

**G E N T L E M A N**

**B U R G L A R**

Written by

David Condolora

Based on the novels "The Extraordinary Adventures of  
Arsène Lupin, Gentleman-Burglar" and "The Hollow Needle"  
by Maurice Leblanc

hello@davidcondolora.com

'As is a tale,  
so is life:

not how long it is,  
but how good it is,  
is what matters.'

- Seneca

GANIMARD (V.O.)  
Now boy. What do you know?

**INT. FRENCH CONSULATE GENERAL - DAY**

A turn of the century office. Small. Crowded. ISIDORE BEAUTRELET (12, inquisitive but reserved) sits beside Monsieur D'ANDRÉZY (25, slim with playful eyes), both of them facing INSPECTOR GANIMARD (50s), who scowls from behind a desk.

Isidore's eyes are glued to the floor. MAURICE BEAUTRELET (60s, but older in body and spirit) gently touches his back.

MAURICE  
My son, perhaps we should return--

GANIMARD  
You are here. My time has already  
been spent. Waste no more of it.  
(to Isidore)  
Garçon?

Isidore looks up at his father, the old man's eyes nervous -- then turns to Ganimard, musters his courage:

ISIDORE  
Our ship had received an urgent  
message from Le Havre.

The sound of a TUMULTUOUS SEA, and we're --

**EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT**

Thunder. Heavy rain. A BOLT OF LIGHTNING illuminates the black sky, revealing a TRANSATLANTIC LINER atop the roiling waves -- and the liner is lost again in the darkness.

**INT. TRANSATLANTIC LINER - RADIO ROOM - NIGHT**

At the telegraph is the OPERATOR (50s, wiry), one hand holding an EARPIECE tight against his head, the other writing furiously --

The door BURSTS OPEN and a TALL SAILOR enters, dripping water everywhere. The operator pays no attention, continues scrawling as the sailor approaches and reads the message aloud.

TALL SAILOR  
 (becoming alarmed)  
 "Dangerous thief Arsène Lupin aboard  
 your vessel. First-class cabin,  
 blond hair, wound on right forearm."  
 (slowly, as it's written)  
 "Traveling alone under alias R--"

The small cabin is suddenly ABLAZE WITH LIGHT. The operator  
 RIPS OFF HIS HEADSET as electricity arcs through the telegraph.

A massive THUNDER CLAP. The men open their eyes:

The telegraph is a smoking mess. Melted wire. A small flame.

OPERATOR  
 ...I didn't get the rest.

His eyes are full of dread.

PUSH IN on the paper, the name ARSÈNE LUPIN...

**EXT. TRANSATLANTIC LINER - DAY**

Broad daylight. Clear skies. Calm sea.

Isidore stands in a circle of finely-dressed PASSENGERS. Across  
 from him, d'Andrézy laughs with infatuate affection as  
 Mademoiselle RAYMONDE (19, brown curls, graceful) protests.

RAYMONDE  
 Why should I not be afraid, Monsieur  
 d'Andrézy? We have five more days  
 of this dreadful voyage, at the  
 complete mercy of Arsène Lupin. And  
 he could be anyone on board!

The BLOND MAN (30) beside Raymonde places a sympathetic hand  
 on her shoulder. D'Andrézy's eyes FLASH -- he resumes a smile.

D'ANDRÉZY  
 We can solve this mystery quite as  
 well as the great Inspector Ganimard.  
 We have only to find the man who  
 matches the description.

Raymonde rolls her shoulder and the blond man drops his hand.

RAYMONDE  
 Yes, but Lupin always outwits  
 Ganimard. And do you propose to  
 interview every man in First Class?

D'ANDRÉZY

*Mais, non!* Those only who are blond  
and whose names begin with 'R'.  
(unfolding a paper)  
The captain has been kind enough to  
lend me the passenger list.

As d'Andrézy scans it, Isidore moves closer, keenly focused...

D'ANDRÉZY (CONT'D)

In first class, only three men travel  
alone under names beginning with  
'R'. The Marquis de Raverdan--

RAYMONDE

He's the secretary to the ambassador.  
I met him at breakfast.

D'ANDRÉZY

Monsieur Rivolta --

Behind a book a man with a thick black beard raises his head.

RIVOLTA

Yes?

D'ANDRÉZY

Your pardon, monsieur.

The small crowd LAUGHS, fully immersed in d'Andrézy's game.

D'ANDRÉZY (CONT'D)

Then the last one must be Lupin:  
Monsieur Rozaine.

Raymonde turns to the blond man beside her.

RAYMONDE

Monsieur Rozaine?

ROZAINÉ

Alone, in first class, blond. I  
begin to think I should be arrested.

RAYMONDE

But surely you lack the wound!

ROZAINÉ

Yes, true! I'm completely whole.

