

MEM

FERNANDO SZURMAN
MATTHIAS HOENE

THE QUEEN'S SORCERER



LOGLINE

This TV show is a unique and modern take on the story of young and handsome John Dee, who was known as a fortune-teller, magician, alchemist, spymaster, and secret lover of Princess Elizabeth.

He was an instrumental figure in the creation of the British Empire and is sometimes called “The original James Bond” and “The real Merlin.”

TONE

This is a sexy, young, and dangerous story featuring illicit love, court intrigue, action, supernatural mystery, and magic. It will be a cool and contemporary series that deals with themes that are important to us today.

Imagine “Game of Thrones” and “Harry Potter” meets “Elizabeth” and “In The Name Of The Rose.”



THE WORLD

Britain in 1552 has problems very similar to our own: The government has exhausted its resources. Trouble is brewing on the streets. The church is fighting a war against science; intellectual retrenchment means many people are afraid. While a new generation of open-minded visionaries is trying to find new ways of making sense of the world.

Princess Elisabeth and Queen Mary are trying to keep up the facade of harmony. Still, rifts between the two are quickly developing: The conflict between their Catholic and Protestant beliefs stands between them and will ultimately break them apart.

This story illuminates the dark side of the Elizabethan Empire and leans into a fantastical world of scientists toying with the supernatural. Power-hungry and corrupt officials finance occult magic to help solve problems of their own making. Greedy merchants do anything they can to expand their wealth and the reach of the Empire. While rival governments send secret agents to overthrow the Queen. And every character is caught up in the uneasy relationship between church, government, science, the supernatural, and worldly desires.





FORMAT

8x60 featuring an overarching plot, with each episode having a specific 'quest' for Dee to deal with. Each episode will be star sign themed and dramatise the different characteristics of its respective Zodiac.

THEMES

The series deals with themes of illicit love, ambition, the supernatural vs. science and religion, the power of star signs, alchemy, cosmology, and magic.

