

Five English schoolboys are whisked away to 1066.

They fight in the great battle: Hastings.

However, two of the boys fight as Normans. The others are Saxons or Viking.

Thus, (back in 1928) the boys fight each other.

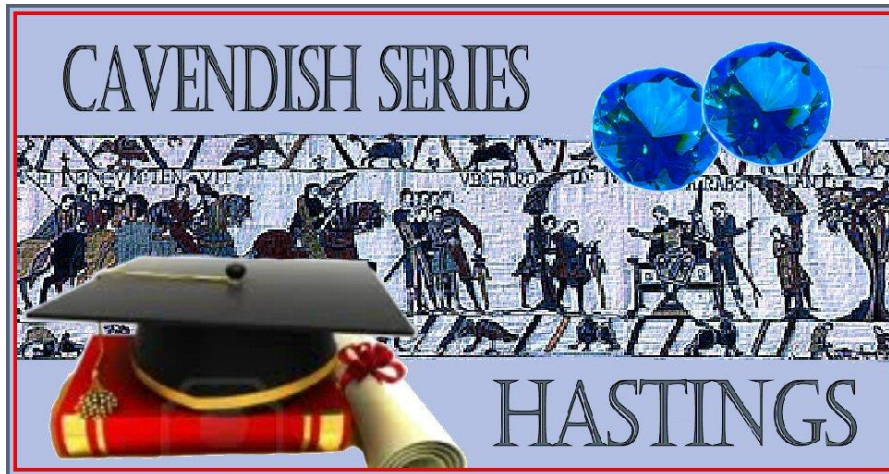
To bring back some normality to their lives, the boys must uncover the secret in  
the little red book ~~

**"The English Under The Norman Yoke".**

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ALTERNATIVE TITLE: "THE ENGLISH UNDER THE NORMAN YOKE".

## ACT I

### **I, Scene i:** Boxing Day, 1927

Scenario -- Boxing Day 1927.

Lord Cavendish (Roy Bevan) has a son (Geoffrey Bevan, 16) by a previous marriage (the wife died ten years ago).

His new wife is Elizabeth (Bessie), nee Marsden. They have three children.

It is Boxing Day and the Cavendish family will drive from Pentecost Abbey, Oxford to the home of Mrs Marsden (Bessie's mother). There, the children will open the presents from their own family and from the Marsden relatives.

Bessie's father died in the Greater London Library only three months previously. However, his widow insists that her late husband would have wanted the Boxing Day festivities to go ahead as usual.

Geoffrey is not related to the Marsdens, and would normally be going to his Burnside cousins, much to everyone's relief. The problem is that Geoffrey, now 6 feet tall and gangly, is behaving badly to everyone without favour. He is sour, morose and vile.

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Progress:

The presents must be ferried out to the chauffeur-driven limousine (boot), we have to discover that Geoffrey is a shit, and that an unexpected bout of measles has precluded him from visiting the Burnside cousins. We have to get to the Marsden residence promptly to start the action: which is the confrontation between Geoffrey and the late Grandpa Marsden.

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene ii: A Lady's Drawing Room In Pentecost Abbey, Oxford.**

*Prim servants in uniform carry out armfuls of Christmas presents, under the direction of Bessie Bevan. The camera notes that amidst this procession, Lord Cavendish (wearing black armband) has slipped into his wife's drawing room, and is looking thoughtfully out the window. The camera follows his gaze.*

*Standing in the long driveway, we spy Christmas carollers, rugged up against the cold, merrily trilling an old Norman carol as a stout old maid, wearing a thick coat and scarf and bearing a large plate of mince pies, cakes and biscuits approaches them.*

*[The tune of "Hey-ho Merry!" will be echoed (ironically) by Egil when we first meet her, and she is singing in the kitchen.]*

*On Christmas Day, Duke William crowned,*

*Hey-ho, Merrily we sing, ho!*

*And bounty gave the lords and lads*

*As he toured every English town.*

*Hey-ho Merry, Hey-ho Merry Christmas to you, everyone.*

*Bring peace and Joy to every Christian soul, oh!*

*Then the singing grinds to a stop as the people tuck into the treats on the maid's plate, thankfully. Plumes of steamy breath rise up. There are innocent smiles and nods as the carollers take comfort in the delicious food.*

Maid, *apologetically*      You'll have to take your Yuletide singing elsewhere I'm afraid. The house is in mourning.

*Random words are heard from the carollers.*

*The carollers*              So sorry.  
   Yes, of course.  
   I wondered about the black hatchment on the door.  
   Thanks for the cakes.

Maid, *kindly*              God bless you ...

END OF SCENE

### **I, Scene iii:** Return To Bessie's Drawing Room In The Abbey.

*The wrapped Christmas presents have gone out the door, presumably to the waiting car boot. Roy is still gazing out the window. Bessie turns to him.*

Bessie *smiling*              Off we go, then.

Roy                              Change of plan, I'm afraid. Geoffrey will have to come with us. He has already packed an overnight bag, after all. He may sit in the front seat, beside the driver.

*[Turning from the window to face his startled wife.]*

I've just now rung off the telephone. Call from Albert Burnside: measles.

Bessie *surprised* Measles?

Roy *shrugs* Yes. Rotten thing to happen right at Christmastide.

Bessie The Burnsidés? So, Geoffrey is not to stay with them?

Roy Obviously not. He won't be welcome to stay with his cousins if they're all spotty and feverish, will he.

Bessie But ... then what will we do with him?

Roy *decidedly* As I said, he'll have to stay with us at your mother's.

*Bessie pulls on her gloves, whilst Roy returns to the window. We see Bessie sneak a look at her husband, biting her lip.*

Roy That your mother is hosting any kind of party with her father not long under the sod is difficult to fathom.

Bessie Papa would have wanted the children to receive their presents as usual, Roy. Of course, the festive mood will be modified, as one would wish.

Still, you will have a word with Geoffrey, then? I mean, my mother ...

Roy *tired of the whole thing* Already have. Several choice words, in fact. I'm as fed-up with the boy as you are.

However, I fear, as usual, that my strictures won't do much good. We have to be patient with him, Bess; tenth anniversary of his mother's death and what have you.

Bessie *penitent* Oh, Roy, I'm so sorry. I shouldn't be complaining about my stepson at such a time ... but his morose ill-humour, bordering on rudeness is really too much to bear.

*Roy approaches Bessie, stroking her hair.*

Roy Bess, I know you've gone out of your way to be a good, kind mother to him.

Bessie *smiles lovingly* Yes, I have. No woman could have done more, I assure you. But in his eyes, I'm still the evil step-mother in some grisly fairy story.

Roy Don't feel disheartened, my dear, for we *all* partake of his Turkish treatment. To be blunt, I'm thinking of hauling him out of Whitefriars and throwing him into the army. The rigours of army life, the discipline: make a man out of him.

Bessie Oh, but he's only a boy.

Roy He's just turned 16 years. Time for him to stop mollycoddling himself and face up squarely to his future.

Come on, lass; time we were on our way!

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene iv:** The Marsden Residence. Less Imposing Than Pentecost Abbey.

*Arrival at the substantial house of Bessie's recently widowed mother.*

*The Bevan family has been chauffeur-driven. On arrival, the chauffeur steps briskly out to open the door for the rear passengers to embark, leaving Geoffrey to his own devices. The Marsden butler snaps his fingers. Like a conjuror, this causes several busy servants to appear. They are to carry in the luggage (which is only light overnight bags) and the presents from the car boot.*

*Geoffrey was seated in the car beside the stiff-backed chauffeur. The boy is very unpleasant, scowling at the world. He gets out of the car unaided and looks about him with huge displeasure and disgust.*

*In the passenger seats sit: Lord Cavendish (Roy), Beatrice, Bessie (all facing the driver's back), Nurse, Michael and baby Nerine (all in the back-facing rear seat).*

END OF SCENE

## I, Scene v: The Muted Boxing Day Celebrations

*Most of the family are in black or sombre grey, with the men wearing black armbands. In an imposing chair, rugged and dressed in expensive lace, sits the formidable Grandmother Marsden. A middle-aged maid is nearby. Bessie heads straight for her mother. Geoffrey is absent from these festivities.*

*In the middle of the room, surrounded by armchairs, kneel Michael Bevan (seven years old) and his beautiful three-year-old sister, Beatrice Bevan. She is very cute, dressed in stylish clothes and blonde curls. She has opened a Christmas present, which is a shiny Jack-in-the-box that jumps up alarmingly. The little girl squeals with delight. At this the adults laugh and applaud, whereas Grandmother Marsden merely smiles a little.*

*Other children are prancing about. Bessie is showing her baby to one of the relatives. There are some bright Christmas decorations. Plates and bowls of food and punch on the sideboard. A merry fire dances in the huge fireplace. This is a jolly, happy room full of joyful family members, except that they are mourning Mr Marsden. The music is bright and Christmassy, but very much in the background.*

Granny *aside to the woman in the next chair*

What is Bessie about to be spoiling those children so? They have all received too many presents. They can't possibly play with them all.

Aunt#1

I rather think that dear Bessie is trying to compensate, Mother.

*[Sharing a secret]*

She was telling me just now that the stepson gives her no end of trouble. Unmanageable. Indeed, I understand that they'll wind up packing the boy off to the military academy. *[Nodding wisely]*

That will certainly slap some sense into him.

Granny

They'd better put a rock on top of that boy's head. He's growing up too fast. Be too tall, he will.

Aunt#2 *Holding the baby*

Ah, what a precious one you are! Nerine ... such a sweet name.

So like Roy, don't you think? Sweet, adorable baby!

*[Confidential, to Bessie]*

And how is it all going along with that boy, Bessie? Any improvement?

*Bessie taking back  
baby Nerine and  
shaking head quickly*

I'm at a complete loss to know what to do with him, Beatie. He has no friends at school. Acts like a complete misfit.

For Goodness sake ... His mother's been dead for ten years, and he won't let any of us forget it; not for a moment!

*Sebastian standing  
behind his sister*

Perhaps I could have a word with Geoffrey?

*Bessie surprised*

You, Sebby? What about? He's quite unapproachable, you know.

*Sebastian shrugs*

Oh, I don't know ... find out what his interests are ....

*Bessie wryly*

His only interests, dear brother, are in feeling quite sorry for himself and in being obnoxious.

*Sebastian gives a mischievous grin.*

*Sebastian*

I'll haul him off to my makeshift gymnasium in the potting room. Biff some sense into him, what?

*Bessie shocked*

Do you mean ... ?

*Sebastian smug*

Fisticuffs!

END OF SCENE

## I, Scene vi: The Marsden Library, Boxing Day 1927.

*In the Marsden library, Geoffrey (wearing tweed suit which only just fits, complete with black armband) sits slumped in a big armchair, bored and cheesed-off, before a roaring fire. He has opened some presents, which sit cast-off beside his chair. He is brooding as he stares at the fire; his lips tightening in anger.*

### FLASHBACK:

Below: flashback to a recent scuffle at Whitefriars Boys School, interspersed with various teachers, who forcefully demand Geoffrey's attention.

These snippets intensify our comprehension of Geoffrey's self-loathing.

### *The flashback is dated as early December 1927:*

*In the schoolyard of Whitefriars, just prior to the boys leaving for their Christmas break. Bright, sparkling music. Snow lies on the ground and boys of about 12 to 16 tear about, in rowdy, rough play. They wear thick dark coats, scarves and gloves. Throwing snowballs, rolling about in the snow, and so on. Geoffrey, grim-faced, head-down, slouches his way across this scene, hands firmly in pockets. He wears a battered woollen barrow-boy cap. Leonard, Cedric, George and Henry tear past, in a rumbustious game of football. Henry smashes roughly into Geoffrey.*

Henry                      Look out, Bovine!

*Geoffrey tries to defend himself from the surprise onslaught, but Cedric easily pushes him to the ground. He holds Geoffrey down with his foot. Camera looks up at the boys, as if the camera is Geoffrey. Cedric makes fun of Geoffrey in a nasty, cruel way.*

Cedric                      Cattle forage in the snow, Bovine. Why don't you try to find some clover for your lunch?

George *as the boys*      Always falling asleep in class, Bovine. You're a shame, you really  
*laugh at Bevan*              are!

Hat!

*[Rips the hat off Geoffrey and chucks it away.]*

Come on, lads. Let's leave the beast to his dinner.

*There follows rude laughter. The nasty boys kick and shove Geoffrey as they tear off. Geoffrey scrambles to his feet, fumbles about for his cap, then runs into hiding around the back of a huge stone school building. Geoffrey cries angrily.*

***The flashback is also dated as early December 1927:***

*There is a switch of scene in our continuing flashback. The following represents various "in-your-face" confrontations between Geoffrey and the Whitefriars masters.*

*Various male teachers look crossly into Geoffrey's face, calling for his attention.*

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Teacher #1 | Answer me, Master Bevan! Answer at once, boy!  |
| Teacher #2 | Do you know the answer to this quadrilateral equation, Geoffrey Bevan? Well – do you?  |
| Teacher #3 | You will one day be Lord Cavendish, Sir! Is this to be the abysmal level of the future Lord Cavendish's intelligence quotient?     |
| Teacher #1 | I shall have no other recourse but to pen a stern letter to your exalted father regarding your lack of scholastic progress, Bevan. |
| Teacher #2 | You will dignify our mathematics class with an answer. And it had better be the correct answer, young man.                         |
| Teacher #3 | Pull yourself together and pay attention, boy. Pay attention!  |

***The flashback is also dated as December 1927:***

*We return to the schoolyard. With humiliating cruelty, the four boys (Skeggs, George, Leonard and Henry) are tormenting Bevan. Henry is particularly savage. The camera pointed upward, as if it is Geoffrey Bevan.*

Henry <i>with teeth</i>	I'm going to smash your face with my boot, you ignorant
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*clenched*                      *cockroach!*

*Henry's boot comes down hard on the camera.*

## **END OF FLASHBACK**

*The actor who plays Geoffrey Bevan also plays the young Viking Snarr.*

*The actor who plays George Danton also plays the young Roger de Curci.*

*The actor who plays Cedric Skeggs also plays the young Wegga (son of Eorl Wegga).*

*The actor who plays Leonard Mortimer also plays the young Peter Frankiss.*

*The actor who plays Henry Bell also plays the young Oldroyd.*

*The actor who plays Grandpa Marsden also plays Sir Digby.*

*The actor who plays Sandford Durrell also plays Sir Hubert Attewoode.*

*The actor who plays Monsieur Laureston also plays William The Conqueror.*

*We return to Geoffrey in the Marsden library, staring into the fire, with eyes ablaze with hatred.*

*Geoffrey has formed his hands into two fists. With clenched teeth he mutters with savage anger to himself.*

Geoffrey                      I'll get you back, you faggots!

Grandpa Marsden Suddenly Appears.
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*Grandpa Marsden (in dark suit) stands near the fire so that Geoffrey can see him. He has a small gift for the boy. Geoffrey snaps out of his filthy mood in startled surprise. The music is low and foreboding.*

Grandpa Marsden            You don't recognise me, then? Grandpa Marsden?  
  
   And do you not stand when an elder enters the room, Master Bevan?

*Geoffrey hesitates. Slowly, without any energy, and with an ill-grace, the boy shuffles to his feet. He does not stand straight, but slouches. And this gesture is obviously performed under sufferance.*

Grandpa Marsden            Here you are, my boy. Somehow or other, this Christmas present  
*bright and friendly*            from myself to you was left under the tree.

*Grandpa Marsden hands to Geoffrey the wrapped present, which Geoffrey is extremely reluctant to receive. On the other hand, Grandpa Marsden smiles encouragement.*

Geoffrey                      Sir.

Grandpa Marsden            Well, aren't you going to open it, then?

*Geoffrey makes a feeble attempt to open the unwanted gift, then stops unwrapping it.*

Geoffrey                      I'm not your grandson. I don't really understand why you've given me a present at all, Mr Marsden.

Grandpa Marsden            The present **must** come to you.  
  
   I might not be a relation of yours, not in blood. But I always think of you as my kith and kin, through your stepmother, of course.

*There is no response from Geoffrey other than a very sullen look.*

Grandpa Marsden            I commiserate with you, I really do. I can appreciate that every  
*gently*                              Christmas is Hell for you, young Geoffrey.  
  
   They usually let you visit with your Burnside cousins, don't they? I suppose you enjoy yourself very much with them, hmmm?

*Geoffrey remains ungracious. He looks down at the carpet. He is unwilling to engage with the older*

*man. However, Grandpa Marsden remains determined to press on.*

Geoffrey                      No, I don't.

Grandpa Marsden              But due to an untimely illness, this Christmas, the parents brought you here: the last place on Earth where you could possibly be happy.

*Geoffrey shrugs his shoulders, not quite understanding where this conversation is leading.*

Geoffrey                      As a matter of fact, I **would** like to know just why I've been dragged here.

*At last! Grandpa Marsden spots a chink of light in this stilted and one-sided dialogue.*

Grandpa Marsden              Because I **organized** that they would bring you to us this year, *triumphant* Geoffrey. I especially wanted to see you.

Geoffrey *confused and on the back foot*      What? Did you send an attack of the measles to the Burnsides?

Grandpa Marsden *nods and gestures*      Of course. Now, do open your present.

*Continuing in his reluctance, Geoffrey stares in disbelief at this outrageous confession. Then he shrugs at the inevitable.*

Geoffrey                      Very well.

*[Opens the present, downcast]*

It's ... it's only a book.

*[Disappointed]*

You've wasted your money. I never read.

Grandpa Marsden              Yes, that's a deplorable admission to make. 'Tis a very old book, Master Bevan. "The English Under the Norman Yoke." Very special. And you're the **only one** who could ever read it to unlock the mysteries therein.

*Geoffrey now raises his eye. His interest has been piqued.*

Geoffrey                      I beg your pardon? Mysteries?

*Grandpa Marsden steps closer to Geoffrey.*

Grandpa Marsden *very softly*      Some things can't be explained. Your mother was taken from you many years ago, on Christmas Day, if my memory serves, which it usually doesn't.

Why? Why was that? Was it so that you and I could become acquainted through your father's second marriage to my daughter Bessie?

*Geoffrey stares at the old man, abhorring this ludicrous suggestion. Geoffrey then sobs, throwing the small red book to the floor. Geoffrey runs out of the room. The old man stoops in an uncomfortable way to pick up the book, and the camera focuses for a second on the old hardcover book in Grandpa Marsden's hand. Music drifts over the scene: foreboding, dark themes are heard in the music.*

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene vii:** In an Upstairs Corridor, Outside a Bedroom.

*Geoffrey walks along a corridor, carrying his spongebag, wearing pyjamas and dressing gown.*

*Bessie, his stepmother, approaches, smiling kindly at him.*

Bessie *bright and cheerful*              Do you know your way about, my dear? Have you everything you require?

Geoffrey *sullen and ungrateful*              Yes.

*Bessie hesitates as the boy puts his hand on the doorknob of the bedroom. Bessie is desperate to get through to her thankless stepson.*

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*In confused terror, Geoffrey drags himself up onto his elbows, crying out. There is no-one there. A moment later, there is a knock at his door. Bessie is concerned for Geoffrey. She calls to him from the hallway outside his room.*

Bessie *voice-off*                    Geoffrey, are you alright in there?

*Geoffrey is still on the floor, breathless and frantic that Bessie does not burst in on him. Beads of sweat appear on his face.*

Geoffrey *voice racing & breaking*                    Yes, I'm fine. I ... I just fell off the bed reaching for something. I'm alright, honestly. Don't come in!

Bessie *disembodied voice*                    Goodnight, then, dear.

Geoffrey                                Er ... yes, goodnight.

*Geoffrey wipes away the sweat with the back of his hand. He crawls onto the bed and, looking absolutely scared, reaches for the book and (gripping it tight shut and without opening it) gingerly puts it on the bedside table. Then, he puts a heavy weight on it.*

*Later, Geoffrey is lying in bed, with one eye cocked open, looking at the bedside table. The camera moves in on the book. (We must try and drag a bit of quirky humour from this little episode.) We hear quirky music.*

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene viii: Still At The Marsden House.**

*Next day, the children are rugged up warm and playing in the light fall of snow. Geoffrey has hidden in the conservatory. He sits among the shrubbery, shaking his head, and muttering. Sebastian bursts the door open, looking about as if searching for somebody.*

Sebastian *breathless* Ah! Brought you to ground at last. Come and see the potting room. I think you'll be impressed.

Geoffrey *sneering unpleasantly* Potting room? I don't think so.

Sebastian *insistent* Come on, old chap! I've fitted it out as a gymnasium. Lots of fun. More to your taste, I think, than this botanical atmosphere.

*Nice view of the plants in the conservatory as we move with the young men into an adjoining room, which is an indoor potting shed (garden implements, pots, and so on) with additional sporting equipment (dumb-bells, weights and a punching bag). Bit of a mess, but attractively so. Immediately, Sebastian chucks a pair of practice boxing gloves at Geoffrey, whilst he himself pulls on large padded boxing mitts.*

Sebastian *keen for the sport* Take off your jacket. Let's find out what you're made of Master Bevan. Lay into me!

Geoffrey *sour* Not likely!

*Sebastian cuffs Geoffrey several times, which angers the boy.*

Geoffrey *angrily* I don't want to!

*Sebastian laughs at his step-nephew, dancing about, pushing and cuffing to force the contest. Geoffrey, now white with anger, rips off his jacket (hurling it to the floor), pulls on the boxing gloves, then begins to fight in earnest. Sebastian fends him off with the mitts, shouting encouragement. Geoffrey is a natural athlete but has never bothered with any sports.*

Sebastian Don't fight angry, fight clever. Good! Good! Lovely long reach there. Use your shoulders. Put all your weight behind the punch. That's it! Go for my body as well as my head. Excellent! Nice one!

Quick Scenes Depicting The Sparring Session.

*Now follows a series of quick scenes. The young men have removed their outer clothing.*

*There are now cracks of laughter; they are enjoying the sparring.*

*We see quick action shots with accompanying bright music as Sebastian instructs the boy. Then, sweaty, towels around necks. Sebastian chucks Geoffrey under the chin in a friendly gesture. Both young men are breathless and chuckling. Geoffrey's grey mood has lightened considerably. In fact, from this moment on, Geoffrey sloughs off his brittle exterior to re-join the Human Race.*

Geoffrey                    I say. Your house isn't haunted, is it?

Sebastian                 Haunted? God, no.

*[Whimsical look]*

You haven't seen a ghost, have you?

Geoff                        I rather think that I have, actually. Your father gave me a History book yesterday. It was a Christmas present. But I had this weird feeling that the drawings in it came to life.

Sebastian *puzzled*        My father? Dear boy, my father died about three months ago. Don't you remember?

*Geoffrey (confused and embarrassed) has the grace to blush. He tries to apologize to Sebastian but is tongue-tied.*

Geoff *aghast*                It ... I'm ...

Then who was it who gave me the book? It was – He was ...

Sebastian *shrugs, not really concerned*    Oh, I don't know. One of the uncles, I suppose. What did he look like?

Geoff                        An elderly gentleman, really. And ... oh, yes! He introduced himself to me as Grandpa Marsden.

Sebastian *dismissive*     Well, it was obviously one of his brothers, having a joke. Not in

the best of good taste, I would have said. Come on, let's try and rake up some food. I'm jolly-well hungry after all that exercise. Aren't you?

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene ix:** Geoffrey's Bedroom At The Marsden Residence.

*Geoffrey wakes with a start. Sir Digby/Grandpa Marsden (dressed as a knight in tabard and chainmail) sits at his ease beside the bed, reading the little history book by candle-light. Geoffrey makes gurgling noises, unable to speak, then reaches out and pinches the man savagely on the forearm.*

*Sir Digby yowls in pain*      What in all that's wonderful was **that** for?

Geoffrey                      Then you're not dead after all!

*Sir Digby affronted*        Of course I'm dead. But that's no reason to go about gouging your fingers into cadavers, now is it?

*Geoffrey interested*        Am I dead, too?

*Sir Digby apparently annoyed by such a question*                      No. You are destined for military greatness. Your time to die, thank Heavens, is a long way off.

*Geoffrey alert, very pleased*                      Me? Military greatness?

*Sir Digby sighs*              The Germans rise up again and you lot will have to fight them once more.

*Geoffrey frowns*              But we've only just had a Great War against the Germans.

*Sir Digby*                      Well, they'll bob up again. And the Japanese.

Geoff *astounded*

Good Lord!

Sir Digby

But you'll become a sterling army officer and be much decorated. Sandhurst. Year after next would be perfect. And you must leap at the chance when it comes. 'Twill be the making of you, Master Bevan ...

Now look here! You had better call me "Sir Digby" from now on so that you won't give my relations a nasty fright. Your calling me "Grandpa Marsden" will unnerve them all, I fear.

Anyway, more of that anon. We have some serious work to do right now. Step out of the bed but be careful not to land face-down in the briny, as The Great Man is said to have done.

*Sir Digby assists Geoffrey to alight from the bed.*

Geoffrey

The Great Man?

Pevensey, East Sussex.
------------------------

*They are instantly standing on the beach at Hastings (that is Pevensey) in the dawn light. They stand side-by-side, looking across to France. Geoffrey is in his pyjamas, and Sir Digby is still in his battle-dress. Geoffrey grabs hold of the old man in fright. Sir Digby manages to steer clear of the boy's frightened clutches.*

Sir Digby

Steady on, there! You'll have to get used to this sort of jumping about in space and time when you knock about with me, young feller.

Now, look here! This is obviously Hastings, and this stretch of water here is the Channel, which the French call 'La Manche' (the Sleeve). And over there ... that is Normandy.

*There is a pause. A slight breeze ruffles their hair. Geoffrey shivers with cold.*

Sir Digby William the Bastard gathered some 6000 warriors, and shipped them, with all the horses and equipage across this water in 1066.

*[Turns to the boy.]*

You know about that, don't you?

Geoffrey I've heard of 1066, but never much bothered with it.

Sir Digby Well, from now on it will be a big part of your life. Learn everything you can about it from that little book I gave you.

Geoffrey *reverently* Gosh!

Sir Digby Do you lads play sport at that school of yours?

Geoffrey Sport at Whitefriars? By Jove, I should definitely say so! In fact some chaps ... well, that's all they ever do is to play sport, Sir.

Sir Digby *nods, pleased* Good! You must take up wrestling, archery and especially fencing.

Geoffrey What? Whatever for?

Sir Digby You're going to have to hone your skills in the military line.

Geoffrey *horrified, can only gulp* ... And ... and boxing? Sebby ... I should say, your son Sebastian, is encouraging me to box.

Sir Digby Pugilism! Absolutely essential. But the fencing is *de rigueur*, as the Frogs have it. Olympic Games.

*Geoffrey is entirely at sea. He shakes his head as if to clear it.*

Geoffrey Er ... Sir! You mentioned something yesterday about the book holding some sort of mystery. Could you ...?

Sir Digby Yes, the blue emeralds. Or is it green sapphires? Anyway, you'll recognize them when they come.

Just think, Geoffrey Bevan. You will meet him: the Great Man. And you will model your future battle tactics on what you learn from him.

Geoffrey                      Who is The Great Man?

Sir Digby                     Come along. Back to bed. You've a big week ahead of you.

Geoff *resisting, not to be fobbed off*              Sir, what Great Man? Of whom do you speak?

