

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

by

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Based on the novel by Thomas Hardy

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. TOLL GATE, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY 1

A day in LATE AUGUST. A FIGURE on a hill top; the unpopulated landscape - lush in summer, barren and bleak in winter - curving down to high chalk cliffs with the ocean beyond.

GABRIEL OAK sits watching over his flock with his two DOGS, his face handsome if somewhat weather-beaten beneath a low-crowned felt hat. He has a quality of contentment, calm and stillness. Idly, he plays with a stone in his hand. No sound but the sounds of nature.

Which is why his eye is drawn towards the horizon, the sound of wheels. A CART is approaching. Curious GABRIEL rises and walks closer, as the CART stops at a toll gate and the OLD WAGGONER gets down.

2 EXT. TOLL GATE, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY 2

From GABRIEL's p.o.v, an argument has broken out with the TURNPIKE KEEPER.

WAGGONER

Misses says she won't pay more.

TURNPIKE KEEPER

Then Misses'd best turn back. Price is thrupence.

The WAGGONER sighs, and goes to negotiate with his PASSENGER, as yet unseen. GABRIEL steps closer.

WAGGONER

Perhaps best to pay him. Be dark soon.

She replies - barely heard. The WAGGONER returns.

WAGGONER (CONT'D)

She says she's paid you quite enough.

TURNPIKE KEEPER

Three pence.

A stand-off. Until GABRIEL arrives. He knows the GATEKEEPER. A local.

GABRIEL

Let her through. It's a woman on her own.

Going through the gate, BATHSHEBA EVERDENE very briefly turns to GABRIEL. If she feels gratitude, she can't quite bring herself to express it. Pride wins out. The cart moves on.

CUT TO BLACK:

3 TITLES - 'FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD.' 3

Under TITLES, a series of Wessex landscapes.

- CARROW COVE on a brisk autumn day, the low sun glinting on the sea.

- the CLIFFS of NORCOMBE HILL facing out into the sea in the grip of a winter storm.

- the RIVER AXE in full flow with the melting snows of spring.

- bleak EGDON HEATH in the rain, the road seeming to stretch on forever.

- the gloom of the GREAT FOREST, dark in its depths even on the brightest summer day.

- the mud and stone of ploughed fields in the VALE of BLACKMORE, awaiting planting in March.

This is the stage for our story, quite remote from the rest of the world. A grand landscape, sometimes beautiful, sometimes harsh -

- and finally, the slope of NORCOMBE HILL on a day in LATE SEPTEMBER.

CUT TO BLACK:

4 INT. STABLE, MRS HURST FARM, NORCOMBE HILL - DAWN 4

LATE SEPTEMBER. A chink of light opens out as the stable door is pulled open. BATHSHEBA is silhouetted against the bright light.

5 EXT. MRS HURST'S COTTAGE - DAWN 5

BATHSHEBA leads the horse into the yard of MRS HURST's farm; small, subsistence-level but tidy and well-kept, clinging to the side of the remote hill.

We see her face as she greets the horse; a startlingly vivid face, full of spirit and determination. She rides off.

- 6 EXT. NORCOMBE HILL - DAWN 6
- heading down to the forest that borders the hill.
- 7 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY 7
- BATHSHEBA finds herself in a hollow-way, a path covered by a canopy of trees, too low for rider and horse to pass beneath.
- She looks one way, then the other, to ensure that she's alone then, in a single dextrous movement, then switches from side-saddle to cross-saddle, tucking her dress up - some sort of trousers or breeches revealed beneath. Comfortable now, she lies backwards along the horse so that her head is near its tail, her feet near its shoulders, her eyes to the sky. It's an impressive performance, almost a circus trick, and she smiles in satisfaction to herself as the horse trots forward, the sky showing between the low boughs.
- On the ground behind her, a SCARF.
- 7A EXT. NORCOMBE HILL - DAY 7A
- towards a high vantage point. The panorama is magnificent and she smiles to herself.
- She urges the horse on, a wonderful rider, riding past GABRIEL without even stopping.
- 7B INT. GABRIEL'S COTTAGE,- NIGHT 7B
- The SCARF again, but now it lies on the table of GABRIEL OAK's cottage, a neat, comfortable place.
- GABRIEL sits nearby, counting out money which he locks away in a strong box. He closes his money box.
- His eye returns to the SCARF -
- 8 EXT. GABRIEL'S COTTAGE - DAY 8
- Another day. From his high vantage point, GABRIEL with his sheep and dogs, behind him his cottage.
- He sees BATHSHEBA walking by, below.
- GABRIEL
- Miss!
- In his hand, the lost SCARF. He stays proudly on top of the hill, so she has to climb the hill towards him. He hands her the scarf.

BATHSHEBA

(out of breath)

My scarf. I lost it. You must be Farmer Oak.

(surprise from GABRIEL)

This is your land, I must be trespassing.

GABRIEL

You're welcome here. Gabriel. And you are...?

BATHSHEBA

I'd rather not tell you. It's a very odd name, I try not to say it out loud.

GABRIEL

I'm sure you could get a new one. If you wanted.

(An awkward moment, a misfire. She takes the scarf -)

Forgive me, I can't always..map my mind on my tongue.

BATHSHEBA

Thank you. Farmer Oak.

On BATHSHEBA as she walks away, a small smile appearing.

8A EXT. MRS HURST'S FARM, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY

8A

BATHSHEBA is milking the cows. GABRIEL is herding his sheep nearby, heading up to the small SHEPHERD'S HUT, a kind of CARAVAN from where he guards the sheep.

A greeting between them. She steps out and looks after him. The ice melting -

8B EXT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY

8B

GABRIEL has two dogs, YOUNG GEORGE who barks and nips at the flock, and OLD GEORGE who sits contentedly by BATHSHEBA.

A new development. BATHSHEBA watches GABRIEL go about his work with some admiration. GABRIEL, for his part, is showing off a little.

GABRIEL

Come by, George. Come!

(Returning to BATHSHEBA)

He's keen enough, Young George, but he doesn't know when to stop.

(petting OLD GEORGE)

(MORE)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Not like this one. Been with me a long time, haven't you?

BATHSHEBA

And what's that one called?

GABRIEL

This is Old George.

BATHSHEBA

(she laughs)

Of course. Old George.

And GABRIEL walks away towards his caravan.

GABRIEL

Find me amusing, do you?

9

EXT. NORCOMBE HILL - NIGHT

9

BATHSHEBA is out riding once more. She stops. It's a beautiful night, the stars framing her, steam rising from the horse. From somewhere in the distance, the sound of dogs barking.

Some distance away stands GABRIEL's hut, the small building on wheels that he uses for shelter when watching the flock at night. Smoke rises from the chimney.

But something is amiss.

We follow her towards the caravan. She knocks on the door - no answer. She goes in and finds -

10

INT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - NIGHT

10

GABRIEL lies unconscious in the smoky interior. BATHSHEBA takes in the scene then leaps into action. With all her strength, she drags him upright, slaps his face.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Oak! Mr Oak, wake up! Gabriel Oak!

Nothing. Now she tries to haul him to her feet. But he falls, a dead-weight, across her lap. This is all new to BATHSHEBA. A man in her lap. She takes it in. To her side, a jug of milk. She takes it, throws it into his face.

Gasping, dazed and confused he comes round. Looks up, sees her face. She laughs with relief. GABRIEL is confused, breathless.

GABRIEL

What's the matter? What is it?

BATHSHEBA

Nothing, since you're not dead. I was heading home when I heard the dogs barking.

(she busies herself,
ventilating the hut)

It's very foolish of you, Farmer. Oak. My uncle had a hut just like this, I used to play in it as a little girl and he told me, always, always keep a window open or you'll suffocate.

(- the wetness -)

I'm sorry about the milk. At least it was warm.

(he attempts to stand,
stumbles. Takes her HAND)

Rest a moment. You know, Farmer Oak, I think I may have saved your life.

Her hand in his, as GABRIEL steadies himself.

GABRIEL

Tell me your name. I still don't know your name.

BATHSHEBA

Then find it out. My hand, Mr Oak?

Somewhat reluctantly, he lets go of her hand. She walks out into the night.

GABRIEL sits on the steps and watches her go.

11 EXT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY 11

Next morning. GABRIEL is working his sheep, but his mind is elsewhere. He stops working, his mind wandering.

12 INT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY 12

GABRIEL polishes his boots, puts away his working clothes. A decision has been made.

13 EXT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY 13

GABRIEL walks through his flock and finds a lamb. It has come weeks early, and is the only one. He scoops the tiny thing up.

14 EXT. MRS HURST'S COTTAGE - DAY 14

Accompanied by OLD GEORGE, carrying the lamb, GABRIEL marches towards MRS HURST's, a man with a mission.

Middle-aged, wry and weather-worn, MRS HURST joins her niece in clearing brambles from the cottage garden. Tough work, BATHSHEBA scratched and muddy.

MRS HURST stretches out her back and notices GABRIEL approaching.

MRS HURST
Goodness. Mr Oak.

BATHSHEBA
What does he want?

15 INT. KITCHEN, MRS HURST'S COTTAGE - DAY 15

BATHSHEBA washes the mud from her hands, wipes it from her face, checks her reflection in the small mirror. It will have to do.

16 INT. PARLOUR, MRS HURST'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS 16

GABRIEL and MRS HURST sit in the parlour, a little awkward. BATHSHEBA enters, and he stands abruptly.

GABRIEL
Miss Everdene. Bathsheba. I've brought you a lamb.

BATHSHEBA
(delighted)
Thank you, Farmer Oak! Such a dear thing, that's very sweet of you.

GABRIEL
He's come too soon and won't last the winter. I thought you'd like to rear it instead.

BATHSHEBA
Thank you. That's very kind.

MRS HURST takes the lamb out with her.

MRS HURST
I'll make some tea.

And she makes her exit. Silence.

GABRIEL
The lamb is not why I came.

BATHSHEBA

Go on.

GABRIEL

Well...I wanted to ask, Miss
Everdene, if you'd marry me.

A long moment.

BATHSHEBA

Oh -

This is not the response he wanted -

GABRIEL

I've never asked anyone before.

BATHSHEBA

No, I -

And impulsively he stands.

GABRIEL

Well. I'll leave you now.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Oak -

(he turns, waits)

There are things to consider.

GABRIEL

Someone waiting for you?

BATHSHEBA

No, there's no-one else but that
doesn't mean I'll marry you.

GABRIEL

Good day to you then.

17

EXT. MRS HURST'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

17

BATHSHEBA follows him out.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Oak, stop! I didn't say I
wouldn't marry you either!

(he doesn't understand -
which is it?)

I really haven't ever thought about
it. I need time to consider.

GABRIEL

But I know I can make you happy.
(she's thrown by this)
I have one hundred acres, two
hundred sheep, When I pay off the
money, the farm is ours. You could
have a piano in a year or two.
Flowers and birds. A frame for
cucumbers. A baby perhaps, or two -

BATHSHEBA

Please, Mr Oak, that's too much -

GABRIEL

- or more. And whenever you look up
I'll be there, and whenever I look
up there'll be you.

BATHSHEBA takes this in, imagines it, and makes her decision.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Oak, I do not want a husband.
I'd hate to be some man's property.
I shouldn't mind being a bride at a
wedding, if I could be one without
getting a husband, but -

GABRIEL

That's just stupid talk.

With as much calmness and compassion as she can muster;

BATHSHEBA

You are better off than I, Mr Oak.
I have an education and this dress
and nothing more. You can do much,
much better than me...

GABRIEL

Maybe that's true. But you know
that's not the reason.

BATHSHEBA

I'm too independent for you.
(this sounds more
plausible)
If I ever were to marry, I'd need
somebody to tame me, and you'd
never be able to do it. You'd grow
to despise me.

GABRIEL

(with quiet simplicity)
I would not.
(she takes this in.
A moment, then -)
Goodbye, Miss Everdene.

And with that he turns and goes.

For a moment she follows him, just a step or two. Then she walks back to the cottage. One last look.

GABRIEL walks away, no turning back.

18 EXT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY 18

WINTER. Time passing.

GABRIEL is herding sheep as light snow falls. Hard, physical work.

As night comes on, he rests on the steps of the Shepherd's Hut, the site of BATHSHEBA's rescue.

19 INT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - DAWN 19

Another day. In his caravan, OLD GEORGE by his side, GABRIEL sleeps on.

The barking of YOUNG GEORGE wakes them both. Something is up. He sits, listens.

The sound of sheep bells now. He is on his feet. To OLD GEORGE -

GABRIEL
Stay here, old boy.

20 EXT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - DAWN 20

GABRIEL steps out of the caravan, pulling on his clothes. He listens to the distant barking to find the direction, then runs off.

A broken fence nearby -

20A EXT. GABRIEL'S CARAVAN, NORCOMBE HILL - DAWN 20A

He walks through trees, losing track of the barking for a moment. Coming out of the trees and forest, he crests the hill in search of the flock.

But they have gone. Disappeared. Silence.

Then barking, the sound of the bells, further off this time. He runs -

21

EXT. CLIFFS, NORCOMBE HILL - DAWN

21

A natural basin leads up to cliffs and, beyond that, the sea. The precipice is fenced off, but it is towards this cliff edge that the flock have been harried by YOUNG GEORGE.

GABRIEL stumbles across the darkened hillside after them.

...but it's too late. The young, impetuous dog is barking and snapping at a single remaining sheep, forcing it through a gap in the broken fence and into the darkness beyond. The sheep has gone.

YOUNG GEORGE runs to his master, desperate for approval. But GABRIEL is numb. With a terrible sense of foreboding, he walks towards the gap in the hedge, knowing already what he'll find.

GABRIEL's POV. A glimpse of white below.

22

EXT. BEACH, NORCOMBE HILL - DAY

22

At the bottom of the limestone cliff, the corpses of the flock. Two hundred sheep, all dead.

The sun is up, the water lapping at the corpses. GABRIEL stands exhausted, numb. All of his hopes, his ambitions, the rewards of twenty years hard work, all dead. At his side, YOUNG GEORGE licks his hand, awaiting his reward for a job well done.

He kneels next to YOUNG GEORGE, places his forehead against the dog's and speaks to him quietly.

GABRIEL

Least we didn't marry, eh Georgie?

Then he quickly stands and, without malice but with an awful resignation, he raises his gun.

A shot rings out.

23

INT. GABRIEL'S COTTAGE - DAY

23

Keys and cashbox handed to two GENTLEMAN FARMERS.

FIRST FARMER

Good luck to you, Mr Oak.

SECOND FARMER

And our sympathies.

FIRST FARMER

Where are you heading?

(no reply)

We take no pleasure in this.

GABRIEL ignores them and goes instead to OLD GEORGE.

GABRIEL
Sorry, old boy.

24 EXT. EGDON HEATH - DAY 24

Another day. GABRIEL walks on, everything he owns now in the pack on his back.

Now snow falls. The road across Egdon Heath has disappeared. Desperate for shelter, he sees a barn.

25 INT. BARN - NIGHT 25

GABRIEL wraps himself in his blanket and tries to sleep, his breath hanging in the frozen air.

There's a hole in the roof. GABRIEL looks to the skies, thinks of BATHSHEBA -

26 EXT. MRS HURST'S FARM - DAY 26

MRS HURST
Bathsheba!

A shout. BATHSHEBA, working in the fields, stands. MRS HURST runs towards her, waving something in her hand.

BATHSHEBA
What is it?

A letter. She hands it to BATHSHEBA, breathless. Gasping for air -

MRS HURST
Oh my love, it's your poor Uncle's will.

