

RETURN TO WESSEX

Written by

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Based on the novel *Far From the Madding Crowd* by Thomas Hardy,
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EXT. BLACKMOOR VALE, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - MORNING

FADE IN:

Blackmoor Vale, South Wessex, England, 1885

A farrier's wagon appears on a county route as it slowly makes its way out of Blackmoor Vale, up the crest of a hill, into South Wessex proper. A single driver, seated behind the buckboard, holds the reins to a draft horse. On the sides of this box-wagon are hung tongs of various sizes, coal rakes, shovels, and raw iron stock that swing and clatter their way along the lush rolling countryside. The bulk of the load to be pulled by this solitary workhorse is comprised of a portable forge, an anvil, and heavy tool chests. In the event of rain, the wooden arches pitched at the rear of the rig serve to support a sizable tarpaulin in times of rain. While his horse plods along, the farrier lifts his head to survey the boundless road ahead.

THOMAS HARDY

A plain in front of me, And there's
the road Upon it. Wide country,
And, too, the road!

Past the first ridge another, And
still the road Creeps on.
Perhaps no other Ridge for the
road?

Ah! Past that ridge a third,
Which still the road Has to climb
furtherward - The thin white road!

Sky seems to end its track; But no.
The road Trails down the hill at
the back. Ever the road!

FADE OUT.

EXT. ALONG OLD CHALK ROAD, SOUTHERN WESSEX, ENGLAND - LATER

Entering the chalklands just beneath Blackmoor Vale, young Brit Landon comes upon a meandering brook. There, he stops to allow his horse to water, while he rests in the tall grass. Brit soon shimmies on his belly to the edge of the stream, where he fills two canteens before coming to his feet. Hearing the rumble of thunder, he tosses both canteens over the sideboard before moving to the back of the wagon to untie the heavy canvas tarp. Now prepared for anything, Brit climbs up the side of the rig, slides onto the bench, grabs hold of the reins, and nudges his draft horse back onto the road for their next stop in Chalk Newton.

While admiring the barren terrain he's passed by numerous times, rain begins to pelt the brim of his hat. Undeterred, Brit gently coaxes his horse down the hill. Looking left, he catches sight of a small figure taking cover under a nearby tree. Lightning soon strikes one of its branches, causing Brit to hail this individual to warn them of the impending danger. The rain, now falling in torrents, forces this person to make a break for the wagon. Suddenly anticipating a visitor, he makes his way to the middle of the rig to draw the tarp across the wooden supports in the rear and throw it clear over the horse's head, before jumping off to fasten the streaming guy lines to the wagon. By the time he climbs into the safety of his makeshift canopy, slung just above the buckboard, his rain-soaked visitor is already waiting inside.

JUDITH

Excuse the intrusion, sir, the rain was coming on so strong. I...

BRIT

It's alright, miss. Besides, where else could you have gone to escape this storm? There's nothing for miles but open field.

JUDITH

All the same, you saved my life...!

Judith squeezes yet more water from her hair before extending her hand to Brit.

By the way, I'm Judith Stapleton, a lamber in the area.

BRIT

Brit, Brit Landon, farrier.

Shaking her hand.

Where are you from, Judith?

JUDITH

Mellstock. Well, just outside of Mellstock, that is...

BRIT

And a lamber, you say?

JUDITH

Yes. My mother was famous in these parts for bringing ewes and rams into the world. I learned the trade from her. It's said that she birthed literally thousands of them.

(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)

My father was a drover, who died on his way to London, while delivering sheep to Smithfield Market. I was two when it happened.

Brit notices a pouch set at her feet.

BRIT

What's that you have with you?

JUDITH

Oh, it's my lamber's satchel.

BRIT

I see. Pretty important job you've got there.

JUDITH

Why thank you. You too.

BRIT

Right. Hey, I think the rain has stopped.

He begins to tug on the tarp, freeing the horse and themselves, before emerging from the covers. Brit now tosses the tarp behind him before taking hold of the canteens.

JUDITH

Where did you say you're headed?

BRIT

I didn't, but my next appointment is in Chalk Newton, about an hour or so away... Where are you off to?

JUDITH

(sighing)

Mellstock. I have to pick up some fresh supplies. Lambing season begins in earnest next month.

BRIT

I can take you there, if you like.

JUDITH

I'd like that, thank you. You're most kind.

BRIT

Not at all. Say, how old are you, miss, ah Judith?

JUDITH
Twenty-two, and you?

BRIT
Twenty-seven...

Preparing to leave the location.
Are you spoken for, I mean, are you
attached to anyone?

JUDITH
Why, no...

Studying the floorboards.

BRIT
(hesitantly)
I have a notion to settle down.

JUDITH
But, how would you conduct your
farrier service without traveling
to county farms, like me?

BRIT
Why, I'd quit the trade...

Gazing upon the rich, fertile fields, while musing.
and take up farming.

JUDITH
Farming what exactly?

BRIT
Wheat and barley, of course! You
know, when folded properly, sheep
are an excellent source of
fertilizer! Sure, the wool and meat
they produce is important, but I've
learned that it's their droppings
that actually benefit a farm the
most.

JUDITH
Well, yes, here in the chalklands,
but, farther north it's wool.

BRIT
Agreed, but I'm talking about South
Wessex...

JUDITH
So, you're interested in purchasing
a farm around here?

BRIT
Given the right opportunity, yes.

Suddenly interested, Judith turns toward Brit. After a thoughtful pause, she responds.

JUDITH
(sincerely)
Then you'll be in search of a wife...

BRIT
(grinning)
I don't know, there's a farmer on my route today named William Bolden, who happens to be a happily confirmed bachelor!

JUDITH
Oh, how happy could he possibly be all alone like that! What about children? They're as vital to a farm as any livestock. Besides, they require no pay until they come of age.

BRIT
True.

Pondering logically before replying.
What are you saying, Judith?

JUDITH
Only that...together we would make a good team.

BRIT
Yeah? Me?

JUDITH
Yes you! You'd make a wonderful husband and father.

BRIT
Why, you barely know me!

JUDITH
(astutely)
I know good qualities when I see them.

BRIT
Such as...?

JUDITH

Such as...you gave me shelter! You, you spoke readily to me, a complete stranger. And you seem like the kind of person I could depend on.

(warmly)

Besides...if you do purchase a farm of your own, you'll be needing a wife.

Looking directly into Brit's eyes.

BRIT

I'm flattered Judith, really I am...

JUDITH

Don't be, you're a catch. Strong, intelligent, ambitious...

BRIT

(ardently)

All right, all right, I get your drift! If you're serious...

Judith swallows hard before responding.

JUDITH

(earnestly)

I am...

BRIT

My aunt is the only relative left to me. She doesn't live far from here. I'd...I'd like you to meet her.

JUDITH

(unsure)

Well...

Straitening her hair as Brit entreats.

BRIT

It would go a long way to solidify our plans...

JUDITH

In that case, I'd welcome the opportunity...

Cradling both hands on her lap, Brit breaks out the two canteens from behind the buckboard, offering one to his newfound intended. Judith raises the flagon to her lips before Brit takes an equally refreshing swallow.

BRIT

Shall we?

Snapping the reins.

JUDITH

By all means...

Finally free to move forward, the horse plods up yet another knoll, pulling Brit, young Judith, and the heavy wagon behind him.

I/E. CLAYBOURNE MANOR, TALBOTHAYS, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
AFTERNOON

Having already finished his job in Chalk Newton, Brit and Judith later pull into the circular driveway of Claybourne Manor, only to find Aunt Agnes outside supervising the gardeners. The couple exit the wagon to greet the woman, who now turns to receive them.

AGNES

Is that you, Brit?

BRIT

Yes, it is! How are you, Aunt Agnes?

Stepping onto the walkway, he removes his hat while Agnes sizes up the young woman.

AGNES

Is everything alright?

BRIT

Everything is fine. We were just passing through on our way to Mellstock.

Aunt Agnes turns to the gardeners.

AGNES

Glenn, move your men over to the far side of the manor, and begin pruning the rhododendrons. I'll be with you shortly.

Glenn nods, and his workers depart. She now invites Judith and her nephew inside.

Come on in. Are you thirsty?

BRIT

We have plenty of water in the wagon, thank you. Aunt Agnes, this is Judith Stapleton. We met earlier today during a bad rainstorm on my way to Chalk Newton.

AGNES

I see... And you're going to Mellstock?

BRIT

Yes. Judith is in need of fresh supplies for the lambing season. Her home is located just outside Mellstock, where she serves as a traveling lamber.

AGNES

Is that so, dear?

JUDITH

Why, yes, madame.
(proudly)

This will be my fifth season servicing farms on my own.

Crossing under the threshold and showing them inside, Agnes calls for her steward.

AGNES

Alex, Alex...oh, there you are!
Take their boots and give them to the stable boy to clean up.

BRIT

Sorry, Aunt Agnes.

JUDITH

(shyly)
Yes, sorry...

AGNES

Let's go into the parlor, shall we?

They enter the fashionable room and sit on a fine upholstered settee, opposite Aunt Agnes

Now that we're alone together, tell me why you're here.

(MORE)

AGNES (CONT'D)

You must pass this way often, Brit,
but you never stop to see me. Ever.

BRIT

I can explain. This is where I
usually make my turn to visit
Little Weatherby Farm. I must never
arrive late when calling on Farmer
Bolden. He's a stickler for
punctuality.

AGNES

He always was...

BRIT

So, you know him?

Aunt Agnes places both hands in her lap.

AGNES

I was once engaged to him!

BRIT

But, you married Uncle Rob...

AGNES

I did, and we were happily married
for forty-eight years until he
passed.

JUDITH

(apologetically)

I'm sorry.

Ignoring Judith's sympathies.

AGNES

My husband had great promise ahead
of him when we wed, whereas William
Bolden had many years of financial
hardship before becoming
prosperous. How is he, anyway?

BRIT

Oh, he's fine and very set in his
ways...

AGNES

Still a bachelor, I'll bet...!

BRIT

Yes, still single. But he keeps a
well groomed manor.

AGNES

Of course, he does!
 (impatiently)
 Now, what can I do for you, Brit?

BRIT

Well, for starters, Judith and I met hours ago and amazingly hit it off, so we've decided to purchase a farm of our own as husband and wife.

Agnes rises to her feet and addresses Judith.

AGNES

Will you excuse us, dear? You may wait in the kitchen.

JUDITH

Why, yes, Madame.

After Judith departs the room, Aunt Agnes draws both sets of pocket doors closed and returns to her wingback.

AGNES

Exactly how old is this girl, Brit?

BRIT

She's twenty-two.

AGNES

Twenty-two! And what do you know about her?

Judith proceeds to pace the floor in the kitchen, while the domestic staff are busy preparing supper.

BRIT

Well, her father was a drover, who died when she was two.

AGNES

(caustically)
 Oh, I am sorry! And her mother?

BRIT

She's an expert lamber, famous in South Wessex for having helped deliver thousands of lambs throughout the county.

A large, round salver falls to the pantry floor, causing a stir in the kitchen.

AGNES
 (wincing)
 Oh, my...

BRIT
 Judith has taken after her mother.
 She's well respected in the...

AGNES
 I've heard enough.

 Holding up her hand.
 Why Brit, like her mother she's a
 common lamber!

BRIT
 So...?

AGNES
 Need I remind you, young man, that
 I'm still responsible for your
 welfare?

BRIT
 (defiantly)
 I know!

AGNES
 And as your only living relative,
 you must bend to my wishes. That
 girl...

BRIT
 Judith.

AGNES
 Yes, Judith, is a nobody, who would
 only cause you hardship and toil!
 Go where the money is, Brit...and
 bring me someone of upright
 breeding and promise. I won't see
 you wanting and poor. Love will
 only get you so far.

BRIT
 But, I want to settle down.

AGNES
 And you will, Brit, just find the
 right kind of woman, is all. Don't
 be choosing the first loaf of bread
 on the shelf. Be selective!

Now softening her stance somewhat.

Tell you what. If I were to give you part of your inheritance now to purchase property large enough to attract a woman of merit, would that work?

Looking toward the pocket door where Judith exited, then back to Aunt Agnes.

BRIT

I don't know...

(more boldly)

Judith and I are a perfect match, and I intend to marry her!

AGNES

Not while I'm alive, you won't!

BRIT

But...

AGNES

Brit, you have to know that you need my consent to marry. Otherwise, why would you come by here today with that, that...girl? Without my approval, you'll get nothing from me upon my death. And by God Almighty, if you secretly marry that common sparrow without church banns, I'll see to it that you inherit absolutely nothing!

Getting up, she approaches a grand bureau across the room.

But, if, and only if, you agree this minute to forego this...shabby union, I'll write you out a draft today to pay for the farm of your dreams. Take it or leave it!

Agnes now opens the center drawer and removes her checkbook.

What's it going to be, Briton?

Well, I'm waiting...!

Tapping her foot as Brit approaches the bureau, only to peer over her shoulder.

EXT. OUTER MELLSTOCK, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - LATER

Shown from behind, Brit and Judith sit beneath a broad oak tree just outside of Mellstock. In time, Brit gets up, still holding onto Judith's hand.

After kissing the back of her wrist, he tips his hat, climbs into the wagon, and swiftly rides away. A heartbroken Judith now buries her face in her hands.

EXT. LITTLE WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - AFTERNOON

Brit arrives on the farm of William Bolden, located just outside Weatherbury, who greets him at the entranceway.

BOLDEN

Brit, I've got a delivery of seed unloading right now in the threshing barn. 'Tis the season, you know. It should only be a moment.

Tipping his hat before returning to the barnyard. Moments later, the seed transport leaves, allowing Brit's wagon to enter the drive. He soon meets Bolden outside the horse stable.

BRIT

I'm about to light the forge now. It should be fully heated shortly. And how are you, sir?

BOLDEN

I'm well, thank you.

Observing the tinder as it's passed into the furnace. Have you enough coal? I've had some brought around just in case!

BRIT

No need. I have plenty, thank you.

BOLDEN

Where to next, Brit?

BRIT

The Bellingham Farm over in Kingsbere. He has a team of Cleveland Bays that need shodding.

BOLDEN

Yes, I saw them at the Greenhill Fair last year. Mighty fine animals.

BRIT

Yes, and so obedient! They're a pleasure to fit.

BOLDEN

I've no need for horses that big.

BRIT

Not around here anyway. Farther North, yes... I passed through Blackmoor Vale this morning, on my way to Chalk Newton, and got caught in a dreadful storm!

BOLDEN

I heard the distant rumble from here. Not too serious, I hope!

BRIT

(smiling)

I'm here, aren't I? Ok, the forge is ready now. Who's first?

Bolden whistles to his stable boy to bring a two-tone pony forward.

BOLDEN

Let's start with Topper.

BRIT

(sighing)

Very well...

BOLDEN

How now, Brit! Why so melancholy?

Brit lifts one of Topper's forelegs to remove her shoe and clean around the frog, sole, and lamina.

BRIT

My, how did her shoe get so worn?

BOLDEN

I use her to take my gig to the Corn Exchange in Casterbridge. Those cobblestones can be rough on the old stompers!

BRIT

I'll say... Thank God my route is in the countryside. Though...

BOLDEN

Yes?

BRIT

(exhaling)

I believe I'm in need of a change.

Hammering the iron stock into shape on the anvil.

BOLDEN

Oh...?

BRIT

I've been thinking of settling
down, sir.

Soon, laying the red-hot band against the pony's hoof before
cooling it off in the slack tub.

BOLDEN

I'm surprised to hear you say that,
Brit!

BRIT

Well, I've money enough now to buy
a farm. Any ideas?

