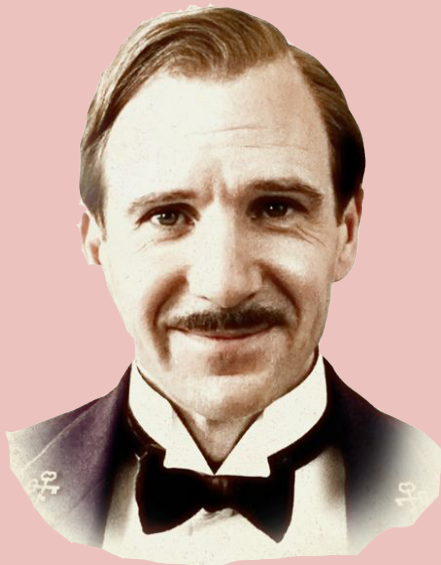


THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL

WES ANDERSON
HUGO GUINNESS



THE KEY CHARACTERS



GUSTAVE



ZERO



DMITRI



JOPLING



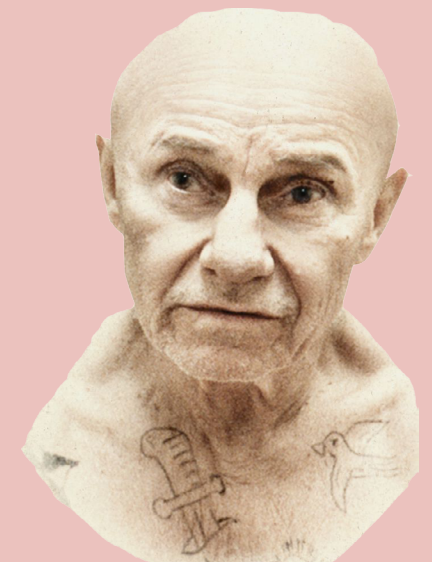
MADAME.D



AGATHA



SERGE



LUDWIN





EXT. CEMETERY. DAY

The present. A graveyard in the city-center of a great Eastern European capital. Frost covers the ground among the stones and between rows of leafless trees. A teenaged girl in a beret and trench-coat with a well-read, dog-eared novel called *THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL* tucked under her arm stands facing a tarnished bust of a slender, balding, spectacled old man. A bronze plaque below reads, in large letters:

INSERT:

The plaque. There is a block of smaller text at the bottom which states simply:

In Memory of Our National Treasure

All around the base of the statue, there are little metal hooks with hundreds of hotel-room keys of every age and variety from all over the world hanging from them. The girl adds a new set to the tribute.

INT. STUDY. DAY

Twenty years ago. A cluttered office with French windows and ornate mouldings. There are books in shelves and stacks, first editions, dictionaries, dime-store paperbacks, translations in numerous languages. There is a typewriter on the desk and an extensive collection of literary prizes on a bureau.

The author, seventy-five and identical to his sculpted image, sits with his hands clasped and addresses the camera:

AUTHOR

It is an extremely common mistake: people think the writer's imagination is always at work, that he is constantly inventing an endless supply of incidents and episodes, that he simply dreams-up his stories out of thin air. In point of fact, the opposite is true. Once the public knows you are a writer, they bring the characters and events to you -- and as long as you maintain your ability to look and carefully listen, these stories will continue to seek you out --

A six-year-old boy dressed in a grey military uniform with short trousers appears next to the desk and points a miniature Luger pistol at the author. The author warns him, icy:

AUTHOR

Don't do it. Don't!

The boy hesitates, then fires. A yellow, plastic pellet ricochets off the author's chest and rings against a whiskey glass as the author makes a violent lunge for the boy -- who evades him and dashes off. The author looks at a note-card and rambles a bit, searching for his place:

AUTHOR

Over your lifetime. I can't tell you how many times.
Somebody comes up to me.
(back on track) To him who has often told the tales of
others, many tales will be told.

The boy returns, the gun now tucked under his belt, and sits, immediately comfortable, on the author's lap with the old man's arms wrapped around his shoulders. The conflict seems never to have existed. They both look into the camera as the author concludes:

AUTHOR

The incidents that follow were described to me exactly
as I present them here, and in a wholly unexpected way.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE. DAY

The late sixties. A stunning view from a rusty, iron- lattice terrace suspended over a deep crevasse, green and lush, alongside a high cascade. The author continues in voice-over as the camera glides along a cracked path through a plot of untamed edelweiss and buttercups:

AUTHOR (V.O.)

A number of years ago, while suffering from a mild case of "Scribe's Fever" (a form of neurasthenia common among the intelligentsia of that time) I had decided to spend the month of August in the spa town of Nebelsbad below the Alpine Sudetenwaltz -- and had taken up rooms in the Grand Budapest --

The camera comes to a stop as it reveals a sprawling nineteenthcentury hotel and baths situated on a wide plateau. There is a deep, formidable staircase up to a regal entrance. There is a promenade above and a glass-panelled conservatory below. A rickety funicular groans as it slowly climbs its hillside tracks. The grass needs cutting, the roof needs patching, and more or less every surface of the building needs a coat of paint.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

-- a picturesque, elaborate, and once widely-celebrated establishment. I expect some of you will know it. It was off- season and, by that time, decidedly out- of-fashion; and it had already begun its descent into shabbiness and eventual demolition.

MONTAGE:

The nine other guests of the hotel each observed from a respectful distance: a frail student; a fat businessman; a burly hiker with a St. Bernard; a schoolteacher with her hair in a bun; a doctor; a lawyer; an actor; and so on.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

What few guests we were had quickly come to recognize one another by sight as the only living souls residing in the vast establishment -- although I do not believe any

acquaintance among our number had proceeded beyond the polite nods we exchanged as we passed in the Palm Court and the Arabian Baths and onboard the Colonnade Funicular. We were a very reserved group,

it seemed -- and, without exception, solitary.

CUT TO:

An enormous, half-abandoned dining room. There are two hundred tables and fifty chandeliers. The ten guests sit, each on his or her own, at their separate tables, widely-spaced across the giant restaurant. A waiter carries a tray a great distance to the schoolteacher and serves her a plate of peas.

INT. LOBBY. EVENING

There are faded couches, fraying armchairs, and coffee tables with new, plastic tops. The carpets are threadbare, and the lighting in each area is either too dim or too bright. A concierge with a crooked nose smokes a cigarette as he lingers behind his desk. He is M. Jean.

(NOTE: the staff of the hotel in both the relevant time- periods wear similar versions of the same purple uniform -- while the public spaces reflect a cycle of "regime changes".)

On the wall behind M. Jean, there is a beautiful, Flemish painting of a pale, young boy holding a piece of golden fruit. This is "Boy with Apple". A patch of water-damage above seeps dangerously close to the picture- frame.

The author (a fictionalized version of himself) wanders into the room with his hands in his pockets. He has dark circles under his eyes.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

Perhaps as a result of this general silence, I had established a casual and bantering familiarity with the hotel's concierge, a West-continental known only as M. Jean, who struck one as being, at once, both lazy and, really, quite accommodating.

M. Jean quickly stubs out his cigarette as the author approaches -- and tucks the butt into his coat pocket.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

I expect he was not well-paid.

The author and M. Jean chat amicably as they study a pamphlet of Alpine tourist sites.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

In any case, one evening, as I stood conferring elbow-to-elbow with M. Jean, as had become my habit, I noticed a new presence in our company.

At the far end of a colonnade, beyond Reception, a dark-skinned, white-haired seventy-year-old man in a three-piece-suit sits alone smoking a pipe. He is Mr. Moustafa.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

A small, elderly man, smartly dressed, with an exceptionally lively, intelligent face -- and an immediately perceptible air of sadness. He was, like the rest of us, alone -- but also, I must say, he was the first that struck one as being, deeply and truly, lonely. (A symptom of my own medical condition, as well.)

