



THE NORTH WATER

PART ONE: "BEHOLD THE MAN"

By

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Based on the novel by Ian McGuire

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A QUOTATION FILLS WHAT SEEMS LIKE A BLACK SCREEN:

"For the world is Hell, and men are on one hand the tormented souls and on the other the devils in it."

[Arthur Schopenhauer]

1

INT. DERELICT BUILDING / OPENING TITLES - DAY

1

The black screen becomes an inky darkness and within it we hear the sound of a man grunting, having sex. We can hear the woman too, but this is purely a transactional union. It is soon over.

We start to sense a little more light as if our eyes are adjusting. We can make out the woman as she re-arranges her clothes and leaves.

She grinds open a heavy door. Suddenly there's a blast of sunlight and we find ourselves trapped in a derelict room with rats scurrying across the floor.

We can see the man now too, his lower-half at least, a knife hanging from his belt as he rearranges his crotch doing up his britches.

As we push in, he moves to the light of the doorway. We see the man raise his fingers to his nose, his face thick with a dark beard. He sniffs them deeply and then sucks two of them clean.

We can see him clearly now, this brute of a man. He is brawny and filthy from hard work and even harder living. His skin is tanned and leathery.

This is HENRY DRAX.

CUT TO TITLE:

PART ONE: "BEHOLD THE MAN"

2

EXT. HULL STREETS - DAY

2

It is early summer, a warm day that threatens to rain. DRAX prowls the busy streets, his shoulders broad but relaxed, his gaze staring directly ahead.

(CONTINUED)

A laden cart passes, piled high with rough cut timber. He breathes in its fragrance, running his tongue along his haphazard teeth.

DRAX stops -- sensing a fresh need arising inside him, small but insistent, a new requirement aching to be met.

He notices the smell of blood from a butchers window. He considers this as he stares through the glass at the meat hanging in the window but it's something else that takes his attention.

On the other side of the street, there is a small group of teenage boys sharing a bottle of grog. DRAX now knows what he wants.

3

INT. DE LA POLE TAVERN - DAY

3

DRAX enters the tavern to find it near empty, the light through the windows warm but the corners dark and full of shadow. He approaches the bar removing first a jackknife, then a halfpenny coin from his pocket.

DRAX

Rum.

DRAX pushes the halfpenny towards the rough barman, whose name is BARRACLOUGH. He shakes his head giving a clear gesture that he is not getting a drink.

DRAX

I'm leaving in the morning on the
Volunteer. I'll give you my note
of hand.

BARRACLOUGH

Do I look like a fool?

DRAX shrugs. He doesn't care if the barman is a fool or not.

DRAX

Then this good knife of mine
against a tot of your rum. Heads
or tails?

(CONTINUED)

DRAX pushes the jackknife towards BARRACLOUGH. He picks it up and unfolds it, testing the blade against the ball of his thumb.

DRAX (CONT'D)
It's a fine knife, that one. Not failed me yet.

BARRACLOUGH takes a shilling from his pocket and tosses it high in the air. He slaps it down hard on the counter.

DRAX (CONT'D)
Heads.

BARRACLOUGH removes his hand from the coin and smiles.

BARRACLOUGH
I'll be glad of such a fine knife.
Thank you for this.

BARRACLOUGH picks up the knife and the coin and stows them in his waistcoat pocket.

BARRACLOUGH (CONT'D)
Now fuck off out of my tavern.

DRAX's expression does not alter. There is no sign of irritation -- losing the knife seems merely part of some greater plan.

He bends down and pulls off his stinking boots and slams them on the bar. BARRACLOUGH instantly recoils from the stench.

DRAX
Toss again.

BARRACLOUGH
I don't want your boots. And get them off my bar.

DRAX
You have my knife. You can't back away now.

BARRACLOUGH
I don't want your stinking bloody boots.

EPISODE 1
3

CONTINUED: (2)

4.
3

DRAX

I'll say it one more time. You
can't back away now.

DRAX is calm and direct, but BARRACLOUGH stays firm.

BARRACLOUGH

I'll do whatever the hell I like.

BAIN (O.C.)

I'll buy you a drink myself if ye
shut the fuck up.

The voice comes from a Shetlander sitting at the end of the counter. He wears canvas britches caked with filth and a stocking cap. His name is BAIN. His long hair and beard are dank with seal grease and he too has a knife hanging from his belt.

DRAX

I'd thank you for that. I've been
whoring all morning and the
whistle's dry.

BAIN nods to BARRACLOUGH who then with a grand show of reluctance, pours a rum. DRAX lifts his boots from the bar and takes the glass over to the fire.

DRAX sits and gulps his drink down. He belches and farts. He looks into the flames as they spit and whistle.

4

INT. THE VOLUNTEER / BROWNLEE'S CABIN - DAY

4

A tin-chest is handed down from the deck to the cabin boy below, his name is JOSEPH HANNAH. PATRICK SUMNER (28) follows into the ship as he climbs down the ladder.

HANNAH leads SUMNER down the narrow companionway past the pantry, through the wardroom bustling with activity, the crewmen turning their heads towards him, and then down another companionway towards his cabin.

HANNAH

This here is your cabin. I'll put
your trunk on your bed.

SUMNER seems reluctant.

(CONTINUED)

HANNAH

It'll be safe.
(nodding to the cabin
at the end)
The Captain is in there.

SUMNER leaves HANNAH and knocks on the door. A gruff voice comes from inside.

BROWNLEE (O.C.)
Yes?

SUMNER
It's Mr Sumner.

BROWNLEE (O.C.)
Ahh, yes. Come in.

SUMNER opens the door and walks inside to find BROWNLEE pouring brandy into two fine crystal glasses. He is 47, sturdy and working-class. SUMNER stays standing, taking in the new environment.

BROWNLEE
I hear you were injured out in
India.

SUMNER
Yes. Shot by a sepoy musket ball
on the first day of the assault
near the Cashmere Gate. My
shinbone bore the brunt, but I'm
recovered now. Not even a limp.

BROWNLEE hands him one of the glasses. They both take a short sip. It tastes good.

BROWNLEE
Glad to hear it.

BROWNLEE gestures for SUMNER to sit, and they both take a seat.

BROWNLEE
(leaning in)
Tell me. Did you see Nicholson
killed?

(CONTINUED)

SUMNER

No.

(sensing Brownlee's
disappointment)

But I did see his body afterwards.
Up on the ridge.

BROWNLEE

An extraordinary man, Nicholson. A
great hero. I heard he sliced a
Pandy clean in half with one swing
of his sword like he was cutting a
cucumber.

BROWNLEE makes a grand gesture of the swing, but SUMNER
seems unimpressed.

SUMNER

He had a Pashtun bodyguard, an
enormous sod named Khan. Slept
outside his tent to protect him.
The rumour was the two of them
were sweethearts.

BROWNLEE shakes his head and smiles.

BROWNLEE

Nothing but jealously. If it
weren't for men like Nicholson the
Empire would have been lost long
ago and then where would we be?

SUMNER

I saw him hang a man once just for
smiling at him and the poor bugger
wasn't even smiling.

BROWNLEE

Lines must be drawn, Mr Sumner.
Surely you agree that civilized
standards must be maintained?
Sometimes we must meet fire with
fire. They killed women and
children, raped them and slashed
their tiny throats? Doesn't a
thing like that require righteous
vengeance?

