INT. PALACE. DAY. FLASH BACK (F/B) 1 - (2 AUGUST 1826, 15:25)

We open in the unexpected, surreal world of the four Genii: four children (CHARLOTTE age 10, BRANWELL, 9, EMILY, 8, ANNE, 6) with haloes of fire encircling their heads, race through the corridors of a Gothic palace. BRANWELL is clutching a box (the size of a shoe box) and he's struggling to keep the lid on, because there's something in there that wants to get out. They're all excited.

They race into a room with a table in it. BRANWELL throws the box onto the table. The lid flips off, and instantly four men jump or climb out, fully grown, but no more than three inches high, each of them a live toy: THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, CAPTAIN WILLIAM EDWARD PARRY and CAPTAIN JOHN ROSS. Each of them wields a sword, the first two in military uniform, the second two wrapped in bear skins (they're Arctic explorers) and naval uniform. The children are excited and delighted.

The DUKE OF WELLINGTON is just as splendid and snooty as you would expect -

DUKE OF WELLINGTON
WHAT THE HELL is going on?

He looks up and sees the four Genii towering over him, staring down at him with delight. The other three brave men have already noticed the Genii. BONAPARTE is just as mean, moody and magnificent as we might expect -

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE
Qui sont ces gens?!

In such esteemed company, PARRY and ROSS are both wise enough to keep quiet and bide their time to see how things pan out.

PARRY
(confidentially to ROSS)
They’ll tear us limb from limb.

ROSS
(awe struck)
I’ve crossed the Arctic and seen nothing like it.

It’s at this point that ROSS and PARRY land on a tacit understanding to make a run for it. PARRY murmurs “Run”, to ROSS. Just as they disperse, BRANWELL shouts -

BRANWELL
(thrilled)
Down on them! Instantly!
CHARLOTTE grabs the DUKE OF WELLINGTON, EMILY grabs PARRY, tiny giant ANNE grabs ROSS, and BRANWELL grabs NAPOLEON. As soon as they do, the four men become wooden soldiers in the children’s hands.

BRANWELL (CONT’D)
Know you that I give into your protection - but not for your own - these mortals whom you hold in your hands.

EMILY addresses CHARLOTTE –

EMILY
What’s yours called?

CHARLOTTE
(she peers closely at him)
Wellesley.

EMILY
This. Is Gravey. Because he looks a bit...
(...and this pleases her)
Grave.

ANNE
Mine’s called –

CHARLOTTE
Waiting Boy.

ANNE
Is it? Why?

CHARLOTTE
Yes! Because he’s a queer looking little thing, Anne. Much like yourself.

EMILY
Look who’s talking.

BRANWELL
This is Sneaky.
(he addresses NAPOLEON – )
Thou art under my protection, and I will watch over thy life, for I tell you all –
(he addresses SNEAKY along with the other three wooden soldiers that his sisters are holding)
- that one day... you shall be kings.

Then BRANWELL looks up at his sisters with a smile, he’s so excited by this. These toy soldiers are the best thing, ever.
The sisters smile back, delighted with the new toys. And we know that one day, CHARLOTTE, EMILY and ANNE really will be kings.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY. F/B 1 - (2 AUGUST 1826, 15:25)
INTO NIGHT 1. DUSK - (12 JULY 1845, 21.55)

TITLE SEQUENCE

We see the same distinctive shoe-size box, and the wooden soldiers – shiny and new – are left chucked about like the children have abandoned them on the table in the parsonage parlour, whilst they’re off squealing in another room. We also see abandoned on the table a detailed map of the Glasstown Confederacy, drawn by precocious 9-year-old BRANWELL.

Then we cut to the book shelf by the window in the parlour, with one soldier – the only one left – battered and chewed and chipped, nineteen years later, like it’s a bit of an ornament now, a treasured memento of a happy childhood.

We’ve moved from 1826 to 1845.

Bright, glorious sunlight through the window illuminates the battered soldier. Gradually dusk falls.

EXT. MAIN STREET/CHURCH LANE, HAWORTH. NIGHT 1. DUSK - (12 JULY 1845, 21.55)

Dusk. It’s five to ten in the evening. Haworth Main Street. Saturday 12th July, 1845. The street’s busy: it’s a warm Saturday evening. The workers (men) sit outside drinking. A tiny woman (she’s oddly small, 4’9”, about the size of a 12-year-old) walks up the street and turns left up Church Lane. This is 29-year-old bespectacled, myopic CHARLOTTE BRONTË. She walks quickly, efficiently, she’s eager to get home, she’s just walked four miles from Keighley. Behind her we glimpse the Black Bull, lit up warmly and doing trade.

As she approaches the Parsonage the gate is further up than it is now, it’s nearer the back of the house, and she goes in through the back door. (The Wade extension doesn’t exist).

CHARLOTTE’s voice is clipped and intelligent; we sense a sharp wit under the voice. She speaks in a quiet Yorkshire accent.

CHARLOTTE
(voice over)
Dear Ellen. It was ten o’clock when I got home. I found Branwell ill. He is so very often these days owing to his own fault.

(MORE)
I was therefore surprised at first, but when Anne informed me of the immediate cause of his present illness -

INT. PARSONAGE, BACK KITCHEN/KITCHEN/HALLWAY. NIGHT 1. DUSK
CONTINUOUS - (12 JULY 1845, 21:57)

ANNE BRONTË (25) has just let CHARLOTTE in. They head through the back kitchen, then the kitchen, and into the hallway as they talk. A couple of dogs (a spaniel, FLOSSY and KEEPER, a stocky bull mastiff) greet CHARLOTTE happily like dogs do.

CHARLOTTE
(vo continuous)
- I was greatly shocked.

ANNE
How was the journey?

CHARLOTTE
Pleasant.

ANNE
How was Miss Nussey?

CHARLOTTE
Well. Did my box arrive safely?

ANNE
In our room, we took it up, me and Emily.

CHARLOTTE realises (as she reaches the hallway) that she can hear raised voices from through in the parlour.

CHARLOTTE
What’s - ?

ANNE’s anxious. Annoyed. Embarrassed.

ANNE
Branwell. He’s been drinking. He had a letter. From Mr. Robinson. This last Thursday. He’s been dismissed.

CHARLOTTE’s incredulous. Which of the fifteen questions that flood into her brain to ask first?

CHARLOTTE
How does he do it?

ANNE
[I] -
CHARLOTTE
It’s every job he’s ever [had] -

ANNE
I know, but this is different.

CHARLOTTE
How?

ANNE
Nothing was spelled out. In the letter. But he – him and Mrs. Robinson –
(she struggles)
...I had reason to know that they were –
(it embarrasses her to say it, she can feel her face going red)
carrying on. With one another. And I don’t know – I can only assume – that Mr. Robinson’s found out, and that’s what it’s about.

CHARLOTTE struggles to take this in. This is enormous, it’s huge. Not just the age gap, but the class gap, as well as the transgression itself. The enormity can’t be over-emphasised.

CHARLOTTE
Carrying on...? How?
(ANNE is tongue-tied. CHARLOTTE mouths it - )

Congress?
(ANNE doesn’t deny it. CHARLOTTE’S utterly incredulous: is BRANWELL mad?)

Mr. Robinson’s wife?

ANNE’s relieved finally to be able to tell someone, bad as it all is -

ANNE
It’s why I resigned. I couldn’t look people in the face. I’ve known for months. (she’s burdened with the knowledge. A moment, then CHARLOTTE heads decisively for the parlour door. ANNE grabs her)
Papa doesn’t know. He just knows he’s been dismissed, he doesn’t know why. Emily does, I told her. And of course we don’t know that that is the reason, [but] -
But it is.

CHARLOTTE
Where’s Emily?

ANNE indicates (with a nod of the head) that EMILY’s in there, with them. We hear 68-year-old PATRICK, who’s doing his utmost to keep calm -

PATRICK
(oov)
The point. That I’m trying to make. Is that surely you must have some idea what it’s about [and] -

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. NIGHT 1. DUSK. CONTINUOUS - (12 JULY 1845, 21:59)

BRANWELL’s livid; angry and emotional. He has tears streaming down his face. He’s very drunk, there’s an upturned dining chair in evidence of his violent mood. It looks like PATRICK and EMILY are dealing with an injured, dangerous, volatile animal. PATRICK is almost blind with cataracts, and we get the idea that EMILY’s in here for damage limitation purposes should BRANWELL get even more violent. (EMILY’s 5’7”, almost a foot taller than her diminutive big sister).

BRANWELL
You think repeating the question enough times will suddenly make me able to answer it?

PATRICK
- and if not then one of us must write to the man and ask for some kind of explanation!

CHARLOTTE comes in during this. There’s a tacit nod/hello between CHARLOTTE and EMILY.

BRANWELL
He hates me! It’s an excuse to get rid of me! He’s not going to give any kind of explanation! He’s a monster, he’s a bully, he’s a law unto himself, he’s an idiot.

PATRICK
Why does he hate you? Why does he need an excuse to get rid of you? Surely [you] -

BRANWELL
Because he’s old and he’s ill and he’s jealous of me!
PATRICK
That’s - it doesn’t make any sense!
Is it a misunderstanding? Has someone misrepresented you to him?

PATRICK’s being disingenuous; he knows damned well (from sad experience) that BRANWELL will have done something, he’s just trying to get it out of him by appearing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

BRANWELL
Just - !
(he lets out a crazy kind of animal roar and kicks the upturned dining chair into the wall)
GOD! This HOUSE! Does it matter? Go to bed! Stop asking fucking questions!

So that’s a bit shocking. EMILY takes the bull by the horns and gets close to BRANWELL and says (not unkindly, but certainly no nonsense) right into his face -

EMILY
If you don’t like this house, don’t stay in it. There’s none of us’ll miss you, not when you get like this.

PATRICK
I’d like to know what’s happened.

No-one replies straight away, even though they all know.

ANNE
(from the doorway)
Tell him.

It’s BRANWELL she’s addressing. And this may be the first time that BRANWELL realises that ANNE knows. He can’t speak. For all his over-wrought emotion and bluster.

CHARLOTTE
Branwell’s been at it. With his employer’s wife.

PATRICK can barely believe his ears. This is a new level of rubbishy behaviour. The hugeness hits him just like it hit CHARLOTTE. He stares (as well as he can stare) at BRANWELL for an explanation. We realise that BRANWELL’s heartbreak is greater than his humiliation (or is his humiliation so great that he has to turn his sordid fumbles with Mrs. Robinson into a tale of grand passion to try and attach something noble to it?) -
BRANWELL
(wretched)
She was lonely.
(no-one knows what to say,
hearing the shameful
confirmation)
*She was lonely!*

EXT. VORTEX/INT. PARSONAGE, HALLWAY/STAIR/UPSTAIRS LANDING.
F/B 2 - (12TH SEPTEMBER 1828, 11:34)

WELLINGTON and BONAPARTE fall and twist through the air,
engaged in a frantic sword fight, hurling furious insults at
one another. This is a fight to the death. The driving rain
soaks them as their mighty swords clash, and lightning
streaks and crashes through the sky behind them. The roar of
battle, the boom of the cannon, the cataracts of cavalry
thunder all around them. Oddly however (and hopefully to
comic effect) their voices become those of 12-year-old
CHARLOTTE (WELLINGTON) and 11-year-old BRANWELL (NAPOLEON) -

**DUKE OF WELLINGTON**

*I’ll* rip your head off, *I’ll* slice
you limb from limb, *I’ll* feed you
to the dogs! *There’ll* be nothing
left but a bad smell where Napoleon
Bonaparte once strutted about with
his fat ulcerated belly!

**NAPOLEON BONAPARTE**

(French accent)

*I’ll* parade you through the
streets! *You’ll* be laughed at by
the toothless! *We’ll* lop your head
off, *we’ll* dissect your innards and
pickle them!

Suddenly we’re no longer on the battlefield, but in the
parsonage, and it’s CHARLOTTE and BRANWELL shouting at one
another up and down the stairs (using lopped off bits of tree
as swords), whilst EMILY (10) and ANNE (8) provide SFX by
banging copper pans with weighty rolling pins. They’re also
adding to the general tone and mood and melee by screaming
constantly throughout at the tops of their voices. The dog
(not KEEPER) is barking too. Outside, it’s raining heavily
and the sky is leaden. The sword fight between CHARLOTTE and
BRANWELL seems no less robust than their grown-up
counterparts.

**CHARLOTTE**

‘*Tis* a shame you’re embarked on
this course of myopic self-
destruction, for I imagine you and
I might - under better
circumstances - have made very
stimulating company for one
another!

(MORE)
We are both men of great intelligence and discernment. Are we not?

BRANWELL
I despise everything you stand for! Revolution is in the air! Only a fool like you sir would ignore it! Every utterance that springs from your lips fills me with the most profound abhorrence!

TABBY AYKROYD (57, the BRONTÉS’ servant) has clearly been trying to quieten them down for some time, and she’s genuinely pissed off with them now. This is all simultaneous with the shouting above -

TABBY
If t’parson and your Aunt Branwell were in you’d noan make so much din! They all think you’re right quiet and studious down in t’village y’know! They’d think different if they saw you like this!

(she turns to ANNE, who’s nearest)
And I don’t know why you’re doing so damned much screaming!

ANNE
I’ve been shot through the head with a cannon ball! Half my brain’s missing!

TABBY
You’re enough to flay the divvel! All on yer! I’s atta go fetch our Willie to come and shut y’up and calm yer down if y’don’t put a sock in it! Are any on yer listening?

From Armageddon to silence as we move forward again to 1845 -

EXT. PARSONAGE. DAY 2. MORNING - (14 JULY 1845, 09:10)

JOHN BROWN (40, the village sexton and stone mason) stands at the open door, waiting politely, dressed for a journey.

INT. PARSONAGE, UPSTAIRS LANDING/BRANWELL’S BEDROOM. DAY 2. MORNING. CONTINUOUS - (14 JULY 1845, 09:11)

EMILY (sleeves rolled up, apron on, like she was busy in the kitchen when she had to answer the front door) taps on BRANWELL’s open bedroom door. He’s pulling a jacket on, he’s heard JOHN at the door.
EMILY
Mr. Brown’s here.

BRANWELL (who’s pale with a hangover, and whose humiliation remains manifest as bad temper) tacitly acknowledges that he’s heard what she’s said, though he offers her no thanks, and she anticipates none. She goes back downstairs. BRANWELL follows.

INT. PARSONAGE, HALLWAY. DAY 2. MORNING. CONTINUOUS - (14 JULY 1845, 09:11)

KEEPER’s waiting for EMILY at the bottom of the stairs, she herds him into the kitchen and disappears with him. BRANWELL comes to the open front door where JOHN’s waiting.

JOHN BROWN
Y’fit, lad?

BRANWELL
Yeah, I’m just -

BRANWELL pauses to tap on the door to his father’s study, which is just by the front door. He pushes the study door open -

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S STUDY. DAY 2. MORNING. CONTINUOUS - (14 JULY 1845, 09:12)

- and we discover CHARLOTTE reading the Leeds Intelligencer to her father (who can no longer see to read).

CHARLOTTE
“Another outrage has happened in Ireland. A party of Orangemen at Armagh, on the 12th, unhappily disregarding the advice given them, of abstaining from processions, which their better-advised brethren have followed in other places, but nevertheless conducted themselves with propriety, were savagely attacked by their Roman Catholic townsmen, who fired at and wounded one of their [leaders] - ”

CHARLOTTE shuts up when she sees pale BRANWELL. BRANWELL’s manner to his father is subdued, apologetic.

BRANWELL
John’s here. We’re off. Don’t get up.

PATRICK
(he gets up)
No, I’d like to see John.
CHARLOTTE doesn’t get up. PATRICK comes out of his office to speak to JOHN. We linger on CHARLOTTE, on her thoughts (repressed anger), as she hears the polite, awkward exchange -

PATRICK (CONT’D)
How’re you today John?

JOHN BROWN
I’m very well Mr. Brontë, thank you.

We cut away from CHARLOTTE to look at PATRICK, BRANWELL and JOHN. All slightly awkward.

PATRICK
Good. Well. Travel safely.

JOHN BROWN
Nice day for it.

PATRICK
(to BRANWELL, softly)
Look after yourself.

There’s a tacit understanding: BRANWELL is grateful that PATRICK hasn’t carpeted him, and has instead dealt with it with the sort of compassion and understanding he knows he barely deserves.

BRANWELL
Thank you.

BRANWELL and JOHN BROWN set off.

We see CHARLOTTE again surreptitiously watching BRANWELL and JOHN through the window of her father’s study as they depart. Her anger still apparent.

PATRICK closes the front door, and we linger on his sad thoughts for a moment. About what an unhappy, hopeless being his son - who was such a prodigy - has become. He goes back into his study and says quietly to CHARLOTTE -

PATRICK
I think. Through kindness. And understanding. And prayer. We might still - for all his naivety and nonsense - get him back onto a proper path.

CHARLOTTE’s not convinced. She’s sick of BRANWELL. She’s sick of the attention he gets and the endless benefit of the doubt. And PATRICK can’t see what CHARLOTTE’s thinking because he can’t see her properly (and even if he could he mightn’t get it).
JOHN and BRANWELL walk along the path to the gate.

JOHN BROWN
(a murmur, a laddish smirk)
Y’dozy bastard, getting caught.

But BRANWELL tries to laugh it off, but struggles. He’s obsessed with the humiliation. As they pass by the back yard at the gate, MARTHA BROWN (17, the BRONTËS’ maid) is hanging out washing. TABBY AYKROYD (now 74 years old) is with her. Over the back wall MARTHA sees JOHN and BRANWELL, and risks calling shyly across -

MARTHA
Will y’bring us all something back from Liverpool, father?

JOHN BROWN
(brusque, casual, fond)
You behave yersen. And then. We’ll see.

He winks fondly at MARTHA then turns his attention back to BRANWELL as they disappear off down Church Lane.

INT. PARSONAGE, KITCHEN AND VIEW INTO EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD. DAY 2. MORNING. CONTINUOUS – (14 JULY 1845, 09:15)

We find EMILY sitting at the kitchen table writing on a bit of paper with a stub of pencil. She has inky fingers. We have a good look at EMILY: she’s this tall lass with the air of something very capable (mentally and physically) about her. KEEPER and FLOSSIE are lolling about somewhere. The back door’s open (it’s a warm day in July) and we can see through to the back kitchen and back yard where MARTHA’s busy with the washing. EMILY still has her sleeves rolled up, like she’s been busy and will be busy again shortly. But just now she’s snatching a few minutes to write her diary paper. We hear (in voice over) the bit that she’s writing now:

EMILY
(vo)
Anne left her situation at Thorp Green of her own accord, June 1845.
(she pauses very briefly to consider how to word the next bit)
Branwell left.

TABBY wanders in. She’s bad on her legs, not that it seems to stop her doing anything.

TABBY
They’ve set off.
EMILY

Good.

TABBY

Call me old fashioned. But I think it’s nice having everybody back at home.

EMILY

In theory.

TABBY

(glancing out back to make sure MARTHA’s too busy to hear anything)

What happened?

EMILY

You heard the shouting.

TABBY

I had my pillow over my ears. I didn’t catch the details.

EMILY

Lucky you.

TABBY

So he’s –

(lowers her voice, comes and sits adjacent to EMILY)

been mucking about, and by way of punishment, he’s packed off on holiday for a week wi’ Martha’s father?

EMILY

Packed off on holiday for a week, or got shut of for a few days? It’s all a question of how you might choose to look at it. Tabby.

FLOSSIE’s just wandered out of the kitchen, and into the next scene, which is continuous...

INT. PARSONAGE, HALLWAY. DAY 2. MORNING. CONTINUOUS – (14 13 JULY 1845, 09:16)

CHARLOTTE’s just leaving PATRICK’s study with the newspaper as FLOSSIE comes through from the kitchen, and wants to be let into the parlour. CHARLOTTE can hear EMILY laughing with TABBY in the kitchen. Laughter jars with her own low spirits. She lets FLOSSIE into the parlour...
INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 2. MORNING. CONTINUOUS - (14 JULY 1845, 09:16)

...where ANNE’s sitting in the rocking chair with her feet on the fender by the fireplace (though no fire) just reading through her diary paper. CHARLOTTE uses the excuse of letting the dog in, to come into the room too. CHARLOTTE drops the newspaper somewhere and flops on the sofa. CHARLOTTE watches ANNE write for a moment or two.

CHARLOTTE
Do you still write stories?

ANNE’s not sure she should admit to that. She knows CHARLOTTE might construe it as childish. On the other hand she can’t lie.

ANNE
Sometimes.

CHARLOTTE
About Gondal?

ANNE
When we can.

