

# **THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER**

A Play

by

**ANDREW BEATTIE**

*based on the novel by Mark Twain*

**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd**

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

**[www.schoolplayproductions.co.uk](http://www.schoolplayproductions.co.uk)**

THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

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ISBN 978 1 902472 29 4

Printed and published by  
**SchoolPlay Productions Limited,**  
15 Inglis Road,  
Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU

## **Production Notes**

*This is a play based on the novel published in 1882 by the American writer Mark Twain (1835 - 1910).*

### **Casting**

#### **Tom Canty and Edward Tudor**

The actors playing the two boys must, of course, look alike and would ideally be twins, although not necessarily identical ones; both the play and the original novel indicate that the boys do not look exactly alike.

#### **LARGE CAST PRODUCTIONS:-**

With an expansion of the roles of courtiers and paupers to around fifteen in each group and a large number of thieves and prisoners a cast of eighty or more is quite feasible. Doubling up of roles and cutting down the size of groups will support smaller scale productions. There are plenty of roles for both genders and all ages; many of the named parts are neither gender nor age specific.

#### **SMALL CAST PRODUCTIONS:-**

The play can be performed with a cast of just fourteen, comprising the following roles:

1. EDWARD TUDOR
2. TOM CANTY
3. BOY: HUMPHREY MARLOW: CHILD (Act 1 Sc. 12)
4. NAN: PRINCESS ELIZABETH
5. BETH: GIRL: LADY JANE GREY
6. FATHER ANDREW: ROYAL PHYSICIAN: MILES HENDON.
7. JOHN CANTY: KING HENRY VIII: 1st GUARD (Hendon Hall)  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
8. WILLIAM PHIPPS: CONSTABLE: 2nd GUARD (Hendon Hall)
9. SERVANT: 1st GUARD (Palace & Guildhall): HUGO: HUGH
10. 2nd GUARD (Palace & Guildhall): EARL OF HERTFORD:  
STEPHEN: 1st VILLAGE CONSTABLE: CLERGYMAN
11. LORD CHANCELLOR: BOATMAN: HERMIT/HERMITRESS  
1st VILLAGE CONSTABLE: JAILER
12. MRS CANTY: HERMIT/HERMITRESS: EDITH 13. LADY-IN-

WAITING: LADY FLEMING: LADY NORFOLK:

WOMAN: MARY

14. LADY-IN-WAITING: STALLHOLDER: BOATMAN'S WIFE:  
CATHERINE PARR

All performers (*with the exception of the roles of TOM and EDWARD*) also play the PAUPERS *etc.* with lines distributed as appropriate. There should be a minimum of six in each group. Some lines in the final scene would need deleting/reassigning as it is impossible for all these characters to be on stage at the same time as those roles being doubled.

### Historical Characters

A number of the characters in the play are actual historical figures and the following brief biographies may influence casting decisions and help the actors' portrayal. The ages given are for when the play is set; the weeks either side of the death of King Henry VIII in 1547.

**Edward Tudor** (*Prince of Wales / King Edward VI*) - age 9.

Son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour, the King's third wife. Jane died twelve days after giving birth to Edward. Edward was a precociously gifted student of Latin, French and Greek. He was nine years old when he succeeded his father and died from tuberculosis in 1553 aged sixteen.

**Princess Elizabeth** - age 14.

Second daughter of Henry VIII, she succeeded to the throne of England in 1558 as Queen Elizabeth I following the death of her sister Mary.

**Thomas Cranmer** (*Archbishop of Canterbury*) - age 58.

Archbishop under Henry VIII and Edward VI, he oversaw the Protestant Reformation but fell from favour during the Catholic regime of Mary. On her orders, he was burned at the stake in Oxford in 1556 for promoting Protestantism.

**Lady Jane Grey** - age 9.

Edward's cousin and born within days of him, in 1538. Edward nominated her as his successor shortly before he died. She ruled for only days in 1553 before being overthrown by Mary. She was executed the following year at the age of sixteen, an innocent pawn in Tudor power-struggles.

*CATHERINE PARR - age 35.*

Sixth and last wife of Henry VIII, she bore him no children but took a keen interest in the education and well-being of those he already had. She survived him and remarried after his death.

**Princess Mary** - *age 31.*

Ruled England as Mary I from 1553 - 1558, returning the country to Catholicism after the death of Edward.

**Edward Seymour** (*Earl of Hertford & Duke of Somerset*) - *age 47.*

The brother of Jane Seymour, he was the Protector of England during the minority rule of Edward VI. He was imprisoned and executed in 1552 after his rival the Duke of Northumberland gained control of the government.

**King Henry VIII** - *age 55*

One of England's greatest monarchs, he was famed as an athlete and scholar. However, this story is set at the end of his life by which time he was bloated and ill.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

### In order of appearance - Act I.

The London Poor (*group of eight or more, M/F*)\*  
The Tudor Court (*group of eight or more, M/F*)\*  
Acrobats and musicians (*M/F*)\*  
John Canty - *Tom's father*  
Lord Chancellor  
Two Ladies-in-Waiting  
Mrs Canty - *Tom's mother*  
Tom Canty - *a London pauper*  
Boy  
Girl (on streets of London)  
Beth - *Tom's sister*  
Servant (*M/F*)  
Lady Fleming - *Edward's nurse*  
Edward Tudor - *the Prince of Wales*  
Dr William Phipps - *Edward's tutor*  
Father Andrew - *a cleric, Tom's tutor*  
Two guards (outside the Palace)  
King Henry VIII - *Edward's father*  
Catherine Parr - *wife of King Henry VIII*  
Royal Physician  
Earl of Hertford - *Edward's uncle*  
Lady Jane Grey - *Edward's cousin*  
Princess Elizabeth - *Edward's half-sister*  
Humphrey Marlow - *Edward's whipping boy*  
Stallholder (*M/F*)  
Child (*M/F*)  
Boatman  
Boatman's wife  
Two guards (outside the Guildhall)  
Constable  
Messenger  
Miles Hendon - *a country squire*

## Act II

Princess Mary - *Edward's half-sister*  
Lady Norfolk - *a noblewoman*  
Archbishop of Canterbury  
Stephen - *Miles Hendon's servant*  
Hugo - *the leader of a gang of thieves*  
Thieves (*group of seven, M/F*)\*  
Stranger (*M/F*)  
Hermit (*M/F*)  
Woman  
Two village constables  
Lady Edith - *Hugh Hendon's wife*  
Ann - *Lady Edith's maid*  
Hugh Hendon - *Miles Hendon's brother*  
Two guards (at Hendon Hall)  
Prisoners (*group of eight or more, M/F*)\*  
Jailer  
Girl (at Coronation)

*\*the script allows for flexibility in casting these parts - in terms of male/female, young/old, and in numbers of performers needed to play them; in productions requiring a small cast, some of the "named" roles can be played by members of these groups. More suggestions for casting the play are included at the on pages 73-74.*

**Setting:** London and the surrounding countryside

**Time:** 1538 (opening scene) and then 1547

**Set:** With a play whose action switches between a number of locations, it is assumed that the set will be minimal - although various backdrops (depicting the skyline of medieval London, a grand palace etc) may be used to suggest changes in scene.



# THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

by Andrew Beattie

## ACT I

### SCENE 1 - THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

*A bare stage.*

*(Enter THE PAUPERS. They form up on one side of the stage as THE COURTIERs enter on the other leaving a distinct, clear space between them).*

*[The opening narrative, which follows, should be delivered seamlessly as if one piece of text].*

**First Pauper:** This tale we set before you ....

**First Courtier:** .... was told to us by one who learned it from his father ....

**Second Pauper:** .... who in turn heard it from his father ....

**Second Courtier:** and so on, back and still further back, the fathers retelling it to their sons ....

**Third Pauper:** .... preserving it for generations to come.

**Third Courtier:** It may be history ....

**Forth Pauper:** .... it may only be a legend ....

**Fifth Pauper:** .... a tradition.

**Forth Courtier:** It may have happened ....

**Fifth Courtier:** .... it may not have happened ....

**Fifth Pauper:** but it could have happened.

**Sixth Pauper:** In the ancient city of London, on a certain autumn day in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, a boy was born to a poor family by the name of Canty, who did not want him.

*(The PAUPERS move to stand in a tight circle, as if cramming round to look at a newborn baby, who is held by MRS CANTY, a middle-aged woman. There is the sound of a baby crying).*

**Seventh Pauper:** Another hungry mouth to feed!

**Eighth Pauper:** Another thin little body to keep warm!

*(The sound of a sharp slap; the baby stops crying. JOHN CANTY, Tom's father,*

*speaks now from the midst of the group, huddled amongst them, affording the audience no clear sight of him).*

**John Canty:** Don't want none of your bloody noise disturbing this household!

*(LORD CHANCELLOR enters, on the courtier's side of the stage).*

**Lord Chancellor:** On the same day another English boy was born to a rich family by the name of Tudor, who DID want him.

*(The members of the court huddle as if they too are standing around a newborn child. A baby cries openly and does so throughout this next exchange).*

**Lord Chancellor:** Lady Shaw! Lady Woodstock!

**Lady Shaw:** *(excitedly)* Lord Chancellor!

**Lady Woodstock:** Sir!

**Lord Chancellor:** *(responding reciprocally)* It's a boy?

**Lady Shaw:** It is, Sir.

**Lord Chancellor:** The King will be informed at once! And the child is healthy?

**Lady Woodstock:** Hear him crying for yourself, Sir!

**Lord Chancellor:** And your mistress, the queen?

**Lady Shaw:** *(anxiously)* Alas, Sir.....

**Lord Chancellor:** She will recover. Praise God that she recovers, to bear the King a second son. And a third, and a fourth! We must give thanks. *(Louder)* Let all England give thanks! Our Kingdom is blessed today!

*(Both groups give a loud cheer; hats are thrown in the air. A peal of church bells).*

**First Pauper:** The King granted everyone a holiday, and high and low ....

**First Courtier:** Rich and poor ....

**Second Pauper:** Feasted and danced and sang ....

**Second Courtier:** And celebrated for days and nights together.

*A London street.*

*(The group of PAUPERS and COURTIERS suddenly mingle, forming one unified street throng. ACROBATS and MUSICIANS appear; there are banners, streamers, music and noise. Sellers of food and drink ply their trade. Suddenly voices rise above the throng. A PAUPER BOY sits on the shoulders of a COURTIER, thus raising him high above the crowd. At the opposite side*

*of the stage, a RICH BOY of similar age from the court has been raised on to the shoulders of one of London's PAUPERS).*

**Young Courtier:** *(on shoulders of a PAUPER)* Let's give a cheer for England's future King!

**Young Pauper:** *(on shoulders of COURTIER)* Rich or poor, it doesn't matter today! Let's celebrate the birth of the Prince of Wales! Hip hip!

**Crowd:** Hurrah!

**Pauper:** Hip hip!

**Crowd:** Hurrah!

**Pauper:** Hip hip!

**Crowd:** Hurrah!

*(They freeze. There is a sudden change of mood).*

**First Pauper:** But the celebrations didn't last long.

*(The sound of a bugle call).*

**Second Pauper:** Shhh! A messenger from the palace ....

**Messenger** *(FIRST COURTIER): (moving through the throng)* The Queen! The Queen is dead!

*(Sound of a single, slow drum beat - offstage).*

**First Pauper:** The King's beloved, Jane Seymour, had died of the pain and effort of providing him with the son he longed for.

*(The crowd, as one, lower their hats and stand in sombre silence as a coffin draped in a coat of arms and carried on a bier is processed in front of them).*

**Third Courtier:** Even as the people mourned, all talk in England was of the baby that Jane left behind, who was christened by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the name of Edward Tudor.

**Fourth Courtier:** The noisy creature lay wrapped in silks and satins, unconscious of all this fuss, and not knowing that great lords and ladies were watching over him.

**Third Pauper:** But there was no talk at all about the other baby, Tom Canty, wrapped in his poor rags, except among the family of paupers whom he had just come to trouble with his presence.

*(The group of COURTIERS and PAUPERS separate; the MUSICIANS and SELLERS of food disappear; the stage is divided - the court on one side, and the poor on the other - with an open space between them).*

SCENE 2 - TOM'S EARLY LIFE

*(MRS CANTY and her daughter NAN stand to one side of the group of PAUPERS, scrubbing washing in a bowl on a table).*

**Sixth Pauper:** Let us skip a number of years.

**Mrs Canty:** My boy Tom! How he's grown in all that time!

*(TOM emerges from the group with another PAUPER, playing at sword-fighting with wooden swords).*

**Seventh Pauper:** *(speaking as 'fight' continues)*. Hah! "All that time?!" The merest blink of an eye!

**Eighth Pauper:** Hundreds of years, our city's been here! London won't hardly notice the likes of us ....

**Seventh Pauper:** Scraping a living in this foggy cesspit on the banks of the Thames.

**Nan:** A living? Some living!

**Mrs Canty:** *(calling)* Oi! Tom! Where are you? There's work to be done!

*(At this TOM strikes away the sword of his opponent, which clatters to ground. The boy falls to his knees. Another child - A GIRL - is watching from the crowd, and moves forward).*

**Tom:** You have lost your sword. I will be merciful.

**Girl:** *(scornfully)* "Merciful!" Who d'you think you are Tom Canty?

**Tom:** *(He 'knights' his opponent)* Arise, my good knight! You are the faithful servant to a Prince.

**Girl:** *(laughing nastily)* A prince! Don't make us laugh!

**Mrs Canty:** *(calling again)* Tom! *(turns to NAN)* I expect he's down by the river again. You'll have to go and fetch him, Nan.

*(NAN heads off while TOM glances at the boy and girl; now they are both looking*

at him scornfully).