BOLDEN

Why, the farm next door has been
available for quite some time.

BRIT

Next door?

Pausing to drive the horseshoe into Topper's hoof.

BOLDEN

It's known as Upper Weatherby Farm,
a larger spread than mine...

BRIT

You don't say! We would be
neighbors, William.
(laughing)

Placing the hoof back on the ground.

There you go, Topper. Three more to
go!

BOLDEN

(reflecting)

Yes, it would be grand to have a
neighbor again...

BRIT

Tell me, who should I contact to
make an offer on the property?

Moving on to the next leg.

BOLDEN

The owner's name is Dick Wilson,
and the best place to find him is
at the Corn Exchange...in
Casterbridge.

BRIT

(sighing)
Ah, Casterbridge...

BOLDEN

Look for him there on any market
day. You'll find him alright!

BRIT

I'll do just that, thank you,
Farmer.

BOLDEN

Not at all...

BRIT

Say, how long was he your neighbor?

BOLDEN

(shyly)
Not very long. Wilson purchased the
property from a man named Oak,
whose wife inherited the farm well
before their marriage.

BRIT

I see... So, the farm was in her
name at one time? That's mighty
unusual in these parts.

BOLDEN

I'll say. As I recall, she
supervised the entire farm without
a bailee. Eighty head of sheep, no
less. A strong-headed woman and the
subject of many a story in
Weatherbury. Her name was Bathsheba
Everdene. She was striking and
could ride like the wind...

Gazing into the furnace door, reminiscing.

BRIT

Bathsheba... That's quite a name!
Say, what ever happened to her and
her husband?

BOLDEN

Oak!

BRIT

Yes, Oak... Do they still reside in Wessex?

BOLDEN

No. After selling the farm to Wilson, they sailed to America out of Portsmouth.

Setting his eyes on the available property.

BRIT

You don't say...? I think I'll go see this Wilson fellow tomorrow.

BOLDEN

Dick.

BRIT

Yes... Dick!

He measures out another length of stock while a patient Topper awaits the next fitting.

INT. CORN EXCHANGE, CASTERBRIDGE, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - THE NEXT DAY

Brit enters the Corn Exchange the next morning, where he approaches Chairman Perkins, who is surrounded by a throng of planters. He slowly makes his way into the front row.

BRIT

(shouting)

Excuse me, sir.

(louder)

Excuse me, sir!

GIL

Wheat or barley?

BRIT

What?

GIL

Are you interested in wheat or barley seed?

BRIT

Oh, no. I'm looking for Dick
Wilson. Can you by any chance point
him out?

GIL

Are you a Tallyman?

Nervously looking around.

BRIT

A what?

GIL

A Tallyman, uh, an accounts
collector!

BRIT

Why, no... Actually, I'm interested
in purchasing a farm outside of
Weatherbury, and I'm here to speak
to its owner! Can you point Dick
Wilson out to me?

GIL

(animated)

Ah! Surely! He's just leaving
through the side door, over there.
He's wearing a hat similar to my
own!

Touching his broker's stick to the rim of his hat.

BRIT

Thank you, sir.

GIL

You're welcome, young man. Alright,
who's next...!

Brit runs across the crowded floor before slipping out the side entrance. Scanning the street, he spots Dick Wilson getting into a buggy and approaches the gig. After shaking hands, Brit speaks with this person, who nods in agreement as they discuss the details of their transaction. He soon takes notice of a striking woman in uniform across the street, waiting for the traffic to clear. She soon approaches the carriage, climbs in, and sits next to the elderly gentleman, her face obscured by a broad-brimmed Cloche. On the breast of her corselet, medals of brilliant luster hang from multi-colored ribbons. These are service decorations awarded by the local chapter of the Girls Friendship Society, of which she is the leader. Though the woman's eyes are shaded, gleaming teeth of even order appear in her fixedly set expression.

DICK
Brit, this is my daughter, Addison.
Addy, meet Brit Landon.

BRIT
Hello, miss.

DICK
Brit here has made an offer on
Upper Weatherby Farm.

Addy turns to her father.

ADDY
And you've accepted this offer?

DICK
Well, yes, my terms have been met.

BRIT
It's only a matter of inspecting
the property and formalizing the
deed.

ADDY
I see... Well, it'll be nice to see
the farm operable again. I do hope
you're handy, Mr. Landon!

BRIT
You can be sure of it! Well, sir, I
shall inspect the property and, if
it meets my terms, I'll deliver a
bank check to you by close of
business today.

DICK
In the meantime, I'll have my
attorney ready the deed for
conveyance.

BRIT
Thank you, sir!

Shaking his hand in agreement and tipping his hat to Addy.
Miss Wilson.

I/E. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- EVENING

A month into Brit's repairs to Upper Weatherby Farm, Judith
passes by one night on her way to Mellstock. As she does,
commotion sounds from one of its barns.

Upon entering a dimly lit outbuilding, she spies two shepherds endeavoring to save a sheep about to give birth to a breech lamb. Now in agony and bleating frantically, Judith rescues the ewe and her newborn ram from certain death. Rejoicing, the shepherds invite Judith to join them for a tankard of cider at a nearby tavern.

INT. THREE RINGS TAVERN, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
LATER

Judith follows the shepherds into Three Rings Tavern, where two pots of cider await them on the table. Being perfect gentlemen, they wait for their guest to take a pull on the first tankard before partaking themselves. Brit soon enters the establishment, where he meets the person responsible for saving a vital member of his flock. Easily recognizing Judith, he is encouraged by his men to hire this miracle worker to be his barn manager.

BRIT

We meet again, Judith!

JUDITH

Yes. I honestly didn't know this was your farm, Brit.

AARON

She saved Juniper's life and the farm now has a healthy new ram.

BRIT

So I heard.

Aaron takes a gulp of cider and begins to cough.

AARON

It was miraculous, I tell you.
(hacking)
She would make a, a fine barn manager, sir...!

Other shepherds join in this belief.

BRIT

All right, all right! An enterprising boss listens to his employees' practical advice.

Followed by more banter.

Very well! And what shall be her weekly wage?

The workers start bidding for young Judith's services.

LABORERS

Eight pounds, ten... Nonsense, an
even nine pounds... Make it nine
pounds, three, boss!

After settling on an adequate wage, Brit hires Judith, much
to the shepherd's delight.

BRIT

Another round for the shepherds,
Maltster Warren!

Cheers erupt from his men. From this time onward, Brit
frequents this local canteen, where workers from Upper
Weatherby Farm regularly gather.

EXT. BRIDAL PATH, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH
WESSEX, ENGLAND - MORNING

The next morning, Hugh Pippin's Wife walks Judith to her
first day as Sheep Barn Manager at Upper Weatherby Farm.

MRS. PIPPIN

I hope you didn't mind sleeping in
the linen closet last night.

JUDITH

Not at all! It was cozy and really
no different from the tight
quarters I'm accustomed to on the
lambing circuit.

MRS. PIPPIN

Such as...?

JUDITH

Well, in a vacant horse stall, for
instance. Or...a tool shed if I'm
lucky! But mostly under hay wagons,
parked along country roads at
night. Straw can be quite
comfortable and warm when properly
arranged.

MRS. PIPPIN

Hmm, I'm afraid domestic life suits
me best, at work as well as home.

(snickering)

Besides, I could never see my Hugh
curling up in a tool shed, let
alone our children. Warm beds suit
us just fine.

JUDITH

You work at the manor, I'm
supposing...

MRS. PIPPIN

I do. I'm responsible for
maintaining the wash tubs, scrub
boards, and yards of clothesline...

They soon meet up with John Long, who joins them from an
adjoining track.

Well, good morning!

JOHN

Morning, Rebecca.

Doffing his straw hat.

(blushing)

Hello, Miss Stapleton. Do you
remember me from last night?

JUDITH

It was so dark in the tavern, but
yes, I do, uh...

JOHN

John!

JUDITH

(smiling)

John...

JOHN

Like in the Bible!

MRS. PIPPIN

Now, John, there you go again! How
many times must I remind you, that
there be more than one John in the
Holy Book...

JOHN

I know, I know. You don't have to
remind me!

Holding up his hand.

John the Baptizer, my patron saint,
and John the Apostle, the son of
Zeba, Zeba...

JUDITH

Zebedee!

JOHN
That's right!

Coming into a clearing adjacent to the farmyard.

JUDITH
Why John the Baptist, John?

JOHN
Because I'm the designated sheep
douser before a shearing, who,
using my crook, dunks the sheep
underwater in the stream basin over
yonder, along the outermost field.
Like the Baptizer.
(proudly)

MRS. PIPPIN
Ah, here we be! John, you show
Judith to the sheep barn, and I'll
talk to Deidre about her living
arrangements.

JUDITH
Thank you, Mrs. Pippin!

MRS. PIPPIN
Don't mention it, missy! See you
both at breakfast...

Tipping his hat, John escorts Judith to the sheep barn, while
Mrs. Pippin scurries over to the manor.

EXT. LITTLE WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX,
ENGLAND - LATER

Stylish Addy Wilson is in the neighborhood, first to visit
Farmer Bolden, then check on the neighboring property. She
soon locates him in a nearby field, supervising the
excavation of new postholes.

ADDY
Hello, there!

BOLDEN
(surprised)
Well, what do you know? Addy
Wilson! What brings you here,
missy?

Addy gets down from her horse.

ADDY

Well, I was in the neighborhood,
and I'm, I'm interested to see how
the farm next door is coming along.

BOLDEN

I see...

ADDY

Putting in new fencing?

Peering down the straight line of holes.

BOLDEN

Yes! Work never stops on a farm,
you know.

ADDY

(sighing)

Yes, I have a farm of my own,
remember? Practically everyone in
Wessex either owns a farm or is
working on one.

BOLDEN

True, true! Are you still raising
Dorsets?

ADDY

What else! They're a hardy breed.

BOLDEN

I'll say...! So, what exactly do
you want to know about improvements
being made next door?

ADDY

Well, I...

Abashed while studying her riding crop.

BOLDEN

All I can tell you is Brit Landon's
a clever man. Why, I never saw
anyone apply himself to so many
pursuits. Farming, construction,
animal husbandry, management, and
commerce. You should go over there
and see for yourself.

ADDY

Hmm... I think I will. Is the
bridal path still open?

Bolden puts his gauntlets back on.

BOLDEN

Why, sure. Brit had his men reopen it shortly after he moved in, so as to visit me. It's nice having a neighbor again.

ADDY

Thanks.

She mounts her quarter-horse and heads for the path.

BOLDEN

I'll have my stable boy run ahead and open the gate for you.

ADDY

You're too kind, Farmer.

BOLDEN

Not at all!

Before long, a little boy dashes ahead of Addy to open the gate.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- SAME TIME

After touring the outbuildings, John formally introduces Judith to the farm staff. Coming to the end of those assembled, he asks his senior shepherd to say a few words.

AARON

(embarrassed)

Well...

Hacking while kicking around the straw in front of him.

My name be Aaron Bishop. No relation to His Lordship, mam. I serve this farm as Senior Shepherd. And well I conduct my tasks!

JOHN

That will do, Aaron.

AARON

(coughing)

And one more thing...

JOHN

Yes?

AARON

I work well with all the men before
yee here. Corbin and Russel.
Gibbons, White, Tinley, and
Pippin...

TINLEY

I can attest to that, mam, surely!

JUDITH

Oh, do call me by my Christened
name.

All gaze at Judith while she catches John's eye.
Now, who can show me the tools used
on this farm to keep your flock
maintained and shorn?

TINLEY

I can, mam, uh, Judith, I mean.

JUDITH

Thank you.

JOHN

Alright, men, you can return to
work!

Jacob Tinley now accompanies Judith to the tool shed as the
others take leave of the barn.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- MOMENTS LATER

Riding through the bridal path towards Upper Weatherby
farmhouse, Addy catches sight of Brit, who is on the roof
nailing shingles. Calling up to him from below, he soon joins
her in the yard to discuss improvements he's making to the
property, as well as plans to increase the livestock. Finding
Brit to be both attractive and industrious, she now sets her
sights on him while Judith angrily looks on.

JOHN

Well, would you look at that!

Turning to an overly concerned Judith.
Her name is Addison Wilson, better
known 'round here as Addy. Her
father owned this place before
sellin' it to Brit. She's most
familiar with this farm, havin'
raised sheep here before getting a
place of her own.

JUDITH

She's pretty in a social kind of way...

JOHN

Yes, a real socialite, as they say! We'd best get back to work.

Brit shows Addy to the side porch, where they exchange words while seated on newly made rocking chairs.

ADDY

I must say, this place is beginning to sparkle!

BRIT

Thank you, though you haven't seen anything yet.

ADDY

I'll bet...! Say, who is that young girl who keeps looking over here?

Pointing her out discreetly.

BRIT

That's our new sheep barn manager, Judith Stapleton.

ADDY

I see...
(pondering)
And how old is she?

BRIT

Twenty-two.

ADDY

Hmm... Not to change the subject, but I just saw Farmer Bolden. He was supervising some of his workers who are digging postholes. I think your living next door has somehow inspired him.

BRIT

What's the story on him anyway? I've been calling on his farm for the better part of two years, and have never gotten an honest answer out of him or anyone else around here.

ADDY
So, you don't know?

Biting her lower lip.

BRIT
(perplexed)
Know what, exactly?

ADDY
William Bolden murdered Mistress
Everdene's husband twelve years
ago. He was a sergeant in Her
Majesty's Royal Dragoons, who went
by the name of Francis Troy.

BRIT
But, Bolden said that Bathsheba is
married to a man named Oak!

Leaning forward in his rocker.

ADDY
She married Oak after her husband
was killed...on Christmas Eve, no
less!

BRIT
So, Farmer Bolden murdered
Bathsheba's first husband? William
Bolden?

Cocking his head.

ADDY
Yes. He served ten years in
Northern England for his crime and
was released out of pity, I'm told.

BRIT
Well, you'd never know it by
speaking to him. Such an amiable
man, he is...

ADDY
Authorities concluded it was a
crime of passion. You see, Bolden
was madly in love with Bathsheba,
who was presumed widowed, after her
husband, Troy, had been reported
drowned off the coast of Budmouth a
year earlier.

BRIT

You say, presumed...

ADDY

Uh hmm. It appears that Troy was mysteriously spotted lurking about Weatherbury hours before his death. Bolden, having been promised Bathsheba's hand after six more years of widowhood, was set to announce as much to his guests that night. At the very moment of his joyous news, a tall man dressed in a dark coat entered the house, demanding that Bathsheba leave with him.

Leaning forward in her rocker to match that of Brit. Before doing so, however, he revealed himself to be none other than...

BRIT

Sergeant Troy! Then...?

ADDY

Hearing Bathsheba scream at the sight of her presumed-dead husband, Bolden reached above the fireplace for his shotgun and proceeded to fire both barrels into Troy's chest. Those in attendance later claimed that the discharge issued from that gun filled the entire room with smoke and left nearly half of the guests deaf for two hours.

Sitting back in her chair, she stares vacantly at activities occurring in the barnyard.

Troy soon perished in Bathsheba's arms, while later that night, Farmer Bolden surrendered to authorities in Casterbridge, where he confessed.

BRIT

(astonished)

Amazing! Hmm. I'm absolutely shocked. And all this took place next door?

ADDY

It did... Oh, he's a changed man now, thankfully. Love rattled his emotions, to be sure, with deadly consequences.

Brit struggles to digest this information before speaking.

BRIT

Did you know Bathsheba?

ADDY

Yes, but I was very young when my father bought this farm.

BRIT

I'm told she managed this place without a bailee.

ADDY

You heard right! Word is she was a very determined woman.

Turning to Brit.

