

THE PREDICTION -1666

Written by

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Based on the novel  
"The Astrologers apprentice" by Julian Venables

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FADE IN:

EXT. OLD LONDON TOWN FROM ABOVE. DAY

TITLE reads: January 30th 1649, the end of the English Civil War

Birds-eye view of old London town, the dark grey-green River Thames, the tide is high with choppy waters. The white smoke from chimneys drifts over the river. London Bridge boasts the severed heads of traitors stuck on pikes over its gateway.

In the middle of the city is a cluster of buildings surrounding a grass quadrangle. This is Gresham's college where the Royal Society are based. Looking into one of the elegant windows reveals a library.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIBRARY IN GRESHAM'S COLLEGE, LONDON. DAY.

In the foreground a brass mechanical Orrery device is clicking and whirring gently with miniature models of the seven planets on slender brass arms moving at different speeds in a circular motion.

Beside each other, in the background, are WILLIAM LILLY and JOSHUA COLEY.

Behind the two men are gathered a smartly dressed group of academics, among them are DR YATES and ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

The room has shelves of leather bound books. Stained glass windows filter morning light into the room.

WILLIAM and JOSHUA turn to face the group. WILLIAM points to the mechanical Orrery.

WILLIAM LILLY

Gentleman, there is much that the heavenly orbs can tell us of earthly workings. Especially when seen with a particular set of eyes. The future indeed, can be seen...(beat - to himself) and so help me God I can see. (Loudly) A prediction gentlemen. In sixteen years, a pair of disasters will befall London.

Murmurs from the rest of the group. JOSHUA looks uncomfortable as WILLIAM stands firm.

DR YATES

What sort of disasters?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Watch your words Master Lilly. Your previous predictions have caused much unrest.

WILLIAM LILLY

In 1665 a deathly sweep of plague, followed in a year by raging fire.

DR YATES

On what do you base these claims?

WILLIAM LILLY

On the planets.

Loud jeering.

DR YATES

Lilly, we have been patient but you present no scientific evidence that demands we bring it to the attention of the authorities.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Hocus-pocus that will wreak havoc is all it is.

WILLIAM and JOSHUA start to gather up their charts.

WILLIAM LILLY

(long beat) Gentlemen, I fear your failure to see the purpose of my art will cost London dearly.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

From now on you can keep your "predictions" to yourself astrologer!

WILLIAM LILLY

Come Joshua. I see our talents are not wanted here. Good day to you gentlemen.

Amid much jeering, WILLIAM and JOSHUA make their way to the door.

WILLIAM and JOSHUA leave the room as ROGER follows closely behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRESHAM'S COLLEGE QUADRANGLE AND CLOISTERS. DAY.  
MORNING.

WILLIAM and JOSHUA are heading towards the college gates as  
ROGER calls to them.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
It's all over Lilly.

WILLIAM and JOSHUA halt in their tracks and turn around.

WILLIAM LILLY  
What ails you, Roger?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
You know what you have done Lilly!

WILLIAM LILLY  
If you choose not to believe what I  
foretell then...

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
(interrupting)  
She left me because of you.

WILLIAM LILLY  
Roger, really I have no idea...

ROGER pulls from under his coat an almanac, published by  
WILLIAM

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
This! My betrothed, Lady Annabelle,  
left this in her house. You spoke  
with her didn't you?

WILLIAM takes a slightly different stance.

WILLIAM LILLY  
Lady Annabelle was your fiancée?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
Whatever you said to her Lilly  
drove her from me.

WILLIAM LILLY  
Roger, I...

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
You told her not to marry me,  
didn't you? Didn't you?!

WILLIAM LILLY  
As I recall I told her not to  
marry. I had no idea it was to be  
to you.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Lies! Like your damn almanac and your damn fortune telling of catastrophe. (Long beat - menacingly) Mark me Lilly, I'll make it to my last breath toiling to see you hang.

ROGER rips the almanac publication in two and throws it to the ground.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Not another fortune told Lilly. Not another word printed. You understand?

WILLIAM nods and exits with JOSHUA. ROGER stands watching them leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. A BUSY LONDON STREET LEADING WEST TOWARDS WHITEHALL PALACE. DAY.

It is a cold, bleak day. WILLIAM and JOSHUA make their way down a crowded street. JOSHUA trying to catch up as WILLIAM strides purposefully.

JOSHUA COLEY

Could he do what he said Master Lilly? Roger L'Estrange I mean. Could he have you hanged?

WILLIAM stops suddenly and looks gently at JOSHUA.

WILLIAM LILLY

Aye Joshua. That he could. And those close to me. The Society has much power behind it. We must watch our words from now on.

JOSHUA COLEY

What shall we do?

WILLIAM LILLY

I shall tell no soul of what I have seen. We will close shop and tell fortunes no more. There is too much at stake. But hear me when I say, London will suffer because of this.

The two men come across a large crowd gathered outside WHITEHALL PALACE. They stop to watch the proceedings.

CUT TO:

EXT. A RAISED PLATFORM BUILT OUTSIDE WHITEHALL BANQUETING HALL. DAY

There is a raised scaffold covered in black cloth. One of the palace's windows opens onto the scaffold. The large crowd is huddled around its base murmuring, weeping and offering prayers. On the scaffold stand parliamentarians, dressed in black, and REVEREND HUGH PETERS with armed guards.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN MIDDLE OF CROWD GATHERED AT BASE OF PLATFORM. DAY.

WILLIAM & JOSHUA have made their way to the middle of the crowd with a clear view of the scaffold.

The crowd pushes forward as KING CHARLES STUART is brought out of the window and displayed on the scaffold. An attendant plays a rolling snare drum, heightening tension.

WILLIAM LILLY

Dear God, they're actually going to do it.

JOSHUA turns pale, he grabs WILLIAM's arm.

JOSHUA COLEY

(Panicking)

This can't be happening. This is my fault... God will judge me.

CUT TO:

EXT. A RAISED PLATFORM BUILT OUTSIDE WHITEHALL BANQUETING HALL. DAY

The snare drum stops abruptly as REVEREND HUGH PETERS steps forward to make an announcement.

REVEREND HUGH PETERS

It is hereby decreed that the office of the king is unnecessary, burdensome and dangerous to the liberty, society and public interest of the people. Charles Stuart, convicted tyrant, traitor, murderer and public enemy shall today be put to death by the severing of his head from his body.

KING CHARLES STUART is pushed forward to face the crowd. Members of the crowd call out in praise, as well as impassioned wailing. He speaks his last words which don't carry far in the cold air.

KING CHARLES STUART  
(barely audible)  
I have delivered to my conscience;  
I pray God that you do take the  
best courses for the good of the  
kingdom and your own salvation.

Two guards hold the king's shoulders and upper arms and turn him to face the low block. They bend him slightly and he kneels down. The fervor of the crowd increases as a hooded executioner steps onto the platform and lifts his long handled axe to show the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF CROWD GATHERED AT THE BASE OF PLATFORM. DAY.

JOSHUA claws his way through the crowd, pushing people aside to get to the front.

JOSHUA looks up at REVEREND HUGH PETERS on the scaffold.

JOSHUA COLEY  
This must stop! It is a grave  
error!

REVEREND HUGH PETERS doesn't hear JOSHUA, who is now at the front, almost underneath the platform.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
(desperate)  
Your majesty forgive me!

CUT TO:

EXT. IN MIDDLE OF CROWD GATHERED AT BASE OF PLATFORM. DAY.

WILLIAM has stayed in the same place, stoic, unmoved.

WILLIAM LILLY  
(to himself)  
No one can stop the sunset at the  
end of the day.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF CROWD GATHERED AT THE BASE OF PLATFORM. DAY.

JOSHUA COLEY

No! You cannot cut the God given  
ascension.

JOSHUA watches the executioner stand beside the block; the men on the scaffold give the sign of the cross and lower their heads. The executioner measures up distance and raises his axe. The axe falls with a sickening crunch. The king's blood sprays across the front row of the crowd and JOSHUA's face as the executioner stoops to pick up the severed head of the king. JOSHUA drops to his knees as the crowd gasps, then groans. All are horrified.

WILLIAM walks slowly up to a distraught JOSHUA

WILLIAM LILLY

I don't know what to say my friend,  
it could have been either of us.

JOSHUA is kneeling as WILLIAM stands beside him. JOSHUA's tortured face up close, crying, smeared blood on his face, dishevelled.

JOSHUA COLEY

This is the end of the world. I am  
cursed... (to WILLIAM) Get away  
from me. Get away from me!

JOSHUA pushes WILLIAM away, scrambling to his feet and pushes his way through the crowd. WILLIAM stands looking after him.

The sounds and sights of the execution scene fade.

FADE TO BLACK.

IN BLACK

TITLE reads: May 1st 1665, sixteen years later

FADE IN:

INT. THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD, BACK STUDY ROOM. DAY

JOSHUA kneels in front of his bible, hands clasped together, praying fervently.

JOSHUA COLEY

Create in me a clean heart, O God;  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from thy presence;  
and take not thy holy spirit from  
me. Amen.

He kisses the bible and closes it, stands up and walks into the kitchen where his wife ELIZABETH COLEY is fussing over their excited and nervous daughter, SUSANNAH COLEY, getting her dressed to be the May Queen of the Strand.

JOSHUA stands beside the foot of the stairs, he looks up and shouts.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
Tom, come down. It's time to pray.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM COLEY'S TOP FLOOR BEDROOM. MORNING. DAY

TOM COLEY is in front of a mirror. He is smartly dressed. His window is wide open and looks out over the Saint Clements Danes church and the Strand Maypole.

TOM COLEY  
(to himself)  
Of course it's time to pray. It's  
always prayer time with you father.  
(Loudly) Coming father!

He leaps down the stairs at the back of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. COLEY HOUSE KITCHEN. MORNING. DAY.

TOM appears from down the stairs and into the kitchen area. JOSHUA reaches out to put his arms lovingly around TOM and SUSANNAH pulling them towards him.

JOSHUA COLEY  
(to Elizabeth)  
Look at these two! A May queen and  
a soon-to-be Oxford scholar.

ELIZABETH COLEY  
Let us give thanks for the blessing  
of God's guidance and forgiveness.

JOSHUA COLEY  
Indeed!

JOSHUA motions to TOM and SUSANNAH they should bring their hands together and kneel in prayer. They all kneel.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
Today's festivities call on the  
pagan heart. We must watch out lest  
the devil step in. Let us call on  
God for protection.

TOM and SUSANNAH glance at each other behind their clasped hands, hiding a smirk.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
 Restore unto us the joy of thy  
 salvation; and uphold us with thy  
 free spirit...

There is a knock at the front door. TOM jumps up to open the door and there is a costumed pagan GREEN MAN with painted green face and beard. He is portly and dressed in forest-like brown and green clothes with a woven oak crown on his head.

GREEN MAN hands TOM a bunch of springtime flowers.

GREEN MAN  
 Ho! Ho! Is my queen ready?

Across the room JOSHUA looks at him guardedly but steps to one side to present SUSANNAH.

JOSHUA COLEY  
 She is. And be assured she is  
 protected by the love of God.

SUSANNAH  
 (playfully hitting his arm) Father!  
 Lighten up! It's May Day!

The GREEN MAN bows, takes SUSANNAH's hands and leads her outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST CLEMENTS DANES MAYPOLE DANCING PAGAN FESTIVAL.  
 MORNING. DAY.

A gathered crowd are dressed in traditional pagan costumes, some with strange masks, others with painted faces. They chuckle, coo and cheer as SUSANNAH appears. She mounts a horse and leads the procession through the square, JOSHUA walks beside holding a corner of her saddle protectively. TOM and ELIZABETH follow. People are dancing, skipping, whooping to the rhythmic music of drums, flutes and lutes.

SUSANNAH looks entranced by the unfolding spectacle. JOSHUA looks up at his daughter then leans over to ELIZABETH.

JOSHUA COLEY  
 (concerned)  
 Why did I let her do this?

ELIZABETH COLEY  
 Oh Joshua. She'll be fine! The  
 devil has no mind to play tricks on  
 a day such as this.

JOSHUA COLEY

Aye, well we'll see.

ELIZABETH gives JOSHUA a quick kiss and squeezes his arm.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP OF STRAND LANE, ENTERING THE STRAND. MORNING. DAY.

Turning the corner and heading towards the amassing festive crowds are a maturer looking WILLIAM LILLY and a young woman dressed in a festive dress, with flowers in her hair. This is MARTHA. They are casually arm-in-arm and stroll together.

MARTHA

See Master Lilly. It's not so bad out among the people.

WILLIAM LILLY

You're right my dear. I have spent far too long pent up indoors.

MARTHA

Besides if you are going to get your business back up and running you have to meet some customers!

As they walk passers-by recognise WILLIAM - with mixed responses. Some smile and nod others look surprised, fearful or angry. WILLIAM walks on looking a little uncomfortable. One passer-by makes a rude gesture.

WILLIAM LILLY

(to Martha)

Everyone's entitled to an opinion.

MARTHA holds WILLIAM's arm securely and gives him a wholly trusting look.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST CLEMENTS DANES MAYPOLE DANCING PAGAN FESTIVAL. MORNING. DAY.

The wildly dancing procession makes its way around the perimeter of the parish church and stops in front of a stage riser, positioned across from the tall, painted, ribbon-dressed Maypole. SUSANNAH dismounts and with the GREEN MAN step up onto the stage. The gathered crowd hushes and the music stops.

GREEN MAN

Behold revellers, here is our Queen of May, whose word is law for a day.

SUSANNAH COLEY

Thank you all, let us dance and  
play.

The music starts again and SUSANNAH sits in her wooden throne as various celebrants start to organise games.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE GEORGE CROWTHER'S APOTHECARY SHOP IN DRURY LANE. MORNING. DAY.

The shop door creaks open and GEORGE CROWTHER, fat and with a sallow complexion, squeezes himself through the door and pulls it shut, his shaky hand locks it with a key. GEORGE is dressed in Cavalier style, but his clothes have faded and are somewhat threadbare. He carries a festive mask with a long curved bulbous nose and he looks fearfully and suspiciously up the lane from his doorway, guardedly stepping out to then look down a dark alleyway full of shadows where there are a couple of red crosses painted on doors and shuttered windows. The shadows appear to move like thin creeping fingers of mist as a scary tonal sound is heard. GEORGE flabber gasps at 'it', then shakes his head because 'it' isn't actually there.

GEORGE CROWTHER

(mumbling nervously)

I know you Miasma, and I see  
you!(louder) Dispel. Be gone I say!

He scurries off down the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. BESIDE STAGE RISER ACROSS FROM MAYPOLE. DAY

JOSHUA, ELIZABETH and TOM are stood watching the events. TOM's attention is drawn towards the Maypole where he sees MARTHA, a young woman dancing passionately, full of life.

Across the square a plush carriage pulls up on the edge of the crowd with three distinguished looking people in it. There are ROGER L'ESTRANGE, DR. YATES, now a principal of Oxford University, and his daughter CAROLINE YATES.

JOSHUA COLEY

(To Elizabeth and Tom) I see Dr.  
Yates has arrived. He's the man who  
is getting you into Oxford my boy.

TOM COLEY

Yes father.

JOSHUA COLEY

Very important man Dr Yates. He will help you enormously once you are at your studies there. Come I shall introduce you.

But TOM is already drifting off into the crowd.

TOM COLEY

Yes father... I'll be back in a minute.

JOSHUA COLEY

Tom! Where are you going? Get back here!

TOM smiles and blows a kiss at ELIZABETH, then vanishes into the crowd thronging around the Maypole.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)

Insolence!

CUT TO:

EXT. DR.YATES OPEN TOP CARRIAGE. EDGE OF MAYPOLE CROWD. DAY.

DR. YATES, CAROLINE and ROGER sit in the carriage.

CAROLINE is clapping her gloved hands in time with the music, amazed at what she sees.

CAROLINE YATES

Oh this is wonderful, marvelous, father!

DR. YATES

It's all a bit wild for my tastes young Caroline.

CAROLINE leans out the carriage and grabs a passers-by butterfly mask and puts it to her face. ROGER looks rather disdainfully and gives a fake smile. DR YATES looks disapprovingly at his daughter.

DR. YATES (CONT'D)

Give it back to the poor man.

CAROLINE's face drops, she sighs and hands back the mask.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER EDGE OF MAYPOLE. DAY

MARTHA is leading the dancers around the Maypole as she notices TOM watching her. She skips to him, grabs his hand to pull him in.

MARTHA  
Come and dance with me.

TOM COLEY  
I don't know how...

MARTHA  
Don't worry I'll show you.

TOM clumsily follows her lead. The crowd claps in time and cheers, encouraging them along.

CUT TO:

EXT. BESIDE STAGE RISER ACROSS FROM MAYPOLE. DAY

ELIZABETH and JOSHUA watch their son dance with MARTHA.

ELIZABETH COLEY  
Look at our boy leading the dance.  
He's quite good!

JOSHUA COLEY  
(concerned)  
Who's that girl with him?

ELIZABETH COLEY  
Does it matter? Let him have some  
fun.

JOSHUA COLEY  
He has too much fun. He is a man  
now! Time to take responsibility.

ELIZABETH COLEY  
Let him live a little!

JOSHUA COLEY  
Aye, well... I'd best talk to  
Doctor Yates.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERNEATH THE MAYPOLE. DAY

TOM and MARTHA are dancing close. TOM is entranced by her.

TOM COLEY  
What is your name?

MARTHA

Martha.

TOM COLEY

I've not seen you in this parish before. Where are you from?

MARTHA

Just over there, in Strand Lane.

MARTHA pulls TOM out of the dancing to catch her breath.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

I live with my guardian William Lilly, the astrologer. Have you heard of him?

TOM COLEY

An astrologer?

MARTHA

Not just any astrologer! He is London's Master Astrologer. Well, he used to be. He is a very impressive man. Do you wish to meet him? He's just over there.

MARTHA points out LILLY, standing aside from the crowd, dressed in black with puritan style white collar and cuffs with a long black cape lined in dark green.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Come on. Come with me.

CUT TO:

EXT. BESIDE THE YATES'S HORSE AND CARRIAGE, NEAR AND ONE SIDE TO THE MAYPOLE. DAY

JOSHUA approaches DR.YATES's open top carriage.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Here comes that Coley man.

DR. YATES

He's been writing to me about his son. Wants to get him into Brasenose.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I heard he's reformed from his days gazing at the stars.

DR.YATES

Entirely so by all accounts.  
(MORE)

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Seen the light so to speak...(to  
JOSHUA) Why if it isn't our old  
friend Joshua Coley!

DR.YATES leans from his carriage to shake hands with JOSHUA.

