

Reel Trouble

Written by Niyazi Unugur

Created in collaboration with the Kensington Green Company 2025-26

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SYNOPSIS

Genre: Comedy (Mystery)

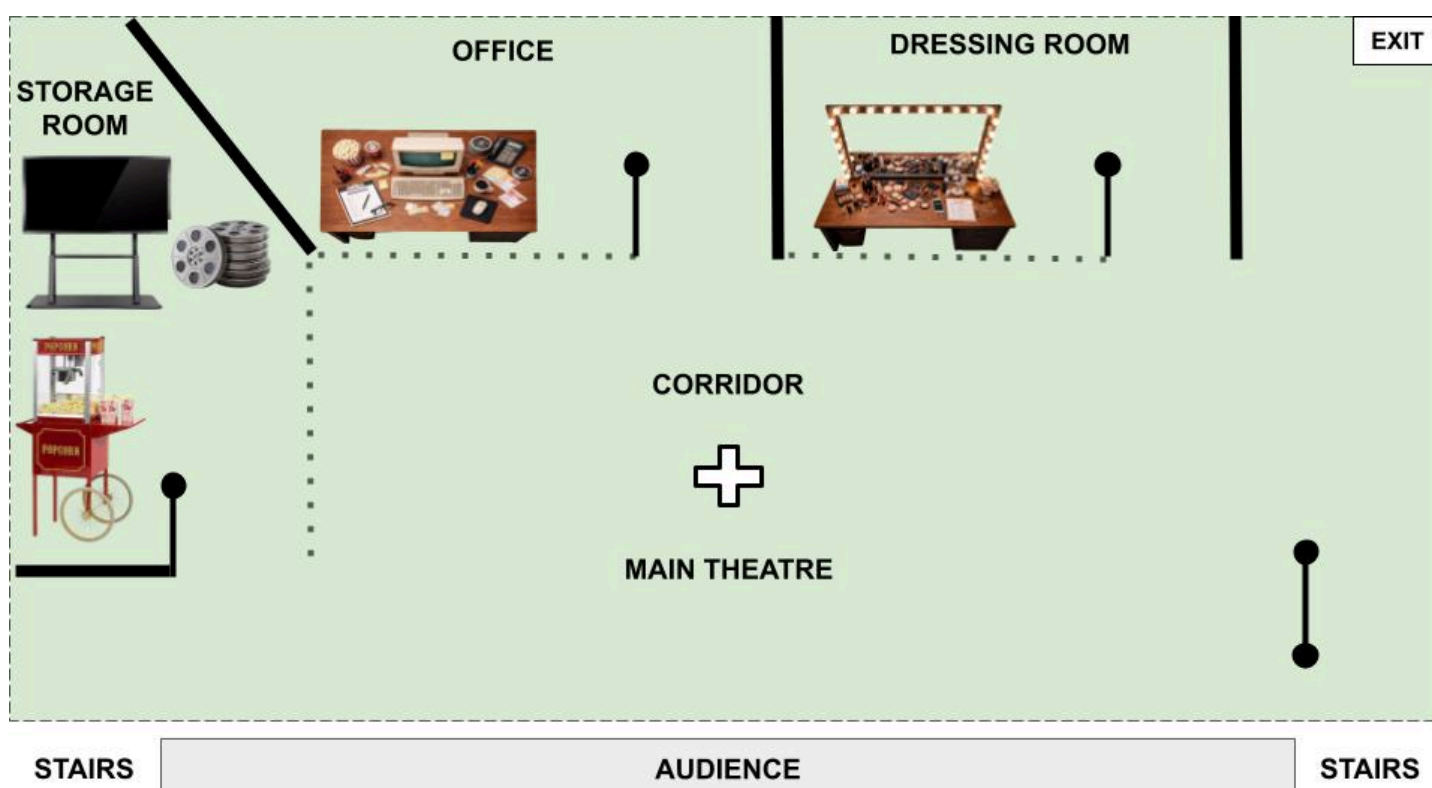
When the staff of a struggling, run-down cinema gather for the premiere of a long-awaited blockbuster, excitement quickly turns to panic when the most important item of all goes missing — the master film reel. With guests arriving and the cinema's future on the line, it becomes clear that if the reel is not found in time, the cinema will be forced to shut down forever.

As the day unfolds, secret conversations are overheard, suspicious clues are uncovered, and long-held tensions between staff rise to the surface. Everyone seems to have something to hide and some with dangerous motives. What begins as a frantic search becomes a fast-paced, mystery filled with moments of sharp comedy.

Balancing farce with suspense, Reel Trouble explores themes of loyalty, power and ambition. As the evidence behind the missing reel slowly emerges, the workers must decide who they can trust and whether saving the cinema is worth standing up to those who want to see it fail.

This play was inspired by the role-play sessions with our Kensington Green Company of 2025–26. Using the Role That Dice system, pupils explored an immersive, improvised drama world where their choices shaped the story. Through collaboration, investigation, and roleplay, the pupils created the characters, dialogue, and narrative that formed the ideas for this script.

STAGING DIAGRAM



SCENE 1: MAIN THEATRE. EARLY MORNING.

LX: 0 – Preset: low green/ orange

MUSIC: 'PLAYLIST 90's HITS'

The main theatre of a rundown cinema.

Mess from the night before scattered on the stage floor.

LX: 1 – State A (Main Theatre) – snap

MUSIC: 'WALKING ON SUNSHINE' by Katrina And The Waves.

LINDA bursts in, oversized headphones on, broom in hand. She dances as she cleans, broom as microphone, sliding and spinning across the floor. Joyful. Messy. Unapologetic.

*OPHELIA enters quietly unnoticed by LINDA.
She stops and watches.*

*BEN enters behind her.
Relaxed, hands in pockets. He watches too.*

*SERENE appears next in the doorway.
Confused and wide-eyed she watches.*

*The three cough in tandem, alerting LINDA to their presence.
LINDA spins, embarrassed as she finally sees them. A long, painful beat.*

LINDA

I was just sweeping!

OPHELIA

Of course you were dear.

Well rest assured, the cinema has received your offering and it approves!

SERENE

That was a five star performance Linda!

BEN

So, is that a part of the job now?

Because I was not trained to do that!

LINDA

Oh no!

**LINDA rushes to her seat, taking the bin and broom with her.
OPHELIA, BEN and SERENE take their seats too.**

ROSIE, AMY, BEA, BRAMLEY, ANNE and LILA enter.

ROSIE

Today feels huge!
I'll be honest, I'm nervous!

AMY

Well, I am choosing to remain hopeful.
Tonight *will* be a success!

BEA

The building sounds different today.
Like it knows people are coming.

