



# Act IV Scene 2



Lara ran to the edge of the balcony and clasped the balustrade. She looked down to the ground anticipating the dreaded, unbearable thud. But when it came, it was modulated by some other sound, some mimicry of the rain's incessant patter. She didn't know what to think. Her brain see-sawed between terror and uncertainty, relief and desperation. She gazed helplessly down at the darkness below.

"I'm okay," came a gurgling voice, "there was a pool or something!"

A high-pitched scream emanated from the house.

A sharp, but lilting voice followed, "There's something in the pool!"

Lights turned on. Lara could see Attila clearly down there clambering about in the water. In this state, the barbarous Hun within him was pronounced. His grey straggly hair covered his face. His wrinkled calloused skin developed a slimy texture in the pool. And his deep-blue luminous eyes suggested an evil within. She could see why the house's occupants were disturbed.

Lara shouted, "It's okay! We're travellers!" not knowing what else to say.

A tall woman appeared on the deck besides the pool. A face of angular features pointed to the central ruby of a sumptuous diamond rope slung round her head. And the necklace itself drew one's gaze to a taut red dress falling below her knees. In her left hand, she held a long cigarette in such a way as to suggest the device was both an imposition and an extension of her very self. She looked up above her.

"And what, pray, are travellers doing on the roof?"

Her voice was calmer now. But beneath the threatening melody lurked an enticing countersubject.

Lara thought it a fair point though.

"We, uh... we fell."

"From where, pray?"

Lara pointed up, and responded rather bluntly, "From up there."

"Skyyy travellers!"

Some mixture of sarcasm and sincere enthusiasm infected her elongated vowels and rolled r's.

"You could say th—"

"Oh, do forgive my appalling manners. I'm Scarlett. What an absolutely exquisite pleasure."



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“I’m Lara.”

“Attila,” said the Hun as he pulled himself out of the pool.

“Do come in, the others would love to meet you too.”

A thoroughly soaked Attila left his shoes behind in the pool, and followed this surprising Miss Scarlett into a lounge.

A coarse-looking man, regaled in military honours, awaited them there. He was still clasping reflexively the revolver at his side. But though his medals glinted obtrusively in the fragile electric lighting, all Attila could see was his prominent sickly yellow moustache — a product of years of many cigarettes and few baths.

“Mustard, honey, go fetch Lara from the balcony.”

“Of course, I’ll be back in a moment.”

His voice was far gentler than his appearance seemed to warrant.

Attila was alone with Scarlett in the lounge.

“Mustard rose to colonel in the war, you know. He was awarded an MC too.” Her eyes sparkled sensuously.

Attila nodded along, surprised at how easily he had been absorbed into the household, but totally ignorant of what an MC was, or even what war it was won in. But wait, he was a museum curator. Surely, he could work out what time period they had landed in, if indeed this world bore any historical relation to his own.

A fireplace framed Scarlett’s body. And a tempestuous inferno raged within it. But, on the mantelpiece above, there stood a peculiar candlestick. It reminded Attila of an artefact in his own museum. It had to be early 1920’s England, assuming the item was contemporary.

