



Universidad de Oviedo

THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH: THE WORLD OF KINGSBRIDGE



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Introduction

I read *The Pillars of the Earth* the summer I was 16 years old. It was a cold one, full of thunderstorms, soft darkness, and forests. Forests that felt as lonely as I was —though the fiery discontent was (probably) only mine. So, I rebelled, in my own quiet way, and set out to find a book. The summerhouse was filled with suffocating silence, but so it was with stories: I liked the one that talked about a cathedral the most. And its world. It was one I revisited so many times, trying to build it in my dream architecture, “simultaneously controlled by the selected, directing words of the text and liberated —that is, unconstrained by the limits of the visual or aural” (Hutcheon 2010: 23). I adapted it, or sketched a private adaptation: the places, the characters, the enacting of words in a mixture of movie-like visions, fragmented imaginary, and emotion. It seemed as the culmination of Kingsbridge, until I learned of its realized adaptations —someone else out there had done more than just *dreaming*.

I felt torn, between the desire to return to the known pattern¹ —to the story—, and the refusal to engage with that I knew was not going to be ‘as good as the book’. Except the thing is that it was never about the book. It was not a crusade to defend Ken Follett’s *Pillars*, but *mine*: my “ideas, images, interpretations” (Costanzo Cahir 2006: 13), what I had made of it until it was my own, which was not really different than what the adapters had done —as I had had my “values, aims, and ambitions” (16), so had they. In front of me was but their *awakening* of the story, their strong, vivid impressions of what the book’s fictional world looked like, and what it all meant²: their *dream architecture* outside the *dreaming*, in their own terms —medium, mode, aesthetic.

¹ Kubler 1962: 72

² Costanzo Cahir 2006: 13

The Pillars of the Earth is about building a cathedral, have it your way or any other: Follett's, Pielmeier & Mimica-Gezzan's (series), Kempke's (videogame). It is also about passion. All the creators did was out of unconditional love for the story, driven for the certainty that it was something special –they made it something special, in so many different ways. From the individual, solo work of author (Follett) and *receivers* to the collaborative enterprise behind the series and the video game: “as in the building of a Gothic cathedral, there are multiple makers and therefore [...] multiple adapters” (Hutcheon 2010: 83) –multiple storytellers.

“[S]torytelling is always the art of repeating stories” (Benjamin 1992: 90). Stories that come back to us in a different form, transformed but yet recognizable, showcasing but the extent of our capacities of constructing – and translating– narratives in all possible languages: word, visual, aural, interactive.

‘Reunion scene’ is the moving from the word/telling (novel) to the audiovisual/showing (mini-series), the latent building up capabilities of the visual and the aural, and expectations –the adoration of the known. It sees how image and soundtrack have an incredible story-building power; how dialogue paves the way, like glass, allowing to look through it rather than at it; and how *change* may be the truest way to be faithful to the *originary*.

‘We came to see you, Jack’ is the literary made interactive (video game), and it is all about storytelling, from that embedded in the space (*environmental storytelling*) to that created by scripted consequences; agency, the fluid, shifting ownership of the story that is let go in favour of the receiver, yet is an ever-present hand ready to regain control over the narrative; and a full of potential hybrid: the literary/filmic breathing into the interactive.

'Texts become part of us' is a reflection on the first adaptation that is ever done: that of the receiver. It takes the explored in both 'Reunion scene' and 'We came to see you, Jack' and builds on it, awakening its understanding as texts—in any form—are awakened in the receiving. Dream and imagination, and the slaying of the old gods of how adaptation is received: "[i]n the workings of the human imagination, adaptation is the norm, not the exception" (Hutcheon 2010: 177).

1. Methodology

The Pillars of the Earth is a massive work. That statement is as true to the book (806 pages) as it is to the mini-series (428 minutes, ≈7 hours), and the video-game (≈13 hours). It would have been a mammoth of an analysis to do the full any of them, but the three, that would have been colossal—much like a cathedral. It was a humbling task to understand that it was a better fit for giants, and see there was nothing lacking in aiming *smaller*.

Free from the weight of analysis wholeness, there was left how to approach the three stories. I found the answer in Costanzo Cahir and her *Literature into Film: Theory and Practical Approaches* (2006). Here she talks about "single, isolated moment[s]" (scenes) and makes three eye-opening questions: "What was lost, if anything? What was gained? What unique slant, if any, did the [film] assume?" (16). It had been meant just for "literature to screen", but I could not find it any binding, as it worked as well for the video game adaptation: the same questions could be asked to it. Questions that were freedom-infusing: in shortness, in focusing in something concrete, there existed the possibility to express the infinite.

The search for that "single, isolated moment" required revisiting the novel (Pan Books edition 2007) and its chosen adaptations: the mini-series (Starz 2010), and the video game (Daedalic Entertainment 2017; Keith Ballard

playthrough). The pursuit was in pose of a meaningful enough passage, of something that, while short, encapsulated the whole of its medium storytelling possibilities. The one in which Jack and Aliena find each other – the *reunion scene*– was it.

As there are three works –and thus scenes, compiled as annexes in their textual, visual and dialogic spheres– three separate analyses might be expected, though only two would be found: that of the mini-series, and that of the video game. Following a sequential order, the analysis would focus on answering Costanzo Cahir’s questions, for which Ken Follett’s work would be essential. Not providing a solo analysis of the novel does not mean that the novel is forgotten, or neglected –adaptation demands the *originary* material. But it is by analysing it together with the stories born from it that it becomes relevant. Figures are added to complete and illustrate the *answering*.

The analysis is a convergence of Hutcheon’s *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), the work and ideas of outstanding authors, and my own perceptions. The exploration of the world of Kingsbridge is as much a work of theory as it is of passion.

2. Reunion Scene

The scene begins with Jack working on his statue. And it is not casual that it does so. The previous scene finished with a mention of it, making for an organic transition –the statue guides us, becoming, together with Jack, an element that remains, and thus grounds us. This never happens in the book. Jack is not in Saint Denis carving images on the stone when the narrative returns to him again in the short yet intense back and forth of chapter 12, nor has he been working there for a long time, as the series hints: he has just arrived. Yet, in the series narrative, it could have not happened in any other way. Jack’s stay in Saint Denis has to make up for his whole

peregrination along the *Camino*, as well as his stay in Toledo. All the architectural knowledge gained in the different cities of France and Spain, as well as the guidance provided by the Saracen Raschid Alharoun, are key pieces for our cathedral to be completed –and since the story has no purpose if it does not serve that end, they could not simply be erased. Thus, a choice was made, and that meant change. “Transposition to another medium [...] always [does]” (Hutcheon 2006: 16). Featuring so many location changes for events whose page extension was nearly completed by mere technical descriptions, and adding the pressure of more characters and storylines to an already complex narrative would have not been a smart choice. Not only would we be talking of its lack of smartness budget-wise –the moving of the crew to the different settings, the time-period accommodation of the exteriors, the interiors building, and the hiring of a troupe of actors (both secondary characters and extras)– but in terms of time. The immense work that would have been necessary to complete what most likely would have amounted to a time-lapse sequence of mere minutes (maybe more were dialogues to be included, especially those revolving Rashid), does not appear but purposeless. There was unbounded beauty in them, and tremendous transcendence in them story-wise, yet where the linearity of the novel can be endless, that of the series demands limits. And so, the pivotal elements are taken (Euclides, the pointed arches, the wandering, the reunion); the rest are let go. They are in our hands in all their etherity, so ready to escape between our fingers, singing the songs of what they want to be as series–Jack would say about the voices of the stone. They would take form in Saint Denis, in the master builder that reprimands him, in his book about Euclides, and the weeping stone that would be one of the two elements replacing ‘the weeping lady’. As no journey has taken Jack to Spain, another origin must be given to the statue: Jack’s doing.

