

Remember, Remember!

A Healthcare Science play to perform at home

By Nicola Baldwin with Dr Elaine Cloutman-Green

Society for Applied Microbiology
Perform At Home 2020

First created for Great Ormond Street Hospital
Pathology Week, November 2018

Characters

You can change character names, ages and whether they are male or female. We performed the play with 4 actors, by ‘doubling’ characters. We doubled like this: Princess Elizabeth played by same actor who plays Eliza; Lily / Sir Jasper Wingard; Rosa / Guard at Tower of London; Frank / Guy Fawkes. You can perform it with more, or less people. It’s up to you!

Princess Elizabeth (age 9) – daughter of King James 1. Good at getting her own way.

Lily – Senior Healthcare Scientist, who works the whole ‘patient pathway’, she deals directly with patients as well as leading the team. Good at dealing with people.

Rosa – recently joined the lab, loves the science and equipment. Good at being enthusiastic.

Frank – experienced Healthcare Scientist, who thinks that nothing can surprise him now. Good at reading results.

Guard at the Tower of London

Guy Fawkes (aka John Johnson) thinks he is an international man of mystery

Sir Jasper Wingard Head of Security, His Majesty’s Parliament

Other Plotters a desperate band of hot-heads

Eliza – a clinical engineer

Setting

Hospital laboratory in the present day, and 1605 London at the time of the Gunpowder Plot. ‘Stage directions’ to describe action / places are written in italic letters like this.

Credits

Written by playwright Nicola Baldwin with Dr Elaine Cloutman-Green, Lead Healthcare Scientist at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Created for patients, families and staff at Great Ormond Street Hospital. First performed at GOSH for Pathology Week, November 2018 by Jennifer Daley, Peter Hamilton Dyer, Tara Kearney, Becky Simon. Director, Hannah Jones. Our project was funded by SfAM; the performance at GOSH was also supported by the Royal College of Pathologists. Thanks to: Jonny Wright, Abi Bown, Melisa Canales, NT Costumes, Rachel McInery, She’emiah Hastick, Miranda France, Polly Cheeseman, Anthony Manuel DeSouza (EDUCATION RESOURCES), Fionnuala Wilkins (GOSH SCHOOL), Amy Sutton (GOSH YOUTH FORUM), Laura Walsh (GOSH PLAYTEAM), Andrew Roast (GOSH DIGITAL), Royal Literary Fund. Photography was by Rabbit Hole Photography. This play is for performing at home.

Scene 1**A Lecture Room at Great Ormond Street Hospital**

Lily, Rosa and Frank run in. They wear Lab coats, carry clipboards. They look flustered and stare at the waiting audience.

ROSA Are we back?

LILY Looks like it.

FRANK Are you sure?

ROSA These people don't look like dangerous rebels....

FRANK They don't look like scary prison guards with dirty hands

LILY They don't look like they are from the Royal Family... *(the others agree)*
 Okay Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls. Thanks for coming. We are a bit late starting.
 Sorry for the delay. I know you are all excited for our presentation on....
(consults clipboard) Principles of MALDI-ToF Spectrometry.

FRANK Or, if you prefer, Matrix Assisted Laser Desorption/ Ionization Time of Flight
 Mass Spectrometer –

LILY Bonnie for short.

ROSA They thought I broke Bonnie – but I didn't

FRANK Turns out Bonnie wasn't broken at all....

ROSA It was a lot stranger than that.....

LILY Yes, thank you Rosa, thank you Frank! I'm sure our sensible science lecture
 audience don't want to hear all about how we got lost in the fog and went back in time and....
 Ooh... but I want to tell the story! *(Rosa and Frank nod encouragement)*
 It started last night. We were working late....
 In our laboratory

(scene change / imagine we are in the Laboratory)

Scene 2, the Lab

They are all hard at work, making notes, studying samples. Lily is working at the MALDI-ToF machine (a real machine which uses lasers to test clinical samples).

LILY *(working at machine)* Have either of you been working here?

FRANK I'm running the tests on the suspected meningitis

ROSA Hmm? I'm putting samples on the plates. In batches, how you showed me.

LILY Have either of you used Bonnie?

FRANK Not yet.

ROSA No!

LILY She's flashing, as if there are results.

FRANK maybe Ray or one of the others?