CHARLOTTE
Emily as well?

ANNE
You’ve been here with her more than I have! Surely y[ou know] -

CHARLOTTE
(interrupts)
We never talk about it.

ANNE
Never? (CHARLOTTE affirms)
Do you? Write. Still.

CHARLOTTE
Not so much.

ANNE
What about the infernal world?

CHARLOTTE hesitates.

CHARLOTTE
Not for years.

ANNE
Why?
CHARLOTTE
(a sad sardonic smile, she’s conscious of speaking grandly)
I relinquished my pen.

ANNE can barely believe it. All CHARLOTTE used to do was write, it defined who she was.

Why?

She barely knows where to start. Her depression is almost tangible.

CHARLOTTE
(she knows it sounds mad)
Because it frightened me. It threatened to make the real world seem pointless. And colourless. And drab. And that way lies madness. The real world is what it is, but we must live in it. So.

(she has a compulsion to admit something, but it’s near the knuckle)
I once - can I tell you something?
(a moment)
When I was teaching. At Roe Head. I had this...
(it’s an embarrassing thing to admit it)
vision. Of Zamorna. That was so...

INT. CLASSROOM, ROE HEAD SCHOOL. DAY. F/B 3 - (22 MAY 1836, 11:52)

We see CHARLOTTE’s vision. ZAMORNA (formerly WELLINGTON, the same actor). ZAMORNA is the most devastatingly attractive man imaginable. He leans on an obelisk and breathes heavily (like he’s just had sex - or is just about to) and looks so louche and Byronic and compelling.

CHARLOTTE
(vo)
...vivid. He was leaning on an obelisk, and I was there, I was with him. I could’ve touched him. Or at least...

We sense the properly erotic nature of what she was thinking)

let him touch me.
And then we see twenty year old CHARLOTTE (who in contrast to ZAMORNA looks so ordinary, so plain) sitting at the desk at the front of the small classroom, looking at ZAMORNA over the heads of the eight teenage girls she has in her class with their heads bent over their work.

CHARLOTTE (CONT’D)
And then –

Suddenly, right in her face –

MISS LISTER
What y’thinking about, Miss Brontë?

CHARLOTTE looks at MISS LISTER (13), who’s brought her book up to CHARLOTTE to be marked. ZAMORNA has gone. MISS LISTER has a certain bold irritating cheek about her. Almost like she knew CHARLOTTE was having some sort of erotic fantasy. 20-year-old CHARLOTTE finds herself embarrassed, humiliated, caught out.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 2. MORNING. CONTINUOUS FROM 16 SCENE 14 - (14 JULY 1845, 09:19)

29-year-old CHARLOTTE is reliving the embarrassment. ANNE’s intrigued.

CHARLOTTE
Of course the fat-headed oaf brought me crashing back to earth and did me a favour. And that was when I decided to give it up. The dirty work. It was all so...
(a moment as she reflects, and then the same smile, the same delight in their teenage inventions)
Wrong. The things we let them get up to in Angria. Is it still like that in Gondal?

ANNE
You should write if it makes you happy.

CHARLOTTE
I worry about my eyes. And I think. As well...
(she hates recalling it, but - )
After I wrote to Southey. “Literature cannot be the business of a woman’s life”. At the time I brushed it off. But the longer I’ve dwelt on it, the older I’ve got, the more I’ve thought...
(MORE)
CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
(from somewhere very deep
in her depression)
what’s the point?

ANNE
The point. For me. Is that I’m
never more alive. Than when I
write. You’re the same. Surely.

CHARLOTTE
But with no prospect of
publication? It’s nothing but
playing at it. Isn’t it? Which was
all right. When we were children.

CHARLOTTE’s words affect ANNE, who already has doubts and
demons of her own: no job to go to, and just cloud cuckoo
land (Gondal) to make her feel in any way validated.

EXT. HAWORTH MOOR. DAY 2 - (14 JULY 1845, 16:55)

EMILY and ANNE walk across Haworth Moor towards Stanbury.
They walk with purpose, they’re not just floating about,
they’re delivering a note from PATRICK to Mr. Heaton at
Ponden Hall. KEEPER and FLOSSIE romp around freely. EMILY
checks all about her to make sure no-one’s looking, and then -

EMILY
Are we playing then, or what?

ANNE
(with trepidation, she
knows it’ll go down like
a lead balloon)
Does it ever bother you that we
might be getting a bit old? For
that.

EMILY looks stung. Humiliated.

EMILY
You weren’t saying that two weeks
ago in York.

ANNE
No. Well. I didn’t want to spoil
things in York.
(she’s anxious not to
offend EMILY, but - )
It’s something I’ve been thinking
for a while.

EMILY’s struck, betrayed. This is important to her.

EMILY
Well what did you come out with me
for then?
ANNE
To talk.

EMILY
What about?

ANNE
Things. At home. Do you never think about - ?

EMILY
What?

ANNE
The future. What are we without papa and Branwell? Papa won’t - (she hates saying it, but the facts are these - ) He won’t live forever. And he’s blind, and that house - our house - it belongs to the Church Trustees. Not us. And Branwell! What’s he doing? What’s he thinking? To have such a hopeless grasp. On the realities. Of what comes next. Are we nothing to him? Does he even see us? If we don’t make something of ourselves, and God knows we’ve been trying. I’ve been trying. I was governess at that - (she hates saying it, so she whispers it) ludicrous place for five years! What will we do, Emily? What will we...? What will we be?

18 EXT. MOOR. DAY 2 - (14 JULY 1845, 17:44)

Later. EMILY and ANNE’ve stopped to flop and gaze across the moor at the calm, still, brilliant day. Emily’s got off her high horse. This isn’t what they’d planned to do together today, it’s all a bit out of the ordinary to be talking like this. Normally they’re off in Gondal when they get the chance, not facing the realities, but today’s different.

EMILY
It was when I came back from Roe Head. And he was here. At home. Branwell. And he wasn’t supposed to be. You’d gone. You and Charlotte. You’d gone off back to Roe Head. And he was supposed to be in London, trying to get his foot in the door at the Royal Academy. And that’s when I knew what a liar he was.
1836. AUNT BRANWELL (60) and PATRICK (59) are with EMILY (17) and BRANWELL (18), who both look pretty glum, like they’ve both just failed at something.

AUNT BRANWELL

Sharps?

BRANWELL

Thieves.

PATRICK

You were mugged?

AUNT BRANWELL

Four of them?

EMILY’s watching BRANWELL. She’s sharp enough to know he’s lying even if the grown-ups aren’t.

BRANWELL

I think four.

AUNT BRANWELL

In broad daylight? That’s – surely someone saw what happened?

PATRICK

(interrupting)

So you didn’t even get there?

BRANWELL

No!

(he’s verging on tearful)

It was just after I arrived at the coaching inn at St. Martin le Grand, and I knew my way around. From the maps. In my head. But London – the whole thing – it was just so much bigger than I ever imagined.

(at PATRICK)

You didn’t tell me how big it was! And I didn’t know who to turn to! With no money. So. I came home.

PATRICK

Well –

(latching onto what AUNT BRANWELL just said)

Yes, witnesses, surely someone saw what happened.

BRANWELL

They all looked away and went about their business!
AUNT BRANWELL
So all thirty shillings? Gone?
(she’s sickened with
disappointment for
BRANWELL, his big chance
scuppered)
Oh - !

BRANWELL shakes his head, what can he do? He’s as upset as they are (genuinely so, but he’s crying because he’s lying to them and hates himself for it).

EXT. MOOR. DAY 2. CONTINUOUS FROM SCENE 18 - (14 JULY 1845, 17:46)

EMILY and ANNE as before.

EMILY
Then when Aunt Branwell went to bed and papa went back to his study, I said to him, “You’re lying”. And he admitted it. He didn’t even get to London, never mind any business at any Royal Academy.

(ANNE’s intrigued: why?)
He said he was about to get on the high-flier. In Bradford. With his paintings and his sketches. But then when he was faced with the reality of setting off for London, he realised... that they just weren’t that good. They might look well enough at home, but next to a Lawrence, or a Gainsborough...

(she dries up)
So he fortified himself. He said. To get courage to get on the next coach - which was his intention. But he didn’t. He spent four days in Bradford. Drunk and miserable and dreaming up some trash that he thought everyone at home’d be blown enough to believe.

ANNE
He spent thirty shillings on drink? In four days?

EMILY
I could’ve cheerfully murdered him. To start with. And then... actually I felt sorry for him. They always expected so much of him. More - probably - than he was ever capable of. And I just thought “Thank God I’m not you”. I mean I know I couldn’t cope at Roe Head.

(MORE)
EMILY (CONT'D)
But I wasn’t reduced to telling lies.
(a moment)
Anyway, ever since then - and I’m not condemning him for it, we are what we are, but ever since then - I’ve always had it at the back of my mind that it’d be unlikely [that] -
(she dries up, she hates saying it)
that we could ever really rely on him for anything.

It’s clear that it saddens EMILY to say this. ANNE’s sickened too; it’s hard to hear her brother being written off like that by someone who isn’t saying it just to be rotten.

ANNE
It’s disappointing. I know. And I’m angry too, he humiliated me at Thorp Green, and he knew what he was doing. But we shouldn’t give up on him. Should we?

EMILY
No. We shouldn’t give up on him. But we should see him for what he is. Not what he isn’t. It’s not fair on him.

ANNE takes that in. Accepts it, reluctantly.

ANNE
I sometimes think Charlotte despises him.

EMILY
Yeah. Well. Charlotte has her own demons.

ANNE
What demons?

EMILY weighs things up.

EMILY
She’d be cross if she knew I’d told you.
(inevitably ANNE’s intrigued)
You know how low she’s been? For months. To the point of making herself ill, and convincing herself she’s going blind.

ANNE
Yes.
EMILY doesn’t like betraying people’s confidence. On the other hand it’s only their CHARLOTTE.

EMILY
You know when we were in Brussels? Monsieur Heger.

She pulls a bit of a face as she says his name, like she thinks he was pompous.

ANNE
Yes.

EMILY
Well she was...
(nudge nudge wink wink)
You know.

ANNE
What?

EMILY
Taken up with him. Not when I was there. This was after Aunt Branwell died when I stayed at home. She became...
(mouths it)
obsessed with him.

ANNE
He was married.

Oh yes.

EMILY
It’s why she left. At finish.

Cut to later as they’re walking back -

Later in the day. The sun’s lower in the sky.

EMILY
I don’t think she’d have told me, only she felt guilty.

ANNE
Having feelings for a married man? Well, yes, I suppose she [would] -

EMILY
Oh, well, no, not - that exactly. It was -

(MORE)
EMILY (CONT'D)
(she hesitates, then lowers
her voice, even though
they’re in the middle of
nowhere)
She went to confession. To confess
her guilt.

ANNE
(amazed)
Confession? As in - ? In a - ?

EMILY
Yeah.

ANNE
(mouthing it)
Catholic church?

EMILY
She had no-one to talk to, and so
of course then she felt guilty
about setting foot inside a
Catholic church. She wrote to me -
"Don’t tell papa".

ANNE
So...
(ANNE can’t help smiling.
She knows it’s not funny,
really, but it’s
obviously ironic)
She went into a Catholic church to
confess her guilt about -
(lowers her voice)
- having feelings for Monsieur
Heger, but then she had to write to
you to confess her guilt about
going to confession?

EMILY
I don’t like the Catholic Church
any more than I like any other sort
of organised hypocrisy. BUT. I do
think there’s something to be said
for being able to get something off
your chest. Of course I absolved
her.

She makes a saintly gesture and smiles beatifically.

ANNE
And she actually spoke to a priest?

EMILY nods: Yup.
EMILY
And the point is. She’s made herself ill with obsession and guilt and God knows what else. Disappointment. Over a married man. And then Branwell blithely wades in and does that, and never mind the consequences. So. If she is animated about it... that’s why.
(ANNE takes it in. In the distance EMILY sees a cart with a MAN and a WOMAN in it)

EMILY keeps her head down so she doesn’t have to say hello to anyone. ANNE’s still digesting the information.

EXT. DEVONSHIRE ARMS, KEIGHLEY. DAY 3 - (21 JULY 1845, 12:50)
A week later.

BRANWELL and JOHN BROWN step down off the high-flier (along with fifteen other people) at the Devonshire Arms in Keighley. BRANWELL looks marginally less wretched than last time we saw him, but he’s still a man with a dark obsession hanging over him.

BRANWELL
(voice over)
My dear Leyland.

INT. JOE LEYLAND’S WORKSHOP, SWAN COPPICE, HALIFAX. DAY 4 -23 (22 JULY 1845, 17:10)

JOSEPH BENTLEY LEYLAND (35 years old) is a sculptor. He’s a beefy man with an accommodating face who looks more like a butcher than a sculptor. He’s reading BRANWELL’s letter. Behind LEYLAND sits whatever colossal, half-hewn edifice he’s presently working on.

BRANWELL
(vo)
I returned yesterday from a week’s journey to Liverpool and North Wales, but I found during my absence that wherever I went a certain woman robed in black, and calling herself “MISERY” walked by my side, and leant on my arm as affectionately as if she were my legal wife. Like some other husbands... I could have spared her presence.
Tea-time. 5pm. PATRICK, CHARLOTTE, BRANWELL, EMILY and ANNE eat their meal together. Bread and butter, cheese, cake and tea. No-one’s speaking, they’re all in their own little worlds. EMILY sneaks bits of cheese to KEEPER and FLOSSIE.

PATRICK
Is she feeding those dogs again?

It’s CHARLOTTE he seems to be addressing.

EMILY
(a convincing casual murmur)
No.

EMILY pulls a face “Shh...!” at CHARLOTTE.

CHARLOTTE turns her attention from EMILY to BRANWELL. It’s a look of contempt. The noise he makes eating (which is in fact neither here nor there) irritates the hell out of her. It’s a case of those who seek offence being sure to find it. BRANWELL’s too self absorbed to notice.

PATRICK
Tell us something about Liverpool.
Branwell.

BRANWELL
(realising he’s being addressed)
Oh. Well. The docks were extraordinary. We saw a black man. A Blackamoor, a Creole. He really was black. I think he was something on one of the ships.

ANNE and CHARLOTTE are interested. EMILY’s feeding the dogs again (but it’s probably all sinking in).

INT. PARSONAGE, UPSTAIRS LANDING. NIGHT 3 - (21 JULY 1845, 23:36)

Later. Dark. CHARLOTTE comes upstairs. With a candle. She’s on her way to bed. She hears muted sniggering (or whimpering) coming from Branwell’s bedroom. The door’s closed. She goes and listens. Then she taps gently on the door and opens it.

INT. PARSONAGE, BRANWELL’S BEDROOM. NIGHT 3. CONTINUOUS - (21 JULY 1845, 23:36)

BRANWELL’s sitting on the floor. Writing. He’s very obviously drunk, talking to himself, engrossed in whatever it is he’s writing.
He tries to hide his whisky bottle as soon as he realises someone’s coming in, but - being drunk - he’s made a mess of it. CHARLOTTE appears at the door with her candle. She pretends she hasn’t seen the bottle, and BRANWELL goes on the defensive -

BRANWELL

(he smiles: it’s a bit arsy, a bit of a challenge)

Yes?

She comes in and shuts the door. And what comes out is sadness, not anger or judgement.

CHARLOTTE

If you don’t get on top. Of this habit. When things don’t go right for you. If you can’t exercise some restraint. It’ll take over your life. Branwell, and [it’ll - ]

BRANWELL

Don’t be ridiculous.

CHARLOTTE

I’m not being ridiculous - it’ll destroy you. And you still have [so much] - ! Potentially, you still have so much to offer. Branwell.

(still no response)

You need a plan.

BRANWELL

I’ve got plans.

CHARLOTTE

Have you?

(he affirms in a rather dismissive “I might have“ way)

And can you share them? With anyone.

BRANWELL

D’you know what I’ve realised? This’ll interest you. What I’ve realis[ed] -

(interrupts himself)

Oh! You will be pleased to hear. As well. That I have written to Francis Grundy. My old -

CHARLOTTE

I remember.
BRANWELL
- friend, and I’ve asked him to look out for me. For any vacancies. On the railway. Again. I mean surely enough time has elapsed for that other business to be swept under the -
  (he makes a gesture)
- carpet, and he wasn’t a man to hold a grudge. Francis. No. So. Also! I have written to Leyland. In Halifax. And I shall visit him. You see there may be opportunities there.

CHARLOTTE
(she nods: good)
What’s the thing that would interest me?

BRANWELL
Ah! D’you know what I’ve realised?

CHARLOTTE
What?

BRANWELL
There’s no money in poetry.
  (CHARLOTTE takes that in.
   Okay, fair enough. She could’ve told him that.
   But so what?)
Novels. That’s where the money is.
And the thing, the thing I’ve realised. Is. That whilst the composition of a poem demands the utmost stretch of a man’s intellect - and for what? Ten pounds at the most - I could hum a tune and smoke a cigar and I’d have a novel written.

CHARLOTTE takes that in. Whether it’s true or not, she can’t say. What does strike her -

CHARLOTTE
No-one would publish a novel by an unknown author.

BRANWELL
Northangerland -
  (he indicates himself)
Has had nine poems published in the Halifax Guardian.
  (MORE)
Branwell (cont'd)

(he finds a copy of the
newspaper - with one of
his published poems -
that's been chucked on
the floor somewhere)
It's only Halifax, I know, but.
It's widely enough read.

Charlotte
You'd need a good story. For a
novel.

Branwell
Oh, when was I ever short of a
story?

He seems happy. Then suddenly he looks forlorn. His brain
defaults to his misery (heartbreak + humiliation) over Mrs.
Robinson, so when he's been taken out of himself for a moment
- as he was just now - it cripples him all over again when
she floods back into his brain.

INT. Parsonage, Branwell's Bedroom. Day 4. Morning - (22 July
1845, 07:05)

Morning light falls through a crack in the shutters and
illuminates Branwell's 40-page manuscript, the one he was
working on last night, entitled And The Weary Are At Rest.

We see something of what he's written on the most recent
page: Mrs Maria Thurston had known enough of Sorrow, and God
had intended her to both know and feel enough of love.

There are a few words scratched out and altered, and some
cartoon doodles in the margin. The half bottle of whisky
Branwell was drinking is empty under the bed, and Branwell is
flaked out, fully clothed, on the bed.

Ext. Main Street/Church Lane, Haworth. Day 4A. Morning - (28
August 1845, 09:46)

The new church bells are arriving. It's a big day for the
village. It's a bit of an event and a spectacle. People pause
to watch, others emerge from their shops and houses as the
bells are hauled past on a horse-drawn cart up the street,
encased in wooden crates (presumably it takes huge shire
horses to haul something this heavy up such a steep slope).
There's wooden scaffolding erected up the church tower where
the old bells have been removed, and where the new ones will
be hauled into place.

Patrick and his curate, Arthur Nicholls (26) watch with some
excitement and satisfaction (kind Arthur describing the scene
to blind Patrick); this is the culmination of a lot of fund
raising and hard work on Patrick's part.
MR. GREENWOOD - a local dignitary - has come to watch, and congratulate PATRICK.

EXT. CHURCH LANE, HAWORTH. DAY 4A. MORNING - (20 AUGUST 1845, 09:48)

The horse-drawn cart comes around the bend in the lane, and up Church Lane, drawing parallel with the church tower.

INT. PARSONAGE, CHARLOTTE & ANNE’S BEDROOM. DAY 4A. MORNING CONTINUOUS - (20 AUGUST 1845, 09:50)

EMILY and CHARLOTTE are watching the spectacle from the upstairs window in CHARLOTTE and ANNE’s bedroom. They look striking together, EMILY so tall and CHARLOTTE so little.

EMILY
Are you still thinking about going to Paris?

CHARLOTTE
I don’t think it’s likely. At the moment.

EMILY
Why?

(CHARLOTTE struggles to formulate a response: the truth is she’s too swamped in apathy and depression to organise something like that)

It might do you good.

(still no response)

Are you still hell-bent on making yourself poorly?

CHARLOTTE
I’m not poorly, I’m just struggling to...

(it’s something she can’t articulate, and then an outburst -)

Why is it that a woman’s lot is so very different to a man’s? I’ve never felt inferior. Have you?

Intellectually. Why is it that we have so very few opportunities? You or I could do almost anything we set our minds to. But no. All we can realistically plan is a school - a modest enough school - that no-one wants to come to! Why is it that a woman’s lot is to be perpetually infantilized?

(MORE)
CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Or else invisible. And powerless to do anything about it?

EMILY looks quite engaged by CHARLOTTE’s outburst. She mulls it over, and it’s more CHARLOTTE’s bad temper she’s reacting to than what she’s said as she mumbles –

EMILY
Did he never write back to you? Heger?

