Ethan Frome Film Scenes


2. **Train arrives**: “This is Starkfield” says conductor. “What is?” says Reverend Smith Rev. meets Ned Hale (he is dead in novel) dialogue by Ned Hale shows isolation and parochial attitudes of villagers, derogatory comments about the city (Boston) Shots of Starkfield as Ned drives Rev attractive white houses, smiling locals, children playing, clear sky,

3. **Inside village store**: “the smart ones get away” Harmon Gow

4. **Inside Mrs Hale’s house**: Rev. insistent/tells Mrs Hale “we must ease his burden”

5. **New England landscape** panoramic shot / children sledding in foreground/ laughter, idyllic? setting

6. **New England landscape** wide shot of Rev Smith dwarfed by imposing landscape

7. **Outside Frome house**: Ethan discovers book “Scientific American” this hints at E’s past attempt to escape/pursue hopes/dreams

8. **Snow storm**: blinding snow storm, fierce winds, two men struggling (Ethan and Rev Smith), agitated horse, wheel stuck in snow, bleak landscape, forced to abandon cart, reach Frome house.

9. **Frome house/kitchen** lamp on back wall LHS warm inviting effect on room, light and shade but not gloomy, framed picture illuminated on back wall RHS, note dialogue, Rev Smith even tells Ethan “It’s warm in here”! Fire throws yellowy-red colours on wall, creating a warm and attractive appearance. Cinematography should have shown a bleak kitchen?

10. **Pulpit in church**. Rev Smith giving sermon on the need to be charitable. Misreading of Wharton’s novella Villagers understand the Frome situation and the tragic “accident” (additional scene in film only)

11. **Mrs Hale narrates** the story of Ethan Frome. We go back to the past (24 years earlier)

12. **Funeral of Ethan’s mother**. Story begins. This is Chapter One in novella

13. **Zeena’s bedroom** Ethan helps Zeena get trunk upstairs. Intimate, smiles/laughter Ethan and Zeena marry

14. **Elm Tree** return to the present Mrs Hale “That’s where it happened” establishes sense of doom/foreboding

15. **Five Winters Pass** narrator/Mrs Hale “Folks said Zeena caught every illness she had ever heard of” But sympathetic portrayal of Zeena looking after Ethan

16. **Mattie Arrives** voiceover of Mrs Hale relating Mattie’s hard life

17. **Inside dance hall** voiceover of Mattie as ‘A very alive young woman”, Denis Eady admiring and then dancing with Mattie, cut to outside shot of Ethan peering through the window (forbidden love)

18. **After dance/ outside** Ned and Ruth’s nearly have accident coasting

19. **Gazing at the stars**. After dance, Ethan and Mattie Mattie says “It’s so pretty. I can see the moon in your eyes”

20. **Lost key**. Note camera angle Zeena looking down on Ethan and Mattie who are searching for the key. Also, the use of light and dark background with only Zeena’s face illuminated. Disapproving expression

21. **Barn** close-up of bottle of poison, light focused on white label with words STRYCHNINE capitalised. Ethan lays poison to trap an intruding fox

22. **Cutting trees** Ethan and hired hand, Jotham Powell timber to be delivered later to Andrew Hale Bright sunny day no sense of arduous life of Ethan?

23. **Zeena’s bedroom** Mattie drops the teapot and then something burning on stove downstairs Zeena’s scolding response/tension of scene
24. **Kitchen** meal awkward silences and stilted conversation Etham, Zeena, Mattie and Jothan, close up of a tense Jothan

25. **Mr Hale Timber Yard** Ethan delivers timber, asks for advanced payment

26. **Eady’s Grocery Store** Denis Eady gives Ethan a present to give to Mattie

27. **Evening together sharing a meal** Ethan and Mattie alone. Zeena gone to Bettsbridge, but her presence remains, importance of cat in this scene (Zeena’s presence) “I nearly stepped on you, puss” (Mattie) and when cat jumps into Zeena’s rocking chair “She’s keeping Zeena’s place warm” (Mattie), candle lit kitchen warm intimate effect, shows faces clearly, not shadowy as in other evening meal scenes when Zeena present, relaxed, laughter, Mattie singing, emotion between Ethan and Mattie shown by Ethan standing close behind her. Ethan’s hopes “Let’s sit here and eat, like we were” Note pivotal moment, sentence unfinished as cat breaks red glass dish. Soundtrack returns, increasing volume, Mattie crying, tension mounts