Mr. Moustafa drinks a sip of sherry. The author lowers his voice and asks discreetly:

AUTHOR (V.O.)

"Who's this interesting, old fellow," I inquired of M. Jean. To my surprise, he was distinctly taken aback. "Don't you know?" he asked. "Don't you recognize him?" He did look familiar. "That's Mr. Moustafa himself! He arrived early this morning."

The author looks to Mr. Moustafa again. Mr. Moustafa is now staring directly back at the author. The author quickly looks away and examines a detail in the wood work on the ceiling.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

This name will, no doubt, be familiar to the more seasoned persons among you. Mr. Zero Moustafa was, at one time, the richest man in Zubrowka; and was still, indeed, the owner of the Grand Budapest. "He often comes and stays a week or more, three times a year, at least -- but never in the season." M. Jean signalled to me, and I leaned closer. "I'll tell you a secret. He takes only a single-bed sleeping room without a bath in the rear corner of the top floor -- and it's smaller than the service elevator!"

The author seems genuinely intrigued by this information. He nods thoughtfully.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

It was well-known: Moustafa had purchased and famously inhabited some of the most lavish castles and palazzos on the continent -- yet, here, in his own, nearly-empty hotel, he occupied a servant's quarters?

M. Jean frowns. The fat businessman, sitting at a table in the middle of the lobby drinking hot chocolate and eating biscotti -- appears to be choking to death.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

At that moment the curtain rose on a parenthetical, domestic drama which required the immediate and

complete attention of M. Jean --

M. Jean dashes out from behind his desk. As he performs an improvised version of the Heimlich maneuver on the fat businessman, the German hiker enters the lobby with his St. Bernard. The rescue dog, sensing a human in distress, charges avidly, hurdling three tables and jostling the dessert cart, and arrives at the fat businessman's side just as a significant hunk of biscotti rockets out of his mouth, into the air, and lands on a saucer at the next table. M. Jean immediately detaches a cask hanging from the dog's neck, pours a generous shot of brandy into a water glass, and forces it down the fat businessman's throat.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

-- but, frankly, did not hold mine for long.

The other guests of the hotel begin to gather around the gasping victim as the author makes his way into the elevator. He presses a button, and the doors close.

MONTAGE:

The author appears pensive as he: lies in bed that night staring up at the ceiling; sits in the dining room at breakfast eating toast and gazing into space; and floats through the conservatory ignoring flora at noon. He nods to the schoolteacher sketching an orchid. She smiles and nods back.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

However, this premature intermission in the story of the curious, old man had left me, as the expression goes, gas-pannant wie ein Flitzbogen, that is, on the edge of my seat -- where I remained throughout the next morning until, in what I have found to be its mysterious and utterly reliable fashion: fate, once again, intervened on my behalf.

INT. SPA. DAY

A steamy, underground mineral baths. Miniature tiles of various shapes and intricate patterns cover every inch of the walls, floors, and ceiling. Distant voices echo faintly through succeeding chambers.

A long row of identical, adjacent cubicles each contains a blue tub and is tiled in a more recent, utilitarian style. The author soaks in one of them. He shakes salts from a carton into the water and stirs it.

A voice interrupts from off-screen:

MR. MOUSTAFA (O.S.)

I admire your work.

The author hesitates. He looks around. He is not sure which general direction the voice came from.

AUTHOR

I beg your pardon?

MR. MOUSTAFA (O.S.)

I said, I know and admire your wonderful work.
There is a small splash, and Mr. Moustafa leans into view from behind a partition where he himself is soaking in a cubicle three tubs over. He wears a bathing cap. The author sits up straight and says formally:

AUTHOR

Thank you most kindly, sir.

MR. MOUSTAFA

(teasing slightly)

Did M. Jean have a word or two to share with you about the aged proprietor of this establishment?

AUTHOR (reluctantly)

I must confess, sir, I did, myself, inquire about you.

MR. MOUSTAFA

(resigned)

He's perfectly capable, of course, M. Jean -- but we can't claim he's a first or, in earnest, even second-rate concierge.
(sadly)
But there it is. Times have changed.

The author nods, attentive. He changes the subject to observe encouragingly, motioning toward the plunging pool across the hall:

AUTHOR

The thermal baths are very beautiful.

Mr. MOUSTAFA

(gently)

They were, in their first condition. It couldn't be maintained, of course. Too decadent for current tastes -- but I love it all, just the same. This enchanting, old ruin.

Mr. Moustafa looks wistfully around the vaulted space. The author squints, holds up a finger, and asks gingerly:

AUTHOR

How did you come to buy it, if I may ask?
The Grand Budapest.

Pause. Mr. Moustafa disappears back behind the partition. The author looks slightly puzzled. Mr. Moustafa immediately reappears, but he has turned himself around in the tub and is now facing the opposite direction so he can more comfortably rest in view. He props his elbow onto the edge of the bath. His eyes twinkle as he says:

MR. MOUSTAFA

I didn't.

At this moment, one of the matrons of the hammam blasts the fat, now naked, businessman with a jet of icy water. He hollers as he is sprayed down. Silence.

Mr. Moustafa and the author look back to each other. Each has raised an eyebrow. They both smile slightly.

MR. MOUSTAFA

If you're not merely being polite (and you must tell me if that's the case), but if it genuinely does interest you: may I invite you to dine with me tonight, and it will be my pleasure and, indeed, my privilege to tell you -- "my" story.
Such as it is.

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT

The enormous restaurant as before -- but now one of the tables has been set for two and is occupied by the author and Mr. Moustafa. The nine other guests watch, curious, from their usual spots.

Mr. Moustafa stares at the wine list as he rattles off a robust order (oysters, soup, rabbit, fowl, lamb). "Boy with Apple" is on the cover of the menu. The waiter departs.

MR. MOUSTAFA

That should provide us ample time -- if I commence promptly.

AUTHOR

By all means.

Another waiter arrives to uncork a split of champagne and pours a thimbleful. Mr. Moustafa tastes it and nods. The waiter pours two, full coupes. They each drink a long sip. Finally, Mr. Moustafa settles in:

MR. MOUSTAFA

It begins, as it must, with our mutual friend's predecessor. The beloved, original concierge of the Grand Budapest.
(with deep affection) It begins, of course, with --



Part 1



“M. Gustave”



M. GUSTAVE

Bring the table to the window.

FIRST WAITER

Yes, M. Gustave.

M. GUSTAVE

Bring the tray to the table.

SECOND WAITER

Right away, M. Gustave.

M. GUSTAVE

(pointing to two hats)

Have those been brushed and blocked?

FOOTMAN

Of course, M. Gustave.

M. GUSTAVE

Pack them in the hat boxes.

(pointing to a shopping bag)

Is that from Oberstdorf and Company?

BELLBOY

I believe so, M. Gustave.

M. GUSTAVE

Second trunk. Who has the tickets?

Zero raises his hand.

ZERO

I do, M. Gustave.

M. GUSTAVE

Give them to me.

Zero hands M. Gustave a set of train tickets. M. Gustave studies them carefully. He nods and points.

M. GUSTAVE

These are in order. Wait in the corner.

Zero retreats. M. Gustave strides to the bedroom door, raps on it briefly, then swings it open.

M. GUSTAVE

Good morning, Madame. Your breakfast is served. The sitting room is a battlefield at the moment, but rest assured, you will be en route in precisely

-- (checks his watch)

-- eleven minutes. You look heavenly. Pray be seated.

An immaculately-dressed, eighty-year-old woman emerges from the bedroom, nimble, brisk -- and highly agitated. She is Madame D. She is followed by two young women, a lady's maid and a private secretary, who quickly join the hubbub fidgeting with trunks and rushing to and fro preparing for their departure.

MADAME D.

I beg your pardon?