**Girl:** *(with contempt)* Listen Tom Canty! I can hear your mother calling you.

**Boy:** *(with similar contempt)* Your mother, the Queen! She's calling from the palace window!

*(Ignoring them, TOM throws his sword down and moves to sit cross-legged centre stage, facing the group of PAUPERS with his back to the group of COURTIERS. He opens a book, covers himself with a blanket and places a lighted candle on the floor next to him. He begins to read, straining his eyes in the dim light drawing the blanket around himself. The BOY and GIRL dissolve back into the crowd as NAN and BETH reappear, watching their brother contemptuously).*

**First Pauper:** *(spoken alongside the action)* His games didn't last long though.

**Second Pauper:** Grew up fast, Tom Canty did!

**Third Pauper:** Fancied himself as a prince! But none of the other children would play along.

**Nan:** *(with contempt)* So he turned to story books instead ....

**Beth:** While his sisters clean and scrub and beg ....

**Mrs Canty:** And his parents do nothing but argue and fight!

*(JOHN CANTY now emerges from the group of PAUPERS, while Tom's SISTERS dissolve back into the same group. JOHN CANTY sits on a wooden stool, provided for him by his wife. He drinks from an ale bottle and is rather the worse for wear - though not amusingly so. MRS CANTY continues to scrub the washing).*

**Mrs Canty:** We've no food in the house. Nothing at all.

**John Canty:** What's that useless boy doing?

**Mrs Canty:** He was out begging all morning. Got nothing, he said, not even a crust.

**John Canty:** He's lying! *(threateningly)* He's with his books!

**Mrs Canty:** *(frightenedly)* Search me, I don't know where he is!

**John Canty:** That dreamer will be rubbing his wounds 'till Christmas, if I catch him!

**Mrs Canty:** Our Tom, all his reading and knowledge, he'll make something of himself one day! He'll be a teacher or a lawyer! He'll keep us in food until we die!

**John Canty:** *(scornfully)* He'll keep dreaming, and we'll all die hungry!

*(He retreats back into the group of PAUPERS. TOM remains seated throughout this, reading quietly, with the blanket drawn tightly around him).*

**Mrs Canty:** *(calling)* Tom, you'd better come down from there! *(Nervously)* He's on the prowl! Your father!

*(TOM glances up from his book, then goes on reading. MRS CANTY retreats back into the group of PAUPERS).*

**First Pauper:** Tom's attic was right at the top of the house where he lived, in Offal Court, off Pudding Lane ....

**Second Pauper:** .... one of the smallest and foulest dwellings in all London.

*(Lights up on the COURTIERS).*

**First Courtier:** Ha! The poor of this city deserve nothing more.

**Second Courtier:** *(addressing the PAUPERS)* You should be thankful for what the good Lord has provided you with!

**Third Pauper:** How little you know, with your grand houses, your gardens, your music!

*(Lights down on the group of PAUPERS).*

### SCENE 3 - THE PRINCE'S EARLY LIFE

*(The LORD CHANCELLOR, LADY FLEMING and WILLIAM PHIPPS now emerge and talk quietly, standing apart from the rest of the group. LADY FLEMING is Edward's nurse).*

*(Soft lute music. A SERVANT enters carrying coloured pastries on a silver tray. EDWARD TUDOR rushes on carrying a sword. Not looking where he is going, he collides with the SERVANT).*

**Lord Chancellor:** Your Highness!

**Edward:** Oh!

**Servant:** No matter, my Lord, my fault entirely!

*(EDWARD looks at the SERVANT without expression - and helps himself to a pastry).*

**Lord Chancellor:** You have finished your lesson with Sir Richard?

*(EDWARD waves his sword around in the air fighting an imaginary opponent).*

**Edward:** Yes, I won as usual!

**Lord Chancellor:** *(indulgently)* Congratulations!

**Lady Fleming:** *(coming forward)* You have torn your coat.

**Edward:** *(ignoring her)* Not a bad result, considering he's been on four crusades!

**Lady Fleming:** *(looking at the tear on his jacket)* Look at that.

**Lord Chancellor:** *(disappointed)* My Lord, have you been careless?

**Phipps:** After being warned yesterday!

**Lord Chancellor:** *(to servant)* See that Edward's whipping boy is punished for this!

*(The SERVANT nods briefly to him and goes).*

**Phipps:** That'll teach you!

**Edward:** It was only a little tear.

**Lord Chancellor:** *(to EDWARD)* You will see the boy later on and apologise to him for your behaviour.

**Edward:** I shall certainly see him! I will tell him that a whipping is too harsh a punishment for tearing a coat.

**Lord Chancellor:** My Lord, if I might be allowed to say .... *(hesitantly)* Your attitude is disappointing.

**Phipps:** And not becoming of a Prince!

**Lady Fleming:** Perhaps His Majesty is over-tired?

**Edward:** Yes! Perhaps I am! *(Sulkily)* I won't have any more lessons today. I shall take a book of Greek poetry and read it in the garden.

**Phipps:** A splendid idea!

**Edward:** *(curtly)* And if I feel tired, I will go to sleep, under a tree.

**Lord Chancellor:** My Lord, your father the King wishes to see you later this afternoon.

**Edward:** Fetch me when it is time, then. You know where I will be.

*(EDWARD moves off. He sits centre stage, facing the COURTIERS, and begins to read a book. TOM CANTY and he are now back-to-back, though neither boy is aware of the other's presence).*

**Lord Chancellor:** *(dismissing LADY FLEMING).* Thank you, Lady Fleming.

*(She curtsies briefly and goes).*

**Phipps:** *(scoffing)* Sir Richard lets the boy win every time ....

**Lord Chancellor:** Wouldn't you?

**Phipps:** *(doubtfully)* And that's supposed to teach the boy something about swordsmanship?

**Lord Chancellor:** Worried it keeps him away from his Greek and Latin?

**Phipps:** His father is one of the most learned men in Europe. He expects the same of his son.

**Lord Chancellor:** Dr Phipps, I take it you know just how ill the King is?

**Phipps:** I do.

**Lord Chancellor:** I think that soon we will be preparing the boy for much more than sword fights and Latin translation.

*(They exit. Lights down slowly on the group of PAUPERS and COURTIERS, dissolving to a single pool of light, centre stage. TOM and EDWARD still sit cross-legged and back to back).*

#### SCENE 4 - THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

*(The PAUPERS and COURTIERS watch the two boys, as the lights change).*

**Sixth Pauper:** And so they sat with their books ....

**First Courtier:** Edward Tudor, heir to the throne of England ....

**Seventh Pauper:** .... and Tom Canty, heir to a stale lump of bread for his supper that night; if he's lucky....

**Eighth Courtier:** .... and a good hiding from his father if he's not!

*(Exeunt save TOM and EDWARD who speak their lines unaware of the other).*

**Edward and Tom:** *(together)* One day ....

**Tom:** *(brightly)* I might meet a real Prince, like the one in this book.

**Edward:** *(gloomily)* I will escape this rotten palace.

**Tom:** *(sadly)* But what will he think of me?

**Edward:** *(shutting the book and throwing it across the floor in front of him)* Armies and battles. I don't want to know about them.

**Tom:** *(sadly)* My poor manners, my muddy feet dirtying the floors of his palace!

**Edward:** I want to play in the mud by the side of the river. I want to be like normal boys!

*(Simultaneously, from opposite sides of the stage, the boys' tutors, WILLIAM PHIPPS and FATHER ANDREW, enter).*

**Phipps:** My Lord Edward! There you are! I've been looking for you everywhere!

**Father Andrew:** *(simultaneously)* Tom Cauty! There you are! I've been looking for you everywhere!

*(The stage is divided in half, as the two independent conversations take place).*

**Tom:** I was hiding from my father.

**Phipps:** *(to EDWARD)* You are sitting in the furthest corner of the gardens.

**Tom:** He's going to beat me again!

**Phipps:** One might almost suspect you of hiding!

*(PHIPPS picks up the book EDWARD has thrown away and flicks through it as FATHER ANDREW continues his conversation with TOM).*

**Tom:** A whole morning outside the Guildhall and all I got was a farthing!

*(He tries to give the coin to FATHER ANDREW - but he refuses it).*

**Father Andrew:** Tom, this is for your poor mother.

**Tom:** *(offended)* But it's for teaching me.

**Father Andrew:** Teaching you is God's work. Besides, I get paid by the parish. Give it to your mother, then your father won't hit you.

**Tom:** He will, he'll find another reason.

**Father Andrew:** *(ruefully)* That belt of his! He'll wear it out raising the dust from the seat of your breeches with it!

*(TOM draws up two chairs, as PHIPPS finishes flicking through the book and talks to EDWARD).*

**Edward:** Does my father want to see me now?

**Phipps:** I'm afraid he's busy.

**Edward:** He's always busy.

**Phipps:** When he does, he wishes to talk to you on matters of state, entirely in French.

**Edward:** I think he wants me to speak better French than the King of France!

**Father Andrew:** *(taking the book off TOM)* Tell me what you're reading.

**Phipps:** *(to EDWARD)* Did you not like the book?

**Tom and Edward:** *(together)* Stories again.

**Tom:** They're fantastic!

**Edward:** They don't interest me. Take it away. *(pause)* Dr Phipps, could I go to school?

**Phipps:** *(shocked)* To school? Why, Edward, there would be other boys there.

**Edward:** I know. That's why I want to go.

**Phipps:** You must learn to like being by yourself, Edward. You will find it a lonely business, you know, being King. *(shutting the book).* It is a fine afternoon, to be sitting in the gardens! Your nurse will come and find you just as soon as the King is ready. I think she is worried that you might be coming down with another fever.

**Edward:** *(sourly)* Of course she is! It's her reason for hanging around me all the time, like everyone else does.

*(EDWARD sits on the floor facing the audience as PHIPPS bows and goes, taking the book with him. Simultaneously TOM talks with FATHER ANDREW, who has been flicking through his book).*

**Father Andrew:** You read fast, Tom. Already I must find you another book!

**Tom:** Don't tell my father.

**Father Andrew:** One day, when you are too big for him to hit you, I will make sure he knows what a good student you are. That you've even learned some Latin, like the boys who go to school!

**Tom:** Do princes go to school?

**Father Andrew:** What a curious question. Schools are for the sons of merchants and lawyers. A prince would be taught by his own tutor. A learned man ....

**Tom:** Like you!

**Father Andrew:** Me? I'm nothing but a lowly priest. Now the Prince of Wales... I hear that he has one of Oxford's cleverest Doctors of Philosophy to teach him.

**Tom:** Sometimes I want to meet a prince. Or even be one. And live in an enormous palace.

**Father Andrew:** You've been reading too many stories, Tom. The inside of your head is turning to custard! Next time I will find you a book about science or mathematics, something that won't go giving you grand ideas.

**Tom:** I can still dream, though, can't I?

*(BETH rushes in).*

**Beth:** Tom! Our father's on the lookout for you!

**John Canty:** (*offstage, angrily*) Tom Canty! Are you up in that attic again, you miserable wretch?

**Father Andrew:** Maybe we won't have a lesson today, Tom.

(*He bustles TOM out of the room, who leaves just as JOHN CANTY enters carrying his belt, ready to give TOM a beating*).

**John Canty:** Where is he?

**Father Andrew:** Put your belt away, John Canty.

**John Canty:** Beth! Where's he gone?

**Beth:** (*flustered*) Father .... I ....

**John Canty:** (*He finds TOM'S book which he waves in FATHER ANDREW'S face; threateningly*) You're going to stop filling that boy's head with stuff he never needs! D'you hear me?

**Father Andrew:**(*with contempt*) The whole of Offal Court can hear you, John Canty. And when you hit the boy, they have even less trouble hearing you then!

**John Canty:** Beth, go to your mother. I'm going out, to look for your lousy brother.

(*He exits with BETH*).

**Father Andrew:** (*he moves the chairs back and continues ruefully*) Yes, Tom Canty, you can still dream.

(*FATHER ANDREW leaves and for a moment, EDWARD is alone on stage*).

#### SCENE 5 - TOM'S MEETING WITH THE PRINCE

(*TWO GUARDS appear, standing centre stage; they act as narrators for the first part of the scene. The first faces TOM, as if barring his way, the second faces EDWARD, as if protecting him. Between them we must imagine an enormous gate - the entrance to a palace - perpendicular to the front edge of the stage, and dead centre. TOM reappears in his "half": the division between "rich" and "poor" still remains clear*).

**Guards:** (*together*) That afternoon ....

**First Guard:** Tom walked for miles through London ....

**Second Guard:** .... Prince Edward sat for hours in the Palace gardens ....

**Guards:** *(together)* .... alone and unhappy.

**Tom:** *(looking around)* I don't recognise this place.

**First Guard:** This is the Palace of Westminster. The home of King Henry the Eighth.

**Tom:** *(turning to him)* King Henry the Eighth? And Prince Edward Tudor?

*(EDWARD turns his head as he hears his name mentioned. He rises, and looks past the soldiers, through the "gate" they are guarding. The SECOND GUARD sees that EDWARD is looking through the gate at TOM).*

**Edward:** I heard someone say my name.

**Second Guard:** *(to EDWARD)* Some urchin out in the street, my Lord. No need to bother yourself.

*(The boys catch sight of one another).*

**Edward and Tom:** *(together)* There's a boy the other side of the gates. Standing there on his own. A boy of my own age.

**Tom:** *(sotto voce)* Surely that can't be him .... a real Prince! *(He runs forward).*

**First Guard:** *(knocks him flying)* Not so fast beggar boy! *(He looks as if he is about to kick TOM back to the ground as he rises).*

**Edward:** *(shouting at the guard)* No!

**First Guard:** *(bowing nervously)* Sir?

**Edward:** How dare you treat a boy like that!

**First Guard:** *(bowing nervously)* Sir, it is for your protection.

**Edward:** *(softly)* I'm sorry, boy. This man claims to be acting in my name. *(He pushes past the guards to talk to TOM through the gate).* Are you hurt?

**Tom:** *(rising)* I .... I'm fine.

**Edward:** What do they call you?

**Tom:** *(stunned)* Tom Canty, my Lord.

**Edward:** Well, Tom Canty, your coat has been torn and I fear it's my fault.

**Tom:** *(horrified at the suggestion)* Oh no ! No, my Lord!

**Edward:** *(to the GUARDS)* Open the gate and let him in! *(They do so and TOM enters)* You look hungry. *(to the GUARDS)* Fetch this boy something to eat, some chicken legs will do, I think, and some fresh water. *(Pause)* Well? Get on with it then!

**Guards:** *(flabbergasted)* My Lord, right away. *(They close the gates and move off, bowing obsequiously).*

**Tom:** Are you really the Prince of Wales?

**Edward:** My guards treated you badly. I will have them put in chains for the night.

**Tom:** Weren't they just doing their job?

**Edward:** (*surprised*) You forgive them easily. (*pause*) Give me your coat. Sit with me here.

(*TOM sits taking off his coat and passing it to EDWARD. There is the sound of birdsong.*)

**Edward:** My father gave me this garden as a birthday present.

**Tom:** (*amazed by his surroundings*) It's so quiet.

**Edward:** (*sadly*) I'm the only one who ever comes here.

**Tom:** You could sit here all day and read; no-one would disturb you!

**Edward:** (*examining the coat*) It's funny, both of us have torn our coats today. I will have a servant take this coat to the palace and get it mended.

