EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH – DAWN

Morning light, lemon and faint through the trees of HAMPSTEAD HEATH. A SQUIRREL runs along the BRANCH of a tree.

OCTOBER 1818.

INT. BEDROOM ELM COTTAGE – EARLY MORNING

A THREAD of COTTON noses it’s way through the eye of the needle.

FANNY BRAWNE aged 18 is SEWING by FIRST LIGHT while her 9-year old sister MARGARET sleeps. Her stitches are confident, intricate and fast. The WHITE MUSLIN she is sewing is delicate and fine. The glint of the STEEL NEEDLE as it weaves then pulls, weaves then pulls a trail of perfect stitches.

INT. THE KITCHEN ELM COTTAGE – MORNING

MRS BRAWNE 40 enters the KITCHEN dressed to go out. Fanny, the MAID CHARLOTTE and little Margaret are all sewing different parts of Fanny’s white muslin dress. Samuel, her 14-year old brother, sits apart munching toast.

MRS BRAWNE
Have you forgot we are going to Mr and Mrs Dilke for tea? We are to meet Mr Brown’s poet friend Mr Keats.

FANNY
No I have not forgot. Can you help Margaret, the stitches must be small and exactly even.

Mrs Brawne takes over from her youngest daughter.

FANNY (cont’d)
What if Mr Brown has already poisoned Mr Keats against me? I shall not be afraid to take them on in wit. If I am in the mood I could lash them both.

MRS BRAWNE
Why not ignore Mr Brown?

FANNY
He provokes me! Mama it is his game. I must defend myself.

INT. BEDROOM ELM COTTAGE – MORNING

Fanny finishes some intricate hair arrangement, with the help of little Margaret, who passes the pins to her mother who is securing them.
INT. KITCHEN ELM COTTAGE - MORNING

The maid finished pressing the dress. She carries it upstairs over her arms like a baby.

EXT. WASHING LINES AT THE BACK OF ELM COTTAGE - DAY

Fanny, a vision in white, walks elegantly between her family out onto Hampstead Heath, past the WASHER WOMEN and a maze of WASHING LINES.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH FIELD - DAY

Fanny and her family walk down the Heath between CLOTHES spread out on BUSHES with a distant London beyond. They pass a FAMILY evicted from their house with their possessions, BED, WARDROBE and TABLE for sale. The air is SMOKE FILLED from the burning of AUTUMN LEAVES.

EXT/INT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

The Brawne family group turn into the gate of WENTWORTH HOUSE. Fanny dauntless, her head high, her cheeks pink and ready for battle.

MARIA DILKE greets them at the door, adoring Fanny’s new dress and it’s petal embroidery. Fanny greets everyone warmly, MR DILKE and little CHARLES their son. MR BROWN joins the group. Fanny frowns and looks away.

MR BROWN
Ah, the very well stitched little Miss Brawne in all her detail.

MRS BRAWNE (TO MARIA DILKE)
Where is Mr Keats?

MARIA DILKE
I’m afraid he is not joining us. He is next door in Mr Brown’s half of the house.

Mr Brown puts out his hand to Fanny who moves past, ignoring him.

MR BROWN
What is this? What have I done? How have I offended?

FANNY
I don’t shake hands with an enemy.

MR BROWN
An enemy? What have I done to you?
FANNY
You do nothing to me, or for me and that is
how I prefer to keep it.

Mr Brown holds up his arms in mock wonder, enjoying teasing
Fanny as he might a lap dog.

MR BROWN
What!?

FANNY
All right, your offence is to my fashion to
which I am “so helpless slavish!”

MR BROWN
I didn’t say that, Mrs Dilke? I never would
say such nonsense. I have been ill quoted.

The gathering moves into the DRAWING ROOM where tea is
served. Maria is bowing her head guiltily.

MR DILKE (TO MR BROWN)
Baiting...baiting...

FANNY
...“her obsession with flounce and cross
stitch?”

MR BROWN
Cross stitch? Miss Brawne I don’t even know
what it means, I have been wrongly used.

FANNY
I feel the same about your poems Mr Brown, I
know nothing of what they mean. In fact, they
have the quality of your cigar, they puff,
smoke and dissolve leaving nothing but
irritation...

MRS BRAWNE
Fanny why not talk to one of us you hold in
higher favour?

FANNY
Mr Brown sets out to irritate and he is
successful, now I set out to demolish and I am
only begun.

MR BROWN
Ohhh...

MARIA DILKE
Fanny take this tea to poor Mr Keats, he is in
very poor spirits.

FANNY (LOOKING CONCERNED)
Oh. Will he have sugar?
MR BROWN
He is composing and does not want disturbing.

FANNY
It is my finding in the business of disturbing you are the expert.

MRS BRAWNE
Fanny that is too far.

FANNY
I am praising him!

MRS BRAWNE
Fanny...

FANNY
What now I am restrained because I compliment him too much? I withdraw. Let someone else take Mr Keats’s tea, I want to be left alone to examine the length of my stitches.

MARIA DILKE (POURING KEATS’S TEA)
Please Fanny I want you to go, I am wanting to know what you shall say about Mr Keats. I have been waiting two weeks that I may enjoy your opinion. I cannot look upon him without smiling and he is quick with his thoughts though now they are mostly sad.

MR DILKE
His brother Tom is not at all better, very diminished.

Fanny’s sympathy is engaged.

MARIA DILKE
Mr Keats nurses him alone. It is difficult work.

MRS BRAWNE
Are there no other family members?

MARIA DILKE
No. The parents are both dead. There is only a much younger sister and a brother who emigrated to America.

MRS BRAWNE
How old is Tom?

MR DILKE
Only 19, very painful and Keats is not much older.

MRS BRAWNE
I am so sorry.
INT. MR BROWN’S HOUSE – AFTERNOON

Fanny stops mid corridor to check her hair and self in the hall glass.

She is possessed, neither pleased or displeased with her appearance and dispassionate in her attention.

Outside Mr Brown’s DOOR Fanny stops to knock and then to turn the handle but KEATS surprises her by pulling the door suddenly open (expecting Mr Brown).

Keats and Fanny are eye to eye, each other’s petite equal. They laugh. The tea sloshes.

FANNY
You like jokes Mr Keats? I like jokes. I hope we shall play some on each other. Mr Brown I warn you, does not like my jokes, he complains I care for nothing but fashion. Should you like cake?

Fanny turns to leave.

KEATS
And what shall be said of me? You have come to spy.

FANNY
I came to bring you tea.

KEATS
How will you describe me? My character?

FANNY
I am not the least interested in your character.

KEATS
My jacket then or my pantaloon?

FANNY
You need a new jacket that is what I would say.

KEATS
That is all?

FANNY
That it should be of velvet.

KEATS
Tell me Miss Brawne, how are you so sure?
FANNY
All that I wear I have designed and sewn myself. Is it not well done?
(MORE)
I am often told I am clever to exception about design, I have originated the pleated edge upon the ribbon. It is charming and it has been copied...

Mr Brown enters the room and sits at his spot at the WRITING DESK opposite Keats, pushing his chair back to look at Fanny.

MR BROWN
Has she annoyed you sufficiently? She has done brilliant well with me. Men's room, men's room, OUT, thank you. Poets writing.

Mr Brown picks up his PEN and acts writing. Fanny leaves calmly as if Mr Brown was not scuttling her.

KEATS
Goodbye minxstress.

FANNY
My stitching has more merit and admirers than your two scribbling’s put together.

KEATS AND MR BROWN
Ohhhh. Ohhhh.

FANNY
And I can make money from it.

KEATS
Ouch!

10  EXT. STREET HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY
Margaret and Samuel make their way to the BOOKSHOP, careful not to catch the eye of the HUNGRY and HOMELESS.

11  INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY
The BELL on the BOOKSHOP DOOR rings. Margaret and Samuel enter. Their boots clunk on the boards of the quiet shop, they walk to the counter. There is no-one there, they stand in front of it. A VOICE speaks from a shelf behind.

SHOPKEEPER
Yes?

Samuel moves to the counter.

SAMUEL
Have you got John Keats’s poem book Endy...

SHOPKEEPER
Endymion? I’ve not heard much good about it. I’ve not sold one and took twenty.
The SHOPKEEPER takes a copy from a tallish pile.

MARGARET
My sister has met the author. She wants to read it for herself and decide if he is an idiot or not.

INT. BEDROOM ELM COTTAGE - DAY

Fanny at home in her room sews the tiny pleats of a TRIPLE MUSHROOM PLEATED COLLAR. Her needle weaving in and out, then drawing the thread through. Her eyelashes caught in the PALE WHITE SUN. Standing in her PETTICOAT, she holds the almost complete collar to her neck and checks it’s effect in the glass. She gently tilts her head to the side and points her toe.

INT. BEDROOM ELM COTTAGE - DAY

Margaret and Samuel come upstairs and enter Fanny’s bedroom. Margaret takes off her COAT and sits. Fanny’s steel needle pauses.

FANNY
Unwrap it.

Margaret takes the BROWN PAPER from the book. Fanny watches. She takes the book in her own hands, turns it over, opens it to the title page. Then passes it back to Margaret.

FANNY (cont’d)
Read it.

Her needle weaves in and out of the pleats, drawing it’s pale thread behind it.

MARGARET

ENDYMION
BOOK 1
“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth”

Fanny’s eyes stop and go deeply inside, she is listening. Her needle again weaves in and out of the fine pleat. She is sewing faster.

MARGARET (cont’d)
“Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth”
FANNY
Stop.

Margaret stops and looks to Fanny. Fanny stops sewing.

FANNY (cont’d)
I am completely lost...

Fanny takes the book from Margaret.

FANNY (cont’d)
"...yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits."

INT. THE ROYAL ARTILLERY MESS – EVENING

The ROYAL ARTILLERY MESS at WOOLWICH, a DANCE and Fanny in the centre of it in her new gown. She dances with a studied grace. The effect is elegant yet mannered.

In the interval she sights an under dressed Keats sitting back, ignoring the dancers absorbed in his thoughts. Near him Mr Brown and their friend REYNOLDS and his SISTERS talk loudly. Fanny whispers to her younger brother Samuel. Samuel slouches over to Keats.

SAMUEL
My sister Miss Brawne wishes to greet you Mr Keats.

KEATS
And where is she?

Fanny is all alone waiting for him strategically posed by a large ORNATE MIRROR near the dining hall.

FANNY
“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness;”

Keats looks surprised.

KEATS
You have read Endymion?

FANNY
I wanted to adore it.

KEATS
But you hate it?

FANNY
I cannot say.
KEATS
Are you afraid to speak truthfully?

FANNY
Never.

KEATS
Well tell me then.

FANNY
No. I am not at all clever with poetry.

KEATS
Neither it seems am I. Still I have hope for myself. What do you make of my hope Miss Brawne?

FANNY
I think hope very useful.

KEATS
But...

FANNY
But hope and results are very different. One does not create the other.

KEATS
Could practice help?

FANNY
Yes it might. I was not always able to stitch so well.

KEATS
Ah ha, I must practice my stitches.

Fanny looks at Keats.

FANNY
Let me do the sewing, I have such a start. This is the first frock in Woolwich or Hampstead to have a triple-pleated-mushroom collar.

Keats looks about to realise there is only Fanny, himself and their reflection.

KEATS (INTIMATELY)
Behind you I see one I fear to be identical.

Fanny disconcerted, turns to see her own reflection, she laughs very pleased with the joke.

She sees a GROUP of MILITARY MEN, dance partners searching for her. She puts her back to them so she may finish talking.
FANNY
My card is completely full; three I have met before and are suitors. Mr Tarrant is scaring me with his talk of estates and his dogs, he has eleven. Maman says it is possible to love almost anybody and I will come to understand that.

KEATS (GESTURES)
Even Mr---?

FANNY
Tarrant? Yes, isn’t that a miracle? But you don’t dance Mr Keats. I love to dance.

KEATS
I don’t feel like dancing..

FANNY
Your brother is still ill?

KEATS
He is no better.

FANNY
I have thought of him often and wish to make him something. Would lemon wafers be agreeable?

KEATS
He would like so much that you had thought of him.

FANNY
My Papa was ill for as long as I can remember. He died when I was still a child.

Fanny tears up. She takes out a small WHITE EMBROIDERED HANDKERCHIEF and pats her eyes.

The TWO MILITARY MEN spot Fanny and come over.

Keats bows and departs while Fanny is led out on to the dance floor. She has recovered herself and is dancing with quaintly exaggerated hand movements aimed at affecting a personal stylishness. The Reynolds sisters notice and comically impersonate. Apparently for Keats’s benefit. He is not amused by them or by Fanny but is alone and alienated

INT. KITCHEN ELM COTTAGE – DAY

On the kitchen table Fanny and the maid are grating LEMON RIND. Dabbing WAFER MIX onto an OVEN TRAY. Stoking the FIRE. From the cooked wafers Fanny tosses all but the most perfect onto a rubbish heap. She lines a BASKET with LINEN. Then pausing, she turns from the table.
Quickly she swoops on Margaret’s frock where she snips a LEMON RIBBON off her neckline and begins to tie it decoratively on the basket.

MARGARET
Mother! Fanny has taken my ribbon and she never asked. Mama!

Margaret goes in search of her mother who she finds in the hallway.

MARGARET (cont’d)
She has cut my ribbon.

Mrs Brawne enters the kitchen to see a mess of SHATTERED and DISCARDED wafers and Fanny tying the ribbon on her basket of 20 PERFECT wafers.

MRS BRAWNE
What are you doing Fanny?

FANNY
I am trying to bring some comfort to a dying man.

Mrs Brawne picks up one of the discarded wafers from a huge stack.

MRS BRAWNE
What dying man? Where are you taking them?

FANNY
I cannot offer poor Mr Keats’s brother anything that is not perfect.

MRS BRAWNE
But so many of them look quite well.

FANNY
Mama, quite well! He may die. I cannot offer him anything but our most beautiful and our best.

16
EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY
Fanny carries the BASKET of wafers as the THREE young Brawne’s walk up the path to Wentworth House.

17
INT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY
Inside the house they walk down the corridor to Mr Brown’s apartment. Fanny knocks.

MR BROWN
No thank you, poets at work.
FANNY
It is me, Miss Brawne. I have something to deliver to Mr Keats.

MR BROWN
Leave it at the door.

FANNY
Is Mr Keats not there?

KEATS
I am here.

MR BROWN
We are working Miss Brawne.

FANNY
I have something for Mr Keats's brother.

Heavy footsteps. Mr Brown opens the door. Fanny holds out a basket with a LACE NAPKIN laid over the top. Mr Brown whips off the LACE COVER and pinches a wafer.

MR BROWN
Mmmm...delicious...

