

The Prestige – “Beat Sheet”  
Beats by Matt Holloway

1. Title Montage: V.O. over CUTTER with canaries, intercut with a magic act, BORDEN gets called up as a volunteer. He sneaks his way below stage, intercut with on-stage. ANGIER is performing the Transported Man trick. Borden watches Angier drop from a trap door into a box filled with water, DROWNS. Intercut again with Cutter and a little girl, performing a trick with a canary.
2. Courtroom: Cutter is under interrogation on stand. Accuses Borden of killing Angier. Cutter is withholding the secret of the trick but agrees to tell the judge in private.
3. Prison yard: a stranger visits Borden. OWENS wants to buy Borden’s tricks for his employer, LORD CALDWELL, offers to support Borden’s daughter in exchange for Transported Man trick. Gives Borden Angier’s diary.
4. Prison cell: Borden looks through Angier’s diary: “A cipher” V.O. takes us to...
5. A train through Colorado, Borden V.O. cont, reading Angier’s diary. Now Angier’s V.O., from the diary entry...
6. Angier in Co. Springs, walks w/cane, whole town has electricity. Luxury hotel, he reveals open-ended trip to hotel clerk, requests a coach up the mountain to observe scientific experiment.
7. Coach approaches a gate, Angier is turned away by ALLEY, who nonetheless recognizes him as the GREAT DANTON. Alley is friendly, hears Angier’s \$\$ offer, is intrigued by his magic.
8. Angier reading Borden’s diary in hotel study – V.O. brings us back to the theatre, to Borden’s description of Angier’s show.
9. Theatre: Angier and Borden, looking younger, are both plants for another magician, MILTON. They get called up to tie knots: Angier kisses the assistant’s leg, she’s hoisted and dropped into a water tank, escapes.
10. Backstage: Borden trashes Milton, reveals his own ambition. Cutter is disapproving, tenderness between Angier and his wife, the assistant. Cutter sends them both to see a Chinese magician, offers a booking to the one who can guess the secret of his trick. Borden and Cutter argue about the knot on Angier’s wife’s wrists.
11. Chinaman’s trick: Borden gets it, explains to Angier outside.
12. In bedroom, Angier can’t do the trick. “Borden saw it at once,” – bad dialog but a tender moment between him and his wife. She invents a stage name for him: The Great Danton.

13. Angier in CO., reading Borden's diary, writing in his own. ----- Borden in jail, reading Angier's: "bloody fool," says Borden.
14. Younger Borden, minor magic show, he is assisting. Meets a girl (SARAH) and her little nephew. Follows to her apartment, pulls a creepy appearing trick inside of her apartment. Does not seem physically possible.
15. Borden in prison, thinking back...
16. Cutter with an investigator, showing him a big machine, learns that it's all been sold to a Mr. Caldwell, Cutter says don't sell the Transported Man: "it's real". Shows and explains the murder box.
17. Back to Milton's magic act, where Borden's fancy knot KILLS Angier's beautiful wife.
18. Angier's apartment, grief montage, morgue, Cutter talks about a sailor friend – Borden's there, claims not to remember which knot he tied.
19. City street -- Borden's now married to Sarah. She goes into apartment, finds Borden with a man named FALLON. They fight about the expense of keeping him (who has sneaked off) as an assistant. She's pregnant. He's planning a dangerous bullet catch trick. Today his "I love you" doesn't seem true to her.
20. Angier, dwelling on a bullet.
21. Borden's show – Angier sneaks in, gets called up as volunteer, SHOOTS Borden in the hand (Fallon noticed, knocked Angier to the side preventing a kill).
22. Angier reading diary: "don't know which knot!" – furious. Borden reading Angier's diary in prison, affected.
23. Sarah tending to Borden's wound – "it's as bad as the day you got it!" The baby's born. Borden's still ambitious, with one hand, for a big trick.
24. NY bar, Angier drinking. Cutter approaches, proposes a booking. They inspect the venue – Cutter's found an assistant.
25. They debate tricks, Cutter introduces OLIVIA, new assistant. They practice a big clunky canary cage trick, mechanical, collapsing.
26. Big opening – Borden sneaks on-stage, ruins the trick, they lose the booking. Cutter wants to try again, sends Angier to see Tesla's exposition "for inspiration".
27. Hotel bar – Angier transcribing Borden's diary. Alley approaches, brings him up to Tesla's. Shows him Tesla's light bulbs, semi-accepts proposal.