Sir Digby                     Why, the Duke of Normandy. William the Conqueror.

Geoffrey's Bedroom at Marsden House.
--------------------------------------

*Geoffrey is suddenly sitting up in bed in early morning light. He is alone. He gulps and shivers. His hair is windswept. He hesitates, then grabs a jacket to put around his shoulders. He then carefully takes the history book, and begins to read, still sitting up in bed. The music lures us into the next scene, at Whitefriars Boys School, in Mr Frederick Durrell's History class.*

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene x:** A Classroom At Whitefriars. The History Lesson With Mr Frederick Durrell.

*Mr Durrell is dressed in cap and gown. He is a tall, well-built man, who stalks about the classroom trying desperately to drum up interest in the boys.*

*The bored boys have been lolling about. The lesson is nearing its end. When Geoffrey is later picked out for Durrell's harsh treatment, the other boys seem pleased. They snicker, laugh, nudge each other, stick Geoffrey in the back with their rulers and are all generally unpleasant to him: he is treated as a complete zero.*

Durrell                         So, to continue with King Edward: does anybody know why he was known as "The Confessor"? Yes, Bodlington?

Bodlington *stands confidently* Sir, he was called "Edward the Confessor" because he was a very holy king.

*[Smirking, sits down.]*

Durrell Yes indeed he was. His death was an enormous tragedy for the Saxon people. And why was his death an enormous tragedy for the Saxon people, Cedric Skeggs?

Cedric Er ... he um ... He was --

Durrell Stand, boy, when you answer your History Master. Stand on the two legs which God gave you.

Cedric *standing* Sorry Sir.

*[Clears throat. Uses his facial expressions and voice to be persuasive.]*

He was a very good king, Sir, and the people were sorry that he'd died.

Durrell *eyeing Cedric askance* Yes, well, there's a little more to it than that, as we shall discover. I speak of course of that most momentous battle in the history of the world. Yes, of the *World*, young Mr. Arkendale.

The Battle of Hastings awaits us. We can only hope that Geoffrey Bevan has returned from the Yuletide break for this first History lesson in 1928 with more enthusiasm than he has shown in this Year of Our Lord 1927 for the Saxon and Viking years.

*Geoffrey is utterly downcast for being so singled-out with this sledgehammer sarcasm. He looks about him, at a sea of sneering boyish faces, glaring at him.*

The Little Red Book Kicks In.

## MAJOR MOOD CHANGE within the scene:

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Below: this is a "translucent" scene, wherein the classroom transforms to fit the story told (apparently) by Durrell, as envisaged by Geoffrey. In this scene (ultra-important as plot progression) we learn (in advance of the plot) of the fate of the "Eyes of Christ" emeralds.

*The lighting, mood and scene seem to change. The boys turn back to the teacher. Geoffrey, leaning forward in his seat, looks upwards, something curious in his expression, as the History teacher drones on.*

*Throbbing strings are heard. The mood is: "something-is-about-to-happen-but-not-just-yet" music. This is a syrupy scene, lit by the ruddy glow of the dancing fire. Then we vaguely make out a crucifix, our camera focusing on Christ's eyes as he looks up in his passion.*

*Our camera backs away.*

Now Follows The Very Important ANUND Sequence.

*The actor who plays the Russian prince (Victor Kamarisov) will also play Anund the Viking.*

*There is a barely-lit classroom. The mood is surreal.*

*The boys at their desks all lean forward, keen and enthralled. Their faces are illuminated by the dancing reflection of a huge fire.*

*We are in fact not in a classroom, but in the hall at Egilstead. Durrell, using a very persuasive storytelling voice, tells the tale, whilst the boys are breathlessly rapt.*

*At first, there is just an unintelligible hum (which is Durrell's voice coming into "view").*

*[Below, in time with Durrell's words we see the story played out in the room: that is, the tale of King Harold and Eorl Wegga. Eorl Wegga wanders off with the casket under his arm.*

*The music builds all the time **towards** the magnificent, marvellous title theme. But we do not get there yet.*

*About Durrell's voice:*

*Now we can hear it. His face is alert, intense, and not his usual classroom drone. He is more of a narrator than a boring schoolmaster.*

Durrell *as the storyteller*

... And the gracious Prince of Byzantium fought mightily against the ferocious pirate, Anund the Viking.

But the Dane was the stronger of the two men. He wrested the leather pouch (that pouch that contained the two most precious jewels in **all** of Christendom) from the unhappy Prince.

Whereupon, Anund the Viking stowed the priceless jewels in a strongbox, locked it with a golden key, and delivered that casket to the King of England, Harold Godwinsson.

When King Harold heard that his rival for the throne of England was about to set sail from Normandy, he bade his henchman, Eorl Wegga of Egilstead, to guard that strongbox.

And this Eorl Wegga did.

Now follows a SHARP and SUDDEN return to original classroom History lesson.

Return To The Boring History Lesson In The Classroom.
---

*The interlude is broken sharply and suddenly. We return abruptly to the original classroom scene. The music completely stops.*

*Now himself again, Mr Durrell smashes his cane loudly on Geoffrey's desk. Geoffrey wakes and sits up with a tremendous start and a gasp.*

Durrell *authoritative*

How dare you fall asleep in my History class, Geoffrey Bevan!

Does your Father (Lord Cavendish) pay good money for you to come to this college for the purpose of learning to sleep?

Any further inattention or mental laziness on your part will be met with a sound thrashing. Now sit up straight. Straight I said! You'll learn your History and like it, or else I shall flog you, be warned!

*Geoffrey flicks his head about. Every boy is watching him, willing him to go down in flames and be flogged by Durrell, who towers over him.*

Durrell *very firm*

Mr Bevan! For the second time, I shall ask you to name the combatants at the battle of Hastings. And I must warn you, Sir, that your ***continued*** inattention in my History class will be met with six of the best from the cane. Now, young man: for your response, please.

*Geoffrey looks wildly about. The other boys grin and giggle at his discomfiture. They are obviously glad that he is under the pump. Geoffrey straightens himself and coughs.*

Geoffrey *lost, all at sea* The Battle of Hastings, Sir, was fought between ...

*[He is lost.]*

Durrell *closing in on*

*the boy, towering over the seated boy, cane in hand*

Well? Stand up, boy and answer the question. The Battle of Hastings, Mr Bevan. ***Who – were – the – combatants?***

*Geoffrey is trembling with fear as he rises unsteadily to his feet. His fingers touch the red History book in his pocket. It seems to give him confidence. As he speaks, he becomes ever more lively, keen.*

Geoffrey

It was ... it was ...

*[Gulps, straightens his shoulders, forges ahead]*

You see, Sir, Edward the Confessor told William of Normandy that he might be King. But he told the same thing to Harold Godwinsson. They were all related, Sir.

Durrell *surprised, backs off* What?

Geoffrey *animated* They were all the descendents of the Danes ... er, they were Vikings: Edward, Harold and William. That's why they were called Normans. You know, "northmen", "men from the north".

Harold was Edward's heir, but so also was William. And then there was another chap. A Dane called Tostig.

And Sir, they fought for the sovereignty of England in a field. Hastings, on Christmas Eve, 1066. Sir.

*Durrell is interested and surprised that his dullest pupil should have bothered to bone-up on the Battle of Hastings. Durrell plonks himself on a nearby desk as Geoffrey goes to sit.*

Durrell Actually, William was crowned on Christmas Day, with the battle being in October. And your Tostig, who incidentally was Harold's brother and sworn enemy, was already dead by this time. But you surprise me, and I'm pleased to hear at last a note of excitement in your voice.

*[Geoffrey sits]*

No, no. Keep going. As you can see, you have captured our full attention. Tell us what happened.

Geoffrey *stands, really living the tale*

Yes, Sir,

The Angles, Saxons and Danes (or Vikings, as they are sometimes called) fought alongside Harold. The house-carls wielded huge battle axes, which brought down the Normans and their horses. The Norman cavalry charged over and over again. But William was clever, Sir, with his strategy. He lured the Saxon fyrdmen to his warriors, and when they did so, William's forces rounded on them, slewing them willy-nilly. The fyrdmen retreated, but the house-carls bravely fought on. Finally, Sir, King Harold was slain with an arrow to the eye. That left England at the mercy of Duke

William and his Norman barons.

*[Looks around at the rapt faces of the other boys.]*

That's about it, Sir.

*As Geoffrey sits down, a burst of applause and encouragement rises from the other boys. They still obviously think that Geoffrey is a bit of a joke, but he is pleased at the praise.*

*As Durrell moves back to the blackboard, Cedric and Henry hurl large spit balls at Geoffrey.*

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene xi:** The School Gymnasium.

*This is a 1920's-style gymnasium. There is lots of equipment: rings, bars, a vaulting horse, and such like. Young men and boys in loose-fitting 1920's style sports kit leap about. There is lots of male shouting.*

*We see a boxing ring at floor level in the corner. Some lads are sparring. Camera closes in on the small group watching the fisticuffs. Some are wearing protective headgear and battered old boxing gloves, holding mouthguards. They have gowns on or about their shoulders: they jig and shiver in the cold.*

*The sports master points to Geoffrey and he scrambles through the ropes without seeming to have any fear. He puts in his mouthguard and dances about a bit. His opponent is a dopey-looking boy: big and lumpy with hunched shoulders and weary expression. When Geoffrey is told to come forward and start boxing, Geoffrey does so, instantly flooring the other boy with a couple of well-executed punches. There is a stunned silence. Then Geoffrey turns, takes out the mouthguard.*

Geoffrey *defiant*                      Come on, Treacle. I'll take you on.

*Laughter, as Geoffrey dances about, shadowboxing.*

Henry *nasty, inciting,*              Give the ponce a belting, Treacle. Put the little shit in his place.

*to Cedric*

Leonard                      Yes, larrup him! But beware of his right uppercut. I think he might be rather handy with his fives.

*Cedric is very keen. He loves boxing and usually wins due to his brawn and prowess. Grinning broadly, Cedric smacks his boxing gloves together in real delight.*

*As Cedric scrambles up in the ring, the defeated boy drags himself out. Cedric takes up a very professional boxing stance, as was favoured in the '20s.*

Cedric                      Come on up to me, then. I'll give you a boxing lesson.

Sport master              Begin!

*This match is quite a good standard, with the boys exchanging blows willingly. They attract quite an audience, and all the boys yell encouragement to both combatants. Geoffrey is the superior boxer, being very quick, and quite without fear. He lands a series of strong punches which soon have Cedric sitting on his bum. Geoffrey raises his arms in triumph. Rather than being upset or miffed, Cedric leaps to his feet and congratulates Geoffrey. The other boys applaud, even Henry, Leonard and George.*

END OF SCENE

<p><b>Interlude:</b> The camera drinks-in the glorious wooded lawns of Whitefriars as it (the camera) nears the chapel.</p>
---

**I, Scene xii:** The Boys (In "Civvies") Are Filing Out Of Chapel.

*A young rector is standing on tiptoe, looking keenly over the boys, searching for someone.*

Rector *looking worried*    Is Geoffrey Bevan there? Ah, there you are, Geoffrey. Your parents are here to visit you. I've left them in the green sitting

room. You have been given permission to meet them there.

Geoffrey                      My parents? Cripes, I hope nothing is wrong.

*Geoffrey dashes off, still holding prayer book*

END OF SCENE

### **I, Scene xiii:** In The Green Sitting Room.

*An airy room, overlooking the sports field and the woods. Mr & Mrs Bevan sit on straight-back chairs. They are both looking at the view, and we have interrupted their conversation.*

Roy *speaking sotto voce to Bessie*              Don't worry; we're sure to get it all sorted out. The boy can't possibly have had anything to do with this.

*[Dismissive]*

Your brother has misunderstood, that's all.

*As Bessie nods, the door opens slightly, and a teacher, grinning like a Cheshire cat, pokes his head around the door enquiringly.*

Roy                              Stinky Armitage! Well, I never!

*The teacher, beaming and delighted, quickly enters the room to shake hands with a now-standing Roy.*

Armitage                      You've come to visit young Geoffrey, no doubt. Lovely to see you again, Roy.

Roy *equally delighted*              Dear, this is my old school chum, Bernie Armitage. Wound up in the Army with him, too. One of the best friends a chap ever had. Bernie, allow me to introduce you to my wife, Elizabeth. Bernie is now one of the masters here at Whitefriars, and no doubt doling out whackings to the students with great verve.

*Armitage bowing and shaking hands with Bessie* Don't listen to Beefie, Madam. Quite outrageous! How simply splendid to meet you, Mrs Bevan. Or may I call you Elizabeth?

*Bessie charming* Please! I'm Bessie to my friends. Shall I leave you two gentlemen to reminisce?

*Armitage* No, no. Young Geoffrey has just been summoned. The boys were at chapel, you know. Sunday morning. I say, has anyone ordered tea for you?

*Bessie* Oh, no. Please don't fuss. After all, we're --

*The door has been left ajar, and Geoffrey sneaks in. His father, on seeing him, nods encouragingly.*

*Roy jovial* Ah, come in Geoffrey.

Armitage, I'll catch up with you when I've sorted out this family business with my son.

*Roy turns to his son and shakes hands with him.*

*Roy bonhomous* Well, well, boy, you're looking very fit and well. Good to see.

*Geoffrey very pleasant* How do you do, Father.

*Without hesitation, Geoffrey then bends to kiss Bessie on the cheek, which surprises her absolutely. Geoffrey even smiles at his once-detested stepmother.*

*Geoffrey sincere* Hello, Mother. How nice of you to visit me.

*With a quick glance, Geoffrey notes that his father is still in jolly conversation with Armitage.*

*Geoffrey speaks in an urgent, thrilling under voice to Bessie.*

*Geoffrey hoarse whisper* Get rid of Father, will you? I urgently need to speak with you **alone!**

*Bessie is confused and very much overwhelmed by her stepson's pleasant greeting. And even more so by his violently-expressed request.*

*Bessie* I beg your pardon?

*Geoffrey whispers hoarsely as his father winds up with Armitage, who then leaves the room.*

Geoffrey *urgent whisper* I must speak to you. Send Father off to look at the Honour Boards, or something, can't you?

*Bessie, stunned, stares at Geoffrey, open-mouthed. Meanwhile, Roy is still standing. He adopts a serious demeanour.*

Roy *frowning* Now, my boy. A rather serious occurrence has overset the Marsden household, and your uncle Sebastian believes that you may be able to shed light upon it.

They've lost a very valuable antique: a book, in fact. It's a history book, small with a red leather cover. Do you know anything about the disappearance of that book?

Geoffrey *sets himself up, tall and straight, not afraid* Yes, Sir. One of the Marsden uncles gave it me as a Christmas present. I kept the wrappings and card which came with it, if you'd care to verify what I'm saying. They are in my room at home, Sir.

Roy *perplexed* Uncle? Which uncle?

Geoffrey I'm not sure, Father. He told me that I should read the book, which I've done, and a jolly old wheeze it was too, Sir.

Roy *dumb founded* "A jolly old wheeze?"

Geoffrey Yes, Sir. I've to tell you both that my History teacher is rather pleased with my progress.

*[Frowns boyishly]*

My Mathematics is still a bit soupy, but I'm really working hard at that. You'll see!

*Roy looks at his wife, and then back at the boy, still perplexed.*

Roy *flummoxed* But the book, Geoffrey. That thing was safely under lock and key, behind glass. No-one has the key, except that it's in a safe-deposit box in a London bank vault. That book positively **cannot** have been removed from its bookcase, save by divine

intervention.

Now, see here, Geoffrey. Where is the book now?

*Geoffrey puts the prayer book into one pocket and digs out the history book from the other one. He hands the little red book to Roy.*

Geoffrey                    Here it is. Please apologise on my behalf for what's happened. I'll write to Grandmother Marsden and explain, shall I?

*Both Roy and Bessie are hugely overcome by Geoffrey's changed demeanour, staring at him as if at a rara avis.*

Bessie *recovers*            Why... why thank you, Geoffrey. That would be charming.

Roy *flipping through the book*            But confound it, boy, that still don't explain how you ever got hold of this damned book! Which uncle gave it to you? What did he look like?

*Whilst Roy is momentarily distracted, flipping through the history book, Geoffrey takes a chance to make urgent faces at his stepmother, who takes the hint. She reaches over and pats her husband's knee.*

Bessie                        I think I'd better manage it, Roy. I'd like to have a chat with your son. Do you mind wandering off for a few minutes? I'll meet you at the stairs, shall I? And then we'll look-in on Michael in the Prep school.

Roy *surprised at this turn of events*            Eh?

