

**LEGACY OF VAN DIEMEN'S LAND****THIRD SERIES IN  
'THE HEART OF STONE SAGA'****EPISODE ONE: THE NEW BRIDE AND THE BRIDEWELLS**

FADE IN:

3/1 INT. NIGHTMARE: (SEP 1854)

3/1

NATHAN MEAKINS is led up the WOODEN STAIRS and onto the PLATFORM OF THE GALLOWS. His hands tied behind his back. His LEG-IRONS chafing his ankles. He is halted below THE GIBBET and feels the material of THE BLACK HOOD placed over his head. He trembles as the darkness enfolds him. The perspiration runs down his face beneath the black cloth. The weight of THE COARSE THICK ROPE being placed around his neck is numbing. He is petrified.

A RELIGIOUS MAN IS MUMBLING TEXT FROM THE BIBLE and finally he hears THE MECHANISM OF THE TRAP opening. Suddenly his stomach turns as he is falling... falling.

DISSOLVE TO:

3/2 INT. THE HOLD OF THE TRANSPORTATION SHIP: DAWN

3/2

He awakes with a jolt. Drenched in perspiration, his heart is leaping wildly. The pungent smell of the bodies packed tightly around him and the lack of fresh air, reminds him that he did in fact escape the noose and he is now lying in the hold of the transportation ship; relief washes over him. His situation is barely an improvement, but at least there is a slim chance he will survive this indignity.

The regular sound of men snoring and THE LOUD CREAKING OF THE FABRIC OF THE SHIP are interrupted by THE BUGLE CALL AT 5.30 A.M. Meakins eases his ankles where THE SHACKLES have been rubbing him raw. He dresses in his RAVEN DUCK OVERALLS, HIS JACKET AND WOOLLEN HAT.

The warders enter and the men shuffle off to their assignments. Some of them are set to SCRUBBING AND SWABBING THE DECKS, SOME TO DRY HOLY-STONING, but Meakins is tasked with his MESS GROUP OF EIGHT MEN to PICKING OAKUM and they remain below. He hates the smell of the TAR-SOAKED CORDAGE, his fingers become coated in the AMBER-COLOURED PITCH and increasingly sore from unravelling THE FIBROUS THREADS.

Eventually Meakins hears THE EIGHT-BELLS and joins the men queuing for their BREAKFAST. It is GRUEL AND BISCUITS AND HALF A PINT OF COCOA. Beggars can't be choosers and he swallows the unappetising food, rather than go without.

After their meagre meal they are given different assignments and this time Meakins' group is taken above and tasked with POLISHING RING BOLTS AND DRY HOLY-STONING the more inaccessible areas about THE MASTS AND GUNS.

THE PENSIONER GUARDS keep vigil, with THE CAT-O'-NINE-TAILS handy, lest any gang should take it into their heads to mutiny. They are down on their hands and knees like dogs, using the smaller, FLAT STONES CALLED PRAYER-BOOKS, sliding them about to and fro over the WET AND SANDED DECKS.

Not used to any form of manual work Meakins suffers more than most with aches and pains. His back is hurting, his knees are red and inflamed and his fingers are still sore from the oakum. This is galley-slave work!

A taunting image of the pompous Lord Joshua Dryer sitting in comfort at HIS MAHOGANY DESK, surrounded by his LEGAL BOOKS, enters his mind.

FADE IN:

3/3 INT. JOSHUA'S STUDY: DAY - FLASHBACK (SCENE 2/172) 3/3

Angrily Joshua grabs hold of him by ONE ARM AND THE BACK OF HIS RIDING JACKET AND FLINGS HIM TOWARD THE OPEN DOOR.

FADE OUT

3/4 INT. THE HOLD OF THE TRANSPORTATION SHIP: DAWN 3/4

NATHAN MEAKINS (V.O.)  
I swear to God I will make sure that  
he pays, one way or another, for his  
dogged persecution of me!

3/5 EXT. ALVINGTON MANOR DRIVEWAY: DAY 3/5

When LORD JOSHUA DRYER and his new wife LOUISA return from their honeymoon, both looking very stylish in the latest Paris fashion, their employees are assembled outside to welcome them home.

LOUISA lowers her head slightly as she descends from THE CARRIAGE, to avoid disturbing the ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS DECORATING HER NEW BONNET; she smooths her MATCHING PURPLE GOWN AND ADJUSTS THE FLOUNCED CAPE JACKET, DECORATED WITH A PRINTED BORDER OF PALE LILAC DAISIES.

JOSHUA takes her arm and she looks up, appreciatively, into his warm, dark eyes. She is very proud of her handsome husband dressed so fashionably in his TALL BLACK HAT; SMART DARK-BLUE, CUT-AWAY MORNING COAT; GREY TROUSERS, SKY-BLUE NECK-TIE AND MULTI-HUED BLUE WAISTCOAT.

They are greeted warmly by GARETH the head butler, MRS ABBOTT the housekeeper, and the remainder of the staff, all lined up in the September sunshine; the male servants bowing and the females dipping their curtseys.

