

THE LIFE AND CRIMES OF MARGARET CATCHPOLE

EPISODE 1 "Meet The Cobbolds"

WRITTEN BY ROBERT KELLY

(A fictionalised account of REAL HISTORICAL EVENTS and
PERSONS, based on the writings of RICHARD COBBOLD)

ipswichrockradio@yahoo.com
01473 745120

THE LIFE AND CRIMES OF MARGARET CATCHPOLE

FADE IN:

EXT. DENTONS FARMHOUSE AND COURTYARD - MID MORNING

1777. A rustic farmhouse fronted by a yard with a stable where a SUFFOLK PUNCH HORSE can be glimpsed. This is just outside Nacton Village in Suffolk. YOUNG MARGARET CATCHPOLE is milking a COW in the yard.

Young Margaret is 14, a farmhand with long dark hair and she is becoming a pretty young lady.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Nacton Village, Suffolk, 1777."

SUSAN CATCHPOLE calls from inside the farmhouse. She has a Suffolk accent and is about 12 years old.

SUSAN CATCHPOLE (O.S)
(screaming from indoors)
Help!! She is dead! She is dead!

Margaret abandons the cow and rushes towards the entrance.

QUICK FADE TO

INT. DENTONS FARMHOUSE - MID MORNING

Cluttered and run-down, with a rocking chair and rustic furniture. Susan Catchpole and AGNES DENTON are trying to rouse MRS DENTON who has collapsed and lays unconscious.

Mrs Denton, mid 50's, is a farmers wife.

Agnes, 15, is the frumpy daughter to Mrs Denton.

Both girls are in a state of panic (first aid is not known).

The front door opens and Young Margaret rushes indoors.

SUSAN CATCHPOLE
(distressed)
Lord help us - she is dying! Dying!!

AGNES DENTON
(to Mrs Denton)
Mother! Mother!! Speak to me??

SUSAN CATCHPOLE
She's dying Margaret, she's dying!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mrs Denton begins to THRASH ABOUT as though having a fit or seizure. All three girls watch fearfully, but these convulsions quickly pass and Mrs Denton remains unconscious.

YOUNG MARGARET

(To Susan)

Where is father and our brothers? What of the Cracknells?

SUSAN CATCHPOLE

Miles away, tending the herd!

AGNES DENTON

Why did she move like that? Is she possessed??

Agnes starts to WEEP and she hugs her mother, terrified.

SUSAN CATCHPOLE

(distraught)

What should we do, Margaret??

Young Margaret crouches to put her face near Mrs Denton's Face and observes her breathing - more calm than the others.

YOUNG MARGARET

Help me lift her up to her chair, get her up off this hard floor?

The girls pull Mrs Denton up and into the rocking-chair. Margaret uses a cushion to prop Mrs Denton's head sideways - unknowingly keeping her airways clear.

YOUNG MARGARET (CONT'D)

Don't let her tip, keep her steady...
Susan, go and fetch some water?

Susan rushes away out of sight. Agnes is still snivelling but tries to help Margaret position Mrs Denton more comfortably.

YOUNG MARGARET (CONT'D)

I'll ride to Ipswich for a Doctor. You must keep her comfortable while I'm gone! I'll be as quick as I can.

Agnes NODS dumbly, still upset. Young Margaret loosens Mrs Dentons clothing. Susan hastily returns, carrying a LADLE OF WATER which she is spilling as her hands TREMBLE.

The girls sprinkle water over Mrs Denton and try to put a few drips in her mouth, with limited success.

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CONTINUED:

Young Margaret heads to the exit, looking determined.

SUSAN CATCHPOLE

Margaret, for gods sake don't leave
us?! We don't know what to do?!

AGNES DENTON

And there is no saddle for the horse!

YOUNG MARGARET

I'll be back before you know it with
help! Keep her comfortable!!

FADE TO

EXT. FARMHOUSE AND COURTYARD - MID MORNING

The abandoned cow has wandered away to nibble some nearby
greenery, the bucket of milk has been kicked-over.

Young Margaret hastily exits the farmhouse and rushes to the
stable. She leads out the SUFFOLK PUNCH HORSE and mounts this
bareback and begins to trot briskly away.

FADE TO

EXT. NACTON SHORES - MID MORNING

A wide shallow river and sandy beaches, similar to as it is
today. A track runs along raised ground adjacent the river.

Young Margaret skilfully rides the horse along the path, at a
slow gallop (workhorses are not overly fast).

VISUAL EFFECT - The action goes into SLOW MOTION and the
colours become SEPIA in tone.

FADE TO

EXT. FURTHER NACTON SHORES - MID MORNING

NOTE: This doubles as the opening credits sequence. The
Visual effect continues in slow motion.

There is a beached WOODEN SAILING SHIP, with several CRATES
AND BARRELS on the beach nearby. A VIOLENT GUN BATTLE between
SMUGGLERS from the ship and CUSTOMS MEN is underway.

The several SMUGGLERS are typical seafaring men, armed with
pistols and muskets. They use the crates and barrels for
cover as they RETURN FIRE.

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CONTINUED:

The few CUSTOMS MEN do not have official uniforms in this period but are all similarly dressed and armed with muskets. They are crouching behind the the bank exchanging fire.

Aiding the Customs Men are a few DRAGOONS, in uniforms of the era and armed with pistols and swords. They are clearly better trained then their Customs allies and less panicked.

Young Margaret is riding her borrowed horse along the path which runs past the battle. She takes little notice as bullets whizz past and guns flash.

She continues to gallop past on her mount as Margaret's Adult Voice-Over begins to narrate.

MARGARET CATCHPOLE as an adult is only heard in this scene, she has a Suffolk accent and is about 22.

MARGARET (V.O)
(voice as an ADULT)

My name is Margaret Catchpole. This is the true story of my life and loves, of crimes I committed for good reason. And how I would become the talk of 'old Ipswich town' - not once but thrice over, where I am still much remembered today.

VISUAL EFFECT : FREEZE FRAME IMAGES - of Young Margaret riding, of Smugglers firing, of Customs Officials firing, of barrel being riddled with shot, of the fighters getting injured.

FADE IN CREDITS AND THEME as the visual image continues.

As the credits conclude and fade Young Margaret gallops away and visuals return to normal.

FADE TO

BLACK SCREEN

The following text fades in :

SUPERIMPOSE : "FIVE YEARS LATER. CLIFF HOUSE, IPSWICH 1782"

FADE TO

INT. CLIFF HOUSE HALLWAY - MIDDAY

An Entrance Hall (not servants entrance), some nicer quality

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

furnishings of the era - the residents are 'new money'.

MRS ELIZABETH COBBOLD approaches the front door. She is a handsome woman, late 20's, dressed in elegant clothing. She usually speaks in a forced upper-class manner that can slip.

Mrs Cobbold OPENS THE DOOR and steps back as momentarily blinded by GLARING SUNLIGHT - there is a caller.

PAN TO the caller - this is MARGARET CATCHPOLE, fading into view after the initial glare from the sun fades.

Margaret, early 20's, is dressed in working-class ladies attire including bonnet and shawl. Her dark hair is pinned up under her hat and she has blossomed into womanhood.

MARGARET

(Curtsy)

Good afternoon Ma'am, my name is
Margaret Catchpole. I believe you are
expecting me?

QUICK FADE TO

EXT. CLIFF HOUSE - MIDDAY

A Georgian House with large windows and an wide courtyard. A servants entrance and a brewery extension is to the rear and in the distance is the River Gipping and a few sailing ships.

NOTE: Cliff House today includes Victorian extensions and is much bigger than it was here.

Margaret is at the front door and Mrs Cobbold is in the doorway indoors and seems slightly surprised.

MRS COBBOLD

Why yes Margaret? You were not
expected at the front door though?
(pause)

I am Mrs Elizabeth Cobbold, mistress
of Cliff House. You are here about the
position I assume?

MARGARET

(nodding)

Yes indeed I am.

MRS COBBOLD

Well... I have received your
references from Doctor Stebbing, a
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS COBBOLD (CONT'D)
 mutual friend who holds you in the
 highest regard.

As Margaret and Mrs Cobbold converse ROBIN COULSON aka 'OLD ROB' approaches from the direction of the river.

Coulson, 60, has spindly legs, a bushy beard and a weather-beaten wrinkled face. His clothing has been re-patched many times and he is carrying a basket of fish.

MRS COBBOLD (CONT'D)
 Well as you are here, might I ask you
 a few questions directly? Dr Stebbing
 wasn't entirely clear about one or two
 small points?

MARGARET
 Certainly ma'am - please do?

MRS COBBOLD
 Am I right in thinking you were
 formerly in the service of the
 'Leaders' in Brandeston?

MARGARET
 Yes, I was with the Leaders for nearly
 three years. Before that I worked as a
 servant at Priory Farm for Mr Wake.
 Before that I worked on Dentons Farm
 at Nacton. So really I can do anything
 - from cow house to nursery!

MRS COBBOLD
 (slightly amused)
 I understand you were mainly the
 Leaders housekeeper? That they had no
 other servants?

MARGARET
 Yes ma'am, and I helped with their
 children too. In truth I still miss
 the children, but fate has brought me
 to seek employment here in Ipswich.

