

THE KNICK

"Two As One"

Written By

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* Note: This spec was written roughly halfway through the first season of THE KNICK.

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. THACKERY'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Dr. Thackery's phone rings and he grunts awake. He shuffles towards a corner table, rubbing sleep from his eyes.

Crunch!

His foot comes down on an empty cocaine vial. Slices his heel.

DR. THACKERY

Shit!

The phone rings harsher, its tone amplified by excruciating pain.

Teeth gnash as Thackery extracts a glass shard from his foot. He tracks blood across the room as he hobbles towards the phone, desperate to stop the ringing.

Finally --

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

Speak!

(listening)

Yes. Why? Why not?

(listening)

That's not a valid reason. Christ, Barrow, I don't have patience for games right now.

(sighs, massages temples)

Fine.

He slams the receiver down.

QUICK CUTS as Thackery showers. Columns of steam billow up and engulf him. Bloody water pools in the drain.

He towels himself dry. Bandages his heel. Gets dressed -- everything except for his shoes.

He ambles over to his physician's bag and removes several empty cocaine vials.

Thackery rushes to his desk. Rifles through it. Nothing. Tries his night stand. No dice.

He's completely out of cocaine.

EXT. ELI LILLY WAREHOUSE - DAY

Wisps of fog roll off cobblestones as horse-drawn carriages click-clack past.

Thackery, his eyes black-and-red smudges, browbeats the ELI LILLY REP.

DR. THACKERY

I couldn't care less if it's new and improved! What do you expect me to tell my patients who need it now?

ELI LILLY REP

You're preaching to the choir, Doctor. I was informed the cocaine would arrive this afternoon. All I'm offering you is the truth.

DR. THACKERY

A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.

(checks pocketwatch)

I'll be seeing you later.

ELI LILLY REP

(dabs forehead with kerchief)

Looking forward to it.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

Turn of the century opulence. Ostrich leather chairs. Ornatly framed paintings. Ebony bookshelves with hand-carved inlays.

Cornelia Robertson sits in a board meeting with her father's FINANCIAL ADVISORS and ATTORNEYS.

FINANCIAL ADVISOR

We are underfunded, Ms. Robertson. The Knickerbocker Project has consumed its budget for the rest of the year. Unless we re-prioritize, it will cripple us.

Herman Barrow is present, but might as well not be. He looks like he hasn't slept in weeks.

Barrow may wield authority at the hospital, but his invitation to this meeting was just a formality, and he knows it. As such, he steers clear of the verbal fracas.

ATTORNEY

(to Cornelia)

I know this is difficult for you...
difficult for all of us, but the
truth of the matter is that --

CORNELIA

The truth of the matter, gentlemen,
is that it is not your place to
tell me how to run my father's
company. The company he built on
his own, from nothing. The company
at which you are still currently
employed.

Cornelia postures up.

CORNELIA (CONT'D)

Unless there's anything else you
wish to discuss, I have important
matters to attend to at the Knick.

AUGUST ROBERTSON (O.C.)

Cornelia.

She whips around, blanching at the sight of her father standing in the doorway. Barrow bolts upright.

BARROW

Captain Robertson... what an
unexpected surprise.

Robertson doffs his top hat at the men, then resets his sights on Cornelia.

AUGUST ROBERTSON

Gentlemen, if you'd be so kind as
to give us a moment.

Barrow and the men can't get out of there fast enough. Cornelia rises to her feet. Her father rests his hands on her shoulders.

CORNELIA

Father, I wasn't expecting you.

She desperately scans him for any tells.

AUGUST ROBERTSON
 (poker-faced)
 Came to check on what matters most.

CORNELIA
 You could have sent for me...
 spared yourself the trip.
 (swallows her fear)
 We were just discussing the Knick --
 although there have been hurdles,
 I'm optimistic about the hospital's
 future.

AUGUST ROBERTSON
 I'm a businessman, Neelie. The
 Knick is hemorrhaging money.

CORNELIA
 Father, we both know long term
 investments are prone to periods of
 instability. The situation is
 temporary. This will pass.

Robertson's eyes narrow. Cornelia focuses, kicks into another gear.

CORNELIA (CONT'D)
 And I don't want to belabor the
 point, but we mustn't forget the
 sweat equity we've invested into
 this project. Riches have wings,
 but the time and energy I've --
we've -- poured into the Knick,
 certainly you can see the value in
 that.

Robertson lifts his hand from Cornelia's shoulder and rests it on the side of her face.

AUGUST ROBERTSON
 Just because I can't count the
 value doesn't mean I don't see it.
 Appraising an investment's worth is
 all rather black-and-white to my
 accountants, however.

CORNELIA
 We'll change their minds.

AUGUST ROBERTSON
 I'm sorry, Neelie. I truly am. If
 you can't stop the bleeding by the
 end of this quarter, I'll be forced
 to cut my losses.

ACT ONE**INT. GALLINGER HOUSE - DAY**

Gallinger cradles his adopted infant daughter, Grace. A palpable sense of despair suffocates the house. It's cold. Lifeless. No longer a home.

DR. CHARLES SANDERS (52), with a reddish-grey beard and held together by his suspenders, approaches him. Sanders is the psychiatrist treating Gallinger's wife, Eleanor.

Eleanor lies on her bed. Stiff as a plank. Wrapped in a cocoon of bedsheets. She doesn't move. Or blink.

Her eyes are deep-set, void of color. The men speak in hushed tones.

DR. SANDERS

Have you thought about what we discussed?

DR. GALLINGER

There's nothing to think about.
What we discussed isn't an option.

Dr. Sanders hangs his head. Scratches his beard.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)

There must be an alternative.

DR. SANDERS

There isn't. She's not improving.

DR. GALLINGER

I refuse to send my wife to a sanitarium.

DR. SANDERS

A change of scenery might be just what she needs. Upstate New York is angelic this time of year. I work closely with --

DR. GALLINGER

Save your breath, Charles. She belongs here. I'll hire a caregiver.

(projecting strength)

She'll turn the corner.

Gallinger steals a glance at Eleanor. The look in his eyes says he isn't so sure...

INT. DECREPIT TENEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Cleary and Pouncey stand in the cramped, dimly-lit hallway of a rat infested hellhole. Every surface caked in a layer of grime. The building's elderly LANDLORD knocks on an apartment door.

A YOUNG BOY (6), answers. He's freckled, with a busted lip. He clutches a stuffed owl with its head torn off.

Behind the boy, a trail of blood snakes its way across the floor. Cleary, noticing, eases the creaky door open the rest of the way.

The boy's mother lies on the floor, unconscious. Beaten to a pulp. Bleeding from a deep laceration on her head.

POUNCEY

What the shite...

The boy steps aside as Cleary and Pouncey enter.

INT. DECREPIT TENEMENT APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Cleary zeroes in on the boys' FATHER, who sways on the edge of his bed. The man's swollen knuckles clamped around an empty fifth of bourbon.

CLEARY

What happened here?

The man's lips crease into a smile, flashing a glimpse of gnarled, piss-colored teeth. He snickers.

CLEARY (CONT'D)

I asked ya what happened.

FATHER

She took a spill is all. Likes to play dramatic. Likes the attention.

Cleary glares. The man flops backwards onto his bed, chuckling. Empty bottle clanks onto the floor.

CLEARY

(to young boy)

What's your name, son?

The boy averts his gaze, clutches his torn owl. Cleary kneels so that they're eye level.

CLEARY (CONT'D)
 My name's Cleary.
 (motions)
 This here's Pouncey. We've come to
 help your mother. Is that okay?

The boy nods. Cleary nods back and motions to Pouncey to come help.