Enough with the sad stories, I'm going to take a ride. I'd love for you to join me!

BRIT

I could use a ride myself. Give me a few minutes to change and I'll be right out.

Addy smiles as Brit enters the house. He soon returns outside, mounts his horse, and leads her down the bridal path before passing into field after field of fresh spring clover.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- EVENING

Out for a walk near her humble lodgings, Judith gazes at the stars in the Northern Sky. Hearing approaching footsteps, she now comes face to face with a brightly-lit lantern, its bearer being the person of Brit Landon, out for his nightly inspection.

BRIT

Who goes there...? Why, Judith, is that you? What are you doing outdoors on such a dark night?

Lowering his lantern.

JUDITH

Star gazing. On nights spent outside sleeping on hay mounds along my route, I became very proficient where stars are concerned, especially on evenings such as this. I miss that!

BRIT

You're unhappy here?

JUDITH

Oh, no. It's just that I miss the stars and the secrets they reveal.

BRIT

Secrets?

JUDITH

Never mind. I shouldn't be going on like this...

Just now, a shooting star streaks across the sky.
How was your ride today with...

BRIT

Addy Wilson?

JUDITH

Yes, if that's who you were with...
John Long refers to her as a socialite.

Leveling her eyes with Brit.

BRIT

(laughing)
He does, does he?

JUDITH

He's perceptive in a simple kind of way.

BRIT

That he be. Uh, you wouldn't by any chance be jealous?

JUDITH

Do I have a reason to be? I believe fate brought me to this place, Brit, even though I was rejected out of hand by the head of your family.

Looking back at the stars.

BRIT

Leaving you that day in Mellstock wasn't easy. Our plan fit together so perfectly...

JUDITH

And yet?

BRIT

And yet, were we to marry now, I'd be forced to abandon this farm, which wouldn't be good for either of us.

JUDITH

So, you still prefer me to Addy?

Touching his wrist.

BRIT

I didn't say that, but...

JUDITH

But you think it, right? Say it. Say it, Brit!

BRIT

Regardless how I feel, I mustn't act on it. I'll have to settle for someone else unless you could find us thirty thousand pounds.

JUDITH

I'm afraid that's impossible...

BRIT

Exactly!

JUDITH

Unless...

BRIT

What?

JUDITH

Unless you were to secure a bank loan by pledging the sheep. That way, you could give the proceeds to your Aunt, letting you off the hook entirely. Hmm?

BRIT

It would still result in my being
stricken from her will...

Judith now whispers in his ear as he bends to set the lamp
down at his feet.

JUDITH

Yes... But, think how happy we
would be, Brit! Please try. Please
try to find a banker...

Sliding her hand further up his arm.

BRIT

(intoxicated)

I'll ride to Casterbridge at first
light and find a banker who would
consider such an arrangement.

Stooping to find Judith's lips, they kiss.

(whispering)

Give me time, Judith... That's all
I ask for.

JUDITH

Oh, Brit, you do love me...

Brit picks up the lantern to turn it off before setting it
down on the ground. The only light left to them now is the
luminous glow of stars in an indigo sky.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- MORNING

English honeybees, *Apis mellifera*, emerging from their
dormant state, readily visit such plant species as crocuses,
both snow and common, dandelion, primrose, comfrey, bluebell,
and lesser celandine, as well as the flowering trees of
cherry, apple, willow, and hawthorn.

INT. BARCLAYS BANK, CASTERBRIDGE, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
LATER

A clerk unlocks the front door to Barclays Bank in
Casterbridge, opening the business to customers. Hearing the
jumbling of keys inside, Brit steps onto its multi-columned
veranda and enters the establishment.

CLERK

Can I help you, Sir?

BRIT

You may. I'm seeking a loan using
my livestock as collateral.

The clerk looks down at Brit's scuffed boots.

CLERK

I'm afraid you've come to the wrong
place.

BRIT

But the sign in your front window
reads Loans Available...

CLERK

I understand, but the sign refers
to collateralizing real property,
not chattel. This bank only handles
land-backed loans. Our branch in
Sandbourne, however, should be able
to handle your needs.

BRIT

Thank you, Sir. May I have your
business card?

CLERK

Certainly. Who's next?

Taking the card from the Clerk, Brit returns home.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- THE NEXT DAY

Once again using the bridal path to enter Upper Weatherby
Farm, Addy appears at the front door of the manor. She now
raps on the entranceway with her riding crop.

LIBBY

Mam?

ADDY

I'm looking for Brit. Is he here?

LIBBY

No, he went to Sandbourne on
business...

Addy turns and anxiously scans the barnyard.

ADDY

Did he go alone?

LIBBY

Why, no mam. Young Judith went with him. I was told she needed lamber supplies.

ADDY

I see...

LIBBY

Is that all, mam?

Offering no reply, Addy mounts her horse and leaves.

EXT. OUTSIDE SANDBOURNE, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - SAME TIME

Approaching Sandbourne, Brit and Judith continue their conversation.

BRIT

There should be a turn coming up soon. I haven't been here in some time, so...

JUDITH

I see a clearing up ahead...on the left. There!

BRIT

That's it! I knew I brought you along for a reason... If my reckoning is correct, we should be coming into Sandbourne shortly.

JUDITH

I was thinking. If I were to go into the bank with you, I might better describe the collateral.

Brit turns and smiles.

BRIT

Tell you what, if I need you, I'll come outside and call you in.

JUDITH

(frustrated)

Banks are behind the times where women are concerned! Though I was told by farmhands that Bathsheba Everdene conducted her own banking affairs.

BRIT
Right... Like I said, if the moment
presents itself, I'll call you in.

JUDITH
Alright, I understand!

Brit pulls up to the side of the building, climbs down from the rig, and enters the bank. After a brief period, he waves his hand in the window opposite the wagon, motioning for Judith to come in. She jumps down from the box, straightens out her blouse, and steps into the establishment. There, Brit introduces her to Tristan Quinn, an elderly loan officer specializing in livestock, particularly sheep. So experienced is Quinn in the realm of sheep farming that the questions asked of Brit forced him to call for Judith, who appears before them now.

BRIT
Mr. Quinn, this is my Sheep Barn
Manager, Judith Stapleton.

QUINN
Young lady.

Taking her hand.

JUDITH
That's a hardened grip you have
there, Mr. Quinn!

Brit looks on uneasily.

QUINN
Ha! You know an experienced hand
when you shake it, Tib. Now,
describe for me the flock Brit
plans to use as collateral.

JUDITH
For starters, they're Dorsets.

QUINN
Good, good!

JUDITH
They number about one hundred, with
eighteen sturdy rams.

QUINN
Virile, are they?

JUDITH

Oh, yes. When separated from the ewes, they chew clear through their pens.

QUINN

(laughing)

They'll do that! Now, one hundred head doesn't fetch much collateral these days.

Turning to face Brit.

What loan proceeds are you seeking again?

BRIT

Thirty thousand pounds.

QUINN

Thirty thousand! You're going to need more sheep to secure that sum. What are your plans for the Fall tugging season?

BRIT

Well...

JUDITH

This is my first year at Upper Weatherby farm, but I'm an expert lamber with five years experience in South Wessex.

QUINN

(fatherly)

I'm talking about preparations for the mating season! You simply need to breed more sheep to adequately collateralize such a loan! Say, one hundred and fifty.

BRIT

Uh...

JUDITH

Allow me, Mr. Quinn.

Looking Brit's way apologetically.

As Barn Manager at Upper Weatherby Farm, I plan to have the ewes properly flushed in fields of lush rye, and later clover, before tugging begins.

(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Once thoroughly grazed, the long-isolated rams will be introduced into the sheepfold, producing as many healthy viable single and twin births as possible.

Quinn suddenly takes note of Judith's ability.

QUINN

You best keep her as your barn manager, Brit? I just might make it a term in your loan papers.
(laughing)

BRIT

Very well, sir.
(smiling)

QUINN

Young lady, if you would accompany me to my desk, I'll provide you with the secret to a successful mating season. Right this way! You too, Brit.

Judith and Brit pass shelf after shelf of bank records, as well as file cabinets, until they arrive at Quinn's desk. There, he proceeds to write something down on Barclays' letterhead and presents it to Judith, who looks down at the note, then back at Quinn.

JUDITH

Yeah? Trough feed them, too?

QUINN

Yes! That was the secret of my success as a farmer. Did you arrive here by wagon?

BRIT

Yes.

QUINN

I know a Quaker feller in Havenpool. Take this order to his feed store on your way home. I've jotted down the address. Four dozen fifty-pound sacks ought to do it!

Judith nods her head while Brit struggles to read the note over her shoulder

Send me a letter after lambing season, around the end of Lent, and I'll send out a man to inspect the entire flock, lambs and all, and conduct a headcount. If your flock is healthy and it numbers one hundred-fifty or more, I'll draw up a thirty-thousand-pound agreement for Brit's signature. Fair enough?

Brit shakes Quinn's hand, who, in turn, shakes Judith's.

INT. REYNOLDS HOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - EVENING

Seeking an acceptable way to get Brit into her house, Addy writes to the chairman of the Casterbridge Corn Exchange.

ADDY

(voiceover)

June 7, 1885
Hon. Gilbert Perkins
Casterbridge Corn Exchange
100 Exchange Street
Casterbridge
South Wessex

Chairman Perkins,

GIL

(voiceover)

In keeping with our annual tradition, I offer Reynolds House as a venue for this year's Harvest Dinner Dance, scheduled for Saturday, September 26, 1885, at 6 o'clock pm.

Dinner, refreshments, and music will be generously supplied. Kindly advise me of same at your earliest convenience.

Your willing servant,
Addison Wilson, Cdr. GFS
Reynolds House
Outer Comstock Road
Weatherbury
South Wessex

Finishing the envelope, Addy applies her wax seal to the back side.

EXT. WORKER'S KITCHEN, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY,
SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - MORNING

Early the next morning, a maid lights a wood stove in the workers' kitchen. Located beneath the farmhouse, opposite the ground-floor entrance, this whitewashed recess serves as the dining area for both domestic and farm staff. A young girl, fresh from the barnyard, soon delivers two baskets heaped with eggs while the stove, now fully heated, is ready to welcome the hefty iron skillets. Today's menu consists of fried eggs, potatoes, toast, and coffee or tea for the more genteel. Within minutes, the crowd arrives, pulls out their chairs, and seats themselves at the sturdy twelve-foot table.

OLIVIA

Judith arrived home late last night.

MRS. PIPPIN

Where was she?

OLIVIA

With Brit, of course! She traveled to Sandbourne with him yesterday and didn't arrive back until eleven.

MRS. PIPPIN

(whispering)

Sandbourne be far, but not that far.

OLIVIA

When I inquired why they went, she remained tight-lipped, as they say.

(shrugging)

I don't know, maybe they eloped?

MRS. PIPPIN

If they did, why, she'd have slept in the manor instead of her lowly cot!

OLIVIA

I hadn't thought of that...

MRS. PIPPIN

No, Mr. Brit is far too smart to be marrying so soon after taking on this place.

OLIVIA

(whispering)

Here she comes now.

Judith enters the kitchen and proceeds to sit down at the end of the table, where she helps herself to coffee.

JUDITH
Aaron! Is Aaron here?

AARON
Yes, Judith, I'm here at the other end!

JUDITH
The wagon was packed with four dozen sacks of oats yesterday. Take a man and stack them in the threshing barn. Be sure to tell the stable boy not to feed the cats for a while until they adjust to a steady diet of rodents.

Aaron gets up to leave.
I didn't mean now, Aaron! Finnish your breakfast.

AARON
Thankee, Judith!

TINLEY
Did I hear you say oats?

JUDITH
Uh hmm. Whole oats for flushing season.

A kitchen girl sets a plate in front of her, comprised of two eggs, sunny-side up, and toast.
Thank you, Milly!

TINLEY
But, isn't meadow grass enough?

JUDITH
Apparently not! We met a Quaker yesterday in Havenpool who insisted that come Autumn, sheep should be trough-fed with whole oats after grazing to build up their reserves.

OLIVIA
(laughing)
My master in Talbothays never used oats for flushin' or tuppung, if you don't mind me saying, mam...

Aaron gets up from the table and nods to Judith.

JUDITH

Thank you, Aaron... And you too,
Hugh!

(pausing)

/This suggestion comes not only
from the Quaker I just mentioned,
but the loan officer we met with
yesterday.

MRS. PIPPIN

We...?

Lifting her eyebrows.

And why would Brit be needin' a
loan when he acquired this farm for
cash not four months ago?

JUDITH

Maybe I've said too much!

Pulling away from the table and finishing her coffee.
See you out there, folks.

OLIVIA

I'll be right there...

Judith leaves the diners with more questions than they had
before she arrived.

EXT. LITTLE WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX,
ENGLAND - AFTERNOON

Weeks later, Brit is handed his mail by the postman while
visiting William Bolden next door.

POSTMAN

You're savin' me a trip today,
Brit...

BRIT

Glad to be of assistance!

Looking over his mail, he pulls out a single envelope.

BOLDEN

What do you got there?

POSTMAN

I'd say by the fancy writing that
it's some sort of invitation.

BOLDEN

Hmm. I wonder if I received one?
Let's see... Why, lookee' here!
It's identical to yours, except for
the name.

POSTMAN

Well, got to run along now,
gents...

Tipping his hat while the others dip their brims.

BRIT

Reynolds House...?

BOLDEN

On Outer Comstock Road!

BRIT

And a seal on the back. A.W.?

Running his thumb across the raised surface, he now breaks
the ruby seal and draws out the contents.

Addison Wilson.

BOLDEN

Addy?

BRIT

She's hosting the Casterbridge Corn
Exchange Harvest Dinner...

BOLDEN

What?

BRIT

(frowning)
Dinner Dance!

BOLDEN

When?

BRIT

September twenty-sixth!

BOLDEN

I'll have to break out my best
suit. Ha! Do you own one, Brit?

BRIT

Why, no, I don't.

BOLDEN

Well, we'll just have to do something about that, now won't we?

BRIT

Yeah, I'll have to do something about that!

He places the invitation in the envelope and stuffs it into his pocket along with the other mail before taking the bridal path back to the farm.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- DAY

It's shearing time, and Judith gladly performs her skills in a nearby brook where sheep are submerged before trimming begins. As Brit looks on, he smiles fondly at his Sheep Barn Manager, only to be interrupted by Addy, who shows up mounted on her prize quarter horse dressed in a formal felt jacket, gabardine pants, polished boots, black velvet helmet, and riding crop.

BRIT

Well, hello there!

ADDY

Good morning. We completed our shearing last week, yielding well over five-hundred pounds of prime wool.

BRIT

(grinning)
Congratulations...

A terrified ram is pushed into the water, resulting in a chorus of laughter.

ADDY

Uh, Brit...?

BRIT

(grinning)
Yes?

Returning his attention to Addy.

ADDY

Did you receive my invitation?

BRIT

Why, yes...! Farmer Bolden and I
got ours on the same day.

ADDY

I hope you can make it. Is there
somewhere we can speak in private?

BRIT

Sure.

They pass into the dense scrub, shielded from the workers
below, before Abby dismounts her horse.

ADDY

This is better. So, can you make
the party? All the gentleman
farmers will be there.

BRIT

Bolden is keen on attending...

ADDY

But, I'm talking about you!

Placing her hand on his forearm.

I'd love you to see my place...and
dance. Do you dance, Brit?

BRIT

I can't say that I do...

ADDY

Not to worry, I'll teach you. Say
you'll come. Please.

Squeezing his wrist.

BRIT

Sure...I'll be there.

ADDY

Good.

(exhaling)

There, that was easy, wasn't it?