M. GUSTAVE

This diabolical varnish. The color's completely wrong.

MADAME D.

M. GUSTAVE

It's not that I don't like it. I'm physically repulsed.

(checks his watch again)



M. GUSTAVE

(wildly frustrated)

How can I? With this enormous rock-pile around my neck like an albatross.

(taking charge)

Tell me right now -- wholly, specifically, and without abbreviation:

what's troubling you?

(surprised)

Are you weeping?

Tears have begun to stream down Madame D's cheeks. M. Gustave produces a dazzling pink handkerchief and dries her eyes. The old woman takes a deep breath.

MADAME D.

Let us pray.

Madame D. closes her eyes, lowers her chin, and crosses herself. M. Gustave reluctantly follows suit. Silence. Madame D. snaps one eye back open suddenly:

MADAME D.

Well?

M. GUSTAVE

(surprised) You want me to do it?

MADAME D.

(with authority) If you don't mind.

M. GUSTAVE

(instantly)

Dear heavenly Father, please, protect our cherished guest as she travels through snow and sleet and under shadow of darkness. Guide her in the night to her final destination. Indeed, whatever luxury she may require,

be it small or more extravagant, please, do grant --

MADAME D.

(now with both eyes open)

That's not a proper prayer.

M. GUSTAVE

Give me your hand.

Madame D. does so. M. Gustave firmly clasps it. He says in an affectionate, reassuring, patronizing voice:

M. GUSTAVE

You've nothing to fear. You're always anxious before you travel. I admit you appear to be suffering a more acute attack on this occasion, but, truly and honestly --

(suddenly taken aback)

Dear God. What've you done to your fingernails?

Madame D. wears an understated, pale-pink polish. She stiffens.

MADAME D.

I beg your pardon?

M. GUSTAVE

This diabolical varnish. The color's completely wrong.

MADAME D.

(slightly uncertain) Really? You don't like it?

M. GUSTAVE

It's not that I don't like it. I'm physically repulsed.

(checks his watch again)

Time to go!



INT. CORRIDOR. DAY

The procession of trunks, cases, and assistants goes in one direction, and M. Gustave, Madame D, and Zero (carrying a small leather jewel case) go in the other.

CUT TO:

The elevator on its way down. M. Gustave sits with Madame D. (now wearing gloves) on a velvet-upholstered bench. She clutches his arm and looks deeply concerned. Zero stands at attention with the jewel case alongside a veteran elevator operator.

M. GUSTAVE

Perhaps this will soothe you.

MADAME D.

(alarmed) What? Don't recite.

M. GUSTAVE

Just listen to the words.

MADAME D.

(anxious) Please. Not now.

M. GUSTAVE

Hush!

(declaiming gently)

"While questing once in noble wood of grey, medieval pine, I came upon a tomb,
rain-slick'd, rubbed-cool, ethereal; its inscription long-vanished, yet still within
its melancholy fissures --"

Madame D. sighs deeply yet does seem to calm somewhat as she accepts the inevitability of these stanzas.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE. DAY

The trunks are piled on the roof of a long, silver limousine. More suitcases stick out of the rumble seat (along with the two bellboys). Madame D. and her secretary sit inside the car. M. Gustave reaches in the window and tightens a fur stole around Madame D's shoulders.

MADAME D.

Will you light a candle for me, please? In the sacristy at Santa Maria.

Madame D. digs a five Klubeck coin out of her handbag and presses it into M. Gustave's hand. He accepts it:

M. GUSTAVE

I'll see to it myself immediately.

(saintly)

Remember: I'm always with you.

M. Gustave begins to withdraw, but Madame D. grips his shoulder tightly. She whispers, sincere and impassioned, what she fears will be their last communication:

MADAME D.

I LOVE YOU.

M. GUSTAVE

(as if to a child)

I love you.

(barking at the driver)

Abfahren!

The driver hits the gas. M. Gustave watches as the vehicle races away, spitting ice-chips off the packed snow. Zero lingers outside the front door. M. Gustave says with discreet pride as he continues to stare off down the road into the village of Nebelsbad:

M. GUSTAVE

It's quite a thing winning the loyalty of a woman like that for nineteen consecutive seasons.

Zero hesitates -- uncertain that he is, in fact, being addressed. He ventures:

ZERO

Yes, sir.

M. GUSTAVE

She's very fond of me, you know.

ZERO

Yes, sir.





M. Gustave holds out the five Klubeck coin, still staring off into the distance, and says rapidly though distracted:

M. GUSTAVE

Run to the cathedral of Santa Maria Christiana in Brucknerplatz.
Buy one of the plain, half-length candles and take back four Klubecks
in change. Light it in the sacristy, say a brief rosary, then go to Mendl's
and get me a Courtesan au chocolat. If there's any money left, give it to
the crippled shoe-shine boy.

M. Gustave points to a blind child in leg braces crouched at the top of the funicular tracks.
The boy whistles a war march while he polishes a man's boots.

ZERO

Right away, sir.

Zero nods briskly and takes the coin. M. Gustave looks squarely at him for the first time.

M. GUSTAVE

Hold it.

Zero freezes, poised to dash off. M. Gustave frowns slightly. He says finally, pointing:

M. GUSTAVE

Who are you?

ZERO

(stammering)

Zero, sir. The new Lobby Boy.

M. GUSTAVE

(mystified)

Zero, you say?



M. GUSTAVE

I've never seen her like that before.

ZERO

No, sir.

M. GUSTAVE

(mildly concerned)

She was shaking like a shitting dog.

ZERO

(unfamiliar with the expression)

Truly.

ZERO

Yes, sir.

M. GUSTAVE

Well, I've never heard of you. I've never laid eyes on you. Who hired you?

ZERO

(worried) Mr. Mosher, sir.

M. GUSTAVE

(sharply) Mr. Mosher!

M. Gustave snaps his fingers. A man with neat, oily hair and a thin moustache briskly approaches. He is Mr. Mosher.

MR. MOSHER

Yes, M. Gustave?

M. GUSTAVE

Am I to understand you've surreptitiously hired this young man
in the position of a Lobby Boy?

MR. MOSHER

He's been engaged for a trial period -- pending your approval, of course.

M. GUSTAVE

(vaguely remembering)

Perhaps. Thank you, Mr. Mosher.

MR. MOSHER

You're most welcome, M. Gustave.

M. Gustave looks back to Zero. He says ominously:

M. GUSTAVE

You're now going to be officially interviewed.

INT. LOBBY. DAY

M. Gustave strides through the front doors. Zero is quickly at his heels, terrified.
M. Gustave withdraws a small note-book from his pocket as they walk. Zero asks, uncertain:

ZERO

Should I go and light the candle first?

M. GUSTAVE

(not sure what he means)

What? No.

(starting the interview)

Experience?

ZERO

(anxious, very formally) Hotel Kinski, Kitchen
Boy, six months. Hotel Berlitz, Mop and Broom
Boy, three months. Before that I was a Skillet
Scrubber in the banquet hall at --

M. GUSTAVE

(noting this) Experience: **Zero**.

At this moment, a criss-crossing group of people simultaneously engage M. Gustave all at once. They are: a man in a finely-tailored business suit with a pair of opera tickets in his hand, a doorman in a long coat holding a bouquet of white roses, and a tiny bellboy. (This is Anatole.)

HOTEL GUEST NO.1

Thank you again, M. Gustave.

M. GUSTAVE

(curtly to Anatole) Straighten that cap, Anatole.
(warmly to the hotel guest) The pleasure is mine, Herr Schneider.

ANATOLE

(working on it) The damn strap's busted.

M. GUSTAVE

(studying the roses) These are not acceptable.

DOORMAN

I agree, M. Gustave.

Suddenly, M. Gustave and Zero are alone again. M. Gustave resumes his interrogation as they proceed across the carpet:

M. GUSTAVE

Education?