Pouncey unrolls the canvas stretcher he's holding. Helps Cleary load the mother onto it. The boy silently watches.

Copious amounts of blood run down Cleary's hands as he gingerly cradles the woman's head. He finishes positioning her.

YOUNG BOY/THOMAS
 I'm Thomas.

Cleary looks at the boy, surprised.

CLEARY
 Ever gone for a ride in an
 ambulance, Tommy?

The boy shakes his head "no."

CLEARY (CONT'D)
 Tell ya what... why don't ya come
 down to the Knick with Pouncey and
 me so you can look after your
 mother.
 (to Pouncey)
 Pouncey'll let you crank the siren,
 aint' that right?

POUNCEY
 S'right.

Thomas nods. He plucks his decapitated stuffed owl's head off the floor and follows them out.

INT. GALLINGER HOUSE - DAY

Gallinger barely keeps it together as he kisses Eleanor. Desperately searches her eyes for any signs of life.

Across the room, NURSE MONK (20's), a part-time nurse at the Knick, coos as she gently rocks baby Grace in her bassinet.

Gallinger walks over to Grace. Vacillates for a moment. Gently rests his hand on her chest as she breathes. She's strong. Healthy. Full of life.

He turns and removes money from his billfold and hands it to Nurse Monk. She pockets it and smiles.

NURSE MONK

Thank you.

DR. GALLINGER

No, thank you... for assisting me on such short notice.

(stares at billfold,
blinking)

I... was that enough? I don't know the going rate for this kind of thing.

(goes for another bill)

Here, I should give you more --

Nurse Monk clasps her hand over his.

NURSE MONK

You've given me more than enough.

(off his hesitation)

I assure you.

DR. GALLINGER

(clears throat)

You're certain?

NURSE MONK

(firm)

It's plenty.

Gallinger steals one last glance at Eleanor.

NURSE MONK (CONT'D)

Eleanor and Grace will be waiting for you when you get back.

DR. GALLINGER

I... suppose I should be on my way, then.

NURSE MONK

Good day, Dr. Gallinger.

Gallinger grabs his doctor's bag.

DR. GALLINGER

Good day.

INT. KNICK - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

An out-of-focus, flesh-colored blob squirms in the foreground. Thackery enters. His jaw drops as he closes the door behind him.

He approaches the blurry figure. Drops his physician's bag. Leans in close, hovering inches from it.

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal the object of Thackery's fascination: a pair of conjoined twins. Baby girls. Connected at the upper abdomen. Facing one another.

Barrow, perched next to a COUPLE wearing custom tailored, high-wrought attire, breaks the silence.

BARROW

Dr. Thackery, I'd like to introduce you to Mr. And Mrs. Astor... heirs to the Astor fortune.

DR. THACKERY

(eyes glued to the twins)
Pleased to meet you.

MR. ASTOR

The pleasure is ours, Dr. Thackery. We came to you because every other surgeon we've consulted insists separating our girls is a lost cause.

Thackery palpates the flesh bridge connecting the infants.

DR. THACKERY

I'm inclined to agree with that assessment.

Barrow squirms.

BARROW

You should know that Mr. Astor was gracious enough to sign an affidavit earlier. In it, he promises the Knick a very generous donation-

Mr. Astor steps forward.

MR. ASTOR

-if you can bless my beautiful wife and I with just one, normal child.

DR. THACKERY

This type of surgery has been attempted many times throughout history. Every single one has ended in complete disaster.

Thackery continues studying the twins. Clear, watery mucus runs from his nose. Early cocaine withdrawal. He sniffles. Wipes it away, his hand trembling slightly.

MR. ASTOR

I've read up on you, Dr. Thackery. You're a trailblazer. Cutting-edge advancements in the management of appendicitis. The ingenious placenta previa procedure you co-developed with the late Dr. Christiansen. Hernia repair using a revolutionary silver mesh. Time and again, you've succeeded where others have failed.

DR. THACKERY

My ego thanks you, Mr. Astor, but, with the exception of the previa procedure, the advancements you speak of involve pathologies affecting a single individual. Even in the previa cases, mother and child are two separate entities, connected only by an umbilical cord. Your daughters are xiphopagus conjoined twins.

Thackery motions with his finger.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

They're coupled by a flesh bridge starting here, at the xiphoid process, and ending here, just above the umbilicus. I'm not worried about bisecting dermis, or cartilage... but your daughters share vasculature. Possibly even portions of their livers.

BARROW

Dr. Thackery, if anyone can solve the riddle, it's surely you. With the Robertsons losing faith in the Knick, this opportunity couldn't have come at a finer time.

MR. ASTOR

The "opportunities" you speak of
are named Claire and Hannah, Mr.
Barrow.

Barrow winces. Mrs. Astor clears her throat.

MRS. ASTOR

With all due respect, Doctor, if
you doubt the possibility of my
baby girls surviving separation,
then I'd rather not risk their
lives.

The gears in Thackery's head turn. Mr. Astor, sensing this --

MR. ASTOR

It's a daunting task, Dr. Thackery,
but surgeons have come close in the
past. If you plant the flag just a
few feet further, you'll be the
most famous physician in the world.

Even Barrow looks impressed.

MR. ASTOR (CONT'D)

Several doctors have informed us
that if one of our daughters falls
ill while they're connected,
they'll likely both die.

DR. THACKERY

It certainly makes sense.

MR. ASTOR

Given that information, we'd like
to move forward with this as
quickly as possible.

Thackery runs a trembling hand through his hair.

DR. THACKERY

I need to formulate a plan.
(to Barrow)
In the meantime, notify and
assemble my surgical staff.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. KNICK - SURGICAL THEATER - DAY**

Thackery, sweating profusely and grinding his teeth, paces in front of Doctors Gallinger, Edwards, and Chickering Jr.

Behind him a chalkboard -- every inch covered in diagrams of conjoined twins, infant anatomy, and surgical techniques.

Barrow, flanked by half a dozen medical students, watches from the observation deck.

DR. THACKERY

After cutting open the flesh
bridge, we will proceed to double-
ligate every blood vessel
connecting the twins, leaving at
least an inch between ligatures.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

Why are we applying two ligatures
per vessel?

DR. THACKERY

(irritated)
Let me finish, Bertie, and you'll
have your answer.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

I'm sorry.

Thackery, noticing his hands shaking, clasps them behind his back. Continues pacing.

DR. THACKERY

After double-ligating the
vasculature, we will continue to
administer anaesthesia to the twins
for approximately half an hour.
During this time, we will closely
monitor their vitals. This step
will prove critical in deciding
whether we push forward with the
actual separation. If both infants'
vitals take a turn for the worse,
we will abort the procedure by
removing the ligatures and suturing
the initial incision.

Thackery points to an anatomy diagram on the chalkboard.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

My hope, however, is that after being separated from each other's blood supplies, one of the infants will emerge as the more robust of the two: she'll have her own, autonomous circulatory system, a more developed liver, and her vitals should reflect that.

Thackery eyes Chickering Jr.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

Once the stronger twin shows herself, Bertie, we simply snip the connecting vasculature between our pre-tied ligatures, keeping blood loss to a minimum.

Chickering Jr. nods, "got it." Edwards clears his throat.

DR. EDWARDS

What if both infant's vitals remain strong during the monitoring phase? Shouldn't we try to save both?

DR. THACKERY

Although that is a possibility, it is highly unlikely. One will weigh more, have better muscle tone, healthier coloration. We will pour all of our energy into the infant with the better chance at survival.

Thackery, noticing Gallinger's thousand-yard stare, taps the chalkboard.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

You with me, Gallinger?