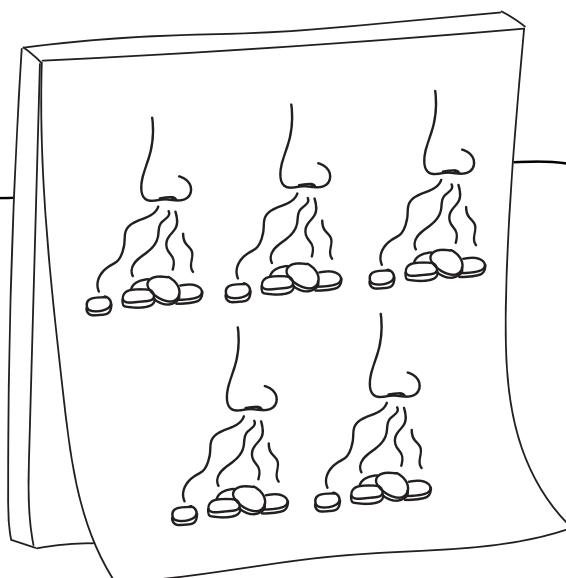
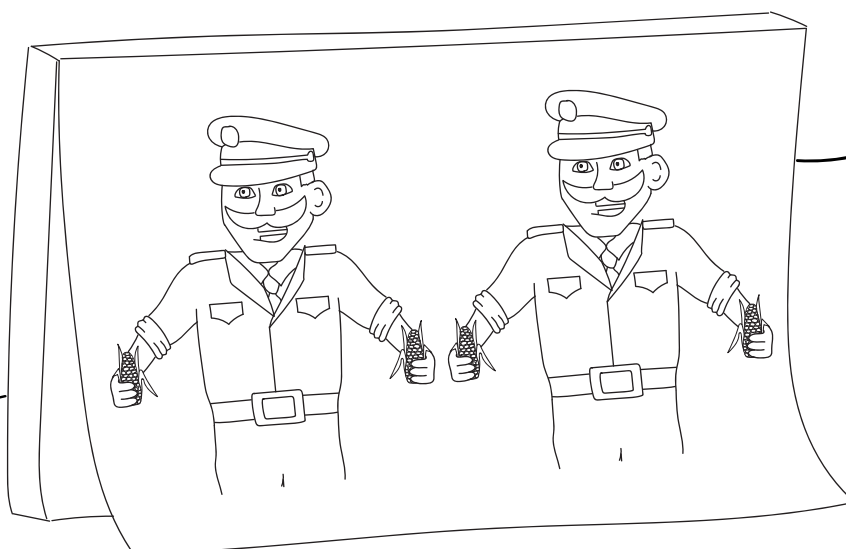
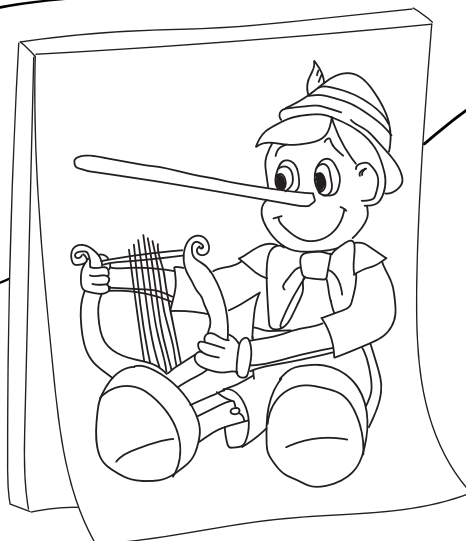
He continued his small talk with Scarlett, managing to establish that she’d bought the candlestick recently. And soon Lara came down from the balcony with Colonel Mustard. Some others followed them: at the front of the column wobbled an aged man, bent forwards by time; a matronly woman came after with stupidly large glasses; and after her another woman, slimmer than the first, with small penetrative eyes.

Attila and Lara registered their respective names as they were introduced: Professor Phillip Plum, Margaret White and Patricia Peacock.

“Wait,” sang Scarlet, “where’s the Reverend?”

