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The Illusionist

By Neil Burger

It's her! I know it's her!

She wants to tell us something!

- We must do something!

- Sit down!

- Please!

- Hey!

In the name of His Imperial Majesty
and the city of Vienna...

I hereby arrest Eduard Abramovicz...

also known as Eisenheim

the Illusionist...

on charges of disturbing public order...

charlatanism and threats

against the empire!

Leave him alone!

They're arresting him!

They're arresting Eisenheim!

Chief Inspector Uhl.

- You're late.

- My apologies, Your Highness.

I was attending to

the loose ends of the case.

- Are there still loose ends?

- Very few.

Did he do it again?

How does he do it?

I'm afraid I still don't know.

Did you ask him?

He's not talking at this point.

Well, I'm sure

you have... methods...

for that kind of thing.

I want you to put an end to it.

Surely you have something on him.

Something from his past?

Yes. Yes, I think I do.

In fact, we know all about his life.

We've spoken to almost everyone

who ever knew him.

As a boy, I'm told

he had a chance encounter...

with a traveling magician.

Boy.

One version

of the story was that the man himself...
then vanished...
along with the tree.
Who knows what actually happened?
People began to think he had
some kind of special power...
or at least that
he was a bit different.
And then he met her.

- Don't drop it.
- Careful, you're going to trip.
- Drop it, you muck snipe.
- Oh! Watch out for that hole, alley rat!
- Drop it!
- Come on.

Pick a card.
Put it back in the deck.
Now, watch.
Duchess von Teschen, you can't be
in a place like this. They're peasants.
Remember who you are.
She was brought back to the castle...
and they were forbidden
to see each other.
But soon, they were doing just that.
Over the next few years, they could
always find a way to be together.
Quick, come on.
In China there's a magician
that could make anything disappear-
a house, a wagon, anything.
We'll go visit him. They can't stop us
if we want to be together.
They'll never find us.
Do you promise
you'll take me with you?
One day I will.
One day we'll run away together.
We'll disappear.
There's a secret way to open it.
I wanted a picture.
Sophie, are you there?

- We must hurry! They're coming!
- Duchess von Teschen!

Duchess von Teschen!

- Duchess von Teschen!

- Duchess von Teschen!

Make us disappear.

Make us disappear.

Duchess von Teschen!

Stop. Stop.

- Don't do this.

- Let go!

- Let me go. Let go!

- Your father's waiting for you.

- Let go!

- No!

- Eduard!

- Please, let go!

- No!

- Let me go!

Let her go, please!

- Let go! Stop it!

- Sophie!

Eduard!

- Sophie!

- Eduard!

Sophie.

Stay away from her, or next time...

we'll arrest you and your family.

What happened next remains a mystery.

We do know that

he traveled the world...

that he began to perform

his magic in public...

that he changed his name

to Eisenheim.

And then almost 15 years later...

he appeared in Vienna.

Life and death...

space and time...

fate and chance.

These are the forces

of the universe.

Tonight, ladies and gentleman...

I present to you a man who has

unlocked these mysteries.

From the furthest corners

of the world...
where the dark arts
still hold sway...
he returns to us to demonstrate...
how nature's laws may be bent.
I give you... Eisenheim.
Might I borrow a handkerchief
from someone?
You, madam.
Thank you.
Ah, be patient.
Now, if you please.
I would like to continue
with an examination of time.
From the moment we enter this life,
we are in the flow of it.
We measure it and we mark it,
but we cannot defy it.
We cannot even speed it up
or slow it down.
Or can we?
Have we not each
experienced the sensation...
that a beautiful moment
seemed to pass too quickly...
and wished that
we could make it linger?
Or felt time slow on a dull day...
and wished that we could
speed things up a bit?
I assure you, they're quite real.
Is it real? Let's see.
And you, madam,
where is your handkerchief?
Bravo!
Very good.
Give us something, please.
- Please, give us something. Please.
- What's all this?
We're poor.
- Do you think you're poor?
- Yes.
I want to show you something.
You're not poor.

