

Thomas Hardy: Scripting the Irrational

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Abstract

Through creative practice and critical engagement this thesis argues that film and television adaptations of the work of Thomas Hardy have failed to capture elements of his writing both in terms of content and form. Hardy's writing is infused with references to the folkloric practices and beliefs that he grew up with in nineteenth-century Dorset; much of this folklore concerned itself with the irrational and the practice of witchcraft in particular. Hardy was also keen from the outset to explore adventurous narrative patterns, anticipating literary styles that were to come and this is mirrored in the form that the series takes and the attention given to it in the critical elements of the thesis. Yet these aspects of his work have been largely ignored by production companies in their quest to present Hardy's work to the financially lucrative heritage market both here in the UK and in North America. This is a market in which the inclusion of any supernatural elements presented in a slightly challenging manner, would simply not fit with the kind of past they are recreating and their attempts to offer the nostalgia of a safe and rurally idyllic picture of nineteenth-century England. This practice-led thesis has involved scripting a five-episode mini-series for television with the aim of addressing this situation; the series, *The Haunting of Mr Hardy*, comprises adaptations of four of his dark short stories plus one original episode. The scripts will make an important contribution to knowledge about Hardy and their appearance is timely in that the contemporary television audience seem to have an increasing appetite for the weird and eerie, witnessed by the growing popularity of the folk horror genre. To most viewers it will be a little seen side of Thomas Hardy's work and the series will be as much about their creator and narrator as the stories he is narrating.

Table of Contents

Frontispiece	1
Abbreviations for texts cited	2
Introduction	3
<i>The Haunting of Mr Hardy</i> – synopses of the five episodes	17
Chapter 1: Hardy and the irrational.	29
Hardy’s Wessex and Egdon Heath	31
Egdon Heath’s Mephistophelian Visitants	34
Diggory Venn, Mop Ollamoor and the Freudian Uncanny	40
Skimmington-rides, ghostly coaches and other superstitions.....	42
Hardy: death, the grave, faith and the Church.....	46
Chapter 2: The Scripts, <i>The Haunting of Mr Hardy</i>	55
<i>The Fiddler of the Reels</i>	55
<i>The Three Strangers</i>	137
<i>The Withered Arm</i>	199
<i>The Grave by the Handpost</i>	261
<i>Afterwards</i>	323
Chapter 3: Hardy’s novelistic method and style	385
<i>The Poor Man and the Lady</i> and <i>The Hand of Ethelberta</i>	386
Hardy adapting Hardy	392
Hardy and Coincidence	395
Hardy’s range of narrative perspectives	397
Hardy and the visual arts	400
Hardy and Surrealism.	404
Chapter 4: Television and Film	409
Adaptation	409
Contents of Contemporary Television Drama.....	413
The Delivery of Contemporary Television Drama.....	419
Heritage Drama	421
Folk Horror and the English Eerie.....	426
The Haunting of Mr Hardy	430

Conclusion.....449

Bibliography453

Filmography..... 465

NB: The scripts form an integral part of the thesis and therefore follow linear page numbering. To ensure that they retain their integrity as scripts they also include their own page numbers and these numbers are used for reference in the body of the thesis.

Frontispiece

This thesis offers a rare opportunity for the curious to glimpse the eerie antics of the Mephistophelian visitants as they tread and dance over the history encrusted soil of Egdon Heath, in Thomas Hardy's Wessex. Rare, because little in the way of page-to-screen adaptation has dared to show the Conjurors at work trying to undo the whispers of the Witches as they hag-ride and donate their evil-eye upon the innocent; no sound has ever been captured of the haunting magic of the fiddler's strings as demented children lose the ability to control their limbs and join the young women weeping and wanting.

Let us walk with Hardy as he meanders his way down the memory lane of a vanishing world, a pathway so often ignored. Let us witness the hangman's knot on the way to the handpost by the cross-roads and show to all the reddle-man painted in dread, there for the sake of the ache in the stake driven through the heart of the dead.

The tales should be told away from the lure of the heritage dollar and the critical remarks of the teacher or scholar; told as they were always meant to be told, from mother to daughter, mother to son, to everyone, passed on and on. These were the stories young Tommy was fed, about the ancient and recent just dead, there beneath the soil of secrets, the space he named Egdon Heath.

Abbreviations for texts cited*Blue Eyes**A Pair of Blue Eyes**Crowd**Far from the Madding Crowd**Ethelberta**The Hand of Ethelberta**The Fiddler**The Fiddler of the Reels**Jude**Jude the Obscure**Tess**Tess of the d'Urbervilles**The Mayor**The Mayor of Casterbridge**The Return**The Return of the Native**Wayfarers**The Three Wayfarers**Woodlanders**The Woodlanders*

Introduction

Thomas Hardy is regarded as one of the leading literary figures of the nineteenth century, a novel such as *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) considered a 'classic' along with novels by Dickens, Eliot, Austen and others. This is owing, as Pierre Bourdieu suggests, to 'their consecration, and therefore their widespread durable market, to the educational system' (1986, p.153). These writers and their work were rapidly commandeered and adapted into the service of the audio-visual domain in the BBC's early stages in 1936, informed by its Reithian responsibilities for educating and entertaining the public. Since that time adaptations of 'the classics' seem to have pleased and satisfied the viewing public in what appears to be their never ending appetite for film and television adaptations. As Neil Sinyard states, the 'legacy of the nineteenth-century novel is the twentieth-century film' (1986, vii) and that observation can now be extended to both film and television productions in the twenty-first century.

The most recent television adaptation of Thomas Hardy's work was a BBC production of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* screened in four one-hour parts in 2008, and the most recent film, Thomas Vinterberg's 2015 *Far from the Madding Crowd*. It is fair to say that Hardy has not commanded the same avid attention from the film and television industries as Jane Austen or Charles Dickens. I have turned my attention to his work in this practice-led thesis because Hardy has been badly represented on the screen, the darker unsettling elements of his stories and the form that they often took have not been addressed. My practice has focused on producing five scripts suitable for a television mini-series, four of which are adaptations of his lesser known short stories and the creation of a fifth original episode. Only one of the stories has previously been adapted for television 'The Withered Arm', which featured in the 1973 BBC2 *Wessex Tales* series. The stories chosen for adaptation all come from Hardy's life-long fascination with the irrational and supernatural mostly drawn from the Dorset folklore he grew up with. In a commercial sense the time seems ripe for the release of these underrepresented tales, coinciding with the renewed interest in the genre of folk horror which these stories lean towards; my writing is intended to be drama that fits into contemporary television schedules.

I believe that my creative product, the series of scripts for a television series, will do what Craig Batty and Alec McAuley describe on the *NAWE* website

(National Association of Writers in Education) satisfy and function ‘as both a method of research enquiry and also a research artefact’, showing the value of ‘screenwriting as a way to generate and disseminate new knowledge’ (Batty and McAulay, 2016). Dallas J Baker suggests on the *TEXT* website that scripts used in this way should not be regarded as ‘merely blue prints for later production’ (Baker, 2013) asserting that scripts have an existence as texts of scholarly and literary intent in their own right. My scripts adhere to the format required by the television industries and are tightly directed towards that area. They are intended as, what Ian Macdonald terms ‘screen ideas’ (2013, p.4) for future production, but they are also structural devices which reveal little seen aspects of Hardy’s writing, his life and his fascination with the irrational.

The scripts are documents that display my creative practice and the screenwriting process, focused on analysing and defining Hardy’s use of the irrational and the irregular in terms of both the content and the form that his writing often took. For, as I discuss in the following chapters, Hardy’s work and the short stories I have chosen in particular are drenched in the irrational, whilst his longer works, which frequently employed irregular narrative patterns, show he was keenly interested in experimentation. Through my practice I bring these features to the forefront in my scripts, thereby exemplifying the unsettling aspects of Hardy’s work, making them commensurate with the original texts for a twenty-first century television audience. This process is particularly appealing to me because of its ability to couple the critical with the creative; giving me the opportunity to investigate through practice, the contemporary resonances of Hardy’s work. The essence of my methodology throughout has been analysing the original material and biographical facts about Hardy and interpreting the material for my writing.

I define the term ‘irrational’ as that which stands outside reason: that is, thinking which is not based on logic, but rather on that which is not objective and verifiable. For Hardy this is evident in the contradictions between a doctrine based on Enlightenment thinking and the deeply rooted pre-Christian beliefs and practices of rural nineteenth-century Dorset. In Hardy’s writing, as Chen Zhen states we: ‘find a transitional world where old and new ideas are struggling to defeat each other and where Christianity and Paganism are in combat’ (2015, p.56). The irrational continually manifests itself in Hardy’s fiction, which frequently references folklore and a folk tradition, as well as characters that have a contingent belief in both of

these. In these terms the short fiction I have chosen for adaptation contains some of the tropes of what would now be described as ‘folk horror’. One of Adam Scovell’s definitions of folk horror (whilst acknowledging that it ‘is a prism of a term’) is that it is a ‘work that uses folklore, either aesthetically or thematically, to imbue itself with a sense of the arcane for eerie, uncanny or horrific purposes’ (2017, p.7). This describes perfectly what Hardy does in these stories which I am recycling and presenting to a television audience.

In Chapter One I will be drawing on Sigmund Freud’s 1919 essay *Das Unheimlich*, or *The Uncanny*, in which Freud states that the term when experienced by an individual represented everything ‘that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open’ (2003, p.132). The feeling of the uncanny is something that we have some familiarity with and yet is foreign to us, leaving us feeling uncomfortably disturbed. Nicholas Royle aptly describes the ‘uncanny’ as ‘a flickering sense, but not conviction, of something supernatural’ (2003, p.1). I invoke the ‘flickering sense’ phenomena with my character Eva in episode five of my series ‘Afterwards’.

Hardy’s fiction goes beyond the uncanny, as do I in my scripts, acknowledging the concepts of the eerie and the weird. All three terms (uncanny, eerie, and weird) come under the canopy of the irrational and are exemplified in my practice. Mark Fisher, notes that the:

sensation of the eerie occurs either when there is something present where there should be nothing or [...] there is nothing present when there should be something. (2016, p. 61).

An eerie silence when there should be some noise is a good example of this and one used in my practice in the third episode of the series (episode 3, p.33) amongst other places. As the character Gertrude makes her way over the heath it might be expected that there ought logically to be some noise: perhaps the sound of crows cawing and rattling and trees grinding in the wind but there is only silence, eerie silence. Fisher states that the ‘sensation of the eerie clings to certain kinds of physical spaces and landscapes (2016, p.61). I will argue and demonstrate both in the chapters of my critical writing and my scripts, that Hardy’s Egdon Heath is just such a landscape.

Fisher further suggests that what the eerie and the weird ‘have in common is a preoccupation with the strange’ (2016, p.8). It is the ‘irruption into *this* world of something from outside which is the marker of the weird’ (2016, p.20, italics in the

original). In my first episode (episode 1, p.12) the character Mop Ollamoor suddenly appears playing his fiddle on the doorstep of a cottage in the quiet rural village of Stickleford; his appearance much to the shock of a passing Car'line. Mop's arrival on the doorstep, with two boys dancing in a trance like manner around him 'opens up an *egress* between this world and others' (Fisher, 2016, p.19, italics in the original). Mop seems to have arrived at the cottage doorway from a very much darker place, 'coming from', as the narrator notes 'nobody knew where' (*The Fiddler*: 287). He is, as Carolina Paganine states, 'a Wessex outsider in birth and appearance' and with the sound of his fiddle 'able to cause emotional outbursts in children' (2017, p.171) and also, as the narrator tells us, in young women 'of fragile and responsive organisation' (*The Fiddler*: 288).

Hardy's interest in supernatural phenomena came from the folk belief shared by the rural poor where he grew up. The widespread nature of such beliefs is validated by amongst others the Dorset poet William Barnes (1801-1886). Hardy set out to preserve the folklore at a time of rural depopulation in the second part of the nineteenth century. As Sophie Gilmartin and Rob Mengham state Hardy was 'immersed imaginatively in folk customs and superstitions [...] they gave a power and force otherwise denied to the impoverished and oppressed in rural Wessex' (2007, p23). Hardy's fascination with folk belief, witchcraft, superstition, and the eerie runs throughout his writing, but have been consistently ignored in screen adaptations of his work; in this thesis my scripts will rectify this situation.

As in the case of Austen or Dickens, the majority of adaptations of Hardy have been produced to serve and perpetuate the constructed image of the 'Hardyan', in the same manner as we have had the 'Austenite' or 'Dickensian', rather than to reflect aspects of Hardy's work. The popular view of all these writers has been formed by the combination of their literary work, their perceived persona and television and film adaptations of both. Adaptations of Hardy's work, like those of other canonical writers of the nineteenth century, have been aligned to the genre of costume or heritage drama, which still seems to be much in demand both here in the UK and internationally. The phenomenon of heritage, as Andrew Higson states, represents 'a nostalgic and escapist flight from the present' (2003, p.51) and relies for its delivery on period costume and detail, visually stunning landscapes and magnificent country houses. The incredible success of this genre can be illustrated by ITV's period drama *Downton Abbey* (2010-2015), discussed more fully in

Chapter Four. This series, created and written by Julian Fellowes rather than an adaptation of a nineteenth-century novel, is riddled with the features of heritage. On the *Wrap* website Michael Edelstein, President of NBCUniversal International Studios, who co-produces the series, stated that: ‘Seen in over 250 territories, *Downton Abbey* is a global phenomenon and viewers around the world continue to ask for more’ (Edelstein, 2017). It would seem that the pleas of these viewers are to be answered: in September 2019 a film version of *Downton Abbey* will be released, made by the US film production company, Focus Features LLC. My scripts set out to challenge the genre of heritage and seek to capture and display the folk beliefs of the rural underclass in nineteenth-century Dorset; this was Hardy’s heritage, aspects of which were frequently invoked in his work.

Adaptations of Hardy’s work certainly provide the picturesque landscape and the odd stately mansion (Mapperton House in Dorset, for example used as Boldwood’s Jacobean residence in the 2015 *Far from the Madding Crowd*) but Hardy and his created Wessex has appealed to film and television audiences through nostalgia for a rural life that has largely vanished. Keith Selby used the term ‘hokum’ to describe the manner in which this way of life is presented through the adaptations, ‘designed to make a sentimental or melodramatic appeal to the audience’ (Selby, 2000, p.93). The ‘hokum’ is what has come to be thought of as Hardyan, a contributory factor to the way in which the brand has been constructed, and still one of the ways in which Hardy’s Wessex is perceived today. The light-hearted and idealised pastoral snapshot of rural England as presented in his second published novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), has tended to dominate the screen presence of his work. Hardy quickly moved on following this novel, experimenting, as we shall see, with both form and content, yet most adaptations still show little enthusiasm for doing the same.

Hardy himself did however, play a big role in the construction of the Hardyan and by setting his stories in the landscape of ‘Wessex’, strategically energised what was to become the heritage brand of his fiction. Hardy also encouraged the formation of what Martin J. Weiner referred to as the ‘Wessex Worshippers.’ These are Hardy devotees who:

Shaped their own version of Wessex and made it into a mythic image for England itself [...] In such ways, Hardy’s complex [...] fiction was

reduced to a one-dimensional, repetitious chronicle of an appealingly timeless and nonmaterial way of life under siege' (1981, p.53).

Hardy, being a shrewd businessman, realised from the outset the potential value of his created Wessex. In a letter to his publisher of 1888 he asked:

Could you, whenever advertising my books, use the words "Wessex Novels" at the head of the list? [...] I find that the name Wessex, wh. I was the first to use in fiction, is getting to be taken up everywhere: & it would be a pity for us to lose the right to it for want of asserting it (Purdy and Millgate, 1978, p.171).

In 1913 Hardy helped his friend and photographer Hermann Lea to produce the first *Hardy's Wessex* guidebook, identifying the 'real' sites on which his fictional occurrences took place and listing the disguised place names, Casterbridge for Dorchester, Budmouth for Weymouth and so on. He was later to recommend these photographs to his American publishers as a way of promoting his work there. The Hardy brand, and indeed the Hardyan, is still big business and it is my intention in this project, by writing against expectations, to widen the perception of that Hardyan in the series of scripts and original writing that I have undertaken. However, there is a tension between seeking to offer something new, and the inevitable risk of contributing to a pre-existing industry. Some examples of this tension follow.

In 'The Fiddler of the Reels' (1893), the first story in my series to be adapted, Hardy wrote that on the lower verge of Egdon Heath sits 'a lone roadside hostel,' (*The Fiddler*: 298) known in the neighbourhood as 'The Quiet Woman', and this hostel also makes an appearance in *The Return of the Native* (1878). The inn did exist apparently but was some miles away from where Hardy sets it. In any hypothetical adaptation of my work the inn would no doubt be sought out by viewers as yet another Hardy's Wessex destination, set in 'Hardy country' it would be 'true to', as Peter Widdowson points out, the 'historical myth of Wessex'. This is what I would inevitably be offering to my television audience, particularly, as Widdowson notes, the 'transatlantic one, fascinated by the notion of their origins in old England' (1989, p.98). At least in my screened adaptation the inn would be 'hokum-free' and following what occurs there, the abduction of a little girl by Mop Ollamoor, would become the dark and unsettling place that it is in the text.

The Quiet Woman inn would have to be created in order to shoot the sequences in the production and then, in a sense, it would be taken by some as 'real'. Such is the blurring between the real and the fictive: in this case film adapted from

fiction, which at one point was loosely grounded in reality. This, as Allison Kroll suggests, is a ‘common occurrence within heritage culture where historicity and authenticity prove to be quite complex issues’ (2009, p.357). Widdowson offers an example of this complexity, when he states that on visiting the village museum in Corfe Castle, which had for a time in 1978 ‘become’ Casterbridge in a BBC television production of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, he noticed a ‘cart-sign bearing the name ‘Henchard’, at first he thought it was ‘an extraordinary (even Hardyian) coincidence’ (1989, p.99). He then realised that the sign was a prop from the television production and was now part of the village’s ‘real’ history, in that the production was filmed there. A further example of this and one even more bizarre, since it only refers to the purely fictional, is the existence of a blue plaque outside the Dorchester branch of Barclay’s Bank in Cornhill which states: ‘This house is reputed to have been lived in by the Mayor of Casterbridge in Thomas Hardy’s story of that name written in 1885’. The Hardy brand is still powerful and the writer, his life in Dorset, the locations used in both his novels and their filmed adaptations all merge into the accessible ‘pastness’ of the heritage industry built round him. In these terms the past and present blur and this indistinctness, as will be apparent, becomes a feature in my work, when the world (and its characters) of nineteenth-century Wessex have a presence in twentieth-century Dorset.

Following the publication of *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), Hardy stated that he did not wish to be stereotyped as only being able to write about pastoral matters. Nonetheless most television and film adaptations of his work have reduced him to being just that: the writer of the rural, the rustic. This has partly occurred because adaptations of writers such as Hardy, particularly in the case of film, rely on transatlantic funding for both their production and their market and this has had an impact on what has been produced. I shall argue in this thesis that the heritage label, whilst lucrative for the television and film industries especially in export terms, does shape and limit the nature of the productions. Television and film adaptations of Hardy have only reproduced the safe and reliable, a rural and often idealised, sanitised version of the past with the added emphasis of nostalgia required by the heritage film. In many ways Terry Wright’s sense that Hardy is often perceived (borrowing the patronising phrase from the writer Henry James), as ‘the good, little Thomas Hardy, producer of pastoral tragedies’ (2005, p.2) still lingers.

Paul Niemeyer states of a 1998 ITV adaptation of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, that the story is 'dumbed down' and is representative of the way in which 'Hardy stories become simplified, laden with clichés, and little more than a series of pretty sequences' (2003, p.239). Niemeyer's observations on this particular production, apply to the majority of adaptations of Hardy's work since, as I argue in Chapter Four, only a few adaptations of Hardy have dared to move out of the Hardy comfort zone; Michael Winterbottom's film *Jude* of 1996, with its 'gritty' social realism approach to the class-based injustices of the Victorian era being a rare example of a production that has presented a challenge to the genre of heritage. I will also discuss the fact that, with the exception of *Wessex Tales*, a BBC2 series of short stories screened in 1973, Hardy's fascination with the irrational has been ignored by both television and film.

The story that initially inspired me to write scripts dealing with Hardy's interests in the irrational was 'The Fiddler of the Reels'. As a child Hardy was fascinated by, and highly sensitive to, his father's fiddle playing which at times reduced him to tears. I make reference to this in Chapter Three when discussing Hardy's interest in the visual arts and how his work pre-figured some of the concerns of the twentieth-century Surrealist movement. One of the principle interests of the Surrealists was the phenomena of the individual experiencing an emotional disturbance which overcomes reason; Hardy, like his character Car'line, was susceptible to this. Car'line's disturbances in reaction to Mop's fiddle playing are a central part of my script for 'The Fiddler of the Reels' as they were in the original text. Fiddle playing also takes place in 'The Three Strangers' episode two and the 'Grave by the Handpost' episode four; the young Hardy's violin and bow also makes intrusions into the diegetic space of the scripts and their somewhat uncanny presence is commented on by characters. As I was writing the fiddle became an important object to introduce into the series and another element in its structure, both musically and visually; the potential for its appearance was certainly part of the selection process for the stories I chose to adapt. For, as I have old Hardy say (episode 2, p.12): 'the fiddle meant so much'.

If I were to be asked to present a pitch of 'The Fiddler of the Reels' to a production company, the logline would be: 'The Fiddler of the Reels is a story about the evil and wizardry exacted upon a family by a sexually charismatic travelling musician'. This sets up the situation: Mop Ollamoore is the demonic 'other'

exercising his evil in this story which Hardy sets in a precise period of the past, 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. If the exhibition celebrated all that was new in technology in Victorian Britain, the triumph of rationalism, Hardy in his creation of the character Mop was, as Norman Page suggests, asserting the ‘persistence of the irrational even in a scientific age’ (1996, xxi). Hardy had been asked to submit a short story by the American *Scribner’s Magazine* for their special ‘Exhibition Number’ to coincide with the Chicago World Fair of 1893; by sending ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’ with its references to a violinist whose ‘repertory’ was composed solely of the ‘devil’s tunes’ (*The Fiddler*: 288), Hardy was in a sense exporting the irrational. The other adaptations in my series are based on ‘The Three Strangers’ (1883), ‘The Withered Arm’ (1888) and ‘The Grave by the Handpost’ (1897).

The short story is an ideal format for Hardy to deliver his narrative of the irrational; even though it is present in all of his writing, it is in his shorter fiction that he is able to focus totally on these dark elements. For as Ailsa Cox states: ‘A short story distils or condenses. It captures the essence of an experience’ (2005, p.2). If that experience is of the weird, uncanny or eerie, its presence will be all-encompassing in the short story form and, because the narrative is compressed, it will be all the more powerful. Narrative compression is obviously a feature of short stories along with the fact, as noted by Brander Mathews, they are ‘complete and self contained’ (1994, p.73). This ‘self containment’ functions as a little world that in Hardy’s case, the reader is often invited into (as the viewer will be in my series). Paraphrasing the Argentinian writer Julio Cortázar (1914-1984), Charles E May refers to the intensity of the short story stating that it ‘is a paradoxical form which cuts off a fragment of reality in such a way that the fragment acts like an explosion that opens up a more ample reality’ (1994, xvii). The ‘reality’ of Hardy’s Wessex, especially in the short stories I have chosen to adapt, is very dark indeed. In this thesis, concerned as it is with the screen adaptation of particular aspects of Hardy’s writing where he is recalling and recording the tales told to him as a child, the process of narrative recycling continues, for as May states: ‘In their very shortness, short stories have remained close to the original source of narrative in myth, folklore, fable, and fairy tale (1994, xxvi).

In Chapter One I shall be looking at ‘The Withered Arm’ which is, as Neelanjha Basu comments, ‘memorable for its supernatural elements like witchcraft, prophetic dream vision, and black and white magic’ (2017, p.146). All features that display Hardy’s interest and first-hand knowledge of traditional local culture and narratives of witchcraft. The final and original episode ‘Afterwards’ deals with Hardy’s last few hours of life, his subsequent death and the somewhat bizarre and macabre events that followed; these events based on what actually occurred in ‘real life’ Dorset in January 1928.

The short form of fiction I have selected from Hardy’s writing is ideal for adaptation. The stories all take place in one location, in and around Egdon Heath in Wessex, ‘that invented region’ that Gilmartin and Mengham describe as Hardy’s ‘single most famous creation of place’ (2007, p3). Apart from installing in the viewer ‘a sense of place’ with the locations used in the series, on a practical level this would also reduce costs for a production company, as would the fact that apart from some ancillary actors, the series does not require a large cast. Screen adaptations of shorter fiction do not face the same issues of narrative compression as novel-to-screen adaptations. All the original texts I have adapted contain no sub-plots and therefore offer space for expansion, allowing me both to develop individual character further, as I have done, and to open up, for the first time, the ‘world’ of Hardy and Max Gate.

All the stories in *The Haunting of Mr Hardy*, the title of my series, come from a side of Hardy which was openly interested in the dark and the sinister and it will be a side which film and television audiences will have seen little before. Perhaps the episode in the series that will create the greatest contrast for viewers between what they have seen, read or perceive of Thomas Hardy’s work and the stories I have adapted, will be ‘The Grave by the Handpost’. Although the story involves the singers and players of the parish church choir, as did *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the circumstances and atmosphere created in the two fictions could not be more different; the short story features two suicides, a betrayal and a stake being driven through a dead body, as Susan Hill comments:

The choir still plays old familiar tunes and speaks with burred West Country accents, but its involvement and even relish in the melancholy incidents is depressing. The tale seems to throw a shadow over the Wessex world, and to mock and give the lie to our memory of it as a place of gaiety, sweetness and light, of rural innocence and charm. Our memories play us false (1979, p.33).

It is this largely ignored ‘shadow’ of Hardy’s work that I address in my critical writing and scripts.

Immediately following this introduction, I include a summary of the five stories in my series. Chapter One discusses folklore and myth in nineteenth-century Dorset and Hardy’s interest in these areas of the irrational and argues that they act as a heuristic device for aspects of much of his writing. Most of this folklore that fascinated him all his life came from stories told to him by his mother and grandmother; F.E. Halliday states that Hardy’s mother in particular:

a devout intelligent woman, must have encouraged the boy’s reading, and her fatalistic view of life must have been partly responsible for his interest in the grotesque and macabre (1977, p.126).

These are of course speculative assumptions by Halliday, but they are nonetheless persuasive and valuable to me in my creative endeavours. Storytelling and the ways in which those stories were later to be utilised in his fiction and poetry cannot be stressed enough in any account of Hardy’s writing, since, as Millgate suggests: ‘Hardy was to an extraordinary degree a child of the oral tradition, and perhaps, in England, that tradition’s last and greatest product’ (1985, p.37). The storytelling process, with Hardy narrating and reading, is evident throughout my scripts. As George Woodcock argues we must:

entertain the possibility of considering Hardy in his role of literary persona as a narrator-character, the teller of tales who appears in so many of his short stories, a kind of nameless Marlow whose point of view perpetually conditions our perception of the action and in this way becomes an integral part of the novel considered as an artefact (1981, p.24).

This strand of critical reaction to Hardy is again particularly attractive to me in this project, since this is where I creatively place Hardy in my series, right at the very centre of my scripts. He is Woodcock’s ‘narrator-character’ in *The Haunting of Mr Hardy*; the series, as the title suggests, being as much about him as the stories he is narrating. Biographical research, critical reading as well as a degree of conjecture have gone to make up my characterisation of Thomas Hardy, giving him an extra-textual presence, as I have him re-living and narrating his anthology of dark tales. Chapter Two comprises of the five scripts, my ‘practice’, that go to make up *The Haunting of Mr Hardy* series.

Chapter Three examines Hardy’s use of adventurous narrative patterns and argues that the form in which his writing was presented to the reader diverged

considerably from the realist mode exemplified by writers such as George Eliot.

Richard Nemesvari notes that in what is probably his best known novel, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy's writing is a:

conflation of realism with sensationalism, tragedy, melodrama, didacticism, the Gothic, and the pastoral is exacerbated by a third-person narrator who is sometimes omniscient, sometimes contradictory, sometimes part of the story, and sometimes apparently unable to describe the story at all (2005, p.170).

I suggest that the vast range of 'experimental' narrative on display in this novel and indeed much of Hardy's work glances back, as Woodcock notes, 'to the melodrama of the ballad tradition but also forward to modernist fiction' (1981, p.19). One of the narrative features of the ballad tradition was its reliance on coincidence and I will consider Hardy's plentiful use of this. An 1893 stage adaptation by Hardy of 'The Three Strangers' entitled 'The Three Wayfarers' will be discussed as a further example of Hardy's willingness to experiment with form. In this case, that experimentation includes the breaking of the imaginary fourth wall between actors and the audience, so that characters acknowledge their own fictionality.

Experimentation is an important element in the shape my scripts have taken, as I have an elderly Hardy interacting with his younger self throughout the series. The interaction is necessary, as we shall see, in order for the older Hardy 'to correct tricks of memory' (Purdy and Millgate, 1980, p.54). As stated, I also consider the influence the visual arts had on Hardy and how they fed into his thirst for bold narrative patterns, patterns which have subsequently encouraged my creative practice.

In Chapter Four I shall be looking at theories of novel-to-screen adaptation in the last sixty years or so. Although discussion of the nature of adaptation began with the birth of film, George Bluestone's 1957 *Novels into Film* marked the beginning of academic theorisation on the subject. Much of the theorising has been undertaken in the attempt to widen discussion away from the somewhat stifling issue of fidelity or faithfulness to the source text. As a writer I have found Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996) useful: structural theories of adaptation are of particular importance in the process of screenwriting, being able as Ken Ireland states to identify the 'shared narrative elements in different modes' (2018, p.18). Following this I shall then examine recent trends in television, both in terms of content and delivery: what is being shown and how it is now being viewed.

I will be considering the claim that Thomas Hardy is, as David Lodge calls him, a 'cinematic novelist' (1977, p.78) since this argument is relevant to both television and film. I will then examine the heritage genre, which Hardy has become absorbed into and the genre of folk horror, which I believe his work, especially in the stories covered in my series, leans towards; a consideration of television and film adaptations of Hardy's work will also be made. Throughout the chapters I will make reference to my scripts when it is pertinent to do so, but in Chapter Four I offer further observations.

Nemesvari, discussing a 1998 ITV adaptation of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, states that: 'a more experimental attempt to transfer Hardy's idiosyncratic textual methods to the screen would have forced a more intense engagement with the film' (2005: 181). My scripts seek to provide the vehicle for that engagement, re-appointing drama in a form that respects Hardy's narrative experiments and with a content that is far removed from the concerns of heritage drama. In the stories I have chosen for adaptation there are no grand and imposing country houses, no gentry or aristocrats and little in the way of rural hokum. My scripts reverse the heritage aesthetic taking Hardy back to his 'heritage', in which he as a character experiences a sense of nostalgia in trying to recall the deeply rich folklore of the rural poor of Dorset, complete with eerie murmurs and whispers of witches.

The Haunting of Mr Hardy – synopses of the five episodes

In the case of the first four episodes of my series, the following treatments or synopses focus primarily on the narrative I have inherited and adapted from Hardy's short stories. The structure of that narrative, with Old Hardy trying to revisit the life that is 'vanishing' and using his younger self as the eyes and ears of memory, is present throughout, but balanced so as not to distract from the content of those stories. This is also the case in the manner in which the characters of the 'real world' of Max Gate, Florence Hardy, the staff and Sir Sydney Cockerell are introduced. Except for the final episode, Young Hardy's presence does not intrude on the diegetic space of the primary narrative, but as will be apparent on reading the scripts, he does leave 'traces' that are noticed.

The content of the fifth episode is informed by the biographical detail about Hardy which features in each episode. The series becomes a good example of research and practice creatively interacting to form an artefact that both brings new knowledge to, and entertains, the viewing public.

Episode 1: *The Fiddler of the Reels*

After establishing the narrative structure of the series (with an Old and Young Hardy) we move on to the featured story of the first episode. Mop Ollamoor is a demonic Gypsy whose activities Hardy sets in a precise period of the past, 1851, the year of London's Great Exhibition. Mop is a sexually charismatic fiddle player and one of his conquests is Car'line, who at the start of the story is a happy eighteen-year-old engaged to Ned Hipcroft, a mechanic. Walking home one afternoon she encounters Mop playing his fiddle. Car'line tries to resist the hypnotic notes produced by Mop but enters a state of delirium; drunkenly, as in a trance, she eventually makes her way home. Car'line becomes obsessed with Mop, rejects Ned and the idea of their marriage and they finally part on the day of a local fair where Mop is due to play. Ned reluctantly leaves for London in search of a job. On the night of the fair Car'line, once more in the fever and trance of Mop's music, has sex with him.

Ned finds work at the Great Exhibition and settles down. Four years pass and he receives a letter from Car'line saying how she regretted breaking up and that she would still love to be his wife. Car'line joins Ned accompanied by her child Carry, fathered by Mop. Ned, shocked at first, accepts the situation, the two marry and following the wedding the family go off to visit the exhibition. Whilst there Car'line thinks she sees Mop in a mirror and hears the fiddle music playing again; she breaks down in an emotional state. Car'line recovers and after a period of time, and the fact that Ned's work in London is coming to an end, the family decide to return home to Wessex.

After arriving in Casterbridge by train, Ned enquires about work prospects in a couple of workshops whilst Car'line and Carry go ahead, arranging to meet up at an inn later in the evening. When the two get to the inn a dance is taking place and to Car'line's horror the musician is Mop. On seeing Mop Car'line pulls down the veil of her hat so that he won't recognise her and at one point tries to leave. But Mop is aware of her presence and again she becomes intoxicated with the music, goes into a state of frenzy and eventually collapses. Ned arrives at the inn and it is only then that everyone notices that Carry is missing. Ned and others race out on to the heath in search of Carry but to no avail. Car'line again recovers. Ned, who has built up a strong and loving relation with the child, carries on searching. Car'line tells him to stop worrying and that Mop will not hurt her, but Ned's mental health suffers. Eventually one night, following a nightmare, Ned gets up and washes his face only to see Mop in the mirror laughing and to hear fiddle music playing. Back in his study Old Hardy informs us that from that night on Ned was only ever to utter one word, 'Carry'.

Episode 2: *The Three Strangers*

Most of the action in episode two takes place at Shepherd Fennel's cottage on the night of the christening party for his daughter Mary. It is a wild and rainy night on Egdon when the First Stranger (Timothy Sommers) knocks on the door of the cottage seeking shelter (we have previously seen Sommers escaping, with the help of a sympathetic jailor, from Casterbridge prison where he was due to hang the next morning for the crime of stealing a sheep). Roughly dressed and weather-beaten but

friendly and polite, the First Stranger gratefully accepts the hospitality that Shepherd Fennel offers; Shepherdess Fennel is not so welcoming and has her suspicions.

A second knock on the door heralds the arrival of the Second Stranger, who in my adaptation is William Calcraft, Britain's 'real life' principal executioner from 1829 to 1874. Calcraft, also known as 'short-drop Calcraft', because of his preference in using a shorter piece of rope (thereby causing a slower and more painful death to the individual being hung) arrives with an air of power and menace. He has a loud and deep voice and again avails himself of the food and drink available, much to Shepherdess Fennel's annoyance. From the moment he enters the room, the 'prince of darkness' gains everyone's attention (everyone except Oliver Giles and Widow Wren who are amorously pre-occupied and eventually slip out surreptitiously to an adjacent barn) and sings a song which tells the guests that he's the hangman and will be employed the following morning in the execution of Timothy Sommers.

As Calcraft sings his ditty, a further knock is heard on the door and a Third Stranger stands there asking for directions. He nervously looks round the room, notes the presence of Sommers and Calcraft, panics and then runs off. Shortly after gunshots are heard and one of the guests suggests that the shots probably mean that a prisoner has escaped from Casterbridge jail. All in the room decide that The Third Stranger who was too frightened to enter the party must be the escapee, the man Calcraft should hang the next morning. Calcraft quickly bullies the reluctant males in the room to go and search the heath. The room is soon emptied as the men go off and the women go upstairs. Sommers returns, has a further drink and something to eat and is soon joined by Calcraft, both men independently deciding not to take part in the search, obviously Sommers having his reasons! There is tension between the two, the viewer never really sure whether Calcraft suspects that the other is the wanted man. The two eventually leave going their separate ways.

On the heath The Third Stranger is captured and brought back to the cottage. Whilst they have been searching on the heath a local magistrate and two officers from the jail have arrived; both of the officers state that the man arrested is definitely not Timothy Sommers. The Third Stranger admits to being Timothy's brother John who had called in that night to seek directions to Casterbridge wanting to visit Timothy

before his hanging. As John has no idea where his brother has gone he is released. Back in Old Hardy's study we find out that Timothy Sommers was never captured but we are told that the menace and threat of William Calcraft, the second of the two strangers that night, would have haunted him for the rest of his life. Calcraft also features in the next episode, older, but still as menacingly twisted.

Episode 3: *The Withered Arm*

Rhoda Brook is a milkmaid working for Farmer Davey; she is a thin and pale looking woman of about thirty. The other women at the dairy have little to do with her as she is regarded by some as being a witch, capable of 'overlooking'. This may have started because she had a child (Edward) out of wedlock, the father being Farmer Lodge who now ignores both Rhoda and his son. All the talk in the dairy where Rhoda works is of Lodge, for he is to return to Holmstoke the next day with his new wife Gertrude, twenty years his junior. The talk of the other milkmaids hurts Rhoda and on leaving work she meets up with Edward and asks him to go to the market the next day as Farmer Lodge and Gertrude may pass through, Rhoda wishing to know what Gertrude looks like. Edward does this, making a point of staring at the couple as they drive past him in a new gig; he duly reports to his mother that she is very pretty and is asked to go to church the next morning to observe the young woman further.

One night shortly after this Rhoda goes to bed and dreams/ hallucinates that Gertrude is sat astride her forcing her wedding ring into her face, eventually Rhoda grabs Gertrude's left arm and throws her (the incubus) to the floor with a thud. Rhoda looks to the floor but there is nothing there, she notices that the time is two a.m. Next morning Edward asks whether Rhoda had fallen out of bed as he'd heard a thud in the night, the time being two a.m.

A few days later Gertrude arrives at Rhoda's cottage with a new pair of boots for Edward, unbeknown to Rhoda, Gertrude had spoken to Edward after she'd noticed that his were in a poor state. Although Rhoda had not wanted to meet Gertrude she comes over as a pleasant and kind young woman. They see each other again and Gertrude shows Rhoda the marks on her left arm that look as if someone has

squeezed it very tightly; Gertrude states that the marks appeared following a nightmare that she had experienced and from which she woke up about two a.m. On a further occasion the two meet up at the market and Gertrude says that the arm is getting worse despite the fact that she has seen doctors, applied creams and ointments. Someone has suggested to Gertrude that Rhoda may know the whereabouts of a Conjuror Trendle, who may be able to help. At first when Gertrude finds out that Trendle is a witch she wants nothing to do with seeing him, but later begs Rhoda to take her to meet him. Reluctantly Rhoda agrees and accompanies Gertrude to Conjuror Trendle's cottage on Egdon Heath; after looking at her arm and telling her it is the work of an enemy, Trendle gets her to take part in a divination practice. The white of an egg is placed in a glass of water and Gertrude is told that the face of her enemy will appear to her, this duly happens and it is the face of Rhoda.

Rhoda and Edward leave the area and the years pass. Gertrude's arm continues to worsen and this has a bad effect on her marriage, Farmer Lodge losing interest in her. She eventually consults Trendle again and is told that the only possible cure is to 'turn the blood' by having the affected limb come into contact with the neck of someone who has just been hanged. Although the idea horrifies her, Gertrude sets off to Casterbridge where she knows there is to be a hanging and seeks a meeting with the executioner, William Calcraft. For a 'trifling fee' everything is arranged and on the morning of the hanging Gertrude waits in a room in the jail for the arrival of the corpse. When it does she is summoned by Calcraft over to the body, as she is about to place her arm on the neck of the deceased she is horrified to see that the body is that of Edward Brook. She faints and falls to the floor with a 'loud thud'. From the other side of the room Rhoda and Farmer Lodge, who were there to collect Edward's body, rush over towards Gertrude, Rhoda shouting that this is what Satan had showed her in her vision. Three days later Gertrude dies and subsequently Rhoda leaves the area and Farmer Lodge sells his farm.

In Old Hardy's study he explains that although Rhoda was never 'really' seen again in the area it was claimed by some that she haunted the bleak heath and was in turn haunted herself by the distorted image of Gertrude sitting astride her. It was said that

periodically as Rhoda walked, her whole body would go into violent spasm as she struggled to remove the incubus from her.

Episode 4: *The Gate by the Handpost*

It is Christmas Eve and a group of singers and musicians are about to set off around the village of Mellstock caroling. They are a little early and decide to walk up to the outlying cottages in Sidlinch Lane. As they approach a crossroads they can make out in the darkness, a cart approaching with two men and a boy leading it. The three stop and begin digging a hole by a handpost, and then go back to the cart and appear to throw a body into the hole. One of the men then picks up his shovel, the other a wooden stake and the stake is banged down into the hole. Following this the three fill in the hole with soil.

Members of the choir approach the men from Sidlinch who admit to having just buried a body. It transpires that the person buried was Sergeant Samuel Holway and his demise is explained to the choir, the ‘particulars’ coming out at a recent inquest. Sergeant Holway had a son Luke who was a very bright boy who could have gone to Christminster to study. The Sergeant had insisted however, despite protestations at the time from Mary, his late wife, that Luke should go into the army as he had done. The Sergeant had enjoyed his time in the forces and had managed to avoid the worst of any action. Luke now signed up and serving in the East Indies had fallen ill with fever and hated being in the army; the Sergeant being made aware of this through a friend whose son was also in the regiment out there. After some time a letter arrives from Luke which blames the Sergeant for his predicament. After hearing this news the Sergeant is distraught, haunted by his late wife’s warnings he takes to alcohol and eventually shoots himself in a shed outside his cottage. The inquest ruled that the Sergeant was not feeble-minded at time of death and therefore had committed the act of *felo-de-se*, felon of himself, because of this the parson at Sidlinch would not allow him to be buried in consecrated ground. The matter of having a wooden stake hammered into the Sergeant’s heart is not discussed with the Sidlinch men, but Ezra Cattstock the sexton at Mellstock church and member of the choir is aware that this was often the practice in cases of *felo-de-se*.

The Sidlinch men go and the choir decide to sing a hymn over the grave, just as they are finishing, Luke Holway arrives and hears the news that his father has just been buried: 'like a dog in a ditch then' Luke comments, 'and all through me' sending the letter. Ezra says he will talk to the parson at Mellstock, the Reverend Oldham, and discuss a Christian reburial, Oldham being more liberal in his views. Luke goes to see Oldham and it is agreed that the Sergeant can be buried at Mellstock as long as the ceremony is held at night and the grave placed at the edge of the churchyard. Luke orders a gravestone before being called back to his regiment; he leaves the exhumation and reinternment of his father's body to the Mellstock choir. By asking around in Sidlinch, Ezra has his suspicions that the Sergeant's body did have a stake driven through it confirmed, he then informs the Reverend Oldham of this. Given the circumstance the Reverend Oldham feels that he cannot go ahead with the reburial. The gravestone that Luke ordered arrives with the words 'I am not worthy to be called thy son' inscribed on it, it is placed at the bottom of Ezra's garden where it is eventually damaged in a storm.

After many years Luke returns to Sidlinch having excelled in the army. On getting home Luke immediately feels the need to see his father's grave in Mellstock churchyard and sets off accordingly. He is heartbroken when he cruelly finds out that his father still lies under the handpost. After this he lives a reclusive life and has little to do with anyone. One Christmas Eve he hears a group of carol singers outside and this makes him recall the night his father was buried. Luke is seated at the table, weeping with sadness and feverish, with the window open so that he can get some air. He finds a piece of paper and starts writing a letter beginning with 'to the Coroner's Court, being of sound mind ...'. On completing the letter Luke, in a very disturbed state, takes a gun goes outside and shoots himself in exactly the same manner that his father had.

A small number of people attend the funeral at Mellstock but the occasion is dignified with a soldier playing 'The Last Post' on a bugle. In Old Hardy's bedroom (Old Hardy having taken to his bed through illness) Young Hardy comments that Luke was a good man and that his death was sad but adding that at least he had a proper exit from the world, buried as he was in consecrated ground, not *felo-de-se*. Old Hardy then explains that it was Luke's wish to be buried with his father at the

crossroads by the handpost and the letter he had written on the night of his suicide expressed this. The script then directs our attention back to the table Luke was sat at when he wrote the letter and watch a sudden puff of air from outside take it through the open window. It eventually ends up blown to the handpost where his father is still buried.

The ending of 'The Grave by the Handpost' supplies a 'hook' to the final and original episode of the series *Afterwards* with Old Hardy commenting on Luke's burial wishes being denied: 'not being laid to rest where one wants to be laid, is no rest at all' and then asking 'will that fate also apply to me?' Young Hardy is confused by this stating that he does not understand. Old Hardy replies that he is just thinking like Shakespeare's Prospero, where the character states at the end of the play that 'every third thought shall be of my grave'.

Episode 5: *Afterwards*

Young Hardy wakes up in Old Hardy's study to hear loud voices rowing downstairs. Sir Sydney Cockerell, Hardy's literary executor, who has featured throughout the series in the background, is arguing with Henry and Kate (Old Hardy's brother and sister) that Old Hardy should be buried in Westminster Abbey. Kate rightly points out that her brother is not yet dead and his wishes have always been that he should be buried in Stinsford churchyard with the rest of his family. Florence, Old Hardy's wife, is with him upstairs, both are aware of the discussion. Cockerell, Henry and Kate eventually leave the house. Eva, Florence's younger sister arrives and goes upstairs to see Old Hardy.

In Old Hardy's bedroom the two reminisce about the time when Old Hardy read his poem 'Afterwards' to distinguished visitors in the garden of Max Gate. The two also discuss Old Hardy's supposed atheism and rationalism and the contradiction of him then believing in ghosts. It is at this point that Eva glances out of the window and thinks she sees one (Rhoda Brooke from episode 3), she recovers from the shock of this and leaves Old Hardy's bedroom. Young Hardy has been present in the room.

In a hotel in Dorchester, Cockerell is talking on the 'phone to James Barrie reporting on Old Hardy's failing health and giving Barrie instructions on whom to contact at Westminster Abbey to begin funeral arrangements. Meanwhile in a Stinsford inn, three men all in their sixties, Stanley, Walter and Tony discuss Old Hardy and the fact that he is 'fading'; Stanley knows this because his wife Nellie is a maid at Max Gate. Old Hardy is not popular amongst this little group mainly because he had been a JP in Dorchester. We return to the inn on another occasion in Afterwards to hear what the men think of the bizarre nature of Old Hardy's funeral arrangements as they unfold in the episode.

Back at Max Gate, Eva returns to sit with Old Hardy and Cobby the cat on the bed, Young Hardy is also in the room. Nellie arrives at the door carrying a tray with some broth for Old Hardy. Suddenly Old Hardy has a seizure, dramatically shoots up from the bed and dies; Nellie drops the tray and Florence on hearing the commotion rushes into the room. All are shocked including Young Hardy who reflects on what Old Hardy has said to him, that it is now his time and his recent experiences will be forgotten, but never totally forgotten and this (a mere trace of memory) is what will make him want to be a writer.

Cockerell holds his first press conference in Dorchester admitting that although Hardy wished to be buried in Stinsford churchyard, a Westminster Abbey funeral was being pursued because 'Hardy belongs to the nation'; he invites the journalists to Max Gate to see Old Hardy's body. After Cockerell leaves two of the journalists comment that as Cockerell's museum, the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge, has manuscripts of Hardy's novels, their worth will be increased considerably if Hardy is interred in Poets' Corner. (They are later to have a similar conversation about the value to the Church of having Hardy's heart buried in Stinsford).

Old Hardy's family are outraged that Florence has let Cockerell handle all the funeral arrangements. Florence and Eva are shocked and incredulous when the press arrive to see Old Hardy's body as they hadn't been consulted. Eva at this point has a further unsettling 'flickering sense' experience in that she half-hears Young Hardy's voice. Cockerell goes to see the Rev Cowley at Stinsford with the news that the Westminster people had agreed to a funeral and given a slot in which Old Hardy's

remains could be interred; this could only be achieved with the agreement that his body first had to be cremated as there simply wasn't room in Poets' Corner.

Cowley is shocked by this and comments that the family and locals will be angry and hurt, that nothing of the writer remains in his beloved Stinsford; Cowley then offers a possible solution. This 'solution', the removal of Old Hardy's heart, plus the fact that his body is to be cremated is received with horror by all concerned. There is a backlash by some in the Church that Old Hardy, the writer of the scandalous *Tess* and *Jude* was to be buried at Westminster, but Cowley becomes involved, reassuring all that Old Hardy had love for his local church and matters proceed.

All these incidents and issues are witnessed by Young Hardy and the strange events commented on. He is present when the doctors arrive to remove the heart, he also discovers, by noise coming from Old Hardy's dressing room, that Cobby the cat is eating the heart, but can do little about it. The undertaker arrives to collect the heart from the dressing room and again there is a lot of noise, startling Eva, Nellie and Young Hardy, with only the latter knowing what the noise is about.

Journalists are a permanent presence in the front garden of Max Gate, much to the annoyance of Bertie the gardener. Inside Max Gate Cobby the cat is nowhere to be seen and his absence is noted by the house staff. Florence, Eva and Kate attend the funeral in London which is described as a very grand affair attended by the eminent figures of the day; in Stinsford the internment of the heart is overseen by Old Hardy's brother Henry.

Young Hardy watches events in Stinsford churchyard and is surprised to see an assortment of characters from the previous four episodes. He makes his way through the crowd towards the gate in something of a daze. Just outside a number of funeral cars are parked and on the bonnet of the hearse is Cobby the cat. On turning towards the lane at the side of the church Young Hardy sees his mother Jemima and his brother Young Henry approaching. Jemima asks whether it's been a good day for the young architect.

Young Hardy is bewildered, he turns around towards the church, to find that all the people and the cars have gone. The three walk hand in hand down the lane as a

voice-over Old Hardy reads a verse from the poem 'Afterwards'. Young Hardy then stops, turns around and speaks direct to camera asking, with doubt in his voice, whether he will be 'a man who noticed such things'.

Chapter 1: Hardy and the Irrational

This chapter offers a picture of the many elements of the irrational in Thomas Hardy's work in general and in the short stories I am adapting in particular. It sets out to show that a number of the folkloric elements that Hardy grew up with, or that were recounted to him orally as a child in rural Dorset, went on to feature in his created landscape of Wessex. It will demonstrate how Hardy embedded aspects of shared traditions, legend, supernatural beliefs and practices into his fictionalised accounts of Wessex, thereby preserving them in a time of rural depopulation.

In this chapter I will be making reference to Freud's 1919 essay *Das Unheimlich*, or *The Uncanny* in connection with Hardy's characters Diggory Venn (*The Return of the Native*) and, more importantly for my adaptations, Mop Ollamoor who features in 'The Fiddler of the Reels'. Mop Ollamoor is a character who I argue belongs to the category of the 'other': he is marginalised in terms of race, Hardy indicating that he is a Gypsy and he is also 'other' in the supernatural sense. I will be looking at Hardy's apparent loss of religious faith and his uncomfortable relationship with the Church following the publications of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, as again, it is an issue of importance in my writing. All these matters and contradictory elements in Hardy's persona gathered from primary and critical sources have profoundly informed my practice and combine in the final and original episode of my series 'Afterwards'; the scripts seek to address what I argue is a gap in screen adaptations of Hardy.

The structure of my series, with a young Hardy helping out an elderly Hardy by being his 'eyes and ears of a life that is vanishing' (episode 1, p79) first began to form itself when I read a letter he had written to his friend Edward Clodd in 1894. In this fascinating letter, which is used verbatim in the first episode of my series (episode 1, p.4), Hardy writes:

I must say, once and for all, that every superstition and custom described in my novels may be depended on as true records of the same and not inventions of mine [...] I know I am old, yet I am still instituting inquiries to correct tricks of memory, and striving against the temptation to exaggerate (Purdy and Millgate, 1980, p.54).

In this letter, which is central to my creative and critical endeavours, Hardy stresses that the supernatural elements on display in his writing were not invented but existed as 'real folklore'; folklore, believed in and practiced by a section of the rural

population in Dorset and recorded by writers such as John Symonds Udal (1848-1925) and the ‘Dorset Poet’ William Barnes (1801-1886). In a letter written to John Pasco in 1901, again concerning folklore, Hardy was to confirm the reliability of his source material:

To your other question, if the legendary matter & folk-lore in my books is traditional, & not invented, I can answer yes, in, [sic] every case; this being a point on which I was careful not to falsify local beliefs & customs (Purdy and Millgate, 1982, p.94).

Hardy was very aware that the demographics of the area around him were rapidly changing and that age-old Dorset customs, superstitions and traditions were disappearing quickly, as Keith Selby points out:

Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, and even into the first decade of the twentieth, Dorset was experiencing that social phenomenon now euphemistically referred to as the ‘depopulation of the English village’. During the fifty years of the period 1860–1910, about 350,000 agricultural workers simply disappeared from the land (2000, p.100).

Against this backdrop of rapid change, Hardy sought to preserve the folklore, customs and traditional culture of Dorset, an important element of which was the supernatural. In the stories I have adapted there is a wide range of this on display: from the downright horrific, like a corpse having a six foot stake hammered into it, as in ‘The Grave by the Handpost’ and the somewhat subtler, but nevertheless disturbing depiction of a musician who could ‘well-nigh have drawn an ache from the heart of a gate-post’ as in Mop Ollamoor in ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’ (*The Fiddler*: 287). My adaptations unify the various generic strands of the irrational on display into a coherent series presented by their elderly creator with the help of his younger self; this provides the audience with an approachable but nonetheless challenging (and uncanny) structure to view them. They are also unified by the fact that they all occur on a particular site and a particular area: Egdon Heath in Hardy’s Wessex. By using this location in my adaptations, I am aware that I am engaging in building further creative layers of fiction on something Hardy initially created from stories he was told or heard, adaptation being an ongoing process of narrative recycling. There is also the sense that by acknowledging some of Dorset’s folklore (which has already been transferred and mediated by Hardy to Wessex) and presenting it to a twenty-first century television audience, I am not only recycling that narrative of folklore, but also preserving it.

Hardy's Wessex and Egdon Heath

Hardy's first major success came with the publication of *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) and it was at this stage that he decided to set his novels in the landscape of a mythical 'Wessex.' This was a region which, as Hardy stated in a preface written twenty years later, was 'partly real, partly dream-country' (*Crowd*: 48) and the insertion of some of the folklore of Dorset can be seen to sit somewhere between the two states, believed as fact by some, dismissed as rustic nonsense by others. Initially Wessex was based on the area of Dorset in which Hardy grew up, but by the time of his last novel *Jude the Obscure* (1896) it had enlarged to include Oxford, which became that novel's Christminster. Hardy seems to have used this solid base of Wessex, adopted 'from the pages of early English history' (*Crowd*: 47), as a conceptual space onto which he might graft his tales, a surface, on which, as Michael Irwin and Ian Gregor have suggested, he could:

shift his narrative stance slightly [...] so that he was freed from a manner of narration which suggested the inventor of tales, to a manner which suggested he was their chronicler (1977, p.110).

It was within the landscapes of Wessex, (amongst his fourteen novels and over fifty short stories, and some of his poetry) that Hardy explored his passion for the dark folkloric tales, imported as they were, from his childhood in Dorset; many of the tales the 'chronicler' (to use Irwin and Gregor's term again) told, concerned the 'Mephistophelian Visitants', first mentioned in *The Return of the Native* (*The Return*: 131), that seemed attracted to the area, and Egdon Heath in particular. Most of the action in the 'The Withered Arm', which is the third episode in my series, is centred round Egdon; Rhoda and her son live in a 'lonely spot' near 'the border of Egdon Heath, whose dark countenance was visible in the distance as they drew nigh to their home' (*Withered Arm*: 46). Conjuror Trendle also lives 'in the heart of Egdon' (*Withered Arm*: 56) he is, as Romey T. Keys states, 'a creature of the heath' which is a 'space belonging to the supernatural, to magic' (1985, p.118). As Gertrude, with her terribly disfigured arm, makes her way over Egdon to visit Trendle the narrator informs us that 'thick clouds made the atmosphere dark, though it was as yet only early afternoon' and adds that the landscape she was walking on was probably 'the same heath which had witnessed the agony of the Wessex King Ina, presented to after-ages as Lear' (*Withered Arm*: 57). Here Hardy draws attention

to the history that lurks just below the surface, the way in which, as Fisher comments, ‘particular terrains are stained by traumatic events’ (2016, p.97).

In *The Return of the Native* Hardy places Egdon at the very centre of the text allocating the first chapter, ‘A Face on Which Time Makes But Little Impression’, exclusively to the location, and treating its timelessness in as much detail as a main character, stating that:

Civilization was its enemy; and ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the particular formation (*The Return*: 56).

It is clear that any feeble attempts by humankind to tame the heath, to control it, will be destined to fail. No plough ‘had ever disturbed a grain of that stubborn soil. In the heath’s barrenness to the farmer lay its fertility to the historian’ (*The Return*: 66).

The landscape and the setting, play a major role in the novel governing the lives of characters that inhabit it, as Irwin comments:

What in other novelists is enabling matter, in Hardy’s case becomes the dominant force. The human drama seems virtually to lose itself in the background, or rather dissolve into it, and yet to take on the more significance for doing so (2000, ix).

Egdon is, as Keys states, ‘the site of the supernatural’ (1985, p.116) and is regarded by Christian Cantle, a local to the heath, as a place to be avoided ‘after dark’ unless one wants to be ‘pixy-led’:

“Tis very lonesome for ‘ee in the heth tonight, mis’ess [...] Mind you don’t get lost. Egdon Heath is a bad place to get lost in, and the winds do huffle queerer tonight than ever I heard ‘em afore. Them that know Egdon best have been pixy-led here at times” (*The Return*: 84).

I use Cantle’s phrase about being ‘pixy-led’ in the second episode of my series ‘The Three Strangers’ when I have the character Charley Drake expressing his reluctance in searching the heath for the Third Stranger on a wet and windy night (episode 2, p.43). The phrase seems to sum up aspects of Egdon which as Ruth A. Firor notes was believed by some to be ‘full of pixies’ who simply loved to ‘lead travellers away, over moors and into bogs, laughing heartily’ (1962, p.56). Pixies, synonymous with elves and sprites, were generally regarded in folklore as mischievous, but under the cover of darkness seem happy to join the menace of Egdon, where even a thorn bush had ‘a ghastly habit [...] of putting on the shapes of jumping madmen, sprawling giants, and hideous cripples’ (*The Return*: 125). The horrific intensity

Hardy invests in his description of night-time Egdon Heath is something I promote in my scripts: Ned frantically searches the heath in its menacing gloom for little Carry (episode 1, p.71) and the tormented Luke hurries over the open countryside wishing to avoid the handpost under which his father is buried (episode 4, pp. 46-48). The heath was essential to Hardy as a location and features in all of the episodes of my series; the wild and isolated landscape influencing both the characters' beliefs and behaviour.

Most of the action in *The Return of the Native* takes place on the Rainbarrow, itself one of three prehistoric burial mounds on Egdon Heath, whose people engage in activities and seasonal rituals which seek to celebrate an ancient pre-Christian past. The Rainbarrow, as Kroll suggests, draws the heath folk to it because it has been 'a site of human significance in the past' (2009, p.342) and in their engagement with it the present heath dwellers become part of its evolving history. Eustacia and Wildeve meet at the country dance where 'Paganism was revised in their hearts' (*The Return*: 321); on another occasion when people are gathered dressing the maypole in preparation for a celebration the narrator tells us:

the impulses of all such outlandish hamlets are pagan still: in these spots homage to nature, self adoration, frantic gaieties, fragments of Teutonic rites to divinities whose names are forgotten, seem in some way or other to have survived mediaeval doctrine (*The Return*: 452).

As in much of folk horror the landscape, as Scovell comments, is 'essentially the first link, where elements within its topography have adverse effects on the social and moral identity of its inhabitants' (2017, p.17). There are many examples such as this in the text: chapter three opens on the Rainbarrow with what Firor describes as 'a scene of pagan revelry' depicting the Guy Fawkes bonfires 'the whole heath alive with suns of fire, some pale and distant, some red, like dreadful wounds' (1962, p.147). According to Firor the Guy Fawkes celebration 'took over pre-existing customs and transferred them to a fixed date' (1962, p.148), which became, as depicted in *The Return of the Native*, a date of great significance to the locals.

Andrew Norman notes that the 'real' Egdon Heath lay behind Hardy's childhood home in Higher Bockhampton: 'Behind the house extends a huge area of heathland, which in Thomas III's time [...] was dotted with isolated cottages' (2011, p.20). Egdon Heath became a key ingredient in Hardy's fiction and my re-working of these stories, with a clear emphasis on the Heath as a location, responds both to

the ways in which Hardy blends fact and fantasy, and to the particular significance of Egdon itself as a part of that process.

Because of the attention and the power Hardy invests in the heath is significant, it was therefore noticeable by its absence in a 1994 television film of *The Return of the Native*. In this adaptation, directed by Jack Gold and produced by the American greeting card company Hallmark, Egdon is changed, as Rosemary Morgan suggests, 'to suit a modern audience's idea of old England. Rugged Egdon, its characterisation as a unique entity, becomes an idealised rural landscape' (2005, p.118). The 'prettification of the past' (2005, p.118) is much in evidence in this production as it is in many other adaptations of Hardy. The television audience is offered romance and Hardyan hokum, but not the force and power of his dark narrative. As Paul J. Niemeyer rightly states, in this one-hundred-minute production, 'locations, period details, and atmosphere are played up to the expense of the story' (2003, p.218). In both the form my scripts take and the dark nature of the subject matter they contain, I challenge the perspective of heritage drama addressing and countering the popular misconception of Hardy's stories, when adapted to the screen, as 'safe'.

Egdon Heath's Mephistophelian Visitants

Hardy first used the term 'Mephistophelian visitants' (*The Return*: 131) in connection with his character Diggory Venn, I use the term here as it neatly describes some of the inhabitants of the Heath and their particular supernatural practices. The story of 'The Withered Arm', which Gilmartin and Mengham comment is one of 'the most sensational stories that Hardy ever wrote' (2007, p12), is a good example of this combination. In this story Hardy displays not just one element of the supernatural but three: being 'hag-rid', the process of 'overlooking' or being given the 'evil-eye,' and the custom of consulting white witches or 'Conjurors'. Nooral Hasan described this story as an example of 'Hardy's ability to domesticate the occult' (1982, p.118) since amongst the local characters involved, the manifestation of witchcraft and the supernatural are almost regarded as ordinary everyday experiences. 'The Withered Arm' principally involves Rhoda Brook who dreams one night that she is being 'hag-rid' by her former lover's new wife Gertrude Lodge. Hardy uses the term 'hag-ride' or 'hag-rid' in its literal sense as defined by the

nineteenth-century Dorset poet William Barnes that is: 'the nightmare attributed to the supernatural presence of a witch or hag by whom one is ridden in sleep' (2012, p.20, italics in original).

The phenomena of hag-riding is also referred to in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, as Tess gets down from the threshing machine looking exhausted her fellow worker Marion remarks that Tess's face looks as if she has "been hagrode!" (*Tess*: 407). In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* when Elizabeth-Jane, who is trying to 'improve' herself and speak in a more genteel way suffers a sleepless night, we are told 'she did not quaintly tell the servants next morning that she had been "hag-rid," but that she had suffered from indigestion' (*The Mayor*: 131). Hardy also uses the term in the fifth verse of the poem 'The Ruined Maid' which in style, as Mark Ford points out, bears a strong 'relationship to mid-Victorian music hall' (2016, p. 89) with its 'fallen woman' theme:

You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,
And you'd sigh, and you'd sock; but at present you seem
To know not of megrims or melancho-ly! -
'True. One's pretty lively when ruined,' said she.
(1978, p.113)

The examples given above illustrate the mobility of the term 'hagrode', 'hag-rid' or 'hag-ridden'. In these examples they are used as everyday slang, devoid of their links with the supernatural; however, for Rhoda Brook, the term applies in its original sense.

Owing to the dominance of agriculture in the area of Wessex, supernatural intrusions were also believed to impose themselves on animals, and livestock, thereby threatening a farmer's livelihood. If a horse was found in its stable sweating and distressed in the morning it was thought to have become a victim of a witch. Hardy invokes this variant in *The Woodlanders* where Fitzpiers, who is a doctor, is having an extra-marital affair with Mrs Charmond and travelling a long way to see her on a night when he is supposed to be seeing patients locally. He uses his wife's horse 'Darling' for these illicit journeys:

the man who attended to the horses, Darling included, insisted that the latter was 'hag-rid'; for when he had arrived at the stable that morning she was in such a state as no horse could be in by honest riding [...] The unprecedented exhaustion of Darling [...] was sufficient to develop a whole series of tales about equestrian witches and demons (*Woodlanders*: 169).

According to Christian Cantle in *The Return of the Native*, animals themselves were thought to be capable of the act of overlooking; looking down on a live adder that is destined to become fried fat as a possible cure for Mrs Yeobright's adder bite, Cantle says: "Look at his eye – for all the world like a villainous sort of black currant. 'Tis to be hoped he can't ill-wish us! There's folks in heath who've been overlooked already" (*The Return*: 359). The general atmosphere being evoked on Egdon Heath is one of mystery, supernatural forces suspected of imposing themselves on the everyday lives of mere mortals, and, as George Levine suggests, such matters do not belong in realist fiction where 'mystery is merely a temporary gap in knowledge' (1991, p.19). Throughout Hardy's work and particularly in the short fiction I am concerned with in this thesis, 'mystery is the effect of a spiritual and inexplicable intrusion or initiation from outside of nature' (Levine, 1991, p.19).

John Symonds Udal in *Dorsetshire Folk-lore* lists a number of instances of supposed witchcraft, evidenced by reports from local newspapers in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Dorset, particularly in connection with being 'overlooked', the term usually referring to being given the 'evil eye' by a witch and the victim then suffering as a result. Hermann Lea, Hardy's friend and photographer, writing in 1907 suggested that:

The immediate effect on a person who has been overlooked, ill-wished, or hagrod [...] as it is variously called consists as a rule of some sort of indisposition. This gradually increases to severe sickness, and finally death supervenes. (Lea, 2016)

Udal states that:

the most effectual way of neutralizing, or of removing, the baneful influence exerted by the witch, or other person who was supposed to be overlooking the sufferer, was to draw blood from the 'overlooker'. (1970, p. 207)

This 'belief' is referenced in Shakespeare's play *Henry VI*, in Act I, Scene V, when Talbot tells Joan la Pucelle: "Devil or devil's dam, I'll conjure thee: Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch" (1992, p.463). As Udal suggests the mention of the 'cure' in a Shakespearian text gives the practice the 'imprint of some antiquity'. (1970, p.207). Here Hardy is recycling a narrative of sinister practice that has been performed for centuries.

In *The Return of the Native* Hardy offers an example of the drawing of blood from the 'overlooker' when Susan Nunsuch attacks Eustacia Vye in church one morning 'with a long stocking-needle' (*The Return*: 235); Susan wrongly believing

that Eustacia is bewitching her son. Christian Cantle reports that “Sue pricked her that deep that the maid fainted away” (*The Return*: 235). Udal comments that an 'additional interest is afforded in this case from the fact that':

this gross outrage took place in church, the deluded woman, no doubt, believing that a fuller success would attend her "charm" if the supposed witch could be met with attending divine service (1970, p.210).

Susan Nunsuch is deluded because although Eustacia appears at times both exotic and 'unworldly' her 'Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries' (*The Return*: 118) she is not a witch, but her end in drowning is one suffered by many that were. Later in the novel, just before her death when Eustacia is 'standing on Rainbarrow, her soul in an abyss of desolation seldom plumbed by one so young' (*The Return*: 424), Susan busies herself by making a wax effigy of Eustacia, in which she then sticks pins, before finally melting it on the fire. This process is accompanied by the 'murmur of words', Susan slowly reciting the Lord's Prayer backwards three times. The narrator notes that this was 'a practice well known on Egdon at that date, and one that is not quite extinct at the present day'.

Over time in 'The Withered Arm' the condition of Gertrude's arm, which was seized by Rhoda Brook in her 'dream' deteriorates and gossip has it that Gertrude is being 'overlooked', or given the 'evil eye' by Rhoda; Rhoda being viewed as a witch by some, primarily because she had a child out of wedlock. Gertrude after trying all manner of medications reluctantly consults a Conjuror Trendle. Barnes defined the conjuror as 'cunnen man, or wizard; a low kind of seer' (2012, p.17), a 'white witch' with supernatural expertise and one to consult as Udal states, whenever an individual fears that 'either himself or his property to be under the malefic influence of the evil eye' (1970, p.215).

Trendle, after looking at Gertrude's arm, tells her she has an enemy and the divination process which follows in the story matches the practice noted by Hardy in an entry in his notebook dated December 1872. Hardy recorded that another:

man of the sort was called a conjuror; he lived in Blackmoor Vale. He would cause your enemy to rise in a glass of water. He did not know your enemy's name, but the bewitched person did, of course. (Taylor, 1978, p.12)

After a few years, and a temporal gap in Hardy's narrative, a desperate Gertrude goes to visit Conjuror Trendle again and he informs her that the only cure, the only counterspell, would be to have her 'blood turned' by the affected arm coming into

contact with the neck of a corpse following a hanging. In the preface to *Wessex Tales* Hardy refers to 'the facts out of which the tale grew':

In those days, too, there was still living an old woman who, for the cure of some eating disease, had been taken in her youth to have her 'blood turned' by a convict's corpse, in the manner described in 'The Withered Arm'. (*Wessex Tales*: XXI)

Also in the same preface Hardy states that:

Since writing this story some years ago I have been reminded by an aged friend who knew 'Rhoda Brook' that, in relating her dream, my forgetfulness has weakened the facts out of which the tale grew. In reality it was while lying down on a hot afternoon that the incubus oppressed her and she flung it off, with the results upon the body of the original as described. (*Wessex Tales*: XXI)

Hardy goes on to observe that the fact that the incident took place in daytime makes the occurrence even more impressive. In my script for this story I stay with the incident happening during the hours of darkness as I believe its impact is much stronger.

The 'aged friend' has generally been thought to be Hardy's mother Jemima and is perhaps an example of him trying to conceal what he considered to be his humble background and the class of people who believed in such things; certainly, as we shall in my scripts and in the original texts, it is amongst the less educated in Hardy's stories that the belief in witchcraft is strongest. But Hardy, as Dillion rightly states, throughout his work:

undermines the assumption that rational, standardised knowledge is wholly superior to 'imbibed' knowledge. He was in a unique position to understand both of these worlds. (2016, p.21)

Hardy's character Gertrude, who comes from an urbanised middle-class background, is reluctant at first to seek help in supernatural form from a white witch but eventually accepts the 'fact' that she needs to have her 'blood turned'. She also accepts that in order to achieve this, she will have to rub her arm against the neck of a still warm corpse. Rejecting both the thoughts of her husband who hated these 'smouldering village beliefs' (*Withered Arm*: 62) and the church who 'strongly condemned' (*Withered Arm*: 62) activities which involved witchcraft, this formerly rational woman is so influenced by Egdon and its macabre nature, that she prays that a corpse will soon become available and does not particularly care where it comes from or the manner in which it finds itself there: "O Lord, hang some guilty or

innocent person soon!" (*Withered Arm*: 62). She also goes on to express, when a hanging is imminent, the hope that the condemned man is not granted a reprieve. It would seem that the general environment of Egdon Heath, Wessex has a profound effect on a number of its inhabitants.

The conjuror figure, of central importance in 'The Withered Arm', runs throughout Hardy's oeuvre; in a letter to Hermann Lea in July 1907 Hardy explained that although the name Conjuror Trendle was an invention, the conjuror as a character was not. Hardy states that he does not remember:

what his real name was, or rather, he is a composite figure of two or three who used to be heard of. .. Conjuror Minterne, or Mynterne, who lived out Blackmoor way, you have of course heard of: he was one of the most celebrated. (Purdy and Millgate, 1982, p.264)

The custom of consulting white witches or conjurors is mentioned in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Dairyman Crick, when the cream will not turn to butter, suspects that "somebody in the house is in love" (*Tess*: 189), another local superstition. He adds that if the situation does not improve he will have to seek the help of Conjuror Trendle, although he "don't believe in en":

"Tis years since I went to Conjuror Trendle's son in Egdon - years!" said the dairyman bitterly. "And he was nothing to what his father had been. I have said fifty times, if I have said once, that I don't believe in en. But I shall have to go to 'n if he's still alive. O yes, I shall have to go to 'n, if this sort of thing continns!" (*Tess*: 189).

Jonathan Kail who is in the dairy at the time says that he always preferred Conjuror Fall "t'other side of Casterbridge [. . .] But he's rotten as touchwood now" (*Tess*: 189). Conjuror Fall also appears in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* when Henchard, a corn merchant, consults him for a weather forecast in connection with the harvest. Henchard does not take Fall's advice and when things go wrong he questions whether some power was working against him:

"I wonder if it can be that somebody has been roasting a waxen image of me, or stirring an unholy brew to confound me! I don't believe in such power; and yet – what if they should ha' been doing it!" (*The Mayor*: 191).

Although Henchard has lifted himself above such rustic beliefs as witchcraft, he is not totally confident in dismissing its presence. The 'Mephistophelian visitants' and their particular supernatural practices are well represented in Wessex and, as Jacqueline Dillion correctly points out, 'no single version of reality or agreed belief exists'. (2016, p. 23)

Diggory Venn, Mop Ollamoor and the Freudian Uncanny

As noted above, Hardy first used the term ‘Mephistophelian visitants’ in connection with the appearance of Venn the ‘reddleman’ whose job it was to mark sheep in preparation for them to go to market. This character, covered from head to foot in bright red pigment, is a good example of Hardy trying to capture and retain an image of the vanishing life of rural Dorset, explaining that ‘Reddlemen of the old school are now but seldom seen. Since the introduction of railways, Wessex farmers have managed to do without these Mephistophelian visitants’ (*The Return*: 131). Because of his appearance and the red pigment that ‘permeated him’ (*The Return*: 58) the reddleman was often the cause of fear in children. The narrator describes how a:

child’s first sight of a reddleman was an epoch in his life. That blood-covered figure was a sublimation of all the horrid dreams which had afflicted the juvenile spirit since imagination began. "The reddleman is coming for you!" had been the formulated threat of Wessex mothers for many generations (*The Return*: 131).

It is not just children in *The Return of the Native* who are frightened by the appearance of the reddleman, Timothy Fairway is also startled:

“No slight to your looks reddleman, for ye bain’t bad-looking in the groundwork, though the finish is queer. My meaning is just to say how curious I felt. I half thought it ‘twas the devil or the red ghost the boy told of” (*The Return*: 82).

