

Crimson Peak

by

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&

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FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Silence, except for the whisper of the wind.

A WHITE SCREEN resolves into a wide view of a 19th century cemetery, its dark contours softened by several inches of fresh snow. Big, wet flakes float down from a leaden sky. *

Wealthy MOURNERS stand under black umbrellas at an open grave as pallbearers slide a gleaming ebony coffin from a horse-drawn hearse. *

A legend FADES ON:

BOSTON, 1886

CAMERA DESCENDS to find a solemn, bespectacled child, EDITH CUSHING, age 10, in a black coat and hat. Her delicate features are half-hidden behind a mourning veil.

Frightened, the child clings to the gloved hand of her tall, bearded father (CARTER CUSHING, 48). *

EDITH (V.O.)

*The first time I saw a ghost, I was ten.
It was my Mother's-* *

The coffin passes before the child's pale face.

EDITH (V.O.)

*At that age, I barely understood what had happened. She had died of Cholera-
(beat)
And on account of her disease, Father
ordered that the casket remain closed...* *

As the coffin is lowered unto the earth- *

DISSOLVE TO: *

INT. YOUNG EDITH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A coffin-like grandfather clock is TICKING in an enormous, gas-lit bedroom. Shadows seem to swallow up the girl's collection of dolls and books. *

Snowflakes drift past the tall windows, little Edith lies in bed, staring at the wall. Her EYEGLASSES are on the bedside table. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH (V.O.)

*...so there was really no last glimpse.
No goodbye.*

(pause)

That is, until she came back.

*

The clock stops ticking, the gas lamps go dark and the floorboards CREAK. There's a rustle of silk as-

*

- a translucent tracery of cobweb ectoplasm crosses the room, its desiccated feet not touching the ground.

*

The bed curtains move and the bedsprings sink down. Edith freezes, her eyes wide, her head turned away. She hears a low, asthmatic sigh.

A shimmering hand caresses the child's hair. Finger bones are visible. In the dark, a glimpse of a tormented face...

EDITH (V.O.)

*...and I heard her voice. A throatless
whisper, low and grave and full of earth.
Her words seared my memory as if with
fire...*

MOTHER'S GHOST

Edith... beware of *Crimson Peak*.

Crying out, the child sits up and looks around. Without her glasses, the world is a blur.

A HAZY FIGURE is floating away. Edith puts on her glasses.

No one is there. The gas lamps come back on; the clock resumes its ticking.

*

EDITH (V.O.)

Then she was gone.

(pause)

*It would be years before I again heard a
voice like that - or saw a dead thing
come to life. But see it I did... and the
horror hidden in her whispered warning
would change my life forever.*

*

CUT TO:

EXT. BOSTON STREETS - DAY

A perfect spring day in Boston. The gorgeous blue sky is dotted with puffy white clouds...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...and below it, a city is growing.

SUPERIMPOSURE:

1900

A new century has arrived and the teeming streets are alive with motorcars, bicycles and horse-drawn carriages.

CAMERA FOLLOWS a veiled YOUNG WOMAN as she passes workmen paving streets and erecting power poles. Steam erupts from a pile driver... smoke roils from vats of hot tar.

The young woman reaches the front door of a tea room. It's EDITH, now a pale but striking 22 year-old. She still wears glasses.

INT. SOCIETY TEA ROOM - DAY

Sitting alone among the elegant PATRONS, Edith leafs through a thick, handwritten MANUSCRIPT, making last-minute corrections.

At the next table, the dowager MRS. WALKER and her chubby daughter EUNICE are gossiping with a group of vivacious women.

MRS. WALKER

We met him at the British Museum. Last fall. He took one look at Eunice and said she was as beautiful as anything by- by-

*
*

EUNICE

Burne-Something- a painter- I think-
(beat)
Oh, mother, he is so handsome!

*

MRS. WALKER

He never took his eyes off you, did he?

EUNICE

(barely able to get a word in)
Well-

MRS. WALKER

(overlapping)

-Then we all went to tea. It seems he's a Baronet-

SOCIETY GIRL 1

What's a Baronet??

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Edith closes her book and looks at Society Girl 1.

EDITH

A Baronet is a minor aristocrat. An opportunist. A man who lives off land that others work for him.

SOCIETY GIRL 1

Is that so, Edith?

EDITH

That is so.

SOCIETY GIRL 2

Well, from what I hear, this minor aristocrat is perfectly charming and is a great dancer...

MRS. WALKER

...who's crossed the ocean with his sister. I'm sure it's because of Eunice. He's been writing us every week.

EUNICE

Mother, he's here on business!

SOCIETY GIRL 1

I'm hearing wedding bells. But that wouldn't concern you, would it, Edith?

EDITH

No, it wouldn't.

Edith takes off her glasses and gets up to leave. Her dress and scarf are a sombre black and navy blue silk.

MRS. WALKER

I think it's a shame, Edith, I really do! A man will never notice you if your nose is buried in books.

SOCIETY GIRL 2

Wearing black and writing all day long - our very own Jane Austen.

EDITH

(walking away)

Thank you, Sally. But I would prefer Mary Shelley. And, Eunice? You don't look at all like a Burne-Jones. Not languid enough.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY

An enormous LOBBY, bustling with activity. Carrying her manuscript, Edith approaches a reception desk where a GUARD directs her to an elevator. CAMERA LINGERS on a STATUE of a man, pensive and reading, surrounded by a pile of books. This is a likeness of MR. OGILVIE.

INT. MR. OGILVIE'S OFFICE - DAY

In the same exact position as the statue, SAMUEL OGILVIE grunts with displeasure as he leafs through Edith's work.

Edith discreetly uses her glasses to see what page he's on.

OGILVIE

Hrumpf-

Ogilvie pointedly turns his chair around and reads some more.

Finally, he puts the manuscript down. He nods slowly, replacing it in the pouch. *

OGILVIE (CONT'D)

So... Miss Cushing. How is your father?

Now Edith knows what he thinks of her manuscript. *

CUSHING (V.O.)

I take it he said no. *

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A beautiful dining room, with damask wallpaper and art nouveau sconces. Edith sits across from her FATHER, CARTER CUSHING (almost 60 now.) His beard is streaked with gray. *

EDITH

After skimming a single chapter, Father. *

CUSHING

Ogilvie's old-fashioned. He probably looks down on ghost stories.

EDITH

It's not a ghost story.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUSHING

But it has a ghost in it-

EDITH

Father. It's a... conduit-
(off her father's look)
 -a pretext, to talk about spirituality.
 The ghost acts as a metaphor-

CUSHING

Ah. A metaphor. That may be too
 sophisticated for me, then-

*
*

EDITH

Ogilvie said it needed a love story. Can
 you believe that?

CUSHING

Well... does it?

EDITH

What?

CUSHING

Need a love story?

EDITH

No!- *Why? Why* must a woman always write
 about love? Stories of girls in search of
 the ideal husband - or the man who eludes
 them?? Is there nothing else?

Her father stares at her blankly.

CUSHING

I agree.

Obviously he does not.

At that moment, a WHISTLE from a passing train... and a
 train's lights move on the sheer curtains. Obeying an old
 habit, Cushing checks his POCKET WATCH - and smiles.

CUSHING (CONT'D)

I'll have a word with Ogilvie- Monday at
 the club.

She pulls the manuscript from the envelope.

EDITH

You will not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CUSHING

Why? Why won't you let me help you?

EDITH

No-

(beat)

I have to do it myself. With my *words on the page!* Since I'm not "beautiful" - or "graceful" - or "charming"...

*
*

CUSHING

But you are!

EDITH

The *words* have to do it. All I have are words... and they will find their way into print. You'll see. In the meantime you just have to hear me complain...

*

He smiles and pats his daughter's cheek.

CUSHING

With pleasure, always.

EXT. RAILYARD - DAY

A high, wide view of a RAILYARD with steam locomotives chuffing from a roundhouse.

CAMERA PANS to a five-storey brick OFFICE BUILDING.

*

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

In the large, busy outer office, a scowling Edith is sitting at someone's desk, fingers pecking on a newfangled Underwood typewriter.

*
*

JANE, a gray-haired secretary, is showing her how to use it.

*

JANE

See? The carriage return is almost automatic. Just push this lever here-

EDITH

Automatic. Such a horrid word, isn't it? Everything is automatic now... But -
(*looking at the page*)
-it does look stronger than longhand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

It's a diabolical contraption, but if you're writing to publishers, you'll get their attention. And you'll save time, I warrant.

EDITH

I'm not sure I want to save time at all. What would I do with it?

THOMAS SHARPE, 38, enters. He's a well-dressed, handsome Englishman and carries a WALKING STICK and a MAHOGANY BOX. Edith is too engrossed in her letter to notice him.

SHARPE

(to Edith)

Good morning, Miss.

Wham! - Edith bangs over the carriage return and looks up. Sharpe blushes and removes his hat.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

Sorry to interrupt, but I have an appointment with Mr. Carter Everett Cushing. Esquire.

EDITH

Goodness. With the great man, himself?

SHARPE

I'm afraid so.

JANE

I'm sorry, but I'm the-

Edith signals her to be quiet. She'll handle this.

EDITH

You're not late, are you? He hates that.

SHARPE

In fact, I'm a bit early.

EDITH

Oh - I'm afraid he hates that, too.

Sharpe leans a bit closer.

SHARPE

Pardon me for asking, but - is he *really* as terrible as they say?

Edith glances at Jane and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EDITH

A monster.

SHARPE

I don't believe it. Why would a pair of charming ladies work for such a person?

EDITH

He pays me nothing.

JANE

(chuckles)

True enough-

SHARPE

Impossible. Where is this fiend? I shall make it my business to protest, to rebuke him-

EDITH

He's just behind you, sir.

Sharpe turns to find Carter Cushing approaching, hand extended.

CUSHING

Sir Thomas Sharpe. Welcome to Boston.

He holds the young man's hand an extra moment-

He regards Sharpe's long, wavy hair, his walking stick and velvet-collared suit.

CUSHING (CONT'D)

(gestures toward Edith)

May I introduce Edith, my daughter-

Sharpe is speechless.

EDITH

We've just met, father.

(to Sharpe)

It was a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Sir Thomas. I hope the great man treats you well.

She smiles sweetly at Sharpe, who looks abashed but pleased.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The conference room overlooks the railyard. A dozen BANKERS and INVESTORS sit at Cushing's table. Amongst them, an elderly attorney - WILLIAM FERGUSON. *

Sharpe's mahogany box rests near a stack of topographical maps and production charts. Alongside, a small alcohol lamp heats a miniature, nickel-plated boiler.

SHARPE

In the last few years, we scraped together just enough capital to reopen the mines and find what we believe are very encouraging samples.

He shows the men a rough hunk of iron ore. As they pass it from hand to hand...

CUSHING

"We," you say? Who might that be?

SHARPE

Mining engineers. Geologists. I have their statements here- *

CUSHING

So- you've never done any digging yourself?

(beat)

In that mountain of yours? *

SHARPE

I'm afraid not.

Cushing looks at the others: "Thought so."

CUSHING

Go on.

SHARPE

As investors in mining, you'll want more than speculation and projections. So here, gentlemen-

He opens the box to reveal a SCALE MODEL of a mining drill. *

SHARPE (CONT'D)

-a steam drill - my own design - that matches the output of a ten-man crew. With mechanized digging, abandoned mines can be reworked and made profitable again. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He connects the little boiler. With a HISS of steam, the brass levers and gears start moving; the drill spins.

The men admire its ingenuity - all except Cushing.

CUSHING

Turn that off, please.

Sudden silence as Sharpe complies.

CUSHING (CONT'D)

So you come to us, having failed to raise capital in London.

The Boston businessmen glance at Cushing, whose cold smile reflects open skepticism.

SHARPE

London, Edinburgh, Leipzig -

CUSHING

Where your family name seems to have counted for very little.

The door to the conference room is ajar. Edith stands there, half-hidden, peeking in like a child.

SHARPE

I'm not discussing my name. This is a new century. As a railroad man, you'll need steel-

*

CUSHING

We have no shortage of iron ore in this country. Your holdings came to you through inheritance, did they not?

SHARPE

All right, yes. My great grandfather was Lord Middleton Sharpe, first Baronet of Allerdale. But the Sharpe Mines are more than a name, sir. More than nostalgia. They are my birthright.

CUSHING

And now Thomas Sharpe the Baronet - you've come to America, where you hope to raise money to honor that *birthright*?

SHARPE

In part, yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CUSHING

In this country, we don't have such traditions. The men at this table - all of us - we came up through honest, hard work. Well- almost all of us - Mr. Ferguson here is an attorney, but he can't help *that*-

Laughter amongst the men.

CUSHING (CONT'D)

But- his father shined and repaired shoes. As for me, I started out laying those very tracks - there in the yards below - decades ago. You see? And my hands-

He raises two thick, calloused hands.

CUSHING (CONT'D)

-reflect who I am. Just as yours do. Softest handshake I've felt in years.

(beat)

We bank on effort, not privilege.

Sharpe surveys at the faces of the other men, now stern and uncomfortable.

SHARPE

(touching the model drill)

I believe that inventions like this are equal to any man's hard work. I make no apology for my dreams...

A TRAIN puffs by in the railyard. Cushing checks his pocket watch.

CUSHING

(without looking up)

Take your toy, young man, and dream somewhere else.

SHARPE

Mr. Cushing, I have tried to be as frank as possible, but you've not given me a fair hearing.

CUSHING

No? Well, you may attribute it to a Yank's lack of breeding.

Sharpe is devastated but silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

EDITH (V.O.)

*I knew just how he felt, this fellow
dreamer, when I saw him facing defeat.*

*
*

Sharpe turns and meets Edith's eyes. She darts out of sight. *

CUT TO:

INT. EDITH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Edith sits at her desk, writing in her diary.

Behind her, a framed CHILD'S DRAWING of a ruddy mountain
thrusting up into a blue-black sky. The schoolgirl lettering
beneath it reads: C-R-I-M-S-O-N P-E-A-K.

The room is a bohemian hodgepodge of books, paintings, rugs
and tapestries.

EDITH (V.O.)

*Over the next few days, Sir Thomas Sharpe
walked the muddy, torn-up streets of
Boston in search of an investor. I,
meanwhile, had found inspiration.*

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET, BOSTON - DAY

Edith stealthily follows Thomas Sharpe through a series of
rejections:

AT THE BANK, she observes through an open door.

AT A GENTLEMANS' CLUB she peers through a window.

AT A MEETING HALL he is, again, sent away.

EDITH (V.O.)

*I would rethink my book. I would try my
hand at romance after all. For the first
time the genre appealed to me.*

*
*

Sharpe finally reaches a deserted alley. Exhausted and
furious, he throws down his papers and the mahogany box.

Once he's gone, Edith steps out from hiding and looks at the
smashed MINIATURE and the multitude of gears spilled on the
ground.

INT. CUSHING MANSION, PARLOR - DUSK

At the mirror in his front hall, Carter Cushing checks his white tie and tails. As a SERVANT brings him his hat and coat, Edith enters, wearing a simple house dress.

CUSHING

I do wish you'd change your mind and come along. It's not just another party. Not that there's anything wrong with a simple party, mind you.

EDITH

You know I can't bear such things.

CUSHING

There's a performance of some kind, a woman's playing Chopin. Or is it Ravel..? I can't keep 'em straight.

(pause)

And little Lord Fauntleroy will be there. *

EDITH

You mean Thomas Sharpe?

CUSHING

None other. I saw you spying on us, child.

EDITH *

I found him interesting, it's true. Like a character, in a play. *

CUSHING *

A bad actor, you mean. Nothing to swoon about. *

EDITH *

Nobody's swooning. But tell me: were his ideas so outrageous as to merit such a quick dismissal? *

CUSHING

It wasn't his ideas, my love. I felt a lack of focus. Is he the inventor of a steam drill? Or a mine owner seeking to exploit his holdings? There's something ill-defined about him; you can't do business with men like that.

