

Thy Young Blue Eyes

By Tara Meddaugh

© 2003

To see the entire screenplay or for more information,
contact tmeddaugh@gmail.com.

Brief Description leading up to excerpt:

After Isabella discovers the infidelity of her husband, poet Lord Byron, she leaves him, refusing him the ability to have contact with her or their child, Ada. She raises Ada in isolation, forbidding her to engage in any of the "corrupt" activities of the arts and society that remind her of her former husband. Ada's mother strictly teaches her math, what she deems the opposite of the arts, but Ada has always held a secret passion for poetry and language. While her mother is out gambling at the races, Ada's grandmother arranges for her to have her first dinner in public, at the age of 17. Her dinner is at the Somerville home..

EXCERPT OF THY YOUNG BLUE EYES

INT. SOMERVILLE HOME - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

MARY SOMERVILLE, a petite woman in her forties, sits in a chair, sipping a glass of wine. CHARLES BABBAGE, a tall, disheveled man in his late fifties, stands nearby. WILLIAM SOMERVILLE, a handsome man in his forties, pours himself a glass of brandy. BETH WALLACE, a pretty woman of nineteen, sits at the piano.

WILLIAM

Are we to be graced with a melody,
Beth, or shall I entertain with more
tales of my wounded toe?

MARY

Oh, do play, Beth! And quickly!

The men and women laugh and Beth begins plucking out a tune.
The SOMERVILLE SERVANT enters.

SOMERVILLE SERVANT

Miss Ada Byron.

Ada cautiously steps in front of the servant, entering the room.
Mary rises and rushes to her. She hugs and kisses her.

MARY

Welcome, Ada. Welcome!

Ada stares at the people in the room.

WILLIAM

Pleased to have your company tonight.

He kisses her hand.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Is your mother well?

Ada nods.

ADA

At the races. She-

Beth stands and stares at her skeptically.

ADA (CONT'D)

Oh, it's not base, for she has a system...that is...

She looks at Beth, then turns away and speaks quickly.

ADA (CONT'D)

She's simply away at present. But well. Mr. Somerville. She's well.

WILLIAM

Oh, well. Do send her our regards.

Ada nods. She trembles slightly. Charles watches her from a distance. Beth moves closer to her.

BETH

Law! She looks about to faint, Aunt Mary! Are you ill, Miss Byron?

ADA

Oh, I...

Mary leads Ada to a chair near the piano.

MARY

It's alright, dear. Only a bit
nervous, are you?

Ada nods. Beth follows Mary and Ada to the chair.

MARY (CONT'D)

This is my niece, Miss Wallace.

Beth helps Ada to sit down. Beth glances at the piano then back to Ada.

BETH

Do you play?

Ada shakes her head.

BETH (CONT'D)

Oh, then you must play harp! My mother's hired a tutor to teach me, as I have told her I must stay current in all the fashions of today.

She leans in closer to Ada.

BETH (CONT'D)

But honestly, I do not think I shall ever pick it up. 'Tis far better to learn as a child than as a woman, to be sure.

Ada looks at Mary.

BETH (CONT'D)

Do you not agree?

Ada turns back to Beth.

ADA

It may very well be true, what you say.

Beth smiles.

ADA (CONT'D)

However, I do not play the harp or any instrument. My mother disapproves of the arts.

BETH

How odd.

ADA (CONT'D)

And my father is dead.

Beth straightens up.

ADA (CONT'D)

But he was a poet.

Beth looks to Mary and William.

BETH

Yes, I know.

Mary puts her hand on Ada's shoulder.

MARY

And hiding in the corner over there, is
Mr. Babbage.

Charles steps forward a bit.

CHARLES

Ch-Ch-Charles, please. M-my
profession, it-it-it affords no such f-
f-f-formalities.

Ada looks at Charles and smiles.

INT. SOMERVILLE HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Charles, Mary, William, Beth and Ada sit at a dining table,
eating.

BETH

Should he be in ill health, I'd
consider him immediately, but long life
runs strongly in his family.

Ada moves to the edge of her seat, away from Beth. Beth sighs
and picks at her plate.

BETH (CONT'D)

And with such an ill temper, and his being so plain and old, I should rather go on living on one-hundred a year than risk my eternal happiness for two hundred pinmoney.

Mary smiles politely at her.

MARY

You are quite a sensible girl, Beth.

BETH

Thank you, Aunt Mary. Besides, I intend to have three more offers just this year.

Beth smiles at Charles. He looks around the room, not realizing what she's smiling at.

BETH (CONT'D)

I will not marry simply to spite my younger sisters as Sophy Brandwall did.

She leans in to Ada.

BETH (CONT'D)

She told me only last week her husband has still not built her the greenhouse he promised her—to say nothing of the plants with which it was to be stocked!

Ada nods, then looks away. Beth looks down at her untouched plate of food.

BETH (CONT'D)

But I must dine.

She picks up a fork, and gazes at Charles.

BETH (CONT'D)

So tell me, Mr. Babbage, Aunt Mary says England will no longer give you support for your project, so you've simply given it up.

Charles sets his fork down and attempts a half-smile.

CHARLES

I h-h-have a n-new project.

BETH

Well, what is it?

CHARLES

T-to m-m-make logarithms with-without-

Ada's head raises and stares at him. He stops speaking. The others look to him to continue.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Pe-pe-people are c-computers right n-now, but, but, m-maybe I can m-m-m-make one.

BETH

You intend to make a person?

Beth giggles and looks to Mary and William for acknowledgment of her joke. William represses a laugh. Mary smirks. Ada looks at them.