The series has gone to extreme lengths to showcase Jack as a talented sculptor, making sure that we see him as such —more than the novel ever does. The necessity that there was to give him a tangible craft with which to showcase his talent when the support of words was substituted by that of image, here too answers to the void left once the *pilgrimage* is gone. It is not only Jack who wanders. Aliena does too in order to find him. The way she does or, more accurately, the way the series resolves that ‘finding’, is exceedingly clever. Jack is a talented sculptor, known for his “*twisted, agonised figure[s]*” (2007: 744), so let these figures be the ones that guide Aliena towards her lover. What was a spark of recognition in the novel, “*her eye lit on a new corbel being installed by the builders [...] She knew instantly [...] that [it] had been carved by Jack*” (2007: 744), in the series becomes an unparalleled guiding force that resolves the ‘search’ to around 30 seconds of screentime (Figure 1), utilizing the novel exchange to which the quote belongs as scaffold for its series counterpart.



Figure 1. Aliena recognizes Jack's work | Episode 07 | 03:29 - 04:05

But let us go back to Jack and his statue, at the scene in question that I have called, for the sake of analysis, ‘reunion scene’. In a tracking shot, we move from the statue to the figure of Jack (our grounding elements), to be left at a frame where all the on-focus space is claimed by them both, together with a figure that enters by the right, navigating in an out-of-focus background. Its contours are blurry, and it would appear that its identification would be a tricky one. But the series has trained us to know

who she is. Not only by her silhouette (her build, as well as her colour palette, rich in browns, and the unmistakable white cloth of the baby), but by music. Before even the focus is inverted, turning her sphere into the sharp one, and in turn, Jack's into the blurry —technique known as *rack focus*, that enables a shift of attention between two elements on the same frame—, there is a distinctive track that seems to mute the world inside the walls of the cathedral.

2.1 *Leitmotifs*: guides to feelings | Love theme

It starts softly, notes of flute that we have heard before, and that we have unconsciously been guided to associate with Jack and Aliena, through a *leitmotif*. Richard Wagner defined them as “guides to feelings”, and for us, track 21 is strongly linked to the couple's journey —their ‘falling in love’. A variation of the first notes appears timidly, for the first time, when both characters meet each other (episode 01, 48:36 - 49:39). The music hints at something (love), but that something is yet not there, and, like the melody, is vague and unsure: a song between strangers that have yet to learn the tune. But as they keep meeting, the hesitancy is gone and is replaced by playful longing as strings take over the track, which by episode 03 is fully identifiable. The two instruments work in tandem to play the *leitmotif*, representing, respectively, Jack (flute) and Aliena (strings). And they do it so beautifully, painting with sound a picture of them as characters: the ethereal wildness of the boy from the forest who dreams of cathedrals, and the untamed spirit of the Princess who longs for stories of the kingdom she has lost. As Jack is the first to feel the pull of attraction, it is his voice, the flute, the one that sings first, longing for an answer (episode 03, 35:27 - 35:43 | 37:12 - 37:23).

It is only when Aliena answers, to the pull, to the love, that her strings join the melody, saying yes to it all, “*like a thunderstorm, like a lion, like a*

helpless rage” (2007: 679) in their second kiss during episode 05 (28:17 - 29:05). We would have to wait until episode 06 (21:54 - 23:37) to fully hear the track –the duet finally performing unrestrained–, but since it is about their ‘falling in love’, having it sound during the culmination of that emotion comes organically at their love making –hence the track’s name, *Jack & Aliena Make Love*.

Jack and Aliena falling in love is subtle, not defined by grand gestures, but by patience, light kisses, and extensive internal monologues:

He had seen - clever, clever boy that he was - that she could not be won by wooing; and he had approached her sidelong, as a friend rather than a lover, meeting her in the woods and telling her stories and making her love him without her noticing. (2007: 996)

In moving from the “telling mode” to that of the “showing” (Hutcheon 2006: 23), the unbound capacities of words in their “interlinking of description, narration, and explanation” (2006: 23) are gone. We lose the control over the ink strokes on the pages, but in turn we are given something that moves, that breathes, that sings. Emotions that filled pages now contained in a glance, a smile, a touch... in a song –in aural “equivalence” (2006: 23). We hear them (Neumeyer 2015). We know it is love because we are hearing it –it is then dashingly fitting that the (demo) name chosen for the track was *Love Theme*.

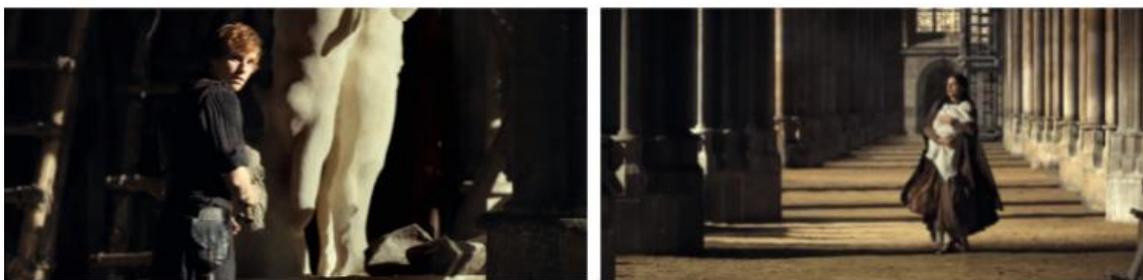


Figure 2. Jack sees Aliena | Episode 07 | 07:27 - 07:32

So, if we are to trust our new story guides, if the track is playing, it is because the two voices are there to answer each other. This is the moment Jack and Aliena meet again after the consummation of their love, and the many events that followed. The book has employed its time to tell us about their insecurities, their fears, their longing. The series does not make use of that time, simply because it does not need it to convey those emotions. It has image and sound, and those are powerful enough things to compete, in their finite nature, against the written infinite.