**Tom:** Is the palace yours too?

**Edward:** It will be one day. (*He rises to call a servant*).

**Tom:** My Lord, you mustn't trouble yourself with my coat, my sisters will mend it for me .

**Edward:** (*sitting back down again*) You have sisters?

**Tom:** Two. Nan and Beth.

**Edward:** I also have two sisters. Elizabeth and Mary. But I hardly ever see them.

**Tom:** Don't they sleep in the same room as you do?

**Edward:** In the same room? Of course not! I have a whole wing of the Palace all to myself. (*Disbelievingly*) Don't tell me ....

**Tom:** My whole family; we have only one room.

**Edward:** Don't you fight with your sisters?

**Tom:** Sometimes. But if my father's hit me, they let me sleep between them.

**Edward:** (*shocked*) Your father hits you?

**Tom:** He drinks, you see.

**Edward:** I'm glad you have sisters to look after you. My older sister - Mary - well, she's not much fun. She thinks anyone who laughs forms a pact with the devil! She dismisses her servants if they so much as smile! Are your sisters like that, with their servants?

**Tom:** Servants! In Offal Court! We don't have servants!

**Edward:** But who helps you get dressed in the morning? And chooses which clothes you are to wear?

**Tom:** No-one! We wear the same clothes every day!

**Edward:** (*stunned*) The thought of it! I will see to it that all of the residents of - where did you say - Offal Court - are decently clothed. After I've done something about your father. Perhaps I should put him in the Tower, like my

father did with Anne Boleyn! You've heard of her, I take it?

**Tom:** My Lord, I'm afraid I haven't.

**Edward:** My sister Elizabeth's mother. My father had her executed with a silver sword. You must have heard of my father.

**Tom:** Oh, yes, we all know King Henry.

**Edward:** You speak well; for a pauper, I mean. Can you read and write?

**Tom:** Our parish priest, Father Andrew, has taught me. But I don't have enough time for reading. I must beg for food, you see, for our family.

**Edward:** Beg? But that's awful! I always imagined ....

**Tom:** What?

**Edward:** Well, how wonderful it would be to live in a place like Offal Court.

**Tom:** *(incredulously)* Wonderful?

**Edward:** What about - the Punch and Judy shows?

**Tom:** The performing monkeys are funnier!

**Edward:** The games by the river bank?

**Tom:** There are some boys I often play with there. We duck each other in the water and cover each other with mud!

**Edward:** I saw you once!

**Tom:** From the Royal Barge?

**Edward:** Yes!

**Tom:** We all waved!

**Edward:** I waved back. My father went mad!

**Tom:** There must have been a dozen ships.

**Edward:** It was a royal pageant. There were a hundred!

**Tom:** Covered with gold and fluttering banners and brilliant lights.

**Edward:** It's actually quite boring, you know. The boat journey takes hours and then at the end of it, there's some banquet or other, with lots of Lords and Earls, all talking about politics.

**Edward and Tom:** *(together)* If only I could live like you ....

**Edward:** Just for a day.

**Tom:** A morning .

**Edward:** It would be such fun. *(He sniffs the air)*. I smell chicken legs! My guards are coming back! *(He begins to remove his coat quickly)*.

**Tom:** What are you doing?

**Edward:** Here - my hat. Try it on.

*(TOM cautiously takes off his cap and puts on EDWARD'S hat, while EDWARD puts on TOM'S coat - which he is still holding - and passes his own to TOM).*

**Edward:** It fits! Put my coat on; you will be a Prince for a day, and I will watch the

Punch and Judy shows in Offal Court.

**Tom:** But ....

**Edward:** I command it! Prince Edward of Wales has spoken!

**Tom:** How long will you be?

**Edward:** Only a couple of hours. Shoes as well!

*(TOM slowly puts on EDWARD'S coat. They exchange shoes, and are soon facing each other).*

**Edward:** It's almost as if I were looking in a mirror.

**Tom:** A mirror?

**Edward:** Haven't you realised how alike we look? You have the same hair as me, the same eyes. Listen to our voices, don't we sound the same?

*(The GUARDS return with plates laden with chicken legs).*

**First Guard:** My Lord Edward!

*(EDWARD turns round. But the GUARDS ignore him, and approach TOM).*

**Second Guard:** Your chicken legs!

**Tom:** *(glancing hesitantly at EDWARD)* Ah - of course.

**First Guard:** *(to TOM)* Should we serve your guest out here, in the garden?

**Edward:** *(to TOM)* Actually - I've changed my mind. *(awkwardly; to the GUARDS)* I'm not as hungry as I first thought. But .... they do look nice .... maybe they will tempt the Prince of Wales!

*(He bows to TOM. The GUARDS immediately turn and offer the plate to TOM, who takes a chicken leg, greedily - and another; the GUARDS watch him, mystified).*

**Edward:** The Prince has said you should unlock the gates for me.

*(The GUARDS glance at TOM, who is still busy gorging on chicken legs).*

**Tom:** Oh! Yes!

**Edward:** He commands it!

**Tom:** Oh - yes - I mean - I command it!

**First Guard:** Very well, Sir.

**Tom:** But treat the boy kindly as he goes! As if he were a prince!

*(The GUARDS open the gate and EDWARD passes through. The GUARDS bow deeply - too deeply - as EDWARD heads out through the gates. The two boys briefly look at each other through the gates; the GUARDS take up their positions again. LADY FLEMING approaches TOM from the other direction, with the LORD CHANCELLOR).*

**Lord Chancellor:** Ah! There you are! At last I've found you.

**Edward:** *(to TOM)* Which way is it to Offal Court?

*(TOM points and turns as the LADY FLEMING curtsies briefly in front of him. With a backward glance, EDWARD heads off).*

**Lady Fleming:** My Lord, you are quite all right?

**Lord Chancellor:** There is some trivial disturbance outside the gates. I should ignore it.

**Lady Fleming:** *(putting her hand to his forehead)* You look quite pale.

**Lord Chancellor:** Do you feel unwell?

**Tom:** I'm not sure.

**Lady Fleming:** Thankfully it is time for you to go inside.

**Lord Chancellor:** Your father is ready to see you.

**Tom:** *(shocked and dazed)* My father ?

**Lord Chancellor:** You must come with us. If it pleases you, Sir.

*(TOM stuffs some chicken legs into his coat pocket and hands the empty plate to the GUARD and then in a daze follows the LORD CHANCELLOR and LADY FLEMING offstage. The GUARDS look at each other quizzically and head off in the opposite direction).*

#### SCENE 6 - TOM'S TROUBLES BEGIN

*(Some COURTIERS are fussing over an ornate throne, fluffing up the cushions and polishing the gold and wood).*

**First Courtier:** *(shocked)* The manners of the young master!

**Second Courtier:** Snatched those chicken legs off the plate like he was a boy off the street!

**Third Courtier:** And stuffed them in his pockets for later! That's what I heard!

**First Courtier:** His manners have always been so impeccable!

**Second Courtier:** His father's insisted on it!

**First Courtier:** Something's come over him!

**First Courtier:** What can be the matter?

*(More COURTIERS enter, on cue, at the beginning of their line. They are setting up bowls of fruit and trolleys of cakes as a mid-afternoon snack for the KING. The two GUARDS have returned).*

**Fourth Courtier:** What can be the matter?

**Fifth Courtier:** Have you heard the latest?

**Sixth Courtier:** *(from another direction)* The latest?

**Fifth Courtier:** Prince Edward is ill.

**Second Courtier:** Ill?

**Fifth Courtier:** He's gone mad, someone said. The boy doesn't know who he is any more.

**Courtiers:** *(together)* How strange!

**Guards:** *(together)* How strange!

*(The LORD CHANCELLOR enters, surrounded by more COURTIERS. He goes over to the GUARDS).*

**Lord Chancellor:** You don't know anything about this, do you?

**Guards:** *(together)* Us, Sir?

**Lord Chancellor:** You two were the last to see the boy in his normal condition.

**First Guard:** Perhaps it was the chicken legs he had.

**Lord Chancellor:** The chicken legs?

**First Guard:** I thought they smelt a bit strange.

**Second Guard:** They might have gone off!

**Lord Chancellor:** Nonsense. They were so fresh that the chicken was practically still clucking!

**First Guard:** Clucking, Sir?

**Second Guard:** Very well, Sir.

**First Guard:** As you say, Sir.

**Guards:** *(together)* Nonsense!

**Sixth Courtier:** The King! Make way for the King!

*(A flourish of trumpets, offstage. KING HENRY VIII enters; he is bloated and ill. He is supported by his wife CATHERINE PARR and attended by DR PHIPPS and the ROYAL PHYSICIAN. The GUARDS and COURTIERS stand to*

attention. KING HENRY VIII is placed centre stage on the throne.)

**King:** Now then, Physician, tell me what you make of it all.

**Royal Physician:** Well - if your majesty will forgive me - I need to be reminded about the exact nature of the boy's condition.

**King:** (*with a sigh*) This afternoon I called for my son to be brought to me. He seemed - how would you say, Dr Phipps?

**Phipps:** In a daze, your majesty. His nurse diagnosed a mild fever.

**Physician:** That woman does fuss him.

**King:** He failed to recognise me! Me, his own father! I took him to Catherine.

**Catherine Parr:** And the boy claimed he wasn't the Prince of Wales....

**King:** ....but that he was a pauper, of lowly birth! A common piece of vermin from the streets!

**Physician:** It sounds a most extraordinary delusion, your Majesty.

**King:** I asked him a question in Latin. He knows Latin very well, and he answered the question very well. Then I spoke to him in French and the boy looked at me blankly, saying he had never heard the language!

**Catherine Parr:** I have often talked with him in French. He speaks the language almost fluently!

**King:** Physician, people are saying he is mad. What can be the cause of all this?

**Physician:** (*at a loss*) Are we CERTAIN it wasn't the chicken legs? Supposing they HAD gone off? We should try them on someone else to see if the effect is the same.

**Lord Chancellor:** Ah, yes! YOU perhaps.

**Physician:** (*suddenly worried*) Me, Lord Chancellor?

**King:** Or are you going to throw in the towel, as you usually do, and just say you don't know what the problem is but perhaps the boy merely needs some rest?

**Physician:** (*backtracking*) That's exactly what I was about to suggest! A rest would DEFINITELY be in order.

**King:** (*anger rising*) Yes, and that's just what you said to the boy's mother, moments after she had delivered him. "Get some rest, my dear lady, get some rest". The rest she got was God's eternal rest! If I hadn't listened to you then, she might still be alive!

**Physician:** (*nervously*) Your majesty I assure you ....

**King:** Catherine knows about children. What do YOU say?

**Catherine:** Give him some fresh air. Take him hunting at Windsor!

**King:** A-ha! A real solution at last! Get him out of the schoolroom for a while. You overwork him, Dr Phipps.

**Lord Chancellor:** I've told him that myself, Sir!

**King:** Music and poetry is all very well, but there's a time enough for that when he's

better. In the meantime, healthy exercise is bound to cure him. But - until he is better - hear this: anyone who speaks about his illness will be speaking against the peace and order of the realm. They will pay the standard penalty for treason! *(He calls for a drink from a servant).*

**King:** A drink, a drink .... water .... support me!

*(The ROYAL PHYSICIAN approaches but HENRY waves him away).*

**King:** Not you! Catherine ....

**Catherine:** *(She approaches and supports him).* My Lord .... you mustn't let this terrible business trouble you ....

**King:** *(recovering a little)* He is my son and England's heir. God will not allow his condition to be permanent.

**Lord Chancellor:** Your instructions will be carried out immediately, sir.

**King:** *(bitterly)* Of course they will! *(coughing)* Even if he's dying, the King's will is law.

*(The PHYSICIAN leaps to support him. One of the COURTIERS announces the entrance of TOM CANTY, LADY FLEMING and the EARL OF HERTFORD. TOM is now dressed in royal finery).*

**Sixth Courtier:** His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales!

*(The COURTIERS bow or curtsy as appropriate; CATHERINE PARR curtsies).*

**King:** Oh stuff and nonsense to your bowing! The boy needs to be left in peace, not be fawned over by you all day. Go and do something useful! Get him something to eat, why don't you!

*(He shoos them away; they scurry off; only the KING, TOM, THE EARL OF HERTFORD, LADY FLEMING and CATHERINE PARR are left on stage).*

**King:** Now tell me, Lord Hertford, is my son getting better?

**Earl of Hertford:** He is, Sir. In fact, I was just making it clear to him, as you yourself said, that your majesty's will is law. And that your will at the present time is that Edward ceases in his current, rather unfortunate delusion.

**King:** Quite so. Edward, one day the law will be your will, too.

**Tom:** Yes, Sir.

**King:** I know that you will govern England wisely. *(He struggles off his throne).* Here, why don't you sit down? *(TOM sits).* Hmm! You seem quite at home

there! Perhaps your memory is returning? Come on, Catherine. I feel in need of a nap. This afternoon has been so busy. I will leave Lord Hertford to keep instructing Edward as to my wishes.

*(The KING and CATHERINE exit. The EARL OF HERTFORD bows deeply as they go).*

#### SCENE 7 - TOM RECEIVES INSTRUCTION

*(The EARL OF HERTFORD remains with TOM and LADY FLEMING - in a more relaxed state, now the KING has gone).*

**Earl of Hertford:** *(straightening up)* .... which are, if I might be so bold as to repeat them one final time, that you are to keep your infirmity hidden, until it is passed.

**Lady Fleming:** You will stop denying that you are the true Prince of Wales.

**Earl of Hertford:** You will make no further mention of this place you talk of; Offal Court.

**Lady Fleming:** Do you understand?

**Tom:** All right.

**Lady Fleming:** *(correcting him)* "Yes I do, Uncle".

**Tom:** *(weakly)* Yes I do, Uncle. *(He bows his head, briefly).*

**Earl of Hertford:** Do not bow your head to me, your Majesty. It is I who bows to you.

**Tom:** Oh, of course.

**Lady Fleming:** Your father is keen that you make every effort to remember the names and faces of those you knew before you were beset by this unfortunate condition.

**Earl of Hertford:** Starting with this afternoon's visitors.

**Tom:** *(shocked)* Visitors?

**Earl of Hertford:** The Lady Jane Grey and the Princess Elizabeth are waiting outside. *(He heads for the door).*

**Tom:** *(to himself)* The Princess Elizabeth. His sister. MY sister, I mean.

**Lady Fleming:** Edward, your condition will upset them. You must remember how much they love you. Try to convince them that you are getting better!