Venn leads a Gypsy-like lifestyle on the heath sleeping in his van and visiting farms when necessary; he is a solitary, mysterious, ghostly figure living on the very edge of the Egdon Heath community in every sense.

In her discussions on Diggory Venn, Tracy Hayes recalls Freud's 1919 essay *Das Unheimlich*, or *The Uncanny*, noting that Venn is ‘unknowable’ (2014, p.52) and therefore an example of ‘Otherness’ occupying a ‘position outside the status quo’ (2014, p.51, italics in original) with an appearance and a manner that causes fear. Freud stated that the term ‘uncanny’ applies to everything ‘that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open’ (2003, p.132). It is something that we have some familiarity with and yet is foreign to us, leaving us feeling uncomfortably disturbed. Yet, as Hayes points out it is Venn who is of key importance in the text, he ‘steers the course of the plot’ and even ‘though he remains unheimlich, Other to all he interacts with’, Venn ‘remains vital to the progression of the society he watches over’ (2014, p.53, italics in original). Ironically it is when

Diggory Venn leaves his role as reddleman and becomes ‘white’ that he alarms his future wife Thomasin: “O, how you frightened me!” she said to someone who had just entered “I thought you were the ghost of yourself” (*The Return*: 450). Later she tells Yeobright that she was so ‘alarmed’ when she had first seen him and “couldn’t believe that he had got white of his own accord! It seemed supernatural” (*The Return*: 450).

For all the strangeness of both his appearance and the working role he occupies on the Wessex landscape, Diggory Venn is not an agent of the supernatural, Mop Ollamoor in ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’ however, certainly is. He occupies a place of ‘Otherness’ outside the ‘status quo’ identified by Hayes. The term ‘Otherness’ was originally associated with Michel Foucault as a critique of Enlightenment thought that was used, as an ‘ethnocentric construct that implicitly naturalises a white, masculine perspective’ (McNay, 1994, p.5). Although Hardy never refers directly to Mop as a Gypsy, the fact that the narrator states that he first appeared in the area as a ‘fiddle-player at Greenhill Fair’, has ‘rather un-English’ looks, his ‘complexion being a rich olive’ (*The Fiddler*: 287), would suggest that at least functionally he is playing that role in the story; therefore in a structural sense Mop is the ‘Other’ in Foucault’s terms, part of a marginalised group and in some ways, he is also ‘Other’ in the supernatural sense. No-one knows where Mop comes from and he also has the ability to go missing without trace; we are told early on in the story that he has a power, especially over women, which ‘seemed sometimes to have a touch of the weird and wizardly in it’ (*The Fiddler*: 287). If Diggory Venn, because of the red pigment colour, has something of Satan surrounding him, Mop’s power lies in his fiddle playing. Venn is the bogey man to children in the area, but Mop can reduce them to tears by playing his fiddle.

Mop’s fiddle playing is described as being able to:

claim for itself a most peculiar and personal quality, like that of a moving preacher. There were tones in it which bred the immediate conviction that indolence and averseness to systematic application were all that lay between ‘Mop’ and the career of a second Paganini (*The Fiddler*: 287).

The significance of the reference to ‘a second Paganini’ is important here. It is very likely that Hardy had heard of the exploits of the Italian violinist Niccolò Paganini, (1782–1840) who he referred to above and based his character Mop Ollamore on him. Paganini was popularly believed to have sold his soul to the devil; his

performances frequently causing fainting amongst the females in the audience. By connecting the fictional character Mop with this well-known musician, Hardy makes an implicit connection between satanic possession and the power of music to influence and bewitch.

The notion of ‘evil’ and the weird surrounds Mop, the weird being ‘constituted by a presence – *the presence of that which does not belong*’ (Fisher, 2016, p.61, italics in original). The first sighting of him in my script (episode 1, p.12) is when he emerges from the darkness of a cottage doorway. Car’line already bemused, having encountered a small disturbed boy on her way up the lane, is alert that something is about to occur; Mop’s eventual appearance being summoned in advance by the build-up of fiddle music and the sight of two boys dancing in a trance-like manner, their eyes filled with tears. Fisher makes the point that ‘doors, thresholds and portals [...] *the between* is crucial to the weird’ (2016, p.28, italics in original). In this scene in my adaptation, I want to give the impression by his dramatic appearance, that Mop, whilst coming through the doorway, ‘the between’, has not just exited from a cottage, in rural Stickleford, Wessex, but has arrived there from a very much darker place, ‘coming from’, as the narrator notes ‘nobody knew where’ (*The Fiddler*: 287). Mop’s appearance at the doorway contrasts sharply with the character Ned at his doorway (episode 1, p10) where he finds a cat which he subsequently takes into his cottage and feeds. I create a similar contrast between evil and innocence later in this episode: whilst Car’line at the Great Exhibition sees the image of Mop in a mirror, Ned and Carry look at the image of rotating ballroom dancers in a ‘pretty’ music box, which plays a ‘pretty’ tune (episode 1, pp. 48-49). Neither of these two incidences involving Ned were taken from Hardy’s text, like many others in my series they have been added. My adaptations do not merely import narrative from the primary text but add layers of narrative on to it. As Linda Hutcheon observes: ‘adaptors are first interpreters and then creators’ (2006, p.18).

Skimmington-rides, ghostly coaches and other superstitions

One of the most uncanny moments in the major novels of Hardy occurs in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* when Michael Henchard is suicidal and ready to jump in a pool ‘where the water was at its deepest’ (*The Mayor*: 296). He is about to do this

when something becomes visible in the water, a shape emerges, that of a human body:

lying stiff and stark upon the surface of the stream. In the circular current imparted by the central flow the form was brought forward, till it passed under his eyes; and then he perceived with a sense of horror that it was *himself*. Not a man somewhat resembling him, but one in all respect his counterpart, his actual double, was floating as if dead in Ten Hatches Hole. The sense of the supernatural was strong in this unhappy man, and he turned away as one might have done in the actual presence of an appalling miracle (*The Mayor*: 297, italics in original).

This situation occurs because of another folkloric practice that Hardy brings into this text, the practice of ‘skimmington’ or ‘skimmington riding’. Skimmington rides involved the parading through the streets of effigies of those deemed to have been engaging in illicit behaviour; in this instance, Lucetta and Henchard, who had a prior relationship before Lucetta married Farfrae. The parading was often accompanied by locals noisily banging pots and pans. Udal, quoting from George Robert’s *History of Lyme Regis* published in 1834, states that skimmington riding ‘checks those instances of openly profligate and licentious conduct, which else might become too prevalent among the lower orders’ it:

brands with infamy all gross instances of licentiousness, and exposes to lasting ridicule those couples who by their dissensions disturb the quiet and order of the neighbourhood, and so set a bad example. (Robert, 1834, cited in Udal, 1970, p.193)

Both Henchard and his former lover Lucetta are deemed to be in disgrace and their two effigies are led through Casterbridge back to back on a donkey; the narrator comments that ‘it was impossible to mistake the pair for other than the intended victims’ (*The Mayor*: 279). Lucetta from her open window sees and hears the crowd in the street below: “Tis me!” she said, with a face as pale as death. “A procession – a scandal – an effigy of me, and him!” (*The Mayor*: 279). The shock of witnessing the ‘spectacle of the uncanny revel’ (*The Mayor*: 279) of the skimmington procession, and the thought of her husband seeing it too, causes Lucetta to have an epileptic seizure. She is pregnant at this time and miscarries before dying.

Skimmington riding, although only a moderately uncanny practice in itself, being more of a moral warning to the lower classes about licentious behaviour, becomes deeply unsettling when Hardy uses the effigies in this way, both Lucetta and Henchard are confronted with their doubles. Lucetta is shocked by shame and

subsequently dies and Henchard believes that he has been part of some sort of divine intervention, questioning the whereabouts of the effigy of Lucetta, Henchard asks: “But where is the other? Why that one only? [...] That performance of theirs killed her, but kept me alive!” (*The Mayor*: 298). As Andrew Hewitt states, Henchard seems to take the effigy as some sort of ‘bizarre compliment’ recognising that ‘ritual mockery can be read as a tribute’ (2016, p.90) to one who had been used to power.

Skimmington riding, hang-fairs, pre-Christian festivities on Egdon Heath were staged events involving a number of people and regarded as entertainment, Hardy also makes use of local folklore and superstition in relation to certain places. In my script of ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’, Ned and Car’line, after returning from London, arrange to meet up at The Quiet Woman inn. Whilst they are discussing the route, Ned becomes angry with Car’line for thoughtlessly frightening Carry about the fact that they will have to pass ‘Heedless William’s Pool’ which is said to be haunted. As in the case of The Quiet Woman inn, the pool did exist and was close to the cottage where Hardy grew up in Higher Bockhampton, it was also, as Fran and Geoff Doel point out:

supposed to be the site of a coaching disaster, where the driver William and his passengers perished. The pool is also said to have been dug out by fairy shovels and to be bottomless. (2007, p.19)

I make use of this to show once again how Ned has become ‘a father figure to a child who is not biologically his own’ (Ghosh, 2013, p.65) and emphasise the strong bond between himself and Carry, a bond that is noted by a fractious Car’line earlier on (episode 1, p.45):

I can see it already, it’s going to be
all about you two isn’t it?

Ned is aware of the legend of the pool and points out the positive aspects of its ‘reputation’ to Carry (episode 1, p.57):

Ned puts his hands on Carry’s shoulders.

NED (CONT’D)

It is also said Carry, that the pool was
dug out with fairy shovels, so you might
well see some fairies there.

Disappearing and ghostly coaches feature frequently in Dorset folklore: Edward Waring in *Ghosts and Legends of the Dorset Countryside*, gives a useful account of these and says of the ‘Heedless (vulgo Headless) William’s Pool’:

Disappearing into a pool is a familiar trick of ghostly coaches. If they are denizens of the underworld, what better exit from the world could they find than a deep or 'bottomless' pool? (1977, p.19)

Hardy refers to one of these legends in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. After their wedding service Tess (whose ancestors were from the noble d'Urberville family) and Angel, are about to get on a coach to take them on their doomed honeymoon. Tess admits to feeling troubled and having a notion that she has seen the coach somewhere before, at this point Angel begins to explain the myth:

“Well – I would rather not tell it in detail just now. A certain d'Urberville of the sixteenth or seventeenth century committed a dreadful crime in his family coach; and since that time members of the family see or hear the old coach whenever – But I'll tell you another day – it is rather gloomy. Evidently some dim knowledge of it has been brought back to your mind by the sight of this venerable caravan” (*Tess*: 280).

Hardy gives no more detail about the legend till later on in the novel when the story is recounted to Tess by Alec, who is not of course 'a genuine d'Urberville':

“If you are a genuine d'Urberville I ought not to tell you either, I suppose. As for me, I'm a sham one, so it doesn't matter. It is rather dismal. It is that this sound of a non-existent coach can only be heard by one of d'Urberville blood, and it is held to be of ill-omen to the one who hears it. It has to do with a murder, committed by one of the family, centuries ago.”

“Now you have begun it, finish it.”

“Very well. One of the family is said to have abducted some beautiful woman, who tried to escape from the coach in which he was carrying her off, and in the struggle he killed her – or she killed him – I forget which” (*Tess*: 437).

In a letter written from Dorchester in 1903, to someone questioning him about the legend of the phantom coach, Hardy responded by stating that the story of the coach was well known in the area and made itself manifest in 'two properties formerly owned by branches of the same family – the Turbervilles. The cause of the appearances is said to be some family murder'. (Purdy and Millgate, 1982, p.93) This is a further case of Hardy using local folklore from his particular area of Dorset and transposing it to his created Wessex.

The effect of someone of 'Turberville blood' seeing the coach is explained by Wilkinson Sherran in his book *The Wessex of Romance* (1908) and quoted in Udal:

An anecdote is told of a gentleman who, passing across the old Elizabethan bridge on his way to dine with a friend, saw the ghostly coach [...] On arriving at his destination he spoke of it [...] Much to his astonishment he was told it

was the Turberville coach [...] the sight [...] is said to forebode disaster to the descendant to whom it appears. (Sherren, 1908, cited in Udal, 1970 p.175)

The ill-fated wedding of Tess is also predicted by the omen of a cock crowing in the afternoon, as she and Angel are about to leave the farm; everyone gathered in the yard to wish them well is aware of the bad luck associated with this, as is Tess herself: “I don’t like to hear him!” said Tess to her husband “tell the man to drive on”. After the coach has gone Crick the farmer comments to his wife: “Now, to think o’ that just to-day! I’ve not heard his crow of an afternoon all the year afore” (*Tess*: 282). Mrs Crick tries to play down the importance of the cock’s behaviour by placing another folkloric interpretation on it: “It only means a change in the weather,” said she, “not what you think ‘tis impossible!” (*Tess*: 282). Udal confirms that the crowing of a cock in the afternoon was a widely held superstition in Dorset at the time, an old woman in Symondsburry stating: “If the cock crows after twelve o’clock noon her is doing it to bring I bad news, or John may be bad again. I can’t a-bear to hear ‘en” (1970, p.180). The same phenomena can then have two possible interpretations, yet the text makes clear which one applies to Tess.

Hardy: death, the grave, faith and the Church

A sweet face is a page of sadness to a man over thirty – the raw material of a corpse. (Hardy, 1955, p.29)

The above quotation is taken from Thomas Hardy’s Notebooks edited by Evelyn Hardy and was written a month before his thirtieth birthday. Hardy’s writings are littered with such comments and totally enforce James F. Scott’s claim that Hardy had a ‘preoccupation with graves and corpses’ (1963, p.373); this ‘preoccupation’ or obsession, underpins my writing. Throughout his fiction there is a noticeable recurrence of situations where characters express particular wishes to be buried in certain places, but often end up interred elsewhere. When Michael Henchard’s death is imminent in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* one of his instructions ‘written in the anguish of dying’ (*The Mayor*: 333) is that ‘I not be bury’d in consecrated ground’ (*The Mayor*: 333) and the narrator explains that his wishes were ‘respected as far as practicable’ (*The Mayor*: 333). It is not coincidence that throughout his writing Hardy flagged the idea of the horrors of an individual being buried in a place or a way they would not have chosen. In ‘The Grave by the Handpost’, neither Sergeant Holway nor his son Luke end up being buried where they wished to be; Luke’s

written wishes to be buried with his father by the handpost being blown away by the wind and the Church not allowing the Sergeant in consecrated ground as he has committed the act of 'felo-de-se', suicide. In an entry in his notebook of 1882 Hardy recorded: 'Burial of suicides at cross roads abolished c1830. (Stake driven through it: between 9 & 12. Times)' (Taylor, 1978, p.24). John Fowles and Joe Draper discuss one particular cross-road Warmwell Cross, near Owermoigne, where such burials took place, noting that:

They have a long association with bad luck, perhaps because they were where suicides and witches were always buried, and certainly they were where the gibbets stood. (1984, p.99)

Another example of a folkloric narrative imbued in Hardy's writing, cross-roads, like pools that devour passing coaches, are places infused with dark deeds and dark history that he brings to our notice. Sergeant Holway of course is not the first Hardy character to be denied a Christian burial; Tess was not allowed to bury her baby Sorrow within the churchyard because the child had not been 'officially' baptized, so the baby was to be placed at night:

in that shabby corner of God's allotment where He lets the nettles grow, and where all unbaptized infants, notorious drunkards, suicides, and others of the conjecturally damned are laid (*Tess*: 148).

Within the first few lines of my script for episode one I have Old Hardy looking down at his first wife Emma's grave and reciting the second verse of his poem 'Something Tapped'. In the poem Hardy imagines Emma calling him (episode 1, p.1):

OLD HARDY
O I am tired of waiting,' she said,
'Night, morn, noon, afternoon;
So cold it is in my lonely bed,
And I thought you would join me soon!

'Something Tapped', included in the *Selected Poems* collection written in 1913 a year after Emma's death, belongs to a series of elegies where Hardy expresses his remorse at his wife's death, even though, as all biographical sources state, their marriage at the time of her death had broken down completely, with both living separate lives at Max Gate. Michael Millgate suggests that the writing of the poems was 'stimulated by a yearning to expiate what he now acknowledged as his neglect of her in recent years' (1985, p.487) whatever the reasons for them being written,

they make up, as Claire Tomalin remarks, ‘one of the finest and strangest celebrations of the dead in English poetry’ (2006, xx).

At the point of writing the poem Hardy believed that he would be buried alongside Emma and the rest of his family in Stinsford, having left space on the tombstone for his own name and stated these instructions in his will. It is therefore ironic, that the reality of Hardy’s death and own funeral(s) in January 1928 far outstripped that of any of his fictional creations and this is what I draw upon in ‘Afterwards’, weaving fact, reportage and folklore together in my practice. In this final episode named after the poem which was, in a sense, Hardy’s own self-penned epitaph, I catalogue the strange and bizarre events surrounding this time. When Hardy died, Sir Sydney Cockerell and J.M. Barrie (both friends of Hardy) completely took over the funeral arrangements, asserting ‘their male authority’ over what Cockerell had already referred to as ‘the houseful of women’ (Millgate, 1985, p.574). The two were to totally disregard Hardy’s wishes, believing that he should be the first novelist since Dickens in 1870 and the first poet since Tennyson in 1892, to be buried in Poets’ Corner at Westminster Abbey. They quickly made moves to arrange this and despite objections from both Hardy’s family and some in the Church, on Monday 16th of January the burial at Poets’ Corner took place.

Hardy’s family also objected to, and were horrified by two other features of his funeral arrangements: before his remains were interred at Westminster he was to be cremated and before the cremation took place Hardy’s heart was to be removed. The cremation took place at Brookwood near Woking on the 13th of January and the heart was buried at Stinsford at the same time 2.00pm on the 16th of January as the ashes were interred in London. The removal of the heart was at the suggestion of the local vicar the Reverend Cowley who had possibly estimated the future value of having the writer’s organ deposited in his churchyard, because seventy-odd years later its resting place is still a big attraction, almost a site of pilgrimage for interested literary tourists. In my script I have two characters Journalist One and Two becoming alert to both the interests and possible motivations of Sir Sydney Cockerell and the Reverend Cowley in wanting aspects of Hardy’s funeral staged as they were. They firstly comment on the fact that Old Hardy had left room on the Stinsford tombstone for his own name before Journalist One suggests that a writer buried in Poets’ Corner would not harm the reputation of the Fitzwilliam Museum (where Cockerell was the Curator) which housed original manuscripts of Hardy’s

work. Later Journalist Two suggests that the interests of Stinsford Church would also be well served by the writer's heart being buried there (episode 5, p.42):

I bet the place is still attracting Hardy
-heads, pilgrim's gold in a hundred years time.

Despite protestations from all of Hardy's family these somewhat macabre acts of 'medieval butchery' as Hardy's friend Edmund Gosse called it (Gosse, 1984, cited in Tomalin, 2006, p.372) went ahead as planned. In my script I have Young Hardy perplexed by the events taking place and commenting that the reality of the situation was stranger than fiction (episode 5, p.48):

All this is madness. Madness. A writer couldn't
make this up.

Before asking the mischievous question:

Or could he?

Another equally bizarre occurrence was said to have happened concerning Hardy's heart which was believed (by some) to have been eaten by a cat. Whose cat and where the incident took place varies by account: Martin Seymour-Smith (1995) suggests that a surgeon came to Max Gate to remove the heart, which he placed in a biscuit tin, a cat then gained entry to where the heart was being stored, knocked off the lid and started devouring the contents. Subsequently the undertaker arrived killed the cat and gathered the remaining morsels of unconsumed heart and both were then buried in a casket at the service in Stinsford. The other version blames the doctor's cat, the heart being taken back to his home following its removal. I have chosen the former version in 'Afterwards' and make Hardy's beloved and cherished 'Cobby' the guilty party; Cobby being introduced in episode one. Tomalin states that the story 'may have originated in the pubs of Dorchester, where macabre jokes were no doubt appreciated' (2006, p.372). Hardy had served as a Justice of the Peace in Dorchester, sitting on thirty-eight occasions between 1884 to 1919 and I use this context to suggest that he was unpopular with some in the town. I feature the 'banter' (largely about Hardy) of the inn on two occasions in 'Afterwards' (episode 5, pp.18-20 and p.38) and the actual incident with the cat towards the end of the episode (episode 5, pp. 52-54). Seymour-Smith's suggestion that this tale, which has itself become folkloric, 'would have hugely amused Tom' (1995, p.863) is compelling. By referring to it in my script and selecting where it took place I am again recycling a narrative with no certainty that it is based on fact or fiction. I

should add that there is a positive resolution, for the cat at least, at the end of the episode.

Although Hardy did not end up in ‘a shabby corner of God’s allotment’ (*TES*: 148) his relationship with the Church and Christianity in general was deeply troubled and this is also relevant to the fifth episode in my series. In 1913 when Hardy was about to receive an honorary fellowship from Magdalen College Cambridge, he was described in the *Cambridge Magazine* as a ‘celebrated Atheist’ and bearing in mind that the Vice-Chancellor at the time was the Reverend Alexander Donaldson one would have imagined some tension, but according to Tomalin (2006, p.330) the event passed smoothly. The speculation that there might be problems followed on from the hostile reception to *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* where, in connection with the latter, the then Bishop of Wakefield, Walsham How, famously burnt a copy and wrote to the *Yorkshire Post* labelling it indecent and persuaded W.H. Smith to withdraw it from their circulating library. Writing about this in the preface to *Jude the Obscure* in 1912 Hardy commented:

So much for the unhappy beginning of Jude’s career as a book. After these verdicts from the press its next misfortune was to be burnt by a bishop – probably in his despair at not being able to burn me. (*Jude*: vi)

Hardy also stated that the negative reaction he had received to the book, had completely cured him ‘of any future interest in novel writing’ (*Jude*: vii); *Jude* was to be Hardy’s last major novel.

There is an account in *Jude the Obscure* which has been consistently omitted from screen adaptations and may have added to the Church’s unease with the narrative. When Jude and Sue are working as stone masons on the lettering of the Ten Commandments the churchwarden tells them a story told to him as a child. Whilst workmen were engaged in the same activity in a nearby church, when the ‘Commandments wanted doing up’ (*Jude*: 312) the workers had to labour on long into a Saturday night, where they got drunk and eventually ‘fell down senseless, one and all.’ When they sobered up:

there was a terrible thunderstorm a-raging, and they seemed to see in the gloom a dark figure with very thin legs and a curious voot, a-standing on the ladder, and finishing their work. (*Jude*: 312-313)

The next morning as the congregation gathered for the Sunday service they all witnessed the devil’s work, ‘all saw that the Ten Commandments wez painted with

the “Nots” left out’ (*Jude*: 313). Was Hardy in this tale simply being mischievous about the Commandments and the Church, or did this tale come from some form of folkloric legend? Certainly Draper (1984, p.90) feels that *Jude the Obscure* ‘expressed the most anti-Christian views’ out of all Hardy’s work and recalls Sue’s statement when Jude asks her whether she’d like to go and sit in the cathedral: “Cathedral? Yes. Though I think I’d rather sit in the railway station [...] That’s the centre of the town life now. The Cathedral has had its day!” (*Jude*: 141). Hardy is displaying Sue’s modernity and her atheistic views here, but were those views also his own?

The present Bishop of Wakefield, Rt Revd Stephen Platten who addressed Hardy devotees and scholars at the Thomas Hardy Society London Lecture, 2013 stated that, Hardy’s ‘entire life and work are interwoven with musing on faith and doubt’ (2014, p.14). Certainly as a child in his rural environment Hardy and his family were very involved in local church matters at Stinsford and this is depicted in the Mellstock choir in *Under the Greenwood Tree*. The vicar at the time, the Reverend Shirley, noted that the young Hardy ‘was bright’ and encouraged him ‘to join his own sons as a teacher in the Sunday School’ (Tomalin, 2006, p.39). Indeed Hardy ‘even practised sermon writing in the late 1850s’ (Platten, 2014, p.16) and at one stage considered going into the church as a county curate, but as was the case of his character Jude, this plan would have involved study at university and so was eventually rejected.

The biographical details of Hardy’s life as documented in *The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840–1928*, published in two volumes after his death, with authorship ascribed to Florence Hardy, was actually dictated to her by Hardy himself; therefore the accuracy of this ‘disguised’ or ‘third person’ autobiography’ is questionable. With caution in mind, it is generally agreed, from all biographical sources, that Hardy’s move from Dorset to London in 1862 as an architectural draftsman marked a watershed in his religious belief. In London he encountered all that was current in intellectual thought and he himself stated in 1882 that ‘as a young man he had been among the earliest acclaimers of *The Origin of Species*’ (Millgate, 1985, p.158). He attended Darwin’s funeral at Westminster Abbey in 1882 and was in agreement as Sven Backman states with the ‘rationalist views of men such as J.S. Mill [...] Herbert Spencer [and] Auguste Comte’ (2001, p.10). These claims may be accurate, but it is also true, as Backman goes on to say, that he never lost his fascination with

‘the mysterious forces that he felt were at work behind the veil of reality’ (2001, p.10). Hardy, through his writing, made sure that these ‘mysterious forces’ were never totally neglected.

This confusion between science and the irrational is echoed in the issue of Hardy’s religious beliefs and continued right up to his final days. On his deathbed on Boxing Day 1927 he asked his wife Florence to read him the Gospel account of the birth of Christ and the massacre of the innocents, remarking when she had finished ‘that there was not a grain of evidence that the Gospel was true’ (Tomalin, 2006, p.367). Yet Platten notes that even as a very old man:

Hardy would cycle the two miles or so from Max Gate to Stinsford to attend Evening Prayer. His Bible and his Book of Common Prayer were annotated with extraordinary care (2014, p.22).

I display this ambiguity throughout the series, opening episode one, ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’ with Old Hardy wearily cycling back to Max Gate from Stinsford church (episode 1, p.1) and then in episode five disturbing his younger self by saying that he is an atheist. This comment has a shocked Young Hardy saying that he might well go on to join the Church to which Old Hardy mutters quietly to himself (episode 5, p.8):

Like Jude Fawley I suppose?

Outwardly, post-Darwin Hardy would not admit to any religious involvement, which might have seemed unfashionable; for as Platten states ‘his self-education, impressive as it was, did not reinforce a proper intellectual security’ (2014, p.20). Hardy’s class-based anxiety mirrored his reluctance explicitly to state that stories of the supernatural had been passed down to him by his family. Again, I cite this in ‘Afterwards’ Eva questioning her sister on the subject of Old Hardy’s supposed atheism and Florence replying that she thinks (episode 5, p.7):

it depends who Tom is talking to at the time.

Tomalin makes a convincing point that Hardy ‘atheistic or agnostic as he was – he was not sure which [...] could never quite get away from the Christian God’ (2006, p.223). Neither, I would argue, could he ever get away from the supernatural and the folkloric narratives that he grew up with in Dorset, which he then transported with his pen to Wessex.

The narrator’s description of Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native* sets out a vision of how:

the storm was its lover, and the wind its friend. Then it became the home of strange phantoms; and it was found to be the hitherto unrecognised original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream till revived by scenes like this (*The Return*: 55).

It was the landscape that Jacqueline Dillion and Phillip Mallett and others have likened to Freud's 'concept of the Abseits, a space off-side or to the edge which leaves room for the uncanny' (2015, p.100, italics in original). It was the landscape lying just behind Hardy's childhood home in Higher Bockhampton that fed the writer's imagination and lies behind his literary inventions, Egdon Heath and Wessex. From this, as Angelique Richardson states, Hardy opened 'windows into the supernatural; onto magical worlds in which powers of the mind, of dreams and fantasies overpower reason' (2004, p.168).

This chapter has highlighted several instances of Hardy displaying his passion for Dorset folklore, both of the actual 'reality' of characters like Diggory Venn, carrying out their completely rational everyday tasks, to the irrational beliefs and superstitions held by many in the power of witches and demons. This passion has been largely ignored by the majority of screen adaptations of his work and the focus of my attention in my scripts. Hardy wished to record the folklore as the rural world vanished into the twentieth century; as we shall see in chapter four the 'horror' of the 'folk' is still very much alive in the twenty-first century with the emerging genre of folk horror. I believe that Hardy, with his focus on the isolated landscape of Egdon Heath, was one of the first to lay down the foundations of the genre and I hope that my scripts manage to generate this view in audiences that relate to folk belief and its practices.

THE HAUNTING OF MR HARDY 1: THE FIDDLER OF THE REELS

Written by

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Based on Thomas Hardy's The Fiddler of the Reels

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FADE IN:

EXT. STINSFORD CHURCHYARD. SUMMER EVENING.

An elderly gentleman (OLD HARDY) comes out the door of a small church carrying a prayer book in one hand and a hat in the other. He is in his eighties with a droopy grey moustache and is wearing a grey suit with his trousers tucked into his socks.

He slowly walks through the churchyard and stops at the grave marked 'Emma Hardy'.

He puts both his hands behind his back and looks down at the grave.

OLD HARDY

O I am so tired of waiting, she
said, Night, morn, noon, afternoon;
So cold it is in my lonely bed,
And I thought you would join me
soon!

Old Hardy looks up to the sky and then back down to the grave again.

He slowly moves towards the gate whilst placing his hat on his head. A bicycle leans on the stone wall outside. He mounts it awkwardly placing his prayer book in the basket at the front.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANES. SUMMER EVENING.

Old Hardy looks tired and out of breath as he cycles through the country lanes and one small village. Passing two ladies talking outside a thatched cottage he tips his hat and both nod and smile at Old Hardy. Further on he sees MICHAEL an elderly farmer, a large kindly man with rosy cheeks.

MICHAEL

Evening Mr Hardy, lovely evening it
is.

Old Hardy nods back politely to Michael.

He cycles on.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN. MAX GATE. SUMMER EVENING.

Old Hardy dismounts his bicycle and wearily pushes it up the gravel pathway towards a large imposing house bearing the name 'Max Gate'. He leans the bicycle on the side wall of the house taking the prayer book from the basket.

He makes his way towards the front door, removes his hat and takes out a key from his jacket. He enters the house but does not fully close the door behind him.

After a few moments a young man of about seventeen, YOUNG HARDY, smartly spruced in his Sunday Best and carrying a violin and bow also walks up the path.

He knocks timidly on the door and waits somewhat nervously. After a few moments he knocks again, this time harder. Realising that the door is open he cautiously makes his way through into the hallway, leaving the door slightly open behind him.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED HALLWAY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

The hallway is dark and sombre with a number of old paintings hung on the walls. Young Hardy gazes at them. He looks around, nobody seems to be about.

There is silence, only the ticking of a Long Case Grandfather Clock sitting in the corner.

Young Hardy hears someone COUGHING upstairs. Clutching his violin for comfort, he makes his way slowly up the stairs.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

Again, the walls are lined with paintings. There are a number of doors leading from the hallway one of them is slightly open.

Young Hardy shouts timidly.

YOUNG HARDY

Hello.

There is more coughing, Old Hardy sounding breathless.

OLD HARDY (O.S)

Ah come through.

Tentatively Young Hardy moves towards the open door and makes his way through, closing it behind him.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Just got in myself.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

Inside a smallish study there are two walls lined with books and a fire-place with many small pictures hung above it.

Old Hardy sits at a desk with a window behind him. He has a pen in his hand which he puts down as Young Hardy enters.

The only light in the room comes from a desk lamp.

OLD HARDY
Come through. Come through. And
take a seat. Florence is out at
present expected back later, only
Nellie about and she seems to have
gone somewhere, so we can talk
freely.

Young Hardy somewhat awkwardly tries to make himself comfortable, he places his violin and bow on the floor.

Old Hardy smiles kindly at the young man and nods whilst looking at the violin.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Of course, of course.
(pause)
I suppose you want to know why I've
called you here?

Young Hardy nods and clears his throat.

YOUNG HARDY
Yes sir, if you could tell me sir.

OLD HARDY
I will do just that.

Young Hardy nods again.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
But before I do I have to remind
you that you mustn't be so
deferential, you're as good as
anyone else and always remember
that.

Again Young Hardy nods and speaks softly without any real conviction.

YOUNG HARDY

Yes sir, as good as anyone else
sir.

Old Hardy shifting papers on his desk looks up towards Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY

I've just written a letter to a
friend of mine Edward Clodd about
certain aspects of my writing. I'll
read it if I may?

YOUNG HARDY

Yes sir, please do.

OLD HARDY

Dear Edward, I must say, once and
for all, that every superstition
and custom described in my novels
may be depended on as true records
of the same and not inventions of
mine.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT./INT. COUNTRY LANES/ STINSFORD CHURCH/ MAX GATE/ EGDON
HEATH. DAY.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

In every case in my work I was
careful not to falsify local
beliefs and customs. I know I am
old, yet I am still instituting
inquiries to correct tricks of
memory, and striving against the
temptation to exaggerate, in order
to preserve for my own satisfaction
a fairly true record of a vanishing
life.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

Old Hardy puts down the letter, rubs his eyes and stares into
space.

OLD HARDY

A vanishing life and I shall vanish
from it shortly.

Young Hardy smiles faintly and looks embarrassed.

Old Hardy shifts his gaze back onto the young man.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Sorry. As you can see I'm getting very old and will soon be sleeping peacefully in Stinsford church yard, or should that be Mellstock? Two worlds one place. Yes very old.

Young Hardy looks totally confused.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

I need you to do something for me.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN. MAX GATE. EVENING.

NELLIE the maid, a rather plump woman in her fifties gets off her bicycle and wheels it round to the side of the house, leaving it near Old Hardy's.

BERTIE the gardener is kneeling down throwing clumps of weeds into his wheelbarrow.

NELLIE

You're working late Bertie, wife not waiting with supper?

Bertie stands up. He is a tall powerfully built man in his forties.

BERTIE

Just want to tidy this bit up and then I'm off.

He wipes his hands on a bit of cloth.

BERTIE (CONT'D)

No, wife's with sister at seaside, Weymouth, so poor me is getting his own food and will eat tonight all by himself.

Bertie putting on a pitiful voice.

BERTIE (CONT'D)

So no seaside or supper for sad little Bertie.

NELLIE

Oh, you poor dear. My heart it bleeds for you.

Both smile and Bertie nods towards Old Hardy's bike.

BERTIE

Boss must be back, can't say I've
seen him, I ain't been round much
at this side mind.

From the basket on the front of the bike Nellie takes a bunch
of flowers.

NELLIE

We'll see where he is, we'll see.
Yes he'll a been to church.

BERTIE

He still does that then? He does
well on cycle at his age.

NELLIE

Oh yes he does that.

Nellie looks around her to see if anyone else is around and
lowers her voice.

NELLIE (CONT'D)

He's a queer old varmint but we
wouldn't be without him.

Bertie nods vigorously.

BERTIE

Right enough, right enough.

NELLIE

If you're around in half hour I can
fix you up with victuals.

BERTIE

Oh I couldn't possibly.
(laughing)
I was just hoping you'd say that,
thank you Nel.

Nellie smiles. Walking towards the front door she takes a key
from her purse and is surprised to find the door open, she
walks through and closes it behind her.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED HALLWAY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

Nellie places the flowers on a small table and puts her door
key back inside her purse. The house is quiet but she can
hear talking upstairs.

She nods to herself on hearing Old Hardy talking and walks
towards the stairs.

NELLIE

Must have someone with him. Best find out if they want tea.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

OLD HARDY

So you see I'm trying to capture with frail memory a particular time that is sadly and all too quickly vanishing.

Young Hardy looks very uncomfortable and shakes his head.

YOUNG HARDY

But, I'm ...

OLD HARDY

And you can help me considerably in that task.

There is a noise outside the door and Young Hardy immediately shoots up out of his seat.

Old Hardy looks across at him shaking his head and muttering to himself.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

No, no, you don't have to.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

Nellie knocks on the door, opens it and pops her head round.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

NELLIE

Just wondered if you and your guest would like some tea sir?

Nellie looking round the door finds only Old Hardy sitting at his desk. Nellie notices that resting near the chair opposite him is an old violin and bow.

NELLIE (CONT'D)

Oh,em. Oh I am sorry sir, I thought you had...

OLD HARDY

Company Nellie? No.
(shaking his head)
(MORE)

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
But yes, I will have some tea
please.

NELLIE
Very well sir.

Looking somewhat confused Nellie exits the room and closes the door behind her.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

Nellie mutters to herself.

NELLIE
No we wouldn't be without him, but
a queer old varmint he certainly
be.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. EVENING.

Young Hardy sits back down on the chair again. Old Hardy shakes his head.

OLD HARDY
You really didn't have to. Never
mind.

Old Hardy reaches in his drawer and takes out a small posy of wildflowers which he cradles in his hands. He smiles gently as he looks at the flowers and then across to Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
You can soon witness this.

Young Hardy looks totally perplexed.

YOUNG HARDY
What? Sorry, sorry sir?

OLD HARDY
An act of pure innocence.
(pause)
Perhaps a small gift to the pretty
Car'line Kytes from the very steady
Ned Hipcroft?
(pause)
Yes, let us at least begin with
innocence.

EXT. A ROW OF THATCHED COTTAGES IN THE COUNTRY. DAY.

It is a bright summer's afternoon and a young couple walk hand in hand, CAR'LINE KYTES and NED HIPCROFT. Car'line, is about eighteen, with sandy brown hair. She wears a light coloured summer dress and straw bonnet.

Ned, a couple of years older, has been working and is dressed in overalls; he has a pleasant and amiable face with a neatly trimmed moustache, he carries a bag of tools in his left hand.

The couple stop outside a row of cottages.

Over the other side of the lane and barely visible Young Hardy observes the couple from a window in an old disused barn.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Oh yes I remember these two,
Car'line and Ned. I suppose they're
the main characters in this story.
There is another, you'll meet him
soon enough.

Car'line and Ned are flirting with each other and Car'line is giggling.

Ned puts his bag on the floor opens it and takes out a small posy of wildflowers and hands them to Car'line.

NED

Daft old Ned picked these earlier
for you, surrounding our work shed
they be. Jack who I work with
thinks I gone light.

CAR'LINE

Oh they be lovely, thank you Ned.

NED

So give me a kiss then and I shall
see 'ee tonight, and we'll church
tomorrow.

Car'line does a small jump away from Ned.

CAR'LINE

No! You covered in oil Ned
Hipcroft, besides I don't like to
do our love making out here where
anybody can see.

(MORE)

CAR'LINE (CONT'D)

But as everybody knows about you
and me I don't suppose it'll cause
harm.

Car'line leans forward and gives Ned a quick peck of a kiss on the cheek, she promptly frees her two hands, one still clutching the flowers. She looks down at her hands as if they're dirty and pulls a face, she giggles and goes skipping off.

From the barn window Young Hardy smiles.

Ned smiles, takes a key from his pocket and moves towards one of the cottages.

NED

You get yourself back to
Stickleford now and I'll see 'ee
about seven. And I do promise young
lady that I'll be so spruced up and
proper that you won't be able to
take your eyes off me!

Car'line shouts back still giggling.

CAR'LINE

About seven.

Ned bends down to stroke a black and white cat which has arrived at his doorstep.

NED

Oh your here as well are you old
puss, bit hungry after a day's work
are 'ee. Come on then daft old Ned
will find you something.

Both Ned and the cat go into his cottage.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE. DAY.

Car'line makes her way from the cottages, her skipping eventually slowing to a normal relaxed pace. She walks down a country lane at the side of a river.

Young Hardy, a slight figure in the distance follows her.

She holds the small posy of flowers in the fingers of her right hand and continues walking. Some distance ahead of her is a small stone bridge on the left and just further on a small group of thatched cottages on her right.

Car'line as she walks, twists and rotates the little bunch of flowers in the fingers of her right hand.

In front of her the figure of a SMALL BOY is approaching at speed. The child is about seven or eight years of age, tears are streaming down his face. As he gets closer Car'line tries to speak to him.

CAR'LINE

Whatever's a matter with 'ee little
fellow?

The boy races past her looking terrified. He then stops and turns round.

SMALL BOY

He's a bad man! A really, really
bad man.

The boy runs away and soon disappears from Car'line's view. She shakes her head and shrugs her shoulders in bewilderment, her right hand still twiddling the posy of flowers. She walks on.

FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING.

Car'line is further bemused when she hears fiddle music playing.

CAR'LINE

(mutters to herself)
Who be playing that?

Involuntarily her walking pace changes slightly on hearing the music.

Car'line looks towards the cottages where it seems to be coming from. The small bunch of flowers is still in her hand as she walks towards the bridge on her left.

EXT. BRIDGE. DAY.

Car'line, walking half way over the bridge looks down at the flow of water below. Whilst her upper body is leaning on the wall of the bridge her hands as if in prayer are clasping the flowers. Her feet are now moving more deliberately, reacting to the fiddle-player's music.

A little further ahead to her right TWO BOYS of about nine years old are dancing in front of an open door of a cottage where the music is coming from. They move almost trance like, hypnotised, with tears running down their faces.

The cottage doorway is shrouded in darkness.

Fascinated, Car'line looks over towards the boys and the doorway.

THE FIDDLE PLAYING CONTINUES.

After a few moments the figure of MOP OLLAMOOR emerges out of the darkness and stands on the door step.

The two boys move away slightly, their movements becoming even more manic.

Car'line is shocked and jolted by the appearance of Mop, playing his fiddle with his eyes closed. He is in his late twenties, swarthy and bearded with long black hair. He is dressed in black trousers and a dark shirt and waistcoat with a red silk bandana tied round his neck.

Car'line stares intently at the scene in front of her.

Mop continues to play, his face seemingly lost in the intensity of his music. Car'line looks down vacantly into the water. She then alternates between looking down at the water and her hands holding the flowers and looking over towards Mop.

At a time when she is looking at Mop he suddenly opens one eye and smiles at her. Car'line's face shows amazement her body jolts back violently as if she's been electrocuted. Mop is smiling, almost laughing, his gaze pinning her to the spot.

CAR'LINE ENTERS A STATE OF DELIRIUM.

In SLOW MOTION Car'line's hands open up and the released flowers cascade over the wall of the bridge and into the water.

Car'line's face is quivering, her eyes wide-open looking at Mop.

He is laughing and displaying generous amounts of white teeth, like scrubbed gravestones, stark against the blackness of his beard.

The flowers are still falling over the wall of the bridge, the two boys are still dancing, their eyes full of tears.

INT. KITCHEN. NED'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Ned is in his kitchen putting down some food for the cat.

NED

This should keep you going puss.
Havin got you sorted now I'll sort
myself out. Covered in oil, I like
her cheek.

EXT. BRIDGE. DAY. CAR'LINE'S STATE OF DELIRIUM.

FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING.

Car'line, in order to continue her walk home has to pass near where Mop is standing. Her legs are weak and at first she fights for control of them. She looks at Mop again, he is still playing and staring at her. She averts her eyes and struggles to get away from the bridge.

Mop is laughing at the state she is reduced to, as almost drunkenly she makes her way onto the lane towards home. Above the sound of the fiddle Mop shouts at her.

MOP

You cannot leave off, dear, whether
you would or no! You cannot, you
cannot.

She starts to run. Along with the FIDDLE MUSIC we now hear a HEART BEAT.

MOP (CONT'D)

You'll never leave off!

Mop, whilst still playing, beckons one of the boys to him, he kneels down and whispers in the boy's ear. The boy, also unsteadily, starts to chase Car'line and after a short time catches her up, he is out of breath.

BOY

Miss! Miss! He says to tell you. He
says tell you miss, that you've
met, you've met Mop and that you
cannot leave off, whether you would
or no!

CAR'LINE

(also out of breath)
Mop, you say Mmm op?

BOY

Yes miss. It's Mop. And, and you
cannot leave off.

The boy runs back towards where Mop is playing but turns round to shout.

BOY (CONT'D)
You cannot leave off!

Young Hardy looks on, both fascinated and frightened by the events he has witnessed.

FIDDLE MUSIC FADES. THE HEART BEAT GETS LOUDER.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAR'LINE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

CAR'LINE'S DELIRIUM/ DREAM. HEART BEAT SOUNDS.

Car'line is fast asleep, a look of anxiety and ecstasy twists her face.

It is night and Mop is pressing his body against her as she is pressing her back against a tree. She can feel his hot breath on her face. She is looking straight into his leering black eyes.

There is a full moon. She is shouting.

CAR'LINE
Oh Mop! Mop!

REALITY. HEART BEAT FADES.

INT. CAR'LINE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Car'line opens her eyes. She's in her own bedroom and her older sister JULIA is leaning over her, also in the room but looking out of the window at the night, is her brother TONY.

The bedroom is lit by oil lamps and by the side of Car'line's bed there is a small bunch of wild flowers in a jar.

CAR'LINE
Mop. Mop? Where am I? Julia, is that you?

Julia sits down on the side of the bed and takes Car'line in her arms.

JULIA
Of course it is my love. You've had us all worried you have. You came in last night hardly knowing where you were. Close onto fitting you were. Cus of your weakness when you were a child we got Doctor in.
(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

Your Ned been ever so worried,
everybody been worried.

CAR'LINE

Ned. Ned? Not Mop?

JULIA

Ned. Ned Hipcroft, your fiancée, or
as good as, and all you been
shouting for is that Mop.

Tony moves away from the window towards the bed, he looks
angry.

TONY

And if it's that Mop who does the
fair grounds our Car'line he's a
bad lot.

JULIA

Not now Tony, hardly right is it?
Poor girl only just come round. Not
now.

Tony ignores his sister.

TONY

He's good with his horses and he's
good with the jigs and the reels,
but if you have an ounce of any
sense our Car'line you'll keep out
of his way.

JULIA

I said not now!

Tony goes towards the door, he stalls and turns round to make
one last point.

TONY

Well! And her having a good and
decent man like Ned as well, they
don't come much better!

Tony leaves the room, banging the door behind him.

JULIA

He's in a bit of a rage, only cus
he cares mind.

Julia leans forward and kisses Car'line's cheek.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Anyway, never mind about that now.
How do you feel my love? Do you
want some water or something to
eat? We got some lovely broth on
...

INT. KITCHEN/ PARLOUR. LATER. NIGHT.

Tony sits alone at the kitchen table having just finished a meal. Julia enters the room and sits down opposite him. Tony looks up.

TONY
Is our Car'line settled now?

JULIA
She is, but no thanks to you going
on like that.

TONY
Well at times truth has to be told.

JULIA
That's as maybe, but there's a
right time for all that.

Julia stands up and takes Tony's plate over to the sink.

JULIA (CONT'D)
So what do you really know about
this Mop?

TONY
From all accounts he's a bad lot
Julia he really is.

Tony lowers his voice to an emphatic whisper.

TONY (CONT'D)
Some say with that fiddle of his he
plays the devil's tunes.

Julia turns round agitated.

JULIA
Do you believe all that old village
nonsense? Do you really believe it?
In this day and age? When we av
trains, and machines in the field?

TONY

There's a lot of folk round here that still do and the nearer you get to Egdon...

Julia shakes her head.

JULIA

Well they wants their heads looking at!

TONY

But never mind all that, as I said up there, Mop's a sometimes horse-doctor, sometimes fiddle-player, but most of all he's a dandy a woman's man. A real woman's man.

Julia joins Tony at the table again.

TONY (CONT'D)

And most of 'em, most of 'em he leaves in trouble, if you see my meaning.

JULIA

Course I do, I want born yesterday. Anyway it'll perhaps amount to nothing.

(pause)

She's asked us. Asked us to keep Ned away for a couple of days.

TONY

(angrily)

Keep Ned away! What's poor Ned done? You couldn't have a more decent and goodly man. You couldn't. That girl wants her head looking at!

JULIA

Well for the moment we go along with it okay?

TONY

We'll go along with it but I'm not happy our Julia, not happy with keeping Ned away, not happy at all.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CAR'LINE'S FRONT DOOR/ LANE OUTSIDE. DAY.

Ned knocks on Car'line's front door which is opened by Julia, she talks to Ned and after a few moments he walks away.

From the upper floor of the house Car'line peeps from behind a curtain watching Ned as he leaves.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Now Ned was, as Tony said, a good and decent man, a practical man not given to hysterics and rushings to the head.

On another occasion Ned stands outside Car'line's cottage talking to Tony. Ned is shaking his head unable to accept the situation. Concluding the conversation Tony touches Ned's arm and goes in closing the door behind him. Ned stands there for a time before walking away.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)(CONT'D)

So when he finally got to see Car'line again he was prepared to go along with whatever she wanted.

Ned is standing in the lane outside the cottage with Car'line. He tries to embrace her, but she turns away from him as if he's a hindrance. Ned shakes his head, he can't understand her behaviour.

Car'line has a small bill-poster in her hand which she gives to him to look at.

Ned quickly reads the bill-poster and nods his head in approval.

INT. INN. LARGE ROOM. LIT BY CANDLES. NIGHT.

FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING.

Ned stands alongside Julia and her fiancée WILLIAM at the back of an inn where there's a dance taking place, they are all having a drink.

Many people are dancing to the music being played, the musicians being an OLD MAN with a bushy white beard playing the mandolin and Mop Ollamoor playing his fiddle.

Along with a few other young women Car'line stands directly in front of the musicians. She looks mesmerized, her gaze locked onto the long dark shape of Mop who is standing and playing his fiddle on a barrel. He has both eyes closed.

Ned looking at Car'line and then the musician, gives a long slow shake of his head and speaks to Julia.

NED

That's why she wanted to come so badly. I might a guessed it. What am I supposed to do?

JULIA

I just don't understand her, I really don't.

William also shakes his head.

WILLIAM

It's like he's got some sort of power over her, some sort of spell, some sort of devilry.

NED

She's making me look a fool.

JULIA

Oh Ned, I don't know what to say. What can anyone say. You're right though Will she's absolutely bewitched.

NED

I've em, I've honestly had enough of this.

(shaking his head)

No I can't. See you both.

Ned places his unfinished glass on a nearby table and walks out of the room disgusted.

Looking at Car'line still standing directly in front of Mop, Julia shakes her head and speaks to William.

JULIA

She's going to lose everything, the way she's carrying on.

Also in the room observing the situation is Young Hardy who murmurs to himself.

YOUNG HARDY

I don't know him, but the poor man
shouldn't be treated like that.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

Old Hardy at his desk sits opposite Young Hardy who has his
violin and bow in his lap.

OLD HARDY

I agree Ned certainly didn't
deserve to be treated like that.

There's a knock on the door and SIR SYDNEY COCKERELL, a grey
haired distinguished looking man in his early sixties enters
carrying a pile of papers.

COCKERELL

Sorry to disturb you Tom, just a
quick visit, Nellie said you were
up here. I have these papers for
you to sign.

OLD HARDY

Ah yes. There are always papers,
always papers.

COCKERELL

These are all concerned with the
extremely generous gift of your
original manuscripts to the
Fitzwilliam.

Old Hardy shakes his head and looks bemused.

OLD HARDY

Why would your museum or indeed any
museum want my jottings and
scribbles?

COCKERELL

There you go again. There you go,
underselling your importance and
the cultural value of your writing.
Jottings indeed. When will you ever
acknowledge your importance?

Old Hardy does not look impressed, rather a little
embarrassed and jokes.

OLD HARDY

Perhaps next year, or the year
after?

Cockerell shakes his head and laughs.

COCKERELL

You're impossible. The Fitzwilliam
is indebted to you.

Cockerell places the papers on the desk and looks round the little room his stare coming to rest on the chair opposite with a violin and bow resting on it.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Can't remember seeing that one
before? Is it an old one?

Old Hardy replies slowly and thoughtfully.

OLD HARDY

It dates back, yes, many, many
years.

Cockerell smiles nodding his head. He places his hand on Old Hardy's shoulder.

COCKERELL

I'll collect the papers in the
morning. So sorry, I interrupted
you, I really am.

Old Hardy smiles at Cockerell as he opens the door.

OLD HARDY

It's okay don't worry Sydney,
honestly and yes I'll get them
signed.

COCKERELL

See you in the morning, I'll leave
you to your thoughts.

The door closes and Old Hardy talks quietly to himself, looking over towards the fiddle on the chair.

OLD HARDY

Back to my thoughts. A tale that
happened not far from here and the
devil's music played on a fiddle
just like that one.

EXT. A FIELD. SUMMER AFTERNOON.

It's a lovely warm and bright summer's afternoon and the field is full of people enjoying the weather and visiting a fair that's taking place.

In the distance there is FAIRGROUND MUSIC PLAYING (ORGAN).

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Yes, go back and remember the poor and honest Ned Hipcroft, the dizzy mesmerized Car'line Kytes and the dark evil of Mop Ollamoor. It was on the day of the Greenhill Fair where Mop again was booked to play, that Ned decided to see where he stood with Car'line.

The couple are heading towards the tents and all the hurly-burly atmosphere of the fair. Car'line walking with purpose is moving the fingers of her right hand, playing with imaginary flowers.

Ned puts his hand on her shoulder and stops walking, Car'line reluctantly stops.

NED

I wants a word before we go on.

CAR'LINE

Not now Ned. Not now I want to get to front where the music be. You didn't have to come, if 'ee didn't want. Julia's here somewhere, I'll be fine if 'ee don't want to come.

NED

I want a word. Just two minutes that's all.

CAR'LINE

Oh go on then, but make it quick Ned.

NED

I need to know what's going on. You seem so different, like a stranger. Everyone's talking about it. Look how you treated me the other night at that dance, everyone were a looking. I need to know. I need to know whether we're still courting.

(pause)

Are we courting with a view to marriage?

CAR'LINE

Marriage? You and me Ned?

NED

How can I be talking about anybody else? For a good many years it's always been about you and me hasn't it?

Car'line, agitated, shakes her head.

CAR'LINE

Oh I don't want all this now. I really don't want this.

Ned places both his hands on Car'line's arms, grasping her firmly.

NED

It's now or never Car'line. Do you still intend to marry me?

CAR'LINE

I can't Ned, not now.
(pause)
I can't.

NED

If you're sure about that then I must go. Are you sure Car'line? Are you really sure?

CAR'LINE

Yes. Yes I'm, I'm sure enough as I can be.

Ned releases his grip on Car'line and tears form in his eyes as he stares at her in disbelief. He slowly shakes his head from side to side.

NED

I really can't believe this. I really can't. All those years, all everyone thought was you and me. Is there anything, anything I can say or do? Anything?

CAR'LINE

No Ned, no. My mind's made up.

Dejected Ned turns round and slowly walks away. As he walks he passes Young Hardy who is standing in the field watching events.

After a couple of seconds Car'line starts walking in the opposite direction towards the fair.

After a few yards she turns around to see the figure of Ned disappearing into the distance.

Young Hardy follows Car'line towards the fair.

EXT. GREENHILL FAIR. AFTERNOON.

ORGAN MUSIC PLAYING.

Car'line and Julia are facing each other talking animatedly, Julia is very angry.

JULIA

And you've let him go? You silly little fool. How could you treat him so badly? You know where he's going now? London!

CAR'LINE

He didn't say that. But London or no London I can't marry him, not now. Too much has happened.

JULIA

What do you mean happened? Eh? What do you mean? Both Tony and I lied to Ned when he came round, said you still weren't well, we shouldn't have done, he don't deserve that and you don't deserve him. You'll rue this day to be sure my girl!

CAR'LINE

Maybe I will.

JULIA

I saw you at that dance ignoring poor Ned, my William saw it too. Well. I'm not going to stand around watching you make a fool of yourself with that, that heathen! That fancy travelling man, never seen such as the inside of a church!

CAR'LINE

You don't understand.

Julia walks away, leaving Car'line standing and looking reflective.

CAR'LINE (CONT'D)

You just don't understand.

After a few moments Car'line walks through the fair, it is full of vibrant noise and colour. Above the noise, the distinctive SOUND OF THE FIDDLE makes itself apparent.

Car'line heads towards the sound moving in an almost trance-like manner, gliding past performing jugglers and fire-eaters.

There is a small crowd gathered around a flamboyant ANNOUNCER on stilts working with the freak show.

ANNOUNCER

Later tonight, and straight from
the mysterious east, come and see
the two-headed woman.

Car'line pauses for a moment, a few yards behind her Young Hardy also pauses.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

But now we bring you, directly from
the pages of Jonathan Swift the
Three Lilliputians.

THREE DWARFS in top hats and carrying canes come out from a tent followed by a further DWARF carrying a flute.

The audience clap as they make their entrance.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

These gentlemen will dance and
entertain.

The dwarf with the flute starts playing a JAUNTY TUNE which is barely audible above the surrounding noise.

The three dwarfs go through a little dance routine before making room for the big attraction. THE FLUTE MUSIC STOPS and the four dwarfs bow to the audience. As the audience claps the dwarfs make their way back inside the tent.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And now, directly from the United
States of America, I give you
Mister Felix Wehre, Elastic Man.

ELASTIC MAN comes out of the tent wearing trousers and a vest. He immediately grabs with his right hand some flesh from his left arm and pulls it a great distance from the bone and muscle of the arm.

The crowd are shocked by this but clap enthusiastically. Young Hardy's face grimaces.

Elastic Man approaches a young woman and suggests that she pulls the surplus skin further, the young woman shrugs away horrified. The crowd laugh at her reaction.

Elastic Man tries the same with Car'line but she shakes her head and scurries away. Again the crowd laugh.

After just a few yards a PAINTED-CLOWN tries to get Car'line's attention.

PAINTED-CLOWN

Come right in, step this way.
Who'll be next and who'll be lucky?
Who'll be next? Could it be you
madam?

CAR'LINE

Please, please, get out of my way.

PAINTED-CLOWN

No madam, no. Really madam? In such
a hurry?

CAR'LINE

Yes, yes get out of my way!

Car'line already in a state of hysteria moves on.

FIDDLE MUSIC GETS LOUDER.

Car'line can now hear Mop's fiddle more clearly and after a further few yards she can see him too. He is standing on a barrel, dressed in dark clothing with the red silk bandana round his neck.

EXT. A FIELD. CONCERT. AFTERNOON.

As if in a dream Car'line makes her way to the front of the small group of about thirty listening and watching Mop. Most are young women although there are a small group of boys dancing around the musician with tears in their eyes.

Young Hardy watches from a distance.

Mop is accompanied by an old man with a white bushy beard playing a mandolin.

Standing next to Car'line is a YOUNG WOMAN whose face is hideously disfigured by a number of sores around her lips and mouth. She leans forward to talk to Car'line.

YOUNG WOMAN

I suppose you like him too, do yer?
We all do. Has the tone of his
fiddle got your heart?

The Young Woman waves her arm at the crowd excitedly.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Look at em all. He got quite a
following.

Car'line backs off at the sight of the woman's disfigured
mouth.

A bald headed WAITER wearing a white apron carries a large
tray laden with drinks through the crowd.

WAITER

Come on ladies and any gents for
that matter, if there be any. Gin
and beer hot. First one compliments
of the seated gentleman over there
by the tent!

The waiter nods to the SEATED GENTLEMAN who duly lifts his
head from a copy of 'Scribner's Magazine' and nods back. He
is in his fifties, well dressed with receding hair. He sports
a moustache that appears to be waxed at the ends.

The Young Woman takes two glasses from the tray and gives one
to Car'line. Car'line mechanically takes the glass and
drinks, without taking her eyes off Mop.

The Young Woman looks round and stares at the Seated
Gentleman.

YOUNG WOMAN

He be famous so they say, but keeps
himself to himself so they say,
likes to keep an eye on things
though.

The Young Woman takes several gulps of her drink as some
dribbles from her mouth.

Young Hardy looks across to the Seated Gentleman, who sees
him. He smiles and waves.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Waving he is. Don't know who he's
seen. Someone famous though, so
they say. I'll take his kindness
though and so must you. Drink,
drink it'll do you good.

The crowd grows in size whilst Mop and the old man continue with their act. Car'line is drinking quickly, her agitated feet responding to the music.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE. EARLY EVENING.

FIDDLE/ MANDOLIN MUSIC STILL PLAYING.

Ned's booted feet and legs are walking, almost marching with purpose. He has a determined look on his face and a heavy looking rucksack on his back.

EXT. A FIELD. CONCERT. EARLY EVENING.

FIDDLE/ MANDOLIN MUSIC STOPS.

The musicians finish the reel. The audience clap almost robotically. The old man with the mandolin nods his appreciation, the waiter offers him a drink from the tray and they both walk off together.

The boys stop dancing and walk away slowly, exhausted.

Mop remains, still with his eyes closed, standing on the barrel. Slowly he lowers his fiddle and bow to the sides of his body.

There is an air of expectation, tension shows on the faces of the young women, all of whom stare at the figure on the barrel.

There isn't a man in sight, the Seated Gentleman has now gone, an old violin and bow now rests on the chair.

The only male is Mop.

There is absolute silence.

After a few moments someone shouts out in anguish.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE

Mop! Mop! Oh Mop!

Mop slowly lifting his fiddle to his neck and shoulder brings the bow up to rest on the strings. After a few seconds when his movements appear frozen he launches into another reel 'My Fancy Lad'.

FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING. CAR'LINE ENTERS A STATE OF DELIRIUM.

Car'line's face shows surprise and shock, she is overpowered with hysteric emotion. The empty glass that contained her gin and beer hot is dropped and in SLOW MOTION it falls to the ground and bounces. The glass doesn't break.

She is intoxicated seized by the seductive strain of the music. She dances, with slow drunken movements in her body, legs and arms. Although she is reduced to a fluid, her head and gaze are fixed on Mop.

Everyone is staring at Car'line as she continues to stare at Mop. He finally opens one eye and his dark blaze fixes on her, his mouth opens to a smile and then a leering laugh. Above the sound of the fiddle, he speaks to her and she can hear him clearly.

MOP

You cannot leave off, dear, whether
you would or no!

Everyone is still looking at Car'line. The Young Woman standing next to her thrusts her scarred mouth towards Car'line's face.

YOUNG WOMAN

It seems to be you that he's
interested in!

Car'line's head and vision starts to spin, the Young Woman whispers to her in a sinister manner.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

It seems to be you that he's
interested in. He'll make you limp.
He'll play the fiddle so as to draw
your soul out of your body like a
spider's thread.

Following the young woman's whisper all the crowd turn round towards Car'line and start chanting collectively.

CROWD

You! You! You! You! You! You! You!

YOUNG WOMAN

So they say. So they say.

CROWD

You! You! You! You! You! You! You!

YOUNG WOMAN

So they say. So they say.

The crowd continues chanting. Mop is still playing and laughing and looking at Car'line as she goes through some sort of blissful torture.

The chants are merged with the FIDDLE MUSIC, the SOUNDS OF THE FAIR, and THE ORGAN etc. Car'line sees the face of the Painted-Clown again and hears the Announcer.

PAINTED-CLOWN

Who'll be next and who'll be lucky?
Who'll be next ...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Roll up, roll up, directly from the
Orient ...

PAINTED-CLOWN

Who'll be next and who'll be lucky?
Could it be you Madam?

Car'line alternates between seeing the face of the painted-clown and Mop's face.

MOP

You cannot leave off, dear, whether
you would or no!

Then the Young Woman's face is peering cruelly upon Car'line.

YOUNG WOMAN

Draw your soul out of your body
like a spider's thread.

The HEART BEAT SOUNDS mount in volume.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODLAND NEAR THE FAIRGROUND. NIGHT.

There is a full moon.

CAR'LINE IS IN A STATE OF DELIRIUM. HEART BEAT STILL SOUNDS.

A look of anxiety and ecstasy twists Car'line's face. Mop is pressing his body against her as she is pressing her back against a tree. She can feel his hot breath on her face. She is looking straight into his leering black eyes. She is shouting.

CAR'LINE

Oh Mop! Mop!

FLASHBACK TO THE EARLIER BRIDGE SCENE.

As the flowers in SLOW MOTION fall down from Car'line's hands into the water.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. WOODLAND NEAR THE FAIRGROUND. NIGHT.

HEART BEAT SOUND CONTINUES.

Car'line and Mop copulate against a tree, Mop laughing and leering in Car'line's face.

In the foreground a few yards in front of the couple a black and white cat walks slowly past.

HEART BEAT GRADUALLY FADES.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANE(S). TOWNS. DAY/ NIGHT.

Ned stoically walks on through a variety of landscapes enduring all manner of weather.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

The railway to South Wessex was in the process of construction, but it was not as yet opened for traffic; and Ned Hipcroft reached the capital by six days trudge on foot, as many a better man had done before him.

EXT. APPROACHING LONDON. DAY.

Ned marches on, ascending a hill. He stops walking, removes his rucksack and takes his first look at London. He faintly smiles at what he has achieved.

NED

You've done it lad, done it. Now what's next? Whatever's next, one thing be for sure, the days of daft old Ned are over.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT./INT. THE CRYSTAL PALACE. DAY.

The Crystal Palace is being built and the whole area in Hyde Park is the scene of feverish activity as the glass and cast iron structure is being constructed.

There are men replanting trees with the aid of cranes both inside and outside the structure.

There are workers on the roof laying panels of glass.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Once in the great city he found
there was no shortage of work for a
skilled mechanic like himself.

Ned works with other men on the building of a steam hammer and other mechanical devices.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. NED'S ROOMS. NIGHT.

Ned puts up shelving for his books.

He is also involved in doing various tasks including doing his own cooking, cleaning and tidying his rooms, darning his socks.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Ned found himself a quiet lodging
in Lambeth and after working hours
he was usually engaged in domestic
activity. Between his lodgings and
his work in Hyde Park, Ned in his
own measured way was happy enough.
For four years or so he plodded on
fully shaping himself by degrees to
a life-long bachelorhood. As he had
no family to speak of he held
little communication with his
former life.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT./INT. NED'S FRONT DOOR/ ROOMS. NIGHT.

Ned returns from work carrying a bag of tools and enters his house where a letter lies on the mat inside.

Ned picks it up and looks at it quizzically, he then climbs the flight of stairs to his rooms. He places the letter on a table and goes into the kitchen.

Ned prepares some tea, filling a kettle from a jug and pouring milk from another.

NED
(muttering to himself)
It can't be from her can it?

He continues his preparations.

INT. NED'S PARLOUR. NIGHT.

With tea in hand Ned walks over to some shelving containing books. On one of the shelves is a paper-knife which he uses to open the envelope, he then picks up the letter and his tea and settles down in his favourite armchair.

NED
(still muttering to himself)
It is as well. I thought I recognised the shaky writing. Car'line Kytes, my Car'line after all these years:
(reading out-loud)
"Dear Ned, I hope you get to read this, I've had such trouble getting your address. It's all probably too late now . . ."

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

Old Hardy sits at his desk reading Car'line's letter, sitting opposite him is Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY
(reading out loud)
"It's all probably too late now but I realise what a fool I was to turn down your offer of marriage. Mop went off pretty soon after you went and I haven't courted anyone since. What I'm trying to say is that if you'd still consider me I'd be pleased to be your wife...."

Old Hardy stops reading and calmly puts the letter back in the envelope and then places it on his desk.

In front of him is a cup of tea which he sips slowly whilst staring into space, deep in thought.

After some moments his face breaks into a smile and he looks over to Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Yes. I like that. I like that.

Young Hardy smiles and nods his head approvingly.

INT. NED'S PARLOUR. NIGHT.

Ned stops reading and calmly puts the letter back in the envelope and then places it on the table. He drinks his tea slowly whilst staring into space, deep in thought. After some moments his face breaks into a smile.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. THE CRYSTAL PALACE/ NED'S ROOMS. DAY/ NIGHT.

Ned pursues a variety of activities both at work and home.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
Now being Ned, he didn't reply the next day or the next after that, he gave the matter much thought. He reckoned that Car'line ought to beg his pardon. She had treated him badly, taken his love for granted but Ned still reckoned that she was a good woman at the core. If she would come to him, and say she was sorry, as was only fair; why, yes, he would marry her.

INT. NED'S PARLOUR. NIGHT.

Ned sits at his table, the letter from Car'line is at his side, he has just finished writing a reply. He reads out-loud part of what he has written.

NED
So taking all that into account, if you truly are sorry I'll be happy to have you as my wife.
(MORE)

NED (CONT'D)

When I first came down here I walked, but we now live in different times, the new railway from South Wessex is open, and they run special trains, called excursion-trains, on account of the Great Exhibition. We can if you want, marry soon after you arrive. We'll make a good day of it and I'll take you to the Exhibition.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT./ EXT. NED'S ROOMS/ LONDON STREET SCENES/ INSIDE OF HORSE-DRAWN OMNIBUS. DAY.

A cloudy and rainy June afternoon.

Ned getting ready for the meeting with Car'line, puts on his best suit.

Making his way out of his rooms he carries an umbrella. He walks with purpose and enthusiasm, head held high.

He boards a horse-drawn omnibus.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

It was on a June afternoon, although you'd never know it by the weather that Ned left work early, got himself washed, shaved and kitted out in his finest, to go and meet Car'line at Waterloo station. He was excited and knew Car'line would be too. She'd written back saying that she embraced his offer of marriage with all her heart and would make up for lost time by being a good wife always. She had also said that she'd be a little frightened by the journey as she had never as yet been on a railway-train; only ever seen one pass at a distance.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT./ INT. WATERLOO RAILWAY STATION. LATER THAT DAY.

Ned walks towards the station his umbrella rolled up in hand, although it is still raining slightly. He makes his way through the station and finds his way to the platform; he glances up at the clock and waits patiently.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

As Ned stood there on the platform in the drizzle he glowed inwardly, and seemed to have something to live for again. He thought of Car'line's last letter informing him that he would be able to identify her in the crowd as she would be wearing 'my new sprigged laycock cotton gown.' Ned didn't have an idea as to what she was on about, but it made him smile.

A few other people are also on the platform.

Young Hardy is also present watching Ned attentively.

The SOUND OF A TRAIN can be heard approaching.

There is an ELDERLY GENTLEMAN with a well trimmed grey beard standing next to Ned.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

(rather breathless)

I'm waiting for my son. On his way up from Casterbridge. They said that last week people came out at every station on the way just to see the excursion-train going through Wessex.

NED

Ey, it's the future it seems. I'm meeting my fiancée. We're to be married soon.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

A new departure in the history of travel ey? Oh married, yes, many congratulations. Here it comes.

The HISS OF STEAM and the SHRILL WHISTLE of the train is deafening as it makes its way into the station and stops. Porters unload luggage and limp and lurch with the weight of suitcases. Passengers emerge from the smoke and noise many of whom are in a poor condition from their long journey; blue-faced, stiff-necked and rain-beaten.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Trains were still a novelty on the Wessex line and everywhere else for that matter. A triumph of the new age; the age of logic and reason. However, exciting as it might have been, the seats for the humbler class of travellers were open-trucks.

Through the bustle and crush of passengers alighting and arriving Ned manages to spot Car'line. She is a slim pretty little figure dressed in the 'sprigged lilac', he waves at her. Car'line looking wet, bedraggled and frightened recognises Ned and waves back.

The Elderly Gentleman spots his son who is well dressed and dry. As he moves to greet him , he touches Ned's arm.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

All the very best for the wedding then.

Ned nods his appreciation and walks to meet Car'line, she is openly shivering.

CAR'LINE

Oh Ned, I'm so cold, so worried that 'ee weren't going to be here. So cold.

Ned clasps her in his arms and kisses her, Car'line has tears in her eyes.

NED

You know I'd never let 'ee down. You are wet my poor dear. I hope you'll not get a fever.

Ned pulls away slightly from Car'line and takes stock of the various packages and luggage that she has bought with her. Clinging desperately onto her is a little girl (CARRY) of about four. Like Car'line the child is soaked. Ned looks at the girl and then back to Car'line.

NED (CONT'D)

Who is this little one, somebody you know?

CAR'LINE

Yes, Ned. She's em, she's mine.

Ned separates himself from Car'line.

NED

Yours?

CAR'LINE

Yes. My own!

NED

Your own child?

CAR'LINE

Yes, yes Ned.

NED

Well, as God's in...

CAR'LINE

Ned, I didn't name it in my letter, because, you see, it would have been hard to explain! I thought that when we met I could tell you how she happened, so much better than in writing! I hope you'll excuse it this once, dear Ned, and not scold me, now that I've come so many miles!

NED

This means Mop Ollamoor, I reckon!

Car'line starts sobbing.

CAR'LINE

But he's been gone for years! And I never had a young man before! And I was so unlucky to be caught the first time, though some of the girls down there go on like anything!

Ned is silent, he looks at Car'line and Carry and shakes his head.

CAR'LINE (CONT'D)

You'll forgive me, dear Ned? I haven't taken'ee in after all, because, because you can pack us back again, if you want to; though tis hundreds o' miles, and so wet, and night a coming on, and I with no money!

Ned stares blankly ahead.

NED

What the devil can I do? What can I do?

Standing awkwardly and staring vacantly into open space Ned and Car'line present a pitiable picture.

Carry starts crying jolting Ned out of his silence. He kneels down and places his hand on Carry's damp and clammy hood.

NED (CONT'D)

What's the matter, my little maid?

CARRY

I not a little maid I'm Carry. I do want to go home! And my totties be cold, an' I shan't have no bread an' butter no more!

Ned's eyes are also moist with tears, he slowly shakes his head again.

NED

I don't know what to say to it all!

Both Car'line and Carry are now crying.

Ned, still knelt down addresses Carry.

NED (CONT'D)

You want some bread and butter, do 'ee?

CARRY

Yes.

CAR'LINE

(tugging on Carry's arm)
Please. Say yes please.

CARRY

Yes. Please.

Ned stands up shaking his head.

NED

Well, I dare say I can get 'ee a bit! Naturally, you must want some. And you too, for that matter, Car'line.

CAR'LINE

I do feel a little hungered. But I can keep it off.

NED

Folk shouldn't have to do that.

Ned scoops Carry up in his arms.

NED (CONT'D)

There come along! You must bide here tonight anyhow, I suppose. What can you do otherwise? I'll get 'ee some tea and victuals. And as for this job, I'm sure I don't know what to say. This is the way out.

Ned, with Carry in one arm and a suitcase and umbrella in the other, makes his way out of the station followed by Car'line.

Young Hardy watches the little party leave the station.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT./ INT. LONDON STREET SCENES. INSIDE OF HORSE DRAWN OMNIBUS. EARLY EVENING.

Although tired and distressed both Car'line and Carry are excited about being in London. They look out of the window of the bus whilst Ned points out various things on route.

The three get off the bus and walk through the streets, Carry still being held by Ned.

INT. NED'S PARLOUR. EARLY EVENING.

In Ned's parlour Car'line and Carry at first look awkward whilst Ned lights an already prepared fire. Getting his guests to sit down he supplies them with fresh clean towels. Car'line dries Carry in front of the fire.

Ned leaves the room.

Car'line looks around her, noticing how tidy and clean the place is. She is also impressed by the shelves and the books. She talks quietly to Carry.

CAR'LINE

He's got this place well sorted Carry. Books as well. Seeing to improve himself as our Tony kept saying.

Carry is sitting by the fire.

CARRY

Seeing to improve himself.

Ned shouts from the kitchen.

NED (O.S.)

I'll get you something to eat. I've got a ham in, that be okay?

CAR'LINE

Yes for me. Can Carry have some bread and butter please?

Carry nods her head in agreement.

CAR'LINE (CONT'D)

Do you want a hand Ned? I'm not too tired to help.