DR. GALLINGER

(shaking cobwebs loose)
... I am.

DR. THACKERY

Are you sure?

DR. GALLINGER

(recovering)
Just going through the procedure in my mind's eye... making sure I've got all the steps down. It's a sound plan, Thack.

Thackery nods.

MEDICAL STUDENT (O.C.)
 Dr. Thackery, is there no safer
 method of determining whether the
 twins are indeed two as one?

Thackery snaps the piece of chalk he's holding in half.

DR. THACKERY
 (to Barrow)
 I don't mind a fly on a wall, but I
 mind ones that buzz around and
 annoy me. Why did you bring medical
 students, again?

BARROW
 They're about to become residents.
 They likely won't come across
 another learning opportunity like
 this in their lifetimes.

DR. THACKERY
 (points to chalkboard)
 Does this look like Introduction to
 Anatomy and Kinesiology?

MEDICAL STUDENT
 My apologies, Dr. Tha--

DR. THACKERY
 (to medical student)
 Shut your mouth!

Thackery glares at Barrow.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
 Your testicles reside in your
 scrotum, Barrow. Either locate them
 and defend yourself, or do us all a
 favor and let your precious medical
 students castrate you. The
 procedure is surprisingly simple.
 Perhaps if they put their heads
 together, they'll be able to muster
 the collective mental horsepower
 necessary to perform it.

BARROW
 (thoroughly emasculated)
 I... made an exception.
 (motions to students)
 They come from prominent
 families...

(MORE)

BARROW (CONT'D)
 families whose wealth and influence
 might be of service to us one day.

Thackery shuts his eyes.

DR. THACKERY
 And the truth shall set you free...

He rests two fingers over his carotid artery, taking his own pulse. Rhythmically clenches his other fist.

He snaps his eyes open. Stares at Barrow like he's about to rip his head clean off.

Barrow turns, addresses the students.

BARROW
 That'll be all. I hope you've
 learned something valuable.

The students get up and file out. Barrow turns to face Thackery, who motions "the exit's that way." Barrow turns to leave.

As he grabs the door handle --

DR. THACKERY
 Imbecile.

Barrow pauses, then walks out.

INT. KNICK - THACKERY'S OFFICE - DAY

Thackery fidgets at his desk. Rifles through medical texts and images of conjoined twins. Vigorously chews a wad of Wrigley's gum to keep from gnawing his own fingers off.

There's a knock at the door.

DR. THACKERY
 Come in.

Gallinger enters. Thackery offers up some Wrigley's.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
 Chewing gum?

DR. GALLINGER
 No, thank you. May I sit?

Thackery nods. Wipes a slick of sweat off his forehead with his kerchief.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
I was hoping to discuss my position
here at the Knick.

DR. THACKERY
(genuine concern)
Don't make any rash decisions,
Everett. If you need some time
away, take it. With everything
that's happened... you'd be wise to
take a break, spend time with
Eleanor. You'll come back
revitalized and clearheaded.

Gallinger sets his jaw.

DR. GALLINGER
I didn't come to ask for time off,
Thack. And you should know that I'm
thinking more clearly than ever.

Gallinger leans forward.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
Barrow told me about the hospital's
financial crisis. With the
Robertsons almost certain to pull
funding, Edwards can no longer hide
behind their money... behind their
vener of power. I've come to ask
for the promotion you promised me.
I deserve to be your Assistant
Chief Surgeon.

Thackery temples his fingers. Considers this.

DR. THACKERY
The Robertson's influence was no
vener, Gallinger. My hands were
tied. You know that. But you bring
up a valid point. If the separation
is a success, the Astor money means
I'll be able to play by my own
rules.

DR. GALLINGER
Very well. If the surgery is a
success, then you'll promote me?

DR. THACKERY
On the spot. You're my protégé,
Everett. You deserve the job.

DR. GALLINGER

Thank you, Thack. I'll let you get back to your preparations, and I'll get back to mine.

Gallinger gets up, heads for the door.

DR. THACKERY

Gallinger, regarding the separation attempt --

Gallinger faces Thackery.

DR. GALLINGER

I know what you're about to say, and I'm telling you I won't slow you down in there.

Thackery grins.

Gallinger nods, turns, and leaves.

Thackery's smile vanishes as he removes his hand from behind his desk. It trembles even worse than before.

He raises it to his face, inspecting it. Balls it into a fist and smashes it into his desk.

INT. KNICK - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Cleary and Thomas wait while Chickering finishes examining the boy's mother.

Chickering lifts her lips. Examines her gums. They're pale. He lifts her eyelids. Studies her pupils.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

She's in a concussion-induced coma. Lost a lot of blood as well.

CLEARY

(grim faced)

Is there anything that can be done?

DR. CHICKERING JR.

No. All we can do is wait... hope for the best.

Thomas looks up at Cleary with big, glinting eyes. Clutches his torn stuffed owl harder than ever.

THOMAS

Will my mum be okay, Mr. Cleary?

Cleary places his hand on Thomas' head.

CLEARY

Do me a favor Tommy and wait
outside with Pouncey. I'll be along
in a minute.

THOMAS

Yes, sir.

Cleary watches Thomas leave, then turns to Chickering.

CLEARY

What are her odds, Doc?

DR. CHICKERING JR.

I'd say fifty/fifty.

Cleary shuts his eyes. Cracks his neck, exhaling loudly.
Snaps them back open.

CLEARY

Right.

He doffs his cap at Chickering and lumbers out.

EXT. KNICK - AMBULANCE BAY - DAY

Pouncey, smoking a cigarette, rummages through a toolbox. A pair of worn-out yoke couplings lay by his feet. Thomas sits on a bale of hay and watches.

Pouncey pulls out a replacement coupling. Compares it with the worn-out one. Shakes his head. Wrong size. Removes another spare. As he inspects it --

POUNCEY

Tell ya what, Tommy. How about you
make yourself useful and feed the
horses.

THOMAS

Sure, Mr. Pouncey. Where's their
food?

POUNCEY

You're sittin' on it.

Thomas gets off the hay. Grabs a handful and offers it up to one of the horses. The horse devours it. Thomas smiles. Feeds the other horse a handful. Pouncey keeps rummaging.

THOMAS

What are you looking for, Mr. Pouncey?

POUNCEY

New set of yoke couplings.

THOMAS

What are they for?

POUNCEY

(sighs)

They connect the horses to the rig.

Thomas feeds the horses more hay. Their tongues slobber all over his arm.

THOMAS

(smiles)

That tickles.

POUNCEY

Don't give'em too much, or you'll be up shoveling horse shite way past your bedtime.

THOMAS

Yes, sir.

Thomas stops feeding them. Walks over with his torn stuffed owl.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

So you're good at fixing things?

POUNCEY

When I'm left in peace to concentrate.

Cleary approaches unseen as Thomas offers his stuffed owl's head and torso to Pouncey.

THOMAS

Can you fix Herbert?

POUNCEY

No point. Your old man'll just rip him apart again the next time he gets liquored up.

Cleary smacks Pouncey upside his head. Hits him so hard he knocks his cap clean off.

POUNCEY (CONT'D)
Ow! The hell was that?

CLEARY
(to Thomas)
Don't listen to the fool. I'll take you to someone who can fix your friend. You said his name's Herbert?

TOMMY
Uh-huh.

CLEARY
Fine name for an owl.

Cleary turns to Pouncey. Narrows his eyes.

CLEARY (CONT'D)
How's about you get the rig fixed before we get our next call.

POUNCEY
None of the spare couplings fit.

CLEARY
So mosey over to the goddamn tack shop and buy new ones.
(to Thomas)
Let's go, Tommy.