FANNY
You vile, disgusting, ape!

A sad Keats turns his head towards Fanny at the door and watches listlessly.

KEATS
Invite Miss Brawne inside. Let them all come in.

Mr Brown stands aside, gobbling his wafer.

MR BROWN
Be careful you enter the apes cage, (mimicking a monkey) Hoo, hoo, hoo.

FANNY
You are invisible to me, you idiot, you...

KEATS
Come and sit here, next to me Miss Brawne. My prospects in the world feel very faint.

FANNY
This room is so poorly cared for. It is half night in here for want of pulling your drapes back.

She passes over the wafers.
Please try one. I am anxious they will cause him to choke.

Keats takes one. Mr Brown puts his hand into the basket. Fanny whips it away.

No! They are baked for someone very ill. Try another and I swear I shall bite you.

Ohhh, I’m very scared.

Take care, she has sharp teeth. She has sunk her fangs into my poor poem and shook it apart.

I am very sorry I could not love your Endymion completely Mr Keats. Perhaps I did not say but I thought the beginning of your poem something very perfect.

Fanny turns to go.

No, don’t leave us. You can see for yourself, nothing is happening. All day we lie about the room begging for inspiration. Tell me what I must do.

There is something sordid and menacing that I don’t at all enjoy in the atmosphere. I am in a hurry to get myself away. I feel I am inside a cage with two monkeys.

We monkeys just want a little company.

Mr Brown steals another wafer. Fanny spins away.

How dare you!

Fanny, Margaret and Samuel walk back fast through the Heath. A great GUST of WIND sends the AUTUMN LEAVES spiralling upwards. Keats, flush faced is jogging after them but somewhat behind them. He has Fanny’s basket in his hand.
KEATS
If we’ve finished tiffing, come and say “hello” to Tom, it might cheer him.
MARGARET
We will have to ask Mama.

FANNY
No we don’t Toots.

MARGARET
Yes we do, isn’t that so Samuel? We have to stay together.

Samuel shrugs. Fanny walks off.

FANNY
Well then, I am going and you will have to come with me.

Keats stands at the junction of many tracks.

KEATS
Should you like to go by the pond or through the wood? I have explored all these paths which are more in number than your eyelashes.

FANNY
My eyelashes?

Fanny bats her eyelashes and laughs. She walks beside Keats.

FANNY (cont’d)
It amazes me that you can sit opposite Mr Brown all day. I have never heard him say one thing of wit. Not one!

KEATS
You favour wit?

FANNY
I rate it the highest.

KEATS
You like the fashionables?

FANNY
Yes, I do.

KEATS
Men who say things that make you start without making you feel?

FANNY
No, things that are amusing.

KEATS
I know these dandy’s, they have a mannerism in their very eating and drinking, in their handling of a decanter.
FANNY
You are making an attack on me.

KEATS
No, I am defending Mr Brown’s generous good heart.

FANNY
By attacking myself?

KEATS
Forgive me. I have been too long at my brother’s sick bed.

FANNY
Can we not still appreciate clever humour?

KEATS
What witty thing can be said of a nineteen year old drowning in his own blood?

Fanny suddenly realises the seriousness of Tom’s illness.

FANNY
Nothing, nothing at all.

EXT. KEATS’S APARTMENT WELL WALK – DAY

The three Brawne’s led by Keats, arrive in the COURTYARD of his rented apartment in WELL WALK. Keats leads them in.

MRS BENTLEY
Oh thank God! He’s been calling out for you.

KEATS
Excuse me.

INT. TOM’S ROOM WELL WALK – DAY

He enters TOM’S ROOM

In the other room Fanny glimpses Keats holding his pale, groaning brother who struggles to breathe. It looks grim, hopeless.

MARGARET
I want to go. I want to leave. It smells.

FANNY
Shush, or I’ll cut your hair in the night.

Keats comes back out looking pale and saddened.

KEATS
He is feverish and cannot speak.
FANNY
Should I call a nurse?

KEATS
I trained for 5 years as a doctor, there is nothing to be done.

Tears spring to Fanny’s eyes, she gives Keats the LEMON WAFERS.

FANNY
The wafers.

EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - EVENING

Wentworth House in the evening. Both sides of the house are LIT UP for an evenings entertainment. PEOPLE are arriving, walking up the path to the house.

INT. HALL WENTWORTH HOUSE - EVENING

Inside Fanny and her family are removing their PELISSES and OVERCOATS with the Dilke’s help when Keats arrives. There are lots of “Good Evenings” and jollities.

MR DILKE (TO KEATS)
I don’t see your bassoon, I hope you have not forgotten it.

KEATS
Not at all, it’s in my waistcoat pocket.

Fanny watches Keats arrival keenly.

FANNY
Mr Keats.

KEATS
Hello Minx.

FANNY
How is Tom?

Keats looks away from Fanny suddenly anxious.

MR BROWN
Gentlemen of the orchestra to the left, Ladies to the right.

FANNY
Mr Keats how is...

KEATS (TO FANNY)
Don’t ask me of Tom, Minx. The only good I can do is say how I love him.
MR BROWN
Rehearsal has begun. Hurry on gentlemen.

KEATS
Let us start with some claret to tune the instruments.

Mr Dilke walks after Keats playing an invisible violin.

Fanny watches them disappear.

INT. DILKE’S DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – EVENING

The ladies, Mrs Brawne, Mrs Dilke, the Reynolds sisters, Fanny and the children sit quietly together in the Dilke’s drawing room. The Reynolds sisters play CARDS with the older women while Fanny sews a flower pattern onto a piece of lawn. From their room they can hear the loud voices of the MEN in the opposite wing. Fanny’s needle picks out the outline of the leaf.

INT. DILKE’S KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE – EVENING

In the kitchen Mrs Dilke, her COOK and Fanny carry PLATES of PICKLES, CHEESE and MEAT through into the men’s room. Fanny seeks out Keats who is drowning his sorrows in play, he and another friend, MR SEVERN the artist, are having a duel using CELERY STICKS. Fanny puts the plates down on the TABLE and leaves with the others unnoticed.

INT. DILKE’S DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – EVENING

Fanny and Mrs Dilke come back into the insular world of ladies.

REYNOLDS SISTER 1 (TO MARIA DILKE)
We were just telling Mrs Brawne of John Keats’s review in Blackwoods.

REYNOLDS SISTER 2
We did not know there were people left who had not read it.

REYNOLDS SISTER 1
You have not seen it?

MARIA DILKE
In this house we do not acknowledge it.

FANNY
Was it so very bad?

MARIA DILKE
I can’t bring myself to remember...
REYNOLDS SISTER 2
It has stuck in my mind. “...no man, whose mind has ever been imbued with the smallest knowledge or feeling of classical poetry or classical history, could have...”

REYNOLDS SISTER 1 (JOINS IN)
“...profaned and vulgarised every association in the manner which has been adopted by this “son of promise”...”

FANNY
Did they not admire the opening? The opening was perfect even I could know that.

REYNOLDS SISTER 1
Do you like poetry Miss Brawne?

FANNY
No. Poems are a strain to work out - and I never can tell if I have worked them well.

The Reynolds sisters titter.

JOHN REYNOLDS enters the room. He is a lawyer poet friend of Keats

REYNOLDS SISTER 1
John we are talking or about to talk of your defence of Mr Keats’s poem Endymion.

JOHN REYNOLDS
Yes...
“I have clung to nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen or felt but a great dream! O I have been presumptuous against love against the sky, Against all elements, against the tie of mortals each to each.”
The rhythm is beautiful and unique. There are rhymes but not on the beat, they are quiet but binding and the repetitions set you up to fly. “I have clung to nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen.”

Reynolds indicates the expanse of flight.

JOHN REYNOLDS (cont’d)
Here you come out
“Or felt but a great dream...”

FANNY
It’s beautiful.

JOHN REYNOLDS
There are immaturities but also immensities and that is what they didn’t say.
REYNOLDS SISTER 1
It was said, you said it brother.

JOHN REYNOLDS
Thank you.

REYNOLDS SISTER 1
Indeed you said it beautifully.

REYNOLDS SISTER 2
Very bravely.

Mr Severn walks into the room.

MR SEVERN
Ladies the Hampstead Heathens are about to begin. Reynolds?

JOHN REYNOLDS
Not me, I’m expelled.

INT. MR BROWN’S ROOMS WENTWORTH HOUSE – EVENING

The AUDIENCE of lady folk squeeze into Mr Brown’s CANDLE LIT rooms. The fifteen gentlemen are formally assembled. Keats, Mr Brown and their friends perform a well known MOZART PIECE with their human orchestra. Fanny watches quietly focusing on Keats. The Reynolds sisters enter confidently into the festivities, “ohhhing” and “ahhing”, laughing affectedly.

INT. ELM COTTAGE – DAY

Fanny and her brother and sister are having dance instruction from their very effeminate FRENCH DANCE MASTER. They use a BOX MIRROR to correct their posture. Through the window, Fanny notices a teary faced Maria Dilke gesturing to Mrs Brawne who leaves. The class continues with Fanny dancing in the formal style of the time but her feelings overwhelm her. Tears fill her eyes.

DANCE MASTER
Fanny, tempo. Un deux trois, un, deux, trois.

Fanny has stopped still. Tears roll down her cheeks. She leaves the room.

DANCE MASTER (cont’d)
Mademoiselle...

She walks down the hall to the kitchen where Maria Dilke is being comforted by Mrs Brawne and a CUP of TEA.

FANNY
Is it Tom? Has he died?
Maria Dilke turns and nods her head. Fanny leaves, pushing past Toots.

MARGARET
Fanny vient de quitter la classe de danse.
(Fanny just left the class.)

MRS BRAWNE
Laisse-la.
(Leave her.)

INT. FANNY’S BEDROOM ELM COTTAGE - DAY

Fanny pulls out a piece of IVORY SILK. She slices through the material with SCISSORS.

Mrs Brawne enters the room. She watches Fanny sobbing loudly as she works, then bends to help Fanny pin TWO rectangles of the silk together.

Fanny’s needle is thread with a light GREEN COTTON. Her needle flies in and out making a line of grass. Out of the grass she sews stems and wild flowers.

INT. BRAWNE’S PARLOUR/HALL/FRONT DOOR ELM COTTAGE - DAY

John Keats, Charles Brown and the Brawne’s sit in the Brawne’s PARLOUR. Fanny is silent. Mr Brown talks to Mrs Brawne who is all solicitude.

MR BROWN
I woke with the strange sensation of someone holding my hand. I opened my eyes and there was John. I knew immediately what had happened and then he said “Tom died at 8 o’clock quietly and without pain.” Of course Mr Keats can’t go on living there, so I have invited him to stay with me.

Mr Brown stands, sighing, looking towards a numb Keats.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
Aghuh, we have a long schedule of visits.

Fanny sits with her eyes downcast. Keats is watching her sensing her disappointment that they are leaving so soon.

MRS BRAWNE
I don’t want to interfere with your city plans but you are most welcome to have dinner with us. We have provided and set the table...

KEATS (QUIETLY TO FANNY)
Minx? Are you unwell? I have never seen you so quiet.
FANNY
I am sad for your brother Mr Keats.
Fanny hands him the silk embroidered PILLOW SLIP wrapped in BLACK CLOTH.

MARGARET
She has been sewing it all through the night.

Keats begins to unwrap it, enough to see the beautiful stitching and the simple pattern of wild flowers on the edge.

KEATS
I am afraid I will break down. Tell me what it is?

FANNY
It is a pillow slip.

KEATS
Then I shall rest Tom’s head upon it.

MR BROWN
Keats, the Reynolds are expecting us.

KEATS
I will catch you up. Thank you.

Keats kisses the pillow slip.

Mr Brown has come across and is whispering in Keats ear.

MR BROWN
Let us get out of here.

It is a loud whisper, loud enough so that Fanny and Keats both hear. Fanny, shamed, watches as the two men continue discussing, she catches phrases, “would like to stay”, “we are expected by HAYDEN and LAMB”.

Keats puts on his COAT.

KEATS
Invite me again, alone.

FANNY
Come for Christmas.

KEATS
Shouldn’t you ask your mother?

FANNY
No, what one of us wants we all wish for, that is how we are.

Keats looks unconvinced.

FANNY (IN FRENCH) (cont’d)
Maman I have invited Mr Keats for Christmas dinner.
MRS BRAWNE
Yes, Mr Keats, please do join us.

Margaret and Samuel loudly enthuse.

MARGARET AND SAMUEL
Yes. Hurrah. Please do, please!

MR BROWN
But Marianne Reynolds invited us for Christmas. You were there when she said it, remember they are having musicians?

The Brawne children are crestfallen. Fanny defiant.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
I am sorry to spoil things.

MRS BRAWNE
Not at all. Wherever Mr Keats is happy we are happy for him.

MARGARET
Why can’t he be happy with us?

FANNY
Because Mr Brown wants Mr Keats all to himself.

MR BROWN
I am merely remembering to Mr Keats a previous engagement.

Fanny turns and walks back inside Elm Cottage.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
You are walking away Miss Brawne! I thought we were conversing...

INT. BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM ELM COTTAGE – DAY

Fanny and her sister sew in silence.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN ELM COTTAGE – DAY

Mrs Brawne and Charlotte the maid work quietly together making MINCE PIES.

A LETTER is delivered to the kitchen door. Charlotte gives the letter to Mrs Brawne.
INT. BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM ELM COTTAGE - DAY

Mrs Brawne comes into the drawing room with the open letter. Margaret and Fanny look up but Fanny does not pause in her neat small stitches

MRS BRAWNE (READS)

"Dear Mrs Brawne, May I yet join you for Christmas? I have not the health or the heart to be anywhere but with a family such as your own."

John Keats.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN ELM COTTAGE - EVENING

Fanny, the maid, Mrs Brawne and Margaret prepare the Christmas dinner. POTATOES are peeled, PROFITEROLES are filled with cream, PEAS are shelled, a GOOSE is baking in the oven. Margaret is counting CUTLERY at the window.

MARGARET

Mr Keats has come!

Margaret runs out the kitchen back door. Fanny’s hands are covered in flour. She turns her back to her mother who unties her APRON. Fanny rinses her hands and dries them. Carefully she adjusts her hair and smooths her frock.

EXT. STREET ELM COTTAGE - EVENING

Margaret flies down the street and throws herself into Keats’s arms who carries her.

KEATS

Do you know the difference between a caterpillar and a cheese?

MARGARET

A caterpillar and a cheese?

KEATS

Yes.

MARGARET

Of course.

KEATS (DROPPING HER TO HER FEET)

Then you are too old for me to carry you.