*(TOM sits back in his chair, looking dazed; LADY FLEMING crosses to the EARL OF HERTFORD who is with the PRINCESS ELIZABETH and LADY JANE*

*GREY, both young girls. They have just been shown in by the LORD CHANCELLOR who has a COURTIER with him).*

**Earl of Hertford:** *(nodding to them)* Lady Jane. Princess Elizabeth.

*(The girls cross over to where TOM sits, centre stage. The LORD CHANCELLOR and the EARL OF HERTFORD nod briefly to LADY FLEMING, who stands away from TOM on one side of the stage, and then themselves sit to one side - as if listening, behind a door).*

**Lady Jane Grey:** Edward! I haven't seen you in weeks! You remember me?

**Tom:** Of course! My sister, Elizabeth.

**Lady Jane Grey:** No, I am your cousin, Jane .... and THIS is Elizabeth.

**Elizabeth:** Don't worry yourself too much.

**Lady Jane Grey:** It is your illness that has made you forget.

**Elizabeth and Jane:** *(together)* We understand.

**Tom:** You are .... you're very kind. *(pause)* You seem uncomfortable standing up.

**Elizabeth:** *(shocked)* My Lord! Surely you are not suggesting that we sit down?

**Lady Jane Grey:** No-one sits in your presence. It is unheard of!

**Tom:** Well then, I command you to sit down.

**Lady Jane Grey:** *(exchanging glances with ELIZABETH)* Well, if the Prince commands it.... *(They sit down).*

**Elizabeth:** My Lord, I saw you reading in the garden, earlier today.

**Tom:** You are trying to help me get my memory back ....

**Lady Jane Grey:** What were you reading, my Lord?

**Tom:** Some Latin.

**Lady Jane Grey:** Ah, so your lessons with Dr Phipps are coming on well?

**Elizabeth:** He is a wonderful tutor isn't he?

**Tom:** Yes, he is .... *(remembering what Father Andrew told him)* He is one of Oxford's cleverest doctors of philosophy!

**Lady Jane Grey:** You are beginning to remember things! Your father will be so pleased.

**Elizabeth:** But Edward, when our father spoke to you in French today you said you didn't understand him.

**Tom:** Yes! I find .... that I can remember only my Latin.

**Elizabeth:** Your illness is playing funny tricks on you!

**Lady Jane Grey:** But you mustn't let it show.

**Elizabeth:** Particularly not tonight.

**Tom:** Tonight?

**Elizabeth:** *(reminding him)* The Lord Mayor's reception at the Guildhall.

**Tom:** Reception? At the Guildhall?

**Elizabeth:** A glorious pageant of ships beforehand! On the river!

**Tom:** A river pageant with the boats lit up, and hung with banners?

**Lady Jane Grey:** Yes!

**Tom:** People watching from the banks!

**Elizabeth:** It will be a glorious occasion. Oh it's good to see your memory is returning.

**Lady Jane Grey:** We'll be coming too.

**Elizabeth:** We'll look after you. You'll be fine.

**Lady Jane Grey:** To tell you the truth, these occasions are often rather boring.

**Tom:** Yes. Lots of Lords and Earls, talking about politics.

**Elizabeth:** That's just what you said after the last one! My Lord, you're not as ill as we feared!

*(TOM yawns)*

**Lady Jane Grey:** All you need is some rest and you'll be right back to your usual self!

*(Enter the LORD CHANCELLOR and the EARL OF HERTFORD; the girls rise).*

**Earl of Hertford:** My Lord, it sounds as if you are getting better!

**Lady Jane Grey:** He will be better still after he has slept awhile.

**Earl of Hertford:** He will have all the rest he requires! *(He signals to LADY FLEMING to take TOM out).*

**Lord Chancellor:** *(To ELIZABETH)* So, what do you think?

**Elizabeth:** My brother is clearly not himself.

**Lord Chancellor:** Not himself? You mean he's somebody else?

**Earl of Hertford:** *(triumphantly)* Ah-ha! Treason! You heard what the king said.

**Lord Chancellor:** Calm yourself, Lord Hertford. The Princess is only fourteen. I think you know what she means.

**Elizabeth:** *(nervously)* Sir, forgive me.

**Lord Chancellor:** What the girl means is, we must keep encouraging him.

**Earl of Hertford:** Precisely. Princess Elizabeth....Lady Jane....thank you.

*(The GIRLS exit. The LORD CHANCELLOR and the EARL OF HERTFORD talk in hushed tones as some COURTIERS set up a table, piled with food, close by).*

**Lord Chancellor:** Well?

**Earl of Hertford:** *(resignedly)* There are some signs that his madness might be leaving him - but not enough. Meanwhile, his father is nearing the end, and it

will be left up to us to pick up the pieces. (*He turns to go*).

**Lord Chancellor:** (*calling him back*) Lord Hertford! (*He looks around to check nobody is listening*). What I mean is, haven't you noticed? The boy has been changed by his madness, not just in his manner and speech....

**Earl of Hertford:** Treason! Again! You heard what the King said!

**Lord Chancellor:** It's plain for anyone to see!

**Earl of Hertford:** Madness can do the strangest things.

**Lord Chancellor:** The boy actually LOOKS different.

**Earl of Hertford:** (*scoffing*) Are you suggesting there is an IMPOSTOR in our midsts? Why, the boy is even wearing the same coat he wore this morning! (*Drawing the LORD CHANCELLOR to one side*) An impostor - if there was one - would claim all the time that he was a Prince! Yet here we have quite the opposite. OUR Prince denies his royal position whenever he can! And - another thing - if the boy we have is an impostor, where is the real Prince? No, it's quite clear the boy is my sister's son gone mad, and there's no more to it. Not another word - or you'll be expressing your doubts to the King! (*The table has been set by the COURTIERS*). Is it ready?

**First Courtier:** It is, sir!

**Hertford:** (*to COURTIERS casting his eye over the sumptuous food*) A spread fit for a Prince!

**Second Courtier:** Fit for a KING Sir!

(*A flourish of trumpets, offstage. The EARL OF HERTFORD and the LORD CHANCELLOR exit*).

#### SCENE 8 - TOM'S FIRST ROYAL DINNER

(*At the sound of trumpets, the row of COURTIERS stand to attention behind the table, piled high with food. There is a place laid only for one. TOM is brought in by a COURTIER and led to his place. TOM moves to sit down*).

**First Courtier:** (*shocked*) Sir....

(*TOM stands back up again, looking round mystified as grace is said*).

**Second Courtier:** For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.

**Third Courtier:** No-one sits in the presence of the Prince of Wales. But, if I might be allowed to remind His Majesty, not even the Prince of Wales sits in the presence of God.

*(TOM sits down nervously. The FIRST COURTIER pulls back his chair for him, whilst the SECOND COURTIER fastens a napkin round his neck).*

**Tom:** *(overawed)* Thank you. Your fastening is very expert.

**Second Courtier:** Sir, it is my privilege! My family have held the post of Royal Napkin Providers to the Prince of Wales for two hundred years. *(TOM looks too carefully at the napkin).* You are examining it closely, my Lord....it is not to your satisfaction?

**Tom:** It's fine.

**Third Courtier:** Take it away! Fetch another! The Prince is not happy with his napkin!

*(Before TOM can protest, the napkin is whisked away and another provided, as the FIRST COURTIER pours some wine which he gives to the FOURTH COURTIER, who tastes it and nods; then the THIRD COURTIER pours some wine from the same bottle for TOM).*

**Tom:** *(quizzically)* This man is served before I am.

**Third Courtier:** He is the Royal Taster, Sir. He ensures your food and drink are not poisoned.

**Tom:** Ah. *(pause)* Does someone want to kill me?

**Second Courtier:** We must be wary of the Spanish, Sir.

**Third Courtier:** And perhaps the French, too.

**Fourth Courtier:** As for the Scots...

**Second Courtier:** It is normal, Sir, for everything to pass the lips of a Royal Taster before it is passed to your own. Have you forgotten?

**Third Courtier:** We have been warned that your majesty is....?

**Fourth Courtier:** How shall we say?

**Tom:** Out of his mind?

**Third Courtier:** A little muddled, perhaps.

**Fourth Courtier:** In need of reminding how things are done.

**Third Courtier:** About who everyone is.

**Fifth Courtier:** I am the Lord Darcy, First Groom of the Chamber. That is why I helped dress your majesty for dinner.

**Tom:** Ah, yes.

**Sixth Courtier:** I am the Lord Chief Butler.

**Seventh Courtier:** The Lord Great Steward, Sir!

**Eighth Courtier:** The Lord Head Cook, Sir!

**Tom:** Your meal .... this food. I've never seen so much!

*(As he prepares to tuck in, various COURTIERS leap to his command and pass things to him as he reaches for them).*

**Tom:** Remind me, how many servants do I have?

**Third Courtier:** Three hundred and eighty-four, Sir.

**Tom:** *(shocked)* Three hundred and eighty-four!

**Third Courtier:** It is not enough?

**Tom:** What do they all do?

**Third Courtier:** They cater for your every need, Sir.

**Tom:** Supposing - I want a huge plate piled high with cakes and pastries - in the middle of the night?

**Third Courtier:** Then one will be prepared by the Head Cook, and brought to you!

**Tom:** Supposing I want to....see a Punch and Judy show?

**Third Courtier:** *(a little uneasily)* Then the Lord Chief Steward will engage London's best Punch and Judy man, and make him give a show in the Palace just for you!

**Tom:** It's no fun watching Punch and Judy on your own.

**Third Courtier:** My Lord, you would surely not want a rabble intruding on your enjoyment?

**Tom:** *(He pauses and sits very still).* Supposing....I have an itchy nose?

**Courtiers:** *(muttering amongst themselves)* An itchy nose?

**Tom:** Who deals with that?

**Fourth Courtier:** *(turning to FIFTH COURTIER)* That is something for the First Groom of the Chamber to deal with!

**Seventh Courtier:** The Prince's Nursemaid!

**Fifth Courtier:** *(Turning to SEVENTH COURTIER)* No, The Lord Great Steward, surely?

**Tom:** Perhaps I should scratch it myself?

**Third Courtier:** *(shocked)* My Lord!

**Fifth Courtier:** The thought of it!

**Tom:** Perhaps there should be a newly-created post? Nose-scratcher to the Prince of Wales!

**Third Courtier:** *(indulgently)* My Lord, an excellent suggestion. I shall see to it myself. *(pause)* Do you have an itchy nose, Sir?

**Tom:** I did. But I don't any more. You spent too long talking about it! *(Much to the COURTIERS' relief he goes back to his meal. He picks up a turnip).* What's

this?

**Eighth Courtier:** That, Sir, is a turnip.

**Tom:** Ah. I haven't seen one before.

**Eighth Courtier:** A wonderful delicacy, imported from Holland! As yet we don't grow them in this country.

*(TOM tastes the turnip; he doesn't like it).*

**Eighth Courtier:** It is not to your liking?

**Seventh Courtier:** Only the very best turnips are selected for His Majesty.

**Tom:** THAT'S one of the BEST?

**Third Courtier:** Fetch His Majesty another turnip!

**Tom:** No! Don't worry, I won't be having another one.

**Third Courtier:** *(with a slight bow)* Very well, Your Majesty. As you please.

**Eighth Courtier:** Your illness has done funny things to you, Sir. Previously, you loved turnips....

**Third Courtier:** *(TOM is stuffing some nuts into his pocket)*....but hated nuts.

**Tom:** Ah. I thought I'd try them later. To see if I've changed my mind. I've heard these are sold on the streets of London .... a whole bag for a farthing!

**Third Courtier:** Indeed. Does this mean you have finished your meal, Sir?

*(The FOURTH COURTIER passes him a bowl of water. TOM takes one look at it and drinks the water. He sees people looking at him, flabbergasted).*

**Tom:** That's nice! It has a funny taste.

**Third Courtier:** Sir! It is rose water, made from scented rose petals.

**Second Courtier:** You use it for cleaning your fingers.

**Tom:** *(stunned)* But they're not dirty! And even if they were, what's wrong with water from a well?

**Third Courtier:** *(shocked at the notion)* From a well?

**Fifth Courtier:** What an amusing notion!

**Tom:** Isn't that where it comes from?

**Third Courtier:** Sir, the water is provided by the Groom of the Royal Water.

**Tom:** *(wearily)* Of course.

**Second Courtier:** It is the finest there is!

**Tom:** *(he hands the bowl back, looking unimpressed).* He still brings it from a well though, doesn't he?

*(KING HENRY enters walking with great difficulty, bent double over a stick. He is very irritable and breathless and his arrival surprises everyone in the room).*

*He is again supported by his wife, CATHERINE PARR).*

**Third Courtier:** Sir! *(The COURTIERS bow)*

*(Stunned, TOM stands immediately, then bows as the KING moves centre stage)*

**King:** *(He stands and surveys the scene)* Yes! An unannounced visit! I have come to see my son about an important matter of state. In private! *(With a flourish he sends the COURTIERS away).*

#### SCENE 9 - THE QUESTION OF THE GREAT SEAL

*(The COURTIERS leave, taking with them the remains of the food. The KING speaks with TOM, who slowly straightens up from the deepest bow possible).*

**King:** So, I see you haven't forgotten how to eat.

**Tom:** No, Sir, I have had no difficulty with that.

**King:** *(to CATHERINE)* Help me sit.

*(TOM helps him sit down; the KING is obviously surprised and flattered).*

**King:** Ah Catherine! See how well the court has brought him up? He thinks to bring his old father a chair. *(Catching his breath and speaking then to TOM).* And what about everything else? Are you beginning to remember things again?

**Tom:** I'm feeling .... a little less muddled.

**King:** Good. I hope you're not listening to Hertford and the Lord Chancellor too hard.

**Tom:** They told me I must do everything they say!

**King:** They are fools. You will still be a boy, when you become King. They will try to take advantage of that! Promise me you will watch them like hawks!

**Tom:** I promise, Sir.

**King:** At least there's one man you won't have to worry about. The Duke of Norfolk loses his head tomorrow.

**Tom:** He is going to be executed?

**Catherine Parr:** For treason! Against your father!

**Tom:** What treason did he commit Sir? If you don't mind me asking?

**King:** I'll let you into a secret, my boy. He has committed no specific treason. But he is a powerful man and I want to get rid of him. And at last an opportunity presents itself! However, the warrant for his execution needs to have on it the mark of the Great Seal.

**Tom:** The Great Seal?

**King:** That is why I have come to see you. You had it last.

**Catherine Parr:** The Lord Chancellor was teaching you to use it last week.

**Tom:** It must be my illness, Sir. I have completely forgotten.

**King:** (*anger rising suddenly*) Damn this illness of yours! Edward, look me in the eye. Do you know where the seal is?