Thomas follows Cleary towards Sister Harriet's orphanage.

CLEARY (CONT'D)
(over shoulder, to Pouncey)
And save the receipt for Barrow --
(under his breath)
-- the cheap bastard.

INT. KNICK - SURGICAL THEATER - DAY

Packed to the gills. Surgeons, The Astors, August and Cornelia Robertson, resident physicians, and even a few well-connected politicians and glitterati have come to witness this once-in-a-lifetime show.

Sister Harriet dabs holy water onto the twins while reciting a few *Hail Mary's*.

DR. EDWARDS
 (under breath)
 I believe the Astors are
 Protestants.

SISTER HARRIET
 (motions to twins)
 And I'm makin' sure the good Lord
 doesn't hold it against 'em.

Sister Harriet finishes her prayers and takes a seat up in the observation section. She holds her chin high as Mr. Astor scowls at her.

Dr. Chickering and Nurse Elkins administer ether to the twins using infant-sized mouthpieces and rubber air pumps.

All eyes on Thackery as he grabs his scalpel and prepares to make the initial incision -- but it's impossible not to notice his trembling hands.

DR. EDWARDS
 Dr. Thackery?

No reply as Thackery perspires under hot white light. Wipes sweat from his firecracker-red eyes. Murmurs erupt from the audience.

Thackery turns, addresses them.

DR. THACKERY
 I'm afraid what began as stomach
 cramps earlier may in fact be food
 poisoning. Luckily, my surgeons
 have been thoroughly briefed on
 every aspect of the procedure.

Thackery turns, offering up his scalpel. Edwards instinctively reaches for it, but Thackery's hand glides past his and sets it firmly in Gallinger's palm.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
 (to audience)
 My protégé, Dr. Gallinger, will
 take the reigns while I instruct my
 team and closely monitor the
 operation.

Edwards, technically second-in-command, is about to object. He decides against it after scanning the observation decks: a sea of white faces.

In the audience, Mr. Astor clasps his wife's hand inside his, tracing her knuckles with his thumb. It's hard to tell who's more nervous.

The first, and least technical part of the procedure, commences.

Thackery quarterbacks his team as:

- Gallinger slices open the flesh bridge.
- Bloody skin flaps are clamped down and secured.
- Surgical forceps are inserted into the abdominal cavity.
- Diligent hands work fast to ligate engorged vasculature.
- Blood soaked gauze is dropped into a container. Then another. And another.

INT. KNICK - SURGICAL THEATER - LATER

The team's finished, for now. The twins are stable. Thackery, shaking and sweating, addresses the audience up in the decks.

DR. THACKERY

Ladies and gentlemen, all vasculature connecting the twins has been tied off. Nutrients, oxygen, enzymes, and waste products can no longer pass between them. We will now monitor them for a short period of time. If their vitals remain stable, we will move on to the separation.

Thackery turns away from the audience and pulls his surgical team aside into a huddle. He removes his pocketwatch, smearing it with blood.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

Doctors Edwards and Chickering, monitor the twins' vitals closely.

(checks his watch)

Dr. Gallinger, it's a quarter past two. I'm going to fetch something for my stomach. If I haven't returned in thirty minutes, come get me in my office. If the twins' vitals take a turn for the worse, and I'm not back, remove the ligatures and abort the procedure.

DR. GALLINGER

(nods)

Understood.

DR. THACKERY

Nurse Elkins, restock all surgical supplies. We must be ready to go as soon as I return.

Only a thirty minute window for Thackery to obtain his cocaine and return to the Knick.

Thackery rushes out of the surgical theater.

OFF the splayed-open twins...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. KNICK - DAY**

It's "rush hour," and Thackery, unable to flag down a horse-drawn carriage, sees his salvation: the Knick's ambulance. He runs over to the --

AMBULANCE BAY

DR. THACKERY
(looking around)
Cleary! Pouncey!

They're both gone.

Desperate, Thackery tosses his physician's bag behind the dashboard, steps onto the rig's footplate, and hoists himself up onto the carriage perch.

He takes up the reins, clutching them with a vice-like grip.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
Hiya!

He cracks the reins and the horses launch forward, except there's no couplings connecting their yoke to the carriage chassis.

The horses bolt free, and the front of the undercarriage slams down as Thackery, still clenching the reins, explodes out of his seat.

Thackery, catapulted through the air, hits the ground like a sack of grain. The horses run off. Thackery lies on the hard-packed dirt, writhing and making guttural noises.

EXT. KNICK - CONTINUOUS

Pouncey, whistling, heads back towards the Knick with the new yoke couplings. He's startled out of his leisurely stroll by the sight of his own horses, still connected by their trace and tack, galloping towards him.

He drops the couplings, shoots both hands up, and blocks their path.

POUNCEY
Whoa! Whoa!

EXT. AMBULANCE BAY - CONTINUOUS

Thackery finally catches his breath, moans, and rolls onto his back. Caked in dirt, he groans and sits up.

He blinks several times as he gazes at the now horseless ambulance. Remembers his mission. Checks his trusty pocketwatch.

And then he sees it, like a gift from the gods, staring him right in the face: Nurse Elkin's cornflower blue bicycle.

He hobbles over to the bike, scoops his doctor's bag off the ground, tosses it over one of the bike's handlebars, and makes a mad dash towards the Eli Lilly warehouse.

Ring-ring! Ring-ring!

As Thackery zooms off, frantically ringing the bike's bell, he pedals right past Pouncey, who trots the horses back by their reins.

DR. THACKERY
(yelling at pedestrians)
Out of my way! Move!

Ring-ring! Ring-ring! Ring-ring!

Pouncey does a double-take at the sight of Thackery, dirty and disheveled, weaving through traffic on the bicycle.

EXT. ELI LILLY WAREHOUSE - DAY

Storefronts are packed. Customers haggle vendors. Couples stroll past, chatting away. Taxis click-clack along.

Thackery arrives as crates of the "new and improved" cocaine are unloaded.

Thackery ditches Nurse Elkin's bicycle and marches up to the Eli Lilly rep. He removes a crumpled wad of cash from his breast pocket.

ELI LILLY REP
(shitting bricks)
Dr. Thackery. What a pleasant surprise.

DR. THACKERY
(holding out cash)
Here. I'm in a hurry.

ELI LILLY REP

You've arrived a bit early. As you can see, we're unloading the shipment, and I need to take inventory.

Thackery isn't hearing any of this. He throws his money at the rep, which flutters all over the place, and grabs a nearby crowbar.

As he bashes one of the crates to smithereens --

ELI LILLY REP (CONT'D)

Stop! Dr. Thackery! Stop that at once!

DR. THACKERY

(not stopping)

You'll take my money --

(bash!)

and keep your trap shut --

(bash!)

if you know what's good for you!

ELI LILLY REP

(moving towards Thackery)

You're acting like a madman!

Thackery, snarling, whips around and takes a swing at the rep.

DR. THACKERY

This madman will cave your goddamn skull in if you take a single step closer!

Thackery continues bashing the crate.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

This is because of you!

(bash!)

This is your fault!

(bash!)

This is what happens --

(bash!)

-- when you shit on paying customers!

Bash!

The crate bursts apart.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
 (breathing heavily)
 They shit right back on you!

Thackery tosses the prybar aside and scoops as many cocaine boxes into his doctor's bag as will fit.

INT. GALLINGER HOUSE - DAY

A tin basin filled with warm, soapy water sits adjacent Eleanor's bed. Nurse Monk gently maneuvers Eleanor onto her side. Lays towels underneath her. Carefully undresses her and gives her a sponge-bath.