BRAMLEY

I just want this thing to start and end on time -
I'm so tired already!

ANNE

Another late night?

BRAMLEY

Yes, yes, you could say that.
My new watch was set to New Zealand timing!

ANNE

Bea is right, the cinema sounds different on days like these.
Like it knows people are coming.

BEA

We've had plenty of busy days like this before.

LILA

Never like this.
This one has eyes on it.
Especially after what happened...

An uncomfortable silence.

BOB

You know, whenever I am in this space...
It reminds me of the boss...
I really miss him.

BELLA

We all do.

JONN

And I think old Monty Timble would've been so excited about tonight.

BELLA

I know that he would've wanted us to keep the cinema open and fun..

OPHELIA

Oh, Monty is definitely excited about tonight.
He told me last week when we had lunch together in the screening room!

JONN

You really creep me out.

The CINEMA STAFF look at OPHELIA awkwardly and then take their seats in the front row.

OPHELIA

Rude!

MILTON TIMBLE rushes in, excitable and straightening his bow tie.

MILTON

Good morning everyone. Please let's take a seat Ophelia!

MILTON

Now, it is no secret that today is a huge day for our cinema.
Possibly the biggest day we have had in decades.
To have our small cinema hosting the premiere of a major blockbuster is an honour.
An honour my late father would have been extremely proud of.
An event like this puts our cinema back on the map, exactly as he always believed.
Now, before we begin preparing everything for the big night,
I would like to invite some very important people to say a few words.
So, let us begin with an award winner and a true visionary.
The film's director - Roger Davis.

ROGER DAVIS enters. The film's director. Immaculately dressed, confident to the point of indulgence. He takes his time, absorbing the space, the people, and the attention.

ROGER

You know, this cinema, it's got character.

And I respect that.

You feel it immediately upon entering.

Too many modern theatres are polished and soulless.

This place has history.

(talking directly to the cinema workers)

I also respect the little people.

Those who have achieved nothing of particular note.

And by that, I mean you all.

I can only imagine it takes a certain endurance to remain so consistently invisible.

And I respect that deeply.

(He notices the lack of applause. A flicker of awareness.)

Of course, a film such as this does not appear by magic.

It requires a brilliant mind to shape the story.

Someone capable of giving the characters words that feel real.

So it is my pleasure to introduce the man who wrote 'The Lunar Project'.

Our scriptwriter. Dexter Fontaine!

ROGER moves stage right to join MILTON.

DEXTER FONTAINE enters. The screenwriter. Neatly dressed but slightly rumpled, clutching a folder as if it might run away. He hesitates, then steps forward.

DEXTER

The truth is, the last decade has been... more than difficult.

After the first Lunar film, expectations were high - very high.

I wrote many scripts.

Some of my scripts were misunderstood.

Others were simply ignored.

(A beat. He exhales deeply.)

There were moments when I was quite certain I would never stand on a stage like this again.

I thought that perhaps my best work was already behind me.

(Looks to the skies dramatically.)

But a part of me always believed I would find my way back.

That one day, the right story would arrive at the right moment.

'The Lunar Project: Eclipse' is that moment.

I have waited long enough.

This is my return.

DEXTER falls to his knees.

***VERONICA VALE enters, interrupting him. The film star.
Effortlessly glamorous, sunglasses on indoors, as she glides through the space.***

***KYLIE KABOODLE follows her. The make-up artist.
Quirky glasses, oversized kit bag, already fussing, circling Veronica like a satellite.***

VERONICA

Dexter, darling, always soooo dramatic.

DEXTER moves stage right to join the group.

VERONICA

I want this film to succeed.

(removes her sunglasses slowly, surveys the cinema.)

Success, however, does not happen by chance, it is about presentation.

And, the presentation begins the moment the audience walks through that door.

(A beat. She gestures vaguely around the space.)

This venue... Well, it's not ideal.

But the decision to premiere here was not mine.

I have simply agreed to be professional about it.

And, I expect everyone in this building to do the same.

Clean seats.

Tidy uniforms.

And, no surprises.

Tonight must look effortless - even if it is not.

Because if this film fails, it will not be my name attached to the mess!

VERONICA moves stage right to join the group.

KYLIE

Hands together for our star, Veronica Vale.

She's an icon. A miracle.

Now everyone, reminder to please refrain from breathing in her direction.

Do not touch her.

Do not look at her for too long.

And absolutely no autographs!

Thank you!

KYLIE hurries after VERONICA.

MILTON moves centrestage.

MILTON

So, last, and certainly by no means least,
The man who without, none of this would have been possible.
The film's producer - Mr Tolga Güler.

TOLGA GÜLER steps forward.

Calm, measured, impeccably dressed. He surveys the room intensely.

TOLGA

It's no secret that I have invested a considerable amount of money into this project.
Producing the film, repairing this cinema and paying all of your wages.
So, make no mistakes, tonight will run smoothly.
And, if we all do our jobs properly, this cinema thrives.
If not, then I'll need to start cracking skulls!

An awkward silence from the ENSEMBLE who are not sure if he is being serious or not.

TOLGA

I trust I've made myself clear.

GREGORY enters quietly from the side. Gets MILTON'S attention who then crosses over him.

GREGORY whispers something into MILTON'S ear.

MILTON's smile tightens and his eyes widen, trying to stay composed.

TOLGA

Is everything okay, Milton?

MILTON

Yes, Mr Güler.

(forcing a smile)

Everything is right and dandy!

TOLGA

Right and dandy?

MILTON laughs nervously.

MILTON

I'll need to speak to the cinema staff - alone.

Health and safety - very boring stuff!

So, if I could ask everyone else to make their way to the staff room.

There is warm coffee, and pastries!

MILTON gestures toward the exits.

MILTON

If you would be so kind.

The guests exit.

TOLGA gives one final threatening look before leaving.

GREGORY waits until the doors closes before speaking.

The atmosphere shifts.

GREGORY

Okay, everyone listen up.

No one needs to panic.

(waits until he has their attention.)

What I am about to tell you must not leave this room.

Not to the guests.

Not to Mr Güler.

No one.

(A beat.)

The film reel is missing.

The ENSEMBLE reacts with a sharp inhale of breath, followed by overlapping whispers.

GREGORY

I know it was here last night.

It was in the screening room, ready for tonight - exactly where it should be!

I always check it the night before a show.

Don't I Milton?

MILTON nods.

GREGORY

I locked up after checking it.

Now, this morning, it is gone.

Which means someone moved it - or stole it.

MILTON is panicking and begins hyperventilating.

GREGORY

Please stay calm Milton, we're gonna find it.
The reel is missing but that does not mean it is gone.
Your father trusted us to look after this place.
We will fix this.