Eventually, self-consciously –

CHARLOTTE

No. (EMILY looks a bit sad and sorry and awkward; the closest she can come to showing sympathy. CHARLOTTE takes the opportunity to say – )

Anne says you’ve written some poems.

(EMILY considers that. Then realises she doesn’t actually have to provide an answer)

Have you ever thought about publishing them?

EMILY

(quiet, decisive)

No.

Pause. They watch the bells.

CHARLOTTE

It’s – the thing is you see – I’ve written some verses too, and if between us we could accumulate enough material to think about publishing a small volume, [then] –

EMILY

What, and have it pored over and ridiculed and rubbished by whoever might choose to waste their money on it?

Not likely.

EMILY leaves CHARLOTTE to it, she’s seen enough of the bells arriving. CHARLOTTE’s left with whatever plan she had brewing trashed.

Or is it?
EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD. DAY 4A. MORNING - (20 AUGUST 1845, 10:35)

EMILY heads off out through the back yard (with KEEPER and FLOSSIE) and up onto the moors. KEEPER gallops off. EMILY whistles at him, loud like a sheep farmer, and shouts -

EMILY
Get back here! Keeper!

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR/HALLWAY/STAIRS/UPSTAIRS LANDING. DAY 4A. MORNING - (20 AUGUST 1845, 10:52)

CHARLOTTE’s sitting doing nothing in the parlour (she was reading the paper, now she’s doing nothing). She can hear the clock ticking on the landing. We get the idea that the house is empty.

CHARLOTTE makes a decision: a big one, a momentous one as it will turn out, but right now a bit of a scary one. She gets up and heads out of the room.

She comes out into the hallway, and listens. She looks in the kitchen, and listens, just to check that everyone really is out.

Then she looks up the stairs.

On the landing she comes to EMILY’s door. Which is shut. She braces herself, then tries the handle. She pushes the door open. She looks inside, and listens to the house, perpetually terrified of getting caught out in case there’s someone in the house she’s forgotten about. Without stepping into the room she looks around, imagining where EMILY might hide her poems.

EXT. MOORS. DAY 4A. MORNING - (20 AUGUST 1845, 10:54)

EMILY heads along the moorland path. There’s a MAN and BOY coming the other way and already EMILY’s feeling the burden of having to greet them. The MAN touches his cap at EMILY and goes, “Afternoon!” Socially inept EMILY manages a rather charmless, shifty, “‘Lo” back. We feel sorry for her, how difficult she clearly finds the most simple, brief human interaction with people she doesn’t know, or is only half familiar with.

INT. PARSONAGE, EMILY’S BEDROOM. DAY 4A. MORNING - (20 AUGUST 1845, 10:55)

CHARLOTTE’s in EMILY’s bedroom now. She looks under the bed. Nothing but a chamber pot with a broken handle. She goes to the chest of drawers, and pulls open EMILY’s drawers, one by one. In the bottom drawer she finds EMILY’s portable writing desk.
CHARLOTTE braces herself: she really shouldn’t be doing this. She opens the lid. Like most desks, it has a false base, or a secret drawer, but of course CHARLOTTE knows that, because her own writing desk is probably similar. Effortlessly she accesses the secret compartment, and finds it full of nothing significant. Frustrated, that’s when her eyes land on EMILY’s sewing box, sitting there in plain sight on top of her chest of drawers. She replaces the writing desk in the drawer, and opens the sewing box. She lifts out the top tray. Then under the next layer... she finds what she’s looking for. Several notebooks filled with poetry. She carries them over to the bed and opens one up. Everything’s written up in neat, easily legible but tiny print. She flicks through. We hear EMILY’s voice -

EMILY
(vo)
He comes with Western winds, with evening’s wandering airs,/ with that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars:/ winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,/ and visions rise and change that kill me with desire.

CHARLOTTE can’t believe what she’s reading. She had high hopes for EMILY, but this is extraordinary. It’s almost like she’s forgotten to breathe she’s that astonished by its quality. She stares and stares at the poem, reading and re-reading it. Then it occurs to her to go back to the first one. Again, the exuberance is overwhelming and compelling -

EMILY (CONT’D)
(vo)
High waving heather ‘neath stormy blasts bending,/ midnight and moonlight and bright shining stars:/ darkness and glory rejoicingly blending,/ Earth rising to heaven and heaven descending,/ man’s spirit away from its drear dungeon sending,/ bursting the fetters and breaking the bars.

CHARLOTTE feels transported reading it, it’s so vivid, assured, powerful. She returns to the first one she was reading (He comes with western winds), runs her eyes over the next two verses, and we pick it up again as voice over in the fourth -
EMILY (CONT’D)

(VO)
Then dawns the Invisible, the
Unseen its truth reveals;/ My
outward sense is gone, my inward
essence feels —/ Its wings are
almost free, its home, its harbour
found;/ Measuring the gulf, it
stoops and dares the final bound!/
O, dreadful is the check — intense
the agony/ When the ear begins to
hear and the eye begins to see;/
When the pulse begins to throb, the
brain to think again,/ The soul to
feel the flesh and the flesh to
feel the chain./ Yet I would lose
no sting, would wish no torture
less;/ The more that anguish racks
the earlier it will bless;/ And
robed in fires of Hell, or bright
with heavenly shine/ If it but
herald Death, the vision is divine.

During this we cut to:

35 EXT. MOORS. DAY 4A. MORNING - (20 AUGUST 1845, 10:58)
EMILY and the dogs. EMILY lobs a stick across the moor;
KEEPER and FLOSSIE race to retrieve it. EMILY sticks her
fingers in her mouth, and whistles loud at the dogs again.
They race/frolic back to her with the stick.

36 EXT. PONDEN KIRK. DAY 4A. MORNING - (20 AUGUST 1845, 11:21)
EMILY stands on top of Ponden Kirk, a rocky outcrop on the
top of Haworth Moor, observing the vast, bleak, magnificent
landscape beneath her.

As the poem ends, we return to CHARLOTTE...

37 INT. PARSONAGE, EMILY’S BEDROOM. DAY 4A. MORNING - (20 AUGUST 1845, 10:58)
CHARLOTTE’s world just changed. It’s a feeling she could
almost touch and taste, it’s so tangible and powerful. She
feels elated, inspired, shocked. She can hardly bear to put
the poems back, she just wants to devour them all.

38 EXT. PARSONAGE. NIGHT 4A. DUSK - (20 AUGUST 1845, 21:32)
Establishing shot; the parsonage in the dying evening light.
INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. NIGHT 4A. DUSK - (20 AUGUST 1845, 39 21:32)

CHARLOTTE’s sitting at the table reading by oil lamp, ANNE’s sitting at the table writing. The dogs are by the fire. Suddenly a door slams upstairs (EMILY’s bedroom door), and footsteps are heard hurrying down the stairs. CHARLOTTE’s terrified. She knew this was coming, she steels herself. ANNE simply wonders what’s amiss. The door opens and EMILY comes in, accompanied by a rush of cold air. She has her writing desk with her. She plonks it down unceremoniously on the dining table. She says nothing. She sits down, throws her writing desk open, and gets her stuff out to start writing.

ANNE
What’s the matter?
(EMILY can’t answer. She’s too angry. She carries on what she’s doing, gets out her pen, her ink pot, like she does every evening. It’s properly passive aggressive)
What’s the matter?

EMILY resists answering straight away.

EMILY
Somebody’s been in my room.

ANNE
Somebody - ?

EMILY
Somebody. Has been through my things. And not had the wit to realise - when they put them back - that everything was in a certain order.

ANNE
Well... who - ? We haven’t, I haven’t -

EMILY
No. No, you haven’t. You wouldn’t. I know that.
(CHARLOTTE’s been steeling herself for this, but she’s still not ready for it)

Branwell’s in Halifax. It’s safe to assume Papa couldn’t see to do it, and anyway why would he bother? Tabby’s got better things to do, and Martha can’t read. That well. Yet.
(MORE)
(CHARLOTTE’s still not responding)

She also has too much

(suddenly she shouts the words in a way that makes everyone jump)

dignity. And respect. For other people’s things.

EMILY manages a glance at CHARLOTTE. CHARLOTTE’s cornered and she knows it, she’s only got her brains and diplomacy to save her now.

(CHARLOTTE)

I shouldn’t have, I know. But I’m not sorry - I mean I am sorry, but - look. Emily. Your poems are...

(she hasn’t got words big enough. We can see ANNE thinking the equivalent of “Oh shit”)

They’re extraordinary.

(EMILY doesn’t reply. She just keeps looking daggers at CHARLOTTE now she’s confessed)

I know they’re private, I know they’re personal, they’re a thousand and one things, but I know what I’m talking about, and they’re not something to keep hidden!

(still no response)

It [was] - I admit it was curiosity - not idle curiosity, I hope, but something more n[oble] noble - that [made] -

EMILY

Noble? Going in people’s bedrooms? Going through people’s things?

CHARLOTTE

No wo[man] - no-one has ever written like this! Nothing I’ve read, nothing I can think of - nothing published - is equal to it! Emily, I understand great poetry when I see it! They’re exceptional, they’re astonishing, I couldn’t breathe reading them, they’re -

(Charlotte’s looking at EMILY like she’s never quite seen her before)

I know you’re angry, I know what I did [was] - is - unforgivable, except please see that it isn’t.
EMILY
(she feels violated. She’s gone icy)
You disgust me. You can’t begin to imagine how much. You stay out of my room and you don’t speak to me. You don’t speak to me generally, and you don’t speak to me specifically about your misguided, tedious, grubby little publishing plans.

She chucks all her stuff back in her desk, slams her lid shut, picks it up, and leaves the room. As she leaves, PATRICK’s just coming in from his study across the hallway (he’s heard raised voices).

PATRICK
What’s the matter?

EMILY
(pushng past)
She’s been in people’s bedrooms going through people’s things. (she heads off upstairs)
I’m putting a lock on that door!

PATRICK turns back to CHARLOTTE and ANNE.

PATRICK
What happened? Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE feels sick, she feels like she’s been beaten up.

CHARLOTTE
Nothing. It’s nothing, I just – I went in her bedroom.

PATRICK takes that in, realises there’s probably more to it, could choose to get involved and take it further, but chooses not to. He withdraws from the room grumbling something under his breath, then remembers –

PATRICK
Where’s Branwell?

CHARLOTTE/ANNE
Halifax.

PATRICK
And is he due in? Tonight? Or are we to lock the back door?

CHARLOTTE and ANNE look at one another, neither of them know.
CHARLOTTE
I imagine he’s taken a key.
(PATRICK accepts that,
lingers a bit, and then
withdraws. CHARLOTTE can
feel ANNE looking at her)
All right! I made a mistake.
(a beat)
Except I didn’t! They’re - !
(still she can’t find words
big enough)
Have you read them?

ANNE
No. She’s never asked me to. What
did she mean about your ‘grubby
little publishing plans’?

CHARLOTTE
Oh -
(perhaps she wasn’t going
to share it with ANNE,
but right now she needs
all the allies she can get)
it was something Branwell said.

40 INT. PARSONAGE, CHARLOTTE & ANNE’S BEDROOM. NIGHT 4A. DUSK 40
(20 AUGUST 1845, 21:36)
ANNE comes into the room and eagerly, carefully takes a small
collection of notebooks, and a more substantial document (the
manuscript of Passages In The Life of an Individual) from
between folded clothes in one of her drawers.

41 INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. NIGHT 4A. DUSK - (20 AUGUST 1845, 41
21:37)
ANNE comes back in and hands one of her notebooks to
CHARLOTTE. Rather gingerly, CHARLOTTE takes it. ANNE sits
down next to her. Nervous. CHARLOTTE opens it. Poetry. She
reads. Takes her time. She skims through to another page, and
reads. Clearly she’s nowhere near as excited as she was when
she read EMILY’s poetry.

CHARLOTTE
They’re not without charm.

ANNE
It’s not just the poems, you see.
I’ve been writing this too.
(she offers her the
manuscript entitled
Passages in the Life of
an Individual.
(MORE)
ANNE (CONT'D)
CHARLOTTE takes it, looks through it)
It’s a novel. It’s not Gondal and Gaaldine. It’s more about how things are in the real world. It’s about being a governess, it’s all... things I’ve seen. And heard. And witnessed.
(CHARLOTTE reads through the first page, we see what a fast, intelligent reader she is. And we see that it engages her much more than ANNE’s poetry)
The thing is, you see, I -

CHARLOTTE
This is beautifully written.

ANNE
Thank you. I would be ready. To try and publish. I would be ready to risk failure. And who knows? This is what we’ve done all our lives. Write. We’ve lived in our heads. I don’t regard the attempt to do something with it as venal. I think it’s more venal selling ourselves as governesses when we find it such a trial. So long as we approached it carefully, wisely, and not make fools of ourselves, then surely -

CHARLOTTE
(interrupts)
The plan. Would be to try to publish a volume of poetry first. And then if that met with a modicum of success, and something of a name was established, then we could each risk a work of fiction. I’ve toyed with writing something about Brussels.
(she fights a feeling of self-consciousness)
I mean, I don’t even know if that’s the etiquette. But. Perhaps I could write to a publishing house and find out.
(a moment as she looks over another one of ANNE’s poems)
Your poems are competent, and charming. And I’m no great poet myself. But Emily’s contribution could elevate a small volume to something...
(again, she’s lost for hyperbole so resorts to something more prosaic)
Actually worth spending a few shillings on.

INT. PARSONAGE, KITCHEN. DAY 5 - (22 AUGUST 1845, 10:31)

Two days later. EMILY’s busy dividing the bread dough she’s just kneaded into four lots, to make four loaves. (We notice her pencil behind her ear, her notebook handy, her ink stained fingers). The kitchen’s busy with TABBY and MARTHA to-ing and fro-ing. ANNE’s with EMILY. Their conversation is a bit hush hush (on ANNE’s part at least), not wanting TABBY and MARTHA to hear the details of what is after all a bit of a domestic argument.

ANNE
I feel sorry for her.

EMILY
Why?

ANNE
Same reason I feel sorry for Branwell. So much is expected of her. Being the eldest. And not even the eldest. By accident the eldest.

EMILY
Bossiest. She was bossy when Maria and Elizabeth were still alive, I remember it. Vividly. It’s being so bossy that’s stunted her growth.

ANNE knows that was said a bit tongue-in-cheek. Its intention was to raise a smile, even though EMILY’s still not giving much away, and even though it was a bit cruel. So ANNE can see light at the end of the tunnel, if she persists.

ANNE
She’s ambitious. For all of us, and I can see nothing wrong with that. I realise some people might think it’s vulgar, but Emily, we were born writing, and if we’re cautious, if we’re clever - and we are - and if we disguise our real selves and our sex [well then surely] -

EMILY covers the loaves with a cloth to let them rise, whips her pinny off, then calls to TABBY (interrupting ANNE) -

EMILY
Right, that’s done, Tabby! I’m off down the h[ill] - !

(MORE)
TO WALK INVISIBLE - SHOOTING SCRIPT - 26.04.16

EMILY (CONT'D)
(TABBY’s just come through from the back kitchen, so EMILY realises she doesn’t have to shout)
Hill.

TABBY
It’s wonderful how quiet they all think she is in t’village, and how loud she is at home.

EMILY gives TABBY a ‘yeah whatever’ look and turns to ANNE -

EMILY
You can come with me if you want.

43
EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD/CHURCH LANE. DAY 5 - (22 AUGUST 43 1845, 10:38)

EMILY and ANNE come out of the back door, out of the back gate and head down Church Lane together.

ANNE
Have you ever thought about writing something that’s not Gondal? Something more... not princesses and emperors, more just... what happens in the real world.

At length, having weighed up whether she wants to share this and play ball -

EMILY
You know when I worked in Halifax? At that school at Law Hill.

ANNE
Yes.

EMILY
Miss Patchett. That ran it. She told me this tale. And I’ve often thought it’d make a story. A novel.

ANNE
What was it about?

EMILY
This man, this lad. Jack Sharp. (smiling, thrilled) Have I never told you this?

Nope.
44  EXT. LAW HILL, HALIFAX. DAY. F/B 5 - (4 NOVEMBER 1838, 09:18)

Winter, 1838. 20-year-old EMILY is a teaching assistant, and walks side-by-side with ELIZABETH PATCHETT, the 42-year-old head teacher of Law Hill School. In front of them a crocodile of 10-year-old girls, walking two abreast (with another teacher leading from the front to keep up the pace). They’re walking away from the school (possibly to church) so the school is behind them. MISS PATCHETT is a cheerful, intelligent woman, sensitive to EMILY’s shyness and her intelligence.

MISS PATCHETT
It serves us well enough, but it’s not an attractive building, I know.
It has a rather curious history.
(Shy EMILY looks interested)
It was built out of spite.
Apparently. Sixty years ago. By a man called Jack Sharp.

Cutting as and when with:

45  EXT. FURTHER DOWN CHURCH LANE, HAWORTH. DAY 5 - (22 AUGUST 1845, 10:50)

EMILY and ANNE, as before, heading down the street.

EMILY
So. There’s this family. The Walkers. They own Walterclough Hall, this big house, just above Halifax, it’s been in the family for generations. They’re woollen manufacturers - aren’t they all? Anyway, John Walker has four children, two boys, two girls, and he’s adopted this nephew. Jack Sharp.

Suddenly - in a sort of subliminal flash – we see 19-year-old JACK SHARP. He’s just standing there looking arrogantly at the camera in a kind of surreally-lit moorland landscape. (It may be the same actor that played PARRY). He looks no-nonsense, a hint of nasty. But compelling.

We cut to MISS PATCHETT and EMILY, as before, following a crocodile of little girls.

MISS PATCHETT
Richard and John - the two sons - were educated well, and they ended up making their livings in London.
(MORE)
MISS PATCHETT (CONT'D)
Jack stayed at home with the girls - Grace and Mary - and he was trained up to take over the family business. Which suited everyone, because - it seems - he’d always been old Mr. Walker’s favourite, the truth be told. You know what families are like.

EMILY and ANNE coming down the top of the stone steps onto Haworth Main Street:

EMILY
Then, when Richard - the eldest son - dies in some tragic accident somewhere, old Mr. Walker decides to leave the district - for whatever reason - and he leaves Jack in charge of his business and Walterclough Hall.

MISS PATCHETT and younger EMILY in Halifax -

MISS PATCHETT
Eventually - some years later - old Mr. Walker himself dies, and the remaining son, John - in London - inherits everything and gives Jack Sharp - who he’d never liked - notice to vacate the property forthwith. Which -
(to put it mildly)
- can’t have gone down well. But -

Haworth -

EMILY
- but, John Walker junior has the law on his side, and after enough wrangling - in court - Jack Sharp has to vacate the property whether he likes it or not. But not before he’s trashed the place and taken anything of any value.

Halifax -

MISS PATCHETT
The furniture, the silver, the plate, the linen. You can only imagine what they all went through. The anger and the bitterness. And then he built his own home, a new house. Here. At Law Hill.

* 

Haworth -
EMILY
The spot chosen very carefully, people believed, because it looks down on Walterclough Hall. And then he filled it with the stash he'd purloined from the Hall. Like he was goading John Walker to come and fetch it. If he dared.

We now remain in Haworth with EMILY and ANNE.

ANNE
And did he dare?

EMILY
I doubt it. But. The worst thing Jack Sharp did. One of old Mr. Walker’s sisters had a son. Grown-up by then, called Sam Stead. And Jack Sharp apprenticed him in the trade, like he’d been apprenticed himself by old Mr. Walker. And he cleverly, calculatedly, bit-by-bit, indulged and degraded Sam Stead with gambling and drink, and the lad was too feckless to know any better.

ANNE
Why would you do that?

EMILY
To cause as much misery and humiliation to the Walkers as he could.

ANNE
That’s -

EMILY
I know. (ANNE looks appalled. EMILY looks excited, her eyes have lit up) All that anger. It’s so rich. (they’ve reached JOHN GREENWOOD’s stationery shop down the Main Street) Right. Well. If we’re writing novels... (she nods at JOHN GREENWOOD’s shop) I imagine we’ll need more paper.

...and steps into it.
EXT. HAWORTH. DAY 6 - (24 AUGUST 1845, 09:00)

Sunday morning. The church bells ring joyously.

INT. PARSONAGE, EMILY'S BEDROOM. DAY 6 - (24 AUGUST 1845, 09:01)

CHARLOTTE and ANNE are with EMILY. EMILY remains rather cool with CHARLOTTE. CHARLOTTE’s calm but energised, delighted that EMILY’s been won round, but wise enough not to be too over the top about it. CHARLOTTE’s responding to a statement EMILY’s just made -

CHARLOTTE
Of course we’re not going to use our real names!