Keats looks up the garden path to see Fanny, a perfect doll, framed at the open front door.
INT. BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM ELM COTTAGE - EVENING

Keats is crouched on the sitting room floor stroking the Brawne’s CAT. Fanny comes in with a TRAY of GLASSES, she is shy of looking at Keats but acutely aware of him. She polishes each glass with a cloth and places it on the table.

FANNY
I wondered this morning if you are sleeping in my bed.

KEATS
Pardon?

FANNY
Are you sleeping in my bed?

Keats is confused and amazed.

KEATS
No...

FANNY
You see I believe you are. Have you forgot that we rented Mr Brown’s half of the house this summer while you were journeying in Scotland? Which room did you sleep in?

KEATS
The one overlooking the back garden.

FANNY
That was my bed. For proof, pull it out from the wall and by the pillow you will find a figure I drew with pin holes.

KEATS
Is the figure you?

FANNY
No. It was a fairy princess.

KEATS
Should I be feeding her?

FANNY
No, she refuses to eat. But what she might like is a good night poem. Mr Keats will you teach me poetry? I want to understand, but I don’t know how to begin.

Margaret comes in putting a BREAD ROLL on each persons plate. Keats strokes the CAT watching Fanny, the movement of her hands as she folds the NAPKINS and the angle of her head as she examines the arrangement of the table.
The Brawne’s sit about the DINING TABLE including the maid. The meal is finished and Keats has invented a skit that compares the English and the Scottish. There are THREE CUPS OF TEA on the table and the maid, Toots and Fanny are being instructed to stir their teas in different and complimentary rhythms, clanging the edges of their cups with their SPOONS at the end of each cycle.

KEATS
The English drawing room, now the Scottish.

Keats nods to Samuel who begins to play an impression of a highland tune on his VIOLIN.

With PLEATED NAPKINS tucked into his pantaloons kilt-like, Keats does a wild impression of a highland fling.

KEATS (SCOTTISH ACCENT) (cont’d)
Theeeey Kick and jump it and toe and go it and twirl it and wheel it, stamp and sweat and tattoo the floor!

The family clap and laugh. Keats bows and removes his napkins.

MRS BRAWNE
Formidable, very good.

MARGARET
A poem!

OTHERS
Oh yes, a poem.

MARGARET
A short one.

The others laugh.

Fanny is quiet, watching, scared to betray her growing affection for Keats, her head bowed.

Keats sits opposite and as he sits he begins to speak so naturally they are only gradually aware he is reciting.

KEATS
“When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean’d my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in charactery,
Hold like rich garners the full ripen’d grain;
When I behold, upon the night’s starr’d face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance.”
Fanny looks up, she and Keats are looking into each other’s eyes. Keats is suddenly speechless.
The family look at Keats, there is an awkward pause.

KEATS (cont’d)
I do apologise, I have gone blank.

But Keats seems tranced.

MRS BRAWNE
You must be tired. Should you like coffee and cakes, we have not had cake.

Mrs Brawne is getting up, clearing the table.

Fanny sits opposite Keats. Neither move. Finally with what seems an enormous effort Fanny rises and moves around the table to take Keats’s plate. As Fanny leans forward, Keats leans in towards her. As they touch, there is a suspension of time, of breath in the room that makes even Samuel puzzle a moment as he loosens his bow. Keats looks up at Fanny, at her irresistible closeness. He runs a finger across Fanny’s wrist, both confirming and breaking the spell.

KEATS
"Two witches eyes above a cherub’s mouth."

INT/EXT. FRONT DOOR SELM COTTAGE – NIGHT

At the door everyone is saying goodbye and waving. Fanny walks out into the street with Keats.

FANNY
Mr Keats have you remembered the poem?

KEATS (HE NODS AND CLEARS HIS THROAT)
"...Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance:
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of an unreflecting love; – then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink."

Fanny and Keats look at each other. Keats is bewitched, so is Fanny. Keats makes an awkward bow and coughing, walks into the frosty night.

INT. WENTWORTH HOUSE HALL – DAY

In the dark hallway Fanny knocks on Keats and Mr Brown’s door. Behind her Maria Dilke takes Samuel into her half of the house. Mr Brown opens the door.
FANNY
I have come for my poetry class.
Fanny slips under his arm.

MR BROWN
Poetry classes!

INT. BROWN’S DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Fanny and Keats sit together. Fanny listening intently. Keats seems a little flat.

KEATS
A poet is not at all poetical, he is the most un-poetical of anything in existence, he has no identity – he is continually filling some other body, the sun, the moon...

Mr Brown watches disturbed.

MR BROWN
I cannot restrain my credibility longer. Miss Brawne may I ask you a question?

FANNY
You may.

MR BROWN
Is this really you? Or are you acting?

FANNY
It is really me.

Keats is looking irritated.

KEATS
Charles I have a pupil, desist or depart.

Mr Brown gets up, takes some BOOKS and his TEA CUP with him.

MR BROWN (UNDER HIS VOICE)
My modest hope is the cost of the lessons will not be the poet.

FANNY (STANDING)
The cost Mr Brown is that Mr Keats will forthwith discuss poetry with me not you as I shall study.

MR BROWN
You don’t mean to read the poems?

FANNY
I do until I know all the poets and poems in the world. I have an excellent brain and nothing to do as you have so many times noted.
MR BROWN
Let me bow to your ambition.
Mr Brown exits.

FANNY
Now Mr Brown has gone I shall find it easier to talk, he is forever scrutinising.

Fanny looks at Keats. She is unsettled by his darkening mood.

FANNY (cont’d)
...can you say something of the craft of poetry?

Keats’s face darkens.

KEATS
Poetic craft is a carcass, a sham. If poetry does not come as naturally as leaves to a tree it had better not come at all.

Fanny is writing NOTES as Keats speaks.

KEATS (cont’d)
I am mistaken I am not sure I can teach you.

FANNY
Am I so extremely hopeless? Is it Mr Brown? I was too rude? I can apologise.

KEATS
I don’t think I have the right feeling towards women. I’m suspicious of my feelings.

FANNY
I don’t understand you.

KEATS
If you knew what a slave to my affections I fear myself to be, and the fury it brings about in me, you might understand.

FANNY
Do you not like me?

KEATS
I am attracted without knowing why, all women confuse me, even my mother. I yearn to be ruined by shrews and saved by angels and in reality, I have only ever loved my sister.

Fanny begins to put on her BONNET.

FANNY
I am annoyed by my sister as often as I love her. And I still do not know how to work a poem out well.
KEATS
You do not work out a poem. That would undo
it’s magic. Poems need understanding through
the senses, they develop your negative
capability not rational capability.

FANNY
And what is negative capability?

KEATS
Your capacity for being in uncertainties,
mysteries, doubts, without any irritable
reaching after fact and reason.

Fanny listens, not understanding.

KEATS (cont’d)
The point of diving in a lake isn’t
immediately to swim to the shore but to be in
the lake, to luxuriate in the sensation of
water. You do not work the lake out, it is an
experience beyond thought. Poetry soothes and
emboldens the soul to accept mystery.

FANNY
I love mystery.

KEATS
I found your little princess, on the wall by
my bed.

FANNY
You could make her out?

KEATS
I joined the pin pricks with my pen, she wears
a butterfly frock. Shall we continue with
Spencer?
INT. BRAWNE DINING ROOM ELM COTTAGE - MORNING

Fanny and her family are having breakfast. BOWLS of PORRIDGE. Fanny is pouring over her POETRY BOOKS, making notes.

FANNY
Maman, Mr Keats is really very brilliant, but he doesn’t like me. He prefers Toots and Samuel and even our cat who he is always petting to death.

Mrs Brawne watches Fanny who has gone back to eating, with a little wonderment and concern.

MRS BRAWNE
Mr Keats knows he cannot like you. He has no living and no income.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD STREET - DAY

Fanny and Samuel walk through the SNOW CLAD streets in their WELLINGTONS.

INT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny is let in at Wentworth House by Mr Brown. She is carrying a LARGE PILE of POETRY BOOKS.

MR BROWN
Mr Keats is not here. He said to tell you he had a sore throat and thought it better to stay on in Chichester.

Fanny looks very unbelieving.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
You do not believe me, come in.

Fanny walks into their parlour.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
There, no Mr Keats.

FANNY
May I return these books to his room? I know where it is.

INT. KEATS’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny makes her way to Keats’s bedroom on her own. She puts the books on his BEDSIDE TABLE.
Then sits on the BED and removes the PILLOW to see the tiny PRINCESS just as Keats had said, outlined in pen.
Fanny trots down the STAIRS. Mr Brown waits at the bottom.

MR BROWN
I have ordered tea for us both. If you tell me what you have read, maybe I can catch up.

Fanny hesitates.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
I’m interested...

INT. DILKE SITTING ROOM – DAY

NOTE – This scene now includes SAMUEL

Warm and pretty Maria Dilke pours tea into ELEGANT LITTLE CUPS. Her son lays his head in her lap.

MR BROWN
What Chaucer did you read?

FANNY
All of it...also Mr Spencer, Mr Milton, and The Odyssey...

MR BROWN
That is a lot to read in one week. What did you think of The Odyssey?

FANNY
I am yet part way through but I have read all Mr Keats has written twice and learnt some by heart. THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

“Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No utter’d syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.”

Mr Brown listens, impressed, a little smitten and also dubious of her claims.

MR BROWN
And what Miss Brawne, did you make of Paradise Lost?

FANNY
I liked it.
MR BROWN
You didn’t find Milton’s rhymes a little pouncing?
Fanny looks back wide-eyed at Mr Brown. Mrs Dilke looks up, puzzled.

FANNY
No, not very.

Mr Brown regards Fanny and her wide eyes.

MR BROWN
Is it the material of her dress that makes Miss Brawne’s eyes so violet like?

Mrs Dilke sits forward to look into Fanny’s eyes. Fanny, quite pleased, opens them towards Mrs Dilke.

MARIA DILKE
Oh, yes they are blue.

MR BROWN
Violet almost.

MARIA DILKE
Yes, yes. What colour are yours Mr Brown.

Mr Brown BIG EYES Mrs Dilke and then Fanny.

FANNY
Suitcase brown.

EXT STREET HAMPSTEAD HEATH – DAY

Samuel and Fanny walk home through the Hampstead streets.

FANNY
Did you see Mr Brown? He was amazed, he was gaping.

SAMUEL
So many authors in one week is a bit incredible

FANNY
I know, he sees I am serious, and I will read them when I have the time.
EXT. ELM HOUSE - DAY

A MESSENGER BOY approaches Elm House with a LETTER.

VALENTINES DAY 1819

INT. BRAWNE HOUSE STAIRS ELM COTTAGE - DAY

Margaret climbs the steps to their bedroom.

MARGARET
Fanny! You have a letter.

Margaret looks hard at the ENVELOPE against the light.

MARGARET (cont’d)
I think it is a valentine card.

Fanny comes to the door. Margaret hands her the envelope. Fanny promptly shuts the door before Margaret can walk in and join her.

Fanny sits neatly on the end of her bed. At her feet a PATTERN is pinned out.

FANNY
“The suitcase?” Oh it is from Mr Brown.

Fanny is clearly disappointed and confused.

FANNY (cont’d)

“Darling Valentine
I am not sure if you should have a kiss for your violet enchantress eyes or a whipping!
Yours, the suitcase.”

INT. BRAWNE ELM COTTAGE KITCHEN - DAY

Keats is pacing in the rain amidst the clothes lines outside Elm Cottage.

Inside Mrs Brawne and the maid watch him from the kitchen window. Keats appears very agitated.

MRS BRAUNE
Fanny, Mr Keats is behaving very oddly, should I invite him inside?

Fanny joins the women at the window where Keats continues his vigil.
EXT. ELM COTTAGE - DAY

Fanny puts on her COAT and joins Keats outside. Keats looks at Fanny who is pleased to see him.
KEATS
Mr Brown sent you a Valentine?

FANNY
I think it is a joke.

Mr Brown is walking up the road towards them. Keats sees him and backs off, walking towards the Heath.

MR BROWN
Keats! John, wait.

Keats strides up the road, Fanny and Mr Brown follow him.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

Fanny and Mr Brown cross the road onto the Heath, where Keats leads them down an AVENUE OF TREES, then across a FROST SCORCHED MEADOW to a COPSE of WINTER ELMS.

No one speaks. There is gravity to Keats’s mood and an anger. Keats takes sidelong glances at Fanny.

KEATS
I was away but 10 days Brown, with you encouraging me to stay on and get well. Now you send Miss Brawne a valentine card. Are you lovers, is that the truth?

Keats walks off again unable to stand still. Keats walks past Mr Brown.

MR BROWN
No John...

KEATS
You sent a card Charles, you have the income to marry, where I cannot. Did you accept him Miss Brawne? Am I to congratulate you?

Mr Brown moves to Keats and by putting his back to Fanny talks privately.

MR BROWN
John, easy, it was a jest.

KEATS
For whom? I do not laugh, Miss Brawne does not laugh.

MR BROWN
I wrote the valentine to amuse Fanny who makes a religion of flirting. I am simply smoking her so you may see who she is.

Mr Brown puts his arm about Keats. Keats pulls away.
KEATS
You disgust me.

MR BROWN
John she is a poetry scholar one week and what, a military expert the next? It is a game, she collects suitors.

KEATS
You astound me...both of you. There is a holiness to the heart’s affections, know you nothing of that? Believe me it’s not pride, it hurts my heart.

Keats walks up to Fanny and stands in front of her.

KEATS (cont’d)
Are you in love with Mr Brown? Why don’t you speak?

MR BROWN
She can’t speak because she only knows how to flirt and sew.

Fanny walks away, humiliated.

MR BROWN (CALLING AFTER HER) (cont’d)
And read all Milton whose rhymes do not pounce because Miss Brawne there are none! There are one or two of her kind in every fashionable drawing room of this city “aheming” over skirt lengths.

A troubled Keats takes a moment or two to decide then runs after Fanny. Together they walk across the Heath.

KEATS
I’m sorry. We could have a poetry lesson tomorrow.

Fanny turns to him, tears streaking her face.

FANNY (AN IMPRESSIVE RAGE)
NO! NO! I want to dance and flirt and talk of flounces and ribbons and beading until I find my old happiness and humour.

Keats is impressed by her passion.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

SPRING.

A SILHOUETTE of BLOSSOMS on the Heath’s trees.
INT. MRS BRAWNE’S BEDROOM ELM COTTAGE - DAY

Mrs Brawne, Margaret and Fanny sit together on Mrs Brawne’s bed in their NIGHTGOWNS sipping TEA and NIBBLING TOAST from a shared plate. TREE FILTERED SUNLIGHT plays on the bed covers.

Fanny is attaching the last SLEEVE to a DUSTY PINK JACKET.

