely not the work of Vermeer.

Goering walks closer, raising the gun to eye level.

GOERING

I do not know how you came upon them, nor who painted them, but I think that you and your wife have made quite a lot of money by selling the signature of Vermeer - shamelessly attaching it to these paintings in order to increase their value.

HAN

Did she tell you that?!

ANNA (OS)

I didn't tell him anything.

Han spins around to find Anna standing in the anteroom doorway, wearing a new dress and a hairdo which hides one side of her face. She sips a glass of champagne.

ANNA

As I recall, Herman, this... meeting... was arranged for my benefit. A new Vermeer for you and I am allowed my freedom. Han has lived up to his part of the bargain, now it's your turn.

Han watches Anna with a careful eye as she slowly makes her way across the room. Goering lowers the gun back down to waist level but continues to point it at Han.

GOERING

My dear, you have always had your freedom. This is not the Gestapo.

ANNA

Very well, then if you will pay my husband for the paintings, we shall be on our way.

GOERING

A price. Yes. Which returns us to the question of the signature's authenticity.

HAN

I can assure you, Herr Reichmarshall, that these initials were not painted as an addendum to the work.

GOERING

And not by you?

HAN

Not unless you believe that I painted this... masterpiece.

Goering gives an unimpressed snort at the suggestion just as Anna arrives between the two men.

ANNA

Fine. Then it's all settled.

She kisses Goering on the cheek and turns to Han, who catches a glimpse of Anna's hidden eye - black and bruised from the cheekbone to her forehead.

ANNA

That will be £700,000 for Footwashing and say... £800,000 for this one - what do you call it?

HAN

They call it Christ and the Adulteress.

GOERING

I will give you one million pounds for the both of them with a second delivery expected in two days' time.

ANNA

Fine.

HAN

A second delivery? But there aren't anymore. This is it. This is all we have. We can't just make them.

With inhuman speed, Goering grabs Anna by the hair and pulls her tight. She drops her champagne glass to the floor. Goering slides the tip of the pistol into her mouth.

GOERING

We seem to have some sort of misunderstanding.

HAN

I don't know what she's told you but... we can look and ask but... It's difficult. My Italian friend, these were the last of her collection.

GOERING

I thought she was Dutch.

HAN

Yes, I'll try. I'll do my best.

GOERING

I suggest you do better than that. Sign here.

Goering pushes Anna away and pulls a receipt book from his jacket. Han reaches over and signs his name.

INT. - HAN'S STUDIO - EVENING

Han storms into his studio and walks immediately to the hidden compartment, from which he pulls The Last Supper and a few stacks of currency. Anna enters a few moments later.

ANNA

What are you doing?! A million pounds and a promise for more! We'll be---

HAN

A promise?! That was Herman Goering - Hitler's second in charge. We may just as well have made a pact with Satan. And I don't see any money. We've got this.

Han grabs a sack and throws the money in. He grabs some of his morphine stash and throws it in as well.

HAN

And these. We can buy paints. We'll take some clothes. Come on, what are you waiting for? We've got to get out of here.

ANNA

We're not going anywhere. You signed for the money and we can pick it up in two days.

HAN

With what?! With what!! A Rembrant? A Hals? In two days?

Han fixes himself a morphine drink and gulps it down. Anna points to The Last Supper and then walks to the window.

ANNA

Sell him that. It should fetch more than the other two.

Han backs toward the painting, protecting it.

HAN

This is not for sale...

Han turns to the staring faces of the painting.

HAN

...not to them.

Han turns back to Anna.

HAN

We'll take it with us. We'll go to England or maybe Spain...

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

Anna sees a Nazi entourage stop outside of the house. A handful of soldiers, Goering and his First-in-Command walk quickly from their cars and into Han's house.

INSIDE THE STUDIO

HAN (CONT.)

...and I'll paint... we can set up an art gallery and... and... please, I've already lost one wife... and my daughter... Please come with me. I'm begging you - pack your things and come with me, tonight. Before it's too late.

Han looks to her through teary eyes.

ANNA

It's already too late, Han.
And I'm not your wife.

The door CRASHES open and a barrage of soldiers storm in.

COMMANDER

Everyone remain exactly where you are.

Goering walks through the doorway.

ANNA

Herman, how are you?

COMMANDER

Quiet fraulien! Before I give you another beating.