The ethereal, soft notes of the flute (*Jack's flute*) filling the suspended silence are the 'longing'. We are taken back to when it was just his voice, that of the forest boy, we could listen to, when his love flooded into a void that never answered. He is reaching, for he misses her, for he loves her, but with no expectations of being reached back —Aliena is not there but back at Kingsbridge. He sings but to a ghost, a wild fantasy. And then the baby cries, and he turns, and before he sees her, he hears her. Her strings play in the same timid, restrained way, like a shot in the dark. She is also reaching, searching, waiting for her song to be answered, hopeful and yet scared there will be nothing for her but silence. Hayley Atwell (Aliena) does an outstanding job at conveying that tentative hope that surges forward in the undercurrents of the soundtrack, flooding it all with emotion. And then Jack cries out her name as he sprints towards her, not trusting their song alone any more, urgency rushing through his veins as he trusts all his being into reaching her. Voice breaks the silence for the first time (07:39). Then there is the kiss.

2.2 Repetition worshippers: TV Tropes | Reunion kiss

In the book there is no hunger, no wild, intoxicating rapture: "*He leaned forward [...], and kissed her softly*" (2007: 771). There is a building towards it (a full page), and by no means is the raw, euphoric culmination of its series counterpart. But if the series had followed the novel event-sequence, the

scene, the ‘reunion’, would have not worked, because it would have crushed the audience’s expectations. Human beings are born storytellers, pattern-seekers (Tropes Are Tools / Administrivia - TV Tropes 2022), and repetition worshippers in a constant yearn for the *Econian deja vú* (Eco 1985: 5). This has evolved to be known in pop culture as ‘trope(s)’: “a conceptual figure of speech, a storytelling shorthand for a concept that the audience will recognize and understand instantly” (TVTropes - Trope). Far from estranging from it, we adore the ‘known’ –the confidence of knowing what is about to happen next (Hutcheon 2006: 114)—, and we will ask for it unless there is a weighty enough reason for its subversion. Here there is none, so trope(s) ensue.



Figure 3. ‘Reunion kiss’ | Episode 07 | 07:44 - 07:48

There is a reunion. There are two lovers. There is a kiss. Falling under either the category of ‘Reunion Tropes’ or ‘Kissing Tropes’ (or their intersection), what is encountered here is an example of a ‘reunion kiss’: “[t]wo characters who have been separated for a long time share a kiss” (Main / Kissing Tropes - TV Tropes 2022). We need that kiss, maybe with as much urgency as its protagonists do. It springs from our very core, in a larger-than-life culturally ingrained collective consciousness that began in the medieval period (Danesi 2013). It is intoxicating *catharsis*, and the culmination of what we understand as *love*. Words, or any other gesture would have not sufficed. Simply because there is no other *act* that in our understanding could surpass the *romantic kiss* as the embodiment of two

bodies coming together, breathing their souls into each other (Danesi 2013: 157).

Their voices reach, their bodies reach, their entire beings expanding until they lock in pure, jubilant euphoria —and that is what is important: the *emotion*. The kissing is just the *cinematic* manifestation of the overwhelming, precious, blurry torrent of emotion that these two characters feel after finding each other, which has led them to find each other. It is its novel “equivalence” (Hutcheon 2006: 10). Equivalence of the fear, of the hope, of the *journey*. Much of the emotional weight of this reunion, in the novel, is on the journey, and that journey has been cut awfully short in the series: it begins at the end of episode 06 (45:35), and is completed by minute 07:13 of episode 07. But the thing is, we are not *telling* a story, we are *showing* it. What is possible to access of the screenplay —“the presentation of audio” (Sherry 2016: 6)— displays it clearly: the dialogues are no literary masterpiece. If the scene is reduced to only its *language dimension*, it feels empty. Because it is not through *language* that we enter or relate to the story (Hutcheon 2006: 23). The visceral experience that is the spectacle of the series, its aesthetic pleasure, is audio-visual (Sherry 2016: 6). Characters still talk, though, and “what [they] say [...] [is] crucial to our experience and understanding [...] since the coming of sound” (Kozloff 2000: 6). So, of course, there is language. It is just that it is *transparent*, like glass, allowing us to look *through* it rather than *at* it (Richardson 2010: 4).

2.3 From literature to screenplay: dialogues

And it is in that ‘glass’ that it is possible to feel the closest to the novel. The transposition of dialogues from literature to screenplay is a relatively simple and tantamount process as there is a clear audio-visual equivalent that makes the translation of these elements entirely smooth, with the retaining of notably faithful sections (Sherry 2016: 6). This scene does exactly

so, pledging loyalty to the book, in its own way. “Dialogue paves the way” (Kozloff 2000: 38), but it is the *aural* and the *visual* that bring it to life, and it is that most of the lines of *Pillars* are not delivered through words.

Jack said: **‘What’s the baby called?’ (4)**

‘I haven’t named him yet.’

‘Why not? He must be a year old!’

‘I wanted to consult you.’

‘Me?’ Jack frowned. ‘What about Alfred? It’s up to the father...’ He tailed off.

‘Why...? **Is he... is he mine?’ (2)**

‘Look at him.’

Jack looked. ‘Red hair... It must be a year and three-quarters since...’

Aliena nodded.

‘Good God.’ Jack said. He seemed awestruck. **‘My son.’ (3)** He swallowed hard.

She watched his face anxiously as he tried to take in the news. Would he see this as the termination of his youth and freedom? His expression became solemn. Normally a man had nine months to get used to the idea of being a father. Jack had to do it all at once. He looked again at the baby, and at last he smiled. ‘Our son,’ he said. ‘I’m so glad.’

Aliena sighed happily. Everything was alright at last.

Another thought struck Jack. **‘What about Alfred? (1)** Does he know...?’

(2007: 771, Annex 1)

That all from the novel is contained from minute 07:55 to 08:36 in the series, and this is all the dialogue it is possible to find (the lines have been numbered so as to show their *literary* equivalent):

(07:57) Jack: **You left Alfred? (1)**

(08:08) Jack: **He’s mine? (2)**

(08:14) Jack: **He’s mine (3)**

(08:21) Aliena: He won’t break

(08:30) Jack: Aliena, he’s beautiful

(08:35) Jack: **What’s his name? (4)**

This exchange happens right after the ‘reunion kiss’, and that kiss is the very reason for it. All the tumultuous myriad of emotions – the *fear*, the *hope*, the *love*—, the questions that are addressed in the novel... any need to have them vocalized dies the moment the characters’ lips find each other. The

soundtrack, the visuals, and Hayley Atwell (Aliena) and Eddie Redmayne (Jack)'s performances *show without telling* in the most cinematic of fashions. Dialogue is retrieved, though, to explain what cannot be communicated visually (Kozloff 2000: 39): [Aliena] *Is it really you?*; [Jack] *Yes*; [Aliena] *I followed your work*. Because as much power as *image* has, and I believe no doubt could be cast over that, our stories come from (spoken) words. The words from the novel come back to us in a new form (Sanders 2006: 160), through a “*process of language*” (Costanzo Cahir 2006: 14): the same is said, though with a different “*grammar*” (Hutcheon 2006: 35).