You have everything
that you need right here.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
And that's yours.
And this too.
I've got the magic one!
- Good morning.
- Good morning.
- Coffee?
- No.
- Strudel? I have two.
- Nothing, thank you.
You look very pleased with yourself.
How are the receipts?
- Not bad. A three-quarter house.
- Well done.
But we're going to do better
than that. Listen to this.
Listen. "There is no argument
that his uncanny displays...
"separate him from the ranks
of garden-variety stage wizards.
"Some of his effects
transcend mere illusion...
"and approach the realm of art.
He is very young
to be so masterful."
Do you see?
We'll pack the house with this review.
We are going to make more money
than you ever dreamed of.
But if it was mechanical.
Maybe he had it wrapped
in some kind of bark?
Oh, I know, of course
I thought of that.
It's the butterflies
I'm trying to work out.
Oh, for Pete's sake.
Invisible wire.
Too obvious. How many men
have you detailed for tonight?

We have eight men inside,
another eight out front.
Perhaps you'll get another look
at your butterflies.

Mmm.

- Come on in.
- Check the last 10 rows there.

You! Don't touch that!

- Put that down!
- Ah, Herr Eisenheim.

Who are you and what do you
think you're doing?

I'm Chief Inspector Walter Uhl
and I'm inspecting your theater.
I've seen you perform.

Very impressive.

- Very impressive.
- How can we help you, Inspector?

You will be honored to know
the crown prince...
plans to attend
your performance tonight.

- The crown prince?
- Yes!

So, obviously we have
to inspect the theater.

I think that one's small
for an assassin, don't you?
Yes, the orange tree.

You know, I have seen things
like this before...
but never one like that.

- Extraordinary.
- Thank you.

I have been puzzling
over how it works...
especially how the butterflies fly.

I assure you,
your secret is safe with me.

I'm an officer of the law after all,
and a bit of an amateur conjurer.

- Are you really?
- Yes.

Well, card tricks, coins,

uh, sleight of hand, yes.

Hmm.

But nothing fancy.

Perhaps you'll give me a tip.

Yes, all right.

I'll show you one I'm very fond of.

Are you a gambling man?

- On occasion, yes.

- I will bet you the secret of the orange tree...

that I can guess which hand

you place this in every time.

Excellent.

Put it in your fist, raise your hand

against your forehead...

concentrate on it,

form a mental picture.

- Yes.

- Have you got it?

- Yes.

- Put your hands in front of you.

It's in your left.

- Well-

- A lucky guess, perhaps.

You have a confederate

who signals you.

- No. It's more primitive than that.

- Uh-huh.

When you raise your hand to your head,

the blood drains from it.

It will be paler every time.

Oh. Oh, I like that very much.

Please take it with my compliments.

Why, thank you.

Eh, the blood drains.

Now, Inspector...

if you don't mind, I've got to prepare

for tonight's performance.

Ah.

Please stand for His Imperial Highness...

Crown Prince Leopold.

I thought we might end this evening

with a discussion of the soul.

All of the greatest religions...

speak of the soul's endurance

beyond the end of life.
So, what then
does it mean... to die?
I need a volunteer
from the audience.
Someone not afraid of death.
Please, someone?
I assure you,
no tragedy will befall you.
It's an honor, Duchess von Teschen.
Do you know me?
No.
You're quite certain
that we've never met before?
Yes, of course.
Now please gaze
directly into my eyes.
Look nowhere else.
Wave to yourself.
Turn in a circle.
Now bow to yourself.
Away.
They must have liked you. They've
waited for you nearly five minutes.
Your Highness, may I introduce
Eisenheim the Illusionist?
- Well done.
- Thank you for coming. I hope you enjoyed it.
Oh, we more than enjoyed it.
Stimulated great debate
amongst us, hasn't it?
Except of course for your assistant,
Duchess von Teschen.
You seemed to have struck her
quite speechless. A feat in itself.
- Did you hypnotize her?
- In a fashion.
I'd like to learn that trick.
Rainier here thinks you have
supernatural powers.
Do you claim supernatural powers?
I've never said anything
of that kind.
- Then you won't mind a question or two.