The DOORBELL rings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUSHING (CONT'D)

That'll be young Dr. McMichael. He's brought his new motorcar. That's a good fellow- He's-

*
*

EDITH

(rolls her eyes)

I know, Father- he's got such a *firm* handshake...

The servant opens the door and shows in DR. ALAN McMICHAEL, 31, a serious, bearded internist. He, too, is in formal wear.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Good evening, Mr. Cushing. Hello, Edith...

EDITH

Good evening, Alan. My, don't we look smart.

DR. MCMICHAEL

(blushing)

Not really. No more than your average penguin.

*

CUSHING

It's Edith who should be the belle of the ball, don't you agree, Doctor?

DR. MCMICHAEL

(gazing at her)

Change your mind, Edith. With you, I could actually dance.

*

EDITH

You lads will have much more fun without me.

(to Dr. McMichael)

Don't let him drink too much.

(to her father)

And no pontificating, brawling or flirting, either. No matter how fetching the ladies.

Cushing dons his hat and coat.

CUSHING

I'll be a saint!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The old man chortles - Edith's the love of his life.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDITH'S ROOM - LATER

Edith sprawls on her bed, engrossed in a thick book replete with maps of England.

EDITH (V.O.)

*I was busy reading about iron mining in
the North of England.*

*
*

Outside, RAINDROPS spatter the windows. Sharpe's half-assembled MINIATURE DRILL stands on the desk.

Edith turns a page and stumbles upon an old engraving of a mining operation in Cumberland.

EDITH (V.O.)

*And I found the Sharpe mines, in a barren
landscape at the base of a mountain...*

*

Outside, a distant RUMBLE of thunder. And behind her - *the miniature steam drill tumbles off the desk and crashes to the floor.*

*
*
*

Edith leaps to her feet. The mirrored door to an ARMOIRE opens and something recedes into a darkness. Only the hem of a dress is visible. Edith recognizes it.

*
*

EDITH
(*whisper*)

Mother-?

She approaches the corner and descries the rippling shape of a WOMAN - shadow upon shadow.

*

A cadaverous FACE seems to emerge from the darkness, with enormous eyes, wet with tears.

*
*

As Edith suppresses a scream - a TAP on the door and a MAID SERVANT leans in.

*

MAID

Excuse me, miss -

Edith spins around, then glances back, seeing nothing now - just a dark dress hanging in the armoire.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAID (CONT'D)

Are you all right, miss? Whatever is the matter?

EDITH

Nothing. You - you startled me, that's all.

MAID

There's a Thomas Sharpe at the door, he's dripping wet and most insistent on coming in. *

EDITH

Thomas Sharpe? At this hour?? It's out of the question, Annie. *

MAID

I told him, miss. He won't go away. *

Edith dons a dressing gown and goes to the window overlooking the rainy courtyard. Thomas Sharpe stands at the front door, holding an umbrella. He's wearing white tie and tails.

She removes her glasses and opens the window.

EDITH

Good evening, Mr. Sharpe. Father's not home, I'm sorry to say.

SHARPE

Of course he's not! He's gone - maybe by gondola - to the reception at the Walker house. Which is my destination, too

EDITH

But that's in Roxbury. This is Back Bay. You're very much off course.

SHARPE

Not at all, my dear Miss Cushing. I've found you, haven't I? I don't think I can brave the best of Boston society without you as my guide. *

EDITH

Miss Eunice Walker, I believe, will be waiting for you. With open arms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHARPE

The devil take Miss Eunice Walker!
Please, am I to make a wretch of myself?
Am I to beg-

Sharpe kneels among the puddles. *

SHARPE (CONT'D)

I'm lost in a strange city. A child- a
mere child. And I desperately need your
help.

EDITH

(smiling now)

Help with what?

SHARPE

Well, the language, for one. As you see,
I don't speak a word of American.

Edith laughs. She glances back into the room, where Sharpe's
model drill lies in pieces on the floor.

EDITH

I don't know, Mr. Sharpe. Tonight's
already been somewhat... strange. For
whatever reason, I'm seeing things.

SHARPE

Wonderful! Come with me and we'll see
them together.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

All of Boston society is seated in a ballroom where a piano
recital is underway. In the audience: Eunice Walker, her
mother and Society Girls 1 & 2.

At the keyboard is a striking blonde WOMAN with chiseled
features and an intense air of concentration. This is
LUCILLE SHARPE, 40, Thomas' sister. She concludes a
brilliant Chopin Polonaise and stands to acknowledge the
APPLAUSE.

Eunice brings her an armful of roses; they exchange warm
kisses to renewed applause and approving murmurs.

Taking a final bow, Lucille's expression darkens: her
brother has entered the room, accompanied by a transformed
Edith.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A new BUZZ from the guests as they take notice. Edith is a vision of understated elegance in pale blue satin. Seeing her on Sharpe's arm, Eunice Walker and her mother are crestfallen.

Cushing leaves his seat and hurries over to his daughter. As he acknowledges Sharpe...

CUSHING

I congratulate you, sir. Only remarkable ...*persistence* could bring my daughter out of her cave.

SHARPE

Glad to be of service, Mr. Cushing. Like her father, she was not easily moved.

CUSHING

None of us are, Mr. Sharpe. What did he promise you, Edith?

EDITH

Nothing, father. I'm just more pliable than you.

Dr. McMichael approaches, dazzled by her appearance.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Hello, Alan. May I introduce Sir Thomas Sharpe?

(to Sharpe)

This is Dr. McMichael. The man to see in Boston if you're feeling poorly.

DR. MCMICHAEL

That's quite a glowing presentation, Edith-

EDITH

He's brilliant. If you have aches and pains-

Dr. McMichael lowers his head, even more disappointed at this.

SHARPE

But I've never felt better, Miss Cushing, thanks to you.

(shaking the Doctor's hand)

A pleasure to meet you, sir, under any circumstances.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Outside - a brief flicker of LIGHTNING... and more THUNDER rolls over the city. An exclamation from the crowd as the room GOES DARK.

SERVANTS scurry to light candelabras, which give the room a romantic and mysterious glow.

The befuddled hostess, MRS. WALKER brings the beautiful blonde pianist over to them. But as she moves through the room, a *shadow* seems to follow... *

...and within it Edith sees a pair of pinprick eyes glittering in a sallow face. She recoils, *again recognizing the ghost of her mother.* *

But the stout and imposing Mrs. Walker blocks her view.

MRS. WALKER

Good evening, Sir Thomas, you honor us.
Welcome to our fair city.

SHARPE

I'm sorry we're late.

He kisses Mrs. Walker's hand.

MRS. WALKER

Oh, a kiss. How very rare that is today.
Eunice can't wait to say hello.

(turning to Edith)

Edith. What a surprise. Seeing you...
sparkle.

As the ghostly image of her mother blurs and rises toward the ceiling, a flustered Edith tries to collect herself. Lucille is watching her closely.

MRS. WALKER (CONT'D)

Our magnificent pianist is Lucille Sharpe, who's come with her brother all the way from Cumberland, in England- or is it Scotland?

LUCILLE

Ah. That thorny question dates back to before the Norman conquest.

EDITH

It's in Northern England, Mrs. Walker, made famous by Mr. Wordsworth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LUCILLE

Exactly, Miss Cushing. Although Dove Cottage is a long, long way from where we live.

Mrs. Walker takes Sharpe by the arm and leads him away.

MRS. WALKER

Eunice is here, Mr. Sharpe, waiting in the dark with her friends. They insist on hearing your wonderful accent.

(beat)

Of course, we've heard English accents before, but yours is so- so- very...

Thomas is quickly surrounded by a cloud of excited young women. Eunice shoulders her way to the front of the pack.

LUCILLE

(to Edith)

All that adoration. He positively basks in it.

Edith's eyes dart over the room, ready for another apparition.

EDITH

Word travels quickly in Boston. Among the young females, anyway.

LUCILLE

Do you not count yourself among them?

Edith hears the woman's delicate sarcasm and finally turns to face her.

EDITH

It is your brother, Miss Sharpe, who sought me out. Left to my own devices, I avoid parties like this and the waspish women who flourish here.

*

A small string ORCHESTRA starts playing a stately passacaglia; the servants clear the chairs from the dance floor.

Thomas frees himself from the girls and bows to Edith. Mrs. Walker and Eunice look on, losing all hope.

SHARPE

Miss Cushing. You came this far - will you venture a few steps further?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

EDITH

I'm not much of a dancer, Mr. Sharpe.

SHARPE

Could I be the judge of that??

He escorts her onto the dance floor...

*

DANCING

...where two concentric circles of GUESTS move rhythmically clockwise and counterclockwise. The steps are formal and controlled; each GUEST holds a LIT CANDLE.

Sharpe grabs two candles – for Edith and one for himself. They join the outermost circle.

All the while, Edith keeps a wary, distracted eye on the darkest corners. Sharpe is amused.

SHARPE

Miss Cushing. Whatever are you searching for? Here I am.

Embarrassed, Edith gazes into his eyes.

EDITH

I – I'm sorry. I told you I was seeing things tonight.

The guests keep moving while the music lasts, each one guarding his or her flame jealously. Its a game, not unlike "musical chairs."

Suddenly the MUSIC stops. JOYOUS CHAOS. Everybody covers his own candle while trying to blow out others! The last person holding a lit candle will win.

The two circles shrink accordingly. The dancing resumes.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Look at all those long faces. Eunice, my father... and your sister.

SHARPE

Lucille? She just likes to worry. Any girl who crosses my path – she stands guard.

The music stops again and the circles shrink some more. Now only four couples remain- amongst them SHARPE and EDITH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH

Maybe it was a mistake, letting you drag me out here. Mrs. Walker looks furious-

SHARPE

Just close your eyes, then.

EDITH

And if I close them, what? They won't see me?

SHARPE

Precisely. Won't you try it?

Edith closes her eyes and lets Sharpe guide her round and round... until the music stops. More candles go out. *

Now only ONE couple remains: Sharpe and Edith. They start dancing again, staring into each other's eyes. *

The music ceases for the last time and -after a collective gasp- the room falls silent. Two flames left. WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

Sharpe blows his own flame out and bows to Edith. She in turn blows out her candle... and the room explodes in applause!!

Everybody is delighted.

Everybody except MR. CUSHING.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. EDITH'S ROOM - DAY

A SERVANT places a breakfast tray on a table in Edith's bedroom. Edith, in a dressing gown, is scribbling away, with a growing stack of manuscript pages at her elbow. *

EDITH (V.O.)

So, a new book took shape. All about a young man's quest to fulfill the legacy of a once-great family. I'd never thought much about the travails of the well-born. Fortunately, Sir Thomas delayed his departure, again and again... *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Edith puts down her pen, opens the heavy drapes, she lets the sunlight flood her room.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Edith and Sharpe are picnicking on the banks of the Charles River. As Sharpe reads a few pages of Edith's manuscript...

SHARPE

This fellow, "Cavendish" - your hero -
has he no fears? No doubts?

*
*
*

EDITH

Of course he does. He's haunted by his
ancestors. You'll see.

*
*
*

SHARPE

Haunted? Literally?

*
*

EDITH

No ghosts this time. I've banished them
from my fiction. But they have visited
me, they really have...

*
*
*

He takes a snapshot of Edith with a KODAK BROWNIE BOX
CAMERA. CLICK!

INT. ART GALLERY - DAY

At an exhibition of French Symbolist paintings, Edith and
Sharpe stop to admire a strange, dreamlike work by Odilon
Redon.

*
*

EDITH

Why should it be so hard to believe? If
one goes by experience and testimonies
more people have seen Ghosts than
kangaroos. And yet we firmly believe in
Kangaroos.

*
*
*
*
*

Sharpe laughs and brings up his Kodak... CLICK!

*

EXT. BOSTON COMMON - DAY

*

In the park, a BRASS BAND is playing a Sunday concert.
Dozens of well-dressed Bostonians are seated on lawn chairs,
enjoying some John Philip Sousa.

*
*
*

Edith and Sharpe stand off to one side, in the shade of an
elm tree. As he takes another SNAPSHOT:

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH

To my mind certain dismal places -
houses, castles, battlefields - they can
store and preserve the pain of their
deceased inhabitants. Like a wax cylinder
and its recorded voices...

SHARPE

And we'd need Mr. Edison to play them
back -?

EDITH

Stop laughing at me! That is the whole
point some people can "play back" those
images and sounds- some others don't
have the sensibility-

Sharpe notices a couple of familiar faces in the crowd.

SHARPE

Oh, no - it's the Walker women. They
haven't seen us-

But Mrs. Walker and her daughter Eunice are waving at them.

EDITH

They have. And hope springs eternal.
Come, we'll join them- Eunice can teach
me how to charm-

Sharpe takes her by the arm, leading her to the exit.

SHARPE

You, Miss Cushing, need no help in that
department. Let us away, while there's
still time.

INT. OUTER OFFICE - NIGHT

A STEAM LOCOMOTIVE is trundling through the freight yard
below, its bell CLANGING in the darkness.

Edith is alone at Jane's desk, typing up the latest chapter
of her manuscript. Ready to go home, her father emerges from
his office and sits down, regarding her as she works. When
she pauses:

CUSHING

Going well, I see. Your love story.

She nods, and resumes typing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUSHING (CONT'D)

Has someone swept you off your feet, by
any chance?

*
*
*

Edith stops typing and looks him in the eye.

*

EDITH

Let me assure you, father: Thomas Sharpe
is a literary godsend. Nothing more.

*
*
*

CUSHING

Nevertheless, you've invited him to the
house, for tea...

*
*
*

EDITH

What of it? I owe him a debt of
gratitude.

*
*
*

CUSHING

You've made a conquest, my dear, whether
you know it or not. Proceed with caution,
that's all I ask.

*
*
*
*

Edith has resumed her typing, a pencil clenched between her
teeth. Cushing studies her, aware of her happiness.

*
*

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

The greenhouse is an elegant edifice of glass and steel,
lush with flowers. Edith smiles as TWO SERVANTS set out an
afternoon tea on a table near the entrance.

EDITH

It's all beautiful. Where is Mr. Sharpe?

SERVANT

I saw him in the orchid rows, ma'am, with
his sister.

Edith nods and moves away. She slows down as she hears
VOICES.

LUCILLE (O.S.)

This is not what we agreed upon. It is
not-

*

SHARPE (O.S.)

What difference does it make to you?
None! It is my task- My duty- Is it so
wrong for me to decide how to go about
it??

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When Edith comes into view, the discussion ends, but Lucille is visibly upset. She storms out.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

(to Edith)

My sister- she is yet to grow accustomed to your country, Edith. And she's tired of my frustrations, too. I daresay she has reached her limit...

*

He sees a MANUSCRIPT in Edith's hands. His expression changes.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

No. Don't tell me. You've finished Chapter Three??

*

She bursts out laughing as he playfully pulls it from her fingers.

*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BOSTON CITY VIEW - DAWN.

Dawn breaks over the quiet city. A few carriages move through deserted streets.

EXT. GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - DAWN

One of the carriages stops in front of a Gothic Revival building. The driver opens the door and a rotund, faintly raffish man gets out: MR. HOLLY.

He has a large ENVELOPE in his hand.

INT. GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - LOBBY

Mr. Holly is received by a STEWARD who shows him the way to-

INT. GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - POOL - CONTINUOUS

A swimming pool inside a domed space done up in Oriental tiles and arches.

Alone in the pool, swimming laps, is Cushing. Even in late middle age, his steady strokes are witness to enormous energy. He climbs out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUSHING

Mr. Holly! I like the club first thing in the morning. I have it all to myself.

A Negro SERVANT hands him a towel and robe.