ZERO

(worried) studied reading and spelling.
I completed my primary school certificate.
I almost started --

M. GUSTAVE

(noting this)
Education: **Zero**.

A second criss-crossing group of people now engage M. Gustave. This time: a very old washroom attendant carrying a monkey-wrench, the head waiter wearing an apron and waving a menu, and a woman of a certain age in a beautifully-embroidered dress with a small dachshund cradled in her arms.

WASHROOM ATTENDANT

Now it's exploded.

M. GUSTAVE

(sweetly to the dachshund)
Good morning, Cicero.
(coldly to the washroom attendant)
Call the goddamn plumber.

HOTEL GUEST NO.2

(flirtatious)
This afternoon, M. Gustave?

HEAD WAITER

(angrily)
What in the hell is this?

M. GUSTAVE

(equally flirtatious)
Without fail, Frau Liebling.
(sharply to the head waiter)
Not now!

The second interruption ends. M. Gustave continues:

M. GUSTAVE

Family?

ZERO

(long pause) **Zero**.

M. GUSTAVE

(noting this) I see.

M. Gustave leads Zero through a rotunda, below a grand, winding staircase, and back into the elevator. He closes his note-book. The elevator operator awaits instruction.

M. GUSTAVE

Six

The elevator operator throws a lever and they begin to ascend.
M. Gustave locks eyes with Zero.

M. GUSTAVE

Why do you want to
be a Lobby Boy?

ZERO

Well, who wouldn't --
at the Grand Budapest,
sir? It's an institution.

M. GUSTAVE

(deeply impressed)
Very good.



INT. SITTING ROOM. DAY

M. Gustave and Zero re-enter Madame D's suite. M. Gustave walks directly over to a pedestal where an envelope waits tucked beneath a vase. He tears it open and withdraws a letter and a stack of bills folded in half. He counts the money and says coolly:

M. GUSTAVE

A thousand Klubecks.

ZERO

(astonished) My goodness.

M. Gustave skims the letter. He holds it up for Zero to see. There is a lipstick-kiss at the bottom of the text. Zero is unsure how to interpret this. M. Gustave raises his eyebrows and tucks the note and the bills inside his jacket. His eyes glaze over in a moment of reverie. He sighs. Zero makes a sudden realization:

ZERO

Were you ever a Lobby Boy, sir?

M. GUSTAVE

(bristling but playful) What do you think?

ZERO

(speculative)
well, I suppose you had to start --

M. GUSTAVE

Go light the goddamn candle.

One Month Later

INT. LOBBY. DAY

The crowded room buzzes in all corners. Zero circulates among tables and sofas holding up a folded telegram while he calls out a name, searching. A military officer in a grey uniform hails him, and Zero dashes over to deliver the missive.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

And so, my life began. Junior Lobby Boy (in-training), Grand Budapest Hotel, under the strict command of M. Gustave H. I became his pupil, and he was to be my counselor and guardian.

M. GUSTAVE (V.O.)

(rhetorical) What is a Lobby Boy?

MONTAGE:

Zero pushes an old man in a wheelchair. Zero arranges a white bouquet. Zero replaces dirty ashtrays, rearranges furniture, and shields a large woman with a toothpick from view as she excavates between her teeth.

M. GUSTAVE (V.O.)

A Lobby Boy is completely invisible, yet always in sight. A Lobby Boy remembers what people hate. A Lobby Boy anticipates the client's needs before the needs are needed. A Lobby Boy, above all, is discreet, to a fault.

CUT TO:

M. Gustave, accompanied by Zero, advancing down a corridor at high velocity. On the floor next to each door they pass, a pair of shoes waits to be polished.

M. GUSTAVE

Our guests' know their deepest secrets, some of which are, frankly, rather unseemly, will go with us to our graves -- so keep your mouth shut, Zero.

ZERO

Yes, sir.

M. Gustave stops at the end of the hallway in front of a door labelled KAISER FREDERICK SUITE. He says to Zero:

M. GUSTAVE

That's all for now.

Zero hesitates for an instant, then nods and reverses rapidly away. M. Gustave withdraws a ring of pass-keys from his pocket. He looks up and down the corridor furtively.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

I began to realize that many of the hotel's most valued and distinguished guests -- came for him.

Zero looks back briefly over his shoulder as he starts down the staircase and sees M. Gustave slip into the suite. The door locks.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

It seemed to be an essential part of his duties, but I believe it was also his pleasure.

MONTAGE:

A succession of dames of varying grandeurs seen tête-à-tête with M. Gustave: a sixty-year-old Russian chats with him in the tea salon; a sixty-five-year-old German strolls with him on the promenade; a seventy-year-old Argentinian shares a cigarette with him naked in her bed; a seventy-five-year-old Englishwoman washes his back in her bath; and an eighty-year-old Austrian wearing a hair-net and a nightgown gives him a blow-job while he watches in the mirror and eats grapes. There is a platinum wig on a stand on the dressing table.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

The requirements were always the same. They had to be: rich, old, insecure, vain, superficial, blonde, needy.

CUT TO:

Mr. Moustafa and the author at their dinner table. The remains of a rabbit tart are replaced by a sizeable, roasted pheasant as the author gently inquires:

AUTHOR

Why blonde?

MR. MOUSTAFA

(after a moment's reflection)
Because they all were.

INT. ELEVATOR. DAY

M. Gustave, somewhat tousled, with lipstick on his cheek, stands waiting to arrive at his floor. He checks the railings for dust. The car stops and the elevator operator opens the gate. M. Gustave exits with a curt nod. A middle-aged couple enter.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

He was, by the way, the most liberally perfumed man I had ever encountered. The scent announced his approach from a great distance and lingered for many minutes after he was gone.

As the elevator descends, the middle-aged couple sniffs the air. The man looks irritated. The woman swoons slightly.

INT. STAFF QUARTERS. MORNING

Zero wakes up in the pitch black in a tiny room smaller than a service elevator, turns on the light, springs to his feet dressed in white pajamas with short trousers, splashes water from a bowl onto his face, then quickly dampens and combs his hair. His uniform hangs neatly from a peg on the wall. He carefully grooms it with a clothes-brush.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

I worked six days each week plus a half-day Sunday, five a.m. until just after midnight. Our meals were small but frequent (for stamina): two breakfasts, two lunches, and a late supper. M. Gustave also delivered a nightly sermon:

INT. MESS HALL. NIGHT

The evening meal. Most of the hotel staff occupy a long table set for fifty. A thin, grey broth is served with boiled potatoes. M. Gustave starts at a little podium, then paces back and forth in front of it as he addresses the group. They begin to eat hungrily -- but, at the same time, they continue to listen, attentive and respectful.





Rudeness is merely the expression of fear. what
People fear they won't get what they want. The most
deadful and unattractive person: only needs to be
loved -- and they will open-up like a flower. I'm re-
-mined of a verse ;

(reciting)

The painter's brush touched the inchoate face of
face by ends of nimble bristles -- and, with that
blush of first color, rendered her lifeless cheek,
living; through languish.

M. GUSTAVE

As the poetry begins, some of the diners' eye glaze over and there are faint sighs. Mr. Moustafa continues his narration:

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

His own dinner, he took alone in his room.

CUT TO:

M. Gustave seated at a folding table in a room nearly identical to Zero's but with a connecting sitting room and kitchenette. He wears his uniform trousers and a white undershirt. He eats a bowl of cereal while listening to classical music on a radio-set.