MARGARET
I was dancing, but my dress was not properly on and no matter how I hauled it up it slipped until it was around my ankles.

FANNY
Did you have on a petticoat?

MARGARET
No, nothing.

FANNY
Naked?

Margaret nods and they laugh.

MRS BRAWNE
Did you dream Fanny?

Fanny is remembering her dream but she is not telling. The others know better than to press her.

EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny walks along the street then up the path to Wentworth House with a WHITE BLOSSOM TWIG. She is wearing a FROCK of snowy whiteness over which she has DUSTY PINK EMPIRE LENGTH JACKET. She looks adorable.

Behind her Samuel follows kicking a WOODEN BALL.

Fanny sees Keats inside his room and taps at the WINDOW.

EXT. KEATS’S ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Keats leaves Mr Brown at the table and throws open the window.

Fanny gives Keats the BLOSSOM SPRIG from behind her back.

FANNY
I dreamed of your eyes, it is a sign I think that I do like you.
KEATS
Even though I don’t dance?
From behind Keats Mr Brown watches edgily.

MR BROWN (LOUDLY)
Have we broken for the day? Keats?

But Keats appears not even to hear.

Samuel comes over to the window excited.

SAMUEL (TO KEATS)
We are going to live next door, Mr and Mrs Dilke are moving to Westminster and we can have six months half rent!

FANNY
It is a great economy for Maman. But if you like, only if you like.

Keats climbs out the window. Mr Brown closes his books moodily.

EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

NOTE - BRAWNE cat in basket for move to Wentworth House

While the Dilke’s, Maria, Charles and their son move out of their side of the house, the Brawne’s move in. Mr Brown and Keats are talking intensely in the GARDEN, hands behind their backs.

MR BROWN
If the princess has already abandoned the dwarf, we cannot keep his love speech...

Samuel’s BALL passes in front of them and Keats splits off to kick it back. Samuel and Keats begin a game together.

Keats playfully kicks at Mr Brown twice but the ball simply bounces off his legs and then Samuel and Keats pass and tackle leaving Mr Brown alone. He walks fast into the house.

INT. BRAWNE LIVING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

The Brawne’s goods are part unpacked. Mr Brown has the family gathered in the Dilke’s old living room. Mr Brown stands at the fireplace while they sit and stand about their unsettled furniture.

MR BROWN
If Mr Keats and myself are strolling in the garden, lounging on a sofa, staring into a wall, do not presume we are not working. Doing nothing is the musing of the poet.
FANNY (TEASING)
Are these musings what we common people may know as thoughts?
MR BROWN
Thoughts yes, but of weightier nature.

FANNY
Sinking thoughts?

MR BROWN
Not really Miss Brawne, musing, making one’s mind available to inspiration.

FANNY
As in amusing?

MRS BRAWNE
Our thoughts are all very simple so you never need worry about interrupting us. We are always glad of company and should be happy if you joined us for dinner on any day.

INT. KEATS’S ROOM/STAIRS/FANNY’S ROOM W’WORTH HOUSE – DAY

Keats walks upstairs to his room. His hands behind his back, distracted with thought, the words of Mr Brown can be heard faintly from the living room. Keats walks into his room and stares at the wall.

Fanny and Margaret climb up their stairs and enter their bedroom where they resume unpacking and tidying away their CLOTHES and EFFECTS.

Keats moves towards the wall and knocks.

Fanny and Margaret stop still.

MARGARET
Mr Keats?

Fanny moves towards the wall.

Keats on his side again knocks a little rhythm.

Fanny replies with the same rhythm from her side.

Keats moves his BED against the wall.

Fanny and Margaret listen to the sound of the bed scraping and thudding against the wall.

INT/EXT. GARDEN/KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

A SPRING morning. The FLOWERS are opening their petals to early DAPPLED SUN and the BEES are busy visiting each and every bloom.
Amongst the flowers are Keats, Fanny and Margaret. They are moving between the blossoms sniffing them.
Inside Wentworth House kitchen, Mrs Brawne is helping their maid with TOAST and TEA.

**MR BROWN**

Good morning, good morning.

Mr Brown’s fine good spirits fade when he notices Keats and Fanny amongst the flowers. Mrs Brawne joins him at the window. They watch as Fanny and Keats sniff from flower to flower. Samuel sits eating his toast.

**SAMUEL**

They are sniffing every flower in the garden to find the best scent.

**CHARLOTTE**

Mr Keats is being a bee.

Mr Brown can bear it no more. He takes his tea and leaves.

Now Fanny and Keats are nose down in the same flower.

**MRS BRAWNE**

Fanny! I need your help.

Fanny appears not to hear.

Mrs Brawne goes outside but is immediately drawn into judging between TWO blooms

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**INT. BROWNS ROOM & BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM/TERRACE WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY**

Mr Brown observes the dance class through the open door, before he returns to the table where he scans Keats’ writing. Mrs Brawne matches Keats with Margaret but the Dance Master changes them so Keats becomes Fanny’s partner.
MR BROWN (READING ALOUD EVE OF ST AGNES)

“Soon trembling in her soft and chilly nest, in sort of wakeful swoon, perplex’d she lay, until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress’d her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away; flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day; blinded alike from sunshine and from rain, as though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.”

Mr Brown is blinking, touched and impressed.

Fanny and Keats dance together, small and delicate faery people.

INT. FANNY’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - NIGHT

Upstairs Mrs Brawne helps Fanny dress in a NEW BALL GOWN, as ever it is cleverly conceived and original.

A COACH arrives and a young woman friend MARY ROBINSON walks up the path to Wentworth House.

Inside Keats can hear Fanny coming down the stairs. Keats meets her in the hallway just as Fanny is greeting her friend.

KEATS
Where are you going, are you keeping secrets? You said nothing of this on our walk.

FANNY
It is not a secret. I am going with Mary to a dance at the Mess.

KEATS
Not to dance?

FANNY
Yes. Of course I will dance - why don’t you come too?

KEATS (LOW TO FANNY)
To watch as soldiers put their arms about you?

Mrs Brawne comes down the stairs.

MRS BRAWNE
Hello Mary, you’ve not left yet?

FANNY
I was just asking Mr Keats to join us but he is not persuaded.

Keats bows and full of jealousy retreats.
ADD SOME DANCING.

INT/EXT.  FANNY’S ROOM/GARDEN WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Fanny puts her dance sore feet on the floor of her room. She opens her CURTAINS to let the morning light in and sees Keats lying beneath her window. Keats is looking up at Fanny.

EXT.  THE HEATH – DAY

It is a beautiful day. The HEATHER on the Heath is sprinkled with WILD FLOWERS. CHILDREN sail their PAPER BOATS on the POND. Keats and Fanny wait while Margaret buys an ICE CREAM.

KEATS
Lie to me tell me you did not dance last night.

FANNY
I did not sit down a single tune. You can see the truth in my slippers they are completely scuffed. I don’t think they can be wiped clean even with methylated spirits. Mama is annoyed as they are expensive but I do not know how I could have prevented it.

Margaret returns with a VANILLA ICE CREAM.

MARGARET
May I watch the boats? I don’t want to wait again under the trees while you talk.

Fanny and Keats walk together up the HILL to their favourite spot shaded from the sun and prying eyes by long limbed OAK TREES.

KEATS (ON THE WAY TO THE TREES)
I had such a dream last night.

FANNY
Ohhh?

KEATS
I think one of the greatest enjoyments I have ever had in my life.

FANNY
Well tell me.

KEATS
I was floating above the trees with my lips connected to those of a beautiful figure for what seemed an age. Flowery tree tops sprang up beneath us and we rested on them with the lightness of a cloud.
Keats sits back into the long grass. Fanny is rattled, jealous.

FANNY
Who was the figure?

KEATS
I must have had my eyes closed for I am not sure.

FANNY
Yet you remember the tree tops.

KEATS
Not so well as the lips.

Fanny looks at Keats.

FANNY
Whose lips? Were they my lips?

Keats touches Fanny’s lips with his finger

KEATS
They may have been yours.

Keats closes his eyes and presents his lips for Fanny to kiss. Fanny gently places her lips on his.

Keats waits and Fanny kisses him again. Keats pulls Fanny on top of him and kisses her and she him and he her. They lie down together lip to lip.

KEATS (cont’d)
"Pale were the lips I kiss’d."

Keats kisses her again.

KEATS (cont’d)
"- and fair the form. I floated with about that melancholy storm."

Margaret comes calling up the hill. Keats makes sound effects of wild flowers squealing as Margaret stops.

KEATS (cont’d)
"Help." “Ahhh.”

Keats slows her to a halt. To her chagrin she cannot step without crushing something.

MARGARET
Stop it!
The three make their way across the Heath home. Keats and Fanny follow behind Margaret who plays a game of catching them touching, kissing.

Fanny, Keats and Margaret return. A glowing Keats walks backwards looking at Fanny. Keats lets Fanny pass and watches her from behind. Fanny smiles and slyly touches hands.

In the garden Samuel has climbed onto the HEDGE. Mr Brown stands underneath, disconcerted by Keats’s attention to Fanny. Fanny walks in a cloud up to her room.

Fanny lies stretched on her bed listening to her body tingling with new and beautiful sensations.

Mr Brown bet I couldn’t find the nightingale’s nest.

There is no nest and no bet.

Keats makes nightingale trills.

Mr Brown puffs his PIPE while Keats joins Samuel in the tree, SILHOUETTED against the last of the SUN WINKING THROUGH THE LEAVES.

Late at night Keats sits in the drawing room writing a LETTER to his brother George and sister-in-law Georgina when Mr Brown enters in a DRESSING GOWN with a PLATE of MIDNIGHT SNACKS. Mr Brown sits beside Keats and eats without pause.

You are making a liar of me - I had just writ -
“Brown is gone to bed - and I am tired of rhyming - there is a north wind blowing, playing gooseberry with the trees.”
MR BROWN
I read your Eve of St Agnes today it does not trip, not once, it is perfect, extraordinarily good.
"Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:"

KEATS
"Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex’d she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress’d
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;"

MR BROWN
"Her soothed limbs,..."
I spent the afternoon sorting through your sins and think Ode to Psyche very keen, beautiful and clear.
"And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in!"
See here there are tears, you are so far ahead of me and above me.

KEATS
Brown, I am amazed.

MR BROWN
Your writing is the finest thing in my life.
A greater miracle than to see new life born.
That sort of miracle is in compare common place.

Mr Brown holds out his hand to Keats who takes it. Mr Brown pats Keats hand.

MR BROWN (TO KEATS’S HAND) (cont’d)
You wrote this little hand.

KEATS (PLAYFULLY)
Yes, while he was dreaming I wrote it all, see this is where the pen pressed.

Mr Brown clasps the hand.

MR BROWN
As one who truly loves you I must warn you kindly of a trap you are walking into.

KEATS
If you are going to speak of Miss Brawne we have never agreed and cannot agree.

MR BROWN
No that is not true, we both agree she is an exquisite dressed creature.
KEATS
Is it a sin to look well?

MR BROWN
For one or two of your “slippery blisses” you will lose your freedom permanently. You will be slaving at medicine 15 hours a day - for what? To keep Mrs Keats in French ribbon?

Keats looks dismayed, sick.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
I cherish your talent, I truly do.

KEATS
Then allow me my happiness for I am writing again.

EXT. PLUM TREE WENTWORTH HOUSE - MORNING

Keats looks up into the PLUM TREE. He whistles. The NIGHTINGALE sings.

INT/EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - MORNING

Fanny watches Keats from her bedroom window.

INT/EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE AND GARDEN - MORNING

Keats picks up a CHAIR from the living room table. As he takes it outside Fanny comes down the stairs and goes to the Brawne sitting room where she sees Keats place the chair under the plum tree in the DAPPLED SHADE.

Out of Keats’s pocket he takes a FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER and a LEAD PENCIL. He does not write but becomes perfectly still, his body relaxed, his focus inward.

KEATS (V.O.)

ODE to a NIGHTINGALE
“My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
’Tis not through envy of their happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness, —”

Fanny watches Keats move his chair to the shade and his pen make its steady journey across the paper.

Mr Brown enters his living room, he notices the chair gone, then Keats under the tree one leg crossed over the other completely still except for the pen flying.
KEATS (V.O.) (cont’d)

“That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.”

THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS AGAIN THEN FLIES OUT THROUGH THE BRANCHES LIKE AN ARROW. [CGI SHOT]

Keats watches the bird’s flight then continues writing.

Fanny rises and walks to the window her SEWING in hand.

Keats has gone. The chair is empty.

INT. BROWN’S DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Keats stuffs his NOTES into a gap in the BOOKSHELF of the drawing room. Mr Brown looks up and watches as Keats walks out of the room. Mr Brown retrieves the notes. Carefully Mr Brown lays the PAGES out on the table.

INT. BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Keats is playing with the Brawne CAT. Toots stands ready in a BONNET for a walk. Samuel has a BALL and CRICKET BAT.

Fanny joins them, BONNET, GLOVES and PARASOL ready. Keats looks across and smiles.

Mr Brown enters the drawing room unannounced, he looks very intense.

MR BROWN
John, can you come?

KEATS
I was about to accompany the Miss Brawnes to the Heath.

Mr Brown looks urgent, intent.

MR BROWN
Now. Please.

Fanny glumly undoes the BOW on her bonnet and Keats follows Mr Brown out of the room. As Fanny goes to the stairs bonnet in hand, she pauses. She can hear the sound of Keats’s voice and sometimes Mr Brown reading with him.

KEATS (AND MR BROWN)

“Darkling I listen: and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath.”
Fanny opens the door softly despite Mr Brown’s sign KEEP OUT POETS AT WORK.

Keats turns and sees her. Mr Brown is at the table trying to make out Keats’s handwriting as he makes a fair copy.

MR BROWN

"Now more than ever seems it rich to die."

KEATS

"To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!"

Fanny sits on a chair against the wall listening, thrilled. Mr Brown stops work and scrapes back his chair looking at Keats exasperated.

KEATS (cont’d)

What?

MR BROWN

Did you tell Miss Brawne of our summer holiday, or shall I?

Fanny looks at Keats.

KEATS

Not as yet. Brown is doing his summer rental and we both have to leave.

MR BROWN

We are meeting up on the Isle of Wight for some undisturbed writing and carousing.

Fanny is burning with humiliation. Head bowed she rises from the chair and leaves.

INT. HALL WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

In the DARK HALL Fanny leans against the wall and sobs. The door opens, it is Keats.

KEATS

Fanny I was going to tell you.

FANNY

When? When were you going to tell me? You play with me like a cat. I won’t be PICKED UP AND PUT DOWN!

