

COBB (CONT'D)

This job-this last job-is how I get there.

Miles looks down, fiddles with his papers.

COBB

I wouldn't be standing here if there were any other way. I can get home. But I need an architect who's as good as I was.

Miles looks Cobb in the eye. Decides.

MILES

I've got someone better.

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

Miles and Cobb stand by as STUDENTS file out of a lecture.

MILES

Ariadne...

A young woman carrying books turns. This is ARIADNE.

MILES

I'd like you to meet Mr. Cobb.

She sizes him up with quick eyes. Offers her hand.

ARIADNE

Pleased to meet you.

MILES

If you have a few moments, Mr. Cobb has a job offer to discuss with you.

ARIADNE

A work placement?

COBB

(smiles  
Not exactly.

EXT. ROOFTOP, ÉCOLE D'ARCHITECTURE - MOMENTS LATER

Ariadne leans against the parapet, overlooking Paris. She unwraps a sandwich, watching Cobb pull out a pad of GRAPH PAPER and a PEN. He offers them. She bites her sandwich.

COBB

A test.

ARIADNE  
 (mouth full)  
 Aren't you going to tell me  
 anything?

COBB  
 Before I describe the job, I have  
 to know you could do it.

ARIADNE  
 Why?

COBB  
 It's not, strictly speaking, legal.

Ariadne raises her eyebrows.

COBB  
 You have two minutes to draw a maze  
 that takes me one minute to solve.

Ariadne takes the pad and pen. Cobb looks at his watch.

COBB  
 Go.

She starts DRAWING LINES on the grid, constructing a maze.

COBB  
 Stop.

Ariadne hands the pad and pen to Cobb. He glances at the pad,  
 then, looking her in the eye, TRACES the solution. She is  
 taken aback. Cobb RIPS off the sheet, hands the pad back.

COBB  
 Again.

She traces straight lines, CONCENTRATING...

COBB  
 Stop.

She hands Cobb the pad, a touch pleased. Cobb solves the  
 puzzle instantly, as before. Her smile falls.

COBB  
 You'll have to-

She GRABS the pad, frustrated... but this time she FLIPS it  
 over and starts drawing on the BLANK CARDBOARD of the back.  
 Cobb watches, surprised. He smiles as he sees that she's  
 drawing CIRCLES, creating a maze based on concentric rings.

Ariadne hands back the pad, defiant. Cobb takes the pen,  
 starts the maze. This time he gets stuck. Nods.

COBB  
 (working the maze)  
 More like it.

EXT. NARROW STREET, PARIS - DAY

Arthur stops at a warehouse door. Consults a piece of paper.

INT. WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

A large, dusty warehouse. The SLIDING DOOR cracks open.  
 Arthur enters. Looks around, approvingly.

INT. SAME - LATER

Arthur DRAGS LAWN CHAIRS into the middle of the room. He erects a table. Lays out several SILVER CASES, unpacking them, laying out lines of tubing, MECHANISMS...

EXT. PARISIAN CAFE - DAY

Cobb and Ariadne sit at an outdoor table.

COBB  
 They say we only use a fraction of  
 the true potential of our brains...  
 but they're talking about when  
 we're awake. While we dream, the  
 mind performs wonders.

ARIADNE  
 Such as?

COBB  
 How do you imagine a building? You  
 consciously create each aspect,  
 puzzling over it in stages... But  
 sometimes, when your imagination  
*flies-*

ARIADNE  
 I'm *discovering* it.

COBB  
 Exactly. Genuine inspiration.

Cobb leans forwards and draws on the paper table cloth.

COBB  
 In a dream your mind *continuously*  
 does that...

Cobb has drawn a circle made of two arrows.