COULSON
 (arriving, swaggering)
 Ho there, Mrs Elizabeth!!

Margaret and Mrs Cobbold turn to see Old Coulson. Both recognise him but Margaret now becomes worried.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS COBBOLD

Please excuse me a moment, Margaret? I
need a quick word with this gentlemen.

(to Coulson)

Good Afternoon Master Coulson. What
have you brought me today?

COULSON

Fresh mackerel and sole, milady.

Mackerel and sole...

(noticing Margaret)

Well well - if it ain't young Peg from
Nacton?

MRS COBBOLD

Miss Catchpole is seeking a position
within my household, Robin.

COULSON

(to Margaret)

Well Peg, it's been many a moon since
I last saw you, have your old friends
from Nacton been up to their tricks of
late?

MARGARET

(stammering)

I...I don't know what you mean, sir?

COULSON

Sir? Sir? Too proud to chat plainly
with an old friend are ye?

Old Rob Coulson SPITS on the ground.

MRS COBBOLD

You are already acquainted with Rob?
There is some issue between you?

Margaret looks worried.

MARGARET

Yes ma'am, we're acquainted - although
its been a few years since we last
met. There is no problem though?!

COULSON

Oh - I see now, its about the job?

MRS COBBOLD

Rob, you are aquainted with Miss
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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MRS COBBOLD (CONT'D)
Catchpole?

COULSON
Aye! I've known Peg and her kin for
many a year now...

MRS COBBOLD
Are they of good character?

COULSON
The Catchpoles are a hardy lot...
Suppose they'd all have to be.

MRS COBBOLD
A rough lot would you say then?

COULSON
I mean 'hard workers'... Peggy I know
to be a good girl Mrs Elizabeth, aye -
and clever too. More than most.

Margaret seems relieved.

MRS COBBOLD
You would recommend this young lady to
my service then, would you?

COULSON
Aye, that much I would. And gladly.

MRS COBBOLD
(Thinking aloud for a moment)
The Catchpoles... Nacton...?
(to Margaret)
You wouldn't be the same girl who once
saved her employer by riding a horse
bareback from Nacton to Ipswich to
fetch a doctor?

MARGARET
Yes madam, that was me. Though it was
many years ago now.

COULSON
Aye - that's our Peg! Always on a
horse, whenever she can be.

MARGARET
When I was six I used to ride plough
horses home every evening. And I've
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET (CONT'D)
rode horses ever since.

MRS COBBOLD
Well... That makes you something of a local celebrity then Margaret? Your reference from Doctor Stebbing is very positive and Rob here, who I trust implicitly, speaks highly of you. So Margaret... Welcome to my household!

MARGARET
(happy, curtsying)
Oh, thank you madam!

FADE TO

EXT. THE SPREAD EAGLE TAVERN - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A Tudor-era tavern with oak beams and lattice windows. It is located on the corner of Eagle Street and Fore Street, in the vicinity of the docks and Christchurch Mansion. There is a rear courtyard and small stables accessible from Eagle Street. Candle lights and lamps flicker inside.

NOTE: The tavern exists today and is largely unchanged.

FADE TO

INT. THE SPREAD EAGLE TAVERN - NIGHT

Inside are wooden beams and lattice windows. The main bar area is in an L-shaped room with the bar to the left of the front entrance. Opposite the bar is a door that leads down to the cellar and a network of SMUGGLING TUNNELS.

NOTE: The tunnels are still here today also.

A few DRUNKARDS are gulping down the last of their drinks and starting to leave. These are working-class persons who live locally. Coulson is among them.

MRS PEACOCK is collecting tankards, she is the landlady, about 50 and has grey hair.

JOHN LUUFF is seated alone at a table, finishing a pint of ale. Luff is about 30, dark and broad. He has a thick stubble and scruffy clothes, he is a professional smuggler.

MR PEACOCK the landlord is behind the bar, encouraging the Drunkards to leave. Peacock is about 55 and he tries to dress

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flamboyantly but has financial limitations.

COULSON
(drunk)
Night Peacock! Sleep tight, if that
wife o' yours will let ye!

Coulson and the Drunkards exit the tavern, swaying.

Mrs Peacock exits to the rear carrying a tray of empty tankards as the last few Drunkards leave.

Mr Peacock notices Luff is not moving from his seat and approaches him questioningly.

PEACOCK
All done are we sir? Its well past our
closing time...

Peacock reaches for Luffs tankard, but Luff GRABS his wrist and pulls him closer.

LUFF
I am surprised at how large and well stocked your cellar must be? You do a roaring trade but only have a monthly delivery? Strange that...?

PEACOCK
(nervously - trying to pull away)
Are you an Excise Man or something?

LUFF
(very amused)
No, I am not an Excise Man! I am what you might call 'an entrepreneur'. A simple working man looking to find his way in this unjust world.

Luff releases Peacock, who retrieves the tankard and steps gratefully away.

PEACOCK
Find his way? Whatever do you mean sir?

Luff calmly pulls out and places his PISTOL onto the table.

LUFF
Let me put it plainly : I want to know all that you can tell me about the new
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUFF (CONT'D)
 owner of this fine establishment. Your
 master - Mr John Cobbold.

Peacock swallows heavily and looks worried.

FADE TO

INT. COBBOLDS STUDY, CLIFF HOUSE - DAY

Typical of the era, the room is dominated by a large writing-desk and is rather cluttered. JOHN COBBOLD is writing letters with a quill and ink.

Mr Cobbold, 55, is smartly dressed and rather portly.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

MR COBBOLD
 Come?

GEORGE MARSH the Butler enters the room, leaving the door open behind him. Marsh is mid 50's, rotund, waddling as he walks. He has an air of self-importance and deep voice.

MARSH
 Excuse me Mr Cobbold Sir?

MR COBBOLD
 Yes - what is it George?

Mr Cobbold stops writing and gives Marsh his full attention.

MARSH
 Mrs Hogger was enquiring about dinner this evening, which I understand is depending on The Farrell's visit? I was thinking of suggesting perhaps the chicken option?

MR COBBOLD
 Ah - very good George. The Farrells have rescheduled. The chicken will suffice, it will be only us again.

Margaret wanders into the room with a duster, she pauses and looks questioningly at Marsh and Cobbold. Margaret is now dressed in clothes more akin to a servant.

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MARSH
 (slightly annoyed at Margaret)
 Oh... This is the new maid and nursery
 assistant, Miss Margaret Catchpole.

Margaret CURTSIES politely to Mr Cobbold.

MARGARET
 Pleased to meet you sir.

MARSH
 (to Margaret)
 This is your employer Margaret - Mr
 John Cobbold.

Cobbold grunts and waves Margaret away dismissively.

MARSH (CONT'D)
 (Firmly)
 Now go about your duties Margaret. You
 should not be in here while the master
 is working.

MARGARET
 Yes Mr Marsh sir!

Margaret curtsies again to all present and then obediently exits. Marsh rolls his eyes in disdain - already finding Margaret difficult to work with.

FADE TO

EXT. CUSTOM HOUSE, IPSWICH DOCKS - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Custom House is at Ipswich Docks, typical docks of the era, with jetties, sailing ships, boats and numerous warehouses. DOCK WORKERS are loading and unloading goods.

NOTE: Ipswich Docks are different to those of pre 1800, much was built mid 19th Century with new modern flats added since.

Customs House is the ORIGINAL CUSTOMS BUILDING on the same site as the rebuilt version from around 1840. This is timber-framed, somewhat sprawling and in very poor repair.

FADE TO

INT. CUSTOMS OFFICE, CUSTOMS HOUSE - DAY

The main Office is the biggest of several in Customs House, although all are in need of renovation. This office is

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

cluttered with files and paperwork. Seated is EDMUND ELLIS.

Ellis, 60, is the head of Customs for Ipswich. He is smartly dressed, he is wrinkled with whitening hair.

There is a KNOCK and the office door opens.

SNODGRASS enters, followed by ROBERT BLISS.

Snodgrass is a junior Customs officer, about 30. His attire plain and simple and worn-looking.

Bliss is about 50, overweight and balding. His attire reflects he too is a senior Customs officer but much more wealthy and successful than Mr Ellis.

SNODGRASS
(to Bliss)
Just through here sir...

ELLIS
(looking up from paperwork)
Ah Mr Bliss, we meet at last!

Ellis rises and SHAKE HANDS with Bliss. Snodgrass bows and quietly exits, closing the door.

BLISS
Mr Ellis! It is indeed good to put a name to a face at last. Please, call me Robert?

ELLIS
And please call me Edmund. I am delighted you have accepted our invitation, I understand you are a very busy man these days?

Ellis gestures to Bliss to be seated, so Bliss sits.

BLISS
We're all 'run ragged' I fear... But any assistance or advice I can offer, I am more than happy to oblige.

ELLIS
Quite frankly we need all the help we can get! Illicit trade is spiralling out of control in Suffolk, particularly in recent months.

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CONTINUED:

BLISS

I fear this is a national issue, not limited to the East of England.

ELLIS

Perhaps? Though we have certainly hit something of a peak...

BLISS

I hope my previous suggestions have been helpful?