Fanny shrieks at Keats stalking back to her side of the house. Slamming the door. Mr Brown opens the door. Samuel comes downstairs to look.
Keats knocks on the Brawne sitting room door. He lets himself in. Fanny is sobbing onto her mother’s lap.
KEATS
May I speak to Fanny Mrs Brawne?

FANNY
NO, NO, I will not speak to him. (Shrieking at Keats) YOU HAVE HUMILIATED ME! YOU COULD NOT HAVE DONE BETTER IF YOU HAD STRIPPED ME BARE!

Keats is white with fright.

KEATS
I have no money Fanny in fact I am in debt. I must earn, I must write and make a living. If I fail though I hate to think on it, I must make way so another may marry and adore you as I wish to.

FANNY
I will not be adored ever again by you or anyone! I hate you! I hate you! I HATE YOU!

Keats sits, alarmed and helpless watching the sobbing Fanny in Mrs Brawne’s lap. Mrs Brawne resumes her EMBROIDERY, raising her eyebrows at Keats.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT/INT. BRAWNE HALF OF WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

The Brawne half of the house in it’s summer suit. DAPPLED LIGHT, YELLOW LAWN, ROSES BOBBING. The Heath beyond full of MERRYMAKERS.

Samuel wanders out the FRONT DOOR. Mrs Brawne is cleaning TEASPOONS in the dining room. Margaret in the drawing room is sewing a SAMPLER. Fanny watches Samuel waiting at the gate. The POST MESSENGER passes but does not pause. Samuel turns and walks back.

SAMUEL (CALLING TO FANNY)
Nothing.

A disappointed Fanny is sitting on an UPRIGHT CHAIR with the CAT on her lap. Mrs Brawne counts the SPOONS and places them one by one in a VELVET LINED BOX.

FANNY
My life is no more than a cats. I sleep. I clean myself. I prowl around the rooms and barely ever leave this house or this neighbourhood.

TEARS begin to well in Fanny’s eyes.

Mrs Brawne repairs to the kitchen for more SILVER.
MUSIC can be heard distantly on the Heath and the SHOUTS and LAUGHTER of the SUMMER CROWD.

Margaret carries a little SAMPLE WORK across to Fanny.

MARGARET (TOOTS)
Will you check my stitch Fanny it is an open work seam.

FANNY
Oh God no Toots, go away. I don’t care a dam for stitches. Mama, please get rid of her.

The CAT is sent flying and Margaret’s STITCHING is tossed aside.

EXT/INT. FANNY’S ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - CLEAR SUMMER’S DAY 76

Fanny is lying in bed.

Margaret kneels beside the bed, a set up of her TOY WORLD with ALL ITS ACCOUTREMENTS lined up on the floor.

Mrs Brawne enters with a TRAY OF TEA.

Fanny looks up.

FANNY
No letter?

MRS BRAWNE
Not today.

Fanny falls back softly CRYING.

FANNY
Am I in love? Is this love? It really is a very bad thing. I shall never tease about it again. It is very hard, so sore I believe one could die of it.

INT. BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY 77

Fanny sitting in the drawing room POURING TEA for Mrs Dilke, her mother, Margaret and Samuel.

Fanny hears the STEPS of a MESSENGER outside the GATE. Her whole concentration shifts, she puts down the pot and moves to the window willing the messenger to stop at their gate. He does. The messenger opens the gate and walks up the path carrying a letter. Fanny is drawn to the door like one possessed. The messenger hands the LETTER IN KEATS’S HAND to Fanny.
She PAYS the messenger 1/6d and without further explanation
takes the letter held to her bosom upstairs to her bed. She
pulls the covers up over her head and in her tent like
privacy opens the letter.
KEATS (V.O.)

SHANKLIN,

ISLE OF WIGHT, THURSDAY

My dearest Lady,

"I am now at a very pleasant Cottage window, looking onto a beautifully hilly country, with a glimpse of the sea; the morning is very fine. I do not know how elastic my spirit might be, what pleasure I might have in living here if the remembrance of you did not weigh so upon me. --- ask yourself my love whether you are not very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so destroyed my freedom."

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

Fanny leaves the house trailed by Margaret and Samuel. As she walks out upon the Heath away from other strangers and far ahead of her brother and sister, she takes out Keats's LETTER.

Keats's letter continued.

"Will you confess this in a letter? You must write immediately and do all you can to console me in it --- make it rich as a drought of poppies to intoxicate me --- write the softest words and kiss them that I may at least touch my lips where yours have been."

Fanny gulps for breath, she kneels unaware of herself in the LONG GRASS studying the words. Pressing her lips against the letter.

Keats's letter continued.

"For myself I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form: I want a brighter word than bright; a fairer word than fair."

Margaret and Samuel catch up with Fanny and collapse in the grass near her, watching her strange possession with the letter but knowing better than to interrupt.

Keats's letter continued.

"I almost wish we were butterflies and liv'd but three summer days --- three such days with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could ever contain."

Fanny beams at Margaret. She pulls her towards her and kisses her.
FANNY
If I have ever been mean and I know I might have been, please forgive me my darling Toots.

Margaret blinks with each kiss.

FANNY (cont’d)
Sorry, sorry, sorry.

INT. FANNY’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – NIGHT

Fanny prepares the paper by kissing it.

My Dear Mr Keats,

“Thank you for your letter.

I have lately felt so nervous and ill that I had to stay five days in bed. But having received your letter yesterday, I am up and again walking our paths on the Heath.

I have begun a butterfly farm in my bedroom in honour of us. Sammy and Toots are catching them for me. Samuel has made a science of it and is collecting both caterpillars and chrysalises so we may have them fluttering about us a week or more.”

The children and Fanny in the business of BUTTERFLY and CATERPILLAR collecting.

JAR TOPS are covered in GREASE PROOF PAPER and tied around the top with STRING. The paper is PRICKED with a FORK for air holes.

The jars are lined up around Fanny’s bedroom.

Fanny’s PEN DIPS into the INK, a BUTTERFLY in a GLASS COVERED JAR slowly CLOSES its wings as she writes her letter.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Fanny talks to her mother in the kitchen. She is dressed for an outing, all in WHITE, STRAW BONNET and WHITE PARASOL. Mrs Brawne is rolling out a PIE while the maid is IRONING.

FANNY
If a letter...

MRS BRAWNE
I promise I shall come and find you.

FANNY
But be ready. Have your hat and parasol ready.

MRS BRAWNE
Perhaps I’ll send Abigail. Can you run?

ABIGAIL
Oh yes I can, if I lift my skirts go as fast as any boy or even a man.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY
Fanny and Margaret are strolling near the POND where CHILDREN wade and coax their TOY BOATS along with a STICK. Samuel is guiding his along from the edge. Fanny’s eyes scan any sign of movement, a CHILD chasing a BALL, a MAN bowling a CRICKET BALL, A MOTHER rushing after a TODDLER.

Fanny lies on the GRASS face-down, dead-like.

Most of the Heath’s revellers have left.

Margaret sits near Fanny not knowing what to do.

Samuel fiddles with his boat’s RIGGING.

MARGARET (SPEAKING TO FANNY ON THE GROUND)
Shall we go home? Fanny? I have collected some leaves for the caterpillars.

INT. BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY
On the staircase as Fanny enters lies a LETTER from Keats addressed to her. Fanny snatches up the letter and storms into the drawing room. Charles and Maria Dilke stand to greet her but she is in mid fury.

FANNY
Why didn’t you send for me? Mr Keats has written and you did not send Abigail as you had said.

MRS BRAWNE
Please greet our friends.

FANNY
I’m sorry but I cannot be polite when I have been so betrayed. Why are you against me Mama?

MRS BRAWNE
Fanny the letter could wait an hour. I needed Abigail.

FANNY
Three hours!!!
Fanny storms out of the drawing room and upstairs to her room.

The party downstairs re-seats themselves, the air fatally electrified around them.

MARIA DILKE
When did this happen?

MRS BRAWNE
Under my nose - I am praying to God it will blow over.

INT. FANNY’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – NIGHT

In the privacy of her room Fanny by CANDLELIGHT reads her new letter.

Keats’s letter.

“I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your loveliness and the hour of my death. O that I could have possession of them both in the same minute.

I am miserable that you are not with me: or rather breathe in the dull sort of patience that cannot be called life. I never knew before, what such a love as you have made me feel, was; I did not believe in it; my Fancy was afraid of it, lest it should burn me up. But if you will fully love me, though there may be some fire it will not be more than we can bear when moistened and bedewed with Pleasures.”

FANNY
“Bedewed with Pleasures...”

Fanny kisses the letter.

INT. FANNY’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – AFTERNOON

Mrs Brawne enters Fanny’s bedroom concerned by the romantic chaos, BUTTERFLIES in the air, CLOTHES scattered about. Attempted LETTERS littering the bed and all about Fanny, KEATS’S LETTERS. Fanny looks up smiling.

FANNY
I forgive you Maman.

Mrs Brawne OPENS a window.

MARGARET
No Maman we will lose them.

MRS BRAWNE
There is no air.
MARGARET
They love the heat.

FANNY (READING)
Listen, “I love you more in that I believe you have liked me for my own sake - I have met with women who I really think would like to be married to a poem and to be given away by a Novel.” “Married to a poem.”

Fanny laughs amused. Mrs Brawne does not. Butterflies flutter past Mrs Brawne.

FANNY (cont’d)
Maman do not be cross.

Fanny takes her mother’s hand.

FANNY (cont’d)
When I do not hear from him it is as if I have died, as if the air is sucked out of my lungs and I am left desolate, but when I receive a letter I know our world is real and it is the only one I care for.

Mrs Brawne backs out of the door. Fanny gets up and follows Mrs Brawne to her own neat, clean bedroom.

FANNY (cont’d)
Was Mrs Dilke speaking against us?

MRS BRAWNE
She is your friend too. And she cares for and loves Mr Keats as I do.

FANNY
But not as I do. What did she say?

MRS BRAWNE
That he should not come back here and live is what Mrs Dilke said. What Mr Dilke is saying too.

FANNY
And you agree?

MRS BRAWNE
Yes.

FANNY
Let me marry him Mama, if he comes back let us be.

MRS BRAWNE
You ambush me Fanny.
FANNY
I will organise my life. Take all the letters, you keep them, and once a day, no better, once a week you may give them to me for one hour. The rest of the week I shall work. I shall sew 4 hours, and study, and take up my dance classes, we can all walk upon the Heath. I will make you laugh again Mama but let us be engaged.

MRS BRAWNE
No man wants to live off his wife’s family who are barely managing.

FANNY
You insult him and you insult me. Why must you do this? His great worth is in the future. What can we not afford, another chop? Then I shan’t eat and when I die the family can prosper, is this your logic?

Mrs Brawne looks at Fanny hopelessly.

MRS BRAWNE
Do your programme. Give me the letters, let us try.

FANNY
I may keep only the latest? Mama to have something of his.

INT. BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny, Margaret and Samuel are practising their dance steps. Mrs Brawne passes through the room cautiously pleased.

INT. BRAWNE DINING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - EVENING

Margaret and SIX OTHER CHILDREN receive instructions from Fanny on how to work a SWISS EMBROIDERY FRAME clamped to the table.

FANNY (TO MARGARET)
Fill the inside with as many padding stitches as you can, then use a wide slanted satin stitch.

Mrs Brawne watches, cautiously pleased.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Margaret runs into the kitchen looking frightened. Mrs Brawne and Abigail are ROLLING PASTRY.
MARGARET
Fanny wants a knife.

MRS BRAWNE
What for? What has happened?
Margaret’s lip begins to quiver.
Mrs Brawne runs up the kitchen stairs.

INT. FANNY’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY
Fanny lies sobbing on the floor, clutching her latest letter, a TINY pair of SEWING SCISSORS lie nearby. The family cat sniffs curiously at her cheek, while only one live dazed BUTTERFLY flutters around the room. The CORPSES of many others lie about the floor and surfaces.

FANNY
It is all over. I have such a short letter, after all this time, saying he was in London, but couldn’t bring himself to visit for fear it would burn him up!

MRS BRAWNE
He wrote that, “burn him up?”

FANNY
He has made no fortune and he is ashamed of it. If only he knew how little I, or even you, care for that now. I don’t know how I will live.

Fanny breaks down, a small scratch on her wrist.

INT. BRAWNE STAIRS WENTWORTH HOUSE – EVENING
Abigail and Margaret carry an armful of EMPTY butterfly JARS full of DEAD LEAVES downstairs to the kitchen.

INT. FANNY’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – EVENING
Fanny sweeps BUTTERFLY CORPSES into a dustpan.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT/INT. WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY
Margaret and Samuel are playing cricket in the garden, they stop and stare as Mr Brown appears on the path.

MR BROWN
Hello.
Margaret turns and leaves immediately. Behind Mr Brown a THIN YOUNG MAN pulls a cart piled with Mr Brown’s holiday LUGGAGE.

A crushed Fanny and Mrs Brawne are quietly sewing; Fanny a DRESS, while Mrs Brawne DARNS. Margaret appears at the window.

MARGARET
Mr Brown has returned but no Mr Keats with my rocks he promised.

Mrs Brawne looks across at Fanny anxiously.

FANNY
What can he do to me? Hurt my pride? It has slipped so low I have stepped out of it.

INT. MR BROWN’S HALF WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Mr Brown is surrounded by his LUGGAGE in piles in his drawing room. He is PAYING the CARTER who puts the last of the bags down.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Fanny enters followed by ABIGAIL their RED HEADED MAID, her head bowed.

FANNY
Mama asked me to welcome you home and to introduce you to Miss O’Donaghue who is our maid but may also do for you.

The young IRISH maid BLUSHES and CURTSEYS.

ABIGAIL
Please sir call me Abigail or Abby.

MR BROWN
Very well. Be sure you do not enter when the door is closed.

Abigail nods.

ABIGAIL
Yes sir.

Abigail leaves. Mr Brown watches, his interest mildly aroused. Fanny remains awkwardly.

MR BROWN
Mr Keats is not coming back. He is going to live in London.

FANNY
Please tell Mr Keats that we Brawne’s have kept safe all his things.
INT. BRAWNE BASEMENT WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny takes the KEY from Keats’s chest stacked high with books. She threads it onto a RIBBON.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny is KNITTING a fine wool SOCK in the DIMLY LIT kitchen. Abigail is kneading and making BREAD.

ABIGAIL
Mr Brown has said that I could learn to read yet and I said “what will I read?” And he said “even the Bible is not so dull as you might believe.” He has said that the “Songs of Solomon” are juicy enough to make a churchman blush and as I learn to read I will see he does not tell a lie!

Fanny’s FOUR slim NEEDLES work steadily, systematically. Around her neck is the RIBBON reaching into her bodice.

EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Keats walks up the path to Wentworth House.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Margaret runs into the room.

MARGARET
Mr Keats has come, aren’t you coming down? He needs the key to his chest.

Fanny is startled. She puts down her NEEDLEWORK.

INT. BRAWNE CELLAR WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny follows Margaret into the cellar where Keats and Samuel are struggling with the LOCK.

SAMUEL
Do you have the key Fanny?

FANNY
Hello Mr Keats.

KEATS
Hello Miss Brawne.
The two stare at each other a long moment before Fanny removes the RIBBON from around her neck and gently pulls the KEY clear from her bodice where it had been nestling in her bust. Fanny drops it into Keats’s hand.
Keats is transfixed by the warm KEY lying in his palm, burning it.

Samuel leaves, his voice FADING off.

**SAMUEL**
Mama we have found it, Fanny had it like I thought.

Ignoring everything but each other, Fanny gently takes the key from Keats and kneeling unlocks his CHEST. She opens the lid.

**FANNY**
What do you need?

Keats kneels beside her. He is unable to take his eyes from her. He watches as Fanny pulls out items of clothing.

**FANNY (cont’d)**
Your coat?

Fanny shakes it out holding it up.

**FANNY (cont’d)**
But it is not warm enough, there is no lining. These brown breeches are warm.

Their eyes connect as Fanny turns slowly towards Keats the FOLDED PANTS in her hands. She turns back to the trunk.

**FANNY (cont’d)**
And your black vest, Ohhh it has a small hole. I could mend it so well you will not see it.

Wordlessly Keats and Fanny continue bonding through the domestic chores simple and deep - all his resolve dissolving.

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**INT. 25 COLLEGE STREET - DAY**

The Dilke family DINING ROOM where the Dilke’s SON and a FRIEND play. Charles Dilke writes at one end of the TABLE Keats at the other while Maria Dilke is POURING TEA. Keats’s PEN dips in his DARK BROWN INK.

**11 & 13 October 1819**

My Sweet Girl,

"I am living today in yesterday: I was in a complete fascination all day. I feel myself at your mercy. Write me ever so few lines and tell me you will never for ever be less kind to me than yesterday - you dazzled me - there is nothing in the world so bright and delicate."
You have absorbed me I have a sensation at the present moment as if I was dissolving ---"
EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH – DAY

Fanny and Keats walk slowly together through the AUTUMN LEAVES on the Heath. Samuel and Toots run ahead. The lovers lean together on the trunk of a huge ELM. Keats gives Fanny a RING. Keats kisses Fanny deeply on the lips. Toots and Samuel shocked, stop in their tracks.

INT. BRAWNE DINING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Mrs Brawne and Maria Dilke are talking gravely and taking TEA in the Brawne’s dining room. Fanny passes through with her sewing.

MRS BRAWNE
Fanny.

FANNY
What is wrong, you are looking so grave?

MRS BRAWNE
Maria says Mr Keats is now proposing to live next door again. She wants to know if I have any objections.

FANNY
Of course you don’t. No she doesn’t. Mr Brown is Mr Keats’s best friend, how can we object.

Maria Dilke is quiet, she looks at Mrs Brawne.

MARIA DILKE
Fanny, Mr Dilke and I are worried that such close connection may prove restrictive for you.

FANNY
No.

MARIA DILKE
I don’t think you fully understand. Mr Keats can’t afford to marry, his circumstances are really quite hopeless and if he is next door how will you meet anyone else? How will you go to dances?

Mrs Dilke notices Fanny’s ring, shocked.

MARIA DILKE (cont’d)
Ohh but you are engaged?

FANNY
It was Mr Keat’s mothers ring, not an engagement ring.
MRS BRAWNE (OVERLAPPING)
You were not to wear it

FANNY
See I wear it on the finger next door

MARIA DILKE
What a pretty ring.

MRS BRAWNE
Do not even discuss it. She is in no way bound
to him.

Mrs Brawne is SHAKING her head exhausted by Fanny’s powers of
persuasion.

FANNY (CONT’D)
You taught me to love, you never said only the
rich, only a thimbleful. Mr Keats is a
genius. His poems will sell, and until then I
could make money sewing.

MARIA DILKE
Attachment is such a difficult thing to undo

INT. HALL WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Fanny is walking towards Keats and Mr Brown’s door. She
slips her GARNET RING off her middle finger and across to her
engagement finger.

MRS BRAWNE
Fanny!

Fanny hides her left hand behind her back.

FANNY
I am going to say good morning.

MRS BRAWNE
How will he write his poems if you are with
him? Come.

FANNY
It is alright he is simply fair copying the
poems for a new book and in this I give him
calm.

Fanny enters the poets rooms almost invisibly. Quietly she
takes a CHAIR and places it next to Keats at the table. She
begins to sew. Mr Brown, at the other end of the table,
finally notices and leaves perturbed. As the door closes
Fanny and Keats immediately begin to kiss. Keats rests his
head on Fanny’s chest.
KEATS
“Pillow’d upon my fair love’s ripening breast,
To feel forever it’s soft swell and fall,
Awake forever in a sweet unrest
Still, still to hear her tender taken breath.”

FANNY
It’s new, from which poem?

KEATS
Yours –
“Bright Star would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night.”

FANNY
Why do you say Not? Not in lone splendour?

KEATS
Because I want to be close enough to you,
(kiss), to hear your every breath, (kiss), yet
I wish for the eternal faithfulness of a star.

FANNY (PUSHING HIM BACK)
You fear I am not steadfast because I oblige
Maman by going to a dance?

KEATS
Don’t tease Fanny.

FANNY
I will tell Maman I am unwell.

Fanny kisses Keats.

KEATS
No, go, go.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Mr Brown scoffs FRESH SCONES in the kitchen. Abigail BUTTERS
them for him full of admiration. Fanny is working on her
SCRAPBOOK of fashion ideas.

MR BROWN
Good Irish Abigail
Who never did fail
To make a scone
As good as a swan...

Abigail puts a hand over her rotted teeth as she giggles.

Suddenly Fanny rises, she is looking out the window as the
SNOW begins to fall. Fanny leaves the room.
Mrs Brawne sees Fanny walking out into the snow. She moves to the window.

MRS BRAWNE
Fanny come in, it has turned very cold.

FANNY
Mr Keats has gone into London with no coat.

FADE TO BLACK.

The snow has turned to sleet. The Brawne’s make their way by candle up to their rooms.

Fanny watches from her window. Rain is reflected across her face. She is relieved to finally see the small chilled figure of Keats making his way unsteadily to the house.

Mr Brown comes out from his study as he hears the front door close.

Keats is wet and staggering, finding it hard to stand.

Mr Brown
Have you had wine?

Keats shakes his head.

Mr Brown (cont’d)
What is the matter, are you fevered?

Keats
Yes, yes. I was severely chilled. I was on the outside of the coach – but now I don’t feel it.

It is pitch black only the sound of Mr Brown’s voice shouting, banging and footsteps.

Mr Brown (voice off)
Abigail! Abigail! Get up, dress yourself we need a doctor.
Fanny sits up terrified.
INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - NIGHT

Fanny in her DRESSING GOWN and with a CANDLE. Abigail is carrying SHEETS through to the laundry. Fanny follows her.

FANNY
What has happened?

ABIGAIL
I don’t know Ma’am.

FANNY
Has a doctor arrived?

ABIGAIL
Yes Ma’am. Mr Brown told me to take these sheets off as they are bloodied.

Abigail places them in the LAUNDRY TUB and turns on the WATER.

FANNY
Is it Mr Keats?

Abigail makes her way back to the STOVE with its BOILING KETTLE.

ABIGAIL
I don’t know Ma’am.

FANNY
Let me help.

Fanny puts CHINA CUPS on a TRAY. Her hands are shaking. Mr Brown comes through. Fanny moves towards him about to speak.

MR BROWN ECHOING (INTERRUPTING)
Not now Fanny, I can’t talk.

FANNY
If he’s ill I want to help. He would want me there.

MR BROWN
Move away, this is an emergency. A basin, I need a basin and a towel, glasses.

FANNY
I can bring them.

MR BROWN
NO! STAND BACK!

Fanny stands back offering no resentment. The SOUND of WATER filling the wash tub sends her to the laundry. She turns off the TAP, Keats’s BLOODIED SHEETS blooming in the dark tub.
INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Mr Brown is standing by the kitchen HEARTH, towels are folded on the table. Abigail crosses past with a barely touched TRAY of BROTH and TOAST from Keats’s room. DR BREE is finishing up a plate of bacon and eggs. The Brawnes (including Samuel and Margaret) are sitting at the table listening anxiously.

MR BROWN
Doctor Bree was particular in saying that Mr Keats should avoid all sources of excitement. It is a disease peculiarly vulnerable to romantic anxiety.

Brown looks towards the Doctor who confirms Brown’s explanation with a nod.

DR BREE
A lot of rest.

He leaves, head down, signalling them to remain.

MR BROWN
Keats has already asked to see Miss Brawne but I have managed him and said she had gone into town...

FANNY
But I have not. How could I go into town when Mr Keats is so ill?

MR BROWN
I am speaking of keeping Mr Keats calm.

FANNY
What must he be thinking? This is a deception I cannot join.

MR BROWN
It is not a deception, I am simply determined to preserve the life of my friend.

FANNY
He will be unquiet until he sees me...

MR BROWN
He has been profoundly unquiet since you have decided to love him Miss Brawne.

FANNY
He would be more unquiet if I decided not to.

MRS BRAWNE (SHARPLY)
Fanny!
FANNY
Mr Brown would have it that I kill Mr Keats with affection.
MR BROWN
Perhaps you will. Perhaps there is nothing I can do to protect him from your insistence of loving him into an early grave. But I shall try, Miss Brawne, I shall try! All visits will follow my regime or they will not happen at all.

Fanny sits back shocked.

MRS BRAWNE
Please, we Brawne’s will do whatever we can to restore Mr Keats to health.

INT. KEATS’S ROOM/PASSAGE WENTWORTH HOUSE – EVENING

Fanny waits outside Keats’s room. She puts her GARNET RING onto her engagement finger. The DOOR opens, Mr Brown stands aside to allow Fanny through.

KEATS
Darling girl. I have been wondering where you were.

FANNY
I never did go to town, I have been waiting to be with you the whole day.

KEATS
Last night there was a great rush of blood, such that I thought I cannot survive, that I would suffocate. I said to Mr Brown very calmly “this is unfortunate” and my thoughts were of you.

Keats strokes her hand.

KEATS (cont’d)
Knowing you are next door makes a pleasant prison of my house.

Mr Brown enters the room and Fanny immediately lets go of Keats’s hand and rises.

KEATS (cont’d)
Come as frequently as they allow. And write me when you cannot.

INT. STAIRS/MRS BRAWNE’S ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – NIGHT

Fanny runs upstairs into her mother’s room. Mrs Brawne takes her in her arms, Fanny SOBS onto her lap.
He has a new greatcoat, why didn’t he wear it? Oh God, Oh God he spat so much blood. Why must this happen to us? I am so afraid.

Fanny abruptly sits up wiping her face.

FANNY (cont’d)
Wait, I have to write him a note so he has something of me tomorrow morning.
"My sweet creature when I look back upon the ecstasies in which I have pass’d some days and the miseries in their turn, I wonder the more at the Beauty which has kept up the spell so fervently. When I send this round I shall be in the front parlour watching to see you show yourself for a minute in the garden. How horrid was the chance of slipping into the ground instead of into your arms – the difference is amazing Love. Do not take the trouble of writing much: merely send me my “good night,” to put under my pillow."

J. Keats

Keats is resting in a MAKESHIFT BED made from chairs. Fanny appears in the garden, Keats’s NOTE in her hand. She walks towards Keats’s window.

Mr Brown looks up from his desk. He gets up and walks towards the windows.

MR BROWN (SHOOING FANNY)

Go! Go on!

Keats turns to see Fanny.

KEATS

No Brown I need to see her.

Fanny KISSES her NOTE and holds it to her heart. Keats smiles at her.

KEATS (cont’d)

I feel anxious if I miss a day.

MR BROWN

Why not bed her, she would do whatever you wished. It might relieve your condition.

Keats is writing a LETTER. On his SIDEBOARD is a row of JARS and JELLIES, GIFTS from friends’ larders.
INT.  FANNY’S BEDROOM - DAY

Fanny sits on the edge of her bed and writes on a SMALL PIECE OF PAPER the words “good night”.

INT.  DOORWAY TO MR BROWN’S APARTMENT - DAY

The FOLDED PAPER with “Mr Keats” written in tiny handwriting is slipped under Mr Brown and Keats’s door. Both men turn to look.

INT.  KEATS’S BEDROOM - EVENING

A BARE CHESTED Keats takes the NOTE from his trouser pocket, unfolds it, puts it to his lips then places it under his PILLOW. He RAPS on the wall.

INT.  FANNY’S BEDROOM - EVENING

The “rap” is faint on Fanny’s side but she hears it and puts her hand against her side of the wall. Toots already in bed, watches the ritual. Fanny’s SHADOW FLICKERS large against the wall.

EXT.  HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

Fanny sits upon a STONE WALL on Hampstead Heath reading her note while Samuel and Margaret play with a CRICKET BALL.

Fanny walks, still reading through some desolate SKELETONS of TREES, NO LEAVES above and MUD below.

“Let me no longer detain you from going to Town - there may be no end to this emprisoning of you. Perhaps you had better not come before tomorrow evening: send me however without fail a good night. You know our situation - I am recommended not even to read poetry much less write it. I wish I had even a little hope. I cannot say forget me - but I would mention that there are impossibilities in the world.”

Your affectionate

J.K.

OMITTED
Fanny walks quickly to Mr Brown’s half of the house where Keats is propped up on a DAY BED. She draws a chair next to him.

Fanny sews and talks quietly.

**FANNY**

Why do you say impossibilities?

**KEATS**

I have coughed blood again. I fear the disease has the upper hand and I cannot recover.

**FANNY**

I cannot leave you. It is an impossibility. I have such clear hope about your new book of poems. When you are well enough you can finish the fair copying. They are more beautiful than any I have read of Mr Coleridge or Mr Wordsworth or even Lord Byron.

**FANNY (cont’d)**

“Oh What can ail thee knight at arms,  
Alone and palely loitering?  
The sedge has withered from the lake  
And no birds sing!”

**FANNY (cont’d)**

“I met a lady in the Meads  
Full beautiful, a faery’s child;  
Her hair was long, her foot was light  
And her eyes were wild –”

**KEATS**

“I set her on my pacing steed  
And nothing else saw all day long,  
For sidelong would she bend, and sing  
A faery’s song –”

**FANNY**

“She found me roots of relish sweet  
And honey wild and manna dew,  
And sure in language strange she said  
I love thee true –”
KEATS

“She took me to her elfin grot
And there she wept and sigh’d full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.”