There are approximately twenty-five identical bottles of cologne on a shelf above the sink in the background. Each is labelled L'air de Panache, Pure Musk.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE. DAY

A large sedan with tire-chains arrives through the snow and parks in front of the hotel. A sign next to five stars on the side of the hood reads: Grand Budapest Hotel. One of the back doors opens, and a tall man in a double-breasted suit emerges. He carries a briefcase and wears a pointy beard. He is Deputy Kovacs. He hurries to the top of the steps where M. Gustave waits to greet him.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

The identity of the owner of the hotel was unknown to all of us. Each month, his emissary, known as Deputy Kovacs, arrived to review the books and convey messages on behalf of the mysterious proprietor.

INT. LOBBY. DAY

Zero, substituting at the concierge desk, looks up to a high window across the room where the shadowy figures of M. Gustave and Deputy Kovacs meet in a storage pantry. A clerk with a pot-belly flips the pages in a ledger-book and takes notes. He is Herr Becker.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

On these occasions, M. Gustave and our business manager, Herr Becker, met with him in private consultation above Reception.

CUT TO:

A plain, graceful, seventeen-year-old beanpole with freckles and a birthmark the shape of Mexico on the side of her face. She is Agatha. She works a rolling-pin over a wide expanse of flattened pastry-dough. There are carts circled around her filled with trays of exceptionally well-made, beautifully-decorated pastries shaped like hour-glass figures.

(These are Courtesans au chocolat.)

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

This was also when I met Agatha --

Agatha pauses to dry the perspiration on her brow with the back of her sleeve. She resumes her rolling.

EXT. BAKERY. DAY

The timber-frame store-front of a tiny pâtisserie. A large sign painted in delicate, pink cursive across the glass reads: Mendl's. There is a heavy-set baker in an apron with flour all over every inch of himself standing in the doorway. He is Herr Mendl.

Agatha rides a rickety bicycle up the alley next to the shop and rings a bell as she turns onto the cobblestone lane. She bears a milkmaid's yoke balanced across her shoulders overloaded with sixty small, pink pastry-boxes tied with string.

CUT TO:

Agatha gripping the handlebars as she bounces pedalling down the road.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

-- but we won't discuss that.





Part 2



“Madame
C.V.D.u.T.”

EXT. TOWN SQUARE. MORNING

Dawn. The platz in the center of Nebelsbad is deserted. Zero emerges briskly from a press kiosk carrying a thick stack of newspapers. He looks down, scanning headlines, as he crosses the street.

Zero stops. His eyes are glued to one of the articles. He skims it. He quickly re-reads it twice more. His mouth falls open. Zero bolts off at a sprint

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE. MORNING

Zero races up the steps into the hotel carrying the stack of newspapers.

INT. LOBBY. MORNING

Zero dashes past Reception carrying the stack of newspapers.

INT. ROTUNDA. MORNING

Zero mounts the staircase three steps at a time carrying the stack of newspapers.

INT. CORRIDOR. MORNING

Zero speed-walks to the end of the hallway and stops in front of a door labelled PRINCE HEINRICH SUITE. A sign on the knob reads: Do Not Disturb. Zero hesitates, then knocks. Pause. The door opens a crack and an irritated M. Gustave in a purple, silk dressing gown looks out.

M. GUSTAVE

What do you want?

ZERO

Look. (a frantic whisper)

Zero holds up the stack of newspapers. M. Gustave picks one off the top and studies it.

INSERT:

The front page of the Trans-Alpine Yodel. The headline is, "Will There Be War? Tanks at Frontier" -- but a column below the fold reads:



Dowager Countess Found Dead in Boudoir

As M. Gustave reads the article, he says gravely:

M. GUSTAVE

Dear God.

ZERO

(sadly)
I'm terribly sorry, sir.

M. GUSTAVE

(melodramatic but pained)
We must go to her.

ZERO

(hesitates)
We must?

M. GUSTAVE

Tout de suite. She needs me -- and I need
you: to help me with my bags and so on.

An old woman's voice calls from the next room, coquettish:

FRENCH LADY (O.S.)

Tout va bien, ma chérie?

M. GUSTAVE

(sharply)
Attendez-moi, darling.
(to Zero:)
How fast can you pack?

ZERO

(short pause) Five minutes.

M. GUSTAVE

Do it -- and bring a bottle of the Pouilly-Jouvé '26 in an ice-bucket with
two glasses so we don't have to drink the cat-piss they serve in the dining car.

ZERO

Yes, sir.

M. Gustave slams the door, and Zero dashes away down the corridor.

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT. DAY

A first-class state-room on the express to Lutz. The snowy foot-hills of the Zubrowkian Alps
whiz by outside. M. Gustave and Zero each hold a glass of chilled white wine. There are tears
in M. Gustave's eyes

M. GUSTAVE

I blame myself.

M. Gustave checks the color of the wine in the light. It is excellent.

M. GUSTAVE

She tried to tell me she had a premonition. I didn't listen.
(imagining the scene) All of Ltz will be dressed in black --
except her own ghastly, deceitful children whom she loathed
and couldn't bear to kiss hello. They'll be dancing like gypsies.

Zero nods soberly. M. Gustave becomes philosophical/ nihilistic:

M. GUSTAVE

There's really no point in doing anything in life, because it's all over
in the blink of an eye -- and, the next thing you know, rigor mortis
sets in. Oh, how the good die young! With any luck, she's left a few
Klubecks for your old friend --
(motioning to himself)
-- but one never knows until the ink is dry on the death certificate.
She was dynamite in the sack, by the way.

ZERO

(scandalized in spite of himself)
She was eighty-four, M. Gustave!

M. GUSTAVE

(pause)
I've had older.

M. Gustave throws back the rest of his glass and refills it as he expands on the point:

M. GUSTAVE

When you're young, it's all filet-steak, but as the years go by,
you have to move on to the cheaper cuts -- which is fine with me,
because I like those. More flavorful, or so they say.
(shrugs)
Why are we stopping at a barley field?

The train has, in fact, come to a halt in the middle of nowhere. Noises echo from the other
end of the coach: a door slams open; loud voices argue; heavy footsteps approach.

Three soldiers appear in the compartment doorway. They are stocky, thick-necked, and armed
with carbine rifles. They wear grey uniforms and long coats. M. Gustave says with an air of
fancy-meeting-you-here:

M. GUSTAVE

Well, hello there, chaps.

SOLDIER #1

(blankly)
Documents, please.

M. GUSTAVE

With pleasure.

M. Gustave withdraws his passport from his coat pocket and presents it to the soldier.
The soldier begins to flip through it. M. Gustave gestures toward the photograph of himself:

M. GUSTAVE

It's not a very flattering portrait, I'm afraid.
I was once considered a great beauty.

The soldier ignores this comment. M. Gustave peers at the breast-pocket of his uniform.

INSERT:

A name tag pinned below a military badge. It reads: Cpl. F. Müller.

M. Gustave raises an eyebrow and asks pointedly:

M. GUSTAVE

What's the "F" stand for? Fritz? Franz.

SOLDIER #1

Franz. (hesitates)

M. GUSTAVE

(exceedingly pleased)
I knew it!

The soldier returns the passport to M. Gustave and looks to Zero. Zero nervously hands him
a creased and tattered little scrap of paper covered with stamps and seals. The soldier frowns
and studies it. M. Gustave smiles, uneasy, and says lightly:

M. GUSTAVE

He's making a funny face.
(to the soldier)
That's a Migratory Visa with Stage Three Worker Status,
Franz, darling. He's with me.

The soldier shows the scrap of paper to his associates. They confer rapidly at a whisper.
There is some debate. Finally, the soldier waves for Zero to follow him:

SOLDIER #1

Come outside, please.

Zero swallows hard and begins to rise -- but M. Gustave motions sharply for him to stop.
He says, a bit stern:

M. GUSTAVE

Now wait a minute.
(to Zero) Sit Down, Zero.
(to the soldiers)
His papers are in order.
I cross referenced them myself with the Bureau of Labor and Servitude.

You can't arrest him
simply because he's a
bloody immigrant.
He hasn't done anything
wrong.