Bessie *firmly*                I'll handle this, dear.

~~~~~ Break ~~~~~

*Cut to Bessie and Geoffrey in earnest conversation, with Geoffrey sitting close beside Bessie and leaning forward, imploring. Roy is no longer in the room.*

- Geoffrey *earnestly* I can't possibly explain the book. You'd not believe it in a thousand years. But you must tell me: your Father! Was he trying to solve some puzzle or other at the time of his death?
- Bessie *aghast* Did you want to speak privately to me about my dead Father? What on earth has possessed you?
- Geoffrey Never mind that just now. Only it's vitally important that you tell me **anything** you can remember about Grandpa Marsden's concerns or his worries. Possibly concerning precious stones: emeralds or sapphires they'd be. If you do think of anything, write to me ... or even use the telephone.
- Bessie *confused* Geoffrey! I'll try my best, but ...  
*[Draws breath]*  
Still, I really must try to explain to my poor old mother how that rare book wound up in your possession. You see, it was found clutched in my father's hands when his body was discovered in the Library. You can't think how overtaken my mother is by its disappearance.
- Geoffrey *thrilled and astounded* He had the book with him when he died? Really? I didn't know that! So he might have actually been **reading** it when he popped off ...
- Bessie *reproving* Geoffrey ... Please don't put it quite like that.
- Geoffrey *contrite* Sorry.
- Bessie You said something about wrapping paper and a note. Perhaps I can recognize the handwriting, or --
- Geoffrey *snaps fingers, now alert and excited* Of course! The handwriting!  
... But you mustn't become hysterical when you **do** recognize it. And for goodness sake, don't say **anything** to Father. Not a word. Do you promise faithfully, now?



Geoffrey *warming to his bathroom visitor* And my name's down for all sorts of sporting activities: wrestling, boxing, contact ball, and --

Sir Digby *now faces the boy* Excellent! Excellent! We'll solve this thing together before you can say "Jack Starling"!

Geoffrey *frowning* The blue emerald puzzle, Sir? But I can't work it out, not from that book. Could you not give me some more clues? What exactly am I to do?

Sir Digby Yes! It's time for us to go on our adventure with William of Normandy. Where are those nice friends of yours?

Geoffrey Friends? Whom do you mean?

Sir Digby Why, those lads who used to pick on you.

Geoffrey *downcast* Oh, everyone does **that**. But I know whom you mean, and they're **not** my friends, nor never will they be.

Sir Digby *delighted, rubs hands* Oh, yes. You'll treasure their friendship all your life. They're coming with us. Not all at once, but in time.

How to get you all there was a bit of a stumer, of course. Lightning strike? No ... too dangerous.

*From the basin, Sir Digby hauls out a live fish, a large one.*

Sir Digby Fishing is the thing. Tomorrow morning, before church, take your fishing rod and line and go to the stream in the village. I shall pick you up there and you'll be on our way.

Geoffrey *mulish* I'll not be asking those other boys to join me. I never speak to them if I can get out of it. Not above half.

Sir Digby No, no. That's all taken care of. They'll be there, you'll see!

END OF SCENE

## I, Scene xv: Fishing In A Stream

*It is a crisp winter morning, with frost on the ground and a bright white sun. Whistling and happy, with rod over shoulder, Geoffrey arrives at the bridge over the little stream near the village. He takes up his position, and casts. Birds flap noisily overhead, and the boy watches them. This is a picture-postcard, sweet and lovable scene. Then Geoffrey sees something down the road, and his expression becomes doleful.*

Geoffrey *scowling*            Hell and the Devil!

*Henry and Cedric are riding along the path on their bikes. They are panting, but happily laughing and making scattered conversation. They do not see Geoffrey.*

*Just then, from the direction of the village, Sir Digby appears, in his chainmail and tabard, astride a large white horse, like a smallish draught horse. The boys stop bicycling; they want to pat the horse and talk to the elderly man. The boys stand about under a large spreading oak nearby to Sir Digby and his horse.*

Henry *to Sir Digby*            Have you been to a fancy dress party, Sir? Just coming home, are you?

Sir Digby *smiles*            Something like that.

Cedric                            Did you win first-prize, Sir? I'll just bet that nobody had such a grand costume as yours.

*Geoffrey abandons his rod and moves towards Henry, Skeggs and Sir Digby, aghast.*

Geoffrey *frightened*            Can they see you?  
*voice*

Henry *aggressive,*            Bovine! What are you doing here, Worm? Of course, we can see  
*nasty*                            him, you ass.

Sir Digby *to Geoffrey*            Young man! I think that you've caught yourself a fish. Better reel  
him in.

*Geoffrey races back to take up the rod. It is the fish from last evening, which Geoffrey saw in the bathroom.*

*With help from Henry and Cedric, the boy lands the fish. They toss it from one to the other. But once clear of the water, the fish fans out hidden spikes on its back, and these spear the boys' hands, so that one after the other, screeching in pain and gripping their hands, the boys pass out.*

*[Footnote: These three boys end up being knocked out for two days, during which they all dream of pre-Conquest England. Geoffrey becomes Snarr, Henry is Oldroyd, and Treacle is Wegga (the Younger).]*

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene xvi:** Beside A Stream Which Flows Through A Tiny Saxon Village.

July 1066.

Three Boys (Geoffrey, Henry and Cedric) Share The First Dream.

Geoffrey is Snarr, Henry is Oldroyd and Cedric is Wegga the Younger.

*It is Summer. We see the English countryside at its unspoiled loveliest.*

*Snarr laughs childishly and rolls about on the grass beside the stream. He is being licked by Old Kit's dogs (5 greyhounds). Watching him, relaxed and grinning are Wegga and Oldroyd.*

*The village bell rings. They all freeze, for they are listening to the peel of the bell.*

Wegga                      News!

Snarr                      Someone has brought us news!

*Snarr quickly gets to his feet. The boys run off towards the village square through this lovely countryside. Old Kit hobbles along quickly. People have gathered in the square. An important-looking knight stands waiting for his audience to assemble. He is with the Sheriff. The boys rush up breathlessly.*

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Lord Larchwood           Is everyone here?

Wegga                     Dad and my brothers aren't. And Old Kit's just coming.

*The Sheriff explains to Lord Larchwood that Wegga is the youngest son of Eorl Wegga. On hearing this information, Lord Larchwood nods.*

Sheriff                   Eorl Wegga's youngest.

Snarr                     Is it news? Is it good news?

Lord Larchwood         No, it isn't good.

*haughty*

Old Woman *cackles*     Well, why don't you piss off, then?

Lord Larchwood         Stand aside there, hag.

*indifferent to the  
laughter this evokes*

Sheriff *in response to  
Wegga's concern that  
his menfolk are not in  
attendance*           It's alright, little Wegga. Lord Larchwood has already spoke to your Dad fust. Settle down, now.

*Meanwhile, the man climbs up high on a pile of lumber and holds up his hand for silence. He now has an audience of some 30 to 40 men, women and children.*

Lord Larchwood *voice*   Attend! Attend me well!

*sonorous and stern*

I have come from London where our holy King Edward once lay a-dying. And while the life-blood still ran its course through his veins, he promised that Atheling Harold Godwinsson would succeed him as King of England. Some time since, King Edward **also** promised the crown of England to Duke William of Normandy: that son of Robert the Devil who is called The Bastard.

*[Some gasps of shocked surprise]*

Our King has double-booked.

*[Raises voice]*

Harald Hardrada, a huge man of the North, also now lays claim to Atheling Harold's Kingdom, and even as I tell the tale of our woe to you good people, he raises an army of heathens in the North. Who with good King Harold's own disgraced brother Tostig, will he make war against us.

*This news causes a ripple of concern and anguish through the assembled folk.*

Lord Larchwood            Your king now faces this Danish threat from the North and this Norman threat from the South.

*[Dramatic pause]*

Therefore, King Harold commands Edward's loyal subjects once-that-were to stand firm against Hardrada's heathen souls. Even so, another force is needed in response to Duke William's army, which will no doubt be gathering on the shores of Normandy, as it prepares to cross the Channel.

All able-bodied men and grown boys will forgather ...

*[Fade out]*

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene xvii:** The Boys Rush Home Towards Egilstead. July 1066.

*The lads scramble up a rise on which some scrawny cows, sheep, goats and ponies graze past the distinctive rock formation (called "Tate's Tor"), up the hill to the house. As they arrive, they see Eorl Wegga and his two elder sons (who have all been undertaking strenuous exercise) wipe dirt from their hands and arms near to the entrance hatch to the cellar. Their boots are muddy.*

***It is vital that we see this activity, as a very important later scene depends upon this.***

*The boys can hear Egil, who is in the kitchen, singing, banging kitchen equipment together and shouting out orders and decrying everything and everybody in a humorous way. Her voice becomes more distinct as they approach.*

**Egil's song and her "Shoulder-to-shoulder" speech.**

*[The tune of "Hey-ho Merry!" echoes back to the carol-singers of the opening scene.]*

*My kitchen-work is never done!  
Hey-ho, Merrily we sing, ho!  
As bang I loudly pot and pan  
To startle every English town.  
Hey-ho Merry, Hey-ho Merry Baking to you, everyone.  
Bring peace and Joy to every Christian soul, oh!*

*Wegga, Snarr and Oldroyd grin at each other. Wegga cups his hands about his mouth, to shout loudly.*

Young Wegga

Ma! We're off to fight the Varangian hordes! Pack me a huge lunch, will you?

*The boys all laugh immoderately. Then, from the kitchen comes Egil's "shoulder-to-shoulder" speech, which is witheringly and brutally reprised in the later burial scene. Egil delivers the speech in mock-heroic voice, as if she were a man.*

Egil *voice-off*                      Shoulder-to-shoulder I stand by my brother.  
                                                  Foe-heads rise over the hillock before us.  
                                                  Gripping spear, gripping sword  
                                                  My kinsman whispers --

*The three boys yell in unison with Egil at this point.*

Young Wegga,                      "Lay in, go hard, take hold!"  
 Oldroyd, Snarr *loud*  
*and in mocking spirit*

*Still laughing, the boys run after Eorl Wegga and his two elder sons. They are busy with dogs and various farm animals. The three boys rush up.*

Young Wegga                      Hey, Dad! Me and Snarr are allowed to come with you to the fight  
                                                  up North, against Hardrada.

Eorl Wegga                          How so?

Young Wegga                      We checked with the Sheriff and Lord Larchwood. They said that  
                                                  if we were old enough to have been banished to the unmarried  
                                                  men's quarters, then we were old enough to fight.

Snarr                                      Yes, and we've been sleeping in the Cock-barn for nearly a year  
                                                  now.

Eorl Wegga *to his son*              Why then you and Snarr, and not Oldroyd as well?

Oldroyd *proud and*  
*pleased*                                  Lord Larchwood wants me to spy for him, Eorl Wegga, down the  
                                                  coast.

*[Eorl Wegga nods at that.]*

I'll join you for the fight when he gets his affairs straightened out.

*With his two older sons grinning appreciatively, Eorl Wegga pretends to look the three boys over. He rubs the chin of each boy, then stands with hands on hips.*

Eorl Wegga *as if* Have your voices dropped? How low can you sing?  
*throwing out a dare*

*The three boys try to sing the lowest possible note. The brothers begin to roar with laughter and Eorl Wegga finds it hard to keep a straight face.*

Eorl Wegga Well, you're all bearding now. Yes, you can join the forces. Pack your kits and get some weapons and be ready to leave at first light.

Elder brother *to the boys* And don't muck about. This is for real, and you'll have to do as you're told.

Second brother *to the boys* And if you get wounded, don't cry like babies. Take the hits when they come and roll with them.

*This is the boys' first battle. They look from one to the other with both excitement and trepidation.*

*Long shot of the kitchen with huge walled fire and exhaust chimney in the middle of room and benches/stools round about. Around the walls are small beds. Lollie and Egil are busy hovering over their cooking while the menfolk move about getting food and drink then sitting on the benches and stools, talking.*

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene xviii:** Sandy Dunes On A Beach. July 1066.

*Our camera is in long shot.*

*The sky is heavily clouded and light rain falls. Oldroyd canters (bareback) up to a dune of sedge grass on a small pony. Shading his eyes against the light rain, Oldroyd scans the horizon out to sea. In the sky, a lone pigeon approaches. Oldroyd raises his arm. The pigeon lands on his hand.*

*Quickly, Oldroyd extracts the tightly-rolled message strapped to the bird's leg. Without unrolling that message, Oldroyd strokes the bird, then chucks it into the air. He encourages the pony to leave the beach at speed.*

END OF SCENE

### **I, Scene xix: A Humble Cottage. August 1066.**

*Oldroyd bursts in the door, surprising an old man who sips soup from a large bowl and spoon. The old man sits on a stool near the fire. Oldroyd shoves the rolled message towards the man.*

Oldroyd *bright, cheeky*    Soup down! Eyes down! We need your talent to decode this.

Old Man, *with lift of  
one eyebrow*        "We"?

Oldroyd, *waiting  
impatiently*        Your kinfolk. Your people. Those who would share the time of day  
with you over a steaming tin of broth.

*The old man snarls. However, giving Oldroyd a look of disdain, the old man permits Oldroyd to remove from his grasp the bowl and spoon, and takes the message. He unrolls it with a show of ceremony.*

Old Man                    And which high and mighty one of my kinsfolk ordered me to  
read this?

Oldroyd                    Lord Larchwood **and** my adopted father, Eorl Wegga.

Old Man *chuckles  
nastily*                    Then by God, let it be good news, eh?  
*[He reads the tiny scrap of parchment, squinting as he does so.]*

Ah!

*Laughing and coughing, the old man chucks the message into the fire.*

Oldroyd                    So tell me ...

Old Man Find the King and tell him that our French spy dislikes the gathering of so many thousands of men, many of them not Normans, at a little seaside town called St Valery in Normandy. Can you remember that?

Oldroyd Yes. Is that all?

Old Man Tell Harold Godwinsson that our man in France can hardly see the seawater at this place, St Valery.

Oldroyd *confused* Why?

*The camera closes in on this old man, who seems to be enjoying himself.*

Old Man, *grinning* Why? Because the seashore is littered with the many hundreds of longboats ready to sail for England. As soon as the wind favours these Normans and their allies, they sail.

*We now see a close-up of Oldroyd, looking shocked and grim. Music is heard: dark, foreboding.*

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene xx:** In The North Of England, In A Hall, King Harold And His Knights Carouse September 1066.

*In York, in a great Viking Hall, at a rough-hewn table, where the seats are backless benches.*

*A mighty fire roars to the side of the room, with a rudimentary chimney and flue above it.*

*The atmosphere is smoky: this is just like any noisy Saturday night at the local pub: the boys are on the go! Saxon and English Vikings in battledress. No women are in the room as yet; the wenching will come later.*

*Ale, mead, bread and small cakes cover the table. All the men drink noisily, except for some who have dropped off to sleep, oblivious to the cacophony around them.*

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*A couple of servants struggle under the weight of a huge, throne-like wooden seat. It is set down at the table, and many knights motion to their king to sit in that throne. He does so, to the applause of his fellows. The knights are rowdy.*

Knight #1                      Tell me again what you said to Tostig, about Harald Hardrada?

Harold                              What, that I would bury him?

Knight #2 *encouraging*      Say again! Say again!

Knight #1                      Tell the throng! It's a damned good story!

*Harold stands, holding his hand up for silence. This order is somewhat obeyed.*

Harold *demanding*              Attend!

*silence*

At Stamford Bridge, I, King Harold Godwinsson, King of all England, faced Tostig with my peace offering of a rich earldom. Caught without his armour, my wretched brother, instead of begging for his life, boldly asked: "And what does my brother offer to my ally, Harald of Norway?"

*This is met with derisive cat calls and mean laughter. The king nods, smiling. Again, the king holds up his hand, but he is pleased that his men are supportive.*

Harold                              Attend to me! To the which I replied: "To Harald of Norway, Harold of England will give seven feet of English ground, or as much more as he may be taller than other men."

*Rousing cheer. Harold sits, and only his intimates hear his next words.*

Harold                              But I shed a bitter tear or two for Tostig's poor carcass.

Knight                              And it was **my** arrow which caught Hardrada in the throat!

*The knights begin to argue vociferously over who slew whom.*

Harold *spies Eorl*                      And so there's no chance of the Bastard challenging our rule?

*Wegga nearby*                      That threat's all gone now, think you?

Eorl Wegga *nods*                      If my information is good. The rabble he had collected about his person has even since dispersed, to float back to their hides. God

has shown himself to be displeased with their enterprise. They cannot get a favourable wind. And so the whole idea has melted away.

Harold *looks up from under frowning brows* He might try again next summer.

Eorl Wegga He might. ... But by then, you'll have the stronger hand, once you've laid these Viking raiders to rest.

Harold *disgusted* Ah! That's all my reign has been about: fending off marauding pirates. Of course, those who pay me tribute are more than welcome to stay in my land. But the others simply want to steal my land from me. ...

Which reminds me.

*[Taps forefinger on table.]*

I'll get that thing back from you. You know ...

Eorl Wegga Ah, yes! Surely! As soon as we get home.

*We enjoy a bit more of this scene, with its drinking, shouting and singing. The mood is one of joy over-brimming. We take a quick glimpse of the boys: young Wegga and Snarr. Snarr is listening with full attention to an older warrior reliving his past with actions. Wegga's forehead rests on the table: he is out to it due to over-indulgence of drink.*

*Suddenly, a bit of a commotion occurs. Oldroyd staggers in, totally breathless. He must speak to the King. [Remember: there's no kneeling. The Saxons don't kneel!]*

Harold *to Oldroyd* What's this?

Oldroyd *hardly able to speak* William the Bastard has gathered a vast army from all over Europe and will set sail for England any day now.

Harold *stands, roaring ferociously* What did you say, cunt?

*The background noise ceases as if cut with a knife. Oldroyd still gasps for breath, chest heaving.*

Oldroyd                                Just remember that I am only the talebearer, and not the tale itself.

Harold Godwinsson must be made aware that there are sixty or seventy hundred men. Horses, hoards of weapons ...

Larchwood believes that William's army will camp at Pevensey, my King.

*King Harold stares at the pathetic figure of Oldroyd, his facial muscles working in disbelief. He sends the messenger flying with a vicious swipe of his hand.*

Harold *roars*                            Get you out of my sight, scumbag! Would you bring me such news, messenger or no?

*Harold stands, thinking and deeply frowning, breathing fast.*

Harold *totally distracted*                Pevensey? How many fucking days march would that be from here? Shit!! Shit!! Shit!!

*The scene now changes to one of complete pandemonium.*

*Harold storms angrily from the hall, violently pushing on-lookers from his path. From this moment on, until his death in the battle, Harold is angry, reactive, abusive and loutish.*

*The rowdy, shouting knights splutter about, pulling themselves together, re-arming and diving out of the room. This is indeed a scene of dramatic, irresistible bustle.*

*Snarr is not sure what to do. He stands, hesitant, looking about him for guidance. One of Wegga's brothers grabs Wegga's hair and pulls his head up. Wegga's drunken sleep is rudely interrupted as he is slapped and then hauled out. This scene of passionate dysfunctionality contrasts starkly to the Norman cool orderliness (which we shall witness in the next Act).*

*The dark, foreboding music, which we heard at the end of scene xix, rises again, but it becomes richer, grander and more over-powering.*

END OF SCENE

END OF DREAM #1

The time is now February 1928.

The First Dream Has Ended.

**I, Scene xxi:** One Of The Dormitories At Whitefriars (Where Geoffrey Sleeps)

*The dormitory contains 16 beds.*

*We now focus on the boys as they wake up from the first dream. It is daylight and the 11 o'clock sun wakes Geoffrey. He is quite alone in his dorm. His eyes remain shut, as he tries to say something. But his lips are stuck together. His fingers grip the edge of the sheets.*

*An elderly maid sticks her head around the door, as she wants to "do" the room. "Yoohoo". Geoffrey stirs, trying to see her through the mist.*

Maid *admonishing*            Oh, so you're finally awake, I notice. About time!

*[Points accusingly]*

Matron will want to see you. She's been keeping an eye on all you boys. You've been out of action for 2 days, you have.

Geoffrey *puzzled, thick voiced*            Boys? Whom do you mean?

Maid                                Why, Master Skeggs and Master Henry Bell and yourself, that's who.

*The woman stands with hands on hips waiting for him to rise.*

*Geoffrey tries to think, hand to head. He grabs a long cardigan then races along a corridor to another dorm.*

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene xxii:** One Of The Dormitories At Whitefriars (Where Henry, Cedric, George and Leonard Sleep).

*The dormitory contains 16 beds.*

*There Geoffrey finds Leonard and George sitting forlornly by Cedric's bed. They look up when Geoffrey bursts in. George and Leonard look at him in a puzzled way. Meanwhile, Geoffrey is staring in some concern at Henry and Cedric.*

Geoffrey *somewhat shocked*            Whatever happened to them?

George                            They just went for a short ride on their bicycles before breakfast on Sunday morning and didn't come back. Next thing, some busy or other telephones to Head to say that these two and yourself have been found knocked unconscious in the village, by the stream.

Leonard                        Well, we've ascertained that the local Bobbies were called-in, but (as yet) nobody has been arrested for the attack.

Geoffrey *confused*            Blimey! But ...

Leonard *somewhat flushed*            Why don't **you** tell **us** what happened. You were there after all.

George *fascinated, even hopeful*            Were you set upon by cut-throats?

*Geoffrey looks uncertain as he rubs his scalp energetically. He goes over to Henry's bed, then back to Cedric's bed.*

Geoffrey *shaking Cedric*            Wegga! Cedric! Cedric... er ... Treacle!

*Cedric stirs, then snaps awake, grabbing hold of Geoffrey and talking to him (wide-eyed) in Old English (presented with subtitles). Cedric's tone is desperate, frightened.*

Cedric                            Snarr, you will always be my brother. If either of us should be

killed, then –

Geoffrey *shaking him vigorously* No! You're back in your bed, Treacle. The dream is over. It's over!

*Cedric looks about in dazed wonder, falling back to earth, dismayed that he is back at Whitefriars as Henry snaps into consciousness. While this is all going on, George and Leonard look awe-struck, stunned and anxious. Henry suddenly sits up and calls out, also in old English with subtitles.*

Henry *shouting* We can't possibly fight off that many soldiers. Look at all the horses they're bringing! We're done for, for sure!

*Geoffrey quickly goes over to Henry to lay a restraining hand on his chest. Meanwhile, Cedric feels his head (aching from his 1066 hangover).*

Geoffrey It's alright, it's alright.

George *concerned, to Cedric* Treacle ... are you feeling quite well?

Cedric *back to modern English* I've had the most **amazing** dream. Only it was just so realistic; as if I was really there. I honestly felt that I was there, with sword and buckler at the ready, facing Hardrada's Viking army. My God! And with **you**, Bovine!

Henry I was by the beach at Pevensey, watching for Duke William of Normandy's invading forces, should they approach the shoreline.

*Henry leaps out of bed and now stands beside Geoffrey, at the foot of Cedric's bed.*

Henry *to Cedric* And is your name Wegga, son of Eorl Wegga?

Cedric *amazed* Yes ... and you are Oldroyd, and you, Bovine, are Snarr, my adopted brother. Gosh! I remember ... You're a bloody **Viking**, Bove!

Geoffrey *nods vigorously* And Bell was pushed to the floor by King Harold! He called you a c-- ... I mean ... well it was a very naughty word he used on you, Bell.

Treacle: your mother is Egil, and our house is called Egilstead.  
But us lads have to live in the filthiest hole outside.

Henry Which we call "The Cock-barn". And there are rushes spread all over Egil's kitchen floor, because it's a dirt floor, such as one would find in the meanest hovel.

Cedric And those huge smelly dogs forage about for food scraps.

Geoffrey *clicks fingers* As we eat from our knees because there's no table. It's positively primitive there ...

*Geoffrey, Cedric and Henry gaze from one to the other, nodding.*

Geoffrey We've all had the same dream!

George It's uncanny ... totally unbelievable! Did you take a hallucinogenic drug or some such thing?

Henry *eyes bright* It was that man on the horse ... the one from some fancy dress ball or other. Sir Digby, that was his name! **He drugged us.**

Cedric Through that fish! We all touched that fish – it must have been poisoned. Those spike-things on its back.

Leonard *confused* But why would he do that?

Geoffrey *with crushing certainty* I know why.

Henry *after a thrilling hesitation* Well?

*Geoffrey looks from one to the other. They in turn are all focused on Geoffrey.*

Geoffrey *nervous,* If I tell, you'll not believe it.

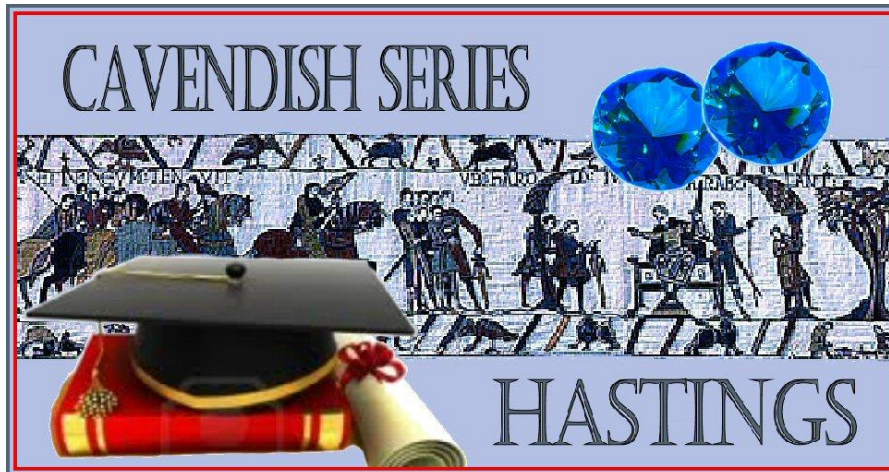
*licking his lips* It's ... it's about that little red history book of mine ...and ... my stepmother's father, of all people ...

END OF SCENE

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END OF ACT I



## ACT II

### INTERLUDE

An interlude between ACT I and ACT II occurs here.

We see very brief shots. There are many happy schooldays, replete with fun and sport.

Geoffrey is seen to be sporting. He takes fencing lessons, boxing, archery, and is mucking around with the other boys.

The music is bright and cheerful.

We hear snatches of scattered conversation from the boys.

THIS WILL CONTRAST BALDLY WITH THE SIMILAR SCENES JUST PRIOR TO THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

**ACT II Begins with happy days, the trip to the city in the train, Dream #2 and continues until the boys are bailed out after Dream #2**

**II, Scene i: The Dormitory At Whitefriars.**

*Geoffrey is sitting on the floor, leaning back against his new bed in the dorm with the other boys. He holds his mother's last diary in his hands. Henry sits beside him, looking worried, working through the mystery of the little red book. Cedric sits on the other side of Geoffrey. George wanders about, and Leonard sits at his bed, reading a Boy's Own comic book.*

Henry *sighing* I give up. There's nothing here but old embroidered knights and waffling prose.

Cedric *nods* I agree.

George *grandly, magnanimous* How is this for you, then, Geoffrey? We've chucked a ghastly little weasel out of this bed and given it to you. Now the five of us can be together. I hope you appreciate what we've done.

*Geoffrey hardly responds as he is distracted by his Mother's diary.*

Geoffrey Mmmm ... Yes ... Er ... Thanks ...

George Is that another little puzzle book there? Black binding this time, I see.

Geoffrey *with brutal frankness* Diary, old chap. After being bullied by Treacle and Belfry, I usually found solace in my mother's diaries.

*Henry (grinning) digs Geoffrey cruelly in the ribs. Geoffrey retaliates in kind, with both boys giggling as they attack each other from their sitting positions.*

Geoffrey, *regaining composure* Look! Here's the page here. This is really strange.

Henry How strange? Stranger than Head's private collection of grubs?

Leonard *continues to read* He grinds them in a pestle-and-mortar, you know, and smokes the paste. Aphrodisiac.

*George finds this concept off-putting. He looks away.*

George *somewhat prim* The idea of Whitefriars Headmaster with an erection is quite nauseating.

Geoffrey

Listen!

*"...blah, blah ... when the Randolph-Parrs come into the room.*

*Still the same uncomfortable and nagging pains. Dr Eblin (the poor thing!) is anxious to nail them down, as are we all. However, he continues, unabated, to show an unwholesome interest in TEUTNY. Or do I mean 'obsession'?"*

That was the very last thing she wrote.

*[Sighs]* And then she died seven days later, on Christmas Day, 1917. I was just six years old, so I don't really remember her much. But you can see from that that she was very witty and droll.

Henry *nods sadly*

My Ma's a bit of a fluff-brained glamour puss, but I suppose I'd be pretty much lowered if she snuffed it. Not that I think she will, of course. ...

What's the name of the doctor ... "Evilman"? Sounds pretty vile, if you ask me.

Geoffrey *laughs*

Yes, and I wonder if he ever had his way with the unfortunate "Teutny", whoever that was.

Cedric

What, don't you know?

Geoffrey

No. I've always had this ghastly picture in my mind of some poor upstairs maid being set upon from behind by this drooling, lecherous doctor. Like a pair of coupling dogs!

Henry *laughing immoderately*

And still wearing his monocle and stethoscope, no doubt.

*Henry, Cedric and Geoffrey roll about on the floor in gales of laughter. Leonard grins in appreciation. George is only mildly interested.*

END OF SCENE

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**II, Scene ii: A Railway Platform. The Boys Stand In A Knot, Observing.**

*The five boys stand about wearing coats and scarves, having small overnight bags with them. They wait in the cold (visible breath) on a little railway platform in the village. George drags a small paper bag from his pocket and offers gumdrops about. The boys help themselves to the lollies, and thereby, they all speak somewhat thickly.*

George                    I bought these for the trip.

Henry                    It's not that far, you know. My mother's major domo Beckwith will send Bunning in the Roller to pick us up from the railway station. Then it's off to a very suave gentleman's club, courtesy of my brother.

George *pleased*            "A gentleman's club" ... It sounds sophisticated and grand.

Cedric                    Nice touch of your mother to include Geoffrey.

Henry                    My folks are what is termed in polite circles "filthy rich". They've oodles of money, loads of style, the best of everything, all modern conveniences. But no title. In their little lucre-filled world, Bevan here offers a ray of light through the chink in the door.

Geoffrey *surprised*        Why?

Henry *shrugs, not all that interested*        Your Vice-Regal connections. Duke of York.

Geoffrey *slightly appalled*        But, damn it, my father only just came into his dignities.

Henry                    Yes, but to my family you're the son of Lord Cavendish, who's on first-name basis with the royals and that's all that matters.

Leonard                I suppose you get used to being toad-eaten by the Cits, do you?

Geoffrey *shudder*        Not at all. In fact, it quite embarrasses me. I've been brought up not to care for such things.

*George has stuffed copious amounts of gumdrops into his mouth, such that he is hardly able to*

*speak.*

George *thickly* Ah – there's the train, at last.

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene iii: The Gentlemen's Club, Fanshawe Alley.**

*Our young heroes are now inside the "gentlemen's" club. We begin immediately with madcap pizzazz. However, this is **not** what George had expected in the "Gentlemen's Club".*

*There is a plethora of rhythm and loads of atmosphere. The club in Fanshawe Alley is a swinging 1920's jazz club as only the London bands played it. Girls with huge smouldering black eyes and bobbed hair sip cocktails or dance deliciously, their lips painted into perfect bows. They flirt outrageously with the starchy men who swarm around them as they sip and/or dance.*

*Henry's brother organised for the five boys to have a private table (in an alcove) at Fanshawe Alley. The boys have their hair slicked down. They wear evening dress, as would befit young men in 1928. Henry is very suave and smokes ostentatiously.*

*Henry's brother Sidney strolls up. He is slim and snaky, with pencil-thin moustache, and he smokes with the aid of a cigarette holder. We spot his jewellery as he shakes hands with the boys. We hear the odd indistinct "How d'ye do?" Altogether, he is utterly smarmy, especially to Geoffrey, because of the Bevan Vice-Regal connections.*

*George looks about him, awkward, uncomfortable and disapproving.*

George *unimpressed* I say, chaps, this is awfully fast. Those gells over there have painted their nails red. My mother would faint if she were to see their frocks. Positively indecent. Some of those fillies are quite inebriated.

Henry *dragging on his cigarette* What are you complaining for? You don't have to pay for it. They're showing you their charms for free.

George *dignified* If I had a gell I'd expect her to disport herself with a little more decorum.

Henry *grinning* I don't have a jot of decorum. Why on earth, then, do you tolerate me?

*George is surprised at the question.*

George But ... you're a chum. That's different. I was speaking purely about females. I mean, one expects one's fillies to be modest and pretty. Not like these garish, immoderate harpies.

Henry *frustrated* Oh, for Heaven's sake! What's the point of coming to a den of vice if you hope to see the maidens sitting with their hands neatly folded in their laps over their prayer books?

*Unlike George, Cedric is delighted at the sight of so many girls. He is awestruck.*

Cedric I'm going to require someone to hurl a bucket of cold water over me. Have I gone to Heaven? Someone pinch me, quick.

*Leonard obliges by sticking a fork into Cedric's forearm.*

Cedric Ouch!

*Geoffrey is looking about him uneasily. He has not yet reached the stage where girls interest him much.*

Geoffrey I've a funny feeling, gentlemen, with the five of us here like this. I think something is going to happen.

Henry *eagerly* That we're all going to be seduced?

Cedric I'm ever so scared ...

*Henry calls out to the general room, which is so noisy that only the boys at the table hear him.*

Henry *loudly* Girls! I promise you all that I shall give in with nary a struggle. Take me!

*This outburst is met with hearty laughter.*

Geoffrey, *settling down* No ... I was thinking of Grandpa Marsden. You know, Sir Digby.



*Leonard looks amused, and seems to be searching for a response, doodling on the tablecloth with his fork. The wine waiter approaches. He is a middle-aged man of obvious Italian parentage. The waiter now leans forward, to refresh George's wineglass. Cedric is affected by the wine and has nodded off.*

*Geoffrey looks up in horror and is instantly sobered. The wine waiter has transformed into Grandpa Marsden. He appears in his own character and not in his guise as Sir Digby. However, the boys will call him "Sir Digby" as that is how they have come to know him.*

*Geoffrey standing, in*      **You!**  
*horror*

*Cedric snaps awake.*

*Grandpa Marsden* *sadly*    It is the wine, this time, lads.  
*as he pours*

*Geoffrey grabs Grandpa Marsden's wrist.*

*Geoffrey*                      Tell me more about this mystery: the blue emeralds.

*All five boys are riveted on the elderly wine waiter. Grandpa Marsden disengages himself from Geoffrey's grasp and continues to pour for all five boys.*

*Grandpa Marsden*            I'm a bit vague ... go back to the book ... I remember that there are clues in that history book somewhere.

*Henry* *argumentative*      That's just hokum! There's not one single clue in that wretched little book. What game are you playing with us, sir?

*Ignoring Henry's outburst, Grandpa Marsden pours the rest of the wine, watched keenly by Geoffrey.*

*Grandpa Marsden* *tries*      Drink up! You're all off on your next grand adventure. This time, you'll actually be at Hastings on the big day.  
*to be cheerful*

*Cedric* *wide-eyed*            We'll see the battle of Hastings, Sir Digby?

*Grandpa Marsden*            Not just see it, young squire, but actually fight in it.

*There is a general thrill at their table, with the Charleston music still banging-away in the background.*

Geoffrey Do we all survive the battle?

Grandpa Marsden Er ... yes, but not wholly unscathed, I believe. Good luck to you all, gentlemen.

George *unsure* Morts and I ... are we ... ?

Grandpa Marsden Certainly. All five of you. Courage, Young Sirs, courage and strength!

*As he moves off, it can be seen that the waiter is once again Italian. Geoffrey seems to be about to fire more questions at Grandpa Marsden, but seeing that Marsden is gone, Geoffrey gives up. One by one, the boys raise their glasses.*

Geoffrey *excited* Chaps, when we drink this, we'll apparently be transported back to 1066. See you at Senlac.

*They all stare at Geoffrey as he sculls the drink. Geoffrey looks at each of them.*

George *disappointed* You're still here.

*Wondering at the strange but exciting prospect before him, Geoffrey turns the empty wine glass about in his hand.*

Geoffrey Perhaps we can't go unless we all go together.

*Cedric gulps his drink down, followed by Henry. The three boys who have drunk the wine smile at each other.*

Cedric Nothing yet.

Morts? George? You'll be joining us this time.

*George looks very uncertain, then starts sipping tentatively.*

Henry *impatient* Come along, Georgie. It ain't Matron's cough-syrup, y'know.

*George pulls a face and makes the best of it. When George finally sips the last of his wine, the 4 boys all look at Leonard, expectantly.*

Geoffrey *eyes wide open* Well?

Leonard *his lip  
trembles*

My damned heart is beating like a drum. I hope that gentleman was right, about us not being much injured.

Here goes, then! Down the hatch.

*Leonard quaffs the wine wholesale.*

END SCENE

Beginning of Dream #2.

The scene in the Fanshawe Alley nightclub fades out. Also, the Charleston music fades away.

A dolorous church bell is heard to peal.

Our scene has changed to the interior of a Norman church in October 1066.

## **II, Scene iv: A Medieval Church, St Valery, At The Mouth Of The Somme.**

*A low hum devolves into a drone of deep male voices singing a chant. The scene clarifies into caramel shades: a medieval church, lit only by candles. There are no stained-glass windows: only a few open "portholes". Monks, friars, Norman knights and other men kneel in prayer. These prayers are whispered.*

The Initial Appearance of William The Conqueror Should Be Outstanding.

*Kneeling and leaning on a railing is William, Duke of Normandy. He raises his head to gaze longingly at a wooden cross high on the wall. His face is tear stained.*

William *whispers  
penitently*

Jesus, Son of God. Grant to me my favour, I beg of you. Let me take possession of England as is my rightful claim. Give me a southing wind. I implore you, Jesus Son of God. Six weeks have I

waited.

*[Grits teeth.]*

Let the wind turn; let it be from the South. This is my heartfelt prayer to you, my Lord.

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene v:** At The Port Of St Valery October 1066.

*A small pennant, bearing the Duke of Normandy's insignia (two couching lions) flutters gaily. The wind is from the North, and the Normans await a South wind, to carry them across the channel. For six weeks they have waited.*

*In a small field, near the township, a tree with an enormous girth and nearby banks of colourful flowers present a pretty scene. Peter Frankiss and Roger de Curci lean against that tree, looking thoughtful. They are watching the pennant, which can now be seen to be fluttering from the top of a lance, which someone has stuck into the ground. Roger's dog snuffles the grass nearby, then approaches rumbustiously to be patted.*

*Roger sighs gustily. Both boys are dressed very richly. They bear arms: sword and shield. The church bell begins to peal again.*

Roger                                 Down, Snood. Good boy. I just wish that I'd not drunk so much last night. Whose idea was it to ply us with wine? Those Italians, it must have been. Did they think we'd fall down drunk? It was them, I'm sure of it. I can remember them grinning at me.

Peter *smiling,*  
*deliberating as is his*  
*way*                                 They just wanted some sport, I suppose, watching two young lads who can't hold their wine falling about. They're so dead bored, as are we all, with waiting for the order to sail.

Roger                                 Six weeks of this! It's almost unbearable. My knees are aching

from praying continually. Hopefully, St Edmund's bones will do the trick.

Peter *staring in disbelief*

Hey! Do my eyes play tricks on me, or has that flag started flying southing?

*The bright pennant now flutters in the opposite direction. Just as the boys cry out, many other male voices roar. The noise is heard from the dock as the boys, with other males, race recklessly towards the dock.*

