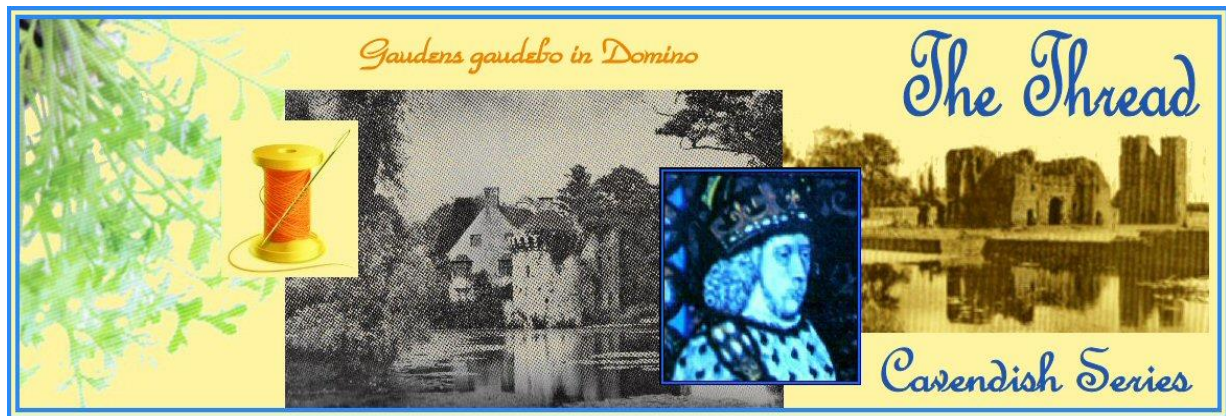




"You and your sisters! What lovely singing!"

With that, Cornelia hands over a reel of gold thread to surprised Marl Cavendish.
Five resourceful ladies forge several historical documents which will affect the outcome
of the Wars of the Roses.

The televisual interpretation of events is juxtaposed with the real course of the
adventure in this third in the "Cavendish" series.

This screenplay is the personal favourite of the Queensland Truckie's Mate.



ACT I

OPENING SCENES:"The Making of 'My Heritage'"

When one purchases a film on DVD, special extra features are often included, especially a "The-Making-Of ..." feature.

To this end, a cameraman (Dennis) roams about the film set, recording random scenes. Our film begins with some scenes which would later appear in "The Making Of My Heritage".

Dennis and his camera will appear regularly throughout the film.

"My Heritage" background:

Finsbury UK:TV with NetBearings Alliance have presented a multi-award-winning made-for-TV special hosted by Prince Charles related to the life of King Charles II. There were 2 previous episodes, each featuring a living member of some historical personage's family, along with graphic re-enactments of specific incidents from the historical life. Series name: **My Heritage**.

Cedron Dynnsflyte is the director of the next challenge: the life of **Sir Giles Cranthorpe**, who was a soldier of fortune at the time of the Wars of the Roses, and who assisted Richard Neville also known as the Earl of Warwick (The Kingmaker) behind the scenes. His living relative is **Jason Cranthorpe-Massey**, aged 34, unmarried. He is cultured, involved in international relations, tours Europe extensively and is on the "hot bachelors" top 10 list for the UK.

I, Scene i: "Where Is Your Master?"

The Yorkist nobles rehearse one of the scenes for episode #4 of "My Heritage". Dennis films this.

We will revisit this scene a few more times as it is rehearsed and then finally acted out.

In a large room in the studio. Several male actors of varying ages chat; they are dressed very casually. Brian starts the rehearsal.

Brian *pleasant but
organizing*

Right then, gents. Could I get you to line up roughly in two columns?

The boys do so.

Brian

Carl, I want you at the front to deliver your lines. Ben will need to come into this column closest to the camera. Can you swap with ... that's it. Good.

Now, I'm the camera here. So you'll walk forward, towards my right arm, and then past me, keeping these 2 columns more or less regular. This is **not** a march, it's just a stroll. However, you'll be strolling down a cramped corridor, so this will be the best way to go. I don't want anyone jostling, or hunching, or -- .

Okay. Okay. When I say "Go", you'll start off and keep going until I tell you to stop. That will be for your confrontation with Philip, Carl. That's where you'll all stop, so that Carl can address Philip.

And remember, you are haughty noblemen. You are in a group, and there is great strength in numbers, so every one of you must look self-assured and ready for action.

Vince and Gary are about the same height. Vince, you lean towards Gary and mutter something. And Gary will grin at what Vince says. The lip-readers will have a field day, I'm sure, so make it relevant to the scene.

Keith/Norfolk *shouts*

"What a lovely day for a rose fight, old boy".

Carl/Kent *fay* Or what about: "My codpiece is bigger than yours."

Ripple of laughter.

Brian Yes, anything non-controversial will be fine.

Gary/Hastings Brian, will we be wearing swords, or -- ?

Brian Yes, swords, daggers in the belt. You can check out your togs with Tizzy. It's all very rich costumes and swagger. I want loads of swagger. So, are we ready? Okay, go!

The boys wander forward. Brian acts as if he is a cameraman, slipping along backwards. The real cameraman is preparing.

Brian And stop! Marvellous! That's what I want. Those of you who had hands on hips, keep that in. That looked really great! Remember whom you stood behind, won't you? I want you all in just that formation. Wonderful!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene ii: Cedron's Office

We are now in Cedron's office, where some bookshelves are crammed with framed photos, books and media awards. Cedron stands in front of this interesting array, looking towards Dennis' roving camera.

Cedron *laughing* What do you want me to say?

Dennis *voice off* Tell us about the previous episodes. The awards for the show which was about Charles II and --

Cedron Ah, yes ... Charles II. Well, we won every major award in the entire universe for that one. It was blindingly successful.

Dennis *voice off* What made it work? How did you stage it?

Cedron We were very, very lucky to receive the Palace's blessing. Er, every assistance was given us, without which the thing just couldn't have worked. And ... His Royal Highness was interviewed and did the voice-over. Wonderful! That was very special to have such an august person, a celebrity if you like, attached to the show. Besides all of which, King Charles II himself led a totally fascinating life.

Dennis *voice off* The Royal Oak, his many mistresses --

Cedron All that! So we didn't have to beat about trying to find something interesting to say. I mean, the period before and after the Great Fire was an exciting one for England: the Royal Society, art, music, literature, architecture most especially. The show's format is to recreate some of the important events of the historical personage's life, introduced by his or her living relative, in a very sumptuous, glossy 90-minute show.

Dennis *voice off* And that was, I think, the third episode.

Cedron Yes, that's quite right.

Dennis *voice off* Preceded by --

Cedron Well, we did a lovely show on Sarah Churchill, the Duchess of Marlborough; and a very popular episode on Oliver Cromwell. Had a lot of facts in it not previously discussed.

Dennis *voice off* Right. So this latest offering is about --

Cedron *taking a framed picture of the Earl* Yes, the "My Heritage" series now turns its attentions to the Wars of the Roses.

This is a story, indirectly, about the Earl of Warwick, the so-called Kingmaker. He was a larger-than-life figure who has always commanded great interest. But, new evidence has come

to light, about three years ago, indicating that The Kingmaker was in fact ***guided*** by his very able lieutenant, Sir Giles Cranthorpe.

Now, Cranthorpe was a shadowy figure, almost a Secret Agent (we would call him now), and no-one seems to have known much about him. However, a collection of papers sent to the Earl by Giles Cranthorpe has been unearthed, and they indicate how vital this man's undercover activities were at a very pivotal time in our history. It's very exciting.

Dennis *voice off*

These papers were sent --

Cedron

Sorry to interrupt, Dennis, but I should have said "drafts". I mean, obviously the real papers would have been destroyed by the Earl upon receipt. What we found in fact were the drafts, which Sir Giles kept, for whatever reason.

Dennis *voice off*

Right. But ultimately the reports themselves found their way to the Earl to instruct him on how to act, one assumes?

Cedron

That's right. Yes, it's quite clear from the correspondence that Cranthorpe was charged with the task of appreciating the military and political situation. He would then presumably advise the Earl accordingly.

It has long been held that there was something missing which might help explain the Earl's seemingly incongruous actions around about .. ooh, 1469 to 1471? I need my history buffs to help me here. At any rate, these directives from Cranthorpe go a long way towards explaining the vagaries of the Earl's proceedings.

So, as I say, the Earl of Warwick, one of the most powerful barons in England in his day, depended heavily upon the advice of his main henchman, Sir Giles Cranthorpe.

Dennis *voice off* Your history buffs would be ...?

Cedron *sombre* Well, the examination of the Cranthorpe papers started off, very fortunately, with Professor Howard Danton, who sadly passed away just last year.

We do have a team of very able historians to carry on Danton's work.

[Laughs heartily]

Why don't you go and meet them, Dennis? "Cedron's Girls", we call them.

Dennis *voice off* Cedron's "harem", perhaps?

Cedron *chuckles* Well, if wishes were fishes ...

Dennis *voice off* Thank you, Cedron. That was great.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iii: A Filmed Interview In a Lounge room

This scene (highlighted in blue) is filmed professionally, not filmed with Dennis' camera.

The usual lounge room interview takes place with an attractive table lamp in the background. The ambience is subdued, with toned-down lighting. Marl Cavendish is very attractive in an angora jumper and pearls. Her hair is stylish and she appears to be well-groomed. In her early 30s, Marl speaks with an Australian accent but not unattractively. She is obviously on top of the subject matter, using her hands often while speaking.

Subtitle: Marl Cavendish, M. A. (Oxford) Research Fellow.

Throughout this interview, Marl's appearance is superimposed onto an ornate rendering of the Edward III family tree, to enable the audience to somehow follow the complications of this scenario.

Marl

Richard Neville (the Earl of Warwick) was closely related by blood to the royals and could easily have had a tilt at the crown himself. But it seems that he preferred to be the power behind the throne, running the kingdom via what he thought to be his puppet kings.

His father-in-law had tutored the young Henry VI, who took the throne as an infant upon the death of his father, the heroic Henry V. However, owing to irreconcilable differences between the boy-king's uncles and the Richard Nevilles (father and son), the Nevilles allied themselves to another branch of Edward III's many progeny: to Edward, the Yorkist claimant. The 16th Earl of Warwick, the so-called "Kingmaker" strove ceaselessly to dethrone Henry (who was considered an imbecile by most of the courtiers) and enthrone the young Edward in his stead. This was achieved in 1461, being cemented by the Yorkist victory at Towton.

When this alliance with the Yorkists later went sour (because King Edward had humiliated him on several fronts), Warwick simply switched sides and took up the Lancastrian cause again. In 1470, he returned Henry VI as King. At this point, Warwick held captive both Edward and Henry, and was truly the most powerful person in the realm. By whatever means, the former king Edward escaped to freedom and the chance to challenge once again for the throne of England. That challenge ultimately led to the Warwick's death in the Battle of Barnet in the following year.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iv: The Second "Where is your master?" Rehearsal

Revisit ACT I, Opening Scene "Where Is Your Master?"

The male actors are casually dressed and line up in 2 columns, side-by-side.

They swagger importantly as they move forward to actor Philip (playing a guard) who stands rigidly to attention. On reaching Philip, the actor Carl and the rest of the troupe stop.

Carl looks Philip over in sullen, almost insulting way and briskly asks: "Where is your Master?", to which Philip merely indicates with a head movement.

Carl looks over to a supposed courtyard, musingly. Then he and the men behind move off.

Filmed by Dennis. In the same large room in the studio as for first scene.

The Yorkist nobles are lined-up as was practised in the opening scene (having finished the walk and reached Philip). To the right of them, in a group, stand the male actors taking the parts of the Lancastrians. They work within a "moat" of chairs, signifying what will become a small stone-walled rose garden. The "John" actor stands in front of that group, legs astride in a confronting pose, slapping a gauntlet impatiently into his hand and onto his thigh. At the end of the Yorkist walk, Philip stands guard.

Brian

[To the Lancastrians]

Good, John Pearce. That's it. Nice hauteur.

[To the Yorkists]

Okay, so you've swanned up here, up to the entrance to the courtyard, and Carl you've said the "Where is your master?" speech to Philip.

Now, John and his crew are turned towards you. Carl, your gang moves forward, and this becomes the face-off.

Carl challenges John with the white rose. Now Carl, you reach over and grasp a white rose. Then offer it to John. Reach out to

him. Be forceful and challenging. Dare him to take it. So what's your line, again? What does Kent say?

Carl/Kent *loud, forceful, reaching out as instructed*

"Here I hold the white rose of York, my Lord Percy, symbolizing the true power of England".

Brian

Right! Then John: you try to stare Carl down. Very masculine.

Carl/Kent *sarcastic*
Titter of laughter.

Yes, roses are very macho this year, Brian.

Brian *grinning, ironic*

Well, old cock, it's all about symbolism. Stick with the program, will you.

Okay. Steve, if you can remember to always stand where you are now, you can easily reach back for a red rose. Then pass that to John. No, don't reach it forward, John. Rather, hold it to your chest. And you say ... what?

John/Sir Ralph Percy
talks fast

"The crown of England's God-given authority resides with the red rose of Lancaster, good Sir Knight."

Brian

Take your time with that speech, John. Don't rush it. Relax!

Excellent, lads, excellent! Tizzy, make sure that John's costume will allow that red rose to stand out, will you?

Tizzy *off-camera*

Brian, I was thinking of old gold for John Pearce.

Brian *smug and self-assured*

'Triffic.

Carl and John play about, pretending that the roses are swords. They indulge in a mock fencing match with the roses.

Brian *rueful*

Yes, well that will add to the sense of drama.

Everyone else chuckles, watching them.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene v: Archival Footage Of Professor Howard Danton

Archival footage (only 2.5 years old) of the late Professor Howard Danton.

He is seated at the big table at Deepdene, wearing white cotton gloves. And has been pouring over the Cranthorpe Letters. He is late middle-aged and twee.

Prof Danton *delighted*

Of course, I've spent all my adult life engorging the contents of the Paston Letters, which tell us so very much about the privations suffered during these baronial wars. We read about the lawlessness, the complete collapse of the legal system, and even of several attacks upon the Paston manor house itself. The members of the Paston family were prodigious and devoted correspondents indeed.

But these Cranthorpe fair copies are something else again. You know, this is not second- or third hand recounting of what was going forward in England. No, these papers actually call the shots. We can envisage Giles Cranthorpe setting out here his thoughts and decisions, and then copying them fresh and readable for the Earl of Warwick himself. And luckily, he kept these fair copies, to stash away later and they ended up hidden here at Deepdene Manor. Thank God!

To find ... to find something like this ... well, it's just ... you know ... it's earth-shattering. There's no other way to describe it.

And I'm the fortunate one who gets to decipher them. It's amazing. Totally amazing.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene vi: The Wooded Garden at Deepdene Manor

In a scenic wooded garden at Deepdene Manor stands Jason Cranthorpe-Massey wearing modern hunting gear, complete with a broken gun over his arm. He squints a little in the sunlight and smiles jovially into the camera.

Jason *into the camera* Hello. I'm Jason Cranthorpe-Massey, and I'm standing in the grounds of Deepdene Manor, in Sussex.

[Bursts into embarrassed laughter.]

Why am I standing here in my garden looking like a complete burk, Dennis?

Dennis *voice off* Because you look extremely gung-ho in the manner of a country squire, and because you're the lynchpin and star of this episode of "My Heritage". That's why.

Jason And shall I win armfuls of trophies like HRH, old boy?

Dennis *voice off chuckling wryly* Only if you believe in miracles.

Jason Well-spotted!

General laughter. The cameraman takes in all the mirth and wry comments.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene vii: A Helicopter Over Edgecote Moor

In the cockpit of a helicopter, some people do a reccy over Edgecote Moor. All voices here are "Helicopter" voices. It is difficult to make out what is said. There is a pilot, along with Dennis plus ever-present camera, Garth in the front seat and some other man.

Disembodied male voice What about the suitability of this field? Can we film here?

#1

Disembodied male voice Permits? Are we right for --

#2

Disembodied male voice Affirmative, we have obtained all the necessary permits. Over.

#3

The helicopter does a couple of sweeps of the potential field of battle.

Disembodied male voice The utility tents and vans and what-have-you could be set up in
#1 that area to the north, out of camera range. Are you getting this,
 Dennis?

Disembodied male voice That's affirmative. Over.

#3

Disembodied male voice Yes, there's oodles of room for the battle. I think the local
#2 historical group do a recreation every second year. We'll get
 them on board for advice ...

*The chopper lands, and we witness everyone piling out, hair flying as the rotors above spin
relentlessly. We follow Garth, who is **extremely** precious and strained. He is a perpetual worrier.*

As we follow him away from the chopper, he is immediately yakking on his mobile phone.

Garth No, it has to be Edgecote Moor. Yes, I'm here now. What?

 No. No can do. Well, you're quite right. Towton would make a
 much more splendid battle scene. But --

 No listen, Kal. Listen! Towton is not about Warwick, whereas
 Edgecote is **all** about him. This is the turning-point in the Wars,
 because ... well, because ... no, listen Kal! Edgecote Moor is
 Warwick's big win after he swaps sides. Yes!

 Excuse me a minute, will you?

[Frazzled, directly to the camera]

 Dennis, do you mind? I really can't --

Dennis *voice off* I'm so sorry, Garth. Switching off.

Camera snaps off.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene viii: Interview with the Armourer

Here we meet George Tisdale, the armourer.

A large furniture removal van has been converted into a smithy, where the armour and weaponry is on display. Camera pans over the array.

George's voice as we pan Hello all. Well, I'm George Tisdale, Armourer. That's a very glorious title. What I really do is to weld bits of metal together. The motto is: "Don't leave the garbage bin lids lying around, or George will turn them into breastplates!"

[Laughter]

I'm very lucky to be the husband of the Costumier, Tizzy Tisdale. My lovely wife. It's been a case of Tizzy and I working together because there was such a very fine line between armour and costume in those days of yore.

You can see all the gear laid out for ease of access, and being a van, we can travel to locations. The boys can just come into this van and collect whatever they need for the battle scenes.

There are shields over here, and armour. Chainmail suits in various sizes. The men who took part in the Wars of the Roses were either archers, or men-at-arms. The latter were mounted, as you'd imagine for knights-of-olde, but most dismounted so as to engage in hand-to-hand combat, with swords, daggers and

shields.

So these blokes just wore a lighter version of armour which allowed them to mount their steeds without aid. They weren't done-up in heavy suits of armour; you know, they didn't have to be craned into the saddle. That would have been laughable. They really did need to leap nimbly about in the heat of the battle.

Dennis *voice off*

How did it go? "And vaulted with such ease into his saddle". Henry IV. Part I, I think?

George

Ah, a Shakespearian, by my troth. Was it not "seat" rather than "saddle", Dennis?

Dennis *voice off*

Whatever ... You seem to be ready for a full-scale war, George.

George Tisdale *smiling
as he handles a sword*

Yes, I think we might have obtained a lot of this lumber from the garage sale held recently at a well-known rival studio.

Dennis *voice off*

Not counting what was nicked from that Henry VIII thing last year.

George *grins at the
camera*

Ah, so you know about that, do you?

General laughter.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene ix: Interview with the Armourer and His Wife, The Costumier

Both the armourer and his wife, Tizzy (the costumier), stand amongst a throng of onlookers during outdoor filming. A couple of actors appear here as models.

Tizzy We've designed the costumes to reflect the wealth and rank of the aristocracy. Only certain rankings wore ermine and fur, for instance. This was very rigidly enforced by the authorities.

George There aren't many poor folk in this show, are there, dear? So we don't have to costume the poor and needy.

Tizzy No, that's right. These were baronial, factional contests, and the actual battles themselves hardly affected the general community at all, except for the occasional inconvenience of having troops wandering about.

George *enthusiastic and attempting humour* I mean, there you'd be taking a sherry on your landing, and you'd spot a cohort of soldiers marching through your apple grove. And then, you'd hear the shouts from the men as they grappled each other. Later on, you'd be helping to patch up the wounded in your second-best parlour. And finally, off they'd shamble somewheres else. In the face of it, it was hardly a "war" at all; more a series of organized scuffles. But they did wear armour and manage to carry real weapons. There's that about it.

Tizzy And there was no clear division amongst the supporters. There was no such thing as "We're a Lancastrian family. You can't bring these York men in here!" It wasn't like that at all.

George Just like football fans. Mum followed Eastham and Dad followed Westham. You'd squabble about the various merits of your favoured side, but you'd not come to blows over your team.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene x: The Dress Rehearsal Of "Where Is Your Master"

Revisit ACT I, Opening Scene "Where Is Your Master?"

The male actors are now superbly costumed, lining up in two columns, side-by-side.

They swagger importantly as they move forward to actor Philip (playing a guard) who stands rigidly to attention. On reaching Philip, the actor Carl and the rest of the troupe stop.

Carl looks Philip over in sullen, almost insulting way and briskly asks: "Where is your Master?", to which Philip merely indicates with a head movement.

Carl looks over to a supposed courtyard, musingly. Then he and the men behind move into the courtyard, where await them actor John (playing a haughty nobleman) and his retinue. On Carl and his men arriving in the courtyard, there is a face-off.

Carl plucks and then extends a white rose aggressively to John: "Here I hold the white rose of York, my Lord Percy, symbolizing the true power of England".

John answers by plucking a red rose which he holds to his chest, saying: "The crown of England's God-given authority resides with the red rose of Lancaster, good Sir Knight."

All the men glare aggressively at those men on the other side, and all adopt postures suggestive of imminent sword-play.

In the studio, as before, we will re-do scenes 1 and then 4 (in continuum), as described above, such that we get a dress rehearsal under Brian's direction.

Brian shouts "Go" and then "Stop" and gives random directions to the actors. They walk through fairly well but there are extra people getting in the way and halting things. Tizzy and her seamstresses and George and some stagehands deal with the costumes, swords. Lighting people and sound people hover about.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xi: Real Time -- Marl Meets Tizzy in Her Lair

This is "real-time" and not filmed by Dennis.

The Wardrobe room, with Tizzy busy with costumes on dummies. She wears an overall with a pincushion strapped to her left wrist. Marl approaches. Tizzy is too busy to stop ... she converses with Marl as she continues to work.

Marl	Where's that mag?
Tizzy	The posh one?
Marl	Yeah. The girls and I are meeting "Darling", so we need to bone-up on him.
Tizzy <i>smiles</i>	Substitute "Britain's Most Eligible Bachelor" for "Darling", I suppose ...
Marl	Yeah. The man who's climbed the Hindu Kush, swum across the Yangtze River, surfed at Montanita, Ecuador and is a total jockstrap even in his sleep. Oh, and champion fencer, polo player and --
Tizzy <i>laughing</i>	Whereas you are a ... ?
Marl	Library-lizard. He's booked me in for a secluded lunch. Little does he know that I'm completely not his style of lady at all . Don't worry, I'll be gentle with him when I reveal my feet of clay ... So, that mag would be?
Tizzy <i>nods towards a messy table</i>	Yes ... It's over there.
Marl <i>spots the mag, grabs it</i>	Got it! Thanks. I'll bring it back.
Tizzy	No rush.
<i>Marl wanders out, flicking through the mag, when she recalls something. She retraces her steps.</i>	
Marl	Oh, and do we have a list of actresses and what costumes

they're wearing?

Tizzy Sure do! It's right here.

Marl Ah!

Tizzy *warningly* But you can't take it away. It's my Bible.

Marl Oh ... Is it okay if I look at it here, though?

Tizzy Sure!

Marl flips through the pages such that we are able to glimpse the superb female costumes designed and made by Tizzy. Marl looks perplexed.

Marl Tsk! She's not here.

Tizzy Who?

Marl Oh, this frumpy, frowsy old bird. I have absolutely no idea who she is. No, she's not old ... about mid 30s.

Tizzy *wryly* Definitely not old.

Marl She's about yay tall and a bit chunky.

Tizzy What does she wear?

Marl Grey. Something like a widow in half-mourning. A woollen shawl ... A little grey bonnet. She looks almost skint.

Tizzy *a bit uppity* Well, she wasn't dressed by me, darling. None of my ladies has anything even approaching grey, and they're all on the tall side.

Marl *screwing up her face* Hmmm ... next time I see her, I'll have to bring her to the ground with a flying rugby tackle. I must find out her hidden agenda.

Tizzy Why? What's it all about?

Marl I've been accosted by her **twice** now and it's always the same line. "You and your sisters! What lovely singing!" Then she flits off.

Tizzy I didn't know you had any sisters.

Marl That's just the point! I don't have sisters, only brothers. And I don't sing. Oh! and she calls me "Winnie".

Tizzy *stops work to stare at her* **Winnie!?**

Marl I know! Isn't it bizarre? Thanks for the mag.

[Leaves, waving the mag as Tizzy shakes head]

Ooroo!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xii: Pentecost Abbey, Home Of The Cavendish Family

In this scene, Marl calls upon her grandfather, Geoffrey Bevan, Lord Cavendish. We have met Geoffrey as a lad in the first film ("Hastings") and as a grown man in the second film ("George and John").

Geoffrey Bevan, in his 90s sits in a conservatory, waited on by one of his many relatives: Beatrice (Beattie), his half-sister, whom we first met as a delightful three-year-old in "Hastings". Marl, smiling enchantingly, is ushered in. She kisses her grandfather's cheek upon arrival. The music is mysterious, rising as Lord Cavendish reveals his secret.

Beattie *voice off* Here she is!

[Aside to Marl]

You won't tire him, will you?

Marl Hello, Grandpa! How is Lord Cavendish today? Still waiting for that letter from the Queen, are we?

Geoffrey *thrilled to see* I'll get to 100 to spite them all. Is Beattie there? What about a

his granddaughter cup of tea?

[For Marl's ears alone]

Get rid of these people, will you? I want a private word with you.

Marl *confused* Er ... Yes, okay. What is it, Gramps?

Geoffrey *fretful* Beattie told me recently that you're investigating Warwick for some TV drama. Is that so, little Marl?

Marl Yes, I --

Geoffrey *must get his words out* Warwick! He was the one who foisted first this king and then that king onto the throne of England. Wars of the Roses ...

Marl *wondering* Mmm, hmmm ...

Geoffrey There was a prophecy, made years ago, in the late 1920's. The others have all gone: Len, Belfry, Treacle ... what was his name, now? Cedric! and our George, Professor Howard Danton's father. That great gouge in George's arm was never made in a road accident, my dear. Not a bicycle at all, but a Saxon fighting axe. Lucky to have any arm left, I said at the time.

Marl *absorbed* Saxon fighting axe?

Geoffrey The year was 1066 ... We were there, the five of us. All there ...

And your aunt Nerine, my half-sister and Beatie's sister, who has lived in Australia since her marriage. You know her.

Marl Sure. When I'm in Oz, I see Auntie Nerry quite a bit. She's lovely.

Geoffrey Did she ever tell you what happened to her? Mention King John in her presence and watch her blench.

Now it is your turn, little Marl. Tell me, has anyone tried to hand you some object? A drink? Or, "Smell these flowers"? That sort of thing ... No? Anything strange ... ghosts, or ... a small book which you are asked to read, perhaps?

Marl *laughs* What an imagination you have, Grandpa! You could hire yourself out as a --

[Stops as if shot]

 Oooh, wait a tick ... there **is** a funny little woman who's stalking me. Well, stalking is a very strong term for it. She's dressed in old-fashioned garb. No-one knows who she is. And I'm sure she has a hidden agenda.

Geoffrey *lighting up, grabs her wrist* It's happening ...

Marl And "it" would be ... ?

Geoffrey You must be brave, now, girly. You must **never** give up hope.

Marl *patting his hands* I'm always very positive, you know that.