JOSHUA COLEY

Greetings! Welcome back to London  
again.

DR.YATES

It's always an honour to lecture at  
the Royal Society.

DR. YATES

You remember Roger L'Estrange don't  
you Joshua? He's started his  
censorship work at the university.

ROGER and JOSHUA acknowledge each other with a nod.

JOSHUA COLEY

A vital role Master L'Estrange.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Yes. It is important to keep  
control of publications.

DR. YATES

And this is my daughter Caroline.  
It's her first visit to London. She  
wants to see it all.

CAROLINE YATES

Indeed I do. It looks so much fun!

JOSHUA COLEY

Too much fun some would say. Take  
my son for example...

CAROLINE YATES

You have a son?

JOSHUA COLEY

Yes, Tom. He's about your age in  
fact. I was going to bring him  
over, but he's got caught up in the  
festivities I'm afraid.

DR. YATES

(assuredly)

No hurry Joshua. Do the boy good to  
get it out of his system before he  
starts the serious matter of study.  
He'll get his place at Oxford be  
assured.

JOSHUA COLEY

I am blessed with an intelligent son. He has benefited greatly from tutors like yourself at the Royal Society.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Dr Yates has told me he shows much promise.

CAROLINE YATES

(excitedly)

When can I meet him?

JOSHUA COLEY

Let me see if I can spot him in the crowd.

JOSHUA looks for his son in the crowd. He is surprised to see TOM is no longer dancing, but standing at the edge of the crowd with MARTHA talking to WILLIAM. JOSHUA looks horrified. L'ESTRANGE notes JOSHUA's reaction.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

No! What? What is he doing?  
(long beat) I can't spot him right now. Sorry Miss Yates, I'll make sure he is available when we meet tomorrow at the Royal Society. Have a good day gentlemen, Miss Yates.

JOSHUA leaves, the two men share an amused glance.

CUT TO:

EXT. AT THE EDGE OF THE MAYPOLE CROWD, NEAR TOP OF THE STRAND. DAY

TOM and MARTHA stand with WILLIAM.

WILLIAM LILLY

And whom have we here?

MARTHA

Master William, I'd like to introduce Tom Coley.

WILLIAM LILLY

I saw you dancing. Coley did you say? What is your father's name?

TOM COLEY

Joshua Coley, sir. He's a tutor of languages.

WILLIAM LILLY

Well bless my soul, Joshua Coley! I knew him very well! And now his son stands before me.

TOM COLEY

If you don't mind my asking, sir, how do you know my father?

WILLIAM LILLY

Many years ago your father and I were good friends. He translated sacred texts for me. Then, well, we parted ways.

TOM COLEY

Why was that?

MARTHA

(interrupting)

Master William, Tom has never met an astrologer before!

TOM COLEY

I know very little about what you do.

WILLIAM LILLY

And are you curious?

TOM COLEY

Well sir, my father has strict guidelines as to my education.

WILLIAM LILLY

Yes your father always had strong convictions, although they changed over time. Many things do of course.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEAR TO THE MAYPOLE. DAY

JOSHUA is looking across the Maypole festivities at TOM in the distance. He can see TOM is talking to MARTHA and WILLIAM. JOSHUA is distressed and looks anxious.

JOSHUA COLEY

(to himself)

Oh no my boy, not him.

CUT TO:

EXT. AT THE EDGE OF THE MAYPOLE CROWD, NEAR TOP OF THE STRAND. DAY

WILLIAM stands with MARTHA and TOM.

WILLIAM LILLY

Well, young Tom we must make our way back to Corner House. Give my regards to your father. It has been so many years.

TOM COLEY

May I come and visit Martha some day?

WILLIAM LILLY

Of course. There will be a warm welcome for you.(beat) A safe harbour in fact.

TOM COLEY

What do you mean?

WILLIAM LILLY

You'll see.

MARTHA

Tom, I have something for you!

MARTHA bends down to a basket on the ground and pulls out an embroidered pillow stuffed with herbs. She hands it to TOM with a smile.

TOM looks at the pillow which has a moon and stars embroidered on one side, and a sun and roses embroidered on the other side.

TOM COLEY

It's beautiful, Martha. Thank you!  
(He holds it to his heart).

MARTHA

It's for your nose, silly! So you can breathe clean air through it. To protect you ... from the Miasma.

WILLIAM LILLY

Come, Martha dear, it is time we left.

WILLIAM strides off. MARTHA gives TOM a silent wave and gets into step beside WILLIAM. TOM stays where he is, a little awestruck, holding the pillow to his nose.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD. EVENING

TOM opens the front door. ELIZABETH, SUSANNAH and JOSHUA are in the kitchen area. ELIZABETH is serving dinner.

TOM COLEY  
(cheerfully)  
Hello everyone!

JOSHUA stands up, takes a quick pace over to TOM and suddenly grabs him by the shirt and pushes him against the wall, face-to-face.

JOSHUA COLEY  
(angrily)  
Where have you been? What were you doing with him?

TOM COLEY  
(shocked) With who?

JOSHUA COLEY  
The old man, dressed in black.

TOM COLEY  
Master Lilly? He said he once knew you.

JOSHUA COLEY  
That would be his way of tempting you.

TOM COLEY  
(Fearful) No father, no.

JOSHUA releases him.

JOSHUA COLEY  
So he enchanted you with a pretty girl, did he?

TOM COLEY  
No father, you've got it wrong! All she did was ask me to dance.

JOSHUA COLEY  
You are never allowed to see that girl again or that man. I absolutely forbid it.

TOM is stunned at his father's reaction. Joshua grabs a crucifix off the wall and shoves it into TOM's chest, who takes it.

JOSHUA firmly holds the cross into TOM's chest with one hand, and raises his other hand upwards as if in supplication.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
 Then I will teach transgressors thy  
 ways; and sinners shall be  
 converted unto thee.

JOSHUA shakes his head dejectedly and points up the stairs,  
 pushing TOM towards them.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
 Get out of my sight.

TOM is confused but begins to climb and exits up stairs.  
 (long beat) JOSHUA bends over clutching his stomach, retches,  
 brings up a small amount of black bile onto the table. Slumps  
 exhausted into his chair, looks at ELIZABETH, who looks  
 shocked at the black sick.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
 It's the curse Lizzy ...after all  
 this time.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM'S TOP FLOOR BEDROOM. NIGHT

TOM sits alone by his bedroom window with the shutters open.  
 The crucifix is next to him, but he holds the pillow from  
 MARTHA as he looks up into the night sky and watches the full  
 moon rise above the rooftops. He compares it to the  
 embroidered moon on the pillow.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ROYAL SOCIETY AT GRESHAM'S COLLEGE. DAY

JOSHUA and TOM are sat on the front bench in the lecture hall  
 attending a lecture by DR.YATES. In the centre of the room is  
 a table laid out with elaborate scientific equipment. Across  
 from them and to one side of the lectern sit CAROLINE and  
 L'ESTRANGE. CAROLINE watches TOM with interest.

DR.YATES  
 ... so you can see, natural  
 philosophy - where the worlds of  
 nature, man and divinity are  
 intrinsically intertwined - form  
 the basis of our theories and work  
 at Oxford and we believe it will  
 eventually help us to define the  
 physical properties of matter  
 itself. Thank you.

Clapping and applause fills the room.

JOSHUA COLEY

(to Tom)

What did you think of that, son?  
Just brilliant, isn't he?

TOM COLEY

Yes father.

JOSHUA COLEY

That's what a good education gets  
you. The power of reason and  
rational thought.

TOM COLEY

Yes father.

JOSHUA COLEY

"Yes father"? You have more to say  
than that. Don't fear showing your  
intellect here. You are among  
peers!

TOM COLEY

It's just...

JOSHUA COLEY

(interrupting)

See over there? That is Caroline  
Yates, Dr. Yates's daughter, with  
Roger L'Estrange. She is very well  
respected at Oxford.

CAROLINE looks over towards them. JOSHUA nudges TOM and  
chuckles.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)

She's a lovely girl. You would do  
well to make her acquaintance.

TOM COLEY

Yes father.

CAROLINE seems to focus in on TOM, looking at him with  
interest.

JOSHUA COLEY

See how she looks at you! My, I  
think you have an admirer. Come on  
boy I'll introduce you.

TOM COLEY

Yes father.

TOM squeezes the herbal pillow and sniffs it.

JOSHUA sees the pillow, grabs it and pulls it out TOM's hand.

JOSHUA COLEY  
 What meaningless trinket is this?  
 Who gave it to you?

TOM grabs it back.

TOM COLEY  
 Martha. The girl I met yesterday at  
 the Maypole.

JOSHUA COLEY  
 Put it away this instant! It is  
 time to leave such weak-minded  
 nonsense behind you. Come with me.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LECTURE HALL AT GRESHAM'S COLLEGE. DAY  
 CAROLINE is quietly talking to ROGER.

CAROLINE YATES  
 (looking at TOM)  
 That boy over there, who is he?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 Tom Coley. You met his father  
 yesterday. Why?

CAROLINE YATES  
 I want to meet him.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 What you want, you will get, my  
 lady. (Beat) And it seems you might  
 not have to wait too long.

JOSHUA and TOM arrive.

JOSHUA COLEY  
 Master L'Estrange. Miss Yates. Here  
 is my son, Tom.

CAROLINE is unabashed as she looks TOM up and down.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
 I meant for you to meet him  
 yesterday but he got carried away!

CAROLINE YATES  
 I feel he was not the only one.  
 It's a very exciting place where  
 you live Tom. Not like the Ivory  
 towers of Oxford at all!

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Oh, she's not telling you the half of it! There is more to life in Oxford than first meets the eye. Do you write letters Tom? Miss Yates has wonderful penmanship. Perhaps you two could correspond?

CAROLINE YATES

Tom, have you met Roger? Roger L'Estrange, Tom Coley. (Whispers) He's incorrigible. (As normal) I hear you will soon be joining Oxford.

TOM COLEY

Well, yes Miss Yates but...

CAROLINE YATES

Please call me Caroline.

DR.YATES strides up to the group, still energized from his performance.

DR.YATES

Ah Caroline. Sweetheart! Such a receptive audience here at the Royal Society.

JOSHUA COLEY

We are all the wiser for listening to you speak. May I introduce you to my son, Tom.

DR.YATES

Ah-ha, the young genius!

DR YATES shakes TOM's hand warmly and touches his shoulder.

DR. YATES

I have heard so much of you. It's all planned. You have a place at the university! Be proud of your father, he has written to me several times on your behalf.

TOM COLEY

Yes sir, I am proud.

DR.YATES

So tell me Tom, what did you think of my lecture? You are well studied in the doctrines of natural philosophy no doubt.

TOM COLEY

Yes sir... but of late my mind has turned to another avenue.

DR.YATES

Is that so?

TOM COLEY

We talk of this world and of our place in it, but what about the other worlds? The heavens, the stars and planets?

JOSHUA COLEY

Tom, that's adolescent prattle. What has come over you?

JOSHUA looks embarrassedly at the rest of the group.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)

Excuse me, my son forgets the company he is in.

CAROLINE YATES

Now, now! I think we have had enough lively debate for one morning. (coily) Tom, when you come to be part of us, we can see a lot more of each other. I will show you many things at Oxford.

TOM COLEY

Thank you Miss Yates...

CAROLINE YATES

Please, Caroline. Make sure you write me your first letter as soon as you return to your part of London! Promise?

TOM COLEY

Yes. Caroline.

CAROLINE YATES

Good. Father, will you let Tom here take me to our carriage?

DR.YATES

Yes, my dear, of course.

CAROLINE YATES

Tom, accompany me to the gate would you?

TOM nods and exits with CAROLINE.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

(in a low voice to JOSHUA)

At the maypole yesterday, I saw what happened to your son. I think he may have been affected by that man?

JOSHUA COLEY

William Lilly?

ROGER nods.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)

Yes! He was affected. Don't I just know it.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

You must make sure Tom never goes near him again... or that girl. All this talk of stars and planets!

DR YATES

You don't want your son taking the same path as you did Joshua. A fine mind you had, a good career ahead of you. But that crackpot philosopher ruined your chances. Shame to see your boy go the same way.

JOSHUA COLEY

I turned my back on Lilly many years ago as you know.

DR YATES

With the threat of jail hanging over him, Lilly has done well to stay silent for so many years. For his own sake. But now is not the time for him to make a return. It could be very bad for us. The plague has gripped London and he foretold it. Right here in this room. We must tread carefully, for fear of the old man's spite.

JOSHUA COLEY

I never thought he would come back into our lives.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

So you know Joshua, we are all in this. Our reputations and that of the Society. There is no need to poke the old man - let sleeping dogs lie they say. He has no stomach for revenge.

(MORE)

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

But your son must not learn from him anything of the past, or of his art.

JOSHUA COLEY

I've forbidden Tom to see either Lilly or the girl, but I doubt he'll listen. He's very headstrong.

DR YATES

Encourage him to write to my daughter. We can draw him away. She has much charm. Maybe a match could be made?

JOSHUA COLEY

I'll try my best.

DR YATES

(sudden, violently) Make sure you do Coley or he'll pay for your mistakes.

DR YATES exit, followed by ROGER and a stunned JOSHUA.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE GRESHAM COLLEGE GATES. DAY

CAROLINE climbs into her carriage as TOM waits and JOSHUA, ROGER and DR. YATES walk out through the college gates. JOSHUA is walking slowly and hesitantly, as if there's something wrong with him.

DR YATES and ROGER reach TOM.

DR YATES

(to TOM)

Young man, look after your father. He has done much for you. You would do well to heed what he has taught you. And be sure to write to young Caroline here. She could be very important to your progress at Oxford. Besides, it would make your father happy.

TOM nods. ROGER and DR. YATES get in to the carriage and it pulls away.

Some way away, JOSHUA suddenly bends over double in pain, coughing and sick. He slumps against the side of building. TOM rushes to help.

TOM COLEY

Father! What's wrong?

JOSHUA COLEY  
Nothing son. Just a bit dizzy. Hail  
the carriage.

TOM frantically hails the driver and carriage. He helps his father to stand and climb in.

CUT TO:

INT. CARRIAGE INTERIOR RIDING WESTWARDS THROUGH LONDON. DAY

JOSHUA is buckled in pain sweating and shaking, lying across the carriage bench with his head on TOM's lap.

JOSHUA COLEY  
You must write to Caroline. Promise  
me Tom!

TOM wipes his father's sweaty brow.

TOM COLEY  
Father, you must rest. We'll be  
home soon.

JOSHUA stops the carriage, opens the door, climbs out and retches. He leans on the wooden rail of the Fleet river bridge. He looks down to see several black rats scuttling down the river bank ditch. He climbs back in the carriage and grabs TOM's hand desperately.

JOSHUA is sick again, his body trembling with fever.

JOSHUA COLEY  
There's a reason why I did what I  
did, my boy.

JOSHUA passes out. TOM holds his father's head and mops his brow.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD. DAY

The carriage pulls up outside the Coley household.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD. AFTERNOON

TOM runs in to get ELIZABETH and SUSANNAH. They help JOSHUA through the front door.

ELIZABETH COLEY  
Take him to his bed.

JOSHUA COLEY

It's spotted fever, I'm sure of it.

They help JOSHUA through to the bedroom. SUSANNAH stays with him as TOM and ELIZABETH come back through to the kitchen area. ELIZABETH grabs a jar off the side.

ELIZABETH COLEY

He has felt unwell since last night. Here, take this.

TOM takes a jar filled with his father's urine. He holds it to the light.

ELIZABETH COLEY (CONT'D)

I got it from him this morning before you left. Take it to the apothecary.

TOM COLEY

I'll go now.

TOM looks in on his father before leaving.

JOSHUA COLEY

Pray for me son. Pray for salvation.

TOM nods and leaves as his father begins another bout of coughing.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE DRURY LANE APOTHECARY. AFTERNOON. DAY.

TOM walks swiftly up Drury Lane to George Crowther's Apothecary shop.

CUT TO:

INT. GEORGE CROWTHER'S APOTHECARY SHOP. AFTERNOON. DAY.

The door creaks as TOM steps into the dusty interior. Shelves of glass bottles of all colours, shapes and sizes, racks of wooden drawers, some open, some closed. Several stuffed animals are suspended from the ceiling. GEORGE CROWTHER, his sleeves rolled up, wheezing and sighing, waddles over to TOM.

GEORGE CROWTHER

Another young man holding a bottle of his piss eh? Let me see it.

GEORGE reaches out, takes the bottle and sips from it, immediately spitting it out. Then he holds the bottle to a narrow shaft of sunlight.

GEORGE CROWTHER (CONT'D)  
You've got the plague, boy. Do you  
have buboes?

TOM COLEY  
It's not mine, sir. It's my  
father's.

GEORGE CROWTHER  
Well, he is rank with it. Do you  
live in St Giles's parish? The  
contagion is rife there.

TOM COLEY  
No, St Clement's Danes, by the  
church.

GEORGE CROWTHER  
Oh dear, your house is the first to  
be infected in that parish. Not  
good. (beat) I have a potion you can  
take.

GEORGE goes to a large open drawer and takes out a bottle,  
hands it to TOM.

GEORGE CROWTHER (CONT'D)  
That'll be a crown. It will lessen  
the pain.

TOM gives him a coin.

TOM COLEY  
Is there a cure?

GEORGE CROWTHER  
No. No cure. More drastic measures  
are needed now. (Beat) Take that  
bottle to the sick man. Then, if  
you are someone who can heed  
advice, make yourself scarce for  
the rest of the day.

TOM COLEY  
Why?

GEORGE CROWTHER  
Because you won't want to be  
involved. The city's got a shadow  
falling over it fast, and you will  
want to stay in the light.

GEORGE takes TOM by his shoulders, wheezing on him, and turns  
him around towards the shop door, opens it and pushes him  
out.

GEORGE CROWTHER (CONT'D)  
Don't waste anymore time. Go now.

TOM stands outside looking up and down Drury Lane. He starts to notice how many of the houses at the St Giles parish end of the lane are shut and the street is quiet, with red crosses painted on the doors and windows. The scary tonal sound can be heard up the street, round the corner. GEORGE sees TOM's realization dawning on him.

GEORGE CROWTHER (CONT'D)

Aye lad. It's the only way to stop it creeping through the air. It's unpleasant but necessary. Now get going.

GEORGE firmly shuts his shop door. The scary sound seems to get closer. TOM runs back towards St Clements Danes looking back over his shoulder once.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD. AFTERNOON

TOM enters the kitchen. ELIZABETH and SUSANNAH are sat beside the hearth.

TOM COLEY

It's the plague. The apothecary said its spreading fast.

