

COLD OPEN

EXT. BRAINTREE - DIRT ROAD - NOON

John, Peter, and Elihu walk through a busy marketplace.

ELIHU

What gives you the right to move
your stuff out first?

JOHN

I'm the oldest.

ELIHU

You moved out when you went to
Harvard!

JOHN

So?

Peter grabs a stick and breaks it into uneven halves.

ELIHU

You don't need help when you know
what to do.

JOHN

I have more things than--

Peter whistles. John and Elihu quiet.

PETER

Hey idiots!

He holds the two pieces of the stick out to them.

PETER (CONT'D)

Draw.

They draw. John gets the larger one. He pumps his fists in
the air.

ELIHU

Shut up.

JOHN

I'm not saying anything!

ELIHU

(glaring at Peter)
Why'd you get involved? You don't
even have to move!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Not my fault I got the big house.

He returns to John, still silently gloating.

ELIHU

Go get your ink.

JOHN

Yup--

He notices Abigail nearby, looking at some produce, white as a sheet. At the sight of her, John freezes.

PETER

Here we go...

Abigail looks up and sees John. Relief washes over her face.

ABIGAIL

Mr. Adams! Oh, thank God, someone I know. I usually come with Mary, but she's too busy with the wedding.

She pauses, then rolls her eyes and chuckles. John heaves a little at her laugh, a smile on his lips.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I sound completely insane. I'm fine, really.

JOHN

I... uh...

Peter pokes him in the back. John flinches from surprise.

Abigail notices his brothers. Terrified, she runs off.

PETER

That was much better, John! Next year you can graduate to sentences!

John collapses on the ground and lies there, groaning.

END OF COLD OPEN

CONTINUED:

Richard greets Mary with a chaste kiss on the hand, but their eyes suggest something less innocent. For the rest of the scene, they never break eye contact.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

What are you doing November 25th?

MARY

Nothing in particular.

RICHARD

Now we're getting married.

Abigail leaves for the kitchen. Richard swings around to sit next to her on the couch.

MARY

Watch your step.

RICHARD

Eh, it's just a bit of water.

Mary adjusts herself in a flirtatious manner.

MARY

Betsy, get Phoebe to clean this up.

BETSY

Mama said not to leave you and him alone.

RICHARD

It'll be our little secret, Betsy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betsy shakes her head vigorously. Richard shoves her so her foot falls into the puddle.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Someone should really clean that up.

MARY
There are rags in the kitchen.

Betsy storms off. Richard tucks his hand behind Mary's ear and leans in.

Within a second, Abigail walks in.

MARY (CONT'D)
Nabby, go away...

Abigail grabs her window-cleaning rags and hurries out of the room.

Richard and Mary lean in for a second time.

John walks in through the front door.

JOHN
Get a room.

Richard and Mary finally break eye contact.

RICHARD
We're trying!

BETSY (O.C.)
I'm baaaaack!

Mary, in fetal position, screams.

John backs out of the front door, eyes still glued to Richard, Mary, and Betsy somewhere off-camera.

EXT. ADAMS HOMESTEAD - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

INT. ADAMS HOMESTEAD - BEDROOM - EVENING

John, Peter, and Elihu fill up a trunk with books, quills, and other office supplies.

ELIHU
Did you say anything?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Couldn't have. Doubt Miss Smith
speaks "um."

Peter loads up more items from a pile outside the bedroom.

JOHN

I say more than um...

Peter pokes his head into view.

PETER

I know: you also say "uh."

Elihu begins to load a pile of books on the floor into a trunk.

ELIHU

Don't complain, Peter. This is the
first time John's ever shut up.

Elihu grabs a book from the pile.

PETER

Maybe you could mime to her, maybe
she'd like that.

Elihu drops the book into John's hands.

ELIHU

Girls like gifts. She likes books.

JOHN

How did you know that?

ELIHU

Because I don't have the power to
shut you up.

EXT. SMITH HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

INT. SMITH HOUSE - PARLOR - NOON

Mary sits, hemming the skirt of an elegant dress.