HOLLY

A great way to start the day, sir-

CUSHING

Isn't it? And perhaps a good time to end certain things, too.

INT. LOCKER ROOMS - DAY

Cushing towels away the water.

CUSHING

I didn't expect to see you again so soon, Holly. What am I to make of it? Good news or bad?

HOLLY

I don't make such judgments, Mr. Cushing. I just gather the facts and leave the rest to the client.

Cushing opens the envelope and scans the contents, which include letters, telegrams and yellowing civil transcripts.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

The English peerage and family tree was easy enough to locate - as were the property records, all the way back to the sixteen hundreds. For the banking information, I relied on a colleague in Manchester.

One particular piece of paper catches Cushing's attention.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

But *that* - that document... The Civil Registry - that's the real find.

CUSHING examines a document emblazoned with the CUMBERLAND SEAL - an EAGLE AND A MOUNTAIN.

CUSHING

You'll have your money tomorrow, Holly. Share this with no one.

CUT TO:

EXT. CUSHING HOUSE - DAY

Half a dozen CARRIAGES and a couple of MOTORCARS are parked in the courtyard of the Cushing house.

Among the arriving GUESTS - Ferguson, Dr. McMichael... then, Sharpe and his sister. *

INT. FOYER - DAY

As a radiant Edith greets the guests and a SERVANT takes their coats, Sharpe and Lucille find themselves face to face with Cushing.

SHARPE

May I thank you for this invitation, Mr. Cushing? It's most welcome - I know I've monopolized your daughter... and I've worried that it might not sit well with you.

CUSHING

It did not. I've been most displeased. *

(to Lucille)

Hello, Miss Sharpe. May I ask - are you the older sibling?

LUCILLE

I am.

CUSHING

Well, perhaps you already know what your little brother is about to learn: "*The truth will out.*"

INT. CUSHING'S LIBRARY - DAY

Cushing guides Sharpe and Lucille away from the other guests and into his private library. He closes the door.

CUSHING

Now. Sir Thomas. The first time we met, at my office-

SHARPE

I recall it, sir. I recall it perfectly.

CUSHING

I imagine it wasn't hard for you to realize I didn't like you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCILLE

You made that plain enough to him, sir.

SHARPE

Lucille- please...

CUSHING

My daughter, later on, asked me why.

SHARPE

Sir, I am aware that in the business world I have no advantage, no position to offer. But-

CUSHING

But you love her, is that what you mean to say?

SHARPE

Yes, sir, it is.

CUSHING

Well, as I said: my daughter asked me *why* I didn't like you. Honestly, at the time, I had no good answer. But-

He pulls out the envelope from Mr. Holly.

CUSHING (CONT'D)

Now, I do.

Lucille opens the envelope and a single glimpse of the seal is enough. Her face grows pale and rigid. She turns to Sharpe- who doesn't even look.

SHARPE

Does she know?

CUSHING

No. But I will tell her if that's what it takes to send you on your way.

SHARPE

I am sure you wouldn't believe me, but-

CUSHING

You love her. I know. You're repeating yourself.

He hands him a check. Sharpe and Lucille are both taken aback by the amount.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CUSHING (CONT'D)

It's more than generous, I know, and
there's a reason. With that money you can
dig iron ore to your heart's content.
Build that contraption of yours. Whatever
- but it will keep you far from her.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Then he gives them two STEAMSHIP TICKETS.

*

CUSHING (CONT'D)

The *Majestic* is sailing for Southampton
on Friday. If you want to keep the
money...

(beat)

You'd better be on it. Otherwise, that
check won't clear and, one way or
another, I'll have the law on you both.
Whatever continent you're on.

*

Sharpe nods weakly.

CUSHING (CONT'D)

Good. I'm glad we understand each other.
Now-

(beat)

As for my daughter. Without further ado-
You, dear sir...

(beat)

...are going to break her heart.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Sunlight pours into the Cushing dining room, which has been
decorated with cut flowers. Servants come and go with
luncheon dishes.

At the long table, Sharpe and his sister are the guests of
honor.

CUSHING

(raising his glass)

May I propose a toast of farewell? A *bon*
voyage to Boston's questing baronet and
his musical sister. A safe journey to you
both.

Edith stares in shock at her father - then at Sharpe. She's
devastated.

*

Sharpe gets to his feet:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE

Thank you, sir. When I came to America, my heart was brimming with a sense of adventure. Here the future actually means something.

(beat)

And although I found no financial success in Boston -

He looks straight at Edith, his gaze sad and steady.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

- I have found warmth and friendship among you all. And for that, I am grateful.

(beat)

So for now, farewell. May we meet again soon.

INT. PARLOR - LATER

Chattering happily, the guests mingle in the sumptuous parlor. Sharpe approaches Edith.

EDITH

So - you are leaving us now. You might have told me.

SHARPE

I didn't know how. You're aware of my situation. Nothing holds me in America any longer.

EDITH

Nothing. I see.

He hands over her manuscript.

SHARPE

Here's your chapter three. *

EDITH

And?? *

SHARPE

(a shrug)

Your description of the garden, the maze behind the mill- it's poetic, evocative... *

EDITH

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE

And quite unnecessary.

Sharpe eyes Cushing, who observes from a distance. Sharpe feels pressured.

EDITH

Pray, elaborate...

SHARPE

All of it. The last ten pages. The whole chapter. I would cut it all. Wouldn't miss a thing.

EDITH

But we want to know if she's going to find his letter-

SHARPE

Do we, really?? I don't think so- no-
(beat)

For the life of me, I cannot understand why you consider yourself a writer- The plot is banal... to put it plainly.

EDITH

It's not the tale, Mr. Sharpe but how you tell it- *

SHARPE

Precisely my point. We've all read this tale- and many others like it. A romance gone wrong. *

(he shakes his head)

I advise you to return to your ghost stories.

EDITH

(aghast)

I thank you, then, for your frankness, sir...

Sharpe goes on, struggling with himself but unable to stop.

SHARPE

...but you don't have anything to say- about the natural or the supernatural, do you?

EDITH

Stop- let me be- *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHARPE

Writing about life... the aches that you describe with such earnestness... the pain- the loss... the love. You have not lived at all... In fact, you seem to know only what other writers tell you. How can you even presume to feel-

*

*

EDITH

Enough. You've made yourself more than plain.

SHARPE

-how it hurts to be alone and desperate?
All from your comfortable nest in-

*

She slaps him, silencing him. The party guests gasp and stare as she flees the room. Sharpe is devastated - but Cushing smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. EDITH'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's late and dark. Edith lies in bed, wiping at her tears.

The floorboards creak softly. The curtains move and the bedsprings go down. Edith freezes, her eyes wide, her head turned away.

Her father's hand caresses her hair.

CUSHING

I am not blind, Edith - I'm not. I know you had feelings for him. But give it time. You shouldn't be afraid of being alone-

(beat)

You still have *me*... Perhaps you and I- we could go to the West coast. A season in San Francisco. You could write and I-

EDITH

Good night, Father. I love you - but good night-

The old man leaves her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - POOL - DAWN

His morning ritual: Cushing walks in, wearing his robe.

An ATTENDANT appears with clean towels.

CUSHING

How's the water today, Benton??

ATTENDANT

Just the way you like it, Mr. Cushing,
sir-

CUSHING

Very well, then. Be kind enough to order
me some ham and eggs. I'll start with
coffee, if it's hot -

ATTENDANT

Right away, sir.

As he leaves, Cushing kneels to test the water.

A FIGURE comes up behind him. When Cushing turns, he smiles
in surprise. Then, it's too late.

WHACK!!! The figure has clubbed him with a BUTCHER'S HAMMER.
Cushing staggers, then goes down. The FIGURE stands over
him, grabs his head and *smashes it again and again against*
the TILED CORNER of the POOL... *

The body rolls into the water with a soft SPLASH. The
assailant withdraws.

Cushing's body rocks gently back and forth, his fractured
skull oozing a plume of blood into the pristine water.

The attendant walks back in, sees the body and drops his
tray of coffee.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Edith walks through the stacks of the Boston Public Library,
checking some Dewey decimal numbers scrawled on the last
page of her chapter three. *

Finally, she locates the numbered volume: a copy of *Jane*
Eyre. Opening it up, she finds a letter from Sharpe. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE (V.O.)

Dear Edith: By the time you read this I will be gone. So, these words are my only chance to tell you how much you mean to me. Your father asked me to break your heart and leave you.

*

Edith blinks and reads on as a SHADOW gathers behind her.

*

SHARPE (V.O.)

By this time, surely I have accomplished both. But know this: I leave only because of my present station in life. I shall change it. Even if it takes years, I shall change it - and when I can prove to your father that all I ask of him is his consent - nothing more - then, and only then will I come back for you. Forever: Thomas Sharpe.

Edith turns, headed for the stairs. But a dead woman is there. *It's her mother* - raising an arm, as if to block her way.

*

*

This time, Edith sees a once-beautiful face, which is now a decomposing horror. Edith drops the book and flees.

*

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

Edith runs down a busy dock, pushing her way through a crowd of STEVEDORES and waving FAMILIES.

But it's too late. By the time she arrives at the gangplank, the *Majestic* has set sail.

She stands there, panting, defeated, watching the UNION JACK on its stern receding.

But little by little she becomes aware of another presence standing close by. It's Sharpe.

Disturbed, flustered, Edith backs away. He follows closely.

SHARPE

It seems I missed my ship. On purpose, Edith. My sister - *she's* on board - but I couldn't go - not yet.

EDITH

When, then? When do you leave?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE

I don't know - I truly don't-

EDITH

What do you mean? If you don't know, who does?

SHARPE

You, Edith. Only you know.

He pulls her close and kisses her. Edith is thrilled. She pulls away...

EDITH

And what about my book? Is it so awful?

SHARPE

I loved every word. You must finish it.

EXT. CUSHING HOUSE - DAY

A TAXI is parked in front of the Cushing home, engine idling. A chauffeured black MOTOR CAR pulls up behind it.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Edith and Sharpe are in the taxi, locked in a passionate embrace. A sudden KNOCK on the window... Ferguson, the LAWYER- opens the door.

Edith takes one look at him and knows something terrible has happened.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A CORONER leads Edith, Sharpe and Ferguson down a hospital corridor.

Dr. McMichael appears behind them, hurrying to catch up.

DR. MCMICHAEL

(looking stricken)

Edith. I'm so sorry - it's incomprehensible - I can't believe it, how could such a thing happen-? He was a dear friend, you know that-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He falters. Edith is in shock, holding back her tears. The coroner opens the door to the morgue. Before she can enter:

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

Edith. Wait.

(to the coroner)

I'll give you a positive identification.
No need for Miss Cushing to see him. I
was his physician.

FERGUSON

And I *am* his lawyer, Dr. McMichael. I am
sorry- it's a legal formality.
Obligatory, I'm afraid.

CORONER

(regards Edith closely)

You must concentrate on the features that
remain intact, Miss. Don't fix upon
broken things, things out of place-

INT. MORGUE - MOMENTS LATER

They have gathered around a draped cadaver on a steel table. The coroner pulls back the sheet, hiding the corpse from CAMERA, but revealing it to Edith.

She fights back her tears as Sharpe comes alongside, steadying her. The coroner addresses them.

CORONER

As the sole surviving relative, you could
request an autopsy, but in this case I
don't think it's necessary. An accident -
the floor was wet -

FERGUSON

Ah. Of course. He slipped.

Dr. McMichael gazes intently at the corpse, frowning at what he sees.

DR. MCMICHAEL

(to the coroner)

May I, sir?

As he inspects the dead man's skull,

EDITH

Get away from him- This is my father- my-
father- my father.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH (CONT'D)

He - he- is turning sixty next week - and
he is- he is afraid of it showing-

(breaks)

Afraid of looking his age, you see?

She struggles to go on.

EDITH (CONT'D)

That's why he- he dresses so well- That's
why he swims every day- that's why- He
loves taking long walks with me- He loves
it- He loves me-

(beat)

And now I am alone.

And as she says this, she finally crumbles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Once again, Edith is in black and surrounded by mourners at the Cushing burial plot. A fresh grave lies open next to her mother's granite tombstone.

As the REVEREND reads a passage from the Bible (MOS), Edith leans on Sharpe's arm. A large DIAMOND RING sparkles on her finger.

A bereft-looking Dr. McMichael is standing in the crowd, staring fixedly at Sharpe. It's a duel- but then, with a gentlemanly tip of Dr. McMichael's hat, it's over.

Before the diggers close up the grave, Edith steps forward and drops Cushing's pocket watch onto the coffin.

EDITH (V.O.)

*Within a few short weeks, the very same
guests who mourned my father's passing
attended my wedding at Trinity Church...*

CUT TO:

EXT. STEAMSHIP - NIGHT

The dark shape of the *S.S. Providence* ploughs through the moonlit waves of the North Atlantic. CAMERA MOVES IN to one of the portholes on the "A" deck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH (V.O.)
*...and then, setting sail with Thomas I
 felt...*

*

INT. STATEROOM - NIGHT

The first-class stateroom is filled with FLOWERS.

EDITH (V.O.)
*...that by his side I could face any
 horror in the world. And I would - in
 time - face all of them.*

Edith emerges from the bathroom, her body backlit through a sheer negligée. As she slips into bed, Sharpe places a wooden case by her side.

EDITH
 What pray tell is that?

SHARPE
 A surprise. Open it -

EDITH
 What - ?

Sharpe proceeds to unlock the case.

SHARPE
 I wracked my brains for a suitable
 wedding present. As usual, Lucille came
 to the rescue. Her idea -
(he gestures to the case)
 - I daresay, will prove useful.

It's a TYPEWRITER.

EDITH
(bursts out laughing)
 Oh, how perfect!
(kissing him)
 Thank you, Thomas, I love it! Shall I try
 it out? Right now -?

SHARPE
 It can wait until morning, I think.
 You'll have more to write about.

He kisses her. As their embrace becomes passionate, he lifts off the nightgown and they begin to make love.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CUSHING'S LIBRARY - DAY

MOVING MEN are carting off the contents of Cushing's home and loading a horse-drawn dray outside.

Dr. McMichael is seated at Cushing's desk, transferring the contents of the drawers into a carton.

One packet of papers attracts his attention. The TOP of a page pokes out of an envelope: It is emblazoned with the *Cumberland eagle and a mountain*. This is the file from Holly, the private detective.

As the young Doctor unfolds it, he finds that the rest of the page has been torn off.

CUT TO:

EXT. CUMBERLAND HILLS - DAY

A Rochet-Schneider HORSELESS CARRIAGE putters over the barren, snow-covered hills of rural Cumberland. No one else is on the road; a few woolly sheep browse the icy slopes.

Sharpe is at the wheel, with Edith sitting beside him, wrapped in furs and a lap blanket.

At a lonely crossroads, they make a turn, following a line of power poles. A weathered signpost reads: SHARPETON. 5 mi.

EXT. ABANDONED VILLAGE - DAY

Sharpeton is nothing but a cluster of abandoned stone cottages.

*

SHARPE

Once the mine closed, everyone left, except us. The family motto is "*Semper Pertinax*"-

EDITH

"Always Stubborn..?"

SHARPE

To a fault.

Edith can see a grand house brooding up in the hills, its many chimneys silhouetted against the gray sky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A FLOCK OF SHEEP crosses in front of the car, followed by a sheepdog. Then, an arthritic SHEPHERD in tattered clothing runs up, saluting Sharpe with his crook.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

Hello, Finlay. How have you been keeping? *

Finlay's leathery, whiskered face is earnest and attentive, but his blue eyes are cloudy with cataracts. *

FINLAY *

Never better, Sir Thomas. I knew it was you a mile off.