NED (O.S.)

No, no I'll be with you in a minute.

Carry gets up and walks over to Car'line with her arms open wide.

CARRY

Can we sing Twinkle Twinkle, sing Twinkle?

CAR'LINE

No it's not even dark yet.

CARRY

Twinkle Twinkle!

CAR'LINE

No, I said.

CARRY

(looking distressed)
I very tired. Please!

CAR'LINE

Very well madam. But just once and that's it.

Car'line somewhat reluctantly picks the child up and turns to the window. They quietly sing the nursery rhyme whilst Car'line gently rocks Carry.

CAR'LINE AND CARRY

Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are?

(MORE)

CAR'LINE AND CARRY (CONT'D)

Up above the world so high, like a
diamond in the sky.

Ned coming out of the kitchen with a plate of bread and butter stops in his tracks as he takes in the scene before him, again he is moist in the eyes.

CAR'LINE AND CARRY (CONT'D)

When the blazing sun is gone, when
he nothing shines upon, Then you
show your little light.

Neither Car'line or Carry are aware of Ned's presence, eventually Car'line turns round notices him and stops singing.

CARRY

Twinkle, twinkle all the night.

NED

(almost in a whisper)
That's lovely. Really lovely. You
two must be very tired. Been a long
long day for you.

He gives the plate to Carry and kisses her on her now blooming cheek. He looks wistfully at Car'line and kisses her too. His attention remains on her.

NED (CONT'D)

Well. I don't see how I can send
'ee back all them miles, now you've
come all the way o'purpose to join
me.

Car'line looks up to him appreciatively and smiles.

NED (CONT'D)

But you must always be honest with
me Car'line, I've done well here in
London, daft old Ned has gone, an
he won't be messed about anymore.

Ned extends a hand to Carry's shoulder.

NED (CONT'D)

Well, do you feel better now, my
little woman?

Carry nods whilst still eating. Car'line is tearful.

CAR'LINE

I will always be honest with you
Ned. I will, as I put in my letter,
try to be a good wife always, and
make up for the time we've lost.

EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

By the door of the church Ned stands hand in hand with
Car'line the couple talking to a young parson who has just
conducted the ceremony.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Because the banns had to be read
out three times, the wedding, a
quiet affair, given the
circumstances, didn't happen for a
few weeks.

A small group are gathered to the side of them. The group
includes Julia, who has her arms draped around Carry,
William, Julia's husband and a few of Ned's workmates and
friends.

Young Hardy is also there enjoying the event.

A very happy looking Car'line is wearing a big picture hat
with a posy of wild flowers attached to the side.

Carry wears a white dress and also has a posy of wild flowers
woven in her hair.

INT. NED'S BEDROOM. EVENING.

Carry is sat up in her cot crying and Car'line shouts from
the parlour.

CAR'LINE (O.S.)

For goodness sake girl no is no.

Ned enters the bedroom also from the parlour.

NED

What is ever the matter with my
little maid?

CARRY

(between sobs)
I want Twinkle Twinkle.

Ned sits on a chair beside the cot. Carry, her head lowered is looking at her hands.

CAR'LINE (O.S.)

She wants singing to, I've said no.

NED

Your mother's tired Carry. And I'm not good at singing. Tell 'ee what though, do you know where you're going tomorrow?

CARRY

(still with head lowered)

I no going anywhere because I've been bad.

NED

(softly reassuringly)

Oh yes you are Carry. Tomorrow your Ned is taking 'ee to the biggest show in the world. In a place so big it's got fully grown trees and big statues inside it. A place so important that the Queen of England has already visited twice.

Carry looks up, stops snivelling and takes interest.

CARRY

The Queen of England?

NED

Yes.

CARRY

With her crown?

NED

Yes Queen Victoria with her crown. It was her husband Prince Albert who first started the exhibition, to show how great Britain is.

CARRY

Has he got a crown?

Ned laughs and shakes his head.

NED

That I don't know Carry.

Car'line enters the room and looks down crossly at Carry.

CAR'LINE

Are you still belly-aching? You'll drive poor Ned to the asylum.

NED

No. No, she's all right. I was just telling her about tomorrow.

Car'line sits on the edge of the bed.

NED (CONT'D)

Now you like your Twinkle Twinkle, where you're going tomorrow they have telescopes to look through and the stars are so close you feel you can touch them.

CAR'LINE

But you're only going if you good!

NED

(slightly annoyed)

Oh shush Car'line she's bein good, aren't you my love.

CAR'LINE

Oh pardon me! I can see it already, it's going to be all about you two isn't it?

Car'line gets up and leaves the room banging the door.

NED

(whispering)

Never mind your mother Carry, she's tired. So yes, tomorrow you'll see telescopes, so 'ee can touch the stars. There's a fair there and a circus with fire-eaters and a world famous tightrope-walker called Blondin.

CARRY

(sleepily)

What's tightrope?

NED

Well you know what a piece of rope is?

CARRY

Like my skipping-rope?

NED

Like your skipping-rope, but rope stretched high up in the sky so that a man can walk right across it.

CARRY

Walk on the rope, up in sky, without falling?

NED

Yes my love. So all that tomorrow. And the world's biggest diamond called the Koh-i-Noor from the mysterious East. Anyway you're tired, and tomorrow's another day.

CARRY

Biggest diamond?

Ned gives Carry a final 'tuck-in' and kisses her on the cheek and then whispers to her.

NED

Yes. Tomorrow you'll see what your Ned has been doing all these years whilst you've been growing up. You'll see crowds and crowds of people, but we'll be so important, so so important, we won't have to even queue.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GT. EXHIBITION. BRIGHT AND SUNNY DAY.

Ned, Car'line and Carry are all dressed in their best clothes and clearly excited as Ned points out various features to them.

NED (V.O.)

(whispering)

Crowds and crowds of people, but we'll be so important we won't have to even queue.

Lots of people are milling around and a long queue formed with two policemen on foot and one mounted policeman, complete with cutlass, over-looking things.

There are gentlemen in top hats, ladies in their finest, half a dozen Chelsea Pensioners, men with sandwich boards, jaunty sailors dancing, clowns and fire-eaters performing.

FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING.

They pass through the crowds waiting to go into the exhibition and encounter a young musician with his violin busking. The three listen and watch. Ned takes a coin from his pocket, bends down to talk to Carry, gives her the coin and tells her to put it in the busker's violin case, lying at his feet. Carry does this and the busker nods his thanks.

Young Hardy looks on enjoying the music and the excitement.

The three walk towards the entrance. Ned nods at one of the policemen and takes out a piece of paper from his jacket which he then shows. The policeman extends his arm making a passage way through the people who are queuing. Car'line's face shows her amazement at this.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

This was the proudest moment of Ned's life as he led his little family into the wonders of the exhibition. The celebration of modern industrial technology, the triumph of the age of logic and reason in which Ned had played his part.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. EXHIBITION HALL. DAY.

Bright sunlight comes through the elaborate glass structure of the roof.

Both Car'line and Carry are awestruck as they enter into the Grand Avenue, with its massive glass and cast iron construction. The avenue is lined with working exhibits and dotted with trees and statues.

The three stop to look at various exhibits. The entire process of cotton production from spinning to finished cloth. A reaping machine from America, microscopes, air pumps and barometers.

At an exhibition stall run by French people showing chemically developed photographs, Carry patiently poses for a portrait whilst other people watch. The three of them wait for it to be developed and are pleased with the result. The print is put into a large brown envelope which Ned holds.

The tour continues as Ned busies himself with explaining and demonstrating some of the exhibits to Carry as they make their way through the hall. The two show particular interest in the telescopes.

Car'line, in a world of her own, walks ahead, looking skywards through the glass structure. She drifts into one of the courts devoted to furniture.

Still absorbed by the telescopes Ned looks up towards Car'line.

NED

Blimey, that'll cost us Carry, your mother is off to look at all the furniture. I think we'd better catch her up before she spends all our money, don't you?

Carry nods in agreement and takes Ned's hand, the two walk, Carry breaking into a skip, in pursuit of Car'line.

NED (CONT'D)

(talking to himself)

Could be worse I suppose she could be looking at the diamond.

Car'line is still a way ahead of Ned and Carry but is within sight. She stops to look at bedroom furniture, wardrobes and dressing tables.

Ned and Carry stop to look at a collection of musical boxes in the same room. Carry points to one highly decorated box in particular.

CARRY

That's pretty.

The two walk over to a table where the music box sits. Ned lifts up the lid of the wooden box to reveal two model ballroom dancers, with a mirror behind them.

NED

(laughing)

Now isn't that just like a woman. I bring you here, at great expense, with all the best that science can offer and you take your fancy to a music box. You're very right though my little maid it is very pretty. Let's see if it plays a pretty tune.

CARRY

It is pretty and I say it will be a pretty tune.

Ned winds up the clockwork mechanism at the side of the box, and the two dancers rotate.

THE MUSIC BOX PLAYS

Both Ned and Carry watch the dancers and the dancers repeated image in the mirror and listen to the tune.

CARRY (CONT'D)

Very pretty.

Car'line is still wandering around the furniture, she stops in front of a dressing table that has a posy of wild flowers in a small vase on it. She looks at her reflection in the mirror.

The MUSIC BOX PLAYS faintly in the distance.

The MUSIC BOX PLAYS as Ned and Carry continue to look at the pair of dancers and their repeated image in the mirror.

Car'line is aware of the MUSIC BOX PLAYING in the distance.

Suddenly she hears FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING.

Car'line moves closer to the mirror and is now studying her reflection. With alarm she sees in the mirror a dark figure standing behind her. She turns around quickly only to find that there is no-one there.

CAR'LINE ENTERS A STATE OF DELIRIUM. FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING.

She swivels round towards the mirror and the dark figure is there. Turning behind her again no-one, nothing. On returning towards the mirror she realises that she is confronting the image of Mop Ollamoor. He is dressed in a dark shirt and waistcoat with a red silk bandana tied round his neck. He is smiling and laughing.

MOP

You cannot leave off, dear, whether
you would or no!

Car'line screams and knocks the vase with the posy over, in SLOW MOTION it falls to the ground, bounces but doesn't break.

Car'line alternates between seeing the image of Mop in the mirror and turning round to find that he isn't there. In a frenzied state she collapses to the floor. She hears his voice again.

MOP (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You cannot leave off, dear, whether
you would or no!

REALITY. FIDDLE MUSIC FADES AND STOPS.

INT. EXHIBITION HALL. DAY.

Alarmed Ned and Carry leave the music box and race over to Car'line.

NED

What is it? What's matter! What on Earth!

CARRY

Mother! Mother!

Ned and Carry reach the distraught figure of Car'line. Ned kneels down and places an arm round her.

NED

What on earth is the matter my love? What is it, what happened, what's wrong?

CAR'LINE

(sobbing)

It's him Ned. It's him. Mop is back.

NED

Mop? Mop Ollamoor, him that, where?

CAR'LINE

He were standing behind me Ned. Right behind me.

Carry is crying and holding on to Car'line.

NED

(talking to Carry)

You stay with your mother little Carry. Look after this.

Ned hands Carry the envelope containing the photograph, he stands up looking angry.

NED (CONT'D)

I'll just have a little look around. He had to put a fever on my day. I'll swing for that varmint I tell 'ee. Why's he back now bothering us.

CAR'LINE
 (faintly)
 You don't understand Ned, you don't
 understand, he was there, but he ..

Two attendants make there way over to Car'line and Carry who are both in a distressed state.

CAR'LINE (CONT'D)
 but he wasn't.

Young Hardy looks on concerned and shakes his head.

YOUNG HARDY
 I feel so useless, I just want to
 help.

Ned races around the hall, weaving between various exhibition stands, bumping into people.

NED
 As God is my judge. I'll swing for
 him! Swing for him I will!

INT. NED'S BEDROOM. EARLY EVENING.

Car'line lies in bed. To the side of the bed is a small table with a posy of wild flowers in a jar sat on it.

Ned sits on the edge of the bed holding Car'line's hand, he speaks to Car'line softly but emphatically.

NED
 Swing for him I will. Was it him
 Car'line? Was it him? And is he now
 back to blight our lives?

Car'line looks up at Ned still with tears in her eyes.

NED (CONT'D)
 I got to ask you something
 Car'line, something not easy. I
 told you on that first night that I
 wouldn't be messed about.

Car'line nods.

NED (CONT'D)
 Did you know that Mop was up here?
 Did you know he was up here when
 you said you'd join me?

Car'line shakes her head.

CAR'LINE

No! No Ned, no. Nothing was further from my mind. You got to believe me on that Ned, you have to, I been so happy.

Car'line starts crying again, Ned leans forward and kisses her on the cheek.

CAR'LINE (CONT'D)

(between sobs)

I don't want this to end. You do believe me don't you Ned?

NED

Yes. Yes I believe you. It's just, just him back again. You get some rest my dear.

CAR'LINE

I don't think he's back. I don't know, maybe it be me. I just don't know. Do you think I'm going mad?

Ned again leans forward and kisses Car'line. And then shakes his head.

NED

No I don't think your going mad Car'line, I really don't.

CAR'LINE

Carry, is Carry all right?

NED

(smiling)

No fears about that one. The little maid is over there asleep, but only after verse after verse of Twinkle Twinkle in the parlour.

Car'line smiles.

CAR'LINE

You be a saint Ned Hipcroft you really are. I said it'd be all about you two didn't I?

NED

You did I own it.

Again the couple kiss.

NED (CONT'D)
You get some rest now.

Ned leaves the room closing the door behind him.

INT. NED'S PARLOUR. EARLY EVENING.

Ned enters the room.

NED
If I'm a saint, Mop Ollamoor is the
devil himself.

Although it is still light, Ned makes his way over to the window to close the curtains. On glancing down to street level he is surprised to see a black and white cat looking up towards him.

Ned shakes his head.

NED (CONT'D)
The devil himself.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. EXHIBITION HALL. DAY.

The hall is the scene of much activity with various workmen including Ned dismantling exhibition material and putting machinery in crates.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. NED'S ROOMS. DAY/ NIGHT.

Car'line is occupied with a variety of domestic duties including cooking, washing clothes, sewing, often aided by Carry.

All three sitting at the table together eating.

Ned reading to Carry at bedtime.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
It's fair to say that this was a
happy time for the Hipcroft family.
(MORE)

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Ned finding Car'line to be a good
companion and mother. One autumn
Ned came home with some news and a
very interesting proposal to put to
her.

INT. NED'S PARLOUR. NIGHT.

Car'line is sitting at the table, empty plates suggest that
they have finished their evening meal. Ned comes in from the
bedroom and joins Car'line in sitting at the table.

CAR'LINE
She got off then?

NED
Oh she's gone straight off, the
little maid takes after her mother
in that. Anyway as I was saying
earlier on it looks as if the works
coming to an end and there isn't
that much about at the present, so
I had an idea. Depends how 'ee feel
about it.

CAR'LINE
Go on.

NED
Well. Well it's this. I wondered
whether the three of us might want
to go back home?

CAR'LINE
What Stickleford?

NED
That way yes. We're all country
born and bred. Better for all of us
to leave these lodgings where we're
all on top of each other.

CAR'LINE
(excitedly)
Oh yes Ned yes! I'm sure our Julia
could find us a cottage to rent,
she thinks a bit different of me
these days and she'll love having
Carry around. Love it she will!

Looking pleased Ned gets up from the table and walks into the
kitchen. The clinking sound of bottles is heard.

NED (O.S.)

Great! That's great! We'll have a drop of perry to celebrate, a pal who I work with brought some up.

CAR'LINE

Oh it'll be good Ned. Going back home, I left under a cloud but I'll go back a married woman having London ways about me. You wait till I tell Carry she'll be so excited.

EXT. WATERLOO RAILWAY STATION. DAY.

Ned, Car'line and Carry are waiting for the train on a platform. Carry is holding her skipping-rope with red wooden handles, clearly happy and excited, jumping and dancing about.

There is a HISS OF STEAM AND A SHRILL WHISTLE as the train makes its way into the station. When the train eventually stops and passengers disembark the three get on board.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT. DAY.

All three are chatting, laughing and looking out of the window at the passing countryside. The bleak London landscape gradually fading and making way for the green open space of Wessex.

Carry is really excited showing her mother and Ned things through the window.

Ned explains his plan of action when the three arrive at their destination.

NED

Now the train don't stop at Stickleford, so we got to get off at Casterbridge. And as we need to pay the rent on our new cottage

Looking at Carry in particular.

NED (CONT'D)

Ned needs to find a job. So he'll go one way and call in at a couple of workshops to see if there's any work.

(MORE)

NED (CONT'D)

And you two another way towards our new cottage and we'll all meet up later on.

Carry again is very excited.

CARRY

New cottage? Is it pretty? Is it?

Car'line and Ned both smile.

NED

Your aunty Julia says it's very pretty.

Both Car'line and Carry doze, Ned continues to look out of the window at the passing landscape.

As the train makes it way into Casterbridge Ned touches Car'line's arm and awakes her, she in turn wakes Carry.

INT. CASTERBRIDGE RAILWAY STATION. DAY.

The train comes into the station. The three alight, Ned picking up the luggage and Carry clutching her skipping-rope.

NED

I'll leave this one here at the station, but I can manage to carry this.

Car'line straightens Carry's coat and adjusts her own hat. Ned bends down to kiss Carry on the cheek and also kisses Car'line.

NED (CONT'D)

And we'll meet up at the roadside inn by Heedless William's Pool. The Quiet Woman I think it's called.

CAR'LINE

That pool. Weren't there something about that pool? Something about ghosts and that?

Carry looks alarmed at the mention of ghosts.

CARRY

Ghosts?

CAR'LINE

I remember now. I remember, they used to say that it was haunted.

(MORE)

CAR'LINE (CONT'D)

A whole coach and its passengers
drowned there when it went into the
water one night.

Ned responds to this angrily.

NED

Tis only nonsense! Don't be telling
her that Car'line, that's bad!
You'll scare the poor child out of
her wits.

CAR'LINE

Oh pardon me!

NED

Well, honestly.

Ned puts his hands on Carry's shoulders.

NED (CONT'D)

It is also said Carry, that the
pool was dug out with fairy
shovels, so you might well see some
fairies there.

CARRY

Will we, will we see some fairies?
Will we mother?

Car'line obviously in a mood has no time for this and she
grabs Carry's arm.

CAR'LINE

Come on you. We got three miles to
walk and I want to do it before
it's dark.

CARRY

I's tired. I want to go with Ned.

CAR'LINE

Well you just can't. And we're all
tired! Now come on.

Ned shakes his head and stares at Car'line disapprovingly, he
then bends down towards Carry.

NED

You give your Ned a kiss then. And
I'll catch 'ee up later.

Carry gives Ned a kiss on his cheek. Ned walks off with the luggage one way and Car'line and Carry make their way out of the railway station.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. MARKET PLACE/ COUNTRY LANES. EVENING.

Car'line and Carry walk through the market place and out towards open countryside.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

It was getting dark and the woman and child were tired and cold from the journey but it was dry underfoot and they soon made their way past the pool and neither ghost nor fairy were anywhere to be seen.

As the two walk on and eventually pass the pool Carry clenches her mother's hand and closes her eyes tightly. She is still holding the skipping-rope in her free hand.

EXT. OUTSIDE A WORKSHOP. EVENING.

Ned and a mechanic in overalls talk outside a large wooden shed. The two obviously know each other very well, they are laughing and look happy.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Whilst Car'line and Carry were walking and nearing the end of their journey, Ned had managed to seek out an old workmate who seemed pretty sure that a mechanic with Ned's experience shouldn't find it too hard to get work.

EXT. COUNTRY LANES. EGDON HEATH. EVENING.

The light of an inn can be seen in the distance.

Car'line and Carry can see customers of the inn standing outside and can hear FIDDLE MUSIC playing which gets louder as they approach.

CARRY

I tired. I want my Ned and I want to go home.

Car'line stops walking and clutches Carry's arm tightly and angrily shakes the child.

CAR'LINE

I've had. I've had just about enough of you young lady. Don't 'ee think I'm not wearied. We're all wearied!

Carry starts crying. Car'line bends down and points towards the inn. She now speaks softly.

CAR'LINE (CONT'D)

We're all tired but we've only got to get there and we can rest.

CARRY

An my Ned? An my Ned?

CAR'LINE

And your Ned. Your Ned will be here soon. Come on now dry those eyes.

The two walk hand in hand slowly towards the entrance of the inn.

There are eight to ten farmers and labourers standing outside the door drinking. Music is coming from inside. One of the more elderly farmers (Michael), a large kindly man with rosy cheeks smiles at Car'line and takes off his hat as she approaches.

FIDDLE MUSIC STOPS.

MICHAEL

Evening ma'am.

Car'line looks around her and into the doorway of the inn where even the passageway seems full.

CAR'LINE

Evening. Never remember this place so busy.

MICHAEL

No your right they're never usually as busy as this. There's been a fat stock auction that accounts for it. And there seems to be a bit of a dance on too. You'll be made very welcome inside I'm sure.

Michael moves closer to Car'line and peers into her face and smiles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Scuse my old eyes, but surely 'tis
little Car'line Kytes, that was
down at Stickleford I knew your
father, bless him, very well.

CAR'LINE

It's Car'line Hipcroft now and
we've just got off train from
London.

Michael bends down and touches Carry's cheek which is still
damp with tears.

MICHAEL

And is this your little girl? You
must be both tired and cold. Come
on in and I'll buy you both a
drink.

CAR'LINE

No you don't have to put yourself
out, I'm meeting my husband later,
we'll be ...

Michael takes Car'line's arm and leads her into the inn,
Carry has her hand in her mothers and is at the end of the
chain with her skipping-rope trailing behind her.

MICHAEL

No I won't hear of it. Not every
day likes of us get to mix with
London folk.

As they enter, people come out, including a musician carrying
his fiddle. There is pleasant chaos in the doorway not helped
by Carry's skipping-rope which Car'line tells Carry to pick
up. Because of the chaos Car'line doesn't notice who the
musician is.

INT. PASSAGEWAY/ LARGE ROOM LIT BY NUMEROUS CANDLES. THE
QUIET WOMAN INN. NIGHT.

There is no door between the passageway and the large room.
All the seats in the room have been pushed to the side of the
wall so that people can dance.

Michael finds Car'line and Carry seats and then leaves them
whilst he goes to get drinks.

MICHAEL

Won't be a minute.

People drift in and out of the room and Car'line makes herself and Carry comfortable. A man with a red waistcoat (JOE SCAMEL) nods and smiles at Car'line and she duly returns the smile.

Michael returns with drinks and hands a tumbler to Car'line and one to Carry. Car'line's face grimaces a little as she tastes the strong brew.

People are flowing back into the room and Car'line engages in chatter with Michael whilst drinking her beverage.

Glancing up towards the area of the small stage Car'line sees the back of a musician tuning up his fiddle and rosining his bow. He has long flowing black hair and when he turns round she is shocked to see that it's Mop Ollamoor.

Car'line immediately pulls down the veil attached to her hat. She bites her lip and her hand trembles as it clutches her glass.

Young Hardy watches on from the corner of the room.

FIDDLE MUSIC STARTS.

Mop begins to play and a group including Joe go on to the dance floor forming themselves into two lines. Car'line gulps down her drink.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

How it all came back to her! The notes of that old violin which thrilled the London wife, these having all the witchery that she had so well known of yore.

After a time Joe's dancing partner drops away and he then stretches out his hand towards Car'line urging her to join him. At first she shakes her head but Joe is persistent. She eventually gets to her feet grasps Carry by the hand and begins to dance.

Car'line whirls about the dance-floor with the rest. Carry, tired and soon bored with dancing, takes herself off and sits down by Michael who she talks to. After a few moments Michael then leaves the room and returns with a further tray of drinks for everyone.

FIDDLE MUSIC STOPS.

The dance finally ends and Car'line makes her way over to Carry and Michael. She is in a distressed state, hand shaking and sweat running down her face, visible under her veil.

She takes the drink from the table and gulps the contents down in one.

Michael notices this and out of the view of Car'line, looks quizzically at her, silently and slowly shaking his head.

As some dancers leave the room Car'line wipes her lips and starts making preparation to go, fastening Carry's coat and straightening her veil.

MICHAEL

You two making a move? I thought you were meeting husband here.

CAR'LINE

I am, I don't know, I just.

CARRY

Come on mother.

Mop stands motionless on the stage area. He slowly lifts his fiddle to his neck and shoulder bringing the bow to rest on the strings. After a few seconds when his movements appear frozen he suddenly launches into another reel 'My Fancy Lad'.

FIDDLE MUSIC STARTS.

On hearing the start of this tune three or four dancers immediately approach Car'line begging her to join them, at first she declines shaking her head. Carry is eager to get away tugging at her mother's coat in an attempt to get her towards the door.

CARRY (CONT'D)

Mother please, please.

Car'line shakes her head in total bewilderment and then signals to Carry to return to her seat. Carry is upset and moodily bangs the wooden handle of her skipping rope on the floor. Michael tries to engage with her.

Car'line despairingly steps into the middle of the room with the other four.

From time to time whilst dancing Car'line steals a glance at Mop who has his eyes closed.

The dance starts at a quite moderate pace but gradually the tempo quickens. The dance begins with the five reelers in the form of a cross; the reel being performed by each line of three alternatively, the person who successively comes to the middle place dancing in both directions.

Car'line soon finds herself in the middle, the position which requires most energy. She seems stuck there, the very centre of the whole performance, and to all in the room, the centre of attention with people shaking their heads at the wildness of her dancing.

She continues to wend her way through the figure of eight that is formed by her course. After a time the other woman (GRACE) of the five leaves the floor exhausted, she sinks into the nearest chair panting. She is soon joined by Joe and the two move out of the room to get a drink. Car'line and two other men continue dancing.

Without a break the tune changes into 'The Fairy Dance'.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

How did he know? How was he able to
introduce into his notes the wild
agonising sweetness of a living
voice to one too highly wrought?

Car'line's face under the veil is bathed in sweat. She bites her lips again in a state of blissful torture. Her wild movements shows no concern for the two men supposedly dancing with her.

Through Car'line's eyes the rooms SPINS and she sees the candles that light the near empty room mingled with the faces of Michael, Carry and the other two remaining dancers, all of whom show some concern at her behaviour. Their collective glare trying to pin her down.

Car'line is aware of the dust from the stone floor kicked up by her feet as her movements become more manic.

After a time the last two men drop away from the dance looking exhausted. As they leave the room they speak to Michael who gets up from his seat to join them. He casts worrying looks towards Car'line and tries to persuade Carry to leave the room with them, she refuses and they exit.

Car'line's lower lip is now bleeding and she is muttering to herself.

INT. PASSAGEWAY/ BACK-ROOM BAR. THE QUIET WOMAN INN. NIGHT.

FIDDLE MUSIC FADES SLIGHTLY.

The three make their way through the passageway and into the crowded back-room where they order some drinks from the bar and chat together.

INT. LARGE ROOM LIT BY NUMEROUS CANDLES. THE QUIET WOMAN INN.
NIGHT.

FIDDLE MUSIC LOUDER AGAIN.

The only ones left in the room are Mop, who is still playing,
Car'line and Carry.

Young Hardy also sits in the corner of the room looking
fearful.

CAR'LINE ENTERS A STATE OF DELIRIUM.

Car'line now seems totally possessed by the music. With tears
still streaming down her face and blood coming from her lip
she flings up the veil to get some air. At the same moment
Mop opens an eye and fixes it upon Car'line and smiles.

Above the sound of the fiddle Mop speaks.

MOP

You cannot leave off, dear, whether
you would or no!

FLASHBACK FROM THE EARLIER BRIDGE SCENE.

Flowers in slow motion fall down from Car'line's hands into
the water.

END OF FLASHBACK.

FLASHBACK TO THE NIGHT OF THE FAIR.

The Young Woman's face peering cruelly upon Car'line.

YOUNG WOMAN

(whispering in a sinister
manner)

It seems to be you that he's
interested in!

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. LARGE ROOM LIT BY NUMEROUS CANDLES. THE QUIET WOMAN INN.
NIGHT.

Mop's voice is heard again his leering face mouthing his
words.

MOP

You cannot leave off, dear, whether
you would or no!

Carry is crying and goes over to Car'line and takes her hand.

CARRY

Stop, mother, stop, please. Let's
go home!

Car'line staggers to the floor and screams, Mop's fiddle shrieks to a halt. He leaps down from the small stage and goes over to Carry who is bent over her mother.

Young Hardy stands up, his look shows that he is obviously distressed by events.

YOUNG HARDY

I just want to help.

INT. BACK-ROOM BAR. THE QUIET WOMAN INN. NIGHT.

FIDDLE MUSIC from the large room comes to an abrupt end and a SHRILL SCREAM cuts through the relaxed and jovial atmosphere. Commotion ensues.

MICHAEL

What the hell is that!

JOE

It'll be that young woman, used to
live round here, Car'line Kytes I
think. Sounds like she's taken a
turn.

MICHAEL

Car'line Hipcroft now I hear. Yes,
she were dancing as if she
possessed.

JOE

Hipcroft. Hipcroft. Was it Ned
Hipcroft?

The two men, along with others including Grace hurriedly make their way through the passageway and into the large room.

INT. LARGE ROOM LIT BY NUMEROUS CANDLES. THE QUIET WOMAN INN. NIGHT.

Car'line lies on the floor her limbs are in spasm and her body writhes. Joe takes charge of things.

JOE

Someone give me a hand to get her
over there by the windows, she's
gasping for air.

Another customer (SETH) a very thin man dressed in overalls,
comes over to help Joe carry Car'line. They place her with
her back leaning against a wall near to an open window.

JOE (CONT'D)

Get those bellows from the hearth
if you will Seth. She's raging up.

SETH

Got blood on her face as well by
look of it.

Joe and Seth attend to Car'line and attempt to revive her by
blowing her face with the bellows. Grace kneels down at the
side of Car'line and takes her hand.

GRACE

Come on now my dear. You're with
friends.

Seth is rigorously using the bellows. Grace looks round at
him and shakes her head.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I don't think that'll do much good
Seth, best leave her to me ey?

Seth stops and takes the bellows back to the hearth. Grace
gestures that the men should leave.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Shall we get the lads out, you be
happier with just little old Grace
ey?

Michael looks on as he makes his way out of the inn followed
by Seth.

Grace continues nursing Car'line opening the top buttons of
her blouse and wiping the blood from her lip with a clean
handkerchief.

MICHAEL

(muttering to himself)
This is a bad and evil do. There's
bad and evil in the air, I can feel
it, evil.

Clearly upset by events Young Hardy also makes his way outside.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUIET WOMAN INN. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

There are a few customers standing outside the front of the inn; they are all busily discussing the events of the evening and the commotion created by Car'line.

MICHAEL

(still muttering)

Evil. I could see it in her dancing
and hear it in the strings of his
fiddle.

SETH

Want there something between them
two at some stage?

MICHAEL

What Car'line and the fiddle
player?

The group are joined by an elderly man (OLD TONY) furiously puffing on a pipe and obviously enjoying the misery of others, he answers Seth's question.

OLD TONY

(leering)

Something between them? Something
between them? A bit more than that
from what I heard!

Sniggers and innuendo break out amongst the group, from which Michael tries to separate himself.

EXT. LANE LEADING TO THE QUIET WOMAN INN. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

Ned makes his way towards the inn carrying his bag, looking weary but happy.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUIET WOMAN INN. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

MICHAEL

I tell you evil has gone on tonight
pure evil.

Looking at Old Tony in particular.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Not much to laugh at! What got into that young Car'line woman only the devil knows.

Old Tony sniggers.

OLD TONY

An 'ee were playing fiddle!

Joe joins the group and hears Michael and Old Tony's remarks.

JOE

She's in a state that's for sure. Old Grace will sort her out.

MICHAEL

Not nice to see, not nice.

JOE

No, certainly isn't. Car'line Hipcroft now then, did I hear you say inside?

MICHAEL

That's right, just returned from London.

Ned, who is approaching, looks at the group of men and Joe in particular in his red waistcoat.

NED

Evenin all. It's Joe innit? Joe Scamel, I'd know you anywhere with that on.

JOE

(smiling)

It do give me a way a bit I own up to it. Ned Hipcroft, been a few years.

The two shake hands.

NED

You're right with that Joe, a few years indeed. Did someone mention my misses Car'line? Did someone say her name? I'm meeting her in here.

Everyone goes quiet. From within the inn a scream is heard.

NED (CONT'D)

What the hell was that?

Everyone in the group lowers their heads feeling uncomfortable, only Michael steps forward to say something.

MICHAEL

Ned isn't it? Ned, that's your Car'line in there, she's taken some sort of turn. But someone's with her.

Ned places his bag down and races into the inn he is followed by Michael and Joe.

INT. PASSAGEWAY/ LARGE ROOM LIT BY NUMEROUS CANDLES. THE QUIET WOMAN INN. NIGHT.

Car'line is still weeping violently propped up against a wall and comforted by Grace, who looks up as Ned and the others enter the room.

GRACE

I've done my best but she takes some calming.

MICHAEL

Grace, this is Ned, the lady's husband.

Ned kneels down by the side of Car'line and puts his arms round her. Grace gets up and moves away.

NED

Car'line it's me Ned, whatever's happened, what's happening my love?

Car'line continues to weep.

NED (CONT'D)

Ey, whatever's happened! Best we get 'ee home I think sooner the better.

Ned turns to the group standing by the door looking on.

NED (CONT'D)

Can someone get us a cart to take us onward to Stickleford?

MICHAEL

I can try and ask for you Ned. Just give me a few minutes.

Michael goes out of the room.

NED

And can anyone please tell me
what's been going on?

With Michael exiting the room the task falls on Joe.

JOE

We always have a bit of a jig after
market and this fiddler turned up
and said he'd play for the love of
it. Used to live here for a time.
Bit of a dandy if you like,
traveller, name of Ollamoor.

Ned stands up, his face taut with anger.

NED

Ollamoor, Mop Ollamoor? I might 'av
guessed. Where is he?

Ned anxiously looks round the room.

NED (CONT'D)

Where is the varmint and where's my
little girl?

Joe shakes his head and shrugs his shoulders.

Ned notices Carry's skipping rope lying on the floor. He goes
over to the hearth and takes a poker he is mad with rage.
Grace goes over to Car'line to comfort her again.

NED (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Blast him! What has he done with
her? I'll beat his skull in for'n,
if I swing for it tomorrow!

Ned races out of the room into the passageway and out of the
inn, others follow.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUIET WOMAN INN/ EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

On the other side of the road there is a mass of dark heath
land. Ned runs frantically towards it waving the poker in the
air. He is followed by others and watched from the doorway of
the inn by Young Hardy.

NED

(shouting)

Carry! Carry! Where are you my
little maid?

Ned's desperate face is streaming with tears.

NED (CONT'D)
Carry! What's he done with you?

Ned continues shouting for Carry.

NED (CONT'D)
Carry! Carry!

Ned's face is contorted with anxiety and fear. He runs blindly still shouting Carry's name. Lights can be seen all over the heath from the lanterns of others who have joined the search.

Ned's voice gradually fades.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
Poor Ned, he hadn't a chance. Egdon Heath was a place of Dantesque gloom at this hour, which would have afforded secure hiding for a battery of artillery, much less a man and a child.

INT. PASSAGEWAY/ LARGE ROOM LIT BY NUMEROUS CANDLES. THE QUIET WOMAN INN. NIGHT.

Ned and the other men drift gloomily into the room. Car'line is quieter now sitting up, her back resting against the wall. She is still being tended to by Grace.

The room seems unnaturally quiet only the steady sob of Car'line disturbing the silence.

Ned sits down and clasps his forehead with his hands. Seth sits at a table with Old Tony and whispers to him.

SETH
Well what a fool the man is, and hev been all these years, if he thinks the child his, as he do seem to.

Old Tony contentedly puffs on his pipe and smirks.

OLD TONY
And everyone else knowing otherwise!

Ned looks up and shouts.

NED

I heard that, you don't know truth
of it!

Startled by Ned's response Old Tony moves back a little in his chair.

NED (CONT'D)

No, I don't think tis mine! But she
is mine, all the same! Aven't I
nursed her? Fed her and teached
her? Aven't I played wi' her?

Ned bends forward with his hands across his face.

NED (CONT'D)

Oh, little Carry, gone with that
rogue, gone!

Seth gets up from his chair and walks over to Ned and places a hand on his shoulder. He speaks quietly in an effort to console.

SETH

You have'nt lost your mis'ess,
anyhow. She's throwed up the
spirits, and she is feeling better,
and she's more to 'ee than a child
that isn't yours.

Ned also speaks quietly he now has tears in his eyes again.

NED

She isn't. She's not so much to me,
especially now she's lost the
little maid! But Carry's
everything!

SETH

Well, very likely you'll find her
tomorrow.

NED

Ah, but shall I? The man has the
devil in him. Yet he can't hurt
her, surely he can't?

Ned stands up and rubs his eyes.

SETH

You hev to believe he won't.

Ned walks over to Car'line and puts his arms round her, he is still having to repress tears, his eyes still watering.

NED

Come, lets get you to Stickleford.
I'm ready. As ready as I'll ever
be. Is there a cart?

Michael is standing alongside Young Hardy in the passageway.

MICHAEL

Waiting just outside for you Ned.
Whenever you're ready. We've loaded
the case you had with you.

Ned steadies Car'line and they slowly move towards the
passageway. Grace kisses Car'line on the cheek and Michael
extends his hand giving Ned a comforting pat on the back.

GRACE

You take care my love.

MICHAEL

Take care both of you. I'm sure all
will be well.

Ned glances back at the room and again focus's his look on
the redundant skipping-rope lying on the stone floor.

NED

I don't know what we're gonna do. I
really don't.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUIET WOMAN INN. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

The couple make their way through the passageway and outside.
The driver gets down and helps Ned lift Car'line onto the
cart. She is holding Grace's handkerchief to her mouth which
is still bleeding.

The driver gestures through the reins for his horse to move
and the cart goes off. Ned holds Car'line in a tight
protective grasp, there are tears running down his face.

The cart moves slowly away. Outside the inn Michael, Joe and
Seth watch it till it disappears down the road.

Young Hardy also watches the cart slowly submerge into the
blackness of the night.

Joe talks out load to no-one in particular.

JOE

Poor old Ned he don't deserve that
he really don't.

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

If I see that heathen again he'd better look out. I'm not frightened of his devilry.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. BEDROOM. COTTAGE. DAY.

Car'line is lying in bed and Ned is caring for her, taking her broth on a tray, taking her drinks. He spends a long time sitting by the side of the bed holding her hand in both of his, his head bowed as if in prayer.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Next day she was calmer, but quiet, very quiet. And over the next few days her health was seen to improve.

Ned stands by the side of Car'line's bed on the other side a doctor is finishing his examination. He is putting his stethoscope back in his bag. He nods over to Ned that he is pleased with his patient.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

For the child she appeared to show little concern. It was Ned who was left to worry to the point of distraction. There could be thoughts that the impish Mop would restore the lost one after a freak of a day or two; but time went on, and neither he nor she could be heard of and Ned's thoughts were that perhaps he was exercising upon Carry some unholy musical charm, as he had done upon Car'line herself.

INT. PARLOUR. COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Ned is sleeping in a chair, opposite him sits Car'line sewing.

NED'S DREAM. FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING.

Mop Ollamoor is standing on the step of a cottage. He is playing his fiddle and has his eyes closed. He is dressed in black trousers and a dark shirt and waistcoat with a red silk bandana tied round his neck.

Carry is dancing in front of him, moving almost trance-like, hypnotised, with tears running down her face.

As the music gets faster and louder Carry seems more and more frenzied in her movements. Mop opens up one eye and fixes her with his stare.

MOP

You cannot leave off, dear, whether
you would or no!

NED (O.S.)

(shouting)
No! No! Leave her alone!

FIDDLE MUSIC FADES.

INT. PARLOUR. COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Ned awakes shouting.

NED

Leave her! Leave her be!

Car'line calmly looks up from her sewing and slowly shakes her head.

CAR'LINE

There's no use in going on like
that. I tell 'ee, he won't hurt her
Ned, why you go on so much I do not
know.

EXT. OUTSIDE COTTAGE. DAY.

Ned is standing at the front of the cottage talking to a
POLICEMAN.

POLICEMAN

Ned Hipcroft be your name sir, the
fellow that's daughter gone
missing?

NED

(excitedly)
It is, the very same. You have some
news? She been seen?

POLICEMAN

Now I don't want to be building
hopes up, but ...

NED

She been seen? My Carry?

POLICEMAN

(calmly)

Ned, I just wanted to tell you that a traveller and child has been seen at a fair on the coast near Sandbourne. He playing a violin, she dancing on stilts.

The Policeman places his hand on Ned's arm.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

As I said I don't want to build your hopes up, but it might well be worth, getting yourself over there.

Ned thanks the Policeman and goes back into the cottage muttering to himself.

NED

Just got to get my little maid back, got to get Carry back. Back from the devil.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. VARIETY OF FAIR GROUND SETTINGS. DAY/ NIGHT.

Ned travels to various fairs throughout Wessex asking fairground workers and stallholders if they've seen Carry and Mop.

Ned shows the photograph of Carry taken at the Great Exhibition. All he is met with are a number of shakes of the head, no-one has seen her.

Ned's face and body show both weariness and sadness as he continues this pursuit.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE. REALITY/ NED'S DERANGEMENT. NIGHT.

Ned walks home from a fair in the dark clearly distressed.

Young Hardy walks behind him.

It is a clear night and the stars are visible. Ned looks up to the sky and pleads to the heavens.

NED
 (crying)
 Oh Carry what has he done with you?

IN NED'S MIND CARRY SINGS THE 'TWINKLE TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR' RHYME.

CARRY (O.S.)
 Twinkle twinkle little star, how I
 wonder what you are? Up above the
 world so high, like a diamond in
 the sky. When the blazing sun is
 gone, when he nothing shines upon,
 Then you show your little light,
 twinkle, twinkle all the night.

SILENCE.

Ned walks on sobbing with grief.

INT. BEDROOM. COTTAGE. NIGHT.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Ned was reaching the end of the
 line. Damaged and broken with
 little support from Car'line.

Ned and Car'line are in bed and both seemingly asleep. The room is dark and is lit by one gas-lamp. By the side of Car'line lying on a table is a small bunch of wild flowers in a jar.

Ned, escaping from a bad dream, shoots bolt upright and shouts.

NED
 Carry! Carry! What has he done with
 you Carry?

Car'line wakes up and is very agitated.

CAR'LINE
 Oh Ned. Ned, whatever's a matter
 now?

NED
 That rascal's torturing her to
 maintain him!

CAR'LINE

Don't 'ee raft yourself so, Ned!
You prevent me getting a bit o'
rest! I've told you before he won't
hurt her!

Car'line settles back down again.

Ned gets up and lights another gas-lamp. He looks behind him
Car'line appears to have gone straight back to sleep.

Ned sits on the edge of the bed for a few moments before
deciding to swill his face in a wash-basin in the room.

NED ENTERS A STATE OF DELIRIUM.

Through the splashing of the water Ned begins to hear FIDDLE
MUSIC which gradually gets louder. Ned looks in the mirror
and sees Mop with a red silk bandana round his neck, playing
his fiddle. He has one eye open and he's smiling.

NED SCREAMS. FIDDLE MUSIC STOPS.

INT. BEDROOM. COTTAGE. NIGHT.

CAR'LINE shoots up to consciousness angrily.

CAR'LINE

Ned! Ned, you'll be the death of
me, you really will. When is this
going to stop? He won't hurt her I
tell you, he won't hurt her!

Ned is still looking in the mirror he stops screaming.

NED

(softly getting louder)
Carry? Carry? Carry? Carry!

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

NED (O.S.)

Carry!

Old Hardy sits at his desk, in his hands he is holding
Carry's skipping-rope with the red wooden handles. On his
desk is the photograph of Carry taken at the Great
Exhibition.

Sitting opposite him is Young Hardy with his violin and bow
on his lap.

Old Hardy looks up from his thoughts towards Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY
 Poor Carry, poor Ned. I remembered
 well.

Old Hardy looks down to Carry's skipping-rope.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
 Too well.

YOUNG HARDY
 I just wanted to help.

Old Hardy places the skipping-rope on the desk.

OLD HARDY
 I of all people understand that you
 wanted to help but remember you are
 the eyes and ears of a life that is
 vanishing. I will need you again.
 In a long life of writing there are
 other matters.
 (slowly shakes his head)
 And I sadly am fast running out of
 time to remember them.

Old Hardy reaches into his drawer and takes out a hangman's
 noose.

On seeing this Young Hardy seems shocked and jumps backwards
 in his chair.

Old Hardy smiles and shakes his head.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
 Just a few more matters, a few more
 stories.

Young Hardy is clearly frightened, his glance locked onto the
 noose in Old Hardy's hands.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
 And in the next story, this

Old Hardy holds up the noose.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
 And those that loved to use it.

Old Hardy puts the noose back in the draw and picks up
 Carry's skipping-rope.

Young Hardy still concerned looks at the skipping-rope and then glances over to the photograph of Carry.

YOUNG HARDY

Carry sir? How did she fare?

OLD HARDY

No-one knows, although there were rumours that the two had gone off to America, but who knows.

YOUNG HARDY

And Ned sir? What happened to Ned?

OLD HARDY

From that time onwards, till the day he died, poor Ned's mouth could only ever utter one word.

INT. BEDROOM. NED'S DERANGEMENT. NIGHT.

FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING GETTING LOUDER.

Ned is still looking in the mirror the reflection shows the figure of Mop, he has one eye open and he's smiling.

NED

(softly getting louder)

Carry? Carry? Carry? Carry!

FIDDLE MUSIC STOPS.

BLACKNESS

NED (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Carry?

FADE OUT:

END.

THE HAUNTING OF MR HARDY 2: THE THREE STRANGERS

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FADE IN:

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED DOORWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

A young man (YOUNG HARDY) smartly dressed and carrying a violin and bow enters a dark hallway with a number of old paintings hung on the walls.

As he comes in to the hall the drawing room door opens and a young girl (BETTY) of about sixteen comes out carrying a tray. The door is held open for her by a tall thin woman in her late forties (FLORENCE HARDY).

BETTY

Thank you miss.

The door is closed and Florence goes back into the room.

Young Hardy looks on at Betty as she hurries away with the tray.

From the drawing room Young Hardy hears Florence, a well spoken woman and an equally well spoken man (SIR SYDNEY COCKERELL) talking. Young Hardy stops to listen.

FLORENCE. (O.S.)

No Tom isn't well, he's not himself. He wouldn't dream of travelling to London anymore.

Young Hardy now presses his ear to the door.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Both Florence and Cockerell are seated in armchairs, in front of them a small table laden with papers. Florence is fidgeting with a scarf tied round her neck.

FLORENCE

What was it he said the other day?

Cockerell, a grey haired distinguished looking man in his early sixties, listens attentively.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

Yes that's it. I am getting more and more like a vegetable that will not bear transplanting.

COCKERELL

(nodding)

Yes that doesn't surprise me. I suppose we all have to accept that the great man's time is, well he's.

(pause)

Yes we all have to face up to it.

Florence continues to fidget with her scarf.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Have you thought anymore about what I said some time ago about Westminster Abbey?

There is a long and awkward silence.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

You obviously haven't. But you'll have to consider these matters, the great man deserves it.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED DOORWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Young Hardy still has his ear pressed to the door.

COCKERELL (O.S.)

Anyway I'll go up and tell him the latest honour to be bestowed on him.

Young Hardy looks puzzled. He makes his way out of the hallway and up the stairs.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

The walls on the landing are lined with paintings and there are a number of doors leading off, one of which is slightly open.

Tentatively Young Hardy moves towards the open door and makes his way through, closing it behind him.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Inside a smallish study there are two walls lined with books and a fire-place with many small pictures hung above it.

OLD HARDY sits writing at his desk, he is in his eighties with a droopy grey moustache. To the side of the desk a black and white cat (Cobby) lies on a small mat asleep.

Old Hardy puts down his pen as Young Hardy enters.

The only light in the room comes from a desk lamp. Directly under it is a skipping-rope with red wooden handles and a photograph of a young girl (Carry).

OLD HARDY
Come through. Come through. And
take a seat.

Young Hardy makes himself comfortable, his violin and bow nestling on his lap. Old Hardy smiles kindly at the young man.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
I said I would need you again there
are always other matters.

Young Hardy notices Cobby.

YOUNG HARDY
Sir, isn't that, the cat that Ned
Hipcroft used to feed?

Old Hardy looks across sternly.

OLD HARDY
I think I've told you to drop the
sir bit.
(pause)
And yes the cat, it could have
been, he does get about a bit.

Young Hardy looks confused.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
But I haven't brought you here to
talk about old Cobby.

Old Hardy bends down to stroke the cat.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
As nice as he is. No you're here
because there are a few more
matters and you're to be the eyes
and ears of my memory.

There is a knock on the door and Cockerell pops his head round.

COCKERELL
Sorry to interrupt.

Cockerell looks round the door.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

I thought you'd got someone with you.

OLD HARDY

No just talking to Cobby here, an old writer is allowed his eccentricities. Do come in and take a seat.

Cockerell partly comes into the room he has a pile of papers under his arm.

COCKERELL

No I can't stop now, just been going through the accounts with Florence.

(pause)

Certainly the old writer is allowed his eccentricities, he is also to be the focus of a tribute by his acquaintance, the great Gustav Holst.

Old Hardy looks surprised, putting his head to one side.

OLD HARDY

Really? He's going ahead with that?

COCKERELL

Yes he is, just heard. Egdon Heath, a homage to Thomas Hardy. A tone poem apparently, music that evokes the mood of the heath.

OLD HARDY

I'm surprised.

COCKERELL

Due to be performed in both America and here early next year.

OLD HARDY

Very surprised and indeed very honoured.

Cockerell shakes his head.

COCKERELL

How many times do I have to tell you? You shouldn't be surprised. You deserve it. You deserve to be knighted, you also deserve,

(pause)

(MORE)

COCKERELL (CONT'D)
 when the time comes, heaven forbid,
 to be with the great and the good
 in Poets' Corner.

OLD HARDY
 (smiling)
 No, not at all, no, Stinsford,
 Stinsford. I think I've told you
 before the Abbey doesn't have an
 annex for atheists!

COCKERELL
 You're impossible.

Cockerell also smiling shakes his head and looks at the old violin and bow resting on the chair opposite Old Hardy's desk.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)
 You will have to play that for me
 sometime Tom, it would be great to
 hear you.

OLD HARDY
 (shaking his head)
 I'm not so sure it would. Not after
 all these years.

COCKERELL
 Anyway I'd better go. But
 congratulations, you just don't
 realise at times your own
 importance. And now of course
 you're up there with Gustav Holst's
 Planets.

Cockerell wags his finger and smiles.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)
 So be told. And I shall see you
 very soon.

The door closes. Old Hardy looks flushed in the face and very pleased with himself.

OLD HARDY
 Tone poem. What a fuss.

After a few moments Old Hardy looks across the room towards Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
 Sorry about that, an old man's
 vanity. Tone poem indeed.

He reaches into his drawer, takes out a hangman's noose and holds it up.

On seeing this Young Hardy's face grimaces. Old Hardy smiles at Young Hardy's reaction.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

As I said just a few more matters.

Young Hardy's glance is locked onto the noose in Old Hardy's hands.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, some would say, a lot of them feature this.

Old Hardy looks down at the noose in his hands, places it down on his desk and looks across to Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Do you remember Elizabeth Martha Brown? Seventy so years ago. Killed her husband after he had wronged her time and time again. Martha Brown do you remember?

Young Hardy looks perplexed.

YOUNG HARDY

I do sir I do, em, but, em it was only last summer.

The old man slowly stands and goes to the window at the back of his desk. He looks outwards onto the large garden.

OLD HARDY

Yes. Yes of course August the ninth. I was an apprentice at Hicks in Dorchester, supposed to be at work even though it was Saturday.

EXT. OUTSIDE DORCHESTER PRISON. DAY.

A dark and damp morning. A large crowd have gathered outside the prison to witness a public hanging. The scaffold is empty, yet there is an expectant buzz in the crowd.

Young Hardy is there looking on excitedly with his friend JOHN, who, younger and smaller than Young Hardy, decides to climb a nearby tree to get a better view.

Just behind them stand a group of young soldiers in military uniform.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Saturday morning and we'd been talking about it for weeks, the hanging of a woman. The hanging because she'd killed her husband after he had cheated on her, kicked and whipped her.

Two male guards escort Martha Brown up the stairs and onto the scaffold. They are followed by a clergyman, a small plump man carrying a bible.

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Elizabeth Martha Brown the last woman to be hung in Dorchester. It was a dark and miserable morning.

Also standing on the platform with his back turned towards the hang-fair crowd is the executioner WILLIAM CALCRAFT, a powerfully built forbidding figure dressed in black.

Martha, an attractive woman, seems calm and composed, she is dressed in a long black silk dress. The guards stand either side of Martha as the clergyman says something to her and touches her forehead.

The clergyman moves away.

Calcraft walks over and looks long and hard at Martha before theatrically, and with much aplomb, placing a white hood over her head and positioning the noose around her neck.

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They used to call the executioner 'short drop Calcraft' because his rope was only a foot or so long, causing most of his victims to die a slow and agonising death.

Calcraft leaves the scaffolding to go below to open the bolts on the trap door.

The crowd are now silent. Martha stands alone.

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

William Calcraft. They say he began his 'career' flogging the younger inmates in Newgate Prison. In his time he executed over four hundred and fifty people. Some times the hang-fair crowds would number more than thirty thousand.

The breeze blows Martha's dress up. One of the guards still on the scaffolding shouts below to Calcraft.

The young soldiers loutishly nudge each other at the sight of Martha's legs. Other people look at the soldiers in disgust at their lewd behaviour.

The figure of Calcraft returns to the platform to place a strap around her legs, on the outside of her dress. Again the crowd present barely have the opportunity to see Calcraft's face.

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

At least that day he was good
enough to protect Martha's modesty.

Calcraft leaves the scaffolding for the second and final time.

Young Hardy's friend John has now climbed up into the tree.

The crowd are silent.

There is the noise of the trap door opening. Martha's body falls and jolts violently. The crowd produce a collective noise of shock.

At the same time John falls from his position in the tree.

Young Hardy is mesmerized by Martha's hanging figure.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Martha's body stayed in the same
position hanging from the rope for
a full hour.

John gets up and tries to wipe mud from his trousers and jacket. It is now raining quite heavily.

JOHN

I gotta go Tom. Mess I'm in now,
I'll catch it if father finds out I
been here.

Young Hardy nods to John but does not take his eyes off the figure of Martha.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Many of the audience left. My
friend John, well shaken but
nothing broken, brushed himself
down and also left.

The young soldiers leave noisily.

People put up umbrellas and make their way from the prison, some clearly excited at what they'd witnessed.

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I stayed on, rooted to the spot. In the rain the hood over Martha's face got so wet and you could clearly see her features, she almost looked like a statue.

Martha's body slowly spins in the breeze.

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And I noted what a fine figure she showed against the sky as she hung in the misty rain, and how the tight black silk gown set off her shape as she wheeled half round and back.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy turns away from the window and slowly returns to his desk and sits down.

OLD HARDY
I'm not proud of what I thought at that time, but, but ...

Looking over to Young Hardy and smiling.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
I was only young.

Young Hardy nods in agreement.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
And she did look, well she did look beautiful.

Again Young Hardy nods.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
The Birdsmoorgate Murder, poor Martha Brown the killing of her husband, who all knew had deserved his death.
(pause)
She will live forever as long as my Tess is read. They both dangled from the lonely rope after fate had ended its sport with them.

YOUNG HARDY
 (nervously)
 Tess sir? Sorry I don't ...

OLD HARDY
 You will, you will. All will become
 clear in time.

Young Hardy again looks perplexed.

YOUNG HARDY
 Sorry?

OLD HARDY
 Be patient, be patient. All will
 become clear.
 (pause)
 For the moment let us go back
 again, but go back to Casterbridge
 prison.

INT. PRISON CELL. CASTERBRIDGE. NIGHT.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Rather than be outside for a public
 hanging, let it be inside and a
 very dark prison cell.

It is dark in the cell and a prisoner (TIMOTHY SOMMERS the
 FIRST STRANGER) has his back turned to us. In front of him
 stands a PRISON OFFICER in his fifties.

PRISON OFFICER
 Go on then hit me.

FIRST STRANGER
 I don't want to hit yer, I know I'm
 in here, but I'm not like that.

The Prison Officer steps closer to the First Stranger and
 whispers loudly.

PRISON OFFICER
 Don't be a bloody fool hit me! In
 five minutes we change shifts, too
 late then. Do it fool, dam you do
 it!

The First Stranger shakes his head.

FIRST STRANGER
 Why are you doing this?

PRISON OFFICER

Because I knew your father Alfred Sommers, 'ee were a good man. And I don't like seeing someone hanged because he couldn't afford to feed his family. Now bloody well hit me before I change my mind.

FIRST STRANGER

I'm not, I'm not like this. But if you're sure.

The First Stranger punches the Prison Officer in the stomach and then in the face. The Prison Officer collapses in pain.

FIRST STRANGER (CONT'D)

Sorry.

PRISON OFFICER

Now go!

FIRST STRANGER

I'm really sorry.

The First Stranger tries to help the Prison Officer up.

PRISON OFFICER

Go! You stupid, just go!

The First Stranger hurriedly leaves the room.

YOUNG HARDY (V.O.)

I still don't understand. Who was that?

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

YOUNG HARDY

Who was that?

Old Hardy puts the noose back in the desk drawer and closes it.

OLD HARDY

I said be patient. With your help the story will all come together.

Old Hardy looks directly at Young Hardy's violin.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

The good news is you'll get to play the fiddle.

Young Hardy nods his head in appreciation.

YOUNG HARDY

Thank you.

Old Hardy also nods his head.

OLD HARDY

Good, good, the fiddle meant so much.

(pause)

But back now. Back to the dark and menace of Egdon Heath.

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

It is a wild rainy night with a weak full moon. The landscape is dotted with a few trees and various large clumps of rock where sheep take refuge with their backs turned towards the rain.

On the very brow of the hill smoke comes from the chimney of Shepherd Fennel's cottage and lights can be seen through the windows.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Back to the heath, back to the very strange night that is still talked about. The strange night at Shepherd Fennel's cottage.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

MUSIC PLAYING.

The room is largely lit by candles. There are fifteen or so people in the cosy room where most of the seats have been pushed to the side to allow a small space for dancing.

Above the fireplace highly polished sheep-crooks hang ornamentally.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Go back, and yes enjoy that fiddle-playing as long as it lasts, sit there in that room and be the eyes and ears of my memory.

Two musicians are playing, ELIJAH NEW, the parish-clerk who plays the serpent (a large brass instrument) and a young boy DICK of about twelve playing the fiddle. People are dancing.

Young Hardy sits in one of the chairs near the front door with his violin at his side he is obviously impressed by Dick's fiddle playing.

MUSIC STOPS.

Young Hardy claps appreciatively, the only one in the room who does.

Those who have been dancing return to their seats.

SHEPHERD FENNEL in his early thirties stands up looking very uncomfortable and nervous.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

If I could have your quiet please.
Please. I'd like to start by
thanking ...

A jovial looking man JOHN PITCHER a dairyman and Shepherd Fennel's father-in-law interrupts from his chair.

JOHN PITCHER

Have we got speeches then? Have we
got speeches? I prepared no
speeches.

JOAN PITCHER who is seated next to her slightly deaf husband whispers loudly to him.

JOAN PITCHER

You shut up John Pitcher. You
already been hogging the mug of
mead and it only just turned eight.

John Pitcher pretends to be shocked.

JOHN PITCHER

As God's my judge hardly a drop has
passed my lips. Why you so nettled
with me?

Sat nearby CHARLEY JAKE the hedge-carpenter, a man in his sixties without any discernible teeth, nudges his younger friend WILL SABIN sat next to him.

CHARLEY JAKE

(laughing)
I told thee it'd soon start.

WILL SABIN

You were not wrong Charley, not
wrong.

Shepherd Fennel takes a deep breath in and tries to assert himself.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

I was trying to say. And no we haven't got speeches.

(pause)

I was trying to say thank you for turning out on a night such as this for our little bit of happiness.

JOHN PITCHER

I can say a few words if it be needed.

JOAN PITCHER

(angrily shouting)

Oh shut up you silly old fool!
Can't you see how you spoils things.

Some guests seem embarrassed, others think it is funny. Elijah New, a large man who has been struggling to sit down with both his weight and his serpent, tries to appeal for calm.

ELIJAH NEW

John, John that's enough now my old friend. Enough!

Elija New sits down. John Pitcher shrugs his shoulders and whispers something into the ear of the man seated next to him, WILLIAM STOW, and they both laugh. All eventually focus on Shepherd Fennel.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

All I was going to say and it don't hardly seem worth all the effort now.

JOAN PITCHER

Oh it is, oh it is, don't be put off by this silly old fool.

JOHN PITCHER

What do you mean fool woman? I'm no fool.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

(shouting)

All I was going to say was thanks for being here on the happy event of our daughter, little Mary's christening.

John Pitcher picks up his mug and raises it.

JOHN PITCHER
To little Mary!

All clap Shepherd Fennel and repeat John Pitcher's toast.

ALL
To little Mary!

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

The figure of the First Stranger is walking up the hill towards the cottage, the rain beating down on him.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Shepherd Fennel sits down.

CHARLEY JAKE
You got there in the end boy. You
got there. Can we have a tune now?
Now that speeches have passed.

No-one answers Charley Jake's request.

Shepherd Fennel sits down and grabs the large family mug and drinks as if he deserves it. Everyone starts talking and laughing again.

Will Sabin nudges Charley Jake drawing his attention to OLIVER GILES a youth of about seventeen who is sat in a corner with the WIDOW WREN a woman in her thirties.

WILL SABIN
Never mind which tune you want have
you seen those two? All over each
other, old enough to be his mother
she be.

CHARLEY JAKE
And her husband only fresh to the
earth, hardly cold.

WILL SABIN
And they're getting very warm, very
warm. He were a good man too were
Jack Wren.

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

Outside in the rain and wind the First Stranger is approaching a row of bee hives near Shepherd Fennel's cottage. He appears tall and gaunt, in his forties, his face largely covered by a hat.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL nursing baby Mary in her arms talks to a young woman CAROL SABIN, sat next to her.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

If it had been up to me there'd
have been no party. We're not
rolling in shillings
(nodding her head towards
her husband)
and I can never get him to see
that.

CAROL SABIN

You got to have a party for little
Mary, she's so beautiful, aren't
you little one ey?

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

She's beautiful and she'll never
long for love in this cottage, but,
and I can be honest with you?

CAROL SABIN

Course you can.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

She wan't planned and we're very
short on shillings.

Shepherdess Fennel looks over to her husband.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL (CONT'D)

And although he's a good man, he
can be as empty headed as his sheep
sometimes.

(pause)

You see the trouble with a sit-
still party is the men fairly drink
the house dry.

Carol Sabin nods but is more interested in playing with the baby's fingers.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL (CONT'D)

But an all dancing-party whilst
saving on the drink does mean that
they all get ravenous and wanting
the good victuals.

Carol Sabin nods again.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL (CONT'D)

Look at em, they're all at drinking
now, each and everyone of them.
(looking up and shouting)
Elijah can we have another tune
please!

Elijah New holds up his hand in recognition that he's heard the request and sets about the difficult task of getting up from his chair. Dick by contrast is already up and ready to play his fiddle.

Oliver Giles stands up and takes Widow Wren's hand and leads her to the 'dance-floor'.

MUSIC STARTS.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT/ INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S BARN. NIGHT.

The First Stranger walks past the line of bee hives and heads for a small covered barn adjacent to the cottage. Here he sits down on a bundle of straw and tries to shake off some of the rain.

He hears the boom of the serpent and the lesser strains of the fiddler start up again next-door.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

MUSIC PLAYING.

A few couples are now dancing including Oliver Giles and Widow Wren and the general mood is jovial. The young boy playing the fiddle, despite his early years, shows great skill and dexterity.

Young Hardy watches on in admiration.

Shepherdess Fennel summons Shepherd Fennel over to her.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

How's the mead an the victuals going? Have we got enough to see us through the evening? I'm not sure I like the look of things.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Oh don't fret so my luv. It's all alright. Folk are just enjoying themselves that's all. Just having a good time.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

But we got to eat next week!

Shepherd Fennel wonders off shaking his head.

Shepherdess Fennel hands the baby over to Carol Sabin.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL (CONT'D)

Would you be good enough Carol to put baby Mary in her crib upstairs? I feel I've got some sorting out to do down here.

CAROL SABIN

It be no trouble at all will it Mary, my little angel. You come with your aunty Carol.

Carol Sabin happily takes Mary off her mother and sings a little song to the baby.

Shepherdess Fennel gets up and tries to speak to Elijah New who's playing his serpent. He has great trouble hearing her.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

Not too long, they'll all eat too much.

Elijah New shakes his head indicating he cannot hear. Shepherdess Fennel defying the obstacles of Elijah New's fat body and the large shape of the serpent, puts her mouth next to his ear.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL (CONT'D)

(shouting)

I said make this the last one for a bit!

ELIJAH NEW

(shouting back)

We only just about started woman!

(MORE)

ELIJAH NEW (CONT'D)

But yes, yes if you say so, the
last one it be.

EXT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

MUSIC PLAYING from inside the cottage.

After making himself as presentable as possible the First
Stranger heads towards the front door of the cottage.

MUSIC STOPS.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Elijah New tries to maneuver his weight and the serpent
towards a seat again whilst shaking his head and muttering
something at Shepherdess Fennel.

CHARLEY JAKE

Can't we have another tune Elijah?
What's a matter with things, we
wants another one.

ELIJAH NEW

It ain't me Charley or the boy, ask
the misses here.

JOHN PITCHER

(to no-one in particular)
Cut that one a bit short didn't he?

Oliver Giles in particular seems angry having been getting on
well in his dancing with the Widow Wren.

OLIVER GILES

Be it a party or not Elijah?

ELIJAH NEW

(angrily)
I just said to Charley it ain't me,
you got that? It ain't me!

OLIVER GILES

Oh well, I don't get why we start
and then we stop.

There is a knock at the door which makes Young Hardy jump in
his chair.

Glad of the diversion Shepherd Fennel stands up.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Walk in.

The First Stranger stands at the door dripping wet. He is dark in complexion and when he removes his hat he has a curly mass of black hair.

He seems nervous and apprehensive as he looks round the room. He has a rich and deep voice.

FIRST STRANGER

The rain is so heavy that I ask
leave to come in and rest for a
while.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

To be sure you can stranger and
you're very welcome. And faith
you've been lucky in choosing this
night when we're having a bit of a
fling for a very glad cause.

The First Stranger enters the room nodding at the others who all stare.

FIRST STRANGER

And what cause is that may I ask?

SHEPHERD FENNEL

A birth and the christening of our
little girl Mary. Let me take your
coat.

FIRST STRANGER

Thank you so much shepherd. That's
really good of you, and yes a very
good cause for a celebration.

The party atmosphere continues.

Shepherd Fennel hangs the First Stranger's coat and hat on a hook from a ceiling beam. He is joined by his wife whose eyes scrutinize the First Stranger.

Young Hardy still seated in a chair by the door looks across.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

Bit late to be traipsin about in
it?

FIRST STRANGER

Late it is ma'am, as you say.

Shepherd Fennel picks up the family mug from the main table and offers it to the First Stranger.

SHEPHERD FENNEL
Pull on the mug suit you?

The First Stranger gladly accepts the offer and drinks heartily, Shepherdess Fennel looks on disapprovingly.

FIRST STRANGER
That is good, thank you kindly.

He hands the mug back.

FIRST STRANGER (CONT'D)
I'll make my way over to the chimney-corner if you have nothing to urge against it master; for I'm a little moist on the side that was next to the rain.

The First Stranger makes his way over to the chimney corner and once there stretches out his legs enjoying the warmth and comfort.

Both Shepherd Fennel and his wife follow him over to the corner and the latter continues her visual scrutiny of him.

Taking advantage of Shepherdess Fennel's distraction Dick is given a coin by Oliver Giles and encouraged to play his fiddle.

Elijah New is now engaged in eating a huge pie.

Standing up with fiddle and bow in hand Young Hardy walks over and tentatively takes his place besides Dick and attempts to accompany him.

MUSIC STARTS.

Immediately Oliver Giles and Widow Wren get up to dance and are then joined by others.

In the chimney corner the First Stranger is aware that Shepherdess Fennel is looking at his ragged trousers and the poor state of his boots.

FIRST STRANGER (CONT'D)
Yes I'm rather cracked in the vamp and not well fitted.

He looks down at his trousers and boots.

FIRST STRANGER (CONT'D)

I've had some rough times lately and been forced to pick up what I can in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working days when I reach home.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

And where's that, round here?

FIRST STRANGER

No, em, it be further up the country.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

I thought so. And so be I. And by your tongue you come from my neighborhood.

FIRST STRANGER

Ahh! But em. But you wouldn't have heard of me, no. By lookin at you, my time would be long before yours ma'am.

Shepherdess Fennel seems unimpressed by the First Stranger's attempt at flattery.

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

The figure of a powerfully built man (William Calcraft, the SECOND STRANGER) is making his way up the hill towards the cottage. The rain is pouring down.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

The First Stranger stretches his legs out further. Steam is rising from the dampness on his clothes. Shepherd Fennel again hands him the family mug.

FIRST STRANGER

I do thank you both for your kindness. There's only one thing more wanted to make me happy, a little bit of baccy which I'm sorry to say I'm out of.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

I'll gladly fill your pipe.

FIRST STRANGER

I'm sorry to say I have no pipe.

SHEPHERD FENNEL
 (quizzically)
 A smoker, and no pipe about ee?

FIRST STRANGER
 I must have dropped it somewhere on
 the road.

Shepherdess Fennel shakes her head as her husband hands the First Stranger a new clay pipe.

SHEPHERD FENNEL
 Hand me your baccy-box, I'll fill
 that too whilst I'm about it.

Shepherdess Fennel looks at her husband and then back to the First Stranger.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL
 I bets you're going to say you've
 lost your baccy-box too.

The First Stranger goes through the process of checking his pockets and then nods his head.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL (CONT'D)
 (shaking her head)
 Honestly. Folk must think we're
 made of shillings.

Shepherdess Fennel moves away.

FIRST STRANGER
 I'm afraid your good wife's right.
 Could you give it to me in a screw
 of paper?

Shepherd Fennel obliges and the First Stranger lights the pipe from the candle on the table. After deeply inhaling on his pipe and drinking from the mug he leans back with a look of ecstasy.

Young Hardy is still playing his fiddle and is enjoying himself.

Shepherdess Fennel indicates to Dick to finish playing.

Oliver Giles and Widow Wren are now the only two dancing.

EXT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

MUSIC PLAYING from inside the cottage.

In the rain the large figure of the Second Stranger approaches Shepherd Fennel's front door.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

There is a loud knock on the door and the Shepherd Fennel responds.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Walk in.

The door swings open to reveal the forbidding figure of the Second Stranger, a tall and powerful man in his late twenties dressed totally in black with a bushy black beard.

MUSIC STOPS.

Dick and the Young Hardy stop playing and Oliver Giles and the Widow Wren go back to their seats.

Young Hardy scampers somewhat nervously back to his seat by the door.

The Second Stranger has a very loud and strong voice.

SECOND STRANGER

I must ask for a few minutes
shelter, or I shall be wetted to my
skin before I ever get to
Casterbridge.

Young Hardy looks hard at the Second Stranger.

The very power in his voice and the fact that the music has stopped makes all the guests at the party look up startled.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Yes. Welcome to our cottage. Make
yourself at home master and
welcome. That is of course if
(looking round)
if you can find room.

The Second Stranger confidently takes off his hat and coat and hangs them on a nail from the ceiling-beam. He then makes his way over to the chimney-corner where the First Stranger sits.

Space is tight and the First Stranger moves over slightly to let the other sit down. The two men nod to each other by way of acknowledgment, the First Stranger hands the Second Stranger the family mug. He raises it to his lips and drinks heartily.

Young Hardy continues to stare at the Second Stranger.

Shepherdess Fennel who stands next to her husband whispers in his ear.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

The mug wasn't his to give away in
the first place!

All are silent in the room, eyes pinned to the Second Stranger, who talks in a very loud voice looking at the mug.

SECOND STRANGER

I knew it. When I walked up your
garden before coming in and saw the
hives. I said to myself where
there's bees there's honey, and
where there's honey there's mead.

Slowly he takes the mug to his lips and drinks before putting it back down on the table.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

But mead of such a comfortable
sort, I really didn't expect to
meet.

He again lifts the mug and this time finishes off the content. He wipes his beard with a handkerchief that he produces somewhat theatrically from his trouser pocket. He then hands the mug back to Shepherd Fennel indicating that he would like some more.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Glad you enjoyed it.

Shepherd Fennel goes off to a dark area under the stairs where the barrel is and fills up the big mug of mead.

Shepherdess Fennel walks over to join him.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

Oh yes it's goodish mead. But it is
trouble enough to make and honey
sells well so I hardly think we
shall make any more.

Shepherd Fennel returns and hands the Second Stranger the mug.

SECOND STRANGER

Oh you must you must. I love mead
when 'tis old like this.

The Second Stranger raises the mug to his mouth and gulps furiously. When he lowers the mug he again wipes his beard with his handkerchief. He looks round the room where everyone is watching and listening to him and speaks loudly with menace in his voice.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Yes I love mead like this as I do
love to go to church o' Sundays or
to relieve the needy any day of the
week.

The silence of the room is broken by the First Stranger who somewhat nervously laughs out loud.

Charley Jake whispers into Will Sabin's ear.

CHARLEY JAKE

What do you make of this one Will?
Strange sort if you ask me.

Will Sabin answers with a shrug of his shoulders and a shake of his head.

SECOND STRANGER

(more calmly)

Well as I say I must be getting off
soon to Casterbridge, Casterbridge
I must go. I should have been
almost there by this time, but the
rain drove me to your dwelling and
I'm not sorry for it.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

You don't live in Casterbridge
then?

SECOND STRANGER

Not as yet. Though I shortly mean
to move there.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Going to set up in trade or
something?

Shepherdess Fennel studies the quality of the Second Stranger's clothes.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

No, no, it's easy to see that the
gentleman is rich and don't want to
work at anything.

After a long and awkward pause the Second Stranger answers.

SECOND STRANGER

Rich is not quite the word for me
dame. I do work, and I must work.
And even if I only get to
Casterbridge by midnight I must
begin work there at eight tomorrow
morning.

He again pauses and takes a long look at the people in the
room who watch and listen in silence.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Eight tomorrow morning. Het or wet,
blow or snow, famine or sword, my
day's work tomorrow must be done.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

Poor man! Then in spite o' seeming
you be better off than we, we were
mistaken.

SECOND STRANGER

Tis the nature of my trade, men and
maidens. Tis the nature of my trade
more than my poverty. Yes.

(pause)

Yes, I really and truly must up and
off, or I shan't get a lodging in
the town.