ELLIS

Yes - very. Exchanging and sharing information with other enforcement agencies is proving to be a goldmine!

BLISS

In my experience criminals have little regard for borders or jurisdictions. Pooling of information seems a very logical step?

ELLIS

Yes I agree - and I am keen to hear about your latest ideas? It seems that every week there is news about another huge seizure north of the border. We are becoming quite envious of you, Mr Bliss!

Bliss smiles politely.

BLISS

That is very kind of you to say, but I am merely a figurehead really. My men are very diligent and committed...

ELLIS

Come now Bliss, no need for modesty here? What is your secret?!

BLISS

I'd say careful co-ordination and good communication is key. As with anything though - luck is always a factor.

ELLIS

Luck?! Well it seems you have had much greater luck than that of your predecessor?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLISS

He did things his way, but when I took over I was keen to modernise and streamline our methods - not cling to outdated traditions that the criminal element knows only too well.

ELLIS

My own predecessor, William Clarke, would have struggled to keep up with this latest wave of smuggling that plagues our beleaguered county - things are getting wilder each month!

BLISS

Old Billy Clarke? I had some dealings with him in my youth, he seemed a very meticulous and dedicated man?

ELLIS

Yes, yes he was... Very efficient, even-handed... And he liked a drink.

BLISS

I spent a few evenings with him once, but couldn't keep up! I heard he got married recently after his retirement?

ELLIS

(amused)

Yes indeed, to an actress less than half his age!

BLISS

Really? Well good for him! Hopefully he is still enjoying a long happy retirement?

ELLIS

Unfortunately he 'passed on' a couple of years ago now...

BLISS

Oh? Pity... Well, returning to the matter at hand... What do you think of my proposal about joint operations between Norfolk and Suffolk?

ELLIS

I think that is a fine suggestion, with much merit! An excellent notion!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLISS

Then with your consent I'd like to arrange a meeting with the heads of all local law enforcement - Preventative Offices, Dragoon Captains, Coastal Riding Officers?

ELLIS

Yes, that I can easily arrange. I look forward to working with you, Mr Bliss!

FADE TO

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM AT CLIFF HOUSE - MORNING

This room has a crude sink and tubs for soaking and scrubbing laundry and a large clothes press. ALICE COLLINS and Margaret are working on the laundry together.

Alice is a dark-haired, frumpy maid. She tends to speak rather coldly to Margaret.

ALICE

(stirring washing)

Yes Margaret, the Cobbolds are a family on the make - or that's what Mr Marsh always tells us. Their main fortune was made by the late father of Master Cobbold.

MARGARET

(scrubbing with washboard)

How did the Cobbolds gain such wealth in just one generation?

ALICE

It was something to do with exporting spring water from Holywells - just up the road from here.

MARGARET

I didn't know Ipswich was known for its spring water?

ALICE

It was being imported to Harwich - that little fishing town on the coast.

MARGARET

Why Harwich?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

Er... I'm not sure. The local water
there is brackish, or some such like?

MARGARET

Oh? I've never been there.

ALICE

The Cobbolds built-up a thriving
delivery business, sending barrel
after barrel of water over there.

MARGARET

And let me guess, the 'empty barrels'
coming back from the coast were not
always quite so empty?

ALICE

(slightly shocked)

Oh?! Well... I wouldn't know about
such things?

MARGARET

Well that's very interesting, thank
you Alice... I'm glad to know a bit
more about those I'm working for?

There is the distant GONG OF A CLOCK striking half past.

ALICE

We'd better get a move on! No time for
idle gossip!!

Alice begins working faster, worried about falling behind.

FADE TO

EXT. RIVER GIPPING - MORNING

A typical stretch of river with a distant windmill. TWO
SAILING VESSELS are present, the first a ramshackle vessel
more akin to a 'Chinese Junk' which is being steered by Rob
Coulson towards the second vessel. The second is more usual,
on the deck are crates covered by cloth. This vessel is stuck
in shallows and JOHN LEGGETT is trying to free his ship.

John Leggett, 25, is a courier by trade (like a postman) and
dressed accordingly. He has an Essex accent.

Soon Coulsons 'junk' vessel pulls alongside Leggetts.

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CONTINUED:

COULSON
(calling)
'Ello sir, can I lend you a hand?

JOHN LEGGETT
No, I'm fine thank you.

COULSON
Ah - stuff and nonsense! Us boat-folk
need to help one another!

Speedily for an older man, Coulson throws a rope around part of Leggetts ship and he jumps onboard without permission.

COULSON (CONT'D)
(gazing around the ship)
I've seen many a good sailor struggle
with the undercurrent here. Never fret
sir - I'll have you free in a jiffy!

Leggett looks suspiciously at Coulson, who grabs a boat hook and begins pushing at the riverbed like a punt.

COULSON (CONT'D)
(while using boat-hook)
I know these rivers like the backs of
me own hands. Coulson is the name sir,
Rob Coulson. I take it you're not
local then?

JOHN LEGGETT
No, I'm... I'm just visiting relatives
over at Woodbridge.

COULSON
Woodbridge? Nice place but getting a
bit too crowded for my taste... Who
are your relatives sir, I might know
them?

JOHN LEGGETT
Smith.

COULSON
Smith eh? Not old George and Annette
Smith - the pig farmers? Out by the
old Ramsey place?

JOHN LEGGETT
No... They're not farmers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COULSON

Oh well, maybe I'm getting muddled in
my old age?

With another SHOVE Coulson has freed the small ship, which now begins to drift along. His own 'junk' ship is toed.

COULSON (CONT'D)

There you go!! That's done it! Free to go about your business at last.

JOHN LEGGETT

Thanks for your help.

COULSON

(glancing at the crates)

That's a heavy load you have sir? No wonder you've had troubles! A little boat like this isn't ideal for transporting goods, especially when the tide is turning. Its lucky I found you sir, I'm bound Woodbridge-way myself and can escort you if you'd like?

JOHN LEGGETT

Thank you again, but that won't be necessary.

Old Coulson moves to return to his ship, but deliberately stumbles and "accidently" pulls back the cover of a crate as he scrambles up. The crates are full of BOTTLES.

COULSON

(jovial)

Oh sir silly me!. Oh - is that a bottle or two I see?!

Leggett looks worried and reaches for a concealed knife.

COULSON (CONT'D)

Oh fret not young sir, I do not stick my nose in another mans business. Not old Rob! Have no worries there!

Coulson grins and climbs back aboard his boat.

COULSON (CONT'D)

I'm no squealer - rest assured that I've seen nothing sir...

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CONTINUED:

Coulson unties his boat and begins to move away.

COULSON (CONT'D)

Just last week there was another young gent travelling these waters, much like yourself... A bad end for him though, it was the very day of the Excise men's patrol!

JOHN LEGGETT

Oh? The Excise Men?

COULSON

They spotted him for a stranger straight away, searched his little boat and now he's a-languishing in Ipswich Gaol with talk of hanging!

JOHN LEGGETT

Hanging?!

COULSON

Our local judges take a dim view of illicit activities... But don't you worry sir, don't you worry... There will be no Excise Men about today.

Coulson continues calling as he finds a hidden weapon.

COULSON (CONT'D)

A few bottles for the Smiths as a one off need not cause a problem for no-one... Just as long as this won't become a regular thing?

Coulson's demeanour grows colder as he pulls out A MUSKET.

COULSON (CONT'D)

(more threatening)

It won't become a regular thing, will it Young Sir?

Coulson cocks the hammer of the gun.

FADE TO

INT. CHILDRENS NURSERY, CLIFF HOUSE - MORNING

An old-fashioned schoolroom crammed with small desks - suggesting that the Cobbolds need larger accommodation.

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CONTINUED:

SOPHIA PETTIT is placing-out chalk and slates onto the desks.

Sophia is tutor of the Cobbold children. She is about 25 has a dark complexion, possibly of Italian or Spanish descent.

Alice leads Margaret into the room.

ALICE

This is 'Miss Sophia'. Er... Miss Sophia Pettit.

MARGARET

Hello, pleased to meet you.

MISS SOPHIA

And you must be Margaret, the new girl? Everyone here tends to call me 'Miss Sophia' - a habit picked up from the children. You may do the same if you so wish?

MARGARET

Thank you... Miss Sophia.

MISS SOPHIA

Have you met the Children yet?

MARGARET

A few - yes. But there seems to be so many of them?!

MISS SOPHIA

Don't worry, we won't be teaching all fourteen, just eight - the youngest are too young for lessons. You are just to assist and provide occasional cover as and when required.

MARGARET

I am not to have the run of the classroom then? Choose the topics of the lessons?

MISS SOPHIA

Oh no-no-no! I set the curriculum - which is agreed well in advance with Mrs Cobbold. Your role is to assist me and act as a second pair of hands.

MARGARET

Oh, I see?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS SOPHIA

How is your painting and drawing? And music? Most of the children have quite a talent for art, which I encourage.

MARGARET

My art is a little under-developed in all truth.... I've no such talent really. Or with music either.

MISS SOPHIA

Mrs Cobbold tells me that you have experience with younger children?

