

Episode 2 - Chapter 1

Chapter written by genie-49
from Florida, USA

[The scene opens with the sight of the busy cotton mill. Men and women work their looms and children scurry about beneath the machines, collecting the ever-present fluff, which floats through the air and covers the floor.]

Mill Worker 1 overheard: We need some more over here!

[Hannah Thornton oversees the operation with an imperious eye.]

Mill Worker 2 to Mill Worker 3 [seeing Hannah headed their way]:
Look out, here's Your Majesty. I reckon she can smell it when you're not working.

Hannah Thornton: [hollering to Mill Worker 3] You there! Is the machine mended?

Mill Worker 3: Yes.

Hannah Thornton: Then use it, for there's many to take your place.

[As Hannah walks through the machines, she notices one of the women clutching her daughter to her chest fervently.]

Hannah Thornton: The child is ill. Send her home.

Mill Worker 3: I can't afford to.

[Hannah Thornton shows signs of annoyance, but offers a firm but merciful solution.]

Hannah Thornton: The child cannot work. Is there another child at home? [Mill Worker 3: nods agreement] If you can get her here within the hour you can keep the place.

Mill Worker 3: Thank you.

Hannah Thornton: In the hour, mind, or lose it.

[Hannah Thornton walks over to join her son, who is also watching over the smooth operation of the mill. She looks into his face, desiring to know his thoughts.]

John Thornton: Whatever you think best, Mother. You know how this mill works almost better than I do.

[Hannah smiles in response.]

[Margaret narrates her thoughts to Edith Lennox as we see her taking her daily walk up the hill past the cemetery. Margaret's tone is optimistic, but her expression says otherwise.]

Margaret Hale: [narrating her letter] You ask me what I miss most about the countryside. Well, Edith, in Milton you cannot feel the seasons change around you but I do think that at long last we have put winter behind us and I can resume my daily walks.

[John Thornton and Mill Master Slickson walk briskly through the yard at Marlborough Mills as they discuss Slickson's recent actions in dealing with the talk of a strike.]

Mill Master Slickson: I don't know why you're blaming me.

Thornton: You can play your tricks out to Ashley. That's your decision. But if you get it wrong, we all suffer.

Slickson: They wanted 5%. Would you have given it them?

[Thornton stops walking and turns abruptly to face Mill Master Slickson.]

Thornton: No, but I would've told 'em straight. I wouldn't pretend I were thinking about it and tell them to come back on payday, so that I could turn them down flat and provoke them.

Slickson: Are you accusing me of trying to encourage a strike?

Thornton: You're tellin' me that it wouldn't have suited you? It's their lives and our livelihood you're playing with.

[Nearby, Boucher turns towards the masters as he hears this part of their conversation as the men continue through the mill yard towards the Thornton house.]

Slickson: You would handle your workers better?

Thornton: I would not deliberately deceive them. Good day.

[Thornton leaves Slickson as he approaches the steps to his house. Margaret is looking down on him from the window in the sitting room. Hannah Thornton steps into the room holding a

piece of paper. She speaks and Margaret turns sharply, having apparently been interrupted in her thoughts. Hannah Thornton looks vaguely uncomfortable at the idea of Margaret's call at the house.]

Hannah: Here is the address of our doctor. You did not need to visit in person. You could have sent a servant. Oh, you've been in this heathen climate for some time now, Miss Hale. I'm surprised you haven't needed a doctor yet.

Margaret: We don't. I came here personally because I didn't want to alarm my father. It's just a precaution ... in case. My mother has low spirits.

Hannah: Really? We don't have much of that up here. But I'm sure Dr. Donaldson will try to help if he can.

Margaret: I'm sorry to disturb you.

[After receiving the needed information, Margaret starts on her way out, but turns back as Hannah Thornton has more to say.]

Hannah: You do not disturb me. But even you, not remotely interested in industry might know that there is talk of a strike. Not just here at Marlborough Mills, but one that will affect the whole of Milton.

Margaret: What would they gain by striking? They'll be wanting higher wages?

[As Margaret hears this, she is stunned and confused at this turn of events and conversation. Hannah Thornton however, appears annoyed at Margaret's naivete in the matter.]

Hannah: That is what they will say. But the truth is that there are some men raise themselves to be masters, while others will always seek to pull them down. That is the way of the world Miss Hale, and there is nothing you or I can do about it. [Margaret nods her head indicating she understands. She turns around and walks away, leaving for home.]

Episode 2 - Chapter 2

Chapter written by SearchyGirl

California, USA

[Margaret Hale walks away from the Thornton's house and out through the mill yard.]

Mill Worker Woman: I need three over here!

Spinner Girl Jenny: Hello, Miss Margaret! Been visiting the old dragon?

Margaret: Hello, Jenny. How's your mother?

Spinner Girl Jenny: Little better, miss.

[Margaret smiles and turns to keep walking on her way, but stops and turns back to talk to Jenny and her friend.]

Margaret: Do you like working here?

Spinner Girl Jenny: Like it? Like work?

Jenny's Spinner Friend: It's the same as anywhere. Well, it's better than Hamper's. You can only earn four shillings there. I earn five and ten up here, but my dad makes me give him most of it.

Margaret: What would you spend it on, if you could?

Jenny's Spinner Friend: Food, and then more food. I'd pile it up, great big plates.

Margaret: So, would you join a strike? Well, I'm not saying there will be one; just if there was.

[The spinner girls see something behind Margaret; they both look down at the ground and do not answer her question. Margaret turns to find the cause and sees Thornton standing there looking intently at the scene before him. Margaret quickly turns back to the girls to catch a breath and then turns and walks towards Thornton.]

Margaret: Your mother has kindly given me the name of a doctor.

John Thornton: [looking concerned] You're ill?

Margaret: No. No, it's just a precaution.

[Thornton glances at the spinners behind Margaret and back to her face. Then he backs away slightly and starts walking. Margaret also glances back and then follows along to walk with him through the yard.]

Margaret: Your mother is always accusing me of knowing nothing about Milton and the people who live here.

Thornton: Doubt she meant you should hang on to the tittle-tattle of young piecers and spinners.

Margaret: [smiling] Well, they weren't telling me any secrets.

Thornton: There was a man with a survey here a few weeks ago. It's quite the new thing. They become practiced at telling others their wages and their working conditions.

Margaret: Do you mind that? If they tell the truth?

Thornton: Course not. I don't apologize to anyone about the wages I pay or how I run Marlborough Mills. It's no secret. It's in plain sight for all to see.

[Thornton and Margaret come to a stop and Margaret turns to face Thornton.]

Margaret: And what about how they spend their money?

Thornton: [crossing his hands in front of him] Well, that would be none of my business. My duty is to the efficient running of the mill. If I neglect that, all the workers will cease to have an income.

Margaret: But what about your moral duty?