Geoffrey Because I can't ever leave this mortal place until **you** go back.

Marl *surprised* To Australia?

Geoffrey *frustrated by his failing memory* To the Civil Wars. Not Oliver Cromwell and the Ironsides ... er, no. I mean Roundheads. No, Warwick's wars.

Marl *leans closer, whispers* Are you saying that I'll be going back to the Wars of the Roses? For real?

Geoffrey *nods and whispers* History relies on you, and you have to be brave, my dear.

Marl sits back, staring open-mouthed at her grandfather.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xiii: The Finsbury UK:TV Studio

Jodie and Marl are back at the studio, grabbing some stuff. There are loads of other people still working. Jodie turns to leave.

Jodie 'Bye. See you in the morning.

Marl Ooroo. See you then.

Jodie Marly, you've been in the UK long enough now to drop the colonial crap and say "Toorah" as we do.

Marl *laughs and puts on Strine accent* Bite yer bum, sis!

Jodie leaves, and a couple of seconds later, a young man sticks his head around the architrave.

Jack Um, we're all leaving soon. Will you be needing a taxi or --

Marl No, Jack. But thanks for asking.

Jack You sure, now?

Marl *utterly patient* My bedsit is about two and a half streets away. Less than ten minutes' walk and I'm home. So I'm okay. It was really sweet of you to ask, though.

Jack *pressing* I could walk you to your door.

Marl *firm* It's okay. I'm fine. *[With finality]* Thanks.

Jack meanders off, whilst Marl turns off lights and closes down her little area. Then, in the dim half-light she reaches back for something, groping along the desk. She grabs a diary or some such thing and turns.

Shockwaves: Cornelia is awaiting Marl.

Cornelia *red-faced and utterly brimming with pleasure* Dear Withie! Such beautiful singing! You and your sisters can lift the heart, indeed you can. Oh, but! Here is Marj's reel of gold thread. She meant to give it to you yesternight but forgot.

[Puts the reel of thread into Marl's hand]

For your tapestry. Toodle-bye and Goodnight!

Marl *follows*

No, no no no no no – wait, wait wait wait. Hang on! Where are you going? I want to talk to you.

END OF SCENE

ACT I INTERSCENE: Shifting From The Studio To 15th Century [Mid-April 1469]

The corridor becomes a very dark passageway in an old stone building, Deepdene Lodge.

We can just make out Cornelia flitting along ahead of a running Marl. The music is racy and exciting.

SEGUE INTO NEXT SCENE

I, Scene xiv: Deepdene Manor, Mid-April 1469. Night Time.

The same actress who plays Marl also plays Withie.

The same actor who plays Jason also plays Cranthorpe.

Marl, now in her character and costume as Withie, lurches out into the courtyard, barely lit by flaming torches. There is a bustle. William and Peter stand at the back of the dray. Cornelia hovers about nearby, clucking, wringing her hands and looking worried. In her grasp are the reins of the saddled war steed belonging to our hero (who is lying in the back of the dray, mortally wounded). During this scene, the truculent Peter nods solemnly in agreement with Sir William. A couple of dogs (Clan and Rufus) romp about.

Withie *rushing up,*

Dadda! Thank God you've come!

breathless There are men ... archers ... they've erected tents and what have you in Landgate's lower fields. I hear them roistering at night.

 Why, what d'you have here?

William *working with* Help us, Withie. This bonnie lad weighs a ton.

Peter to lift the large

man out of the dray

Withie *horrified* But ... What on Earth is this? You cannot ... Lucy is about to give birth. All the family is here for one reason or another. We can't possibly have this corpse in the house!

William He lives. But only just.

Withie It is impossible, Dadda. You must see that.

William You'll nurse him, Withie.

Withie Who is he?

William *nods towards* I've no idea. Clearly a gentleman, judging by the noble steed

the horse from which he was unseated by his brutal attackers.

Withie But you can't bring him here, with all this soldiery prowling about.

William Two scoundrels have tried to murder this poor soul.

Withie But --

William *reasoning with* Withie, you're quite right to be anxious about the troops nearby.

her And we certainly don't want to raise any suspicions. But until we know what this is all about --

Withie Yes, but --

William Thank God for Lucy's impending delivery. All the household will be taken up with *that* and not spare a thought for our doings. You won't mind bandaging him and applying poultices, will you? I suppose you've seen a naked man before?

Withie *affronted* When would I have ever seen a naked man, Dadda?

William No? Oh, well, I suppose ...

Withie *conceding the lost battle* It's alright. I'll manage. Needs must that the Devil drives.

William Am I the Devil in your eyes?

Withie No, old thing. How could you be? But with the house full of women ... To bring a dying soldier into our midst ... Men-at-arms lurking about ... Pardon my frankness, but I'm just pointing out that it's not very sensible of you.

William *realization hits him* Tut! Tut! This is no time for any rational thought, my daughter. This man dies whilst we argue the point. Lord only knows how much I bashed him about dragging him up into the dray in my haste. Come Peter! We must somehow get the poor creature upstairs. Withie, lead the way, if you will.

[Grunting]

Withie *urgent to Cornelia* Cornelia, do you stow his horse out of sight. I'll come down to you in a trice so that we can stable it as --

William *gritting teeth* I'll deal with that! Come along, girl!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xv: The Narrow Staircase at Deepdene Manor

William Venervels and his servant Peter are almost collapsing as they carry the unconscious Giles up the narrow stairs. They make it to the landing, below the dimly lit passage. Withie opens the door as the men shuffle into the gloom, puffing noisily. Giles moans.

Withie *whispers loudly* Oh, Lord! Keep him quiet, do!
Peter *can hardly speak* In with him then, Mistress Withie.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xvi: The Landing

William is on the landing, leaning back, still breathless. Withie leaves the bedroom.

William Still in the land of the living, is he?
Withie By our Lord's grace he is. The steed?
William Yes, Cornelia has hidden it in the under croft. No-one will think to look for it there, save for some nosey manservant.
Withie *thinking* Do we have such?
William We have **lazy** manservants (apart from Peter that is). I should think that that will serve. And Cornelia's coming and going to feed it and tend to it will raise no suspicions.
Withie True. She is ever here and everywhere, that one.
William *wipes forehead and pauses* D'you know, Withie, that the perpetrators of this heinous crime made off just as I reached the scene. So it is possible – **just possible!** – that these would-be murderers believe they have successfully dispatched their victim in all good faith. That then must follow that they will not seek him out to finish-off the job.
Withie If they **do** visit us, you can tell them from me that they can save their efforts in that regard, for your lame duck won't greet the morning.
William That bad, eh? But you've tended to his wounds?

Withie Aye. As much as could be done has been done. But our best course now is through prayer, I should imagine.

William *nodding* He is in God's hands, I grant you.

This must be kept a close secret, Withie, until we can discover who this man is and what lies behind the attempted slaughter.

Withie Well said.

William He muttered something unintelligible as I hauled him from his erstwhile watery grave. I couldn't tell what. But he may stir and say more: his name perchance. You and Peter must be attentive. Write down whatever he says, even if it makes no sense. Meanwhile, I'll have to keep an ear open for any nobleman or soldier of fortune who may be missing. For he is a gentleman, no doubt of that. Over two yards tall, I should say, and well-muscled. A game lad, I'll warrant.

Withie *wryly* And heavy when dripping wet.

William He is that, yes!

Withie I would not for all the world drag our menfolk into this, Dadda. If you and Peter can keep mum in front of the males, then all the better. But one of our *ladies* may know his name.

William Do you think –

Withie *shrugs* It's worth a try.

William *nods* Very well.

They stop. There is a fearful cry from a woman somewhere in the lodge.

Withie *alert* Lucy! She is in her time. Go you, Dadda, and make sure that all the women and servants are situated in *that* part of the house. That will leave Peter and myself free to attend to the carcase undisturbed.

William heads off up the remaining stairs into the passageway, and Withie slips back into the bedroom.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xvii : In the Bedroom Where Lies "The Corpse".

The bedroom is very gloomy. Only a few candles are seen, so the light is poor.

A very tired Withie stands over her patient, with Peter in attendance. The girl sighs, mopping her brow, hair wildly askew. More horrible yells from the far-off Lucy. A baby's cry is heard. Withie and Peter smile at each other.

Peter *crossing himself* I pray that Mistress Lucy is delivered safe, ma'am.

Withie *crossing herself* Aye. Safe indeed. And a lovely, healthy baby to nestle at her breast.

We should kneel in prayer, both of us.

As they begin to sink to the floor to pray, they are shocked and stunned by Cranthorpe's unexpected outburst.

Cranthorpe *with a* Featherbridge at noon --
startled jerk and moan

Withie and Peter are alarmed. Then Cranthorpe subsides back into slumber.

Withie *recovering her* I must write that down for Father. "Featherbridge at noon!" Is
wits not that what he said?

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xviii: In the Bedroom Wherein Lies "The Corpse"

On the following night in the darkened sick room, we find Peter nervously watching over Giles Cranthorpe. Withie carries on high a branch of candles, and beside her, Marjorie hovers in the doorway, looking reluctant.

Peter Oh, lawks, Mistress Marjorie! He's like to die, poor soul, sure as not!

Marj *ignoring Peter* Fo! I wholly detest the sickroom. I believe that I'll have to excuse myself from this undertaking, my dear. All too ghastly.

Withie *cross* It's NOT a sickroom.

Marj It smells like one. Where is my nosegay? I fear I'm going to catch something nasty.

Withie The man is dying from his mortal wounds, not from any disease. Just go up to the bed, Marj, look at his face, and see if you can recognize him.

Withie pushes her sister forward. Marj is disgusted as she holds her hankie to her face.

Marj *uninterested and flat* No. I don't have a clue who this wretched man is.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xix: In the Bedroom Wherein Lies "The Corpse"

The darkened sick room with Peter nervously watching over Giles Cranthorpe. Withie carries on high a branch of candles, and beside her, Mary hovers in the doorway, clinging to Withie, and looking scared.

Peter Oh Mistress Withie, I don't –

Withie Shut up, Peter!

Withie pushes Mary forward. She is terrified and still clings to Withie.

Mary The poor dear gentleman. Who could want to commit such a dreadful deed?

Withie Never mind that now. Just try and recall where you've seen him before, if you have. Go up closer. He can't bite you. As far as I can see, God's called him to His side and he's just about to leave us to travel on to the other place.

Both Peter and Mary shudder, crossing themselves.

Mary *whispers* What a lovely, peaceful face. So handsome ... But I'm so sorry. I think that we may be too late ...

Withie *stoic* Either way, we still have to identify him. Surely, we need to advise his relatives and friends.

Mary simply shakes her head, despondently.

Withie *to Peter* Has my step-mother viewed the body yet? Perhaps ...

Mary I'd bring Cornelia in, dear Withie, if I were you. You know her way of nosing-out everyone's business and being ahead of the wind ---

Withie *snaps fingers and thumb* Of course! Cornelia! Why I didn't I think of her? She'll be nursing Lucy, won't she? What a genius you are, Mary! I'll fetch her straight away.

Mary *blushing* Oh, well ... as to that ...

Withie thrusts the branch of candles at the startled Peter, and dashes from the room.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xx: The Carcase Is Identified By Lucy

Withie pulls up short. There is a party of three people almost at the sickroom door.

William (holding another branch of candles) has brought Lucy to the room; she leans on her father and cousin Cornelia, smiling bravely.

Withie *horrified* Oh fie! For shame, Dadda. Lucy cannot leave her room ... she must stay put in bed for the lying-in.

William Now, now! She would come –

Withie But it's not to be thought of –

Cornelia It's only for a minute, my love! She's stretching her legs, is all.

Lucy *being very brave* Withie! You couldn't keep me away. I love a good adventure, you know that! And I had a marvellous birth. No pain to speak of. Where is this mystery man, then? Where have you hidden him?

Withie He's here. Father, support her! And you too, Cornelia.

They enter the room. So now there are two branches of candles, and seven people: Giles Cranthorpe, Mary, Peter, Withie, William, Lucy and Cornelia, all crammed into this tiny room. Everyone except Giles creeps up towards the bed. Peter and William hold up their branches of candles over the bed.

William *sighs heavily* I was sure that he would not survive last night. Those deadly wounds. But, as you see, he still breathes, thanks to our dearest Withie.

Withie Aye. What a task you set me! But I've done the best I can to patch him up.

[To Lucy]

Well?

Marvellous "something-will-happen" music. The occupants of the room (save for Giles) lean forward, with faces gazing down at the patient: concern, doubt, curiosity.

Lucy *slowly* Yes ... I've seen him before. Yes ...

Withie *eager, keen* Who? Who is he?

Cornelia *frowning* Now, was he not ...?

Lucy *thinking aloud* Something to do with Richard Neville, I fancy. Neville dined with us, in great state not long since. 'Twas a strange night, with gauze-clouds racing over a waxing moon. I could not forget. And **this** man came up to the house but would not permit himself to be admitted.

Cornelia *pleased* I wondered if I hadn't spied that magnificent gelding before! Now I remember!

Withie *excited* Oh, Cornelia, tell me at once! Who is he?

Cornelia *thrillingly* He hovered outside, in the shadows of the dappled moonlight, holding his steed's bridle. And nobody but the Great Man might approach him or speak to him.

Withie *in wonder* "The Great Man?"

William Neville, of course. Earl of Warwick, ye know.

Lucy Yes. Yes. And Cornelia ... You are in the right. The Earl of Warwick must go to him ... He called him ... Oh, what was it? I caught a clear glimpse of this gentleman's face as he wound off his mufflers to speak to Warwick.

Cornelia *thrillingly* Yes, yes, I remember. 'Twas ...

Lucy And as he spoke, the Earl called him ...

Withie *impatient* **What** did he call him?

Cornelia *wringing her hands* He came to give some direction to the Earl, you understand.

Lucy And that very noble man was forced to leave the dining table in order to come out to him, as this man refused to come inside

and be recognized. Of course! I do remember it quite well.

Cornelia And he spoke to Neville, at length. Then this gentleman vaulted up into the saddle and rode off at speed.

Lucy Oh, drat! What on Earth was his name?

Withie *aghast* Can't you remember?

Long pause. The camera looks at one anxious face after the other, and then at Giles.

Cornelia Craghead? Cragford? Cra - something

Withie Who?

William Not "Giles Cranthorpe"?

Cornelia Oh, yes! That's it! ***That's it!***

Lucy *firm, assertive* Aye! Sir Giles Cranthorpe. The very name! This is he, certainly.

William *realization dawns* The Earl of Warwick's eyes and ears.

Withie Richard Neville's spy?

William More than that.

Withie And would that account for his being murdered?

William *grins at Withie* He's not yet dead.

Withie Uh! Close enough.

Lucy Secrets, attempted murder and assorted machinations – all too thrilling! Dears, I must return to my bed. I'm utterly exhausted. But the name is correct: Sir Giles Cranthorpe, Warwick's right-hand man.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xxi: Lucy's Lying-In Room, Three Days After Giles Arrives

In the lying-in-room, the women are assembled, but Withie paces about, nibbling her fingertips. In the room are: Rosena, Withie, Marj, Mary, Cornelia. Lucy is propped up in bed breast-feeding her baby. An old deaf nurse sleeps on a chair in the corner near the bed. Marj's two children can be heard scampering about in the passage with their grandfather, William.

Rain falls over a Spring countryside. At a small dormer window, Withie stops her pacing, looking out: a little despondent, thoughtful.

Marj Dadda is playing with the bairns, I hear. Too wet to take them outside.

What is it, Withie? Has your patient finally gone to God's tender mercy?

Withie *not much caring* Not yet.

Marj Withie, sit down and rest. You've hardly slept for the past three nights.

Lucy What's that? You mean The Corpse survived three nights, did he? Well done!

Withie Just.

Mary Ah, he owes his continued existence to your ministrations, dear Withie. What a virtuous saint you are, indeed!

Rosena *puzzled* Patient? Of whom do you speak?

Marj Father has dragged home a lame duck, dear Rosena, and given him to our Withie to mind and care for. Don't stir yourself, now.

Rosena *alarmed* Goodness! Why, I knew nothing of this ...

Withie Don't fret. It won't be a long stint.

Rosena *wanting to be busy* But ... I'd better see what can be done. Where have they put him?

Withie *yawning* In that small dormer at to the very top of the first stairs. He was too heavy to carry any further. But you'd better knock before you barge in. Peter is bed-bathing him now, and Heaven knows what else. Which is why you find me here.

Rosena *clucking* What a business! This is unheard of; a stranger hidden in our house at these times. What can your father have been thinking?

Withie *calming* It's alright, Rosena. I vouchsafe that he is a gentleman. 'Tis a goodly Christian knight that is your unbidden guest, you know.

Rosena Well ... it makes it no better ... Such goings-on ... I'll converse with Peter. What a thing to happen at a time like this!

Rosena flies from the room. All the remaining women (save for the nurse, who dozes on) smile at each other.

Mary She worries constantly that she'll have soldiers encamped at the gates.

Cornelia They're already close enough for me, I thank you.

Lucy You'd better go with her, Withie, in the interests of fair play.

Withie Oh, she's alright. It'll give her something to do, clucking over our titled visitor. No, I wanted to tell you about this ...

[Fishes a folded parchment from her pocket]

This was on "The Corpse's" person. I've dried it at the fireside, and only a couple of the words are smudged beyond recognition. ... It's ... it makes very interesting reading, though it's a bit muddled ...

Withie hands the parchment to Marj, who scrutinizes it closely. Cornelia looks over her shoulder.

Marj *looking up at Withie* This was meant for Warwick, do you think?

Withie Of course. There can be no other explanation. If Cranthorpe is his spy, then this will no doubt prove to be his report to his boss.

Cornelia Pardon me, but if Cranthorpe has been out of the world for three days, won't the Earl of Warwick be waiting for news, and fear some mischance?

Mary You know, we could send Peter to the Earl, with this letter, and tell him that his minion is lying mortally wounded at Deepdene Lodge.

Withie That's probably our best plan. For sure, they can come to collect him and take him off our hands.

Cornelia Unless it was the Earl's own creatures who tried to kill brave Sir Giles?

Withie *annoyed* Oh, that's hardly likely, is it?

Lucy We're very much in the dark, here. What to do? Do we send on the paper to indicate that he lives, or not send it to pretend that he is dead?

Marj And one ought to advise his kinsfolk of his whereabouts and condition.

Withie *reasonably* If he's a secretive spy, then they would never know where he is from one day's end to the next, now would they?

Lucy *musingly* Pity that "The Corpse" hasn't said anything.

Withie Oh but he has! He blurted out "Featherbridge at noon" just as your babe was taking her first breath.

Cornelia How odd ...

Lucy That's fairly worthy of note.

Mary What can it mean?

Marj Probably organizing to meet someone or other at Featherbridge at noon.

Withie *laughing* Fie, what a very scholar you are, to be sure!

Lucy Oh tush! *[shouts very loudly]* Nurse! Wake up! Nurse!

[aside] Deaf as a fencepost.

[very loudly] Here, take away the infant, do. I'm finished feeding it now.

Cornelia You should say "her" and not "it", Lucy.

Lucy Do hand over the letter, Marj. I'm a whizz with cryptic puzzles.

Withie *brightening* It just occurred to me! What a dunce I am. You do realize, don't you, that we could send the Featherbridge party off somewhere else? If we were to change this letter, and forward it on, we might redirect the flock.

Marj That's right. So we could! Mary, you were always a dab hand at copying other's people's work; paintings and so forth. Are you a forger, too?

Lucy *suspicious* What are you thinking?

Marj It's just that our dear Mary could re-write this report in Craghook's hand to deliver an entirely different message. That's what I'm thinking. As Withie points out, we might compose a similar, but different letter, and send it on through the offices of Peter or some such trusted servant, as if "The Corpse" had managed it from his deathbed.

But first of all, Mary will have to copy it out faithfully onto a clean sheet of parchment in "The Corpse's" hand.

Mary *thrillingly* Dare I?

Marj *self-satisfied and smug* If nothing else, we might remove these damned troops from our midst. Move them onto Lancashire or somewhere.

Withie Is this Yorkist Cranthorpe really of such importance that his word moves Lancastrian armies?

Lucy closely perusing the letter and not raising her eyes from it Oh, indeed yes! He's pretty senior. I trow that Warwick hardly takes a step out of bed without his having Giles Cranthorpe's intelligence to hand.

Withie excited Then let's do it!

Lucy absently Do we count Father in, as a member of our cabal?

Mary who has moved to the bed beside Lucy in order to write Not for all the pine cones in the forest. This must be kept a very close secret from the men, for if our Harvey should hear of it --

Withie ironic Does he ever take notice of anything other than his own particular interests?

Lucy reads as Mary writes when instructed "Bailiff", "Seneschal" and "Marshall". Those are obviously *noms de guerre*. Oh, what fun! This likes me very well, and I like it!

He waffles on about the troop build-up in Sussex. It worries him, I think. So we'll leave that in, but embroider it by adding that Seneschal (I'm assuming that's GC's codename for himself) advises luring the Red brigades north. They should hive off towards ... where? Um, Oxford! Of course!

And we'll politely inform our gracious Bailiff (that'll be Warwick's pseudonym) that we met "Featherbridge" at noon, as promised. All is well in that quarter.

Lucy is triumphant with her handiwork.

Mary Will it do?

Mary stands up in order to copy the whole report. Then Lucy gets an idea.

Lucy thinking eager Stay, Mary, stay! Let us not rush to lose the chance which we have been awarded here.

This close friend to the Earl of Warwick has been pitch-forked onto our doorstep by foul means. Was it fortuitous? Or hand of

God?

[The others all cross themselves and bow their heads.]

Let's just take advantage of our piece of luck. Since the Earl is miserably watching that silly boy who once-that-was the Earl of March ruin our country, let us offer him (under the guise of the Corpse) a *coup*.

Marj, what would provide the biggest sensation at court, do you think?

Marj If Neville were to punch Crownhead in the nose. He deserves it.

Lucy Something more sinister and treacherous ...

Mary *shocked* You're not suggesting regicide, I hope.

Cornelia 'Twere me, I'd have a laugh at the King's expense. Something about brides. For His Majesty's inappropriate marriage to that Woodville girl was what turned the Earl sour on the King in the first place.

Lucy *exultant* Precisely! Marriage!

What is the name of the Earl's daughter's again?

Withie Isabel. But whom do you propose she marry?

Cornelia *shrewdly* The brother ... the King's brother ... that's what you intend, isn't it?

Lucy *grinning* Mary, add this into our report, just after we allude to dear old Featherbridge, whomever he is.

"Methinks that I see a wedding band in the fingers of Tippy. He watches the glint of gold winking in the light. And then he places that ring on the finger of the young flower of the Bailiff. Pleasant dreams."

Withie And Tippy is?

Marj Clarendon, of course, the King's younger brother.

Withie I thought that he was Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

Marj *knowledgeable* No, Richard's the youngest. This one's the middle one and nicknamed "Tippy" for his complete lack of sobriety.

Lucy There! Just the right official and manly tone, Mary. Too easy. What does Peter say? "Money for jam".

Mary *while still writing carefully* Will anyone understand our intention?

Mary makes the final adjustments, then moves over to the writing table to copy it out properly.

Marj Lucy! I trust that you are not seeking to model your mode of speech on the servant's conversational gambit, dear sister. That would be just a tad too demeaning.

Withie *bracingly* There's nothing wrong with Peter. He's a good, solid man. And trustworthy to a fault.

Mary *as she writes* We'd better hang onto this original, just in case.

Cornelia Are we expecting difficulties?

Withie *ignoring Cornelia's concerns* So, when Mary finishes her copying, Peter's to deliver this, disguised as the Carcase, and obviously riding the roan gelding.

But where? And to whom?

Marj *grinning smugly* I know just the very gentleman to receive this!

END OF SCENE

ACT I INTERSCENE: Shifting Back From 15th Century To The Studio

We are back in the studio. Lena speaks into Dennis' camera. As she is walking, Dennis must walk backwards. We actually get to see both Dennis from behind, and also what he sees through his camera.

Lena Now pay attention. Questions will be asked.

Dennis Gotcha!

Lena In what is known as the Readeption of Henry VI, the Lancastrians briefly ruled England in 1470. Edward buzzed off to Burgundy. He conned them into providing him with an army to win back the realm. But to avoid complications, he told everyone that he merely wanted to reclaim his dukedom. Darling old Bolingbroke had used that ploy previously and look where that got him!

So there's the Earl of March (aka Edward) back in league with Malmsey-butt Clarence and a small force, marching to London if you please. Due to a lack of diligence on Warwick's part, Edward was able to capture the King (Henry) and imprison him.

Warwick was killed as we know at Barnet, and then followed the Battle of Tewkesbury ... both in 1471. Henry's son was killed, and then fell Henry himself, either by fair means or foul.

Funnily enough, Clarence and the youngest brother Richard (famous as the Hunchback) both married Warwick's daughters.

Okay, so --

From somewhere off, Jack gives an urgent shout. Dennis is no longer filming ... this is "real-time" film now.

Jack *shouting, anxious* Hey! Marl's passed out here. Does anyone know First Aid?

Everyone rushes over. Marl (for whatever reason) has collapsed. She is lying peacefully asleep in the studio just where she met Cornelia on the previous evening. Apparently, she has stayed like that

overnight and all morning. Gasps of distress and concern are heard all around. Note that in her hand is still clasped the reel of gold thread.

Lena, Jodie and Sarah squat down beside her, and are trying to revive her.

Lena My God! What can have happened?

Jodie She's ... I'm pretty sure that these are the same clothes she had on yesterday.

Lena Yes, they are.

Sarah Christ! That means that she's been lying here all night.

Everyone is extremely concerned. We see in the background that Jason is admitted to the studio. He looks about uncertainly, frowns, then follows the commotion and is soon to be found standing behind the girls. He looks concern, dumps his stuff and squats down beside Marl, with the girls (none of whom he has met yet).

Jodie *panic in her voice* We ought to call an ambulance.

Jason *taking charge* Hang on a tick, will you? Just let me have a little look-see ...

As the girls stand and hold each other, Jason checks Marl's head and neck. He takes her pulse and feels her temperature by placing his hand on her forehead.

Jason *still squatting beside Marl* Please don't stress-out, everyone. I'm quite well-trained for this sort of situation; trekking and so on.

How long has she been like this, do you think?

Lena Oh, it would have been all night, and into this morning. I said goodbye to her last night and left. She only lives about five minutes away, so it wasn't as if she had far to go. Those are the same clothes that she had on yesterday.

Sarah When I arrived, I was wondering where she was, and looked for her everywhere; but she must have been lying in such a way that she was hidden by the frosted glass.

Jason *nodding* Well, there's no evidence of any blow to the head, and her pulse

is normal. There's no temperature. Now, is there a couch or lounge where she might rest if I carried her to it?

Lena Yes! It's not far. I'll lead the way.

Jason lifts Marl, standing with her in his arms, then carries her to the couch, following Lena. The others troop along in their wake.

Jodie *whispers* Sal volatile here! Lady in a swoon! I'm swooning.

Sarah Shut up will you? This is bloody serious.

Jodie *whispers thrillingly* You don't get it, do you? I mean, I dream **every** night that some he-man-hunk-himbo will scoop my lifeless body from the floor and carry me off.

Sarah *laughs in spite of the gravity of the situation* And so here is Marl living **your** fantasy. Tell me how that makes you feel.

Jodie *deflated rolls eyes* Ask me that question again when he rips open her bodice with his teeth and feels for her heartbeat.

Jack *looking useless* I offered to walk her home. She was busy fiddling about with stuff, turning lights off and what have you.

Once Jason has deposited her on the couch, he begins to try to waken her by flicking her skin, calling her name and tickling her. She sleeps through it all.