- Now let's not ruin it.
You needn't divulge
anything I can't guess.
As you wish.
Your assistants
are behind the mirror...
somewhere in robes obviously.
Lights in the frame perhaps
to illuminate them, or angled mirrors?
That would be one way to do it.
I think I understand it all
except the ghost.
That was very, very good.
Another viewing perhaps?
You must come to the Hofburg next time.
We'll make an evening of it.
That will be my pleasure.
So be it.
Sophie?
And we'll gather
our best minds next time.
You'll really have a challenge then.
Then I'll prepare something special.
Perhaps I'll make you disappear.
My God.
When he volunteered her...
I heard the crashing sound
of money falling on me in piles.
Every lady of means in Vienna will
want to get up there with you now.
- Mmm.
- What a show-off.
His father would have died
if he had seen such a display.
- She didn't seem too happy about it either.
- She'd better get used to it.
- How's that?
- Word is she'll marry him soon.
- Really?
- Taking her chances if you ask me.
- Why?
- He likes to give his lady friends...
a good thrashing now and again.
People say he pushed one of them

off a balcony...
just to cover
the beating he'd given her.
For Herr Eisenheim.
Hello, Sophie.
When I was on the stage,
you knew me right away.
It took me a moment...
but, yes, I knew.
You could have said something.
I thought you'd figure
it out eventually.
Yes, I would have.
I would have come another night,
volunteered...
walked right on stage
and said, "Hello."
And then you'd really
have had to move quickly.
I suspect you would have.
I don't understand why.
Perhaps for the same reasons you
find it prudent to meet in a carriage.
It's just a game
I have to play with them.
I'm followed everywhere. It's-
It's supposed to be for my protection.
Yes.
So, I hear congratulations
are in order.
What for?
They say you'll be the princess.
- It's not decided at all.
- Ah.
It makes a certain sense, I suppose.
We've known each other for years,
and of course, our families.
He's very intelligent.
A little too intelligent
for his own good.
You're lucky, you know...
to have broken free as you did.
I often wish that I had-
Wished what?

Wished that I would see you again.

And now you have.

Yes, now I have.

I look forward to seeing you
again at the Hofburg.

Until then.

Here's the report

on Duchess von Teschen.

Mmm. Anything interesting?

See for yourself.

The magician?

They drove around for half an hour.

Then he got out near the theater.

What do you want us to do?

Join us for a drink?

Please.

You like something to eat,
something to drink, hmm?

- No, thank you.

- Herr Eisenheim...

I'm going to ask you a question...

that may not seem friendly...

but I assure you, in fact, is.

What is your relationship
with the Duchess von Teschen?

You're right,

that doesn't seem friendly.

Oh, but that is precisely my point.

For, you see,

where others might judge...

a discreet carriage ride

for what it seemed to be...

I am willing to find out

what it actually was.

All right. We were

childhood acquaintances.

Acquaintances?

Childhood friends.

My father was a cabinetmaker.

He made the furniture for her family's house.

I see, the cabinetmaker's son

friends with a-

- Has there been a complaint?

- Oh, no, no. If there'd been a complaint...

well, we'd be having a very, uh,
different sort of conversation.
Yes. He relies on you for
that sort of thing, does he?
I'm a simple public servant,
Herr Eisenheim.
That's not what I hear.
I hear you'll be
the chief of police very soon.
- Maybe mayor of Vienna? Party secretary?
- All subject to his whim.
You better hope he doesn't dissolve
the parliament before you get there.
Now the prince has some progressive ideas,
but he will make a fine emperor.
Well, they say you're very close to him,
so I'm sure you'll do fine.
Look. Yes, indeed, they say
that I'm very close to the prince.
But the simple truth of the matter is,
Herr Eisenheim, I'm the son of a butcher.
He's the heir to the empire.
How close could we be to such as him?
Hmm? Do you see my point?
Don't fool yourself that
you can play in their game.
I've served on the edge of it...
for... many, many years...
and I can tell you with certainty...
there's no trick they haven't seen.
It's not worth it.
My guest tonight...
is not a showman at all,
but rather a wizard...
who has sold his soul
to the devil...
in return for unholy powers.
Or so at least some of our friends here
would have us believe.
But fear not.
Everything can
and will be explained.
- All mysteries penetrated.
- Hear! Hear!