ANNE
But must they be men’s names?

EMILY
When a man writes something, it’s what he’s written that’s judged. When a woman writes something, it’s her that’s judged.

ANNE takes that in and realises it’s true.

CHARLOTTE
We must select the poems we want to use and then... yes, if we’re to be taken seriously and judged fairly and make anything resembling a profit... we must walk invisible.

A moment.

ANNE
What about names that are neither men’s nor women’s?

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 6 - (24 AUGUST 1845, 09:48)

The bells continue to ring as we see CHARLOTTE’s hand write ‘Currer Bell’ on one of her manuscripts. EMILY’s hand comes in and writes ‘Ellis Bell’ on one of hers. ANNE’s comes in and writes ‘Acton Bell’ on one of hers.

EXT. HAWORTH. DAY 6 - (24 AUGUST 1845, 09:48) INTO DAY 7 (MARCH 1846, 14:03)

Epic shot of Haworth and the hills. The bells continue to ring joyously and - like most church bells - slightly out of kilter. Then as the bells fade, the landscape changes from autumn to winter.
The church, the parsonage, and the moorland township is covered in a modest dusting of snow (1845 - 46 was a mild winter).

2 March 1846. CHARLOTTE returns home from seeing ELLEN again, heading up the hill, just as she was the first time we saw her in Scene 3, eight months ago.

CHARLOTTE

(vo)
Dear Ellen. I reached home a little after 2 o’clock all safe and right yesterday. Emily and Anne were gone to Keighley to meet me.

This voice over takes us into the next scene and continues through it –

CHARLOTTE comes in and finds no-one in the parlour. She goes across the hallway and taps on PATRICK’s study door, then pushes it open. MR. NICHOLLS is in with PATRICK, reading correspondence to him (we may see MR. NICHOLLS’ slight agitation - he’s infatuated - when CHARLOTTE is anywhere near him, but it goes right over CHARLOTTE’s head).

CHARLOTTE (CONT’D)
I’m back.

MR. NICHOLLS
(flustered, he stands up politely and knocks his tea cup over)
Miss Brontë!

CHARLOTTE
Mr. Nicholls.

CHARLOTTE goes upstairs, unfastening her bonnet.
CHARLOTTE
(vo to ELLEN)
I went into the room where Branwell was, to speak to him. It was very forced work to address him. I might have spared myself the trouble as he took no notice -
(at this point we see CHARLOTTE going, “Branwell? Branwell!” at him. Once more he’s sitting on the floor, amidst papers, with pen and ink, but too stupefied to actually write anything, and with all sick down his front) - and made no reply. He was stupefied.
Just as she’s about to leave him to it, CHARLOTTE sees a parcel on the floor, addressed to herself. C. Brontë Esq. She grabs it. Continuous -

INT. PARSONAGE, BRANWELL’S BEDROOM. DAY 7. CONTINUOUS - (253 MARCH 1846, 14:08)

CHARLOTTE
What’s this? Branwell, what’s this?

BRANWELL
(his lips barely string thoughts and words together. He seems miserable yet amused)
Ohh... thassfer you. I opened it. By mistake. It said ‘esquire’ so I thought... ‘twas mine.
(CHARLOTTE realises he’s opened it, and he’s been through it)
Proof pages! So how much are you paying them for the privilege? I assume you’re paying them, I assume you’ve clubbed together, I assume they’re not paying you?

It takes him a while to spit this out, because he is properly wobbly unco-ordinatedly drunk. Or off his head on opium. CHARLOTTE makes no reply because he’s absolutely right, they are paying the publisher. They’re paying the publisher a lot.

CHARLOTTE
(nodding at his front)
You’ve been sick.
EMILY and ANNE have just arrived back with the dogs, and are just taking their capes and hats off. CHARLOTTE’s been home about two hours now.

CHARLOTTE
I didn’t confirm or deny, I made no reply.

EMILY
I don’t care about him knowing we’re paying them, it’s a means to an end as far as I’m concerned. I care about him talking to people. About us.

CHARLOTTE
Where’s he got the money from anyway? To get into that state?

EMILY
He screwed a sovereign out of papa. Yesterday.

ANNE
He claimed to have some pressing debt, and papa said no, and then [the next thing] -

EMILY
(interrupts)
- then the next thing we know he’s given it to him - God knows how or why - and he’s trotting off down the hill to get it changed in the Black Bull.

Silence as CHARLOTTE absorbs that. The implications: was PATRICK bullied and threatened? CHARLOTTE goes very sombre. Eventually -

ANNE
Perhaps - when he’s sober - he’ll not even remember he’s seen our proof sheets.

Good point. CHARLOTTE and EMILY both latch on to that and are keen to believe it. Although they’re both wise enough to know it’s not exactly a fool proof plan.

CHARLOTTE
I’ll write to Aylott and Jones and ask them to address their correspondence differently in future.
ANNE
Was he angry? Branwell.

Yes, he was, but -

CHARLOTTE
What can we do? We can’t include him, the way he is now! He’s unmanageable! We’d never get anything agreed or done!

EMILY
Anyway, why would ‘Northangerland’ want to publish with his sisters?

CHARLOTTE
He certainly couldn’t afford to contribute to the costs.

EMILY
We’re doing the right thing. Anne. It’s hard, it’s tough, but I’m sorry.

(she’s quiet, she hates saying this, she can see it troubles ANNE)
He’d drag us down with him if we let him.

They all know it’s true, appalling as it is to admit it.

EXT. HALIFAX. DAY 8 - (13 JUNE 1846, 10:22)

Three months later.

Establishing shot of Halifax from the Keighley Road. In 1846, Halifax had something like 200 factory chimneys. It was a powerful, bustling, huge industrial town. The sun’s high in the sky. BRANWELL (in his slightly battered stove pipe hat) walks along the Keighley Road from Haworth to Halifax. We feel his own sense of himself as a tragic artist; the struggling writer crippled by misery and pennilessness.

EXT. HALIFAX. DAY 8 - (13 JUNE 1846, 11:05)

BRANWELL walks through Halifax toward JOE LEYLAND’s studio.

INT. JOE LEYLAND’S WORKSHOP, SWAN COPPICE, HALIFAX. DAY 8 - (13 JUNE 1846, 11:14)

JOE LEYLAND (who we met briefly in scene 23) is at work. The man’s a genius, his work is awe-inspiring. BRANWELL appears at the door. He takes in the massive sculpture before he makes his presence known to JOE, who’s too busy to notice a visitor.
BRANWELL takes genuine pleasure in JOE’s epic endeavours. (There are two of JOE’s APPRENTICES busy throughout.)

BRANWELL
Hello Joe.

LEYLAND
(he turns and sees BRANWELL. He’s delighted)
Well I never. Eh?
(he downs tools)
How y’doing lad?

He goes and gives BRANWELL a big fond hug.

BRANWELL
I’ve resolved. This morning. To keep myself busy.

LEYLAND
Good. Good!
(he casually regards his morning’s work on the monument, and confides —)
Me too.

INT. THE TALBOT INN, HALIFAX. DAY 8 - (13 JUNE 1846, 11:44)
Half an hour later. BRANWELL and JOE are big drinking buddies. JOE can drink for England. (He’s on the slippery slope too, and for all his life enhancing talent, will die an alcoholic, just three years after BRANWELL - five years from now - at the ripe old age of 40).

BRANWELL
I thought I’d go and see John Frobisher. I thought I might write something to set to music. And he’d be the man. He is still here, isn’t he? At the church?

LEYLAND
So far as I know, yeah. Have y’thought any more about going abroad?

BRANWELL
Not - no, I’ve not seen any vacanc[ies] - at least nothing that - not with the way things are at the moment.

LEYLAND nods sagely.

LEYLAND
How’s things at home?
BRANWELL pauses; he barely knows how to answer.

INT. THE TALBOT INN, HALIFAX. DAY 8 - (13 JUNE 1846, 12:46)

We jump to exactly the same scene, but an hour later, when both men have had much more to drink. But they’re still on the same subject -

BRANWELL
It’s like living with people who don’t speak the same language as I do! No. Joe. Honestly. I could be with a tribe from some far flung corner of the globe for all I have in common with them! They despise me, and -

(he was going to say “And I despise them” but it’s not quite true, and he knows that)

I only live there because I’m such a fucking pauper. They need to get married, those three. Only who’d have them? Who’d have any of us? What a ridiculous set we’ve become.

(a moment)
And we used to be quite a nice little family.

(silence, he goes thoughtful, more time passes)

She did - she does love me. You know. Joe.

(he checks that no-one’s listening. Of course no-one is)

Lydia.

LEYLAND
Well. You know.

(he’s heard it all so many times, and God knows what the truth was)

I don’t know. I wasn’t there, I can’t say.

BRANWELL
I know everyone thinks I’m - God knows - but if you saw her - if only for a moment - you’d get it, you’d see.

LEYLAND
What would I see?
BRANWELL
That she’s... the sort of woman that can change a man’s life. His whole... everything.

LEYLAND
You’ve got to look forwards though, eh? Not back. We’ve talked about this.

LEYLAND glances around the bar to see if there’s anyone more interesting wandered in lately.

Nope.

BRANWELL
Am I boring you, Leyland?

LEYLAND
No, lad. No. You’re not boring me. I just - I worry that you’re kidding yerself. Eh? A woman her age, in her position.

BRANWELL
No. Leyland. What you’ve got to understand. Is that her husband... there’s no - there was no - there was nothing between them. Not for years. He’s an invalid. He’s a bad-tempered invalid. Her life was a misery. Perhaps it was wrong, and certainly we were foolish, but she was happier than she could ever remember being! She told me so repeatedly. She wept - she cried - saying it. I’m not dreaming this, Leyland, I’m not making it up. My only hope is that he’ll be dead. Soon. And I shall be asked back.

LEYLAND nods, he’s on automatic pilot, he’s heard it so many times.

EXT. TOP OF CHURCH LANE, HAWORTH. NIGHT 8 - (13 JUNE 1846, 59 23:10)

EMILY’s sitting outside on the gate at the top of Church Lane in the moonlight. It’s a balmy enough night. There’s a full moon. The village dogs are howling. BRANWELL appears staggering up the hill.

EMILY
Hello.

BRANWELL
Hello.
EMILY
Look.

She means the moon.

BRANWELL
I know. It’s beautiful.

He staggers looking up at the moon, nearly loses his equilibrium because he still has so much alcohol in his blood. He steadies himself by clinging onto EMILY (she lets him) and then he sits with her.

BRANWELL (CONT’D)
The same moon that’s shone down since we were children. Since our ancestors were children. We’re... so tiny. Really. Aren’t we? So unimportant. All of us.

EMILY
That’s right.

They’re gazing up. The dogs are still howling.

BRANWELL
Bloody dogs.

He howls back at them. It makes EMILY smile and she joins in. *

EXT. MAIN STREET, HAWORTH. DAY 9 - (20 JUNE 1846, 12:44)

A week later. A man (WILLIAM ALLISON, dressed well, but in black) in his mid-twenties rides a horse up Main Street. He cuts quite a striking figure amidst all the threadbare make-do-and-mend of Haworth. He dismounts outside the Black Bull. There are a couple of old misshapen blokes outside the pub in stove pipe hats and shirt sleeves smoking their pipes. The man asks them if there’s anyone that can take his horse round the back to be looked after. One of the old blokes offers to do it. The young man goes inside the Black Bull.

EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD AND VIEW INTO INT. PARSONAGE, KITCHEN. DAY 9 - (20 JUNE 1846, 13:01)

BRANWELL is sitting nursing a hangover in the back yard not doing anything very much. The outer door into the back kitchen is open as it’s a bright summer day, and we can see MARTHA, TABBY and EMILY busy with their chores. A little lad, THOMAS MALLINSON, appears at the gate. He sees BRANWELL.

THOMAS MALLINSON
The’s a fella i’ t’Black Bull lookin fothy.
BRANWELL

Who?

THOMAS MALLINSON
He says he’s from -
(he enunciates it clearly,
as it was said to him)
Thorp. Green.

BRANWELL can’t believe his ears, and can’t get a coherent question out -

BRANWELL
Who who who - ?
(who is he? THOMAS just shakes his head: that’s as much as he knows)
I’ll I’ll just - I’ll get my coat.

BRANWELL dives into the back kitchen, pushing past the women. Little THOMAS watches and waits, hoping for a farthing off someone for his trouble if he loiters. EMILY comes out and sees what’s happening. She sees THOMAS. He smiles at her. EMILY’s expression doesn’t change, she just looks very severe and goes back inside. TABBY’s come out to have a look too. BRANWELL comes flying back out pulling his coat on, and with his stove pipe hat perched on the back of his head.

INT. BLACK BULL. DAY 9 - (20 JUNE 1846, 13:05)

BRANWELL arrives in the Black Bull and looks around anxiously. The landlord, ENOCH THOMAS (age 34), catches BRANWELL’s eye and nods through to a little snug room. BRANWELL heads through (we go with him) and we discover the striking young man in black we saw earlier. WILLIAM ALLISON is a groom in the Robinson household at Thorp Green. BRANWELL takes in the fact that ALLISON is dressed in black.

WILLIAM ALLISON
Mr. Brontë.

BRANWELL
(daring to hope, but fearful in case for some reason it’s her that’s dead)
Someone’s dead.

WILLIAM ALLISON
Mr. Robinson. He passed away three weeks this last Tuesday. Did you not know?

Practised at concealing the affair, BRANWELL has to conceal his glee.
WILLIAM ALLISON is a difficult man to read: it’s difficult to tell where his sympathies lie, or whose agenda he’s pushing, yet we sense no personal animosity between himself and BRANWELL. In his calm, quiet, unassuming manner, he seems to be treading a fine line between diffident and threatening.

BRANWELL
(hardly daring to speak for excitement, his eyes have lit up)
No. No, how could I?

WILLIAM ALLISON
It’s been in t’papers.

BRANWELL
We - we don’t get the York papers.

WILLIAM ALLISON’S bought a bottle of whisky and two glasses; he knows BRANWELL likes a drink. He’s already poured one for himself: he pours one for BRANWELL.

WILLIAM ALLISON
(gently)
You’re advised. To stay away.

BRANWELL takes that in.

BRANWELL
Does she...?
(lowering his voice, looks around. Like he knows that ALLISON knows, just neither of them can name it)
Not want me to go to her? She didn’t say that.

WILLIAM ALLISON
No. No, it isn’t her. It’s Mr. Evans. One of the trustees of Mr. Robinson’s will. Apparently... he’s said if he sees you, he’ll shoot you.

BRANWELL absorbs that.

BRANWELL
Did he send you?

WILLIAM ALLISON
No. No. She did. She was concerned you might turn up. And that Mr. Evans might feel obliged to do as he’s threatened. And as well as that. You should know. By the terms of the will.

(MORE)
If she marries again, she’ll forfeit any rights to her husband’s fortune.

BRANWELL

What?

WILLIAM ALLISON

Every penny. And the house.

(BRANWELL’s shaking his head. This is appalling)

She asked me. Not to tell you how wretched she is. You’d not recognise her, Mr. Brontë. She’s worn herself out these last few months in attendance upon him. And then - in the last few days before his death - his manner was so mild. So... conciliatory. It’s a pity to see her, kneeling at her prayers. In tears. I suppose we can only guess at what torments of conscience she might be going through. Now.

BRANWELL

But she sent you -

WILLIAM ALLISON

- to beg you to think of your own safety. Mr. Brontë. And her sanity. Which - below stairs - we fear hangs by a thread.

BRANWELL’s angry. He kind of knows he’s being brushed off, but by who, he doesn’t know. I suppose it suits him to think it’s not her, but them, the trustees. Even though he is angry he still can’t express that anger, because WILLIAM ALLISON is a lot bigger than BRANWELL, which is presumably one of the reasons he was sent.

BRANWELL

I don’t give a damn about my own safety.

WILLIAM ALLISON

No, but thing is...

(as delicately and kindly as he can)

It’s never going to happen, Mr. Brontë. Do you understand?

(lowers his voice)

You’re advised to stay away.

WILLIAM ALLISON stands up - keeps his eyes on BRANWELL - swallows the tot of whisky he’s poured himself, and leaves BRANWELL with the rest of the bottle. Unobtrusively, like very little has happened - he walks out.
But what’s going on in BRANWELL’s head is huge. Momentous. Devastating.

EXT/INT. JOHN BROWN’S WORKSHOP. DAY 9 - (20 JUNE 1846, 13:52)

JOHN BROWN’s busy chiselling away at a head stone when THOMAS MALLINSON appears in his doorway. He’s just run up Church Lane.

THOMAS MALLINSON
Mr. Brown! Mr. Brown!

JOHN BROWN
What do you want, you little bugger?

JOHN says this with a certain brusque affection.

THOMAS MALLINSON
You’ve to come! Mr. Thomas at Black Bull says you’ve to come!

JOHN can see it’s urgent. He downs tools and follows THOMAS.

INT. BLACK BULL. DAY 9 - (20 JUNE 1846, 13:59)

The bottle of whisky is empty. BRANWELL’s all limp and floppy and incoherent. He’s sitting on the floor, in tears, crying silently but uncontrollably. ENOCH THOMAS is sitting with him, pending JOHN BROWN’s arrival. ENOCH THOMAS has his hand on BRANWELL’s shoulder, like he’s sympathetic, but doesn’t really know what to say (like people don’t in real life when people cry). JOHN BROWN comes in.

JOHN BROWN
Now what?

ENOCH THOMAS
God knows. There were a fella here.

JOHN BROWN
Paddy? Come on lad. What’s up?

ENOCH THOMAS
I sent for thee ‘cos I thot -

JOHN BROWN
ENOCH THOMAS (CONT'D)
No, you’ve done reight. - state he’s in.

ENOCH THOMAS (CONT'D)
Come on.

BRANWELL realises JOHN’s here.
BRANWELL
(he’s smiling like it’s funny, even though he remains in tears. It’s absurd, he’s absurd)
John.
(he touches JOHN’s face affectionately)
Nothing I do.

EXT. CHURCH LANE, HAWORTH. DAY 9 - (20 JUNE 1846, 14:05) 65
BRANWELL staggers up the lane home, supported by JOHN BROWN.

BRANWELL
Why are we walking up here?

JOHN BROWN
It’s where y’live.

BRANWELL
I don’t want to go home, we’re not going home.

JOHN BROWN
Right well where d’you wanna go then?

BRANWELL
Keighley.

JOHN BROWN
I think meself you’d be better off at home.

BRANWELL
I’ve got to get to Thorp Green, John.

JOHN BROWN
Fair enough but not just now, not today, not in this state.

BRANWELL
This state, yes. This is the best state to go there in.

JOHN BROWN
Well you can, I can’t, obviously, it’s two o’clock i’ th’afternoon, I’ve to get back to work.

As they approach the parsonage, MR. NICHOLLS emerges from the gate, just leaving, no idea what he’s just about to bump into.
We now see the world from BRANWELL’s pissed wobbly point of view.

JOHN BROWN is humiliated bumping into MR. NICHOLLS like this –

JOHN BROWN (CONT’D)
He’s - he’s - had a bad do, he’s
had a bit of bad news.

- but JOHN BROWN needn’t be humiliated; MR. NICHOLLS immediately grasps the sordid situation, and tacitly undertakes to help JOHN get BRANWELL inside and out of sight. Together they walk BRANWELL through the gate and inside...

INT. PARSONAGE, BACK KITCHEN/KITCHEN/HALLWAY. DAY 9.

...through the back kitchen, the kitchen, into the hallway. MR. NICHOLLS’ hat gets knocked off in the tussle.

BRANWELL
[Fucking] curate. [Fucking]...
(pulling his arm away from MR. NICHOLLS)
touch me.

MR. NICHOLLS
(calm)
Calm down.

BRANWELL
You calm down.

MR. NICHOLLS
Please don’t raise your voice.

BRANWELL
Don’t [fucking] tell me what to do!

INT. PARSONAGE, CHARLOTTE’S BEDROOM. DAY 9. CONTINUOUS - (20 JUNE 1846, 14:08)

EMILY’s ironing when she hears the commotion downstairs. She puts the iron down in the grate of the fire and goes to the top of the stairs to see what’s going on.

INT. PARSONAGE, HALLWAY/STAIRS. DAY 9. CONTINUOUS - (20 JUNE 1846, 14:08)

ANNE comes out of the parlour, where she was writing. CHARLOTTE comes out of PATRICK’s study, where she was reading to him and EMILY appears at the top of the stairs. PATRICK emerges from his study behind CHARLOTTE.
BRANWELL
Look at them, looking at me! They’re always looking at me! With their stupid, empty faces! Stop looking at me! And him! What do you want? What do you want? You’ve had everything! You’ve had everything you’re getting!