MILTON looks at him, overwhelmed, he turns to the staff.

MILTON

Oh dear. Oh dear. This is very bad.
If this premiere does not go ahead, I'm finished - I'll be bankrupt.

ONE BY ONE the CINEMA STAFF stand and move on stage when saying their lines.

BOB

Don't worry Mr Timble, it has probably been misplaced.
That happens.
We will find it.

ROSIE

Yeah, things get moved all the time.
Especially here.

LINDA

Mr Grumble said it was not misplaced?
He said someone might have stolen it?

ANNE

Look, it must be in the building somewhere.
And, if it's not then we'll find out who took it

LINDA

And more importantly, why?

BEN

There will be a trail of evidence, there always is!
And if there is, we will find it.

AMY

We'll conduct an investigation.. In secret.
And report back.

BRAMLEY

I did not touch anything important.
Just saying.

JONN

What a suspicious thing to say, don't ya think!

BRAMLEY

I hope that isn't an accusation, Jonn!

BEA

Stop it you two!
We mustn't go accusing one another.

LILA

If someone did take it, they would have left some clues!

AMY

We'll need to know exactly who was in the building last night -

JONN

And if anyone was here early this morning!
We'll need to find some solid evidence!

BELLA

Let's search the cinema, discreetly.
Mr Timble, you keep the others busy whilst we do.

SERENE

Yes, we must make sure the others don't find out.

MILTON *nods.*

OPEHLIA

I'll have a chat with old Monty, to see if he saw anything.

ENSEMBLE *react, head in hands.*

GREGORY

And I'll check the CCTV footage to see if there are any clues there.

MILTON

Thank you for your understanding everyone...

Okay, let's meet back here in an hour's time?

The CINEMA STAFF nod in agreement and exit stage.

LX: 2 – Fade to blackout

SCENE 2: CORRIDOR. MORNING.

LX: 3 - State B (Upstage Active)

MUSIC: 'DIED IN YOUR ARMS' by Cutting Crew.

The stage is divided into three distinct spaces:

Upstage right: the STORAGE ROOM.

Upstage centre: the OFFICE.

Upstage left: the DRESSING ROOM.

The CORRIDOR runs parallel to centrestage, connecting all three spaces.

Throughout the scenes to follow, the actors in each room remain in continuous mime.

They do not acknowledge the audience, the corridor, or anything beyond their own room.

OFFICE

ROGER DAVIS and DEXTER FONTAINE enter.

DEXTER sits at a computer and ROGER stands over him, looking at the screen.

DEXTER leans in, nodding, occasionally typing or cross-checking with the script in his hands.

Their exchange is quiet, focused, and entirely in mime.

They remain absorbed, never looking out of the office.

DRESSING ROOM

VERONICA VALE enters the upstage left, followed immediately by KYLIE KABOODLE.

VERONICA sits in the chair gazing into the mirror, posture perfect.

KYLIE begins working at once: powder, brush, mirror, constant adjustment.

VERONICA practises expressions, checks her reflection, resets.

They are locked into their routine, talking is minimal.

STORAGE ROOM

GREGORY GRUMBLE crosses quickly to the STORAGE ROOM upstage right.

He enters and begins working on a CCTV control unit.

His movements are careful. Deliberate.

CORRIDOR

LX: 4 – State C (Corridor)

*TOLGA enters last, mid-phone call.
He walks the length of the corridor, speaking intensely in mime.
He stops and waits, facing stage right.*

*MILTON enters the corridor.
He spots TOLGA' and freezes.
Slowly, carefully, he attempts to retreat tiptoeing away.*

*Without turning, TOLGA speaks.
MUSIC snaps off as he does -*

TOLGA

Milton!

(pause)

A word.

MILTON sighs, steels himself, and meets TOLGA centre stage.

MILTON

Yes Mr Güler.

I was just on my way to -

TOLGA

(interrupting)

To ensure tonight runs right and dandy?

MILTON gulps nervously.

TOLGA

Your father and I spoke at length when this project began.

God rest his soul.

We agreed on expectations.

I would hate for there to be any confusion now.

MILTON

Of course, I remember it very well.

TOLGA

I'm glad you do.

(He gestures vaguely around the building.)

Because I invested very generously into your father and his renovation project.

MILTON

And, I am grateful.

Deeply grateful.

TOLGA

Your gratitude is charming.

But, financial returns are better.

A beat.

TOLGA

Listen, one way or another, Milton,

I will be collecting what is owed to me by the end of tonight.

MILTON

I assure you Mr Güler, everything will go -

TOLGA & MILTON

Right and dandy!

Silence.

TOLGA smiles thinly.

TOLGA

Let's get back to our responsibilities.

Shall we?

TOLGA turns and walks away, exiting downstage right.

MILTON remains in the corridor and watches until TOLGA is fully gone.

Only then does the weight of the situation hit him. MILTON exhales.

The CINEMA STAFF begin to enter the corridor.

One by one, creeping in, tucking themselves behind the wall of the DRESSING ROOM.

MILTON eventually turns to see them.

The CINEMA STAFF wave and smile comically.

***MILTON ushers them all out of sight, waving his arms frantically.
The CINEMA STAFF now move to the alley downstage left.***

MILTON takes a final deep breath and moves quickly exiting downstage left.

The space settles with all three rooms active in mime.

SCENE 3: INVESTIGATION PART ONE. VARIOUS ROOMS. MORNING.

This scene plays as a rapid split-scene sequence. Each ends on a cliffhanger. Spotlights snap on and off, and when one location is lit, the other areas freeze in place.

The CINEMA STAFF spill into the CORRIDOR, talking over each other in hushed secrecy.

ANNE

Guys, this is so weird.
Why is Mr Güler being so mean to Mr Timble?

BEN

He's mean to everybody.
All the time!

AMY

We need to find the reel before this whole cinema is shut down.
Otherwise, we're all going to lose our jobs!

OPHELIA

Sush! My voodoo powers are tingling!
We need to move!
If they see us all together like this, they might get suspicious!

SERENE

Let's split up, into three groups and look for clues.

LINDA

Okay.
We'll go check the Office.

BELLA

We'll go investigate the Dressing Room for clues there.

SERENE

And, we'll go check the Storage Room for the CCTV footage.

The CINEMA STAFF split into three groups, each going separate ways:

BEN, BOB, SERENE, ROSIE and BEA break away hiding outside the STORAGE ROOM.

JONN, BRAMLEY, BELLA and OPHELIA hide outside the DRESSING ROOM.

ANNE, LILA, LINDA and AMY hide outside the OFFICE.