Well said! Well said!

- Is that the emperor?

- Ah, yes, your father.

I didn't think he was invited.

Bravo.

A fair likeness of the old man.

Too modern a style for him, of course.

I'm afraid I'm not much
of a painter.

It's true. There are no brushstrokes
in this painting.

I can see that clearly.

So to achieve the color...

some sort of chemical must
be interacting, presumably.

Some sort of sprayer up your sleeve?

- May I?

- If you feel you must.

- I do.

- Oh, let the man do his show.

You want me to just sit there
when it's so obvious?

I do.

He tries to trick you.

I try to enlighten you.

Which is the more noble pursuit?

May we have the lights, please...

so His Highness can better see?

- See here, Leopold, let's have the show.

- Hear! Hear!

- Come on, Leopold.

- Get on with it.

Very well. I propose a challenge.

Why don't you astonish us...

if you can...

without all the... gadgetry?

As you wish.

Your sword is very beautiful.

Might I see it?

Certainly.

May I?

Where does power flow from?

Skill or destiny, or divine right?

We all know the story

of a sword called Excalibur.
Excalibur's blade
was fixed in stone...
and there it stayed.
Many worthy knights tried to
pull the sword from the stone.
Only Arthur succeeded...
proving his right to rule.
Who can take this sword?
You, sir, can you take the sword?
No surprise there.
Perhaps you, sir.
Not so eager, cousin.
Come on. You can do it.
- Do it! Do it!
- Come on!
You shall live a long life.
Thank you for your indulgence.
Come now. If you can't pull it out,
you'll never be emperor.
Your father will live to be a hundred.
The sword to its rightful owner!
That's enough light entertainment
for this evening.
For more serious discussion,
please join me for a drink.
Shut him down.
Well, he's very popular,
Your Highness.
I'm sure you'll find a way.
- What did you do to him?
- I gave him what he asked for.
What would possess you
to do something so foolish?
Duchess von Teschen,
you must come along, my dear.
We don't want to keep
the prince waiting.
- Did you enjoy the show?
- It was wonderful, wasn't it?
It was amusing.
Who told you where to find me?
Your manager. I told him if he wants
to stay in Vienna, you need my help.

Ah, so I'm to be driven
from the city, is that it?
- Good. I shall relish it.
- Stop it!
I came here to try to help you.
Why? Why should you possibly
care what happens to me now?
You were my friend.
I am your friend.
We knew each other very briefly
a long time ago. You don't know me at all.
Then why did you speak to me?
Why did you even bother talking-
And you kept it all this time.
I used to sit and stare
at your picture...
trying to imagine where you were.
At night I'd have dreams
I had gone with you...
and then I'd wake up
and realize where I was.
But in my dreams you
had shorter hair and no beard.
Where did you go when you left?
To my uncle's farm near Prague.
How exotic.
I went to Russia...
then Asia Minor...
and then the Orient for many years.
So long.
I always meant to return.
I just- I kept thinking I'd find it
around the next corner.
What?
A real mystery.
I saw remarkable things...
but the only mystery
I never solved was...
why my heart couldn't let go of you.
He wants me to go to Budapest...
with him next week
to announce our engagement.
He wants the Hungarians behind him.
They're going to crown him king.

I'm sure his father will have something to say about that.
He plans to overthrow his father.
That could go very badly for him...
and for you.
You shouldn't be involved.
I am part of his plan.
He only gets Hungary by aligning himself with my family.
- Leave him.
- It's not that easy.
Call it off and come away with me.
Or don't say anything and we'll just go.
As long as we're alive...
he'll hunt us.
And when he finds us, he'll kill us.
Look at me.
Do you truly want to leave with me?
Yes, I do.
There you are. As I predicted, they've shut us down.
Are you happy now, hmm?
You made your point.
It doesn't matter that we were sold out for the whole run!
No, look. You got it off your chest.
- Do we have money?
- What?
- Do we have any money saved?
- Yes, we have some.
But we could have had much, much more.
Mmm, it will have to do.
And the second account, all of it.
Of course, Herr Eisenheim.
Thank you.
And you have no doubt it was Duchess von Teschen?
I'd stake my life on it.
What was in this suitcase?
I don't know.
He's by the first car.
The map will show you where to meet.