SUMNER

Oh there was a good deal of that going on. A good deal of the righteous vengeance. Yes, indeed.

BROWNLEE smiles gently. There is something in SUMNER's indifference that he finds oddly appealing, his capacity and willingness not to please.

BROWNLEE

So why did you quit the sixty-first and leave India? It wasn't the leg. A surgeon isn't in need of two good legs.

SUMNER

Not the leg.

BROWNLEE

Then what?

SUMNER

Six months ago my uncle Donal died and left me his dairy farm over in Mayo. It's worth enough to buy me a pretty little house and a nice respectable practice somewhere quiet but wealthy -- Hastings, Scarborough. I like the salt air.

BROWNLEE

So why are you not attending to the ailments of old widows instead of sitting here with me. A famous Irish landowner like yourself, I mean?

SUMNER smiles at the obvious sarcasm.

SUMNER

There are legal complications. Mysterious cousins have appeared out of the woodwork, counter-claimants if you will.

BROWNLEE

It's always the way.

It is clear that BROWNLEE doesn't believe him for one second -- but SUMNER stays strong.

SUMNER

I've been told that the case could take a year to be resolved, and until then I have nothing much to do with myself and no money to do it with. I was passing through Liverpool on my way back to the lawyers in Dublin when I ran into your Mr Baxter in the bar of the Adelphi hotel. We got to talking and when he learned that I was an ex-army surgeon in need of gainful employment he put two and two together and made a four.

BROWNLEE

He's a fierce operator, that Baxter.

BROWNLEE wears a tired grin at the mention of his name.

SUMNER

I'm not expecting the whaling will make me rich, but it will keep me occupied at least. While the cogs of justice turn.

BROWNLEE

Oh, we'll make use of you one way or another. There is always work for the willing.

SUMNER

I'm at your service.

BROWNLEE nods, stands, and walks towards the porthole window. As if on cue, the cabin darkens and the wind picks up, the ship creaking gently.

BROWNLEE

While injuries are common of course, as a rule there's not much doctoring to be done on a whaler.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BROWNLEE (CONT'D)

When the men get sick they either get well again on their own or else they turn in on themselves and die. The potions don't make a great deal of difference.

SUMNER

Potions? I mean no offense but doctors adhere to science, not witchcraft and superstition.

BROWNLEE

You will find the men aboard this ship have little time for science.

SUMNER

Either way, I should examine the medicine chest. There may be some items I need to replace or add.

BROWNLEE

The chest is stowed in your cabin. There's an apothecary on Clifford Street. Get whatever you need and tell them to send the bill to Mr Baxter.

SUMNER

Baxter won't like that much I imagine.

BROWNLEE

Bugger Baxter.

BROWNLEE turns towards him and SUMNER stands up and extends his hand. The captain shakes it firmly.

BROWNLEE

You don't sound much like an Irishman.

SUMNER

I've spent most of my life here, Sir. More of Englishman now.

BROWNLEE

Is that right?

SUMNER

Yes, Captain.

BROWNLEE

Do you know what people call us?
They say we are 'refugees from
civilization'.

SUMNER

(genuinely)

That sounds very appealing to me.

BROWNLEE

Yes. I'm sure. But you'd be wise
to remember that at some point you
have to return.

5

INT. SUMNER'S CABIN - DAY

5

SUMNER's cabin is tiny. There is a single bunk, a desk, and a blubber lamp. The only ornamentation comes from a whalebone walking-stick attached to the wall. The only natural light comes from a small porthole.

SUMNER looks at the ceiling. He listens to the voices above, the heavy footsteps as the ship is prepared for departure.

He turns and shuts the door, locking it with a key left in the keyhole, his confident demeanor dropping now that he is alone.

6

INT. SUMNER'S CABIN - DAY

6

At his desk, SUMNER opens the ship's medicine chest and peers skeptically inside at the contents.

SUMNER

(quietly to himself)

Tragacanth. Spirit of Squills? Was
the last surgeon a fucking druid?

He tugs a pencil stub and writes a list in his own leather-bound notebook: *Mercurial ointment. Ether. Epsom salts. Calomel. Powdered rhubarb.* He waits a beat before writing *Laudanum.*

(CONTINUED)

SUMNER opens his own trunk and takes out a wooden box. He flips open the lid to reveal his tools of the trade -- sharp lancets, various pliers and blades, a large bone saw. He puts this alongside the medicine chest.

SUMNER then padlocks his own trunk, shaking the lock to check that it is secure. He then pushes the trunk under his bunk alongside the medicine chest.

He sits down on his bed and puts the padlock key into his waistcoat pocket. He taps it twice to ensure its presence as a few beads of sweat appear on his forehead.

7 **EXT. CLIFFORD STREET - DAY**

7

As the sky darkens with rain clouds, SUMNER walks down the cobbled street towards the apothecary, a doctor's satchel over this shoulder.

8 **INT. CLIFFORD STREET APOTHECARY - DAY**

8

The chemist checks SUMNER's list. His name is GEOFFREY TURNER, a bald man missing several teeth. He has rolled-up sleeves that reveal the blue fringes of a tattoo.

TURNER
Has Baxter seen this?

SUMNER
You think I'd trouble Baxter with this?

TURNER
He'll be troubled when he sees this bloody bill. I know Baxter, and he's a tight-fisted bastard.

SUMNER
Just fill the order please.

TURNER shakes his head and rubs his hands across his mottled apron. Putting the list on the counter, he points to some of the requests.

TURNER
I can't give you all that Laudanum.

(CONTINUED)

SUMNER

Why not?

TURNER

If I do, I won't get paid for it.
I'll give you the regular
allowance and nothing more.

As TURNER prepares his order, SUMNER steps away from the counter and considers his next move.

On the sidewalls he finds stuffed animals displayed in strange melodramatic poses: a barn owl devouring a field mouse, a badger attacking a ferret, a snake strangling a gibbon. It gives him an idea.

SUMNER

Do you do all these yourself?

SUMNER's tone has changed. He hopes flattery will help get him what he wants.

TURNER

I'm the best taxidermist in town.
You can ask anyone.

SUMNER

What's the biggest beast you've ever stuffed? The very biggest, I mean and tell me the truth.

TURNER

(proudly)
I've done a walrus, a polar bear too. They bring them in off the Greenland ships.

SUMNER

You've stuffed a bear?

TURNER

I have.

SUMNER

Now that's something I'd like to see.

TURNER

I did it for your Mr Baxter. I had him standing up on his hindmost legs with his vicious claws raking the frigid air like this.

TURNER reaches his hands into the air and arranges his face into a ridiculous frozen growl.

SUMNER

Would you ever stuff a whale?

TURNER lets out a hearty laugh. SUMNER joins in.

TURNER

The whale can't be stuffed! Apart from the size, they putrefy too quick. And besides, what would any sane man want with a stuffed bloody whale? Someone did bring me a platypus once.

SUMNER summons a look of admiration, and after a brief pause, he points to something on the list.

SUMNER

Why don't we change the name of this on the bill? Call this absinthe or calomel.

TURNER

We already have calomel.

SUMNER

Ah yes. Absinthe then, let's call this absinthe.

TURNER

I guess we could call it blue vitriol. Some surgeons take a good amount of that.

SUMNER

Blue vitriol it is.