He lets out a weird animal roar at them all again (as he did in scene 5) then this becomes the most anguished crying. Eventually he dissolves into tears and flops on the floor. No one seems to know what to do, it’s absurd and humiliating. EMILY sets off down the stairs. JOHN whispers in BRANWELL’s ear -

JOHN BROWN
Come on upstairs, have a lie down and you can have a few knock-out drops, eh?

BRANWELL nods. He can barely focus. But the idea of knock-out drops gives him something to aim to get to the top of the stairs for. He lets EMILY and JOHN help him upstairs. MR. NICHOLLS - left at the bottom of the stairs - glances apologetically at CHARLOTTE as he retrieves his hat, and they manage a brief embarrassed exchange -

MR. NICHOLLS
Sorry.

CHARLOTTE
Sorry.

- and he leaves.

INT. PARSONAGE, BRANWELL’S BEDROOM. DAY 9 - (20 JUNE 1846, 69 14.11)

JOHN and EMILY get BRANWELL into his bedroom. BRANWELL pulls JOHN towards him and murmurs -

BRANWELL
You’ll have to go down the hill and get me some John, I haven’t got any.

JOHN tuts a bit, he knows damned well BRANWELL won’t have any money either, and he’ll have to pay for it himself.

JOHN BROWN
Right, well you’ll atta gi’ me a few minutes.

BRANWELL
Yeah yeah.
JOHN glances apologetically at EMILY and leaves the room. BRANWELL groans and writhes on the bed, then heaves himself up and vomits. EMILY watches, stony-faced, knowing she’s the mug who gets to clear that up. KEEPER wanders in to have a look as well. “Ooh sick, that looks tasty”, KEEPER’s thinking. EMILY grabs his collar.

EMILY

Don’t.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. NIGHT 10 - (7 JULY 1846, 22.26)

CHARLOTTE, EMILY and ANNE all busy writing. We linger on them writing for a good few moments. There’s an oil lamp in the middle of the table. Perhaps we can tell by their level of concentration that EMILY and ANNE are writing fiction. CHARLOTTE’s writing to ELLEN.

CHARLOTTE

(vo)

Dear Ellen. We have been somewhat more harassed than usual lately. The death of Mr. Robinson has served Branwell for a pretext to throw all about him into hubbub and confusion.

CHARLOTTE’s VO continues as we cut visually to the next scene...

EXT. CHURCH LANE, HAWORTH. MORNING. DAY 10 - (7 JULY 1846, 11:40)

Another shiny new July morning. The postman SAMUEL HARTLEY heads up the lane, through the Brontës’ gate and round to the front of the house, where he knocks on the door.

CHARLOTTE

(vo)

He has become intolerable. To papa he allows rest neither day nor night and he is continually screwing money out of him sometimes threatening that he will kill himself if it is withheld from him.

CHARLOTTE opens the door, but not very wide because inside we can hear BRANWELL shouting at PATRICK as PATRICK urges BRANWELL to keep his voice down. She has to answer the door though, because she’s desperate to know what SAMUEL’s got for her.

BRANWELL

(oov)

I need. Some money.
PATRICK
(oov)
You need. To get a situation. You need. To pull yourself together!

BRANWELL
(oov)
I’ve tried! God, I’ve tried! Are you stupid as well as blind? There’s nothing out there! Not for someone who’s fit for nothing like me! Thanks to you.

PATRICK
(oov)
You’ve had every opportunity! I am not giving you any more money.

BRANWELL
(oov)
No, you are.

PATRICK
(oov)
No, I’m not. I’m afraid there is no more.

BRANWELL
(oov)
Right, well I’ll just have to take it then.

PATRICK
(oov)
Well. Mm. You’ll have to find it first.

BRANWELL
(oov)
Where is it?

PATRICK
(oov)
It’s gone.

BRANWELL
(oov)
Where is it? Tell me where it is!

PATRICK
(oov)
You can threaten me all you like. There is no more money, Branwell. Not for you. I beg you to recognise that you are ill.

During the above CHARLOTTE takes a handful of mail from SAMUEL HARTLEY.
She murmurs “thank you” at SAMUEL, who looks a bit embarrassed for CHARLOTTE, trying to pretend he can’t hear the shouting. CHARLOTTE closes the outer door and we follow her into the parlour...

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 10. CONTINUOUS - (7 JULY 1846, 11:43)

...as CHARLOTTE’s voice over continues. CHARLOTTE shuts the parlour door behind her (we stay with her in the parlour, the shouting across continues, but less distinct), and she sorts through the mail. There’s one for her and the rest for her father. She opens the letter, and reads. Enclosed are a couple of newspaper cuttings: reviews. She absorbs the contents quickly (again we see what a quick reader she is and how fast her mind works) and despite the misery of what’s going on in the house right now, the contents of the cuttings make her eyes light up.

CHARLOTTE

(vo)
He says Mrs. Robinson is now insane, that her mind is a complete wreck, owing to remorse for her conduct towards Mr. Robinson, whose end it appears was hastened by distress of mind, and grief for having lost him. I do not know how much to believe of what he says. He now declares that he neither can nor will do anything for himself. Good situations have been offered more than once - for which by a fortnight’s work he might have qualified himself - but he will do nothing except drink and make us all wretched.

CHARLOTTE leaves the room with the paper cuttings...

INT. PARSONAGE, HALLWAY/KITCHEN/BACK KITCHEN. DAY 10. CONTINUOUS - (7 JULY 1846, 11:45)

...and heads along the corridor (BRANWELL and PATRICK still arguing in the study), through the kitchen, through the back kitchen (where TABBY’s busy), and outside...

EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD/CHURCH LANE. DAY 10. CONTINUOUS - (7 JULY 1846, 11:46)

...where EMILY’s feeding a couple of geese. CHARLOTTE speaks quietly so TABBY won’t get wind of it.
CHARLOTTE
Two reviews. One from the Critic, one from the Athenaeum. Both anonymous. But both really...
(she doesn’t want to overstate the case)
Really quite good. Especially about you.

EMILY takes the papers and reads. She reads just as efficiently as CHARLOTTE. EMILY doesn’t show much, but we can see that on the quiet she finds this deeply gratifying.

CHARLOTTE (CONT’D)
“...refreshing, vigorous poetry - no sickly affectations, no namby-pamby, no tedious imitations of familiar strains”.

There’s a moment of something a bit like understanding between them. It’s the closest EMILY will come to apologising to CHARLOTTE, and admitting that she did the right thing. But it’s kind of understood.

EMILY
Are they still fighting?

CHARLOTTE tacitly affirms.

CHARLOTTE
Will you be all right? When I go to Manchester with Papa?

EMILY
(she nods)
It’s only three weeks. I’m more concerned about when he comes back. He’ll need rest, and quiet. Not this.

Just then BRANWELL comes out of the house pulling his jacket on, his hat perched on the back of his head. TABBY knows to get out of his way as he pushes past her. Suddenly EMILY’s anger gets the better of her.

EMILY (CONT’D)
Did y’get what you wanted?
(she walks out onto the lane after him)

BRANWELL
(a mumble)
Oh fuck off.
EMILY
Come back here and say that.
(BRANWELL comes back like he’s going to head butt her, but to his surprise EMILY doesn’t flinch, she walks towards him like she’s going to head butt him back. And of course she’s taller than he is)
Yeah, go on. Have a go. See what happens.

BRANWELL decides not to.

BRANWELL
I haven’t time.

EMILY
No, just the blind and the elderly then, is it?

BRANWELL
(as he wobbles away)
Otherwise I would.

EMILY
Course you would.

BRANWELL clearly has more pressing matters to attend to now he’s managed to get money out of PATRICK. EMILY watches after him for a moment and then marches back inside. CHARLOTTE follows.

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S STUDY. DAY 10. CONTINUOUS - (7 JULY 1846, 11:48)

EMILY comes through to PATRICK’s study. The door’s ajar. She taps on it and pushes it open. PATRICK’s sitting there with a small contusion to his left cheek bone, which he prods gingerly to see how tender it is. He probably has a raging headache now as well. He looks up (as well as he can) at EMILY.

PATRICK
It’s nothing.

EMILY
Did he hit you?

PATRICK
Don’t make a fuss.

EMILY’s angry. She’s upset as well. But she decides to do as he’s asking. She hesitates for a moment, and then leaves him to it and heads back to the kitchen.
CHARLOTTE lingers with PATRICK for another moment (to show solidarity) and then follows EMILY back through to the kitchen.

INT. PARSONAGE, KITCHEN. DAY 10. CONTINUOUS – (7 JULY 1846, 11:49)

TABBY’s around, but out of earshot, and they keep it hush-hush. It’s only then that CHARLOTTE realises that EMILY has tears in her eyes. Not that she’s giving in to it. She presses the folded up reviews back into CHARLOTTE’s hand, implying that she should put them somewhere safe.

EMILY
I’m still aiming to finish my story by the end of this week. There’s a handful of passages I’d like to look at again, but then – depending on where you and Anne are with yours –

CHARLOTTE
Oh, The Professor’s finished. As much as it ever will be.

EMILY
– perhaps we could aim to get them off to a publisher before you set off to Manchester.

CHARLOTTE agrees: good plan.

EXT. PARSONAGE. DAY 11 – (19 AUGUST 1846, 09:08)

Wednesday 19th August, 1846. Another sunny day. EMILY and the carter put CHARLOTTE and PATRICK’s boxes on the cart that’s waiting at the gate. ANNE leads blind PATRICK from the house. CHARLOTTE follows with a basket of provisions for the journey. EMILY helps ANNE get PATRICK up into a cart.

CHARLOTTE murmurs to EMILY –

CHARLOTTE
Good luck.

EMILY
And you.

EMILY helps CHARLOTTE into the cart.

TABBY
(to CHARLOTTE)
Keep him wrapped up, see.

PATRICK
Are our boxes in?
CHARLOTTE
Yes yes, everything’s under control, papa.

TABBY
Has she heard?

CHARLOTTE
Yes! I’ve heard.

PATRICK
And you know where the gun is, Emily.

EMILY
Yes.

CHARLOTTE
(calling to the driver)
We’re all in! Thank you.
(then to EMILY)
I’ll send you the address as soon as we know what it is!

EMILY, ANNE and TABBY watch them plod off down the lane. At length -

ANNE
(to EMILY)
Branwell doesn’t know where the gun is. Does he?

EMILY
Not any more.

TABBY
Is he still i’ bed?
(she realises - )
Daft question.

TABBY wanders back inside. Then EMILY says confidentially (but firmly) to ANNE -

EMILY
You give him no money. Nothing. Whatever sob stories he comes up with. All right?
(ANNE affirms)
He won’t hit you. And if he hits me...
(there really is only one solution)
I’ll hit him back.
(she heads inside)
Harder.
Several days later. PATRICK’s eye operation. PATRICK is attended by the surgeon, MR. WILSON, and two ASSISTANTS, one whose job is to look after the eye during surgery, another who is on hand with MR. WILSON’s instruments. PATRICK is awake, sitting, reclined, with his hands clasped tightly together. CHARLOTTE is sitting in a corner of the room, quiet and still, with her hands clasped in empathy. There are times when CHARLOTTE has to close her eyes, when she sees her father tense his hands together.

CHARLOTTE

(vo)
Dear Ellen. Papa and I came here on Wednesday, we saw Mr. Wilson the Oculist the same day; he pronounced Papa’s eyes quite ready for an operation and has fixed next Monday for the performance of it. Think of us on that day dear Nell. Mr. Wilson says we will have to stay here a month at least. It will be dreary. I wonder how poor Emily and Anne will get on at home with Branwell.

EMILY’s busy in the kitchen with TABBY and MARTHA out back doing the washing when the front door bell rings. EMILY goes to answer it, but ANNE (who was sewing) beats her to it, emerging from the parlour just in front of her. ANNE pulls the door open and is handed the post, including a package. ANNE silently demonstrates the package to EMILY as she closes the door. EMILY follows ANNE into the parlour (glancing down towards the kitchen to check that TABBY’s not looking)...

ANNE opens the package. EMILY closes the parlour door. The three manuscripts of Wuthering Heights, Agnes Grey and The Professor are returned, with a brief letter. ANNE absorbs its contents quickly.

ANNE

“...not able at present to consider publication”.
(a moment)
Do you think they actually read them?

A moment.
EMILY
Do they look like they’ve been read?

ANNE grabs Agnes Grey and EMILY grabs Wuthering Heights, both looking for clues that they’ve been thumbed through and read. Eventually ANNE gives up: who knows? EMILY gives up too: what’s the point worrying about it? They’ve been rejected whether they’ve been read or not.

ANNE
Who’s next on the list?

EMILY goes and takes a volume from the book case. In the back is a bit of paper with a list of publishers that CHARLOTTE’s drawn up.

INT. PATRICK AND CHARLOTTE’S LODGINGS, MANCHESTER. NIGHT 12.

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DUSK - (24 AUGUST 1846, 21:05)

It’s raining. CHARLOTTE’s alone in a strange parlour (we get a glimpse of bed-ridden PATRICK in another room with his eye bandaged). She sits down at a table with an oil lamp. She’s got her pencil and paper ready. She stares at nothing for ages, and we look into her penetrating eyes. She starts writing: “There was no possibility of taking a walk that day”. She pauses and considers some more. She writes “Chapter One” at the top. Then she continues the narrative: “We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of the question”. Then she writes in brackets “(Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early)”, then puts an arrow to indicate that it should come after “dinner”. Then she writes at the top, “Jane Eyre”.

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INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. NIGHT 12. DUSK - (24 AUGUST 1846, 21.25)

EMILY and ANNE are busy writing too by the light of an oil lamp. The dogs are flopped in front of the fire. Something’s troubling ANNE.

ANNE
Do you think it’s wrong to write about something very close to home?

EMILY
Like what?

ANNE
A woman. Forced to abandon her home. A good, well-off home.

(MORE)
To protect her child - and herself - because of a change in her husband’s character when he sinks into...

(she glances up aloft where BRANWELL is)
You know. Addictive behaviour. And then forced to make her own way in the world.

EMILY considers. And then she’s very clear about it -

EMILY
No. I don’t think it’s wrong. I’d never have invented Hindley if I hadn’t been set such a fine example at home.

ANNE goes back to work. Then realises something -

ANNE
Have you seen Branwell today?

EMILY
No.

ANNE
Have you heard him?

No, EMILY realises, she hasn’t. BRANWELL’s voice takes us into the next scene -

BRANWELL
(vo)
I see a corpse upon the waters lie,/ With eyes turned, swelled and sightless, to the sky -
And arms outstretched, to move as wave on wave/
Upbears it in its boundless billowy grave./
Not time, but Ocean thins its flowing hair;/
Decay, not sorrow, lays its forehead bare;/
Its members move, but not in thankless toil,/ For seas are milder than this world’s turmoil;/
Corruption robs its lip and cheeks of red,/ But wounded vanity grieves not the dead;/ And, though those members hasten to decay,/ No pang of suffering takes their strength away;/
With untormented eye, and heart, and brain,/ Through calm and storm it floats across the main:/
Though love and joy have perished long ago,/ Its bosom suffers not one pang of woe;/
Though weeds and worms its cherished beauty hide,/ It feels not wounded vanity or pride;/
(it’s that last line that makes BRANWELL start to cry, and he struggles to think the rest as he dissolves into helpless tears)

Though journeying towards some far off shore,/ It needs no care or purse to float it o’er;/
Though launched in voyage for Eternity/ It need not think upon what is to be;/
Though naked, helpless and companionless,/ It feels not poverty or knows distress.

Three months later. There’s frost on the ground and it’s icy. BRANWELL’s walking home from Ovenden to Haworth. He looks wretched, emaciated, gaunt, yellow. He’s lost a stone in weight since we last saw him. He also appears to have lost his hat. BRANWELL now has the permanently unco-ordinated manner of an alcoholic; even when he’s not actually drunk, it’s as though the majority of his brain cells have been squeezed dry. It affects everything about him, including his gait. An old sheep baahs at him from a field. BRANWELL baahs back. His clothes look a bit too big for him, he looks like some funny little tramp out of a Laurel and Hardy film. A cart goes past. He turns to it and sticks his thumb out, offering a dopey, charming smile, hoping he can get a lift. The well wrapped up CARTER asks him “Wheer’s ta gooin lad?” BRANWELL says “Haworth”. The CARTER indicates for him to jump on the back.
EXT. MAIN STREET, HAWORTH. DAY 13 - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 10:32)

BRANWELL walks up the main street. It’s still icy and he slides over. He picks himself up and carries on, like he’s on automatic pilot, too numb to feel pain where he’s grazed himself.

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S STUDY. DAY 13 - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 10:46)

PATRICK looks ten years younger now his sight has been restored (he’s just had one eye done). He’s smarter too, now he can see to look after himself better. He’s busy writing briskly at his desk when - out of the window - he sees someone walking up the lane. Something about the figure catches his eye and he realises - to his delight and his horror - that it’s BRANWELL, much changed. PATRICK heads from his study (we realise how sprightly he is, and that it’s only his eyesight that’s been stopping him) and through to the kitchen.

    PATRICK
    Girls!

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 13. CONTINUOUS - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 10:47)

CHARLOTTE and ANNE (writing or reading) look up when they hear PATRICK’s agitated voice.

INT. PARSONAGE, KITCHEN/BACK KITCHEN. DAY 13. CONTINUOUS - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 10:47)

PATRICK heads through the kitchen, the back kitchen and outside.

EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD/CHURCH LANE. DAY 13. CONTINUOUS - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 10:48)

EMILY’s bothering with the geese when PATRICK emerges from the back kitchen door. She follows him out onto Church Lane, where BRANWELL is just arriving at the gate.

    PATRICK
    Is that you, boy?

PATRICK can barely believe it: it’s so long since he’s seen BRANWELL properly, and now to see him like this.

    BRANWELL
    Oh hello.

Branwell collapses. He just slips to the ground, unconscious, and his face hits the stone floor of the yard.
CHARLOTTE and ANNE emerge from the back kitchen door behind PATRICK. PATRICK and EMILY rush over to BRANWELL. PATRICK turns to CHARLOTTE and ANNE.

PATRICK
One of you go and fetch Dr. Wheelhouse.

ANNE runs off.

EMILY
Be careful! It’s icy. Get some proper shoes on! And a shawl.

ANNE dives back inside the house. CHARLOTTE’s the one who finds she can’t move, can’t help, isn’t practical, doesn’t know what to do in the heat of the moment.

EMILY (CONT’D)
Branwell?

She slaps his face, but he’s out for the count. She tries to lift him up, but it’s awkward: she’s strong, but a limp body’s hard work, even an emaciated one. She persists, eventually manages to push her hands under his shoulders and to drag him inside. PATRICK grabs hold of his legs and they manage to lift him inside rather awkwardly between them.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 13 - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 12:10)

The three women are sitting in the parlour. The door’s open, and across the way PATRICK emerges from his study with DR. WHEELHOUSE (27) who murmurs “You know where I am” as PATRICK lets him out of the front door.

PATRICK comes into the parlour. He sits.

PATRICK
There is hope. He’s home, he’s back with us. And with nourishment and abstinence. And peace and quiet. And prayer. We may yet hope for better things. His body has suffered the ravages of gross neglect. And...

(hesitates)
abuse. Self-inflicted. And yet I cannot - in my conscience - do other than blame that woman. That sinful, hateful woman.

(this resonates for ANNE; she finds it hard to listen to)

Who with her more mature years and her social advantages should surely have known better responsibility.

(MORE)
PATRICK (CONT'D)
He has come very low, but sometimes... sometimes a man has to sink to the bottom before he can turn his life about. And perhaps that’s -
(he barely believes it himself. But what’s the alternative?)
- that’s what’s happened, what’s happening. Here.

EMILY
Where’s he been?

ANNE
How’s he been living?

CHARLOTTE
Does he want to abstain?

PATRICK
He has to. He has to abstain.
(then answering EMILY and ANNE)
Halifax. I assume. I don’t know. It’s where John’s always imagined he was.

EMILY
Or where John knew damned well he was.

This is extreme language for EMILY to use in front of her father. But she’s making a point, and PATRICK’s struck by this. He’s always imagined JOHN BROWN was a good influence on BRANWELL.

CHARLOTTE
Have you talked to him? About abstention.

PATRICK
He’s asleep.

CHARLOTTE
It’ll only work if he’s determined to do it himself.