MARGARET

Yes, with the 'Leaders' children. I used to take them on nature trails and teach them names of trees and plants. We'd usually play games outside when it was hotter, like today.

MISS SOPHIA

We tend to have a more formal approach here, Margaret - reading, writing and arithmetic in the main.

MARGARET

In the winter we'd stay indoors more, the girls would practice their needlework and the boys would compete with drawing. I've always found it's good to have a little 'fun' to help the young 'uns with their learning, or they get bored and misbehave!

MISS SOPHIA

Well that's something I'll bear in mind? Lessons start promptly at nine o'clock every weekday, apart from Christmas and New Years day. I like to arrange the classroom a good thirty minutes before we start. Perhaps you can be here to assist with setting things up from now on?

Margaret nods her head.

MISS SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Speaking of which - would you mind helping me set those books out on the tables? And I can go over a few things

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS SOPHIA (CONT'D)
about today's lesson?

FADE TO

EXT. WAREHOUSE, IPSWICH DOCKS - AFTERNOON

The Docks are as seen before, with the Customs House building in the background. The Warehouse is among others and is busy, several DOCK WORKERS are moving items of cargo inside from carts and sack-barrows. A few WAREHOUSE GUARDS are loitering, directing the workers. They are better dressed and brawny.

Luff stands nearby, watching from a neighbouring building. Unknown to him PETER CATTERMOLE and a WAREHOUSE GUARD have nipped around to approach him unseen from behind.

Cattermole, 40, is tall with an unkempt mane of curly hair. He has a pistol in his belt that he doesn't try to conceal.

The Warehouse Guard has a scraggily beard and scarred face. He has a battered cludgel tucked in his belt.

CATTERMOLE
(to Luff)
Can I help you?

Luff spins around, startled.

LUFF
No - I am good, thanks!

Cattermole and the Warehouse Guard exchange annoyed glances at this flippant response.

CATTERMOLE
(to Luff)
Might I ask what you are doing here?
My man tells me you have been hanging around watching us all day?

WAREHOUSE GUARD
(to Cattermole)
That's right - seen 'im skulking 'ere
since about ten!

LUFF
It's a free country? I enjoy the
hustle and bustle of life here at the
docks. And for your information I was
here much of yesterday too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATTERMOLE

It's not free actually, everything has a price-tag - especially these days. If they could do it we'd be paying duty on the very air we breathe!

(pause)

Perhaps you wouldn't mind moving along? My lads don't like to be stared at - makes em feel uncomfortable.

WAREHOUSE GUARD

(menacingly)

Yeah. Too right it does!

The Warehouse Guard moves closer to Luff, menacingly. Luff remains cool and unconcerned.

LUFF

You know - there's a funny thing I've noticed? There's an almost constant flow of deliveries in, but very few goods moving out? And yet this warehouse never seems to be full? Strange that?

Cattermole sighs and reaches for his pistol. The Warehouse Guard is about to grab Luff then stops as he recognises him.

WAREHOUSE GUARD

Hold on - you're one of Bargoods men, aren't you? What are you snooping around here for then?

CATTERMOLE

One of Bargoods?

(chuckles)

We thought for a moment you were with those Customs idiots just up the road?

LUFF

Yeah - I work for Bargood, the name is Luff. I've made deliveries here plenty of times myself over the years.

The Guard and Cattermole relax and step away.

LUFF (CONT'D)

I don't think you need worry about your neighbours either - they wouldn't be able to detect anything if you served it up to them on a silver dish!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAREHOUSE GUARD
(chuckling)
Yeah, you're not wrong mate. Talk
about being right under their noses?!

Luff turns to leave but is stopped by Cattermole.

CATTERMOLE
Just a moment - you didn't say what
you were doing here? Or why??

LUFF
Just catching some fresh air, there's
nothing like the smell of rotten fish
in the mornings...

Luff pulls free and walks away whistling, leaving the Guard
and Cattermole exchanging confused glances.

FADE TO

INT. CHILDRENS NURSERY, CLIFF HOUSE - DAY

Miss Sophia and Margaret are conducting a class. There are 8 x CHILDREN present, aged between 15 and 5 in age order with oldest first: MASTER JOHN, WILLIAM, RICHARD, HARRIET, SOPHIA, THOMAS, SALLY, and HENRY. The children resemble Mr Cobbold in appearance only (not Mrs Cobbold - the stepmother).

The younger children are SINGING their A - B - C's in the style of 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' led by Miss Sophia.

The older children instead of singing are engrossed in mathematical work and puzzles.

YOUNGER CHILDREN
(Singing together)
A-B-C-D-E-F-G...

Now I know my A-B-C...

After a few moments Margaret joins-in singing.

MARGARET AND YOUNGER CHILDREN
(Singing together)
H-I-J-K-LMNOPQ-R-ST-U-V...

Sophia raises her hand and the song abruptly STOPS.

All children seem surprised at this interruption.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET
(to Sophia)
Oh sorry, I thought I was supposed to join in?

MISS SOPHIA
(surprised)
You know the alphabet Margaret?

MARGARET
Of course I do, yes. And I can read and write a fair bit as well.

MISS SOPHIA
Sorry but I was under the impression that you were uneducated?

MARGARET
Oh I haven't had what you might call 'proper lessons', I learned from the tutors we had for the children in my previous job. I was learning as they were learning, you might say.

MISS SOPHIA
(calling to youngest child)
Master Henry - I saw that! Stop annoying your sister.
(To Margaret)
Sorry Margaret, you were saying?

MARGARET
It seemed a chance to learn a new skill so I took it. I think it's always good to try and improve oneself... Reading and writing is very useful, and not everyone can do it.

MISS SOPHIA
I couldn't agree more Margaret.
(to class)
I hope you all heard and will take note of that too, children?

ALL COBBOLD CHILDREN
(chanting obediently)
Yes Miss Sophia.

FADE TO

EXT. CUSTOMS HOUSE, IPSWICH DOCKS - DAY - ESTABLISHING

It is now raining slightly.

FADE TO

INT. CUSTOMS OFFICE, CUSTOMS HOUSE - DAY

The office has been made into a meeting room, a large table and chairs added. Snodgrass, Bliss, Ellis are present plus OFFICER TOBIAS BLOOMFIELD, OFFICER OLIVER THIRKETTLE and RIDING OFFICER EDWARD BARRY.

Bloomfield 40, is chunky and bald aside from dark brown hair around his ears. He is a Preventative Officer and habitually BLINKS as he speaks. (Preventative Officers have no uniform).

Thirkettle is a captain of The Dragoons and is dressed in his military uniform. He is tall, about 40, balding with piercing blue eyes. He speaks in a cultured upper-class manner.

Mr Barry, mid 20's and has ferrety features. He is a 'Riding Officer' so the poorest person present.

BLISS

(angry, to all)

So you are effectively telling me they are just too big for us to deal with?
Even with the additional resource I can bring from Norfolk?

THIRKETTLE

If you are suggesting 'open confrontation' then yes? Even with additional men from Norfolk and Essex we would be out-numbered and out-gunned. It's too great a risk!

BLOOMFIELD

(to Bliss)

Captain Thirkettle is quite correct. All we can do and what we have been doing - is monitor them and their activities, for the time-being.

BLISS

Why not then simply arrest their leaders? You say you know who this is, this 'John Harvey' and where he resides? Surely there is ample evidence against him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLIS

That did happen actually - a couple of years ago.

BLISS

And?

ELLIS

Let's just say that Mr Harvey didn't stay under arrest for very long, he has some very influential friends.

THIRKETTLE

And an arrest prior to that I remember, which also failed.

BARRY

Quite miserably, from what I remember?!

ELLIS

I was forgetting about that debacle?

THIRKETTLE

Both times the trial collapsed, with rumours of the jury taking bribes...

BLISS

Well gentleman I believe I may have the strategy needed that can yield positive results and weaken this 'Hadleigh Gang' of yours.

SNODGRASS

You do sir?

BLISS

We should focus our efforts on their supplies and storerooms. Let them run all the risks importing and transporting the goods, then simply raid them. Surely you must have a good idea where these supplies end up?

ELLIS

We do for the most part, but their stores are well guarded, according to our sources.

BLISS

And the storerooms of their customers

-

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLISS (CONT'D)
are these guarded too?

ELLIS
I wouldn't have thought so - these would just be local taverns and merchants for the most part? We have good intelligence on their regular customers too, I might add.

BLISS
Excellent - then we can organise a large operation to target the buyers exclusively. Raids to seize any illicit wares - if they have no proof of duty paid we take the lot!

THIRKETTLE
Ah - I see where you're going with this then Mr Bliss?

BLISS
If we can't hurt the supplier we can cripple the buyers - and exceed our quota for seized contraband with ease and safety.

BLOOMFIELD
Interesting? Very interesting...

ELLIS
And the gang would indirectly suffer too - when their main buyers go out of business, and their customers in gaol?

BLISS
Exactly!

All present nod and murmur their approval.

FADE TO

INT. KITCHEN AT CLIFF HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A typical kitchen for any larger family house. Margaret is washing numerous dishes in the sink. Alice stands nearby and is drying dishes with a towel, conversing as they work. Unseen Mr Marsh is in an adjoining room - eavesdropping.