TURNER does a calculation in his head and reluctantly nods his agreement. He turns around and takes out the required supplies from the wall of drawers.

SUMNER breathes a small sigh of relief and then turns to the window as the clouds break and the rain lashes down onto the cobblestones.

9

INT. DE LA POLE TAVERN - DAY

9

The rain rattles at the window panes as DRAX wakes from a long, deep sleep. BAIN is now in the corner and shit-face drunk with a heavy-set prostitute named HESTER.

The only other person in the tavern is ALBERT STUBBS (13) who crouches in the doorway, his clothes filthy.

BAIN

Get over here.

STUBBS walks over to BAIN as DRAX reaches down and pulls his sea-boots back on.

BAIN (CONT'D)

Get me a plate of mussels from the fishmongers on Bourne Street.

Bourne St, ye understand? I don't want to be shitting all the way to Greenland.

BAIN flicks a coin into the air making STUBBS scrabble in the sawdust to find it. He then scurries out the door into the rain.

DRAX watches blankly as BAIN tries to kiss HESTER. She rebuffs him with an avaricious and well-rehearsed squeal. After a few moments, DRAX gets up and walks towards them.

DRAX

Buy me another drink.

BAIN squints at DRAX, shakes his head, and turns back to HESTER attempting another kiss.

DRAX (CONT'D)

Just one more drink and that'll be the last you hear of it.

BAIN ignores him -- but DRAX doesn't move. He simply stands motionless before them. BAIN takes out his blubber knife and slowly stands to face him.

(CONTINUED)

BAIN

I'd sooner cut ye balls off than
buy ye another drink.

BAIN lifts the knife and lays the cold blade against
DRAX's cheekbone. Still DRAX does not move, his features
impassive, barely a breath from his lips.

BAIN (CONT'D)

I could cut ye nose off too and
feed to the porkers out back.

BAIN looks back to HESTER laughing as a loud creak comes
from the bar hinge. DRAX turns to see BARRACLOUGH walking
towards him brandishing a wooden club.

BARRACLOUGH

(to DRAX)
I want you gone.

DRAX looks up at a clock on the wall; it is past six. He
looks back at BAIN, a monstrous tension between them.

DRAX wets his lips and noses the air. He takes in the
stench of BAIN and suddenly lunges at the him, his fist
clenched and raised.

BAIN jolts backwards, preparing for the worst, but DRAX
stops short. He lowers his fist and turns to BARRACLOUGH
who is pointing him to the door with the club.

DRAX

You can stick that shillelagh up
your fucking arse.

With a growl of thunder, DRAX heads out into the driving
rain. He passes STUBBS returning with a plate of fragrant
mussels, protecting them the best he can from the rain.

They lock eyes for a moment. DRAX breathes in his scent.
He feels a new pulse of certainty as to what is to come.
But he does not stop. He walks on.

EPISODE 1
10

CONTINUED:

16.
10

He passes another man racing towards the tavern to avoid the rainstorm. It is SUMNER. We leave DRAX and follow the ship's surgeon back into the tavern.

11

INT. DE LA POLE TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

11

SUMNER enters the tavern, dripping wet. He passes BAIN, HESTER and STUBBS, but pays them little attention. At the counter, BARRACLOUGH is putting away the wooden club.

SUMNER

Rum.

BARRACLOUGH

Do you have the money?

SUMNER

Yes.

BARRACLOUGH

I don't want any more trouble.

SUMNER

I don't want any trouble either. I have money.

12

INT. DE LA POLE TAVERN - DUSK

12

SUMNER sits in a private corner and takes out a bottle of Laudanum from his satchel.

As he glances around to check that no one is looking -- we start to hear his voice, no more than a whisper, as if carried in by the wind.

SUMNER (V.O.)

After all that has beset me, all the betrayal and humiliation, all the disgrace...

SUMNER dispenses a small, but exact amount of laudanum liquid into his glass of rum. He then drinks it down in one glorious sip.

SUMNER (V.O.)

...the death of my parents from typhus;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EPISODE 1
12

CONTINUED:

17.
12

SUMNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

the death of William Harper from
the drink; my many efforts
misdirected or abandoned, my many
plans gone awry.

SUMNER takes from his pocket a leather notebook and his
pencil. He starts to write.

SUMNER (V.O.)

But I am still alive. I am still
intact, still breathing.

SUMNER looks up to see BAIN order a full bottle of rum.
He watches HESTER steal some of his money when his head
is turned.

13 **INT. DELHI HOUSE - DAY**

13

FLASHBACK: An INDIAN BOY, no older than 10 years old;
thin, bare-chested and shoeless stands. This is GAURAV.

14 **INT. DEL LA POLE TAVERN - DUSK**

14

SUMNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Yet, even after India I am still
alive, still intact, still
breathing. It is true that I am
nothing now, a surgeon on a
Yorkshire whaling ship, but isn't
to be 'nothing', if looked at from
a different angle, not to be
'anything' at all.

SUMNER's expression, his stance, the way he holds himself
-- it all softens as the drug takes hold, soothing his
mind, caressing him.

SUMNER (V.O.)

Then not lost as such, but at
liberty. Finally free.

As his eyes become heavy and pupils dilate, SUMNER fights
to hold the pencil. He stops writing but his words
continue.

(CONTINUED)

EPISODE 1
14

CONTINUED:

18.
14

SUMNER (V.O.)

Perhaps it this freedom then that gives me this feeling of perpetual uncertainty? And my dizziness no more than a surprising symptom of my current unbounded state?

The clatter of the rain finally fades and it is replaced by the evening-song of birds, a sound that lulls SUMNER into gentle oblivion.

15 **EXT. HULL STREET - EVENING**

15

A low mist hangs in the air. DRAX is drenched to the bone but unconcerned as he stands in the darkness of an alley.

Out of the murk of the evening comes the sound of a woman singing. The song has a simple poetry, the voice pure and bright. DRAX cocks his head in its direction.

It is HESTER, stumbling down the street and shepherding the drunken BAIN, a bottle of grog in his hand. They pass DRAX, unaware of his presence...

16 **EXT. HULL STREET / ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

16

We follow HESTER's singing down a dark and quiet street, keeping our distance, stalking her and BAIN as if they are our prey. As if we are DRAX.

Then, as they take a sharp right down an alley, DRAX comes out of the shadows ahead of us, facing us, having arrived on the scene from a different direction. In his hand he holds a jagged rock.

He passes us and we follow them all down the alleyway, DRAX in pursuit. He gets closer and closer. His boots make no sound on the wet ground.

DRAX is now close enough to strike and as he lifts the rock, BAIN and HESTER turn a corner, DRAX turning with them, finally upon them at last.

We miss the impact by a second, but we hear the thud of the rock as it hits his skull and the smash of the bottle on the ground.

(CONTINUED)

We arrive to see BAIN slam hard on to the cobblestones, the sound of his teeth shattering like glass.

HESTER turns to DRAX in complete horror and is about to scream, when he whips out a blubber knife and holds it to her throat.

DRAX

Make a noise and I'll slice you open like a fucking codfish.

HESTER holds up her mucky hands in surrender. DRAX puts the knife away and kneels down to ransack the pockets of BAIN. He takes the money and the tobacco and leaves what is left.

HESTER

We need to move this bastard now or I'll be in the shit.

DRAX

So move him.

