

Burn Alone
an original screenplay by
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FADE IN:

AD 1541

INT. CUPBOARD - DAY

A hand reaches up and in. Searches about. The hand is male, not clean. The cupboard is empty apart from dust and a dead cockroach - and a rat in fight mode.

The hand finds the cockroach. The rat attacks to save its dinner but bounces back as from an invisible wall.

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

An impoverished 16th century hovel in need of repair - by a bomb. The only even moderately attractive item is a porcelain bowl on the table.

WILL MORTIMER, 25, studies the cockroach. If wasted rock guitarists have a common ancestor, this man is it. He throws the bug away in disgust. Reconsiders. Finds it - but he hasn't sunk quite that low yet. Tightens his belt.

A movement. The rat.

WILL
Hello din dins.

Will reaches behind him for a knife, moving carefully so as not to startle his target.

He pulls his arm back for a quick strike - but catches his hand on the table and loses his grip. The knife arcs up and would come down on - and through - his bare foot but it deviates impossibly at the last moment.

Will doesn't see this because he has turned his head to watch his meal escape - with the cockroach.

Then he notices that he has broken his bowl. This hurts.

The image distorts - BECAUSE it's reflected in an eye. The eye belongs to a woman who is not in the room. She's in a graveyard.

EXT. VILLAGE GRAVEYARD - DAY

CATHERINE PENHALLICK, 43, kneels on a grave. She lets out a slow, relieved breath and lowers her head.

CATHERINE
Men are such hard work.
(to the grave)
Yes, you were too.

In a time when middle aged women are old, Catherine is young. She carries the sort of serenity that could make a charging army stop and apologize for making so much noise.

She tidies the grave of Richard Penhallick - died 1530.

Not satisfied with the result, Catherine makes a small hand gesture. Wild flowers spring up. She kisses her fingers, touches the top of the headstone and walks away

- unaware of TOM CRIPPS, 25, watching from the woods. Tom is the sort of man women rarely notice. If they had geeks in the 16th century, he'd be their poster boy.

As Catherine walks, she notices that her husband's grave now looks different from the others. Easily fixed. A small gesture and wild flowers blossom across the cemetery.

Never taking his eyes from Catherine, Tom makes his way to a grave bearing the inscription:

"Adam Cripps 1487-1527"

He rests his hand on the headstone.

TOM
All right, Dad.

The other hand holds irises intended to replace the dead blooms in the earthenware pot on the grave. They look paltry compared to the growing wild flowers.

He kicks the earthenware pot. It shatters against the headstone. Tom squats and removes the shards, and all yellow flowers, from the grave.

INT./EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Will carefully lays the fragments of his bowl on the table and slouches outside.

He stands beside his tethered horse and studies the chickens in the coop.

WILL
So Mabel, which goes first, the
chicken or the egg?

GLOVER (O.S.)
Isn't that nonsensical?

Who said that? Will looks at the horse.

GLOVER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Yes it is.

Will turns a little farther and sees FARMER GLOVER, 60. It's unlikely that Glover has ever been the life and soul of any party.

GLOVER (CONT'D)
Which *came* first is a reasonable question. The other way round? A dead chicken lays no eggs.

WILL
Nor do my live ones. In fact --

GLOVER
Hunger makes you forgetful, I expect. A debt, for instance, might slip your mind.

Will prepares to be charming.

WILL
Mr. Glover, I --

GLOVER
No, Will, my patience is exhausted.

WILL
As demonstrated by all the interrupting. Give me two days.

GLOVER
I'll take the hens.

WILL
And leave me to starve?

GLOVER
Perhaps you would prefer a duel?

Will looks at the elderly, arthritic Glover and thinks this might not be a bad idea.

GLOVER (CONT'D)
My son will be happy to oblige.

A youth steps out of the trees. If the Hulk was 18 and not green, he would be this guy. Will's heart sinks. He gestures in resignation towards the chicken coop.

GLOVER (CONT'D)
The next installment is due Friday. Or I could accept the mare as payment in full - as it's you.

This breaks Will's heart but he has no alternative.

WILL
Can't afford to feed her anyway.

GLOVER
Could she not feed you - for weeks?

Will is appalled - and worried for the mare.

WILL
She's a good horse. Her name's
Mabel.

Glover's son unties the mare and throws the rope to Will.
They take the horse and leave.

Will looks at the rope then looks at his shitty little
house. What's the point?

He fetches a stool and throws the rope over a branch about
eight feet from the ground.

Unseen by Will, Tom watches with interest.

Will is tying one end around the tree trunk when the branch
breaks.

He looks at the rope lying on the floor then looks away -
and notices Tom.

A fraction too late to be convincing, Tom ambles forward
as if he has just arrived.

TOM
Wasn't that your mare?

WILL
Go away, Tom.

TOM
Rotten branch?

WILL
Go away now.

TOM
Taking it down before it falls on
somebody. Sensible.

WILL
Please.

TOM
No, I'm taking you for a drink.

WILL
No money.

TOM
No problem.

Will sighs and trudges off towards the village.

TOM (CONT'D)
Not locking your door?

WILL
In case somebody breaks in and
leaves something?

They turn a corner and see ANNE MORLEY, 22, sitting outside the blacksmith's forge flicking stones at a tethered goat. She wears a brightly coloured party dress, which contrasts strikingly with everybody else's drab clothes.

The sight of her instantly lightens Will's mood. He preens.

TOM
No one can say you're not resilient.

WILL
Does that mean handsome?

TOM
And clever. Flowers are always
good.

Yes! Thank you. Will scampers around picking wild flowers.

OUTSIDE THE FORGE

Will saunters towards Anne with the flowers behind his back. Tom follows, not expecting this to go well.

Anne sees them coming. Sighs.

Her father, the village blacksmith, brings her a drink.

DANIEL
You could do worse than Will
Mortimer, my girl.

ANNE
How exactly?

With a nod to the approaching men, Daniel goes back inside.

WILL
Evening, Anne. Looking good.

She stares impassively in his general direction.

He holds the flowers out to her.

WILL (CONT'D)
For you.

ANNE
Why?

WILL
The field was a mess. Thought I'd
tidy up.

ANNE

And bring me the rubbish?

He turns up the charm.

WILL

Well, you have a furnace.

She takes the flowers - and holds them out for the goat to eat.

WILL (CONT'D)

And a goat.

Not how Will thought this would go. Looks at the chewing goat. Looks to Tom for help. Tom looks at the sky.

WILL (CONT'D)

Right. Well. Things to do.

Will hurries off. Tom winks at Anne and follows him.

WILL (CONT'D)

I Know, I know, you told me so.

TOM

No. I didn't.

WILL

You *thought* me so. I broke my bowl.

TOM

The one your mum left you?

WILL

The place is less cluttered now.

EXT. OUTSIDE VILLAGE TAVERN - DAY

Will has calmed down a little and has slowed his pace.

WILL

She'll come around when I'm rich.

Reaches into his shoe and produces a coin.

WILL (CONT'D)

My lucky day.

TOM

It's certainly going well so far.

INT. / EXT. CATHERINE'S SHED - DAY

A large ramshackle shed containing sacks of grain, various jars and drying herbs.

Rats work through one of the sacks to get at the contents. They freeze when Catherine comes in.

CATHERINE
(quietly)
Stop that.

The rats walk away. There is no panic or frenzied escape - they are simply obeying her.

Catherine picks up a large jar, takes it outside and hands it to Glover, who is astride Will's horse.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Mix with water. Even parts.

Glover pays her.

She nods her thanks and indicates the horse.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
There are other areas where you
could be generous.

GLOVER
Moral instruction from Satan's
servant?

CATHERINE
Pious condemnation from - you?

He looks up at the shed's poor state of repair.

GLOVER
How long's your husband been dead?

CATHERINE
Eleven years.

GLOVER
It shows.

He rides away.

Catherine takes a breath. Goes into the shed. The rats are back at the sack. She waves her hand and the rats explode. Blood and bits of rat carcass shower the grain.

CATHERINE
Didn't think that through.

INT. VILLAGE TAVERN - DAY

A busy place. Clientele of both sexes but mostly men.

Will plays cards while Tom watches.

Will loses.

TOM
You should get away.

WILL
My luck will change.

TOM
The only luck is the luck we make.
I mean get away from the village.
See the world.

WILL
Anne is here.

TOM
Will, she's the only woman you know.

WILL
Anne's the only woman in the world.

TOM
No. She isn't. Really.

Will loses again.

WILL
You're putting me off.

Tom looks away. His gaze falls on two men at a nearby table.

MAN 1
What you looking at?

Tom turns away - into the BARMAID who's collecting tankards
and is almost wearing a low-cut blouse.

TOM
Sorry.

She scowls and hitches up her top.

The men at the nearby table laugh.

MAN 1
He's as mad as his mother was.

MAN 2
Turd never falls far from the cow.

Will is ready to spring to his friend's defence.

WILL
Did he insult you?

TOM
No.

WILL
Sure?

TOM
Yes, I speak the language.

Will loses again.

TOM (CONT'D)

Drink?

He goes to the bar.

With no money left, Will follows.

The Barmaid ignores Tom and points her cleavage at Will.

TOM (CONT'D)

Lizzie. I see you've come to be
milked but we'll stick with ale if
you don't mind.

She's too shocked to retort.

TOM (CONT'D)

Any time this week.

She pulls the pints.

WILL

You really think I have no chance
with Anne?

TOM

Without money, no. I hear there's
work in the city. You could be
there in two days.

WILL

If I had a horse.

Tom smiles to himself.

TOM

I could lend you Marmaduke if you
promise not to stake him in a bet.

The barmaid brings their drinks. There's a big difference
between the way she plonks Tom's down on the bar and the
flirtatious way she delivers Will's.

WILL

(to Tom)

Thanks but I'm good here.

EXT. FORGE - DAY

Anne makes eyes at a nobleman while Daniel finishes shoeing
his steed. She undoes a button. The nobleman rides off.

DANIEL

You'll get nothing from the high-
born likes of that one, Annie -
apart from a quick tumble and a
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)
dose of the clap. Young Will is
very taken with you.

ANNE
He can be taken by the devil. Will
Mortimer has even less than you.

Her words wound and she regrets them. She can't apologize
but she takes his hand and sits him down beside her.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Do you really think Will Mortimer
is the right man for me? Or is it
because you know he'll never leave
here? Dad, I can't stay for ever.

DANIEL
You don't seem able to get away.

They both laugh. It's a rare shared moment for them.

ANNE
When I'm settled, I'll get my rich
husband to send for you.

DANIEL
But who'd look after the forge?

She sees he means it, that without his forge he would be a
lost little boy.

EXT. WOODLAND PATHWAY - DAY

STEPHEN WALDEGRAVE, 40 and expensively dressed, sits glumly
on his horse while his assistant, CRISPIAN DE BARGE, nails
a notice to a tree:

"Substantial Reward offered for
witches at Ravenhurst garrison."

WALDEGRAVE
This is demeaning.

DE BARGE
Yes, sir.

WALDEGRAVE
An investigator of my prowess.

They ride off at a walking pace.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)
As if hunting witches were not
sufficiently underwhelming, now
we're having them delivered.

DE BARGE
That's the future.

Off to the side, a magpie threatens a blackbird's nest.

Waldegrave pulls out his dagger and brings the magpie down with an impressive yet casual throw.

DE BARGE (CONT'D)
I suppose you want me to fetch that?

De Barge reluctantly turns his horse.

Waldegrave rides on.

As de Barge dismounts, he thinks he sees a woman (Catherine) through the trees, reading the notice he nailed up. But when he looks again, she's gone. ^

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Somewhat the worse for drink, Will and Tom play a game in which one player kicks a ball of bundled rags at a tree trunk and the other tries to block it with a stick.

WILL
Anne would bed a stranger but what
will she give me?

TOM
Abuse?

WILL
No one will love her as I do.

TOM
Maybe you just want to. One - nil.