BATHSHEBA
What does it say? What's happened?

Breathless, MRS HURST indicates.

MRS HURST
Read it! Read!

BATHSHEBA does so -

BATHSHEBA puts her hand to her mouth. Then she embraces her AUNT.

27 EXT. MRS HURST'S COTTAGE - DAY 27

The cart is loaded with suitcases and furniture. In her city dress once more, BATHSHEBA says farewell -

- then clambers aboard, and finds a place amongst the precarious load.

The cart trundles off, BATHSHEBA turning and waving goodbye. Excitement, anticipation. On her lap, the lamb. GABRIEL's gift.

The blare of a trumpet and -

28 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY 28

CLOSE on SERGEANT FRANCIS TROY of the 11th DRAGOON GUARDS. Fine-boned, a neatly-trimmed moustache on a finely structured face.

The DRAGOONS are a splendid sight, a blaze of brass and scarlet on a January day.

They ride towards the market town of CASTERBRIDGE

29 EXT. TOWN SQUARE, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 29

The GUARDS are holding an opportunistic recruiting drive. As TROY and the other troops stand at ease SERGEANT DOGETT, attempts to muster new recruits.

SERGEANT DOGETT

So who'll join us, lads? Which of
you fine boys'll put on the scarlet
uniform and proudly serve his Queen
and Country?...

In amongst the crowd, a YOUNG WOMAN. She's in her best dress, but painfully under-dressed for the cold weather. She's also encumbered by a large, impractical carpet bag. Nevertheless, there's a kind of elation about her, as if she's embarking on some adventure. An escape. This is FANNY ROBBIN.

She pushes through the crowd towards the front, finding herself next to GABRIEL OAK; gaunt now, exhausted.

FANNY ROBBIN

Frank! Over here! Frank, it's
Fanny!

TROY gives her a quick, fond glance, then fixes his eyes forward again.

FANNY

(to GABRIEL)

My sweetheart. Over there.

SERGEANT DOGETT

You, sir...

(he has spotted GABRIEL)

...next to the pretty lady!

(FANNY ROBBIN blushes)

There's a good strong figure of a man. Always room in the ranks for gentlemen of your calibre. Come join us, sir!

A moment of hesitation.

FANNY

Go on. You'd make a fine soldier.

But GABRIEL shakes his head and shrinks back into the crowd, walking away as DOGETT continues.

SERGEANT DOGETT

Or that gentleman there, you look like a patriot. Come on lad, don't be shy, step forward...

GABRIEL takes one more look over his shoulder, then heads on his way.

But FANNY has followed him -

FANNY

You might try Weatherbury!

(GABRIEL turns)

If you're looking for work, try Weatherbury. There's a farm there needs all the help it can get.

GABRIEL

Thank you. I'll do that.

(a moment. He notices her carpet-bag, her thin clothes)

You should have a cloak, cold night like this.

FANNY

(with forced pride)

Oh, no, Francis'll take care of me. He's a sergeant. We're going to be married soon you see.

GABRIEL

But tonight, you have lodgings?

FANNY

No. Not tonight. Not yet.

GABRIEL reaches into his pocket and offers her a coin.

FANNY (CONT'D)

I am taken care of.

(Pride vs. Necessity.

GABRIEL persists.)

But if you're sure can spare it...

(and she takes it)

I'll repay you. I'll send it to
Weatherbury. But please, don't tell
anyone there you saw me. I've run
away you see. Let it be our secret.

GABRIEL nods assent and she hurries off, carrying all her
possessions.

30 EXT. CASTERBRIDGE LANE - DUSK 30

GABRIEL walks on towards Weatherbury now. Exhausted, it's
time to rest.

31 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT 31

A feeble camp fire. Scooping leaves into a pile, GABRIEL
makes a mattress of sorts in the woods. Exhausted from the
day's humiliations, he pulls his blanket up and tries to
sleep.

The NOISES of the wood at night. And then a new noise. SHOUTS
of alarm.

GABRIEL sits. Through the trees, a red glow like the end of a
cigar...

32 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT 32

Half a mile away a fire is clearly visible, blazing out of
control. Human shouts, the panic of cattle and horses.

From the edge of the woods, GABRIEL watches impassively. None
of his business. Nothing to do with him.

Then a decision. He heads off towards the flames.

33 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 33

A hayrick in flames, burning with startling speed and
intensity.

The farmyard is in chaos; livestock crying in panic as men
run uselessly back and forth in the orange light. At present,
it's the only one on fire, but a number of ricks stand close,
and burning straw tumbles through the air, across to the
great BARN that holds the crop.

A rag-tag group of farmhands - JOSEPH, JACOB, BILLY, LABAN, CAINY and JAN - all hurl water uselessly onto the flames. GABRIEL arrives.

GABRIEL
Who's in charge here?

LABAN TALL
Who are you?

GABRIEL
Who's in charge? Where's your farmer?

JOSEPH POORGRASS
Look - the barn!

Sure enough, the fire has spread to the roof of the barn, where all the crop is kept.

GABRIEL
This rick is lost. It's the barn you need to save. D'you understand?

They stare uselessly at the stranger.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Ladder?

JOSEPH POORGRASS
It was on the rick.

GABRIEL thinks for a moment. He takes the scarf from JOSEPH's neck and wraps it around his face, making a make-shift mask. Then he grabs a bucket of water, pours it over his head, and strides towards the barn.

34 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT

34

A haywain has ignited, burning furiously down one side, the side nearest the barn.

GABRIEL
Get it away! Now!

And he leads the men in pulling the flaming cart away from the precious barn.

But it's too late! The barn roof is starting to burn.

They do so, but the cart itself is in flames now. GABRIEL steadies himself and looks across to the barn roof.

35 INT. BARN, RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 35

GABRIEL runs inside, through smoke and the crop, searching for a way to the roof. The whole building is a tinderbox, but he clambers to the highest level despite the flames above him.

36 EXT. BARN, RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 36

And now he appears on the roof (through a hatch? via a ladder? TO BE DISCUSSED) and begins smothering the burning thatch as the MEN watch from below.

37 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DAWN 37

The fire is extinguished. Thick smoke hangs in the air, a battlefield after the fighting. GABRIEL, blackened and exhausted, is washing the soot from his face. He gathers his possessions, ready to move on, when a maid approaches. This is LIDDY -

LIDDY (O.S.)
The farmer's here.

GABRIEL
About time too. Where's he been?

LIDDY
She'd like to thank you.

GABRIEL stops still. Stands straight.

A FIGURE approaches, her face covered against the smoke. A WOMAN. She slows. Stops. She uncovers her face -

BATHSHEBA
No. It can't be.

GABRIEL smiles. And BATHSHEBA EVERDENE, owner of Weatherbury Farm smiles back at him.

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)
Mr Oak, is that really you?

GABRIEL
Do you happen to want a shepherd, ma'am?

BATHSHEBA
As a matter of fact, I do.

38 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 38

As the WORKERS clear away the fire damage, BATHSHEBA and OAK walk.

BATHSHEBA

I owe you an immense debt, Mr Oak.
If I'd lost the barn, I'd have lost
my farm.

GABRIEL

Your farm?

BATHSHEBA

It's my inheritance -

And they turn a corner, REVEALING the main house, a little
run-down perhaps, but still fine and imposing.

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

I loved it here as a little girl.
When my uncle passed away, he left
it to me. Of course it's a little
ragged now but this was once the
finest farm for miles. I intend to
make it so again.

(she glances at Gabriel)

Perhaps you find the idea
preposterous too, Mr Oak?

GABRIEL

I no longer have that luxury.

BATHSHEBA

I'm truly sorry to hear of your
great loss, Mr Oak, but if this
reversal of fortunes causes you any
embarrassment...

(GABRIEL is silent)

I think it best if you address me
as 'ma'am' or 'Miss Everdene'. In
turn I will address you as Mr Oak.

GABRIEL

I understand. Ma'am.

An awkward smile, and she goes.

38A

INT. GREAT HALL, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

38A

BATHSHEBA sits at a great oak table, a cash box in front of
her.

A noise from the doorway - LIDDY, BATHSHEBA's maid, friend
and confidante.

Fiercely protective of her mistress and, despite being the daughter of BILLY SMALLBURY, fiercely proud of her status.

LIDDY

Miss, the philistines are upon us!

The MEN loiter in the doorway, waiting to be paid.

BATHSHEBA

Send them in.

39

INT. GREAT HALL, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

39

A little later. Paid or waiting to be paid are -

JAN COGGAN - strong, capable, reliable, a companionable bachelor.

LABAN TALL. Handsome, conceited, suspicious of GABRIEL's easy charm.

JOSEPH POORGRASS is weak, physically inept, painfully shy, especially around BATHSHEBA.

JACOB SMALLBURY, LIDDY's grandfather, is the self-appointed elder statesman, given to wise pronouncements, alcohol and laziness.

BILLY SMALLBURY, his son, is reliable, slightly put-upon by both father and daughter.

CAINY BALL is an awkward teenager, easily distracted, always in the way.

TEDDY COGGAN, JAN's young brother, is the youngest, indulged and spoiled by the others.

TEMPERANCE and SOBERNESS MILLER are the opposite of what their names suggest; flirtatious, irreverent, 'yielding'.

MRS COGGAN is the housekeeper and cook, JAN's mother, perpetually harassed and dusted in flour.

SUSAN TALL is the ferocious, controlling wife of Laban, perpetually enraged at his boozing, his lack of social advancement.

MARYANN MONEY is LIDDY's side-kick, good-humoured, a dreamer, easily perplexed.

BATHSHEBA hands out the money to each in turn, LIDDY proudly by her side. Next up is -

BATHSHEBA
Joseph Poorgrass! Which one is
Joseph Poorgrass?

JOSPEH POORGRASS steps forward. LIDDY indicates 'hat off'.

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)
And what do you do, Joseph
Poorgrass?

JOSEPH POORGRASS
I does general things and in Spring
I shoot the rooks and help at pig-
killing, Sir, I mean Ma'am.

BATHSHEBA
Here's seven and ninepence, and
another ten shillings as I'm new.

JOSEPH POORGRASS
Thank you, Ma'am.

BATHSHEBA
Now. Fanny Robbin? Where is she?

JACOB SMALLBURY
She has run away ma'am. With a
soldier.

GABRIEL picks up on this -

PENNYWAYS
Not a soldier, a *sergeant*!

Sceptical laughter. BATHSHEBA is unamused.

BATHSHEBA
Bailiff Pennyways, here is ten
shillings and a further ten. This
ends our association. You are
dismissed.

PENNYWAYS
Beg pardon, ma'am?

BATHSHEBA
When my uncle was alive, this was a
fine, productive farm. Since his
death it has fallen into ruin -

PENNYWAYS leans into BATHSHEBA, his face full of menace.
GABRIEL stands, at the ready.

PENNYWAYS
Now see here, *Miss* -

BATHSHEBA

- a fire threatens to destroy the barn and you're nowhere to be found. I have no use for men like you, Mr Pennyways. You are dismissed.

She holds her nerve. PENNYWAYS's bluff is called. A moment as he scans the room for support that will not come. Addressing the others -

PENNYWAYS

I'd get out while you can if I was you!

And he leaves. If BATHSHEBA is shaken, she hides it well. Settling herself.

BATHSHEBA

Now. You've met Mr Oak, our new shepherd. You understand your duties, Mr Oak?

GABRIEL

If I don't, I'll ask you. Ma'am.

BATHSHEBA

(she stands to address the room)

From now on you have a mistress, not a master. I don't yet know my talents in farming, but I shall do my best. If you suppose, because I'm a woman, that I don't know bad from good, right from wrong, then leave. But to those who choose to stay, I promise you this. I shall be up before you are awake, I shall be in the fields before you are up. It is my intention to astonish you all. Now - back to work, please.

She stands and leaves the room. The WORKERS look on, some impressed, some sceptical, some duly astonished.

40

EXT. MELCHESTER MOOR - DUSK

40

As the evening falls, FANNY walks through the mud of a riverside path in barely adequate shoes towards MELCHESTER BARRACKS. She still carries her carpet-bag, still on the move.

It's a barren, bleak landscape, and some of the hope, some of the certainty has gone from FANNY's adventure.

41

EXT. MELCHESTER BARRACKS - DUSK

41

A river. A wall, high and blank, with shuttered windows.
FANNY counts the windows -

FANNY

One, two, three, four...

She picks up a handful of earth, throws it. The small window opens, and TROY appears.

TROY

Who's there?

FANNY

Is it Sergeant Frank Troy?

TROY

Who is it?

FANNY

Frank, don't you know me? Fanny Robbin!

TROY

Fanny!

FANNY

Yes!

TROY

How did you get here?

FANNY

You said I was to come.

TROY

Well...I said that you might.
You're too late!

FANNY

You can't come out and see me?

TROY

No no, the barrack gates are closed
and I have no leave. I'll find you
tomorrow.

FANNY

Tomorrow! Oh, Frank. Then I won't
see you till then?

TROY

Do you have a place to stay?

FANNY

Yes. No. I'll find somewhere. When
will it be?

TROY

What?

FANNY

What you promised...Don't make me say it. You say it first!

TROY

You say it.

FANNY

When will we get married?

TROY

Soon -

FANNY

Have you asked permission?

TROY

If I said I'll marry you, I will.

FANNY

Oh, I love you Francis Troy!

TROY

Shhhh! Tomorrow.

He closes the window but FANNY lingers, full of hope.

42 EXT. CORN EXCHANGE, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 42

Market Day. The building is at the very heart of the town, imposing, high-domed and noisy, a sort of stock-exchange for grain.

Outside, BATHSHEBA and LIDDY hoist hefty bags of grain samples from her carriage and heads towards the entrance.

43 INT. CORN EXCHANGE, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 43

Inside, it's a temple of commerce, and a strictly male preserve that echoes with bargaining, banter and deal-making -

- until BATHSHEBA enters, LIDDY behind her.

BATHSHEBA

(a whisper)

We have a perfect right to be here.

All heads turn. They could not be more surprised if a small elephant had entered the hall. A silence. Then the murmur of gossip, disapproval, some admiration.

Meanwhile, one WELL-DRESSED GENTLEMAN clears his throat.

BOLDWOOD
Gentlemen, shall we return to
business?

This man is BOLDWOOD, forties, self-contained, handsome in a Roman way; dignified, the nearest Casterbridge has to aristocracy, and clearly a step above the tradesmen around him.

Needless to say, BATHSHEBA notices him -

But indifferent, BOLDWOOD returns to business.

44 INT. CORN EXCHANGE, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 44

A little later. Still BATHSHEBA stands alone, looking for her first customer as the MALE CROWD mills around her. LIDDY returns;

LIDDY
Perhaps we should go, Miss.

But a FARMER catches her eye. There's nothing for it -

BATHSHEBA
It's Farmer Stone, isn't it? I'm
Farmer Everdene's niece. He talked
about you with such admiration.

A moment. And the FARMER approaches -

45 INT. CORN EXCHANGE, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 45

And now BATHSHEBA is surrounded by FARMERS. She is enjoying herself now, as she pours the grain sample into FARMER STONE's hand.

FARMER STONE
How much?

BATHSHEBA
Five pounds a quarter.

FARMER STONE
Three pounds ten shillings.

BATHSHEBA
You paid my uncle five pounds. It's
the same grain, Mr Stone.

FARMER STONE
Three pounds ten.

And now BOLDWOOD has approached.

BATHSHEBA

How about you, sir? You'll pay me
five pounds?

He tips his hat and walks away. BATHSHEBA watches him.