Once in positions, ALL freeze.

THE OFFICE: PART 1

LX: 5 – State E (Office)

*ROGER looms over DEXTER, who is frantically rifling through pages of script.
ROGER gestures sharply at the computer screen.*

ROGER

This is wrong.
The order is wrong.

DEXTER

No, that's the revised running order.
I emailed it to you. Twice.

ROGER

The speeches are listed before the screening.
I never speak before a screening.

DEXTER

Because you insisted on it at the last meeting.

ROGER

I insist on many things.
That was not one of them.

DEXTER

If we move it, the pacing collapses.

ROGER

The pacing has already collapsed.

DEXTER

You can't just change it now.

ROGER

I can and I will.
I'm telling Milton.
This needs fixing now.

ANNE, LILA, LINDA and AMY stand, moving centre stage trying to act casual.
ROGER storms out, stops for a moment noticing the girls.
DEXTER remains, surrounded by scattered pages, staring at the screen.
ANNE, LILA, LINDA and AMY wait until ROGER is fully gone.
They exchange a look, then slip into the office and quietly close the door behind them.
ANNE, LILA, LINDA and AMY now stand over DEXTER, arms folded, eyes wide, threatening.

AMY

Well, if it isn't Dexter Fontaine.

DEXTER

Oh, hello.

I'm sorry - who are you?

LINDA

(sassy)

Ummmm, we work here.

AMY, LINDA, LILA, ANNE

Ummmmm hmmmmmm

DEXTER

Right?

What can I do for you?

AMY

We have some questions.

DEXTER

Questions. About what?

LILA

About you, Mr Fontaine.

DEXTER

Well, that's rather vague.

ANNE

Let's make it clearer, shall we?

DEXTER

Please do.

I'm in the middle of something.

Why are you all standing there like that?

AMY

We need to know if you are hiding something.

DEXTER

Hiding what?

LINDA

We're the ones asking the questions, Mr Fontaine!

DEXTER

This is highly inappropriate.

LILA

You didn't want the world to see.

To see your awful writing.

Did you?

DEXTER

(standing)

What is going on?

AMY

(grabs his shoulder and forces him to sit again)

That's exactly what we're trying to work out, Mr Fontaine.

They hold his gaze.

All freeze.

LX: 6 – Blackout

THE STORAGE ROOM: PART 1

LX: 7 – State F (Storage Room)

The STORAGE ROOM is cramped and cluttered. Boxes of old posters, cables, reels, and discarded equipment are stacked everywhere. Inside, GREGORY is working.

BEN, BOB, SERENE, ROSIE and BEA creep outside the storage room door.

BOB

Guys, why don't we just ask Mr Grumble?

BEN

Because, he's a suspect, stupid.

BEA

Please do not call him stupid.

We're supposed to be working together!

SERENE

Bea is right, that is not acceptable behavior.

And as the assistant manager -

ROSIE

Since when were you made assistant manager?

SERENE

Since I was voted to be in charge of shift rotas.

BEA

That's because no one else wanted to do that job!

BEN

Occasionally, you might assist the manager.

That does not mean you're an assistant manager.

SERENE

Whatever.

Just, watch and learn.

SERENE shoos them away and then knocks on the door.
Inside, GREGORY freezes mid-task and stands.

GREGORY

What is it?!

SERENE

Mr Grumble - emergency!
There's a blockage in the toilet!

A beat.

GREGORY

Not again!

GREGORY takes the CCTV control unit that he was working on and places it in a box.

SERENE

It's a ... really big one!

GREGORY

Alright, I'm coming!

The door opens. GREGORY steps out with a plunger in hand, irritated, already rolling up sleeves huffs and marches off down the corridor. As he goes, he locks the door behind him. He does not notice the rest of the staff.

ROSIE

He locked the door.

BEN

That is very suspicious.

BOB

You know, I think I can pick the lock!

BOB produces a small screwdriver.
The others watch on nervously.

BEA

Hurry up, before he comes back!

A click.

BOB

Got it!

ROSIE

Impressive.

You're full of surprises aren't you little one!

SERENE

Quickly, get in.

I'll keep a look out.

BEN, BOB, ROSIE and BEA creep into the STORAGE ROOM.

SERENE keeps watch at the doorway.

They freeze.

LX: 8 – Blackout

THE DRESSING ROOM: PART 1

LX: 9 – State D (Dressing Room)

VERONICA sits in the chair as KYLIE brushes her hair.

VERONICA

I can't believe the state of this place.

KYLIE

Tell me about it!

Are they trying to ruin your career?

It just seems... a little too convenient, don't you think.

VERONICA

So you think someone is trying to ruin my career.

What do you know?

Tell me!

KYLIE

Well I'm just saying, who benefits if the film fails?

Roger gets to blame the venue - and the late Monty Timble takes the fall for it.

Dexter gets to be a misunderstood genius - *again!*

And Tolga - sorry, Mr Güler - he never loses.

He collects his money, one way or another.

Milton, bless his cotton socks, never had it in him to handle a film this big.

And then there's -

A sneeze outside from OPHELIA.

VERONICA raises a hand. KYLIE freezes mid-rant.

VERONICA crosses sharply to the door and pulls it open.

JONN, BRAMLEY, BELLA and OPHELIA smile after being caught.

VERONICA

What *are* you doing?

BELLA

We were just -

JONN

Passing by -

OPHELIA

To get an -

BRAMLEY

An autograph!

They all nod overly exaggerated.

VERONICA

Oh, do come in.

JONN, BRAMLEY, BELLA and OPHELIA enter the DRESSING ROOM.

VERONICA

One at a time.

BELLA

Miss Vale.

We didn't want to disturb you!

OPEHILA

We know you're extremely busy!

JONN

So, we were just waiting for you, outside!

VERONICA

And you?!

BRAMLEY

To be honest Miss Vale,

I did not plan to be here.

I just simply failed to leave.

VERONICA

What do you think, Kylie?

KYLIE takes a moment, examines them closely.

KYLIE

I think they are lying Miss Vale.

OPHELIA

You're right, I can't lie!

My ancestors will haunt me forever!

We thought someone might be trying to sabotage the premiere.

VERONICA

Interesting!

And why would you think that?

An awkward silence.

BRAMLEY

To be honest Miss Vale, the film reel has gone missing.

We're actually looking for it.

You're both suspects by the way.

JONN, BELLA, OPHELIA

BRAMLEY!

Silence.

VERONICA

My reputation is at stake.

Do you understand?

Find the film reel and return it to me when you have.

They nod rapidly.

VERONICA

Good.

Now get out.

JONN, BRAMLEY, BELLA and OPHELIA retreat in a flurry of apologies and awkward bows.