WILL
You think too much. One - all! And
you're not as smart as you think.

TOM
Two - one! But my cleverness
increases. Your looks ...

Tom makes a sliding downhill motion with his hand.

While Will stands transfixed by the awful thought, Tom dummies a shot.

Will moves late, slips, leaving an open goal - until he manages to divert the flying ball by hurling his stick like a spear. It's an incredible throw.

WILL
What should I do?

He retrieves the ball.

TOM
Women like you to pay attention
when they talk.

WILL
I do that. Two - all!

TOM
But you have to overdo it because
they only heed other women.

WILL
Unless you've done something wrong.

TOM
Unless you've done something wrong.
Shit! Two - three.

He notices that Will is REALLY LOOKING at him. It's weird
and a bit scary.

TOM (CONT'D)
That's - much better.

Tom tries to take advantage of Will's distraction but he
kicks the ball wildly. It disappears into the undergrowth.

WILL
My best undies are in that ball.
Why don't we play when it's light
enough to see?

TOM
We're not drunk enough then.

WILL
We could be.

TOM
If ale were free.

WILL
Yeah. Sorry.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom lies in bed, remembering. A small carved wooden pig is
on the pillow beside him.

He's nine years old. His MOTHER kneads dough at the kitchen
table. Tom attracts her attention and hands her a flower.
She smiles, wipes her hands and takes the gift. The boy
couldn't be happier.

MOTHER
Thank you, Thomas. That's wonderful -
and yellow.

Her mood flips. She is suddenly a dangerous person to be near.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I hate yellow!

She rips up the flower and lashes out at her son with the nearest solid object - a frying pan. It catches him on the arm and opens a wound.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

What are you trying to do?

She grabs Tom and would inflict further harm if his FATHER didn't run in and pull her off.

FATHER

Calm yourself, dear. The boy meant no harm. He -

His wife rakes her fingernails down his face, drawing blood. Taken by surprise, he lets her go.

She is suddenly calm. Smiles.

MOTHER

Potatoes. I'll pick some potatoes for dinner.

She strolls out, tousling Tom's hair on the way as if nothing has happened.

Tom's father gives him a small carved wooden pig and tends to Tom's wound, ignoring his own.

FATHER

She can't help it, mate.

TOM

Will says if one of your parents is mad, you'll go mad too.

His father makes a difficult decision.

FATHER

That's not true. And she won't be hurting you again.

TOM

She will.

FATHER

No - because she won't be living with us any more.

TOM

But she's my mummy.

FATHER

I suppose you're old enough to
hear this now. The death took
your mother when you were a baby.
Katie was -- I remarried.

His wife returns, carrying potatoes in her apron.

MOTHER

All right for some, with time to
sit around gassing.

MEMORY 2

Tom, 12, finds his mother hanging dead in the kitchen.

MEMORY 3

TOM'S MOTHER'S FUNERAL

The same cemetery we saw earlier. Fewer graves.

A small crowd around the grave as the minister mumbles the
standard words of the time.

Tom, holding the carved pig, gazes at the beautiful
Catherine watching from a distance. His father notices
this and stands in this son's line of sight with his arm
around the boy's shoulders.

BACK IN THE PRESENT

A smile spreads across Tom's face. He's putting things
together.

EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

Will sits on the roof, snapping twigs off the dead branch
he brought down earlier.

From here he can see Anne sitting outside the forge,
illuminated by the light from the furnace.

WILL

(snaps a twig)

I love her.

(snaps another)

I love her not.

(another twig)

She's the only one for me.

(another)

She's the only one here.

The next twig resists and cuts his hand. He rips off a
different twig, using his other hand.

WILL (CONT'D)

This tells me something.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
(another twig)
It doesn't.

INT. VILLAGE CHURCH. VESTRY - DAY

Tom sits with the young PRIEST who's checking a ledger.

TOM
My dad made those doors.

PRIEST
Very nice. Intricate. How's Will?

TOM
What's your favourite part?

PRIEST
Of what?

TOM
Of the intricately carved door
depicting the story of Samson and
Delilah.

PRIEST
Is that what it is? Must be five
months since I spoke to William.
The gambling was ruining him.

TOM
You didn't speak in the confessional
then?

The priest closes the book.

PRIEST
There's no record that I can find.
Is he still at the gambling?

TOM
I wouldn't know. Nothing about a
second marriage?

PRIEST
And no death of a Cripps until
your father.

TOM
Are the records complete?

PRIEST
I doubt it.

TOM
Are they reliable?

PRIEST

Unlikely. Mother Church has not had unbroken tenure. Unmarried mother. Bastard. Stigma. Add a little money and you can rewrite history.

TOM

That unmarried mother would be in her forties now.

PRIEST

If she's still alive. Have you spoken to anyone who was here at the time? I'd try Andrew Glover. He's still sharp about most things.

Tom waits for an explanation but the priest's mind is elsewhere.

TOM

What isn't he sharp on?

PRIEST

Oh, he thinks he was a crusader. Knight Templar, that sort of thing.

TOM

Is he that old?

PRIEST

Nobody's that old.

Tom stands and walks away.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

Ask Will to come and see me. That is a nice door.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Farmer Glover sits fishing.

Tom squats beside him.

TOM

Beautiful morning.

GLOVER

It was.

TOM

Enough small talk. Tell me about the widow.

GLOVER

The death has left many widows.

TOM
Catherine Penhallick. Did she have
a son?

GLOVER
The memory is feeble.

Tom holds out money.

TOM
Have some tonic.

Glover holds a fishing xrod out to Tom.

GLOVER
The information is free if you catch
the first fish. Otherwise double.
Is that fair? I think so.

Tom takes the rod.

During the following exchange, Glover manages to change
rods without Tom noticing.

GLOVER (CONT'D)
There was a boy. He had an accident.

TOM
Fatal?

GLOVER
Scarring. Mildly. Or so I heard.
Things get muddled in the telling.

Tom feels the scar on his arm.

GLOVER (CONT'D)
There were rumours. Reverend
Merryweather, or it might ...

Glover pulls out a fish. It looks suspiciously dead for a
fresh catch. But Tom needs to know. Hands over more money.

GLOVER (CONT'D)
... might have been Father Gilstrap,
forced her to give the child up to
be raised by a barren couple.

Exciting news.

TOM
What couple?

GLOVER
Was I here to see? No, I was
fighting in the Holy Land.

Tom stands.

TOM

Did you ever hear anyone call the
widow "Katie"?

GLOVER

No. Want to buy a fresh fish?

EXT. FORGE - DAY

Anne sits outside the forge, soaking up the sun. Still wearing her party dress but with a couple of buttons open, the sleeves pushed up and the hem above her knees.

Daniel nudges Will to go to her - and to remove his shirt.

Will does so. He stands in front of Anne with everything pumped and flexed to its best advantage.

ANNE

My sunshine.

He preens.

ANNE (CONT'D)

You're in it.

Will gives up and turns away - revealing a scar on his lower back.

Anne doesn't open an eye until she hears a rider.

When she sees it's a GENTLEMAN, she leaps to her feet and dusts herself down.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Good morning, handsome sir.

GENTLEMAN

Could you direct me to the
blacksmith's?

ANNE

Right here.

GENTLEMAN

Oh, I assumed this was the bordello.

Anne deflates.

The man climbs down off his horse and squeezes her rump.

GENTLEMAN (CONT'D)

How much, by the way?

Anne pulls away and goes inside - past Daniel, whose knuckles are white around a bent poker. He takes a moment.

DANIEL

How can I help you, sir?

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Tom walks up to Catherine, who is sweeping her front step.

CATHERINE
Master Cripps. How can I help you?

TOM
By giving me my powers.

She doesn't know what he means but this is not a conversation for outdoors. She nods for him to go inside.

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Catherine follows Tom in and closes the door.

The room is clean and bright. A profusion of herbs, growing and drying, but no obvious 'witchy' apparatus.

TOM
Did you think my father wouldn't tell me about you and him - and don't you go calling him a liar. My father was a good man.

He's getting worked up. Catherine speaks carefully.

CATHERINE
Your father was a great man, Tom, much loved in the village.

TOM
Much loved by you. And I am the result. See? Proof.

He shows her the scar on his arm.

CATHERINE
You think I'm your mother?

She sits down and looks at him, trying to understand.

TOM
You had a son.

CATHERINE
My son died. People do. The death.

TOM
There's no grave. I looked.

CATHERINE
I moved away.

TOM
To avoid scandal? How proper. Powers now please.

CATHERINE

Tom, I have no powers to give.

TOM

Liar.

CATHERINE

I'm sorry. I'm not your mother.
She took her own life, poor soul.

TOM

Lying witch bitch.

He pulls a dagger. Catherine looks at it, unfazed.

CATHERINE

Calm yourself.

Probably the worst thing she could have said.

TOM

Calm myself? You give me away,
then deny me, call my father a
liar and claim I sprung from a mad
woman? Calm myself?

He raises the dagger - and finds it turned into a flower.
A yellow flower. He drops it in horror and runs out.

Catherine sniffs the flower, deep in thought.

EXT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

The priest watches Will repairing the roof of his cottage.
Will has very little idea what he's doing.

PRIEST

Need some help?

WILL

I'm fine. Thanks.

The priest climbs the ladder and joins Will on the roof.

PRIEST

Rebuilding is rarely a one-man job.

He assesses the problem and starts work. He's a much better
handyman than Will.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

Haven't seen you at mass in a while.

WILL

Been a few months.

PRIEST

A few dozen months.

WILL
God and I fell out when he burnt
my parents.

PRIEST
You're punishing God?

WILL
Taking a hint. Not wasting my time.

PRIEST
Like I waste mine?

WILL
Maybe God likes you.

PRIEST
Maybe there's a reason for that.

WILL
What reason did I give him when I
was ten years old?

He takes back his tools.

WILL (CONT'D)
I can manage. Thanks.

The priest leaves it there. Starts down the ladder.

PRIEST
Don't fall, William. It's a long
way down.

EXT. CASTLE - DAY

The GUARD at the gate takes two flagons from Tom, who is
in a buoyant mood as he accepts payment.

TOM
Best honeyed ale in the county, if
I say so myself. Got to look after
the boys who look after us.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - EVENING

Will and Tom play a game that involves tossing a number of
small stones at a circle drawn in the dirt, skipping to a
defined point and hopping back.

WILL
You're rubbish today. What's up?

They keep playing.

TOM
Memories. Stuff. My mum and dad.
How old were you when yours died?

WILL

Ten.

TOM

Do you still not remember the fire?

WILL

You won't put me off that easily.

TOM

Race you to the oak.

Tom sprints off.

Will starts to chase then sits on a tree stump and stares at the sky - so he doesn't notice the snake that gets out of his way with unnatural speed.

TOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Loser!

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom lies in bed thinking.

STREAM

Will leaps easily over the stream. Tom attempts the same feat and falls in.

TAVERN

A barmaid, repulsed by Tom's attentions, immediately falls for Will's twinkling smile.

BABIES

Two baskets lie on the ground between Catherine and Tom's parents. Each basket contains a baby. Tom is in one (with his adult face). Catherine picks up the other baby (with Will's adult face) and distastefully indicates for the woman to take what's left.

THE PRESENT TIME

Tom twirls the wooden pig with increasing fury.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Will and Tom hunt with bows and arrows. No luck yet.

A rabbit. Will tightens his belt. Takes aim.

TOM

Hold on. What's that?

Points to a notice nailed to a tree. They walk up to it.

TOM (CONT'D)
Deliver a witch to the garrison?
Substantial reward. Enough for
Anne to take you seriously.

WILL
But I don't know any witches.

TOM
Catherine Penhallick?

WILL
The woman who helps people?

TOM
The woman who calls up demonic
powers so she can *seem* to help.

Will thinks he's joking. Tom doesn't smile.

TOM (CONT'D)
If you don't do it, someone else
will. Then they'll get the money,
the witch will still be tried and
you'll still be poor.