Louisa is delighted to see that Mrs Abbott has AURORA held tightly by the hand.

AURORA DRYER

Mama!

Aurora pulls loose, rushing forward to hug her, excitedly. Joshua picks her up and throws her into the air and she squeals with pleasure.

AURORA DRYER (cont'd)

Again, Papa! Again!

MRS ABBOTT

Welcome home Lord and Lady Dryer. It is good to have you safely back home with us.

Louisa joins her husband, who has Aurora held safely in his arms. The domestic staff bow as Lord and Lady Dryer pass by them to enter their home. Then smiling happily, they disperse back to their chores.

On the side table, Louisa spots A PILE OF CALLING CARDS in the SILVER SALVER, but decides to go through them later, after taking tea in the oak with Joshua and Aurora.

That evening whilst seated in THE DRAWING ROOM Louisa sifts through THE PILE OF CARDS.

LOUISA DRYER

Look Josh, all these cards have their top right-hand corner folded over which means that all the locals are congratulating us. There is one from Serena Bridewell inviting me to attend afternoon tea at Clifton Maybank Manor. I'm so relieved. I was afraid that being a lowly chambermaid before you proposed to me, I'd be shunned. I'd convinced myself that I'd never be accepted as Lady Louisa Dryer.

JOSHUA DRYER

Have no fear, my love; I always knew that because you are modest and genteel they'd accept you very quickly. If you were bold and brazen it might have been a different matter.

(Joshua laughs at her indignant expression)

I know how you feel, for, was I not in the same position when I first came to Alvington? I well remember feeling very uneasy and out of my depth, but I soon got used to it and so shall you. Fate has decreed that we're meant to be together, my darling, and so we shall always be.

Joshua kisses Louisa's head affectionately, as he sits down beside her. Louisa looks up from THE PILE OF CARDS.

LOUISA DRYER

Joshua, I've a mind to ask Rosa to be my lady's maid. What do you think?

She watches his expression as he considers for a moment.

JOSHUA DRYER

I think that's a very good plan, for you need to have someone with whom you are relaxed and happy to share your most private moments. Shall I ring for her, so you can ask her immediately?

LOUISA DRYER

Yes, please do.

Joshua stands up and goes to tug on THE BELL-PULL.

LOUISA DRYER (cont'd)

(Ponders)

This does mean, though, that if she agrees we'll have to think of someone to replace her as our parlour maid.

JOSHUA DRYER

Yes, that's true... perhaps Jean Hawkins would like the position? I believe that was her post at the Meakins' residence.

Louisa closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

LOUISA DRYER

Please don't remind me of that obnoxious fellow, Josh; besides I had heard that Jean is now working in one of the glove factories.

JOSHUA DRYER

I'm sorry, my darling, I didn't mean to upset you.

Joshua is at her side in a moment, kissing her gently on her forehead.

I assure you, my dear, you don't have to worry about Meakins any more, for he is well on his way to the Antipodes by now.

LOUISA DRYER

Thank the Lord.

JOSHUA DRYER

Well then, how about Lettie? I think that Toby is now going to school and Lettie would fit in here very well, with her mama being the cook, and her papa the gamekeeper.

LOUISA DRYER

(Nodding in agreement)

That's a good suggestion, my dear. I will go and suggest it to Flora.

Joshua goes off purposefully towards THE KITCHEN. Moments later, Rosa knocks and enters.

ROSA WARREN

You rang, milady.

As she dips in a curtsey she is smiling. It is the first time she has called Louisa that.

LOUISA DRYER

(Smiling)

I did, Rosa. I have something I'd like you to consider. Please, take a seat a moment.

Rosa sits down in THE CHAIR indicated.

LOUISA DRYER (cont'd)

After working all this time together, Rosa, I feel that you and I have become true friends. I wouldn't wish to do anything that may jeopardise our friendship, but I'd like you to consider becoming my lady's maid.

ROSA WARREN

Oh! Milady, I'd be delighted. Why should it spoil our friendship, it is after all an advancement?

LOUISA DRYER

Oh! Rosa, I hoped you'd say that. I'm so pleased. It will be less hard work for you and you'll be able to put your artistic talents to good use, when attending to my hair and my costumes. You always appear immaculate and I know that you read well and you can sew beautifully. In addition it will mean a further ten pounds a year, on top of your current salary.

ROSA WARREN

That will certainly be much appreciated now that I too am a married woman. I will love it, milady. When do I start?

LOUISA DRYER

Tomorrow morning would be good for me, Rosa. You can come and help me retrieve all my personal possessions from the Dower House.

ROSA WARREN

Very well, milady.

LOUISA DRYER

Next Wednesday I'd like you to accompany me on a visit to Clifton Maybank Manor where I'm to take tea with Serena and Alicia Bridewell. John Moore will take us and you'll be able to join their staff downstairs, for they will provide tea for you too.