SHARPE

(as if talking to a child)

Finlay, this is my wife, Edith. We were married in Boston, Massachusetts - that's on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. *

FINLAY *

I know, I know, milord. You are married.

(to Edith)

Welcome back, Lady Sharpe! *Mein Name ist William, wie sind Sie heute?*

(he nods, satisfied)

There, I learned it!

He hurries into one of the stone hovels near the road.

EDITH

What on earth? Was he speaking German?

SHARPE

Of a kind. I'm sorry.

(embarrassed)

He's been here forever - he worked for my parents. The soul of generosity. We help him when we can.

Finlay emerges with a beautifully carved WOODEN LAMB. He hands it to Edith. *

FINLAY *

Here, this is for you, mum. Another one.

SHARPE

(uneasy)

Why, thank you, Finlay! Very fine work, as always. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EDITH

But - it's beautiful! Did you make it
yourself? *

FINLAY

(nodding)

That's little Scrub. She answers to
Scrub, she's the baby of the family. Put
her with the rest of the flock, they'll
treat her right. *

He touches his cap and Sharpe drives on. As Finlay recedes
from view: *

EDITH

Was he always like that?

SHARPE

More or less. The whiskey didn't help.

THE SHARPE MANSION

The car proceeds under an arch with wrought-iron letters:
CLOUD TOP. As they motor up a long, steep driveway, Edith
leans forward, peering through the windshield at the
imposing house. *

EDITH

But it's *enormous!*

SHARPE

It does swallow one up. But we love it
anyway - and you will, too, you'll see.

A cute little DOG frisks around the car as they stop at the
front steps. Edith gets out and picks up the dog.

EDITH

And who is this? You never told me about
him! *

(laughing)

Or is he a she?

Sharpe's chuckle is awkward, almost confused. SOMETHING'S
WRONG: *he hadn't expected this.*

SHARPE

I - I'll just let you guess -!

He TOOTS the car horn and glances at the house, but there's
no other sign of life.

INT. FOYER - DUSK

Sharpe unlocks the massive, oaken front door and Edith peeks uncertainly into the foyer. She shrieks as Sharpe playfully grabs her around the waist and lifts her through the portal.

The dog barks in excitement as he carries her inside. Setting her down...

SHARPE

Welcome home, my Lady!!

The gloomy FOYER is paneled in dark wood. Just beyond it, a staircase climbs through three open floors and jutting balconies. At its center: a caged elevator.

Edith wanders uncertainly, like Jonah inside the whale.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Lucille?

He tries a wall switch: no lights.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

Lucille?

He exits the foyer.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

The electric service is new - wait here, I'll only be a moment.

Edith becomes aware that the dog has grown quiet; its tail curls between its legs.

Shivering, Edith pulls her coat tight around her. Behind her, the door blows shut with a soft BOOM. Even darker now.

Somewhere, a FLY is buzzing.

A motionless, silhouetted WOMAN in black is in an adjoining passageway. She stands straight, with preternatural dignity. *

EDITH

Lucille?

The woman's pince-nez glasses gleam; a diamond RING flashes on her finger. The dog GROWLS.

Just then, the wall sconces blaze up in a warm and cheerful light. Sharpe reappears, wiping his hands on a rag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE

I have no idea what I'm doing with fuses
and the like. Electricity is the work of
the devil -

(beat)

We keep a box of candles in every room
and now you know why -

Edith seizes his arm, spinning him around to face the woman -
gone now.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

What is it?

EDITH

I saw somebody -

SHARPE

Somebody?? Don't be silly. We're alone
here - there's not a living soul for
miles. Unless you count Finlay and his
flock. *

EDITH

Wh- where's your sister?

Sharpe presses a brass CALL BUTTON. Somewhere below,
machinery WHIRS. CABLES move.

SHARPE

She'll be upstairs. Come - here's the
lift.

The CAGED LIFT rises into view.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

It goes to all the floors and down two
levels to the old mine offices. *

(beat)

Don't ever go below this floor, all
right? No place for you.

UPSTAIRS

At the far end of a cavernous grand stairwell, Sharpe and
Edith exit the elevator and proceed down the murky hall.

SHARPE

Lucille?

THEIR BEDROOM

Heavy furniture and floral wallpaper. A fireplace in the corner. Sharpe deposits the cases on the four-poster bed.

SHARPE

I'll get a fire going. Once it's lit,
this room stays toasty warm -

Edith places Finlay's hand-carved lamb on a shelf, then
draws back a curtain, revealing barren, dark hills
overlooking a valley hundreds of feet below. A few
snowflakes are drifting down. *

SHARPE (CONT'D)

Lucille may be in the coal shed. Or the
garage. I'll just go see. *

He leaves. Pleased with the room, Edith removes her hat and
gloves, then goes to the mirror, where she takes a moment to
gaze at her reflection. *

With a coquettish smile, she takes off her eyeglasses.

EDITH

Lady Sharpe, do you take milk or lemon?
Won't you try a nice, warm scone?

She becomes aware of a few drowsy HOUSEFLIES vibrating -
agonizing - on the windowsill.

She opens the window and shoos them outside, catching sight
of Sharpe headed for a garage at the side of the house. *

With a grin, she opens her mouth to call out to him. But-

VOICE

Edith. Get out... *

Edith whirls around - she's alone.

CORRIDOR

Coming out into the hall without her glasses, Edith
squints...

A faint CLUNK and the WHINE of machinery. Down the hall, the
elevator cables are moving.

A moment later, the cab comes up; a WOMAN is on board.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH
(relieved)
 Lucille! We've been-

The elevator door opens revealing... *

...a walking horror with wild grey hair tumbled over naked, shrunken breasts. The woman's tongue, lips and throat are stained black; her eyes are pits of darkness. *

WOMAN
Leave us- Now!

Edith covers her face as the skeletal figure reaches for her. RIP - !! A three-inch tear appears on Edith's blouse. *

Stifling a cry, Edith runs in the other direction, colliding with Sharpe, who's coming up the stairs.

EDITH
 Who was that -? Oh, my God, Thomas - Who, in God's name is that woman??!! Who else is in this house? *

SHARPE
 Shhh, Edith- Lucille's nowhere to be -

EDITH
 Not Lucille! Someone else, just now! And -
(pointing)
 - she came up on *that* - you saw it coming up, the elevator...!

Sharpe puts his hands on her shoulders and smiles.

SHARPE
 Edith, please- calm down- I have no idea what-

EDITH
 Look - it tore my blouse, I *felt* it!

SHARPE
 What have you done? Good lord. Here, let me show you something. Come -

He leads her into the elevator cab. Points at a mirror on the back wall inside the cab. *

SHARPE (CONT'D)
 A rusty silver mirror - rotting away, that's all - and you, my darling, without your glasses!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Edith looks at her reflection. *

EDITH

No - that's not it. Thomas, I - I'm
scared- *

SHARPE

Shh- Shh- Come. *

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

On board the lift, Sharpe closes the glass doors and moves the brass lever downward. As they slowly descend:

SHARPE

Now. This thing has a mind of its own. In fact, I prefer the stairs. In our mother's day, it was operated by half a dozen servants in the basement, hauling on ropes. Lucille had it motorized and it's been quite a comedy ever since.

Through the glass panels, Edith can see the foyer coming up under her feet.

EDITH

I want to leave, please. This - this is one of those places, I can feel it- a container, full of souls in pain, hateful creatures... *

SHARPE

Ah- your love affair with ghosts. Here, in the very house where I grew up! I should be offended- *

He centers the lever and the elevator gently stops. He opens the door, revealing the dark shape of *another WOMAN*. *

Edith leaps back - !

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

It's Lucille Sharpe, in gloves and heavy woolens, mustering a chilly smile. *

LUCILLE

There you are! The two weary travelers. So, Edith, welcome to Cloud Top. Hullo, Thomas - why don't you have a fire going!?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE

We've only just arrived, my dear. Where have you been!

Lucille throws off her cape and shakes off some snowflakes.

LUCILLE

In Strathney. Your machine parts are here from Birmingham. Four crates - Fraser needs you to arrange for delivery. I stopped at the Post Office, too.

(back to Edith)

You have a letter from Boston. Go on, open it.

(inspects the envelope)

It's from a Mr. Ferguson. Your solicitor. I mean, lawyer, don't I?

SHARPE

Not now, Lucille, I beg you. Give us a moment- Edith's in a state.

As Lucille hangs up her winter clothing:

LUCILLE

Why is that, Edith? What's happened?

THOMAS

She saw something - a shadow, a reflection -

LUCILLE

(to Edith)

And it tore your dress?

THOMAS

As you see. It's a presence, am I right, darling? Ghosts, shades or whatnot, whose souls are imprinted within the walls. Stored there, if I understand correctly.

Edith covers her face with her hand, feeling a fool.

EDITH

(bracing up)

Piffle. I've gone mad. It never happened.

LUCILLE

You're overtired - after such a long journey..?

EDITH

Not a bit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUCILLE

You're missing your father, then. My
condolences on his passing - so tragic.

EDITH

I need a proper welcome, that's all!
Here, Lucille - give me a kiss.

She embraces her sister-in-law.

EDITH (CONT'D)

(kissing Lucille)

From this day forward, this house will
contain nothing but warmth, friendship
and love. I hereby banish all shades of
melancholy. Away, you ghosts. Begone,
dull care

Over Edith's shoulder, Sharpe locks eyes with Lucille.

LUCILLE

Hear, hear. And congratulations, Edith.
What a beautiful bride you are.

PRELAP: the notes of a Chopin nocturne...

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

In a raised bay in the Sharpe library, Lucille is seated at
a GRAND PIANO, playing with her usual concentration.

Sipping a BRANDY, Edith strolls around the magnificent
double-height room, which is crowded with books and glass
cabinets. Oil portraits stare down from the walls; stuffed
animals mingle with other souvenirs of a well-traveled
family.

A stained-glass window bears a family coat-of-arms: "*Semper
Pertinax.*"

SHARPE

Do you like it?

EDITH

I do... it's almost a church...

SHARPE

I spent my childhood in here.

The dog trots into the room, going directly to Edith.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH *
 Lucille, what is the dog's name? I seem *
 to have a new and faithful companion- *

Lucille's eyes are closed as she plays the Chopin. *

LUCILLE *
 The dog... has no name. It's a stray, we *
 have no plans to keep it. *

The dog leads Edith to a stack of GERMAN BOOKS on the floor. *
 She picks one up and looks at the flyleaf. *

EDITH *
 And these books... are in German-? *

Lucille stops her piano playing. *

LUCILLE *
 Those books belonged to a house guest. Do *
 you read German, Edith? *

EDITH *
 A few words, that's all. *

LUCILLE *
 (to Sharpe) *
 I've been wanting to donate them to the *
 local library, haven't I, Thomas-? No *
 reason to keep them here. *

INSERT *

The bookplate reads: *Von der Sammlung von Eleanora Schott.* *
 Below, the woman's signature, in an elegant, Continental *
 hand. And the year, 1897. *

BACK TO SCENE *

Edith sniffs the book, noting the scent of perfume. *

EDITH *
 And the piano? Lucille, is this where you *
 learned to play? *

LUCILLE *
 Not really. I was sent away. We both *
 were, in actual fact. Separated. *

Edith is puzzled; she looks at her husband. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH

But why? Such a cruel thing - whose idea was that?

*
*
*

SHARPE

The estate's executors in Carlisle. After mother's death.

*
*
*

He guides her to an OIL PAINTING of their mother - LADY SHARPE - over the fireplace. It's a high-quality portrait of an imposing woman in pearls, silk, an ivory cane and pince-nez glasses.

*

SHARPE (CONT'D)

You see? A famous beauty in her day.

SILENCE as Edith frowns, remembering the apparition she saw in the foyer. *This is the same woman.*

*

A soft MOAN fills the room.

*

EDITH

(*looking around*)

What in God's name...?

SHARPE

Ah, that. Some of the mine tunnels run directly beneath the house. When the wind picks up, the chimneys form a vacuum - ghastly, isn't it?

*
*

EDITH

Can something be done about it? I've had more than enough scares already, thank you.

SHARPE

It's no use. I can remember crying every time I heard it, when I was in this room as a child.

LUCILLE

It never bothered me. You know, I'm the practical one, like Mother.

Edith looks back at the portrait.

EDITH

Lucille: you look so like her.

LUCILLE

(*bursts out laughing*)

What an imagination you have, Edith!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

Thomas, isn't that funny? I look like her...

EDITH

May I ask, how did she die?

SHARPE

A seizure, here at home.

EDITH

And your father? Was he already dead?

SHARPE

Yes, father died when we were very small. *

EDITH

How sad, for both of you! Just think how happy he'd be to see you now, all grown up with a blushing bride at your side. *
*
*

She kisses him, then realizes that Lucille has left the room.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sharpe pokes up the fire, then gets into bed, where Edith is propped up on pillows, reading FERGUSON'S LETTER. *

SHARPE

What does he say?

EDITH

Probate is almost complete. The house and its contents are sold. The bank papers will be sent for my signature.

(kisses him)

I've been practicing my new signature. "Edith Sharpe." Is it a good author's name, Thomas? Or should I publish under Cushing, what do you think?

SHARPE

I think you'd better finish the book. Then you can decide what your admirers should call you.

More kisses; soon they are making love on the canopied bed.

INT. LUCILLE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Lucille lies awake in her bed in a room down the hall,
listening to the MOANS of the lovers.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A dull, gray day. Behind the house, a prominent, rocky HILL,
denuded of trees, juts skyward.

EDITH (V.O.)

*"Dear Mr. Ferguson: thank you for your
recent letter. Upon receipt of the
documents, I will execute the signature
copies and send them back to your
office."*

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

In her nightgown, Edith's at the desk, writing a letter.

EDITH (V.O.)

*"At which point all the stock
certificates, bonds and liquid assets
should be transferred to the account of
Lady Edith Sharpe at the Royal Bank of
Carlisle."*

Still in bed, Sharpe stirs, sits up and looks at Edith. With
his ruffled hair and sleepy grin, he looks like an impish
boy.

SHARPE

Edith: it's far too early for any of your
pen pushing. You must at least wait.

EDITH

Wait for what, my love?

Sharpe draws back the down quilt, inviting her to return to
bed.

SHARPE

For further inspiration. Come.

Edith lays down her pen and goes to him.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY *

Horse-drawn FARM WAGONS and local PEDESTRIANS crowd the town center on a cold, wet afternoon. *

Sharpe steers his car to a stop outside a FREIGHT OFFICE in the high street. *

As a SHIPPING AGENT appears to usher him inside, Edith and Lucille exit the car. Lucille disappears into an adjacent DRY GOODS STORE. Edith heads for the POST OFFICE across the street. *

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY *

At the counter, the POSTAL CLERK affixes a stamp onto Edith's reply to Ferguson. As Edith counts out some coins, the clerk notes her name on the return address. *

POSTAL CLERK *

You're Lady Sharpe, then? Forgive me, mum, but there's a letter come in for you just this morning. *

He disappears for a moment, then returns with an envelope. Handing it to her: *

POSTAL CLERK (CONT'D) *

All the way from Germany. *

Edith frowns, looking at the address, written in an elegant cursive hand: *

*Lady E. Sharpe
Poste Restante, Strathney
Cumberland, United Kingdom* *

POSTAL CLERK (CONT'D) *

Is there anything the matter, mum? *

Edith is examining the postmark: Leipzig. *

EDITH *

No, nothing at all. Thank you so much. *

She tucks the letter into her handbag, then sees a happy Sharpe waving to her from the barn-like freight depot across the street. *

INT. DEPOT - DAY *

At a loading dock, Sharpe proudly shows Edith the contents
of several OPEN CRATES. *

Packed in sisal, gleaming GEARS, AXLES and HOSES. *

EDITH *

Thomas! Is that the Ore drill - ? *

SHARPE *

It will be, once I put it together. I'm
having the bit fabricated separately, in
Glasgow. *

The shipping agent approaches with a BILL. *

SHIPPING AGENT *

If you'll just sign here, Sir Thomas. *

As Sharpe signs the paper: *

SHIPPING AGENT (CONT'D) *

Will you be wanting it this afternoon,
then? *

SHARPE *

(nodding) *

Yes, please. And think lucky thoughts,
Mr. Fraser - the Sharpe Mines might re-
open if this thing cooperates. *

The man nods and withdraws. Sharpe shows the bill to Edith. *

SHARPE (CONT'D) *

I never had enough money to get this far.
Now, thanks to a certain gentleman in
Boston - *

EDITH *

Boston -? *

SHARPE *

- who shall remain anonymous - *

EDITH *

No! You found an investor? Tell me! *

SHARPE *

In good time, my darling, all will be
revealed. Suffice to say that meeting you
made all the difference. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. MCMICHAEL (V.O.)