Will snatches down the notice.

Unseen by the two men, a small boy watches.

WILL
How much is a 'substantial' reward?

TOM
Enough to make people do it. And
when she's found guilty, her
property goes to you too.

WILL
That's the law?

Tom takes the notice from Will.

WILL (CONT'D)
Need a horse to transport a witch.

TOM
There's still only Marmaduke. He
might not be the fastest or the
strongest -

WILL
Or the best tempered -

TOM
- horse in the kingdom, but I want
him back. Okay?

Will nods and hugs Tom, who smiles coldly.

WILL
If the Widow really is a witch --

TOM
An abomination.

WILL
-- how can I overcome her?

TOM
Caution? From you?

WILL
Must be getting old.

TOM
Old and poor is not good.

EXT. WOODS/ INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Will rides Marmaduke through the woods. It's hard work.
He's a poor rider and the horse is cantankerous with age.

Catherine sits in her kitchen with her back to the window
and her cat on her lap.

CATHERINE
So this is the day.

She puts the cat down and goes out to meet Will.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Mr. Mortimer. How pleasant.

He jumps down off the horse and holds a sword to her throat.

WILL
Pleasanter with your hands behind
your back.

CATHERINE
How exciting! I should point out
I'm old enough to be your mother.

He ties her hands.

WILL
I'm taking you to the garrison to
stand trial for witchcraft.

She hides a smile, playing along.

CATHERINE
Have pity on a poor, harmless widow
with no funds with which to buy
her freedom.

WILL
I don't want your money.

He tightens his belt.

CATHERINE

If you're hungry, there's some grain you can have. Prized red-speckled grain from the Orient.

He tightens a noose around her neck and, holding the other end of the rope, climbs back onto the horse.

WILL

If you are innocent no harm will befall you. Walk.

She does so - but Marmaduke won't. When Catherine gets to the end of her leeway on the rope, she stops.

CATHERINE

Sorry, was I going too fast?

Will tries to cajole Marmaduke into moving.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Let me know when you're ready.

She sits on a rock and proceeds to eat an apple. Will stares at her. Pulls his sword and jumps off the horse.

WILL

How did you get free?

CATHERINE

How do you mean?

WILL

I tied your hands behind your back.

CATHERINE

Are you sure? That's odd then, isn't it? Here, have another go.

She stands, gives the apple to Marmaduke and holds her hands behind her back. He re-ties them - extra tight.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Shall I follow you, In case you can't keep up again?

WILL

No, I want you in front where I can see you.

She walks and, again, Marmaduke is reluctant to move.

WILL (CONT'D)

Come on you useless old nag.

CATHERINE

He can't help being old.

WILL

He's lazy.

CATHERINE

And quite angry.

They are beside a thick gorse bush. She half turns and winks at Marmaduke, who starts to buck. It's feeble but Will is not a great rider. He's about to fall off - on the side away from the bush.

With a sigh, Catherine squeezes her eyes - and when Will is unseated, he falls safely onto the bush, which has moved around to that side.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Heavens to Betsy! Are you all right?

She hurries around to help him up.

WILL

'Heavens to Betsy'? What does that mean?

CATHERINE

Just something I made up. Think it'll catch on?

He notices she's untied again. Leaps up.

WILL

Right!

He re-ties her, this time putting small home-made crosses in the knots.

CATHERINE

Good idea. They'll protect us on the journey.

They set off, making good progress this time.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You realize you're taking me to my death?

WILL

No. You help people. They'll let you off.

She stares at him. *Seriously?*

CATHERINE

Then you won't get paid. Haven't thought this through, have you.

Clearly, he hasn't.

WILL

I need the reward to get married.

CATHERINE

Anne the blacksmith's daughter?
She will certainly enjoy the money.

WILL

Stop talking now. Please.

CATHERINE

Don't be too set on a particular
destination. Life twists and turns
in unexpected, and often better,
ways.

He glares. She "buttons" her lips.

They walk on in silence. Turn a bend - and they're
approaching Catherine's cottage.

WILL

What! But... How? I've lived here
all my life. I know my way.

CATHERINE

Perhaps if we had taken that road?

She points, untied again.

Tom, watching from the woods, spits in disgust.

Will is out of ideas.

WILL

Maybe we could come to an
arrangement?

CATHERINE

Your captive audience. Sort of.

WILL

How much money can you spare?

CATHERINE

Not enough for the avaricious Anne.

WILL

Don't insult my beloved - especially
in words I don't understand.

CATHERINE

I'll give you the means to make
all the money you'll ever need.

She goes inside, leaving him standing uncertainly in the
yard - until Marmaduke gives him a shove.

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Catherine unfolds a chess board.

CATHERINE
A game called chess. Crusaders
brought it back from the East.

WILL
A game I can't lose?

CATHERINE
You don't have to play it.

She lays the board on the table beside a small sundial and places a gold coin on a corner square.

A shadow moves around the sundial, even though the window is the only light source.

Will moves his hand, trying to cast a shadow and see what is making the sundial work.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
And by morning ...

The coin has magically moved to the second square and has been joined by another.

WILL
It's a trick.

Catherine stands at the far side of the room with her hands behind her back.

CATHERINE
If you leave the coins there, on
the second night ...

The sundial shadow does a complete rotation. The two coins move to the third square and are joined by two more.

WILL
Every night? Then by the end of
the board there would be - loads.

CATHERINE
There would be millions.

Doubtful, Will tries to do the math.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
If it worked beyond the third square.
Shoddy eastern craftsmanship.

WILL
I could start over at square one?

CATHERINE

As required.

WILL

People will wonder where I got money.

CATHERINE

You could visit a dying relative.
Then return with your inheritance.

WILL

I don't have any rel... Ah!

He likes the idea.

CATHERINE

Go to the city. Everyone's
anonymous there.

(off his puzzled
look)

Nobody knows who you are.

WILL

Why are you helping me?

CATHERINE

You have a good heart.

WILL

So do a lot of people.

CATHERINE

I don't meet a lot of people.

He hands her back the gold coin.

WILL

I want to buy something from you.

CATHERINE

With my own coin?

WILL

A potion, to ensure Anne loves me
for myself.

CATHERINE

Oh, irony.

WILL

That a herb?

The cat hisses at the window then looks at Catherine. She
nods subtly and the cat settles down.

OUTSIDE

Tom runs in a crouch to the woods.

INSIDE

Catherine mixes a potion.

CATHERINE

Anne Morley loves her father. She may love you.

WILL

She will.

CATHERINE

Anne thinks she's Sleeping Beauty and the village is her curse. She waits for a prince but forgets about the hundred year sleep breath.

What?

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

It's a metaphor. A witch thing. Not always useful.

WILL

Who's Sleeping Beauty?

CATHERINE

May not have been written yet. Foresight - another witch thing - generally comes in handy.

She hands him the potion.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Sprinkle this on the lady's food and she will love you. Use it wisely, William.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE VILLAGE - DAY

Will rides back towards the village looking troubled. He pulls Marmaduke to a halt. They turn around.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Catherine comes out carrying a loaded basket.

Will watches from the woods until she is out of sight then rides quietly towards the cottage.

A loaf cools in the kitchen window. Will sprinkles the love potion on the bread.

He wants to make a quick getaway but Marmaduke will have none of it.

WILL

Should have given you some.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - EVENING

Tom paces, holding the carved wooden pig, kicking furniture and walls. Catches his fragmented image reflected in the low grade glass of the window.

TOM

Plot against us, will they?

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Catherine comes in and lights a lamp. She senses something. Looks at the loaf in the window. Smiles. That's my boy!

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

The city is crowded, dirty and dangerous, teeming with beggars, prostitutes and thieves.

The Clotted Goose Tavern is exactly the sort of place you would expect to find here.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - NIGHT

The place is packed, the atmosphere loud and jovial. Apart from a few streetwalkers, the clientele is all male.

A fight breaks out at the back of the room but no one takes much notice. The altercation is concluded quickly and brutally and business continues as before.

RACHEL, 30, works behind the bar. She has a way of taking no nonsense without upsetting anybody.

A strange feeling washes through her and she has to steady herself against a table. The tankard of beer in her hand shimmers unnaturally. Nobody else notices this.

Rachel takes a couple of breaths and goes to the LANDLORD.

RACHEL

George, I need to go upstairs.

LANDLORD

Now?

RACHEL

Just for a minute. Headache, sickness, women's problems.

LANDLORD

We're chockered and if they have to wait they'll pass the time by chopping up other paying customers - and the furniture.

RACHEL

A bit of redecoration wouldn't hurt. Come on, George, you know I wouldn't ask if it wasn't important.

He isn't convinced.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I'll sing you a song later.

LANDLORD

What song?

RACHEL

I'll make one up - really filthy.

Too good to pass up. He nods for her to go.

She sprints to the stairs.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You're my hero, George.

LANDLORD

Probably why I married a dragon.

RACHEL

Evening, Jane.

The landlord spins around but his wife isn't there.

Rachel grins. Gotcha!

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is small and cluttered.

Rachel runs in and locks the door behind her. She stands in front of the dressing table, looking into the mirror - which shimmers and Catherine's face appears.

CATHERINE

So, Rachel, I trust you aren't abusing your abilities and living a life too fine?

A crash from downstairs. Another fight.

RACHEL

Not so you'd notice.

CATHERINE

It's what others might notice that could hurt us.

RACHEL

And the first thing they'll see is me not working. Then I lose my job.

CATHERINE
I seriously doubt that.

Rachel smiles, acknowledging the point.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I've sent William to you.

RACHEL
Does he know I exist?

CATHERINE
Don't tell him you're his sister
until you must. I will ensure he
arrives. You will ensure that
harm does not.

More noise from downstairs. A scream.

RACHEL
Here? Seriously?

Catherine's image fades on another grin.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE - DAY

Will shakes Tom's hand. Both men are warm and friendly but
a fierce anger lurks not far below Tom's smile.

WILL
With a bit of luck, I'll return a
richer man.

TOM
Since when did you have luck?

WILL
Since my uncle died and left
everything to me.

TOM
Define 'everything'.

WILL
There might be a trinket or two
passed down from the crusades.

TOM
As they say in that part of the
world: May heaven be kind and your
road be flat.

After a bit of back slapping, Will climbs onto his horse.

WILL
It was the right thing to do, Tom.
She's a good person. I know you think
she entranced me but she didn't.

TOM
How would you know?

EXT. FORGE - DAY

Anne sits on the doorstep, tossing the occasional stone at the ducks on the pond. She looks up expectantly at an approaching rider - but deflates when she sees who it is.

WILL
Looking beautiful as always, Anne.
And I will soon look good to you.

ANNE
Doubt it. I don't drink.

WILL
My inheritance may change things.

This piques her interest.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

A WOMAN and HER DAUGHTER wait while Catherine throws grain for the hens.

CATHERINE
I'll be STRAIGHT with you Mistress
Green.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE

Will rides to a crossroads. Tries to go left but Marmaduke continues straight on.

CATHERINE'S HOUSE

Catherine finishes feeding the hens.

CATHERINE
All gone. There's no more LEFT.

COUNTRYSIDE

Will comes to a junction.

WILL
Straight on, I think.

But Marmaduke turns left and will not be corrected.

CATHERINE'S HOUSE

Catherine smiles. Turns to the woman and her daughter.

CATHERINE
Cure for earache, wasn't it? RIGHT.
Sorry, that was a bit loud -
especially when your ears hurt.

She smiles reassuringly and goes inside.

COUNTRYSIDE

Will comes to a fork in the road. He points to the right.

Without complaint, Marmaduke takes the right fork.

WILL

So you finally realize who's in
control.

INT. FORGE - EVENING

For the first time, Anne looks animated and happy. Daniel
hands her a drink.

DANIEL

You can give your party dress a
rest now, girl.

ANNE

What if something better comes along?