**Tom:** Truly I don't Sir! Is it .... in a pond, somewhere?

**King:** (*incredulous*) In a pond?

**Tom:** Well a pond is where I would look for a giant fish.

**King:** A giant fish? (*Seeing the joke*) Ha! The Great Seal! A giant fish! Catherine.... he's playing a GAME!

**Tom:** I'm not Sir! I swear.

**King:** (*irascibly*) You've been giving us the runaround! You haven't lost your memory at all!

**Catherine:** (*soothing*) Now now, dear husband, see how irritable you are getting ? I can see the boy is telling the truth!

**Tom:** My mother's right, Sir. It's not a game, and I haven't seen the seal.

**King:** (*suddenly shocked*) Your mother?

**Tom:** The .... the Queen.

**Catherine:** My sweet boy, I am your father's wife but I am not your mother!

**King:** Your mother was Jane Seymour and she died just after you were born.

**Tom:** My mother's dead?

**King:** Her funeral was one of the greatest processions London has seen! She was greatly loved as a Queen and as a wife. She would have been well loved as a mother, too.

**Tom:** I have often heard people talking of a great funeral procession through the streets. It was a couple of weeks after I was born.

**King:** She died from the pain of giving birth to you. Her sacrifice was England's glory. She gave the country a future King!

**Catherine:** (*calming him*) Sir....

**King:** Ah, my wife doesn't want me getting over-tired. Is it time for my afternoon nap?

**Catherine:** Sir, you have already had it.

**King:** Well I shall take another one! (*CATHERINE helps him to stand*) See Edward, that one day you take a wife like Catherine. Loyal and generous; kind to a man in his forgetful old age.

**Tom:** I'll try my best, Sir.

**King:** You are getting better. I can see the colour in your cheeks returning. (*He is displaying his frailty and walking slowly with a stick; slowly, he makes to exit with CATHERINE*).

**Catherine:** Edward, you must come and read to me. In French, this afternoon, whilst your father is sleeping. I will send for you.

(*TOM watches the two of them go and then pulls a nut from his pocket. He is about to try to crack it open but is disturbed by the entrance of a boy, HUMPHREY MARLOW, and a SERVANT*).

**Servant:** Sir!

**Tom:** (*Hurriedly he puts the nuts away*). Now what?

**Servant:** Humphrey Marlow craves your attention! Will you receive him?

**Tom:** (*wearily*) Go on, then. (*The SERVANT exits. HUMPHREY MARLOW bows*) Who are you? (*pause*) You... (*awkwardly*) You may stop bowing now.

**Humphrey:** (*rising*) Sir, surely you remember me?

**Tom:** I don't. I've been ill, you see. You'll have to remind me. You are one of my servants?

**Humphrey:** Sir, I am Humphrey Marlow! Your whipping boy!

**Tom:** (*confused*) My what?

**Humphrey:** My Lord, you will surely remember that this morning you tore your coat? During your lesson in swordsmanship, with my own father.

**Tom:** Did I?

**Humphrey:** You did Sir, and your uncle decided that I should be soundly whipped as a punishment for your carelessness.

**Tom:** You .... be whipped for something that I did? I don't understand.

**Humphrey:** My Lord, your memory really has gone. Let me explain. No-one is ever allowed to hit you, as you are the Prince of Wales and your person is sacred. So on the occasions that your behaviour merits a whipping it is I that receives it.

**Tom:** What on earth for?

**Humphrey:** (*shrugs*) To make you feel guilty I suppose.

**Tom:** That doesn't seem fair!

**Humphrey:** My Lord, it is entirely right and proper that another boy is always punished in your place.

**Tom:** Well why should it be you?

**Humphrey:** I am your whipping boy! It is my profession and my livelihood!

**Tom:** What an extraordinary way to make a living! And have you been whipped for my carelessness?

**Humphrey:** Not yet, your good Majesty. The punishment is due to take place this afternoon. But I wondered if I might be so bold as to remind your Grace that you promised to intercede on my behalf, saying that a whipping was too harsh a punishment?

**Tom:** I will speak to my uncle right away!

**Humphrey:** Ah! You HAVE remembered.

**Tom:** No-one will be allowed to beat you.

**Humphrey:** Your Grace, I thank you.

**Tom:** Remind me; what else have I done that you have been whipped for?

**Humphrey:** Sir, just last week, you made two mistakes in your Greek translation, for which I received six strokes.

**Tom:** Six?

**Humphrey:** Your tutor expects much of you, Sir.

**Tom:** It must have hurt.

**Humphrey:** (*rubbing his behind*) Sir, you can't imagine.

**Tom:** No. I think I can.

**Humphrey:** I couldn't sit down for three days afterwards! But I am a professional, I don't let it worry me, and it's an honour to serve you.

**Tom:** Still, I will be more careful next time. (*pause*) I'm sorry.

**Humphrey:** (*surprised*) My Lord?

**Tom:** What?

**Humphrey:** Well, whenever you've said that before it's never sounded as if you actually meant it.

**Tom:** Well I do mean it! And to make amends, I will invite you to dine with me tonight, at supper, as my guest! That way I won't have to eat on my own.

**Humphrey:** Sir, you are generous, beyond words. (*He bows, as if to go*).

**Tom:** No - wait - don't go. (*pause*) You seem surprised?

**Humphrey:** Well Sir, forgive me, up until now you have rarely agreed to act on my behalf.

**Tom:** From now on you will find me a generous master.

**Humphrey:** (*hesitating*) Why - thank you.

**Tom:** Aren't you pleased?

**Humphrey:** Well Sir, if you are generous all of the time then I am ruined. I will have no livelihood left in the palace! I will have to seek service elsewhere.

**Tom:** Well, then, I have an idea. You said your father teaches him .... (*corrects himself*) teaches ME swordsmanship.

**Humphrey:** Why yes, Sir; he has taught me too before he entered royal service. He was a crusader; one of the most fearless, it is said.

**Tom:** I'm feeling out of practice. You will no longer be my whipping boy. I will employ you as my fighting teacher!

**Humphrey:** (*overwhelmed*) Sir, it is an honour.

**Tom:** We shall go into the garden this afternoon. You can show me all the techniques your father has taught you. I will be ... Richard the Lionheart. You will be defending the gates of Jerusalem!

**Humphrey:** (*delighted and amazed*) Your illness has changed you for the better, Sir.

**Tom:** I want you to be my friend.

**Humphrey:** Sir I can't. I am a servant.

**Tom:** I command it.

**Humphrey:** (*bowing nervously*) Sir, if you command it.

**Tom:** You can tell me all about life in the palace; about who everyone is. Help me get my memory back. (*pause*) It's quite lonely being a Prince you see.

**Humphrey:** Yes, you have said so before. But my Lord, until now you have never said that you needed a friend.

**Tom:** (*He empties the nuts from his pockets*). Are my servants fed well? Be honest.

**Humphrey:** I think so. I've never worked anywhere but the palace.

**Tom:** Would you like some nuts? Help yourself.

**Humphrey:** Sir, I have only ever seen such things on the Prince's dinner table!

**Tom:** Well that's where they came from! Try one.

**Humphrey:** We need something to crack them open with.

**Tom:** I have just the thing! I found it in my room, earlier today. (*He retrieves the Great Seal - a large, heavy bell-like object with a flat base - from behind the table*). This will do.

**Humphrey:** What is it?

**Tom:** I don't know. But - the Prince of Wales commands it to be a nut cracker!

**Humphrey:** Well then it must be! (*They crack nuts happily together*).

#### SCENE 10 - THE RIVER PAGEANT

(*Song - "Pastime With Good Company", [whose composition is attributed to KING HENRY VIII]. When it is finished the lights come up on a group of COURTIERS and PAUPERS, watching the Royal Pageant go past. It is evening and some of the crowd carry lanterns. There is the sound of oars, cutting the water. As the crowd forms, TOM and HUMPHREY exit and the stage is set, behind the crowd, for the scene that follows this one.*)

**First Courtier:** (*as the music ends*) See how the river is ablaze with light!

**First Pauper:** The bridges decked out with coloured lanterns.

**Girl Pauper:** (*excitedly*) I can see them! I can see them! The boats are coming!

**Third Pauper:** A file of barges draws up to the steps of the great palace.

**Second Courtier:** Forty of them!

**Third Courtier:** More! Fifty!

**Fourth Courtier:** There are banners and streamers, fashioned from arras and cloth of gold, and emblazoned with coats-of-arms.

**Fifth Courtier:** This one, the emblem of England. This one now, the King's own standard. And there - the coat of arms of the Prince of Wales!

**Crowd:** (*together*) The Prince! The Prince! The Prince!

**Sixth Courtier:** There are dancers and musicians. A song is heard, composed by the King's own hand.

**Fourth Courtier:** A carpet is unrolled.

**Seventh Courtier:** Attendants line either side, resplendent in gold and crimson, as the Prince leaves his Palace and is welcomed onto his own Royal Barge.

(*A flourish of trumpets*).

**Sixth Pauper:** The river pageant has begun!

**Fifth Pauper:** From the Palace of Westminster to the Guildhall, all London lines the banks, straining for a view.

**Seventh Pauper:** In one boat is the sergeant of the city guard; in the next, the Knights of the Bath, each with white lace on his sleeve; then the judges, in their scarlet robes ....

**Eighth Courtier:** Then the parties of the Spanish Ambassador, The French Ambassador, The Representatives of his Imperial Majesty, the Tsar of Russia.

**First Courtier:** The Dukes of Somerset, Northumberland, Kent, and Buckingham.

**Second Courtier:** (*announcing*) The high and mighty, the Lord Edward, Prince of Wales! (*applause erupts*).

**Eighth Pauper:** And Tom Canty, the hero of it all, steps into view on the prow of the ship, and bows his princely head.

**First Courtier:** He wears a doublet of white satin, powdered with diamonds and edged with ermine ....

**Second Courtier:** .... and over it a mantle of white cloth-of-gold, lined with blue satin, set with pearls and precious stones.

**Third Courtier:** Wherever light falls upon him jewels respond with a blinding flash.

**First Pauper:** Oh Tom Canty, born in a hovel, bred in the gutters of London familiar with rags and dirt and misery, what a spectacle is this!

(*The CROWD exits and a cross-fade signals the commencement of the next scene*).

SCENE 11 - THE PRINCE'S TROUBLES BEGIN

*(The lights change to indicate another change of time and location. In a busy London street a STALLHOLDER - one of the PAUPERS - stands over a cart laden with vegetables; people queue up to buy produce from her. They talk as they are served, each leaving the scene after they have paid for their purchases. In the queue is NAN, Tom's sister).*

**First Pauper:** Such a wonderful occasion.

**Second Pauper:** More satin and lace that you'd ever set eyes on!

**Third Pauper:** How fine the young prince looked.

**Fourth Pauper:** *(nudging NAN)* Hey, Nan, your brother Tom, what he would have given to be on one of those boats with their Lords, High and Mighty.

**Nan:** We don't know where Tom is.

**Fourth Pauper:** He'll have his head in a book somewhere! Tales of Kings and Princes!

**Nan:** Lost in dreamland, our father says.

**Fifth Pauper:** Perhaps he's run away to become a servant in the royal household.

**Fourth Pauper:** Hah! If he's lucky he'll get to clean the Palace latrines.

**Third Pauper:** Or be the Prince's whipping boy!

**Fifth Pauper:** If he's lucky he'll rid himself of John Canty, once and for all, that's for sure.

*(They are so busy talking they haven't seen EDWARD - dressed in TOM'S clothes and looking like him - saunter boldly up to the cart and pick an apple off it).*

**Stallholder:** Hey! What d'you think you're doing?

**First Pauper:** There's a queue here!

**Nan:** *(shocked)* Tom! *(EDWARD has taken a bite from the apple).*

**Stallholder:** *(angry)* Are you going to pay for that apple?

**Edward:** *(puzzled and outraged)* Pay?

**Nan:** *(haranguing)* Our father's looking for you!

**Stallholder:** *(crossly)* A farthing, that'll be.

**Edward:** *(ignoring the stallholder)* Our father? *(scoffing)* My father is at this moment in the Palace, talking with the French Ambassador!

*(The STALLHOLDERS laugh, mocking him).*

**Stallholder:** *(She grabs EDWARD'S arm)* Where's my money?

**Edward:** *(He takes another bite from the apple)* Get off me! *(shaking her off)* The

Prince of Wales doesn't pay! You will show proper respect for the future King of England!

**Fifth Pauper:** "Proper respect!"

**Fourth Pauper:** It's one of his games again!

**Third Pauper:** You make us laugh, Tom Canty, you and your make-believe.

*(There is more mocking laughter as JOHN CANTY, who has been watching the scene for some time, comes up behind EDWARD and collars him. BETH is with him. He is in a filthy mood).*

**John Canty:** So! Found you at last, you useless piece of vermin! I'll warrant you've brought nothing home for your poor mother and me! *(He snatches the apple as EDWARD wriggles free from him).* An apple, is that all?

**Edward:** You should bow, before speaking to me!

**John Canty:** Don't play games with me, boy! I'll break every bone in your body!

**Edward:** You will do no such thing! You will take me to the Palace, right away, and to my real father!

**John Canty:** *(confused)* The Palace? Your real father?

**Fourth Pauper:** Tom Canty's gone properly mad, John. He thinks he's the Prince of Wales!

**John Canty:** He does, does he...*(He grabs the struggling boy again, holding him so he cannot speak).*

*(FATHER ANDREW enters and approaches).*

**Father Andrew:** John Canty, leave the boy alone!

**Second Pauper:** Father Andrew! No! Be careful!

**John Canty:** You! You're the cause of this madness! Putting ideas into his head from all that learning!

*(He lashes out and FATHER ANDREW falls to the ground. A couple of PAUPERS run to his aid).*

**John Canty:** Nan! Beth! You'd better be coming home with me. *(He thumps EDWARD, who is still struggling, on the head then picks him up and puts him over his shoulder).* Nan! Beth! Home! You heard! Or you'll get the same as your brother!

*(JOHN CANTY leaves with BETH and NAN in tow. Meanwhile some PAUPERS drag the lifeless body of FATHER ANDREW on to the vegetable seller's cart)*

*and leave, hastily, with it).*

SCENE 12 - THE PRINCE IN THE TOILS

*(The CANTY'S house in Offal Court. MRS CANTY stands by a basin, scrubbing and cleaning. She is startled by the shouts and cries of EDWARD being beaten offstage. JOHN CANTY enters, dragging EDWARD with NAN and BETH following meekly behind. JOHN CANTY half-throws the hurt, upset and frightened EDWARD to the ground).*

**John Canty:** Don't worry about him, he's been knocked about a bit, that's all! Look! He's stolen an apple for us!

*(EDWARD still has the apple and he is trying to struggle to his feet. MRS CANTY comes up to try and support him but is pushed away).*

**John Canty:** That's right lad, stand up, you can tell us again who you are!

**Edward:** *(dazedly)* I've told you, I am Edward, Prince of Wales! What's more, my person is sacred, and no-one is ever allowed to hit me. I will see that you hang for this!