BRIT

(blushing)

Yes, easy...

The couple reappears high atop the streambed with Addy's
steed following close behind, his burnished saddle buckles
gleaming in the sun.

Dripping wet and showing through her work shirt, Judith gazes up the embankment at the unsettling scene playing out above.

EXT. BRIDAL PATH, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - LATER

Late that night, Judith meets Brit on the bridal path. There, she shares with him her contempt for the overly extravagant Addy, warning him to steer clear of this high-minded patrician socialite.

JUDITH
(hushed)
Brit.

BRIT
Judith...

JUDITH
What exactly was that playing out above the streambed today?

Bending over to pick a wildflower growing on the side of the path.

BRIT
Oh, I've been meaning to tell you. Farmer Bolden and I have been invited to a dinner dance given by the Corn Exchange.

JUDITH
What does that have to do with it?

BRIT
Well, the event is to take place at Addy Wilson's house...

JUDITH
(downcast)
I see...

BRIT
In late September... Why the face?

Cocking his head sideways.

JUDITH
I believe you're blind where Addy is concerned.
(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)

She's obviously attracted to you, Brit, and will stop at nothing until she has you as her husband. Women like that usually get what they want!

BRIT

After today, I realize that...

JUDITH

And you're going to attend her soiree anyway?

BRIT

She somehow coaxed it out of me this morning...in private!

JUDITH

So I noticed, in between dripping sheep! I can just see her at that party, dressed in a fine evening gown...

BRIT

Adorned with medals.

JUDITH

Medals?

BRIT

I met her on the day her father and I finalized the purchase of this farm. She was in a Girls Friendship Society uniform with medals and ribbons hanging from her top pocket.

JUDITH

She'll be wearing those, too, I'll bet!

BRIT

You mustn't...

JUDITH

(sharply)
Mustn't what?

BRIT

What I was about to say is you mustn't take this invite seriously.

JUDITH
 (whispering)
 But I do. She's a driven woman and
 I'm, I'm a simple...barn manager.

BRIT
 My barn manager! Who, today, proved
 her worth to me! Ya know, seeing
 you drenched in that stream today
 was...revealing.

Eagerly taking her into his arms.

JUDITH
 (uneasy)
 I didn't mean to show myself like
 that, particularly in front of the
 men.

BRIT
 But, somehow, you did in front of
this man....

JUDITH
 (blushing)
 Oh, Brit, I'm such a fool!

BRIT
 No more talk. Let's enjoy our time
 together.

JUDITH
 In private...!

BRIT
 Yes, in private! For now, anyway...

Attempting to soothe an irritated Judith.
 I want to maintain some semblance
 of order around here until flushing
 season begins.

JUDITH
 When the oats be spilt...

BRIT
 (whispering)
 Yes. When the oats are spilt.

They now lie down on the summer grass, off the bridal path,
 under a quarter moon.

INT. WOMEN'S LIVING QUARTERS, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM,
WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - MORNING

Just before dawn, Judith enters the women's quarters and slips into her cot while Olivia peeks over her covers.

EXT. KINGSBERE HEATH, KINGSBERE, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - DAY

In moors as far away as Kingsbere, honeybees continue to feast on vast spears of heather, *Calluna vulgaris*, to transfer essential nectar and pollen back to Upper Weatherby Farm. These flights become more pronounced in late Summer and early Fall when the sweetened nectaries packed inside each bloom are at their peak.

INT. REYNOLDS HOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
EVENING

Two months later, William Bolden and Brit Landon pull into the circular driveway of Reynolds House on this crisp September evening. They step out of Bolden's gig, mount the granite stairs, and enter the manor, where a valet takes their hats and coats.

VALET

Good evening, gentlemen, welcome to Reynolds House. The guests are in the parlor.

BOLDEN

Thank you. Well, Brit, pretty impressive so far, aye?

BRIT

Yes, so far... Did I tell you we began our fall harvest today? It's my first, you know...

BOLDEN

Well, you should hear some sound advise tonight, since most everyone in attendance here has been harvesting for years.

BRIT

I welcome that! Uh, Addy is heading over to us now.

Addy sweeps across the room dressed in a gold low-cut gown with a modest train. Medals dangling from bright ribbons pinned to a straight board appear on her upper left breast.

Her auburn hair, done up in the latest style, holds a diamond tiara courtesy of the Girl's Friendship Society.

ADDY

Farmer Bolden, welcome, it's good to see you here! And Brit, nice of you to come...

Offering her hand to both men.

BOLDEN

Why, Addy, you look like a princess.

ADDY

Thank you, William, do you like it?

Twirling around while holding out her train.

BOLDEN

You look beautiful! Don't you think, Brit?

BRIT

Uh, yes, yes. Quite nice!

ADDY

Now that's the kind of complement a woman can treasure.

Turning to Bolden.

Would you mind if I pulled Brit away for a time? I'd like to show him around the manor.

BOLDEN

Certainly. I'll be moving along now.

ADDY

Thank you, sir. Come along, Brit, I'll give you the grand tour.

Winking at the elderly gentleman before taking the younger man's arm. With that, Bolden begins to mingle with the others just as Chairman Jenkins yells to him from across the room.

GIL

Bolden! Is that you? It's good to see you.

BOLDEN

And it's good to be here, Gil.

GIL

I thought when the Crown commuted your sentence that you'd appear at last year's dinner, but alas, you never showed...

BOLDEN

I'm sorry. I only had the courage to attend this year because of my neighbor, Brit Landon.

GIL

How's he getting along?

BOLDEN

Good, good! He began his first harvest as a farmer today. Wheat and barley...

GIL

Of course, of course! Where is he anyway? I'd like to meet him.

Peering about the room.

BOLDEN

He's off with our hostess, taking a tour of the manor.

GIL

Doesn't she look lovely! I don't see...oh, there's her father in front of the fireplace with someone.

Lowering his voice.

Probably negotiating another land deal.

(laughing)

BOLDEN

Yes, he's conducted many of those. The one most beneficial to me, however, was him selling Upper Weatherby Farm to young Brit. I tell you, Gil, keep your eye on him, he's a most clever and industrious man. Why, since we became neighbors, I've never made so many improvements to my property.

Gil pauses to greet other guests before leaning into Bolden.

GIL
Where did they imprison you anyway?

BOLDEN
(expressionless)
Newcastle Gaol, Carliol Square,
Northumberland County...

GIL
(shocked)
My God, why so far from Wessex?

BOLDEN
I don't feel comfortable talking
about that place, but it was
thought at the time of my
conviction to be an ideal house of
correction.

GIL
Was it?

Bolden places a hand on his jaw.

BOLDEN
No. But the conditions became so
bad at this new facility that
instead of moving me, authorities
came to the conclusion that I had
suffered enough.

GIL
Hear, hear! Sergeant Troy was a cad
and a rogue, all wrapped up in one.
He was a scourge in Wessex and
deserved the hand he was dealt. I
never understood what Bathsheba
Everdene saw in him.

BOLDEN
(reminiscent)
Neither did I...

Perkins grips his shoulder affectionately while others in the
room look on.

GIL
(louder)
You shot him in a rage of passion.
I said as much in court before the
judge pronounced your sentence.

Bolden drops his head.

Such a terrible thing to show up unannounced at your house to frighten that poor woman and treat her so cruelly!

(warmly)

I want you to know that I never held the death of Sergeant Troy against you, and all of us, down to a man, still hold you in high regard. We'd be honored if you would come to the Exchange on the next market day, so we may rejoice at your presence.

BOLDEN

I'm humbled, Gilbert.

Bowing his head as the others look on.

(modestly)

Fellow planters, it's good to be here.

Cheering rings throughout the room. Brit suddenly appears at the sound of the excitement, followed by a thoroughly frustrated Addy.

INT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- SAME TIME

While taking inventory in the toolshed, Judith makes a surprising discovery. Tucked behind some carding combs on the top shelf, she finds a pocket-sized book. Believing it to be a ledger of sorts, Judith sets it aside. Later, after finishing her work for the evening, she spots the book, cleans it off, and notices the word diary written across the cover. The title page reads as follows:

JUDITH

(voiceover)

The diary of Bathsheba Oak.

INT. REYNOLDS HOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
MOMENTS LATER

Just before dinner in the manorial hall, Addy rises to address her guests.

ADDY

Before dinner is served, I thought I'd take the time to recognize our newest members. Tim Barrow, from nearby Egdon Heath...

(MORE)

ADDY (CONT'D)
 Matthew Price of Talbothays... and
 Brit Landon, here in Weatherbury.

Applause begins in the room.

As a token of our appreciation, I'm
 now going to distribute to you a
 commemorative disc signifying
 tonight's event and your membership
 in the Exchange. Given the tight
 conditions at this table, there's
 no need for you to stand; I'll
 simply hand these out over your
 shoulder.

Addy distributes the mementos to the first two recipients
 before finally coming to Brit. There, she reaches over his
 shoulder with her right arm, setting the keepsake in front of
 him. As she does, she slowly brushes against Brit with her
 décolletage to the sound of tinkling medals.

EXT. ROAD TO UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX,
 ENGLAND - LATER

On their way home, Bolden is gleeful about the turn of events
 tonight, while Brit, his appetite whetted, hears nothing but
 jangling medals.

INT. WOMEN'S LIVING QUARTERS, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM,
 WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - THE NEXT DAY

Rain is falling on Upper Weatherby Farm, where half the
 workers have the day off while the others are busy harvesting
 rye in the lower field. Usually out and about on Sundays,
 Judith is preoccupied reading Bathsheba's diary.

JUDITH

(voiceover)

July 18, 1875

I am low today! Liddy is keeping me
 company, concerned about my well-
 being, after Frank, begging me for
 money this morning, went to play
 the horses at Budmouth, despite my
 objections. Like a fool, I
 relented. Again! Ever since the
 wedding party in the barn last
 week, celebrating our return, my
 husband has been obstinate and
 cold, finding any reason to avoid
 time alone with me. I fear it is
 someone else, but what am I to do?

(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)
 Ask around town and humiliate
 myself? I am forlorn and crushed. I
 think I shall lie down now.

OLIVIA
 What's that your reading?

JUDITH
 It's nothing but a supply ledger
 belonging to another owner.

The living quarters are quiet once again. Olivia eventually
 breaks the silence.

OLIVIA
 Oh, I detest days like these,
 particularly on Sunday.

Judith ignores this simpleton and places the book facedown on
 her chest.

JUDITH
 (voiceover)
 She thought she was in love with
 him, but that was only when he
 pursued her so unceasingly, like a
 wolf hunts down its prey.

Looking up at the rafters.
 Where are you going, Livy?

OLIVIA
 I must get some air, it's stifling
 in here.

JUDITH
 Well, take that broolly in the
 corner or you'll catch your death
 of cold!

OLIVIA
 Very well...

She departs the living quarters, much to Judith's delight.

JUDITH
 (voiceover)
 How could she not have seen through
 the likes of Francis Troy? Surely,
 Bathsheba was forewarned of his
 philandering. People talk! They
 talk, but all too often, women who
 think they're in love refuse to
 listen.

(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Like moths to a glimmering flame,
they flit too close, only to dither
and die.

Faced with this realization, she closes her eyes and, with both hands clasped behind her head, falls asleep.

EXT. REYNOLDS HOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
SAME TIME

Brit calls on Addy the following day, only to be told by her valet that she is down at the stables tending her horses. He walks around the side of the manor and down to the farmyard, where he locates the building.

BRIT

Addy, are you in here?

ADDY

I'm on the other side of Chestnut,
brushing his coat.

Stepping out of the stall.

Well, this is a surprise! And you
brought me flowers...

BRIT

I picked them from my garden in the
rain, no less, in appreciation for
last night.

ADDY

It was grand! Wasn't it?

Meanwhile, Chestnut begins to stir in his stall.

(humorously)

I'll be right there! Males can be
so impatient...

BRIT

Anyway, I thought we could go for a
drive sometime to view the autumn
colors.

Kicking at the straw on the floor.

ADDY

How about today?

BRIT

I have to get back to the farm,
we're harvesting barley today.

(MORE)

BRIT (CONT'D)
Besides, the rain is beginning to
come down hard. Let's go on a fine
day.

ADDY
(grinning)
On a date?

BRIT
Sure, on a date! Why is that so
peculiar?

ADDY
Won't a certain person be upset?

BRIT
Judith?

ADDY
Hmm, hmm...

BRIT
(embarrassed)
We're companions, that's all.

ADDY
Are you sure? Your Libby told me
you both traveled together to
Sandbourne last week.

BRIT
We did. So, you called on me again?
(laughing)

ADDY
Seems we're even, Brit! I'd like to
go on that drive. Let me check the
calendar for next Sunday. I best
get back to Chestnut. Ta-ta!

Returning back to her horse.
(soothingly)
You silly boy. Did you miss me?
Yeah...

Brit stands momentarily, listening to Addy's alluring voice.
She, too, listens between brush strokes until his footsteps
disappear.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- LATER

The rain has stopped for now. Brit is on a ladder, set against a large mound of barley, while weaving sheaves together to protect it from the elements. Soon after the final sheave is attached, effectively crowning the rick, a zephyr is felt on his cheek, signaling the likelihood of rain out of the Southwest, possibly over the Cornish coast or greater Atlantic. Later that night, Brit and Judith meet at their usual spot on the bridal path.

EXT. WORKER'S KITCHEN, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY,
SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - MORNING

Mrs. Pippin and Olivia leave the breakfast table to begin their daily routines. Outside, they stop and cup their hands around their mouth to gossip while others exiting the kitchen idly pass by.

OLIVIA

I heard them as plain as day. Why,
he was biddin' her farewell just
outside my window.

MRS. PIPPIN

Well, you must've heard them wrong
because I saw them as close as
lovebirds last night when I passed
them on the bridal path before
heading home.

OLIVIA

All I know is I heard what I heard,
that they are ending their
relationship, though not forever.

Mrs. Pippin pauses to adjust the knot on her bonnet.

MRS. PIPPIN

I'm afraid I don't understand...?

OLIVIA

(whispering)

He, because he's seeing Miss
Wilson, and she, because she
doesn't want her reputation soiled!

Just then, Eleonor Greenway intrudes.

ELEONOR

Why, you two are gossipin' like a
couple of schoolgirls.

MRS. PIPPIN

Oh, shush now. You best keep clear of it. This is no concern of yours! Ready the washtubs, Ellie, I'll be right there...

ELEONOR

Oh, alright!

Heading off to the laundry yard.

MRS. PIPPIN

(hushed)

So, they be calling it quits?

OLIVIA

That's my take... At least I won't have to wait up for her at night anymore. That's the short of it! Let's see, she said to him: Let us part. A year from now, nothing will change. You cannot love me if you be shaming my name.

MRS. PIPPIN

(motherly)

True, true... Then what?

OLIVIA

Well, he turned, and with eyes all teary said, Judith, I love you so much that my name be yours one day. Who cares how poorly Addy speaks of you? If you marry me, we shall be happy still. But first, I need prove to myself that my Aunt is wrong! For your well-being as well as mine. That love for love's sake is the only thing that matters in this madding world. But, I must find that out for myself!

MRS. PIPPIN

(ideally)

So serious a man is Brit.

Patiently waiting for Olivia to continue.
Go on, go on...

OLIVIA

Marry you, she said? To be honest, I fear you'll listen to rumors, grow elusive, harsh, and unkind.

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

But he turned, took her in his arms, and answered, No, Judith, no! Then...they parted. But not for long, I be thinkin'!

MRS. PIPPIN

Men can be such fickle things when led astray by high breeding. She, having all the trappings of a fine, stately life, bein' so much a part of her appeal...