Jason Okay, she evidently needs medical attention. But rather than ambulances, can we simply get a local GP over here?

Jack I'll take care of that. Dr Brewer's our resident quack.

Jason *eyebrows up* Quack?

Jack *shamefaced* Sorry.

Jack heads off to phone for the doctor.

Lena *almost crying* Is she ever going to wake up?

Jason *laughs slightly* We may all have to kiss your Sleeping Beauty.

Jodie *wryly* That's all I need ... to be branded as a dyke!

Just as Dr Brewer arrives, Cedron rocks up to shake hands with Jason and be apprised of the happenings. They all wander off, leaving Lena speaking softly to her friend.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xxiii: The Boardroom At Finsbury UK:TV.

A laptop is hooked up to a projector, and historical stuff is on the screen. A small group of people watch (seated) as Jason takes them through some of the Cranthorpe background.

Jason -- so the grounds sprawled down to this stream in Tudor and pre-Tudor times. There were several punts placed along the --

The door flings open, spilling light into the room, spotlighting Jason, who turns (squinting at the bright light) to see who is barging into his road show. Marl is silhouetted deliciously in the doorway. She is still holding the reel of thread.

Jason *smiles* Hello. Feeling better? Please, take a seat. This is a brief overview of Deepdene Manor from a historical perspective. We haven't been going long.

Marl *bright, delighted* That's my stream. I walk for hours along there, picking herbs and flowers for Rosena. At the moment, there are some sweet little baby water voles learning to swim with their mother.

Oh you are finally awake, are you? Should you be up and about?
How are your wounds?

In the gloom, we see that everyone is startled, taken aback, confused. Jason likewise. They all look across at Marl. There is an embarrassed pause.

Jason *uncomfortable* Yes, well, come in, Marl. As I say, you haven't missed much. I'm just going through the --

Marl *concerned and confused* But, you are wearing a modern suit.

Jason *sarcastic* I've come straight here from the Palace. Should I have changed first?

Thus follows a titter of embarrassed laughter. Marl, still looking perplexed joins the others, and Jason continues with his road show. Stay with this only a couple of seconds, and show Marl playing with the reel, looking concerned.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xxiv: The Boardroom At Finsbury UK:TV

Again, the boardroom, but this time the lights are on. Only Cedron and his girls sit about. Time has passed, it is later that night. At one end of the huge table, empty fast-food containers loll about, with various coffee cups and wine glasses. There is also a vast array of historical parchments and papers at the other end, and everyone wears white cotton gloves.

Jason I know that you've all been stooped over copies of the famous Cranthorpe letters, probably for several months now. So, as a reward, I've brought along the originals.

Gasp of thrill. Jason produces the letters.

Cedron Marvellous! Oh, they're beautiful!

Likewise expressions of thrill and privilege erupt from the girls.

Sarah We're really looking at the originals of the letters. Superb penmanship.

Marl studies the letters as her normal self, and then comes to the first one.

Marl *blurts out, shaking her head* This isn't **your** report that was sent to Warwick. No, Mary copied it and changed its meaning! She managed to capture your hand quite skilfully, Sir Giles. It was Marj's idea, of course, and mine. Lucy told her what to write. She changed this bit and this bit, then she wrote it out afresh. And directed it to Bishop Hobbin, although of course that was Marj's brainwave to get rid of the troops.

Everyone in the room is totally aghast. The ensuing silence is taut, brittle.

Jodie Er, Marl, did you see Doctor? What did Dr Brewer say? Do you need to lie down again?

Marl *surprised* No, not at all. She looked me over and gave me the thumbs up. I must have just fainted or something, but I'm okay now.

Jodie *very unsure* Oh, good.

It is then that Jason notes the reel in Marl's hand. He gently takes hold of her wrist, then takes the reel of gold thread from her grasp and frowns.

Jason *severe* Excuse me, but where did you get this? It's a treasure of Deepdene. How did you come by it? It's always been locked away in a display case. How did you get this?

Marl *confused* What?

Jason *firmer* How did you get this?

Marl looks bewildered. Jason holds out the reel in the palm of his hand and she takes it again in her fingers. Marl brightening immediately

Marl *utterly happy* This is the gold thread which I'm using for the Latin motto in my tapestry. Which I ply at while watching over you. But it was Marj's to begin with ... Oh, I remember now! Cornelia handed it on to me.

Jason *totally at sea* Who?

Marl *bright, bubbly*

Cornelia! Surely you remember Cornelia? Or maybe not, you were so close to death for such a long time. She and Dadda hid your horse in the under croft, away from prying eyes, because we thought he would be easily recognized. Such a big, handsome boy ... well, gelding.

Jason *stern*

I've never met you before this evening, dear Miss Cavendish, and I am certainly not acquainted with anyone called "Cornelia". Are you trying to be funny? Is this Ozzie humour?

Everyone is now genuinely concerned. Marl (blushing and crestfallen) stares up into Jason's face, very confused. He looks down into her face in sombre displeasure. He takes the reel again and stows it in his pocket.

Jason

You and I are having lunch together tomorrow, as I recall. So that'll give you a chance to explain to me your cryptic conversation. Plenty of time between then and now to think of a good excuse for your ungraciousness, hmmm?

Then he turns his back on Marl and proceeds to talk to the others about the historic papers. This leaves Marl stunned.

Cedron *gently*

Marl, may I have a brief word with you, please?

Marl

Yeah, sure, Cedron.

[They move aside]

Cedron *anxious & stern*

You have to pull yourself together or C-M will order you off the project. You've upset him, you know. He's genuinely upset.

Marl

I didn't mean ... He's invited me out to lunch tomorrow. I'll apologize then, of course.

Cedron

I should bloody well hope so! Look, dear, he's our front man, and we have to jig him along. Your inane outbursts do precisely nothing for anybody, least of all for him. What's come over you? You're not sniffing something that you shouldn't, are you?

Marl *shocked* No!

Cedron Look! Your father and I were at University together. I stand here as a sort of "guardian" to you.

Marl *smiling* I'm a very big girl of 32 now, Cedron.

Cedron Act your age, then, Ducky.

I can't watch you slither down the drainpipe. Get a good grip, Marl. You've always been so utterly dependable in the past. I can't fathom this nonsense ... not by a long chalk.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene xxv: An Up-Market London Restaurant

Lunch. Jason has chosen a very swish restaurant, and they are seated at a table in a very private cul-de-sac overlooking an atmospheric fernery. All very tasteful and gorgeous. They have finished eating. The dirty crockery, cutlery and glassware is being removed by waitresses. Marl has almost concluded telling Jason about the dream.

Marl -- nothing malicious about it at all. We simply wanted to redirect the soldiers away from Deepdene Lodge, plus give the Earl a bit of a helping hand. And really, nobody would be the wiser.

Jason Fascinating. That's really fascinating. And your grandfather, Lord Cavendish, warned you of it?

Marl *nods* He did, yes. When I remembered that Cornelia had been stalking me, and told him about it, his eyes fairly blazed. There've been several amazing experiences in my family, apparently. So he says ...

Anyhow, I turned around and there was the same woman who'd

accosted me twice before (this Cornelia-woman). Only **this** time, she managed to press the thread into my hand. When I ran after her, I was transformed into Withie and on we went from there. Cornelia proved to be the conduit Grandpa warned me of.

Jason *musings*

I must take you to Sussex. At Deepdene, there isn't much left of the Tudor wing, as we call it. But numerous books have been written on the subject and we retain some magnificent sketches and paintings of it. However, it would be very interesting to have a first-hand account as well.

Marl *eager*

You see that's the very nub of the subject. Every historian's dream is to actually experience the past in person. It's just not possible, in the normal course of events. But for me to have gone back to the 15th century, even for only one night. That was pure magic!

Jason

So ... expound away! Describe it.

Marl *looking out the window and drawing a breath*

Just how brilliant it was to **really** be Johnny-on-the-spot during the Wars of the Roses. It's all about Peter Laslett's book "The World We Have Lost": the welcome absence of machines and car noises, cows lowing in the fields, and that achingly lovely stream at the bottom of the field. The Lodge was a rabbit warren of tiny rooms, with wainscoting and narrow, steep staircases. That huge fireplace in the miniscule kitchen. Servants, a raddled old cook, nurses, young wenches and maids.

Handmade boots to last a lifetime. Not taking the morning shower, but instead running a wet piece of huckaback over oneself. The softness of the woollen clothes. Do you know that my lambswool shawl had been handmade by the nuns at Loris Convent?

[Takes a sip of wine]

It was brilliant. And in many, many ways, I miss it, that life I led as Withie Venervels.

Jason *carefully*

You mentioned a tapestry on which you worked whilst you watched over Sir Giles.

Marl

That's right. As Marl Cavendish I'm a grotesque failure as a needlewoman. But as Withie Venervels, I swung a mean thimble.

Jason *amused*

And you said that you were stitching a Latin motto into it. What was it?

Marl *without hesitation*

From Isaiah 61: "Gaudens gaudebo in Domino".

Jason

"I will be full of joy in the Lord".

Marl *impressed*

Yeah. That's the one.

Jason *wry face*

Some dream!

Marl takes another sip of wine as she looks out over the fernery. She is close to tears.

Marl *sadly dreamily*

Only, it wasn't a dream, you know. I honestly felt like I was there, in real life. It was so odd.

It really happened. I was really there.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT I



ACT II

II, Scene i: A Small Theatrette In The Studio.

Full lighting. No music. The professional speeches are highlighted in blue.

The large screen shows the desktop of Cedron's laptop, complete with assorted icons. The laptop itself stands on a small table between the door and screen. During the rushes, Cedron will operate the show via this laptop.

All the behind-the-scenes people, plus most of the actors we have seen so far cram into this theatrette. Everyone is chattering madly, laughing, greeting, and so forth as they take their seats. Many of the men choose to stand around leaning on the walls. We hear and see quite a hubbub of noise and movement. Cedron enters and calls back through the doorway to any latecomers.

Jason rushes in, much to Cedron's delight.

Cedron *grinning broadly* Hi! We weren't sure if you could make it.

Jason *breathless* Yes, I had to come. Couldn't miss it.

Cedron looks over the room, head high, and claps his hands several times. Cedron will speak loudly as the noise subsides and the light fades out.

Cedron Good!

Thanks to everyone for what we have so far. There are s-o-o-o many people to thank. But we'll leave that for another time.

Now, we're only half-way through all the work we have to do.

But so far, I'm pleased and impressed with the quality and content of our fourth show in the "My Heritage" series.

After my little presentation, you can all go off and get some R & R. And that means "sleep" everyone: we're all going to need to focus on what's coming up. Brian and Garth will speak to you first thing tomorrow morning at the Ops meeting about our future events.

[Emphasis]

Now over the next few days or weeks, we'll be filming the big battle scene: Edgecote Moor. So for those drinkers out there, keep yourself nice until after that shoot. We're all going to have to stay on our toes. All of you who are participating in the battle will be thoroughly exhausted at the end of each day, I can promise you that, so let's all stay sober, okay?

[Groans, laughs and murmured comments are heard. Cedron raises his voice]

I'm just giving you fair warning. Plenty of time to get legless afterwards. Alright ...

Here are some grabs which should interest you all. We'll start with the intro. Brian has given us a real kick-start with the red and white roses thing. Jason, our Mr Heritage man, gives a spiel. And straight into some drama, with the Earl of Warwick beginning to feel the pinch in 1467. Is that right? 1467?

Several disembodied voices

Yes. Yeah 1467.

Cedron *nods and continues*

And then something about the music with our beloved John Pearce. Finally, we move onto 1469, when Warwick turns the tables on his King, with a bit of dynastic reshuffling.

Not all of this stuff is finished yet, so don't get despondent if you

don't look 100%. There'll be some editing and what have you in the final days.

Carl *cheekily, voice off* No amount of editing could make John Pearce look good, Cedron!

Laughter is heard from the gathering.

Cedron *grinning in spite of himself* Yes, thanks, Carl. I assume that was Carl.

John *shouting, voice off* Point of order, Mr Speaker!

Cedron *smiling* Very good. Okay. Settle down, and here we go.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene ii: UK:TV Presentation On The Screen, Into Which We Zoom

The Titles And Intro

Graphics:-- moving in and out of shot, we see various arty representations of contemporaneous artwork.

Edward IV is in council, with his councillors leaning forward to catch his words. His eyebrows are down in an intense frown, and he speaks with teeth almost clenched. The camera moves about as he speaks to give a surreal quality. The colouration and ambience are superb.

UK:TV Edward IV We are surrounded by jackals. They lurk in the dark recesses of the castle, hungrily awaiting any scrap of flesh to be torn from a bone. They rush forward, snarling and drooling, to snatch up discarded carrion, to gobble it down too hastily. Then again they subside, with tails pulled down, back into the shadows. That is the kind of men we attract, my kinsmen: those who feed on our leavings.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iii: The "Where Is Your Master?" On Film, The Finished Product

This is the culmination of the previous rehearsals (ACT I, scenes 1, 4 and 8). The men swank along a narrow corridor, then egress into the light and into the stone-walled rose garden. There is a face-off. Again, the presentation is utterly superb: of the highest standard.

A divine trumpet fanfare heralds the red and white roses scene, now sumptuously filmed. The finished scene is achingly beautiful, polished and filmed using various camera sweeps. The music crescendos and then we go into the titles and main theme.

Revisit ACT I, Opening Scene "Where Is Your Master?"
--

The Yorkist noblemen swank along the corridor as rehearsed. Carl/Kent delivers his "Where is your master?" line to Philip (dressed as a solid armed guard) standing at the end of the corridor. He jerks his head.

Carl/Kent and his troop swank out into the sunshine of the rose garden, where await John/Percy and his Lancastrians. They are similarly gorgeously costumed and looking like they are waiting for trouble.

Then, exactly as rehearsed, Carl, John and Steve do the white and red roses face-off, with music banging-in and then straight into the sumptuous titles.

We hear a round of applause and whistles from the audience here.

Continuing Scene: *artefacts, paintings, parchment with artistic script (all mostly filmed in museums or at Deepdene). These feature as would be done in any TV history show. What is seen on the screen matches Jason's voice-over. The voice-over was done on another day; he is not actually speaking live in the theatrette.*

UK:TV Jason *voice-over*

By 1464, when he was aged 22, King Edward IV was beginning to feel his strength as King of England. He wanted to be his own man; however, his mentor Richard Neville (the Earl of Warwick) jealousy guarded the royal person, thus restraining this new-found independence on the part of Edward. Without a backward glance, King Edward set out to embarrass and humiliate Warwick on the world stage. While the Earl had been busy cobbling together a very handsome match for his king with a virtuous French princess, Edward had secretly wed a girl from the Woodville clan. The Woodvilles were parvenus; and there were many of them to find places for at court. This wedding to Elizabeth Woodville proved a stinging slap in the face for Richard Neville.

The loyal Nevilles were effectively pushed aside, to make way for the grasping Woodvilles. More than ever, Warwick needed information from his band of spies. Whom could he no longer trust now that the Woodville tribe was in the ascendant? Who might be disgruntled with the King, and be willing to come over and stand by the Nevilles?

To add to the Earl of Warwick's woes, the Earl's henchmen seemed to be falling one by one. Hanwell was stabbed in an inn during a wedding breakfast. Gausbeck's head was wantonly dumped on top of a midden in Warwick's very own kitchen garden. And now his right-hand man, Sir Giles Cranthorpe, was missing, said to have been savagely murdered by brigands in a lonely stretch of Sussex woodland. Warwick's weary heart must have sunk ever deeper as he felt his world caving in on him.

Then, unexpectedly, Cranthorpe resurfaced, unharmed, and continued to gather the intelligence which was so vital to the Earl. Sir Giles' advice acted like a beacon on the Earl of Warwick,

spurring him into action. From that time onwards, nearly every move made by the Earl on the giant chessboard which was England during these times of baronial unrest, was directed by his most trusted adviser, my ancestor, Sir Giles Cranthorpe.

Quick shot of Jason standing with the others, leaning against the wall. He is trying not to grin. Those around him applaud and congratulate him.

Cedron We don't have any likenesses of Sir Giles to pop into that segment. Maybe we'll have time to put together a little dramatic spot whereby Sir Giles is seen lurking in the woods and hiding in barns, and so forth.

And now, here's some drama.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iv: UK:TV Presents The Room Which Warwick Uses As His "Office", 1467.

UK:TV Warwick stands, perusing a large piece of parchment, which is one of several in his hands.

His brother UK:TV George slams into the room.

UK:TV George *shouts* Do you know what that swine has done now?

UK:TV Warwick *calm, suave, ironic edge* Yes, do come in, George. Take a seat.

UK:TV George I'm too angry to sit. Look at me! ***Look at me!***

UK:TV Warwick turns slowly and surveys his brother, who postures theatrically with arms spread wide.

UK:TV Warwick Well?

UK:TV George gesticulates wildly. He speaks with very heavy sarcasm.

UK:TV George Chain? Chain of office? Where?

UK:TV Warwick You seem to have mislaid the heavy gold chain which behoves your high office, George.

UK:TV George *beside himself, spitting with rage* Mislaid, is it? Nay, brother! 'Twas flicked off my neck and over my noggin by your friend Neddy Crownhead. That is, 'twas Stillington did the deed. Aye! For it is he that is Bishop of Bath who now becomes Lord Chancellor in **my** place, if you please.

[Extra emphasis]

But your Nedward was right behind him!

UK:TV Warwick *frowning but interested* You've been --

UK:TV George *imitating King Edward with heavy sarcasm* "George! Return to us our seal of office, will you, dear chap? Our great seal, old boy. *Edwardus Dei Gracia Rex Anglie et Francie et Dominus Hibernie*. There's a good man."

UK:TV Warwick *wearily* You've been stripped of office, then?

UK:TV George *pacing in anger* Aye, stripped of office and with narry a word as to why. Oh well, obstructionist activities **were** mentioned sometime during the conversation, I suppose. And Stillington -- **Stillington!**

By God, Dick! For there was that pimp, Bobby Stillington, smiling as if he'd just spent the night in his mistress's arms. Saunters up to me, as if on some promenade, grasps my chain and nimbly hoicks it over my scone, and then off with it.

UK:TV Warwick *walks to the window and stares out, deep in thought.*

UK:TV George It's all gone to the dogs, ever since Ned's foolish, foolish marriage. Allying himself to that Woodville clan.

[Shakes finger at his brother]

Did you not predict, Dickie, at the time, that we would rue the

day King Charming tied the knot with that girl?

UK:TV Warwick *drawls* Yes ... I believe that I did.

UK:TV George *nods vigorously* And so it is now a right royal debacle! You listen to me, dear brother. This snatching-away of my honours will not be the end of the business.

UK:TV George winds down, watching UK:TV Warwick who rocks gently on the balls of his feet as he musingly gazes out the window, a finger tapping his lips.

There is a pause. Through the window, UK:TV Warwick watches nobles on horseback ride off. UK:TV George paces about a bit.

UK:TV George *sighs* Well, I'll leave you. When the Earl of Warwick muses, not even his brother, the Archbishop of York, may intrude upon his cogitations.

UK:TV George waits for UK:TV Warwick to take the bait. He does not. UK:TV George, somewhat put out, leaves the room, slamming the door behind him. UK:TV Warwick continues to ponder at the window.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene v: The Recording Studio. Dennis And Camera.

John Pearce not only plays the part of Sir Ralph Percy but is also the music director.

He introduces us to the musical instruments (which are laid out on a bench), and then a small group of players standing nearby launch into some bright recorder and drum music. John Pearce points out the different musical instruments as he goes.

John Pearce I warn you, Dennis, this is not Tosca.
You'll be familiar (I expect) with the recorder and the lute. This is an early trumpet and a cornet just here. And this drum-like

instrument was called a tambour. Hence the later "tambourine" with the addition of the small cymbals along the side.

I'm utilizing the sackbut, and the crumhorn. They make a good sound for the late Renaissance music we're after. Here is a rebec. We might pop that in somewhere.

It's all fascinating for the music historian. I want to give this "My Heritage" episode just the right feel.

The wars encompassed some truly lyric choral music, but we've no opportunity to slot that in. It just doesn't fit the storyline. We'll have fanfares and lovely, light country music. But mostly it'll be very military, "call-to-arms" stuff. And noblemen types wandering about; stately, grand, imperious music.

Dennis

John Pearce: as well as being the musical director, you're playing Sir Ralph Percy, grandson of the legendary Hotspur. How did that come about? Are you an actor turned musician, or ---

John Pearce *smiling to camera*

Actually, I'm a professional musician and music historian who's always had a burning desire to act, Dennis. Cedron Dynsflytte offered me the role of music director, seeing that this is the area in which I specialize (Medieval and Tudor). So I got down on my knees. Literally! And I begged Cedron to give me a walk-on role. He thought that with my impressive bulk, I'd make a jolly fine Percy.

Dennis *amused*

Good work! Break a leg! But I wouldn't give up your day job just yet. I saw you at rehearsals.

Loud laughter arises from John and the players.

Dennis *back to business*

Okay. We seem to have bevy of musicians standing-by. What are they playing for us?

John Pearce

We're going to present a very jolly tune called "Shepherds in the

Hay". Nothing like a roll in the hay, as they say.

John picks up his recorder, nods to the players, and with recorder to lips, bobs his head four times. The players launch into a delightful and merry tune. They are of an excellent standard. Their tune fades out to be superimposed by a more royal trumpet and cornet air, which seeps into the next scene.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene vi: Earl's Chamber, 1469. Professional Film, Not Dennis's Camera.

This is the same room as in the scene previous to last: darker, lit by many candles and wall-mounted torches. Several Yorkist knights sit around an impressive table.

The Earl of Warwick is not present in the room.

Kent/Carl This likes me not, Hastings. When Richard Neville keeps mum in this manner, then I fear some awful and bloody treachery is afoot.

Hastings/Gary Yes, there is a nasty something in the wind.

Kent/Carl The Earl's brooding silence bodes ill.

Norfolk/Keith If I were King Ned, I'd be shaking like a choirboy on the verge of losing his innocence to a harlot.

Shrewsbury/Ben How will Richard act? Tell me, Kent, which way will he swing, think you?

Kent/Carl There's nothing to be decided until Cranthorpe's information is to hand. If it comes at all ...

Shrewsbury/Ben But has there been any word from Cranthorpe? I did hear that he'd been slaughtered by cut-throats somewhere down in

Sussex.

Norfolk/Keith You're joking, aren't you?

Kent/Carl My sources tell me he was slain, true enough. But I am unwilling to give such tattle credence.

Hastings/Gary No! I heard that rumour too. But it was quite false. The information arrived, albeit a couple of days later than expected.

Shrewsbury/Ben So, Sir Giles is **not** dead?

Hastings/Gary Not by a long straw, Shrewsbury. He breathes air as we do, gentlemen, and not yet dirt.

Kent/Carl How can you be sure?

Hastings/Gary *self-
important* I questioned Bishop Hobbin, the recipient, at length. He swears that the man who delivered the letter **was** Cranthorpe. He knew the horse by sight and described in detail the gentleman's raiment. It all tallied with what we know of Sir Giles.

Norfolk/Keith Stay! Now, why would Cranthorpe move his report through Hobbin? It makes no sense.

Kent/Carl That matters not, Norfolk. So long as the report arrived safely, Warwick must be satisfied, and he will act accordingly.

Shrewsbury/Ben 'Tis evidently just a change of tactic, on Cranthorpe's part, to foil the enemy.

Kent/Carl The enemy ... and only Richard Neville knows which way he will jump.

Richard Neville enters the room (folding and stowing a piece of parchment as he does so) and hastily takes a seat at the table. The eyes of all the knights focus on him.

UK:TV Warwick I have decided to offer my daughter Isabel in marriage to Clarence.

The effect of his words is profound: disbelief, shock, stunned amazement.

Norfolk/Keith	Your daughter to become Duchess of Clarence?
Shrewsbury/Ben	What! Sister-in-law to the king?
Hastings/Gary <i>shocked and appalled</i>	Richard! The King won't wear it! He'll tear your eyes out for this act of defiance! Thinking to marry your close kin into the Royal Family.
Norfolk/Keith	Such a virtuous and beautiful virgin to be sacrificed to that lecher. Fo! This is little better than a rape.
UK:TV Warwick <i>calm</i>	The girl will naturally do her duty to her father. It's all about obedience, Norfolk. Besides, she has seen the light of 18 summers. Time for her to start breeding, one would have thought.
Kent/Carl	I believe that I understand your scheme, my dear Earl. To have Clarence at your side, the Heir Presumptive, brother to the king. To thumb your nose at Neddy in this novel way.
UK:TV Warwick <i>smug</i>	Precisely, Kent. Neddy Crownhead must be brought to heel. To think that he can outfox the richest man in England is the work of an untried boy. 'Twas I who put him on the throne; let him not forget that fact. Let him squirm to see his brother and his kingmaker side-by-side.
Kent/Carl <i>impressed</i>	A master stoke!
Hastings/Gary <i>horrified</i>	'Tis errant madness!
Shrewsbury/Ben <i>shrewd</i>	What do your spies suggest, Dick? Does this seem to our intelligence propitious, to marry your family so close to the king?
UK:TV Warwick <i>smiling</i>	Why, Shrewsbury, my dear fellow. 'Twas my spies put the notion into my head in the first place.

The screen shows the last shot frozen, and a burst of applause is heard. This proves the END of the Film show. The lights flicker back on. Cedron intends to make himself heard above the babble. He rubs his hands together in sheer delight.

Cedron *loudly*

So Warwick takes his first unwitting step over to the Lancastrian camp and away we go. It's all about battles and political machinations from now on. Just think: our Earl of Warwick will have both kings as his prisoners by 1470. And all thanks to Giles Cranthorpe's sage advice.

Righto! See you all tomorrow morning at 9:30 sharp (that's half-past-nine) for our big Ops meeting.

There is buzz of murmur, chatter and laughter, along with everyone moving out of the theatrette. Cedron and several people cluster together at the laptop. Jason is watching out for Marl but is trapped in the throng. He spots her rushing off out of a side door. Weaving through the crowd, he reaches the girls. They are delighted to see him.

Sarah

Oh, hello, Jason. What did you think? It's coming along nicely, isn't it?

Jason

Yes. The dramatics are stunning.

Lena

I think the music is going to be the big winner. I simply worshipped the music for that Queen Anne thingy.

Sarah

The Duchess of Marlborough episode? Yes, that was brilliant. I think that we should put out a CD.

Jason *impatient*

Look, where did Marl go, do you know? I need to speak with her.

Lena

Props. Property room. We need a silver bell, and Marl thinks she's seen one there.

Jodie *pouting at the sight of Jason's downcast face*

Oh ... It's alright! No need for that hangdog face.

[Putting on a Dracula voice]

"The bell does not toll for thee Not yet"

Lena *ghostly voice* "The blood drained away from his visage"

[Back to herself instantly]

Do you want me to show you the way to Props?

Jason No, I'll be fine, thanks. Good sense of direction, me.

Jason tears out into the evening, looking about in an undecided fashion, biting his lip in uncertainty.

Jason *aloud to himself* Now, where was the property room? Where did Ceddie drag me the other day? Along here, I feel.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene vii: Deep In The Property Room.

Marl is head-down-bum-up in amongst the debris.

Marl *to herself* Here it is. Come here, you little bugger. Got it! Whew!

Laughing, Marl rings the silver bell in her hand. She wipes it over with some miscellaneous rag, obviously pleased with herself. As she swings around, Cornelia, beaming at Marl, bars her path.

Marl *shrieks in huge delight* Cornelia!

Marl wraps Cornelia in a bear-hug, kissing her cheek, as if being reunited with a long-lost friend.

Marl *thrilled* Dearest Cornelia! It's so wonderful to see you again!