Soldiers fan out around the room. The Commander sees Last Supper and walks to it.

COMMANDER

Look, Herr Reichmarshall, you were right.

GOERING

Get away from it. Take some men and search the rest of the house.

All but two of the Nazi soldiers leave the room; the two remaining guard the door. Goering walks to the painting.

HAN

I cannot meet your demands in two days. I cannot meet your demands on any schedule. It's impossible.

GOERING

Do not be such a simpleton. This will do just fine - for another million pounds?

Anna smiles greedily to Goering and Goering turns to Han.

HAN

The painting is not for sale.

Goering looks to the two soldiers and waves them outside. When they close the door, Anna slowly saunters away from Han.

ANNA

Of course it's for sale. It's the last of the hidden Vermeers.

HAN

It's not Vermeer. I painted it. It's a Megeeren.

Goering looks to the painting then back to Han and Anna. He pulls his gun.

GOERING

I will have no more lies.

ANNA

He's crazy. He injects morphine. He doesn't know what he's talking about. We'll take it as a gift from him... and I'll help you find more.

She approaches Goering but he aims the gun to keep her away.

GOERING

Where is this from?

ANNA

From Italy. He lied this
afternoon. There are more.

HAN

You whore! You god damn whore!
I lied. Yes. But I only lied
about her being my wife. The
rest is true. Vermeer didn't
paint those - but I didn't add
the signatures. The paintings
are mine. This one, the two in
your office, others...

ANNA

...and they're worth millions
now - but worth nothing if
anyone else knows---

KRACK! A single shot fires from Goering's gun. Anna falls
dead to the floor - a hole through her head. The door
opens and the soldiers enter.

GOERING

It's nothing. Bring me the
satchel.

And just as quickly, the door closes.

GOERING

If I have learned one thing in
this life, it is that you may
follow in a man's footsteps but
you will never become that man.
You're a whore, just as she
was. But your pride will keep
you silent - more silent,
perhaps than a bullet.

The guards reenter, satchel in hand. Goering nods and they
throw it to Han. Goering marches to the door.

COMMANDER

Herr Reichmarshall, what about
the painting?

GOERING

It's worthless. The woman was
a charlatan. Heil Hitler.

The door slams and Han is alone.

And what starts as a cry of sorrow, quickly becomes a cyclone of fury!

Han smashes bottles against the wall, overturns his shelves, rips canvas, breaks windows... he loses all control.

Smashing around the room like a maniac, he destroys nearly everything except the Last Supper.

Then, wiping debris from his floorboard hiding place, Han slides the painting into seclusion and turns to leave...

He looks at Anna's dead stare...

...at the tools of his trade smashed around the room, and from the debris he picks up just a small paint brush to take with him - but peaking out of the wreckage is Goering's satchel of money.

Han pulls it from the mess and carries the satchel out of the room, closing the door on his Paris life.

THE ROAD HOME MONTAGE (PARIS, ANTWERP, BREDA, HOME)

Han trudges to the city's edge in the middle of the night. He looks forlornly back to a captured Paris and marches on into the darkness.

Months later, a waifish Han with beard and long hair hides in some road side woods and watches German soldiers pass.

Once the soldiers pass, Han climbs to the small village. He staggers through dead bodies and broken homes, picks a bottle of wine from the remnants and falls asleep in a stable.

Han wakes quickly and startles a figure in the stable. The figure pulls a trap door closed. Han follows and discovers a frightened Jewish family of six in the cellar.

Invited into their hiding place, Han sees a doctor trying to mend the broken leg of a young girl. Han pulls his morphine vials from his pocket and offers them to the doctor.

As the doctor prepares to administer the drug to the girl, her mother gives Han a map and etches out the route to Holland: Antwerp, Breda, Amsterdam.

Han walks through woods, shooting around the outskirts of Antwerp. He roots through the ruins but finds nothing.

His body shivers from the cold - and from withdrawal. Finding a deserted shack, he crawls inside and falls asleep.

Han wakes, too weak to rise. He coughs terribly - hacking blood onto the floor and falls back into exhaustion.

Han wakes in a small bedroom. An elderly couple watches over him. He tries to rise but his illness holds him down.

Han's beard grows thick and scraggly as he recovers. The wife brings him soup in bed, and some berries which Han mashes into a paint and uses his only paintbrush make a sunset on a block of wood... remembering home.