FARMER STONE

Very well. Four pounds -

BATHSHEBA

- and ten shillings.

FARMER STONE

Four pounds five.

BATHSHEBA

Perhaps I should move on...

FARMER STONE

Very well. Four and ten.

A handshake, the audience enjoying the show, almost as much
as BATHSHEBA is enjoying the success.

Her eyes seek out BOLDWOOD, but he is already on to more
important matters.

MUSIC UP: The wheezing of a church organ, the sound of the
choir.

46 INT. CHURCH, WEATHERBURY - DAY

46

BATHSHEBA and LIDDY are in their Sunday best, taking their
seats in the congregation.

BATHSHEBA

It was as bad as being married.
Eyes everywhere!

LIDDY

Men! They do like to stare at us.

BATHSHEBA

There was only one man who had the
good sense to pay no attention to
me -

47 INT. CHURCH, WEATHERBURY - DAY

47

A hymn. BOLDWOOD sings in a strong dignified baritone. But
despite BATHSHEBA's glances, he remains maddeningly
indifferent.

Elsewhere, GABRIEL sits in the gallery with the MALE WORKERS,
attracting admiring glances from the WOMEN opposite. He
observes BATHSHEBA, observing BOLDWOOD.

LIDDY

Rich, handsome, it sends the local girls mad. The Taylor sisters worked at him for two years. Jane Perkins spent twenty pounds in new clothes and might as well have thrown it out the window. It's said when he was young his sweetheart jilted him...

BATHSHEBA

People always say that. Women don't jilt men. Men jilt us.

LIDDY

Did someone jilt you, miss?

And there's GABRIEL, talking with the other MEN.

BATHSHEBA

Me? Certainly not. A man did ask to marry me once, some time ago.

LIDDY

And you wouldn't have him?

BATHSHEBA

I thought he wasn't good enough for me.

LIDDY

What a luxury, to have a choice. 'Kiss my foot sir, my face is for mouths of consequence'.

BATHSHEBA

It wasn't like that at all.

LIDDY

Why? Did you love him?

BATHSHEBA doesn't answer.

48

EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

48

Early February morning, and BATHSHEBA is the first in the fields as promised, a shotgun slung across her back, a pair of pheasants hanging by her side.

BATHSHEBA watches and waits, and is about to fire when -

She hears a noise behind her, and turns. MR BOLDWOOD is there on horseback. He rides on.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Boldwood!

BOLDWOOD

Don't shoot me, please.

BATHSHEBA

I had no intention of shooting you.

(nothing)

It's Miss Everdene! Your neighbour.

Farmer Everdene's niece? I'm

managing the farm alone now,

perhaps you'd heard.

BOLDWOOD

Yes, I'm sure you'll do very well.

In the circumstances.

(BATHSHEBA bridles)

Well. As you say, we are

neighbours. Good hunting, Miss

Everdene.

And that's it. BATHSHEBA watches him go.

49

INT. STUDY, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

49

Surrounded by books, papers, dusty boxes, BATHSHEBA and LIDDY are sorting through Farmer Everdene's old belongings.

LIDDY

Listen to this. 'The Rose is red,

The Violet blue, Carnations

sweet...'

BATHSHEBA

What are you doing, Liddy?

LIDDY

It's a valentine. I was going to send it to Joseph Poorgrass, just to see the look of panic on his face.

A gawdy, sentimental confection of paper and lace.

BATHSHEBA

Poor boy. A little far-fetched, isn't it?

LIDDY

Either him or Mr Oak -

BATHSHEBA

(abruptly)

No. Certainly not Mr Oak.

LIDDY

I know! Let's send it to high and mighty Mr Boldwood! Ignoring you like that..

BATHSHEBA

Yes!

LIDDY

Or perhaps not.

BATHSHEBA

No, we must!

LIDDY

We mustn't!

BATHSHEBA

Why not?

LIDDY

Because he won't see the humour -

BATHSHEBA

I'm sure he will. Or perhaps he won't, perhaps it is too much.

LIDDY

Perhaps it is.

(But it's too much fun to miss)

Unless we toss for it.

From the debris, she finds a book.

BATHSHEBA

Open Boldwood, closed -

LIDDY

Joseph Poorgrass.

BATHSHEBA

Closed - Joseph, open - Boldwood.

LIDDY

Are we ready?

BATHSHEBA

Quickly, before I change my mind!

And she tosses the book high into the air. It lands. Open.

50 INT. DINING ROOM, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - DAY 50

THE VALENTINE. It lies in its envelope on the large dining table in Boldwood's large, comfortable house.

BOLDWOOD raises his tea to his lips, and glances casually at the envelope. He turns it over.

Facing him is the wax seal. Imprinted in the red wax the words -

'Marry Me'

Carefully, he places the tea-cup down. He checks the address - yes, no mistake there.

With forensic care, he takes a knife and carefully prises open the envelope so as not to break the seal, then pulls out the card; the gaudy confection of lace and cupids. An entirely foreign object, he holds it with his finger tips.

He opens it, and a perfectly ordered world is knocked out of shape.

51 INT. ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 51

A service is just ending and as the PARISHIONERS disperse, TROY walks towards the PRIEST, splendid in full uniform, nerves concealed behind his swagger.

TROY
Sergeant Troy, for half-past eleven.

PRIEST
Yes, Sergeant Troy and -

TROY
Miss Fanny Robbin. We're getting married.

52 INT. ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 52

Later. TROY, stands erect at the altar, impassive. The sound of a door behind him. He doesn't turn, but smiles in anticipation of the sight of his bride...

But it's only SERGEANT DOGGETT, his best man.

DOGGETT
Sorry I'm late, old boy. Not long now.

A few PARISHIONERS have remained to spectate.

PARISHIONER ONE
(whispers)
Where is she?

TROY doesn't move.

53 EXT. STREET/CHURCH, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 53

And sure enough, here comes FANNY ROBBIN hurrying along. She looks beautiful, a simple bunch of flowers grasped in her hand.

54 INT. ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 54

The PRIEST has now taken a seat. TROY's composure remains intact.

55 EXT. STREET/CHURCH, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 55

ALL SOUL'S CHURCH is up ahead. FANNY pauses for a moment, takes a deep breath, composes herself, suppresses her joy. And enters.

A GROOM stands at the altar. A BRIDE too. Consternation as the small CONGREGATION turn and see FANNY in her wedding dress.

Confusion.

56 INT. ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 56

Meanwhile TROY still waits. Discomfort now. The OLD LADIES whispering. There is some laughter, but TROY's features remain fixed.

The church bells start to chime. DOGETT places his hand on TROY's shoulder.

DOGETT
Don't think she's coming, old boy.

A moment. Then with a snap of his heels TROY turns and marches back down the aisle with as much dignity as he can muster.

As he passes, the OLD LADIES smile sympathetically. 'Poor lamb!' Enraging! Humiliating.

57 EXT. ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY 57

FANNY hurtles across the square just in time to see a stern TROY marching away from the church.

FANNY

Frank! Oh, Frank! Wait!

TROY doesn't break stride as FANNY tries to make light of it.

FANNY (CONT'D)

There's been a mistake! I thought
you told me All Soul's not All
Saint's! I went to the wrong
church! I thought you'd jilted me,
Frank!

(No smile)

I don't blame you, but I'm sure you
did say...or perhaps it was my
mistake after all. Still, we're
here now! Smile, Frank, please?

(He doesn't speak.)

Tomorrow then! We'll get married
tomorrow, just the same?

And TROY stops and turns on her. With barely concealed rage-

TROY

Do you think I'll be humiliated a
second time?

FANNY

It was a mistake, Frank.

TROY

(striding on)

It was.

FANNY

You will marry me though, won't
you, Frank? You promised, and you
know I love you. Don't walk away. I
have nowhere else to go. Tell me, I
beg you, when? When?

People are watching now, she's struggling to maintain her
pride despite growing panic. She takes TROY's arm, he shakes
her off.

There's a final look from TROY before he turns and walks
away, leaving FANNY, heartbroken, standing in the street in
her wedding dress.

58

INT. DINING ROOM, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - DAY

58

'Marry Me'. The words in red wax on the envelope, which now
sits on BOLDWOOD's mantelpiece. BOLDWOOD takes his
breakfast, as before, but now his eye returns to the
envelope.

The BUTLER arrives, bearing the post. BOLDWOOD sorts through
it eagerly, stops -

He crosses to the window. In the Everdene fields beyond,
GABRIEL.

59 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

59

GABRIEL is stacking logs with the help of little TEDDY COGGAN. BOLDWOOD strides purposefully across fields towards him.

BOLDWOOD
Mr Oak!

A little LATER. BOLDWOOD now helping GABRIEL with his work.

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)
A letter came to me by mistake.
'The new shepherd, Weatherbury' I
can only assume it's for you.

GABRIEL opens the letter. The COIN, returned from Fanny as promised. A simple note. 'Thank You For Your Kindness'

BOLDWOOD, meanwhile, produces his pocket book, containing the letter. With forced casualness -

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)
On a separate matter, between
ourselves, I wonder, do you know
whose handwriting this is?
(He shows him the
envelope)
It's just a foolish thing -

GABRIEL
There was no name?

BOLDWOOD
No, I believe that is where the fun
lies. Do you recognise it?

He does. And with recognition, he understands BATHSHEBA's intentions too. Her perceived ambition. It all makes terrible sense.

GABRIEL
Miss Everdene's.

60 INT. CORN EXCHANGE, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY

60

Deaf to the noise around him, BOLDWOOD watches BATHSHEBA.

For the first time he notices the curve of her neck, the colour of her lips, the shape of her ear. To FARMER STONE;

BOLDWOOD

Is Miss Everdene considered
attractive?

FARMER STONE

(has he gone mad?)
Very much indeed.

FARMERS surround her, as she smiles, banters, negotiates with
a HANDSOME YOUNG MAN, all watched from BOLDWOOD'S P.O.V.
Another new experience - jealousy.

Suddenly she looks across, and catches his eye. Hurriedly he
looks away.

This is all new. For the first time in his life, his heart
has begun to move within him.

60A INT. BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - NIGHT

60A

And so he sits. Insomniac. All peace of mind lost.

61 EXT. YARD - DAY

61

End of May and the time comes for sheep-washing. To this end,
a series of fences have been set up, obliging the sheep to
enter a deep stonework pool.

Up to their chests in chill water, stand GABRIEL and his
assistant shepherd JAN. They must hold the panicked sheep
under water then hoist them on to dry land.

BATHSHEBA and LIDDY arrive.

LIDDY

Careful you don't get wet, Mr Oak!

GABRIEL

Perhaps you'd care to lend a hand?

The MEN laugh.

BATHSHEBA

You don't think I could? Very well.

And BATHSHEBA strides towards the water and, without
hesitation, steps right in.

She is able and strong, smiling at the applause of the
laughter of the others then getting on with the work.

For one moment, in the muddy water, we see the shapes of
BATHSHEBA and GABRIEL's hands meeting for a moment.

62

EXT. YARD - DAY

62

BOLDWOOD, in his Sunday best, hears the shouts and splashes of the sheep-dipping, and approaches. Then stops.

The most extraordinary sight. BATHSHEBA up to her waist in the water, manoeuvring the sheep through the water.

LIDDY approaches him quickly and he speaks to her for a moment, passing on a message.

LIDDY

Mister Boldwood wondered if he might have a word.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Boldwood, of course, perhaps later? I'll need to -

BOLDWOOD nods and leaves. BATHSHEBA hauls herself out of the water. The MEN exchange meaningful glances.

GABRIEL

Back to work.

They do so. But GABRIEL can't help but watch BATHSHEBA.

63

EXT/INT. TERRACE/GREAT HALL, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - DAY

63

The house is beautiful. BATHSHEBA and BOLDWOOD stand on the terrace, somewhat self-conscious.

BOLDWOOD

One-thousand acres, a mix of arable and livestock. An orchard. A glasshouse. I have some interesting pigs.

(BATHSHEBA laughs.

BOLDWOOD too)

Some other time perhaps.

BATHSHEBA and BOLDWOOD walk through the fine hall, BOLDWOOD watching her, noting how she fits in here. This seems right.

BATHSHEBA

You have a very beautiful house.

(no reply from BOLDWOOD)

Mr Boldwood?

BOLDWOOD

Forgive me, perhaps I should...I'll speak plainly. I have felt lately, more and more, that my present way of living is bad, in every respect bad. But we all change, and my change in this matter came with seeing you.

And BATHSHEBA knows what must come next.

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)

Miss Everdene, I want, very much,
more than anything, to have you as
my wife.

(grasping her hand -)

Miss Everdene - marry me!

BATHSHEBA

I feel, Mr Boldwood, though I
respect you very much, I do not
feel - what would justify me to -
in accepting your offer.

BOLDWOOD looks as if he has been struck.

BOLDWOOD

I see. I have known disappointments
in the past, and I wouldn't have
asked in this instance if I hadn't
been led to believe -

(he fumbles in his pocket,
the ENVELOPE)

Unless...unless I'm mistaken -

BATHSHEBA

The valentine. No, you're not
mistaken, but I should never have
sent it. Forgive me, it was
thoughtless to disturb your peace
of mind -

BOLDWOOD

'Thoughtless'?

BATHSHEBA

Impetuous, frivolous -

BOLDWOOD

So - you meant it as a *joke*?

BATHSHEBA

No! Not a *joke*, not exactly -

BOLDWOOD

Then a premonition perhaps? Of
future feelings?

BATHSHEBA

I haven't fallen in love with you.
Certainly I may say that. I like
and respect you very much but
you're too...dignified for me.

BOLDWOOD

Too dignified? I see. Perhaps you think I'm too old, but I'll take more care of you than anyone your own age -

BATHSHEBA

- I'm sure you would -

BOLDWOOD

I'll protect you, and care for you, you shall have no worries, your farm shall be looked after by a man, you shall never have to so much as look out of doors at harvest time.

(BATHSHEBA shakes her head)

You shall have dresses, a gig, a piano -

(- and smiles, despite herself)

I amuse you?

BATHSHEBA

No, it's only...I have my own piano, and my own farm and I have no need for a husband.

(BOLDWOOD doesn't know what to say)

I think I'd like to return home. My hat, please...

BOLDWOOD

Yes, yes of course. I'll...I'll get someone to drive you. Your hat.

But he's in something of a daze, knocked sideways by this disappointment. BATHSHEBA sees this, and takes pity.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Boldwood. I have made you miserable. It was very wicked of me

-

And in her apology he sees his chance.

BOLDWOOD

Will you reconsider?

She takes him in. Handsome, dignified. Would it be so bad?

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)

Can I hope for a change of heart?

BATHSHEBA

Don't hope. Let me think.

BOLDWOOD
Yes. Yes, I'll give you time.
(He smiles, gives her the
hat)
I will wait.

64 INT. WORKSHOP, EVERDENE FARM - DUSK

64

GABRIEL works alone by lamplight, sharpening blades on a pedal-driven grindstone in anticipation of the impending shearing. Sparks illuminate GABRIEL's face.

BATHSHEBA
You're working late, Mr Oak.

GABRIEL
We'll need sharp blades for the shearing.

His manner is subdued. There's something on his mind. So -

BATHSHEBA
Will you teach me?

GABRIEL gives up his seat at the grindstone. BATHSHEBA sits down, and GABRIEL sets the wheel in motion.

GABRIEL
Here -
(he sits behind, arms
wrapped around her)
Incline the edge so. That's right.
Like that.

His hands cover hers. The wheel spins. Too casually -

BATHSHEBA
I wanted to ask, did the men say
anything today, about Mr Boldwood?