KYLIE

That was... weird.

VERONICA glares.

VERONICA

Kylie Kaboodle, something very strange is going on.
Follow them and find out what it is.

KYLIE

Of course, Miss Vale.

They freeze.

LX: 10 – Blackout

OFFICE: PART 2

LX: 11 – State E (Office)

DEXTER is surrounded by ANNE, LILA, LINDA and AMY.

DEXTER

You've insulted my script!
And in doing so, you've insulted my life's work!
And, I will not have it!

*DEXTER snatches up his pages and turns to leave.
At that exact moment, MILTON enters, scanning the room.*

MILTON

Dexter, there you are!
(awkwardly)
Roger said there was a mistake on the programme, and I was sure you'd emailed it twice -
Ha! What's going on in here then, girls?

*MILTON makes frantic, half-hidden gestures towards the girls;
Smiling awkwardly as he tilts his head towards the corridor.
The CINEMA STAFF ignore him..*

AMY

I am so glad you could join us, Mr Timble.

MILTON

Girls, a word in the corridor if I may?

ANNE

Mr Fontaine was just about to spill the beans!

MILTON

Beans?

LINDA

Metaphorical honesty beans.

MILTON *wide eyed shakes his head at the CINEMA WORKERS.*
They stare back at him, even wider-eyed.

DEXTER

What exactly is going on here Milton?

LINDA

If this place goes under, we'll all go under.

DEXTER

Why would this place go under?

Milton?

LILA

Tell us what you know. Now!

MILTON

(nervous laugh)

I assure you, everything is fine.

AMY

You say that like someone lying.

DEXTER

Is this about my film?

It is, isn't it?

MILTON

No.

ANNE, LILA, LINDA, AMY

Yes!

DEXTER

It is?

MILTON

It isn't.

ANNE, LILA, LINDA, AMY

It is.

DEXTER

Milton?

MILTON

It... might be.

DEXTER freezes, sensing something is wrong.

DEXTER

What do you mean, might be?

MILTON

Dexter...please remain calm.

A beat.

MILTON

Okay, so no need to panic, but -
The film reel for tonight's premier is... missing.

DEXTER'S face collapses in disbelief.

DEXTER

No. No no no no no -

DEXTER advances on MILTON, then suddenly grips him by the collar.

MILTON

Dexter, I know you're probably very upset right now,
But it's very important we don't tell anyone else -

LX: 12 – Blackout

STORAGE ROOM: PART 2

LX: 13 – State F (Storage Room)

BEN, ROSIE, BOB and BEA slip inside the STORAGE ROOM.

SERENE remains outside the door, standing guard, LOOKING intently down the corridor.

ROSIE

There has to be something in here.

They rummage urgently through shelves and crates, shifting boxes, lifting cables, and disturbing dusty forgotten equipment.

BOB

Why is everything so dusty!

BEA

Found something!

She holds up the old camera that GREGORY was working on.

They gather around, looking over BEA's shoulder as she navigates through the footage.

BEN

Perfect.

Scroll back to last night.

Slowly.

BOB leans in far too close, squinting.

ROSIE

What if we see something horrible?

Suddenly, GREGORY storms on from the corridor, pointing straight at SERENE.

GREGORY

The toilet isn't blocked?

SERENE laughs nervously.

SERENE

That's so odd!

SERENE begins coughing loudly. Then louder. Then oddly she makes a bird-like noise. Behind the door, the group hears this and panics.

GREGORY

What are you doing Serene?

SERENE

I have a cough.

GREGORY

A cough?

SERENE

It's seasonal.

GREGORY

It's the middle of summer.

SERENE begins coughing louder and makes the bird-like noise again.

Inside the STORAGE ROOM, panic as they scramble to hide.

GREGORY narrows his eyes, steps forward, and pushes past her, through the door.

GREGORY

What is wrong with all of you!

ROSIE

We were... checking... the CCTV footage from last night.

GREGORY

But I told you I was doing that?

Don't you trust me?

BEN

Trust is an interesting concept.

Isn't it?

A nervous laugh from the group. They all freeze.

CORRIDOR: PART 2

LX: 14 - State B (Upstage Active)

DEXTER storms down the corridor towards centre stage, wild-eyed.

DEXTER

Roger!

Roger!

ROGER steps back on from the wings.

The ENTIRE ENSEMBLE enters the corridor, except for TOLGA.

ROGER

What is all the commotion, Dexter?

DEXTER

The reel.

The reel for tonight - it's missing!

ROGER freezes.

BELLA

He said it out loud.

BRAMLEY

That is not optimal.

JONN

Far from optimal.

ROGER

What do you mean the reel is missing?

VERONICA

Mr Timble, is this true?

MILTON

Yes

GREGORY

We will find it Miss Vale.

In the meantime, it's very important that Mr Guler doesn't know.

Or he'll completely lose it!

KYLIE

His exact words were "crack skulls"

TOLGA enters.

He clocks the group instantly and marches towards them.

TOLGA

Why is everyone just standing around the corridor?

Haven't we all got work to do?

ROGER

Just a... little corridor gathering.

To boost staff morale.

KYLIE

Yay!

The ENSEMBLE shrink back, fake smiling through the panic.

TOLGA

Well, perfect timing!

I'd like to run a technical check.

To make sure everything is operating smoothly for tonight.

DEXTER

No. I mean, wouldn't that ruin the magic?!

The ENSEMBLE ad-lib support for DEXTER, whilst fake smiling through the panic.

MILTON stands there nervous and TOLGA's eyes lock on to him.

TOLGA

Milton, you're sweating.

What's wrong?

MILTON, panicking, eyes widening.

VERONICA

It's a big night.
Pressure does strange things.
Give him a break.

A beat. Stillness.

TOLGA studies her, then softens, just enough.

TOLGA

Oh, believe me, Veronica.
If tonight doesn't go exactly as planned...
I'll give him a break.

A firm stare. The threat lands.

MILTON

We've got work to do.
Cinema staff to the main theatre. Now.
Everyone else - as you were.

MILTON turns, ushering the STAFF toward the MAIN THEATRE.

ROGER

You heard the old boy.
Back to work!

ROGER, DEXTER return to the OFFICE.

VERNOICA and KYLIE return to the DRESSING ROOM.

GREGORY returns to the STORAGE ROOM.

TOLGA lingers alone a moment, observing and calculating, before joining the OFFICE.

LX: 15 – Fade to blackout

SCENE 4: MAIN THEATRE. MIDDAY.

LX: 16 – State A (Main Theatre)

MUSIC: *'WHAT IS LOVE' by Haddaway.*

The CINEMA STAFF are scattered across the front row seating and stage floor.

