ROBERT.
Is that understood?
ISAAC.
Yes.
ROBERT.
Good.
ISAAC.
So are you going to help me take out the needle?
ROBERT.

ISAAC.

ROBERT.

ISAAC.
Robert?
(Robert leaves.)
Robert?
Robert?
Aw crap.
(Long silence.)
ACTOR.
Minutes pass.
Minutes are passing.
And everyone's gone.
ISAAC.
Hours are passing and no one's coming for me.
I haven't eaten anything.
I chew on my fingers.
They bleed.
I think somewhere along the way I fucked up.
ACTOR.
Days pass.
(Actor, on Isaac's behalf, marks out the passing days in hatch marks on the wall.)
ISAAC.
I went too far.
ACTOR.
And days keep passing.
(More hatch marks.)

ISAAC.
And it kind of sucked going too far.
I wish I lived a different life.
I wonder if it's too late to change.
I don't think it's too late to change.
It's not like I'm 30.
I can become a farmer.
I can work with sheep.
I can grow carrots.
I can work in the dirt.
Working with carrots and dirt and sheep is better than working with people.
ACTOR.
And weeks pass and he thinks —
ISAAC.
And I can get married.
Catherine can marry me.
And we'll stay here.
And I can help out in the apothecary.
... If only Catherine were still around.
ACTOR.
And after more weeks pass he prays —
ISAAC.
Dear God,
I'd like you to bring back Catherine.
I miss her. I'd like to see her again.
I'd like to tell her that I miss her and wish I could marry her.
Amen.
ACTOR.
Amen he says.
ISAAC.
Amen.
ACTOR.
And God hears Isaac,
and God sends Catherine back for one last visit.
ISAAC.
Hey.
CATHERINE.
God told me I should come back.
ISAAC.
I asked him to bring you back.

ACTOR.
Scene Five, the final scene.

CATHERINE.
What do you want?

ISAAC.
I've been having a bad month.

CATHERINE.
You have a needle in your eye.

ISAAC.
I know.

I put the needle in my eye and Robert was supposed to help me take it out, but he didn't and he left and I've been stuck here with a needle in my eye. Every time I go to try to take it out, it starts to hurt. So instead I just have to stay really still and not move the eye.

... It's so dry, and

I can hear in my head the eyeball rubbing up against the side of the needle.

It's kind of squeaky.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
I've been sitting here a long time and thinking and thinking ...

CATHERINE.
What have you been thinking about?

ISAAC.
You.

CATHERINE.
Me?

ISAAC.
And me. You and me.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
I want to marry you. I am ready to marry you and settle down here.

I don't want the fellowship.

I don't want the Royal Society.

I don't want any of this.

I'm tired of light and I'm tired of thinking.

I am always looking at everything, and I am always asking questions.

It would be nice to be able to look at a leaf and say that is a leaf, and to look at a dog and say that is a dog, and look at a cat and say that's a stupid cat, and just be happy at that.

And so I want to become a farmer.

CATHERINE.
But you hate farmers.

ISAAC.
I know, but I want to spend my time making things grow and not thinking too much about it.

I'd like to live a life with you and have my life be about the people I'm spending it with.

I'd like friends.

I'd like to not be alone.

I did not used to want this but now I do.

I've changed.

CATHERINE.
You have?

ISAAC.
I've changed.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
I've changed.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
I've changed.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
I think you just think that because you have a needle in your eye.

I think it's more complicated than that.

I think you can think you feel something that's not really there.

I think that when I take out the needle — and I think that when you start feeling safe again —

I think you'll change back to the person you were.

... That's what I think.

ISAAC.

No, it's real. It's for real because there's nothing else I can do.

CATHERINE.
ISAAC.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
He found the stuff I wrote.

CATHERINE.
Who?

ISAAC.
Robert. He found the stuff, my papers on theology.
He found the stuff that I wrote that could get me in trouble
and he took it.
He told me that if I ever tried to get my writings published
or if I ever tried to get into the Royal Society
or if I ever tried to take that job with Trinity,
he told me that he’d show everyone what I wrote.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
So I don’t even really have a choice here.

CATHERINE.
If you don’t have a choice then you didn’t choose.

ISAAC.
Well I mean, it was a combination of things.

CATHERINE.
But hold on a second.
What if you could make those papers vanish.
Would you change your mind?

ISAAC.
No. No, I’ve said I’ve changed and I’ve changed.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.

CATHERINE.
Robert has asked me to marry him.

ISAAC.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
Is this a hypothetical thing?

CATHERINE.
This is what it is.
This is real.

ISAAC.
He asked me to marry him.

ISAAC.
When have you been hanging out with him?

CATHERINE.
The past couple of weeks.

ISAAC.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.