JOHN DEE

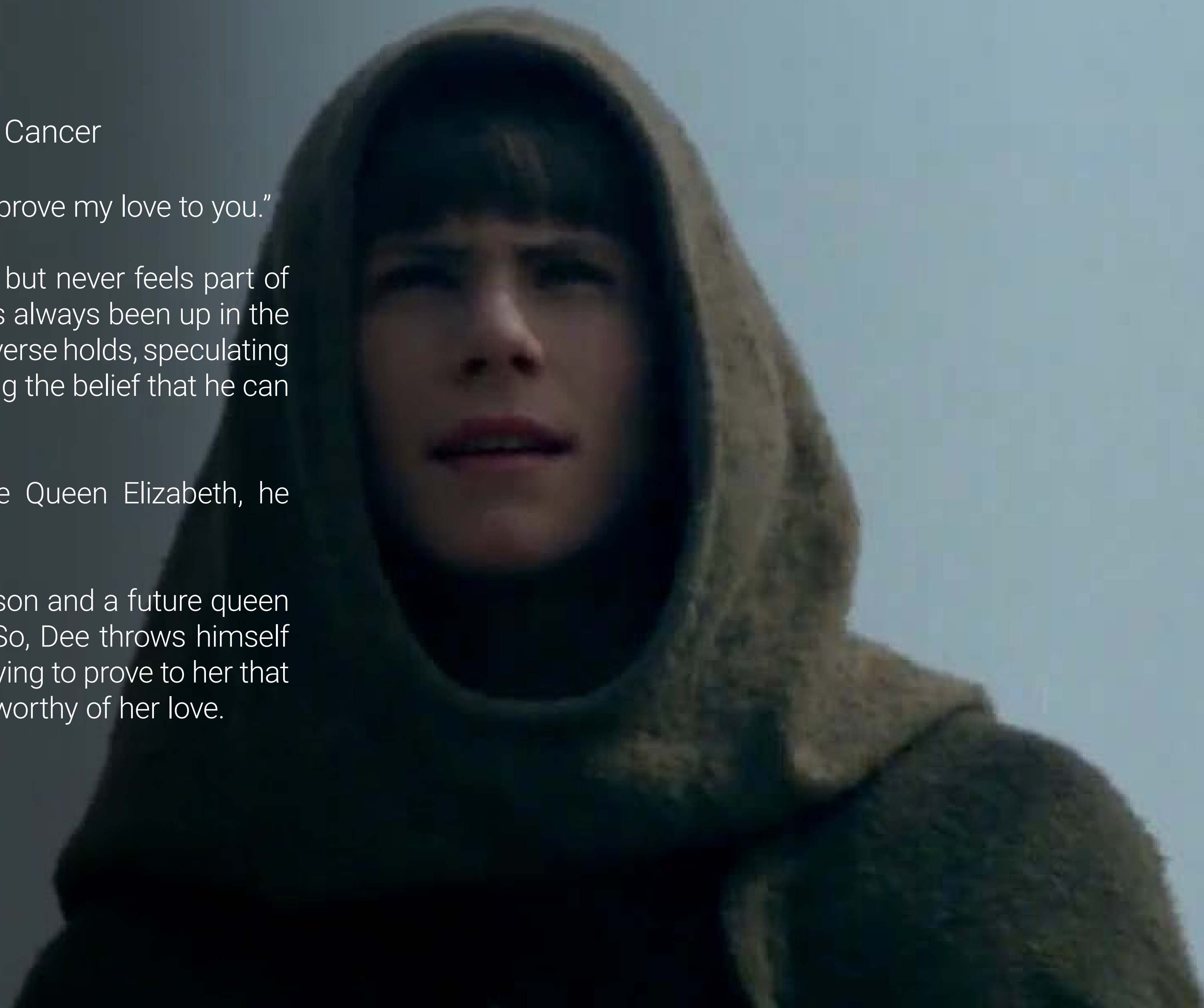
Born 13 July 1527. Zodiac: Cancer

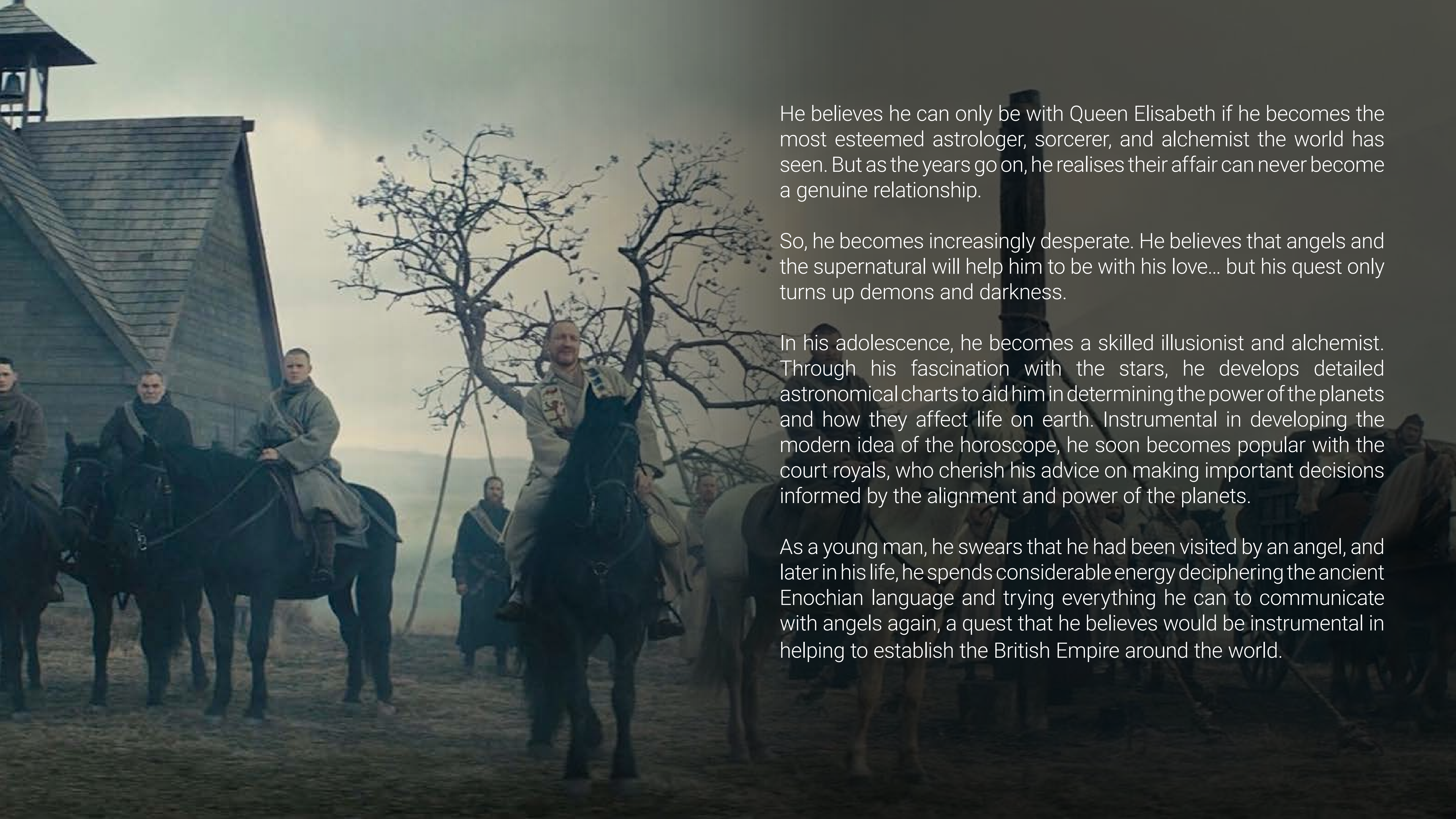
“I will bring the stars down from the sky to prove my love to you.”

John Dee grows up in a family of mercenaries but never feels part of the family dynasty. A dreamer, his head has always been up in the sky, fantasising about all the secrets the universe holds, speculating about the power of the stars, and harbouring the belief that he can communicate with angels.

After a chance encounter with the future Queen Elizabeth, he develops a lifelong love affair with her.

But the reality is that a common mercer's son and a future queen cannot be allowed to have a relationship. So, Dee throws himself into the world of science and knowledge, trying to prove to her that even though he's from a lower class, he is worthy of her love.