HESTER

I ain't moving him. You did this, you move him.

HESTER takes no shit from anyone, even DRAX. DRAX kicks open the door of a nearby COAL-SHED. He drags the body inside by the heels.

HESTER

You're a strong fellow.

DRAX

They can find him tomorrow. I'll be gone by then.

HESTER

Why not give us a shilling or two? For all the trouble you've caused.

When DRAX comes out of the coal shed, he flicks a single shilling in the air. It lands on the ground, amidst the dirt and the blood, and as HESTER scrabbles to find it, DRAX slams the coal-shed shut.

17

INT. DE LA POLE TAVERN - NIGHT

17

SUMNER wakes suddenly from his drug-induced slumber with a jolt. Trying to focus, he finds BARRACLOUGH brandishing his club above him.

BARMAN

Get out.

18

EXT. HULL STREETS - NIGHT

18

SUMNER walks towards the dock, visible at the end of the street, the opium still in his bloodstream. He listens to the echoing clack of his boot heels on stone. He listens to the distant laughter, cursing, the creak of cartwheels, a crude harmony of the night coming together in a primitive symphony.

SUMNER (V.O.)

A 'refugee from civilization' is precisely what I need to become. I must dissolve and dissipate, and then after, some time later, I can re-form and finally return.

Up ahead, he sees a man come out of a side alley and stop to look toward him. SUMNER stops too but this man is no more than a vague silhouette.

We, of course, can see that it is DRAX but he turns away from SUMNER and walks towards the dock at the end of the street, the Volunteer waiting for them both to embark.

19

EXT. HUMBER ESTUARY / VFX SHOT - DAY

19

A steam tug pulls the Volunteer up the Humber estuary, the land flat, gulls hovering over the broiling brown water left in the ship's wake.

BROWNLEE (O.S.)

So what do you make of our paddy surgeon?

(CONTINUED)

EPISODE 1
19

CONTINUED:

21.
19

BAXTER (O.S.)
Did you see what I got him for?
Two pounds a month and a shilling
a ton. That's a record near
enough.

BROWNLEE (O.S.)
Do you believe the dead uncle
story and the inheritance?

20

INT. BROWNLEE'S CABIN - DAY

20

BROWNLEE pours a glass of whisky for an elderly BAXTER
who is dressed not as a sailor, but as a businessman with
calf-skin boots and a cutaway coat of navy worsted.

BAXTER
Of course not. Complete hogwash.
He's not the skilled liar he
thinks he is.

BROWNLEE
Do you think he's been cashiered?

BAXTER
Even if he has been, so what? What
do they dismiss you for over there
now anyways? Cheating at bridge.
Drinking too much gin. Buggering
the bugle boy.

Both of the men laugh.

BAXTER (CONT'D)
I'd say he'll do for us.

BROWNLEE hands BAXTER the drink and they both sit.

BROWNLEE
I truly cannot wait to see what
gaggle of shitheads you've got
waiting for me to pick up in
Lerwick.

BAXTER
All good men. Shetlanders, hard
workers, biddable.

(CONTINUED)

BROWNLEE

That doesn't make up for
Cavendish. It's a bad move to make
him first mate.

BAXTER

Cavendish is a great turd and a
whoremonger it's true, but you
need him.

BROWNLEE

You should know I aim to fill the
hold.

BAXTER

(shaking his head)
Fill it with what exactly?

BROWNLEE

More blubber than anyone has seen
for many a year.

BAXTER

You don't need to prove yourself
to me, Arthur. I know what you
are.

BROWNLEE

I'm a whaling man.

BAXTER

And a damned fine one, but what
would be the point? The problem we
have is not you or me, but
history. You remember the *Aurora*
in thirty-eight? It was back by
June, fucking June.

BROWNLEE

With stacks of whalebone as high
as my head lashed onto the
gunwales.

BAXTER

I'm not saying it was easy back
then, it was never easy as you
know, but it could be done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Now we need, what? A two-hundred horsepower steam engine, harpoon guns, and a lot of luck. And even then, odds are you'll come back clean as a whistle.

BROWNLEE

I'll kick these bastards up the arse and fill the hold, you'll see.

BAXTER

(with resignation)

I can't ask that you bury your instinct.

BAXTER leans in conspiratorially.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

But you *cannot* fuck this up, Arthur. Don't misremember what we're up to here. This is not a question of pride, not yours and not mine. And this is definitely not about the fucking fish.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out two sheets of parchment. He unfolds them and pushes them across the table.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Twelve thousand pounds is a considerable heap of money.

BROWNLEE looks at the documents.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

A good deal more than you could ever hope to make from killing whales.

BROWNLEE

Only Cavendish knows?

BAXTER

Yes. Keep it that way.

(CONTINUED)

BROWNLEE

What about Drax?

BAXTER

He doesn't know. But keep him
close and if the time comes you
can call on him.

BROWNLEE

And you can assure me that Captain
Morwood will be there to take my
crew. I can't risk a repeat of the
Percival.

BAXTER

He'll be there.

BROWNLEE looks up from the papers, very serious.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Arthur. Morwood will
be there. He knows if this goes
well, he'll be next in line.

BROWNLEE

This is what it comes to. Sinking
a fine ship for twelve thousand
pounds.

BAXTER

It's the money, Arthur, that's all
it is. The money does what it
wants to do. It doesn't care what
we prefer -- block off one
passageway and it carves a new
one. I can't control the money. I
can't tell it what to do or where
to go next.

BROWNLEE pushes the papers back to BAXTER. He folds them
up and returns them to his pocket.

BROWNLEE

You better pray there's enough ice
up there to make this believable.

EPISODE 1
20

CONTINUED: (4)

25.
20

BAXTER

If there's one man alive who has
the true knack for finding it, I
believe it's you.

BAXTER looks at his pocket watch, a fine piece.

BAXTER

Now get me on the tug and back to
Hull. I have a lunch to attend.

21

EXT. VOLUNTEER DECK / THE NORTH SEA - DAY

21

SUMNER emerges from below-decks as BROWNLEE orders the mainsails unfurled. The men jump to action, everyone working in unison. It is a wondrous sight, the deckhands struggling to control the force of the sails billowing in the wind.

22

EXT. THE NORTH SEA / SUPERIMPOSED MAP - TWILIGHT/NIGHT 22

The *Volunteer* heads north of the Scottish mainland and towards the Orkney Isles. The moon is bright in the clear sky, the sea sturdy.

23

INT. SUMNER'S CABIN - DAY

23

The ship creaks and sways on the swell. SUMNER lies on his bunk reading a well-fingered copy of HOMER's 'THE ILLIAD' when there is a loud knock on the door.

SUMNER

(calling out)

Yes?

CAVENDISH (O.C.)

It's Cavendish.

SUMNER hides the book under his blanket and goes to the door. He opens it to find CAVENDISH (40) staring at him with a sly grin.

SUMNER

Can I help you?

CAVENDISH

What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

SUMNER
Reading.

CAVENDISH
What?

SUMNER
Homer.

CAVENDISH
(mockingly)
So we have an intellectual on
board? I wonder how he'll cope
with us rough brutes of the sea.

SUMNER
Are you in need of something Mr
Cavendish? Do you have some kind
ailment or affliction?

