

‘Come with me,’ said Lady Jane kindly. ‘Your father wants to see you.’

‘My father? Is John Canty here?’ asked Tom. But Lady Jane did not answer him.

He followed her through many great palace rooms and then they came to a large bedroom. There was a great bed in the centre of the room. A very large man sat in a very large chair next to the bed. His face was grey and he was ill. When he saw Tom, he smiled weakly.

‘What is the problem, Edward?’ he said. ‘Are you ill? Lord Hertford tells me that you are not well.’

‘Are you the king, sir?’ asked Tom. He was afraid.

‘Of course I am the king. Don’t you know your father?’

Tom bowed. ‘Your Majesty*, I am not your son. I am not the prince. I am only poor Tom Canty of Cheap Street—’

‘Tom Canty? Cheap Street? What are you talking about? Do you think that I don’t know my only son?’ answered the king angrily. ‘You are Edward, Prince of Wales, son of King Henry the Eighth, King of England. Don’t make me angry.’

‘No, Your Majesty,’ said poor Tom.

‘I know that you sit for many hours each day with your books and your teacher. Those languages – Latin, Greek, French, Spanish – are difficult.’

Then the king asked Tom a question in Latin. Tom answered in Latin.

The king turned to Lord Hertford and laughed. ‘How many paupers speak Latin?’ he asked.

Next he asked a question in Greek. Tom did not answer – Father Andrew did not know Greek. ‘Very strange,’ said King Henry to Lord Hertford. ‘He remembers his Latin but forgets his Greek.’

*Your Majesty: You use these words when you talk to a king.



‘Of course I am the king. Don’t you know your father?’