Cornelia *blushing and embarrassed* Oh, my love ... such a warm welcome.
But ... While I was feeding the horse, it suddenly dawned on me.
"Neddy". You could use that in your letters.

Marl *confused* "Neddy"? Is that what The Corpse calls his horse?

Cornelia No, Withie dear. Well, he may do ... but I'm not privy to that

depth of detail regarding our visitor's livestock.

No, it's what the Earl of Warwick calls the King. Could anything be more disrespectful? And, you know, His Royal Majestic Highness calls His Honour the Earl "Dickie".

But I wondered if you couldn't put that in your next letter to the Earl, to make it seem more authentic.

Marl Yes, I'll try. But we shouldn't be wandering about in this fashion. Not at this late hour. Besides which, Dadda is entertaining the officers. I want to hear what they are saying. For *that* might well go into the next report.

Cornelia *mischievous* Hold out your hand, dear.

Marl looks confused. Cornelia snaps the reel of gold thread into Marl's palm.

Cornelia There! The little chaps made off with that. They were converting it into the fo'c'sle of a paper ship when I discovered them with it. Do look after it, Withie. 'Tis gold.

Cornelia dashes off, and Marl makes to follow her along the corridor, then slumps to the floor.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene viii: In The Entrance To The Property Room.

On entering this scene, we find a Corps of Commissioner bloke (quite elderly) is trying to haul a lifeless Marl to her feet. Just as he struggles (with much groaning) to right her, wobbling as he holds her against him, Jason hares into the room, taking in the situation at a glance. The silver bell has rolled away to one side, but the spool of gold thread is still firmly clasped in Marl's hand.

Jason rushes to the elderly man, surprising him as he scoops Marl up into his own arms.

Jason *holding Marl in his arms* Thanks, old boy. I'll take it from here.

Commissioner *utterly breathless and panting* Drugs! She's O-D-ed. You have to walk her around, mate, not carry her! Make her walk it off, for Christ's sake!

Jason *still with the girl in his arms* She's not on drugs. This is merely an old-fashioned fainting fit. I don't think you should have tried to lift her. You sit down and have a rest. Will you be alright? Should I call someone for you?

Commissar *coughing waves him away* Nah. I'm as fit as a trout, Sir. If I was 25 again, I'd have done what you did. Very eyeable, that one.

Jason laughs and nods goodbye, then carries the girl towards his car.

Jason *to the comatose girl in his arms* Withie Venervels. I hereby order you to accompany me to my great Auntie Lily's little cottage, just nearby. I'm sure we'll be greeted with open arms.

Here, a few brief scattered scenes snap onto the screen:

- *arriving at Auntie's*
- *depositing Marl on a bed*
- *thanking an elderly woman (great Aunt Lily)*
- *covering Marl with a crocheted rug.*

In the dim room, watching Marl sleep, Jason paces about a bit, dragging his hand through his hair.

Jason *to himself* What the hell is all this about?

Can somebody explain to me what the hell is going on?

END OF SCENE

II, Scene ix: A Bedroom At Great-Aunt Lily's London House

Next morning, Marl awakens in the strange room, and sits up, looking about her. She spots Jason sleeping soundly in a wicker chair. Marl goes to him, kneels, and takes one of his hands in hers. Then she cups his hand to her face and kisses it while he sleeps.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene x: London, In Jason's Sports Car.

In his expensive sports car, inching his way through London's streets, Jason is looking tired and grim. Marl (in the passenger seat) constantly sneaks side-long glances at him, wondering about his foul mood.

Jason *snarls* That 9:30 meeting would have taken one-third the time if Garth the Mouth weren't so fond of the sound of his own voice.

Marl Yes, he --

Jason *cheesed off* Damn! It's nearly lunchtime, and I was planning for you to have plenty of time to look about, at Deepdene. We won't get there until nightfall at this rate. Would you be able to stay the night, or are you needed for the battle scenes tomorrow?

Marl They'll live without me. I'd love to sleep over at Deepdene. It would be a genuine pleasure.

Jason is impatient with the traffic, and suddenly pushes the button to roll the top over them.

Jason *unsmiling* It's dusty. Better with the roof.

Marl Er, yes.

Jason *edgy* Well?

Marl Were you really watching out for the spool of gold thread to

disappear from the locked cabinet?

Jason Naturally.

Marl And you rushed to London on account of seeing it gone?

Jason Correct.

There is a pause. Jason sighs and fiddles with the interior of the car. He is unfriendly and unsociable. She is uncomfortable.

Jason *dour* Go on. Say it.

Marl is at sea with Jason's words. She tries for some indifferent conversation.

Marl I was just thinking that we picked probably the worst time of the day to try to escape from London.

Jason *ungracious and unfriendly* There's no good or bad time to escape London.
[Slight pause]

So, you're dying to tell me and I'm equally dying **not** to hear it.

Marl *lost* Sorry, what?

Jason *dour* You had another one of those bloody dreams, didn't you? Of course you did.

Marl Well ... yes. Yes, I did.

Another fidgeting pause occurs. Marl is extremely uncomfortable in the face of Jason's bad mood.

Jason *scowling* And there was another draft for Warwick, wasn't there, written by a pack of women?

Marl *reluctant* Yes. Two actually. The one advising a peace-making exercise with Margaret of Anjou, and that one advising a united attack: Warwick and King Henry.

Jason *really put out* Christ!

Marl sits, looking out the window, acutely uncomfortable, whilst Jason continues to scowl.

Jason *to the traffic* Why the hell don't you put your blinker on **before** changing lanes, my good man? Ignorant poultrice!

[Slight pause]

For God's sake, did Giles Cranthorpe compose **any** of those documents found at the Manor?

Marl *carefully* I'm beginning to think not. Apart from most of the first one, of course.

Jason, glowering, angrily drags his fingers through his hair. They speak at same time.

<i>[Jason]</i> Well, we had better contact Cedron Dynsflytte and tell him to cancel the show before it's too late, given that it's based on a completely erroneous premise, on a downright fraud.	<i>[Marl]</i> It was all done innocently. We just wanted to move the troops on -- to help the Lancastrians.
---	---

Marl I'm sorry, Jason, but I'm not doing this on purpose.

Jason *frazzled* I'm envisaging gigantic headlines about our hoax, rivalling the fiasco of the Piltdown Man. God, what a Right-Royal cock-up!

He watches the traffic in seething temper. Then he sighs heavily, tries to smile at her, and squeezes her hand.

Jason Sorry, Marl. I'm being a brute. It's none of your fault. But it's such a very **bitter** disappointment.

Marl We all should have guessed, three years ago.

When they were found, you'll remember, Professor Danton dashed off to Deepdene, in a lather of excitement, to pour over what we all thought were documents of huge historical importance. Here was a tranche of drafts purporting to have been written by Cranthorpe to the Earl of Warwick, prior to his having sent off the originals. All found neatly stored in a secret

hiding place at Deepdene Manor. A major historical breakthrough of ginormous proportions. It was just too good to be true.

But, we should all have stood back and thought about the likelihood of such a man keeping drafts. Or keeping anything. Giles Cranthorpe was a no-nonsense man, as hard as whitleather. He would no more keep incriminating documents than become the Court musician. Think it through: he was a spy. Every waking moment, he would have gone in fear of discovery, if not in fear of his life. Giles Cranthorpe would certainly have burned anything that might have given him away.

[Slight pause]

No, keeping letters is what women do. It was all Mary's idea. We should have realized.

Jason

But women wouldn't have been implicated in such an undertaking. How could we surmise that? Marl, without your dreams, no-one would suspect.

Marl *pleased but firm*

There! Exactly! Cedron doesn't need to know anything about it, because after all it's only dreams. We can't stop the show because of my whacky visions!

Jason

But we know that --

Marl

Only you and I know. The rest of them are dead. We can carry on and not tell a soul.

Jason

Then you think --

Marl *clinging the argument*

The Earl of Warwick's actions followed the instructions he received. That's the absolute truth, and we can hoist our flag on that truth.

[Pause]

Jason

Tell me, am I conscious yet?

Marl Right at the end you wake up, but you've got amnesia.

Jason *crack of laughter* Amnesia?

Marl I can tell that you're determined to drag the tale from me, even against your better judgement. So, here it is ...

Our plan backfired badly, and now there is a company of soldiers encamped right in our courtyard at the Lodge. Lucy and Marj think it's a hoot, but I'm cheesed-off about it. We're passing you off as a sick relative in case anyone asks: a cousin called Roger Montacute.

Jason Roger? My new name is Roger?

Marl It's what is now known in the trade as "Covering One's Arse".

[Shrugs, reasons with Jason]

You're still out to it, so you don't care what you're called.

Anyway, my father and male kinsmen are entertaining several of the captains to a lavish repast. I think that Dadda wants to find out which way the wind is blowing. Not that he's involved with our little schemes.

Because of the troops and so on, the ladies have remained at Deepdene, but the gentlemen are taking off in the morning, with the officers if you please, for a spot of hunting. When I joined Cornelia in the courtyard, it was a bit sticky.

Jason Cornelia again. Did she hand you the thread, as before?

Marl Yup! In the Property Room.

[Slight pause]

Where was I? Cornelia was feeding your horse. We discussed his name, by the way. I wonder what it is? We simply can't go on calling him "The Horse" all the time.

Jason *amused and playful*

I'm going to call him "Jack". All good secret agents call their horses "Jack". If 007 had had a roan gelding instead of an Aston Martin, well --

Marl *delighted*

Ha, ha! Anyway, Cornelia was looking after Jack, and that's where I met her, as she whisked herself back into the Lodge, via the courtyard, where the soldiers were relaxing before curfew.

ACT II INTERSCENE: Shifting From Jason's Car To 15th Century

At the conclusion of ACT II, Scene vii, Cornelia dashed off, with Marl in hot pursuit along a narrow corridor at Deepdene.

Here, the corridor becomes a very dark passageway in an old stone building which is Deepdene Lodge. We can just make out Cornelia flitting along ahead of Marl. Then Marl, now in her character as Withie, lurches out into the courtyard, lit by flaming torches. Now, there are tents and the bustle of soldiers. We hear the noise of men chatting, laughing, coughing and so on. Cornelia and Withie must run the gauntlet.

A couple of soldiers step forward, blocking their path.

Soldier *aggressively*

Here we are, lads! A brace of damsels have we here. 'Tis the beauteous ladies of the household, I believe.

The men begin to fondle Cornelia who shrinks back in embarrassed alarm. They also try Withie but she fiercely slaps their hands.

Withie *regal*

Stand back! Your superiors dine even now with my family. Do you suppose that you can manhandle the Venervels ladies in this uncouth fashion? You'll be flogged for your trouble.

The men, abashed and afraid of the possibility of corporal punishment, bow and step aside. In contemptuous hauteur, Withie walks majestically towards the house, having taken Cornelia's arm.

Just outside the door, Marj's two boys William de Witte and Harvey de Witte Junior are found playing marbles and alleys with a couple of young soldiers.

Cornelia Oh, goodness! It is far too late for you boys to be up and about.

Withie Little chaps, come on, it's bedtime.

Young William *pointing to the soldier* He won my cat's eye, but then I won it back!

Withie You mustn't be annoying the men, little chaps. They are busy preparing to fight great battles.

Harvey Jnr *loud with importance* When I'm big, I'm going to ride a huge charger and wear spurs on my boots. And I'll knock the silly Yorkers about like spillikins.

Young William *hitting his brother* No you won't! You're too stupid to be a sodger.

Harvey Jnr *firing up* I will! See if I don't.

The two little boys rush into the house, fighting as they go.

Soldier *smiling indulgently* They're likely lads, Mistress Withie. Make good soldiers someday.

Withie Heaven forfend!

Withie and Cornelia escape inside.

Withie Cornelia, could you please race down to the kitchen and make up a bowl of gruel for Sir Giles? I should be doing it, I know, but I have to do some polite spying on our dinner guests.

Cornelia *shocked* Mistress Withie! You don't actually mean to say that you're going to --

Withie Of course! We must forge another letter for the Earl. Why, you and I were just then offended by that scum residing in *our* very own courtyard. Rosena has taken a nervous collapse and been put to bed.

[Forceful, slapping fist into palm]

Cornie, we just have to get rid of these troops!

Cornelia *warns* Our last letter did more harm than good.

Withie *laughs in spite of herself* Yes, Warwick misunderstood and sent re-enforcements to Sussex. You have to laugh, don't you ... it's so ludicrous! But I intend to keep trying ...

Go you, Cornelia and brew the posset. I'll join you in the kitchen shortly.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene xi: The Candle-Lit Dining Room, As Seen By Withie Through A Chink In The Curtain.

The geography of Deepdene Lodge is such that Withie is able to conceal herself in a tiny, dark chamber, so that she can peek through a very thick curtain into the dining room where the officers are being entertained.

These men and the Venervels household are Lancastrians: so red roses are seen on the men's clothing and in a vase on the table. The table is laden with wine goblets, and wine. As well as sipping wine, the men partake in a leisurely fashion of fruit, cheese and bread.

The kinsmen are: Sir William (of course) and Marj's husband Harvey. Mary is his sister-in-law. She is the widow of Harvey's brother. And Lionel is Lucy's husband, and thus, a new father.

Captain Mather is a man in his 40s. Trent and La Boye are younger. La Boye is a teensy bit precious.

Harvey And what action have you gentlemen seen during these battles?

La Boye *airily* Oh, hardly any.

Mather Mostly, we visit the local squires and gentry, swapping yarns and feasting well, just as we are doing tonight with you gentlemen.

In fact, this evening is quite typical of our military exercises. And tomorrow we will hunt. We've had some damned good hunting

over the past several months. Nothing could be better!

Trent Of course, there's a modicum of work involved. Every so often, we'll receive word from a gasping messenger, who's ridden hell-for-leather all night, that we are to take up our positions and defend the ground against those vile Yorkists. So that provides a bit of a break from the tedium of inaction.

La Boye *aside to Lionel* The men love to be up and doing.

Mather But basically, it's just sauntering about the Sussex countryside being convivial and doing the civil with the local squires.

Harvey *enthusiastic* An admirable life to lead!

Withie backs away.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene xii: The Kitchen

We enter the bright warmth and bustle of the small kitchen, which is dominated by a huge roaring fire, complete with iron arms (from which to suspend pots) and a spit. There is a large, formidable wooden table in the centre. Cook is a raddled old thing of indeterminate age, whose head is swathed in a dirty cloth, and her gowned body in a dirty apron. She looks perpetually worried and screams machine-gun instructions to the half-dozen wenches at her beck and call.

Cornelia crouches at the fire, stirring the gruel which bubbles in a small black iron pan. She seems to be trying to stay out of Cook's way.

When Cook sees Withie, she addresses her roundly, hands on hips and a big wooden spoon in her hand.

Cook And who's this they say you have lodging upstairs, and for whose delight Missie here is making slops?

Withie kneels at the fireside. Withie speaks In an under voice to Cornelia, as she watches Cornelia spoon the gruel into a large bowl.

Withie Thank you, dear. I'll give it to the patient. You join the ladies.
Tell them I'll be there in a trice.

[Louder, to Cook]

My cousin, Roger Montacute is our guest, Cook. You'll remember Roger. He came here to stay with us some summers ago, during an outbreak of tertian ague.

Cook thoroughly put out That boy was a nasty little sod who scrumped apples from the orchard and stole a pot of my apple jam from out of my pantry. I saw him do it, though he swore blind otherwise. And now you soil your knees for him at my hearth so that he may suck gruel and keep you absent from your duties.

Withie firing up My Christian duty is to nurse my poor cousin back to health. Tell me, you old crone, what is wrong with that?

Cook Where's the missus? She should be pandering to young Montacute, not you.

Withie She's suffering from a fit of the vapours, if you must know.

Cook *[Bossily shouting at the giggling wenches]*

Never mind Mistress Withie; you slatterns keep going with your work. And don't let me catch any of you within three yards of them soldiers, or I'll larrup you all!

[To Withie, appalled, hands on hips]

The vapours? ... Well, that makes her interesting, but it's not very helpful.

Withie laughing in spite of herself How can she avoid it, things being as they are? Fie, you have such a jaundiced view of the world, Cook.

Cook Your step-mama should stop mollycoddling herself and get busy finding you a husband. And here is a field of handsome officers (as likely as you'd find) at her disposal.

Withie makes a face as she whisks herself out of the kitchen.

Withie Urk! I'd rather kiss our bull than flirt with them.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene xiii: The Bedroom In Which Sir Giles Lies

This is a very, very quick scene, whereby Peter assists Withie in feeding Sir Giles. The girl must spoon the gruel into the patient's mouth, as Peter strains to support the man in a semi-upright posture.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene xiv: The Secret Chamber From Which Withie Spies On The Officers

Withie is back behind the thick curtain (refer ACT II, Scene xi), holding the empty bowl and spoon, spying on the officers. They are evidently in the midst of a heated argument, speaking at once.

All speaking at once, This will not do.

loudly Cannot be thought of.

No, no. If you think we have anarchy now, then that notion would tip England over the brink.

Trent *making himself* If someone could just show the Earl that the best path for him to
heard follow is back to the true line. If he could barter for the throne

with Henry.

La Boye

That young man is intellectually gifted and a model of piety; but he is all at sea with the game of politics. I doubt that he can tell friend from foe, right from wrong.

Harvey

Then, you would have to deal with his wife, the Angevin queen. Now, she that's a very shrewd woman, and has the ear of her husband.

Mather

She has the *ordering* of her husband, to say true.

Lionel

Yes, that is the strangest marriage, indeed. For *she* is the husband who makes the decisions and rules the roast, whilst *he* is the wife, locked in his chapel whispering psalms and fainting at any mouse's scratching behind the wainscoting.

William *wryly*

That must make it interesting at night, when they are abed.

Mather *roaring with laughter*

Aye, Sir, indeed! For who is then the cock and who the hen? Eh?

The men dissolve into loud, immoderate, red-faced laughter.

Withie, watching and listening intently in her "hide" is startled to find Mary beside her. Mary tweaks her sleeve and signals urgently that Withie should leave the "hide" and follow her. Once outside, Mary speaks to Withie.

Mary *hoarse whisper*

Rosena has worked herself up into a real state about "you-know-who". You're to come to her immediately, she states. And do please try to calm her, Withie. None of us has had much luck so far.

The two women head off, up the stairs.

Withie

Perhaps we should try a counter-irritant. Cook has it that we should steer her into the match-making line. Now, if she were busy planning my nuptials ...

Mary It would take more than that to sway her mind. She is obsessed by "that rogue of Withie's" whom you have hidden in her house, right under the soldiers' noses. Withie, you must try to reason with her. She's really beside herself with mortal dread. You know her way.

Withie Reason with her? When have I ever been able to do that?

Mary I'm afraid that since he's ***your*** patient ... well, you're bearing the
entirety of the blame, and hence, you're the only one who can --

[Stops on the stairs]

Oh, Withie! Did the officers say anything that we can use?

Withie *stopping a couple of steps above Mary* Yes, yes they did! Only a jot here-and-there, of course. For you understand what it is with gentlemen; one of them will begin to state some earth-shattering truth, only to have another of them make some sort of ribald joke. Then they will all roll about in gales of laughter.

Mary *shocked, hand on cheek* "Ribald"? Dearest Withie! I hope that you closed your maiden ears to anything of that nature. Harvey, I'm sure, would not approve.

Withie, again ascending the stairs Our Harvey whooped more immoderately than the rest, Mary! He is a dark horse, your late husband's brother.

The camera remains outside Rosena's room, in the narrow passageway as the door opens.

Marj (*from inside the room*) Ah, here she is. Come in, Withie, you are much needed.

Rosena *faint (from inside the room)* Withie? Oh, blessed girl. My ray of --

The door closes.

There are some mutterings, the door re-opens and then all the other females troop out of the room: Marj, Mary, Lucy's nurse, a couple of maids. Marj closes the door behind her. There are whispers and looks; from this, we assume that Marj, Mary and the nurse are all heading back to Lucy's room.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene xv: The Bedroom Of Rosena And Sir William, Four-Poster Bed

Rosena is propped up in the magnificent four-poster bed. Withie stands beside the bed looking down at her.

Rosena *stern* Now, Withie. You and your father must do everything possible to move that man out of the house, unseen by these troops. And if it takes more letters to be sent to the Earl of Warwick, then for goodness sake, write them and send them.

Withie *astounded* How did you know --

Rosena *camera moves in* The King of England is a rotten Yorker. And by what I can glean, he is dealing with the Earl in a very shabby way. The Earl, Richard Neville, is a very great man, as you know, and in my opinion, he won't stand such Turkish treatment for very much longer.

Now, the Earl was once the mentor of the rightful king: our dear King Henry. He of the red rose. **Our** red rose. But they fell out over ... someone ...

Withie The Duke of Somerset, do you mean?

Rosena *camera into* Aye! That's the one.

close-up Withie, all you have to do is to persuade the Earl to return to Henry --

William Well, go on!

Lionel You have our absolute and undivided attention, old boy.

Mather She swore to me that the Lord had reached out to her with the certain knowledge that one of Katharyn Swynford's brood had sired a future king who will take England out of this stinking mire of corruption and make her the greatest country to behold.

Trent A Beaufort, do you mean?

Harvey A Beaufort brat king of England? You are joking, I hope.

La Boye John of Gaunt's by-blows, do you say?

Mather Aye! The great-grandson or such of those bastard Beauforts will one day rule England as her mighty king, uniting the white rose with the red rose. And these silly wars will be but a memory.

Trent *sniffing haughtily* I'd have your wife locked away in a nunnery for spreading such a taradiddle.

Lionel Or give her a good thrashing with a birch switch.

Mather I wouldn't harm her, not for the world. She's a lovely bundle, is my wife. No ... and she's never been wrong yet.

Withie stifles her surprise by putting her hand over her mouth, eyes wide open. After gasping in sheer surprise for a couple of moments, she crosses herself.

Withie *to herself* The Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, has prophesied that Neville must return the crown of England to Henry!

She is seen rushing out of her "hide" and up the stairs at full pelt.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene xvii: Lucy's Room.

Marj is walking about with the baby over her shoulder. Lucy is having her breasts massaged by nurse. Mary and Cornelia sit about, fondly watching Marj with the baby. Into this quiet, serene scene bursts Withie. She is excited as she makes an impressive entrance.

Withie *rushing* The Lord Jesus Christ has prophesied that Neville must return the crown of England to Henry of Lancaster.

The ladies all turn around, smiling, to look at Withie. She hyperventilates, looking from one lady to the other.

Marj Then we must pray for that happy event, Withie.

Eager, and full of business, Withie strides over to the little table which Mary has used for the Cranthorpe letters.

Withie *earnest* I'm of the opinion that "prayer" might not be enough to answer the purpose. What is required is another letter to Neville.

Cornelia *worried* More words where past words failed. And a drifting away from Godliness ...

Withie *excited and rushing* What did they nickname William de la Pole, he that was a bosom friend of the rightful Queen? It was "Jack Napes", wasn't it?

Ooooooh! I want to say "Margaret" but cannot find --

Stay! Who was that St Margaret of Scotland? Was she not --?

Quick! Quick! We must write this down, Mary! Where is the report you were writing to stipulate that the Lancastrian soldiers **must** be drawn northwards, and out of our region? Ah! there it is!

Withie swoops like a whirlwind into the cupboard, to find ink, quill, parchment. She is gently chastised by all the ladies.

Lucy Settle down, or you'll get heartburn.

Withie *to Mary* We'll add this gem at the bottom of the page. A bit of blank

verse as subterfuge.

Mary Withie, dear! Calm yourself. If you are as frisky as a lamb, then I'll catch it too and begin to blot my ink.

Marj What have you in mind, my dear sister?

Withie plonks down the writing equipment onto the small table, and yanks Mary out of her seat, shoving her into a small chair at the table. More admonishments from the ladies follow.

Withie *over-bearing* Now write this, Mary, in Cranthorpe's hand, as before, just here.

"That Malcolm's queen all holy should beside Jack Napes stand, there on the River Maine will find her. Kneel, knight, to her good fortune."

There! that's all that's needed.

Mary *carefully writing* -- "to her good fortune."

Why, what good will this do, my dear?

Marj And what meaning does it convey, I'd like to know.

Withie *aggressive* Malcolm of Scotland's queen was St Margaret. "Margaret". and in case they miss that, she was the friend of de la Pole (Jackanapes personified). And in case they miss **that**, the Maine runs through Angers. Angers! "Anjou". Get it? So, we're advising Richard Neville to dump Neddy the Yorkist and take up again with Henry, the true king. But via his wife, Margaret of Anjou. We'll forward it through the Bishop's offices again. Simple!

Mary And is this **all** we're writing? May I finish off and address it to --

Withie Yes. With a hidden implication that the Lancastrians must raise a mighty force to crush this usurper King and win back the throne for the true King.

Marj Well, it's a long message in a few cryptic words. Will the Earl comprehend your very hidden meaning?

Withie *rounding on Marj* In Jesus Christ's name, I hope he bloody-well does!

Mary, Cornelia, Lucy: Withie! Language!
together, shocked

Withie *white with anger* You've all made a huge botch of it, so far! I'm going to haul us out of the river, come what may. And I don't care **what** you think! These wars will end by fair means or foul, and we can get our lives back.

Cornelia, take that to Peter and advise him to hasten off with it to Bishop Hobbin at the first chance.

Cornelia rushes to obey the bad-tempered, imperious girl. Withie flops angrily into a chair and folds her arms, with face of thunder. Nurse subsides back into her chair, oblivious.

Marj *smiling naughtily* I can remember a little tyke called Withifreda Venervels who used to put on hissy fits when we sang to her. She'd make tiny little fists and try to punch us. Do you remember?

Lucy *smiling fondly* Oh, yes! What did we sing now?

Marj starts the singing, and Lucy, then Mary join in. Withie blocks her ears and drops her head to her knees. Then she sits up, laughing in spite of herself, to join in the singing. She looks utterly adorable as she sings. The song is of a country nature, with tune reflecting that which John Pearce and his players presented in ACT II, Scene v.

Continuation Scene: *Morph into the next day (sunny, filled with flowers), with everyone taking luncheon in the garden with officers Mather, La Boye and Trent. The ladies (Withie, Lucy, Mary and Marj) are singing for the party. There is no break between the singing in the previous scene and this one. The song ends and there is good applause and congratulation. Withie is in her best looks.*

END OF SCENE

II, Scene xviii: Beside The Stream

Marj, Lucy and Withie stroll arm-in-arm beside the stream. This is a deliciously bucolic scene.

Marj *smug* The funny thing is that our forged reports in Cranthorpe's name are actually working. Isabel and Clarence are wed, the troops have moved on to the North, and Warwick is even now making overtures to Queen Margaret. Or so the current gossip has it.

Lucy We must move on, too. Lionel is keen to return to his pastures and his stock, now that this menace has been removed.

Marj *very smug* Removed through our good graces. Not one man in 10,000 would ever credit that six women could pull off such an outcome, does that not occur to you?

Withie And all under the aegis of a man who has been lying at Death's door for so many days that I've lost count.

Lucy I'm loath to remove Mary, Withie, but I'll need her at Brace Park. 'Twill seem extraordinary if I come home with a new babe and no-one but a doddery old nurse to assist me.

Withie *reasonably* Well, I can't do without her, for who else can forge the papers?

Marj But surely you won't require any more such, now that the troops are gone?

Withie You're not thinking it through, Marj. The Earl obviously needs to be nourished with constant intelligence from his trusted subaltern. I have a man on my hands who is supposed to be that subaltern, supposed to be tearing about gathering said intelligence, whereas in fact that man is barely able to swallow mouthfuls of gruel. He is such a big fellow and it's all I can do just to maintain his bulk.