ALICE
Oh go on, you can tell me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET

I prefer to keep my business to myself
Alice, I don't feel the need to go on
about it?

ALICE

But this 'William Laud' you mentioned,
he sounds so interesting?

MARGARET

It that was all years ago... I've been
alone since, scarcely even seeing my
relatives back in Nacton for years.

ALICE

But that night under the old Willow
tree at Nacton shores... Its sounds so
romantic?! And he was a smuggler?

MARGARET

Well - a "merchant adventurer", but he
was master of a trade ship, yes.

(pause)

Although he just worked for the
owner... Er...By the name of 'Captain
Bargood' - I think it was?

ALICE

Well it still sounds romantic?

MARGARET

Never involve yourself with a sailor,
that's my advice Alice! Not unless you
like a lot of time alone?

ALICE

Perhaps he might come back one day?

MARGARET

No - I've come to believe that that
William Laud is long since dead.

Alice GASPS and drops a plate which SMASHES.

MARSH (O.S)

(calling, annoyed)

Alice you clot?! That better not be
another plate of Mrs Cobbolds fine
china?!

FADE TO

INT. THE SPREAD EAGLE TAVERN - EVENING

Mr Peacock is collecting empty tankards. Mrs Peacock is behind the bar, pouring drinks. Several SMUGGLERS are present, boisterous and jolly. A few HARLOTS are present, some sit on the laps of the smugglers and behave in a flirtatious manner. These are older ladies who have squeezed into revealing dresses and plastered makeup over themselves.

SMUGGLER #1 is standing at the bar, swigging ale. He is slender and wiry with a weather-beaten face.

SMUGGLER #2 is at a table molesting a harlot, who does not object to wandering hands. He is about 50 with a bushy beard.

Seated beside Smuggler #2 is Luff. He has vomited down himself and is face-down on the table in a drunken slumber.

The main door opens and CAPTAIN BARGOOD enters.

Bargood, mid 50's is a former sea captain, he still has a nautical look to his attire and a strong Norfolk accent.

The tavern CHATTER quickly fades and all turn to look questioningly at Bargood.

SMUGGLER #1
It's the Captain!

SMUGGLER #2
(to a harlot)
Captain Bargood is here!?

Luff awakens from his drunken slumber and gazes around.

PEACOCK
Captain Bargood - welcome sir! What brings you here?

BARGOOD
Mr Peacock - I need a quick word with the men for a minute or two?

Peacock nods, puts down his tankards and rushes to lock the door behind Bargood to ensure no-one else enters.

BARGOOD (CONT'D)
(to all present)
Sorry to interrupt your festivities lads, but I'm afraid I have a bit of bad news...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARGOOD (CONT'D)
 (to Harlots)
 Ladies - can you give us the room for
 a minute or two?

The Harlots obediently leave the room along with Mr and Mrs Peacock, all moving to the rear of the tavern out of sight.

BARGOOD (CONT'D)
 Some of you may have heard already,
 but there's a new Customs Man in town,
 by the name of Robert Bliss.

SMUGGLER #1
 I heard of him Captain. Thought he was
 normally up Norfolk way?

SMUGGLER #2
 Yeah - I heard of him too, a real
 nightmare for those in 'the trade'?

BARGOOD
 He is now here in Suffolk,
 reorganising the locals and upsetting
 the status quo.

A few smugglers grumble and mutter curses at this news.

LUFF
 (to self, slurred)
 No news is ever good news?

BARGOOD
 Bliss - an ironic name - seems intent
 on plundering our hard-earned loot and
 causing us problems. For those that
 don't know him, Robert Bliss is known
 as 'the most hated man in Norfolk'.

SMUGGLER #2
 Aye! Too right. A real bastard!

BARGOOD
 He has ruined the livelihoods of many
 desperate families with no other means
 of income and put many of our brethren
 behind bars, or worse.

SMUGGLER #1
 He must have run out of people to
 upset north of the border then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARGOOD

You men are out at sea tomorrow, so you will need to watch your backs! I hear additional customs cutters have been redirected to these parts also.

SMUGGLER #1

(whispers to self)

Oh god! Really? How'd he do that??

BARGOOD

I have however already arranged an alternate route and timetable for your captain, but Bliss is a cunning devil with informants everywhere.

SMUGGLER #1

Aye - a silver-tongued devil of a man!

SMUGGLER #2

He turns brother against brother, offering a deal they can't refuse.

BARGOOD

Reputation has it he is a crusader - that that he can't be bribed or blackmailed...

LUFF

(wiping his mouth)

Then why not just kill him?

FADE TO

INT. KITCHEN AT CLIFF HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The kitchen is more active, with pots and pans bubbling. Alice and MRS HOGGER the cook are rolling pastry.

Mrs Hogger is about 50, ruddy-faced and she is enormously overweight. Alice is as before but more excitable.

Also present and seated drinking tea are MASTER FREDERIC SMYTHE and GEORGE TEAGER.

Smythe, 35, is a male servant, willowy and slender.

Teager is the Coachman, about 65 and very deaf. He wears a uniform of sorts but this has seen better days.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS HOGGER
 (to Alice)
 Really? Whatever next?!

ALICE
 (to Mrs Hogger)
 Then she told me how they'd go off an' meet each other in secret, away from where her old dad could find them!

SMYTHE
 I've often said you've missed your true vocation in life, Alice... You should become a spy! You'd work wonders against the Frenchies!

ALICE
 (ignoring Smythe)
 ...And he would bring her presents of silk undergarments - that she would model for him at their meetings!

MRS HOGGER
 Good heavens! Really??

SMYTHE
 Oooh how sordid?!

TEAGER
 (turning his head to hear)
 Er, what was that?

ALICE
 He would get silks and other gifts from the continent on the cheap, because he was a smuggler!

MRS HOGGER
 A smuggler? Good gracious!

TEAGER
 ...Er, what??

Marsh the Butler enters and looks sternly at Alice.

ALICE
 And then she told me about...
 (trails off)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARPASH

Alice - I've told you before about your gossiping girl! A little less talk and a little more work - if you please?!

TEAGER

(trying more to hear)
Er? What was that again?

FADE TO

INT. MARGARETS BEDROOM, CLIFF HOUSE - LATE EVENING

A shared room, with three small beds. Alice is dozing in one bed in a nightgown, a second bed is vacant (its occupant is elsewhere currently) and Margaret in a nightie sits on the edge of the third bed writing in her notebook with a quill and ink and candle.

MARGARET (V.O)

Dear diary - it's been two months already... My room at Cliff house is shared with two other girls so there is little privacy. Alice Collins, another maid and my roommate is a gossip. She takes an unhealthy interest in everyone else's business - perhaps because her own life is so dull? I am pleased to find myself in work though and no-longer have to press upon good Doctor Stebbings kindness, but I do not feel welcome here nor am I certain about staying.

Alice sighs loudly and rolls over - she wants the lights out.

FADE TO

INT. CHILDRENS NURSERY, CLIFF HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The children have yet to arrive, Margaret has been putting out books and slates but has paused to read a letter.

Miss Sophia enters.

MISS SOPHIA

Oh Margaret, you're early? And the books all out too I see?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET
 (distracted)
 Hmmm, oh yes?

MISS SOPHIA
 Bad news, Margaret?

MARGARET
 Sorry - a letter from home, care of a
 former neighbour who can read and
 write. My sister Susan has just died.

MISS SOPHIA
 Oh Margaret - I am sorry to hear that?

MARGARET
 She'd been sickly for years - so it
 wasn't a shock. Perhaps in a way it
 was a kindness and an end to her
 suffering?

MISS SOPHIA
 If you want time off, that won't be a
 problem? Just have a word with Mr
 Marsh? I can run classes this week
 without you, its no bother at all?

Margaret folds and puts the letter in her pocket.

MARGARET
 Thank you - a day off or two for the
 funeral might be needed?

FADE TO

INT. COBBOLDS STUDY, CLIFF HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Now account books, ledgers and paperwork are sprawled across the main desk. Cobbold is seated beside PARKINSON and they are reviewing the papers together.

Parkinson is Cobbolds 'confidential clerk', accountant and cousin. He is about 40 and dressed in smart clothing.

Seated opposite both is Cattermole, who has made some attempt to comb his mass of unkempt hair.

PARKINSON
 (to Cobbold)
 As you see - no problems with
 supplies, all very smooth last month.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR COBBOLD
 And the profits are certainly up too?
 (turns to Cattermole)
 Mr Cattermole - any news on acquiring
 that additional storage space we
 discussed?

CATTERMOLE
 It's still 'in hand' sir... The seller
 needed a little more 'convincing' -
 but things are proceeding again as
 planned.

PARKINSON
 (to Cattermole)
 Let me know if there are further
 delays, we cannot expand any further
 with our current facilities.

CATTERMOLE
 Of course. And with your leave I'll
 get back to the warehouse? Don't like
 leaving the boys too long in case they
 get thirsty!

PARKINSON
 I'll call by the warehouse later too?
 Do the monthly stock check.

Cattermole nods and rises to leave, then pauses.

PARKINSON (CONT'D)
 Was there anything else Mr Cattermole?