ELIZABETH COLEY

The signs are there. He has the swellings.

TOM COLEY

We must go before it gets worse.

ELIZABETH COLEY

Where would we go? Your father's too ill to move.

TOM COLEY

We could leave the city?

ELIZABETH COLEY

Where to? This is home, Tom, and here is where we'll stay. God's protection keeps us safe.

TOM COLEY

Is it my fault father is ill?

ELIZABETH COLEY

Just go and pray for him.

TOM leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET ST CLEMENTS DANES PARISH. AFTERNOON.

TOM walks across the street to the church.

CUT TO:

INT. ST CLEMENTS DANES CHURCH. AFTERNOON

A tearful TOM walks down the aisle and sits in a pew. He kneels and begins to pray. He is deep in prayer and doesn't notice WILLIAM and MARTHA enter the church and take a pew close to him.

WILLIAM LILLY

Hello young Tom, is anything amiss?

TOM COLEY

Master Lilly! My father ...he is ill. (Beat) He forbade me from talking to you. (To MARTHA) Either of you.

WILLIAM LILLY

Then maybe we should respect his wishes.

They get up to leave.

TOM COLEY

No. Wait. Why is he so set against you?

WILLIAM LILLY

I know of a very different world than your father's. It is hidden from many and feared by most.

(smiles)

Your father holds back from telling you something. It eats at his soul.

TOM COLEY

He has the plague.

WILLIAM LILLY

Yes I know.

TOM COLEY

How?

WILLIAM LILLY

(Beat) I often visit this church, to be still and listen to his word. My art is to study the planets and their influence. The nearer to God I am, the purer judgement I can give.

TOM COLEY  
So will he be well?

WILLIAM LILLY  
Whatever happens to your father,  
know God is with him and with you  
always. Go speak with your father.  
He needs you now.

WILLIAM indicates they should leave. TOM stands up and all three walk up the aisle to the double doors.

MARTHA  
You'll come knocking at our door  
again, won't you?

WILLIAM turns the handle of the door and opens it.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD. AFTERNOON

Outside and across from the entrance to the church is the Coley house; there are two open top wagons pulled diagonally across the entrance. There is screaming coming from inside the house.

TOM COLEY  
(shocked)  
What's happening?

TOM runs across the street closely followed by MARTHA and WILLIAM who walks quickly. TOM is looking for a way around the wagons when a man in a leather bird mask and thick waxy shawl and cloaked dress appears in the Coley doorway. He is a PLAGUE DOCTOR and is raiding the Coley house, intending to quarantine and seal it up.

TOM COLEY (CONT'D)  
Who are you? What are you doing?  
That's my...

MARTHA runs up beside TOM and grabs the back of his collar, pulling him back and shoves her hand across his mouth to muffle him.

PLAGUE DOCTOR  
(muffled)  
What did you say?

MARTHA  
Excuse me sir. He is my brother.  
He's not right in the head.

MARTHA keeps her hand firmly over TOM's mouth as WILLIAM helps to contain him.

WILLIAM LILLY

We must learn to keep him under control! He's such a moonstruck lad.

MARTHA and WILLIAM pull and drag him down the street as Tom struggles. MARTHA whispers in TOM's ear.

MARTHA

Hush now Tom, be calm. Don't say anything or you'll be quarantined too.

WILLIAM LILLY

(struggling with Tom)  
Come Tom. That is not the destiny you're meant to be going towards.

TOM quietens down, they loosen their grip on him, walking down the street.

TOM COLEY

My parents are in there, and my sister!

MARTHA

And you almost volunteered yourself to join them. You must keep a safe distance for now.

TOM looks back as his family is bought out by the PLAGUE DOCTORS to be examined in the sunlight. All three are prodded and poked, then rough handled back inside the house, as the masked figures shut the door and windows, sealing them shut with hammers and nails and painting red crosses on the door.

TOM COLEY

(scared and desperate)  
What am I going to do?

WILLIAM LILLY

Remember what I said when we first met. With us you will find a safe haven.

CUT TO:

INT. CORNER HOUSE. EVENING

WILLIAM, MARTHA and TOM open a large door on to a wide, dark hallway.

WILLIAM LILLY

Welcome to Corner House. It has seen better times to be certain. But no matter. It is home.  
(MORE)

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)  
 (To MARTHA) Martha, could you warm  
 some soup for our guest. I'm sure  
 he hasn't eaten of late.

MARTHA goes through to the kitchen.

TOM COLEY  
 Everything happened so quickly.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 It seems that way to you now but  
 you will see this has been a long  
 time coming.

TOM COLEY  
 What do you mean?

WILLIAM LILLY  
 What do you know of astrology Tom?

TOM COLEY  
 Only a little. It uses the stars  
 and planets to see the future.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 Um... come with me.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAM'S STUDY. EVENING

WILLIAM pushes open a creaking door and he and TOM stand in  
 the doorway of WILLIAM's study. It looks like it hasn't been  
 used in a long time. Dust sheets cover instruments and books  
 are covered in dust. Curtains are closed. WILLIAM goes to  
 open the dusty curtains and late evening light floods in.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 By observing the stars and planets,  
 you predict with a degree of  
 certainty the likelihood of  
 something happening.

TOM COLEY  
 Like forecasting the weather?

WILLIAM LILLY  
 Yes. It's the art of making things  
 known beforehand.

TOM looks around the room and sees a boarded up window.

TOM COLEY  
 What's this?

WILLIAM LILLY

It's the old consultation window.  
People would come and ask for my  
predictions - and pay for the  
privilege too I may add. But I  
closed shop up some years back.

WILLIAM goes to pull a dust sheet off and reveals a large  
brass instrument. Then blows the dust off a large leather  
bound book on the table.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

Your father and I used to love  
doing this.

WILLIAM opens the book and starts to look for a reference.  
TOM looks on in silent amazement. WILLIAM goes to the brass  
instrument and turns and rotates different wheels within it.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

Destiny has clearly bought you to  
me. I have had to be silent for far  
too long. I do believe I'm being  
called on once more!

TOM COLEY

Silent about what?

WILLIAM LILLY

My prediction! (Energetically) I  
foresaw so much of this. You were  
but a infant when your father  
turned away from my teachings  
...and now it seems you are the one  
to carry on where he left off. It  
all becomes clear.

TOM COLEY

I don't follow...

WILLIAM LILLY

I foresaw you coming here. I have  
been looking for someone to make my  
apprentice, and I am certain it is  
you. I sense it within you. You  
face great challenges, but the  
heavens will favour you in the  
outcome.

TOM COLEY

You've seen my future? What of my  
family?

WILLIAM LILLY

(long beat)

Be brave. Keep your spirit and your  
hope.

Enter MARTHA.

MARTHA

Come Tom, I'll show you around. All will be revealed when you are ready. Come, you must be hungry.

MARTHA leads TOM out.

WILLIAM LILLY

(after them)

Make yourself at home. You are more than a guest.

WILLIAM sits alone and looks at charts.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

Young Tom, I hope you are ready. I hope I am too. There are fearsome tests that fate has planned for us... although not entirely without joy.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CORNER HOUSE, KITCHEN. EVENING

MARTHA is ladling soup into a bowl as TOM sits at the table, his head in his hands. She puts a bowl in front of him and some bread. It goes untouched.

TOM COLEY

I have never once seen father get ill.

MARTHA

Have heart Tom, they may be well yet. The plague doctors have fierce methods, even those not afflicted can be quarantined without proof.

TOM COLEY

What can I do? I must see them.

MARTHA

Slowly Tom. It's too dangerous. (beat) Listen, my mother is a herbalist. We'll visit her tomorrow and get some healing potions.

TOM COLEY

You would do that for me?

MARTHA nods. WILLIAM enters the kitchen.

WILLIAM LILLY

The staff say the plague is spreading apace.

MARTHA

Master William, may I take Tom to see my mother tomorrow?

WILLIAM LILLY

The plague scurries down the streets of London. We must fortify Corner House until God's vengeance passes. It is not safe.

MARTHA with a single look, melts WILLIAM's resolve.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

Alright my angel, I can never resist you. And I cannot stop you from seeing your mother. (beat) Now Tom Coley, Martha is my joy and my heart. If I let you go, do you understand what responsibility I have placed with you?

TOM COLEY

(standing)  
Yes sir, I do.

WILLIAM LILLY

(to Martha)  
My sweet child, do not linger. Return swiftly.

MARTHA

Master William, we will.

WILLIAM LILLY

You have my permission. Speak with no one, stay in saddle. Take herbal pillows to breathe untainted air.

WILLIAM exits.

MARTHA

(to TOM)  
It's late. I'll show you to your room.

CUT TO:

INT. CORNER HOUSE, TOM'S UPSTAIRS BEDROOM. EVENING.

MARTHA shows TOM his room. He looks around to see dark oak furniture, a tester (4 poster) bed, a chest of drawers and a desk to sit at beside a leaded glass window.

TOM COLEY  
This room is lovely.

MARTHA  
You'll be looked after here.

TOM COLEY  
Martha, you have been so good to  
me. I ...

MARTHA moves to him and puts her finger to his lips to stop him speaking. Her hand gently strokes his face and she flicks his hair as they look at each other.

MARTHA  
Keep me close, Tom, and I'll keep  
you in my heart.

Long beat before they tentatively embrace and kiss. MARTHA's cat enters the room and waving its tail around their ankles, meows loudly. MARTHA pulls away from their kiss.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
Have you met my cat? Her name is  
Malkin, she's an exemplary ratter.  
She's telling me it's time for  
sleep.

TOM nods and sits on his bed.

TOM COLEY  
Goodnight Martha. Thank you for  
bringing me here.

MARTHA  
It's Master Lilly you need to  
thank. He saw your star chart and  
knew you should be here with us.

MARTHA blows out the candles in TOM's room and pulls the bedroom door closed as she leaves. TOM goes to the window, opens it and leans out to look up at the night sky. The moon is still full, but starting to wane.

As he stares at the night sky, he has a constellation vision, seeing the stars link up in patterns. After the constellations, some planetary symbols and geometric patterns fade in and out.

TOM COLEY  
Why did you never tell me about the  
stars, father?

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNER HOUSE, STRAND LANE. DAY. MORNING

TOM and MARTHA prepare the horse. WILLIAM stands in the door of the house.

WILLIAM LILLY

Now remember to stay on the horse  
for the whole journey.

TOM helps MARTHA to mount the horse first, she sits sidesaddle in front. TOM jumps up beside her and sits at the back.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

After Katherine come straight back  
to Corner House.

TOM COLEY

Yes, Master Lilly, sir, we will.

TOM nudges the stirrups and the reins and the horse starts walking up the lane. WILLIAM watches them through the gate.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE BAR GATEWAY. DAY. MORNING.

As TOM and MARTHA's horse approaches the Temple Bar, the street is busy with vendors and street sellers. A strange looking wiry man, dressed in black with a stovepipe hat, is standing in a preaching barrel. This is JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE, an eccentric soothsayer and prophet.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Listen not to Barebone, Mare Fruit  
Fowler, Weep Not Billing and the  
distrustful Kill Sin Heaton. Much  
Spudwort and Thyme have they  
munched to poison their physic. I  
have a clear eye on the heavens.

TOM COLEY

(quietly in MARTHA's ear,  
joking)

Is this one of Master Lilly's old  
apprentices?

JEREMIAH, eyes level with TOM on his horse, points a finger at him.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

You, young man. The comet with two  
tails has trailed in our heavens!  
Son of perdition. Goliath,  
Nebuchadnezzar and the Antichrist.  
"And no marvel;  
(MORE)

## JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE (CONT'D)

for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." This is the year of man. And we will weep and moan, bewail and lament at Babylon's fall. (Long beat) You'll come back and see me soon young man.

TOM and MARTHA ride on.

CUT TO:

EXT. THAMES STREET RUNNING ALONG BESIDE OLD LONDON BRIDGE.  
DAY. MORNING

As TOM and MARTHA's horse walks through the busy street near London Bridge various sellers and stalls line the way. They turn left up St Mary Hill and MARTHA points to a small cart tucked into a corner by the entrance to St Mary-at-Hill church.

MARTHA

See that cart? That's my mother's. She used to sell all her herbal elixirs and potions on it. When I was a little girl, I used to sit on top. She still pushes it around everywhere.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE ST MARY-AT-HILL CHURCH. DAY. MORNING

MARTHA leads TOM into the church, all is quiet except for the whispering of scattered people praying in pews. An eccentrically acting older lady in a shawl and head scarf alternately stands, then sits, whilst imploring loudly to the altar. This is KATHERINE, MARTHA's mother.

KATHERINE

..and I've asked you many times about the neighbors, my saviour, and what have you done? Nothing. It's all well and good looking down on your perfect creation, but a bit of street peace is all I ask!

MARTHA

(interrupting)  
Good morning mother.

KATHERINE

Martha my love. I saw it was the full moon, I've been expecting your visit. What delayed you?

MARTHA

The Maypole festivities and dancing, and then ... (indicating to Tom) someone else has come into my life.

KATHERINE

Ooh my goodness, a young man!  
(to the altar)  
You didn't tell me this was going to happen! Hey Lord? All seeing are you? Not all telling by the looks of it!

MARTHA

(to TOM)  
I'll explain later!

KATHERINE

(to TOM)  
Come here, come here. What a fine specimen you are! (to MARTHA) Where did you find him, my dear?

MARTHA

At the Maypole mother.

KATHERINE

At the Maypole indeed. That's a springtime blessing if there ever was one. (to TOM) What's your name?

TOM COLEY

Tom Coley. I was bought up in St Clements Danes parish.

MARTHA

Tom is now staying at Corner House. Master Lilly has taken him in.

KATHERINE

Lucky boy! A special sanctuary indeed.

MARTHA

Mother, we've come to ask you for a potion. Tom's father is sick with plague.

KATHERINE

Ugh, plague, nasty stuff. I have some bottles for you.  
(MORE)

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

It's all at home. Come with me.  
 (loudly to the altar)  
 I'll see you next time. Don't  
 worry, I'll stay on my best  
 behavior. Bless me. Amen.

KATHERINE turns back to TOM and MARTHA, puts her arms around them and walks them out of the church with her.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET SCENE OUTSIDE ST MARY-AT-HILL CHURCH. DAY.  
 MORNING

KATHERINE is pushing her cart, MARTHA is on her horse, TOM is leading it by its reins, walking. Once through the hustle of the area around Old London Bridge, they turn down a smaller, quieter lane on the northern side of Thames street.

MARTHA

This is Lovat Lane. I was born  
 here. My mother has lived here for  
 many years now.

MARTHA indicates a half-timbered house which leans into the lane, with a closed and shuttered shop on the ground floor. There is a side entrance which leads down a passage, some stairs going up. KATHERINE pushes her cart down into the passage and puts it behind the staircase.

CUT TO:

INT. KATHERINE'S UPSTAIRS ROOM IN LOVAT LANE. DAY. MORNING.

KATHERINE's room is in half light, with thick curtains mostly covering the window, a tester bed with blankets piled up, a rocking chair with a table with wine jug and goblet; a spinning wheel.

KATHERINE

Come in. Find somewhere to sit.

She goes over to her stack of potion bottles.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

These are no good. Let me make you  
 a new batch.

She prepares an elaborate concoction as they talk, occasionally swigging from a wine goblet.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

The plague tokens show either red  
 or black on the skin, before the  
 buboes appear.

(MORE)

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

The red skin is ruled by Mars, and people can heal from that. The black skin is ruled by Saturn, and that's certain death. I have seen a few cases.

TOM COLEY

How long have you been a herbalist?

KATHERINE

Most of my life. I learned the trade from Nicholas Culpepper when I moved to London, around the time Martha was born.

MARTHA

That's how we got to know William Lilly; he was friends with Master Culpepper.

TOM COLEY

Before London, where were you?

KATHERINE

The town of Lynn in Norfolk. That's where I got pregnant with Martha. Now, where did I put the pepperwort?

TOM COLEY

If you don't mind me asking, but where is Martha's father?

KATHERINE

Ha! That's a question! Not shy this one is he! (beat) He was a royalist cavalryman from a good family you know, or so he told me. He would meet me in secret.

TOM COLEY

And where is he now?

KATHERINE

He died protecting Lynn when the parliamentarians laid siege to it. Or at least that's what I believe. I found out I was pregnant shortly after. Had to move to London of course... And then made my way working as a herbalist.

MARTHA

Apparently, I have the same eyes as my father.

KATHERINE

Indeed you do my dear.

MARTHA

Mother had a good name for herself. Until the day she was asked to be Midwife at a birth where the baby died. The family accused her of witchcraft and hauled her up before a court. Her show of faith saved her.

KATHERINE

I pray to God and Jesus for all to see. They can't ever accuse me of being a witch no more!

MARTHA

They spared her life, but sent her to prison. I was not more than infant when Master Lilly took me in. By the time she was released some years later, William was like a father to me.

KATHERINE

So she stayed with him. He is a fine man and a fine guardian for my dear Martha.

TOM COLEY

Yes ... I think he wants to teach me.

KATHERINE

Well, do it, young man! Have no hesitation. That man is wise. He has a good reason for everything.

KATHERINE finishes making the potion and passes the bottles to TOM. Starts ushering them to the door.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

There, done. Now take these potions and go and help your family.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON STREETS. DAY. AFTERNOON.

TOM and MARTHA ride swiftly through the streets. Rats scuttle away from the trampling hooves. Momentary glimpses down side streets and alleyways reveal encroaching shadows.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNER HOUSE. DAY. AFTERNOON.

TOM quickly dismounts and helps MARTHA off the horse.

Long beat as they know he may not be able to return. They kiss.

MARTHA

You must go Tom, to your father.

TOM COLEY

The plague doctors won't keep me from you.

MARTHA

I know.

TOM mounts the horse.

TOM COLEY

Tell Master Lilly I accept his offer. I will be his apprentice.

TOM rides off as MARTHA looks after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD. DAY. LATE AFTERNOON.

Dark shadows with misty tendrils have advanced from Drury lane into St. Clements Danes, and lurk in corners near to Coley's house. TOM dismounts, his horse is uneasy. The scary tonal sound whispers quietly. A PLAGUE DOCTOR prowls in front of the boarded up Coley house. As he moves on and turns a corner, TOM sees his chance and vaults a wall up to a side roof and a window of the house. In the gap between the buildings the scary tonal sound gets closer and shadowy corners bear down on him.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD. DAY. LATE AFTERNOON

It is dark and musty inside. SUSANNAH is preparing some broth. TOM knocks on the shutters.

SUSANNAH COLEY

It's Tom!

SUSANNAH hobbles weakly over to the shutters at the back of the house and opens them to let TOM in.