 What must we do? We'll have to keep sending these missives to the Earl or he will fall into a heap.

Lucy Oh, come! It isn't that bad.

Withie But it is. Here we stand on the point of putting the anointed King back onto the throne of England. It all hangs on Warwick, and you're asking me to take away his support.

No, the reports must continue to be sent to Warwick until such time as I can render up a live, fit Giles Cranthorpe. Mary must stay with me at Deepdene.

Lucy But I don't see --

Marj You may keep Mary, my dear, and Lucy can have Cornelia.

Lucy Excellent!

Withie No, it is not excellent. I need Cornelia to help me with the steed.

Marj Can't Peter do that?

Lucy *edgy* It seems to me that this Sir Giles Cranthorpe's needs must come before all else.

Withie *firing up* And why not? 'Tis England's very future that we play for.

Marj Here, what about this? Lucy shall have my maid Marie-Ann to order about as she sees fit. I can do without her for a few weeks.

We'll set it about that Mary ails. She is caught in the megrims or has suffered a bad bout of stomach-ache because Cook failed to properly broil the pullets.

Withie *wry* Heavens! I should love to hear Cook's tirade when you set **that** tidbit on the rumour-mill.

Lucy No, I like it. Mary cannot accompany me **yet** but will do so when her health improves. And Marie-Ann is quite an excellent choice for my needs.

This bodes very well, methinks.

Withie Good. Then Mary and I will busy ourselves with the next news drop, which will be: Warwick and Margaret must make a colossal effort to defeat Edward in battle. Poor Peter! He will be riding back and forth to Hobbin's palace non-stop.

Marj All in a goodly cause, though.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene xix: Giles' Sickroom

From the open dormer window in Giles' sickroom, the camera looks down at Marj and Lucy reprising the earlier song. They are in the delightful, picturesque garden. They look up towards the window, arms linked, swaying from side-to-side as they "serenade" Withie.

Withie stands at the casement window, leaning on the sill, singing along with them, also swaying from side to side in time with the tune. The dogs (Clan and Rufus) watch her.

A huge yell erupts from the kitchen, which causes them to cease their singing and begin to laugh. We hear Cook's disembodied voice. She roars out: very loud and very angry.

Cook *voice-off* Food poisoning? From my kitchen, d'ye say?

Marj and Lucy scamper off, laughing heartily. Withie continues the song alone.

The camera backs back, so that we can see Sir Giles propped up. His head lolls back on pillows, eyes closed and he breathes unevenly. Every so often there is a groan. He frowns, listening to Withie singing, turning his head to catch the sound.

Withie leaves the window and returns to him, still humming happily. As Withie tidies his face and bed-clothes, Giles suddenly and unexpectedly grasps her wrist, without changing position, nor opening his eyes. Withie gasps in surprise.

Giles Awakens.

Giles *thickly and with great effort* Where am I?

Withie Deepdene Lodge, in Sussex.

Giles Why am I here? What ... happened ... to me ...

Withie *baldly* You were murdered.

FLASHBACK

In the dimness of approaching night, with rain drizzling down, beside a stream, Giles fights manfully while on horseback, fighting with his sword, teeth clenched. The two assailants get the better of him, and he is mortally wounded, falling from the frightened horse. One man dismounts to deal the death-blow, when the other shouts: "Somebody coming! Away with us!" The man remounts and the pair canter off noisily. We hear a groan from Giles, who is bleeding to death in the stream.

A dramatic shiver races through Giles.

Giles I remember that. Some men set upon me. In the dark. I fell from my horse. The cold steel bit into my flesh ... and ...

Withie *soothing* Ssh, now! You may relive your dramatic near-death and rescue when you are feeling better. For now, you must rest and regain your strength. Oh, and your beautiful gelding is quite safe.

 Good-day to you, Sir. I'll look in upon you a little later.

Withie goes to leave the bedside, but the grip on her wrist is painful.

Withie Ow!

[Aside]

 Strength returning, I see.

Giles *gulps for air*

Who rescued me?

Withie

My father performed that service for you, Sir, and brought your carcass back here, to Deepdene Lodge. Then we all worked night and day to patch you up.

Giles

And ... who is he, my rescuer? What name has he?

Withie

He is Sir William Venervels.

Giles

Sir Will ... and you? You are his daughter?

Withie

Of course. I am the third and youngest of his daughters. I am called Withie, Sir.

Giles *dreamily*

Withie ... Withie ...

Now concentrating hard, still lolling back on the pillows, and still with eyes closed.

Giles *dreamily*

And what day is this? How long have I lain here in ... in this state?

Withie *bright*

Er, Saturday, if it please you. And you've been our most welcome guest for over 80 days.

Here is a long pause as Withie watches Giles trying to register what she has conveyed to him.

Withie *aside, sarcastic*

Thanks, dear Withie, for mending my broken --

Giles *worried*

Day ... day of the month?

Withie

'Tis the 6th day of July, in the year of our Lord 1469.

[Pause]

You really must rest, sir.

Withie tries to draw away, but he continues to grip her wrist. He speaks with much effort as his remaining strength subsides.

Giles

No! Stay one more minute, and then you may leave me.

Withie *aside*

A gentleman evidently accustomed to giving commands.

[Pause, makes a wry face]

And having them obeyed.

Giles holds Withie's hands between both of his own and brings them up to his eyes. With a huge effort, he opens his eyes and looks at her hands. Then he closes his eyes and kisses her hands, holding them to his mouth. Withie is uncertain whether to stay or leave.

Giles *suddenly*

And ... And who did you say I am? What is **my** name?

END OF SCENE,

END OF ACT II.



ACT III

III, Scene i: Filming At Edgecote

Outer Scene: At Edgecote, four of the young male actors are grouped around a laptop. We hear general shouts of "whoo-hoo" and laughter.

Young man #1 Oh yeah! Nice tits!

Young man #2 Again! Again!

Young man #3 Oh, shit! We've gone right back to the start this time.

Young man #2 No, play it all. Run the whole scene!

Our camera moves right in to pick up the action on the laptop screen. This should be clear, crisp film quality, not Dennis' camerawork, and full screen, although we can hear the boys in the background.

SEGUE INTO NEXT SCENE

III, Scene ii: UK:TV Drama Presenting King Edward's Private Quarters.

King Edward (sketchily clad in nightshirt and nightcap) cavorts with several half-naked girls, who giggle and squeal as he chases them about. [We overhear "Yes! More of this!" and so on from the boys watching.]

Throughout this entire scene, we can hear the king's vocals as he chases and catches and beds the girls, and we can hear their continued giggles and squeals.

In an antechamber, outside the king's private room, UK:TV George and a priest play at a dice game. The priest smiles naughtily at the goings-on. UK:TV George merely looks smug.

Richard (Hunchback) Duke of Gloucester [who will go on to become King Richard III] hobbles in and looks surprised (and displeased) at what he finds. Neither UK:TV George nor the priest stand to honour him.

UK:TV Gloucester What do you do here, your Grace? What business is this?

UK:TV George *bowing* Awaiting an audience with his Majesty, your Grace.
his head

Gloucester jerks his head towards the door, with a questioning look.

UK:TV George His Majesty is wenching tonight.

The priest titters but tries to hide it.

UK:TV Gloucester I can well hear that, George Neville. But why do you allow it?
displeased You are Archbishop of York. Use your authority to counsel my brother.

UK:TV George Your Grace ... er ... that is why you find me here, seeking an interview with His Majesty ... to instruct him in pious ways, according to the Good Book.

[Warms to his theme.]

I even have a speech to hand, my lord Duke. It begins:
"Fornication is no friend to -- "

Again, the priest titters but tries to hide it.

UK:TV Gloucester Oh for God's sake! Are they clean, these strumpets? They were
interrupts UK:TV George not dragged directly from the stews for his Majesty's pleasure, I
rudely trust. For that were the quickest path I heard of to poxy lesions
and foetid pustules.

UK:TV George (pretending to be shocked) raises his hand.

UK:TV George *feigning* Indeed not, your Grace. Let such thoughts wither on the bough
shock; then unctuous as do late summer plums. I checked the ladies myself. With my
own lily hands.

UK:TV Gloucester Fo! To say true, you **procured** these doxies for my brother, with
disgusted an eye to humouring him. Yes! You need to jig him along, don't
you, your Grace? ... So out of favour as you are.

*Richard Crookback hesitates, seething, watched by UK:TV George and the priest (who both adopt
angelic, guiltless miens). Then Gloucester halts angrily off.*

UK:TV Gloucester *from a* Tell King Edward that I'll visit him at a more propitious hour.
distance

UK:TV George, *to the* "Propitious" ... that's a good word for it, for what I do.
priest, leaning forward

*Suddenly, the bedroom door flings open and a naked girl rushes out. [We hear the "Whoo-hoo"
again, in background.] The door slams shut in her wake. The girl clutches a shawl to preserve some
modesty, looks at the two startled men, and then rushes off with a naughty laugh. Without too much
fuss, the men resume their posture over the game.*

UK:TV George While Edward is king, and requires my assistance, I shall give it
him. I would even deliver up every one of his enemies to him,
including my own brother Warwick, would it save my skin.

Even so, if Henry should be re-instated, why, I would gird my
loins to fight on his behalf. I'd use every treachery and trick that
I could muster to ingratiate myself.

So, as I say, "propitious" is an excellent word to describe the

means that I employ to survive in this heigh-ho world.

Priest *whispers* Because you bend with the wind, your Grace.

Priest starts to sway from side to side, grinning mischievously. UK:TV George joins in the swaying, in time with the priest. The noise from the bedroom is quite loud now. Both men glance at the door.

UK:TV George *honey-sweet* I bend with the wind. 'Tis the Neville way.

Background voices are heard, such as "Nice work!" and so on.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene iii: Helicopter Over Edgecote Moor

Reprise of Act I, Scene vii:

In the cockpit of a helicopter doing a reconnaissance over Edgecote Moor. "Helicopter" voices. Late afternoon on the day prior to filming of the battle scene.

The helicopter does a couple of sweeps of the potential field of battle. We can see now that there are tents and large vans scattered about. Loads of film equipment is in evidence.

Garth *pointing down to a spot over which the helicopter has just flown* That will be the Lancastrian forces just in front of the tents. If we film in the early morning, we'll get the correct light. Er ... over.

Disembodied male voice I don't want to change the lads from Red to White more than once. I want to complete all the Lancastrian stuff and then completely change shop to the other side. Over.

Garth *now pointing towards the pilot* That'll be over there on the higher land. Jim, take us over there, will you? Over. Over. Over.

Disembodied male voice Roger.

of pilot

There are string-and-flag markings for where the troops will muster, which starts on the next morning. Garth seems much happier than when we first saw him.

Garth *looking down eagerly* Yep, that's perfect. The Whites will march down towards the tents. That's completely the opposite light angle.

Good! Well, that's going to make it much easier.

Disembodied male voice Unless it rains. Over.

Disembodied male voice Clear skies for the next three days. Over. I always forget to say
pilot that ...

For whatever reason, the helicopter passengers laugh heartily.

END OF SCENE

IIII, Scene iv: Edgecote, A Private Corner

Real-time: not Dennis. Amidst a welter of film equipment and film people, Brian and Cedron discuss Sarah. We begin with a very close close-up of Brian, pondering. He is disturbed by something. He slightly shakes his head and makes deprecating face. Camera backs back, to reveal Cedron watching Brian.

Brian *under voice* I'm just not happy with presenting a **woman** as military historian.

Cedron Oh, come! Why ever not?

Brian *speaking in an under voice, but distinct* The British viewing public have certain no-go areas for women. They are: sports commentators, carpentry demonstrators and military historians. You of all people surely understand that, Cedron.

Cedron Rubbish! You know, I never realized that you were such a stodgy old fart.

Brian The expectation is that a male ... a man ... would explain the troop movements. I mean, the nuances of battle don't ring true when delivered soprano.

Cedron Sarah Callow's voice is mellifluous. A lovely mellow contralto.

 Besides, she looks gorgeous on screen. And she is ***totally*** qualified to deliver the Edgecote Moor dissertation.

Brian *shaking head* I don't think so. It doesn't gel for me.

Cedron Watch it again ***without*** prejudice.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene v: In Jason's Car, Approaching Deepdene Manor.

Marl ... and so there we were, hand-in-hand, as you drifted back into sleep.

Jason Romantic!

Marl Oh, and Lionel actually has a hunting hawk called Remy. When the menfolk set off for their hunting, they took some very handsome dogs with them; greyhounds they were, belonging to Captain Mather and Lieutenant La Boye. And this hawk of Lionel's. He really looked the part, did Lionel, sitting up straight in the saddle, with this heavy gauntlet on his left hand, on top of which clung the hooded Remy.

 And from all accounts, Remy did very well. They all did! Came back ruddy-faced, flushed with pleasure.

Jason And in possession of several bags of Deepdene's game, I expect.

Marl *enthusiastic* Yes! Absolutely.

Jason We're nearly there, you know. And I can probably show you just where they went on their hunting expedition. If it hadn't been for that old curmudgeon, Josiah Cranthorpe-Massey in the late 17 hundreds, the park would probably have remained exactly as Withie would remember it. Pity, but there you are ...

So, fill me in all these people. Lionel is ... ?

Marl Oh, sure! The Venervels tribe. My eldest sister ... I mean, Withie's eldest sister, I should say, is Marj. She is married to Harvey de Witte, a rather puritanical man of very stern aspect. Well, at least, that's what we all thought until I saw him half-sloshed. Anyway, the de Witte's have two of the cutest little boys called William and Harvey Jnr. And Mary is Harvey's sister-in-law, widow of his brother Desmond. Mary drags herself around wherever she's required, helping Marj.

Then my other sister is Lucy who --

Jason You mean "Withie's other sister", don't you?

Marl Yep! Of course ...

Lucy is married to Lionel Margrave, and they've just had their first child (Lorna). The Margrave's keep a nurse who is totally deaf, and sleeps all the time.

And that leaves Cornelia, our cousin. She just seems to be everybody's dog's body; and Sir William is Dadda (who rescued you from certain death) and his second wife is Rosena, who pretends that she's a dope but really is quite fly.

Jason And Withie and Giles have just shared a very tender moment?

Marl *dreamily* Yes! I can still feel the pressure of your fingers on my wrist.

Jason Not my fingers, baby.

I need your opinion here: do you think that they are going to become an item, Withie and Giles? Will they marry? As you know, I need to find a mother for my forebear Richard.

Marl *sing-song* Every boy needs a mother.

Jason I'm really depending on you here: it's just about certain that they'll marry?

Jason swings the car into the gates at Deepdene Manor, and drives a little way along the drive, then parks the car midway along the drive with the engine running.

Marl *no embarrassment* Yeah. Totally.
nods

Jason I ask because my family has honestly never been able to identify Richard Cranthorpe's mother. His father was certainly Giles (despite the suggestion that he might later have taken a *nom de guerre*); that same Giles who served the Earl of Warwick. But of his mother, there is no record. We've been pretty sure that it was the Venervels girl; but she in fact married elsewhere.

Richard Cranthorpe did very well out of the Tudor kings. He was a wealthy squire, entertaining the Sussex gentry on a large scale. It was he who began the collections of interesting artefacts which so clutter the Manor. You'll see them all very soon.

Now, this collection included three items which legend has it belonged to Richard's mother, whoever she was. They were the spool of gold thread which your Cornelia nicks with surprising regularity, a large wooden bowl or basin, and a scrap of what must pass for a piece of embroidery or tapestry, complete with Latin inscription stitched in gold thread.

Do you follow where my mind is travelling here?

Marl *realization dawns* Oh ... shit ...!

Jason Yes, quite!

Either Richard Cranthorpe bought Deepdene Lodge from Withie's father, and that's how come Deepdene went from the Venervels to the Cranthorpes. And that the 3 interesting relics went with the house as a sort of job-lot.

Or it was willed to him on account of his having grown up there as a member of the Venervels family, the relics being passed down to him from his mother.

Since meeting you, I now favour the latter explanation.

Between the time that Giles was almost murdered (according to your dream) and the battle of Barnet where we know he died in all truth fighting so bravely beside his friend, Warwick, there was almost enough time for him to marry Withie Venervels and father her son.

Marl Um ... and that means ...

Jason I'm just preparing your mind for the possibilities. If I show you the bowl and the embroidery, and you recognize them as Withie's then that almost certainly confirms Withie as the mother of Richard Cranthorpe (my ancestor). And thus, Giles's missing wife.

But even more spooky: if you have another one of these dreams, you may find yourself naked in bed with Giles, having rampant sex with him, in order that you can become pregnant with Richard. Get my drift?

Marl *without thinking* You're not up to it.

Jason *stunned* **What?**

Marl *frowning* Your wounds. You can't even go to the toilet unaided.

Jason I'll recover from the failed murder attempt.

I mean, Giles will recover. What happens when he does? What will Withie do then?

Marl I was actually thinking that I'm going to pump you for information. Your mind wanders, you know. So even though I'm tricking you into thinking that you're cousin Roger, you still ramble on about royal things. I'm planning a really good follow-up letter for Warwick which has *real* Cranthorpe input.

Jason Good for you. And I'm trying to suggest, as reasonably as I can, that if Marl/Withie and Jason/Giles wind up in bed together, it's not going to come as a surprise to either party, based on historical precedent.

Marl *laughing* That's the most original come-on line ever! Does it work on all the other girls you meet?

Jason grins, shakes his head and resumes the drive, with Deepdene Manor becoming visible in the middle distance. We watch the car disappearing down the drive.

Jason *voice-off* You did promise to stay the night.

Marl *voice-off* Yes, but you're such a bully. I can still feel the pressure of your fingers on my poor wrist ...

END OF SCENE

III, Scene vi: Edgecote Moor, Ground-Level, With The Helicopter In The Background.

The day prior to the beginning of filming (battle scenes).

Dennis and his camera at Edgecote: wander about.

What it is that Dennis films:

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- *George and Jodie inside a van, which contains George's armoury*
- *Longbows. Garth and Brian take the cameraman through the positioning for the longbows. The actors playing archers practise.*
- *Lots of walkie-talkie stuff. Brian, Garth and several others test out the connections between where the Yorkists will line up and where the Lancastrians will line up.*

END OF SCENE

III, Scene vii: Deepdene, Strolling About.

In the late afternoon, Marl and Jason arrive in a room where stands a large polished table. On it, old books are stacked.

Marl I'd forgotten that Withifreda Venervels married ... what was his name again?

Jason Jack Digby. Whom she seems to have loved to the end of her days.

Marl *mournful* Yes. Jack Digby.

What an absolutely acute disappointment. It's written in the Parish rolls, so it must be accurate. As plain as a pikestaff.

Jason To be brutally frank with you, I find Miss Venervels a bit of a cold-hearted bitch. Sorry! But she wed this Digby chap not very long after the Battle of Barnet.

Marl *surprised* Withie may have been forced into this marriage because she was expecting Giles's child. Is that possible?

Jason Quite possible. Only ... Richard would have been raised with the surname "Digby" and not at Deepdene. No. For Richard to bear the name "Cranthorpe", he would have been born as Giles's

legitimate son.

Marl If I could have another dream or two, I may be able to sort this out.

Tell me, it's been puzzling me; why did we spend last night with Auntie Lily? I had imagined that a gazetted single guy such as yourself would maintain a groovy bachelor pad, complete with a cinema-size plasma screen and surround sound.

Jason *grins* I do. Not the big screen nor the sound-system, though. If you're lucky, I might be able to dig out a Nintendo Gameboy.

Marl Was it so untidy that I couldn't --

Jason No, no. She was close at hand, and you required a lady's assistance last night, that's all. And Aunt Lily loves nothing better than to rescue people.

Marl *dreamily* Like Dadda ...

Jason stops in his tracks.

Jason *with a sweep of his arms* This is approximately where the old building would have stood. We found the drafts behind this panelling, during restoration three years ago.

And these books here on the table relate to the Henrician lodge. Nothing earlier, unfortunately; but there wasn't much alteration between the time of the Wars and Henry VIII's reign. However, the Elizabethans certainly ripped into the woodwork, building the first of the many wings. Anyway, as I say, these books should all hold true for what you -- for what Withie Venervels would remember.

Marl I've brought along a layout of the lodge, as I recalled from the dreams.

Jason *rubs hands* Oh, good! May I?

together in pleasure

Lovely Renaissance music floods the scene, and we don't hear any more conversation during this scene.

Marl gets out the folded stiff paper from her handbag and spreads it out on the large table. He is absorbed, and goes for a couple of books, flicking them open.

She points out the various rooms on her map, and he makes comparisons with books. They both seem to be happy, enjoying their labour.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene viii: A Small Sound Studio

The music we have just heard is being played by a group, who all seem to be long-haired University students. There is a collection of musical instruments on a table, as seen previously. John Pearce is both a main actor (playing the character of Percy) and the musical director.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene ix: A Superb Room At Deepdene

We are in a formal room, holding works of art and sculptures; fine arts. The music fades out.

Marl and Jason move across the room, with Marl looking about her in wonder. Jason will point to the small locked crystal cabinet, and then to two items he has reefered out of storage to place on a side-board.

Jason Now for Richard Cranthorpe's treasures left to him by his mother.

[Pointing to the cabinet]

There's the spool of gold thread. See how it's locked away? The key is hidden. So your Cornelia did pretty well to abscond with that relic. And here is the wooden bowl.

On the side-board stands a very simple but large basin, carved from wood.

Marl *delighted to handle the bowl again* Oh yes. That's one of Cook's bowls. It isn't really mine: I just borrow it when needed.

Jason Turn it over. Can you see what's carved underneath?

Marl *turning over the bowl* It's my handwriting, but I don't recall having done that. "W Cranthorpe."

[Looks speculatively at Jason, biting lip]

Maybe in the future ... ?

Sometimes, when walking by the stream, I take that bowl and the wicker basket, so that I can collect things for Cook and for Rosena.

Do you still have the basket, by any chance?

Jason shakes his head slightly, watches her for a moment, then carefully picks up a framed fragment of tapestry (under glass) and hands it to her. Marl looks at it in wonderment, rather than delight.

Jason And this is the famous tapestry. "Gaudens gaudebo in Domino".

Music: a mournful little tune creeps into the room. Marl runs her fingers over the glass.

Marl *looking up, her eyes bright with unshed tears* What's happened to it? It was my best effort.

Jason takes the frame and replaces it on the side-board. Marl wipes her hand surreptitiously across her eyes. Jason stands quietly watching her.

Marl *trying to smile* I used to sit in your room, waiting for you to wake up, humming away to myself, and sewing this tapestry. Stitching the Latin

motto wasn't nearly as hard as it looks.

[Looks about blankly, on the verge of tears]

Is this ... Is this all that remains of me?

Marl's face crumples and she is completely overcome, weeping softly into her hands. Jason promptly takes her in his arms to comfort her. She pulls back such that they look at each other for a few moments, and then they start to kiss.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene x: Back In The Studio That Night.

The scene is set in Cedron's office, which is a modern, glass-partitioned set up. Bottles of red wine, wine glasses, large plate of cheese, biscuits and exotic fruit are visible. People help themselves whenever. In this scene, people come and go, yakking in the background. It is all casual, natural and meant to look spontaneous. If anyone wants to ad lib, please do so.

Start the scene with Cedron lounging back in his large office chair, Brian on a couch. Beside Brian sits Jodie. We enter (as Dennis, holding the camera) during one of Brian's impassioned speeches. In front of Brian is a very well-thumbed copy of Huizinga's classic: "The Waning of the Middle Ages".

Brian ... the theory being that following the 100 Years War, the streets of London were filled with yahoos and hooligans who'd been trained to do nothing but fight. These gangs of lawless ruffians and mercenaries supposedly put the English legal system under such huge pressure that --

Lena swans in and interrupts.

Lena What's going on? I thought you told everyone to stay as sober as judges, and here you are getting poo-faced.

She promptly helps herself to a glass of wine and some food and sits down in a spare chair.

Cedron *pretending to be offended* "Poo-faced"? Never! I'm simply having a convivial restorative tonic with my fellow workers after a hard day's grind at the mill.

Jack and Garth follow Lena, taking wine and food, and finding somewhere to sit.

Jack *winks into the camera* Don't say anything naughty in front of Dennis, or it'll end up on the Web page.

Garth Besides, it's well-known that Cedron Dynsflytte is unable to function as one of the UK's greatest living producer-directors without recourse to a snort of red now and then.

Jodie *aside* More "now" than "then"!

Cedron *grinning and ignoring Jodie* Quite so, Garth.

Jack And anyway, some of the lads **will** heed your temperance policy. So it's not all loss-loss.

Cedron I don't consider this a loss. Actually, this is not a bad drop at all. I'll have to get Louise to order a few more crates of this stuff. Is she still here?

Cedron cranes around in a vain attempt to spot the office co-ordinator. Failing to see the office co-ordinator, he makes a note with a flourish in his notebook.

Tizzy and Sarah float in. There are other sundry people wafting in and out.

Brian *trying to recapture the conversation* Anyway, back to the point at hand.

We've side-stepped any mention of priests, friars, religious reforms (such as they were), the poor, social strata, the crime wave. I mean, there's so much of the mid-15th century that we've dodged.

[Touches the book]

One reads Huizinga and the depth, the complexity of the later middle ages simply leaps out at one. All I'm saying is that we're

merely scratching the surface. I mean, we can't ignore --

Cedron

Blood-letting, violence, men-at-arms, knights with lances under their wings.

People want ***bloodshed***, Brian. Do you know, I heard my second boy telling one of his buddies that he didn't think much of that Russell Crowe navy film, as there were only two battles in it. Of course, I buttonholed son #2 (being that he represents the target audience), and I quizzed him about the "fights" thingy.

"Oh, you know, Dad. I fast-forward all the middle bit and only watch the battles. Men getting impaled on cracking timbers or being blown up by cannon fire. That's terrific!"

General laughter and discussion. We hear some scattered comments: Master and Commander, I loved that film, it was marvellous, hot-headed youth.

Cedron

How savage can one get?

Garth

And if we don't keep up the interest level, Brian, the punters switch over to some dreadful cookery competition show.

Jodie

Or flashy dancing.

Sarah

But it's not just action-Jackson. What about some romance? There's not a tongue-kiss or bodice-rip in our entire drama. Edward IV was renowned as a womaniser and hard-drinking lad. We could at least jump into bed with him and carouse.

Cedron *pleased*

Already done and dusted, pet! We've run around the block with sexy king Edward and enjoyed a spot of tits-and-bums for our trouble. Can't say fairer than that.

Brian *really wound up*

Our drama takes place in the middle of the 15th century, at the time of the Renaissance in Northern Europe. This is the time when English music, drama, poetry take root. All I'm saying is that in this 90-minute episode of My Heritage, we by-pass the

New Learning without a backward glance.

Lena It's just that the "war" element of the Wars of the Roses makes for very exciting theatre.

Brian In our last episode, we covered every aspect of British society in the 17th century.

Jodie That's because King Charles was part of all that. You couldn't mention the Enlightenment without referring to the King, because he was totally a part of it.

Garth Are we in the business of instructing the viewing audience in the mores of late Medieval England, or in presenting a factual dossier on the life of Sir Giles Cranthorpe?

Jodie The Earl of Warwick and all his hangers-on were career soldiers. Neville was a hugely wealthy and powerful warlord. He honestly wouldn't have given a toss about culture or the New Learning, or how the poor were faring.

Lena Yes! We'd better not drag all that extraneous stuff into it. We'll have the critics bleating that we aimed too high and spread ourselves too thin.

Brian Meanwhile, there are well-respected critics who'll bray about the concentration on military matters at the expense of the *Weltanschauung*.

Lena *patting Brian* You just can't win with the critics, Ducky.

