

1

EXT. SHEPZOY FIELD - DAY 10A

1

A field of corn, golden under a blue sky.

A breeze blows, swirling and sighing through the crop like an inland sea.

CHARLIE plays through the field, whistling to himself, a boy used to his own company.

A BOOM somewhere down the valley, the sound of dynamite exploding.

BIRDS scatter.

CHARLIE stops, more intrigued than afraid.

2

INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY 10A

2

GWEN is struggling to clean off the blood-stained image of the YOUNG WOMAN WITH A BOOK OF LIGHT.

Push slowly into this strange, foreboding image.

BOOM.

3

INT. VICARAGE/STUDY - DAY 10A

3

NATHAN is taking tea with HARRIET in the study of the vicarage, has been checking on her progress. *

She looks good, healthy and confident.

DENNING - the proud, attentive father - is labelling geological specimens.

NATHAN

I am delighted to see you looking
so well, Harriet. *

HARRIET

Thanks to you. *

NATHAN gets up to leave. *

DENNING

Let me show you out. *

A thought occurs to NATHAN. Turning back to HARRIET - *

NATHAN

Do you remember you drew something
on the wall at Shepzoy? Like a
woman with a book in her hands. *

NATHAN takes Gabriel's drawing out of his bag.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Something like this.

HARRIET shakes her head, it means nothing.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Could you have seen the image
somewhere else in the house? On my
desk?

HARRIET

I don't think so. I'm sorry, Mr
Appleby, it means nothing to me.

BOOM.

4 INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/NATHAN & CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - DAY 10A 4

CHARLOTTE is washing blood from her nightdress in the basin,
scrubbing at it with her handkerchief.

GWEN whistles into the room, her arms full of fresh linen and
towels, not expecting to see her mistress standing there.

GWEN

(Mortified)

Sorry, Mrs Appleby, I didn't know
you were here.

GWEN sees that CHARLOTTE is upset, sees the blood in the
basin, knows exactly what is happening.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Here, ma'am, take a fresh towel.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you, Gwen.

GWEN hands her mistress a fresh towel - as she
surreptitiously pockets the handkerchief.

5 EXT. BROCKLEY COMBE - DAY 10A 5

A pretty valley, a hive of activity today.

A young Northern industrial surveyor (SMITH) and his
ASSISTANTS are surveying the rock stratus of the valley.

SMITH hunkers down over a detonator.

SMITH

Heads down, gentlemen!

The ASSISTANTS squat down and SMITH detonates the dynamite.

BOOM!

The dynamite rips into the landscape.

6 INT. MINE - DAY 10A

6

Deep underground something has awakened. We hear voices, BOYS' VOICES. They are calling out to each other in the darkness, some near, some far...

David... Harrington... Abraham... Henry... Benjamin... Ebenezer...

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

7 EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY 11

7

A meadow, lovely on a summer's day.

But far away, walking very slowly towards us, in a dead straight line, is a VERY OLD MAN.

8 EXT. CHURCHYARD - DAY 11

8

NATHAN walks through the graveyard, walking through the same gravestones that "spoke" through Harriet.

Then NATHAN kneels by the headstone of his dead wife and child.

OLIVIA APPLEBY

1864 - 1884

WIFE OF NATHAN, MOTHER OF GABRIEL

GABRIEL APPLEBY

1884 - 1889

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Some dark lichen has started to grow in the lettering of his son's name and NATHAN gently cleans it out.

He turns at the sound of a boy's voice.

CHARLIE is in the adjoining field, playing on his own.

NATHAN smiles to himself as he watches the boy at his lonely play -

NATHAN

Charlie!

CHARLIE stops playing, looks over at NATHAN with alarm, assumes he's in trouble. Points to himself - me?

NATHAN nods, beckons him over.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Shouldn't you be working in the
fields?

CHARLIE
Yes, sir, I was just on my way.

A BOOM down the valley.

NATHAN
Or would you rather come and watch
the surveyors at their work?

CHARLIE nods, absolutely delighted.

9 EXT. SHEPZOY FIELD - DAY 11

9

CHARLOTTE stands next to GIDEON in the field. In the background her WORKERS are involved in pitchforking hay into wagons.

CHARLOTTE looks down at the weeds and docks sprouting from the earth.

CHARLOTTE
Now I'm no expert, Gideon -

GIDEON
That's right, ma'am.

CHARLOTTE
But these look to me like weeds.

GIDEON
(Agrees)
Yes, ma'am.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Because the field hant been tidied yet.

CHARLOTTE
Why hasn't it been tidied?

GIDEON
That were John's job, ma'am, to tell us what to do and when to do it.

Another explosion echoes up from the valley.

The FARM WORKERS tense, small CHILDREN turning into the folds of their mothers' dresses.

Little BATHSHEBA looks up at AGNES, concerned.

CHARLOTTE can see her work force are still worried about the explosions.

CHARLOTTE

It's just the surveyors at Brockley Combe, pay it no mind.

AGNES

Why do they have to blow great holes in the valley, ma'am?

CHARLOTTE

They're surveying the underlying rock to see if it's capable of taking a viaduct over the valley.

GIDEON

A what, ma'am?

CHARLOTTE

A viaduct, Gideon. To take the railway across the valley.

GIDEON grumbles to himself.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

They are here because Mr Appleby petitioned for them to be here, so they will be made welcome, is that clear?

AGNES, GIDEON and the others do not look convinced.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

If we can get a railway halt near here we could churn our butter in the afternoon and it would be on the breakfast tables of Bristol and London by the next morning... imagine that!

They all just stare back at her, dead-eyed.

BOOM!

10

EXT. BROCKLEY COMBE - DAY 11

10

NATHAN - excited - watches as SMITH walks forward to inspect the rock strata his latest explosion has exposed.

SMITH is working in a pretty valley, surrounded by the tools of his trade: theodolite, tripod, tape. And a wooden box of dynamite.

A couple of ASSISTANTS make drawings, measurements.

CHARLIE just looks amazed, it's a different world.

SMITH

It's looking quite promising.
Definitely Keuper Marls, we just
need it to be of significant depth.

DENNING hurries up to NATHAN -

DENNING

Look at these, Appleby! Neolithic
flints.

(Shows Charlie)
The last human to touch these has
been dead for 10,000 years.

NATHAN watches as an ASSISTANT climbs out of a depression in the land, another charge set. *

*

NATHAN

Charlie, you can do the honours.

SMITH hands the overwhelmed CHARLIE the plunger.

SMITH

Push it down, lad, nice and firm.

CHARLIE pushes the plunger and -

BOOM! The dynamite rips into the landscape, showering them with dirt.

*

A geyser of red liquid spurts high into the sky, soaking CHARLIE, turning his upturned face red. He looks at his red arms, clearly traumatised.

SMITH (CONT'D)

It's just water, lad.

CHARLIE walks forward, peers into the hole the explosion has created. Smoke swirls around. He hears - does he hear? - the sound of CHILDREN laughing. *

*

11

EXT. FERTILITY TREE - DAY 11

11

The landscape is empty, eerie.

The FERTILITY TREE, its branches draped with faded ribbons, snatches of material, charms. Making a strange noise in the breeze.

GWEN is the only human figure. She has a basket, full of herbs and wild fruit.

She looks around, careful not to be seen. Then GWEN takes out CHARLOTTE's handkerchief and ties it around a lower branch.

12 **EXT. LANDSCAPE - DUSK 11**

12

The OLD MAN is still walking towards us through another lonely landscape. Slow. Relentless.

13 **EXT. VILLAGE/THE WHEATSHEAF - DUSK 11**

13

Dusk beyond The Wheatsheaf pub.