In the novel, Jack is the one to deliver the line that in the series was done by Aliena: “When he [Jack] spoke, his voice was hoarse. ***‘Is it really you?’***” (2007: 770). The thing is that series-Jack has already asked that question, through song, through his *flute*, and the audience has understood it, leaving no reason for an empty repetition —the same as in the novel. Novel-Aliena undergoes the silent reaching, so it is Jack who voices it. Since their roles have interchanged, that their forms of *showing/telling* do exactly the same comes as easy as breathing. The lines remain, yet redefined, and it is simply fascinating. The rest of the dialogue is more of a *transmutation*, a *metamorphosis*, but that retains the core: as if they were not the same words, and yet they are.

The first one, *You left Alfred?* (1), is spoken softly, out of breath, like a question never meant to be asked out loud. Eddie Redmayne (Jack) pours into his features tentative hope, his eyes soft and fond as he keeps drinking the sight of her. Aliena looks at him, pausing for an instant, silently reaching a decision before her gaze travels down to the baby, that she gently reveals, and then back to him. Her eyes search her lover's face, all her emotions and thoughts a maelstrom, but yet baring it all to him, trusting he will not crush them. As if he would ever. The camera now focuses on Jack, who is like a deer

in the headlights, recognition flooding him as he mutters, like a prayer, *He's mine?* (2). The way he looks at her as if she had hung the sun and the moon, like a miracle; the wetness that glimmers in his eyes; and the softness of the track that hints towards a crescendo are just cinematic perfection. And then she smiles, and that is all the confirmation he needs —*He's mine* (3). Aliena nods bashfully, not fighting anymore to hide the happiness that she would gladly let overflow her. She then delivers the first 'original' line of the scene (*He won't break*) as the camera transitions to a wide shot (WS). The change in perspective shows the two characters together, so small in comparison to the cathedral's arches, and yet it is that smallness that makes *visible* how they feel, external appearances made to mirror inner truths (Hutcheon 2006: 58): as if the three of them were the only people in the world. Then, a series of close ups follow, tenderness and happiness overflowing the couple, the emotion of the kiss still lingering as Jack delivers the second original line (*Aliena, he's beautiful*), and *What's his name?* (4).

The scene does not really stay near the written text (Costanzo Cahir 2006: 19), and yet I do not believe any truer *transposition* could have been done. The lengthy exposition, and questioning, and overlay of facts already known work in the novel, but would be dreadful on screen. Worst of all, it would be sterile of emotion —*literalness* would have been revolting. The gestures that follow most lines would have come off as restrained, cold; when the lines did not already do that for themselves. Book-Jack and Aliena have ugly sides to them, and there are times when sympathizing with these characters is hard —more so when their actions seem only aimed at hurting the other. To have kept their catty-proneness in this scene would have ruined all its meaning. As it would have dividing it:

(08:35) Jack: What's his
name?

(08:37) Aliena: I haven't
chosen one yet

(08:40) Aliena: Should we call him Jack?

knew. Let's name him after the father I did know

(08:42) Jack: No. No. No, Jack's the father I never

(08:52) Aliena: Tom

(08:55) Jack: Tom

In the book this exchange, or rather its equivalent, happens after quite some events, and a change of scenarios. After another kiss, Jack and Aliena are chased out of the church by a young monk – “*If you insist on behaving lewdly in church, please remain in the nave.*” (2007: 772)–; step into the busy market square of Saint-Denis; ride out of the village into the fields, where the novel goes again into exposition (of events already known); and then is when the exchange happens. Bringing every detail to *visual life*, and thus having the scene stand as a *facsimile* (Costanzo Cahir 2006: 19) would have made it visually messy, time/budget-consuming, and anticlimactic: the intimacy of the reunion, the emotion, it all would have been lost, which does not seem worthy for literality's sake. Above all, it does not really add anything, making understandable the choice of maintaining the details that seemed fit, revamping them, and making a continuum with the previous elements so as to compose “a single, complete and unified dramatic [...] unit [...] of storytelling” (Cinematic Terms / A FilmMaking Glossary - Scene 2022). And it is that choice that makes of what was a fleeting, barely-there-exchange something so meaningful.

In its original, novel position the lines are nothing memorable; and are just a dialogue-conduct of what becomes the setting mood of a sexually charged fragment –though by far one of the most graphic of *Pillars*. The underlying desire of both characters takes away any profoundness from the dialogue, as if it was but a mere afterthought, and anything else could have been said (“*[Aliena] spoke to cover her embarrassment*” (2007: 773). Actually, any other thing could have been said, even nothing at all. In the series,

however, it speaks volumes. Not just because the bare meaning of the words alone, that in the new context, the series-context, gain true transcendent—series-Tom Builder made his death a felt one, and his relationship with Jack did feel paternal³, making it nothing but precious to name the baby after him—; but because of how the actors bring them to life (Kozloff 2000: 96). Eddie Redmayne (Jack) and Hayley Atwell (Aliena) own the scene. Their aural and gestural choices among the myriad of possibilities (Kozloff 2000: 96) make of it something so soft, so intimate, even playful. Atwell's little stumbling when answering (*I haven't chosen one yet*) is endearing. Just seconds before she had been so enamoured with the sight before her, buzzing with happiness, the rest of the world forgotten. The hesitancy just adds to that happiness, and to the *love*. Her whole face is a testament of that feeling: her eyes, with that lonely tear; and her smile, which is just infectious. As is Redmayne's, though his emotions are more raw, reverent, in his voice still the taste of joy-tears. That together with his sniffing, and almost choking up does not only add to the tenderness of the moment—a father meeting his son, and a son remembering his father (*Let's name him after the father I did know*)—but reinforces the *dreamer* that is the boy of the forest. The boy who fell in love with a princess, and her with him, and grew up to build cathedrals.

3. We came to see you, Jack

The *Gregorian chant* envelops the world, voices together singing with soul-hunger⁴ in a tongue you cannot understand, and that yet screams *medieval, holy, God*—and you just know, as if it had carved itself in your memories-of-other-lives in the same way it did in the stone of cathedrals.

³ In the book, Tom's first thoughts towards Jack are nothing but derogatory, thinking of him as an "idiot" (33) and "weird" (34) child, and there is always the impression that all he does is to gain his mother's favour.

⁴ Hendra 2004: 49

And it hangs in the air as the basilica of Saint Denis comes into view, as you enter, as you feel so small inside something so big. Yet where you expected silence, reverence; there is noise, life: the masons' chisels, the moving of stones, the tightening of ropes. A church is being built, and *building* is never quiet, nor still. The world moves, too busy to care if we are there or not⁵, because the story infused into it (Carson 2000) makes it a living entity. We enter the "heterocosm" of Kingsbridge:

What gets adapted [...] is a heterocosm, literally an "another world" or cosmos, complete, of course, with the stuff of a story — settings, characters, events and situations. To be more precise, it is the "*rex extensa*" —to use Descartes' terminology— of that world, its material, physical dimension (Hutcheon 2010: 14)

3.1 'Fictive' agency

In the *telling mode* (novel), "selected, directing words"⁶ are the stones of our *dream architecture*⁷; in the *showing* (series), images make of us nothing but isolated and distant voyeurs⁸; in the *interactive* (videogame), the *another world*, so masterfully designed and sculpted (Jenkins 2003: 4), becomes ours —and the utmost realization of the world of *Pillars*.

