

SOMETHING WICKED

Written by

Hendré Basson

Based on,

Macbeth

By William Shakespeare

FADE IN:

INT. MADAM CERISE'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The door SLAMS shut as Simon walks down a narrow hallway towards an archway emanating an orange glow. Benny hurries after him, both men soaking wet.

BENNY

Simon, must you do this now? We should be celebrating with Tony, not chasing superstitions.

Simon looks briskly over his shoulder. The light flickers in his eyes.

SIMON

This won't take long.

Benny SIGHS and shakes his head.

Simon's feet sink into the lush red carpeted floor as he pushes through a drape of purple fabric that hangs above the arch, and enters the next room.

INT. MADAM CERISE'S RESIDENCE - COUNCIL ROOM - NIGHT

With a sharp INHALE, Simon charges towards a woman sitting behind a wooden desk. MADAM CERISE (30s), organizes a stack of tarot cards in one hand and balances a lit cigarette in the other.

Her long red hair drapes over her shoulders and she wears a purple blouse and large emerald earrings.

Two women in grey clothing arrange books on shelves behind her, and do not respond to the sudden intrusion.

Madam Cerise pinches the cigarette between her lips and takes a long INHALE. She glances at Simon and frowns.

MADAM CERISE

We're closed.

Simon pulls out a pistol from beneath his coat and takes aim at Madam Cerise. She EXHALES and the smoke creates a frame around Simon's head, a perfect portrait.

SIMON

Make time for one more.

BENNY

Simon, wait!

Simon reaches into his pocket and retrieves The Wheel of Fortune tarot card. He slaps it onto the desk and points at the M.C initials at the bottom written in gold.

SIMON

What do you want with me, Madam Cerise? Why send this to me? If it is a curse--

MADAM CERISE

It is not.

Simon grips the pistol tightly as raindrops drip from his fedora. The warm light of the lamp on Madam Cerise's desk illuminates his jawline but invites shadows to linger over his eyes.

Madam Cerise stubs out her cigarette in an ashtray then stares at him with a devious smile. Her lips spread, but her eyes do not squint.

BENNY

Simon, we have endured a great victory today. Let us celebrate and lay this nonsense to rest.

MADAM CERISE

I have watched you for some time, Mr. McQueen. I've seen your ambition grow with each passing week. That same ambition has now festered into a passion for power, and you have been rewarded for your patience.

SIMON

How do you know my name?

Madam Cerise slides Simon's tarot card towards her with an index finger. The orange lamp light flickers like fire across her skin.

MADAM CERISE

The cards tell me everything.

Benny approaches the desk cautiously. Simon stares at his tarot card.

SIMON

Enlighten me.

BENNY  
Don't encourage this.

SIMON  
I want to know.

BENNY  
Simon.

MADAM CERISE  
Destiny has spoken, Mr. McQueen.  
You shall become Tony Duncan's  
right hand man, then in due time,  
rule the syndicate yourself.

Simon lowers his pistol, his finger grazing the trigger. His face, along with Benny's, is pale with surprise.

SIMON  
Tony relies on his cousin, Louis.  
There is no vacancy to fill.

MADAM CERISE  
The cards have spoken. I relay the  
message.

BENNY  
To hell with the cards!

Simon lowers his guard and points at his tarot card. He grows curious.

Benny steps next to him and observes the two women in the background. They now stand facing the table, their expressions dull and eyes hallow.

The room atmosphere grows ominous, and a folk musical orchestra suddenly SHOUTS from a gramophone in the far corner of the room.

The lamp light dims.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
I don't like this, Simon. Let's go.

Madam Cerise leans forward as Simon parts his lips. His gaze transfixes on the card.

SIMON  
What do you see?

MADAM CERISE  
A prophecy.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

## MADAM CERISE (CONT'D)

The Wheel of Fortune represents change, fortune, luck, and great wisdom.

## SIMON

How do I know you are telling me the truth?

Madam Cerise spreads out a row of five cards on the surface of the desk. Their contents are hidden. Simon arcs a brow and glances at Benny.

With a wave of her hand, Madam Cerise SIGHS.

## MADAM CERISE

Pick a card.

Simon leans over the desk and analyzes his options. His eagerness prompts him to play the game.

He points to the card second from the right.

## SIMON

That one.

Madam Cerise turns it over, and displays The Emperor.

## MADAM CERISE

Ah.

## SIMON

What does it mean?

## MADAM CERISE

You will have authority and control. As I said, Duncan will fall, and you shall replace him.

## SIMON

How will I achieve this?

## MADAM CERISE

If you want further clarity, pick another card.

Silence fills the room. Benny wrinkles his nose and steps forward.

## BENNY

And me? What do the cards foretell of my future?

Madam Cerise leans back in her chair and grins. She waves a hand over the remaining four hidden cards.

MADAM CERISE  
Please, go ahead.

Benny is hesitant, but gives in and selects the card on the far left. He glances at Simon and the two lock eyes.