Thornton: If she keeps to her hours and does nothing to disrupt the honest and efficient working of the mill, what she does in her own time's not my concern. Here in the North, we value our independence.

Margaret: But surely you must take an interest?

Thornton: I'm her employer. I'm not her father or her brother that I can command her to do as I please. Sorry to disappoint you, Miss Hale. I would like to play the overbearing master, but I'll answer your questions as honestly as I'm sure you ask them.

[Margaret has a look of semi-understanding on her face. Then her gaze is arrested by something she notices over John Thornton's shoulder. He looks backwards as well and we see Hannah Thornton watching them from the house window. John Thornton looks back at Margaret and quickly ends their conversation to move on to his business.]

Thornton: Now, if you'll excuse me, I've urgent business.

[John Thornton walks away and Margaret takes another look at Hannah Thornton in the window.]

[The Higgins' house. Margaret is visiting Bessy Higgins, who is making tea for the both of them.]

Margaret: And all the time there she is, looking down on us like a great black angry crow guarding the nest. As if I were to ever consider her son as a suitor!

[Bessy laughs and Margaret is smiling. Bessie sits down across from Margaret after having put the water on the fire to boil.]

Bessy: Come on, don't say you haven't thought about it. Mind you, you'd have to get yourself some smarter clothes if you were to mix with them at Marlborough Mills.

Margaret: [laughing] Thank you! I'll have you know these were new last year!

Bessy: You won't stand a chance. There's loads of girls after him.

Margaret: Well, they're welcome to him, with my good wishes. I can say this. If I ever have a son I'll not hang on to him like she does.

Bessy: Well, I'll never be having children of any sort, so that won't be a problem. [She coughs as she pours the water for the tea.]

Margaret: Bessy, is it really so bad?

Bessy: Fluff in me lungs. Won't go away, however much I cough. At least I won't grow too old and ugly! There is that. [said with a smile as she finishes pouring and handing the tea to Margaret.]

Margaret: And this happened at Marlborough Mills?

Bessy: No. No. Must've happened when I were little. We didn't know of these things then. We all had to work. When Father found out, he moved me straightaway to Thornton's.

Margaret: He loves you very much, doesn't he?

Bessy: Yes. Fathers and daughters. Mothers and sons. So maybe we shouldn't be too hard on old battleaxe Thornton!

[they both laugh]

Bessy: Maybe your mother would be just the same if she had a son.

Margaret: She does...have a son. I have a brother.

Bessy: Well now why didn't you ever say so before?

Margaret: Because we don't talk about him.

Bessy: Come on, I could do with a good story.

Episode 2 - Chapter 3

Chapter written by LookinGood

Germany

[inside the Higgins' house. Margaret Hale and Bessy Higgins talking.]

Margaret Hale: I cried when Fred left home.

[Margaret waving goodbye to Frederick. ...as he walks away in his Naval uniform, he tips his hat and gives his family a big smile]

Margaret Hale: So did Mother, but he was desperate to go to sea, and Father thought it were the making of him. He left full of hope, but that was before he sailed with the captain. He was a monster. Once they set sail, the captain did, whatever he liked. He beat the children to within an inch of their lives.

Bessy Higgins: But couldn' they do anythin'?

Margaret Hale: They tried. Frederick and the others stood up to him. Some of them wanted to kill him. Eventually they put the captain and a few of his officers in a boat, and let it loose on the open sea. The Navy called it a mutiny, but Frederick really had no choice. He was branded the ringleader and called a traitor. Eventually the Navy printed a list of the mutineers.

[Mr. and Mrs. Hale are standing outside in the Helstone garden. Mrs. Hale reads the newspaper and then violently tears the paper into shreds before collapsing into tears. Mr. Hale tries to comfort his wife but is lost in his own thoughts and fears.]

Margaret Hale: And Fred's name was among them. It nearly killed my parents.

[Mrs. Hale seen crying, Mr. Hale comforting her.]

[cut back to the Higgins' house, Margaret and Bessy]

Margaret Hale: He was in South America for a few years. Now he lives in Spain, in Cádiz.

Bessy Higgins: Spain! How romantic.

Margaret Hale: Sometimes I think I'll never see him again.

Bessy Higgins: But if i' could be told how he were put upon, how he defended others against that madman, surely the law would spare 'im?

Margaret Hale: [shakes head] Some of the sailors were caught ... they pleaded their case. Captain Reid was clearly insane, but they were hanged anyway. No, Frederick is safe in Spain, but if he comes home, he'll be condemned to death, I am sure.

Bessy Higgins: [leans forward, takes Margaret's hand] I suppose you can take comfort that he was so brave ...and acted to spare those sailors weaker than himself.

Margaret Hale: Yes, I do. But I confess that sometimes I wish he'd been more of a coward, if it meant that my mother might see him once more.

[Living-room at the Thornton's house. Mrs. Thornton and Fanny Thornton sitting at the table doing paperwork. Fanny Thornton humming. John Thornton enters left.]

John Thornton: Preparations already?

Hannah Thornton: If we are going to entertain, we must do it properly. [quietly, to John] You're not regrettin' th' invitations, are you?

John Thornton: [in a low voice] No, no. Spend what you want. May have to be the last dinner party we have for some time. [louder] So... who's on the list?

Hannah Thornton: Slickson's, of course. Fosters. Browns will decline, but we must invite them all the same. Hales will come, I presume?

Fanny Thornton: They are probably aware of th' very great advantage it would be to Mr Hale, to be introduced to people like the Fosters...

John Thornton: [annoyed] I am sure that motive would not influence them, Fanny.

[John Thornton walks away from the table and sits on a sofa, picking up a newspaper, ignoring her.]

Fanny Thornton: How you seem to understand these Hales, John. Do you really think they are so very different from any other people we meet?

Hannah Thornton: He seems a worthy kind of man ... well, rather too simple for trade. She's a bit of a fine lady, with all her low spirits. As for the daughter, she gives herself airs! An' yet they're not rich, an' never have been.

[John Thornton's attention is diverted away from the newspaper, he is now listening to the conversation between his mother and sister]

Fanny Thornton: And she's not accomplished, mother. She can't play the piano ...

John Thornton: Go on, Fanny. What else does she lack to bring'er up to your standard?

Hannah Thornton: I heard Miss Hale say she could not play myself, John! If you would let us alone, we would perhaps see her merits and like her.

Fanny Thornton: I'm sure I never could.

[Fanny gets up, agitated, and sits down at a different table, picking up embroidery and starting to work. John Thornton gives up on his paper, gets up and wanders across the room to his mother.]

John Thornton: I wish you would try to like Miss Hale, mother.

Hannah Thornton: Why? You've not formed an attachment to her, have you? Mind you, she'll never have you.

Aye, she once laughed in my face at the thought of it, I am sure she did.

John Thornton: She would never have me.