The Second Stranger drains the content of the mug and directs
his voice towards Shepherd Fennel rather than the room in
general.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

There's time for one more draught
of friendship before I go, and I'd
perform it at once if my jug were
not dry.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

I'll fill your mug with pleasure,
believe me it's not every day we
celebrate like this.

Shepherd Fennel takes the mug and walks over to the barrel
under the stairs, he is again followed by his wife who is
looking very agitated.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

Why should we do this? He's emptied it once, though it held enough for ten and he's a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part, I don't like the look o' man at all.

Shepherd Fennel fills the large mug from the barrel and speaks quietly and emphatically.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

But he's in the house, my love, and 'tis a wet night and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? There'll be plenty more next bee-burning.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

Very well this time then. But what is the man's calling. As I say I don't like the look of him.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

(whispering)

An for that matter neither do I. But he'll be gone soon enough.

Shepherd Fennel gives his wife a quick peck of a kiss on her cheek.

SHEPHERD FENNEL (CONT'D)

Soon enough.

Shepherdess Fennel is not impressed and shakes her head.

A low murmur of talking in the room begins again. Will Sabin whispers in Charley Jake's ear.

WILL SABIN

I've got a notion of who this man might be.

CHARLEY JAKE

Av you now, you think you know him, your ahead of me then, I don't, not a clue who he be. Rum en though I'd say that.

Young Hardy, like Will Sabin and Charley Jake stare intently at the large figure of the Second Stranger sat in the corner.

FLASHBACK. EXT. OUTSIDE DORCHESTER PRISON. DAY.

Two male guards escort Martha Brown up the stairs and onto the scaffold. They are followed by a clergyman, a small plump man carrying a bible.

Also standing on the platform with his back turned towards the hang-fair crowd is the executioner William Calcraft, a powerfully built forbidding figure dressed in black.

Martha an attractive woman seems calm and composed, she is dressed in a long black silk dress. The guards stand either side of Martha as the clergyman says something to her and touches her forehead.

The clergyman moves away.

Calcraft walks over and looks long and hard at Martha before theatrically, and with much aplomb, placing a white hood over her head.

As he is doing this we see a close up of Calcraft's face as Martha sees him, and then BLACKNESS, as the hood is pulled down.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. SHEPHERD'S FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Still seated in the chimney-corner the Second Stranger attentively wipes his bushy black beard with a handkerchief.

Excitedly Young Hardy points his finger at the Second Stranger.

YOUNG HARDY
Him! William Calcraft.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Sitting in his study Old Hardy lifts his head and slowly nods.

OLD HARDY
Yes, William Calcraft.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

WILL SABIN

I think it be a Mr William Calcraft
also known as 'short-drop
Calcraft'.

Charley Jake looks quizzically at Will Sabin and shakes his head.

CHARLEY JAKE

I ain't got any idea what you're on
about. What you mean with short-
drop?

Will Sabin leans forward and whispers to Charley Jake.

WILL SABIN

Never mind with that, tell you in a
bit. Have a look at these two.

Close to Will Sabin and Charley Jake sit Oliver Giles and Widow Wren who are still behaving amorously. He is touching and stroking her leg under the table.

WIDOW WREN

(whispering)

I tell 'ee we can't. I'll be talked
about young Oliver.

OLIVER GILES

No-one will notice not whilst this
stranger is in the room. I'll get
up and go first, you slip out
afterwards.

Shepherd and Shepherdess Fennel move away from the area under the stairs and the Second Stranger is handed the replenished mug.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Pull on that my master and tell us
if you will what you're doing in
these parts.

Most in the room pay attention and wait for the Second Stranger's answer.

Oliver Giles slips out through a door at the back of the room, this is noticed by Will Sabin.

The First Stranger in the chimney-corner suddenly comes to life and speaks to the room.

FIRST STRANGER

Anybody may know my trade, no
secret to it, I'm a wheelwright.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

A very good trade for these parts.

SECOND STRANGER

And anybody may know mine if
they've the sense to find it out.

Charley Jake raises his hands up in the air.

CHARLEY JAKE

You can generally tell what a man
is by his claws.

Others in the room look at their own hands to validate
Charley Jake's theory.

CHARLEY JAKE (CONT'D)

My fingers be as full of thorns as
an old pin-cushion is of pins.

The First Stranger immediately places his hands under his
seated legs.

SECOND STRANGER

True. Very true. But the oddity of
my trade is that, instead of
setting a mark upon me.

The Second Stranger looks round the room menacingly.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Instead of setting a mark upon me,
it sets a mark upon my customers.

Will Sabin whispers in Charley Jake's ear again.

WILL SABIN

I told 'ee 'short-drop Calcraft' I
can see the absolute menace in the
man.

CHARLEY JAKE

I still don't know what you're on
about.

WILL SABIN

As I said Mr William Calcraft the
new executioner at Casterbridge.

CHARLEY JAKE

Oh hell and damnation, him! I see.
So he's the one that's come to hang
that poor what's his name from
Shottsford?

WILL SABIN

Yeh you got him, Timothy Sommers.

CHARLEY JAKE

And why 'short-drop Calcraft'?

WILL SABIN

Cus his rope be only a foot or so
long and death come on slowly and
with much agony. No mercy weights
with this villain!

CHARLEY JAKE

(looking horrified)

No mercy weights. It be hoped that
God's mercy be on poor man then.

There is a sense of unease in the room sensing this
Shepherdess Fennel calls for a song.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

How about some music then? Elijah?

JOHN PITCHER

Music did the daughter say? Why not
have that one about the fisherman?
You know it, I like that one.

JOAN PITCHER

That isn't fit for mixed company
you silly old fool.

JOHN PITCHER

Give up on it woman!

John looks round the room.

JOHN PITCHER (CONT'D)

She's still nettled with me, still
nettled.

Widow Wren quietly makes her way out of the room using the
same back-door as Oliver Giles a few minutes before.

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

The small figure of a man (THIRD STRANGER) makes his way in the rain up to Shepherd Fennel's cottage.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

ELIJAH NEW

How about Dick doing a reel. He be
more than willing to wouldn't you
boy?

Dick nods his head in agreement, picks up his fiddle and stands ready to play.

Taking no notice of this the Second Stranger also stands up and moves into the centre of the room.

SECOND STRANGER

Never mind with that.

The Second Stranger looks round disdainfully at the boy, indicating with his arm that he should remove himself.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

I shall sing thee a song, you never
mind with him.

Frightened, Dick sits down again quickly.

All is silent.

The Second Stranger thrusts one thumb into the arm-hole of his waistcoat and waves the other hand in the air. He starts singing.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Oh my trade it is the rarest one,
simple shepherds all - My trade is
a sight to see; For my customers I
tie, and take them up on high,
And waft 'em to a far countree!

The room remains silent.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Chorus!

Only the First Stranger in the chimney-corner somewhat nervously responds.

FIRST STRANGER

And waft 'em to a far countree!

Again total silence.

Smoking his pipe the First Stranger offers encouragement.

FIRST STRANGER (CONT'D)

Second verse then, stranger, second
verse.

SECOND STRANGER

My tools are but common ones,
simple shepherds all - My tools are
no sight to see: A little hempen
string, and a post whereon to
swing, Are implements enough for
me!

Following this last verse other people in the room start to
realise who the Second Stranger is.

JOAN PITCHER

(whispering loudly)
Do you know who he is?

JOHN PITCHER

You what? Him? How would I know
he's a stranger.

JOAN PITCHER

He's the hangman.

John Pitcher's jaw drops. He in turns whispers into William
Stow's ear.

JOHN PITCHER

It be the hangman.

William Stow who has had a considerable amount to drink
starts to laugh.

WILLIAM STOW

As wife bought him here to see to
thee.

JOHN PITCHER

No. You daft'en. It be for hanging
in Casterbridge tomorrow.

William Stow stops laughing and sobers up quickly.

WILLIAM STOW

Oh damnation. The new officer of
justice. I heard about him,
everyone talking about him, evil,
evil man so they say.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S BARN. NIGHT.

Oliver Giles and Widow Wren are standing out of the rain, both look awkward.

WIDOW WREN

It don't feel right young Oliver,
talked about I will. Say if someone
came out what would they think?

OLIVER GILES

No-one will come out till the mead
is dry. Plenty of time, just a kiss
Widow Wren will see me on my way.

Looking down the hill Widow Wren notices the Third Stranger approaching.

WIDOW WREN

Quiet. Look 'ee over there.

Widow Wren points, both look down the hill.

OLIVER GILES

That be another guest coming to the
party. Best us hide over here
behind the straw.

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

The Third Stranger gradually approaches the area around the cottage and looks on towards the door.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Shepherd Fennel has an arm round the waist of his wife and draws her near whispering.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

It be him for tomorrow's hang-fair,
come to string up that poor man who
stole a sheep.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

Oh him, the clock-maker from
Shottsford.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

That be him.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

Poor soul.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

And this devil is the hangman that
has come to replace our county man
who died. He'll live in the very
same cottage by the river under
prison wall.

The Second Stranger ignoring the whispering, walks over to the First Stranger holding out his mug.

SECOND STRANGER

Your health master.

The First Stranger extends his arm the mugs clink and both men drink heartily.

FIRST STRANGER

Another verse surely.

The Second Stranger moves back to the centre of the room, he puts his thumb in the arm-hole of his waistcoat and prepares to sing.

There is knock on the front door making Young Hardy jump anxiously again and causing everyone else in the room to look round. Reluctantly and with some caution Shepherd Fennel speaks sounding very weary.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

You'd better come in.

The door is gently opened. The Third Stranger is small with a dark complexion and curly black hair, he looks into the room nervously.

THIRD STRANGER

Can you tell me the way to
Casterbridge? I be ...

The Third Stranger looks around the room and his eyes become locked on to the tall and powerful man in black who suddenly bursts into song.

SECOND STRANGER

Tomorrow is my working day, Simple
shepherds all - Tomorrow is a
working day for me; For the
farmer's sheep is slain, and the
lad who did it ta'en, And on his
soul may God ha' mercy!

The First Stranger in the chimney-corner steals a quick look at the Third Stranger at the door, shakes his head slightly and then waves his mug around enthusiastically. He repeats in his bass voice as before.

FIRST STRANGER

And on his soul may God ha' mercy!

The Third Stranger remains standing in the doorway. All eyes now focus on him. He is a picture of terror shaking throughout his body, his lips parted and his eyes still locked onto the Second Stranger.

Shepherd Fennel approaches him concerned.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Are you alright my friend?

The Third Stranger doesn't answer but turns, quickly closes the door and is gone.

SHEPHERD FENNEL (CONT'D)

We can tell you ...

Shepherd Fennel looks bewildered and turns to those in the room.

SHEPHERD FENNEL (CONT'D)

What a man can it be?

No-one answers Shepherd Fennel's question.

The Second Stranger still stands in the centre of the room everyone else seems to have moved as far away as possible from him forming a circle.

There is silence in the room except for the rain against the window-shutters.

Young Hardy's eyes are still fixed on the Second Stranger.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Circulus, cujus centrum diabolus, a circle at whose centre was the devil. What this man did was legal what he practiced was sheer evil.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S BARN. NIGHT.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

And although most on the heath that night were terrified by the devil incarnate, some were temporarily immune to his power.

Widow Wren and Oliver Giles are laid down on the barn floor amongst the straw locked in a passionate embrace. The rain beats down outside.

WIDOW WREN

(giggling)

Thought you said just a kiss young Oliver.

OLIVER GILES

I 'daint say a kiss where though.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

The silence in the room is broken by the distant BANG OF A GUN.

SECOND STRANGER

Be jiggered! What the hell was that?

Everyone including Young Hardy jumps at the noise.

JOAN PITCHER

What the! What was that?

JOHN PITCHER

What was what?

CHARLEY JAKE

What does that mean?

JOHN PITCHER

What's the fuss for?

JOAN PITCHER

There was a bang out on the heath.

William Stow who has nearly been falling asleep shoots up in his chair.

WILLIAM STOW

I know what that is! I remember bein told. A prisoner escaped from the jail, that's what the bang be.

The First Stranger in the chimney-corner lowers his head on hearing this.

Young Hardy slowly nods his head and smiles in recognition of the earlier event.

YOUNG HARDY
Ah, now I understand.

FLASHBACK. INT. PRISON CELL. CASTERBRIDGE. NIGHT.

The First Stranger punches the Prison Officer in the stomach and then in the face. The Prison Officer collapses in pain.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy sits at his desk writing. He stops for a moment and looks up.

OLD HARDY
If you can remember, I told you
that all you needed was to be
patient.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

YOUNG HARDY
(nodding)
Yes, yes of course.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S BARN. NIGHT.

There is a BANG FROM A GUN.

Widow Wren struggles to separate herself from Oliver Giles.

WIDOW WREN
What was that? Sounded like a blast
from a gun!

OLIVER GILES
I don't know, best we stay here
though out of the way.

There is a further BANG. Both Widow Wren and Oliver Giles sit up alarmed.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

WILLIAM STOW

I've been told about it, being my position, what I am like, but I never heard it afore now.

SECOND STRANGER

I can only wonder if that was my man?

All are now seated.

Shepherd Fennel who hears the remark is the first to speak, nodding to the Second Stranger.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

Surely it is your man. And surely we all seed him! It were that little man who looked in at the door and quivered like a leaf when he seed you and heard your song.

JOHN PITCHER

His teeth chattered and the breath went out of his body.

WILL SABIN

And bolted as if he'd been shot at.

FIRST STRANGER

You may be right he certainly were acting odd enough.

CAROL SABIN

We were all a wondering what made him run off in such a fright and now 'tis explained.

The FIRING OF THE GUN is heard again. The Second Stranger looks menacingly round the room.

SECOND STRANGER

Is there a constable of this county here? Is there such? If so, let him step forward.

Everyone looks round to stare at William Stow. After a few uneasy moments William Stow steadies himself and stands up.

The Second Stranger looks at him critically and also stands up.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

You?

The Second Stranger walks towards William Stow.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

You are a sworn constable of
Wessex?

WILLIAM STOW

I be sir, yes I be.

The Second Stranger stops still but only inches away from William Stow who looks terrified.

SECOND STRANGER

Then pursue the criminal at once
and with assistance bring him back
here. He can't have got far.

WILLIAM STOW

Yes, yes I will sir.

(pause)

I will when I've got my staff. I'll
go home and get it, and come back
sharp here and start in a body.

William Stow starts to back away from the Second Stranger, who shouts at him loudly.

SECOND STRANGER

Staff! Never mind your staff. The
man'll be gone!

WILLIAM STOW

But I can't do nothing without my
staff, for there's the King's royal
crown a painted on and the lion and
unicorn, so as when I raise en up
and hit my prisoner, tis made a
lawful blow thereby.

Angered the Second Stranger again moves closer to a flummoxed and nervous William Stow.

WILLIAM STOW (CONT'D)

I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man
without my staff, no not I.

(pause)

If I hadn't the law to gie me
courage, why, instead o' my taking
up him he might take up on me!

A few in the room, including Charley Jake finds William Stow's last remark funny and start to laugh. They are quickly cautioned against this by the Second Stranger who stares at them.

SECOND STRANGER

This is not a laughing matter!

The Second Stranger moves his head to within inches of William Stow's face.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

You're pathetic! I'm a King's man myself and can give you authority enough for this.

Charley Jake's toothless mouth remains open.

William Stow is visually shaking, the Second Stranger moves away from William Stow much to his relief.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye lanterns?

WILLIAM STOW

Er yes we have lanterns I demand it.

SECOND STRANGER

And the rest of you able bodied, have you some good stout staves and pitchforks?

By way of an answer William Stow nods and excitedly addresses the men in the room.

WILLIAM STOW

Staves and pitchforks then in the name of the law!

(pause)

Yes, and take 'em in your hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell you!

William Stow's motivational speech to his potential deputies is not enough to inspire, no-one in the room moves.

Charley Jake's whispers to Will Sabin whilst also shaking his head.

CHARLEY JAKE

You'd need to be pixie-led to go
out on that heath tonight.

WILL SABIN

Pixie-led yes. It seems no matter,
I think that's what he'll be having
us doing.

The Second Stranger, still clearly angry, again has to shout.

SECOND STRANGER

You all heard what he said, move!
Move!

The Second Stranger's shouting wakes up the child and her cry
is heard from upstairs. This clearly upsets Shepherdess
Fennel who has tears in her eyes.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

You horrible evil, evil man! Get
out of my house! Evil you are,
evil!

Shepherdess Fennel breaks down and her husband goes over to
comfort her.

All goes quiet in the room.

The Second Stranger stares at Shepherdess Fennel and silently
shakes his head before addressing the shepherds again.

SECOND STRANGER

I said move!

He looks round to Shepherd Fennel comforting his wife.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

And that means you too, get your
backside out there!

SHEPHERD FENNEL

(angrily)

Yes, yes, I'll be with you soon
enough. Soon enough.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

(quietly to her husband)

I best be upstairs.

(crying)

Oh my poor baby. Tis of ill omen
for her, all this gallows talk at
her christening.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

You get yourself upstairs my love,
things will be well.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

(whispering)

Don't do too good a job out there,
that poor wretch don't deserve to
be caught.

(pause)

We could all find ourselves needing
to steal in order to eat, he don't
deserve to be hanged by likes of
him.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

He certainly don't. But you heard
him, you heard him, the hangman.

Shepherd Fennel looks over to William Stow and shakes his
head.

SHEPHERD FENNEL (CONT'D)

And Mr William Stow, our sworn
constable of Wessex! May the lord
bless him.

Shepherdess Fennel makes her way upstairs and is followed by
the other women in the room. Dick, the boy fiddler,
reluctantly joins them on the demand of Joan Pitcher.

The men put on coats and equip themselves with lanterns which
they hastily light. They carry sheep-crooks, collected from
above the fire place, sticks, staffs and hurdle-staves. They
all venture outside.

The room is now deserted except for Young Hardy.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S BARN. NIGHT.

Despite the noisy interruptions Oliver Giles and Widow Wren
have continued their love-making. However the sound of people
shouting and emerging from the cottage brings matters to a
close.

Will Sabin's lantern shines from just outside the barn and
Oliver Giles and Widow Wren hastily adjust their clothing.

Will stands at the doorway.

WILL SABIN

Just as I thought. You are a disgrace Widow Wren, a terrible disgrace. Your Jack an all.

(pause)

Disgrace. And you Oliver, I believe Jack was a good mate of your father's, interesting to hear what he has to say.

Will Sabin shakes his head.

WILL SABIN (CONT'D)

Disgrace!

Will Sabin and the light from the lantern moves away from the barn.

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

It is still raining heavily.

All the men are now ready. Will Sabin joins John Pitcher outside the front of the cottage.

CHARLEY JAKE

Where you been Will boy? I tell you I weren't moving till I had sight of thee.

WILL SABIN

I'll tell 'ee later. The matter got me vexed it has. Hold up, the great sheriff Stow is about to speak.

WILLIAM STOW

Eh just remember. I got the law, even without my staff. If you see him and he get caught call for me.

JOHN PITCHER

What's he say?

WILL SABIN

Nothing worth bothering yourself with. Come on then let's see if we can find the poor devil.

CHARLEY JAKE

Don't you be going too fast we ain't all got your legs. And I ain't too keen being out here, ain't right.

The men disperse and start looking, the lanterns can be seen spread all over the hill.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

All is quiet in the downstairs of the cottage, the women can be heard from upstairs.

Young Hardy has not yet joined the search party outside but has taken the opportunity to inspect Dick's violin abandoned on the floor.

The front door opens and the First Stranger's head peers round, seeing that the room is empty he enters. He helps himself to a piece of skimmer-cake and pours half a mug of mead. He walks over to where he had been sitting in the chimney-corner. He sits again and makes himself comfortable.

There are noises from the people above.

The front door opens again and the Second Stranger's head looks round, he too enters the room and sees the First Stranger back in the chimney-corner.

Young Hardy watches on.

SECOND STRANGER

Oh your here? I thought you'd gone to help in the capture.

The Second Stranger helps himself to a generous quantity of mead nearly filling a large mug.

FIRST STRANGER

I thought you had too.

The First Stranger puts his finger up to his lips.

FIRST STRANGER (CONT'D)

We better be a bit quiet, the women seem to be upstairs.

The Second Stranger stands in the middle of the room.

SECOND STRANGER

That be the case I will then, I can be inclined to be a bit loud at times I own it.

The Second Stranger drinks from his mug.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

No, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without me. And such a night as it is too. And 'tis the business o' the government to take care of its criminals not mine.

FIRST STRANGER

True, so it is. Like you I felt there were enough out there looking.

The First Stranger remains seated eating his cake.

SECOND STRANGER

An I don't want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country.

FIRST STRANGER

Nor I neither, no.

SECOND STRANGER

These shepherd people are used to it, simple-minded souls.

He takes another gulp of his mead.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

They'll have him ready for me in the morning, and no trouble to me at all.

FIRST STRANGER

Right enough, they'll have him ready for you.

(pause)

Ready for their meeting with you, Mr William Calcraft then.

The Second Stranger walks a few steps towards the First Stranger in the chimney-corner.

SECOND STRANGER

Ah you know my name. And you know of course of my work?

The First Stranger nervously nods his head.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Yes they'll have him ready for me.

The Second Stranger leans over the First Stranger so that their heads are quite close.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

As always with my customers I will make sure that my face is the first he sees in the morning and I'll tell him there and then that my face will be the last thing he will ever see on earth.

The Second Stranger with hands either side of his face snatches down an imaginary hood making the First Stranger jump.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Before I pull down his hood!

FIRST STRANGER

That's em,
(shaking his head)
That's what you do? Is it? That's what you do.

SECOND STRANGER

Oh yes, that my friend, that is what I do.

The Second Stranger moves away laughing, he finishes his drink and places the empty mug down on a nearby table. He wipes his beard with his handkerchief.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Anyway, my way is to Casterbridge; 'tis as much as my legs will do to take me that far.

The Second Stranger stares at the First Stranger intensely.

SECOND STRANGER (CONT'D)

Are you going the same way? The same way as me?

FIRST STRANGER

No. No,
(rather nervously)
I'm sorry to say. I have to get home over there.
(nodding to the right)
And I feel as you do, that it's quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime.

The First Stranger stands up. The Second Stranger still has his eyes locked onto the eyes of the First Stranger. The two men shake hands.

FIRST STRANGER (CONT'D)
So it be goodbye then Mr, Mr
William Calcraft.

Young Hardy looks at Stranger Two and then Stranger One before switching back to Stranger Two.

SECOND STRANGER
Yes, it's goodbye my friend. It's
unlikely that we will meet again,
unless of course,
(pause)
unless it was ever deemed that you
were in need of my services.

The First Stranger gives a nervous little laugh.

FIRST STRANGER
Let us, let's hope not.

The Second Stranger speaks slowly and with much menace in his voice.

SECOND STRANGER
Yes, let us hope not.
(pause)
I wish you a safe journey then, for
it is very dark out there.
(pause)
Very dark indeed.

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

The hill and the landscape is lit by both the weak full moon and the lanterns as the men conduct their search. It is still raining.

Young Hardy joins the men on the hillside.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
Very dark it was and after some
time searching it was decided that
it should get darker still.

Shepherd Fennel talks to William Stow and after a few moments he shouts out instructions to the men searching.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Shepherd Fennel suggested that the lanterns did more to dazzle their own eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration. So all lights were extinguished and due silence was observed.

Gradually the lights from the lanterns are extinguished one by one.

The small party of Will Sabin, Charley Jake and John Pitcher move slowly through the darkness. They somewhat clumsily approach a tree and what appears to be the figure of the Third Stranger.

OLD HARDY (V.O. CONT'D)

The three of them found themselves near a lonely ash, the single tree on this part of the coomb, probably sown there by a passing bird some fifty years before.

The Third Stranger moves slightly in the darkness.

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself, appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond.

WILL SABIN

See him? He's there! There!

Will Sabin gestures to the other two to stand back as he approaches the Third Stranger.

WILL SABIN (CONT'D)

I'll do the approaching.
Nice and easy. I don't think there'll be trouble.

He addresses the Third Stranger directly.

WILL SABIN (CONT'D)

You're not going to give me any trouble are you?

THIRD STRANGER

(nervously)
What me?

CHARLEY JAKE

We ain't be speaking to anyone else!

THIRD STRANGER

(shaking his head)

No. No trouble.

JOHN PITCHER

What's he say?

WILL SABIN

I certainly be speaking to you. Please make no move to run away. You will soon be arrested by a, well a, a representative of the law.

JOHN PITCHER

Representative of what?

CHARLEY JAKE

The law. Stow. Stow in other words.

JOHN PITCHER

(sniggering)

Oh him. Him in authority.

Will Sabin shouts for William Stow.

WILL SABIN

Stow! Stow! We've got him, got your man. Over by the tree.

The Third Stranger stands quite still as do those around him.

William Stow accompanied by Shepherd Fennel and Elijah New, who is desperately out of breath, make there way over the hill and arrive at the tree.

WILLIAM STOW

The law is here now, the King's royal crown, well not here but, well you know.

Young Hardy watches proceedings obviously amused by William Stow's efforts in trying to be official.

WILLIAM STOW (CONT'D)

Stranger, in the name of the King I arrest you as you should rightly be biding in Casterbridge jail in a decent proper manner to be hung tomorrow morning.

(MORE)

WILLIAM STOW (CONT'D)

Any resistance will be responded to with the staff, even though it's not really

WILL SABIN

(impatiently)

Shall we just get him back Stow? Then maybe we can all get to our beds.

CHARLEY JAKE

Can we have some light now? I'm sure I'm going to fall and break my old bones.

The group moves off in the direction of Shepherd Fennel's cottage which is visible in the distance. William Stow walks besides the Third Stranger.

Elijah New trails well behind the main party.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

There had been a change of occupants at Shepherd Fennel's dwelling whilst the search had been taking place.

INT. SHEPHERD FENNEL'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Amongst the remaining ladies from the christening party were two officers from Casterbridge jail, and a local magistrate.

All three officials are seated at a table, Shepherdess Fennel, Carol Sabin, Joan Pitcher and Dick are over the other side of the room.

The FIRST OFFICER looks out from the open door.

FIRST OFFICER

There's lights out there now, and they're heading this way and it looks to me as if they might have had some success.

The magistrate (JOHN KEMPTON) a bespectacled and severe looking man in his sixties also stands up to look.

KEMPTON

Not before time it must be near
(taking a watch from his
waist-coat)
Midnight, at least the rains
stopped.

The SECOND OFFICER remains seated.

SECOND OFFICER

And the new hangman gone off to the
jail?

KEMPTON

The new officer of justice you mean
officer.

SECOND OFFICER

Officer of justice then.

FIRST OFFICER

Short-drop Calcraft, that's what
they be calling him.

Kempton shakes his head.

KEMPTON

All only rumours, only rumours.

FIRST OFFICER

You wait till tomorrow sir, I have
it on good authority that's what he
does.

The First Officer turns towards the Second Officer.

FIRST OFFICER (CONT'D)

Makes an inch of rope very very
valuable.

The Second Officer nods his head in agreement. Kempton shakes
his head and sits down.

KEMPTON

(to himself)
Surrounded by rural plebs.

At the other side of the room Shepherdess Fennel is seated
beside Carol Sabin.

CAROL SABIN

I do hope everything's alright and
no-one's hurt.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL

It's a blessing if they haven't
with all the excitement.

(lowering her voice)

Did you hear about widow Wren?

Carol Sabin shakes her head and Joan Pitcher leans forward with interest.

Definitely not interested Dick goes over to join the officials and sits down quietly.

SHEPHERDESS FENNEL (CONT'D)

Well your Will will surely tell you
but it seems...

At the other side of the room a group of men arrive at the front door headed by William Stow who is puffed out with pride.

WILLIAM STOW

Gentlemen, not without risk and
danger I have brought back your
man.

The group enters the room, the Second Officer now stands.

WILLIAM STOW (CONT'D)

He is inside this circle of persons
who considering their ignorance of
crown work have made themselves
useful.

WILL SABIN

Just get on with it Stow!

William Stow enters the circle and proudly pushes the Third Stranger forward towards the officials. All the search party now find themselves seats clearly fatigued by their efforts.

The Third Stranger despite the man-handling still looks relatively calm.

WILLIAM STOW

Do you still want him guarded?

FIRST OFFICER

(shaking his head and
smiling)

No, I'm sure we can manage. Who is
he anyway?

WILLIAM STOW

Your man. The convict you were after.

Both the officers shake their heads.

SECOND OFFICER

Certainly not. This certainly isn't Timothy Sommers.

WILLIAM STOW

But how can it be otherwise?

WILL SABIN

It must be him surely for he just bolted away when he were at the door.

SHEPHERD FENNEL

It would be him, he was in a terrible queer state when he saw the hangman.

John Pitcher leans over to Charley Jake.

JOHN PITCHER

What they saying, it ain't him?

CHARLEY JAKE

That's what they're saying it ain't him. He ain't the one they're after.

Kempton who has remained seated now stands up and addresses William Stow directly.

KEMPTON

Can you or someone please tell me what is going on, is this the man you were after?

WILLIAM STOW

Er, yes sir this be him.

Elijah New arrives panting and out of breath, Dick offers him his seat into which he collapses.

Kempton now turns to the two officers.

KEMPTON

And you're both saying that this gentleman isn't the convict in question, one Timothy Sommers?

Both officers shake their heads.

SECOND OFFICER

It certainly isn't Timothy Sommers
sir.

Kempton now addresses the Third Stranger.

KEMPTON

May I ask you then who you are and
what were you doing out there at
this unholy hour of the morning.

(pause)

Indeed, with the patience of a
saint, what am I doing here at such
an unholy hour of the morning.

THIRD STRANGER

(calmly and quietly)

If I may sir. My name is John
Sommers and I am the brother of the
man you are searching for.

There are various murmurs of 'it's his brother' that go round
the room. Kempton, more calmly now, gently nods his head.

WILLIAM STOW

What? You the brother. All that
effort!

KEMPTON

(to himself)

Total incompetence.

(to the Third Stranger)

Please go on, when you're ready.

THIRD STRANGER

Yes sir. Timothy the man you are
looking for is my brother. When I
arrived at this door. I needed to
ask way to Casterbridge, for I
wanted to speak to my brother one
more time before, well before he be
...

Again, murmurs go round the room, commenting on what the
Third Stranger has revealed.

THIRD STRANGER (CONT'D)

Well anyway, then I saw him, the
hangman singing his terrible song.
I saw my brother in the chimney-
corner.

The Third Stranger is clearly distressed and is close to tears.

THIRD STRANGER (CONT'D)

I was scared beyond words that I would somehow reveal him to the people here, reveal him to the hangman.

KEMPTON

(quietly)

Do you have any idea where your brother is?

THIRD STRANGER

No sir.

(shaking his head)

I honestly don't.

KEMPTON

(shrugging his shoulders)

Then.

(pause)

Then you are free to go, I have no alternative.

WILLIAM STOW

Free to go?

Kempton turns to William Stow and looks at him with contempt.

KEMPTON

Free to go as I said. Do you have an issue with that?

William Stow nervously shakes his head signifying that he doesn't.

KEMPTON (CONT'D)

Good.

Kempton looks around the room.

KEMPTON (CONT'D)

And we still have a man to catch.

Along with others in the room Young Hardy is bewildered by the events of the evening.

The Third Stranger after shaking hands with Kempton and Shepherd Fennel walks out into the night.

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

The Third Stranger gradually disappears in the distance.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy sits at his desk.

OLD HARDY

And there we have the night of the
three strangers.

Young Hardy sits in front of him clutching his violin. He
shakes his head from side to side.

YOUNG HARDY

Back there then, can we go back
again?

OLD HARDY

Go back there? Certainly. For
within this room I am as Prospero
in his cell, controlling the
island.

YOUNG HARDY

(looking confused)
Prospero?

OLD HARDY

(shaking his head)
Never mind, never mind.
There's so much you have yet to
learn.

(pause)

Yes we can go back.

(smiling)

A tempest was raging on that night
too.

FLASHBACK TO EARLIER SCENE. INT. COTTAGE. ROOM LIT BY
CANDLES. NIGHT.

FIRST STRANGER

So it be goodbye then Mr, Mr
William Calcraft.

Young Hardy looks at Stranger Two and then Stranger One
before switching back to Stranger Two.

SECOND STRANGER

Yes, it's goodbye my friend. It's unlikely that we will meet again, unless of course,
 (pause)
 unless it was ever deemed that you were in need of my services.

The First Stranger gives a nervous little laugh.

FIRST STRANGER

Let us, let's hope not.

The Second Stranger speaks slowly and with much menace in his voice.

SECOND STRANGER

Yes, let us hope not.
 (pause)
 I wish you a safe journey then, for it is very dark out there.
 (pause)
 Very dark indeed.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

YOUNG HARDY

Back there then, did the hangman amongst all those stares, know that he had Timothy Sommers in front of him?

OLD HARDY

(smiling)
 We shall never know, never know. But we shall meet William Calcraft again, be he somewhat older.

Old Hardy reaches into his drawer again and pulls out the noose.

Alarmed Young Hardy backs off.

YOUNG HARDY

More hanging?

OLD HARDY

One more matter of the noose to be dealt with.

YOUNG HARDY

And Timothy Sommers sir, was he
caught, was he ever hanged?

EXT. EGDON HEATH. NIGHT.

Outside in the rain and wind a man of about forty is
descending the hill away from a row of bee hives and Shepherd
Fennel's cottage.

The man is tall and gaunt, his face is largely covered by a
hat.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

As far as I know nothing was ever
heard of Timothy Sommers and
although there was a search, the
law still having a man to catch;
bearing in mind his crime, common
folk never searched too much, too
high or too low.

(pause)

But be very assured the menace of
William Calcraft, the second of the
two strangers that night, would
have haunted him for as long as he
lived.

BLACKNESS

SECOND STRANGER (V.O.)

I wish you a very safe journey, for
it is dark out there.

(pause)

Very dark indeed.

FADE OUT:

END.

THE HAUNTING OF MR HARDY 3: THE WITHERED ARM

Written by

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Based on Thomas Hardy's The Withered Arm

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FADE IN:

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

OLD HARDY who has just come upstairs stands just outside his study carrying a cup and saucer. He opens the door.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Inside YOUNG HARDY is looking at some watercolors above the fire-place. He turns round as Old Hardy enters the room.

Old Hardy is surprised to see him.

OLD HARDY
Ah you're here!

Old Hardy closes the door and makes his way over to his desk the cup rattling in the saucer.

YOUNG HARDY
Yes, just looking at these.

The old man sits down at his desk and sips tea from his cup.

OLD HARDY
Those? Ah yes by a friend you've
yet to meet, but now sadly gone.

Young Hardy shakes his head and looks confused. He sits down on a chair opposite the desk moving his violin and bow that were placed there.

The only light in the room comes from a desk lamp. Directly under it is a skipping-rope with red wooden handles and a photograph of Carry.

YOUNG HARDY
So, you need me again?

Old Hardy seems slightly shocked by the young man's confidence.

OLD HARDY
Yes,
(smiling)
Yes I certainly do.

Old Hardy reaches into his drawer and takes out a hangman's noose.

On seeing this Young Hardy's face grimaces.

YOUNG HARDY

More hanging? More hanging you wish
to remember?

There is a knock on the door and it quickly opens. FLORENCE enters carrying a small bottle of pills and a glass of water.

FLORENCE

You took your tea but you forgot
these, remember what Doctor Mann
said.

Florence looks at the noose in Old Hardy's hand.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

I, I won't ask what that's doing
here.

Florence, shaking her head, places the bottle of pills and the glass on the desk.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

Take them Tom, please, for my sake,
you're not well.

Close to tears she exits closing the door behind her.

Old Hardy puts down the noose on his desk and picks up the bottle of pills. He takes two out and swallows these with some water.

OLD HARDY

My wife thinks these will help.
Sadly she's wrong.
(pause)
She's been very ill herself.

He puts down the glass and picks up the noose again.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Back to this. Back to the noose.

YOUNG HARDY

But it's not Tess? Not Tess that
you wish to remember?

OLD HARDY

No. No not my Tess. Not my Tess.
Other matters. Other stories. But
unfortunately, some might say, all
concerned with the hangman's noose.

Old Hardy puts the noose back in the desk drawer and closes it. He then looks directly at Young Hardy's violin and shakes his head.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Sorry to have to say it, but there
will be no place for the fiddle.

YOUNG HARDY
Not that sort of story?

OLD HARDY
No not that sort of story.
(pause)
So you met the Officer for Justice,
the hangman William Calcraft on
your last adventure back didn't
you?

FLASHBACK TO SCENE FROM EPISODE TWO.

The Second Stranger stands in the centre of the room everyone else seems to have moved as far away as possible from him forming a circle. There is silence in the room except for the rain against the window-shutters.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
Circulus, cujus centrum diabolus, a
circle at whose centre was the
devil.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Young Hardy nods.

YOUNG HARDY
Yes I met him, certainly met him.

OLD HARDY
Well you'll be meeting him again
later on.

Young Hardy's face looks fearful.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
And although Mr Calcraft's frame
and face may have aged, his
occupation and the evil that came
with it has not.

EXT. FARM YARD. HOLMSTOKE. EARLY MORNING.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

I ask you if you will, to call in at the area besides the river Frome which will become the village of Holmstoke. Call in at Farmer Davey's dairy there and hear the talk that will set the scene for the story to unfold.

Young Hardy leans on a wooden post near the entrance of a dairy.

Almost opposite him a thin and pale woman of about thirty, RHODA BROOK, emerges from a barn carrying an empty bucket. She walks over the open yard that is dotted with busy hens and enters the dairy.

INT. COWSHED. HOLMSTOKE. EARLY MORNING.

FARMER DAVEY is just making his way out.

FARMER DAVEY

Good morning Rhoda, how are you?

RHODA

I am well sir, well.

FARMER DAVEY

I might have a bit of work for your Edward in a couple of days, nothing too heavy. I know the few coins I'll pay him will come in useful.

RHODA

They'll do that certainly. Thank you sir, thank you.

There are FOUR MILKMAIDS next to each other milking their cows and gossiping. They all stop talking as Rhoda enters the dairy and although they all look up no-one speaks. Rhoda too ignores everyone and chooses to milk her cow somewhat apart from the rest of the milkmaids.

Young Hardy wanders in.

SUSAN, a milkmaid of about Rhoda's age, breaks the silence.

SUSAN

So they be coming home tomorrow farmer Lodge and his new wife. It'll nettle her over there,

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

(quietly)

the evil one, for they say the wife
is so young an pretty.

A young milkmaid (PAULINE) of about seventeen leans her head to the side of her cow so that she can see Susan.

PAULINE

Evil one? Nettle Rhoda you mean?
Why? Why should that be?

Rhoda hears her name being mentioned but doesn't look up.

SUSAN

Ah yes, you wouldn't know, too
young.

(loud whisper)

Oh yes she be evil all right.
Her boy Edward was fathered by
farmer Lodge when Rhoda be about
your age.

Pauline looks shocked, she turns round to look at Rhoda and then back again towards Susan.

PAULINE

(whispering)

Oh that be truly wicked and
shameful. Who'd ever have thought
that of her.

Listening two cows away is REBECCA. Her head now comes from behind the cow she is milking. She makes no attempt to soften her voice.

REBECCA

Talk of the village at the time.
Disgrace. Neither of them speak to
each other now and he don't have
anything to do with boy.

A much older milkmaid (ANNIE) has finished her milking and makes her way over to Rebecca to join in the gossip. She is unaware that Farmer Davey is behind her looking agitated.

ANNIE

You lot talking about Rhoda?

FARMER DAVEY

Don't any of you ever stop! There
is work to be done.

(pause)

(MORE)

FARMER DAVEY (CONT'D)

And don't you older ones think that poor Rhoda has had enough to put up with? Don't you?

(shouting)

Well I do. And I'm the one paying you lot so get on with it!

Rhoda hears all this but makes no comment. She presses her head to the side of the cow she is milking. Her eyes are full of tears.

Farmer Davey walks passed Rhoda and out of the barn.

SUSAN

Well he certainly got one on him today, wonder if the evil one is overlooking him?

REBECCA

Overlooking? The way that she used to carry on she might well be looking after him in all sorts of ways.

The other milkmaids quietly giggle except Pauline who looks confused.

YOUNG MILKMAID

What does overlooking mean?

The rest of the milking carries on in comparative silence

Rhoda finishes her milking, gathers her things together and leaves the shed. The remaining milkmaids watch her leave without saying a word.

She makes her way over towards the lane that runs alongside the farm.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE. HOLMSTOKE. MORNING.

In the lane she finds her son EDWARD waiting to meet her. Edward is about twelve years old. He is tall for his age. The two of them talk as they make their way home.

RHODA

Nearly driven me mad it has all the talk. All about your father and his new wife. His new wife is this, his new wife is that, that's all they've gone on about all the morning. That 'n calling me names.

EDWARD

Take no heed of it mother.

RHODA

All day it been.

EDWARD

Don't be fretting mother, we're okay, don't matter about father, or them and what they do or say.

RHODA

Ah but it does, it matter to me it does.

The two walk on in silence until they approach an old and dilapidated cottage. Rhoda stops at the rusty gate of the yard.

RHODA (CONT'D)

Before we go in listen, and I promise we'll talk no more about the matter today, no more. I want you to do something for me. It's Saturday tomorrow and the two of 'em are bound to go to the market, I want you to go too.

Edward pushes the gate open and the two walk towards the front door.

RHODA (CONT'D)

I want you to tell me whether she's as pretty as they say, whether she have dark hair or fair. That sort of thing.

EDWARD

I'll do as you say mother, but you need not fret, she'll not be as pretty as you.

Rhoda stops and gives Edward a loving hug.

RHODA

What would I do without you Edward Brook?

EXT. ROAD ACROSS EGDON HEATH. SUNNY DAY.

A handsome new gig with two horses travels along a road over the heath. The driver is FARMER LODGE and sat beside him is a very pretty young woman GERTRUDE his new wife.

Farmer Lodge, who is smartly dressed, is about twenty years older than Gertrude. He has sandy to red hair and a neatly trimmed moustache.

The gig passes a pond and then descends a hill.

FARMER LODGE

That's Rushy Pond we just passed.
And we're heading over Egdon and
then on to Holmstoke where everyone
will be excited to meet you.

Gertrude looks round excitedly.

GERTRUDE

It all looks so very lovely.

Farmer Lodge leans over and kisses Gertrude on the cheek.

FARMER LODGE

You look so very lovely my dear, I
can't wait to show you off.

The gig travels on with Gertrude observing the scenery around her with enthusiasm.

On the road in front of them making his way back from the market is Edward carrying a heavy load. As the gig approaches him he turns round and stares intently.

Gertrude notices Edward staring.

GERTRUDE

Why does that young boy stare so?

Farmer Lodge looks angrily at Edward.

FARMER LODGE

You're bound to attract some stares
for a time. I told you it would be
the way, locals round here aren't
accustomed to a lady such as you.

Edward continues to stare his eyes locked onto the gig and its occupants.

GERTRUDE

He looks so pitiful though, his
load so heavy and his clothes,
boots and britches in such a state.
Can't we stop and offer him a lift?

FARMER LODGE

Take no heed, these country lads
are as tough as they come. That
load will seem nothing to him,
nothing.

GERTRUDE

He just looks in such a poor state
that's all.

The gig passes Edward who keeps his eyes focused on it, it
eventually disappears into the distance.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

The cottage is dark and lit by candles.

Rhoda is serving up a meal and places plates on the table.

RHODA

It's ready Edward.

EDWARD (O.S.)

Coming.

Edward joins Rhoda and sits down at the table.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

This looks good. I'm starving.

He attacks his plate enthusiastically.

RHODA

Well then.

There is a pause whilst Edward finishes chewing his food.

EDWARD

Well what? I said it looked good
and it tastes good.

RHODA

Not your food! What does the new
Mrs Lodge look like?

EDWARD

Yes, she looked sort of young and
had fair hair I think.

RHODA

Only think? And did your father
speak at all?

EDWARD

Not to me no, he looked angry if anything, like he'd never seen me afore and that I had no right to look at him.

RHODA

That be just like him ashamed of his own kin. Well, I want you to do something else for me if you will?

EDWARD

(suspiciously)
What mother?

RHODA

Just go to church tomorrow morning and have a good look at her, they're bound to go.

Edward nods that he will.

INT. HOLMSTOKE CHURCH. MORNING.

Edward sits in his best clothing at the very back of the church. The church is well attended, in the next pew to him sits Young Hardy.

The vicar is about to start the service but delays matters by a few seconds as Farmer Lodge and his young wife arrive at the church door.

Their arrival causes a commotion with all the congregation turning round to look at the couple. Gertrude looks extremely embarrassed by all the attention she receives. Farmer Lodge nods politely to everyone.

Edward stares at Gertrude and she in turn takes special notice of him.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Rhoda and Edward sit together at the table eating, both obviously enjoying their meal.

EDWARD

This is lovely mother.

RHODA

It is thanks to you. It's a very tender hare that you've wired. But you be careful.

EDWARD

(looking puzzled)

Careful? Why 'cus its a hare? An we shouldn't eat em, 'cus of witches an that?

RHODA

So you know all about that do you?

(slowly shaking her head)

No nothing to do with witches, there's enough talk like that goin about, most of it to do with me. No you be careful about hares or whatever you wire, poaching is poaching.

(pause)

Now tell me about the new Mrs Lodge?

EDWARD

She is very pretty, very pretty, everyone looked at her.

RHODA

Go on.

Edward speaks as if reading from a list.

EDWARD

She's very pretty, she has light coloured hair, blue eyes, wears fine clothes ...

INT. COWSHED. HOLMSTOKE. EARLY MORNING.

Rhoda sits on a stool milking a cow. She can hear the other milkmaids gossiping about Gertrude Lodge.

SUSAN

Well you should a seen her yesterday at church. She looked a real picture she did, expensive clothes an that.

ANNIE

What she look like then in herself?

SUSAN

She's very pretty, has light coloured hair, blue eyes, wears fine clothes and has hands that have not seen work of any sort.

ANNIE

(loud whisper)

Wedding ring will fit nicely then.
Bet it's driving the evil one wild
don't you?

Rhoda presses her head against the cow she is milking her eyes full of tears again.

INT. BEDROOM. RHODA'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

The room is lit by a candle by the bed.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

The descriptions of Gertrude from both her son and the other milkmaids made Rhoda Brook think that she had a strong almost photographic image of what the new Mrs Lodge looked like.

Rhoda undresses and prepares for bed and then goes to the bedroom door.

RHODA

Goodnight now my Edward.

EDWARD (O.S.)

Goodnight mother. Don't you be fretting too much about things. You see it'll all settle down.

Rhoda smiles at Edward's remark and speaks to herself quietly.

RHODA

Bless you my Edward, your an old head on young shoulders, bless you.

She puts on a night-dress and extinguishes the candle at the side of her bed.

All is still and silent.

RHODA'S DREAM/ HALLUCINATION.

Rhoda is woken up sharply. The candle is now lit again and the figure of Gertrude Lodge is sat across her chest riding her as if she were a horse.

Gertrude is wearing a pale silk dress and a white bonnet and her features are shockingly distorted.

SHE HEARS A MIXTURE OF EDWARD'S DESCRIPTION OF GERTRUDE AND THE MILKMAIDS.

EDWARD (O.S.)
Very pretty, has light coloured
hair, blue eyes, wears fine
clothes...

SUSAN (O.S.)
Blue eyes, wears fine clothes and
has hands that have not seen any
work.

The pressure on Rhoda's chest gets heavier and heavier as the blue eyes peer cruelly down.

ANNIE (O.S.)
(loud whisper)
Bet it's driving the evil one wild
don't you?

SUSAN (O.S.)
Hands that have not seen work of
any sort.

ANNIE (O.S.)
Wedding ring will fit nicely then.

Gertrude is laughing, leering as she thrusts her left arm forward so that her wedding ring is in Rhoda's face glittering in front of her eyes.

AGAIN SHE HEARS THE VOICES.

ANNIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Wedding ring will fit nicely then.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Very pretty. Hands that have not
seen work of any sort.

ANNIE
Fit nicely then.

Struggling, Rhoda swings out her right hand seizing Gertrude's left arm whirling her backwards off the bed.

There is a LOUD THUD as Gertrude's head hits the floor.

RHODA'S DREAM/ HALLUCINATION ENDS.

INT. BEDROOM. RHODA'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Rhoda shoots bolt upright in the darkness. She is breathing heavily and is in a cold sweat. Shaking, she manages to relight the candle.

Rhoda glances down at the floor but there is no-one there, she also looks at her right hand which, in her dream, had gripped Gertrude's left arm so tightly.

The clock indicates that it is two a.m.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Rhoda clears plates from the table as Edward starts to rake out the debris of the fire from the night before, he looks up towards his mother.

EDWARD

Did you fall out of bed in the night mother?

RHODA

No, why do you ask that?

EDWARD

I just heard a bump that's all.

RHODA

A bump.

EDWARD

Yes, it be about two o'clock.

Rhoda face shows that she is troubled by this.

RHODA

No, no I didn't.

The two continue to tidy and clean the cottage, Edward setting the fire and stacking a pile logs on the hearth.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Edward is standing over the sink busy skinning a rabbit.

Rhoda is sat at the table preparing vegetables. She hears the garden gate click and looks out of the window. Gertrude Lodge stands by the gate carrying a basket.

Rhoda stops what she is doing. She recognises Gertrude's face from her dream.

FLASHBACK TO THE SCENE OF RHODA'S DREAM/ HALLUCINATION.

The pressure on Rhoda's chest gets heavier and heavier as the blue eyes peer cruelly down. Gertrude is laughing, leering as she thrusts her left arm forward so that her wedding ring is in Rhoda's face glittering in front of her eyes.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. DAY.

RHODA

What the. What on earth is she
doing here?

EDWARD

Who?

Edward puts down the rabbit and looks out of the window.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Oh, em, I think I know what she
come for.

RHODA

(agitated)

You better well tell me then hadn't
you!

EDWARD

Well I saw her yesterday.

GERTRUDE

And?

EDWARD

And she said are you the boy I saw
in church and the one carrying that
heavy load back from the market?
And I said I was. She looked down
at my boots and noticed they were
cracked and let in water. And I say
that I live with my mother, I have
no father, and life be a bit of a
struggle.

Rhoda annoyed, slowly shakes her head.

RHODA

You shouldn't have spoken to her,
shouldn't have!

EDWARD

Well she said she'd get me some boots and that she'd come and see you about it. I think she were only bein kind.

RHODA

You shouldn't have spoken Edward! Bein kind indeed.

Gertrude knocks gently on the door and after a pause Rhoda goes to open it.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

The young woman introduced herself. Rhoda almost expected to see the cruel and distorted face that she'd seen in the night but instead was confronted by a soft-cheeked and pretty young woman.

Gertrude hands the basket containing new boots over to Rhoda and soon after leaves.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. DAY.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

A week later she was to call again.

Rhoda and Gertrude are sat at the table drinking mugs of tea.

GERTRUDE

Is your boy Edward out at present?

RHODA

Yes he's out in the fields somewhere.

GERTRUDE

He's genuinely a lovely lad you must be very proud of him.

Rhoda nods and smiles as Gertrude drinks from her mug.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

And thank you so very much for this.

(looking down at her mug)

I won't keep you for long I promise. I like walking and this is the nearest place to where I live and to be completely honest I don't know many people.

RHODA

How are you finding it here? Hope the air agrees with you and that you're not suffering from the damp of the water meads, some do you know.

GERTRUDE

No. No I'm generally fine, but now you remind me, I've one little ailment which puzzles me.

Gertrude puts down her mug, gets up and walks over to Rhoda and uncovers her left arm.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

It's nothing serious, but I can't make it out.

On the pink surface of Gertrude's arm there are distinct marks of where Rhoda's fingers seized it in her dream. Rhoda is shocked.

RHODA

How, how did you come by these?

GERTRUDE

Well this will sound strange but I was in bed one night a couple of weeks ago, I'd been dreaming about being in some strange place and I awoke suddenly with a sharp pain in my arm. At first I didn't know where I was till the clock striking two reminded me.

FLASHBACK TO THE SCENE OF RHODA'S DREAM/ HALLUCINATION.

Struggling Rhoda swings out her right hand seizing Gertrude's left arm and whirling her backwards off the bed.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Rhoda slowly shakes her head from side to side.

RHODA

(to herself)

My God. No, no. I don't believe this. Don't believe it.

Looking concerned Gertrude places her hand on Rhoda's arm.

GERTRUDE

Are you okay?

Rhoda quickly removes her arm.

RHODA

Yes.

(pause)

er yes, yes sorry I'm fine. That be awful, awful for you.

EXT. MARKET PLACE. DAY. SOME WEEKS LATER.

Gertrude and Rhoda meet up when both are shopping at the busy market.

Young Hardy is also present.

GERTRUDE

Oh Rhoda, you're just the person I want to see, I was going to call on you.

RHODA

Yes.

GERTRUDE

My poor arm seems a lot worse. Let's go over here and I'll show you.

Both women move to a quieter area and put down their shopping baskets. Gertrude rolls up her sleeve and shows Rhoda her arm.

Young Hardy having followed the two also looks at Gertrude's arm.

YOUNG HARDY

Horrible!

GERTRUDE

See how shrivelled it is? It hurts terribly and my husband has made me see a doctor, but he didn't seem to know what it was. He prescribed some ointment but as you can see it's no better.

RHODA

That's awful.

GERTRUDE

My husband said that it looks like
the finger marks from some witch,
or the devil himself.

(pause)

And he then says that he doesn't
believe in such things.

Gertrude rolls down the sleeve.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

I was going to come and see you.
Now someone has said that there is
a man on Egdon Heath, a Conjuror? A
Conjuror Trendle?

Reluctantly Rhoda nods in acknowledgment.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

And that he could help me with my
arm. They also said, and your name
was particularly mentioned, that
you would know where he lives.

RHODA

(irritated)

Me? Me. Oh yes I would wouldn't I!
(to herself)
Bein what they think I am of
course.

GERTRUDE

Sorry I don't understand.

RHODA

You wouldn't, you wouldn't. Yes,
yes I know of this man, this
Conjuror Trendle, but do you know
what he is, what he does?

Gertrude shakes her head.

RHODA (CONT'D)

A conjuror is another name for a
witch.

GERTRUDE

(shocked)

Oh no thank you. Most definitely
not! I don't believe in it. I want
nothing to do with anything like
that. Nothing at all.

Gertrude buttons up her sleeve says goodbye and departs.

Rhoda is left in the market place muttering to herself.

RHODA

So they're all talking again, I'm the evil witch, because of having my Edward. I'm the sorceress, who would know of the whereabouts of the exorcist.

Young Hardy watches on.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Rhoda is in her kitchen preparing a meal. There is a knock on the door, looking out of the window she sees a very pitiful looking Gertrude on her doorstep.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

A couple of weeks passed and sorceress or not the young Mrs Lodge needed Rhoda's help.

Rhoda opens the door and invites Gertrude in, she is followed by Young Hardy.

Gertrude is obviously distressed and near to tears.

GERTRUDE

Oh Rhoda. I've come to ask you a favour.

RHODA

Whatever is the matter with you? Come in and sit yourself down.

Rhoda guides Gertrude over to the table where they both sit.

Young Hardy watches on from the door.

GERTRUDE

I know I said when I saw you two weeks back that I didn't believe in witchcraft. Well I'm getting absolutely desperate. Look it's getting worse.

Gertrude rolls up her sleeve to show Rhoda. From just above her wrist up to the shoulder the skin has shrivelled to that of the arm of a very elderly person. The area in which Rhoda gripped has now turned blue.

On seeing this Rhoda shoots back in her seat.

Looking over the shoulder at the arm Young Hardy looks as if he's about to vomit.

RHODA

You poor soul.

GERTRUDE

It's getting worse and because of that I want a favour from you.

(pause)

Will you take me to see this Conjuror Trendle?

RHODA

(shaking her head)

Oh no, no I'm really not happy about that. Not happy at all.

GERTRUDE

Please, please you must. I have no-one else to turn to and I am so very desperate. Please. I have no-one.

RHODA

As I say I'm far from happy, but I do know where he lives.

GERTRUDE

Please, please you must show me, you must.

Rhoda gets up and walks over to the sink. She turns to face Gertrude.

RHODA

I don't like it Gertrude, certainly don't. But if I must, can you be ready for tomorrow morning?

GERTRUDE

I can make anytime, my husband always seems to be away on business these days.

(pause)

Always away, away from me for that matter. But he mustn't know, mustn't know.

Rhoda nods her head in understanding and empathy.

RHODA

He won't find out from the likes of me. Very well. If you be sure you want to go?

GERTRUDE

Very sure.

RHODA

Be at the end of the lane by ten tomorrow morning and we'll walk across the heath.

GERTRUDE

Oh thank you so much Rhoda, thank you so very much.

Gertrude gets up from her seat and gives Rhoda a hug. She gathers her belongings and closes the door behind her.

RHODA

She might not be thanking me tomorrow.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANE/ EGDON HEATH. MORNING.

It's a bleak and windy autumn day as Young Hardy sets off across Egdon Heath. He is followed by Rhoda and Gertrude who walk in silence, both looking sullen.

As they walk JOE SCAMEL approaches them, he is wearing a red waistcoat.

Young Hardy cannot believe it as Joe passes him and acknowledges the two women.

JOE SCAMEL

Morning ladies, don't suppose you seen a little girl, have you, on your travels? Carry, Carry Hipcroft?

Both Rhoda and Gertrude shake their heads and walk purposefully on.

Young Hardy stops and stares.

YOUNG HARDY

What? He's in the wrong story surely?

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. MORNING.

Old Hardy looks up from the papers on his desk. He scratches his head.

OLD HARDY
 Yes. Yes. You're right of course.
 Wrong story
 (pause)
 but all neighbours in the world of
 Egdon Heath, Wessex.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE/ EGDON HEATH. MORNING.

Eventually the two women descend on a cart track leading to Conjuror Trendle's cottage.

EXT. OUTSIDE CONJUROR TRENDLE'S COTTAGE. LATE MORNING.

There are hens in the yard and CONJUROR TRENDLE is cutting wood in an adjacent barn.

Just inside the barn with him is a black and white cat sitting on a bale of straw.

Young Hardy shakes his head when he notices the cat.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy gives a faint but weary smile as he looks up into space from his writing.

OLD HARDY
 Yes it is. I told you he got about
 a bit.

EXT. OUTSIDE CONJUROR TRENDLE'S COTTAGE. LATE MORNING.

On seeing the two women Conjuror Trendle puts his saw down. He is a grey-bearded man in his sixties with a reddish face.

CONJUROR TRENDLE
 Now then, what can I do for you
 ladies on such a miserable day?

Conjuror Trendle looks enquiringly at Rhoda's face.

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

Now I think I know you from
Holmstoke. Rhoda? Rhoda Brook is
it?

RHODA

It is. But it's this lady here that
I've brought to see you.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Very well, how can I help you young
lady?

Gertrude rolls up her sleeve making her very disfigured arm
available for the Conjuror Trendle's inspection.

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

Oh dear that be nasty, very nasty
indeed.

GERTRUDE

Yes it is. I've seen a doctor but
he wasn't much help, I tried some
ointments. But unfortunately as you
can see they didn't work.

Gertrude is close to tears.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

I'm desperate.

Conjuror Trendle slowly shakes his head.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

No, no young lady ointments
wouldn't help. No unfortunately
medicine will not cure this.

He lightly runs a finger over Gertrude's arm and looks into
her face.

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

You won't want to hear this, but
this my dear is the work of an
enemy.

Rhoda physically moves away from the two.

GERTRUDE

Enemy? What enemy?

CONJUROR TRENDLE

That would be best known to you my
dear.

Gertrude shakes her head, she is slightly indignant.

GERTRUDE

I don't think I've got an enemy.
Not one that I know of.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

I'm reluctant to argue with you my
lady, but enemies you certainly
have. Now if you be willing to come
inside my cottage I can probably
show you who these enemies are.

Conjuror Trendle leads Gertrude down the path towards his cottage. He looks at Rhoda and indicates that she too is welcome, she shakes her head wishing to stay outside.

She settles on a bench near the back door. Gertrude and Conjuror Trendle enter the cottage.

They are followed by Young Hardy.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. CONJUROR TRENDLE'S COTTAGE. LATE MORNING.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Sit yourself down there if you
will, I won't keep you long.

Gertrude sits at the table, the door is left open and she can see Rhoda sitting on the bench outside.

Conjuror Trendle takes a glass from his dresser and fills it with water, he also takes an egg from a cupboard. With his back to Gertrude he seems to murmur something to the egg, which he then breaks.

Conjuror Trendle retains the yolk of the egg in the shell but pours the white in to the glass. He gently shakes the mixture before handing it to Gertrude.

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

Now you take the glass to the light
and look at it very closely.

Gertrude goes to the back door and inspects the glass as the white of the egg mixes with the water. Young Hardy stands just behind her.

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

Now do you catch the likeness of
any face or figure as you look?

(MORE)

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

For if you do then that will be
your enemy.

GERTRUDE

No. I can't say that I do. Although
I ...

Gertrude stares intently at the mixture, she then looks at Rhoda sat on the bench and then back to the mixture.

Young Hardy also looks at both the mixture and Rhoda.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

Oh no, no!

Gertrude seems in shock and drops the glass on the floor.

EXT. OUTSIDE CONJUROR TRENDLE'S COTTAGE. LATE MORNING.

On seeing and hearing Gertrude's state of shock and witnessing the breaking of the glass, Rhoda walks up the path to the lane where she waits with her back turned towards the cottage. She recalls the incident in her bedroom when she grabbed Gertrude's arm.

FLASHBACK TO THE SCENE OF THE RHODA'S DREAM/ HALLUCINATION.

The pressure on Rhoda's chest gets heavier and heavier as the blue eyes peer cruelly down. Gertrude is laughing, leering as she thrusts her left arm forward so that her wedding ring is in Rhoda's face glittering in front of her eyes.

AGAIN SHE HEARS THE VOICES.

EDWARD (V.O.)

She is very pretty, very pretty,
everyone looked at her.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Wedding ring will fit nicely then

Struggling Rhoda swings out her right hand seizing Gertrude's left arm whirling her backwards off the bed.

There is a LOUD THUD as Gertrude's head hits the floor.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. CONJUROR TRENDLE'S COTTAGE. LATE MORNING.

The glass lands on the floor.

Conjuror Trendle goes over to Gertrude who still stands at the back door.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Are you okay my dear? Bit of a shock was it? I'm so very very sorry.

A very flustered Gertrude tries to hold herself together. She bends down and starts to pick up the broken glass.

GERTRUDE

No. No its me that's sorry. I er must pay you for this. How much am I in your debt? I'll clean all this up.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

You'll do no such thing and you owe me nothing.

Conjuror Trendle looks down at the glass then back to Gertrude.

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

Only an old glass. You've had a bit of a shock. Get yourself safely on your way home, Rhoda's waiting for you outside.

GERTRUDE

Rhoda! Yes, yes Rhoda.

EXT. CONJURER TRENDLE'S COTTAGE. LATE MORNING.

Gertrude leaves the cottage and walks in a trance like manner up the garden path towards Rhoda. Conjuror Trendle closes the door behind her. Rhoda turns round towards Gertrude and searches for something to say.

RHODA

Did, did he charge much?

GERTRUDE

Oh no nothing. He would not take a farthing.

RHODA
And what did you see?

GERTRUDE
Nothing.

Gertrude looks at Rhoda intently.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)
Nothing, nothing I care to speak
of.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANE/ EGDON HEATH. EARLY AFTERNOON.

Rhoda and Gertrude set off walking both with their heads down
in silence.

They are followed by Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
Hardly a word was spoken by the two
on their journey back to Holmstoke.
Indeed they were destined not to
talk or even meet again for quite
sometime.

INT. COWSHED. HOLMSTOKE. EARLY MORNING.

It's milking time and Rhoda milks her cow away from the
others. Again she is aware that they are talking about her.

OLD HARDY (V.O. CONT'D)
Some way or other a story was
whispered about the many-dairied
lowland that winter that Gertrude
Lodge's gradual loss of her left
arm was owing to her being
'overlooked' or bewitched by Rhoda
Brook.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. RHODA'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Rhoda and Edward sit at the table eating.

EDWARD
Lovely drop of broth Mother.

Rhoda puts her spoon down her meal not touched.

RHODA

I'm just not hungry, not hungry at all.

Edward carries on eating with enthusiasm.

EDWARD

As I say it's lovely. Are that lot in dairy getting at you again?

RHODA

I've had enough of things, well and truly.

Rhoda plays with a piece of bread in her fingers.

RHODA (CONT'D)

How would you feel about leaving?

EDWARD

What leaving here?

RHODA

Yes leaving here, I know I could get some work the other side of the Hintocks and I'd leave all that lot behind.

Edward stops eating.

EDWARD

You know I'll go wherever you go although it do seem a shame. I can help you a bit here, and I do get a bit a work from Farmer Davey from time to time, and we're so settled.

Rhoda nods in agreement with this and picks up her spoon.

RHODA

Just let's see what the spring brings shall we.

INT. DINNING ROOM. FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Farmer Lodge sits at one end of an elaborately laid table whilst Gertrude sits at the other. Gertrude is wearing a dress with long sleeves and her left arm hangs by her side. The two sit in silence.

Farmer Lodge picks up his wine glass and looks across to Gertrude who is not eating.

FARMER LODGE

Your not eating my dear, venison
not to your liking?

GERTRUDE

There's nothing wrong with the
food. I just feel sad that's all.

FARMER LODGE

Sad?

GERTRUDE

Sad that you don't seem to want to
be seen with me anymore.

FARMER LODGE

Oh this one again. Business trips,
business trips that's all, I've
told you, you'd only be bored.

Farmer Lodge wipes his mouth on a serviette.

FARMER LODGE (CONT'D)

Dry and boring but, if you so
desire it, I'll try in future to
make sure that you can accompany
me.

GERTRUDE

It's not just the trips. You just
don't seem to want me, you don't
look at me, you don't touch me,
love me.

FARMER LODGE

(shouting)

Where has all this come from? It's
all absolute nonsense!

GERTRUDE

It's not nonsense! I just can't
take the way things are between us
anymore.

Gertrude stands up and is close to tears, her right hand
gripping her left arm.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

It's this, it's this arm isn't it?
And I can do nothing about it.
Nothing at all.

FARMER LODGE

Nonsense!

Gertrude hurries away from the table towards the door at which point she nearly collides with ELSIE, a young and pretty servant of about eighteen. She turns round at the door.

GERTRUDE

Your ashamed of me aren't you?
Ashamed of me and it's not my
fault! Not my fault!

Gertrude leaves the room brushing passed an embarrassed Elsie. Farmer Lodge throws down his knife and fork onto the table.

FARMER LODGE

Oh damn you woman! Damn the lot of
you.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANE/ EGDON HEATH. EARLY MORNING.

It is a bright spring morning Rhoda and Edward make there way along the lanes and over the heathland of Egdon. Their belongings are stacked on a cart pulled by a horse and led by Edward.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Come spring, and after giving the
matter much thought, Rhoda decided
that her and Edward, were to move
away from Holmstoke.

INT. BEDROOM. FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. DAY.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

For Gertrude there seemed to be no
such escape. A few years had passed
and her damaged arm was worse than
ever.

Gertrude a pathetic and pale figure sits distraught on the edge of a lavishly curtained four poster bed. She is in her night dress. Her left arm is bandaged from shoulder downwards and is immobile by her side.

Young Hardy stands in the corner of the room looking awkward and uncomfortable.

Farmer Lodge is kneeling down in front of a cupboard angrily discarding its contents.

FARMER LODGE

Dammed if you won't poison yourself with these apothecary messes and witch mixtures some time or other. You've been spending too much time listening to village nonsense.

GERTRUDE

I only meant it for your good, so I could be attractive again for you.

FARMER LODGE

My good? My good? How on earth can it be for my good. I'll clear out the whole lot, and destroy them.

(shouting)

And you must try such remedies no more!

Gertrude is now sobbing. Farmer Lodge looks at her and, feeling guilty for shouting, walks over to the bed and puts an arm round her.

FARMER LODGE (CONT'D)

I think what you want is somebody to cheer you. It's such a pity that we haven't been blessed with children.

GERTRUDE

That seems to be my fault as well.

FARMER LODGE

Not at all. Not at all, it's more the curse on an old rogue like me marrying a very pretty young thing like you.

(pause)

I er, I once thought of adopting a boy, yes.

FLASHBACK FARMER LODGE AND GERTRUDE TRAVELLING BY GIG FROM THE MARKET.

On the road in front of them making his way back from the market is Edward carrying a heavy load. As the gig approaches him he recognises his father and stares intently at the pair in the gig.

Gertrude notices Edward staring.

GERTRUDE

Why does that young boy stare so?

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. BEDROOM. FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. DAY.

FARMER LODGE

But the boy's too old now. And, and
'em he's gone away somewhere I
don't know where.

GERTRUDE

Boy. Which boy?

Farmer Lodge ignoring the question stands up and makes his way to the door.

FARMER LODGE

Yes, yes I did. Too late, too late.
Come down when you're ready. I'll
send one of the girls up, Elsie, to
clear that mess.

Farmer Lodge exits out of the door.

After a few moments Gertrude stands up and makes her way to a large mirror on the wall. She studies her reflection.

Young Hardy stands behind her, his image is not reflected in the mirror.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Six years of marriage and only a
few months of love. Poor Gertrude
just longed to be as she was then.
Despite her husband's wrath
regarding village nonsense Gertrude
was desperate and decided to visit
Conjurer Trendle again on Egdon
Heath.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANE/ EGDON HEATH. MORNING. EERILY QUIET.

It is a dark, cold and damp autumn morning.

Gertrude sets off, her left arm hanging uselessly from her body.

Crows fly above Gertrude but make no noise. She looks up nervously clutching her left arm with her right.

She is followed in the distance by Young Hardy.

After a long walk across heathland she eventually reaches the cottage.

She walks down the path and knocks on the door. Conjuror Trendle answers and invites her in.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. CONJUROR TRENDLE'S COTTAGE. MORNING.

Gertrude sits down in a chair by an open fire. A black and white cat lies contentedly on the fireside rug. Trendle also sits down.

Young Hardy leans against the kitchen table watching and listening attentively.

Conjuror Trendle notices that Gertrude is shaking either with fear or from the cold of outside.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Get yourself warm my dear. Now I
know I've seen you before haven't
I?

He looks at her face and then her left arm hanging uselessly by her side.

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

That's it. You're the young lady
who'd been overlooked by an enemy,
that's right isn't it?

GERTRUDE

Sadly it is right yes. And I've
come to see if you can do anything
more for me?

Conjuror Trendle slowly shakes his head.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

I've heard you can send away warts
and other excrescences, I know
people have said, why can't you
send away this?

Gertrude sheds her top coat, uncovers her left arm and lifts it up towards Conjuror Trendle, again he shakes his head.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

You think too much of my powers my dear, I'm old, and I'm weak now too.

GERTRUDE

Isn't there anything you can suggest? The arm is ruining my life, my marriage.

Gertrude is very close to tears.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

My husband doesn't want to take me anywhere, or be seen with me, he doesn't want to look at me or have anything to do with me.

(pause)

He's ashamed of me, ashamed!

Gertrude breaks down crying.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

(calmly)

That is his loss young lady, his very great loss, let me assure you of that.

Conjuror Trendle leans forward and gives Gertrude's right arm a reassuring and kindly squeeze.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Unfortunately I can't really help you, it's too much for me to attempt in my own person. I simply don't have those sort of powers anymore.

GERTRUDE

(pleading)

Nothing you can do? Or advise? Anything please?

CONJUROR TRENDLE

There is only one chance of doing it known to me. It has never failed in afflictions of this kind. But it is hard to carry out, especially hard for a woman.

GERTRUDE

Tell me! Tell me please.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Are you sure? It's not a pleasant thing.

She nods her head.

GERTRUDE

Yes, I'm sure.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Very well then. You must touch with your damaged arm the neck of a man who's just been hanged.

Both Gertrude and Young Hardy look horrified.

CONJUROR TRENDLE (CONT'D)

Before he's cold, just after he's been cut down.

GERTRUDE

Oh goodness! How can that, how can that do good?

CONJUROR TRENDLE

It will turn the blood and change the constitution. But, as I say, to do it is hard. You must go to the jail when there's a hanging and wait for the corpse when he's brought off the gallows. And, as I said he must be still warm.

GERTRUDE

(shaking her head)

Still warm that's awful. I don't think ...

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Well, I said it would be hard. But work it does. I used to send dozens for skin complaints. A few years back two epileptic children from Holmstoke were cured by doing the same thing, the turn of the blood.

(pause)

Condemned by the local clergy they were, but the children were cured nevertheless.

GERTRUDE

How would I set about doing such a thing?

CONJUROR TRENDLE

You'd have to bribe the hangman or the officer of justice as he's known. In Casterbridge that's the very, let's say very well known, William Calcraft,
 (pause)
 more evil than any he's ever hung.

GERTRUDE

William Calcraft?
 (again she shakes her head)
 I don't think I could do it, I honestly don't.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Well that is a matter for you to decide.

Gertrude still fighting back tears stands up, she fastens up her sleeve and puts her coat on.

GERTRUDE

Is there nothing more you can suggest?

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Sadly I have nothing more to offer you.

GERTRUDE

Can I pay you for this? For your time.

Conjuror Trendle stands up.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

No my dear, you owe me absolutely nothing. I can only wish you the very best of luck.
 (pause)
 And can I be as bold as to say something?

GERTRUDE

Yes of course.

CONJUROR TRENDLE

Your husband if he acts as you say, doesn't deserve you my dear, he really doesn't.

Gertrude gives a weak smile.

Conjuror Trendle opens the door for her and she leaves, she is closely followed by Young Hardy.

Conjuror Trendle waits until Gertrude is out of sight before he closes the door.

INT. BEDROOM. FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. MORNING.

Gertrude sits in front of her dressing table brushing her hair in the mirror. She is wearing a dressing gown. There's a knock on the door and Elsie pops her head round.

ELSIE

Is it all right if I make the bed ma'am? I can leave it for a bit if you want.

GERTRUDE

No it's fine to do it now Elsie it's me that's running late.

Gertrude turns away from the mirror towards Elsie.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

Actually Elsie I was going to ask you something, sit down on the chair for a minute.

Elsie sits down looking slightly awkward.

ELSIE

(defensively)

If it's about the windows miss, Seth Richards has promised faithfully that he'll get round to cleaning em next week.

GERTRUDE

No nothing about the house and its upkeep. Something a little more private and personal.

Elsie leans forward to listen attentively.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

You've mentioned in the past about your brother Wilf and his friends.

ELSIE

(again defensively)

I have ma'am but what he gets up to is nothing to do with me, my father's in despair with him at times.

Gertrude shakes her head and smiles.

GERTRUDE

No, no no I'm not suggesting anything of the sort. But you've mentioned in the past him attending the hang-fairs in Casterbridge?