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

An exhausted Will rides up to an inn. He is about to
dismount when a light from across the road makes the shape
of an arrow pointing to the left. He would ignore this but
a shadow in the doorway he was about to enter suddenly
resembles a skull.

Spooked, he turns away - and sees Rachel standing in the
road. This gives him a fright but he turns his reaction
into something almost (if you're generous) cool.

RACHEL

First time in the city?

WILL

Seen one, you've seen 'em all.

RACHEL

Seen anywhere to stay?

WILL

Looking for an inn.

She points over her shoulder (to where the arrow - now
gone - was pointing) at The Clotted Goose.

RACHEL

That's an inn. And I'm an inn keeper -
's assistant. There. Rachel.

WILL

What's a clotted goose?

RACHEL
Probably the only place round here
where you'll live to see morning.

A stool crashes out through the window. Rachel smiles as if that didn't happen.

WILL
Lively. I like that.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - WILL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rachel shows Will into the room.

WILL
Will my horse be all right?

RACHEL
Nobody's that hungry.

WILL
He won't be all right? Cause he
isn't really my horse.

RACHEL
He'll be fine. You'd best stay in
the room tonight. In the morning
I'll give you a crash course on
how to survive the city.

Will puts on a tough air.

WILL
Any rogue who comes near me will
regret it, I promise you.

RACHEL
Don't open the door to anybody
except me.

She goes out, closing the door behind her.

Will listens until she's moved away then slides the oak dresser in front of the door.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Rachel is half way down the stairs when she realizes she still has Will's key in her pocket. She goes back up, knocks and opens the door - OUTWARDS.

Will and Rachel stare at the dresser and the open door.

She hands him the key, closes the door and goes away.

WILL
Thank you.

When he's sure she's gone, he locks the door. Tests it. Then he gets out the chess board, places a gold coin on a corner square and looks for somewhere safe to hide it. He finally decides to slide it under the bed.

INT. FORGE - NIGHT

Anne sits warming herself beside the furnace.

Tom arrives and leans against the door frame, trying to look impressive. Anne barely glances at him.

TOM

You could do worse than me.

ANNE

What at?

TOM

You could do worse than to have me as a husband.

She tries and fails to hide her amusement. Acts bashful.

ANNE

Forgive me, This is so sudden.

She lets go and laughs.

TOM

Sudden can be exciting. Or deadly.

ANNE

I've often found it disappointing.

TOM

As disappointing as your beau riding off in search of love?

She thinks about this.

ANNE

No, I'm not playing.

TOM

Like I said, you could do worse. And some kinds of worse would be very bad indeed.

ANNE

They'd have to be.

Tom pulls her to him and kisses her. When he's finished, she rakes her fingernails down his nose, drawing blood.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Equally unpleasant for us both. Call it quits?

His pain is intense - and not just physical.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - WILL'S ROOM - DAY

Will wakes. Looks under the bed and is delighted to see two gold coins on the chess board.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - DAY

Rachel serves Will breakfast in the otherwise empty bar.

RACHEL

Sleep well?

WILL

It's quieter in the country.

RACHEL

You can hear yourself slide towards the grave?

WILL

Is that smart, big city talk?

RACHEL

You taking the piss?

Will has clearly never heard the expression - as possibly no one else has in the sixteenth century.

WILL

What would I want piss for?

RACHEL

It's an expression I made up. Might catch on.

Will is dubious.

WILL

My uncle died.

RACHEL

I'm sorry.

WILL

Left me a fortune.

She pinches his lips together. Looks around anxiously.

RACHEL

Rule one: never talk about money, inheritances or -- anything. Around here, even the rat shit has ears.

WILL

Really?

RACHEL

No that was a metaphor. It's a girl thing.

Will hits a new level of blank look.

Rachel nods towards the window. OUTSIDE an old woman is being mugged.

Will jumps up and runs to help but by the time he reaches the door the woman is dead and the thief gone. People walk past, taking no notice.

WILL

That doesn't happen in the country - not if there are witnesses.

Rachel turns him around and holds eye contact.

RACHEL

This is not the country.

She notices the chess board under his tunic.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Interesting fashion accessory.

WILL

Keep-sake. From my mum.

He thinks he's making that up.

She leads him back to the table.

RACHEL

Plans for today?

WILL

Get my bearings.

RACHEL

I could show you round, minimize trouble.

WILL

Trouble is my middle name.

RACHEL

Do you have a middle name?

WILL

No. Any more bacon?

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A typical medieval street - narrow, filthy, full of diseased people and ever-present danger. Everything is for sale here - pigs, sex, a combination of both. It's fascinating for a country boy.

Rachel and Will stroll. Everybody else bustles, begs or collapses.

She takes his arm. He thinks she's being romantic - but she pulls him back a second before a chamber pot is emptied into the street from an upstairs window.

RACHEL

Got to keep your wits about you.

WILL

I get it! That would have been me taking the piss.

RACHEL

Yeah, you need more wits.

He slides his arm along hers so they're closer.

WILL

You could teach me.

She disentangles herself.

RACHEL

So, you're engaged? To Anne?

WILL

Great girl. Worships me. When did I tell you about her?

They come upon a three-card sharper playing to a small crowd. Will's eyes light up. He takes out a coin and steps towards the game. Rachel holds him back.

WILL (CONT'D)

You're surprisingly strong.

RACHEL

And you're predictably stupid. The game is rigged.

She drags him away.

They approach a slightly up-market (by local standards) eatery.

WILL

Lunch? On me.

He flicks the gold coin in the air.

RACHEL

Do you have no ability to learn?

Too late. A pair of thieves have spotted the easy mark with his gold. They signal to each other and fall in behind Will and Rachel, drawing their daggers. Will is oblivious.

Rachel wiggles her fingers. The thieves trip and fall in an embrace, kissing each other on the lips. After a couple of seconds they react, horrified, and stab each other to death.

Will hears the noise and turns around.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Suicide pact. Life is hard on the mean streets. You should return to your village.

WILL
I will - as soon as --

She flashes a warning look.

WILL (CONT'D)
-- as soon as I can.

INT. PIE SHOP/ EATERY - DAY

Will and Rachel sit at a corner table. He looks around and is particularly fascinated by two old men playing chess.

Rachel peeks under the crust of her pie and recoils. A quick check to make sure no one is looking and she fixes the pies with a gesture.

RACHEL
Your pie will get cold.

Will turns back and takes a bite. Wow!

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Best place in town. Occasionally.
Why do you gamble?

He's puzzled. Did he tell her about that?

WILL
Fun. Excitement. Not knowing how it'll turn out.

RACHEL
There's no uncertainty in gambling.
If you win, it's temporary.

She takes his hands. Gets a jolt of understanding.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You like it *because* it's self-destructive!

WILL
You're like my friend Tom. He's the one person I can count on.

RACHEL
It's good to have someone.

Will stands.

WILL
I need to ...

RACHEL
Okay.

He hesitates, looking helpless. Rachel points the way.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Don't talk to anybody.

When he's gone, she opens a ring and sniffs powder from it, making herself sneeze - over his pie.

Rachel closes the ring. Job done.

EXT. TAVERN YARD - DAY

A small yard. Two men pissing. Will makes his way to a free wall, being very careful where he treads.

One of the men pulls out a garotte. Tip-toes towards Will. Falls and suffocates in the deep muck on the floor.

Will doesn't notice.

INT. PIE SHOP/ EATERY - DAY

When Will returns, he sees a WELL DRESSED MAN being overly attentive to Rachel, almost climbing into her lap.

WILL
Can I help you?

MAN
I can manage, thanks.

WILL
Where I come from, a man respects
a lady.

MAN
Where I come from, busybodies die
young.

He draws his sword.

Rachel sighs. The sword turns into an anvil, which lands on the man's foot. As he pitches forward in agony, Rachel magics Will's elbow into the man's face knocking him out. She then makes the anvil disappear.

Will stares in bewilderment. What just happened?

RACHEL
My hero.

He looks at the floor, to where he's sure he just saw --

RACHEL (CONT'D)
That was brilliant. Few swordsmen
expect you to stamp on their foot.

She hugs him.

Will misunderstands and kisses her. She sinks into it for a moment then pulls away. Turns and marches out of the room. After a few seconds, she marches back in.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Don't do that again.

WILL
Okay.

RACHEL
It isn't --

WILL
Here we go, the old "It's not you,
it's me" speech.

RACHEL
No, it's --

WILL
Someone else.

RACHEL
(goes with it)
Yes. Someone else. For both of us.
You have Anne and I have...

She looks for inspiration. Sees the specials board.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
-- Swan. Philip Swan. He's away
on government business. In France.

WILL
Sorry. Won't happen again.

RACHEL
Good.

WILL
Let's go.

RACHEL
You haven't finished your pie.

WILL
Not hungry.

RACHEL

Will, in the city, it is considered a sign of weakness if a man allows a fight to divert him from what he intended to do.

WILL

We're fighting now?

Rachel indicates the unconscious man on the floor.

RACHEL

And it's extreme cowardice if that diversion entails leaving food.

WILL

Really?

RACHEL

Trust me, you have to be brave to eat round here.

He takes a mouthful of pie. A bemused look spreads over his face.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You were saying how much you hate gambling.

WILL

Don't know why I used to enjoy it.

RACHEL

Youthful exuberance.

What?

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Being a twat.

Again, what?

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Insult I made up. Should catch on.

He stands. She takes his arm.

As they leave, the man on the floor tries to rise - until he finds his hair tied around the table leg.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Will and Rachel come upon another crook enticing people to bet on the cups and ball game.

WILL

Make him let you lift the cups so he can't cheat.

The crook and two of his associates advance on Will.

Rachel sighs and looks to heaven. Her little brother is hard work.

RACHEL

Where's the law when you need them?

INT. WALDEGRAVE'S CASTLE OFFICE - DAY

Stephen Waldegrave throws a book onto a table and sits cleaning his fingernails with a jewelled dagger.

He gazes, bored, out of the window to where firewood is being arranged around a stake in the courtyard below.

A KNOCK on the door.

Waldegrave waits. There is no second knock. Eventually -

WALDEGRAVE

Come.

De Barge enters carrying a leather-bound book and a letter.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

How long would you have waited?

DE BARGE

Longer than you.

Waldegrave jumps up and moves restlessly about the room. Points to the book with the dagger.

WALDEGRAVE

Why can't people write as they speak? What will future generations make of us?

DE BARGE

Nothing.

He waits for the real reason for the agitation.

WALDEGRAVE

Crispian, do you think we shall ever face criminal activity worthy of our talents?

DE BARGE

There you go.

WALDEGRAVE

It's all mindless thugs nowadays.

DE BARGE

And witches.

WALDEGRAVE
Deluded and victimized women.

De Barge closes the door.

DE BARGE
The Church instructs and the courts
decree otherwise.

WALDEGRAVE
And which church rules our minds
this afternoon? I haven't checked
for half an hour so we could be
anything.

DE BARGE
Minus a head, perhaps?

WALDEGRAVE
Would you turn me in as a heretic?

DE BARGE
Only if absolutely necessary to
save my own arse, sir.

Waldegrave throws the dagger past de Barge's head to spear
a fly against the door frame. De Barge doesn't move.

WALDEGRAVE
You could at least have the decency
to flinch amusingly.

DE BARGE
I shall work on my frivolity.

WALDEGRAVE
So what irridescent delights await
us today?

De Barge opens the book and lays it on the table.

DE BARGE
All mindless thugs and deluded
women, I'm afraid.

Waldegrave retrieves his knife.

DE BARGE (CONT'D)
But perhaps not for much longer.

He holds out the letter. Waldegrave glances at the envelope.

WALDEGRAVE
Summarize.

DE BARGE
By Royal Decree, the country is to
be cleared of witches before Advent.

WALDEGRAVE

We would be witches ourselves if
we could do that.

DE BARGE

The letter stipulates that all
practitioners of the occult are to
be interrogated, tried and
dispatched within twelve hours.

