

NEWS FROM THE STARS  
Almanac for the Year of Christ 1677

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I was with Hester when we saw the comet in the night sky over London, saw it before anyone spoke of it or wondered what it meant. It was just past midnight on an April evening, a week or more past Easter. My father had come home late from being in company, and I was anxious to hear if the playwright John Dryden had been there, or perhaps Aphra Behn, London's female playwright. Hester and I waited up in the parlor, as we often did, thinking to have a mug of ale with him while he shared his gossip. But he told me Dryden wasn't there, and when I asked who was, he only smiled at me and winked, and said it was none of my affair.

Then he went into the small parlor to read manuscripts by candlelight, and Hester and I went to our room. But before we undid our stays we both decided we were not sleepy, and agreed that the spring air felt fresh and fine. So