LILY *(to audience, serious voice)* As you all signed up for the MALDI-ToF lecture, this will interest you. Mass spectrometry allows us to fire a laser at our test sample, blasting it into parts, and the pattern of lines identifies the bug

FRANK See what's in there; run the results

(Lily pushes the button)

ROSA What's that?

FRANKNothing I've ever seen before

ROSA It looks like... letters?

LILY it's reading the impact of proteins, Rosa, not a book. It can't be writing

ROSA Look, that's definitely an H

FRANK *(writes on clipboard)* I'll write them down...

ROSA 'E'.... this is spooky. 'L'?P. 'Help'?

Frank holds up the word he has written 'HELPE'

FRANK Help-e

LILY 'HELPE? I don't know what's weirder, that Bonnie is writing, or Bonnie can't spell...

ROSA Bonnie is asking for help.

LILY Bonnie is a sophisticated piece of clinical engineering, not a video game. She doesn't do messages. She doesn't need help. Turn the power off. (*does this*) And on again

FRANK oh my

LILY Helpe ?

FRANK Oh no.... 'HELPE' has gone. Replaced by a map!

LILY Map? Let me see that –

They stare at the screen.

ROSA That looks like Great Ormond Street! Yes look, it's the outline of the hospital; Queen's Square, the road...

LILY Ridiculous. It can't be

FRANK That does look like the dimensions of the lab area (*Points at screen*) here

ROSA And a big X at the top of Lamb's Conduit Street by Coram's Fields

FRANK X marks the spot?

ROSA Perhaps that's where the message comes from? Perhaps someone at the top of Lamb's Conduit Street.... needs our help?

LILY Who? Little Green Children from the Planet Mars Bar? This is a mass spectrometer, none of this can be happening... You've been watching too much Doctor Who!

FRANK But the evidence of our eyes...

LILY We're tired. Working hard. Look at the time. Our shift ended 2 hours ago. Let's unplug Bonnie at the wall, and say no more about it (*does this*) That's that

ROSA The map's gone.

LILY it wasn't a map!

FRANK It was pretty much the exact lay out of the roads and the corner there –

LILY Coincidence. A glitch. Come on Frank, how long have you been working here? Have you ever come across secret messages in spectrometry charts, or maps in our routine test results? Of course not. It's completely unscientific

FRANK The chances are mathematically infinitesimal, less than 0.0013...

ROSA But –

LILY But nothing, Rosa. We're scientists. I'll have a biomedical engineer check over Bonnie's screen tomorrow, let's go home and never speak of this again.

FRANK Alright, then. I'll be off. Goodnight.

LILY Goodnight Frank.

ROSA Bye, Lily

LILY Night, Rosa.

They step outside

Scene 3. In the Fog

Cold November fog envelops everything.

FRANK Blimey. Where did all this fog come from?

LILY It's often foggy in November.

ROSA I've never seen such thick fog. Can't see the streetlights

FRANK Can't hear the traffic

ROSA It's spooky....

LILY Are you going to the tube station?

FRANK Er, yes... But I'm just going to pop to the shop for... *(trying to think of something)* chewing gum

LILY Ok. Rosa?

ROSA I'm going to.... *(trying to think of an excuse)* go this way and get a bus.

LILY At least none of us is going up to the top of Lamb's Conduit Street!

ROSA No! Ha ha!

FRANK X marks the spot, eh!

LILY Ha ha. How silly!

ALL Ha ha ha. Very funny (etc)

LILY See you tomorrow then?

ROSA Good night.

FRANK Cheerie bye!

They go their separate ways in the fog. When each has gone far enough to be out of sight, they double back, retrace their steps. They creep carefully or stretch out their arms to feel for obstacles or walk along touching the wall. Because the fog is thick, and a bit creepy, they talk to themselves as they go

(FRANK) Lamb's Conduit Street

LILY Right to the top...

ROSA X marks the spot

Arriving at the top of the street at the same time, they all bump into one another

LILY Ach -

FRANK Oof

ROSA (*screams*) Aaaagghh!

They are shocked, then relieved; they all laugh for a moment.

LILY Did you get lost looking for chewing gum?

FRANK In all honesty, no. I couldn't resist coming up here to have a look at where X marked the spot... In a spirit of scientific curiosity you understand?