The wife bursts into Han's room and looks around, amazed. Han has gone, and left behind the sunset painting high upon a stack of French money. She throws the paper onto Han's bed and picks up the painting. The husband enters and picks up the paper, reading the headline - "War Ends!".

Han approaches Breda from a hillside and sees hundreds of people trudging along the roadside, trying to return home with all that the war has left them. Coughing, he makes his way back into the woods and moves on.

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOME (HOLLAND) - DAY

Nadine, twelve years old now, skips into the yard ahead of Josephine, who carries a bag of groceries from the road.

NADINE (OS)

Eeek!

Josephine puts the bag on the ground and marches warily around the side of the house.

JOSEPHINE

Leo, I swear - if you're scaring Nadine again I'll... oh my god.

BACK YARD

Han shaves into a bucket. He looks up; his eyes two black holes, his hair long and stringy. He stands on weak legs.

HAN

<cough, cough> I... I tried to clean myself up.

Josephine stares in amazement. She approaches him carefully.

HAN
I'm sorry, Jo. I'm so, so
sorry. <cough, cough>

Josephine embraces Han and he faints in her arms.

INT. - MEGEEREN HOUSE, NADINE'S ROOM - DAY

Han comes to on a small bed. Dr. Brunwaldus rises from examining his chest.

DR. BRUNWALDUS
Thank you. That will do.

Dr. Brunwaldus walks out of the room, closing the door.

Han looks around, revealing Nadine staring from a chair across the room. Small, beautiful watercolor pictures of sunsets and flowers surround her like a halo.

HAN
Where am I?

NADINE
You're in my art gallery.

HAN
It's beautiful. Are any of
them for sale? <cough, cough>

Nadine takes a golden sunset and rests it in Han's grip.

NADINE
Silly. You can't sell things
to your family.

She kisses him on the cheek. Han looks at the picture and sees the initials NVM.

HAN
Are you Nadine?

NADINE
Of course. Shhh.

Han turns to the painting in his hand and holds it to his chest as he falls back to sleep.

DINING ROOM

Josephine and Dr. Brunwaldus talk in confidence.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

He's quite sick. He has tuberculosis and his body's failing him - he probably hasn't eaten a decent meal in months.

JOSEPHINE

Will he be recover?

DOCTOR

I don't know. He needs rest.

Josephine holds Brunwaldus' hand in her own.

JOSEPHINE

I'll talk with him. But, want to wait.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

I understand.

Suddenly, the bedroom door flies open and Han stares out at the two. Josephine drops Brunwaldus' hand.

JOSEPHINE

Han, you shouldn't be out of bed.

HAN

Who is he? Who are you?

DR. BRUNWALDUS

I'm Dr. Brunwaldus.

JOSEPHINE

Don't you remember? He delivered Nadine.

HAN

I remember.

Han sees his bag on the table and staggers to it. He reaches down deep and pulls out a wad of bills. He carries the bills to Brunwaldus.

HAN
Here. This should cover the
bill. Good day.

JOSEPHINE
Han...

HAN
Take it.

DR. BRUNWALDUS
No. There's no charge.

HAN
There's always a charge. Here.

Han shoves the money into his hand and makes his way to the door. Opening it, he waits for Brunwaldus to exit.

DR. BRUNWALDUS
I can't take your money, Han.

HAN
Why not? It's as good as the
next guy's.

DR. BRUNWALDUS
No. It's not.

Han's anger grows.

DR. BRUNWALDUS
Haven't you heard? It's all
been recounted. You can
exchange it at the bank. But
until then, this money's
worthless.

Brunwaldus gives the money back to Han, who stares at it.

HAN
Worthless?

DR. BRUNWALDUS
Don't worry. I'd be glad to
exchange some for you. How
much do you have?

Han grabs his bag and carries it into the bedroom.

HAN

Get away from me! Don't touch
it. I'll do it myself.

Brunwaldus looks to Josephine, who shrugs. Han reappears
at the door with his coat and boots on.

JOSEPHINE

What are you doing?!

HAN

I've made it this far. Another
couple of miles isn't going to
kill me.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

It might.

Han scoffs at this remark and walks out into the front
yard.

EXT. - TOWN STREET - DAY

Han makes his way slowly down the street - Berghoff's shop
all closed up. But the Wiltshire Gallery still running
just as ever.

Han peaks in and sees Leo talking with a few investors -
doing very well for himself, from the looks of it.