CAVENDISH
Of course not. Strong as a walrus.
No, I came to tell you that once
we get to Lerwick, a few of us
plan to test the achievements of
the local distillery. So far there
is my second mate Jones, who is a
cool customer and claims only to
drink ginger beer, and then there
is --

SUMNER
What has this got to do with me?

CAVENDISH
We are inviting you to join us of
course.

Despite himself, SUMNER seems pleased to be included.

CAVENDISH
(with a grin)
We may need a doctor tonight.

24

INT. SUMNER'S CABIN - DAY

24

With the door shut and CAVENDISH gone, SUMNER pulls the medicine chest from underneath the bunk. He takes out a bottle of Laudanum.

He carefully measures a small amount and drinks it down. He sits back on the bunk and waits, unsure whether it is nerves or excitement in the pit of his stomach.

25

EXT. LERWICK HARBOR - DUSK.

25

Above the low, treeless hills that surround Lerwick, an ashen sky threatens to rain as the *Volunteer* sails into the harbour. A number of other whaling ships are already there, safely moored, sails furled.

26

EXT. THE VOLUNTEER DECK - TWILIGHT

26

SUMNER approaches the men as they lower a whaleboat into the water. The sky above them is getting darker, the lights of the town twinkling in the distance.

CAVENDISH

Here's our surgeon! Mr Sumner,
this is Jones.

JONES (24) is eager and friendly.

JONES

Welcome.

SUMNER

Thank you.

CAVENDISH

And over there is our master
Harpooner, Mr Henry Drax.

DRAX turns towards him. SUMNER seems to recognise DRAX but he is unable to place.

SUMNER

Pleased to make your acquaintance.

DRAX looks SUMNER up and down but says nothing. He turns around and jumps into the whaleboat below.

(CONTINUED)

CAVENDISH

As you'll soon discover, Drax is a man of few words.

27

EXT. LERWICK HARBOR - TWILIGHT

27

With the laudanum in his blood, SUMNER watches DRAX as he singlehandedly rows them towards shore. There is a power about him, his bulk and presence, that is captivating.

CAVENDISH

By Christ, the ungodly stench of her quim. You would not believe it unless you were standing there. I couldn't understand why they would fight over such a quim but then the smaller of the two stabbed the bigger one in the eye and when the knife came out so did the eyeball. Like it does with a seal. Out it popped -- pop!

JONES

(to SUMNER)
First time to Lerwick?

SUMNER

Yes.

JONES

You'll find it a backwards sort of place.

CAVENDISH

And thank God for that! A decent drink and a good wet slice of pussy are all a man requires before he commences the bloody work of whaling. Fortunately those are the only two products that Lerwick excels in.

JONES

If it's whisky and women you're after, you are certainly in the right place.

(CONTINUED)

EPISODE 1
27

CONTINUED:

29.
27

SUMNER
(with a smile)
I feel fortunate to have such
experienced guides.

CAVENDISH
You are fortunate. Drax? What do
you say we show our surgeon the
ins and the outs of this elegant
town?

CAVENDISH makes a crude gesture with his fist -- in and
out. DRAX, who still has not spoken, finally speaks.

DRAX
The cheapest whisky is sixpence. A
decent whore will set you back a
shilling, or possibly two, if your
requirements are more specialised.

CAVENDISH
See what I mean? A man of few
words.

28

INT. MRS BROWNS LERWICK - NIGHT

28

MRS BROWNS is more a parlour than a tavern. When our crew
arrive, it is boisterous and packed to the rafters with
whaling men from across the country all enjoying their
last night on solid ground.

CAVENDISH and DRAX each choose a prostitute and head
upstairs while SUMNER and JONES decline the offers and
find a space to stand.

JONES
You sure you don't want to partake
in Lerwick's finest?

SUMNER
I believe a surgeon needs some
ethics.

JONES seems impressed by this moral stance.

(CONTINUED)

SUMNER

Or perhaps I just don't want to
set sail with a dose of the clap.
And you?

JONES

I have promised to stay faithful
to my Bertha.

SUMNER

Very impressive.

JONES offers SUMNER a cigar which he accepts graciously.

JONES

Can I ask you a question? What are
you doing on the *Volunteer*?

SUMNER

What do you mean?

JONES

The job of a surgeon on a whaling
vessel doesn't seem a fit for you,
someone so experienced from what I
hear.

SUMNER

What have you heard?

JONES

Not a great deal but a ship's
surgeon is usually taken by a
medical student in need of funds,
not a man like you.

SUMNER blows twin tubes of cigar smoke out of nostrils.

SUMNER

Perhaps I am an incurable
eccentric. Or a fool.

JONES

I doubt either is true.

SUMNER looks at JONES, his open face, someone you could
trust.

SUMNER

I was looking for a change, you could say.

JONES

(eyebrows raised,
intrigued)

You mean you are running away?

SUMNER realises that no good can come from this talk and gently shuts it down.

SUMNER

In the end, Baxter made me an offer and I accepted it. Perhaps that was rash of me but now we've begun I'm looking forward to the experience. I intend to keep a diary, make sketches, read.

JONES

The voyage may not be as relaxed as you think. You know the captain has a great deal to prove. Did you hear about the *Percival*?

SUMNER

What of it?

JONES

It was Brownlee's last command. It went down three years ago, crushed to matchwood by a berg, eight man drowned and even more perished of the cold. None that survived made even a sixpence.

SUMNER

Sounds like a misfortune that could happen to anyone.

JONES

But it happened to Brownlee, no one else and a Captain that unfortunate doesn't get another ship. You have to ask yourself, how come he gets another command?

SUMNER
Baxter must trust him.

JONES
(unconvinced)
I guess he must.

SUMNER
So why are you here?

JONES
(shrugging)
Brownlee is reckless, that much is
true, but if he succeeds he may
earn me a good deal of money. And
if he fails, what with his
reputation, no blame will be
attached to me.

SUMNER
You're very shrewd for a young
man.

JONES
I don't intend to end up like the
others. They no longer know what
they're doing or why they are
doing it. I have a plan. Five
years from now, or sooner if I get
my share of luck, I'll have my own
command.

SUMNER
And you think a plan helps a man?

JONES
Men like me need a plan. That's
the God's truth of it.

DRAX heads down the stairs and through the crowds. He overhears a LARGE SHETLANDER make a passing remark about him, which he clocks but does not respond to. He then finds a space next to SUMNER and JONES.

JONES
How was she?

DRAX

For a shilling, I've had worse.

TWO FIDDLERS start to play in the corner and some of the girls begin to dance with a party of DECKHANDS, a rough looking gang.

JONES

They're from the *Zembla*!

JONES, excited to see his old friends, goes to join them leaving SUMNER and DRAX alone. SUMNER watches DRAX as he stares at the merriment with a growing sense of disdain.

SUMNER

Do you not like the music?

DRAX doesn't respond.

SUMNER

Do you like to dance?

DRAX turns and looks at him. SUMNER knows the question is ridiculous but before DRAX can say anything, CAVENDISH arrives buttoning his britches and swinging a bottle of whisky. He offers the bottle around.

CAVENDISH

Our Mr Jones over there is a smug little prick.

SUMNER

He has a plan.

CAVENDISH

Fuck his plan. He wants his own ship, but he won't get it. He has no idea what's going on here.

SUMNER

Which is?

CAVENDISH

Oh nothing much.