Ken Follett's black marks —words— drew beautiful *cathedrals* in the *realm of imagination* (Hutcheon 2010: 23): he sculpted in ink the world of Kingsbridge as a true master builder. The series erected it into 'our world', making it tangible, corporeal, *there*. Yet, neither belong to us. We are at best welcomed *eavesdroppers*⁹ constrained by an outsider's narration (Tavinor 2005: 26). No matter how much one desires to explore Kingsbridge, once the narrative moves forward, the space(s) are engulfed by darkness, as

⁵ Rouse 2010

⁶ Hutcheon 2010: 23

⁷ Wolf in Hutcheon 2010: 136

⁸ Metz in Hutcheon 2010: 132

⁹ Weis in Kozloff 2000: 15

the *creator* continues to walk, taking the *light* with them. It is as if you were a child, holding the hand of the only person who has a candle, wanting to let go, and, at the same time, aware you have yet to learn how to see in the dark. Any spark of rebellion is dead before it can ignite fires –or burn cathedrals. Because if they were to burn, then we would be free to build those of our own and become the light ourselves. That is the videogame: the ashes from which to erect our story.

We are the *creators*¹⁰ of this *Pillars*, it is ours –even if it is just illusory so: the events are pre-authored, and the narrative is linear (Stobbart 2018: 5), as it still needs to tell Follett’s story. But the thing is that, even if our influence is predominantly fictive, once we “step into the fictional world of the videogame”¹¹, we make it (fictionally) true. Because it is us who react to situations, who make decisions, who push the story forward. No external, all-knowing narrator who judges what to pull from the darkness, but us. If we are to move, it will be in the direction we *choose*. That is what it all is about: *choice*: “Video games by their nature require player choices, which is the opposite of the strategy of serious film and literature, which requires authorial control” (Ebert in Baty 2020: 18). But it is a *choice* that matters:

In *Pillars of the Earth*, your decisions can be a matter of life and death, and certain scenes and situations will and will not occur depending on the choices you make. Along with altering crucial story events, your choices impact the world in more subtle ways (Zak 2017).

It is true that the old cathedral will burn, that Aliena and Jack will fall in love, that the new cathedral will be completed. That is set in stone, for they are the pillars of the story, but the rest, the rest is for us (the player) to dictate. And how we do it, what we choose, can alter immensely “how [the narrative] unfolds” (Stobbart 2018: 13). Choice here is meaningful

¹⁰ Baty 2020: 11

¹¹ Tavinor 2005: 34

(Zak 2017), every step of the way. Thanks to available online walkthroughs¹², you learn that, for example, Richard (Aliena's brother) either lives or dies by the end of book two (Sowing the Wind) depending on whether you, as Aliena, respectively decide to trust or not the 'verderer's wife' on your flight from William Hamleigh (Figure 4). The emotional connection with the game is so close (Tavinor 2005: 37) that, at that moment, you are a sister terrified for both you and your brother, who has to make a decision, and who knows it will have consequences ("Looking back we had been lucky [...] that his ear had healed [...] after we had burned out the wound. Otherwise, I am not certain my brother would have survived the attack in Huntleigh"¹³). These are scripted consequences, yes –the options between which to choose are limited–, but our scripted consequences. There might be just one path forward, but we choose how to walk it, and, in those steps, resides our *authority*. We are like stained class, channelling the light (the story) to paint it in colours. Not that Daedalic had not already achieved it on its own.



Figure 4. Richard's fate: trusting vs. not trusting the 'verderer's wife' | Chapter 09 | The Oath | The verderer, who takes your horse no matter the choice you make regarding taking or not the risk to trust his wife, comes back at Huntleigh. He has been searching for you (Aliena) since William Hamleigh caught him riding his stolen horse (yes, you stole his horse in order to escape), and he has tracked you all the way to your aunt and uncle's former house. The man, probably an outlaw (the novel provides more information about this), proceeds to hit Richard, leaving him barely conscious. If the wound of his ear, courtesy of William Hamleigh, has not been cauterized –which happens if you choose the 'trust option'–, he, your brother, dies, which leads to the second cutscene, and a heart-breaking dialogue, that, as invested as you are, makes a pang of sadness run through you: *Now all that remained for*

¹² [GAMESPUB](#) and Keith Ballard's [Let's Play Ken Follett's The Pillars of the Earth](#)

¹³ [Let's Play Ken Follett's The Pillars of the Earth Part 17 - Five Years Later](#) (02:49 - 03:01)

me to do was to stay with you... to hold you... until your skin had gone pale and the burning veins clutching your neck had grown cold.

3.2 The building of worlds: *environmental storytelling*

The game design expanded the world of Kingsbridge to extents not even the novel –nor the series– could have ever achieved. The spaces described by the “little black marks on wood pulp”¹⁴ or erected from studied blueprints were there, but they never felt of great importance. I never stopped much to think about them while reading the book, nor watching the series. I was too busy following the story –or rather too busy watching my steps in the dark to care about anything but where the light was pointing towards. The novel/series world felt out of focus, like “a [...] facade put up for the convenience of the story” (Isbrucker 2016: 06:34-37). But the video game world felt like a breathing environment of endless capacities, with a sense of place, depth, and richness to it that no imagination nor visual realization really ever accomplishes on its totality:

When a reader enters the fictional world of a novel, he or she receives varying degrees of specificity regarding the space and place. Some novels may hinge on the physical sense of place – whether that setting is fictional or found in the real world– whereas others use setting as a background feature. [...] The reader may choose to build this fictional world more completely, or simply disregard world building beyond what the author provides. The filmgoer experiences a visual sense of place, but this is always limited by the eye of the camera and what the director has opted to focus on in any scene. So, while the filmgoer's visual landscape may be more complete than the reader's, both suffer degrees of limitation (Green 2018: 40)

It might have to do with the medium. There is a limit on how much a novel can develop its world –not because it cannot, but because there is so much a reader is willing to stand *description* alone–, as so with any audiovisual production –there is a budget, and physical limitations, so any element/set

¹⁴ Le Guin (1989)

not deemed necessary or not feasible would simply not be featured. But there are no such constraints when it comes to animation. Animation is limitless (Coley, 2018). For the video game *Pillars of Eternity* to choose it (2D), it meant the freedom of unbounded worldbuilding.



