

Stories for lipreading



[Out of the Ages by Lewis Thomas – Setting the Scene](#)

This mysterious story begins in 1820 and then moves to 1871. The setting is London Charterhouse which was established in 1611. It was an almshouse for the elderly and infirm, but also housed a school in what had been a Carthusian monastery. The monastery was dissolved (closed down) during the Reformation when the monks refused to recognise Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church of England. The Prior, John Houghton, and two others were executed as a result. The 1871 section of the story takes place on the eve of the school's relocation from London to Godalming in Surrey where it still stands today.

The story opens in the porter's lodge with the porter, John Bowen, being woken by his boy assistant, Adam Willis, to deal with a stranger who has arrived seeking shelter. The porter acted as janitor, guard and general assistant. A similar role still exists today in some Oxbridge colleges.

When the story moves to 1871, Adam Willis has become the porter and is with the headmaster in the library.



Above left: the central quadrangle of the London Charterhouse. This is the square which Ryker and Bowen cross to reach the kitchens.

Above right: a view of the London Charterhouse in the 1700s. The Porter's Lodge is the small building to the right of centre, with a small gate in the diagonal wall.

The Charterhouse in London is now open to the public, with guided tours and a museum. For further details, see <http://www.thecharterhouse.org/>

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Helpful Vocabulary and Phrases

Episode One

Page 1

Master Bowen

Sheepish child

Gate

Scholar

Beak (*Charterhouse slang for school teacher*)

Page 2

Tunic

Mediterranean

Nelson

Inn

In his cups

I'll tell him to sod off

Fighty

Assistant

Sets the candle down

Spyhole

Hunched within a cloak

Accent

Petitions for residence

Cold

Have cook put something together

Courtyard

Unearthly

Episode Two

Page 3

Thomas Ryker

The voice is sonorous

London

Hanover

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Cracking in their throats
Irrelevant
Trots
Oh God. Nostalgia
Turning the spit
Aged and sapped by the years
Tankard of ale
Kind
Practically solid with grime
Joseph's

Page 4

Coercive
Sentence hanging in the air
Adam Willis
Torso
Tattoos
Black and red
Ancient muscle
The East
Ladled out
Moscow
Saluting their God and stoning the devil
Sun-baked
Pendant hanging around his neck
Tiny ampoule at the centre
He had no use for it

Episode Three

Page 5

Starts to regale
Fork-bearded bandits
Snow-tipped cities
Up the stairs
Greatest humility and respect
On account of his links
City churches
Dates

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1871

It's a new era, of course
Charging his pipe
Uneasily
Dying October light

Page 6

Retired
Get used to this Clubman lark
Legend
Tone that indicates
Monks and statesmen
Skull
Anecdote
Plate and ornaments
Henry
Relic
Medieval frippery, one would assume
Gold
Kitchen boy
Gallows
Martyrs
Scarpered
Worn your years lightly

Page 7

East
Gift
Snow-capped rooftops

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Contact: info@storiesforlipreading.org.uk