TOM COLEY

Oh my poor Susannah.

He goes to embrace her, but she steps back and shakes her head.

TOM COLEY (CONT'D)  
Where's father?

SUSANNAH points to her parents' room, where we see TOM's father lying in his bed and his mother ELIZABETH, sitting by his side. TOM starts to go over to him.

SUSANNAH COLEY  
Don't get too close Tom.

TOM holds the herbal pillow to his nose and mouth, as his father is a plague ridden stinking mess. Large buboes have burst, his skin is sickly white with blue/black dark patches of blood coagulating under the skin. JOSHUA is delirious, but still recognizes his son.

JOSHUA COLEY  
My boy, you came back! Did you pray  
for my salvation?

TOM COLEY  
Yes father, I haven't stopped  
praying.

JOSHUA tries to sit up in bed but is very weak. ELIZABETH gives him some water to sip.

ELIZABETH COLEY  
You can't stay here Tom, the plague  
has us all. Where will you go?

TOM COLEY  
Master Lilly has offered me a place  
of refuge.

JOSHUA looks despairingly and coughs a little blood.

JOSHUA COLEY  
Tom sit. (beat) The day you were  
born I was the happiest man in  
London. I had a beautiful wife, a  
good business. At that time I  
studied under William Lilly.

TOM COLEY  
So, you were an astrologer.

JOSHUA COLEY  
Yes.

(During FADE OUT)

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)  
 (V.O) I had been Lilly's apprentice  
 for about a year.

FADE TO:

INT. CORNER HOUSE, WILLIAM'S STUDY. STRAND LANE. EVENING

We see a younger JOSHUA sitting in WILLIAM's study with a  
 younger WILLIAM, studying charts together.

JOSHUA COLEY (V.O.)  
 It was the end of the Civil War.  
 King Charles I had been captured  
 and there were rumours he was to be  
 put on trial ...

The two are startled by a knock at the door. WILLIAM opens  
 the door and two official looking men enter, one is REVEREND  
 HUGH PETERS.

REVEREND HUGH PETERS  
 Master Lilly, your reputation in  
 this city is untarnished and people  
 speak of your skill in reading the  
 stars.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 I am flattered Reverend.

REVEREND HUGH PETERS  
 We have come to ask a simple  
 question.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 Few questions are simple.

REVEREND HUGH PETERS  
 Oh don't worry Master Lilly, we  
 shall pay you for your time and  
 insight. Just tell us: What is a  
 good day for justice?

WILLIAM LILLY  
 Joshua, you are now capable. What  
 does the scheme of heaven say?

Long beat as JOSHUA inspects the star charts.

JOSHUA COLEY  
 Four weeks from now, January 29,  
 1649.

The two men nod, throw a bag of coins on the table and leave.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)

(V.O)

They paid and left. I thought no more of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE WHITEHALL BANQUETING HALL. DAY. MORNING

As earlier scene - the execution of KING CHARLES I. WILLIAM and JOSHUA make their way through the crowd. On the scaffold, conducting the proceedings, JOSHUA sees REVEREND HUGH PETERS.

JOSHUA COLEY (V.O)

And when the day came, the true nature of the question I had been asked was revealed to me. I had given the date for the King's death!

CHARLES I is executed and JOSHUA collapses as the crowd heaves and sways around him.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COLEY HOUSEHOLD. LATE AFTERNOON.

JOSHUA COLEY

I had committed a mortal sin. I played a part in the death of our monarch. A curse has been on me since that day.

JOSHUA coughs up more blood.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)

I withdrew from Lilly and rejected his teachings, his predictions. I urge you to do the same Tom. He has done nothing but bring pain and hurt to this family.

TOM COLEY

Father, I'm so sorry.

JOSHUA COLEY

Perhaps I should have done more to warn people that it was coming ...

JOSHUA weakly holds his son's hand.

JOSHUA COLEY (CONT'D)

Go to Oxford son.

TOM COLEY

Father ... father!

JOSHUA dies. ELIZABETH and SUSANNAH cry, as does TOM.

TOM COLEY (CONT'D)  
Oh father ...

ELIZABETH COLEY  
Tom, my darling, you must leave  
this house. Look.

ELIZABETH and SUSANNAH both show marks of the plague.

ELIZABETH COLEY (CONT'D)  
Tom, we love you, but you must go.  
The death cart men will come soon  
for your father.

SUSANNAH COLEY  
Please don't stay any longer sweet  
brother.

TOM takes out the bottles of potion and hands them to his  
mother.

TOM goes to the shutters, looks back.

SUSANNAH COLEY (CONT'D)  
Keep us in your heart Tom.

TOM COLEY  
Yes, always.

TOM climbs out. The women embrace.

CUT TO:

INT. CORNER HOUSE, WILLIAM'S STUDY. STRAND LANE. NIGHT

MARTHA and LILLY wait TOM's return pensively. They hear the  
door. TOM enters.

MARTHA looks to TOM and he just shakes his head. She rushes  
over to hug him. WILLIAM slumps in a chair.

WILLIAM LILLY  
I am to blame for this. I should  
have done something.

TOM COLEY  
No Master William, you and Martha  
could not have helped me more. You  
saved me.

WILLIAM LILLY  
No Tom. (long beat) I predicted the  
plague 16 years ago at the Royal  
Society.

TOM COLEY

You did? And you did nothing?  
Thousands are dying - my family!

WILLIAM LILLY

Your father knew. He was there. But he soon turned his back on my teachings. The other academics had already decided to reject astrology. They ignored my warnings and threatened that I stay silent.

TOM COLEY

Threatened how?

WILLIAM LILLY

Imprisonment. (He looks at MARTHA) They knew I had responsibilities. What could I have done Tom? With me in prison, the authorities would have taken her.

TOM COLEY

So you have hid here all these years? Doing nothing. Telling no one.

WILLIAM LILLY

This is not an exact science Tom! I could have been wrong. Martha was too dear to me to lose. It tested my faith. Once the contagion started I knew I was right. So I consulted the schemes once more.

TOM COLEY

And you found me.

WILLIAM LILLY

(Looking intently at TOM) The heavens shifted.

TOM stands and goes to the boarded up consultation window.

TOM COLEY

Then, there is no more time for hiding.

TOM starts to tear at the boarded shutters, breaking the planks with his hands. MARTHA joins him and then finally WILLIAM. Moonlight starts to flood in through the broken slats.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. THE CITY OF OXFORD SKYLINE. DAY- MORNING.

TITLE reads 'July 1665, Ten weeks later.'

The sun shines in a blue sky with white drifting clouds. A birds-eye view of the spires of Oxford University.

Occasional college bells ringing. Scholars walk around a quadrangle purposefully.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL YATES'S APARTMENT IN BRASENOSE COLLEGE. DAY. MORNING

CAROLINE is sitting in a window seat with a desk overlooking the neat grass quadrangle. She is finishing writing a letter. She folds the letter and uses sealing wax and a candle to melt and press a seal on it. She silently holds the letter to her lips for a brief moment.

There is a knock at the door.

CAROLINE YATES

Come in.

Enter ROGER.

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D)

Master L'Estrange, I was about to call for you.

CAROLINE hands L'ESTRANGE the letter. He takes it with a respectful nod and looks out of the window.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

This is the fifth letter you've written to Tom Coley in as many weeks.

CAROLINE YATES

There is something about him. Something that living in London has given him. Everyone's so stuffy and serious up here in Oxford.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

London is not all excitement my lady. There is much danger there also. The Plague Doctors stalk the streets and looting is rife. No place for a fine mind like yours.

CAROLINE YATES

Well, I would still like to decide that for myself.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 Anyway, the city is quarantined at present, so neither you nor your letters can get to the capital.

CAROLINE YATES  
 How long until it is lifted?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 When the king decides.

CAROLINE YATES  
 As soon as it ends, you must deliver these letters.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 I will endeavour to find Master Coley for you, but I wouldn't keep such high hopes Caroline, there's a possibility he may have fallen to the plague also.

CAROLINE YATES  
 That's unimaginable. I know God will protect him.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 Your faith is admirable Caroline.

ROGER exits.

CAROLINE YATES  
 (to herself)  
 His story will not end on the Bellman's cart. I know it.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR BRASENOSE COLLEGE. DAY. MORNING

ROGER and DR YATES walk along the corridor, students pass.

DR YATES  
 So what news of London?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 The king is ponderous and frivolous as always. The country is run by elitist buffoons.

DR YATES  
 And what of Tom Coley and Lilly?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 News is hard to come by, but I have heard the Coley family has suffered greatly the ravages of the plague.

DR YATES

Joshua?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

The whole family is dead. Except young Tom. I hear he has been taken in now by Lilly. There are rumours he has started to practice the art again.

DR YATES pulls ROGER into a recess.

DR YATES

(In hushed tones)  
What? This is grave.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

That it is.

DR YATES

(Angrily) I am not sure you understand the import of this situation Roger. Everything we have worked for is at stake here. If Lilly's predictions become public knowledge, we will at best lose our standing, if not in some way be held accountable. (Beat) Has Caroline not been writing?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Aye she has but with the quarantine in place I cannot get her letters to London.

DR YATES

With the blockades Lilly's movements and influence will be hindered. The plague is a good thing, for now. Best we both pray that the quarantine holds - or that plague grips the Lilly household.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAM LILLY'S STUDY, CORNER HOUSE. DAY. MORNING

TOM and WILLIAM are sitting at the wooden table in the study, which is unrecognizable from how it was. The scientific instruments gleam, the books open and the room dusted.

WILLIAM throws open the shutters on the consultation window, there is a new sign reading "Master Astrologer William Lilly: all questions answered" and a small bell hanging above the window. He smiles.

WILLIAM hands TOM a leather bound Ephemeris which TOM opens and flicks through. There are mathematical tables and figures.

WILLIAM LILLY

Your studies continue young Coley.  
As you are well learned in  
mathematics, then by using our art,  
you will understand how God works  
through numbers.

TOM COLEY

Master Lilly sometimes you still  
talk in riddles.

WILLIAM LILLY

Because you see only with your  
eyes, not with your soul my boy!  
But you are learning and learning  
quickly I may add. (beat) When I  
first met you, I thought the flow  
of knowledge would be but one way,  
from I to you, old to young. But  
these last weeks, you have taught  
me much.

TOM COLEY

Like what?

WILLIAM LILLY

Well, the power of faith for one.  
That you must trust your divine  
given gifts.

At that moment, the small bell at the window study rings.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

Aha - first customer of the day.

The bell rings again.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

You take this one Tom, see how you  
do.

TOM goes to the window and opens it. Standing in Strand Lane is the KING'S MESSENGER from Whitehall Palace. He is dressed in fine red, blue and gold livery.

TOM COLEY

Good morning...

KINGS MESSENGER

Is this the house of William Lilly,  
the eminent astrologer?

TOM COLEY

Yes it is. Master Lilly! I think  
you better serve this one.

WILLIAM pokes his head through to the consultation area.

KINGS MESSENGER

The King requests an audience with  
Master Lilly at Whitehall palace.  
He has a question he wishes to ask.

WILLIAM LILLY

Does he now? I was a favourite of  
his father's, but it has been a  
while since I was at court.

(to MESSENGER)

Thank you messenger. We'll prepare  
ourselves. Here Tom, take this  
chart with today's planets. Gather  
up your other things.

TOM COLEY

You're taking me to Whitehall  
Palace?

WILLIAM LILLY

Of course! You want to meet the  
king don't you?

TOM COLEY

Yes indeed. Thank you Master Lilly.

WILLIAM LILLY

(to the MESSENGER)

We'll be with you shortly.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STRAND. DAY. AFTERNOON

WILLIAM and TOM ride in a royal carriage through the plague  
ravaged city with the KING'S MESSENGER. They hold herbal  
pillows to their mouths and noses.

They pass a churchyard overflowing with unburied corpses,  
mostly in white stitched shrouds, but a few exposed bodies  
without any covers.

A death cart piled high with grey and discoloured bodies is  
clunking and creaking its way down The Strand.

They pass by TOM's family home. The front door daubed with a  
red cross is ajar. As they pass two shadowy figures scuffle  
over an object inside.

TOM bangs on the roof of the carriage.

TOM COLEY

Stop! Stop the carriage!

TOM leaps out of the carriage and enters the doorway surprising the two hooded figures, who scuttle past him out into the street and run off in the other direction. TOM starts after them but WILLIAM takes TOM's arm and shakes his head.

TOM turns back, pulls the door shut. He leans against it.

TOM COLEY (CONT'D)

Sometimes I can't forget.  
Everything I had, here in this house, has been stolen from me. Every happy memory hauled away on the death cart. I'm not strong enough Master Lilly. I feel grief will kill me.

WILLIAM LILLY

This time brings out the worst in some people, the best in others. You don't know it young Tom, but these times will be the making of you. I can see your heart. It will not break. It has other things for which to beat. (long beat) Now come, we must go to the king.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE WHITEHALL PALACE. DAY. AFTERNOON.

WILLIAM and TOM arrive at the palace gates in the carriage. They leave the carriage and walk to the main gates. A couple of guards with crossed pikes raise them as the small entourage pass through. From a doorway inside the gate appears a COURTIER in an elegant satin coat who walks up to WILLIAM.

COURTIER

Master Lilly, good day to you. His Majesty is expecting you. (Looking at Tom) And you've bought your assistant I see. Well, follow me.

CUT TO:

INT. A CORRIDOR IN WHITEHALL PALACE. DAY. AFTERNOON.

The COURTIER opens a door and ushers WILLIAM and TOM into a plushly decorated ante chamber. Already in the waiting chamber are ROGER L'ESTRANGE and DR.YATES.

The two pairs of men are both surprised to see each other, and stand off, eyeing each other guarded and suspiciously.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
(arrogantly)  
What are you doing here?

WILLIAM LILLY  
The same could be said to you.

DR. YATES  
We are the appointed royal society,  
Lilly! (looks disdainfully at TOM)  
and why, young Coley, are you with  
this man?

TOM shuffles his feet awkwardly, bows his head.

TOM COLEY  
I have my reasons.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
You know we have the upper hand in  
the new advancements and knowledge,  
Lilly.

WILLIAM LILLY  
Well, we'll see. Why did the king  
ask me here then?

The COURTIER reappears and whispers to them in a low voice.

COURTIER  
His majesty will see you all in his  
bedchamber.

The COURTIER raps on the door and it is opened from the  
inside by another servant.

CUT TO:

INT. KING CHARLES II BEDCHAMBER, INSIDE WHITEHALL PALACE.  
DAY. AFTERNOON.

It is a sumptuously decorated apartment with a large  
luxurious looking bed set into an alcove. On the bed is KING  
CHARLES II, wearing a white silk nightshirt and long  
embroidered coat. He is without a wig, and has a shaved head.  
Just in shot is a wooden faced mannequin sporting a full wig.  
Two women are at the bedside, one of them stroking the kings  
feet. The COURTIER breezes into the bedchamber.

COURTIER  
Your majesty, as requested. Sir  
Roger L'Estrange and Doctor Yates  
of the Royal society, and Master  
William Lilly and his assistant.

ROGER and DR.YATES And WILLIAM and TOM enter the chamber and all bow low. The two pairs place themselves on each side of the room, either side of the bed.

KING CHARLES II

Good day gentlemen. I am pleased to see the plague has spared you thus far. I recognise all of you except the boy?

WILLIAM LILLY

Please may I introduce my gifted young apprentice, Tom Coley.

KING CHARLES II

An astrologer's apprentice?

WILLIAM nods respectfully. KING CHARLES II smiles and inclines his head towards TOM. ROGER and DR. YATES give a silent scowl towards WILLIAM and TOM.

KING CHARLES II (CONT'D)

So gentlemen, this fierce visitation of plague on our city seems to have no end. I hear people are leaving the city in their multitudes. The Bishop of London tells me the clergy are closing churches and fleeing London in fear of their lives.(beat)  
I am leaving for Salisbury with my court tomorrow until it is safe to return.

The woman stroking the kings feet makes the king pause, chuckle and moan.

KING CHARLES II (CONT'D)

The Lord Mayor tells me twenty thousand people have become victims. The Aldermen and Magistrates are overwhelmed with corpses.

The woman starts using a feather. He lifts his hand to her.

KING CHARLES II (CONT'D)

(to the woman) Stop! Stop!

That's too much! (beat)

I need an answer to stem the tide of plague gentlemen. That's why you're here. I know you have differing views, but I need to hear both sides. So I'll ask each one of you in turn the same question.

The KING turns to ROGER and DR.YATES.

KING CHARLES II (CONT'D)  
 I'll start with my own Royal  
 Society. Pray tell Master  
 L'Estrange, what manner of thing is  
 causing the plague?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 Thank you sire. Together (looking  
 at DR.YATES) we theorize the  
 infection is carried on the air, in  
 invisible creatures that enter the  
 body with the breath, or into the  
 pores of the skin. And there they  
 generate the most acute poisonous  
 eggs which mingle with the blood  
 and so infect the body.

DR. YATES  
 ... rapidly boiling and erupting  
 under the skin, your majesty.

KING CHARLES II  
 And you have seen these strange  
 creatures?

DR. YATES  
 Not exactly, but we are certain of  
 their corruptible influence on the  
 people.

The KING takes some fruit from a bowl and noisily eats.

KING CHARLES II  
 So the Miasma causes the Buboes...

Both ROGER and DR.YATES nod and bow towards the king.

KING CHARLES II (CONT'D)  
 It sounds plausible, but without a  
 known course, we deal with a  
 mystery, which some may say is  
 God's revenge on a city of sin.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 If I may interrupt your majesty...

ROGER gives LILLY and TOM an angry look as the KING turns his  
 attention over to WILLIAM and TOM.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)  
 ...the Buboes are malefic planetary  
 eruptions pushing to expel  
 themselves from the body.

KING CHARLES II  
 Ah, yes, the planets! We can't  
 forget those Master Lilly.  
 (MORE)

KING CHARLES II (CONT'D)

I know the sacred tradition so favoured by my forefathers may offer a solution.

WILLIAM LILLY

It is known for its accuracy, your majesty.

KING CHARLES II

So its your turn, and I ask the same question: what manner of thing is causing this plague?

WILLIAM LILLY

(to TOM)

Unfurl the scheme of heaven.

Both WILLIAM and TOM study the parchment, gradually turning it, as they whisper to each other whilst the king's attention is taken again by the foot stroking woman. ROGER and DR.YATES appear to scoff at they watch the astrologers method.

Encouraged by WILLIAM, TOM steps forward with an answer. The KING looks up.

KING CHARLES II

Ah, the boy speaks! My answer if you will.

