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INT.

INT. FATHER PREE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1348 AD

Writing on a parchment, baring an expression of deep concentration, FATHER SIMON PREE, middle aged monk, with religious devotion and short cropped hair resembling a monk's cut, works hastily on a book. His quill moves quickly, scratching the surface of the parchment.

FATHER PREE (V.O.)

Alchemy, a primitive science aimed at curing all diseases and providing immortality, is practiced by men who sit by a burning furnace mixing various chemicals together, inhaling toxic fumes like mercury and sulfur and devoting their lives to the work.

On the work desk lays, an illuminated book on Aristotle's explanation, on the ancient form of alchemy.

FATHER PREE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Alchemists seek a tool to help them transmute the basic elements, fire, air, water, and earth into gold. Since ancient times, man has hungered for the knowledge of the masterwork. Only those pure of heart, can learn the secrets of alchemy and thrive.

Taking a moment to look around the room, the monk suddenly stops his wandering gaze and clasps a hand around his neck taking a deep unsteady breath of air.

Fumes fill the laboratory. Vials filled with different colors bubble from the heat.

Pree closes his eyes shut tightly and sees numerous images - the images are a mixture of alchemic symbols. Slowly, the images begin to form into a formula.

FATHER PREE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In dark times such as these, we godless alchemists look to prayer for answers unbeknownst to us.

The words on the parchment seem to move, in swirls. On the paper, blobs of ink cover the sides; they begin to form a picture of various elements like mercury, iron, and gold.

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Then, the images dissolve away. The inscription on the parchment emerges once again.

FATHER PREE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The word of God is our protection  
 against evil, we are disciples,  
 following our master and practicing  
 the masterwork.

A blob of ink drips from Pree's quill - tip, spattering the parchment.

BISHOP (O.S.)  
 Any death, whether it comes by the  
 hand of the church or by the hunger  
 to learn and master the craft of  
 transmutation will end up taking  
 our lives.

The voice of the abbot penetrates the thoughts of father Pree in an echo.

INT. APOTHECARY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Ten months earlier-

Two monks, Father Pree and the BISHOP, a keen, ambitious, devoted physician and one of highest - ranking members of the clergymen, stands poised and confident, his looks hide the ugliness of his true nature. Both monks wear black birdlike masks as they examine a plague patient.

Both physicians point to parts of a patient's body, where signs of the deadly bubonic plague, are seen all over him.

A body of a man lies on the worktable.

Father Pree is about to perform a secretive medical procedure. In his hand, is a bottle, filled with a clear crystal liquid.

Father Pree opens the bottle and begins to administer it into the victim's mouth when suddenly a hand snatches it away and casts the vile to the ground, where it shatters into several shards of glass.

FATHER PREE  
 Surely tis not a crime to know the  
 human body? We are healers, were  
 here to observe ailments and treat  
 the sick.

(CONTINUED)

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Pree points to the man's armpits, where swellings and carbuncles cover the area.

FATHER PREE (CONT'D)

Shouldn't I be able to use my gift to heal them. Isn't this what this art is all about father?

BISHOP

Nay, you cannot. The church has already outlawed the craft and any alchemic text fearing that we are performing acts of god. They have placed a high price on any person performing alchemy.

Both monks eye the bottle's remains on the floor and the wet substance covering their feet. Their eyes fall back on the patient's swollen glands and black blotches.

The man's mouth is slightly agape, his black tongue unfurls, proving he is indeed infected with the deadly disease.

CUT TO:

INT. FATHER PREE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1348 AD

Taking up his quill once again, Father Pree begins to finish his passage, his fingers fumble with the weight of the words.

FATHER PREE (V.O.)

Many see alchemy as paganism and alchemists as nothing more than quacks looking for a way to make a profit. There are some that learn the science for greed but there are those that look to alchemy to work miracles. I myself am one of them.

The ground seems to sway beneath him, candles wavering around. The wind blows and the light of the candle burns out suddenly. A loud thud follows, as if a heavy object had fallen down in the darkness.

EXT. SKY - MORNING

A hymn is sang, reaching the abbey as the sunrise touch the bell - tower.

INT. PASSAGEWAY - MORNING

Hearing a hacking cough, hoarse, and labored, Father Gendry, a young monk, rushes through the passageway to find Father Pree on the floor, kneeling on his knees, grasping his chest, just as Gavin had done repeatedly throughout his illness.

Father Gendry kneels down and picks up Father Pree, he holds onto tightly.

FATHER GENDRY  
What's wrong brother? Are ye  
filling ill?

Father Pree waves away his statement.

FATHER PREE  
Aye something like that.

Pree begins to have a hacking fit. Father Gendry keeps his weight on him, maintaining his fragile balance.

FATHER GENDRY  
Why didn't ye tell me Simon?

FATHER PREE  
I couldn't. It's hard to tell an  
old friend that I am about to die.

FATHER GENDRY  
The Elixir is failing isn't it. It  
wields no more power. Doesn't it?

Gendry grows angry and shakes his friend violently, jolting him awake.

FATHER PREE  
Aye, it's useless. The effect is  
only temporary.

FATHER GENDRY  
Then that means the stone has been -

FATHER PREE  
Destroyed but there is an extra  
stone. The one I helped create with  
the bishop.