14 **INT. VILLAGE/THE WHEATSHEAF - DUSK 11**

14

The pub is quiet this evening, just GIDEON emptying his cup of cider and proffering it to SIMON for a refill.

The ENGINEER'S ASSISTANTS laugh loudly at some joke.

GIDEON glares over at them, noticed by SIMON.

SIMON

I remember when old Mrs Appleby grubbed out the Tremlett Bitter orchards and replaced 'em with Dabinett. You were in here every night, moaning your head off about the evils of progress.

GIDEON

There's nothing wrong with Tremletts. Who wants a train, anyways? Nasty, noisy buggers they is. I expect.

SIMON

Shhh, the engineers will hear you.

GIDEON

The engineers... No good will come of it, you mark my words.

SIMON shakes his head.

SIMON

'Tis like talking to a wall.

GIDEON

I'm just saying - as my dear old granfer used to say to me -

(Lowers voice)

- what lies beneath should be left beneath.

15 **EXT. SHEPZOY FIELD - DUSK 11**

15

That field of corn, now under a deep blue summer evening sky.
Stars.

Something or someone is moving through the corn towards us.

16 **EXT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/LAKE - DUSK 11**

16

The harvest moon yellow in the sky.

NATHAN stands on the jetty fishing, watching his float. But his mind is not on the float, but on the dark water.

CHARLOTTE lies on her back, her legs up, feet against the bark of a tree. She is only wearing her underwear, her tousled hair fanned out on the grass.

NATHAN

Come on, Jonah, come to Nathan.

CHARLOTTE

Jonah?

NATHAN

An enormous carp, only ever landed by my father.

CHARLOTTE

The fish have names. Oh my God.

A beat.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

How did it go today?

NATHAN

Apart from nearly blowing Charlie to kingdom come... pretty well, I think. Smith is optimistic he can put a good case to the railway.

NATHAN reels in, walks back towards CHARLOTTE, sees his wife on her back with her feet half way up a tree.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What exactly are you doing?

CHARLOTTE

Just giving nature a helping hand.

NATHAN lies on his elbows above her.

NATHAN

We will get there, I promise you.

CHARLOTTE

I thought coming down here to live,
away from London, all the peace and
quiet...

NATHAN

We know there is no medical reason
you cannot conceive. We just have
to be patient.

CHARLOTTE

I know. It's just... I want your
baby, Nathan Appleby.

NATHAN dips his head down and kisses her on the lips.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(To the moon)
I want your baby!

17

EXT. COTTAGES - NIGHT 11

17

Something or someone is looking up at the lit windows of the
row of modest cottages.

We see PETER and MAUD in one window.

Then AGNES trying to get her children - BATHSHEBA and two
other DAUGHTERS - washed and into bed in another.

CHARLIE is outside the family cottage, holding up his lamp so
that he can check doors are locked, check that nobody is
around.

GIDEON staggers past, on his way home from the pub.

GIDEON

Good night, Charlie. We be all safe
under your protection.

GIDEON salutes Charlie and weaves off down the lane.

AGNES appears in the doorway, watches her son with a love she
rarely shows... and just a little sadness.

AGNES

Bed, Charlie.

CHARLIE holds his lamp up, illuminating the first few feet of
the night.

CHARLIE

All safe, mother.

AGNES and CHARLIE enter the cottage.

The door is closed and locked.

18

INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/STUDY - NIGHT 11

18

NATHAN is at his desk. A lovely photograph of Harriet standing outside the vicarage, clearly taken by Charlotte, is propped up in front of him.

He is listening to the crackly cylinders, an unpleasant sound on a summer's night -

ABEL NORTH

Except for the wenches. The young ones. Like fresh fruit waiting to be plucked. I'm the man to pluck 'em.

CHARLOTTE

Do we have to listen to that horrible man?

NATHAN is working. We see the chapter heading: *Harriet Denning*. The page is blank. Instead of writing, NATHAN is doodling the image of the YOUNG WOMAN WITH A BOOK OF LIGHT.

A breeze lifts some papers on NATHAN's desk.

TOBY the deerhound growls.

NATHAN

Sshhh, boy, it's just the wind.

But TOBY is not mollified, barks.

NATHAN gets up, moves to the window.

CHARLOTTE

What is it?

Through the open window NATHAN can hear the laughter and shrieks of CHILDREN.

NATHAN

Just children playing.

CHARLOTTE

At this time of night?

19

INT. AGNES' COTTAGE - NIGHT 11

19

BATHSHEBA and the other CHILDREN huddle together for warmth as they sleep.

A hessian sheet divides the room, leaving CHARLIE alone on his small truckle bed by the window.

Something makes him sit bolt upright in bed. Staring at the shutters.

A long beat.

David... Harrington... Abraham... Henry... Benjamin... Ebenezer...

CHARLIE gets out of bed. Slowly, slowly walks towards the shutters.

A floorboard creaks under his bare feet.

CHARLIE reaches the shutters.

David... Harrington... Abraham... Henry... Benjamin... Ebenezer.....

CHARLIE lifts the bolt, opens the shutters.

Far off in the field opposite the cottage, so far they're hard to see in the summer night, are a line of BOYS. They are all holding hands and staring at CHARLIE.

A long beat.

Then one of them beckons for CHARLIE to join them.

CHARLIE quickly shuts the shutters and -

BATHSHEBA
Charlie? What are you doing?

It's his sleepy, nosey younger sister, rubbing her eyes and looking up at him.

20 **EXT. SHEPZOY FIELDS - DAY 12**

20

A fresh morning.

GIDEON is already out in the field, sharpening the scythes for the day ahead.

FARM WORKERS start to appear, ready for their day's labour.

21 **SCENE OMITTED.**

21

22 **INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY 12**

22

CHARLOTTE is interviewing a prospective farm manager, MR WOOLFORD.

He's already uncomfortable being in the formal room in the house and is very uncomfortable being interviewed by a woman. He sits and mangles his hat in his hands.

CHARLOTTE

Where do you stand on the new model
traction engines, Mr Woolford?

WOOLFORD

I'd never buy one, I know that.

CHARLOTTE

And why would that be?

WOOLFORD

I'd let some other fool take all
the risk and rent one when I needed
it.

CHARLOTTE

But the "other fool" might become a
rich man and you'll be forever
under obligation to him.

WOOLFORD

I saw your shiny new traction on
the way in, ma'am. Broken, is it?

CHARLOTTE doesn't like the twinkle in WOOLFORD's eye.

CHARLOTTE

(Reading)

You do seem to move around a lot.
Why would that be?

WOOLFORD

I've come a long way, ma'am. I
think it only fair I get to speak
to the master.

CHARLOTTE

Except he is not here, is he? But I
am here, Mr Woolford, and I appear
to be a sentient being. Why did you
leave your last position?

WOOLFORD

I had some problems with one of the
workers.

CHARLOTTE

What sort of problems?

WOOLFORD

I formed a liking to one of the
parlour maids, if you must know.

CHARLOTTE

Oh. And was this liking
reciprocated by the parlour maid?

WOOLFORD looks at CHARLOTTE like he doesn't understand the question.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Did the girl like you back?

WOOLFORD does not want to discuss this.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
I'll be writing to your employers
either way.

WOOLFORD
I thought so at the time. Seems I
was wrong, according to that
strumpet.

CHARLOTTE studies the man for a moment, far from impressed.

CHARLOTTE
I don't think you'd like it here,
Mr Woolford.

23

EXT. SHEPZOY FIELD - DAY 12

23

The WORKERS are still out in the fields, loading up the carts.

Everyone is needed - GIDEON, PETER, JACK, AGNES, GWEN, LIZZIE, CHARLIE, BATHSHEBA - out in the fields at this critical time of the year.

NATHAN, sleeves rolled up, works next to his workers.

NATHAN
How's that weather looking, Gideon?