(piteously)

While Judith gets tossed aside, however interim, by that harridan!

OLIVIA

Addy?

MRS. PIPPIN

You know it! We had better be getting on, Master Brit might be walking the grounds as we speak...!

Olivia and Mrs. Pippin tuck their heads and dart off in different directions.

EXT. SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - AFTERNOON

Beginning on the following Sunday and clear through to flushing season, Brit and Addy drive to various sites in Wessex, including the coastal towns of Sandbourne, Knollsea, Anglebury, Budmouth, and Exonbury, in Devon. All the while, Addy does her level best to encourage Brit.

EXT. WOMEN'S LIVING QUARTERS, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - EVENING

Days later, shortly after dinner, a knock is heard on the door of the women's quarters. Olivia springs out of bed to answer the visitor.

OLIVIA

Mrs. Pippin!

MRS. PIPPIN

Hello, Olivia, is Judith here?

OLIVIA

She is. Judith, Mrs. Pippin is here to see you.

Judith puts down Bathsheba's diary and comes to the door.

JUDITH
Mrs. Pippin?

MRS. PIPPIN
Judith, I was wondering, if you're not busy, whether we could take a walk before bedtime.

JUDITH
Surely. Let me grab my tippet...

Heading to the closet before stepping outside.
Ready?

MRS. PIPPIN
Ready. My, that's a fancy one.

JUDITH
Warm, too! Like it? I bought it in town last week.

MRS. PIPPIN
Where?

JUDITH
Wells and Coverly.

MRS. PIPPIN
Turn around.

Admiring the style.
Nice... How much?

JUDITH
Four shillings! Can you believe it...?

MRS. PIPPIN
You can wear it tomorrow. It's Michaelmas, you know!!

JUDITH
I almost forgot! We can walk to church together.

MRS. PIPPIN
Surely. So...I heard the news.

JUDITH
About Brit?

MRS. PIPPIN
Of course, about Brit!

Judith stops and turns to Mrs. Pippin.

JUDITH

I fear I've lost him for good. He said his fling with Addy Wilson is provisory, but, I don't know...

MRS. PIPPIN

Men! Can't live with them, but can't be without 'em.

JUDITH

He loves me, and yet...

MRS. PIPPIN

And yet, what?

JUDITH

He says he must prove to himself that his Aunt was wrong. That...love for love's sake is the only thing that counts in this world.

MRS. PIPPIN

'Tis true, to be sure.

Judith begins to saunter again.

JUDITH

But, what if he never returns to me? I honestly don't know what I would do, Dotty. I'd have to leave the farm entirely, far away from here... I see no other way!

MRS. PIPPIN

Then we must find a way...

JUDITH

But how?

MRS. PIPPIN

Let's head over there and sit down for a while.

They seat themselves on a wooden bench along the side of the barn.

How have you been passing the time during Brit's absence? It's important that you find something to do when away from the job. That is, until the situation mends itself.

JUDITH
I'm glad you said that, Mrs.
Pippin. To be frank, I've been
reading.

MRS. PIPPIN
What, precisely?

JUDITH
(reluctantly)
A...diary.

MRS. PIPPIN
Yours?

JUDITH
Heaven's no!

MRS. PIPPIN
Then, whose? They be private, you
know.

JUDITH
Yes, I know, but I couldn't put it
down.

MRS. PIPPIN
Does it belong to someone here on
the farm?

JUDITH
Sort of...

MRS. PIPPIN
Oh, say it! Whose is it?

JUDITH
Bathsheba's.

Mrs. Pippin covers her mouth with both hands.

MRS. PIPPIN
(amusingly)
Bathsheba Everdene? How did you get
hold of it?

JUDITH
It was inside a toolshed. I found
it while conducting an inventory
last week!

MRS. PIPPIN
And you're reading it?

JUDITH

Uh, hmm...

MRS. PIPPIN

Is it good?

Looking both ways.

JUDITH

(whispering)

Let's just say it's the answer to my prayers where Addy is concerned...

MRS. PIPPIN

(excited)

I don't believe it!

JUDITH

Shush. Someone might be listening.

Mrs. Pippin lowers her voice.

MRS. PIPPIN

Tell me more...

Just around the corner, Olivia is in earshot of everything concerning Judith and Bathsheba Oak's diary.

EXT. EGDON HEATH, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - AFTERNOON

At a clearing in Egdon Heath, Brit surveys the surrounding terrain while Addy hints at the purpose of their visit.

BRIT

The moors have a unique character all their own, far different from the downs we've inherited.

ADDY

From a landowner's perspective, I'd tend to agree.

BRIT

But, under this heath, the soil is infertile and useless.

ADDY

Whereas the soil we have in the chalklands remains fertile for now, anyway...

Losing her train of thought while running out of patience with Brit's less-than-fervid lovemaking.

Say, why don't I demonstrate a maneuver I taught Dama last year! I learned it at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. It's called a courbette. Only Andalusians and a few other breeds are capable of performing the feat.

BRIT

Explain it to me.

ADDY

With you standing stationary in the clearing down there.

Pointing with her riding crop while patting the horse on her hind quarters.

I drive Dama to within a few feet of you before rearing her up above your head, and with hooves fully extended, formally greet you. But only if you remain perfectly still. Otherwise, she will veer away from you at the last second. Understand?

BRIT

I think so...

ADDY

Good! I'll see you down there.

Brit begins to walk down a steep embankment before arriving at the designated place. There he turns around, only to find a thoroughly magnificent Addy, high on a bluff, ready to perform her caper.

Are you ready?

BRIT

As ready as I'll ever be!

ADDY

CHARGE!

With her leather crop slapping Dama's flank, she bears down hard on the horse and, with beating hooves, arrives within a few feet of Brit before rearing the horse up on her hind legs and spreading her forelimbs affectionately. Addy, mounted high above, now appears to him suffused in a warm, luminous glow.

INTERMISSION

INT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- MORNING

Libby is standing outside her boss's parlor, waiting for her orders. There, she overhears a conversation between Brit and Hugh Pippin.

BRIT

I'm going to be away for a few days, and I want you to keep an eye on the place, especially at night.

HUGH

You can count on me, Brit.

BRIT

I'll have Tinley assume your tasks so you can oversee the entire farm. With the harvest now over, there shouldn't be too much activity outside of normal operations.

HUGH

Right.

BRIT

Your wife will be in charge of the household staff, so, I suggest you two reside here until my return. Your children may sleep in the attic. Mrs. Pippin can locate beds for them. That way, you'll be close at hand.

HUGH

Very well. Is that all, sir?

Nancy, the parlor maid, attempts to enter the room but is prevented by Libby.

LIBBY

(whispering)
Wait!

BRIT

And, one more thing...

HUGH

Yes?

BRIT

I'll be in Budmouth if anything urgent should arise. I'm staying at the Burdon Hotel on Esplanade Street. Have a man take my horse and ride there if need be. Otherwise, I'll see you Friday.

HUGH

Very good. When are you leaving, sir?

BRIT

I'm being picked up first thing in the morning.

HUGH

Who should I look for?

BRIT

Addy Wilson, but Libby can notify me when she arrives, so there's no need to keep watch.

Hugh nods before departing the room.

LIBBY

You can go in now, Nancy. I was going to speak with Brit, but something's come up...!

Armed with the news of Brit's imminent departure, she soon appears in the laundry yard to tell Mrs. Pippin, who, in turn, makes haste for the sheep barn. There, she finds Aaron Bishop.

MRS. PIPPIN

Aaron, is Judith in here?

AARON

Why, no, mam. She's in the field helping Tinley repair a pen. The rams nearly escaped last night through a hole they chewed in the side.

MRS. PIPPIN

Which field?

AARON

The southernmost, down by the brook.

MRS. PIPPIN

Thank you!

She abruptly leaves the barn.

AARON

(shouting)

Where are you going? Is everything alright? Shall I come with you...?

MRS. PIPPIN

No need for that, everything's fine...

To the sound of her dwindling voice, Aaron watches as Mrs. Pippin dashes through open fields down to the southernmost pasture, stopping only to gambol over an occasional stone wall. Arriving at the ram pen, Mrs. Pippin broadcasts the news of Brit's departure while Judith and Tinley make final repairs to the sheepfold.

INT. WOMEN'S LIVING QUARTERS, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - LATER

Making sure that Olivia and her fellow inhabitants are away at work, Mrs. Pippin enters the women's living quarters. There, she finds Bathsheba's diary under Judith's pillow, exactly as described. She soon approaches Libby and hands the precious item over to her.

LIBBY

It's far smaller than I imagined.

MRS. PIPPIN

(confidentially)

Never mind that! Brit's laundry should be ready soon. I need you to place this diary in his luggage when you pack his clothes.

After a few minutes, Libby collects the newly folded clothes while cradling the diary safely under her arm.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - EVENING

Later, while adding items to his suitcase, Brit discovers the diary. He soon turns in for the night, but not before thumbing through this tiny book.

BRIT
(voiceover)
The Diary of Bathsheba Oak.

He rolls on his side to turn up the lamp, allowing him to better discern Bathsheba's elaborate longhand. From Judith's quarters below, the light streaming from Brit's window shines forth like a beacon on this bleak November night.

LIBBY
Pardon the interruption, sir, but
is there anything else?

BRIT
Nothing tonight, Libby. Say, where
did this diary come from? It was in
my suitcase.

LIBBY
Really? I haven't the foggiest
idea, sir.

BRIT
Very well. Goodnight. See you in
the morning...

LIBBY
Yes, goodnight.

Libby closes the door, leaving Brit alone with the diary.

BATHSHEBA
(voiceover)
Were I to live my life again, I
would have nothing whatever to do
with Frank Troy, let alone marry
him. So drawn was I to his dashing
uniform, with its shiny medals and
colorful ribbons, that I failed to
consider his personal flaws until
it was too late. This error on my
part caused me to spend my early
years in hardship and toil. Had I
listened to the first man to come
into my life and taken up with him
as I do now, we would have been
able to raise a family and live a
full life as husband and wife.
But, enough of that! Gabriel and I
are at peace in Wessex and have set
our sights on our remaining time
together, as if all the strife
prior to our union never existed.

(MORE)

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

And, if anyone should happen to read these pages when I'm gone, let them heed the words contained in this most intimate account.

Brit can't stop reading, so fixated is he on Bathsheba's entreaty. Finishing the diary just before dawn, he drifts off to sleep while the lamp burns on.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- MORNING

Judith and Olivia step outside their living quarters and head over to the farmhouse for breakfast. Still dark outside, Judith looks up at the Master Bedroom, where a brilliant light still shines. Down below, an empty surrey sits idle in the driveway. Filing into the kitchen and taking their places, the workers experience commotion in the parlor directly above them, silencing the room. Barely audible, they hear the following exchange.

ADDY

Where are your bags?

BRIT

I put my things away and have decided not to go.

Stomping the floor.

ADDY

What do you mean you're not going!
What about our plans in Budmouth?

BRIT

I'm afraid I've changed my mind.

ADDY

Just like that!

BRIT

Yes... Something has happened.

Looking about whilst the clang of a skillet is heard downstairs.

MRS. PIPPIN

Shush, Penelope!

ADDY

I don't quite understand? Has something happened on the farm?

BRIT
 Maybe you had better sit down.

ADDY
 (complying)
 Alright...

They both sit down on the davenport.
 What is it, Brit? You're beginning
 to frighten me.

BRIT
 I happened to read a diary last
 night.

ADDY
 Whose?

BRIT
 A person who resided in this house
 before you and your father lived
 here...

ADDY
 Who...? Who, Brit? One of the
 workers at the time?

Two steaming pots of coffee are set before the workers below.

BRIT
 Actually, the keeper of the diary
 was the owner of this farm, when
 she...

ADDY
 She...? Bathsheba? Bathsheba
 Everdene?

BRIT
 Oak, actually... Bathsheba Oak.

ADDY
 Alright, Bathsheba Oak! Her diary?
 How on Earth did you acquire it?

BRIT
 I found it packed in my bag last
 night.

ADDY
 I smell a rat!

Beginning to pace the floor like a tigress.
 It was probably that lamber!

BRIT

Judith?

ADDY

(crying out)

Yes, Judith!

BRIT

No. She hasn't been in this house
for weeks.

ADDY

Well, one of her compatriots I'll
bet! What did you read in
Bathsheba's diary that has you all
balled up?

BRIT

She regretted the fact that she
took up with a cad and a rogue.

ADDY

And what does that have to do with
us, may I ask...? Wait a minute!

Stomping the floor even harder, causing pots and pans to sway
below.

You're not comparing me to her
first husband, Frank Troy, are you?

A girl slides fresh biscuits and a stack of plates on the
table in lieu of a full breakfast. The diners dig in while
keeping their eyes glued to the timbers above.

BRIT

Only that, in the end, Bathsheba
said she would have been wiser to
marry her first lover, Gabriel,
instead of the glib Sergeant
Troy... It got me to thinking.

ADDY

I see! So I assume Gabriel Oak,
where you're concerned, is young
Judith?

The workers, finished with their fleeting breakfast, begin to
file outdoors.

Well, Brit Landon? I'm waiting...!

BRIT

(coyly)

You might say that.

ADDY

You just did! Good bye, Brit!

She rushes out of the farmhouse in the heat of rage, screaming.

You'll be sorry! You'll be so, so sorry!

Climbing into her gig, she catches sight of Judith, amid a crowd of workers gathered there.

And you too, GIRL!

Snapping the reins of her surrey, she barrels out of Upper Weatherby Farm at a frightening speed.

INT. SHEEP BARN, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - LATER

Alone in the sheep barn, Judith leans against a stack of burlap bags containing whole oats. There she harkens back to the night she and Brit met on the bridal path, after the shearing, when she shared with him her contempt for Addy, cautioning him to stay clear of the high-minded patrician socialite.

CUT TO:
REMINISCENCE

JUDITH

I believe you're blind where Addy is concerned. She's obviously attracted to you, Brit, and will stop at nothing until she has you as her husband. Women like that usually get what they want!

BRIT

After today, I realize that...

JUDITH

And you're going to attend her soiree anyway?

BRIT

She somehow coaxed it out of me this morning...in private!

JUDITH

So I noticed, in between dripping sheep! I can just see her at that party, dressed in a fine evening gown...

BRIT
Adorned with medals.

JUDITH
Medals?

BRIT
I met her on the day her father and I finalized the purchase of this farm. She was in a Girls Friendship Society uniform with medals and ribbons hanging from her top pocket.

JUDITH
She'll be wearing those, too, I'll bet!

BRIT
You mustn't...

JUDITH
(sharply)
Mustn't what?

BRIT
What I was about to say is you mustn't take this invite seriously.

JUDITH
(whispering)
But I do. She's a driven woman, and I'm, I'm a simple...barn manager.

BRIT
My barn manager! Who, today, proved her worth to me! Ya know, seeing you drenched in that stream today was...revealing.

Eagerly taking her into his arms.

JUDITH
(uneasy)
I didn't mean to show myself like that, particularly in front of the men.

BRIT
But, somehow, you did in front of *this* man....

JUDITH
 (blushing)
 Oh, Brit, I'm such a fool!

BRIT
 No more talk. Let's enjoy our time
 together.

JUDITH
 In private...!

BRIT
 Yes, in private! For now, anyway...

Attempting to soothe an irritated Judith.
 I want to maintain some semblance
 of order around here until flushing
 season begins.

JUDITH
 When the oats be spilt...

BRIT
 (whispering)
 Yes. When the oats are spilt.

They now lie down on the summer grass, off the bridal path,
 under a quarter moon.