TOM COLEY

Yes, your majesty, from looking at this scheme of heaven and timing it for your question, we believe the manner of thing causing the plague is a small furry creature with four legs and a tail.

WILLIAM nods his approval to the king. KING CHARLES II pulls a long face and purses his lips.

KING CHARLES II

Small furry creature with four legs and a tail? I trust you are not talking about my beloved pet spaniels?

WILLIAM LILLY

No your highness. Something stray and feral.

The KING sits up and drapes his legs over the edge of the bed, and stands up.

KING CHARLES II

Good. You have given me an answer.

WILLIAM LILLY

Your majesty, I implore you not to act too soon and take time to consider.

KING CHARLES II

I don't have time. The people are dying at an uncontrollable rate. Thank you for your knowledge and efforts gentlemen. I am satisfied you have given me answers to the best of your abilities.

The KING waves his hand to indicate the audience is over. He stands beside the two women who place his wig on his head and start to fit it to him.

WILLIAM LILLY

Your majesty...

The COURTIER re-appears to direct WILLIAM and TOM and ROGER and DR.YATES to the door. All four men bow low and walk backwards out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. A CORRIDOR IN WHITEHALL PALACE. DAY. AFTERNOON.

The courtier leads the two pairs of men down the corridor towards the palace exit.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I can't believe you had the audacity to turn up to the king, Lilly! As if you could give him a decent answer.

WILLIAM puts his arm protectively around TOM's shoulders and they speed up their pace.

DR. YATES

(spitefully)

Lilly, we're warning you now, if you make public this audience with the king, I'll make sure you get given the deepest dungeon in Newgate jail.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

How dare you suppose you can intelligise over our solutions. We are the Royal Society! You are a maverick, and a feeble one at that.

WILLIAM stops and turns back to face ROGER and DR.YATES

WILLIAM LILLY

Gentlemen, you seem to forget this calamity goes far beyond our petty differences. A whole city and thousands of people are dying, and you turn on me? Do you not have any feelings for those suffering?  
 (beat) I do. And you threaten me with prison and an enforced silence to save your own face. (wavering voice) Its true I fear you, but I also fear things will only get worse by trying to cover up what I have predicted. (beat) Come on Tom, we must go. I have had enough today.

The COURTIER looking concerned, steps between the pairs of men, and indicates WILLIAM and TOM to leave. They both exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CORNER HOUSE GARDEN. EVENING.

MARTHA is playing with her cat Malkin as TOM and WILLIAM return from the palace. She runs over to hug TOM. Malkin slinks off and up onto the garden wall.

MARTHA

So how is the king, court astrologer?

TOM and WILLIAM share an amused look.

WILLIAM LILLY

The court is leaving London.

MARTHA

Is he to lift the quarantine?

WILLIAM LILLY

Unlikely, dear Martha. It is hard for even me to second guess the royal mind. (beat) Look up. I try to gaze at the heavens everyday if I can.

MARTHA

It's beautiful.

WILLIAM LILLY

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

(MORE)

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

Through it you find tolerance for whatever life throws at you, and inspiration for higher development. (beat) You did well today, Tom, at the palace.

A shooting star whizzes across the sky.

TOM COLEY

Look! Surely that's a sign.

WILLIAM LILLY

Indeed it is, dear boy.

Suddenly there is an unearthly cat screeches and the banging of cart wheels on cobbles.

MARTHA

Malkin?

TOM and MARTHA look to each other and run through a gate at the back of the garden.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

TOM runs down the alleyway where he sees two burly men pushing a wheelbarrow cart piled high with corpses of cats, dogs and rodents. On top of the pile is a dead Malkin.

TOM COLEY

What are you doing?

MAN 1

I'm under orders of the city officials. Kill all small furry four-legged animals stray on the streets.

MAN 2

Order of the King.

MARTHA appears in the alleyway.

MARTHA

What's happening?

MARTHA sees the dead pile of animals including her cat, she screams.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Oh my sweet Malkin. Curse you both!

MARTHA gently lifts the limp body off the cart and cradles it as she walks off.

TOM COLEY  
 (to himself)  
 ...a small furry creature with four  
 legs and a tail...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CORNER HOUSE BACK GARDEN. NIGHT.

MARTHA places her dead cat on the bench.

TOM shuts and latches the gate behind him. He slumps against  
 the gate and moans, then looks anguished at WILLIAM.

TOM COLEY  
 This is because of us isn't it.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 This is unfortunate. When it comes  
 to actions people choose over the  
 astrologer's judgement; it is  
 beyond our responsibility.

TOM COLEY  
 But we set the fates in motion.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 It is up to the client to be  
 influenced in anyway they choose.  
 This is the danger of what we do.  
 Do you see now what power we wield?  
 You have to understand the stars  
 impel, but they don't compel. We  
 simply gave an answer to a question  
 using our rules of art. Your father  
 felt guilt and suffered. Don't do  
 the same. What you saw in the  
 horoscope reading for the king will  
 have meaning and come true in some  
 form or other.

The cat lies lifeless on the bench in the moonlight, blood  
 seeping from its mouth.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD. DAY. AFTERNOON.

A coachman cracks his whip on top of a four horse carriage  
 which gallops at a barreling pace on a country highway, the  
 road from Oxford to London.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE THE CARRIAGE - MOVING. DAY. AFTERNOON.

CAROLINE, DR YATES and ROGER sit as their bumpy ride takes them to London.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

You're very lucky your father has given you permission to stay with me in London, especially since the quarantine on the city has only just been lifted.

DR YATES

It has been many months since the height of the outbreak. I am certain the city is safe and this dreadful business is behind us.

CAROLINE YATES

I must know if Tom Coley is alive.

DR YATES

We will stay at Roger's house Caroline. He will seek out young Tom and deliver your letters. This has been a very regrettable business. Very regrettable. That he should take up study with that man.

CAROLINE YATES

He's just looking for something different.

DR YATES

Different! What is different? It's dangerous blasphemy and fairytales.

CAROLINE YATES

Even the king consults astrologers now days.

DR YATES

(very angry)Just mind what you are saying young woman! You have no idea of how dangerous he is. The damage he could do. He is a heretic and sinner. Your duty is get that young man away from him!

CAROLINE YATES

My duty?!

DR YATES

To your father! Best you keep to it. You know nothing of that man's evil. Now no more of this. Not another word!

CAROLINE slumps back in her seat unhappily.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD. DAY. AFTERNOON.

The carriage continues on the road.

CUT TO:

INT. A TAVERN IN THE STRAND. NIGHT. EVENING.

TOM and MARTHA are sat at a wooden table in a busy tavern.

Unseen by them ROGER enters, sees them, orders a drink and positions himself in a dark corner to observe. He looks curiously at MARTHA, as if he recognises her from somewhere.

TOM makes his way to the bar with two empty mugs to refill. ROGER steps forward from the shadows

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
Hello young Tom Coley.

TOM COLEY  
(Warily) Master L'Estrange. What brings you to this part of London?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
I have been in Oxford these last few months, as a guest of Doctor Yates. Now the city is safe I have returned with the express purpose to seek you out. (Beat) The day you met Miss Caroline Yates, you agreed to write. I here deliver her letters and collect those for her.

ROGER reaches inside his coat pocket and pulls out five neatly folded envelopes which he hands to TOM.

TOM nods briefly, takes the envelopes.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
I trust you have written with similar enthusiasm.

TOM looks uncomfortable. ROGER looks stern.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)  
Caroline is a refined and upstanding woman. I think of her as my daughter. Destiny chose not to gift me with a family of my own so she is the closest I have.  
(MORE)

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

She will be a useful ally when you take up your studies in Oxford.

TOM COLEY

(long beat)

There have been many changes in recent months. I'm not sure if Oxford is where I need to be anymore Master L'Estrange.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

What changes?

TOM COLEY

My family are gone.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Even more reason to leave London. There is nothing to stay here for.

TOM COLEY

(long beat)

I have begun an apprenticeship with Master Lilly. I have taken up residence with him at Corner House.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

We know all about your apprenticeship Coley. Like your father you have been tempted into a life of frivolity and ill discipline. Your father recanted and so will you.

ROGER looks over to MARTHA who is at the table, playfully petting the pub dog. There is something familiar about her but he can't put his finger on it.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Who is this girl you are with?

TOM COLEY

Martha, charge of Master Lilly.

ROGER suddenly pulls TOM close by his jacket.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

This has gone far enough! It is foolishness. I will not let this continue. William Lilly is a dangerous rumour monger. You don't know the extent of it.

TOM pushes him away. ROGER smoothes down his jacket, composes himself.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)  
 Write that letter Coley. I'll be  
 expecting to hear good news on your  
 change of heart and renewed  
 commitment to your studies at  
 Oxford.

ROGER exits. Shaken TOM pauses at the bar and looks over at  
 MARTHA. She looks up and smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STRAND NEAR TO JUNCTION WITH STRAND LANE. NIGHT.  
 EVENING.

DR YATES's carriage is parked outside the tavern. The curtain  
 is pulled aside and an inquisitive CAROLINE is looking out.

The carriage door opens, ROGER enters.

DR YATES  
 What news Master L'Estrange?

CAROLINE YATES  
 Is Tom well?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 That he is Miss Yates, well of body  
 at least.

CAROLINE YATES  
 What do you mean?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE  
 The loss of his family has affected  
 his mind. He is having doubts about  
 his studies.

DR YATES  
 Well, we must convince him. Does he  
 know who I am and how I can change  
 his life? One way or another we  
 will bring him to Oxford!

CAROLINE looks pensively at ROGER.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CORNER HOUSE, FIRST FLOOR LANDING BY STAIRS. NIGHT

TOM kisses MARTHA good night by her bedroom door, she goes  
 into her room.

TOM goes into his room and closes the door.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

By candlelight TOM sits at his desk, takes out CAROLINE's letters, opens them quickly and scan reads a couple of them, then stuffs the rest unopened into his desk drawer.

Takes out parchment and quill and writes a note.

TOM COLEY (V.O.)

Dear Caroline, thank you for your letters. I am in good health and survived the plague although my family perished. I hope our paths will cross again soon. Yours, Tom

TOM folds letter, puts in envelope, seals it and goes to bed. Blows out the candle.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CORNER HOUSE. WILLIAM'S STUDY. DAY. MORNING

WILLIAM and TOM are working together. They have parchment and quills out on their table, and WILLIAM is demonstrating to TOM how to draw a scheme of heaven.

WILLIAM LILLY

See, from here we can see how the planets offer insight to coming events. This is how I knew the plague was coming. (Beat) That day I made another prediction.

TOM looks up from the scheme.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

There will soon be a fire Tom. One that will sweep through the city, fanned by the east wind.

TOM COLEY

Then we must tell people.

WILLIAM LILLY

It is too dangerous! I already fear that the opening of my practice will have drawn too much attention.

TOM COLEY

We cannot just let it happen, not again. We must tell the king. The Lord Mayor.

WILLIAM LILLY

Tom remember how the king took our advice before.

(MORE)

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

They killed all the animals - the city was overrun with rats and the plague got worse. Our prognosis was right, but the interpretation wasn't.

TOM COLEY

But it is our duty to try.

WILLIAM LILLY

That was not the first time I have been misinterpreted. Years ago I predicted an eclipse over London. I knew it was a terrible portent for the King, the citizens, the City and England. I announced it in my almanacs and when the day came and the sky went dark over London, all doors and windows closed and not one person would leave their house. No one went to work and the city came to a standstill.

TOM COLEY

Master Lilly, this is not an eclipse! People risk losing everything in a fire. You can't be the only man who knows what's going to happen. You have to let the people know.

WILLIAM LILLY

I fear for Martha and I have no desire to rot in jail.

TOM COLEY

You still have to do something. (Beat) What if we send a secret message to warn the people?

TOM grabs a blank parchment and sketches with a quill.

TOM COLEY (CONT'D)

A picture. If London is to burn then how about a bonfire? Gathered around are people, dressed in different ways to represent the planets, putting out flames? Like this...

TOM shows WILLIAM the sketch.

WILLIAM LILLY

A silent hieroglyph. Very good, yes, very good.

TOM COLEY

Even if they made the connection,  
it would be hard to prove we  
predicted it without any words. Do  
you know when the fire will start?

WILLIAM LILLY

September 2nd. Finish the picture  
and we'll put it on the front cover  
of my new Almanac.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE BAR GATEWAY. DAY. MORNING.

People are busy about their day.

TOM carries a wrapped parcel of the new Almanacs along the  
street. He approaches JEREMIAH, preaching on the street.

TOM COLEY

Jeremiah! I am Tom Coley apprentice  
to Master Lilly. He told me you  
usually sell his almanacs for him.  
I have here a newly printed  
edition.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Ah you! Now you see how you play  
your role. Come! Come! Give them  
here!

JEREMIAH grabs the package and starts ripping the wrapping  
off mumbling with excitement.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE (CONT'D)

Master Lilly, Master Lilly what do  
we have here for the year! A year  
of the three sixes! Let me see ...a  
Hieroglyphic! Oh what cunning!  
(Long beat) He speaks but makes no  
sound. Oh what deceit! More in what  
it doesn't say than what it does...

TOM COLEY

Very perceptive Master Deliverance.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Pah! You astrologers are not the  
only ones who have vision! I've  
divined other portents, you know.

JEREMIAH holds up open pages of his well-thumbed bible.

## JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE (CONT'D)

Isaiah 30: And the lord shall show the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest and hailstones! (Long beat) You know what I think Tom Coley? I think there is danger in this book of Master Lilly's and that is why he plays in shadows and pictures.

## TOM COLEY

You may well be right, Jeremiah.

## JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Then you ask me to take great risk selling this for the Master.

## TOM COLEY

William asked if you would sell each copy for a shilling, and take two pence for yourself.

## JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Two pence you say? Why yes of course I'll sell them! (Shouting) Come on mobs, jesters and good folk! Master Lilly's new almanac is here for your revelation! Only a shilling for all the answers!

TOM smiles as people stop to buy copies and then he walks under the Temple bar, heading into the city.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ROYAL SOCIETY IN GRESHAM'S COLLEGE. DAY

TOM is walking in the Quadrangle holding his letter to Caroline. ROGER steps out of a doorway and they meet.

## ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Well done Tom. I knew you would make the right choice! Are you ready to leave for Oxford?

## TOM COLEY

No sir, I'm just keeping my word. Here is the letter for Caroline Yates.

TOM hands ROGER a letter.

## ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Miss Yates is staying in London with me.

(MORE)

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

I think it's time you met her again. She's very keen to spend more time with you.

TOM COLEY

Thank you Master L'Estrange but no. My path lies elsewhere. I won't be leaving London for Oxford. There are events soon at hand that necessitate me to be here.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Events at hand?

TOM COLEY

Excuse me, I must go.

TOM starts walking away.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

The Royal Society prepared you for Oxford. You can't run away. Remember your father's last wish.

TOM hesitates, and turns around.

TOM COLEY

What do you know of my father's wishes?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Your father believed in what we did.

TOM COLEY

To keep Lilly silent!

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

So, you know about the prediction.

TOM COLEY

My family died in the plague, Master L'Estrange. The Society's fear of what it does not understand cost thousands of lives.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Then you should know that it was your father that banished Lilly from the Society. He knew how dangerous he was.

TOM COLEY

I must go.

TOM sets off quickly towards the Gresham's college gateway. ROGER calls after him.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

William Lilly is not what he seems young Coley! You're going to learn the hard way if you don't heed my advice.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER L'ESTRANGE'S HOUSE. DAY.

ROGER enters the room where CAROLINE is sitting reading by the fireplace. DR YATES passes the room. ROGER hands DR YATES TOM's letter.

DR YATES tears it open.

DR YATES

What is this?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

That is all he gave me.

DR YATES

"Hope our paths cross"? What kind of scholar writes with such brevity? Why write at all?

DR YATES hands the note to CAROLINE. She scans it and looks bereft.

DR YATES (CONT'D)

It is clear he has no interest in my daughter or Oxford.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I'm sure he will come around to our way of thinking. We just need to draw him away from William Lilly.

DR YATES

Lilly is a manipulative man. His art is far from God. It will not be so easy. Caroline, you must go to him.

CAROLINE YATES

Father you use me wrongly. I care deeply for Tom Coley but I shall not be a mere lure for him.

DR YATES

You will do as I say! The consequences for your young Tom could be severe.

CAROLINE YATES

Father I fail to recognise you.  
What is it that eats at your soul  
so?

DR YATES

Leave me Caroline. Your weakness  
will cause much damage.

CAROLINE leaves deeply upset. ROGER goes to say something but DR YATES turns away. ROGER leaves. DR YATES stands alone trembling with rage.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE BAR GATEWAY. DAY

JEREMIAH is hawking WILLIAM's almanac from his preacher's barrel by the Temple Bar.

Passers-by are buying copies from him.

ROGER approaches in his carriage and pulls over on the side of the road to watch.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Gather round now people, come see  
the hieroglyphic for an eventual  
year. Yes, come close, look here.  
Herein the aspect of the heavens  
learn, and of the times the mystic  
signs discern.

A MAN takes a copy and looks at the picture on the front cover

MAN

What does it mean?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

It's the accurate prognostications  
of the great and mysterious  
astrologer, Master William Lilly!

WOMAN

I've heard of him! Rumour has it  
he's always right.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Yes! He knows a powerful year is  
now upon us, and he is testing us  
with clues.(beat) Why not buy  
yourself a copy? It's only a  
shilling.

CUT TO:

INT. CARRIAGE. DAY

ROGER is straining to listen intently at the window.

The MAN hands over coins to JEREMIAH, who thanks him, slips coins into his jacket pocket and dips into his barrel to pick out another copy of the almanac.

ROGER gets up to exit the carriage.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE BAR GATEWAY. DAY

ROGER approaching looking serious. JEREMIAH eyes him with suspicion and lowers the almanac he's been waving around and picks up his bible instead.

ROGER points to the almanac.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Hey preacher man, street hawker,  
whatever you are. What is this  
publication?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

It is William Lilly's new almanac  
sir, an intriguing read, why not  
take a copy home?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

What are you doing flogging his  
wares?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Well good sir, I'm excited about  
this year... I have seen the comet,  
read the warnings in the bible  
about the forthcoming destruction  
of our city of sin and I am in awe  
of the expected appearance of the  
great beast in this year of the  
three sixes, as prophesied in the  
book of revelations.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

It is good you respect the word of  
the lord, preacher, but loose  
speaking spreads fear and  
suspicion.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Ah but Master Lilly divines the  
same outcomes as me.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

And what outcome is that, barrel man?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Fire! Sir, fire! See here, this hieroglyphic, there are flames rising up to devour a sinful people. The wrath of God is soon to be known.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I'd stop right there if I were you.