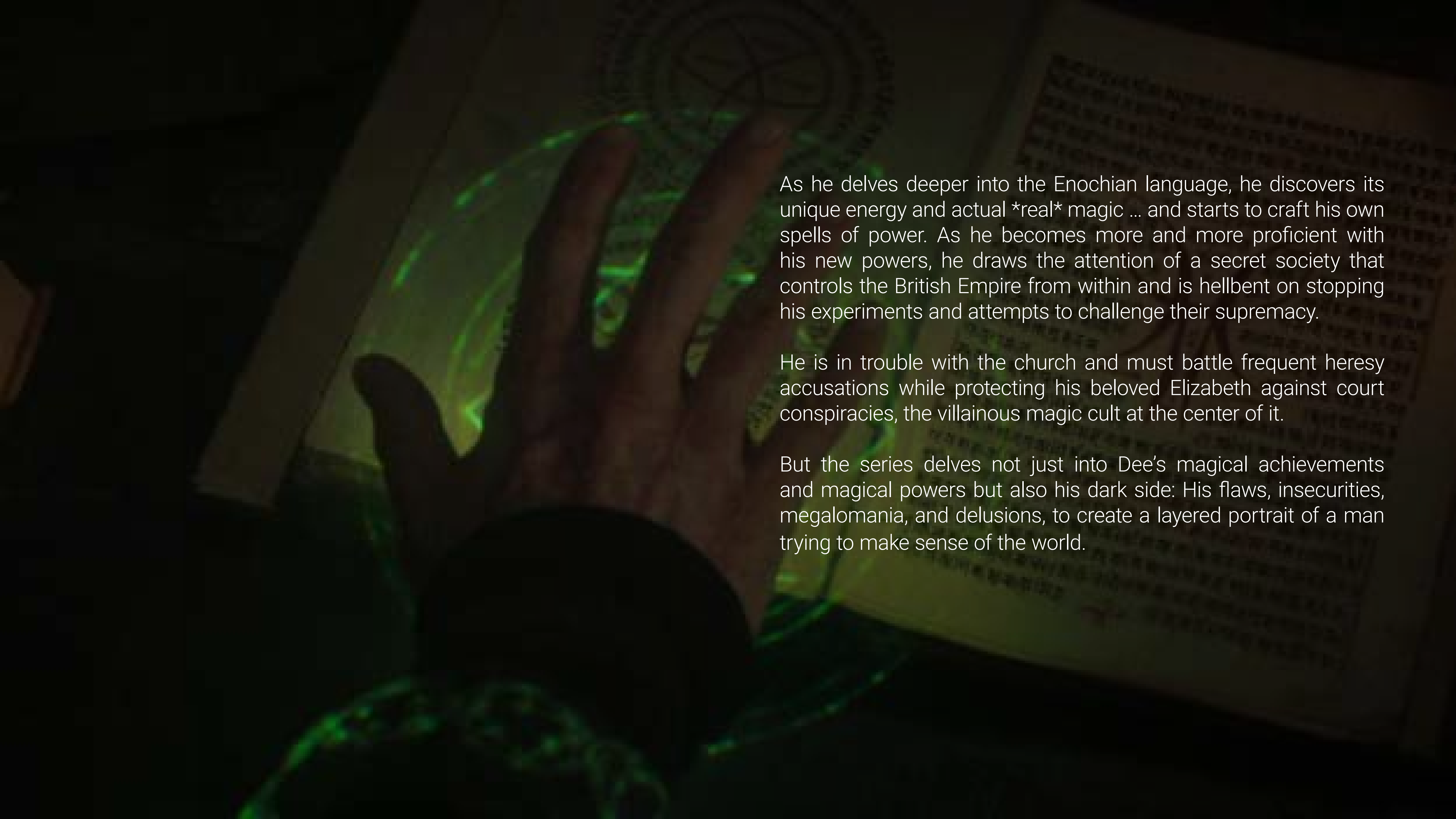


He believes he can only be with Queen Elisabeth if he becomes the most esteemed astrologer, sorcerer, and alchemist the world has seen. But as the years go on, he realises their affair can never become a genuine relationship.

So, he becomes increasingly desperate. He believes that angels and the supernatural will help him to be with his love... but his quest only turns up demons and darkness.

In his adolescence, he becomes a skilled illusionist and alchemist. Through his fascination with the stars, he develops detailed astronomical charts to aid him in determining the power of the planets and how they affect life on earth. Instrumental in developing the modern idea of the horoscope, he soon becomes popular with the court royals, who cherish his advice on making important decisions informed by the alignment and power of the planets.

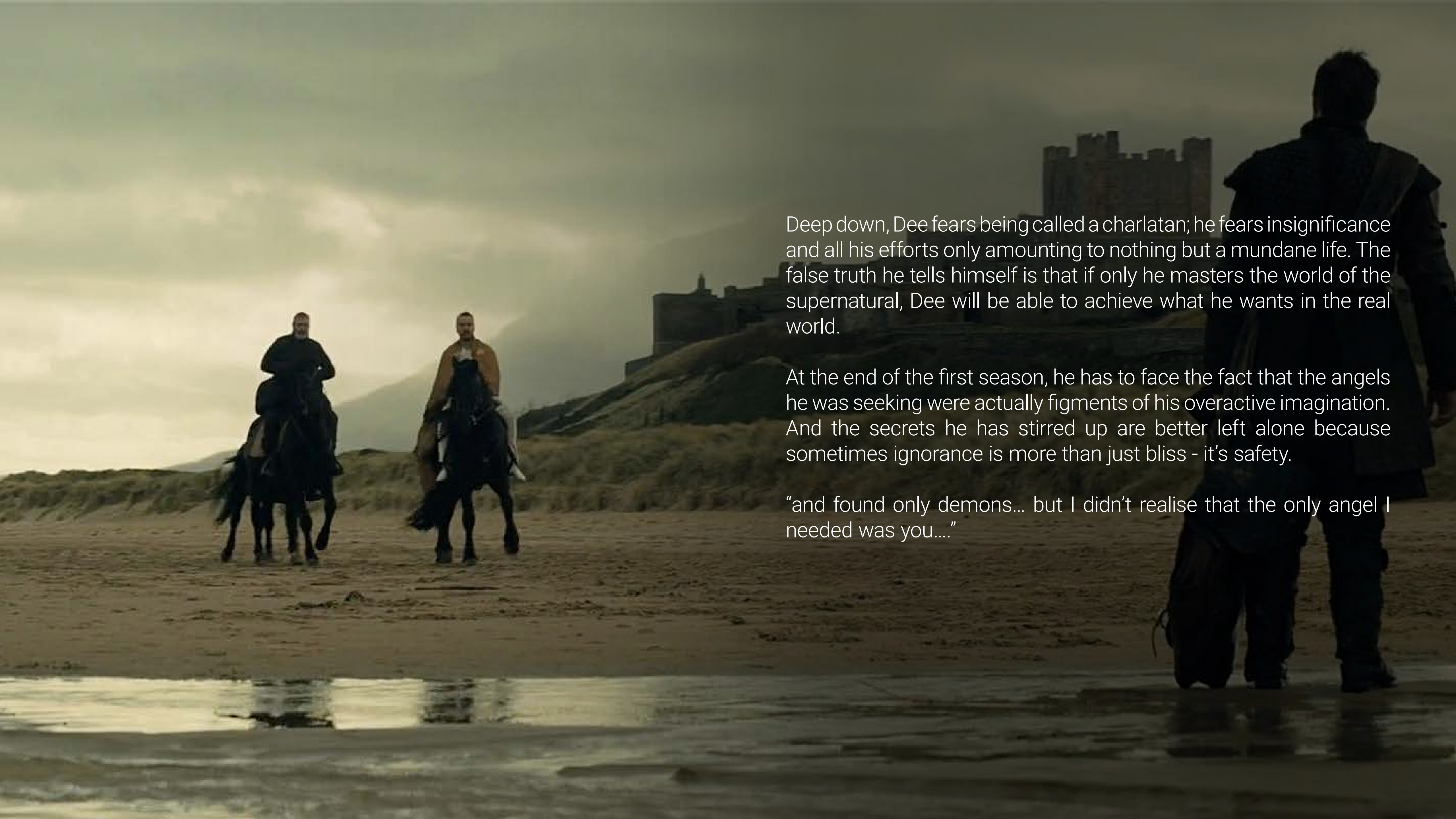
As a young man, he swears that he had been visited by an angel, and later in his life, he spends considerable energy deciphering the ancient Enochian language and trying everything he can to communicate with angels again, a quest that he believes would be instrumental in helping to establish the British Empire around the world.

