

THE MAID OF BUTTERMERE
by
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Based on the novel
by Melvyn Bragg

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FADE IN:

1 **EXT. THE LANCASTER SANDS. DAWN**

1

The Lancaster Sands at low tide, shimmering under a pale sun which hints through thinning clouds...

SUPER LEGEND: "The Lake District", then: "Summer 1802".

In this desolate, endless expanse, away from prying eyes, a rehearsal is taking place...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I am Alexander Augustus Hope,
Colonel, Member of Parliament for
Linlithgowshire and brother to the
Earl of Hopetoun...

We PUSH IN to find a lone figure...

MAN'S VOICE/HOPE

(repeats it, different inflection)
Member of Parliament for
Linlithgowshire and brother to the
Earl of Hopetoun...

The man -- HOPE, 35 -- consults the notes in his hand as he addresses his invisible audience. His face is bright, with a high complexion whipped up by the weather: strong nose, fine teeth, glowing eyes. His hair is long and thick, and there is a scar on his left cheek that dimples as he smiles. His clothes are informal and have seen better days.

HOPE

...A comfortable name, Hope, and one
which my dear father thought fit to
encourage with the highest
aspirations by harnessing it -
(pauses to think about the word,
then smiles, pleased with it)
-- *harnessing* it to the names of two
of the greatest warriors of ancient
times...

He stops again, looks at his notes, delighted with his speech. He practices a few bows --

HOPE (CONT'D)

Your servant, sir. Your servant,
ma'am... m-a-a-a-m... My names
directed me to the army, and --
(looks at notes, considers it)
Ordered me --
(prefers it)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

HOPE (CONT'D)

My names *ordered* me to the army, and, happily, my inclination was willing to follow. Saw service in Flanders, 1794, brigade major of the guards under Major General Gerald Scott... commanded the 14th Foot in the attack on Gueldermasen -- Guu-eeld-er-masen -- in January of 95. Took the place but badly wounded, very badly... the leg, chest...

He paces forward and back, waving his free hand in the wind, now in full concentration --

HOPE (cont'd)

Turned to politics in the party of my great friend Mr Pitt... The peace treaty? The French will use it to re-arm, Napoleon will never rest until he has landed on English soil... Take my word for it, this is not a peace treaty, this is just a break in the hostilities --

(likes it, repeats it)

Take my word for it, this is not a peace treaty...

2 **INT. ROOM, ROYAL OAK INN, LANCASTER. EARLY MORNING (LATER)**

2

A man -- NEWTON, 37 -- sits in a corner of the dusky, oak-stained room, dark except for a hint of light filtering through a small window. He has a stark, solemn face, intense eyes, and is always dressed in black.

The door creaks open. HOPE steps in. Looks for Newton in the semi-darkness --

NEWTON (O.S.)

You took your time.

Hope looks around, uncomfortable with the darkness and with Newton.

HOPE

Can we not have some light in this room?

Newton watches him as he walks over to the wall and pulls the bell-rope which is heard JANGLING faintly below.

NEWTON

Are you ready then?

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

Yes.

(holds up notes from Sands, edgy)
You're sure this is reliable?

NEWTON

Absolutely.

(beat, smiles)

I'd stake your life on it.

HOPE

We'll be -- *I'll* be in a right spot
if your good colonel were to make a
sudden appearance at the Lakes.

NEWTON

'My' good colonel will be stuck in
Vienna until they resolve their petty
squabbles or war breaks out -- by
which time we'll be long gone.

HOPE

And the girl? What if she's not in
Keswick?

NEWTON

She'll be there, John. She'll be
there, wiling the days away while
waiting for you to charge into her
life and do what you do best.

HOPE

(nodding, distant)

What I do best...

NEWTON

Stop worrying. Pretty soon we'll put
a raging ocean between us and this
vile place and have a whole new
continent to lose ourselves in. Now
why don't you calm down and pour us a
drink.

Hope does it while Newton says nothing and just studies him
intently.

NEWTON (cont'd)

I would have liked to be there with
you...

Hope puts his drink down and takes off his boots, his coat, and
his shirt. He looks at the shirt before throwing it into a
corner.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

I need you to watch my back and keep them off our trail long enough for me to get things done. And you have to take care of the letters.

Hope walks over to a beautifully detailed dressing case and opens it. Its side panels hold magnificent silver-topped bottles and brushes.

NEWTON

(beat, another tack)

I think it would be safer if I kept the dressing case here.

HOPE

No. I need it. Without the case and the letters -- I can't do it. I have to make our fortune. Remember?

NEWTON

You crave it all as much as I do. Neither of us is free of sin, John.

Newton knows which buttons to push -- Hope looks at him with haunted eyes --

HOPE

But I wouldn't murder for it.

-- and we FLASHCUT to

AN ELEGANT DRAWING ROOM

sometime in the recent past where HOPE watches in stunned shock as NEWTON shoves a cushion onto the face of a helpless old ARISTOCRAT and suffocates him on his sofa --

BACK TO SCENE

NEWTON

(emphatic)

The old fool was on to us. What, would you have rather I let him be and see us back in the dungeons of Scarborough? I don't remember them being your happiest days.

(beat)

No, the South is finished for us now... You have to succeed, and fast.

HOPE

Why don't we just go with what we have?

(CONTINUED)

NEWTON

With what? That dressing-case and a carriage? That will hardly do...

(beat, then hypnotic)

There is little point in reaching the New World with all the vexation we have here in the Old. Make no mistake, John, the New World will be no different: those who have will rule and those who do not will grovel and be trampled upon and forced to beg and live like rats in sewers. The New World is full of men like us and I dare swear it will be worse than here in its brutal way, and although I am confident we are a brutal match for them, life will be much easier and happier with the company and the considerable wealth of a pretty little object like our dear miss Amaryllis Antonia Parke...

(beat, raises glass)

To America. To a new life in a new world.

Hope, half dressed, obligingly raises his glass. Eyes studying each other with concealed and mutual unease...

3 **EXT. HEST BANK, LANCASTER SANDS. MORNING**

3

The edge of the desolate sands. In the distance, we see the shimmering MASTS of ships in Lancaster harbour.

HOPE, now transformed and elegant, sits atop a magnificently appointed carriage drawn by four black horses. He handles the horses himself. NEWTON, who rides beside him on horseback, eyes the sands nervously.

NEWTON

You're certain this is a good time to cross?

HOPE

I'll be fine. The tide won't be in for a few hours yet...

(beat)

Make sure you keep writing to me. Your letters are my guarantors.

NEWTON

(nods, still glancing at the Sands, then back at Hope)

Good luck, John.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

They exchange a tense parting glance. Newton watches as Hope leads the carriage down to the bank...

Hope notices an older WOMAN, holding a shrimping net, watching the caravan. She looks up at him as he thunders by. He bows lightly to her.

She watches him whip up the horses and quickly pass to the front of the caravan, recklessly vying with the pilot...

4 **EXT. LANCASTER SANDS. MORNING** 4

HOPE guides the carriage across the damp, ominous desert...

5 **EXT. MOUNTAINS, LAKE DISTRICT. DAY** 5

In a series of shots, we see HOPE, now alone, guiding his carriage across the magnificent, rugged mountainous terrain...

The landscape is dramatic and spectacular, the journey is a demanding one...

6 **EXT. HILLS ABOVE KESWICK. AFTERNOON** 6

HOPE crests a ridge and there, sprawled below, nesting in the valley, is the first of the lakes...

7 **EXT. ROAD INTO KESWICK. DUSK** 7

KESWICK appears down the hill. As HOPE approaches it, he meets a slow moving, simple horse-drawn CART leaving town. A huge sheepdog keeps pace with the cart, which is loaded with a few crates of empty jars.

A GIRL of 20 drives the cart, alone. As their paths cross, the dog starts BARKING loudly towards HOPE.

She goes to quieten it, then turns to look at Hope --

-- and as she turns, we see that there is something disarmingly special about her. Their eyes meet for a breathtaking moment, the barking fading into nothingness --

Before she disappears up the hill...

8 **EXT. COURTYARD, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. DUSK** 8

HOPE's carriage pulls into the courtyard of a small hotel.

(CONTINUED)

A small POTBOY sits up as HOPE's carriage storms noisily into the courtyard of the small hotel. The boy approaches it, excited by the steaming splendor before him. Hope looks down at him:

HOPE
Bring me the landlord!

The boy disappears into the hotel as Hope looks around from his driving seat. He spots an alluring and wholesome young maid, CHRISTINE, crossing the back court with a basketful of supplies as the landlord, GEORGE WOOD, balding and flustered, walks out.

Wood's pace sharpens when he sees the carriage and style of his newest customer. He turns to the boy:

WOOD
(flustered)
Go and fetch Dan!
(to Hope, smiling)
George Wood at your service, sir.

Hope looks down on him, holds his eyes for a moment before smiling openly and warmly.

HOPE
My card...

He hands Wood his card. Wood reads it, then looks up, noticeably impressed:

WOOD
It's an honour to have you with us,
Colonel Hope, sir.

HOPE
Do you have a good room free?

WOOD
Absolutely, Colonel, sir. I've a fine big bedroom with a private parlour off it that many ladies and gentlemen have been kind enough to tell me they found very comfortable, sir.

Hope sizes him up for a quick beat, then climbs down from the carriage.

HOPE
Very well, then.

As he answers, Wood studies the carriage, looking for something, hesitating to ask -- then does:

WOOD
And... your servant...?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

HOPE

Terrified out of his wits, I'm afraid. When we came into this glorious country, it was simply too horrifying for him... I put him on the coach back to London and drove the last few miles myself. Not that it was an unpleasant experience, on the contrary: such air, such hills! Fells you call them? Magnificent... You see, I'm a lake tourist already.

Hope smiles at him. Wood is clearly conquered.

WOOD

Please, allow me to show you to your room.

9 **INT. HALL, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. DUSK**

9

HOPE follows WOOD through the entrance hall and up the stairs...

WOOD

There's the smoking room. And over here we have a small conservatory...

Hope peers in -- a few TOURISTS sit around the fireplace enjoying their port. Hope nods, as they do -- while Wood nudges a couple of passing guests out of the way to catch his WIFE's eye --

WOOD (cont'd)

(waving her over urgently)
Joanne -- Joanne!!

His wife, JOANNE, hustles over, drying her hands, flustered --

WOOD (cont'd)

Colonel Hope, sir, allow me to introduce my wife, Mrs Wood --

HOPE nods gracefully, her face lights up...

10 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. DUSK**

10

WOOD opens the door and allows HOPE in.

WOOD

I hope it's to your satisfaction, Colonel Hope, sir...

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

HOPE

(looks around, keeping him on his
toes, then:)

Very nice.

WOOD

(relieved)

Excellent, excellent. I'm sure you'll
be most comfortable. Ah, here are the
boys.

(to valets)

In you go, come along -- careful.

WOOD ushers in the valet DAN, the POTBOY and another SERVANT who carefully carry in his DRESSING CASE.

Hope unlocks and opens it. It is clear from their looks that they have yet to see anything as beautifully made or appointed: it glows like an altar as Hope studies their faces, pleased with the desired effect...

11 **EXT. KESWICK STREETS/LAKE'S EDGE. DUSK (LATER)**

11

A magnificently dressed HOPE -- green frock coat, white trousers, linen cravat, black felt hat and leaded oak stick -- saunters through the streets of Keswick...

The town is neat and prosperous with handsome buildings, shops, and hotels. Pack horses amble up the broad main street, chaises and carriages flow in and out of the winding side thoroughfares.

All around him, Hope sees style, family, and money parading down the main street. He follows the ostentatiously leisured promenade of Keswick society, nodding imperceptibly, slowly pecking his way into the idle circle, and is greeted by admiring glances from the local gentry, the fellow lake tourists, and especially, the women, young and old, who take notice of him...

He reaches the edge of Derwent Water (the lake at Keswick) and watches the boats lazing on the water under picturesque clouds and, close offshore, the fashionable strollers and gatherings on Pocklington's Island.

Hope canvasses the arena, studying his hunting grounds...

12 **INT. DINING ROOM/SMOKING ROOM, QUEEN'S HEAD. NIGHT (LATER)**

12

HOPE sits at his dinner table, his plates emptied. He seems entranced, staring at a small pot on a sideboard.

WOOD clears a table as the last of the GUESTS are leaving the adjacent SMOKING ROOM where a small peat fire smolders...

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

My compliments to Mrs Wood on a fine meal.

WOOD

She'll be honoured, sir.

HOPE

The potted fish was delicious -- trout is it?

WOOD

No sir, that's actually char --

HOPE

Ah. And you pot it yourself?

WOOD

I wish I could say so -- but no, we get it from a small farm in the area, over in Buttermere.

HOPE

It wasn't delivered to you today by any chance, was it?

WOOD

As a matter of fact, it was, sir.

HOPE

As I was riding into Keswick earlier, I came across a young lady with a small cart and a leviathan of a sheepdog...

WOOD

One and the same! Her father's farm would be the source of your char, sir!

HOPE

I thought I recognized the pots.
(beat, more intimate)
Not that the young lady herself went unnoticed...

WOOD

You're not the first man to have noticed her, Colonel.

HOPE

Really?

(CONTINUED)

WOOD

Oh yes. Mary's almost a tourist attraction in her own right. Ever since Mr Coleridge mentioned her in one of his poems...

HOPE

Coleridge? You're pulling my leg, Wood!

WOOD

I wouldn't presume, Colonel... Will you require anything else tonight?

HOPE

(looks to the empty smoking room, motions to it)

Join me for a drink, won't you?

WOOD

(flattered, flustered)

With pleasure, sir. With pleasure...

Hope adjourns to a sofa in the next room as Wood quickly fetches a bottle of port, pours a couple of glasses and sits down...

HOPE

Tell me, Wood... Who do we have here then, roundabout Keswick? What society?

WOOD

Well, there's the Earl of Carlisle down at Naworth... and the Lonsdales of course, at Lowther, they're the great power in the country. Mr Pitt has his seat down at Appleby all thanks to the Lonsdales.

HOPE

I'm well aware of that, Mr Wood. The Prime Minister is a good friend of mine, I'm proud to count myself of his party, especially now when he needs his friends... you know, this business with the French, it's not a peace treaty, it's merely a break in the hostilities...

(beat)

But you are not on target, Mr Wood.

WOOD

Begging your pardon, sir...?

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

The visitors, Mr Wood. I was trying to wrinkle out who might be my fellow lake tourists...

WOOD

Ah!

HOPE

You see, I have neither the inclination nor, I may say, the time to make the acquaintanceship of the local gentry, and as for the local noblemen, I have no wish for the burden of family connections ...

WOOD

(nodding, trying to keep up)
I understand.

HOPE

On this trip, I should consider myself a simple visitor looking for relaxation and peace of mind... come to think of it, perhaps you know of an acquaintance of mine, Miss Amaryllis Parke?

WOOD

A fine young lady, Miss Parke. She's warmly regarded in the district, sir. What with having to cope with her father's passing away.

HOPE

How very sad.

WOOD

Oh yes. Quite sudden it was too...

DISSOLVE TO:

13 **EXT. AMARYLLIS'S VILLA, NEAR KESWICK. DAY**

13

...Where HOPE, keeping well out of view under the thick, low foliage of a tree, studies the impressive villa where a carriage awaits.

WOOD (V.O.)

...he was a businessman of great success, you know. A trader in Ceylan tea and Indian Jute.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 13

WOOD (V.O.) (cont'd)
I can't imagine her staying
unattached for very long, what with
the fortune her father left her.

Three figures emerge from the villa: two women, MRS MOORE and MRS CRUMP, middle aged, elegant and stiff; and the focus of Hope's attention: a richly dressed, elegant heiress: AMARYLLIS PARKE, 20.

14 **EXT. STREET, KESWICK. DUSK** 14

...where pack horses amble up the broad main street and chaises and carriages flow in and out of the winding side roads, and in this parade of style, family, and money, we find a magnificently dressed HOPE, walking slowly among the promenaders, stalking his prey, keeping a discrete eye firmly fixed on:

AMARYLLIS again, only this time, escorted by AN OLDER COUPLE: The woman, MOORE'S WIFE, one of the women we saw leaving the villa; and her husband, MOORE, stern-faced, military in all respects.

WOOD (V.O.)
They say his wealth was of an
enormity to make the sultans and
pashas of the East take notice...

15 **INT. COFFEE ROOM, KESWICK. DUSK** 15

...where MOORE, his WIFE, and AMARYLLIS share an animated time with a few other FRIENDS around a large table.

Tucked away discretely with his back to them, HOPE sits alone, listening. His look brightens almost imperceptibly: a plan is set...

HOPE (V.O.)
I had no idea...

16 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. NIGHT (LATER)** 16

In the darkness, we hear NOISES of sudden movement, followed by groans of pain, as HOPE thrashes around in his bed, sweating, his face cringing...

He howls, in the grips of a nightmare...

And we FLASHCUT to

HOPE being thrown into a dark cell where fierce looking CELLMATES await, leering at him through infected teeth --

And another FLASHCUT of

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

HOPE, shackled, getting beaten by prison GUARDS -- a blow cutting into his left cheek, the origin of his scar --

BACK TO SCENE

HOPE snaps upright, looking like a ghost. He looks around, emerging from his daze, slowly realizing where he is.

He runs his fingers through his hair, massages his temples. He lights a candle and walks over to the case, opens a compartment and pulls out a small medicine bottle. He holds it almost reverently, then brings it back to his bedside, pours himself a glass of water, uncorks the bottle, and carefully pours out a few drops into his glass. Then a few more.