(prelap)

As the body dies- as its organs shut down... a weight change occurs. It loses exactly 21 grams.

CUT TO:

INT. BOSTON MEDICAL SCHOOL / OPERATING THEATRE - DAY

DR. MCMICHAEL

People of faith claim this is the weight of the soul leaving the body, but I urge you, as men of science, to dismiss such a notion.

The Doctor lectures in an operating theatre, where a body lies before him, flayed open. In the gallery, dozens of students take notes and make sketches.

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

Physical humours evaporate, secretions leave the body through open pores- that and the air, leaving the lungs... This is what you must look for, gentleman. Not faith, not magic, just science.

CAMERA singles out a man seated among the students: the lawyer, Mr. Ferguson. As Dr. McMichael sees him:

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

We must question every detail before us...

INT. GENTLEMAN'S CLUB TEA ROOM - DAY

Tea is being served to Dr. McMichael and Ferguson.

FERGUSON

It all seems to have ended well enough. Edith seems to have found happiness, don't you agree?

DR. MCMICHAEL

I haven't had a word.

FERGUSON

Damn, that's a shame.

(pause)

Well, I have.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FERGUSON (CONT'D)

Nothing personal, of course. Per her instructions, I'm liquidating all the family assets.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Are you really?

FERGUSON

Quite unusual. She may be investing every penny. Those iron mines of his-

(speaking quietly)

If I might confide-?

*

Dr. McMichael puts down his tea, leaning close.

FERGUSON (CONT'D)

Before Cushing died, he hired a New York man, a Mr. Holly- very hard to track down. He digs up unsavory facts, haunts places not suitable for a gentleman. The very fact that Holly was involved gives me pause.

DR. MCMICHAEL

I'm not sure I follow-

FERGUSON

Cushing was no fool. And he liked you, Doctor- he did. He always mentioned you as someone worthy of his trust- and his daughter.

Ferguson writes something on the back of a card.

FERGUSON (CONT'D (CONT'D)

Now, it's clear that Cushing had his doubts about Sharpe. I myself would love to visit Edith- wish her the best. Seeing as I have her address...

*

He passes the Doctor the card.

FERGUSON (CONT'D)

But I am old and tired. A trip like that requires some stamina...

(beat)

If you are the man Cushing believed you to be... you should be the one making that house call.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A steady SNOWFALL is transforming the vast landscape. A couple inches have already covered the house and its many gables.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Steam billows in the vast tile bathroom as Edith waits for the tub to fill with hot water. She opens the envelope from Leipzig and finds a letter written in German.

EDITH
(reading)
"Mein liebe Eleanor..."

Puzzled, she sets it aside, drops her robe and gets into the bath. Gazing at the wedding ring on her finger, she grows dreamy, until...

...she sees a FLY crawling on the window pane.

A sudden RASP at the door makes her jump - but it's only the dog, scratching. It enters and sits... then turns its head as the fly zooms past.

SNAP! The little dog's jaws click shut on the insect. GULP - down it goes. The dog's pink tongue appears, licking its chops.

Edith laughs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

In the cavernous, skylighted kitchen, Lucille is at the stove, which is as large as a hay wagon.

Edith enters, the dog in her arms.

EDITH
 Good morning, Lucille!

LUCILLE
 Good morning. I've made porridge, if you'll eat it.

EDITH
 But that's awful, Lucille - ! I mean, you making my breakfast! Here, let me do something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She puts down the dog and heads for the stove.

LUCILLE

No. And I prefer the dog be kept out of
the kitchen. *

Edith scoots the dog into the hall, closes the door and
smiles politely.

EDITH

There. Gone. Where is Thomas? *

Lucille's eyes look tired and distant.

LUCILLE

In the garage, assembling that thing of
his. *
*

EDITH

Lucille, don't tell me you're a skeptic. *

LUCILLE

It's a pipe dream, an utter waste of
money. I long ago accustomed myself to
the reality of our situation - Thomas
never has. Do you prefer coffee or tea? *
*
*

EDITH

Lucille, I'll not have you cook my meals
and do for me in any other way. Believe
it or not, I know my way around a
kitchen. *

Pause. Then, Lucille nods in understanding, brushing back a
lock of hair.

LUCILLE

Forgive me, I'm a sour old thing in the
morning. Let me warn you, however:
there's more than enough work here for
everyone- no servants- we can't afford
them.

EDITH

Soon, we will. Father's assets are being
transferred here. With a house this
grand, that money will be put to good,
practical use- I think he'd be pleased. *

Edith checks the fire under one of the cast-iron platters.
She picks up the coal scuttle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EDITH (CONT'D)

So. Where's the coal kept?

No answer from Lucille, whose face has again grown stony.

LUCILLE

Edith. Did you tell my brother about this bank transfer?

EDITH

(nodding)

It was in Mr. Ferguson's letter... Thomas hasn't mentioned it? *

LUCILLE

(dry)

No. Not a word.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Edith comes down a gloomy, frigid corridor behind the kitchen. A dark SHAPE darts out at her feet: the dog again.

It follows Edith to a small door, the entrance to the coal shed.

INT. GARAGE - SAME *

In the cavernous garage, Thomas is crouched beside a steam boiler, fitting a hose to a pressure gauge. The senile shepherd Finlay is there, too, sitting among the crates, singing to himself as he polishes a flywheel. *

Lucille enters, wrapped up in a shawl. *

Sharpe looks up, surprised.

SHARPE

Where is she?

LUCILLE

You and I must talk. We keep nothing from each other, is that not so?

INT. COAL SHED - DAY

Coal is piled up against the rough wooden walls of the semi-detached storage shed. Frost covers the single small window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Edith shivers; she can see her breath.

There are COBWEBS everywhere, all of them dotted with dead flies. With a shovel, Edith fills the coal scuttle... then turns to go. No dog now.

EDITH

Where are you..? Come, doggie...

A SIGH shakes the spider webs; dead flies drop to the floor.

In a matter of seconds, it grows dark. Edith looks out the window - *at a night sky with scudding moonlit clouds..!*

Disbelieving, Edith turns around; a cloud of white VAPOR hangs in the air. *

VOICE

Still here...!?

Edith backpedals as another sinuous strand of vapor gathers before her. *

VOICE (CONT'D)

Stupid creature...

Edith grabs a handful of COAL DUST and flings it. The black particles settle on a YOUNG WOMAN'S FACE hovering in midair!

The mouth is moving even as the glittering eyelids stay shut.

FACE

...leave ussss- !

A CLANG as Edith drops the coal scuttle and trips on a board. She falls heavily - and looks up as...

...coal dust swirls and rains down upon her. *

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER *

Thomas and Lucille's conversation is interrupted by BARKING.

The dog charges into the garage, followed by Edith, whose hands and dress are filthy black. *

She hurtles past brother and sister to the Rochet-Schneider motorcar. Sharpe manages to stop her, but she tears free, intent on getting behind the wheel. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE

Edith -! Edith, what is it..!?

He forcibly turns her around; her eyes finally focus on him.
Then she looks around the garage, becoming aware of where
she is.

FINLAY

*(doffing his cap)**Guten tag, guten tag, alles...*

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Edith has taken refuge on the bed, hiding like a child under
the quilt. Sharpe is seated alongside her, holding her hand.

SHARPE

Your hand's like ice! Are you running a
fever -? Look at me...

(seeing her face)

What in God's name- ?

She sits up and hugs him.

EDITH

Thomas: I saw a face - a woman, she was
alive, not a shadow, not trick of the
light -

SHARPE

Whose face?

(concerned)

Edith - shh, I'm here. Did you recognize
her? Was it someone you know?

EDITH

No, no - it was- a different woman this
time. Young. Blind. In *moonlight!*-

A TAP at the door and Lucille enters, carrying a breakfast
tray. Edith clings to Sharpe, trying to regain control of
herself.

SHARPE

*(aghast)**Blind, you say?*

EDITH

(nodding)

I know this much...

Lucille sets the tray down on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH (CONT'D)

(shuddering)

It wants me out of here.

Hands shaking, Edith takes a sip of tea.

LUCILLE

Nonsense, my dear. Your arrival has brought us hope. *

EDITH *

What about me? If I can't tell what's real, how can I stay here? *

She puts on a painful smile; her hands are shaking. *

EDITH (CONT'D) *

Send the hysteric to Vienna. She's ready for Dr. Freud. *

LUCILLE *

Never, ever. Cloud Top is your home now. And as dull as it sounds to the Austrian alienists, ours is a material world. That much is indisputable. *

From the hallway downstairs, there's a BOOMING KNOCK on the front door. A TEAMSTER calls out:

TEAMSTER (O.S.)

Hello, the house!

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

A horse-drawn DELIVERY VAN has pulled up out front. Two WORKMEN stomp through the snow, unloading a shipment of CRATES and TRUNKS.

The elderly teamster doffs his cap when he spots Sharpe throwing open the upstairs window.

TEAMSTER

'Morning, Sir Thomas! Sorry we're late - the road's that bad, over a foot here and there!

Finlay walks up with his sheepdog. *

FINLAY *

With more snow coming!

(to the teamster)

Hello, Malcolm! Anything for me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEAMSTER

Could be, Finlay, could be. We'll take a look.

*

As Sharpe and the men converse (MOS):

EDITH (V.O.)

They said the arrival of my things from home - my "goods and chattels" Thomas called them - would calm me down. I didn't believe them, but I decided I must try.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VERANDAH - LATER

Wrapped in a heavy coat, Edith stands on the front porch surrounded by open crates, sorting through her things as the workmen carry lamps and vases inside.

*

The teamster pauses to give Finlay a bottle of whiskey.

*

TEAMSTER

Make it last, now. Might not see you for weeks, if the road's closed...

FINLAY

You're a godsend, Malcolm...

*

In a box full of books, Edith comes upon her framed childhood drawing of Crimson Peak.

*

CRACK!!! The glass in the frame SHATTERS. Edith gasps...

The teamster looks over her shoulder.

TEAMSTER

That's a shame, mum. There's a shop in Strathney can order you a new glass -
(*noticing the caption*)
"Crimson Peak"?!

EDITH

(recovering)

As a child, I - I had an active imagination. This mountain had to be red, red, red-

Fascinated, Finlay seizes Edith by the arm and eagerly pulls her along the verandah.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINLAY

Crimson Peak? Come see!

*

*

CAMERA DOLLIES with them to reveal the hill behind the house, which is now snow-covered and glowing like an immense ruby in the morning sun.

*

*

*

TEAMSTER

Thank you, Finlay.

(explaining to Edith)

Color crimson on account of the ore leaching up from below. In summertime, it's more of an orange-like, but by Winter the snow turns blood red.

*

*

*

(beat)

*

Crimson Peak all the same. That's what us locals call it-

*

*

Sharpe comes up, holding a couple of Edith's books.

SHARPE

Look, darling, we have the very same edition of *The Tales of Hoffmann* -

*

He falls silent when he sees the expression on her face.

TEAMSTER

Just a bit of broken glass, sir.

He indicates Edith's drawing behind the cracked glass.

TEAMSTER (CONT'D)

Quite a coincidence, ain't it?

They all compare Edith's artwork to the real thing: an uncanny match. Edith's mind is racing... back to memories of her mother's warning.

TEAMSTER (CONT'D)

Was Lady Sharpe here as a child, sir? Is that it?

Sharpe is looking with concern at Edith.

EDITH

It's a coincidence - nothing more -

*

SHARPE

A blessing, then. A *blessing*. Not a coincidence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He embraces her. But his face is troubled.

*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VERANDAH - DAY

Crimson Peak is a dull, ruddy shape half hidden behind a new, heavy SNOWFALL.

*

CAMERA BOOMS DOWN to find Sharpe helping Lucille into the motorcar in front of the house. Edith is there to see them off.

*

*

SHARPE

*

(worried, to Edith)

*

Will you not come with us? Promise me you won't summon forth new beings from the netherworld-

*

*

*

*

EDITH

*

Shh. Stop. I'm going to work like a scholar. It's high time I got back to the book.

*

*

*

*

SHARPE

Then, write, do you hear me?? You have a whole day to yourself! Make the most of it!

*

As they drive off, Edith waves from the bottom of the snow-covered front steps.

She picks up the little dog and regards the front door, open and gaping as if ready to gobble her up.

A gust of wind and the house *moans*. Edith shivers, then goes inside and shuts the door.

*

INT. COAL SHED - DAY

Edith stands in the middle of the coal shed, studying the gloomy corners. Silence.

She loads the coal scuttle, takes a defiant last look around, then leaves. Outside, the snow is piling up.

The sound of TYPING.

*

EDITH (V.O.)

"My... dear... Eleanor..."

*

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

The coal fire is glowing. The faithful dog lies at Edith's feet as she types, translating the letter from Leipzig with the aid of a GERMAN DICTIONARY. *
*

EDITH (V.O.)

"...Why, dear cousin, will you not answer my letters? Your little Lotte must be walking and talking by now... and still, no word of any kind. What are your English relatives doing to you?" *

Edith lifts her eyes. The oil portrait of the late Lady Sharpe gazes down on her. *

AMONG THE BOOKS

Edith sits atop a rolling ladder, just below the portrait. She moistens a handkerchief and rubs it on the canvas -

- exposing, on the woman's finger, a diamond RING. She compares it to the ring she's wearing: the same.

The dog's BARK reaches her ears. *

INT. FOYER - DAY

Edith walks through the foyer, glancing up... More barking from upstairs.

She finds herself at the lift.

On impulse, she gets in and moves the brass handle to "up": CLUNK - the unseen electric motor whines and the cab raises her out of view.

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR

From the doorway of a wood-paneled STUDY, Edith surveys a workbench strewn with metal parts and blueprints - all relating to Sharpe's miniature steam drill. *

Edith smiles at the chaos.

A BEDROOM

Edith enters Lucille's austere, sparsely-furnished bedroom. A framed PHOTO of brother and sister - younger, posing arm in arm on Brighton Pier - stands on the bedside table.

At the desk, she inspects a pile of ACCOUNT BOOKS, LEGAL PAPERS and a KEY RING. Some of the documents are in German, including a letter from a bank in Leipzig.

Edith comes upon an envelope with her name on it: *"Edith Cushing, Boston 1900."*

In the envelope: SNAPSHOTS of herself back in Boston - the Kodak pictures taken by Sharpe. *

NURSERY

Using Lucille's key ring, Edith unlocks a dusty room that once served as a nursery. The wallpaper features a parade of merry animals. A CRADLE and TOY CHEST occupy the corner near the window.

On a shelf, near a dented silver rattle and christening cup, she finds a BLACK RUBBER BALL.

THE CORRIDOR

In the corridor, Edith hears the dog WHINING on the other side of a heavy pair of double doors. She tries the brass knobs: locked.

Using another of Lucille's keys, she opens the doors onto a long-forgotten passageway.

PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

A few SNOWFLAKES drift in from a half-open skylight. No sign of the animal.