A close-up, dimly lit image of a hand holding a book. The book's pages are illuminated with a vibrant green light, revealing Enochian text and complex geometric diagrams. The hand is positioned in the center, with fingers spread, holding the book open. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the glowing text and the hand's interaction with the book.

As he delves deeper into the Enochian language, he discovers its unique energy and actual *real* magic ... and starts to craft his own spells of power. As he becomes more and more proficient with his new powers, he draws the attention of a secret society that controls the British Empire from within and is hellbent on stopping his experiments and attempts to challenge their supremacy.

He is in trouble with the church and must battle frequent heresy accusations while protecting his beloved Elizabeth against court conspiracies, the villainous magic cult at the center of it.

But the series delves not just into Dee's magical achievements and magical powers but also his dark side: His flaws, insecurities, megalomania, and delusions, to create a layered portrait of a man trying to make sense of the world.



Deep down, Dee fears being called a charlatan; he fears insignificance and all his efforts only amounting to nothing but a mundane life. The false truth he tells himself is that if only he masters the world of the supernatural, Dee will be able to achieve what he wants in the real world.

At the end of the first season, he has to face the fact that the angels he was seeking were actually figments of his overactive imagination. And the secrets he has stirred up are better left alone because sometimes ignorance is more than just bliss - it's safety.

"and found only demons... but I didn't realise that the only angel I needed was you...."

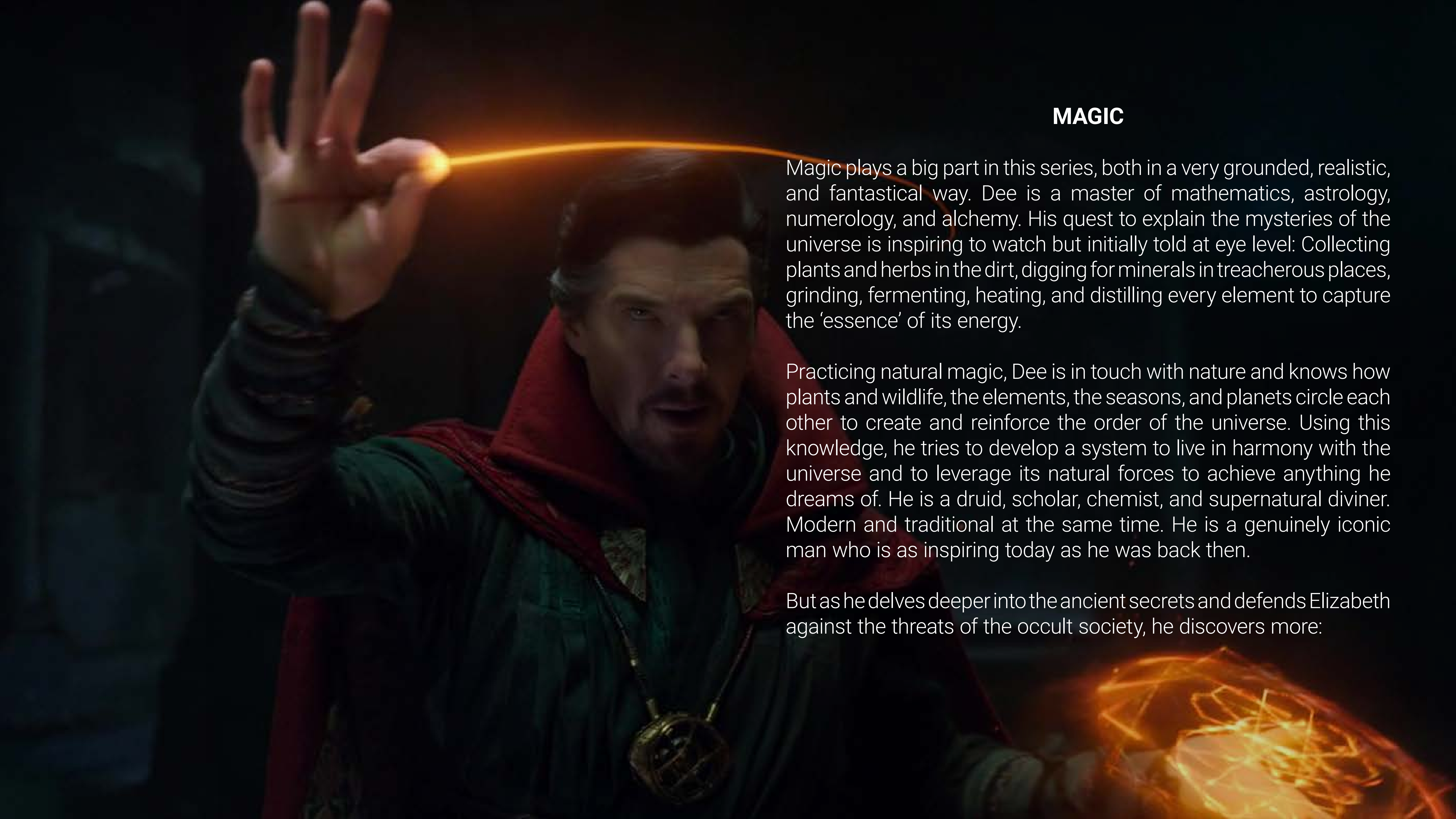


PRINCESS ELIZABETH

Born on 7 September 1533. Zodiac: Virgo.

Elisabeth grew up in a regulated, high-stakes environment—feeling like a pawn in a chess game—and she has a real need for the mythic, for love and to believe in a greater cosmic order.

Dee is the man that fulfills those needs—with him, she feels like she can be authentically herself—yet she knows they can never be together properly. But she still has hopes, and as she navigates the complicated situation with her sister, Queen Mary, she appreciates everything Dee does for her. But as he stirs up darker and darker forces, she starts to doubt herself; maybe he brings too much trouble to the crown, and perhaps he is not the right partner for her?