He swigs it back, and lies down and shuts his eyes...

And the faintly lit ceiling starts swirling, he loses track of where or when he is and night turns to day until OFFSCREEN KNOCKS ON A DOOR bring us back to reality and to...

17 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. MORNING**

17

The KNOCKING wakes Hope from a deep sleep. He stirs in the darkened room...

HOPE

What is it?

CHRISTINE, 24, provocative, peers in tentatively from the door.

CHRISTINE

(re: curtains)

Colonel -- would you like me to...?

HOPE

(slowly coming to life)

Yes, yes...

She walks over to the window and pulls open the curtains. Light floods the room as she turns to face a groaning, groggy Hope. He sits up, his eyes adjust to the light -- and he notices Christine who is quickly and happily aware of his regard --

HOPE (cont'd)

Thank you, --

(waiting for the name)

CHRISTINE

Christine.

HOPE

A pure, sparkling name, Christine...

As you do beside that sunny window...

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

CHRISTINE

Thank you, sir... Would you like me
to bring up some breakfast...

(cheekily)

Or lunch...?

HOPE

Lunch...? What time is it?

CHRISTINE

It's almost midday, sir.

HOPE

Midday?!

He leaps out of bed, grabbing his clothes --

HOPE (cont'd)

I need my horse! Quickly!

18 **EXT. DRUID'S CIRCLE. DAY**

18

Various small parties of TOURISTS and GUIDES amble around the
mysterious circle of fifty upright stones at Castlerigg...

At the centre of this is AMARYLLIS, now on the arm of the older
gentleman, COLONEL NATHANIEL MOORE, whose attentive pose belies a
protective, almost parental relationship. He holds open a
leatherbound guide book.

And into this arena glide HOPE, pacing a slow, measured entrance
to the centre of the circle without raising his gaze from the
ground, his hand supporting his chin, meditating...

Amaryllis sees him, as does Moore, both impressed by his inner
preoccupation. And just as he's about to bump into them, he draws
back and seems to wake out of a trance. With rapid dignity, he
collects himself, and looks at them:

HOPE

I do beg your pardon, ma'am.

The couple take immediate notice of the tone, the address, the
costume, the slight bow, the gold fob, the silver tassels...

MOORE

Not at all, sir, not at all. It is a
place that promotes deep thought.

HOPE

(looks keenly, then:)

Colonel Alexander Augustus Hope, sir.

(CONTINUED)

MOORE

Colonel Nathaniel Moore, sir. And this is my ward, Miss Amaryllis Parke.

Hope bows elegantly, concentrating his gaze on her.

HOPE

Your servant, ma'am.

As he swivels up, he smiles slightly, his right hand trailing towards his heart, his breathing perceptively heavier. She realizes her beauty has scored a palpable hit, flinches to a smile, half-turning away...

HOPE (CONT'D)

(gesturing at the setting)

Marvelous, isn't it?

(to Moore)

Mystery, in the lap of beauty.

He smiles cheekily at her on the word 'beauty'. She blushes...

MOORE

(holds up book)

Mr Hutchinson gives us a rich account of both, I think.

HOPE

(holds up an identical book)

Mr Hutchinson is indeed an authority, sir, but even he may not tell the whole story. Of course I am no scholar, though I suppose we soldiers must at times have a scholar's curiosity.

Moore smiles at the compliment. Hope continues...

HOPE (cont'd)

Indeed, you could say that the very greatest soldiers: David, Alexander -- who lent me one of my Christian names -- Caesar, they've all been scholars in some manner. I myself would claim no more than the natural store of a questioning mind.

MOORE

It is indeed a healthy attitude.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

When I see these stones here, and ponder, as I was doing when I so nearly precipitated myself upon you...

(he rapiers a look at Amaryllis)
...these stones, so unexpected in this magnificent country, reminded me of another place, of somewhere I knew not where... And then it dawned on me... Egypt!

AMARYLLIS

Egypt!

Moore shoots her a look. Amaryllis is embarrassed by her outburst.

HOPE

I confess it might seem a little far off -- not as a country but as a comparison -- but the Great Pyramids, the Sphinx, the monuments of strange beasts standing in the desert... a pomp and detail, I know, quite missing from these bare monoliths, but nevertheless, connected in some dark undercurrent of history... But I intrude. Forgive me.

He backs away, with Moore, correctly, not attempting to detain him.

MOORE

Are you staying in the district?

HOPE

In Keswick itself, at the Queen's Head.

MOORE

I will leave my card for you.

HOPE

I'm honoured, sir -- I shall look forward with great anticipation to when we can all meet again.

(hand on heart, fixing Amaryllis)
Ma'am.

He backs away and heads for the big stones as Amaryllis manages to sneak off a glance... which he acknowledges.

20 CONTINUED:

20

He stares at his reflection: he looks haunted, his brain stiff, his eyes throbbing.

And we FLASHCUT to another lashing of IMAGES:

A fat, evil looking LORD unshackling a young, naked HOPE, aged 10, and throwing him into a cockfighting ring where another terrified and naked BOY waits, surrounded by A LOUD MOB OF FRENZIED GENTRY tossing coppers, betting, shouting, and

Young HOPE finding one of the servant BOYS hanging from a beam, and

And the same young HOPE escaping out a bedroom window, leaving the fat LORD lying naked in his bloodied bed, his throat slit from ear to ear.

BACK IN HOPE'S ROOM

HOPE still stares into the mirror.

21 **INT. ENTRANCE HALL, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. DAY**

21

HOPE, a letter in his hand, comes down the stairs to find WOOD, rushing around busily.

HOPE

Wood?

WOOD

Ah, Colonel Hope, sir.

HOPE

(he hands him the letter)

Could I trouble you to post this for me?

WOOD

(taking it)

No trouble at all, Colonel. I have a letter to send myself.

HOPE

May I see it.

Wood reaches into a drawer and pulls out a large envelope. Hope studies it.

HOPE (cont'd)

Let me to sign it for you and save you the postage duties.

WOOD

Sir, I wouldn't presume --

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

HOPE
(interrupting)
Nonsense, Wood.

CLOSE ON THE LETTERS: Hope signs the initials "Col. Hon. A. A. Hope M.P." on them, then marks them "FREE POST".

He takes a pinch of sand from a countertop bowl and sprinkles it on the letters.

HOPE (cont'd)
Postage is horribly expensive, and I'm sure His Majesty's coffers won't suffer hugely if I extend my free postage privileges to one of your letters.

WOOD
(worried)
That's very kind of you, sir, but... the law...

HOPE
(interrupting, jovial)
No one's going to hang you for this, Wood. After all, you're not forging my signature -- I'm signing it myself, am I not?

Hope smiles at Wood. Wood manages a half-smile back, but his unease is obvious -- then he suddenly remembers something:

WOOD
How foolish of me -- I almost forgot!

He reaches into the desk and pulls out an envelope which he hands Hope.

WOOD (cont'd)
A gentleman called for you and left this.

Hope opens it and pulls out the invitation with restrained satisfaction.

22 **EXT. AMARYLLIS'S VILLA, NEAR KESWICK. DAY**

22

HOPE, on a fine, handsomely saddled horse, rides up to the splendid villa we saw him watching earlier. He's greeted by a STABLEMATE who takes his horse as Moore walks out to receive him.

MOORE
Delighted you could make it, Colonel.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

The pleasure is mine, sir.
 (looking around at view)
 What a superb outlook.

MOORE

Quite magnificent, isn't it? Jonathan
 -- Amaryllis's dear departed father,
 that is -- he fell in love with it
 instantly.

HOPE

And understandably so.

MOORE

Please.

A waiting VALET takes Hope's hat and coat as they walk into the house.

23 **INT. HALL, AMARYLLIS'S VILLA. DAY**

23

HOPE and MOORE enter the elegantly decorated hall with its grand circular staircase as MRS MOORE waits to greet him.

MOORE

(to Hope)
 My wife, Helen -- Colonel Alexander
 Hope.

HOPE

(bowing)
 Delighted, ma'am.

MRS MOORE

Colonel...

Hope looks at her, and seems startled by a sudden thought.

HOPE

Forgive me, Mrs Moore, but -- such a
 ridiculously slight acquaintance --
 absurd, but so extraordinary a
 coincidence, really, quite, quite...
 (beat, looks at her, curiously)
 Now that I have begun, I suppose I
 must say it, don't you think so?

Mrs Moore looks at her husband and leans forward on her toes, enthralled.

MRS MOORE

Oh, yes.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

Perhaps not... too soon to presume...

MRS MOORE

No, not at all.

HOPE

It's just that... and I'm sure, certain, that someone must have told you this...

Mrs Moore's look begs him to continue...

HOPE (cont'd)

It's just that you bear a remarkable resemblance to my very good friend Mathilda, younger sister of the Princess of Hohenzollern.

Mrs Moore rocks back, blushed with embarrassed joy.

MRS MOORE

Really... And how is she?

HOPE

When I last left the palace, she was exceptionally well.

MRS MOORE

(delighted)

Exceptionally?

HOPE

With the same natural effusion of good colour that I find in your own complexion, ma'am.

He puts his hand on his heart and bows. Mrs Moore does a tiny curtsy, beaming. Moore looks at her with surprise. Footsteps make them turn to see AMARYLLIS gliding down the staircase.

MRS MOORE

And there's Amaryllis. You have met Amaryllis, haven't you, Colonel?

But Hope is already working on her with the eyes and the bow...

In the swirl of an elegantly served lunch, HOPE holds court with his tales. Both MRS MOORE and AMARYLLIS hang on his every word while MOORE looks on, observing the fawning of his wife and ward...

24 CONTINUED:

24

HOPE

...When I was in Egypt I thought at first that the sun and the desert, the empty sky and the endless sand -- that there was nowhere more grand. But then I thought about why the pyramids were so enormous and splendid -- and realised it was because there was nothing else there. Men had to make their own markers, their own monuments, and eventually they had to build an entire landscape of them. But here, nature itself provides the landscape and the monuments and...

(looks at Amaryllis)

...so much more than that...

25 **INT. POST OFFICE, KESWICK. DAY**

25

WOOD walks up to the counter of the postmaster, ISMAY, a stern looking, mustache bearing stickler of a man.

ISMAY

Ah, George -- I've got something here -- where is it, now? -- yes, here we are. Another letter for the Colonel.

WOOD

I'll see to it that he gets it -- he also needs these two letters sent.

ISMAY

Let's have a look --

He hands them over to Ismay who scrutinises them as Wood looks on, nervously. After a tense beat, Ismay looks up at Wood, not thrilled by the 'free post' markings on both:

ISMAY (CONT'D)

Very well. I'll send them off with the paying post in the morning...

26 **EXT. LAKESIDE PROMENADE, DERWENT WATER (KESWICK LAKE). DAY**

26

HOPE and AMARYLLIS, talking, laughing... A few steps behind, MOORE and his WIFE follow, watching, Mrs Moore beaming with delight at the courtship...

27 **EXT. GARDEN, MOORE'S VILLA. DAY**

27

Days later now... Outside the villa and watched by MRS MOORE who sits on a nearby bench reading a book, HOPE and AMARYLLIS walk in the garden whose views extend across neighbouring fells and down to Derwent Water...

AMARYLLIS

I have so enjoyed these last few weeks.

HOPE

The way you say that leads me to suspect they are not to continue.

AMARYLLIS

(nods)

I'm needed up in Carlisle on some urgent business. The Colonel thinks it cannot wait. He doesn't think it should be more than a few days...

(beat, hesitating)

You will be here when we return, won't you?

Hope lets her hang for a beat before giving her a comforting smile. She smiles from relief...

28 **INT. SMOKING ROOM, THE QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. MORNING**

28

HOPE sits alone, looking out the window, frustrated. A discarded newspaper lies next to him on the sofa.

He rises from his chair, abruptly decisive. Goes to the window and looks out.

HIS POV -- the hills, beckoning.

29 **EXT. THE ROAD TO BUTTERMERE. MORNING/DAY/DUSK**

29

HOPE rides alone through the steep and difficult passes of the journey...

Over a SERIES OF SHOTS, we watch as:

HOPE trots past the celebrated churning and twisting of the LODORE FALLS...

Past the BOWDER STONE poised high above the valley...

And finally over the barren HONINSTER PASS at DUSK from where he sees it:

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

THE TINY HAMLET OF BUTTERMERE, a wall of cliffs to its south, the tranquil lake, and still, rich meadows beyond...

He stops his horse, looks around, sees the scattered sheep on the fells, takes in the calming serenity around him...

He rides down in the golden evening light, the mountains reflected in the oil-calm water of the lake, and enters slowly into Buttermere, and to...

30 **EXT. THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. DUSK**

30

A small cluster of a place, with stables, byres, and outhouses, and which sits nested between Crummock Water and the adjacent Lake Buttermere...

And there HOPE sees her again, arriving with her flock of sheep, walking past him and looking at him directly: MARY ROBINSON, 20, the girl from the cart, as mesmerising as we remember her...

Hope stares at her, entranced.

HOPE

Alexander Augustus Hope...

(beat, then bows, with a hand on his heart)

Your servant...

Mary doesn't bow nor smile, just politely replies...

MARY

Good evening...

...without stopping. Hope is desperate to keep her around:

HOPE

I'm in need of a room for the night.

...to which she replies, without slowing her pace, stopping or looking back:

MARY

I'll send my father out...

...and he watches her disappear behind the wall...

31 **INT. DINING ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

31

HOPE sits in the small, candlelit dining room. His eyes follow MARY around as she serves TWO TOURISTS at another table across the room from him, mesmerised by her -- before being interrupted by her father, JOSEPH ROBINSON, who appears with a bottle of port.

(CONTINUED)

ROBINSON

(pours him a glass)

Here we are, sir. I think you'll find this to your liking.

Hope sips it as Robinson hovers, waiting for a comment. Hope nods his satisfaction --

HOPE

Very nice.

ROBINSON

Thank you, sir.

Hope's eyes stray from Robinson at Mary, following her around as she lights up fresh candles. Robinson hangs about, clearing up.

HOPE

It's a pleasant change from Keswick here. More peaceful...

ROBINSON

Don't be fooled, it's only like this when my wife's away. She's gone down to Lorton to sell the goat's cheese and potted char.

HOPE

You entrust the selling to your wife?

ROBINSON

She's much better at it than I am -- my mind's not up to all of that dickering and bargaining...

HOPE

(eyes straying to Mary)

It's just as well then...

ROBINSON

She should be back tomorrow -- I expect it'll be nice and clear over the next few days -- good for going up into the fells. Best walks over Buttermere way or maybe towards Robinson -- that's the hill on the far side of the lake.

HOPE

Robinson? You have a mountain in your name?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

31

ROBINSON

Oh, it was here long before us,
although there's some that foolishly
think it's called after our Mary.

Hope's eyes find her again -- which she notices, her eyes meeting his for the briefest of moments.

HOPE

I have no doubt that it was named
after your family -- if not in
tribute then surely in
anticipation...

Robinson looks at him curiously -- Hope's comment, which would have bowled Wood over, doesn't score much with the more earthy man -- and when he can look away again, Mary's disappeared into...

32 **INT. KITCHEN, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

32

...where MARY deposits the plates by the sink. Deep in thought, she doesn't notice ALICE, younger and chubby, washing up.

ALICE

(cheekily)
So has he asked for a bath yet?

Mary gives her a chastising look which surprises Alice.

MARY

(firm)
No.

Which is far from the usual ribbing she is used to with Mary...

33 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

33

HOPE thrashes around in bed, tormented by another bout of nightmares. He howls...

34 **INT. MARY'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

34

MARY wakes up, jolted by his yells. She gets out of bed and opens her door. She hears another howl.

35 **INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. NIGHT**

35

Her bare feet make no sound as she climbs down the steps from her attic. She edges up to a nearby door and creaks it open.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

MARY

Father?

But Robinson is snoring away, oblivious. Another howl makes her turn. She looks at her father, and decides not to wake him.

36 **INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE HOPE'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

36

She creeps up to Hope's door, scared. She leans in close, her ear to his door, and listens.

37 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM/HALLWAY, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

37

HOPE, in the throes of another nightmare, yells and hurls himself upright, waking up. He looks around, placing himself.

In the hallway, MARY, wide-eyed, listens. The howling is over. She presses herself even closer to the door, while inside --

HOPE, dazed, looks for his bottle of laudanum. He finds it and reaches for the cup of water -- but it's empty. He slowly gets out of bed, takes his candle and shuffles to the door.

MARY hears the floorboards creaking as he approaches the door. She looks around in a panic, but it's too late for her to hide --

HOPE'S SHIVERING HAND REACHES FOR THE DOOR HANDLE --

THE DOOR CREAKS OPENS --

And they come face to face, Mary standing there in her nightdress, startled to attention in the dim light of the single candle. They stare at each other, speechless for a moment.

MARY

I -- I heard some noises.

HOPE

Yes, I... I was...

An uneasy beat... he goes silent as he looks at her.

MARY

Are you alright?

They stare at each other. Hope loses himself in her candlelit face.

HOPE

I... --

(beat, then lifts up his cup)

I need some water.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

MARY
 (beat, studies him)
 I'll be right back.

She takes the cup from his hand. Hope watches her as she slips away. She turns for a quick glance at the bewildered looking man before disappearing down the stairs...

38 **EXT. HAUSE POINT, OVERLOOKING BUTTERMERE. DAY**

38

The sun radiates through cotton clouds as HOPE rides up into the fells overlooking Buttermere...