Madam Cerise reaches out and turns over Benny's card. It displays The Fool. Madam Cerise clenches her jaw.

MADAM CERISE (CONT'D)  
Unlike Mr. McQueen, you will not  
succeed Tony Duncan.

Benny SCOFFS.

BENNY  
The fool? Nonsense, it was an  
unlucky guess.

SIMON  
Seems reasonable to me.

Benny glares at Simon then smirks. He CHUCKLES and points at another card.

BENNY  
Give me that one. Since this is a  
game, why not have a little fun.  
Perhaps I can win back my dignity.

Simon smiles and shakes his head. Madam Cerise turns over the second card. It reveals The Seven of Pentacles.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
So, am I doomed?

MADAM CERISE  
You may not cherish in the riches  
of power, but through hard work,  
diligence and perseverance, your  
descendants will succeed where you  
cannot.

Benny grips Simon firmly by the arm.

BENNY  
Do you hear that?

SIMON  
How promising.

Benny LAUGHS and shuffles back. He extends his arms like a preacher.

BENNY

Enough of this. I'm ready for a drink.

Simon focuses his attention on Madam Cerise. She stands and holds out the Wheel of Fortune tarot card. Simon takes it carefully.

SIMON

You have said plenty. I shall bid you goodnight.

The two men prepare to leave. The gramophone CRACKLES and disjoints it's MELODY.

MADAM CERISE

One more thing.

Simon stops mid pivot. He looks at Madam Cerise and discovers the two other women, LILITH (40s), and ESTELLA (50s), lingering behind her in silence.

MADAM CERISE (CONT'D)

Heed this warning. Fortune will not last.

ESTELLA

As a wheel turns, what comes up must go down.

LILITH

You have been granted prosperity, Simon McQueen. Do not waste it.

EXT. TONY'S CLUB - NIGHT

Rain SPLATTERS on the road as Benny's car pulls up to the front entrance. The white headlights pierce the night, like two blinding stars.

INT. BENNY'S CAR - NIGHT

Simon stares out the window. The rain THUNDERS against the metal roof above him like GUNSHOTS. His body is tense and he leans back, deep in thought.

Benny looks at him and smiles.

BENNY

Simon?

Simon pays no attention, caught in a trance.

A hand grips his shoulder and he startles.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Simon?

SIMON

What?

BENNY

Let's forget about it, okay? Madam Cerise's gift of foresight is as superb as my dancing.

Simon glances at him without emotion, then cracks a half smile.

SIMON

My wife still can't feel her toes.

BENNY

Exactly. Now let's go inside and have a good time, okay?

Simon rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

SIMON

Yeah.

BENNY

Yeah?

SIMON

Yes! Let's go.

Simon CHUCKLES, shrugs his shoulders and he opens the car door as he steps out into the rain.

EXT. TONY'S CLUB - NIGHT

Simon and Benny wrap their coats tightly around their bodies and march towards the entrance. They share a LAUGH and enter the building.

INT. TONY'S CLUB - NIGHT

JAZZ MUSIC SCREAMS into the air and the TAPPING of shoes ERUPTS as couples swing arm in arm on the dance floor.

The men wear clean-cut shirts and trousers. The women bring life into the mundane scene with their colorful dresses.



LAUGHTER and CLAPPING overwhelm the club. Guests wear smiles and CLINK glasses of champagne.

Benny nudges Simon and takes off to join the dancing. He removes his jacket and asks a idling young woman to the floor. She eagerly accepts and the pair surrenders to the MUSIC.

Simon grins, and watches them from afar. His smile fades and he takes out the Wheel of Fortune tarot card, flipping it between his fingers.

TONY

McQueen!

Simon turns in response to the voice, his eyes wide. TONY DUNCAN (30s), approaches him holding two beers. As he smiles, the thin mustache on his upper lip wrinkles.

The shock subsides and Simon beams. He slips the card into his back pocket.

SIMON

Tony! Good to see you.

Tony slaps a hand on Simon's chest and CHORTLES.

TONY

What took you so long?

SIMON

Car troubles.

Simon leans back as Tony CACKLES. He staggers from side to side, clearly drunk.

TONY

Here. I got you something.

Tony hands Simon a beer. Simon takes it in a cautious manner.

SIMON

Thanks.

(beat)

Hey, where's Louis? Did he check out early.

Tony GIGGLES like a little boy.

TONY

Nah, he's not coming.

SIMON

Why not?

TONY  
Because I shot him.  
(beat)  
Bang.

Tony grins and makes a gun with his thumb and index finger.  
He fires it into the air.

TONY (CONT'D)  
Bang, bang.

Simon processes the news. His face fills with shock and disbelief.

SIMON  
Wait. He's dead?

TONY  
Turns out he was feeding intel to  
the Riccardo's. Bank details,  
warehouses, everything. If I hand't  
caught him in the act he would have  
bled us dry.  
(beat)  
Couldn't have that.

SIMON  
Well who's gonna replace him?

Tony smiles and raises his bottle. He takes a drink.

TONY  
You.