ROGER takes the copy of the almanac from JEREMIAH's hand

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Do you know who I am?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

No sir?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I am Roger L'Estrange. My official position is the censor of mathematical publications. What is your name?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Je...Jeremiah De...Deliverance, Mister Strange.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

L'Estrange! Now do you know what a censor of Mathematical publications does Jeremiah?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

I have heard rumour.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Right now I could arrest you for spreading seditious material. Which could result in you losing your head.

ROGER threateningly points to the rotten heads on pikes stuck on top of the Temple Bar gate.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Several of those men up there lost their ability to speak against the state. Do you want to join them?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

No Mister Strange, not at all.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Would you rather help the king than hinder him?

JEREMIAH nods.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Good. Who gave you these books to sell?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

William Lilly's apprentice bought me a packet of almanacs and told me I could make two pence for every one sold.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Was this apprentice Tom Coley?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Aye sir.

Long beat.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

What's this cover then preacher?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

I don't believe what it says for a moment sir.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

But what does it say?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

He predicts bad things for the city.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Right. Thank you barrel man, you've done well. I'll take these pamphlets, and if I see you selling them again then your head will join those of the other traitors.

Throws him a coin as he turns to leave.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

I would like to suggest, as you're obviously a God fearing man, that you go and find a church to pray in for your eventual salvation.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

Yes Mister Strange.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Keep your conscience Jeremiah.  
Don't fall under the spell of those  
who claim to know the future. Only  
God knows a man's destiny. (long  
beat) We'll talk again soon, I'm  
sure.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROGER L'ESTRANGE'S HOUSE COURTYARD. DAY.

CAROLINE idly walks in the courtyard. COACHMAN groom horses  
etc.

ROGER returns in a carriage. He leaps out carrying a copy of  
the Almanac. He is greeted by DR YATES, he shows him the book  
and they start to talk. They walk through the stables.  
CAROLINE follows to hear what they are saying.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

He's trying to tell people his fire  
prediction from all those years  
ago. The one we banned him from  
speaking of.

DR YATES

He's got young Tom Coley on his  
side too. What are we going to do?  
If people know the Society ignored  
his warnings ...(hushed) he was  
right about the plague!

As they walk CAROLINE struggles to hear what they are saying.

DR YATES (CONT'D)

I thought this was over. He's been  
silent all these years, and by the  
looks of things he's still wary of  
saying it directly! We have to do  
something to scare him off  
entirely.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

He lives at Corner House near the  
Strand. I can visit him and warn  
him.

DR YATES

It'll take more than just a  
warning. Coley has emboldened him.  
I'll take this in hand ...

As they walk on, CAROLINE struggles to hear what they are  
saying and, becoming frustrated, rushes back to the  
courtyard. She sees the COACHMAN preparing the carriage.

CAROLINE YATES

Good man, where are you going?

COACHMAN

I have some errands to run for  
Master L'Estrange.

CAROLINE YATES

Where?

COACHMAN

All around town, m'lady. Up Strand  
Lane and thereabouts.

CAROLINE YATES

Ah I have some business to attend  
to myself in that area. Would you  
mind if I rode with you?

COACHMAN

At this time, my lady, you are the  
mistress of the house. The coach is  
yours to do with as you please.

CAROLINE YATES

Then I shall get my robe and ride  
with you to Strand Lane! Wait there  
coachman.

CUT TO:

EXT. STRAND LANE. DAY.

CAROLINE rides in the carriage looking out on the city  
streets. She is wearing a blue hooded robe.

From the carriage CAROLINE sees WILLIAM's consultation window  
and signboard and bangs on the roof of the carriage to get  
the COACHMAN's attention... to no avail. Frustrated she leans  
out of the window and hollers.

CAROLINE YATES

Coachman! Coachman! Pull the reins!

The carriage pulls to a halt.

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D)

Thank you. I will just be a few  
minutes, can you wait?

COACHMAN

Aye ma'am. I have some business  
just up yonder.

CAROLINE pulls up her hood and walks back down Strand Lane to Corner House.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CORNER HOUSE UPSTAIRS PARLOUR. DAY.

MARTHA is sat on a window seat overlooking Strand Lane. She is embroidering herbal pillows. She notices a young lady in a dark blue hood and cloak approach the consultation window but she does not know who she is.

The window bell tinkles, so MARTHA gets up and walks through the house to TOM'S bedroom, which overlooks the garden. WILLIAM is in the garden.

She leans out of TOM'S window and calls to WILLIAM.

MARTHA

Master Lilly, you have a customer  
at the consultation window.

WILLIAM waves and makes to go inside.

MARTHA fondly looks around her boyfriend's room. She goes to his desk to casually look at the papers on it. She curiously opens the desk drawer and sees the ribbon-tied letters of CAROLINE.

Her face shows a slight frown as she takes the letters out of the desk for closer inspection.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAM LILLY'S STUDY. DAY.

WILLIAM enters his study and goes to the consultation window and opens it. A young lady lifts her dark blue hood and it is CAROLINE.

WILLIAM LILLY

Good morning, and how may I help  
you?

CAROLINE YATES

Am I correct in thinking you are  
the astrologer William Lilly?

WILLIAM LILLY

That is what the sign says above  
the door!

WILLIAM leans a little out the window to point to the Inn style hanging board which reads in stylized writing "All Manners Of Questions Answered and Nativities Judged by William Lilly"

CAROLINE YATES

I was just walking down the lane  
and...

WILLIAM LILLY

... saw a little bell and decided  
to ring it? Without looking at the  
sign?

CAROLINE YATES

Yes. Look, I've never met or spoken  
to an astrologer before. How does  
this work? What do you do?

WILLIAM LILLY

You compose a question to ask me  
and in my methodical way I look at  
today's scheme of heaven...

WILLIAM indicates to a parchment with a diagram on it.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

... and judge your fate according  
to the natural influence of the  
stars.

CAROLINE YATES

And that comes true?

WILLIAM LILLY

I am but a humble student of  
astrology, who uses the heavenly  
knowledge of the stars- the  
admirable works of our invisible  
and all-glorious God. It is an  
ancient tradition and you can take  
of it what you will.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM. DAY

MARTHA is sat at TOM's desk and unties the ribbon bow and is  
opening the letters. She is clearly shocked by what she is  
reading and begins to cry.

She tears open the rest of the letters, briefly scanning the  
contents of each one and then throws them across the bedroom  
floor so they scatter all round.

She stands up and the desk chair falls to the ground behind  
her.

MARTHA storms out of TOM's bedroom crying and slams the door  
behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM. DAY.

MARTHA storms into her bedroom and grabs a bag and silently starts stuffing it with clothes from her closet.

She is shaking her head to herself and sniffing as she does it.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAM LILLY'S STUDY. DAY.

As before.

CAROLINE YATES

I would like to know, what will  
happen to the man I love?

WILLIAM nods and turns to check a large hourglass with trickling sand and then picks up his parchment, turning it slightly to adjust how it reads.

As he refers to the parchment and mumbles to himself, he occasionally looks over the top of it at CAROLINE.

WILLIAM LILLY

Venus the planet of love is ahead  
of the Sun and in a dual sign, as  
is the waxing moon applying to it.  
Your answer is simple: the man you  
love is also very much in love!

WILLIAM puts down his parchment.

CAROLINE YATES

Thank you, that gives me hope.

WILLIAM LILLY

See? That is your answer. That'll  
be half a crown please my dear.

CAROLINE opens a purse and is about to hand WILLIAM a coin but stops.

CAROLINE YATES

Wait. What else can the picture  
tell you?

WILLIAM LILLY

How much do you want to know? In  
this scheme you are represented by  
the star Altair, which suggests you  
come from riches and preferment?

CAROLINE YATES

Maybe, carry on.

WILLIAM LILLY

It also suggests determination...

CAROLINE YATES

One has to pursue what one wants in life, doesn't one?

WILLIAM LILLY

Yes, particularly when called on for swiftness and boldness of action, my dear.

CAROLINE YATES

You speak in riddles Master Lilly.

WILLIAM LILLY

But how do you feel on hearing this?

CAROLINE YATES

Like I must carry on to attain the prize.

WILLIAM LILLY

Then do so. Two men will soon be very grateful you did. Your carriage back to Oxford is at the top of the lane.

CAROLINE YATES

How do you know where I'm from?

WILLIAM LILLY

I have been practicing my art for forty years. I see many things, even the things I don't wish to see.

CAROLINE hands WILLIAM the silver coin.

CAROLINE YATES

Pray tell, what do you mean, two men?

WILLIAM LILLY

Why not look out for the two men? When you know why you'll move heaven and earth to correct their destiny. (beat) They'll be a fortunate outcome. You're a good woman with fine morals. It's all about your own personal lesson.

CAROLINE YATES

My own lesson?

WILLIAM LILLY

Yes. When the hour comes, listen to your conscience and act on it, as you do. Afterwards you'll learn to be happy with where you're from.  
(beat) And now I must go. Good day!

WILLIAM closes the consultation window and vanishes.

CAROLINE YATES

Wait! I must tell you something!

CAROLINE tinkles the little bell again and peers into the closed window, banging it with the palm of her hand. She gives up and moves away from the window.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY IN THE CORNER HOUSE. DAY.

WILLIAM is opening his study door as MARTHA storms down the stairs towards the front door carrying her bag and in tears.

WILLIAM LILLY

Martha my dear, what's wrong?

MARTHA storms past him.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE CORNER HOUSE IN STRAND LANE. DAY.

A tearful MARTHA swerves past CAROLINE, not knowing who she is.

CAROLINE senses the force of the angry woman and watches her stamp her way up the lane.

CAROLINE peers into the consultation window once more then puts her hood back on and slowly walks up the lane herself.

Unseen before Dr YATES comes out of an alley and follows MARTHA up the street. CAROLINE sees him.

CAROLINE YATES

Father?

She goes to follow him, but loses him in the crowded street.

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D)

Father? What are you up to?

She runs back to the carriage, just as the COACHMAN gets back.

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D)  
Quick coachman. Take me back to the house.

COACHMAN  
Aye lady.

She climbs and looks back out the window.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE HALLWAY OF CORNER HOUSE. DAY.

TOM arrives back at Corner House and enters into the hallway and climbs the stairs up to his bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM. DAY.

TOM opens the door to his bedroom and sees CAROLINE's letters scattered across the floor, the desk drawer open, an envelope scrunched on the desk, the desk chair lying on the ground and the window open.

TOM COLEY  
Martha! Oh no, what have I done?

He rushes out the room.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE HALLWAY OF CORNER HOUSE. DAY.

TOM runs down the stairs.

WILLIAM appears from the back of the house and the two meet at the bottom of the stairs.

TOM COLEY  
Master William, have you seen Martha? Something's happened.

WILLIAM LILLY  
She left in a hurry. Why? What has happened?

TOM COLEY  
There has been a terrible misunderstanding! I must find her.

CUT TO:

EXT. STRAND LANE. DAY.

TOM pelts up the lane.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLEET STREET LOOKING EAST TOWARDS OLD ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. AFTERNOON. DAY.

Tom is running through the streets of London, weaving through crowds and dodging carts and carriages.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE KATHERINE'S HOUSE, LOVAT LANE. AFTERNOON. DAY.

TOM arrives at KATHERINE'S front door, breathless. He bangs on the door urgently, waits a minute. KATHERINE opens the door and stands defiantly in the doorway arms folded, looking furious.

TOM COLEY

Please can I speak to Martha,  
Katherine?

KATHERINE

Like hell you can. Who do you think  
you are?

TOM COLEY

It's not what you think! She's got  
it all wrong.

KATHERINE

And you expect her to believe you?

TOM COLEY

Please tell Martha that without her  
in my heart my soul is incomplete.  
I love her, I really do.

KATHERINE

You've proved that you can't be  
trusted.

TOM COLEY

Please ask her to talk to me.  
Without her I would be lost.

KATHERINE

In that case, go ahead and get  
lost.

KATHERINE slams the door in TOM's face. TOM looks up at the window, but the curtains are drawn. He dejectedly walks back towards the Strand.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROGER L'ESTRANGE'S HOUSE. COURTYARD. EARLY EVENING

CAROLINE's carriage pulls up sharply in the courtyard. CAROLINE jumps out and runs across to the house.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER L'ESTRANGE'S HOUSE. EARLY EVENING

CAROLINE bursts through the doors.

CAROLINE YATES

Roger! Roger! Where are you?

ROGER comes to the top of the stairs.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Miss Yates. What is it? You look flustered.

CAROLINE YATES

What do you know Roger? Why was my father at Corner House? What is going on?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Oh lord. I was fearful this would happen.

CAROLINE YATES

What would happen?

ROGER looks ashamed.

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D)

What would happen? Roger? I overheard you earlier, talking with my father. What is he planning?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

You have to understand Caroline your father is very upset. His life's work is at stake.

CAROLINE YATES

So help me God Roger, if you don't start telling me what is going on

...

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Alright... He said he wanted to scare off Lilly. I don't know what he intends to do, but the last thing he said was that the best way to get to Lilly was through his charge, Martha.

CAROLINE YATES

That must be the woman I saw leaving Corner House. What does he intend to do?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Your father is a good man  
Caroline...

CAROLINE screams in frustration and storms back out the front door into the courtyard and back to the carriage. ROGER runs down the stairs and sees in the carriage as it pulls off into the street.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Where are you going? Miss Yates.  
Caroline!

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP OF STRAND LANE. EARLY EVENING. SUNSET.

TOM walks past St.Clements Danes church heading towards Strand Lane.

WILLIAM joins him in the street and they start to talk.  
WILLIAM has two horses with him.

WILLIAM LILLY

Young Tom Coley! There you are.

TOM COLEY

She won't see me Master Lilly. What have I done.

WILLIAM LILLY

She is a fiery girl Tom. Give her some time. Let's take a ride. Let the calm air cool passions. Mount up, the hour is upon us.

TOM obeys, his heart broken, taking the rein of his horse.

They mount and start to ride up the Strand.

CAROLINE's carriage barrels around the corner. She leaps out of the carriage and hammers on the door of Corner House. One of the staff opens the door.

STAFF

Can I help you?

CAROLINE YATES

Master Lilly where is he?

STAFF

He left just moments ago. I saw him  
up the lane there, talking with  
Master Coley.

CAROLINE runs out into the street desperately looking for them. She just glimpses their backs as they head around the corner. She rushes back to the carriage and jumps in. It turns in the street and heads after TOM and WILLIAM

CUT TO:

EXT. PUDDING LANE. EVENING.

At the top of Pudding Lane there are many people busy preparing business for the next day. Trays of different kinds of breads are laid out ready for baking. A group of playing children are seen running between the houses and down the cobbled lane.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BRIDLEPATH RUNNING UP THE SIDE OF PRIMROSE HILL. NIGHT.

WILLIAM and TOM dismount and tie up their horses beside the Primrose Hill windmills.

TOM COLEY

Why are we here, Master William?

WILLIAM LILLY

To take in the view, young Tom.  
Maybe clear your head a little.  
What date is it today?

TOM COLEY

Sunday, September second.

WILLIAM LILLY

(long beat) Come on, let's climb up  
inside this windmill, I do believe  
there's a rather rewarding view of  
the city at the top.

The two men enter the door of the windmill.

As they go in WILLIAM turns to look back down the hill and sees CAROLINE's coach and horses also making its way up the bridlepath. He nods and smiles to himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDLEPATH ON PRIMROSE HILL. NIGHT.

CAROLINE's carriage comes to a stop and the two windmills are about 100 metres away.

The COACHMAN parks the carriage off the path. CAROLINE climbs out.

CAROLINE YATES

Wait for me here please driver.

COACHMAN

Take care my lady, I am here if you need any help.

CAROLINE lifts the hood of her cloak and starts to walk up the path towards the windmills.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE THE WINDMILL. NIGHT.

WILLIAM and TOM are stood on the edge of the platform looking at the city. The sails gently creak in the breeze and the moon shines high up in the night sky.

WILLIAM LILLY

I wanted to bring you up here because it's the best place to see it start.

TOM COLEY

The fire?

WILLIAM nods silently and lifts his collar up against the cold night air. TOM shivers slightly.

TOM COLEY (CONT'D)

Will we witness a lightning bolt from heaven strike the city?

WILLIAM LILLY

I think not. It will be a human error, not divine intervention.

CUT TO:

INT. FLOUR MILL IN PUDDING LANE. NIGHT.

Millers are busy sifting flour in the mill in Pudding Lane. Clouds of flour bellow around and spill out the doors into the lane. More and more frenetic activity.

CUT TO:

INT. LOWER LEVELS OF THE WINDMILL. NIGHT.

CAROLINE climbs up the ladders inside the windmill, until she is on the level directly underneath WILLIAM and TOM. She can see their silhouettes through gaps in the floorboards above her. Beside her is a smaller open service hatch looking out over the city.

She strains to hear what the two men are talking about.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TOP LEVEL OF THE WINDMILL ON OPEN PLATFORM. NIGHT.

TOM and WILLIAM stand in the doorway onto the windmill platform as before.

TOM COLEY

I would've liked Martha to have been with us this evening.

WILLIAM LILLY

So how are you going to win back her heart?

TOM COLEY

I will do anything to prove my love to her.

CUT TO:

INT. LOWER LEVEL OF THE WINDMILL ON THE STAIRS. NIGHT.

CAROLINE listens in the shadows carefully.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TOP LEVEL OF THE WINDMILL ON OPEN PLATFORM. NIGHT.

WILLIAM and TOM as before.

WILLIAM LILLY

Risk your life?

TOM COLEY

If that's what it takes.

WILLIAM LILLY  
You love her then? Truly?

TOM COLEY  
With all my heart. No one else  
could ever replace her.

CUT TO:

INT. LOWER LEVEL OF THE WINDMILL ON THE STAIRS. NIGHT.

CAROLINE is distraught by what she has heard. She starts crying, quietly.

CUT TO:

INT. FLOUR MILL IN EVENING. NIGHT.

Continued frenetic action and then a whooshing sound and a spontaneous wave of air pressure created by the clouds of flour blows the millers off their feet. A door blows open to the next door property where open baker's ovens throw sparks and burning embers all over the room.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TOP LEVEL OF THE WINDMILL ON OPEN PLATFORM. NIGHT.

WILLIAM and TOM as before.

WILLIAM LILLY  
You know I think the world of  
Martha, and of you too Tom.

TOM COLEY  
I fear I have lost her Master  
Lilly.

WILLIAM LILLY  
We shall see young Tom. Fates may  
intervene yet.

CUT TO:

INT. LOWER LEVEL OF THE WINDMILL ON THE STAIRS. NIGHT.