GABRIEL
Yes they did.

BATHSHEBA
What did they say?

GABRIEL
That you'd be married before the
end of the year.

BATHSHEBA
I see. Well I'd like you to
contradict it, to the men.

And any warmth there might have been instantly disappears.
The wheel spins, then GABRIEL speaks -

GABRIEL

Well, Bathsheba -

BATHSHEBA

'Miss Everdene' please -

GABRIEL

- if Mr Boldwood did really speak of marriage then I'm not going to tell stories just to please you.

BATHSHEBA

I said that I wanted you just to mention that it was not true that I was going to marry him.

GABRIEL

I can say that if you wish. I could also give an opinion of what you've done.

BATHSHEBA

I dare say, but I do not want your opinion, Mr Oak!

GABRIEL

I suppose not.

A beat.

BATHSHEBA

Well, what is your opinion?

GABRIEL

That you are greatly to blame for playing pranks on a man like Mr Boldwood. Your actions were unworthy of you.

BATHSHEBA

Unworthy! May I ask where my unworthiness lies? In rejecting you perhaps?

GABRIEL

I've long given up thinking of that.

BATHSHEBA

Or wishing it?

GABRIEL

Or wishing it either.

(Does he mean it? Has he moved on? This blow hits too. With great dignity)
But I will say this;
(MORE)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Leading on a man you don't care for
is beneath you.

And with this parting shot he turns and walks away.

BATHSHEBA

I cannot allow an employee to
criticise my private conduct. You
will please leave the farm at the
end of the week!

GABRIEL

(calmly)
I'd prefer to go at once.

BATHSHEBA

Then go! I never want to see your
face again!

A long moment.

GABRIEL

Very well 'Miss Everdene'. I'll go
first thing tomorrow.

He walks away with great dignity, and BATHSHEBA can only
watch him go.

65 EXT. GABRIEL'S COTTAGE - DAY

65

His possessions on his back, GABRIEL closes the door of his
small, comfortable cottage, and sets off once again.

66 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

66

Bathsheba gallops up, Jan and Joseph running alongside.
Scattered across the field the sheep lie on their side, their
stomachs swollen, Jacob and Billy examining them.

BATHSHEBA

What is wrong with them?

JOSEPH POORGRASS

They broke fence and got into a
field of young clover. Makes their
stomachs swell. Come see.

They approach one particular sheep, breathing fast, foam at
its mouth.

BATHSHEBA

How did this happen? Who let them
break fence?

(the men look at the
ground)

(MORE)

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

And why didn't you tell me sooner?

(BATHSHEBA kneels.)

Poor thing. What do we do now?

JOSEPH POORGRASS

Nothing. The whole flock is
blasted.

BATHSHEBA

Blasted? You mean they're all going
to die?

BILLY SMALLBURY

Most probably.

JAN COGGAN

(with a sheep)

Another one gone here.

BATHSHEBA

But there must be something we can
do!

JACOB SMALLBURY

(the elder, sagely)

Only one way of saving them.

BATHSHEBA

What is it? Tell me, quickly!

JACOB SMALLBURY

They must be pierced in their side
with a tool made on purpose. A
hollow pipe, with a pricker inside.

BATHSHEBA

Well can you do it?

Eventually -

JACOB SMALLBURY

No.

BATHSHEBA

Can I?

JACOB SMALLBURY

Good lord, no. One inch to the
right or left and you kill the ewe
for sure. Not even a shepherd can
do it as a rule.

BATHSHEBA
Then who? Tell me!
(They look at the floor-)
No. Oh no.

67 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

67

GABRIEL is well on his way to Casterbridge with his possessions on his back. Healthier than when we first saw him, but on the road again.

A shout comes across the fields.

JOSEPH POORGRASS
Gabriel! Gabriel Oak! Wait!

He turns, curious.

68 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

68

BATHSHEBA stooped over another dying sheep. Elsewhere -

JAN COGGAN
Lost another one, ma'am

Breathless, JOSEPH POORGRASS rides up.

BATHSHEBA
Why are you alone? Did you find him?

JOSEPH POORGRASS
Yes miss...

BATHSHEBA
So what did he say?

JOSEPH POORGRASS
(embarrassed)
He said...

BATHSHEBA
Joseph, please...

All are listening.

JOSEPH POORGRASS
He said you're to come in person
and request him civilly in a proper
manner.

BATHSHEBA

Where does he get his airs! I'll do no such thing!

JOSEPH POORGRASS

He said you'd say that. He said to reply that 'Beggars can't be choosers'.

69

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

69

GABRIEL waits patiently, a picture of nonchalance as a figure on horseback appears. BATHSHEBA.

If he's enjoying this, he tries not to let it show. The mere ghost of a smile as he stands.

BATHSHEBA dismounts. With some effort, she re-arranges her face, from vexed pride to forced humility.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Oak. Gabriel?

(a deep breath)

Please don't desert me, Gabriel. I need your help.

A moment. Then he walks abruptly towards BATHSHEBA...

...and past her, taking the reins of the horse, mounting it.

He's about to ride off.

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Make room for me.

GABRIEL smiles and holds out his hand to her -

GABRIEL

Hold on.

He urges the horse into a gallop, BATHSHEBA holding on tight around his waist.

70

EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

70

- then across the fields. LIDDY, JAN COGGAN and the others see them approach. JAN smiles.

JAN COGGAN

You sly old dog...

71

EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

71

GABRIEL kneels over a bloated sheep, reaches into his pocket and produces a strange instrument.

A brass rod, with a needle concealed inside, a kind of basic syringe. Like a surgeon, he passes his hand over the sheep's flank.

GABRIEL

Find the spot...just here, between
the ribs...

And with a sudden, skilled motion, he stabs the sheep.
BATHSHEBA and the others recoil.

LIDDY

Oh Lord!

GABRIEL

Looks worse than it is. Now-

The lance pierces the skin, and when the needle is removed the air rushes audibly through the tube. Slowly the sheep visibly deflates, a living balloon. BATHSHEBA can't help but laugh. GABRIEL smiles and sets to work on his next patient.

72

EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

72

BATHSHEBA has the syringe now, and leans poised over a bloated sheep. The other WORKERS look on -

BATHSHEBA

Here?

GABRIEL

Fast and strong and she won't feel
it.

He takes her fingers, places them on a spot over the sheep's ribs. BATHSHEBA summons up her courage, raises the syringe like a dagger -

LIDDY

I CAN'T LOOK!

BATHSHEBA

Liddy!

(she raises it again)
Perhaps you should do it.

GABRIEL

And when I'm not here?

BATHSHEBA stabs the sheep. The needle is removed, the sheep deflates. The crowd sighs in relief. BATHSHEBA laughs...

73

EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DUSK

73

And now the sun is setting, and BATHSHEBA watches, admiring his skill and dedication as GABRIEL, lit by lamps, moves expertly from one sheep to the next.

BATHSHEBA

Ridiculous animals. Always getting into trouble.

And if GABRIEL remains his own misfortune, he doesn't say anything.

The last of the sheep is on its feet again. He crosses to BATHSHEBA, and they survey the scene.

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Gabriel. Stay on with me?

He smiles. And nothing more needs to be said.

74

EXT. EVERDENE GARDEN - NIGHT

74

A celebratory meal. BATHSHEBA's piano has been moved out into the yard and decorated with flowers, and JAN COGGAN plays and sings a tune.

GABRIEL is dressed smartly, a man on the move at one end of the table, BATHSHEBA at the other.

As twilight falls and the music plays, BATHSHEBA surveys the bucolic scene and allows herself a smile for her achievements. Her eyes meet GABRIEL's in gratitude.

JOSEPH POORGRASS, meanwhile, has conquered his nerves enough to sing a song, a truly awful dirge, literally MONOTONOUS.

JOSEPH POORGRASS

*I sowed the seeds of love/It was
all in the spring....*

It's all too much for LIDDY, who has the tablecloth stuffed into her mouth to suppress laughter.

JOSEPH POORGRASS (CONT'D)

O the willow tree will twist...

The fit of giggles is spreading along the table. BATHSHEBA struggles with a straight face. Then she sees a new arrival; MR BOLDWOOD.

BATHSHEBA

(premature applause)

Thank you Joseph! That's enough.

(JOSEPH sits)

Mr Boldwood! Will you join us?

Where -

(MORE)

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)
(a place for him to sit)
Gabriel, would you mind...

A brief moment of awkwardness as the social order re-establishes itself. But -

LIDDY/MARYANN/TEMPERANCE AND SOBERNESS
There's a space next to me,
Gabriel!/Over here, Mr Oak!/Come
and sit with us, Mr Oak!

He joins LIDDY further down the table.

JACOB SMALLBURY
A song, ma'am?

General approval at the notion.

BATHSHEBA
Me? I couldn't possibly!
(LIDDY and GABRIEL share
an ironic smile)
I don't know what to say! Very
well.

She sits at the piano and begins to play. The song is 'The Banks of Allan Water' and, after a moment's nervousness, she sings it beautifully.

GABRIEL watches her, then turns to look at BOLDWOOD, enthroned at the head of the table, the heir apparent. GABRIEL notes the devotion in his eyes. To everyone's surprise, he starts to sing too. A faltering baritone that grows in confidence.

The song becomes a duet then ends with LOUD APPLAUSE. GABRIEL realises that this is a battle that he can never hope to win. He joins in the applause.

75

EXT. EVERDENE GARDEN - NIGHT

75

In the exquisite evening, a lantern between them, BATHSHEBA and BOLDWOOD walk away from the party.

BOLDWOOD
I thought we were rather good.

BATHSHEBA
So did I!
(They laugh. A beat.)
I wanted to thank you for not
approaching me again on...that
subject.

BOLDWOOD
It has not been easy.

BATHSHEBA

And I'm grateful for your restraint, Mr Boldwood. I can't give you my answer tonight but by the end of the summer, in six weeks time, my mind will be clearer and you'll have my decision then.

BOLDWOOD

It's enough. It's more than I hoped for.

BATHSHEBA

Was there...anything else?

A moment. Will he kiss her? Her face is raised towards him, exquisite in the glow of the lamp.

She smiles - granting permission. But -

BOLDWOOD

Do you wish me to accompany you back to the house?

With disappointment, BATHSHEBA registers the hesitation.

BATHSHEBA

No, I like to walk around the farm myself each night, to make sure all is safe.

BOLDWOOD

Then I'll walk with you -

BATHSHEBA

I've done it many times alone.
Goodnight, Mr Boldwood.

And she walks off, leaving BOLDWOOD hopeful, BATHSHEBA thoughtful.

76

EXT. PLANTATION - NIGHT

76

A narrow, overgrown footpath through a fir plantation. The passage is barely wide enough for one and she's disconcerted to see another figure enter the corridor ahead of her.

A MAN.

A moment of fear and hesitation. She gathers her nerves, lowers the lantern and proceeds to walk. The male figure gets closer. A scarlet jacket, unbuttoned, an uncertain step.

They are about to pass. Head down, she squeezes by and -

- is immediately stopped in her tracks. Her dress has become entangled with the spurs -

SOLDIER

Have I hurt you?

BATHSHEBA

No -

SOLDIER

We are entangled. Let me -

He turns on the lantern. She places the lantern on the ground, sending great shadows dancing in the trees.

He takes it from her, and raises it so that their faces are illuminated. SERGEANT FRANK TROY.

The sudden sight of all that silver and scarlet is like the blare of a trumpet. BATHSHEBA is taken aback. TROY too.

TROY

Good God!

They kneel together simultaneously, then with the lantern shining onto their faces, they untangle the knot.

BATHSHEBA

We've got hitched together somehow.

TROY

Then it seems you're my prisoner -

BATHSHEBA

You're making it worse on purpose -

TROY

Now why would I do that?

BATHSHEBA

Let me do it myself-

TROY

Why such a hurry? Husband waiting?

(BATHSHEBA is silent)

I have a knife here.

BATHSHEBA

No! Here, let me try-

(He can't look away.)

Please don't stare.

TROY

I can't help myself.

BATHSHEBA

You're drunk. I smell it on your breath.

TROY

I don't think I've ever seen a woman as beautiful as you.

BATHSHEBA

How dare you!

TROY

Take it or leave it, it's the truth.

The knot comes undone suddenly, causing her to stumble backwards. He pulls her to her feet.

A moment as they face each other, then she bustles off. To her back -

TROY (CONT'D)

At least tell me your name! Where do you live? I want see you again!

And he watches her as she disappears into the night.

77

EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

77

A bright SUMMER's day and the FARM WORKERS are making hay. The MEN lead, scythes flashing in the sun. The WOMEN, wearing tilt bonnets to protect them from the sun, follow on behind, raking the cut hay into windrows - ranked piles left to dry in the sun before binding into sheaths.

LIDDY and BATHSHEBA join in the work.

LIDDY
Miss, look -

Amongst the dull yellow smocks, a bright white shirt; TROY, with a scythe, energetically mowing ahead.

BATHSHEBA
Who is he, Liddy?

LIDDY
Sergeant Francis Troy. Mother was a French governess, father was a doctor. Or an Earl, depending on what you believe. Noble blood, full of promise, very sharp and trim. Well educated, good things expected of him, and he threw it all in to be a soldier. And a walking ruin to decent girls.

(BATHSHEBA gives her a look.)
So they say.

BATHSHEBA
(tuts, strides off)
Well I won't have it.

LIDDY
What are you doing, Miss?

BATHSHEBA
I'm going to tell him to leave!

And she strides towards TROY. LIDDY watches, amused.

78 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - CONTINUOUS

78

TROY watches her approach. The other workers too, stop and stare, GABRIEL amongst them.

BATHSHEBA
Sergeant Troy, I must absolutely insist that you leave this very moment!

TROY
I can't, I have to work off my sin.

He goes back to work.

BATHSHEBA
Well...I wish you wouldn't.

TROY
Why not?

BATHSHEBA

Because I'd rather not thank you.

TROY

And I'd rather not leave. So I won't.

And he returns to work. BATHSHEBA left staring at his back.

GABRIEL lays down his scythe and is about to intervene.

BATHSHEBA

(To TROY, sternly-)

Will you follow me, please?

And she strides off through the tall grass. TROY puts down his scythe, and follows, grinning.

TROY

Farmer Everdene, you're quite the local legend.

BATHSHEBA

Please!

TROY

What angers you exactly? What I said, or the way I said it?

BATHSHEBA

Neither...both! I won't allow strangers to be impudent, even in praise.

TROY

Even if it's the truth? You must know. There must be some man who tells you that you're beautiful.

BATHSHEBA

Not to my face, not exactly -

TROY

But there must be someone, who kisses you and tells you -

BATHSHEBA

I've never been kissed.

(The admission surprises both of them. They stop.)

Why couldn't you have just passed by and said nothing?

TROY

Half the pleasure of a feeling lies in being able to express it. Do you forgive me.

BATHSHEBA

I do not!

TROY

Why?

BATHSHEBA

Because...the things you say.

TROY

I said you were beautiful and I'll say it again. The most beautiful face I ever saw.

BATHSHEBA

That's simply not true -

TROY

But you've never seen yourself through a man's eyes -

BATHSHEBA

Of course not -

TROY

- you don't know what it's like.

BATHSHEBA

What is it like?

TROY

Like not being able to think, or hear, or look in any direction. Except one.

BATHSHEBA glances to where the WORKERS and GABRIEL, are staring.

BATHSHEBA

I hope you fight as well as you speak.

TROY

Better. Meet me tomorrow, eight o'clock and I'll show you.

A pause.

BATHSHEBA

I can't.

TROY

You don't want to?