*A group of men, evidently of the highest rank, stand about in idle conversation. Wolf Frankiss is greeting everyone. Various sleek dogs prance about. Then Wolf spots Peter, his youngest son. As Wolf speaks, we can see various interesting characters wandering about.*

Wolf *to his son and Roger*

Stay close to me, *garçons*. The very worst scoundrels of Europe are gathered here. Pack of baying hounds, they are! Drawn like a magnet to our Duke on the hope of that most unseemly wealth, which is supposed to be found over there in England. And they say that there is Honour among thieves. Mercenaries and cut-throats to a man!

*[Pointing accusingly at Peter]* You guys just mind that you stay away from those foreign people.

Man *patting boys on backs*

Good luck to you both, Peter. You, too, Roger. You must show Courage and Strength, if you are to bear arms for the House of Frankiss, this being your first real fight.

Wolf *proudly*

They both have a fighting pedigree, these raw, untried colts. The sire of Roger de Curci fell at my side these eleven or twelve summers gone. He was the best of warriors, and a trusted friend to boot. Tell me lad, what have **you** to say about it all?

Roger *brazenly but reasonably*

We drank with the foreigners because I decided that it was time for us to be blooded, Sir.

*There are loud gasps and guffaws from the men standing within earshot. Wolf Frankiss is appalled. Just as he is about to speak, a loud cry goes up for all the warriors to board the first of the long boats.*

*There is an awestruck moment when William The Conqueror in his habitual flowing cape and his entourage move at leisurely pace towards a boat which towers over the others. There are many dignitaries at his side, including Puddingsauce.*

Wolf *reverently*

Now we sail for England, my friends. The Duke's sea-master is ready to cast off. And we shall follow him out to sea shortly afterwards.

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| The Normans Set Out For England |
|---------------------------------|

*The bishop, in beautiful robes and with all pomp and circumstance, carries a requary containing St Edmund's bones. His cavalcade quickly makes its way to the beach. Solemn procession, prayer. The camera has pulled away and pans the sight of St Valery, at the mouth of the Somme; the huge preparation under way to equip and man the boats: supplies, arms, the horses are loaded, along with the men and their dogs. The men are equipped with bright shields and glinting swords and armour. There is a feeling of wealth. Scattered amidst the warriors are banner bearers. Some of the men have hawks resting on their wrists or shoulders.*

*A few women sit about in the sun, armed with huge bunches of flowers. They chat happily.*

*And in the centre of this long shot, William The Conqueror and his party kneel in prayer, on the deck of their large, ornate boat. There is a pleasing orderliness to these scenes.*

*Music: the music is grand, rich and is interspersed with various seamen giving orders in deep, resonant tones. The first boats unfurl sails, the oars begin their rhythm, and the boats move off from the docks.*

*Now, male singing accompanies the sumptuous music.*

END OF SCENE

## II, Scene vi: Night: The Channel Crossing By The Normans / Daytime: The Saxons March Southwards October 1066

*Here follows an interspersing of scenes, with just snatches of action.*

*It is important that there be a contrast: Norman orderliness as opposed to Saxon mayhem.*

| <u>The Normans</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <u>The Saxons</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roger and Peter look over the side of the boat</li> <li>• William's grand boat in the distance</li> <li>• The horses and dogs aboard the long boats, and the men minding them</li> <li>• The rhythm of the oars as the sun glints on the metalwork of swords and armour</li> <li>• The starlit sky and Hailey's Comet</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oldroyd, Wegga and Snarr scrambling through wet bracken in a foggy wood</li> <li>• Some Saxon warriors falling out, fighting each other outside an inn</li> <li>• Oldroyd wiping dark mud onto his face, in the manner of American native.</li> <li>• Misty rain, a dirt track, Saxons slipping and sliding down the track</li> </ul> |

END OF SCENE

## II, Scene vii: The Norman Landing On The Beach At Pevensey October 1066

*Disembarking; as soon as possible, the men leap over the side of the boats, armed and ready for action. William The Conqueror jumps athletically, lands in the water, and falls flat on his face, much to the consternation of everyone. He is hauled to his feet by Puddingsauce.*

*Gasping and dripping wet, William holds up his hands, which are filled with sand.*

William *shouts*                      Here is an omen, no? See! I have taken England with **both** my hands!

*This witticism is met with delighted laughter, encouragement and applause, which in this case would be slapping one's weapon on the shield.*

*The Norman warriors plough keenly through the knee-high water, onto the beaches of England. No one can be seen to welcome nor attack them. However, a few frightened villagers scurry from behind bushes, dropping their kindling.*

*The Normans provide a scene of orderly arrival, with several men (unlike Wiliam) having to be carried pick-a-back from the boats to the shore. Various warriors give orders. There is a sense that this is a well-trained, disciplined, moneyed set of warriors. Nothing seems to go amiss. Roger and Peter splash ashore with Wolf and Peter's brothers and from now on, they stay very close to them.*

A Norman nobleman      Ha! Now where are those so ferocious English soldiers hiding? Or did they not expect us to pillage them so soon?

*A few seconds more of this arrival scene, which would be best filmed from above. A bishop in full regalia stands on the beach, holding his large cross and staff, and makes a blessing. The keen faces of the many warriors, the horses being unloaded and the dogs. When they can, the men begin to mount up, and canter off the beach. Dogs tear about and bark excitedly. The occasional falcon is permitted to take flight, to soar majestically upwards.*

*We get the feeling that the Normans will make a picnic of the Saxon army. The music builds throughout: heroic, confident, strong.*

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene viii: The Battle Of Hastings, October 1066, In Senlac Field.**

*We open this scene on Senlac Field. There is a face off.*

|              |
|--------------|
| The Normans. |
|--------------|

*The camera moves along the lines of Norman soldiers.*

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*The front ranks are comprised of the archers, the second ranks of the spearmen and at the rear stand the cavalry. The uniforms and arms are all good-looking. The coats of arms on the shields are not one and the same. Remember that these are autonomous groups linked under the banner of William: foreign princes and so on. The one vital ingredient here is that the Normans are quiet, except for the occasional horse whinnying. They are still and in perfect formation. William and his entourage wait together very patiently.*

|             |
|-------------|
| The Saxons. |
|-------------|

*Now for the Saxons. They are falling into position as the battle starts. Three ranks, side-by-side, with the house-carls flanked by fyrdmen: archers, spearmen and mounted knights. The house-carls carry huge battle-axes which glint in the weak sunlight. There is a lot of noise and scurry as Harold's army has had four days march from the North and his troops are not all yet gathered. View of the opposing Normans on the other side of the field, like a huge human wall. Close up of one Saxon soldier breathing: "Oh, shit!" as he stares in awe at the formidable ranks opposite.*

*Snarr gasps at the sight of the Norman army ahead. How impenetrable their lines are! The masses of mounted warriors. Oldroyd begins to shake uncontrollably.*

Young Wegga                      We'll all look out for you. Here! Stand between Snarr and me.

*Oldroyd shifts position, to stand between Snarr and Wegga, who look very brave.*

Snarr *whispers*                      I love you, Egil. God spare me so that I may kiss you again.

*There is now an ominous silence. Then, a shout goes up.*

Disembodied male                      Forward, men! Forward there!  
voice

*The shout is picked up by the individual captains and the Saxon army moves forward. There is a loud clanking of arms and armour and the sound of the marching feet.*

*Over to the Norman army. Profile of William, watching the approaching foe.*

William *shouts*                      *Avaunche, mes soldats! Avaunche!*

*That cry is taken up by other Norman warriors. In strict formation, very correct and in unison, William's forces move forward.*

*The battle of Hastings is now in full progress. Over the noise and confusion of the fighting, Egil's confident voice is heard. The "Shoulder-to-shoulder" speech flows over everything as the two sides fight, along with sweet female crooning.*

Shoulder-to-shoulder I stand by my brother.  
Foe-heads rise over the hillock before us.  
Gripping spear, gripping sword  
My kinsman whispers  
"Lay in, go hard, take hold!"  
Shoulder-to-shoulder  
Recall your past glories, past wars.  
Hasten to the fight.  
Our foe (who by whale-road, by sail-road)  
Heartens to settle sword.  
The sign of the Holy Cross guides  
Thanes, slayers with vengeance longing.  
Brave for the spoils they came, for us to best.

*There are continued shouted cries from the captains of both sides. We should try to mix up the gory fight with the figures of the tapestry.*

*Many men and boys are wounded. Roger de Curci is hurt (he has a deep wound to his upper left arm, inflicted by a Saxon fighting axe) and he winces in pain. Peter Frankiss helps tie up Roger's arm and then the boys throw themselves back into the fray.*

*Harold's death occurs as he is shot by a Norman arrow right in the eye and he falls from his horse.*

*The rout of the Saxons then follows.*

*I have not given much stage direction here, because this will be a CGI and logistics job.*

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene ix: Following The Battle Of Hastings**

*A bleak landscape, sepia tones, with fog drifting across. Peter Frankiss, with blood seeping down his neck from his wounds, comes charging across the field at Hastings, after the battle is over. With raw bravado, Peter shouts his chant hysterically like a footy fan: "Normandy! Normandy!" Over and over. He waves his sword over his head as he does so.*

*Some nobles, wearing long billowing cloaks and decorations are on horseback. William detaches from the group and rides over to the path ridden by the boy.*

William                               Holla, young fire-eater! You quite outdo yourself with excitement.

Peter *reining in*                       Sire! My liege!

*William notes the bloody wounds on Peter's neck and shoulders.*

William                               This was your first battle, *non?*

Peter                                    Yes, Sire.

William *nods*                           And you are proud of your wounds. Wear them well, for this was a great and noble victory of ours.

Peter                                    Yes, Sire.

*William appears to be studying Peter Frankiss, especially taking in his armour.*

William                               You are the son of Wolf Frankiss, is it? I think that Wolf and your brothers fought beside me.

Peter                                    They did, Sire.

William                               And you, also. Well, I want further of your help, if you can spare

me some of that boundless energy.

Peter                               Of course, anything, My King!

*William makes a vague gesture towards a group of Saxon prisoners who are being hauled off in chains.*

William                            I noticed that there were boys among the captured; young enough for us to train. I would like for you to accompany them to the Fort, and learn their language, as they will learn ours. You will all train together, and become brothers-in-arms, even though just now, you are sworn enemies. In this way, we will bring these Saxons and Angles and all of their kind to heel. And they will not trouble us so much.

Peter                               Very well, Sire. It is as you command.

William *moves closer*        Do you understand why I desire this? Our victory here on this field of Hastings is not complete until all my subjects give me obeisance.

Let them know that I mean to be a father to my people, but that I will not brook any resistance. Let them understand and acknowledge that.

Peter *nods*                        Yes, Sire. I will.

William                            One day, you will tell your children and your grandchildren that you took part in the Battle of Hastings. They will open wide their blue eyes and gasp in disbelief. Men down the ages will remember this battle and talk of us in hushed tones.

Peter                               They'll speak of the mighty Duc de Normandy, the victorious conqueror, William.

William *shrugs*  
*indifferently*                Oh, I only held the reins. My men, such as yourself, did all the work. *Adieu.*

*King William rides off, watched adoringly by Peter.*

END OF SCENE

**II, Scene x:** 1066, London.

*Very reminiscent of the opening scene of Dream #2. Duke William is at prayer.*

*The drone of the Norman male voices gradually segues into the baleful tune which accompanies Snarr's verse, mixed with the wailing of Lollie, Egil and the Saxon women (as we segue into the following scene).*

END OF SCENE

**II, Scene xi:** The Funeral Of Eorl Wegga And His Two Elder Sons. October 1066.

*This scene is harrowingly sad.*

*The dead bodies of Eorl Wegga and his two elder sons (hacked and butchered by the Normans) lie on the ground, surrounded by simple floral tributes. Young Wegga, Oldroyd and Lollie sob, hugging each other. Snarr (grim-faced) stands ready to bury his adopted father and brothers, with his arm around the weeping Egil's shoulders.*

*There follows the burial in the glen, along with its gut-wrenching lament.*

*Grand music accompanies the muffled drumbeat. A short verse is spoken by Snarr (still clutching Egil to his side), and he fights valiantly to hold back his tears. The blank verse is a throw-back to the "Shoulder-to-shoulder" speech delivered by Egil and is accompanied by exactly the same sweet female crooning over the music (which has faded a little into the background).*

**Here follows Snarr's spoken, tearful oratory:**

**His manner dolorous, distress and torment.**

**Leans on the rock all alone,**

**He laments with bitter anguish to himself alone.**

**Once was shoulder-to-shoulder with**

**Valiant and noble kinsman.**

**Clamour, bloodshed in haste.**

**Carry the news to the highest in the land,**

**For when he is dead, none shall be higher nor lower than his dead comrades at arms.**

**Receive the tale and remember**

**That perfect peace stands patiently at the drawbridge**

**True heart and brave.**

*Snarr's lips tremble uncontrollably. The music fades out so that just the drumbeat remains, along with Egil's desperate sobs.*

END OF DREAM #2

## **II, Scene xii: 1928, A Tiny, Badly Lit Storeroom In Fanshawe Alley.**

*Two days have passed.*

*As Geoffrey Bevan drags himself awake, we see that all 5 boys were dumped into this storeroom, partially filled with boxes and crates.*

*They are all still dressed in their evening dress, except for George. His jacket has been removed, and his left sleeve ripped away. A large bandage swathes his upper left arm. George stands, gazing about as Leonard tries the door, and successfully opens it.*

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Leonard *thankfully* Well, at least we aren't locked in. Pshaw! This is a vile hole. Does anybody know where we are?

George *shrugs* Fanshawe Alley, I suppose. More importantly, is everyone alright?

*Leonard and George survey the other three boys, noting that Geoffrey is coming-to.*

Geoffrey *drowsy* I think I'm alright. But what about **you**, George? What's that bandage on your arm?

*George looks slowly towards his left arm. He is confused and nonplussed by the large, serious-looking bandage thereon.*

George *gulps* D'you know, I believe that I received a stunning blow from a Saxon fighting axe.

Geoffrey *as if in a daze* Yes, that would do it.

George *rubbing his fingers on his chin* And I badly need a shave. How long have we been here, then?

*Leonard has stepped into the dark, noisome corridor as quick footsteps can be heard.*

Leonard *peering into the gloom* Someone's on his way to rescue us. Is it Bell's brother? I can't quite make out ...

*Sydney Bell approaches swiftly. He is dressed appropriately for golf in plus fours, silk cravat and natty cap. Henry is coming round.*

Sydney Bell Oh, so you're all awake, then? God, what a fright you've given us! You've been out to it for two whole days. I've had to spin a yarn (very involved it was, too!) that you lads were all our guests at *Maison Bell* for a couple of days. Illness, et cetera. But I've been frantically concerned.

*Henry Bell appears to be comforting Cedric, who is lying on his stomach trying to master his sobs. Henry looks up at Sydney, who enters the room, trying to take in the situation.*

Sydney Bell *to George* And what the hell happened to you? You're the Bishop's son, aren't you? How will you explain that horrible wound in your arm?

I was in two minds as to whether I should call in the police.

George *stoic*

Honestly, I ... I'll be fine, I assure you.

Sydney Bell *points to*

And what about him? Can't he hold his liquor?

*Cedric*

*This is very awkward. Whilst Cedric continues to muffle his sobs, the other four boys look from one to the other.*

Henry *lame answer*

He just lost his father and his two brothers in ... in the fighting ...

Sydney Bell *deeply*

What fighting?

*frowning*

Geoffrey *improvising*

The late war, it was. Terribly heroic. Poor Skeggs can't cope with his ... with his loss ...

*recklessly*

Sydney Bell *appalled*

But the bally War's been over for 10 years! I'd say that's taking grief a little too far, wouldn't you?

*As Geoffrey stands, looking wildly around for inspiration, Henry has tried to help Cedric to his feet.*

*Sydney Bell steps forward.*

Sydney Bell *bracing*

Come on, Old Cock. Can't lay about here all day. You have to return to Blackmonk's, and pretty soon about it.

*Cedric pushes himself up with his arms. His face is tear stained. He looks up at the others, wildly angry.*

Cedric *passionate,*

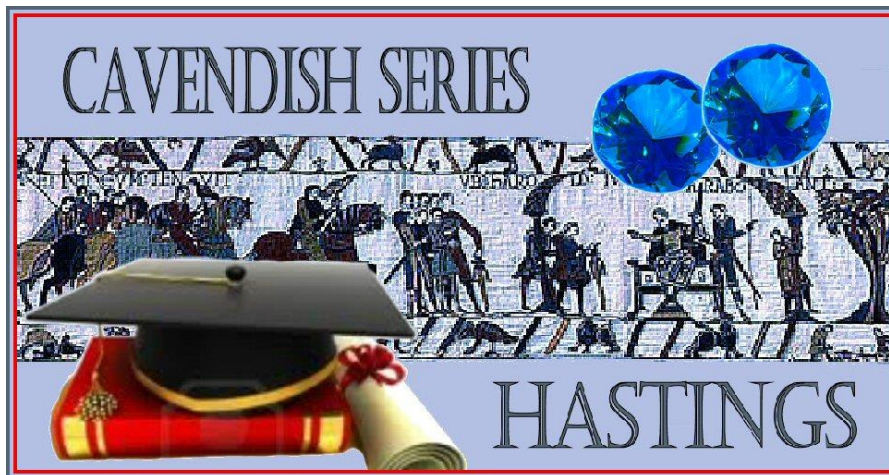
For Christ's sake, just leave me alone, can't you!?!

*weeping*

*Music chips-in. We now have a build-up of music to indicate that something exciting is on the go.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT II.



### ACT III

ACT III: Dysfunctionality sets in as the five boys try to come to grips with the visions they have shared, with trying to fit back into their normal schoolboy lives, and with solving the annoying puzzle of the little red History book. Realization comes: if they don't solve the puzzle, they'll be stuck with uncomfortable 1066 visions forever.

#### **III, Scene i: AFTER DREAM #2 A Classroom At Whitefriars**

*A doddery Mathematics teacher fumbles about with chalk and a ruler. The other boys in the class giggle or muck about. Our five boys are huddled at the back of the room, where Geoffrey is hunched, staring out of the window. Leonard throws something at him but gets no reaction. The teacher drones on about quadrilateral equations as the boys begin the fight.*

The Classroom Fight Based On The Norman/Saxon Experience.

Henry, Cedric and Geoffrey fight against Leonard and George.

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*In the ensuing fight, the boys divide into two sides: Henry, Cedric and Geoffrey versus Leonard and George. This occurs because in the Dream, they were on different sides. The other boys in the class do not join the fight; rather, they are interested spectators. When the boys begin to speak in the old tongues, the spectators look about at each other, in a puzzled search for enlightenment.*

Cedric *to Geoffrey*           What's got up your nose?

Geoffrey *cheesed-off*       I don't know why we're bothering with this, truly I don't. It's all so worthless now. Mathematics is a stinking, boring waste of time.

Cedric *chuckles*            What do you mean?

Geoffrey                    Well, I mean, we can never go back to what we had before. He's taken away our youth and our innocence.

George                     Who has?

Geoffrey                    That old fart, Sir Digby.

Our first dream, before the Conquest ... ah, that was bloody wonderful. Marvellous! Life just sang. Then it all went rotten to the core. His fault entirely.

Cedric *grudgingly agrees*        I suppose ...

Leonard                    Bit dour, aren't you, Bove?

*Bevan, unresponsive, shrugs peevishly.*

George *bright*             Well, for my part (aside from my injury, of course) I don't begrudge my share of the adventure at all. It was rather fun, actually.

*Cedric stares at George, as if he has not really seen him before this. Cedric sits back, frowning and affronted.*

Cedric                     Fun?

George *pleased*            Rather! That's what I should say.

Bell *with bitter sarcasm*   Fun, Danton? And which part of killing the Saxons did you enjoy

the most, old man?

Leonard I say, steady on! No need to take that tone, Belfry. You beastly Saxons started the business, after all.

*Henry and Cedric continue to be affronted by the attitude of George and now Leonard. Geoffrey also sides against the erstwhile Normans. He turns quickly towards Leonard, his face twisted into a savage snarl.*

Geoffrey *snarling* You bloody Normans simply floated across the water to snatch our kingdom. What were we supposed to do? Sit on our hands all day?

*The classmates of our 5 boys experience a frisson of excitement, expectation. The 5 boys have now disturbed the Mathematics Master, who turns from the blackboard and mutters to them to behave themselves.*

The Master *feebly* Boys! Settle down, there, won't you? The material I'm presenting here is of major importance to the progression of Mankind.

*The Master is ignored. The classmates are watching the argument rather than paying attention to their mentor, who turns back to the board, oblivious to the by-play. George incites further rage by spreading his hands in an expansive gesture.*

George *heavy sarcasm* If that's all you cattle-herders are good for –

Bell *eyes wide open* Oh ho! And what of your dear demoiselles who are too nimminy-pimminy to walk unaided across a field?

*Leonard adds further fuel to the fire as he leans forward to speak.*

Leonard *derisively* There, now! Of course. You'd rather have your ladies refined and dignified, **like Wegga's sister** –

*Geoffrey is standing now, fists clenched, leaning forward menacingly and he speaks through clenched teeth. The boys in the class not involved in the fight get really excited and stirred-up.*

Geoffrey *very menacing* Be careful, Len Mortimer! Don't you start on Lollie.

Leonard *taunting, eyes ablaze* With her red elbows and boiled hands from scrubbing the clothes.

Henry *screams angrily* You fucking bastard!

**With the fight in full throttle, the boys now adopt the old tongues.**

**George and Leonard scream Old French/Norman obscenities.**

**Henry, Geoffrey and Cedric hurl offensive words in Old English.**

**Translations will be required.**

*Bell jumps agilely up onto his desk to hurl himself at Mortimer.*

*There is an all-in brawl between the five boys, smashing desks and sending books and stationery flying. Obviously, Bell, Bevan and Cedric are fighting against Danton and Mortimer. The latter boys, being outnumbered, are the underdogs. Bell is visibly demented by his anger (eyes ablaze and teeth clenched) and he fights with brutal intent. The other boys simply brawl.*

*During all this, the old Mathematics master tries to establish order: "Boys, boys! Stop this at once!" but he is ignored. The other boys are thrilled, excited or scared as appropriate. Some barrack loudly and seem to derive great pleasure from the spectacle.*

*Mr Durrell bursts energetically into the room and proceeds to separate the combatants. A young prefect follows him to lend assistance. It is exceedingly difficult to separate the five boys as they fight with such earnest passion. Leonard Mortimer's nose is bleeding profusely.*

Durrell *struggling with Cedric* Mortimer, go at once to Matron for that nosebleed. If it's broken, you'll need to be sent to the doctor.

*As Leonard takes himself off, gripping his bleeding proboscis, the fight continues unabated, especially as concerns Henry. Durrell is amazed rather than appalled. He and the prefect grapple with the four remaining boys, intent on separating them. Further assistance arrives from other masters, and each boy is hauled off to Headmaster's office, while the shaken Mathematics teacher tries to restore order to the classroom.*

*Scattered words and grunts during this commotion come from various quarters.*

Confluence of male  
voices

Stop this immediately! Boys! You are not on the football field now! Bell -- recall yourself! Bevan – your dignities, Sir! I’ve got this one, Sir. Settle down! We must continue with our lesson. You other boys may continue with your studies.

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene ii: Headmaster’s Office.**

*Leonard is absent from this assembly. The other four boys slouch about in front of Head’s huge desk. Their uniforms are ripped. There is evidence of thuggery: they give the appearance of having been 10 rounds in a boxing match.*

*The camera stands behind the four boys. Head wears his very sternest expression as his eyes pass from one boy to the next. As Head starts his speech, the camera follows around to see the boys’ faces. They are all ashamed and sorry for themselves, except for Bevan, who seems to be browned-off.*

Head *pontificating*

Henry Bell, I believe that you were the ringleader in this unhappy affair. Such unpardonable behaviour is not to be tolerated at Whitefriars.

As a result, I’m sending you away from this school for the remainder of term. Hopefully, the disgrace in which you now find yourself will prove a valuable lesson in life’s journey. A tradesman’s son must always remember his allotted position in society, otherwise, society would surely fall to pieces!

You other boys may remain at school, but will be deprived of all pleasures and treats, which of course means no puddings. And I must warn you young gentlemen that fighting at Whitefriars is

strictly confined to the fisticuffs canvas in the gymnasium, and nowhere else.

*Head nods dismissal. Henry Bell is dreadfully cut up. Close to tears, he looks about him at the other boys. As they turn to go, Bevan (who has remained rigidly at attention) bursts forth.*

Geoffrey *angry and disrespectful*      Sir, that's completely unfair.

*Everyone in the room freezes (except for grim-faced Geoffrey) at this insolence. Head is utterly dumbfounded. George recovers quickly and sidles up to Geoffrey, nodding vigorously.*

Headmaster *appalled*      What did you say, Geoffrey Bevan?

George      Why, Henry Bell is no more responsible for any of this than **you** are, Sir.

Headmaster      I beg your pardon, Master Danton?

Geoffrey      It's damned hard to be fighting alongside grown men one day, and then treated as sucklings the next. When you've the war wounds to show for it, you don't have much respect for your elders anymore, Headmaster.

George *solid and defiant*      I agree whole-heartedly, Sir.

Head *completely scandalized*      My God! I've never heard such –

Cedric *gaining confidence*      It's true, Headmaster! We were at Hastings in 1066. Henry Bell, Bevan and I declared for King Harold, whilst the other two lads (Len Mortimer and Danton here) fought for King William.

*The boys nod as Head stares from one to the next.*

George *steps forward, conversational*      You see, there's this old ghost, called –

Head *wrathful*      Silence!



Now what was I ... Ah yes. We'll need to figure on having a couple of your men to stand guard on the footpath; parking the taxis while the passengers are dropped off.

Beckwith *patient*                    Certainly, Madame. You may safely leave all those arrangements with me.

Lizzie                                Well, I know I can rely on you that things will go smoothly.

*Lizzie hears the arrival of the boys. Beckwith also hears the noise of arrival. He takes a quick look into the hallway from the doorway.*

Lizzie *alert*                        Hello? Why, who's that sneaking about, Beckwith?

Beckwith                            It's Master Henry, Madame. With some of his school chums, no doubt.

*Henry strolls in, insouciant and bold. Henry nods to Beckwith and has a warm kiss for his mother.*

Henry                                Hiya there, Becks.

*[Theatrical]*

`Tis I, Ma, your little darling.

Lizzie *pleased*                    Henry! But how lovely! I thought I heard voices --

Henry                                Dragged the chaps over, don't y'know. You don't mind, do you?

Lizzie                                Gracious me, no. And ... But ... Why are you here, Henry, or did you tell me that already?

*Henry slumps lazily into a nearby chair and fills his mouth with lollies from a glass bowl. The other boys have been stranded in the adjoining room.*

Henry *utterly casual*            We've been sent down for fighting, Ma.

Lizzie                                Fighting, Henry? You?

Henry *airily*                        Battle of Hastings. On the losing side, but still managed to acquit myself rather well.

*This is met by a supercilious lift of the eyebrow by Beckwith. Henry winks at him and makes a cheeky clicking sound.*

- Lizzie *all at sea* A battle? Goodness. But military encounters fail to interest me much. It was ever so ...
- Military re-enactments can be quite ...
- How jolly for you! I must greet your friends.
- [To the petite manicurist at her elbow.]*
- Thank you, Sophie. They look lovely, as always.
- [Admiring her hands. Then focuses upon her son.]*
- Sent down, did you say, Henry?
- Henry That's it. Should have been for the rest of the term, but old Durrell put in a good word on our behalf. Thus, instead of banishing me, Head accepted defeat gracefully and gave all of us a week off to cool down.
- [Casual thumb gesture towards the other room.]*
- Oh, and Danton and Bevan got a thrashing for insolence, but that's all.
- Lizzie *looking in bewildered way at the furniture* Bevan? But that's the Cavendish scion, isn't he?
- Oh Heavens, a thrashing. Bishop Danton's son, too? How painful that must have been!
- Dadda won't be best pleased when he learns that you've been sent down. P'haps we'd better keep it from him ... somehow.
- Should you all like to go riding with me? Shall Lord Cavendish's son be able to bear throwing his leg over the saddle?
- Lizziebelle drifts off towards the adjoining room, followed by Henry and Beckwith. The other boys stand about, awkward and uncertain.*
- Henry *patient with her* Divine, Ma, but we don't have the correct togs.
- Lizzie Rent some jodhpurs. I'm positive that one can do that. Where's

Beckwith? Can it be done, do you suppose? Riding kit for five?

Beckwith *bows* Naturally Madame.

*Beckwith snaps his fingers imperiously, causing a couple of male servants to appear. The servants and Beckwith confer in whispers, looking the boys over for size, probably in order to rent the costumes. The conversation between Lizzie and her youthful guests continues over that whispered discussion. As she speaks, Lizziebelle has wafted over to each of the boys in turn. They murmur appropriately and respond as indicated. Lizziebelle tends to hold each boy's hand a fraction too long.*

Lizzie Excellent.

Leonard, you are getting so tall that I'll soon need a ladder to be able to touch your cheek. Give your Aunty Lizziebelle a kiss, won't you? Sweet.

And you are the Bishop Danton's son. Please give your parents my very best regards, won't you, and let them know that I'm ever ready to make a fourth at bridge. A thrashing ... whatever next!?

Cedric. You're growing up so fast. You all are, really. And such sweet little boys you were.

And this is our new friend, Lord Cavendish's boy. Ah ... very masculine, and so tall. I'm sure that you must have been too, too brave in the face of that flogging from dear old Mr Peabody.

Geoffrey *impulsive* I didn't cry out once, Mrs Bell.

George Neither of us did, Aunt Lizziebelle.

Lizzie *Noblesse oblige*, no doubt. Come along then, boys. You've just time to enjoy a cup of tea with me in my Gold Salon before we are driven off to the stables for our riding lesson.

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene iv: We Are Now At The Stables.**

*Lizzie Bell, immaculately groomed and dressed in her superb riding outfit is seated on an extremely docile grey mare. Lizzie appears nervous. There are two ostlers to "control" her mount, holding the reins on either side. They walk forward (with the equestrienne looking very frightened) at a gentle stroll.*

*In the foreground, the five boys pass by the camera. The accomplished riders are Geoffrey and Leonard (an excellent seat), with Cedric having an ability to ride, but that's all. The other two (George and Henry) do not have much of a clue, but unlike Lizzie, they at least attempt the trot and canter.*

Cedric                                No don't laugh. There are horses at home, but I always opt for the Firebomb motorcycle to get m'self around.

Geoffrey                              In all my born days, Treacle – how is that possible!

                                            And Belfry. I ain't seen such a lousy seat as yours on a horse for I don't know how long.

Henry *laughing in genuine enjoyment*                Well, riding never really came my way until this lark. I'm more of a skittles and beer man.

Cedric                                And George is no better than you; looks like he's been glued to his mount. Try to relax, old thing.

George *nods to Henry*                We weren't brought up to it like you, Bovine and Morts were, Treacle. Have a heart ... "bowels of compassion", as Papa so often says. I say, Morts, you could win equestrian events, I believe. What a dashing fellow you are!

Leonard *reining in*                In all truth, I've no heart for it just now. Although I didn't agree with him at the time, Bove was bloody right this morning.

Geoffrey                              Was I? That makes a refreshing change. Right about what?

Morts                                 You said something about our lives being changed forever, and things not meaning anything anymore. When I think of what we did, you know, back then ... This is all just fooling about, really ...

Don't you remember that boar hunt, and those ferocious hounds?

**FLASHBACK:**

We did not see this scene during the dreams but will show it now in the form of a "flashback".

This flashback concerns a very exciting boar hunt, on horseback with lances.

This is a marvellous, exciting scene, accompanied by glorious, racy music.

Peter Frankiss, Roger de Cerci, Oldroyd, Snarr and Young Wegga tackle a wild boar through thin woodland and pastures. Large mastiffs with drooling jaws accompany them.

In the flashback, all five boys are superb riders: absurdly fit, brave and "gung-ho".

They ride strong, able steeds.

END OF FLASHBACK

*The 5 boys wear dreamy looks on their faces as they recall the heroism of that day.*

- |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cedric                          | That was so wizard! Nothing nowadays could come anywhere close to equalling that. I mean, any one of us could have perished from one false turn from that rogue boar. |
| Henry                           | Don't fret! The old man might be waiting around the next corner to send us off again.                                                                                 |
| Geoffrey                        | But that's just what I've been trying to point out. We can't go on like that forever. Why, there'll be more trouble at school, which means trouble at home --         |
| George <i>now very downcast</i> | You're right! I'm absolutely dreading facing the Pater after having been sent down. Why, I don't think it's ever happened to a Danton since the dawn of time.         |
| Leonard                         | And none of your august family would have sported a bloody                                                                                                            |

wound such as yours, either.

George No, indeed not!

Bove is spot on the mark. We're never going to have normal lives until we solve that puzzle, you know.

Geoffrey I've half a mind to give up the book to old Durrell. See if he can dig up the answer. It's worth a try, don't you think?

Cedric *surprised* Durrell?

Geoffrey Of course. I think he's on our side. I'm sure of it. The old boy had a decided glint in his eye when we were hauled up before Headmaster.

Henry *agreeing* And he spoke up for us. Don't forget that!

*The boys ride about a bit and then rein-in near Lizziebelle.*

George I hope you enjoyed your ride, Aunt Lizziebelle.

Lizzie Yes, thank you. The riding master assures me that I'm making very fast progress, George. And who wouldn't be, when astride this lovely lady. My noble steed is named for the Goddess of Love, *Errata*. Doubtless you are quite familiar with the classics, being a scholar, as Henry informs me.

George *frowning* Um, yes indeed. But ... Ma'am ... "Errata" ... it's a term used for printer's errors in –

*George Danton's face changes dramatically as something dawns on him.*

George *eyes wide open* Oh my God!

*Leaping athletically from his mount, and thrusting the reins into the startled Henry's hands, George dashes off. He shouts back to the others as he tears off on foot.*

George *shouting* I'm going to search for Errata!

END OF SCENE

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**III, Scene v:** London, In The Entrance Hall Of The Bishop's Palace.

*A teenage girl, who is George's elder sister, breezes down the stairs, seemingly enjoying her brother's discomfiture.*

Sister *bitchy* Ah, there you are. We know all about your brawl, you know. Your beloved Headmaster sent round a personal note to "The Parents", detailing every blow. Needless to say, you are now *persona non grata* in the Palace.

Confidentially, if I were you, I'd slip out through the kitchen door and into the lane *ventre à terre*.

*George Danton looks about wildly, takes a deep breath with fists clenched. His scared "hunted rabbit" demeanour gives way to a more stolid, "take-no-prisoners" aspect. George sets his jaw.*

George *firmly* No! I won't! I shall be manly about this. From this moment on, I'm facing the consequences of my actions. No more scurrying into the laneway. Where is Papa?

Sister *chuckles* In his study, of course, no doubt envisaging all sorts of vile punishments for you.

*George gives her an evil stare as she wafts past him, laughing at him. He then mounts the steps three at a time. He takes another deep breath at the door to his father's study, sets his jaw again, then knocks determinedly at the door.*

Dr Danton *voice-off* Enter.

George *nervous* Um, may I speak with you, please?

*Dr Danton lifts a small notelet which he then fans a little.*

Dr Danton Is it in relation to this hand-delivered letter which I've received from Mr Peabody, the Headmaster of Whitefriars?

George *nods* Father ... I just **had** to see you, Papa.

Look, I understand that you're very disappointed with me just now, and probably not in the least pleased to see me, but I feel

that I owed you an explanation. The fight was ...

You see, Father, the fight was forced upon me by some other chaps, and I did what I could to defend myself. But I don't blame the chaps for a minute for wanting to beat my head in, because after all, I had said something unfortunate which was misconstrued.

Anyway, the long and the short of it was that, when it came to **blame**, and we stood before the Headmaster in that ghastly office of his, I did what I had to do both morally and ethically. I just wouldn't let the other chaps take all the punishment, so that I could get off Scot-free, Sir.

So you see, I ... I stood up for my chums, even though it meant that I would get into heaps of trouble. Six of his best the old swine gave me. Sorry ...

And that's the whole story, Papa.

*Bishop Danton sits in silent thought, while George catches his breath. Then the divine stands and comes up to his son in order to shake hands with him.*

Dr Danton                      Thank you, George.

*[George and his father shake hands]*

I was hoping that the situation as described by Mr Peabody would turn out to be something along those lines. Well done, my boy. If anything, I'm somewhat proud of your responsible behaviour in this matter.

George *relieved and taking heart*              Thank you, Sir.

Please, Papa, might I use your telephone? It's rather urgent.

Dr Danton *gracious*              Certainly, George. I shall even accord you some privacy.

I shall return in about ten minutes, by which time, no doubt, you

will have completed your connection.

George Thanks, Papa.

*When the Bishop shuts the door behind himself, George breathes a huge sigh of relief, then picks up the old-fashioned candlestick telephone. He puts the earpiece to his ear, jiggles the drop hook a couple of times, then waits for a few seconds, listening intently.*

George Yes, Riverside 728, please.

*[Slight pause.]*

Oh, hello. Is that you, Beckwith? This is Master George Danton here. A close friend of Henry's. Yes ... thank you ...

I say, are the other chaps still there, do you know? ... No? Oh, drat! They've gone on to where? Pentecost Abbey? That's in Oxford, isn't it? I say, Beckwith, do you have the number for the Abbey, so that I may contact them? ... Really? Alright, thanks anyway.

*George is not sure what to do now, as he cannot contact the others. Thus, he looks lost and beaten. Just as he is about to shuffle out of the room, the phone shrilly rings. George stares at it for a second then jumps forward to answer it.*

George *hopeful* Hello? Hello? Oh God yes! I've been desperate to –

Listen! I went to the Great London Library. Found a book there which might explain one thing we've missed in Bovine's red book.

Yes ... Yes ...

No wait! There's even **better** news. In the Bibliography section (that's where the librarian dragged me to) there was a man named M. Laurestan sitting by himself, heavily immersed in scads of books. But what do you think: **he's the absolute spitting image of King William**. Yes, to the life. I almost fainted when I ... Alright, Treacle! I'll come straight over. Pentecost Abbey? And where ... *[scribbles down the address]* Fine! I'll have to get to the

railway station and wait for a train. Save me some pudding!