CHARLES

N-no, I-well, yes, but-but-but with st-st-steam-m-m-maybe. It will op-operate on w-words of f-f-f-fifty d-d-d-decimals a-a-a-a-a-

Beth stares at him.

BETH

I'm sorry. I simply do not understand, Mr. Babbage.

He looks at her. Mary smiles kindly at Charles, but says nothing. William eats his dinner.

CHARLES

'Tis n-n-n-nothing, M-m-miss Wallace.

BETH

Oh, well that much I understood.

She giggles to herself again. Ada looks at Beth, then at Charles. Charles looks down, then picks up his fork and begins eating again. Mary glances at Beth and Ada.

MARY

Charles is a man of many ideas.

BETH

'Tis a shame then, that no one can understand him. Or his ideas.

William sets his fork down and leans back in his chair.

WILLIAM

Give us an idea to prevent oafs like me from stubbing toes against bedposts. Will you do that for us, good man? I should pay a large sum of money for such an idea.

MARY

Watch where you walk when you rise from bed. There's your idea, William. Now, will you pay me?

Mary, William and Beth laugh good-naturedly. Charles looks up and smiles at them. Ada stares at Charles, then down at her plate.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ada walks into her bedroom with a small lantern. She sets the lantern down. She sits by her mirror and unpins her hair, setting the pins down on her vanity. She runs her fingers through her hair, then stops. She rises.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Ada pushes the door open, carrying her lantern. She walks to the bookshelves and holds the lantern up to the books. She slowly walks beside the shelf until her eyes rest on one book: CALCULUS OF VARIATIONS. She pulls out the book, then sets the lantern down on the desk. She sits at a desk and opens the book.

She reaches around the desk and pulls out papers and a pencil. She turns the book to a page and copies down a problem from the book. She begins working it.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - LIBRARY - DAY

Ada's body is slumped over and her head rests on the open book on the desk. There are several sheets of paper with formulas and other numbers all over the page.

ISABELLA (O.S.)

You've no right to allow her to attend such festivities!

MRS. MILBANKE (O.S.)

She needs to be around others her own age.

There are sounds of FOOTSTEPS.

Ada jerks her head up and looks around her.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - STAIRS - DAY

Mrs. Milbanke stands at the bottom of the stairs leading to the corridor. Isabella stands at the top and walks down the stairs.

MRS. MILBANKE

Did you lose more money, Isabella?

ISABELLA

She's not in her room!

INT. MILBANKE HOME - LIBRARY - DAY

Ada shoves her papers in the book and stumbles to the bookshelves. Isabella opens the door and walks in.

ISABELLA

Can I not trust you for one night to
behave as a proper girl ought?

Ada turns around.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

You disgrace me! You disgrace
yourself!

ADA

'Twas not a disgrace. 'Twas a
respectable dinner. Grandmama—

ISABELLA

Grandmama—

Isabella moves to her and grabs her hair, pulling her to the
chair.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Will no longer be chaperoning your
affairs.

Ada looks up at her mother.

ADA

But you are so scarcely home, Mama.
And she was only—

ISABELLA

Then I shall no longer make myself
scarce.

She pushes Ada in the chair.

ADA

I'm sorry, Mama...

Isabella stares at her and touches Ada's hair softly.

ISABELLA

You know I love you.

Ada nods.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Good.

Isabella turns to leave, then surveys the room and notices the book in Ada's hand.

ISABELLA

Whatever are you doing in here?

ADA

I...

ISABELLA

What are you holding?

Isabella takes the book and opens it. She sees the sheets of paper of Ada's work. She skims the paper then looks at Ada.

ISABELLA

You do not know how to find stationary values of integrals of the form.

Ada looks at the papers.

ADA

But I—that is, Mr. Babbage—from last night, he—he and Mary thought you might be interested.

ISABELLA

Mr. Babbage? Why, the whole of England knows he's a fool.

She looks at the papers again.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

This work appears outstanding.

Ada looks up at her with wide eyes.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Mary must have done it. She's even more exceptional than I in maths. Perhaps she might be interested in helping me with my formulas for the races.

She looks back up to Ada.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

You are excused. Go to your room and
clean yourself up.

Ada rises from the chair and walks toward the door. Isabella
sits down with the math papers and reads them. Ada watches her
for a moment, then leaves.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Ada sits on the floor before a roaring fireplace. Isabella sits
in a chair at a small table nearby. She is writing figures on a
sheet of paper. Ada looks into the fire.

Ada's eyes remain fixed on the fire jumping in the fireplace.
The flames begin to form bright yellow and orange shapes,
numbers, long chains of formulas. Ada's mouth opens slightly as
she stares, transfixed—the sounds of the fire and the sights of
her numbers consuming her.

Ada hears the sound of paper rustling and the numbers merge back
into flames. She blinks hard, then turns to her mother.

ADA

May I go for a stroll outside?

Isabella looks up from her papers. She examines the pale gaunt
face of her daughter.

ISABELLA

In the carriage. You're too weak to
walk. Wear your winter bonnet.

ADA

But 'tis only Autumn.

ISABELLA

Miss Price may chaperone you.

Ada looks at her for a moment, then nods.

ADA

Thank you, Mama.

Ada stands and Isabella does not look up.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Ada and Miss Price sit in the carriage. There are sounds of HORSE HOOVES clicking along the road. Ada smiles as they pass the vast land of greenery. She turns to Miss Price.

ADA
You promise?