He eagerly pulls up a sleeve -- his left arm.

ISIDORE  
But Lupin was wounded on his--

OLDER WOMAN (O.S.)  
My jewels! My pearls!

An OLDER WOMAN (60s trying to seem 40s) theatrically runs up.

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)  
I've been robbed!

RAYMONDE  
Lupin!

As everyone crowds around the woman, Isidore watches Rozaine, who quietly slips away --

**INT. FRENCH CONSULATE GENERAL - DAY**

Ganimard glares impatiently.

GANIMARD  
We know about the stolen jewels.  
What do you know that we do not?

D'Andrézy looks at Isidore, raises an eyebrow. Maurice fidgets behind his son. The boy sinks deeper into his chair.

ISIDORE  
Well... That night, at the ball...  
there was news.

**INT. TRANSATLANTIC LINER - BALLROOM - NIGHT**

Isidore and his father maneuver plates of food around the dancing crowd. A smiling Raymonde passes them on her way to d'Andrézy, who picks up a champagne flute from a table.

D'ANDRÉZY  
Mademoiselle! In better spirits?

RAYMONDE  
Have you not heard? The captain has  
detained Monsieur Rozaine!

She takes a champagne flute, raises it to d'Andrézy's -- CLINK!

**EXT. TRANSATLANTIC LINER - NIGHT**

On the deck, D'Andrézy and Raymonde stand shoulder-to-shoulder, the ocean drowning out the music as they gaze at the heavens.

D'ANDRÉZY  
Where is home, Raymonde?

RAYMONDE  
Ambrumésy. Do you know it?

He gently takes her shoulder, turns her to look at him.

D'ANDRÉZY  
I would like to visit you.

RAYMONDE  
...Yes. I would like that as well.

She smiles, her eyes laughing with delight against the stars.

**EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - DAY**

The STATUE OF LIBERTY welcomes the ocean liner to New York.

**EXT. TRANSATLANTIC LINER - DAY**

Maurice holds Isidore's hand as they walk on deck with their bags. Isidore pulls away and looks at the city, as nearby --

SNAP! D'Andrézy lowers his boxy KODAK, revealing Raymonde against the New York skyline. He smiles, SNAPS again.

D'Andrézy picks up his BAGS, camera cradled in his forearm. Raymonde wraps her arm around his and they promenade together.

D'ANDRÉZY  
Are you eager to see the city?

RAYMONDE  
Oh, somewhat. But my heart lies in the country. I should like a farm, somewhere quiet, and work to do with my own hands.  
(smiling)  
You must find that quite unbecoming.

D'ANDRÉZY  
On the contrary, I find you endlessly fascinating.

BANG! The gangway is dropped in place, but POLICE OFFICERS block the way -- joined by Ganimard, clearly in charge.

D'ANDRÉZY (CONT'D)

Inspector Ganimard! Here to take Rozaine into custody, no doubt. But he'll need the jewels to jail him.

RAYMONDE

That villain must have hidden them away. To think that I allowed him to show interest in me!

They join the line and watch as Ganimard allows people by.

D'ANDRÉZY

Lupin is quite a romantic figure. Free to do as he pleases, powerful, fiendishly clever--

RAYMONDE

And an unscrupulous, vain thief. To him, all people are mere playthings. I could never give my heart to one so selfish.

Rozaine approaches the gangway escorted by a BURLY SAILOR.

D'ANDRÉZY

Take my camera! A photograph of Lupin and Ganimard together would be a wonderful souvenir.

Raymonde takes the camera, but before she can snap a picture, Ganimard waves Rozaine on. He hurries off the ship.

RAYMONDE

But surely he is Lupin!

More passengers exit. Isidore and Maurice disembark. Soon Raymonde and d'Andrézy stand before the stone-faced Ganimard.

GANIMARD

Arsène Lupin, is it not?

He looks coolly at d'Andrézy. The younger man LAUGHS.

D'ANDRÉZY

I am Bernard d'Andrézy.

GANIMARD

Bernard d'Andrézy is dead.



D'ANDRÉZY

You are mistaken. My papers--

GANIMARD

Yes, you have his papers. I know exactly how you acquired them. I also know of the false name and description you provided to Le Havre to confuse the captain of this ship.

Raymonde looks at d'Andrézy, confusion mingled with dread -- Ganimard STRIKES d'Andrézy's right arm and he FLINCHES, his bags dropping. The inspector pulls up his sleeve: a BANDAGE.

Ahead, Isidore stops on the docks, watches this drama unfold.

D'Andrézy -- Lupin -- blushes at Raymonde. She regards his camera in her hand, then meets his embarrassed eyes, hers crestfallen.