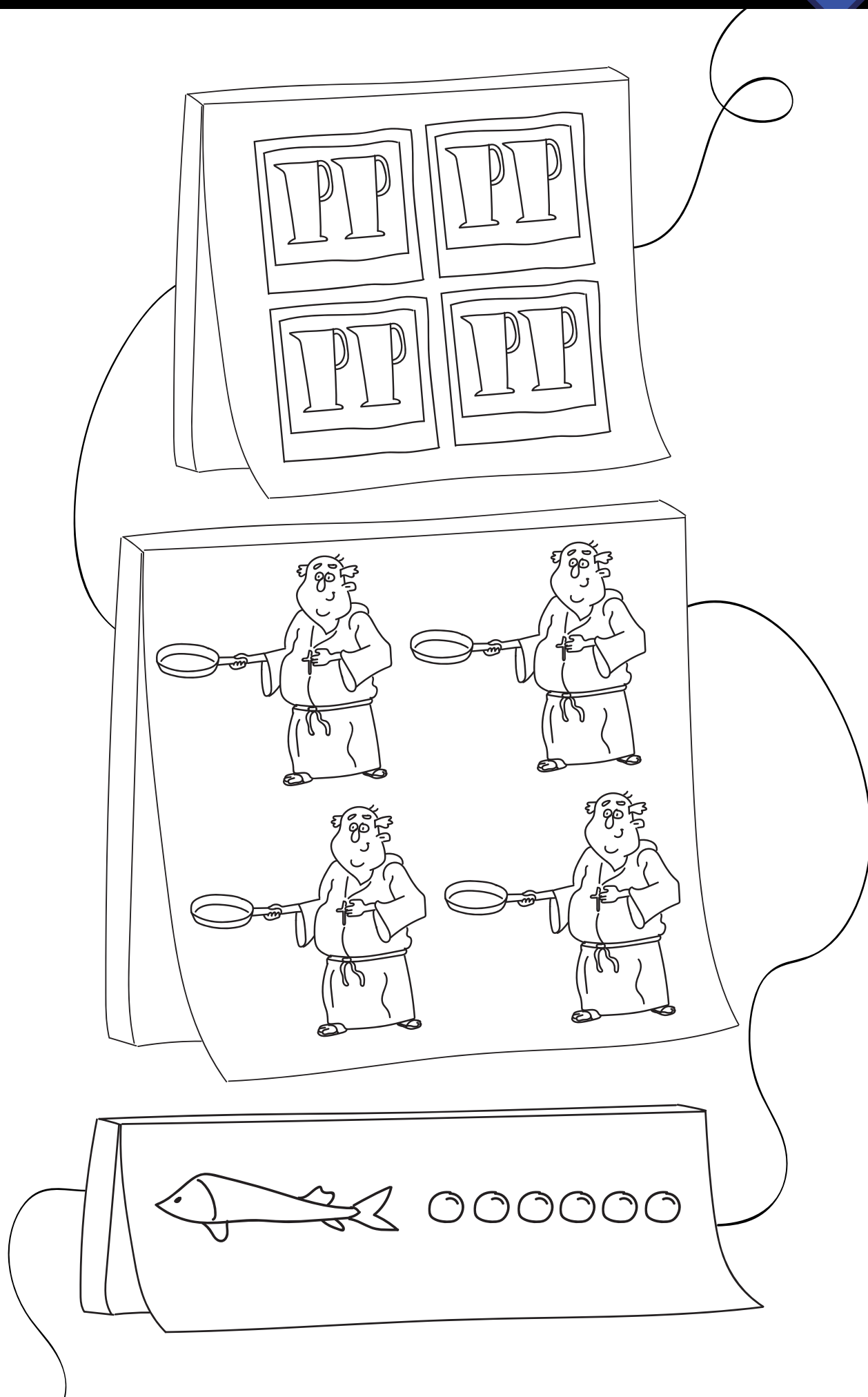


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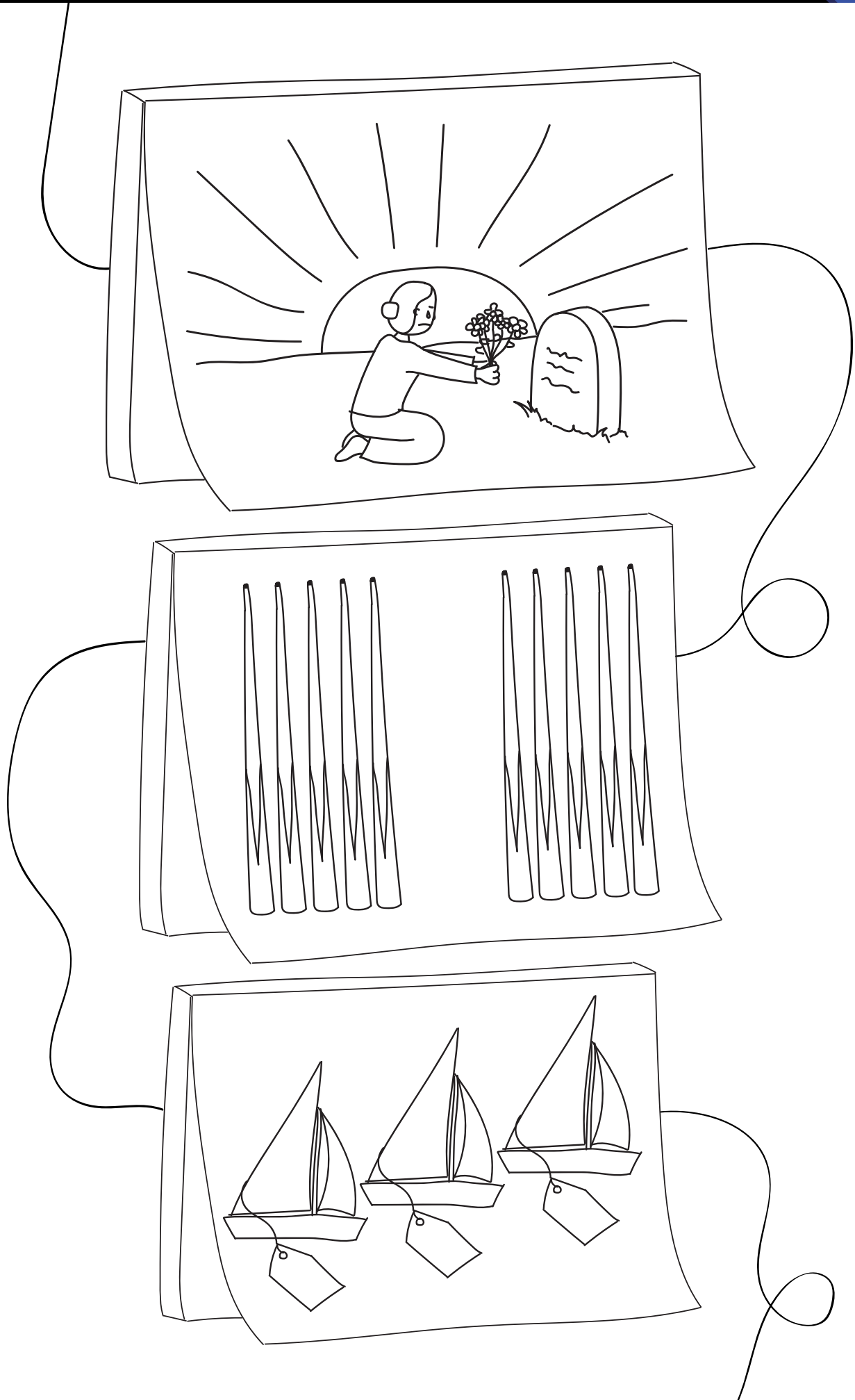


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