ROSA Same here

LILY Well I can't see anything

ROSA Too much fog

FRANK No one about –

*They do not immediately notice **Princess Elizabeth** appear out of the fog (appear behind them from her hiding place behind the powerpoint lectern) as if by magic*

ELIZA There you are!
(All shocked / wah! / react)
 I've been waiting and waiting here. On my own.

LILY Er... ok –

ELIZA I thought you were never coming. You may curtsy now
(very surprised, the scientists try to do this)
(to Frank) Not you! Boys bow. *(Frank bows awkwardly)* I'm glad I don't bow. If I'm was wearing a tiara, it would fall off. Once, my father's courtier bowed so low in the garden at Dunfermline Palace, his beard got stuck on a rose bush! That's REALLY TRUE and it was SO funny. I'm not supposed to laugh so I had to do this with my mouth
(squishes up her mouth)

FRANK I can't believe I'm asking this, but... did you send us a message?

ELIZA No. Not a message, a command.

ROSA How did you.... send a command through our machine?

ELIZA No time for silly questions. Your Princess needs your help

ROSA Princess?

ELIZA Princess Elizabeth Stuart. And I'm nine. Nine and a quarter. Don't look so astonished at me I REALLY AM AND I'M TEN NEXT SO THERE!

LILY Elizabeth –

ELIZA / *Princess* –

LILY Princess Elizabeth.... what are you doing out so late on your own?

ELIZA It's truly terrible. You have to help.

LILY We'll help it we can

ELIZA *(check no one listening)* There is a Plot to get rid of my father, King James 1st -

ROSA You mean The Gunpowder Plot?!

FRANK Of 1605?

ELIZA How do you know that?! Are you involved? Are you plotters? HELP! HELP!

FRANK HELP-E -

LILY No, no, it's alright. We're here to help-e. We're scientists.

FRANK We work at the children's hospital

ROSA We help children all the time... but we've never helped a Princess before

ELIZA Well it's like this. The soldiers at the Palace of Westminster uncovered the Plot. They arrested a stranger hiding in the UNDERCROFT! He won't say where the gang are hiding. But their Plot is to get rid of my father, and make me queen! At first I thought – 'I can eat cake for breakfast and throw my schoolbooks out of the window and make a law it's my birthday EVERY DAY!' Imagine! I'd be like TEN tomorrow? ...Eleven on Sunday. By next... (*counts on fingers*) Wednesday I'm almost FIFTEEN -

LILY (*interrupts*) So, the help you need from us...?

ELIZA Well, I've realised being queen is actually quite rubbish. The big crown is SOOO heavy and you have to sit for HOURS signing papers which is even worse than homework. You have to do wars, have loads of portraits painted and YUK get MARRIED!

FRANK I don't exactly see how we can help /-

ELIZA /You said you would. You promised. You said you (*starts to cry*) help little children...

She sobs heart-breakingly for a few moments more

LILY Please don't cry.

ROSA We'll do what we can!

ELIZA (*brightening up*) Thankyou! I knew I could count on you. But how can you help? (*upset again*)

We'll have to go to the Tower of London and interview the Prisoner and go to the Houses of Parliament and look for clues – and if we don't catch the Plotters tonight it will be too late! It'll be HOMEWORK AND MARRIAGE forever and there's NOT ENOUGH TIME! (*she cries again*)

LILY Now then, I'm sure there's a way. We're scientists. We'll do it systematically by splitting up. You and I can go to the Tower, Frank and Rosa will look for clues in the –

ELIZA the Undercroft.

ROSA How do we get to the Undercroft?

ELIZA I drew you a map. *(she shows them the map)*

FRANK That's the map we saw on Bonnie! How did you manage to project visual imagery across time and into our digital equipment?

ELIZA It was easy. I'll tell you later. The boat is waiting.

FRANK I didn't know there was a river near here.

ELIZA You silly Science-issies! Everyone knows Mr Lamb built this water channel to carry water from the Fleet River for drinking and washing. How do you think Lamb's Conduit Street gets its name?! AND THAT'S REALLY TRUE! Come on, get in the boat –

They start to climb aboard. Lily stops

LILY Wait a minute. The State Opening of Parliament was delayed in 1605, because London had an outbreak of the Plague.

Frank and Rosa recoil from the boat/water

ELIZA Oh yes but its fine, we burned lots of herbs and the evil air is quite gone! I ORDER you to get in. By royal command. I'm a Princess and THERE'S NO TIME!

LILY *(patiently)* There's always time for infection prevention

FRANK Be aware of risks when handling potentially contaminated materials.

