

Episode 4 - Chapter 1

Chapter written by Thomas591

(from Western USA)

[At Marlborough Mills workers are in the yard moving bales of cotton, someone leads a horse, and Nicholas Higgins walks in the gates. Next he is inside the mill, cotton fluff is flying as he passes the windows. Later he is outside being roughly escorted off the premises by Williams the overseer.]

Williams: Go on! [with a push sending Higgins off balance] Get out and don't come back! Go on! Go on!

[Mr. Thornton is mounting some steps going into the mill but turns towards the raised voice with a frown to watch Higgins' ignominious departure before he continues.]

Williams: And don't show your face in here again! [Nicholas reaches the gate, looking back in chagrin as he passes through.]

Margaret Hale: [narrating a letter to Edith] Although the autumn is turning chilly, I'm still determined to take my daily walk. I cannot persuade Father to join me. He has been very cast down since Mother's death. He keeps to the house and his own company, and he has very few visitors to disturb him.

[Mr. Hale and Margaret sit, each reading their own book when Dixon knocks and enters the room.]

Dixon: That man Higgins is here.

Margaret: Oh, [glancing at her father] show him up, Dixon. [with a pleased smile]

Dixon: If you saw his shoes you'd say the kitchen were a better place!

Mr. Hale: He can wipe them, surely. [Dixon sighs]

[Nicholas is untying his muddy shoes as Dixon stands over him. He leaves the kitchen barefoot, passing Dixon who gives a superior nod.]

Nicholas Higgins: [in a head to head with Mr. Hale] I've been looking for work. Been keeping a civil tongue in my head, and not minding who says what back to me. I'm doing it for him, of course, not me. Boucher. Well, not for him. He doesn't need my help where he is, but his children. [Margert comes in smiling a welcome, and he looks up at her.] But I'll need your help, Master, if you'll give it.

Mr. Hale: Gladly, but what can I do?

Nicholas: Well, Miss here has often talked about the South. I don't know how far it is. But I've been thinking, if I can get down there where food is cheap and wages are good and people are friendly...maybe you can help me get work there.

Mr. Hale: Oh, what kind of work?

Nicholas: I think I'm good with a spade.

Margaret: You mustn't leave Milton for the South. [very earnest] You couldn't bear the dullness of life. It would eat away at you like rust. Think no more of it, Nicholas, I beg you! [He looks disappointed.]

Nicholas, have you been to Marlborough Mills for work?

Nicholas: [snorts] Aye, I've been to Thornton's. The overlooker told me to be off and...told me to go away sharpish.

Margaret: Would you try again? I...I should be so glad if you would. Mr. Thornton would judge you fairly, I am sure, if given the chance.

Nicholas: It would take my pride. I think I'd rather starve. Well, if you can think of anything, Master.

Mr. Hale: Well, of course, of course.

Nicholas: Thank you. I'll bid you goodnight.

Mr. Hale: [They all rise.] I am sorry, Nicholas.

Margaret: [following Nicholas to the door] You'll find your shoes by the fire. [Nicholas turns and nods his thanks before he goes.]

Mr. Hale: He is a proud man. Still, there are qualities to be admired in these Milton men. Maybe...God has found his way here after all. [puts his glasses on and reaches for his book]

Margaret: [still standing at the door] If only he and Mr. Thornton could speak man to man! If he could forget Mr. Thornton is a master and appeal to his heart.

Mr. Hale: My word, Margaret! To admit that the South has its faults and that Mr. Thornton has his virtues. What has happened to bring about such a transformation?

Episode 4 - Chapter 2

Chapter written by Thomas591

(from Western USA)

[At the mill yard looking in the gate again. Mrs. Hannah Thornton is walking out. The scene changes to the Hale's sitting room where Hannah is seated looking uphappy and Margaret comes in.]

Margaret: Mrs. Thornton. Thank you for sparing the time to visit us. Ah, my father is detained, but he'd be touched by your kindness. [Hannah looks like she would speak, but Margaret goes on.] Thank you for your kind messages. We're so grateful. My aunt has sent me details of a little Italian tune that Miss Thornton asked me about. [She searches in her desk.]

Mrs. Thornton: [abruptly] Miss Hale. I'm afraid I did not visit to indulge Fanny's thirst for light music. [pause] I have a duty to perform. I promised your mother that if I knew you had acted wrongly I would offer you advice, whether you chose to take it or not. So, when I learned from one of my servants that you had been seen out after dark with a gentleman, I thought it right to ... to warn you against such impropriety! Many a young woman's lost her character...

Margaret: [cutting her short] Mrs. Thornton! I'm sure my mother never meant me to be ... exposed to insult. [an exchange of proud looks] Whatever Mr. Thornton has told you ... [looks down] I can assure you...

Mrs. Thornton: My son has told me nothing. You know nothing of the man you rejected. If he has any knowledge of this, he keeps it to himself as any man of honour would.

Margaret: Of course. [looks ashamed] I don't doubt it. [sitting] I cannot give you any sort of explanation. I've done wrong ... but not in the way you imagine or imply.

Mrs. Thornton: I did not approve of my son's attachment to you. You did not seem WORTHY to me. But I was prepared, for his sake. Your behavior on the day of the riots exposed you to the comments of servants. But by the time my son had proposed you'd changed your mind. [distainful noise] Maybe this other lover...

Margaret: You must think very little of me, madam.