CAROLINE, in silent tears, makes her way down the stairs in the shadows. Through anger and hurt pride, she decides fatefully not to tell TOM of the danger MARTHA may be in.

She reaches the bottom and looks out across the city and suddenly sees a small plume of flame reaching up into the night sky from the Pudding Lane district.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BRIDLEPATH ON PRIMROSE HILL. NIGHT.

CAROLINE runs towards the coach. She arrives and tearfully shouts to the driver.

CAROLINE YATES

Turn the coach around. Take me back  
to the house. I shall leave for  
Oxford. Why should they find  
happiness? Why should I let them?

The carriage pulls off.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TOP LEVEL OF THE WINDMILL ON OPEN PLATFORM. NIGHT.

WILLIAM and TOM as before. The flames can be seen in the distance.

WILLIAM LILLY

It has begun. Three days of blaze,  
fanned by this easterly breeze.

TOM COLEY

Martha! I must go to her.

TOM rushes out and down the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. KATHERINE'S UPSTAIRS ROOM. NIGHT. BEFORE DAWN.

MARTHA and KATHERINE are asleep in a bed as there is loud knocking at the door. MARTHA wakes. KATHERINE snores loudly.

MARTHA

Tom?

Sleepily she gets up and goes to the door. As she goes to turn the key she pauses a moment, then smiles - she knows TOM really loves her and in passion she has over reacted. There must be some explanation. She turns the key prepared to forgive TOM and as the lock clicks she is suddenly knocked over as the door is forced open hitting her on the head and knocking her out.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY OF LONDON. NIGHT. BEFORE DAWN.

TOM is riding his horse at a gallop into the City of London as flames start to take hold in the distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALDERSGATE ENTRANCE TO THE CITY OF LONDON. NIGHT, JUST BEFORE DAWN.

TOM rides his horse through the gates of the city wall; behind the wall in the distance there is a large plume of smoke and an orange glow.

TOM slows his horse down to a trot and then dismounts, tying his horse up just inside the city gate. He starts on foot into the city streets.

People are coming out onto the streets and looking up at the fiery glow in the sky and wondering what's going on.

CUT TO:

INT. KATHERINE'S UPSTAIRS ROOM. NIGHT. BEFORE DAWN.

MARTHA comes round and the first thing she sees is her mother's terrified face - her hands and feet are bound and her mouth stuffed with a towel. MARTHA finds herself the same way.

There are sounds of panic on the streets, the sounds of flames and timber burning.

Suddenly, DR YATES comes from the shadows - he looks feverish and manic.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHEAPSIDE STREET. NIGHT. BEFORE DAWN.

TOM is making his way down Cheapside heading eastwards towards KATHERINE's house.

He is walking against the flow of people and makes several swerves and dodges through the panicking crowd.

TOM grabs a stranger.

TOM COLEY

How far has the fire spread?

STRANGER

To Lovat Lane! There's no way past!

## STRANGER 2

It's the Dutch! Revenge for  
Terschilling! They are burning down  
the city!

TOM pushes on through the crowd.

TOM passes by fine dressed merchants piling goods on to barges in the Thames and people desperate to get on board.

Firefighters pile gunpowder barrels against a building, ignite the fuse and duck out the way as it blows a hole in a terrace wall in an effort to create a fire gap.

TOM rushes on down the street as fire shoots up through and in between slate roofs, in spurts.

CUT TO:

INT. KATHERINE'S UPSTAIRS ROOM. NIGHT. BEFORE DAWN.

MARTHA is struggling as smoke starts seeping through floorboards and runs across the ceiling above their heads.

DR YATES

(mumbling) I warned him to keep  
quiet. I told him no good would  
come of it.

MARTHA stares at DR YATES imploring him to come closer.

DR YATES (CONT'D)

Oh Martha you are a lovely woman. I  
can see why Tom fell for you...  
even over my daughter.

DR YATES leans close to MARTHA and she suddenly gets a foot free from the bindings and kicks his leg, knocking him to the floor. He screams in pain as she rolls over and gets to her feet, kicking him repeatedly in the head. Blood flies across the floor. He tries to protect himself.

Suddenly, TOM smashes in through the door as flames lick up the stairwell behind him. He quickly pulls MARTHA off DR YATES and starts untying her. He pulls the gag from her mouth.

MARTHA

Mother! Get mother.

TOM goes to untie KATHERINE. The smoke is billowing up from below and the timbers creak. MARTHA stands over the blooded DR YATES as he weeps. She goes to help him up when suddenly the floor gives way beneath them and flames shoot up as DR YATES falls to the floor below engulfed in flames. He screams. MARTHA dangles holding on to the floorboards.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Tom! Help!

TOM rushes over and pulls her up. The embrace. They help KATHERINE stand up but she is badly shaken and her leg is injured. They help her through the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STAIRWELL OUTSIDE KATHERINE'S ROOM. NIGHT. BEFORE DAWN.

TOM and MARTHA help KATHERINE down the stairs to where KATHERINE'S cart is parked.

They lie KATHERINE in the cart

Smoke billows thicker and thicker in the stairwell and a crackling sound of blazing wood can be heard as the first flames appear through the smoke at the top of the stairwell, consuming the floor above KATHERINE'S room.

They watch in fear as they see the upstairs level above KATHERINE'S old room ignite.

In seconds the fire has engulfed her old living space. They push the cart out the door and onto the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE THAMES RIVERBANK BESIDE LONDON BRIDGE. DAY. EARLY DAWN.

TOM and MARTHA push the cart with KATHERINE on it and they find themselves by the River Thames where there's absolute chaos as every boat and floating object is being used to take the desperate people and their possessions away from the burning buildings alongside the riverbank.

MARTHA

There's no way through.

TOM COLEY

We have to get to Corner House. Master William said it would be spared from the flames.

MARTHA

That's back through the city where the fire is strongest.

TOM COLEY

(long beat) We can do it. Come on!

They wheel the cart around again and start pushing their way through the crowds back up towards the blazing city.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE AREA AROUND WATLING STREET, EAST OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. DAY. EARLY DAWN.

TOM and MARTHA push the cart with KATHERINE laid out on top of it.

Up ahead is the old St. Paul's Cathedral looming through the drifting smoke. The city is in full flames and they walk through thick clouds of smoke, coughing and spluttering.

Suddenly a building collapses in front of them, brought down by the flames. Their path is blocked as ashes, flaming pieces and harsh smoke billows up in front of them.

TOM COLEY

We have to find another way.

TOM guides MARTHA to another direction and pushes the cart into a narrow side street with tall overhanging buildings.

The side street is evacuated, looking like all the residents left in a hurry.

TOM pushes the cart left then right and then left again, in an attempt to circumnavigate around and find their way back to Watling street. Instead they lose their way and find themselves entering a courtyard with buildings on three sides.

Behind them the flames are raging and roaring down the alleyway that they have just come through. It seems like there's no way out.

TOM looks around desperately as does MARTHA. KATHERINE lies still on the cart.

MARTHA

We're stuck.

TOM COLEY

I was sure we could've got through this way. I'm sorry Martha.

The fire has turned the corner of the alleyway and is now blazing away at the entrance to the courtyard.

TOM looks for a way out. It is useless.

TOM COLEY (CONT'D)

Help! Help us! Can anyone hear us?

MARTHA

(quietly)

Tom. It's no use. Come here.

He comes back to the cart in the centre of the courtyard.

TOM COLEY

Oh Martha, what have I done?

MARTHA

(long beat)

Tom. Tom! Look at me. I know you love me. That is all that matters.

They hug and kiss.

The courtyard entrance is now blazing, and the three sides of the courtyard are also in flames.

There are shimmering waves of heat, smoke and ash. MARTHA and TOM shelter KATHERINE on the cart.

The flames rise and gradually encroach on them as the burning buildings start to creak like they might collapse and crush the little cart with the three figures on it.

One more thick wave of smoke passes over them; they both cough and wheeze as they are running out of fresh air.

Suddenly there is a huge ground-shaking boom as a huge wave of dust and wood splinters rushes past their cart, knocking TOM and MARTHA over.

Behind them a glimpse of blue sky.

TOM and MARTHA stand up, framed by the blue sky and shredded buildings and as the smoke clears a little, fire fighters walk through the gap into the courtyard. They are amazed to see the three figures still alive.

FIREFIGHTER 1

God's blessed you three! Come on!  
Get out! Quick!

TOM and MARTHA start to push the cart out through the gap.

FIREFIGHTER 1 (CONT'D)

Keep moving westwards. The fire is less fierce.

The three pick their way through the debris and back onto Watling Street. Old St. Paul's Cathedral looms in the smoke.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROOF OF THE CORNER HOUSE IN STRAND LANE. DAY.  
AFTERNOON.

WILLIAM is pacing up and down on a flat area of the roof of his house. He has a view of the River Thames and over towards London Bridge.

In the distance is a wave of flames eating their way through the city towards his house. Along with the flames we see a wall of smoke rising up into the sky and blocking out most of the morning sunlight.

WILLIAM LILLY  
Blow west wind damn you!

One of his servants comes up to the roof.

SERVANT 1  
Master Lilly, you'll be glad to know that three familiar friends have just arrived.

WILLIAM LILLY  
Thank God!

WILLIAM rushes to get off the roof and back into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HALLWAY OF THE CORNER HOUSE. DAY. AFTERNOON.

WILLIAM comes down the stairs and is most relieved to see an exhausted, ash covered and grubby MARTHA with TOM.

KATHERINE is slumped on a hall chair.

WILLIAM LILLY  
Ah! I am so relieved to see you are all safe!

MARTHA  
It was a close run thing, Master William.

WILLIAM LILLY  
I can imagine it was. Someone attend to Miss Katherine!

WILLIAM's servants appear; one tends to KATHERINE.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)  
Come up to the roof.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROOF OF THE CORNER HOUSE IN STRAND LANE. DAY.  
AFTERNOON.

WILLIAM, TOM and MARTHA stand on the roof looking out eastwards at the blazing city. Their silhouettes are framed by the flames. From a distance we can see the landmark of Old St.Pauls Cathedral catching fire. There is a distant roaring sound of flames interspersed with shouting and screaming of Londoners in panic fleeing the flames.

TOM COLEY

I had no idea it would turn out like this. It's an apocalypse.

WILLIAM LILLY

The east wind is still blowing the flames towards us.

WILLIAM looks over towards a weather vane on top of a local church steeple, and lifts his finger into the air, as if testing for the wind direction.

TOM COLEY

We only have a few hours before we'll have to leave Corner house.

WILLIAM LILLY

It will change.

TOM COLEY

How can you be so sure?

WILLIAM looks over towards the weather vane, it starts to change direction.

As the three characters look out over the city skyline, the wall of smoke starts to change and disperse and gradually moves away in the other direction.

MARTHA faces into the new westerly breeze.

WILLIAM LILLY

All praise to Zephyr, the west wind! He has risen and saved us. Come on my dears! We are safe! Corner House will be preserved! Come! Dance with me!

WILLIAM grabs MARTHA and twirls her around. TOM joins in and they make a circle of three, skip dancing around and around. Behind them London burns in the background, as they are framed in front of the distant wall of flames.

FADE TO BLACK.

IN BLACK

TITLE: 4 WEEKS LATER. OCTOBER 4TH 1666.

FADE IN:

EXT. FLEET STREET. DAY. MORNING.

The city is a burnt out shell. Original half-timbered houses are now hollowed out ashen grey and blackened timber frames which still crackle and smoulder in some places. Stone walls and slate tiled roofs have collapsed into piles of rubble.

ROGER rides with three soldiers along Fleet Street.

The four horsemen cross the Fleet river bridge; the Temple Bar gateway and the entrance to Saint Clement's Danes parish up ahead.

We can see how the fire stopped before the Temple Bar gateway, and the point at which the city was saved.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE BAR GATEWAY. DAY. MORNING.

JEREMIAH sees ROGER approaching and ducks down, hiding behind his preacher's barrel.

ROGER sees JEREMIAH and calls out to him from atop his horse.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Jeremiah Deliverance! You're not thinking of leaving town are you?  
(beat) I want your appearance at court, to stand as a witness.

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE

It wasn't me, Mister Strange.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Your a witness, Jeremiah, not the accused. Your testimony will be very important in securing another man's conviction.

JEREMIAH'S face drops in anguish, overcome with a moral crisis.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Now now Jeremiah. Don't look so glum. You'll be doing your country a favour!

CUT TO:

EXT. STRAND LANE OUTSIDE CORNER HOUSE. DAY. MORNING.

ROGER dismounts outside Corner House. He bangs on the front door. The door doesn't open.

ROGER stands back to look up at the parlour room, mumbles angrily to himself. The front door quietly opens.

WILLIAM is standing holding a rolled up scroll under his arm. He steps out into Strand Lane and starts to unravel the daily star scheme, as if ready to consult.

WILLIAM LILLY

Good morning Roger.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Lilly.

WILLIAM LILLY

Your timing couldn't have been more perfect. Everything is mapped out.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Don't try to turn the tables wizard. You know I have the force of the state behind me. London has been razed and a man killed, Lilly. Someone must answer for this catastrophe!

ROGER opens a leather sleeve to reveal an official document, with signatures and seals on it. He shows it to WILLIAM. WILLIAM takes a moment to read.

WILLIAM LILLY

A court summons? You seem so certain that I caused the fire? Why?

ROGER places the document back in its sleeve.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I don't know what it is you do, and I have no wish to find out, but you clearly insinuated on the front cover of your almanac that there would be a fire. It's obvious you had a hand in the starting it. Seeking fame and fortune no doubt. As far as I know you're an agent working for the Dutch or Rome even!

WILLIAM LILLY

I observe the heavens and I look for the signs, then I decide whether to announce what I have seen. That is all.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I have always despised you, Lilly.  
As did Dr Yates. You toy with the  
bedrock of science like it's a  
game.

WILLIAM LILLY

So, now we see what this is.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

(long beat)

Someone will have to take the blame  
Lilly! It might as well be you. The  
city is burnt! Someone has to hang.

WILLIAM LILLY

And you want it to be me?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

And young Tom Coley, foolish boy  
that he is.

ROGER hands over the summons to WILLIAM in its sleeve.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Both your names are writ. The date  
is set for 26th October, at  
Westminster Hall. I have a witness  
to testify against you.

WILLIAM LILLY

Are you sure this is the path you  
want to take?

ROGER nods indignantly.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

In that case, I will personally  
defend myself. There are those that  
know the truth and they will come  
forward.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Always so sure of yourself, aren't  
you Lilly.

WILLIAM LILLY

(glancing upward)

I have help.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I will see you in court Lilly.

ROGER turns and takes his horse's reins and begins to walk up  
the lane. WILLIAM rolls up his star scheme and tucks it under  
his arm again.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 (calling after him)  
 After years of bitterness, you will  
 have a rediscovery of love.

ROGER carries on walking away without acknowledging WILLIAM.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)  
 But if you are unprepared for it,  
 it'll slip through your hands.

WILLIAM watches ROGER as he walks to the top of the lane and  
 turns the corner.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)  
 Oh well, I've told you.

WILLIAM is about to go back indoors when a bloodied hand  
 reaches up from behind him and grabs his shoulder.

Surprised, WILLIAM turns around to see a bloodied and  
 battered JEREMIAH, who has fresh bloody welts on his hands  
 and face, holding a bloody flail.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)  
 Jeremiah! What has happened to you?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE  
 Master Lilly, forgive me...

WILLIAM LILLY  
 For what, dear man?

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE  
 It is all my fault... I have to  
 whip the sin out of me.

JEREMIAH raises the flail whip and WILLIAM grabs the whip and  
 takes it off him, discarding it.

WILLIAM LILLY  
 Jeremiah, stop that!

JEREMIAH DELIVERANCE  
 Roger L'Estrange, Master Lilly!

WILLIAM LILLY  
 Fear not Jeremiah, you must not  
 worry. God will oversee justice.

WILLIAM gently takes JEREMIAH'S shaking hands.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)  
 Come into the house. Come, come.

WILLIAM guides a shaking and bent double, crooked JEREMIAH into Corner House.

FADE TO BLACK:

IN BLACK

TITLE: OCTOBER 26TH, 1666. THE DAY OF THE TRIAL.

FADE IN:

INT. THE HALLWAY OF CORNER HOUSE. DAY. EARLY MORNING.

JEREMIAH sits in the hallway dressed smartly, hair cut and combed. He still has bandages on his hands and a dressing on his face.

WILLIAM, TOM, MARTHA and KATHERINE are stood together in the hall. There is silence and palpable tension as everyone glances around each other.

One of the house servants comes in the front door from outside.

SERVANT 1

The carriage and driver are waiting at the top of Strand Lane, Master William.

WILLIAM nods, turns to his assembled loved ones.

WILLIAM LILLY

We have lived in troubled times and now we face a final test. I don't know the outcome. Some things even I can't see, but the truth will guide us through.

They start to leave.

CUT TO:

INT. BRASENOSE COLLEGE APARTMENT OXFORD. DAY. EARLY MORNING.

CAROLINE is sat at her desk opening letters. One letter is from Roger, which she starts to read and then reads aloud to herself.

CAROLINE YATES

...You may be interested to hear that I have summoned William Lilly to court to answer for the catastrophic fire and the tragic death of your father.

(MORE)

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D)

I feel that Lilly had a major hand in luring Tom Coley away from you and Oxford and also in the unfortunate death of Dr Yates - one of the men who have suffered the consequences of Lilly's predictions. I am hoping to secure a solid conviction against the manipulative old man.

CAROLINE puts the letter down and looks out of the window at the dreaming spires of Oxford. Tears in her eyes.

Suddenly, she gets up and dashes out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE CORNER HOUSE. DAY. MORNING.

We see JEREMIAH being led away by Royal Guards.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE THE CARRIAGE. DAY. MORNING.

WILLIAM, TOM, MARTHA and KATHERINE are sat looking uncomfortable and nervous in WILLIAM's carriage.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEAR CORNER HOUSE. DAY. MORNING.

The carriage pulls out on to the street and off towards Westminster.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRASENOSE COLLEGE GATES, OXFORD. DAY.

CAROLINE dressed in a thick coat and scarf, mounts a smaller carriage with four horses to sit up with the driver.

CAROLINE YATES

Driver, how fast can we get to London?

CARRIAGE DRIVER

These four horses fly like the wind my lady.

CAROLINE YATES

Then let us go directly!

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE WESTMINSTER HALL. DAY. MORNING.

WILLIAM'S carriage pulls up outside Westminster Hall. Several small groups of people are milling around outside the hall. The River Thames is in the background.

WILLIAM'S group climb out of the carriage.