Miss Price grasps Ada's hand and nods. Ada smiles back at her.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Mr. Scheneley, the driver in his forties, helps Ada and Miss Price step out of the carriage. Other carriages drive by and people walk about in stylish dresses and suits. Ada watches the activity on the street for a moment, then suddenly puts her hand to her hair. She feels the tight braids around her shoulders and back. She turns to the Miss Price.

ADA
Have you any more hair pins?

Miss Price shakes her head.

MISS PRICE
Your mother...

Ada touches her hair again.

ADA
I should-it's only, Miss Price, I
should like to make a good impression.
I should like...

She looks toward a simple townhouse in front of them.

ADA (CONT'D)
I should like him to find me agreeable.

Miss Price looks at Ada, then to the house. She pulls a few hair pins out of her own hair and pins up Ada's braids. Ada kisses her cheek and beams.

Miss Price nods at Mr. Scheneley, then walks with Ada toward the house.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - CORRIDOR - DAY

Charles opens a door and Ada stands, staring at him, eyes wide. Miss Price stands by her side.

ADA

Oh-I-I was not expecting you.

CHARLES

I live h-h-here.

ADA

No, I mean, I know that.

They stare at each other and are silent for a moment. Miss Price looks at Ada.

MISS PRICE

We thought to see a servant first, is all, sir.

CHARLES

I f-f-find no need to call a s-s-s-servant every time someone should come to the d-d-d-door. I should think my h-hands are as strong as theirs.

Miss Price smiles. Charles backs into the house.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Sh-sh-should you like to step in a m-m-moment?

ADA

Thank you.

Ada and Miss Price step in the house.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Ada sits, holding a tea cup. Charles stands nearby. They are silent.

Ada sips her tea. Charles moves a few paces in one direction. He moves a few paces back in the other direction. Ada sips her tea again. She looks at her cup. Charles looks at her.

ADA
Thank you for the tea.

CHARLES
I did not m-make it.

He sits down.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Nor serve it.

ADA
Right. Well.

She sets the teacup down.

ADA (CONT'D)
I enjoyed meeting you at the
Somerville's last month.

CHARLES
Yes.

ADA
I enjoyed hearing a bit about your
project.

CHARLES
My an-n-nalytical engine. Yes.

Charles shifts around in his chair. Ada looks at him.

ADA
Is it very improper for me to call on
you like this?

CHARLES
D-do you think it improper?

ADA

No. But I've not much sense for it.

CHARLES

Well.

He smiles.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

'Tis properly f-f-fine for me.

Ada smiles back.

ADA

Good then. Because I have heard that if a project such as yours were successful, one associated with it might be given the means to change one's position in life—to teach or tour, for example.

CHARLES

This is quite t-true, but it c-c-c-cannot become successful if n-no one can understand my work.

He picks up a tea cup and looks at it.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

At t-times, I have d-difficulty expressing my ideas.

Ada nods.

ADA

I am very competent in maths, sir. And words.

She sips her tea and looks at him.

ADA (CONT'D)

I should like to speak with you about your engine.

Ada sips her tea and looks at him.

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

The carriage jostles. Ada and Miss Price sit, looking out the window at the darkness. Ada takes the pins out of her hair so it falls into braids.

MISS PRICE

Mr. Babbage's servant has a doobie loom with a new Jacquard head.

ADA

Oh.

MISS PRICE

She says she shall show me how to use it if we return again.

ADA

I shall be anxious to hear of your progress.

Ada and Miss Price smile.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Isabella sits, sewing. Ada enters the room.

ADA

May I go for a stroll, Mama?

Isabella does not look up at her.

ISABELLA

In the chaise. Wool bonnet.

Ada nods.

ADA

Thank you, Mama.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Ada sits next to Miss Price. Ada smiles as she looks out the window.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - LIBRARY - DAY

Ada sits at a table filled with large drawings, papers, and teacups. Charles stands near her.

CHARLES

Have you n-noticed anything-any p-pattern-when you are working on a long c-c-computation?

Ada sips her tea.

ADA

Perhaps...perhaps the operations are repeated from time to time.

CHARLES

Repeated regularly, yes! So if they are comprised of a c-consistent pattern, then it must be possible to design a m-machine-a calculating machine which could do these operations f-for us.

Ada sets her tea down.

ADA

Without a person?

CHARLES

Without a person.

ADA

How would it operate?

CHARLES

Steam.

Ada looks at the steam rising from her tea.

ADA

But...steam cannot think.

CHARLES

No, but-but-but-but why can we not tell

it what to think—what to perform? If I
can find an adequate m-method of input...

He walks around the room.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

A way to store the instructions for the
m-machine, and allow them to be
executed in a specific order—rather
than a numerical order...

He moves toward Ada.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Why then, it can perform any f-function
we tell it to!

Ada stares at him.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You d-do not b-b-believe m-m-m-me.

He takes a step back.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You may laugh, if you like. Even M-Mary and William do not b-believe me. My c-colleagues at University do not believe me. England certainly d-d-does not b-believe m-me.

ADA

I...

CHARLES

I thought I could speak c-clearer with you—I stumbled less with m-my words...

He walks to the doorway.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I thought I could explain m-myself more properly, but you still do not understand me.

ADA

Charles, wait.

He turns to her.

ADA (CONT'D)

I do believe you.

He walks closer to her.

CHARLES

Then the others—they will laugh at you too. They do not believe me.

ADA

Perhaps they have no need to.

Charles walks to Ada and sits down next to her.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - CORRIDOR - DAY

Miss Price stands by the door, putting her gloves on. Ada walks to her.

MISS PRICE

Miss Stillwell let me use the loom today!
May I show you what I'm weaving?

ADA

Next time. I promise.