~~~~~ Break ~~~~~

*Bishop Danton ascends the stairs just as George bounds down them, carrying an overnight bag.*

*George (breathless) scampers out of the house, delivering a farewell to his Father.*

George                      Father! I'm off to stay with Lord Cavendish's family. In Oxford.  
Give my love to Mother. 'Bye Papa.

*Under the bishop's bemused gaze, George slams the door.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene vi:** The Sun Room At Pentecost Abbey, Breakfast.

*The boys help themselves to breakfast, which is laid out upon a huge, ornate dresser at one end of a delicious sunroom. A couple of male servants stand firmly to attention nearby. This room is all glass and plants, with a large sturdy table in the centre. Cedric is the last to arrive.*

Cedric                      Feeling any better about things, lads?

Henry                      It just don't make any sense. How can that ruddy old knight expect us to solve a puzzle when we don't have a clue what it's all about. It's like: "what is the riddle of the Nile?"

Leonard                    Where on Earth are we to start looking for clues? And then we ask ourselves: "clues about what?"

George                      Point 1: we can't find anything at all in the book, which is supposed to be the key to the puzzle. It looks like being a red herring.

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Geoffrey I mean, we've all read the thing at least 18 times.

George Point 2: I suddenly get an idea to search for known mistakes in the book, vis-a-vis, Errata. Which takes me to the Great London Library.

Point 3: When I get to the special section in the Library (where I'm told that I might find the many volumes written about your little red history book, Geoff) they've just about all been snaffled by a man --

Henry A man who just happens to look exactly like our dear William the Bastard.

Leonard *affronted* King William if you don't mind.

Cedric Now, now. Let's not have another fight.

George Who looks **exactly** like our King William. I happened to see his name on his satchel, and so we know him to be one M. Laurestan.

Geoffrey And all you could find out was that there is a misprint in that French bit. So instead of "known to the two lakes" it now reads "known to the two mothers", which leaves us no better off than we were before.

Cedric And all we can glean from Sir Digby, or Grandpa Marsden as he calls himself, is that it's something about blue emeralds.

George Which is bloody curious because there's no mention of any gemstones at all in that book.

Geoffrey I still hold with my original idea. When we get back to Blackmonk's, let's give the book to Freddie Durrell, and see if he can make a go of it.

END OF SCENE

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**III, Scene vii: Pentecost Abbey, Moving From The Breakfast Room To The Garden**

*Later, as they are about to wander into the garden, the boys are compiling a list. They are involved in a heated discussion about certain points on the list. Bessie is standing beside the French windows, smiling at them, whilst overhearing them talking.*

Bessie *sighs* Ah, Monsieur Laurestan. That noble soul ...

Geoffrey *pulls up short* What did you say, Bessie? Are you acquainted with someone called "Laurestan"?

Bessie Oh, yes. The sweetest gentleman. And when I use the term "gentleman", in this case, it's quite appropriate.

*Bessie sighs again, dreamily.*

George But, Lady Cavendish ... I saw him in the library yesterday, armed to the teeth with bibliographies related to books about the Norman invasion.

Bessie *nods* Yes, that would be correct. There is some of sort of club. Like-minded men who are concerned with King Harold's final movements. "Healthy, Wealthy and Wise" I think it was called. Monsieur Laurestan was the Wise member of that club.

I shall never forget his kindness to my poor father.

*Bessie makes to move off.*

Geoffrey *urgent* Just a minute, Mother.

*[Geoffrey turns frantically to the others.]*

Remember, lads, that her father is Sir Digby!

*[To Bessie, urgently]*

When was Monsieur Laurestan kind to Grandpa Marsden?

Bessie At his death, of all moments.

Boys *shocked* What?

Bessie                                    They had been speaking, in hushed tones of course. (It is a library after all.) Apparently, my father stood up in order to gather some books from one end of a nearby bench, when he suddenly collapsed. Your French historian did everything possible to revive him.

*This news causes Geoffrey to bang his hand into his forehead in a frantic manner.*

Geoffrey                                My God! I thought that when everyone said that he'd died in the **library**, that they meant that he'd died at his home in the Marsden library!

Bessie                                    No, no, not at all. It was in the Great London Library that he passed away.

Cedric                                    Gosh!

Henry                                    That puts a whole different complexion on it!

Bessie                                    And knowing the inestimable value of father's favourite book (that one you had in your pocket, Geoffrey), he returned it to my mother that very day. It isn't often that one finds such kindness, is it?

*The boys dash into the garden. Suddenly, we hear music which is exciting, throbbing.*

Leonard                                Grandpa Marsden dies with that book clutched in his fingers and –

George                                    The Frenchman who looks like King William I takes it from his dead grasp. And remember that this is one of the most valuable books in the world, because of some secrets it contains. And does he keep it? **NO!**

Cedric                                    He promptly returns same to Sir Digby's widow.

Henry                                    Lord, chaps! This damn puzzle is taking on a life of its own.

*The boys are wandering randomly about in the gardens at Pentecost Abbey, deep in discussion about their list, when Geoffrey spots the gardener. He wears a battered hat, smock and old boots. A man is*

*pruning and uses a ladder for this activity. It is Sir Digby. This is an absurdity, as Sir Digby is covered in armour.*

Geoffrey *astounded*        **You!** I've been wondering when you'd turn up.

*Sir Digby looks at Geoffrey gloomily, then goes on with his pruning.*

Geoffrey                      Why, whatever's the matter? You look all in.

Sir Digby                     Give a man a break, can't you? I am dead, after all, you know.

Geoffrey                     Look! We need your help with this quest on which you've sent us. That red book's been no earthly use at all.

Sir Digby *concerned*      You must be wrong, dear boy. It's a ... a treasure map. That's what it is. Everybody says so.

Geoffrey                     But there's no mention in it of sapphires or emeralds, Sir. Are you positive about the precious stones?

Sir Digby                     Yes! Yes! It's all in the book.

*Sir Digby descends the ladder (which is difficult in full armour).*

Cedric                        What about your papers? Your diary? Are there any other clues to be found?

Sir Digby                     I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but you've all to go back to that other time. It's flowers this time, by the way.

Cedric *bright*                Oh, we don't mind a jot, as long as it helps us to solve this damned thing.

Sir Digby                     Yes, but you **will** mind this time. It's not very pretty, I'm afraid. After the Conquest, the Saxons behaved very badly. And by way of retribution, the Normans made their lives quite hellish.

Henry *thrilled*             Do you mean there'll be lots of blood and gore?

Geoffrey *pleased*         Oh, well, we don't mind that a bit! We're pretty much used to visceral mayhem, all things considered.

Sir Digby *sadly* You'll all have to grow up, and lose your naïvety, your youthful innocence. William and his cronies will see to that. Alright. Goodbye young gentlemen.

*Grandpa Marsden walks over to a large bush, covered in huge bell-like flowers.*

George Hold on, Sir Knight.

There's an easier way to tackle this, which will leave us to go home free.

All you have to do is to talk us through this briar patch of myth and mystery and we'll find those gems for you. Easy as that! Why, there's no earthly need for dreams at all. What I mean is, let's just be scientific about this, what?

Sir Digby *genuine surprise* Tell you? But you don't follow at all, do you? Oh, on the subject of the Future, I'm dazzlingly clever: a blue-Riband scholar. But the Past is to me no more than a misty marshmallow.

Henry *laughter in his voice* You can foretell the Future, then? Who's going to win the 3<sup>rd</sup> race at Ascot on Saturday?

Sir Digby I can tell you, Master Henry Bell, that you're destined to become a wealthy Cit, and marry very well: a lovely, loving wife you'll have. There'll be many clever and prosperous children, too.

And Dr Danton's boy here, George, becomes a Professor of History at your Whitefriars school. And *his* son becomes one of the most revered historians of all time. You see, George Danton marries Geoffrey's little sister, Beatrice, bringing forth half-a-dozen fruits from his loins.

Geoffrey *aghast, as are they all* My little sister, Beattie? Sir, she's all of three years old.

*George pulls a disgusted face, pretending to be violently ill.*

Sir Digby That's right, Geoffrey. However, little girls often grow into

superbly beautiful women. Beatrice's grace and beauty will be the talk of London anon. Of all the men who court her, she'll pick you, George.

Beatrice has a sister: the little babe, Nerine. Like you, she will visit the past. Only her quest will be to dig up the lost jewels of King John.

*[To Geoffrey]*

You yourself are framed for a brilliant career. I prophesy that military honours will abound in your quarter. But even more glorious, you will cross swords with Gaudini at the 1932 Olympic Games in America. Sabres, dear boy.

Geoffrey But you were joking about "love", I hope.

Sir Digby She's exquisite, your future wife! You'll be absurdly happy. And ... something way into the future about the Wars of the Roses ... But I'm a bit fuzzy ... Your clever granddaughter, perhaps?

Geoffrey Did you hear that, chaps? I'm off to fight again! In the Wars of  
*misunderstanding*  
*completely*  
the Roses!

Sir Digby Cedric here will be a powerful entrepreneur: the employer of many, many people. But, unlike you, he's not to know true happiness in love.

*Cedric looks downcast. Sir Digby nods farewell and gestures to the plant whereon grow the drugged flowers.*

Henry Hold on, Sir. You're forgetting Morts. Whatever happens to him?

*Sir Digby walks over to Leonard to lay a hand sadly on his shoulder.*

Sir Digby The warrior's life is not always long. 'Tis the nature of the profession, more's the pity.

Leonard *matter-of-fact* Am I to die in battle?

Sir Digby *carefully* Let's just say that you will be fighting when you die. That's all I can tell you. Now, young men --

George Er, just before you toddle off ... We must double-check something. It was in the Greater London library where you passed away? Not in your library at home? Do we have that right?

Sir Digby Yes, yes, that's where I was killed.

Boys *in shocked unison* ***Killed?***

*Sir Digby moves again towards the bush.*

Sir Digby *speaks grandly* The overpowering scent of these blooms will carry you back to the very darkest hours of England's history.

Henry *urgent* Wait a bit! ***Killed?*** Do you mean "murdered"?

Sir Digby Aye. Haven't I already mentioned that?

Cedric *angry* No you bloody-well haven't! How the devil are we to work out this business for you if we don't know all the facts?

George Is your death anything to do with a French chap called "Laurestan"?

Leonard So ***that's*** why your tormented soul still clings to the temporal world. You have to avenge your unnatural death! Like Hamlet ...

Geoffrey *pondering* Funny, but I don't ever remember having seen this bush before. Oh, gawd, but that's a pretty dreadful pong.

*One by one the boys collapse onto the grass, while Sir Digby looks on sadly. There is no music, which adds to the eerie feel.*

END OF SCENE

Several years have past.

The actors playing Snarr, Oldroyd, Eorl Wegga, Roger de Curci and Peter Frankiss are now young men rather than boys.

They will have to be identified during the plot progression (so as not to confuse the audience).

The actors playing Geoffrey, Henry, Cedric, George and Leonard continue as before.

The brutality meted out to Feste (William The Conqueror's minstrel) will change forever the relationship between conquering Norman and conquered Saxon.

### **III, Scene viii: Egilstead**

*On the ground, outside the Egilstead house, we find Oldroyd, Wegga and Snarr sprawled about on the ground. They are sleeping one off, having fallen where they stood on the previous night: dead drunk. Chickens peck and scratch about in their vicinity. Lollie comes into the yard and chucks the dishwashing water over the boys, sending the hens squawking off.*

Feste The Minstrel Approaches.

*On horseback, riding with one leg placed jauntily over the pommel, is Feste. He is a thin, phlegmatic man in his late 30s, dressed in a gaudy medieval jester costume. There are coloured ribbons streaming from his hat, from the horse's bridle, and from his lute.*

*He stops at Egilstead to greet Lollie effusively. Feste gallantly sweeps off his hat, holding it to his heart. Lollie stares at him, arms akimbo, not at all pleased with his advances.*

Feste *unctuous*                      Ah, good morrow, my lovely young English wench. Surely, the sight of your comely face gladdens the heart of this poor Feste.

*He pushes on with his wooing, as the boys gradually come-to (with groans and moans).*

Feste *over-bright* And so you douse these wretched guys with Holy water, do you?  
Ha, ha. What would I not give, now, to be lying at your feet, my pretty one. Would you douse me too, eh?

Lollie *prosaic* You'd better go back where you came from, Monsire Feste. The watchword for you is: "Keep far from the Saxon woods, the Saxon villages, and you will keep safe".

Feste *laughing* Oh, no, no, no, no! Feste has the King's leave to travel as far and wide as he may choose. King William's beloved favourite minstrel must wander everywhere, to bring gladness and folly to the sad hearts of England with a lay and a lie.

*Feste smiles broadly to Lollie, sweeping her a low bow from his position on horseback, and makes to ride into Tallboys Forest.*

Lollie *warning* Don't go that way, you fool. William the Bastard's many enemies have hidden themselves in that forest. There's nought but danger for you there.

*Feste doffs his hat gallantly to Lollie, who shakes her head and returns inside.*

*Off goes Feste, singing happily of his love for England and the green fields. He often strums the lute. The music picks up the tune and we see and hear him fade off down the road.*

*Snarr opens a bleary eye, still lying on the ground, drenched in Lollie's dishwater.*

Snarr *slurring* What the hell was that all about? Is that Minstrel/Fool blundering into the woods, now? Tell me that, Oldroyd.

Oldroyd *thickly* What Fool?

Wegga Shit! I feel like death. Someone slit my throat to put me out of my misery, will you?

*Snarr drags himself up. He is very unsteady and seedy looking.*

Snarr Don't tell me that rascal is trying to ... Oh, God!

*Snarr staggers off to vomit into the bushes. He calls out from his position in the bushes.*

Snarr                               Eorl Wegga. You are a fearsome warrior. You will have to ...  
  Aaaaaaaaah!

Wegga                               What? What will I have to do, then Snarr my brother?

Snarr                               Daaaaaaaaaaaah! We have to stop him!

*[Important: Snarr is seen next at the very end of film #3, so film that scene while you can.]*

|   |
|---|
| Feste The Minstrel Blunders Into Tallboys Forest. |
|---|

*Meanwhile Feste rides on, singing happily. He waves to uninterested bystanders, chirrups to barking dogs, and sings copious praises for his new homeland. Then he stops with a soft "Oh ...".*

*Ahead, straddling the road, is a group of "football hooligans": shaved heads, carrying pikes, stakes, axes, and so on. They move forward and around Feste. When they speak, their voices are both menacing and encouraging. More men, all looking down-at-heel, stalk out of the woods. Feste looks terrified and the gelding reacts by tossing his head and whinnying.*

Saxon Yobbo #1               Come along, Frenchie.

Saxon Yobbo #2               What happened to that nice song you was singing just now?

Saxon Yobbo #3               Got stage fright, 'ave ya?