Mrs. Thornton: I can't claim to be sorry you refused my son. No, I'm glad. Especially now, when you expose yourself to gossip and ridicule.

Margaret: [rising agrily] I won't listen to you any more. I refuse to answer your questions. Excuse me. [She sweeps out of the room, leaving Mrs. Thornton with her mouth open in shock.]

Episode 4 - Chapter 3

Chapter written by Thomas591

(from Western USA)

[Nicholas Higgins paces outside the mill gate. He stops, rubbing his eyes and looking tired. John Thornton is walking swiftly towards him, bent on some urgent business. Higgins intercepts him on the way out.]

Nicholas Higgins: I need to talk to you, sir.

John Thornton: I can't stop now. [He puts on his hat and rushes past.]

[Nicholas watches him go and collapses against the gatepost with a look of hopelessness.]

[The banker, Mr. Latimer is playing billiards at a club.]

Mr. Latimer: You've seen the new figures?

Thornton: I'd hoped to reduce the bank loan by now.

Mr. Latimer: Eh, it's a pity so much is tied up in the new machinery.

Thornton: I needed the machinery because we were doing well. We had large orders. And I needed to buy the cotton in bulk. Obviously I wasn't expecting not to be able to fulfill the contracts.

Mr. Latimer: But you've been back to work for a good while now.

Thornton: But we're still behind with the orders and we'll not catch up for ... It's not looking like we WILL catch up.

Mr. Latimer: Well, the bank can extend the loan. Temporarily. But we'll have to be careful.

Thornton: I don't think anyone has ever accused me of being careLESS! Or frivolous! [huge sigh, shakes head] Forgive me. I don't know how I could have prevented this or what to do next.

Mr. Latimer: Well, there are more ... modern financial procedures. Investments. [billiard ball clunks] I could let you know when I hear of any such schemes.

Thornton: Speculation? [shakes his head] I'll not risk everything on some idiot money scheme.

Mr. Latimer: Well, if matters carry on like this you might not have anything left to risk. [He looks John in the face before he leaves.]

[Higgins still waits outside the gates. Thornton walks back to the mill, his head down, face troubled.]

Nicholas: Sir.

Thornton: Good Lord! Are you still here?

Nicholas: Yes, sir. I want to speak to you.

Thornton: You'd better come in then.

[Nicholas worries his cap in his hands, standing in front of Thornton's desk while he waits for the master to look over the messages that have come in.]

Thornton: Well, so what do you want with me?

Nicholas: My name is Higgins...

Thornton: I know who you are. What do you want?

Nicholas: I want work.

Thornton: Work? You've got a nerve.

Nicholas: Hamper'll tell you I'm a good worker.

Thornton: I'm not sure you'd like to hear all of what Hamper would have to say about you. I've had to turn away 100 of my best hands for following you and your union. And you think that I should take you on? Might as well set fire to the cotton waste and have done with it.

Nicholas: [looking like he just may turn and go, hesitates] I promise you, I'd not speak against you. If I found anything wrong I'd give you fair warning before taking action. I'm a steady man. I work hard.

Thornton: [sneering] How do I know you're not just planning mischief ... or maybe you're just interested in saving up money against another strike.

Nicholas: I need work, for the family of a man who were driven mad. He had his job taken by one of those Irishmen you hired. Didn't know one end of a loom from another.

Thornton: YOUR UNION forced me into hiring those Irish. Much good it did me! Most of them have gone home. [He continues with his paperwork, getting up to get something and sitting down again, practically dismissing Nicholas.] If I were to believe your reason ... I can't say that I'm inclined to. I'd advise you to try some other work and leave Milton.

Nicholas: If it were warmer, I'd take Paddy's work and never come back again. But come winter, those children will starve. If you knew any place away from mills ... I'd take any wage they thought I was worth for the sake of those children.

Thornton: Oh, you'd take wages less than others? They have no union of course. Your union'd be down like a ton of bricks on my Irish for trying to feed their families, and yet you'd do this for these children? I'll not give you work. You're wasting your time. [starts to read his papers]

Nicholas: [with a sour smile] And YOURS. I was told to ask you by a woman. Thought you had a kindness about you. She was mistaken. But I'm not the first to be misled by a woman.

Thornton: Tell her to mind her own business next time and stop wasting your time and mine. [Nicholas turns and goes out, but Thornton's fist comes up to his mouth as he considers Higgins parting words.]

[Williams is watching over the workroom when Thornton comes up beside him.]

Thornton: How long has that man Higgins been waiting to speak to me? [They watch Nicholas walk away outside the window.]

Williams: He was outside the gate when I arrived, sir, and it's four now. [Thornton looks considerably at Williams.]

[It's snowing. Margaret enters a shop among crowds of people. Fanny Thornton is there examining lace on some linen.]

Fanny Thornton: Oh! [Upon seeing Margaret, she flourishes her engagement ring on her hand.] Miss Hale! [giggle]

Margaret: I must congratulate you.

Fanny: Yes, we are to be married SOON! [turning to future husband, Watson]

Mr. Watson: Delighted to see you again, Miss Hale. [He lifts his hat and takes Margaret's hand.] You must hurry, Miss Hale, for my dear girl is busy buying up the whole shop.

Fanny: [laughs, then quietly aside to Margaret] He is a little grey, but he's very well set up. He's a very good match for us Thorntons. He has been trying to interest John in a speculation.