MILTON sits alone in the centre seat, back to the audience.

Hands pressed to his temples.

He stares up at the ceiling.

LINDA gently bobs to music only she can hear.

The others glance at her.

A few trade looks.

The awkwardness deepens.

MILTON exhales, frustrated.

MILTON

Bloomin' hell Linda!

Would you please turn that off.

LINDA

Sorry guys!

MILTON

We've gotten nowhere.

Absolutely nowhere.

BEA

That's not true Milton.

We're not nowhere.

We've established clear motives.

BRAMLEY

And now that they know we're watching them.

They'll be stressed.

OPHELIA

People who are stressed usually slip up.

One way or another.

BEN

You see, that's not nothing.

AMY

So we observe.

LILA

We interrogate.

ROSIE

We collect evidence.

LINDA

And we make sure Mr Güler doesn't find out!

A beat.

BELLA

The more I think about it...

Mr Güler actually has a lot to gain if this all goes wrong.

MILTON

Don't say that.

JONN

It's true, Milton.

You shouldn't be so trusting of him -

MILTON

He was my father's friend!

A long awkward silence.

GREGORY appears suddenly.

GREGORY

Milton.

MILTON

Gregory, this really isn't a good time -

GREGORY

I'm sorry boss - it can't wait.

MILTON puts his popcorn box on the floor beside ANNE before leaving.

ANNE

We need to lay out our theories.

What do we actually know?

And, who do we suspect?

BELLA

Well, Roger clearly does not like this venue.
Maybe he wants the premiere postponed - moved somewhere nicer.

JONN

Veronica too.
Her big film, premiering in a dump like this!
That can't be good for her image.

LILA

Kylie. She's lived forever in Veronica's shadow.
Jealousy can do strange things.

BEA

Dexter. His career's been flatlining for years.
If the film fails, it's not his fault.

BOB

Gregory. He knows every corner of the building.
And he did say he was the last person to see the reel.

ANNE

Gregory was Monty's best friend.
He's basically Milton's uncle.

A beat.

LINDA

Has anyone considered that it might be Milton?

BELLA

That doesn't make sense.
It's his family business.
Why would he destroy his own legacy?

OPHELIA

How about Mr Guler?
If the cinema fails, Milton takes the blame.
And Mr Guler takes the profits.

LILA

But if the film succeeds - Mr Guler makes even more money
And that man loves money!

The room settles.

Silence.

ROSIE

Old Monty wouldn't have panicked like this.
He'd have sat us down, made a plan.

BRAMLEY

And then he'd have made a joke.
A terrible one.

LILA

And you'd always feel better after.

BEN

This place ran smoother when he was around.

BOB

Everything was more fun when the boss was alive.

ANNE

He'd never let us feel this scared.

LINDA

He trusted us.

OPHELIA

He always did.
He still does.

AMY

Yeah. Well, he's not here anymore is he...

Silence again. Heavier now.

ROSIE

I need some fresh air.
Five minutes and I'll be back.

ROSIE tries the door, it's locked. She rattles it harder when it doesn't open.

SERENE

What is it?

ROSIE

It's locked.
Someone has locked us in!

BRAMLEY

And so... the plot thickens!

SERENE

Hey, let us out!

This is against health and safety laws!

You can't just lock us in!

I'm the assistant manager!

LX: 17 – Blackout

SCENE 5: MAIN THEATRE. MIDDAY to AFTERNOON.

*A freeze-frame montage of four images, each one marking the passing hours.
Each image holds for 15 seconds, then blackout, before snapping to the next still image.*

MUSIC: 'ALL THAT SHE WANTS' by Ace of Base.

LX: 18 – State A (Main Theatre) – snap

HOURL ONE – STILL TRYING

- Some stand at the doors, testing handles and talking strategy.
- A few sit together gossiping, confident someone will figure it out.
- Some organise their theories centre stage.
- They all assume the door will open soon.

Hold for 15 seconds then **LX: 19 – Blackout – snap**

LX: 20 – State A (Main Theatre) – snap

HOURL TWO – BORED

- Some slump into seats, staring at the ceiling.
- Others fan themselves with old programmes.
- A few sprawl across the aisle, restless and bored.

Hold for 15 seconds then **LX: 21 – Blackout – snap**

LX: 22 – State A (Main Theatre) – snap

HOURL THREE – TIRED, HUNGRY, FRUSTRATED

- Some sit on the floor, drained.
- Others begin to argue in small clusters.
- Several stare at the locked door in silence.

Hold for 15 seconds then **LX: 23 – Blackout – snap**

LX: 24 – State A (Main Theatre) – snap

HOUR FOUR – COMPLETELY GIVEN UP

- Some lay motionless, heads in hands.
- Others sit in seats, defeated.
- No one tries the door anymore.
- No one even has the energy to argue anymore

Hold for 15 seconds.

LX: 25 – Shift to State A

LINDA

You got any more popcorn, Kev?

BOB

Kev?

Who's Kev?!

BEN

You've become delusional.

ROSIE

There's no way out.

AMY

I need water.

I'm dehydrated.

ANNE

We're all gonna die in here!

BELLA

I don't want to die in a place this filthy.

OPHELIA

I can hear the angels singing my name. Is that you, Mama?

JONN

It's boiling in here.

Did someone turn the air-conditioning off?

LILA

Can anyone else smell that?
Something's rotten.

LINDA

That smells disgusting.

BOB

I think Bramley farted.

BRAMLEY

Trust me, if I farted, you'd all know about it.

JONN

I need air...

Look, why don't we just smash a window and make our escape?

BEA

There are no windows here.

It's a cinema, Jonn!

AMY

I need something to eat.

I'm going to faint.

ANNE

Oh!

Look!

A box of popcorn!

ROSIE

Don't eat that, it's probably gone stale from last night!

ANNE has already shoved a handful in her mouth. She stops confused, and then slowly reaches into the box pulling out a key. They all stare.

ANNE

It's a key?

LILA

Milton was eating that popcorn.

His key must've fallen out.

BEN

Or maybe Milton left it for us -

JONN

Do you think it's a message?

BEA

A clue?

AMY

A cry for help?

BELLA

Maybe Milton needs us?

ROSIE

Milton must have put it there for us.

He wants us to keep digging.

BOB

Look...

This is Monty's old key?

OPHELIA

Told ya!

Monty wants us to save the cinema.

I have been telling you this all along!

LINDA

It's a sign!

We have to save this cinema!

Purpose returns to the group as they realise there is still hope to save the cinema.

SERENE

We need to continue our investigation.

JONN

We're running out of time.

It's already 4pm.

