

SCENE 1

SFX WIND, BALLOON OPERATION, CREAKING,
FIRE

ROBERT: Look. Over the edge. What do you see?

BARTLEBY: The ground. Quite some ways away.

ROBERT: Ridgeway. My town. I might govern from Phoenix, but I was born here. My family built this town. My hands, my father's. This town exists to service our workshops, our factory.

BARTLEBY: It's quite nice.

ROBERT: ...but it's no London?

BARLTEBY: Have you been?

ROBERT: I have.

BARTLEBY: How did you find it?

ROBERT: Large. Stinking. Haphazard. Chaotic. Buildings thrust up against one another without care, roads weaving every which way.

BARTLEBY: It's a city that's been growing for thousands of years, Mr.

Koning. Since the days of Rome...

ROBERT: She's showing her age, Mr. Bartleby.

BARTLEBY: It's organic—

ROBERT: I'm an engineer, Mr. Bartleby, not a horticulturist. Beauty is order. Clean lines. Careful planning. (CLOSE) Take a closer look!

BARTLEBY: Mr. Koning!

SFX GRAPPLING STRUGGLE.

ROBERT: (CLOSE) Look, you bastard. Look! See, the design shop next to our home? See the factories near the edge of town? See the test track?

ALTON: You're... hurting... me...

ROBERT: None of that is incidental. That's how I live my life, Mr. Bartleby. Deliberately. Carefully planned. My family as carefully as my town, and do you know why?

SFX STRUGGLE. WEAK BLOWS. GURGLING

ROBERT: Because I know myself all too well, Mr. Bartleby. When I have no plan, I tend to make rash choices. I must have order

to preserve my very humanity. When something goes unexpectedly... something as small as a woman coming into my barber shop, or as large as being left at the altar, my world falls askew.

BARTLEBY: Robert! Governor Koning!

ROBERT: We had an agreement, Mr. Bartleby. One you did not keep to.

BARTLEBY: Wait!

SFX GRUNT FOLLOWED BY SOMETHING
GETTING CAUGHT IN ROPES

BARTLEBY: (Cry of terror and pain.)

ROBERT: (OFF) Well, I'll be damned. Caught up in the rigging. Don't despair, Mr. Bartleby, I'll have you loose in a moment.

BARTLEBY: (LOW) For the love of god... pull me up...

SFX KNIFE SCHING

ROBERT: (OFF) I'm afraid I've taken this all quite personally, and every moment we spend together I only want to throttle you all the more. Settling for a ballooning accident is just one more disappointment I'll have to learn to live with.