NURSE MONK
 (bathing Eleanor)
 Sometimes, good things fall apart
 so that better things can fall
 together.

Eleanor is an apparition of her former self. It's obvious her mind is completely deteriorated, and her body is withering away.

NURSE MONK (CONT'D)
 After your bath, how about we try
 and get some food in you? We need
 you to get your strength back...
 for Grace and Everett.

Nurse Monk sings *A Bird in a Gilded Cage* as she bathes Eleanor.

INT. KNICK - SURGICAL THEATER - DAY

Edwards and Chickering monitor the twins' vitals while Nurse Elkins restocks surgical supplies.

The Astors, staring at their clamped-open, conjoined daughters, grow restless.

Gallinger sits in the corner, pocketwatch in hand, but might as well not even be there. He's glassy-eyed, with a vacant, far-off stare.

DR. EDWARDS
 Dr. Gallinger, I believe we're
 coming up on thirty minutes.

Gallinger snaps out of it.

DR. GALLINGER
 (checking pocketwatch)
 Right.

He gets up and heads for the door.

EXT. KNICK - DAY

Thackery returns to the Knick with his medication. He unhooks his doctor's bag from the bicycle's handlebars and just drops the bike, letting it crash to the ground.

As he storms off, he checks his pocketwatch one last time before vanishing into the hospital.

INT. KNICK - THACKERY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Thackery, barefoot, with his cocaine injection in hand, curls his toes a few times to get the blood pumping.

On his desk sits a torn-open ampoule box with the ad copy "now 30% more effective" prominently visible.

He primes the injection, then spikes it in-between his toes. As he depresses the plunger with his thumb --

Gallinger knocks on his door.

DR. THACKERY
 Just a minute!

Thackery presses down harder, grimacing from the pressure buildup in his foot.

DR. GALLINGER (O.C.)
 Thack? Are you alright? It's been thirty minutes.

DR. THACKERY
 I'm fine!
 (muffled)
 Fuck!
 (to Gallinger)
 I'll be right out!

He injects the last of the cocaine solution. We "see the bell ring" in Thackery's head, *but then it goes beyond that.*

Thackery's pupils dilate inside red-rimmed eyes as the cocaine hits him like a sledgehammer.

QUICK CUTS as Thackery shoves his foot into his shoe. Laces up. Hobbles to the door. Steadies himself against the wall for a moment. Shakes his head. Exits his office.

INT. SISTER HARRIET'S ORPHANAGE - DAY

Cornelia introduces Thomas to the other children. Cleary pulls Sister Harriet aside.

CLEARY

Tommy's gonna need to stay at the orphanage. His mother suffered an accident. He might be here for a while.

SISTER HARRIET

The children are double-bunked as is. We don't have the resources we used to. We don't have any more room.

CLEARY

You'll make room.

Cleary turns to go.

SISTER HARRIET

You said his mother had an accident. What about his father? Can't he care for the boy?

Cleary whips around. His expression turns Harriet's blood to ice.

CLEARY

His father suffered an accident, too.

Cleary makes for the door.

SISTER HARRIET

What kind of accident?...
Cleary!... What happened?!?

CLEARY

(over his shoulder)
Just mind the boy, Harrie.

Cleary leaves. Cornelia approaches Harriet with Thomas.

CORNELIA

(to Thomas)
Go ahead... ask her.

Thomas, not used to the sight of a nun's habit, hesitates. Harriet leans down, greets him with a warm smile.

SISTER HARRIET
It's alright, child. Don't be
frightened by this silly old
garment.

Thomas holds up both pieces of his stuffed owl.

THOMAS
Can you fix Herbert?

INT. KNICK - SURGICAL THEATER - DAY

Thackery and Gallinger return to the operating theater. Thackery, cleaned up now, sports a crisp white surgical smock.

A calm immediately settles over the Astors and the rest of crowd at the sight of Thackery. Chickering, removing his stethoscope --

DR. CHICKERING JR.
Dr. Edwards and I have been
monitoring the twins as per your
instructions. The infant on the
left, Claire, has stronger vitals.

Thackery, oozing confidence, moves a mile-a-minute.

DR. THACKERY
Then it's Claire's lucky day. Good
work.

DR. EDWARDS
Dr. Thackery, if I may, Hannah's
vitals aren't far below normal.
Perhaps we can try and save both.

Thackery, flanked by Gallinger, glides into position. Hovers over the twins like a God.

He glances at Hannah, the weaker twin, and shakes his head.

DR. THACKERY
She's living dead. We'll follow my
protocol: save the one with the
better chance at survival.

DR. EDWARDS

But why not try for both? At the very least, it will double our chances of saving one.

DR. GALLINGER

You're wrong, Edwards. If we divide our attention, our resources, we'll decrease our chances.

Thackery holds his hand out.

DR. THACKERY

Nurse Elkins... scalpel.

Before Nurse Elkins can hand him the scalpel, Thackery clenches his chest. He clutches onto Gallinger's shoulder to ballast himself.

DR. GALLINGER

Thack!

DR. CHICKERING JR.

Dr. Thackery!

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

(recovering)

I'm fine. Just a stomach cramp.

Edwards stares at him, dubious. In the observation section, Mr. and Mrs. Astor lean forward in their seats.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)

(firm)

I'll take that scalpel, now.

Nurse Elkins hands Thackery the blade as the team nervously glances at each other.

Thackery goes about his scalpel-work at a machine gun pace, the rest of his team struggling to keep up.

He pauses for a moment. Scans the room, blinking rapidly, then shakes his head as if trying to keep from flying off the rails.

DR. EDWARDS

Dr. Thackery? Are you sure you're fine?

Thackery doesn't even answer. He just resumes cutting. The team locks into rhythm. Vacuuming. Suturing. Cauterizing. Everyone pushed to the brink to keep up with Thackery.

After all the vasculature is dissected, Thackery slices into the twins' connected liver tissue. He makes sure to leave slightly more for the healthier twin.

And then it happens. Everyone moving so fast they barely have time to register it. Thackery hands baby Hannah to Edwards, and the entire room is stunned.

For the first time in their lives, the conjoined twins are no longer connected.

A hush falls over the room. Mouths hang open. Shock and awe.

Mrs. Astor covers her mouth, tears running down her face and onto her calfskin gloves. Mr. Astor pulls her close and struggles for composure. He kisses her on the forehead.

Edwards carefully walks Hannah to a second surgical table. He stares at her for a few moments, a thousand thoughts racing through his mind.

He pulls himself together and moves to return to his station, but he's been boxed-out: Thackery, Gallinger, Chickering, and Nurse Elkins form a human wall around Claire, and are already working completely in-sync.

Edwards scans the dozens of rapt faces in the observation deck -- all eyes on Thackery and his team.

He walks back over to Hannah, the "throwaway twin," and starts working on her.

Thackery steals a quick peek over his shoulder and continues working on Claire.

DR. THACKERY

It's pointless, Edwards.

DR. EDWARDS

You seem to have things under control over there. I see no harm in trying.

DR. THACKERY

It's a lost cause... besides, we might need it for extra skin.

Edwards doesn't listen. He's decided that he's going to save Hannah. That he's going to prove everyone wrong. *The defining struggle of his life.*

On the other side of the room, a scalpel clanks onto the floor.

Thackery takes a knee and violently dry-heaves, clutching his chest as if to keep his heart from exploding out of it.

DR. GALLINGER
Jesus! Thack!

NURSE ELKINS
John!

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
I'm fi--

He's interrupted by another bout of dry heaving. The audience gasps. Thackery wipes his face, composes himself.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
(hyperventilating)
It's the food poisoning. I'm too ill to continue. Gallinger, continue the procedure... exactly as planned.