Waldegrave steps to the window.

WALDEGRAVE

And if it rains?

DE BARGE

Hang them.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - WILL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Will takes out the chess board and unfolds it beneath his
bed. Next he takes a leather money bag from inside his
shirt. Weighs it in his hand before removing two gold
coins and placing them on the board.

He lies on the bed staring into space.

Sounds of trouble from the bar downstairs. No worse than
usual but Will leaps up.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - NIGHT

A MAN has his hand around Rachel's throat, pinning her to
the bar while he uses his sword to toy with her clothes
and cut off buttons.

The landlord stands by helplessly.

Rachel is annoyed but unworried. She sighs when she sees
Will running down the stairs to rescue her.

WILL

Unhand the lady!

The man stuns Rachel by smacking her head against the bar
and turns to face Will.

Rachel's arm catches a candle, setting her sleeve alight.

The landlord puts out the flames.

WILL (CONT'D)

You will regret that.

MAN

Doesn't seem likely.

He grins at Will's shaking sword.

MAN (CONT'D)

Sure you got that in the right hand?

WILL

You know, you could have a point.

He whips his other hand from behind his back and smashes the man in the face with the bag of coins.

The man goes down.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Will fusses around Rachel, checking her head and the minor burn on her arm.

RACHEL

I'm all right, my big strong brother, I'm fine.

He stares at her, trying to work out what she means.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Yeah, 'Brother' is local slang. It means 'friend', a person with whom one has no sexual - or familial - relationship.

WILL

So what do you call an actual brother?

RACHEL

Brother.

WILL

Isn't that confusing?

RACHEL

Clearly.

WILL

Going home tomorrow. I have enough ... you know ... now.

RACHEL

Right.

WILL

To marry Anne.

RACHEL

Yeah.

He wants her to ask him to stay but she can't.

He stands.

WILL
Better get to bed. Early start. If
you're sure you're okay.

After a little more hesitation, he goes.

When the door closes, Rachel lets the tears come.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - DAY

Outside, torrential rain spears the ground.

Will and Rachel stand awkwardly facing each other. She
rubs her burnt arm.

RACHEL
You don't have to go out in this?

WILL
First, I want to ask about something
you said - concerning rat shit.

RACHEL
What was I drinking?

WILL
You said it was a - what's the
word - a metty --

RACHEL
Metaphor.

WILL
A girl thing. And you make words
up and say they'll catch on. I
knew you reminded me of someone.

She takes his hand, pulls him outside into the rain.

WILL (CONT'D)
So I do have to go out in this?

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Rachel semi-drags Will through the downpour into the middle
of a field. No prying ears here.

RACHEL
Catherine Penhallick is my mother.

He's worked that out.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
She asked me to look after you.

Bristling wounded machismo.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Till you learned the city's ways.

WILL

How?

RACHEL

In whatever way was necessary.

WILL

How did she ask you? I set out straight after I talked with her.

Unsure how much he knows, Rachel is cagey.

Gazing into the distance for inspiration, she sees birds above the distant woods.

RACHEL

Carrier pigeon.

WILL

I saw no pigeon coop.

To hell with it, he knows anyway.

RACHEL

Yeah, Mum's a witch, Will. If she needs a pigeon, she gets a pigeon. She doesn't ever need a pigeon.

WILL

Have you got powers too?

RACHEL

Little bit.

WILL

Your mum has a lot?

RACHEL

I get the rest eventually.

WILL

When she dies?

RACHEL

You should go.

She produces a daisy chain and hangs it around his neck.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Wear it as much as you can.

WILL

Is it one of those protection things - an ambi - aim - ?

RACHEL

Amulet.

Yes!

RACHEL (CONT'D)
No. But it might help.

The moment draws out. Neither of them wants him to go.

WILL
Philip is a lucky man.

Who?

RACHEL
Yeah, he doesn't know he's born.
Literally. I'll stay here. Don't
like goodbyes. They should be called --

WILL
Bad byes.

RACHEL
Yes!

It's a moment. Will kisses her forehead and reluctantly
turns away. He strides off without looking back.

Rachel drops into a sitting position on the muddy grass.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You got all that and you missed
"brother"?

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - TOM'S HOUSE - DAY

Will sits on a fine steed with Marmaduke and another horse
in tow. He's pleased with himself and oblivious to Tom's
simmering resentment.

WILL
What happened to your nose?

TOM
Shaving.

WILL
Your nose?

TOM
Clumsily.

Will accepts that. Jumps down and embraces his old friend.

Tom's response is warm - but the warmth does not extend to
his face when Will can't see it.

WILL
I brought you an extra horse.

TOM
You shouldn't have.

WILL

Really?

TOM

No it's the least you could do.

Will shows him the engagement ring.

TOM (CONT'D)

You shouldn't have.

This time he means it.

TOM (CONT'D)

Coming in?

WILL

Later. Got some proposing to do.

TOM

Good luck.

WILL

Thought you didn't believe in luck.

TOM

Things change.

EXT. FORGE - DAY

Anne is delighted with her enormous jewelled ring. It seems bigger than when Will showed it to Tom.

ANNE

Yes. Yes, yes, yes!

She kisses him. Neither party is as enthusiastic as they pretend - but only Will is surprised by this.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Will stands aside while Anne gazes disapprovingly around her future home. He lays the chess board on a side table.

ANNE

I'll soon sort this mess out.
Most of this junk can go.

She touches the chess board as if it might bite.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Don't need this, do you?

WILL

Yes.

ANNE

Where are the little men?

WILL
Going to make some. Out of wood.

ANNE
You carve wood?

WILL
Gonna learn. Need a hobby now I've
stopped gambling.

INT./ EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Catherine looks out and sees Will riding up. Her face
flushes with pleasure. She runs out to meet him.

CATHERINE
You look prosperous. Kettle's on.

He dismounts. Looks for somewhere to tie his horse.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
He won't wander off.

INSIDE

Will sips suspiciously from a steaming cup.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
It's called tea.

WILL
This will definitely catch on.

He takes the folded chess board out of his tunic.

WILL (CONT'D)
Look after this for me?

CATHERINE
You don't trust the in-laws?

WILL
Why don't these daisies die?

CATHERINE
They aren't ready. Do you like
messing around in boats?

INT. FORGE - DAY

Tom arrives to find Anne admiring the way the light from
the furnace glistens in her ring.

ANNE
Does your new horse need shoes?

TOM
Do you really mean to marry Will?

ANNE

Do you want him all for yourself?
Oh - you want *me*, don't you?

She makes a balance with her hands. The hand with the ring
'weighs' more.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Handsome and rich.
(on the other hand)
Poor and you. Bye bye.

Behind Tom's back, Daniel makes a face and silently reminds
his daughter that Tom is Will's friend.

ANNE (CONT'D)

And of course I love Will dearly.

TOM

Are you as sure of his devotion?

ANNE

He's made no secret of it.

TOM

So he's over Catherine Penhallick?

ANNE

She's an old woman.

TOM

She is firm and beautiful. And
he's enjoying her as we speak.

Anne hitches up her skirt and runs out.

Tom hands a piece of paper to Daniel. It's the note he and
Will took from the tree.

TOM (CONT'D)

Let me know if you need me to keep
him out of the way.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Will and Catherine sit in a rowing boat in the middle of a
lake. He dangles his hand in the water. They're relaxed
and comfortable in each other's company --

-- which infuriates Anne, who watches from the woods before
stomping off.

CATHERINE

I suppose you got up to all kinds
on your travels?

WILL

What happens on the road stays on
the road.

CATHERINE

Did you make that up? It's good.

This might well be the first time Will has ever felt intelligent. He likes it.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Rachel has rubbed off on you.

WILL

No, she wouldn't. She's got a boyfriend and - Sorry.

CATHERINE

Fancy fish for tea?

Before he can reply, he feels something touch his hand in the water. He pulls it out and drops a fish into the boat.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

That was lucky.

He goes to put his hand back in.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Lucky it wasn't a pike.

And that's enough hand soaking for Will.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Still getting married?

WILL

You don't like Anne either?

CATHERINE

I'm sure she has a good heart.

WILL

I look forward to feeling for it.

CATHERINE

That's probably not the sort of thing you should say to me.

WILL

You're no prude.

CATHERINE

No.

WILL

To tell you the truth, if I could have any woman in the world, it would be Rachel. She's so like you. You should be proud.

CATHERINE

I am. William, that can never be.

WILL

I know. I'm not good enough for
your daughter - even if she wasn't
in love with another.

CATHERINE

You're more than good enough for
any woman - apart from your sister.

He waits for the punch line.

She waits for the penny to drop.

WILL

Sister? She called me her...

CATHERINE

You knew you were adopted?

He looks around. Goes to stand up. Needs to be alone.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Good luck trying to walk away.

WILL

So that's why the boat.

He snatches up the oars and rows for the shore. But he's
too confused and upset to make much headway. Eventually he
has to stop.

Catherine takes over the rowing.

CATHERINE

Did you ever tell Tom about your
parents not being -- ?

WILL

I loved my mum and dad. Wasn't
going to throw them away.

CATHERINE

The children of witches are presumed
demons and are killed.

WILL

So you gave me away.

CATHERINE

To a wonderful couple who couldn't
have children of their own. I stayed
close. I watched over you. Except
that one weekend I was sick.

WILL

The fire?

She nods.

WILL (CONT'D)
What about Rachel?

CATHERINE
I sent her to live with my cousin
in the city.

WILL
Who was my father?

CATHERINE
Adam Cripps.

WILL
Tom's dad?

CATHERINE
It was before I was married. And
yes, Adam was also Rachel's father.
I was very young and very in love.

WILL
Does Tom know?

CATHERINE
He's unhappy because I'm not his
mother. She was --

WILL
Mad.

CATHERINE
Unwell. And I think that illness
has passed to him. William, I
believe Tom means you harm.

Will can't handle any more. He jumps out of the boat and
wades ashore.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
That went well.

INT. FORGE - DAY

Anne reads the poster offering a reward for witches.

DANIEL
I don't understand why Tom didn't
claim the reward himself.

ANNE
Because, like all men, he's afraid.
Afraid of upsetting his friend.
Afraid of the witch.

DANIEL
He has a point, my dear. Witches
have magic.

ANNE

We have God and our wits. My wits.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Will and Tom ride side by side.

TOM

Thanks for coming with me.

WILL

Needed to get away for a bit.

Up ahead a gang of robbers waits to attack the riders.

But the bushes in which they're hiding attack them first.
Branches bind hands and feet while thicker stems force
their way into mouths - and out of ears.

TOM

Worried about the wedding?

WILL

So is this aunt of yours rich?

TOM

No. But she's dying and I haven't
seen her since I was a boy and
family is important.

He touches Will's daisy chain.

TOM (CONT'D)

So these are fashionable in the
big city, are they?

The yellow centers of the flowers pulse. Tom recoils.
Will doesn't notice because he's off in his memories.

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Catherine tears leaves from a potted herb.

A frantic knocking at the door.

She opens up to find Anne looking distraught.

ANNE

It's my father. I think he's dying.

CATHERINE

What's wrong with him?

ANNE

I don't know. I'm not a physician.

CATHERINE

Neither am I.

ANNE

That's why I've come to you. He's coughing up blood and the physician would only take more from him.

Catherine throws supplies into a basket and hurries out.

INT. FORGE - NIGHT

Anne and Catherine bustle in.

A figure is (apparently) lying on the far side of the room, covered by a blood-soaked blanket.

Catherine senses something is wrong but before she can react, Daniel grabs her from behind, pinioning her arms.

Anne knocks her out with a mighty uppercut.

DANIEL

Blacksmith's hands. My girl, I'm so proud.

ANNE

Quick before she comes round.

Daniel binds Catherine's hands while Anne ties her feet.

DANIEL

You don't feel bad that she came to help us?

ANNE

She is helping us. It's what she wanted.