Margaret: Speculation? Oh, excuse me, I just didn't think that Mr. Thornton would participate in any kind of risky venture.

Fanny: Ah! Everybody does it! All business is risk, as my Watson would say. John will have to be more modern in his ideas if he's to keep up. [Turns toward the shopkeeper where Watson is about to sign the bill.] Oh, no! You must send the bills to Marlborough Mills. [to Watson] You must not pay for a button. We are quite rich enough! [laughs, while Margaret looks like she might doubt this]

[At the Thornton's house, Fanny sets down a pile of linen and bills on the table where John works on his papers and his mother sews.]

Fanny: Honestly! Miss Hale could do with having just a little humility about her position. She was at Green's and stopped to congratulate me. She seemed surprised when I told her of my wedding plans. She's so grave and disapproving, as if we couldn't afford it. [John is frowning.] I soon put her right. It's not as if she will ever get a husband. [Mrs. Thornton glances toward her son.] She's much older than me. And so severe! I told her about Watson's business proposition and she really turned up her nose at me! She as much as said you wouldn't be interested, as if she knew you better than me. So superior.

John Thornton: I'll thank you not to discuss my business affairs in the street. [Fanny looks insulted.] What do you know about anything anyway, Fanny, except how to SPEND money?

Fanny: I know that if you were to take up Watson's offer and join him in the speculation, you would be certain to profit. Tenfold....

John: [interrupting] There is nothing certain about speculation. [Hannah thoughtfully listening.] I will not risk the livelihoods of my men by joining Watson's tomfool schemes. If I lose money, how will I be expected to pay off the expense of your wedding?

Fanny: [very angry] You'll be sorry. [She stalks off, John bows his head, resting it on his fist. His mother approaches.]

Mrs. Thornton: Is the speculation so risky?

John: Do you need to ask me that, Mother? It's very risky. If it succeeds, all our financial problems will be over and no one will ever know how bad things are.

Mrs. Thornton: If it fails?

John: At the moment, the payroll is safe. Would you advise me to risk it?

Mrs. Thornton: If you succeeded, they'd never know.

John: And if it fails, I would have injured others. Would you ask me to risk that?

Mrs. Thornton: [Makes a negative motion and steps forward to put her hands on her son's shoulders.]
Tell me what to do.

John: Pray for a good summer. People will buy cotton clothes. Pray that some of our buyers pay their bills on time ... and pray that Fanny doesn't have time to order any more from the draper's. [Hannah's sudden smile breaks through and she strokes John's hair as he barely manages a smile himself.]

Episode 4 - Chapter 4

Chapter written by Larkie25
(Florida USA)

[John Thornton is walking down the steps of the Princeton District, where the poorer people live. He sees two women and a child. The child puts her hand out silently hoping for money. Thornton puts a coin in her hand. He feels pleased by his gift but then he is quickly saddened by the situation and goes off to his destination. A wailing baby is heard. He knocks at the door and Higgins opens it. Higgins stands there, deciding whether or not to let John Thornton enter. After a hard look Higgins steps aside and lets Thornton in. Tom Boucher and Mary Higgins are going over reading lessons together.]

Tom Boucher: She is in g-great..

John Thornton: [to Higgins] Are these your children?

Nicholas Higgins: No, but they're mine now.

John Thornton: Did your daughter teach them to read?

Nicholas Higgins: I think they are teaching her.

John Thornton: And these are the children you mentioned yesterday?

Nicholas Higgins: You didn't believe me?

John Thornton: I spoke to you in a way that I had no business to. I did not believe you. I couldn't have taken care of a man such as Boucher's children. I have made enquiries and I know now that you spoke the truth. I beg your pardon.

Nicholas Higgins: Well, Boucher's dead and I am sorry. But that's the end of it.

John Thornton: Will you take work with me? That's what I came here to ask.

Nicholas Higgins: [thinking for a moment] You've called me impudent, a liar, a mischief-maker. But for the sake of these children, do you think we could get along?

John Thornton: Well, it's not my proposal that we get on well together.

Nicholas Higgins: Work is work. I'll come. And what's more, I'll thank you. And that's a good deal from me.

John Thornton: [holding out his hand] And this is a good deal from me. [They shake hands] Now, mind you come sharp to your time. What times we have, we keep sharp. [with a strong serious look] And the first time I catch you using that brain of yours to make trouble, off you go. Now you know where you are.

Nicholas Higgins: Reckon I'll leave my brains at home, then.

John Thornton: [walks to the door to leave and stops] Was Miss Hale the woman that told you to come to me? You might have said.

Nicholas Higgins: And you'd have been a bit more civil?

[John Thornton glares at him and leaves. Nicholas Higgins smiles in triumph]

[John Thornton is walking toward the Hale's house with books under his arm. Margaret Hale lets him into a room]

Margaret Hale: Well, my father is waiting in the sitting-room.

John Thornton: I thought you might like to know that I've taken Higgins on.

Margaret Hale: [with a quiet joy] I am glad of it.

John Thornton: I didn't know that it was you who urged him to come to me.

Margaret Hale: Would it have made you more or less likely to give him a job?

John Thornton: I don't know. I'll not withdraw it though, if that's what worries you.

Margaret Hale: [looking down] I wouldn't think you capable of that. I have a better opinion of you than you do of me at the moment, I feel.