Betsy throws a log onto the fire.

Sparks fly straight at Mary. She waves them away.

MARY

You singed the sleeve.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETSY

Last time I set my sleeve on fire.

MARY

If you set this on fire, I'm
setting you on fire with it.

She looks at the sleeve and sighs.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'll be right back.

Mary goes into the hall. Betsy runs to the spinning wheel.

Abigail enters, holding a pitcher of water and a few glasses.
She puts it down on the side table and pours a few cups. She
sees the singed sleeve.

Her face lights up at the sight. She pours a bit of water on
it and scrubs with her apron.

Mary reenters with a pair of fabric scissors.

MARY (CONT'D)

Abigail! What are you doing?

Abigail spins.

ABIGAIL

I... I saw dirt on the sleeve--

She's cut off with a laugh from Mary. She puts her hand on
Abigail's shoulder, a comforting gesture. It has quite the
opposite effect on Abigail.

MARY

Betsy signed it. It's okay, I had
to cut it off anyway.

John enters, carrying a satchel. Under his arm is the book
Elihu gave him. He stops short when he sees Abigail.

Abigail's relieved at the interruption. She smiles at him and
holds up the pitcher.

ABIGAIL

Would you like some water, Mr.
Adams?

JOHN

I brought you a book.

He shoves it into her hand and runs away. Abigail stares at
the book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ABIGAIL

Why would he give me this...?

Richard appears in the doorway.

RICHARD

Because he likes you.

ABIGAIL

(sarcastic)

Really? No, he couldn't possibly.

RICHARD

Then why are you surprised he gave
you a gift?

The cover is in Latin.

ABIGAIL

Because I don't speak Latin.

BETSY

If Mr. Adams likes you why aren't
you courting him?

Abigail's taken aback. Richard and Mary watch the show.
Richard's hand drifts to a button on Mary's dress sleeve.

ABIGAIL

Because I don't want to.

BETSY

But he likes you.

ABIGAIL

I don't know him at all.

BETSY

But he likes you!

ABIGAIL

That doesn't mean I automatically
like him back.

BETSY

But--

EXT. SMITH HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

John walks out, and sees Abigail sitting in the shade of the conveniently placed tree, watching the night sky.

ABIGAIL
Heading home?

John nods. Abigail motions for him to sit with her. He does.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
I needed a break from all those
people.

She pauses. They stare up at the sky together. At last, the silence isn't awkward.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
I finished Lear. I'll mail it back
to you.

JOHN
Mail it back?

ABIGAIL
Well, you have no reason to come
here anymore.

John gets nervous. Then, the anxiety disappears.

JOHN
You're teasing me.

ABIGAIL
It's what I do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Never to me.

ABIGAIL

I tease my friends.

JOHN

We're friends?

ABIGAIL

I think so, after what you did for me. Thanks, for making my evening.

She looks at him with a delicate smile.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I can see why Richard likes you.

She gives him a friendly kiss on the cheek. But when she releases, she lingers. She stays there until John turns his head to meet her lips.

The kiss is passionate, innocent, and romantic all at the same time. Abigail lies on the grass, smiling as she kisses him, one hand on his back. John runs his hands through her hair.

Finally, he pulls away. Abigail's eyes are still closed. He falls onto the grass beside her.

JOHN

That was a really good pity kiss.

ABIGAIL

Mmm-hmm...

Her smile fades. Embarrassment creeps in.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I-- I-- I'm sorry, I've never... you know, kissed any... one... um...

JOHN

Honestly, I've wanted that so long I was going to like it no matter what.

ABIGAIL

Well, maybe... that's good... uh... by the time the shine wears off I'll-- I'll be better.

A beat. They lie together under the starry sky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Who's stammering now?

Abigail giggles.

They both sit up. John extends a hand to her, business-like.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Mary and Richard two-point-oh?

Abigail takes his hand.

ABIGAIL

Mary and Richard two-point-oh.

They shake.