Han moves on, entering the town bank.

INT. - BANK, BUREAUCRATIC PROCESSING ROOM - DAY

The line filters through a grungy wooden doorway. Han
waits.

CLERK

Next. Sign here.

He checks Han's name against a ledger on the table.

CLERK

Megeeren... Megeeren...

Finding the name, he runs his finger across the page to a
cryptic marking. He looks around and discreetly calls
attention to a guard standing nearby.

CLERK

Yes, sir. How much?

HAN

All of it.

He turns the bag upside down and thousands of bills fall onto the desk. The Clerks eyes grow wide and the Guard makes his way into a back room..

EXT. - MEGEEREN HOME - EVENING

Han makes his tired way back home. He opens the front door

INT. - MEGEEREN HOME, KITCHEN

Josephine, Nadine and Brunwaldus sit around the table eating dinner. A place is set for Han.

Han simply stares. Unsure of what is going on. He walks past Brunwaldus and sticks some bills in his hands, then takes a seat.

Nadine looks around, confused.

The rest of the table eats in silence, eyes flittering from one person to the other. After several moments.

NADINE

Pass the carrots, please.

Both Brunwaldus and Han reach for the bowl at the same time. The both hold on, staring at each other... then, there is a KNOCK at the door. Han releases the bowl.

HAN

Excuse me.

Han opens the front door.

POLICE (OS)

Mr. Megeeren? Han Megeeren?

HAN

Yes. What is it?

POLICE (OS)

You're under arrest.

JOSEPHINE

What?!

Everyone rises and rushes to the door as Han is led away by a number of Police.

DR. BRUNWALDUS
What's going on here?

POLICE
This man is being arrested.
He's a spy.

They stand in shock as the Police take Han away.

INT. - HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

Han sits on a wooden stool; his hands cuffed behind his back, a table in front of him.

On the table sits Han's leather satchel with all of his money stacked next to it. Across the table, an Inquisitor glares at Han. Behind the Inquisitor stand two large guards.

HAN
Is it a crime to be rich?

INQUISITOR
Your wealth is not your crime.

HAN
I'm a business man.

INQUISITOR
A business man who does not believe in banks?

Han does not respond. The Inquisitor motions to his guards. One leaves the room, the other - GUARD X - walks behind Han and pulls his arms away from his body, nearly pulling them from their sockets.

HAN
AHHHH! No.

INQUISITOR
What is your "business" Mr. Megeeren?

With his arms fully extended at a 90 degree angle from his body, Guard X bends Han's thumbs back towards his shoulders.

HAN
AAAIIEEEE!!! I sell things.

The Inquisitor motions for Guard X to release Han. Han breathes a sigh of relief. The second guard reenters. He carries Christ and The Adulteress into the room. Han shakes his head in disbelief.

INQUISITOR

You sell things... Yes. Tell me - did you sell this "thing"?

Han's eyes dart from the painting... to the money... and back to the painting.

HAN

Yes. Some years ago I came into possession---

Han stops as Guard X again begins to raise his arms.

INQUISITOR

How did you come into possession of this masterpiece?

HAN

An... AHHH! An acquaintance of mine. She needed money and I brought it to Paris for her. I haven't seen it in years. I sold it to a rich Dane.

An uncomfortable silence falls across the room. The Inquisitor stares at Han. Guard X holds Han's arms just below the threshold of pain.

The Inquisitor opens a squeaky drawer in the table. From it he produces Goering's receipt ledger. Han's eyes fix upon the receipt baring his signature.

INQUISITOR

You are aware that conspiring with enemy forces during times of war is a crime?

Han licks his lips, closes his eyes and remains silent.

INQUISITOR

And who was your "acquaintance"?

Eyes still closed, Han reaches to the very depths of his memory. Guard X begins to hurt him again.

Han doesn't say a word. He stares at the Inquisitor, showing his resolve... but it is not enough.

More pain and finally he breaks.

HAN
AHHHH!! I can't remember.

INQUISITOR
Stand him up.

Guard X releases the pressure and allows Han to stand.

INQUISITOR
Han Van Megeeren - your signature speaks louder than your words, no matter how loudly you scream. You are a liar... and a thief... and a traitor. And you are under arrest for selling national treasures to Hitler's Reichmarshall during German occupation of Paris. Do you understand these charges?

HAN
Yes. I understand.