When it's done, you'll travel ahead
with her and I shall follow.
And she understands
everything this entails?
Completely. There's not a lot of time.
As you know, we sometimes follow...
Duchess von Teschen
for her protection.
Yesterday she was seen
in the company of another man.
What man?
Eisenheim the Illusionist.
What were they doing?
- Well, they were meeting and, uh-
- Touching? Kissing?
Fornicating?
Not that we observed, no.
However, I have reason to believe that
they may be planning something together.
It's possible they may be leaving.
I'm not certain of anything yet,
Your Highness.
Thank you, Inspector.
We can, of course, acquire more information-
He spent the afternoon
in Vienna with his father.
He's expected shortly.
What a surprise.
I thought you didn't like it here.
I suppose you think
you're very clever...
and very democratic
in your friendships.
- Aren't you?
- What are you talking about?
Your magician friend.
I know you've been with him.
It's true. We've been
friends since childhood.
You sleep with all
your childhood friends?
I will not be spoken to this way.
- You'll be spoken to as I wish to speak to you!
- You're drunk.

You're getting quite old,
aren't you?
You know, my mother was 16 years old
when she married my father.
And you? Can you even bear children?
Are you any use at all?
- Are you trying to embarrass me?
- It has nothing to do with you.
It has everything to do with me!
You will not share my bed
if you've slept with him!
You don't understand.
I'm not going to share
your bed at all.
I'm not going to Budapest with you.
I don't want to be part
of what you're planning.
And I will not marry you.
I assume you haven't been so stupid
as to tell him anything.
'Cause if you disrupt my plans, I will have
no further use for you. Do you understand?
Now, you will travel
to Budapest tomorrow.
I recommend that you are here early,
packed and ready to go.
Do nothing more to embarrass me.
Good-bye.
What do you mean, "Good-bye"?
Come back here.
Come back here!
Don't disobey me again.
Whore!
Out of my way.
Please, don't.
No, leave that.
Leave all the lanterns.
Duchess von Teschen!
Duchess von Teschen!
Maybe look on that side!
Over here!
Whoa. Whoa.
I thought you saw her
get on the train with him.

No, sir. We were waiting in Vienna for them, but they left from Baden.

We assumed she was with him.

Should I wire

the crown prince in Budapest?

It's been done.

- Who are you?

- I'm the family's doctor.

Are you the chief inspector?

Yes, I am. You understand

this is a police matter now?

- Of course I understand.

- Good, good.

- You have determined the cause of death?

- She bled to death.

There's a wound on her throat...

just above the left collarbone.

Perhaps from a knife or a sword.

May I take a look?

Inspector, I-I will

not stand for it.

The crown prince

will not stand for it.

This is not some circus sideshow.

My apologies, of course.

Thank you, Doctor.

Probably robbed.

Gypsies, maybe.

Saw all those diamonds,

couldn't say no.

Chief Inspector,

there's one thing you should know.

- Yes, what is that?

- In the folds of her dress...

I found this small gemstone.

Seen last Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,

riding without an escort...

toward the Imperial Hunting Lodge.

Groomsman said

she arrived about 8:30.

What was she doing riding alone?

He did this.

You know he did.

- I know who did what?

- The crown prince!

He killed her. He's done it
before, and you know it.

No, I don't know that. In fact,
I'm sure he didn't. He's in Budapest.

- He killed her before he left!

- I'm afraid the facts don't support your theory.

- She was leaving him.

- For who? You?

- Yes!

- Don't be absurd, Herr Eisenheim.

He killed her because
he couldn't let her go.