**John Canty:** Will you! Well, I'll take you to the scaffold with me for company! *(EDWARD looks at him, dazed).* Begging and theft! Capital offences, they are. Both of them! *(He bites into the apple).*

**Mrs Canty:** Oh John, the poor lad. All his books and reading, it's finally sent him mad!

**Edward:** Good lady, your son isn't mad. He is in the Palace as I have said. Take me there, to my father the King, and you will get him back.

**Mrs Canty:** *(despairingly)* Tom, please shake off this horrid dream. Look me in the eye. I'm your mother!

**Edward:** You aren't. My mother is dead. I have never seen you before in my life.

*(MRS CANTY withdraws, distressed).*

**John Canty:** *(sarcastically)* Nan! Beth! Where are your manners? How dare you stand in the prince's presence! On your knees, pauper scum, and show him the respect he deserves!

*(The girls go down on their knees. JOHN CANTY laughs, mockingly).*

**Nan:** *(nervous)* Father please!

**Beth:** It's true what you say. He's mad, but he's been like this before. Let's all go to bed, so that he can sleep it off.

**Nan:** He'll be himself again tomorrow!

**John Canty:** *(grabbing EDWARD by his collar)* So he will! And tomorrow he'll go begging, and bring back two pennies - no less, mind - so that I can pay the half year's rent. Or we'll all be out of this place, on our ears!

**Edward:** Leave me alone! I tell you for the last time; I am the King's son!  
*(JOHN CANTY is about to hit him again but MRS CANTY intervenes).*

**Mrs Canty:** No John! You've hit him enough, and it's done no good. There's another way. Let him sleep, like Beth said.

*(Lights go down; they have been extinguished in the streets outside).*

**John Canty:** *(considering his wife's proposal)* You're lucky, boy! It's too dark to hit you properly, now the lights in the street are out. If you're still like this tomorrow you'll all know about it. Now to bed, the lot of you!

*(A flurry of activity as the family prepare for the night: each has some blankets and chooses a corner in which to bed down. MRS CANTY blows out a lamp that sits nearby. EDWARD stands there motionless).*

**Mrs Canty:** *(pleadingly)* Tom please, see what he'll do to us all if you go on like this? *(She hands him some bed clothes).*

**Edward:** Make the bed up for me! *(She does so, and helps EDWARD into it).* I will lie down - but I will not sleep. *(He falls asleep almost at once).*

**Mrs Canty:** *(watching EDWARD)* Beth? Beth? Are you awake?

**Beth:** Yes.

**Mrs Canty:** Will he get better?

**Beth:** Better? He can't get better.

**Mrs Canty:** What do you mean?

**Beth:** Can't you see? He's not Tom.

**Mrs Canty:** What are you talking about? Of course he's Tom!

**Beth:** He's different. See the way he's sleeping, on his side, with his mouth closed. Our Tom has slept on his back since the day he was born, never on his side!

**Mrs Canty:** His madness has done strange things to him.

**Beth:** It's as if he's another boy entirely!

**Mrs Canty:** How can he be?

**Beth:** All this talk of being the Prince of Wales...

**Mrs Canty:** Beth, he's always been a dreamer. No, he's my own son, gone mad, otherwise who else would he be? (*scoffing*) The Prince of Wales himself, here in Offal Court?

*(Their conversation is interrupted by a knocking at the door. JOHN CANTY wakes and stumbles to the door).*

**John Canty:** Who's that?

**Child:** (*outside door*) Sir - open the door - I have an urgent message for you! (*JOHN CANTY opens the door. The CHILD stands there breathless*). Sir - I was sent to tell you, Sir - the man you struck earlier today - Father Andrew ....

**John Canty:** What of him?

**Child:** He's dead Sir! Given up the ghost Sir! And the justices are after you Sir!

**Mrs Canty:** God have mercy!

**Child:** They have charged you with murder Sir!

**John Canty:** (*turns to the room*) We must leave at once. Up with you all! We're leaving! (*He rapidly removes the coverings from the beds of NAN and EDWARD*). Out of bed! Now! Mind your tongues, all of you! Our name isn't Canty anymore, it's .... . Hobbs. We will throw them off the scent! Stick close to me. If we are separated, we will meet by the south gate of London Bridge!

*(There is a rush, as they prepare to escape with their belongings. A number of PAUPERS appear - their narration providing the link to the next scene which again takes place on the streets of London).*

### SCENE 13 - THE KING IS DEAD: LONG LIVE THE KING

*(PAUPERS emerge, carrying torches to create a street scene outside the Guildhall).*

**First Pauper:** The Canty family burst suddenly into the midst of a multitude of singing, dancing, and shouting people.

**Second Pauper:** A line of bonfires stretched as far as one could see, up and down the Thames.

**Third Pauper:** London Bridge was illuminated ....

**Fourth Pauper:** .... Southwark Bridge too ....

**Fifth Pauper:** .... while a thick rain of dazzling sparks from fireworks filled the sky with coloured lights.

**Sixth Pauper:** On the river, the glorious pageant was reaching its end. The Royal Barge had delivered its precious princely passenger to the Guildhall, for the Lord Mayor's Banquet.

*(There is music and noise and in the distance there are flashes from fireworks. The darkened stage is filled with people; some are carrying lanterns. JOHN CANTY is leading his family through the throng, holding EDWARD tightly by the hand while MRS CANTY helps NAN and BETH. They are stopped by a burly BOATMAN and his WIFE. PAUPERS gather round sensing the start of a scuffle).*

**Boatman:** Hey .... hey .... not so fast .... what's your business when everyone else is celebrating?

**John Canty:** Out of my way.

**Boatman's Wife:** You must drink to the Prince of Wales!

*(JOHN CANTY is startled, but keeps a tight grip on EDWARD. A large two-handled bowl has been thrust in front of him).*

**Paupers:** A drink! Make him drink!

**Boatman:** We will not let you past until you have shown the proper respect to His Royal Highness.

**Boatman's Wife:** Drink, man, or we will drop you in the river and feed the fishes!

*(Reluctantly, JOHN CANTY takes the bowl with both hands and drinks. He is forced to let go of EDWARD who slips away into the crowd).*

**John Canty:** The boy's gone! Catch him someone!

**First Pauper:** The Prince wasted no time.

**Second Pauper:** He dived among the forest of legs about him and disappeared.

**Edward:** *(emerging through the crowd and speaking to a PAUPER)* Which way is it to the Guildhall?

**Pauper:** You'll never get a glimpse of the Prince of Wales there, the crowd's ten deep!

**Edward:** Tell me!

**Pauper:** Follow this road straight. But you're better off watching from Southwark Bridge .... *(EDWARD has gone)*

**Edward:** (*re-emerging by some GUARDS*) Is this the Guildhall?

**First Guard:** It is, Sir.

**Edward:** Let me in! I am the Prince of Wales!

**Second Guard:** (*bemusedly*) Sir, the Prince of Wales is inside!

**Edward:** He is an impostor! I am the true Prince of Wales!

(*A small crowd has gathered to watch this strange scene. Among them is MILES HENDON, a country squire.*)

**First Guard:** An impostor?

**Second Guard:** Hark at him! His big words!

(*The CROWD begin to laugh at him, pushing him and joshing him. MILES HENDON comes forward.*)

**Fourth Pauper:** Throw him from London Bridge!

**Miles Hendon:** Leave him alone! (*He hides EDWARD behind him.*)

**First Guard:** (*calling*) Constable!

**Constable:** (*approaching*) Is there trouble here?

**First Guard:** This boy wants to gain access to the Guildhall, Sir.

**Miles Hendon:** It's all right Constable, boyish spirits, that's all! The celebrations have gone to his head!

**John Canty:** (*emerging from the crowd*) THERE you are!

(*MILES HENDON has drawn his sword. JOHN CANTY stays back.*)

**Constable:** And who are you, Sir?

**John Canty:** Why, I am the boy's father.

**Edward:** He's not! He's lying!

**Constable:** (*confusedly and referring to MILES HENDON*) I thought this man here was his father?

(*JOHN CANTY moves to take EDWARD; he backs off after MILES HENDON intervenes.*)

**Miles Hendon:** Not so fast!

(*A flourish of trumpets; there is a hush. A MESSENGER addresses the CROWD.*)

**Messenger:** Listen all! I come with a solemn message from the Palace of Westminster! The King is dead. By the grace of God, Long live the King!

*(A murmur goes through the crowd; someone shouts).*

**First Pauper:** At last, the reign of blood is over!

**Second Pauper:** Long live Edward, King of England!

**Crowd:** Long live Edward, King of England!

**Edward:** But that's me!

**Third Pauper:** *(shouting from another part of the CROWD)* There he is! John Canty, the murderer of Father Andrew!

**Fourth Pauper:** Constable! Arrest that man for murder!

**John Canty:** *(to CONSTABLE)* Sir, I am not John Canty, my name is Hobbs. This is my son Jack!

**Fourth Pauper:** He's lying! He's John Canty, sure as night follows day!

**John Canty:** *(to EDWARD)* Jack! Come with me!

*(The CROWD push JOHN CANTY onward and is soon on his heels - led by the CONSTABLE. MILES HENDON is left with EDWARD).*

**Miles Hendon:** Are you all right?

**Edward:** *(dazedly)* I am King!

*(There are still some PAUPERS around, who sneer at him, nastily. One of them mimes picking up a stone, from the ground; he 'throws' it at Edward's feet. EDWARD jumps out of the way, just in time).*

**Fourth Pauper:** Ha! Long to reign over us!

**Miles Hendon:** Leave him be, you've had your fun! *(to EDWARD)* You'd better come with me. It's not safe for you here!

**Edward:** But ....

**Miles Hendon:** *(holding out his hand)* I haven't introduced myself: Miles Hendon. And you're Jack I believe?

**Edward:** *(shaking his hand, in a daze)* No! I'm not Jack, I'm Tom! No .... I'm .... I don't know *who* I am.

**Miles Hendon:** Well whoever you are, I seem to have rescued you! Come on, before any more stones come flying in your direction!

*(Another stone wings its way towards him. MILES HENDON leads EDWARD away as the CURTAIN FALLS).*

**END OF ACT I**

## ACT II

### SCENE ONE - THE PRINCE AND HIS DELIVERER

*The Tabard Inn in Southwark. The stage is still divided as it was at the opening of Act I. This scene takes place in the 'poor' half of the stage.*

*(EDWARD sleeps soundly on the floor, wrapped in blankets. MILES HENDON sits close by, on a stool. As the scene begins, his servant, STEPHEN, enters noisily with a plate of food).*

**Miles Hendon:** Sshh! The boy is sleeping. Put it next to him for when he wakes.

**Stephen:** *(doing so)* Does he still think he is King of England?

**Miles Hendon:** Look at the peaceful expression on his face. I hope his troubles have left him.

**Stephen:** You don't think it is a game then, Sir?

**Miles Hendon:** I think it is an illness caused by one too many blows to the head from that vile father of his. Hobbs, did he say his name was?

**Stephen:** It's not Hobbs, Sir, it's John Canty. Everyone knows him. He changed his name because he's on the run. Killed a man, people were saying.

**Miles Hendon:** He seems a nasty piece of work, whatever his name is!

**Stephen:** Will you be travelling today, Sir?

**Miles Hendon:** I can't stay a day longer in London. But I can't leave the boy to the mercy of that mob; so it looks like he'll have to come with me.

**Stephen:** *(leaving)* I will ensure that your horses are prepared, Sir.

**Miles Hendon:** Stephen, if he is not cured, then we will have to play along with him. Humour him; that might help him to get better.

**Stephen:** You mean we should address him as 'Your Royal Highness, Prince Edward' Sir?

**Miles Hendon:** Not at the moment. 'Jack' will do. It's what his father was calling him. Although he seemed to be saying his name was 'Tom', too. I think there might be more to this curious boy than meets the eye, although I wish I could say what!

*(STEPHEN leaves, just as EDWARD wakes and stretches and looks around).*

**Miles Hendon:** Good morning! There's wine and smoked ham for breakfast. Is anything wrong?

**Edward:** *(dazedly)* Where am I?

**Miles Hendon:** The Tabard Inn in Southwark. Have a look out of the window!

You can see London Bridge.

**Edward:** An Inn? London Bridge?

**Miles Hendon:** I brought you here last night.

**Edward:** You rescued me from all those people!

**Miles Hendon:** You were lucky. You were causing a lot of trouble telling everyone you were the King of England!

**Edward:** Thank God someone realized I was though!

**Miles Hendon:** I thought you seemed in need of a friend. You stood up for yourself well. I've always admired someone with courage; that's the soldier in me, I suppose.

**Edward:** *(realization dawning)* You think I'm making it all up don't you?

**Miles Hendon:** Some food and a rest will put you right!

**Edward:** *(rubbing his eyes)* There's mud on my face!

**Miles Hendon:** You'll find a well in the yard outside if you want to get clean.

**Edward:** A well? Water is usually brought to me by the Groom of the Royal Water!

**Miles Hendon:** I see. At the moment he's not here...

**Edward:** What about that jug of water over there? Fetch it for me - and a towel!

*(MILES HENDON fetches EDWARD the water and towel and places it in front of him. Throughout the scene he is both bemused and annoyed by EDWARD and generally humours him, with a gentle hint of mockery in his voice).*

**Miles Hendon:** Anything else?

**Edward:** I can't use the water IN the jug, can I?

*(After a moment's hesitation, MILES HENDON pours the water into the bowl and then passes EDWARD the towel. EDWARD kneels and washes his face before realizing something is wrong).*

**Edward:** You are sitting in the presence of the King!

**Miles Hendon:** *(with mockery)* So I am!

**Edward:** I could send you to the Tower!

**Miles Hendon:** *(standing)* Happy now?

**Edward:** What's your name?

**Miles Hendon:** I introduced myself to you last night, but you have forgotten. *(They shake hands).* Miles Hendon, son of Sir Walter Hendon, the Fourth Baron of Hendon Hall.

**Edward:** I've never heard of you.

**Miles Hendon:** I admit we are not a powerful family, but in our little corner of Kent

- well, every body knows us there.