INQUISITOR
The penalty for this crime... is death. I hope you understand that as well, you filthy scum. Take him away.

The Guard drags a terrified Han out the door.

INT. - COURTROOM - DAY

A simple, impromptu courtroom - judge's bench, prosecution defense desks, evidence table and a small observers area. Footwashing and Christ and the Adulteress hang on one wall.

PROSECUTOR
...allied forces discovered Goering's treasure throve in a salt mine in Austria. And *this* is the man who sold that monster our legacy of worlds past!

The Prosecutor points an accusational finger at a pale and disheveled Han. His arms hang loosely at his side. He leans over and whispers to his DEFENDER.

DEFENDER

Your honor, I would like to request a point of information.

JUDGE

I remind defense that this is not an official court hearing - merely a fact finding inquiry.

DEFENDER

Yes, your honor. My client wishes to ask the court if these charges would be relevant if the item in question were... say... a manuscript for a novel...

Han whispers some more.

DEFENDER

...or a piece of furniture.

The judge considers and carefully answers.

JUDGE

The charge of conspiracy implies that those involved were conspiring... were devising... a plan which was meant to mislead... the public into a false sense of security. Namely that national treasures were safe from Nazi procurement..

Satisfied, Han whispers again to his defender.

DEFENDER

Your honor, my client wishes to know if the charges against him would stand if the item in question were not a national treasure.

Han leans over to whispers some more.

JUDGE

Mr. Megeeren, please rise.

Han stands proudly before the court. His arms, weak and sore, lie at his side.

JUDGE

Mr. Megeeren, is there a specific point you wish to address before the court?

HAN

Your honor, it is true that I sold this painting to Herman Goering. But it is **not** a national treasure and I have committed no crime.

Josephine and Brunwaldus enter the observation area, followed by Leo and Jonathan Glass.

JUDGE

That is not for you to decide Mr. Megeeren. And I believe that art critics would disagree with your opinion of Vermeer's work. Now, explain yourself.

Han steadies himself and glances back at the audience. His confidence rushes from him and he coughs violently, leaning over to talk with his defender.

DEFENDER

Your honor, my client is not a well man. May we ask for a delay in questioning?

JUDGE

No. If Mr. Megeeren does not wish to explain his comments, then he shall have his day in court - in four week's time. Take him away.

INT. - PRISON CELL - DAY

Han sits alone on a cot in his small cell, coughing, his arms lifeless at his side.

A lone stool and table rest in the corner holding a candle, a pencil and a stack of paper. A toilet occupies the other

corner. A cot folds down from the wall while a sturdy oak door with a small barred window create the room's entrance.

A key turns in the lock. Han looks up to find Brunwaldus and Josephine standing in the doorway. A guard ushers them in and locks the door behind them.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

How do you feel? Are you warm enough?

Han seems a million miles away - staring off at a blank wall.

JOSEPHINE

We brought some things from home but... well, they won't let us give them to you. Han. What's this all about? What did you do?

Han rolls away from them onto the cot.

JOSEPHINE

Nadine thinks it's all pretend. We told her you'll be home soon.

DR. BRUNWALDUS

Do you need anything.

Han turns a single wretched eye to the doctor, then back to the wall. Han will have nothing to do with them.

JOSEPHINE

Han. We want to talk with you. The two of us.

No response. Josephine gives up and KNOCKS for the guard.

HAN

Children know, Josephine. You can't lie to them. Just...

Josephine turns back.

JOSEPHINE

What would you like me to tell her?

HAN
Just don't lie... about
anything. Tell her...

The guard unlocks the door.

JOSEPHINE
Tell her what?

But Han ignores her - staring off into space.

PRISON CELL MONTAGE

Days pass. The guards watch Han through the barred window as his condition worsens.

The bruises on Han's arms heal but he has problems raising them to wash his face. He tries to write but that too becomes a chore. "Dear Nadine..." He tears it into a hundred pieces and throws them into the toilet.

Han lies on his cot, coughing. His body convulses, craving morphine and alcohol. He licks his dry lips. A guard walks away from his vantage point at the door.

Han tries to eat a prison meal but can only swallow a few mouthfuls. Han lays on his cot, wide-eyed, staring away at nothing. His breathing slows.

A tender faced Jesus appears in the locked room. Blood drips from a crown of thorns. Han does not acknowledge His presence.