As Edith latches the skylight shut, a sudden YELP... and the dog is sitting at her feet.

EDITH

There you are! All right, little girl:
fetch!

Edith throws the rubber ball. With a BARK, the dog takes off after it, disappearing into the gloom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, nothing.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Come on, silly. Come on...

THUMP... *the ball comes bouncing back.*

Edith moves deeper into the frigid passageway, moving in and out of shafts of light from other skylights.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Here, girl. Here..?

She passes a stack of BRICKS, large GLASS BOTTLES filled with roofing nails, an old wicker WHEELCHAIR... and finally reaches a rusty iron door only three feet high.

Hearing SCRATCHING on the other side, she kneels down and tries the handle: it won't move.

EDITH (CONT'D)
How did you get in there?!

The SCRATCHING becomes intense, frenzied. Edith looks down and realizes *the dog is sitting alongside her - !!*

Flesh crawling, she gathers up the dog and runs.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Reaching the double doors, she glances back.

Something small and skeletal is coming, scuttling over the floor, in and out of the light. *
*

It's a bony HAND! The jar of nails EXPLODES! The pile of bricks tumbles over... *

Edith slams the doors and throws the lock. She backs away, but, like a spider, the fingers wriggle out from under the door..!

ELEVATOR DOWN

Edith charges into the lift and yanks the lever - and nothing happens.

EDITH
Down, dammit! *Down!!*

Finally, the cab jerks, sways, and starts moving -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

- but the hand - covered in rotten flesh - is pressed against the outside of the glass, riding along!

The dog thrashes in her arms, strangling in her grip.

The ground floor is in sight! But the cab drops right past it!!

EDITH (CONT'D)

No!

Desperate, Edith pulls on the control handle - to no avail.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A filthy BASEMENT comes into view... shelving, canned goods, an ancient washer and mangle.

And the elevator keeps going...

INT. LEVELS - CONTINUOUS

...passing dark, abandoned tunnels once active with iron miners.

INT. MINE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Finally, a gentle BUMP as the elevator stops. The HAND drops off the glass and withdraws. *

Edith puts down the dog and tries the lever, but the elevator won't budge.

INT. MINE LANDING

Edith's groping fingers encounter a light switch. She twists the knob and a few brownish bulbs come on.

Inky tunnels are everywhere, like an enlarged termite nest. No movement, no sound except for the distant DRIP of water.

Edith starts down steep, rickety steps, which creak in protest.

INT. MINE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The dog trots ahead. On the rough-hewn walls hang mining tools, chains and lanterns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Edith moves carefully, keeping an eye out for the terrible hand - or anything else.

ALCOVE

In an alcove, she discovers a pile of women's shoes. The dog sniffs at them, unleashing a stampede of COCKROACHES.

Edith lifts the lid of a STEAMER TRUNK and finds...

...a STRAW HAT. A WHITE CANE. A woman's SPECTACLES with
BLACK LENSES. And an adorable flock of Finlay's HAND-CARVED
SHEEP. She examines a lace HANDKERCHIEF with an embroidered
monogram: ES. She smells it - recognizing the perfume. *

Below it, she finds three ALBUMS of Kodak snapshots.

The handwritten labels on each album:

"Pamela Upton - London - 1887"

"Margaret McDermott - Edinburgh - 1893"

"Eleanora Schott - Leipzig - 1896"

She remembers that day at her father's office-

FLASHBACK BEGINS:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Cushing peers at Sharpe at the conference table:

CUSHING

So you come to us, having failed to raise
capital in London.

SHARPE

London, Edinburgh, Leipzig -

CUSHING

Where your family name seems to have
counted for very little.

FLASHBACK ENDS:

ALCOVE

Edith opens the albums.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all feature Thomas and several beautiful, well-dressed YOUNG WOMEN. They are young and healthy, in carriages or in formal wear.

The youngest of them is blind and carries a white cane. *

The German woman is holding the cute little dog that has befriended Edith.

EDITH

Oh, my God-

A thin, malevolent WHISPER from the darkness...

VOICE

Edith! Verstorben! Verstorben!!

Edith snatches up an IRON BAR and strides out into the empty tunnel.

EDITH

Who is it? Show yourself!

No answer. Edith frowns: FLIES are buzzing. The dog starts to trot forward, into the dark...

EDITH (CONT'D)

(to the dog)

No. Stay - !

The dog obeys. Looks up at her.

AT THE ELEVATOR

Brushing away hordes of flies, Edith climbs the stairs and throws open the doors of the elevator -

Waiting inside, a decomposing YOUNG WOMAN with a DEAD BABY caught in her long hair...

The weeping thing holds out the infant's remains.

YOUNG WOMAN

Er ist gestorben -! Während Sie wird...

Edith screams and lashes out with the iron bar. The figure swirls like oily smoke... and reconfigures, its eyes bulging in supplication.

Retreating, Edith tumbles down the stairs. She hits the bottom landing hard - something SNAPS!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She screams, her face contorted in pain. Somewhere, an infant is wailing, a mother is shrieking.

Mercifully, Edith loses consciousness.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - DUSK

The windows glow in the swirling snow. Sharpe's motorcar is parked out front, and behind it, a HORSE-DRAWN SLEIGH.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A stolid, bearded young man gazes down on Edith. *It's Dr. Alan McMichael!* Seeing that her eyes are open...

DR. MCMICHAEL

Hello, Edith. Don't try to move just yet, all right?

Edith looks around and recognizes the master bedroom. A fire crackles in the grate. *

EDITH

Alan - ? Wh- what are you doing here? Is it-

DR. MCMICHAEL

Easy, easy. You're going to be fine. We need just a bit longer for the plaster to dry.

(another smile)

Quite a shock seeing me, I warrant. Forgive me.

Sharpe and Lucille are watching anxiously from the doorway.

SHARPE

Edith, we met Dr. McMichael in Blencathra, on his way to us. Heaven-sent, as it turns out.

DR. MCMICHAEL

I arrived in Southampton three days ago. I should have sent a wire.

(smiles at them all)

But I thought you'd enjoy the surprise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCILLE

We'd have been at a loss, Edith.
 Helpless, especially in this weather!
 It's a miracle, you were bleeding - a
 compound fracture -!

Dr. McMichael is wiping his hands, which are covered in white plaster. Edith's left leg is encased in a hip-to-ankle cast.

Groggy, Edith looks at them, then blurts out...

EDITH

The dog ran away. I couldn't find it-

DR. MCMICHAEL

Shh- not now-

*

EDITH

She spoke to me -

LUCILLE

Who spoke to you??

EDITH

She knew my name -

DR. MCMICHAEL

It's shock. She'll be quite woolly-headed-
(he stops, looks at Edith)
 What is it, Edith? Are you in pain?

Tears are rolling down Edith's cheeks. Her lips are trembling as she remembers... Dr. McMichael brings a cup of hot TEA to her mouth.

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

Here. Drink.

As she drinks, he places a small BROWN BOTTLE on the night stand.

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

It's an opium derivative: no more than
 two drops with hot liquids. Once a day.
(to Sharpe & Lucille)
 No more than two drops, understood?

EDITH

(lying back)

She looked at me - the ghost - and in her
 arms- oh, God, she was holding something
 awful. A dead b-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Thomas freezes but Lucille cuts in -

LUCILLE

Edith. You were mad to go down there!
The mine is ill-lit and crawling with
vermin... and you used my keys. *And* the
lift.

(to Sharpe)

You see? It should be disabled, or locked-

SHARPE

But I told her - you remember, I warned
you, didn't I, Edith?

LUCILLE

Clearly, she didn't understand or didn't
care-

DR. MCMICHAEL

Excuse me.

(the others fall silent)

May I ask... would you take your
conversation downstairs? I think she's
heard enough for now.

SHARPE

I beg your pardon?

DR. MCMICHAEL

Let me finish here. We must all do our
best to see that she gets some rest.

Lucille pulls Sharpe by the sleeve.

LUCILLE

We'll leave you, then, Dr. McMichael.
With your patient.

They leave. Edith brushes away her tears and tries to sit
up.

EDITH

(falling back)

I'm dizzy - everything's upside down...

DR. MCMICHAEL

It's the narcotic. You may feel some
nausea. Have you ever broken a limb
before?

Edith shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

It was a habit of mine, as a boy. My aviation experiments. I fell off the roof twice. I spent my youth in plaster casts.

(pause)

Now what's all this about a ghost?

Edith smiles weakly.

EDITH

They don't exist, I know. Until one day, they do. Given enough time in this house, Alan, I swear, even you-

He stops her with a gentle smile.

DR. MCMICHAEL

No, no. A methodical drudge - a pill pusher - is just not cut out for such things.

She takes his hand.

EDITH

I can't believe you're actually here. Is everything all right?

DR. MCMICHAEL

I hope so, yes. I'm making certain inquiries. We'll discuss them tomorrow, when you're ready.

EDITH

What are you talking about? Tell me now. I can't just lie here - !

DR. MCMICHAEL

(after a moment)

I went to your father's club. Early. At that hour, there are no other swimmers. The floor is perfectly dry. How could he slip? And his injuries... yes, injuries. I saw *multiple* fractures.

Edith is looking at him in horror.

EDITH

Oh, God, Alan.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Lie back. You must get some rest. I'm here to confirm a few facts -

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

EDITH

What sort of facts?

(no answer)

I love him, he's more than I ever wished for, he's my life now-

DR. MCMICHAEL

I know. I wanted to be happy for you. Even as I worried, I've thought of little else.

He puts a pillow under her head and touches her cheek.

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm at the Elgin hotel in town. Close your eyes now. I'll come back tomorrow and we'll go over everything.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Lucille and Sharpe are waiting as the Doctor comes downstairs.

DR. MCMICHAEL

She should sleep through the night. Keep an eye out for fever.

Lucille hands Dr. McMichael his hat and coat.

SHARPE

We're ever so grateful. Won't you stay here, with us? The roads are awful - we have more than enough room...

DR. MCMICHAEL

Thank you, no. I have some business in town. Contact me immediately if there's any change.

As they walk to the door:

SHARPE

I'm only sorry that you have to see her like this. Really, she's taken to life here in the hills. For all her big city upbringing, she says she's never been happier. She's thriving, believe me.

DR. MCMICHAEL

I believe you, sir. You're a lucky man.

EXT. THE SHARPE MANSION - NIGHT

Snow is still falling.

Dr. McMichael climbs into his sleigh and guides it down the driveway as Lucille and Sharpe stand at the door, watching.

They go inside and slowly close the door.

Prelap PIANO: one of Liszt's Transcendental Etudes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Lucille's at the piano, working her way through an especially ferocious passage.

INT. ALCOVE - NIGHT

Far underground, Sharpe enters the darkened alcove. Hearing a WHISPER, he holds his lantern high.

An ambiguous SHADOW undulates over the wall, then onto the ceiling -! Startled, Sharpe presses himself into a corner, but after a moment, he frowns, seeing that one of the trunks is open. As are the photo albums within.

He flicks through snapshots of himself embracing the beautiful GERMAN WOMAN with a pudgy BABY in her arms. More PHOTOS: the two kissing on a forest path, pushing a baby carriage through the main plaza in Leipzig.

INT. MINE SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Sharpe drags the steamer trunk down a tunnel to the edge of an open pit. He kicks away a GUARD RAIL, then tips the trunk over.

It falls...

...and falls... and falls.

DISSOLVE:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Edith opens her eyes as Sharpe enters, pushing the wicker WHEELCHAIR. Lucille follows, carrying a BREAKFAST TRAY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE

Good morning, my love. Look what we found. It was grandfather's.

He sits down in the wheelchair and rolls himself over to her. Lucille parks the tray on a bedside table.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

I used to play with it. He must have been over six foot tall - far too big for you.

LUCILLE

So. Did you sleep well?

EDITH

I never moved!

LUCILLE

Good: Now try to eat something. Dr. McMichael's orders.

She pours a cup of tea and adds FOUR DROPS from the brown bottle. Sharpe counts them with her: TOO MANY. Their eyes meet -

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

I've made porridge, as usual. And a fresh pot of tea. Here.

Lucille places the tray in front of Edith, who begins to eat the cereal.

EDITH

Tell me. Were there other children living here? Within the last few years?

SHARPE

No, there were no-

LUCILLE

(swiftly)

Yes. Yes, one of the housekeepers had a baby. It died. They both died, actually. After leaving the country, more than ten years ago -

EDITH

Was her name Eleanora Schott?

LUCILLE

Precisely. She was a German woman, highly educated. Of course you remember her, Thomas. How Finlay adored her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Their eyes are riveted on the cup of tea. They watch as Edith brings it to her lips - *pretending* to drink.

SHARPE

I do remember, yes.

EDITH

Her things are here in the house. I saw a book - but the date was 1897... just *three* years ago.

SHARPE

She left everything when she returned to Leipzig. But you must have misread the date.

Edith replaces the cup on the saucer; the tea is untouched. Having another spoonful of porridge...

EDITH

And Pamela Upton? Margaret McDermott? Who are they?

LUCILLE

My piano students. For a moment I thought I might be cut out for teaching. It was a disaster, I'm sorry to say.

SHARPE

This house is full of memories. So many of them unhappy... We shouldn't talk about them.

Again, Edith pretends to sip some tea. Lucille glares at her brother.

LUCILLE

(*to Sharpe*)

Then let's get out of this room and let your darling invalid enjoy her breakfast in peace. Come.

As she propels her brother toward the door, Edith pours the cup of tea into a flower vase next to the bed.

Not a moment too soon - Sharpe stops and lingers in the doorway. As he turns back...

EDITH

Thomas. I - I feel such a fool. Snooping in the basement, dredging up sorry things. I will not ruin everything! I promise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SHARPE

No, it's not you. This place never recovered. When father died - in the library - he - died alone and distraught. He killed himself, Edith. And this house died with him.

*
*
*

EDITH

My God- I'm so sorry! What happened?

Sharpe returns to her and sits on the edge of the bed.

SHARPE

After mother's death. He went to pieces.

Edith reaches for him. He embraces her, visibly moved.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

Edith. Was it a mistake? Bringing you here - to this cold and lonely place?

Edith shakes her head. He kisses her gently.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

It was. If you're seeing ghosts, it's because of me. I'm sorry.

EDITH

(studying his face)

No, no. Once, I would have given anything to live among spirits. To commune with them, to be brave and not run away.

SHARPE

And now?

EDITH

Now... I have you. Send them on their way, Thomas, if you can. It is I who belong here, not them.

SHARPE

You... you are different. So different.

EDITH

Different from whom?

SHARPE

Everyone.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sharpe places the breakfast things next to the sink. Lucille checks the teapot.

SHARPE

She drank it - look.

He holds up the empty cup.

LUCILLE

Maybe she did, maybe not. It doesn't matter. I put half the opium in the porridge.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

A MANAGING EDITOR leads Dr. McMichael through a busy newspaper office. A noisy printing press is at work.

MANAGING EDITOR

We don't make our back issues available to just anybody. But seeing as you're a medical man...

The rear of the office is jammed with wooden filing cabinets. Several EMPLOYEES are leafing through bound back issues.

MANAGING EDITOR (CONT'D)

Anything ever written about that family would be in here. We've found a few things.

Dr. McMichael examines a photo that has been set aside: a very young but recognizable THOMAS, sitting on a pony. Standing alongside, holding the reins, is a blonde ADOLESCENT GIRL. *

DR. MCMICHAEL

(reading the caption)

"Lucille Sharpe introduces brave little brother Thomas to the joys of the horse ring." *

MANAGING EDITOR

Doctor, if you don't mind, at night I have the strangest numbness in my lower back -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. MCMICHAEL

At night, you say? Tell me all about it.

MANAGING EDITOR

It's a tingling sensation, right down to
my toes...