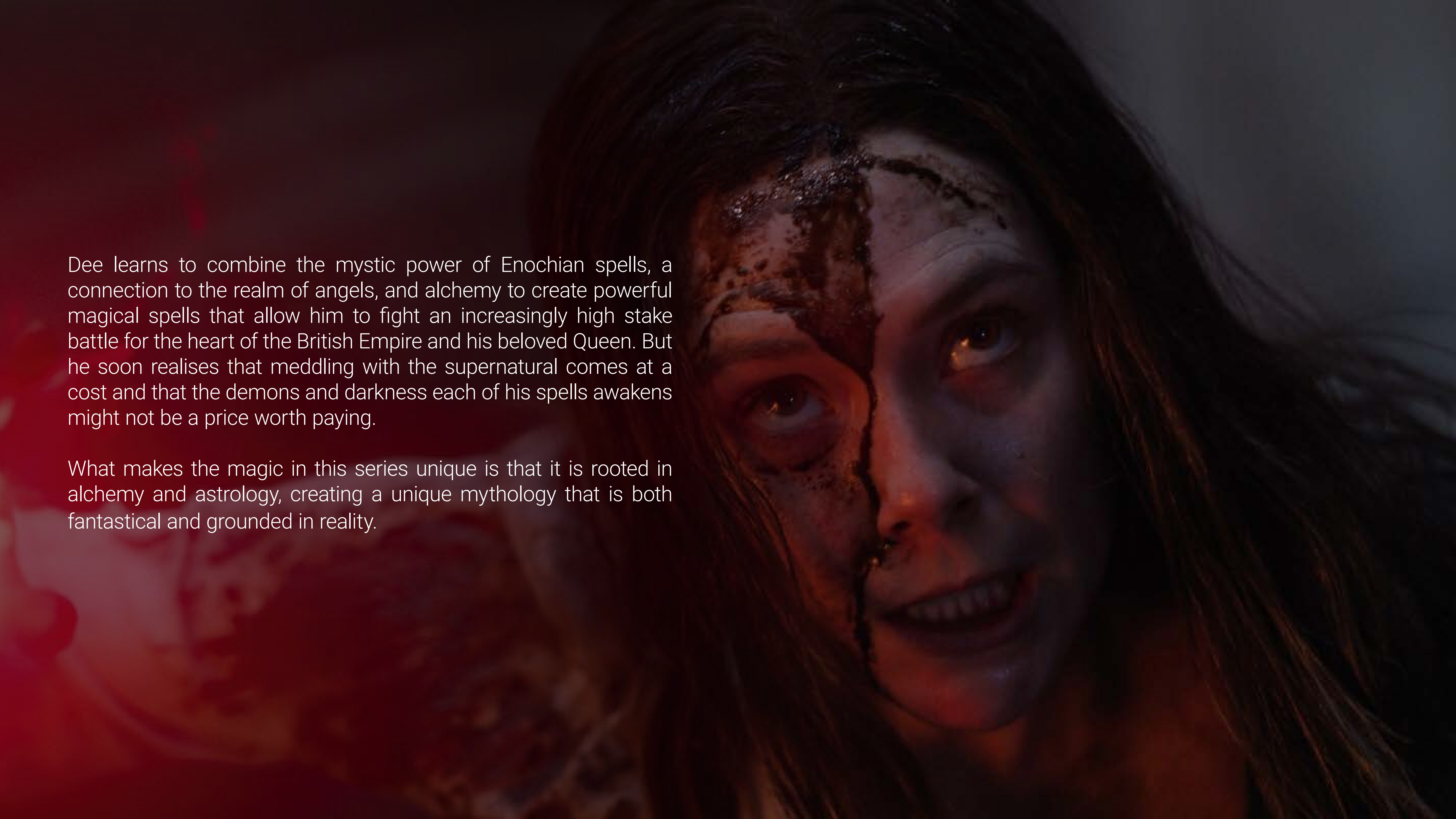


MAGIC

Magic plays a big part in this series, both in a very grounded, realistic, and fantastical way. Dee is a master of mathematics, astrology, numerology, and alchemy. His quest to explain the mysteries of the universe is inspiring to watch but initially told at eye level: Collecting plants and herbs in the dirt, digging for minerals in treacherous places, grinding, fermenting, heating, and distilling every element to capture the 'essence' of its energy.

Practicing natural magic, Dee is in touch with nature and knows how plants and wildlife, the elements, the seasons, and planets circle each other to create and reinforce the order of the universe. Using this knowledge, he tries to develop a system to live in harmony with the universe and to leverage its natural forces to achieve anything he dreams of. He is a druid, scholar, chemist, and supernatural diviner. Modern and traditional at the same time. He is a genuinely iconic man who is as inspiring today as he was back then.

But as he delves deeper into the ancient secrets and defends Elizabeth against the threats of the occult society, he discovers more:

A close-up of a woman's face, likely from the TV series 'Merlin'. She has long, dark hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious, intense expression. Her face is covered in dark, textured markings, possibly mud or magic, particularly on her forehead and cheek. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows, creating a mysterious and somewhat menacing atmosphere. The background is dark and out of focus.

Dee learns to combine the mystic power of Enochian spells, a connection to the realm of angels, and alchemy to create powerful magical spells that allow him to fight an increasingly high stake battle for the heart of the British Empire and his beloved Queen. But he soon realises that meddling with the supernatural comes at a cost and that the demons and darkness each of his spells awakens might not be a price worth paying.

What makes the magic in this series unique is that it is rooted in alchemy and astrology, creating a unique mythology that is both fantastical and grounded in reality.



STORY / FIRST SEASON

The first season will throw us knee-deep into the forbidden love story between John Dee and Princess Elizabeth and the politics and religious tensions of the British Empire. It will showcase a unique blend of period spy set pieces and action-packed magic battles.

Dee and Elizabeth's impossible and passionate meetings become increasingly dangerous, and they escape detection many times. But when one of the court members finds out, they must ensure his silence by all means possible, even dark magic. Dee tries to prove his love for and protect Elizabeth by helping to overthrow Queen Mary.

Elizabeth is enamoured with this mystical, charming gentleman, but is she just using him to help her gain the throne?

Dee tries to prove to Elizabeth that he is worthy of her and will even try to bring the angels down from the sky to be with her. But, in the end, he will have to decide between his love for Elizabeth and her safety and his desire to be recognised as a true sorcerer.

STRUCTURE

Each episode is star sign themed and informed by its ascendants and sun and moon signs.

STORY

PRINCESS Elizabeth (19) and JOHN DEE (25) have known each other since childhood. We meet them, waking up late after a wild night together. She panics when her maids clamour to enter her chamber. Dee gathers his clothes, clambers out of the window, and — chased by royal guards — flees across rooftops, alleyways, steamy bedrooms, and slippery laundry parlours, and only narrowly escapes.

