

DEBTORS ' CURSE

by

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Based on a true story.

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FADE IN:

EXT. LONDON - THE FLEET PRISON - DAY (1725)

Above a barred window, snow accumulates over a sign: "Pray Remember ye poor Debtors"

Christmas decorations and the interior sound of drunken carolers fail to cheer the foreboding facade.

INT. FLEET CHAPEL - DAY

Drunk carolers in want of harmony barely notice when...

UNCLE EDWARD ARNE (40) - disoriented, emaciated, naked, feathers stuck to the sickening filth on his body - runs in.

A VICIOUS JAILER gives chase and tackles Edward who screams with a weak, hoarse voice.

INT. FLEET STRONGROOM - DAY

The jailer shoves Edward in then locks the thick door.

A putrid river of human waste runs below loose floor boards where Edward falls face first.

VICIOUS JAILER

Only way out is by the quid, Arne.

Shivering, Edward crawls into a torn feather mattress as if it's a sleeping bag.

EXT. COVENT GARDEN - "TWO CROWNS & CUSHIONS UNDERTAKER" - DAY

"Bros. Thomas II and Edward ARNE" on the door shingle.

INT. TWO CROWNS & CUSHIONS - MORGUE - DAY

Edward's lifeless body lies half covered on a table.

Tearful THOMAS ARNE SR. (43) washes the filth and feathers from Edward's skin. A rage builds as he gags from the smell.

ARNE SR.

Did Papa's death teach you nothing,
Edward? Were I a superstitious
Catholic I should think all the
Arne men is cursed to die in
debtors' prison.

He turns, startled to find YOUNG RICHARD (6) and YOUNG SUSANNAH (11) in the doorway, clutching their rosaries.

FADE OUT.