

An Appointment with Dr. Nostradamus

Dr. N welcomed his patient, Rathern Goodfolk, who was suffering from eczema and weakness in the limbs.

"How be thee, Rath?"

"The pain is consuming, sir, and my skin does flame as a burning ember."

Dr. N reached under his robe, rummaged for a moment, then pulled out his sheathed dagger. "In that case, it is time to bleed you. Lie on yon couch."

"Wait, kind doctor. Perhaps...a potion, or elixir...or..." He trailed off lamely, distressed.

"Bleeding works. Now hoist thy skinny buttocks over here."

Rath complied, protesting. "If bleeding assuages me not, what then?"

"Bleeding works. It is accepted medical procedure. It is our...only procedure."

Rath tried to stall. "Perhaps I may seek advice from another, and forgo your attentions today."

Dr. N's face turned purple. "A second opinion?! Perhaps ye would like to hear more of my prophecies, Mr. Goodfolk."

"No! Please! No!"

Dr. N continued, anyway. "I see a vast nation of afflicted, who have no one to bleed them. The sick are given herbs and potions that do not heal their suffering. They gather in square, soulless houses to seek remedies." His voice rose. "Each man must part with his coin, giving his entire fortune to charlatans in robes and cloths that hide their faces. I see all of humanity bowed before fantastic machines that take the coin into one side, and dispense curious bits of parchment on which is written instructions for...for..." He held his hands to his temples, eyes heavenward. "The vision is gone." In a jerky theatrical flourish, he dropped the dagger and fell to his knees, forehead touching the floor. "I beseech Thee, O Lord, to let all within the sound of my voice see the danger ahead, if this scourge of alternative advice is allowed."

He rose slowly, smoothed out his robe, and faced a now sobbing Rath.

"Willst ye now be bled, or will Rathern Goodfolk disobey the will of the Almighty?"

Rath gulped. "I will be bled, and this be the last time." He placed the knotted rag into his mouth and bit down.

Dr. N unsheathed his dagger and made a shallow cut into a vein on Rath's arm. Rath's blood spiraled down his arm into a silver chalice. After an interminable few minutes, Dr. N applied a tourniquet, and prepared to usher Rath out. Before they could move, he once more fell to his knees, forehead to the floor,

moaning and drooling.

"I have received another mysterious vision." He announced. "It has been revealed that the Chargers will win the SuperBowl."

"What nonsense be this?" Rath was tiring of Dr. N.

Dr. N stood, picked up the chalice of blood and lifted it to his lips. "Cheers." he said, then drank.

He put down the empty cup and turned to Rath.

"Perhaps, just perhaps, a poultice of nettleweed and rosemary will soothe thy skin."

Stunned, Rath hurried from the house, vowing never to return.