*

Something else catches Dr. McMichael's attention. It's a newspaper column entitled RECENT WEDDINGS.

DR. MCMICHAEL

One moment, please.

In the text: a PHOTO of twenty-something Thomas marrying Pamela Upton, a fair-haired young society girl from London who wears dark glasses and carries a long, white cane.

*

*

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

The Baronet. Sir Thomas - he's had how many wives?

MANAGING EDITOR

Haven't the foggiest. I've never met the man.

On another page, another photo, more recent, of Thomas marrying Eleanora Schott, a wealthy heiress from Germany.

*

MANAGING EDITOR (CONT'D)

But I daresay, you should go back. August 1872. That's the real shocker.

The man leafs through another bound volume, this one older.

MANAGING EDITOR (CONT'D)

I've never heard anyone speak about it. As if everyone in the district were ashamed or paid to keep mum. I suppose the Sharpes were powerful enough back then, but even so - it made the front page.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Dear God.

MANAGING EDITOR

Dreadful business, isn't it? No photographs then - but here -
(he turns to another page)
...the engravings are clear enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Dr. McMichael is speechless as looks at an unseen page of illustrations.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MINE TUNNELS

The elevator descends and stops. Edith is on board.

She glides ghost-like down inky tunnels deep underground. Her eyes are closed; her hair billows, as if underwater. *

Gaping HOLES and CRACKS pass below her bare feet - but she floats over them, her nightgown swirling. *

Magically, Edith is in a... *

PENTAGONAL ROOM *

...where flies are buzzing. Four of the five walls feature newly-laid, bricked-in CRYPTS. *

The fifth crypt is still open, waiting for her. Suddenly, *Lucille Sharpe* steps out from the darkness. Although her mouth never moves, her low VOICE is audible: *

LUCILLE (V.O.)

None of you will ever leave. You'll dwell here in torment, at my pleasure.

Edith's eyes fly open as a shining blade pierces her neck!! A strangled, wet SHRIEK erupts from her lips -

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Edith wakes up. Weak sunlight filters in from behind the heavy drapes, which have been drawn tight.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Edith is bent over the toilet, vomiting.

She straightens up and tries to clear her head, pausing at the sink to take a few swallows of water.

She stops as she catches sight of her reflection in the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shock: her face is gaunt, her eyes sunken. She brings a claw-like hand to her throat, which is stained black. Her tongue is black, too -

EDITH

No - no...

She brushes against a naked WRAITH - the walking corpse of a young woman whose face is half-hidden behind a curtain of black hair. The awful thing reaches for Edith, but -

- both her arms are chopped off at the elbow!

WRAITH

Soon, I say! Ssssoon - !

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Again, Edith wakes up. This time for real. She looks around, alone in her room. Trembling, she flings off the bed covers and gets to her feet.

She's clumsy, teetering on her plaster cast, dizzy from the ingested drug.

EDITH

Thomas?!

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

A muttering, hideous SHAPE is rolling through the shadows of the upstairs corridor.

It's Edith, in the wheelchair. Weak and disoriented, she stops; her head lolls... a MOAN breaks the silence.

Another MOAN... Down the hall, sitting outside Lucille's room, is the dog. *

IN LUCILLE'S ROOM

Edith reaches the threshold and pushes the door aside. She stands in front of a mirror. A man, behind her, kisses the nape of her neck and embraces her suggestively. She MOANS but... *

...sees Edith! *

The man turns around- Is Thomas!!!! *

CORRIDOR

Gasping, Edith blindly rolls herself toward the stairs.

The dog runs ahead, barking like a mad thing. Suddenly, the wheelchair jerks to a stop. Sharpe is there, holding her in place.

She flails at him... he fends her off, his face a picture of calm.

Then Lucille looms up, stirring a glass of water and bringing it to Edith's lips.

Edith hurls herself out of the wheelchair. She hits the floor with a thump, only to be rolled onto her back.

Sharpe puts a knee on her chest and pins her arms. He glances at Lucille and nods.

Lucille again comes close with the drinking glass. She SLAPS Edith hard, then swiftly grabs her nose and forces the solution down her throat.

Gagging, Edith spits the liquid at the woman's face.

EDITH

Who are you? Who are you, really?

LUCILLE

Who do you think?

EDITH

You're not his sister!

Lucille slaps her again and forces more liquid down.

LUCILLE

I am.

*
*

Edith struggles, reaching for the chair. She tries to crawl, but Sharpe kneels next to her, holding her down.

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN:

Silence. Then, the boom of the DOOR KNOCKER.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE SHARPE MANSION - DAY

The snow has stopped. Drifts are everywhere.

Lucille opens up to find Dr. McMichael on the doorstep, carrying his black bag and a large book - one of the bound volumes from the local paper.

His horse and sleigh are in the driveway.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Good afternoon, Miss Sharpe. How's Edith doing?

LUCILLE

She's asleep right now, Doctor.

DR. MCMICHAEL

That's fine. Fine. And your brother??

LUCILLE

He's gone to the post office. He'll be back shortly.

DR. MCMICHAEL

I see.

LUCILLE

Dr. McMichael, last night... didn't go well. Edith awakened several times, crying out. We were all of us up til dawn.

DR. MCMICHAEL

If she's in pain, I should see her-

LUCILLE

No, no. She's finally getting her rest. I wonder, do you have more opium? In the dark, we broke the bottle.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Of course.

(pats his bag)

Right in here.

LUCILLE

But come inside. There's no reason for you to freeze to death.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Still in his overcoat, Dr. McMichael is seated on the sofa, decanting some liquid opium into another small bottle.

Lucille tends to the fire and sits opposite him, eyeing the drug. *

DR. MCMICHAEL

Well. Back home, everyone's clamoring for some news. Tell me, Miss Sharpe, how's her book been going?

LUCILLE

Oh, she talks of nothing else. Quite the imagination, that one.

DR. MCMICHAEL

A writer's talent is one I've always envied.

LUCILLE

You have a taste for fiction, Doctor?

DR. MCMICHAEL

I do. Although in my experience, actual events can go far beyond one's wildest imaginings.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

The bedroom is dark. Lying under the covers, barely moving, Edith hears the distant voices, as if in a dream.

EDITH

(raising herself up)

Alan - ?

Across the room, the dog is alert, tail thumping.

Edith looks at the open door, then reaches for the rubber ball on the night stand. With supreme effort, she rolls it into the hallway.

It almost reaches the stairs when the dog scampers and - brings it back!

EDITH (CONT'D)

No - no...

Fighting off nausea, she again picks up the ball. Throws it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The dog instantly goes after it. But, in the hall, the animal recoils as *one of the hissing spectres* - Pamela Upton, the blind girl - springs forth from the shadows!

*
*

A dry, bony hand guides the rolling ball to the steps...

INT. LIBRARY - SAME

Dr. McMichael is about to give Lucille the bottle of opium, but almost teasing, he pulls it away.

DR. MCMICHAEL

You know, Miss Sharpe, I really should examine the patient before doling this out.

LUCILLE

(*thin smile*)

And her doctor's orders, what of them? As I recall, he was quite insistent on rest and sedation.

A moment of silence as they size each other up.

Suddenly, the RUBBER BALL bounces down the stairs and into the room. The dog follows, barking happily.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Ah. Someone's awake.

He pockets the opium vial and exits.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Dr. McMichael strides into the bedroom and draws back the curtain, revealing Crimson Peak. He sits at Edith's bedside.

DR. MCMICHAEL

There. Now - if you'll just look at me.

Edith gazes into Dr. McMichael's eyes; he checks her pupils, then takes her pulse.

EDITH

Help- help me- take me away...

Dr. McMichael picks up the brown bottle, checks the liquid.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Yes. But not now. You're in no shape-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH

Now! You must -! You don't understand-! I can walk!

DR. MCMICHAEL

You can't.

EDITH

The wheelchair, then-

Lucille appears in the doorway. Dr. McMichael changes his demeanor.

DR. MCMICHAEL

(to Lucille)

She's showing signs of anemia and exhaustion. I'm going to take her to a hospital -

LUCILLE

That won't be necessary.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Miss Sharpe, under the circumstances -

LUCILLE

Doctor, we appreciate everything... you coming here so fortuitously, doing what you can. But we have decided to seek the assistance of a bone specialist.

DR. MCMICHAEL

You didn't mention anything before -

LUCILLE

I didn't want to trouble you - or appear unkind. An osteopath is coming from London. Tonight.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Is he, now?

LUCILLE

In fact, my brother has gone to fetch him at the station.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Then you won't mind if I stay and make his acquaintance.

A NOISE from outside signals the arrival of a motorcar. Lucille hurries away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Dr. McMichael immediately takes Edith by the arm.

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)
All right. Show me you can stand up.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Lucille opens the front door. Sharpe is already out of his car, alarmed at the sight of Dr. McMichael's sleigh.

SHARPE
(*seeing Lucille*)
How long has he been here?

LUCILLE
Half an hour. He won't leave.

SHARPE
I'll deal with him.

Sharpe hands a large postal ENVELOPE to Lucille as he heads for the grand staircase.

SHARPE (CONT'D)
Here. From her solicitor. And the Boston bank.

Lucille pulls a thick wad of papers and contracts out from the envelope.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Sharpe enters the bedroom and finds Edith seated in the wheelchair. Dr. McMichael stands behind her.

DR. MCMICHAEL
Good afternoon, Sir Thomas. We were just going.

SHARPE
Leave her be.

Lucille comes alongside her brother. She's holding something in the folds of her skirt.

DR. MCMICHAEL
Do you know the Brathwaite *Daily Ledger*?
"The newspaper of record for northern Cumberland." I've borrowed some back issues.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He kneels next to the wheelchair, so Edith can see. He opens the book of old newspapers.

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

(to Edith)

Edith. It seems that your mother-in-law, Lady Edwina Sharpe, was murdered, here in this house.

Edith stares at him in puzzlement. Then she looks at the open book.

Headline: "AXE MURDER AT SHARPETON." CAMERA lingers on a detailed STEEL ENGRAVING depicting a butchered woman in the library downstairs.

DR. MCMICHAEL (CONT'D)

No suspect was ever arrested.

SHARPE

Did you understand what I said? Leave.

DR. MCMICHAEL

(turning)

You, Sir Thomas, were only thirteen at the time. After questioning by the police, you were sent off to boarding school in Surrey.

(to Lucille)

Your story, Lucille, is less clear. A convent education in Switzerland, it said.

LUCILLE

(to Sharpe)

What are you waiting for?

DR. MCMICHAEL

An entire paragraph describes the condition of the body as it was found. A grisly thing, a hatchet or something similar. Thirty blows -

LUCILLE

Enough-

BAMM!!! She darts forward and stabs Dr. McMichael in the NECK with a boning knife. *

Edith screams!!!

The Doctor arches back, the knife jutting from under his ear. He staggers out the door, struggling to remove it. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Edith is on her feet, reeling, trying to catch up. SOCK!
Lucille smacks her back into the wheelchair.

EXT. THE SHARPE MANSION - DAY

Bleeding profusely, the Doctor gropes his way down the ice-
covered front stairway. He finally pulls out the knife, then *
slips and falls.

The knife bounces off the stone steps.

Rolling over, he sees Lucille coming- calmly picking up the
knife. Then Sharpe is there, followed by the excited DOG.

The Doctor scrambles backwards, clutching his wound. He
points at Lucille.

DR. MCMICHAEL

Who is she, Sharpe? Where did you find
her -?

Lucille hands the knife to Sharpe.

LUCILLE

(to Sharpe)

You do this!! Get your hands dirty for a
change!

DR. MCMICHAEL

Edith... will not die here. Not her.

Numb, Sharpe stares at the knife in his hand.

LUCILLE

(to Sharpe)

I'll deal with him, you said -! You've
never done anything for us - look at you!

DR. MCMICHAEL

She's stronger than both of you.

Lucille pushes Sharpe forward.

LUCILLE

Do it!!!

Sharpe closes in on the wounded man and stabs him in the
gut.

SHARPE

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He twists the KNIFE, digging deeper.

The Doctor twitches, groans and goes still. The dog, tail wagging, licks at the fresh blood on the snow. Repulsed, Sharpe turns away.

INT. THE SHARPE MANSION - DAY

Lucille and Thomas drag Dr. McMichael into the elevator. Lucille goes through the man's pockets and retrieves the opium.

Then she steps out, and Thomas takes the elevator down under the house. Once he's gone, Lucille brings out the knife and turns toward the dog.

LUCILLE
(sweetly)

Come here, doggie. Come along, see what I have.

INT. CRYPT - DAY

CAMERA follows a BLOODY SMEAR along the floor of the mine tunnel to the brick crypt, where Sharpe is stuffing Dr. McMichael into a dark corner.

He tosses the Doctor's black bag and the bound book of newspapers onto the body and leaves.

For several seconds, all is still. Then, very slowly, the Doctor's eyes open. He coughs and a surge of blood rolls over his chin.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Lucille appears at the bedroom door; in her bloody hands, a COIL OF ROPE. She tosses the rubber ball at the back of the wheelchair.

LUCILLE

There. I just put a poor creature out of its misery. It was missing its mistress, a certain German woman.

She jerks the wheelchair around: *empty*. She checks the bathroom - Edith is gone.

Lucille throws open one of the windows and looks out front.
No horse and sleigh!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

Thomas!!

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY

A WHIP cracks... the horse-drawn sleigh yaws into view, skidding down the abandoned main street of Sharpeton. *

Edith hauls on the reins, stopping at Finlay's hovel. *

EDITH

Mr. Finlay!! *

She gets down from the driver's bench, barely able to stand. Gripping a tumble-down fence for support -

EDITH (CONT'D)

Mr. Finlay -? *

Finlay's sheepdog appears in the doorway. *

INT. HUT - CONTINUOUS

Edith hobbles inside and looks around. The hut's a mess; a meagre coal fire is smoking on the grate. Her foot knocks a whisky bottle across the floor.

EDITH

Wake up! Come on -

She shakes a lump in the bed... it's a pile of old clothes.

Suddenly, Finlay is standing in the doorway and cradling one of the lambs. *

FINLAY

That sleigh out there... it came up from town. *

EDITH

Yes! That's right! Take me to town, Mr. Finlay!? Can you do that? *

FINLAY

Straightaway, I can. As you say, my Lady - *jawohl und schnell!* *

Edith is near to fainting; Finlay grabs her before she blacks out. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINLAY (CONT'D) *
Where's Sir Thomas, then? You need help.

EXT. HILLS - DAY

Edith's eyes open; she's back on the sleigh, with Finlay driving now. The horse trots along smoothly... they're making good time. *

She glances behind - no one's following them.

EDITH *
Mr. Finlay - I'm not Eleanora Schott. Fraulein Eleanora... do you understand that? She's dead... three years ago...

FINLAY *
(nodding)
I saved a lamb for the baby. She was named Mary, after all.

EDITH
You saw this baby? They showed you?

FINLAY *
Born in the house, she was. They should have named her Hope. That's what I said, remember? I sat outside, I heard you crying.
(looking ahead)
Almost there -

EDITH
(confused)
Where?

FINLAY *
Home, my Lady. Whoa -
(he hauls on the reins)
Da kommen sie. You'll be all right now. *

Sure enough - a CAR HORN from up ahead.

It's Sharpe and Lucille, in their motorcar. Coming down from the road to the house, closing in on them.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SHARPE MANSION - DAY

The motorcar is parked in the driveway. Finlay is gone. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sharpe and Lucille drag Edith up the front steps; at the top, she manages to tear free.

EDITH

(to Lucille)

You - you - you're his wife, aren't you!?-

LUCILLE

Why do you say that? Because of what you saw?? Two monsters, naked on the bed? Tell her, Thomas. Tell her -

Sharpe calmly walks toward her.