FANNY

“And there she lulled me asleep
And there I dream’d – Ah! Woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.”

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny comes into the kitchen where Abigail is making an incredible RACKET, BANGING POTS, and STOMPING to and fro.

On the TABLE is a LETTER.

FANNY

Is it mine?

ABIGAIL

Aye it is. Mr Brown has said to give it to you tomorrow, but I shall not wait. He is every bit as cruel as any gaoler of any prison in this foul world. Let him do his own dirty work.

Fanny takes up the LETTER. She looks at Abigail and sees her eyes are red from crying.

ABIGAIL (cont’d)

If you have a note for poor Mr Keats I will take it as soon as you will.

Abigail bursts into TEARS. Fanny moves to comfort her.

ABIGAIL (cont’d)

I wish I were dead. Oh my God! Ohhh! Ohhh!
Fanny writes at her PORTMANTEAUX.

Dearest Love,

“I hope you rested well last night. I am turning circles for joy that you have finished the fair copy of your book.

Did you hear from your side the banging of pots? Abigail has been sobbing without stop and believes you are the only one she can confess her troubles to.

I shall send you later your “good night” with Abigail. She has quite changed and will help me whenever I ask!”

Yours ever and with love Fanny

“P.S. Tell me as soon as you are able when Dr Bree has come and what he says.”

Keats turns as Mr Brown enters.

KEATS
I am boiling with fury.

MR BROWN
What is it? This is not good, be calm. You must not convulse again.

KEATS
Abigail is with child, but to whom out of shame or fear she would not say. We Brown must find out and when we have his name, butcher or baker, he shall face up to his indecency. Call her, let us get it done..

MR BROWN
It’s not necessary. She has me believe I am the father.

KEATS
My God, I had no notion of a love affair.

MR BROWN
There was none or I must have slept through it. I woke up after some claret to find the girl in my bed snoring like a fireman.

KEATS
With what ease you help yourself.
MR BROWN
It was an accident. Now she is starting a sobbing campaign to marry me. I shan’t of course.

KEATS
And the child?

MR BROWN
I have agreed to pay expenses. The worst thing is I can’t keep this place, I have to start my summer rental early. I feel wretched turning you out while you are unwell, but I haven’t anything left, only debt.

KEATS
Don’t be concerned, I shall manage. In what stumbling ways a new soul is begun.

INT. BROWN’S DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Fanny quietly pours tea and moves softly amongst Keats’s LITERARY SUPPORTERS and Dr Bree. She is invisible to all but Keats who constantly watches her.

MR HUNT
Gentleman I think we should hear Dr. Bree on the issue of climate for Keats health.

DR BREE
He has to go. He won’t live through another winter in England.

MR HUNT
How do you feel about Italy John?

Keats doesn’t reply

MR BROWN
I think it’s an issue of finance.

MR HUNT
Could we between us not start a fund or a collection? Where are we up to with the poems?

MR HASLAM
We have them in the Galley now.

JOHN REYNOLDS
Could they not generate income?

MR HASLAM
It is very hard to predict sales
MR HUNT
Of course he’ll need a traveling companion.
Brown, you’ll go?

MR BROWN
Yes, absolutely someone must go, but I’m not sure I’ll be able to.

MR HUNT
Is that a ‘No’?

DR BREE
There is an excellent English doctor in Rome, a Dr Clark, who could also find rooms for you Mr Keats.
KEATS (TURNING FROM FANNY)

Pardon?

DR BREE
I am talking of a Dr Clark who attends the English colony in Rome.

KEATS
Ah.

MR HUNT
I can help find a room for the summer John if you want.

At that moment a pregnant Abigail makes her way into the room with a tray of hot tea.

(OVERLAPPING)

ABIGAIL (HISSING)

Miss, Miss.

But it is Mr Brown who strides irritated to the door and swiftly takes the hot pot. Abigail doesn’t move, she stays still like a stunned rabbit. The men look then look away discretely.

MR BROWN
Which poem goes first? Is it to be Lamia or Eve of St Agnes?

MR HASLAM
It is Lamia I believe.

Keats nods once again watching Fanny.

EXT. STREET KENTISH TOWN - DAY

All along the street are signs of the precarious life of the poor, STREET URCHINS begging, a DRUNK collapsed in the pavement. Fanny and Samuel support Keats along the road, pausing as a cough racks his body.

Samuel walks a few steps behind, next to a BOY carting Keats's TRUNK.

FANNY
I want to come to Italy with you. We can marry and I’ll go with you. Sammy walk behind.

Keats laughs.
KEATS
My friends talk of Italy but I have no money
and must yet make it through the summer in
London. Besides, I don't believe it possible
I could ever leave you.

Samuel is slinking up alongside Fanny and Keats.

FANNY (EXASPERATED)
Get back behind.

KEATS
Poor Sammy, he’s not a dog.

FANNY
But he will tell!

SAMUEL
I won’t tell.

FANNY
You see, he listens.

Keats stops.

KEATS (EVASIVE)
Farewell me here.

FANNY
Why?

INT. CORRIDOR/BASEMENT KENTISH TOWN HOUSE – DAY

Fanny and Keats follow the LANDLADY down a DAMP corridor into
a BASEMENT SUITE of TWO WATER STAINED ROOMS. There is a
TABLE DIMLY LIT by the basement’s WINDOW. A SHRIEK followed
by another somewhere higher in the building.

LANDLADY
We don’t do linen.

She leaves, SHOUTING back up the stairs.

Keats sits at the DESK. He pretends to write. He turns to
see Fanny’s look of horror. Keats looks away, shamed,
steely.

FANNY
Mr Hunt cannot have meant these rooms.

Keats is going darkly into himself. He shakes his head.

KEATS
I told you not to come. Tell me how will you
fill your days when we are apart? Who will
you find to smile with?
FANNY
No one, I will wait.

KEATS
Wait?

Fanny nods, confused.

KEATS (cont’d)
Yes you can wait, you can probably find amusements. I am not the same as you. The very air I breathe empty of you is unhealthy. You are to me an object intensely desirable. But that’s all right because you can wait! You don’t know what it is to love. It is making me glad there is such a thing as the grave!

INT. BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny, her mother, Samuel and Margaret and the Dilke’s are sitting at their FORMALLY SET TABLE. All are very subdued. Fanny is deeply depressed. Out of nowhere she starts to sob. The children and Mrs Brawne watch her anxiously. All decorum is swept aside as Fanny’s sobs become convulsive. Mrs Brawne waves the children away. She takes Fanny’s head in her arms, stroking her tears away but they do not stop. Mrs Dilke also strokes her.

FANNY
He wrote that I don’t love him. He was told I have been flirting...but I haven’t.

MARIA DILKE
How long has Mr Keats been gone?

MRS BRAWNE
Five weeks.

MARIA DILKE
Perhaps it is for the best.

FANNY
Whose best?

MARIA DILKE
I thought it might be a relief to be separated when the circumstances are so difficult.

FANNY
Everyone wishes I would give up, but I cannot, even if I wanted to I cannot. There is no one in this world so beautiful or so brilliant.
Mrs Dilke and Mrs Brawne exchange looks of anxiety. Toots’s face appears at the window.

FANNY (cont’d)
Get rid of her!

EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE GARDENS - EVENING

Margaret is outside in the garden PICKING FLOWERS when she notices something strange under the HEDGE. A LEG, then as she cautiously circles, ANOTHER LEG and a BUNDLE beside it.

OMITTED

EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE GARDENS - DAY

Fanny approaches the tree slowly like a cat until a very ill Keats, barely recognisable, turns, his eyes accusing and frightened on Fanny. Keats puts an arm out to fend Fanny off.

KEATS
Keep away if you do not love me, if you have not a crystal conscience this past month.

FANNY
John...?

Fanny does not hesitate, she kisses Keats. He is sheet white and sweating.

KEATS
I thought my heart was breaking.

FANNY
You are shivering. What is this, blood? Maman! Toots, call Maman.

KEATS
Hunt’s son opened your letter and hid it for two days...I’ve walked out, I’ve left them...
(KEATS IS BARELY ABLE TO SPEAK)

Keats falls to one side unconscious as Mrs Brawne arrives outside.
The Brawnes assist Keats towards the house

The Brawne’s roll Keats gently onto a SHEET and together lift him upstairs and onto Mrs Brawne’s BED.

Doctor Bree is applying SUCTION GLASSES to Keats’s back. Fanny sits beside him stroking his forehead. Mrs Brawne picks up Keats’s SOILED CLOTHES from the floor.

Mrs Brawne is putting Keats’s clothes into the TUB. Fanny joins her helping to scrub the stains.

FANNY
Maman may Mr Keats stay?

MRS BRAWNE
Yes all right, tonight.

FANNY
And tomorrow? Until he leaves for Italy?

MRS BRAWNE
But you are not even officially engaged.

FANNY
Can’t we be?

MRS BRAWNE
Please do not begin, there is no end to this, next you will want to marry and after that travel to Rome. It is all my doing. I should never have moved to this house. I have let this happen.

FANNY
Let him stay just until Italy. I promise I shall never ever ask anything more. You will not regret it.

Mrs Brawne continues to scrub.

MRS BRAWNE
You are already the source of so much gossip.

FANNY
Well let us be engaged. He is too ill to be a threat!
INT. MRS BRAWNE’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - NIGHT

Fanny sits beside her feverish fiance, cooling his head with a WET CLOTH. She moves her ENGAGEMENT RING across to the fourth finger on her left hand. Her RING SPARKLES in the night. Bright Star.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

VEGETABLES are being peeled and chopped. A CHICKEN BROTH is strained.

OMITTED

INT. MRS BRAWNE’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Inside Keats is dressed, lying dreaming on a DAY BED by the window.

Fanny takes the tray and puts it carefully on Keats’s lap. Margaret steps shyly towards Keats smiling.

KEATS
Toots have you been eating rosebuds?

TOOTS
No, I never have.

KEATS
So where do your cheeks get their blush?

Fanny pulls her chair close, signalling Margaret to leave.

FANNY
Bye, bye.

Keats begins to sip the SOUP. There is a WILD ROSE on Keats’s tray. Fanny takes a PETAL and winds it around her finger.

KEATS
“fold a rose leaf around thy finger’s taperdness, And soothe thy lips.”

Fanny rubs the PETAL across her lips.
KEATS (cont’d)
...sometimes remember that I did not only dote
on roses but climbed mountains and cut up
bodies.

INT. BRAWNE LIVING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

There is a small gathering of Keats’s inner circle in the
Brawne living room. MR TAYLOR and MR HASLAM Keats’s
publishers, Mr Severn a young and very nervous painter friend
and MR HUNT a loyal supporter. The tea has mostly been drunk
and people are preparing to leave.

Fanny is quietly sewing a silk lining onto a CAP. An
improving Keats sits next to her. They are very much a
couple.

MR TAYLOR
I confirmed your ship, the Maria Crowther
sailing to Naples.

MR SEVERN
When does she leave?

MR HASLAM
In ten days.

Keats winces, he looks at Fanny stops sewing, stops
breathing.

MR TAYLOR
Autumn is coming, it’s getting colder, I’m
afraid if you delay there will be less and
less reason to hope.

KEATS
So there is no putting it off I must march
against the battery.

Mr Severn has SPILT his TEA onto his SAUCER and is
neurotically dallying about what to do.

FANNY
Let me pour you another.

MR SEVERN
Really, well perhaps I might just tip it back,
no well perhaps not. Did I take sugar?

FANNY
Yes I think you did.

MR SEVERN
Well then I did not stir it.
FANNY
Mr Keats tells me you are planning to paint in Rome...

MR SEVERN (DISTRACTED)
We shall be in need of an Italian dictionary Mr Keats. Sorry, yes indeed I shall definitely paint.

Shaking hands with Keats Mr Severn leaves. Mr Haslam says his farewell to Keats.

MR HASLAM (DISCREETLY)
Mr Brown could not go?

KEATS
Sadly not! I am waiting to hear but I think it not likely.

Mr Haslam nods a moment thinking.

MR HASLAM
Well there is no alternative, we must put all our hope and faith in Mr Severn.

A distressed Fanny continues the TINY, PERFECT STITCHES around Keats's CAP.

INT. BRAWNE KITCHEN WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny is putting a TRAY together for her and Keats's supper. Mrs Brawne is SHELLING PEAS.

FANNY
My God what I would do to accompany him. He is still so weak.

MRS BRAWNE
No. No! I have looked into it, we can't afford the fare and if anything should happen to Mr Keats or even you in a foreign country, how could you survive?
Fanny

But it should not be Mr Severn he barely knows him. Where is that fool Mr Brown when he is needed? Why doesn’t he write?

Fanny picks up the tray.

Mrs Brawne

I have found a goose for Mr Keats’s last dinner.

Fanny (Suddenly terrified)

Do not say “last”.

EXT. GARDEN WENTWORTH HOUSE – LATE AFTERNOON

Fanny puts Keats’s arm in the correct position about her waist for a waltz. She is giggling, shaking her head happily. Beside her Margaret and Samuel stand ready except Margaret is laughing at Keats who is clowning in his efforts. The dance class is happening on the lawn in the BACK GARDEN. It’s late afternoon and the trees are casting beautiful SHADOWS across the GRASS, while the ROSES bob in the breeze. Mrs Brawne is at the open windows.

Mrs Brawne

Ready?

Fanny

Yes, please.

Mrs Brawne sits back at the PIANO and begins.

Fanny (cont’d)

One, two, three, turn...

Keats

Two or three Posies
With two or three simples –
Two or three Noses
With two or three pimples –

Margaret and Samuel are laughing too much to keep dancing. Keats is making up his own mad steps. Fanny is nimbly keeping up.

Keats (cont’d)

What?
Two of three Wiggles
With two or three Giggles.

Keats stops beside an AUTUMN LEAF.

What’s that?
Fanny playfully stands on it.
FANNY
Nothing whatsoever. There is no autumn in this house only summer. Please remove it.

Margaret takes the LEAF by the stork like a mouse by the tail and drops it over the fence.

MARGARET
And don’t come back.

Keats and Fanny dance on in their own gay way until Keats stops and lies in the grass catching his breath. He looks up and sees the AUTUMN TREE TOPS.

INT. MRS BRAWNE’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny is arranging Keats’s CLOTHES in his TRUNK. Keats is at the LITTLE DESK writing in the front piece of his RED BOUND POETRY BOOKS.

Fanny sits back and watches him, drinking up the last moments of his presence as if he were the sun setting. Fanny moves across and gently strokes Keats’s head and he, like a cat plays up to the stroking, moving his head under her palm.