[John Thornton turns away and walks to the other room]

[Mr. Hale comes down steps to join Margaret in the kitchen]

Mr. Hale : Margaret, my dear, you're not obliged to answer this question, but, um [pause] do you have any reason for thinking that Mr. Thornton cared for you?

Margaret Hale: [looking up, gravely] Father, I'm sorry.

Mr. Hale : You, um ... rejected him?

Margaret Hale: [looking back down] I should have told you.

Mr. Hale : Oh, no, no, no. It would account for him not coming so often to the house. And I do value his company and conversation, especially now now that your mother's gone. But, um, if you feel uncomfortable in his presence I'll ask him not to come to the house again. [turning away and then back] I mean, I'm sure you were honest with him. That's the most important thing.

Margaret Hale: [resolutely but with sadness] I've done nothing that I wouldn't do again

[John Thornton is going over notes and books in his office late at night. He is obviously tired and drops his quill and puts his hand to his face. He hears the shift ending whistle and, confused, checks his watch. He looks out his window and sees Tom Boucher sitting on the steps reading a book. Workers begin to pour out of the door. Nicholas Higgins is the last one out and he taps the boy on the back and takes his hand. Nicholas Higgins sees John Thornton in the window and nods, John Thornton acknowledges him by nodding back.]

[Margaret has been serving food in her home to Nicholas Higgins and she comes to take his empty plate. Tom Boucher is eating with him]

Nicholas Higgins: Thank you. I needed that.

Margaret Hale: You're becoming a model employee. [smiling] Maybe someone will tell the union.

Nicholas Higgins: [smiling back] I always kept to my time. Ask anybody. No, I'll not give Thornton the chance to give me the sack. Puts in all hours himself. Sometimes I don't think he sleeps from one day to the next. And he's taken an interest in young Tom, saying he's got to have a good education. He's a funny one. I can't make him out.

Margaret Hale: Oh now you will definitely be drummed out of the union for thinking not so badly about a master!

[Later, on another late-shift night, Tom Boucher is sitting practicing his reading and waiting for Nicholas Higgins]

Tom Boucher: [sounding out words] Laugh...at me. C-Call me A comee...c-comical. A...

John Thornton: [sitting down next to him] A-ni-mal

Tom Boucher: A-ni-mal

John Thornton: What are you doing here? Where's Higgins? [Tom Boucher shrugs shoulders] Have you had your supper?

Episode 4 - Chapter 5

Chapter written by Larkie25

(Florida USA)

[Margaret Hale is reading her father's letter while walking inside the Hale's home. As she nears a window she looks up from the letter and sees Mr. Bell outside on the street. He sees her and then stops. He takes off his hat, looking at her with a grave face. Margaret's smile disappears into grief]

[Outside the meal house]

John Thornton: Mr. Hale? Dead?

Nicholas Higgins: Aye, in his sleep. Poor fellow. Never recovered from his wife's death.

[John Thornton is stricken with grief over the news and leans upon the doorway.]

Nicholas Higgins: Master? Master, come in. Sit down, have some food.

[Both sitting at the table]

John Thornton: And Margaret? What of her?

Nicholas Higgins: There's nothing to keep her here now. Her aunt's coming to take her home, they say. She's seen a great deal of sorrow since she's been here. We'll be sorry to see her go, Mary and I.

[John Thornton places his hand on his face as he is lost in thought.]

[In the Hale's home. Books are piled on the table in stacks. Margaret and Dixon are sitting silently, grieving, while Aunt Shaw paces the room]

Aunt Shaw: Oh, my dear! How you have suffered! And what sorrows your father has brought you! We are leaving instantly. Dixon, you're to stay here for the time being and arrange an auction for all of this.

Margaret Hale: [looking up, with effort] Not all the books. [turning to Dixon] I must say goodbye to our friends.

Aunt Shaw: I can't imagine how many friends you can have HERE! I will help you say goodbye and then we are leaving this horrible place for good!

[At the Thornton's home. Margaret and Aunt Shaw are with Hannah and Fanny.]

Fanny: I am sorry that you're leaving, Miss Hale. I was hoping that you might visit my house. I've finished it with Indian wallpaper from the Exhibition. I don't suppose you could travel back?

Hannah Thornton: [with contempt] Miss Hale will be in no mood for traveling back from London just to see your furnishings, Fanny.

Margaret Hale: [to Hannah] It was a while ago, but I'm sorry for the way I spoke to you at our last meeting. I know that you meant well.

[Hannah nods. John Thornton enters the room]

John Thornton: So, you're going.

Margaret Hale: [walking towards him] I... brought you Father's Plato. I thought that you might like it.

[He accepts the book, with a kind smile]

John Thornton: I shall treasure it. As I will your father's memory. He was a good friend to me.

[John Thornton pauses then says quietly] So you are going. And never come back?

Margaret Hale: I wish you well Mr. Thornton.

[John Thornton turns away from her]

Aunt Shaw: I must get her home as soon as possible.

Hannah Thornton: [looking at Margaret Hale] To be sure. As soon as possible.

[Outside the Thornton's home in the mill yard. Snow is falling As Margaret slowly climbs inside the carriage. Behind her John Thornton stands at the entrance to his home. He looks over the mill yard and

carriage which are both white from the swirling snow. The carriage door shuts and begins to pull out of the mill yard]

John Thornton: Look back....Look back at me.

