10th October 1666

Dear Diary,

Heartbroken and terrified. That is exactly how I feel right now and I do not know what to do. I’m so alone. It all started when I awoke to banging on the door, I just knew it was mother and when I flung open that door, an immense wave of relief washed over me- I had missed her so much and I was certain that Mother was here to stay… oh how wrong I was.

Without thinking, I ran up to my mother, hoping desperately for one of her amazing hugs, but instead, I was shouted at and told not to touch her, at first I thought I had done something terrible to offend her. Feeling rejected and suddenly nervous, I studied the weathered, anxious and overwrought look on my Mother's face and then I realised that something was desperately wrong. Taking a closer look, I noticed the tear stains and worry etched on her face and all of those feelings of dread and apprehension came flooding back.

And then she told me. My poor family, who do not deserve this anguish and pain; my poor Grandma Tebbutt who is extremely sick with the monstrous plague. Even though I knew it deep down, in my heart of hearts, hearing Mother say those words will forever be imprinted on my mind. Dark thoughts of losing family members and questions about the rest of the family whirred around in my head but I kept my mouth shut and let Mother continue.

Pleading for us to be brave, she told us that we were to stay in this desolate barn on our own, looking after eaching other, caring for one another but above all, staying alive. Suddenly feeling like I had the weight of the world upon my shoulders, Mother then gave me strict instructions to open the parcel she had brought with her carefully (at least she was good spirits and laughed about how silly she must’ve looked dragging it up the hill!).

Finally, it was time for Mother and I to part ways; she made us promise not to let anybody in the barn or to cross the river- I know how important these instructions are but does she not realise that we will miss her terribly? Does she understand that when we look over the bank of the river and see the smoking chimneys of our home, how isolated and lonely we will feel? However, I could not bear to burden her with anymore so I forced a smile upon my face and said my goodbyes.

Hopefully it won’t be too long before we can be reunited; I know that we have to be strong and look after each other. I will take each day as it comes and pray for everything to be ok.

Catherine