Miss Price hands Ada her pelisse and nods.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Milbanke sits on a sofa, reading a book. Ada enters the room and rushes to her.

ADA

Grandmama!

She bends down and kisses Mrs. Milbanke on the cheek.

MRS. MILBANKE

Ada! I do not see enough of you now!

Ada sits down next to her.

ADA

Mama keeps me occupied.

Mrs. Milbanke nods.

MRS. MILBANKE

There's color in your cheeks. Your
strolls are doing you well.

Ada smiles.

MRS. MILBANKE (CONT'D)

And how wonderful to see your teeth
again, my dear!

Ada looks down and blushes.

ADA

What are reading?

Mrs. Milbanke closes the book and sets it down.

MRS. MILBANKE

Our great Shakespeare's sonnets.

Ada's eyes widen.

ADA

Oh!

She looks toward the doorway.

MRS. MILBANKE

She's out for the night. Besides, this is my house and if I desire to read poetry, I intend to read poetry.

Ada nods respectfully.

MRS. MILBANKE (CONT'D)

Should you like to read with me?

Ada opens her mouth, but says nothing.

MRS. MILBANKE (CONT'D)

I know you've ceased your maths since you were a child, but perhaps you may begin your words as an adult.

Ada looks back to the doorway again. She shakes her head.

ADA

Oh, no. No, indeed. Thank you.

She stands.

ADA (CONT'D)

Good night, Grandmama.

MRS. MILBANKE

Good night.

Mrs. Milbanke picks up her book.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ada reaches under her bed and pulls out a blue covered book labeled "TRIGONOMETRIC FUNCTIONS." She sets it on her desk and sits down. A cup of hot tea rests on her desk. She opens the pages of the book and moves a small lantern closer to it.

Scrawled at the top left of the page, in slanted handwriting are the words: ADA BYRON, 1830.

Underneath this is handwritten a short poem. Ada reads the words:

*Oh! why Esteem'd thou this sullen Child?
Whom long ago did leave your Nested Womb?*

Ada stops reading and turns a few more pages. She looks down at it and sees at the top: ADA BYRON, 1824

There are more words now in the right margin, another poem handwritten. Ada puts her fingers to the words on the paper. She whispers the words aloud.

ADA
In dreams I dream to meet thee
In waking hours I mourn
To look o'er the Burdened Valley
Which has aptly kept me Torn
Away from thee.

She closes the book. She picks up her cup of tea and walks to the window. She stares outside. The trees, standing side by side, slowly begin to merge into a line of graphs. Ada's mouth opens slightly as she stares at it.

A small wave of steam from her tea cup drifts up to her face. She looks at the steam and whispers.

ADA (CONT'D)
Charles...

The graph lines disappear and Ada rushes to her door. She stands quietly, listening for a moment. All is silent.

She moves back to her desk and sits at it. She flips through the book until she finds a blank page. She wets her pen, looks at the steam from her cup, smiles, and begins to write.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Ada and Charles sit at the table, eating bread and soup. Ada's hair is pinned up.

ADA

What is it like? Is the sun always shining, like in your painting?

Charles takes a bite of bread.

ADA (CONT'D)

Come now, Charles! We've poured over the designs all this morning! You promised to tell me about Europe at mid-day! What is it like?

Charles leans back in his chair.

CHARLES

Like England. But more advanced. M-more intelligent.

Ada smiles at him.

ADA

You only say that because the French are interested in your engine.

Charles smiles back at her.

CHARLES

I never argue with the F-French!

ADA

Because you cannot speak French!

They smile at each other, and Miss Price enters the room.

MISS PRICE

Excuse me, Mr. Babbage. Miss Byron.

CHARLES

Good d-d-day, M-Miss Price. Won't you join us?

MISS PRICE

Oh, no, sir. I only wanted to remind Miss Byron of her promise.

Ada looks up.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)

'Tis nothing for a man, to be sure, but Miss Byron, you promised to see my work on the loom.

ADA

Oh yes, of course, Miss Price. Would you mind, Charles?

Charles smiles and shakes his head.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - SEWING ROOM - DAY

MISS STILLWELL, a rosy Irish woman in her forties, sits at a large loom. Miss Price and Ada enter. Miss Stillwell stands up.

MISS STILLWELL

I were only changin' the card, Miss Price, as you asked me to.

ADA

The card?

Miss Price nods and leads Ada over to the loom. Ada looks down on the intricate patterns in the threads.

ADA (CONT'D)

You've done this, Miss Price?

MISS PRICE

I have!

ADA

I had no idea you were so adept at weaving.

MISS PRICE
I'm not, Miss Byron! Look!

She shows her several pasteboard cards, each having a series of holes punched into them.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
I choose the punch card, see?

She inserts it into the loom.

MISS PRICE (CONT'D)
And I may weave the complex pattern of the card. When I desire a new weave, I put in a new card.

Ada holds one of the cards in her hand.

MISS STILLWELL
She looks like a long time weaver with her patterns, does she not?

Ada nods.

MISS STILLWELL (CONT'D)
But she only just started! The card does it all for her!

Miss Price sits down at the loom and begins weaving. Ada looks at her, then stares at the card in her hand. She feels the holes in it.

Charles enters the room and nods at the women.

ADA
Charles!

She moves to him, holding up the punched card.

CHARLES
'Tis half past three. Your mother will be expecting you.

ADA
Oh, I...

Miss Price stands up quickly and rushes to Ada.

MISS PRICE

We must leave at once, Miss Byron.
Thank you, Mr. Babbage. I had lost
track of the hour.

ADA

Charles, I must speak with you.

MISS PRICE

Next time, Miss Byron. Your mother
will not allow us out again should we
return so late.