BATHSHEBA

Yes, but -

TROY

Then you must.

BATHSHEBA

I mustn't. I can't tell you why,
but I mustn't...

TROY

But you could. Nobody would know.

BATHSHEBA

Then I must bring Liddy...

TROY

Now why would you want to do that?

BATHSHEBA

Please. Go now.

TROY

Tomorrow night. Eight o'clock. The
hollow in the ferns.

He turns and walks casually away, leaving BATHSHEBA flushed
and breathless.

79 INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 79

BATHSHEBA attempts to read. But her mind is elsewhere.
Exasperated, she puts down the book. Glances at the clock.
Picks up the book. Should she go? And -

80 INT. HALLWAY, EVERDENE FARM - LATE AFTERNOON 80

If she goes, is she dressed right? She assesses herself in
the mirror. She wears her finest summer dress, pulling the
material against her body. She looks exquisite.

81 EXT. MEADOW, WEATHERBURY FARM - LATE AFTERNOON 81

And now she's hurrying through the meadow towards her
rendezvous, flushed in anticipation -

82 EXT. THE HOLLOW IN THE FERNS - LATE AFTERNOON 82

An uncultivated tract of land forms a natural amphitheatre,
at the base of which stands a smudge of scarlet.

TROY, waiting.

BATHSHEBA watches him a moment, breathless. She should leave,
immediately.

But he sees her, and smiles.

83

EXT. THE HOLLOW IN THE FERNS - EVENING

83

An exquisite evening, sultry and sensual. TROY is giving his lesson, a fearsome looking sword glinting in his hand.

The sword exercise is a series of lethal looking slashes and thrusts, very precise. TROY narrates as he demonstrates.

TROY

Four right and left cuts, four right and left thrusts.

(The sword hisses through the air. BATHSHEBA watches, entranced.)

Cut one is as sowing corn, two as if hedging. Three as if reaping, four as if threshing...Do you trust me?

BATHSHEBA

I do.

TROY

(He removes his jacket.)

Now. You are my enemy, with this exception; I shall miss you every time by a hair's breadth...

(His hand on her waist, he positions her as if for a dance.)

I give you my word as a soldier, I will not harm you. The sword is blunt, but you must not flinch.

BATHSHEBA

I'll try not to.

TROY

(He readies himself)

Very well. Let's begin.

And suddenly the air is filled with the swash of the blade, glinting in the sun's slow rays as TROY repeats the exercise, the blade passing thrillingly close to BATHSHEBA's body.

And then the display is over. TROY is sweating and BATHSHEBA too is exhilarated.

BATHSHEBA

Is it over?

TROY

Yes. Except -

And he raises the point of the sword once more to her cheek. A flick of the wrist, and a lock of hair falls.

BATHSHEBA

How did you...how could you cut my hair?

TROY

This sword could skin you alive.

BATHSHEBA

You lied! You told me I was safe!

TROY

And you were, entirely safe. I gave you my word.

(He steps closer.)

Now, I will take this -

- the lock of dark hair lies on her breast. Instinctively BATHSHEBA turns her face up towards him, and he takes her face in his hands.

Her first kiss has a startling passion, like nothing she has ever experienced before. His hand, too, is between her legs. She gasps.

And then, with a coolness that's almost callous, he simply walks away, leaving BATHSHEBA breathless.

84 EXT. MEADOW, WEATHERBURY FARM - NIGHT

84

And as night falls, she walks slowly home, transformed. The night is warm, it has a sensuality to it. Something has changed.

85 INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - LATE AFTERNOON

85

BATHSHEBA dresses for her rendezvous. There is no hesitation this time. She stands...

86 EXT. EVERDENE FARM - LATE AFTERNOON

86

- and hurries through the courtyard towards her next rendezvous with TROY. When -

GABRIEL

Miss Everdene.

(she stops - caught)

Perhaps I could walk with you.

87

EXT. YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DUSK

87

BATHSHEBA and GABRIEL walk side by side in silence in the warmth of the summer evening. But BATHSHEBA is on edge, keen to get away.

BATHSHEBA
I'm quite happy to walk by myself.

GABRIEL
I'll walk with you.

They walk a little further.

BATHSHEBA
Still, perhaps I'll say goodnight -

GABRIEL
You should have nothing to do with him. He's not good enough for you.

BATHSHEBA
Why ever not? He's perfectly honourable, perfectly decent-

GABRIEL
That's not what I believe.

BATHSHEBA
Why, what have you heard? Tell me!
(And he could. He knows.
But he hesitates.)
You see, it's all rumours,
prejudice, simply because he's a
soldier -

GABRIEL
I like soldiers, but not this one.
I believe him to have no conscience
at all. Stay clear. Don't listen to
him, don't believe him. Get rid of
him.

BATHSHEBA
And why should you care?

A moment. They both know.

GABRIEL
I'm not such a fool as to imagine I
might stand a chance now that you
are so...above me. But -
(A deep breath; this is
hard.)
Mr Boldwood loves you. You would be
safe in his hands.

BATHSHEBA

You want me to be 'safe'?

A beat. It pains him to say it, but -

GABRIEL

Yes, I do.

A long moment. BATHSHEBA is touched, but also surprised by her own reaction. She reaches for indignation instead.

BATHSHEBA

Then I think it might be best for both of us if you leave this farm immediately.

But GABRIEL starts to laugh.

GABRIEL

This is the second time you've pretended to dismiss me -

BATHSHEBA

Pretended! -

GABRIEL

What's the use of it? Sometimes I'd be glad as a bird to leave this place, for don't suppose I'm content to stay a nobody all my life. One day I will leave you, you can be sure of that. But for now I care for you too much to see you go to ruin. So if you don't mind, I'll stay by your side.

BATHSHEBA smiles, GABRIEL too. But now another a figure approaches.

TROY. He stops and waits a little way off.

One moment's hesitation, and she walks towards TROY.

Without looking back, GABRIEL walks away.

88 INT. STUDY, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

88

Next day. BATHSHEBA writes a letter, seals an envelope To 'Mr Boldwood, Lower Farm, Weatherbury.' No turning back now.

89 INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT

89

Decisive, BATHSHEBA goes to her wardrobe and begins to pack -

- 90 EXT. FARMYARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 90
- She hurls her bag into her fastest gig, heads off into the night.
- 91 EXT. BATH - DAWN 91
- And as the sun rises, the city of Bath appears in the distance. A weary BATHSHEBA urges the horse on.
- 92 EXT. STREET CORNER, BATH - DAY 92
- At the appointed time and place, TROY waits.
- Through the crowds, he sees her; BATHSHEBA, breathless with anticipation. She watches for a moment and approaches.
- They stand in the street, tantalisingly close.
- BATHSHEBA
I wasn't sure if you'd be here.
Frank...
- TROY
Of course.
- Beneath her cloak, she reaches out one hand. Just their fingertips entwine.
- 93 INT. DINING ROOM, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - DAY 93
- BOLDWOOD sits alone at a large dining table, taking his solitary breakfast, reading his mail just as he had on Valentine's Day.
- A LETTER. He recognises the handwriting now. A rattling sound. He notices that his hand is shaking. Carefully, he puts his tea-cup down.
- BOLDWOOD opens the letter.
- 94 EXT. COUNTRY LANE, WEATHERBURY - NIGHT 94
- The coach from Bath makes its lonely way towards Weatherbury.
- BOLDWOOD watches the coach approach, his hand tightening on the silver-headed cane.
- The coach stops at the top of the lane that leads to the Everdene farm. A figure descends;
- TROY starts to walk towards the farm.
- BOLDWOOD falls into step behind, cane in hand.

95

EXT. COUNTRY LANE, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT

95

On the approach to BATHSHEBA's house now.

BOLDWOOD

Going to see her I suppose?

TROY walks on without turning.

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?

TROY

Should I know you?

BOLDWOOD

My name is William Boldwood.

TROY

Never heard of you.

BOLDWOOD

Nevertheless, I wish to have a conversation. I don't wish to enter into questions of right or wrong, you wouldn't understand. I'm a businessman, and I intend a business transaction with you.

TROY

Go on.

BOLDWOOD

I was engaged to be married to Miss Everdene until you came along.

TROY

Not quite *engaged*...

BOLDWOOD

You have heard of me then.

TROY

She told me some foolish old man was in love with her. You, I presume.

BOLDWOOD

(he lets this go)

Miss Everdene will never marry you. You're not even an officer. She's playing with you, you're too poor, too low-down. A nobody.

(TROY laughs this off -)

TROY

What is your proposal?

BOLDWOOD

Marry the other girl. Leave Miss
Everdene alone. I'll make it worth
your while.

But this is like a slap for TROY. He considers Boldwood,
taking him seriously now.

TROY

How?

BOLDWOOD

Leave tonight and I'll give you
fifty pounds. The girl shall have
money too, and after the wedding
I'll settle a certain amount of
money on the both of you, paid
annually. You can resign your
commission, leave this place, start
a new life. And leave us be.

TROY considers the deal.

TROY

Fifty pounds you say?

BOLDWOOD

I have the money here.

And he produces the money.

TROY

You seem very confident I'll
accept.

BOLDWOOD

I know what you're worth.

TROY lets this pass. He takes the money, weighs it in his
hand, then opens the gate and heads towards BATHSHEBA's
house. BOLDWOOD follows on, alarmed -

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)

Where are you going? You must go
tonight, that's the agreement -

TROY

I can't just leave without saying
goodbye. It'll break her heart.
I'll tell her I'm not good enough
then go straight away. How's that?

BOLDWOOD

No word of me or our arrangement.
And never see her again, you must
swear...

TROY

I give my solemn vow as a soldier,
that I will...

(Almost at the door, he
suddenly stops.)

But wait a moment....

BOLDWOOD

What is it?

TROY

There's a problem.

BOLDWOOD

Tell me!

TROY

We're already married. You see?

TROY holds his hand up to BOLDWOOD's face.

A gold band on his finger.

BOLDWOOD is broken.

TROY (CONT'D)

We married first thing this
morning. Lovely service in Bath,
very quiet, the two of us.
Tonight's our wedding night. So,
you see, it seems I am good enough
for her after all.

BOLDWOOD lunges, but TROY intercepts the blow. BOLDWOOD's
hand goes to TROY's throat.

BOLDWOOD

I'll kill you, d'you hear me! I'll
break your wretched neck!

But TROY swiftly turns the table, shrugging off BOLDWOOD's
grip and hurling him to the ground. Three sharp blows to the
face - swift and effective.

TROY

(whispering in his ear)

Best kill yourself, old man. Don't
you think?

(pushing him to the
ground)

Now - pick up your money and go.
You're trespassing.

- 96 INT. EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 96
- TROY surveys his home for the first time. He fingers a porcelain figure, a book. He picks out notes on the piano, pours a glass of wine. His hand is still shaking.
- This is all his property now. For all its comforts, suddenly it seems bourgeois, dowdy, dull. A twinge of doubt. There is, he realises, the potential for this all to go horribly wrong.
- A noise, a voice from above. TROY walks towards the stairs.
- 97 INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 97
- They make love for the first time. In contrast to the bravado and swagger of their past encounters, there's something tender, tentative about it.
- 98 INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - MORNING 98
- BATHSHEBA sleeps soundly in the tangled sheets.
- Sounds from the yard wake TROY. Wearing breeches and his scarlet jacket, he sits on the edge of the crumpled bed and lights a cheroot.
- From outside, the sound of hammering -
- 99 EXT/INT. YARD, BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - CONTINUOUS 99
- GABRIEL, POORGRASS and JAN COGGAN are in the yard, well into the working day.
- TROY
Good morning, comrades!
- JAN COGGAN
Morning sir!
(hissed to GABRIEL-)
Answer the man!
- TROY
Fine old house. Needs a lick of paint, don't you think?
(nothing from the MEN)
You, Sir -
(- GABRIEL)
What's your name?
- For a while it seems as if he might not answer.
- GABRIEL
Oak.

TROY
Can't hear you!

GABRIEL
My name is Gabriel Oak.

INTERCUT. BATHSHEBA hears this.

TROY
(to JAN)
Can you hear him? Mr Oak, please
learn to smile and answer when
you're spoken to. I'll be down in
the fields some time this week, but
until then we're not to be
disturbed.
(meeting GABRIEL's eye;)
Here, this -
(he tosses them coins)
- is to drink our health.

JAN stoops eagerly to pick up the coins, but GABRIEL doesn't move. A figure has appeared behind TROY. BATHSHEBA, wrapped in the sheet of the marital bed, momentarily catches GABRIEL's eye. Nothing shameful in her decision, but still a concern for GABRIEL.

TROY (CONT'D)
Who is this Mr Oak?

BATHSHEBA
He's my right hand.

TROY takes this in...

100 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

100

The harvest begins, the ricks piled high with the fruits of the year. Back-breaking work, sweaty, the kind of occasion BATHSHEBA would once have relished.

But not now.

From a carriage at the edge of the field the newly-married couple watch the workers, sheltered from the heat and humidity. TROY is now a Gentleman Farmer, ill-at-ease in new civilian clothes. BATHSHEBA in her fashionable clothes is an observer, no longer a participant.

GABRIEL glances over at her, then returns to work.

101 EXT. THE RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DUSK

101

Dusty from the days labours, GABRIEL washes. Then notices - a great fat toad lumbers across the ground.

OAK kneels and watches its progress. The toad is looking for shelter - a sure sign that a storm is coming.

He looks to the skies too. The evening is clear, but dark clouds are already rolling in. Rooks caw, clouds of starlings wheel confusedly around the sky. The night has a sinister aspect. There's a sense of foreboding.

The year's harvest stands unprotected in the rick yard.

The sound of MUSIC comes from the barn -

102

INT. BARN, EVERDENE FARM - DUSK

102

A band is playing and the barn is full of the WORKERS and their FAMILIES. Foliage and old chandeliers have been hung from the rafters, food and drink laid out

Clapping, cheering and stomping as TROY and BATHSHEBA dance, wonderful together, eyes locked. The dance ends to much applause, TROY and BATHSHEBA at its centre. TROY kisses her; cheers, laughter.

TROY

Gentlemen! Silence! Friends, it is not only the Harvest Home that we're celebrating. This is also a wedding feast. A short while ago I had the happiness to lead to the altar this beautiful lady, your mistress, and only now have we been able to celebrate our happy news. So please, charge your glasses and raise them to - my wonderful wife, Mrs Bathsheba Troy!

GABRIEL watches the applause, then approaches BATHSHEBA.

GABRIEL

(to BATHSHEBA)

I have to tell you -

TROY

To me, please, Mr Oak.

GABRIEL

(to both of them)

There's going to be a storm. We need to protect the ricks or we'll lose the harvest.

TROY

And how do you know there's going to be a storm?

GABRIEL
(hesitates, then -)
Certain signs. The animals.

TROY
(laughing, teasing)
The animals *told* you?

GABRIEL
I need five, six men for an hour,
no more.

BATHSHEBA
Frank, perhaps we ought to-

TROY
Nonsense! Tonight's our
celebration. Oak, you have no
glass in your hand - here.

He pours a glass and offers it to GABRIEL.

GABRIEL
With all due respect, we need able-
bodied working men, not drunks and
fools...

TROY
It will not rain tonight. My wife
forbids it! Now, if you'll excuse
me, Mr Oak. Gentlemen, one more
thing. Even though I'm no longer
Sergeant Troy! I remain a soldier
in this one respect -
(he beckons one of the MEN
forward. He carries -)
Bottles of the finest French
brandy! A triple-strength dose to
every man here!
(Disquiet from BATHSHEBA,
shouts and cheers from
the men)
And if any of you men show the
white feather, then you can look
elsewhere for a winter's work!