ROSA Always wash your hands!

Princess reaches towards the river water as if to wash. Scientists react No/ stop

LILY Not in the river water!

ELIZA Make up your silly minds.

The Princess holds out her hand demurely. Frank helps her into the boat. The 3 scientists get carefully into the boat, elbows out, not touching anything that could be contaminated. Lily and Rosa pull on their scientists' rubber gloves to row the boat.

(ELIZA) To the Tower!

ALL The Tower!

They row.

FRANK oh look! The Globe theatre!

Scene 4, The Tower of London

They 'row' their boat on the spot awhile to the Tower.

ELIZA There's the Tower!

LILY Pull in here, Rosa

FRANK Careful, you need about a 40degree angle on your approach. That's it

ROSA Got it

At the Tower Lily helps Princess Elizabeth carefully out of the boat

ELIZA I'm not touching the water

LILY Good girl –

ELIZA Good PRINCESS!

ROSA (*rowing off*) We've got the map and secret code!

FRANK See you later!

ROSA Byeee!

FRANK Good luck!

As Frank and Rosa disappear, rowing, Lily and Princess Elizabeth stand at the foot of the Tower and look up. So high!

LILY So this is the Tower of London in 1605... A formidable place.

*At that very moment, **The Guard** appears*

GUARD Halt! Who goes here?

LILY Oh hello. This is Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King –
(but Princess is hiding behind Lily)
And I'm Lily. A Healthcare Scientist

GUARD An Elf Care whatt?

LILY - scientist

GUARD Tis whatt agin?

LILY Science –

ELIZA Put a spell on him, Lily!

LILY Elizabeth? I can't –

ELIZA Turn him into a Frog –

GUARD A Frog is it?!

ELIZA Make him fall asleep for a thousand years!

GUARD I am a bit tired, as it goes. *(to Lily)* Are you a witch? Cos if so, you b'long in 'ere. All locked up

LILY I know you're only doing your job. And can I say, you're doing it very well. Good for you. And I'm sure you're capable of being very helpful –

GUARD Nope

LILY We'd like to see the Prisoner. The mystery man from the Undercroft?

GUARD What you know about 'im?

LILY not enough. That's why I'd like to ask him a few questions –

GUARD Interrogation, is it? Cruel and brutal interrogation?

LILY A few scientific tests...

GUARD *(brightening)* Aha torture! Horrible torture and loud interrogation? Why didn't you say so? Come in. *(opens door)* Welcome to my 'umble abode.

LILY What's all this on the floor?

GUARD Clean straw....

LILY It's a long time since that straw was clean; it's very smelly

GUARD It's my special floorcovering invention. Every time yon floor gets mucky, put more straw on thy floor. Drop ye sandwich, spill ye drink; ye old dog poo-eth – do not ye worry, put more straw on't. Nice clean straw

LILY *(to Elizabeth)* Elizabeth –

But Elizabeth understands. She holds her hands up

ELIZA Don't touch -

LILY Good Princess.

*They have arrived at the cell. Inside, **Guy Fawkes** stands with his back to us*

GUARD Well, well Mister-I'm-Not-Talking Man of Mystery, your jig is up. Your goose is cooked. His Majersty The King, has sent two Science-witches to make you squark –

Guy Fawkes turns slowly to consider them, he glances at Elizabeth, then Lily

LILY Hello! We'd like to ask you a few questions

GUARD He don't say nothing, not to nobody

FAWKES Why Knave, you are mistook! I do not stoop to speak with thee, yet unto fair damsel such as she, forsooth, whose words are like unto the sweetest bell, her beauty like the fragrance of a rose inside this... cesspit –

GUARD She's here to torture you.

Fawkes recoils

LILY No, really I'm a scientist

Guard and Scientist both recoil

FAWKES Tis what?

LILY A Healthcare Scientist. Do any of you know what that is? I diagnose people –

They gasp as if it is the most horrible thing in the world

GUARD Boils and plagues –

FAWKES What sorcery is this! I shut my mouth and speaketh not
(he watches them from the corner of his eyes)

LILY *(to Guard)* What do we know about the Prisoner?

GUARD They caught 'im lurking under the House of Parliament, by a pile of wood

LILY A bonfire?