INT. WALDEGRAVE'S CASTLE - OFFICE - NIGHT

De Barge accepts delivery of the alleged witch from Anne and Daniel. He checks the bonds are secure and nods for guards to take away the still groggy Catherine.

He signs and seals a sheet of paper which he hands to Daniel. Anne snatches the paper.

ANNE

What's this?

DE BARGE

A receipt.

ANNE

Where's the reward?

DE BARGE

To be apportioned when, and if, the woman is proven in league with the devil.

Anne is about to flare up but Daniel steps in.

DANIEL
Is that in doubt?

DE BARGE
The court will decide. Attend the trial in case your evidence is required. Rewards are collectable from the clerk of the court after sentencing. Do not forget to bring the receipt.

DANIEL
Thank you, sir.

Anne is far from happy.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE - DAY

Will and Tom arrive on horseback.

TOM
Coming in for a drink? Got some special stuff I've been keeping.

A FARMER walks past, heading for the tavern.

FARMER
You heard we're famous? They caught a witch. The Penhallick woman.

Will wheels his horse around and gallops off.

FARMER (CONT'D)
Wanted the reward himself, did he? Should have seen to business before he went gallivantin' then.

Tom nods. That's his policy.

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Will runs in to find the place wrecked. Everything of value has been taken.

A corner of his chessboard pokes out of the ashes in the grate. He retrieves it before running out of the house, jumping onto his horse and galloping off.

INT. DUNGEON

Catherine is still bound and unconscious.

Waldegrave sits outside the cell with his feet up.

Behind him, de Barge fills out paperwork.

Catherine stirs. Opens her eyes.

WALDEGRAVE

Good morning. Did we wake you?

CATHERINE

Yes. Thank you. I'd have hated to miss a second more of these beautiful surroundings.

WALDEGRAVE

Catherine Penhallick. Nice name. I'm told it belongs to a witch.

CATHERINE

You're misinformed. Now you've heard both sides.

WALDEGRAVE

The other side has evidence.

DE BARGE

That you cured a sick child.

WALDEGRAVE

Are you a physician?

CATHERINE

No. My treatment works.

DE BARGE

Because the remedy is affected by demons working through you.

WALDEGRAVE

My friend has a rather provincial mind. Alas, these days provincial minds make the rules.

CATHERINE

You think it evil to cure a child?

DE BARGE

If the aim is to recruit the child for Satan's army on earth.

For the first time, Catherine looks afraid.

CATHERINE

You wouldn't hurt innocent children?

DE BARGE

Society must be protected.

Catherine looks to Waldegrave, who squirms slightly.

WALDEGRAVE

I'm paid to catch, not to judge.

CATHERINE

How comforting for you. In years to come, everyone will learn to heal with plant extracts.

DE BARGE

Now you predict the future? Demonic powers indeed!

Catherine stares. There is no hope here.

INT. FORGE - DAY

Anne comes in to find Tom in the otherwise deserted forge.

TOM

Have you reconsidered my proposal?

ANNE

A woman of means can afford to be choosier than that.

TOM

Then please come over here. There is something I wish you to see.

ANNE

And I wish you to leave.

He punches her and watches her fall.

TOM

I did say please.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - BACK ROOM - DAY

Alone in the bar, Rachel is tidying up when a strange feeling comes over her. She has to drop to the floor. Lies on her back and wriggles under the table, the underside of which now bears a moving picture of her mother's face.

RACHEL

Mom?

CATHERINE

This is no time for resting.

RACHEL

I'll save you.

CATHERINE

Then what?

RACHEL

We'll go away.

CATHERINE

To where? A shared grave? I forbid you to come.

RACHEL

You can't.

CATHERINE

It would be too hard for me if you were there. I will stop you.

RACHEL

Mum please!

CATHERINE

If questioned you must deny me.
Promise. Now your brother needs
you. Dark meshes enfold him.

The image fades. Rachel curls into a ball and cries.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Catherine's trial. The room is packed.

The PROSECUTOR stands.

PROSECUTOR

M'Lud, the prosecution --

The JUDGE raises his hand to stop him.

Signals for the clerk to place the black cloth on his wig.

JUDGE

Catherine Penhallick, you are
sentenced to be burned at the stake.
If you renounce Satan and all his
ways, The Lord may have mercy on
your soul. Now, lunch, I think.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Will gallops towards the castle. His riding has improved
but not a lot.

The horse stops suddenly.

Will falls off into a bush that wasn't there a moment ago.

He tries to cajole the horse but it will go no farther.

The castle is only four hundred yards distant - He could
run there.

No he can't. He rebounds from an invisible barrier.

A cart passes through unimpeded towards the castle.

Will tries to follow in its tracks, but he's blocked.

He looks at the ground at the side of the road. Tests it
with his foot.

EXT. CASTLE YARD - DAY

A large eager crowd awaits the execution. Vendors pass amongst them selling snacks and drinks.

Pickpockets also move through the crowd, plying their trade.

Catherine is tied to the stake and guards rearrange the kindling around her. Priests stand by to see justice done. No-one prays for her soul.

Waldegrave and de Barge watch impassively.

DE BARGE

Why do you come if you don't believe
they deserve to burn?

He casually stabs a thief who tries to pick his pocket.

WALDEGRAVE

It's my job.

He waves for soldiers to remove the pickpocket's body.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

And how intellectually challenging
it is!

DE BARGE

Performing it well prolongs one's
life. I aim to be the first member
of my family to reach fifty.

But Waldegrave's attention has been taken by a man pushing through the crowd towards the pyre.

Will is filthy - as if he's been digging and tunnelling.

His eyes meet Catherine's.

CATHERINE

(in his head)

One meaningless death is enough.

She shakes her head slightly and he immediately turns around and stands expressionless.

Waldegrave and de Barge exchange looks.

The fire is lit.

The crowd cheer.

The pain is enormous and, despite all her previous self-possession, Catherine screams. Loses control of Will.

Now aware, Will turns and sees a ball of flames with vague convulsive limb movements barely discernible.

The crowd is not happy. They expected more of a spectacle.
Complaints of:

"Too fast"/ "Did they use gunpowder or what?"/ "Boring"

People throw snacks.

Will hurries away. He has to force himself not to run.

DE BARGE

An intrigue worthy of your talents?
Odd that the shrew hasn't been to
collect her blood money.

WALDEGRAVE

Conscience? Doubt? Regret?

DE BARGE

You didn't meet her.

De Barge takes his leave and follows Will.

Waldegrave stares into space, apparently oblivious to the
worsening mood of the crowd. A soldier hastens to him.

SOLDIER

Sir, the mob is turning ugly.

Waldegrave looks around. His eye falls on a thief who, up
to now, has been having a good day.

WALDEGRAVE

Let's burn a warlock - slowly.

The soldier grins. He and a colleague grab the thief and
march him to the pyre. The crowd cheers.

INT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - DAY

Alone in the bar, Rachel is faced with a mountain of
tankards to wash. No hot water in sink nor jug. Her burnt
arm is troubling her.

RACHEL

Hot water please.

She does a little spell - but instead of a jug of water
she gets all the glasses washed, dried, stacked and gleaming
on the other side of the sink.

What the -- ?

The significance of what has just happened hits her. She
turns to march out of the room but only gets a couple of
steps before she has to sit on the floor.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Mummy! No!

INT. FORGE - DAY

The door is closed and barricaded.

Anne and Daniel are tied up on the floor at opposite ends of the room. Both have fresh bruises on their faces.

Tom speaks calmly while he heats a ladle of molten metal.

TOM

We're going to have a little chat.
Any shouts, screams or calls for
help, I will pour this on your
legs - to start with. Are we clear?

They both nod.

TOM (CONT'D)

Life, as I think you'll agree, can
be disappointing. Do you suppose
it gets any better after we die?

Daniel goes to speak but Tom holds the ladle over the blacksmith's face.

TOM (CONT'D)

Rhetorical question.

ANNE

You leave my dad alone.

TOM

Sweet. So Daniel, were you going
to say how you'll give me anything
I want and forget about this little
misunderstanding?

With no apparent emotion, he pours molten metal onto Daniel's face. The blacksmith's scream is brief.

Anne stares at him in shock as he refills the ladle.

A KNOCK on the door.

PRIEST (O.S.)

Hello? It's Father Grayson. Come
on, Daniel, I know you're in there.

TOM

And better.

Tom makes a finger-on-lips gesture to Anne and goes to open the door. She's too shocked to make a sound.

EXT. CLOTTED GOOSE TAVERN - DAY

Rachel paces, drying her eyes. She takes a deep breath. Needs to get it together.

EXT. ROAD - EVENING

Will rides recklessly, too upset to care what happens to him. Sure enough, he falls off. Lands with a thump. Winded, he lies on his back on the road.

His horse wanders back to him and grazes by the roadside.

The evening is alive with BIRDSONG.

In his mind, Will adds lyrics to the song of each bird.

BIRD 1

Two mothers burned. Two mothers
burned.

BIRD 2

All your fault. All your fault.

BIRD 3

Just your sister left. She'll burn
well. Only Rachel left, to send to
hell.

BIRD 4

Everything you touch turns to shit.

A soldier watches from the shadows.

EXT. FORGE - NIGHT

Soldiers stand guard.

Waldegrave and de Barge come out of the forge. The mangled bodies of Anne and Daniel can be glimpsed inside.

WALDEGRAVE

William Mortimer is an unlucky
man. One woman incinerated and
another melted.

DE BARGE

The one in there was his fiancée.

Waldegrave spots a man walking past. The man is clearly eager not to miss anything.

WALDEGRAVE

Could you come here for a moment
please, sir. Yes you.

Tom comes over. Waldegrave indicates for de Barge to question him. While his assistant does this, the chief investigator examines the ground.

DE BARGE

Good day, Mr. Cripps.

Reluctantly, Tom moves on.

WALDEGRAVE
Anything useful?

DE BARGE
A mentally deficient busybody,
like everyone in these places.

WALDEGRAVE
Anything apart from your prejudices?

DE BARGE
We know where Mortimer has been
since before these two met their
fate. Of course, that could be
convenient.

WALDEGRAVE
Create an alibi by linking himself
to a condemned witch? That would
be incredibly stupid.

With exaggerated distaste, De Barge indicates the
surroundings - Duh!

DE BARGE
Stupidity is an intellectual goal
for these people.

Waldegrave gives him a look.

DE BARGE (CONT'D)
I strive to be fair.

WALDEGRAVE
Assuming Mortimer had an accomplice -
would that be human or demonic?

DE BARGE
Must you mock me?

WALDEGRAVE
Of course.

A soldier scurries around the side of the building.

SOLDIER
Sir, you need to see this.

Waldegrave and de Barge follow the soldier to the pigsty.

Two large pigs feast on the face of a body dressed in
priest's clothes.

WALDEGRAVE
(to soldier)
Get him out of there.

The soldier is horrified by the idea of getting in with
those pigs.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)
Bacon for the garrison.

But he likes the sound of that.

Waldegrave and de Barge walk back the way they came,
scanning the ground as best they can by torch light.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)
Would Mortimer have his fiancée
murdered before collecting the
reward?

DE BARGE
Not intentionally.

WALDEGRAVE
That would be an elaborate accident.

DE BARGE
Communication between accomplices
is not always efficient.

INT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Will searches, being as methodical as he can with the aid
of a torch.

A polite cough.

He looks up and sees Waldegrave leaning against the
doorframe. Behind him are de Barge and soldiers.

WALDEGRAVE
Your home?

WILL
Yes.

WALDEGRAVE
I wonder if all witches are as
untidy as the one you live with?

WILL
All right, I was robbing the place.
She doesn't need anything any more.

Waldegrave smiles and signals for Will's arrest.

As Will is led past him, de Barge notices the daisy chain
around his neck.

DE BARGE
Sweet.

WILL
You're not my type.

EXT. CATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel arrives to see Will being taken away. She thinks she is unobserved but neither Waldegrave nor de Barge miss much.