She walks onto the gangway, STUMBLES, and the camera slips from her hands -- or is it let go? -- SPLASHING into the water. She looks at Lupin. Then walks on and is lost in the crowd.

As he is handcuffed, Lupin's eyes remain fixed on where Raymonde exited his life.

LUPIN

What a pity I am not an honest man.

**INT. FRENCH CONSULATE GENERAL - DAY**

D'Andrézy/Lupin stares at his shackled hands in his lap.

GANIMARD

(to Isidore)

And?

Isidore straightens.

ISIDORE

I observed Lupin take two photographs on deck. But he never wound the camera, not even between pictures.

GANIMARD

...Go on.

The boy's eyes shine as he looks directly at Ganimard:

ISIDORE

The stolen jewels are in the camera.

GANIMARD  
At the bottom of the harbor?

ISIDORE  
Yes. If you act quickly, you may  
still retrieve them.

A long silence.

Finally, Ganimard GRUNTS. Maurice puts a palm over his face.

GANIMARD  
You have quite an imagination, little  
monsieur. Enjoy your vacation.

ISIDORE  
But, inspector--

Ganimard waves dismissively and turns his attention to a stack of papers on his desk. Lupin meets the boy's eyes, nods respectfully. Isidore stares back with fearful curiosity.

MAURICE  
(quietly)  
Come, my boy.

Isidore reluctantly stands and his father guides him out, leaving Lupin alone with Ganimard.

LUPIN  
Well, *mon capitaine*. Will you send  
divers to retrieve the camera?

GANIMARD  
He is a boy.

Lupin chuckles.

LUPIN  
And you are a fool, as always.

CUT TO:

**EXT. LYCÉE JANSON-DE-SAILLY - DAY**

By a fountain in the school's courtyard, a GROUP OF BOYS crowd around a bench in rapt silence. At their center is a boy obscured by a NEWSPAPER.

*FRANCE, 1908*

*FIVE YEARS LATER*

The boy lowers the paper: Isidore, now 17 and rail thin, but with the same intense curiosity in his eyes. He hands the paper to a SMALL BOY (11), who holds it in awe. A TALL BOY (15) stands poised with a NOTEPAD --

ISIDORE

The concierge is responsible. He is the only possible murderer.

TALL BOY

(writing)

Solved before Ganimard, as usual!

Isidore smiles to himself at this.

BOY WITH GLASSES

Here, do this kidnapping!

He thrusts another newspaper into Isidore's hands, and the photo erases Isidore's smile. The kidnapped woman is Raymonde.

**EXT. CHÂTEAU AMBRUMÉSY - DAY**

A brilliant spring day. Two CARRIAGES pass through a gate, the CHÂTEAU coming into view, a beautiful old manor.

In the rear carriage are two reporters. One smiles pleasantly behind a ridiculous-looking curly beard -- Isidore may be a boy genius, but he is not yet a master of disguise.

Near the château are RUINS, the remains of an ancient abbey.

**INT. CHÂTEAU AMBRUMÉSY - DRAWING ROOM - DAY**

On carved sliding doors as they are thrown open by MAGISTRATE DUFORT (40s, short and short-tempered), followed by OFFICER BRÉDOUX (29, lanky, bearded, obstinate), the REPORTER (20s and mustached), and Isidore.

Before them, the COUNT DE GESVRES (50s, tall but portly), instantly stops his nervous pacing.

The drawing room could double as an art museum -- several priceless tapestries and paintings hang throughout.

COUNT DE GESVRES

(urgent)

Have you found her? Is she well?

DUFORT

We came across this in the woods.

He hands the count a SCARF -- it's stained with blood. The reporter writes. Isidore mentally stores every detail.

COUNT DE GESVRES  
Her scarf! She is wounded!

DUFORT  
We followed the trail to a ninety-meter cliff above the sea... I am afraid there is little hope.

The count slowly sits on a couch, holds the scarf lovingly.

Isidore takes in the room. He approaches FOUR RUBENS PAINTINGS, striking images of muscular figures and nude goddesses.

REPORTER  
Whose scarf is--

DUFORT  
(irritated)  
Don't you read your own paper?

REPORTER  
Well, I--

DUFORT  
I will explain only once. Five weeks ago, after midnight, a sound awoke the count's niece, Raymonde. She saw two men bearing four large bundles across the grounds, then ran down here, where another man stood. He leapt from the balcony. But before he could escape, she shot him and he fell among the ruins.

The reporter writes hastily, scribbles out a mistake...

DUFORT (CONT'D)  
Wheel tracks were discovered outside the château wall, but nothing in the house was missing, and the body of the wounded thief was not found. In the morning, the count received a threat -- "Woe betide the young lady if she has killed the chief."

A SERGEANT (20s) bursts in. The reporter's pencil tip breaks.

SERGEANT  
New evidence, sir.