Jesus looks down on Han from beside the cot. Han's breathing slows even more. He tilts his face to Jesus.

HAN
Forgive me...

Jesus touches His own forehead in a peaceful gesture. He notices blood on His fingers and touches his fingertips to Han's eyelids, closing them.

Han lies motionless and Jesus leaves him.

Suddenly, Han convulses in a violent coughing jag. He spits blood to the floor and begins to cry out.

INT. - JUDGE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Leo sits in his finest suit, waiting for the Judge to return - which he does, with a solemn look on his face.

JUDGE
Can I help you?

LEO
Leo Wiltshire. I represent
certain collectors from the
arts community and---

JUDGE
Get to the point.

LEO
The point is that Han Megeeren
is a lunatic. We know of his
accusations. He's made them
before... you see, this is a
very volatile time for
collectors... art collectors,
and such talks of forgeries
are... most disruptive.

JUDGE
There have been no such
accusations... until now.

LEO
But...

The Judge sits down and examines Leo closely.

JUDGE
Please, continue.

INT. - INFIRMARY - DAY

Rows of white lined beds line the walls and a handful of
recovering prisoners lie in them. Watchful guards stand at
key spots within the long hallway.

White sheets cover most of Han in bed while Leo sits upon
the neighboring, unoccupied bed.

HAN
Why?

LEO
Because. There's too much at
stake. There are too many
people with fortunes tied up in
these paintings. Han, how many
forgeries did you make? Did
the Nazis finance this?

HAN

I didn't help the Nazis.

LEO

All right. But listen, the Judge agreed to a lesser sentence if we don't take this to court. If you don't testify about the forgeries... you'll get out. You can paint in peace for the rest of your life.

Han gives him the thousand yard stare.

LEO

Han. Han?

Han takes his gnarled, shaking hands from under the covers.

HAN

I can't paint any more.

LEO

Han, if you go to court you're going to die. Nobody will testify on your behalf. Jesus, I've got half of the experts in the world ready to say that all the discovered Vermeers are authentic. We're talking millions of pounds... hundreds of millions of pounds.

Leo's words cut deep. Han looks away.

HAN

So? If I can't paint... I lost my family... No friends... I'm dead already... my body just doesn't know it yet.

LEO

What are you talking about?

Han motions Leo closer.

HAN

You're a son of a bitch, Leo.

FOOTSTEPS ECHO through the infirmary. Leo looks to the entrance and sees the Judge approaching.

LEO

Well, that's just fine. So,
it's all settled then? You'll
take the plea agreement and...

The Judge arrives at the foot of Han's bed.

JUDGE

Mr. Megeeren, has Mr. Wiltshire
been able to accurately explain
our morning discussion?

HAN

It was thirteen years ago.

JUDGE

Pardon?

HAN

Thank you. But no. I'd rather
prove myself in front of the
world.

Leo backs away from the bed, shrugging to the Judge.

JUDGE

Mr. Megeeren, I don't know what
you're driving at, but some
very influential friends have
proven to me that your case
would be better for all
concerned if it were quietly
slipped under the rug.

HAN

Sure. You know why? Because
you can follow in someone's
footsteps, but you can never
become that man. I tried. I
tried for ten years... these
hands created master pieces of
art - true masterpieces. And
some old pile of bones received
all the credit.

Leo turns to walk away.

JUDGE

Mr. Wiltshire. Please stay where you are. Your friend seems to have something on his mind.

HAN

You're damn right. You know why he wants this swept away? Because I can prove that all the Vermeers discovered in the last decade were fakes - forgeries. I didn't conspire with the damn Nazis, I hoodwinked them out of millions. And he knows I can prove it!

JUDGE

How?

HAN

Because I painted them.

LEO

I told you, your honor. He's insane.

JUDGE

An declaration is not proof, Mr. Megeeren. You said you have proof.

HAN

Of course.

he holds out his hands.

HAN

Right here. These hands have talked with God. And they can do it again. Give me one year to recover... and another to create - and I'll give you all the Vermeers you desire.

JUDGE

One will suffice. You have three months.

A wry grin crosses Leo's face.

HAN
Three months? But---

LEO
See? I told you. Just another
charlatan, trying to stretch
his sentence. Two years... ha.

HAN
Fine.

The Judge and a surprised Leo turn their attention back to Han.

HAN
I'll need supplies. And
absolute peace and quiet while
I work.