28. **Evening together after the meal** Ethan gives Mattie Denis Eady’s present (white ribbon) Mattie when she realises it is not from Ethan, doesn’t put it on. Sound of cat meow reminds us of Zeena’s “presence”, Scene ends with unfulfilled desire as Ethan caresses Mattie’s sewing

29. **Evening together, Mattie’s bedroom** Ethan and Mattie kissing passionately, not in novel

30. **Next morning**, wide shots of Ethan and Mattie enjoying sleigh ride through attractive countryside

31. **Eady’s Grocery Store** try to buy glue to fix the broken dish, Mattie forgets about Eady’s present

32. **Other grocery store** old Mrs Hale also in the store, comments “Hope nothing broke that Zeena set store by”, ominous, also metaphor for broken relationship

33. **Zeena returns early**. Zeena’s bedroom “Doctor says I’ve got complications”, tension over no money from Mr Hale. “You’re a poor man’s wife” (Ethan) cut to kitchen to show anxious look on Mattie’s face

34. **Zeena finds broken dish**, angry response from Zeena, Mattie plaintive response “I wanted to make the supper table pretty”.

35. **Barn**. Ethan lays poison to trap fox (additional scene)

36. **Mattie’s bedroom**, Door suddenly opens, Zeena camera angle, looking down sternly at seated Mattie who is packing a suitcase. Zeena’s accusatory tone: “I want to see what you’re taking”.

37. **Ethan in Mattie’s bedroom**, tense look from Mattie “She’ll hear you!”, Ethan replies “I need you”. They kiss passionately. (additional scene) cut to Zeena’s bedroom

38. **Zeena lying in bed**, eyes wide open, looking alert and seemingly listening. She coughs as camera focuses on her extended arm, wedding ring clearly visible

39. **Dead fox**, blood and dead fox lying in snow, stark contrast of red and white colours, (additional scene)

40. **Kitchen**, Zeena “I heard something last night” referring to fox, but also Mattie with Ethan, see Mattie’s warning in scene 37- “She’ll hear you”. The intruder (fox, Mattie?) taken care of. Zeena “I feel a bit better. My appetite’s back.

41. **Barn**, Mattie tries to suicide by eating poison Ethan enters barn and frantically stops her

42. **Kitchen**, Agitated and defiant Ethan, “I’ll drive Mattie to the train”

43. **Outside House**, Zeena says good-bye to Mattie, no affection shown, Mattie looks despondent

44. **Ethan and Mattie on Sleig**h, Ethan tells Mattie of plan to escape to “Florida or out West”

45. **Buying a present for Mattie**, In Eady’s store, Ethan insists on buying a red ribbon? For Mattie. Ethan is reminded of his duty and obligations as the husband of a sick wife by old Mrs Hale’s comments

46. **“We’re going coasting”**, after Ethan’s comment, ominous shot of elm tree, motif of impending doom throughout film, Ethan and Mattie seen happily coasting down the hill on two occasions,
47. **Train Whistle** Ethan and Mattie holding each other, but ominous sound of train whistle in background, “If I miss my train, where will I go?” “Where will you go if you don’t?” Then Mattie’s answer (suicide?) “I never want to leave this hill”

48. **One final ride**, trudging up the hill, no laughter now, no soundtrack, eerie silence, foreboding. Change places on sled, coasting down the hill, slow motion this time, cut to boys, cut to agitated horse with their sleigh

49. **Outside Frome House**, in the present again. Mrs Hale and Rev. Smith

50. **Kitchen**, two grey-haired old women, Rev. Smith mistakes Mattie for Mrs Frome, Zeena helps Mattie to read, Rev Smith tries to open curtain, but Zeena “We prefer the dark”

51. **Outside Frome House**, Mrs Hale yells a parting remark to disabled Ethan, “Spring’s coming”, but voice peters out

52. **Outside Frome House**, final shot of film as disabled Ethan limps behind the house