And to cheers and applause, the bottles are passed round.
BATHSHEBA, meanwhile, looks to GABRIEL, wanting to follow.

TROY (CONT'D)
You wouldn't leave our wedding
party. Would you?

He kisses her, and she does her best not to worry.

- 103 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DUSK 103
- But outside, dark clouds have indeed started to form in the evening sky. A distant flash of lightning.
- The harvest stands vulnerable and exposed. GABRIEL makes a decision.
- 104 INT. BARN, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 104
- TROY is in amongst his MEN, laughing, joking, passing out the brandy, trying to recreate the camaraderie of the barracks. The WOMEN have largely gone - only SOBERNESS and TEMPERANCE, neither sober nor temperate, remain.
- 116 The band strike up again, and TROY leads the singing of a 116
bawdy song. Excluded, BATHSHEBA and all but a few of the
WOMEN have no other choice but to turn and go.
- 105 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 105
- GABRIEL hauls the water-proofed tarpaulins into the yard. Attaching a rope to one corner, he hurls the other end over the stacks.
- 106 INT. BARN, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 106
- Mad dancing from the MEN, TROY the life and soul. A drinking song now - something like *The Barley Mow* -
- 107 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 107
- With great effort, GABRIEL hauls at the rope, dragging the tarpaulin over the top of the third stack. But the wind catches it, filling it like the sail of a ship.
- The storm is overhead now. No rain yet, just startling blue skeletons of crackling light. GABRIEL takes a long metal rod with a chain attached - imagine a giant needle and thread - and jams it into the highest point of the rick. This he hopes will act as a lightning conductor.
- But there's still so much to do.
- 108 INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 108
- From her bedroom, BATHSHEBA looks out of the window towards the rick yard. A flash of lightning. GABRIEL silhouetted against the sky as he begins the work of roughly thatching the remaining stacks.
- She makes a decision. Hurriedly, excitedly, she removes her jewellery, her party shoes. The old BATHSHEBA, back again.

109 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 109

GABRIEL works on. BATHSHEBA walks towards him, lamp in hand, in working clothes now.

BATHSHEBA
What can I do?

GABRIEL
It's too dangerous.

BATHSHEBA
If it's too dangerous for me, then
it's too dangerous for you.
(GABRIEL hesitates)
Just tell me what to do.

A rumble of thunder; not much time.

110 INT. BARN, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 110

The MEN are visibly staggering now. JOSEPH POORGRASS, slight and not used to drinking, is laughing hysterically. Young CAINY BALL, too young to drink, can barely stand. Meanwhile LABAN TALL has picked a fight with another man, and a messy brawl is starting.

TROY, the Master of Revels, watches over them.

111 EXT. RICK YARD, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 111

Perched on ladders on top of the rick, BATHSHEBA and GABRIEL work together, hammering sheaves in to place to shelter the crop. Thunder rolls, lightning crackling but -

BATHSHEBA
Still no rain.

GABRIEL
It'll come.

A flash of lightning, the thunder following immediately.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Frightened?

BATHSHEBA
Why, are you?

As if in rebuke there's a terrible crack. Lightning forks down from the black sky, and strikes the conductor.

Then the terrible peal of thunder. BATHSHEBA, startled, stumbles and falls. GABRIEL grabs her arm and holds her. A moment of relieved laughter -

And then the RAIN starts. An extraordinary downpour.

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Gabriel, if I were to die - and I may die soon, and I'd hate you to think badly of me -

(GABRIEL goes to protest)

Please, let me explain. I didn't intend to marry him. I had every intention of ending it, just as you'd advised. But he told me about another woman, a great beauty that he'd loved before and so, somewhere between jealousy and distraction..I married him. Please understand.

(GABRIEL goes to speak)

No opinions. I only wanted you to know.

GABRIEL smiles. A moment of extreme closeness between them. For a moment, they might almost kiss. But to what possible end?

GABRIEL

Go to bed, I can finish the rest without you. Let me help you -

He helps her down the ladder. She holds him back.

BATHSHEBA

Gabriel. Thank you.

A look of immense gratitude and affection. GABRIEL accepts it, and understands, and returns to work.

112 EXT. YARD, EVERDENE FARM

112

Early morning. The work is completed and GABRIEL, exhausted, climbs down from the last rick. But someone is watching. At a distance, MR BOLDWOOD.

GABRIEL

Sir?

(BOLDWOOD turns, walks smartly away. GABRIEL follows)

Mr Boldwood, sir -

BOLDWOOD

I wanted to ensure your mistress' crops were safe -

GABRIEL

Wait a moment, sir -

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)

Good work, Gabriel, she's lucky to have you -

He turns. Haunted, strained, pale, soaked to the skin.

GABRIEL

You seem unwell. You should go home.

BOLDWOOD

Yes. Yes, I will.

(he hesitates)

Oak, you know that things have not gone well with me lately. I was going to get a little settled in life, but it was not to be. I daresay I am something of a...joke about the parish, but I do want to make it clear that there was no jilting on her part. We were never engaged. No matter what people say, she promised me nothing. And yet, Gabriel, I feel the most terrible grief.

(He turns to GABRIEL. With an awful false bonhomie)

Still! No woman ever had power over me for any length of time. Not a word to her. We understand each other, yes?

And poor, mad BOLDWOOD walks on.

112A EXT. YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

112A

A dreary day in AUTUMN. TROY stands alone in shirtsleeves, a broom handle clutched like a sword. He carries out the sword exercise, as before, the chickens pecking around him. But there's something diminished, pathetic about the man in his civilian clothes.

This private display is watched by BATHSHEBA, with concern and sadness as he completes the exercise then, in a mad flash of rage, hurls the broom handle against the wall.

112B EXT. BOXING ARENA, MARKET SQUARE, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY

112B

A FIST connects with a man's head. Blood and sweat. Market-day at the Corn Exchange has bought a BOXING MATCH to the town, and in a corner of the square a CROWD has gathered to watch PATTERSON Vs. SULLIVAN.

The fight has brought with it BEGGARS, GYPSIES, DRUNKS, GAMBLERS, SOLDIERS on furlough. And among them is TROY, smoking a cheroot, aloof, indifferent.

A blow lands. SULLIVAN crashes to the ground.

TROY scowls and stabs out his cheroot. His money is handed over to the BOOKIES. And TROY stalks off -

112C EXT. BOXING ARENA, MARKET SQUARE, CASTERBRIDGE - CONT. 112C
- and becomes aware of a BEGGAR WOMAN following close behind.

TROY
No money, I'm afraid. All gone.

He turns. And freezes. The BEGGAR-WOMAN, hunched, barely able to stand, clutching a familiar, battered carpet bag.

She's barely recognisable as FANNY ROBBIN. TROY is stunned.

TROY (CONT'D)
Fanny.

FANNY
Hello, Frank.

TROY
What are you doing here? I thought
you were at your mother's, I
thought you were safe.
(taking her hands)
You're so pale. You're shaking.

FANNY
I walked here. I'm very tired.

112D EXT. MARKET SQUARE, CASTERBRIDGE - CONT. 112D
BATHSHEBA has finished her business, and wants to return home. The carriage is empty. Where's TROY? Impatient, she scans the street. The next BOXING MATCH has begun.

112E EXT. BOXING ARENA, MARKET SQUARE, CASTERBRIDGE - CONT. 112E
TROY sees BATHSHEBA searching for him, getting closer

TROY
My wife mustn't know -
And there it is; 'wife'.

FANNY
Your wife.
(she follows his look)
Mrs Troy is very beautiful.

TROY
No more than you. Fanny -
(Searching his pockets-)
Six-pence. It's all I have left.
Take it -

112F EXT. MARKET SQUARE, CASTERBRIDGE - CONT. 112F

From BATHSHEBA's p.o.v., she sees her husband talking to a WOMAN, sees the lingering touch of hands, the exchange of money. An unmistakable intimacy, a terrible blow. She quickens her pace -

112G EXT. BOXING ARENA, MARKET SQUARE, CASTERBRIDGE - CONT. 112G

Back to TROY and FANNY. BATHSHEBA is nearly there - he speaks quickly, desperately...

TROY

I've made a terrible mistake,
Fanny, but I will make amends. I
swear on my life, I'll find a way
to be with you.

FANNY

You've sworn before, Frank.

TROY

But this time, this time...
(FANNY smiles sceptically)
Go to Budmouth, stay at the Union -

FANNY

The workhouse, Frank? -

TROY

(quickly)
Tonight, just tonight, one night,
then meet me tomorrow at ten at the
bridge. I will bring you all the
money I have, I'll find a place for
you. You'll want for nothing and I
promise you, I will make amends.
(-heading to BATHSHEBA -)
Tomorrow, Fanny, at twelve.

And he backs away. FANNY watches him go.

For a moment, BATHSHEBA and FANNY's eyes meet...

But TROY is approaching now, eyes black with rage.

BATHSHEBA

Do you know who that woman was?

TROY

Get back in the carriage.

BATHSHEBA

Who is she?

And now he grabs her wrist, pulls her towards the carriage -
violent, public too.

TROY

How dare you spy on me. Get back in
the carriage -

(grabs her wrist, pulls
her away)

Back in the carriage, damn you!

113 EXT. CASTERBRIDGE ROAD - DAY 113

And so, exhausted and pale, FANNY begins her long journey
towards BUDMOUTH.

114 EXT. CASTERBRIDGE ROAD - DAY 114

An autumn rain starts to fall.

115 EXT. CASTERBRIDGE ROAD - DUSK 115

Later. FANNY stirs from uneasy rest. No time to rest or
shelter now. She struggles to her feet, steps back out into
the rain and -

116 EXT. BUDMOUTH WORKHOUSE - NIGHT 116

A grim, grey building, its iron gates forbidding in the
gloom.

FANNY reaches for the wall to steady herself, stumbles,
falls, lies there in the rain.

A light appears in a window. An alarm bell is rung...

117 INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 117

BATHSHEBA lies on one of the bed, TROY on the other,
shirtless, smoking a cheroot. She watches his back. He stubs
out his cheroot. Unbearable tension.

118 INT. GREAT HALL, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 118

BATHSHEBA eats breakfast alone. TROY strides in.

TROY

Could you let me have twenty
pounds?

BATHSHEBA

What for?

TROY

I need twenty pounds.

BATHSHEBA

If you continue to gamble, I will
lose the farm.

TROY

It's not for gambling. Do you have
the money or not?

BATHSHEBA

That money is required for farm
expenses.

She returns to her breakfast. TROY looks dangerous.

TROY

You've had your fun. Now don't do
something you'll regret.

BATHSHEBA

I already have.

TROY

What do you regret?

BATHSHEBA

That our love is at an end.

TROY

Well, all love ends at marriage.

BATHSHEBA

I wish you wouldn't talk like that.

TROY

I believe you hate me.

BATHSHEBA

I hate your vices.

TROY

Then give me the twenty pounds and
perhaps we can be friends.

Stung, she holds her nerve -

BATHSHEBA

The money is required for farm
expenses.

A direct challenge.

Then he stands and walks determinedly towards the study.
BATHSHEBA, enraged, follows.

TROY strides towards the bureau.

BATHSHEBA

It's for that woman, isn't it?
Tell me her name!

He begins to rifle through the drawers, a thief now.

TROY

I will not-

BATHSHEBA

Is she married? -

TROY

No -

BATHSHEBA

Is she the one you spoke about, the
other woman? Who is she?

TROY

The woman I love! The woman I
should have married instead of you!
(back to the drawers,
scrabbling for the money)
There, you've wormed it out of me,
I hope it makes you happy...
(He finds the money.)
And if you regret our marriage,
then you can be damn sure so do I.

BATHSHEBA

But I don't! I don't regret it if
you still love me! I still love
you, Frank...
(Desperate, holding him)
Come to bed, let me try and please
you like I used to. I still love
you, Frank. Say you love me too!
Say it, Frank, and kiss me!

He regards her face with a look of appalling scorn, then
pushes her away from him.

TROY

Bathsheba, please. Don't be so
sentimental.

He pockets the money and goes.

120

EXT. CASTERBRIDGE ROAD - DAY

120

Glad to be free, glad to be making amends, TROY rides at
speed to the rendezvous.

121 EXT. BRIDGE, BUDMOUTH - DAY 121

TROY waits anxiously at the appointed time for his rendezvous with FANNY.

A rumble. Along the road comes a waggon bearing a COFFIN. New pine, a pauper's casket, a WORKHOUSE OFFICIAL driving. As a matter of course, TROY removes his hat out of respect...

122 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 122

The cart continues on its way. In the distance, its destination - the EVERDENE FARM.

123 EXT. YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 123

GABRIEL and the WORKHOUSE OFFICIAL are in discussion as BATHSHEBA approaches.

GABRIEL
Well there must be some mistake.

WORKHOUSE OFFICIAL
No mistake, Mr Oak. This was Miss Robbin's last known abode.

GABRIEL
No, you'll have to take her to the church.

BATHSHEBA
Bring her inside.

GABRIEL
Perhaps we might let her rest in the coach-house, ma'am.

BATHSHEBA
We'll do no such thing. Fanny was my uncle's servant and we shall treat her with respect. Bring her inside please.

Pale, troubled, BATHSHEBA heads into the house.

GABRIEL climbs the waggon, removes the black cloth, and starts-

On the lid he sees words written in chalk;

'FANNY ROBBIN AND CHILD'

He glances towards BATHSHEBA, waiting at the doorway.

A moment's thought. She can't know. GABRIEL takes his handkerchief and removes the words 'AND CHILD'

124 INT. STUDY, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT

124

Surrounded by candles, resting on two benches, the coffin sits in the solemn room. BATHSHEBA and LIDDY, with some reverence, place flowers and branches around the plain pauper's coffin.

LIDDY

Do you want me any longer ma'am?

BATHSHEBA

No more tonight, Liddy.

LIDDY

I'll wait up if you like.

BATHSHEBA

No, you go to bed.

(LIDDY stands)

Do you know what she died of, Liddy?

LIDDY

No, miss. There were rumours but...no.

BATHSHEBA

I see. Liddy, Fanny had a sweetheart. Is that right?

LIDDY

(LIDDY hesitates.)

Yes, miss. A soldier. A sergeant.

(An admission from Liddy.

And now she knows)

Please, come sit upstairs with me.

BATHSHEBA shakes her head - she is crying quietly

BATHSHEBA

I seem to cry a great deal these days. I never used to cry at all.
Good night Liddy.

And somewhat reluctantly, LIDDY goes, leaving BATHSHEBA alone.

124A INT. STUDY, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT

124A

Midnight. BATHSHEBA, pacing up and down.

She removes the boughs and flowers from the coffin lid.

She sees Fanny's name, and the smudged chalk beneath. Her worst fears...

She finds the nails that hold the rough lid down. A moment...

Then she takes the poker from the fireplace, places it beneath the lid, pushes.

She stumbles back. The coffin lies open in the darkness. Her hands shaking, she reaches for a candle and walks towards the coffin.

FANNY looks beautiful in the candle light. In her arms, a bundle confirms BATHSHEBA's suspicions. She takes the flowers with which she was adorning the coffin, and now places them on her rival's body...

Suddenly -

TROY

What?

BATHSHEBA stumbles backwards.

BATHSHEBA

I must go.

TROY

Who is it?

BATHSHEBA

I can't stay. Let me go, I want air.

TROY

Stay here!

Numb, dazed, TROY crosses and sees his beloved's face. In her arms, the bundle of white linen. He reaches for the linen, reveals the face. A thunderbolt of shame and remorse.