Thackery scrambles to his feet, struggles for a deep breath.

DR. GALLINGER
Are you alright, Thack?

DR. CHICKERING JR.
Do you need medical attention?

DR. THACKERY
I'm a grown man with an upset stomach! Stop worrying about me and worry about the goddamn infant on the operating table!

As Thackery leaves, he palms a handful of Morphine vials.

In the audience, Mr. Astor turns to Barrow as Mrs. Astor watches on in disbelief.

MR. ASTOR
What's happening? Where's Dr. Thackery going?

Barrow doesn't have an answer for him.

Gallinger glares at Edwards. Edwards stares back, dagger-eyed.

They size each other up like prizefighters, each standing over one of the twins.

Industrial-strength tension grips the room.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**EXT. KNICK - AMBULANCE BAY - DAY**

Cleary stalks past Pouncey. Sees the worn-out couplings on the ground. Senses Pouncey's nervous energy. Turns around.

CLEARY
You fix the rig?

POUNCEY
Just finished.

Cleary's eyes study the ambulance... then the horses.

CLEARY
Somethin' happen?

POUNCEY
What do you mean?

CLEARY
The horses look spooked.

Pouncey glances at the horses, then back at Cleary. Removes a fresh cigarette.

CLEARY (CONT'D)
And you're acting strange. Like
you're hidin' something.

POUNCEY
(lights cigarette)
Well I ain't.

Cleary harrumphs and removes a rusted claw hammer from the toolbox. He stomps past Pouncey and climbs up onto the ambulance.

CLEARY
Wait by the phone.

POUNCEY
Where you off to? What happens if
we get calls?

The horses whinny and grunt as Cleary cracks his seat. He grabs the reigns --

CLEARY
Route 'em to Bellevue.

Pouncey stares at him like he's gone mad. Cleary speeds off, disappearing into a whirling vortex of dust and silt.

INT. KNICK - SURGICAL THEATER - DAY

With Thackery gone, it's officially Gallinger vs. Edwards.

The onlookers are at the edge of their seats -- this is more exciting than they could have ever hoped for.

The Astors, on the other hand, look deeply troubled, but are powerless to do anything. Barrow's pale as a ghost.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

Dr. Edwards! We need your assistance!

DR. GALLINGER

No we don't!

Too busy to argue, Chickering resumes operating.

Even though Gallinger has Chickering and Nurse Elkins assisting him, Edwards is a machine: he's blazing fast, and uses advanced European suturing techniques.

At first glance, Edwards appears to be the more composed of the two --

DR. EDWARDS

(quietly, to Hannah)

Looks like we're stuck with each other. You don't quit on me, I won't quit on you. That's our pact.

-- but upon closer inspection, his calm facade barely conceals the hurricane raging just under the surface.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM, Claire takes a turn for the worse as Gallinger works to locate a blood leak.

NURSE ELKINS

(monitoring stethoscope)

Pulse is weakening.

DR. GALLINGER

Clamp!

Gallinger gropes around inside Claire's abdomen, which slowly fills with blood. Chickering hands him a clamp.

NURSE ELKINS

Pulse has become eccentric.

DR. CHICKERING JR.
 (quiet urgency)
 We need Edwards.

DR. GALLINGER
 What I need is for you to vacuum!
 I'm seeing fuck-all!

Chickering moves in with Edwards' electric vacuum.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
 There's the leak!
 (to Chickering)
 At the portacaval anastomosis!
 (clamps it)
 I have it!
 (to Nurse Elkins)
 Warren's needle and gut! Quickly!

Chickering sees the leak. He vacuums. Nurse Elkins hands Gallinger a curved needle and thread.

Gallinger sutures up the leak, but his hands shake from the adrenalin overload. *Not used to being in the driver's seat.*

NURSE ELKINS
 Pulse is normalizing.

DR. GALLINGER
 There we go.

Gallinger knots off his catgut suture.

DR. CHICKERING JR.
 Well done, Everett.

Gallinger nods. Nurse Elkins uses gauze to dab sweat from his forehead.

DR. GALLINGER
 Surgical scissors, Nurse.

Nurse Elkins passes him the scissors. Gallinger glances up at Chickering.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
 (sigh of relief)
 I told you we didn't need that
 overrated ape.

DR. CHICKERING JR.
 Gallinger!

But it's too late. Gallinger snips excess thread, and accidentally catches Claire's common hepatic artery, severing it.

Chickering and Nurse Elkins watch on, horrified, as a torrent of blood roostertails up onto Gallinger's face.

INT. KNICK - THACKERY'S OFFICE - DAY

Thackery, morphine injection in-hand and bursting apart at the seams, scours himself for a vein, but he's collapsed everywhere.

At the end of his tether, he grabs a grease pencil, steadies his hand, and, using a wall-mounted mirror, marks a spot on his neck with the pencil.

It's his jugular vein.

His entire body shaking, he presses his shoulder against the wall to steady his arm, and uses his free hand to choke himself (making the jugular more prominent).

He makes peace with his sins, then spikes himself, in the jugular, with a massive dose of morphine (to counteract the cocaine overdose/keep from having a heart attack.)

As he slides the needle out, an avalanche of blood gushes from the puncture site.

He presses his kerchief tightly against the side of his neck and stumbles out of his office.

INT. KNICK - SURGICAL THEATER - DAY

Controlled chaos has been replaced by sheer panic. The Astors, along with the rest of the audience, squirm in their seats.

Gallinger's placed nearly a dozen clamps in Claire, but the blood keeps rising.

Chickering uses Edward's device to vacuum up the sea of red.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

Dr. Edwards! Come help us!

Edwards, working on Hannah, glances over.

DR. GALLINGER

No! I can save her!

DR. CHICKERING JR.
We need him! Edwards!

Edwards glances up again.

This time Gallinger smashes his blood-covered fist onto the surgical table, sending a tray of surgical instruments crashing to the ground.

DR. GALLINGER
(to Chickering)
I don't need him!

NURSE ELKINS
There's no pulse.

The electric vacuum, completely backed-up with blood, sputters and dies.

DR. GALLINGER
Clamps! More clamps!

Nurse Elkins removes her stethoscope, averts her gaze. Chickering stops working.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
Chickering! What are you doing?!?
I need clamps!

DR. CHICKERING JR.
We've lost her.

DR. GALLINGER
(voice cracks)
I can still save her! Do your goddamn job and help me!

DR. CHICKERING JR.
Everett... she's gone. Look at her.

Gallinger looks down. His hands are submerged knuckle-deep in blood.

He scans the stunned faces of everyone in the audience. The reality of the situation ripping through him like a chainsaw.

In a violent outburst, he grabs the side of the surgical table and launches it.

The operating table crashes onto its side. Claire, dead and mutilated, flops onto the floor.

Mr. Astor covers his wife's eyes and averts his gaze. The entire crowd, including the Astors, the Robertsons, and Barrow, decide they've seen enough and make for the exits.

Gallinger glares at Edwards, who's just as shocked and sickened as everyone else.

Edwards blocks out the distraction, however, and forces himself to continue working on Hannah... to keep his promise to her.

Gallinger storms out of the surgical theater and into the prep room.

Chickering covers Claire's corpse with a white linen sheet and races after Gallinger.

INT. KNICK - SURGICAL PREP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ceramic tile. Two back-to-back rows of sinks. Everything sterile.

Gallinger bursts into the room. Flies off the deep-end. He sledges a kick through a porcelain sink, shattering it.

He ravages other sinks, lockers, and walls before noticing Chickering watching in stunned silence.