FAWKES Bonfire says you?! Zounds, nay! There was indeed all manner of crated goods and barrells thereabouts, perhaps of mead or oil or wine; I know not, for said wood was all trampled, perchance by the King's own men, or elephants. Who knoweth? Yet verily it was broke all into sticks before I ever came thence.

LILY So, you're saying... you didn't build the bonfire?

FAWKES My Lady doth hear me like my truest friend.

ELIZA THAT'S NOT TRUE! Zap him, Lily –

LILY (*patiently*) And what other evidence have we got?

GUARD he had about him sticks and spills and flint for lighting fire

LILY Matches? Do you have them?

GUARD Over yonce –

Lily picks them up and puts them into a plastic bag. Others stare at the bag in wonder.

LILY I'll analyse these later. What is your name?

FAWKES ... it's..... John

ELIZA John what?

FAWKES John.... (*searches his imagination*) Johnson... A simple, honest name for an honest simple, honest man. Lately arrived in London, I met a Fellow, who offered me a job... to guard his pile of wood. I know not why

LILY And the matches?

FAWKES The place I was to guard, being underground, was dark. He gave me matches. Said he would bring me a lantern by and by. But he did not. I know not why.....

LILY Anything else?

FAWKES I asked yon Fellow if I might have a seat to sit, lest my feet ache from standing guard. He shewed me barrels...full of Gunpowder they were. I know not why.....

LILY That's it. I've heard enough.

Lily pulls out a small needle

FAWKES *(alarmed)* What means you with that blade, dear lady?

LILY To find out the truth

GUARD Aha, torture!

LILY Nonsense, this won't hurt him at all; a slight scratch, nothing more -

Fawkes falls to his knees and turns to Elizabeth

FAWKES Pleeeeease I beg you! Princess! Don't let the Psy-antist wound me.

ELIZA It won't hurt if she says it won't, but Lily knows powerful magic. She can weave a spell upon your blood, so it will whisper all your secrets....AND THAT'S TRUE!

LILY That's really not how a DNA test works, but YES IT'S A BIT LIKE THAT!

Guy Fawkes breaks down. His accent may change. He may or may not be from Yorkshire

FAWKES Alright, alright! I am not John Johnson, I am Guido Fawkes, Plotter, and admit my crime. But you won't catch the others! Villains they are, determined to succeed and *(quickly and a bit shifty)* I know not where they're hid....

LILY Listen Guido. I'm glad you're thinking about telling the truth. But your blood in this swab can tell us everything. When I analyse this, I'll know who you are; by the antibodies in your blood against plague, how recently you came to London; and who you've been in contact with -

FAWKES You'll never stop them!

LILY *(to Guard)* Do you have a boat we can borrow to get to the Houses of Parliament?

GUARD*(showing them)* Me old water taxi here. Just let me... get my salted fish supper from the bottom of the boat –

LILY Wash that before you eat it, and your hands -

(Guard about to stick hands in the river)

ELIZA Not in the river!

LILY there are all kinds of bacteria – tiny living organisms - in rivers. Some of them can give you an upset stomach or worse. So always wash your hands in clean water, by boiling it. And get rid of this filthy straw.

GUARD Wash... but not water... boils and filthy straw?

LILY Let me write out some hygiene rules for you -

GUARD I can't read!

ELIZA I'm 9 and I can read in three languages.

GUARD I'm 29, and I'm not royalty. When I need to remember, I make a rhyme....

LILY Ok, let's try and think of a rhyme for you, then the Princess and I must hurry

Lily and the Guard go off, working on rhymes

LILY Hand hygiene is important because –

GUARD If you eat with hands that smell, you'll make yourself unwell –

LILY Ok, that's a good start...

GUARD I work in the nick, and I often get sick -

They move off, leaving Princess Eliza by the boat. She talks to the audience.

ELIZA I like rhymes. You hear people all day long outside the Palace – like 'Fred the Baker, and Cake Maker', or shouting the news. The rhyme they're all saying about the Plot...
Remember, remember the fifth of November.

Gunpowder, treason and plot.

We see no reason

Why gunpowder treason

Should ever be forgot.....

It's a bit scary, really. Lily is brave and she makes me feel safe...She says it will turn out fine. What Lily did with Guy Fawkes, how she made him talk with her 'test' WAS SO CLEVER! But what about Rosa and Frank? How can they get a pile of wood to tell them anything? And if wood can't talk, how will the other Plotters be found?