28. Expo – Angier and Borden are both there. Tesla’s expo squashed by Edison’s men.
29. Angier follows Borden out of expo – sees him, gloved, with wife and baby. Jealous VO to Angier in CO with diary ---- to Borden in prison with Angier’s diary.
30. Borden with daughter and Fallon in prison, gives Fallon Caldwell’s card.
31. Borden writing in prison, switches his chain onto a guard, takes a beating.
32. Angier to Tesla’s, diary VO. Tesla impresses him, accepts the offer over lunch, overlooking a mountain valley.
33. Angier disguising himself – Olivia’s staying in the dressing room/workshop. She sees his obsession, plays along.
34. Intercut with Borden’s show, where he first does the Transported Man, is Angier’s disgusted recap to Olivia – “the greatest trick I’ve ever seen”. Cutter’s in the audience.
35. Cutter, Angier, and Olivia discuss the trick. Angier agrees they need a double.
36. Borden’s bought Sarah a townhome.
37. Olivia’s found Gerry Root in a barroom – drunk but a perfect double for Angier.
38. Olivia and Angier at stage, he shows trapdoor, the mechanics of the trick. They drop down together, she kisses him. Cutter arrives with Root in tow, a creepy, stunning double. Angier’s voice leads to...
39. Opening night – crowds flowing in. The trick is stunning, but Angier’s bowing under the stage.
40. Backstage, Angier’s dissatisfied, unhappy with the trick, the finale. He sends Olivia to Borden, to spy on *his* Transported Man.
41. Tesla’s efforts have produced nothing, so far, for Angier.
42. Olivia visits Borden’s workshop, where she tells him the full truth about Angier.
43. Backstage – Root makes demands to Cutter. Angier says “pay him for now”
44. Intercut Borden and Root in bar with Angier performing trick. Root drunkenly finishes the trick; in the bar, Borden explains to Root what power he has.
45. The trick again: this time, no mat for Angier to land on. He looks over and sees BORDEN rise in Root’s place. What’s more, Borden reveals Root onstage, dressed as

Angier, bound and gagged, lowered from the rafters. He is wearing a SIGN, advertising Borden's show. Fallon's in the audience.

46. Angier in Olivia's apartment – confronts her about the deceit. She gives him diary. Angier arranges to steal it again so as not to implicate her – she confesses her love for Borden.

47. Borden's smashed workshop w/Fallon – “notebook? Then he's just getting started.”

48. Borden's Transported Man is successful. Outside, he tells Fallon he's walking. Angier follows. Fallon follows Angier, who leads him (Fallon) into a trap. Fallon falls into a box. Cutter nails it shut.

49. Cemetery – Borden and Angier meet – Angier wants the secret, the keyword to the diary. Fallon wouldn't talk. Borden gives him the keyword (“the keyword is the method”). Angier says “dig him (Fallon) up”.

50. With Cutter, Angier reads the keyword: TESLA. He's going to America, but Cutter's not.

51. Sarah and Borden in restaurant with Olivia and Fallon. Sarah sends Olivia and Fallon away, but Borden still won't tell her what he's celebrating (saving Fallon, fooling Angier with the keyword).

52. Angier in Colorado. Edison's men are at the hotel. Borden's voice from the diary to...

53. Borden meeting Olivia. She convinces him to show his severed fingers, proving no double in trick. VO continues – Borden loves Olivia, needs proof of her fidelity. VO – she's proved her fidelity...