- She knew his secret.

- What secret?

- Ask your inspector. He knows-

- Stop this right now!

Are you completely corrupt?

No, not completely. No.

Which is why I'll advise you not to accuse
anyone, especially His Imperial Highness.

Or you will end up in jail yourself.

- Where's the guard who let her out of the gate?

- Gone with the crown prince.

- Did any of the servants see her leave?

- All asleep.

Ah-ha.

What about him?

He, uh, he put her horse
in the first stall when she arrived.

Ah.

Was it this one?

We don't have jurisdiction
on Imperial property.

Thank you.

I know.

So what are you doing?

Investigating.

Listening to that magician, are you?

For all we know, he did it.

No, I think not.

The crown prince is back.

Chief Inspector.

We should go. Now.

What have you found out?

- She was last seen riding here, alone.

- Yes.

And based on your information,

I then threw her out.

- Did she commit suicide?

- No. It was surely murder.

- Do you have a suspect?

- We will soon, Your Highness.

Later that week, we

arrested a man and charged him with murder...

but I knew that

that wouldn't satisfy Eisenheim.

I had my men continue to watch him.

He finally emerged from his grief

and bought a rundown theater.

It's perfect.

He fired his manager...

and began preparing

for a new kind of show.

Who is he?

My name is Frankel.

- Where did you come from?

- I come from Brunn.

My father is a lens grinder there.

How have you come

to be here tonight?

- I don't know.

- Are you alive?

What can you tell us

about the other side?

- What's it like?

- Yes, tell us.

You must know things. Secret things.

Say something spiritual.

They don't seem

to think it's a trick.

Eisenheim.! Come out and talk to us!

Eisenheim's audience

had always been enthusiastic...

but now he was attracting a more...

impassioned following.

Madame. Please?

With these spirits,

these manifestations...
With these spirits,
these manifestations...
Eisenheim has given us hard proof...
of the soul's immortality.
The spirit has been reaffirmed...
in the face of modern,
scientific materialism.
The work of spiritualism
will rouse humanity...
to a new, moral earnestness.
"It is a revolutionary movement,
and we will turn the empire...
into a spiritual republic."
Do you think Eisenheim's behind all this?
Why must I be bothered
with a magician?
He is proving to be more
than a magician, Your Highness.
He is a charlatan.
He's a faker.
He pretends to have
supernatural powers-
Put him on trial for fraud.
- First, we have to show it is fraud.
- Then do it.
Find out how the trick is done,
and then arrest him.
This is just a rough demonstration,
Inspector.
But you can see how it could work.
Yes, I see.
Not bad, not bad.
We need a spy in Eisenheim's troupe.
- Those Orientals, they won't give us anything.
- Mm.
- I already tried.
- Yeah. Then try something else.
What has happened here?
One of those ghosts from
the theater down the street.
- Yes. Up there.
- Where?
- There.

- Right there. And it's a boy.

- Yes. Look, look.

- Sick!

- Where is this thing?

- Right there.

- Over there.

- Uh-huh. Did you see it?

Mm!

God. An apparition. I saw it. I swear.

- Yes!

- Right over there.

Where are you taking him?

I want to know how it's done.

First the orange tree, now this.

Do I have to share all my professional secrets with the police?

Well, in this case, yes, or I'll be forced to arrest you.

- On what charge?

- Oh, well, we'll start with fraud.

- Excuse me, Chief Inspector-

- What?

I think you should look outside the window.

- Who are they?

- They are here for him.

Oh!

My goodness, you have a devoted following.

- What is it they expect of you?

- I have no idea.

What do your spies tell you?

That you plan to subvert the monarchy, perhaps.

Why? Just because the crown prince is a murderer?

He's not a murderer.

We have the real murderer in prison.

- He pleaded guilty.

- You've got the wrong man.

- You don't know that.

- No, but you do.

Hmm.

Herr Eisenheim, you will

also go to prison...

if you don't explain to me

what it is you are doing.

- Let him go!

- Or we will!

The sentence will be greater

if that mob attacks the building.