Sarah All the same, I'd welcome a spot of lovey-dovey amidst all the gore and mayhem.

Cedron *interested* Yes, how's the search for a romantic interest going?

Sarah We simply don't have a solid basis for naming Cranthorpe's wife.

We all believe that she had to have been the third daughter of William Venervels, the squire whose family had possessed

Deepdene for several generations. There's just no other candidate. But neither is there direct proof of it. "W Cranthorpe" etched into the base of a wooden bowl could just have been wishful thinking on the young lady's part.

One solid record indicated that she married a soldier of fortune: one Jack Digby. That certainly occurred **after** Cranthorpe was killed at Barnet beside the Earl, and most likely after the birth of Richard Cranthorpe, too. This Venervels daughter was apparently very happy with her squire Digby, living a long life with him and giving him numerous progeny.

[Sarah shrugs]

There's also some references during this period to her cousin, Roger Montacute. Now he was a distant relative of the Earl, which is interesting. His name pops up unexpectedly in historical documents in relation to Cranthorpe. He disappears from all recorded history after Barnet, so may have been killed there.

And the lady herself was named either Winifred or Withifreda Digby, depending on which parish records you read.

- Lena The problem is: how could this Winifred have even **met** Cranthorpe. He hardly touched the ground in Sussex, such a great traveller that he was. He just never stayed anywhere long enough to hang his hat.
- Sarah Well, there's a lovely local tale about Giles and the Venervels girl gathering chestnuts in the woods of Deepdene.
- Cedron *heartly* Ah, yes ... chestnuts'll do it every time!
- Lena That's where Marl is. Marl and Jason. They're trying to prove --
- Garth At Deepdene?
- Lena *nodding* Trying to prove that Giles and the youngest Venervels girl **did** in

fact marry and have the boy Richard, who (for whatever reason) was raised by his maternal grandparents. That puts young Richard Cranthorpe at Deepdene (which passed from the Venervel's family to the Cranthorpe's) at just the right time.

Cedron *excited*

It fits! It fits! I adore that jig-saw puzzle effect, when circumstances and events mesh together.

Garth

That would be splendid to close off this episode with the romance between Winifred and Giles. Very nice. Nice touch.

Jodie *shakes head firmly*

No can do, Garth. Cranthorpe dies at Barnet. It all ends there.

Cedron

Speaking of Marl, is she over this fainting business yet?

Jack

She's not pregnant, is she?

Tizzy

I didn't think Aussie girls fainted. Made of tougher stuff, I always thought.

Sarah *smiling coyly*

Jason has fallen in love with our Marl, if you ask me. And that love is whole-heartedly returned.

Cedron

Well, Sarah, there's the romance you so crave dished up for you on a plate.

Lena

Do you remember all that rubbish she was spouting when she came-to after that fainting fit? Calling Jason "Giles" and waffling-on about Rosena and the herbs. Now, I've been investigating and Winifred Venervel's step-mother was named Rosena. It felt to me as if Marl'd had had some sort of vision and couldn't separate real from fake.

Brian

Write that off as existence transferral.

Tizzy

Except that she told me about some little squab of a woman stalking her. That's right, and she kept calling Marl "Winnie".

[Clicks her fingers and thumb]

And the woman complimented her on the singing she had performed with her sisters.

Sarah But Marl only has brothers.

Jodie *shakes head* And Winifred only had sisters. How odd!

Garth *directly into the camera* You'd better wipe all that last bit, Dennis. Might be litigation ...
I like saying "litigious", but that's not the correct word, is it?

Dennis *voice-off* Roger! Switching off.

Dennis switches his camera off.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene xi: Darkness Of The Theatrette.

Cedron, dead tired, slouches in a chair. Dennis, looking extremely unkempt, lolls a couple of seats away.

Cedron *yawning* What have you got for us?
prodigiously

Disembodied male voice Neville meets with Queen Margaret.

Cedron Oh, yes. I worship this actress. She simply rivets me to the screen.

I'm going to be a bulb-eyed slow loris tomorrow. Do we still have any cans of Mother left over? Jump out of your socks after a couple of slugs of that brew.

Disembodied male voice There's a stash in the backroom where the CGI boys hang out.

Cedron Ha! I should have guessed. Triffic! I'll go and raid their larder on the way out.

Okay! Fire when ready!

END OF SCENE

III, Scene xii: UK:TV Presents The Defection Of Warwick To The Lancastrians.

This is not one of Dennis' films. This is superbly and richly filmed.

Sumptuous scenery: very professional, grand and aesthetic.

UK:TV Jason *voiceover*
(*describing what is*
directly below) Once more, the Earl of Warwick called upon the advice of Sir Giles Cranthorpe. He travelled to Angers in France, to meet with Queen Margaret. By this astonishing act, Neville had finally declared himself as a supporter of the unseated King Henry VI. Warwick had thus deserted the Yorkist powerbase, for which he had strived for so many years, and for which so many hundreds of men had died, to take up arms again with the Lancastrians.

UK:TV Warwick is solemnly admitted to the Queen's presence, and falls to his knees before her, with head bowed.

UK:TV Warwick Your most beauteous and holy Majesty.

UK:TV Margaret Your grace, the Earl of Warwick. The King, the true King, is at his prayers. We are afraid, Sir Richard, that you must deal with the lesser vessel.

UK:TV Warwick I would crave your pardon, Majesty. I am come all penitent to beg you to forgive my past transgressions.

UK:TV Margaret Consider them forgiven.

UK:TV Warwick I have turned away from the usurper Edward, Earl of March and beg to reunite my most unworthy person with the true King and Queen. I would serve you, Highness, and fight for your return to

the throne of England.

UK:TV Margaret To what do we owe this most welcome change of face, Sir Richard?

UK:TV Warwick God spoke to me, my Queen. His words came at a time when I was searching for truth, for guidance. 'Twas but a short message. But I understood its import.

UK:TV Margaret Well said.

UK:TV Warwick You are a lady of great wisdom and true piety.

UK:TV Margaret We are queen; we understand the Realm and what it will take to return us there as ruler.

UK:TV Warwick Majesty.

UK:TV Margaret That is, one should say, as the **consort** of the ruler. You are permitted to stand, Sir Richard. After all, you own most of our country. Our rule were not possible without your Grace's good offices. We certainly understand that!

UK:TV Warwick *on his feet* Majesty.

UK:TV Margaret To return to England as ruler Yes, that is our avowed desire. And what it will take (we are sure we've no need to advise you, Sir Richard) is to raise an army.

Now, one cannot hope to gather together enough men to challenge Edward of York, under one's own devices. But the yeomen of England will flock to **your** banner, Warwick. You see, the usurper's cruelties which he has meted out indiscriminately upon his loyal people have turned his subjects against him. More than a little. If the Earl of Warwick were to declare for our husband, the true king, and to join his forces to those of Lancaster, then more men would rally to the common cause.

'Twould be an awesome force indeed.

UK:TV Warwick And this mighty army would crush the Yorkists, and thereby return the crown of England to Henry. Is that where your Majesty's thoughts tend?

UK:TV Margaret *turning from him*

Yes.

UK:TV Warwick But your most Majestic Highness, the men will not put down their ploughs and leave their fishing nets for the grandson of Henry Bolingbroke. That man is considered to be too ... er ... too ill, too delicate in health to reign.

UK:TV Margaret *stern* Say true, Sir Knight, that it His Majesty's delicacy of mind, and not body, which precludes the men from rallying to his cause.

UK:TV Warwick *right behind her speaking into her ear*

They will, however, march for Margaret of Angou.

UK:TV Margaret Will they?

UK:TV Warwick *intimate* God spoke to me, Majesty. And I understood quite well the import of His words.

UK:TV Warwick strides around to face her, dropping on one knee and taking her left hand.

UK:TV Warwick May I kiss this little hand, all powerful as it is?

UK:TV Margaret smiles and nods. UK:TV Warwick kisses her hand, and then stands, bowing. He walks backwards then bows himself out, with elegant grace.

UK:TV Margaret watches UK:TV Warwick leave and then imperiously signals to her maid, who approaches. UK:TV Margaret makes a tight fist, then harshly rubs the back of her hand (the one which UK:TV Warwick kissed) vigorously down her gown.

UK:TV Margaret Wash us immediately. We have been touched by that vile snake, *venomous* and can still feel the contagion of his presence on our body.

I want to spit!

[Spits as if she has something dirty in her mouth]

He thinks to treat our royal husband as some pliable mannequin whilst he rules our England from behind the throne. Well, Neville the Cur, it shall not be!

Let us hope that our goodly husband's prayers pack that rogue off to Hell, for he will never grace the halls of Heaven.

UK:TV Margaret sweeps out of the room, maid racing behind her.

END OF UK:TV FILMING: we now return to Cedron and Dennis in the darkened theatrette.

Cedron What about the spitting? Keep the spitting in? Are we right with that? Because, you know, we'll have the Health Authorities down on us ... The AIDS people will be baying for our blood.

Dennis She's such a damn fine actress: we'll probably get away with it. She did that off her own back, you know: no direction ... living the part.

Cedron Incredible!

[Shrugs]

Alright ... leave it in.

Of course, when my youngest lad sees the finished product, ***that's*** the bit he'll most remember. "I liked the lady spitting, Dad."

They chuckle, rising to their feet.

Cedron Okay, Den. Early start tomorrow at Edgecote.

Dennis What's our ETA on the battlefield ... 4:30 am, isn't it? And you'll be there?

Cedron Of course. In person. Large as life. Nothing so romantic as greeting the dawn.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene xiii: Next Morning, The Edgecote Moor Battlefield. The Actual Filming

Dawn is just breaking on the horizon. As usual, Dennis is the roving cameraman. All the people in these scenes are aware of Dennis, and often have good rapport with him. Most of the people who aren't actors have headsets, or are "stage-hands" carrying and/or using tools. Tizzy and her helpers and all the other behind-the-scenes people are very much in evidence.

Vans, tents, caravans, four-wheel drives, horse floats.

John Pearce, already costumed as Sir Ralph Percy stands forward in the field, playing a haunting melody on English bagpipes. [I want this tune to be really fantastic so that it is carried around independently of the film.]

Horses are unloaded. Lots of people start to mill about, especially around the commissary van. We see the steam rising from cups of coffee. There is a low murmur of voices, mostly male.

George Tisdale's van has a large canvas annex attached to it. Whistling along with John Pearce's beautiful tune, George makes running repairs to a chap's armour, as the chap watches on.

Two actors in chainmail (archers) stand about drinking orange juice and eating croissants. Their helmets are nearby; they don't wear them yet for clarity of speech, eating and so on.

They look in the direction of John Pearce, unimpressed.

Actor 1 *to Dennis* It's half-past four and this is orange juice. We've been told to swear off the grog for the next month.

Actor 2 *put out* Is that John Pearce out there making that howling noise? I hope he's not going to do that every morning. Christ! What have we got ... four weeks of this?

Actor 1 At the outside. If the weather stays fine, they'll wrap it up earlier.

Actor 2 put out I mean, there's not a Scot in sight. Why on Earth bagpipes?

Actor 1 to Dennis, camera Did the English have bagpipes? I know the Irish still have them.

Dennis voice-off Yes. Don't you remember the Miller in Chaucer? He piped the pilgrims on --

Actor 1 delighted Oh, yes, of course! And would they still have been around in --

Dennis voice-off Most probably. Chaucer was in Richard II's time. Dicky-Two was kicked out by Bolingbroke, who became Henry IV. He was our Henry VI's grandfather. So, yes, I imagine that bagpipes would still have been very popular in England in the 1470's. But ask John, he's our music aficionado.

Actor 2 disgruntled Well, they're not popular in the 21st century at this ungodly hour. Is this what Hell is like?

Dennis voice-off And you blokes are archers? The famous English long bow.

Actor 1 brighter We're Yorkist archers, as you can tell from our tabards. That's today. Then on another day we'll switch over to become Lancastrians. The camera'll focus on different men when we swap sides, so that the viewing public don't get wise. Nifty, huh?

Dennis voice-off So, were you experienced as long-bowmen, or did they teach you here?

Actor 2 Yesterday was our first try. I don't think that any of the guys had done it before. But I honestly think that I could go in for this stuff.

Actor 1 Yesterday afternoon was turned over to tuition and practice. We practised what's known in the trade as the "volley".

And they don't shout "Fire!" because that was an artillery thing. Did you know that?

Actor 2 I was amazed at that. All my life, I'd never known that the command "Fire!" came from lighting the wick when you were about to set off a cannon, or one of those siege engines.

Dennis *voice-off* Fascinating. You learn --

All three together -- something new every day!

All three men laugh.

Dennis focuses on the armour-clad John Pearce, who stands in silhouette against the rising sun, proudly playing his English bagpipes.

As the sun rises, Dennis captures a panoply of activity on Edgecote Moor. The different groups break off, especially the Yorkists who move to one side of the field, facing the other side, as would be the case in battle.

The horses are being saddled and caparisoned. Those actors playing mounted knights are busy making friends with their mounts or standing about chatting.

A small group of armoured actors is being coached in sword-fighting, practising the various moves, how to pose their bodies and so on.

Brian, Jodie and Sarah (all with headphones at the back of their necks) are poring over a huge, bright board, covered in butcher's paper, featuring the layout of the battle.

They give us a complete summary of what will happen, just by discussing it.

The Yorkist archers form a line, guided by several headphone people.

Headphone person Men! Let fly!

Volley of arrows. This is repeated -- there is a burst of spontaneous applause from the onlookers.

Cedron *voice-off* As soon as possible, we'll get this stuff over to the CGI boys, and let them loose on it. They'll convert 14 real actors firing arrows into 100s of men. When it's all polished-off, it'll be stunning.

Gradually, we'll marry the men staging sword-fights in hand-to-hand combat with the finished article which will look sensational on the screen. All this will be accompanied by some marvellous, stirring music.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene xiv: Deepdene Manor, The Treasure Room

The camera is positioned in the wall behind the glass crystal cabinet, so that it is looking out into the room. Marl and Jason stare into the cabinet, gazing at what should have been the gold thread, towards the camera.

Jason See? It's gone.

Marl Grouse!

Jason We'll carry on as normal.

Except that I won't let you out of my sight. I want to meet this busybody for myself.

Marl You might not be able to see her, darling. No-one else has seen her but myself.

Jason Even if I have to stay awake all night, I'll see her.

Marl What I mean is: she might be a ghost.

Jason *with certainty* I'll see her.

Jason is sitting up in bed beside Marl, with a bed lamp switched on, yawning prodigiously. He is scrunched up, trying to work out the Times Cryptic crossword puzzle. Marl is fast asleep throughout this scene, up until Cornelia exits.

Jason *dreamily* "English seed housing brings back simpleton." In four letters.
"Dope".

That was too easy.

The door opens quietly and Cornelia enters. Jason sits up, alert, taut. Cornelia gives Jason a withering look of disdain, displeasure and contempt. Holding herself upright, head held high, she stalks over to

Marl's bedside table and loudly plonks the reel of gold thread onto the bedside table. Cornelia clears her throat. Jason relaxes back into his bank of pillows, smiling serenely.

Jason *back to his puzzle* Hello, Cornelia. Welcome to Deepdene Manor.

Are you any good at cryptic crossword puzzles?

"Untruthful probationer intended to addle seat of power" in 10 letters. Eighth letter is "E".

Cornelia *highly unamused*

If you want assistance with your word game, young sir, then you'd best speak to Mistress Lucy, for she's the one with the head for the puzzles.

Jason *still with the puzzle*

Ooh, I know what it is! "Parliament". Good!

[Fills out the letters in the puzzle.]

You know, what interests me is that I can not only see you, but I can understand you, too. I thought you'd be rattling on in some kind of Chaucer-speak.

Cornelia *prim and severe*

I've been able to communicate with the ungodly all my life and tried to mend their evil ways. And you're a prime candidate for reform.

You should be on your knees, Sir Knight, begging our Lord's forgiveness for your manifold sins and wickedness.

Jason *still glancing at the puzzle*

Now you're sounding like a vicar.

Cornelia *pointing to Marl*

This sweet, lovely, innocent girl has drained herself dry tending to your grisly wounds. So near to death as you were. If I'd known what was to happen, I'd have finished you off myself on that first night.

Jason

But what was I to do, Cornelia? She climbed into my bed willingly, without force or duress. I'm a normal red-blooded chap,

and she's a beautiful --

Besides, how am I to father a child when I'll soon be off to die at Barnet? And if I don't father the child, then where do I, Jason Cranthorpe-Massey fit in? If you can follow my rather fractured logic.

Cornelia *wags finger*

Don't you "logic" me! The Devil himself can dress up a plain tale in rich raiment. What you did to Mistress Withie was little better than rape, and that's a hanging matter.

Jason

Listen here, my good woman. There's every chance that I've been unwittingly involved in one of the biggest hoaxes since --

You know, if you're real and not a figment of my tortured imagination, I should be able to feel your presence, as well as see it.

[Thrusts forward his arm]

Here! Pinch me.

Cornelia gives his forearm a savage pinch, with lips pressed tight together. Jason yelps in pain and sits back, rubbing his arm.

Cornelia *grim-faced*

I'll more than pinch you!

Cornelia begins to leave the room. Jason calls her back.

Jason

Hey! You have to put that into her hand. That spool of thread. We've found that it doesn't work unless you actually place it in her hand.

Cornelia

Surely you can do that yourself, sir.

Jason

No, no! I meant you personally -- Cornelia. You must be the one to do it.

With an annoyed sigh, Cornelia goes back to Marl's bedside and pushes the spool of thread into Marl's hand. As she does so, Jason's hand shoots out to grab her wrist.

Jason *eyes wide open, very eager* Now tell me, does it all turn out alright in the end? Do all the pieces fall into place? Am I, Giles, Richard's true father? And is Withie his mother?

Cornelia *leaning forward* Let me give you a piece of advice. With your sharpest knife, cut off a goodly length of that gold thread, and have Missie here stitch the letters "GC" into your jerkin. Don't leave Deepdene without it.

Jason relaxes his grip, pretending to be interested in the crossword puzzle. Cornelia, tenderly stroking Marl's hair, gives Jason another withering, scornful glance, then departs quietly.

Jason *to the departing figure* Adios, Ducky.

Grinning, Jason continues on his crossword, but also stretches out a hand to enclose Marl's hand, the one with the spool of thread in it. He chucks the crossword and biro away, and shakes Marl.

Jason Hey! Wake up! What are you doing in my bed?

Marl *very drowsy* I'm just resting ... You were talking in your sleep again. I didn't want to miss anything.

Jason *continuing to shake Marl* Really?
Quick! Hop along to your own bed. Come on, girl, right now! We've been sprung. I woke up not long since and there was Cornelia, standing at your bedside, grim-faced and looking daggers at me.

Marl It's alright ... Nothing happened.

Jason Up, up, up with you.

Jason pushes her out of bed. She stands uncertainly, knuckling her eyes like a little girl. Gradually, the room has morphed into the tiny dormer at Deepdene Lodge.

Marl *whingeing tone* If I go, then you mustn't shout out anything. Save it for when I'm nearby.

Jason *gently*

Are my words so precious to you, then?

[Adopts a stern tone]

Now don't risk hopping into bed with me, Withie, ever again. I may be able to keep line when I'm in my right mind; but with all this wandering that I seem to do ... Well, you know ... I may forget that I'm a gentleman and a knight. And we're **cousins!** It's just not fit for you, dear girl.

Marl *frowning*

Nothing will happen, Roger. You're as weak as a kitten --

Jason

You're being absurdly naive. Don't do it again. Go on, out with you.

Marl turns on her heel and flounces out, like an irritable child, closing the door behind her.

END OF SCENE, END OF ACT III



ACT IV

IV, Scene i: The Studio, Late At Night

Dennis walks carefully along the passage, filming. He heads towards Brian's glass-fronted office. The camera picks up the sounds of a huge argument going on: Jodie, Brian, Garth. During this brawl, Dennis approaches right into the office.

Jodie shrieking angrily Are you being deliberately obtuse because you think it makes you newsworthy?

Garth blustering under the influence of too much red wine If one behaved less like a veritable fishmonger's doxy, then a chap might be able to discretely insert a word or two --

Brian also "on-the-go" Dear One, Garth is merely trying to --

Jodie vehement, almost frothing at the mouth I've explained it to you both 622 times!

The men followed their lord! Think of him as a patron, someone upon whom you hung your star.

If you were a liegeman of Lord Fauconbridge, as an example, then you followed him where he led you. If the Earl of Warwick marched you to **Alaska**, you went willingly in his stead. By birth, by tradition; your fealty, your loyalty belonged to your lord, and in no way directly to the king, whoever he was.

Garth *trying vainly to follow the drift* As usual, Jodie, you've gone off on a complete tangent when --

Brian *being provocative, insulting* Aren't you an Oxford graduate? The entrance exam must be a doddle these days ...

Jodie *rounding on them* To be on the wrong side, the losing side could honestly mean losing your land, your title and your freedom. There were herds of dispossessed ex-noblemen hovering in the woods right throughout the wars.

As a baron, as an English worthy, you had to align yourself to the winning side, whether Red or White or Vermillion.

Brian But the King --

Jodie *beyond exasperation* Who **cares** who the King was? The barons had the King under their control via parliament. You merely had to be seen to be a supporter, and all was well.

Brian *negative* No, no, no!

Jodie *screams, banging hand on table* Brian! You arse!

Brian *fierce* They were **both** usurpers! Edward through Warwick, and Henry through Bolingbroke. Allegiance was and always would be to the Red Rose or the White Rose, and to none other! That was paramount.

Garth turns angrily towards the door. He begins to "guide" Dennis out of the office.

Garth *ungracious* Dennis, naff off!

Brian *raking hair with fingers* Yes, drop it, there's an obedient little cameraman.

Dennis *voice-off* Now just a minute, lads! It seems that every time I catch something interesting or exciting or poignant, I'm told to back

away.

Garth Yeah, like right now, old cock.

Dennis *voice-off* I want "drama", my viewers lust for "drama" and here you are: you're giving me "drama". Just keep rolling with the brouhaha, will you?

There is an awkward pause: a fuming silence. Jodie, close to tears, whisks herself out of the office.

Garth and Brian stare at each other, and then Garth excuses himself, squeezing by Dennis with eyes downcast and red-faced. Garth is utterly self-conscious.

Dennis points the camera directly at Brian, who fidgets awkwardly.

Brian *softly and* All I tried to say to my companions-at-arms was that this is a
carefully, ruddy-faced very complex period of English History. Machiavelli would have
 had a field day.

[Waves vaguely at the lineage chart for Edward III on the wall]

I mean ... Look at this family tree!

[Frustrated, drags his fingers through his hair]

We only have 90 minutes, for fuck's sake!

Sorry, no swearing. Potty-mouth swear-bear.

Dennis keeps the camera rolling as Brian walks about absently, stopping before the chart to stare at it with hands on hips.

Dennis *voice-off* What we have here is the wars of the Wars of the Roses.

Brian, head down, sighs. Then he shakes his head, smiles and turns to the camera.

Brian *wistful* Yes ... Yes, it would seem that way ...

[Takes a big breath]

Sorry. Sorry, Den, for all the tantrums.

Edward III dealt us a bad hand by having so many children,
that's all. He's proving to be the *real* villain of the piece.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene ii: The Studio. THE BATTLE OF TOWTON In "Cartoon" Format

This is a dimly-lit, narrow winding corridor, threading its way through a rabbit-warren of small rooms. This is where the backroom boys hang out.

Cedron leads the way, followed by the camera as held by Dennis. Every so often, Cedron will turn to Dennis and speak into the camera.

Cedron You may have had a whiff of some undercurrents. Angst.

[Whispers seductively]

Bit of a tiff going on.

[Loudly]

To be brutally frank, Dennis, we've hit a huge snag.

Dennis *voice-off* You've run out of funds?

Cedron No, no. Ah ... strangely enough, we are cashed up to our tits, if you'll pardon that rather inglorious description of our wealth.

It's "time", Dennis. "Time". We don't have "time".

I mean, of course, that we have loads of time, but we just don't have "time".

Dennis *voice-off* That's utterly clear, Cedron.

Cedron *pretending to be smug and self-important* Yes, isn't it?

They've reached the room where the backroom boys work. Cedron stops at the door. Looks into camera.

Cedron *speaks fast here* You know, we're not like "Ground Force" where at any moment Granny will return home from her bowls tournament to find her weed-beds transformed into a tropical rainforest. Only we haven't even finished the bloody water-feature yet, and isn't that her Mini tootling up the drive?

Dennis chuckles at that, and Cedron has the grace to grin boyishly.

Cedron You get it, do you?

I mean, we've hit a snag simply because we are limited absolutely to 90 minutes; however, I need at least 150 minutes to wade through all the requisite material.

Cedron opens the door with a flourish and enters the room, followed by Dennis.

Cedron But these chaps in here are going to throw me a lifeline (I hope!)

Three beaming young men sit before several large screens, working on CGI stuff. The room is a complete shambles, chockful of techo equipment, and other impedimenta. On the wall hang some large schematics of the battle of Towton.

When introduced, the guys will wave or nod to the camera.

Cedron You've met Cedron's girls who mind the historical accuracy of our play. Well, these are Cedron's Sidekicks: Rani, Joe and Pete.

So, to cut straight to the chase, we've realized that although we just simply don't have time for the battle of Towton, we have to have it. Simple as that. Our public demands it.

That puts us back to 1461, miles before the period we're interested in. But the significance is that Edward snaffled the throne by virtue of that win. Anyway it's *in* ... time or no time.

With the aid of some wonderful graphics conjured up by these worthy lads, we'll please everyone and disappoint no-one.

We focus on the boys, while Cedron happily rubs his hands together.

Cedron So! Rani, you'll remember that several weeks ago I came to you, cap in hand, and put to you some ideas, hoping against hope for a minor miracle. Now, what have you got for me?

Rani's screen depicts beautiful, stylish, pleasing 3D horse/knight figures, able to move about singly or in formation over a verdant countryside.

Rani We decided that **these** figures were the most ... the clearest, and the most aesthetic in terms of your viewing audience. What we have done, then, is to step through those lines of engagement which you can see on the charts hanging there over on the wall, using these computer-generated figures.

Cedron You have red units for Lancaster, naturally, and --

Rani Yes, and white for York, of course.

Cedron This is quick and clear, *jā*?

Rani Yep! Yep! Very clear. I'll show you what we have so far. And Pete will do the voice; but it would be better for Jason --

Cedron Yeah, we'll pop his voice in later. Can you demo?

Rani Sure!

While the lights are switched off, and people move from chair to chair, Cedron looks into the camera.

Cedron Dennis, Towton was **the** major battle of the WOTR. It's not centred upon the Earl, and nothing to do with Cranthorpe (although he may well have been there: we don't know for certain), which is my excuse for giving it a minor role as a brief aside. But we are all agreed that we must have it ...

Cedron shrugs expansively.

From now on, the 3D, CGI will dominate our screen, in glorious colour. Pete's voice is unprofessional, so he'll only speak minimally. We should be able to get the drift irrespective.

Pete *voice-off* Well ... our overseas viewers might need to know that Towton is

a city in Yorkshire. The winners were the Yorkists.

Okay. So in the first frame, the two sides square up. The count of men-at-arms and dismounted knights is some 20,000 Lancastrians (some of whom hid in Castle Hill Wood). They were under Somerset's command. And Trollope led about 5000 archers. And on their right is the River Cock, and on their left is Towton Spring. That blob there is --

Cedron *voice-off,*
snapping the speed
along

And Yorkists? How many?

Pete *voice-off*

Er, same amount of Yorkist archers (5000) led by Fauconburg, here. And behind them, Warwick and Edward each led 5000 unmounted troops and knights. Then right up here at the rear stood 1000 mounted knights under Wenlock.