PATRICK’s sad, thoughtful, he knows it’s a long shot, but so wants to believe it. He gives it a moment, and then he leaves the women to it. He returns to his study. ANNE’s tearful, angry. She tries not to be, tries not to show it, tries to get over it before anyone spots it, but CHARLOTTE and EMILY have both picked up on it. CHARLOTTE squeezes ANNE’s hand and gently murmurs, “Shhh”.
ANNE
I should have done more. At Thorp Green. I should have stopped him, I should’ve told someone, I should’ve -!

(she barely dare articulate it)

I’m -

(still struggling, she spits it out)
complicit in their sin.

She’s sincere and terrified. EMILY and CHARLOTTE are both quick to reassure her -

EMILY
You’re not.

CHARLOTTE
You were in an impossible position.

ANNE
I let it happen. All I did was leave. In the end... I was a coward. A moral coward. Before God.

INT. PARSONAGE, BRANWELL’S BEDROOM. (BRANWELL’S NIGHTMARE.)
INT. PARSONAGE, BRANWELL’S BEDROOM. (BRANWELL’S NIGHTMARE.) NIGHT 13 - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 23:41)

BRANWELL’s in bed. His eyes open. He looks disorientated. He doesn’t know where he is. He throws the covers back. He’s fully dressed. As he leaves his bed and the room, he accidentally throws his bedclothes over a lit candle. He doesn’t notice he’s done this. He opens his bedroom door, and finds himself in another room...

INT. MRS. ROBINSON’S BEDROOM. (BRANWELL’S NIGHTMARE.) NIGHT 13 - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 23:43)

He’s in MRS. ROBINSON’s very grand boudoir. MRS. ROBINSON is draped along a chaise longue, naked, and surrounded by men. All of whom look ready to fuck her. BRANWELL murmurs, “Lydia?” (so we know it’s her).

MRS. ROBINSON wants sex with anyone and everyone. All except BRANWELL. Pathetic little BRANWELL. WILLIAM ALLISON’s here, ready to fuck MRS. ROBINSON, as well as LEYLAND and JOHN BROWN and ENOCH THOMAS and then - to his further horror - his father is here too in with more of a chance than he is himself. Other men are here too. And they’re all turning to BRANWELL and going, “What’s up? What’s matter? Y’all right lad?” etc.

Suddenly a load of water lands on BRANWELL from above, like God just dropped a bucket load of water on him.
Suddenly -

INT. PARSONAGE, BRANWELL’S BEDROOM/UPSTAIRS LANDING. NIGHT - (21 NOVEMBER 1846, 23:45)

Ejaciated, ill BRANWELL wakes up struggling to breathe. We can hear a voice (EMILY’s) shouting, “Wake up! Wake up!” She’s just dragged him out into the corridor from his room and thrown a bucket of water in his face. She’s coughing too. There’s smoke everywhere. ANNE, CHARLOTTE and PATRICK emerge from their rooms, just realising something terrible is amiss. (EMILY’s dressed, like she was the only one that hadn’t gone to bed, so was the first to realise something was wrong).

EMILY
(breathless)
Fire, there was a fire, I’ve put it out - I think I’ve put it out.

PATRICK goes and looks in the room to check that the fire is out. As well as struggling to catch his breath, BRANWELL’s shaking really badly. And sweating (well, he’s drenched, EMILY’s just doused him) and staring. He looks terrified, like he doesn’t know what’s happening to him. He has no awareness of anyone around him; it’s like he’s fixated on a terrifying vision that only he can see.

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S STUDY. DAY 14 - (22 NOVEMBER 1846, 09:33)

The next morning. DR. WHEELHOUSE is with PATRICK again. (DR. WHEELHOUSE is a rather charmless, awkward man, who is in fact an alcoholic himself).

DR. WHEELHOUSE
Delirium Tremens. It’s when someone who’s been drinking solidly for weeks suddenly stops. Either through choice or - more usually - through lack of funds. The body doesn’t know how to respond, so it goes into spasm.

PATRICK
(interrupts)
Will it happen again?

DR. WHEELHOUSE
With care. No. But you do need to keep an eye on him. He’s lucky. (delicately, it’s a harsh thing to say, but it needs to be clearly understood)

(MORE)
You could’ve been sending for the undertaker this morning, Mr. Brontë, not me. He’ll have to stop drinking. He won’t want to. His body’ll crave it. But it will kill him. If he doesn’t. Can he be made to understand that?

(PATRICK nods)
I’m sorry. It’s a tragic thing to live with.

PATRICK is close to tears, and perhaps finds he can’t speak for a moment.

INT. PARSONAGE, BRANWELL’S BEDROOM. DAY 14 – (22 NOVEMBER 1846, 09:36)

CHARLOTTE, EMILY and ANNE are cleaning up in the scorched bedroom, which feels sad, cold, desolate. PATRICK appears at the door.

PATRICK
I think. Rather than come back in here. He should sleep in my room with me. For the time being.

Good plan.

EXT. MOORS. DAY 15 – (23 NOVEMBER 1846, 09:42)

It’s a bright day. Chilly, but dry. ANNE’s sitting in front of EMILY, and EMILY has her long arms wrapped round ANNE. They gaze across the moors, both wrapped up warm, boss of all they survey. EMILY wants to say something, but it takes her a moment to spit it out –

EMILY
I wrote a rhyme. For you.

ANNE
Did you?

EMILY
Well I wrote it. And I was thinking about you. After I’d written it. So. It goes –

(hesitates)
D’you want to hear it?

ANNE
Yes.

EMILY
It starts - it’s - the first line [goes] - it goes...

(MORE)
EMILY (CONT'D)
(she hesitates, she's self-conscious)
No coward soul is mine.
(so that wasn’t too bad.
She risks the next one)
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere.
(that sounded okay too, and
no-one’s laughing)
I see Heaven's glories shine
And Faith shines equal arming me from Fear.

ANNE
Talk more slowly.

EMILY tries to take the note, but she still can’t help talking a bit too fast at times -

EMILY
Oh God within my breast -
(realising that was fast)
Oh God within my breast
Almighty ever-present Deity
Life. That in me hast rest,
As I Undying Life, have power in Thee.

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men’s hearts, unutterably vain,
Worthless as withered weeds
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main

To waken doubt in one -
(she means ANNE, and she wants ANNE to realise that)
To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thy infinity,
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of Immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves,
creates and rears

Though earth and moon were gone
And suns and universes ceased to be
And Thou wert left alone
Every Existence would exist in thee

There is not room for Death
Nor atom that his might could render void
(MORE)
EMILY (CONT'D)
Since thou art Being. And Breath.
And what thou art may never be destroyed.
(a pause, then she whispers in ANNE’s ear)
There’s nothing to be frightened of. Not for someone like you.

ANNE thinks about that. Eventually -

ANNE
I love you.

EMILY
Good. I love you.

She kisses her cheek and gives her a squeeze. They cling onto each other.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR/HALLWAY/KITCHEN/BACK KITCHEN. DAY 15 -
(23 NOVEMBER 1846, 10:01)

CHARLOTTE’s busy writing at the table. The door’s ajar, and PATRICK’s just pulled the door open to the postman, SAMUEL, who’s mumbling something at him.

PATRICK
(oov)
Who?

SAMUEL HARTLEY
(oov)
Currer. Bell.

CHARLOTTE panics. She needs to get hold of that letter, and without arousing anyone’s suspicion. The rest oov as we stay with CHARLOTTE -

PATRICK
There’s no-one of that name here.

SAMUEL HARTLEY
Well no, I know that Mr. Brontë, only it’s addressed to here, so -

PATRICK
Well that’s a mystery. There’s no-one of that name in the entire parish. As far as I’m aware.

SAMUEL HARTLEY
No well that’s why a thought happen a visitor.

PATRICK
No. No. No visitors. Not at the moment.
SAMUEL HARTLEY
Fair enough, I’ll take it back to t’sorting office then.

CHARLOTTE sidles out of the room. She’s got something resembling a half baked plan. PATRICK - between shutting the front door and going back into his office - doesn’t notice CHARLOTTE sidle out of the parlour, and along the corridor and through the kitchen, the back kitchen and outside.

EXT. PARSONAGE. DAY 15. CONTINUOUS - (23 NOVEMBER 1846, 10:03)
CHARLOTTE intercepts SAMUEL as he’s heading along the path alongside the house to the gate.

CHARLOTTE
Ah!

SAMUEL HARTLEY
Morning Miss Brontë.

CHARLOTTE
Did did I hear...? The name...? (there’s no getting round it)
Currer Bell?

SAMUEL HARTLEY
Yes!

CHARLOTTE
Good. That’s - not me. Obviously. But if I could take it. I can make sure it reaches him. Him. You see he - Papa, he forgets. He’s - Mr. Bell - he’s not here. He was here. And now... he isn’t. So. I can forward it. To him. I have his address.

SAMUEL HARTLEY
Funny name. Currer. (CHARLOTTE has no response)
I thowt happen it were summat to do wi’ Mr. Nicholls. Arthur Bell Nicholls. But -

CHARLOTTE
No. No. No no. That was [just] - that’s just coincidental.

A moment: is he going to give it to her? He probably realises she’s up to something, but he likes her, so -
SAMUEL HARTLEY

Good!
(delves in his bag)
Well that saves me filling in a
docket down at t’sorting office.

CHARLOTTE

I’m much obliged. So will he be.

SAMUEL HARTLEY

How’s your...?
(delicately)
Brother? Is he - ?

CHARLOTTE

Oh he’s - he’s -

She nods, shakes her head, twitches a bit, implying that he’s
not great. SAMUEL nods, smiles sadly, sympathetically, and
heads off.

SAMUEL HARTLEY

‘Til tomorra then! Miss Brontë.

CHARLOTTE


CHARLOTTE lets SAMUEL wander off, then looks at the envelope. It’s not a package. It’s a letter. She can’t wait, and anyway, she’ll have as much privacy out here as she has inside. She rips it open. And reads.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 15 - (23 NOVEMBER 1846, 12:16)

Later. CHARLOTTE’s sitting on the sofa. On her own. With the letter. She looks rather sombre and thoughtful. ANNE comes in looking reasonably breezy (having just come back from her walk).

CHARLOTTE

Where’s Emily?

ANNE

In the kitchen. D’you want her?
(ANNE notices the letter.
CHARLOTTE affirms. ANNE
goes to the parlour door
and calls - )

Emily?

INT. PARSONAGE, HALLWAY. DAY 15. CONTINUOUS - (23 NOVEMBER 1846, 12:17)

EMILY appears in the kitchen doorway, and ANNE mouths to her...
ANNE
A letter. From a publisher.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 15. CONTINUOUS - (23 NOVEMBER 1846, 12:17)

ANNE comes back in, followed closely by EMILY. They both see how CHARLOTTE's eyes are alive with excitement, but it’s difficult to read exactly what that excitement is.

CHARLOTTE
Thomas Cautley Newby has offered [to] -
(lowers her voice, you never know who’s lurking in the corridor)
to publish Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey. His terms are steep, but he is offering to publish them. Which is more than anyone else has done, [so] -

ANNE
What about The Professor?

CHARLOTTE
No. No, he’s not offering to publish that. So -

EMILY
Why?

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
So you need to think about how you want to [approach] -

ANNE
(interrupts)
No, that’s - we should publish them all together or not at all. Surely.

ANNE looks to EMILY for support. But EMILY’s a step ahead of ANNE, and doesn’t agree, but doesn’t want to say so in front of CHARLOTTE. Awkward. CHARLOTTE of course picks that up -

CHARLOTTE
That’s...
(as kindly as she can manage)
sentimental, it’s kind, but it’s nonsense. This is a solid offer - as I say, not a generous one, but - I’ll persevere. In sending out The Professor. And with the other one I’ve been writing. In the meantime you have a choice to make. Read it.  (MORE)
CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
(it’s EMILY she offers the letter to, and to ANNE she explains - )
He’s asking you to provide an advance of fifty pounds towards the cost of publication.
(EMILY takes it and reads it quickly)
But clearly he believes its viable or he wouldn’t make the offer.

EMILY
He’s addressed it to Currer Bell.

CHARLOTTE
Yes! That was...
(not amused)
Interesting.

EMILY
You didn’t -

CHARLOTTE
Of course I didn’t! I had to...
(she can’t bring herself to admit to being a liar)
fib.

EMILY
Fifty pounds.

ANNE
Perhaps that’s normal. Perhaps whoever undertook to publish it would ask for an advance of that sort. We’re a risk. We’re unknown. Despite the poems.

EMILY
Because of the poems. Two copies sold.
(EMILY offers the letter to ANNE. She sits down and addresses CHARLOTTE with great sincerity)
You will persist.

CHARLOTTE
Oh yes.

She says it almost lightly, but we sense an inner core of steel behind it.
A shot of Haworth nestling the hills from across the valley. Time passing.

There’s a man knocking on the front door. This is a BAILIFF. He has a HENCHMAN with him that’s built like a brick shit house. TABBY answers the door.

TABBY
(she looks them up and down, especially the big one who’s hanging back)
Yes?

BAILIFF
I’d like to speak to Mr. Brontë.

TABBY
The Reverend Brontë?

BAILIFF
Mr. Patrick Brontë.

TABBY
What shall I say it’s to do with?

BAILIFF
Is he in?

TABBY
Who wants to know?

BAILIFF
I’m a bailiff of the county appointed by Mr. Rawson, the Magistrate at Halifax. I’m here about an unpaid debt. Is Mr. Brontë in?

During the above we glimpse –

BRANWELL’s gripping onto the stair railings struggling to hear what’s being said below. He looks pale and wasted as before, but right now he looks terrified too.

Back at the front door –
EXT. PARSONAGE, FRONT DOOR. DAY 16. CONTINUOUS - (18 DECEMBER 1846, 10:12)

TABBY
I’ll – you’ll just have to give me a minute.

She pushes the door to, not quite shut, but it’s a bit like shutting the door in someone’s face. The BAILIFF turns to his colleague and gives him a look: the usual rigmarole they have to go through.

INT. PARSONAGE, HALLWAY/PATRICK’S STUDY. DAY 16. CONTINUOUS - (18 DECEMBER 1846, 10:13)

TABBY knocks on PATRICK’s study door and pushes it open.

TABBY
There’s a man at the door, Mr. Brontë. He says he’s here about an unpaid debt. He says he’s been sent by a Magistrate at Halifax.

PATRICK’s heart sinks: what fresh hell is this?

INT. PARSONAGE, UPSTAIRS LANDING/STAIRS/HALLWAY. DAY 16. CONTINUOUS - (18 DECEMBER 1846, 10:13)

BRANWELL heads down the stairs, anxious not to be seen (despite the impossibility, but what choice has he got?), struggling to pull his boots on. Once again we see the perpetual unco-ordinated wobbliness/inefficiency of the dyed-in-the-wool alcoholic.

Simultaneously PATRICK’s emerging from his study to go and talk to the BAILIFF at the front door. PATRICK doesn’t see BRANWELL, but TABBY does.

INT. PARSONAGE, STAIRWELL/HALLWAY/KITCHEN/BACK KITCHEN. DAY 16. CONTINUOUS - (18 DECEMBER 1846, 10:14)

As he wobbles down the stairs and slips through to the kitchen, he does an absurd/comedy: “Shhh!” at TABBY. PATRICK pulls the front door open just as BRANWELL’s slipping into the kitchen from the bottom of the stairs (where the BAILIFF would see him).

BRANWELL pushes past EMILY –

BRANWELL
(a whisper)
Shift.
EXT. PARSONAGE, FRONT DOOR. DAY 16. CONTINUOUS – (18 DECEMBER 1846, 10:14)

PATRICK
Now then. Gentlemen. How may I help you?

BAILIFF
Mr. Patrick Brontë?

PATRICK
Yes.

Experience tells the BAILIFF that this elderly, tidy, polite man of the cloth can’t be the bloke he’s looking for. However, in the belief that it takes all sorts, he shows him his official documents (which PATRICK takes and peers at) and explains –

BAILIFF
I’m appointed by the Magistrate at Halifax to collect a debt of fourteen pounds, ten shillings and sixpence owing to Mr. Crowther of the Commercial Inn, Northgate, Halifax, and now outstanding for a total of eight months. If you are unable to pay that sum – in total – I am empowered by the Magistrate to arrest you and take you to York, where you will be imprisoned until the debt is paid in full.

SCENE OMITTED

EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD/CHURCH LANE. DAY 16. CONTINUOUS – (18 DECEMBER 1846, 10:16)

BRANWELL legs it (wobbly style) through the gate, only to come face-to-face with the BAILIFF’s SECOND HENCHMAN who – in the traditional manner – has been asked to cover the rear of the premises.

SECOND HENCHMAN
Woah woah woah – not so fast, little feller.

(BRANWELL dives out of the man’s way, but he’s not quick enough. BRANWELL finds himself obliged to take a swing at the bloke, who’s clearly a lot more solid than BRANWELL, but BRANWELL’s desperate to get away)

Steady now!

(MORE)
SECOND HENCHMAN (CONT'D)
Y’don’t want me to hurt yer! And you don’t want to hurt me, because if you do, the’ll be bother.

EMILY’s come out of the back kitchen – she shuts the dogs in as they continue to bark – just as BRANWELL lunges at the bloke again. Her natural reserve is challenged when she sees this big bloke laying into her emaciated brother.

EXT. PARSONAGE, FRONT DOOR. DAY 16. CONTINUOUS – (18 DECEMBER 1846, 10:17)

CHARLOTTE and ANNE have appeared behind TABBY (who’s behind PATRICK), having heard voices, both mouthing to TABBY “What’s going on?/What’s happened?”

BAILIFF
Your son? Right well where is your son then, Mr. Brontë?

PATRICK
The thing is, he’s ill, he’s upstairs, he’s in bed, he’s been ill for some time, and this is the first thing I’ve heard about any debts.

BAILIFF
I’m afraid that doesn’t alter the fact of the matter. If this bill remains [unpaid] –

Suddenly they hear voices from the back of the house. The SECOND HENCHMAN calling (as he struggles with BRANWELL): “I’VE GOT HIM MR. RILEY!”

The BAILIFF gives the first HENCHMAN a look, indicating for him to keep an eye on PATRICK, as he heads off to see who his SECOND HENCHMAN has got. Intrigued, PATRICK follows the BAILIFF round the back of the house, and then the first HENCHMAN is obliged to follow PATRICK. CHARLOTTE edges past TABBY to follow the HENCHMAN. TABBY and ANNE follow CHARLOTTE.

EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD/CHURCH LANE. DAY 16. CONTINUOUS (18 DECEMBER 1846, 10:18)

BRANWELL’s on the floor, face down, with the SECOND HENCHMAN on top of him, struggling to tie his hands behind his back with a bit of rope.

BRANWELL
Get off me! Emily! Get him off me! Emily! I can’t breathe!
SECOND HENCHMAN
Stop wriggling! Stop struggling!
You’re not going anywhere!

BRANWELL
I’ve done nothing wrong! You’ve got
the wrong man!

SECOND HENCHMAN
Well what were you legging it for
then? And why did you try and hit
me? Y’little twat.

The BAILIFF’s arrived.

BAILIFF
Are you Patrick Brontë?
(BRANWELL doesn’t reply)
Are you Patrick Branwell Brontë?

BRANWELL’s hands are now tied.

SECOND HENCHMAN
Up.

(Patrick’s hands are now tied.
BAILIFF pulls him up,
BRANWELL’s too weak to
resist, but he does his
best not to comply)

Stand up! Answer the man!

PATRICK appears behind the BAILIFF, and CHARLOTTE, ANNE and
TABBY (and first HENCHMAN) behind PATRICK. EMILY (and now
MARTHA) look on in horror from the back kitchen door.

BRANWELL
(he addresses PATRICK)
I don’t know who these people are.

PATRICK
You owe money. To some publican in
Halifax. And if the debt isn’t paid
they’ll take you to the debtors’
prison in York.

BRANWELL’s shaking; the cold, the shattered nerves, the
terror, his brain not working properly, just the urgent need
to get out of this mess.

BRANWELL
Well better pay up then. Eh?

PATRICK can’t believe that BRANWELL just said that, that this
is his attitude.

PATRICK
Take him.
The women are shocked. BRANWELL’s mortified. The SECOND HENCHMAN steers BRANWELL towards the lane.

BRANWELL
No! No! I’m sorry! I’m sorry! Help me! Papa! Papa! Charlotte! CHARLOTTE, do something! EMILY! Do something! DO SOMETHING CHARLOTTE!

It’s weird that he’s appealing to CHARLOTTE, except it goes back to something primal in his brain, it’s like calling for his mother, or at least his oldest ally. CHARLOTTE has tears welling up; she hates the tears, but she can do nothing about them.

