

**2019 ACMT Annual Scientific Meeting  
Open Mic Competition**

Title: Iocane Powder is Real? Inconceivable!

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Abstract: William Goldman's *The Princess Bride* has everything: fencing, fighting, torture, revenge. True love! Giants, snakes, spiders. Chases and escapes. However, it is poison that is at the center of the most iconic scene of this tale. The Man in Black, master of the sword and giant-slayer, sits across from Vizzini, a Sicilian mastermind and recent kidnapper of the princess. At an impasse, they agree to a battle of wits: the Man in Black declares he will secretly dissolve a tasteless, odorless poison called iocane powder into one of the two cups of wine on the table. Before they drink, it is up to Vizzini to determine which cup is harmless and which cup will lead to certain death. Unbeknownst to Vizzini, the Man in Black covertly poisons both cups of wine and relies on an acquired immunity to iocane powder to survive and triumph in the battle of wits.

Though this tale could easily be dismissed as fantasy, there may be some truth to it. Could William Goldman have been describing a real poison? Is there be a deadly powder that is odorless, tasteless and instantly soluble in water? A small amount would need able to cause a rapid collapse in one person, but be harmless in someone who has been slowly building an "immunity." And, to be completely true to the story, the poison would have originated originate in Australia. The task is daunting, but we are up to the challenge. Let's discover the origins of iocane powder!

Objective 1: Encourage the audience to think about aspects of drugs and pharmaceuticals that are often ignored such as smell, taste and solubility.

Objective 2: Discover a poison that matches the qualities of iocane powder.

Objective 3: Celebrate the timeless classic, *The Princess Bride*.