Saxon Yobbo #4               That there's a nice gelding you have there. You're all mounted up  
  on a real leather saddle, too. Very swish!

  I wouldn't mind having a horse like that.

*With a minimum of fuss, but a deal of delighted shouting, Feste is dragged from his horse to be brutally murdered and hacked to pieces by the Saxon louts. The lute is chucked into the long grass at the roadside and the gelding led away.*

*Now the music echoes Feste's song, but the tune becomes mournful, moody and intense.*

END OF SCENE

### III, Scene ix: An English Garden Belonging To King William.

*It is mid-morning, with brilliant sunshine and no wind. This walled garden has a glorious archway draped with climbing roses. Other flowers and bushes abound in marvellous profusion. To the side sit four musicians, playing a simple country dance tune. Puddingsauce seems to be the Master of Ceremonies.*

*Several ethereal young maidens (all beautiful), long hair loosely garnished with flowers, dance about gracefully. Roger de Curci and Peter are among a handful of young Norman gentlemen dancing with the girls. There is a deal of sweet, affected flirting between the young men and girls. The music and dancing continue unabated throughout this scene.*

*King William has been handed Feste's blood-stained lute by a solid guard, who stands awaiting William's orders. William turns the lute over and over.*

Guard                                    He was never a good man, My Liege – but what harm did he ever do? I ask you.

*William sadly strokes the lute, allowing the globs of Feste's blood to touch his fingers.*

Guard *angry*                            If it were up to me, my Liege, I'd gut the scoundrels who did this – Filthy swine!

William *controlled and quiet*                            Shhh, now! Don't disturb the maids at their dancing.

Guard *firm*                                What action do you wish us to take in response to this outrage, Duc William?

*William wanders further into the garden. He lovingly strokes the lute. Sir Hubert Attewoode (an Angle who sympathizes with the Normans) approaches, bowing.*

William *thoughtful, subdued*                            Action? *Oui*, I suppose that some punishment is deserved.  
[Pause. Turning to Sir Hubert.]

I thought that I could bring culture and refinement to these Saxon yokels. That was a preposterous wish, non?

They would far rather have that oaf Harold Godwinsson lording

over them: uncouth, uncaring and unkind.

Yet here is Duc William, opening up to these farmhands a stunning new vista of the world. The Norman cuisine, music, art, literature. Courtesy and courtly romance.

*[Sweeps his hand towards the dancing maidens.]*

Think you, Hubert, what it means to be Norman. You are an Angle by birth, after all. You cannot fathom how proud the Normans are.

We have the strength and courage of our Viking ancestors allied with the beauty of all things French. Could any peoples be more blessed by God?

Sir Hubert *bows slightly* Majesty! The Saxons are poets and storytellers. In their own way, they are proud, too.

*William stops his ramble to look down at the lute in his hands. His lip trembles.*

William *reverently* My favourite minstrel, Feste, has been savaged by a mob in Tallboys Forest. *Eh, bien.* It was observed that for no reason (other than that Feste emanated from my court) was he dragged from his horse and hacked to death by cowardly Saxon butchers. Of course, the beast was spared, no doubt to be yoked to a ploughshare. But Feste's jolly music now lies dead.

*Wordlessly, William hands the lute to the guard. William ponders for a moment, watched by the two men.*

*William The Conqueror shakes himself from his reverie, turning again to the guard.*

William *decisive* Take a large party of armed men to the Tallboys Forest and slaughter 10 of any useless, lawless idlers you do find there. Leave alive the able-bodied men: I want them to be dragged into my army, as I did with the boys recently. They will make fine soldiers, given the correct encouragement.

*The guard bows, then stalks off, still holding Feste's lute.*

**William to Sir Hubert** Set about publishing and proclaiming in every village my laws. Start with the *murdrum*. Read the Riot Act over these people. Let them understand that lawbreakers will be punished mercilessly. I want the local Saxon earls and dignitaries involved heavily in this. And we need organization. Get together the Latin scribes and have them set about cataloguing the wealth of this land. Call it a Domesday Ledger, or whatever name you can think of. I'll no doubt be flitting back and forth between England and Normandy. I'll need a full account of what is what and whose is whose. Oh, and the others ... the Angles, yes? Who are these people that I have conquered: not all Saxons, I think.

**Sir Hubert** As well as the Saxons, your subjects include Viking Danes, Angles, Jutes, Frisians, and various admixtures of those races. Plus some watered-down Celtic blood, and what's left of the Roman stock.

**William keen** Good! Good!  
My gut-feeling is that we maintain some connection with the past, despite our subjugation of the populace. "England" will remain on all maps, and in the tales and stories. "The Land of the Angles" sounds quite romantic, and no taint of the Saxons in it. So I intend no renaming of this country.

Further, the English tongue will not be stamped-out. It will flourish alongside our Norman lingo. Make a point of broadcasting that my sons will be tutored in English. Will you do that?

**Sir Hubert** Pardon me, Sire. But will that not lead to some confusion? For instance, do I ask the milkmaid for "lait" or "milk"? Should I eat "pain" or "bread"?

Anund *from behind them*      Shall I bow to the "roy" or to the "king"?

*William turns slowly, a wicked grin spreading over his face as he sees Anund standing actually on the garden, crushing the flowers. Anund stands tall, erect and impressive. At the sight of him, William lets out a delighted crack of laughter.*

William *humorous*      Bow to your "roy" and get off my damned flowers!

*Anund does not bow. However, he steps forward to clasp William to him in a fervent man-hug.*

William *bonhomous*      Sir Hubert Attewoode! This is my greatest enemy in all the world. He names himself Anund: a Varangian of fierce reputation. But he's really a soft jelly at heart.

*William pats Anund's stomach. Anund grins sheepishly, in spite of himself.*

*Then, the two men (Anund and Sir Hubert) nod to each other, sizing each other up.*

Anund *gruffly*      Well, new friends and old friends should congregate at the fireside.

I came not to chat and bleat, William of Normandy, but to tell you a truth. That truth is that King Harold Godwinsson received from me a pair of priceless jewels named "The Eyes of Christ".

Now, since that that King is under the sod, does anyone now have those jewels?

William *uncertain*      That sounds like an important matter on which I should hold a strong opinion. However, I don't.

Sir Hubert      My Liege! Perhaps you are unaware of the history behind these precious gems.

*[To Anund]*

Aye! You tell true, oh! respected seafarer. Harold knew that with those jewels in his possession, he and his forces would stand invincible. No army could touch him while he had them in his

keeping.

And yet he passed them onto another man, just like that! No-one can fathom such whimsy.

Anund *keen* Which man?

Sir Hubert *shakes head* Nobody on Earth was that close to Harold Godwinsson to know the man's name, except that man himself.

William *musings* And he may also be dead.

Anund *alarmed* Then --

William *softly* *Calmez-vous! Calmez-vous!*

Sir Hubert and his men will uncover the jewels, wherever they be, in compiling the Doomsday catalogue.

Anund *fiery* Ho! So you trust this English knight, do you?

*William closes in on Anund. He looks severe, uncompromising.*

William, *soft but menacing* Know this, *par Dieu!* Every man Jack in this land of England knows, or will know, the might of William the Bastard. I can trust every man; else, my vengeance on him will be deep and cutting.

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene x:** Egilstead. The Grim Gathering Of Conquered Souls.

*In every nook and corner, poor and dispossessed Saxons sit about, in grim hopelessness.*

*As Wegga enters Egilstead, he is surprised.*

*Wegga, now the young Eorl Wegga and Lollie fight over his allegiance. As this scene progresses, we sense that although they are both angry (with teeth clenched and spitting venom at each other), there is an underlying mood of hopelessness.*

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Wegga                               What are all these poor folk doing here?

Lollie *spiteful, vicious*       They've nowhere else to go. These Normans have taken their homes, their land, their kine and their crops. They have nothing left ... nothing! And all courtesy of your French friends.

Wegga                               It is because of my friendship with the Norman leaders that we **have** food and shelter to give them. Think on that.

Lollie                                You've sold your soul to the Devil, Eorl Wegga and you've thrown in your lot with the enemy.

Wegga                               They are no enemy to me, Lollie. I have many Norman friends just as I have many Saxon ones.

Lollie *savage*                    No Englishman worth his salt would give you good-day. You're a traitor to your people.

Wegga *horribly offended*        I am no traitor. Say not that I am a traitor. There is no more loyal subject of the King than Eorl Wegga.

Lollie                                A king who filched this country from --

Wegga *argumentative*        William was pronounced Edward the Confessor's heir and was duly anointed as our King in God's presence. There was no theft in that.

Lollie                                Oh, you make me want to scream!! Edward the Confessor's successor can only have been Harold Godwinsson, on whose side you fought in that great battle.

Wegga                                Yes, the great battle which --

Lollie *angry tears*               Which took the lives of our father and our brothers. You would have done better to have perished along with them.

Wegga                                But I did not, for God had other work for me: to be a-stitching this country back together again.

*[Holds hand up for silence.]*

Sister Lollie! God decided to favour the Normans in that battle. His will, Sister, was that William should rule this kingdom of England. Having survived that battle, and buried the dead, I was rewarded for my faith by being entrusted with my current position as keeper of the peace. I have taken an oath in blood to serve my Norman masters. That ends this discussion.

Lollie

And to let your Saxon fellows die in misery. No, Wegga! You shall hear me. Our mother sits in the corner every day and will not stir since the great battle. I have had to run Egilstead almost single-handed from that day. But now the task, with all these refugees at our door, is becoming too great for me. You must tell your new friends that by harming these people, they do no good for themselves, nor for the country. Tell them that, from me!

*Lollie spits angrily on the floor. This action (along with his sister's intemperate words) cause Wegga to view his sister with disgust and disdain.*

Wegga

'Tis no wonder that you remain unmarried, Lollie. You are too sharp a shrew for any man to tackle.

Lollie *voice shaken with tears*

I am unwed because I have had no chance to find a husband. All my time from cockcrow to curfew is devoted to this ceaseless toil.

It often occurs to me that, if King Harold had won at Hastings, I should by now have been one of the lovely ladies at his court: dressed in the finest silks and wooed by Princes.

But look at me. Look at me, brother! Who would now want to marry this sad, wretched bag of bones?

*Wegga bows his head, deeply moved. He allows Lollie to put her arms about him. When Wegga speaks, his voice is now soft and broken.*

Wegga

I shall speak to Sir Hubert Attewoode. He can organise some help for you, I think ... You must understand that by siding with the conquerors, I have given this family a chance to survive.

Lollie *looking down, shakes head* You tell me that I must understand it; but I never shall. You say, too, that you are stitching the country back together again. Well, I do not see that happening. To my eyes, it is being rent in every direction, with no hope for any of us.

Wegga *resolved* There must be hope! I'll call on Sir Hubert.

Lollie You can spare someone more immediately, can't you? Where is Oldroyd?

Wegga No-one has seen him these 10 days. I believe he is under taint as an outlaw.

Lollie *shocked: this is the last straw* Why?

Wegga *squaring his chin* He was asked to subdue a group of rebels in the woods. But mayhap he has joined them. And so there will be a bounty on his head.

Lollie *shaking her head in utter disbelief* No!

Wegga *wry smile* So you see? It is better that I go down my own road in this, for the good of the family, what's left of it.

*Music: our music is very mournful and yet foreboding.*

END OF SCENE

END OF DREAM #3

### **III, Scene xi:** The Train Ride Back To Whitefriars.

*The boys sit in an old railway carriage as the train speeds along. Thus, they sway from side-to-side. George, Geoffrey and Mortimer gaze at the passing view indifferently.*

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*Henry rips up bits of a newspaper, sticks the pieces into his mouth and creates large spitballs. These he chucks at Cedric, who is utterly gloomy and stares out of the train window unseeing. It is evident that an argument has been undertaken, and that the boys have subsided into angry silence. Henry, however, allows his mischievous spirit to overrule common sense.*

Henry *taunting* I'm an outlaw, then. That fits my character much better than trying to smarmy-up to the all-conquering Normans.

*Eventually, Cedric has had enough.*

Cedric *angrily* Gerroutofit, Belfrey, or I'll smash your rancid face for you!

George *distantly* Bit of decorum, fellas.

Cedric *rounding loudly on George* I told you already! Keep your fucking hoity-toity nose out of it, George Danton!

*There is an audible gasp from other passengers, even though the boys are in their own compartment.*

George *shocked* Here! You'll have us chucked off this train with such foul language!

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene xii:** A Railway Platform At A Major Railway Station In London.

*The train pulls into the platform. Six burly policemen race along the platform. Scandalized passengers alight, staring at (and pointing towards) one compartment where we can just make out a melee taking place. The five Whitefriars boys are seen to be dragged forcibly off by the constabulary towards a waiting police van. All five boys are very bedraggled, hobbling in pain as they shamble along. They all sport various injuries associated with pugilism.*

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene xiii: In The Paddy Wagon.**

*All five boys are crowded into the police van. They sit in solemn silence. George moans in pain.*

*We now see a camera close-up of Geoffrey, who is bruised and bloodied. He is firm, determined and forceful.*

Geoffrey *flinty*

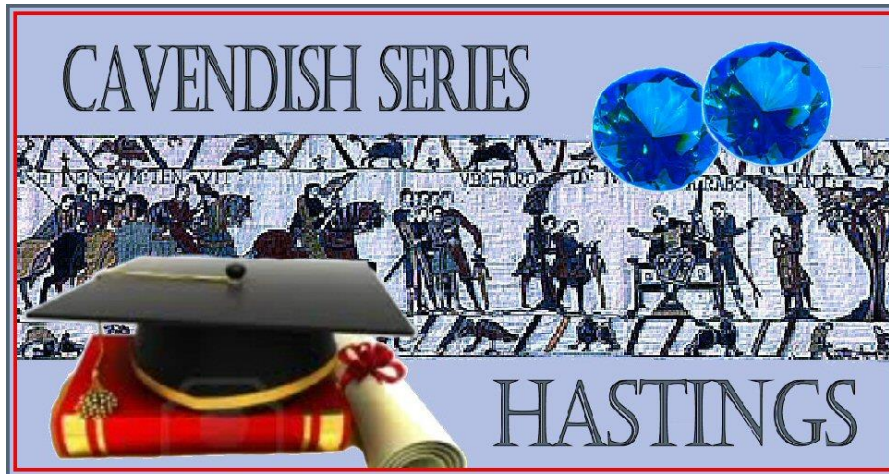
It comes down to this, gentlemen.

We have to make the greatest push imaginable to solve the blue emeralds mystery in that bloody book of Sir Digby's. This ... this damned fighting between us is positively ludicrous. We need to be on the same side, playing for the same team.

You know what? The fighting stops ***right now***, and from this moment we shall channel all our resources into the enterprise of that foul red book. And we'll start by working out what old man Marsden and his cronies had been up to when he died.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT III



## ACT IV

### IV, Scene i: Detention Study Room.

*There is a sign on the door "Do not enter: Detention". The camera passes through the door.*

*The boys (all sporting impressive bandages) are doing their detention study, under the watchful eye of Durrell.*

*Geoffrey is chewing his pencil, frowning over his letter. The other boys pretend to study.*

Henry *whispers*                      Give me a look at what you've done so far.  
*urgently*

*Geoffrey pulls a face, then passes over a couple of dirty, badly crumpled sheets, covered in scratched-out musings.*

Henry *reading, sotto*                "Dear Mrs Marsden, I am very sorry to have found your deceased  
*voce*                                        husband's book in my pocket. However, it would be nice to look  
at his personal diary. Yours Truly, G. Bevan."

*[Disgusted and no longer reading]*

Why, this is bland-fartlings, Bevan! You've been writing this all day. Is this drivel the best that you can come up with?

Geoffrey *affronted* Well ... what the Devil should I write? It's concise and sincere, isn't it?

*Durrell does not look up from his papers as he chastises the restless boys.*

Durrell Boys! Silence there, please.

*Henry puts his head firmly down (in an effort to look studious). He scribbles frantically.*

Henry Sorry, Mr Durrell.

*George imperatively puts out his hand for the letter, which is passed to him under the desk.*

George *whispers, reading quickly* Is this the letter begging Whatsername for the diary? Perhaps I can improve upon it. Polish it up ... give it a bit of class.

*The others are heads down, pretending to work. George waxes lyrical over the letter. His pencil races over the page. When he is not reading out his words, he is mouthing something unintelligible, with grand actions.*

George *whispers* "My dearest Mrs Marsden. Our souls were touched by the .... Virtue glittering like gold in the sand .... With his unimpeachable character .... Strength of .... From the bottom of my heart, I implore you to ...."

*Now the boys next to George, being Geoffrey and Henry chuckle in appreciation of George's flowery prose. Again, Durrell does not look up from his papers as he chastises the restless boys.*

Durrell Bell, is that a mathematics textbook which I see lying unattended on your desk?

*Henry tries hard to stop himself from giggling.*

Henry Yes, Sir, Mr Durrell.

Durrell Then will you be so good as to read it?

*Henry is really struggling not to laugh.*

Henry Sorry, Mr Durrell.

George *pencil tearing* " .... If you would be so kind as to ... in honour of the special

*across the page* feelings we have for your ..."

*Cedric leans forward, whispering hoarsely.*

Cedric Let me see it. I bet I can get the old girl to give over the goods.

Durrell And stop that whispering. Get on with your studies, please.

*George surreptitiously passes the paper to the boy next to him who passes it to Cedric. Durrell bangs something down on his desk such that he severely startles the boys. He has had enough!*

Durrell Skeggs! Bevan! Come before me at once. Are you two passing notes to each other during your Detention class?

*They look from one to the other. Then the 5 boys troop up to Durrell's desk. They hand the letter to Durrell, who glances at it, frowning.*

George We're in a bit of a sticky mess, Sir.

*Durrell can hardly believe what is written in the scribbled note. With frowning brows, Durrell looks from one boy to the next, confused.*

Durrell "The English Under The Norman Yoke"?

Geoffrey Sir ... I ... that is, all of us ... we would like you to read this History book and see what you can make of it. Please, Sir.

*Geoffrey pushes the red book forward towards Mr Durrell. George pulls the Errata page out in order that Durrell will see it.*

Durrell *somewhat supercilious* By "make of it", I interpret your meaning to be that you wish me to render a critical analysis of this rather slender volume?

George That slip of paper is really the only clue we have. Errata, Sir. We've been getting into quite a deal of trouble because of that book.

Henry *keen to explain and cajole* There's a mystery there, Sir. And **you're** the man to untie the knots and unravel the cord.

George *rolling up his* You'd better look at this ...



require a stronger aperitif?

Durrell No, no ... Sherry will be fine.

*The brothers manage to get far enough into the room so as to be able to sit.*

Sandford Well?

Durrell *drawls* ... Samuel Marsden.

Sandford *whips around* Ah! Samuel Marsden. ... He died in Mickey's arms, you know.

Durrell *very thoughtful* Did he, now? Poor soul!

Sandford But a thoroughly delightful chap. So very droll.

Durrell Interesting ... I had not known that you were so well acquainted with him.

Sandford Oh, yes. Met him any number of times. Only during the past twelve-month, of course.

Do you know, we had intended to initiate him as a fourth member of the society.

Durrell *eyebrow lift* But surely that would have destroyed the beautiful symmetry of the group? "Healthy, Wealthy and Wise" ...

Sandford -- and Witty! Well it was not to be ...

Durrell Sad.

And have you been in touch with the other founding members recently?

Sandford Oh, Laurestan puddles along as always. Poor Victor is a bit under the weather, though.

Durrell I'm sorry to hear that Prince Kamarisov is not well.

Sandford Yes. But he's sure to be as right as a trivet in no time. Has some sort of doctor staying with him at this juncture. Oh, not a doctor. What do ye call them? Specialist. Some quack or other. At any

rate, bound to patch him up.

Durrell *sighs*                    Alright.

*Durrell pulls the red History book from his pocket. He plonks the book down carelessly on the table in front of Sandford.*

Durrell                            Sandford, old man, what do you think was handed to me by one of my pupils? Lord Cavendish's son.

Sandford                        Good Lord! Where did he ...?

Durrell                            Marsden was his grandfather. Well, to be honest, step-grandfather (if there is such a term). This boy and four of his friends claim that the ghost of Samuel Marsden gave them this book, which as you may know was perpetually kept under lock and key. Then he sent them off, if you please, to the year 1066, to Senlac Field in Hastings.

Sandford                        No! By Gad ... ghost stories!

Durrell *nods slowly*            What is more, my prize student, the son of Dr Danton, Bishop of London, is one of the boys in question. He currently sports a very nasty wound on his arm which appears to have been caused by an axe of some kind. Claims that the injury was sustained at Hastings, during the battle.

Sandford *transfixed*        What?

Durrell                            Aye. No doubt he could have received that wound anywhere. I'm not placing too much emphasis on it. However, I heard these five boys arguing vociferously during a classroom scuffle last week. Two of them shouted obscenities in a Norman variant of old French, whilst the others hurled back their insults by way of very lusty old English phrases. And I cannot conceive of a valid explanation for any of these boys having learnt the old tongues in such a short space of time. It's quite inexplicable.

Sandford *explodes* Good heavens! It's madness!

Durrell Yes, bizarre is not a strong enough epithet, is it? I don't believe in the occult: ghosts nor time-travel. And neither, I should imagine, do you, Snaffle.

Sandford *decisive* Certainly not!

Durrell But these students of mine insist that they've only just returned from harrying the Saxons on William the Bastard's behalf. From their description of events, I take it that their situation was quite ghastly. In desperation, they've begged me to investigate that book. Their Marsden-ghost clings emphatically to the tenet that the answer to some puzzle or other resides therein. And they'll be free from their nightmares once they crack the secret.

*Sandford picks up the book, turns it over, then replaces it on the table. He shakes his head gloomily.*

Sandford Kamarisov, Laurestan and I spent weeks on it with Marsden. There's nothing there at all.

Durrell But I don't follow .... What on earth were you all **looking** for?

*Sandford stands suddenly and looks down, very thoughtful. Then he looks up, and thrumming strings are heard. Sandford swings around, sighing.*

Sandford Do you know ... I think I'd better meet these students of yours. It seems to me that Samuel Marsden is trying to speak to us from the grave.

*With evocative music welling-up, the camera closes in on Sandford Durrell's face.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene iii: An Impressive Room At Whitefriars.**

*The Headmaster of Whitefriars has permitted Durrell to use his interview room. This is a very impressive oak-lined room, with a large solid oak table in the centre. Durrell has placed a large blackboard on an easel nearby. To the right of this blackboard are three solid chairs: seated therein are Sandford Durrell, M. Laureston and Prince Kamarisov. On the other side of the table are five straight chairs.*

*Durrell goes to the door, opens it, and calls in the boys. He is very particular about where they will sit. To the boys, Durrell uses his schoolmaster voice.*

Durrell                      Remain standing whilst I introduce you. Danton and Mortimer, you will sit here. You other two over there and Bevan here in the middle.

*The boys stand as instructed, as the three seated men look them over, smiling kindly. Durrell goes to the blackboard. The boys cannot stop staring at the men.*

Durrell                      Gentlemen, these fine young specimens of manhood are George Danton and Leonard Mortimer. These lads represent the Normans, respectively: Roger de Curci and Peter Frankiss, son of Wolf.

At the other end of the table are Henry Bell (Oldroyd) and Cedric Skeggs (Wegga the Younger, now an Eorl). They are Saxons. Wegga's father died at Hastings, fighting alongside King Harold.

The fifth lad is the Viking Snarr, whose real-life father is Lord Cavendish; this is the Honourable Geoffrey Bevan.

*Durrell nods that the boys may sit, and they do so. The three men are astounded.*

Prince Kamarisov            Incredible! What an adventure, boys!

*All the males in the room look from one to the other. Durrell brings them back to the focus of the meeting.*

Durrell                      Now, boys. These gentlemen wish to discuss your book and your dreams with you. I believe that together, the nine of us might

solve Mr Samuel Marsden's puzzle.

This gentleman is Prince Victor Kamarisov, this gentleman is Monsieur Michel Laurestan, and finally, here is my brother Sandford Durrell.

*The boys mutter: "How do you do?" The men merely nod indifferently to the boys.*

Durrell                                So ... the idea is that we all know a little something. Alright, let's put everything together onto the table, and see if we can solve the enigma. Boys, please feel free to join in the conversation, but remember your manners.

Boys *mutter*                                Yes, Mr Durrell.

Durrell *gestures to Laurestan*                                Monsieur? Will you begin, please?

Laurestan *nods*                                *The Eyes of Christ.* That is what the blue emeralds are called. *The Eyes of Christ* are matching gems of unmatched quality. Beyond price. Giving to them a monetary value would be quite a meaningless exercise.

They had been in the possession of one Prince Zorilau of Byzantium. He was a very religious Christian, who nevertheless believed that the stones held mystical powers. Then they were wrested from him by pirates and were supposedly brought to the British Isles by some means or other at about the time of the Conquest.

Sandford *pointing to the TEUTNY book*                                That's the gist of it, at any road. Marsden's little volume here is supposed to be a guide to their current whereabouts. However, I'll be damned if I can find a single clue therein. And believe me, we've searched and searched.

Prince Kamarisov *to*                                Your Grandpapa was a marvellous man, with a first-class mind.

*Geoffrey* But young gentlemen: so I am forced to enquire, what does his tortured spirit say about it all? If anyone knows, it does!

*The boys look from one to the other and seem to nominate George as the spokesman.*

George Mr Marsden takes on the persona of Sir Digby. When he appears to us, he uses some means or other to spirit us off to Norman England. But before we passed-out last time, Sir Digby intimated that he'd been murdered.

*The four men nod; apparently, they had already considered that.*

Sandford And what about when you are in the "Old Days"? Does anything happen or is anything said which may give us a lead?

George No, Sir. I'm sorry, Sir. It's all just fighting and hard work.

Henry *under voice* And dancing about with pretty girls ...

Leonard *quietly* It's ruining our lives, actually. We can't be just schoolboys anymore, not after fighting as we did ... alongside grown men.

Prince Kamarisov Yes, it must be very difficult for you.

M. Laurestan But this Digby character asks you to solve the riddle of the "Eyes of Christ", does he not? So, these dreams must be in the nature of ... ah, how would you say? ... providing you with clues, perhaps?

*The nine males look at each other. There seems nothing further to say.*

Henry *clears throat* George got hold of the Errata page. After a bit of inspired sleuthing, he came up with "2 mothers", not "2 lakes".

*[George blushes]*

We've been thinking about that. Cedric/Wegga and I are cousins, as our mothers were sisters. And Snarr and I are the sons of a Viking pirate, it turns out. Half-brothers. All three of us look on Egil as our mother, even though really she's only Treacle's

mother. I mean, Wegga's. Sorry.

*[To the Prince]*

Begging your pardon, Your Highness, but the Viking pirate is called Anund. And he's you, Sir. Begging your pardon.

*Prince Kamarisov appears both surprised and pleased at this revelation.*

Prince Kamarisov            I am in the story? Smashing!

Laurestan *impressed*        This is ingenious, *non?*

Henry *making a clean  
breast of it*                You, Monsieur, are in the story, too. You are William the Conqueror.

Laurestan                    *Mon Dieu!*

Sandford Durrell            And I suppose that I play the luckless King Harold?

George                        Oh, no, Sir! Nothing like! You are a very good knight: Sir Hubert Attewood, friend and advisor to The Conqueror.