**Edward:** I went to Kent once with my father, to a place called Dover. He was looking at all his warships there. It was a bit boring really.

**Miles Hendon:** My house is nowhere near Dover. It's right out in the countryside surrounded by woods and orchards. It's where I grew up and it's where I'm going today!

**Edward:** It sounds nice - but it can't be nicer than the Palace of Westminster.

**Miles Hendon:** No, I suspect it isn't. But it's been seven long years since I was last there. I've been abroad; fighting in Europe mainly. I can't wait to see the old place again!

**Edward:** Who were you fighting?

**Miles Hendon:** Whoever I was paid to. I was a mercenary, a paid soldier. (*Showing him his scars*) Here, a scar from when I fought for the French against the Spanish and here, another scar; this one from when I fought for the Spanish against the French. I served in the armies of two Dukes, three Princes and four Kings.

**Edward:** Were you ever captured?

**Miles Hendon:** I was nearly executed - twice!

**Edward:** It sounds as if Hendon Hall would have been much safer!

**Miles Hendon:** So it would have been. But I couldn't stay there. I was banished you see, by my father.

**Edward:** Banished?

**Miles Hendon:** I fell in love with a girl - my cousin, Edith. She is rich and very beautiful but my father had agreed that she should marry my brother, Hugh. He told me to leave England so that I would not prevent Hugh marrying her.

**Edward:** Did your brother - Hugh - love this lady, Edith?

**Miles Hendon:** Not as much as I did.

**Edward:** And now?

**Miles Hendon:** My father is dead. I am returning home to claim Edith as my bride.

**Edward:** What will Hugh say?

**Miles Hendon:** Not much. (*He draws his sword to show he means business and it hovers under EDWARD'S nose*).

**Edward:** I was going to be married once.

**Miles Hendon:** Really?

**Edward:** To Mary Queen of Scots.

**Miles Hendon:** Indeed.

**Edward:** My father told me I would marry her when I was sixteen. But she married the King of France instead.

**Miles Hendon:** Well young Sir, it sounds as if both of us have been unlucky in love.

**Edward:** You have been unluckier. Your heart has been broken and you have been away from England too long. Give me your sword and kneel in front of me.

*(MILES HENDON kneels and EDWARD 'knights' him).*

**Edward:** I dub you Sir Miles Hendon, of Hendon Hall. You are the most faithful of my knights. Tell me, what special privilege do you claim?

**Miles Hendon:** The right - the right to sit in the presence of the King of England!

**Edward:** Your wish is granted!

**Miles Hendon:** *(sitting back down on the stool)* And now my Lord, you may finish your breakfast. We will leave in an hour.

**Edward:** For the Palace?

**Miles Hendon:** For Hendon Hall!

**Edward:** Well, I won't be coming with you.

**Miles Hendon:** There are woods and fields there. You could ride or go hunting; all the things I used to do when I was a boy! The fresh air would clear your head!

**Edward:** I have to prepare for my coronation!

**Miles Hendon:** You have to get better my friend. I can't simply throw you back out on the streets.

**Edward:** My people will cheer me on the way to the Abbey.

**Miles Hendon:** I think the last thing 'your people' will do is CHEER you!

**Edward:** I'm supposed to be meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury - right this minute!

**Miles Hendon:** Well he'll just have to be kept waiting. Besides, you can't meet the Archbishop of Canterbury in those clothes, can you?

**Edward:** You're right, I can't! You should buy me some new ones!

**Miles Hendon:** That's what I was about to suggest! I don't want you getting mud all over Hendon Hall. There's an excellent tailor I know who has a shop on London Bridge. What have you been doing to get so muddy?

**Edward:** Playing on the river bank!

**Miles Hendon:** *(dubiously)* An odd thing for the King of England to be doing.

**Edward:** Baron Hendon, yesterday I was lucky enough to see how the people of England really live. But now, my father is dead and I really must return to the Palace. You will be rewarded handsomely for rescuing me.

**Miles Hendon:** *(hesitantly)* Yes, well, when I have returned from my tailor's, then, if you still want to return to the Palace, you can perhaps explain to me how you come to look as you do now.

**Edward:** I will. It's a long story.

**Miles Hendon:** In the meantime your ham is getting cold. I won't be long. My

servant, Stephen, is around if you need anything.

*(MILES HENDON goes, leaving EDWARD alone on stage busily finishing his breakfast. After a few moments a man comes in. He is HUGO, the leader of a gang of thieves and vagabonds. JOHN CANTY is with him but hangs back, watching the scene from a distance).*

**Edward:** Are you Stephen?

**Hugo:** *(cautiously)* Yes.

**Edward:** Sir Miles has gone to London Bridge to buy me some new clothes.

**Hugo:** He sent me to fetch you. You must meet him by the South Gate.

**Edward:** Why?

**Hugo:** He needs to - to know the size of jacket that you require.

**Edward:** Sir Miles really has poor manners you know. It would have been better if he had come for me himself. Still, no matter, you may take me to him!

*(They go out one way. EDWARD catches sight of JOHN CANTY and realizes he has been tricked, just as MILES HENDON and STEPHEN come in another way. MILES HENDON carries a small package of newly purchased clothes).*

**Miles Hendon:** *(talking busily)* If we leave now we will be able to make it to Greenwich for lunch. *(looking around)* The boy? Where has he gone?

**Stephen:** He was here just a moment ago.

**Miles Hendon:** This is that vile Canty's doing! Where will they have gone Stephen? You must help me find him. Come on, there's not a moment to lose! *(They head off frantically).*

## SCENE 2 - THE REIGN OF BLOOD IS ENDED

*(Cross-fade to the 'rich' side of the stage and the Royal Palace where TOM CANTY sits on a throne, in his royal finery, nibbling some chicken legs. He is sharing the plate with HUMPHREY MARLOW who sits by him. The LORD CHANCELLOR approaches with a noble woman, LADY NORFOLK, and Edward Tudor's half-sister, PRINCESS MARY. The SERVANT stands to one side).*

**Lord Chancellor:** My Lord.

**Tom:** (*wearily*) Back to discussing my coronation I suppose.

**Lord Chancellor:** The Archbishop of Canterbury would like to speak with you.

**Tom:** This woman is the Archbishop of Canterbury?

**Lord Chancellor:** No Sir, this woman is Lady Norfolk. She won't keep you long.

**Tom:** What does she want?

**Mary:** (*curtsies*) Her husband, the Duke of Norfolk, was rightfully sentenced to be executed by our father, King Henry, before he died.

**Humphrey:** You remember my Lord, you said he spoke to you about it.

**Mary:** She is here to beg for clemency.

**Lord Chancellor:** A formality; the sentence will be carried out this afternoon.

**Lady Norfolk:** Sir, if you please. My husband committed no treason. There wasn't even a trial!

**Lord Chancellor:** The Archbishop IS waiting Sir.

**Tom:** (*curtly*) Let him! I will hear what this woman has to say.

**Lady Norfolk:** Sir, if you have it in your heart to show mercy ....

**Tom:** (*He confers quietly with HUMPHREY*). Good lady, your husband will not die today.

**Lady Norfolk:** (*shocked*) Sir - by God's blessing you are merciful indeed.

**Tom:** He will be released from the Tower and a proper trial will be arranged.

**Mary:** This is most irregular Sir!

**Tom:** This woman is right to protest. My father told me there's no evidence her husband was guilty.

**Lord Chancellor:** Sir...

**Tom:** I command it! The King's word is law!

**Lord Chancellor:** Very well. (*To SERVANT*) Have word sent to the Tower.

**Tom:** (*to LADY NORFOLK*) You seem surprised by my judgement.

**Lady Norfolk:** It is more than I could ever wish for, Sir.

**Tom:** Humphrey! You were on the streets of London yesterday when it was announced my father was dead. What was the crowd shouting?

**Humphrey:** "The 'Reign of Blood' is over!" I heard them chant it over and over again!

**Tom:** And so, Lady Norfolk, no more blood will be shed in my father's name.

**Lady Norfolk:** God bless you again, Sir.

(*She departs with the SERVANT following a nod from the LORD CHANCELLOR*).

**Mary:** Sir, I must be allowed to say how damaging these actions are!

**Tom:** To show mercy is a sign of strength, not weakness!

**Mary:** You are disregarding England's ancient and traditional laws!

**Tom:** They may be ancient and traditional but they are also cruel.

**Mary:** I heard this morning you let a man go completely free after he had been sentenced to hang for the charge of theft.

**Tom:** The only evidence against him came from a witch!

**Mary:** Who you also freed!

**Humphrey:** She was only nine years old!

**Mary:** She had sold her soul to the Devil!

**Humphrey:** She was mad! She didn't know what she was doing and her mother was mad too. It was plain for all to see! My master did the right thing.

**Mary:** They were both sentenced to be drowned.

**Tom:** But now, by the King's will, they are still alive. I sent them to live in a holy convent.

**Mary:** Do you know how many thieves were executed under the goodly reign of our father?

**Tom:** I dread to think.

**Mary:** Seventy-two thousand!

**Tom:** And how many had stolen because they had nothing to eat?

**Mary:** That doesn't matter. They sinned against God and against the laws of England too.

**Tom:** Is it true that you think laughing is a sin? That you forbid your servants to smile, in case they form a pact with the devil?

**Mary:** Who told you that?

**Tom:** Madam, you must not question the King!

**Mary:** God is insulted by laughter.

**Tom:** Well then, go and ask Him to provide you with a human heart. *(To the LORD CHANCELLOR)* See my sister out please. *(He does so).*

*(TOM and HUMPHREY pick up their swords. HUMPHREY is TOM'S teacher as they fence tentatively).*

**Mary:** *(drawing the LORD CHANCELLOR aside)* The King is clearly mad. His illness hasn't left him!

**Lord Chancellor:** Princess Mary, his father's law still stands. I could consider that treason. And anyway, he is much better now. *(He returns to TOM, busy now in a slow 'practice' swordfight).*

**Tom:** This must be a better life for you, Humphrey.

**Humphrey:** Sir, it is! It is only now that I have stopped being your whipping boy that I've realized what a rotten profession it is!

**Tom:** I'm glad to have you as my trusted adviser.

**Humphrey:** Sir, I hope you will be able to call me your friend too, as you wished.

**Lord Chancellor:** *(somewhat exasperated)* Sir, if I might interrupt your game,

there is much to be done. Your father is to be buried in four days' time and there is the matter of your coronation to be dealt with.

**Tom:** (*putting down his sword*) In four days! Won't he go off?

(*LORD HERTFORD brings on a coronation robe for TOM to try on.*)

**Lord Chancellor:** Go OFF! Sir, your father's body is being attended to by skilled embalmers. He's not like some common pauper, buried the afternoon he dies!

**Tom:** No, of course. (*To LORD HERTFORD as he tries on the robe*) That one's too tight, fetch another. (*Pause; to LORD CHANCELLOR*) Where is he now?

(*The SERVANT shows in THOMAS CRANMER, the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY*)

**Lord Chancellor:** He's lying in state, Sir, in the Chapel Royal. Archbishop Cranmer, I apologize for our lateness.

**Archbishop:** It doesn't matter. In fact Lord Chancellor, your mention of the Chapel Royal leads me to invite His Majesty to pray there with me.

**Lord Chancellor:** After we've gone through the arrangements for the coronation.

**Tom:** Very well, perhaps we can do that in the garden.

**Archbishop:** A very fine idea, your Majesty. I know how much you like it there.

**Tom:** Humphrey can come too! We can go on with our sword-fighting lesson, afterwards. Isn't that a fine idea as well, Humphrey?

**Humphrey:** It is, Sir. In fact lately, your Majesty, all your ideas have been fine ones! (*They go.*)

### SCENE 3 - FOO-FOO THE FIRST, KING OF THE MOONCALVES

(*A change of lighting to indicate a shift in scene and time. 'Greensleeves' can be heard. In a wood, outside London, a company of thieves and vagabonds has gathered. There is birdsong and the sound of the wind in the trees.*)

**First Thief:** (*drunkenly*) A song! Play us another.

**Second Thief:** (*growling*) If he plays another, I'll wrap the thing round his neck!

**Third Thief:** Oh lay off him and let him play!

**Fourth Thief:** (*strumming a musical instrument*) There was a woman in our town, in our town did dwell. She loved her husband dearly, but another man - he

loved she...

*(SECOND THIEF lunges at musician who kicks him back but stops playing. JOHN CANTY enters, dragging EDWARD whom he throws to the ground).*

**Third Thief:** Well if it isn't John Canty!

**Fourth Thief:** Welcome stranger, want a beer?

**Fifth Thief:** That your boy, John Canty? Last time you were here he wasn't much taller than a tree stump.

**John Canty:** *(takes beer)* It's not Canty any more.

**Fifth Thief:** You on the run?

**Hugo:** *(enters)* He killed a man in London.

**Fifth Thief:** Accident, I'll bet.

**John Canty:** *(ignoring him)* I'm John Hobbs now; Hobbs.

**Hugo:** The boy's Jack.

**Fourth Thief:** I thought he was called Tom.

**John Canty:** He's Jack now!

**Third Thief:** *(peering at EDWARD)* Is he any use to us?

**John Canty:** He'll prove himself, given time.

**Sixth Thief:** There's men round these parts, John, can still remember your thieving from when you were a boy.

**Third Thief:** *(nudging EDWARD)* Is Jack Hobbs going to do his old man proud?

**John Canty:** He ran away from me. Got himself some fine gentleman as a friend. *(scoffing)* I was loyal, when I was a boy. *(He kicks TOM)*

**Hugo:** *(intervenes)* John, he's had a long journey. All day trussed up in a sack in the back of a cart.

**Fifth Thief:** Poor mite, find him some water.

**Third Thief:** Bet he made a fuss!

**Second Thief:** *(drunkenly)* He needs *beer*, not water!

*(All laugh and scoff as FIFTH THIEF gives water to EDWARD).*

**Third Thief:** Doesn't say much does he?

**Sixth Thief:** Where's his gentleman friend?

**Hugo:** We gave him the slip. I fooled the boy by pretending to be the man's servant.

**Fourth Thief:** *(incredulously)* He fell for that?

**Third Thief:** The boy's too dim to be a thief.

**Hugo:** Needs training up, that's all.

**Sixth Thief:** Hey Jack! What can you nick?

*(EDWARD looks at him blankly as the THIRD and FOURTH THIEF gather round him threateningly).*

**Fourth Thief:** Could you take a pig from a farm under your coat? Cut its throat to stop it squealing?

**Third Thief:** *(He lifts his shirt to show welts across his back).* See that? Whipped through three towns for stealing I was, 'till the blood ran cold!