CHARLOTTE
(she mumbles to PATRICK, and it’s against her better instincts, but she really can’t stand this)
We have money. We have money! We have money, please stop them.

The BAILIFF has witnessed this. He’s used to the pattern these things take, and he lingered anticipating some such development.

BAILIFF
(calling to his colleague)
Hang on boys!

PATRICK
(he’s quiet)
Bring him back.

BAILIFF
If it’s all right with you Reverend, my colleagues’ll keep hold of him ‘til I’ve got the remittance.

PATRICK
I shall require a receipt.

BAILIFF
I shall give you one.

PATRICK and the BAILIFF head inside (the front way). CHARLOTTE and ANNE consult one another with a look, but don’t quite know what to do. EMILY heads decisively back inside (the back way).

In the street, BRANWELL stands there shivering and shaking and looking wretched, flanked by these two men who are twice his size. EMILY emerges from the back door with a blanket. In defiance of the two men, and saying nothing, she wraps the blanket around BRANWELL (who’s still cuffed with rope).
Then she folds her arms (to keep herself warm) and simply stands there with him, intending to remain there for as long as it takes.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. NIGHT 17. DUSK - (7 AUGUST 1847, 114 21:05)

EMILY’s sitting on the floor gazing into the fire (maybe she was reading, but her concentration’s lapsed). She has one arm around KEEPER. FLOSSIE’s here too. ANNE and CHARLOTTE are sitting at the table writing, both hunched over and intense.

It’s CHARLOTTE’s head we’re in. She has a two page letter in front of her from Smith, Elder & Co. She’s dated her letter 7th August, 1847.

CHARLOTTE
(vo as she writes)
Gentlemen. I have received your communication of the 5th instant
(she writes this as inst.)
for which I thank you. Your objection to the want of varied interest in The Professor is, I am aware, not without grounds. I have a second narrative in three volumes
(she writes this as vols.)
now completed, to which I have endeavoured to impart a more vivid interest than belongs to The Professor. I send you per rail a manuscript
(she writes ‘an M.S.’)
entitled Jane Eyre, a novel, in three volumes
(she writes 3 vols.)
by Currer Bell. I find I cannot pre-pay the carriage of the parcel as money for that purpose is not received at the small Station-house where it is left. If, when you acknowledge receipt of the manuscript
(M.S.)
you will have the goodness to mention the amount charged on delivery, I will immediately transmit it in postage stamps. It is better in future to address Mr. Currer Bell - under cover to Miss Brontë - Haworth - Bradford Yorks - as there is a risk of letters otherwise directed, not reaching me at present. To save trouble I enclose an envelope. I am Gentlemen Yours respectfully C Bell.
On the table in front of CHARLOTTE her self addressed envelope, brown wrapping paper and string, and the fair copy hand written manuscript of Jane Eyre. We see enough to read ‘Jane Eyre, Chapter One, There was no possibility of taking a walk that day.’ CHARLOTTE wraps her letter, the addressed envelope and the manuscript into a parcel and addresses it to Smith, Elder & Co, 65 Cornhill, London.

115 EXT. CHURCH LANE, HAWORTH. DAY 18 - (25 AUGUST 1847, 09:35)
CHARLOTTE heads out onto the lane, alone, clutching the auspicious package on the first leg of its epic journey, addressed to Smith, Elder & Co. It starts to rain and she tucks the parcel inside her cape.

116 EXT. MAIN STREET, HAWORTH. DAY 18 - (25 AUGUST 1847, 09:38)
CHARLOTTE comes down the steps below the church, and heads off down the street, past the Black Bull and away from us. We watch her walk determinedly down the street, then rise above the village and chimneys, looking beyond at the landscape and up into the sky.

117 INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 19 - (22 JANUARY 1848, 11:14)
Five months later.

We move along the bookshelf by the window in the parlour containing the Brontës’ favourite authors, Walter Scott, James Hogg, Byron, Shelley... and then we come to the very newly published three-volume first edition of Jane Eyre by Currer Bell, and the two-volume first edition of Wuthering Heights by Ellis Bell and the one-volume first edition of Agnes Grey by Acton Bell, all sitting next to one another on the shelf. We become aware of raised voices off -

BRANWELL
(oov, his speech and delivery now permanently affected by his condition)
I keep telling you! You keep being told! One day. One of us. Is not going to leave that room alive! I will. Either. Kill you. Or. I will kill myself! Do you want me to kill myself? Eh? ‘Cos if I do, old man, you can rest assured that you’ll have driven me to it with your endless prayers and your drivel!

ANNE and CHARLOTTE are sitting at the table. They were writing, but of course their concentration has been shattered, and all they can do is look at one another, waiting for the episode to end.
INT. PARSONAGE, KITCHEN AND VIEW INTO EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD. DAY 19. CONTINUOUS – (22 JANUARY 1848, 11:15)

MARTHA and EMILY were busy in the kitchen. EMILY has also stopped doing what she’s doing, listening to the argument, gauging whether it’s time to wade in and do something about it or not. MARTHA is embarrassed, not knowing whether to pause in her work (so EMILY can hear) or carry on. (We glimpse TABBY sitting out in the back yard, where she can’t hear it).

BRANWELL

(oov)
Can you not understand, can you not get. The idea. That the only only respite I have from the misery of my existence is being allowed a little bit of something to drink. I’m only asking for a shilling, for God’s sake!

Everything goes quiet. Moments pass, and then PATRICK’s study door is yanked open, BRANWELL emerges, makes his wobbly, uncoordinated way out down the hallway, through the kitchen and the back kitchen, pushing past MARTHA and outside. EMILY raises a bit of an eyebrow in MARTHA’s general direction by way of saying “Sorry about my dozy feckless twat of a brother”, then she heads off to PATRICK’s study.

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S STUDY/HALLWAY. DAY 19. CONTINUOUS – (22 JANUARY 1848, 11:16)

EMILY appears at PATRICK’s door (which remains wide open as BRANWELL left it). EMILY doesn’t say anything, she just leans against the door jamb. PATRICK looks wretched.

PATRICK
He’ll just go on and on and on until he gets what he wants anyway, and I just – I don’t always have the energy. Any more.

EMILY accepts that, despite her zero tolerance efforts with BRANWELL. She gives it a moment, heaves a heavy sigh, then turns and heads into the parlour. We go with her...

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 19. CONTINUOUS – (22 JANUARY 1848, 11:16)

...she doesn’t quite shut the door behind her. She sits down on the sofa and looks at CHARLOTTE and ANNE, who remain sickened and distracted.

EMILY
I know this is contradicting what I’ve said before. But.

(MORE)
EMILY (CONT’D)
(a stab at dry humour - )
My second thoughts are - occasionally - better than my first ones. I think you should tell papa about Jane Eyre. About how successful it’s been.

CHARLOTTE’s not exactly averse to the idea, but just to be sure they’re singing from the same hymn sheet -

CHARLOTTE
Why?

EMILY
I think it’d do him good. To know. That we now seem to have found a means of supporting ourselves. Possibly. In the event of... whenever something happens to him.

CHARLOTTE
Why Jane Eyre?

EMILY
No, we’ll tell him about everything, but just... as a way in.

CHARLOTTE’s quite excited. Thrilled, even. But then she’s terrified too.

CHARLOTTE
But then... he’ll read it.
(EMILY’s like durr... yeah, obviously)

Now?

EMILY nods. Yes. Now. ANNE’s as nervous as CHARLOTTE, but she’s excited too. CHARLOTTE takes her courage in her hands, takes the three volumes of Jane Eyre off the shelf, then the three volumes of Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey, puts the latter three on the table (to imply that EMILY and ANNE aren’t going to be allowed to wriggle out of their half of the bargain) and then heads across the hallway. We remain with EMILY and ANNE for a moment as we hear -

CHARLOTTE (CONT’D)
(oov)
Papa?

PATRICK
(oov)
Hello.

CHARLOTTE
(oov)
Have you got a moment?
PATRICK
(oov)
Quickly.

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S STUDY. DAY 19. CONTINUOUS - (22 121 JANUARY 1848, 11:17)

PATRICK was busy writing, composing a letter, consulting another book as he writes. CHARLOTTE has the three small volumes behind her back.

CHARLOTTE
I’ve I’ve I’ve been writing a book.
A book. And -

PATRICK
(entirely unfazed)
Well well.

CHARLOTTE
Yes. It’s erm - would you like to read it?

PATRICK
No. I can’t. I haven’t time. And you know, your little tiny writing, I can’t see it. But well done.

CHARLOTTE
The thing is, you see. It’s published.
(she offers it to him)
It’s been published, it’s a properly published – it’s a book in three volumes.

PATRICK
(properly interested this time)
Well well.
(he takes it)
Currer Bell. No, he’s famous, he’s -

CHARLOTTE
No, that’s me, [that’s] -

PATRICK
That’s you? What’s you?

CHARLOTTE
That’s - I’ve published under a pseudonym. C.B. Charlotte Brontë. Currer Bell. You see. It’s... the same initials. And the thing is. It’s just about to go into a second edition. It’s sold a lot of copies. It’s...

(MORE)
been really quite unusually successful. There’s a stage play of it in rehearsal as we speak at a theatre in - the Victoria Theatre - in fact. In London. It’s been so...

(erem)

(she’s still struggling to believe it herself)

Hugely well received.

PATRICK
So...? You’re...? You’re...?

CHARLOTTE
Yes. And we’ve - I’ve made money. With the prospect of quite a lot more. And if we - I continue to work hard, and produce the kind of writing that people are prepared to pay money for... it should furnish us with a comfortable existence.

PATRICK smiles. It’s perhaps the first time we have seen him smile. He’s delighted. Can’t quite take it in. Is she winding him up?

CHARLOTTE (CONT’D)
Would you like me to read you some of the reviews?

122 INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 19. CONTINUOUS - (22 JANUARY 1848, 11.19)

EMILY and ANNE are ear-wigging, then they both try and look dead casual like they were just chilling as PATRICK comes in followed by CHARLOTTE.

PATRICK
Children. Charlotte has written a novel. And it seems to be quite a lot better than I might have expected.

We glimpse CHARLOTTE. She keeps smiling, despite the back-handed compliment. It’s one of those inept parent moments that you just have to smile through.

123 INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 19 - (22 JANUARY 1848, 13:45)

Later. PATRICK now has the three volumes comprising Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey in his possession too. The reviews are also spread out in front of him - good and bad. The first volume of Jane Eyre now has a bookmark in it, thirty or so pages in.
PATRICK
Why have you kept it such a secret?

CHARLOTTE
To protect ourselves. We’ve been accused of vulgarity and coarseness. I have “forfeited the right to be called a member of the fairer sex” according to Lady Eastlake -
(she prods one of the reviews)
who speculates that Currer Bell might actually be a woman, I’m complicit in the revolutions throughout Europe.
(PATRICK raises an eyebrow: “How?” CHARLOTTE’s memorised it without even trying to -)
“We do not hesitate to say that the tone of mind and thought which has overthrown authority and violated every code - human and divine - abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home, is the same which has also written Jane Eyre”.

PATRICK
So Jane Eyre. How is it vul[gar] -?

ANNE
It isn’t, papa! People are just squeamish about the truth, about real life. Our work is... clever. It’s truthful. It’s new, it’s fresh, it’s vivid and subtle and forthright, and - (...and everything)
But. More importantly. The point is. We didn’t want Branwell to know. That’s first and foremost why we’ve kept it a secret. It isn’t just that he’d be scathing, we can stand that.

EMILY
It’s because it’s what he always wanted to do. And now it looks less and less likely that he ever will, it’d be like rubbing salt into a wound.

It’s utterly clear to PATRICK that all three of them feel exactly the same.
CHARLOTTE
No-one can ever know who we are. We’ve agreed. We just didn’t want you to worry that we weren’t doing anything with ourselves. Because we have been. We are.

PATRICK
So...? Who else knows. Besides me?

EMILY
No-one.

CHARLOTTE
I’ve not even told Ellen.

PATRICK
(at EMILY)
Tabby?

EMILY
No-one.

CHARLOTTE
The publishers don’t even know who we are.

ANNE
They think we’re three men.

EMILY
We’d like to keep it that way.

ANNE
We just wanted you to know.

PATRICK’s moved. He’s so proud of them. He puts his hand on volume one of Jane Eyre.

PATRICK
Little Helen Burns. That’s your little sister. Maria.

CHARLOTTE
Maria was our big sister.

PATRICK
Of course she was.
(he has a tear in his eye, but he’s smiling)
Of course she was. There isn’t a day that passes when I don’t think about her. And little Elizabeth. And your mother.
(And he’s still smiling, despite the tears.
(MORE)
He always knew there was something special about these women.

I am... (pride's a sin, so he hesitation, then whispers)
Very proud of you.
(then he realises...)
I always have been.

And whilst this is touching (hopefully), we should feel like this is the first time he has actually noticed them.

EXT. HAWORTH. DAY 20 - (2 JULY 1848, 09:12)

Sunday morning. Haworth from across the valley. The church bells are ringing.

EXT. CHURCH TOWER. DAY 20 - (2 JULY 1848, 09:12)

We see the bells ringing inside the church tower.

EXT. CHURCH LANE, HAWORTH. DAY 20 - (2 JULY 1848, 09:12)

We creep very slowly up empty Church Lane towards the parsonage.

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S BEDROOM. DAY 20. CONTINUOUS - (2 JULY 1848, 09:12)

PATRICK’s bedroom is now a bit of a mess. We see a variety of scraps of paper strewn around on the floor, including BRANWELL’s cartoon of himself being challenged by Death to a boxing match.

BRANWELL’s sitting on his chamber pot, composing a letter, which reads:

Sunday

Dear John

I shall feel very much obliged to you if can contrive to get me Five pence worth of Gin in a proper measure.

Should it be speedily got I could perhaps take it from you or Billy at the lane top or what would be quite as well, sent out for, to you.

I anxiously ask the favour because I know the good it will do me.

Punctually at Half-past Nine in the morning you will be paid the 5d out of a shilling given me then. Yours,
There are a number of crossings out and mistakes, and it’s the shaky writing of someone who’s struggling with their co-ordination. He folds it up.

EXT. CHURCH STREET, HAWORTH. DAY 20 - (2 JULY 1848, 09:54)

BRANWELL goes and posts the letter (now addressed and sealed) through JOHN’s door, down the lane on the other side. People are going to church. They pay him no attention and he pays them none. He heads off back up the lane to the parsonage and he starts coughing. It becomes bad, so bad he has to stop walking and concentrate on coughing. It gets worse, and when it’s over, he has to pause to recover from the spasm and catch his breath before he can carry on up the lane. He really is starting to look like a ghost now. Just as he’s nearing the gate, CHARLOTTE, EMILY and ANNE emerge (chatting happily) from the gate, dressed handsomely in their Sunday best, CHARLOTTE and ANNE carrying a hymn book each. They weren’t expecting to see BRANWELL, and walk awkwardly straight past him; like everyone else they treat him like a ghost. After all, they only ever get abuse off him these days.

Eventually - without saying anything - EMILY simply breaks away from the other two and goes back and helps him inside. ANNE and CHARLOTTE look back, hesitate, then decide to carry on to church.

INT. PARSONAGE, KITCHEN. DAY 21 - (7 JULY 1848, 10:33)

A week later.

EMILY’s kneading bread. TABBY’s about. ANNE comes in, and is keen to avoid TABBY overhearing anything as she murmurs to EMILY -

ANNE
Have you got a minute?

Something about ANNE’s tone is ominous. EMILY downs tools and follows ANNE through to the parlour...

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 21. CONTINUOUS - (7 JULY 1848, 10:34)

...where CHARLOTTE’s pacing up and down with a letter in her hand. EMILY shuts the door behind her.

EMILY
What?
CHARLOTTE
We’re going to have to go to London.

EMILY
Who is?

CHARLOTTE
We are. All three of us.

EMILY
When?

CHARLOTTE
Today.

EMILY
Why?

CHARLOTTE
(she hands EMILY the
letter, it’s from Smith,
Elder & Co, CHARLOTTE’s
publisher)
Your –
(she resists an expletive)
Mr. Newby must’ve - I don’t know -
sold the first few pages of The
Tenant of Wildfell Hall to an
American publisher on the
understanding that it was written
by
(prodding herself in the
chest)
Currer Bell.

EMILY absorbs the contents of the letter and looks at ANNE.

EMILY
Well it’s obviously a
misunderstanding –

CHARLOTTE
Will you…!
(she’s so exasperated)
Please. See. That this man is a... 
con man! A rogue! How many -
(interrupts herself)
how many - mistakes did he print in 
Wuthering Heights? Proofs that you 
painstakingly corrected and he 
ignored! And now this! My publisher 
is livid –
(prods the letter that 
EMILY’s holding)
that I could possibly have ‘sold my 
next novel’ to another publisher!
(MORE)
CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
They have first refusal on my next two novels, and now they think I’m some kind of unscrupulous double dealer!

EMILY
Well... just write and explain.

CHARLOTTE
No. No, we’ve got to go to London and give ocular proof that we are three people, and that the novels are not all the work of one person, and that this -
(stabbing the letter again with her forefinger)
is absolute trash.

EMILY loves it when CHARLOTTE gets wound up; she looks so little and funny.

EMILY
Well I’m not going.

CHARLOTTE
Why?

EMILY
Because. You can write a letter and explain all that, and just say that Newby’s made a mis[take] -

CHARLOTTE
That’s not a mistake! It’s a deliberate deceitful attempt to cash in on the success of Jane Eyre.
(to ANNE)
Sorry.

ANNE brushes it off, she’s on CHARLOTTE’s side.

EMILY
It isn’t.

CHARLOTTE
It is!

EMILY
Newby has made the mistake - along with a lot of other people - of assuming we’re all one person, that’s all it is. It doesn’t matter, it’s a simple letter, [you just] -

CHARLOTTE
Why. Are you. So obtuse?
EMILY
Why are you so melodramatic?

ANNE
Emily. I don’t want The Tenant of Wildfell Hall promoted and sold on a deceitful claim — misunderstanding — whichever. That it’s by anyone other than me.

CHARLOTTE
We have to go to London. Now. Today. And explain to Mr. Smith and Mr. Smith Williams what’s happened. It’s intolerable. To imagine that they could think that I would be so slippery.

EMILY
But... wait. Look. You can’t. You can’t go to London and explain who you are. Because. They will see you.

CHARLOTTE
That’s the whole point.

EMILY
Yes, and you promised — you promised me — that we would never reveal ourselves. To anyone. Ever.

CHARLOTTE
Well. I’m afraid. Because of your...

(again, she has to resist yet another expletive)
Mister Newby. We now find ourselves in a... situation.

ANNE
Emily. I think we should go.

EMILY
No. And you’re not going either.

ANNE
No, I am.

EMILY
No you’re not.

ANNE
Newby’s compromised my integrity as much as Charlotte’s. I shan’t publish with him again. And if you won’t come with us, that’s — that’s your choice.
ANNE’s never defied EMILY before. It’s a bit of a shock.

CHARLOTTE
We don’t need to fall out about this. Emily.

EMILY looks like she could explode. She gives herself a moment and manages to speak without screaming at them -

EMILY
It’s about your novel
(that was to ANNE)
- and your name.
(that was to CHARLOTTE)
It’s got nothing to do with me.

She walks out -

ANNE
Don’t be like that Em[ily] - !

- and slams the door.

130  EXT/INT. TRAIN. NIGHT 21 - (8 JULY 1848, 03:04)  130

CHARLOTTE and ANNE travel through the night up to London. They’re both wide awake, even though it’s three o’clock in the morning. Rain beats against the carriage window, the only illumination is the moon and perhaps they huddle together for warmth. CHARLOTTE realises that ANNE has silent tears brimming in her eyes.

CHARLOTTE
What’s the matter?

ANNE
(she wants to dismiss it as nothing, but it’s easier said than done)
Emily.

CHARLOTTE
Yes, but you do know her bark’s worse than her bite. Don’t you?

ANNE kind of does know that, yes. But she still hates not being mates with EMILY.

131  EXT. EUSTON STATION, LONDON. DAY 22 - (8 JULY 1848, 07:12)  131

The train has arrived in the station and passengers pile off. CHARLOTTE and ANNE step off the train, carrying a bag each. Everyone else looks like they know exactly what they’re doing and exactly where they’re going, and so much more sophisticated than CHARLOTTE and ANNE (or so it feels to them).
CHARLOTTE and ANNE walk along the bustling street, the noise of the city is huge and vulgar, especially to the sensitive ears of two people who’ve been awake all night on a rattling train. Divested of their bags, and having managed to spruce themselves up a bit after their long journey, they arrive at Smith, Elder & Co. A book shop. They sort of have to dare each other to go inside. Eventually CHARLOTTE’s the one who ventures to try the door handle.