GIDEON
Set fair, sir, set fair.

PETER HARE is looking at Nathan. Nathan notices him. Peter - embarrassed - breaks his gaze and walks more quickly away.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Maud Hare's son, Peter. Never been
a sociable lad.

Nathan's interest is piqued.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Bookworm.

NATHAN looks up as CHARLOTTE stomps across the field towards him.

CHARLOTTE

It's like 1794 down here. It
doesn't bother me that they'd
rather speak to an insect than a
woman, but it does bother me that
their views on agriculture haven't
changed since the Romans moved on.

NATHAN

We'll find someone.

CHARLOTTE picks up a pitchfork, ready to take her
frustrations out on some hay.

It's clear that CHARLOTTE has barely ever done this before
but she prongs away with huge enthusiasm.

Some affectionate smiles, not least from NATHAN.

CHARLIE has his head down, working, when he feels eyes
looking at him -

There, standing way over at the other end of the cut field,
are the RED BOYS. Standing in line. Holding hands.

CHARLIE looks at the other WORKERS but it's clear that nobody
else can see them.

One of the BOYS again gestures for CHARLIE to join them.

Charlie's frightened, shakes his head.

Seen by NATHAN, who looks where the boy is looking - just an
empty field. But it's clear that young CHARLIE is extremely
unnerved.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Charlie? What's the matter?

CHARLIE

Nothing.

AGNES

Don't you dare speak to Mr Appleby
like that! He asked you a question,
boy.

NATHAN

It's alright, Agnes.
(To Charlie)
Was somebody there?

CHARLIE

No, sir.

BATHSHEBA steps forward.

BATHSHEBA

'Twas the Red Boys, sir.

CHARLIE

(Angry, at Bathsheba)
Shut up! You shut up!

24

EXT. SHEPZOY FIELDS - DAY 12

24

NATHAN and CHARLIE sit in the shade of a hay wagon, the WORKERS still toiling in the field behind them.

NATHAN

So Mr Smith said there's a bacterium called Chromatiaceae that thrives in oxygen-depleted water and turns it red.

CHARLIE

'Twas really just water?

NATHAN

Been trapped beneath the earth for centuries.

A beat.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(Offhand)
Tell me about these boys.

Nothing from CHARLIE.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Are they like imagined friends?

CHARLIE

Only children have friends like that.

NATHAN

You have your responsibilities and I have mine. If something is threatening our community we must share the knowledge, you and I.

CHARLIE is touched by this, calmed by NATHAN's quiet strength of personality.

CHARLIE

They came for me. In the night.

NATHAN

And what did they want?

CHARLIE
For me to go with them.

NATHAN
Go where?

CHARLIE
I don't know.

NATHAN
And you saw them again just now? In
the field?

CHARLIE nods and NATHAN sees that the boy is genuinely
frightened.

He stands up, pulls CHARLIE up by the hand.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Do you know what a nightmare is,
Charlie?

CHARLIE
A dream that goes bad?

NATHAN and CHARLIE start walking back towards the WORKERS.

NATHAN
If you've had an unusual day, or a
difficult one - and, let us be
honest, you and I got rained on by
blood, or so we thought - your
brain needs to deal with that
stress, to re-calibrate its
equilibrium.

CHARLIE
They were real, sir.

NATHAN
No matter how real they seem they
are just pictures in your head -
and pictures cannot harm you.

CHARLIE looks up at NATHAN, so wants to believe him.

CHARLIE
What do I do if they come again?

NATHAN
Let them come. We are men and they
are pictures - let them come.

NATHAN puts an arm around CHARLIE's shoulders.

25 **EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DUSK 12** 25

The far bend of a high-hedged Somerset lane. The OLD MAN never stops moving. Where is he going? What will he do when he gets there?

26 **EXT. SHEPZOY HOUSE - NIGHT 12** 26

Shepzoy House, silhouetted against the dark blue summer night.

A few of the windows glow orange with lamp-light.

27 **INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT 12** 27

GWEN is stirring a saucepan on the ancient range.

CHARLOTTE comes into the kitchen, sniffing the air and wrinkling her nose.

CHARLOTTE

It's you, Gwen. For one awful moment I thought Cook was boiling up her offal again. What are you doing?

CHARLOTTE peers into the murky, steaming pot.

GWEN

Just a little something, ma'am.

CHARLOTTE

A little something of what?

GWEN

For you and Mr Appleby, to help you get with child.

CHARLOTTE

I've been pushed and prodded by some of the most expensive doctors in London, I don't think some boiled grass is going to make much difference.

GWEN

It works, ma'am.

A beat. GWEN holds her mistress' eye.

CHARLOTTE

(Lowering voice)

What's in it?

CHARLOTTE peers into the saucepan.

GWEN

There's cabbage leaves, mandrake.
Marjoram, thyme, parsley, the root
of worm fern and...

CHARLOTTE

What?

GWEN

The tail of a slow worm.

CHARLOTTE

What's that for?

GWEN

Added potency.

CHARLOTTE

And all the raspberries. What are
they for?

GWEN

They're to take away the taste of
the slow worm.

28

INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/STUDY - NIGHT 12

28

NATHAN sits at his desk writing up his case notes. He looks up, stares at his son's drawing of the BOOK WOMAN.

CHARLOTTE

I believe an early night is called
for, Mr Appleby.

NATHAN turns to his wife, a goblet in each hand, standing in the doorway, wearing one of his shirts - and not much else.

NATHAN

What's that? Wine?

CHARLOTTE

Like wine, yes. Come on.

CHARLOTTE walks away.

NATHAN looks back one more time at the image.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(OOV)

Nathan!

NATHAN turns and leaves the room, no wiser than he was before.

We stay behind, looking closer at that drawing of the BOOK WOMAN.

The French windows open wide. Then gently shut again.

29 **SCENE OMITTED.** 29

30 EXT. AGNES' COTTAGE - NIGHT 12 30

Something or someone is approaching the cottage.

The last embers of a fire in the hearth.

AGNES is asleep in her chair, snoring happily.

BATHSHEBA and her SISTERS, huddled and asleep.

CHARLIE wakes with a start, sits up.

He's staring at those shutters...

David... Harrington... Abraham... **Henry**... Benjamin...
Ebenezer.....

CHARLIE gets out of bed.

CHARLIE
Pictures in my head.

He's tentative but not afraid - he remembers what Nathan said.

David... Harrington... Abraham... Henry... Benjamin...
Ebenezer..... CHARLIE.

CHARLIE moves to the shutters and opens them wide.

32 INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/NATHAN & CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 12 32

NATHAN smokes, his mind miles away, in the post-coital tangle of the bedsheets.

CHARLOTTE is reading the latest edition of the Agricultural Journal.

CHARLOTTE
We could do it! We could actually
do it!

CHARLOTTE reaches over, takes the cigarette from his mouth and smokes it herself.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

"Why are you so excited, beloved
wife?"

NATHAN is watching TOBY pace and whine.

NATHAN

Sorry?

CHARLOTTE

Strawberries.

NATHAN just looks at her.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Arable crops are susceptible to the
vicissitudes of the weather, yes?
Turning this place into a dairy
farm would decimate the community -

NATHAN

And will never happen.

CHARLOTTE

But strawberries. If we get our
branch line we could access markets
we've never even dreamed of. We
could build huge glasshouses, be in
control of the growing process.

NATHAN

If it comes.

CHARLOTTE

It will come. I just know it will.

NATHAN takes the cigarette back. He slides out of bed.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

NATHAN

To take the dog out. Go to sleep.

He kisses her. Leaves.

CHARLOTTE is on her own.

A beat.

Then she reaches for the goblet and downs it with a shiver of
disgust.

NATHAN walks the dog up a high-sided country lane.