M. GUSTAVE

The soldier hesitates. He turns to his associates again. They look back at him, expressionless. The soldier grabs Zero by the arm and jerks him out of his seat. M. Gustave is instantly on his feet, tussling.

M. GUSTAVE

Stop it! Stop, damn you!

ZERO

(in disbelief)

Never mind, M. Gustave!

Let them proceed!

M. GUSTAVE

What are you doing?

That hurts!

In two seconds: both M. Gustave and Zero are locked in hand-cuffs with their arms behind their backs. At this point, M. Gustave explodes:

M. GUSTAVE

You filthy, goddamn, pock-marked, **Fascist assholes!**

(in a pure rage:) Take your hands off my Lobby Boy!



HENCKELS (O.S.)

What's the problem?

M. Gustave and Zero lock eyes across the fracas. In an instant: they are brothers. A new voice shouts from the end of the corridor:

All the soldiers snap to attention as a young officer appears in the doorway. He is well-groomed and clean-shaven. He wears a dress-grey uniform with a cape. He is Henckels. The first soldier hands him the scrap of paper and starts to explain the situation -- but M. Gustave interrupts calmly with blood trickling from his nose:

M. GUSTAVE

This is outrageous. The young man works for me at the Grand Budapest Hotel in Nebelsbad.

Henckels turns suddenly to M. Gustave. He stares. He says in a quiet voice:

HENCKELS

M. Gustave?

M. Gustave looks at Henckels, curious. He nods slowly.

HENCKELS

My name is Henckels. I'm the son of Dr. and Mrs. Wolfgang Henckels-Bergersdörfer. Do you remember me?

M. GUSTAVE

I know exactly who you are. It's uncanny. You're little Albert.

HENCKELS

I'm terribly embarrassed.
(to the soldiers) Release them.

The soldiers immediately remove the hand-cuffs from both M. Gustave and Zero while Henckels takes out a note-book and begins to scribble something onto a yellow ticket. M. Gustave sits down and presses his pink handkerchief onto his nostril. Henckels says as he writes:

HENCKELS

Your colleague is stateless. He'll need to apply for a revised Special Transit Permit, which, honestly, at this point, may be very difficult to acquire. Take this.

Henckels finishes writing, tears the ticket out of his note-book, and hands it to M. Gustave.

HENCKELS

It's temporary, but it's the best I can offer, I'm afraid.

M. GUSTAVE

How's your wonderful mother?

HENCKELS

Very well, thank you.

M. GUSTAVE

I adore her. Send my love.

HENCKELS

I will.

Henckels motions politely for Zero to return to his seat and hands the scrap of paper back to him. Zero tucks it carefully into an envelope. His hands are shaking. Henckels says gently:

HENCKELS

Your companion was very kind to me when I was a lonely little boy.
(to both M. Gustave and Zero)
My men and I apologize for disturbing you.

Henckels turns coldly to the first soldier. He looks sheepish. He says, robotic, to M. Gustave:

SOLDIER #1

I beg your pardon, sir.

Henckels and the soldiers immediately leave the compartment, march down the corridor, and exit the coach. Silence.

M. GUSTAVE

You see? There are still faint glimmers of civilization left in this barbaric slaughterhouse that was once known as humanity. Indeed, that's what we provide in our own modest, humble, insignificant --
(sighs deeply) Oh, fuck it.

M. Gustave looks out the window as the train begins to move again. Zero appears to be in a state of numb shock.

MONTAGE:

The cosmopolitan city of Lutz in the dead of night. A rickety Daimler taxi sputters along a winding cobblestone road at top speed. It squeezes up a narrow lane lined with shops. All are closed and shuttered. It dips into a tunnel through a brick building. It crosses a stone bridge high over a river. It drives through an iron gate, circles around a garden, and skids to a stop next to Madame D's limousine.

Up a short path, there is an enormous mansion.

A bell rings. Feet clack and echo on the wide marble floor. A maid in black hurries to open the front door. She is Clotilde. M. Gustave and Zero enter the vestibule while the taxi waits outside. M. Gustave kisses Clotilde on both cheeks and says immediately:

M. GUSTAVE

Where is she, Clotilde? Take me to her.

Clotilde leads M. Gustave with Zero in tow through a series of doors, enfilade, until they arrive at a dimly candle-lit drawing room.

Murals of cherubs cover the walls. There is a harpsichord in one corner and a loudly ticking grandfather clock in another. The feet of the corpse, in silver pumps, jut out, toes up, from inside the casket on top of a gold-leaf table.

M. Gustave stops and gasps. He turns to Clotilde and nods. She tugs Zero by the sleeve, and they withdraw. M. Gustave picks up a chair, carries it to the body, sets it down, and sits. Silence. He speaks in a normal, conversational voice:



You're looking so well,
darling. You really are.
They've done a marvelous
job. I don't know
what sort of cream
they've put on you down
at the morgue, but I
want some. Honestly,
you look better than you
have in years. You look
like you're alive!

M. GUSTAVE

M. Gustave shakes his head in admiration. He leans down and kisses Madame D. on the lips. Zero and Clotilde, watching discreetly from the shadows in the next room, look slightly revolted.

M. Gustave takes the corpse's hand. He notices something and hesitates.

INSERT:

Madame D's fingernails. They are now lacquered in a rich plum.

M. Gustave says, deeply moved:

M. GUSTAVE

You changed it, after all. It's perfect.
(calling to the next room)
Clotilde?

Clotilde advances into view. She says respectfully:

MAID

Oui, M. Gustave?

M. GUSTAVE

A glass of chilled water with no ice, please.

CLOTILDE

Oui, M. Gustave -- et aussi: M. Serge a demandé
un mot avec vous en privé dans son office, s'il
vous plaît.

M. GUSTAVE

(slightly irritated)
Oh. Well, all right.
(distracted, to the body)
I shan't be long, darling.

M. Gustave stands up and follows Clotilde through the row of doors. Zero looks back at the casket as he trails behind them.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

We were escorted through a green-baize door,
down a narrow service-corridor, and into the
butler's pantry.

INT. OFFICE. NIGHT

A small chamber separated from the kitchen by a glass-panelled wall. M. Gustave checks his watch. There is a glass of water in his hand. Zero drinks a sip of milk. In the background, a sous chef chops while the cook stirs a bubbling broth. Kitchen and scullery maids dart back and forth clanking pots and pans.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

A moment later, the kitchen passage swung open,
and a small servant dressed in white jolted into
the room.

An extremely anxious, petite butler enters with an ice-bucket. He is Serge. He hacks chips off a frozen block in the sink and fills the container briskly. He turns to go -- then spots M. Gustave looking out at him from inside the pantry.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

I've never forgotten the look on that man's face.

Serge is: deeply distraught, physically exhausted, and, above all, terrified. He swallows, holds up a quick finger for M. Gustave to wait, then disappears back out the door.

M. Gustave frowns. He says to himself:

M. GUSTAVE

What the devil is going on?

M. Gustave looks to Zero.
Zero is perplexed.



MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

I, myself, had never set foot inside a house of this kind in my life.

M. Gustave dumps his glass of water into a potted cactus and strides through the chaotic kitchen while Clotilde watches him with a feather duster in her hand. She makes a reluctant move to advise him to stop -- but he flies past her, bangs out the swinging door after Serge, and marches into a dark corridor.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

I understood very little about the events that were to follow
-- but, eventually, I came to recognize:

INT. TROPHY ROOM. NIGHT

A door opens. M. Gustave comes inside and stops short. He hesitates. Zero sidles in next to him. They both stare, mouths open.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

When the destiny of a great fortune is at stake,
men's greed spreads like a poison in the bloodstream.