ELSIE

That's true I have ma'am. Horrible, if you want my look at things, horrible. Making a day out of some poor soul's misery, it don't seem right. Not to mention all the trouble it puts Wilf through to get there, twelve mile or so walk there and then back again.

GERTRUDE

Out of interest how do people find out about when hangings are to take place?

ELSIE

Well he always finds out by word and mouth. News be spread from market to market, fair to fair, inn to inn. And it be in the paper of course. You can always get news after courts have met.

GERTRUDE

The assizes.

ELSIE

Yes that's it ma'am the assizes.

GERTRUDE

Thank you Elsie. Can I ask you one more thing please? Please don't mention this conversation to anyone.

Elsie stands up shaking her head and looking slightly confused.

ELSIE

Of course not ma'am. I'll come back a little later and do the bed, when you're ready.

Elsie leaves the room. Gertrude turns back to the mirror and carries on brushing her hair.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Gertrude had decided that she had to do something. The problem for her would be getting to Casterbridge a dozen or fifteen miles away without her husband knowing. For she knew he would never condone such an action.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. DAY.

Gertrude is seated at the table reading the newspaper her left arm hanging by her side. Farmer Lodge enters the room looking grave and somewhat agitated. Gertrude hardly looks up from her newspaper, she is clearly fascinated by something.

OLD HARDY (V.O. CONT'D)

And then one morning, a Wednesday, news showed her unexpected fortune. The assizes had met in the last two weeks and determined that an execution was to take place on the following Saturday at Casterbridge. And more good news for Gertrude was to follow.

FARMER LODGE

Put the paper down for a minute Gertrude I have something to tell you.

Gertrude lowers the paper and looks up at Farmer Lodge, he speaks gravely.

FARMER LODGE (CONT'D)

I'm going away for a few days on business. Tiresome business unfortunately. Business that determines that I'm unable to take you with me. Now I know I said before that I'd always endeavor to take you with me, but on this occasion it simply...

GERTRUDE

When are you to go?

FARMER LODGE

Oh em tomorrow first thing and I probably won't get back till next Monday. Depending on various details and things sadly beyond my control. As I said I know what I said before that ...

Gertrude calmly puts down the paper and tries not to look too pleased.

GERTRUDE

That's fine.

FARMER LODGE

Fine?

(pause)

Fine then. I'll be going first thing. Thought you'd, after what we'd discussed, I thought you'd be upset.

GERTRUDE

I'll miss you of course dear, the house always seems so empty when you're not around, but business is business and as you said I'd probably be bored.

FARMER LODGE

Yes. Yes it is. I'm glad you see it that way.

Farmer Lodge exits the room looking relieved. Gertrude picks up the newspaper again.

GERTRUDE

(to herself)

Execution for the felony of arson.
To be hung on Saturday morning.

EXT. OUTSIDE FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. MORNING.

Gertrude is in her front garden looking at the flowers. It is a bright summers morning. Elsie approaches the house.

ELSIE

Morning ma'am and a lovely one at that.

GERTRUDE

Morning Elsie, yes it is. When you've got yourself settled will you go over to the stables for me? And ask John to saddle Lady my mare up for this afternoon please.

ELSIE

Will do ma'am.

GERTRUDE

The masters not here and I'm er, I'm visiting a friend later today.

ELSIE

Will you be safe ma'am, I mean with your...

GERTRUDE

My arm? Yes Elsie I'll be fine on Lady. Thank you for your concern.
(pause)
Good that someone cares.

Gertrude turns round and goes back into the house. Elsie looks sad at this comment.

ELSIE

Yes miss.

EXT. OUTSIDE FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. LATER THAT DAY.

Gertrude, carrying a small bag, comes out of her garden to meet JOHN who is leading Lady towards her.

JOHN

Here she is miss and a true lady she is herself, Lady by name, lady by nature if you don't mind me saying so.

GERTRUDE

She is indeed John, Lady is the steadiest horse in the stables.

John takes the bag off Gertrude and ties it to the saddle. He then offers his arm.

JOHN

Can I give you a hand miss.

She accepts John's offer as her left arm is useless in such a maneuver. She eventually finds herself in the correct position to ride side-saddle.

GERTRUDE

Thank you John. Now you know the masters away, I'm visiting a friend and probably won't be back till tomorrow. If I'm not in by ten tonight will you see to it that the house is all locked up please?

JOHN

Certainly miss, enjoy your visit. I know you'll be fine with Lady.

Gertrude thanks John and moves off slowly away from the house.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANE/ OPEN HEATHLAND. LATE AFTERNOON.

Gertrude rides her horse with her left arm hanging by her side. She takes a very steady pace.

After riding over the heath she arrives at a pool where her horse takes a drink.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

After a steady climb uphill Gertrude halted at Rushy Pond. For the first time she could see over to Casterbridge.

In the distance Gertrude can see the county jail with activity taking place on its roof.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

On the roof Gertrude could see workmen busy erecting something. When she realised what that something was her flesh crept.

From looking at the workmen on the roof of the prison Gertrude directs her eyes downwards towards her useless left arm.

GERTRUDE

How I loved it all when I first arrived.

FLASHBACK TO WHEN GERTRUDE AND FARMER LODGE TRAVELLED IN THEIR GIG.

GERTRUDE

It all looks so very lovely.

Farmer Lodge leans over and kisses Gertrude on the cheek.

FARMER LODGE

You look so very lovely my dear, I can't wait to show you off.

The gig travels on Gertrude observing the scenery around her with enthusiasm.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE/ OPEN HEATHLAND. LATE AFTERNOON.

GERTRUDE

Now its dismal and cursed like my arm, why did this have to happen?

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. HEATHLAND/ COUNTRY LANES/ APPROACHING CASTERBRIDGE. EARLY EVENING.

Gertrude continues to ride steadily and now takes the downward track towards Casterbridge. The town is busy and the market still very much open for business.

The first inn she comes to is the White Hart which has its stable adjoining it. Gertrude leads Lady into the stable yard.

Young Hardy follows.

EXT. STABLE YARD. WHITE HART INN. EVENING.

The OSTLER, an elderly man, comes out to greet Gertrude and Lady.

OSTLER

Evening miss. Shall I be relieving you of your mare.

The Ostler walks slowly over and pats the horse on the neck.

OSTLER (CONT'D)

She seem to be blowing a bit, you
come a fair way?

Adjacent to the stable is a harness-maker's shop where a group of noisy youths are gathered at the door looking inside.

GERTRUDE

Lady? Oh yes a good fair way yes.

Gertrude points over towards the youths.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

What's going on there?

OSTLER

Oh that, that's all to do with the
hanging tomorrow. Stanley in there
be making the rope.

Gertrude's right hand jumps over her body to clutch her immobile left arm and awkwardly she tries to dismount, the Ostler helps her down.

OSTLER (CONT'D)

You okay. You don't mind, there you
are miss.

He then starts to undo the saddle and bag from the horse.

OSTLER (CONT'D)

Yes, as you can imagine the rope
always gets bit of interest. Tis
sold by the inch afterwards. And
being that the hangman is the
'Great King Calcraft' he don't use
so much rope, it be even more
valuable.

Gertrude takes the bag from the Ostler.

OSTLER (CONT'D)

Now Calcraft's economy means that
the varmint dangling from the short
drop suffers a bit more before he
departs. No mercy weights, no
mercy.

The Ostler lowers his voice.

OSTLER (CONT'D)

Now if you wished ma'am I could get Stanley to save you a bit of the rope. That's if you're interested at all, I could get it at a good price?

Gertrude looks shocked.

GERTRUDE

No! No, I'm not interested in anything like that.

OSTLER

But you're here for the hang-fair surely?

GERTRUDE

(agitated)

No! No I'm not. Well not in the way you think.

OSTLER

It don't matter whats I think. There's many that's here this Friday night because of tomorrow, that's all I'm saying. People travel miles to see a Calcraft execution.

He leads the horse over towards a corner of the stable.

OSTLER (CONT'D)

I'll make sure your mare is well fed and watered ma'am.

Clutching her bag Gertrude makes her way out of the stables, she is followed by Young Hardy.

GERTRUDE

Yes, please do and thank you.

INT. FOYER. WHITE HART INN. NIGHT.

The inn is busy, people coming and going and drinking at the bar.

Gertrude stands at the bar talking to the landlord of the inn. He hands her a set of keys and takes her bag off her. He comes round the bar and the two then walk towards the stairs the other side of the room.

The clock immediately above the bar tells us that it is eight o'clock.

Young Hardy makes himself comfortable in an armchair.

INT. FOYER. WHITE HART INN. NIGHT. LATER.

The clock above the bar indicates that its now eight twenty and Gertrude comes down the stairs and hands the keys of her room to the landlord. She has changed into a dark and sombre dress.

Young Hardy stands up and prepares himself to move.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

It was only at this moment that it dawned on poor Gertrude that she had no idea where the officer of justice, the hangman could be found. She decided then and there that she'd rather ask the old man in the stable than anyone at the inn.

EXT. STABLE YARD. WHITE HART INN. NIGHT.

Gertrude is talking to the Ostler and he is indicating how she can get to the hangman's house. Gertrude gives the Ostler some money and he watches her leave the yard, her left arm still hanging by her side.

OSTLER

Good luck with everything miss. I understand all now, I really do, I wish you well.

She turns round and smiles but does not reply.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CASTERBRIDGE TOWN. NIGHT.

The town is still busy as Gertrude, followed by Young Hardy, makes her way through the streets. Some traders are still working and shouting out the goods they have for sale.

She eventually finds her way to the hill on which the prison building rests. Looking up above the white building she can make out people working, still busy erecting the gallows.

Gertrude walks to the left of the hill by a river passing the outskirts of the jail. She asks a small boy for directions and he points her the way. After a further hundred yards or so she finds herself outside the executioner's cottage, it stands by the river and close to a weir which emits a STEADY ROAR.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE EXECUTIONER'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Gertrude stands hesitating a few yards away from the cottage when the door opens and an old man (CALCRAFT) with a bushy white beard comes out carrying a candle. He is tall, powerfully built and dressed totally in black.

He comes out of the cottage and locks his door, he then turns and ascends a flight of wooden steps fixed against the end of the cottage. He does not seem to notice Gertrude.

Gertrude moves to the foot of the stairs and tries to make herself heard above the roar of the weir. She shouts up towards Calcrafft.

GERTRUDE

Hello! Is it Mr Calcrafft!

CALCRAFT

(angrily)

Who wants him and why!

GERTRUDE

To speak to him a minute.

Cursing to himself Calcrafft descends the stairs with his candle.

CALCRAFT

I am William Calcrafft and was just going to bed. You know what they say, early to bed and early to rise.

His eyes scrutinise Gertrude and his voice still sounds angry and menacing.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

But I don't mind stopping a minute for such a one as you. Come into house.

Calcrafft reopens the door and shows Gertrude in.

Young Hardy remains outside.

INT. PARLOUR. WILLIAM CALCRAFT'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

The room is dark and for a few moments only illuminated by Calcraft's candle. He lights some more candles. Both Calcraft and Gertrude stand by a table on which there is an empty jug and a half full tankard.

CALCRAFT

Now then miss how can I help you?

GERTRUDE

I've come about tomorrow.

CALCRAFT

(smiling)

I thought as much. If you've come about the knot you're wasting your time, one knot is as merciful as another if you keep it under the ear.

Gertrude shakes her head.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

No? Or is the unfortunate person to be hung tomorrow a relation?

He looks at the way she is dressed.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

Or is it a person who's been in your employ?

GERTRUDE

Neither. What time is the execution?

CALCRAFT

The same as usual these days. Twelve o'clock, or as soon after as the London mail-coach gets in. We always wait for that, in case of a reprieve.

GERTRUDE

A reprieve? I hope not!

Calcraft seems momentarily shocked by Gertrude's seeming heartlessness.

CALCRAFT

(smiling)

As a matter of business so do I.

(MORE)

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

But there would be some who'd say,
and I'm not one of them, that the
lad is only eighteen and he was
only present by chance when the
rick was fired.

GERTRUDE

Yes, yes of course. I only meant, I
mean ...

CALCRAFT

It don't matter what you meant.
Don't you worry there's not much
chance of a reprieve, they're
obliged to make an example of him.

Calcraft picks up the tankard from the table and raises it to
to his mouth and drinks. He then wipes his beard with a
handkerchief that he produces somewhat theatrically from his
trouser pocket.

GERTRUDE

I only meant. I only meant that I
want to touch him for a charm, a
cure of an affliction, by the
advice of a man who has proved the
virtue of the remedy.

CALCRAFT

(nodding)

Ahh, now I understand. I've had
such people come in the past years.
But it didn't strike me that you
looked of a sort to require blood-
turning. What's the complaint?

GERTRUDE

It's my arm as you can see.

Gertrude rolls the sleeve of her left arm up

CALCRAFT

Ah, yes it's all a-scam, withered.

He examines her arm as if he's an expert.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

I've seen worse cured by this
method. Twas a knowing-man that
sent you here, whoever he was.

GERTRUDE

You can contrive for me all that's
necessary?

CALCRAFT

Well, you should have really gone to the governor of the jail, and brought your doctor with you, that's how it used to be done. I got into bother once for allowing it.

Calcraft runs his deep black eyes over Gertrude.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

But still. Still perhaps I can manage it, for a trifling fee.

GERTRUDE

Thank you. Thank you. I would rather do it this way, as I should like it kept private.

CALCRAFT

(sneering)
Lover not to know, eh?

GERTRUDE

No! No, husband.

CALCRAFT

Whoever, whatever, I'll grant you a touch of the still warm corpse.

GERTRUDE

(shuddering)
Where is it now?

CALCRAFT

It? It? 'He' you mean, for at the moment he breathes as you and I.

GERTRUDE

I'm sorry, of course, of course I feel ...

Calcraft laughs and shakes his head.

CALCRAFT

Lady, there is no need to feel sorry! The prisoner is locked in a small space of gloom in the jail above us.

(pause)

Mine will be the first face he sees in the morning and it'll be the last he sees on this earth.

Gertrude casts her eyes upwards.

Calcraft takes Gertrude by the right arm and leads her to the door which he then opens. He points up the lane towards the town. He has to shout above the noise of the weir.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

Now, you be waiting at the little wicket in the wall, that you'll find up there in the lane, a good few minutes before twelve o'clock. I will open it from the inside.

Gertrude moves away from the door glad to be freed from Calcraft's grip.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

Goodnight. Be punctual, and if you don't want anybody to recognise you tomorrow wear a veil.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CASTERBRIDGE TOWN. NIGHT.

Gertrude walks up towards the town, on her way she stops to look at the small wicket where she is to meet Calcraft the next day. She looks back to see him with his candle, ascending the stairs outside his cottage.

The town now is much quieter with only a few people on the streets. The clock strikes ten as Gertrude returns to the White Hart Inn.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. CASTERBRIDGE TOWN. DAY.

Gertrude wearing the dark dress of the night before but now accompanied by a veil covering her face, makes her way through the town to the jail. She walks as if in some sort of dream unaware of all around her, she collides at one point with a GROCER setting up his stall, spilling a bag of carrots onto the floor.

GROCER

Mind how you go ma'am! I don't know, I obviously got in your way, lady muck or what!

Gertrude is oblivious to this and walks on.

Street sellers are out shouting and selling their wares.

There is a party atmosphere on the streets and crowds in numbers are jostling to get a good view of the gallows in front of them.

Gertrude walks towards the hill on which the jail is built and as before goes to the left of it by the side of the river. She approaches the small wicket gate and waits.

Young Hardy stands behind her looking apprehensive.

After a few moments Calcrafft opens the gate, he is dressed in a black three piece suit, he allows Gertrude to pass through.

CALCRAFT

It's all arranged as stated, no revision of the plan. We know now that there will be no reprieve, the youth will die.

Gertrude offers only a weak and glazed smile.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)

Come then my lovely lady, I will show you to the waiting room, where you must do just that, wait. We cannot dally long afterwards as I'm informed that the relatives want the body for burial.

INT. THE JAIL. DAY.

Gertrude goes up one flight of stairs followed by the executioner. The stairway is dark as is the room she arrives in. Calcrafft indicates that she should take a seat in one of the many chairs that are lined up against three of the bleak brick walls.

Young Hardy, who has followed, sits directly opposite.

Other than the chairs the room is empty except for two large pieces of stone in the centre which are about four feet apart.

CALCRAFT

I will be collecting you soon, when my work is done.

Calcrafft walks through a stone archway bearing the inscription 'County Jail: 1793'. The archway leads to the only light that floods into the room.

From this space Gertrude hears the frantic crowd outside excitedly anticipating events.

Young Hardy follows Calcraft out under the archway towards the gallows.

Above this babble of noise Gertrude hears a single voice of someone.

UNKNOWN VOICE (O.S.)
Last dying speech and confession.

The town clock strikes twelve.

This is followed by total SILENCE, then, from the audience below, a collective NOISE OF SHOCK.

Young Hardy returns to the dark waiting room and takes his seat. He is clearly shaken by what he has witnessed.

On her seat in the waiting room Gertrude hears the reaction from the spectators below and bows her head. She then makes efforts to prepare herself for the ordeal by rolling up the sleeve of her left arm. Her head is still bowed as she waits.

In a business like manner Calcraft comes through the arch and walks towards her.

CALCRAFT
Are you ready?

Gertrude stands up, she is shaking violently, unable to keep her body still.

Two men emerge through the vivid light under the arch carrying a coffin which they then slam down on the two pieces of stone in the room.

The THUD makes both Gertrude and Young Hardy jump and causes one of the corpse's legs to bounce over the side of the coffin.

The two men exit the room.

Gertrude aided by Calcraft walks over to the coffin. Calcraft puts the corpse's limb back in the coffin and then takes a firm hold of Gertrude's damaged arm.

There are voices of people coming up the stairs behind Calcraft and Gertrude.

As Gertrude's arm is about to make contact with the neck of the corpse she steals herself to look down.

She is horrified and screams hysterically when she finds out that the neck she is about to touch is that of Edward Brook.

GERTRUDE

Young Edward! Oh no! No! No!

Young Hardy shoots up from his seat and looks at the body of Edward in the coffin.

Gertrude turns round to see Farmer Lodge and Rhoda in the room.

Despite Calcraft's efforts in trying to steady her Gertrude collapses and there is a LOUD THUD as her head hits the floor.

FLASHBACK TO THE SCENE OF RHODA'S DREAM/ HALLUCINATION.

Struggling Rhoda swings out her right hand seizing Gertrude's left arm and whirling her backwards off the bed.

There is a LOUD THUD as Gertrude's head hits the floor.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. THE JAIL. DAY.

In tears and in fury Rhoda rushes over to Gertrude.

RHODA

You, you! Why are you here now?
Why? This is the very thing that
Satan showed me in my vision. Why
why?

Rhoda is bending over the unconscious Gertrude shaking her. Farmer Lodge rushes over and pulls Rhoda away.

RHODA (CONT'D)

Haven't you done enough to me?
Don't I still see your face and
wedding ring night after night
after night.

FARMER LODGE

Please Rhoda! Please Rhoda no! Let
her be.

Calcraft kneels down and attends to Gertrude who is unconscious.

CALCRAFT
 (shouting)
 This lady needs a doctor!

Two men appear again from the light under the archway. Calcraft shouts to them.

CALCRAFT (CONT'D)
 Get a doctor one of you and be quick!
 (muttering to himself)
 Damn you woman, what now my trifling fee?

One of the men disappears under the archway the other comes over to Calcraft to see if he can help.

Young Hardy looks on anxiously at the sad figure of Gertrude lying on the floor. He then looks at Edward's body in the coffin and glances over to Rhoda who is in an hysterical state at the far end of the room. He sadly shakes his head at the events that have taken place.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE, DAY.

Old Hardy is sat at his desk his fingers playing with a noose.

Young Hardy is sat opposite looking despondent, his violin and bow rest on the floor.

YOUNG HARDY
 It was not a scene that I would want to remember.

OLD HARDY
 No, no I can understand that. It's done now, done. The story told.

YOUNG HARDY
 And what, can I ask of Gertrude?
 And poor Rhoda?

INT. BEDROOM. FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. MORNING.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Sadly Gertrude never regained consciousness.

Gertrude lies still in bed her right hand in both hands of Farmer Lodge's who looks down sadly towards her.

FARMER LODGE

I think she's gone Elsie and I feel
so so bad.

Elsie walks over from the door to the bed fighting back
tears.

ELSIE

I think she has sir. Bless you
miss, you didn't deserve an ending
like this one.

Farmer Lodge moves forward to kiss Gertrude.

EXT. HOLMSTOKE CEMETERY. DAY.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

She was buried in Holmstoke
cemetery, her arm on internment
still bearing the imprint of Rhoda
Brook's fingers.

A group of people including Farmer Lodge, the vicar and Elsie
stand round an open grave as Gertrude's coffin is slowly
lowered in.

Further away from the main group stand some of the villagers,
including Farmer Davey.

Just outside the cemetery John stands with Lady watching
events and paying their respects over the wall.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Following poor Gertrude's death
Farmer Lodge could never settle in
Holmstoke.

EXT. OUTSIDE FARMER LODGE'S HOUSE. MORNING.

Farmer Lodge stands outside his house talking to Farmer
Davey.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

He sold his farm to Farmer Davey
leaving him with money and
instructions to the effect that if
Rhoda Brook was to return to the
village that she should be well
provided for.

Farmer Lodge who is dressed smartly hands Farmer Davey a white envelope, he then boards a gig with a driver and two horses that are waiting for him. The gig then moves off away from the farm.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy sits at his desk his hands still playing with a noose.

YOUNG HARDY

And did she? Did Rhoda ever come back to Holmstoke?

Old Hardy smiles slightly and shakes his head.

OLD HARDY

No she never really returned.

(pause)

Never 'really', and I choose my words carefully, seen in the area again. She's still talked about though as the witch that overlooked poor Gertrude Lodge.

Old Hardy puts the noose away in the drawer and takes out a small bottle of pills, from which he takes two and swallows them with some water from a glass.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Doctor's orders and plenty of rest.

Young Hardy looks across somewhat bewildered.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Weakness of the heart, when there's so much to remember.

Old Hardy opens his drawer again and takes out a large sheet of paper with a pencil sketch on it. He hands it to Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Have a careful look at this, see anybody you recognise?

Young Hardy studies the sketch.

YOUNG HARDY

Some of the faces seem familiar but sort of look much older.

(pause)

(MORE)

YOUNG HARDY (CONT'D)

Is it the Dewey's? Yes it is. And it's, it's Michael Mail? It's the Stinsford Choir!

OLD HARDY

Correct. They are all characters from Under the Greenwood Tree.

Young Hardy looking confused places the sketch back on the desk.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

So, this is what's next for you. And you will get to play your beloved fiddle!

Young Hardy looks pleased and glances down at his violin.

YOUNG HARDY

It will be so good to be with honest and true singers and musicians. Surely nothing can go black and evil with the church choir.

(pause)

Can it?

Old Hardy puts the sketch back in his drawer and smiles knowingly.

OLD HARDY

Well. Well we shall see won't we.

YOUNG HARDY

Before all that, can I ask you a question about Rhoda Brook?

OLD HARDY

Of course.

YOUNG HARDY

You said a few moments ago that after the death of Gertrude and the execution of Edward, Rhoda was never 'really' seen in the area again. What did you mean by that, never 'really'?

OLD HARDY

Well, let us just say that there were some who claimed to have seen Rhoda wandering on Egdon Heath on different occasions.

EXT. OPEN HEATHLAND. NIGHT.

It is raining and the wind blows fiercely

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

They claimed that she haunted the
bleak heath and was in turn haunted
herself by the distorted image of
Gertrude sitting astride her.

Rhoda walks slowly her head and shoulders hunched up over her
frail body.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

It was said that periodically as
Rhoda walked, her whole body would
go into violent spasm as she
struggled to remove the incubus
from her.

Rhoda's terrified face looks towards an invisible tormentor,
her right arm shooting forward trying to grab the incubus but
only managing the evening air.

FLASHBACK TO THE SCENE OF RHODA'S DREAM/ HALLUCINATION.

The figure of Gertrude is sat across her chest riding her as
if she were a horse. She is wearing a pale silk dress and a
white bonnet and her features are shockingly distorted.

The blue eyes peer cruelly down. Gertrude is laughing,
leering as she thrusts her left arm forward so that her
wedding ring is in Rhoda's face glittering in front of her
eyes.

Struggling Rhoda swings out her right hand seizing Gertrude's
left arm and whirling her backwards off the bed.

BLACKNESS.

There is a LOUD THUD.

FADE OUT:

END.

THE HAUNTING OF MR HARDY 4: THE GRAVE BY THE HANDPOST

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM CAMBRIDGE. MORNING.

SIR SYDNEY COCKERELL walks briskly up the steps of an imposing columned grey stone building. He carries a pile of papers under his arm and a umbrella. He enters the doorway.

INT. LARGE RECEPTION HALL. FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM CAMBRIDGE. MORNING.

The impressive hall is lined with paintings and is dotted with classical sculpture and antiquities.

Two uniformed door staff tip their hats at Cockerell as he come through the door. He duly nods and smiles and makes his way through the hall.

A man in his late forties (Cockerell's secretary JAMES) in a grey tweed suit also carrying papers walks towards Cockerell. Behind him are two smartly dressed women.

JAMES

Ah good morning Sir Sydney. Glad I've managed to see you.

COCKERELL

Good morning James. Good morning ladies.

(acknowledging the women)

Am I in trouble already and it's only

(smiling and looking at his pocket-watch)

Eight thirty?

James smiles and shakes his head.

JAMES

Not yet Sir. I'm just off to a meeting with the Prince of Wales's people, that all looks as if it's going ahead.

COCKERELL

Good it will be great to have him here again. To have lunch with him indeed.

(pause)

I didn't always dine with royalty.

JAMES

(looking slightly
embarrassed)

Er no sir. No. But I wanted to tell
you that Florence Hardy has already
been on the telephone twice this
morning. It seems...

COCKERELL

Twice? Oh dear. Thomas not too
good.

JAMES

Not good sir, if you could
telephone Max Gate when you have
time I think it would be very much
appreciated.

COCKERELL

Will do, will do.

JAMES

(quietly)

The poor lady sounds in quite a
state.

Cockerell nods his head.

COCKERELL

She will be.

Cockerell moves closer to James and lowers his voice.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Just between us two at the moment,
as it's not widely known, poor old
Thomas Hardy is. Well let's just
say, things are not looking too
good.

INT. LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

After climbing the stairs YOUNG HARDY carrying his violin and
bow encounters FLORENCE. She is standing at the doorway of
the bedroom talking to Old Hardy. Florence is wearing a pale
yellow dress and has a scarf bundled round her neck.

FLORENCE

(quite sternly)

You heard what Doctor Mann said.
Now please just do as your told.

She turns round passes Young Hardy and goes down the stairs.

Young Hardy makes his way over to the room where Florence has been, the door is open.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

The room is quite dark. A coal fire burns brightly.

OLD HARDY is lying in bed propped up on pillows he has a glass of water in his hand. On the bedside table there is an array of bottles, pills etc.

On the floor beside the bed are a number of books and papers placed in a distinctive looking biscuit tin with a picture of a winter scene complete with Robin Redbreast.

OLD HARDY

Come in, come in. And have a seat.

Cobby the cat who has been sat on the bed jumps down and goes out.

Young Hardy crosses the room and takes a seat in the corner, he places his violin and bow at his feet.

Old Hardy looks across and smiles.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

It'll soon be your day, your time.
Mine, mine seems to be coming to an
end.

He takes a sip of his water and places the glass back down on his crowded table.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

But not quite yet, not quite yet.
(pause)
I feel quite naked in here without
my desk, without my magic. But, I
will be back in there soon. Have no
doubt.

Young Hardy leans forward in his seat.

YOUNG HARDY

But you do, you do need me, there
are other stories?

OLD HARDY

Oh yes, other stories. If you remember, and indeed you should remember, I said this story was one for your fiddle and that it involved a choir, some members of which you knew?

Old Hardy reaches down to the side of the bed and picks up a piece of paper with a pencil sketch on it. He offers it to Young Hardy.

Young Hardy walks across and takes it and nods keenly.

YOUNG HARDY

Oh yes Stinsford I believe.

OLD HARDY

(slightly agitated)
Mellstock!

YOUNG HARDY

Yes, yes of course, you said Mellstock.

Young Hardy hands the sketch back and goes back to his seat.

OLD HARDY

I recalled a story that was told to me, told to us indeed, many many years ago.

EXT. STONE STUMP WITH CROSS. VILLAGE GREEN. NIGHT.

A group of about a dozen men, some carrying musical instruments are gathering together around the stone stump in the middle of the green.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

It was the eve of Christmas and a group of carol singers and musicians were about to set out on their annual tour of the village caroling.

Most of the men have been drinking at the White Horse Inn opposite.

OLD HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Usually on those nights spirits were high but there was a noticeable difference on this occasion, especially with some of the older ones.

The area is busy, a number of soldiers in uniform also emerge from the inn.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

It was as if they were thinking they might be joined by the phantoms of dead friends who had been of their number in earlier years and were now mute in the churchyard under flattening mounds.

RICHARD TOLLER places his hautboy (a type of oboe) on the ground and rubs his hands together trying to keep warm. He is a large man with a long grey beard and is in his late sixties. MICHAEL MAIL a fiddle player also in his sixties stands next to him.

RICHARD TOLLER

Do you know Michael it just don't seem right tonight somehow.

MICHAEL MAIL

I know just what you mean Richard Toller. I said the very same to my misses afore leaving home. Can't put my finger on why though.

They are joined by SAM NOTTON who carries a clarinet. Sam is a thin bespectacled man who tends to look down his nose at people.

MICHAEL MAIL (CONT'D)

What you say to it Sam Notton?

SAM NOTTON

What's you on about now?

RICHARD TOLLER

We're saying tonight don't just feel right, something dark about events, don't feel like Christmas.

SAM NOTTON

You know my views on these Christmas events, caroling has had its day. Efforts is wasted on a group of heathens.

Richard looks at Michael and shakes his head.

RICHARD TOLLER

Oh you're full of the joys as usual
Sam. Full of Christmas spirit.

(looks around)

Anyway Lot be here now.

LOT SWANHILLS a strong and powerfully built man and the unofficial leader of the choir walks over towards the green. He is in his early forties and has a deep and rich voice.

LOT SWANHILLS

Are we all ready gentlemen?

SAM NOTTON

(muttering to himself)

As ready as we'll ever be.

Young Hardy carrying his violin and bow joins the group.

EZRA CATTSTOCK a man in his fifties with a long white beard, looks at his pocket watch.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

It ain't quite twelve yet Lot and
you know as well as I that it be
bad luck to start afore.

A number of the group nod in agreement with this.

EZRA CATTSTOCK (CONT'D)

There would seem no real harm then,
in us getting back to our beer over
at the Horse.

Again there is a general air of agreement amongst the group, DICK DEWY who having just made his way back from the inn seems particularly keen on this suggestion.

DICK DEWY

Well I could find room for another
one.

SAM NOTTON

(murmuring again to
himself)

You always could.

(more loudly)

What about your Fancy? I hear she
don't approve of some of your
beering, she were saying last week
that...

Dick agitated by this remark walks over towards Sam who backs off slightly.

DICK DEWY

You leave my Fancy out of this!
What's it got to do with you? Eh?
You just can't keep that big nose
of yours...

REUBEN DEWY, Dick's father, looks on anxiously.

REUBEN DEWY

Now our Dick! Take no heed of his
remarks.

Lot shakes his head adamantly and directs his gaze towards Dick and Sam.

LOT SWANHILLS

Stop it all now! Seasonal goodwill
gentlemen! Goodwill!

(calmly)

No, no more beer for a time. No,
none of it. If we're a bit early
it's better if we walk towards the
outlying cottages in Sidlinch Lane,
the people up there own no clocks.

RICHARD TOLLER

You're right there Lot, those
Sidlinchers make church mice look
rich.

Ezra turns to Richard.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

It's all very well for young 'ens
but it be a fair old climb up to
Sidlinch and me with the cello to
carry.

RICHARD TOLLER

We'll be right Ezra, the young 'ens
will just have to wait, that's all.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANES. NIGHT.

The group, some carrying lanterns, pick up their instruments and leave the village green and head towards Broad Sidlinch.

Dick is still obviously furious with Sam and is making his point to Lot and his father Reuben.

Some of the choir start singing and Michael plays a little jig on his violin. On seeing this Young Hardy also starts to play.

MUSIC PLAYS.

The group make their way along the lanes and start to climb a steep hill.

Half way up the hill Ezra, who is struggling with his cello, and Richard pause to get their breath. Ezra is particularly troubled.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

Eh! You lot!

(gasping for air)

Alright for folk carryin a fiddle,
someone give me a hand.

MUSIC COMES TO A STOP.

Further up Michael smiles and puts on a 'posh' accent.

MICHAEL MAIL

Oh don't you know my dear Ezra, us
violinists, we're meant for the
finer things!

EZRA CATTSTOCK

I'll give you finer things indeed!
When I get up there, if I ever do
get up there.

Lot stops in his tracks.

LOT SWANHILLS

Sorry Ezra. I'm with thee.

Lot goes back for Ezra's cello and slowly they all climb towards the top of the hill.

EXT. NEAR THE TOP OF THE HILL. NIGHT.

LOT SWANHILLS

We'll just take our rest for a time
and then we'll start our caroling.

RICHARD TOLLER

We got no bloomin breath to sing.

REUBEN DEWY

I'm with you on that one Richard,
tired I certainly am.

Some of the group remain standing whilst others sink to the ground grateful for the rest. Above them a road intersects the lane they are on and at this junction is a handpost.

EXT. THE HANDPOST. NIGHT.

A light coming from a lantern held by one of TWO MEN and a BOY gets brighter as they lead a horse and cart towards the handpost.

MAN ONE

This be it, just here by handpost
that's what we were told. The
quicker we gets on with it the
quicker we gets home.

The horse and cart stops by the handpost and the three all take spades from the back of the cart and begin digging.

After digging for a few minutes the Boy notices a light coming up the hill.

BOY

There's lights down there someone
be coming up.

MAN ONE

Never mind to that lad, keep
digging.

MAN TWO

That's right. It's Christmas Eve
and we wants to get home!

All three continue digging and eventually put their spades down. They then go back to the cart where they pick up a body and somewhat clumsily bring it over to where they have been digging. The body is tossed unceremoniously into the hole.

EXT. NEAR THE TOP OF THE HILL. NIGHT.

Approaching up the hill the light from the lantern is seen by the choir.

DICK DEWY

What the devil all that be up
there?

EZRA CATTSTOCK
(still breathless)
I think I know what it might be.

LOT SWANHILLS
Yeh?

EXT. THE HANDPOST. NIGHT.

One of the men picks up his spade, the other a six foot long wooden stake which is then banged down into the hole.

EXT. NEAR THE TOP OF THE HILL. NIGHT

Ezra's face flinches at the sound of the spade hitting the wooden stake into the ground.

DICK DEWY
If I didn't know better, I'd say
that it looks as if they're digging
a grave.

LOT SWANHILLS
What do you know of this Ezra?
(to himself)
Could it be the Sergeant?

EZRA CATTSTOCK
(muttering to himself)
It 'aint right, it just 'aint
right.
(addressing Lot)
Shouldn't be happening, I've heard
of this practice.

LOT SWANHILLS
Tell me later Ez. Come on lads
let's get up there, see what
they're up to.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
I'll stay here a while and get my
breath back.

RICHARD TOLLER
And so will I, I be bushed. I were
cold back there, I got sweat on
now.

REUBEN DEWY

I'll bide with these two if you
don't mind Lot.

The remainder of the choir including Young Hardy make their way up the hill towards the men.

EXT. THE HANDPOST. NIGHT.

The two men and the boy fill in the hole and tread down the earth before throwing the spades into the back of the cart. They look up to see some members of the choir approaching.

MAN ONE

Mellstock choir? I thought it might
be you boys when lad saw the light
below.

LOT SWANHILLS

Ey and we saw you Sidlinchers up
here. Who ye be a burying? Not the
Sergeant?

MAN TWO

You're not wrong, you've heard
about it then. Yes Sergeant Samuel
Holway. You know the particulars?

LOT SWANHILLS

The particulars?

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy lies propped up on his bed, pondering and looking slightly confused and muttering to himself.

OLD HARDY

The particulars, particulars, what
might they have been? Ah yes, the
particulars.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

SERGEANT SAMUEL HOLWAY in his fifties sits in his pants and vest at the table by the window. He looks distressed and has a letter in front of him.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Let us start with poor Sergeant Holway who had been so pained and in such torment that he'd taken an old firelock that he used for scaring birds and shot himself in his apple-closet on the previous Sunday.

Sergeant Holway walks over to the corner of the room and picks up a rifle, now sobbing to himself he goes out of the door.

SERGEANT HOLWAY (O.S.)

Enough! Enough! I've had enough. I really have.

After a few seconds of silence there is a LOUD BANG from outside.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

This suicide had been judged by the court as an act of *felo-de-se*, as they say, felon of himself rather than *non compos mentis*.

(pause)

In other words Sergeant Holway was not judged to be insane at the time of his death.

EXT. THE HANDPOST. NIGHT.

MAN TWO

It seems the old boy shot himself in his apple-closet last Sunday.

Apart from Sam, who wears his permanent smirk, the choir members look shocked and shake their heads. Young Hardy has his head lowered looking down at the soil on top of the grave.

LOT SWANHILLS

I'd heard something about the poor troubled man being dead, I didn't know how he died.

DICK DEWY

Or why?

MAN ONE

Why. We can tell you why. For it all come out at the inquest.

The choir gather round the Sidlinch men.

MAN ONE (CONT'D)

Yes it all came out at the inquest,
it were a lot to do, well all to do
with his son.

Lot looks perplexed.

LOT SWANHILLS

His son? But the son is a soldier
isn't he? Now with a regiment in
the East Indies.

MAN TWO

Ay. And it been rough with the army
over there lately. Twas a pity his
father persuaded him to go. But
Luke shouldn't have blamed the
sergeant over it, since he did it
for the best.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy is out of bed and is being helped on with his
dressing gown by NELLIE the maid.

OLD HARDY

Thank you Nellie.

Old Hardy places his finger to his lips.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

And not a word to Florence, or I'll
be in trouble.

Nellie smiles and shakes her head.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Big trouble. Oh I'll take that
biscuit tin in with me if I may
it's got some papers I need.

Nellie picks up the tin and hands it over to Old Hardy. She
looks at the depicted scene on the tin.

NELLIE

Very wintry.

When she is sure Old Hardy is steady on his feet she leaves
the room.

Old Hardy looks up into space.

OLD HARDY
Now where were we?
(pause)
Ah yes, the question whether
Sergeant Holway sent Luke off for
the best of reasons?

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
Well certainly the Sergeant's wife
Mary never thought that it was the
best of reasons.

A woman (MARY HOLWAY) is busy preparing a meal. The door
opens and Sergeant Holway comes in.

MARY HOLWAY
You back then Sam, I'll just finish
what I'm doing and I'll put the
kettle on for a brew.

Sergeant Holway sits down at the table by a window.

SERGEANT HOLWAY
No rush woman, when you're ready,
no rush.

He picks up a book that lies on the table, looks quizzically
at it and shakes his head and mutters to himself.

SERGEANT HOLWAY (CONT'D)
Whatever is he reading now? Can't
keep up with the lad.

He puts the book down and looks out of the window.

SERGEANT HOLWAY (CONT'D)
Is young Luke about?

MARY HOLWAY
No he's gone off to see his old
teacher, Mrs Dewy, she got some
more books for him.

SERGEANT HOLWAY
More books? He's always got his
head in the clouds that one.
I'll sort him, have him as a
soldier yet.

Mary turns round, dries her hands on a cloth and joins her husband at the table.

MARY HOLWAY

Oh Sam we're not going to go through this again are we? Luke don't want to fight, he's a proper little scholar. In fact Mrs Dewy says ...

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Never mind about his Mrs Dewy.

MARY HOLWAY

All his teachers agree that he could even go off to Christminster to be a scholar if he ...

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Christminster! Such places be not for him. Not for us. Only those with plenty of money. Christminster indeed!

Mary shakes her head looking despondent.

SERGEANT HOLWAY (CONT'D)

What do teachers know about the real world? Tell me that woman? The army certainly never did me any harm and it could be his golden chance.

Mary leaves the table looking distressed and muttering to herself.

MARY HOLWAY

Not that you ever saw any action Sam Holway and by all accounts did your best to avoid it.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

What you saying woman?

MARY HOLWAY

(to herself)

I thought he'd choose not to hear that one.

(more loudly)

The other thing that's been mentioned is an apprenticeship. I suppose you got something against that too.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

You're right that I have, I own it.
Apprenticeships! Half wages until
your time is spent, you must think
we're made of money.

Sergeant Holway looks out of the window and sees LUKE
approaching.

SERGEANT HOLWAY (CONT'D)

Speak of the devil, he's here.

The door opens and Luke, a boy of about thirteen comes into
the room carrying books, he is followed by Young Hardy. Luke
looks pleased with himself.

MARY HOLWAY

How you get on my love?

LUKE HOLWAY

She got me the books. And she's
found out that there's a works in
Casterbridge who will be taking
boys on, but it would mean an
apprenticeship.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Oh for the love of ...

MARY HOLWAY

(whispering)

Take no notice of him.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Listen to me woman! Trade is coming
to nothing in these days. And if
the war with the French lasts, as
it will, trade will be still worse.

Luke joins his father at the table placing the books on the
floor near his feet.

SERGEANT HOLWAY (CONT'D)

The army Luke, that's the thing for
'ee.

LUKE HOLWAY

But father I really ...

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Tw'as the making of me, and it'll be
the making of you. I hadn't half
such a chance as you'll have.

MARY HOLWAY
 (getting agitated)
 But you got out Sam long before
 France. You were lucky! And you've
 said as much yourself.

Luke sits at the table his head lowered. Mary comes over and stands with her hands on Luke's shoulders.

MARY HOLWAY (CONT'D)
 (emphatically)
 You mark my words. You're wrong to
 insist on him being a soldier
 Samuel Holway, wrong! And one day
 you will know that you're wrong.
 You'll live to regret it.

Mary clearly agitated leaves the room, Sergeant Holway and Luke remain at the table.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 This scene was repeated over and
 over again and when Luke's mother
 died a couple of years later Luke
 had no-one to champion his cause.

EXT. CASTERBRIDGE TOWN. DAY.

Luke and Sergeant Holway, who has donned his uniform, walk through the busy town. They are followed by Young Hardy.

There are a number of soldiers walking about.

Luke carries a suitcase. The two approach a carrier's van and a soldier in uniform stands outside it. The soldier salutes Sergeant Holway as he approaches.

At the side of the soldier stands WILLIAM FLINCH who greets the Holways.

WILLIAM FLINCH
 Oh you're here too are you Sergeant
 Holway, and be this your boy Luke?

SERGEANT HOLWAY
 Yes it be Luke about to do his bit
 for the country. Good to see you
 William.

The two shake hands.

WILLIAM FLINCH

(addressing Luke)

You'll find my son Michael inside
the van Luke, he's just as fearful
as you look.

Luke nods to William, hands the soldier a piece of paper and
shakes hands with his father before boarding the van.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Yeh bye son, all the very best to
you

(shouting into the van)

And to you Michael!

WILLIAM FLINCH

(whispering)

Let's be hoping they get the chance
to keep their heads down as we did.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Don't you be saying that about
town, there's some who might
believe it.

WILLIAM FINCH

Well it's right. And you very well
know its right you old rascal.

After saluting Sergeant Holway again the soldier also climbs
aboard. The van sets off.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

In the course of a few weeks Luke
was to be sent out to India to his
regiment.

INT. WHITE HORSE INN. NIGHT.

The inn is busy, a number of uniformed soldiers make up the
biggest proportion of people having a drink.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

At the request of William Flinch he
and Sergeant Holway were to meet up
a few months later.

Sergeant Holway and William stand at the bar talking.

WILLIAM FLINCH

I don't know about you, but it
seems that they've been out there
for years not months.

Sergeant Holway nods in agreement.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

It do to me too.

WILLIAM FLINCH

But I had to see yer Sam, when it became known to me that you hadn't heard from your Luke.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Not a word from him no. Not a word.

WILLIAM FLINCH

Well I have, in a manner of speaking.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Go on?

WILLIAM FLINCH

It seems.

(pause)

It seems that your Luke is not too good.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

(alarmed)

What is he injured? Wounded? What's gone on?

WILLIAM FLINCH

No sick it seems, from my boy Michael I hear he has a storm of a fever.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Oh my God that be the worst.

WILLIAM FLINCH

I know little more than that. But I thought I'd make it my business to let you know.

William places his hand on Sergeant Holway's arm and then releases it.

WILLIAM FLINCH (CONT'D)

I just wanted to tell you that's all. They've, they've had it far harder than we did, if you take my drift.

(pause)

(MORE)

WILLIAM FLINCH (CONT'D)
 As I say they ain't had the
 opportunity to keep their heads
 down.

William puts his empty glass on the bar and nods to Sergeant
 Holway.

WILLIAM FLINCH (CONT'D)
 If I hear anymore I'll be in touch.
 (pause)
 The boy is young an strong he'll
 probably be, well he'll pull
 through. I had to tell you Sam, let
 you know.

William leaves.

Sergeant Holway indicates to the woman behind the bar that he
 wants another drink.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 That was the start of the
 Sergeant's suffering.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Sergeant Holway walks into the room carrying a letter.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Nothing was heard from Luke for a
 further few months and then a
 letter arrived, for the Sergeant it
 didn't make easy reading.

He sits down at the table opens the letter and reads it.

LUKE HOLWAY (O.S.)
 Dear Father, I don't know how to
 start this letter or even why I
 should be sending it to the one who
 got me in this mess in the first
 place. If it wasn't for you I
 wouldn't have had to suffer the
 pain and fatigue that I have
 endured.

Sergeant Holway's face grimaces as he reads.

LUKE HOLWAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I wouldn't have had to lower myself
 and learn firsthand how to hurt
 people that have done me no harm.
 (MORE)

LUKE HOLWAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I wouldn't have had to take orders
from evil brutish bullies.

Sergeant Holway shakes his head and puts down the letter.

SERGEANT HOLWAY
This is evil, an all my doing.

He looks down at the letter again.

LUKE HOLWAY (O.S.)
I wanted none of this and you by
making me come here have ruined my
life.

Sergeant Holway breaks down crying.

SERGEANT HOLWAY
What have I done? What on earth
have I done?

He lowers his head into his hands.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy is wearing his dressing-gown. He reads out-loud
from the letter he holds in front of him.

OLD HARDY
If it hadn't been for your bad
advice I would have been working
comfortably at a trade in the
village that I never wished to
leave.

Old Hardy puts the letter down on his desk.

EXT. THE HANDPOST. NIGHT.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
It was this letter that sealed the
Sergeant's fate.

Man One takes a piece of paper from his pocket and offers it
to Lot.

MAN ONE
It seems it was this that sealed
Sergeant Holway's fate. This was
produced at the inquest.

Lot takes the letter.

MAN TWO

After this he was badly wounded,
and took to the liquor.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. VARIOUS INNS. NIGHT.

MAN TWO (CONT'D) (V.O.)

And some say he were haunted by his
late wife.

Sergeant Holway stands at bars drinking and muttering to himself. Other customers noting and commenting on his behavior.

INT. WHITE HORSE INN. NIGHT.

Sergeant Holway leans on the bar is drunk and is muttering to himself.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Mary, Mary what have I done? Wrong,
wrong I was very very wrong.

He looks up across the bar towards the LANDLORD and pushes forward his empty glass.

SERGEANT HOLWAY (CONT'D)

Another. Another when you're ready
governor.

The Landlord walks over towards Sergeant Holway and speaks quietly.

LANDLORD

Sergeant Holway. Sam, don't you
think you've had enough?

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Enough?

LANDLORD

You look tired Sam that's all I'm
saying, I'm happy to serve you
tomorrow, but I really think you've
had enough.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

Yes.

(pause)

Yes, you're right I've really had
enough.

With his head down Sergeant Holway leaves the inn, others
watch as he goes through the door.

INT. BEDROOM. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE NIGHT.

The room is lit by an oil lamp at the side of the bed.
Sergeant Holway is propped up drinking from a bottle and
looking tormented.

SERGEANT HOLWAY

I've really had enough. What have I
done? Oh Mary what have I done?

He breaks down crying.

SERGEANT HOLWAY'S HALLUCINATION.

Mary Holway stands in the room her face taut with anger.

MARY HOLWAY

(emphatically)

You mark my words. You're wrong to
insist on him being a soldier
Samuel Holway, wrong! And one day
you will know that you're wrong.

(pause)

Not that you ever saw any action
and by all accounts did your best
to avoid it.

William Flinch is also in the room.

WILLIAM FINCH

Let's just be hoping they get the
chance to keep their heads down as
we did.

MARY HOLWAY

Did your best to avoid it.

WILLIAM FINCH

Keep their heads down as we did.

HALLUCINATION ENDS.

INT. BEDROOM. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Sergeant Holway SCREAMS.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Sergeant Holway sits at the table by the window in his pants and vest. He has Luke's letter in front of him and is distressed.

Again he hears Mary's voice, this time the muttered words amplified.

SERGEANT HOLWAY'S HALLUCINATION.

MARY HOLWAY (O.S.)

Not that you ever saw any action
and by all accounts did your best
to avoid it.

HALLUCINATION ENDS.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Sergeant Holway walks over to the corner of the room and picks up a rifle, now sobbing to himself he goes out of the door.

SERGEANT HOLWAY (O.S.)

Enough! Enough! I've had enough.

After a few seconds of silence there is a LOUD BANG from outside.

EXT. WOODEN SHED. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

The shed door is open, inside Sergeant Holway's body lies on the floor. Beside him lies the rifle. He has shot himself through the neck.

A black and white cat walks slowly past the shed.

INT. PARLOUR. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Luke's letter remains on the table.

EXT. THE HANDPOST. NIGHT.

MAN ONE

Then they found that letter. And that's why he be buried here.

MAN TWO

Anyway we better be getting along. I'll take back the letter if I may, it belongs to deceased's estate.

Lot hands the letter back.

The two Sidlinch men and the boy gather their remaining belongings together and start to leave.

MAN TWO (CONT'D)

Oh, an it don't much feel like it I know. It don't feel like it at all, but compliments of the season just the same.

As the Sidlinch men with their horse and cart leave, the choir are joined by Ezra, Richard and Rueben, they are carrying their instruments.

LOT SWANHILLS

Ey, tis Christmas after all. He's right though, don't feel like it.

All are silent. Lot turns to Richard.

LOT SWANHILLS (CONT'D)

Tis Christmas. And this man, this Sergeant, not that he was ever in a battle bigger than would go into a half-acre paddock.

(pause)

Well, his soul ought to have as good a chance as any other, hey?

Richard nods his head in agreement as does Young Hardy.

RICHARD TOLLER

What d'ye say to lifting up a carol over his grave, as 'tis Christmas, and no hurry to begin down in the parish, and 'twouldn't take up ten minutes, and not a soul up here to say as nay, or know anything about it?

LOT SWANHILLS

The man ought to have his chances.

Sam shakes his head.

SAM NOTTON

Ye may as well spit upon that patch
of earth there, his grave, for all
the good we shall do him by what we
lift up, now he's got so far.

Dick shakes his head and smiles with contempt at this remark.

DICK DEWY

That's just what I'd expect you to
say Sam Notton. You horrible piece
of ...

REUBEN DEWY

(anxiously)

Now our Dick. Christmas and that.

SAM NOTTON

But! I'm agreed to do if rest be.

The choir position themselves into a semicircle round the
disturbed earth of the grave.

LOT SWANHILLS

We'll do number sixteen of our
collection, best suited for the
occasion I think. Just singing
boys, that's more than enough.

Michael takes out hymn sheets from a satchel he has been
carrying and gives everyone a copy. The choir thumb through
the sheets.

MICHAEL MAIL

Number sixteen.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

Hark the Glad Sound it is then.
First three verses gentlemen?

The choir sing 'Hark the Glad Sound':

CHOIR

Hark! the glad sound! the Saviour
comes, the Saviour promised long:
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

Sam is still wearing his sneer and a number of the choir look
uneasy. Richard who is suffering from the cold openly
shivers.

CHOIR (CONT'D)

He comes the prisoners to release,
 In Satan's bondage held; the gates
 of brass before him burst, the iron
 fetters yield.

Dick still stares with hatred at Sam, Reuben noticing Dick's stare shakes his head.

CHOIR (CONT'D)

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
 the bleeding soul to cure; and with
 the treasures of his grace, to
 enrich the humble poor.

The choir finish singing the hymn and all look slightly embarrassed. Ezra breaks the silence.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

Jown it, we've never played to a
 dead man afore.
 (mutters to himself)
 Never played to the dead with a
 stake pierced through their heart.

LOT SWANHILLS

What you say Ez?

EZRA CATTSTOCK

No nothing, nothing.

LOT SWANHILLS

No Ez, never played to a dead man.
 But, it be least we can do. Come on
 then boys, caroling to do.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

Ey it do seem more merciful than to
 go away and leave en, as t'other
 fellers have done.

The choir gather up their instruments and begin to move. They hear the noise of a cart coming towards them. It is drawn by a steaming and jaded horse.

It reaches the handpost and the driver, a soldier in uniform (LUKE HOLWAY) pulls the reigns.

LUKE HOLWAY

Stop here!

The cart comes to a halt and Luke gets out. He addresses the choir.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)
 Evening, can I ask, have you just
 buried a man?

LOT SWANHILLS
 No. No, we ain't Sidlinch folk,
 though a man has just been buried
 here and we've raised a hymn over
 the poor mortal's body.

Ezra peers closely at Luke.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 What, do my eyes see before me
 young Luke Holway, that went wi'
 his regiment to the East Indies, or
 do I see his spirit straight from
 the battlefield?

Luke is also closely examined by Young Hardy and Dick.

DICK DEWY
 Be you the son that wrote the, oh
 yes.

Sam nudges Michael and speaks to him in a loud whisper that
 most including Luke hears.

SAM NOTTON
 That's the letter writer then.

Michael and Dick look at Sam disapprovingly.

DICK DEWY
 Don't you ever shut that big mouth
 of yours? You hateful...

Dick clenches his fist. Sam looks pleased with himself,
 clearly enjoying the situation. Reuben Dewy looks anxious.

REUBEN DEWY
 Now our Dick.

LUKE HOLWAY
 Don't ask me about the letter.
 Don't!

Luke is agitated and sweating, he mops his brow with a
 handkerchief.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)
 Sorry. Sorry I get the sweats since
 India.

(MORE)

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)

(pause)

The funeral is over then?

All look to Lot for a reply he replies awkwardly.

LOT SWANHILLS

There was no funeral in a Christian manner of speaking.

(pause)

But buried, sure enough. You must have met the men going back in the empty cart.

Luke shakes his head and looks down at the grave in front of him.

LUKE HOLWAY

Like a dog in a ditch then, and all through me.

(looking up)

My friends, you have sung peace to his soul. I thank you, from my heart, for your kind pity.

Luke looks at Sam in particular.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)

Yes. I am Sergeant Holway's miserable son. I'm the son who brought about his father's death, as truly as if I had done it with my own hand.

Lot looks at Sam with disgust.

LOT SWANHILLS

Don't listen to the likes of him Luke, he's just not worth it.

Ezra moves towards Luke and places his hand on his shoulder.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

No, no. Don't take on so young man. Your father had been naturally low for a good while, so we hear. Since your mother passed on.

LUKE HOLWAY

We were in the East when I sent him that letter and everything was going wrong, including, as you can see, the fevers.

Luke again mops his brow.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)

When we got back to barracks at
Casterbridge I heard of this ...
Damn me!

(fighting back tears)

I'll follow my father, it's the
only thing to do, the only thing
that make sense.

Lot also moves closer to Luke and speaks quietly.

LOT SWANHILLS

No. Don't be rash Luke Holway, try
to make amends by your future life.
And maybe your father will smile a
smile down from heaven upon you.

(pause)

Try and be worthy of your father at
his best, 'tis not too late.

Lot shakes his head.

LOT SWANHILLS (CONT'D)

Not too late at all.

Luke nods his head in appreciation.

LUKE HOLWAY

Thank you for your good counsel.

(pause)

I'll live for one thing at any
rate. I'll move father's body to a
decent Christian churchyard, if I
do it with my own hands.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

No it ain't right where he is I
agree. Evil. Our parson at
Mellstock says it's a barbarous
custom they keep up at Sidlinch and
ought to be done away with.

LUKE HOLWAY

So he thinks it's barbarous too
does he. Do you think there'd be
any chance of moving my father to
Mellstock?

Lot looks around to Ezra.

LOT SWANHILLS

What do you think Ezra?

(turning back to Luke)

Ezra's the sexton at Mellstock.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

He's a hard man at Sidlinch the very reverend Davies saying that if folk kill themselves in hot blood they must take the consequences. But our parson don't think like that, it be worth a try.

LUKE HOLWAY

What's his name?

EZRA CATTSTOCK

The honourable and reverend Mr Oldham, brother to Lord Wessex. But you needn't be feared on that account, he'll talk to you like a common man.

LUKE HOLWAY

I'll ask him, I can do no more. Thank you all gentlemen, for your kind deeds in the singing of the hymn.

Luke looks down at the disturbed soil.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)

Just seems wrong, wrong. Like I said, a dog in a ditch.

Luke near to tears slaps the palm of his hand against the handpost.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)

Goodbye father.

(pause)

I may be off to Spain soon, another chance to be worthy of you.

Luke turns the horse and his fly round in the direction of Sidlinch, he climbs aboard and heads off.

LOT SWANHILLS

That should be okay shouldn't it Ez? Having a reburial at Mellstock?

EZRA CATTSTOCK

As I says to him, worth a try. I'll say no more now but I just fear something that's all.

FLASHBACK TO BURIAL EARLIER.

One of the men picks up his spade, the other a six foot long wooden stake which is then banged down into the hole.

Ezra's face flinches.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. THE HANDPOST. NIGHT.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

Just fear it.

EXT. MELLSTOCK CHURCHYARD. DAY

Ezra is busy tidying the churchyard maneuvering a wheelbarrow through the headstones. His small dog (Bella) runs around excitedly.

Ezra hears his name being called and looks up. PARSON OLDHAM, in his fifties, bald and bespectacled, walks over patting Bella on the head.

PARSON OLDHAM

Have you got a minute Ezra?

Bella barks excitedly.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

Shush Bella. Be quiet. I have sir, I have.

PARSON OLDHAM

Glad I've seen you. I had a visit yesterday from a Luke Holway about his late father Sergeant Holway, I believe you know the story?

EZRA CATTSTOCK

I do sir yes, very sad one as it is.

PARSON OLDHAM

Indeed a sad affair. And not a thing I'm in favour of, burying someone by a handpost because they are deemed to belong nowhere.

(pause)

I had met the deceased once, yes met him once.

(pause)

(MORE)

PARSON OLDHAM (CONT'D)
 Anyway I've agreed to a reburial
 with certain stipulations as I
 don't want to offend the people at
 Sidlinch.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 No, no I can see that.

PARSON OLDHAM
 The stipulations being that the
 Sergeant is buried at night and as
 privately as possible. I would also
 ask that the deceased be buried on
 the edge of the enclosure.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 That can be done, but, but there
 might be, just a, no.

PARSON OLDHAM
 Go on.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 No, take no notice of me, it don't
 matter at this stage.

PARSON OLDHAM
 Sure?
 (pause)
 Very well. Now if you're in
 agreement with that I suggest you
 try and see the young man as soon
 as you can. Yes, as soon as you
 can.

Parson Oldham walks away and Ezra shakes his head.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 (to himself)
 I'm still not sure about this, just
 fear things that's all.

INT. PARLOUR. EZRA CATTSTOCK'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

The room is lit by oil lamps. Ezra sits taking warmth from a
 fire, curled up by his side is Bella. There is a knock on the
 door, Bella barks.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Ezra was right to be uncertain
 about the arrangements.

Ezra opens his door and lets in Luke. Luke pats an excited Bella and is offered a chair by Ezra, he declines and remains standing.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Luke explained that his furlough had been cut short, owing to new developments of the war in the Peninsula, and being obliged to go back to his regiment immediately, he was compelled to leave the exhumation and reinterment to his friends, the Mellstock choir.

Luke hands Ezra some money.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Everything was paid for, and he implored them all to see it carried out forthwith.

Ezra agrees but looks troubled. He shakes hands with Luke and watches him out of the door.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. OUTSIDE AN INN IN SIDLINCH. DAY.

Ezra is talking to one of the men present at the burial (Man One). After a few minutes Man One shrugs his shoulders and walks into the inn leaving Ezra shaking his head.

EXT. OUTSIDE COTTAGES IN SIDLINCH. DAY.

Ezra is talking to a very old man outside his cottage who also shakes his head.

Ezra stands talking to a Young Woman on her doorstep. The woman is explaining something and is clearly upset, she points over to a nearby barn. After a few moments Ezra thanks her and walks away.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

It seemed that the young lady's brother, a lad of fourteen had been involved with the burial of Sergeant Holway's body. And somewhat reluctantly had also been witness to other matters that had taken place that night.

Ezra approaches the barn, outside is a cart with three shovels resting against it.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
(nodding to himself)
Yes I was right then, felo-de-se.

FLASHBACK TO EARLIER SCENE OF SERGEANT HOLWAY'S BURIAL.

One of the men picks up his spade, the other a six foot long wooden stake which is then banged down into the hole.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. OUTSIDE A BARN IN SIDLINCH. DAY.

Ezra walks slowly away from the barn and mutters to himself.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
I'd hoped I be wrong.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
Felo-de-se, as they say, felon of himself. In the past anyone who deliberately killed themselves would forfeit all that they owned to the king, often leaving their poor families destitute.

INT. BARN. NIGHT.

The barn is lit by lanterns.

Sergeant Holway's body lies on a pile of straw. Two men and a Boy stand round it.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
In these 'enlightened' times he would be buried at night, at a crossroad. And, although nobody wanted to admit it he would have had a six foot stake driven through his heart.

Man Two holding a mallet, takes a six foot stake and positions the pointed end of it on the chest of the corpse.

Man One then holds the stake in position.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
A barbaric and bestial practice.

The Young Woman peers round the entrance of the barn. The others, including her brother, are not aware of her presence.

MAN TWO

So this is how it'll be young en.

Man Two stands on a bale of straw besides the body and lifts the spade above his head.

MAN TWO (CONT'D)

We get the stake in the right place
and then.

Man One moves the stake to the side of Sergeant Holway's body.

MAN TWO (CONT'D)

And then.

Man Two bangs the spade down on the stake. The Boy's face and that of his sisters grimaces.

MAN TWO (CONT'D)

And then the heart is secured to
the soil.

Man One looks over to the Boy who is trembling with fear.

MAN ONE

Can't say I like this business much
either, evil it be, but Coroner's
court must be obeyed.

Man One with some effort pulls the stake free. Man Two steps down from the straw bale.

MAN TWO.

He's right. Dark and evil it is,
but no, the Sergeant here weren't
feeble-minded at time a death.
Coroner's word must be obeyed. Felo-
de-se.

BOY

(distressed)

So no coffin or anything?

MAN TWO

No coffin, just in the soil, just
in the very earth itself.

BOY

It don't seem right and with a
stake through him.

(MORE)

BOY (CONT'D)

(pause)

I er, I couldn't, I couldn't do it.

MAN TWO

You don't have to.

Man Two smiles and looks over to Man One.

MAN TWO (CONT'D)

Yet.

Both men laugh.

MAN TWO (CONT'D)

Anyway time's a passing, let's get
the good Sergeant on the cart.

The Young Woman who has been watching from the entrance to
the barn is clearly disturbed.

As she leaves the barn she notices a black and white cat
sitting nearby on a bale of straw.

INT. PARSON OLDHAM'S STUDY. DAY.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

The next day Ezra felt compelled to
report back to Parson Oldham.

Ezra is talking to Parson Oldham in his book-lined study.
Both men are standing.

PARSON OLDHAM

If it is as you say that the body
was buried without a coffin and
worse still with a stake driven
through it.

(shaking his head)

Which is absolutely appalling, I
really can't see us being able to
attempt a reburial. Really can't
see it.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

That's what I thought you'd say
sir. Not easy.

EXT. EZRA CATTSTOCK'S GARDEN. DAY

Ezra is out in his garden with Bella. A horse drawn cart
arrives on the lane in front of the garden. A large man
(DELIVERY MAN) jumps from the cart.

Bella barks.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 (to Bella)
 You shush girl.

DELIVERY MAN
 A Mr Ezra Cattstock?

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 That be I.

DELIVERY MAN
 Got something for you, all paid up.
 Do you think you could give me a
 hand?

The two men walk to the back of the cart and take off a gravestone. Together they then pick it up, Ezra struggling with the weight of it.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)
 Where can we take it?

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 Nice and steady then please. I'll
 have to have a bit of rest on way.
 But over to the outhouse, side of
 my cottage.

With one short break whilst Ezra gets his breath back the two gradually make their way with the stone towards the outhouse with Bella running round excitedly.

They place the stone just inside the outhouse.

DELIVERY MAN
 I'll be getting on, another
 delivery in Casterbridge and
 that'll be me for the day.

The Delivery Man walks back to his cart, boards it and sets off.

Ezra scrutinizes the stone and reads the inscription.

EZRA CATTSTOCK
 Here lyeth the body of Sergeant
 Samuel Holway ...
 (pause)
 right, and erected by L.Holway. 'I
 am not worthy to be called thy
 son'.

Ezra and Bella walk towards the door of his cottage, Ezra shaking his head.

EZRA CATTSTOCK (CONT'D)

I am not worthy to be called thy son.

(talking to Bella)

What we're going to do with that stone I simply don't know.

Ezra and Bella enter the cottage.

EXT. MELLSTOCK CHURCHYARD. DAY.

Ezra leans on his spade talking to Parson Oldham who is holding a bible.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

Yes the headstone has come sir, but I'm afearred we can't do it.

PARSON OLDHAM

I should like to oblige him but er, as we said no,

(shaking his head)

not an easy situation, not easy. Have you heard anything more of the young man?

EZRA CATTSTOCK

I believe he's embarked this week to Spain with the rest of his regiment. And if he's as desperate as has seemed, we shall never see him in England again.

PARSON OLDHAM

It's an awkward case, awkward case. Anyway I'd better be getting on,

Parson Oldham raises his bible.

PARSON OLDHAM (CONT'D)

Have a few visits to do, God's work is never done.

Parson Oldham walks away.

INT. WHITE HORSE INN. NIGHT.

Ezra, Lot, Michael, Dick and Richard sit at a table in the inn.

DICK DEWY

Now it was mentioned, not by me mind. That we could just leave the good Sergeant where he is and just put the stone in the churchyard. I mean nobody would know.

Ezra shakes his head.

Young Hardy joins the group taking a chair and sitting at the table.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

No I don't like that.

LOT SWANHILLS

Me neither. Dishonest, better to do nothing.

Michael, who is looking intensely at his empty glass agrees.

MICHAEL MAIL

Better to do nothing.

DICK DEWY

No, no I didn't say I liked it, it were just mentioned, that all.

RICHARD TOLLER

Considering how body be a buried, we could hardly make a job of it. We could just plant stone near the handpost, but not on top, if you get my meaning.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

(shaking his head)

No, I'm not with that one either.

(pause)

Anyway, are we be having another beer? I think Michael here is thirsty. And if so, I believe it's your turn at the bar Dick Dewy.

All agree and Dick makes his way to the bar.

EXT. EZRA CATTSTOCK'S GARDEN. DAY.

Ezra and Lot move the headstone out of the outhouse and take it to the bottom of Ezra's garden where it is rested against some bushes.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

(gasping for breath)

I appreciate this Lot, thank you,
appreciated

(pause)

I have to say this business been
playing on my mind every time I see
that stone.

LOT SWANHILLS

Bound to. I'm not happy either, but
none of us liked the thought of
moving the body, been as how it was
buried and that.

Ezra nod's his head in agreement.

EZRA CATTSTOCK

The chances are, given what we
hear, the lad will never get out of
Spain on any account.

EXT. EZRA CATTSTOCK'S GARDEN. STORMY WEATHER. NIGHT.

It is extremely windy and a tree not far from Ezra's cottage
is blown over doing some damage to his outhouse and landing
on the headstone breaking it into three pieces.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

The pieces of stone remained at the
bottom of Ezra Cattstock's garden
for many a year. They eventually
lay flat to the earth and turned
green.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy sits at his desk still wearing his dressing-gown,
Young Hardy sits opposite him, his violin at his feet.

Old Hardy reaches down to the side of his desk and attempts
to pick up a piece of the gravestone.

Young Hardy, seeing Old Hardy struggling, gets up to help. He
lifts the stone up and places it on Old Hardy's desk.

OLD HARDY

(out of breath)

Just the words, 'I am not worthy',
that's all that remains now, the
remainder was put to rest in the
mud.

(MORE)

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

(pause)

'I am not worthy'.

Young Hardy after looking at it places the piece of stone on the floor.

Old Hardy opens the biscuit tin with the wintry scene on it and takes out a small pencil sketch of a military man which he hands to Young Hardy.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Recognise the face?

Young Hardy studies the drawing.

YOUNG HARDY

Is it Luke Holway?

OLD HARDY

Yes. Yes it is Luke Holway, or we should really say Sergeant Major Holway. That was drawn just after Waterloo.

Looking impressed Young Hardy hands the drawing back. Old Hardy looks down at it.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Luke hadn't been born a Mellstock man, and he had no relations left in Sidlinch, so that no tidings of him reached either village throughout the war. Although he did contact an old neighbour just before his return.

Old Hardy places the sketch carefully in the tin.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Yes after Waterloo and the fall of Napoleon there arrived at Sidlinch one day an English Sergeant Major covered in stripes and, as it turned out, rich in glory.

(pause)

I suggest that you go this very day to meet him.

Old Hardy looks across his study Young Hardy has gone, his violin and bow are sat on the chair.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. A ROW OF COTTAGES. SIDLINCH. DAY.

A carrier's van pulled by two horses comes to a stop outside a row of cottages.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Luke had served with unswerving
 effectiveness through the
 Peninsular campaigns under
 Wellington; had fought at

Luke in full military uniform leaves the van. He then walks to the back to retrieve a suitcase.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Busaco, Fuentes d'Onoro, Ciudad
 Rodrigo, Badajoz, Salamanca,
 Vittoria, Quatre Bras, and
 Waterloo.

Young Hardy also leaves the van looking slightly bewildered.

With the suitcase in his hand Luke goes over to the driver and gives him some money. The driver thanks Luke and wishes him well. The carrier's van moves off.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 He now returned to Sidlinch to
 enjoy a more than earned pension
 and repose in his native district.

A young girl (CATHERINE) emerges from one of the cottages with a set of keys. She is about sixteen years of age, very attractive, with long dark hair.

With Catherine is another girl (ANNIE) of about the same age who is trying hard not to giggle.

CATHERINE
 He be very handsome in his uniform
 and that. Very handsome.

ANNIE
 And you best get over to him with
 the keys and all. He do be very
 handsome though and a hero I hear
 my father saying.

Young Hardy raises his eye-brows at the sight of Catherine, he is very impressed.

Catherine approaches Luke who smiles on seeing her.

CATHERINE

(nervously)

Is it Mr, soldier, oh I don't know what, is it Mr Holway?

LUKE HOLWAY

(smiling)

Yes it is, it's Sergeant Major Holway, but you must, just call me Luke.

CATHERINE

Luke? Yes. Yes Sir Luke. I got your keys here. We cleaned the place up after your letter. There's a fire laid and ready, as it's getting chilled now.

Catherine hands the keys to Luke.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

My mother says to thank you for the money you sent and if there is anything you need, well you just to ask.

Catherine and the Annie begin to move away. Annie is now openly giggling.

Luke scrutinizes Catherine.

LUKE HOLWAY

Is it Catherine Archer? And if it is, how you've grown these past years.

CATHERINE

(turning round and clearly embarrassed)

Yes, Catherine sir, Catherine. Oh and my mother got you some victuals in.

ANNIE

(giggling)

An Catherine will come over to cook them for you if you want.

CATHERINE
Annie, you stop that!

LUKE HOLWAY
That's a very kind offer but I
think I'll manage, but thank you.

Luke smiles as does Young Hardy. Catherine is obviously embarrassed, she rebukes Annie as they walk away.

CATHERINE
Why you go an say something like
that?

Luke picks up his suitcase and walks over to his cottage. He turns the key and enters.

Young Hardy remains outside.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Luke enters the room, puts his suitcase on the floor and looks round.

LUKE HOLWAY
The old place don't look any
different.

The room is clean and tidy. On top of the table by the window is a pile of papers. Luke walks over and notices that at the top of the pile is the letter he sent his father.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)
And this would have to be the first
thing I see.

Luke sits down at the table, reads the letter and shakes his head.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)
How guilty do I still feel?

Luke places the letter back on the top of the pile. He stands up and looks in the cupboard and he takes out some eggs and bread.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)
Very guilty.
(pause)
(MORE)

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)
 I'll have my victuals, as the young
 lady said, and then I'll walk down
 to the churchyard at Mellstock.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANES/ THE HANDPOST. DUSK.

Luke walks with purpose down the lanes towards the handpost.
 On arriving at it his hand grasps it firmly.

LUKE HOLWAY
 Thank God you're not still lying
 just under here. More than I could
 bare.

He walks on towards Mellstock churchyard, followed by Young
 Hardy.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. MELLSTOCK CHURCH YARD. DUSK.

Luke walks round the churchyard carefully looking at all the
 inscriptions on the headstones.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Although it was getting dark Luke
 searched every headstone, looking
 for the one bearing the inscription
 'I am not worthy to be called thy
 son.' Needless to say he didn't
 find it.

Luke makes his way home leaving the churchyard.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. COUNTRY LANES AND FIELDS. NIGHT.

Luke scrambles over bushes and runs through ploughed fields.
 His face is taugth and anguished.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
 Luke didn't want to pass the
 handpost again so took a route over
 fields and rough landscape to avoid
 it.

Luke is sweating profusely and is followed by Young Hardy who
 is having trouble keeping up with him.

FLASHBACK TO EPISODE ONE.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUIET WOMAN INN/ HEATH LAND NIGHT.

On the other side of the road there is a mass of dark heath land. NED HIPCROFT runs frantically towards it waving the poker in the air. He is followed by others and watched from the doorway of the inn by Young Hardy.

NED
(shouting)
Carry! Carry! Where are you my
little maid?

Ned's desperate face is streaming with tears. He continues shouting for Carry but the voice gradually fades.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. COUNTRY LANES AND FIELDS. NIGHT.

Luke continues to run furiously followed by Young Hardy.

LUKE HOLWAY
I'll find you father, I swear it,
wherever they've laid you to rest.

FLASHBACK TO EPISODE ONE.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUIET WOMAN INN/ HEATH LAND NIGHT.

Ned's face is contorted with anxiety and fear. He runs blindly still shouting Carry's name. Lights can be seen from the lanterns of others who have joined the search.