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CATHERINE.

ISAAC.

CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
and you are fucked up, and you're right, Robert's fucked up too.
But the difference is Robert's nice to me.
Robert cares about me.
Robert wants to have children with me.
Robert cares less about dogs but that's okay.
I'd rather someone care more about me than about dogs.
And sure, Robert cares about his work,
but Robert knows how to care about me and his work.
He can do both and you can do both too, I know you can,
but you won't and you don't, and that's the difference.
ISAAC.

CATHERINE.
You say Robert has the papers that could destroy your career.
I could take those papers. I could burn them. I could make it a non-issue.
ISAAC.

CATHERINE.
I'm going to give you a choice.
You can pick me.
You can give up all of this stuff with your career and the fellowship.
We can marry and you'll become a farmer and we'll stay here.
Or ... I can marry Robert. And I will find those papers,
and I will take them and I will make a fire and I will burn them,
and Robert will never be able to use those papers against you.
And you can have your career and you can go off to Trinity College,
become a Bachelor of Science, get your fellowship,
and live the life of a monk.
You pick. Now's your chance to make a choice.

ISAAC.
Easy. I won't become a fellow.
CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
I'm not going to become a fellow, I've given that up.
We can get married.

CATHERINE.
Is that your choice?
Is that what you really want?
ISAAC.
Yes, that's my choice, that's what I really want.
CATHERINE.
Alright.
(Catherine removes the needle.)
ISAAC.
That feels better.
CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
Wow.
(Catherine leans forward — they kiss, a long kiss.)
Thank you.
CATHERINE.
This is good. This will be good.
This will be good for both of us.
ISAAC.
Yes, I think so.
(She kisses him again.)
I should eat. Because I haven't eaten anything for like a month.
CATHERINE.
I'll see what you have in the kitchen.
(She exits. He sits in the silence. For awhile.)
ISAAC.
(Calling off.)
Hey, just a thought.
I wonder if it would be a good idea if you went back to Robert just to get those papers, because it would be good to just have them back. Maybe pretend just a little bit longer that you're going to marry him, just long enough to get those papers, and then bring them back. And then we can get married.
CATHERINE.

ISAAC.
Is that okay?
CATHERINE.
That's okay.
ISAAC.
You’ll do that for me?
CATHERINE.
Yeah.
ISAAC.
Yay.
CATHERINE.
... In fact, I should probably go do that now.
ISAAC.
Oh.
Okay.
Yeah.
The sooner the better.
CATHERINE.
Yep.
ISAAC.
I’ll see you soon.
CATHERINE.
Okay.
(Actor walks upstage to the wall, takes an eraser and begins erasing all of the writing.)

ACTOR.
And she leaves.
She goes and she burns the papers
but she does not marry Robert.
but she also does not return to Isaac.
She is gone and she is gone for good.
But then again, all of that is fiction,
Catherine meeting Robert and the threats and the blackmail and,
all of it ether, if it’s not written here, just ether,
just a little lie to help you see something that’s difficult to see.
(Actor turns to Isaac.)
Because there’s a lot that Isaac, that you, Isaac,
cannot, could not see,
and if you could see all that there was to see you would know,
You would know —
and all of this is true, everything I’m about to say is true —
you would know that you’re not exactly right about light.
You would know that light is sort of particle and sort of wave.

Later, you’ll figure out how motion works,
and you’ll figure out a lot about how gravity works.
And that’s the thing you’ll be most famous for.
And the truth is, that you and Robert,
you haven’t met yet, but you will meet,
in another couple of years,
you’ll cross paths, and you won’t like each other, that is true.
And it’s true that you will join the Royal Society, but when
Robert starts criticizing your work,
you’ll have a nervous breakdown, for real, and
you’ll leave and …
You will become a fellow at Trinity College.
And even later, you will become the president of the Royal Society.
And someday Robert will die and soon after he dies,
a lot of his papers will disappear and no one will know how or why.
People, historians will wonder but they can’t know for sure.
And it’s possible that there a lot of things that Robert did
do that he’ll never get credit for and —
Even his portraits will disappear and no one from then on on
no one will know what Robert even looked like.
Robert will just sort of fade.
ISAAC.

ACTOR.
You’ll never marry.
And towards the end of your life,
you’ll try to buy the house,
Catherine’s house with the attic,
the house that has the verses written on the wall.
You’ll try to buy the house and people years, decades, centuries later,
people will wonder why, and they won’t be able to find an answer.
ISAAC.

ACTOR.
And when you die, you’ll die alone.
And when you die, everyone will say
that you’re one of the greatest people who ever lived,
and for the remainder of human existence, everyone will say that
you’re one of the greatest people who ever lived.
But still, when you die, you will die alone.