Hannah Thornton: She's too good of an opinion of herself to take ye. I should like to know where she'd find any one better.

John Thornton: [looks down] You can both believe me then when I say this out of complete indifference to Miss Hale: Mr Hale is my friend, she's his only daughter. I wish you would both make an effort to befriend her.

Fanny Thornton: Phf.... --I only wish I knew why you talked about her so much. I am tired of it.

John Thornton: [angrily] What would you like us to talk about? How about a strike for a more pleasant topic?

Fanny Thornton: [stares at him, mouth hanging open in disbelief]

[At the Lyceum, crowds of mill workers standing around, Boucher among them.]

Nicholas Higgins: Now! Now, listen! The men up at 'ampers have been told not to expect a rise.

[Men shouting, and shaking their fists.]

Nicholas Higgins: How about Slickson's?

Worker 1: Nothin' yet.

Worker 2: Thornton will tell us Friday!

[Men shouting]

Nicholas Higgins: So, what d'ye reckon?

Men: Strike! Strike! Yeah, strike!

[Boucher, looking grave and concerned]

Nicholas Higgins: I thought so. Now's the time. We will all stop our machines at the end of the day, Friday, ten minutes before time. And no-one, no-one will start them up!

Nicholas Higgins: [pointing at someone in the crowd] What ye?

Worker 3: What if Slickson decides to offer? Do anything to keep his mill working, a' advantage of others.

Nicholas Higgins: Then you still come out. Remember: If we all refuse to work –we are the strong ones!

[men cheering]

Worker 4: How long do you think, masters'll last out, if we're all together?

Nicholas Higgins: A week. Two weeks at most!

Worker 5: What if they sending for 'ands from Ireland?

Workers: They wouldn't dare! --Thornton would! He'd die before being dictated on! --I'd take him down if he gives me half a chance! And every Irishman that takes away our wages!

[Men shouting. Boucher looking depressed.]

Nicholas Higgins: No! Listen! No. No violence. Masters expect us t' behave like animals. We'll show them we are thinking men. We will not be out-thought! The only enemy of our strike is ourselves! Now, we must manage this strike well, not like five year' ago, when half of us wen' back to work before the others.

Workers: Aye! Aye!

Nicholas Higgins: That understood?

Workers: Aye.

Nicholas Higgins: That is it. We keep together. Friday evening it is!

Workers: Friday! Yeah! Strike! Strike! Strike! Strike! Strike! [clapping]

[The Thornton's house. John Thornton is in the living-room.]

Hannah Thornton: Are the hands about to turn out?

John Thornton: They're waiting for the moment I have to turn down their wage demands.

Hannah Thornton: Are there many orders in hand?

John Thornton: Of course, we know that well enough. The Americans are flooding the market. Our only chance is producing at a lower price and faster. But the faster we fill the orders, the longer it takes for us to be paid for them.

Hannah Thornton: How much are we owed?

John Thornton: The debts at the bank is nearly four hundred pound.

Hannah Thornton: [sighs and sits down in a chair]

John Thornton: The men are less patient. They barely made up pay since their last cut.

Hannah Thornton: Why don't they listen? They think that by just putting their ignorant heads together, they'll get their way.

John Thornton: Don't worry mother. It's a young industry, these problems will iron themselves out. We're not yet in a position of selling up.

Hannah Thornton: Can't you get men from Ireland? Then you could get rid of the strikers. --I would. I'd teach them, that I was master and could employ who I like.

John Thornton: Yes, I can. And I will, too, if the strike lasts. It'll be trouble and expense, but I will do it, rather than give in.

[Hannah Thornton nods, turns and takes a pile of cards from a nearby table]

Hannah Thornton: If there's to be this extra expense I am sorry we are giving the dinner this year.

John Thornton: We should go on as before. No more, no less. [gets up, walks past his mother, touching her shoulder]

[The Hale's house. Margaret coming down the stairs carrying a gown on her arms]

Margaret Hale: There, now, mother. Surely one of these would do for Thornton's? [walks into the living-room where Mrs Hale, Mr Hale and an unknown man wait]

Margaret Hale: Excuse me.

Mr. Bell: Ah! And this is Margaret, of course. You know the last time I saw you you were eight years old running around Helstone with your brother.

Margaret Hale: Oh, Mr. Bell. Of course. [puts down the gowns] How do you do?

Mr. Bell: Well, Hale, I thought then she would grow into a handsome young woman, but this goddess I'd never have imagined.

Mr. Hale: Come, come, Bell, Margaret will not understand your humour.

Mr. Bell: Oh! No offence, my dear.

Margaret Hale: Of course not. I... –I am pleased you've come to visit at last.

Mr. Bell: With all this talk of strike, I thought I'd better check with my banker whether I should sell up my property.

Margaret Hale: Surely not. We're not even certain there'll be a strike, are we, father?

Mr. Hale: Ah, I don't know. Seems to be that masters and workers will never see eye to eye. In my teaching capacity, I meet many a working man. They have some dreadful tales and speak from the heart [Mr. Bell listening intently] ... and have arguments for the strike which appear to me to be entirely logical. You know they suffered a pay cut 5 years ago and have never got back to those wages. No, though the price of food goes up all the time. [Margaret Hale also listening intently] Then our friend Thornton comes to read and he answers my questions and puts the other side so eloquently... I truly don't know what to think.

Margaret Hale: [with a slightly negative tone in her voice] I'm sure Mr. Thornton does put his own view very eloquently. [Mr. Bell picking up on the tone in her voice]

Mr. Hale: I'm surprised the Thornton's are having a dinner, with trouble looming.

Mr. Bell: Oh, the Thornton's have an annual dinner on exactly the same date every year. Time nor tide stops for Mrs. Thornton's dinners. She does not turn back for any man.

Margaret Hale: Now, that is very true.

Mr. Hale: You know, Margaret's made friends amongst the workers.

Mr. Bell: Really? Extraordinary girl!

[Mill yard of Marlborough Mill, seen from first floor window, over the shoulders of Mrs. Thornton and John Thornton.]

Hannah Thornton: You said no?

John Thornton: They were expecting it.

[View from outside looking towards Hannah and John Thornton, looking grave.]

[Inside Marlborough Mill, machine hall. All the machines are running full tilt. Boucher looks around, then at the clock which reads 7:47 pm. The Foreman/gaffer looks at his pocket watch. The workers look around and continue to work. Boucher is knitting his brow. The clock now reads 7:50. Boucher and other workers cut the power to their looms and begin to leave the hall. The large flywheel, crank shafts and transmission belts all come to a standstill.]

[Inside the Thornton's house, Hannah Thornton, lifts her head, listens, and then looks at the clock.]

[Back at Marlborough Mill, the workers are leaving. Boucher exchanges a look with John Thornton, who is looking down upon them from the steps that lead to his office. He is expressionless but standing tall. Hannah Thornton watches them from the window.