NED
Carry my love, where are you?

Young Hardy looks concerned from the doorway of the inn.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. COUNTRY LANES AND FIELDS. NIGHT.

Young Hardy is still running and trying to keep up with Luke.

YOUNG HARDY
This isn't right I'm following Luke
Holway, not Ned Hipcroft!

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

(shouting)

No! No, this isn't right, it isn't right. Searching on the heath again, the heath of Egdon, the heath of the Reddleman Diggery Venn, of Thomasin and Clym. Egdon Heath the home of strange phantoms. Not right. Not right.

Young Hardy shakes his head and looks concerned.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy sits at his desk with his head in his hands. He looks up and shakes his head slowly.

OLD HARDY

(to himself)

Not right. Not right.

(pause)

But Egdon Heath again, always Egdon.

EXT. COUNTRY LANES AND FIELDS. NIGHT.

Young Hardy is still running and is now breathless.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy still has his head in his hands.

OLD HARDY

I'm feeling very old, but why my thoughts should suddenly travel back to poor Ned on Egdon Heath, I simply don't know.

EXT. MELLSTOCK CHURCH YARD. DAY.

Luke is standing with a vicar (PARSON CRAWFORD), outside the church. Parson Crawford holds a book in his hand which both men are looking at.

PARSON CRAWFORD

I simply don't know. As you can see, there's no mention or record of your father's burial, or rather reburial in this.

(pause)

(MORE)

PARSON CRAWFORD (CONT'D)

Between you and me I find the whole business of felo-de-se and its implications for the deceased, and may I add the deceased's family, archaic. The Church should feel shame at such practices.

LUKE HOLWAY

But surely it must have taken place it was all arranged with Ezra Cattstock. Is he still around?

PARSON CRAWFORD

I'm afraid not, Ezra died sometime ago. There is a new sexton now, a Mr Jake Humphrey, but I can't see how he'll be able to help you.

Luke looks down to the ground shaking his head.

LUKE HOLWAY

I'm at my, well I'm at my wits end with it.

Parson Crawford places his hand on Luke's shoulder.

PARSON CRAWFORD

I'm so sorry that I can't help you. Have you thought of asking the remaining members of the old choir? They may be able to help.

Luke, looking dejected, shakes hands with Parson Crawford and walks away from the church yard.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. A NUMBER OF COTTAGES. MELLSTOCK. DAY.

Luke knocks on a number of doors but is greeted with shakes of the head from the various people at the doorstep.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Luke was to discover that whilst he'd been away a number of the old choir had joined Ezra Cattstock in the soil. He was getting nowhere and then one night in the White Horse Inn, he was, in the cruelest of ways, to find out the true whereabouts of his father's remains.

INT. WHITE HORSE INN. NIGHT.

There are only a few men in the inn a number of them soldiers in uniform.

Luke walks into the inn and orders a drink from the Landlord. The two men talk and the landlord points over to the corner of the room where Sam Notton sits on his own, warming his hands in front of a roaring fire.

Luke picks up his drink and walks over towards Sam and is joined by Young Hardy.

Sam, lifts his head up and looks through his glasses down his nose.

LUKE HOLWAY

It's Mr Notton isn't it? May I join you for a moment.

SAM NOTTON

It is indeed Samuel Notton and yes, you can join if you must.

Luke and Young Hardy sit down. Behind the bar the Landlord is watching and listening.

LUKE HOLWAY

My name is ...

SAM NOTTON

I know very well who you are, Sergeant Major Luke Holway I believe.

LUKE HOLWAY

Yes that's correct. I've got this right I think. You were a member of the Mellstock choir weren't you?

SAM NOTTON

For my sins I was, yes.

LUKE HOLWAY

I believe you can help me then. I'm trying to find the whereabouts of my ...

SAM NOTTON

Your father, the late Sergeant Holway.

LUKE HOLWAY

Yes.

SAM NOTTON

I'm surprised you don't know
Sergeant Major.

(pause)

I mean, haven't you worked it out
yet?

Luke shakes his head.

SAM NOTTON (CONT'D)

Your father remains buried where
the Sidlinch men left him that
night. He's still lying by that
handpost.

LUKE HOLWAY

But, but I paid good money for a
proper burial.

Sam is clearly enjoying the situation.

SAM NOTTON

I take no pleasure in saying this
believe me, but your father lies
rotted now in the same place with
no coffin and a six foot stake from
a sheep-pen piercing his bones.

Again Luke shakes his head. There are tears in his eyes and
he is sweating. He reaches in his pocket for a handkerchief
and wipes his brow.

LUKE HOLWAY

So he's still lying like a dog in a
ditch.

(pause)

With a stake through him, I'd heard
such things.

(pause)

But chose to ignore them.

Sam laughs and shakes his head.

SAM NOTTON

And you trusted them didn't you
Sergeant Major?

(pause)

You trusted Ezra Cattstock, Richard
Toller, Lot Swanhills, Reuben and
Dick Dewy and all the rest. You
trusted them, they've made you look
a fool.

Luke shouts out emotionally.

LUKE HOLWAY

Fool! Yes that's what I've been.
Fool to send that letter and yes
fool to trust them!

Frightened by Luke's shouting Sam moves back in his chair.

Young Hardy also looks shocked.

The landlord looking over towards Sam Notton shakes his head.

LANDLORD

You nasty piece of work Sam Notton
it didn't have to be told like
this!

All goes silent in the room, the soldiers look up from their tables.

All eyes follow Luke as he stands, mops his brow again, and makes his way out of the inn muttering to himself.

LUKE HOLWAY

I trusted them, yes fool for
trusting them. Fool, fool, fool,
fool, fool.

The door is slammed shut.

LUKE HOLWAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(shouting again)
Fool!

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY

Luke works in the kitchen at various tasks.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

From that time onwards Luke became
a virtual hermit only venturing out
when the view from the window
suggested there was no-one about.

EXT. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. DAY.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

The only visitors that he ever had
were young Catherine and Annie who
would occasionally bring food
round, which most times he
rejected.

Catherine and Annie stand at the door handing a plate of food
to Luke who expresses his thanks but shakes his head, he
closes the door and the two go away disappointed.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Luke sits at the table by the window he has his head in his
hands and he is sweating.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

It was Christmas Eve but you
wouldn't have known it from Luke
Holway's cottage.

Luke opens the window in an attempt to get some more air.

From outside he hears a VOICE sounding similar to the late
Ezra Cattstock.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hark the Glad Sound it is then.

A CHOIR START SINGING.

CHOIR (O.S.)

Hark! the glad sound! The Saviour
comes, the Saviour promised long:

Luke attempts to look out of the window.

CHOIR (CONT'D) (O.S.)

let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

LUKE HOLWAY

I can't believe this. Carol
singing, Christmas eve of course.
Christmas eve again.

FLASHBACK TO EARLIER SCENE OF SERGEANT HOLWAY'S BURIAL.
NIGHT.

A light coming from a lantern held by one of two men and a boy gets brighter as they lead a horse and cart towards the handpost.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

SINGING CONTINUES.

Luke's face is agitated, he is sweating and tears are in his eyes.

 CHOIR (O.S.)
 He comes the prisoners to release,
 In Satan's bondage held; the gates
 of brass before him burst, the iron
 fettters yield.

FLASHBACK TO EARLIER SCENE OF SERGEANT HOLWAY'S BURIAL.
NIGHT.

The body is tossed unceremoniously into the hole.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. PARLOUR. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Luke is weeping.

 CHOIR (O.S.)
 He comes, the broken heart to bind,
 the bleeding soul to cure; and with
 the treasures of his grace, to
 enrich the humble poor.

FLASHBACK TO EARLIER SCENE OF SERGEANT HOLWAY'S BURIAL.
NIGHT.

One of the men picks up his spade, the other a six foot long wooden stake which is then banged down into the hole.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. PARLOUR. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

CHOIR (O.S.)
Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
thy welcome shall proclaim; and

Still seated at the table Luke rubs his face.

CHOIR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
heaven's eternal ring with thy
beloved Name.

LUKE HOLWAY
That letter, the trust I put in
those men.
(pause)
I am not worthy to be your son.

THE CHOIR CONTINUE SINGING IN THE BACKGROUND.

Luke somewhat frantically searches for a piece of clean paper and a pencil and begins to write.

LUKE HOLWAY (CONT'D)
To the Coroners Court, being of
sound mind...

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy lies propped up in his bed Young Hardy sits in a chair the other side of the room with his violin and bow at his feet.

OLD HARDY
And that's when Sergeant Major Luke
Holway wrote his suicide note
leaving no doubt to anyone at all
about his intentions.

Young Hardy nods his head.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
He left the note on the table and
followed exactly the same procedure
as his father before him.

Luke walks over to the corner of the room and picks up a rifle, now sobbing to himself he goes out of the door.

LUKE HOLWAY (O.S.)
I am not worthy to be called thy
son.

After a few seconds of silence there is a LOUD BANG from outside.

EXT. HOLWAY'S WOODEN SHED. NIGHT.

The shed door is open, inside Luke's body lies on the floor, beside him lies the rifle. He has shot himself through the neck.

A black and white cat walks slowly past the shed.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

Luke's letter remains on the table.

EXT. MELLSTOCK CHURCH YARD. DAY.

It is a cold but clear winter's day.

A group of people including Catherine, Annie and William Flinch and his son Michael stand round the newly prepared grave as Luke's coffin is lowered into it.

Also present are two soldiers in full military dress, one of which carries a bugle.

Sam Notton is also present still wearing his smirk.

Young Hardy watches on.

Parson Crawford is conducting the service.

PARSON CRAWFORD
In sure and certain hope of the
resurrection to eternal life
through our Lord Jesus Christ, we
commend to Almighty God our brother
Luke.

Young Hardy stares angrily at Sam Notton and shakes his head.

YOUNG HARDY
(direct to camera)
Why has he come? Why?

PARSON CRAWFORD

And we commit his body to the
ground; earth to earth; ashes to
ashes, dust to dust.

Young Hardy slowly makes his way from the grave looking sad.

PARSON CRAWFORD (CONT'D)

The Lord bless him and keep him,
the Lord make his face to shine
upon him ...

Parson Crawford's voice begins to fade as Young Hardy walks
away from the churchyard.

THE SOLDIER WITH THE BUGLE PLAYS 'THE LAST POST'.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

'THE LAST POST' FADES.

Young Hardy, is still clearly upset.

OLD HARDY

Well what do you think? About the
story?

YOUNG HARDY

Me?

OLD HARDY

Who else is here?

YOUNG HARDY

Oh I feel sorry for Luke for he was
a good man.

(pause)

But I suppose at least he had a
decent and proper Christian
funeral. And not that felo, felo
what?

OLD HARDY

Felo-de-se. And you think that's
what he wanted, a decent and proper
Christian funeral?

YOUNG HARDY

Well yes, I do.

OLD HARDY

Let us briefly go back there for
the very last time.

INT. PARLOUR/ KITCHEN. HOLWAY'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

The room is empty.

LUKE HOLWAY (O.S.)
I am not worthy to be called thy
son.

After a few seconds of silence there is a LOUD BANG from outside.

Luke's letter remains on the table.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
Given the early hour, it will be
sometime before anyone discovers
the origin of the bang.

A gust of wind causes the curtains to bellow outwards and the letter to be blown into the space outside.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy reaches down for a piece of paper in the biscuit tin by the side of his bed.

OLD HARDY
I have the letter here. It is worth
reading.

Old Hardy holds the letter up and Young Hardy comes over to get it.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
As you can see it was the Sergeant
Major's final wish to be buried
with his father at the crossroads
by the handpost.

Whilst standing Young Hardy looks at the letter and after a few moments hands it back to Old Hardy. Old Hardy takes it and with some effort puts it back in the tin by the side of his bed.

Young Hardy shakes his head slowly.

YOUNG HARDY
That's very sad. And him finishing
the letter with 'I am not worthy to
be called thy son'.

Young Hardy returns to his seat.

OLD HARDY

Yes very sad.

(pause)

And of course, not being laid to rest where one wants to be laid, is no rest at all.

Old Hardy looks into space and mutters to himself.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

And will that fate also apply to me?

YOUNG HARDY

Sorry, I don't understand.

OLD HARDY

Nothing. Nothing. Just thinking like Shakespeare's Prospero again, where 'every third thought shall be of my grave.'

YOUNG HARDY

(confused)

Shakespeare's Prospero? Still a lot for me to learn, I suppose.

There is an awkward silence.

YOUNG HARDY (CONT'D)

Can I ask em

(embarrassed)

whether I'll see that girl Catherine again?

A broad smile spreads across Old Hardy's face.

FLASHBACK TO EARLIER SCENE OF LUKE HOLWAY'S RETURN. DAY.

A young girl (CATHERINE) emerges from one of the cottages with a set of keys she is about sixteen years of age, very attractive, with long dark hair.

Young Hardy raises his eye-brows at the sight of Catherine, he is very impressed.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

OLD HARDY

We shall see, we shall see.

(pause)

As you are aware from this present story, I do make mistakes. I am getting very old.

(pause)

I'm weary now and feel I should sleep. You must stay around here now, near me here at Max Gate.

YOUNG HARDY

Around here? Yes, yes I will stay near you.

(pause)

Can I ask you something else?

OLD HARDY

(wearily)

As ever, of course.

YOUNG HARDY

Is Sergeant Holway's body, is it still there by the handpost?

EXT. THE HANDPOST. NIGHT.

A breeze blows a piece of paper, a letter, Luke's letter towards the handpost.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

Oh yes, it's still there, the grave by the handpost. The whispers of that spot may claim to be preserved.

The letter comes to rest by the handpost.

BLACKNESS.

LUKE HOLWAY (V.O.)

I am not worthy to be called thy son.

FADE OUT:

END.

The Haunting of Mr Hardy 5: Afterwards

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

YOUNG HARDY is asleep in a chair opposite Old Hardy's desk, his violin and bow on the floor beside the chair.

The only light in the room comes from a desk lamp. Directly under the lamp is a photograph of Carry along with a skipping rope and a distinctive looking biscuit tin with a picture of a winter scene. Leaning on the side of the desk is the piece of the headstone Luke Holway had bought for his father's grave.

From the floor below someone with a Dorset accent (HENRY) is shouting loudly.

HENRY (O.S.)

Not right! Not blooming well right,
no matter how fancy you put it.

Young Hardy awakes looking somewhat bewildered. Rubbing his eyes he now hears a woman's voice, again with a strong local accent (KATE).

KATE (O.S.)

He's right, he's right! Our Henry's
saying truth. What God-given right
have you got?

Young Hardy picks up his violin and bow and makes his way out of the study and downstairs.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Young Hardy looks around, the voices are coming from the drawing room. He now hears a very well-spoken man (SIR SYDNEY COCKERELL).

COCKERELL (O.S.)

That's how I think he would have
wanted things.

HENRY (O.S.)

What are thee talking about? He
wants Stinsford, just go up an ask
him! Like rest of family. Good
enough for us, good enough for him.

KATE (O.S.)
 (shouting)
 How can you all be so horrible and
 talk like this, poor Tom hasn't
 even passed on yet!

On hearing this Young Hardy looks shocked.

COCKERELL (O.S.)
 Never mind, never mind. Very sadly
 the great man is, well we've known
 for some time. He's bigger than
 Stinsford, that is all that I'm
 saying. He belongs to the nation.

HENRY (O.S.)
 He belongs to family. And where he
 grew up!

COCKERELL (O.S.)
 I'm going now please tell Florence
 that I'll be back tomorrow.

HENRY (O.S.)
 Don't you be hurried about it, thee
 won't be missed!

Cockerell comes out of the drawing room. He is wearing a tweed jacket and has a pile of papers under his arm. He walks through the hallway and exits through the front door.

Young Hardy makes his way upstairs again.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

On reaching the upstairs landing Young Hardy hears a woman's voice (FLORENCE) coming from Old Hardy's bedroom. Young Hardy stands in the hallway.

FLORENCE (O.S.)
 You get some rest now, I'll send
 Eva up when she comes.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

The room is quite dark and the flames from a coal fire dance wickedly. OLD HARDY lies in bed propped up on pillows. Beside him purring contentedly is Cobby, Old Hardy's cat.

Florence stands beside the bed, she is in her late forties, and is painfully thin. She wears a silk scarf around her neck which her fingers in agitation play with.

OLD HARDY

Yes do.

(sounding weak and weary)

It will make life a bit easier for you. You're not well.

Florence shakes her head and tries to fight off tears.

FLORENCE

No. No, I'm not.

OLD HARDY

But you honestly do not need the scarf, the scar isn't that bad.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

A distressed Florence comes out of the bedroom, passes Young Hardy on the landing and goes down the stairs. Young Hardy coughs and hears Old Hardy's faint voice.

OLD HARDY (O.S.)

Come in when you're ready young Tom. Come and sit in here.

Young Hardy makes his way into the room.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Young Hardy takes his violin and bow over to the other side of the room before sitting down on the bed. He then leans forward and strokes the cat.

OLD HARDY

Old Cobby is the only one here making any sense. Did you hear them downstairs?

Young Hardy nods.

YOUNG HARDY

Yes, I heard people, yes. And saw that gentleman again.

OLD HARDY

They think for some reason that I don't know what's going on. Oh you saw Sydney did you?

Young Hardy nods.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Yes Sir Sydney Cockerell a good man
and a good friend.

EXT. OUTSIDE MAX GATE. DAY.

Cockerell is getting into the back of a motorcar outside Max Gate, placing the pile of papers on the seat beside him. A chauffeur nods to him and the motorcar starts up and drives away.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)
But he can be, he can be a little
bombastic on occasions.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

YOUNG HARDY
(tentatively)
Also Florence? Just outside, she
em, she still looks ill.

OLD HARDY
She is, poor Florence, trying to do
her best for all concerned.

Old Hardy leans forward toward Young Hardy and whispers.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Although I do know she doesn't want
me lying next to Emma. She never
liked that idea. But that is the
way things will be.

YOUNG HARDY
Lying next to you? Oh when you're
dead. They er, they were talking
downstairs. Sorry. Emma? I'm sorry.

Old Hardy faintly smiles.

OLD HARDY
No need to be sorry. Remember what
I said it's nearly your time.
And Emma, Emma you'll meet her
later.

Old Hardy moves his head back to the pillow and spends a few seconds looking intensely at Young Hardy. There are tears in Old Hardy's eyes.

The younger man shifts uncomfortably and feels he has to say something. He shrugs his shoulders.

YOUNG HARDY
What? What is it?

Old Hardy shakes his head slowly.

OLD HARDY
It just seems like yesterday that I
was your age, looking like that.
Yesterday.
(pause)
How soon we become the past.
(pause)
Doctor Mann has suggested to
Florence that I'm fading, weakness
of the heart.

Old Hardy slowly extends a hand to take a glass of water from the table by his side and sips slowly.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Fading from view.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Florence and her sister Eva are locked into an embrace. Eva, still wearing her outside coat, is a slim pleasant looking woman in her early forties.

Florence in tears moves away from Eva.

FLORENCE
Fading. He's fading Ev, fading. Oh
I'm so pleased to see you.

The two hug again before Florence moves away and dries her tears on a handkerchief.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Come on get your coat off and have
a warm by the fire. I'm not
thinking properly.

Eva removes her coat, drapes it over a chair and walks towards the fire to warm herself.

EVA
And you say they've all just gone?

Florence's fingers play nervously with the silk scarf.

FLORENCE

Yes, a wonder you didn't see them,
or more likely hear them. Wonder
Tom didn't.

Eva sits down in a chair.

EVA

Still talking about his ...

FLORENCE

Funeral. Yes. Oh it's awful.

Florence also sits down in an armchair near to Eva.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

And as Kate keeps saying poor Tom
isn't even dead yet!

Florence's agitated fingers continue to play with the scarf
and she starts to cry again.

EVA

Oh poor you as well, all this on
top of your illness.

Eva leans forward and clutches Florence's arm.

EVA (CONT'D)

Is the great Sir Sydney Cockerell
still talking about Westminster
Abbey? I'm not as sure as you are
about that man.

Florence moves slightly away from Eva and wipes her eyes with
a handkerchief.

FLORENCE

He means well I'm sure, but yes
he's still talking about the Abbey.

EVA

And does, does Tom know about this?

Florence stands up and straightens her clothing.

FLORENCE

He's suspected things for years,
for as you know Sydney is Tom's
literary executor.

Eva now stands too and nods.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

As I think I've said before Sydney always said that Tom belongs to the nation. All Tom's ever said is that his resting place is in Stinsford and that it's written in his will. And then jokes saying that the Abbey doesn't have an annex for dead atheists.

Eva smiles too, but then looks stern faced.

EVA

Tom's not really an atheist is he? I mean it wasn't that long ago that he'd cycle to church every evening.

Florence shakes her head.

FLORENCE

I sometimes think it depends who Tom is talking to at the time.

EVA

Oh the modern thinker's fashionable view to reject religion.

FLORENCE

Something like that.

EVA

But as I said I'm not as sure about Sir Sydney as you are. Is it Tom that belongs to the nation or is it Cockerell and that museum he runs? And his sister is right of course, Tom is still alive!

Eva shakes her head and moves towards the door.

EVA (CONT'D)

Bad bad business.

Eva turns round to face Florence.

EVA (CONT'D)

But you of all people know that. I'll go up and see him if I may? If he's sleeping I won't bother him.

FLORENCE

(nodding)
Of course.

(MORE)

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

I'll get a pot of tea organized.
You know where his room is.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy still lies in bed whilst Young Hardy sits on the edge of it.

OLD HARDY

So they're all talking about my
forthcoming death and where I shall
be buried. And they very well know
I'm an atheist!

YOUNG HARDY

(looking shocked)

But I'm not. I mean you know I've
taught at Sunday school and even
written sermons. I may well go on
to join the church!

Old Hardy remains calm and measured, slowly shaking his head.

OLD HARDY

(quietly to himself)

Like Jude Fawley I suppose? You
won't, you won't. Don't you want to
be a writer?

YOUNG HARDY

Who?

OLD HARDY

Never mind. Don't fret about
things. As you grow you will see.

Young Hardy still angry slowly shakes his head.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

Do you remember me talking about
poor Luke Holway? And saying that
not being laid to rest where one
wants to be is no rest at all?
I asked whether that fate also
awaited me.

Young Hardy solemnly nods his head.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

With people saying, and I've heard
them saying, somewhat pompously I
might add, that I, like Dickens,
belong to the nation.

Old Hardy slowly sits up in his bed, looks stern and waves his finger.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
If that is the case and I lie
somewhere other than Stinsford I
will not be at rest. Not at rest!

Young Hardy shakes his head.

YOUNG HARDY
I don't know what to say. I don't
know what you want from me.

Old Hardy relaxes back down in the bed.

OLD HARDY
I just want you to watch things
unfold. I want you to witness fate
at work playing its nastiest of
tricks. For that is what will make
you, well, think in the first
place.

(pause)

I just want you to see, before of
course you forget again. But never
quite forget, never quite.

Young Hardy looks confused and shakes his head.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Life is a 'Chequerboard of nights
and days, where destiny with men
for pieces plays.'

(pause)

And that is what will make you
think. And eventually, eventually
make you want to write.

YOUNG HARDY
I'm sorry, I really don't
understand. Write about what?

Old Hardy smiles.

OLD HARDY
You'll see, you'll see, just watch
events as they unfold, for this is
your time.

There is a knock on the door and Eva pops her head round.

EVA

You don't mind me coming in to see
you do you Tom? I've just arrived.

Young Hardy quickly gets up from the bed and moves to the other side of the room. Cobby jumps down and goes out of the door.

OLD HARDY

No, no Eva not at all.

Eva walks in.

EVA

I thought I heard voices.

OLD HARDY

No. No just me talking to old
Cobby.

Eva sits down on the bed and leans forward kissing Old Hardy on his cheek.

EVA

How are you feeling?

OLD HARDY

Tired. I was just saying, just
thinking, Stinsford churchyard will
soon be my bed.

EVA

Oh Tom, you must never give up.

OLD HARDY

I'm not giving anything up Eva.
What was that line I wrote about
Stinsford?

Eva looks quizzically at Old Hardy and slowly shakes her head.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

And mourn the yellowing tree, for I
shall mind not, slumbering
peacefully.

Eva smiles and gently squeezes Old Hardy's hand with hers.

EVA

Yes. Yes there are worse places to
be than in that churchyard. With
all your family in God's acre.

OLD HARDY
(somewhat agitated)
God's acre? I've spoken many times
to Reverend Cowley at Mellstock,

Eva looks puzzled at this.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
Stinsford sorry. And I've told him
what I think about God, that vast
imbecility!

Eva slowly shakes her head and stands up clearly troubled by
Old Hardy's remarks. In the corner of the room Young Hardy
also shakes his head.

EVA
You shouldn't be saying that Tom.
You still give to the church don't
you? And believe in an afterlife?

Old Hardy smiles.

EVA (CONT'D)
Didn't Florence say that you once
saw a ghost?

OLD HARDY
Yes I did. About this time of year.

EVA
I'd love to hear about it sometime.

Eva holds up her hand, palm facing towards Old Hardy.

EVA (CONT'D)
But not now. I don't want to tire
you.

As she says this Eva glances out of the window at the side of
Old Hardy's bed, it is getting dark outside. Eva for a brief
moment thinks that she sees a bent and hunched up figure
walking towards the house RHODA BROOK. Rhoda's right arm
lurching forward trying to grab an incubus but only managing
the early evening air.

EVA (CONT'D)
What the?

Eva shudders at the sight of this.

EXT. GARDEN. MAX GATE. DAY. DARKENING SKY.

Eva stands at the window her face clearly distressed.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Eva looks out of the window again and this time sees that there is nothing there. Her head is still shaking.

EVA

No. No, I er don't want to tire you. I er really don't.

OLD HARDY

Ghosts? Ghosts?

Eva continues to stare out of the window.

EVA

(quietly)
Yes ghosts.

OLD HARDY

Yes, this time of year, Christmas Eve in fact. Things beyond the veil. Things beyond the veil.

Eva sits back on the bed, more composed now but still shaken she leans forward and takes Old Hardy's hand in hers.

EVA

Things beyond the veil indeed! I don't want to tire you, but you say God is an imbecility and I know you follow the modern views of Darwin and the like. Yet you believe in ghosts and believe you've seen one?
(to herself)
I think I might have done now.

Old Hardy slowly nods his head.

EVA (CONT'D)

A contradiction surely?

Old Hardy's face breaks out into a smile and he gently laughs.

OLD HARDY

Things beyond the veil. Things beyond the veil.
(still laughing)
Yes.

(MORE)

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

The Reverend Cowley knows my views.
He knows. He knows. What with Tess
and Jude the Church and myself...

(pause)

I'm so tired Eva so tired.

EVA

Get some rest, it's me that's
tiring you.

Eva starts to get up Old Hardy's right hand grasps her arm.

OLD HARDY

Life is a 'Chequerboard of nights
and days, where destiny with men
for pieces plays.'

On the other side of the room Young Hardy shakes his head and
looks bewildered.

YOUNG HARDY

(mutters to himself)

He's just said that to me.

Eva is also shaking her head.

EVA

Oh Tom. Forever musing on fate. Do
you remember a couple of years
after you and Flo were married
reading your poem to us in the
garden?

OLD HARDY

I do, yes. It was a glorious spring
afternoon.

Old Hardy raises himself slightly.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

I would read it now had I the
breath.

(pause)

You read it. Yes. You read it.
Would you?

Old Hardy slowly lifts up his arm and points to a bookshelf
on the wall close to where Young Hardy sits in the corner of
the room.

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)

It should be in a volume on the
shelf over there.

Eva gets up from the bed and moves towards the bookshelf.

EVA

As I said I don't want to tire you.

OLD HARDY

'Moments of Vision' it's called.

Eva spends a few seconds looking for the book, eventually finding it she walks back to the bed and sits again.

Eva thumbs through the book looking for the poem.

EVA

Yes it was such a lovely afternoon
and I was thrilled to be in such
elevated company. Oh it was all so
lovely. I'll read it then, do my
best, but it won't be the same as
you reading it, here I go:

Eva pauses and gently clears her throat.

EVA (CONT'D)

When the Present has latched its
postern behind my tremulous stay.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. GARDEN. MAX GATE. BRIGHT SPRING DAY.

A dozen or so people including Cockerell, J.M.BARRIE, Florence and Eva are gathered outside in the garden, some eating, others drinking champagne. Old Hardy's dog Wessex runs around excitedly. All are standing and listening attentively to Old Hardy, who is in his seventies, reading a poem from a book.

OLD HARDY

And the May month flaps its glad
green leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk,
will the neighbours say,
'He was a man who used to notice
such things'?

SERIES OF SHOTS:

VARIOUS LANDSCAPES OF DORSET/ HEATH LAND/ STINSFORD
CHURCHYARD. EXT. DAY/ NIGHT.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

If I pass during some nocturnal
blackness, mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively
over the lawn,
One may say, 'He strove that such
innocent creatures should come to
no harm,
But he could do little for them;
and now he is gone'.

If, when hearing that I have been
stilled at last, they stand at the
door,
Watching the full-starred heavens
that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who
will see my face no more,
He was one who had an eye for such
mysteries?

EXT. GARDEN. MAX GATE. DAY.

OLD HARDY

And will any say when my bell of
quittance is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause
in its outrollings,

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Old Hardy lies quietly listening to the poem.

EVA

Till they rise again, as they were
a new bell's boom,
'He hears it not now, but used to
notice such things'?

EXT. GARDEN. MAX GATE. DAY. DARKENING SKY.

The guests gathered around Old Hardy clap enthusiastically and nod their heads in appreciation. Old Hardy lowers the book, smiles and looks content.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Eva slowly lowers the book to her lap. Old Hardy smiles and looks content.

OLD HARDY

The brevity of our existence. And
how we hope to be remembered.

EVA

A lovely poem from a lovely poet.

Old Hardy leans forward and takes Eva's hand.

OLD HARDY

Thank you for saying so. I'm afraid
as I told Virginia when she
visited, I haven't given up on
poetry, poetry is giving up on me.

Eva shakes her head.

EVA

I repeat, a lovely poem from a
lovely poet. And yes you were,
indeed you are, the man who used to
notice such things.

Getting up Eva walks over to the bookshelf and replaces the book.

OLD HARDY

Both poetry and life is giving up
on me. I shall rest quite calmly at
Stinsford. I feel so tired, so
tired, I shall sleep now till death
finally summons me.

EVA

Well I'll leave you.

Eva has tears in her eyes. She leans forward kisses Old Hardy on the cheek and moves towards the door.

EVA (CONT'D)

Get some rest now. I'll send Nellie up later to see if you want anything to eat.

Old Hardy closes his eyes as Eva leaves the room.

Young Hardy stands up and looks over towards Old Hardy.

YOUNG HARDY

Now what? Now that it's nearly my time?

OLD HARDY

(still with his eyes closed and murmuring)

Fading, fading.

COCKERELL (O.S.)

Fading. Yes he's fading quite quickly now.

INT. KING'S ARMS HOTEL FOYER. DORCHESTER. NIGHT.

Cockerell is using the telephone on the reception desk. The exceptionally smartly dressed manager of the hotel (JEREMY SOAMES) is seemingly engaged with paper work at the other side of the desk.

COCKERELL

Matter of hours. We'll do what we said James, if you could?

(pause)

Yes a Westminster Abbey funeral, has to be. I've got a contact there, bear with me one second....

Cockerell takes a small notebook from his pocket and thumbs through it.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Yes, are you there James? Good. Yes it's a Dr Foxley Norris and he's the Dean, yes Dean. And if you could talk to Stanley Baldwin and that fellow Dawson from The Times.

(pause)

Excellent, just add a bit of weight to our proposal.

(pause)

No there shouldn't be problems.

(MORE)

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

There'll be resistance here mind
you.

(pause)

Yes unfortunately they are,
houseful of women and yes, as you
say, rural plebs.

Soames looks up from his paper work raising his eyebrows at
Cockerell's comments. Cockerell is aware of this.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

I'll call when I have more news.

Cockerell places the telephone back in its holder as the
manager looks up.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Sorry em, sorry about that.

SOAMES

You've finished your call Sir
Sydney?

Cockerell nods. Soames moves the telephone to the side of the
desk and leans forward.

SOAMES (CONT'D)

I couldn't help but overhear.

COCKERELL

I know I shouldn't have said that.

SOAMES

Perfectly all right Sir Sydney.
But, may I ask, is that Mr Hardy,
our very own Thomas Hardy you're
talking about?

COCKERELL

Yes, yes sadly it is, it's no
secret. I have to contact some of
the papers now to alert them. The
great man is sadly fading.

INT. THE WHITE HORSE INN. NIGHT.

A dark room lit largely by candles with a roaring fire in the
corner of the room.

A group of three very gnarled men STANLEY, WALTER and TONY
sit at a table with empty glasses in front of them. They are
all in their sixties.

STANLEY

Fading fast now, that's what our
Nellie told me. She's always had a
bit of a soft spot for the man.

Tony stands up taking the three glasses with him and stands
at the bar close to the table.

WALTER

I got no bugger soft spot! He can
fade as fast as he wants as far as
I'm concerned. Miserable bugger, he
did my grocer twice in war for
making a bit on the side.

Tony turns round laughing.

TONY

Who's got a bit on the side?
Stanley here?

WALTER

No you deaf old bugger, what would
Stanley do with a bit on the side
at his age.

STANLEY

Never mind about my age you cheeky
varmint. You don't know what I'm
capable of.

WALTER

No we're talking about the
magistrate, Lord Thomas Hardy, or
he thinks he is. Wouldn't give
anybody the droppings from his
nose.

TONY

Oh him, I got 'ee.

The LANDLORD arrives and takes the three empty glasses.

LANDLORD

Same again?

Tony nods approval and turns round again.

WALTER

I was saying. He did my grocer for
profiteering during war. His young
wife is still not welcome in any of
the shops in Dorchester.

STANLEY
 (with a snort)
 Casterbridge! You ignoramus.

TONY
 And did me for being drunk and
 disorderly and you know me and
 drink, moderation itself.

Filling the glasses the Landlord smiles.

STANLEY
 Anyway Lord Hardy is fading fast
 now.

Sitting in the opposite corner by the chimney are two
 strangers. Both men are in their late twenties, one tall and
 gaunt with a curly mass of black hair (FIRST STRANGER). The
 other a powerful looking man dressed in black with a bushy
 black beard (SECOND STRANGER). The two share a large mug.

Walter moves a little closer to Stanley indicating with his
 head.

WALTER
 Who be those two over there? Rum
 looking pair.

Stanley looks over to the corner by the fire-place. The
 Second Stranger in particular looks back menacingly.

INT. KITCHEN. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

Florence, the maid (NELLIE) and the young scullery maid
 (BETTY) are standing talking.

NELLIE
 He's asked for some more kettle-
 broth ma'am. So I said I'd check
 with you first. I did him some this
 morning along with a rasher of
 bacon cooked in front of the
 bedroom fire.

Florence goes over to the table and sits down.

FLORENCE
 Oh thank you Nellie for that, just
 do him the broth, it's getting
 late.
 (to herself and smiling)
 (MORE)

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

Kettle-broth for the invalid and
bacon grilled on the fire, just as
his mother would have cooked it.

(to Nellie)

Take it up when it's ready Nellie
and then you must get off home.

BETTY

I could do it if you want miss?

NELLIE

(to Betty)

That's kind Betty, but no I'll do
it.

(to Florence)

I think your sister is with Mr
Hardy at the moment isn't she
Ma'am?

FLORENCE

Yes she is.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

Old Hardy lies in bed, sitting alongside of him is Eva and
Cobby the cat.

Young Hardy sits in the corner of the room.

Old Hardy's voice is weak and only just audible.

OLD HARDY

I ate pheasant and champagne only
the other day, but between the two
of us, and not a word to anyone,
I still prefer the kettle-broth.

Eva smiles.

EVA

Another contradiction?

OLD HARDY

I suppose so. I suppose I'm full of
them.

Suddenly Old Hardy, his face contorted with pain, seems to
seize up holding his chest.

Frightened by the movement Cobby jumps from the bed.

EVA

Tom! Tom! What is it?

OLD HARDY

I'm not sure. Not sure, not sure.

Nellie arrives at the door with a bowl of broth on a tray.

NELLIE

Everything alright miss?

EVA

No, no Nellie, best get my sister quickly. I'll take his pulse.

Eva attempts to get hold of Old Hardy's wrist as she is doing this his upper body springs up from the bed, his right arm extends and points into the air.

OLD HARDY

(shouting)

Eva, what is this?

At the same time Young Hardy also springs up from the chair he has been sitting on. He looks towards the direction that Old Hardy is pointing. He can see nothing.

Eva and Nellie look terrified. Nellie drops the tray and Old Hardy falls back on the bed. Dead.

Young Hardy also falls back into his chair looking resigned to his fate. He mutters to himself.

YOUNG HARDY

It's me now. Me?

Florence comes rushing into the room and makes her way over to the bed.

FLORENCE

Whatever is the matter?

Both of Florence's hands hold Old Hardy's hands. She looks round to Lily who is still in shock.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

Someone get Dr Mann!

Eva slowly shakes her head and puts her arm round Florence. Both Eva and Florence hug each other. Nellie looks sadly on.

Young Hardy walks over to the bed and looks down at Old Hardy.

YOUNG HARDY

My time now I suppose. What was it
you said? Just watch, just see,
before of course, you forget again.
(shakes his head)
And that is what will make you a
writer. I still don't understand.

After a few moments he leaves the room looking upset. His
violin and bow remain in the corner of the room.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

Young Hardy stands at the top of the stairs and shakes his
head.

YOUNG HARDY

But I don't want to be a writer!

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

Dr Mann sits writing out a death certificate.

Eva is washing Old Hardy's body which lies on the bed. Nellie
has been clearing up the mess on the floor from dropping the
tray.

EVA

I'm just going to run a razor over
his face, I won't be a moment
Nellie.

Eva exits through the door of the dressing room.

A very distressed Florence enters the room from the landing
carrying a large package under her arm. She places her hand
on Nellie's shoulder.

FLORENCE

Nellie I told you to go home ages
ago what will Stanley be thinking.

NELLIE

Don't worry about him ma'am, most
likely he'll be drinking somewhere.

Eva returns to the room with shaving equipment.

FLORENCE

(tearfully)
Thank you so much Nellie.
(MORE)

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
And you too Eva, Dr Mann, you've
all been ...

Florence breaks down. Eva goes over to comfort her.

Doctor Mann nods slowly as he's getting ready to leave.

DR MANN
Cardiac syncope. It was quick in
the end, which is always a
blessing.
(to Eva)
Did I mention that reporters are
already gathering outside.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

Five or six journalists are standing in the front garden some
with cameras.

DR MANN (O.S.)
Vultures.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

Doctor Mann exits.

EVA
Vultures indeed.

FLORENCE
I'd like you to help me dress poor
Tom in this please.

Florence unties the package revealing a red gown.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
He was so proud of this, but, being
him, would never let on of course.
His doctoral scarlet robe.

Eva looks at the gown then she notices the violin and bow in
the corner.

EVA
Yes very smart. Is that Tom's
violin over there? Don't think I've
seen it before.

Florence glances over shrugs her shoulders and shakes her
head.

FLORENCE

Not sure what it's doing there. It was Tom's when he was a boy. Oh Ev.

Florence breaks down again and Eva walks over to comfort her.

INT. KITCHEN. MAX GATE. LATER THAT NIGHT.

Florence and Eva sit at a table drinking tea both are upset and tearful.

EVA

Who have you got in touch with so far about Tom?

FLORENCE

I've tried to telephone Henry and I've tried to contact Kate, nothing. But I know they don't like using the telephone.

EVA

(smiling)

Both of them, I seem to remember, don't answer it when it's dark.

FLORENCE

They're not on their own, Tom never wanted the telephone installed here. I've asked Nellie to tell Vicar Cowley on her way home. I've also spoken to Sydney who's in Dorchester.

EVA

Sydney? Oh Sydney Cockerell, him. The world will soon know then!

FLORENCE

Yes. Yes you're right the world will know.

(shaking her head)

Oh Tom, there's so much I should have said.

Florence puts her head in her hands and starts sobbing loudly.

Eva stands up and walks to the other side of the table and puts both her hands on Florence's shoulders.

EVA

Come on now my love, time to try
and get some rest.

Florence looks up at Eva tears streaming down her face.

FLORENCE

So much I should have said. But
yes. But yes, yes of course you're
right. There's so much to sort out.

EVA

It'll all get done. At least poor
Tom's at rest now.

Eva helps Florence up from the table and the two women walk
arm in arm out of the kitchen.

EVA (CONT'D)

Fancy cuddling up to your little
sister tonight?

INT. DRAWING ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Florence sits alone at the table looking weary, Eva enters.

FLORENCE

I think we'll base ourselves here
for today. And people as they
arrive can go and see Tom upstairs
if they wish.

Eva sits down at the table

EVA

Yes. Yes I think you're right. I've
telephoned Henry and Kate they're
on their way round. It will be a
busy time.

INT. FOYER. KING'S ARMS HOTEL. DORCHESTER. DAY.

Cockerell sits at a table with four journalists all with note
pads.

Young Hardy sits behind them.

COCKERELL

Yes gentlemen it will be a busy
time.

(MORE)

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

My friend, and indeed Thomas's great friend, James Barrie is with the Westminster Abbey people as we speak.

JOURNALIST ONE

If I can come in at this moment sir?

COCKERELL

(nodding approval)

Yes, please do, please do.

JOURNALIST ONE

I'm local sir and have had the privilege of talking to the late Mr Hardy on many occasions. I think it was always understood that he would be buried with all his relations in Stinsford.

COCKERELL

Yes. I understand that. But what I'm going to say now I fear, will be something you'll find me repeating over and over again.

Cockerell reaches for a small glass of water he has on a table in front of him and sips the liquid before placing it down again.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Thomas Hardy belongs to the nation and as his friend and literary executor I shall make sure that the great man has the great send-off which he richly deserves.

Cockerell stands up and prepares to leave.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me gentlemen, you're all welcome at Max Gate this afternoon. Shall we say two pm?

The journalists nod in agreement.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Good. I'll see you all later.

Cockerell exits. The journalists look at each other shaking their heads.

JOURNALIST ONE

Now there'll be some fun and games,
it wasn't what Mr Hardy wanted, not
what he wanted at all.

JOURNALIST TWO

Hadn't he left room on the
tombstone for his own name?

Journalist One nods as he begins to gather up his papers and notebook.

JOURNALIST ONE

He had indeed. I might be becoming
an old cynic, but a funeral at the
Abbey won't do any harm to Sir
Sydney or the museum he runs.

JOURNALIST TWO

Why's that?

JOURNALIST ONE

Well the Fitzwilliam has a couple
of Hardy's original manuscripts.
The manuscripts of a writer buried
in Poets' Corner, a valuable asset?

Journalist Two nods in agreement and they and their colleagues leave.

YOUNG HARDY

(muttering to himself)

Who can you trust? I can't make
this Cockerell out.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Florence sits in a chair absentmindedly playing with her fingers, she looks up as Eva, Henry and Kate enter the room. Both Henry and Kate are in their seventies.

EVA

You two get yourselves sorted out
and I'll get Nellie to make us some
tea.

Eva exits the room, both Henry and Kate sit down.

HENRY

He looks at peace Florence, that's
all we can say.

Florence nods timidly.

KATE

Yes. Yes you're right he does look at peace.

HENRY

(chuckling quietly)
And he's still got that triumphant look on his face. Had it as a young en, Tommy he was to us at home wasn't he Kate? Always Tommy.

KATE

Yes Tommy. My big brother.

Kate is close to tears. There is an awkward silence.

HENRY

Have you been in touch with undertakers Flo? Family 'as always used Scotts of Dorchester, I don't know who you were thinking of.

FLORENCE

(hesitantly)
I, I was waiting till Sydney arrived, he 'em, said he'd handle things.

Henry snarls and Kate goes rigid with annoyance.

HENRY

Him!

KATE

Why! Do we have to wait on his every word?

Eva enters the room.

EVA

Why indeed? And you're quite right.

Eva walks to the back of Florence's chair and places her hand on her shoulders.

EVA (CONT'D)

But, but, he is taking a lot of responsibility off this one, and at the moment she's got enough on her plate.

Florence breaks down again sobbing. Henry and Kate both lower their heads.

HENRY

(quietly to Kate)

Least said the better with this lot, me thinks. They think we got no bloody sense.

KATE

(whispering)

I'm sure she don't want Tom lying with Emma, that's at the bottom of things.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED HALLWAY. MAX GATE. LATER THAT DAY.

Cockerell stands in the hallway with about five or six journalists.

COCKERELL

Right gentlemen if you can be as quiet as possible that would be er, helpful when we get upstairs.

Cockerell looks sternly at the journalists with cameras.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

And absolutely no photographs, we're not Victorians!

The party led by Cockerell make their way upstairs watched by an astonished Eva and Florence who have come out of the drawing room. They are joined by Young Hardy.

EVA

I really can't believe what I'm seeing. It's like a freak show! Did you give him permission to let the press see Tom's body?

Florence is very distressed.

FLORENCE

He. He, didn't ask.

EVA

This just isn't right.

YOUNG HARDY

(talking directly to Eva)

And I feel it's going to get a lot worse.

Eva seems to hear this comment and turns her head towards Young Hardy.

EVA
(looking confused)
Sorry?

FLORENCE
Sydney didn't ask, didn't ask. It's
all been so strange.

Florence breaks down again and Eva, still puzzled by what she thinks she's heard, comforts her.

EVA
(to herself)
Very strange indeed.

INT. DINING ROOM. KING'S ARMS HOTEL. DORCHESTER. EVENING.

Cockerell and Barrie sit at a dining table eating their evening meal. Barrie is in his sixties and sports a moustache.

Young Hardy sits at a nearby table, his violin at his feet.

Barrie speaks with a Scottish accent.

BARRIE
So you've looked at the will and it
definitely was Stinsford where
Thomas wished to lay.

COCKERELL
Oh yes. Yes it's all there,
Stinsford, but we're going to
ignore it.

BARRIE
So do you think that's going to be
alright? I mean what we're doing,
is it right?

COCKERELL
Of course. Leaving Florence aside
the imbeciles simply have not got a
clue of the stature of this man.

Cockerell picks up his wine glass.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

If Tom had a fault it was that he never could get away from his background. And worse still feeling somehow ashamed of it.

He drinks and places the glass down on the table.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

I'm not a snob or anything such like. As you know, just like Tom, I never went to university, after school I had to go into the family coal business.

BARRIE

But you got lucky. I think you'd acknowledge that.

COCKERELL

(somewhat agitated)

No, no it wasn't luck! Definitely not luck.

Young Hardy looks over to Cockerell and shakes his head.

YOUNG HARDY

Not luck then.

COCKERELL

More design, in more ways than one. I met and worked for Ruskin, Morris and eventually took on the Fitzwilliam. There I found a pig sty and turned it into a palace.

Cockerell finishes his meal and places his knife and fork down on his plate.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

But this isn't about me.

Young Hardy shakes his head again and looks over disdainfully towards Cockerell.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Look, Florence has had messages of condolence from all sorts of the hierarchy and nobility including the King and the Prince of Wales.

BARRIE

Aye you said. Impressive.

COCKERELL

I only want the best for Tom and his stature as a writer moves him away from a small country churchyard and small country minds.

A waiter comes over to the table to collect the plates.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

I'm talking to the parish priest a Reverend Cowley tomorrow, just to tidy up things there. By that time hopefully our wish for internment in the Abbey will have been granted.

BARRIE

Aye. And Thomas will be the first writer since Dickens to be placed there.

The waiter goes and Cockerell picks up his glass and drinks the remaining content.

COCKERELL

And the first poet since Tennyson.

Cockerell stands up, Barrie looks at his pocket watch.

BARRIE

Yes I must be leaving.

Barrie also stands up and shakes hands with Cockerell.

COCKERELL

I'll speak to you tomorrow. What we're doing James is absolutely right and correct.

YOUNG HARDY

(looking at Cockerell)
Is it 'absolutely right and correct'?

INT. REV COWLEY'S STUDY. STINSFORD. DAY.

The Reverend Cowley and Cockerell sit drinking tea in armchairs in a book-lined study.

Also standing in the room is Young Hardy.

COCKERELL

So I heard from James about an hour ago, James Barrie a good friend of mine and a good friend of Toms.

REV COWLEY

Sorry to interrupt but was it Barrie who wrote that play 'The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up'?

Young Hardy looks directly at Reverend Cowley.

YOUNG HARDY

Which boy wouldn't grow up?

COCKERELL

Yes Peter Pan, it's being published later this year as a story.

YOUNG HARDY

Ah, that boy.

The Reverend Cowley nods his head looking impressed.

REV COWLEY

Sorry do go on.

COCKERELL

Yes James reported that Dr Foxley Norris had granted permission for the burial to take place in the Abbey next Monday the sixteenth.

REV COWLEY

So soon?

COCKERELL

It seems they've got a space then. And they've checked with Ramsay MacDonald, and Baldwin, both of whom expressed their wish to attend and they can make it on that day.

The Reverend Cowley's shows his disappointment with this news.

REV COWLEY

Hmm, I'd imagined that it may, in the end, be a London funeral.

The Reverend Cowley takes out a letter from his pocket and opens it.

REV COWLEY (CONT'D)

But, I suppose you know I have a letter from Mr Hardy expressing, in his own extremely valuable words, his wishes to be, on death, and I quote: 'in a supine position in Stinsford churchyard'.

COCKERELL

I know that was what he partly desired.

REV COWLEY

(shaking his head and speaking emphatically)

Not partly Sir Sydney, not partly. Totally. Thomas Hardy wished to remain in Stinsford, Dorset.

Cockerell ignores the Reverend Cowley's remarks.

COCKERELL

But I also know what the nation expects. I also knew the man himself and how he would have been thrilled that he was going to Poets' Corner. Even though of course he would never have wanted to admit it.

(pause)

Just one troubling issue to be resolved.

The Reverend puts the letter back in his pocket.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

He's em. He's going to have to be cremated, as it appears there's just not the room in the Abbey.

Both Reverend Cowley and Young Hardy look alarmed.

REV COWLEY

Cremated?

(pause)

Do his family know of all this? His brother Henry and sister Kate are regular attenders. Do they know?

COCKERELL

They know. Well they know because of my respect for the great man that I'm insisting on the Abbey.

REV COWLEY

Well the very best of luck Sir
Sydney, all this may not go down
well, not well at all!

The Reverend Cowley stands up and walks to the window which overlooks the churchyard.

COCKERELL

I'm afraid that is what's
happening, so they'll just have to
get used to it.

The Reverend Cowley has his back towards Cockerell looking out of the window.

REV COWLEY

So no trace of the great writer's
physical existence, neither his
body nor the ashes from that body
will remain in Dorset? His Wessex
where all of his tales took place.

(pause)

It all seems wrong to me and it
will seem very wrong to others.

He turns round to face Cockerell again.

REV COWLEY (CONT'D)

I may have an idea that might make
that situation more...

(pause)

Maybe a compromise being made would
soothe local nerves a little. But
it would be somewhat, what shall we
say, it would be somewhat radical.

Cockerell leans forward in his seat.

COCKERELL

Yes? Go on I'm intrigued.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Florence, Eva and Kate are sat in armchairs talking. Florence still wearing a silk scarf is pressing it with her fingers.

FLORENCE

So I received a telephone call from
Sydney. And the fact is, the fact
is Tom is to be cremated and his
ashes interred in the Abbey.

Both Kate and Eva shake their heads in disbelief.

KATE

Cremated! Tom would never have wanted that. This is evil.

EVA

Oh Flo that's awful. And again, I suppose, you were not consulted?

Florence fidgets nervously and is close to tears.

FLORENCE

No. No, all Sydney says is, we have no choice in the matter.

KATE

But you, we, we should have a choice we're family.

FLORENCE

The undertakers are upstairs now moving Tom's body onto a table in his dressing room. And tomorrow Sydney and James are accompanying Tom up to Woking to have his body cremated.

(pause)

And there's worse.

There is silence until Eva gently prompts Florence.

EVA

What my love, what could be worse?

There is a long and awkward pause again.

FLORENCE

They're going to take Tom's heart out and bury it in Stinsford!

Another pause follows before Florence stands up and runs out of the room in hysterics nearly colliding with Nellie who was about to enter.

KATE

His heart?

EVA

This is wrong! All very wrong!

Nellie standing at the door shakes her head in disbelief as to what she's heard.

INT. THE WHITE HORSE INN. NIGHT.

Stanley, Walter and Tony sit at a table with drinks in front of them. Young Hardy is also at the table.

STANLEY

Anyway you lot, you ain't heard the latest about Lord Thomas Hardy, as Walter calls him.

WALTER

What's the bugger up to now? I thought him dead.

STANLEY

He's avin his heart taken out.

WALTER

Heart taken out?

STANLEY

That's what our Nel tells me. That's the news from the big house.

Tony and Walter look mystified.

TONY

Heart out? Takes some beating that.

STANLEY

What his bloody heart? It's stopped beating aint it?

Tony shakes his head, Walter laughs.

Tony takes a large gulp of beer from his glass and then puts it down firmly on the table.

TONY

What's Saint Peter gonna say at them pearly gates? Ere be heart where be rest of you?

The three break down laughing.

Young Hardy sadly shakes his head.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN. MAX GATE. DAY.

The garden seems busy with several journalists standing round. One (JOURNALIST FIVE) in particular is engaged in a discussion with a man in a red waistcoat (JOE SCAMEL).

JOE

Yes I'm sorry Mr Hardy's passed on,
he could tell a good tale.

Journalist Five nods enthusiastically and takes down notes.

JOE (CONT'D)

That he could. But you can tell
your readers, if it'd be of
interest of course.

As Joe talks a very thin man dressed in overalls makes his
way over (SETH).

JOURNALIST FIVE

Yes, please go on.

JOE

I didn't like the ending of the
story I was in, poor Ned Hipcroft
never the same without little
Carry. Never. Not a right way to
end a story that.

JOURNALIST FIVE

Indeed it was very sad. Very sad.

Seth joins Joe and Journalist Five.

SETH

Is this Mr Hardy you be talking
about?

Joe nods.

SETH (CONT'D)

Couldn't abide a happy ending.

Journalist Five quickly finishes talking to the two as a lady
(THERESA) in her eighties slowly makes her way through the
door of Max Gate and down the pathway. She looks troubled and
distressed as all the journalists move towards her.

JOURNALIST THREE

Do you mind telling me who you are
ma' am. Do you know the deceased?

THERESA

Oh go away the lot of you! Go away!

Theresa tries to weave a path through.

THERESA (CONT'D)

I'm Tom's cousin and I just want you to go away. We all do.

Theresa moves as quickly as she can.

JOURNALIST FOUR

Can I ask you whether you appreciate the honour of having Mr Hardy's remains interred in the Abbey?

THERESA

Go away can't you!

Theresa tries to manoeuvre her way through the journalists but suddenly stops.

THERESA (CONT'D)

There is nothing in honour! He wanted to be buried in Stinsford and it is cruel not to do as he wished. If you want my opinion he should never av been a famous writer.

Theresa hurries away.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Eva looks out of the window. She moves away and joins Florence and Kate at the table, all looking tense and troubled.

EVA

Poor Theresa, poor all of us.

KATE

I've told Henry to keep his distance, he be disgusted with the whole business. The old fool might try en hit Sir bloody Sydney.

EVA

(quietly to herself)
I wish he would.

KATE

And don't ask me about that Reverend Cowley, don't ask.

EVA

We won't ask Kate. But have a bit of thought for my sister.

Florence is clearly agitated, her fingers playing with the silk scarf round her neck.

FLORENCE

I know I'm not coping very well.

EVA

You're doing fine.

FLORENCE

I know I'm not, but I'm doing my best. And I have to believe that Sydney and James are also doing their best.

KATE

And the doctors are coming round to take Tom's heart out. It's a terrible thing to do!

FLORENCE

(hysterically)

We have no choice in the matter! No choice, no choice, no choice!

Florence breaks down. Eva quickly gets up to comfort her and looks directly at Kate.

EVA

Please no more, she really can't take much more!

EXT. FRONT GARDEN. MAX GATE. DAY.

Dr Mann and another smartly dressed gentleman (DR NASH-WORTHINGTON) make their way up the pathway to the house, both carry brief cases. Journalists soon surround the two men.

Young Hardy is also there.

JOURNALIST ONE

It's Dr Mann isn't it sir?

DR MANN

It is indeed.

JOURNALIST ONE

Can I ask whether the rumours that Mr Hardy's heart is to be interred in Stinsford churchyard are true?

DR MANN

I'm sure Sir Sydney Cockerell will be making a statement to you all shortly.

The two are joined by Young Hardy and approach the door which is opened by Nellie.

DR MANN (CONT'D)

Now if you don't mind gentlemen.

JOURNALIST FOUR

Can I just ask?

All three go through the door which is quickly closed.

JOURNALIST FOUR (CONT'D)

I obviously can't then.

The journalists gather in a group and start discussing things. Journalist Two beckons Journalist One over towards him and the two separate themselves from the rest.

JOURNALIST TWO

You know what you said about Poets' Corner serving Sir Sydney's interests?

Journalist One nods.

JOURNALIST TWO (CONT'D)

Well, the Reverend Cowley has done the same thing for Stinsford Church. I bet the place is still attracting Hardy-heads, pilgrim's gold in a hundred years time.

Journalist One again nods his head in agreement.

JOURNALIST ONE

It will be, it very well will be. My editor is thinking along the same lines, even asking why the Abbey and Poets' Corner for a writer who upset the Church so much with Jude and Tess?

INT. REV COWLEY'S STUDY. STINSFORD. DAY.

The Reverend Cowley sits at a desk in his study. He is on the telephone with a wad of papers in front of him.

REV COWLEY

I honestly don't think we have anything to worry about.

There is a pause, Reverend Cowley taps a pencil on the paper.

REV COWLEY (CONT'D)

Yes yes, well what they must realise is that it suited Mr Hardy to sound like that occasionally.

(pause)

Yes it really did.

(pause)

Let me just say we had our discussions, but he gave to this church regularly, supported it, and loved the very fabric of it.

(pause)

And I think we would be absolutely out of our minds to pass this opportunity by, both for here and for London.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

NELLIE

Come through Dr Mann and you sir.

DR MANN

Thank you Nellie. Have you been told why we are here?

NELLIE

I have sir I have, you know where Mr Hardy is?

DR MANN

I do indeed, we'll make our way up.

The two, followed by Young Hardy, start to make their way up the stairs. Half way up Dr Nash-Worthington stops and speaks to Dr Mann.

DR NASH-WORTHINGTON.

Em, when we've removed it, we're going to need something to put it in.

DR MANN

Yes of course, you're quite right.

Nodding Dr Mann turns round to address Nellie at the bottom of the stairs

DR MANN (CONT'D)

Could you possibly find us something, a biscuit tin perhaps and maybe a clean tea towel or the like please?

Nellie's faces grimaces.

NELLIE

Yes sir. I'll be up with them in few minutes. I'll em, I'll leave them just outside the door if, if that's okay with you sir?

DR MANN

That's perfectly okay Nellie. Oh and if you could tell Mrs Hardy that the undertakers will be round later on to take Mr Hardy's body away. Sad business, but he had a good and long life.

The two doctors go up the stairs, Young Hardy remains. Nellie is left shaking her head.

NELLIE

Biscuit tin and clean tea towel, what is the world coming to?

YOUNG HARDY

(looking at Nellie)

I can certainly help with the biscuit tin.

INT. KING'S ARMS HOTEL FOYER. DORCHESTER. NIGHT.

Barrie and Cockerell are seated in front of a group of journalists. Barrie stands.

BARRIE

We won't keep you long gentlemen and we won't be taking questions. As previously indicated we are now in a position to outline for you the funeral arrangements of Thomas Hardy. I'll hand over to my colleague Sir Sydney if I may.

Barrie sits down, Cockerell stands up holding a piece of paper.

COCKERELL

Thanks James. Tomorrow James and I will accompany Thomas Hardy's body to a crematorium in Woking. His ashes will then be sent on to Westminster Abbey and be available for a service on Monday at two p.m., when they will be interred in Poets' Corner.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT./INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY. LONDON. DARK RAINY DAY.

Crowds of people stand in the rain as a casket is taken from a hearse. It is placed in a larger box, covered with a sheet of white silk and carried solemnly by a man in black clothes to the entrance of the Abbey.

The silk covered box is collected and placed on a frame and carried by ten pallbearers who make their way inside the building.

ORGAN MUSIC PLAYING.

The seating area around Poets' Corner is full of people.

The floor is lined with white edged purple carpet with a hole cut in it to take the casket.

COCKERELL (V.O.)

The pallbearers on the day will include the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, the leader of the opposition, Ramsay MacDonald and six writers: Housman, Kipling, Shaw, James Barrie of course, and Galsworthy and Gosse.

Following the procession is Florence and Cockerell. Florence's head is bent forward clearly distressed. Cockerell supports her.

COCKERELL (V.O.)

Florence Hardy, Kate Hardy and Eva Dugdale will be present at this ceremony.

INT. KING'S ARMS HOTEL FOYER. DORCHESTER. NIGHT.

COCKERELL

The burial of the Thomas Hardy's heart will also take place on Monday at two pm., at Stinsford churchyard.

(pause)

Er, Henry Hardy will be attending this ceremony.

Cockerell puts the paper on the seat behind him.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

That's it gentlemen thank you for your attention.

Cockerell and Barrie collect their belongings and make their way to leave. They are halted by a question from Journalist Two.

JOURNALIST TWO

Can I ask you Sir Sydney if there's any truth in the rumour that the Dean of Westminster is concerned that Mr Hardy was not a Christian and therefore should not be buried in the Abbey?

For the first time Cockerell looks concerned by this question and then angry.

COCKERELL

I believe, I believe my colleague stated that we weren't taking questions.

Both Cockerell and Barrie make their way through the journalists.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

But I can say that I know nothing of the matter. Thank you gentlemen.

Cockerell and Barrie walk briskly to the front entrance.

BARRIE

(whispering)

Do you know anything about this?

COCKERELL

Yes of course I do. The Reverend
Cowley's dealing with it. Let's
just get out of here.

INT. SCULLERY ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Betty is at the sink washing some pots. Cobby the cat is
rubbing her head on Betty's legs.

BETTY

Oh Cobby, you'll get some food in a
while. Be off for a bit.

The door opens and Nellie walks in. Betty looks over and
smiles.

NELLIE

You alright Bet? And old Cobby.
Just look at him there.

BETTY

He be after something to eat. It's
not that time yet Cobby, I'll put a
bowl of scraps down in a bit.

NELLIE

I'm after a biscuit tin, empty if
there's one around. And I'll get
myself a towel as well.

Nellie walks over to a chest of drawers and takes out a
towel.

Betty still standing at the sink dries her hands.

BETTY

Biscuit tin let me think, biscuit
tin.

Betty walks towards the cupboard and takes out a biscuit tin
with a picture of a winter scene.

BETTY (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Can't remember seeing this one.

(to Nellie)

Can I ask you something miss? Is it
true what Bertie be saying about Mr
Hardy's heart bein taken out?

NELLIE

Bertie shouldn't have mentioned that, but you'd have found out anyway. Yes. Yes it is Bet, that's what the biscuit tin's for.

INT. KITCHEN. MAX GATE. DAY.

Young Hardy stands outside the scullery door listening.

BETTY (O.S.)

Oh that's horrible miss! Truly horrible. Poor Mr Hardy.

The door opens and Nellie makes her way through carrying the tea towel and the biscuit tin. Young Hardy shakes his head.

YOUNG HARDY

(direct to camera)

All this is madness. Madness. A writer couldn't make it up.

(pause)

Or could he?

EXT. FRONT GARDEN. MAX GATE. NIGHT.

A distraught Florence, Eva and Kate stand outside the door and watch as undertakers take the coffin out of the house and through the garden.

The party of Nellie, Betty and Bertie stand at the other side of the garden.

Young Hardy stands alone observing events.

There are still a number of journalists in and around the garden. They part as the men with the coffin make their way through. All remove their hats.

Another man from the funeral company has also been watching, he now makes his way over to the house.

UNDERTAKER ONE

Mrs Hardy I believe Dr Mann has spoken to you.

Florence nods and speaks weakly.

FLORENCE

Yes, yes, he spoke to Eva.

UNDERTAKER ONE

Yes, em well, someone will be round
in the morning to collect Mr
Hardy's em,
(murmuring to himself)
most unusual this.

EVA

His heart.

Florence breaks down and is comforted by Kate.

KATE

(muttering)
It be not right. Not right.

UNDERTAKER ONE

Yes.
(nodding nervously)
Yes precisely. We'll be round in
the morning with a burial casket.
Also the cortege with Mr Hardy's
body will pass here at eight
tomorrow morning.

EVA

Thank you. Before you go, there's
something else.

Eva goes back into the house and reappears carrying a small
bucket and a wreath of lilies which she hands to Undertaker
One.

EVA (CONT'D)

If the lilies could go to the abbey
and if this soil could be mixed
with the ashes that would, that
would mean a lot.

UNDERTAKER ONE

Dorset soil? Yes of course. I will
see to it. I wish you good evening
ladies and again my sincere
commiserations.

EVA

(to herself)
Dorset soil yes, a little bit of
Wessex. For he was a man who
noticed such things.

Undertaker One walks away and the huddle of Florence, Eva and
Kate make their way inside.

Nellie, Betty and Bertie watch on.

NELLIE

I better see if I can do anything.

Nellie crosses the garden and enters the front door of the house.

BETTY

It's all so horrible.

BERTIE

That it is young en, things don't get a lot darker. My nephew Charles, young Charlie works for Scotts, he got to come round in morning to collect master's heart.

Bertie picks up his spade.

BERTIE (CONT'D)

An I'll swing for those reporters. Anyway better get on and get home.

Bertie walks away leaving Betty standing on her own staring into space.

BETTY

Horrible it be, horrible.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN. MAX GATE. DAY.

A hearse arrives and drives slowly past the front of Max Gate it is followed by another chauffeur driven black vehicle in which sit Cockerell and Barrie.

Eva and Kate watch it pass.

Journalists are again present taking photographs of the funeral cortege, much to the annoyance of Bertie who is shouting and telling them to watch where they're standing.

INT. CAR. DAY.

BARRIE

Why's he getting so excited?

COCKERELL

Oh don't ask. Someone's treading on his precious plants or something. I do find all this and all these people so dreadful.

BARRIE

And their wee country ways?

(pause)

Anyway you were going to tell me
about the church.

COCKERELL

Yes I was.

Cockerell reaches in his pocket for a letter and takes it
out.

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

Yes it's all been sorted now. But
I'll read you a bit, precious
bloody Christians!

(pause)

My permission to bury Thomas Hardy
in Westminster Abbey has given rise
to a great deal of controversy. I
am receiving every day furious
protests on the grounds that his
teaching was anti Christian: that
he himself was not a Christian and
that his moral standard was low et
cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

(pause)

Honestly! Not worth the paper it's
written on.

Cockerell returns the envelope to his pocket.

BARRIE

Very strong, considering they
buried Darwin in the abbey.

Cockerell nods his head.

BARRIE (CONT'D)

But all sorted now?

COCKERELL

Yes. All sorted now.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Young Hardy walks into Old Hardy's study. He walks round to
the back of Old Hardy's desk and with much trepidation pulls
out the chair and sits down. He looks at the photograph of
Carry and the skipping rope and shakes his head.

On the floor by the side of the desk is the piece of the headstone Luke Holway had bought for his father Sergeant Holway. Young Hardy stares down at this and again shakes his head. Finally he reaches into the drawer and takes out the piece of rope fashioned into a noose. He shivers as he holds it in his hands.

YOUNG HARDY

Horrible!

He quickly puts the noose back into the drawer. Stands up and shakes himself.

YOUNG HARDY (CONT'D)

Really horrible.

There is a sudden and LOUD CLATTERING SOUND outside the room. Young Hardy in shock exits the room.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Along the hallway all is quiet, the door to Old Hardy's bedroom is open. Young Hardy enters.

INT. OLD HARDY'S BEDROOM/DRESSING ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Young Hardy hears a faint clanking sound coming from the dressing room. He walks over to the door which is slightly open.

He is horrified at the scene that confronts him. The lid of the biscuit tin lies on the tiled part of the floor. The rest of the tin and its contents are being pushed about and ravaged by Cobby the cat.

YOUNG HARDY

Oh no. No! You ridiculous cat!
Shoo! Shoo!

Young Hardy tries to shoo Cobby off.

There are voices outside on the hallway. One is Nellie and the other is that of a young man (CHARLIE).

NELLIE (O.S.)

Now you don't mind if I don't come
in with you?

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Not at all, not at all.

NELLIE (O.S)

But the er, you need to go through
Mr Hardy's bedroom, just there.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Okay will do, just get me stuff
together.

Cobby is now clearly relishing his feast despite Young
Hardy's efforts.

YOUNG HARDY

Just got to get away from this. You
silly cat! Get off it! Someone's
coming. Get off!

Powerless to do anything Young Hardy quietly closes the
dressing room door and makes his way through the bedroom and
onto the landing.

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Charlie is bending over a wooden box looking for something.
He is about seventeen years old and somewhat awkward, not at
ease with himself. Although not in a formal suit he wears
dark clothes.

Young Hardy passes him.

Charlie makes his way into the bedroom carrying the box, the
bedroom door is eventually closed.

Young Hardy goes back inside the study.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Shaking his head Young Hardy goes back to sit in the old
man's chair.

After a few moments Charlie's voice is heard.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

What the hell!

This is followed by a LOUD SCREECH and a THUMPING sound.

Young Hardy puts his head in his hands.

Nellie arrives on the landing and knocks on the bedroom door.

NELLIE (O.S.)
 Everything alright in there?
 Everything alright?

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED LANDING HALLWAY. MAX GATE. DAY.

The door opens and Charlie puts his head out looking panicked.

CHARLIE
 Er Yes, yes, everything okay.
 I'll em, I'll be out in the minute.

He closes the door and goes back into the room again, Nellie shaking her head makes no attempt to enter.

CHARLIE (CONT'D) (O.S.)
 Yes, I'll be out in a, well soon.

Eva comes up the stairs and onto the landing.

EVA
 What in heaven's name is all the commotion about!

NELLIE
 It's the undertaker miss, don't ask me what he's doing in there. He tells me he'll be out soon.

EVA
 Undertaker? Oh yes of course. But need he make that sort of racket? Thankfully I got Dr Mann to make up a sleeping draft up for Flo last night.

NELLIE
 Good idea miss, she been through it.

The door opens and Charlie comes out looking somewhat sheepish carrying the wooden box he went in with.

Nellie immediately looks the other way.

CHARLIE
 Sorry. Sorry ladies.
 (indicating with his head)
 The, the caskets in here.

Somewhat stunned and bemused Nellie and Eva watch as Charlie, uneasily makes his way down the stairs with the wooden box.

INT. OLD HARDY'S STUDY. MAX GATE. DAY.

Young Hardy is still sat at the desk his head in his hands, he looks up.

YOUNG HARDY
(speaks direct to camera)
This story is so so strange and
seems to be getting stranger.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Eva, Kate and Florence sit at the table all dressed formerly in dark clothing. Eva stands up and walks to the window.

EVA
It's got the makings of a lovely
day, cold but very bright. Seven
thirty and they're gathered
already.

KATE
Be they the reporters?

In the garden there are five or six journalists hanging around. Bertie is already berating them for standing on his garden.

EVA
Reporters indeed. And already in
trouble with Bertie.

Eva turns round and addresses the two women.

EVA (CONT'D)
We'd better be making tracks the
car will be here shortly. How you
feeling Flo, are you ready? Ready
as you'll ever be ey?

Florence's fingers are playing with the black silk scarf round her neck.

FLORENCE
Yes I'm, I'm ready.
(looking at Kate)
So Henry knows what he's to do?

KATE
Yes, he'll be here at mid day,
awaiting the hearse. He more than
happy to be doing Stinsford.

Eva gives Florence a gentle hug.

FLORENCE

I'm certain that would have been
Tom's wishes as well.

Eva nods in agreement.

EVA

Of that I'm sure
(quietly to herself)
but he belongs to the nation.

The three prepare to leave putting on outside coats. There is a knock at the door and Nellie and Betty enter and wish the three well for the day. All are close to tears.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

INT. DARK OAK PANELLED HALLWAY/ EXT. FRONT GARDEN. MAX GATE. DAY.

The three women make their way through the hallway and prepare to face the waiting journalists. Eva does her best to protect Florence as they make their way through the garden where a black car awaits them. The three get into the car which then drives away.

Nellie, Betty and Bertie watch from the front door. The journalists begin to move away.

BERTIE

An good riddance to the lot of you!

BETTY

Shall I make a brew?

Nellie and Bertie nod in agreement to this and Nellie follows Betty inside the house. Bertie, with his heavy boots on, walks round to the back and is followed by Young Hardy.

INT. SCULLERY ROOM. MAX GATE. DAY.

Nellie and Betty are standing drinking tea by the doorway, Bertie is just outside leaning on the wall.

BERTIE

They all gone up then on the train?
Waterloo is it? I never been.

NELLIE

Yes all on the train. And Henry Hardy be coming later for the Stinsford ceremony. And we can all attend, Miss Eva wanted us to.

Bertie nods and finishes his tea, he hands the mug back to Betty.

BERTIE

Anyway, better get on.

Bertie looks down at the scullery floor where Cobby's bowl of scraps lie.

BERTIE (CONT'D)

Cobby missed his breakfast then?

BETTY

I 'avent seen him this morning.

NELLIE

He'll turn up no doubt. Anyway as you say Bertie, better get on.

Bertie goes into the garden. Nellie moves towards the kitchen and Betty starts washing-up.

Young Hardy remains by the door.

YOUNG HARDY

(speaks direct to camera)
Don't even ask about the cat.

EXT. STINSFORD CHURCHYARD. BRIGHT SUNNY DAY.

A large number of people stand around the Hardy grave and the churchyard in general, including Henry, Theresa, Nellie, Betty, and Bertie. A number of journalists are there alongside various officials and three or four policemen.

YOUNG HARDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The funeral in London with the great and the good was, I suppose, a very grand affair. In Stinsford it was just Stinsford. Or, of course Mellstock?

The casket containing Old Hardy's heart is being placed in the grave by the Reverend Cowley.

Young Hardy stands outside the door of the church and slowly makes his way towards the grave. He sees Henry fighting back tears.

YOUNG HARDY (CONT'D)
Poor Henry.

Amongst the crowd he is surprised to see SAM NOTTON. As usual Sam is looking round sneeringly at all who are present.

YOUNG HARDY (CONT'D)
What's he doing here?

Young Hardy shakes his head in disbelief when he notices CATHERINE and ANNIE at the far side of the churchyard.

YOUNG HARDY (CONT'D)
And those two?

FLASHBACK TO EPISODE FOUR.

EXT. A ROW OF COTTAGES. SIDLINCH. DAY.

Young Hardy raises his eye-brows at the sight of Catherine, he is very impressed.

END OF FLASHBACK.