Miss Stillwell moves to Ada and takes the punched card from her hand. She walks back to the loom. Miss Byron holds Ada's arm and walks her toward the door. Charles smiles after Ada.

EXT. BABBAGE HOME - DAY

Ada and Miss Price walk out of the house. Charles stands by the door and watches them walk to the carriage.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Ada and Miss Price approach the carriage and Mr. Scheneley opens the door for them. Ada turns around, smiles and waves at Charles. He smiles back, then walks inside.

Ada moves to step into the carriage just as Beth and EMILY, a plump girl in her late teens, walk by. Beth stops and looks at her.

BETH

Ada Byron?

Ada turns around.

BETH (CONT'D)

It is you!

She leans in to Emily.

BETH (CONT'D)

Emily, this is the odd girl I was
telling you about!

EMILY

But I thought you said she never
leaves—

BETH

Whatever are you doing in town? You're
not dressed for a ball, to be sure, and
even so, Aunt Mary says you are not yet
out.

Emily examines Ada's dress and simple bonnet.

EMILY

Why, you really should be out by now,
Miss Byron! We attended a ball just
last night and Beth received two
proposals!

ADA

At the ball?

BETH

Well, not entire proposals.

Ada looks toward the carriage and Miss Price.

BETH (CONT'D)

But the gentlemen intimated them—which
is really just as well, considering
they ought to offer in a genteeler
fashion than whilst dancing.

ADA

Oh. Well.

She gives a half-smile.

ADA (CONT'D)

Good day.

She turns to the carriage. Miss Price holds out her hand to Ada
by the door. Beth follows her.

BETH

So I see that you have visited Mr.
Babbage, have you not?

Ada turns around. Beth smiles widely at her.

BETH (CONT'D)

Charles?

Ada stares at her and is silent for a moment. Emily whispers to
Beth.

BETH (CONT'D)

Can you not speak, Miss Byron? Did you
not understand my inquiry?

ADA

No, I...

BETH

Then what business have you with
Charles?

ADA

We...were speaking.

BETH

On what?

Miss Price steps toward Beth.

MISS PRICE

On a matter. Good day.

Miss Price turns Ada around to the carriage door and Mr.
Scheneley helps her in.

BETH

Oh, well, good day then! We're just
out with my mother in search of a piece
of lace, you see.

Miss Price gets into the carriage, as well.

EMILY

Good day, Miss Byron!

Beth whispers to Emily, they giggle, then turn around. MRS. WALLACE, a fashionable woman in her forties, waves to them from across the street and they walk toward her.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Ada looks out the carriage window back to Emily and Beth. The carriage begins to move.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Isabella sits at a chair in the hall. Ada and Miss Price step into the house. Ada takes off her bonnet. Ada sees Isabella and smiles politely, then takes off her pelisse. Miss Price takes these items and leaves the corridor. Isabella stares at Ada.

Ada begins walking past her mother and nods at her. Isabella follows Ada's walk with her gaze. Ada passes her mother and stops for a moment, then continues down the hall.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - MORNING ROOM - DAY

Isabella sits alone, eating toast and drinking tea. Ada walks into the room behind Isabella, carrying her pelisse and wool bonnet.

ADA

May I go for a stroll, Mama?

Isabella looks straight ahead.

ISABELLA

You may walk along the garden, by the house.

She sips her tea. Ada is silent for a moment, then speaks.

ADA

I should think it might be best if I took the chaise.

ISABELLA

We've no driver at present.

She takes a bite of her toast, still looking straight ahead, away from Ada. Ada takes a step toward her.

ADA

Where is Mr. Scheneley? Is he not well?

Isabella turns around now to face Ada.

ISABELLA

I no longer desired his services. I have also retired Miss Price. Miss Marianne shall be your new chaperone.

Ada's mouth opens slightly and her chin begins to quiver.

ADA

Oh.

Isabella's lips curl up in a smile.

ISABELLA

Well, go for your walk then. Beth Wallace seemed to think you were quite strong when she saw you in town the other day.

She turns back around. Ada stares at Isabella's back. She then turns around and leaves the room.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - ADA'S ROOM - DAY

Ada hurries into her room and tosses her pelisse and bonnet on her bed. She reaches under her bed and pulls out her blue "TRIGONOMETRIC FUNCTIONS" book. She sits at her desk, then gets up and rushes to her door. She closes it.

She sits back down with her book and leafs through the pages filled with her poetic scrawling in the margins. She finally finds a page with blank margins, only a few sheets from the end. She wets her pen and begins to write:

*They who search for Hope shall find
That our Fair Lady's gone away
And in her place a Dreadful*

Isabella opens Ada's door and walks into her room. Ada puts down her pen and closes the book.

ISABELLA

Is the sun not bright enough for your
stroll, my child?

Ada stands in front of her desk.

ADA

I thought I should rest first.

Isabella walks to Ada's desk.

ISABELLA

How do you imagine resting when you are
not yet lying down?

Isabella sees the book entitled "TRIGONOMETRIC FUNCTIONS" and picks it up.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Trigonometry?

She looks at her daughter and her face softens.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

I did not know you still had a fancy
for maths!

ADA

Mama, I-

Isabella opens the book. Ada looks down.

Isabella looks to the book, then to Ada, then back at the book. She turns a page. She turns another page. She turns another. Another. Another. She stares at Ada and her face hardens. Isabella marches to the door with the book. Ada's eyes widen and she whispers.

ADA

My words...

Ada moves toward her. Isabella smiles at her.

ISABELLA

You have no need for your words.