RETURN TO:
 ACTUAL TIME

INT. REYNOLDS HOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
 SAME TIME

Inside Reynolds House, Addy has an iciness in her that will
 not abate. She now weighs the possibility of a retaliatory
 strike against her ungovernable lover before summoning her
 stalwart bailiff. The ever-unkept Russ Whalen soon arrives
 outside her bedroom door.

ADDY
 Mr. Whalen.

WHALEN
 Mam!

Addy remains seated at her dressing table, facing the mirror.

ADDY

Were you to be...cheated by the owner of a neighboring sheep farm without any likelihood of recouping your losses, how exactly would you retaliate?

WHALEN

(pondering)

Well, mam...I would be justified to sow white clover into his field, and once grown, leave the gate open, causing great distress to the sheep's delicate constitution.

ADDY

And...how soon could you accomplish this revenge?

WHALEN

Why, if I can get my hands on some Dutch White Clover seed, I could accomplish this request of yours over the next two nights! But first, I'd need to know the location of the farm and how large of an operation it is.

Addy turns the bailiff's way.

ADDY

And why Dutch clover?

WHALEN

Why, it's the most potent where a sheep's rumen is concerned...

ADDY

I see... So, after seeding the field, how long before the clover ripens?

WHALEN

In moist conditions, a little over a week, mam, but the clover needn't be fully mature. The sheep gravitate to the tender florets their sprouts produce like nothing you've ever seen. Of that, I can assure you!

ADDY

I believe you... I trust you'll be discreet about it?

WHALEN

(purposefully)

No one will know but you and I, mam... May I ask who the recipient of this seed will be?

ADDY

You certainly can! Brit Landon of Upper Weatherby Farm! Do you think you can carry out this...business for me?

WHALEN

I certainly can. I'll report on my progress tomorrow evening or the following night if necessary.

ADDY

Very well. And Russell...

WHALEN

Hmm?

ADDY

Report to me in the parlor next time!

WHALEN

Yes, mam.

The ruffled bailiff departs Addy's bedroom with a mission.

INT. SHEEP BARN, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - DUSK

The ewes, near fully flushed, grind their way through the final sacks of oats. By week's end, the rams, still separated from the flock, will finish off the supply and be turned loose, officially opening the mating season.

I/E. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - AFTERNOON

Weary of the tight conditions in her living quarters, Judith discovers a tiny house located on the property that's been vacant for years. After inspecting the one-story structure and finding it sound, Judith musters the strength to approach Brit and seek his permission to live there.

LIBBY

Why, Judith, it's good to see you!

JUDITH
You too! Is Brit around?

LIBBY
He's out back, building a new set
of chairs.

JUDITH
Thank you.

LIBBY
He's been lonely, Judith.

JUDITH
Yes, but he's leery about
rekindling our relationship. While
I respect his privacy, I fail to
see the reason for such reluctance.

LIBBY
He'll come around, you'll see. I'd
pay him a visit anyway.

JUDITH
I intend to... Goodbye.

LIBBY
So long.

Liddy closes the front door as Judith makes her way around
the side of the farmhouse. She finally locates Brit splitting
logs.

JUDITH
I was told you'd be out here.

Brit drives his ax into the center of the log before
addressing her.

BRIT
I never see you anymore, Judith.
Where have you been?

JUDITH
You know where my door is, Brit...

BRIT
(uneasy)
I know...

JUDITH
Uh, speaking of doors.

BRIT

Yes?

JUDITH

I'm tired of my living quarters,
and I was wondering if that
abandoned cabin down the hill, near
the old stone wall, is available? I
inspected it this afternoon, and it
appears quite sound.

Shielding his eyes while squinting in the direction of the
structure.

BRIT

Farmer Bolden informed me when I
bought this farm that Gabriel Oak
lived there before he got married.

JUDITH

Funny, somehow I wondered about
that possibility...

BRIT

Well, if you insist the cabin is
habitable, you're free to move in.
But I could have John look it over
just the same.

JUDITH

That won't be necessary! I just
needed your approval, is all.
(teasing)
If you want to see me, you'll have
to walk a stretch further at night!

Tossing her tawny hair.

BRIT

(grinning)
I understand... So, it's yours for
the taking.

JUDITH

Why, thank you, Brit, that's
very...understanding of you! So
long.

BRIT

So long...

Having gained the necessary permission, Judith moves further
afield.

I/E. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- EVENING

A week later, while wandering his property on an unusually chilly night, Brit happens to notice a dim light coming from Judith's cabin. For the longest time, he stands in the cold, wondering what his tenant is doing inside. Facing possible exposure, he approaches the house only to peer through the side window. There, amid the faint hiss of a kerosene lamp, he sees young Judith seated in a rocking chair, reading a book. Desperately in need of warmth, he knocks on the door while standing on her porch. Judith soon replies.

JUDITH

Who is it?

BRIT

It's me. May I come in?

JUDITH

It's late, Brit. I was just about to go to bed...

BRIT

I promise not to stay long. It's only to warm myself before returning home for the night.

Judith opens the door to admit Brit.

JUDITH

I can't deny you admission, you own this place.

BRIT

My, that fire looks inviting!

Drawing closer to the hearth.

Do you mind if I add a few logs to these dwindling flames?

JUDITH

Why, no, but...

BRIT

I only need a moment to warm my limbs.

JUDITH

Surely... You may sit down. Here...

Pulling over a chair from the table.

BRIT
Care to join me?

JUDITH
Very well...

Returning to her rocker before gazing into the fireplace with Brit. Moments pass.

BRIT
If I were an inquiring man, I would ask how the Diary of Bathsheba Oak made its way into my luggage.

JUDITH
I...

BRIT
On the very night before my trip to Budmouth!

JUDITH
With Addy Wilson?

BRIT
Yes.

JUDITH
I can't claim credit for that. It was Mrs. Pippin's idea!

BRIT
Good old Dorothy Pippin...

Under his breath.
I really came here to tell you that I'm, I'm not unhappy with the result.

JUDITH
Oh?

BRIT
Though I must admit it was embarrassing to cancel my plans with Addy on such short notice.

JUDITH
So I heard!

BRIT
How?
(surprised)
You did...?

JUDITH

Uh hmm. Along with the other workers having breakfast downstairs.

BRIT

(embarrassed)

Oh, oh...I see! So, you heard everything, huh?

JUDITH

Prit'near...

BRIT

Which you're not unhappy about?

JUDITH

I don't quite know how to answer that question!

BRIT

Say you weren't, then!

The newly inserted logs now tumble into the coals.

JUDITH

Would it please you if I admitted I'm not unhappy with the outcome?

BRIT

Say it!

JUDITH

Say what! That I'm happy she's gone?

Brit remains silent for the moment.

BRIT

I read Bathsheba's diary the night before the argument you overheard...and, well, they revealed to me the risk of going with Addy to Budmouth to accomplish what I, what I...suspect was her plan.

JUDITH

Which was...?

BRIT

To marry her, of course!

A burst of sparks in the fireplace interrupts their conversation for the moment.

JUDITH

I see...

Swallowing hard, she pauses.
Then, it was telling...

BRIT

Pardon me?

JUDITH

Then, it was telling that you read
Bathsheba's diary.

BRIT

I believe so. In fact, I know so!
Though...

JUDITH

Yes?

Brit stands up on his newly warmed feet.

BRIT

Though...it would be disingenuous
of me not to admit to you that I
still have feelings for Addy.

Causing Judith's eyebrows to rise.

JUDITH

I see...! Perhaps you should go
now.

BRIT

I'm sorry, Judith. Be patient with
me...

JUDITH

(whispering tearfully)
I have been, in case you haven't
noticed... Goodnight. I'm going to
bed.

BRIT

I'll show myself out...

Brit departs the dwelling while Judith begins to rock again. This time more fiercely. So candid was Brit tonight that she can no longer be in his company without any firm commitment. After sober reflection, she rises from the rocker, sits down at the table, and composes a letter.

Despite the late hour, she puts on her heavy coat and boots and walks from her cabin to the sheep barn to place the envelope on her desk. Returning to the cabin, she walks on furrow after furrow of broken earth under a moonless sky. Early the next morning, she departs Weatherbury for Mellstock to resume her post on the lambing circuit.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- THE NEXT DAY

Barking from afar, the sheepdog George the Fourth charges in from three fields away, making a beeline for his master. Workers are now seen waving their arms toward Brit. The collie now meets him halfway, greatly alarmed. After a few minutes, Brit arrives at the scene, only to find his flock lying on their side in a badly bloated condition.

JOHN

They be in a sorry state, Brit.

AARON

The only explanation I can, I can figure is they downed some bad clover!

JOHN

Why, King David himself couldn't have foreseen this comin' when he wrote his famous psalm. Our staffs and rods have never been more keenly applied!

Writhing about frantically.

BRIT

Tinley, quick, run to Farmer Bolden and ask him to ride over here. We have a bit of an emergency on our hands. Where is Judith?

Eying his ailing flock, the shepherds remain silent except Aaron, who's in the middle of one of his coughing fits.

AARON

She's gone, Boss! Hugh Pippin passed her on the path this morning before breakfast. She told him she's, well...she told him she's returning to Mellstock for keeps. I, I found this letter on her work desk only minutes ago.

Dipping into his smock-frock.
Here comes Farmer Bolden.

BRIT
Over here, William!

BOLDEN
(shouting)
What's all the commotion about,
Brit?

BRIT
Aaron here believes the sheep have
consumed some poor grade clover.

BOLDEN
(observingly)
They certainly have! There's only
one explanation for them to be
bloated and lying on their right
side like this... Were they grazing
here or somewhere else?

JOHN
(shyly)
Here, Farmer.

Bolden begins to walk the field before easily discovering the
culprit.

BOLDEN
Brit, over here!

BRIT
What is it?

BOLDEN
I regret to inform you that this is
white clover.

Stooping to pluck a blossom, he now rotates the stem between
his thumb and forefinger.

This isn't just any white clover,
it's Dutch White Clover! The worst
kind for sheep. Look, your entire
pasture is covered with young
blooms. No wonder your sheep are
ailing! How on Earth did white
clover get into your field?

BRIT
I don't know! John?

JOHN

Yes?

BRIT

Bolden here claims our field is covered with white clover...

JOHN

Why, 'tis not possible. This field only contains ryegrass and, and...fescue!

Scanning the hillside.

How did these clover blossoms get in here? I didn't notice them yesterday... This is serious!

BOLDEN

It certainly is! They'll all be dead in hours if something isn't done soon. And I mean soon!

BRIT

Aaron, get over here...

Aaron approaches the trio.

Were there white clover blossoms in this field yesterday?

AARON

Uh...no, I've never seen 'em in this field. Ever! It's reserved for flushing.

(decisively)

Everyone 'round here knows that white clover, when eaten after it first buds, causes sheep to bloat on their left flank.

JOHN

Aye', clover can be vile candy for 'em when eaten too soon. Just saying...

BRIT

What exactly is he implying?

Aaron begins to cough fitfully.

AARON

Sheep like newly grown clover, but newly grown clover doesn't like sheep!

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)
White and red clover, before it's
mature, causes a foam in their
rumen, preventing 'em from
belching, which is their nature!

BOLDEN
'Tis true, Brit, 'tis true.

BRIT
Go on, Aaron...

AARON
Well, if they can't belch, all that
gas gets trapped, causing 'em to
bloat like we're seein' here.

BRIT
What can be done?

AARON
There's only one way to relieve the
gas, that I've ever heard tell.

BRIT
Yes...?

AARON
By usin' a trocar.

BRIT
What's that?

JOHN
It's a kinda pricker that goes into
the sheep's for'most stomach, so
that built up gas can, can blow
itself out through the, the...

AARON
The can, can, cannula!

JOHN
That's right!

Nodding in approval.

BRIT
Do we have such an instrument?

AARON
The only one we had on hand left
the farm with Judith!

BRIT

What!

AARON

She had it on her when she arrived here. It's hers. Besides, even if we had one...

Choking on his saliva.

Even if we had one, none of us would know how, how to safely use it. One wrong prick could, could...

BOLDEN

Do them in!

Brit turns to Bolden.

BRIT

Do you know anyone who owns one of these...prickers and is capable of using it?

BOLDEN

There's a Quaker fellow in Havenpool who goes by the name of Gibson. He runs a feed store and is the only one I know of who's able to practice this particular art form. Besides, Havenpool is too far away to be of any help to us. So, I suggest we track Judith down.

Taken aback.

BRIT

What?

BOLDEN

She couldn't have traveled too far on Casterbridge Road. You could send a rider to fetch the girl and have her back here in time.

Frozen momentarily, Brit turns to his workers.

BRIT

Who's our fastest rider? You can take my horse. I must remain here!

AARON

I am!

BRIT

Go! And don't come back without
her...!

With their breathing more labored, the sheep remain in agony.

EXT. CASTERBRIDGE ROAD, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Four miles away, Aaron finds Judith, who is resting under a
yew tree on Casterbridge Road, almost as far as Froom Vale.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- LATER

Galloping at a high rate of speed, Aaron returns to the scene
on Upper Weatherby Farm, entirely out of breath.

AARON

She refuses to come!

Coughing up some phlegm.

BRIT

What!

AARON

Says she won't come without an
invitation...

BRIT

(determined)

Where is she? I'll handle this
myself!

AARON

She's got her feet up under a yew
tree on Casterbridge Road, almost
as far as Froom Vale, on the right.

(coughing)

You can't miss her...

Brit mounts his horse and heads off to confront the wildly
defiant Judith.

EXT. CASTERBRIDGE ROAD, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Brit finds Judith exactly as described. He dismounts his
horse and approaches her warily.

BRIT

I was told I would find you here...

JUDITH

You were told right! Aaron informed me about the fix the sheep are in.
(animated)
How on earth did white clover make it into that field?

Brit sits down next to her.

BRIT

I honestly don't have an answer for you. All I know is our sheep will die if you refuse to help. So, I'm asking you...rather, I'm inviting you to return to the farm and remain there with me. Please come home. I can't manage without you!

JUDITH

(idealistically)
But, I need to live a life of my own...

BRIT

Judith, I implore you, don't abandoned me in my time of need...

Standing up and offering his hand, Judith acquiesces before putting her boots on and grabbing her effects.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- LATER

Warmed by Brit's invite, Judith appears at the site of the crisis with her trusty lamber's satchel. Reaching into her kit, she retrieves the trocar and punctures the skin of an ailing sheep, then its abdominal wall. Safely into the rumen, Judith gently slides the trocar out, leaving the cannula in place to release the rapidly escaping gas. Back to normal size, the grateful ram clambers to his feet and leaps free. All in all, she saves every sheep in the nick of time, much to the others' relief. Brit now questions aloud how Dutch White Clover made its way into one of his lushest fields.

INT. REYNOLDS HOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - THE NEXT DAY

Word gets back to Bailiff Whalen about Judith saving Brit's flock. He now breaks this information to his boss while appearing in her parlor. Irate, Addy orders him to conduct a far more destructive operation, this time against young Judith.

ADDY

Do you think you can drive her off
the farm?

WHALEN

I'll do my best, mam...

ADDY

That trollop is finally going to
get what she deserves! No more
getting back at Brit, I'll simply
boot her from his life entirely.

WHALEN

Yes, mam...

ADDY

And what ever you do, don't get
caught!

Doffing his slouch hat, Whalen leaves his boss alone to
divine a plan to regain her lost crown and, once again, win
dominion over Brit Landon.

EXT. LITTLE WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX,
ENGLAND - NIGHT

Farmer Bolden is walking along his property line late one
evening. Hearing a noise over in the next meadow, he notices
a blaze flickering behind Judith's house. He soon sees a
lanky figure fleeing the scene, running toward the walking
trail. Observing a distant oil lantern approaching him,
Bolden shouts for its bearer to seize the fleeing arsonist.
After a brief struggle, two men subdue the suspect and wait
for Bolden to arrive. Just before reaching them, however, the
offender escapes the men's grip and vanishes into the
darkness. They now greet the farmer and identify the escapee.