From their hiding place, we see the hats of the THREE PLOTTERS POP UP BRIEFLY, cackling in a rascally way. Then they disappear.

(ELIZA) It's after midnight but I'm not tired. I hope we catch them in time.

She sings / hums 'Ring a ring o' roses' to herself. Then runs off before 'all fall down'.

Scene 5. Meanwhile, In The Palace of Westminster

*Rosa and Frank, in their lab coats, are pacing out the Undercroft – a cellar under the Houses of Parliament, where the MPs sit. Followed by **Sir Jasper Wingard**, Head of Security of the Palace of Westminster. He is reading their note.*

ROSA (*pacing*) Six, seven, eight across here

SIR JASPER / I must say –

Frank paces in the other direction

FRANK (*to Rosa*) And 8 metres or so lengthwise, Rosa –

ROSA I'll call this search sector 'C' (*makes a note on her clipboard*)

SIR JASPER - This coded message of yours was rilly (*really*) rather good

FRANK A simple substitution code, Sir Jasper. The Princess thought you, as Head of Security for the Parliament, wouldn't want to let anyone in. Particularly with this Plot

SIR JASPER No, indeed. One has to be rilly careful.
(*he reads the note, again, appreciating his own cleverness for understanding it*)
'Dear Guards' – not that I am a 'Guard' you understand. I am Head Of Security –

ROSA AND FRANK Yes, you said

SIR JASPER (*reads, chuckling*) “These people may be strange but they are here to help. They apparently can use good magic they call 'Science' to help us find the Gunpowder plotters. Please let them into the Houses of Parliament and listen to what they say. Codename: Sugared Violets”

FRANK Do you mind, Sir Jasper?

SIR JASPER Do I mind what?

ROSA You're standing in a Crime Scene

SIR JASPER How awfully thrilling. Am I safe to this side?
(*Rosa and Frank ignore him, look at each other, but he is*)

FRANK Now, this is where the barrels of gunpowder, and some barrels of river water were discovered, is that right?

SIR JASPER Yes. What they wanted with the river water, one has no idea!

ROSA We think those barrels were waterlogged; we found tiny particles of Gunpowder

SIR JASPER Remarkable.

FRANK And over here, the piles of wood?

SIR JASPER Yes, and that strange Fellow with the awfly big hat.

ROSA There are traces of blood here, where one of the plotters hurt himself before he ran away.

SIR JASPER You can see these tiny, invisible things? Remarkable!

Sir Jasper stands over them, looking at the floor.

ROSA We haven't got any of our equipment or machines from the lab? (*idea!*) Or do you have any lenses, or telescopes of any kind in the Palace?

SIR JASPER I believe we do... I'll go and find out.

Sir Jasper strides 'orf' to seek some lenses. They can work in peace at last. Frank pulls out his small magnifier.

ROSA Can you magnify the river samples enough to spot the diatoms?

FRANK I think so, if you investigate the blood from the wood - Lily!

Lily and the Princess arrive.

LILY What have you managed to find?

ELIZA Ahem!

Frank and Rosa bow/curtsey

FRANK & ROSA Your Highness!.

ELIZA You silly Sciencers. You can call me Elizabeth... if you let me help

FRANK Thankyou Elizabeth, will you help us look at the map?

Princess Elizabeth studies the map.

ROSA (*to Lily*) We've got traces of blood

LILY And I've got a blood sample from Guy Fawkes - who has confessed to being a Plotter, but says he doesn't know where the others are hiding now.

FRANK We think we know the names of the other Plotters, and Elizabeth has pointed out their houses on the map. So, their hideaway will be at any of these 4 possible places...

ELIZA But which one? Lily? Lily! Which one?

LILY I don't know yet. We need to test the samples of river water to see the micro-organisms, or diatoms. Every river is different, so we can work out which river the water came from.

FRANK The wood fragments we found are from trees that grow in these areas of the map, so we can cross reference the locations with the rivers.

ELIZA You have to do all that? (*to Lily*) I thought you *knew everything!* –

ROSA We only know, what we can find out by experiments and testing.

LILY That’s what science is.

ELIZA **THAT IS SCIENCE?** All these little bits and spots and dia-tomatoes, and adding up, that’s worse than homework!