He enters his workshop wearing only his nightgown and is surprised by a young man, STANLEY, waiting to be interviewed for a job. Unfortunately, Dee totally forgot that he had been advertising for an assistant, and just as he tries to explain his outfit and flushed complexion, BANG! BANG! The palace guard demands to be let in. Stanley jumps in and makes up a cover story for Dee, putting the guards at ease... and in turn secures himself the job as Dee's assistant.

Dee washes and puts some more respectable clothes on. Stanley wants to know what the job actually entails apart from pulling the wool over flustered palace guards' eyes? Dee tells him he is a scholar, mathematician, astrologer, and mythicist who will change the world. He shows him 'Mutatio Aurum'—a machine covered in Enochian runes built to turn lead into gold. But when Stanley—as instructed—pulls the lever to start the mechanism, it rattles, spurts out black

soot, and then bursts into flames. It's a work in progress after all, apologises Dee. What pays the bills, though—the real work—is writing horoscopes for the court ladies and gentlemen. Telling them what the future will bring is where the *real gold* is made.



Stanley and Dee take turns scanning the sky with his telescope, analysing the position of the stars in relation to the moon and the seasons, and cross-referencing with Dee's elaborate charts to come up with advice for Dee's clients.


Stanley questions Dee. Are you not just simply making up what to say? But Dee tells him that the power of the stars is real. You can feel it, if you let your intellect get out of the way.

He tries to show him: They close their eyes... can you feel the celestial body? The stars and their influence on our world? Their power? Mmh.. maybe... Stanley replies. Keep feeling it. Nothing... mmh... Rrrrhhrh... Suddenly, the earth rumbles. Bottles fall off the shelves, and a few vials in the laboratory crack. SEE!!! Dee proclaims. The stars' power is real!

But unbeknownst to them, it's the lead machine Mutatio Aurum that caused the quake... it crackles with magic energy — something is happening — and... is there some gold sheen on the lead?

Meanwhile, Elizabeth faces QUEEN MARY'S wrath: She wants to know who the person running from her chamber is, and Elizabeth tells her that it was a burglar, who had just snuck in. Mary doesn't know if she should believe her sister. She tells her that the Empire has many enemies and that they must present a united front. And that there are dangers from all sides. Assassins. Spies. Burglars. Gallivanting Men. And that Elizabeth must be vigilant against all of them.



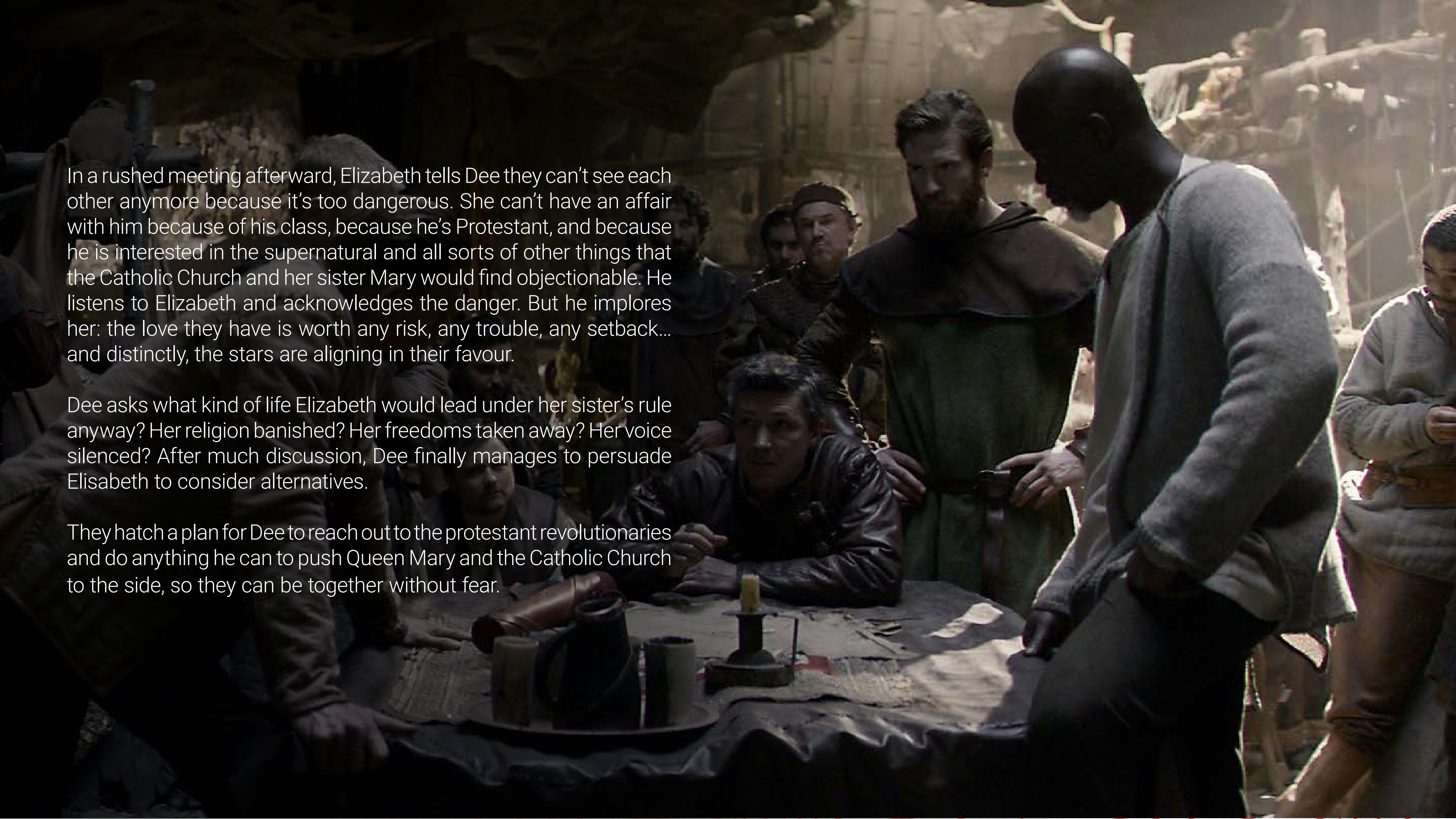
The background image is a historical scene of a town square. In the foreground, a large, dense crowd of people is gathered, many holding up small flags or banners. In the middle ground, there is a long, multi-story building with many windows. To the right, a tall church tower with a clock face and a pointed roof is visible. In the background, there are rolling hills under a bright sky.