JUDGE
We'll lock you in a cell.
Leave you alone. And if, in
three months time... you create
your evidence. You may go
free.

LEO
And when he doesn't? When you
find you've just wasted your
time on this... pathetic waste.

HAN
Then you can kill me. Consider
this my trial. If I lose, cut
my head off. Feed it to the
pigs. I don't care.

JUDGE
Mr. Megeeren, draw up your list
of needs. I'll have it filled
while within a week and your
trial will begin.

Han stares the men down, and nods at the agreement.

INT. - LARGE PRISON CELL - DAY

Upon the table lie mortar and pestle, lilacs, gem stones,
clay, solutions, brushes, palates, paints, art books,
measuring devices and a full bottle of whiskey.

A canvas equal in size of Christ and the Adulteress sits upon a lone easel. Also on the easel, lying against the canvas, rests a photograph of Christ and the Adulteress.

Han is led in and looks back at the closing door. He grabs the photograph and bangs loudly against the door.

HAN

I will not paint another just like this! I'm an artist, not a trained monkey!!

The door opens and the Judge stands in the opening.

JUDGE

Is there a problem?

HAN

Here. I do not copy the works of others - even my own. Every Megeeren is an original!

JUDGE

You are not in a position to negotiate. The identical painting, that will be your proof.

The Judge walks away as the guard locks Han back in his cell.

Han turns to the table and surveys his tools. Then the canvas. Finally, Han sees an unopened box under the table. It has a note attached "*Added this to the list. Thought you might need it - Leo*". He opens the box and finds a case of whiskey.

Han tucks it out of sight and returns to work. He looks at the painting... studies his trembling hands... shakes his head and grabs for the whiskey.

Han sits on his cot and uncaps a bottle, taking a hard pull.

INT. - PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

Josephine walks down the hallway to Han's cell. A guard knocks on the door - no answer. He knocks again.

HAN (OS)

Busy! <cough, cough>

Josephine looks down and sees two dinner trays filled with old meals, untouched. The guard knocks again.

HAN (OS)

Damn it! Leave me alone.

The guard unlocks the door and lets her inside.

INT. - LARGE PRISON CELL

The backside of the large canvas faces the doorway. Han, speckled with paint, lies in a fetal position on the cot on the far side of the room.

Josephine walks past the painting, straight to Han.

She pulls a newspaper from under her shirt and holds it to Han's face.

JOSEPHINE

Ta-dah! Look at this.

Han launches a hacking cough and stares up through bloodshot eyes. He cradles the whiskey bottle in his arms.

The headline reads: "Painter Paints for his Life". A photo of Christ and the Adulteress covers the page.

Han grabs the magazine and throws it to the floor while he continues coughing.

HAN

What are you doing to me?!

JOSEPHINE

What? I thought you'd be happy. Nobody's mentioning a word of this anywhere. It's news. It's important - so I called the papers. Leo went crazy. Peter had to kick him off the yard.

Han looks quizzically at her.

JOSEPHINE

Oh. Dr. Brunwaldus. I've never seen Leo so mad.

HAN

That's because Leo thinks I just might pull it off.

JOSEPHINE

So do I. Let me see. How's---

Han sits up and turns the canvas towards her. She looks, but doesn't understand.

The canvas is a mess of paints and spittle and pieces of food - there are no shapes of people or place, just a mess.

HAN

As long as I'm doing something when they look in, they let me live.

Han stands and takes a sip from his bottle. Josephine grabs it away from him and puts it on the table.

JOSEPHINE

Stop it! You're crawling into a hole and burying yourself.

HAN

Me?! They buried me. They put me in here... and for what? For what?! All I did was paint what they wanted to see.

JOSEPHINE

You stole from people. You swindled them for tens of millions of pounds and then you drank it all away.

Han rushes her but she holds her own. He backs off.

HAN

I didn't steal from anyone! They bought the paintings that they wanted. They stole from me! They stole my life... This is all I have left.

He looks around his dingy room.

JOSEPHINE

Han. You have a daughter who loves you. I love you.

HAN

You love Brunwaldus.

JOSEPHINE

But that doesn't mean I love
you any less.

She moves to hold him but he stops her.

HAN

Guard!

The door opens and Han pushes her gently away.

HAN

Good bye, Josephine.

She resists.

HAN

Good bye. Tell Nadine I tried
my best.