A noise down the far end of the valley makes NATHAN turn.

The DOG starts to whimper -

NATHAN

Toby? What's the matter, boy?

Suddenly Toby turns and runs back towards the house.

Now NATHAN hears it - the sound of a vehicle's engine.

Even odder, two blazing lights are turned on, blinding NATHAN.

The lights start to rush towards him down the lane.

NATHAN turns and runs. Stumbling, feeling the lights getting closer, the screaming engine getting closer -

AGNES

Mr Appleby, thank God. Is Charlie with you?

NATHAN spins around to see a worried AGNES in her nightdress, a lamp in her hand.

NATHAN turns and looks back at where the lights came from.

Nothing.

NATHAN

Charlie? No, of course not.

NATHAN sees how concerned the woman is by the light from her lamp.

AGNES

He's gone missing, sir.

34

EXT. SHEPZOY FIELDS/WOOD - NIGHT 12

34

NATHAN looks for Charlie.

NATHAN

Charlie?!

Nothing.

NATHAN is about to walk on when he hears - or thinks he hears - the sound of CHILDREN's LAUGHTER coming from the wood.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Charlie! Is that you?

Nothing.

NATHAN walks towards the wood.

35 **EXT. WOOD - NIGHT 12**

35

NATHAN pushes deep into the wood.

In here the thick foliage of the canopy dominates.

He holds his oil lamp up and it picks out the shadows of the trees.

A BIRD takes wing, complaining off into the night.

Again, NATHAN hears the sound of CHILDREN PLAYING.

NATHAN pushes on into the wood, deeper and deeper.

NATHAN

Charlie?

The noise of CHILDREN PLAYING instantly stops. Silence.

Then NATHAN sees ahead of him, in a natural clearing in the wood, a boy. It's CHARLIE.

CHARLIE is playing a game of "It" - but his playmates are either not there or are invisible.

NATHAN watches intently as CHARLIE rushes around, laughing. He is obviously not catching anyone but still seems to be enjoying himself, in a manic, concentrated way.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Charlie.

CHARLIE turns to look at NATHAN. It's as if he has been awakened from sleep-walking, as he blinks at NATHAN, completely confused.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

It's alright, son, let's get you home.

CHARLIE just stares at NATHAN. Then his legs go from under him and he collapses.

By the time NATHAN reaches CHARLIE the boy is half-conscious, confused.

NATHAN picks CHARLIE up, carries him in his arms.

NATHAN peers into the darkness but sees nothing. But he feels it... an unfriendly force that does not want NATHAN taking this boy from the wood.

NATHAN picks up his pace, despite the dead weight of the boy, crashing through the undergrowth.

CHARLIE looks back... the RED BOYS are standing there, holding hands, watching him go.

NATHAN almost runs and... suddenly bursts out of the dark wood and back into open countryside again.

A line of WORKERS, lit by torches, fanned out across the field, looking for CHARLIE.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Agnes!

AGNES

Charlie! What the hell are you playing at, boy?

As AGNES runs towards him NATHAN looks back at the wood.

Hears - or thinks he hears - the sound of a CHILD LAUGHING.

36

INT. AGNES' COTTAGE - NIGHT 12

36

CHARLIE is exhausted, but he looks fierce, surly.

NATHAN is at his side, a concerned AGNES behind him, BATHSHEBA and her SIBLINGS peering out from over the hessian divide.

NATHAN offers the boy a sleeping draught.

NATHAN

Take this, it will help you sleep.

CHARLIE moves his head so the draught misses his mouth -

AGNES

(Stern)

Charlie!

CHARLIE reluctantly downs the drink.

NATHAN

What was happening in the wood?

CHARLIE

None of your business.

AGNES is about to scold her son but NATHAN gestures for her not to.

NATHAN

I thought we were friends.

CHARLIE's eyes flicker, he's very tired.

CHARLIE
I'm not to talk to you no more.

NATHAN
Why's that?

CHARLIE
Cos you're a bastard.

AGNES
That is enough!

AGNES is shocked by her son's surly tone - shoos BATHSHEBA and the others away.

CHARLIE
You're all bastards and liars.

CHARLIE falls asleep.

37

INT. AGNES' COTTAGE - NIGHT 12

37

NATHAN indicates for AGNES to follow him into the tiny parlour.

AGNES
You must forgive him, Mr Appleby,
he's not a bad boy.

NATHAN
Your husband went to Wales, did he not? To the smelting works?

AGNES
Said he'd call for us when he was settled. That was five year ago.

NATHAN looks back at the sleeping CHARLIE.

NATHAN
So Charlie is the head of the family. That's a lot of responsibility for a young boy.

AGNES
He's always had that responsibility but he's never behaved like this.

NATHAN
Has anything happened to him recently? Anything unusual or traumatic?

AGNES wants to say something but is concerned she will be speaking out of turn.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Agnes.

AGNES

He's been worried, sir, I won't lie to you.

NATHAN

About what?

AGNES

The changes. Your mother dying and traction engines and John and... he is worried about what is to come of us. We all are.

Out on NATHAN, recognising the enormity of what he and Charlotte are doing to this community.

38

EXT. SHEPZOY HOUSE - DAY 13

38

Shepzoy House on a fresh, bright summer's morning.

39

INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/DINING ROOM/CUPBOARD - DAY 13

39

NATHAN is scrambling around in a cupboard full of battered old toys, when he becomes aware of CHARLOTTE standing in the doorway.

CHARLOTTE

What on earth are you doing?

NATHAN

Just looking for something for Charlie.

CHARLOTTE

I have had the most brilliant idea.

NATHAN

I know, you told me. Strawberries.

CHARLOTTE

Even more brilliant than that.

NATHAN

They're here somewhere, I know they are.

CHARLOTTE

Are you listening to me? I'm
talking about the future of Shepzoy
and you're rummaging in a cupboard.

NATHAN finds what he was looking for - a hessian sack. He
looks in, smiles to himself, delighted.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Nathan -

NATHAN stands and faces his wife.

NATHAN

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

(Puzzled)

Yes, what?

NATHAN

Yes, I think it is a brilliant
idea.

CHARLOTTE

What is?

NATHAN

You being our new farm manager.

CHARLOTTE smiles at him.

CHARLOTTE

You really think I could do it?

NATHAN

(Genuine)

I think you will be the best thing
that ever happened to this old
place.

CHARLOTTE squeals with delight, throws her arms around him.

40

INT. AGNES' COTTAGE - DAY 13

40

CHARLIE looks tired and drawn and tense and a bit sheepish.

NATHAN sits down in front of him, carrying a hessian bag.

NATHAN

How are you feeling? Not so good,
your mother says.

Nothing from CHARLIE.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Am I still a bastard?

Nothing.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
And a liar?

CHARLIE
You said they were pictures in my
head.

NATHAN
Yes, I did.

CHARLIE
That was a lie.

It's clear that CHARLIE is surly, tired.

NATHAN
I brought you something. I was
clearing out a cupboard and found
these...

NATHAN tips the bag up and about twenty much-loved TOY
SOLDIERS, chipped and battered, fall out.

A little spark of life in CHARLIE's eyes now.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
We must have fought the Battle of
Balaclava at least a hundred times,
Gabriel and I, and these soldiers
never once let us down.

CHARLIE picks up one of the soldiers, turns it in his hand.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
When I found you in the woods last
night were you playing with the
boys?

CHARLIE nods.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
How many boys were there?

Nothing from CHARLIE.

NATHAN picks up one of the soldiers, places him in position
on the floor.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
So here's you, standing in the
clearing. Where were the other
boys?

CHARLIE

I don't remember.

NATHAN

Did they surround you, like this?