Figure 5. Kingsbridge view from the bridge, and detail of the watermill | Chapter 10 | *The Rise of Kingsbridge* | One of the most stunning features of the game in terms of background design is how you can see ‘change’ in the various locations portrayed. Not just in how they ‘grow’, as the cathedral does, but in how they reflect the story, the world. The subtly animated details, the ambience sounds, and the light make 12th century England, Kingsbridge, breathe.

To be able to walk the forests, to see the cathedral ‘grow’, to explore to my heart’s content every location from so many different angles, times, colours, and light. That I could simply be there, and the only thing missing was the feel of grass under my feet, the sun’s warmth on my skin or the cold reaching to my very bones made me feel closer to Kingsbridge than ever before, to the point of engraving it as my dream-architecture prototype: Daedalic’s *Kingsbridge* is the only thing I see when I try to imagine the world of *Pillars* — “palimpsests make for permanent change”¹⁵. It makes sense since it is all about *environmental storytelling*. The spaces “evoke and construct [the] narrative”¹⁶, and erect the bridges that connect the game and the story (Fernández-Vara 2009: 1). They need to matter —and they do. And not just because they are beautiful, lovingly detailed (Figure 5), but because they became *ours* the moment we stepped into the narrative: “we feel physically

¹⁵ Hutcheon 2010: 29

¹⁶ Fernández-Vara 2009: 2

present in [them], rather than in our real world”¹⁷, for as long they take up our visual field, and sound dominates all (Hutcheon 2010: 131). If we are to enact *our* story, we need a stage —except when we are not the *players*. And it is that sometimes the hand comes back, and, with it, some degrees of darkness (*non-interactive sequences*). But it is not a *darkness* that feels imposed. Because we actually hold it —as we do the hand—, ceding our (*fictive*) agency without question, and, with that, letting the *literary* and *filmic* breathe into the *interactive*.

3.3 Storytelling alchemy: *literary* and *filmic* breathing into the *interactive*

Daedalic’s *Pillars* is more than a video game. It is an audio/interactive novel, an illustrated book, a point and click graphic adventure (vgartsite 2021), and an animated feature: an alchemy of *storytellings*. It brings together the *telling*, the *showing*, and the *interactive* (Hutcheon 2010), making of us co-authors, storyboard controllers, actors, self-performers, and welcome *voyeurs*¹⁸ in a hybrid that is not afraid to embrace all its parts and expand their possibilities.

‘We came to see you, Jack’ (Annex 3) is one of those times when the *filmic* breathes into the *interactive*, when we stop our performance and become spectators —in what is known as *cutscenes* or *cinematics*— of the ‘reunion scene’ that comes back to us in another form (Sanders 2006: 160). One might think that it is repetitive, especially considering how both the novel and the series have already enacted it: we have already *read* it (Annex 1); we have already *seen* it (Annex 2). But not *this* way. It might seem the same: *Aliena* arrives at Saint Denis, Jack sees her, and they reunite. But it is a completely new experience. Recast, transformed, “its own palimpsestic

¹⁷ Fernández-Vara 2009: 2

¹⁸ Zapp in Hutcheon 2010: 136

thing”¹⁹ “that involves both memory and change, persistence and variation”²⁰. Especially *memory*. “The texts we experience become part of us” (Cutchins 2017: 7): they echo in our memory —they “resonate”²¹, at receiving, and when creating. So, the filmic does not just *formally* breathe into the interactive; it does too *literally*.

Jack is carving a corbel (Figure 6), and, looking at its state, we know he has not just started, thus hinting he has been working at Saint Denis for quite some time. That never happens in the novel (Jack has just arrived at the basilica), but it happens in the series —not a corbel, but close enough. It is subtle, but is there, which just shows how, through us, texts talk to each other. There are no *musical* guides (yet), but there are *visual* ones: the corbel —whose appearance is extremely faithful to the novel’s description “... *a figure of a man who appeared to be holding the weight of the pillar above on his back*” (2007: 744), contrasting with the random gargoyle(s) of the series—, and Jack’s design. We have seen the truss before: first at Kingsbridge, then at Tours, and now again at Saint Denis —every time more detailed, mature, experienced, as Jack has been becoming. The advantage with animation is that ‘character aging’ comes at brush’s command —as does character design. We have become so accustomed to Jack’s aesthetic, silhouette, and palette, that fiery red against rich browns, that we do not need to see his face (that now sports a messy beard) to know it is him, making the revelation so much more satisfying. Especially when, finally, the ‘musical guides’ enter.



¹⁹ Hutcheon 2010: 9

²⁰ Hutcheon 2010: 173

²¹ Hutcheon 2010: 8

Figure 6. Jack's corbel. (1) Chapter 10. *The Rise of Kingsbridge*: introduction of young adult Jack (design) | (2) Chapter 15. *The Journey*: Aliena recognizes Jack's work exactly as described in the novel "I've seen one of those before..." | (3) Chapter 15. *The Journey*: it reveals, or at least hints, at Jack's presence before he is fully shown.

Music tells stories as words and images do; and guides us, invisible layer of pure emotion that it is. The one here, tells one of 'love'. The series had its 'love theme', hinting, evolving as Jack and Aliena fall in love. The video game does not experience those variations, because it has two: 'He loves you' and 'We came to see you, Jack (love theme)'. I think it is genius how they were named. The first one sounds²² when it is only Jack who 'loves' her (though I would not call it love the first time it does), the little boy from the forest, so awestruck by the sight of the princess that he barely manages to speak. That the track maintains the soft flute of the theme of his as a boy ('A Boy Called Jack') enables us to feel it as playful, *ludus*, children's love –even when they no longer are. One of the things that this *Pillars* does is to give us an already established relationship between Jack and Aliena. The novel and the series follow their 'falling in love'. In the video game, they already are. When it is revealed to us²³, in one of those times when we go back to watching from afar, we see them fun-lovingly teasing each other –the voice actors made them sound so happy–, laughing, and simply enjoying spending time together. From their conversation, it strikes us how well they know each other (Jack calls her *Allie*, a nickname we only hear from her brother in the novel), and the trust they have put into the relationship. For Aliena to know that Jack had burnt the cathedral, something he swore he would tell no one, speaks volumes on the depth of their bond. To have the epitome of their love-showing to be a secret, to be trust, instead of a love-making scene, as it happens both in the novel and the series, makes their relationship as a whole

²² [Let's Play Ken Follett's *The Pillars of the Earth* Part 17 - *Five Years Later*](#) (14:51 - 15:10)

²³ [Let's Play Ken Follett's *The Pillars of the Earth* Part 19 - *Stinging Nettle*](#) (16:23 - 17:09)

feel *real*, with the capacity to change and growth –which is reflected by the soundtrack. When the second ‘love theme’ (‘We came to see you, Jack’) plays for the first time, it does to show two people sure of what they want, and signifying a love that would build cathedrals. So, when the ‘mature love theme’ sounds again, charged with all the emotional weight of the journey²⁴, and we see the missing voice of the song, it is really cathartic. The scene goes on to be its own unique thing – “a narrative in [...] itself” (Stobbart 2018: 11)– but before it does, it brings back the *literary*, the *telling*: beginning as if it was enacting the words of the novel (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Aliena shaded her eyes. The sunlight coming through the windows at the east end of the church dazzled her. Like a vision, a figure walked towards her out of the blaze of coloured sunshine. He looked as if his hair was on fire. He came closer. It was Jack. Aliena felt faint. He came to her and stood in front of her (2007: 770)