INT. BRAWNE DINING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - EVENING

The family are eating a roast goose together. The plates are still full, but no-one except Samuel is eating. Fanny starts to gather the plates up. Keats brings from the SIDEBOARD his RED BOUND POETRY BOOKS and puts one beside each family member. Mrs Brawne is looking at hers.

MRS BRAWNE
Oh my mad boy, it is so beautiful. Was it a success?

KEATS
There are two highly positive reviews, by friends, six mainly positive and four hostile. I don’t know, is that successful?

FANNY
Yes! Extremely so...

MRS BRAWNE
So they are selling well?

FANNY
Why must you harp on about selling when the poems themselves are the point and they are so beautiful!

Margaret and Samuel each give Keats a GIFT, Margaret a HANDKERCHIEF she has sewn.
MRS BRAWNE
Yes of course they are, come back and live with us, marry our Fanny, I will miss you as a son.

MARGARET (HUGGING KEATS)
I love you.

She gives Keats a tearful, clinging hug.

Fanny puts the HAT she has been sewing on Keats’s head.

FANNY
It’s your old travel cap. I have sewn a silk lining to keep you warm.

INT. MRS BRAWNE’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - NIGHT

Fanny clips a LOCK of Keats’s hair and carefully folds it into a piece of TISSUE PAPER. Keats picks up the SCISSORS.

FANNY
Is this really happening? Are we really to separate?

Keats selects a DARK CURL from Fanny and cuts it. He puts it between the pages of his POETRY BOOK.

KEATS
I sha’nt be able to speak tomorrow, I suspect I will break down. Let us say our goodbyes now.

FANNY
I want to come to Italy with you.

KEATS
And then...?

FANNY
Be together.

KEATS
For how long?

FANNY
As long as we have.

Keats sighs. Fanny begins to cry.

FANNY (cont’d)
Shall we awake and find all this is a dream? Is there another life? There must be, we cannot be created for this kind of suffering.
Keats puts his arms around Fanny’s neck and draws her head to him. Keats soothes her while he talks.
KEATS
I doubt we shall see each other again on this
earth.

FANNY
Then why are you leaving? Why must you go?

KEATS
Because my friends insist on torturing me with
a hope they can ill afford but have already
financed. It is a hopeless hope, but how do I
refuse?

FANNY
Say you are too ill.

KEATS
"More happy love! More happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting and for ever young."
We have woven a web you and I, attached to the
world but a new world of our own invention.
We must cut the threads Fanny.

Fanny shakes her head.

FANNY
No. I can’t, I never will.

Keats moves away, hitting his head with his palm.

KEATS
Who do I fool? Do I wish you free? NO! NO!
My still unravished bride, I should have bed
you while I was well enough, why not? It
could have been us with child not Brown with
his bastard.

FANNY
You know I would do anything...

KEATS (BITTERLY)
I have a conscience!

Keats is walking to calm himself in his agony.

KEATS (cont’d)
Then let us pretend I am returning in Spring?

Fanny looks up slowly.

FANNY
You will return, I know it.

KEATS
Will we live in the country?
FANNY
Yes, close to Maman.

KEATS
Our bedroom will look out on an apple orchard and beyond that a mountain. I am most partial to a mountain in a mist.

FANNY
I will make a garden where every sort of wild flower grows. We can take our breakfast there on a little table.

KEATS
We will go to bed while the sun is still high.

FANNY
Then it will get dark and the moon will shine through the shutters.

KEATS
And I will hold you close and kiss your breasts, your waist, your arms.

FANNY
Everywhere.

Keats kisses Fanny’s breasts, waist and her arms, then runs his hands along her hands until their fingers touch.

KEATS
Touch has a memory.

FANNY
I know it...

Outside is the sound of FOOTSTEPS.

KEATS
Your mother?

FANNY
She won’t come in.

MRS BRAWNE
Fanny. I am going to bed.

FANNY
I am just joining you.

KEATS
And we will never separate.

FANNY
Never. Not for one night.

Fanny and Keats hold tightly on to each other.
INT. MRS BRAWNE’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - MORNING

Keats stands dressed, ready to leave. The trunk has gone. But still he stays, looking for the last time at the room in which he has enjoyed some happiness. The will to go seems impossible to summon, but finally a rattling cough breaks his reverie. Fanny comes to fetch him.

KEATS

Not a word.

Fanny nods.

EXT. WENTWORTH HOUSE/LANE - MORNING

Fanny and Keats leave the house silently.

Margaret runs after them. Fanny turns and desperately shakes her head dissuading her from coming further. Margaret falls back.

EXT. STREETS AND LANES OF HAMPSTEAD - DAY

Fanny and Keats arm in arm keep stride down the narrow lanes towards the Pond Street Coach Depot. Fanny looks towards Keats but does not speak. Mr Hunt walks a little apart anxiously aware of the young couples ordeal.

EXT. POND ST COACH DEPOT - DAY

Amidst the SMALL CROWD at the COACH DEPOT, STABLE HANDS, CLEANERS, OTHER TRAVELLERS arriving and PARCELS and PRODUCE being unpacked and stacked, Keats and Fanny remain poised. Finally without speaking Keats disengages his arm and squeezes Fanny’s hand. He swiftly boards the COACH. Fanny watches as he is seated then turns and leaves. Keats looks out at the last of Fanny’s figure walking away. Mr Hunt climbs in beside Keats.

INT. WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny bursts through the door of Wentworth House. She runs up the stairs into her room. Fanny opens the LITERARY POCKET BOOK Keats gave her and writes, “MR KEATS LEFT HAMPSTEAD.”

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

The TREES on the Heath are almost bare and the sky is a DARK GREY. PILES OF AUTUMN LEAVES are BURNING, smoking the trees.
A SINGLE BLACK THREAD noses its way through the eye of a NEEDLE. The needle threads in and out of the BLACK MATERIAL Fanny is sewing. Mrs Brawne sits nearby mending.

Margaret is running across the drawing room windows as Mr Brown followed by Abigail their BABY and their LUGGAGE arrive back at Wentworth House.

MARGARET
The baby! Abigail’s baby! Oh God it has red hair!

Abigail now Mrs Brown, is taking tea in the dining room and happily showing off her baby boy to Mrs Brawne and Margaret.

In the connecting sitting room Mr Brown stands at the window, shuffling through his LETTERS from Keats, making an effort to engage with Fanny who is clearly resistant. Fanny is sewing a length of BLACK RIBBON onto the black material, one neat small black stitch after another.

MR BROWN
You saw the baby? Looks like Abigail...John’s reached Naples. They quarantined his ship. He wrote that he made more puns in two weeks out of desperation than he had in any other year of his life. I should have liked to have heard them.

FANNY
You could have, had you gone - I was certain you would.

MR BROWN
I’m planning daily but I fear I have left it too late.

FANNY
Why not leave now, travel overland?

Abigail walks smilingly into the room holding out the crying baby to show Fanny. Mr Brown waves Abigail and the baby away.

MR BROWN
It’s not simple with the baby and my funds reduced, then there’s the snows...

FANNY (SAYS IT OR SILENTLY GIVES THIS IMPRESSION)
And lack of will.
MR BROWN
Should I say it aloud? Will that satisfy you?
I have failed John Keats - I have failed him.
And I pay a price daily - I did not know till
now how tightly he had wound himself about my
heart.

FANNY
What heart? You abandon your ill friend,
never replying or enquiring.

MR BROWN
Fortunately in my absence he was not short of
care, his letter was full of your family’s
kindness...

FANNY
And my love.

Mr Brown is a little stunned, moved despite himself by her
open confession.

MR BROWN (LEAVING)
He asked me to offer whatever comfort can be
given to you.

INT. BRAWNE DINING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAY

Fanny sews a seam in BLACK THREAD. Outside it is SNOWING.
The DOOR BELL RINGS. Margaret answers. It is a LETTER. She
puts it on the other end of the table.

MARGARET
For you Maman, it’s from Italy.

Fanny stops sewing, alarmed. Mrs Brawne slowly rises and
walks to the letter. She glances at Fanny who is waiting
fearfully. Mrs Brawne opens the letter.

MRS BRAWNE
It’s from Keats in Naples. He says it looks
like a dream.

Mrs Brawne stops reading and looks at Fanny who shakes her
head with relief and disappointment.

FANNY
Why doesn’t he write to me?

Fanny looks out into the garden where a bowed Brown reads a
letter.
Mr Brown stands at his window, looking out onto a dreary BARE WINTER GARDEN.
He watches as Margaret and Samuel kick a BALL between them and beyond them the gaunt, upright figure of Fanny slowly comes into view. A mirror match in mood to himself, she paces ghostlike in the snow. Fanny and Brown lock eyes then each look away.

INT. BROWN’S DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE – DAY

Fanny knocks at Mr Brown’s garden door. Mr Brown is surprised to see her, he stands.

FANNY
You once said you would offer what comfort you could.

MR BROWN
Yes, of course, come in.

FANNY
Is there something, anything at all you can read me from his letters? I am disappointed to have none of my own. Any sort of news, even the painful, brings me closer.

MR BROWN
The latest letters are all from Severn. Keats I’m afraid, is in a deplorable state.

Mr Brown sorts through his correspondence.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
I have some older ones from Keats.

FANNY
Please.

MR BROWN
“I can bear to die – I cannot bear to leave her. Oh, God! God! God! Every thing I have in my trunks that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear.”

Mr Brown looks up to judge Fanny’s reaction. She is not shocked but transported.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
“The silk lining she put in my travelling cap scalds my head. My imagination is horribly vivid about her – I see her – I hear her. O that I could be buried near where she lives! I am afraid to write to her – to receive a letter from her – to see her hand writing would break my heart. My dear Brown, what am I to do? Where can I look for consolation or ease? I have coals of fire in my breast. It surprised me that the human heart is capable of containing and bearing so much misery.

(MORE)
Was I born for this end?  God bless her, and her mother."
The letter is to me but it is all about you - keep it.

Fanny shakes her head. They look at each other with something like peace, like compassion, for what they both had and for what they must soon bear.

Fanny turns and Mr Brown watches as Fanny’s ghostlike figure disappears down the hall.

EXT.  APPROACH TO WENTWORTH HOUSE - EVENING

In the last of the light, Brown walks through the MUD SPLATTERED SNOW towards home.

EXT/INT.  BRAWNE DRAWING ROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - EVENING

Fanny and her mother sew while Samuel practices his VIOLIN and Margaret plays happily with the CAT on the couch.

The FRONT DOOR OPENING and CLOSING, then FOOTSTEPS in the hall outside attracts Fanny’s attention. She turns towards the door, poised. Mrs Brawne notices and watches the door anxiously. Samuel stops playing as a sombre Mr Brown enters the room.

Fanny observes Mr Brown sinkingly, her breath suspended.

MR BROWN
It is cold out. How are you all?

Fanny notices a letter from Mr Severn in Mr Brown’s hand.

MRS BRAWNE
We are all quite well enough. But how is Mr Keats?

MR BROWN
It is as unbearable to me as I know it is to you. Mr Keats has died at only 25 years. Mr Severn sent me an account, I have copied it for you Miss Brawne - shall I read it?

Fanny nods.

MR BROWN (cont’d)
Friday 23rd February.
“At four in the afternoon, Keats called me "Severn - Severn - lift me up for I am dying - I shall die easy - don’t be frightened, thank God it has come." At one point a cold, heavy sweat broke out over his whole body and he whispered “Don’t breathe on me it comes like ice.” Keats died imperceptibly...
FANNY

No more.

Mr Brown stops reading.

Fanny makes her way shakily from the room. Mrs Brawne follows. Fanny collapses on the staircase.

FANNY (cont’d)

I should have been with him. I should have held him - it should have been me with him.
Oh my God I am finished. He is gone. Oh Maman help me, please help me.

Mr Brown and Samuel listen stricken. Margaret sits on the couch, tears dropping onto her frock.

OMITTED

EXT. SPANISH STEPS ROME - DAWN

A small funeral procession of TWO COACHES waits by the PIETRO BERNINI FOUNTAIN at the bottom of the SPANISH STEPS. Keats’s COFFIN is loaded into a BLACK FUNERAL COACH. The small procession clatters through Rome’s still sleeping streets.

KEATS (V.O.)

"'Lamia!' he cried - and no soft-toned reply.
The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;
The myrtle sicken’d in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased;
A deadly silence step by step increased
Until it seem’d a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair."

INT. FANNY’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAWN

In the DIM FIRST LIGHT an exhausted Fanny is sewing her BLACK FROCK. She makes a KNOT and CUTS the thread. Across the bed are strewn KEATS’S POETRY BOOKS and his LETTERS. In the next bed sleeps Margaret, her arms about her mother’s neck who sleeps fully dressed. Fanny pulls the BLACK FROCK over her head, one sleeve yet unmade and the hem unfinished.
INT.  FANNY’S BEDROOM WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAWN

With three chops of her big PINKING SHEARS Fanny cuts her hair short. Her BLACK HAIR falls in a circle about her feet. She takes her RED BOUND BOOK of Keats’s poems 1820, her copy of ENDYMION and quietly leaves the room with her BONNET and BLACK BOOTS in her hand. Mrs Brawne rises as she leaves.

MRS BRAWNE
Samuel! Sammy!

INT/EXT.  BRAWNE FRONT DOOR WENTWORTH HOUSE - DAWN

Fanny draws on her COAT and BLACK GLOVES. She opens the front door and steps into the chilled and misty air.

EXT.  HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAWN

Out on the Heath Fanny walks briskly through the winter MIST followed at a respectful distance by a hurriedly dressed Samuel. Fanny, the landscape, the trees, Samuel APPEARING and VANISHING in the FOG. Clutching her precious KEATS BOOKS against her chest, Fanny makes her way up the side of the HILL where she and the landscape completely disappear, only her VOICE continues steadily reciting, learning by heart the poem BRIGHT STAR dedicated to her.

FANNY (V.O.)
“Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art -
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature’s patient, sleepless Eremite,
(devotee)
The moving waters at their priest like task
Of pure ablation round earth’s human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen masque
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors.
No - yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow’d upon my fair love’s ripening breast,
To feel forever its soft swell and fall,
Awake forever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever - or else swoon to death.”

Fanny now alone, walks on the Heath until in the dark she pauses beside the POND. Overhead the STARS GLITTER and are REFLECTED again at her feet.

FADE TO BLACK.

WHITE LETTERS ON BLACK
For three years Fanny Brawne continued to walk Hampstead Heath, often far into the night.
Keats died imagining himself forgotten. Yet generation after generation of poets have been inspired by him, and his fame continues to grow.

CREDITS