NATHAN positions the soldiers in a circle around the "Charlie" soldier.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Are they good boys, would you say?
Or bad boys?

CHARLIE knocks them over with a sweep of his hand.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Your mother said you were worried about having to leave the farm, this cottage. I give you my word, Charlie, that for as long as an Appleby owns Shepzoy House you and your family will live and work beside us.

If NATHAN expected relief and gratitude he is disappointed.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

No work for you today, you stay here and play.

NATHAN is about to leave the bedroom when -

CHARLIE

I don't belong here.

NATHAN just looks at this troubled boy.

NATHAN

Who said you don't belong here?

CHARLIE looks NATHAN square in the eye, almost a challenge, and then turns his back on him.

41

EXT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/YARD - DAY 13

41

A slightly nervous CHARLOTTE addresses her WORKERS.

GWEN is next to her mistress.

CHARLOTTE

I wanted to gather you together this morning with some exciting news. Well, I'm excited and I very much hope you will be.

GWEN glares at the WORKERS, who look back, expressionless.

GWEN

Oh they will be, ma'am, don't you
worry about that.

A BOOM from down the valley, where the surveyors are still
hard at work.

CHARLOTTE

From this moment on, I am going to
be the farm manager.

Gobsmacked faces look back at her.

Silence.

GWEN

That is marvellous news, ma'am.

CHARLOTTE

Now I am not that experienced, as
many of you know and have kindly
pointed out. But I am willing to
learn. I will learn, I give you my
word on that. I will be loyal and
devoted and I expect that same
loyalty and devotion back. I will
be the first one at work in the
morning and the last one here at
night.

CHARLOTTE smiles but gets only the same stares back.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Right, that's all I wanted to say,
I think. There's a lot of
preparation to do before the
harvest.

CHARLOTTE walks back towards the house.

GWEN glares at the WORK FORCE for their lack of support,
hurries after her mistress.

GWEN

That went well, ma'am.

BOOM.

The WORKERS watch CHARLOTTE and GWEN walk away.

JACK

What did I say, friends? We're all
off to Hell in a handcart.

42 **INT. AGNES' COTTAGE - DAY 13** 42

CHARLIE playing with the TOY SOLDIERS. He positions them in a very distinctive curve.

43 **EXT. SHEPZOY FIELD - DAY 13** 43

The WORKERS are working well under a hot sun.

NATHAN walks over to where AGNES is working on her own.

AGNES

I hope he was civil, sir.

NATHAN

Is there any reason why Charlie would feel like an outsider here?

AGNES

An outsider?

NATHAN

In the village. In your family.

AGNES

No, sir. Why would you even say such a thing?

NATHAN knows at once that he has hit a raw nerve.

NATHAN

Agnes, if you want me to help Charlie, we can have no secrets.

44 **INT. AGNES' COTTAGE - DAY 13** 44

NATHAN and AGNES let themselves into the cottage.

Outside NATHAN sees where BATHSHEBA is playing with her SISTERS.

AGNES

Charlie?

AGNES looks around, makes sure her son is not here.

NATHAN looks over at the curve of TOY SOLDIERS. The shape is so precise it slightly perturbs NATHAN.

AGNES (CONT'D)

I had a sister, sir.

NATHAN

Ruth. I remember Ruth.

AGNES

Life was not kind to her and she
became... she fell into low
company. She died, worn out with
disease.

AGNES opens a crude cupboard, finds a hidden wooden box.

The key to it is hidden elsewhere, in a secret panel.

Finally, she opens the box. A few paltry possessions and... a
lock of hair tied around a rolled letter.

AGNES (CONT'D)

A lock of Ruth's hair, given to me
the day before she died. You see
the different hair, threaded
through?

NATHAN nods.

AGNES (CONT'D)

A baby's hair, sir.

NATHAN

(Realising)

Charlie's?

AGNES

He was just six months old when his
mother died. I took him for my own.

NATHAN

Does he know?

AGNES shakes her head.

AGNES

I'm to give him this letter when I
do see fit. It tells him
everything.

NATHAN glances out at BATHSHEBA and her SIBLINGS playing.

AGNES (CONT'D)

I have loved him as my own. Fiercer
than my own, if anything, cos I did
know where he came from. What good
would it do him to know he was not
mine? Me, who loves him more than
life itself.

AGNES takes the entwined locks back, puts it back in the box
and locks it away.

NATHAN admires this strong, protective woman.

NATHAN

You have done a fine job, Agnes.
You will know when the time is
right.

A SCREAM from outside has them both running for the door and -

45 **EXT. AGNES' COTTAGE - DAY 13**

45

- running outside.

BATHSHEBA and her SIBLINGS are rooted to the spot.

BATHSHEBA points -

CHARLIE is standing there, his face blood-red.

46 **EXT. BROCKLEY COME/MINE ENTRANCE - DAY 13**

46 *

SMITH and his COLLEAGUES are having rest, eating a meal.

*

SMITH is intrigued to see - at a distance - the OLD MAN on
the lip of a depression in the land, staring down into.

*
*

SMITH

What's he up to?

*

47 **EXT. FIELD - DAY 13**

47

A wild RABBIT.

NATHAN and CHARLIE - both holding shotguns - watch the
oblivious RABBIT.

NATHAN

Align the gun with your face, back
it into your shoulder. Bend your
front knee, back straight and -

CHARLIE fires the gun and misses the RABBIT by a country
mile.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Getting closer. Definitely getting
closer.

NATHAN hands CHARLIE his shotgun, takes the discharged one
and reloads it for CHARLIE.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I always thought it would be my own
son I'd teach to shoot.

CHARLIE

I liked Gabriel. We played
together.

NATHAN

I know you did. So you'll have to
be a bit of a son to me and I'll do
my best to be a bit of a father to
you. How does that sound?

CHARLIE looks over at NATHAN - does he mean it?

NATHAN (CONT'D)

You belong at Shepzoy, Charlie,
nowhere else. Don't let anybody
tell you different, do you
understand?

NATHAN shuts the shotgun, looks up -

CHARLIE is pointing his gun straight at NATHAN's head.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

NATHAN walks to the side but the gun follows him.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Put the gun down.

CHARLIE does not put the gun down. His finger tightens on the trigger.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Put it down.

CHARLIE fires - but intentionally above NATHAN's head.

NATHAN steps forward and angrily pulls the weapon from CHARLIE's hands.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What is wrong with you?!

CHARLIE looks sneeringly at NATHAN.

CHARLIE

They've seen him.

NATHAN

What are you talking about?

CHARLIE

Gabriel. They've seen him.

NATHAN knows it's nonsense but he has to ask -

NATHAN

Where have they seen him?

CHARLIE

Standing by the lake. Where he
drowned.

With that CHARLIE turns and walks off towards home.

NATHAN

Charlie!

Leaving NATHAN alone, surprisingly rattled by what Charlie
has just said.

EXT. BROCKLEY COME/MINE ENTRANCE - DAY 13

*

SMITH scrambles down into the depression. What could the old
man have been looking at so intently?

*

*

He looks around. Then something about the shape of the mound
in front of him intrigues him. He starts to pull at the
foliage...

*

*

*

48

EXT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/YARD/BARN - DAY 13

48

CHARLOTTE is helping GWEN, GIDEON and JACK stack the hay in
the barn.

CHARLOTTE

I am absolutely exhausted.

GIDEON

You'll get used to it, ma'am.

49

INT. THE WHEATSHEAF PUB - DAY 13

49

NATHAN and DENNING at a corner table, SIMON behind the bar.

It's early and very quiet.

DENNING

I suppose the sun is over the
yardarm somewhere in the world.

DENNING takes a swallow of beer, knows something is on
NATHAN's mind.

NATHAN

Do you believe in ghosts, Denning?

This stops DENNING in his tracks.