It’s a big shop. Obviously not by today’s standards. But it’s a shop you can browse in. CHARLOTTE and ANNE do their best to appear invisible as they meander towards what looks like a desk where people are served. They’re both conscious of appearing shabby. There are a couple of ASSISTANTS at the desk. Some of the latest novels are displayed around the desk. ANNE nudges CHARLOTTE and nods at a display of copies of *Jane Eyre*. CHARLOTTE’s delighted, but daren’t show it. We might see her eyes light up. She just stares for a moment. One of the ASSISTANTS nudges his colleague, “Look at these two bumpkins”. But his colleague KENT is polite –

KENT
Could I help you, ladies?

CHARLOTTE and ANNE are shockingly lacking in confidence in this environment. But CHARLOTTE’s the eldest and has to rise to the occasion.

CHARLOTTE
Yes. Yes, I’d – we’d – like to speak to Mr. George Smith. Please.

KENT
Mr. Smith?
  (CHARLOTTE affirms)
Mr. Smith’s very busy.

CHARLOTTE
Yes. But. The thing is. It’s important.

KENT
Can I tell him what it’s to do with?

CHARLOTTE
Just – just that it’s a matter of importance.

KENT takes that in and nods.
KENT
I’ll – I’ll see what – I’ll see if
he’s got a minute. Who – ? Should I
say is...? Asking to see him?

CHARLOTTE
It’s – that’s delicate.

KENT takes that in.

KENT
He is a very busy man.

CHARLOTTE finds the strength just to be a tad more forceful.
We get the full effect of CHARLOTTE’s very intense eyes, as
does KENT.

CHARLOTTE
We’ve been travelling for seventeen
hours, and we’ll take up less than
one minute of his time.

INT. SMITH ELDER & CO. CORRIDOR/OFFICES, LONDON. DAY 22 - (8
JULY 1848, 11:18)

KENT heads along a corridor and bumps into GEORGE SMITH, who
is just heading into his office. GEORGE SMITH is 24, a very
nicely built man, with a lovely, rounded, handsome face. He
also has a very disarming manner. From his manner, we also
discern that he’s very busy.

KENT
Ah. Sir. Two ladies. Asking to see
you.

GEORGE SMITH
What ladies?

KENT
Didn’t give a name, sir.

GEORGE SMITH
What’s it about?

KENT
The only thing I could prise out,
sir, is that it’s important.

GEORGE SMITH
To me or to them?
(KENT can’t say)
Are they...?

He makes a gesture that could imply “bonkers”.

134
KENT
I wouldn’t say that exactly sir, they were perfectly polite, and they’re asking for no more than a minute of your time. They’ve travelled for seventeen hours.

GEORGE SMITH tosses a coin in his brain. He heads through to the shop.

INT. SMITH, ELDER & CO. BOOKSHOP, LONDON. DAY 22 – (8 JULY 1848, 11:20)

CHARLOTTE and ANNE are peering at the other novels on display (or perhaps CHARLOTTE’s subtly trying to make Jane Eyre look a bit more obvious to potential buyers) when GEORGE SMITH walks in followed by KENT, who points him towards CHARLOTTE and ANNE. GEORGE SMITH takes in their appearance; to him, they are quaint bumpkins.

GEORGE SMITH
Ladies. How can I help you?

CHARLOTTE speaks discreetly; she’d rather they were in a more private place (although the shop’s not exactly heaving with customers).

CHARLOTTE
Am I addressing Mr. George Smith?

GEORGE SMITH
Yes.

CHARLOTTE takes him in, such an elegant man. She glances nervously at the ear-wigging KENT; she’d like him to leave.

CHARLOTTE
It’s a confidential matter.

CHARLOTTE tries to smile, so as not to appear impolite, but whenever she tries to smile she’s conscious of her imperfect teeth. GEORGE SMITH - after a moment’s hesitation - comes round from behind the counter and joins CHARLOTTE and ANNE in the shop.

CHARLOTTE (CONT’D)
We – we’re here to address a misunderstanding. Which – once accomplished – will be to everyone’s advantage. Yours as much as ours. And so we apologise for what must be an interruption to your morning’s work.

(GEORGE SMITH takes that in.

(MORE)
CHARLOTTE (CONT’D)
CHARLOTTE is horrendously nervous, but she’s also doing incredibly well)
Perhaps. If I gave you this. It would clarify who we are.

She offers him a letter. He takes it. It’s the one CHARLOTTE received yesterday that upset her so much.

GEORGE SMITH
Currer Bell?
The name Currer Bell thrills him. But he sees no connection between Currer Bell and the bumpkin in front of him.

CHARLOTTE
(conscious of people in the shop)
Shh.

GEORGE SMITH
Where did you get this letter?

CHARLOTTE
In the post. From you. You sent it to me.
(it’s the first time she’s said it - )
I am...
(again, conscious of people in the shop, not that there are very many)
Currer Bell.
(she points at the letter)
C. Brontë. That’s me. And this is Acton. Bell. Author of Agnes Grey, and - the point is - author of The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. Not me. And Ellis couldn’t come. Ellis didn’t want to come. Ellis is...
(don’t go there)
Anyway. The point is. We are three sisters. I have not sold the first few pages of my next novel to an America publisher - as claimed by Mr. Thomas Cautley Newby - that is not my novel, it’s -
(nodding ANNE’s way)
Acton’s. I - Mr. Smith - have nothing, exactly nothing, to do with Mr. Newby. Nor will my sister -
(she points at ANNE, she can’t speak for EMILY)
Now she has seen him in his true colours. We are people of integrity. And probity. And that is why. We are here. To set matters straight.
GEORGE SMITH
Sorry, you’re – ? You – you’re
Currer Bell?

CHARLOTTE
Shh.
(GEORGE SMITH remains unconvinced. Yet the letter is undeniable)
What makes you doubt it, Mr. Smith?
My gender? My accent? My size?

GEORGE SMITH
And...? There really are three of you?

CHARLOTTE
In total.

It is starting to sink in. And when he looks at CHARLOTTE’s eyes – through her tiny little spectacle lenses – perhaps he starts to realise that he is looking into the soul of the woman who wrote Jane Eyre.

GEORGE SMITH
Oh good heavens. Oh good Lord.
Forgive me, I’m sorry, I –

CHARLOTTE
I’m sorry too, we’ve caught you off-guard. But you see we felt it best to come in person given the tone of your letter. I wanted no room left for any further misunderstanding. Or doubt.

GEORGE SMITH
Well that’s deeply appreciated, Miss...
(not sure how to say)
Brontë.

They affirm –

CHARLOTTE
Brontë. ANNE
Brontë. Sorry.

GEORGE SMITH
And a great relief. Of course.
(he stares at her more, then remembers himself)
Have you really been travelling for seventeen hours?

CHARLOTTE
Through the night. Such was the tone of your letter –
GEORGE SMITH
You must be exhausted.

CHARLOTTE
Oddly, Mr. Smith, I feel extraordinarily awake.

GEORGE SMITH
Where are you staying?

He glances at ANNE, realising he’s ignored her.

ANNE
We’ve booked into the Chapter Coffee House. In Paternoster Row.

CHARLOTTE

GEORGE SMITH
You’ve taken my breath away. Miss Brontë. Oh, you have to meet people. Do you have any idea how many people want to - ? Thackeray! Thackeray Thackeray -

(he’s more tongue tied than them now)

will have to meet you. Today. Now.

(he calls to KENT)

Fetch Smith Williams!

(KENT dives off, GEORGE SMITH becomes even more flustered with delight -)

You have to meet Smith Williams. He is such an admirer of your - he - your genius - he was the one that read [it] - that read The Professor - and saw instantly, before Jane Eyre - which is glorious by the way - he saw - he saw. He saw. Miss Brontë. The whole of literary London - the whole of London! - will fall over itself to spend one minute in the company of Currer Bell.

If CHARLOTTE didn’t totally get it before, she does now. His manner is so sincere. He’s so shaken by her presence.

Practised in composure, CHARLOTTE finds herself with slightly more presence of mind than him: the thing that’s really niggling her -
CHARLOTTE
Somebody really needs to do
something about this Mr. Newby, Mr. Smith.

GEORGE SMITH
Indeed. Absolutely. It - he - will
be dealt with. Please please come
through to my office. Ah - ! Smith
Williams.

(SMITH WILLIAMS has
arrived. A greying,
unassuming, smiling,
intelligent 50-year-old
man)
This. This. Is Currer Bell.

SMITH WILLIAMS takes CHARLOTTE in. He gets it quicker than
GEORGE SMITH. He knew. He knew the reality would be so much
different than anything any of them could ever imagine. He’s
delighted. Humbled. Genuinely happy. As we all are in the
presence of something we know to be the real deal.

WILLIAM SMITH WILLIAMS
How perfect. How delightful.

He offers his hand.

CHARLOTTE
And this is Acton. Bell.

WILLIAM SMITH WILLIAMS shakes hands with ACTON.

ANNE
Ellis Bell couldn’t come.

GEORGE SMITH
Do you like opera?

135A EXT. PARSONAGE. NIGHT 22 - (8 JULY 1848, 23:26)  
Establishing shot of the parsonage at night.

136 INT. PARSONAGE, UPSTAIRS LANDING. NIGHT 22 - (8 JULY 1848, 23:26)  
BRANWELL’s coughing and coughing and coughing. EMILY heads
upstairs with the oil lamp. PATRICK - in night clothes, and
looking very tired and elderly and in need of sleep - emerges
from his bedroom.

EMILY
I’ll see to him, I’ll sit with him,
you go and sleep in one of their
beds.
PATRICK
(a mumble)
Are you sure?

EMILY affirms. PATRICK heads into CHARLOTTE and ANNE’s bedroom. EMILY heads into her father’s room –

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S BEDROOM. NIGHT 22. CONTINUOUS – 1(37 JULY 1848, 23:27)

BRANWELL has a night candle, but EMILY brings more light into the room with the oil lamp. He continues to retch and splutter. EMILY sits on the bed and rubs his back gently as he heaves, and murmurs “Shhh…”

BRANWELL
I’m going to be sick.

EMILY grabs the chamber pot, just in time –

BRANWELL honks into the chamber pot. There’s blood. A lot of it. Like, a pint. EMILY’s cheek gets splattered in blood. Patiently, she lets it happen, and she stays there, stoically holding the chamber pot as BRANWELL catches his breath, before heaving into it again. Stoic EMILY just sits there with him like a rock.

EXT. HAWORTH. DAY 23 – (9 JULY 1848, 06:14)

Establishing shot, sunrise over Haworth.

EXT. PARSONAGE, BACK YARD. DAY 23 – (9 JULY 1848, 10:30)

EMILY’s in the back yard when CHARLOTTE and ANNE appear at the gate. With their bags. A moment when we wonder how things are going to go between them, just as TABBY comes out to join EMILY.

TABBY
You’re back! That was quick. All the way to London.

CHARLOTTE
How were things here?

TABBY
Oh. Well…
(glancing at EMILY)
We’ve had sad work with Branwell.
(ANNE looks at EMILY, worried that she won’t be speaking)
But other than that!
CHARLOTTE
Good. Good!

CHARLOTTE heads inside: if EMILY’s still being an arse that’s her problem. TABBY follows CHARLOTTE inside asking if she can make her some tea. ANNE comes over to EMILY.

ANNE
You’re the last person I want to fall out with.

EMILY
(quiet)
I know.

She means “Me too”. ANNE sits with EMILY.

ANNE
We only told Mr. Smith and Mr. Smith Williams. Well, and Newby. Later. No-one else. And we made it clear that they hadn’t to tell anyone else either. They took us to the Royal Opera House - Mr. Smith and Mr. Smith Williams did - with Mr. Smith’s mother and his sisters - and us with nothing to wear but what we’d gone in - and they’d no idea who we were! Heaven alone knows what they must have thought about us.

ANNE smiles. EMILY imagines it.

EMILY
What was Newby like?

ANNE considers her response carefully.

ANNE
Embarrassed. Charlotte was very effective. She was nervous. We both were. But she was very good.

ANNE realises that EMILY looks untypically vulnerable. It’s because of what she witnessed during the night when she saw BRANWELL cough up blood. A moment - and we sense she doesn’t want to say this but she has to because it’s shaken her -

EMILY
(nodding towards the house)
He’s vo -

She can’t say it. It terrifies her. The implications.

ANNE
What?
EMILY
Branwell. He’s been vomiting blood.

ANNE stares at EMILY. Of course she understands the morbid implications too.

EXT. KEIGHLEY, DEVONSHIRE ARMS. DAY 24 - (28 JULY 1848, 140 11:06)

We discover CHARLOTTE, EMILY and ANNE waiting as people and luggage spill off the newly arrived high-flier.

ANNE
There she is! There! Look!

A neat, prim little woman almost the same age as CHARLOTTE (31) steps from a carriage. CHARLOTTE’s utter delight spreads across her face, and she goes to greet the neat little woman. ANNE and EMILY are no less pleased to see her.

CHARLOTTE
Ellen!

CHARLOTTE and ELLEN kiss one another fondly (but without a great demonstration of affection).

ELLEN
Emily! Anne!

ANNE and EMILY shake hands politely with ELLEN.

ANNE
Miss Nussey.

EMILY’s got her eye on the luggage being lowered from the roof of the high-flier.

EMILY
Which is your box?

EXT. MOORS. DAY 24. EVENING - (28 JULY 1848, 19:22)

A stunningly beautiful evening.

CHARLOTTE, ELLEN, EMILY and ANNE have gone for a walk up on the moors with KEEPER and FLOSSIE. They’re in two separate little gangs; EMILY and ANNE walk ahead (whispering and giggling, shoving each other one minute, arm-in-arm the next, probably playing at Gondal) and CHARLOTTE and ELLEN walk behind. We sense all four of them are happy, ELLEN effortlessly seems to exert a calm, benign influence.

CHARLOTTE
In the end I realised we’d delay your visit forever if we weren’t careful. And he’s so quiet now.

(MORE)
CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
We barely see him. During the day.
He just sleeps.

ELLEN
I think more people have crosses to
bear than we realise. On the
domestic side. On the quiet.

CHARLOTTE concurs.

CHARLOTTE
The oddest thing. I think I told
you - the Robinson girls, the
youngest two, Elizabeth and Mary -
they started writing to Anne. About
six months after their father died.
They’re very fond of Anne, more
than she imagined. Then they wanted
to visit. Here. So. We let them. I
thought if they drove a carriage up
our narrow twisty lane once, at
least they’d never choose to do it
again. So, they came. Last week. Of
course Branwell knew nothing about
it.

ELLEN
What were they like?

CHARLOTTE
Oh. You know. Pretty. Vacuous. Non-
stop –
(she makes a ‘endless
talking’ gesture with one
hand)
Yack yack yack. Emily popped her
head in - purely to satisfy her own
curiosity of course - and then
after approximately four seconds,
withdrew. It’s one of the few
occasions when I’ve really enjoyed
her surliness.
(this makes ELLEN smile;
she likes EMILY, even if
she is surly)
Anyway, the point is. They told us.
Last week. That their mother...

This makes CHARLOTTE so angry, though she does her best not
to make an exhibition of it: she shakes her head, disguising
her anger with a smile.

ELLEN
What?

CHARLOTTE
Is going to marry. Sir Edward
Scott.

(MORE)
CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
So much for contrition and guilt
and madness and clauses in people’s
wills.

ELLEN takes that in and mulls it over. It saddens and angers
her too.

ELLEN
He’s been very sadly used.
Branwell. You didn’t tell him?

CHARLOTTE
What purpose would it serve?
(no)
I’m sorry to inflict all this on
you.

ELLEN
Charlotte. I’m your oldest friend.
You can tell me anything. You know
that.

CHARLOTTE would love to tell ELLEN that she’s Currer Bell.
But she can’t. They’re smiling, looking into one another’s
eyes, when the light changes.

EMILY, ANNE
(calling across to ELLEN
and CHARLOTTE)
Look!

There’s a parhelion - three suns - in the sky.

CHARLOTTE
What is that? That’s extraordinary.

ANNE
Three suns!

CHARLOTTE
What is it? It’s beautiful.

At length -

ELLEN
It’s you three.

She’s smiling. CHARLOTTE frowns - happily - like, “what’re
you talking about?” But ELLEN sees that EMILY’s smiling at
her comment - more happily than we’ve ever seen EMILY smile
before, and then she smiles at ANNE and CHARLOTTE, and they
all look up at the magnificent spectacle in the sky.
INT. PALACE. DAY. F/B 1 - (2 AUGUST 1826, 15:25)

We’re back where we were where we opened in Scene 1: the unexpected, surreal world of the four Genii: three giant children (CHARLOTTE age 10, EMILY, 8, ANNE, 6) with haloes of fire encircling their heads as they sit at an enormous table, in the magnificent parlour of a Gothic palace.

Suddenly the huge ornate doors crash open and the fourth Genii, nine-year-old red-headed BRANWELL comes in, just as before. But he no longer has a halo of fire encircling his head. He still carries the box, but there’s nothing struggling to get out this time. He still has an air of expectation about him though. All three girls stand up, CHARLOTTE goes and takes the box from him. She takes the lid off. Empty. Useless.

CHARLOTTE

You can go now.

Sad little BRANWELL wants to stay, he wants to be part of their world, their genius.

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S BEDROOM. DAY 25 - (24 SEPTEMBER 1848, 10:15)

EMILY, ANNE and TABBY wash and dress BRANWELL’s dead body, ready for burial. ANNE has tears in her eyes, as she removes his glasses. His cheeks are hollow, sunken, ashen. As she puts his glasses onto the bedside table they look so little and grubby and bent. EMILY starts undoing his shirt. She has to sit him up to take it off. His torso is emaciated.

INT. PARSONAGE, PATRICK’S STUDY. DAY 25 - (24 SEPTEMBER 1848, 10:16)

PATRICK has tears rolling down his face. He’s pale. As still as a stone, staring at nothing as he contemplates the shockingly wasted life of his only son. He’s not blubbing, but the tears just won’t stop rolling.

INT. PARSONAGE, PARLOUR. DAY 25 - (24 SEPTEMBER 1848, 10:16)

CHARLOTTE sits alone. She’s tearful, and unable to help because she’s too devastated by what’s happened. The shock of death has appalled her by how angry and neglectful of her brother she’s become in the last months. Her tears become uncontrollable and she has to stifle her sobs as they get worse and worse. KEEPER and FLOSSIE know something’s up, and crowd round her.
We’re looking out onto the front garden and down through the graveyard towards the church (there were no trees then). BRANWELL’s coffin is carried by four bearers (one of them is JOHN BROWN) from the house, down the garden, through the gate, through the graveyard, to the church. ARTHUR NICHOLLS officiates and leads the procession. The coffin is followed by PATRICK and CHARLOTTE, EMILY and ANNE, TABBY and MARTHA. There are other people – parishioners and friends of the family – waiting outside the church.

As we pull back we realise that we’re seeing this view from inside the parlour, through the window, and as we pull back further our final image is the book shelves, the nine volumes of Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, Agnes Grey and now The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, and in front of them the one surviving little wooden soldier, battered, beaten and chewed, a memento of a happy childhood.

As we look at the soldier, the light alters, and we become aware of the sound of voices. Teenagers’ voices, modern voices. Subtly, what we’re looking at changes. The little soldier is gone. The books are different. Even the shelf is different. As we look again through the window, we see tall dark trees outside which weren’t there before, and the new St. Michael’s Church (built in the 1870s) with the taller tower, and a group of 2016 people sauntering up the stairs outside and into the house. As we turn around we see people, visitors, in the parlour doorway behind the red rope, clutching guide books, looking around the room, politely commenting in a whisper to one another about the objects in the room.

Out in the hallway, more visitors arrive through the front door, greeted by staff.

Church Lane is busy with tourists. In the car park coaches are unloading yet more visitors. At the back of the house instead of the yard, is the book shop.
INT. BOOK SHOP, HAWORTH. DAY. F/F 1. (28 SEPTEMBER 2016, 11:42)

Inside the busy, happy book shop, we glimpse the vast array of Brontë publications and Brontë tourist gifts. Through the back window we see the statue of the three sisters.

EXT. ROCHDALE CANAL, SOWERBY BRIDGE. DAY. F/F 1. (28 SEPTEMBER 2016, 11:42)

A badly decayed 15’ tall wooden statue labelled ‘BRANWELL BRONTË 1817 – 1848’ stands at the side of the canal. One of the eyes is hollow, both his hands have rotted away, and down by his crotch the Sowerby Bridge piss-heads have put an empty Budweiser bottle, amongst other modern-day debris around the dank little picnic site.

END