The night sets on London, crows squawk, barges moor on the Thames, the gentle hubbub of thousands of people asleep... not aware yet of the story that will change all of their lives and the Empire with it.

The next day, Dee and Stanley present their horoscopes and readings of the stars to the court's wealthy ladies. Mostly they are after advice on love and marriage, but some start flirting with Dee, who is flattered but tells them that his heart is pledged to science, and not earthly delights. But the girls don't take him seriously. They think his 'science' is a bit of fun and that he's a charlatan who tells them what they want to hear. This hurts Dee, who sees himself as a serious scholar, not a showman or quack doctor. He is about to justify himself when they are interrupted by the announcement of a public hanging that afternoon. Attendance is compulsory.

On the town square, 'Bloody' Queen Mary prepares to execute a witch and three Protestant traitors.

Queen Mary forces her sister Elizabeth—also a protestant—to watch, reinforcing the point that she must behave or suffer a similar fate. Dee watches in terror... what would happen if anyone found out about him and Elizabeth? Would he be executed?



In a rushed meeting afterward, Elizabeth tells Dee they can't see each other anymore because it's too dangerous. She can't have an affair with him because of his class, because he's Protestant, and because he is interested in the supernatural and all sorts of other things that the Catholic Church and her sister Mary would find objectionable. He listens to Elizabeth and acknowledges the danger. But he implores her: the love they have is worth any risk, any trouble, any setback... and distinctly, the stars are aligning in their favour.

Dee asks what kind of life Elizabeth would lead under her sister's rule anyway? Her religion banished? Her freedoms taken away? Her voice silenced? After much discussion, Dee finally manages to persuade Elisabeth to consider alternatives.


They hatch a plan for Dee to reach out to the protestant revolutionaries and do anything he can to push Queen Mary and the Catholic Church to the side, so they can be together without fear.

Meanwhile, Queen Mary meets BISHOP EDMUND BONNER in a secret cavern where he is congregating with the CABALIST SOCIETY and their leader, the dark occultist SANDERS VERHOEVEN. Mary implores them to do anything necessary to protect her against her foes in England and abroad. And to make sure all Protestant revolutionaries are found and punished. Verhoeven tells her he needs a particular grimoire called the “Magica Naturalis” to help him unlock the powers he needs. In a ritual, they pinpoint the location of the grimoire to Dee’s laboratory.

At a secret meeting in the cellar of a pub, Dee makes contact with a protestant rebel, WILLIAM THOMAS ESQ, who puts forward his plan to assassinate Mary. But Dee dislikes this gentleman, and his plan seems unrealistic and reckless.

That night, Dee decides to ask the stars for help again and prepares herbal tinctures alongside reading a few powerful passages from an alchemist’s spell book he recently acquired, the Magica Naturalis — and things stir in his workshop — books fly off the shelves, floating magically as a light beam descends from heaven, and an Angel manifests herself in from of Dee.





Dee is speechless. The angel whispers in a strange language. Enochian! He understands that he needs to believe in himself. He is destined for greatness... but his path will be one of pain, uncertainty, and defeat... “The secret to your success will be to...”

Smash !!! —

But just as the angel is about to reveal the secret, a thief breaks into Dee’s workshop, scrambles through the mess, breaks glass, topples shelves, and takes the Magia Naturalis. In the chaos, the angel disappears. Dee tries to catch the thief. He needs the book... but the thief doesn’t let go of it. Dee manages to tear one page out. He seizes the opportunity, recites a spell from it, and blasts a beam of fiery energy from his hands, injuring the thief and burning most of the book.

The thief flees. Dee looks at his hands. What was that? Did he just speak with an angel? And shoot magic from his fingers?

Can this be real? Is there more to this world than science and mathematics? Stanley emerges from his bedroom. Sees the workshop ruined... and Dee’s blackened fingers, with burn marks everywhere. His face drops. Dee raises his hands... fiery lightning crackles between them.

End of Pilot.

The next day, Dee recounts his experience to the Academy of Sciences. But he can't repeat the magic he previously performed, and the members ridicule him because he has no proof of the alleged angel encounters or his magic powers.

Dee meets Elizabeth at an official court ball. They dance, and while they keep changing partners and swirling around each other, he tells her about the angel and magic. Elizabeth laughs at him... but Dee swears everything he said is true. She tells him to concentrate on worldly matters, like dealing with her sister and the Catholics. Dee tells her about William Thomas' plan to assassinate her sister. Elizabeth is not impressed.

She dances with Robert Dudley, a charming and handsome man, who has a better plan: he will mobilise troops from all the surrounding counties and March upon London to overthrow Mary. But he needs money. Elizabeth changes partners and dances with Dee again. He has an idea. We can steal the gold from the vaults of the Catholic Church. A swirl and a step, and Elizabeth is with Robert Dudley again. He likes the plan. But also likes Elizabeth. He gives her a kiss on the cheek. Dee sees this... and is not happy.

After the dance, they walk the palace gardens and discuss their plan. Doubts creep in. Is it too bold? Will they end up hanged like the other traitors? Is it worth the risk? Dee looks at Elizabeth and Dudley... and is his relationship with Elizabeth even less secure than he thought?

The next day, Mary announces that she intends to marry Prince Phillip of France, to strengthen her position and that of the Catholic Church. She announces that all protestants will have to convert, or else face consequences...

Elizabeth and Dudley panic. Dee's resolve is strengthened. He goes all in: We will overthrow Mary, fight the cabalists, bring angels back down to earth, and build the grandest Empire the world has ever seen.

Elizabeth is excited about Dee's ambitions but worried about what darkness he is stirring up... and questions whether he is actually teetering on the edge of madness?

THE REST OF THE SEASON

Dee continues his studies of Magica Naturalis and tries to make sense of the parts that haven't burned. He discovers that the right combination of herbs, Enochian spells, and the stars aligning correctly is vital to making the magic work. In the meantime, he has to hide his work from the cabalistic society and evade their constant attacks.

Dee and Dudley plan and execute their heist on the catholic gold reserves, using a mix of spy-craft, magic, and good old-fashioned tunneling, while avoiding cursed black plague skeletons attacking them, the palace guard trying to find out what they are doing, and Bishop Edmund Bonner and Sander Verhoeven attempting to sabotage their efforts.