[His eyes watch the carriage pleading for a last glimpse of Margaret. The carriage noises grow farther away and he waits. The realisation that his desire will not be satisfied washes over his face. His eyes narrow, his gaze loses focus, and he looks away disappointed.]

[The carriage goes through the busy street. Nicholas Higgins and Mary Higgins hurrying together]

Margaret Hale: Nicholas! Nicholas! Stop the Cab!

[Margaret gets out of the carriage and meets with them on the street]

Nicholas Higgins: Margaret, there you are! We thought you'd gone. We were on our way to the station to try and catch you. You don't think you could leave us without saying goodbye. We would've come to London, wouldn't we Mary, next Whitsun rather than you go without a farewell from your friends.

[Margaret hugs Mary and then reaches into her purse for some money to give them. Aunt Shaw covers her nose with a handkerchief.]

Nicholas Higgins: Oh, no, Margaret. No, not between friends.

Margaret Hale: No, not for you Nicholas. For the children. You can't refuse it for the children. [places the money in his hands] You'll let me know how they do.

[She gives him a kiss on the cheek and then slowly returns to the carriage. She looks out the window at them as the carriage drives off. Mary leans on her father as they watch her leave]

Episode 4 - Chapter 6

Chapter written by Larkie25

(Florida USA)

[Margaret has arrived in London and stands in the Aunt Shaw's home. She is standing by a veiled window, with no real purpose and a blank expression. Edith and Henry are talking together in a separate room, but watching Margaret.]

Edith: I don't know when she's going to cheer up. It's been three months now and she's still insisting on wearing black. [with a sigh] Henry, I'm counting on you. You know how much Captain Lennox and I

would like the two of you to get together. Mind you, she's terribly good with Sholto. I should hate to lose her. Perhaps we could all live together in one big house. [Henry smiles] Mr. Bell arrives today. Maybe he can make her smile.

[Later, Margaret rises from a chair after she and Mr. Bell have been talking]

Margaret: [joyfully] Mr. Bell, do you really mean it?

Mr. Bell: Of course! I was sitting on the train thinking, "How could we amuse ourselves?" When I got it in my head we should visit Helstone. Do you really like the idea?

Margaret: When can we go? Tomorrow?

[Mr. Bell laughs with joy]

[Margaret and Mr. Bell are walking in a lush green area. They are walking towards Helstone parsonage. They go up the few steps leading to the home. The new vicar and his wife are sitting at a table on the veranda, he is reading to her. Margaret has a warm vision of her parents sitting there instead, waving to her and smiling. A bird squawks and the vision is gone. The reality of the new occupants is dismal and less appealing to Margaret. They approach the house and sit down to talk with them. The wife is serving some tea for all of them.]

Wife: We had to make some improvements. Well, alterations. We have seven children.

Margaret: Yes, of course. It's just...it's a pity the roses are gone.

Wife: The children must have a place to play. Fresh air prepares the mind for God.

Mr. Bell: [sarcastically] Ah, better than all that book-reading, that's what I say.

Vicar: Precisely my very words. We have to get back to simple truth. Forget about all this intellectualism, this questioning.

Margaret: [tensely] This...dissenting? Like my father? Is that what you mean?

Vicar: Well, no! Well, yes. I thought we ought to keep things simple.

Margaret: Ignorant? Uneducated? Is that what you mean? I'm sure the world would be a better place!

Wife: [explaining to her husband] Miss Hale has been in the North, where life is a little more... Well, more wild.

[Mr. Bell senses Margaret's pain and reaches over to take her hand to try and calm her.]

[Mr. Bell and Margaret are walking together later on. A bell chimes]

Margaret: Why are you smiling?

Mr. Bell: [chuckling] I was thinking of Mrs. Thornton, of how she'd love to be called wild.

[They both chuckle]

Margaret: Oh dear, I nearly lost my temper.

Mr. Bell: Yes, I'm afraid this trip has not gone as I'd wished. I'm sorry.

Margaret: When we first arrived in Milton I was guilty of romanticizing the South. I've got to work hard now at not doing the opposite.

Mr. Bell: Oh no, I can't have this! Mrs. Thornton being wild is bad enough. But romantic? No, no! You wouldn't call Milton romantic in any way at all, surely?

[They sit down on a bench]

Margaret: [not answering his question] Mr. Bell. When Mother was dying, Fredrick came to Milton. We-we were very secret. You know why. He left before the funeral. I went with him to the station and we were seen... by Mr. Thornton.

Mr. Bell: I see. [he realizes what she means] Ah. You were seen embracing at the station late at night. Oh, I see.

Margaret: No, no. That's not the worst of it. A man approached Frederick, someone that knew him. He fell and died later. Someone had seen me and I... had to lie to the police inspector.

Mr. Bell: Well, I don't quite see the problem. Frederick didn't cause this man's death?

Margaret: No, no. I... I lied. I was worried because Fred was still in the country. I lied and... Mr. Thornton knows it.

Mr. Bell: Is Frederick safe now?

Margaret: Yes. Yes, he's married now. Settled down in Cadiz. Sometimes I think I'll never see him again.

Mr. Bell: But that's not why you're upset?

Margaret: No, it's just... I hate to think... I hate to think that Mr. Thornton thinks badly of me.

Mr. Bell: Are you sure that's all?

Margaret: [she sighs and looks away] I thought it was going to be such a lovely day.

Mr. Bell: [taking her hand] Look. Perhaps I could have a word with Thornton, though I'm afraid he doesn't think much of me.