Eisenheim.! Eisenheim.! Eisenheim.!

Well?

What are you doing?

Stop!

- Stop!

- Eisenheim.!

There he is!

Listen to me, please!

You must listen to me, please!

Thank you all for coming. I have been
speaking with the chief inspector.

And I think there's been
a serious misunderstanding.

I want you all to know...

that everything that you have seen
in my theater is an illusion.

It's a trick.

It's not real.

I can't bring loved ones
back from the grave.

I can't receive messages
from the other side.

I apologize if I've given
you any false hope.

My intention has only been
to entertain, nothing more.

Now I appreciate your support.

But you must go home.

Please, you must go.

There, now. I've explained it,
so it can't be fraud.

May I go?

Has he tricked you?

Is that it?

No, Your Highness.

Then why are you failing me?

I thought I could trust you.

I thought you were a man I could bring with me when I took the throne.

- Am I wrong about you?

- No. You're not wrong, Your Highness, no.

I need men who can complete the tasks assigned to them!

Instead, I'm surrounded by fools.

In the end, I must

do everything myself.

- I can see this case will be no different.

- Mm.

- How do I look?

- Ordinary, Your Highness.

Very ordinary.

I think I'm going to enjoy this.

- They don't recognize you.

- Good.

And keep your distance. I don't want to be seen with a policeman.

Who are you?

Are you Duchess von Teschen?

Yes.

What's happened to you?

She was murdered.

Were you murdered?

By who?

Did they arrest the right man?

Tell us, please. Who murdered you?

- Tell us.

- Someone. Here.

Tell us, and point him out.

Was it the crown prince?

He's killed a woman before!

Hey! The crown prince isn't even here.

The crown prince

killed her! Something must be done!

Chief Inspector, are you sure

you have the right man?

- Quite sure. Excuse me.

- Did you investigate the crown prince?

He cannot continue if this is true.

- He must be brought to justice.

- It's not true.

The magic trick is not evidence.

What is your name?

- I don't see how that matters.

- I advise you to watch what you say, sir.

That actress didn't even
look like Sophie.

But the audience is
stupid and he knows it.

He manipulates them.

He himself said nothing.

His actress said nothing
inflammatory.

He left it to the audience
to make their accusations.

All plants paid for
by him, of course.

I don't suppose you made
a note of those people?

I'm afraid we didn't
have enough men tonight.

At the next performance,
I want them all arrested.

Every one of them.

Eisenheim, the whole troupe.

I want to have an example
made of him...

in front of all his followers.

That was very foolish last night.

You can't destroy him, you know.

- You can't bring down the monarchy.

- Oh, I know I can't.

Then don't raise her again.

Don't provoke those questions.

Eisenheim, I don't

want to arrest you.

I'm a cynical man, God knows...

but if your manifestations
are somehow real...

then even I'm willing to admit,
you're a very special person.

And if it's a trick,

then it's equally impressive.

Either way, you have a gift.

So don't make me put you in jail!

Promise me you won't do it again.

I promise you, you'll
enjoy this next show.

What do you want?

- Nothing.

- Then why bring her back?

Just to be with her.

To be with her.

- Everything is ready?

- Yes, sir.

- We're trying to assess how he might escape.

- He will not escape.

- I want guards at every door and window!

- Sir.

I want to apologize to you
for my behavior of late.

But I want to make it up to you,
if you'll listen to a proposition.

- Well, I don't know.

- I'll make it worth your while, Josef.

You know, I'm very busy right now. I haven't
just been sitting around waiting for you.

No. No, of course.

I want you to assume control
of all my finances.

And my assets.

- Everything.

- Everything?

Yes. Including this theater...

and all the receipts from

tonight's performance...

which I offer with

my sincere thanks.

- What do you say?

- All right.

- I'll do it.

- Good. Good.

Would you like me

to introduce you tonight?

No. Tonight, just enjoy the show.

Excuse me, Chief Inspector.

I'm Josef Fischer, Eisenheim's manager.

Yes, I remember.

- What's going on? Why all the police?

- Precautions, Herr Fischer.