CUT TO:

A dark, woody parlor with mounted heads everywhere (lions, tigers, buffalo, antelope, etc). A murmuring audience of fifty men in business suits is gathering and taking its seats in rows before a dais. Every age, build, and variety of facial hair is accounted for. Some carry briefcases and canes. Most have strong drinks in their hands. There are also several young dandies; a few little old ladies; and a pair of country farmers.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

Uncles, nephews, cousins -- in-laws of increasingly tenuous connection. The old woman's most distant relations had come foraging out of the wood-work.

Serge drops an ice-cube into a glass of whiskey with tongs. He does a double-take as he sees that M. Gustave has followed him into the room.

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.)

At the head of this congregation (it was a disorienting coincidence), we (more)

MR. MOUSTAFA (V.O.) (cont'd) discovered our own Deputy Kovacs (himself an important attorney, of course). He was the executor of the dead widow's estate.

Deputy Kovacs, standing behind a desk on a platform at the front of the room, squints at M. Gustave, puzzled. M. Gustave and Zero look back at him, equally confused. Deputy Kovacs turns his attention back to the seated audience. He clears his throat, sets a large, cardboard box down in front of him, and address -es the room:

DEPUTY KOVACS

This is Madame D's Last Will and Testament. It consists of a general tontine drawn up before the event of her husband's death forty-six years ago --

Deputy Kovacs lifts a faded, fragile slip of paper out of the box. He places it delicately onto the table.

DEPUTY KOVACS

-- in combination with 635 amendments, notations, corrections, and letters of wishes executed during the subsequent decades.

Deputy Kovacs reaches into the box with two hands and pulls out an enormous pile of scraps, slips, shreds, slivers, forms, files, post-cards, and various bits of lint and loose thread. He plants it all down with a thud.

DEPUTY KOVACS

The ultimate legality of this accumulation requires further analysis; but, in the opinion of this office, it was Madame D's intention that control of the vast bulk of her estate should be transferred, forthwith, to her son, Dmitri --

CUT TO:

A spindly, thirty-five-year-old man with a thick head of spiky, black hair which sticks up straight into the air. He has black eyes and a black moustache. He wears a black suit cut close to his skinny body. He is Dmitri. A thug in a leather coat with close-shaven head and high-heeled boots sits slightly behind and beside him. He wears brass knuckles on both hands. He is Jopling.

DEPUTY KOVACS

-- with special allowances for his sisters Marguerite, Laetizia, and Carolina --

CUT TO:

Madame D's spinster daughters. They range in age from forty to fifty. They are sturdy and fierce.

DEPUTY KOVACS

-- and minor gifts for various members of the extended family as shown in the List of Recipients, which I will elucidate in due course.

There is a mumbling of general approval around the room and throughout the gallery of distant relations. A few take notes. Deputy Kovacs interjects:

DEPUTY KOVACS

However. Voices hush. Pause.

DEPUTY KOVACS

An additional codicil, delivered into my possession by post only this morning, and, by all indications, sent by Madame D. during the last hours of her life, contains an amendment to the original certificate, which, as prescribed by law, I will read to you now. The authenticity of this document has not yet been confirmed by the presiding magistrate, so I ask that all parties be patient and refrain from comment until such time as our investigations can be completed.

Dmitri and Jopling confer at a tense whisper. The sisters grumble, dismayed. The group as a whole sits up to attention. Deputy Kovacs slides a hand-written letter on pale-pink paper out of an envelope and reads:

DEPUTY KOVACS

"To my esteemed friend who comforted me in my later years and brought sunshine into the life of an old woman who thought she would never be happy again -- M. Gustave H. -- I bequeath, bestow, and devise, free of all taxation and with full and absolute fiduciary entitlement, the painting known as 'Boy with Apple' --

M. GUSTAVE

(floored) Wow!

DEPUTY KOVACS

-- by Johannes van Hoytl --

M. Gustave grips Zero by the shoulder like a vise. Zero grimaces:

M. GUSTAVE

I can't believe it.

DEPUTY KOVACS

-- the younger --

Dmitri drops a tumbler on the floor. He blurts angrily:

DMITRI

what?

DEPUTY KOVACS

-- which gave us both so much pleasure."

Deputy Kovacs looks up. The three sisters talk loudly over each other simultaneously:

MARGUERITE

The van Hoytl?

LAETIZIA

Tax-free?

CAROLIN

A Can she do that?

A hunched, ancient, grizzled, old man in the middle of the room throws up his hands.

He asks loudly:

OLD MAN

Who's Gustave H?

M. GUSTAVE

(inevitably)

I'm afraid that's me, darling.

Every face in the entire assembly now turns around fully and stares at M. Gustave and Zero. Silence.

The room erupts. All the distant relations start talking at once. Dmitri is on his feet, advancing toward the back of the room, flanked by Jopling, as he explodes, pointing at M. Gustave:

DMITRI

That fucking faggot! He's a concierge.

What are you doing here?

M. GUSTAVE

(stiffening)

I've come to pay my respects to a great woman whom I loved.

DMITRI

(turning to the room)

This man is an intruder in my home!

M. GUSTAVE

(making a point of it)

It's not yours yet, Dmitri. Only when probate is granted, and the Deed of Entitlement --

DMITRI

You're not getting "Boy with Apple", you goddamn little fruit!

M. GUSTAVE

(genuinely offended)

How's that supposed to make me feel?

The three sisters join Dmitri as the veins in his neck begin to bulge. He continues loudly, for the record:

DMITRI

Call the police. We're pressing charges. This criminal has plagued my family for nearly twenty years. He's a ruthless adventurer and a con-artist who preys on mentally feeble, sick old ladies -- and he probably fucks them, too!

The three sisters look horrified. One of the little old ladies gasps. Shocked faces look to M. Gustave. He shrugs and says tentatively:

M. GUSTAVE

I go to bed with all my friends.

Dmitri cold-cocks M. Gustave an upper-cut to the jaw and drops him with one punch. Less than a second later, Zero slams his own fist squarely right into the middle of Dmitri's face and knocks him over backward with blood spurting out of his nose. Less than a second after that, Jopling pounds Zero in the side of the head sending him flying with a smack against the wall and melting instantly into the floor. The room breaks into complete pandemonium.

In the midst of the chaos, the hunched, old man says, aside, to a younger one:

OLD MAN

Where's Céline?

YOUNG MAN

(hesitates)

She's dead. We're reading her will.



OLD MAN

(slightly embarrassed)

Oh, quite right, of course. How silly of me.

Another younger man, eavesdropping, starts coughing and spits red wine into his glass.

In the meantime: Serge helps M. Gustave and Zero to their feet as Jopling restrains

Dmitri, and various of the distant relations attempt to interfere in the fray. Dmitri, behind an almost certainly broken nose, shouts furiously at M. Gustave as he strains to clamber over his henchman's shoulder:

DMITRI

If I learn you ever once laid a finger on my mother's body, living or dead, I swear to God, I'll cut your throat!
(screaming) You hear me?

M. GUSTAVE

(clever though dizzy)
I thought I was supposed to be a fucking faggot.

DMITRI

(hesitates)
You are, but you're bisexual!

M. GUSTAVE

(pause)
Let's change the subject. I'm leaving.

M. Gustave turns and, assisted by Serge and a staggering Zero, exits the room.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Clotilde rushes to M. Gustave's assistance as Serge brings him through the door. She brushes his shoulders and smooths his hair. Serge shouts frantically in French and guides them all back into his butler's pantry. Zero holds his glass of milk against his ear like an ice-pack. Serge and Clotilde yell at each other while the other servants race in and out of the kitchen, panicking. They disappear again into the next room.

M. Gustave and Zero, alone for a moment, catch their breath. M. Gustave pants:

M. GUSTAVE

That picture -- "Boy with Apple" -- is priceless. Understand?

ZERO

(hopeful)
Congratulations, M. Gustave!

M. GUSTAVE

They're going to fight me for the son of a bitch.