Margaret: Oh, no, no. I don't want him to know about Fred. I do sometimes wish he knew, but don't say anything. Please. [sighing] I don't know what I want.

Mr. Bell: [letting go of her hand] Very well. Let us think of other things. You know, Margaret, I had an idea when your father died ... of ... looking after you.

Margaret: [smiling] You have. You are.

Mr. Bell: [more seriously] No, you don't quite understand. [pause] I rather hoped you would wish to look after me as well.

[Margaret's smile disappears and she looks uncomfortable, he goes on]

Mr. Bell: I never thought to have a wife. Too busy being an Oxford academic. Anyway, I hoped. [quickly changing the subject] Oh, but that doesn't matter. I promised your father I would take care of you. Now, I have often thought how very depressing it would be if one were to leave one's fortune to people who were waiting around hoping you would die off. So, I mean to sign over the bulk of my monies and property to you now.

Margaret: Oh no, I can't. I will not!

Mr. Bell: Yes, you will. I am going back to South America where I shall live out the rest of my life in perfect peace and prosperity knowing that you are putting my money to good use.

Margaret: [shaking her head] Well, I couldn't. Well, what about you?

Mr. Bell: Well, something I've been trying to ignore. My trip to London was not just to see you, my dear. I.... saw my doctor.

[Margaret looks worried, Mr. Bell tries to comfort her]

Mr. Bell: Oh, shh... You must think of me living the life under the Argentine skies. Not many men can plan their exit from this world in such a leisurely way. Come now, we must cheer up. Ah, if we go now we'll be in London in time for dinner. Now, I'm in very great need of good food.

[They stand to leave. Margaret takes his arm and looks up at him, still concerned]

[In Mr. Thornton's office. He and Mr. Bell are going over papers and Mr. Thornton is signing documents]

Mr. Bell: So, I'm almost at the end of sorting my business affairs.

Mr. Thornton: When do you sail?

Mr. Bell: On Wednesday. I shall be pleased to be warmed by the sun again. I spent much of my youth there.

[Mr. Thornton looks at the document, stops, and looks up at Mr. Bell in uncertainty.]

Mr. Bell: [answering his unspoken question] Yes, I have signed all my property and fortune to my goddaughter Miss Hale. I have no other family and Hale is my oldest friend.

[Thornton takes in this news, though it seems difficult for him. He changes the subject.]

Mr. Thornton: But South America? Won't you need money to live on?

Mr. Bell: Oh, I have sufficient for a very good life there. What remains of it.

Mr. Thornton: I'm sorry.

Episode 4 - Chapter 7

Chapter written by AnothaFan **South Island, New Zealand**

[John Thornton is sprawled asleep across his desk, with his arms out in front of him. Mrs. Thornton hesitates in the doorway, before entering. She looks at him tenderly and removes her shawl to place over his shoulders. She puts her hand comfortingly on his head, then moves to turn the lamp down.]

[At Aunt Shaw's residence, Margaret is sitting reading a book. In an adjoining room Edith is talking to Dixon.]

Edith: I think Margaret is looking so much better, don't you, Dixon?

Dixon: Yes, miss. Now we're back in London.

[Aunt Shaw and Edith are seated.]

Edith: I'm so glad she decided to stay with us in Harley Street, even though now she's quite the heiress.

[Dixon, standing, pours the tea and hands Edith a cup.]

Dixon: She's looking much like her old self.

[Henry enters the room.]

Edith: What do you think, Henry?

Henry: [turning to look in Margaret's direction] I think Margaret looks very well. [He takes a cup of tea from the table.]

Edith: Now she's so rich, if you don't ask her soon, we'll have a job keeping others away.

Henry: I will try her when I'm ready. It's really none of your concern. As it is, I'm helping her with business matters. She's decided to use some of her money to try to help Frederick.

Edith: Oh. I hope you can. She will love you forever!

[Henry gives Edith a half-smile, then turns as Margaret enters.]

Aunt Shaw: Margaret, we're engaged at the Piper's on Saturday.

[Margaret stands there looking sombre.]

Edith: Oh dear! I know that look. Margaret is about to tell us something and we cannot argue. She had just the same look on her face when she insisted on giving up dancing lessons, when we were nine.

Aunt Shaw: Margaret, what's wrong?

Margaret: Nothing. But Edith is right. [She moves forward and sits down.] I'm so grateful to you, Aunt, for taking me in. But I've been back in London for a long time now. I am of age and I am of means.

[Henry watches her fondly.]

Margaret: Henry is helping me to understand my financial affairs and responsibilities. We are trying to help Frederick. We will probably not succeed, but it would have pleased Mother and Father that we are trying. It is time for me to take responsibility for my life.

Edith: You want to leave us? [objecting] Well, Sholto would cry so.

Margaret: No. But I would like to make my own decisions for my day-to-day life. I would like to keep to my room if I wish. I would like not to go to the Pipers if I wish. [Aunt Shaw starts to protest.] And I don't. I... can't stand them. I don't like London society. I learnt something when I went back to Helstone, expecting it to be the paradise I knew as a child. [shakes her head] Try as I might, happy as we were, we can't go back.

[Margaret looks at Henry, who smiles warmly back at her.]

[At the Thornton residence, Fanny enters the parlour where Mrs. Thornton and John Thornton are seated. Mrs. Thornton is facing Fanny, whereas John has his back to her.]