LABORERS

That was old Russ Whalen... Yeah,
Addy Wilson's bailee.

Bolden soon shares this information with Brit. Meanwhile, a
host of workers help Judith tamp down the intense flames
engulfing her home. In doing so, they use anything at their
disposal, including one of her precious rugs.

JUDITH

Keep it up, Aaron, it's working,
it's working!

TINLEY

A bucket brigade is being arranged as we speak, mam, and water should be on its way soon. I see 'em working the pitcher-pump in the farmyard up yonder.

Judith soon observes two columns of kerosene lamps faintly illuminating the hastily assembled brigade, comprised mainly of farm workers and household staff.

Here comes the first bucket now!

Reaching the fire, the bucket of water is tossed into the flames, sending steam curling against the back of the cabin, then up into the midnight sky. That same bucket now makes its way up to the pitcher-pump on the return line. So efficient is this brigade that the blaze becomes fully extinguished in a matter of minutes, causing everyone to break out in cheers.

Sorry about your carpet, mam, I mean, Judith.

AARON

Yeah, Judith, sorry...

JUDITH

Pay no mind, men! A favored rug is a small price to pay if it helped save this place, which it did!

Sitting down on a chopping block, she brushes the ashes from her heavily charred coat.

INT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARMHOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - SAME TIME

Libby receives Farmer Bolden into Upper Weatherby Farmhouse and shows him into the parlor.

BRIT

Bolden, what news have you of the suspect? Nancy!

NANCY

Yes, sir.

BRIT

Two brandies, please.

Nancy approaches a center table and pours out two brandies.

NANCY

Here you are, gentlemen...

Serving the pair.

BRIT
That'll be all, Nancy. Goodnight.

NANCY
Goodnight. Goodnight, Mr. Bolden.

BOLDEN
Goodnight.

BRIT
We can sit over here.

Pointing to the davenport.

BOLDEN
(grimacing)
Thanks, Brit... Oh, I'm getting old.

BRIT
How about it, William?

BOLDEN
Well, I was out walking my property line earlier tonight. I haven't been sleeping well lately, so I thought a good stretch of the legs might help.

Tipping his brandy back.

Ah, that's mighty good! Anyway, I looked over the wall and saw what appeared to be a faint glow behind Judith's cabin. I then caught sight of a lanky figure running around the far side of the place. From there, he entered the field and headed toward the westernmost path. At the same time, I noticed someone with a lamp heading my way. So...

Taking another sip.

BRIT
So...?

BOLDEN
So I hailed to what turned out to be two men, telling them to apprehend the perpetrator, which they did.

(MORE)

BOLDEN (CONT'D)
 But before I could reach them, he
 escaped their grip, but not before
 catching sight of his face.
 (animated)
 And you'll never guess who that
 individual is!

Setting his glass down firmly on a tea table.

BRIT
 You're enjoying this, aren't you?

BOLDEN
 I am.
 (grinning)
 You'll understand when I tell you.

BRIT
 Go ahead, I'm listening...

Taking a nip of his own.

BOLDEN
 Russ Whalen!

BRIT
 Who?

BOLDEN
 Russ Whalen, Addy Wilson's bailee!

Brit turns silent, this time taking a considerable sip.

BRIT
 Two calamities on this farm within
 weeks of each other are no
 coincidence!

BOLDEN
 I tend to agree...

BRIT
 And it's not a stretch to conclude
 that those two events lead back to
 the same person...

BOLDEN
 Addy Wilson!

BRIT
 Exactly...!

Getting up and walking about the room.

For the sake of this farm and its workers, I must confront this situation personally.

BOLDEN
With Miss Wilson?

BRIT
(decisively)
No... I'll do one better, her father!

BOLDEN
Dick Wilson is no pushover, I can assure you! When told of Addy's escapades, he will compel her to talk, believe you me!

BRIT
I'll go see him first thing in the morning. Until then...

Finishing his brandy, while Bolden studies the clock.

BOLDEN
Will you look at the time! I must be up early. I'm fitting new stalls into my horse stable.

BRIT
We best hit the sack then...

Bolden stands and shakes Brit's hand.

BOLDEN
You're a good neighbor, Brit. I believe I shall sleep soundly tonight. I can feel it!
(yawning loudly)
I'll show myself out. Goodnight.

BRIT
Goodnight, William.

Now, outside, Bolden mounts his gelding and follows the bridal path home.

INT. CORN EXCHANGE, CASTERBRIDGE, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - THE NEXT DAY

The next morning at the Corn Exchange, Brit locates Dick Wilson and approaches him regarding his mischievous daughter.

Surrounded by other planters, Wilson tips his hat, acknowledging Brit.

DICK

Brit! How are things on the farm?

BRIT

May I have a word with you, sir?

DICK

I'm sorry, but I have a bit of an emergency on my hands! Addy has disappeared and is nowhere to be found. Her surrey is gone, as are much of her personal effects.

BRIT

I'm sorry to hear that... If there's anything I can do, you know you can count on me.

DICK

Much obliged, young man.

BRIT

I might just know the reason for her disappearance!

DICK

Oh?

BRIT

Is there somewhere we can speak in private?

DICK

My buggy is outside. Gentlemen, if you'll excuse me.

Tipping his hat, he leads Brit out of the Exchange into the street.

We can talk in here.

Pointing to his rig before climbing aboard.

BRIT

This is better! What I'm about to say may come as a shock.

DICK

Go on, son...

BRIT

I don't know if you're aware of it, but your daughter and I were seeing each other up until a few weeks ago.

DICK

I see...

BRIT

Anyway, ever since we broke up, unusual events have occurred on my farm.

DICK

Such as?

GIL

I heard the news, Dick. Pardon me, Brit.

Doffing his hat.

DICK

Young Brit here is filling me in on a likely explanation for Addy's disappearance. I'll be back inside shortly, Gil.

Gil touches his broker's stick to the brim of his hat and departs the scene.

You said unusual events have occurred since you split up with my daughter....?

BRIT

Yes. A little over two weeks ago, my sheep became dangerously ill after ingesting Dutch White Clover.

DICK

No! Are they alright?

BRIT

Yes. Thankfully, one of my able employees saved every one of them.

DICK

Gas? Extended bellies?

BRIT

(nodding)

Uh, hmm.

DICK

Alright, you said events. There's been more than one?

BRIT

There has. Last night, my sheep barn manager, the very person who saved my flock only weeks ago, had her cabin set ablaze.

DICK

How do you know it didn't catch fire on its own?

Glancing out the side of the buggy.

BRIT

Because my neighbor, William Bolden, while out for a walk late last night, happened to see a man dart out from behind her cabin immediately after it caught fire.

DICK

Bolden's a good man! Go on...

BRIT

That man was apprehended by passersby, who positively identified him.

DICK

And...

BRIT

His name is Russel Whalen.

DICK

What!

Causing the gig to sway.

BRIT

You heard me right! The Constable arrested him early this morning on the grounds of Reynolds House. He's locked up here in Casterbridge, as we speak!

DICK

I'm shocked, Brit, I really am! And you believe this to be the reason for Addy's disappearance?

BRIT

I do, sir. My theory is that Whalen spilled the beans to her about being nabbed last night for lighting Judith's cabin on fire, and...to avoid being named as an accomplice to this crime, Addy fled Weatherbury altogether! Arson anywhere, particularly in Wessex, is a serious matter.

DICK

To be sure. Why, it's a felony! I honestly don't know how anyone could stoop to such base tactics, let alone my own daughter! I'm sorry you had to go through all that, Brit.

BRIT

Now that I've identified the person responsible for these catastrophes, I'm better able to deal with it.

DICK

You leave that to me!

Clutching Brit's knee with an iron grip.

BRIT

Very well, sir. In the meantime, keep me posted on her whereabouts.

DICK

I certainly will. Thank you. Your...tact in this matter is appreciated.

BRIT

(flattered)

Sure thing. Let's keep in touch.

Dick Wilson nods as they exit the buggy and head off to different places.

INT. CLARIDGE'S HOTEL, BROOK STREET, MAYFAIR, LONDON, ENGLAND
- MORNING

Addy wakes up in a spacious guestroom at Claridge's Hotel in London. Outside her window, Mayfair is already bustling with activity. Far away from authorities in Casterbridge, Addy remains at this west end establishment throughout the Holidays and well into the new year.

INT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARMHOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX,
ENGLAND - EVENING

Months after a successful tuppung season, Brit celebrates Christmas by hosting a party for his employees. The parlor, burnished and decked out in the finest holiday decor, is ready for tonight's festivities. In the dining room, eighteen place settings await the guests who are scheduled to arrive by Seven O'clock.

LIBBY

My, this place looks fine, and what a tribute to us workers. Brit's a good man!

NANCY

That he be. And this parlor looks so festive. It's hard to believe this place was abandoned only a year ago.

LIBBY

I'll say! Now, what this house needs is a good woman...

NANCY

Anyone come to mind?

LIBBY

Well, with Addy on the lam and causing such a ruckus on the farm, we'd have to cross her off the list.

NANCY

(giggling)
How about me?

LIBBY

You do look beautiful tonight, but, you're far too young for the likes of Brit.

NANCY

He notices me goin' about the house.

LIBBY

He may notice, but you're much too young for basket-making!

NANCY

(feisty)

Need I remind you that I'm all of sixteen years old!

Twirling in her dress.

LIBBY

(laughing)

That you are little girl! But, the buzz around this farm for the past month is that he's going to pop the question to Judith tonight in front of everyone!

NANCY

(pouting)

Not me...?

LIBBY

Uh, I'm afraid not, even with that low-cut en coeur you have on.

NANCY

Why, you...!

Chasing Libby into the hallway as the evening guests arrive.

INT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARMHOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND - LATER

In the presence of his entire staff, inside a festive dining room decked out in holly and ivy, Brit rises from the table after dessert and addresses the workers.

BRIT

Good things have come our way this year, not least of which, is most of the ewes are presently in lamb. A special thanks goes out to our shepherds and sheep barn workers. You really came through for us!

Applause is heard throughout the room.

And I would be remiss if I didn't single out one person in particular. She came to us one night during a crisis and delivered a breech lamb, saving one of our prize ewes in the process.

(MORE)

BRIT (CONT'D)

Since that time, Judith has played an integral role on this farm, just as she did weeks ago when she singlehandedly saved the entire flock.

Taking up his glass.

Therefore, I'm please to announce to everyone here tonight, that I am giving Judith...

Libby, Nancy, Mrs. Pippin, Eleonor, Olivia, and the other women on the staff lock eyes.

A one week holiday.

JUDITH

(humiliated)

But, where would I go, and who would I go with?

Amid robust cheers from the men, a humiliated Judith bolts from the house, resigned to the fact that she will never win the heart of Brit Landon.

EXT. GROSVENOR SQUARE, MAYFAIR, LONDON, ENGLAND - MORNING

Addy has received yet another letter from Weatherbury. For her protection, she never replies to its sender. Taking the missive with her to nearby Grosvenor Square, she reads it while seated on a park bench.

ADDY

(voiceover)

Friday, February 12, 1886

Addy-

You best keep away from Weatherbury! The place is abuzz with the trial of Russ Whalen. From the dock yesterday, he stated vigorously that he was ordered as your bailiff to set Judith's cabin ablaze. Furthermore, that it was you who sought revenge against Brit by having Whalen sow white clover in one of his grazing fields in hopes of ruining the mating season. Based on this testimony, eyewitness accounts, and evidence taken from Reynolds House, the Crown has issued a warrant for your arrest!

(MORE)

ADDY (CONT'D)

I must admit, the courtroom was shocked at the thought of you causing such damage to Brit and Judith. Your father is taking all of this very hard. As for Brit, he has yet to attend the proceedings. I suggest you remain where you are for the time being, your location is safe with me! I intend to visit you in a few months when the weather improves to better apprise you of events in Weatherbury, as well as on the farm.

Your good friend,
Olivia

P.S. Still no ring on Judith's finger! If it's any comfort, she rarely smiles anymore...

INT. THREE RINGS TAVERN, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
DAWN

One month later, lambing season begins in earnest. On a frosty morning just before dawn, Judith enters Three Rings Tavern holding four newborn lambs, three in her arms and one balanced on her shoulder. She follows the glow coming from the coal fire and lays them down on the warm straw set about the hearth.

JUDITH

That makes twenty-three, but it's early yet. We'll be seeing many more of these wee ones over the next five weeks, I'm hoping...

WARREN

This cider is almost ready. Can I get yee some?

Judith eagerly nods her head.
My, they're cute little fellows! So fleecy be their coats...

JUDITH

(jubilant)
They certainly are. And look how quickly they've adjusted to their tiny legs!

JOHN
You must have been up all night,
Judith.

JUDITH
Don't you worry, I get in my kips!

Laughter from the shepherds now fills the dimly lit enclave.
The door soon opens.

JOHN
Here be Aaron now...

AARON
I've got a breach lamb down the
hill.

JUDITH
Which sheep?

AARON
Juniper...

JUDITH
The very same ewe I saved last
year, just about this time!

JOHN
I remember it well...!

JUDITH
It must be hereditary. I'll be
right there, Aaron, and be back
here for some warm cider, hopefully
with another healthy lamb. Can you
keep an eye on them, John?

JOHN
Why, surely! Lambs are my
bailiwick. Besides, I'll be
baptizin' 'em before too long.
(blithely)
Gather round little ones, John Long
is here to watch over yee.

Judith and Aaron exit the tavern, sending snow curling in
through the doorway.

INT. SHEEP BARN, UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH
WESSEX, ENGLAND - MORNING

Lambing season has come to an end, and the long-awaited
headcount can now be tabulated and reported to Barclays Bank.

Brit and Judith are currently seated at her desk, ready to begin the tally.

BRIT

So, all the lambs survived their birthing. I'm surprised! That's good for our numbers...

JUDITH

Hmm, I'll say! Though I believe we're going to come up short since not every ewe took up with a ram. 'Tis an odd thing!

BRIT

You can lead a horse to water...

JUDITH

Precisely! Let's see here...I went from pen to pen and recorded each headcount, so this will be the first time I've added up the column.

With pencil in hand she adds the figures together.

There! Hmm... I'm going to add these numbers up again.

She eventually drops her head and pushes the ledger over to Brit.

BRIT

This can't be...! It must be some kind of mistake.

JUDITH

I've added the figures twice over, and we're still short seventeen lambs!

BRIT

So, all told, we have one hundred and thirty-three sheep presently on the farm.

JUDITH

Uh, hmm. I could canvas the pens again...

BRIT

No, no. Unless you overlooked two or three sheepfolds, which I doubt, I'd say our collateral falls well below Mr. Quinn's threshold.

JUDITH

I included every pen, of that I am sure! Still...

BRIT

Yes?

JUDITH

(reckoning)

Still, we're so close to the quota that we could...ask to borrow a couple of dozen newborns from Little Weatherby Farm, then return them after the bank representative vacates the property! Who would know? It's not like their smit marks have been applied yet.

(definitively)

Yes, that's it!

Turning to Brit with sudden ardor.

BRIT

Why, Judith, you're not suggesting we defraud the bank, are you? I have a reputation to protect, as does Farmer Bolden, who is just now getting *his* back after a lifetime of integrity.

Judith begins to despair.

JUDITH

We worked so hard...

BRIT

I know!