CATTERMOLE
 Actually - there was something?

MR COBBOLD
 Oh?

CATTERMOLE
 I caught one of Bargoods boys sniffing
 round our warehouse... Big chap, by
 the name of Luff, or so he said.

MR COBBOLD
 Luff? I've heard that name before?

PARKINSON
 Any indication as to what he was doing
 or trying to find?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATTERMOLE

Not really, no. He didn't hang about either. Bit of a funny bloke really.

MR COBBOLD

Well thanks for mentioning it - as it happens I've a meeting with Bargood next week. I'll see what he has to say about this "Mr Luff"?

FADE TO

EXT. CATCHPOLE COTTAGE, NACTON - MID MORNING

Small and run-down. MR CATCHPOLE is at the battered doorway, with Margaret outside in a shawl and hat. They are HUGGING - both dressed in black. Mr Catchpole is Margaret's Father, late 50's and is wizened from rural work. It is RAINING.

MR CATCHPOLE

(stops hugging)

Margaret - its good to see you?!

MARGARET

It seems whenever I visit its another funeral or some more bad news?

MR CATCHPOLE

Nah! Come in!? Your brother is here - he'll be pleased to see you too.

MARGARET

Charles?

MR CATCHPOLE

No, Edward. Still no word from poor Charles since he set off to India. Doubt we will ever hear from him again. Anyhow - come in girl, out of this rain!

Mr Catchpole leads Margaret indoors.

FADE TO

INT. CATCHPOLE COTTAGE - LATE MORNING

The cottage is run down, those here are very poor. Mr Catchpole is leading Margaret indoors from the front door.

ED CATCHPOLE enters from an adjoining room and beams happily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ed is Margaret's younger brother, dressed in black.

ED CATCHPOLE
Thought I recognised the voice?!

Margaret hugs Ed Catchpole.

MARGARET
Ed! You've put on weight?! How have you been keeping?

ED CATCHPOLE
As good as can be expected... Poor Susan is in the back if you'd like to look at her one last time? Say goodbye before they seal her up?

MR CATCHPOLE
Time enough for that later, you must be tired travelling from Ipswich? How is your work and lodgings there?

MARGARET
Could be better... The Master and Mistress are fine but the other servants are more stuck up than they are! They don't seem to like me.

ED CATCHPOLE
Well they'll warm to you in time... Speaking of which come through to the fire, I've a drop of good gin left that I'd been saving!

FADE TO

INT. CUSTOMS OFFICE, CUSTOMS HOUSE - DAY

The office is back to its usual state, like a study. Bliss is seated at the desk. He is dressed in a new outfit and seems to have a bigger wardrobe of clothing than most.

There is a KNOCK and Barry enters, dressed as before.

BLISS
Ah, Mr Barry, it is a pleasure to meet you again.

BARRY
The pleasure is all mine Sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLISS

Please, take a seat? I just wanted to commend you again for your part in the excellent work done at Sizewell the other day. Seven hundred casks of spirits - a good nights work!

BARRY

(now sitting)

Yes, indeed Sir. But merely a drop in the ocean - if you'll pardon the pun?

BLISS

I wanted to ask you something if I may - about the patrols you and your colleagues undertake around the coast?

BARRY

I can show you the route that I and other Coast Guard take if you have a map to hand?

BLISS

The detail of the route itself doesn't interest me, but the time-table.

BARRY

How so sir?

BLISS

I am under the impression that you patrol the same areas on the same days of the week, with some consistency?

BARRY

That is correct Sir - I follow a set pattern of times and routes.

BLISS

And you have done for years now?

BARRY

That would be a fair assessment, yes Sir?

BLISS

How might I ask you, did all this come about?

BARRY

As you may know sir, I have been in
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY (CONT'D)
this role about three years now? I was shown my route and timetable by my predecessor, Mr Thomas. He strongly advised me to stick to this closely and never to deviate.

BLISS
To what purpose or benefit?

BARRY
Mr Thomas said this route offered a good balance between personal safety and positive results, using tried and tested vantage points, without taking too great a personal risk.

BLISS
I see?

BARRY
This is not unique to myself or the local coastal officers I might add? Following a set pattern is a method widely used across all of England.

BLISS
I am well aware of this, Mr Barry. But did it occur to you that those with local knowledge may come to know and even exploit this regular pattern - especially if they had dishonest intentions in mind?

BARRY
I pressed Mr Thomas on this very point. His advice was that this method would be most effective on those unfamiliar with the region, on those starting some new nefarious scheme.

BLISS
Whilst arguably keeping the existing ongoing activities as yet unhindered?

BARRY
For my part I run additional *ad hoc* patrols too, under my own initiative. Although my superiors have strongly advised against it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLISS
Really? For what reason?

BARRY
(nodding)
I was told in no uncertain terms that we don't have the resource to be everywhere at all times - and to let the Preventive and Revenue men take up the slack in other areas.

BLISS
Also with their own regular times and set routes too, I dare say?!
(pause)

Well I am arranging further meetings with the local Revenue and Preventive Officers, to try and 'better coordinate' our combined efforts. This County of yours needs a bit of a shakeup it seems?!

FADE TO

INT. BARGOODS OFFICE - DAY

An 'import/export business' office at Felixstowe - with notably better quality furniture of that of Customs House. Captain Bargood is at his desk. Opposite sits Luff, who has since washed and changed his vomit-splattered clothing.

Bargood is annoyed initially, but calms throughout.

BARGOOD
Our side of the business cannot exist without the other! We supply the merchandise, they arrange the distribution and finance. We cannot do everything ourselves, so one hand washes the other...

Luff does not reply and instead stretches his arms. Realising Bargood is expecting an acknowledgement he responds.

LUFF
Alright alright Bargood... You're the boss. Perhaps I did overstep the mark?

BARGOOD
I am the boss and I did not reach this position by being foolish! Any
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARGOOD (CONT'D)
 friction between us and our business partners only harms both our operations, draws unwanted attention and above all costs us our profit!

LUFF
 Heaven forbid that we might lose any money Captain!? Don't you have enough profit and properties already?

BARGOOD
 And I mean to continue adding to my assets Mr Luff, so that I can live a long and happy life in retirement. You could do likewise - if you were more cautious, a little more patient?

Luff shrugs.

BARGOOD (CONT'D)
 Just do the work you are paid to do and stop all this snooping! You don't need to know 'the whole picture'! Even I myself have little knowledge of their side of things and I dare say vice-versa. And it is much safer for both sides for that very reason!

LUFF
 I don't understand why should we take all the risks but they reap all the rewards? They never get their hands dirty, in their fancy mansions while we risk life and limb on their behalf?

BARGOOD
 Our arrangements with our investors have always been fair and mutually advantageous. I do not begrudge any man for doing well in business. One day I too may become a financier - playing a more subtle role and letting others run all the risk.

LUFF
 Sounds rather dull to me?

BARGOOD
 Boring perhaps, but much safer.
 (pausing)
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARGOOD (CONT'D)
And speaking of boring - I have a
special task for you, Mr Luff.
Something I that might keep you out of
mischief for a while?

LUFF
I don't like the sound of this
already?!

BARGOOD
The 'illustrious William Laud' is back
with us again from his exile over in
the Americas.

LUFF
(pleased)
Billy-boy is back? Has it been a year
already?

BARGOOD
A year and a half now. He is keen to
pick up where he left off, now that
things have calmed-down again.

LUFF
That's Billy alright, not one for
hanging about?

BARGOOD
I'd like you to take him under your
wing and help him get re-settled.
Bring him up to date with business.

LUFF
Well if that's all it is, then no
problem? I'll whip him into shape!

BARGOOD
Good, then you can start today! You'll
find him lodging at The Salutation in
Ipswich. He's probably already
propping up the bar there, unless life
overseas has changed him?

Luff grins.

LUFF
Yeah, right!??

FADE TO

INT. CHILDRENS NURSERY, CLIFF HOUSE - MORNING

As before, only now the 8 x Cobbold children are standing at their desks, awaiting permission to be seated. (Master John, William, Richard, Harriet, Sophia, Thomas, Sally, Henry).

Margaret is standing before them - the only adult. She is in her usual servants attire.

MARGARET
Good morning Children!

ALL COBBOLD CHILDREN
(together)
Good Morning Margaret.

The children robotically sit down after this greeting.

RICHARD COBBOLD
Excuse me Margaret? Where is Miss Sophia today?

MARGARET
Miss Sophia is 'under the weather',
she won't be able to join us today.

The children exchange questioning looks at this news.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Well children, as it's a glorious day
- lets have the lessons outdoors?

ALL COBBOLD CHILDREN
(cheering together)
HOORAY!!

FADE TO

EXT. RIVERSIDE NEAR DOCKS - DAY

This is a heathland area with mudflats and trees running alongside the River Orwell, south-east of the Docks.

NOTE : now the ORWELL COUNTY PARK - largely unchanged today.

Margaret is walking along with NINE Cobbold children (in age order as follows) : Master John, William, Richard, Harriet, Sophia, Thomas, Sally, Henry and EDWARD.

