

WADDINGTON HALL

Episode #101 "A Changing World"

Written by

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Based on a true story.

TEASER

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - SIR JOHN'S BED CHAMBERS - NIGHT

A grand bed stands in the midst of the room, harbouring both SIR JOHN TEMPEST (early 60s), the head of the Tempest family and a good man from a now-gone age, and his wife, LADY AGNES (early 60s), a strict but loving matriarch with long, dark hair in waves.

The moonlight leaks through drawn curtains, bathing the room in a cold light.

Sir John grumbles to himself in his sleep. His face scrunching.

EXT. HEXHAM FOREST - MORNING

The early morning sun shines through the canopy, speckling its light. Everything is quiet. The Devil's Water river babbles.

A sudden roar breaks the tranquil silence. Armour-clad men, some in red surcoats and some in white, meet--creating man-made thunder.

Devil's Water rushes. Its flow growing more violent, breaking over rocks within.

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - SIR JOHN'S BED CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Sir John groans, pained in his sleep.

He tosses and turns as discomfort threatens his rest. His face scrunches more.

EXT. HEXHAM FOREST - MORNING

The Lancastrians are being pushed back--closer and closer to the steep bank of Devil's Water.

LANCASTRIAN SOLDIER
Stand fast, men!

The clanking of armour, as the Lancastrian forces are pushed to the bank edge, is drowned out by the river's voice.

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - SIR JOHN'S BED CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Sir John curls up, into the foetal position, dragging the covers to his chin.

Lady Agnes besides him starts to stir.

LADY AGNES
(mumbling; half-asleep)
John... Dear...

Sir John groans some more. His hands pull the covers down to his chest--the source of the pain.

EXT. HEXHAM FOREST - MORNING

Begs and pleas of drowning men are lost to the babbling river. Bodies become still in Devil's Water.

The Lancastrians at the top of the pile clamber away, pushing and fighting one another, trying to cross to the other bank.

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - SIR JOHN'S BED CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Lady Agnes, now more awake, rests a hand on her husband's arm. She tries to hold him--to pull herself closer to him--but falters in fear.

Sir John lets out a soft wail, as the pain peaks.

LADY AGNES
(softly)
John, wake up. 'Tis only a
nightmare. Come on now.

EXT. HEXHAM FIELDS - MORNING

At a great pace, HENRY VI (mid 40s), a pale and bearded man with the weight of a kingdom clearly crushing him, and his two men emerge from the woodlands and ride across open fields.

The land wears a fine mist, softening the shine of sun as it spotlights Henry for all to see.

He rides on with his men.

After putting some distance between himself and the Yorkists remaining at Devil's Water, Henry pulls his horse to a momentary stop.

Turning, he stares back at the forest.

KING'S GUARD

Sire... We must keep riding. We should find refuge with the Penningtons. They have always been great allies to you, my liege.

Henry's gaze is fixed on the forest, though. His mind seems to be still lost somewhere within.

KING'S GUARD (CONT'D)

Sire?

Henry blinks a few times, breaking himself out of the trance-like state he'd fallen into, then nods a little breathlessly.

KING HENRY VI

Yes... Yes. Let us ride.

Henry spurs his horse again, turning away from the forest and setting off. His guards follow.

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - SIR JOHN'S BED CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Sir John's eyes open, but he doesn't seem to move. He winces and another cry of pain leaves him.

LADY AGNES

Is all well, dear? Are you alright?

Sir John--pain subsiding--takes a few deep, long breaths. He closes his eyes again for a moment.

SIR JOHN

I... Yes, I think I am.

He rubs his chest, then turns to face his wife with warmth and a reassuring look.

SIR JOHN (CONT'D)

I love you.

Lady Agnes smiles. They share a quick peck.

LADY AGNES

And I love you too.

Without another word, they cuddle up together and drift off back to sleep.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. WADDINGTON HALL - DAY

The sky is blue, speckled with clouds, and the sun shines brilliantly upon Waddington Hall and its gardens.

Suddenly, laughter breaks the peace and quiet.