The game is capable of incredible animation in its cutscenes, and it is not afraid to use it. But here it does not need to be grand –there is grandness enough in the subtlety. The dust dancing in gold, the stained glass painting the light in colours, and the eyes –they are so expressive. Aliena’s avert, like

²⁴ The game faithfully takes on the novel’s Camino, and even expands it, allowing Aliena to reflect, and us with her, about her past decisions, and the first thing she does for herself: finding Jack.

those of a child afraid to have been caught, looking at everything and anything except for the figure who remains in the shadow. Considering we have been playing as Aliena, it makes sense for Jack to remain being the 'revelation'. In her POV, the same as the novel's for that excerpt, he is after all. Throughout the chapter, the game has crafted enough opportunities for Aliena to doubt about the whole thing, to be afraid, to feel lost: *What if he doesn't want to leave? What if he's happier without me? What if he doesn't want to see me?* Her eyes reflect all that in mere seconds, to then leave certainty: *We came to see you, Jack.* The same name as the track that is sounding. The 'we' does not just refer literally to her and the baby, but to *them*, to Jack and Aliena, that now *sing* together. That is why he leaves the shadow to come into the light. Because this is no longer a one-sided plea, but a conversation: *We had to hear each other out, before we could walk on again.* The dialogue might have nothing to do with the novel, but the atmosphere, the feeling, operate as words transposed:

She watched his face anxiously as he tried to take in the news. Would he see this as the termination of his youth and freedom? His expression became solemn [...] He looked again at the baby, and at last he smiled. (2007: 771)



4. Discussion: *dream-bringing and proto-adaptation*

“[The] texts we experience become a part of us, a part of who we imagine ourselves to be”. Cutchins (2017:7) goes over Bakhtin and Rilke’s idea of belonging, of formation and transformation of personalities that surges from the text(s) we establish a relationship with. We know our *texts* (in their academic definition, so not just written materials, but movies, series, video games), especially if they have become meaningful: “[t]hey are a part of us”, because they are awakened by us. An unread book, an unseen movie/series, an unplayed video game are dormant, undefined things²⁵. The reader, the watcher, the player, by reading, watching and playing them, encompasses, and gives them form (Bakhtin 1990: 306). But it is *form* given to their *reanimation* of the latent story: “a creative *and* [...] interpretative act of appropriation” (Hutcheon 2010: 8).

And that is *adaptation*. What it is perceived as the original, our original, is but our ‘dream’ adaptation. Hutcheon talks about three modes: the *telling*, the *showing*, and the *interactive*. I would add a fourth: the *dreaming*, one strong and private, built with “feelings and experiences” (Cutchins 2017: 7), one that makes of text-receivers *proto-adapters*. Proto-adapters who would codify whole systems of emotional experience²⁶ depending on the media nature of the text –be it a novel, a series, or a (video) game. And it is that the *dreaming mode* is about translating into emotional experiences, and forging impressions about the fictional that ignite a proprietary attitude towards the work, or more precisely, the *proto-adaptation*.

Proto-adaptations are adaptations never realized outside the *dreaming*, born of the first contact with the story, whether it is with the *originary* or its “repetition[s] without replication” (Hutcheon 2010: XVI). It is against them

²⁵ Ursula K. Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge of the World*

²⁶ Costanzo Cahir 2006: 13

that those which are *realized* –in the telling, the showing, and/or the interactive– clash. And because the *proto-language* is that of emotions, the response to the encounter is always going to be (personally) biased²⁷. The awakening would never be a reliving of our ‘dream’ adaptation: “to the extent that each of us is different, so will be the [*proto-adaptation*] we each create individually” (Boyum 1985: 44). For that individual vision of ours to align with the adapter’s own is doomed to failure –and to an (almost) inescapable disappointment. And it is that text-receivers are deeply self-centred creatures: there exists in them the expectation, the demand even, of any realization to align perfectly with that by them dream-brought into being. That will not happen, not ever, not really. Dream-brought visions are unique, and, when realized, even more so: “as in the building of a Gothic cathedral, there are multiple makers” (Hutcheon 2010: 83); in the creation of a *realization*, there are multiple proto-adaptations, born from multiple first contacts. And these contacts tend to be with a novel.

Dream-bringing is heavily linked to literature. There are two reasons for that. The first is that the *literary* is origin prone. It is where the story, normally but not exclusively, sparks from, its lifeblood²⁸. The other is the close relationship between *dream* and *imagination*:

In the telling mode –in narrative literature, for example– our engagement begins in the realm of imagination, which is simultaneously controlled by the selected, directing words of the text and liberated – that is, unconstrained by the limits of the visual or aural (Hutcheon 2010: 23)

Proto-adaptations born of book-first contacts are the most unconstrained: the form-giving freedom is absolute. The reader is in complete control of the *reanimation* architecture, choosing as desired what to link to it, and how to construct it, thus building the dream form of words.

²⁷ Costanzo Cahir 2006: 13

²⁸ Seger 1992: xi

Figure 8. BUT IT'S ONLY US. Philip looks for some sort of closure in someone who's seen it all. Aliena's words are less of a comfort than she thinks it is | just. the thought Philip tries to have some sort of talk about what happened but it's like. the way he asks is so unproductive, like there's nothing good to come of knowing how he died. do you want to know the way he choked on the sword? of course not, he probably. wants some sort of opportunity to beat himself up, Aliena's gentle about it. she knows he's been through some shit, but she doesn't know that he no longer believes so, imagine being told that your friend died for a saint?? for God??, like you sent him to nothing. in your eyes he died for nothing. and that's harrowing (@birbwell)

Ken Follet's *The Pillars of the Earth* (video game) was the artist's (@birbwell) first contact with the story, and it is upon it that they have built their proto-adaptation. They assert a favouritism over Philip's character, being the most featured in the reanimation architecture, where birbwell's explores the many headcanons of theirs —as they put it, “u get to fill in the gaps with your own epic scenarios”. Proto-adaptations feed on those “epic scenarios” or headcanons —“essentially, a canon that exists only in your head”:

Headcanon refers to something that a fan imagines to be true about a character even though no information supporting that belief is spelled out in the text. Sometimes that involves filling in your own explanation for a character's strange motivation, or projecting aspects onto a character that make them more relatable to you. (Editors of Merriam-Webster, 2020)

The contact between proto-adaptations and adaptations tends to provoke a myriad of negative responses: “an adaptation is likely to be greeted as minor and subsidiary and certainly never as good as the ‘original’” (Hutcheon 2010: XII). We hold on tight to our *dream-creations*, especially when they seem to be hunted, shadowed, insulted: with the text being part of us, the proto-adapter might perceive an undermining of elements of their personality, a criticizing of who they have become²⁹, and what they have created. So, we reject the adaptation because we want to protect them (our dream-creations), and ourselves, against the threat of that which is supposed to be the same, seems to be, and yet is not —as it should be.