This lands on SUMNER but he is soon distracted as the fiddlers increase the pace of the music and the dancers whoop and stamp their feet sending dust into the air.

CAVENDISH leans into SUMNER and shouts over the noise.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)
I heard all about Delhi. I heard
there was money to be made, loot
aplenty! Did you get anything?

DRAX turns towards the conversation.

SUMNER
The Pandys cleaned the city out
before we got inside. All that was
left was stray dogs and broken
furniture; the place was
ransacked.

CAVENDISH
No stolen gold then? No jewels?

SUMNER
Would I be sitting here with you
two bastards if I was rich?

DRAX
There's rich, and then there's
rich.

SUMNER
And I am neither.

CAVENDISH
But you saw some famous butchery
through, I'd bet. Some heinous
fucking violence.

SUMNER
I'm a surgeon.

CAVENDISH
So?

SUMNER
So I'm not impressed by bloodshed.

DRAX
(mockingly)
Not *impressed*?

SUMNER

Surprised then, if you like. I'm not surprised by bloodshed. Not anymore.

DRAX

I'm not too surprised by bloodshed either. Are you surprised, Mr Cavendish?

CAVENDISH

(laughing)

No, not too often. I generally find I can take a little bloodshed in my stride.

At that moment, the LARGE SHETLANDER shouts something in DRAX's direction but he makes no reaction. SUMNER can sense, however, that an action is forming inside DRAX's head.

He watches him lick his lips as he hands the bottle of grog back to CAVENDISH. He then breathes in slowly before heading out onto the crowded floor.

CAVENDISH

Shit. Not again.

SUMNER

What's he doing?

CAVENDISH

Where's Jones? We're gonna need some help.

DRAX pushes through the crowd towards the SHETLANDER, his back to him dancing enthusiastically with some of the other men. DRAX stands and waits behind him, over this shoulder.

Finally, the SHETLANDER turns around, a sudden wave of fear washing over his dirty face. DRAX leans in close and whispers into his ear like a lover might.

The SHETLANDER abruptly backs away, confused, horrified. DRAX grabs the back of his head and punches him twice in the face in rapid succession.

EPISODE 1
29

CONTINUED: (4)

36.
29

SUMNER watches DRAX raises his fist a third time, but before he can deliver the final blow, he is dragged backwards and set upon by the ZEMBLA CREW.

The FIDDLERS stop playing and the music is replaced by screaming, cursing, and the crack of breaking furniture. CAVENDISH hands the bottle of whisky to SUMNER and runs over to join the fray.

CAVENDISH pulls some of the ZEMBLA CREW off DRAX but is knocked to the ground by a DECKHAND. That DECKHAND is then felled by JONES with a punch from behind.

SUMNER watches, uncertain what to do. It's three against ten and while SUMNER would prefer not to fight, he's very aware of his obligations. He takes a final gulp of whisky and then steps into the mayhem.

He drags the DECKHAND away from JONES only to be punched in the face -- hard, hard enough for everything to go dark.

30

EXT. DEHLI STREET - DAY

30

SUMNER, in military uniform, runs down a narrow street but can see nothing but a whirlwind of yellow dust and dirt. His eyes burn with fear, his face spattered with blood and fragments of bone.

A bullet flies past him, hitting a wall and splintering masonry into the air. Then another shot pierces his calf. SUMNER staggers, falls to the ground, crying out in pain.

31

EXT. DEHLI HOUSE - DAY

31

SUMNER crouches in a doorway and prizes off his boot, blood flowing out over the dusty ground. He looks down to find his shin bone poking through the skin as if gasping for air.

SUMNER rips a strip of flannel from his shirt-tail and binds the wound, unable to suppress a howl of pain. He looks up, breathing heavy, tears staining his bloodied cheeks. There above, he sees a black swirl of birds in the dust-filled sky.

32

INT. DELHI HOUSE - DAY

32

SUMNER pushes open the door and hobbles inside. There is dusty matting on the floor and a broken divan pushed up against one wall. There is a water jug on the ground that he finds empty. SUMNER slumps to the floor and starts to break down in tears, desperate.

Then, through the dim and dusty light he sees someone sitting opposite him, watching him. It is an INDIAN BOY, no older than 10 years old; thin, bare-chested and shoeless. His name is GAURAV.

SUMNER

Pani?

SUMNER's throat is parched and his voice hoarse. GAURAV gives no reaction. SUMNER reaches into his pockets as if looking for a coin but finds something else instead.

He waits a beat, considering his options, and then takes from his breast pocket a ring made of gold and embedded with a huge gemstone.

SUMNER

(desperate)

I need water. Pani?

GAURAV moves closer to SUMNER, drawn to the ring that glistens in the dull light of the room.

GAURAV

Pani?

SUMNER

Yes. Pani. But tell no-one I am here.

GAURAV answers in Hindustani, a language SUMNER cannot understand.

SUMNER

Do you understand? Tell no-one.

GAURAV nods and leaves the room. SUMNER returns the ring to his pocket, leans his head against the wall and closes his eyes.

33

EXT. LERWICK HARBOR - NIGHT

33

When SUMNER opens his eyes, swollen from the punches of the brawl, he finds himself on the whaleboat returning to the ship.

He looks up to see DRAX propelling them all through the churning water as if the fight has not affected him at all.

As JONES nurses his raw knuckles, CAVENDISH silently hands SUMNER the bottle of grog which he gulps down.

34

INT. VOLUNTEER COMPANIONWAY - NIGHT

34

DRAX and CAVENDISH carry SUMNER to his cabin but when they try the door, they find it locked.

DRAX fishes around in SUMNER'S pockets and finds two keys -- one of which lets them inside. DRAX keeps the other in his hand.

35

INT. SUMNER'S CABIN - NIGHT

35

DRAX throws SUMNER on the bunk.

CAVENDISH

This unfortunate fellow appears to be in need of a surgeon!

DRAX pays no attention. He scours the room to find where the second key belongs, and before long, he pulls the tin chest from under the bunk.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

DRAX shows him the second key. CAVENDISH sniffs and wipes a fresh smear of blood from his split lip.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

Probably nothing in there but the usual shite.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRAX opens the padlock and removes the contents; a pair of canvas trousers, a balaclava helmet, a copy of 'An Account of the Arctic Regions' by William Scoresby.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

See? Nothing but shite.

DRAX finds a slim mahogany case and opens it up to see a small pipe.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

My, my, an opium pipe.

DRAX sniffs it and then puts it back.

DRAX

That's not it.

CAVENDISH

Not what?

DRAX removes more; a watercolour box, a shaving kit, more books. SUMNER shifts on the bunk. The two men stop and watch him until it is safe again.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

Check the very bottom.

DRAX reaches further in to the chest.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

Anything?

DRAX pulls out a grubby, dog-eared envelope. He removes a document and hands it over to CAVENDISH.

CAVENDISH

You need to learn to read.

(re: the document)

Army discharge papers. He's been court-martialed, no pension, out on his ear.

DRAX

For what?

CAVENDISH

It doesn't say.

DRAX rattles the envelope and tips it upside down...

(CONTINUED)

...a RING falls to the floor -- the ring SUMNER offered to the INDIAN BOY. Both CAVENDISH and DRAX try to grab it, but DRAX is quicker.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)
Paste. Must be.

Above SUMNER's head, there is a small rectangular mirror attached by brass corner-pieces. DRAX takes the ring, licks it once and then scrapes it across the surface of the glass.