[The Hale's house. Living-room, Margaret Hale sitting at the table, writing a letter]

Margaret Hale: I am sorry to have taken so long to reply to your last letter, when you were asking which colour would suit the baby best. I do so long to see him. [picks up light blue piece of cloth] I am sure he'll look splendid in whatever you choose. I've been very busy. It's strange, for the rest of Milton is not at work.

Episode 2 - Chapter 4

Chapter written by Thomas591

Western, USA

[Closing the door after herself, Margaret is coming down the steps to the street in front of her house. She carries a basket]

Margaret Hale: [her letter continues] The mills have been dark for some weeks, and the streets are strangely quiet. People try to scrape what living they can, but all around there is desparation. [Fewer peddlers are selling their wares, some carts are abandoned, empty.]

[Margaret walks through a narrow street hung with drying cloth.]

Margaret: Both workers and masters are holding fast to their positions. Neither will give way, and no one can say how long the strike will last.

[Close up of Mrs. Boucher looking gaunt and dull. She has her arms around her child and is rocking it as it cries.]

John Boucher: [next door at the Higgins'] Huh? No! My wife! No, no! She's just sinking away. She can't stand the sight of her little 'uns starving. She'll be dead before we get our five per cent! I hate you! You and the whole pack of the union. You said it'd take two weeks. Two weeks, you said! It's been twice as long as that, and my little 'uns are lying in their beds too hungry to cry.

Nicholas Higgins: Don't. Don't!

[He has been listening to the man's story and can't take it any more. Bessy and Mary Higgins are huddled in each other's arms at one side of the room.]

Nicholas: Now, I told you I would take care of you... [crashing some money down on the table in front of Boucher so hard that the girls jump] and I pledge my heart and soul that we will win.

Boucher: You expect a man to watch his children starve 'ere he dare go against union. [child still crying as he walks to the table to get the coins] You've no more pity for a man than a pack of hungry wolves. [The door opens and closes on him, Nicholas stands there with a grim face.]

[Margaret is setting out the food in her basket for someone in the street.]

Margaret: [still writing to Edith] We do what little we can. I feel guilty that we do not go hungry and helpless in the face of so much suffering. [Walking on, she encounters a beggar, and gives him a coin from her purse.]

[Now Margaret sits at the Higgins house with Nicholas.]

Nicholas: She's a bit down in the mouth today. The strike's been going on too long.

Bessy Higgins: Do you blame me? [standing close by] What about the Bouchers?

Margaret: I left a basket outside the door.

Bessy: He's got less spirit than Father and more mouths to feed. The masters'll try anything to get them back. How are you gonna stop 'em going to work while you all stay out?

Nicholas: We'll be persuasive. [loudly, looking at Bessy, then Margaret, and dropping his head]

Margaret: Where I come from in the South, if the field labourers strike, the seed would not be sown and there'd be no harvest.

Nicholas: So?

Margaret: What would become of the farms?

Nicholas: The farmers would have to give them up, or maybe they could pay a fair wage for once!

Margaret: Suppose they couldn't, even if they wished to? Then they'd have no corn to sell and no wages to pay the next year.

Nicholas: [impatiently] I don't know about the South. I've heard there are a lot of unspirited, downtrodden men.

[Bessy starts to cough, and Nicholas gets up to help her.]

Margaret: I'm sure I'm very ignorant. But surely not all the masters would withhold pay with no reason.

Nicholas: You're a foreigner. You know nothing! And to hell with Thornton's, Slickson's, Hamper's! To hell with the lot of them.

Margaret: Is Mr. Thornton really as bad as the rest?

Nicholas: He's a fighter, fierce as a bulldog.

Margaret: He's better-looking, surely, than a bulldog? [looking at Bessy who laughs]

Nicholas: He'll stick to his word like a dog, I'll give him that. He's worth fighting with. That's the best I'll say for him. [sighs] I'll not argue with you, miss. [looking at Bessy] See you later, lass.

Bessy: [after her father is gone] He doesn't mean to shout. They're all nerves at the minute.

Margaret: Where's he going?

Bessy: Golden Dragon. He has a pint pot to... calm himself sometimes. He talks so certain, but he's worried about keeping the strike together. There's a lot of men, and not all of them have the same discipline as Father.

Episode 2 - Chapter 5

Chapter written by AnothaFan

South Island, New Zealand

[Mr. Bell, Mr. Hale & Margaret Hale are standing beside the dinner table. There is background chatter & other guests in the room. Hannah Thornton approaches them.]

Mr. Hale: Ah, Mrs. Thornton!

Mrs. Thornton: I hope it is silent enough for you tonight, Mr. Hale. The men have been gracious enough to turn out for the last month, so all is quiet for our dinner party.

[Fanny Thornton & Margaret Hale are standing together, Fanny smiles at Margaret.]

Fanny: I'm sorry that your mother is ill.

Margaret: It's nothing serious, I'm sure. She is just a little tired.

Fanny: [slightly hesitating] I wonder if she might like to try the water mattress. It's the very latest thing, a mattress that fills with water. Gives great comfort to the back.

Margaret: Have you been ill, Miss Thornton?

Fanny: Oh no, no. I am very delicate. I send off for the latest inventions, just in case. Mother doesn't approve.

[Margaret's attention wanders across the room]

Slickson: [in the background] Ah, Thornton, good evening.

[John Thornton nods to Mrs. Slickson, shakes hands with Slickson, turns to Henderson and Watson.]

Thornton: Slickson, good evening. Henderson. Watson.

[Fanny Thornton is glancing around and smiles as people pass by. Margaret Hale is looking on. Hannah Thornton is standing with Mr. Hale, but looking at Margaret Hale. John Thornton approaches Mr. Bell who is standing beside Mr. Latimer and Miss Latimer. John Thornton and Mr. Bell shake hands.]

Mr. Bell: Ah, Thornton. I took the liberty of inviting myself, knowing your mother's hospitality.

Thornton: I hope you're not worrying about Marlborough Mills. We'll ride out the strike just as we always have.

Mr. Bell: I've always had complete faith in you Thornton, but obviously in the present situation..

Thornton: It's nothing I can't handle.

Mr. Bell: No, of course not. [turns to Mr. Latimer and Miss Latimer.] Thornton knows everything in matters of business. He has my every confidence.

Mr. Latimer: [shakes hands with John Thornton] Thornton.

Mr. Bell: Thornton, you know Miss Latimer?

[John Thornton takes Miss Latimer's hand, Miss Latimer curtsies and smiles at John Thornton. Margaret Hale is watching them. Henderson approaches John Thornton.]

Henderson: Thornton, who's that fine young lady?

[John Thornton looks towards Margaret Hale, Margaret smiles back. Fanny Thornton smiles at both.]