DE BARGE

A lover? That would explain a lot.

WALDEGRAVE

Albeit making everything mundane.

DE BARGE

We can't dismiss the truth because it's boring. But could that tiny girl subdue a blacksmith?

WALDEGRAVE

By means of surprise.

DE BARGE

Or the occult. Shall we take her?

WALDEGRAVE

We can't arrest everybody, lacking as we are in the manpower to contain a riot. She'll keep.

INT. DUNGEON

Will is shackled. Waldegrave sits by the cell door. De Barge bustles about, signing orders, arranging files.

WILL

Why am I here?

WALDEGRAVE

For questioning.

DE BARGE

Concerning the murder of your future wife and her father and how that relates to your involvement with witchcraft.

Waldegrave is frustrated that his assistant has given so much away but it's out there now.

WALDEGRAVE

Having been apprehended in the house of a convicted witch.

Will looks at the stained walls and the blood on the floor.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

Torture has its uses but we can be more civilized - with your help.

He produces the notice offering a reward for witches.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

Look familiar?

DE BARGE

You were seen removing it from its place of lawful display.

WILL

I didn't want anyone to beat me to the reward.

WALDEGRAVE

Yet you did not deliver a witch.

Will has nothing to say.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

We have been able to find no trace of your supposedly rich, supposedly ex-crusader's descendant uncle, supposedly recently deceased.

WILL

You should employ better people.

Waldegrave smiles and takes out his dagger.

WALDEGRAVE

Or better methods perhaps?

He leans against the wall and cleans his fingernails with the dagger.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

Actually, we're rather good at tracing things financial. A necessity given our beloved monarch's approach to taxation.

He gives Will an opportunity to speak. Declined.

DE BARGE

You were seen in the company of a known witch at her home and again at her execution.

WALDEGRAVE

Your betrothed, and her father delivered said witch for trial and were subsequently murdered.

This is news to Will.

DE BARGE

Either you are a witch's consort who took revenge on a father and daughter who had the courage to do the Lord's work.

WALDEGRAVE

Or you are a coward who profited
from a witch before sending his
future in-laws to dispose of her
when she was of no further use.
Then you killed said in-laws so
you could keep all of the spoils.
Have I missed anything?

WILL

The truth.

WALDEGRAVE

Enlighten me.

WILL

I didn't do it.

WALDEGRAVE

You took this notice. Why did you
not deliver the witch?

WILL

I saw the good she did in the
village.

DE BARGE

So you know better than the Church?
Than the Crown? Than us?

WILL

Seems so.

Waldegrave smiles.

WALDEGRAVE

This dungeon is disgusting. I refuse
to spend another minute here. How
about a nice dry cell with a window?

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - NIGHT

Rachel pounds on a door.

Tom opens up.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom and Rachel sit with drinks.

TOM

Will's association with a beautiful
woman such as yourself could be
seen as a motive for murder.

RACHEL

I'm his sister.

This rocks Tom but he covers it.

TOM

And of course Anne had recently
come into money.

RACHEL

Our mother provided for us.

Tom drops his goblet and turns away to master his fury.

TOM

What do you want me to do?

RACHEL

Will respects your advice. Tell
him not to do anything stupid -
like trying to escape - while I
find the real killer.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - NIGHT

Waldegrave and de Barge stroll towards the tavern.

DE BARGE

Must we?

WALDEGRAVE

Information and ale. Perfect.

DE BARGE

These people - and I use the word
loosely - smell.

EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT

Rachel speaks to Will through the bars of his cell window.

WILL

They think I'm a wizard.

RACHEL

No, they believe you are a murderer.
Leave it to me.

WILL

Too many people have suffered
already on my account.

RACHEL

Just don't give anybody a reason
to kill you.

She runs off before he can protest further.

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom moves his brewing equipment to open a trap door. He
takes out a small sealed barrel.

EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT

Tom hands the barrel to the guard on the gate.

Another soldier comes over.

TOM

Enjoy, lads. I hope there's enough.

GUARD

There's only the two of us on
tonight. This not exactly being a
high threat area.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

From a concealed position, Tom watches the guard slump
against the castle wall and slide to the floor.

INT. CASTLE - CELL - NIGHT

Will is woken by his cell window and a chunk of the wall
exploding outwards.

He steps tentatively to the gap in the wall and sees that
Tom has used a team of oxen to pull out the bars.

Tom takes a bow.

WILL

Do they belong to farmer Glover?

TOM

Hardly the important point at the
moment. Quickly, run.

WILL

No. Too many people I care about
have been hurt on my account.

Tom indicates the rubble.

TOM

Might be a little late for that.

WILL

I would be a fugitive all my life.

TOM

At least you'll have a life.

WILL

I haven't done anything wrong and
Rachel's going to fix it.

TOM

Rachel?

WILL

Long story. Get out of here, Tom.

Tom sees that one of the bars chained to the oxen is still wedged at an angle in what's left of the window. The wall above it - above Will - is cracked.

He throws a large stone at the nearest ox. The animal moves away - bringing a portion of the wall down on Will.

Will sees it happening but is too shocked to move.

TOM

And better.

He is going to check that Will is dead but, hearing a galloping horse in the distance. He slinks away.

Rachel dismounts and kneels beside Will. She tries to move the stones but they are too heavy - until she uses magic. Then she runs her hands over him, looking for damage.

FROM THE WOODS

Tom watches Rachel ride off with Will lying across her horse.

INT. CASTLE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Tom stands with de Barge. Waldegrave comes in and throws his gloves on the table.

WALDEGRAVE

Redecorating the cells, Crispian?
Not sure about the open plan design.

DE BARGE

Two guards dead. The prisoner has escaped, apparently by occult means.

WALDEGRAVE

Apparent how?

DE BARGE

We have a witness.

Waldegrave studies Tom.

WALDEGRAVE

Things certainly seem to happen when you're watching, don't they, Mr. Cripps. You must be the most entertained man in Christendom.

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Will lies on a straw mattress, barely conscious. Rachel covers him with a blanket.

RACHEL

I need more herbs. Do not move.

She kisses his forehead and runs out.

Will lapses into unconsciousness.

INT. CASTLE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Waldegrave and de Barge exchange looks. Something feels wrong to them.

TOM

He was hurt in the escape. If we are quick, we can catch them.

WALDEGRAVE

We?

TOM

She knows I saw her and she will want to silence me. There is a man in the village whose hounds can find anyone.

WALDEGRAVE

Dogs with a nose for conjuring?

TOM

You mock me?

DE BARGE

Not you alone.

Waldegrave nods for De Barge to show Tom out.

DE BARGE (CONT'D)

We shall be in touch.

When the investigators are alone -

DE BARGE (CONT'D)

Interesting enough for you now, Stephen?

INT. TOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom paces, frantically trying to work out what to do.

A KNOCK.

He opens the door and is surprised to find Rachel there.

She walks past him into his house.

RACHEL

Will's hurt.

TOM

Do come in.

RACHEL

I need your help.

TOM

Of course, Anything.

He looks sharply at the window.

TOM (CONT'D)

Oh my God! Soldiers!

Rachel spins toward the window. Tom smashes a cooking pot into the side of her head. She goes down, not quite unconscious.

He sits heavily on her belly, squashing the air out of her. Then he holds his hand over her nose and mouth until he's sure she's passed out.

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

A distant clock strikes 12.

Will stirs. Wakes suddenly. He knows something is wrong and that he has to get up. He fights through the pain.

INT. CASTLE - OFFICE - NIGHT

A soldier ties the unconscious Rachel to a heavy chair while de Barge fastens crucifixes around her.

TOM

Shouldn't she be in the dungeon?

Waldegrave pours himself a drink while studying a map.

WALDEGRAVE

That's no place for a lady.

DE BARGE

Why didn't you wait until she led you to her brother?

TOM

She's a witch. Her powers together with Will's --

WALDEGRAVE

Would struggle to equal a goose's fart. They are but people and he is injured.

DE BARGE

As is she.

(MORE)

DE BARGE (CONT'D)
I hope for your sake you have not
scrambled her wits before she can
tell us what we need to know.

Waldegrave draws a circle on the map and hands it to a
soldier.

WALDEGRAVE
Search within this radius.

The soldier goes out.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)
And Crispian, perhaps you could
locate some supper?

TOM
You can think of your stomach with
all our souls in peril?

WALDEGRAVE
Then especially.

De Barge goes out.

TOM
Will you torture the bitch?

WALDEGRAVE
Like that, would you?

TOM
I like whatever brings an end to
Satan's works in our village.

Waldegrave is growing ever more suspicious of Tom.

Behind them, Rachel pretends to be unconscious. She takes
a quick peek then closes her eyes and tests her bonds. She
won't be getting out of those by natural means.

The door opens and de Barge bustles in carrying two plates.
He glances at Tom.

DE BARGE
You weren't hungry, were you?

WALDEGRAVE
But we would be honoured if you
would dine with us.

He tosses Tom a drumstick.

Rachel takes a breath and focuses.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Passing a small copse with thick undergrowth in otherwise open country, Will can barely sit on the horse - until something washes through him, giving him strength and energy.

It starts to rain.

He urges the horse to gallop. Falls off, landing heavily.

Lying on the ground, he can hear and feel the sound of approaching riders, moving fast but still not in sight.

He struggles to his feet and walks into the field opposite the copse. Then he carefully returns stepping backwards in his muddy footprints.

Will can't climb back into the saddle but he manages to get a foot into a stirrup and hang on while he urges the horse towards the trees.

He drops off into the bushes. Then, straightening the vegetation as best he can behind him, he crawls into hiding and smears mud over his face and the back of his hands.

A daisy falls off the chain. Ten remain.

The rain gets heavier.

Will's horse grazes by the roadside.

Eight mounted soldiers arrive and pull up beside the copse.

Two soldiers dismount.

One follows the false trail into the field.

The other studies the spot where Will fell and then examines the damaged foliage where he crawled into the undergrowth.

Will lies very still. Barely daring to breathe.

SOLDIER 2

He fell off here. The horse
scrabbled about.

He indicates an area of the road and some broken branches.

SOLDIER 1

Then he headed off into this field.
In that direction.

SERGEANT

Running or walking?

SOLDIER 1

Staggering.

The rain is now lashing down. The footprints are almost washed away.

SOLDIER 2

We can't track him in this.

SERGEANT

No need. Open country for miles.
The only thing in his favour is
the dark - and that won't last
much longer.

He points to two soldiers, one of whom has a crossbow.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Ambush positions in case he doubles
back for the horse.

SOLDIER

If he does?

SERGEANT

Two of our colleagues died in that
escape. No prisoners no paperwork.

The two soldiers dismount and conceal themselves in the copse. The others set off into the field.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Unknown, uneven ground. Steady.

All is still apart from the pounding rain.

Another daisy falls from the chain.

A hint of approaching day in the eastern sky. The copse is small and will not provide adequate cover in daylight.

Will has to make his move and he has to make it NOW.

He eases very slowly and very carefully towards the soldier with the crossbow.

BUT he isn't careful enough. The soldier hears him and swings his weapon around to bear on Will.

Will snatches up a stick and throws it, spear-like at the soldier. It catches him in the throat, rocking him backwards as he shoots. The crossbow bolt fires almost vertically into the air.

In the same smooth movement, Will catches his adversary in the forehead with a rock. The soldier is unconscious before he hits the ground.

But his partner is moving in fast, sword drawn.

Will tries to get the crossbow but it and the unconscious soldier's sword are trapped beneath his body.

In the tangle of undergrowth Will can't work either free.

The other soldier is almost upon him --

-- when the crossbow bolt comes back down and lodges in his shoulder.

Will knocks him out and takes his sword and scabbard.

Pushes through to the road. No sign of the other troops - or of Will's horse, which has run off.

No alternative but to continue on foot. This would be a challenge even if he wasn't injured.