LILY Elizabeth –

ELIZA Science is RUBBISH! It takes forever and you’ll never find the Plotters. They’ll make me queen, and the crown will squash my head **AND ITS ALL YOUR FAULT!**

FRANK Lily is doing her best -

ROSA We all are -

ELIZA **I’M NOT LISTENING! I’M GOING TO SIT IN THE BOAT AND STICK MY HEAD IN THE WATER AND DRINK UNTIL I AM SICK!**

FRANK She won’t do it.... Will she?

Lily thinks about this, and then goes over to Elizabeth, who is crying.

LILY Elizabeth? Princess...

ELIZA **GO. AWAY.**

LILY OK, I’m just going to sit here a bit. Is that OK?

ELIZA If my dad was here, the King and his ARMY – they’d jump on their horses and chase the baddies all over the country to find out where they are.

FRANK But Lily wants to know *where* they are first, because that’s scientific

ELIZA Science is BORING and POO.

LILY When I was a little girl, I used to think science was boring. Or, something only boys did.

ELIZA Girls can do anything boys can! I can speak French, and ride a horse with my eyes closed **AND THAT’S TRUE! I’M NEARLY TEN!**

LILY Ten, eh? I didn’t look through a microscope until I was twelve.

ELIZA What’s a microscop?

ROSA A special lens -shaped glass- that makes things appear bigger.

LILY When I was 12, someone showed me what river water looked like magnified, with all these tiny living organisms moving about inside—

ROSA Like a tiny zoo.

LILY And if you thought science was a kind of magic, in a way you're right. Because when you look through a magnifying lens, it's another world....

They show Elizabeth the lens, and a glass of river water

ROSA Look inside –

Elizabeth looks in wonder through the lens

ELIZA What are they? (*laughs, delighted*) Little, fluffy, wiggly – (*she takes her eye away and looks at the water*) All that life...is in there?

LILY And not only that, but all those diatoms in this glass tell us everywhere the river has been; what soil, what rocks, what plants it flowed over. Where it comes from...

FRANK (*calls over*) we've got a match!

ROSA The River Oakley!

LILY We know where they are!

Princess Elizabeth jumps excitedly. Frank and Rosa scramble to attention.

Scene 6, The Chase Is On

Lily addresses the audience.

LILY Look, I know some of you are really disappointed about missing the lecture on Mass Spectrometry, but for anyone interested you can visit our Lab any time. And if you are interested in Microbiology or Pathology in general, you should look up SfAM or the Royal College of Pathologists online – because I really want to tell you the next part of our story!

As Lily talks, Elizabeth, Rosa and Frank 'gallop' mount their imaginary horses.

Lily joins them, all climb on horseback. Princess Elizabeth side-saddle; they all ride.

(LILY) None of us had ridden before, but Princess Elizabeth helped us get up on the royal horses, and showed us how to hold the reins and we galloped along the muddy roads out of London as the sun was coming up and the fog cleared until, we saw Holbeech House, home of Robert Catesby, ringleader of the Gunpowder Plot
(*looks over to lectern, as one by one, hats pop up*)
Rockwood! Digby! Tresham! GIVE YOURSELVES UP

PLOTTER NO! (*dissolves into coughing*)

PLOTTER 2 Never!

PLOTTER 3 (*coughs*)

LILY Ok, here's the thing... someone scratched themselves on the wooden barrels left in the undercroft. It wasn't Guido Fawkes, because it's not his blood type. And whoever was scratched, got an infection.

It's not just living things, like microorganisms, or fungi that helped us track you down.

Chemicals are found in the environment, and in our lab we can identify them by Mass Spectroscopy. Because different chemicals (or residues) have different molecular masses.

The results of the mass spectroscopy at the scene look like this: (*zigzags finger in air*)

If we are in our lab, the material that has all of its peaks is the one that is at the scene. But we don't need to do that... because your cough is identifying that one of you is infected.

You are the Gunpowder Plotters. In our time, you would be vaccinated, but we know you are not. You're ill, and we can help... but you have to give yourself up.

Noise of whispering... coughing. They raise their hands in surrender.

LILY Off to the Tower!

Scene 7, The Tower of London

We are back in Guy Fawkes cell. Princess Elizabeth and Lily look around in amazement

GUARD Yeah, I took your advice about cleaning up

LILY It's spotless. I'm impressed.

ELIZA Guy doesn't look very pleased.

Guy Fawkes sighs miserably.

GUARD he's just fed up cos he's going to be hung, drawn and quartered

ELIZA What?