[John Thornton approaches Margaret Hale, with a warm smile on his face. Margaret holds out her hands and clasps John's hand in both of hers.]

Margaret: See, I am learning Milton ways, Mr. Thornton.

Thornton: [looking warmly at Margaret] I am sorry your mother was unable to join us.

[Margaret Hale gives a slight nod of acknowledgement and their hands separate. Slickson approaches them.]

Slickson: Thornton, I must speak with you.

[Margaret Hale glances at Slickson, John Thornton gives an even briefer glance at Slickson, his eyes are on Margaret.]

Thornton: [regretfully] Excuse me.

[John Thornton walks away, Margaret Hale turns to watch his progress.]

Slickson: [in the background] Have you left word at the barracks?

Thornton: It's been done.

[John Thornton and Slickson are facing each other.]

Slickson: Men on horseback, armed?

Thornton: All those arrangements have been made.

Slickson: If they find out you are planning to break the strike by bringing Irish workers...

Thornton: I take this risk for myself. You need not join in.

Slickson: [sighs]

Thornton: I can and will protect myself and anyone that works for me from any kind of violence.

Slickson: I sincerely hope so.

[Margaret Hale has been looking in John Thornton's direction, but turns to Mr. Bell on his approach.]

Mr. Bell: Well really, Thornton is most ungallant this evening, leaving the most glorious woman in the room to talk to that slimy eel Slickson.

[John Thornton looks in their direction.]

Mr. Bell: Now then, who can we introduce you to? Come with me.

[Mr. Bell leads Margaret Hale away, Margaret looks back towards John Thornton.]

[The guests are seated around the dinner table.]

Mr. Bell: I hear Arnold is moving lock, stock and barrel to America.

Watson: America? I'll be damned.

Slickson: That's what I'd like to do, pack up and leave. The damn strikers'd have no work at all then.

Mr. Bell: Well, they have no work at the moment.

Slickson: There is work. They choose not to do it. Thornton? What do you think?

Thornton: Oh, I think our Mr. Bell is up to his old tricks, playing with words at the expense of us simpler fellows.

[Mr. Bell inclines his head and smiles at Mr. Thornton, Margaret also smiles.]

Thornton: But it's a serious question. I don't want to manufacture in another country, but it's logical for others to try if they cannot make enough profit here.

Fanny: What do you think, Miss Hale? Surely you don't condone the strikers?

Margaret: Well, no. Well, and yes. It is surely good to try to see both sides of a question.

[John Thornton smiles.]

Fanny: Mrs. Arthur saw you taking a basket to the Princeton district the other afternoon.

Margaret: I have a good friend in Princeton. Her name is Bessy Higgins.

Watson: Higgins?

[There are serious looks from around the table.]

Watson: Isn't he one of your union leaders, Hamper?

Hamper: Yeah. He's a terrific firebrand. A dangerous man.

Mrs. Thornton: [scornfully] I'm surprised, Miss Hale, that you keep such company.

Margaret: Bessy is my friend. Nicholas is a little...

Hamper: Nicholas? She's on first name terms.

[The other guests at the table are shocked]

Margaret: Well, Mr. Higgins has been made a little wild by circumstances. But he speaks from his heart, I'm sure.

Hamper: Well, if he's so determined, I'm surprised he'll accept charity.

Margaret: Well, he doesn't for himself. The basket was for a man whose six children are starving.

Hamper: Ah, well. Then he knows what to do. Go back to work.

[There are murmurs of assent around the table.]

Mr. Bell: I believe this poor starving fellow works at Marlborough Mills, doesn't he, Margaret?

[There is silence around the table. Mrs. Thornton looks serious.]

Thornton: You do the man, whoever he is, more harm than good with your basket. Well, as you could say, the longer you support the strikers, the more you prolong the strike. That is not kindness. They will be defeated, but it will take longer. Their pain will be prolonged.

[There is applause and murmurs of assent around the table.]

Margaret: [explaining defensively] But surely to give a dying baby food... is not just a question of logic.

Mr. Hale: Mrs. Thornton, um, I really must congratulate you on these magnificent... um, table settings.

[Mrs. Thornton looks perturbed at Margaret.]

Mr. Hale: Um, I don't believe I've seen finer table decorations even in the grandest gatherings in Harley Street.

Thornton: Not all masters are the same, Mr. Bell. You do us an injustice to always think we're all up to some underhand scheme or other.

[The guests chatter in the background. John Thornton sips from his glass. Margaret looks subdued. Thornton puts his glass back down and looks away from Margaret. He turns and smiles warmly at the guest on his left.]

Episode 2 - Chapter 6

Chapter written by genie-49

Florida, USA

[Margaret, Mr. Hale and Mr. Bell are walking home from the dinner party. It is late evening. As Margaret nears her home, she notices another man leaving her house. Margaret stops to wonder what this is about.]

Mr. Hale: [speaking to Mr. Bell] Do come in. Maria may still be up. [Mr. Hale calls out to Margaret] Margaret?

[Margaret hurriedly makes her way to the kitchen where Dixon is working.]

Margaret: Who was that, Dixon?

Dixon: Who?

Margaret: The man I saw leaving the house.

Dixon: What man?

Margaret: [slightly annoyed with Dixon's games] Dixon.

Dixon: It was a doctor. Dr. Donaldson.

Margaret: Mother?

Dixon: [keeping busy, not wanting to look at Margaret] He was just making his usual visit.

Margaret: His usual visit? How long has he been coming here? [Dixon sighs heavily, and resigns herself to tell Margaret all.]

[Mrs. Hale is resting on the couch quietly. Margaret is standing in the door way watching her. Mrs. Hale looks her way.]

Mrs. Hale: Margaret....! Why are you hiding over there?

[Margaret, appearing downcast, enters the room and holds her mother's hand briefly.]

Mrs. Hale: Oh, now, now! What's this?

[Margaret, looking very saddened, stands before her mother for a moment, before sitting down in front of her. Margaret hangs her head. There is an awkward silence.]

Mrs. Hale: [in a hushed voice] Dixon told you, didn't she? She promised she wouldn't.

Margaret: I made her.

Mrs. Hale: It was Dixon who said that you shouldn't be told.

Margaret: What does Dixon know? She's a servant. I'm your DAUGHTER.

Mrs. Hale: Shh... I don't want your father to hear. Don't be angry with Dixon. She loves me.

Margaret: No. I'll try not to.

Mrs. Hale: I keep thinking about Helstone. How, I used to complain about it sometimes and want to leave. And now, I'll never see it again. That's my punishment. And Margaret[Mrs. Hale's voice is breaking.] I can't stop thinking about Frederick. I'll never see him again either! [sobbing and sniffing] Oh, Margaret, it's so hard.

Dixon: [Entering the room, goes to Mrs. Hale.] There, there, now. Shh...shh... shh.... [the sobbing is intensifying] Dear...dear... dear...