DR. GALLINGER

You didn't believe I could do it!
No one did!

DR. CHICKERING JR.

That's not true, Everett.

DR. GALLINGER

Yes it is! Even now I can see it on
your face!

DR. CHICKERING JR.

You know that's not true.

Gallinger, shuddering all over, slides down and crumples at the base of a splintered medical locker. Buries his face in his hands.

INT. KNICK - BOILER ROOM - DAY

Thackery, still pressing the now blood-drenched kerchief tightly against his neck, slogs down the last of the basement stairs. Shuffles towards the furnace.

He opens the boiler door and slinks down next to it. Removes his pocketwatch. Studies it for a moment.

He tosses the watch-end into the fire while holding the other end of the chain with his free hand.

After a moment, he fishes the red-hot watch out. Removes the bloody kerchief from his neck and uses it to scoop up the watch as fresh blood flows out of his jugular.

He steels himself, then jams the glowing pocketwatch against the puncture wound on his neck.

Thackery's flesh sizzles and wisps of smoke roll off his burning neck as the wound is cauterized.

Overwhelmed from the pain, the morphine, or possibly both, he slumps over and passes out onto the soot-covered floor.

Thackery's watch hits the ground, popping open. Its glass face is cracked, and it no longer works.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**INT. KNICK - SURGICAL THEATER - NIGHT**

Silence. The operating theater is a grotesquerie, and the room is empty except for Edwards and Nurse Elkins, their backs to us.

All of the sudden, a baby's cry breaks the silence.

Edwards beams as he turns his body, revealing baby Hannah, kicking and screaming. He tenderly lifts her from the surgical table.

He holds her up as Nurse Elkins wraps her in a towel. They stare at Hannah in silence and amazement.

After some time --

DR. EDWARDS

I suppose I should wash up. It's been a long day.

Nurse Elkins nods.

NURSE ELKINS

I'll finish cleanin' her.

Edwards hands Hannah to Nurse Elkins.

As he leaves --

NURSE ELKINS (CONT'D)

Dr. Edwards...

He turns to face her.

NURSE ELKINS (CONT'D)

"The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength."

DR. EDWARDS

What is that from?

NURSE ELKINS

The Bible... Hannah's prayer.

Edward's lips crease into a warm smile.

NURSE ELKINS (CONT'D)

The strong often mock the weak, but God sometimes hears, sometimes rescues, the Hannahs of this world.

Edwards glances down for a moment. Composes himself.

DR. EDWARDS
Thank you, Nurse Elkins.

INT. DECREPIT TENEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cleary slowly closes the door behind him. He's in Tommy's apartment.

The boy's father is shirtless and passed out face-up on his bed. Cleary trundles over.

He sees the man's bruised knuckles, then shuts his eyes -- as if the mere sight of them causes him physical pain.

Perhaps he imagines the man beating his wife and son, or perhaps it's a flashback to his own traumatic childhood.

Cleary's eyes snap open. He throttles the man by his throat. He hoists him up, then body-slams him onto the floor so hard that a patch of plaster collapses off the wall.

Cleary pounces onto the man's chest, mounting him. The man yells for help, but Cleary stuffs the man's own wife-beater (no pun intended) into his mouth.

Cleary removes the claw hammer from inside his topcoat. The man, his cries muffled, whimpers and soils himself. Cleary pins one of his wrists down.

He raises the hammer high above his head, but hesitates for a moment. He studies the man's visage: a face contorted by pure terror.

Crack!

With a swift, forceful motion, he snaps the hammer down like a bolt of lightning, instantly shattering the man's hand.

Crunch!

The hammer rains down again. And again.

Cleary bashes the man's hand over and over...

...until the grating of metal pulverizing bone gives way to the wet smacking of meat being tenderized.

INT. DECREPIT TENEMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cleary drags the man out of his apartment. Both of the man's hands like hamburger meat now.

Cleary throws the man head first down the flight of stairs.

A door opens behind Cleary -- it's the landlord. The elderly man steps forward and takes in the grisly sight at the bottom of the stairwell.

He locks eyes with Cleary -- a silent understanding passing between them. He shuffles back into his apartment, closing the door behind him.

The stairs groan under Cleary's weight as he lumbers to the bottom of the landing. He drags the man, groaning, out of the front door -- by his hair.

EXT. DECREPIT TENEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Several passersby gasp and avert their gaze as Cleary drags the man across the street and over to his ambulance.

Cleary lifts the man up, chucks him into the back of the rig, then walks around front and hops onto the carriage bench.

EXT. KNICK - NIGHT

Chickering escorts Gallinger, who's calmed down, out of the hospital. As he does, Cleary's ambulance clops up.

CLEARY

Got a patient for ya.

Chickering rests a hand on Gallinger's shoulder.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

I'll take the straggler. Go and be with Eleanor and Grace.

Gallinger nods.

DR. CHICKERING JR. (CONT'D)

(to Cleary)

Bring the patient around. I'll meet you inside.

Cleary whistles, and his horses trot towards the ambulance bay.

DR. GALLINGER
 Bertie... I want to tell you...
 that I'm profoundly disappointed.

Chickering's voice catches in his throat -- *not what he was expecting to hear.*

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
 I'm disappointed in myself. As a
 surgeon. A husband. A father. I
 don't know if I can see past my own
 shortcomings anymore. I don't think
 I can forgive my failures any
 longer. I'm not sure I can continue
 down this path.

Chickering brims with intensity and conviction.

DR. CHICKERING JR.
 You must not be afraid, Everett.
 You need to have sufficient courage
 to make mistakes. You must make the
 decision that you are going to move
 on from this.

Gallinger stares at Chickering. A gaze filled with wavering
 uncertainty, with vulnerability.

DR. GALLINGER
 Bertie the Brave... always fighting
 the good fight.

DR. CHICKERING JR.
 Never without the Good Knight
 Gallinger.

Chickering flashes an almost imperceptible smile. Gallinger
 nods, then leaves.

Chickering turns and notices Nurse Elkin's bike lying on the
 ground. He walks over and carefully props it against the side
 of the hospital.

INT. KNICK - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nurse Elkins approaches as Chickering stalks through the
 eerily empty, gothic-like halls of the Knick.

Upon seeing her, he instantly perks up. It's impossible not
 to notice the effect she has on him -- *we can practically see
 the butterflies fluttering around.*

DR. CHICKERING JR.
Nurse Elkins. Was Dr. Edwards able
to save the other infant?... what
was her name...

(nervous laughter)
I'm completely blanking on her --

NURSE ELKINS
(smiling)
Hannah. She's alive and well.

DR. CHICKERING JR.
(beaming)
That's amazing! Thack'll be
floored. Every medical journal will
report on this. They'll write about
it in history books.

NURSE ELKINS
I know. I'm still not sure I
believe it myself. Speaking of Dr.
Thackery, have you seen him by
chance?

DR. CHICKERING JR.
I haven't. Have you checked his
office?

NURSE ELKINS
I have.

DR. CHICKERING JR.
He's almost certainly at home,
then. Likely recuperating from his
food poisoning.

NURSE ELKINS
I imagine someone should check on
him.

DR. CHICKERING JR.
(checks pocketwatch)
Cleary brought me a straggler, but
I can swing by Thack's after I
finish.

NURSE ELKINS
It's alright. I'll pay him a visit.
I was just about to leave.

Chickering bristles.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

(stern)

I shan't be long. It would probably be better if it were me.

NURSE ELKINS

(unfazed)

It's right on my way home, Dr. Chickering.