BATHSHEBA

Is it her?

TROY

It is. A boy. I had a son. My son.

TROY crumples, tears forming in his eyes; shock and grief and remorse.

TROY (CONT'D)

Forgive me...

And as BATHSHEBA looks on, he bends and kisses the lips of his dead fiancée. It's a kiss you might give to a sleeping child, one of surpassing tenderness. BATHSHEBA is heartbroken.

BATHSHEBA

Frank. Don't kiss them, I can't bear it. I love you more than she did!

TROY

Bathsheba, this woman is more to me
dead than ever were or are or can
ever be. You are nothing to me now.
Nothing.

Heartbroken, BATHSHEBA staggers out -

125 EXT. FARMYARD, EVERDENE FARM - DAWN

125

The coffin is loaded onto a hearse.

TROY steps from the house. His farmer's clothes have been
discarded in favour of his old uniform; the vivid scarlet
jacket. He carries a small suitcase and the sword. He looks
broken, haunted, a deeply changed man.

He takes one last look at the farmhouse that has felt like a
prison, then closes the door.

Turning, GABRIEL is there. The men stand firm. An
acknowledgement of each other. No affection, but no hostility
either. If anything, there's a sense of TROY handing
something back.

TROY

Goodbye, Mr Oak.

A salute perhaps? GABRIEL nods.

126 EXT. OAK TREE, EVERDENE FARM - DAWN

126

Early morning, a light rain falling, the end of a long, dark
night of the soul.

Shivering, wet hair clinging to her face, BATHSHEBA sits
beneath an old oak, overlooking the farm that she inherited
with such hope and spirit just nine months ago. Now all she
feels is weariness, a great melancholy.

She sees a figure striding up the hill towards her, hopping
and sliding through the mud.

LIDDY

There you are! Oh, Miss, whatever
are you thinking? You'll catch your
death.

BATHSHEBA

Is he at home?

LIDDY

Gone, Miss, with Fanny. The money
too.

(LIDDY embrace BATHSHEBA)

I've come to take you home.

BATHSHEBA

Liddy, will you promise me something?

LIDDY

Go on.

BATHSHEBA

Don't ever marry.

LIDDY

Not much chance of that, between the ugly ones I won't have and the handsome ones who won't have me.

BATHSHEBA

Well if you do find someone, stand firm. When trouble comes your way, and it will, don't run from it. Stand your ground, even if you're cut to pieces. That's what I intend to do.

And they start to walk towards the farm.

127

EXT. CHURCHYARD, WEATHERBURY

127

A new slab of white marble. The new grave, with new headstone now in place. A simple inscription;

Erected by Francis Troy. In loving memory of Fanny Robbin and Child.

TROY takes all the money he has and pays the STONEMASON.

TROY

There you are. That's everything.

Alone now, he tends to the rough grave as best he can, planting it with wild flowers, a little garden for her.

128

EXT. COUNTRY LANE, BUDMOUTH - DAY

128

The road to the coast. TROY walks with determination towards a new, as yet unknown life.

It's the last warm day of the year and hot and tired, he stops. In the distance, the sea shimmers invitingly. TROY thinks for a moment, then changes direction, and heads towards the coast.

129

EXT. CARROW COVE - DAY

129

A deserted, sandy cove, concealed from view by a semi-circle of high rocks.

TROY's possessions, folded and stacked with military precision, lie on the beach. The sword glints in the sun.

TROY sits, naked, and contemplates the sea. Then he stands and runs into the waves.

130 EXT. THE SEA - DAY 130

TROY pounding away from the shore, attempting to wash away the past in the cold sea water.

Breathless, he stops and turns. The beach is somehow a little further away than he thought. He must have been caught by the tide. He starts to pound back towards the shore.

158 But the shore is no nearer. If anything it's suddenly further away. 158

131 EXT. CARROW COVE - DAY 131

TWO BOYS run on the beach. One of them comes across the suitcase and uniform, the thrilling sword. Curious, they stoop and examine it more closely.

132 EXT. THE SEA - DAY 132

TROY can see the tiny figures on the beach. Treading water, he starts to shout and wave...

TROY
Hello! Over here...

133 EXT. CARROW COVE - DAY 133

The scarlet jacket is held aloft, the sword is pulled from its scabbard. It glints in the evening sun. The sight is intoxicating for the BOYS.

As the sun sets, they play at soldiers at the water's edge, sword slicing through driftwood while out to sea, TROY's figure is lost in the waves, his voice unheard...

134 EXT. THE SEA - DAY 134

From far out to sea, TROY watches the boys playing at soldiers.

There's a strange calm in his eyes. And he starts to swim again, this time away from the shore.

135

EXT. CORN EXCHANGE, CASTERBRIDGE - DAY

135

BATHSHEBA is at work again in the halls of the Corn Exchange. But the CUSTOMERS who once flocked to her now pass her by. She notes the disapproving looks, the gossip.

An abandoned wife, her husband the father of an illegitimate child. There's a cloud of scandal, disapproval, which she accepts with as much dignity as she can.

And now TWO MEN are approaching her, a CONSTABLE and a SOLICITOR. All eyes on her now -

CONSTABLE

Mrs Troy?

BATHSHEBA

It's about my husband, isn't it?
Tell me.

SOLICITOR

I'm afraid...I'm afraid your
husband has drowned.

BATHSHEBA staggers from the blow.

BATHSHEBA

It's not true. It can't be.

And now BOLDWOOD is approaching, arriving just as she collapses.

BOLDWOOD

What did you say to her, man?

CONSTABLE

Her husband is dead. Drowned at
sea.

No glee from BOLDWOOD, a man of action and decision now. He scoops her up, carrying her through the crowd.

BOLDWOOD

Some air! Gentlemen, some air
please. Make way!

(BATHSHEBA, recovering
now, stirs)

You've had the most terrible shock.
My carriage is outside, I'll take
you home -

BATHSHEBA

No, put me down please.

He does so immediately.

BOLDWOOD

You're hardly in a condition to
drive yourself -

BATHSHEBA

Please, Mr Boldwood. I'd like to go
home alone.

And she gathers herself and walks, a little unsteadily,
towards the exit.

136

EXT. EVERDENE FARM - DAY

136

A sombre mood at the farm. A pale of black water. LIDDY holds
up BATHSHEBA's scarlet dress.

LIDDY

You'll need something to wear, it's
only proper. Miss?

BATHSHEBA

No. It's not necessary.

LIDDY

Why not, ma'am?

BATHSHEBA

Because he's still alive.

LIDDY

Oh, Miss...

BATHSHEBA

Wouldn't I know more, and wouldn't
they have found him, and wouldn't
death feel...different to this?

LIDDY

It's only natural to hope. But
still -

BATHSHEBA hesitates.

BATHSHEBA

Very well.

The dress is immersed in the black water.

And now hangs up to dry, dripping black dye on the ground.

137

INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

137

Brown-paper packages.

BATHSHEBA, austere beautiful and pale in the black of her mourning dress, opens it; his jacket, his sword - all his possessions, retrieved from the beach.

138 EXT. YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

138

GABRIEL returns from a day in the fields to find MR BOLDWOOD waiting near the entrance. Bright, cheerful -

BOLDWOOD

Mr Oak, I wonder if I could have a word.

139 EXT. YARD, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

139

GABRIEL

It's a great responsibility, sir.

BOLDWOOD

Nonsense! No reason why a man of your abilities should not be able to superintend two farms. And why shouldn't there be stronger links between our establishments? Think of it; two thousand acres under your sole charge, a share of my profits...

GABRIEL

Miss Everdene needs me here.

BOLDWOOD

And her farm would have priority.

He sees BATHSHEBA, holding back, watching. There's something gleeful about BOLDWOOD here, as if holding something back.

GABRIEL

I would need Miss Everdene's permission.

BOLDWOOD

But of course. I wouldn't dare to do anything without her blessing.

(GABRIEL contemplates)

If it helps sway your decision, there's an old colleague of yours here -

He opens a side door and out bounds -

OLD GEORGE. GABRIEL can't help but laugh as the dog bounds into his arms. BOLDWOOD watches with pleasure.

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)
He took some finding, Mr Oak. I
hope you're pleased.

GABRIEL
I am, sir. Very much.

BOLDWOOD
And you'll give me your decision
soon. Yes?

BATHSHEBA watches too.

140 INT. EVERDENE FARM - DUSK 140

BATHSHEBA and GABRIEL are sheltering from the rain in the
doorway. OLD GEORGE is there too - a memory of past times.

BATHSHEBA
Farmer Oak, you're getting on in
the world. I knew you would.

GABRIEL
Only with your approval. You know
where my loyalty lies -

BATHSHEBA
You're a man of great talent, it's
only natural that you should rise.
I've no desire to hold you back.

She smiles sadly, and he watches her go. Something has been
lost; her arrogance and vanity, but also her spirit and
exuberance.

140A EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 140A

But the demands of farming are constant, and as late AUTUMN
passes into early WINTER, BATHSHEBA works away in the fields -

140B INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT 140B

- and falls asleep, exhausted, fully-clothed, alone in this
big old house -

141 INT. CHURCH, WEATHERBURY - DAY 141

A hymn. In the church, much has changed. GABRIEL has joined
MR BOLDWOOD in the private pews. In smart Sunday clothes, he
gathers many admiring glances.

BOLDWOOD, too, has lifted his spirits, singing out loud.

BATHSHEBA, pale in her mourning black, keeps her eyes forward.

142 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

142

BATHSHEBA is out hunting. Pheasants move in the undergrowth, and she raises her gun to take aim...

But a noise startles them - they fly off, and she turns and sees BOLDWOOD approaching on horseback.

An accidental encounter.

BATHSHEBA
Mr Boldwood.

BOLDWOOD
Mrs Troy.

BATHSHEBA
We've not spoken since -

BOLDWOOD
No. We've not.

BATHSHEBA
I was heading home, if you'd like to...but perhaps you're busy.

BOLDWOOD
No. I'd like that. Very much.

143 INT. GREAT HALL, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

143

They sit, companionably, taking tea.

BATHSHEBA
You were very kind to me that day.
I hope you'll forgive me if I've kept a certain distance. I've been..not my old self.

BOLDWOOD
No.
(a delicate matter)
Forgive me, I understand there are debts.

BATHSHEBA
You've heard then -

BOLDWOOD
Your late husband -

BATHSHEBA

Perhaps we should change the subject -

BOLDWOOD

Perhaps I can help.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Boldwood, that's a kind offer, but I would never dream of borrowing -

BOLDWOOD

Not money.

(He's trying to restrain himself. But no good -)

I'm a middle-aged man willing to protect you for the rest of your life. You may run your farm if you wish, without risk. I'll pay your departed husband's debts and guarantee its financial stability. It can be your pastime. Of course, we'd need to wait, for propriety's sake. But when you are ready, I'm offering you shelter, comfort. A safe harbour. As my wife.

(a beat)

You must at least admire my persistence.

She smiles at this.

BATHSHEBA

I do -

BOLDWOOD

And like me?

BATHSHEBA

Yes -

BOLDWOOD

And respect me?

BATHSHEBA

Yes, of course -

BOLDWOOD

Which is it, like or respect?

BATHSHEBA

I..it is difficult for a woman to define her feelings in language that is made by men to express theirs. I know I do not love you.

(MORE)

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

I know that I can never love you
the way a woman ought to love her
husband.

BOLDWOOD

If you worry about a lack of
passion on your part, a lack
of...desire, if you worry about
marrying me merely out of guilt and
pity and compromise, well - I don't
mind. I love you and, for my own
part, I'm content merely to be
liked.

144 INT. STABLE, EVERDENE FARM - NIGHT

144

BATHSHEBA and GABRIEL, wrapped up against the chill night,
stand shoulder to shoulder.

GABRIEL

When must you give your answer?

BATHSHEBA

By Christmas. It's a terrible
responsibility, to hold a man's
happiness in your hands. His sanity
too, perhaps.

GABRIEL

Could you...care for him?

BATHSHEBA

You mean love him? Let's just
say...love is wanting. But then
love's a worn-out, miserable thing
for me now, love for him or anyone.
And perhaps a marriage without love
is the price I have to pay.

It's too much for GABRIEL.

GABRIEL

Why are you asking me? Why not ask
Liddy or the parson -?

BATHSHEBA

I need someone who's clear-headed,
who's objective, indifferent...

GABRIEL

Then I'm afraid you ask the wrong
man.

And there it is. An admission. She does not answer
immediately.

BATHSHEBA

Well...thank you, Mr Oak -

She stands, smiles sadly. And walks away.

145 EXT. COUNTRY LANE, BUDMOUTH - DAY

145

A TRAVELLER walks along a deserted country road. The overcoat and uniform he wears - an ordinary merchant navy seaman' - is somewhat bedraggled and muddied, and the face is unshaven, but he's still recognisable as FRANCIS TROY.

A cart approaches. He waits until it's near then hails the DRIVER.

TROY

Can you take me to Weatherbury?

(the DRIVER rides on.

TROY's most charming

smile -)

It is Christmas.

The DRIVER slows TROY jumps on the rear of the cart.

146 EXT. FOREST, BOLDWOOD ESTATE - DAY

146

Axes thud into wood. A great pine is felled by WORKMEN as BOLDWOOD looks on.

147 EXT. BOLDWOOD ESTATE - DAY

147

The steam tractor drags the immense tree towards BOLDWOOD's mansion.

148 INT. GREAT HALL, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - DAY

148

The great tree stands in the process of decoration.

Christmas Eve preparations. A table is laid with meats, wine, bread, even fruit. In pride of place - a pineapple!

BOLDWOOD presides over it all, glowing with hope and excitement, a little manic perhaps as he shows GABRIEL around.

BOLDWOOD

So - what do you think?

(the room)

I'm not in the habit of organising parties. Perhaps we should make it an annual event, every Christmas

Eve. I've invited the whole

village, do you think they'll come?

(MORE)

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)

Do you think Miss Everdene will come?

OAK

I'm sure she will.

Fussing in a mirror, he attempts adjust his tie, while GABRIEL looks on.

BOLDWOOD

You'll stay too I hope? I know Miss Everdene would like you to be here.

GABRIEL

Perhaps. For an hour or so.

BOLDWOOD

Look - my hands are shaking I'm so nervous. Gabriel, would you? As well as you can, please.

(GABRIEL takes the tie.

Face to face -)

Is there a knot that's particularly in fashion?

GABRIEL

You're asking the wrong man.

BOLDWOOD

What about women? Does a woman keep her promise?

GABRIEL

She has promised?

BOLDWOOD

An *implied* promise.

GABRIEL

Once again, I'm not the best person to -

BOLDWOOD

But will she do what's right?

GABRIEL

If it's not inconvenient to her.

BOLDWOOD

Oak, you've become quite cynical lately! She never promised me that first time, therefore she has never broken her promise.

GABRIEL

She hasn't promised this time either.

BOLDWOOD

But she will tonight, I know she
will. And when she does -

He produces a small box from his pocket. An engagement ring,
heavy with diamonds. GABRIEL can't speak.

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)

I wanted to tell you in advance,
Gabriel, because I believe I know
your secret.

(an awkward stab at
intimacy)

I've seen you together, the way you
speak to her and watch her and look
after her. And I know of her
profound...affection for you.
You've behaved like a man and as
the successful rival - successful
through your kindness - I wish you
to know that I am profoundly
grateful.

And BOLDWOOD beams tearfully in gratitude for the final
fulfilment of his dream. Then -

BUTLER

The musicians are here, Sir.