EXT. STINSFORD CHURCHYARD. BRIGHT SUNNY DAY.

YOUNG HARDY
Good to see her. I wonder if I?

As he moves again, reluctantly taking his eyes off Catherine, Young Hardy nearly collides with NED HIPCROFT who is frantically trying to make his way through the crowd. Ned looks pained and distraught as he shouts.

NED
Carry! Carry! Carry!

Some distance behind Ned is an angry CAR'LINE who is also shouting.

CAR'LINE
Come here Ned Hipcroft you'll be death of me you will. I tell yer he won't hurt her!

Young Hardy watches the two as they make their way through the crowded churchyard, Ned's voice gradually fading.

NED

Carry! Carry, Carry ...

Young Hardy sadly shakes his head and walks on.

Coming straight towards him with purpose is an old man with a bushy white beard WILLIAM CALCRAFT. He is still powerfully built and dressed, as usual, in black. He looks extremely menacing and pointedly stares at Young Hardy, his hands playing with a short piece of rope.

Young Hardy noticing the rope, visibly shudders as he passes him.

Young Hardy stops at Old Hardy's grave.

YOUNG HARDY

What did the old man say? Well you just watch, you just see, before of course you forget again.

Slowly he makes his way towards the gate. As he is about to leave the churchyard he suddenly stops. Coming through the gate is GERTRUDE LODGE still clutching her deformed and blisteringly arm. She looks like a very old woman.

YOUNG HARDY (CONT'D)

(face grimaces)

But never quite forget, never quite.

Just beyond the gate a hearse and a number of other cars are parked.

On the bonnet of the hearse sits Cobby the cat.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE. DAY.

Young Hardy is in a complete daze as he walks down the lane, the proceedings of the funeral taking place behind him.

After walking a few yards he notices that coming towards him is his mother JEMIMA and his brother YOUNG HENRY who is about seven. Young Henry, runs excitedly towards him with his arms in the air.

YOUNG HENRY

Tommy! Tommy, Tommy, Tommy.

JEMIMA

(shouting)

Now don't you be bothering Tom he just finished his work!

Young Henry reaches Young Hardy and wraps his arms round his waist.

An out of breath Jemima catches up with Young Henry.

JEMIMA (CONT'D)

Good day for the young architect?
Av I got a tale to tell you.

Young Hardy nods, he looks totally bewildered.

He turns and looks back in the direction of the church where all seems quiet, the people, the hearse and the other cars have disappeared.

Young Hardy, shaking his head, ruffles Young Henry's hair.

The three then walk off together down the lane, Young Henry's hand in Young Hardy's.

OLD HARDY (V.O.)

When the Present has latched its
postern behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad
green leaves like wing,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk,
will the neighbours say,
'He was a man who used to notice
such things'?

Young Hardy stops walking and turns round towards the camera, his face full of doubt.

Jemima and Young Henry stare at him.

YOUNG HARDY

And really, will I be a man who
notices such things?

FADE OUT:

END.

Chapter 3: Hardy's novelistic method and style

In Chapter One I argued that much of Hardy's subject matter focused on the irrational and does not fit neatly with any conventions of realism, and that this is particularly the case in the stories I have chosen for adaptation. In this chapter, following on from my scripts with their challenging structure, set up in opposition to heritage drama, I demonstrate how Hardy often conveyed his subject matter to the reader. I argue, as did Terry Wright in *Thomas Hardy on Screen*, that Hardy in terms of both content and form was certainly not the tame and 'good, little Thomas Hardy, producer of pastoral tragedies' (2005, p.2) as he was alluded to by his patronising contemporaries. Nor indeed was he limited to the writing of pastoral romance with all of its 'hokum', as he is still often perceived. This is a perspective on Hardy that has emerged partly through the somewhat ineffectual manner of the screened adaptations of his work and the popularity as Niemeyer suggests of 'British period dramas' and filmmakers reluctant to release him 'from his heritage trappings' (p.2003, p.242). I believe that Hardy's writing was frequently challenging and should be presented as such on the screen; my series of scripts being an attempt to do just that.

By the various narrative devices he employs, Hardy often draws deliberate attention to the artifice of his endeavours. Terry Eagleton said of Hardy's texts that they 'refuse to stay still within their frames' and that his work 'is always on the point of breaking through its own containing forms' (1988, vii). The stage adaptation that Hardy wrote of 'The Three Strangers', which I shall be referring to later, demonstrates this particularly effectively. In this chapter I will consider the range of narrative perspectives Hardy deploys in his writing and his use of coincidence; I also examine his personal involvement with the visual arts and how his activities in this area shared commonality with many of the aspirations of the later twentieth-century Surrealist movement. All these factors emphasise Hardy's willingness to experiment and to move away from the dominant mode of Victorian realism, exemplified by writers such as George Eliot; realism being a category, especially when it comes to television and film adaptations of his work, in which he is placed. First, however, I will discuss two of Hardy's early novels which demonstrate his desire to experiment with both narrative structure and plot; in this case deployed in presenting subject

matter concerned with the injustices of the class system, which he both witnessed and experienced personally when he moved away from rural Dorset.

The Poor Man and the Lady and The Hand of Ethelberta

In 1868 Hardy completed his first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* and on the advice of his friend Horace Moule, sent the completed manuscript off to the publisher Alexander Macmillan. At this point in his life Hardy had just returned to Dorset after five years working as an architectural assistant in London. Although he had used the time there profitably, hearing Dickens read, visiting the House of Commons to hear Palmerstone speak, attending concerts and recitals, it is clear from the subject matter of the novel that he had found the experience both demanding and challenging.

The Poor Man and the Lady was never published and little remains of the manuscript, but it seems one of its central intentions was to offer a critique of the upper classes and their treatment of their workers, servants and, as Tomalin suggests, ‘any who aspired to better themselves by getting an education’ (2006, p.83); years later Hardy stated that the writing was ‘socialistic, not to say revolutionary’ (Millgate, 1984, p.63). The ‘poor man’, Will Strong is the son of a Dorset labourer who after showing promise at school is sponsored to become an architectural draughtsman by the local squire and his wife. All goes well until Strong falls in love with the squire’s daughter, ‘the Lady’ Geraldine Allenville, which does not meet the approval of her parents. Strong is banished to London and in his resentment adopts radical politics and by chance, whilst also in London, Lady Geraldine hears him make a socialist speech in Trafalgar Square.

Social injustice experienced by working-class and female characters was to become a central theme in Hardy’s writing. In its focus on an intelligent male from the lower classes trying to ‘better himself’ and attempting upward social mobility, *The Poor Man and the Lady* anticipates the themes which would define Hardy’s fiction, most fully realised in the character of Jude Fawley. Such concerns can be seen to be a response to Hardy’s own experience and the perspective of his humble background; when pursuing courtship with Emma, his first wife, Hardy was to encounter her father John Gifford, a solicitor, who according to Michael Millgate greeted his prospective son-in-law with open contempt, referring to him in a letter as

a 'low-born churl who has presumed to marry into my family' (1985, p.143). In the creation of the character Jude Fawley, Tomalin correctly states that 'Hardy's anger had never been extinguished' (2006, p.254).

The Poor Man and the Lady was rejected by Alexander Macmillan, but in a letter the publisher did offer encouragement to Hardy saying that he had read the manuscript 'with care, and with much interest and admiration', Macmillan also stated that he had some empathy with the subject matter:

The utter heartlessness of all the conversation you give in the drawing-rooms and ballrooms about the working-classes has some ground of truth, I fear, and might justly be scourged as you aim at doing; but your chastisement would fall harmless from its very excess. Will's speech to the working men is full of wisdom [...] Much of the writing seems to me admirable. The scene in Rotten Row is full of power and insight [...] If this is your first book I think you ought to go on. (Millgate, 1984, p.60)

But he added that Hardy's treatment of the upper classes in London was far too aggressive and suggested that he should look at the writing of William Makepeace Thackeray who in his view had treated all classes in his dealings in social satire fairly. In contrast to Thackeray, Macmillan detected that Hardy, with his vitriolic attack 'meant mischief' (Millgate, 1985, p.64).

In a letter to his friend Edward Clodd in 1910 Hardy stated that *The Poor Man and the Lady* 'was the most original thing (for its date) that I ever wrote' (Purdy and Millgate, 1984, p.130). This originality was to be found in the form of the text, as well as its subject matter, for what also troubled Macmillan was the apparent absence of 'plot'; the subtitle of *The Poor Man and the Lady* being: *A Story with No Plot: Containing Some Original Verses*, its overt rejection of plot would have challenged any publisher at the time. As Rosemary Sumner comments:

A novel without a plot in the middle of the Victorian period is clearly signalling its author's experimental intentions. Plotless and with verses, it must have been a novel in a completely new form. (2000, p.2)

Sumner's speculation is compelling when she ponders what 'experimental novels Hardy might have written if his first attempt had not been rejected'. (2000, p.2)

Macmillan advised Hardy that plot was an absolute necessity and that he should look at the work of Wilkie Collins and the then fashionable literary genre of the 'sensation novel', a genre which Patricia Ingham describes as comparable to:

the lurid newspaper reports of violent crimes which made popular reading, then and later. In a censorious moral climate such novels were licensed for

publication and popularity by the narratorial condemnation of the shocking goings-on. As one reviewer put it, either naively or ironically: ‘All the crime is done under proper reprobation and yet the writers and the readers have all the benefit of the crime’. (2003, xiii)

This was a mode of fiction, as Louis James suggests, ‘written to surprise and shock’. (2006, p. 215)

Michael Millgate and other biographers (most recently Mark Ford in *Thomas Hardy: Half a Londoner* 2016) suggest that characters and episodes from *The Poor Man and the Lady* were used in other Hardy texts, most notably in the novella *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress* (1878). Hardy, eager to be published, conformed in terms of plot and form to market demands and produced the melodramatic and over-plotted *Desperate Remedies* in 1871. Hardy’s experiments with plot therefore were mediated by the demands of publication in the same manner as the process of serialisation was to curtail the subject matter of his work later in his career. I would go further and claim that Hardy’s work is still being censored and modified by the film and television production companies, to bring it in line with the genre of heritage drama with all of its potential for financial rewards.

In Chapter One I referred to Hardy’s ‘third person autobiography’, the writer’s last attempt at ‘fiction’. Peter Widdowson argues that Hardy’s fifth published novel *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876) should be read as the real story of Hardy’s life as opposed to the biography attributed to Florence. In this work Widdowson believes that Hardy exposes his obsession with ‘acute class-consciousness’ (1998, p.6) and the business of being a writer and producing fiction. This novel and Widdowson’s observations offer interesting perspectives on Hardy’s ‘realism’ and ‘self-reflexivity’; they also display more of the experimental, mischievous and playful approach, which might now be considered postmodern tendencies, that Hardy brought to his work.

The Hand of Ethelberta followed on from the very successful *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) and was largely greeted with disappointment and dismay in that both publishers and readers wanted more of the same, rural tales coming from the newly created domain of Wessex, but Hardy later stated that he had not ‘the slightest intention of writing for ever about sheep farming, as the reading public was apparently expecting him to do’ (Millgate, 1984, p.105). The novel tells the story of Ethelberta, a bright and intelligent woman from the lower social classes who

becomes a published poet. A change of circumstances forces her to abandon poetry and become a storyteller, presenting her stories to London society as a lady, whilst concealing her lower-class upbringing.

In a later edition of the novel, 1895, Hardy wrote in the preface that it was ‘a somewhat frivolous narrative’ (*Ethelberta*: 31) and therefore had been given the subtitle of *A Comedy in Chapters*. This was dropped from the serial version but restored for book publication; Widdowson suggests the subtitle draws attention ‘to the staged artificiality of the novel’ (1998, p.61). A typical example of what Robert Gittings referred to as a ‘juvenile joke’ (1978, p.291) is in the naming one of Ethelberta’s suitors Alfred Neigh, his father being a horse-knacker. Comedy or not, most critics seemed in agreement that the plot was implausible, written in an awkward farcical manner and contained unconvincing two-dimensional characterisation of the gentry and the upper classes.

The whole book is concerned with social class and relations between the classes. Ethelberta and Hardy himself are both on show here as the creatures, referred to in the novel, as belonging to ‘the metamorphic classes of society’ (*Ethelberta*: 320). Hardy, in dealing with Ethelberta in a self-reflexive manner displayed his own feelings, anxieties and hopes, with both heroine and author coming from lower-class parentage and trying to conceal it from their public. As Gittings observes: ‘when Ethelberta’s socially unmentionable relatives appear they turn out to be a fascinating amalgam of Hardy’s own’ (1978, p.292). Both Hardy and his character regard themselves as poets who have to make a living through writing fiction and yearn for financial security so that they may complete their ambitions to write an epic poem, ultimately achieved by Hardy with the publication of *The Dynasts* in 1904.

As Widdowson suggests, *The Hand of Ethelberta* ‘was a strange and self-conscious novel to write at this stage of his career, if for no other reason than because of the amount of disguised autobiography it contains’ (1998, p.49). Critics have offered several accounts of Hardy’s intentions in writing this text. Gittings notes that there was much gossip following the serialisation of *Far from the Madding Crowd* in *Cornhill* that the author was a woman since Hardy’s name was not printed in the magazine. Others, probably because the novel featured working people, thought that the author was a house painter, whilst *The Spectator* of January 1874, in its review of current magazines, asserted that the author was George Eliot,

the work having the same rural flavour as *Silas Marner* and *Adam Bede*. It was the *Spectator's* assertion, according to Gittings, that troubled Hardy, 'the idea that anyone writing about rustics might be mistaken for George Eliot seemed to have weighed oddly heavily with him' (Gittings, 1978, p.281). Eliot was regarded as a key exponent of realism and Hardy may well have disliked the idea of being confused with her for this reason too.

At this time Hardy had just married the very middle-class Emma Gifford and was under a great deal of pressure. The success of *Far from the Madding Crowd* and the prominence this would give him in London society meant that his humble background might soon be exposed. As the novel mainly focussed on working people from whom, as Gittings suggests:

Hardy himself was sprung. How much of this he had revealed to Emma is doubtful: but it is even more doubtful that he had told her anything like the whole truth – that his mother, for instance, had been brought up by Poor Law charity, and all the relatives in Puddletown and Stinsford had been, at one time or another, servants and labourers. (1978, p.273)

Gittings here, making a set of class-based assumptions of his own, believes that *The Hand of Ethelberta* could have been Hardy's attempt to write this problem out of his system. Certainly at the time Hardy did not want to be seen capable only of writing about the rural and so, on a superficial level, *The Hand of Ethelberta* might be read as an urban social satire in the manner of Thackeray. However, I argue that in this novel, as in the case of *The Poor Man and the Lady*, Hardy is making the same observations about the injustice of the class system in Victorian England, a class system which was reinforced and supported, as Christine Devine says:

in part by the literary establishment – even by those middle-class novelists who were ostensibly sympathetic to the so-called 'lower' classes, and whose fiction sought to tell their story and the story of class conflict. (2013, p.169)

In this novel Hardy was again confronting social and political issues; he was also, through parody and pastiche, challenging the literary conventions of so-called 'realism'. The character Ethelberta is, as Widdowson states, 'seen to be solely composed by fictional discourse' (1998, p.83). From this position, Widdowson argues, our attention is then drawn to the fact that so are all other heroines in literature, no matter how 'rounded' and 'knowable' they appear to be. The plausibility and success of characters such as Tess, Rhoda or Gertrude is reliant on their believability through, as David Lodge suggests: 'the suppression of overt

reference to the conventions employed [in creating them] so that the discourse seems to be a transparent window on reality'. (1977, p.79)

Towards the end of the novel Ethelberta decides to 'show herself as she really was' (*Ethelberta*: 306), to share the 'melancholy [...] thoughts of herself as a counterfeit' (*Ethelberta*: 205) to an audience made up of her elderly suitor, Lord Mountclere and his guests and friends. Eventually, whilst delivering this narrative, Ethelberta breaks down, the audience are uneasy and Lord Mountclere, a 'first edition' (*Ethelberta*: 95) as far as original pedigree class terms is concerned, comes to her rescue. He tells the audience that they have been hearing fiction and that the first part of the story should now end:

We have been well entertained so far. I could scarcely believe that the story I was listening to was utterly an invention, so vividly does Mrs Petherwin bring the scenes before our eyes. She must now be exhausted; we shall have the remainder tomorrow (*Ethelberta*: 307).

This 'confession' of Ethelberta's true background to an audience is signalled earlier in the novel when she states 'I have the tale of my own life – to be played as a last card' (*Ethelberta*: 118). Its delivery is subsequently dealt with as 'fiction'.

Widdowson's conclusion is compelling when he states that *The Hand of Ethelberta* is not a 'grotesque failure of fictional decorum' but that its:

performative and self-reflexive artifice presents both a strategic challenge to conventional realism and an exposure of the destructive 'fictions' fostered by a class society. (1998, p.7)

The text is another example of Hardy's use of experimental innovations to narrative and plot, in this instance conveying subject matter concerned with issues surrounding social class. I draw attention to this area and Hardy's class-based self-consciousness twice in my scripts, the first in episode one when I have Old Hardy telling Young Hardy to stop saying 'sir' (episode 1, p.3):

OLD HARDY (CONT'D)
But before I do I have to remind you that you
mustn't be so deferential, you're as good as
anyone else and always remember that.

The second is after Hardy's death when Cockerell and J.M. Barrie are sharing dinner (episode 5, p.32):

COCKERELL (CONT'D)

If Tom had a fault it was that he never could get away from his background. And worse still feeling somehow ashamed of it.

From biographical reading Cockerell's remarks would seem to be true Hardy never felt secure in terms of his relatively humble background.

Hardy adapting Hardy

Hardy's adventurous approach to conveying narrative can be seen in his dramatised stage version of the short story 'The Three Strangers' first performed at Terry's Theatre London under the title of 'The Three Wayfarers' in 1889. Hardy had tried adaptation before in 1882 with *Far from the Madding Crowd* which had a short run at the Globe Theatre in London but according to Carl J. Weber 'for various reasons [...] this experience had not wetted Hardy's appetite for the stage' (Weber, 1943, xi).

One of the most immediately striking features of Hardy's adaptation of his own work is the way that after only three pages, he 'breaks the fourth wall' of theatre with the character Timothy Summers, the First Stranger, telling the audience with an aside that he is the escaped convict (*Wayfarers: 7*):

Late it is, as you say. (Walks aside.) But those in chase of me will be later! . . . God save me!... I'd almost as soon have stayed to be hanged. As bear the strain of this escape!

A few pages later, with the arrival of the Second Stranger at the cottage, the audience are given a further aside with the stranger telling them who he is (*Wayfarers: 10*):

Shepherd - Make yerself at home, master - make yerself at home; though you be a stranger.

(Hangman removes great coat, hangs up hat.)

Hangman - (Aside.) They'd sweat if they knew 'twas Jack Ketch come among 'em.

The theatrical device of the 'aside' in which the actor for a time leaves the diegetic space of the stage and talks to the audience has precedents in Elizabethan and Restoration theatre. The deployment of the 'aside', another form of metafiction after all, shows Hardy in playful mode again, breaking another frame, with the actors confessing to their fictionality and acknowledging the illusion of theatre. Although Hardy was concerned about liberties which might be taken with his work in film

adaptations, in his own adaptation of his work he allowed himself considerable license with the original text. When approached by music hall promoters to stage the play he had little interest in its fate, writing to his friend J.M. Barrie he said that anybody could ‘play it for a guinea a night’. (Purdy and Millgate, 1984, p.194)

In the script of ‘The Three Wayfarers’ following the prison guards notifying that there has been an escape, Hardy has Shepherdess Fennel expressing her fear that what was to be a celebration of her daughter’s christening has been over-shadowed by evil (*Wayfarers*: 22):

O my poor baby! ‘Tis of ill omen for her – all
this gallows work at her christening! I
wouldn’t have had her if I’d known!’

Shepherdess Fennel’s ‘ill omen’ remark fits well with the dark mood of the adaptations I have written and is now included in my script, which will be episode two in my series. Also in Hardy’s adaptation the hangman, whilst singing the grim song about his occupation, pulls a rope from the bag he has brought with him. This is much to the shock of Timothy Summers and guests, although the character has already told the audience who and what he is. It is interesting that Hardy has the hangman, the Second Stranger, refer to himself as Jack Ketch, a famously inept and therefore exceptionally cruel seventeenth-century executioner (he died in 1686), whilst I reference the equally cruel William Calcraft (1800–1879) in mine. Calcraft was often referred to as ‘short drop Calcraft’ because he only used a small length of rope maximising the pain inflicted on his victim. In 1856 he was appointed by the Sheriff of Dorset for the execution of Elizabeth Martha Brown in Dorchester, a public hanging witnessed by a sixteen-year old Hardy and believed by some to have inspired his character Tess; this will be discussed more fully in chapter four.

Hardy’s adaptation in theatrical terms breaks the fourth wall with his characters asides to the audience; as will have been evident from the reading of my scripts, they break similar frames of ‘reality’ throughout the series and most obviously in ‘Afterwards’. After Hardy’s death journalists occupy the garden of Max Gate waiting for any emerging news about the funeral arrangements. It is at this point that I include two characters from my adaptation of ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’, Joe and Seth who discuss their creator’s death and an aspect of his writing (episode 5, p.39):

JOE

Yes I'm sorry Mr Hardy's passed on,
He could tell a good tale.

Journalist Five nods enthusiastically and takes down notes.

JOE (CONT'D)

That he could. But you can tell your readers,
if it'd be of interest of course.

As Joe talks a very thin man dressed in overalls makes his way over (SETH).

JOURNALIST FIVE

Yes, please go on.

JOE

I didn't like the ending of the story
I was in, poor Ned Hipcroft never the
same without little Carry. Not a right
way to end a story that.

JOURNALIST FIVE

Indeed it was very sad. Very sad.

Seth joins Joe and Journalist Five.

SETH

Is this Mr Hardy you be talking about?

Joe nods.

SETH (CONT'D)

Couldn't abide a happy ending.

In the next chapter I briefly discuss Hardy's personal trait of pessimism, but in connection with his writing 'Seth', quoted above, was in some cases correct; the ending to *The Return of the Native* being a good example. In this novel Hardy never intended the marriage of Thomasin and Venn but had to acquiesce to the wishes of his publishers. In a footnote added in 1912 he stated:

The story did not design a marriage between Thomasin and Venn. He was to have retained his isolated and weird character to the last, and to have disappeared mysteriously from the heath, nobody knowing whither – Thomasin remaining a widow. But certain circumstances of serial publication led to a change of intent. Readers can therefore choose between the ending, and those with an austere artistic code can assume the more consistent conclusion to be the true one. (*The Return*: 464)

Hardy's refusal here to commit unambiguously to a 'happy ending' signalled what was to come in his later writing, most obviously in *Jude the Obscure*.

Hardy and Coincidence

In her discussion of Hardy's third novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Laura Faulkner (2011, p.92) claims that coincidence: 'if overused as a plot device draws attention to the construction of the plot and disrupts our sense of the realist frame'. Hardy's use of coincidence clearly directs us away from expectations of realism in his texts. I now discuss this in more detail: first by examining where the tendency possibly came from and secondly to offer examples of the more outrageous use he made of it in some of his minor works.

As discussed above Hardy, eager to be published and acting on the advice of Macmillan, produced the novel *Desperate Remedies* in an attempt to comply with the high degree of melodrama of the Victorian sensation novel genre of Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade and Charles Dickens. This type of literature was extremely popular at the time and was often produced for, and had to follow the dictates of serial publication, with the often excessive use of coincidence being a useful narrative device to compress plots. Hardy was also reared on local rural tales and folk ballads which often contained melodrama and coincidence and these narrative features were inevitably adopted in some of the writing that followed. The third story to be adapted in my series 'The Withered Arm' is a good example of a narrative that was recycled by Hardy; as referred to in chapter one, Hardy states that the story was inspired by an 'aged friend' (*Wessex Tales*: xxi) of Hardy's (in reality probably Jemima Hardy his mother) who personally knew the principal character subsequently named as Rhoda Brook. Most likely the tale would be local to the area of Dorset in which Jemima grew up and like many traditional ballads would contain elements of the grotesque and the supernatural. Such ballads often told of unhappy and tragic events and, because they were delivered orally, would be simple and precise and make use of coincidence as a narrative device.

In reference to the novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Faulkner states that 'Hardy beats us over the head with coincidence' (2011, p.98). This novel, which I discuss below in the context of its status as a 'cliff hanger', tells the tale of Elfride Swancourt a young and pretty clergyman's daughter in Cornwall who is pursued by two suitors Henry Knight and Stephen Smith. The latter is a young architect of humble background carrying out some church restoration work and his courtship echoes much of what is known about Hardy's courtship of Emma Gifford. Again

Hardy presents the theme of the male from the lower classes attempting social mobility and in pursuit of a partner from a higher class.

The story begins in realistic mode, the text describing characters and actions that are plausible, and then gradually shifts towards the sensational with acts of extraordinary coincidences taking place on route. At one stage Henry Knight looks out to sea through a telescope and tells Elfride that on an incoming boat ‘a slim young fellow’ (*Blue Eyes*: 232) is also looking through a telescope at them, the man being Stephen Smith. Hardy created a similar situation, a ‘ridiculous farce’ (Widdowson, 1998, p.77) in *The Hand of Ethelberta* but on this occasion three of Ethelberta’s suitors all choose independently to visit her at the same time at a hotel in Rouen.

Coincidences occur right to the very end in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. By chance Knight meets Smith in London, both men are still pursuing Elfride, and a further coincidence seems to be that they are both staying in the same hotel which causes Smith to comment ‘that’s convenient: not to say odd’ (*Blue Eyes*: 376). Things get even odder as both men independently end up on the same train together to Cornwall to ask Elfride for her hand in marriage; unaware that the train also carries Elfride’s dead body on its final journey home. At one stage in this novel the narrator comments, apparently in defence of the coincidental occurrences, that: ‘Strange conjunctions of phenomena, particularly those of a trivial everyday kind, are so frequent in an ordinary life that we grow used to their unaccountableness (*Blue Eyes*: 101). But such coincidences as these are not ‘trivial conjunctions of phenomena’ they are, as Faulkner suggests, ‘striking coincidences’ that defy our ‘expectations of probability’ in that they do not come from the ‘naturalistic system of causation’. As she states: ‘striking coincidences, while unnerving in real life, can be particularly problematic in ‘realist’ fiction, which strives to conceal the mechanics of its production’ (2011, p.94); it is obvious that Hardy, certainly in *The Hand of Ethelberta*, is not in pursuit of realism.

Coincidental occurrences were less blatant following *The Hand of Ethelberta* when Hardy, in his major works, returned to Wessex and plotting employed acts of ‘chance’ and ‘accident’ instead. But even ‘chance’ as a phenomenon, and ‘chance encounters’ as George Levine points out ‘seem like intrusions from another mode when they occur in realistic narratives’ (1991, p.20) and Hardy’s texts are littered with such encounters. Lawrence Jay Dessner comments on the ‘moments of

superhuman perception' in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* where characters, who happen to be in the right place at a certain moment, have the incredible and improbable ability to overhear the conversation of others some distance away. Dessner notes that the 'root word *hear* appears one hundred and sixty-three times in the novel' (1992, p.163, italics in original). Extraordinary auditory powers are not just confined to characters in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Tess too is able to hear Angel's brothers pass derogatory remarks about her when she is on her way to visit their father. What she hears alters her mind and Tess with 'Tears, blinding tears' (*Tess*: 376) running down her face, turns back; the act of overhearing a well-used trope in Hardy's fiction.

Hardy's range of narrative perspectives

As David Lodge identified, one of Hardy's favourite devices, used throughout his fiction, is the frequently employed 'hypothetical or unspecified observer' (1977, p.81) so characteristic of his narrative style. A passer-by will notice something, or a bystander will accidentally overhear a conversation, or, in the case of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, 'had a gentleman from Scotland-yard [...] been passing at the time' (*Blue Eyes*: 139). As Sumner points out Hardy's 'unconfident' narrator is often working on 'guesswork, assumptions, suggestions' his 'idiosyncratic way of using narrators heightens [the] sense of uncertainty. None of them is omniscient' (2000, p.56). Wright concurs, commenting that Hardy even when 'supposedly employing an omniscient narrator' limits the narrator's knowledge to what is observable simply from the outside (2005, p.8). Wright also notes, the use Hardy makes of ellipsis, the 'gaps and discontinuities in his narrative which force the readers to supply what they cannot see' (2005, p.8). This is most apparent in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* where the reader is not explicitly given a description of the moment when Tess is raped (or controversially 'seduced'), nor when she murders Alec, not allowed to read her confession letter to Angel and not present when she makes the confession on her wedding night. All this narrative 'uncertainty' and sense of instability highlights one of the ways 'in which Hardy, ahead of most other nineteenth-century novelists, was gradually moving towards Modernist techniques' (Sumner, 2000, p.175).

The unsettling elements of Hardy's narrative style have fed into the framing device of my writing where Hardy's memories travel back to the traditional ballads

he heard as a child, and to being aware of the writing taking place in the late 1920s. I make a brief reference to his awareness of the latest literary styles in ‘Afterwards’ (episode 5, p.16) when he comments on what he had said to Virginia Woolf. Woolf, an admirer of Hardy’s writing, visited Max Gate in July 1926 and recorded in her diary that he had stated, when asked whether he had given up writing poetry, that ‘I’m afraid poetry is giving up me’ (Bell and McNeillie, 1980, p.99). Woolf also recorded, when commenting on an Aldous Huxley’s story ‘Half-Holiday’ that Hardy had said:

They’ve changed everything now [...] We used to think there was a beginning & a middle & end. We believed in Aristotelian theory. Now one of those stories came to an end with a woman going out of the room. He chuckled. (1980, p.101)

The title of Claire Tomalin’s biography, *Thomas Hardy the Time-Torn Man*, is apt: in Hardy’s lifetime dominant literary modes shifted from traditional ballads of the early nineteenth century to the challenging literature being produced as his life was coming to its conclusion.

In *A Pair of Blue Eyes* Hardy exhibits a broad range of narrative perspectives in the course of a few pages; the main protagonist is Henry Knight and he is left at the end of one chapter literally hanging from a cliff, whilst the woman he is romantically pursuing, Elfride, runs to get help. With Knight in this precarious state, the narrator first contemplates the height of the cliff in comparison to other cliffs on the British coast (Flamborough, Beachy Head, South Foreland) before noting that directly in front of the desperate Knight’s eyes:

was an inbedded fossil, standing forth in low relief from the rock. It was a creature with eyes. The eyes, dead and turned to stone, were even now regarding him. It was one of the early crustaceans called Trilobites. Separated by millions of years in their lives, Knight and this underling seemed to have met in their place of death’ (*Blue Eyes*: 240).

Here Hardy, fourteen years after the publication of *The Origin of the Species*, acknowledges Darwinism and the geological by taking the reader through the various stages of evolution where everything, as Levine points out, ‘is detectably marked with the vestiges, scars, and incrustations of history’ (2004, XV). He is also reminding us, as Faulkner suggests, of ‘the smallness of human existence on the evolutionary scale’ (2011, p.103). He interweaves this discussion, commenting that ‘Knight was a fair geologist’ (*Blue Eyes*: 240) with Knight’s thoughts as he

confronts death, demonstrating what Hardy himself referred to as ‘that chaos called consciousness’ (*The Mayor*: 121). Knight says to himself that he has been waiting for Elfride for ten minutes but the narrator contradicts this claim telling us ‘she had really been gone but three’ (*Blue Eyes*: 242). Knight also states that he cannot remember ‘such heavy and cold rain on a summer day’ and again the narrator corrects him saying that he ‘was again mistaken. The rain was quite ordinary in quantity; the air in temperature’ (*Blue Eyes*: 242). All this occurs before the narrator finally returns the reader safely back inside the ‘frame’ of the story, back on ‘solid ground’, pulling us away from Knight’s musings:

Knight gave up thoughts of life utterly and entirely, and turned to contemplate the Dark Valley and the unknown future beyond. Into the shadowy depths of these speculations we will not follow him (*Blue Eyes*: 243).

The statement ‘we will not follow him’ has echoes of the cinematic, shifting the camera from Knight to a ‘spot’ that had appeared on the landscape, ‘the head of Elfride’ (*Blue Eyes*: 243).

In *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, an unnamed man from a cottage in Wellbridge, who is going out for a doctor one evening when he ‘happens’ to see Tess and Angel walking along in silence, just after Tess has made her confession to Angel. We are informed that he had met:

two lovers in the pastures, walking very slowly, without converse, one behind the other, as in a funeral procession, and the glimpse that he obtained of their faces seemed to denote that they were anxious and sad. Returning later, he passed them again in the same field, progressing just as slowly, and as regardless of the hour and of the cheerless night as before. It was only on account of his preoccupation with his own affairs, and the illness in his house, that he did not bear in mind the curious incident, which, however, he recalled a long while after (*Tess*: 303).

Narrative uncertainty dominates here, the passer-by locked into his own thoughts, only to remember the two sometime later.

The treatment of this particular passage in *Tess* was used in a totally different manner by Ian Sharp in the 1998 London Weekend Television production of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*. In this production as Tess makes her confession to Angel the two walk down a narrow street and pass an old man going the opposite way who bows and lifts his hat. As he begins his bow the voice-over declares: “I could never forget these lovers, their faces blind to time and place, each isolated in their mutual despair”. A close-up reveals that the bowing man is an ageing Thomas Hardy both

author and narrator. The contrast between the depiction of the scene in the novel and its presentation on the screen, with its attempt at authorial authority, completely reverses the usual state of affairs, in which, as Seymour Chatman states, fiction asserts and film, where ‘the dominant mode is presentational’ (1980, p.132) simply presents. The use I make of voice-over in my scripts, where I have the transition from Old Hardy in his study at Max Gate, to the place and time he is narrating, could be termed assertive; voice-overs usually confirm fact and authority, but Old Hardy with his ‘frail memory’ (episode 1, p.7) unwittingly becomes the unreliable narrator in my series, hence the need for his younger self. This unreliability manifests itself on two occasions in the series: when he admits in ‘The Withered Arm’ that Joe Scamel is in the wrong story (episode 3, p.22 - 23) and in ‘The Grave by the Handpost’ where he confuses Luke Holway with Ned Hipcroft (episode 4, pp.47-48).

One of the hypothetical observers in *The Return of the Native* is Egdon Heath itself, the location where most of the story is set. On a landscape populated with individuals seemingly occupied in viewing, spying and often ‘over-looking’ each other, the narrator tells us that: ‘On the evening under consideration it would have been noticed that [...] the white surface of the road remained almost as clear as ever;’ (*The Return*: 57) as Dillion and Mallett point out: ‘it would have been noticed, that is, had there been need of further witnesses than the heath itself’ (2015, p. 91). When the narrator treats Egdon with the same respect as a character, ‘A Face on Which Time Makes but Little Impression’, the reader should not be surprised that it is also capable of watching events.

Hardy and the visual arts

One of the ways that Hardy experimented with his narrative style was to look towards the then recent developments in the visual arts rather than what was current in literature. Hardy always had an interest in this area and in 1898 he proved his competency as a visual artist by publishing an anthology of poetry entitled *Wessex Poems and Other Verses* accompanied by drawings mostly linked to the poems. The public were somewhat surprised by this publication, since Hardy was not known at that stage for his poetry and even less for his interest and abilities in the visual arts. Sarah Hook suggests that by this venture Hardy was placing his ‘first book of poems

within the tradition of Victorian book illustration' (2013, p.71). She further notes that in the same way as Hermann Lea was to photograph the fictional places in *Thomas Hardy's Wessex* (1913) for tourists, Hardy's choice of title for *Wessex Poems* 'suggests his at least partial awareness of self-marketing his poetic venture by way of the topography of the novels that made him famous' (2013, p.86). A number of the drawings in the collection depict local places: Stinsford Church and an inn in Dorchester (interestingly with a figure standing outside playing a fiddle) but others, as I will debate in the next section, relate more to his imagination, these include amongst others: drawings of an open book, a broken key and wilted flowers in a jug.

As early as 1865 when Hardy was twenty five and still vaguely considering going to Cambridge and becoming a curate in a country village, he was already aware of the restrictions and limitations of what was commonly perceived as realism, or 'the mannered artifice of fiction' as Widdowson calls it (1998, p.82). In a jotting of that time he acknowledged that: 'The poetry of a scene varies with the minds of the perceivers. Indeed, it does not lie in the scene at all' (Millgate, 1984, p.52). Hardy, whilst living in London, was a keen gallery visitor and became particularly impressed by the work and techniques of the Impressionists and the paintings of William Turner, who, Roger Webster notes had abandoned a fixed 'one-point perspective for a shifting, multiple representation' (2005, p.27). Hardy likened Turner to Wagner, whose music he thought offered a 'spectacle of the inside of a brain at work like the inside of a hive' (Millgate, 1984, p.354). Hardy's narrative viewpoint is rarely fixed and can be on occasions, as we shall see, that of a passing bird.

Writing in January 1887 on the compositions of various landscape paintings Hardy stated his dissatisfaction with some of them, feeling that nature:

is played out as Beauty, but not as a Mystery. I don't want to see landscapes, i.e., scenic paintings of them, because I don't want to see the original realities – as optical effects, that is. I want to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are called abstract imaginings [...] The 'simply natural' is interesting no longer. (Millgate, 1984, p.192)

Hardy's expressed desire in wanting to go beyond the superficial in order to see the 'deeper reality' is key here and explains his attraction to 'the mad, late-Turner [whose] rendering is now necessary to create my interest'. (Millgate, 1984, p.192)

According to Webster the influence of Turner and the Impressionists accounted for 'the intensely visual' aspects which sets Hardy's novels 'apart from

the conventions of nineteenth-century classic realism' (2005, p.20). This influence, Gittings suggests, can be seen actually shaping the form of a piece of Hardy's writing in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Hardy attended an exhibition at the Royal Academy in January 1869 and was much impressed by Turner's work and one painting, the 'Snowstorm' (Tate Britain, London), in particular, a depiction of a steam boat caught in the vortex of a severe storm. Turner was fascinated by the effects of extreme weather, mist and light on an image and anecdotally had himself strapped to the mast of a ship for four hours during a storm. Hardy used the 'Snowstorm', Gittings notes, as the basis for the 'weird impressionistic passage about the Arctic birds in the Dorset uplands' (1980, p.88) in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The chapter, 'The Woman Pays', starts off with Tess and Marion working on the bleak winter landscape of Flintcomb-Ash farm; labouring hour after hour stoically in the rain of the swede-field the two recall: 'the time when they lived and loved together at Talbothays Dairy, that happy green tract of land where summer had been liberal in her gifts' (*Tess*: 361). At this point the text remains focused on the moment it seeks to describe, we understand and empathise with the two women in terms of their present predicament and past reminiscences; but we are about to be disturbed, for way above the two, 'Turner's' storm is brewing and, yet again, Hardy's cinematic narrative takes us up there to view it:

After this season of congealed dampness came a spell of dry frost, when strange birds from behind the North Pole began to arrive silently on the upland of Flintcomb-Ash; gaunt spectral creatures with tragical eyes – eyes which had witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror in inaccessible polar regions of a magnitude such as no human being had ever conceived, in curdling temperatures that no man could endure; which had beheld the crash of icebergs and the slide of snow-hills by the shooting light of the Aurora; been half blinded by the whirl of colossal storms and terraqueous distortions; and retained the expression of features that such scenes had engendered. (*Tess*: 363-364)

The narrator goes on to say that these birds flew just above Tess and Marion but brought 'no account' of what they had witnessed on their travels, sights 'which humanity would never see' (*Tess*: 363-364). Once again Hardy is reminding us of the insignificance of the human experience, 'the trivia' of the two women, in this case, set against the vastness of the universe.

Hardy makes the most straightforward and identifiable appropriation from a painting in *Jude the Obscure*, where Jude, returning to Christminster, finds Arabella

working in a tavern. Arabella is alongside another barmaid behind the bar and the narrator informs us that at the back of them there were:

rose bevel-edged mirrors, with glass shelves running along their front, on which stood precious liquids that Jude did not know the name of, in bottles of topaz, sapphire, ruby and amethyst [...] The barmaid attending to [customers in the next] compartment was invisible to Jude's direct glance, through a reflection of her back in the glass behind her occasionally caught his eyes. He had observed this listlessly, when she turned her face for a moment to the glass to set her hair tidy. Then he was amazed to discover that the face was Arabella's (*Jude*: 187).

The whole scene that the narrative creates resembles Edouard Manet's 1881 painting 'A Bar at the Folies-Bergere' (Courtauld Gallery, London) which Hardy had seen on a trip to Paris. It is worth noting here that the journey from painting to text, accomplished by Hardy in using Manet's painting, was to go one stage further in Winterbottom's film, where it was again appropriated. As Webster notes, in the film, the 'dislocating mirrors' mean that 'the unitary perspective of the viewer is fragmented and problematised' and this:

innovative uses of perspective and narrative point of view reveal that Arabella's reflection is in a sense her true self, though her true self is multiple and fractured – arguably more equipped to survive in a modern and mobile environment than Jude is. (2005, p.33)

The fragmented view of Arabella, plus noise from the till and banter between her and customers in the next cubicle, adds to Jude's confusion.

Finally, Hardy's indebtedness to Turner can be seen in another three-stage set of intertextuality, painterly image to word to screen image: that of the use as a setting of Stonehenge, the 'heathen temple' (*Tess*: 26) as Tess calls it. The monument had been the subject of an engraving by Turner in 1832 and the original watercolour was on display in the Royal Academy in 1889, which, Webster informs us, Hardy would have seen. Hardy's narrative description of Stonehenge just before Tess is arrested is, to say the least, 'painterly' echoing elements of Turner's work and this process was continued by Roman Polanski's in his film *Tess* in 1979. At this point in the film, Polanski attempts to replicate Hardy's light sensitive narrative with an atmospheric mist which swirls around, just as the sun is beginning to rise. As Webster states: 'Turner's paintings in particular offered Hardy a visual aesthetic which served his desire to move beyond realism' (2005, p.26).

Hardy and Surrealism

In her study *A Route to Modernism* (2000) Rosemary Sumner has noted many aspects of Hardy's writing and narrative style that anticipated the concerns of the Surrealist movement in the twentieth century. After the collapse of the nihilistic Dada movement in 1922 and interest generated by Sigmund Freud, the French doctor and poet Andre Breton (1896–1966) gathered together like-minded individuals who wished to explore areas of the subconscious, 'the true process of thought' not governed by reason. The object being, as Peter and Linda Murray state (1971, p.402), to free artists from:

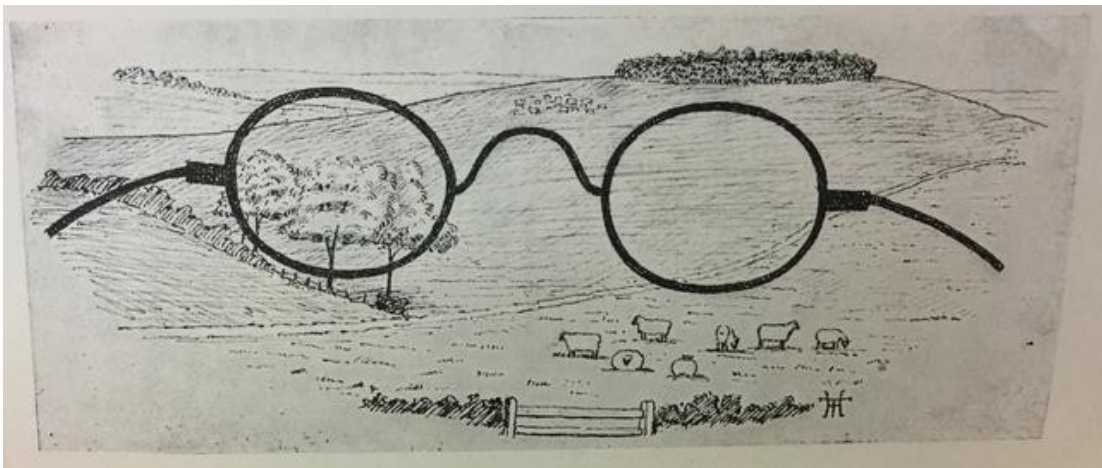
the normal association of pictorial ideas and from all accepted means of expression, so that they might create according to the irrational dictates of the subconscious mind and vision.

The Surrealist movement developed in many directions and signalled its dislocation from logic and reason; it inspired the literature of Andre Breton and Philippe Soupault and the paintings of Rene Magritte, Max Ernst, Salvador Dali and others, and in film, Luis Bunuel's *Un Chein Andalou* of 1928 with its eye-slicing scene being probably the most notorious.

The odd and fantastic juxtapositions of objects that have no obvious relationship with each other were one feature of surrealism which was taken up by the visual artists; the rallying cry of the movement being 'as beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella' (Lautreamont, 1869, cited in Murray 1971, p.402) written by Isidore Ducasse (1846-1870) better known by the pseudonym, the Comte de Lautreamont. Hardy, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, sets up a similar surrealist scene when Tess's family settle down for the night on a four-poster bed outside a church, 'coincidentally' one having a d'Urberville window; the narrator commenting on the very odd out of context juxtaposition of 'indoor articles abandoned to the vicissitudes of a roofless exposure for which they were never made' (*Tess*: 447), is startling. The situation is forced on the Durbeyfields when they are on the move to new lodgings and are let down in their arrangements; although anxiety levels are high because of their plight the family seem relatively relaxed, as if what they are experiencing, is an everyday occurrence. Although not used in such an exaggerated form in my work as the bed outside the church, I too have objects from one particular space or story in the script inhabiting another. Over the course of the five episodes, Hardy's desk in his study at

Max Gate becomes littered with objects of a visually unrelated nature, including part of a gravestone, a skipping rope with red wooden handles and on occasions a hangman's noose. This represents a form of 'montage', the form, as Fisher tells us, that is 'most appropriate to the weird [...] the conjoining of *two or more things which do not belong together*' (2016, p11, italics in original). They could also, because of their past history, be considered objects imbued with evil, a typical trope used in the fiction of M.R. James whose work I will be looking at in Chapter Four.

An even more striking instance of Hardy's surrealism, this one expressed visually, can be seen in his publication *Wessex Poems and Other Verses*, referred to above. The most reproduced image from the collection was drawn to accompany his poem 'In A Eweleaze Near Weatherbury' (figure 1). This is a sketch of a landscape dotted with sheep, onto which is superimposed a pair of spectacles which stretch right across the picture. The poem is all about the passing of time and the ageing process and as Hook suggests, the inclusion of the 'gratuitous spectacles, the lenses of which leave the landscape curiously undistorted, makes allusions to visual modernism' (2013, p.84). Hardy, like the surrealists to follow, wanted 'to see the 'deeper reality underlying the scenic' (Millgate, 1984, p.192) and to him the deeper



(figure 1)

reality lay in the mind of the perceiver, in 'abstract imaginings', the subconscious. The drawing, as Hook comments, 'eludes definitive interpretation' (2013, p.84) and seems to foretell movements in the visual arts of the twentieth century and particularly surrealism and in this case, as Hook suggests, the work of the Belgian painter Reni Magritte.

A process followed by the literary wing of the movement, in the attempt to provide access to the unconscious, was automatic writing, automatism. Andre Breton engaged in this as did the poet Kurt Schwitters (1887–1948), they would cut up newspapers at random, picking out words and sentences and combining them to see what was hinted at, suggested, what, as they saw it, they unlocked from the subconscious. Hardy also used a similar technique when looking for inspiration; Millgate informs us that Hardy would look:

through a passage from the Old Testament or the Book of Common Prayer, picking up particular words and using them in modified grammatical forms and totally different contexts, evidently with the objective of developing and exercising a literary vocabulary of his own, generating new expressive phrases from the impulsion of great models of the past or even evolving the outline of a possible poem. (1985, p.88)

Though Hardy did not engage directly with sleep deprivation and drug use as Breton and Schwitters did, his methods in trying to reach the same goal are remarkably close.

A final instance on Hardy as prototype Surrealist is the wild and uninhibited dancing of the musically hypnotised Car'line in 'The Fiddler of the Reels'. Mop and his musical repertory of evil, provided the impetus for me in wanting to adapt the short story to film. Sumner suggests, paraphrasing Breton, that surrealism was interested in 'dreams, erotic experiences' and 'moments when normality is shaken by something *other*, as in the loss of control in panic [...] a disturbance which overwhelms reason' (2000, p.43, italics in original). Certainly Car'line, who at the start of the story is a 'pretty, invocating, weak-mouthed' (*The Fiddler*: 288) eighteen-year-old engaged to the good and steady Ned, is victim of such phenomena; for following her encounter with Mop Ollamoor she rejects Ned because 'he could not play the fiddle so as to draw your soul out of your body like a spider's thread' (*The Fiddler*: 290). The description of Car'line's wild dancing in response to Mop's music is as Sumner states, full of 'orgasmic suggestiveness' (2000, p.117) and can be interpreted by either supernatural forces (which I have accentuated in my adaptation) or psychological ones; Hardy comments that to understand Car'line's behaviour 'would require a neurologist to fully explain' (*The Fiddler*: 289). As I have shown, Hardy frequently uses music and dance as the forceful agents in acts of sensory disturbance and loss of control; a good example of this being the illicit

meeting of Eustacia and Wildeve in *The Return of the Native* where at a dance ‘Paganism was revised in their hearts’ (*The Return*: 321) as:

Eustacia floated round and round on Wildeve’s arm, her face rapt and statuesque; her soul had passed away from and forgotten her features, which were left empty and quiescent, as they always are when feeling goes beyond their register. How near she was to Wildeve! (*The Return*: 322-23)

Eustacia here, with emotions ‘beyond their register’ is approaching the early stages of the state that Car’line reaches in ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’.

When Car’line first meets Mop by the bridge he is playing his ‘fiddle for the benefit of passers-by and laughing as the tears rolled down the cheeks of the little children hanging round him’ (*The Fiddler*: 289). A little later Mop’s fiddle playing is described as ‘capable of drawing tears from a statue’ (*The Fiddler*: 301). In my adaptation I accentuate children responding emotionally to fiddle playing and this reaction was something very close to Hardy himself who was:

of ecstatic temperament, extraordinarily sensitive to music, and among the endless jigs, hornpipes, reels, waltzes, and country-dances that his father played of an evening in his early married years, and to which the boy danced a pas seul in the middle of the room, there were three or four that always moved the child to tears, though he strenuously tried to hide them [...] This peculiarity in himself troubled the mind of ‘Tommy’ as he was called, and set him wondering at a phenomenon to which he ventured not to confess. (Millgate, 1984, p.19)

One of the reels the young Hardy responded to emotionally was ‘My Fancy Lad’, the same tune with all of its ‘seductive strains’ that Car’line ‘was least able to resist – the one he had played when she was leaning over the bridge at the date of their first acquaintance’ (*The Fiddler*: 300). Hardy therefore, at least as a child, and like his character Car’line was also susceptible to experiencing ‘disturbance which overwhelms reason’ one of the principal interests of the Surrealists.

Car’line’s emotional disturbances form a powerful part of ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’ as they do in my script. One of the elements that I introduce when Car’line is about to enter this state, is the release from her hands of whatever she is holding. This first occurs at the bridge when she encounters Mop, her small posy of flowers, a gift from Ned, falling in slow motion over the bridge into the water (episode 1, p12). Similarly, on the night of the fair ‘overpowered with hysteric emotion’ (episode 1, p.29) she drops her empty glass and again, in slow motion, it falls to the ground. In the inn on the night of Carrie’s abduction (episode 1, p.64), I use ‘flashback’ to

recall the earlier bridge scene, the flowers falling slowly from Car'line's hands. I included these visual elements into the script, accompanied by fiddle music, to show how possessed by the sound of Mop's fiddle playing Car'line is, literally losing her grip on reality and surrendering to the bewitching moment.

This chapter has set out the different methods and ways Hardy experimented with form and narrative in his writing. From offering a critique of other writer's 'realism', in creating characters lacking credibility, as in *The Hand of Ethelberta* and thereby drawing attention to the implausibility of all fictional characters; to his narrative style with its sudden switches of mode, its uncertainty, its gaps and employment of the hypothetical observer. His willingness to experiment, from the start of his career with the unpublished *The Poor Man and the Lady*, a novel without plot and with verses, onwards, where he was to eventually pre-empt some of the concerns and the interests of Surrealism, all confirm, as Widdowson argues, that:

Hardy is not trying and failing to write realist fiction [...] he is strategically experimenting with forms and practices which themselves crack open the discourse of realism. (1998, p.54)

It is this 'cracking open' I experiment with in the writing of my series. Hardy, in his 'third person autobiography' stated that he believed *The Hand of Ethelberta* was:

thirty years too soon for a Comedy of Society of that kind – just as *The Poor Man and the Lady* had been too soon for a socialist story, and as other of his writings – in prose and verse – were too soon for their date. (Millgate, 1984, p.111, italics in original)

This statement underpins my approach to the writing of my scripts; I believe that given Hardy's radical adventures with narrative, the form my adaptations have taken is legitimised and in conjunction with the dark content, the scripts will offer the public a 'little seen' side of Thomas Hardy.

Chapter 4: Television and Film

In this chapter I first review key theories of adaptation which have been in circulation in the last sixty years or so and then go on to examine the terrain of contemporary television drama, both in terms of content and delivery, in which my series *The Haunting of Mr Hardy* would sit. I then discuss heritage drama, the genre to which adaptations of Hardy have predominantly conformed and one that I am writing against. I will also refer to the genre of folk horror, which is enjoying a renaissance at the present time and is a genre I believe my scripts edge towards. In the final section I consider the claim that Hardy is a ‘cinematic novelist’ (Lodge, 1977, p.78) for this argument is relevant to both television and film. Throughout the chapter I make observations of previous screen adaptations of Hardy’s work and discuss my writing, locating my creative practice in and amongst the theories that I outline.

Adaptation

In the early months of 2016 the BBC screened Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, with a script by Andrew Davies; the series was an example of a regular BBC activity, that of taking a text from the nineteenth century and adapting it for television. The screening of a classic novel adaptation often results in new attention being paid to the original text and for many years academic discussion concerning adaptation was dominated by the perceived faithfulness or otherwise of the new product in relation to its literary source. A number of theorists have tried to widen the debate about adaptation away from the stifling issue of fidelity or faithfulness of the film to its source text; for as Terry Wright points out:

attempts to discuss the 'fidelity' of films to their original novels can also degenerate into exercises in pedantry, expressions of critical disappointment that a director's interpretation of the novel fails to match their own (2005, p.1).

Robert Stam in *Literature and Film* (2005) lists the ‘profoundly moralistic’ abuse film adaptations have received, awash in terms such as:

‘infidelity’, ‘betrayal’, ‘deformation’, ‘violation’, ‘bastardisation’, ‘vulgarisation’, and ‘desecration’[...] ‘Infidelity’ carries overtones of Victorian prudishness; ‘betrayal’ evokes ethical perfidy; ‘bastardisation’ connotes illegitimacy; ‘deformation’ implies aesthetic disgust and monstrosity; ‘violation’ calls to mind sexual violence; ‘vulgarisation’

conjures up class degradation; and ‘desecration’ intimates religious sacrilege and blasphemy (2005, p.3).

Such can be the depth and strength of feeling in connection with the adaptation of book to film. Arguably, despite the work of these theorists, the conversation regarding adaptation can still prove totally unproductive with the source text still considered as definitive.

Film and other electronic media are now the major deliverers of narrative, but certainly in the 1950s and later, in academic and scholarly circles, film was seen to belong to the ‘entertainment industry’ and was regarded as literature’s poor relation especially when it sought to transfer the work of a canonical author onto the screen. Although discussion of the nature of adaptation began with the birth of film, George Bluestone’s 1957 *Novels into Films* marked the beginning of academic theorisation on the subject. Acknowledging the technical differences between the two media, Bluestone advocated a ‘medium specific approach’ whereby it should be accepted that both were incomparable and totally independent, characterised ‘by unique and specific properties’ (2003, p.6) intrinsic to themselves. He stated that the novel was the ‘raw material’ that film at best could only ‘paraphrase’, and in adaptation the ‘filmist becomes not a translator for an established author, but a new author in his own right’ (2003, p.62). Bluestone also discusses film’s capacity to convey the ‘spirit’ or ‘essence’ of the novel, but his study only concerns itself with, what Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Cutchins describe as the ‘transformation of highly literary novels’ (2013, p.12) to the screen. Thus, despite lamenting ‘the prevalence of fidelity criticism’, Bluestone follows a number of other adaptation theorists in acknowledging and drawing attention to the privileged ‘primacy of the source text’ (2013, p. 12).

Likewise, Geoffrey Wagner in *The Novel and the Cinema* suggested a taxonomy that could map three different models of adaptation: ‘transposition’, ‘commentary’ and ‘analogy’. ‘Transposition’ represented the situation when the text is taken to the screen ‘with a minimum of apparent interference’ (1975, p.222); ‘commentary’ where it is ‘purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect [...] when there has been a different intention on the part of the film-maker’ (1975, pp.223-224) and ‘analogy’ which represented ‘a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art’ (1975, p.227).

Other theorists such as Brian McFarlane in *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (1996), adopted a ‘comparative’ approach to his work on adaptations, applying Roland Barthes’s narratological system to examine the construction of narrative in both novel and film. Like Seymour Chatman in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978), McFarlane found common ground between the two forms and established which elements of narrative are transferable and available in the adaptation of novel to film. These centered on the linking of ‘cardinal functions’ or ‘hinge points’, which constitute the risky moments in the narrative and are, according to Barthes, ‘of direct consequence for the subsequent development of the story, in short that it inaugurate or conclude an uncertainty’ (1981, p.172). McFarlane noted that the more hinge points that are taken up by the film adaptation, the closer in terms of fidelity to the source text it is. In terms of my work, although the narrative framework I place my adaptations in bears no relation to the structure of the original texts, I have retained most of the narrative ‘hinge points’ of those texts; believing that the twists and narrative turns in the original texts are vital to the impact of my adaptations.

My adaptations of the stories of Hardy came from close reading of the original texts and in this particular area my endeavours could not differ more with the claim made by the film director Alfred Hitchcock. Hitchcock famously stated, in regards to his 1963 screen adaptation of Daphne Du Maurier’s short story *The Birds*, that he had only read the original, ‘once, and very quickly at that’ going on to say that: ‘if I like the basic idea, I just forget all about the book and start to create cinema’ (Thomson, 2004, vi). Whether this was an idle boast by the director is difficult to assess, I only raise the issue here, not as a test or otherwise of his ‘fidelity’ to the original text, but to contrast with the way I have worked in the writing of my scripts. Hitchcock’s film allowed him to elaborate on the original: Du Maurier’s story is thirty-nine pages and Hitchcock’s film is one hour and fifty-nine minutes. In my series I have also found space to expand the narrative and to further develop individual characters. If one takes out the time allocated to the structure of my series (Old Hardy relating to his younger self) they are four short films, adapted from four short stories, unified by the created space of Wessex. As Pat Cooper and Ken Dancyger note, one of the major ‘points about the short film is its linkage to literary form such as the short story’ (1999, p.5). The narrative compression of

shorter fiction, along with its intensity, self-containment and the fact that there are usually no sub plots, make them ideal material for adaptation.

In the last twenty years or so numerous theorists including Sarah Cardwell (2002), Kamilla Elliott (2003), Robert Stam (2005), Julie Sanders (2006), Linda Hutcheon (2006), Thomas Leitch (2007) and others have moved away from the issue of fidelity, adopting a more pluralist approach to adaptation. They have further widened the discussion with their work on intertextuality, inter-filmic dialogue and their acknowledgement that all narratives are subject to the process of recycling and reconfiguration.

The BBC's six-part series *The Living and the Dead*, first broadcast on the 28th June 2016, offers a particular opportunity to discuss one of these aspects: the use of intertextuality. The subject matter of the series, the sinister supernatural events occurring in a Somerset village in 1894, is very close in tone to the stories I am adapting from Hardy. Indeed, at times, with corn-chewing agricultural workers dressed in smocks, drinking cider and taking part in various pagan-like ceremonies and rituals, the whole production of *The Living and the Dead* seemed to draw on popular tropes of, and associations with, Hardy novels. This feeling was further augmented by the characterisation of Charlotte Appleby, the main protagonist's wife, who takes over stewardship of a farm that the couple have inherited. Her character, forthright, bright and progressive, recalls Bathsheba Everdene in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. In an article by Neil Armstrong on *The Telegraph* website, the writer of the series Ashley Pharoah, admitted that in creating this character, he had taken the 'lead from Hardy' stating Charlotte 'is very independent-minded and forward thinking [...] Look at Bathsheba Everdene in *Far from the Madding Crowd*' (Armstrong, 2016). Charlotte Appleby, a character appropriated from Hardy's Bathsheba and prominent on television in 2016, reinforces Linda Hutcheon's argument that literature should not be regarded 'as a one-stage art form' (2007, p.2). Narrative has always been recycled and reconfigured and my creative practice is a good example of this: folktales whispered around Hardy's cottage were later elaborated by the writer to feature in his short fiction, then, many years later adapted to scripts, scripts with quiet ambitions to become film.

Contents of Contemporary Television Drama

In this section I consider the significant developments both in the content and the delivery of television output in last few years, looking at where my series would sit if screened. The early months of 2016 brought us a critically well-received screening of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. This series of six episodes, directed by Tom Harper, was filmed in Russia, Latvia and Lithuania and was reported by Jonathon Freedland in *The Guardian* to have cost in the region of '£2 million per episode' (2016, p.35) to make. Although considered 'racy' and lavish in its production with Clive James on *The Guardian* website calling it 'sexy, heart-rendering, head-spinning and generally not-half-bad' (James, 2016), it was regarded as a fairly conventional adaptation.

Charles Dickens was also featured in an adapted for television series in a production both named and celebrating the *Dickensian*. The series of twenty half hour episodes was written by Tony Jordan, whose past work on television has included being a staff writer on *Eastenders*, and writing, amongst other things *Hustle* (2004) and contributing to *Life on Mars* (2006). *Dickensian* was first screened on BBC One on Boxing Day 2015. Dickens' work on television at Christmas is hardly new, but this was Dickens as he had never been seen before, screened in a form belonging to a genre labelled 'mash-up'. The series featured a variety of characters from various Dickens novels interacting on the streets of Victorian London. Jordan stated on the BBC's *Writersroom* website that:

the world of Charles Dickens is part of who we are as a society, whether you're an avid fan of the books, or the many adaptations or you just loved The Muppets Christmas Carol, it's part of our lives. (Jordan, 2015)

Jordan's *Dickensian* draws on the whole genre of the Dickensian industry, with all of its complex and varied intertextual components; it assumes the public's knowledge of its status as 'heritage' but playfully reinvents this for a family audience. In an interview just before the series started, Jordan was asked whether he felt intimidated taking on the work of a writer of Dickens's status. He admitted that he did at first, but:

once I'd done my research about the man and the writer and read a couple of dodgy cliffhangers he'd used in his periodical *All The Year Round* I realised that although he was clearly far more talented than I am, he was just a writer like me (Jordan, 2016).

Jordon acknowledges here that Dickens, ‘caught up in the Victorian literary treadmill of serialisation’ (Woodcock, 1978, p.17) experienced the same pressures as any successful writer.

Mash-ups may be new to the BBC but one of the literary advisers for the series, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, pointed out on a BBC blog that Dickens legitimised the mash-up format, in that he had employed it himself in his writing. When sales of *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, a weekly periodical he edited and wrote, began to slump, he introduced the wisecracking Cockney servant Sam Weller from *The Pickwick Papers* in an attempt to boost sales. Indeed Dickens, who frequently wrote what might be termed ‘sensation fiction’, having to meet strict deadlines and deploying cliffhangers accordingly, might not have complained too much about the series. The actual process of Dickens’s writing and his struggle with what Cath Clarke on *The Guardian* website described, ‘a nasty dose of writer’s block in 1843’ formed the story line of a 2017 film, *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, directed by Bharat Nalluri and starring Dan Stevens and Christopher Plummer. In this ‘heavily fictionalised biopic [...] a Quality Street treat for the holidays’ (Clarke, 2017) we see Dickens in desperate need of money producing *A Christmas Carol* in six weeks. *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, released just before Christmas, is further proof if we needed it, that Dickens as a character and the ‘world’ he has created, enjoys a global ‘extra-textual’ presence with his audience; the gas-lit street of London, a vital feature in the writer’s work, functioning as Julie Sanders suggests ‘as a virtual character’ (2006, p.128). It is unlikely that the same ‘mash-up’ treatment could be applied to Hardy, for although we have the Hardyan, his characters, apart from Tess, Jude and possibly Henchard, do not carry the same literary weight and familiarity with the public. Hardy simply has not had the same screen exposure as Dickens, since as Wright points out, his radicalism in both content and form are not ‘geared to filling the classic serial slot for television [and] meeting the demands for entertaining, undemanding, acceptable family viewing’ (2005, p.2).

Writing in the *Guardian Review* in February 2016, Alison Flood observed, that adaptations redirect an audience back to the author, to the original source text. The adaptation of *War and Peace* sent the novel into the ‘Bookseller’s top 50’ and the BBC edition Flood tells us ‘sold 3,581 copies [...] putting it in 50th place in the charts with the total sales for the BBC edition now more than 13,000 since its December release’ (2016, p.5). In the same article Helen Trayler, managing director

at the publishers Wordsworth Editions, was quoted as saying that sales of the novel had grown steadily after the first episode and added:

We saw similar sales increases on Dickens thanks to the BBC's Dickensian series [...] We raise our hats to the BBC – and other broadcasters – who bring these incredible classic literary works to the mass market. Although sometimes sniffed at by academics, these adaptations are encouraging more people to read the classics. (2016, p.5)

Traylor's observation that 'this can only be a good thing' is compelling and the viewer over the last few years, and the coming ones, will have plenty of opportunity to 'catch-up' on the classics.

The screening of *The Nightmare Worlds of H.G. Wells* on Sky Arts in January 2016 came closest in format to the structure and framework of my screenplays. Promoted by Sky as 'stories to send shivers down your spine' this anthology series featured four thirty-minute adaptations by Graham Duff. Ray Winstone was cast as Wells, who narrated the viewer through the stories, talking directly to camera. In some ways the series echoed the format of Roald Dahl's *Tales of the Unexpected* which was aired on ITV between 1979 and 1988. But the stories covered: 'The Late Mr Elvisham', 'The Devotee of Art', 'The Moth' and 'The Purple Pileus', seemed 'slight' and critics were largely in agreement that Winstone was not convincing in his role of author/ narrator. Despite the fact that the cast list included Michael Gambon, Luke Treadaway and Rupert Graves most reviewers found the series disappointing. Writing in the *TV Review* of *The Times* website in January, Andrew Billen stated: 'Ray Winston hammed it up as a dishevelled cockney version of the dubious Bromley author' (Billen, 2016).

The difference in narration, between the Wells series and mine is that I do not have Hardy speaking directly to camera at the start of each episode; the introduction is handled by Hardy in conversation with his younger self, 'the eyes and ears of a life that is vanishing (episode 1, p.79); I also wish to represent the character of Hardy himself and not merely as a narrator. As stated, a series more comparable to mine, in terms of subject matter and atmosphere, was *The Living and the Dead*. This series offered Victorian eeriness in an isolated West Country rural setting. Nathan and Charlotte Applebly (played by Colin Morgan and Charlotte Spence respectively) arrive in the village of Shepzooy and encounter a series of supernatural occurrences. At first Nathan, a London psychologist looks for a rational explanation to what is happening, but soon finds himself at the centre of events which not only concerns the

past but includes glimpses of the future. At the end of the first episode when Nathan has been disturbed in the middle of the night by an unexplained light, we see for a few seconds the image of a woman in twenty-first century clothing. At this point the viewer is alerted that ‘time’ will be an element played with in the series, just as it was in Ashley Pharoah’s *Life on Mars* (2006) and *Ashes to Ashes* (2008). Both of these BBC crime-based series featured detectives who were apparently killed in the line of duty, regaining consciousness in a different time period: 1973 in *Life on Mars*, 1981 in *Ashes to Ashes*. These productions were very popular with viewers and offer compelling proof that a contemporary audience enjoys these forms of experimentation.

On the BBC’s *Media Centre* website Pharoah offers an introduction to the series, first describing an idyllic rural landscape on a summer’s day captured on a camera which he then asks us to leave running and then perhaps:

a cloud slides across the sun, slowly darkening the yellow. Or a stronger gust of wind makes the branches in the tree grind. A crow caws. Now the English landscape can feel unsettling, a place drenched in a history that includes war and death and unhappiness. Eerie, that’s the word. And that was the starting place for *The Living And The Dead*, to see the skull beneath the skin of English pastoral (Pharoah, 2016).

Pharoah, admitted to having borrowed extensively from Thomas Hardy in his writing of this series, but the line: ‘to see the skull beneath the skin’ is taken from T.S. Eliot’s poem ‘Whispers of Immortality’, the verse being dedicated to the Jacobean dramatist John Webster (1580–1634):

Webster was much possessed by death
And saw the skull beneath the skin;
And breastless creatures under ground
Leaned backward with a lipless grin
(Eliot, 1963, p.55).

The ‘skull’ lying just beneath the ‘skin’ of the idyllic English pastoral or the menace lurking just below its soil, are features that have recently been in receipt of significant attention again, particularly from those involved with the emergence of the folk horror genre, which I shall discuss shortly. They are also features constantly referred to by Hardy, especially in his eerie descriptions of the terrain of Egdon Heath.

Recent television coverage and its treatment of the nineteenth-century novel, and that particular period, have been varied. *War and Peace* for example is seen to be a fairly straight forward if not ‘racy’ production. Carol Midgely in *The Times Saturday Review* noted that the series was nicknamed ‘Phwoar and Penis’ (2018, p.3); as Kamilla Elliott has commented on nineteenth-century television adaptations, nowhere ‘are corrections of our Victorian ancestors more relentlessly relished than in attempts to restore the sexuality we believe they repressed’ (2007, p.479).

Dickensian meanwhile, leant towards playful postmodernism with its overt use of intertextuality, relying on the audience’s existing knowledge of Dickens’s characters. *The Living and the Dead* introduced Charlotte and Nathan Appleby, both rationalists from the city finding themselves in a place of eerie rural isolation, a typical trope in the genre of folk horror; the anthology series *The Nightmare Worlds of H.G. Wells* presented four more dark and sinister tales.

In September 2018 the collection of nineteenth-century novel to television adaptations was added to with a joint ITV and Amazon production of Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*. The series, comprising of seven one-hour episodes was generally well received, with Susannah Butler writing on the *Evening Standard* website that: ‘Within the opening five minutes *Vanity Fair* establishes itself as a fresh take on period drama’ (Butler, 2018). In *The Guardian* Emine Saner shared Butler’s views, stating that the adaptation ‘has its sights set on a modern audience’ (2018, p.52). Although the series kept close to the novel, its stylish presentation was visually and musically striking with each episode being introduced by a top-hatted Michael Palin playing the part of the author/ narrator William Thackeray, welcoming all to ‘*Vanity Fair*’, a ‘world where everyone is striving for what is not worth having’. This was accompanied by a strangely eerie and slowed-down version of Bob Dylan’s ‘All Along the Watchtower’, whilst the camera lingered on a gilded fairground carousel on which the heroine of the series Becky Sharp, played by Olivia Cooke, and other characters from the series, whirled merrily round; a carousel that Palin, in character as the author Thackeray, had set in motion. Contemporary music was used extradiegetically, and perhaps, bearing in mind the genre of the series, somewhat anachronistically throughout, attempting to ‘match the mood’ of events taking place in the narrative. On the *Radio Times* website the screenwriter of the series Gwyneth Hughes, said of Thackeray: ‘He’s like an omniscient god, he’s created these people and I always have this impression of him [...] looking down upon them indulgently,

going oh aren't they silly' (Hughes, 2018). In the Barthesian sense all authors are dead; in Hughes's adaptation he is also consigned to the heavens, but still seems to have an important and lingering presence.

Apart from 'Thackeray' being there at the start of every episode summarising the story so far and at the very end of the series, there were no interventions by the narrator. In that sense the series was conventionally ordered, but Hughes did have the social-climbing Becky regularly breaking 'the fourth wall' with knowing glances to camera. In the context of the series the 'glances' worked, with both the character and the viewer at home aware of what she 'was up to'. Midgley, writing on *The Times* website however stated that she was: 'iffy about those knowing looks that Becky Sharp gives to camera [...] it feels unnecessary in an already quite mannered and arch costume drama' (Midgley, 2018). The audience will wait till episode four in my series for a 'direct to camera' moment, this occurs when Young Hardy is angry that the character Sam Notton attends Luke Holways' funeral (episode 4, p.56):

YOUNG HARDY
(direct to camera)
Why has he come? Why?

Although still not fully part of the diegetic space of the script at that point, Young Hardy's look to camera is a significant stage in the progression of the narrative. Young Hardy has broken away from his ghost-like status and this move is signalled directly to the audience, for, as he is told by Old Hardy earlier in the episode (episode 4, p.3):

OLD HARDY
It'll soon be your day, your time.

All of this coverage and attention by television in the last few years presents an interesting period for the viewers' engagement with nineteenth-century literature, and there is more to come. 2019 will see a six-part adaptation of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (first episode screened late December 2018) and a production of Jane Austen's unfinished 1817 novel *Sanditon*, both scripted by Andrew Davies. There is also to be a BBC One and Netflix mini-series of *Dracula*, comprising of three ninety-minute episodes scripted by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss. Writing on the BBC's *Media Centre* website Charlotte Moore stated that the series 'will re-introduce the world to Dracula, the vampire who made evil sexy'. (Moore, 2018). I

would like to make a contribution to the viewers' engagement with the emergent forms of nineteenth-century drama, by presenting my series, which, with its connection to folk horror, would sit well with contemporary television schedules. The screening of *The Haunting of Mr Hardy*, which not only presents four of Hardy's lesser known stories, but also focuses on the writer himself who frames them, would provide the viewer with new knowledge, fresh insights about the writer. Hardy would then, like Dickens, gain an extra-textual presence, with his world of Dorset morphed into Wessex, but it would be the rarely seen dark version of Wessex that would be on display.

The Delivery of Contemporary Television Drama

The ways in which television and its content are delivered to the viewer has changed radically over the last few years. *The Living and the Dead* was the first drama series to be released by the BBC on iPlayer before making its appearance on linear television two weeks later. In this new mode of broadcasting the BBC acknowledged the trend for binge-viewing and affirmed its faith in this medium of delivery. This shift began a few years previously when, as Jennifer Gillan suggested 'must see' television evolved into 'must click' television and by 2009 the viewer was able to 'watch TV in a variety of ways' (2011, p.221).