The view is spectacular, calming, inspirational. Three lakes lined up like barges in the valley below, rich fells with scattered bivouac huts of woodmen, flocks coming down from the high pastures...

Hope looks all around him, breathing the air in deeply, overcome by a feeling of openness and freedom...

He looks around for MARY, but doesn't find her. Then he spots her in the distance on a neighboring fell, with a couple of dogs and her flock of sheep.

He watches her for a moment, then looks for a way across to where she is, and aims his horse towards it...

He rides up to her -- but as polite glances are exchanged, her big sheepdog barks, keeping his horse at bay --

MARY
 No, Sandy! Stop that! Sandy! Sandy!

Hope dismounts, calms his horse and kneels down, drawing the dog in. The dog approaches Hope, allowing him to stroke him.

HOPE
 Good boy, Sandy. Good boy.

MARY
 (to Hope, surprised)
 I'm sorry about that. He's getting old... old and wary.

HOPE
 Don't apologise. I'm sure he's been proven right more often than not.

He leads his horse and walks with her and her flock. Hope is still uncharacteristically tongue-tied and hesitant around her.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

MARY

I'm glad to see you're feeling better.

HOPE

I am...

(beat)

I'm sorry I woke you... It's just...

MARY

(sees his difficulty)

You don't owe me an apology... or an explanation.

HOPE

I know...

(beat)

It's just that some memories seem impossible to shake off. Even in a secluded paradise like this...

MARY

Perhaps you're expecting too much of our little valley...

He stops and follows her with his gaze as she walks on...

39 **INT. DINING ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

39

HOPE dines alone, served by EMILY ROBINSON, Mary's mother who brings him another platter of fish. Mary is nowhere in sight.

HOPE

I should stop before you run out -- what would your other guests think?

MRS ROBINSON

I wouldn't worry, Colonel -- there's plenty of it out in the lake, if you know where to look. Which is one thing George does know...

(beat)

Do you fish, Colonel?

Clearly not -- but his look says otherwise.

40 **EXT. BUTTERMERE LAKE. DAY**

40

HOPE sits in the small boat which bobs calmly on the water, lines cast, as ROBINSON rambles on, while...

41 **EXT. FELS ABOVE BUTTERMERE. DAY (SAME TIME)** 41

MARY looks down at the lake and watches the two men.

42 **EXT. THE FISH INN. DUSK** 42

HOPE -- relaxed and comfortable -- and ROBINSON return from fishing, chatting away. Hope's ear has won him over, as has the fruitful day's fishing: Robinson carries a rich catch of char.

They meet MARY coming out of the barn. She nods to Hope, who bows imperceptibly. Robinson hands Mary the fish.

ROBINSON

Here you go, Mary.

(to Hope)

You must take away some of Mary's jars with you. If you ask me, it's far better than any Windermere char, which I hear they pay for hand over fist down in London...

HOPE

Indeed it is... But why should the char of Buttermere not outsell the char of Windermere?

ROBINSON

I've often wondered that myself...

HOPE

They certainly seem to enjoy it in Keswick, as I discovered during my stay... you could easily get it to Lancaster and send it all over England from there.

ROBINSON

All over England... I'd need an agent for that.

HOPE

Agents can be easily whistled up... Lake Tourism could not be more fashionable. There's great interest, Robinson, and that always opens up room for trade.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

HOPE (cont'd)

You could have special pots made -- delicate pots for the nobility, hand painted with a lake scene to give them an extra value -- and on the larger pots you could paint 'The Fish' -- no, 'The Char of Buttermere, the Hidden Heart of the Famous Lakelands'... I can see the coffee houses of London ordering it in enormous quantities... in a few months, you could have a thriving industry here, Robinson.

ROBINSON

(shrugs)

That's more than one man can hope to do alone, Colonel... I've got all this to keep me going.

HOPE

(more at Mary than at Robinson)

I'm sure the district is full of men who would happily work for you.

(beat)

Or with you...

43 **EXT. AMARYLLIS'S HOUSE. DUSK**

43

SERVANTS unload the fine carriage as AMARYLLIS, MOORE and his WIFE return to the house, escorted by a BUTLER.

AMARYLLIS

Will you call upon him, Colonel?

MOORE

First thing tomorrow, my dear.

She looks at him with evident disappointment.

MOORE (cont'd)

Please, Amaryllis. Interest, by all means... but *enthusiasm*... that would be less than seemly...

Amaryllis smiles at his wisdom. They enter the house.

44 **INT. DINING ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

44

HOPE sits at his table. ALICE brings him his dinner while, at another table which MARY clears up, FOUR YOUNG MEN, loud and drunken sons of gentry, leer at her as Hope watches.

(CONTINUED)

DRUNKARD 1

We could stay here for the night. I quite fancy a hot bath... especially if the beauty would run it for me.

DRUNKARD 2

Perhaps you could use your charm to convince her... on both our behalfs?

DRUNKARD 1

What a devilishly scandalous idea!
(louder, at MARY)
Would you fancy that, eh, Mary?

She ignores him.

DRUNKARD 1 (cont'd)

Look at that. She won't even look at me. The little hussy won't even look at me!

DRUNKARD 2

(eyeing Hope, nervous)
Come now, James. Calm down.

DRUNKARD 1

(brushes him away)
NO!
(sits up, to Mary)
Come on, Mary! What will it take?... Just name it and it's yours. Anything you want... Come on...

DRUNKARD 3

Leave it. Just get her to come up to your room later...

DRUNKARD 4

Are you deaf? She's clearly not interested.

DRUNKARD 1

What do you mean, not interested? Who the hell does she think she is?
(beat)
How about it then, Mary?

She moves to Hope's table and clears it with angry eyes. Hope looks at her.

He stands up and walks over to the table of the four whelps. He stands before them menacingly for a moment before pulling out a chair noisily --

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

May I?

-- before joining them without waiting for an answer. His presence is unsettling.

HOPE (cont'd)

(to Drunkard 1)

I must say you bear an uncanny resemblance to a certain German acquaintance of mine. Have you ever been there?

DRUNKARD 1

What are you talking about?

HOPE

Germany, of course.

DRUNKARD 1

(confused)

No, I --

HOPE

Amazing people, the Germans. I've only recently returned from there myself. I was intrigued by their codes and practices. Quite different from ours, but nevertheless... most entertaining.

DRUNKARD 1

(unsure what to make of it)

Entertaining?

HOPE

Take their concept of duelling, for instance. Very exhilarating... sword fights at misty dawn... it's a way of life, gentlemen, and well it should be... This one here --

(points to a scar on his neck)

-- a particularly violent duel, that one. Had it not been to the death, I might have lost, but...

(grins demonically)

A very satisfying conclusion to a most intolerable situation, gentlemen. A situation not unlike the one here in this peaceful sitting room.

DRUNKARD 2

What in God's na --

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

(interrupting, intense)

The gentleman in question had no manners. And if there's one thing I cannot tolerate, it is bad manners.

(turns to address Mary)

Would the lady of the house be kind enough to bring me and my friends a bottle of your father's excellent port?

She heads for the kitchen but stops out of view in the doorway and listens.

HOPE (cont'd)

Remarkable creature, wouldn't you say?

DRUNKARD 1

(leering)

I'd say --

HOPE

(interrupting, scary now)

Perfect example of a natural lady, do you not agree?

DRUNKARD 1

(surprised)

A natural lady?

HOPE

Modest beyond understanding, isn't she?

DRUNKARD 1

(gets up)

Let's find out just how modest --

Hope grabs him by the shoulder and pushes him back down into his seat. The man raises his hand to push Hope's off, but Hope quickly catches it and SLAMS it down on the table, bending his wrist at an excruciating angle -- the drunkard yells out in pain, but Hope only keeps bending it further, glaring at him:

HOPE

(eyes burning into him)

Perfect example of a natural lady, isn't she? Modest beyond understanding, isn't she? Thoroughly undeserving of another coarse word, wouldn't you say?

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (4)

44

DRUNKARD 1

(terrified)

Yes, yes... a most natural lady.

Hope stares him down for a silent beat before releasing him. He glares at the others, stares them down, gets them cowering.

HOPE

Good. Now where's that port?

BEHIND THE DOORWAY

Mary smiles nervously, grabs a bottle and walks calmly over to their table. She glares at them. They look at her with silent respect.

HOPE (cont'd)

No, no. Just for me. I think my friends have had more than enough...

45 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. MORNING**

45

HOPE wakes. He's different to how we've seen him before: clear headed and happy to be alive.

He hears the sheep moving out. He bounces out of bed and over to the window and looks out:

HOPE'S POV: MARY AND HER FLOCK are heading out into the fields.

He stares out at her, then rushes over to his dressing case, pulling his night shirt off...

46 **INT. HALL, THE FISH INN. MORNING**

46

HOPE pulls his jacket on as he hurries down the stairs -- where he runs into ROBINSON.

ROBINSON

Colonel!

HOPE

(rushed)

Robinson.

ROBINSON

(beat)

I... I wanted to thank you, sir...

HOPE

I'm sorry, I don't --

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

ROBINSON

Last night... those scoundrels... I should have been there but --

HOPE

(interrupting)

Please. It was nothing more than a duty and a pleasure.

He smiles at Robinson. Robinson smiles back. There's an awkward silence.

ROBINSON

(uncomfortable)

Emily and I... Mrs Robinson, that is... well we were wondering if -- that is, if it's not being too presumptuous -- if you'd honour us with your company for dinner tonight. You see, it's our wedding anniversary and, well, we thought, as a token of our appreciation --

HOPE

(interrupting)

It would be my honour.

47 **EXT. HAUSE POINT, OVERLOOKING BUTTERMERE. AFTERNOON**

47

HOPE stands again at his favourite point, looking around slowly like a chieftain over his lands...

48 **ON A NEARBY HILL**

48

From a distance, MARY watches Hope, away from her flock. ALICE walks next to her.

MARY

Why do you think he goes there?

ALICE

Does he?

MARY

I've seen him sneak off there at all sorts of times. He thinks nobody notices.

ALICE

What does he do there?

(CONTINUED)

MARY

He just stands there. Once I fancy I saw him kneeling.

ALICE

Is he a man for religion?

MARY

I haven't heard him speak of it.

ALICE

Perhaps he's a recluse.

MARY

Perhaps... he's very reluctant to be sought out by local society, even those quite worthy of him.

(dreamily)

Perhaps he's recovering from the loss of some great love.

ALICE

Or suffering from having found one.

She grins at Mary cheekily. Mary scowls at her.

ALICE (cont'd)

Well? You've not had a moment's quiet since he arrived.

MARY

What should he want with me? I can see that he would want to have some sport -- that's what you'd expect, I've had plenty of that to cope with, thanks to Mr Coleridge and his bloody book. And yet...

ALICE

What...?

MARY

He doesn't behave like the others. He doesn't leer or pinch me. He's made no late night demands for hot water or brandy to his bedroom...

(beat)

What other possible gain can he enjoy from me...?

Alice takes her hands, holds them warmly, and looks at her...

ALICE

Do you think it so impossible, Mary?

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

ALICE (cont'd)
Come. It's time we head back. You've
got a dinner to get ready for...

49 **INT. SMOKING ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

49

The table is set with candelabra, flowers and a simple feast of
char and veal cutlets. A small fire crackles in the fireplace.

As MRS ROBINSON, ALICE and another YOUNG GIRL prepare the feast
in the background, HOPE stands with the REVEREND NICHOLSON, a
pleasant faced man. Nearby, ROBINSON uncorks a bottle of wine...

NICHOLSON
Will you be staying in our little
valley much longer?

HOPE
Life has a habit of moving me on
rather brutishly, although the
enchantment of this spot is working
its way into my blood.

NICHOLSON
I'm afraid it's been known to
happen...

ROBINSON joins them...

HOPE
(to Robinson)
I've been meaning to inquire about
the price of land in this district.

ROBINSON
Land in these valleys is not as cheap
as one might think for such a remote
spot.

NICHOLSON
True. Most of it is owned by the
nobility, and you yourself, Colonel,
need no lessons in how sacred the
land is to our aristocracy.

HOPE
Has there been a more tenacious group
in the history of the world?

Robinson and Nicholson are both pleasantly surprised by the
comment -- when MARY enters, a revelation in a simple but elegant
russet gown and white lace, hair cascading down her shoulders and
back. Hope stares at her and their eyes meet...

50 **INT. DINING ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

50

A friendly, merry dinner, with ALICE and a YOUNG GIRL serving: ale and wine, laughter, more candles, another log for the fire, and above all, glances exchanged between HOPE and MARY...

Mrs Robinson gets up to take away the remains of the fish. Hope looks up at her:

HOPE

May I propose a toast...

(raises glass)

To Mrs Robinson, a credit to any inn the length and breadth of the country.

They toast her as she blushes...

MRS ROBINSON

You're too kind, Colonel...

HOPE

(turns to Robinson)

...and to our host who on this very day -- how many years ago was it...?

ROBINSON

(embarrassed)

Twenty.

HOPE

-- twenty! -- on this very day twenty years ago, beat out the competition and wed this national treasure...

(turns to Mary)

...before generously presenting us with another...

ROBINSON

Hear hear!

They all clang their glasses and drink. Hope smiles at Mary who looks around, uncomfortable with the attention. Nicholson breaks in...

NICHOLSON

(to Hope)

My compliments on the fish, Colonel. It seems you've got quite the special touch.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

Hardly... with Robinson around, the fish were practically hurling themselves into our boat.

ROBINSON

I just know the waters... Life doesn't offer much else around here.

HOPE

Maybe not, but... it's a life I would welcome.

The comment creates a beat of quiet surprise -- until Mary steps in to fill it.

MARY

What life would that be?

HOPE

(to Mary)

A life which takes its time... a life that one can savour.

MARY

You like it here for a day or two, for a little adventure, for a glance at our famous lakes. But you would never be able to tolerate the dullness of it.

HOPE

There's more than enough to keep me here.

MARY

You might change your opinion after a cold, long winter in these parts.

HOPE

(staring into her)

If a cold, long winter brings with it days like these and isolation from the rest of the world... then I can't think of anything that would make me happier...

Hope doesn't take his eyes off Mary who shields her nervous reaction in a sip of wine.

54 CONTINUED:

54

Hope walks over and takes it from him. His embarrassment is quickly dispelled by anger as he sees the familiar handwriting on the letter.

55 **EXT. FELS ABOVE BUTTERMERE. DAY**

55

HOPE rides up a ridge. At its peak, a lone FIGURE stands by a dark horse. The man paces around nervously, studying the lake below. As Hope dismounts and approaches him, we see that it is an impatient NEWTON.

NEWTON

What are you doing? I've been without news from you for weeks now.

HOPE

(annoyed)

So you've come to --

NEWTON

(interrupting, pointed)

I came to check on my old and gallant friend Colonel Hope, who I had heard was passing through these parts for a short while to expedite some business before moving on to another country.

HOPE

As you see, I am still here.

NEWTON

Yes, you certainly are. And...?

HOPE

And nothing.

NEWTON

What of the Parke girl?

HOPE

She's gone for a few days. And not because of me.

NEWTON

I see... And while waiting for her, have you unearthed any other prospects for the good Colonel?

HOPE

I've seen nothing else here that would be of interest to us.

(CONTINUED)

NEWTON

You leave me to sit like a hen on eggs gone cold while you chase yet another of your conquests -- although I can see how this one would be hard to resist. I wasn't in the area for two days before someone mentioned the girl from Coleridge's book...

Hope says nothing, just stares at him. Newton's seen it before.

NEWTON (cont'd)

Well, assuming we can tear you away from your little whore... you may be interested to know that your dear miss Parke -- you do remember her, John, don't you? -- she's back in Keswick. And no doubt more than a little concerned to hear that her most earnest suitor has decided to relocate across the valley to the inn of a rather famous beauty.

HOPE

She's back?

NEWTON

They're all back. And most anxious to hear from you.

(beat)

I want you back there today. My finances are getting dangerously low and yours can't be any healthier, unless this poor girl is paying you for your good services...

(beat)

Don't disappoint me, John. We both have too much at stake.

56 **INT. KITCHEN, THE FISH INN. DAY (LATER)**

56

HOPE enters, looking for Mary. He finds MRS ROBINSON in the kitchen.

HOPE

(bowing, hand to heart)

I wish to speak to Mary.

MRS ROBINSON

She's not here. She's gone to Lamplugh with her father.

(beat)

They'll be back in the morning...

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

Hope's face drops with the news and we cut to...

57 **INT. DINING ROOM, AMARYLLIS'S VILLA, NEAR KESWICK. NIGHT**

57

A grand dinner in full swing.

Sharing the rich food and fine wine are: HOPE, our impeccable and polished Hope; the MOORES; AMARYLLIS, delighted to have her suitor back; and the CRUMPS, an older couple of roughly the same age as the Moores.

MRS CRUMP

What brings you to the lakes,
Colonel?

HOPE

(charming)

The books, the prints, the articles,
the parodies, the paintings, the
poetry... doesn't everybody want to
come here?

CRUMP

All the more so since this business
with the French has made it all but
impossible for most people to travel
abroad...

MOORE

Bah... Soon, it will be much more
enjoyable. September weeds out the
poorer...

Hope lets it go. He turns to Mrs Crump.

HOPE

Travel compares poorly to a quiet
day's fishing in these magnificent
waters.

MRS CRUMP

Are you a keen angler then? You know
we keep a small boat here, you must
use it while you're here.