Chickering, hanging on her every word, is about to dig his heels in, when --

NURSE ELKINS (CONT'D)

Besides, he might be in pain.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

(sighs, hard)

If only we were all so lucky.

Nurse Elkins isn't sure how to process this. Chickering breaks the awkward silence.

DR. CHICKERING JR. (CONT'D)

I have a patient to attend to. Good evening, Nurse.

NURSE ELKINS

Good evenin'...

Chickering beats a hasty retreat and disappears around a corner.

INT. KNICK - X-RAY ROOM - NIGHT

Chickering and Cleary stand in front of an x-ray of Tommy's father's hands.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

(gobsmacked)

What happened?

Cleary massages the nape of his neck.

CLEARY

(clears throat)

Took a spill. Broke the fall with his hands.

DR. CHICKERING JR.

(quizzical)

Broke the fall with his hands?

(MORE)

DR. CHICKERING JR. (CONT'D)
 (scratches his head)
 On what? A meat grinder?

CLEARY
 Are you gonna try and mend them?

DR. CHICKERING JR.
 No. They can't be saved. I'll
 amputate.
 (turning to face Cleary)
 It'll have wait until tomorrow,
 though. I'm done for the night.

Cleary just stands there, blinking. Chickering ambles over to
 a sink. Splashes water on his face. Dries off. Notices
 Cleary, who still stares at the x-ray, trance-like...

DR. CHICKERING JR. (CONT'D)
 Was there something else?

CLEARY
 (snaps back to reality)
 No. Nothin' else. Brain's full of
 cobwebs... I've had a helluva day.
 Time to pay my dear friend Jameson
 a visit.

Cleary leaves. Chickering rubs his eyes, takes one last look
 at the x-ray. Shakes his head -- still can't make sense of
 it. Too tired to care...

INT. GALLINGER HOUSE - NIGHT

Gallinger pads over to Grace, who's sound asleep in her
 bassinet. His eyes immediately dart away, as if seeing her
 triggers unthinkable memories from earlier that day.

He crawls into bed with Eleanor, who lies on her side. She's
 still catatonic. He pulls the bedsheet up over himself.

He nestles up behind her. Gently hugs her. Smells her hair.
 Strokes her neck.

DR. GALLINGER
 (whispering)
 Eleanor.
 (quiet intensity)
 Eleanor. Please.

He kisses her neck. Emotion to the surface.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
(lips trembling)
Eleanor.

He barely holds it together.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
I need you.
(unraveling)
Can you hear me?
(God help me)
Eleanor.

Finally, he lets out a sob. Kisses her neck again. Sobs harder. Strokes her hair. Tries to muffle his crying so as not to wake the baby.

He nuzzles Eleanor's ear. Kisses the side of her face. Wipes his tears from her cheeks. Sniffles as his hands wander under the sheets.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
Eleanor, come back to me.

He wipes his tears away. Kisses her harder. Licks his hand, which disappears under the sheets.

He closes his eyes, then bows his head and moans.

DR. GALLINGER (CONT'D)
Come back to me.

The bed starts to rock back and forth. Gallinger clutches Eleanor tightly. Digs his fingers into her flesh. *It's been so long.*

The intensity ratchets up. Gallinger's desperation builds by the second. He groans. Pushes harder. Desperation turns to frustration. It seeps out of every pore now.

He doesn't stop as he checks Eleanor's vacant expression for any signs of life. Frustration turns to anger. He gets rougher.

The bed creaks loudly as it rocks back and forth. Gallinger breathes heavily.

The headboard starts knocking against the wall.

Knock.

Teeth grit.

Knock. Knock.

Nostrils flare.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Rivulets of sweat coalesce.

Knock. Knock. Knock. Knock.

Skin flushes like an angry swarm of red ants.

Grace's cries pierce the soundscape just as Gallinger finishes.

He tenses and spasms, clamping himself around Eleanor like a tightly-laced corset.

Grace's cries grow shriller. And shriller. Gallinger exhales, his posture relaxes. He rolls onto his back, trembling.

Eleanor remains as lifeless as ever. Grace screams her lungs out.

OFF Gallinger's dire expression...

EXT. KNICK - NIGHT

Thackery shuffles out of the cellar and groggily makes his way into the hospital.

He's caked in dry blood and soot, and the skin on his neck looks like orange rind.

INT. KNICK - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Thackery pulls himself along on unsteady legs, as if having to work to shrug the weight of his body. He meanders through the halls, and finally reaches the --

INFANT WARD

Edwards is there, sitting on a chair, watching over, or perhaps marveling at, baby Hannah.

He stands and gasps upon being visually assaulted by Thackery's ghastly appearance.

DR. EDWARDS

What happened?

DR. THACKERY

It's a boring tale for another time.

(MORE)

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
 (motioning to Hannah)
 My procedure worked. We succeeded.

Edwards smiles.

DR. EDWARDS
 We succeeded.

DR. THACKERY
 Good. As of now, Dr. Gallinger is my new Assistant Chief Surgeon. If you wish to stay at The Knick, you'll stay on as a surgeon.

Edwards, blinking, takes a moment to process this. Then --

DR. EDWARDS
 Have you gone mad? Gallinger blanked out mid-surgery. His mistake took the life of the other twin.

Edwards motions to the sedated infant lying before them.

DR. EDWARDS (CONT'D)
 This isn't Claire. This is Hannah. The one who wasn't worth saving. The one you wanted to use for extra skin!

DR. THACKERY
 (realizing)
 The weaker one survived...

DR. EDWARDS
 Yes. I saved her! It is because of my skill she's alive! It is because of my efforts we're getting the Astor donation! It is because of me that The Knick stays open!

DR. THACKERY
 (deadpan)
 If what you say is true, then you deviated from my plan and went rogue. If what you say is true, then you are responsible for the other twin's death. If what you say is true, your selfishness and inability to follow orders led to the wrong infant surviving.

Edwards, boiling over, closes the distance between himself and Thackery. They're nose-to-nose.

DR. EDWARDS
Gallinger wouldn't accept my help.

DR. THACKERY
It wasn't his decision to make. You
were the ranking surgeon.

DR. EDWARDS
Gallinger killed Claire.

DR. THACKERY
Your decision cost Claire her life
long before Gallinger's scalpel
took it.

Checkmate. Edwards is speechless.

Thackery touches the raw skin on his neck. Grimaces.

DR. THACKERY (CONT'D)
I'm tired. I want you to disinfect
and dress the burn on my neck.
(off Edward's indignation)
The sooner you do, the sooner you
can drag your knuckles back to
whatever fleabitten flophouse
you're staying at and guzzle shots
of sour mash until your eyes bleed.

INT. GALLINGER HOUSE - NIGHT

Gallinger cradles Grace inside his kitchen. He gazes at the
infant in his arms. She suckles formula from a glazed ceramic
and rubber bottle. He tenderly wipes a stream of milk from
her cheek.

OFF Gallinger's expression... a fleeting glimmer of hope.
Blink and you missed it.

EXT. THE KNICK - NIGHT

Thackery wanders out of the hospital, a fresh dressing
covering the side of his neck.

He does an about-face and stares at The Knickerbocker for a
few moments, contemplating, then turns and hails a taxi.

DRIVER
Where to?

DR. THACKERY
Chinatown district. West on
Eleventh, South on Bowery.

Thackery hoists himself into the carriage and it click-clacks away.

PUSH IN on a single candle-lit window in Sister Harriet's orphanage.

Thomas stares through the glass, watching Thackery's carriage as it's swallowed by darkness.

Thomas clutches his stuffed owl. Herbert's been stitched back together -- the two pieces have become one again.

FADE OUT.

END EPISODE