Fanny: [in a conceited tone] I told you. I was right and John was wrong. [strongly] For once you must admit I was right. If you'd invested in Watson's scheme, you'd have made thousands. Enough to get you out of trouble! [She looks at them determined.] Admit it. [She moves forward, haughtily] I will ask Watson if he will lend John some money, but he was very angry when John would not join him in the venture. And he says a gentleman must pay his own way!

[Fanny waits for either one to answer her, then looks irritated at their silence, goes to leave the room, but turns back.]

Fanny: And I think you can think again about Ann Latimer! I'm sure she won't have you now!

[Fanny leaves. John is looking half-down, staring into space. Mrs. Thornton is looking at John.]

John: [softly] You mustn't mind losing the house, Mother.

Mrs. Thornton: [emphatic] I don't mind about the house. [leaning forward to put her hand on John's arm] I care about you.

[John gives a half smile, then sighs slightly.]

John: Thank God Fanny's taken care of. [looking at Mrs. Thornton] It'll just be you and I again.

[Mrs. Thornton gives him a smile of encouragement.]

[Outside the Shaw's residence, a couple of carriages go past. Inside, Henry walks into the dining room where Margaret and Aunt Shaw are having breakfast.]

Henry: [lifting some papers in Margaret's direction] I have some excellent news.

Margaret: Really?

Henry: [putting the papers down beside Margaret's plate] You have made money.

Margaret: What, since yesterday? While I slept? [amused] How clever of me.

Henry: [sitting down and pouring himself a cup of tea] Money makes money.

Margaret: Well, I would rather earn it honestly and put it to good use.

Aunt Shaw: Margaret! You're sounding a little.... well, I hate to notice, but a little revolutionary.

Henry: [pouring more tea] Mr Bell was a shrewd fellow. He bought into a hundred to one investment with a chap named Watson.

Margaret: Watson? Fanny Thornton's husband?

Henry: The very one. Being hailed as a wonder boy. Probably a nine-days wonder, but nevertheless, Fanny's struck gold. Which is more than we can say for her brother.

Margaret: [looking down] Oh?

Henry: He wouldn't have anything to do with it. Far too principled. Might just be the last straw.

[Margaret looks back up at him.]

Henry: [smoothly] I'm afraid you'll soon be looking for a new tenant, Margaret.

[Margaret looks solemn and looks back down at her breakfast.]

[At Marlborough Mills, the looms are silent and still. John is standing amongst them, staring into space. He pictures Margaret standing there, as she had once before, with the cotton dust floating around her. He brings himself back to the present and starts walking. Tom Boucher is seated on one of the looms, reading a book out loud.]

Tom: [reading aloud] What a nice Christmas present it will be, said Charlotte. But I hope...

[John approaches Tom and smiles at him.]

John: Where's Higgins?

Tom: He's finishing off something. [Then carries on reading] Mr Arnott will... sometimes bring her cart into...

[John smiles at Tom, but grows serious as he pictures Margaret again, this time in the arms of the man at the train station. His thoughts are then interrupted.]

Higgins: I said, have you heard about Miss Margaret?

[John looks at Higgins as he approaches.]

John: Still here?

Higgins: Just because it's the last shift, Master, doesn't mean we shouldn't finish the job well.

John: [resigned] I am nobody's master anymore, Higgins.

Higgins: [half sitting on the loom beside Tom] If you're ever in a position to take on workers again, there's a fair number of us who'd be happy to run a mill for you.

[John looks at him with half a smile and a hint of gratitude.]

Higgins: I got up a petition to collect the names.

[John takes the petition and looks down at it in his hands.]

Higgins: Anyway, I was asking about Miss Margaret. Have you heard how she's doing?

John: [looking pensive] She's well. She's in London. We'll not see her again.

Higgins: I thought she might have gone to Spain.

John: [looking at Higgins] Spain? Why would she go there?

Higgins: Well, to see her brother, now that he's her only family.

John: [looking intently at Higgins] Her brother? She doesn't have a brother.

Higgins: Him that were over when their mother were dying. Kept it a secret, they did. [John is mesmerised by Higgins words] My Mary used to fetch things for them. She's a quiet girl, but she talks to me.

John: [puzzled] Why wouldn't Mr Hale tell me that he had a son?

Higgins: Something to do with the law. Found himself on the wrong side of the Navy. In real danger he was.

[John takes in this information, looking very thoughtful. His brow clears, as he looks heartened.]

John: [softly, amazed] He was her brother.

Higgins: [nodding] Well. Thornton.... I'll bid you good day.

[Higgins holds out his hand, John clasps it.]

John: Goodbye Higgins. Good luck.

[Higgins picks up Tom from the loom and walks away.]

[At the Shaw's residence, Margaret comes out onto the mezzanine hallway.]

Margaret: Henry? I wonder... would you help me?

[Henry joins Margaret there, standing in front of her.]

Margaret: I've decided I need to go to Milton and I'd like you to come with me.

Henry : [looking at her obligingly] Of course. Whatever I may do, I'm.. I'm at your service. Always.

[Edith is listening to their conversation from behind a door. She has Sholto in her arms. She smiles happily at Sholto.]

Edith : [barely audible] Yes, yes.

[The train is moving along the track. Margaret is gazing out of the window.]