LILY I'm afraid that is actually true. Guy? Guido?

He cringes in fear

FAWKES Prithee damsel, stay back! Torment me not, with your evil needles!

LILY Listen, Guy. I and my team – we're the opposite of Gunpowder Plotters who just want to do harm. We're Healthcare Scientists. Your Plotter mate, Everard Digby was infected with a bacteria, *Yersinia Pestis*, when he was injured carrying the pile of wood. All we wanted to do was keep Princess Elizabeth safe, and find him and get him treated. Frank and Rosa and I are just trying to make people well and stop diseases –

FAWKES That is why we are plotting! All the people in our towns are sick and we've had plague and we don't know what to do! No one is helping us.

ELIZA are you always washing your hands?

FAWKES What's the point of that?

ELIZA There are a lot of things you can do, to stop diseases.

GUARD She's right. I ain't never felt so well since I stopped spitting on my food to wash me vegetables!

ELIZA We can teach everyone how to stop catching bugs!

GUARD Yess your Highness, but your father, His Majersty, is really very set on the hanging and the drawing and the quarterin'

ELIZA No! I won't allow it. We shall teach all the Plotters about hand washing and let them go. I will talk to my father.

GUARD Begging your pardons, we can't just... pardon them -

LILY You must. And teach them your rhymes... so the knowledge you pass on becomes the antidote to infection by plague and all these other illnesses.

GUARD I don't think the King would allow it. The hangin' and what not is a disincentive against other crime...

FAWKES I HAVE IT! As I have been John Johnson, Guy and Guido Fawkes – I, and my fellow Plotters shall new names take again. Mr Scientist, Sir Infection – simple, honest names! No one shall know us, and a story shall be invented, and spread abroad.., that we were hanged, so that no one else will ever dare to Plot against the Royal family again... and we can pay for our crimes by going out and spreading good across the world.

Scene 8, Back In The Lecture Theatre

As if the scientists have just run in, like the beginning of the play

LILY *(to audience)* no sooner was the plan agreed, the birds began to sing.
(Princess Elizabeth ducks out of sight)

It was almost daylight and we rushed away and rowed the boat back to the top of Lamb's Conduit Street, and rushed in here to you...

FRANK And that was that.

*There is a noise from the side. Lily, Frank and Rosa exchange looks and creep towards it. 'Princess Elizabeth' appears. They all react/ shock/ surprise. Except she is really **Eliza** – older and not at all sounding like the nine year old Princess*

ELIZA Sorry to startle you! And apologies for the costume. We're having a special event, to celebrate Pathology week. I'm Eliza, by the way –

LILY Eliza?

ELIZA Eliza Stewart -

ROSA & FRANK hello....

ELIZA - the biomedical engineer? You called me in about your malfunctioning MALDI-ToF? I've had a look and I really can't find anything wrong with it...

LILY Oh... ok. Thankyou

ELIZA That's fine. Anytime. Goodbye.

The Scientists look at each other.

ROSA All we have to do now is write up our reports... Did anybody bring their notes back with them from 1605?

They look at one another and shake their heads.

LILY We have no evidence. No one will ever believe this really happened to us...

FRANK Never mind. Plenty of real work to be getting on with.

LILY How's it coming along with the COVID-19 tests?

ROSA I'm nearly done with the sample plates....I just need to wash my hands.

LILY Listen...? Do you hear that? A sort of chanting.... And that voice, reminds me of being in the Tower of London....

GUARD (*entering, shouts*) Get in line!

They line up as a row of Prisoners

GUARD Alright, you horrible smelly prisoners!

What do Healthcare Scientists do?

(the 'Prisoners' join in the chant in unison, performing actions to the song)

GUARD Healthcare Scientists are often consider-ed

The forgotten workforce in the-

ALL N! H! S!

GUARD We are small in numbers,
But for impact,

ALL we're the best!

GUARD Eighty percent of diagnosis, and therefore people put on the pathway to better health, have that diagnosis made by –

ALL HCS!
We don't just work in labs, many of you will meet us
and assume we are doctors or nurs-us.
But we ain't
We are Healthcare Scientists!

GUARD What do we say?

ALL Wash yer 'ands, wash yer ands wash yer ands!

GUARD And again!

ALL Wash yer 'ands, wash yer ands wash yer ands!

THE END!

c. N. Baldwin (November 2018, updated for March 2020)