The BUTLER departs. To GABRIEL;

BOLDWOOD

Please - stay. Celebrate with us.

149 EXT. BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - NIGHT

149

Lit by torches, the exterior of the mansion looks
magnificent. MUSIC can be heard. The party has already
started, and BATHSHEBA, descending from the carriage,
beautiful in a black silk dress, looks up at the house with a
terrible sense of foreboding.

At some point this may well be her new home. It's a fine
house, yet she can barely bring herself to step inside.

She takes LIDDY's hand, squeezes it, and they head in.

150 INT. GREAT HALL, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - NIGHT

150

The Party. There are a great many GUESTS here, largely local
GENTRY and FARMERS but, in the spirit of Christmas, some of
the WORKERS too, all of whom are making the most of the food
and the wine. JOSEPH, JACOB, JAN and BILLY, all in their
Sunday best, all in various stages of inebriation.

The band PLAYS. The dancing has just begin - rather formal and reserved at present. BATHSHEBA's arrival, though, is enough to draw the other GUEST's attention. The beautiful widow, still a source of fascination.

From his vantage point on the great stairs, BOLDWOOD watches BATHSHEBA arrives. She smiles back, a little awkwardly.

150A INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - DAY

150A

A shadow in the hallway. TROY, alone, in his old home.

He looks through cupboards and drawers. On a shelf, a glimpse of red. Through torn brown paper, his cavalry jacket, his sword. All his possessions, retrieved from the beach.

151 INT. GREAT HALL, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - NIGHT

151

The PARTY continues, the wine taking effect. Dancing has started, and BOLDWOOD, still keeping his distance, is urging people to join in the merriment.

BATHSHEBA, sitting apart, watches him. An effort of imagination; her future husband, her future home.

GABRIEL, in turn, is the centre of attention. TWO FARMER'S DAUGHTERS, working away at him. But his eyes are on BATHSHEBA, and her sadness. She catches his eye, smiles.

GABRIEL

Will you excuse me -

- and he crosses to her, leaving his ADMIRERS sadly alone.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Oak, you've broken their hearts -
(the ADMIRERS)
Go back and talk to them, poor
things -

GABRIEL

I've come to say goodnight. I don't
suit this kind of affair.

BATHSHEBA

No, neither do I. I wish I could
leave too.

GABRIEL

Stay a little longer. For his sake.

Both look to BOLDWOOD the buoyant host.

BATHSHEBA

I've been trying to imagine myself living here. I can't seem to manage it.

GABRIEL

You'd suit it very well.

BATHSHEBA

Would I?

A sad smile, a moment between them, interrupted by BOLDWOOD.

GABRIEL

I must go.

BOLDWOOD

Not before you've danced, both of you. I insist.

BATHSHEBA

Mr Oak?

Hesitation, then GABRIEL offers his hand. They take to the floor, and join the other DANCERS.

The dance is by no means intimate or improper. There's a distance between them at all times, and LIDDY, BOLDWOOD, the GUESTS watch it with pleasure.

But for GABRIEL and BATHSHEBA it is a kind of agony.

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Gabriel. Tell me - what am I going to do?

GABRIEL thinks about this. He sees BOLDWOOD watching them, the smile on his face, the ring in his pocket.

He can't answer. BATHSHEBA looks to him -

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Gabriel?

GABRIEL

Do what is right.

BATHSHEBA struggles to accept the truth of this, and to hide her disappointment.

BATHSHEBA

Yes. Yes, of course.

She nods tearfully, breaks away and heads for the door.

BOLDWOOD sees her and follows, GABRIEL watching them go.

152 INT. STAIRWAY, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - NIGHT

152

BOLDWOOD

Mrs Troy, surely you're not leaving?

BATHSHEBA

Yes, I should like to go now-

BOLDWOOD

But your promise! You said by Christmas -

BATHSHEBA

Yes I did.

BOLDWOOD

My proposal, you accept it?

(she hesitates)

A business contract, between two friends free of passion or sentiment. I deserve it.

A deep breath.

BATHSHEBA

I give my promise, yes. I give it as the payment of a debt.

BOLDWOOD

When enough time has passed, you'll marry me? Yes?

(She nods.)

Say the words.

BATHSHEBA

I will marry you.

BOLDWOOD's face lights up. Wild-eyed joy.

BOLDWOOD

Thank you! Thank you, thank you, thank you, God bless you, Bathsheba-

BATHSHEBA

Now I must go-

BOLDWOOD

One more thing-

BATHSHEBA

Please, Mr Boldwood-

BOLDWOOD

(the ring)

You'll take this. As a token of my love-

BATHSHEBA

I cannot wear a ring, it is not
right, it is too soon -

BOLDWOOD

Just for tonight. For me.

BATHSHEBA takes in the man, his look of total adoration. She
relents and holds out her hand.

To her discomfort, BOLDWOOD slides on the ring, then kisses
her hand.

BOLDWOOD (CONT'D)

Finally. I am happy now.

153 EXT. BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - NIGHT

153

BATHSHEBA hurries out into the night, desperate to get away.
She slows, and STOPS.

On the great lawn, lit by flaming torches, the STRANGEST
SIGHT.

A FIGURE stands in the moonlight, scarlet and silver, a sword
in his hand as he practices the sword drill. It might almost
be a ghost.

154 INT. GREAT HALL, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - NIGHT

154

GABRIEL is pulling on his coat, leaving now. LIDDY rushes up
to him, drunk, flirtatious.

LIDDY

Mr Oak, no more excuses, you'll
dance with me now.

GABRIEL

Have you seen Mrs Troy?

LIDDY

(disappointed)
I think she may have left.

155 EXT. BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - NIGHT

155

TROY and BATHSHEBA face to face, TROY a little drunk now,
dishevelled, unshaven.

BATHSHEBA

Frank.

TROY

Black suits you. A little
premature, I'm afraid.

BATHSHEBA

I knew it, I knew you were alive, I felt it.

TROY

And here I am. Some fishermen pulled me from the sea. Then I discovered I was dead, and found that I preferred it, for a while anyway.

BATHSHEBA

So why have you come back, Frank?

TROY

The strangest thing. I found I missed you. What's the matter? You don't seem very pleased to see me. No kiss after all this time?

BATHSHEBA

You said that I was dead to you.

TROY

Did I? Well, then - honesty at all times. I find myself in need of money. I gave up my profession for you, it seems harsh that you should have a house and farm while I'm living hand to mouth.

BATHSHEBA

There is no money -

TROY

Then we'll sell the farm.

BATHSHEBA stands numb, devastated - finally defeated.

Near the house a few FIGURES can be seen. GUESTS from the party, SPECTATORS, incredulous at the sight.

TROY (CONT'D)

Come my love, no tears. Come home with me. We'll talk like we used to.

(BATHSHEBA doesn't move)

Did you hear what I said? Come.

(No reply)

I'M YOUR HUSBAND AND YOU'LL OBEY ME, DAMNIT!

Furious, he reaches for her hand and grabs it -

He sees the engagement ring glittering there. A realisation, the truth dawning.

TROY smiles, and -

An EXPLOSION. A gunshot. The force of the blast is immense, sending TROY sprawling across the lawn, the full force of a shotgun blast directed straight into his chest.

BOLDWOOD stands, gun in hand. BATHSHEBA's face, her dress, are sprayed with blood. She starts to shake. OTHER GUESTS come running -

BOLDWOOD

I won't be robbed again. Not again.

He gives the gun to GABRIEL. Then, with calm simplicity, he approaches BATHSHEBA, takes her hand, kisses it -

Then BOLDWOOD walks away.

FADE TO BLACK.

156 INT. GREAT HALL, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - DAY 156

GABRIEL walks through the great hall, empty now. The Christmas tree stands forlorn and wilted.

157 INT. BEDROOM, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - DAY 157

GABRIEL pulls open the wardrobe. Dresses in every colour of the rainbow, silks and satins, poplins and serges, all ready for his beloved fiancée...

Stitched into a pair of white calf-skin gloves, a label bears the name -

'Bathsheba Boldwood.'

158 INT. CASTERBRIDGE GAOL - DAY 158

Perfectly calm, BOLDWOOD sits erect in his cell, hands in lap. Strangely peaceful and still at last.

159 EXT. CHURCHYARD, WEATHERBURY 159

A grey January day, and rain falls on TROY's funeral. His friend and comrade-in-arms SERGEANT DOGETT and a small scattering of military men represent his former regiment.

BATHSHEBA stands a little way off, dressed in black, in mourning for the second time.

The inscription on the gravestone now reads -

Erected by Francis Troy. In loving memory of Fanny Robbin and Child. Died October 9th.

In the same grave lies the aforesaid Francis Troy, Who Died December 24th.

160 INT. BEDROOM, BOLDWOOD'S MANSION - DAY 160

GABRIEL opens a drawer. Jewellery; diamonds, pearls, rubies, heavy gold bracelets.

BATHSHEBA (O.S.)
Let me see.

REVEAL BATHSHEBA, in mourning, as she steps forward gingerly, and takes in the jewellery.

She takes something from her pocket. The engagement ring that BOLDWOOD gave her.

GABRIEL
If it's any consolation, his life
will be spared. A crime of passion.

BATHSHEBA
Because of me.

GABRIEL
You did the right thing in the end.

BATHSHEBA puts the engagement ring back in amongst the other jewels.

GABRIEL pushes the drawer closed.

161 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 161

Summer again. Another harvest. The fields are full of WORKERS scything the corn - a fine harvest, a flourishing business.

Still in mourning black, BATHSHEBA watches, and allows herself a smile of satisfaction.

Music continues -

162 EXT. CHURCHYARD, WEATHERBURY - DAY 162

The choir is practicing in the church nearby as BATHSHEBA tends her husband's grave.

She is still in mourning, but some of the colour has returned to her face now; not quite the firebrand of the last year, but not so drawn and haunted.

She becomes aware of a figure behind her; GABRIEL.

GABRIEL

I'm sorry, I startled you.

BATHSHEBA

I wanted to tend their grave. I've not been here for so long.

(the church)

Are you going in?

GABRIEL

Rehearsals. I sing bass in the choir.

BATHSHEBA

Yes, I've heard you.

GABRIEL

Then I apologise.

(she smiles)

I'd been hoping for a chance to talk to you. We've not spoken as much as I'd have liked -

BATHSHEBA

No -

GABRIEL

And I wanted an opportunity to say...well, the fact is I'm leaving England.

BATHSHEBA

Leaving?

GABRIEL

To go to America. I've a mind to try California, and there's a boat leaving Bristol. Four day's time. I'll be on it.

(She's struggling to take this all in.)

I understand that I should give you notice.

BATHSHEBA

No, you must go when you want.

GABRIEL

Then I'll leave first thing in the morning. No fuss. I think that's best.

And BATHSHEBA stands, shell-shocked in the graveyard as GABRIEL walks away.

The choir sings. She is struggling to take this all in.

- 163 INT. BEDROOM, EVERDENE FARM - DAWN 163
- BATHSHEBA sits on the edge of the bed. She hasn't slept a wink.
- She stands, opens the window, looks out at her land.
- Her wardrobe. Her dress of mourning black.
- 164 INT. GREAT HALL, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 164
- No longer dressed in black, BATHSHEBA sits at the table, attempting to sort through the accounts.
- LIDDY and OLD GEORGE are there too, LIDDY, tearful, consoling the dog, sniffing, inconsolable at the news.
- BATHSHEBA
Liddy, that's enough.
- LIDDY
Sorry, Miss.
- BATHSHEBA returns to the papers before her. Staring. Unseeing.
- Suddenly she pushes her chair back, walks from the room.
- 165 EXT. FARMYARD, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 165
- BATHSHEBA mounts her horse, determined, a decision made.
- 166 EXT. FIELDS, EVERDENE FARM - DAY 166
- BATHSHEBA rides and rides, just as we first saw her. Cresting a hill, she searches the western road ahead, searching for GABRIEL.
- 166A EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY 166A
- The spot where she found him before, but no sign of him this time. Is she too late? She urges the horse on -
- 166B EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY 166B
- She comes to a halt. Losing hope now. Then - a figure, far off. It can only be GABRIEL. She rides on -

167

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

167

GABRIEL walks on, his possessions on his back. The sun is setting now, but he doesn't look back, not even when he hears the sound of horses hooves behind him.

BATHSHEBA

Gabriel! Gabriel, wait!

(she dismounts,
breathless)

You'll think I'm strange, but...I
thought..I wanted to know..
Gabriel, have I offended you?

GABRIEL

No -

BATHSHEBA

- or upset you in some way?

GABRIEL

Not at all.

BATHSHEBA

Is it money? I will pay you more,
Gabriel, whatever you want.

GABRIEL

I don't need money now.

BATHSHEBA

A formal partnership then?

GABRIEL

...nor a partnership. The farm
belongs to you alone. The finest
farm for miles around.

BATHSHEBA

Then why are you going?

A moment.

GABRIEL

I said I'd leave you one day.

BATHSHEBA

I had hoped I could change your
mind.

GABRIEL

Not this time.

BATHSHEBA

Well you must not go!

GABRIEL

You forbid me?

BATHSHEBA

Yes, if you like! I forbid you!

GABRIEL

(he smiles)

It's time for you to fight your own battles, and win them too. I believe in you entirely. I don't believe there's anything you can't do.

And that's the end of the discussion.

BATHSHEBA

So we should say goodbye then.

GABRIEL

I suppose so.

BATHSHEBA

Thank you, Gabriel. You've believed in me and fought for me and stood by my side when all the world was against me, and we've been through so much together - Wasn't I your first sweetheart? Weren't you mine? - and now to have to carry on without you when I've loved you for so long -

(and there it is)

I love you, Gabriel. There.

A moment -

GABRIEL

If I knew -

BATHSHEBA

Go on.

GABRIEL

If I knew that you would let me love you and marry you -

BATHSHEBA

- but you'll never know.

GABRIEL

Why not?

BATHSHEBA

Because you never ask!

GABRIEL

Would you say no again?

BATHSHEBA

I don't know. Probably.

GABRIEL can't help himself. He laughs, and she laughs too.

BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)
So why don't you, Gabriel? Ask me
now. Ask me!

A moment and then he steps towards her, takes her in his arms
and kisses her. And then -

167A INT. CHURCH, WEATHERBURY - DAY

167A

We are in the church, GABRIEL and BATHSHEBA at the altar,
smart but not over-dressed, GABRIEL immensely proud.

GABRIEL
I will.

The VICAR turns to BATHSHEBA -

VICAR
Wilt thou have this man to thy
wedded husband?

In the small but happy congregation, LIDDY, the MEN, MRS
HURST. But our attention is on BATHSHEBA, C.U., listening
intently.

VICAR (CONT'D)
Wilt thou obey him, and serve him,
love, honour and keep him in
sickness and in health?

This is not just a conventional form of words, but a solemn
vow and she weighs each part. Obey, serve, love, honour...

VICAR (CONT'D)
And forsaking all others, keep thee
only to him, so long as you both
shall live?

A suspended moment. A decision.

And then, finally, with joy and conviction, an affirmation -

BATHSHEBA
Yes. Yes, I will.

167B EXT. CHURCH, WEATHERBURY - DAY

167B

The doors of the church -

- burst open as the CONGREGATION spills out. All the workers
are there - LIDDY laughing and crying at the same time, MRS
HURST too. Not a grand marriage, but a joyous celebration
none the less. A ramshackle procession forms, heading down
the country lane.

And at the rear walk the bride and groom.

BATHSHEBA takes GABRIEL's arm, and rests her head on her husband's shoulder.

FADE OUT.

THE END