Cedron *voice-off*

By my calculation, that meant that the Lancastrians had thousands more men at their disposal.

Pete *voice-off*

Yeah, they did.

Cedron *voice-off*

But they lost.

Pete *voice-off*

The Yorkists started the day in the better position. You see, there was a savage snow-storm which incommoded (is that a word?) ... incommoded the Lancastrians. They misfired their arrows.

Then, just as the fight began in earnest, with the superior numbers of the Lancastrians making their mark, Norfolk rocked up with thousands more troops in a superb rearguard action.

Cedron *voice-off,*
admonishing

"Rocked-up?"

Pete *voice-off*

Sorry ... I mean ... You know ...

Now comes the grisly bit. These figures here (we tried not to make it too gory) are the Lancastrian men fleeing North, and drowning in the River Cock. This was pretty bad, because the drowned bodies were used as human stepping-stones by the later deserters. But we might have to pull that bit. Maybe it's too yucky ...

Okay, so the Yorkists won the day owing to the superior tactic of bringing in Norfolk with fresh troops as a rear-guard force.

Cedron *voice-off* Nice work. And Warwick at this time is with Edward.

Pete *voice-off* Yep. He was.

Cedron *voice-off, pleased* Good! Thank you, Peter. Well done, team.

Dennis is now filming Cedron rubbing his hands in sheer delight.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene iii: Battleground At Barnet.

*NOTE: there must be a subtitle on the screen: **Battle of Barnet, 1471**. Otherwise, there will be confusion with Towton.*

NOTE: this is NOT the dream, even though we have Captain Mather here. This is the professional rendition of the events. Captain Mather is included to provide an interesting twist. As usual, the blue shading indicates that this is the UK:TV production.

Captain Mather's body is being sniffed by his greyhound bitch. She whines fretfully at her master's death.

Close-up of Jason playing Giles, clad in armour, lying as if dead. Nearby, Warwick, mortally wounded recognizes Cranthorpe's armour on the body lying beside him. With his last strength, he reaches out to grasp the wrist of his fallen comrade.

UK:TV Warwick *whispers* Giles! Giles! Pray God he is not dead.

A group of horsemen trot up, with one man (the King) having copious ostrich plumes on his helmet.

All the men at ground level solemnly kneel, with heads bowed. The Yorkist sergeant (kneeling) points his gauntlet towards Warwick.

The York sergeant He's here, my Liege. The traitor Richard Neville has fallen at this spot.

Our camera is very close to Warwick. In the background, the King dismounts ponderously, due to the weight of his armour. As Warwick whispers his last prayer, the King walks towards him.

UK:TV Warwick *whispers* and his eyes open unflinching as he sees the king execute him.

UK:TV Warwick *whispers* God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; grant this boon to your unworthy servant Neville and take his vile body to ... *[taut whisper]* Ned! ... guk! guk! guk! guk!

At Warwick's last words, the king raises his sword and plunges it into Warwick's neck. Copious amounts of blood spurt out from the wound, and Warwick's words become a gurgle.

UK:TV King *sheathing his sword & speaks evenly, without sorrow, regret, emotion* Grant this boon to your unworthy servant Neville, and take his vile body to Heaven. Let him sit beside the angels, for with his death, dies all resistance to the house of York, and his demise heralds the fall of the house of Lancaster. Rest thou in peace, noble Warwick.

The King looks for a moment at Warwick's lifeless body, still clutching Giles' wrist, then turns to the other men who have remained mounted.

UK:TV King Edward Thus dies the Red rose, gentlemen.

King turns back to the sergeant.

UK:TV King Edward You there, take away the guts. Bury them in the woods. And

make up some sort of memorial, for this was a great man. This was the maker of kings.

No! Stay where you are! My wiser self tells me that I were better advised to cart his remains to London, for general awe and amazement. Without Neville's body, then unfounded rumours regarding his escape may seep out.

King Edward turns back to the gentlemen, as the sergeant and his men troop off with Neville's body, presumably towards a dray or wagon.

UK:TV King Edward Was there not some artist or painter bearing witness to our triumph?

Knight Aye, my Liege.

UK:TV King Edward Then have him capture this moment with his paints and his brushes; this moment when we slew Warwick. He put us on the throne and took us off it. Only a very great man could do that. We bear him no ill-will. But his dispatch and our victory must be officially recorded.

Knight I'll see to at once, your Majesty.

That man rides off in another direction to that which will be taken by the king's party, once the king has remounted.

Last camera shot, as the king and his party canter off is of Giles's dead body, with flies buzzing about his face.

Jason *voice-over* The Earl of Warwick and my ancestor, Sir Giles Cranthorpe died together in the Battle of Barnet, on the 14th of April, 1471.

Sir Giles left behind him a wife and son. Richard Cranthorpe inherited my home, then called Deepdene Lodge on the death of his maternal grandfather, Sir William Venervels. From that time forward to this, Deepdene has always belonged to members of the Cranthorpe family.

Then follows Marl, just as we have already seen her in scene iii of ACT I. She will deliver the final verdict on the Earl of Warwick, and of his part in the Wars of the Roses. This following speech will be accompanied by the usual artefacts, paintings and leather-bound tomes on display.

UK:TV Marl

Historians are divided over the essential make-up of Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick. He is seen alternatively as a Machiavellian schemer, and as a faithful servant of the Commonwealth.

Warwick was greedy for land, wealth and above all, power. Dubbed "The King-maker", this arrogant, ambitious and pretentious nobleman took the baronial wars known to us as the Wars of the Roses first in one direction, and then in another.

Nowhere equal to King Edward (the erstwhile Earl of March) in military genius, and failing to appreciate the strength and cunning of his enemies, Richard Neville laid himself open to the trap which was to be his undoing, at Barnet. This "Setter-Up and Plucker-Down of kings" refused to pay heed to the warnings of his advisers (chief among whom was Sir Giles Cranthorpe). Warwick died on the field of battle, with his loyal adviser beside him. But to us, in these modern times, Warwick's actions (or often, *lack* of action) remain as a curious, enthralling enigma.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene iv: UK:TV Presents The Award Ceremony

A glittery title ("My Heritage: Sir Giles Cranthorpe") appears in stylized script over the screen for a couple of seconds, then slides to the foot of the screen for the rest of scene. Fanfare and we can hear applause.

UK:TV Warwick (wearing the heavy chain of office) deals with papers, parchments, sealed documents etc as scattered over a table. Henry VI sits at the table, staring ahead, twitching and starting as UK:TV Warwick shifts the papers, or puts them into piles. UK:TV Margaret of Anjou stalks a tight circle, swishing her gown artistically as she paces about, fiddling with her jewellery. The UK:TV Warwick murmurs to himself as he scans the pages.

UK:TV Warwick It appears that I have some work to do.

UK:TV Margaret **You** have work to do?
annoyed

UK:TV Warwick *bowing to her* Aye, your Majesty. The usurper March is a shrewd operator, I don't doubt, but his is not the tidiest of minds.

UK:TV Margaret You have him stowed safe, I trust?

UK:TV Warwick *bows* My brother, George, he that is the Archbishop of York, does hold the usurper prisoner.

[Stops his reading; contemplating; tapping his finger on his lips]

I must decide what to do with Neddy ... a nasty accident involving a slip on wet stairs, perhaps ...

UK:TV Warwick returns to the papers. UK:TV Margaret stalks about a few paces more. She stops to stare at her husband, who has all the appearance of an idiot.

UK:TV Margaret And will our husband, King of England, Scotland and France, sit like a dumb cipher whilst you, Warwick, rule in his stead? Is this what you fought for, to be the power behind the throne whilst our anointed king twitches staccato as if a puppet?

UK:TV Warwick The good governance of England is my only concern, my Queen.

You know that I care nought for else.

UK:TV Margaret *fired-up* Vengeance, vengeance, Warwick! Execute March as the traitorous dog that he is. Cut off his head that he may taunt us no more.

UK:TV Warwick *wearily* He has sons who will rise up against us.

UK:TV Margaret *full of spirit* We shall raise a force, a mighty army, and we'll crush the spawn of this pretender Earl of March and all his hangers-on.

UK:TV Warwick *wearily* And on and on ...

King Henry, *still staring, wisp of a voice* Don't harry me!

UK:TV Margaret and UK:TV Warwick stop, stunned, blank looks. Finally, UK:TV Warwick asks, in some surprise and concern.

UK:TV Warwick Majesty?
surprised

Close up of King Henry, his lips working. Then, to everyone's amazement, he shoots up out of his chair and rounds on his wife and chancellor.

King Henry *loud and forceful* The crown of England cannot be chunked from one man to the next as if it were the taw in a Christmas game. One of us, one of the living relatives of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault, must hold the crown and keep it safe. These wasteful, unnecessary wars are sucking the very life out of the realm. Don't you see that?

The glittery title ("My Heritage: Sir Giles Cranthorpe") rises up to fill the screen in stylized script over the screen once more. The theme music envelops the audience. The applause is loud.

Formally-dressed presenter Ladies and Gentlemen: Cedron Dynsflytte of Finsbury UK:TV and NetBearings Alliance to receive the gold Sampson for "My Heritage", Episode Four, "Sir Giles Cranthorpe".

A beaming Cedron shakes hands with the presenter, and waves out to the audience as the applause rises to standing ovation.

We focus on a couple of large tables at the Awards Ceremony. There are loads of statuettes of all different types on the tables, and the group are very excited happy. The engagement of Marl and Jason is noted (close-up of Marl fiddling with her diamond ring). Marl and Jason wear forced smiles whenever the camera in on them.

In the car going home, the mood is sombre. Marl is driving. Jason holds an impressive statuette.

Marl Funnily enough, Professor Danton and I were related. Did you know? Related by blood. His father George married Beatrice Bevan, daughter of Lord Cavendish. And I'm the grand-daughter of Beatrice's half-brother Geoffrey, who succeeded to his father's honours.

Jason You're Australian, but you have a title? What are you: the Honourable Lady Cavendish?

Marl No! My father was a younger son. He tried South Africa and then Australia. Fell in love with Mum in Adelaide and that was that. But by then, he'd dumped the "Bevan" surname and just used the "Cavendish". No, no title, matey.

I want you to know what you're getting for your money.

No! Why I mentioned Professor Danton was that he let slip something that's been on my mind. About ... dreams actually.

Jason I honestly think that we should put these visions we had behind us. Let's move on!

Marl I don't know how I kept a straight face when they were talking about "My Heritage" at that ceremony. It was all such a sham.

Jason That's what I'm trying to say. Put it all behind you. We'll have a long holiday and then prepare for the wedding.

Marl I don't think I can.

Jason Are you getting cold feet?

Marl Oh, the wedding! No, that's ... that's wonderful and I shall love being your wife, Darling. I mean, it's not going to be easy to put the dreams behind me. That's why I was waffling on about dear old Professor Danton. He cornered me one time, in the manner of the wedding guest in the Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner, and spouted all this guff that appalled me at the time. But now I understand it.

Jason *shifts in his seat* Go on.

Marl Well, his father George Danton and my grand-father Geoffrey were at school together, and they went back to the Battle of Hastings by some means or other. At the time, it all sounded like a load of ridiculous nonsense. George had a great gouge out of his left arm; it remained all his life. He had passed it off as a bike injury, but in reality, it was a war wound from 1066. And ... Beatrice and Geoffrey had a little sister, Nerine. She went back to King John's time. But she would never talk about it much. Something about the jewels in The Wash.

And now me ...

Jason *pretending to be concerned* You're telling me before we take the irrevocable step that I'm marrying into a lunatic fringe family?

Marl Sort of. Make a clean breast of it.

Jason I've always found your breast to be scrupulously clean. I must admit (*entre nous*) that I'm appalled at the idea of becoming the proverbial wedding guest, who feels compelled to blurt out his story to any innocent passer-by.

Marl I've written out my share of it. We should sit down in front of a camera and record a DVD. Then lock it all away and try to get on with our lives.

[Wipes away a tear]

Only I'll walk along beside your little stream and look out for the baby water-voles.

Jason They just might still be there ...

Jason grips Marl's hand. They stare into the night as Marl drives along, both staring ahead, somewhat grim-faced. Ease out of the rainy night sky and segue into the narrow staircase at Deepdene Lodge.

SEGUE INTO THE NEXT SCENE

IV, Scene v: Deepdene, Narrow Staircase.

Withie (looking unspeakably tired) descends the narrow staircase which leads up to Giles' dormer. She is met by Sir William, who is ascending the staircase.

Sir William I heard the most infernal noise, Withie. Can it mean that the Carcase has finally come back to himself?

Withie *waves vaguely* More or less, Dadda. He is bellowing for some substantial food, and a mug of ale, and his clothing, and his horse. Demand after demand is being put forth. He wants to be up and be doing, so he states.

Sir William Ah, good! Three months is a very long time to be "with the angels" when one is not yet dead. I'll chat with him, shall I?

Withie Don't forget that he is your nephew, Roger Montacute.

Sir William *mounting the stairs past her, then stops* Yes, that's right! Oh, and by the way, Withie. Where on Earth does Peter get to these days? Every time I need his services, I'm told that he's off on some errand for you. He hasn't deserted us, has he?

Withie *firmly*

Peter is busy on my business. Yes.

[Aside]

On England's honourable business, to say true.

Withie moves on sleepily, and meets Mary.

Mary *concerned*

You look tired to death. Staying up until all hours ... have you heard anything to the purpose from him?

Withie *sighs*

No, he is remembering Warwick calling to the troops. I assume that in his chaotic mind he is returned to that battle at Towton, a few years ago, before he went into hiding.

[Adopts a false male voice]

Stand firm, gentlemen! Courage, men, courage!

[Own voice]

And something about a fire into which he fears he will be pushed. None of it aids our cause, more's the pity. It feels like it was all such a waste of time. Oh, Mary, I'm so fagged!

Mary, *kindly*

Off to bed with you, then. No, no arguments! Your father has The Corpse in hand, I trow. You may rest easy.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene vi: The Pretty Garden At Deepdene.

Sunlight streams down making the scene utterly bucolic and charming. The dogs Clan and Rufus are in evidence.

Sir William assists Giles into a chair, enhanced with copious cushions. Giles is fully dressed, and grits his teeth in pain as he is lowered into the chair. We can almost hear the muffled conversation.

Withie returns from her ramble by the stream, carrying the usual wicker basket and wooden bowl. Both are brimming with interesting things garnered during her walk. When she sees what is going on in the garden, she pulls a wry, twisted face.

Giles *with sigh of relief* Thank you , Uncle Bill. How invigorating to gaze upon a sunlit scene once more.

William *beaming with delight* And here is your little cousin come to see how you get on.

Withie Dadda ... Roger ...

William *in reference to her chattels* Loaded up with Nature's bounty, I see. Good girl!

When you find a free moment to spare, dearest Withie, perhaps you might like to read aloud some improving book to your cousin.

Without looking at all thrilled at the prospect, Withie curtsies and escapes to the house.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene vii: The Pretty Garden At Deepdene (Later).

Our scene is of birds chirping, insects humming: all lovely and very much an English wood-side garden. Withie now sits on a stool which has been placed at Giles' right-hand side. Giles stares into the distance, looking puzzled and unhappy.

Withie carefully opens a very thin hand-made book and launches straight into the first page.

Withie *reading aloud* The Papal Bull of Pope Pius II, "Execrabilis".

A horrible abuse, unheard-of in earlier times, has sprung up in our period. Some men, imbued with the spirit of rebellion and moved not by a desire for sound decisions but rather by a desire to escape the punishment of sin, suppose that they can appeal

from the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to whom it was said in the person of blessed Peter: "Feed my sheep" and --

Giles continues to stare ahead Hold it! I'd rather talk than listen to that.

Withie feigning surprise A Papal Bull, Sir? What could be more intriguing and meritorious, cousin Roger?

Giles still staring What is my real name? You do call me "Roger" and "cousin", but it doesn't feel quite right somehow.

Withie closes the book, clearing her throat.

Giles now turns to Withie What do I do ordinarily with my life, when not being murdered, that is? What is my profession? Am I a knight, or warrior perhaps?

Withie draws a breath Yes, a knight ... a soldier.

Giles frowning, trying to understand Then why I am I not with my brigade? Why have **you** tended to me for so very long, and not **them**?

Withie with decision It will be much better for you to continue as Roger Montacute. Much better. Less complications.

Quiet descends upon the pair. Withie looks about the enchanting garden. Giles continues to frown.

Giles drumming his fingers I know that there is something urgent that I must do.

Giles draws out his knife from his boot.

Withie, alarmed Hey! What is this?

Giles Do you not have a spool of stout thread with you?

Withie Er ... yes, my gold tapestry thread. Here it is.

Withie pulls out the spool from her pocket and hands it to him. Giles measures off about two metres then snaps the thread with his knife blade. He hands both back to Withie and stows the knife.

Withie puzzled What must I do?

Giles Somewhere amongst all my things you should find a dark leather jerkin such as one would wear into battle under the breastplate. I have a feeling that that jerkin may have saved my life when I was attacked.

Very well, when you find it, please add to your many kindnesses by stitching my initials into it with this length of thread. On the inside, not to be seen.

Withie *tiny voice* Very well.

Giles Not "RM" but my *real* initials. That will be the kindest thing that you can do for me, little cousin.

Withie bites her lip, and looks bleak.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene viii: The Little Kitchen Late Evening.

Cook and the wenches are busy. Giles's arrival in the kitchen causes great excitement amongst the wenches. Cook is very put out and remonstrates with Giles.

Cook *angry, bossy* And just what do you think you're a-doing in my kitchen, you great boy? Out! Out!

Giles *calm* I'm still hungry. I'll take some of that cheese and a portion of the bread.

Cook Oh, you will, will you? I never heard the like!

Unabashed, Giles calmly knifes a big hunk of cheese, and rips off a large portion of bread. He moves in leisurely fashion towards the fire and eats hungrily whilst staring down into it.

Behind him, Cook is ranting in a monologue, as she slashes and bangs with her knives and cleavers. The wenches scurry about, surreptitiously watching Giles and giggling. Cook launches into the following tirade/rant.

Cook ranting and chopping violently

This is what it's come to, then. Large people wander in and out of my kitchen, a-taking of liberties, as they do. Everyone must bow to their high needs and their high desires, I'll warrant.

And we are all expected to keep on a-working and providing food for this ever-expanding Venervels family. It was ever thus. It was ever thus.

As Giles watches the flames, he goes back to the battlefield (in his mind). Cook's kitchen noises morph into the sound of steel on steel, and Giles can hear himself yelling and cursing as he tries to fight his way from his proximity to the fires burning in the trenches.

FLASHBACK TO GRIPPING FIGHT NEXT TO FLAMING
TRENCH

He starts, nearly losing cheese and bread. Then he quickly exits the kitchen to the amazement of the kitchen staff.

[The "flaming trench" is a conceit. There is no evidence that anything like this was employed at any of the Wars of The Roses battles delineated so far in this work of fiction. But a raging fire looks great on film and works as a conduit for Giles to break out of his amnesia.]

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene ix: A Narrow Corridor Outside The Kitchen

From the kitchen, Giles has stumbled into a tiny, narrow corridor, dimly lit, and from there into a small wood-panelled room. On a small table lie the drafts which Mary wrote on his behalf.

Mary, singing happily enters the room, stops, gasping in fright at finding Giles intently reading the drafts. He looks at her silently then continues his reading. Mary whisks herself away. In a couple of seconds, Mary, Withie, Marj and Cornelia spill into the room.

Marj *urgent* Please don't touch those. They're not what you think.

Giles looks at the ladies in a measuring way.

Giles You'll be pleased to know, Mistress Withie, that my memory has returned. I've come back to myself, and I've remembered.

Withie stands, trying to say something/anything. She twists a corner of her apron in her fingers.

Giles's eyes move from the drafts to the ladies. The ladies are wide-eyed and nervous. Cornelia looks as if ready to faint.

Giles *rising anger* I've been a busy man, haven't I, dashing off reports to my master when by your account I've been little better than a babe in swaddling clothes, dying of my wounds.

Withie Please, I can --

More dawning realization comes to Giles. He now attempts to control his anger.

Giles Yes ... there's been some skulduggery here, has there not?

Perhaps I've been impersonated by one of your menfolk. For here was my horse, and my garments to hand. Was it your husband, Marj, Harvey de Witte, who took my place? But, how could our stolid Harvey convince the great Earl?

Marj Why, I --

Withie *getting scared* No, no! Not Harvey, no! If you --

Giles *snaps fingers* Lionel Margrave, then. Your sister Lucy's husband? I've known Margrave these many years -- Aye! -- and fought beside him in France. Ah, yes! He is game for such a venture, is Lionel.

Withie *passionate* Oh, please, please, no! You must listen.

Giles Why don't I fetch my horse and ride over to Gimney, to Brace Park?

Lionel and I can settle down cosily at his fireside, partaking of ale. He can tell me how he managed to forge my handwriting so exactly. We can laugh about this trick we've played on my closest friend.

Withie *despairing*

Giles!

Giles takes a last look at the reports and then slaps them down as he turns to Withie with face of thunder.

Giles

I'll to France. Yes, I'll beg a passage across the Sleeve and hie me to France. That is my only possible course of action, now that you ladies have worked your magic.

Withie *desperate*

Dadda will give you gold to tide you over. Oh, won't you listen to how it was?

Giles *scornful*

Your father, who let this happen under his very nose? Huh!

Withie

Dadda is not to blame in any way ... Giles, he saved your life!

Giles *cold anger, softly*

What life, Withie? Saved my life for what?

It's over for me, after what you women have accomplished here. This mischief has done for me, do you understand that? It's all over. Sir Giles Cranthorpe is no more. Can be no more!

He strides out of the room, closing the door behind him. Withie gasps, covering her mouth with her hands. Marj looks annoyed, whereas Mary and Cornelia sob.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene x: A Cosy Room At Deepdene

At the fireside, Marj sits in a chair, watched by her two little boys. To the side of the chair, Withie kneels, sobbing inconsolably, breaking her heart, into Marj's lap. Marj tries to soothe her, stroking her hair.

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Harvey Jnr She is crying, Mama.

William Jnr Mama, why does Aunt Withie cry so? Has she hurt her head?

Marj *lovingly* She is a little sad. Just a little sad.

With the boys watching closely (all concern), Withie lifts her head, eyes and nose streaming.

Withie *choking on her tears* He hates me now. There will be no wedding. He cannot bear me now. And I love him with all my wretched heart.

Marj looks down into Withie's despondent face. Marj's heart is wrung.

Marj *kindly* Sh, sh, sh! God fills the rivers with water, in the mountains, and that very same water finds its way to the sea. Yet, there are many different streams for the water to travel along. All is done for a reason in God's sight, Withie, though the course does not always run smooth.

Withie *grief-stricken* He told me that ... that I'd ruined his life. You heard him say so.
[Renewed and heavier sobs]

Marj *firmly* Our good Lord will guide his footsteps. You must pray, Withie, that Sir Giles will cleave to the right path.

Little William steps forward and puts his arms around her.

William Jnr There, there, dear. If you like, I could go down to the kitchen and snaffle a cake from Cook for you. Would you like that?

Withie *laughing mildly through her tears* Oh, little chap. That would be so very welcome!

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene xi: The Dimly-Lit Stable Of A Common Inn.

Giles rubs down his horse, and grooms it.

We hear Montacute's "Where is he?" from a distance, and then Montacute himself storms into the stable, face of thunder, looking about him. When he spots Giles, his hand goes to his sword hilt.

Montacute is almost bouncing with anger.

Montacute *very aggressive* Hi there! You there! What the **hell** do you think you're playing at, my good sir? This chappie over here tells me that you've been trotting about the countryside passing yourself off as "Roger Montacute".

Well? What have you to say for yourself, eh?

Giles pauses in the grooming of his horse, and looks the man over, very coldly.

This has the effect of infuriating Montacute.

Montacute *very aggressive* Unhappy man! You have been **dis**covered, and your foul scheme **un**covered! **I'm** Roger Montacute. The **real** Roger Montacute, related to that most worthy member of the nobility, Sir Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. How I can look the Earl in the eye after this treachery I know not.

And you (you blackguard and ne'er-do-well) are nothing more than a lily-livered cad, who's tried to filch my good name and my good character.

Still seemingly unmoved, Giles looks at Montacute with cold contempt, then resumes the grooming of his horse.

Giles *calm* I've not heard anything "good" said about Roger Montacute.

Montacute *beside himself with rage* You vile villain! I'll have your guts for traducing me in this outrageous manner! I'm going to plant a bunch of fives right on your schnozz ... and that's only for starters.

Giles quickly, neatly and effectively puts Roger out of action. All the ostlers and sundry servants watch in awe: Roger Montacute lies unconscious on the stable floor.

One man edges forward, looking at the unconscious man with worried face.

Man *concerned* You've never killed 'im, I 'ope sire?

Giles Not yet. This is Giles Cranthorpe, wanted for high treason and various other crimes. The Lancastrian Captain Mather is searching high and low for him. There's talk of a substantial reward, too; and I've a powerful yearning for that bag of gelt. So, I'll truss this fellow up and take him to Mather this very night.

Murmurs are heard from the other men. They are impressed.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*Switch immediately to Giles heading off on horseback, with the trussed-up Montacute draped over the pommel.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene xii: An Army Tent**

*In a rough tent, Captain Mather, Captain Trent and Lieutenant La Boye are stooped over a makeshift table, studying maps thereon. Sundry murmurs are heard.*

*The tent-flap is opened and Giles stalks in, carrying Montacute over his shoulder. Montacute now wears Giles' leather jerkin. The men turn to stare at him. Giles lowers the unconscious man to the ground inside the tent, then nods at the officers.*

Giles                                  This is the fellow you're looking for. This is Giles Cranthorpe, the traitor.

Mather *suspicious*                      How can you be sure?

Giles                                      I heard him called so in a whisper by a furtive man at Hollsbreadth Inn. Then, when I examined his clothing, I found the initials "G. C." embroidered in gold inside that jerkin. It can be none other.

*Mather nods, and then he and Trent inspect the captive. La Boye goes to the tent flap and looks out.*

La Boye *to Giles*                      Is that your roan?

Giles *pointing to the captive*                      No, it's his. I intend to keep it, though. That's a fine animal there.

La Boye                                      Yes, it certainly is.

*[To Mather and Trent]*

Well, gentlemen; we were told to look for a roan gelding. It looks like we've got our man, finally.

*Mather nods and goes back to the table, pulling out a leather bag full of coins. He dips into it and pulls out four gold coins. Mather hands over these coins to Giles, with measured disapproval.*

Mather                                      There you are. No doubt that's what you came for. Get on your way and stay out of trouble.

Giles *pretending to be upset at the small reward*                      Is that all I get for my efforts? Four mouldy gold coins? The reward is doubtless weightier than that.

Mather *stern and sanctimonious*                      You've snaffled the gelding, haven't you? That's more than payment enough for giving up a man to his enemies. Go on, get!

Trent *suspicious*                      Just a tick ... what's **your** name? I can't get over the feeling that I've come across your phiz before.

Giles *squarely*                              Roger Montacute, sir.

Trent *realization dawns*                      So that's it! Yes, I could have sworn ... You were lately an inmate at Deepdene Lodge, were you not? Recovering from the



ague, as I recall.

Giles *nods and bows* Sir.

Trent A very pretty lass took me to your dormer where you slept soundly. Of course, that's why I recognize you.

*Trent looks at Giles from under his brows, as if to catch him out.*

Trent And the lass would be ...?