Henry                         Not a Saxon – An Angle!

Sandford *delighted*        Ah!

*Another lull occurs. Durrell turns on his heel and moves to a bench by the wall.*

Durrell                        This may be a propitious time for me to put my oar in.

*Durrell reaches for his briefcase and pulls from it a large chart. This he attaches to the blackboard.*

*The chart represents part of the Battle of Hastings as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry.*

Durrell *nodding  
towards TEUTNY*            Sandford, would you be so kind as to turn to page 38 in our little red book? Could you hold up the book so that everybody may see the section of the Bayeux Tapestry thereon?

Notice anything?

Cedric *impulsively*        Are we playing "Spot the difference"?

Laurestan, *frowning*        ... Yes ... there is something ...

*Durrell unfurls another chart.*

Durrell                                    Len, come up here and hold this, will you?

*Leonard acts as the easel for the second chart, which represents page 38 of the red book (magnified). Durrell points to a group of men.*

Durrell                                    Look here!

In this scene, there's a rather strange thing. That chap there isn't in the original. He's a Saxon soldier, a warrior in the front rank, and he appears to be carrying something under his arm. What is it? A barrel? A box? Perhaps your young eyes can make it out, boys. Here's the magnifying glass, if you require it.

*The boys, having deserted their chairs, cluster around. There is lots of speculation and excitement.*

Durrell                                    Everyone's missed it up until now. Until Yours Truly spotted it.

Leonard                                 You know what it will be? Someone's head.

Henry                                     If only it were yours!

Durrell                                    I needed to be certain that this was indeed an extra figure, so I telephoned to a friend of mine, who is by a curious and fortunate chance attached to the Rouen museum (where one finds the original tapestry, of course). She verified that there are only four men in this part of the work. Yet, clearly here we have five warriors. And now we must ask ourselves: what is the significance of this superfluous bloke?

*Murmuring from the boys and men*                    A box ... A box of some sort ... a roundish box ... A hatbox ... *a hatbox, you ass!* ... it's one of those wooden boxes ... they call them caskets, I think.

*While George quizzes Durrell, the "something-is-going-to-happen" music thrums in. The three other men and the other boys gather around the two charts, with Leonard peering at the second chart which he holds. They point and murmur.*

*However, Geoffrey has backed away, and clutches the chair back. He is recollecting something.*



lack of scholarship and application.

Geoffrey *very excited* It was the very first lesson after the Yule break. Don't you recall? You said you hoped that I'd have come back more enthusiastic for history than I was then.

Durrell Well?

Geoffrey *trying to recall* But, Sir, it's all coming back, just now! ... I **wasn't** asleep at all. Not really. You ... you were telling us a thrilling tale about Anund the Viking pirate who fought with a ... a ... um –

Henry With a battleaxe?

Geoffrey *frustrated and impatient* No, no! ... With a --

Durrell My dear boy, I've never heard of anyone called "Anund".

Geoffrey *forcing the issue* No! Listen! He fought with **a Prince of Byzantium!** That's it! And took from him a leather pouch containing the two most precious jewels in all of Christendom. There it is! That's what you said, Sir.

Durrell *looks askance* Did I, now?

Henry *confidentially to Prince Kamarisov* That's **you**, Sir. Our father, Anund: mine and Bevan's.

Geoffrey *ignoring the interruptions* I honestly didn't remember before that I'd –  
[Remembering thrillingly]

Anund locked the jewels in a casket, which he then gave to Harold Godwinsson. But King Harry got in a lather over the impending Viking and Norman invasions, so **he** passed the casket on to **Eorl Wegga** to mind for him.

Cedric *pointing to the 2nd chart* So this could be my father, Eorl Wegga, this extra figure?

Geoffrey *triumphant* Yes, yes, of course it is!

Henry *snapping fingers* And in that first dream, when we raced to Egilstead, Wegga senior and Treacle's brothers were coming up from the cellar. Egil wanted to know what they'd been up to, but they wouldn't tell. I'll just bet they'd been burying that casket under the house.

Cedric Precisely!

Henry *triumphant* The cellar! My mother and Egil used to hide in there, away from the Viking raiders.

Leonard Do you realize what this means, gentlemen? If we can find this Egilstead of yours, Treacle, we could very well locate that treasure, if it's still there.

Cedric *overjoyed* Wizard!

George *doubtful* But it can't possibly still be undiscovered, can it?

Henry Why ever not? The only three people on earth who knew where it was buried have died in battle soon after they stashed it. Who's to know about it now but us?

George Perhaps .... Excavations or ...

*George notices the teacher's thoughtful expression, and the faces of the other gentlemen.*

George What is it, Sir?

Durrell Boys. Are you able to advise us: where then might that casket be buried? Where is "Egilstead"? In what locale?

Cedric *suddenly downhearted* We don't know, Mr Durrell. Perhaps near to Hastings, but .... We just don't know ...

*The boys suddenly look disappointed and bereft.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene iv:** Whitefriars, At The Edge Of The Wood, Near The Tennis Court

*It is early in the morning. Henry and Geoffrey appear at the edge of the wood, having been in the wood. They carry ropes and bags of equipment. They are wearing singlets, white athletic shorts and sandshoes. Both boys are very sweaty and smeared with dirt; they look as if they have been undergoing strenuous exercise.*

*Just as they are about to cross the lawn back to their dorm, a piano is heard to strike-up "God Save the King". A choir of boys sing the national anthem ("King" not "Queen").*

*Henry and Geoffrey glance at each other, then stand rigidly to attention.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene v:** Whitefriars. On The Second Floor Of A Solid Brick Building.

*Leonard and George have been watching from the windows, dressed in pyjamas. On hearing the national anthem, they too are standing stiffly to attention. We see Mr Durrell slip into the room, watching them. On the completion of the song, Leonard and George relax. Durrell strolls up, such that he can see out the window. The boys are now aware of his presence: it does not faze them.*

George                      Oh, hello, Sir. Some people are just too energetic first thing in the day.

Leonard                     I'm more of an evening man myself.

Durrell *pleasant*             Why aren't you with them?

Leonard                     We drew the long straw, which committed us to swatting.

George                       Not that we found anything, Sir. But no harm in trying.

Durrell                       Egilstead?

*The boys sigh, nodding, somewhat downcast. Durrell points lazily to the window.*

Durrell                       Please explain the matutinal physical jerks, then.

George, *shrugs* Oh, it's Bevan, Sir. He is utterly convinced that when we do discover Egilstead --

Leonard -- and he's certain that we will find it. He thinks we're very close, now.

George -- We'll be besieged by all kinds of medieval warriors and life-size tapestry figures before we can wrest the treasure from its hiding place. Bell agrees with him whole-heartedly.

Durrell Good grief! The fecundity of the imagination of youth never fails to floor me!

George Anyway, we're either in training or slogging in the library. One or the other.

Durrell And not neglecting your actual scholastic studies, I trust.

Leonard, *grinning* We manage to slip in a bit of Botany here and there.

*They watch Geoffrey, highly motivated, and Henry, equally keen at their military-style training.*

George, *smiling* Bevan has become a real person, Sir, what with all the search for the emeralds. It's given him a new lease of life. He used to be such a hateful drip.

Durrell, *nodding, thoughtful* Yes, he's blossomed alright.

And yet Cedric Skeggs, who used to be one of the more ebullient boys at Whitefriars, now conducts himself as if in training for a career as an undertaker.

George *defensive* Oh, but Sir, he's fallen into a slough of despond following our last English lesson. Mr Cranfell was happily explaining to us the derivation of some English words when Trea -- I mean, Cedric fairly leapt out of his seat and shouted down poor Mr Cranfell as if the evolution of our mother tongue was all his fault.

Durrell *mildly amused* Let me guess ... no doubt it was some words of Norman

derivation which sparked Skeggs' ire.

Leonard *nods*

It's like this, Mr Durrell. On the one hand, Geoffrey was used to worry constantly that the doctor who had been treating his mother all those years ago might not have been up to scratch. Well, we've taken his mind off that, and given him a sense of purpose.

On the other hand, Ceddie is mourning three dead kinsmen he had in another life. He's helplessly watching his Saxon people sink under the Norman yoke. And there's not an Earthly thing that we can offer him to lift his despair.

*There is a lull.*

Durrell *dreamily*

"The English Under the Norman Yoke" ....

*Durrell nods farewell to the boys, then strolls off. Leonard, watching him, suddenly frowns.*

Leonard *in an under*

"The English Under the Norman Yoke" is T.E.U.T.N.Y! Is that

*voice, more to himself*

"TEUTNY"? TEUTNY was mentioned in Geoffrey's mother's diary, but Bovine wondered if it wasn't the parlourmaid.

*Thrilling music. "Something is about to happen ..." Then the sense of urgency fades into the next scene.*

END OF SCENE

## **Scene vi:** Night In The Dormitory At Whitefriars.

*With lovely music in the background, the camera visits each boy lying awake in bed, staring up at the ceiling. Geoffrey has moved into the dormitory to be with the other boys. The boys speak in low voices. Leonard is far enough away from George as not to overhear the conversation.*

Geoffrey

I'm utterly fagged but I don't want to sleep, George; not until I've

worked out this wretched conundrum of Egilstead's location.

George We've combed every available source for "Tate's Tor" and "Egilstead". But nothing at all has come up ...

Geoffrey It was all so long ago.

George *sighing* It's like it all dissolved into the ether. Or never even existed.

*[Short pause]*

I say, Bove. There's something I've been meaning to ask you.

Geoffrey Yes?

George *stumbling, cannot get started* It's a bit awkward ...

Geoffrey Yes? Go on ...

George You know, when we were in that other place, there were lovely fillies dancing gracefully in King William's garden ... They flirted with their eyes ... Not harpies, you know. There was actually something very sweet and innocent about these lassies. A chap wouldn't touch them in case they broke.

But ... they made me think of ...

Well, what I want to know is: have you ever been with a girl?

Geoffrey *sounding appalled* A girl?

George Been with one.

Oh God, I'm so stupid about all this romantic stuff. I mean ... **been** with a girl.

Geoffrey *revolted* Good heavens no! Last thing I'd ever do.

George *disappointed* Oh ...

Geoffrey *reasonable* Well in some nebulous way-off time I suppose I'll get married.

What else is a chap to do, after all? But girls? No thanks.

George *whispers* Do you think Morts has?

Geoffrey Yes. I think so. Don't be horrified. He comes from a little village in Cornwall and the wenches there are quite different.

George *desperate* But Lord! How does one know what to do? I thought of asking my Pater, and then I fell apart with nerves. You can just see what will happen, can't you? They'll marry me off to some woman or other, and I'll be expected to perform, and I shan't have a clue.

Geoffrey *chuckling* You're supposed to be marrying my three-year-old sister.

George Don't joke! I sincerely need advice.

Geoffrey *shrugs* Ask Morts then.

George *shivers* Don't be preposterous. I shouldn't dream of it!

Geoffrey *put out* You asked **me!**

George *trying to explain* But I could ask you, and you'd just tell me. Morts will make a thing out of it and laugh at me. I can't ask him. I just can't!

Geoffrey Then, you must get a book.

George A book?

Geoffrey *up on his elbow* I was staying with my Burnside cousins one time and my eldest cousin (he's quite a wag) dared me to look at some French books he had under his bed. ***Illustrated French books.***

George *closes eyes and gulps for air* Oh my God!

Geoffrey I didn't of course. I was quite petrified to even think of it. Anyhow, I don't believe that the ones he meant to show me can have been more than some half-clad females lolling about.

But that's what you do ... you get yourself a book with pictures in it.

*George resigned to his fate* Well that's it then. I shall have to con my parents into taking me to Paris again. Somehow I'll sneak off to a bookshop. Blimey Teddy! What sort of books does one ask for?

Geoffrey Um ... a "How to Make Love Encyclopaedia", or some such thing.

*George is as white as a sheet. He sits up, retching.*

*George squeamish* Oh, Bove ... I'm going to be sick ...

*Geoffrey jumps out of bed* Hold on, can't you? I'll fetch the sick bucket.

*As George covers his mouth and miserably retches, Geoffrey runs off for the bucket.*

Short Break

*The room is now in darkness. We hear the heavy breathing of the boys.*

*Leonard bursts into the room, flashing a torch about. He makes for the bedside table beside Geoffrey, but stumbles on all Geoffrey's paraphernalia, and thereby trips. He makes several noises: "Ouch!", "Oo!" as he falls onto his knees. This scrabbling about wakes Geoffrey.*

*Geoffrey startled* Hi! Someone's smashing about in our room!

*There is a short tussle, with vocalization, and the sound of a steel bucket being knocked over.*

*George dashes out of bed to switch on the electric light. The scene is comic: George has an erection which he tries to hide with his hands, whereas Leonard and Geoffrey have been wrestling on the floor. Henry and Cedric sit up in their beds, trying to take in the scene.*

*Henry derisive* We can always rely on you in a crisis, George. Have you been caressing the ferret?

*George jumps back into his bed, to cover his shame with the blankets.*

*George shamefaced* It's all I ever seem to do these days.

*Cedric worried* You can go blind, you know. Fellow I know, well, he --

Geoffrey *impatient*            Never mind telling us of Blind Freddy. What are you about, Morts, to be sneaking up to my bed with a bally torch? And this had better be a damned good story, old cock.

*Leonard is still on the floor. He turns around to face Geoffrey's bedside table.*

Leonard                        I wanted to look in your mother's diary. Where is it?

Henry *bemused*                Are you drunk, old boy?

Geoffrey *equally bemused*            What? Diary?

Leonard *urgent*                The diary which provided you with consolation. I need it urgently.

Geoffrey *all at sea*            But ...

Leonard                        I need it because I must discover the name of the doctor your mother mentioned. The one who was overfond of TEUTNY.

Geoffrey                        It was Dr Eblin.

Leonard *musng*                Hmmm .... I thought so ....

*After looking owlshly at his alarm clock, Cedric lies down again and rolls over.*

Cedric                          Right! It's half past 3 in the Ack Emma. We really do need our sleep.

Danton, if you can tear yourself away from your favourite hobby, be a good chap and turn off the lights.

*Henry also lies down. George switches off the light and returns to bed. Only Leonard's torch provides light at Geoffrey's bedside.*

Henry                          And fire-off a telegraph of your scoop to The Times, Morts.

Leonard *to Geoffrey*            We've established that TEUTNY stood for the initials of the name of that little red history book. Right?

So, why did your mother mention that book in her diary when in fact she wasn't a Marsden. The book belonged to the Marsdens.

Different family altogether.

*There is a thrilling silence. Geoffrey screws up his brow, trying to follow what Leonard is saying.*

Geoffrey *haltingly* Well ... there was a sort of connection ... They knew of each other in a social way ... Grandpa Marsden probably leant the book to the Burnsides on some occasion ...

Leonard Listen! First, your Mother is being treated by Dr Eblin. And she dies. Second, Sir Digby ... I mean, Grandpa Marsden. Dr Eblin again.

Henry How do you know?

Leonard I've been thinking a lot about this TEUTNY business. So I telephoned to your new Mama, Bessie. She told me that: at the time of his death, Samuel Marsden was under the care of one Dr David Eblin.

It was there for everyone to see in Mr Marsden's diary. We didn't ever manage to get hold of it, did we? More's the pity ...

Cedric But ... Sir Digby said that he'd been murdered.

George Cripes!

Leonard But wait! It gets a whole lot soupier.

After that fight we had in the Mathematics class, Durrell sent me to Matron's office, and she telephoned for the doctor. But when he arrived, he wasn't dear old doddery Dr Ball. This doctor was some other medico I'd never met before. Very brisk and no nonsense, he was. But very interested in all my battle wounds; the ones I got at Hastings. It was creepy, I can tell you.

He gave me a bottle of pills, too. But I've not taken any. They're probably chockful of cyanide or some such thing.

Geoffrey So, do you think that this bogus doctor was none other than Dr

Eblin?

Leonard I don't "think" it ... I **know** it!

I've just now been to Matron's station to rifle through her files. On the day of our fight, Dr Ball was indisposed, and a locum (Dr Eblin) was called in.

George *mesmerised* He's after the book.

Leonard No, it's not that simple.

Don't you see? The TEUTNY book on its own is useless. You have to have had the dreams, too. Dr Eblin will zero-in on us when we discover where Egilstead is located and go after the gems. He can't do it on his own. He relies on us, now.

Henry So, why knock-off Morts?

George To cut down the number of people he'll have to fight to wrest the gems from us, I suppose.

Cedric He's already murdered once. Or even twice (sorry Bove).

We probably need to get your pills scientifically analysed, Morts.

Geoffrey *aghast* This is all so horrible!

Henry Will he be trying to dispose of anyone else who's in his way? What about old Durrell, or those gents we met from the Healthy, Wealthy and Wise club?

George Let's put all this on the table in front of Durrell. First thing in the morning.

*Geoffrey scrambles out of bed, to turn on the bedroom light.*

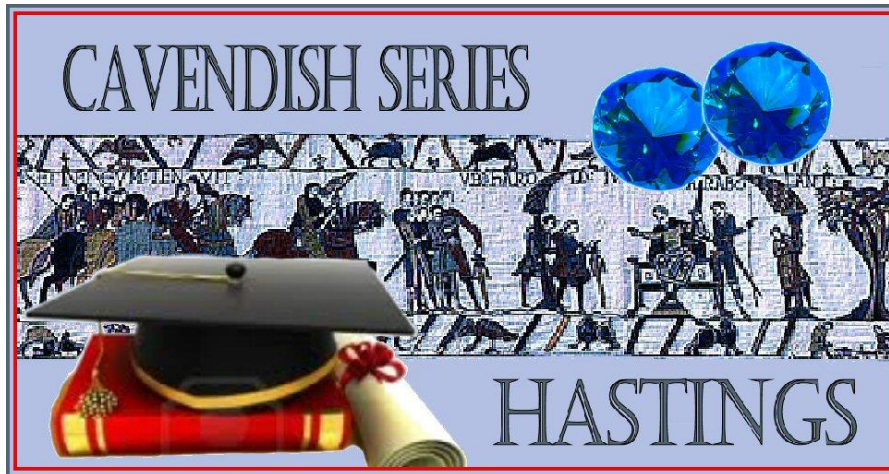
Geoffrey, *fired-up* No! We'll tell him **now!**

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV

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## ACT V

### **V, Scene i:** 1928, Spring In The Vicinity Of The Old Tennis Court, At Whitefriars

*The music now is thrilling and grand, but with distinct military overtones.*

*Right in front of the camera, very close, Cedric, Henry and Geoffrey jog past, dressed in singlets and shorts. They call out to George and Leonard, who are practising tennis. The latter 2 boys respond in kind.*

*It is a sunny early Spring morning. The court is very old-fashioned and attractive: brick piers, bamboo and cane arbours with wisteria and climbing roses. To all appearances, this is a rarely-used spare court which is poorly maintained; for practice only. Behind the end where Leonard stands is a thick wilderness garden, and a lattice gate.*

*George and Leonard are puffed out and breathless, sweating copiously. The boys grunt, groan and shout at each other as they play the shots. They are getting really tired: they've been at it for some time. Leonard misses a forearm shot, and so leans over, chest and shoulders heaving, resting his hands on his knees.*

Leonard *panting and exhausted*                      Phew! Aw, come on ... that's enough! We've been at it for ages, and I'm thoroughly stonkered.

George *rallying,*                      Not on your life! We have to get absolutely fit: peak condition,

*hopping about* don't ye know. Keep going, Sod!

*Still puffing, Leonard slumps off after the ball, and the tennis practice continues. George delivers a powerful but mistimed backhand which sails over the arbour into the thick garden. He roars loudly as he hits the ball.*

Leonard *reluctantly* Oh ... I'll get it.

*Leonard lets himself out via a pretty wooden lattice gate. He thrashes his way heavily and breathlessly through the undergrowth, searching for this ball. Leonard is deep in the thick undergrowth, still thrashing away with the racquet.*

Leonard It's in here somewhere. ... Just a minute ...

*Leonard is still puffing noisily and knocking about under the brush. Suddenly, he pulls up short. Before him, dressed as a golfer is Anund with his caddy, Sir Digby. Sir Digby leans lazily on a golf buggy.*

*Leonard reels back in fright. He shakes his head violently, terrified and in denial. His vision is rooted upon Anund.*

Leonard *aghast* Sir! Does this mean that you have died?

Anund, *nods sadly* Another tick on the doctor's chart.

Sir Digby *nods* Another flag pinned on the map.

Anund Another task for the undertaker.

Sir Digby *changing tack, to Anund* However, your funeral will be grander than mine was. Not that I can remember much about that ...

Leonard It was Mr Durrell who ascertained that your physician was the infamous Dr Eblin, Prince Kamarisov. You've been very ill, and he was hastening your demise. I'm sorry, truly I am.

You and Grandpa Marsden were both murdered by the same man. By a doctor, who took a Holy oath to always do his best by his patients.

Sir Digby *nods* But the "Eyes of Christ" blinded his vision, young Len Mortimer.

Leonard                    We told Mr Durrell everything, Sir. The evil doctor was taken into police custody, because the pills he'd given me turned out to have been poisoned.

Sir Digby *self-satisfied smirk*    I told you that you'd die fighting. Poison would never have come into it. You should have trusted me, young man, when I looked into your future.

                                  Anyhow, well done for spotting the doctor as the villain.

Anund *heavy sarcasm*    And no more deaths at his hands! Hip-hip-hoorah!

*[Gruffly to Sir Digby]*

                                  Come on! We're wasting time. I have a round of golf to play.

*[To Leonard]*

                                  You and that other boy are headed back to Norman England for the last time. So enjoy yourselves!

Leonard                    And will there be a hint as to Egilstead's current whereabouts?

Sir Digby                    Mmmm ... In a manner of speaking, yes!

*[Confidential]*

                                  What have we had, young man? A fish. But you weren't there for that one, were you? Er, then doctored wine. Pardon my pun. And then it was stinking blooms. So this time, it's --

*George Danton, tired of waiting for Leonard, hacks his way into the bushes, using his tennis racquet as machete. He draws up to a dead stop on seeing the 2 golfers, and bangs his head against Leonard's, as the latter swings round.*

*Both boys are knocked unconscious. Anund takes a golf club in his hand and prods Leonard.*

Anund                        Mortimer and Danton, you will not find the treasure by lying down. Get up at once!

Grandpa Marsden *as if an interested spectator*    But **shall** they find it? I should know the answer to me own question ... but for some quirk of the telekinesis, I've gone

somewhat hazy ...

Anund *sagely, nodding* I think so. They are sensible boys. They have coped with all the rubbish which you've thrown at them. Coped very well.

*The two ghosts trudge off, leaving George and Leonard unconscious amongst the bushes.*

END OF SCENE

### Early Norman England.

#### **V, Scene ii:** A Squalid Room In Dover

*Into a rough, squalid room, Peter enters. There are 2 dirty straw paliasses, and some assorted junk (clothing, shoes, weapons, bags, etc). There is no door. In the doorway, a rough hessian curtain has been hung.*

*Roger de Curci is bundled up, asleep, on one paliasse. Peter glances at him, then begins to throw his various belongings into a couple of bags.*

*Roger stirs and rolls over to glare at Peter owlshly.*

Roger, *thick with sleep* I remember now ... the boat with the horses. It's arrived yet?

Peter, *busy packing* On its way. I could just make out something solid on the Channel. I'd give it another hour before they start unloading.

*Roger rolls back under the blanket, facing the wall.*

Roger Good! One more hour of nigh-nighs ...

*Peter looks at his friend, smiling, then launches himself onto Roger's paliasse. The 2 wrestle, with Peter clearly the stronger.*

Peter *laughing* No you don't sleep, Mister de Curci. I've been promoted into the King's outer circle, so you'll do as you're told when I give the

orders. We have a very special mission awaiting us, here in Dover.

*Roger recovers, coughing.*

Roger                      Why promoted?

*Peter stands, hands on hips, looking smug and superior.*

Peter                      "You are deigned Most Royal Attendant on the King's council for recent services to His Majesty. Arise, Sir Peter Frankiss." My father is deliriously happy. He's organized a rare treat for us. So shake your shambles and get out of your nightshirt. We've time to enjoy ourselves before the beasts on the horse-boat have landed.

*Clumsily, Roger drags himself up and strips off his filthy nightshirt. He dresses in Norman robes. He seems concerned by this turn in events.*

Roger                      Whatever did you do to warrant knighting?

Peter                      Working to assimilate the natives with the conquerors.

Roger, *miffed*              Well, I had a big hand in that. Am I to be honoured likewise?

Peter                      Not a chance! You wear your heart on your sleeve, as they say. Always displaying compassion for those filthy carcasses and countermanding orders for their better behaviour.

Roger                      Naturally! I've always considered our treatment of these poor creatures inhuman.

Peter                      What an arrant ass you are, de Curci! Forget about any progress at Court. You'll be overlooked every time in favour of career men, such as myself.

Oh, and I'm to move into fancy rooms in William's castle. With servants, delicious meals (3 per day) and all the French wine I can drink.

*Roger blankly watches the final stages of Peter's packing.*

Peter                                    There! That will do it. That smelly palliasse can be chucked into the sea. Or no! Give it to your lovely Saxon friends.

    Come on! We must get cracking!

END OF SCENE

### **V, Scene iii:** Riding Along A Pathway On Dover's Cliffs

*The two boys now ride at the canter along a pathway on Dover's cliffs, towards a hamlet. They rein in to the walk, such that they can converse. Note that they both hold nosegays as they ride.*

Roger *not really interested*                    Where to now, Sir Peter Frankiss?

Peter                                    A sweet little cottage in a glade. Rustic charm!

Roger                                    To do what, precisely?

Peter *grinning*                        I'll tell you.

*naughtily*                                It's the latest rage in France, where they call it "droit de cuissage". Did you ever hear of anything so droll? "Droit de cuissage", indeed!

Roger, *frowning*                        As in "The Right of Thigh-work"? Are we up for some therapeutic knee-bends, then?

*Peter stops, giving a loud crack of laughter. He belts Roger on the upper arm.*

Peter *delighted*                        Got it in one! It's also known as "The Lord's First Night". We get to ravish a wench on her wedding day **before** the bridegroom does the deed. Was there ever anything more precious? Yes, knee-bends of the most welcome kind await us, de Curci.

Roger, *shocked*                        Steady on! That's totally preposterous! No doubt the wench is a

Saxon girl.

Peter *matter-of-fact* Of course.

Roger And what does her poor groom do while all this pre-marital ravishing is going forward?

Peter Who cares? Mumbles into his beard as he paces the floor, I'll warrant.

Roger *affronted* And then beats the poor girl senseless when she is ultimately delivered up to him. Peter! It's outrageous. I won't have any part in such an irreligious undertaking.

Peter *shrugs, indifferent* Suit yourself ... But don't go about blabbing that you think it irreligious. The very highest-born seigneurs in France and Italy have officially deemed it more than acceptable as a gentlemanly sport. The Pontiff himself probably showed them how it's done.

Roger No! It's absolute madness!

*In a glorious clearing, with sunlight streaming through verdant leaves, the 2 horsemen dismount, watched by several slovenly Saxons. Peter stands tall, with one hand on his sword hilt. He speaks to the Saxons slowly, as if his English words were difficult to find.*

Peter Where waits me the bride?