CAVENDISH leans forward to see a long grey line, like a hair plucked from a head. He licks his finger and wipes away the dust to get a better sense of the depth of the scoring.

CAVENDISH
Shit. It's deep.

They both look down at SUMNER breathing heavily through his bloody nose, sound asleep.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)
The lying little bastard, this is
stolen Hindoo loot, good stuff
too. Why not sell it on?

DRAX
He thinks it makes him safer.

CAVENDISH laughs, shaking his head in amazement.

CAVENDISH
Safer? Loot like that could get a
man in trouble, and a whaling
voyage is full of dangers. A few
among us will not get home alive.
That's a simple fact.

DRAX holds the ring up into the light to inspect it further.

EPISODE 1
35

CONTINUED: (3)

41.
35

CAVENDISH

And if ever a man perishes while on board or on the ice, it is the appointed task of the first mate to auction off his possessions for the sake of the poor widow, not that this ugly sod will have a wife.

DRAX looks at CAVENDISH, fiercely.

DRAX

But not yet. Not in Lerwick.

CAVENDISH

Fuck no, not yet. I don't mean yet.

DRAX nods, making it clear who is in charge. He puts the ring and the papers back in the envelope. He returns the envelope to the bottom of the trunk and arranges the contents just as before.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

Don't forget the keys.

DRAX returns them to SUMNER's waistcoat and looks down at him, his face bloody and bruised.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

Do you think Brownlee knows?

DRAX

No one knows but us.

36

EXT. NORTH ATLANTIC SEA / SUPER IMPOSED MAP - DAY

36

The *Volunteer* sails through mist, sleet and bitter wind, the sky melding together in a damp weft of roiling and impermeable grayness.

37

INT. SUMNER'S CABIN - DAY

37

With his eyes still bruised from the fight, SUMNER lies on the cabin floor. His feet are secured against the wall as he pukes into a bucket. His copy of *HOMER* slides back and forth across the wooden floor.

38 **EXT. VOLUNTEER DECK - DUSK** 38

Still the *Volunteer* heaves in the swell, the bow of ship rising and falling, rocking side to side at the mercy of the heavy churning waves.

39 **INT. VOLUNTEER WARDROOM - NIGHT** 39

Below decks, the stormy weather is of no concern to the crew who drink tea and eat fatty stew, adjusting their bodies to the movement of the ship. It feels as if the *Volunteer* is floating in space, free of gravity.

40 **INT. SUMNER'S CABIN - NIGHT** 40

SUMNER lies on his bunk as the ship churns and heaves; the wooden beams groaning, the distant laughter of the crew seemingly mocking him.

He takes a bottle of laudanum from the medicine chest. Taking care not to spill a drop, he gulps down some of the precious liquid and lets the world disappear...

41 **INT. SUMNER'S CABIN - DAY** 41

The weather has finally calmed and through the porthole of his cabin, SUMNER can see the soft grey sky and the dark blue sea.

Floating on surface of the sea are the first signs of ice -- shallow disconnected blocks that rise and fall on the gentle swell.

42 **EXT. VOLUNTEER DECK - DAY** 42

SUMNER finds the men busy on deck around him, as slop bags are heaved onto the deck, and rifles and clubs are given out to the crew.

SUMNER walks to the gunwales and breathes in the frigid air. He sees the volcanic cone of Jan Mayen Island in the deep distance. He watches the seabirds hover over the pancakes of ice.

Whilst taking in this incredible beauty, a voice comes from behind. It is OTTO -- Danish and with hands like ham hocks. His tone is gruff but also calm, kind even.

OTTO
I'm Otto. Harpooner.

SUMNER
Sumner. I'm the surgeon.

OTTO
I know.

SUMNER
When should we expect to hunt the first whale?

OTTO
Not until we pass the Cape. The seals come first.

SUMNER
Of course.
(a beat)
I have been reading Scoresbury. He says the Greenland whale can hold a boat-full of men in its mouth?

OTTO
That's true.
(with a smile)
But he's a timid fish, playful and slow which makes him easier to catch. He has no teeth either like a sperm or a cachalot. The danger is his flukes.

SUMNER
And the bear?

OTTO
We caught a she-bear and her cub last year. They shot the old bear, but not before it tore the arm off a deckhand. We brought the younger on board to take home.

SUMNER

For what?

OTTO

A baby bear is worth twenty pounds
at the zoo but it was so afraid of
being on deck it snarled and
snapped and tore about, sending
all the men screaming into the
rigging.

OTTO laughs.

OTTO

The only way to quieten it was to
lower its dead mother to the deck
so it could lay beside her. It
moaned and sobbed and licked the
blood from her wounds. It's an
affectionate animal, the bear.

SUMNER

Did it survive?

OTTO

It was sold to the Germans.

SUMNER

I hope we see one, at the very
least.

OTTO

You will.

OTTO's tone is strange -- as if he knows something. It
confuses SUMNER but before he can respond, OTTO leaves.

On the other side of the ship, SUMNER catches sight of
DRAX, sitting against the gunwales, his legs spread wide,
rubbing oil into his jacket.

After a few moments, CAVENDISH comes to join DRAX and
gives him a mug of steaming tea. SUMNER watches them talk
without being able to hear their words.

EPISODE 1
42

CONTINUED: (3)

45.
42

Then, as if they are talking about him, they both glance in SUMNER's direction; CAVENDISH with the sneeriest of smiles.

43

EXT. VOLUNTEER DECK - DAY

43

As the *Volunteer* approaches the boundary of much heavy sea-ice, two whaleboats are lowered into the sea.

DRAX, JONES, CAVENDISH and OTTO jump aboard with the rest of the crew, all armed with guns, blades and clubs.

44

EXT. VOLUNTEER DECK - DAY

44

With his spyglass in his hand, BROWNLEE emerges on the Quarter Deck to the sound of explosions filling the air. He finds SUMNER at the ship's bow watching the men out on the undulating ice-pack.

BROWNLEE

Here.

SUMNER takes the spyglass and brings to his eye. He can see much clearer now, as the ten men stride across the floe shooting, clubbing, and killing.

SUMNER follows the trails of blood to find DRAX jumping over a large fissure between the floes with strength and commitment.

He watches as DRAX lifts his two-barreled shot gun and shoots a seal dead, and then another. It is like an orchestrated dance, bloody but graceful. SUMNER pulls the spyglass away, breathless...

BROWNLEE

He's relentless.

SUMNER

Yes.

BROWNLEE

It's why Baxter likes him.

(CONTINUED)

SUMNER

Does he get a greater share of the
money?

BROWNLEE

I don't think it's money that
motivates Henry Drax.

SUMNER

Then what?

BROWNLEE

I don't wish to know.

SUMNER looks back to the floe but without the spyglass,
DRAX is barely a smudge of black surrounded by splashes
of red.

45

EXT. ICE PACK - DAY

45

We are now on the ice with DRAX. He is like an automaton,
fulfilling each task at hand before moving on to the next
-- swift, sharp and brutal.

We follow him as he bounds across the ice, jumping over
the cracks and holes in pursuit of two seals caught in
his sights.

He doesn't pause. He doesn't stop. He lifts his gun and
shoots twice as he runs towards the animals. One seal is
killed instantly, the other is hit in the flank and
starts to flee.