[Margaret steps back out of Dixon's way and is overcome by this heart wrenching moment.]

[Later ...In the kitchen, Dixon and Margaret discuss this turn of events.]

Dixon: There now, miss. You would know! Now you'll fret before you need to. Likely tell the master too. Then I'll have the whole house to deal with.

Margaret: No, I won't tell father. I can bear it better than him.

Dixon: So I see! [exhaling loudly] I've known for some time now how ill she is. And, though I don't pretend to love her as you do, I've loved her better than anyone else in the whole world. [a moment's pause] I'll never forget the first time I saw her. The young Miss Beresford. I broke a needle into my finger. I was so nervous and she bound my hand with her own handkerchief. And then.... when she returned from the ballshe remembered to look in on me. She changed the handkerchief for another one. [Dixon looking wistful and lightly crying.] She was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen....or seen since. [gathering composure] Now, miss, you'd best get to bed! You're gonna need a clear mind in the morning.

Margaret: [standing to leave...] I'm sorry I get cross with you, Dixon.

Dixon: Oh, bless you. I like a bit of spirit! When you're all fired up, you remind me of Master Frederick. That is a welcome sight.

[Margaret leans over and gives Dixon a kiss on the cheek. Dixon looks thankful as Margaret leaves.]

[It is late night, Boucher is by the railroad tracks where the cotton is shipped to the area. He is gathering loose pieces of coal and wood. Behind him he hears the chatter of a group of people. He sees Thornton and his Foreman walking with this arriving group. Boucher knows that the Irish have arrived.]

Irishman: You'll take us to the factory in the morning, sir? [Thornton is busy counting the new arrivals and notating them in his book - he does not hear the Irishman's question.]

Foreman: [to Thornton] That's the lot for tonight, Mr. Thornton. We can't risk bringing any more in before daylight.

Irishman: Come on, O'Neil! Keep up, now.

[Boucher takes all this in and moves quietly away.]

[The next morning, Margaret is seen posting a letter to her brother. She then heads in the direction of Marlborough Mills.]

Episode 2 - Chapter 7

Chapter written by SearchyGirl

California, USA

[Margaret walks through the eerily silent streets of Milton approaching the imposing dark green gates of Marlborough Mills, which are unnaturally closed. Her footsteps echo loudly. She rings the bell at the gate and takes a look around her at the quiet and empty streets. The gate opens and the mill overseer utters a sigh of relief at the sight of her.]

Mill Overseer: Oh, it's you, miss. [with a nod of his head he ushers her inside the gate and closes it behind them.]

Mill Overseer: Did you see anyone in the street?

[The two of them walk towards the Thornton house as they talk.]

Margaret Hale: No. That's very odd, isn't it? Where is everyone?

Mill Overseer: I think we'll know soon enough. Best get inside the house, miss, and bolt the door behind you.

[The mill overseer leaves Margaret to take herself to the house. Margaret looks up to the mill windows to see the frightened faces of the Irish workers. We see the empty mill yard as she walks up to the house.]

[Many noisy feet and voices are seen and heard running down the steps. We then see John Thornton locking the mill door from the outside. More running feet and angry voices...]

[Inside the Thornton house. Margaret is waiting in the sitting room with Fanny.]

Fanny Thornton: Mamma will be here in a moment Miss Hale. She asked me to apologize.

Margaret: Did I see faces in the mill?

Fanny: My brother has imported hands from Ireland. They're huddled up in the top room.

Margaret: What are they doing there?

Fanny: They're frightened. The strikers have frightened them so that they don't dare work and we don't dare let them out.

Margaret: Poor wretches.

Fanny: Mamma is seeing to their food and Johnny is trying to calm them down. Some of the women are wailing and begging to go back home. Ah, here's Mamma.

Margaret: Excuse me, Mrs. Thornton, I'm sorry to bother you at such a time. My mother...Fanny mentioned you had a water mattress that we might borrow?

[Hannah Thornton looks preoccupied and has only half-heard what Margaret has been saying. She looks out the window as Margaret continues.]

Margaret: I am sorry, I thought...

[The strikers have reached the mill gates and are angrily banging against them. Margaret rushes to the window to see what the noise is. John Thornton is running through the mill yard towards the house, and gives a backward glance towards the gates. Margaret's looks out of the window upset and confused. The rioting strikers are getting louder, yelling taunts at Thornton.]

Boucher: [half-climbing the gate and yelling through it] Thornton!! Thornton!!

[John Thornton reaches the house and enters. The angry mob is growing all the time in ferocity, pushing vigorously against the gates.]

Mob Voices: Push it down!!

Fanny: [frantic] They're coming! They're coming! They'll kill us all!

Hannah Thornton: Shhhh!! [trying to calm down a hyperventilating Fanny]

Thornton: [entering the room] Keep her here at the back of the house mother.

Hannah: How soon can the soldiers be here?

[John Thornton looks down at his watch and back up at his mother. They understand the look between them, and Fanny seems to as well as she becomes more frantic and crumples to the floor while her mother tries to hold on to her.]

Thornton: Try to stop her panicking.

Hannah: Miss Hale!

[Thornton rushes out of the room to find Margaret. The mob is banging vehemently at the gates. John reaches Margaret who has been staring out the window at the unfolding scene.]

Thornton: [slightly breathless] Miss Hale, I am sorry you have visited us at this unfortunate moment.

[The crowd's angry banging has succeeded and the gates give way to their force. The men and women run into the courtyard yelling and screaming.]

Mob Voices: They're in there somewhere! Go on! Go on, lads! We'll find 'em! It's not right! I've a family to feed! Get the Irish out!!

Thornton: [at the window with Margaret, viewing the courtyard] Oh, my God! They're going for the mill door!

[Several members of the angry mob are banging at the mill door.]

Mob Voices: Get the Irish Out!!

Margaret: [back at the window, looking out] Oh, no! It's Boucher!

[The rioting strikers have gathered beneath the window where John Thornton and Margaret are looking out and all eyes and shouts are towards Thornton.]

Thornton: Let 'em yell. Keep up your courage for a few minutes longer Miss Hale.

Margaret: [taken aback] I'm not afraid. But can't you pacify them?

Thornton: The soldiers will make them see reason.

Margaret: Reason? What kind of reason?

[Margaret is looking straight at John Thornton at this point and now he turns to look right at her, no longer at the crowd. He looks almost stunned by her strong words.]

Margaret: Mr. Thornton, go down this instant and face them like a man. Speak to them as if they were human beings! [He looks out the window at the screaming faces again, whilst Margaret still looks straight at him.] They're driven mad with hunger. Their children are starving. They don't know what they're doing. Go and save your innocent Irishmen. [He stares at her for a moment before rushing towards the stairs. Margaret once again looks at the enraged mob and yells back at John Thornton.] Mr. Thornton, take care!