BRAMLEY

Doors open at six.

BELLA

So we have two hours to find the reel.

We need clues.

Actual solid evidence.

LILA

Consider this...Now that they know, that we know, that they know.

We can be frank.

Direct.

BEA

Yes, we get them to prove their innocence!

Guilty, until proven innocent!

BOB

They should all have alibis.

ANNE

We need to know where they were last night and this morning.

AMY

And we need to keep looking for clues.

BELLA

Trust no one.

LINDA

Let's save this cinema.

ROSIE

Let's do this for Monty.

They kneel downstage and stack their hands together.

OPEHLIA

Monty on three.

Three...

ALL

Two... one...MONTY!

They freeze, hands still stacked together.

LX: 26 – Fade to blackout

SCENE 6: INVESTIGATION PART TWO. VARIOUS ROOMS. AFTERNOON.

The next phase of investigation plays mostly in mime to a constant music instrumental, moving between locations in quick succession.

LX: 27- State B (Upstage Active)

MUSIC: 'MANIAC' by Michael Sembello.

CORRIDOR

*DEXTER and VERONICA are already in the corridor arguing.
DEXTER is clearly frantic about the missing reel. His movements are erratic and desperate.
VERONICA is defensive, emotional, and struggling to keep him calm.*

BELLA, AMY, BEA and BEN enter quietly from the main theatre and stop just out of

DEXTER

This is my career, my life's work!
It's been a decade since I have had an opportunity like this!
This ruins everything!

VERONICA

Don't you dare put this on me!

DEXTER

After tonight Veronica...we are done!

DEXTER exits downstage right in a huff.

KYLIE enters.

KYLIE

It will be okay, Miss Vale.

VERONICA

Will it?
Are you sure?
My career is on that screen.

KYLIE

I'm just trying to help, I didn't take it.

VERONICA

(mimicking)

I'm just trying to help, I didn't take it.

KYLIE

(upset)

Miss Vale,

You know sometimes you can be really mean!

KYLIE exits downstage right in distress.

VERONICA

Kylie!

O sweetie, I didn't mean it!

VERONICA, feeling guilty, exits after KYLIE.

—

DRESSING ROOM

The DRESSING ROOM is now empty.

A brief pause.

BELLA, AMY, BEA and BEN enter cautiously and search the room

BELLA notices a makeup bag labelled "KK" placed on the counter.

She opens it carefully. Inside are brushes, powders, and a single distinctive lipstick.

BELLA opens the lipstick and examines the colour closely, making sure the audience sees it clearly.

BELLA

This looks useful.

After BELLA registers its importance, she returns it to the bag and closes it with intent.

ALL freeze.

THE OFFICE

ROGER sits on the chair.

TOLGA stands behind him.

The atmosphere is thick. Controlled. Dangerous.

TOLGA

We are running out of time, Roger.

ROGER

They don't suspect a thing.

TOLGA

Really?

Because to me,

This situation looks... unstable.

ROGER

I did everything you asked.

TOLGA

You forget, I know exactly what happened that night.

ROGER

It was an accident.

TOLGA with a cold smile.

TOLGA

Of course it was.

A tragic accident.

A man crossing at the wrong moment.

ROGER's jaw tightens.

ROGER

Keep your voice down.

TOLGA

Complete the job and no one will ever know.
Your secret stays buried with Monty.

A long silence.

ROGER

Fine.

ROGER stands, takes one last look at TOLGA and exits going to the STORAGE ROOM.

TOLGA watches before taking out his phone, dialing a number and exiting downstage right.

JONN, ROSIE, LINDA and BOB enter once the corridor has cleared before entering the OFFICE. They search quickly and methodically.

ROSIE finds a work rota pinned to a board. Several names are marked as present late the previous night. She traces the names with her finger, committing them to memory.

JONN stifles through paper and at the bottom of the pile finds a contract. He reads it carefully. The document clearly links TOLGA to an insurance payout if the cinema fails. JONN's expression hardens. He folds the contract and keeps it.

JONN

This changes everything.

A mug of coffee sits on a desk next to the script.

LINDA picks up a script from the desk.

It is covered in angry scribbles and marked with coffee stains.

She sniffs the mug of coffee, frowns.

ALL freeze.

STORAGE ROOM

ANNE, SERENE, LILA and OPHELIA slip into the CORRIDOR and tuck themselves out of sight.

ROGER

You know, maybe there's still a way out of this.
What has he promised you in return?

GREGORY

You think your secret's safe?
He'll sell you out at the first opportunity.

ROGER

Just hurry up and do it then!

GREGORY

Roger, old boy.
(a light slap to his face)
We've got to make it look real.

***GREGORY shoves ROGER, who stumbles through the doorway into the CORRIDOR.
GREGORY follows after him and shoves him again.***

GREGORY

Roger!
You are a weak, arrogant twit
In that tragic little turtleneck.
No one likes your films.
Or you, for that matter!

ROGER

Absolutely, no one insults my turtle neck!

***ANNE, SERENE, LILA and OPHELIA step out from hiding.
ROGER punches GREGORY in the face.
GREGORY falls theatrically to the floor, clutching his cheek.***

ANNE

What did you just do?!

SERENE

You hit him!

LILA

Why would you do that?!

OPHELIA

Have you lost your mind?!

They rush to help GREGORY as he groans on the floor.

The rest of the ENSEMBLE now enter.

TOLGA enters last.

MILTON

What happened here?

GREGORY

Ask him.

ROGER

He started it.

OPHELIA

We saw it all.

Roger punched Gregory.

TOLGA surveys the group.

A long pause.

TOLGA

Right.

Everyone, to the cinema.

Now.

He gestures.

No one argues.

One by one, they begin moving toward the MAIN THEATRE.

ROGER and GREGORY last to move.

MILTON watches them both carefully.

LX: 28 – Fade to blackout

SCENE 7: MAIN THEATRE. EVENING.

LX: 29 – State A (Main Theatre)

All characters flood back into the MAIN THEATRE.

MILTON and TOLGA stand centre.

The CINEMA STAFF and NPC's seated.

TOLGA

It is six o'clock.

And without the missing reel, the screening cannot proceed.

Which means your father's debt cannot be repaid.

(He produces the contract.)

As per our agreement... full ownership of the cinema transfers to me.

MILTON looks crushed.

MILTON

(examining it)

It's legally binding.

BEA stands and steps forward.

BEA

Actually Milton... before you hand over the keys.

ROSIE

We did some investigating of our own.

LINDA holds up the script.

LINDA

And, I found Dexter's script.

Complete with an angry monologue confessing why *he* stole the reel!

Reaction of shock from the ENSEMBLE.