*A Saxon man indicates a tiny, drab cottage with his thumb. It is really only a shed: very grim and unsavoury. A trail of smoke wafts skyward from a ramshackle chimney.*

*Peter stalks into the cottage. Roger beckons to a nearby boy, giving him a coin to hold the reins of the two horses. Roger follows Peter inside the cottage. Both young men hold their nosegays up to their faces.*

Roger *sotto voce* Lord knows what we'll catch in this foetid place ...

*Roger edges into the single room, behind Peter, where a girl stands meekly near the wall farthest from the door. Roger stares at her, enraptured. The girl is beautiful, her long hair tumbling down her back. Peter smiles lasciviously.*

*Peter strides towards her. On reaching her side, he strokes her hair. A little wan smile flits over her face. She has been weeping.*

*Camera: close-up of Roger. His face becomes set mulishly. He mouths the word "No".*

*Peter bends to kiss the girl, cupping her breast in his hand and murmuring to her in French.*

*Suddenly, Roger springs forward, his sword held menacingly in his hand. He has pulled Peter away from the frightened Saxon girl, such that he stands between her and Peter.*

Roger *shouting*                    This is **not** what we sailed from St Valery for. This is **not** your reward for bringing together the Normans and the vanquished enemy.

You shall not lustfully take this wretched peasant girl. She must be given up to her future husband in her virgin state.

*Peter unsheathes his sword and stands angrily before Roger, ready to fight.*

Peter *through clenched teeth*    Who is it who will force me to give up this girl, then? **You**, Roger de Curci?

Roger, *to the girl behind him*                    Quick! Run outside! **Out!**

*While the girl scampers out the door, terrified, the boys duel in the cramped confines of the cottage. They cut, thrust and parry within the cottage, then spill out into the delightful, bucolic clearing. It is a very exciting sword fight.*

*A large party of Saxons appear, watching the fight with great interest. Apparently, the bridegroom himself is in attendance, for he takes the girl and enfolds her in his arms.*

*Both boys are sweating profusely, and begin to tire. Out of nowhere, Roger gains the upper hand. He clenches his teeth and shouts loudly.*

Roger                                    **Mon cher Dieu!**

*With a mighty lunge, Roger's sword impales Peter, in his shoulder, above his heart. Peter stops fighting, allowing his sword to fall from his grasp. Almost choking with breathlessness, Peter touches the wound and looks helplessly at Roger.*

Peter, *whispers, in wonderment*      You have killed me. You who were like a brother to me have taken my life. And all for a girl you didn't even know ....

*Peter slumps to the ground, unconscious. Roger, still gasping for air, wears a blank expression.*

*The bridegroom rushes forward, ready to deal the cut-of-death with his knife. Roger stops him.*

Roger *distractedly talking to himself, and to the Saxons*      He lives, and that fact will save all our skins, thank you.  
But then ... you can't understand a word I say, can you?  
Never mind ...

If he dies, then I am a hunted man. Unless I lie. I could make out that you Saxons killed him. Then there would be a tithe of deaths here.

No. For the best outcome, we must nurse him back to health, all of us. Then, no trouble.

*[Loudly, to all the Saxons, with mime actions]*

Mend this man. Heal him. Then, no trouble for any of us.

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene iv:** The Saxon Glade, Some Days Later.

*A rescue-party has found the two Norman boys, and a litter has been provided with which to carry Peter out of the glade and back to his Norman dwelling.*

*Peter (his shoulder heavily bandaged) is carefully carried to the litter by Norman knights, with an attendant band of beautiful Saxon maidens, all reaching out to stroke him. He smiles beatifically upon them, touching their fingers and arms with his fingers.*



What a land this England will be then.

*As Roger draws his sword, the camera backs away. Roger brandishes his sword, standing upright in the stirrups. He shouts: "England! England!" in an echo of Peter Frankiss, who earlier shouted "Normandy! Normandy!" following the Battle of Hastings.*

END OF SCENE

**V, Scene v:** 1928, Spring, Whitefriars, In The Bushes At The Back Of The Practice Court.

*Camera looks down on Leonard and George, who lay on their backs on the ground, with their tennis racquets over their chests. They both have dreamy looks on their faces.*

Leonard *dreamily*            I won them over in the end.

George                      Only the wenches. I won **everybody** over. *Tour de force.*

Leonard                    I say, that "*droit de seigneur*" thingy was a bit rancid.

George                      It nearly cost you your life, boyo.

Leonard                    Nah! You're just a lousy swordsman.

George                      But I wasn't aiming at your heart, dear chap. I only wanted to disable you. It was a rather smashing bit of swordplay, dammit. Credit where credit is due.

*[Sighs happily]*

No, all round, I did terribly well out of that. I deserved the knighting much more than you did, Morts. England is England today because of Roger de Curci, Eorl Wegga and their ilk.

Leonard                    I'd grudgingly include Snarr in that lot. He bent over backwards to become a top-notch Norman warrior, in spite of all his reverses.

George                                    Only because he wants to fight above all else. But I suppose we should credit him with some sort of honour.

Leonard                                  Yes, true.

*[Shamefaced.]*

And I've proved to be nothing other than a worthless time-server: a seducer of women who's rotten to the core. Whereas Belfry in his guise as Oldroyd has happily returned to the Saxons, laying traps for us unwary Frenchies.

*There is a moment's uncomfortable silence.*

Leonard *murmurs,*                    I'm a gutless wonder ...  
*unhappily*

*We can just make out the other three boys calling for Leonard and George, Leonard and George. The two boys jump to their feet smartly.*

George                                    Blimey Teddy! They're looking for us. Mustn't forget to tell Wegga that it's now up to him to find Egilstead. I mean Treacle, of course.

Leonard *carefully*                    And shall we tell them about the last visit to Norman England?  
And my disgusting part in it?

George                                    Have you a grisly wound in your left shoulder?

*Leonard pulls back his shirt. There is a horrible wound on this shoulder, oozing gore. Both boys grimace.*

George *self-righteous*                Unavoidable, I'd say.  
  
I shall give a toned-down version of our saga. Roger slipped on a tree root when delivering the semi-fatal stroke of the blade. I'll say that he had no intention at all of hurting his friend, Frankiss. It was an accident during a bit of horseplay. That's all.

Leonard *nods, hopeful*              Thank you ...

And Sir Peter in no way had designs upon the virgin-bride. He merely .... offered her some flowers.

*Both boys look at each other, nod, then stalk off through the bushes.*

END OF SCENE.

### **V, Scene vi:** A Crowded Corridor At Whitefriars

*The next thing we see is the boys (from behind) shoving their way through tight old corridors, crammed with boys. They carry books and sports equipment. Quite a shoving match, and lots of chatter. Mr Armitage squeezes his way through towards our boys.*

Armitage                      Ah, there you are, Cedric Skeggs. Headmaster wants to have a quiet word with you. Alone, if you don't mind.

Cedric                              Oh, Lord! What have I done?

Short Break

*The boys are slumping around in the hall outside head's office. Cedric comes out of the office, wearing a vacant expression.*

Leonard                         What is it, Treacle?

Henry *jokingly*                Has he finally found out about that incident with Glaudeville's jockstrap?

Cedric *sighs, but relieved*                         No, no. Another funeral, worse luck. There's been a death in the family. A mouldy old great-aunt whom nobody gave a brass razoo for while she was alive. I suppose they're all sorry now.

She's popped off, with the result that I have to go home for the

funeral. Bloody nuisance!

George But our investigations, old man. You're our lynchpin.

Geoffrey, *put out* Well, that's a damned shame, I must say. Can't you get out of it? We need you here to sort out Egilstead's location.

Leonard Yes, that's the very last throw of the dice. Once we find out the location, our battle-plan can be put into action immediately.

George That old Saxon who spoke to me (that is, to Roger) quite firmly stated that Eorl Wegga knew where the stash was hidden. That's **you**, old thing. You just can't shove-off to some old aunt's obsequies and leave us in the lurch.

Leonard That's right! A Holy man will tell all, but only to you. Now whom do you know who's holy?

George, *hopeful* My beloved Papa, perhaps?

Cedric *annoyed and self-righteous* Or not! You can very well battle along without me for a day or two. I'm absolutely done in.

And I really want to see my mother. I'm feeling very delicate just now.

George, *aghast* But Treacle! We're so terribly close!

Geoffrey *sotto voce* Pig-headed bastard! I knew that he was the weak link.

*Affronted and red with embarrassment, Cedric pushes past the knot of boys, who look after him balefully.*

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene vii:** The Solid, Impressive Drawing Room Of Mrs Pearl Skeggs

*Cedric Skeggs has been given special leave to go home to attend the funeral.*

*We find him sitting in his mother's solidly furnished drawing room, in a suit and wearing a black armband. He looks thoroughly browned-off; he is bored and wishing to be somewhere else.*

*His mother, Pearl Skeggs, is a large woman with an ample bosom. She is dressed in black. Evidently, there is great wealth attached to this household, but not in an opulent, nouveau-riche way.*

*Cedric sits on a couch, juggling tea and food, which is passed around by two young male servants. The vicar is a skinny, tall, sad-faced man who is just now trying desperately to be interesting and to curry favour with the wealthy family. His wife Verona, a gushing, twee woman is showing a photograph album to Pearl. Various other and sundry bods are set about in the room. The women wear black and the men wear black armbands.*

Vicar *over-the-top*            My dear Mrs Skeggs! I trust that you won't find me churlish to bring along my holiday snaps to show your guests?

Pearl Skeggs  
*patronizing*                    In no way, Dr Ancaster. I'm aware that you are a very keen (and in fact quite talented) amateur photographer. Please hand your snaps around amongst my guests.

Vicar *unctuous*                Too kind, dear lady.

*Several handfuls of photographs belonging to the vicar and his wife Verona are being passed about. A young woman hands hers over to Cedric with a polite smile. He could not be less interested. The vicar eyes Cedric as if he is trying to find a conversational opening. He obviously does not want to chat with the boy, but it might prove to be a means of gaining the wealthy woman's favour. The Vicar's method of attack is to smile in a hideous, toothy way.*

Vicar                                And you were learning to play the trumpet last time we met, young Master Skeggs. I trust you are still enjoying your music?

Cedric                               Er, no, Vicar. You're thinking of my elder brother, Ivor.

Vicar                               Oh, **Ivor** plays the trumpet. I see. And what musical instrument do you play, Cedric?

Cedric *flat* I don't, sir.

Pearl *tilting her head and speaking over the other conversations* Reverend Ancaster, you might like to know that my elder son is just now on a walking tour of south Wales. That must explain his absence from my aunt's obsequies. We were simply unable to contact Ivor, try as we might.

*Everyone takes up this topic of walking, Wales, Ivor's trumpet. Cedric is obviously dying to leave this ghastly huddle and takes refuge in his tea and cakes. Nobody could be more down in the dumps than Cedric Skeggs. The Vicar (however) is in alt. He insinuates a witticism for the benefit of Pearl: horrid, overanxious and toothy as he laughs.*

Vicar I trust that you don't mean "New South Wales", Mrs Skeggs. That **would** be a long way off!

*This is met with titters. There is a background rumble of polite, inane chatter.*

Disembodied female voice Oh, these are quite enchanting, Vicar.

*More photographs are passed to Cedric. This means that he has to abandon his tea and cakes. He rolls his eyes suggestively to the nearest servant (Jasper), who promptly comes to his aid. The general and particular conversation thrums along in the background.*

Cedric Thanks, Jasper.

Servant Jasper Very good, Master Cedric.  
*murmurs politely*

Cedric *looking up imploringly to Jasper, whispers* I say, you couldn't drum up a lame dog that I'll have to rescue, could you?

*Jasper grins knowingly but slightly shakes his head. Cedric is utterly crestfallen.*

## The Photograph Of Tate's Tor.

*We now focus on Cedric idly flicking through the snaps, with bored sighs. All of a sudden, his eyes light up and he starts in wild surprise. He stares open-mouthed at one particular photo, allowing the others to fall unheeded to the floor. He nearly sets the tea things flying as he shoots up out of the chair, eyes glued to the photograph in his hand. The background conversation grinds suddenly to a halt. Exciting music starts to build up.*

Cedric *breathless*            Vicar! Reverend Ancaster! What is this photograph of? Where was it taken?

*Cedric's outburst causes the other funeral guests to register concern. Music: throbbing strings.*

*The vicar is now the centre of attention, which he loves, and he makes a pompous show of screwing a monocle into his left eye and holding the photograph importantly before him. Cedric is standing by him, keen, alert.*

Vicar                            Ah yes. That would be a rather picturesque spot just outside of Pymble Village.

*[Turning to his hostess]*

It was one of those hamlets (you might be aware, Mrs Skeggs) wherein the population of the village was quite decimated by the ravages of the Black Death in medieval times.

*His eyes wild with excitement, Cedric rudely interrupts, snatching back the photo.*

Cedric                         Pymble Village? But where is that?

Vicar                         Oh, now Cedric ... Er ... Pymble would be somewhat to the North of Suffolk We motored there on –

Cedric                         These trees weren't here in my day. You'd have to be actually walking in the wood to spot it!

Pearl *frowning*             Dear boy, please sit down and drink your tea. There's no earthly need for this unseemly display.

*The guests and even the servants are uncomfortable and a little shocked by Cedric's outburst. He does not hear a word of it. He is totally engrossed.*

Cedric *frowning* I can't quite ... This rock ... did the locals have a name for it, do you know?

Vicar *to his wife,*  
*Verona* Can you remember, my dear?

Verona Yes, Giles.

*[Turning gushingly towards her hostess]*

Mrs Skeggs, we simply **had** to stop the auto for a photograph of quite an amazing rock formation, in a rather attractive woodland. I understand that the people of that vicinity know the feature as "Poor Francis Rock".

Cedric *awestruck* "Poor Francis"? But in my day it was widely called "Tate's Tor".

*[Slaps hand to forehead.]*

No wonder we couldn't find it!

Anyhow, there can be no mistake ... it's the rock in my backyard, alright! And here's the lane, just exactly as it was.

Amazing! Yet Egilstead is gone from the foreground.

*Everyone is dumbfounded by Cedric's revelations. Verona Ancaster carefully picks her words, because she is not sure what to make of Cedric.*

Verona *carefully* Ah yes. That'll be it. Have you been there, Cedric?

Cedric *fairly bursting*  
*with excitement* Too right I have! It was my mother's house ... her name was Egil. My father was Eorl Wegga. ***I was born there!***

And do you mean to tell me that the Tor's still standing? Of course it is!

*[Grabs his forelock in sheer disbelief. Turns to the Vicar, shouting wildly.]*

You're the Holy man that the old man spoke of. And Egilstead is in Pymble!



## **V, Scene ix: A Picturesque Wood**

*A picturesque wood has sprung up where Egilstead once stood, obscuring Tate's Tor from the roadway.*

*This area is now a public park, featuring a variety of large trees and gentle slopes. Very beautiful. There are picnic tables under some of the trees. Music is light and inviting. The 3 adult men wear black armbands in honour of Prince Kamarisov.*

*The Durrell brothers, the French scholar and the boys stand beside Poor Francis Rock. We can see the boys pointing up the steepest rise, up towards a large oak tree. Henry paces out 18 steps. Cedric does likewise. We can see that the boys believe that this oak tree now grows over what was Egilstead.*

Short Break

*Now the five boys, along with the Durrell brothers have removed their jackets, and rolled up their sleeves. They all work energetically under Fred Durrell's direction with spades and picks. All 5 boys are good spademen. M. Laurestan strolls about, smoking.*

Short Break

*The music changes to a more menacing theme. The boys and men have now located the old cellar, which is somewhat caved-in. The oak roots give to the cellar the appearance of having many pillars inside. All eight characters slide and climb down into what's left of the Egilstead cellar.*

*Music: now a more military feel, with strong use of the snare drum. The boys act as if they are on military manoeuvres: as if well-drilled and highly trained. They give the impression of being both forewarned and forearmed regarding the horrors which await them. The Durrell brothers watch these preparations sceptically.*

END OF SCENE

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**V, Scene X: The Battle In The Derelict Egilstead Cellar.**

*This is a pitched battle using many medieval warcraft skills. Once the boys take position and the stones are breached, the Bayeux warriors (Norman, Viking and Saxon) attack them. Then come really grotesque and frightening gargoyles. The music is electrifying; as are the special effects.*

- Archery
- A pit covered with nets
- Fire
- Burning oil
- A small catapult engine.

*The shields, swords and daggers which the boys employ were all nicked from Whitefriars library.*

*The boys act in a tightly-formed team, but allow the Durrell brothers to join in with swords. M. Laurestan gets back-room type jobs. Sir Digby turns up as a knight with a huge shield, mace and chain. Anund also appears: utterly impressive as a Viking in full battle regalia. They assist the 8 characters, thus providing 10 "Whitefriars" fighters.*

*Henry is particularly good: he has a vast array of weapons on his person, and his face is blacked. Henry wears a Japanese fighting scarf around his forehead. Although Leonard licks his lips in trepidation (he fears that he will die as predicted), the others are grim-faced but businesslike.*

*The boys speak where necessary in a mixture of Old French and Old English.*

*Loads of CGI as the fight progresses. The enemy all derive from Bayeux Tapestry "cartoon" types. Geoffrey has a heart-stopping swordfight. Finally, the boys and men win. Sir Digby's horse rears, the old man brandishes his sword on high, and then horse and rider plunge into the stonework. The Viking Anund, with a blood-curdling shriek, departs by hacking his way mightily into the stonework. Everyone else is lolling about, exhausted. Then Geoffrey takes the wooden casket and hands it to Mr Durrell.*

**END OF BATTLE**

*The music fades out. All we can hear are the 8 remaining characters gasping for breath. The boys, exhausted though they are, reach over to shake hands with each other. The Durrell brothers shake hands also.*

Sandhurst I wish that the dear Prince were here to see this.

Laurestan But he did see it, *mon cher*. In his own way, he did see the battle for the Eyes of Christ.

Geoffrey, *sucking in big breaths* Here you are, Mr Durrell. This is it.  
And look Sir: my hands aren't shaking a jot!

Durrell, *gasping for breath* No, neither they are, Geoffrey! So tell me, boys. Was that as scary as 6 of the best in Head's office?

*Everyone laughs.*

Geoffrey Open it Sir.

Cedric God! I hope they are in there. Worse luck if we have to go through that again.

*Durrell prises open the casket with a dagger. The lid pops open, and a mouldy leather bag is the only contents of the casket. Durrell retrieves it and opens it.*

Durrell My heart is beating as would a tom-tom.

*There is a ripple of agreement. Durrell spills the contents of the bag into his palm. Two huge blue emeralds lie there.*

Sandford *reverently* *The Eyes of Christ!*

*Music: soft, almost romantic. The firelight of the torches allows us to see the stones winking and glinting. We see Monsieur Laurestan still panting; he cries and smiles at the same time.*

*Durrell hands the stones to Laurestan, who lovingly cups them in his palms. He takes them about the cellar, showing them to each boy in turn.*

Laurestan Do not fear, my bold young men, that anything untoward will happen with these gems. We three, we members of the Early-to-Bed, Early-to-Rise club took a solemn oath years ago that we would honour the stones. They will be given to His Majesty, King George and to Queen Mary at the earliest opportunity. Sandford: you will accompany me to the palace.

Durrell                                   And thus the puzzle ends.

George                                   With dear old Sir Digby and Anund the Viking disappearing forever. I think I might miss them, especially Sir Digby.

Leonard                                He told me I'd die. But look! I'm still in the land of the living. Not eating dirt yet ...

*Sandford shakes hands again with his brother, then looks about at the boys.*

Sandford, *to Henry*                Mr Henry Bell, are you able to divulge the source of this weaponry? I spent many memorable years of my youth as a student at Whitefriars, and I seem to recall that there were some very pretty pieces (similar to these) way up high on the library wall.

Henry *boldly*                        Yes, Sir. We took everything we could lay our hands on. But we'll put them back, of course; now that the fight is done.

Laurestan                             I must commend you, all of you fine young men. You have fought and won a momentous struggle here. When I speak to Their Majesties, I'll be sure to sing the praises of your bravery and clever battle plan.

Geoffrey                               We learned everything from King William.

*Geoffrey nods towards Monsieur Laurestan, whose trembling mouth manages to smile. The stones still wink in his hands.*

Durrell                                 Well, let's pack up this kit and get you boys back to school.

Cedric *firm*                            No, Sir. We want to be dropped off at the train station. We're going to Hastings, where we plan to partake of a victory dinner.

Durrell *surprised*                 You can have a bang-up dinner at school. I'm sure a word in Head's ear --

Cedric *insistent & proud*                                No, Sir, indeed not. We're warriors. We've proved ourselves both in the battlefield of Hastings and here in this cellar. Warriors do

not attend school, Sir. We shall celebrate in Hastings.

*There is a throbbing silence. The boys are grouped together, facing the 3 men. Durrell looks about at the boys, grouped beside Cedric, looking strong, proud and manly. Durrell grins, tries to speak, but is unable to. He nods, then begins to clear up the debris.*

Henry, *never to be outdone*            I say, Mr Durrell. Could you lend us a fiver for the trip home?

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene xi:** The King Harold Inn

*The boys are wandering along a street in Hastings as if they have been in a dream. From time to time they look at each other and laugh.*

Henry                            Where to now?

Cedric                            Something substantial to eat, such as they conjure up in this part of the world. And a brimming pint of ale, covered in thick, malty froth.

Leonard                        And a long, fragrant cigar.

Henry *giggling*                Scotch whiskey, splashed *liberally* with ginger ale. Ice cubes clinking in the glass.

Cedric                            With full-bodied cheese, like that one we –

George                          Of course. That bright yeller stuff which Puddingsauce loved so much.

Geoffrey                        Gentlemen! It's all over now. We have to put Puddingsauce and all his lot behind us.

*General, if begrudging agreement. They stop, staring upwards. From above them, we look down, past a swinging inn sign for the King Harold Inn. They stare, frowning, then look at each other.*

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George I believe, lads, that this might be the watering hole for us. What think you?

Cedric Apart from Bell's fiver, I've one and thruppence. Will that be enough?

Leonard With my one pound, 16 shillings and 9 pence, we've more than enough. In we go!

*They surge into the inn, and we see them in the hallway as they wander forward, looking about them with interest. It is a very old-fashioned pub hallway, cluttered with hall furniture. Lots of doorways, polished wood. The sounds of drinkers in other rooms permeates.*

*A burly kitchen wench with a stout yard broom confronts them.*

Woman Are you boys lost, then?

*George is in a bonhomous mood: jovial and confident.*

George Woman! Take us to your most gracious private room and ply us with the best in food and beverage which your establishment has to offer. We hunger and thirst at the conclusion of our incredible (yet rewarding) journey through time.

*There is general agreement.*

Woman *hands on hips* Hark at you! A private room, is it? Get along out of here! We don't have underage drinking at the King Harry, thank you very much.

*An oldish man, very gnarled and workman-like, appears behind her.*

Old Man What's going along, Mabel? Are these lads bothering you?

Woman *affronted, then bossy* It's our best private room that they want, if you please. Schoolboys out on a spree, I'll be bound. Go on ... scurry along with you, then.

*Except for Leonard, the boys are chastened and turn to go. But Leonard stands his ground, looking belligerently from the woman to the man. He steps forward, speaking in a deep, dangerous voice, through clenched teeth.*

Leonard *with quiet menace*

All five of us fought at the famous Battle of Hastings, with the scars to show for our efforts. We have all proved our mettle and our manhood on the field of war, so do not waste any more time, woman, in trying to fob us off. We shall sit down to drink and sup in the King Harold Inn, and you will bring us five Cuban cigars, a platter of cheeses, a loaf of fresh-baked bread and a bottle of Scotch whiskey. Your finest.

*[Deliberate]*

***If you would be so good.*** Oh, and a couple of mugs of your best ale, for Mr Skeggs.

*Everyone is frozen in dumbfounded silence as Leonard begins to ascend the stairs.*

Leonard *frosty*                      Up here is it?

Old Man *nodding stupidly*                      Fust floor, Sir.

*Leonard nods decisively and marches boldly up. The boys, murmuring appreciatively follow. However, Henry cannot resist leaning over the banister. He cheekily makes a further demand of the dazed pair below.*

Henry                                      If you can drum up a chicken and veggie pie as well, that would be grand!

*Henry winks pertinaciously.*

END OF SCENE

**V, Scene xii:** The Best Upstairs Parlour In The King Harold Inn

*Later, the boys are seen through a haze of cigar smoke. The bottle is nearly empty, and the remains of their repast can be seen on the sturdy deal table. They happily chat, speaking over the top of each other. The end credits roll through as they speak, smoke, drink and pick at what remains of the food.*

Leonard                    I still can't believe it.

Cedric                     What will he do with them? The "*Eyes of Christ*", I mean.

Geoffrey *shrugs*            The wise Monsieur Michel Laurestan will offer them to His Majesty, as he promised.

George                    Yes ... It was probably Crown land after all.

Geoffrey                   No, George. It belonged and always will belong to the Saxon Eorl Wegga and his family.

*Henry grips his cigar between his teeth as he puts in his tuppence worth.*

Henry                     Truth be told, it was Egil's house. It belonged to **her** forebears.

Cedric                     Those poor, wretched Saxons who risked their all to float on tiny currachs down the Flemish coast and across the Channel.

Leonard                   They started it all. Our language, our way of life. ... Sense of humour. ...

George                    But don't forget the contribution of the Normans. Why, half the English words we use every day turn out to have been theirs. And roast beef, mutton, bacon, custard: they're all of Norman origin.

Geoffrey                   The law is Anglo-Saxon. Don't forget that ...

*Fade out.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT V

END OF FILM

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## Afterword

about Geoffrey Bevan, George Danton and Leonard Mortimer, Cedric Skeggs and Henry Bell.

### Geoffrey Bevan

*The Honourable Geoffrey Bevan left Whitefriars school at the completion of his 1928 year and attended Sandhurst Military College. He became an outstanding, much-decorated Army officer, attaining the rank of Captain. His skill at fencing led him to San Francisco in 1932 to compete in the Olympic Games, in several fencing events. At the end of World War II, at the age of 33, Geoffrey married Julia Crowvey. They had five children and were absurdly happy. Geoffrey succeeded to his father's dignities in 1954, when his father Roy died.*

*[Geoffrey's granddaughter, Marl Cavendish, became the heroine of the 3rd Cavendish script: **The Thread.**]*

### George Danton

*George Danton attended Oxford University, where he became Emeritus Professor of English History. He taught at Whitefriars College until his death, except for his wartime service, of course. As Sir Digby had predicted, the eldest Cavendish girl, Beatrice, became a celebrated London beauty. She was courted by a dazzling array of eligible bachelors, but eventually accepted George's sincere but halting proposal which was lovingly delivered in a moonlit conservatory.*

*[Beatrice's baby sister, Nerine, became the heroine of the second Cavendish script: **George and John.**]*

### Leonard Mortimer

*Just prior to the outbreak of World War II, Leonard Mortimer fell into a fight with several matelots near the Port of Marseilles. He died in hospital on that same night from multiple stab wounds. Police inquiries discovered that the brawl had centred upon a woman.*

**Cedric Skeggs & Henry Bell**

*No-one is sure whether Cedric Skeggs ever got over those traumatic weeks of 1928, when he flitted between his mortal life and that other life. But Henry Bell led the life of a leading London businessman, surrounded by vibrant, interesting friends, and a vast, loving family.*