DENNING

Ghosts?

NATHAN

Charlie said... something about
seeing my son.

DENNING

Charlie wants to get your
attention, so he says the one thing
that is guaranteed to do just that.

NATHAN

One night, in the corridor outside
my bedroom in Shepzyo House, I
saw... a woman.

DENNING

What sort of woman?

NATHAN

Her clothes were strange. She had a
book of light in her hand.

DENNING

The Bible?

NATHAN

Not the Bible. A book with actual
light emanating from it. The house
was in darkness but I saw her face
clearly by that glowing light.

DENNING

Who was she?

NATHAN

I have no idea. But Gabriel drew an
image of a woman with a book, so
did Harriet -

DENNING

Are you seriously telling me you
all saw a ghost? The same ghost?

NATHAN

When I was out looking for Charlie
I saw bright lights, running fast
towards me down the lane.

DENNING

What are you saying? You had a
vision? Angels?

NATHAN

No. I don't know. In all the years
you have dealt with the dead and
the dying and the bereaved... have
you ever seen anything you could
not explain?

DENNING

Never.

CHARLOTTE looks up to where JACK and GIDEON are putting the
finishing touches to filling the barn with hay.

GWEN pours them mugs of cider which she hands up to them.

The OLD MAN is walking slowly, unnoticed but directly towards CHARLOTTE. He picks up a discarded scythe.

CHARLOTTE

Now that - though I say so myself -
was a good day's work.

GIDEON

Time for a touch of the good stuff
at The Wheatsheaf, I reckon.

CHARLOTTE

When was the last time you didn't
end your day at The Wheatsheaf,
Gideon?

GIDEON

Sunday, ma'am.

GWEN

(Explains)
Cos they're not open on Sundays.

JACK

Ma'am.

JACK is looking out of the barn and CHARLOTTE turns to follow his look -

The OLD MAN is walking towards her, the scythe in his hand.

CHARLOTTE

Hello -

CHARLOTTE looks at GWEN - who is this? GWEN shrugs her shoulders.

The OLD MAN keeps walking towards her, never deviating -

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I'm Charlotte Appleby, the mistress
here, can I help -

The OLD MAN raises the scythe above CHARLOTTE.

GWEN screams.

CHARLOTTE is fixed like a moth in a flame, the scythe about to cleave her skull -

The village is quiet, light spilling out of the old pub.

52

INT. VILLAGE/THE WHEATSHEAF PUB - DAY 13

52

The murmur of conversation in the pub, SIMON behind his bar.
NATHAN and DENNING at a corner table.

NATHAN
The woman in my house?

DENNING
A trick of the light.

NATHAN
Lights in the field?

DENNING
The brain is an amazing and
mischievous organ. Who keeps
telling me that?

NATHAN
I know, I know.

DENNING
Anyway, I thought you were meant to
be a scientist.

NATHAN
So did I.

They touch mugs, down their drinks.

DENNING
Simon! Chaps dying of thirst over
here.

The door crashes open and JACK is standing there, so out of
breath he can barely speak.

NATHAN
Jack? What on earth's the matter?

JACK
Mrs Appleby, sir!

EXT. BROCKLEY COMBE/MINE ENTRANCE - DAY

*

SMITH and his COLLEAGUES have descended into the depression
via a ladder.

*
*

They are busily digging and taking away buckets of stones and
rubble to reveal some sort of man-made structure.

*
*

53

INT. AGNES' COTTAGE - DUSK 13

53

AGNES finishes her lonely meal, then walks next door to check on her CHILDREN.

BATHSHEBA and the GIRLS are asleep.

But CHARLIE lies on his truckle bed, his cheeks wet with tears.

AGNES
Charlie?

AGNES sits on the bed next to him.

AGNES (CONT'D)
What can be so bad, my brave man?

A beat.

CHARLIE
Are you my mother?

AGNES
(Shocked)
What? Of course I am, what a thing
to say!

CHARLIE
They said I didn't belong to you or
the village.

AGNES
Who said that? These wretched Boys?

CHARLIE nods.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Then they are liars! Vile, nasty,
spiteful little liars! I am your
mother and this is where you
belong.

CHARLIE puts his arms around AGNES, holds her tight, very
raw.

AGNES holds him tight, fierce with love for him.

54

INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT 13

54 *

NATHAN runs into his house, where a concerned GIDEON and GWEN
are waiting for him.

NATHAN
Where is she?

GWEN
In your study, sir.

NATHAN hurries into the house -

55

INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/CORRIDOR/STUDY - NIGHT 13

55

- and walks quickly to the study.

CHARLOTTE turns at the sound of the door opening and throws herself into his arms.

NATHAN
Are you hurt?

CHARLOTTE shakes her head.

CHARLOTTE
I'm fine.

NATHAN holds her at arm's length, studies her face -

NATHAN
You promise me?
(Firm)
Where is he?

CHARLOTTE
He didn't hurt me, Nathan -

NATHAN
Which does not mean I will not hurt him. Where is he?

CHARLOTTE
He is a very old and very confused man.

CHARLOTTE nods towards the solar.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Please, Nathan. For me.

56

INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/SOLAR - NIGHT 13

56

NATHAN lets himself into the solar, closes the door behind him.

There is the OLD MAN, slumped in a chair, physically and emotionally exhausted.

NATHAN
My name is Nathan Appleby and I am the master of Shepzoy House. Who the hell are you, sir?

The OLD MAN (EBENEZER) raises his weary head, but looks at NATHAN with something close to contempt.

EBENEZER
My name is Ebenezer Alsop.

NATHAN
What are you doing here?

EBENEZER

What are you doing here? They've started again, after all these years.

NATHAN

What has started again? You are making -

EBENEZER

The voices.

NATHAN

If you want my help, sir, ask for it. Do not threaten my wife.

EBENEZER

Your help? What help can an Appleby ever give me?

NATHAN

(Impatient)

You are testing my patience.

EBENEZER

When I was a boy I worked the Appleby mine.

NATHAN

There is no Appleby mine.

EBENEZER

They used us boys from the workhouse in Taunton, never the village lads. Don't risk the village lads, no sir.

A beat as EBENEZER calms himself. Remembers.

Without even thinking, NATHAN reaches for his notebook.

EBENEZER (CONT'D)

'Twas a terrible place, hot as Hell and black as the Devil. Every hour on the hour we would call out to each other, to let us know we were all safe. David... Harrington...

CHARLIE is awake instantly, his nerves on edge.

He stares at the shutters, knows what is coming next...

David... Harrington... Abraham... Henry... Benjamin...

Ebenezer.....

CHARLIE

Not tonight. I don't want to play
tonight.

A long beat. Have they gone?

David... Harrington... Abraham... Henry... Benjamin...
Ebenezer.....

CHARLIE tries to wake AGNES but he can't do it.

He tries to shout out her name - but no sound comes out of
his mouth!

David... Harrington... Abraham... Henry... Benjamin...
Ebenezer..... CHARLIE.

CHARLIE dives under the bed, eyes tightly shut, his breathing
loud. Puts his hands over his ears.

58

INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/SOLAR - NIGHT 13

58

EBENEZER

I was the last one to join the gang
so they was always the pushers and
I was always the trapper.

NATHAN

The trapper?

EBENEZER

Worst job in the mine. The
trapper's job was to open and close
the flap so that air did get into
the tunnels. Twelve hours in a hole
the size of a child's coffin, cut
into the side of the tunnel. No
light allowed, nobody to talk to.

EBENEZER remembers the horror of it all.

EBENEZER (CONT'D)

Some of the trappers went mad. Some
killed 'emselves rather than go
back underneath.

59

INT. AGNES' COTTAGE - NIGHT 13

59

CHARLIE takes his hands from his ears.