He presses on, keeping low, staying close to what little cover there is.

An unseen horse approaching at a gallop. Nowhere to hide. Will jumps out, sword poised to defend himself.

Marmaduke skids to a halt in front of him.

Man and horse share a moment then Will somehow manages to clamber on board.

WILL

I suppose a saddle would have been
too much to ask?

Marmaduke turns and they set off at a reasonable speed.

Another daisy falls from the chain.

INT. CASTLE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Waldegrave eats enthusiastically.

De Barge nibbles, watching Tom.

Tom has no appetite.

Rachel opens her eyes.

WALDEGRAVE

Good of you to join us, My Lady.

Tom fidgets anxiously.

Rachel jiggles the crucifixes.

RACHEL

How pious. Am I dead?

DE BARGE

Not just yet.

The office door opens. The judge looks into the room.

JUDGE
Ready for a verdict?

DE BARGE
We haven't finished interrogating
her yet, Your Honour.

JUDGE
Is that necessary?

WALDEGRAVE
Most definitely.

The judge gives Waldegrave a long appraising look.

JUDGE
Sunrise then.

He walks away, leaving the door open. De Barge closes it.

Waldegrave shrugs an apology to Rachel. She nods and turns to Tom.

RACHEL
So glad you're here.

EXT. CASTLE - GATE - NIGHT

A definite band of daylight along the eastern horizon.

Only one flower remains on the daisy chain.

Will slides off his horse and runs up to the guard.

WILL
I need to see the investigator.
Immediately.

GUARD
You need to go away, while you
still can.

WILL
Ah but I can't.

He draws his sword. But he's still weak and the sword wobbles feebly.

GUARD
Is that even in your best hand?

WILL
Unfortunately, yes. However -

His other hand whips around from behind his back, swinging a bag of coins at the guard's head. But this is no tavern tough. The trained soldier easily blocks Will's sword with his own and catches the hand holding the bag.

GUARD

Seriously?

A rat leaps out of the bag onto the guard's face.

Difficult to tell which of the combatants is more alarmed.

Will's sword comes up and finds a gap in the guard's armour.
The guard goes down.

WILL

Sorry.

He runs on into the castle.

The rat, which had leaped clear of the falling guard,
returns to nibble on his face.

INT. CASTLE - OFFICE - NIGHT

The door slams open when Will and the soldier he's fighting
crash into it. The contest could go either way.

Rachel is about to intervene magically but she changes her
mind. Will runs the soldier through with his sword. Rachel
is impressed.

De Barge leaps up to fight but Waldegrave holds him back.

WALDEGRAVE

Sit down Crispian. It's exhausting
just watching you.

DE BARGE

But he killed one of our men.

WALDEGRAVE

Jenks, wasn't it? Did you like
him? I didn't. And if he couldn't
beat a civilian in a fight -- !

De Barge settles back.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

Mr. Mortimer. I thought it would
be we who had to find you.

Will points at the terrified Tom.

WILL

Don't believe a thing he says.

Waldegrave turns to study Tom.

RACHEL

Thomas Cripps is an evil sorcerer.

WILL

Trying to escape justice by accusing
an innocent brother and sister.

TOM

They practise the black arts.

WALDEGRAVE

A delightfully delectable dilemma.
Is that too alliterative?

RACHEL

I like it.

WALDEGRAVE

Thank you.

RACHEL

You don't have to believe anybody.
Hurl your dagger at him. At that
range you can't miss - unless he
diverts it with magic.

DE BARGE

If he does not, his innocent soul
resides in heaven.

WALDEGRAVE

And we still have you.

Waldegrave fires his dagger at Tom who has no chance of
getting out of the way. With a small movement of her eyes,
Rachel stops the knife a few inches in front of Tom's chest.
It hangs in the air.

She then motions with her head at Will an instant before
she reverses the dagger and makes it fly at Waldegrave.
Will leaps at the investigator and knocks him to the floor
so the dagger passes harmlessly overhead and embeds itself
in the wall.

WILL

You all right?

WALDEGRAVE

A little dusty but - sartorial
considerations aside - thank you.

WILL

It was nothing.

Rachel snorts - quietly.

De Barge holds up a cross as he moves to secure Tom.

Tom tries to run. His carved pig falls out of his pocket
and he almost goes back for it. With the door blocked, the
window is the only way out. He leaps through it.

DE BARGE

Secure the remains. Can't be too careful with this sort of thing.

Waldegrave picks up the wooden pig and strolls to the window. Looks down three storeys into the courtyard.

WALDEGRAVE

No body.

DE BARGE

So he is still alive?

Waldegrave calls down to two soldiers below.

WALDEGRAVE

You two! Do you see a body?

The soldiers look up and then keep staring without reply.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?

The soldiers continue to stare. One of them points in Waldegrave's direction.

After a second or two, he turns to look up.

Above the window, Tom's lifeless body sticks horizontally out from the wall. His head is embedded in the stone.

WALDEGRAVE (CONT'D)

Interesting.

INT. CASTLE - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Will steps towards Rachel, intending to cut her bonds.

Her face wavers and Catherine's face superimposes upon it.

CATHERINE

Rest now, my son.

Rachel's lips do not move. Neither Waldegrave nor de Barge can hear the voice.

Will collapses, unconscious.

Catherine is gone.

RACHEL

Please. I must help my brother.

Waldegrave gestures for de Barge to untie her.

WALDEGRAVE

Brother, eh?

Rachel gives him a little smile.

EXT. VILLAGE GRAVEYARD - DAY

Will and Rachel tend Adam Cripps's grave. Rachel repeats Catherine's trick with wild flowers.

WILL

I miss Tom.

RACHEL

After everything he did?

WILL

All my life he's been there.

She hugs him.

WILL (CONT'D)

So you can contact Mum?

RACHEL

She can reach me. Trust me, Will,
you haven't suffered the losses
and gone through all the --

WILL

Hero shit.

RACHEL

Okay - for nothing.

WILL

There's the money, I suppose.

He lets her stew before turning her to face him.

WILL (CONT'D)

Rach, you're the best thing that
ever happened to me.

A tender moment. He touches her face.

WILL (CONT'D)

And nobody knows you're my sister.

She wheels away and marches off a few steps before she realizes he's winding her up.

WILL (CONT'D)

You look so sweet when you do that
whirly round stompy off angry thing.

RACHEL

Sweet?

WILL

Cute?

RACHEL

Yeah, vocabulary. Not your thing.

He isn't sure how he's meant to reply.

WILL

No?

Rachel takes his arm and they walk out into the village.

Catherine's face appears on the headstone. She's happy but has to rearrange the flowers.

Waldegrave and de Barge are moving out. They're still a way off. Will and Rachel stroll to meet them.

WILL (CONT'D)

Don't know how to say soppy stuff.
Always relied on looking good.

RACHEL

How's that worked for you?

He makes a face. Could be better.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I'll help you pull women.

WILL

No you won't!
(thinks about it)
How?

The riders stop in front of them.

WILL (CONT'D)

Off to persecute more innocent people?

RACHEL

Ignore him. Head injury. Thank you, Stephen.

WALDEGRAVE

Just doing my job. And for once, I think my work has made the world a better place.

De Barge fidgets but does not comment.

RACHEL

Confusing times for you.

Waldegrave raises an eyebrow - How so?

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You didn't believe in magic, you still don't want to believe in it, but you've seen it in action.

WALDEGRAVE

Because I don't know how a trick
is accomplished does not make it
any less of a trick. Crispian,
please constrain your comments as
long as possible.

He and Rachel exchange a smile. Then with a nod to Will,
the party rides on.

WILL

Think he'll be back?

RACHEL

I am rather irresistible.

WILL

That would be so dangerous.

RACHEL

Or exciting. Besides, I have my
brother to protect me.

(beat)

That was me taking the piss.

They walk.

WILL

You'll find our tavern a bit tame.

RACHEL

Good. Got to call on Mrs. Fenton
first. Her daughter has the croup.

Farmer Glover rounds a corner up ahead. Riding the horse
that used to be Will's.

WILL

I'm going to get Mabel back.

(calls)

Hey, Glover.

RACHEL

No, Will, don't.

She makes a small movement to stop him but it has no effect.
Rachel understands. Not sure if she likes it.

Glover stops and waits for them to approach.

WILL

Can I have my horse back?

GLOVER

No.

WILL

Please. I'll give you what you
paid me. Oh wait - that was nothing.

GLOVER

There was a debt.

WILL

Tell you what - I'll fight your son for it.

GLOVER

The death took my boy a month ago.
Was there anything else?

WILL

I'm sorry.

With a scowl, the old man rides off.

RACHEL

I'll See you in the tavern later.
Let you know when I'm on my way.

She doesn't need to explain how.

They part and Will walks on, feeling pretty good.

He hears a galloping horse coming up behind him. Moves aside to let it pass.

At the last moment, instinct makes him turn - to see Farmer Glover bearing down on him with his sword raised to strike.

The sword comes down - until it turns into a huge sail that rips Glover from the saddle and takes him into the sky.

Mabel gallops harmlessly on by.

Glover struggles to hold on. The sail grows extensions that become a harness holding him securely as he rises higher and higher.

The sail catches the wind and moves off across country.

Will turns to see Rachel holding the horse. He's shaken and confused.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Mabel says she's missed you but
she's enjoyed eating properly.

WILL

You saved my life. Again.

RACHEL

Yeah, that wasn't me.

He looks around. Sees no one else there.

She waits for him to realize what she's saying.

WILL

No way!

Rachel grabs his hand and marches off with Will in tow.

RACHEL

Keep up, Mabel. I'll introduce you
to Marmaduke.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - DAY

The place is cleaner than when we last saw it but is
otherwise unchanged.

Rachel sits Will in front of a clear, plain wall.

She closes the shutters and images spring into life on the
"movie screen" of the wall.

It shows the earlier incident where, in that room, Will
dropped the knife when he tried to throw it at the rat. As
it falls, the knife steps to the side to avoid Will's bare
foot and embeds itself in the floor.

WILL

I did that?

RACHEL

Mum made you look away so you
wouldn't notice.

The next scenes follow each other on the wall-screen.

MONTAGE:

1. The snake scurries off the tree stump before Will sits
on it.
2. The foiled attack in the tavern's toilet.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I would have helped but I was a
bit busy.

3. The anvil.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I nearly put my back out making
that disappear. You couldn't have
been obsessed by a dress maker or
someone who uses light tools?

4. The growing engagement ring.
5. The robbers "eaten" by bushes.
6. Waldegrave throws his dagger at Tom and Will saves him
from it's unusual flight path.

WILL
That was you.

RACHEL
Not all of it.

She turns the screen off.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You can watch the rest later.

WILL
So you and Mom stopped me finding
out I could do this stuff because --

RACHEL
You were too immature.

WILL
I was going to say not ready.

RACHEL
I hope you're ready now.

WILL
I finally get to be responsible
for my own life?

RACHEL
You always were.

WILL
With you and Mom watching. Helping.

RACHEL
That's what families do. You'll be
able to block me now if you want.

Will has a humiliating thought.

WILL
So you saw me when -- ?

RACHEL
What happens in the vision stays
in the vision.

WILL
Hey, I made that up. Sort of.

RACHEL
You promised me a drink.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Will and Rachel walk towards the village.

RACHEL

No I don't want a race. And before
you get ideas above your station -
that time in the boat with Mom?
You couldn't have walked on water.

WILL

Not yet.

She realizes he's joking. She *hopes* he's joking.

WILL (CONT'D)

That pictures on the wall thing -
that could catch on. That could be
really big.

RACHEL

If they ever stop burning the people
who make the pictures.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Waldegrave and de Barge ride side by side.

GLOVER (O.S.)

Help!

They look around and eventually look up - at the world's
first hang glider.

They look at each other. This is one they can agree on.

WALDEGRAVE & DE BARGE

Interesting.

They turn their horses and follow the human kite.

FADE OUT: