

The Plague and Doctor Caim



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and
Doctor Caim

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Written & Illustrated by
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When I began writing *The Plague* and *Doctor Caim* in 2016, I never imagined I would finish drawing it during a global pandemic.

I never imagined I would read about experimental treatment after treatment, much in the same vein as the trial and error practiced by the plague doctors of old.

I never imagined masks would become part of our daily lives. And I couldn't help but muse how the beak mask was no doubt a precursor to our antiviral ones.

I never imagined how the plague doctor costume would return as a symbol of our current predicament, cosplayers and even Halloweeners flooding our social media feeds – one teenage “plague doctor” went as far as to frequent a sleepy U.K. village, frightening the locals enough to earn a talking to from the police.

Coronavirus has been frustrating, devastating, and heart-rending on a scale the entire world could have never imagined before.

The vast majority of us are in mourning for lost loved ones, or loved ones of loved ones. Or, at the very least, we are in mourning for the hundreds of thousands who have lost their lives.

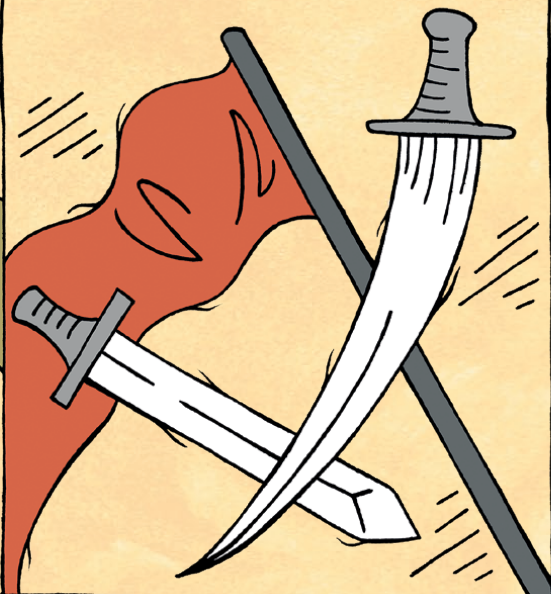
But, perhaps in a few centuries, we'll be able to find a pinch of humor in all this sorrow. Just in the same way I have found humor in the *Bubonic plague* and *Doctor Caim*.

– G.E. Gallas, 2021

Caim is the
inventor of murder.



He is the president of Hell and
commands thirty demon legions.



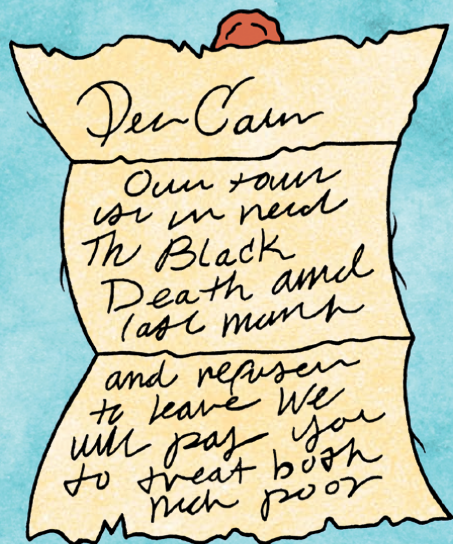
Caim takes the form of
a blackbird, or thrush.



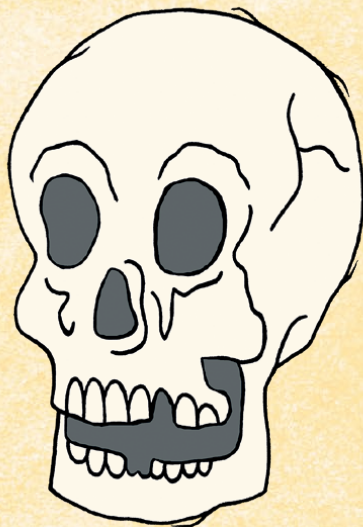
I too have a beak.



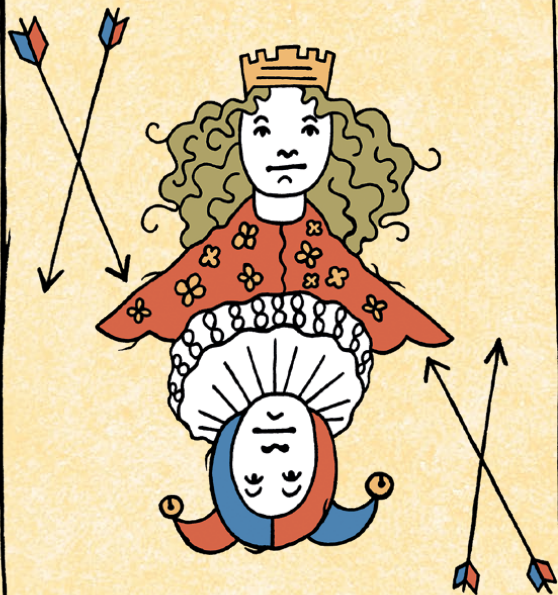
Dear Dr. Caim:
Our town needs you.



The Black Death arrived last month
and refuses to leave.

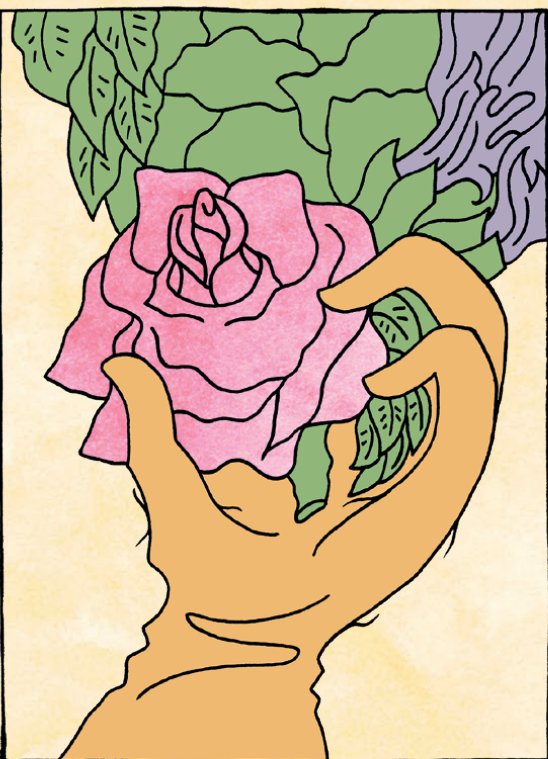


We will pay you to treat both
the rich and the poor.



I would do so anyway.





Doctor Caim!
You came highly recommended
by Doctor Astaroth.



How is my dear teacher?



The Black Death took him.



Ah.



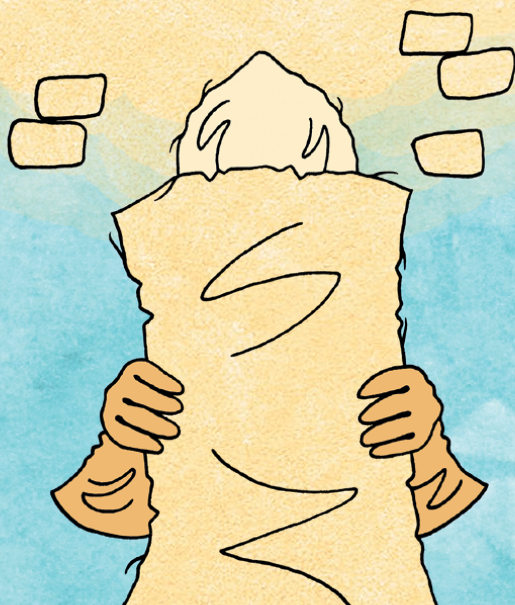
You must first
sign the contract.



But of course.
May I see it?



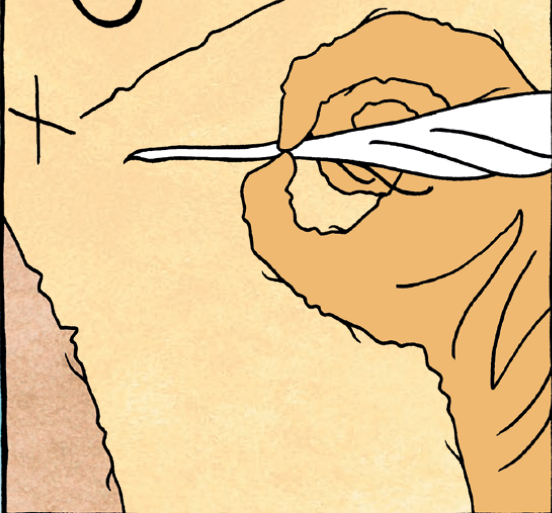
Extraordinary.



The town offers you
food, housing,
and a generous salary.



Caim



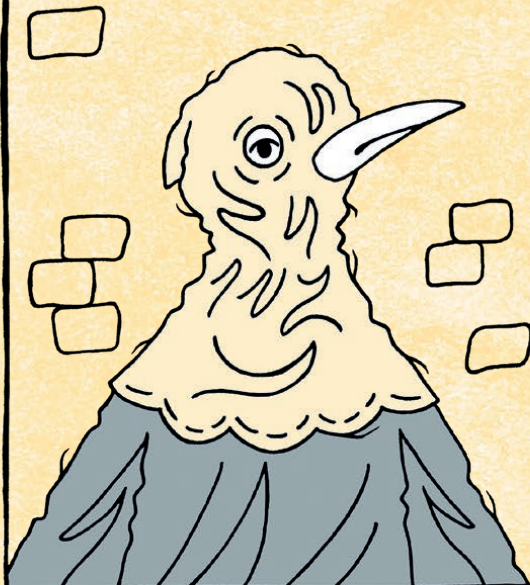
You are prepared
to risk your life?



Always.



What do I keep in
my beak, you ask?



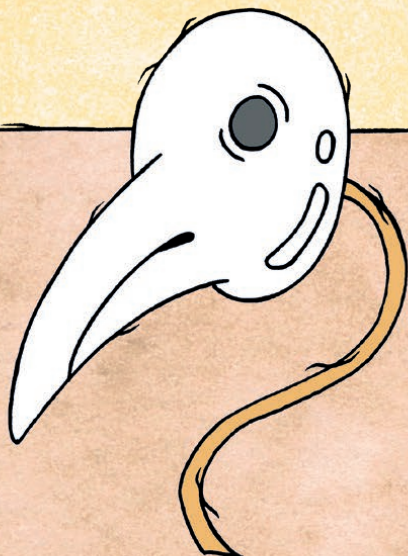
Roses and carnations.



Lemon balm and mint.



To filter evil smells and
protect from infection.



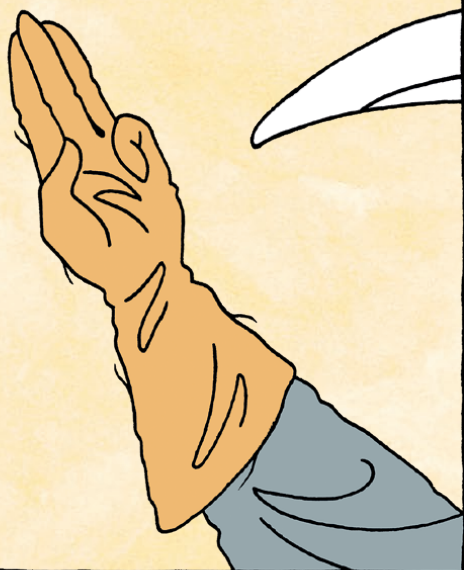
One: Be not greedy.



Two: Do not sell false cures.



Three: Be of few words.



...



This book,
you ask?



Oct
||||

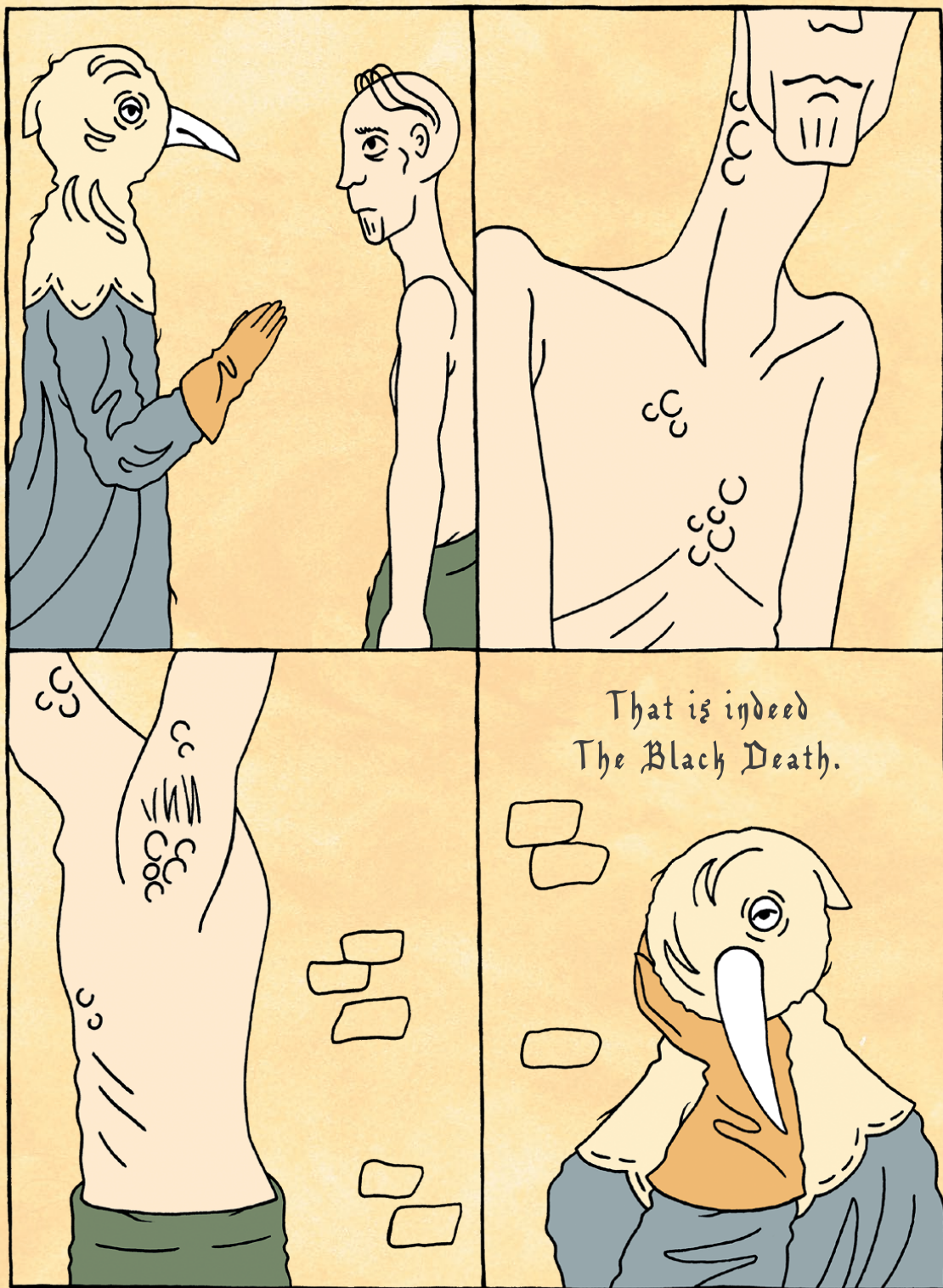


We must record the dead.

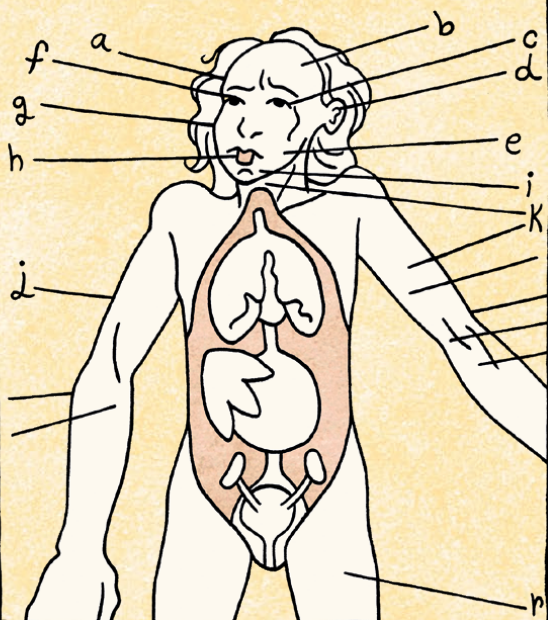
Nov
||||
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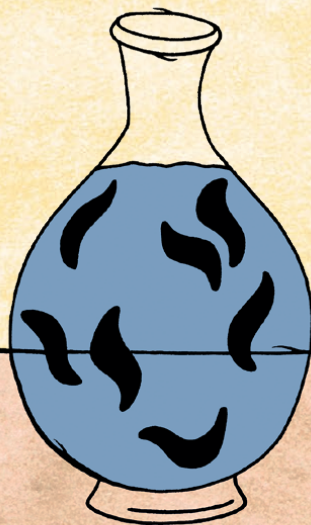




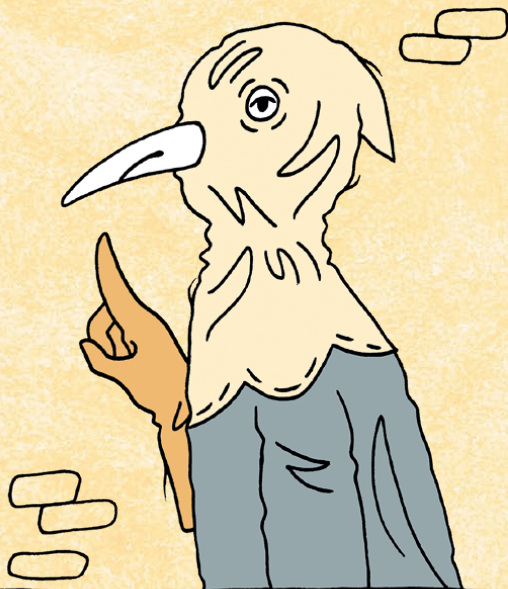
Would you like
to try bloodletting?



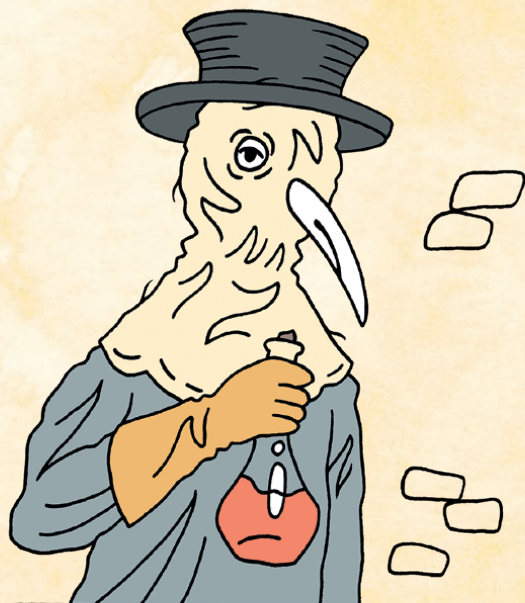
Or would you
prefer leeches?



We must rebalance
the humors!



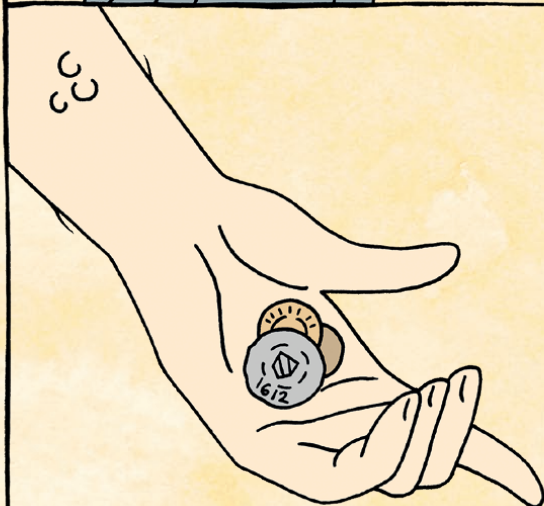
I will leade you
this potion.



Thank you,
Doctor.



6/12



No need, poor fellow.



Doctor?



Stay back,
for your own health.



Please accept my gift:
fresh garlic!



Very kind.



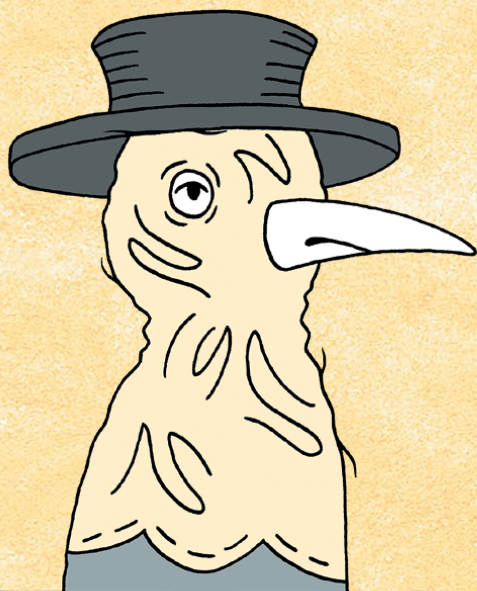
What is that smell?



Garlic?



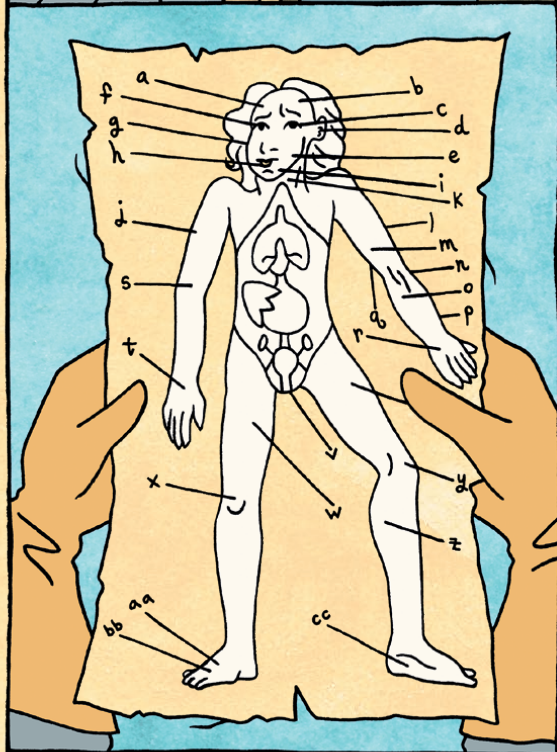
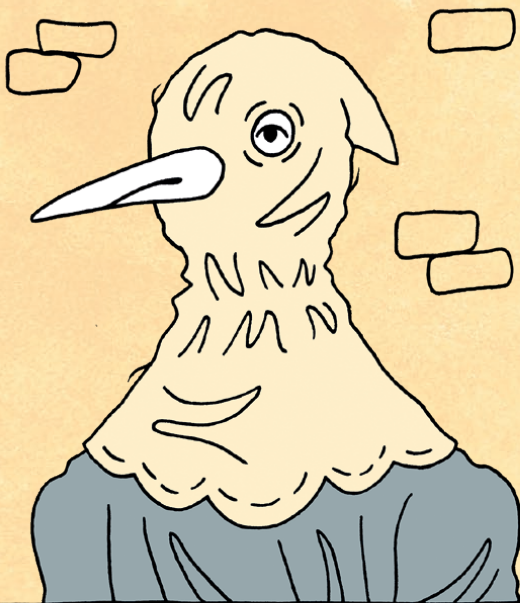
Pardon me.



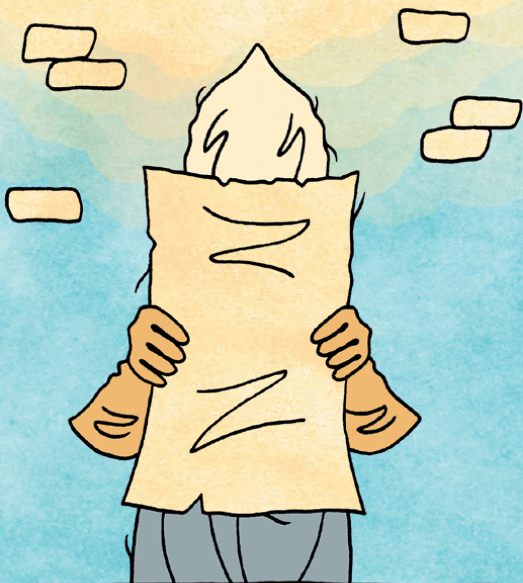
Your liver produces
too much blood.



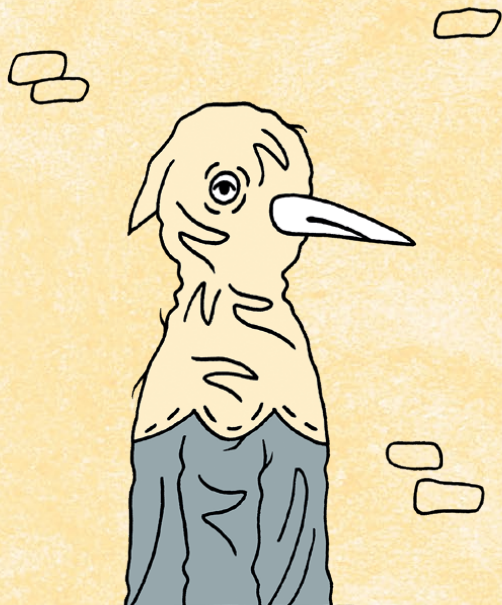
I suggest bloodletting.



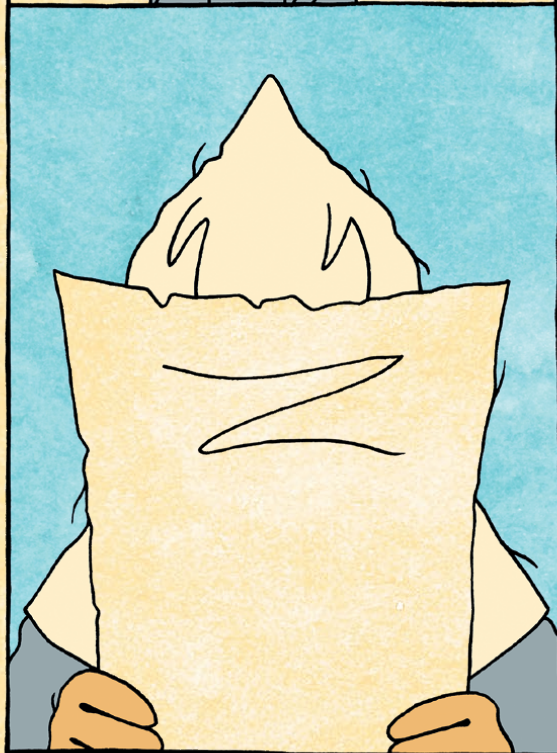
Now, where to cut?



Would you prefer
neck, arm, or toe?

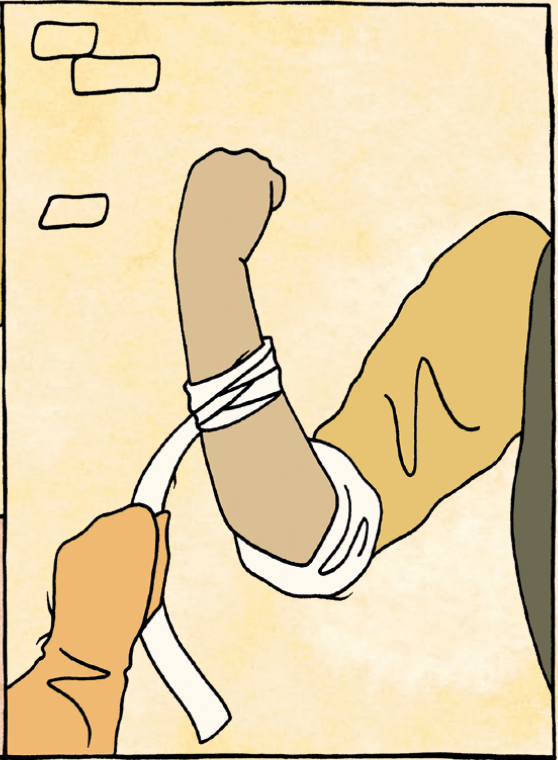


Which is less painful?

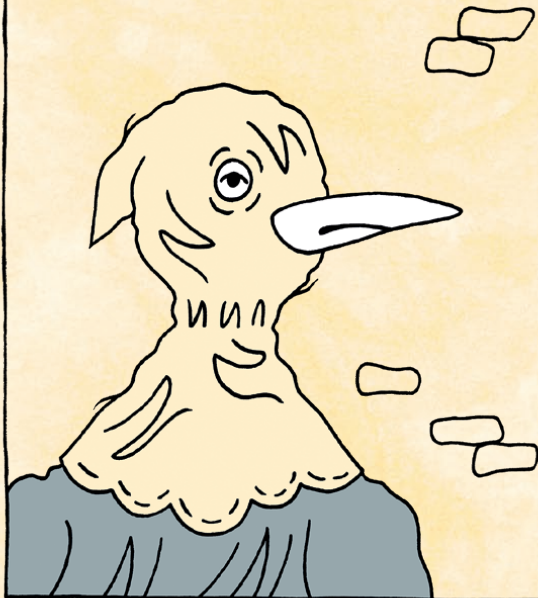


Let us find out.





Not so bad, was it?



Is there no other treatment?



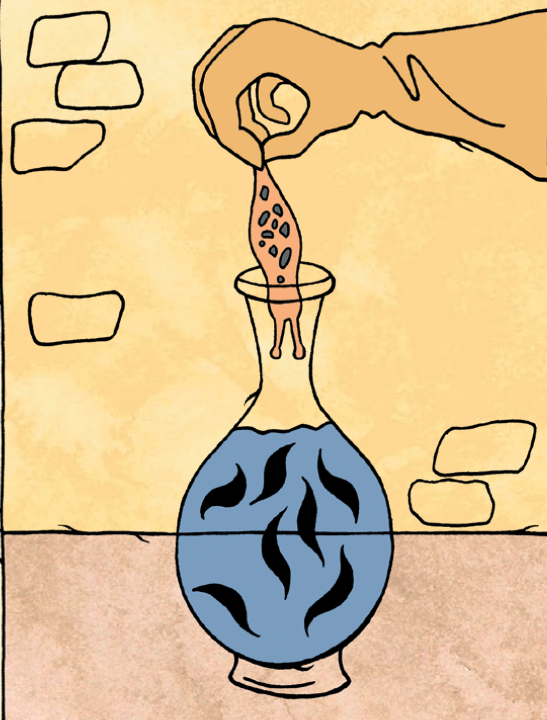
Hello, small friend.



I'm very sorry.



But my leeches
are hungry.



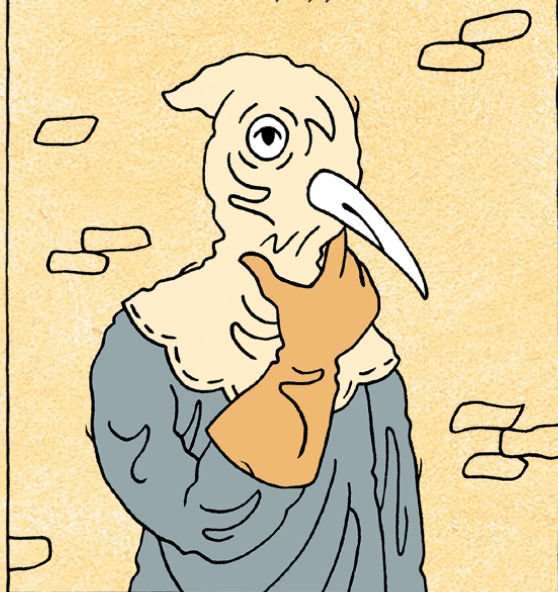
Tell me where it hurts.



My stomach. My back.



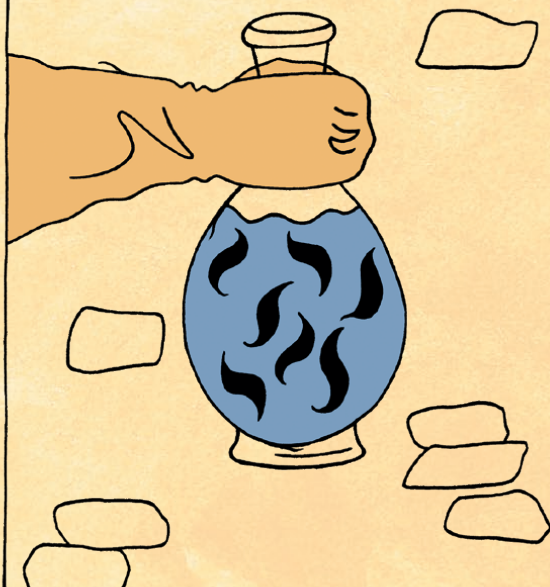
Too much yellow bile,
I think.



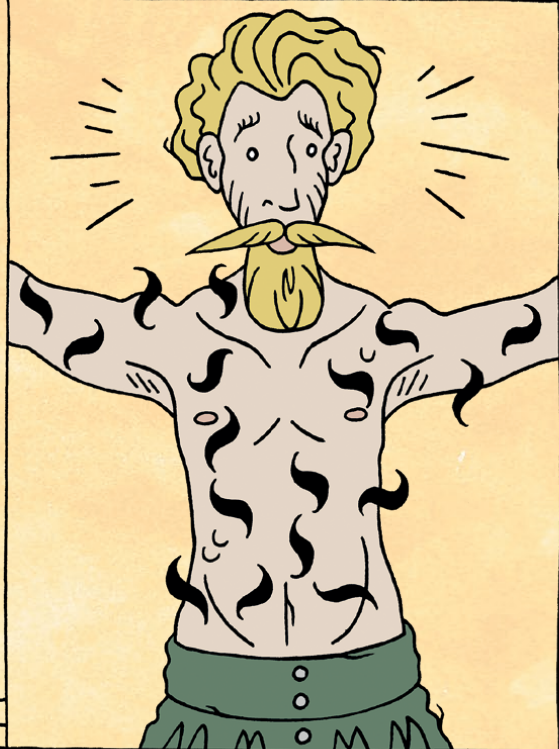
You think?



Let us try the leeches.



Nothing to fear.



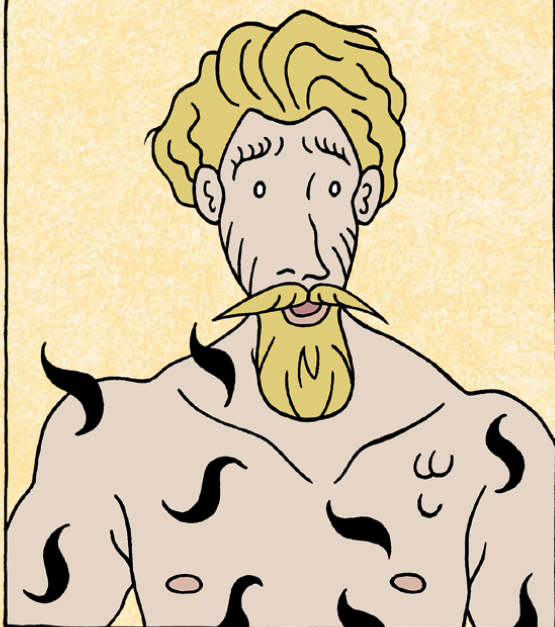
Is it working?



Hmmm...



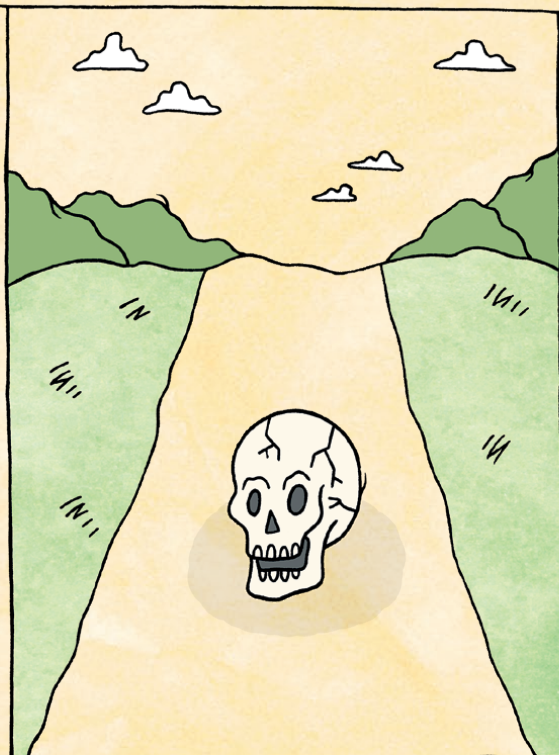
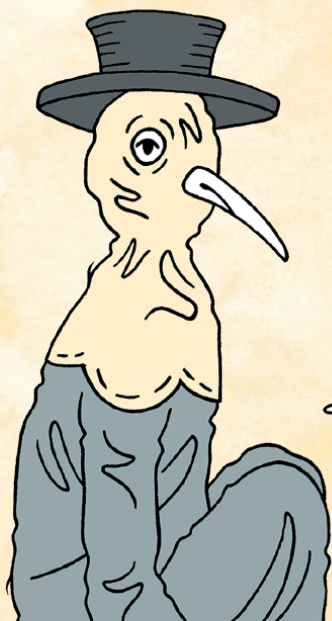
Doctor Caim?



Perhaps it was
the black bile.



Hello, poor friend.



You will help me
teach the sick.



And perhaps spruce up
my lodgings.



Doctor!



Stay back!



I am here to repent my sins.



What on Earth?



I am no priest.



Punish me with your cage!



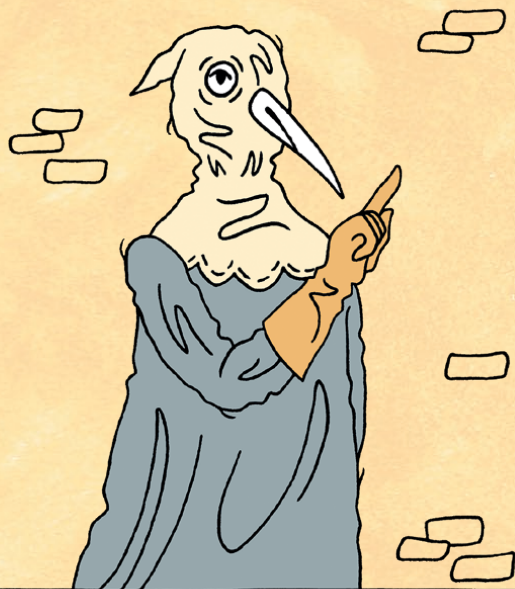
Um, take that?



Oh, thank you, thank you!



Now for my
daily health check.



Feder? No.



Lumps? No.



Good enough.



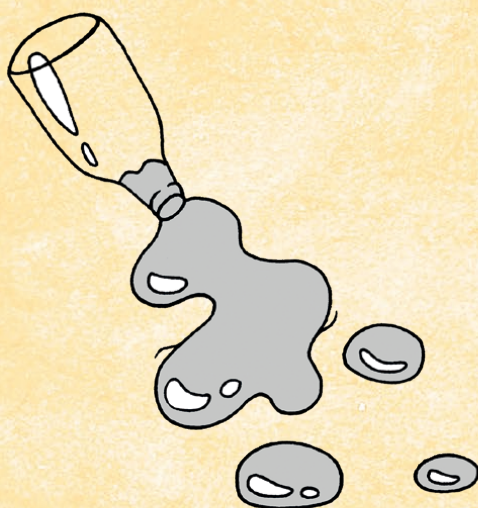
My potion recipe,
you ask?



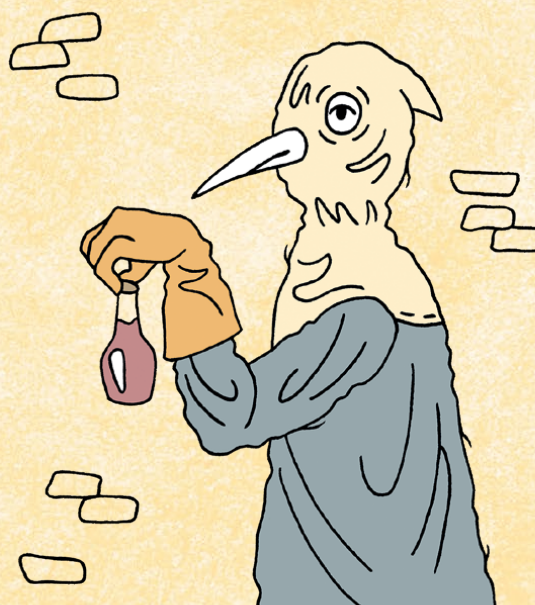
Rose hip.



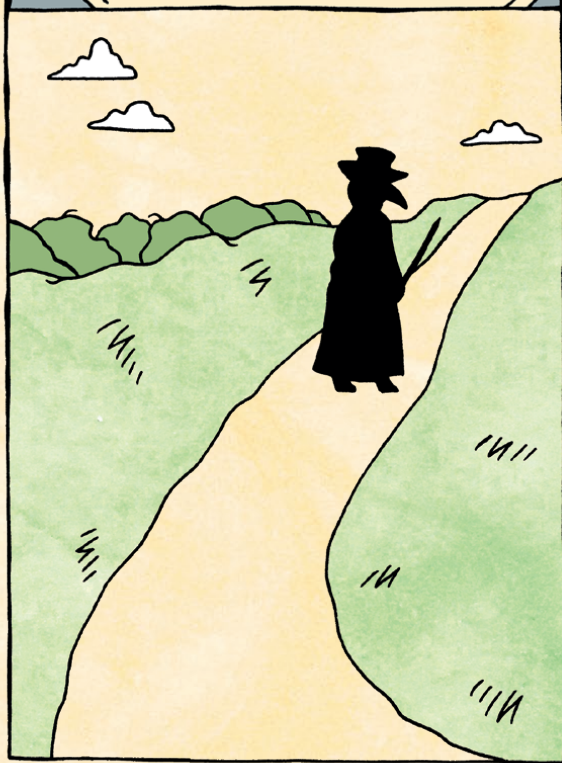
Quicksilver

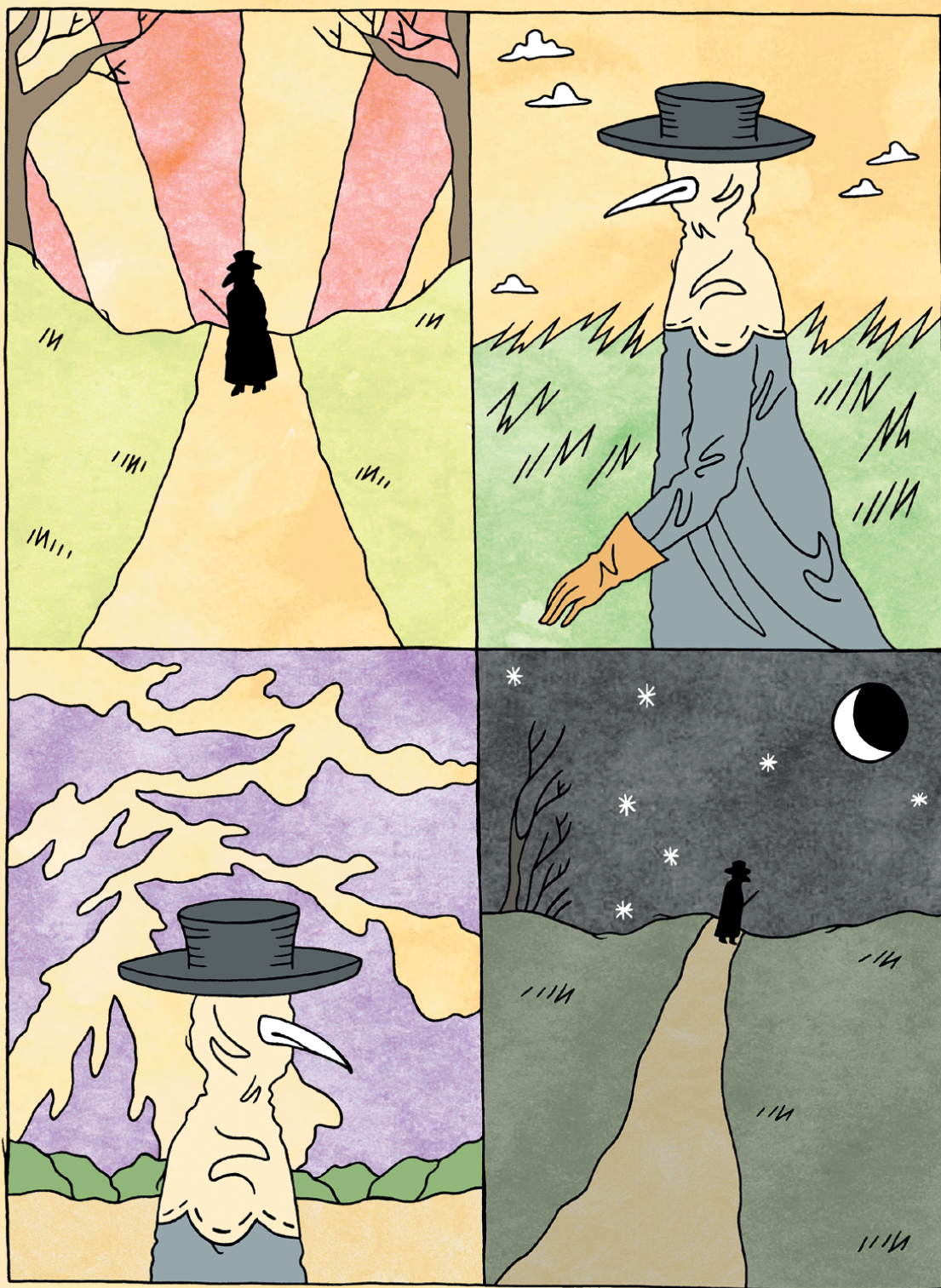


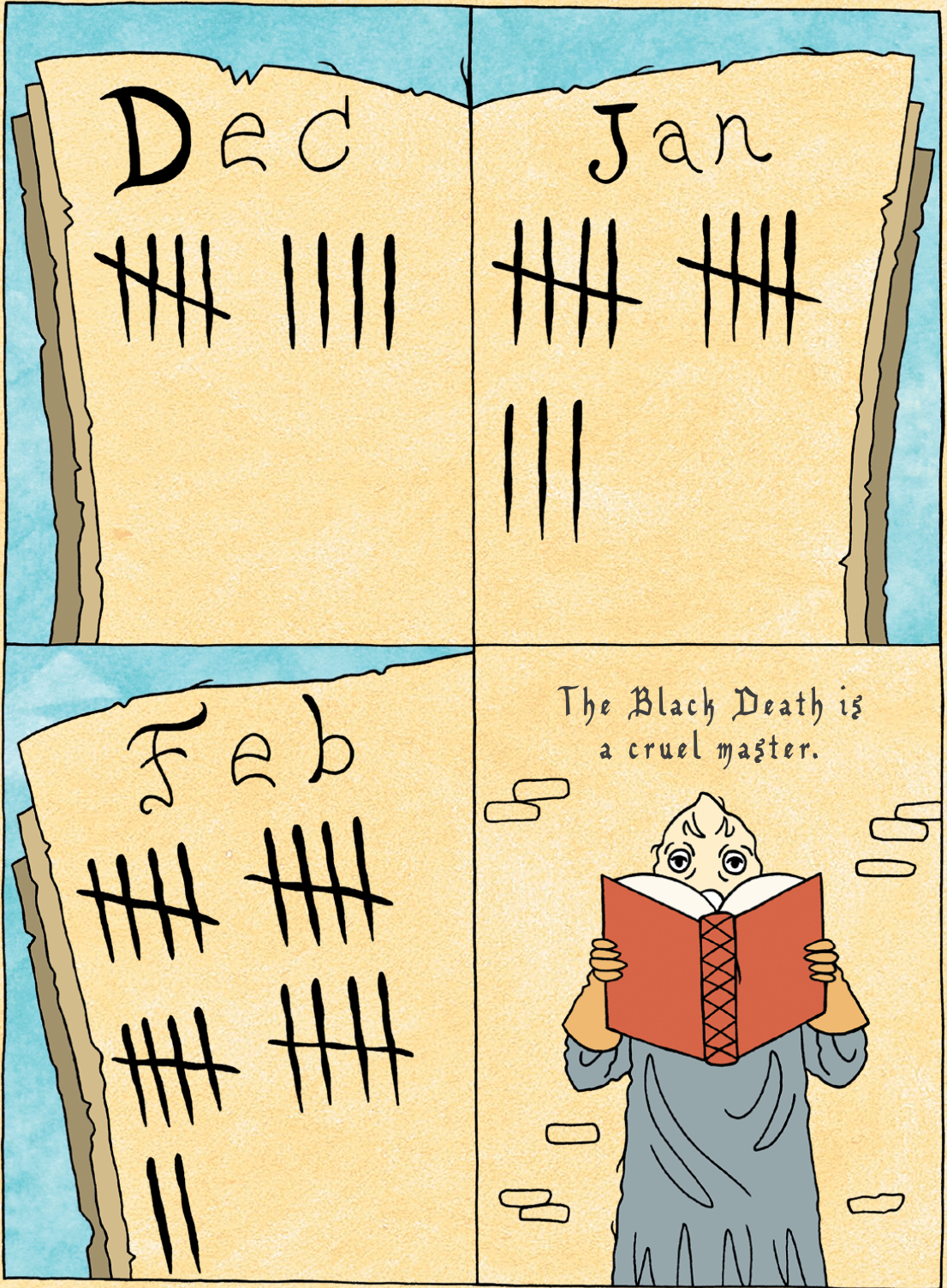
It is a tricky business.



I need time to think.



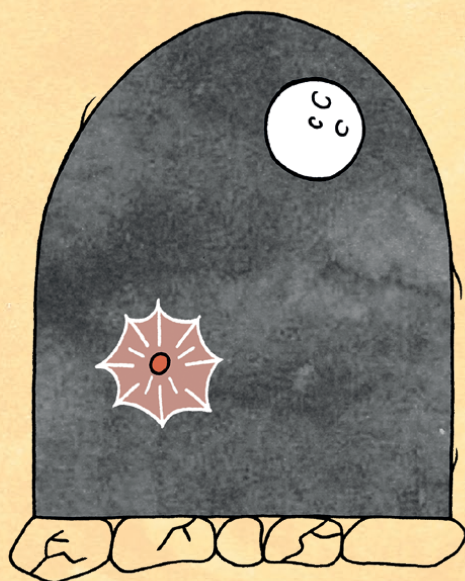




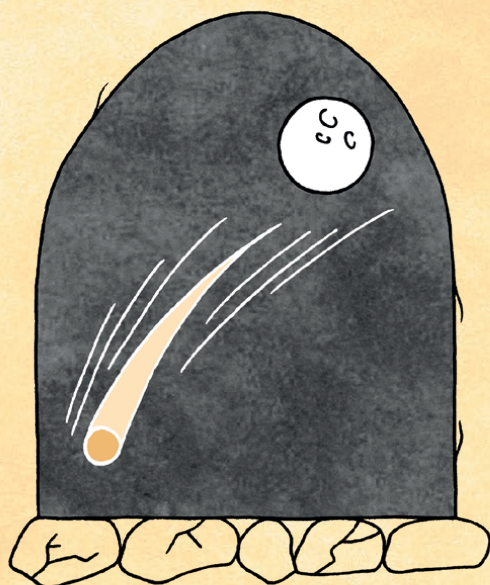
A full moon?



Marg?



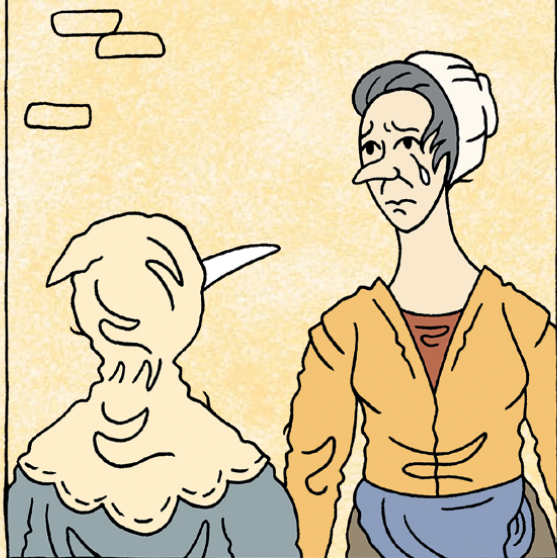
A comet?



What omens!
The worst is yet to come.



I am sorry
for your loss.



Thank you, Doctor.



Do you have
any milk?



Umm...



Your milk, Doctor.



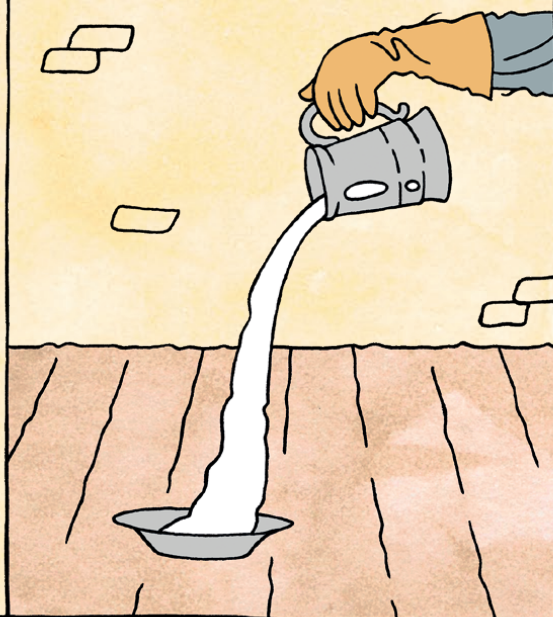
And a saucer?



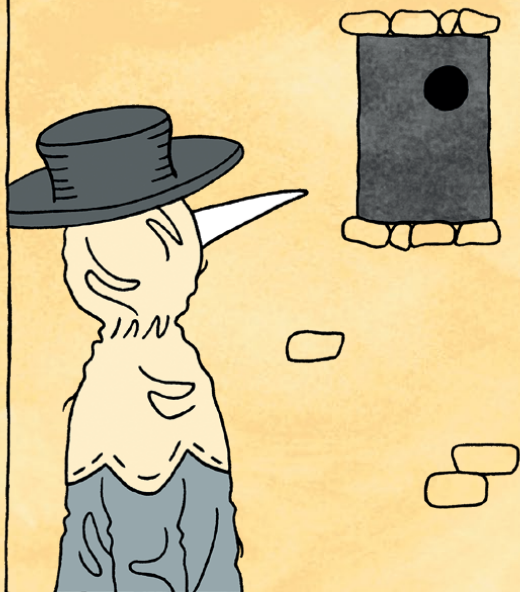
Umm...



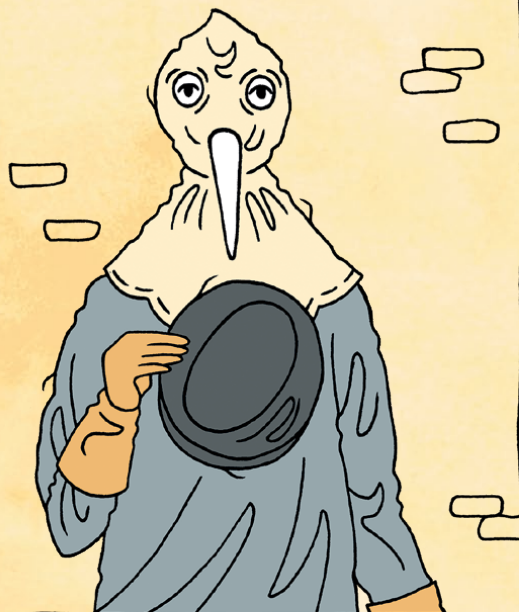
To purify the air!



Tonight is
a new moon.



A bad time for bloodletting.



I see.



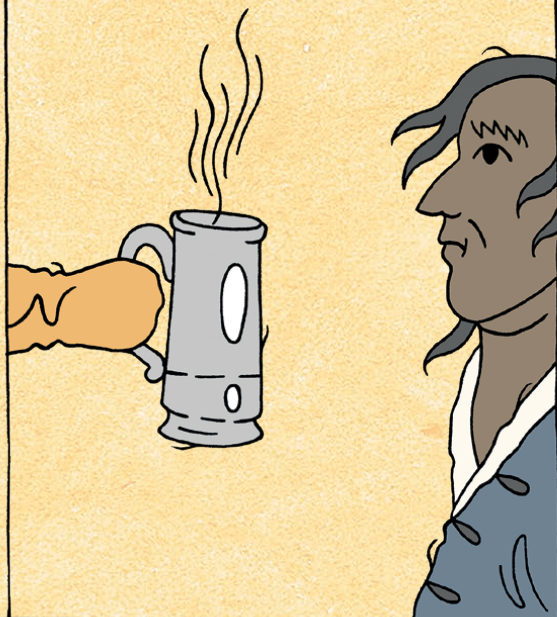
How about
a urine bath?



What about
a hot drink?



To help sweat out
the sickness.



What's in this?



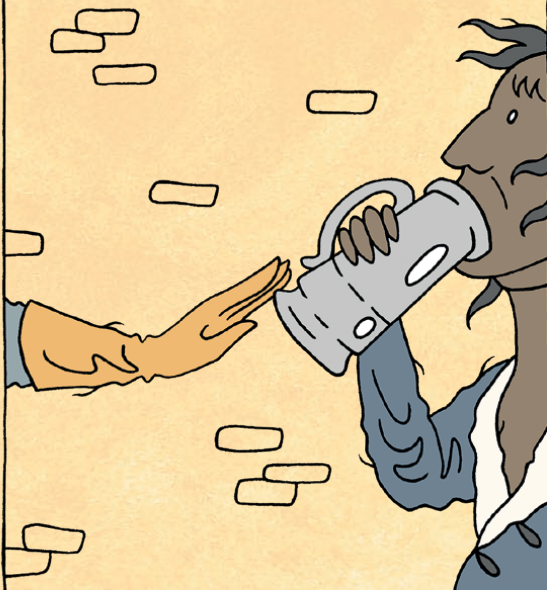
When I said
urine bath...



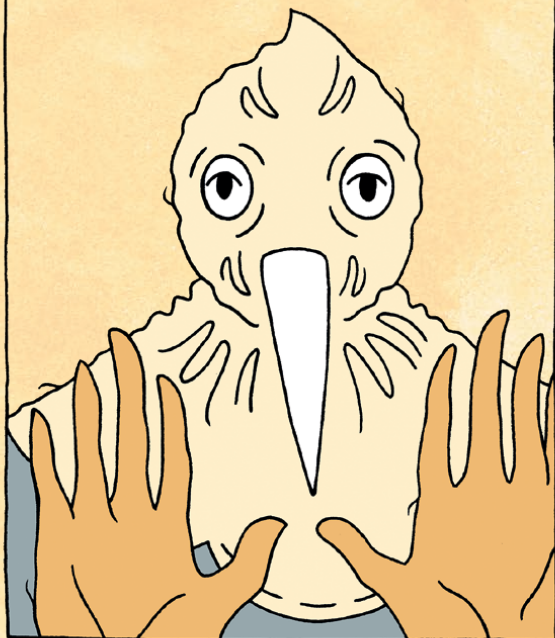
You will drink.



Is there no other way?

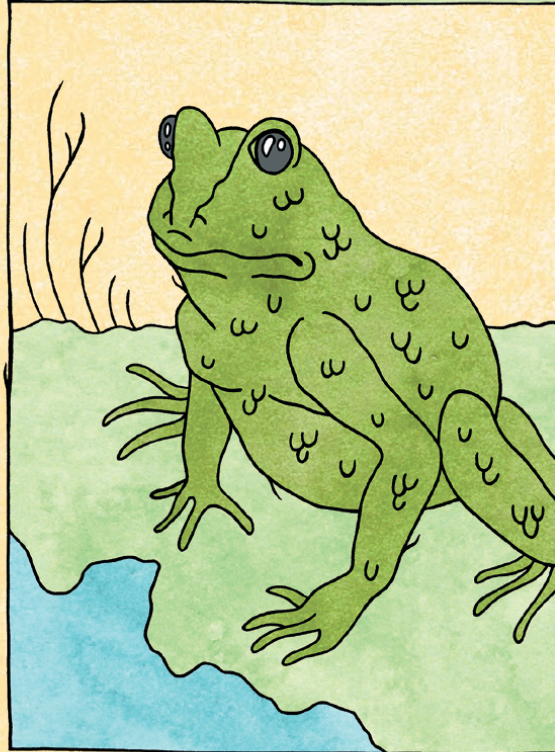
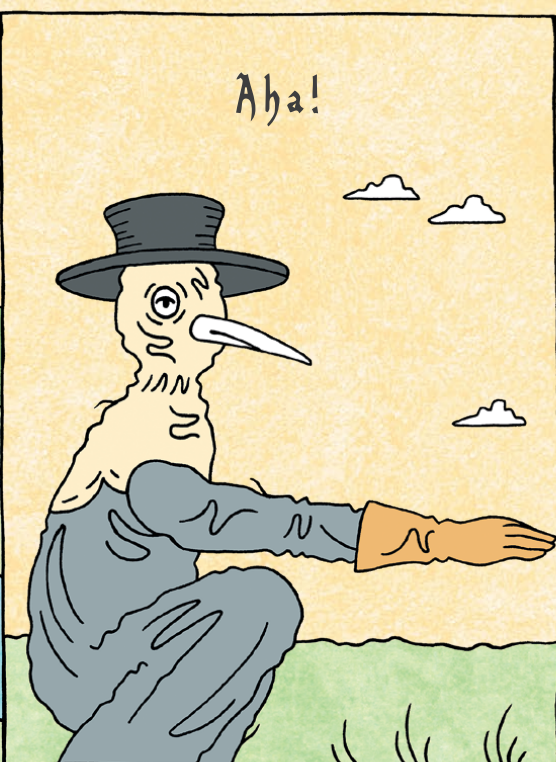
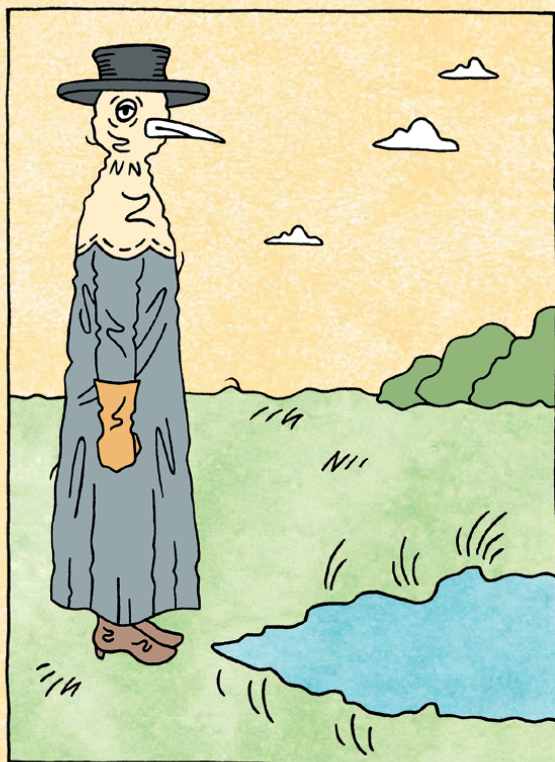


You must drink!



What of the leeches?

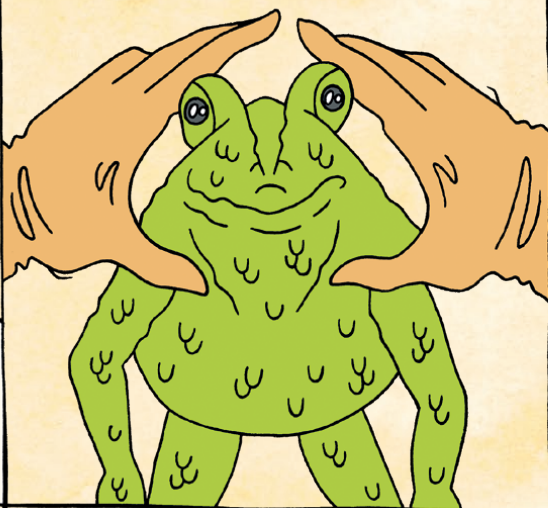




An experiment.



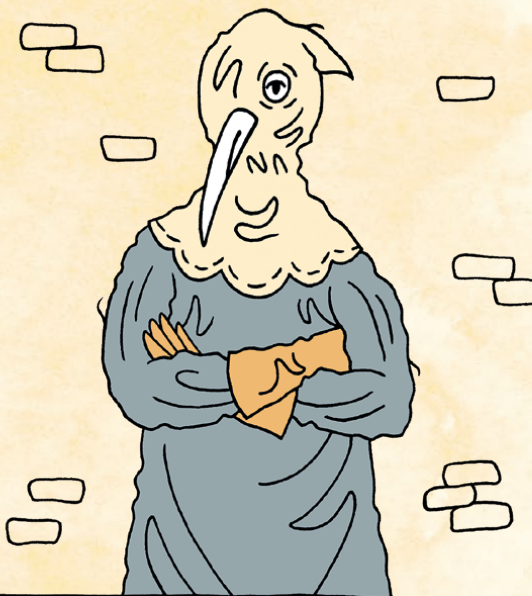
This should do wonders.



It tickles!



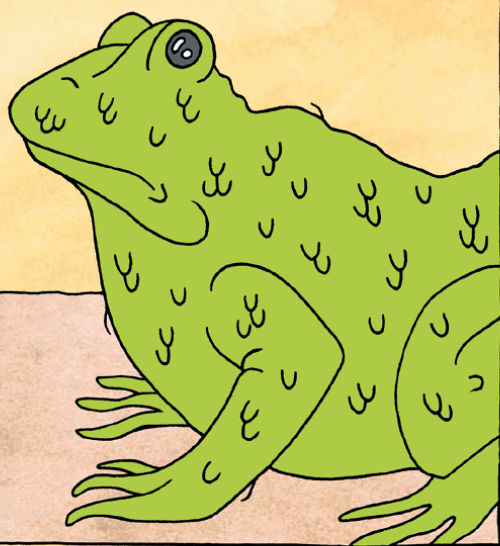
An unexpected effect.



Note to self...



Frogs less painful
than leeches...



Please!

Mercy!

Uncle!



But may overwhelm
patient...



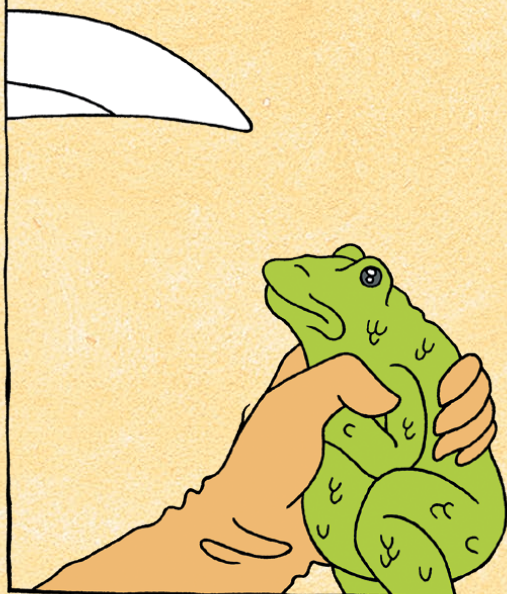
Perhaps next time
the leeches.



No, no, the frogs
will do.

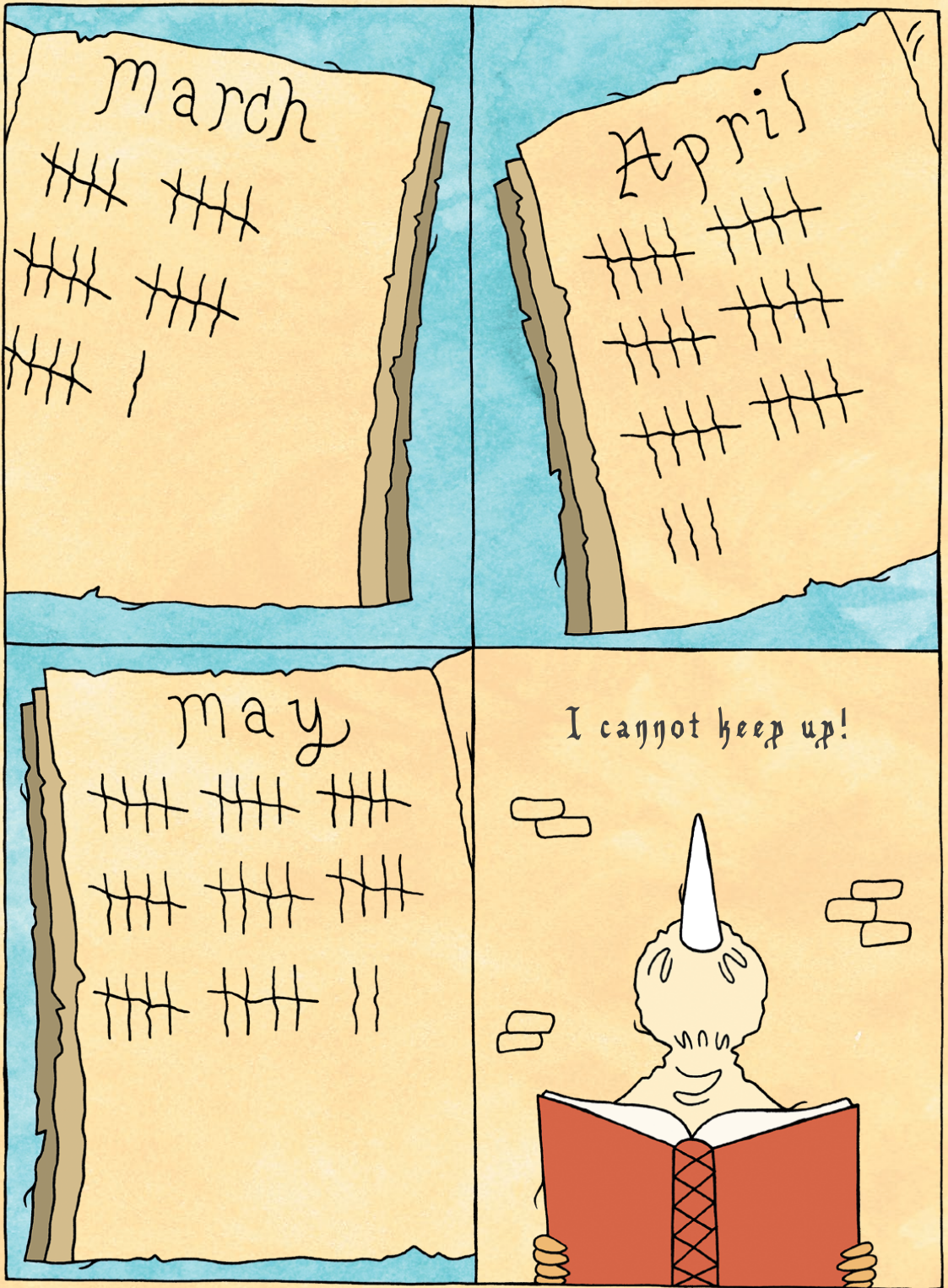


But...

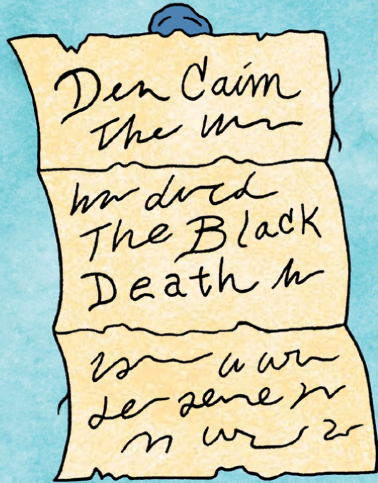


The frogs, I insist!





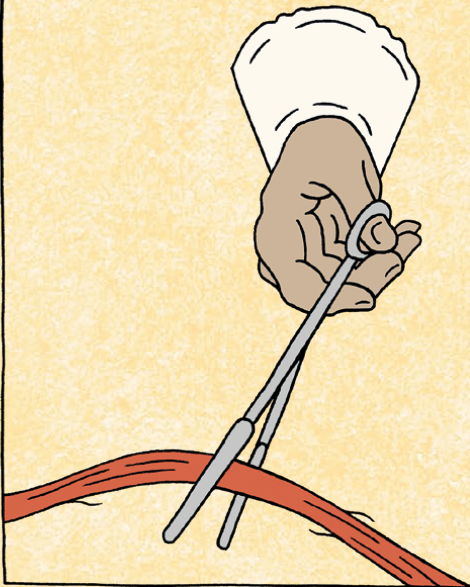
Dear Dr. Caim:
The village priest has died.



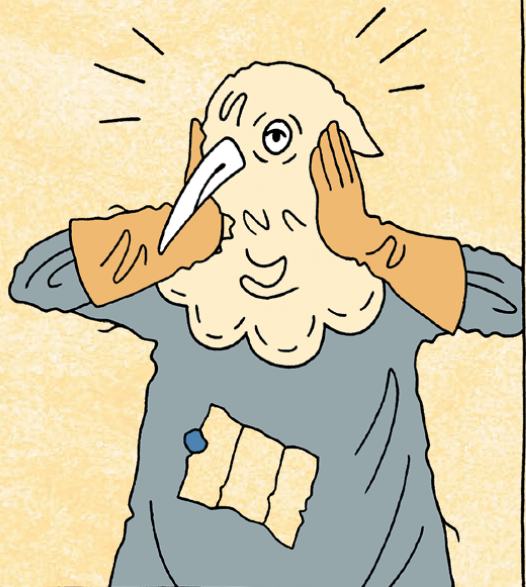
The Black Death took him.

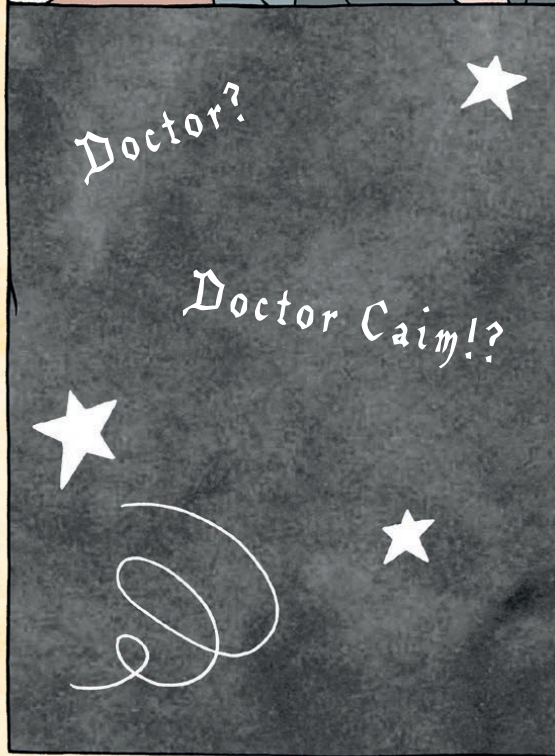
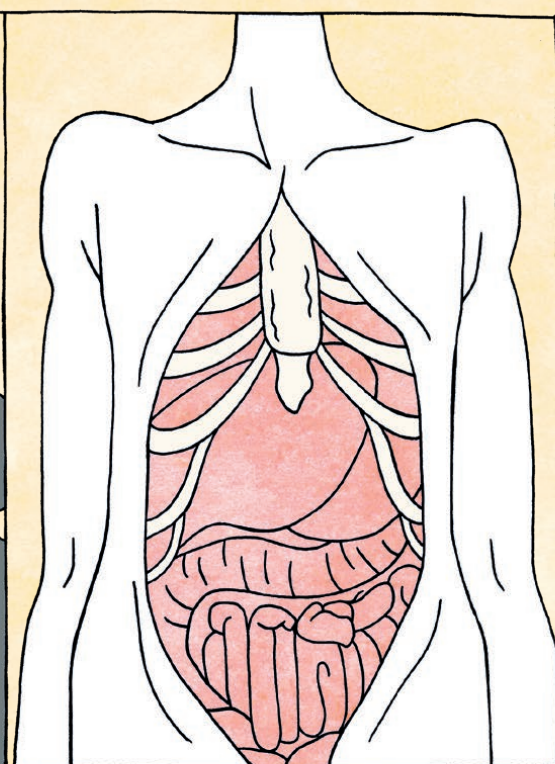


We request your presence
at his autopsy.



My first autopsy!!





I am quite alright,
thank you.



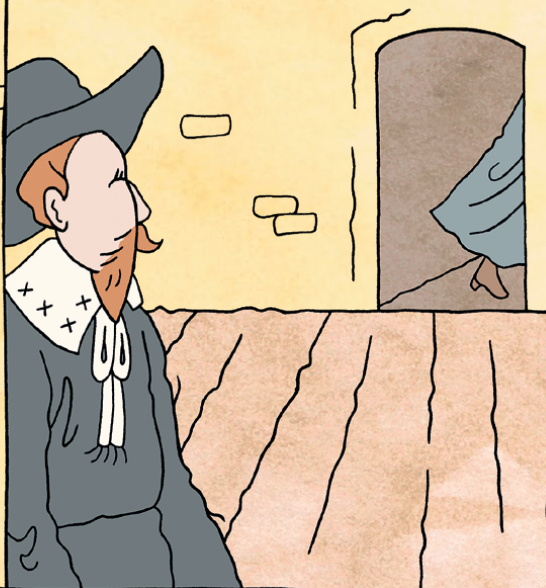
I must be on my way.



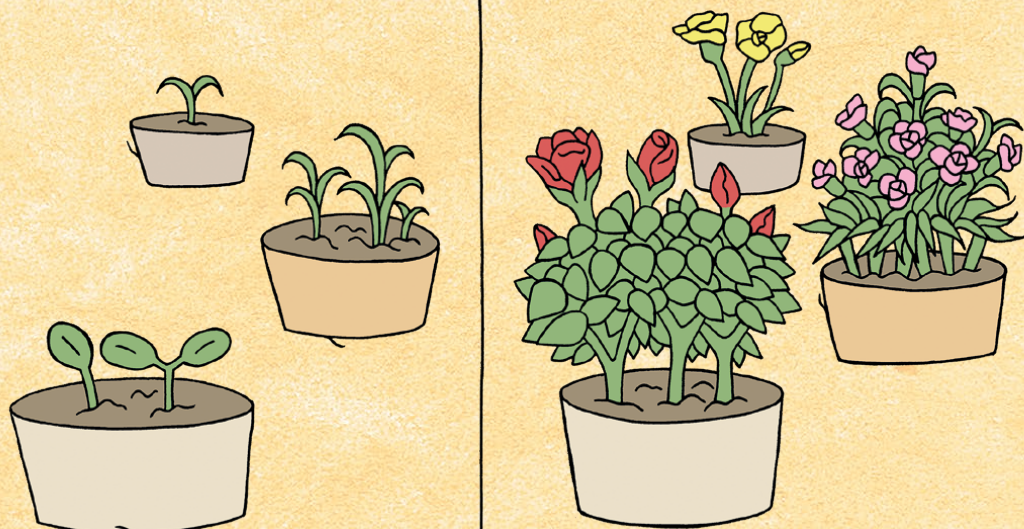
You will attend
the funeral?



Doctor?



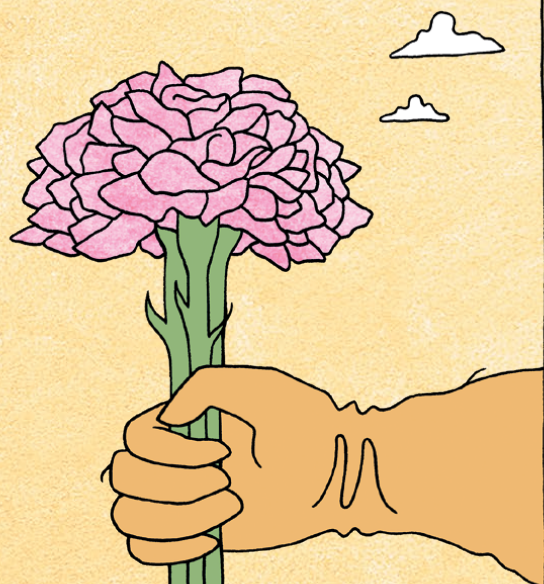
A few months later...



It seems I have
a penchant for gardening...



Who knew?

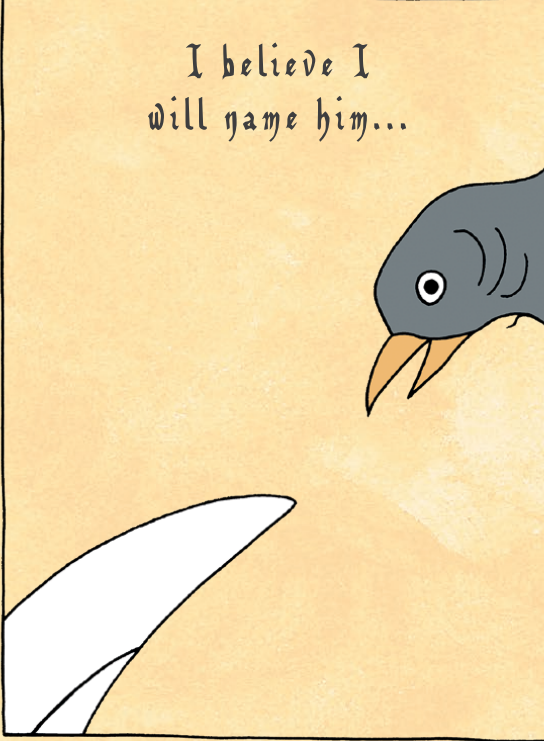




Ah, there!
A black thrush!



I believe I
will name him...



...Caim Junior.



M'Lord....?



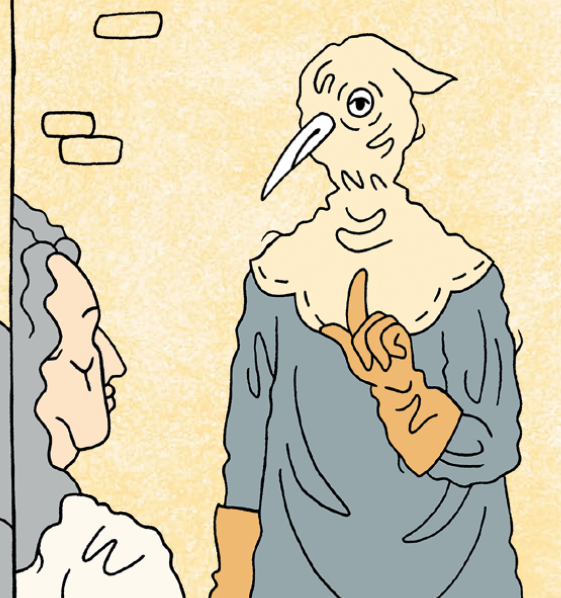
I will have the best treatment, Doctor.



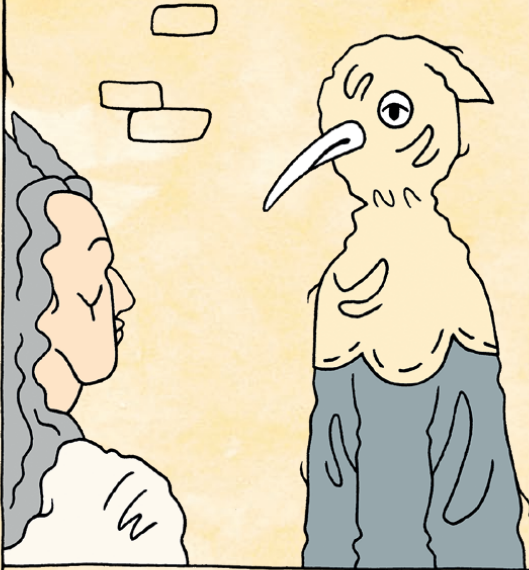
The best money can buy!



Rich or poor,
I treat my patients equally.



May I borrow
your housecoat, m'lord?



What is that foul odor!?



I have soaked
your robe in garlic.



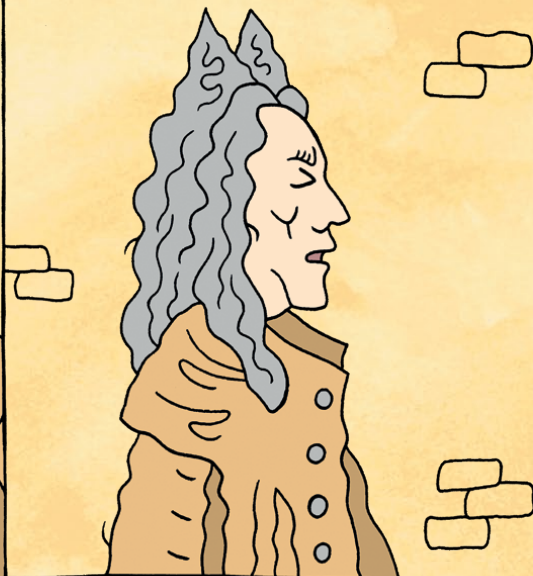
Now you must wear it.



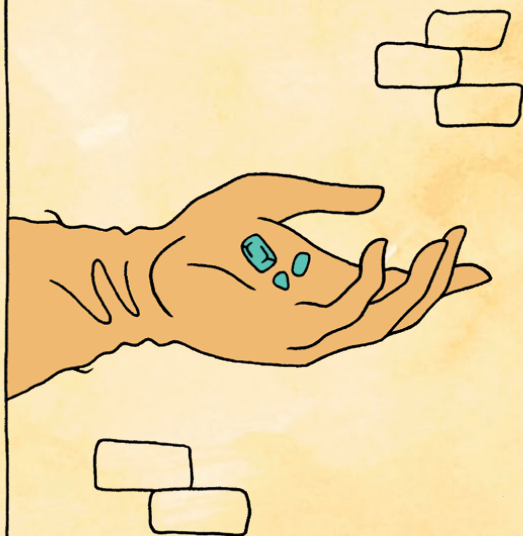
Damn this stench!



I shall never
eat garlic again!



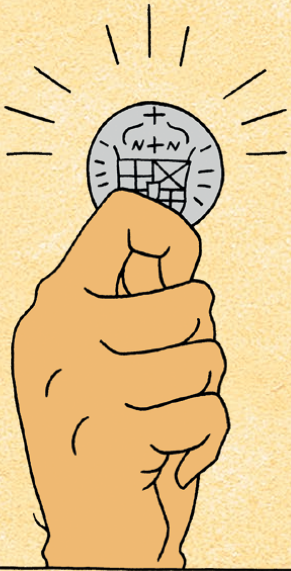
How about ingesting
emeralds?



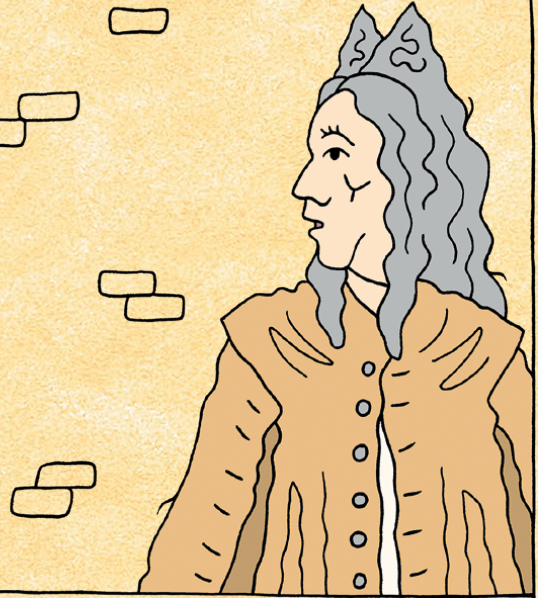
You have gone mad!



Please take this coin.



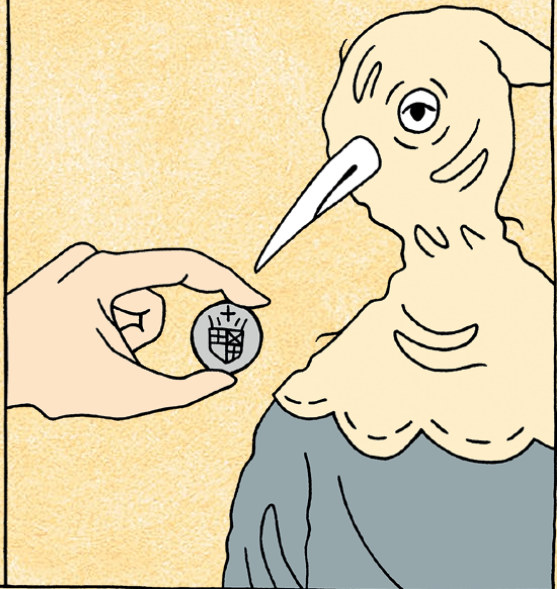
I should be paying you!



It is a lucky charm,
m'lord.



A potent remedy against
the Black Death.



Ah, a viper!



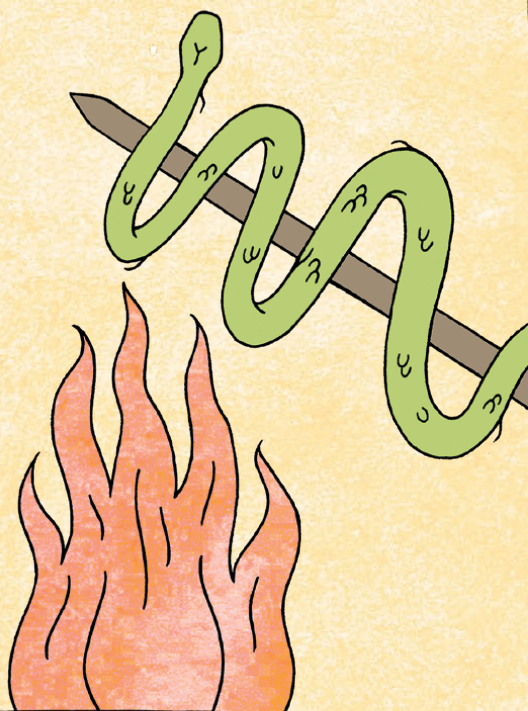
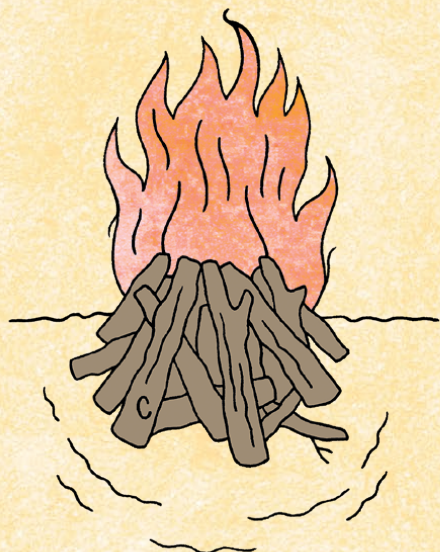
I've got you!



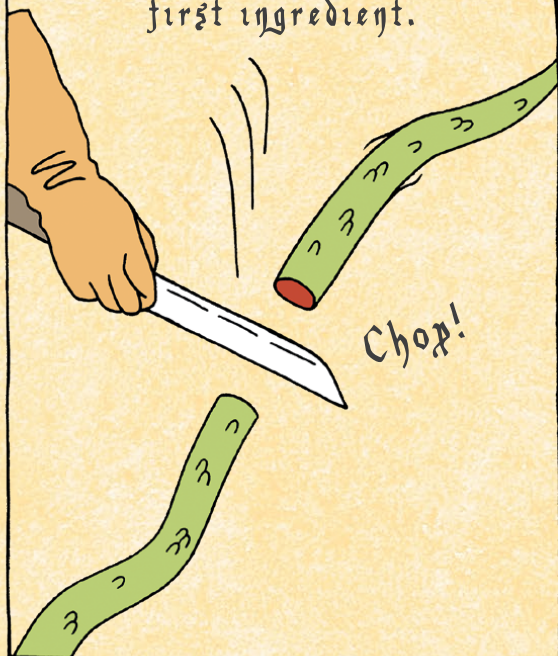
The perfect ingredient
for treacle!



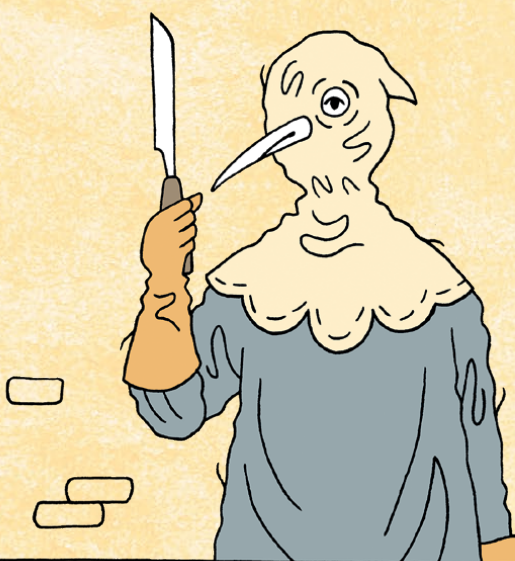
Treacle is a powerful elixir.



Viper is the first ingredient.



Only 63 ingredients to go...

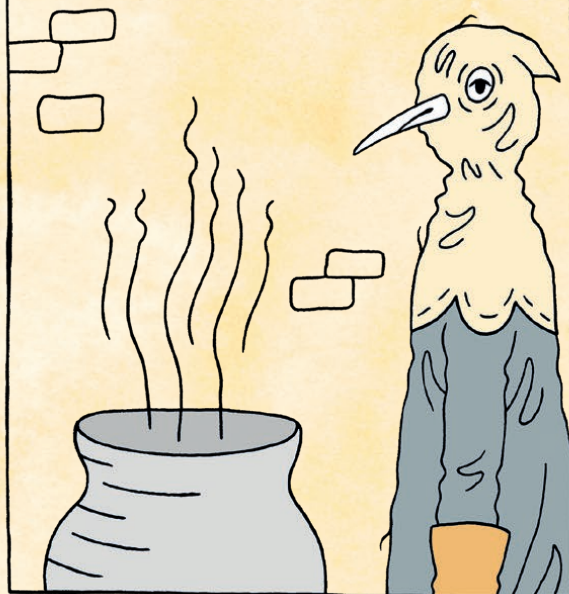


Finally!

All the ingredients
for my treacle.



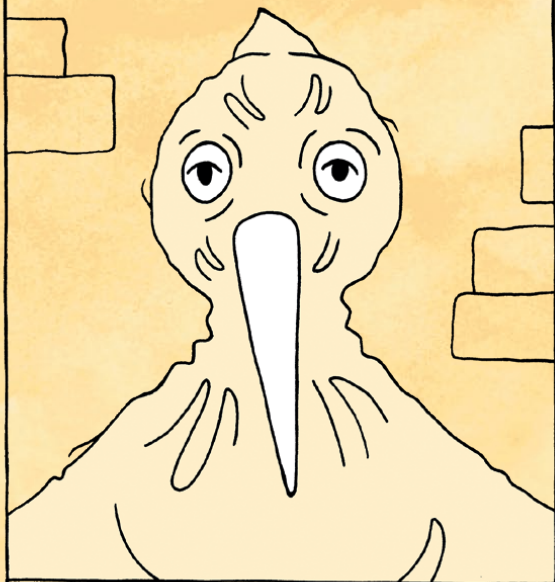
Toiling over a
hot stove all day.



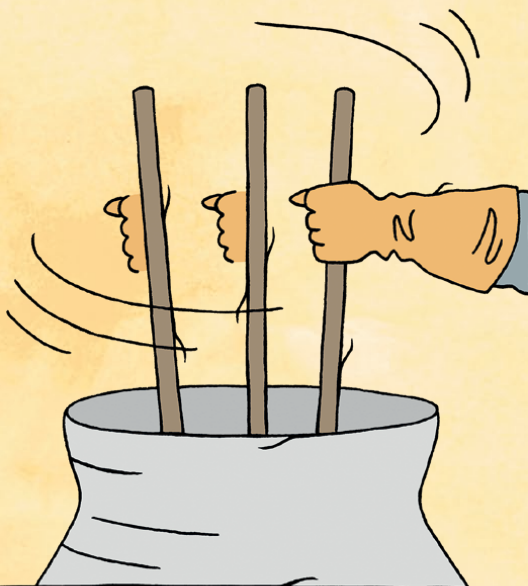
Only 39 days to go...



Finally!



The treacle
is done cooking.

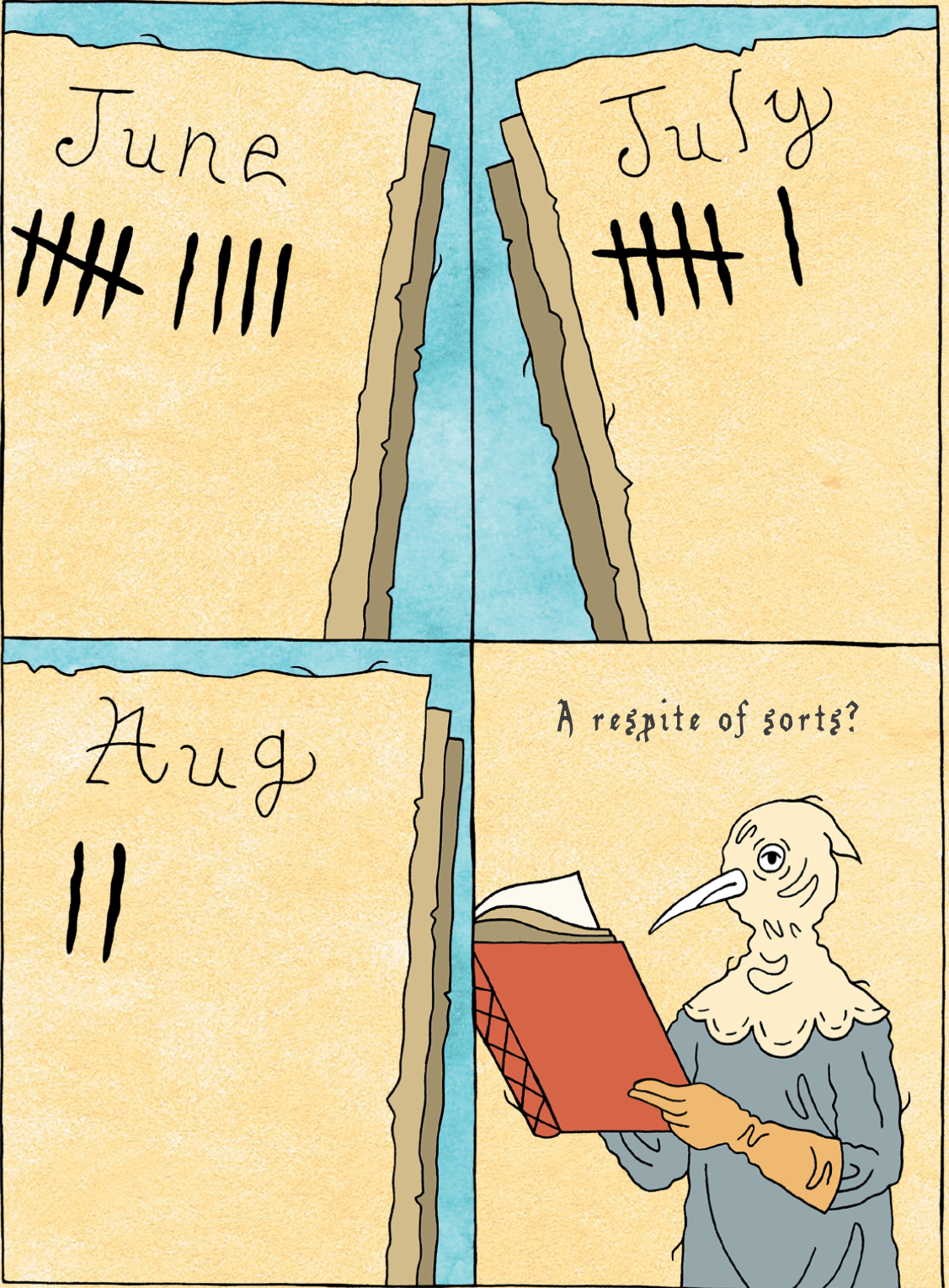


Now, fermentation.



Only 10 years to go...





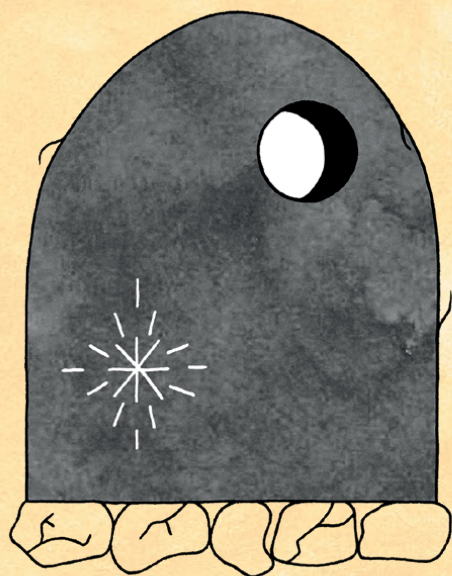
A good day
for bloodletting.



How can you tell?



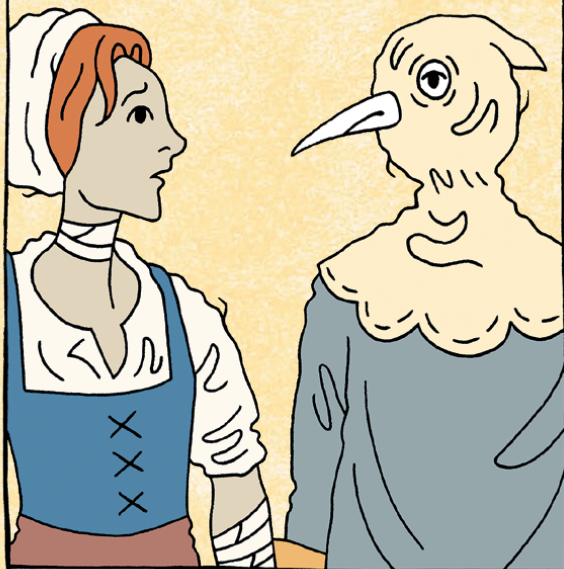
Venus twinkles
and the moon is waning.



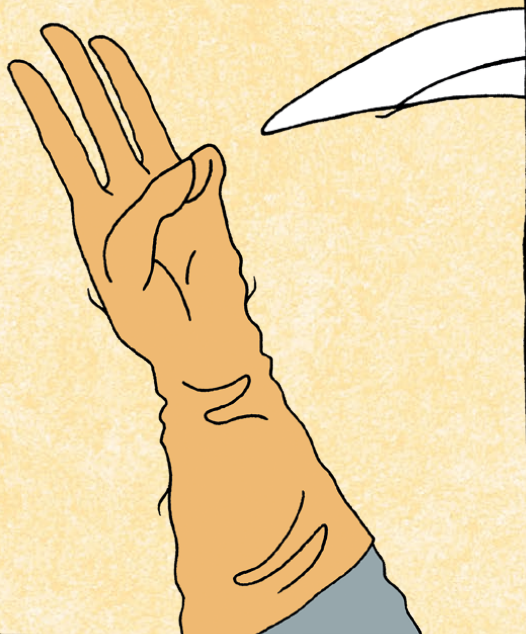
Now, where to cut?



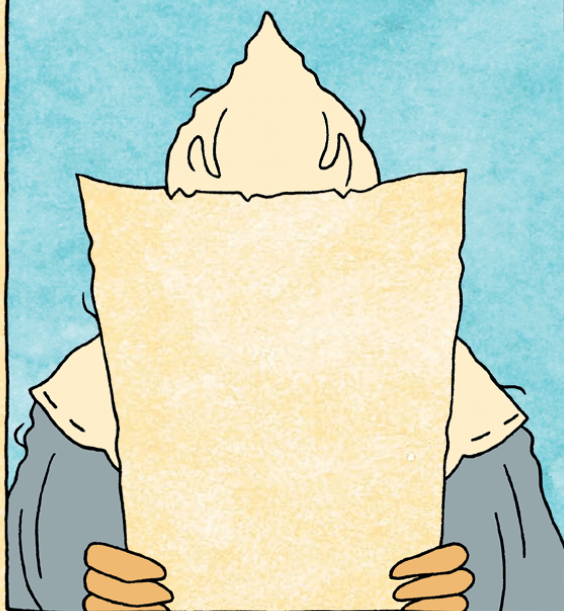
On the body, how many
pointz can be bled?



One, two, three...



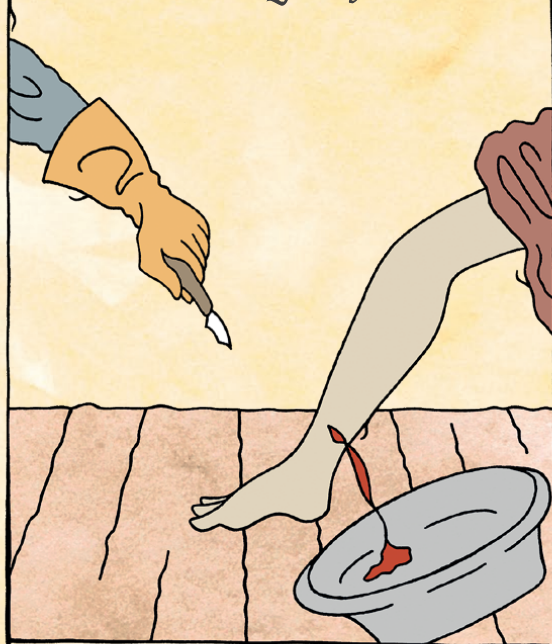
...thirty-nine in total.



Are you certain?



How do you feel?



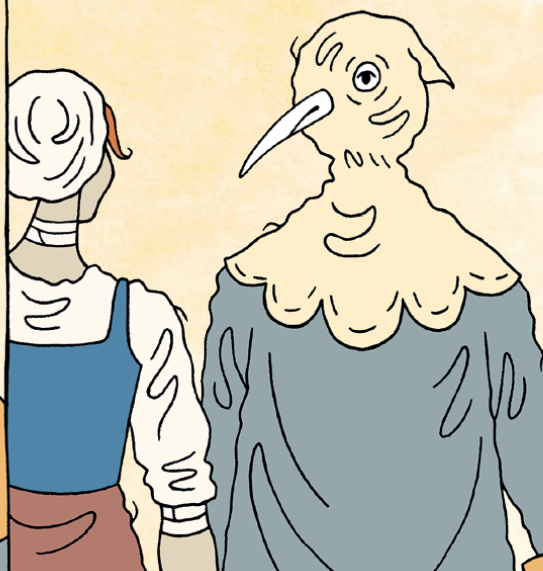
My head hurts.



The brain?



Not enough phlegm!



Doctor Caim!



How are you getting on?



Clever enough to
doubt my progress.

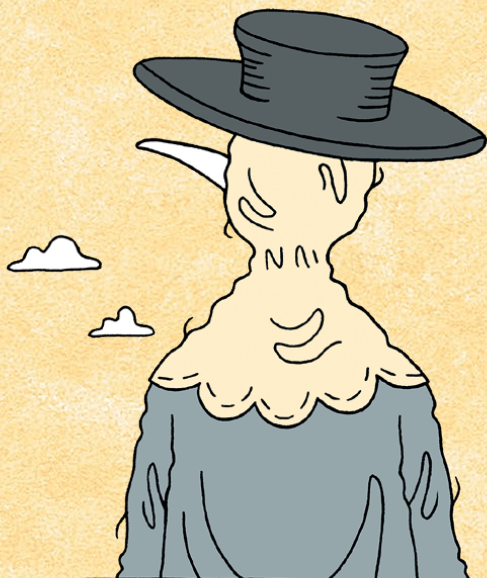
Foolish enough to
continue my work.



How are the rich?



As to be expected.



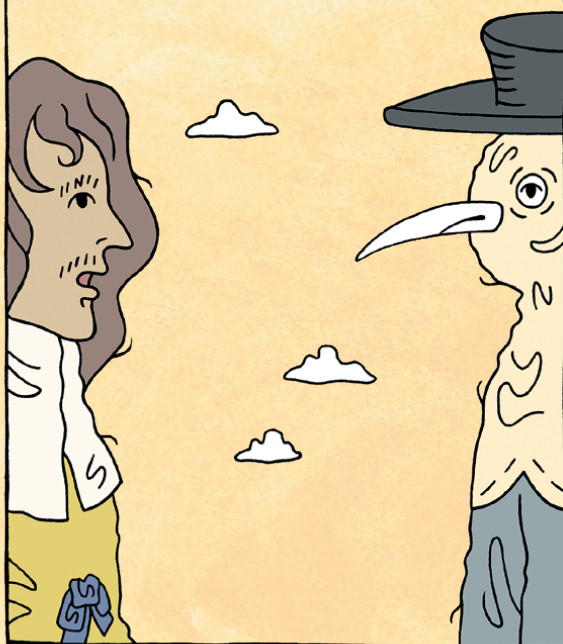
How so?



Each love and hate me
in equal measures.



How are the poor?



As to be expected.



How so?



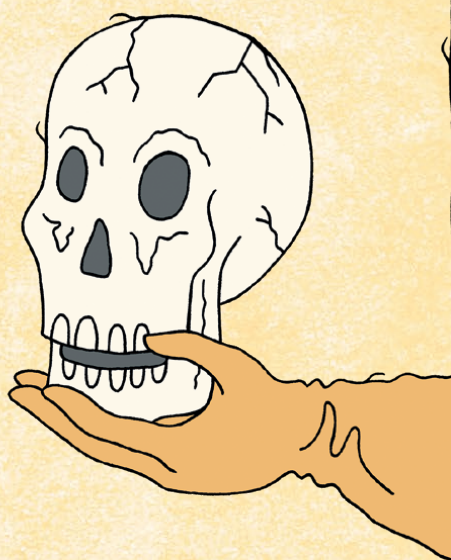
The same as the rich.



How to attract patients?



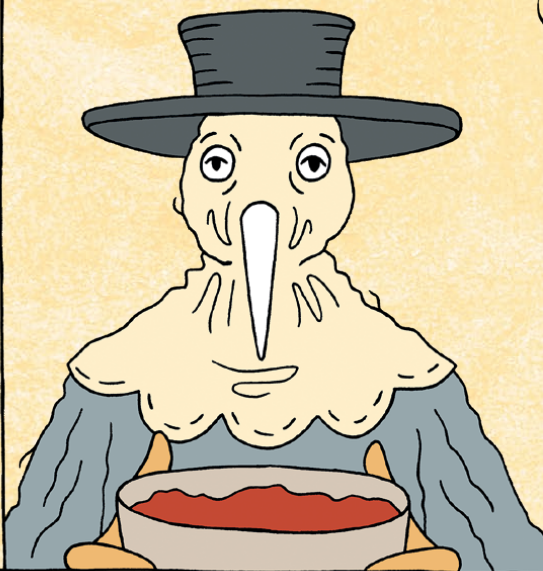
The Skull?



A bowl of blood is the way.

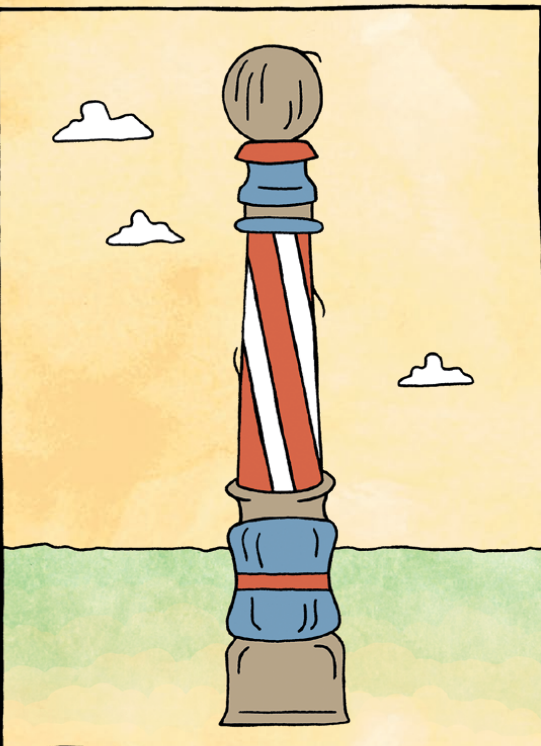


Really?





Doctor! A gift!

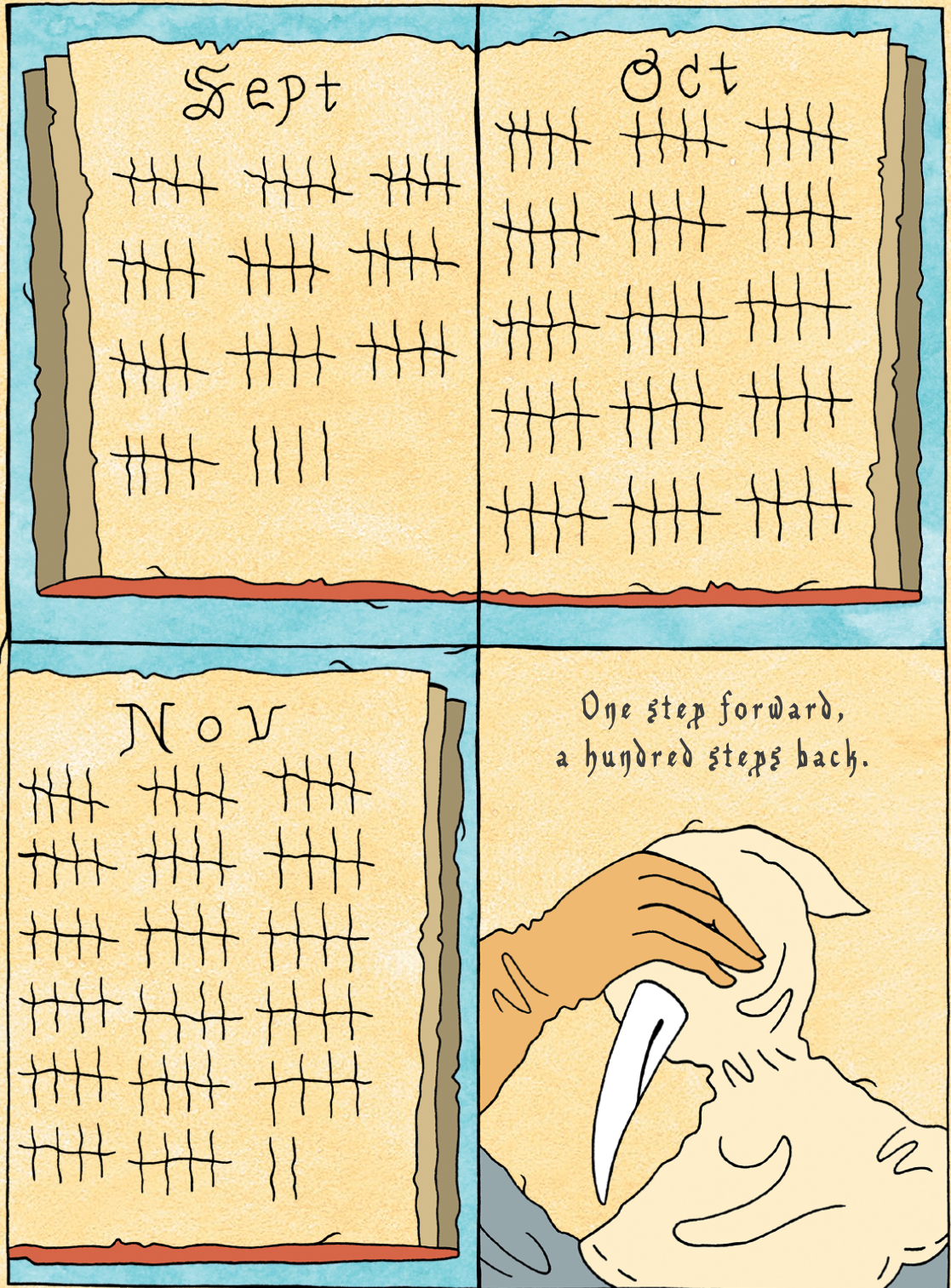


To replace the bowl of blood.

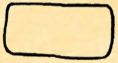
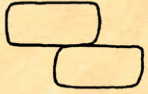


Very generous, indeed!





Lumps on the back
of the neck.



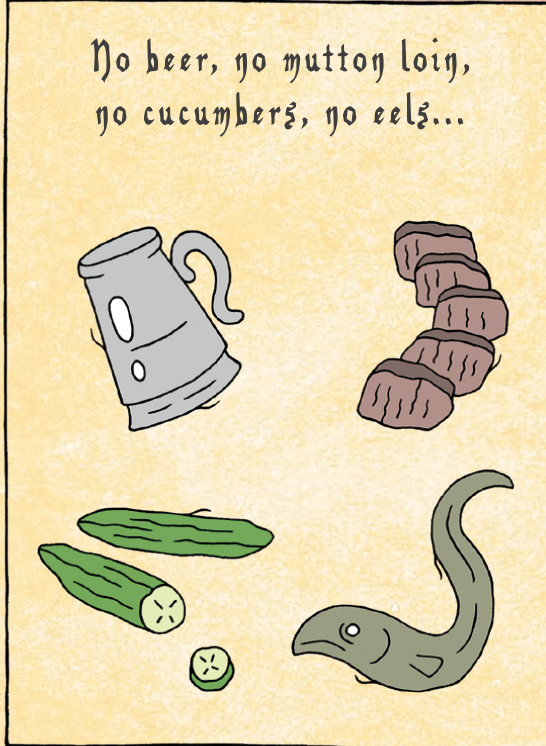
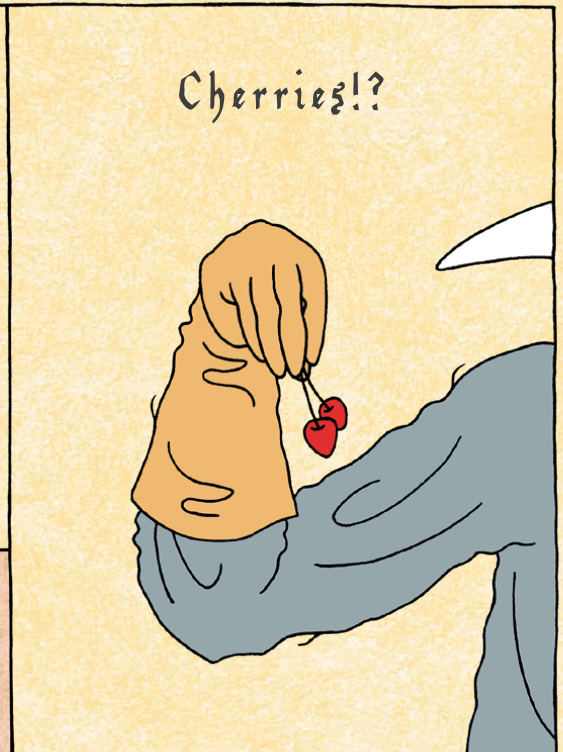
Saturn is the problem.



Why Saturn?

Saturn rules the ears.

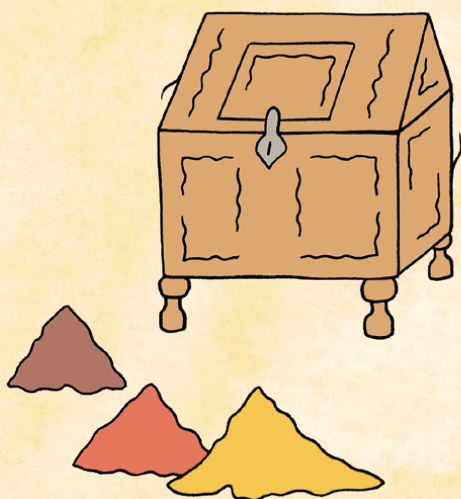




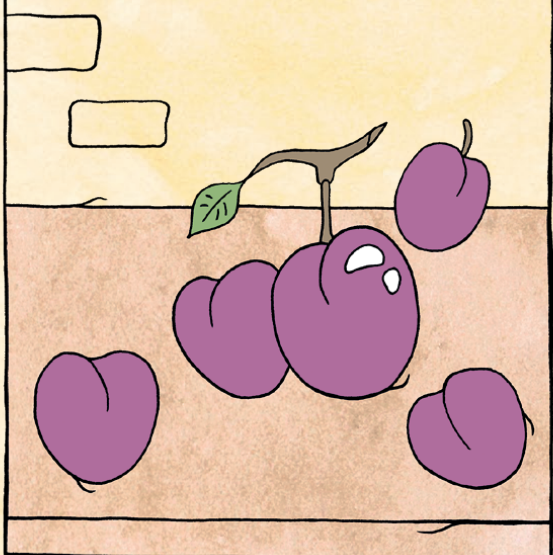
What shall I eat, then?



Spices to provoke sweat.



Plums to purge the bowels.



Everything
in moderation!





Gravedigger: why dost thou
play so merrily?



To forget the Death
around me.



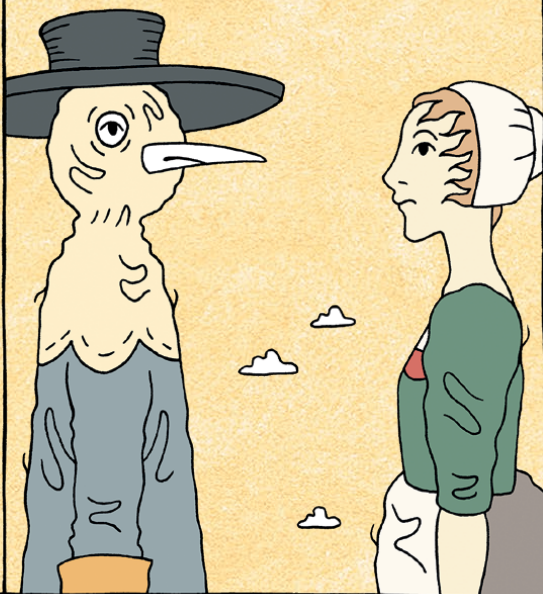
Pray thee, continue!



Hello there!



Where is your friend?



The Black Death
took him.



I had almost forgotten.



Please, attend his funeral?



I am no good at funerals.

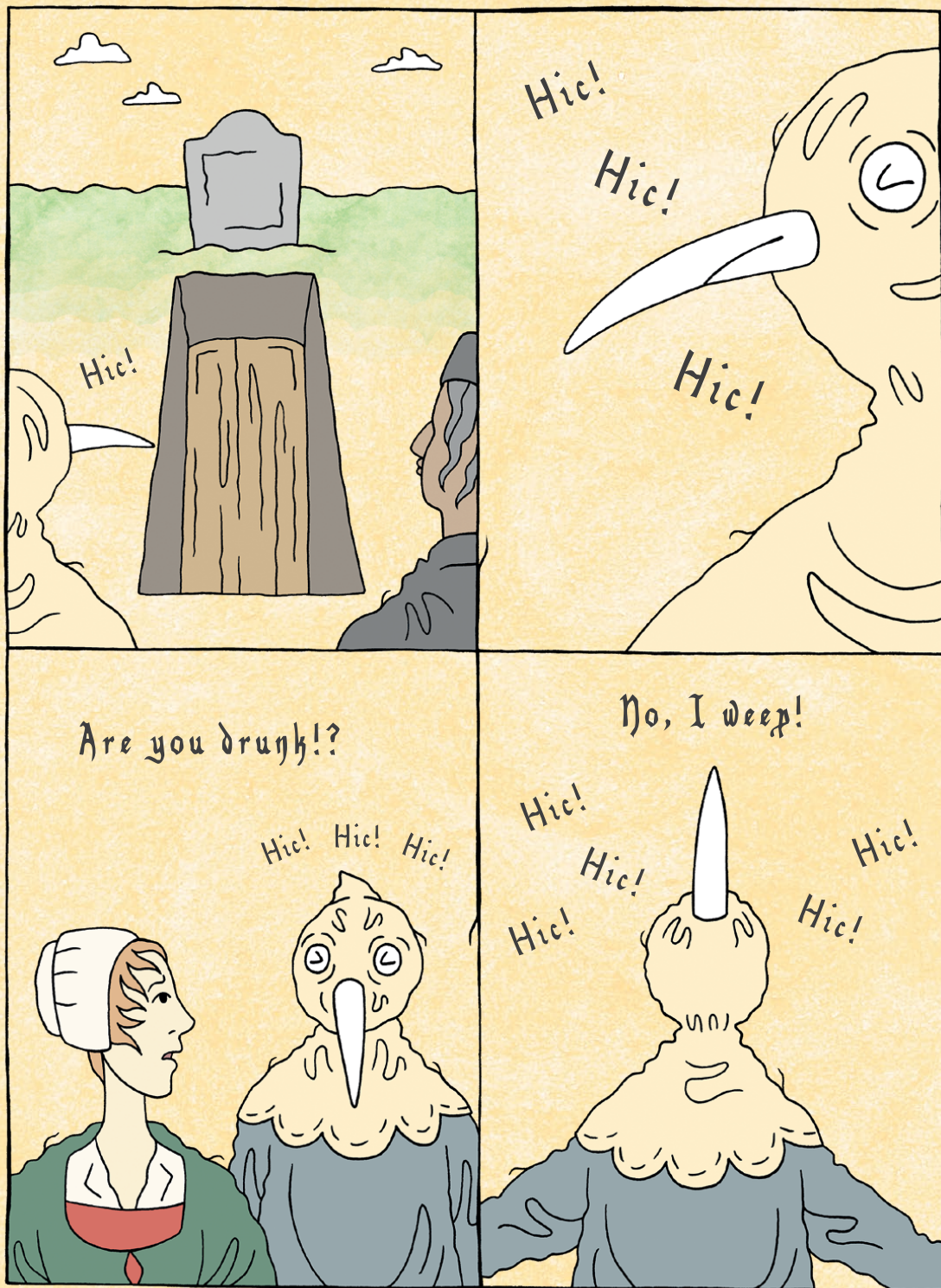


Tears?
No one will know.

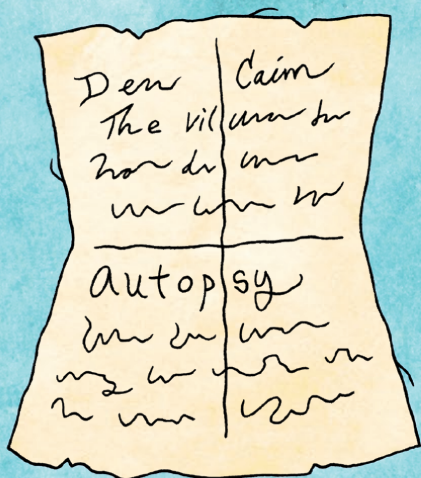


I suppose so.

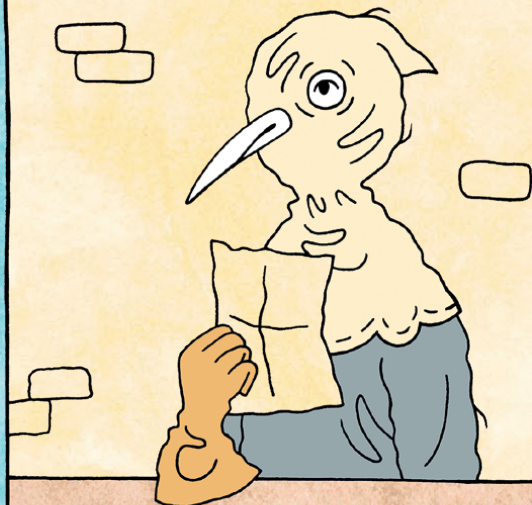




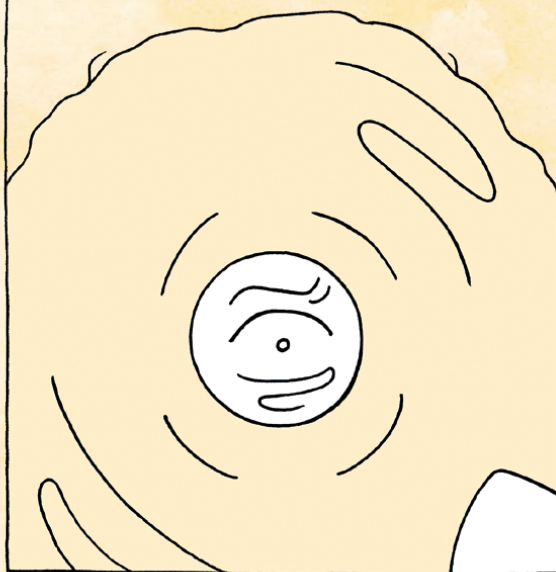
Dear Dr. Caim:
The village barber has died.



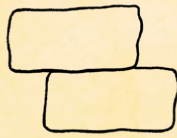
We request your presence
at his autopsy.



Autopsy!?



I shall check your pulse.



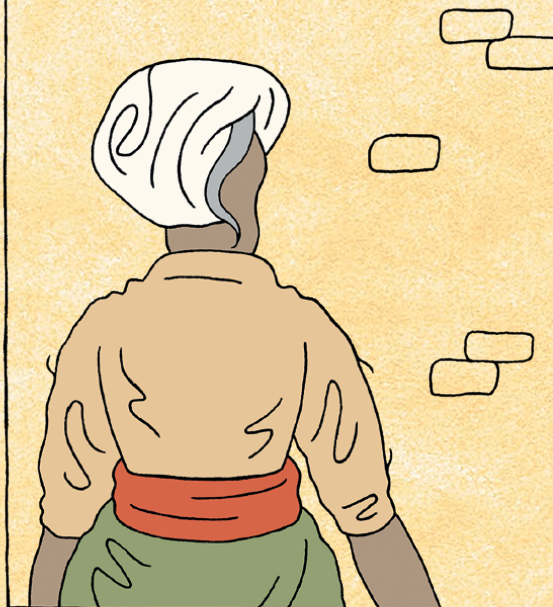
How is it?



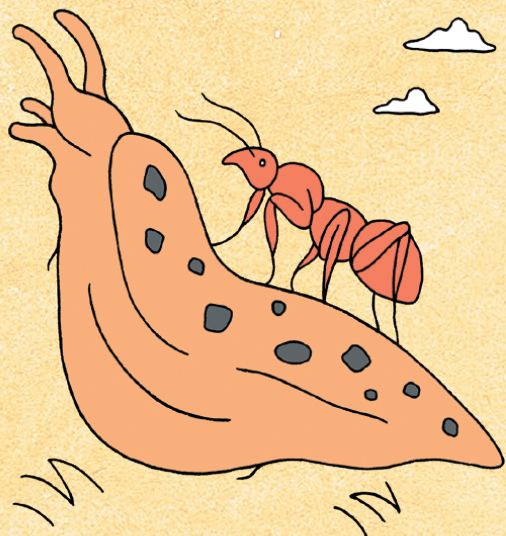
Ant-like.



Is mine a bad pulse?



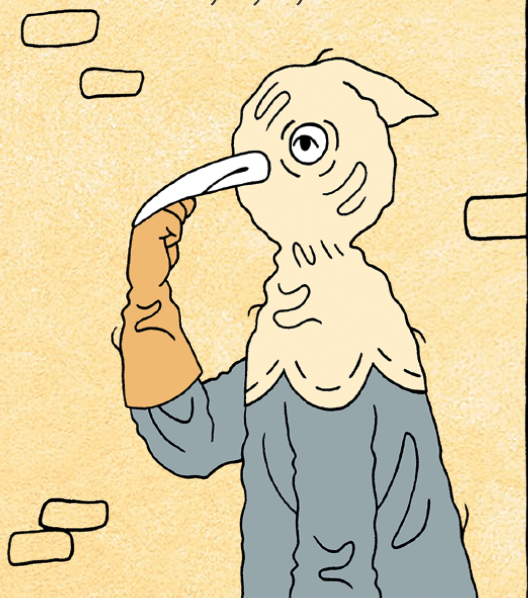
Perhaps...
Better than sluggish.



Is there a treatment?



Possibly...
Ointment.



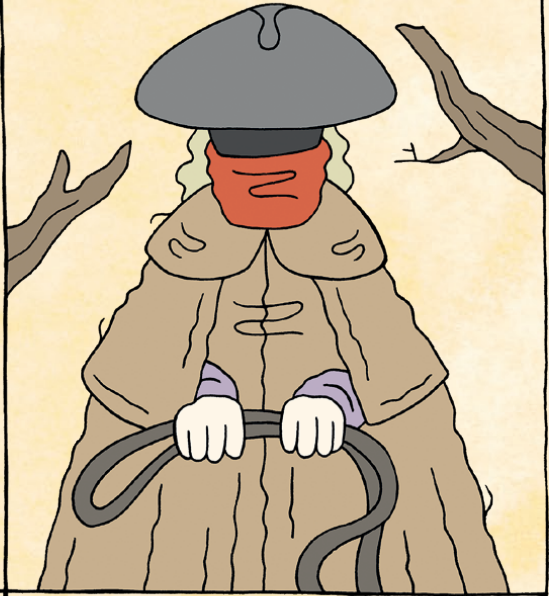




My very person?



Yes, to hold for ransom.



Am I valuable?



You'd be surprised!



Are you not afeared?



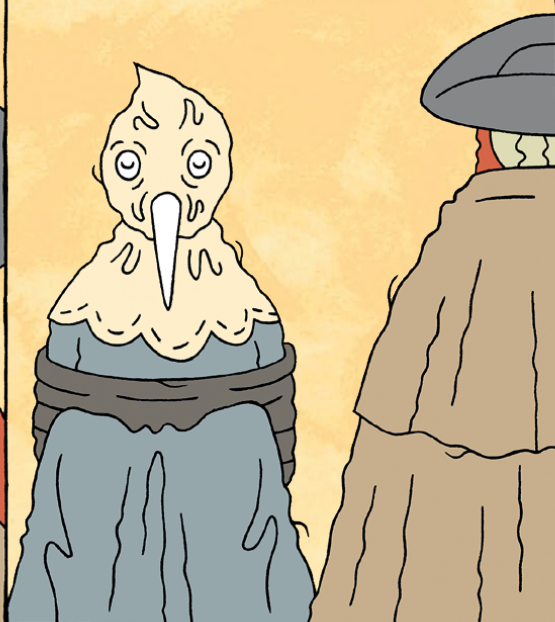
You are a highwayman?



A Gentleman of the Road.



Then I must be God.



Are you not afearred?



Me, afearred!?

Ha!
Ha!
Ha!
Ha!



The Black Death follows me always.
He might take an interest in you.



Oh...



You are a
rich man, sir.



For what is more valuable
than one's health?



Go now!
Be on your way!



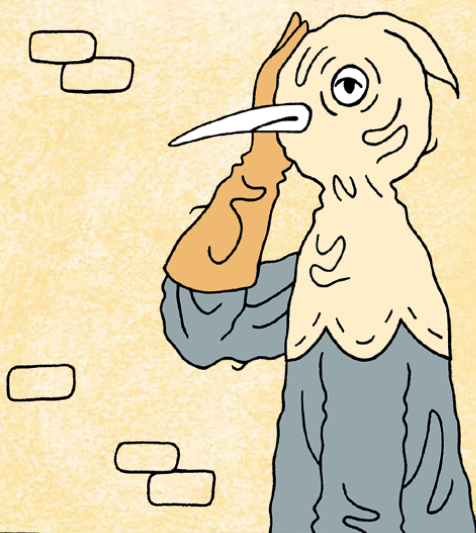
The Black Death and I
take our leave.



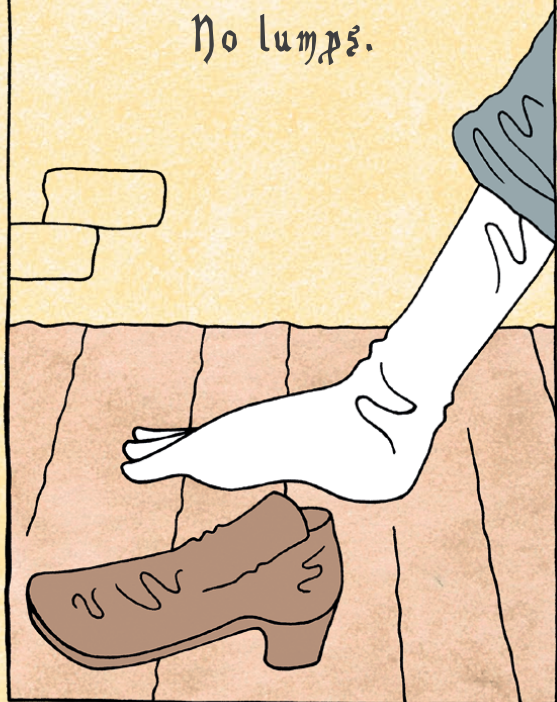
Now for my
daily health check.



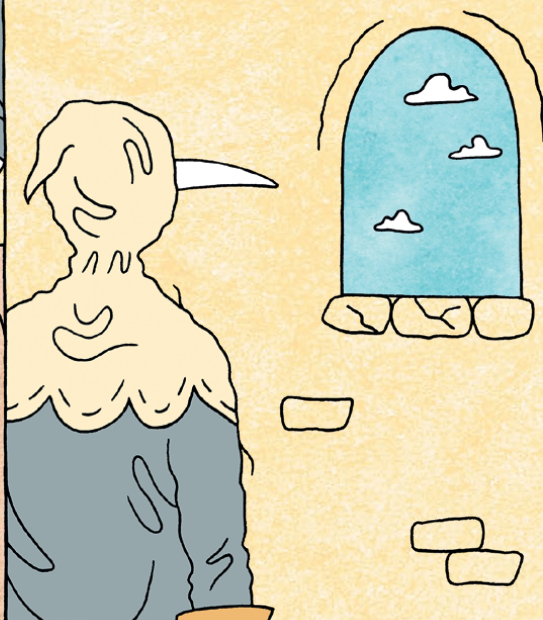
No fever.



No lumps.



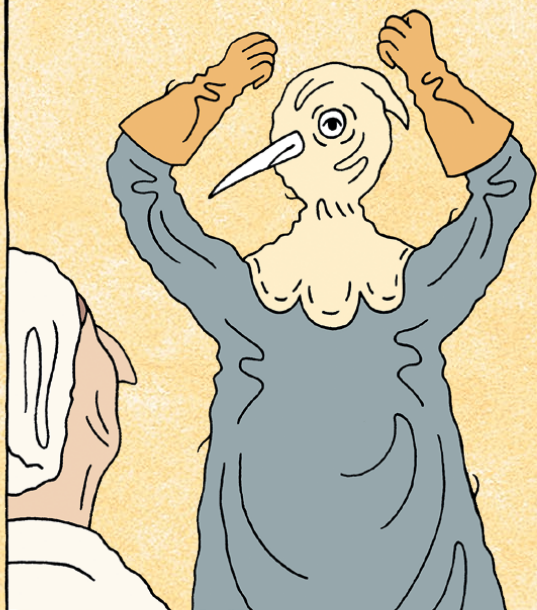
I live to fight another day.







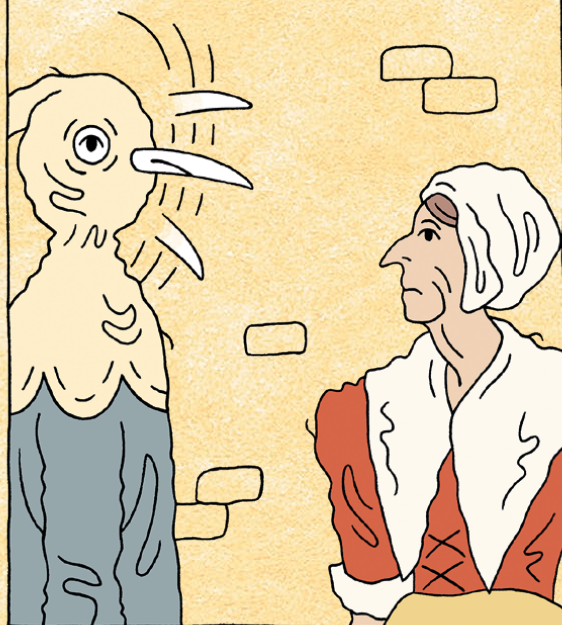
This stench!
It is detrimental!



What shall I do?



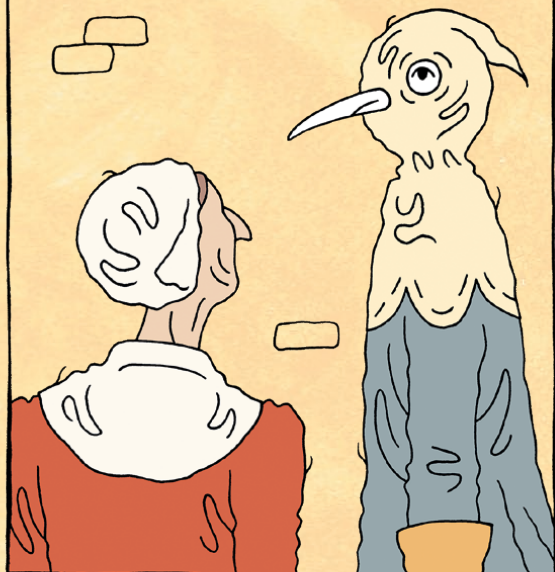
Do you have any niter?
Tar? Resin perhaps?



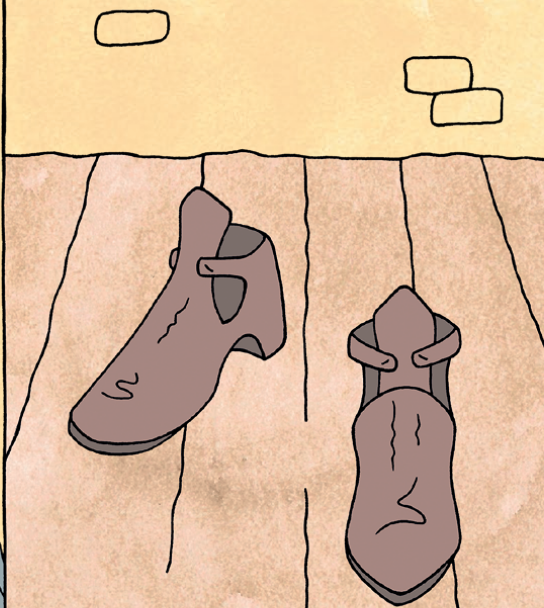
Who owns such things?



How about old shoes?
We might burn them.



I give them to my niece...



Burning shoes?
Would that not feed
the stench?



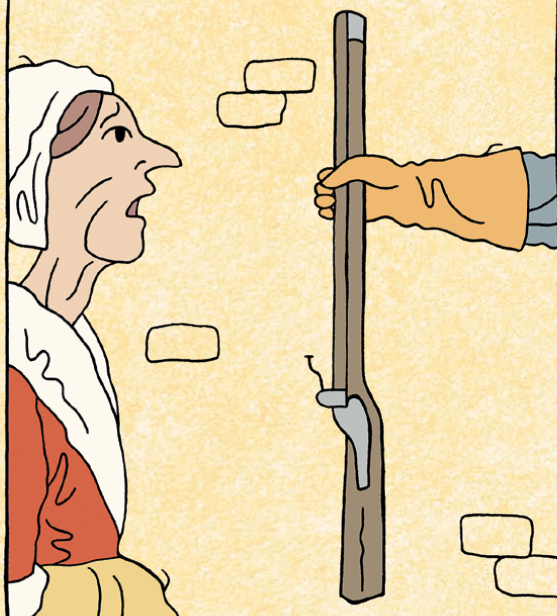
Are your feet very foul?



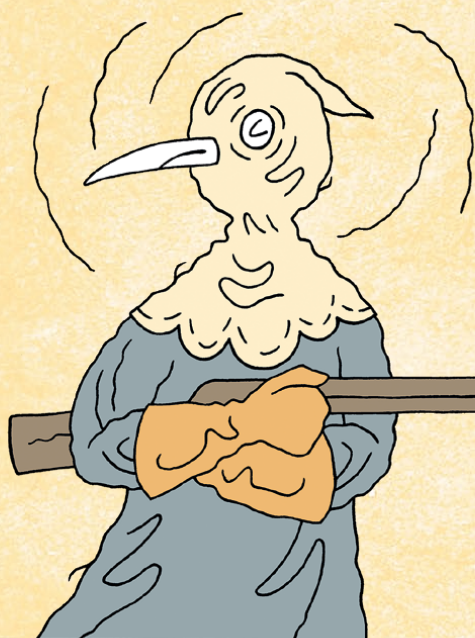
Eureka!



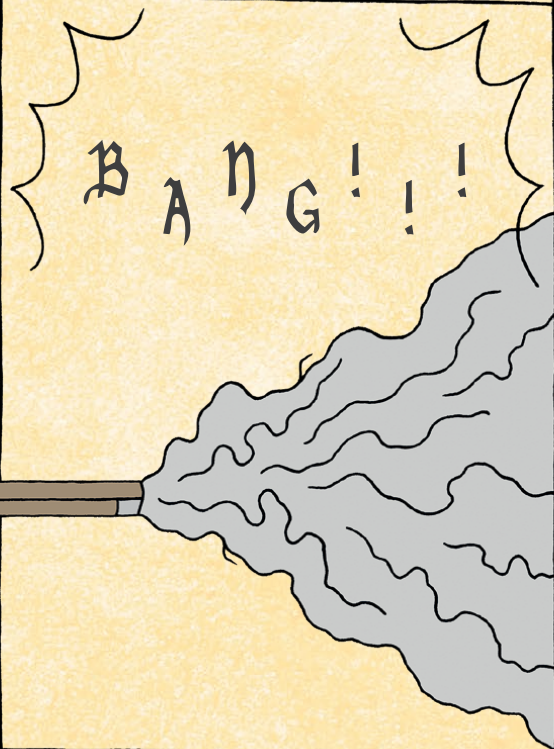
The musket!?



Stay back!



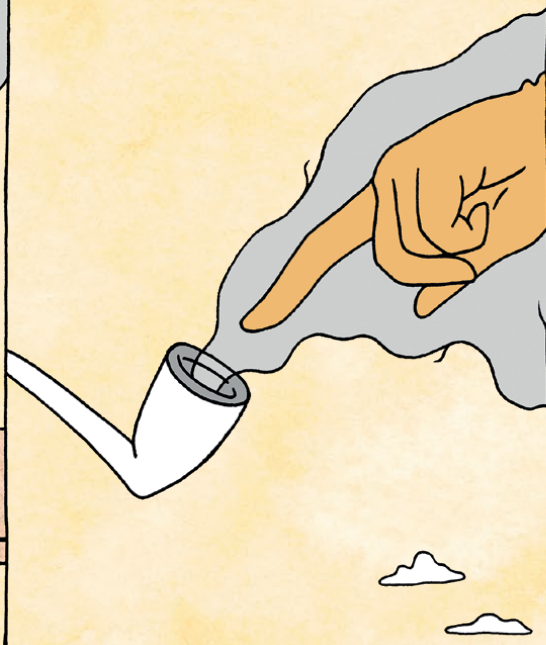
B A N G ! ! !



How do I escape
the Black Death?



Tobacco is a good start.



Two bowls after breakfast.
Three after lunch.



And always in the
presence of corpses.



A sick child?



Where are your parents?
Your family?



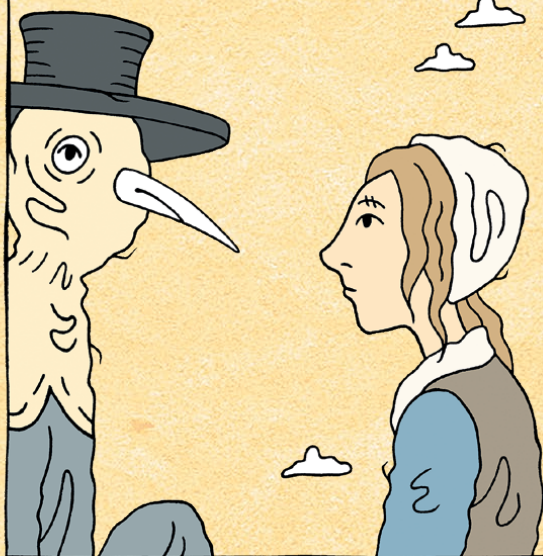
Gone.
To save their health.



Hmm. You better
come with me then.



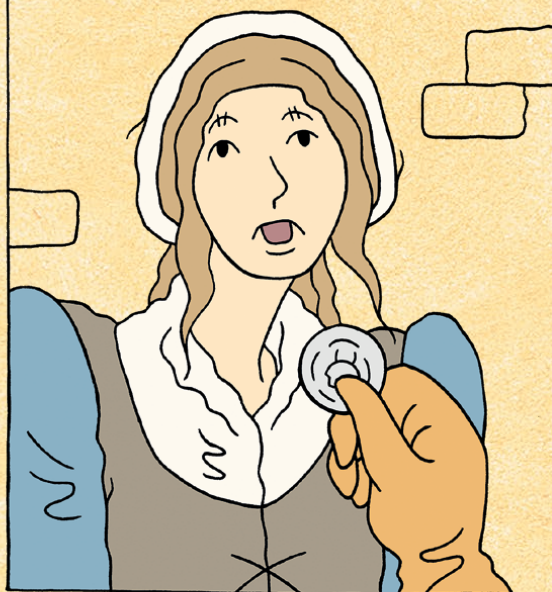
A gift for you.



Elizabeth's coin,
the best.

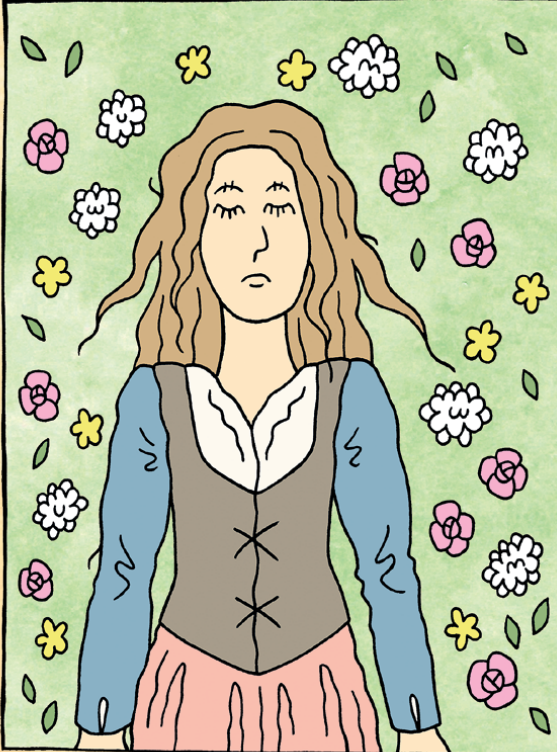


Keep it always
in your mouth.

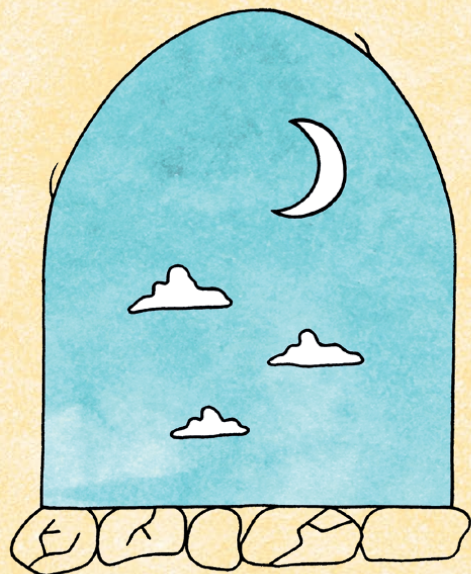


No, do not swallow it!

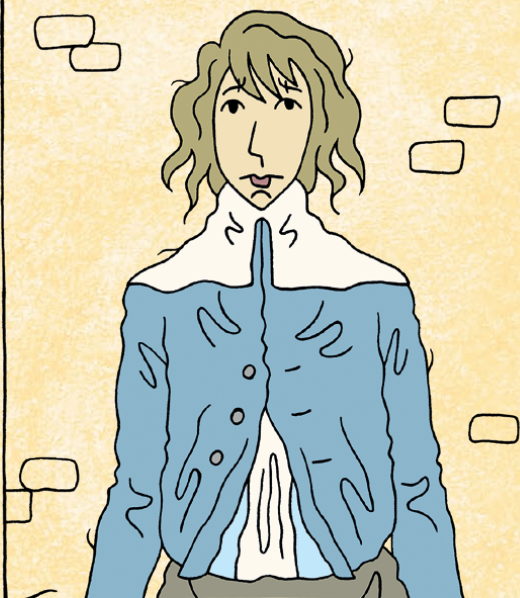




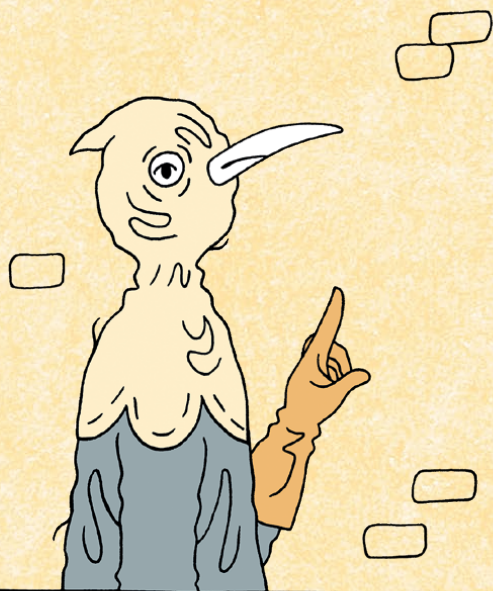
The moon, awake at
this time of day?



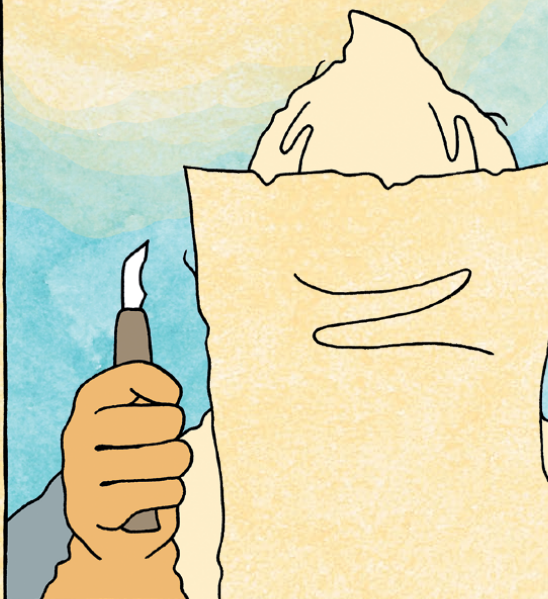
Is that good or bad?

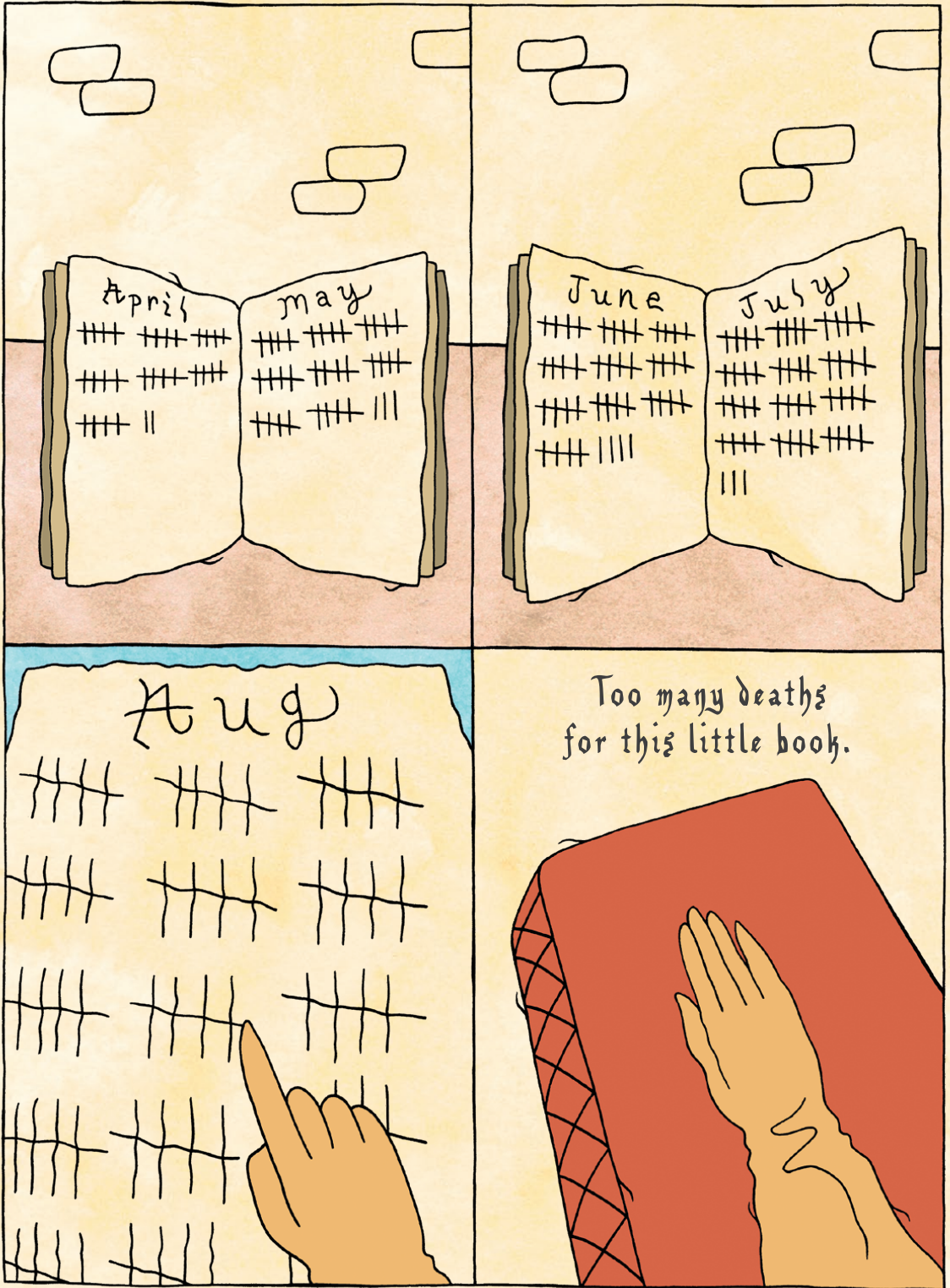


Good for bloodletting!

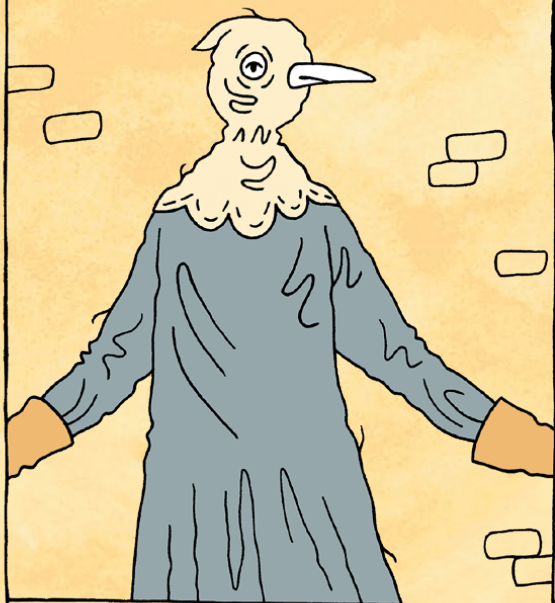


Now, where to cut?

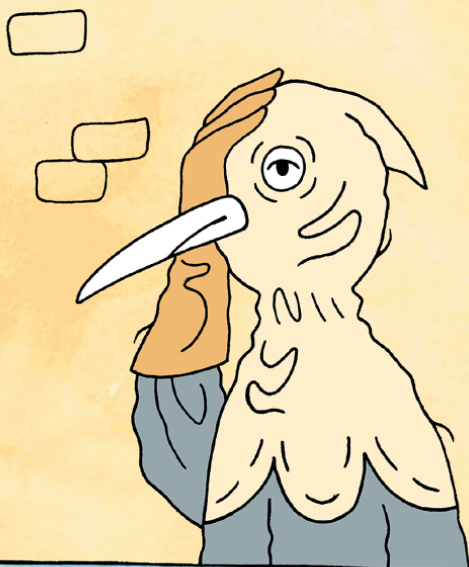




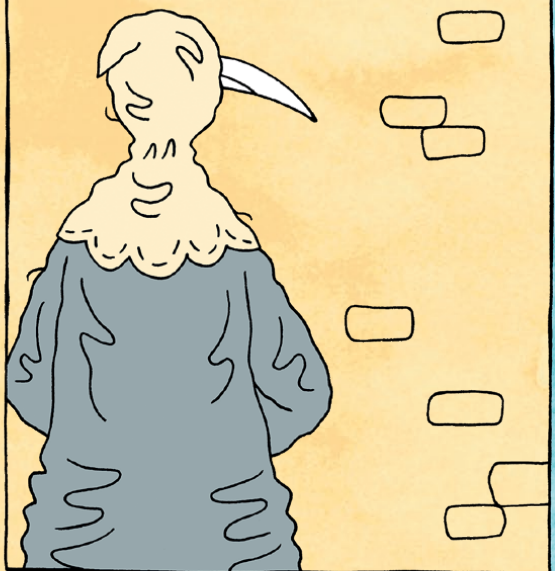
Now for my
daily health check.



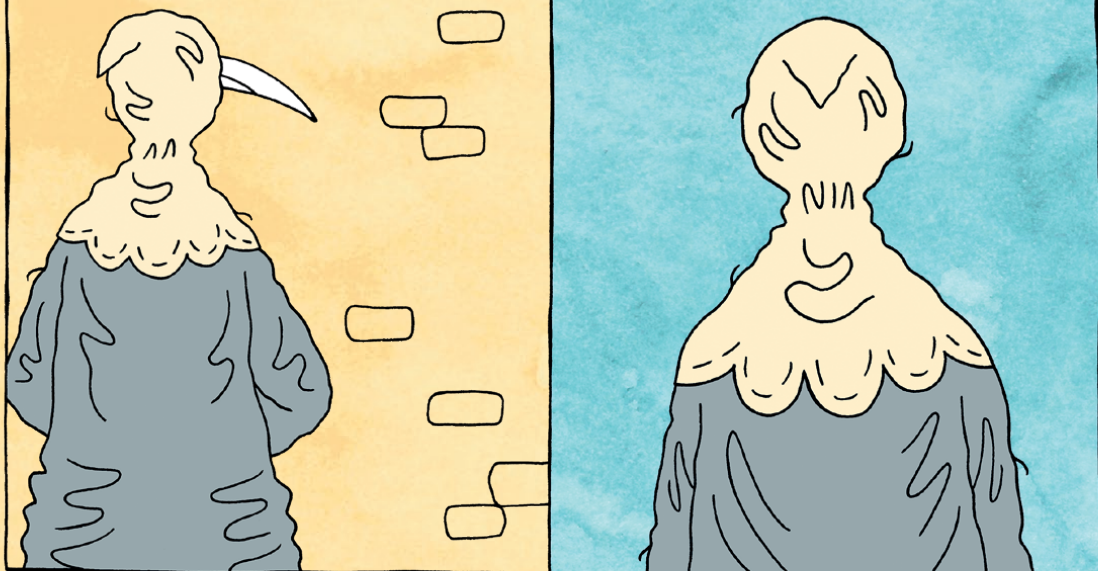
Forehead, a bit hot.

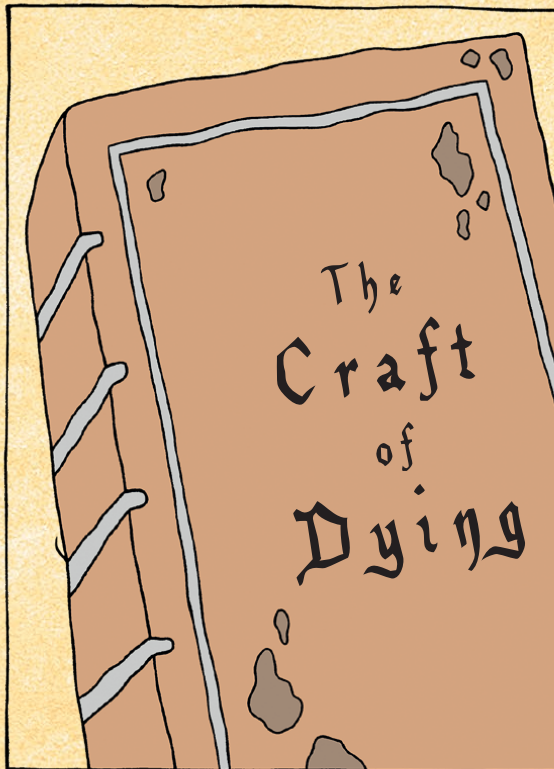


Are those lumps?

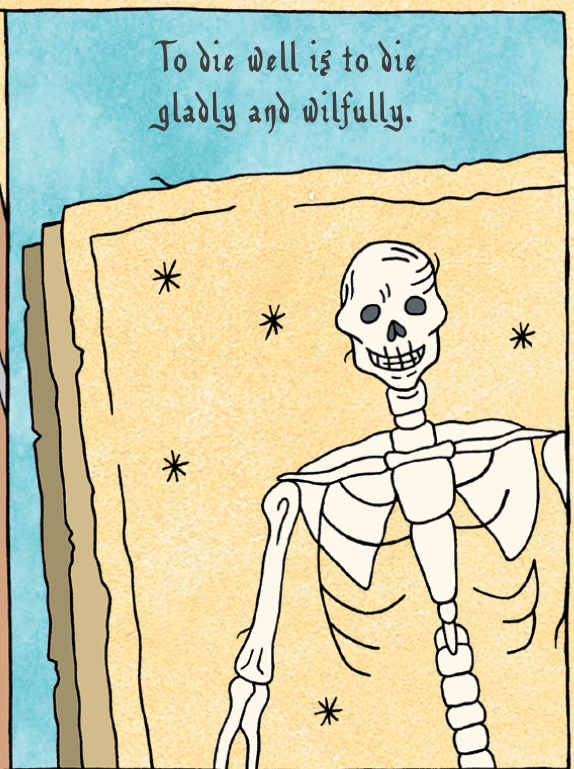


...





To die well is to die
gladly and wilfully.



This sufficeth the craft
and science of dying



It seems I am
not skilled in death.



The Craft of Dying

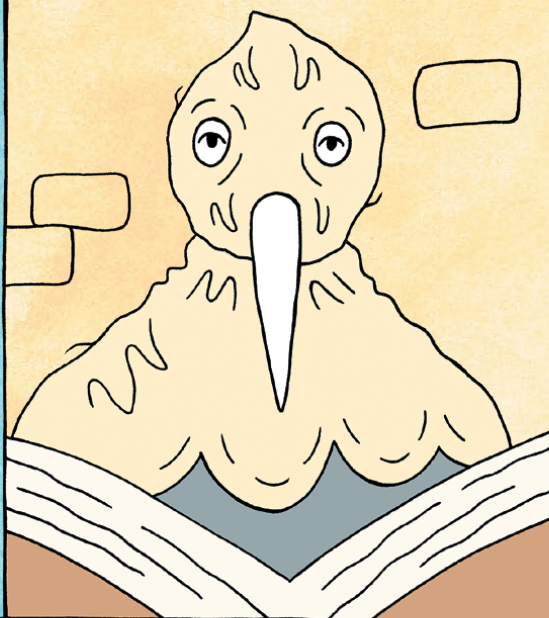
The Devil is busy to advert man
from faith at his end.



Whoso taketh sickness or death
with sorrow, it is a sign he
loveth not God sufficiently.



It is not sorrow I have...
I have no word sufficient for it.

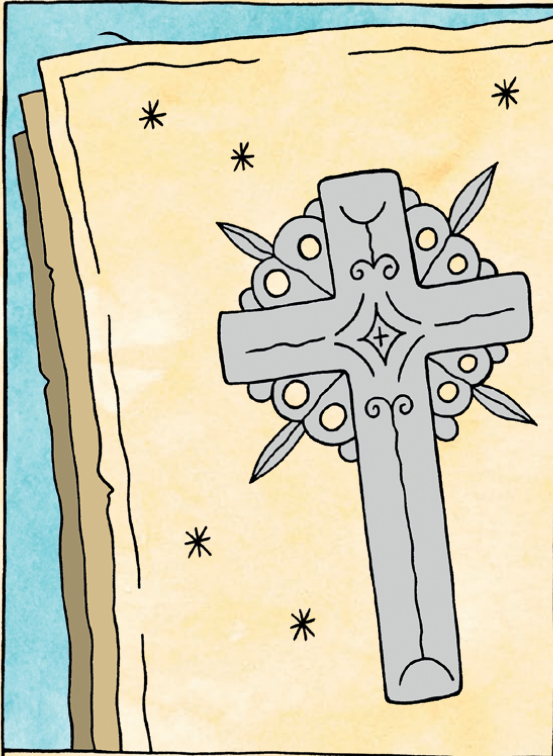




Dieth
surely,
and
not die
everlastingly.

To
this
death
commit
thee
fully.

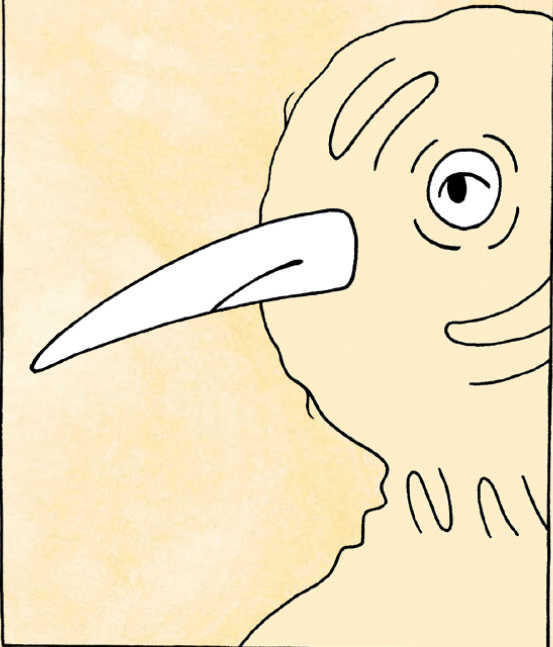




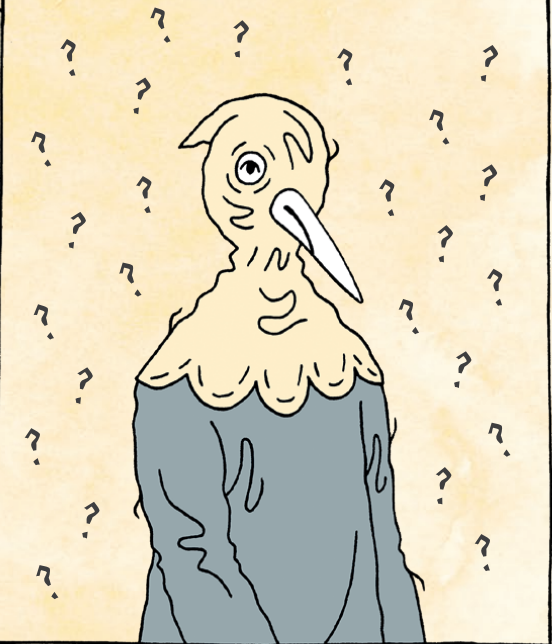
Also He cried on the cross.



Also He wept on the cross.



Wait, there is a difference?





Bodily sickness cometh of
the sickness of the soul.



Therefore the Pope induced him
to seek his spiritual leech.



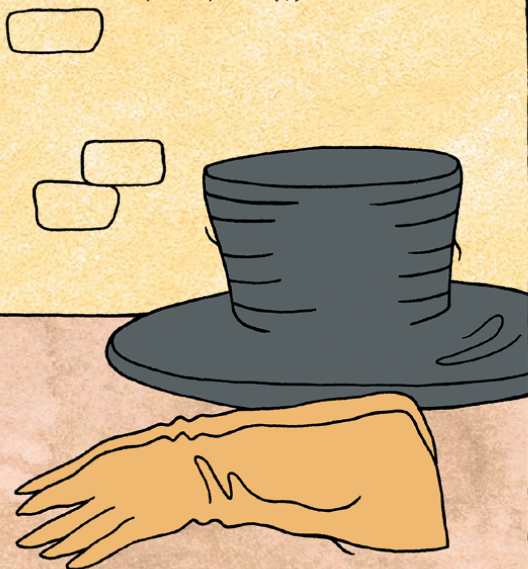
I beseech thee,
friends!



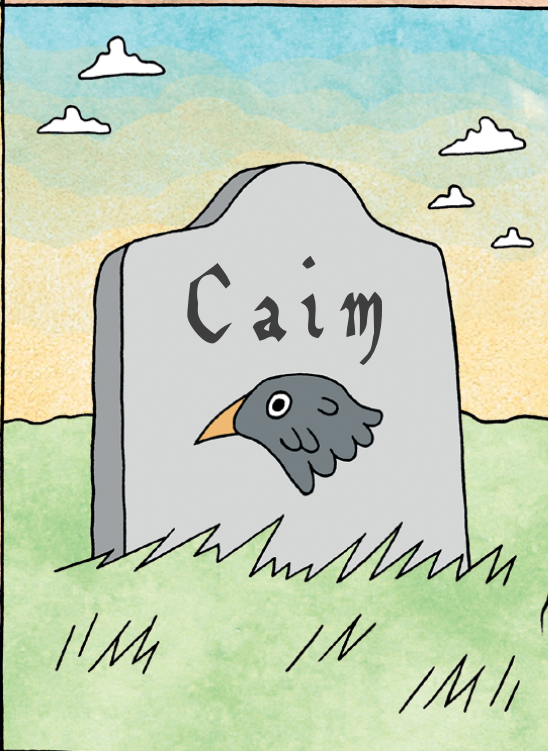
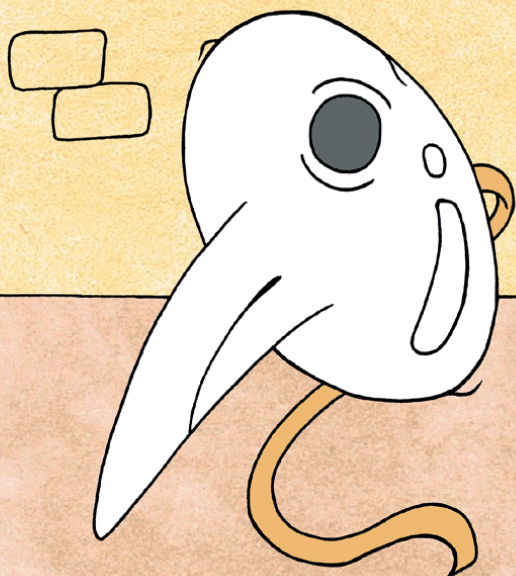
Who was the fool,
who the wiseman?

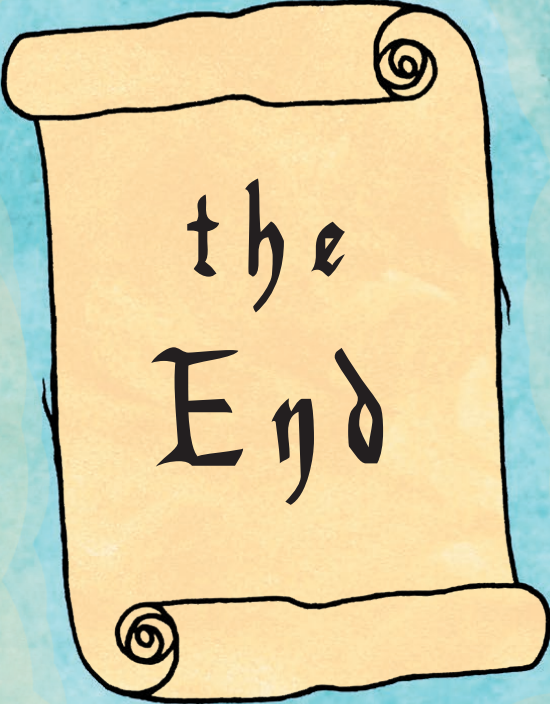


Who the beggar?
Who the emperor?



Rich or poor,
all are equal in death.





A hand-drawn illustration of a scroll with the text "the End". The scroll is light yellow with a black outline and is set against a light blue, textured background. The text is written in a black, stylized font. The scroll is partially unrolled, with the top and bottom edges showing the rolled-up sections.

the
End

Our heartfelt thanks to the Unbound backers listed below,
who have been with this book since the very beginning.

Thank you for your patience.

Buket Akgün
Saqr Al Qassimi
Elijah Aldana
Anya Alford
Mohammad AlHuraiz
Ahlyah Ali
Eli Allison
Charlotte Altass
Amy Andujar
Caren Ann Appel
Milo Applejohn
Sunny Asaf
Tony B.
Sierra Barnes
Rebecca Barr
Zena Barrie
Karen 'Kit' Baston
George Bastow
Jim & Samantha Bean 覆面豆
Nicholas Beckett
Angel Beckett
Kevin Berland
Izzy Berlin
Stacey Bethell
Ian Bird
Katharine Bittner
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Julia Webb-Harvey
Jason Whittaker
Lisa Whittingham
Laura Williams
Arnold Williams
Tricia Wirtanen Miller
Laura Wood
Deborah Wood
Tom Woodman
Dan Brotzel, Martin Jenkins &
Alex Woolf
Natalie Wright
Aila Yeatts
Kim Zimmer
Mimi Zweig





“I am ready, I think.”

Doctor Caim has been summoned.

A village ravaged by the Black Death is sorely in need of his expertise. Rich and poor alike, all seek his services. As Doctor Caim concocts his cures, gathering roses and carnations, lemon balm and mint, he muses on the world around him, and the many people he treats.



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