DEXTER

That's outrageous!

I would never sabotage my own film!

BEA

That's right, you didn't.
Somebody planted it there in an attempt to frame you!

Even bigger reaction of shock from the ENSEMBLE.

LINDA

But they made a mistake when they left coffee stains on it.

DEXTER

I hate coffee.

LINDA

Exactly!

BELLA steps forward with the makeup bag.

BELLA

And then there's this!
Found in the dressing room.

KYLIE stiffens.

KYLIE

That's mine.
I've been looking for that.

BELLA reveals the dinner reservation.

BELLA

Kylie Kaboodle, you had a dinner reservation last night.
With Miss Vale...
And Dexter too!

DEXTER

It's true all three of us had dinner together last night?

KYLIE

Yeah what's your point?!

BEN

Dexter you have an alibi!

So, how could you have taken the reel last night?

ANNE

Dexter was not even in the building last night!

BELLA

Exactly!

KYLIE

So you're saying someone framed Dexter as he would be the obvious target?

(ponders for a moment)

It would have to be someone who knew where his script would be found.

And someone who has access to the office.

And someone was in the building long enough to plant evidence.

That could be a number of people.

And here's the problem.

The reel is still missing.

Suddenly the doors burst open.

BRAMLEY enters, holding the FILM REEL high in the air.

Behind him, a POLICE OFFICER.

BRAMLEY

Looking for this?!

Even more exaggerated shock.

MILTON

Bramley, you found it?

BRAMLEY

Remember I said my new watch was on New Zealand time?

Well, last night I got to work too early and was camped out in the car park.

I fell asleep in my car, waiting for the place to open.

These lights suddenly came on bright.

And that's when I saw Greg and Roger wheeling a spare tyre across the car park.

We'd looked everywhere else, so I thought why not have a look there?

And there it was - inside Greg's van!

Silence, as all eyes turn to stare at GREGORY.

GREGORY

Someone has planted that there!
They're trying to frame me too!

THE POLICE OFFICER holds up a VHS tape.

Then he begins to survey the room slowly and ensemble slowly.

POLICE OFFICER

Perhaps, but in my experience, when a man starts hiding things in vans.
You'll often find that he's got other things to hide too.

(He adjusts his coat, smoothing it and moving to GREGORY)

The lad has filled me in on the details.

A big premier.

A missing reel.

A dramatic consequence.

And, if I'm not mistaken...

Several possible beneficiaries.

(Beat.)

So shall we take a look and see what's on this VHS tape?

He slides the VHS tape into the VCR.

Static fills the screen and then MONTY TIMBLE appears on screen.

MONTY (ON VHS):

Ah... is this thing on?

Good.

I am Monty Timble and this is my last will and testament.

Hello Milton, my boy.

So, if you're watching this, I'm gone.

Which means, you're probably worrying yourself sick.

So first — breathe.

Go on. Good lad.

Ten years ago, when the cinema was on its knees,

I invested what little left in I had in a tiny computer company called Dell Computers.

Many people laughed at old Monty when I did.

But it turns out... they were wrong.

The shares have soared these past few years.

And the best part, I put it all in a trust in your name, Milton.

It's all yours.
Enough to clear the debts.
Enough to fix the cinema and keep this place alive.

And I didn't forget the staff.
I got them each a share too.
Because a cinema isn't bricks and mortar.
It's people.
Always has been.

As for Gregory...
You wonderful man.
I leave you my van.
She leaks oil and hates hills — but she's all yours.
Look after her.

One more thing, Milton.
You've got a good heart, my boy.
Don't let anyone use it against you.
And know this —
I am proud of you.
More than you'll ever know.

Look after yourselves.
Look after our cinema.

Goodbye.

Static. The VHS tape cuts out.

ANNE

So Monty's trust pays the cinema's debts.

BEN

Which voids the transfer.

BEA

Meaning Milton still owns the cinema.

AMY

So the reel was hidden in Gregory's van all along!

All eyes turn to stare at GREGORY.

KYLIE

So Gregory was helping Tolga.

And Tolga wanted tonight to fail, so he could take full ownership of the cinema.

Tolga must have promised Gregory something bigger than was left in Monty's will.

And so, Gregory hid the reel, which forced the transfer of ownership.

The POLICE OFFICER turns to TOLGA.

POLICE OFFICER

Sounds about right!

Tolga Güller.

You are also under arrest.

Attempted fraud and conspiracy.

TOLGA

You've got no proof.

POLICE OFFICER

We'll let the courts decide that, shall we?

(turning to Gregory)

Gregory Grumble.

You are also under arrest for theft and conspiracy to commit fraud.

MILTON steps forward.

MILTON

Of all people, I never thought that you -

GREGORY lowers his eyes.

MILTON

You were like an uncle to me.

(A beat.)

And my father trusted you.

(Another beat.)

You betrayed him.

The POLICE OFFICER moves in.

GREGORY does not resist.

He places his hands calmly into the handcuffs.

LILA

One thing that doesn't make sense.
Roger, why were you helping them?

ROGER

I wasn't.

BRAMLEY

But, you were definitely in the car park last night helping them.
I saw you.

OPHELIA

Why were you helping them, Roger?

ROGER stares at TOLGA and GREG. A long, loaded beat. Then he looks away.

ROGER

It was an accident.

MILTON

What was an accident?

ROGER

I'm sorry.

It was raining.

I was tired.

I panicked.

It was me. I was the 'hit and run'.

I killed your father.

KYLIE

So Tolga was blackmailing Roger this whole time!

POLICE OFFICER

Bloomin ey!

Well I'll be Sherlock Holmes!

Roger Davis, you are also under arrest for Manslaughter.

KYLIE

This is absurd.

VERONICA

Yes darling.

Yes it is.

ROGER, TOLGA and GREGORY exit stage with the POLICE OFFICER.

AMY

So... the cinema's not bankrupt?

MILTON looks around at them all and nods.

An explosion of energy from the cast as one by one they leave the stage.

BRAMLEY

Guess that means we're back in business?

BELLA

Popcorn's on!

AMY

Front of house!

BEN

I'll check the projector!

BEA

Box office!

ROSIE

Programmes!

OPHELIA

Snacks!

LINDA

Cleaning sweep!

ANNE

I'll cue the trailers!

JONN

I'll hold the doors!

BOB

Sound check!

SERENE

Safety check!

LILA

House lights!

MILTON remains centre stage holding the reel.

***DEXTER, VERONICA and KYLIE gather around DEXTER.
He looks OUT at the empty theatre and smiles.***

MILTON

Right then.

(big exhale)

Show time.

LX: 30 – Blackout

END OF PLAY