Isabella leaves the room and Ada stares after her for a moment. She then rushes out of the room.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

Ada rushes to the hallway and looks for her mother.

ADA

Mama!

She sees that Isabella calmly walks down the stairs. Ada moves toward her.

ADA (CONT'D)

Mama!

INT. MILBANKE HOME - STAIRS - DAY

Isabella, carrying the blue book, reaches the bottom of the stairs. She walks to the

INT. MILBANKE HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Isabella walks toward the fireplace, carrying the book.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - STAIRS - DAY

Ada walks half way down the stairs. She looks down on the Sitting Room and sees Isabella toss the blue book into the fireplace.

ADA
Mama! No!

INT. MILBANKE HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Isabella uses a poker to push the book further into the fire. She sets the poker back and walks out of the room toward the stairs.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - STAIRS - DAY

Ada slumps to a sitting position on the stairs, staring at the fireplace down below. Isabella walks up the stairs at a rhythmic pace. She passes Ada and does not look at her. Ada watches her mother walk up the stairs by her. Her chin quivers and she shakes her head.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - ADA'S ROOM - DAY

Ada sits at her desk with a sheet of paper. She holds an ink pen and begins writing.

ADA (V.O.)
My dear Charles, I regret that I have not called on you as of late, but I trust Mary Somerville has conveyed to you my situation.

INT. SOMERVILLE HOME - BREAKFAST PARLOR - DAY

Mary and Charles sit at a table.

ADA (V.O.)
My mother thinks it wise that I remain at the estate-

The Somerville Servant pours tea for Charles. Mary speaks quietly to him.

ADA (V.O.; CONT'D)
But I wish to remain informed on the
state of affairs with the engine—

Charles shakes his head at Mary's news.

ADA (V.O.; CONT'D)
And any other affairs which might
affect our intimacy.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - ADA'S ROOM - DAY

Ada stands by the door, and hands Mrs. Milbanke a folded letter.

ADA (V.O.)
When last we met, your Miss Stillwell
made me acquainted with the notion of a
loom with a Jacquard head.

Mrs. Milbanke gives her several more sheets of blank paper.

ADA (V.O.)
She informed me that the new head reads
something called punched cards—

INT. BABBAGE HOME - SEWING ROOM - DAY

Miss Stillwell sits at the large loom, weaving.

ADA (V.O.)
Which enable the machine to perform a
sequence of operations—

Miss Stillwell admires her pattern, then picks up a new punched card. Charles enters the room and walks to the loom.

ADA (V.O.; CONT'D)

I should think this information might prove useful in the development of input to your engine.

Charles speaks to Miss Stillwell and she hands him a card.

ADA (V.O.; CONT'D)

Although these particular cards perform no computations as of yet, perhaps a method such as this might be an adequate place to store your instructions for computations.

Charles looks at the card. He looks up.

CHARLES (V.O.)

I am deeply troubled by your situation, my little Ada...

INT. BABBAGE HOME - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Charles sits at table, writing a letter. There are papers, punched cards, and designs strewn about.

CHARLES (V.O.)

And wish there were some greater way I could ease your isolation.

He sets the letter down and looks at his designs.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

Please know, in any case, that you have made the most valuable contribution to the engine. Your notion of using punched cards puts all my other ideas in order!

He picks up three punched cards and sets them down next to each other.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

I am designing three separate heads to read three types of cards.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Ada sits, holding a letter and staring into the fire.

CHARLES (V.O.)

One is to be used for arithmetic operations—

Ada sees images of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division signs swirling about in the fire.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

One as the store for the numerical constants (of which it shall hold 1000, of 50 digits each)—

Ada sees images of dozens of long trains of numbers in the fire.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

And one shall be for transferring these numbers from the store to the arithmetic unit or back.

Ada sees images of these numbers merging with the various arithmetic operations.

ADA (V.O.)

Your many letters and designs bring me such joy as I see the promise of the engine becoming fulfilled!

The math problems now have equal signs after the problems and Ada sees images of the answers. She smiles.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - ADA'S ROOM - DAY

Ada sits in a chair. Her hands are folded in her lap and she has a blanket around her shoulders and peers outside at the gray sky.

ADA (V.O.)

The thought of receiving your notes gives me great encouragement to make it through the long winter days. I hope this letter finds you well.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Charles sits and eats alone.

CHARLES (V.O.)

I am always found better upon reading your letters than I am before.

The Babbage Servant enters the room and hands him an envelope. He opens the envelope and pulls out a letter. He smiles.

CHARLES (V.O.)

And your kindness exudes even your written words.

ADA (V.O.)

If your machine may do such things as punching numbers onto cards to be read later, as you have intimated-

INT. MILBANKE HOME - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Ada sits next to Isabella at a small table. Isabella passes a sheet to Ada.

ISABELLA

Check the horses off, please.

ADA (V.O.)

Then indeed, it may make decisions based on previous computations. If the looping and conditional branching work as you imagine-

Ada makes marks on the sheet of paper. Isabella writes her own notations on another sheet.

ADA (V.O.; CONT'D)
Why then I should think you will put
the good Computers out of business!

INT. MILBANKE HOME - ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ada sits at her desk with a lantern illuminating a letter in her hand.

CHARLES (V.O.)
Your ability to articulate my thoughts
still remains, although we can only
speak through our ink.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Charles sits at a table with a small lantern to light it. He holds a pen and stares at a half-written letter.

CHARLES (V.O.)
I fear I should have given this engine
up long ago had I not your
encouragement and questioning.

He wets his pen and writes.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)
Cannot your mother allow a visitor
once? I do so wish to see you...