AMARYLLIS

That's a wonderful idea.

(to Hope)

You promised to take me out on the
lakes soon, remember?

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

(acknowledging the Moores)
Of course.

CRUMP

(delighted)
Excellent. And I hope, sir, that we may be of more assistance to you during your stay in the region. It's a region my wife and I know very well.

MRS CRUMP

The people are so natural, so simple...
(looks around, then:)
Innocents.

The women giggle together.

HOPE

(conjures up a smile)
That's very kind of you... --

MRS MOORE

How silly of me! When we were in Carlisle, we had the pleasure of meeting none other than your good friends the Major General Scott and Judge Hardinge.

HOPE

(masking his ignorance)
What a fortuitous encounter... And how are the Judge and the good General?

MOORE

Major General Scott told us about your gallantry at Guelder... Gueld --

HOPE

Gueldermasen.

MOORE

(not acknowledging correction)
-- with the 14th Foot. Said you commanded it like a true Englishman, sir, and fought like a Roman. He had nothing but the highest praise for you, sir.

HOPE

The Major General is too kind.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: (2)

57

MOORE

I said I was proud to have made your acquaintance, and so I am. And the wounds, sir, you bear them very well. The leg, Major General Scott told me, was very badly crushed.

MRS CRUMP

(faintly)

Oh, sir!

Hope looks up and picks them off one after the other with a dimpled smile of grand simplicity and unaffected openness:

HOPE

I have been where men have suffered far worse, pains which would have murdered any of us here...

(he nods to Mrs Crump)

...and where they not only endured it but seemed to ignore it...

(nods to Moore)

Is that not our lot in life, sir? At least...

(turns to Mrs Moore)

...until we're allowed to join the ranks of those who can savour this life and...

(ends on Amaryllis)

...enjoy the sweet company it can sometimes bestow.

Moore beams, the women swoon, Amaryllis blushes...

58 **INT. HALL, THE FISH INN. DUSK**

58

MARY takes off her coat, looking left and right at the empty rooms before rushing up the stairs and over to Hope's room --

She swings the door open to find it empty, his things gone...

59 **EXT. CRUMP BOAT, DERWENT WATER (KESWICK LAKE). DAY**

59

Back on familiar ground, WOOD handles the oars of Crump's more elaborate boat while HOPE shows a laughing AMARYLLIS the secrets of trout fishing...

She hooks something. As she struggles with the rod and Wood grabs the line and concentrates on not losing the fish, Hope puts his arm around her waist while helping her with the other. She smiles and edges closer to him. Their eyes meet. Hope casts a glance at the distant lakeside where --

60 **FROM THE LAKESIDE**

60

-- the MOORES stroll along the shore, keeping watch over the couple in the boat, MRS MOORE with a delighted look on her face, MOORE more reserved.

BACK ON THE CRUMP BOAT

HOPE nudges the rudder and the boat slowly glides around, momentarily blocking the Moore's view of the couple. Amaryllis notices, looks back at Hope who grabs the moment and kisses her -- hard, devastating. She enjoys it without hesitation. They pull back as the boat puts them back into view. She stares at him hungrily.

WOOD (O.S.)
(none the wiser)
She's a beauty, ma'am!

They turn to see Wood holding up a magnificent trout. Amaryllis is thrilled -- she smiles at Hope and cosies up to him, turning back to look at the fish as Hope's face suddenly betrays his unhappiness...

61 **EXT. HILLTOP OVERLOOKING DERWENT WATER (KESWICK LAKE). DUSK** 61

Days later, on a peaceful, secluded hilltop, HOPE and AMARYLLIS sit alone on a big rock...

AMARYLLIS
I accept.

He kisses her hand delicately, presses it in his hand.

HOPE
Only time will enable me to show you
how much your acceptance means to me.
Only time and... our greater love.
(he kisses her hand again)

AMARYLLIS
I shall arrange the grandest of
weddings for us, you'll see, we'll
have all the --

HOPE
(interrupting)
No, no, darling.
(thinking fast, smiling)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

HOPE (cont'd)

Much as I would like to invite the whole country to our wedding, we simply can't afford the time it would take to get entangled in such complications...

AMARYLLIS

I don't understand...

HOPE

Sweet Amaryllis... I thought I would surprise you, but... well, we need to leave soon... if we're to avoid the stormy winter seas of the Atlantic...

Amaryllis looks at him in confusion for a moment, then smiles in excitement:

AMARYLLIS

America! Oh, Alexander!

HOPE

The Flying Cloud leaves in a two weeks' time. I'm assured she's most comfortable... and private...

AMARYLLIS

Oh, Alexander...

HOPE

We should marry here... here, where we met. A small wedding, but a perfect one.

AMARYLLIS

I can think of no better place to be married...

(beat)

Colonel Moore will want to write his letters, of course. But as soon as we have the answers...

He doesn't react immediately, just turns with a puzzled, restrained look and holds silent for a moment. She's not cowed.

HOPE

I beg your pardon.

AMARYLLIS

We discussed -- the Colonel, Mrs Moore and myself -- the probability of this... proposal.

HOPE

(smiling)

Was I so transparent then?

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

61

AMARYLLIS

I was always certain... and during those two weeks in Carlisle, Mrs Moore became convinced that you would... Colonel Moore, of course, was always a doubter. He thought you would be too grand.

Hope pauses, studies her. Turns away, takes a few paces.

HOPE

The letters... I take it I am to be investigated? To be spied on? How entertaining...

AMARYLLIS

(embarrassed)

Please... let Colonel Moore talk to you about it.

(beat, hugging him)

Oh, darling, this is the happiest day of my life...

62 INT. SMOKING ROOM, AMARYLLIS'S VILLA. DAY

62

With MRS MOORE and AMARYLLIS hovering outside in the garden nervously, HOPE and COLONEL MOORE meet in the comfortable room...

MOORE

It was in her father's will.

Hope says nothing.

MOORE (cont'd)

Amaryllis talked to me earlier. She wanted me to overlook the letters. I think she is afraid that you might be embarrassed. Obviously, I must carry out her late father's wishes, you understand there can be no question of that. Her fortune, you see, is very large... Very large.

Hope nods calmly. Doesn't fall for the baited remark. Not a quiver of anxiety. He takes a sip of claret.

HOPE

What about these letters?

MOORE

It is quite clearly laid down. You are to give me a note and three or four names and addresses. I shall write to them and include your note.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MOORE (cont'd)

Once they have replied, you and Amaryllis can be married in a trice.

Hope lets the silence grow uncomfortable...

HOPE

I could never agree to that.

MOORE

I am afraid, sir, that it is a stipulation. One which I realise is, in your case, unnecessary and tiresome, but I will explain all that, I will tell your referees of the peculiarity of this circumstance, the onus will be on me and trust me, Colonel Hope, I shall not let Amaryllis or yourself down.

(beat)

My wife and I consider this to be a most fortunate match.

HOPE

I understand. You have your duty, but... as one soldier to another, I'm afraid... I have this damned reluctance.

(he smiles quickly, warmly)

Perhaps I can overcome it in time, but for the moment it is too much of, forgive me, a market, an auction, a commercial venture. I am not an unworldly man, as the Earl, my brother, whom I'm sure you'll meet, would assure you --

MOORE

Well then you see, we must contact your brother and --

HOPE

(interrupting)

No, as you will entirely appreciate, sir, there is also a man's own sense of his honour. A sense which can work against his best interests, for I need not repeat how much I respect Amaryllis, how entirely delightful and suitable I find her and how wonderfully rare she is for me who has -- as man to man I can tell you what you must guess -- who has several times been urged to marry.

62 CONTINUED: (2)

62

MOORE

And she has told us how certain she is of happiness with you...

HOPE

She is the first woman to whom I have proposed and I trust she will be the last. But I am afraid that... these letters...

MOORE

You must understand, if it were my sole decision, then of course, of course I would never press it.

HOPE

I understand.

Hope stands up, takes Moore's right hand in both of his. Moore looks up at him, moved and perturbed.

MOORE

Perhaps we can talk again tomorrow.

Hope nods solemnly and leaves the room...

63 **EXT. AMARYLLIS'S VILLA. DAY**

63

He steps out of the house to find the VALET who hands him his waiting horse. AMARYLLIS and MRS MOORE stand in the garden, watching. Hope bows lightly, poker faced, and slowly rides off.

AMARYLLIS's heart sinks as she turns to MRS MOORE, sensing the outcome...

64 **EXT. DERWENT WATER (KESWICK LAKE). DUSK**

64

HOPE walks alone by the water, lost...

65 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. DUSK (LATER)**

65

HOPE sits at his desk, angrily scribbling a letter. A KNOCK disturbs him.

HOPE

What is it?

The door creaks open. WOOD's face peers in.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

WOOD

(privately)

There are two ladies here for you,
Colonel.

(beat)

They would very much like to see
you...

66 **INT. PARLOUR, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. DUSK**

66

Wood guides HOPE reverently into the front parlour, and leaves.
AMARYLLIS lights up when he appears. MRS MOORE sits calmly across
from her.

AMARYLLIS

Would you like some tea?

Hope shakes his head.

AMARYLLIS (cont'd)

Please... will you sit down and let
me talk to you?

HOPE

Of course.

Hope sits down next to her, pressing his hand sincerely on her
shoulder.

AMARYLLIS

My father... my poor father would
have been so proud of me today. He
would have admired you, greatly. As I
do, my darling...

Hope just stares at her, stone faced. She hesitates before
continuing, desperate:

AMARYLLIS (cont'd)

He would have been so happy that his
daughter, his only child, had
accepted and had been so proud to
accept the proposal of a man as
distinguished as you, Alexander. And
of course, he had to take the
greatest possible care. I'm sure that
your name, everything about you...
but the will says quite emphatically,
and Colonel Moore, well... he is a
man who will see it through to the
letter.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

Hope sighs, glowing with a rich and handsome flush of compassion, and raises his eyes against the mocking fates. But he doesn't budge. He looks away and nods...

HOPE

To the letter...

67 **INT. NEWTON'S ROOM, LANCASTER. DAY**

67

NEWTON reads a letter by the glow of a fireplace...

CLOSE on the LETTER: we pick out the following sentences:

HOPE (V.O.)

...it seems you omitted a small but crucial detail concerning her father's will... I can't see how we can possibly get around the matter... all now depends on Amaryllis's resolve being stronger than Moore's... nothing more I can do...

He crunches it up and throws it angrily into the fire before storming out of the room...

68 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM, QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. NIGHT**

68

HOPE soaks in a tub, a flannel over his eyes, an empty bottle of gin nearby...

His mind drifts, and we see a dreamy FLASHBACK of him and Mary under the tree that night in Buttermere...

He doesn't hear his door creak open, followed by footsteps. The door closes, which he does hear. He pulls off the flannel:

CHRISTINE stands above him. Watching him with a lovelorn look in her eyes.

HOPE looks tormented. He rises out of the bath, pulls her to him and takes her, driving her against the wall --

He pulls her dress up and lifts her up, kissing her furiously -- she straddles him and starts writhing against him --

He seems driven, almost vengeful -- then suddenly, he stops and turns away from her. He takes a few steps over to the window and stares out into the night. She looks at him, confused -- then approaches him, caressing his back --

CHRISTINE

What is it?

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

HOPE
You should leave.

CHRISTINE
(playfully)
Do you really want me to go...
(reaching around to touch him)
...or would you rather I --

He grabs her hand, stopping her almost painfully --

HOPE
No. I said LEAVE. NOW.

She looks at him, pained, and rushes out of the room...

69 **EXT. THE QUEEN'S HEAD, KESWICK. DAWN**

69

HOPE, on horseback, storms out of the hotel's courtyard and onto the empty streets of the cool, misty town, his heart hammering him on...

ANGLE - FROM A DOORWAY OF THE HOTEL

WOOD looks out, watching Hope ride away...

70 **EXT. FELS ABOVE BUTTERMERE. DUSK**

70

HOPE storms down the mist covered hills towards Buttermere...

71 **EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE FELS ABOVE BUTTERMERE. DUSK**

71

MARY walks with her flock, not noticing the dogs barking, in a trance...

She snaps out of it at the sound of a horseman. She turns and sees HOPE charging up towards her --

HOPE
Mary!

Mary freezes and just watches as he rides right up to her, climbs off his horse and strides up to her, his eyes never leaving hers.

He stops inches from her, his hands reach up and cup her face, and he pulls her to him.

He sweeps her up into his arms and they lock in a passionate kiss...

72 **EXT. UNDER A TREE IN THE FELLS. DUSK (LATER)**

72

HOPE studies MARY as they lie together quietly, her bearing tense as she looks into the distance...

HOPE
Marry me, Mary.

The words stun her. She slowly sits up, turns to face him -- but the look in his eyes is undeniable.

HOPE (cont'd)
I'm in love with you and I want us to marry.

MARY
You want us to marry...

HOPE
Yes.

Mary turns away, trying to regain her senses...

HOPE (cont'd)
I know this must seem sudden and graceless, but... I have thought of nothing else for days...

Mary collects her thoughts...

MARY
Why?
(beat, clarity coming back)
Why do you want to marry me? You hardly know me.

HOPE
I've told you. I'm in love with you.

MARY
But how do you know? I imagine you must have been in love before, several times I'd suppose. How can you be sure this is -- [the one...]

HOPE
(interrupting)
I know... don't you?

MARY
I'm not sure what it is...

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

I love you, Mary. I want us to spend the rest of our lives here, together.

MARY

Here?

HOPE

If you wish.

MARY

And say I do wish?

HOPE

Then here.

MARY

What would you do? There is nothing for you here except empty fields and a society you have been shunning...

(beat)

A society which would laugh if you married me...

HOPE

Let them laugh.

MARY

It's me they would laugh at.

HOPE

What about your friends? What would they say?

MARY

They would think you a great catch, they would clap their hands in delight and then wonder, just like I would, what we would do with ourselves after the wedding day.

HOPE

We would be together.

(beat)

I am tired, Mary.

MARY

Would our marriage be such a rest?

HOPE

For me it will be a rest of many things.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Perhaps you've found this place to be such a haven after all your travels that you have your feelings for the place with any feelings you have for me.

Hope looks at her for a beat, then smiles at her sincerity...

HOPE

Let's ride to Scotland tomorrow. The laws are different there, we could marry quickly and be done with it.

MARY

I'll not be carted off to Gretna Green and married over a blacksmith's forge!

Mary looks away, summoning the courage to keep going...

MARY (cont'd)

What would your...

HOPE

(interrupting, guessing)
My family?

MARY

Yes.

HOPE

Anyone I care for, Mary, would think you the best woman in the world.

MARY

You wouldn't be ashamed of me, then?

HOPE

How can you ask me that?

MARY

You say you want to marry me and live here -- which I would find impossible -- or in some remote place in Scotland...

Hope takes her hand, holds it hard.

HOPE

Mary... All I want is to be with you. I am done with fine clothes and great routs... I want to be unwatched, I want to be hidden from the demand of others...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (3)

72

HOPE (cont'd)
 and all this I see possible in you.
 You see, Mary, with you I can be the
 man I most long to be -- you must
 realise that, whether you take me or
 reject me -- and please don't do
 that, Mary, take time, as much time
 as you need, but for God's sake,
 don't reject me...

The intensity is too hard to resist -- he grabs her and they wrap
 into each other tightly in a long kiss -- then Mary pulls away,
 overwhelmed by it all --

MARY
 I must go.

HOPE
 Mary --

MARY
 (getting up)
 I must go!

She hurries away. Hope watches her run down towards the inn...

73 **INT. DINING ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

73

HOPE dines alone. ALICE serves a nearby table of TOURISTS. Hope
 looks for any sign of Mary, but she's nowhere to be seen. He
 looks at Alice, who looks back, sensing something amiss...

74 **INT. BARN, THE FISH INN. MORNING**

74

ALICE and MARY work at shearing a sheep. Alice looks at Mary who
 doesn't look back, concentrating on the work. Alice finally
 breaks the uneasy silence.

ALICE
 Are you going to tell me about it?

MARY
 (beat, stops working)
 He...

She can't keep it in and smiles at her.

ALICE
 (takes a second for it to sink in)
 Not...?

Mary nods, beaming.

ALICE (cont'd)
 Marry?

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Yes.

ALICE

Oh, Mary!

She rushes over and throws her arms around Mary. Mary bursts into tears, triggering the same in Alice.

ALICE (cont'd)

You deserve it, Mary, you deserve it...

MARY

But should I...? Should I do it?

Alice looks at her, startled, speechless. Mary dries her cheeks.

ALICE

Why on earth would you say that?

MARY

Even with everything I feel for him, I just can't help feeling scared when I'm around him... I really can't work out what sort of man he is... When I see him, part of me wants him to leave me be and never return... but then again part of me wants to...

She smiles at Alice, cheekily. Alice, startled, pinches her --

ALICE

Mary!

(beat, whispering)

Everyone here will be very pleased.

MARY

You mustn't tell anyone. Please!

ALICE

(crossing her fingers)

I won't.

MARY

I saw that! No crossed fingers. Swear! Go on!

ALICE

(reluctantly)

I swear.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

And may God strike you deaf and dumb,
Alice, if you break this vow. Now
spit.

Alice spits. A calming moment passes...

ALICE

Where would you be married?

MARY

This is all sworn?

ALICE

Yes.

MARY

He wanted to go off to Gretna Green
right away.

ALICE

Oh, Mary!

MARY

Should I have done it?

ALICE

You didn't say no?

MARY

Well... I haven't yet said that I
would marry him.