Edward is youngest and looks facially different to his siblings - as he is the son of the current Mrs Cobbold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Margaret leads the children beside the river bank, pointing out various features. The younger children all hold hands and skip happily along. It is an idyllic summers day.

MARGARET
(pointing)

That over there is a King Fisher. Not as many of them around these days though. As I said before, we all need to take care of our natural habitat around us or one day there may be none left at all!

HARRIET COBBOLD
No birds or anything? Terrible!

THOMAS COBBOLD
How awful that would be?

MARGARET
(Turning angrily)
Master Henry - I've told you before, keep away from the waters edge!

HENRY COBBOLD
Aw... Yes Miss Margaret...

They all continue walking along leisurely.

FADE TO
EXT. THE SALUTATION INN - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The Salutation is an Inn at Carr Street Ipswich, a few minutes walk from Christchurch Mansion. This is a timber-framed smaller inn, with bar and dining area at the front with a few rooms available upstairs.

NOTE: This is still here today, although now a pub.

FADE TO
INT. SALUTATION INN - DAY

A smaller but is otherwise typical inn of the era. Because of its central location it is busy, several DRUNKARDS are present, swigging ale and puffing on pipes. These Drunkards are mostly sailors. The air is thick with PIPE SMOKE.

Luff is seated at a table, opposite WILLIAM LAUD - both drinking as they converse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAUD, late 20's, is rugged and handsome.

LUFF
So Billy-Boy, how was the new world?

LAUD
Just as corrupt as the old... No-
matter where we go, the same old
problems seem to follow.

LUFF
I heard tells of naked native girls,
happy to sell their services for a few
baubles?

LAUD
(amused)
There are native tribes running about,
but out in the wilderness. Given the
chance most would rather kill any
white man though, baubles or not. When
out there I heard tell of attacks on
remote settlements, farmers scalped.

LUFF
Sounds rough - rather wild out West?

LAUD
Much like Norwich on a Saturday night!

Luff chuckles and swigs his beer.

LAUD (CONT'D)
Everything over there is bigger...
Bigger landscapes, bigger mountains,
bigger houses, bigger roads... But
land is cheap - they steal it from the
natives. Oh, and bigger women too!

LUFF
(laughing)
Ah, now that's the Billy I know! Any
nice 'bit of stuff' over there then?

LAUD
There were one or two nice girls that
caught my eye... But in truth, I'm
glad to be back again. There's nothing
quite like old England or our home-
grown Suffolk beauties!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUFF
 (sipping beer)
 Remember old Joseph Cotton?

LAUD
 Old Joe with no teeth?

LUFF
 He died, about two months ago - from a
 Preventative Mans musket.

LAUD
 Oh god - terrible! He had a big family
 didn't he?

LUFF
 Yeah, six or seven kids... Makes you
 wonder what it's all about really? Or
 it makes me wonder anyhow...

LAUD
 I remember him - a good bloke. No-one
 deserves to be gunned-down...

LUFF
 What I mean is... We go through so
 much just to get by, but we all end up
 dead - sooner or later. Whats the
 bloody point of all this struggle??

LAUD
 I suppose a priest would tell you we
 go to a better place afterwards... If
 you've been good.

LUFF
 None of us are 'good' though, are we?
 To make ends meet we all have to bend
 the law at times, just to get by...
 (pause)

Unless you're rich of course? In which
 case you can just break the law and
 get away with it!

LAUD
 You're a lot more philosophical since
 I went away, Mr Luff?

LUFF
 I suppose I've been thinking a lot
 lately... It would be nice to be
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUFF (CONT'D)
 remembered when I'm gone. For
 something at least... Not even
 something good, but just something.

Laud shrugs and gulps down the remainder of his ale.

FADE TO

EXT. A RIVERSIDE COTTAGE, SUFFOLK - DAY

A typical timber-framed cottage, with a good view of the nearby River Orwell. Just outside Ipswich, further up river from the 'riverside near docks' so similar surroundings.

At the front door stands MRS SPENCE, speaking to Rob Coulson.

Mrs Spence, 35, has ginger hair, shapely but her period clothing is rather worn. Coulson is chewing tobacco and spitting periodically as they converse.

TWO SCRUFFY CHILDREN like street urchins play in the garden and chase each other around.

MRS SPENCE
 My late husband worked seven years for
 Bargood as a 'Tubman'. Seven years!
 And what compensation do we get?
 Pennies! A few pennies every month -
 it's a bloody disgrace!!

COULSON
 Perhaps madam I could offer you a few additional pennies to supplement your income, if you would do a little something for me in return?

Mrs Spence sighs wearily and starts to unbutton her dress and nods to invite Coulson indoors. He however stops her and seems amused.

COULSON (CONT'D)
 No madam, you misunderstand me! It is only information that I desire. Information can be of great worth to me and more importantly to those I represent...

MRS SPENCE
 (slightly offended)
 Oh?? What information?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COULSON

I see that you have a wonderful view
of the river - right here?

FADE TO

INT. CUSTOMS OFFICE, CUSTOMS HOUSE - DAY

Ellis is seated at his desk, Bliss is seated opposite. Both men are dressed as before.

ELLIS

Well Robert I have to hand it to you,
the figures are very impressive.
Fourteen Suffolk businesses raided
last week and ten the week before, and
already a small fortune in seized
contraband. I dare say though, I don't
think these methods will endear us to
local shop-keepers or taverns!

BLISS

(coldly)

I'm not here to make friends.

There is a KNOCK at the door and Snodgrass enters, carrying a nearly manila-type file. Snodgrass hands the file to Bliss.

SNODGRASS

Here is that report you wanted, sir?

ELLIS

Another raid planned already?

BLISS

Of course! It's to keep up the
pressure before they can recover or
reorganise. That's how we do things up
in Norfolk, Mr Ellis.

FADE TO

INT. MARGARETS BEDROOM, CLIFF HOUSE - EVENING

Margaret is writing in her diary, she is alone.

MARGARET (V.O)

I can't believe its been several
months so soon, time truly does fly at
times. The family I work for - the
Cobbolds and their many children - are
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET (V.O) (CONT'D)
 moving to a larger house the other side of town and I have decided to remain in their service. I have also heard from William Laud - he is back from the America's and soon we are to meet. It will be wonderful to see him again after all this time but wonder if life abroad has changed him?

FADE TO

INT. CLIFF HOUSE HALLWAY - MIDDAY

All the servants are grouped together: Margaret, Alice, Smythe, Teager, Mrs Hogger and MADELEINE DOHERTY (aka MADDIE).

Maddie is a maid, about 20 with dark hair and broad cheeks, dressed like Alice. She has a hint of an Irish accent.

Mr Marsh, Mr Cobbold and Mrs Cobbold stand addressing them.

Mr Cobbold has a period era dressing-gown. Mrs Cobbold wears a different flowing dress.

MARSH
 (to servants)
 Are there any further questions about our move to Christchurch? As you know, it's just the other side of town, less than an hours walk from Cliff House. This too should make the process of relocating much easier.

A moment passes before a response.

MARGARET
 (raising a hand)
 I was curious as to the timescale? You said we need to start packing next week, but is there a time when we will have had to have moved by?
 (pause)
 You see I sometimes receive letters from my relatives over in Nacton?

MRS COBBOLD
 Yes, a good question? Because we retain ownership of both Cliff House and our new residence, there will be
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS COBBOLD (CONT'D)
no immediate rush. Any mail will
simply be redirected, anything left
can be sent for at a later date.

MR COBBOLD
We have planned the move in various
stages, starting next month. The first
stage will be to move non-essential
items, then most of the children and
servants will move with the second
stage, leaving myself and a couple of
servants here to oversee transport of
the last of the household items.

MARSH
Certainly within a month from now, we
will all have relocated completely.

MR COBBOLD
Indeed. And all of you should visit
Christchurch between now and the move.
This will allow you to get to know
your way around and get a feel for the
place prior to the move.

Alice and Maddie exchange glances and nod in agreement.
Teager seems rather confused, as he has not heard quite all.

FADE TO

EXT. SMUGGLERS SHIP AT SEA - DAWN - ESTABLISHING

A wooden sloop sailing ship is at sea with full sails. It is
windy and slightly stormy. A few SAILORS are on deck
adjusting the sails. The sailors are all male, many have
pistols and knives. There is nothing but open sea all around.

FADE TO

INT. HOLD OF SHIP - DAWN

The wooden hold of the smugglers ship seen in the previous
scene. The hold is full of barrels and crates. There is a
half-table on foldable gate-legs and two stalls. Here sit
Luff and Laud, both dressed similarly to before.

The ship ROCKS from side to side as they converse (poor
travelling conditions deters other vessels and customs
cutters). Unseen outside is THE LOOKOUT up on deck. He is
HEARD ONLY and he has a deep gruff voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAUD

I hear you've been making a nuisance
of yourself, upsetting our biggest
customer?

LUFF

Yeah old Bargood had a word with me...
Or several. Don't worry though Billy-
boy, I'll be good.

LAUD

Why, might I ask, have you been
raising eyebrows anyway? To what end?

Luff pulls out a wad of paper from his pocket, fastened
together with string. There are notes scrawled on each page.

LUFF

I've been busy writing.

LAUD

You've learnt reading and writing
while I was away?