ROSA WARREN

Thank you, milady, I'll look forward to that.

LOUISA DRYER

Another thing, Rosa; I thought you might prefer it if, when we're alone together, you continue to call me Louisa? You only need to say 'milady' when there are others around, to observe the formalities.

ROSA WARREN

I'm afraid I may get confused if I do that, milady. I believe it better for me to think of it as your new name.

LOUISA DRYER

As you wish, my friend, but I don't want you to feel that I'm lording it over you.

ROSA WARREN

(Smiling)

I know you better than that, milady.

LOUISA DRYER

That's settled then.

ROSA WARREN

May I just say, milady, that I'm very pleased to have you and his Lordship back home again. The house has not been the same without you. We've all missed you very much and Miss Aurora has been quite desolate.

LOUISA DRYER

Well, a month is a long time in the life of a three-year-old.

(MORE)

LOUISA DRYER (cont'd)  
But it hasn't stopped her asking us,  
'when will we be going again?' when  
we gave her the little Paris outfits  
that we purchased for her at Le' Bon  
Marché!

They both laugh.

LOUISA DRYER (cont'd)  
Right then, Rosa, I'll look forward  
to seeing you first thing tomorrow  
when we'll sort out the Dower House.

Rosa gets up to leave. She dips a curtsy,

ROSA WARREN  
Very well, milady. Thank you again  
for my promotion. I can't wait to  
tell Malachi; he'll be so proud.

3/7 INT. LOUISA'S BEDROOM, ALVINGTON MANOR: DAY

3/7

Rosa brings up A BREAKFAST TRAY for Louisa at eight o'clock.  
She DRAWS BACK THE CURTAINS AND PLUMPS HER PILLOWS.

LOUISA DRYER  
This looks very tasty, Rosa. Please  
thank Flora for me.

ROSA WARREN  
I will, milady.

They chat whilst Rosa prepares her MISTRESS'S CLOTHES for  
the day, and Louisa enjoys her BREAKFAST.

LOUISA DRYER  
Was Malachi pleased when you told him  
of your new position?

ROSA WARREN  
Of course, milady, he was delighted;  
an extra ten pounds a year will make  
a big difference to us, and he's glad  
to know how much I'm appreciated.

LOUISA DRYER  
Joshua and I know you both to be  
hard-working, indispensable members  
of the estate staff, but to us you  
are even more valuable as our  
friends.



ROSA WARREN

(Smiling)

Thank you, milady, you're very kind.

LOUISA DRYER

I mean it, Rosa, Malachi is the closest Joshua has to a brother around here, and I'd be lost without you.

ROSA WARREN

We indeed feel very fortunate to have you as our employers, milady. But if you'll excuse me, I'll just go now to fetch some hot water for you to wash.

Her breakfast finished, Louisa lies back and stretches languidly, enjoying her surroundings, revelling in her new luxurious life as mistress of Alvington Manor.

3/8 INT. THE DOWER HOUSE, ALVINGTON MANOR: DAY

3/8

It is ten o'clock by the time they enter THE DOWER HOUSE. Her MAID'S ATTIRE is still hanging in THE CLOSET.

LOUISA DRYER

Would you like a couple of spare outfits, Rosa?

ROSA WARREN

Yes, that would be very useful, milady. Thank you.

They remove THE MAID'S COSTUMES AND FOLD THEM UP ON THE BED, ready for Rosa to take away with her. Then they collect together the rest of LOUISA'S BELONGINGS. As they work, Louisa discovers THE LONG WHITE LACE GLOVES and her DANCING SLIPPERS that Joshua bought for her, for their first ball at Alvington Manor.

LOUISA DRYER

(Poignantly)

This reminds me of our Becky. She joked with me, saying 'You have the gloves and the dancing shoes, now all you need is a gown to go with them!' Remember how we had to borrow Clara's gowns?

(MORE)

LOUISA DRYER (cont'd)

(Takes Rosa's hand)

So much has happened to us since then, we're both married for one thing, and I feel so blessed to have found such happiness.

ROSA WARREN

Me too, milady. Our lives have certainly changed for the better.

LOUISA DRYER

How are you and Malachi getting along? You've been married for four months now; is it all that you hoped it would be?

ROSA WARREN

Oh yes, milady. I truly couldn't want for a better husband. You wouldn't think that such a big, strong, bare-knuckle boxer could be so gentle and thoughtful. We really are very happy, milady.

LOUISA DRYER

I'm so pleased for you, Rosa.

ROSA WARREN

How about you, milady, was Paris all you hoped it would be?

LOUISA DRYER

Much more so, Rosa; Joshua too is very gentle and caring, but he has obviously learned a lot from his travels and from the talk of the sailors on the missionary ship, for he has enlightened me with the most ardent loving and I have learnt that there is far more to making love than the missionary position!

Rosa looks aghast at her friend at this intimacy and then suddenly they are both laughing like in the old days, holding their stomachs, their sides aching and Louisa knows that she has chosen her lady's maid well.