SHARPE

Edith. I'm afraid she *is* my sister.

Flailing at him, Edith loses her balance and slides all the way down the steps! She winds up on her back, her broken leg splayed out.

She SCREAMS with fresh pain.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Edith is tied to the bedposts. Like an animal, she tugs repeatedly at the ropes, finally freeing one arm. Her wrist is rubbed raw.

She lifts the sheet and looks at her broken leg; a RED STAIN is seeping into the white plaster cast. As she begins to untie her other arm, Lucille enters and reacts.

LUCILLE

Still the clever one, I see. That's fine. Here, take this.

She hands Edith a gold-nibbed FOUNTAIN PEN and plops a heap of PAPERS before her.

Edith recognizes the documents from Boston that will transfer her fortune to the local bank.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

No need to read them. Just sign.

Seeing Edith's hesitation -

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for? You have nothing to live for. He never loved you. Any of you. He loves only me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH

That's not true.

LUCILLE

It's indisputably true, my dear. The women we found - in London, Edinburgh, Leipzig -

EDITH

- Boston.

LUCILLE

Yes, Boston - all had what was necessary: money, foolish dreams and no living relatives. Mercy killings - all of them. Very well, there was love - one-sided, always - we specialized in provoking it.

EDITH

And your mother? You killed your own mother...

LUCILLE

(mild)

She caught us, one day. We were a bit young, I suppose, but it had started and we couldn't stop. I did kill her. To put an end to her screaming.

Lucille collects Edith's unfinished MANUSCRIPT from the foot of the bed.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

I was sent away. To an institution -

She moves to the fireplace and starts throwing the pages into the fire. The burning papers fly up the chimney.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

I was only seventeen years old! The world is inhabited by monsters, uncomprehending and unworthy of pity!

Edith's not listening; she's looking at the FOUNTAIN PEN, which she holds in her free hand.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

(losing patience)

Sign your name -! Sign your name!!! Will you sign your bloody name!!!

Lucille kneels down on hard on Edith's broken leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
No one hurts me! No one -!!

Edith writhes, holding back a scream.

EDITH
Stop. Stop. I - I can't bear it. Very
well. I'm ready.

LUCILLE
Are you? Show me.

Edith starts signing the papers.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
(inspecting the signatures)
Good. It's almost over now.

CUT TO:

INT. CRYPTS - DAY

Dr. McMichael is sprawled on the floor, surrounded by the contents of his medical bag. His neck is bound up in bloody cotton; with clumsy fingers, he tears strips from his shirt and wraps them around his middle.

Hearing something, he pauses. A low MOAN rises up from somewhere - and the house breathes its mournful sigh.

Caught in a sourceless breeze, Doctor looks wildly around, terrified at what might come next.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

As Sharpe fills the tea kettle, a SHADOW slides across the wall. Startled, Sharpe knocks over the coal scuttle - spilling BLOOD across the floor! He leaps away -

- but the blood vanishes. Just scattered lumps of coal.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Edith is signing her name on page after page.

LUCILLE
There. Now I want you stay on that bed -
it will be just like falling asleep.
There's no pain, far from it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Edith gazes at the fountain pen clenched in her fist. Her hand is steady.

EDITH

What about my father?

LUCILLE

Ah, of course - you have a right to know.

Lucille can't hold back a small smile of triumph.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

Such a coarse, condescending man. You should have seen his face when I hit him.

STAB!! Edith *plunges the pen into Lucille's chest!*

Lucille lurches, then - WHAM! - cuffs Edith, hard. She tears open her dress...

Blood pours down her breast and ribs..!

She sees a frantic Edith untying her other hand, trying to get to the wheelchair! Snarling, Lucille kicks it away, then exits, slamming and locking the door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

In the kitchen, a POT OF TEA is steaming. As Sharpe dumps in the entire bottle of opium, his skin begins to crawl.

He slowly lifts his eyes. The armless DEAD WOMAN is outside, only inches from the window frame!! *
*

Crying out, he grabs a chair and hurls it, shattering the glass..!

Lucille bursts in, holding a piece of cloth to her wound.

SHARPE

What happened? What did she-

LUCILLE

(pushing him aside)

I- I'm perfectly well! It's you I'm worried about!

She inspects the broken window glass, leans outside to have a quick look around.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

She'll take that tea from you, not me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE

I saw her - ! I saw Margaret - ! Margaret
McDermott-

(pointing)

- just there!

LUCILLE

You'll say anything now, just to keep
from going up there and doing what must
be done!

She slams the signed documents on the kitchen table. A drop
of her blood hits the top page, near Edith's signature.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

There. It's done.

SHARPE

What we are - what we have become... We
must stop.

LUCILLE

Why? Why now??

SHARPE

Because... because she's *innocent*.

LUCILLE

They were all innocent!!

Ominous silence.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

Have you fallen in love, baby brother??
Is that it?? Have you??

SHARPE

No - I don't love her...

LUCILLE

What?

SHARPE

I don't love her.

LUCILLE

Again-

SHARPE

I don't love her, Lucille.

LUCILLE

And -?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHARPE

I love - only you. I love-

LUCILLE

Only me.

SHARPE

Only you, Lucille.

She kisses him and then hands him the tea.

LUCILLE

Then kill her.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Edith has dragged herself to the window. Grabbing the curtain, she hauls herself upright. Then she pulls up on the sash with all her might.

It moves an inch; Edith pauses, staring out at -

- Crimson Peak. Redder than ever.

She tries again. The window moves some more.

CLACK-! The doorknob turns... Sharpe enters bearing a tray with the teapot, cup and saucer.

Edith turns to face him.

EDITH

You'll tell me now: was it the money?
Only that?

Sharpe busies himself with pouring the tea.

SHARPE

All of those women were alone. They had no one, no prospects. One was blind. They were sad, really... ignorant, without talent... Killing them was almost an act of mercy-

*

He passes her the teacup.

EDITH

And the child? Your child?

SHARPE

The child was unwell. Its death was like that of the others. An act of mercy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDITH

No. Not mercy. Greed. You killed for money. One after the other, you met and married them... and then... my turn came. Is that it, Thomas?

No answer. She throws the poisoned tea in his face.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Why? Why must we all die? For your land, your property -? For your name??

He turns away, wiping at his eyes -

*

SHARPE

No - there's no time. I - I can't-

EDITH

Tell me! For... *her*?

Again, Sharpe can't answer.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You were only a *boy*... how old -? Were you so alone..?

SHARPE

Night is never lonelier, never darker than when you're a child-

EDITH

Why *her*-?

SHARPE

There is no answer! That's the madness of it - the power of it. Even now. Lucille is me- and I am her. That dark thing - she lives inside me. All our lives we felt it - something stronger than love or hate. She is my fate - she made me and she will destroy me.

EDITH

But not me.

She puts on her glasses and takes a few faltering steps. He catches hold of her arm, but she tears free.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I can walk -!

She throws a coat over her shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EDITH (CONT'D)

For all your words, the truth is plain enough. You're free of her and she's helpless without you.

(pause)

Now. You're going to help me. Down those stairs, out the front door - then into town.

They look at each other for a long moment. Edith has no idea what he'll do. Finally:

SHARPE

We only need to reach the motorcar. Stay close to me no matter what.

He cracks open the bedroom door. Looks around... all quiet. As they start forward-

SHARPE (CONT'D)

Wait! You signed the papers - !?

EDITH

There's no time-

SHARPE

No! I know her. You must get them back-! Stay here.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sharpe walks into the deserted kitchen. The bank papers are still on the table.

But Lucille steps out from behind a cupboard, holding the boning knife. Her face is contorted with grief.

LUCILLE

I thought so. I could see it in your eyes.

SHARPE

She will live.

LUCILLE

What have you told her -? What did you promise her??? A country bungalow?? A rose garden?? Sweet children??

SHARPE

You're not to touch her, or even get near her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHARPE (CONT'D)
(Lucille eyes him)
 Is that clear? Answer me!

LUCILLE
 And me?? What happens to me in your happy
 dreams?? What happens to this house?? To
 Crimson Peak and the mine?? Or the bodies
 down there?? Our blood- my fingers, my
 lips and flesh. Will you forget all
 that??

She lowers the knife, blinking back tears. Sharpe picks up
 the papers and reaches out for the knife.

SHARPE
 We knew this day had to come. And now
 it's happened. It's over, Lucy. She will
 live.

But then, with a MOAN, the house "breathes" again and
 Lucille -

- stabs Sharpe in the chest. He tries to grab the knife from
 her, but she slashes at his hands and arms.

As they struggle-

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - DAY

Edith leans out into the corridor.

She hobbles to the railing and looks down past the grand
 staircase into the foyer below.

The distant CRASH of glassware. A GROAN.

AT THE ELEVATOR

Edith goes to the elevator and stares at the call button.

She reaches for it... but - CLUNK - ! The motor starts...
 the cab comes up.

Edith can see a figure through the elevator's glass panels.

EDITH
(backing away)
 Thomas -?

The lift stops; the doors open and Sharpe is there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His shirt is soaked in blood. More blood is pooling at his feet. She grabs him before he collapses.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Thomas-

He hands her the bank papers.

SHARPE

Let's go- now- Edith-

A NOISE from below: Lucille is marching up the stairs, holding the knife.

Edith squeezes into the elevator next to Sharpe. She quietly closes the door and puts her hands on the bloodied control handle.

Then she waits and waits...

...until Lucille reaches the upstairs landing. Their eyes meet -and Edith jerks the handle to the down position!

A long, maddening PAUSE - and with a lurch, the elevator goes down!

SCREAMING, Lucille rushes forward...! Too late.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Fearing the worst, Edith watches the ground floor getting closer and closer. She reaches past Sharpe and centers the control lever.

The lift comes to a perfect stop. She turns to Sharpe, but he's slumped over now. When she pushes open the doors, he tumbles out onto his back, dead.

Edith limps through the gloomy foyer to the -

FRONT DOOR

- which is LOCKED!

LUCILLE (O.S.)

Where do you think you're going?

LUCILLE

In no hurry, the knife at her side, Lucille stops and looks at the iron rack near the hearth. Among the fireplace tools, the SHOVEL is missing.

LUCILLE

(calling out)

Edith - You wish to hurt me, is that it?
Very well -

Very carefully, she enters the foyer.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

- but I warn you, in this sort of
business, I'm far more-

THUNK!!! - the shovel swings out from the darkness and smacks Lucille in the face, slamming her against the front door.

ELEVATOR

Hobbling, Edith makes it back to the elevator. Lucille is right behind her. Edith gets in and jams the lever to "down."

Descending, she catches a glimpse of Lucille's flayed-open face, contorted in hatred.

INT. STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Lucille runs downstairs as fast as she can, trying to keep up with the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The lift stops one floor below. Edith sees Lucille coming. She pushes the lever again: DOWN.

BAMMM!!! The elevator doors shudder as Lucille pounds them.

Edith watches in horror as the woman cracks open the doors and pins Edith's face against the mirrored back wall.

The flailing knife cuts Edith's blouse and arms, but in a second she's descending again. There's just enough time for Lucille to snatch off Edith's GLASSES.

Slashed, trapped, Edith goes down... down...

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Lucille crushes the eyeglasses under her shoe. Then she hurries on!!!

INT. MINE LANDING

As if possessed, the elevator STOPS at the first mine level. Edith furiously works the DOWN lever just as Lucille again reaches the doors and tries to pry them open!!!

This time Edith jabs with the shovel to break the grip of the clawing hands!!

Suddenly, the elevator *drops like a stone!!!*

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Edith SHRIEKS as the cab hurtles past dim, rocky walls...

...and jerks to a hard stop, four feet short of the bottom!! SMASH! Edith's head cracks one of the glass panels! As blood streams down her face, she tries the control handle, to no effect.

Acting quickly, she forces open the doors, drops the shovel and squeezes out the small opening.

INT. MINE TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

Edith gropes her way down the stairs and turns on the ceiling lights.

Behind her, the empty cab *goes back up!!*

INT. PENTAGONAL ROOM

Once again, Edith enters the pentagonal room. Looks at the crypts, her eyes beseeching...

EDITH

(*whisper*)

Help me! I understand now. I know who you are..!

Her voice echoes off the walls... she hears only the distant elevator cables humming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's fresh BLOOD on one of the ledges. And on the floor, an open medical bag. But no other sign of Dr. McMichael.

ELEVATOR

Bleeding heavily, Lucille steps from the arriving lift. The knife glints as she comes down the wooden steps.

Up ahead, a woman's skirts disappear around a corner.

LUCILLE

There's nowhere to run, Edith.

MINE TUNNELS

Under the pulsating lights, Lucille confidently stalks her prey through a maze of passageways.

LUCILLE

(weird smile)

Yes, that's the way! Do you see it yet?

She rounds another corner... her victim is closer now.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

The end of our labors, a bottomless place where this family came to nothing.

Suddenly, the figure ahead stops short, unable to proceed.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

Good. You've found it.

PIT

The rough-edged PIT yawns before them; Lucille closes in on her victim, who stands at the brink, with nowhere to go.

LUCILLE

You killed him, Edith. And he loved you.

Down comes the knife - only to slice into diaphanous, boneless flesh. Smoke wafts from the wounds. The figure turns- a dead baby caught in its hair!!!

It's the ghost of the German woman, smiling from ear to ear.

Lucille SCREAMS, suddenly seeing the other dead women arrayed before her, their spectral bodies rigid, their mouths agape.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lucille instinctively lashes out with the knife -

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
You're dead... you're dead -!

- slashing at nothing.

Wheezing, exhausted, Lucille realizes that Edith stands among them, calm and unafraid.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
Let me pass!

EDITH
You've made them suffer enough.

LUCILLE
They are nothing! Nothing! Let me pass, I say!

Edith comes forward, eye to eye with Lucille.

EDITH
With you gone, they will be free, all of them.

Hissing, Lucille raises the knife-

Suddenly, *Edith's father is there*, a plume of blood rising from his head into the air like smoke.

Then the shovel clangs against LUCILLE's head!!! Wielded by-
-Edith.

The blow sends Lucille stumbling backwards!! Her feet fly up as she disappears over the edge of the pit.

A final WAIL as she's swallowed up in the darkness.

The flickering ghost of Carter Cushing turns toward his daughter. His sad smile is full of love.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Father -!?

FATHER'S GHOST
Leave... *live*.

Edith's face is suddenly lit by shimmering warm light...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EDITH
(half-blinded)
 Wait - Father, wait..!

But its too late, he's gone. Gradually, the light fades and the diaphanous women recede into the walls. Edith looks down: she's holding the shovel.

Edith realizes that Dr. McMichael is leaned up against the rock wall, wrapped in bloody bandages; his face is rigid in shock at what he has witnessed. As their eyes meet... *

She rushes to him and catches him before he collapses.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MINE TUNNEL - LATER

Edith limps down a mine tunnel, supporting the barely conscious Doctor. A gust of cold air brushes her cheek.

The tunnel slopes upward, toward a glow of daylight.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

The Sharpe mansion is a half mile away.

Old sheds and rusted mining equipment poke up from the snow drifts. In the middle of the debris, a tumbled-down MINE ENTRANCE.

Edith comes out and approaches CAMERA. Her face is smudged, bloodied, but set in determination. She clings to the Doctor, urging him on.

EDITH (V.O.)
As I left the nightmare behind me, I knew that peace had come to the loving souls who sought only to help me. And damnation would be the fate of the real monsters of Crimson Peak. *

She raises her eyes to the mountain, glowing red under lowering skies. *

EDITH (V.O.)
It was here that I found myself empty yet content with the universe. It was here- in the cold indifference of winter, on the edge of death, that I decided to live once and for all. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SNOW begins to fall in big, wet flakes as they make their way toward the road...

...and CAMERA PULLS away, higher and higher.

DISSOLVE TO WHITE. *