LUFF

Yeah - took me several months! It
still doesn't come easily and I get
old man Cole to lend a hand sometimes.

LAUD

Mind if I see?

Laud takes the book and flicks through.

LAUD (CONT'D)

Well your handwriting is...
'Interesting'?! What's this writing
all in aid of then John?

LUFF

Doesn't it seem that all we know is
our little part of the operation?

LAUD

Yes, but so what?

LUFF

Well I want to understand the bigger
picture, the whole scheme. What
happens when we drop off the stuff,
where it goes, who gets involved? How
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUFF (CONT'D)
everything works - the payoffs and how
the profits trickle back to those at
the top? How they hide the money...

LAUD
(flicking through)
A little knowledge in this trade can
be dangerous. I know what I need to
know to get the things done that I'm
paid for. That's enough for me.

LUFF
It's not finished yet, I've still
several pages left to fill... Its 'a
work in progress', you might say.

LAUD
(reading and shocked)
What have you done here Luff? Bargoods
name is mentioned? Several times!
Hell! Other associates named too?

LUFF
(amused, grinning)
It's fiery prose, to be sure! As I say
though, its not the final version...

LAUD
(still shocked)
I can't believe what you've done?!
What's the point of all this?

LUFF
I fancy this could be used as a guide
- how a large scale operation is run.
This has working examples of tunnels,
storage, pay-offs to officials, stock
and supply routes, all the finance
side. Everything needed to succeed in
the trade, with real actual examples.

LAUD
(shaking his head)
You must have lost it while I was
away?! This isn't fiction, any of it?!

LUFF
Nah, it's the lords own truth! Every
page is pure fact...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAUD

This is your death warrant Luff - if the Customs men were to find this, we'd all be finished! What were you thinking - blackmail??

LUFF

I haven't really decided that far ahead. Perhaps I'll publish it as part of my memoirs when I'm old, rich and fat?

LAUD

You won't live to grow old, not with this book in your possession!

LUFF

Pah! Don't be such an old lady... This can be my legacy, something I will leave behind...!

LAUD

You always think too big for your boots. The likes of you and me are never going to be the rich bosses in fancy houses. We're just trying to get by, like everyone else.

LUFF

You're wrong Will, you need to think about the future. We're the ones out taking all the risks - and one day our luck will run out. Look at the Hadleigh boys - they're nothing special but as rich as lords!

LAUD

The Hadleigh Boys are thugs and cut-throats. Pure filth! They get away with it because there are better armed than the law! When the day comes that they slip - the moment they look weak - they'll all hang. Just wait and see!

LOOKOUT (O.S)

(calling)

Land ho! Land ho - port side!!

LUFF

Well Will, it seems duty calls? One thing hasn't changed while you've been
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUFF (CONT'D)
 gone - you're still as stubborn as ever!?

Luff snatches his papers back and stands, ready to exit.

FADE TO

INT. CHILDREN'S NURSERY, CLIFF HOUSE - MORNING

The Nursery Room is half empty - many books and items have been removed, shelves are empty. Miss Sophia and Margaret are packing away books into crates and boxes.

MISS SOPHIA
 I can't get over the change in Little Henry Cobbold - he is so well behaved of late. All since you joined us?

MARGARET
 I just keep Master Henry interested in 'boy things' - that way he behaves himself. It's made more fun and interesting for him.

MISS SOPHIA
 Well I can't deny it Margaret - the children have really taken to you and all seem to be doing well. We've really made progress over these last several months...

MARGARET
 (smiling)
 I've learned more too - think I'm better at maths now! Probably from counting so many children?!

MISS SOPHIA
 As you know, we will soon be relocating to Christchurch and I've been involved in setting up the new school room. Perhaps you'd like to give me a hand planning the layout?

MARGARET
 Yes - I'd be happy to?

MISS SOPHIA
 I have a list of new items I am considering ordering, but perhaps you
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS SOPHIA (CONT'D)
could see what you think too?

MARGARET
Happily!

MISS SOPHIA
Oh and don't forget it's this Thursday
that we will be looking around the
grounds of the new home. Its quite
substantial compared to Cliff House.

FADE TO

INT. CUSTOMS OFFICE, CUSTOMS HOUSE - DAY

Bliss is seated at the desk of Ellis, who is absent. Bliss
seems more pleased with himself. Snodgrass is standing
nearby, pointing out details on some paperwork.

SNODGRASS
Yes sir - delivery will take place
next Tuesday.

BLISS
Five hundred casks of spirits? And not
too mention the dry goods too?

SNODGRASS
The dry goods are mainly silks and a
modest amount of tobacco.

BLISS
And your source for this is reliable?

SNODGRASS
Tried and tested already sir. A
disgruntled member of the Hadleigh
Gang, now our man - in exchange for a
percentage of the seized goods.

BLISS
Excellent! Let's not trouble Mr Ellis
about this for the time being? Some of
my men and local Dragoons are billeted
at The Crown in Bildeston so they can
act quickly on this information.

SNODGRASS
(uncertain)
If you say so sir?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLISS
I do Snodgrass, I do...

FADE TO

EXT. CHRISTCHURCH MANSION AND GROUNDS - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Christchurch Mansion is a Tudor era building in the centre of Ipswich Town. The front of the building is shaped like the letter n with the main entrance in the middle. The ground is WET and it has been raining recently.

NOTE: The mansion is much as it was today, although any modern or more recent features should not be seen.

FADE TO

EXT. CHRISTCHURCH PARK - DAY

Grassy parkland and trees, perhaps the Mansion can be glimpsed in the distance. There is a bench opposite a large ARTIFICIAL LAKE. It is damp and has been RAINING recently.

NOTE: These grounds are still around today, though things like the asphalt pathways and railings are recent additions.

Margaret is seated on the bench opposite the nearby lake. She is off-duty and dressed more casually and deep in thought.

MARGARET (V.O)
I must remember to update my diary
with details about my new home... Also
there is news about Will, he and I are
to meet next week. I hope he will
still care for me as he once did?

Margaret's thoughts are interrupted.

Approaching Margaret run SIX of the Cobbold children:- Richard, Harriet, Sophia, Thomas, Sally and Henry. All chasing one-another around the trees and enjoying themselves.

Maddie is struggling to keep up with the children, despite hitching her dress and rushing along.

MADDIE
(calling to children)
Wait for me, don't keep rushing off!

The children continue running along and soon scamper past Margaret, some waving to her as they dash along.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALL COBBOLD CHILDREN
 (together, as passing)
 Hello Margaret! Hello!!

MARGARET
 Hello children! And hello Maddie.

Maddie approaches Margaret, she is out-of-breath.

MADDIE
 Hello Margaret...
 (puffing)
 Working hard again I see?

MARGARET
 It's my afternoon off, as well you
 know?! You'd better keep a close eye
 on the children, there's been some
 sort of cave-in further down the way.

MADDIE
 Cave-in? Whatever do you mean?

The children charge away into the distance out of view.

MARGARET
 A hole - something to do with those
 'new excavations' for the house I
 expect? Probably all that rain last
 night hasn't helped.

Maddie looks in the direction of the children.

MADDIE
 (calling)
 Come back you little devils!

MARGARET
 Need any help with them?

Maddie sighs, shakes her head and hurries away in pursuit.

FADE TO
 EXT. CHRISTCHURCH PARK, FURTHER - DAY

This area features a fresh SINK HOLE. A length of ground has given-way to reveal what appears to be a dark tunnel running beneath. The cave-in reflects the shape and course the tunnel takes - heading south towards the docks. The ground is wet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Six of the Cobbold children are exploring (Richard, Harriet, Sophia, Thomas, Sally and Henry).

Initially off-screen is Maddie, who is in pursuit of the children. The children rush to the mouth of the hole.

RICHARD COBBOLD
(pointing)
Look - a secret tunnel!

HARRY COBBOLD
I bet there's buried treasure inside?!

THOMAS COBBOLD
Come on, let's see??

Richard, Henry and Thomas jump down into the tunnel and disappear from sight. Harriet, Sophia and Sally remain outside and peer down nervously.

Maddie arrives near the hole, out-of-breath.

MADDIE
(calling)
Children - wait for me!! Girls - where are your brothers?

HARRIET COBBOLD
Mistress Maddie, our brothers have gone down that big hole!

Maddie peers cautiously inside the hole.

MADDIE
What the? What is this??

Maddie leans down into the tunnel and can hear the echo of the voices of the boys.

RICHARD COBBOLD (O.S)
Look over here, I've found something?!

HENRY COBBOLD(O.S)
Wait for me!

THOMAS (O.S)
Its too dark down here?

MADDIE
(calling down)
Children, come out of there, come back
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MADDIE (CONT'D)
here this minute - it's not safe!

The ground around Maddie begins to SHUDDER and part suddenly gives way. Maddie leaps back just in time as more of the tunnel collapses. Another section further along gives way.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Oh sweet lord, preserve us!
(calling, in panic)
Help! Someone help! HELP!!

Harriet, Sophia and Sally cower away and there is a muffled SCREAM of the trapped boys coming from inside the hole.

FADE TO

END CREDITS

FADE OUT

END OF PART 1