Silence.

Has he made it?

*

He turns his head - next to the bed, between the bed and the window, are some of Nathan's TOY SOLDIERS. *

CHARLIE slides out from under the bed, stands up. *

Now he can see that the TOY SOLDIERS are neatly arranged, *
weighing down the lock of hair and the letter. *

The sound of CHILDREN GENTLY LAUGHING outside.

CHARLIE picks it up the letter. *

60 **INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/SOLAR - NIGHT 13** 60

The effort is starting to diminish EBENEZER's remaining
stores of life but NATHAN is insistent, pushing him on.

EBENEZER

That last day... I couldn't stand
it any more. The darkness. The
terrible weight of it on my eyes...
I was nine years old, sir! I had no
mother and father of my own!

NATHAN

Just tell me what happened.

EBENEZER

I climbed up to the surface, to the
sunlight, even though I knew I
would be beaten. Then I heard the
whole valley rumble. The mine was
caving in!

61 **EXT. AGNES' COTTAGE - NIGHT 13** 61

The door to the cottage is wide open.

On the horizon, CHARLIE walks away from the cottage.

62 **INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/SOLAR - NIGHT 13** 62

EBENEZER stares out of the window.

EBENEZER

If there was a landslip, men on the
surface would shout down to the
trapper, who'd sound the alarm
but... But I wasn't in the
coffin... so the boys never got
their warning.

A beat as he remembers.

EBENEZER (CONT'D)

I ran to the office and alerted the
overseers. Old man Appleby was
there -

NATHAN looks up from his notes.

NATHAN

My great grandfather?

EBENEZER

I was screaming and screaming at
him... help the boys, help the
boys! But they said 'twas too
difficult, too expensive to dig 'em
out.

NATHAN

My God.

EBENEZER

They died, sir. Every one. I could
hear 'em screaming and crying for
days. Then it stopped. They were
only workhouse boys, what did it
matter? And now I hear them again.
My poor, angry boys.

A smashing on the window makes both men jump -

It's AGNES. She's in her nightdress, eyes and hair wild.

63

EXT. VALLEY/MINE ENTRANCE - DAWN 14

63

NATHAN throws a rucksack over his shoulder.

GIDEON and other WORKERS arriving at the scene, agitated,
have heard that Charlie is missing.

A teary AGNES is comforted by BATHSHEBA and her other
DAUGHTERS.

At the foot of the ladder SMITH comes out of the tunnel with
his ASSISTANT, coughing.

*
*
*

SMITH

The tunnel opens into a system of
other tunnels, unstable at the best
of times -

CHARLOTTE

(To Nathan)

You don't even know Charlie is down
there.

NATHAN glances over at the devastated AGNES.

*

NATHAN
He's down there.

SMITH

The tunnels were built for small children, in places they will be barely three feet wide.

CHARLOTTE

Listen to him, Nathan.

SMITH

If you do get through there will be little or no oxygen. It's madness.

People part as DENNING appears, also with a rucksack and bottle of water, MARY and HARRIET hurrying after him.

NATHAN

What are you doing?

DENNING

Coming with you. Charlie is my responsibility as much as yours.

NATHAN nods, pleased with the company.

CHARLOTTE

If you're not back soon I'm coming in after you.

He turns to CHARLOTTE, touches her cheek, kisses her on the lips.

MARY

(To Denning)

You are a foolish, foolish man.

*

But MARY embraces her husband.

NATHAN and DENNING walk towards the top of the ladder and start to climb down.

*

*

NATHAN catches AGNES' eye -

AGNES

You'll find my boy, sir, I know you will.

*

*

NATHAN and DENNING disappear from sight.

*

GIDEON

"And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up..."

The door from the solar to the outside is open.

Ebenezer is gone.

66 EXT. VALLEY/MINE ENTRANCE - DAY 14 66 *

CHARLOTTE is not used to just waiting and it doesn't suit her.

CHARLOTTE
Mr Smith, I want you to shore this entrance up.

SMITH
Mrs Appleby.

SMITH nods to his ASSISTANTS and they start to organise themselves.

CHARLOTTE
Gideon, take some of the men and
help them. Gwen, go up to the house
and get food and drink.

GWEN
Yes, ma'am.

CHARLOTTE
(To Jack)
Lamps. All the lamps we have.

67 INT. TUNNEL - DAY 14 67

NATHAN and DENNING struggle deeper and deeper into the labyrinth.

DENNING in particular is really struggling, lungs screaming in the thin air.

The sound of DENNING gagging makes NATHAN turn.

DENNING
The air's so thin.

NATHAN
Go back, Matthew.

DENNING

NATHAN hears - does he? - the sound of a CHILD'S LAUGHTER, holds his lamp up.

NATHAN

Did you hear that? A child
laughing.

DENNING shakes his head -

DENNING

I can just hear the sound of my own
blood pounding in my ears.

NATHAN

(Shouting)

Charlie! Charlie!

NATHAN waits but there is no reply. Just the silence of the earth.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

We must push on. Can you do it?

DENNING nods, brave. The two men push on deeper into the tunnel.

68

EXT. VALLEY/MINE ENTRANCE - DAY 14

68

People sit quietly, barely talking, eating the food that GWEN has served up.

An edgy CHARLOTTE sits on a grassy bank with AGNES.

AGNES

What was I to do, ma'am, leave my own sister's boy in the workhouse? And I loved him. Right from the start, I loved that boy as if he were my own.

69

INT. TUNNEL/CAVERN - DAY 14

69

NATHAN and DENNING drag themselves through the tunnel, their lungs and muscles screaming.

Suddenly the roof of the tunnel has gone and NATHAN can stand up.

NATHAN

It opens up!

DENNING

Thank God.

NATHAN reaches down and pulls his friend through.

NATHAN

The surveying must have disturbed
the old tunnels.

NATHAN and - especially - DENNING are in physical trouble
now, struggling to breathe, dizzy, headaches ...

DENNING

Wait, Appleby, wait.

DENNING hunkers onto his knees, coughing.

They notice that the flames in their lamps are getting
smaller and smaller until they are barely still alight -

NATHAN

We can't stay here.

DENNING

Just let me catch my breath -

NATHAN

There is no breath to catch, we
have to move on!

NATHAN drags DENNING to his feet.

The two men stumble on into the darkness.

70

EXT. VALLEY/MINE ENTRANCE - DAY 14

70

GWEN sits next to the agitated CHARLOTTE, tries to take her
mind off the wait.

GWEN

What was he like, ma'am, when you
first met Mr Appleby?

CHARLOTTE

He was this dashing young man,
running around London, devoted to
his patients, full of new and
radical ideas. Lectures and
parties. Then, when I got him to
stop running around for a moment, I
saw something else... a sadness.

GWEN

Gabriel?

CHARLOTTE

I promised myself that I would love
that sadness out of him.

(MORE)

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Not for him to forget Gabriel -
never that - but to surround him
with our own children, to bring him
that joy again.

GWEN

And so you shall, ma'am. I'm sure
of it.

71

INT. TUNNEL/CAVERN - DAY 14

71

DENNING slumps to his knees, retches.

NATHAN goes back to him, concerned.

NATHAN

We cannot stop here.

DENNING

One moment. Please.

DENNING sits against the wall of the tunnel, trying to suck
in enough air, his head pounding.

NATHAN

Charlie! Charlie!

Nothing.

DENNING

It's no good, man. If the boy came
down here...

NATHAN sees something in the dirt. He picks up the lock of
hair. He bangs the tunnel wall, frustrated and angry.

NATHAN

This God of yours, Denning - absent
or merely cruel?

DENNING

*Shall the thing formed say to Him
that formed it, why hast Thou made
me thus?*

NATHAN

Don't even dare to ask questions,
is that what you're saying? I will
ask questions. I will never stop.