[Thornton opens the front doors with confidence and the mob voices rise in volume once again. He stands on the stoop with his arms crossed. In the crowd, Boucher reaches down and picks up a rock. Margaret sees the action as well and rushes down the stairs to join John Thornton and speak to the crowd.]

Margaret Hale: In God's name, stop! Think of what you're doing! He is only one man and you are many! Go home! The soldiers are coming!

[Her words pacify the mob somewhat and their voices become quiet. As Margaret speaks to them, John Thornton calmly walks out from behind her to stand beside her.]

Margaret Hale: Go in peace. You shall have an answer to your complaints.

Man in Mob: Will you send the Irish home?!

John Thornton: Never!!

[The crowd erupts with a new found vehemence of attitude.]

John Thornton: [addressed to Margaret] Go inside, this is not your place!

Margaret Hale: They will not want to hurt a woman!

[Margaret throws her arms around John Thornton's neck in an effort to protect him from the enraged mob. He struggles to release her grasp and get her inside to safety.]

John Thornton: Go inside or I will take you in!!

[Meanwhile, Boucher has raised his rock in hand and taken aim at Thornton. He throws it, but it misses Thornton and hits Margaret on the temple. She falls limp in John Thornton's hands and he lays her on the doorstep. The crowd once again falls quiet. Boucher and Stephens look worried. John Thornton is kneeling over Margaret's unconscious body, his hand hovering over her bleeding head, but not daring to touch it. He turns and rises, anger flaming into his eyes.]

John Thornton: [yelling] Are you satisfied?! You came here for me so kill me if that's what you want!! [He stands to face the mob with his arms outstretched. The crowd is still standing silently. The sharp whistles of the soldiers ring out and the mob scrambles to escape the courtyard. The soldiers on horses knock out whomever they can in the mob as they run past.]

[Back inside the Thornton's sitting room. Margaret lies unconscious on the couch.]

Fanny Thornton: Is she dead?

Jane the Maid: No, Miss Fanny, she's breathing but she looks very bad.

Fanny Thornton: Oh, where is mother? We need a doctor. [Fanny fans herself vigorously.]

Jane the Maid: Well she had to get through the rioters. She were the only one of us brave enough to go. Did you see miss?

Fanny Thornton: What?

Jane the Maid: Miss Hale. What happened down below. Did you not see Miss Hale clinging to the Master?

Fanny Thornton: No. [with an expression of extreme shock – staring at Margaret’s figure on the couch.] Did all the servants see?

Jane the Maid: We had a good enough view from top window.

Fanny: Mamma’s sure she’s set her mind on John. This proves it.

[Margaret opens her eyes slowly and tries to sit up.]

Fanny: Oh, quick, Jane! Fetch some water! There, there...Miss Hale. You lie quietly. [Fanny finally stops fanning herself to fan Margaret, from somewhat of a distance.] Mother’s gone for the doctor. He will be here soon! [said in a tone reminiscent of one talking to someone slow of hearing.]

Margaret: I don’t need a doctor. I must go home.

[Hannah Thornton enters the room with Doctor Donaldson.]

Fanny: No, you can’t! Ah Mother, thank goodness you’re back! Miss Hale’s just...

Hannah Thornton: Is she worse?

Margaret: No, I’m quite well. I want to go home.

[Doctor Donaldson looks at her eyes and the wound briefly. Hannah Thornton looks quite concerned, while Fanny seems to cringe and want to look away in the background.]

Doctor Donaldson: Mmm, looks worse than it is.

[Hannah Thornton looks relieved and Fanny looks much more at ease.]

Doctor Donaldson: [while cleaning up the blood from her head wound.] But you’ve had quite a blow, young lady. You’d better rest here a while.

Margaret: No, you know my mother is unwell. She must not be alarmed. If she hears of this... I will go now. [very weakly, but decidedly spoken.]

Hannah: [Looking incredulously at Margaret, then for verification from the doctor.] Surely not, doctor?

Doctor Donaldson: I think she must be allowed to do as she will. I'll take her with me in the carriage; see she reaches home safely. The streets are still very noisy.

Hannah Thornton: [looking at a clearly weak Margaret, she relents to the doctor's judgment, although it clearly goes against her own.] Very well.

[An alleyway in the streets of Milton. The whistles of the soldiers can be heard, along with the yells of both soldiers and mob members. A few of the rioters run down the alleyway. The last one is Boucher, who has been injured in the leg somehow in the scuffle. He sits panting heavily against a wall behind a huge kettle. The soldiers do not see him.]

Soldier: This Way!

[The bottom floor of Thornton's mill where Thornton is meeting with a couple of the mill owners and the constable. He is staring out the window at the front door of his house.]

Constable: Mr. Thornton? Don't worry sir. We'll catch the ringleaders.

Mill Master Henderson: [addressed to Mill Master Slickson] Thornton's come up smiling again. Those hoodlums have broken the strike.

Mill Master Slickson: Didn't even have to use his Irishmen.

[John Thornton gazes intensely out the window towards the windows of his house. He is clearly thinking of Margaret's well-being at the moment, not the rioters. He visualizes seeing her unconscious and bleeding on the doorstep.]

[Margaret walks into her house, clearly still dazed. She notices a spot of blood on her dress from her head wound. She briefly looks at herself in the mirror and covers the wound with her hair. As she takes a step on the stairs, her mother calls to her.]

Mrs. Hale: Margaret, is that you?

Margaret: Yes, Mother. I...I'll be in soon. I must wash. The streets are very dusty today.

[Thornton's sitting room. Fanny is now laying on the couch being fanned by Jane. John Thornton walks in.]

John Thornton: Where is Miss Hale?

Hannah: She has gone home.

John Thornton: Gone home? That is not possible.

Hannah: Really, John, she was quite well!

John Thornton: Mother, she took a terrible blow. What were you thinking of letting her go home?

Hannah Thornton: Everything was done properly. Doctor Donaldson was called. In fact, I went for him myself as no one else seemed to have a mind to go.

John Thornton: Thank you mother. The streets were dangerous. You should have...

Hannah: I'm sure it's not possible to keep such a headstrong young woman anywhere she does not care to be. She's such a reckless young woman.

John Thornton: Jane, have you nothing to be getting on with?

Jane the Maid: Miss Fanny, sir, she...

Fanny Thornton: I was so scared John! Believe me, I almost fainted! I thought they would break down the door and murder us all! And...

Hannah Thornton: Oh Fanny, don't be so ridiculous.

John Thornton: You were in no danger.

[Fanny is in shock at being responded to in this manner and appears to be gasping for something to say. John Thornton walks over and picks up his hat from a table near the window.]

Hannah Thornton: Where are you going?

John Thornton: To see if Miss Hale is well.

Hannah Thornton: [said as John Thornton walks through the room on his way out.] I sent her home in a carriage with Doctor Donaldson. Everything was done properly. John!