ALICE

(alarmed)

Mary! Surely he can't be as unworthy
as the others...

MARY

No, that he isn't...

(beat)

For all I know he may have given up.
There are plenty more fish in the
lake.

ALICE

But if he wants to marry you, he must
have thought about it a great lot. He
won't blame you for being cautious.
That'll just stoke him up. No, if he
really loves you, he'll wait...

MARY

(quietly, as if to herself)

But do I want him to?

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (3)

74

ALICE

Of course you do! Don't be silly.
Think of everything he'll give you.

MARY

And in return I shall feel like his
ward... his property.

ALICE

Mary, he's the one. He's the one
you've been keeping yourself for. You
know it...

Mary nods.

ALICE (cont'd)

Well then...

(beat)

Don't hold back. Just follow your
heart...

Mary smiles and nods at her friend's advice. They embrace...

75 **EXT. HAUSE POINT, OVERLOOKING BUTTERMERE. DAY**

75

HOPE sits on a rock at his favorite spot, deep in thought...

76 **EXT./INT. THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. DUSK (LATER)**

76

HOPE rides back towards the Fish Inn...

As he nears the inn, he spots an elegant carriage waiting
outside. He slows the horse as he approaches it, his mind racing.
A familiar figure steps out the door to greet him as he
dismounts: MOORE.

MOORE

My dear fellow! We thought you'd
abandoned us all in Keswick...

Hope dismounts, speechless, almost in a trance, and hands his
horse to the POTBOY. Moore leads him inside --

MOORE (cont'd)

I've a small troupe of people who are
all rather anxious to see you...

He leads him in...

77 **INT. SMOKING ROOM, FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. DUSK**

77

...to find MRS MOORE and AMARYLLIS sitting while ALICE sets out the tea.

MOORE

Here is he, ladies. As promised!

MRS MOORE

Colonel! It's so lovely to see you again.

HOPE

(still in a daze)

Mrs Moore...

(turns to Amaryllis)

Amaryllis...

He bows slightly. Amaryllis beams at him, all radiant and excited. She gives him her hand, which he kisses, then darts a nervous glance at Alice who is all ears.

MOORE

Miss Parke was... well, she was quite shocked at your unannounced departure after so many weeks of being so very attentive, indeed the very model of a suitor...

Hope watches for Alice's reaction. She shows none, and leaves the room.

MOORE (cont'd)

...It was all rather troubling, especially for Mrs Moore... we took her out to Blake's coffee room, to try and lift her spirits... and that's where I had the good fortune of meeting your friend here.

HOPE

My good friend... ?

VOICE (O.S.)

Please, the good fortune was all mine.

Hope turns to see NEWTON emerging from the narrow doorway.

NEWTON

(with a sardonic nod to Hope)

I would have never dreamt of finding my dear friend here of all places.

(CONTINUED)

MRS MOORE

It's quite an enchanting spot you've uncovered here, Colonel.

NEWTON

(enjoying watching Hope)
 Isn't it just?
 (sees someone coming from kitchen)
 Ah, cakes! Excellent, I'm famished.

He grins at Hope who watches helplessly as MARY comes in with the cakes. Newton eyes her, as do the others. Hope controls a nervous smile which she returns warily. Moore is not amused by the pothouse flirtation, which Amaryllis and Mrs Moore also notice.

MOORE

Quite... anyway, we got to talking, Mr Newton mentioned that he was a solicitor from Chester, once in the same line of country as yourself -- Parliament. And so your name came up -- can't quite remember how -- and, well, the long and the short of it was that I took the liberty of asking him -- forgive me -- about your appearance, your manner. Well, though of course I should not be surprised, he drew you to a 'T', not a bit out of place. You were exactly as I see you before me now.

HOPE

(keeping a nervous eye on Mary, willing her to leave)
 I'm relieved to hear it.

MOORE

No offence intended -- you understand, all this complication with the will, a ball and chain, you know. Anyway, Mr Newton seemed delighted about the possibility of your engagement...
 (looks at Newton)

NEWTON

Nothing in the world could make me happier!

Hope watches Mary who doesn't show a reaction and leaves the room...

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

MOORE

...and he was as anxious to see you as we were, so I enquired with the landlord of the Queen's Head -- the man's information about the town is so well developed that if you sliced him into sheets he would have been a newspaper.

(they all chuckle; Hope manages a nervous little laugh)

He said we might find you here in your secluded valley. And so here we are...

78 **EXT. WATERFRONT, LAKE BUTTERMERE. DAY (LATER)**

78

HOPE leads with AMARYLLIS on his arm and leaning towards him intimately. The MOORES and NEWTON follow...

AMARYLLIS

I understand your anger... I have thought about little else since we parted.

(beat)

I am sorry, truly sorry, that you were asked to submit to such a humiliation. I blame myself for lacking the imagination to understand your feelings and believe me, my darling, I have blamed myself a very great deal over the past few days.

Hope studies her. He draws her to him and presses her arm in affectionate forgiveness.

AMARYLLIS (cont'd)

I will make you a good wife -- if you will still have me.

HOPE

Nothing has changed.

AMARYLLIS

Despite the matter of the letters?

HOPE

That will be forgotten in a week.

79 **INT. DINING ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT (LATER)**

79

HOPE, AMARYLLIS, the MOORES, and NEWTON dine, with ALICE waiting on them. Amaryllis is beaming with delight.

(CONTINUED)

Alice bends down to serve Hope some wine with a wry, telling look.

ALICE
More wine, sir?

HOPE
(wary of her presence)
Yes. Thank you.

MRS MOORE
(to Alice)
The young girl we saw earlier? That was the girl in the poems, wasn't it?

ALICE
Yes, ma'am.

MRS MOORE
Will she be serving us too?

ALICE
She's out tending to the sheep.

MRS MOORE
A shepherdess! How classical!

MOORE
Frankly, I can't see what the excitement is all about.

AMARYLLIS
She's wonderfully graceful. And her hair -- I hear someone once wrote a poem about her hair.

MOORE
Her hair... didn't notice the hair.

AMARYLLIS
I envy her. I would love poets to write about my hair.

MOORE
There is no comparison between a lady such as yourself and a village girl who happens to catch the eye of one or two misguided adventurers.

HOPE
(won't let it pass)
You suggest that great beauty has to be bred?

(CONTINUED)

MOORE

Of course.

HOPE

As great intelligence, wit, charm?

MOORE

(noticing that Alice is not there)
 Everything but brute force. The common folk cannot be expected to enjoy these qualities. Their lives don't allow it. On the whole you will find that they are small, ugly, ignorant, smelly and coarse, but as the bishop of Llandaff said in his great sermon, that is God's wisdom in creating both the rich and the poor.

NEWTON

If they did not have their place, we would not know ours.

MOORE

Exactly.

HOPE

God's wisdom is truly beyond our understanding...

MOORE

I never question it, sir.

HOPE

...but shouldn't we seek to understand it?

MOORE

Only if we are professional churchmen. The rest of us are here to go along.

HOPE

Aah.

(beat, as if by afterthought)
 And yet... is that God the God of the new Testament, the Father of Jesus Christ? Or is it God the Jehovah, the Old Testament God, the terrible God who makes such great divides in society, who allows wars, earthquakes, floods, famines, and plagues...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOPE (cont'd)

or do we not rather want the gentle Saviour from the village in Galilee -- perhaps a village like this one, Colonel -- who with His brothers and friends -- common people, Colonel, such as you would find today in these valleys -- set out to change the world -- what boldness! -- to change human nature itself from the Old Jehovah's cruel laws to turning the other cheek and loving thy neighbour - - even a common neighbour, I can think of a few in the New Testament...

Hope stares Moore down. The women are confounded to silence while Moore struggles to contain himself. Newton, enjoying it despite himself, darts curious looks at Hope who hints a comforting smile back. Amaryllis breaks the silence.

AMARYLLIS

I see how we ought to live our lives, but sometimes I fail to see how we can carry out laws made for such a different people at such a different time.

Hope's eyes move off Moore and warm up to Amaryllis.

HOPE

That is a very sound comment, Amaryllis... Very sound...

AMARYLLIS

I would love to see, to study different peoples. After we come back, perhaps we could visit the Orient -- you could show me your old routes.

MOORE

Travelling East is impossible and is likely to stay that way. The French are simply using the time to regroup. This treaty's no peace treaty at all, it's a cessation of hostilities, no more.

HOPE

I disagree.

MOORE

Oh?

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

...though I have heard the phrase used, and by men of the world such as yourself. I would guess that the Frenchman wants peace every bit as much as the Englishman, and we can't be over-run, you see, being an island. Bonaparte's an army man, Moore, you appreciate that, and we're a naval nation... as our host Mr Robinson would tell you if you afforded him the opportunity.

MOORE

I fail to see what an innkeeper has to do with our conversation.

HOPE

Mr Robinson is a most unusual innkeeper. He illustrated to me very correctly the other night how we are a nation of sailors, of fishermen and navigators, how we have our independence because of the sea and that Bonaparte will never be able to overcome that. I shall see if he will join us later. I'm sure you would find his views most compelling.

Moore looks at Amaryllis and contains himself, saying nothing, just stewing... Newton looks at Hope, only this time, warning bells are ringing and his enjoyment of seeing Hope work on Moore is strained...

80 **INT. MOORE'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

80

MRS MOORE and an angry, frustrated MOORE prepare for bed...

MOORE

I have never seen such drawing room republicanism in a man of his position. The gall of the man -- !

MRS MOORE

Dearest, you must not let these discussions aggravate you so.

MOORE

The fact is that in my service I have met all types, but this Colonel Hope... I'm sorry, my dear, I just cannot place him. There is something wild in him that service such as he has seen ought to have polished.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

80

MOORE (cont'd)

He fits into no known type and say what you want but to an old soldier that is a warning sign.

MRS MOORE

I should imagine his being of 'no known type' is the very reason for his unique attraction to Amaryllis.

MOORE

Nevertheless, I have a duty to her father and I shall do as I see fit.

MRS MOORE

(worried, but stern)

Nathaniel... Amaryllis would be most distressed if anything were to unhinge this union.

Her look leaves him no room. He turns in silent frustration...

81 **INT. KITCHEN, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

81

HOPE sneaks down to the kitchen, looking to make sure no one sees him. He finds MARY tidying up...

HOPE

Mary.

She looks at him with condemning eyes.

HOPE (cont'd)

What you heard can all be explained and it has no bearing at all on what I said earlier.

He takes her hands and sits her down.

HOPE (cont'd)

I've known this man Moore for some time, since my army days, and he has pestered me with his ward ever since I arrived in the district. It would be impolite of me not to give the poor girl the time of day, but that is all...

MARY

You're not paying court to Miss Parke?

HOPE

No.

She studies him...

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

HOPE (cont'd)

What is it, Mary?

MARY

I'm sorry, but... I can't see why a man with your position in society, with all the world to choose from, should wish to be hung about with a country girl. It doesn't seem possible... or right.

HOPE

Believe me, nothing could be more right...

He takes her hands. They edge closer... then she pulls back...

HOPE (cont'd)

What are you frightened of?

MARY

I'm frightened of your world... I'm frightened of a world where those who do not belong as clearly as I do not, where intruders like me are ripped to shreds.

HOPE

You will be my world.

She looks into his eyes -- this time, she can't resist it. They kiss -- then she pulls away, clearly torn and confused.

She looks at him, then heads for the door. She stops, takes one last look at him, then disappears down the dark corridor...

82 **INT. HOPE'S ROOM, THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. NIGHT**

82

HOPE lies in bed, staring at the ceiling, unable to sleep... A small candle, almost expired, burns on his bedside table.

83 **INT. MARY'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT (SAME TIME)**

83

MARY also lies awake in bed. Mind racing... thinking...

BACK IN HOPE'S ROOM

He sits up. Thinks about it for a beat, then takes the decision. He gets out of bed.

84 **INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE HOPE'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT** 84

HOPE creeps along the dark corridor, in his nightshirt --

85 **INT. AMARYLLIS'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. NIGHT** 85

AMARYLLIS stands at her mirror, undoing her corset. She hears the floorboards creaking under someone's weight, while --

86 **INT. HALLWAY, THE FISH INN. NIGHT** 86

HOPE passes her room and carefully climbs up the stairs...

THE DOOR TO MARY'S ROOM

inches open. Hope walks in, holding Mary's gaze. He carefully closes the door as she sits up to receive him. She looks miraculously beautiful in the soft candlelight.

He glides over to her bedside and climbs into bed with her, kissing her gently...

The foreplay is soft, Hope moving slowly, tenderly, a different lover to what we've seen so far...

They make love...

TIME DISSOLVE TO LATER IN MARY'S ROOM

HOPE and MARY lie together, nesting cosily in the serenity of the quiet night. MARY looks serene, but HOPE's face betrays an inner turmoil...

MARY

(low, discrete)

We can stay here.

HOPE

Mary --

MARY

We don't have to go to Scotland or anywhere else. I've always been happy enough here, and with you I would just be so much happier...

(beat)

We could buy a good house, with a little land, near the lake...

(beat)

I would still like to keep a small flock of sheep...

(smiles mischievously)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (cont'd)
 ...until I have better things to
 concern me.

HOPE
 (kisses her)
 And you will, Mary. You will.
 (beat, more serious)
 Mary, I...

MARY
 What is it?

HOPE
 I...

She sees he wants to say something, but can't bring himself to.
 Which sends a hint of panic through her --

MARY
 You don't love me, do you?

HOPE
 Of course I do, that's not --

MARY
 (interrupting)
 What, then? You can't marry me, is
 that it? I knew it couldn't possibly
 be --

HOPE
 (interrupting, holding her firmly)
 Listen to me, Mary. I love you and I
 want to marry you. There is nothing
 else on earth I want...

MARY
 What is troubling you?

HOPE
 It's nothing. Nothing at all.

Mary looks at him. She knows there's something there.

HOPE (cont'd)
 I should get back to my room.
 (beat, kisses her)
 I love you, Mary. It's the truth. I
 swear it.

MARY
 You need not swear. I believe you.

87 **EXT. THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. MORNING**

87

HOPE, NEWTON and MOORE oversee the loading of the bags on the carriage back to Keswick.

MRS MOORE

When can we expect you back?

HOPE

Very soon... just one last pass at char fishing to leave you enough time for the preparations.

MRS MOORE

We hope to see you there too, Mr Newton.

NEWTON

I wouldn't miss it for the world, ma'am.

Amaryllis gives her hand to Hope.

AMARYLLIS

Don't stay away too long.

HOPE

I won't.

The women climb into the carriage. Moore, watching, can't contain himself. He looks at Hope:

MOORE

I thought of taking a journey up to your brother's estate at Hoptoun.

Mrs Moore looks at him, amazed at his announcement, but knows better than to say anything. Newton watches. Amaryllis flinches, scenting either another obstruction or a new insult.

Hope just smiles with cold eyes.

HOPE

May I enquire of the purpose?

MOORE

(struggling to ignore bolts of disapproval from the women)
I thought that I would introduce myself to the Earl your brother, in order to reassure him of the... proprieties of the... nature of the family and... its circumstances into which you will marry.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

(smoothly, unflinchingly)

But he would never have doubted it. There would not be the slightest doubt in his mind that the woman who had so generously consented to be my wife would in every possible way be suitable.

(a tense beat; then decides to continue)

Indeed, I would guess that your visit might bewilder him. It would certainly confuse him, it could even astound him. But by all means if you intend to make yourself known to my brother, if you are fully determined to prosecute this most original enterprise, then I shall write a letter to make sure that he receives you, otherwise the poor fellow will not know what to make of it. He is very correct about matters such as these and I could not bear to see you turned away, or worse, kept waiting but not received, or worst of all, received but in total ignorance on my brother's part of the meaning of such an unusual encounter.

(beat)

In any case, it may be wise to delay your visit for a short while -- sadly, he does happen to be in Vienna as we speak...

The silence is savage as Hope stares him down...

88 **INT. TRAVELLING IN THE MOORES' CARRIAGE. DAY**

88

Huge, brooding tension in the carriage: the WOMEN darting angry looks at MOORE and then looking out the window. MOORE, raging inside...

89 **EXT. FELS ABOVE BUTTERMERE. DAY (LATER)**

89

HOPE and NEWTON stand at the edge of a rocky cliff, looking down at the lakes, their horses grazing nearby.

NEWTON

Was that warranted... or wise?

HOPE

I had no choice. We can't afford to have him visit our Colonel's brother.

(CONTINUED)

NEWTON

Were you really sure he intended to?

HOPE says nothing. Just looks at Newton, and beyond him, at the sharp rocks and the vertiginous drop below...

HOPE

(fixing him, in turmoil)

You needn't have come. Your presence here is dangerous.

NEWTON

Your last letter worried me, John. Someone had to vouch for you with Moore and I had to leave Lancaster anyway. I owe money all over the place and I dare not borrow from anyone for fear of arousing suspicion. My position was becoming more desperate every day. It would do neither of us any good if I were to be discovered.

(beat)

Besides, how could I resist a few days here as a lake tourist with you?

(beat)

I must congratulate you on your good fortune. Miss Parke is quite a pretty little thing for someone so mountainously wealthy. Perhaps not by your very latest standards, but still, it shouldn't be too much of a burden for you to wake up next to her each morning...

(beat)

It's clear you've conquered her heart.

HOPE

Yes, but that won't be enough. You've seen Moore... he leeches on her and I dare say he'll never let go, however much salt I rub in.

NEWTON

Well then perhaps it isn't salt we should be using on him.