Soon, DRAX is upon it. He raises his club and swiftly
brings it down with a dull thud. The seal's suffering is
over. DRAX feels no need to cause it excessive pain.

DRAX flips the dead seal over and in one fluid move he
slices through the fat from head to flippers with his
blubber knife. He skins it like a butcher would skin a
rabbit, clean and precise.

46

EXT. ICE PACK - DAY

46

A blood-soaked DRAX hauls twelve seal skins threaded on a line towards the waiting whaleboats, the *Volunteer* in the distance. When he arrives they congratulate him on the number of kills.

DRAX ignores them, throwing the skins onto the boat. He dips his flensing knife into the icy water to rinse off the blood and jumps aboard.

47

EXT. SEA - DUSK

47

Melancholy sea-shanties sung by the filthy crew fill the air as the sun teeters above the horizon and the boats return to the ship. Behind them, they leave the ice pack as dirty as a butcher's apron.

48

EXT. VOLUNTEER DECK - DUSK / TWILIGHT

48

The seal skins are winched on board in dripping bunches and thrown alongside piles of other skins, heaped high and steaming.

BROWNLEE

Two hundred skins is a good
fucking day.

Everyone cheers.

BROWNLEE

It should yield up to six tons of
oil, and each ton will bring in,
I'd say, with some luck on our
side, forty pounds.

They cheer again.

BROWNLEE (CONT'D)

But we must press on tomorrow
before the pack scatters. We must
not let those Norwegian fuckers
beat us to our prize. Tomorrow
we'll send out a fourth boat, and
any of you who are breathing, and
who can hold a rifle, will be out
there killing.

(CONTINUED)

DRAX
The surgeon could join us.

All eyes fall on DRAX, then onto SUMNER.

CAVENDISH
Unless he has a book to read or
someone's hemorrhoid to ram back
in?

The CREW laugh.

BROWNLEE
(to SUMNER)
Mr Sumner? What do you say?

SUMNER
I'd say I'm able. I say I can do
my best.

BROWNLEE
Good. So tomorrow our surgeon will
join the hunt.

SUMNER does not notice the look that CAVENDISH gives DRAX
-- but we do. SUMNER clearly needs to watch his back.

SUMNER writes in his journal under the dim glow of his
blubber lamp.

SUMNER (V.O.)
Why whaling? Why sealing?

He looks down at the medicine chest as if contemplating
taking some laudanum but he decides against it.

SUMNER (V.O.)
There is no reason and that is its
great genius, the illogic of it,
the near idiocy.

At the pink break of dawn, the boats row towards the ice-
pack. SUMNER wears an Ulan cap and a knitted muffler. He
holds a rifle and a club in-between his legs.

SUMNER (V.O.)

Perhaps life can not to be puzzled out or blathered into submission, but should be lived through and survived in whatever fashion a man can manage.

Alongside SUMNER another whaleboat glides through the calm water surrounded by ice. On that whaleboat sits DRAX, and beside him JOSEPH HANNAH, the cabin boy.

SUMNER (V.O.)

Maybe cleverness will get you nowhere. Maybe it is only the stupid, the brilliantly stupid, who will inherit the earth.

SUMNER gazes past DRAX and out to the ice pack behind, to the seals blissfully unaware of the approaching horror.

SUMNER (V.O.)

Only actions count, only events. It is the body, not the mind. It is the blood, the chemistry that counts. All the rest is vapour and fog.

With the ever-present echo of gunfire, we follow SUMNER across the floe. He is more tentative than the other men, aware of the shifting, groaning, creaking ice beneath his feet.

He comes across a gap in the floe, a foot wide with dark water below. He looks to his left to see DRAX in the near distance thwacking a seal with his club.

SUMNER turns back to the fissure before him -- and then beyond that to a lone seal some hundred yards away lying on the ice. He takes a few steps forward and jumps over.

He makes it with ease, and then plots his journey over the shifting floe towards his prey, the surface below a daunting mix of solid ice and cracks filled with bluish slush.

EPISODE 1
51

CONTINUED:

50.
51

Soon, SUMNER is close enough to risk a shot and he stops. He kneels on the icy surface and takes aim. The seal does not move. It simply stares back at him.

SUMNER prepares the rifle and shoots. The bullet hits the seal on the flank but it is not a fatal blow. It screams, slapping its flippers on the ice.

SUMNER only has a single barrel and so races towards the dying animal with his club held aloft, breathing heavy.

When he gets to the seal, he hits it hard. We are spared the sight of the impact but we can see SUMNER's face as he is hit with the animal's blood. He hits the seal again and then once more until it is done.

SUMNER exhales, feeling an odd sense of satisfaction with his achievement. He turns around, looking for DRAX perhaps, but he is nowhere to be seen.

52 **EXT. ICE PACK - DAY**

52

SUMNER does his best to flense the seal, but his skill is limited, his technique sloppy. His clothes and skin are soon caked with blood. As he stands up, he feels an icy blast of wind approach.

53 **EXT. ICE PACK - DAY**

53

The weather has turned. SUMNER has flensed three further seals and their skins are threaded to a rope which he drags across the ice, dripping a line of blood towards the distant boats.

He is groggy with fatigue, his shoulders raw and aching. In the distance, he spots someone, unsure at first who it is.

SUMNER
(calling out)
Hello???

The wind whips his voice away as it begins to snow, just a gentle flurry at first. SUMNER realises that it is DRAX walking towards the boats, pulling an impossible bundle of skins. SUMNER calls out again.

(CONTINUED)

SUMNER

DRAX!!? I need your help.

DRAX seems to turn towards SUMNER but he doesn't respond as around them the snow falls harder and thicker, making it hard to see.

SUMNER wants to call again but is suddenly faced with a yard-wide gap between two floes which he knows he must jump. SUMNER pauses for breath.

He then hurls the seal skins over the gap -- but they don't make it. They slink pathetically into the dark blue water, lost, wasted.

Furious with himself, SUMNER takes a few steps back and prepares for the jump. He takes a step forward, then a bigger, quicker one and jumps --

Only he doesn't make it. He slams onto the other side of the floe and slips quickly into the water, just as the seal skins did before him.

He flounders for a few seconds, weightless, the shock of the water driving any breath from his lungs -- but he manages to thrash himself out, gasping and screaming for air.

He flings one arm out to gain purchase on the floe edge and tries to heave himself out from the water. He hooks his right elbow onto the surface and with his left hand he forces himself up, groaning with ungodly effort,

He presses down with his left hand, using his elbow as a pivot, and for a brief moment SUMNER can feel the balance shift in his favour, all he needs is one more push...

Then out on the ice, through the falling snow, he sees what looks like DRAX approaching. But in the white and uneven light it turns into someone else.

It is GAURAV, the Indian Boy. He is shirtless and without shoes -- and in his chest there is a hole the size of a fist, a bullet wound, bloody and raw.

SUMNER opens his mouth to cry out, but all his will and strength has drained away.

EPISODE 1
53

CONTINUED: (2)

52.
53

His hands start to slip but this time he cannot or does not try to stop himself from falling. And like the seal skins before him, he slinks into the frigid water below.

Then, a pair of bloodstained boots appear on the edge of the floe. It is DRAX. He stands above the impossibly blue water and watches SUMNER vanish into the darkness.

CUT TO BLACK
END OF EPISODE ONE