Sharp giggles from three young girls--JOHANNA (15), the eldest Tempest daughter with light, plaited hair and a keen wit; ALICE (10) the middle Tempest daughter with darker hair in bows--the spitting image of her mother; and JO (8) the youngest Tempest daughter with shorter, loose-flowing hair and an untouched innocence--echo from inside the Hall.

The front door of the Hall is pulled opened, and the three girls rush out into the front garden. There, they pause for a moment.

Johanna takes a few quick breaths then looks over her younger sisters' heads towards the right side of the Hall.

JOHANNA

Follow me. This is the quickest way!

She leads her sisters in running around the Hall, following a gravel path to the back gardens.

As they go, the girls set off laughing again.

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - OFFICE - SAME TIME

Sir John, looking well, stands with his arms held behind his back, watching out a window into the back gardens.

His gaze is focused on a solitary, old tree in the midst of the gardens, circled by a path and then well-kept flowerbeds.

A small smile rests on his face.

Behind him, scribbling away in a book of accounts, is JOHN DE WADYNGTON (15), cousin of the Tempests, apprentice to Sir John, and a silent observer.

The sounds of the girls' laughter grows nearer, as they make their way towards the back gardens.

Sir John takes this as his signal.

He pushes open a secret, hidden door and descends a small spiral staircase within.

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sir John emerges from another secret door. His small smile has grown--doubled even.

He makes his way to a large mullioned window, where he lightly presses on the glass panes, trying to remind himself which opens.

Finally, he pushes the correct one open and climbs out of it and into the back gardens. His daughters' gleeful shouts and laughs grow closer.

EXT. WADDINGTON HALL - GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Sir John casually strolls to the tree in the middle of the gardens.

As he gets beneath its shade, the sounds of shock and bewilderment, mixed with giggles, draws his attention to Johanna, Alice, and Jo.

The girls slow down from their light runs to easier walks as they approach their father.

ALICE

How?! How did you beat us here?

Sir John chuckles, booping Alice on the nose as she, and the others, get close to him.

SIR JOHN

That, my dearest, is and will always be a secret.

ALICE

But then the game simply isn't fair! In fact, I refuse to play anymore.

JO

Would you really prefer to sit it out? What if we just get faster? I think I will be fast enough to beat him one day.

Alice looks down at Jo, as older siblings often look at their younger counterparts--with a loving, indulgent, and bemused smirk.

As the youngest pair are pre-occupied with themselves and discussions of whether they can get fast enough, Johanna focuses on their father.

JOHANNA

(in a hushed voice)

How did you do it though? Surely,
as the eldest, I ought to know.

SIR JOHN

And in time I am sure you will.

(to all his daughters)

Now, come on, girls. Let us head
inside and get on with the day.
Enough games for now.

Alice and Jo, despite the former's apparent refusal to play ever again, seem against the idea of the fun being over. Still, when Sir John sets off walking back towards the Hall, they all follow.

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

John de Wadyngton smiles softly, as he watches Sir John and his daughters head back round the Hall towards the front.

He closes the open window before making his way to the open secret door, closing it behind himself as he enters the stairwell.

INT. WADDINGTON HALL - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

As John emerges from the stairwell, slipping back into the office, he closes the secret door--making sure it clicks and keeping Sir John's trick hidden.

Sitting back down at his desk, John can't quite hide his pride.

He takes his quill and taps it against the inkpot.

Before he can write, however, a knock comes from the door. John looks up.

Standing in the doorway is RICHARD TEMPEST (late 30s), the Tempest heir--a well-groomed and attractive man burdened by great expectations. He gives John a brief, friendly smile.

RICHARD
Good morrow, cousin. Good morrow...
(looking at Sir John's
empty desk)
Father.

John chuckles.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Where is the old man? Never mind.
Wherever he might have found
himself, that is his business. I am
here to discuss ours.

JOHN DE WADYNGTON
Ours?

RICHARD
Indeed! Ours. How art thou?

John chuckles again, as Richard hams it up.

JOHN DE WADYNGTON
I am well. All is well. The books
are well... as am I.

Richard sits on John's desk, both laughing at their
silliness. After a moment, their laughs fade, leaving them in
a pleasant silence.

RICHARD
How about a ride?

JOHN DE WADYNGTON
Now?

RICHARD
Is there anything better to do?

JOHN DE WADYNGTON
Better...? No. But--

RICHARD
Then come on, cousin. Join me!

SIR JOHN (O.S.)
Join you in doing what exactly?

Richard spins around and stands, facing his father. He gives
a gentle bow of his head.

RICHARD
Good morrow, father.

Sir John enters and moves to his desk, sitting as he speaks.

SIR JOHN

Yes, yes, and to you too, lad. Skip the pleasantries, Richard, and be clear. What was it that you were roping your cousin into?

Richard and John share a glance, before Richard focuses on Sir John.

RICHARD

I was asking whether he would like to join me on my morning ride.

Sir John glances past Richard, focusing on John de Wadyngton for a moment.

SIR JOHN

The lad is at his work, Richard.

Richard chuckles then catches himself and nods respectively.

RICHARD

Of course, father... but he is a growing lad. Such should be out in nature. Taking in the fresh air, riding and playing! 'Tis men who should be in offices and working on accounts.

Sir John's gaze finds its way back to Richard. A small smirk grows on his old face.

SIR JOHN

Is that you volunteering to take his place then?

Richard clenches his jaw--wanting to snap back. He decides against it, however, and simply shakes his head.

SIR JOHN (CONT'D)

As I thought.

(BEAT)

Alas... Should young Wadyngton's work be pleasant to the eye for the morrow, he may ride with you. If it is not, however, I will need him to stay and carry on. Is that understood, the both of you?

Richard and John exchange a pleased look, then nod to Sir John.

Sir John stands with a light grunt. He makes his way over to John's desk and peers down at the book and accounts from over the young lad's shoulder.

EXT. WADDINGTON HALL - STABLES - DAY

Richard stands by his horse, untying the reins. He stands alone, with a difficult to read look on his face--maybe unhappy, maybe focused.

Just as he finishes untying his horse, reins in his hands, footsteps come from behind, crunching on the gravel path.

Richard looks back and sees John de Wadyngton approaching, a smirk on his face.

JOHN DE WADYNGTON
(playfully)
Were you actually going to leave
without me? Do you think so little
of my work?

Richard smiles, as John starts to untie his own horse's reins. The horse is less noble and sturdy than Richard's, but still respectable.

RICHARD
The thought did cross my mind, I
confess.

JOHN DE WADYNGTON
You are truly a rogue, you know
that?

RICHARD
Yes... I think it would be hard for
me to get this far into my life
without knowing such. Come on.

With both horses untied now, Richard and John take their horses from the stables and mount them.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(spurring his horse)
Keep up, cousin!

Richard sets off riding, with a laugh, and John follows, laughing too.

EXT. WADDINGTON ESTATE - DAY

The horses' hooves thunder as they beat against the dirt.

Richard and John laugh loudly, as if they haven't laughed in such a way for years. They race one another, using trees as checkpoints or small finish lines.

John spurs his horse on, pushing it to its limits, and passes Richard. He looks back, full of pride and joy.

Richard shakes his head dismissively, sharing a similar look of pride as his cousin rides on.

EXT. WADDINGTON ROAD - CONTINUOUS

As they reach a dirt road, leading back to Waddington Hall, the pair slow gently to trots, going down the road alongside one another.

JOHN DE WADYNGTON

We must do this again! That--That was brilliant!

RICHARD

Indeed, we must. I cannot let you lord over me as winner of our race for long. That needs fixing.

They chuckle, then fall into a silence as they ride together.

The wind rustles the leaves of the trees that line the road. Birds sing their song in the distance.

JOHN DE WADYNGTON

How are you fairing then, cousin? You asked me earlier, whether I am well, but I failed to ask you.

RICHARD

I... am well. I am good, John. Thank you.

(BEAT)

I fear I should feel worse, given the war spreading across the country... alas, I am here and I am well and happy--and that is the truth of the matter. God bless.

JOHN DE WADYNGTON

And Sibyl? Is all well with her?

RICHARD

(blushing)

Indeed.

John looks across at Richard, intrigued by his short answer.