²⁹ Cutchins 2017: 7

5. Conclusion

An adaptation (proto or not) is a unique, independent *entity*; not a mutation, but a fully new thing³⁰ in the time and space where it happens to be³¹. That any form of the realized ones — “the adapter’s creative and interpretive act” (Hutcheon 2010: 121) — has the potential to become the *text* from which to spark the dream-bringing is proof of that. With this truth, it is possible to slay the old gods³² —the thwarted “horizon[s] of expectation”³³, the senseless fidelity, the doomed perfect mirroring— and, with them gone, embrace the opportunity left in their wake: to be told, and shown again, to interact anew with stories over and over³⁴.

Stories that echo in our memories, that find each other in them, and that collide to create experiences richer together than they were on their own —with their merits and their deficiencies³⁵. This contact and colliding results the filling in of gaps with information from the *originary* to the adapted, in a welcomed trespassing on the sacred grounds of the private fictional [proto-adaptations], and the seeing of the bases of our dream-brought creations through someone else’s imagination. *Realized Imaginations* that are influenced —colonized— by each other.

No *originary*, immutable *Pillars* exists. Well, maybe a closed, unread tome somewhere, but that is no story — “[t]he unread story is not a story” (LeGuin 1989: 198)—, and it is not *Pillars*. The world of Kingsbridge exists because it is experienced, because it is *looked at*³⁶ uniquely as each of us is unique. And it is most amazing when some of those unique visions are

³⁰ Costanzo Cahir 2006: 14

³¹ Benjamin in Hutcheon 2010: 6

³² Johnson 2017: 10

³³ Hutcheon 2010: 121

³⁴ Hutcheon 2010: 177

³⁵ Costanzo Cahir 2006: 17

³⁶ Cutchins 2017: 10

realized before *our waking eyes*³⁷. Even more when the eyes are of those who already know the story: human beings are born story-seekers, pattern-seekers, and repetition worshippers.

³⁷ Wolf in Hutcheon 2010: 136

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Annex 1. The Pillars of the Earth | Chapter 12

Scene: Jack and Aliena reunion
pages 769 - 773

Jack walked all the way around the half-circle then turned and came back, still marvelling. He returned to his starting point.

There he saw a woman.

He recognised her.

She smiled.

His heart stood still.

Aliena shaded her eyes. The sunlight coming through the windows at the east end of the church dazzled her. Like a vision, a figure walked towards her out of the blaze of coloured sunshine. He looked as if his hair was on fire. He came closer. It was Jack.

Aliena felt faint.

He came to her and stood in front of her. He was thin, terribly thin, but his eyes shone with an intensity of emotion. They stared at one another in silence for a moment.

When he spoke, his voice was hoarse. 'Is it really you?'

'Yes', she said. Her voice came out in a whisper. 'Yes, Jack. It's really me.'

The tension was too much, and she began to cry. He put his arms around her and hugged her, with the baby in her arms between them, and patted her back, saying, 'There, there,' as if she were a child. She leaned against him, breathing his familiar dusty smell, hearing his dear voice as he soothed her, letting her tears fall on his bony shoulder.

Eventually he looked at her face and said: 'What are you doing here?'

'Looking for you,' she said.

'Looking for me?' he said incredulously. 'Then... how did you find me?'

She wiped her eyes and sniffed. 'I followed you.'

'How?'

'I asked people if they had seen you. Masons, mostly, but some monks and lodging-house keepers.'

His eyes widened. 'You mean - you've been to Spain?'

She nodded. 'Compostela, then Salamanca, then Toledo'

'How long have you been traveling?'

'Three-fourths of a year.'

'But why?'

'Because I love you.'

He seemed overwhelmed. His eyes filled with tears. He whispered: 'I love you, too.'

'Do you? Do you still?'

'Oh, yes.'

She could tell he meant it. She tilted her face up. He leaned forward, over the baby, and kissed her softly. The touch of his mouth on hers made her feel dizzy. The baby cried.

She broke the kiss and rocked him a little, and he quieted.

Jack said: 'What's the baby called?'

'I haven't named him yet.'

'Why not? He must be a year old!'

'I wanted to consult you.'

'Me?' Jack frowned. 'What about Alfred? It's up to the father...' He tailed off.

'Why...? Is he... is he mine?'

'Look at him.'

Jack looked. 'Red hair... It must be a year and three-quarters since...'

Aliena nodded.

'Good God.' Jack said. He seemed awestruck. 'My son.' He swallowed hard.

She watched his face anxiously as he tried to take in the news. Would he see this as the termination of his youth and freedom? His expression became solemn. Normally a man had nine months to get used to the idea of being a father. Jack had to do it all at once. He looked again at the baby, and at last he smiled. 'Our son,' he said. 'I'm so glad.'

Aliena sighed happily. Everything was alright at last.

Another thought struck Jack. 'What about Alfred? Does he know...?'

'Of course. He only had to look at the child. Besides...' She felt embarrassed. 'Besides, your mother cursed the marriage, and Alfred was never able to, you know, do anything.'

Jack laughed harshly. 'There's true justice,' he said.

Aliena did not like the relish with which he said it. 'It was very hard for me,' she said, in a tone of mild reproof.

His face changed quickly. 'I'm sorry,' he said. 'What did Alfred do?'

'When he saw the baby, he threw me out.'

Jack looked angry. 'Did he hurt you?'

'No.'

'He's a pig, all the same.'

'I'm glad he threw us out. It was because of that that I came looking for you. And now I've found you. I'm so happy I don't know what to do.'

'You were very brave,' Jack said. 'I still can't take it in. You followed me all that way!'

'I'd do it again,' she said fervently.

He kissed her again [...] 'Well, ' he said, 'what shall we do?'

'I don't know,' she said smiling.

[...]

'Do you know what you'd like to call him [the baby]?' she said awkwardly. 'Jack, perhaps?'

'I don't know.' He looked thoughtful. 'Jack was the father I never knew. It might be bad luck to give our son the same name. The nearest I ever had to a real father was Tom Builder.'

'Would you like to call him Tom?'

'I think I would.'

'Tom was such a big man. How about Tommy?'

Jack nodded. 'Tommy it is.'

Annex 2. The Pillars of the Earth | Episode 07 "New Beginnings"

Reunion scene

Minutes 07:13 – 08:59



Annex 3. The Pillars of the Earth | Book 3: Eye of the Storm

Chapter 15. The Journey

Cutsense: *We Came to See You, Jack*³⁸

³⁸ Part 30 - Saint Denis (23:13 - 24:33) Keith Ballard [Let's Play Ken Follett's The Pillars of the Earth](#)