[The tone of this exclamation stops him and he looks at his mother.]

Hannah Thornton: I'm asking you not to go.

[Outside the Higgins' house. Mary Higgins exits the front door in a hurry. she is half-running through the drizzling weather.]

[The Hale's sitting room. Margaret is attending to her sleeping mother as her father enters the room and clutches his wife's hand.]

Mr. Hale: I...I hear there's been...some violence up at Marlborough Mills. I do hope there's not too much damage.

Dixon: [entering the room] There's a young lady wants Miss Margaret. I told her to go but she's very distressed. Said her name's Mary.

[Margaret goes to the front porch where Mary Higgins is waiting.]

Mary Higgins: I'm sorry miss! I didn't know what to do! Bessy's been took so very ill!

[Margaret hurriedly throws on her shawl and rushes with Mary towards the Higgins' house.]

[The cemetery in the hills on the outskirts of Milton. John Thornton is walking pensively.]

[Margaret is comforting Bessy at the Higgins' house as Bessy coughs and cries, clutching Margaret's hand tightly, with Margaret calmly rubbing her back.]

[The Thornton's sitting room. Hannah Thornton looks somewhat worried as her son enters and puts his hat down on the table.]

John Thornton: Still up? I thought you'd be exhausted.

Hannah Thornton: [as she embroiders something, facing the opposite direction of her son.] Why should I be? Where have you been?

John Thornton: Just walking. [He walks further into the room and unties his cravat. Now his mother can see his face.]

Hannah Thornton: Where have you been walking?

John Thornton: I promised you I would not go there and I did not.

Hannah Thornton: But?

John Thornton: But... [He comes and sits by his mother.] Mother you know I will have to go there tomorrow and you know what I will have to say.

Hannah Thornton: Yes. You could hardly do otherwise.

John Thornton: What do you mean?

Hannah Thornton: I mean that you are bound in honor as she has shown her feelings for all the world to see.

John Thornton: Her feelings?

Hannah Thornton: She rushed out in front of an angry mob and saved you from danger. Or are you telling me I imagined that? You think none of the servants saw it? Do you think it's not become the tittle-tattle of Milton?

John Thornton: She did save me. But, Mother, I daren't believe such a woman could care for me.

Hannah Thornton: Don't be so foolish. And what more proof do you need, that she should act in such a shameless way?

[John Thornton sighs and Hannah Thornton reaches out and gently strokes his face.]

Hannah Thornton: I'm sure she will take you from me. That is why I did not want you to go to see her today. I wanted one last evening of being the first in your affections. I will have to change the initials on our linen. It will bear her name now, hers and yours.

John Thornton: I know she does not care for me. But I can't remain silent. I must ask her.

Hannah Thornton: Don't be afraid, John. She has admitted it to the world. I may yet even learn to like her for it. It must have taken a great deal to overcome her pride.

[Workers walk up the stairs to begin work at the mills. The mill is busy and noisy with activity again, and the yard is filled with productivity instead of rioters. Thornton leaves his house and walks through the yard.]

[Margaret's bedroom. Margaret reads a letter from her cousin Edith.]

Edith Lennox: [Narrating] Dear Margaret, if only Uncle would bring you all home you wouldn't need to witness such suffering. As for feeling guilty, Margaret, surely you can have nothing to reproach yourself for. After all, the workers chose to go on strike and I am sure you've done your best to help. Even when we were little girls you always did the right thing.

[Margaret smiles a tiny half-smile and then looks up, gazing pensively.]

Episode 2 - Chapter 8

Chapter written by Thomas

Western USA

[John Thornton stands at the lace-curtained window, hands clasped behind his back, waiting for Margaret at the Hale's house. His head is bowed and he looks troubled. He hears the door open behind him and turns, composing his face to greet Margaret, then moves to close the door after her. Margaret looks uneasy, too, when he passes by her and back again to glance down at a bowl of fruit on the table.]

John Thornton: I had not noticed the colour of this fruit. Miss Hale, I'm afraid I was very ungrateful yesterday.

Margaret Hale: You've nothing to be grateful for.

Thornton: I think that I do.

Margaret: Why, I did only the least that anyone would have.

Thornton: [wrinkling his brow unbelievably] That can't be true.

Margaret: Well, I was, after all, responsible for placing you in danger. I would have done the same for any man there.

Thornton: Any man? So you approve of that violence. You think I got what I deserved?

Margaret: Oh, no, of course not! But they were desperate. I know if you were to talk to them...

Thornton: I forgot. [sighing] You imagine them to be your friends.

Margaret: But if you were to be reasonable...

Thornton: Me? Are you saying that I'm unreasonable?

Margaret: [trying again] If you would talk with them and not set the soldiers on them. I-I know they would...

Thornton: They will get what they deserve. [he pauses coming closer and changing his tone] Miss Hale, I didn't just come here to thank you. I came because...I think it very likely... I know I've never found myself in this position before. It's difficult to find the words. [looking introspective, then softly] Miss Hale, my feelings for you are very strong.

Margaret: Please, stop. Will you - Please don't go any further.

Thornton: Excuse me?

Margaret: Please don't continue in THAT way. It's not the way of a gentleman. [withdrawing to the window]

Thornton: [angrily walking around his side of the table] I'm well aware that in your eyes at least I'm not a gentleman. But I think I deserve to know why I am offensive.

Margaret: It offends me that you should speak to me as if it were your DUTY to rescue my reputation.

Thornton: I spoke to you about my feelings because I love you. I have no thought for your reputation!

Margaret: You think that because you are rich and my father is in reduced circumstances that you can have me for your possession? I suppose I should expect no less from someone in trade.

Thornton: [upset that she can't or won't understand him] I don't want to possess you, I wish to marry you because I love you!

Margaret: You shouldn't because I do not like you and never have. [turns away to the window]

[There is silence for a moment.]

Thornton: One minute we talk of the colour of fruit... the next of love. How does that happen? [turns away]

Margaret: [brokenly] My friend Bessy Higgins is dying.

Thornton: And that, of course, is my fault, too?

Margaret: [turning back to him] I'm sorry.

Thornton: For WHAT? That you find my feelings for you offensive? Or that you assume that because I'm in trade I'm only capable of thinking in terms of buying and selling? Or that I take pleasure in sending my employees to an early grave?

Margaret: [distressed now] No! No, no, of course not. I...I'm sorry to be so blunt. I have not learnt how to...h-how to refuse. How to respond when a man talks to me as you just have.

Thornton: Oh, there are others? [Margaret shakes her head anxiously] This happens to you every day? Of course! You must have to disappoint so many men that offer you their heart.

Margaret: Please understand, Mr. Thornton...

Thornton: I DO understand. [looking intently at Margaret] I understand you completely. [opens the door and quickly leaves]

[Margaret looks as though she would say more to try to make things better.]