FATHER GENDRY  
I thought that stone was never  
created. The formula was all -  
wrong

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Pree lifts his weak face into the morning light.

FATHER PREE

Some of the ingredients were wrong.  
The bishop forgot to heat them just  
right. He was in such a hurry to  
obtain the stone that his  
greediness blinded his judgment.  
The ending result was a fake stone.  
A stone that provides temporary  
relief.

Father Gendry understanding the revelation staggers back, as if in faint.

FATHER GENDRY

Transmutation is not possible, is  
it?

FATHER PREE

Nay, not with this stone.

Gendry stares at his fellow alchemists in silence, astonishment written all over his face.

Pree settles himself against the wall, regaining his composure for the moment. From his mouth, a small trickle of blood falls from his lips. He wipes it away with the hem of his long sleeve.

FATHER GENDRY

Does that mean, he is a puffer?

FATHER PREE

Aye, he is not capable of making  
the formula himself. He is not true  
to the science - he only wishes to  
gain the knowledge of the  
masterwork in order to make gold.  
He does not wish to use the stone  
for helping people. His heart is  
tainted that is why he has failed  
in every attempt.

Gendry smirks and then laughs.

FATHER GENDRY

The fool, all this time, he has had  
a fake stone to perform his  
miracles.

Gendry listens to him now attentively.

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FATHER PREE

If he has in fact stolen the stone  
he'll be powerful. Seeing as  
everyone is sick from the plague it  
won't be long until all of us are  
swept away from the epidemic.

FATHER GENDRY

May God save us all.

Gendry makes the sign of the cross to relieve his tension.

FATHER GENDRY (CONT'D)

I don't believe even God can save  
us from this.

Pree manages to say between wheezing breaths.

FATHER PREE

See how I must pay for my sins?

FATHER GENDRY

Ye have nothing to atone for.

Father Pree's eyes have trouble accustoming to the light, he  
squints barely able to see anything. He does manage to make  
out a fuzzy object behind them, hiding behind a wall.

FATHER PREE

(whispering)

Stay attentive for any weird  
changes that may occur to him. Ye  
shall be my eyes and ears in here,  
with this weak body I won't be able  
to do anything for a time.

Pree holds onto the jagged wall for support.

Gendry takes Pree by the arm.

A dark figure emerges from behind, smirking and breaks into a  
run.

INT. ABBOT'S MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Inside, a hearth burns with fire, illuminating the room. The  
fire seats the abbot and Thomas, warming their hands as well  
as bread.

With his face masked with rage, the abbot yanks a piece of  
tough bread with his teeth resembling an animal.

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BISHOP

Ye have made friends with Pree?

THOMAS

Aye sir.

BISHOP

Good work lad! What news do ye bring me about the stone?

THOMAS

Pree is sick.

BISHOP

That I already know.

THOMAS

My sister is sick. I haven't gotten a chance to travel to see her and my parents. Will I be able to?

BISHOP

That will depend on what news ye bring me?

THOMAS

I don't want any harm to come to Pree, I merely want -

Dropping a hand angrily on to the table positioned next to him, the abbot gives Thomas a threatening look.

BISHOP

Tell me now, before I have ye life!

THOMAS

They have a set of plans, father Pree and Father Gendry.

BISHOP

What? What did they discuss?

The abbot grabs Thomas by the hair, yanking his head back.

THOMAS

They have been plotting against ye all this time. They wish for Gendry to learn the forbidden art of alchemy in order to put a stop to your plans in making a new stone.

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CONTINUED: (2)

Dropping the piece of meat to the floor, the bishop runs to the door.

EXT. FRENCH MONASTERY - DAY

The religious paintings on the wall appear to spring to life as shadows play along them and on the wall.

The saint's faces look alive and seem to stare down at the worshipers.

LOUD CHANTING in LATIN, belonging to a clergy of monks, fills the halls of the brightly lit church. Their angelic hymn reaches great heights, reaching the outskirts of the monastery.

INT. MONASTERY - DAY

At the altar, adorned with beautiful, rich vibrant colors, the abbot steps forward and raises his hand in blessing. His brothers listen to him speak ceremoniously.

BISHOP

Today we pray for those souls who  
have died and awaken in paradise.

The abbot stretches out his right arm and gestures to the sunlight seeping through the windows and then back towards the altar wall, where aging tombs lay, untarnished and at peace, a link to this world and to the next.

BISHOP (CONT'D)

Brothers, we pray tonight and give  
thanks to thee Lord for our own  
health.

The abbot's gaze falls onto the crowd of monks. Their expressions are mixed with emotion and remain plastered on their faces. The crowd of holy men stares back at their earthly leader in hushed silence. No questions asked, only a mere exchange of quick glances from one pew to the next.

The pews are filled, shoulder-to-shoulder with monks and scribes attending the daily mass. Their heads are bowed down in respect and in prayer.

The abbot stares at his outstretched hands and cups them into tight fists.

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The abbot's gaze focus's on the back row, where a feeble looking father pree, with his head crouched low, coughs weakly onto a rag. The rag is soaked in blood. Pree places the rag back into his inner garments.

FADE OUT.