Another smarter and more officious looking carriage pulls up across from WILLIAM and his group.

The carriage door opens and out climbs ROGER. He is wearing his long black leather gloves which he pulls up. He adjusts his hat and coat.

KATHERINE looks over to ROGER and strains to focus on his face. She gasps and puts her hand to her mouth as a look of recognition comes over her.

KATHERINE

Oh my, dear lord. It cannot be.

KATHERINE separates herself from WILLIAM'S group and totters over towards ROGER.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

(screams in surprise)

It is you! My Cavalry man! Roger!  
Remember me, your young Kathy?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

No sorry, you must be mistaken. I  
have no recollection of you.

KATHERINE

I thought you died at Lynn during  
the war. But no!

Upon hearing the mention of Lynn, ROGER'S expression shows a glimmer of recognition but he is clearly acting in an officious manner. KATHERINE stands in front of him.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Out of my way. I am here on  
official business.

ROGER pushes KATHERINE aside, who falls to the floor.

ROGER marches towards the Westminster Hall entrance, looking back only briefly, quizzically.

TOM and MARTHA rush over to help her back on her feet.

MARTHA

Mother, what is it?

KATHERINE

That man. I know him. He is your  
father.

CUT TO:

EXT. ON THE OXFORD TO LONDON CITY HIGHWAY. DAY.

CAROLINE and her driver have their four horse carriage in full gallop down the highway. The wheels of the carriage are rattling and the wind is blowing in their faces as we see them rush pass a marking stone which reads 'London 15 miles'. The driver cracks his whip over the horses backs.

CUT TO:

INT. WESTMINSTER HALL, SAINT STEPHENS CHAPEL. DAY.

The courtroom is packed with politicians and the general public, now including KATHERINE and MARTHA, lining several rows of benches rising up on each side of the room and facing each other.

A central open carpeted corridor leads from the entrance doors past all the rows of people towards some steps.

On each side of the corridor at the base of the steps are two opposing lectern docks, each dock has chairs beside it. These are the defense and the prosecution stands.

The steps lead up to what was the altar area. At the top of the steps and dominating the room is a long rectangular table with a row of chairs behind it in which are sat some serious and imposing looking gentlemen dressed in livery and wigs. This is the Parliamentary Committee.

KATHERINE and MARTHA make their way to seats in the public gallery, MARTHA fixes a stare at ROGER, who is sat on the prosecution benches with JEREMIAH. There is a striking similarity in MARTHA's and ROGER's looks.

There is much murmuring among the crowd as the USHER goes to the large oak double doors at the end of the room and opens them stands there and calls out.

USHER

Call Master William Lilly and  
Master Thomas Coley.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE THE COMMITTEE ROOM, WESTMINSTER HALL. DAY.

WILLIAM is stood outside the double doors with TOM as the doors open and the USHER calls for them. They share a look.

CUT TO:

INT. WESTMINSTER HALL, SAINT STEPHENS CHAPEL. DAY.

The committee room goes quiet as WILLIAM and TOM walk down the central aisle to their seats behind the lectern and dock on one side of the open area.

Once they sit down, the USHER calls again.

USHER

Prosecutor Master Roger L'Estrange.

ROGER stands at the other lectern, opposite WILLIAM and TOM.

From the committee bench rises SIR ROBERT BROOKE.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

We are gathered here on the third day of a committee enquiry as directed by Parliament to ascertain the origins and causes of the Great Fire that devastated our beloved city. I am Sir Robert Brooke, the chairman of the committee, and the Members of Parliament gathered here with me will deliberate on these matters. It is our desire and purpose to seek out the perpetrators so those who are guilty can be brought to justice and stand trial.

There is much murmuring in the court.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE (CONT'D)

We have yet to find conclusive evidence to accuse or convict anyone. Master Lilly, would you please stand. You have been summoned to appear before this committee at the insistence of Master Roger L'Estrange of the Royal Society, who holds the office of Censor of Mathematical Publications. He will first present his case and offer evidence against you, Master William Lilly, a freeman of the Salters company and an astrologer. Do you have anything to say at this present moment?

WILLIAM stands holding onto the sides of the lectern. He shakes his head.

WILLIAM LILLY

No sir.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

This committee was formed by Master L'Estrange to summon you to seek knowledge as to the cause of the late fire to ascertain if there might be any design, plot or conspiracy to bring about a blaze.

ROGER stands up and is holding a copy of the Almanac.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Gentlemen, I have taken much pride in my work as the Censor of Mathematical Publications. A duty entrusted to me is to ensure published material is reliable, accurate and of good quality and is not seditious. One of my tasks is to edit and repress published matter from Soothsayers and cunning men. The evil influence of these publications causes much damage as the gullible and weak-minded can be led to believe the truth in any unfounded prediction that they read. This may lead to strife, civil unrest and fear.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Quite so, Master L'Estrange.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Thank you sire. After the dark days of the interregnum and the regicide Cromwell we have had the glorious restoration of the Monarchy. And it must be the king, the church and Parliament, who hold the predominant influence over the people, not a popularist sorcerer.(long beat)  
Thus I bring to your attention a copy of this almanac published just before the fire.

ROGER holds aloft the almanac so everyone in the room can see the hieroglyph.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

This is the latest in a series published by Master Lilly.

(MORE)

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

I have been aware of his status as a writer favoured by the ill-informed and I have previously let his publications past my censorship, due partly to his refound favour with the king. However, when I saw this particular publication being hawked by this man, Jeremiah Deliverance, the picture on the front cover drew my attention and aroused my concern.

He holds up the almanac. There is much murmuring in the hall.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

It is evidently placed there so readers may question its meaning.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Let me see this picture more closely.

Several copies of the almanac are passed to SIR ROBERT and other committee members. There is a pause whilst SIR ROBERT studies the picture.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE (CONT'D)

I cannot see any indication a city was to burn down. Surely it simply depicts people gathered at a fire?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

With respect, I realize this could be an immediate and superficial interpretation, Sir Robert, but when I heard Jeremiah Deliverance loudly announcing the burning down of our city, I realized there were more secretive machinations at work.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Jeremiah Deliverance. Is it true that you sold this almanac in payment for Master Lilly?

JEREMIAH nods guiltily.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE (CONT'D)

Go on Master L'Estrange.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

It is obvious to me that William Lilly uses astrology to coerce and manipulate those who might otherwise be innocent. How can a man tell us a fire is to happen before it does?

(MORE)

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

Surely it is not beyond reason to suggest that he started the fire himself in order to make his prediction come true and thereby gain fame and fortune?

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Is that an allegation, Master L'Estrange?

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Yes your honour, I am convinced you have before you your prime suspect—the instigator of the fire and although not recorded as such the tragic untimely death of Dr Yates, a principal of Oxford University.

A flurry of murmuring and gasps are heard around the courtroom. KATHERINE jumps off her seat.

KATHERINE

(shouting)

This is lies! You are all about lies!

There is much noise and MARTHA pulls KATHERINE back down to her seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE WESTMINSTER HALL. DAY

CAROLINE arrives in her carriage. She leaps out and searches among the waiting carriages for Roger's COACHMAN. She finds him playing a game of dice with other coachmen and stable hands.

COACHMAN

Lady Caroline! What are you doing here?

CAROLINE grabs him by the arm.

CAROLINE YATES

Come with me. There is not a moment to lose!

CUT TO:

INT. WESTMINSTER HALL, SAINT STEPHENS CHAPEL. DAY.

There is hubbub and general noise amongst the crowd.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Quiet! The committee must hear both sides before deliberating on your allegations, Master L'Estrange.

ROGER sits down.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE (CONT'D)

Master Lilly what do you have to say in your defense?

WILLIAM stands up and gives a little bow towards the committee and takes his place at the lectern.

WILLIAM LILLY

May it please you gentlemen, I am passionate about using the knowledge God has given me and I enquire of the astrological art to ascertain what may happen to our nation, especially as we have been through many unstable years. So on a close and detailed study of a particular branch of my art, I found sir, the City of London would be sadly afflicted with a great plague, and not long after with a devastating fire. As Master L'Estrange is fully aware I presented these findings to the Royal Society, where both he and Dr Yates were among those gathered, some 17 years ago.

The committee turn to each other aghast at what they are hearing.

WILLIAM LILLY (CONT'D)

For many years I kept my predictions hidden from public knowledge for fear of imprisonment. Powerful forces have been at work to protect the accepted truth. Through God's will and the help of those close to me, I refound my purpose and began to practice my art once more. I designed a hieroglyph to warn people of the fire but without commentary, a silent image. It sadly happens what I forecast has now come to pass. This was not my desire but I can only predict events, not control them.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

And yet you foresaw the exact date?

WILLIAM LILLY

I did. Whether or not there was a plot to burn the city or anyone employed to do that, I cannot tell. I can only conclude it was the hand of God, but as to the instruments he used to that purpose, I am ignorant.

Murmurs of agreement can be heard from the benches. TOM jumps up unannounced.

TOM COLEY

Sir, may I speak on Master Lilly's behalf?

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Have a care, young man. What we are considering may seal the fate of Master Lilly. If you speak you may implicate yourself and share Master Lilly's fate.

TOM COLEY

I understand your warning sir, but I must see Master Lilly receive the justice that is his due.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Very well, proceed.

TOM COLEY

Master Lilly is a good man and he never means harm to anyone. He has saved my life through his generous patronage. I believe Master L'Estrange is wrong to make his accusations. He is only seeking to protect his reputation and guard against wider knowledge of his own failings.

More hubbub in the court room.

TOM COLEY (CONT'D)

To start a fire which would devastate London would never be in his nature. He heals and mends, but never destroys. The night of the fire, I was riding with him. We were on the outskirts of the city.

ROGER jumps to his feet.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

I call for Tom Coley's testimony to be struck from the record.

(MORE)

ROGER L'ESTRANGE (CONT'D)

He is an unreliable witness, having been coerced into servitude by this... this sorcerer!

Court room erupts in noise.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Order! Quiet! This is a court room not a tavern! (long beat) Master L'Estrange's objection is noted. Tom Coley's account of events must surely be tainted by his relations as apprentice to Master Lilly...

Suddenly the double doors of the chamber open and an usher marches quickly up the aisle to SIR ROBERT's chair at the centre of the room. The usher whispers in SIR ROBERT's ear.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE (CONT'D)

I am told that a young lady has arrived to give testimony. There is precedent for such late witness at a trial of this nature and, given the standing and circumstances of the individual's family, on this occasion I shall allow it. Call her in.

USHER

The court calls Caroline Yates, daughter of Dr Yates of Oxford.

All eyes turn to the door, where CAROLINE stands looking quite disheveled. Alongside her is the COACHMAN.

Much murmuring in court.

Alone, she walks directly to the bar facing the committee and in between the two wooden lecterns without acknowledging anyone.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Please state your name and place of dwelling for the court.

CAROLINE YATES

Miss Caroline Yates of Brasenose College, Oxford University, daughter of Dr Yates, a principal at Oxford.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

And what have you to tell us?

## CARRIAGE DRIVER

May it please you sirs, I trust you will excuse my intrusion and I am grateful for permission to enter into the proceedings. I am here to give a testimony... (long beat) ... in favour of Master William Lilly.

The crowd in courtroom gasps in astonishment.

## ROGER L'ESTRANGE

What!?! Miss Caroline, what is this?

## SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Master L'Estrange, be silent until you are asked to speak. Now, Miss Yates, please continue.

## CAROLINE YATES

Thank you sir. I might start by saying that Master Roger L'Estrange has been a good friend to me and my father. He has helped me immensely in my life in Oxford, when I have visited London and has been a comfort to me in recent weeks. So I must thank him, and ask for his forgiveness at this intrusion of his well prepared moment. (long beat) On the afternoon of the 2nd September I found myself in Strand Lane and I consulted with Master William Lilly.

## ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Sir Robert, I protest. This girl does not know what she's doing! He has cast a spell!

## SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Maybe we could listen to her testimony first, Master L'Estrange, before bringing accusations of witchcraft into the proceedings?

Chuckles are heard around the court.

## CAROLINE YATES

Thank you sir. My carriage happened to be at the top of Strand Lane. I saw Master Lilly's signboard outside his house and I was curious. He didn't actually say much that I understood. I don't think I understand the astrologers' way of thinking.

(MORE)

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D)

Afterwards I was sat in my carriage, and a young man I knew from the Royal Society walked past.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Is this young man in the court room today Miss Yates?

CAROLINE indicates to TOM.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE (CONT'D)

Please state his name for the court.

CAROLINE YATES

(long beat)

Thomas Coley.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Proceed.

CAROLINE YATES

I wasn't able to catch his attention ... (long beat) ... but, while I watched him, Master William Lilly appeared with two horses. They both mounted and rode off. Curiosity got the better of me, I asked the coachman to follow them.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Why would you do such a thing? What concern of yours is it where an astrologer and his apprentice are going?

CAROLINE YATES

(long beat)

For many months I have had .... an interest in Master Tom.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

An interest?

CAROLINE YATES

Yes sir. (long beat. Shyly) A romantic interest.

Court murmurs again.

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D QUICKLY)  
(CONT'D)

Although, nothing ever happened between us.

CAROLINE looks to MARTHA.

CAROLINE YATES (CONT'D)

I know now that his heart belongs and has always belonged to another. (long beat) But that was not the only cause of my actions that day. I overheard my father speaking with Master L'Estrange. The full meaning I could not glean but my fear was that Master Lilly and Tom were somehow in danger.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Miss Yates please elaborate.

CAROLINE YATES

My father had in recent months become very unsettled. I had heard him on many occasions talk of a curse that had befallen him for past actions. He was a brilliant man sirs, but his mind and emotional state in the weeks leading up to the fire was not sound.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Do you think he meant to harm Master Lilly.

CAROLINE YATES

I cannot say for certain sir, but I know he was in an extreme frame of mind.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Please continue.

CAROLINE YATES

I followed Master Lilly and Tom outside the city walls to a hill where windmills overlook the city. I'm afraid even I do not know the name of the place.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Primrose Hill. I know it well.

CAROLINE YATES

Well then sir, you will know that from up there you can see across all of London. It is a magnificent sight.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Indeed.

CAROLINE YATES

Master Lilly and Tom climbed to a platform to get a clear view. And I followed. I am not proud, sir, of my behaviour that night. But I needed to know ... just know whether Tom felt anything of what I felt for him and to warn him - of what I wasn't sure. (Long beat and drawing herself up in dignity) One thing I have learned in recent months is that love can make you undertake the most strange of endeavours.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Please continue, in your own time Miss Yates.

CAROLINE YATES

I overheard Tom speak of another whom he loved. Loved with a passion like I have never felt. I knew that what he described was true and honest. I was blinded sir by jealousy and hurt. (long beat) I fled without warning them of my father's intentions. As I left the windmill I saw a single, large and bright plume of fire come from near the river. My carriage driver will bear witness that on that night we four saw the start of the fire from outside the gates of the city.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Coachman, stand forward. Is Miss Yates' account of the events of that evening accurate? Be warned you are under oath.

COACHMAN

Aye Sir, on my life it is the truth.

CAROLINE YATES

Master Lilly and Tom Coley could have by no means been the instigators in this tragic episode in London's and my family's history.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

And therefore you defend them from the accusations of Master L'Estrange in this instance?

CAROLINE YATES

Yes sirs I do.

The court room erupts in noise.

SIR ROBERT BROOKE

Order! Miss Yates, bearing in mind the witness that you bring to this matter and the manner in which you unveiled truth despite your own personal pain... (long beat) it is this court's decision that Master Lilly may leave this chamber with his character and reputation unsullied. The case is dismissed! The fate of the Royal Society will be pending following further investigation.

Committee members nod in agreement as the court room erupts in more noise and cheering.

ROGER collapses dejected in his seat, while MARTHA and KATHERINE embrace, as do TOM and WILLIAM.

People start leaving the court room.

TOM goes to CAROLINE and takes her hand.

TOM COLEY

Thank you Caroline. You have undoubtedly saved us.

CAROLINE YATES

Aye and myself methinks. (long beat) God bless you Tom and I wish you well.

TOM COLEY

Yes and to you Miss Yates.

MARTHA acknowledges CAROLINE across the room. CAROLINE smiles and takes one last long look at TOM's youthful face, turns and exits.

TOM runs over and embraces MARTHA.

KATHERINE joins them and nods in the direction of ROGER. KATHERINE and MARTHA stride over to him where he sits.

KATHERINE

The passage of time has been harsh on me, sir, but I know you know who I am. Kathy of Lynn. Your lover. (long beat) And see here this young lady?

ROGER looks at MARTHA, the resemblance is undeniable, especially the eyes. It slowly starts to dawn on him.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Kathy? Is this ...?

KATHERINE

After you left I was imprisoned and it almost killed me. I had nothing. Nothing except my daughter, Martha! My angel! But she too was taken from me. The kindness of one man saved her from a life of servitude and poverty.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Kathy, I ...

KATHERINE

That man was William Lilly. The man you tried to imprison. The man whose reputation you nearly destroyed!

ROGER's face changes as a realization dawns on him.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE

Martha... (long beat) Such a lovely name...

MARTHA

I believe that you are my father by blood. I see you in me and I in you. But Master Lilly is the man I shall ever regard as my real father. What I have seen today, I want no part of. What I have seen in you, I want no part of. This is for you to carry alone for all your days.

MARTHA and KATHERINE leave. Long beat on ROGER as it sinks in he has lost everything.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAM'S CARRIAGE - MOVING. DAY.

WILLIAM, TOM, MARTHA and KATHERINE being driven back to Strand Lane.

WILLIAM LILLY

So Tom, there's something I have to tell you.

TOM COLEY

Please speak.

WILLIAM LILLY

I once held you when you were in swaddling clothes. You didn't ever know this, but I attended your baptism. Your father and mother asked me to be your Godfather.

TOM COLEY

They did? That's wonderful!

WILLIAM LILLY

Yes it is. A Godparent is meant to be protective and caring when called on.

MARTHA

Something you've done admirably, Master William.

WILLIAM LILLY

Aye well, thank you Martha. But when I and Tom's father grew apart, I fear I'd failed in my duties. I want to make up for that failing. As you know it's time I retire. I can go and be a Physic out of London. Which leaves Corner House, a place I was lucky enough to inherit. And now I wish to give it to you and Martha.

TOM COLEY

Master William! That's too much!

WILLIAM LILLY

No it isn't. It's perfect (long beat) for a young married couple.

TOM COLEY

Are you suggesting something?

WILLIAM LILLY

Me? Suggesting Something? Surely not. It was mapped out in the workings of Heaven and the starry sky...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NEAR WESTMINSTER. DAY.

The carriage travels along the street out of shot.

THE END