54. Borden VO cont., Angier reading: “this was all a ruse, Tesla was just the key, not to the trick, only to the diary.” Angier FURIOUS.

55. Angier to Tesla's, confronts them. Tesla show that the device doesn't deconstruct matter, but duplicates a cat (echoing the top hats in the opening credit montage).

56. Angier discovers all the hats and the cats. Says Tesla, “they're all your hat.”

57. Borden with daughter, struggling to remember his promises. Sarah drinking heavily.

58. Borden to Fallon: “help me with the little girl. Help me with Sarah, she knows something's up”

59. Borden's at Olivia's. He's thinking of home, she doesn't like that. She's distrustful of Fallon, he says not to be.

60. Angier finds the charred remains of Tesla's shop.
61. Borden reads about it in the diary.
62. Hotel clerk tells Angier about Tesla's box. It's huge, in hotel ballroom, very impressive. A mysterious note from Tesla – destroy this box. Tesla's VO leads to...
63. Angier testing machine, and now Angier's VO about the test. He has a gun ready, to kill any monstrosities. But his VO leads to Borden...
64. Angier VO: "here, at the turn, I must leave you, Borden..."
65. Borden turns his tricks over to Caldwell's agent – minus the prestiges (final parts), which he'll only give when he sees his daughter.
66. Borden and Sarah are fighting, while Fallon hugs the daughter. Sarah: "Do you love me?" Borden: "No."
67. Sarah HANGS herself in the workshop.
68. Cutter in a bar – he gets a note, an address. He goes to theater, finds Angier. Angier's got a show up, needs a booking.
69. He wows the FINANCIER with a full Transported Man.
70. Olivia presses Borden for thoughts of (deceased) Sarah. He confesses that he didn't love her. She tells about the return of Angier.
71. Financier gets the original venue back for Angier.
72. Opening night: A huge success, he's transported all the way to the rafters. Borden's troubled.
73. Borden's raving to Fallon. They see the blind stage hands carting away boxes: "they do this every night, after the performance."
74. Return to the INTRO scene: bearded Borden goes onstage to inspect, sneaks below, finds the box with water, sees Angier fall in, drowning.
75. Borden can't break him free.
76. Cutter IDs body in morgue.
77. Borden found GUILTY in court

78. Cutter wants to buy big machine from Caldwell, is refused an audience but may try to catch Caldwell during delivery.

79. Borden in jail, a visitor. Caldwell with the little girl. It's Angier. Borden offers his secrets, Angier tears them up, leaves with the little girl.

80. Cutter's waiting at Angier's house – shocked to see him alive. He's angry about the girl. Angier demands the machine, Cutter leaves.

81. Borden and Fallon at the jail – a weepy farewell, apologies for Sarah, for the obsession.

82. Intercut: Cutter with the little girl, with the machine, Borden to hang, Cutter: “drowning is agony”

83. Borden: “abracadabra” – is HUNG; Angier considers the dark storage room, picks up bouncing ball, is SHOT by a man with three fingers – it's Borden. Says Angier: “A TWIN!”

84. Borden VO: “we were both Fallon, both Borden. One loved Sarah, one Olivia” “simple but not easy” VO as one chops off the other's matching fingers.

85. Angier: “it takes everything” VO the machine, he's transported, DOUBLES himself, SHOOTS himself. Never knew if he'd be the man in the box or the prestige.

86. Angier: “You don't know. You never knew. It was the look on their faces,” and DIES. Cutter VO (cont. from opening): “every magic trick consists of three parts...”

87. Cutter does the canary trick for the daughter, VO cont. “not enough to take away, you have to bring it back,” – and Borden appears, daughter runs to him.

88. Reveal boxes and boxes, row after row, of DROWNED ANGIERS – “you want to be...fooled.”

89. END CREDITS