HOPE

(angry)

I won't be a party to that again.

(CONTINUED)

NEWTON

Well then if and when it needs to happen, I shall just have to do it alone.

HOPE

(furious)

No, damn you! I won't allow it, do you hear?! Never again!

NEWTON

Fine, fine... Calm yourself. You know how I just like to explore all our alternatives. Isn't that what good partners are for?

HOPE

(beat, reluctantly)

She's consented to a quick wedding.

NEWTON

Well done. And the money? We need to make sure it comes with us. This game won't last forever.

HOPE

I've alluded to a very long adventure. We'll have plenty.

(beat, summoning up the courage to face him)

Look, I will try to bring it to a conclusion as fast as I can, but you must know that I've found all this much harder than I suspected, and...

NEWTON

And...?

HOPE

...and the Honourable Alexander Augustus is becoming tired of this courting business.

NEWTON

(quietly threatening)

We made a contract, John. If you regret it, then regret it but don't make the mistake of trying to get out of it. It will stand until we succeed or until we rot in a jail cell or hang from the gallows.

(beat)

You weren't thinking of breaking it, were you?

(CONTINUED)

Hope stares at his bitter eyes and turns away, his mind racing desperately now, at the edge of the cliff. Newton smiles, reeling him in.

NEWTON (cont'd)

You've been alone for too long, John. Let's not talk of defeat, we are too close now. You mustn't have any doubts, not now. Think of the life we will be leading in a few months. A beautiful bride by your side and all the money we ever dreamed of...

(beat)

John?

Hope emerges from his thoughts and turns to Newton. In his eyes, we see a new clarity: he knows what he needs to do.

HOPE

You're right.

(beat, thinking it through, then:)

I will need to settle my accounts with Wood and with Robinson, and my finances are depleted.

NEWTON

Wood and Robinson are peasants, they can wait. Besides, we'll be long gone by then.

HOPE

They are good men and besides, they are men of business, we can't leave a smell behind. We've been exposed and damaged before.

(beat, voicing the steps of his plan)

No, we must sell the plate and linen. We'll have to get them from Keswick and pick up the carriage. I know a jeweller in Lancaster, Harris, just below the castle. He can give us a good price, and do it discretely.

NEWTON

And then...?

HOPE

And then we can finish what we started.

90 **EXT. STABLES, THE FISH INN. DAY**

90

MARY watches HOPE saddle up. She looks nervously over at NEWTON who waits on his horse by the gates.

HOPE

He's a solicitor from Chester who has come to drag me back for some business. I shall have to go out of the district.

MARY

For how long?

HOPE

I don't know... Forever, if he had his way.

Mary looks at him, her stomach in knots, thinking that was what was troubling him the night before.

MARY

Oh, Alexander...

He reaches out and caresses her face, and smiles at her reassuringly --

HOPE

Don't worry... There isn't a power on earth that can keep me away from you...

(beat)

I love you.

She reaches up and undoes a small velvet strap around her neck that holds a small porcelain locket. She hands it to him.

MARY

I've had it ever since I can remember...

He takes it, squeezes it in his hand, and looks at her for a beat, pained at not being able to touch her.

He mounts his horse. She watches him ride away...

91 **EXT. THE ROAD TO LANCASTER. DAY**

91

HOPE and NEWTON guide the carriage and four across the wilderness on the way to Lancaster...

CLOSE ON HOPE, missing her, and thinking...

HOPE

All this. Us. The Honourable Colonel Alexander Augustus. I can't go through with it.

NEWTON

John, you needn't worry. We'll make it. You know how well we've done together.

HOPE

I'm not worried.

NEWTON

What then?

HOPE

I've changed my mind. You can keep all the money. Just take it all and start a new life in America. I just want another life.

NEWTON

Oh? And what life would that be?

HOPE

A simple life.

NEWTON

A simple life? You? Don't be absurd. You're more addicted to the spoils of the rich than I am.

HOPE

There is more to life than wealth.

NEWTON

(beat)

I have never yet met a man of God or a man of the world who didn't think the Lord was wise in creating both rich and poor and if the good Lord makes the division -- as He has done -- then clearly it is preferable to be one of the rich. I think that's been demonstrated to you quite clearly so far in your life, or haven't you learnt the realities of our great civilisation yet?

HOPE

I'll take my chances.

(CONTINUED)

NEWTON

Please tell me this has nothing to do with the farm girl?

HOPE

Her name is Mary Robinson and it has everything to do with her.

NEWTON

John,... --

HOPE

I want to marry her. And I wish for you and I to part amicably.

NEWTON

You're not serious?

Hope's look is dead serious.

NEWTON (cont'd)

No, no, this is too rich. Have you gone mad? Wait, let me make sure I understand this correctly. You want to marry that labourer, that invisible plaything, and live happily ever after as, what, a sheep herder?

HOPE

Newton, I won't --

NEWTON

(interrupting)

-- and just who is she marrying?

HOPE

What?

NEWTON

Who exactly is it she's marrying?

Hope goes silent.

NEWTON (cont'd)

Colonel the Honourable Alexander Augustus Hope M.P., is it not? You expect to live a simple life as Colonel Hope? Have you completely lost your mind? Or have you forgotten that there's a real Colonel Hope out there, and he will return from Vienna one day, no doubt sooner rather than later once the word spreads that he's lost his mind and run off and married a farm girl.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NEWTON (cont'd)

(beat)

Or is she marrying you, John? The real you? The John I could tell her so many *colourful* stories about...

(beat)

Would she want to marry him?

HOPE

She doesn't know --

NEWTON

When were you planning to tell her? If at all...

(beat)

Grow up, John. Do you think she'd be interested in you without all the ornaments decorating your good name?

HOPE

This is different.

NEWTON

Of course it isn't. It can't be. It's all empty, John. Everything is vanity and detestable frivolity, 'love' most of all.

(beat)

Anyway, enough of this nonsense. I won't allow you to destroy yourself and everything we've worked for.

HOPE

No, we will part ways, you have to agree to that, otherwise --

NEWTON

Otherwise what, John? Otherwise you could tell them about me? Is that your trump card? And if you did, what could they prove? *I* was not bankrupted. *I* did not fail to appear in court. *I* am not a felon, and it was not *I* who forged an M.P.'s signature or who obtained credit falsely...

HOPE

You have done much worse... much worse than I.

NEWTON

Only you know that, John... And who would believe you?

(beat)

No, John.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (4)

93

NEWTON (cont'd)

I'm afraid our destiny is one and the same: to seize the reins and ride roughshod over this evil, brutish, unjust world, to play for the highest stakes, for wealth, for rank, to drive life into the ground... together. So forget this rubbish about your little whore and --

Hope suddenly lashes out at him with a thundering blow across the face --

HOPE

No! NO!

Hope punches him again, battering him as he falls to the ground. Newton tries to push him off, and in the frenzy, Hope's hand finds a rock in the sand -- he bashes Newton across the back of his head --

HOPE (cont'd)

Leave me alone, damn you! LEAVE ME ALONE!

Newton collapses onto the sand, blood spreading from under his head --

Hope reels back in horror, stunned by what he's done. He throws the rock in disgust and stands over him, stares at him lying there, then looks worriedly away at the horizon and the tide which is now thundering in --

He reaches down and rummages through Newton's coat, pulling out a small bundle of cash and two elaborate tickets on which we can see the name of a schooner line. Then, still panicking, he hurries off, heading back to the shore, panting, glancing back...

The blood which stains the sand by Newton's head is washed away as the tide swirls around him. It soon overruns him, washing over him --

94 **EXT. MORECAMBE BAY SANDBANK. DAY**

94

HOPE looms over the bay which is now entirely submerged by the sea.

He turns and walks off to his waiting carriage...

95 **EXT. WATER'S EDGE, LAKE BUTTERMERE. DUSK**

95

HOPE stands alone. He looks haunted as he stares away into nothing.

(CONTINUED)

From the edge of the trees, MARY watches him. She studies him before walking down to join him. He turns, finding a smile for her...

MARY

How are you?

HOPE

Better than I've ever been, thanks to you...

She kisses him. He hugs her, tightly. They stay there in silence, for a beat...

HOPE (cont'd)

Mary, -- what if we did go elsewhere? After the wedding... what do you think? How would you feel about exploring the world with your new husband?

MARY

I thought you wanted for us to make our life here...

HOPE

I do love this place... but it will always be here for us when we return. I would so love to show you the world... to take you to America...

(beat)

How about it, Mary? It wouldn't be forever...

She looks at him, through his comforting, optimistic smile. She leans in and kisses him, smiling her consent...

HOPE and MARY stand before Reverend NICHOLSON, watched by ROBINSON, his WIFE, ALICE, and familiar faces from Buttermere...

NICHOLSON

Do you, Alexander Augustus Hope, take this girl, Mary Robinson, to be your lawfully wedded wife?

HOPE

(looks at ROBINSON and his wife, then at Mary, cringing at the deceit)

I do...

97 **INT. CARRIAGE. DAY** 97

HOPE and MARY, sitting proudly in a simple carriage, are pulled away from the small church as onlookers cheer and toss flowers...

98 **EXT. FISH INN. DUSK** 98

Food and wine at the Fish Inn: A big feast, happy, boisterous.

HOPE and MARY kiss, then Hope notices Mary's PARENTS, looking at them with overwhelmed and proud eyes... Hope turns away...

Music, dancing, a truly joyous occasion for all in the small, local community -- except one:

CHRISTINE, at the edge of the festivities, standing in silence, observing, a sad look in her eyes...

99 **INT. CARRIAGE. DAY** 99

A nervous CHRISTINE sits in the rushing carriage, looking out the window. We pan to see a fuming MOORE sitting next to her...

100 **INT. DRAWING ROOM, AMARYLLIS'S VILLA, KESWICK. DAY** 100

MOORE, with CHRISTINE in tow, bursts in to find AMARYLLIS standing like a statue, draped in her unfinished wedding dress as MRS MOORE, the DRESSMAKER and her MAIDS busy themselves with the fitting.

MOORE

Ladies, I must ask all but my wife
and Miss Parke to withdraw.

It takes a moment to register. Amaryllis puts aside the lengths of cloth and ushers them out. She then stands behind Mrs Moore's chair, holding on to its back, and faces Moore, eyeing Christine nervously.

AMARYLLIS

Colonel? Who is this girl?

MOORE

Hope has married.

The phrase stuns the two women: Amaryllis is speechless, struggling to contain herself as her legs buckle and she sits herself next to Mrs Moore who tries to comfort her --

MRS MOORE

That can't be --

(CONTINUED)

MOORE

I'm telling you he is married. It is the sensation of the lakes.

MRS MOORE

But... when?... and to whom?...

MOORE

To that innkeeper's daughter, that person in Buttermere at the pothouse, the one they call 'The Beauty' in their pathetic, native delusions.

MRS MOORE

Are you sure of this?

MOORE

(re: Christine)

Just ask her. She was there. She saw it all.

The stare at her, she doesn't know where to look, terrified. Her face says it all.

MOORE (cont'd)

There was a special license got from Whitehaven.

(beat, watching Amaryllis)

A special license.

Amaryllis looks up at him with angry eyes, her voice breaking.

AMARYLLIS

She is a lovely woman.

MOORE

(stern)

She is a common serving girl.

AMARYLLIS

(anger rising)

She must be worthy of him... People do speak of her beauty and her virtue.

MOORE

The people's opinion is ignorant, prejudiced and of no account.

AMARYLLIS

Clearly, Colonel Hope must have shared that opinion.

(CONTINUED)

MOORE

Hope has behaved very badly, very badly. If he were here he would have a great deal to answer for.

AMARYLLIS

(angrily)

I think we made him answer for too much as it is.

MOORE

We were cautious. And, you see, with good cause.

Amaryllis fights back her tears, not wanting to give Moore that satisfaction as she rages at him --

AMARYLLIS

You offended him with your incessant hounding and the result is that I have lost him --

MOORE

(interrupting, now angry too)

You are well rid of him. No gentleman would do this. No gentleman would run away and marry a servant girl of whatever provocation, and you gave him none. I acted according to your father's instructions and wishes and I dare say he has been proved right beyond all doubt.

AMARYLLIS

(breaks down now, crying)

And the proof has cost me the man I wanted for my husband.

MOORE

Had he wanted to be your husband, he had only to wait a little longer.

The near-truth is intolerable to Amaryllis who storms out of the room. Moore looks triumphantly at his wife who glares at him and rushes out after her.

He goes to the window and stares out, a storm brewing inside him...

HOPE and MARY are packing for the trip. Hope helps Mary with her few belongings, loading them into an ocean-ready cabin trunk.

101 CONTINUED:

101

MARY

I almost forgot -- nightdresses...

She hands him the small stack. He packs all but two which he hands back to her.

HOPE

You'll need those for the journey.

She puts them in a smaller suitcase which is half full. She looks at him, realising how little he has.

MARY

Is that all you're bringing? One change of day clothes and your evening wear?

HOPE

It'll do.

MARY

But don't you think you need --

HOPE

(interrupting)

Darling, it's a two day journey to the docks. I'll be fine -- and presentable, I can assure you...

MARY

(smiles)

I'm a fair seamstress, and mum has some silks and linens I'm sure she won't miss.

(beat)

It'll keep me busy during the crossing...

She rushes out of the room to find her mother. Hope turns and looks out the window.

HOPE'S POV: He sees a POTBOY brushing down a horse, then notices something else: a lone HORSEMAN, cloak fluttering in the autumn air, riding down the fell towards the inn.

102 **EXT. THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. DAY**

102

The HORSEMAN dismounts and looks around, and finds a POTBOY brushing down a horse.

HORSEMAN

I'm looking for Colonel Hope.

(CONTINUED)

The boy looks at him for a moment then points up at the window. The man -- JENKINS -- gives his horse to the boy and strides towards the front door of the inn just as Hope appears at the doorway.

JENKINS pulls out a letter from his jacket.

JENKINS

I'm looking for Colonel Hope, sir. I have this letter for him from his old friend Judge Hardinge.

He waits for the expected answer. None's forthcoming. Then Hope loses patience:

HOPE

And...?

JENKINS

The boy over there told me that you were the Colonel, sir.

HOPE

Let's have it then.

JENKINS

(withholding letter)

He must be mistaken, sir, for I see you nearer now and I know you are not the Colonel.

HOPE

Let me look at the letter.

Jenkins hesitates before giving in to Hope's imposing stare and hands him the letter.

CLOSE on THE LETTER which bears all of Hope's titles on it.

Hope studies it for a moment, opens it, reads it, then looks at Jenkins with a charming smile.

HOPE (CONT'D)

And you are...?

JENKINS

Jenkins, sir. Corporal Jenkins.

HOPE

Jenkins. This is not for me. It is for my brother. I remember him telling me about your master.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: (2)

102

HOPE (cont'd)

I am Charles Hope, not Alexander,
Member of Parliament for Dumfries,
not Linlithgowshire.

JENKINS

I see.

HOPE

(studies him, realizes he needs
more)

Tell the judge my brother will be
returning from Vienna shortly at
which time he will doubtless be
hosting one of his famous homecoming
dinners. I will look forward to
meeting the good Judge at that time.
Would you tell him that, Jenkins?

JENKINS

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir...

(beat)

Shall I take back the letter?

HOPE

That won't be necessary. Good day to
you.

Hope follows him out. He watches as the potboy hands him the
reins of his horse and, after turning to get one last look at
Hope, ride off...

103 **EXT. COURTYARD, THE FISH INN. NIGHT**

103

A cart is being loaded with their baggage.

HOPE, MARY, ROBINSON, his WIFE, ALICE, and the POTBOY are all
there, helping, finishing up the tying down the trunk on the back
of a simple farm cart. Hope gives the driver last minute
instructions, showing him the tickets he took from Newton's
pocket.

HOPE

Our passage is reserved. They'll find
my name on the passenger list and
deal with baggage accordingly. We
should arrive there shortly after
you. Is that clear?

DRIVER

Yes, sir.

HOPE

Now go, man. Go!

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

The cart rattles out of the yard. There is a moment of silence, Mrs Robinson hugging her daughter in anticipation. The moment is broken by Robinson:

ROBINSON

Well then. How about a last meal with us?

104 **INT. MARY'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. DAWN**

104

HOPE and MARY are asleep, wrapped around each other...

OUTSIDE, the ominous CLUTTER of a chaise and its horses wake HOPE. He leaps to the window to see JENKINS draw up outside the Inn.

105 **INT. HALLWAY, THE FISH INN. DAWN**

105

Buttoning his shirt, HOPE hurries down the stairs, startled to find ROBINSON already dressed and stepping out of the kitchen.

ROBINSON

What is it?

HOPE

It's that confounded corporal again. I'll see to him.

106 **EXT. COURTYARD, THE FISH INN. DAWN**

106

HOPE charges out to confront JENKINS -- only to come face to face with EIGHT SOLDIERS accompanying him, along with a waiting carriage.

HOPE

What is it now, man?

JENKINS

Begging your pardon for the intrusion, sir, but the Judge sends his carriage for your comfort and insists you meet him most urgently.

Hope looks at the solders and sees he's got no choice. ROBINSON wanders out.

JENKINS (cont'd)

Good day to you, sir.

ROBINSON

Can I be of any service...?

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

106

JENKINS

I've been sent by --

HOPE

(interrupting, to Robinson)

It appears an old friend of the family is in Keswick and would like to see me... tell Mary I'll be back shortly.

(dryly, to Jenkins)

I'll take my own horse...