She turns at the doorway.

JOSEPHINE

I thought you told me not to
lie to her.

And with that, she leaves. Han takes a final swig from the
bottle and throws it against the door - shattering it.

HAN

Go ahead! Leave! I don't
paint for any one but me any
more.

He overturns the table, spilling bottles and paints, and
brushes and books across the floor. He throws a jar of red
paint against the door.

HAN

Tell them Jo! Han Megeeren
doesn't make copies - and so
Han Megeeren will die! To hell
with you!

He collapses on the cot, coughing and crying. He opens a
new bottle of whiskey and drinks from it.

HAN

The greatest painter to ever
live will die... again...
alone.

His eyes flutter... closing... nodding off.

Suddenly a colored piece of paper falls across the side of Han's face. He takes it and sees Nadine next to his cot.

NADINE

Do you like it?

HAN

Oh, yes. It's beautiful.
Here, you should paint your
name on it.

Han grabs a brush from the floor and dips it in some paint.

NADINE

Why? I know I painted it - and
so do you...

HAN

How did you learn to paint so
well?

NADINE

You taught me, silly.

HAN

I did?

NADINE

Sure. You gave your words to
Mother and she gave them to me.

HAN

What words?

NADINE

Here.

She sits him up on the cot and puts her painting on his lap. Then she reaches up and places both of her hands over his eyes, pulling them closed.

Han sits with a paintbrush in his hand - eyes closed.

NADINE

Remember what you saw... a long
time ago... can you see it?
Now paint that.

Han opens his eyes. Nadine is gone. The door is closed.
Her painting rest on the easel in front of Han's mess.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. - JUDGE'S OFFICE - DAWN

The High Council Members stand in conference. The Judge looks from his window. From it he sees a large group of people gathering on the front steps of the courthouse - among them Josephine, Brunwaldus, Leo, Jonathan Glass and Bredius.

INT. - PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

A group of reporters, critics and experts follow closely behind the previously mentioned people - lead by the Judge.

JONATHAN

Leo, I thought this matter was not of public concern.

LEO

Well, I didn't call the press.

Leo looks to the Judge, who ignores him. Brunwaldus puts his arm around a smiling Josephine.

The group arrives and a guard knock on the door.

GUARD

Time's up painter. You've got some people to answer to.

The Judge looks down and sees a pile of untouched dinner trays while the guard tries unsuccessfully to open the door.

GUARD

He's barricaded it from the inside.

JUDGE

Break it down!

The guards SLAM into the door. It fights their contact but slowly begins to give way.

The Judge leads them into the room.

INT. - LARGE PRISON CELL - DAWN

Everyone pours into the room but they are unable to get very far. The stench and the mess keep them at a distance.

Paint bombs have dried on every wall. The table, cot, chairs... everything is broken and the canvas is nowhere to be seen.

A gray hand holding a small paint brush sticks out from under a blanket in the corner.

JOSEPHINE

Oh god...

Flash bulbs pop from news reporters as Josephine runs to the corner. Dr. Brunwaldus follows her and feels for a pulse.

She peels down the blanket and Han's dead eyes stare out at the group in his cell. The crowd gathers a somber hush.

The Judge walks to Josephine's side - inspecting Han. The Judge moves the blanket again and Han's other hand comes into view. It clutches a small finger-painting - Nadine's.

Bewildered, Josephine picks it up and twirls it in her fingers while the Leo tugs at a cot sheet on the floor.

JUDGE

I'm sorry. This was a bad idea...

JONATHAN

Yes. Best it weren't mentioned to anyone. Get these reporters out of here!

Nobody seems to move - the crowd in shock.

BREDIUS (OS)

Well I'll be a son of a bitch.

Everyone looks over and sees what Leo has uncovered: Young Christ at the Temple - an innocent depiction of a fourteen year old Christ standing before a tome, reading to a small group of Elders.

There can be no mistaking - the style is that of Vermeer but the paints are new, un-aged by the oven.

The face of Christ is that of Nadine - the group of Elders bare a striking resemblance to those gathered in the room.

Jonathan Glass leans over to inspect the signature. It reads: **H. V. Megeeren.**

Dr. Brunwaldus reaches over and closes Han's eyes and Josephine spits in the Jonathan Glass's face.

Flashbulb POP from the field of reporters and the painting, hoisted by Leo, looks down on them all.

FADE OUT