INT. MILBANKE HOME - BREAKFAST PARLOR - DAY

Ada stands by a window and looks out at the greenery of the estate gardens.

ADA (V.O.)
I believe the only logical explanation
of how such a dreary winter could pass
into such a lively Spring-

Ada smiles at the flowers blooming.

ADA (V.O.; CONT'D)

Is the notion that your letters have
melted more than the snow on our
ground.

INT. BABBAGE HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Charles sits by a window, looking out. He holds a letter in his hand.

The Babbage Servant walks into the room.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

I am amazed at how bright the sun can
appear after only a few lines from you.

The Babbage Servant hands a long coat to Charles. He takes it and stands.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

I am traveling to Turin-

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Charles walks down the path from his house to the street.

CHARLES (V.O.)

England has refused to grant me any
funds to assist with the engine-

He reaches the carriage and turns to look at his house.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

But I have hopes that my visit with
such forward thinking Italians, such as
Luigi Menabrea, who lectures there on
mechanics—

He steps into the carriage.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

Shall prove meaningful.

INT. SHIP - DAY

Charles sits on the top deck of a large passenger ship.

CHARLES (V.O.)

I scarcely can contain my joy and
eternal debt to you on the matter of
our engine.

He looks out at the waters.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

I should have enjoyed your company.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ada holds a letter to her chest and smiles.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - CORRIDOR - DAY

SERVANTS carry a number of bags down the stairs to the front
doorway. Isabella stands by the door, putting on her pelisse
and bonnet. Ada and Mrs. Milbanke stand near her. Ada's hair
is pinned up.

ADA (V.O.)

My mother is presently away for several
fortnights.

Isabella hugs and kisses Mrs. Milbanke, then hugs and kisses
Ada. She then looks around at Servants carrying the bags out of
the house.

ISABELLA

My numbers!

She turns around frantically.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

My horse racing statistics!

Miss Marianne, Isabella's servant from the Byron home, now in her mid-thirties, walks to her and hands her a folder. Isabella grabs the folder and sighs in relief. She looks at Ada.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Your mother shall return free from all debt this time, darling!

She smiles and steps closer to the door. Mrs. Milbanke puts her arm around Ada. Isabella moves to Ada and touches her hair.

ADA (V.O.; CONT'D)

Whilst I am prohibited from leaving the estate—

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

In braids, please.

She pulls her hand back.

ADA (V.O.)

I should greatly like to see you—

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

You are too young to wear it up.

ADA (V.O.)

Should you return before she.

Ada remains still. Miss Marianne opens the door and Isabella walks out.

Mrs. Milbanke and Ada watch Isabella walk to the carriage through the open door. Mrs. Milbanke squeezes Ada's shoulder and whispers.

MRS. MILBANKE

I do not know if it's a sin to say this—

Ada looks at her grandmother.

MRS. MILBANKE (CONT'D)

But...

She looks back at Ada and smiles.

MRS. MILBANKE (CONT'D)

Thank God for the races.

Ada manages a smile. Miss Marianne looks at them, then closes the front door.

INT. MENABREA HOME - LIBRARY - NIGHT

A MENABREA SERVANT opens a door and Charles walks into the library. LUIGI MENABREA, a tall, lank man in his fifties, sits at a desk, smoking a pipe. He stands as Charles enters.

LUIGI

Mr. Babbage!

CHARLES (V.O.)

My dear child-

He moves toward Charles. Charles extends his hand, but Luigi embraces him in a strong hug and kisses his cheeks.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

I am returning to England with immense news!

Luigi leads Charles to a chair.

CHARLES (V.O.; CONT'D)

I shall call on you at once.

Luigi hands Charles a pipe and smiles widely.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Ada, hair down, in braids, sits reading a letter. There is a knock on her door.

ADA

Yes?

Mrs. Milbanke opens the door and comes inside. She closes the door behind her.

MRS. MILBANKE

Mr. Charles Babbage is here to see you.

Ada's eyes widen. She stares at Mrs. Milbanke for a moment in silence.

MRS. MILBANKE (CONT'D)

He says he must speak to you about his...engine.

Mrs. Milbanke looks at her for a moment, then walks to the door. She opens it.

MRS. MILBANKE

You may receive your guest in the breakfast parlor.

Ada's mouth opens slightly, but she still says nothing.

MRS. MILBANKE (CONT'D)

Your grandfather gave me the front parlor for that purpose.

Mrs. Milbanke smiles at her.

MRS. MILBANKE (CONT'D)

Your guest will wait for you there.

Mrs. Milbanke walks back to Ada and kisses her on the head. She then moves back to the door and leaves. Ada stares after her for a moment, then suddenly stands up.

She walks to her vanity and sits before the mirror. She searches through a small wooden box and pulls out several hairpins and a few tiny blue ribbons. She holds a braid to her head and starts pinning it up, intertwining the ribbons with her hair.

INT. MILBANKE HOME - BREAKFAST PARLOR - DAY

Charles sits in a chair, holding a cup of tea. Ada enters. Her hair is still in braids, but now pinned up entirely, with the ribbons. She does not come far into the room. Charles turns around to see her and stands. He smiles at her and she smiles back.

Ada steps closer to him and his chest heaves with excited breathing. Ada sits in a chair not far from his, and Charles sits back down as well. They continue looking at each other, still smiling.

ADA

You wrote you had immense news.

He nods.

CHARLES

Y-you look lovely.

Ada blushes and looks down.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I apologize. Was that improper?

Ada gazes into his eyes.

ADA

I did not find it so.

Charles nods. Miss Marianne enters the room.