JUDITH

As I said, it was the old biddys who came a cropper for refusing to take up with a ram! Of all the sheep, we foolishly cast our lots on those giddy twotooths! Oh, I honestly didn't see this coming.

Driving her fist into a desk drawer before coming to tears.

I want every one of those culls marched to the abattoir come summer!

BRIT

I agree! We'll know better next year.

JUDITH
 You will, but I won't be here to
 see it....

Brit pushes back his chair.

BRIT
 What! Where are you going?

JUDITH
 I read an advertisement in town
 last week seeking experienced sheep
 hands in Australia.

BRIT
 Australia?

JUDITH
 Uh, hmm. In fact, it's right here.

Pulling the dangling notice from her calendar and handing it
 to Brit.

BRIT
 So you're leaving me? When exactly?

JUDITH
 With their spring starting in
 September, I'd have to be aboard a
 passenger ship by mid-May at the
 latest.

Detecting anguish on Brit's part.

BRIT
 (terrified)
 Why, that's only weeks away...!

JUDITH
 (satisfied)
 I know.

Unexpectedly pleased with Brit's expression.

INT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARMHOUSE, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX,
 ENGLAND - DAY

Later that week, Brit receives a letter informing him that
 Aunt Agnes has died at Claybourne Manor in Talbothays.

CLERK
 April 7, 1886

Briton Landon, Esquire
 Upper Weatherby Farm
 Weatherbury
 Casterbridge
 South Wessex

Greetings,

I regret to inform you that your aunt, Agnes Grace Landon, passed from this world on March 29, 1886. In keeping with her wishes while alive, there were no church services or graveside ceremonies rendered in her name.

As her immediate and sole descendant, you are summoned to our offices as soon as practicable to effectively and wholly accept all right, title, and interest in her real property, as well as all personalty, monetary holdings, etc.

As her good and dutiful servant, know that it is our privilege to bestow on you this most fortuitous bequest.

Very truly yours,

Wingate L. Gleason, Clerk
 Geo. Frawley & Sons
 7 Bank Street
 Talbothays
 Casterbridge
 South Wessex

INT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
 - EVENING

Late that evening, Brit appears on Judith's porch seeking admission. He softly knocks on her door, announcing his presence.

BRIT

Judith, it's me. May I come in?

Judith opens the door.

JUDITH

Brit!

BRIT
I realize it's late, but I must
speak with you.

JUDITH
(casually)
Do come in.

BRIT
I've been meaning to come over here
all day to share some especially
good news.

JUDITH
Please, sit down...

They take their respective seats before Brit pulls a letter
from his pocket and presents it to her.
What's this?

BRIT
It seems our predicament is over.

JUDITH
(stoically)
I'm afraid I don't understand.

BRIT
My Aunt died a little over a week
ago.

JUDITH
Oh?

BRIT
The letter you have in your hand
reached me only today.

Judith soon goes over to the lamp.

JUDITH
I regret to inform you that your
aunt, Agnes Grace Landon, passed
from this world on March 29, 1886.
In keeping with her wishes while
alive, there were no church
services or graveside ceremonies
rendered in her name.
(frowning)
(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)

As her immediate and sole descendant, you are summoned to our offices as soon as practicable to effectively and wholly accept all right, title, and interest in her real property, as well as all personalty, monetary holdings, etc.

She now returns to her chair.

So...what does this all mean?

BRIT

It means...we're free at last to do as we like.

JUDITH

Why, I don't know what to say...

BRIT

(pleading)

Don't leave, Judith. Remain on the farm with me! Don't go to Australia...

JUDITH

(yielding somewhat)

I, I won't if...

BRIT

If what...? If what, Judith?

He quickly gets up and faces her.

JUDITH

If I only knew one thing. Whether you would allow me to love you and win you, and marry you after all. If I only knew that...

BRIT

But you will never know.

JUDITH

Why...?

BRIT

Because you never ask!

JUDITH

Oh...oh! My own dear.

Holding out her hand.

BRIT
When shall we wed?

Judith stops to consider.

JUDITH
On the greatest day of the year for
us farmers... Saint Swithin's Day,
July fifteenth.

BRIT
Legend has it that if it rains on
St. Swithin's Day...

JUDITH
It will rain for the next forty
days.

BRIT
But if it doesn't rain and the
weather is fair-

JUDITH
Then forty days of fair weather
shall follow.

Getting down on both knees, Brit buries his face in Judith's lap while she holds the precious tiding tightly to her chest.

INT. CLARIDGE'S HOTEL, BROOK STREET, MAYFAIR, LONDON, ENGLAND
- AFTERNOON

As promised, Olivia arrives at Claridge's Hotel after taking a train from Casterbridge to London Bridge Station. With no lift available for its guests, Olivia scales the stairway to Addy's third-floor room. There, she knocks on the door and waits for her friend to answer.

ADDY
(excitedly)
Olivia! So good of you to come.

OLIVIA
I must sit down. I've been walking
for over an hour.

ADDY
Come in, come in. Take a seat over
there on the davenport.

Olivia drops her bag and proceeds to sit down.

OLIVIA
Ah, that's better...

ADDY
Can I get you anything?

OLIVIA
Not now, thank you.

ADDY
Tell you what, after you rest up,
let's have tea on Bond Street.

OLIVIA
Bond Street?

ADDY
It's only the most exclusive street
in Mayfair. My treat.

OLIVIA
That sounds great! I have so much
to tell you.

ADDY
Somehow I thought you would...

Olivia continues to rub her feet, while her host prepares to leave.

CUT TO:

INT. MANDARIN ORIENTAL TEAROOM, BOND STREET, MAYFAIR, LONDON,
ENGLAND - LATER

Addy and Olivia are seated at the front table of Mandarin Oriental Tearoom in Mayfair. Amid the afternoon bustle of Bond Street, they are both seen chatting at a rapid rate. Addy soon claps both hands over her mouth, turns her head, and bitterly leers out the window.

I/E. ST. MARY'S CHURCH, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND -
DAY

At a little after eleven o'clock on Saturday, July 15, 1886, before the Reverend Hadley Foulkes, Brit and Judith exchange vows at St. Mary's Church in Weatherbury. After the ceremony, the couple returns to the farm and is greeted by a multitude of well-wishers. Among the guests are Libby, Nancy, Mrs. Pippin, Eleonor, Olivia, and female staff members, as well as Aaron, Tinley, John Long, and Mrs. Pippin's husband. William Bolden, Gilbert Perkins, and Tristan Quinn beamingly look on.

As for Judith's mother, she is unable to attend due to poor health.

A reception in the main barn soon takes place to toast the happy couple with cider supplied by Three Rings Tavern. As for food, kitchen workers from the farmhouse treat the revelers to steaming plates of mutton, ham, and sausage, along with an ample supply of side dishes. Before long, it is time to go, and the bride and groom depart Upper Weatherby Farm for Casterbridge to board the express train to London.

INT. CLARIDGE'S HOTEL, BROOK STREET, MAYFAIR, LONDON, ENGLAND
- DAWN

Arriving by cab late last night, the Landons checked into Claridge's Hotel before crossing the threshold leading to the bridal suite. The next morning, the couple is up early as accustomed.

JUDITH
(cheerfully)
Good morning, husband...

Sitting up in bed and stretching.

BRIT
Good morning!
(playfully)
Funny finding you here.

JUDITH
Yes, imagine that...

Brit rolls over on his side.

BRIT
And what are your plans for our first day in the big city, Mrs. Landon?

JUDITH
Well, I hear Bond Street is known for its superb shops. That'll be fun for us country mice...

BRIT
(wryly)
I believe I'll pass!

JUDITH
But who will carry my boxes?

Teasing Brit as he gets out of bed.
Why, what would you prefer we do?

BRIT
Well, I'd like to tour Grosvenor Square for starters. I hear the homes are stellar.

JUDITH
(musing)
Well, you could explore the area while I shop.

BRIT
I suppose...But maybe first we can...

Hopping back into bed.

JUDITH
(amusingly)
What! You've been into the oats again, I see.

BRIT
I have not!

Laughing while touching her nose.
Such a fine nose...

JUDITH
(grinning)
Yours too...

BRIT
And...unlike those old twotooths on the farm, don't you find me irresistible?

JUDITH
I certainly do... Brit?

BRIT
Hmm...

JUDITH
I'm so happy.

Brit rolls Judith onto her back to resume their spousal activities.

EXT. GROSVENOR SQUARE, MAYFAIR, LONDON, ENGLAND - LATER

Fresh from breakfast at the hotel, Judith and Brit saunter along Brook Street while a sleepy Mayfair makes ready for business. Eventually reaching Bond Street, she bids him a brief farewell.

JUDITH
Good-bye, dear!

BRIT
I'll meet you at the Grosvenor Gallery around ten thirty. There are plenty of clocks in the area to check the time. Keep your bags close at hand and be on the lookout for pickpockets.

JUDITH
You bet I will. See you then...

She disappears into the crowd as Brit heads for Grosvenor Square. Just then, an individual dressed in dark garb emerges from an alleyway and begins trailing Judith.

INT. BENSON & HEDGES TOBACCONISTS, BOND STREET, MAYFAIR, LONDON, ENGLAND - LATER

Guarding the packages carefully, Judith completes her purchases for the day and enters Benson & Hedges Tobacconists to pick up something for Brit. A clerk behind the counter greets her.

CLERK
May I help you, mam?

JUDITH
I wish to purchase a cigar for my husband.

CLERK
Well, you've come to the right place! My, you're toting quite a lot of packages there. You may set them down on the counter if you like.

JUDITH
I think I will, thank you.

Among the packages set down on the countertop is a large, partially wrapped ornamental salver.

CLERK

What's that plate you have with you?

JUDITH

It's a souvenir platter containing a likeness of London.

CLERK

Very nice. I take it you're from out of town?

JUDITH

Yes, my husband and I own a farm in Wessex. We were married there yesterday and are staying at Claridge's here in Mayfair.

CLERK

Congratulations! Well, in that case, I believe a complimentary cigar is in order! Your choice, madam. What kind of smoke does your husband prefer?

JUDITH

I don't know exactly. He rarely smokes... I just thought it would be nice.

Surveying the store's many display cases.
I have to meet my husband at the Grosvenor Gallery at half past ten, so I, I suggest you select one for me!

CLERK

(nodding)

Very well. I'll box...this one up for you! It comes all the way from Cuba, crafted with a fragrant blend he's sure to enjoy.

Handing Judith the item.

JUDITH

Why, thank you! I'll stick this in my bag. You're most kind, sir.

CLERK

Not at all...

Brushing off the complement.

Uh, when you reach the art exhibits, be sure to see the landscapes of Cecil Gordon Lawson. Being from rural England, you're sure to enjoy them.

JUDITH

I will, and my husband will appreciate your generous gift.

Holding up the box.

CLERK

He can enjoy it on the way back to the hotel. Congratulations again, mam! Uh, you're welcome to store your packages here and retrieve them later...

JUDITH

(hesitating)

It's not that I don't trust you. I do. But I'd just as keep these articles with me. Besides, my husband can carry them once I'm in the gallery.

Looking over his glasses.

CLERK

Most gentlemen do around here...

JUDITH

(laughing)

So I've noticed! Goodbye and thanks again...

CLERK

My pleasure. Stop by anytime you're in Mayfair

Judith gathers her things, along with the souvenir platter, and departs the store. The shadowy figure seen following her for hours suddenly emerges from a nearby ginnel.

INT. GROSVENOR GALLERY, MAYFAIR, LONDON, ENGLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Judith arrives at the Grosvenor Gallery a little ahead of time and proceeds directly to the Cecil Gordon Lawson Exhibit as suggested by the shop clerk.

There she stands before a painting titled The Vale of Meifod, marveling at the yellows, golds, and browns perfectly capturing barley ricks set in an open field, backed by trees and mountains. Taken by this landscape, not unlike certain parts of Wessex, Judith loses track of time and begins to muse.

Meanwhile, the mysterious figure who has stalked her from the time she left Brit's side begins to make his move. Dressed in a dark coat and hat, he steps from behind a monumental vase, holding a knife high over Judith's head, and lunges to kill her. Failing with his attempt, he chases her down aisle after aisle of exhibits. In her haste, Judith drops the round salver, sending it crashing to the floor. A bobby, who just happened to be rounding the corner, now draws his weapon and shoots the assailant, killing him instantly.

BOBBY

Are you alright, miss?

JUDITH

It's Mrs., and can someone please find my husband! He should be in this gallery. His name is Brit, Brit Landon...!

BOBBY

I will, but are you hurt, mam?

Judith stands up and inspects herself.

JUDITH

No, I'm fine, really. Just a little shaken up!

BOBBY

Fitz, go and locate her husband. He should be somewhere here in the building. His name is Brit...what's the last name again?

JUDITH

Landon, Brit Landon!

BOBBY

You heard her. Go! Come over here and sit down on the bench, Mrs. Landon.

More police arrive on the scene. After the bobby covers the body with his cloak, he gathers Judith's effects and returns them to her.

JUDITH

Thank you.

BOBBY

It would appear this silver platter saved your life! You must have somehow shielded yourself with it. Why, the knife used by the assailant failed to make a dent!

Holding up the salver to show Judith.
I'd hold onto this souvenir if I were you, Mrs. Landon. Here comes Fitzzy with your husband now...

BRIT

(frantic)

Judith, are you alright?

Rushing over to the bench and embracing her.

JUDITH

Yes, yes I am.

BRIT

What happened?

JUDITH

I was studying a painting back there and was accosted by that, that man on the floor.

BRIT

I should've never let you go shopping by yourself...!

JUDITH

(defensively)

But I'm in an art gallery in a very exclusive neighborhood. I couldn't be in a safer place in all of London!

The bobby soon approaches her.

BOBBY

Excuse me, mam, but do you know of anyone who would want to harm you?

JUDITH

(innocently)

Why, no one...!

Turning to Brit as he takes her hand. The coroner now arrives on the scene to inspect the body. The attendants accompanying him soon turn the individual over. While removing the assailant's hat, long, auburn hair tumbles out onto the floor, causing Judith to shriek in terror.

My God, Brit! It's Addy!

BOBBY

Addy?

Judith takes a deep breath before addressing him.

JUDITH

Addy. Addison Wilson of
Weatherbury, our hometown in
Wessex.

The attendants now remove the oversized coat from the corpse before returning it to a supine position. There, for all to see, lies Addy Wilson, shot through the heart, mere inches from her Girls Friendship Society medal.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. UPPER WEATHERBY FARM, WEATHERBURY, SOUTH WESSEX, ENGLAND
- MORNING

Arriving home shortly after midnight, household staff and farmhands gather the next morning to greet the couple as they emerge from the master bedroom, then out onto a second-floor veranda. After vigorous cheering, the workers move on to begin their day. For their part, Brit and Judith leave the porch and return to their private recess, closing the door behind them. Only Mrs. Pippin and John Long remain in the yard.

JOHN

Judith is queen of the manor now,
leaving us poor souls to eke out
our ordinary lives.

MRS. PIPPIN

Ephraim is joined to idols: let her
be...

Tranquility returns to Upper Weatherby Farm, where sheep abide in verdant pastures, and Judith at long last has a treasured idol all her own.

THE END

Before the credits begin, the following poem appears, using the Wessex countryside as a setting.

AN AUGUST MIDNIGHT
By Thomas Hardy 1899

A shaded lamp and a waving blind,
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:
On this scene enter-winged, horned, and spined—
A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;
While 'mid my page there idly stands
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands...

Thus meet we five, in this still place,
At this point of time, at this point in space.
—My guests besmear my new-penned line,
Or bang at the lamp and fall supine.
“God’s humblest, they!” I muse. Yet why?
They know Earth-secrets that know not I.