107 **EXT. KESWICK TOWN HALL. MORNING**

107

JENKINS's chaise, with HOPE alongside on horseback, ride into the town, with Hope drawing interest and glances from the KESWICK FOLK...

108 **INT. MEETING ROOM, KESWICK TOWN HALL. MORNING**

108

HOPE, MOORE and the crimson, beetle-browed, jowly faced JUDGE HARDINGE face off, while JENKINS hover at the door.

HARDINGE

I must say you are very unlike your brother. In appearance.

HOPE

(cool)

You are not the first to have noticed that.

HARDINGE

I could have sworn that there was mention in yesterday's Morning Post of the Member for Linlithgowshire marrying some local innkeeper's daughter.

HOPE

(insulted)

You are referring to my wife, sir.

HARDINGE

I beg your pardon, sir.

HOPE

I have not seen the report... But if it is as you say, then it is in error. My seat is that of Dumfries.

(CONTINUED)

MOORE

(outraged)

I've never seen such damned,
barefaced insubordinate insolence!

HOPE

(calmly)

Is Colonel Moore addressing himself
to anyone in particular?

MOORE

Sir, I --

HARDINGE

(interrupting, holding up his
hand)

Please, Colonel.

HOPE

What is it you want, Mr Hardinge?

HARDINGE

Colonel Moore swears that you have
passed yourself off as Colonel
Alexander Hope, when I know you not
to be, and that the account of the
marriage which appeared in the
Morning Post was written by someone
with access to all the facts of the
case. He swears, in short, that you
are an imposter.

(beat as he studies Hope)

Do you have anything to say in your
defence?

HOPE

(very calm)

I was unaware that this was a
tribunal.

HARDINGE

I am a senior justice of Carlisle,
sir, and where I am, there also, I
tell you, is justice.

MOORE

(bursting)

This man's a fraud from top to toe!
His vulgarities, his fawning, his
wild talk to the ladies --

(CONTINUED)

HARDINGE

(interrupting)

To take on another man's name and character is a most serious offence, sir. You say that you are not the Honourable Alexander Augustus Hope, the Member for Linlithgowshire?

HOPE

I do. And if I may explain to you the reasons for old Moore's desire for vengeance... I paid attentions to his ward, Miss Parke, sufficient attentions for her to enjoy the expectation that I was pursuing a course which might well lead to marriage.

MOORE

Had I not been there you would have seduced and married her!

HOPE

As you see, Hardinge, your friend Moore is beside himself. He has every reason to be. It was due solely to his ill-intentioned interference that my suit failed -- with some distress, I may say, to the lady. Nor, as I understand it, is this the first occasion on which Moore's ward has been denied marriage by his inexcusable rudeness and his devotion to the perpetual security of his own financial interest as guardian rather than any concern at all for poor Miss Parke's happiness.

Moore lunges out at Hope, but Hardinge grapples him around the chest and arms, holding him back.

MOORE

You will pay for this! You will pay for this! You will be hounded until you drop and you will pay for this!

Hope watches him coldly, waits for Hardinge's next move, then decides on his own.

HOPE

I think I have said all that I have to say, indeed, more than I would ever have intended.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED: (3)

108

HOPE (cont'd)

It was not my intention to provoke this man although he has provoked me greatly over the last few weeks and this absurd allegation comes as no surprise. Good day.

He turns to leave when Hardinge calls out:

HARDINGE

We need to hear out one more witness.

Hope freezes, turns...

HARDINGE (CONT'D)

Jenkins! Bring in Mr Ismay.

The door is whipped open. Jenkins walks in with ISMAY, the postmaster. Hope looks at him, momentarily confused...

HARDINGE (CONT'D)

I see you are puzzled by Mr Ismay. Do you not recognize him?

HOPE

No...

HARDINGE

Mr Ismay holds the important office of postmaster in this town. In the execution of his duties in that office he has received on several occasions from the Queen's Head hotel -- while you, sir, were resident there -- letters to be sent free of charge by the authority of His Majesty's Parliament and signed 'A. A. Hope, M.P. Free Post' by you, both for yourself and for others. Now what do you say to that, sir?

HOPE

(smiles)

Really, sir. It is all a very small error. Where you read 'A. A. Hope', it should really be 'C. A. Hope', that is all.

HARDINGE

Speak, Mr Ismay, speak!

ISMAY

We have also received several letters addressed to Colonel the Honourable Alexander Augustus Hope, Member of Parliament, and that is you, sir, as I understand it.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

They are addressed to my brother.

HARDINGE

Come, come, man, the game's up! One Hope roving about the lakes falling in love with innkeepers' daughters and affronting Colonel Moore and his ward is hard enough to believe, two of you circulating about the place puts too heavy a load on credulity. You have been forging the name and signature and character of Colonel Hope and I am this moment -- Jenkins! -- applying to the magistrate for a warrant for your arrest. You are not, sir, who you say you are, nor are you his brother.

HOPE

And who are you?

Hardinge looks behind him at the door, confused as if someone had entered the room.

HOPE (cont'd)

(to Hardinge)

No. You. Judge Hardinge you call yourself. What is the proof of your identity?

HARDINGE

Sir -- !

HOPE

Out with it! How am I to know you are not some jester hired by that man Moore who is mad to exonerate himself in front of Miss Parke whose temper he fears as much as he loves her fortune?

MOORE

If, sir -- !!

HOPE

(interrupts Moore)

-- *if*, Moore? If I want satisfaction?

(to Hardinge)

There you are, Judge -- if you are a judge -- Hardinge -- if there is even such a name -- more law breaking. Does he not know that?

(to Moore)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOPE (cont'd)

But if you want satisfaction now, sir, now, well, we have the whole of that paradise of empty fields and lonely valleys out there where two men could give each other satisfaction all a long afternoon without a constable in sight. Well?

Hope stares down Moore into submission. He turns to Hardinge.

HOPE (cont'd)

And you, sir. You come to me with these ridiculous charges and baseless allegations, sending for postmasters I have never set eyes on.

(to Ismay)

Have I seen you, Ismay? Have I ever laid eyes on you? Have you ever taken letters from my own hand or delivered any to me personally? Answer me!

ISMAY

No, sir, I think not.

HOPE

(to Hardinge)

Then your so-called witness's evidence is of no account whatsoever.

(to Ismay)

Go back to your office, Ismay, and think yourself very lucky I am not bringing actions against you which would ruin you for life.

(to Hardinge and Moore)

Now, gentlemen, I think I've had quite enough for this morning. I shall look forward to meeting with Sir Frederick at his very earliest convenience, if only to encourage him to investigate this outrageous affront to my family's good name. Good day to you all.

They watch with incredulity as Hope waltzes out of the room quickly without giving them the chance to counter --

OUTSIDE THE CHAMBER

Not wanting to raise the alarm, but alert to the imminent danger, HOPE's pace quickens as he walks out, down the stairs, and heads for the entrance --

109 **EXT. KESWICK TOWN HALL. MORNING** 109

HOPE finds his horse and climbs on. He trots away nonchalantly, sneaking a glance up at the irate faces of MOORE and the JUDGE looking down on him from the window. He gradually picks up his pace as he heads out of town...

110 **EXT. FELS ABOVE KESWICK. DAY** 110

HOPE charges into the mountains and up towards the Honister pass...

111 **EXT. FELS ABOVE BUTTERMERE. DUSK** 111

HOPE thunders down towards Buttermere.

112 **EXT. COURTYARD, THE FISH INN. DUSK** 112

MARY runs out to greet HOPE who leaps off his horse and hugs her just as ROBINSON and his WIFE emerge.

HOPE
We need to leave at once.

MARY
Is everything all right?

HOPE
Yes, yes. Just bureaucratic nonsense.
Come on, we must move if we're not to miss our ship.

Mary turns to her parents. She embraces them both tightly as the POTBOY brings her horse into the yard, saddled and ready.

Robinson shakes hands formally with Hope, fixing him solidly. Hope doesn't give his inner turmoil away -- then turns to wave a kiss to Mrs Robinson.

MRS ROBINSON
Take care of her.

Hope nods -- his heart sinking with guilt. Mary, holding back tears, mounts her horse, as does he.

ROBINSON
Good luck.

And with a wave, Hope and Mary ride out of the yard, leaving a whole existence behind...

113 **EXT. FELS ABOVE BUTTERMERE. DUSK**

113

MARY starts to lead her horse down the road towards Keswick, but HOPE calls out:

HOPE
Mary!
(she turns)
This way.

MARY
But that's not --

HOPE
(interrupting)
I know. Not through Keswick. We'll
take highland trail instead.

Mary looks at Hope -- and sees his obvious unease. She rides up close to him.

MARY
What is it?

HOPE
I...

MARY
(worried now)
What is it, Alexander? Please...

HOPE
(beat, can't bring himself to say
it... then:)
I'm wanted by the law.

The world comes crashing down on Mary. Her mind races --

MARY
That man -- the one who came for
you... he told the potboy...
(beat, doesn't dare ask it:)
Are you who you say you are?

HOPE
I am the man you married. The one who
dreams of a life with you alone.

MARY
But are you Alexander Hope?

HOPE
(hesitates, then shakes his head)
You can call me... John.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

Mary takes a beat to let it sink in. They look at each other with frank resolve. She lifts her head up, looks around, then fixes him:

MARY

We had best make a move before we lose all the light.

HOPE

I have to tell you about myself before I can ask you to come with me... Some men will soon be coming after me.

MARY

You told me that.
(a bit of anger starting to show)
Some day you will tell me everything.
But first things first.

She takes one last look at the Fish Inn down in the valley before cantering up the fells towards the distant crest of the hill. Hope follows.

114 **EXT. FELLS. DAWN**

114

MARY, with HOPE close behind, thunders into the hills, heading for the ominous, threatening clouds gathering over the mountains.

115 **EXT. JAWS OF BORROWDALE. EARLY MORNING**

115

A much less hospitable terrain. Their horses advance carefully through the notorious valley of rock falls, rushes of stone and broken ridges. They trudge soddenly into the headwind, both of them wet to the skin from the pelting rain...

MARY looks ahead, then turns to HOPE, pointing the way:

MARY

There's still a way to go. We haven't started to climb yet.

Hope follows his eyeline up to the volcanic hills whose tops are hidden by dark clouds.

MARY (cont'd)

If it's bad down here it'll be terrible up there.

He nods at Mary. They move on.

116 **EXT. COURTYARD, FISH INN. MORNING** 116

ROBINSON and his WIFE rush out to see JENKINS and the SOLDIERS charging up to the Inn. His terrified wife holds onto his arms, gripping tight, while he stands there stoically...

117 **EXT. AARON CRAGS. MORNING** 117

In the grim slashing rain and with darkness rapidly approaching, MARY and HOPE struggle ahead, picking out their footing carefully over the jutting stones made slippery by the newly running mud.

With a cry, Mary's horse loses its footing and falls, throwing Mary off. Hope quickly dismounts and picks Mary up -- she's shaken but unharmed. She checks her horse. It's lame.

She caresses its neck -- pained to let it go. Hope hugs her.

HOPE

Come on...

He lifts her onto his own horse, mounts it behind her, and they ride on...

118 **EXT. JAWS OF BORROWDALE. DAY** 118

JENKINS and the SOLDIERS ride in pursuit.

119 **EXT. SPRINKLING TARN. DUSK** 119

A large and wild stretch of water surrounded by the high massed, perilous crags of Great End, barren and inhospitable, terrifying. Hope and Mary survey their options...

MARY

(pointing)

From here we can go straight over that road ahead -- smuggler's road they call it -- down towards Whitehaven, you can see the sea if we go up that bank a bit. Or if you want to be more complicated, we can go the Langdale way. But it'll be rough going.

HOPE

How rough?

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

119

MARY

Getting to Langdale's fair enough but after that you've got the crags of Great End. The name could not be more fitting. It'll be more than our lives' worth to go on without daylight... it's bad enough when you can see.

HOPE

I don't know... You choose.

MARY

Langdale is a much worse path... for that reason it will seem less likely.

He looks at her, filled with admiration. They set off...

120 **EXT. CRAGS OF GREAT END. NIGHTFALL** 120

The mountains are higher, the spikes and knots and boulders of rock more threatening, as the perilous journey continues. HOPE and MARY lurch, rush, fall, slide and roll their way down, often edged hand holding hand, across the potentially fatal rocks...

Finally, in the distance, Langdale chapel appears. Mary points it out to Hope...

121 **EXT. AARON CRAGS. NIGHTFALL** 121

JENKINS and the SOLDIERS reach the abandoned horse. They look at it, and at the darkening mountains beyond.

JENKINS takes out his gun, aims, and shoots the lame horse. The shot echoes around them. Then, abandoning their pursuit for the night, they turn and head back...

122 **EXT. LANGDALE CHAPEL. NIGHT** 122

HOPE and MARY reach the small, deserted chapel in the moonless night. Wringing wet, supporting each other tightly, they walk up to it. It's open. They go in.

123 **INT. LANGDALE CHAPEL. NIGHT** 123

Rain scatters on the tiny windows, a low wind whistles outside. The faintest light glows from a single candle. MARY and HOPE are curled up in a corner, looking so wrecked and exhausted they can hardly speak.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

(hands her flask)

Here. Drink some of this.

She takes a sip, gives it back. He puts it away and looks at her. He knows what she's waiting for.

MARY

Tell me.

Hope can't begin. The awful realisation of what would happen dawns on him.

MARY (cont'd)

Tell me everything. You're my husband now. What you did before doesn't matter...

HOPE

In America, we can start all over again. No one need know who I am, where I've been or what I've done.

MARY

Tell me, John, and we will never speak of it again.

(beat)

And I will stay with you forever...

He looks into her tired eyes. He looks away, then begins...

HOPE

My parents were as humble as yours... My father worked for a local landowner. When I was around ten, he was dismissed from service through no fault of his own. Within weeks, we were living in fields, starving and reduced to stealing for clothing and food... One by one, I watched them die...

(beat)

I had nowhere to turn and ended up working for Lord Mortram... an awful man... an evil man...

QUICK FLASHCUTS OF:

Young Hope being thrown into the cockfighting ring --

Young Hope slitting the tyrant's throat --

BACK TO SCENE

MARY looks at him, horrified, as he continues...

(CONTINUED)

HOPE (cont'd)

After I escaped, I was taken in by a new owner who taught me to charm and to seduce. I was good at it...

(beat)

Lies became my passport, disguise my visiting card... I could bamboozle the gentry at whim and I loved every minute of it. I lived from hand to mouth, swindling and charming, cheating and stealing, always a jump ahead of the law... until I ended up in Scarborough prison...

(beat)

I was in prison for eight years...

QUICK FLASHCUTS OF:

Hope being thrown into the cell --

And the beatings from the prison guards --

HOPE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They changed my life and utterly broke my spirit. And it was there that I met Newton. He came to me like a saviour. He knew how much I feared silence and loneliness...

BACK TO SCENE

HOPE (cont'd)

He bound me to him and though he was released before me he would send me gifts to keep his bond, for he had a purpose. He had seen in me an instrument for his own needs.

(beat)

We've been together ever since...

He looks into Mary's eyes: Her utter horror is even more amplified by her weakness.

MARY

Tell me that's all there is to know, John. Tell me and we can be finished with it.

He shivers at the torment in her eyes, tries to block out the rest but the image assaults him ferociously:

QUICK FLASHCUT OF:

Hope pounding Newton with the rock on the Sands --

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: (3)

123

BACK TO SCENE

HOPE holds her face in his hands and kisses her softly.

HOPE

That's all there is to know...

(beat)

Now get some sleep.

She looks at him questioningly, but the gentleness of his tone reassures her and she curls into sleep. He slips off his coat and covers her with it... and looks at her...

Soon she falls asleep... He strokes her hair, staring at her face, engraving it in his mind...

124 **EXT. LANGDALE CHAPEL. EARLY MORNING**

124

The first hints of day emerge from behind the distant peaks...

125 **INT. LANGDALE CHAPEL. EARLY MORNING**

125

MARY stirs and wakes up from a deep sleep. She pushes off Hope's coat and looks around her: Hope's gone.

She bolts up and runs outside: except for his horse, which he's left her, she's alone.

126 **EXT. MOUNTAINS, LAKE DISTRICT. DAY**

126

HOPE advances in the angry, violent mountains. Without a coat, against the blustery, driving rain...

A journey though hell...

127 **EXT. LANCASTER SANDS. DUSK**

127

HOPE, beard growing and a wreck of a man, crosses the Sands, his eyes fixated straight ahead at the distant shimmering masts of the tall ships in the harbor, the gateway to his freedom...

He slowly reaches the end of the sands and starts to climb up the dunes that are covered with high grass.

Suddenly, he freezes: he spots a head rising from the grass, a hundred or so yards away, the head of a familiar figure on horseback: Newton. Alive.

Another man appears alongside him: Jenkins. Newton looks at Hope and nods to Jenkins, who signals ahead. More men appear --
SOLDIERS --

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

They advance from all sides, converging on Hope slowly through the tall blades --

Hope looks around in panic --

He backs up and heads back into the bay --

He trudges into the sands desperately as the horsemen reach the sandbank and stop --

He looks back, gasping out of breath, his leg hurting now --

He looks ahead at the horizon, and slows down as he sees the tide coming in slowly, its threatening roar rumbling nearer --

He slows down, realizing his hopeless situation --

He takes a few final stumbling steps, then falls down on his knees as he watches the water rush in --

On the coast, the officers and Newton watch him and wait --

As the water rushes in and engulfs him...