MISS MARIANNE

Should you like tea, Mr. Babbage?

He shakes his head, but does not avert his eyes from Ada.

MISS MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Miss Byron?

Ada looks at her.

ADA

No. Thank you.

Miss Marianne stays for a moment, looking at Charles and Ada, then leaves.

Charles leans in toward Ada.

CHARLES

M-might we walk outside for a moment?

ADA

No!

She looks away.

ADA (CONT'D)

That is to say, I'm not to leave the estate.

CHARLES

Th-the gardens are on the estate.

ADA

Yes, but...

CHARLES

What I wish to tell you, I wish to tell you in c-confidence.

Ada looks back at Charles and brightens.

EXT. MILBANKE GARDENS - DAY

Ada and Charles walk along a path. Ada looks behind her shoulder toward the main path, then continues walking ahead.

CHARLES

The gardens are b-beautiful.

ADA

I've not walked among the flowers in years.

CHARLES

I am sorry to h-hear of your mother's insistence on-

ADA

No, no. My mother loves me very much.

CHARLES

I've no doubt on this m-matter. I only
speak of the matter of-

She stops walking and turns to him.

ADA

Let us not speak on any matter of my
mother, Charles.

He looks at her. She looks up into his eyes.

ADA (CONT'D)

Please.

She gently touches his arm.

ADA (CONT'D)

Whilst she is away, let her be away.

He nods.

ADA (CONT'D)

Now, on what matter must you speak to
me in confidence?

CHARLES

Whilst I was in T-T-Turin-

Ada smiles and still looks up at him.

ADA

Yes?

Charles breaks her gaze and begins walking. Ada turns to catch
up with him.

CHARLES

Luigi-Mr. Menabrea-he b-became rather
intrigued with the engine. With m-my
ideas. He is writing papers on my
designs.

He hesitates.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

He wishes to publish it in F-French.

ADA
Publish it?!

She stops walking and throws her arms around him. He remains motionless at first, then returns her embrace.

CHARLES
He is sending you a copy, as well, my colleague.

He releases her embrace.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Perhaps this would be a proper t-time for me to learn French!

Ada releases the embrace.

ADA
No, no. 'Tis not only the French must hear of your engine. When you build it, it shall affect us the world over!

CHARLES
Ada...

ADA
It shall!

Ada moves to a rose bush.

ADA (CONT'D)
I have been making my own notes on instructing it to compute Bernoulli's Numbers.

She touches a rose petal.

ADA (CONT'D)
You are aware of how long the function takes when men must use the recursive formula themselves.

She picks a rose from the bush.

ADA (CONT'D)

But your engine—

She turns to him.

ADA (CONT'D)

I could create an algorithm for it that would perform the sequence for us!

She moves toward him.

ADA (CONT'D)

Charles, this is no simple calculator as Thomas of Colmar has made. This cannot be kept from England!

Charles smiles at her.

CHARLES

Then what d-do you propose I do, m-my lady?

ADA

I propose you do nothing. I propose—that is—if you should allow me, I should like—

She fiddles with the rose in her hands.

ADA (CONT'D)

I should like to translate the papers into English.

He stares at her for a moment, then a grin fills his face.

CHARLES

No one—and I am s-sincere, no one understands my thoughts as well as you.

Ada and Charles lock eyes. Charles gently puts his hand on Ada's cheek. She lifts her chin to him, and after a moment, he kisses her. She drops the rose in her hand.

She smiles up at him, then takes a breath.

ADA

I love you, Charles.

Charles steps back and looks at her.

CHARLES

Ada...

ADA

I do!

She beams.

ADA (CONT'D)

I had thought love should never come my way.

He tries to turn away, but she positions herself still in front of him.

ADA (CONT'D)

As a child, my mother kept me locked up so much in maths and away from the societal things other girls my age did.

She puts her hand on his arm.

ADA (CONT'D)

I should never have imagined it was my
maths that should bring me my love!

CHARLES

Ada, I—

ADA

But now you have found me!

Ada bends down and picks up the fallen rose.

ADA (CONT'D)

And we may marry and move far away from
here—to France if you like! Or Italy!
And you may lecture there and I may
help with your designs!

CHARLES

Ada, no.

Ada stares at him for a moment, then smiles.

ADA

You know I am capable, Charles.

CHARLES

I d-do love you, Ada. Nothing should
make me h-happier than to have you sit
with m-me every night.

She extends the rose toward him.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

B-but I ought to love you as a father.

ADA

I do not wish that—for my father never
loved me, Charles. He left because of
me.

CHARLES

Ada...I am t-too odd and too old f-for
you.

He turns away. She lowers her hand with the rose.

ADA

You are not.

CHARLES

I shall be gone from this world before
you are f-five and twenty.

ADA

My mother says I have always been
sickly. I doubt I should last much
past five and twenty anyhow.

He turns back to her.

CHARLES

Ada.

She lowers her head.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

'T-tis more than that. My wife p-
passed three years ago. I cannot m-
marry again. You deserve more than I
can g-give you.

She takes a step toward him.

ADA

But I desire you.

CHARLES

You shall f-find someone your age, my
dear.

He touches her hair gently.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

But I shall f-forever be your friend-
and c-colleague.

ADA

But I thought you—I thought you...

She pulls away from him. She shakes her head, as she holds back tears. He looks at her.

ADA (CONT'D)

No...No...

There is the sound of a carriage approaching. Ada turns her head toward it.

ADA (CONT'D)

No!

She drops her rose to the ground.

To see the entire screenplay or for more information, contact tmeddaugh@gmail.com. You may see additional work by visiting her website at www.tameddaugh.com.