NATHAN pushes deeper into the darkness.

DENNING has no choice but to stagger on after him.

72

EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY 14

72

EBENEZER walks high up on the land, Somerset spread out below him.

He is very weak, near death.

EBENEZER drops to his knees, lies down, his cheek against the turf.

EBENEZER

David... Harrington... Abraham...
Henry... Benjamin.....
Ebenezer.

73

EXT. VALLEY/MINE ENTRANCE - DAY 14

73

A little earth spills from the roof of the tunnel.

CHARLOTTE immediately lifts her head -

CHARLOTTE

What was that?

SMITH

Just the earth settling, nothing more.

CHARLOTTE walks towards the ladder -

*

CHARLOTTE

I'll be the judge of that.

*

*

74

INT. TUNNEL/CAVERN - DAY 14

74

NATHAN's lamp is really struggling now, the flame weak and tiny.

DENNING

Hold the lamps high, there will be more oxygen near the roof of the -

The flames brighten. To reveal that they are in a sort of cavern, much wider and higher than the previous cave.

DENNING (CONT'D)

Appleby! Here!

NATHAN lifts up his light - to reveal a macabre sight:

The SKELETONS of CHILDREN, sat against the curve of the wall where they died, still holding hands.

DENNING (CONT'D)

They're all children. Dear God.

DENNING lowers his head -

DENNING (CONT'D)

*I am the resurrection and the life,
saith the Lord: he that believeth
in me, though he were dead, yet
shall he live: and whosoever liveth
and believeth in me shall never
die.*

NATHAN hears a noise, spins around, hold up his lamp.

Nobody there.

DENNING (CONT'D)

*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and
that he shall stand at the latter
day upon the earth. And though
after my skin worms destroy this
body, yet in my flesh -*

NATHAN walks further into the dark "room", his weak flame
struggling to illuminate the darkness.

NATHAN sees - thinks he sees - a boy pass down a tunnel.

NATHAN

Charlie?!

NATHAN hurries off down the tunnel.

DENNING

(After him)

Appleby! What are you doing?!

But NATHAN doesn't even hear Denning, he's determined to
rescue Charlie.

The caves are pitch dark, confusing, his lamp barely making
an impression.

*David... Harrington... Abraham... Henry... Benjamin...
Ebenezer...*

NATHAN

Charlie!

Nothing.

Then, to his left, again that indistinct blur of red.

NATHAN gives chase again, doing his best to keep his feet in
this dark, dangerous place.

He stands at a junction of tunnels, not sure which way to go,
panting hard.

Then a flash of red leads him into one of the natural
tunnels, almost seeming to lead him on.

NATHAN falls over something and goes sprawling, his lamp going out.

Complete darkness.

NATHAN finds his matches, lights his lamp and a weak orange flame flickers feebly.

David... Harrington... Abraham...

NATHAN sweeps the darkness with his lamp... *Henry...*
Benjamin... Ebenezer...

There, scrunched in a tiny coffin-shaped space in the wall of the tunnel -

... *CHARLIE...*

NATHAN touches CHARLIE's cheek.

It is clear that CHARLIE has been dead for some time and the sheer power of his failure rocks NATHAN to the core.

NATHAN gently lifts CHARLIE out of the coffin, closes CHARLIE's eyes. Sits on the dirty ground and holds the dead boy to his chest.

DENNING staggers into view, takes in the crying NATHAN and the dead boy in his arms.

Then, from far off in the labyrinth, a rumble.

DENNING
We have to get out! Now!

NATHAN stands, holding CHARLIE's limp body in his arms.

DENNING holds up the lamp, spins around -

DENNING (CONT'D)
Which way?

NATHAN shakes his head, has no idea, for once his energy dissipated by the shock of CHARLIE's death.

Another rumble, closer now.

DENNING (CONT'D)
We are going to die.

DENNING is close to giving up, to letting go.

Then NATHAN hears something. A small boy's voice -

GABRIEL
(Out Of Vision)
Daddy. Daddy.

NATHAN
Gabriel?

NATHAN walks forward with his light, towards the sound of the voice.

75 **EXT. VALLEY/MINE ENTRANCE - DAY 14** 75

CHARLOTTE is at the foot of the ladder, peering into the darkness of the tunnel. She glances at her timepiece. *

CHARLOTTE
Nathan!

Nothing.

HARRIET waits with MARY, AGNES with BATHSHEBA and the other SIBLINGS - all looking down into the depression. *

The earth trembles, more dirt falling in the tunnel entrance.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
That is not the earth settling! *

GWEN
Please, ma'am. Wait up here with us. *

CHARLOTTE

Listen!

A rumble grows louder, louder and closer.

SMITH

Landslip! Get out! Now!

But CHARLOTTE will not leave -

CHARLOTTE

Nathan!

SMITH

Mrs Appleby! Now!

There is a terrible noise from within the darkness of the cave as somewhere the earth crashes into a vacuum.

A cloud of dirt and dust plumes out of the hole.

GWEN

Ma'am!

GWEN tries to get down to her mistress but SMITH prevents her.

CHARLOTTE's heart stills -

And then she sees them! It's NATHAN and DENNING, covered in dirt, staggering out of the cave.

She is full of joy and relief, only to see that NATHAN has the dead CHARLIE in his arms.

NATHAN looks up, sees AGNES looking down at him. She drops to her knees in grief and shock, keening.

BATHSHEBA and her SISTERS just stare at their dead brother.

It is a dreadful scene and one that NATHAN will never forget.

76 **EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY 14**

76

EBENEZER lies on the turf, his cheek against the land.
His eyes are open. But EBENEZER ALSOP is dead.

77 **EXT. VALLEY - DAY 14**

77

SMITH, GIDEON, JACK and other WORKERS barricade the entrance to the mine, covering it up forever.

GIDEON crosses himself.

78 **EXT. SHEPZOY HOUSE - NIGHT 14**

78

Our house, quiet on a still night.
A light on in an upstairs window.

79 **INT. SHEPZOY HOUSE/NATHAN & CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 14** 79

NATHAN lies in bed, wide awake.

A sleepy CHARLOTTE kisses her husband, concerned.

NATHAN

I let him down. He trusted me and I
let him down.

CHARLOTTE

Shhh, now. It was an accident.

NATHAN

Every sleeping moment of my life -
and most of the waking ones - I
dreamt of him. Waiting for me by
the lake, launching his boat -

CHARLOTTE

Nathan, Nathan -

NATHAN

Then frightened, shouting out for
me, the cold water in his lungs -

CHARLOTTE

Do not torture yourself.

NATHAN

And now I have failed Charlie, too.

CHARLOTTE

You have nothing to reproach
yourself for. Nothing.

NATHAN

I refused to believe what he was
telling me.

CHARLOTTE

That there are ghosts?

NATHAN turns and looks at his wife -

NATHAN

I heard Gabriel's voice. I'm sure
of it.

CHARLOTTE

You said yourself you were short of
oxygen - seeing things, hearing
things.

But she can see that NATHAN is unconvinced.

CHARLOTTE is desperate to drag him away from the memories of
that dark place.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

There are no ghosts. There is just
you and me.

NATHAN hears the hurt in her voice, touches her cheek.

CHARLOTTE rolls on top of him, her hair cascading over his
face.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

And we are alive, Nathan Appleby.
We are alive.

NATHAN reaches for her, his mouth hungry for hers, grief
sparking to lust between them.

He pushes CHARLOTTE back on the bed and she opens for him,
wanting him, needing him....

80

EXT. FERTILITY TREE - DAWN 15

80

The landscape is empty, eerie.

Charlotte's handkerchief flaps in the summer breeze.

An OWL screeches.

END OF EPISODE TWO