Giles *smiling* If she was as pretty and sweet as the flowers of May, then that would have been my little cousin, Withie Venervels. Daughter to Sir William and Lady Rosena. Sister to Lucy and Marj and --

*Giles allows his voice to die. He looks a question. The three men look at each other, shrugging their acceptance of Giles' story.*

Mather *sighs* Very well. Get going. Off with you.

*With a half-bow, Giles retreats.*

La Boye I'll incarcerate the traitor, Sir.

*La Boye stalks out of the tent. The two men (Mather and Trent) return to the maps.*

Mather *heavily, to Trent* Of course, with the political wind blowing first one way and then t'other, this Cranthorpe may turn out to be traitor no more.

By all accounts, he's a fine warrior, and fought beside Warwick in most of his battles. Saved his life on a couple of occasions, I believe.

No ... I'm more likely to distrust that ransom-snatcher that we just saw here (that Montacute fellow) than a knight of Cranthorpe's ilk.

*The camera finds Giles's retreating form, as he rides "Jack" along the laneway.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene xiii:** Bishop Hobbin's Palace, Dark Of Night.

**NOTE:** From this point onwards, the Earl of Warwick and King Edward are NOT the characters we have previously met in the UK:TV presentation. Those characters were part of the Finsbury production and were labelled so.

Here, these two men are intended to be the "real" Warwick and Edward, as relived in the dream.

*Peter Larkin rides up on a grey farm pony, and exhibits his extremely nervousness. He dismounts, patting the mare's nose, then marches forward towards the bishop's palace. He hoots like an owl and watches the back door to the scullery. Watching, he pulls the parchment report from inside his coat.*

*At the back door, Hobbin appears, pointing towards where Peter stands. Peter moves forward, then pulls back as a second man reveals himself. Peter gasps, pushing the scarves around his mouth higher up his face. His eyes betray his fear. His hand is now shaking.*

*It is the Earl of Warwick himself who comes to meet him. The Earl pushes through the bushes, with hand on hilt of sword. There is just enough light from the torches round about to reveal this encounter.*

Warwick *commanding*      Declare yourself. Show me your face.

*Peter pulls back further. The pony has disappeared. The Earl, unafraid, stalks up to him, dagger in hand. The available light winks on the bright metal of the Earl's dagger.*

Warwick *menacing*      I'll run you through, you black dog. You thought to take Sir Giles's place, did you, so that you might pass to me false information.

Well, say your prayers to Heaven for I'll --

*The man we thought was Peter quickly removes his scarves: it is Giles!*

Giles *drawling*      Tut! Tut! My friend, you are about to slaughter the one man in England who truly cares for your welfare.

*Warwick, still holding his dagger, is stunned. Then, laughing, he stows the dagger in his belt and takes Giles in his arms.*

Warwick *relieved and*      Giles! Oh, 'tis you, in very truth, Giles! My Seneschal indeed!

*happy*

Giles *equally happy*

Archbishop! You always were a madcap, Dick Neville. I have heard that lately you have both the Yorkist king and the Lancastrian one under lock and key.

Warwick

Aye! You've just embraced the de facto ruler of England.

Giles

Then what do you do here? You should be in London, guarding your throne.

Warwick

Don't think to mock me, Gilly, for it is my throne indeed. You know that I am John of Gaunt's great-grandson. I've as much right as those other two fellows to be King.

*[Holding Giles by his shoulders.]*

Ah, it does me such a power of good to see you again! They told me this, and they told me that; but I adhered to your advice alone, unswervingly. Tried to convince me that you were dead, they did.

Giles *handing him the latest report*

This latest report must attract your most ardent support. Go back to London, and double, nay triple your guard on Neddy. He is not to be trusted.

Warwick *perusing the report*

He will dance to my tune, Gilly.

Giles *persuading*

There are deep-laid plots to break him out.

Warwick *carefree*

Let 'im run amok for all that I care. His standing in England is lower than a snake's belly, so he is highly unlikely to rally the support he needs to match Lancaster and me. He's a loser, Gilly.

Giles *shaking his head*

This must not be tried, for he will --

Warwick *eager*

Come on, my old friend. My old Seneschal. Let us take him on and crush him.

Giles *reasonably* Better to do away with him in secret while you have his person under your duress. Don't risk a battle, Dick.

Warwick *not listening* Say you'll fight beside me one last time. Like we did before, while our sinews are still lithe. Let us recapture our youth.

Say yes! Do not be obstinate and over-caring.

Giles *accepting* How can I resist you? I could never argue you down.

*begrudgingly* Alright. But I'll need my kit: breastplate and visor. I think George might have stowed them for me. And I need to organize a few tiresome things firstly.

Warwick *slaps him on the upper arm* Good man! Several brigades are meeting at Hadley, before they march to London. Tend to your affairs and then high-tail it to Hadley.

*They embrace once more. Warwick slips away quickly. Giles turns and walks to the spot where Peter stands with the roan gelding and the grey pony.*

Giles *grim, to Peter* I don't like this turn of events. He's not thinking; just acting on a whim. To let the Yorkist king escape his captivity for the hell of it seems to me foolish beyond words.

Peter *stolid* Mayhap he's been pixilated, Sir.

Giles *worried* I don't know.

Larkin, return immediately to Deepdene and instruct Mistress Withie that you met me, and that there are to be no more letters for Warwick. Make her understand that. Tell her I'll come to her when I can, and that I'm sorry we parted on such ... Well, just tell her that I ...

Peter *kindly as he mounts the pony* I'll tell her what she'll want to hear.

*[Reaches down to shake Giles's hand]*

Good luck to you, Sir, and God speed!

Giles *smiling up at Peter* And you! Miss Withie is right. You are a good man, Larkin. And I thank you for caring for me during my incapacity.

Peter 'Tweren't nothing. The mistress did all the mending of you, not me.

*Giles waves, mounts, and then heads off.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene xiv:** Deepdene, Beside The Orchard.

*Withie, heavily pregnant, sits in a little discomfort on a short stone wall. She looks up at Sir William with resigned unhappiness. Mary sits beside Withie, pale with weeping, her arm around Withie's shoulders.*

*At a little distance stands Cornelia, weeping softly into a shred of cloth and beside her is Rosena, looking tight-lipped. Standing before Withie and Mary, looking grim is Sir William, flipping a stout birch switch in his hands.*

Rosena *forceful* Come on, William. Do your duty. The law requires it, the Church requires it, and God requires it. It must be done to satisfy all parties.

Come away, Mary. Comfort the child no more.

*Mary reluctantly moves away to stand beside Cornelia and tries to comfort her.*

Sir William *steeling himself* Very well then.

My daughter, Withifreda: I am charged by God and Man to punish you for your transgressions. It is neither fit nor proper for a young unmarried maid such as yourself to be with child, no matter what the cause.

I had hoped that Mother Nature would deal with this unwanted

babe in her own way. But it appears at this late juncture that you will go through (unhappily) to full term with the infant.

Therefore, and theretoby, I must strike you at least five times with all my strength, as Godly punishment for your sins. And it is this very birch switch which I must use on your tender body.

*Cornelia continues to sob, while Mary dabs at her eyes with her fingers. William tries to work up the courage to punish Withie.*

Rosena *impatient with* Oh, hush! For look how bravely the girl bears it.  
*Cornelia*

Cornelia *sobbing* I could have stopped it! I might have intervened. Oh woe! Oh woe is me!

Mary *weeping* No, no. The fault lies all with me.

William *cocking an eye* Haven't done this for a good while ... might need to put in a bit  
*in his audience's* of practice.  
*direction*

*William paces about a little, practising on garden plants the most violent of whacks with the birch switch, grunting as he lashes out.*

Sir William *savagely with* Take that, thankless child! Take that! and that! Mark well your  
*teeth clenched as he* father's fury.  
*whacks the plants*

*Withie looks genuinely alarmed, and Cornelia wails anew.*

William *losing* Well ... I suppose that I'm ready now. As ready as I'll ever be.  
*confidence, rueful* *[Flexes his arms and clears his throat; does some head rolls]*  
I'd better get this over with, before my compulsory audience over there dissolves into hysterics.

*[Trying to be severe]*

Hold out your left hand, Withie.

*Withie holds out her left hand. Tears roll down her cheeks. She looks utterly beautiful and pathetic. Sir William's mouth is taut. He lifts the switch very high, and then pats it onto her left palm in the very gentlest manner.*

William *appealing immediately to his wife* I don't know what's wrong with me, my dear wife, for I seem to have been drained of all my power. And you know, I am usually a **tiger** when it comes to brute strength and physical energy.

Rosena *smiling* A veritable beast of the jungle, 'tis true. Your practice just before left us in no doubt of your intention to be merciless, good husband.

You must do the best you can, my dear. four cuts more and the deed is done. Give the child four of your best.

*Sir William draws in a big breath and then appears about to wallop the life out of Withie, but only taps her ever so gently on the palm four times. When it is done, he turns away, and hacks into the garden with the switch, which he then javelins over the orchard wall. He sits beside the girl, and takes her in his arms. Rosena, Mary and Cornelia join them in a big group hug.*

Sir William *crying* I could hardly blame you, child, for after all, I brought Cranthorpe here, and bade you nurse him.

Cornelia *mopping her eyes* How very brave you were!

Mary *bright-eyed with tears* Yes, she was a paragon.

Rosena Such a noble, brave girl! And it is none of your fault, Withie. For besides our wounded houseguest, there were any number of cutthroats and ne'er-do-wells stationed right in our very courtyard, mustering under the Red rose. Who's to say that one of those vile fiends didn't get you into trouble?

Withie Oh, I didn't do anything wrong. I swear I didn't! I don't even remember it happening.

Cornelia *surprised* But I found the pair of you in bed together.

Rosena *disapproving* He must have ravished her as she slept.

Withie No, Rosena, he couldn't have **done** anything, for he was too weak from his mortal wounds.

Sir William *grinning cheekily* My love! A young, vigorous knight in the very prime of his manhood will always be able to rise to the occasion, no matter how badly beaten-up he is. You've yet to learn what a cruel tyrant "Passion" can be!

Yet, I must say that it wasn't very chivalrous of him to seduce you whilst you slept beside him, but ... well, there you are!

*They all hug again.*

Rosena Now, Withie. We have all borne witness that your father duly chastened you, as the Law prescribes, and now you may go into the birthing chamber with our blessing.

Withie *uncertain* And you won't drown it in the well when it is born, will you?

Cornelia *girlish* Not yet! Not but what we may feel like drowning the child when in two years' time he or she is dominating the entire household with wilful tantrums.

*Gentle laughter as they return to the Lodge.*

Rosena Your sisters will be here next week. So you'll have no shortage of nurses and well-wishers.

Withie *vaguely* I suppose we should pray.

Mary Yes, yes. The efficacy of prayer.

Cornelia *nods* We'll all kneel together at your bedside.

*[Whispers in confidence]*

And I know what you'll ask God to grant: the return of a certain gentleman. Well, Mary and I shall pray for that, too!



END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene xv:** The Battlefield, Barnet.

Foggy, misty, ethereal.

*At the conclusion of the Battle of Barnet, amidst a rank debris of dead and dying horses and men, quite horrible to see, lies Roger Montacute disguised as Giles Cranthorpe, already dead. Beside him, almost on top of him, lies the dying Warwick, mortally wounded. Warwick gropes for what he believes is Giles' body. Camera is at ground level.*

Warwick *hoarse*                      Giles! Giles! My dear friend ... Do not let him be dead ...

*The king's party arrive so that the king may dispatch Warwick. We can only see the hooves and the feet.*

Yorkist Captain *voice-off, faint*                      That's Warwick on that pile of guts over there. Looks like he's still breathing, Majesty.

*The camera continues at a foot above ground level. Warwick tries to see what injuries he himself has sustained and begins to sob and gasp at the sight of his own wounds. A shadow falls over him, and he looks up, shading his eyes.*

Warwick *hoarse*                      Nedward! Nedward! For the love you once bore me. Make it quick and clean, I beg of you.

*A large sword stabs brutally into Warwick's neck and causes Warwick's shriek of pain to be lost in a gurgle of blood.*

Edward IV *voice-off*                      Quick and clean it is, scumbag.

Yorkist captain *voice-off, extremely indistinct*                      Do you want me to bury the guts in the woods, Majesty?

Edward IV                      Nope. Take his corpse straight to London and put it on general show, that the populace may know that the traitor is certainly

dead, dead, dead.

*Camera shows the exit of horse and man. A stillness settles over the battlefield. Then, softly, a man (Giles) kneels beside the supposed body of Giles, and lifts the mazard such that the camera can see neither the live Giles nor the dead one. The live Giles must not be identifiable at any time in this shot. He touches the dead man's wounds.*

Giles *voice-off,*  
*whispering*

*Illuc irem nisi gratiam Dei haberem.*

**Subtitle: There but for the grace of God go I.**

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene xvi:** Outside The Birthing Room, Deep Of Night

*Peter stands in the passage, weeping. He wipes the back of his hand over his eyes and cheeks. Then he works up the courage to knock on the door. From within we can hear women chatting and cooing, and a baby crying strongly.*

*The door opens and Marj steps out. She reaches out to touch his arm when she sees his distress.*

Marj *genuine concern*      Peter? Why, what ails you, poor man?

*Peter struggles to compose himself.*

Peter *shaking with sobs,*      Oh, Missie Marj! I did hear the most dire news; but would not  
*barely speaks above a*      credit it until I had received proper confirmation. There has been  
*whisper*      a calamity not far from London, at a place called Barnet.

Marj *worried*      Peter! Tell me, what is it?

Peter *still crying*      It was all misdirection and everything turning awry, with the fog  
and mist lying across the battlefield.

The Earl of Warwick's horse fell, and as he tried to regain his  
seat, he was mown down. Beside him, fighting grimly to the

death was Sir Giles Cranthorpe, he that lay in this house so long for Mistress Withie to heal.

As the throng of horsemen and lancers pressed on, one side against t'other, our Sir Giles was mortally wounded and landed on the turf beside his great friend and leader.

Marj, *shocked*                      Do not say that they are both dead? Sir Giles and Richard Neville?

Peter *voice cracking*              Aye, lady Marj. Sir Giles died where he fell, and Sir Richard received the stroke of grace from the King himself.

Marj                                      I cannot take it in ... King Edward gave the *coup de grace* to Warwick?

*A heavy footfall is heard on the stairs. Harvey stops short of the top step.*

Harvey *full of news*              Have you heard the news about Warwick being killed in battle?  
*Before either can answer, he nods towards Peter.*

Harvey                                  Ah! Larkin here will have told you. It's quite true, my dear, the mighty Earl of Warwick has gone to his Maker.

Marj *far-off voice*              And thus ends the Lancastrian cause.

*Peter, overcome, nods, sobbing anew. Marj turns and looks at the door, ashen-faced.*

Marj *whispers*                      Poor Withie and the child!

*[Comforting, to Peter]*

You must take yourself to the kitchen and insist that Cook gives you a fortifying drink. And tell her if she begins any of her nonsense that Mrs Marj will come down to deal with her directly.

Harvey *bonhomous*              Come with me, old chap. This news has hit us all hard. We'll settle you down in the kitchen with ... *[Fade out]*

*Peter hobbles off downstairs with Harvey. Marj supports herself against the architrave.*

Marj                      My God! How do I break this shocking news to Withie?

END OF SCENE

#### IV, Scene xvii: The Garden At Deepdene

*Withie, holding her new babe, sits in the garden, comforted by Mary. She sobs unrestrainedly, and Mary rocks her, cooing and stroking. The dogs lie about nearby.*

*Withie raises her streaming face.*

With *voice broken from crying* I cannot bear it, Mary. He was my lifeblood.

Mary *soothing* Shush, now. Think of the child.

Withie *catching her* I spent so many long hours caring for him, bringing him back to  
*breath on a stifled sob* life. And all so that he could go and get himself killed at Barnet.

Mary                      Now, now, your milk will surely curdle.

Withie                      It was all so useless. And now my heart is broken.

Mary *whispering*      The good is in your son. Richard will be your comfort for all your days.

*Mary rocks the sobbing Withie.*

Mary *somewhat tart*      And, Withie, please don't suggest that we fall to our knees in prayer. For the ground is wet and cold just here.

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene xviii:** Peter And Withie In The Woods, Picking Chestnuts.

*Withie, dressed in a simple country gown, sings happily as she stoops to gather chestnuts which she collects in a strong, capacious wooden basin. The dogs, Clan and Rufus, snuffle in the leaves. Peter sits nearby, watching the sturdy farm horse which carried them both to this wood.*

*Withie climbs a rise, singing and gathering as she goes. She stops for a moment, and looks sadly out over the vista. Suddenly, both dogs yelp and launch themselves into the bushes, tails wagging, barking furiously.*

Withie *curious*                      What do you find there, Clan? Is it a rabbit? Fetch the bunny, Rufus.

*Withie resumes her singing and gathering, with the dogs yelping and snuffing in the background. Withie listens again, somewhat concerned. Then she sings again. However, she becomes aware of a male voice singing with her, not very well. She stops, alert, listening.*

Giles *enticing, voice-off*      Over here, Withie. I'm standing in these bushes. Don't scream or make a fuss. It's me, Giles.

*Scared but brave, Withie picks her way to the bushes. Giles, swathed in scarves, stands tall and strong amidst the bushes, with the dogs jumping up at him, excitedly. He unwinds the scarves from about his neck, at the same time, patting the dogs.*

Withie *a little afraid*            Are you a ghost?

Giles                                  I'm very much alive.

Withie *sadly*                        I have cried bitterly to think that you were gone forever. They told me that you were dead, and I thought that I had died with you, so close had we become, you and I.

Giles                                  They told you wrongly. I did not die.

*He reaches out and nips her arm gently. She rubs her arm in wonder, and slowly shakes her head.*

Giles                                  See? Very alive: hale and hearty, as you see.

*[Laughing at the dogs]*

Hey! Yes, you're both glad to see me again, aren't you?

Withie *in denial*

But you **are** dead and you **are** a ghost! You were slain in the Battle of Barnet.

Giles *shakes his head, rueful*

I didn't get to the battle. God! I would have moved heaven and earth to have fought side-by-side with my friend. Instead, I was chained to a wall, writhing in despair.

It was all confusion, involving your own cousin Montacute, the suspicions of the Red captains and my horse going lame.

This is how it was, Withie. I was supposed to collect my armour from George Neville, and a substitute horse from Warwick. That all fell through owing to my failing to show up as expected. We had pledged to meet at Hadley, you see. But I was delayed on the road with my lame horse, then taken up under attainder as Roger Montacute.

Ah! It all went so horribly amiss to my eternal discredit.

Withie

You said you were chained. Then how did you get free?

Giles

The retreating army of Lancaster.

What a rabble those men presented! But my saviours, none the less. They had come up with the absurd idea to rally all the good people of Barnet to their flag. And even those languishing in gaol, such as myself, were freed from their manacles and leg-irons to take up arms for good King Henry!

The battle was all but over when I reached it. The retreating soldiers spoke, to my horror, of Neville and I having perished in the Yorkist victory. Imagine that, Withie, to learn from strangers that one is dead!

I desperately wished to see you, to warn you that I was not dead. Or even to send you a secret missive.

I had to find out who took my place at Barnet. That was a

nagging concern.

But Fate is a fickle friend. For so long did I need to lie low in case of recapture. Every man wanted to take me into custody for the ransom money.

So ... as you see, I have worsted my enemies and given Fate the slip.

*Giles grabs the girl and pulls her into his arms, kissing her with abandon. The dogs tear off to romp in the leaves. Withie finally comes up for air.*

Withie                      Wait a bit! Who **was** it then who died in your place?

Giles *ruefully*              Roger Montacute.

Withie                      Oh, no! My cousin Montacute? Did he purposely go into battle on your behalf? That doesn't sound like him at all. He was far more likely to run a mile from armed combat.

Giles                        Roger Montacute it was. I met him on the road and felt from his words that your cousin intended to ingratiate himself with his distant kinsman, Warwick. And so it must have been.

As I said, I arrived too late for the battle, so hid myself high up in a tree to watch the king deal the cut of death to my friend. I cried Withie. Lord knows, I am a man, but I cried like any girl to see that heartless slaughter of Warwick.

Later, when safe to do so, and when I had wiped off my unmanly tears, I slid down the tree and ventured forward. Although Warwick's body had been hauled off to London for public display, my supposed body lay on the field as it had fallen. There was my armour and my vizor on the body of another man. On closer inspection it was, as I had already supposed, your cousin.

I'm sorry if you feel sorrow for this untimely death, but such it is

in warfare. I had hoped that my being alive might soften the blow.

*Withie face wreathed in delight*

Oh, indeed yes. It broke my heart to think you were with the angels.

*Giles pacing, restless*

But this is not a happy ending for us, dear girl. I'm now known as Roger Montacute: a wanted man, fodder for the axeman if I'm caught. As I said, it was all that I could do to fetch myself up here at Deepdene without discovery. There is nothing for it but to flee England.

I've been such a creature of the shadows. Hardly anybody knows what I look like as Cranthorpe. A master of disguise, me. I slip in and out of roles ... I'll be able to forge a new life abroad. And then return to England when God grants us peace.

Beautiful girl, you know me more intimately even than my own beloved mother. And I shall love you until I have taken my last breath.

I've come to take you with me on my travels. Throw in your lot with me, Withie, and be my wife.

*Withie*

You'll need a fresh horse, so you must come back to the Lodge and re-arm yourself as befits a world traveller. Dadda will fill your purse with gold and kit-up a swag of clothes, and Cook will ply you with food and drink. Why not stay the night?

*Withie turns and progresses down the hill. Peter stands, staring in disbelief.*

*Giles follows Withie to the spot where Peter waits with the horse nearby.*

*Giles hopeful*

Does this mean that you accept my offer of marriage?

*Withie*

Yes, of course. But I can't go traipsing all over Europe with you. It's not to be thought of.

*Giles*

Why ever not?



*Withie rounds on him.*

*Withie forceful*                      Because you were a very naughty man! You took advantage of my innocence and you had your way with me. Just try to deny it!

*Giles surprised at this attack*                      Yes, I made love to you, several times. After all, you were found to be in my bed. Such a beautiful and buxom girl. What was a fellow to do?

*Withie*                                      That's the strangest way to effect a recuperation I've ever met!

*Giles laughs heartily*                      It was marvellous! It made me feel better and stronger straight away.

*Withie forceful*                      Well, you got me into trouble, and I had to be savagely belted with a birch twig.

*Giles frowning*                      Got you into trouble? Into trouble? Does that mean you --

*Withie*                                      Yes! I had a baby. **Your** baby.

And now, I think that we should give thanks for your eleventh hour rescue and pray for guidance from the Lord.

*Just as Withie and Peter (resigned to his fate of perpetual prayer) cross themselves and sink to their knees, Giles focuses on what she has just said.*

*Giles lunges forward and hauls Withie ungently to her feet. She gasps in fright. Peter jumps nimbly to her defence. Still painfully grasping Withie's wrist, Giles holds Peter off with his sword. Giles shouts forcefully as he holds Withie's wrist.*

*Giles*                                      Stand back, Peter Larkin! This is **my** woman, and I shall care for her body and soul, in all good faith; but right now, I want answers, young Withie, and **you** will give them me.

*Withie irrationally*                      Alright! But we should go back to the Lodge. I can't be questioned thus in the woods.

*Giles insistent*                      The baby lives, yes? You did not have it thrown into some ditch to die of exposure?

Withie                                      Of course not! He is a dear little thing who --

Giles *eager*                                He? The child is a boy?

Withie *proudly*                          Aye, you fathered a bonny son.

*Giles stands, holding Withie's shoulders, shaking his head slightly in wonderment and disbelief.*

Giles *low voice*                        For the first time in my life, I feel --

Listen! I'll ride the horse, with you up before me. The manservant can walk back to the Lodge. He can carry the chestnuts.

*Withie, perched up on the saddle in front of Giles, peeks back over his shoulder, to see the grim-faced Peter stolidly plodding along in their wake. Giles kisses Withie as the horse plods forward.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene xix:** In What Was Lucy's And Then Withie's Lying-In Room

*Giles enters, tentatively. He walks over to the crib, and finds his son swaddled, but with eyes open, looking about. Giles is deeply emotional as the child focuses on his face.*

*Gently, Giles lifts the child from the crib into his arms and rocks him soothingly. The child continues to stare at him. Withie softly enters and stands nearby, enchanted by the scene.*

Giles *cooing*                                My son, my son ...

What did you name him, Withie?

Withie *lovingly*                          He is Richard Giles William Cranthorpe, named for the Earl and for you and for Dadda.

Giles *still gently rocking the child*                      That was kind, to call him after Warwick. A truer friend no man ever had, Withie.

Withie                      Our son was born at about the time that Neville was slain at Barnet, as far as we can make out. Such tears were shed, my love, by all who heard the news. Even the Lancastrian supporters wept. And tears for you, of course. We all sobbed in each other's arms.

Giles *gently placing the child back in his crib*      We must marry. Get yourself into your finest gown, and we'll ride to the priest this very day.

Withie                      But, why not wait and have a proper wedding with --

Giles                        As Montacute, I'm under attainder, little wife. Just one whiff of my presence here and all the locals will be baying for my arrest. When we marry, you'll have to think up another name for me. I've all but worn out "Roger Montacute", and Giles Cranthorpe is of course dead.

Withie                      "Jack Digby" is a handsome name.

Giles                        Rightio, Mr and Mrs Digby it will be, then. But the child is to have my real name. I insist upon that, Withie.

*[Putting his hands on her shoulders]*

                                  And so it's off to foreign shores I go, though it tears the heart from my chest to say it. A man does not sleep easy a-nights when he wears a price upon his head. Anyway, there's little to hope for in England under this present regime.

                                  But the political winds will no doubt change, and they will blow me back to you and Richard. I'll come here so often as I am able, and I shall live only for you and the boy. I swear it!

Withie *grins*                You may write to me.

Giles                        Of course. I'll tell you how I am faring.

Withie                      What will you do? How will you live?

Giles *shrugs shoulders* I can manage a stable of horses or become a mercenary.  
Perhaps I'll work with a troupe of itinerant actors. Who knows?  
There's always lots of ways to rub along.

Withie Needs must that the Devil drives, then?

Giles Precisely!

But come along, my bride, and stand beside Jack Digby at the altar whilst we speak our Holy vows.

*He kisses her with great affection, and then they rush outside.*

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene xx:** The Orchard

*Withie sits in the sunny orchard, pregnant again, watching Richard (a year-old toddler) playing about. She reads a letter, smiling broadly. She fiddles with the spool of gold thread as she does so. The scene is one of bucolic loveliness.*

END OF SCENE

END OF DREAM

#### **EPILOGUE:** The Death of Geoffrey Bevan, Lord Cavendish

*Music: piquant and lovely.*

*Geoffrey Bevan is found to have died in his sleep. His elderly daughter, Beatrice (whom we first met as a lively three-year-old in "Hastings"), stands beside the bed, weeping, as the doctor gently covers Geoffrey's face with the sheet.*

Beatrice *sad* His last words were so haunting ...

Doctor I'm sorry, Ma'am. I didn't quite catch --

Beatrice *smiling through her tears* He told me that he's on his way to Egilstead.

Doctor Was that his old home?

*Beatrice smiles, whilst her tears gather and fall. The music at this point is utterly gut-wrenching and sweet.*

Beatrice *nods* Yes ...

Egilstead was his home, his real home. He's going back there now, I expect.

*The camera backs away. At the doorway of the bedroom, behind Beatrice, the young Snarr from "Hastings" stands, leaning back on the architrave. He bears a quiver full of arrows on his shoulder and carries a Norman bow. He turns and walks off.*

*Music: rises into a sweeping theme, ready for the closing credits to roll through.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV

END OF FILM

Credits roll through.