ZERO

Is it very beautiful?

M. GUSTAVE

(swooning)
Beyond description.
(reciting)
"E'en the most gifted bard's rhyme can only sing but to
the lack of her and all she isn't! His tongue doth trip --"

ZERO

Can I see it?

M. Gustave looks surprised. Pause.

M. GUSTAVE

I don't see why not.

M. Gustave zooms out through the scullery and into a little stairwell.
Zero follows. They spiral up a steep flight.

CUT TO:

A wide landing overlooking the foyer. The voices of the bickering assembly echo from the rear of the house. M. Gustave looks quickly left and right, then darts down the hallway and through a set of double doors.

INT. LIBRARY. NIGHT

A long, narrow gallery lined from floor-to-ceiling with books and paintings.
M. Gustave leads Zero straight through to the far end where "Boy with Apple" hangs above a fire-place. He stands beside it facing Zero and assumes the role of a museum docent:

M. GUSTAVE

This is van Hoyt's exquisite portrayal of a beautiful boy
on the cusp of man hood. Blond, smooth. Skin as white
as that milk.
(pointing to Zero's glass)
Of impeccable provenance. One of the last in private hands
-- and, unquestionably, the best. It's a master piece. The
rest of this shit is worthless junk.



M. Gustave and Zero stand side-by-side and admire the picture for a long minute -- then Zero looks strangely to M. Gustave. M. Gustave looks back at him, curious.

Zero's eyes flicker. M. Gustave frowns.

Zero goes to the corner, picks up a foot-stool, and places it on the hearth.

M. Gustave hesitates. He steps up onto the foot-stool. He lifts the painting off its hooks. He comes back down to the floor. There is a dark rectangle in the wallpaper marking the absent picture. He turns to Zero again, uncertain.



Behind the fire-irons, leaning against a stack of etchings, Zero spots a wood-cut print of two lesbians masturbating. He grabs it and hangs it in the painting's place.



INT. FOYER. NIGHT

M. Gustave and Zero circle rapidly down the wide staircase. Serge comes into the room at the same time and meets them as they arrive at the front door. He says breathlessly:

SERGE

M. Gustave! Pardonnez-moi. Ce n'est pas --

Serge sees the painting tucked under M. Gustave's arm. He stares at it. He says reluctantly:

SERGE

Je peux vous aider?

M. GUSTAVE

Oui, Serge. Vous pouvez emballer celui- la.

SERGE

(hesitates)

Emballer -- "Boy with Apple"?

M. Gustave nods and hands Serge the picture. Serge takes it. Pause. He goes over to a bureau, withdraws a large sheet of wrapping-paper, folds it around the painting, and ties it with string. He returns the parcel to M. Gustave.

M. GUSTAVE

Merci, Serge.

Serge opens the front door. M. Gustave and Zero quickly go outside and get into the taxi. Serge, overwhelmed and confused, with tears in his eyes, looks in at them through one of the back-seat windows. M. Gustave rolls it down.

M. GUSTAVE

What'd you want to tell me? Before.

SERGE

(long pause, with a heavy accent)
I think I cannot say right now.

M. GUSTAVE

(short pause)
Write me tomorrow.
(sharply to the driver)
Lutzbahn Station!

The taxi's tires squeal, and the car shoots down the driveway. Serge watches, deeply anguished and disturbed.

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT. NIGHT

A sleeper on the over-night to Nebelsbad. The bunks have been folded down and made-up, and both M. Gustave and Zero wear pajamas. (M. Gustave's are of bur-gundy silk and belted.) "Boy with Apple", partially unwrapped, is on display balanced along the edge of the wash-basin. M. Gustave says soberly:

M. GUSTAVE

I'll never part with it. It reminded her of me.
It will remind me of her. Always. I'll die with
this picture above my bed.
(quickly)
See the resemblance?

M. Gustave positions himself alongside the painting. Zero mutters politely from his bed:

ZERO

Oh, yes.

M. Gustave lies down. He stares up at the ceiling. Pause.

M. GUSTAVE

Actually, we should sell it. Sooner rather than later,
in case they try and steal it back. Plus: something
about those lunatic foot-soldiers on the express --
I think this could be a tricky war and a long dry
-spell in the hotel trade. For all we know, they could
board us up tomorrow.

Zero looks alarmed. M. Gustave sits up again and signals for him to come closer. Zero joins him.

M. GUSTAVE

Let's make a solemn blood-pact. We'll contact the black-market
and liquidate "Boy with Apple" by the end of the week, then
leave the country and lay low somewhere along the Maltese
Riviera until the troubles blow over and we resume our posts.
In exchange for your help, your loyalty, and your services as my
personal valet, I pledge to you: one-point-five percent of the net
sale-price.

Zero takes this in. He says quietly:

ZERO

One-point-five.

M. GUSTAVE

Plus room and board.

ZERO

(optimistic)
Could we make it ten?

M. GUSTAVE

(in disbelief)
Ten? Are you joking? That's more than I'd pay an actual dealer
-- and you wouldn't know chiarascuro from chicken giblets. No,
one-point-five is correct -- but I'll tell you what: if I die first, and
I most cer-tainly will, you: will be my sole heir. There's not much
in the kitty except a set of ivory-backed hairbrushes and my
library of romantic poetry -- but, when the time comes, these will
be yours, along with whatever we haven't already spent on whores
and whiskey. This is our sacred bond.

I'll draw it up right now.

Pause. Zero nods. M. Gustave whisks a drinks menu out of a slot on the wall,
places it face-down on the night-stand, and sets a fountain pen on top of it.
He dictates:

M. GUSTAVE

I, M. Gustave H, being of relatively sound mind and body,
on this day the twenty-seventh of October in the year of
our Lord nineteen hundred and --

Zero quickly uncaps the pen and begins to write.

INT. STORAGE PANTRY. DAY

The next morning. A vault adjacent to the meeting room above the lobby. There are rows of safety-deposit boxes with engraved room-numbers along the walls. M. Gustave hides the wrapped package behind a radiator. He takes a fur stole off a coat hangar and drapes it awkwardly over the top. They exit the room. M. Gustave closes the heavy, inner door and spins the combination lock, then slides an outer one shut and bolts it with a key.

e.ANATOLE (O.S.)
EXCUSE ME

M. Gustave and Zero jump. They turn around quickly and see Anatole standing in the doorway. M. Gustave mumbles, anxious:

M. GUSTAVE
Uh-huh?

ANATOLE
(intrigued)
The police are here. They asked for you.

Silence. M. Gustave nods. He says cheerily:

M. GUSTAVE
Tell them we'll be right down.

Anatole goes back down the steps. M. Gustave and Zero look down into the lobby through a window. Eight uniformed officers wait at the concierge desk. M. Gustave says tensely:

M. GUSTAVE
Have you ever been questioned by the authorities?

ZERO
(grimly)
Yes, on one occasion, I was arrested and tortured by the rebel militia after the Desert Uprising.

M. GUSTAVE
(hesitates)
Right. Well, you know the drill, then. Zip it.

ZERO
Of course.

M. GUSTAVE
You've never heard the word van Hoytl in your life.

ZERO

Got it

M. GUSTAVE
OK. Let's go.

M. Gustave and Zero descend into the lobby. M. Gustave's face brightens as he crosses the room and greets the visitors:

M. GUSTAVE
How may we serve you, gentlemen?

POLICE CAPTAIN
(producing a warrant)
By order of the Commissioner of Police, Zubrowka Province, I hereby place you under arrest for the murder of Madame Céline Villeneuve Desgoffe und Taxis.

M. GUSTAVE
(somehow vindicated)
I knew there was something fishy! We never got the cause of death! She's been murdered -- and you think I did it.

M. Gustave turns away and breaks into a sprint through the lobby. The police chase him. Zero watches, stunned.