Earlier in 2016 the BBC announced that BBC3 was to be discontinued as a television channel and was to become internet-only with content primarily screened on iPlayer. This action followed a decision taken in March 2014 when the BBC learnt that it had to make a £100 million budget cut across its services. The channel that started life in 2003 focused on short form comedy and documentary productions and was aimed at the younger age group (16–34), this particular target audience probably being deemed to be more suitable for consuming television on mobile devices. Certainly, the BBC has been successful in terms of its iPlayer provision; early in 2014 Victoria Haye, Head of TV Content, BBC iPlayer, announced on the BBC's *Media Centre* website that 2013 had been a:

fantastic year for iPlayer. We've begun the journey to transform iPlayer from a TV catch-up service into an online TV destination in its own right with the introduction of iPlayer exclusive content and programme premiering (Haye, 2014).

2014 was to continue in a similar manner with the BBC iPlayer and BBC iPlayer Radio seeing 3.5 billion television and radio programme requests across all devices. Following the budget cuts in 2014 the BBC has, it seems, turned a potentially challenging situation into something positive.

The BBC has continued in its globally acknowledged and respected classic adaptation tradition with *War and Peace*, been somewhat bolder with *Dickensian*, in terms of format, and innovative in its deployment of new technologies. Generally speaking, with the arrival of on-demand TV such as Amazon Prime, Netflix and Sky and boosted by exclusive screenings such as *House of Cards*, *Game of Thrones*, *Hannibal* and others, the future for drama and its screenwriters looks good. In the *Guardian Review* in February 2016, Simon Vaughan, the chief executive of Lookout Point, who co-produced *War and Peace*, said ‘People have added two or three hours of viewing time to their day because of their devices’ (2016, p.18).

Another very popular production in 2016, screened on the BBC, was the six-part series *The Night Manager*, adapted from John Le Carre’s novel by David Farr and produced by the BBC in association with the US television channel AMC. Set in 2011 around the time of the ‘Arab Spring’ and filmed in locations including Morocco, Marrakesh and Switzerland, this series, according to Claire Webb on *The Radio Times* website, cost around £3 million per episode (Webb, 2016); viewing figures were between six to eight million. The series and its actors Tom Hiddlestone and Hugh Laurie collected Golden Globe awards in Los Angeles early in 2017 alongside another big-budget television production *The Crown*. This 2016, ten part series, made by the American streaming service Netflix, tells the story of the young Queen Elizabeth played by Claire Foy and was reported by Ben Lawrence on *The Telegraph* online to have cost £100 million to produce, making it ‘the most expensive TV series in history’ (Lawrence, 2016). We are living in an era of big-budget television which is no longer in a secondary position to cinematic film and that is evidenced by the number of cinema stars who regularly appear in TV drama. Tom Hardy is a good example of this, starring in film roles such as *The Revenant* (2015), *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and others whilst also appearing in BBC2’s *Peaky Blinders* (2013-2019) and playing the lead role as James Keziah Delaney in BBC1’s *Taboo* (2017).

The distinction between film and television has definitely been blurred, as Chris Louittit points out we now live in an age:

in which media convergence is dominant and cultural products are consumed (and reworked) outside of the medium-specific and geographical limits that existed previously (2013, p.175).

The ability to stream and download drama at will and then to watch as much of a 'series' as desired could also offer positive aspects to anyone writing for television. The fact that streaming completely does away with the notion of the scheduled broadcast, the viewer deciding when, where and how long to watch, carries the potential of freeing the writer from the usual time constraints of terrestrial television drama. As of yet, this freedom has not been particularly exploited, most writers working to the demands of production companies and staying with the tradition of the sixty-minute episode. Only one of the major series to challenge this tradition was *Game of Thrones*, produced by the American HBO company since 2011 where episodes ranged from sixty-seven to ninety-one minutes. More recently (2018) the second series of *The Handmaid's Tale* has been screened on Channel Four with thirteen episodes ranging from between fifty-four to eighty minutes in length. Four of the episodes in *The Haunting of Mr Hardy* are sixty minutes in length with only the first and introductory episode, in which I establish the narrative framework of the series, deviating from this (eighty minutes). Other than the pilot episode my series would suit the conventional time allocation, potentially making it attractive to production companies. The scripts may also attract attention because of the Hardy brand, even though my series is definitely not aimed towards heritage it could, ironically, still benefit from its literary intertext in creating interest. It would also, as mentioned previously, be a comparatively moderate production in terms of cost compared to those discussed above.

Heritage Drama

Heritage or costume drama is identifiable in its focus on the past and the genre is noticeable for its attention to detail in terms of period costume, its use of magnificent country houses, its big budget and the casting of well-regarded actors. I stated in the introduction that the work of Jane Austen has proved to be particularly suitable for this type of treatment; Lez Cooke offers the example of the BBC's 1995 *Pride and Prejudice* by way of illustration, commenting that the series drew a 'huge audience of 10 million viewers' and that its '£6 million budget guaranteed high production

values' (2003, p.168). Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan note that the adaptation of the Austen novel by Andrew Davies was 'phenomenally successful' and 'was saturated with the norms of the genre' (2007, p.189). Following this production, Davies, who had 'intensified every convention and exaggerated every code' (2007, p.190) of the genre in *Pride and Prejudice*, was then to turn his attention to two more adaptations: *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders* (1996) and *Vanity Fair* (1998) both of which moved away from overt heritage indulgence, being much more reflexive in style. Although this might have been interpreted as heralding a new stage in the evolution of form, in regard to heritage drama, subsequent productions do not indicate that reflexivity is the new dominant mode in this genre.

The 'pastness' of heritage, merging as it does with all the industries that surround it, has continued to please both television and film audiences. The repackaged heritage authors, including Hardy, have been accorded a central position in this industry, as Linda Troost comments, the genre of heritage drama has made such writers as 'Jane Austen a household name even in non-bookish households' (2007, p. 84). This type of drama often equates to what James Chapman terms 'heritage export' (2014, p.135) and can bring in very lucrative finance, particularly from the US. As Higson states, films about the English past have played:

A key role in establishing and reproducing the brand image of England as a historical place, and American capital has ensured that this brand image circulates globally (2011, p.191).

Chapman offers an example of this in his reference to the ITV's series *Downton Abbey* stating that it cost over one million pound per episode to make and was a joint venture between Carnival Films, a UK production company and WGBH- TV Boston. Although not adapted from the work of a canonised author from the nineteenth century, the success of *Downton Abbey*, written and created by Julian Fellowes, epitomises 'heritage' and the global interest in the British aristocracy and British culture. As Chapman suggests 'the costume drama distances itself from the problems of the present through recourse to cultural nostalgia for the past' it being 'a safe alternative to the more agitational style of social realist plays and serials' (2014, p.132). Chapman states that *Downton* is reckoned to be one of the 'most-watched television series in the world with an estimated global audience of over 120 million' (2014, p.135). It has won numerous international awards and is regarded as the best

British costume drama since ITV's 1981 series *Brideshead Revisited*, an adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's 1945 novel.

Downton was first aired in the UK in 2010 and 2011 in the US where it was broadcast by the *Masterpiece* strand on PBS (Public Broadcast Service) associated with presenting 'quality drama,' and ran for six series. *Downton Abbey*, like the earlier production *Upstairs, Downstairs* (ITV 1971–1975) also featured the lives of the serving classes as well as the aristocracy and contained what Lez Cooke describes as a 'flexi-narrative structure deriving in part from soap opera where multiple interwoven narrative strands have always been a convention of the genre' (2003, p.176). In *Downton* the various 'narrative strands' were all conducted against the backdrop of 'real life' occurrences in the period the series covered 1912–1926 and included, amongst other events, the sinking of the Titanic, the Suffragist movement, the First World War and the Battle of the Somme.

Scott Foundas writing on the *Variety* website refers to the 'Downton Abbey set' when reviewing the release of Thomas Vinterberg's 2015 film *Far from the Madding Crowd*, saying they will 'find much to enjoy' in the production with its 'solid cast and impeccable production values', but adding that for him it represented 'a perfectly respectable, but never particularly stirring, night at the movies' (Foundas, 2015). This was a production that focuses more on heritage than Hardy and one, as he notes, that 'should generate pleasing returns for this May 1 Fox Searchlight release' (Foundas, 2015). Foundas points out that Hardy's irony in the choice of the title of the novel, taken from Thomas Gray's poem of 1750 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', an idealisation of the peace of country life onto which Hardy grafts his sensational plot, is totally removed so that 'you could almost mistake Hardy for a literalist on the basis of this calm, stately new film version' (Foundas, 2015). Similarly Lucasta Miller in *The Guardian* in April of that year wrote a scathing review, headed 'A Hygienic Bathsheba' stating that in comparison to John Schlesinger's 1967 production, the 2015 version tended to flatten and 'normalise' elements of the story. Miller described the production as a 'George Eliot – version of Hardy' (2015, p.17). Certainly in its quest for realism this adaptation quietens down Hardy's unsettling and disruptive narrative and produces little more than a tame pastoral romance.

The production was also criticised by Tony Finchman in the *Hardy Society Journal*, Finchman claiming that the film had shortened, abbreviated and excluded

events from the source narrative which represented ‘an immense dumbing down of Hardy’s novel’ (2015, p.112). Vinterberg’s production was forty-nine minutes shorter than the 1967 version and Finchman suggests that a 2015 audience would probably not tolerate a film of a one hundred and sixty-eight minutes. Interestingly Keith Wilson notes that the 1967 version was a flop in America because of its length and that audiences found it ‘tediously slow-paced’ (2005, p.102). Could this be the reason then for the ‘dumbing down’ in Finchman’s terms, to make it sharper and more accessible to the international and American market? Certainly in that market, ‘heritage export’ has been borne in mind, in the opening credits of Vinterberg’s film we first see a distant shot of the Hollywood sign before being informed that Dorset is ‘200 miles outside London’.

Aside from questions about content, Miller’s observation regarding the loss of the scene in which Sergeant Troy plays the role of Dick Turpin in a circus at a country fair, seems important. Sergeant Troy’s act is watched by Bathsheba, unaware of her husband’s presence, and in its ‘theatricality – and implicit commentary on the novel as an entertainment’, this ‘could have come directly from sensation fiction, where masquerade is a frequent theme’ (Miller, 2015, p.17). This scene as portrayed in both Schlesinger’s adaptation and the novel, was perhaps too much for Vinterberg and might have jarred with his efforts to portray a pastoral romance aspiring, as it does, to English heritage brand status with eyes firmly fixed on the lucrative US market. Schlesinger’s depiction of this is similar to the carnivalesque fairground scene in my script of ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’. On the night of the fair when Ned is rejected by Car’line and leaves for London, Car’line makes her way over towards where Mop is playing and on the way encounters the performers staging their acts which includes the ‘Three Lilliputians, straight from the pages of Swift’ and ‘a Mr Felix Wehre, Elastic Man’ (episode 1, pp.25-26), all real nineteenth-century circus performers. I also insert a small package of coulrophobia with the use of the Painted-Clown, although at first Car’line is more annoyed by his presence than frightened. I included all these characters to introduce extra colour, and to borrow Miller’s phrase, add a further degree of ‘surreal absurdity’ (2015, p.17) to the script. The inclusion of all this, as in the case of Vinterburg’s film if he had kept the Dick Turpin scene, would seem equally out of place in a production aiming for heritage status.

The only film adaptation of Hardy's work to clearly challenge the notion of heritage is Michael Winterbottom's 1996 *Jude*. This production, with a screenplay by Hossein Amini, can be seen as belonging to a stable of films that Paul Niemeyer and others identified as the 'Post-Thatcher' era when writers and directors expressed the alienation and dislocation felt by the working-classes and the disenfranchised in the 'cold materialistic society' of the 1990s, all trying to function 'in a landscape that often resembled a wasteland' (Niemeyer, 2003, p168). Directors such as Danny Boyle and his 1994 *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting* in 1996, as well as Mike Leigh and Ken Loach, all made films that can be seen as critiques of a society where the poor were marginalised and left to drift aimlessly. Winterbottom's *Jude* clearly fits into this category. Margaret Thatcher and other Conservative politicians from their period of power (1979–1997) had frequently referred to the Victorian era and advocated, as Niemeyer states, a return to 'Victorian family values' (2003, p.167). Winterbottom in *Jude*, drew on and exploited the themes already evident in the text to show that class-based inequality, injustice and cruelty was rife in the Victorian era and was supported and encouraged by the ruling social elite, and thereby tacitly calling attention to the continuation of such themes in contemporary society. The focus of all this in *Jude* is Christminster, the thinly disguised Oxford, where privilege is seen to be enshrined both in the past and the present.

Jude was shot in the north of England and Scotland, well away from the much used television backdrop of an idyllic Oxford (used in *Brideshead Revisited* and *Inspector Morse* for example) with its famous spires and the domed roof of the Bodleian library. Winterbottom, ironically a graduate of Balliol College Oxford, wanted a landscape that reflected Jude's dejection and hopelessness and as Jeremy Strong states the 'shared northern texture' (2006, p. 201) of the film extends to its 'feel' and its then recent past, the north of England having suffered particularly badly from the outcome of Thatcherite policies during the eighties and nineties. Winterbottom's production nudges the film towards the genre of social realism, a definite move away from, as Christine Etherington-Wright and Ruth Doughty state, the American model of 'commercial filmmaking that is typically reliant on spectacle and high production values' (2011, p.115). *Jude*, as Strong claims, 'consistently reverses the heritage aesthetic and the reassuring view of Britain that heritage film perpetuates and exports' (2006, p.202).

The film shows what Neil Sinyard describes as ‘fidelity not to the letter of the source but to the spirit’ (1986, p.135) and is representative of a good portion of Hardy’s polemic concerns and convictions that go back to 1868 and the unpublished *The Poor Man and the Lady*. Winterbottom’s *Jude*, which strived for ‘uncompromising realism’ (Niemeyer, 2003, p.172) by aligning itself with the genre of certain British television and film in the 1990s, was not a success in the US. Deborah Allison notes that box office figures for *Jude* ‘fell far short of those achieved by *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) and *Emma* (1996)’ the former ‘had played in 1,054 US cinemas [...] and *Emma* in 848, *Jude* never played in more than twenty cinemas per week’ (Allison, 2012, p.39, italics in original). Allison adds that *Jude* was not too successful in the UK either and comments that its failure ‘left little doubt that the majority of costume drama fans preferred pictures of a more conservative ilk’ (2012, p.39); here we seem to be back again to Foundas’s ‘Downton Abbey set’.

The director Alan Parker once described the heritage genre as the ‘Laura Ashley school of filmmaking’ (Parker, 2005, cited in Voigts-Virchow, 2007, p.128) and it has attracted many critics. Steve Rose writing in the *Guardian Guide* about film biopics of nineteenth-century authors, comments dryly that they also offer ‘another excuse to revisit historic Britain at its most jolly decent and imperially mighty’ (2017, p. 21). I am in agreement with Rose and note the compelling argument that John Caughie makes when he states that heritage drama ‘has avoided its historical appointment either with modernism, with naturalism, or with critical realism’ (2000, p.216). This thesis, and the work on which it focuses, engages with Caughie’s claim and seeks to re-appoint drama in a form that respects Hardy’s narrative experiments and with a content that is far removed from the concerns of heritage drama.

Folk Horror and the English Eerie

In Neil Armstrong’s article on *The Living and the Dead* Ashley Pharoah states:

Thomas Hardy with ghosts – that was my elevator pitch [...] But I also love the BBC’s Seventies adaptations of M.R. James’s ghost stories and films such as *The Witchfinder General*, in which the English landscape looms large. Those sorts of works were our touchstones here (Armstrong, 2016).

Pharoah’s comments are interesting for two reasons. First, I would suggest that Hardy’s work contains its own supply of ‘ghosts’ and add that these are evidenced

throughout his writing and form the focus of my concerns in this thesis. Secondly, his reference to Michael Reeves's 1968 film *Witchfinder General*, is revealing and hints at the genre within which he imagines his series sits, since this film along with Piers Haggard's *Blood on Saturn's Claw* (1973) and Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man* (1973) form what is often referred to as the 'unholy trinity' of films belonging to the 'folk horror' genre. On the British Film Institute's website Adam Scovell states that the narratives of these films work:

through an emphasis on landscape which subsequently isolates its communities and individuals, skewing the dominant moral and theological systems enough to cause violence, human sacrifices, torture and even demonic and supernatural summonings (Scovell, 2017).

Scovell suggests that more recent films of this genre would include Ben Wheatley's *A Field in England* (2013), Paul Wright's *For Those in Peril* (2013) and Robert Eggers's *The Witch* (2015).

In his 2017 book *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange*, Scovell notes that the term 'folk horror' was first used by the actor, screenwriter, and novelist Mark Gatiss, whilst presenting a three-part documentary, a *History of Horror*, for BBC4 in 2010. Gatiss is one of the figures associated with the revived interest in this genre and along with Reece Shearsmith, Steve Pemberton and Jeremy Dyson is responsible for BBC2's dark surreal comedy series *The League of Gentlemen*, which has all the tropes of folk horror within it; the series has been running periodically since 1999. Besides his other work, which has included writing and acting in episodes of BBC1's *Dr Who* (2005-2017), being co-creator with Steven Moffat of BBC1's *Sherlock* (2010) and playing Tycho Nestoris in the HBO series *The Game of Thrones* (2014-2017), Gatiss has consistently promoted the work of the ghost writer M.R. James and noted the importance of his writing to the folk horror genre. Gatiss wrote and presented a documentary about James, *M.R. James: Ghost Writer*, and adapted and directed one of his stories 'The Tractate Middoth'; both the documentary and the adaptation were first screened on BBC2 on Christmas Day 2013. In December 2018 Gatiss presented a further series of five fifteen-minute stories on BBC Radio 4 entitled *The Haunting of M.R. James: Ghost Stories*, fulfilling what, Scovell describes as 'the BBC's regular spook slot' (2007, p.48) at Christmas. The series was concluded by an hour-long drama with Gatiss playing the role of M.R. James; the title again being: *The Haunting of M.R. James* (the similarity

between Gatiss's title and my own is coincidental: I decided on this title when I began the project in 2012).

In his statement about *The Living and the Dead*, Pharoah also refers to James and the BBC's adaptations of his work; between the years 1971 to 1978 seven of his stories: 'The Stalls of Barchester', 'A Warning to the Curious', 'Lost Hearts', 'The Treasure of Abbot Thomas', 'The Ash Tree', 'Stigma' and the 'Ice House' were featured on television. They were only 'interrupted' one year by the screening of 'The Signalman' a Charles Dickens story adapted by Andrew Davies in 1976.

In 2005 BBC2 revived the critically well-regarded Christmas ghost stories of the seventies, the first of which was Peter Harness's adaptation of James's 'A View from a Hill'. In this story a Dr. Fanshawe has been sent to Squire Richards' house in a remote part of the country to catalogue a collection of historical artefacts. Whilst out on a walk Fanshawe borrows, what Scovell describes as, 'an alchemically-altered pair of binoculars' (2017, p.49) from Richards and discovers two striking features of the surrounding landscape: an old abbey in pristine condition and a figure hanging from a gibbet surrounded by crows on what transpires to be 'Gallows Hill'. Without the aid of the binoculars he is only able to see the ruins of an abbey and a wooded hill minus gallows and circling crows. We find out subsequently that the binoculars have had their barrels filled with liquid used to boil the bones of the dead executed on Gallows Hill, allowing, through their inherent evil, Fanshawe to view the landscape of the English countryside as it looked in the past. Robert Macfarlane, writing about this story on *The Guardian* website, in association with what he refers to as the 'English Eerie', suggests that James remains the dominant writer in the genre because of his understanding of landscape:

and especially the English landscape – as constituted by uncanny forces, part-buried sufferings [...] Landscape, in James, is never a smooth surface or simple stage-set, there to offer picturesque consolations. Rather it is a realm that snags, bites and troubles. He repeatedly invokes the pastoral – that green dream of natural tranquillity and social order – only to traumatise it (Macfarlane, 2015).

Scovell notes that the televisual adaptations of James's stories have further accentuated 'the role of landscape' in the writer's work moving them towards the folk horror genre, for James:

may have imbued his stories with many a malevolent landscape but it is clearly their visualisation in the latter half of the twentieth century that solidifies their aesthetics totally (2017, p.76).

The eerie nature of the M.R. James landscape has been reinforced and promoted by its adaptation for television, boosted by its visual presence on the screen; this is exactly what I intend for Hardy and his landscape of Egdon Heath, Wessex.

In his documentary *History of Horror* Mark Gatiss stated that folk horror ‘shared a common obsession with the British landscape, its folklore and superstitions’ (Gatiss 2010, cited in Scovell, p.7, 2017). Scovell is in agreement with this and further states that the genre ‘uses folklore, either aesthetically or thematically, to imbue itself with a sense of the arcane for eerie, uncanny or horrific purposes’ (2017, p.7). Within this broad folk horror or English eerie genre, as Macfarlane terms it, we are back again to the ‘skull beneath the skin’, back on the landscape of the rurally isolated, for this is where, as Andrew Radford suggests, Hardy can show ‘the continuing existence of the past as a mythically relevant force in the present’ (2016, p.1). This is how Hardy regarded the dark place of Egdon Heath, where arcane pre-Christian folkloric beliefs not only survived but dominated; it is also the area as I have argued throughout this thesis, that has been totally shunned by film and television, denying the fact that this element in Hardy’s oeuvre was considerable. Although it is clear how this situation has evolved, in my writing I reclaim a space for the irrational; consciously nudging my work towards the genre of folk horror, by re-telling Hardy’s tales of the feared and fearful folk, informed by local superstition and folklore, wandering on the bleak menacing soil of Egdon Heath.

On *The Guardian* website in 2015 Robert Macfarlane argued that in all manner of the arts there is renewed interest in the ‘English eerie’, an eerie counter-culture fascinated in particular with the English landscape:

A loose but substantial body of work is emerging that explores the English landscape in terms of its anomalies rather than its continuities, that is sceptical of comfortable notions of “dwelling” and “belonging”, and of the packagings of the past as “heritage”, and that locates itself within a spectred rather than a sceptred isle (Macfarlane, 2015).

Macfarlane’s analysis, and the examples he gives, would suggest that my interests expressed through practice are timely, believing as I do that Hardy’s fascination with the dark folklore of nineteenth-century Dorset share the same foundations as those of

folk horror. However, I am aware that when it comes to the adaptation of work by a canonical nineteenth-century writer the dominant genre remains that of heritage, the established ‘package’ to use Macfarlane’s term. In the material I have chosen for adaptation and the metafictional manner which it is to be delivered, I am therefore also writing against the heritage genre.

The Haunting of Mr Hardy

Hardy’s narratives often comprise elements of the cinematic particularly in his use of point of view or focalisation, but these are used in the manner of a filmmaker rather than a novelist. David Lodge has listed the differences between verbal and film narrative:

Apart from dialogue and monologue (which are available to both) and the use of music for emotive suggestion, film is obliged to tell its story purely in terms of the visible – behaviour, physical appearance, setting - whereas the verbal medium of the novel can describe anything, visible or invisible (notably the thoughts passing through a character’s head), and can do so as abstractly as it pleases (1977, p.80).

Lodge goes on to state that he believes Hardy to be a ‘cinematic novelist’ because he deliberately ‘renounces some of the freedom of representation and report afforded by the verbal medium’ (1977, p.80), often choosing to present his material in a purely visual way ‘presenting’ rather than ‘asserting’.

I noted in the last chapter the main narrative element that Lodge identifies in Hardy’s work, which is the use the writer makes of the hypothetical or ‘unspecified observer’; Lodge uses *The Return of the Native* to illustrate this. After the opening chapter ‘A Face on Which Time Makes But Little Impression’, which introduces the reader to the moody character of Egdon Heath ‘a near relation of night’ (*The Return*: 53), Hardy then in Chapter Two ‘zooms in’ onto the landscape, showing us ‘a little speck of human life in a vast expanse of nature’ (1977, p.82). He does this, as Lodge points out, by ‘restricting himself voluntarily to a limitation that is binding on the film-maker’ (1977, p.82) drawing our attention to an old man, who ‘One would have said’ (*The Return*: 58), had the appearance of a naval officer ‘of some sort’ making his way across the heath. The old man, whom we later discover is Captain Vye, acts as the focaliser as he gazes over towards ‘the tract that he had yet to traverse’ and discerns: ‘a long distance in front of him, a moving spot, which appeared to be a

vehicle, and it proved to be going the same way as that in which he was journeying' (*The Return*: 58). Captain Vye catches up with the 'lurid red' van that belongs to the reddleman Diggory Venn, who then takes his turn in becoming the focaliser seeing the 'pantomime of silhouettes' (*The Return*: 63) of a woman's figure on the barrow outlined against the sky. As Wright suggests, the 'narrative technique here resembles a shooting script even before it indulges in a close-up of Eustace Vye's face' (2005, p.11). Gilmartin and Mengham note that in his poem 'Afterwards' published in 1917 Hardy acknowledges his 'telescopic vision' (2007, I) by being able to record both: 'when the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn' and comment on 'the full-starred heavens that winter sees' for he was 'a man who used to notice such things' (1978, p.304).

On a purely visual level Hardy is the 'cinematic novelist' that Lodge claims, and photographically his work has transferred successfully to the medium of film. Joss Marsh and Kamilla Elliott (2007, p.460) suggest that early in the development of film the medium might have 'derived scopic (that is, highly visual narration)', from a writer such as Hardy and also cites the opening to *The Return of the Native* as an example of this. Hardy had been influenced by painters such as Turner and the Impressionists and these aspects of his work are obviously attractive to the filmmaker, especially when they can be used in conjunction with the 'ready-made' rurally idyllic Wessex on display in heritage productions.

John Schlensinger's 1967 production of *Far From the Madding Crowd* was the first film adaptation of Hardy to be shot in colour and the first to make use of wide-screen technology and aerial shots, but as Roger Webster suggests, the camera tends to dwell on the 'picturesque and pastoral to the point of cliché' (2005, p.28). This is a common criticism of Hardy adaptations and Roman Polanski's *Tess* (1979) attracted similar comments; but as I have suggested whilst discussing Egdon Heath, Hardy himself was so enthused about the landscape he was writing about, that it is an issue for film makers trying to achieve some sort of balance between reflecting this and it becoming what Webster calls a 'visual cliché' (2005, p.28). In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Hardy, describing the landscape in which Angel is falling in love with Tess, states:

Amid the oozing fatness and warm ferments of the Var Vale, at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilization, it was

impossible that the most fanciful love should not grow passionate. The ready bosoms existing there were impregnated by their surroundings (*Tess*: 207).

In Hardy the landscape is seldom passive and never ‘just’ a backcloth, here indeed it is almost sensual.

I offer a director a similar opportunity to display the beauty of Dorset in my script when I suggest a ‘series of shots’, as the character Eva recollects Old Hardy reading his poem ‘Afterwards’ in the garden of Max Gate. The scene heading (episode 5, p.15) suggests various landscapes of Dorset, heath land and Stinsford churchyard. The poem is concerned with the writer’s links to the environment he has spent eighty odd years experiencing and his place amongst it all. However, my scripts also recognise and relish the darker elements of that landscape and the equal importance Hardy placed upon it. In my adaptation of ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’ for example, a ‘voice-over’ Old Hardy describes the heath as Ned frantically begins his search for Carry (episode 1, p.71):

Poor Ned, he hadn’t a chance. The heath was
a place of Dantesque gloom at this hour,
which would have afforded secure hiding for
a battery of artillery, much less a man and a
child.

I take the phrase ‘Dantesque gloom’ direct from Hardy (*The Fiddler*: 302) as I seek to show Ned’s anger and despair; feelings further aggravated by the moody theatre of night-time on Egdon Heath.

Although Polanski was criticised for dwelling on the picturesque in *Tess*, one defence might be that he has sensitively tried to interpret and match the delicate palette of light that Hardy’s narrative employs in this novel. In total contrast to Winterbottom’s *Jude*, where colour is somewhat muted in the quest for ‘gritty realism’, Polanski attempts to parallel Hardy’s text, in which the description of light was seen to correspond to Tess’s mood. In the novel during the pastoral romance phase, ‘the Valley of the Great Dairies’ (*Tess*: 156), leading up to the time of her wedding, Tess’s ‘hopes mingled with the sunshine in an ideal photosphere which surrounded her as she bounded along against the soft south wind’ (*Tess*: 157); she ‘walked in brightness’ her love for Angel Clare ‘enveloped her as a photosphere, irradiated her into forgetfulness of her past sorrows’ (*Tess*: 260). Yet in contrast to this, when Tess is rejected by Angel ‘she knew that he saw her without irradiation – in all her bareness’ (*Tess*: 301). As the situation gets worse for Tess and she is

enfolded in a ‘disordered medley of greys’ (*Tess*: 364) and ‘an achromatic chaos of things’ (*Tess*: 365) Hardy describes how the ‘day hardened in colour’ (*Tess*: 366). Polanski’s use of colour and lighting in this film, offers a good example of Sinyard’s observation that Hardy is so ‘intimidatingly visual as to make the camera seem almost redundant: the director can only duplicate, not enhance’ (1986, p.48).

Kamilla Elliott (2003) refutes the claims by some critics that in adaptation, film is incapable of conveying the figurative and connotative elements of the source text and uses Polanski’s *Tess* to demonstrate how it can be achieved. Early in the novel Hardy offers a description of Tess saying that she was ‘a fine and handsome girl – not handsomer than some others, possibly – but her mobile peony mouth and large innocent eyes added eloquence to colour and shape’ (*Tess*: 51). The reader of this would recognise that the phrase ‘mobile peony mouth’ was a metaphor and not take it literally. Elliott points out the challenges to a director in trying to present an equivalent ‘filmic metaphor’, film being governed by the conventions of realism. She suggests that this is achieved by Polanski when he has Alec placing a strawberry in Tess’s open mouth which ‘enhances and modifies Tess’s lips visually’ in much the same way that the metaphoric ‘peony’ does in Hardy’s text; the strawberry is eaten in the film, just as the ‘figurative verbal peony fades’ (Elliott, 2003, p.235) in the text. The use of the strawberry satisfying the diegetic world of the film as well drawing attention, as Hardy’s metaphor wished, to the shape of Tess’s mouth and lips. Of course, the action of Alec inserting the strawberry in Tess’s mouth also signals later events when Tess is sexually violated by him.

Elliott gives further examples from *Tess* to show how the film, whilst presenting the literal, can also suggest the figurative. She describes the scene where Tess is attempting to whistle to Mrs. d’Urberville’s birds; as she walks along the row of cages the camera movement and angle shows her alternatively caught between being caged and being free, pulling ‘the viewer back and forth between the literal and the figurative dimensions of the Tess-in-the-cages metaphor’ (2003, p.236). This perfectly represents Tess’s figurative plight at that particular time. A similar technique was used in a 1998 ITV version of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* when Tess visits the d’Urberville’s house, ‘The Slopes’, for the first time; on her arrival we see a workman sharpening his scythe and a camera shot shows Tess positioned under the blade. This serial, delivered in two ninety-minute parts, was seen by many to be a reaction against Polanski’s *Tess*, which some considered too detached in its

approach. This production however, with an overtly signposted narrative pathway and numerous voice-over intrusions seemed clumsy by comparison to a film, as Paul Niemeyer commented in 2003, that was ‘still studied for its filmcraft’ (2003, p.235).

Polanski is the only director who seems content to acknowledge the narrative gaps of silence that Hardy uses in his work. Niemeyer believes that these ‘gaps’ and other aspects of Hardy’s narrative have made him decidedly un-cinematic, suggesting that, Hardy’s novels ‘are multifaceted and generally unstable. Film, by contrast, is a relatively *stable* medium that depends on a more unified point of view’ (Niemeyer, 2003, p.5, italics in original). In agreement with this, Webster points out that in Hardy’s novels ‘visualised scenes are followed by dense and sometimes awkward passages’ (2005, p.20). Hardy’s irregular narrative patterns are the void that most adaptations have been unable to cross.

All the points made above by Lodge and Wright about the use of observers or focalisers and narrative ellipses clearly apply to Hardy’s major novels but are less apparent in his shorter fiction. Apart from a 1969 BBC production of ‘The Distracted Preacher’, the only televisual attention given to Hardy’s shorter works remains the 1973 BBC2’s *Wessex Tales* series. These adaptations also represent the only screening on television or film to show Hardy’s obsessive interest in the irrational. In this series of six fifty-minute episodes there was, as Wright notes, a ‘deliberate attempt to reproduce on screen the authentic Wessex of the tales’ (2005, p.2). In the series, the picturesque had to make way for both dark clouds and a corresponding mood. According to Roy Pierce-Jones, the producer of the series, Irene Shubik demanded that each episode ‘began with a long shot of Wessex and any human character would be seen from afar, dwarfed by the landscape’ (2005, p.67) and at the end, the camera would pull away from the individual and return to the vastness of that landscape. Small, insignificant individuals with their burden of anxieties and concerns, big indifferent landscape, are all familiar tropes in Hardy’s writing. I offer a director many such opportunities with sad and solitary figures such as Gertrude Lodge making her way over Egdon Heath.

As a BBC producer Shubik emerged from the background of the so-called ‘permissive’ society of the 1960s when television, with drama productions like the *Wednesday Play* began to loosen the tight grip of John Reith its first Director General. During the 1960s, in literature as in film and television, there was a move towards social realism and issues surrounding sex, class and race were being

approached and aired for the first time and this trend was to continue in challenging dramatic form in the *Play for Today* series which began in 1970. *Wessex Tales* was first aired on BBC2, which was now directing itself to be a slightly more sophisticated channel than BBC1, involved as it was in the contest for ratings with the very popular ITV. Shubik chose both which stories to adapt and which writer would be responsible for the individual screenplays; to her, Hardy's stories appeared relevant to the times, and Shubik stated that Hardy presented them:

in many dimensions, viewing them with a profoundly ironic and very modern eye. His attitudes to women, religion and class could be those of now. Even in those melodramatic tales of witchcraft and horror, 'The Withered Arm' and 'Barbara of the House of Glebe', no characters behave other than believably in terms of modern psychology. (Shubik, 1973, cited in Pierce-Jones, 2005, p.66)

The series comprised 'The Withered Arm', 'Fellow Townsman', 'A Tragedy of Two Ambitions', 'An Imaginative Woman', 'The Melancholy Hussar' and 'Barbara of the House of Glebe'. The six episodes were further and effectively bound together by the musical score of Joseph Horowitz and this featured both at moments in the individual stories and in the credit sequences.

The first story shown was 'The Withered Arm', the only story in my series of scripts to have been previously adapted for British television. Rhys Adrian's script kept fairly close to Hardy's story; Billie Whitelaw gave a strong performance as Rhoda Brook, her presence throughout displaying the burden which Hardy places on this character's shoulders. It is difficult to compare aspects of my script, which remains, in Ian Macdonald's words, a 'Screen Idea [...] a term which names what is being striven for, even while that goal cannot be seen' (2013, p.4), with a production that has come through the many layers of complex processing which have contributed to its final appearance, but I shall try, focusing briefly on two related incidents.

One of the key moments in Hardy's story occurs when Rhoda believes that she is being 'hag-rid' by a wrinkled and 'shockingly distorted' (*Withered Arm*: p.50) Gertrude, who is sitting across her chest and flaunting her wedding ring in her face. In the attempt to free herself Rhoda grabs Gertrude's left arm and flings the 'incubus' (Hardy's term) to the floor. This scene is echoed later in the story when a distraught and aged Gertrude discovers that the corpse that she is about to touch with her damaged arm is Rhoda's son ('Jamie' in this production, 'Edward' in mine,

unnamed in Hardy) and collapses on the floor. Rhoda's words link the two episodes: "This is the meaning of what Satan showed me in the vision! You are like her at last!" (*Withered Arm*: 69). I argue that my script deals with these incidents more effectively than the television production, in two particular ways. In the production Gertrude does not ride on top of Rhoda, as in both Hardy's story and my script, but merely pushes her wedding-ring in Rhoda's face. Although the accompanying music heightens in tempo there is no discernible thud or noise as Gertrude hits the floor after Rhoda flings her off the bed. In Hardy's text Rhoda's son hears this and asks his mother about it next day: "What was that noise in your chimmer, mother, last night?" (*Withered Arm*: 51) These are also the words Jamie uses in this production even though there was no noise as Gertrude hit the floor. In my script the 'thud' is important and it is repeated in the later scene; in both my script and the production 'flashback' is used to remind the viewer of the previous incident but the latter seems too hurried at this point and Rhoda's words, quoted above, seem somewhat lost. My scripted version, by slowing the pace a little at this point, is designed to achieve greater impact.

In another episode from the *Wessex Tales* series 'A Tragedy of Two Ambitions', scripted by Dennis Potter, the tone is much lighter and at times verges on the comical. John Hurt plays the older of two brothers who are both emotionally cold, strictly disciplined clergy in contrast to their father who is amoral, usually drunk, and the source of embarrassment and resentment to the two sons. One day in his drunken meanderings the father falls into a weir and is drowned. The two sons witness the event and do nothing to try and save him and afterwards feel guilt and although they carry on with their church roles, their faith has been broken. As Pierce-Jones comments: 'Such a dark comedy clearly fitted in with contemporary tastes that mistrusted the moral certainties of the more edifying Victorian texts' (2005, p.70).

The viewer of this story, like the reader of the original text, is positioned to dislike the brothers for their cold calculating way of seeking personal and family advancement through the Church. In complete contrast to them, joy is to be taken at the freedom of their father, whose movements in the screened story are accompanied by the music of the oboe, which as Pierce-Jones suggests, signals 'mischief' (2005, p.70); this works very well. In my script of the 'Fiddler of the Reels' I also use music as a signal to the audience, but for somewhat different intentions, not to announce

the coming of mischief, rather the coming of evil and menace; Fisher notes that the ‘feeling of eerie is reinforced’ by accompanying music (2016, p.110). In Chapter One I referred to the power of music to bewitch and I make full use of this power in my writing. When Car’line reunites with Ned in London and they visit the Great Exhibition she thinks she sees Mop’s reflection in a large mirror; I reference and develop this uncanny moment. In my script Car’line sees the reflection of Mop in the mirror and turns round to find no-one there (episode 1, p.49); in a frenzied state she repeats this several times and eventually collapses. This sighting of the devilish Mop is accompanied by fiddle music and I use this as a device to alert the television audience that they can expect to see him, it announces the up-coming uncanny moment. As Robert Edgar, John Marland and Steven Rawle suggest, the use of music:

has been treated by theorists as an aspect of narration, but it cannot tell, it can merely aid focalisation in relation to that which is being shown and told by affecting mood (2015, p.60).

At the very end of my script I have Ned, whom Old Hardy says has reached ‘the end of the line’ (episode 1, p.77), both seeing Mop in a mirror and hearing his fiddle music playing; as usual Mop has one eye open and is smiling. Here both the original text and my adaptation allude to ‘the belief [...] that the demonic appears in reflected forms’ (Seymour-Smith, 1995, p.463). Freud also discusses mirrors and reflections, especially in connection with an individual ‘seeing their double,’ (a topic often considered to be in the realm of the uncanny and associated with Otto Rank and his 1914 essay ‘Der Doppelgänger’) describing an occasion on which he had seen an unexpected reflection of himself in a mirror and ‘thoroughly disliked his appearance’ but later questioned his feelings on this and asked whether his ‘dislike’ was a ‘vestigial trace of that older reaction which feels the double to be something uncanny’ (Freud, 2003, p.162).

In my scripts Old Hardy has been seeing his double throughout the series, be it a younger version that has been on display. In the final episode where Old Hardy is on his deathbed, their meeting is particularly poignant. With only hours to live the old man stares intensely at his younger self making the younger man (and the viewer, I hope) feel uncomfortable before saying (episode 5, p.5):

It just seems like yesterday that I was
your age, looking like that. Yesterday.
(pause)

How soon we become the past.

Old Hardy here is commenting on the passage of time and the brevity of existence; comments that are repeated to his sister-in-law Eva later after she has read out his poem 'Afterwards' (episode 5, p.16):

The brevity of our existence. And how
we hope to be remembered.

Nicholas Royle describes the 'uncanny' as 'a flickering sense, but not conviction, of something supernatural' (2003, p.1). I draw on this notion of the 'flickering sense' throughout the series but refer to the phenomena more directly on two occasions in episode five; both in connection with the character Eva. When Eva arrives at Max Gate to support her elder sister Florence during Old Hardy's illness, she goes up to see him in his sick-bed and the conversation soon moves to his death, where he wants to be buried and his views on religion. During this conversation Old Hardy mentions that he has seen a ghost around Christmas time many years ago (a claim actually made by Hardy). Eva states that she would love to hear about it but does not want to exhaust him. At this point she glances out of the window at the side of Old Hardy's bed and thinks she sees a bent and hunched figure, that of Rhoda Brook from episode three, walking away from the house (episode 5, pp.11-12):

Rhoda's right arm lurching forward trying to grab
an incubus but only managing the early evening air.

EVA (CONT'D)

What the?

Eva shudders at the sight of this.

EXT. GARDEN. MAX GATE. DAY. DARKENING SKY.

Eva stands at the window her face clearly distressed.

A shaken Eva eventually sits back on the bed and she tells Old Hardy what a contradictory character he is in believing in the irrational, because of his claim to having seen a ghost, whilst purporting to follow the 'modern views' of Darwin 'and the like' (episode 5, p.12). It is through the characters of Eva and Florence that I can draw these aspects of Hardy's nature and his conflicting views to the attention of the audience.

Eva is subjected to a second ‘flickering sense’ experience after Old Hardy’s death when Sydney Cockerell, much to the astonishment of Florence, Eva and Young Hardy, invites journalists, as Tomalin states ‘to view Hardy’s body’ (2006, p.371). Eva is angry (episode 5, pp.30-31):

EVA

I really can't believe what I'm seeing. It's like a freak show! Did you give him permission to let the press see Tom's body?

Florence is very distressed.

FLORENCE

He. He, didn't ask.

EVA

This just isn't right.

YOUNG HARDY

(talking directly to Eva)
And I feel it's going to get a lot worse.

Eva seems to hear this comment and turns her head towards Young Hardy.

EVA

(looking confused)
Sorry?

FLORENCE

Sydney didn't ask, didn't ask. It's all been so strange.

Florence breaks down again and Eva, still puzzled by what she thinks she's heard, comforts her.

EVA

(to herself)
Very strange indeed.

The events following Hardy’s death, both in documented reality and in my script, where I nudge even further towards the supernatural, are very strange. The usually level-headed and stable Eva is privy to seeing and witnessing these events, outraged on one level by the behaviour of Cockerell, Barrie and the Reverend Cowley and experiencing that ‘flickering sense’ when confronting the other, the supernatural.

At the end of ‘Afterwards’, I build on the ‘flickering sense’ experience; Young Hardy after walking through Stinsford churchyard and stopping at Old Hardy’s grave recalls what Old Hardy said to him (episode 5, p.59):

Well you just watch, you just see,
before of course you forget again.

Walking on and seeing a variety of characters from Old Hardy’s stories that he has helped to revive in the old man’s mind, Young Hardy is naturally bewildered. He makes his way to the gate and hears Old Hardy’s voice reminding him (episode 5, p.59):

But never quite forget, never quite.

As he walks down the lane at the side of the church, Young Hardy sees his mother and his brother Young Henry coming to meet him. He looks back to the church to find that all is quiet, the crowds of people, the hearse and the other cars that had been there have gone and there is no sign that a funeral has taken place. Young Hardy then has to quickly return to the ‘reality’ of being a sixteen-year-old youth returning home from work in Dorchester, his mother Jemima asking (episode 5, p.60):

Good day for the young architect? Av I
got a tale to tell you.

This ending, with Hardy’s mother about to tell him yet another story, would leave open the possibility of another series; as would the final line of dialogue in the series when Young Hardy, his face full of doubt, questions (episode 5, p.60):

And really, will I be a man who notices such
things?

I noted above that Wright described the screening of the *Wessex Tales* as a ‘deliberate attempt to reproduce on screen the authentic Wessex of the tales’ (2005, p.2). My series of scripts also aims to produce an authentic non idealised Wessex, highlighting, free from the restriction of heritage and aligning my work to the genre of folk horror, the dark drama that Hardy pours into these stories; drama which reflected Hardy’s heritage in the remote and isolated spaces of his formative years. In the preface to *Wessex Tales* Hardy apologises for ‘the neglect of contrast which is shown by presenting two stories of hangmen [...] in such a small collection’ and then explains that in the ‘neighbourhood of county-towns hanging matters used to form a large proportion of the local tradition’ (1999, x). Certainly in Hardy’s teenage years and beyond, hanging was a form of popular entertainment, attracting large

crowds of people to the ‘hang-fair’. In my adaptation of the ‘The Withered Arm’ Gertrude eventually finds herself in the company of the hangman; it is at this point in my adaptation and for the second time in the series, my audience encounters William Calcraft Britain’s ‘real life’ principle executioner from 1829 to 1874 (episode 3, p.48). It is the blurring of the real and the fictional that I play with in my scripts, in the case of Calcraft recreating a historical figure whose practices were demonic.

Calcraft was born in 1800 and it is estimated that during his long career he hung between four hundred and four hundred and fifty people. In the ‘Foreword’ section of Geoffrey Abbott’s book *William Calcraft: Executioner Extra-Ordinaire* (2004) Muriel Brooke (nee Calcraft) and Thomas Calcraft, William’s great grandchildren comment that amongst executioners: ‘William may have had the longest reign, but he used the shortest rope, three foot or less in length, the vast majority of his victims thereby dying slowly by strangulation’ (2004, px). Calcraft’s ‘job description’ also included the ‘flogging [of] juvenile culprits [...] for which he received 10/- per week and 2/6 for each flogging, plus an allowance for birch rods and cat-o-nine-tails’ (2004, p.6). He certainly seems to have enjoyed his career for at the age of seventy-four he was ‘pensioned off by the Court of Alderman’ with a pension equal to his former salary, twenty-five shillings per week but ‘the hangman complained bitterly at his compulsory retirement’ (Abbott, 2004, p.151). His last victim was wife-murderer John Godwin executed on the 25th of May 1874.

In 1856 he was appointed by the Sheriff of Dorset for the execution of Elizabeth Martha Brown (usually referred to as Martha Brown) in Dorchester, Brown having murdered her husband after suffering years of abuse. Thomas Hardy, a sixteen-year-old architectural apprentice at the time, attended the execution on a Saturday morning along with three to four thousand other people. Robert Gittings, in *Young Thomas Hardy* (1978) refers to the effect the hanging had on the young man and makes reference to a newspaper article that Hardy had cut out and pasted in a scrapbook. The article, written by a well-respected journalist called Neil Munro and dated the 2nd of November 1904, appeared in the *Sketch* and claimed that the hanging had haunted Hardy and had subsequently inspired him in his creation of Tess. It is significant that in the scrapbook that Hardy had marked ‘Personal’ he had crossed out certain details in the article and written ‘Corrected’ by the side, but the suggestion that Martha Brown had inspired Tess remained unaltered. Gittings

suggests that to Hardy the hanging of the woman had a sexual aspect, for in a letter to a friend, Lady Hester Pinney dated the 20th of January 1926 Hardy recalls:

I remember what a fine figure she showed against the sky as she hung in the misty rain, & how the tight black silk gown set off her shape as she wheeled half-round and back [at the end of a rope] (Purdy and Millgate, 1998, p.5).

I draw on this incident in episode two (episode 2, pp. 6-10), Old Hardy stating that he was not proud of what he thought at that time, but offers the excuse that he was only young, to which his younger self, Young Hardy nods in agreement. I also adopt the notion that the hanging of Martha Brown did inspire Hardy in the creation of Tess, having Old Hardy saying that Martha ‘will live forever as long as my Tess is read’ (episode 2, p.9). It does seem, as Gittings suggests, that the hanging of Martha Brown ‘supplied at least part of the emotional power of [Hardy’s] best-known novel’ (1978, p.60).

William Calcraft is the second of the ‘strangers’ to visit Shepherd Fennel’s cottage on the night of the christening, seeking respite from the stormy night. In my adaptation he is on his way to Casterbridge to take up his new and permanent post. In both Hardy’s story and my version, the executioner is dark and menacing. In the story Hardy refers to the Second Stranger as ‘the Prince of Darkness’ and describes the formation of seating at the shepherd’s cottage where there is a defined physical gap between the christening guests and the executioner as: ‘circulus, cujus entrum diabolus’ (*Three Strangers*: 15). In the notes at the end of *Wessex Tales* (in which ‘The Three Strangers’ is included), Michael Irwin suggests that this means ‘a circle, at whose centre was the devil’ (*Wessex Tales*: 193).

In my script of ‘The Withered Arm’ Gertrude meets the ‘Prince of Darkness’, William Calcraft, at the county jail in Casterbridge where, on the incentive of a ‘trifling fee’ (*Withered Arm*: 67) she is allowed to place her ‘poor curst arm’ (*Withered Arm*: 69) on the still warm neck of a young man’s body, that, as events transpire, of Rhoda’s son. It is ironic then that in ‘real life’ Calcraft, in the early years of his hanging career, received ‘a severe reprimand’, Abbott notes, for allowing this type of practice. In 1831, prior to an execution, he was asked by a man with a cyst on his neck if he could have contact with the corpse following the hanging, in the belief that this would offer a ‘cure’ for his disfigurement. When the victim had stopped struggling Calcraft:

beckoned the man up on to the scaffold and, lifting one of the corpse's limp hands, rubbed it on the man's neck. On seeing that, the crowd, superstitious or not, went wild, causing the sheriffs to step in quickly and terminate the 'curative' performance (Abbott, 2004, p.24).

Hardy's inclusion of this practice in 'The Withered Arm' and what was regarded as the therapeutic value of coming into contact with an individual who had been hanged, or an item associated with the hanging, seem to have been widespread at the time and offers another example of Hardy wishing to record a practice or belief that was not widely known.

I allude to sales of the used rope in my adaptation, when Gertrude is offered the opportunity of purchasing some rope by the Ostler at the inn in Casterbridge (episode 3, p.45):

Yes, as you can imagine the rope always gets a bit of interest. Tis sold by the inch afterwards. And being that the hangman is Calcraft and he don't use so much rope, it be even more valuable.

The hangman and Mop in 'The Fiddler of the Reels' provide the narrative ingredient of evil to the stories, they are the villains. Writing in the *Guardian Review* in 2013, the television producer and screenwriter John Yorke, comments on the importance of the 'baddie' in the story: 'We don't *like* Satan in *Paradise Lost* – we *love* him. And we love him because he's the perfect gleeful embodiment of evil,' (2013, p.40, italics in original). In Hardy's story Ned and Car'line return to London after Carry's abduction, Ned still deeply troubled by Carry's absence suffers panic attacks whilst Car'line, as Oindrila Ghosh points out: 'seems to be callously indifferent about the abduction of her daughter by the symbolic God of the Netherworld – Mop' (2013, p.66). My adaptation recognises Ned's anguish and notes that the abduction of Carry 'undercuts the classic hero's journey' (Yorke, 2013, p.19) since Ned is the quiet hero, our main protagonist, in this tale.

If Mop was the starting point when I began thinking about the story as film, beginning the journey of my 'screen idea', it was Ned, as I wrote, who became the protagonist taking the story over in all his decency and kindness. Syd Field, the screenwriting coach and author, said that action is character 'a person is what he does, not what he says' (2005, p.47) and from the opening scenes in the first episode, where he feeds a stray cat (Old Hardy's 'Cobby'), through to the relationship he

builds with Carry, Ned matches the evil of his antagonist with his own genuine good nature. His reaction to Carry's disappearance (somewhat heightened in my screenplay in that he eventually goes insane) contrasts sharply with Car'line's reaction, Hardy, as Ghosh states, reversing 'the accepted gender roles' (2013, p. 69) of Victorian society. In his book *Into the Woods*, Yorke writes that modern characters 'are just as likely to drift into meaningless oblivion as to die' (2013, p.19) and this is the fate of Ned. At the end of 'The Fiddler of the Reels' I have Old Hardy telling his younger self and the audience, that following the vision of Mop in the mirror (episode 1, p.80):

OLD HARDY

From that time onwards, till the day he
died, poor Ned's mouth could only ever
utter one word.

INT. BEDROOM. NED'S DERANGEMENT. NIGHT.

FIDDLE MUSIC PLAYING GETTING LOUDER.

Ned is still looking in the mirror, the reflection shows
the figure of Mop, he has one eye open and he's smiling.

NED

(softly getting louder)
Carry? Carry? Carry? Carry!

FIDDLE MUSIC STOPS.

BLACKNESS.

NED (O.S.)

Carry?

The evil of Mop and the pathos of Ned's position help to make 'The Fiddler of the Reels' a powerful first episode in my series; the absolute polarity in the nature of the two characters and the way that this is demonstrated could not be more extreme.

When Car'line joins the audience at the fair where Mop is performing, we find a 'Seated Gentleman' (Old Hardy) reading a copy of *Schribner's Magazine*, an American periodical in which 'The Fiddler of the Reels' was first published in 1893. The gentleman buys a round of drinks and a young woman tells Car'line that he is famous but does not mention his name or what he is famous for, only commenting that 'he likes to keep an eye on things' (episode 1, p27). Later, when all men other than Mop have disappeared from the field, only a violin rests on the gentleman's seat; Young Hardy's violin being the uncanny 'calling card' in the diegetic world of

the scripts. My scripts are full of such intertextual playfulness: as the series goes on Old Hardy's study and desk become littered with objects that have been central to the individual stories, the photograph of Carry and her skipping rope being amongst the first. The gap between the worlds of the narrative Old Hardy has been involved, in creating and recounting the stories, and the actual 'reality' of the world of the old writer in his study becoming blurred. The many appearances of Old Hardy's cat Cobby serving the same function, present in the 'real' domain of Max Gate and then finding its way, sometimes with an eerie presence, into the stories. The penultimate scene in 'Afterwards' is the burial of Old Hardy's heart at Stinsford church yard and this event is attended by many of the characters from the previous episodes. I discussed earlier Tony Jordan's 'mash-up' with the *Dickension* series, and this, I suppose is a mini *Haunting of Mr Hardy* 'mash-up', since the viewers should recognise the various characters present.

As I discussed in the last chapter, two of my characters from 'The Fiddler of the Reels', Joe and Seth are present at Max Gate after Hardy's death, with Seth remarking that the writer was not in favour of 'happy endings'. Seth's comments here expressing the view that many hold about Hardy's supposed 'pessimism'; Millgate states that Hardy disliked being associated with the term and his:

exasperation at being so crudely categorised was exceeded only by his overwhelming sense of the inconceivability of 'optimism' in a world of [...] radical imperfection' (1985, p.409).

A letter Hardy wrote to his friend Henry Rider Haggard in 1891, concerning the death of Haggard's ten-year old son, is perhaps the most pertinent example of Hardy's weariness with the world and his pessimistic view on life. In the letter Hardy wrote expressing his sympathy:

with you both in your bereavement. Though to be candid, I think the death of a child is never really to be regretted, when one reflects on what he has escaped (Purdy and Millgate, 1978, p.135).

Hardy of course does eventually free himself from the 'weariness' through death in 1928 and this occasion prior to, during and 'afterwards' forming the focus of my attention in the final episode of my series.

The television playwright Dennis Potter's phrase 'non-naturalism' would equate, as a form of narrative strategy, with the metafictional playfulness I have been discussing. Potter, who focused most of his energies into television, at a time when,

unlike now, it was the poor relation to cinema, produced some of the most memorable plays between the late seventies until his death in 1994, including amongst others: *Pennies from Heaven* (1978), *The Singing Detective* (1986) and *Lipstick on Your Collar* (1993). Writing in the introduction of *Potter on Potter* (1993), Graham Fuller states:

Where other writers have been constrained by the dramatic parameters of the 'here and now', Potter has trade-marked a number of bountiful and profoundly unsettling techniques for navigating the streams, tributaries, cross-currents and sewers that flow through his protagonists' minds. Challenging viewers' assumptions about what they are watching, he pioneered the fourth-wall-breaking, anti-theatrical techniques of non-naturalism' (1993: xv).

When Potter wrote the screenplay for *The Mayor of Casterbridge* for the BBC in 1978, he stated that when adapting, 'you have to stay true to the spirit – the spirit that you hear when you are reading a book, whatever it is that that triggers' (1993, p.71). He also said that 'if you're tackling something of that stature [Hardy] you feel some presence looking over your shoulder' (Potter cited in Pierce-Jones 2005, p.69). Potter's adaptation of this novel, given his liking for what he referred to as 'non-naturalism', mostly adhered to Hardy's source text and for that matter, in terms of the stories told in my series of scripts so do mine. Hardy has supplied the darkness and access to these near forgotten rural tales and I have developed the structure to put them in; adding in the final episode the details of the writer's death and subsequent funeral(s), which, considering they are factually correct, match the dark and surreal mood of the previous episodes.

Whilst I have been writing this I have not particularly felt the presence of Hardy over my shoulder, but the memory of some of Potter's work has never been far away. At the Edinburgh International Television Festival in August 1977, Potter presented a paper on 'Realism and Non-Naturalism' stating his approach to television drama:

The best non-naturalist drama, in its very structures disorientates the viewer smack in the middle of the orientation process which television perpetually uses. It disrupts the patterns that are endemic to television, and upsets or exposes the narrative styles of so many of the other allegedly non-fiction programmes. It shows the frame in the picture when most television is busy showing the picture in the frame. I think it is potentially the more valuable of the two approaches.

And it reminds the viewer, even as he lurches with a growl towards the off-button, that he is at least watching a play, *A Play, A Play . . .* (Potter, 1977, cited in Caughie 2000: 152, italics in original).

John Caughie discusses at some length Potter's use of the term 'non-naturalism', preferring to put his work into the category of 'modernist drama' (2000, p.173) others may well regard it, with its abundance of 'playfulness', as postmodern, but what is important here is not the particular genre Potter's work is slotted into, but its place in the history of British television drama. Potter constantly broke the 'fourth wall' with his innovative and experimental approach to narrative. Lez Cooke places his work as part of the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, when writers produced 'challenging, provocative, author-led drama' (2003, p.166) such as *Cathy Come Home* and *Boys from the Blackstuff*, giving 'audiences something they had not previously experienced' (2003, p.166). As to Potter's 1977 paper I can only comment that he produced the drama I like to watch and the type of drama I wish to write; quite simply because I enjoy doing both and believe that this type of self-reflexive drama, is capable of revealing far more about character than a more orthodox approach. In the case of my scripts for this series, the form they take with an Old and Young Hardy interacting provide the viewer with fresh insights into aspects of Hardy's character and life and showcase, free from the clichéd aspects of heritage and notions of rural idealism, his dark and lesser known interests and stories.

Hardy's time on television and in cinema had to wait for the new permissiveness of the 1960s. The freedoms gained since that time, in terms of what can be screened, has not, apart from Polanski's *Tess* and Winterbottom's *Jude*, been accompanied by markedly innovative productions. The adaptations have been tame, both in terms of the softening of Hardy's social critique on society and the form in which he often expressed that critique. Apart from the television series *Wessex Tales*, no acknowledgement has been made to his fascination with the supernatural and the irrational; yet the screening in 2016 of *The Living and the Dead* and *The Nightmare Worlds of H.G. Wells*, and the various appearances of M.R. James's work in 2017 and 2018, proves that there is an appetite by the public for such adaptations and productions. It is the heritage tag associated with Hardy and the accompanying finance, which has contributed to the present state of affairs. Unfortunately, Chapman is correct when he states that 'the American market represents a sort of

Holy Grail for British film and television producers' (2014, p.135). However, as I have demonstrated in my series of scripts, experimentation in empathy with both the form and content of aspects of Hardy's writing can still be entertaining and thought-provoking to an audience.

Conclusion

Andrew Higson notes the popularity of period films with ‘strong literary connections’ and believes that for the film industry adaptation of nineteenth-century literature seem in part a ‘marketing strategy, a way of producing a film that is in some significant way pre-sold’ (2011, p.137). Talking to Leigh Holmwood, for an article on *The Guardian* website, Andrew Davies made a similar point, stating that he felt: ‘fairly optimistic for the future of period drama because it’s just such a popular thing. People like bonnets. I don’t think you can underestimate that’ (Holmwood, 2009). Davies is of course quite correct, over the years the viewing public have responded enthusiastically to such drama and his adaptations in particular, right up to his well-rated 2015 serial *War and Peace*. Troost notes that the summer after Davies’s 1995 BBC serial *Pride and Prejudice* was aired ‘Lyme Park, the National Trust property that served as Pemberley was jammed with hundreds of paying visitors’ (2007, p.84) mostly those eager to see the pond where Darcy (Colin Firth) had taken off his clothes and dived in. This ‘invented scene’ as Troost refers to it, which gave birth to ‘Darcymania’, has now become iconic in the history of classic-novel adaptation and exemplifies viewers’ attraction to the genre. Although considered somewhat racy for this type of drama at the time, with scenes which show ‘Darcy’s smouldering passion for Elizabeth’ (2007, p.84), the series was absorbed into the heritage genre and marked another stage in its evolution and contemporisation.

The heritage industries that are built around canonical writers are huge and a visit to the Dorset tourism website (www.visit-dorset.com) in June of 2016, a year after the release of Thomas Vinterberg’s *Far from the Madding Crowd*, confirmed the strength of the Thomas Hardy brand and the value that is still placed on the writer’s endeavours in attracting people to the area. Admittedly, he did not have a presence on the front page, the only reference to film and television being in relation to ITV’s crime drama *Broadchurch* which is filmed in the area. A quick scan through the site however, indicates the locations used in the production (Mapperton House, Sherborne Abbey, Castleton Church and Abbey Close), gives clips of the film and access to a short video, made by Creative England and VisitEngland in which Anita Overland, the co-producer, talks about how the cast and crew loved filming in Dorset, the restaurants they ate in and the cottages in which they stayed.

The visitor to the website is also invited to download a leaflet outlining the ‘Hardy Trail’ which links together the locations where Hardy wrote, his cottage at Upper Bockhampton and his house at Max Gate Dorchester, and the towns and villages that featured in his writing and subsequent film and television adaptations.

The heritage industry surrounding Hardy offers a huge economic boost to the local area and the Dorset tourist board is only continuing the work that Hardy began, for the writer was never shy of expressing his delights of the Dorset, Wessex landscape. As I demonstrated in Chapter Four, screened adaptations of a writer’s work often redirects the viewers’ attention back to the original text and there are obvious benefits to this process. What I object to and have made apparent throughout this thesis and reiterate here in the conclusion, is the tameness with which filmed adaptations of Hardy’s work have been reduced to in order to comply with the heritage aesthetic of charm and rural nostalgia; the eerie has sadly been replaced by the dreary. The quest for global appeal and corresponding financial success has silenced both Hardy’s experiments with narrative and his admiration and fascination for the irrational. As I have shown in both my scripts and critical writing for this study, Hardy’s work is riddled with the folkloric elements, many of which concern the supernatural that he grew up with in nineteenth-century Dorset. These elements, his ‘heritage’, passed down orally through the ages, were deeply threatened by the rapid approach of urbanisation and industrialisation in the last half of the nineteenth century. Hardy was wishing to preserve the folkloric practices he had grown up with but aware of the speed of change. My work continues Hardy’s preservation process, recycling and adding to the narrative just as he did in his day; my scripts reawakening the dark tales from their imposed slumber, presenting them through my practice, to a twenty-first century television audience who have been continually fed on a repetitive diet of Hardyian adaptations comprised of pastoral romance and reassuring rural hokum.

The scripts appear to be timely as their completion coincides with a renewed interest in the genre of folk horror and the English eerie. The BBC screened four stories by M.R. James on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day 2017, as well as a Mark Gatiss documentary: *M. R. James: Ghost Writer*. Writing on the *Radio Times* website in December 2017, Allison Graham admitted to being ‘addicted to [the] adaptations of M.R. James tales’ and stating that she thought it a ‘perfect time to bring back the Christmas ghost story’ (Graham, 2017). The popularity of this genre,

particularly when it is screened over the Christmas period is well-documented, as Michael Newton has noted it was ‘Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* that sealed the bond between Christmas and the spooky’ (Newton, 2015). The fourth episode in my series ‘The Grave by the Handpost’, which begins with a group of carol singers on Christmas Eve, would seem to fit perfectly into this particular seasonal niche.

Much of the work of M.R. James is associated with the English landscape and the menace that lurks there and I characterise Hardy’s Egdon Heath as just such a landscape. As Hardy’s narrator comments in *The Return of the Native* ‘in the heath’s barrenness to the farmer lay its fertility to the historian’ (*The Return*: 66) and in that barely covered history lies arcane menace waiting for the opportunity to be released. Hardy made the ‘heath’ a space in which much of his supernatural folklore could be seen to be at play and I have accentuated its malevolent nature in my series. If *The Haunting of Mr Hardy* were to be screened, I feel its televisual presence would be the final ingredient in rendering a series of powerfully dark tales.

The stories told are placed in a narrative structure that acknowledges Hardy’s eagerness for experimentation with form, as outlined in Chapter Three, and his challenges to the dominant mode of realism that was in place at the time. From his first completed novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* with its subtitle: *A Story with no Plot: Containing some original verses* onwards, Hardy continued to challenge both in terms of content and in terms of form and in this thesis my practice pays homage to his endeavours with both. The structure I have adopted places the writer at the very centre of events both in terms of the stories being narrated and events leading up to his death in 1928 and of course a little beyond. They are delivered in scripts that have taken shape through the process of blurring fact with fantasy, biographical detail with creative conjecture and, like Thomas Hardy’s description of Wessex itself, the series occupies a space which is ‘partly real’ and very much ‘partly dream country’ (*Crowd*: 48).

I regard screen adaptations of written fiction as individual readings of the primary source and they are always of interest in seeing how a particular text has been reconfigured and recycled. The first stage in the production of a film taken from fiction is usually a script and the writer then has the opportunity to offer their ‘reading’ of the original text and how it is to be creatively interpreted. As Hutcheon states, ‘adaptation [...] is not slavish copying; it is a process of making the adapted material one’s own’ (2006, p. 20). To return briefly to the first adaptation of my

series ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’, little Carrie’s liking for the lullaby ‘Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star’ and her affection for the ‘skipping rope with red wooden handles’ were not taken from Hardy’s text. Like many other elements in my series they have been added as a further creative layer onto the original narrative; I have made the adaptations my own.

Baker, discussing scripts as artefacts of scholarly value, prefers the term ‘scriptwriting’ as opposed to ‘screenwriting’, the latter he believes, signaling wrongly that they are ‘only blue prints [...] seen as technical rather than creative documents’ (Baker, 2013). He likens scripts to architectural drawings ‘an illustration and set of instructions enabling the construction of the ‘true’ creation that is the finished building’ (Baker, 2013). He continues by saying that screenplays that fail to be published, ‘unproduced scripts’ are sometimes looked upon as ‘somehow amateur or unworthy’ (Baker, 2013). I am convinced that scripts of whatever form, screen or stage, used in the manner of practice-based enquiry, where the creative is coupled with the critical, can be of scholarly value. After all, as Kevin Alexander Boon points out, scholars in general: ‘approach Shakespeare’s plays as written documents, not performances. That is, the written play is privileged over its performance’ (2008, p.30). There is a lot of interest at present in screenplays, as the presence of the BBC’s *Writersroom* and various other online script sources prove; I hope this thesis prompts others to value scripts as scholarly and literary works in their own right and encourages further engagement in this area.

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Filmography

A Field in England (2013) Dir. Ben Wheatley, UK: Rook Films/ Film4.

A View from a Hill (2005) TV Movie. Dir. Luke Watson, UK: BBC.

A Warning to the Curious (1972) TV Movie. Dir. Lawrence Gordon Clark, UK: BBC.

Ashes to Ashes (2008-2010) TV series created by Ashley Pharoah and Mathew Graham. Dirs: Catherine Morshead, Jonny Campbell, David Drury, Billie Eltringham, Ben Bolt, Philip John, Jamie Payne and Alrick Riley, UK: BBC Wales/ Kudos Film and Television/ Monastic Productions.

Blood on Saturn's Claw (1973) Dir. Piers Haggard, UK: Tigon British Film Productions/ Chilton Films.

Boys from the Blackstuff (1982) TV mini-series created by Alan Bleasdale. Dir. Phillip Saville, UK: BBC.

Brideshead Revisited (1981) TV mini-series. Dirs. Charles Sturridge and Michael Lindsay-Hogg, UK: ITV Granada Television.

Cathy Come Home (1969) TV Drama. Dir. Ken Loach, UK: BBC.

Dickensian (2015/ 16) TV mini-series created by Tony Jordan. Dirs. Harry Bradbeer, Mark Brozel, Philippa Langdale and Andy Hay, UK: BBC/ Red Planet Productions.

Downton Abbey (2010-2015) TV series created by Julian Fellowes. Dirs. Brian Percival, David Evans, Philip John, Andy Goddard, Catherine Morshead, Minkie Spiro, Brian Kelly, Michael Engler, Ben Bolt, Ashley Pearce, James Strong, Jeremy Webb, Edward Hall and Jon East, UK/ US: ITV/ Carnival Films/ WGBH-TV/ NBCUniversal International Studios.

Far from the Madding Crowd (1967) Dir: John Schlesinger, UK/ US: Vic Films/ Appia/ MGM.

Far from the Madding Crowd (2015) Dir: Thomas Vinterberg, US: Fox Searchlight Pictures.

For those in Peril (2013) Dir: Paul Wright, UK: Warp X/ Warp Films/ Film 4.

Game of Thrones (2011-) TV series created by David Benioff and D.B. Weiss. Dirs. David Nutter, Alan Taylor, Alex Graves, Miguel Sapochnik, Mark Mylod, Jeremy Podeswa, Daniel Minahan, Alik Sakharov, Michelle MacLaren, Brian Kirk, David Benioff, D.B. Weiss, Timothy Van Patter, Neil Marshall, David Petrarca, Michael Slovis, Jack Bender, Daniel Sackheim and Matt Shakman, US/ UK: Home Box Office (HBO)/ Television 360/ Grok Studio/ Bighead Littlehead/ Generator Entertainment

Jude (1996) Dir: Michael Winterbottom, UK/ US: BBC/ Revolution/ Polygram.

Life on Mars (2006-2007) TV series created by Ashley Pharoah, Tony Jordan and Mathew Graham. Dirs. S.J. Clarkson, John Alexander, John McKay, Bharat Nalluri, Richard Clark and Andrew Gunn, UK: BBC/ Red Planet Pictures/ Kudos Film and Television.

Lost Hearts (1973) TV short. Dir. Lawrence Gordon Clark, UK: BBC.

Peaky Blinders (2013-) TV series created by Steven Knight. Dirs. Colm McCarthy, Tim Mielants, David Caffrey, Anthony Byrne, Otto Bathurst and Tom Harper, UK: BBC/ Caryn Mandabach Productions/ Tiger Aspect Productions.

Pride and Prejudice (1995) TV mini-series. Dir. Simon Langton, UK: BBC/ Chestermead.

Roald Dahl's Tales of the Unexpected (1979-1988) Dir: Graham Evans, John Gorrie, Alan Gibson, Herbert Wise, John Jacobs, Giles Foster, John Peyser, Bert Salzman, Peter Hammond, Robert Bennett, Claude Whatham, Ray Denton, Paul Annett, Simon Langton, Michael Tuchner, John Bruce, Philip Dudley, Alastair Reid, Barry Davies, Peter Duffell, Norman Lloyd, Leonard Lewis, Leo Penn, John Davies, Donald McWhinnie, Christopher Miles, Chris Lovett, Wendy Toye, Philip Leacock, Christopher Lukas, William Slater, Gordon Hessler, Gareth Davies and John Glenister, UK: ITV/ Anglia Television.

Taboo (2017) TV series created by Steven Knight and Chips Hardy. Dirs. Anders Engstrom and Kristoffer Nyholm, UK/ US: Hardy, Son and Baker/ Scott Free Productions.

Tess (1979) Dir. Roman Polanski, France/ UK: Renn Productions/ Societe Francaise de Production/ Timothy Burrill Productions.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1998) TV mini-series. Dir. Ian Sharp, UK/ US: LWT/ Arts and Entertainment Network.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles (2008) TV mini-series. Dir. David Blair, UK: BBC.

The Ash Tree (1975) TV short drama. Dir. Lawrence Gordon Clark, UK: BBC.

The Crown (2016 -) TV series. Dirs. Benjamin Caron, Philip Martin, Stephen Daldry, Julian Jarrold and Philippa Lowthorpe, UK: Left Bank Pictures/ Sony Pictures Television Production.

The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders (1996) Dir. David Atwood, UK/ US: ITV Granada/ WGBH.

The Handmaid's Tale (2017-) TV series created by Bruce Miller. Dirs. Mike Barker, Kari Skogland, Reed Morano, Kate Dennis, Floria Sigismondi, Jeremy Podeswa and Diana Reid, US: MGM Television.

The Living and the Dead (2016) TV mini-series. Dirs. Samuel Donovan and Alice Troughton, UK: BBC.

The Man who invented Christmas (2017) Dir: Bharat Nalluri, UK/ US/ India/ Canada: The Mob Film Company/ Ingenious Media/ Nelly Films/ Mazur Kaplan Company/ Parallel Films/ Rhombus Media.

The Mayor of Casterbridge (1978) TV mini-series. Dir: David Giles, UK: BBC.

The Night Manager (2016) TV mini-series. Dir: Susanne Bier, UK: BBC.

The Nightmare Worlds of HG Wells (2016) TV collection of stories. Dir. Adrian Shergold. *The Moth, The Late Mr Elvesham, The Purple Pileus* and *The Devotee of Art*. UK: Sky Arts/ Clerkenwell Films.

The Tractate Middoth (1975) TV Movie. Dir. Mark Gattiss. UK: BBC/ Panavision.

The Treasure of Abbott Thomas (1974) TV Movie. Dir. Lawrence Gordon Clark, UK: BBC.

The Wicker Man (1973) Dir. Robert Hardy, UK: British Lion Film Corporation.

Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native (1994) TV Movie. Dir: Jack Gold, US: Hallmark Hall of Fame.

Trainspotting (1996) Dir. Danny Boyle, UK: Channel Four Films/ Figment Films/ The Noel Gay Motion Picture Company.

1973 *Wessex Tales*. TV collection of stories: *The Withered Arm*. Dir: Desmond Davies. *Fellow Townsman*. Dir: Barry Davies. *A Tragedy of Two Ambitions*. Dir: Michael Tuchner. *An Imaginative Woman*. Dir: Gavin Millar. *The Melancholy Hussar*. Dir: Mike Newell. *Barbara of the House of Grebe*. Dir: David Hugh Jones, UK: BBC2.

Vanity Fair (1998) TV mini-series. Dir: Marc Mundan, UK/ US: BBC/ A & E Television Networks

Vanity Fair (2018) TV mini-series. Dirs. James Strong and Jonathan Entwistle, UK: ITV/ Mammoth Screen.

War and Piece (2016) TV mini-series. Dir. Tom Harper. UK: BBC/ Lookout Point Ltd.

The Witch (2015) Dir. Robert Eggers, US: Parts and Labor/ R T Features/ Rooks Nest Entertainment/ Code Red Productions/ Scythia Films/ Maiden Voyage Pictures/ Pulse Films/ Very Special Projects.

Witchfinder General (1968) Dir. Michael Reeves. UK/US: Tigon British Film Productions/ American International Productions.