[Margaret is walking slowly through the factory at Marlborough Mills, the looms off to one side. She pictures John Thornton, as he had once stood there looking down at the workers. Her thoughts back in

the present, Margaret continues to wander around. She looks down at the mill yard, now empty and still. Mrs Thornton's voice breaks into her thoughts. She turns to face Mrs. Thornton.]

Mrs. Thornton : [severely] He's not here, if you've come to crow over him. He's not here.

[Mrs. Thornton walks towards Margaret, her arms crossed.]

Mrs. Thornton: Come to look over your possessions, have you? And he's worked all his life for them.

Margaret : [gently] You once accused me of not knowing what kind of man I'd rejected. And you were right. [imploringly] But if you think I've come to triumph over him, that I don't feel keenly the misfortune of this empty place... then you don't know me at all.

Mrs. Thornton : [more calm, looking away] I don't know where he is. [Then she looks back at Margaret, her voice becoming stronger] And don't think I'm worried for myself. He'll see me right. He always has.

[Margaret moves forward slightly and puts her hand on Mrs. Thornton's arm. Mrs. Thornton looks away, shaking her head. Margaret lowers her arm.]

[John Thornton is walking through the grounds at Helstone. He walks past where Margaret had once lain on the grass. The house is in the background, as he gets to the hedgerow. He stops when he sees the flowers there, and picks a yellow rose. He looks at it intently, then brings it up to his nose, before lowering it as he stares into space.]

Episode 4 - Chapter 8

Chapter written by Thomas591 **(from Western USA)**

[A train station, people are hurrying past a stopped train. Henry and Margaret are visible in the windows of a compartment.]

Henry Lennox: There's a ten-minute stop here. Sorry for the delay, but we're halfway back to London. I think we have to wait for a northbound train to pass.

[Margaret gets up and opens the door to step out on the platform. A train whistle sounds, chugging noises. Margaret's eyes are following an approaching train in amazement. Mr. John Thornton has arrived at the station, but he is staring out of the window, oblivious of Margaret at this point. As the train completes its stop, Margaret draws nearer, still gazing in wonder at John. After a passenger disembarks, John is shutting the door to his compartment when he sees Margaret. He stands up never

breaking his gaze and gets off the train. Margaret looks hazily pleased, then blinks, and closes her mouth as he comes up to her.]

John Thornton: Where are you going?

Margaret Hale: To London. I...I've been to Milton. [uncertainly looking away]

John: [Breathes out an almost "Ah!" then smiles.] You'll not guess where I've been. [He looks into her eyes for a moment then pulls out a yellow hedge rose from his waistcoat pocket, and holds it out to her.]

Margaret: [She takes the flower.] To Helstone! [smiling] I thought those had all gone! [looks up]

John: I found it in the hedgerow. [smiles] You have to look hard. [Margaret looks down again.] Why were you in Milton?

Margaret: [She looks up at him, remembering.] On business. Well, that is, I have a business proposition. [She turns toward her train compartment.] Oh, dear. I need Henry to help me explain.

John: [Follows her and grasps her arm briefly to stop her.] You don't need Henry to explain. [In a very decided manner, he leads her to a bench.]

[Not so sure, Margaret looks toward Henry who is still sitting in the train watching them. John and Margaret sit down.]

Margaret: I have to get this right. [Her glance keeps dropping from his.] It's a business proposition. [swallowing and continuing swiftly] I have some fifteen thousand pounds. 'Tis lying in the bank at present, earning very little interest. [a nervous glimpse up to see him smiling indulgently as he listens and looks intently back] Now, my financial advisers tell me that if you were to take this money and use it to run Marlborough Mills, you could give me a very much better rate of interest. [Slowing down she looks up again breathing quickly. He is smiling into her eyes, and she drops her eyes again to her lap at her hands holding the rose.] So you see, it is only a business matter. You'd not be obliged to me in any way. It is you who would be doing ... [John's arm moves and he grasps Margaret's hand in her lap.] ...me the service. [Her voice fades off and she caresses John's hand. Suddenly she lifts it to her mouth to kiss it fervently.]

[John is visibly moved. He slowly puts his other hand to her face, gently persuading Margaret to raise her eyes to his. Slowly, tenderly, he begins to kiss her, softly at first. Then more firmly he holds her face to his. Henry looks on from the train.]

Conductor: London train about to depart. London train is about to depart.

[John and Margaret draw apart looking searchingly into each other's eyes. Margaret looks troubled. A whistle sounds as Margaret abruptly stands and walks quickly to her train. John gets up more slowly, watching her go with a resigned sigh and a wrinkled brow before he turns dejectedly away.]

Margaret: Henry, I...

Henry: [Standing at the compartment door, he hands Margaret her bag.] Goodbye, Margaret.

[Margaret takes her luggage, exchanging a long look with Henry. He looks grim, shuts the door and sits back down.]

[Margaret's reflection appears in the glass of the compartment John Thornton is standing in front of. He detects a movement behind and turns around. Seeing Margaret he smiles warmly at her.]

John: You're coming home with me? [Margaret answers with a glance. In a moment, Thornton followed her onto the train carrying her bag and shutting the coach door after himself. The train pulls out of the station, its whistle blowing. Countryside passes by the windows, but Margaret and John only see each other. Smiling softly they kiss, once, twice, and again, John's arm around Margaret. Dropping her head shyly, she turns to look out the window again, just as we saw her at the beginning of this story.]

THE END

NORTH & *South*