The love story between Elizabeth and Dee is beset with difficulties, too: Elizabeth is enamored by Dudley. Dee has to fight to get her back and prove he's the one for her. Unfortunately, Dee and Elizabeth's love affair leaks to a court member, and they must extract a vow of silence from her.

As his relationship with Elizabeth becomes increasingly tricky, Dee's obsession with talking to angels becomes increasingly unhealthy.

Queen Mary becomes increasingly paranoid. Urges the cabalists to defeat the enemies of the throne once and for all.

Elizabeth finds Dee with an angel... but the angel is not a heavenly being. It's a concubine from the local pub, and Dee is heavily drugged on his own potions and tinctures. Elizabeth feels betrayed... Elizabeth gives up on Dee and tells him he has gone too far... Dee realises that the angel was a figment of his imagination and an expression of his inner demons, and he starts to question everything he believed in: angels, magic, and the stars. Was it all a lie? Can a human have magic powers? Is he nothing but a charlatan, a common trickster, a deluded intellectual, not worthy of the love of his Queen?

Troops are marching on the palace. Queen Mary gathers her forces. Sanders Verhoeven is planning a destructive attack on the approaching troops.

Dee and his assistant gather their courage. Dee looks at the machine he built to turn lead into gold. And he realises, while he might not be a sorcerer, he can still use sound science and what he has learned about herbs and spells to create a bomb that will foil Verhoeven's plans. Together with his allies, he rushes through his plan and, in a big and epic action sequence keeps Verhoeven from performing his dark ritual

But Mary's troops hold strong anyway and manage to fight off the protestant soldiers. The protestants are defeated. Mary imprisons Elizabeth in the Tower of London for her role in the uprising. But Elizabeth saw how valiantly Dee tried to fight for her did for her, and she forgives him.

Dee tells the academy that he was deluded and that there is no magic or angels. But meanwhile, in his transformation machine, there is no more lead left... just a fully formed lump of gold.

Elizabeth watches the sun go down from the Tower of London... and Dee is already plotting how to break her out.

CHARACTERS

STANLEY — DEE'S ASSISTANT

Born 4 November 1533. Zodiac: Scorpio

Dee's assistant Stanley is clever, resourceful, witty, less serious and scientific than Dee. He's easygoing, lateral thinking, and a good comic foil to Dee.

QUEEN MARY I (BLOODY MARY)

Born 18 February 1516. Zodiac: Aquarius

Mary feels insecure in her grip of power and resorts to violence (she hanged 280 religious dissenters in her 5-year reign) and dark magic to protect herself and the throne. Initially, she asks Dee for help; but she is oblivious that he has a love affair with her sister and is secretly conspiring against her.

PRINCE PHILIP OF SPAIN

Born 21 May 1527. Zodiac: Taurus

Marries Queen Mary to expand the influence of the Catholic Church and the Spanish Empire and become King of England in *jure uxoris*.

EDMUND BONNER

Born 27 May 1500. Zodiac: Gemini

Bishop Edmund Bonner is a fervent believer in traditional catholic values and is trusted by Queen Mary. His ambition is to drive the Protestant church out of England, quell the uprising of heretic beliefs in science and culture, and re-establish the Catholic Church as the only true religion in England. But his dark secret is that he actively engages in the dark arts.

THE OCCULT SOCIETY

A group of mysticists who secretly control much of Europe and see Dee as a challenger to their supremacy.

SANDERS VERHOEVEN

Born 5 March 1514. Zodiac: Aries

Sanders is the head of the Occult Society. He is searching for the grimoire of power, which he thinks will enable him to contact a mighty demon who will destroy Mary's enemies.

WILLIAM THOMAS, ESQ

Born 9 September 1521. Zodiac: Virgo

The original leader of the rebellion against Queen Mary. He is a hot-headed, brash "gospeller" who conspires to assassinate Mary. However, the other protestant revolutionaries think William's plan has little chance of succeeding, so they hatch their own plot.

THOMAS WYATT

Born July 30 1503. Zodiac: Leo

An outspoken nobleman who owns large areas of Kent. At first, a staunch supporter of Queen Mary, he switches sides when she declares her intent to marry prince Philip. Raises an army to march on London to overthrow the Queen.

ROBERT DUDLEY

Born 24 June 1532. Zodiac: Cancer

The 1st Earl of Leicester, he secretly conducts the rebellion from behind the scenes. However, Princess Elisabeth is drawn to him, and when they start flirting, he becomes Dee's love rival.



MATTHIAS HOENNE

www.matthiashoene.com

Matthias is a multi-award winning film, TV and branded content director. He made his film directing debut in 2012 with StudioCanal's horror/comedy, Cockneys vs. Zombies, which premiered at London's FrightFest and has become a British cult classic. He then helmed the martial arts actioner, Enter the Warriors Gate, starring Dave Bautista and written by Robert Mark Kamen and Luc Besson for EuropaCorp. For his first TV project he directed the first season of HBO Max's adventure romp, Theodosia, with Cottonwood Media. Recently he wrapped post production on the thriller Little Bone Lodge starring Joely Richardson.

With a love for all things escapist, Matthias is currently packaging the sci-fi actioner Preservation and contained thriller Best Enemies with Anton Corp, The Berliner(s), a heist thriller set in Berlin with Studio Hamburg, Black Ferry, a Lovecraft-inspired feature with Tea Shop and the TV show The Last Kung Fu Master with Mediawan. He is also attached to EP and direct the pilot for horror/comedy Gnomes with Australian streamer Stan and set to showrun and direct edgy superhero show Death Sentence Berlin with Pantaleon Pictures.



FERNANDO SZURMAN

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Fernando is passionate about writing and directing fantastic stories that involve imagination and digital arts. Fernando comes from a Polish family, he graduated as a media communication technician at ORT and studied philosophy at UBA, specializing in aesthetics. In 2010, he started his career as a director and screenwriter with a 13 episodes series for Argentinian National TV: 'Ecos'. Some years later, he developed a doc series for Canal Encuentro.

In 2015 he started producing and directing pieces involving VFX and animation. His last short film 'Black Water' was selected at Sitges "coming soon" 2019, BIFFF 2020 and Nightvisions festivals. Nowadays, Fernando is developing 2 TV series projects and a feature film in different production stages.

CREATIVE CONTENT

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