- Precautions.
- Are you planning to arrest Eisenheim?

Oh, that's entirely up to him.

There! There!

It's Duchess von Teschen!

Why were you murdered?

- I was leaving him.
- Leaving who?
- The crown prince?
- Of course it was.
- We won't stand for it!
- I tried to get away.

I was wearing my locket when I died.

But now it's gone.

It's lost.

- Tell us, please. Who murdered you?
- Was it the crown prince?

We must do something!

- Come along.
- We must help her!

To the front!

Step out!

In the name of

His Imperial Majesty...

and the City of Vienna,

I hereby arrest Eduard Abramovicz-

also known as

Eisenheim the Illusionist-

on charges of

disturbing public order...

charlatanism and

threats against the empire!

- No!
- Get back, get back!

Stop it! Stop it, all of you!

- He disappeared.
- Where is he?

Find him!

- Where is he?
- He was right there.
- How was his trick done?
- No trick.
- How is it done?
- I don't know. Nobody know.

Damn it!

I had my driver take
the sword to police headquarters.
My men will examine it and see
if it matches the gemstone...
found on Duchess von Teschen's body-
I have no doubt that it will.

And after that, I came in here...
and you asked me why I was late.
You've stolen Imperial property.

That seems trivial
compared with murder.

Even if that were true, you have
no jurisdiction here.

That's right. You may do as you wish here,
without consequence.

Nobody can punish you.

- Except one man.

- Who's that?

The emperor.

I don't suppose he'll leave his crown
to a murderer, do you?

- He'll never believe you.

- Maybe not.

Hmm.

But, I wrote a letter
to his general staff...
telling them... everything.
Including your plan
to overthrow the emperor.

I know they'll listen to that.

You'll not take the throne-
not with my help.

You no longer want to be chief of police?

Mayor of Vienna?

You don't want to be
a baron, an aristocrat?

I'm afraid that's out of
the question at this point.

You fool.

He's tricking you.

He's manipulating you. He had the sword
at a command performance.

He could have pried the stones loose then

and planted them here.

- He has planted everything.

- You're drunk.

It's all a trick.

It's an illusion.

Perhaps there's truth

in this illusion.

You need to wire your driver,

and have the sword returned.

- Or what?

- I'll shoot you. Perhaps I'll shoot you anyway.

And then you'll have killed

a police inspector and a duchess.

Or perhaps you'll kill yourself.

You, uh, committed suicide,

distraught at having failed your leader.

Ah. Some officers

of the general staff, I'd guess.

They must have received my letter.

- What do you want?

- I don't want anything.

Fine. Fine. You shall have nothing.

- Gentlemen-

- The situation is so obvious.

Everyone's completely incompetent.

My father runs the empire

into the ground...

and no one notices, no one

knows anything about it.

I propose to clean up

the mess, and you betray me!

You're all becoming irrelevant.

You will be replaced.

The country will be run by mongrels!

There's a thousand different voices screaming

to be heard, and nothing will be done!

Nothing!

I've done everything I can.

Too much!

Far too much.

Your Highness!

Are you in there?

Your Highness, open the door.

Please. Open the door.

By your father's authority...
I insist you open the door!
You must open the door!
You're all fools.
- Please, Your Highness!
- I can't stand it.
I won't stand it.
Break down the door. Break it down!
- What happened?
- The crown prince just shot himself.
Are you Chief Inspector Uhl?
I used to be.
You!
Who gave you this?
- Who gave you this?
- Herr Eisenheim!
When?
Look out!
All aboard!
Tickets and papers.
All aboard!
When it's done...
you'll travel ahead
with her, and I will follow.
- And she understands everything this entails?
- Completely.
Do you think that
Eisenheim's behind all this?
So, what does it mean, to die?
- What do you want?
- To be with her.
To be with her.
Chief Inspector,
there's one thing you should know.
Your sword
is very beautiful. Might I see it?
- You're drunk.
- You were drunk.
He's a charlatan. He's a faker.
He's planted everything.
Everything
you have seen is an illusion.
It's a trick.