And we FADE TO BLACK...

128 **INT. MARY'S BEDROOM, THE FISH INN. DAY**

128

MARY, looking pale, sits huddled in bed, wrapped in blankets.

Her mother comes in with a tray of food. Mary doesn't react. She sets it down by her bedside, and looks at Mary who still stares ahead. Her mother looks at her for a beat before retreating out of the room...

129 **EXT. COURTYARD, THE FISH INN. DAY**

129

MOORE paces impatiently by his carriage. ROBINSON appears from the inn.

ROBINSON

I'm sorry, sir, but she refuses to come out. She's not been well, you know. Very weak, she is.

MOORE

(hating this)

Tell her that I came, under instruction, to offer Miss Amaryllis Parke's sympathy. She asked me to say that she would be pleased to help in any way she can.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

129

ROBINSON

Thank you, sir.

With that, Moore climbs into his carriage and prepares to leave.

ROBINSON (cont'd)

If I may ask, sir... What will happen to him?

MOORE

What he has done in forging a member of Parliament's signature and sending his letters by free post is a capital offence.

ROBINSON

He could get hanged for mailing some letters without paying for them?

MOORE

(disdainfully)

'Not paying for his letters'... That is not the point. That is not the point at all.

(beat)

He has no case... he will stand trial and be at the mercy of the court.

ROBINSON

What would make them merciful?

MOORE

Why would you want them to be merciful?

Robinson has no answer for him. Moore looks at him, satisfied, and taps the roof of the carriage. The DRIVER flicks at the reins and they roll out...

130 **INT. HOPE'S CELL, BRIDEWELL PRISON. NIGHT**

130

HOPE lies, unfettered, on the stone floor in a cramped and filthy cell. The SOUNDS of the prison at night are terrifying: groaning, howling, sobbing.

He puts his head down and focuses on something he twirls over and over in his fingers: the LOCKET Mary gave him...

131 **INT. MARY'S ROOM, THE FISH INN. DAY**

131

MRS ROBINSON, looking pale herself, shows NICHOLSON quietly into Mary's room.

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

131

MARY is slumped in her chair by the fireplace, wrapped in blankets. Her condition shocks Nicholson. He looks at her mother whose worried eyes betray the hopelessness and danger of the situation. He turns back to Mary and approaches her.

NICHOLSON

Mary... ?

She doesn't answer.

MRS ROBINSON

She hasn't taken any food for nine days.

NICHOLSON

Mary... to harm yourself like this, it's a sin against God. You must eat, Mary.

MARY

Only when they let me see him.

NICHOLSON

Mary, you'll die if you persist in this.

MARY

Then I will be with him forever.

Mary closes her eyes. Nicholson looks at her mother, both of them helpless before her will...

132 **INT. HOPE'S CELL, TOTHILL FIELDS PRISON, BRIDEWELL. DAY**

132

A GAOLER approaches Hope's cell with two GUARDS and opens the cell door. Hope stands up. The gaoler approaches with the cuffs.

GAOLER

Get up! You're wanted in Bow Street for the hearings.

133 **EXT. BOW STREET, LONDON. DAY**

133

HOPE sits in the post-chaise, surrounded by his GAOLER and an ESCORT. He looks out of the carriage's window to see the Houses of Parliament.

As it approaches the Town Hall, A HUGE CROWD besieging the door comes into view. They turn to the approaching carriage and cheer and applaud Hope's progress...

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

Hope steps out of the carriage and has to make his way through the crowd, confused by their huzzas as his ESCORT tries to advance through it...

134 INT. ROOM, TOWN HALL, LONDON. DAY

134

In an elegant, sunlit room, HOPE stands by the window, looking down at the noisy scene outside. He turns to face TWO SOLICITORS sitting around a table.

HOPE

I don't understand...

SOLICITOR 1

(cheerful)

The town is overflowing, coaches are coming in from all over the country, no room can be had in any hotel.

SOLICITOR 2

Even His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland is to be present at your examination.

A solicitor pushes a stack of newspapers across the table at Hope. Hope takes one:

CLOSE on THE NEWSPAPER: "The Morning Post" dated "31 December 1802" and a long article with a heading of "The Keswick Imposter by Samuel Taylor Coleridge".

SOLICITOR 1

Your case is the talk and toast of the town. Never before in this city has a cause claimed such an interest.

SOLICITOR 2

Your case, Mr Hatfield, is being debated at a level of intensity which indicates not only support for you but even a desire to champion you. Everybody seems to be infatuated in your favour.

HOPE

(bewildered)

Why...?

SOLICITOR 1

The women see you as a Romantic hero, they admire you for giving up a wealthy heiress for a poor pothouse girl... The men all want to be in your shoes --

(CONTINUED)

SOLICITOR 2
 (showing him another article)
 -- "the Accomplished Seducer" --

SOLICITOR 1
 -- and the local aristocracy is
 thoroughly entertained by the way
 you've made fools of their arrogant
 consorts up North...

HOPE
 What about Mary?

SOLICITOR 1
 Of course, Mary is universally the
 cause for concern, but in truth,
 everybody -- both high and low --
 seems inclined to support and delight
 in both of you.

Hope sits down, lets it sink in.

HOPE
 (beat)
 What are my chances?

SOLICITOR 1
 We believe you stand a great chance.
 Your offences, while capital, can be
 defused. You abused the name of a man
 who will surely not suffer any direct
 inconvenience --

SOLICITOR 2
 -- he may be rather amused by it --

SOLICITOR 1
 -- he will certainly not be harmed.
 No, the only count that matters here,
 and the most dangerous, is that of
 forgery and of falsely franking the
 letters, and I hardly think that will
 carry in this environment...

He smiles reassuringly at Hope who tries to reciprocate...

In the empty room, MOORE, a copy of the Morning Post in his hand,
 rages in front of a thoughtful HARDINGE.

MOORE

Have you seen this? Ladies paying handsomely to visit him in his cell, these "Bond Street Loungers" dressing in his style... He is being received by London society as if he were a minor princeling!

HARDINGE

The man is astonishing.

MOORE

He is no longer a curiosity and much less a freak, not even a notorious forger, felon, or imposter, but a man of unique distinction from whose presence one comes away enhanced.

(beat)

Isn't there anything you can do, Hardinge?

HARDINGE

Get this trial moved here to Carlisle. I'll take care of him.

News which delights Moore...

136 **INT. ROOM, TOWN HALL, LONDON. DAY**

136

HOPE sits, listening to his SOLICITORS.

SOLICITOR 1

He's requested for your trial to be moved up to his courtroom in Carlisle.

SOLICITOR 2

Hardinge has made quite a strong motion for it. He outlined at great length what he repeatedly refers to as the enormity of your crimes, and points out with gravity and example the ruin that mass forgery would bring on the realm and the debauchery which would be let loose should you go unpunished by the severest of penalties.

HOPE

The severest...?

SOLICITOR 1

The man seems bent on seeing you hang, Mr Hatfield.

(CONTINUED)

Hope sinks into his chair...

HOPE

What can you do?

SOLICITOR 1

We've appealed against the move to Carlisle, of course. I've spoken to the judges here, and I think we stand a very good chance of defeating his motion.

SOLICITOR 2

(smiles reassuringly)

I wouldn't worry about it, Mr Hatfield... I don't think the crowds here would tolerate losing you just yet...

137 **INT. HOPE'S CELL, TOTHILL FIELDS PRISON, BRIDEWELL. DAY**

137

In a much cleaner cell, HOPE - longer hair now - is dining in a surprisingly pleasant atmosphere of candles and decent food. The GAOLER appears at HOPE's cell door and unlocks the gate.

GAOLER

Visitor for you, sir.

He moves to let the man in. It's NEWTON, elegantly dressed. He walks around Hope, taking in the surroundings...

NEWTON

Well, well... either his Majesty's had a change of heart regarding his guests' accommodations since we were last in his pleasure, or you've really moved up in the world, John...

HOPE

Is that what you've come here for? To gloat...

NEWTON

No... I just wanted to bid farewell to my old friend... even if he did try to bash my skull in.

(beat)

Why, John? How long have we been friends?

HOPE

Too long...

(CONTINUED)

NEWTON

Perhaps... in any case, I am glad you've ended up here and safe. I really am. You wouldn't last a minute up in that madman Hardinge's court. He had an eleven year old boy hanged for poaching a few fish on one of his cronies' estates. And his dislike for you borders on madness -- which strengthened my bargaining position when it came to what I asked for in exchange for giving you up...

HOPE

(finds a smirk)
First class passage?

NEWTON

The look on his face alone was worth it...

(beat)

We could have had it all, you know...

HOPE

No... Not without Mary...

NEWTON

(finally understanding him...)
I see...

(beat)

And how is your dear betrothed? I trust she's feeling better?

HOPE looks at him, thrown by the comment --

138 **INT. HOPE'S CELL, BRIDEWELL PRISON. NIGHT (LATER)** 138

HOPE sits by a candle, scribbling worriedly at a letter...

139 **EXT. THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. DAY** 139

The POTBOY rides up to the Inn. He dismounts by ROBINSON, reaches into his pouch, and takes out the letter. Robinson frowns at it, opens it, then quickly scrunches it up and tosses it into the water trough where the ink seeps away...

140 **INT. HOPE'S CELL, BRIDEWELL PRISON. DAY** 140

HOPE sits, staring at the walls. His beard is unkempt. The door CREAKS open. NICHOLSON appears. Hope springs to his feet and embraces him.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

Nicholson! My God, how wonderful to see you, Reverend. Sit down, please, sit down. How have you been?

He sits him down. Nicholson's face betrays his deep sadness...

HOPE (cont'd)

How's Mary?

NICHOLSON

(beat)

She's not well... She refuses to eat. She's lost half her weight.

(beat)

She's lost the will to live,... 'John'.

HOPE

I wrote to her. Did she get my letter?

NICHOLSON

I don't know... She can't get over your abandoning her.

HOPE

Abandoning her...?!
(beat)

(beat)

I should have never allowed myself to enter her life in the first place. Anything of beauty that I've ever touched has only been ruined by it...

(beat)

She deserves a better life than one on the run with a scoundrel... I had to leave her, can't you see? I needed to put as much distance between us as is physically possible.

(beat)

It would be the one decent thing I would ever have done for her...

NICHOLSON

I'm not certain she's of the same opinion...

HOPE

I have to talk to her, explain everything to her.

NICHOLSON

She could never survive the journey here.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED: (2)

140

HOPE

She cannot die, Nicholson, do you
hear me? She cannot die!

(beat)

She will not die...

His mind racing, he turns to Nicholson:

HOPE (cont'd)

Ask her to hang on. Can you do that
Nicholson?

NICHOLSON

Yes, but --

HOPE

(interrupting)

Just see to it that she hangs on...
please...

141 **INT. CORRIDOR, BRIDEWELL PRISON. NIGHT**

141

URGENT FOOTSTEPS echo down the dark passageways of the prison. A closer look in the dim lamp light reveals them to be Hope's SOLICITORS...

142 **INT. HOPE'S CELL, BRIDEWELL PRISON. NIGHT**

142

HOPE meets with his SOLICITORS. He looks like he hasn't slept, but has a determined glare in his eye.

SOLICITOR 1

What is it, John?

HOPE

(hugely determined)

I need you to get a message to Judge
Hardinge...

143 **EXT. TRAIL LEADING DOWN TO BUTTERMERE. DAY**

143

HOPE, cleanshaven, on horseback and in irons, is surrounded by a detail of SOLDIERS as they make their way up down the Honister Pass. Below, in the valley, nested by snow, a thin trail of smoke rising from its chimney, sits the snow covered Fish Inn...

144 **EXT./INT. THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. DAY**

144

MARY's PARENTS stand at her Inn's door as two SOLDIERS lead HOPE to it. Joseph looks like he could kill him.

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED:

144

He steps over to block his way. Hope doesn't resist, just stops and looks at him with sincere, regretful eyes...

HOPE

Please...

Robinson stares him down, then looks at his wife. She looks at Hope, acquiesces, and nods to Robinson. He moves aside, glaring at Hope who enters the house...

They lead him up the stairs and stop at the door to the room Mary's in. Hope looks at the SOLDIER, raising his shackled arms:

HOPE (cont'd)

We have an agreement.

The soldier stares at him, says nothing. Hope's doesn't flinch. The soldier, reluctantly, fishes out the keys and takes off his chains.

145 **INT. ROOM, THE FISH INN, BUTTERMERE. DAY**

145

HOPE quietly enters the room. MARY lies in bed, looking close to death. He hesitates before approaching her bedside.

She stirs awake. Looks over and sees him. Her eyes register surprise first, then anger...

HOPE

Mary... my darling Mary... What have I done to you?

She says nothing. Just stares at him...

MARY

Why are you here?

HOPE

I...

Hope can't begin. Mary turns away and looks out towards the window...

HOPE (cont'd)

Mary, don't do this.

MARY

I want it all to go away. All of it.

HOPE

No, Mary, this isn't --

(CONTINUED)

MARY

You never loved me... All the time, you knew all the time that you were lying to me, that you were deceiving me, even in those moments when we were one...

Hope approaches carefully and sits next to her...

HOPE

I lied to you, Mary... I deceived you abominably on everything... except for what really mattered: that I love you and that I couldn't live without you.

MARY

You are worse than a murderer. You leave a body with no life but without the peace of a corpse.

HOPE

As God is my witness, I swear to you that I never intended to bring you any harm. When I saw you that first time, I knew that I should have turned away right there and then and left you alone... but I couldn't stay away...

(beat)

The worst fate one can suffer is to meet the right person at the wrong time...

She looks at him. He takes her hand in his -- he's getting through...

HOPE (cont'd)

Mary... all this is of no importance. The only thing that matters is for you to get better. You must find strength, Mary, you must overcome all this. And in a few years, perhaps even in a few months, with God's will, all this will be forgotten... I will serve my time, and before you know it I'll be out -- I'm told the public's opinion will not allow a harsh sentence, I'm assured of it by my solicitors who are very good, Mary, they're very good...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOPE (cont'd)

and you can forget all about me and live your life as you please, and when I'm out, I'll come back and beg for your forgiveness and then, only then, you can decide whether or not you will allow me back into your life...

MARY

Oh, John...

HOPE

...but first you must get well, Mary. You must. You must savour life again, you must relish the sky and breathe the air, and eat, drink, travel... and live. You have the choice to stay a part of the time you were born into, to stay with your loved ones and the ones who love you... Your family wills it. Your friends will it. The whole country wills it. Promise me, Mary. Promise me you'll get well...

He caresses her head. Her face softens, brightens up a little... A smile breaks through her death mask...

MARY

Oh John...

Hope smiles at her --

HOPE

Promise me...

Mary nods -- and the soldier interrupts the moment --

GUARD

Time's up. It's a long ride to Carlisle...

Hope freezes at the Guard's mention of Carlisle -- and looks at Mary, hoping it didn't register with her. But it has. She understands what he was trying to do and the price he's paid to do it. But in a supreme effort she manages not to let on -- so as not to spoil it for him...

MARY

(finds a smile)
I'll see you soon.

HOPE

(smiles back)
Yes you will...

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED: (3)

145

He holds up her hand. Kisses it longly, eyes shut tight... Then he stands, turns and walks away...

But she can't hold it back:

MARY

John! JOHN!

IN THE HALLWAY, Hope hears her -- he turns, the GUARD tries to hold him back, but he pushes him aside and forces his way past him and back into the bedroom --

And rushes to Mary -- they kiss and embrace passionately...

MARY (cont'd)

I'll always love you...

Before he's dragged away...

MARY (CONT'D)

(tearing up, to herself)

I'll always love you...

146 **INT. COURTROOM, CARLISLE TOWN HALL. DAY**

146

HOPE is led into the crowded courtroom. As he advances, he glances left and right to see familiar faces: The Robinsons, Alice, Nicholson, Wood, Dan and the Potboy, Burkett, the Moores and Amaryllis, and finally, in the distance, the self-satisfied scowl of Judge Hardinge...

147 **EXT. COURTYARD, CARLISLE PRISON. DAY**

147

A heavy wooden door SLAMS open. Through it appears a GAOLER, then another, followed by HOPE, shackled and squinting in the light.

His eyes adjust and he sees his destination: the gallows erected in the middle of the courtyard, the HANGMAN and assorted prison GUARDS waiting there.

As he's manhandled over to the scaffold and led up the stairs, he stares at the waiting rope and its thick noose...

And all noise fades to SILENCE --

And as if in a dream, we see MARY on her rope, swinging under her tree, all healthy under a bright spring sun...

The rope swings back and forth under the branch, the angle increasing --

And the rope starts twirling, Mary laughs, her smile lighting up the screen as the sky swirls above...

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

147

Swirling and turning...

And then a LOUD CRACK --

And we SMASHCUT to HOPE's limp body dangling from the gallows, bouncing every so slightly in slow motion as the spine is severed and the body dies...

And CLOSE on his HANDS, tied and clenched behind his back, which unclench, releasing something -- Mary's locket...

It falls, turning and spinning in the air, its velvet ribbon trailing above it, curving through the air...

148 **EXT. HAUSE POINT, OVERLOOKING BUTTERMERE. DAY**

148

On an inspiring spring day...

MARY -- looking healthy, almost back to her old self -- bends down and places a small bunch of flowers on grave which is nothing more than a simple mound of earth and a small rock marker...

She turns and we now SEE that she's pregnant.

She walks away into the inspiring countryside of the lakes and we

FADE OUT

THE END