**Fourth Thief:** Look, no ear! Cut cleanly off as a punishment for begging!

**Third Thief:** It's a crime in England, you know, to be hungry.

**Fourth Thief:** Let's drink! To English law!

*(All raise their bottles and cheer - "To English Law").*

**Edward:** *(to SEVENTH THIEF)* There is a mark on your cheek.

**Sixth Thief:** Ha, it talks!

**Second Thief:** *(forcing bottle to EDWARD'S lips)* Get some of that down you. Talk some more.

**Edward:** It's the letter "S".

**Sixth Thief:** And it can read, too!

**Seventh Thief:** "S" for "Slave", boy. I was caught begging three times. Had this brand put on me. A hot iron against my cheek, so that my sins were clear for everyone to see.

**Third Thief:** He's on the run now, like your old father.

**Seventh Thief:** Know what'll happen, when they find me?

**Sixth Thief:** Hanging's the punishment for runaway slaves.

**Edward:** No! He won't be hanged! *(to the SEVENTH THIEF)* I'm going to see to it, that the law is changed!

**First Thief:** Changed? Who are you thinking you can change the laws of our land?

**Edward:** I am Edward, King of England.

*(They fall about laughing).*

**First Thief:** Listen to him!

**Third Thief:** How much beer has the manikin had?

**John Canty:** My son is a dreamer, ignore him.

**Edward:** *(to JOHN)* I AM the King, as you'll find out to your cost. You murdered a man, and will hang for it!

**John Canty:** How dare you!

*(He makes a lunge for EDWARD but is pushed back by the FIRST THIEF).*

**First Thief:** Not so fast John Hobbs, leave him be. *(To EDWARD)* And as for you, you will not make threats against anyone here. Pretend to be the King, if that's what makes you happy. We are bad people - all of us - but none is so bad as to be a traitor to their King, as you are.

**Second Thief:** Hear, hear! Long live Edward, King of England!

**Thieves:** Long live Edward, King of England!

**Edward:** *(He is completely blind to their mockery).* I thank you, my good people. *(They laugh again).*

**Third Thief:** He really IS mad!

**Seventh Thief:** Boy, I should drop it. Choose another title.

**Fifth Thief:** How about Foo-foo the First, King of the Mooncalves!

**Fourth Thief:** Yes! Long live Foo-foo the First, King of the Mooncalves! *(They all laugh again, repeating this over and over).*

**Second Thief:** Crown him!

**Third Thief:** Robe him!

**Fourth Thief:** Sceptre him!

**Fifth Thief:** Throne him!

*(As they say this, EDWARD is dragged onto a barrel, where he is "crowned" with a tin basin, "robed" in a tattered blanket, and "sceptred" with an old iron bar. The THIEVES gather round the barrel, kneeling).*

**Sixth Thief:** Be gracious to us sweet King.

**Seventh Thief:** Spit on us, so that our children can tell the story to their children, and be proud forever!

**First Thief:** Warm us with your gracious rays, O flaming sun of sovereignty!

**Hugo:** That's enough!

**Second Thief:** Show us the ground you have stood on, so we can eat the dirt your noble feet have touched!

**Hugo:** *(Starting to remove the basin and blanket from EDWARD)* The boy doesn't need this! Let's see if the poor, mad creature is any use to us. All of you, leave now. See what we can all bring back. I'll stay here, with the boy, and see what he's good for.

**John Canty:** Don't let him out of your sight. He's as mad as he is stubborn. I've lost him twice already!

*(One by one the THIEVES gradually go, until EDWARD is left alone with HUGO).*

**Edward:** I won't beg.

**Hugo:** You've been begging all your life, on the streets of London.

**Edward:** Is that what John Canty told you?

**Hugo:** I've known your father since we were boys. We grew up together, here.

**Edward:** He's not my father. He's a liar.

**Hugo:** You've told him that have you?

**Edward:** Several times.

**Hugo:** Well you're braver than I thought. I'll make a good thief of you yet!

**Edward:** Take me back to London.

**Hugo:** Is His Majesty getting cold?

**Edward:** His Majesty will watch you swing for this!

**Hugo:** You won't beg, you won't steal; perhaps some attention from your father will help you change your mind. Meanwhile, you can be the decoy, while I beg!

**Edward:** On second thoughts hanging may be too good for you.

**Hugo:** Watch! Here comes someone. I will pretend to have a fit. When the person comes running, you fall to your knees, and wail, and say that I am your poor afflicted brother and you will keep on wailing until a penny gets handed over. Got that?

**Edward:** You can wail all you like. I won't do anything.

*(A STRANGER approaches. HUGO immediately pretends to have a fit).*

**Stranger:** Oh your poor soul, here let me help you.

**Hugo:** Oh, you are too kind. My brother here will tell you the agony of these fits I keep having. Please, a penny, to buy some food; then you can leave me to my sorrows.

**Stranger:** A penny, of course! *(He hands some coins to Hugo).* Come on, lad ... help me to carry your brother to that house.

**Edward:** He's not my brother.

**Stranger:** Who is he, then?

**Edward:** A beggar and a thief! He's got your money and he's picked your pocket too. Hit him with your stick, if you want to cure him! Then he'll squeal!

**Hugo:** *(snarling)* Why, you...

**Edward:** *(triumphantly)* Ha!

**Hugo:** Your father warned me about you! He'll give you such a thrashing ....

**Edward:** *(to the stranger)* Catch him! He is a dangerous criminal!

**Hugo:** *(dodging his would-be captors)* You watch out, boy! I'll be dealing with you later. *(He exits).*

**Edward:** *(deflatedly)* Thank goodness he's gone! But now what do I do?

**Stranger:** *(suspiciously)* Who are you, exactly?

**Edward:** If I told you, you wouldn't believe me.

**Stranger:** Try me.

**Edward:** Edward Tudor, King of England.

**Stranger:** (*edging away*) You're right. I don't.

**Edward:** Where am I?

**Stranger:** In a forest!

**Edward:** I need a bed for the night. Some food too. You couldn't help me, could you?

**Stranger:** Help some boy I meet in the forest who claims to be the King of England, and whose friend robs me and pretends to be insane? (*edging further away*) Are you mad?

(*There is the sound of thunder.*)

**Edward:** Please? It's starting to rain.

**Stranger:** There's a hut over there, through the trees. A hermit lives there.

**Edward:** A hermit?

**Stranger:** Almost as mad as you, he is! Spent twenty years living on nothing but mushrooms and pond water, they say! You'll get on well with him. (*He exits*).

#### SCENE 4 - THE PRINCE AND THE HERMIT

(*In another part of the stage the HERMIT - male or female - has appeared. It is dressed in filthy clothes with a long sheepskin cloak, and is very old and haggard. The creature is kneeling, in some sort of meditation; next to it is a skull, an open book and a lighted candle. EDWARD moves over to it and stands on tiptoe, as if looking through the window of the HERMIT'S hut.*)

**Edward:** That's him! I'm in luck! (*He mimes knocking on the door; the HERMIT looks up, surprised by the sudden visitor, and screams*). Er ... I don't mean you any harm.

**Hermit:** A visitor!

**Edward:** (*nervously*) Yes.

**Hermit:** I never have visitors!

**Edward:** (*bolder*) Can I come in?

**Hermit:** If you do you must leave your sins behind, for the ground on which you stand is holy! (*EDWARD enters and the HERMIT looks at him quizzically*). Who are you?

**Edward:** I am the King.

**Hermit:** How wonderful!

**Edward:** Who are you?

**Hermit:** Why, I am an archangel!

**Edward:** Oh - that's very interesting.

*(The HERMIT welcomes EDWARD and sits him down on some shabby blankets).*

**Hermit:** You seek sanctuary here?

**Edward:** Yes, until it stops raining anyway.

**Hermit:** You say you are the King. But clearly you have thrown aside your crown and clothed yourself in rags!

**Edward:** *(sighing)* Yes. It's a long story.

**Hermit:** *(ignoring EDWARD)* You have devoted yourself to holiness; clearly! Consider yourself more than welcome! You will be at peace here. No-one will ever find you or make you return to the empty and foolish life which God has made you abandon. Here you will meditate on the delusions of the world and eat nothing but roots and crusts.

**Edward:** Roots and crusts? Hmm - do you have anything to drink?

**Hermit:** *(holding out a beaker)* Here.

**Edward:** What is it?

**Hermit:** The finest pond water mixed with pus from my own warts and blisters.

**Edward:** *(unimpressed)* I think I'll have some later. Perhaps it will taste better with some of those roots and crusts you were talking about. *(pause)* How long have you been an archangel?

**Hermit:** There is awe in your face, I can sense it! I was made an archangel on this very spot, five years ago, by angels sent from God. Their presence filled this place with an intolerable brightness. They walked with me in the courts of heaven. Touch my hand. Go on. You are touching a hand which has been clasped by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *(pause)* Who did you say you were?

**Edward:** The King.

**Hermit:** But Henry is King!

**Edward:** He's dead. He was my father.

**Hermit:** *(suddenly angry)* It was he who made me homeless you know. Turned me out into the world, after my monastery was closed. *(He grabs a knife and continues nastily).* I was going to be Pope! I was told it in a dream!

**Edward:** You can't be an archangel and the Pope!

**Hermit:** Why not?

**Edward:** *(lamely)* It's a full time job, I expect, being Pope.

**Hermit:** Say your prayers, son of Henry the Eighth! Pray the Prayer for the dying! You will pay dearly for what your father did! *(He throws a hood over*

*EDWARD preventing him speaking).*

**Miles Hendon:** *(He enters and mimes knocking furiously at the door).* Open up!  
Open up!

**Hermit:** It was a good life you know, in that monastery... the companionship, the beer!

**Miles Hendon:** Open up!

**Hermit:** *(He ties EDWARD up, immobilising him, before moving to the door).*  
Who's that?

**Miles Hendon:** My name is Miles Hendon. Where is the boy?

*(EDWARD swings round as he hears the familiar voice).*

**Hermit:** Boy? What boy?

**Miles Hendon:** *(drawing his sword)* I've been told you have him.

*(The HERMIT does not allow MILES HENDON into the hut. MILES is clearly suspicious and tries to see past but the HERMIT keeps moving from side to side thus preventing him from spying the wriggling and trussed form of EDWARD)*

**Hermit:** He went on an errand.

**Miles Hendon:** An errand?

**Hermit:** Picking mushrooms.

*(HUGO, JOHN CANTY and two of the THIEVES appear in the darkness, in another part of the stage).*

**Miles Hendon:** You're lying! He wouldn't go on an errand for anyone, let alone you!

**Hermit:** Ah, but I am not anyone. I am an archangel!

**Miles Hendon:** An arch...

*(One of the THIEVES falls over, making an horrendous noise. The others 'sshh' him).*

**Miles Hendon:** What was that?

**Hermit:** What was what?

**Miles Hendon:** I heard a noise over by that tree. Is that where you're keeping him?  
*(He thrusts his sword at the 'undergrowth' but finds nothing).* He's got lost in these

woods. Which way did he go?

**Hermit:** *(pointing in opposite direction to JOHN CANTY)* That way!

**Miles Hendon:** You're coming with me to look for him.

**Hermit:** Am I?

**Miles Hendon:** I'm not letting you out of my sight! *(They exit).*

*(JOHN CANTY and HUGO now enter the hut and approach the wriggling EDWARD).*

**John Canty:** Have they gone?

**Hugo:** I think so.

**John Canty:** Is that him?

*(HUGO rips the hood off EDWARD from behind. EDWARD is unable, momentarily, to see him).*

**Edward:** Miles!

**Hugo:** Wrong!

**John Canty:** John Hobbs and Hugo!

**Edward:** Where's Miles Hendon? I heard his voice.

**Hugo:** Forget him. You're coming with us, there's work to be done!

**John Canty:** Thieving and begging!

**Hugo:** And this time we won't let you out of our sight!

**Edward:** No! I won't go with you! Where's Miles Hendon? *Sir Miles* I mean; he's one of my knights...*(He is silenced as HUGO puts the hood back over his head and he is dragged, kicking and screaming, offstage).*

#### SCENE 5 - A VICTIM OF TREACHERY

*(Some of the THIEVES re-enter with a bundle which they throw to each other as if trying to get rid of it. Each THIEF delivers their line as they catch the bundle before throwing it to the person delivering the next line).*

**First Thief:** The boy's mad!

**Second Thief:** Why won't he ever do what we say?

**Third Thief:** He got the thrashing of his life from John Canty!

**Fourth Thief:** A lot of good that did.

**Third Thief:** He's no use to us. Let's get rid of him!

**Fourth Thief:** No, he'll report us to the sheriff.

**First Thief:** Let's hang him upside down from a tree all day long!

**Fourth Thief:** But he can't beg and steal if he's hanging from a tree!

**First Thief:** What shall we do with him?

**Third Thief:** What shall we do with him?

**Sixth Thief:** (*Enters dragging EDWARD on with him*). What SHALL we do with him?

(*The THIRD THIEF throws the bundle down in front of EDWARD. A WOMAN appears at the same instant with two VILLAGE CONSTABLES*).

**Woman:** That's him! That's the boy who stole my pig!

**Edward:** I haven't stolen anything!

**First Constable:** (*Examines the bundle lying in front of EDWARD*) This is your pig, madam?

**Woman:** It is!

**First Constable:** Well it would appear that this boy has been caught red-handed!

**Miles Hendon:** (*enters*) Just a moment.

**Edward:** Sir Miles!

**Second Constable:** Do you know this boy Sir?

**Miles Hendon:** Has he been accused of stealing? This matter should be dealt with by the courts.

**First Constable:** That's just where I was about to take him!

**Miles Hendon:** You were about to hang him from a tree with no proper investigation!

**First Thief:** He is a thief and a beggar!

**Edward:** Speak for yourself!

**Miles Hendon:** He is no better or worse than any of you. (*pause*) Good woman, how much was your pig worth?

**Woman:** Why Sir .... around three shillings I would say.

**Miles Hendon:** Would you swear to that price on oath?

**Woman:** Sir, I would.

**Miles Hendon:** Are you aware of the penalty for theft of something over the value of eight pence?

**Woman:** Sir, I fear ....

**Miles Hendon:** It is death by hanging. Would you condemn this poor unfortunate boy to that fate?

**Woman:** Lord, what have I done?

**Miles Hendon:** I would guess that he has eaten nothing today; but that you have

eaten plenty.

**Woman:** Well it is quite a thin pig, now I think about it.

**Miles Hendon:** You would care to reconsider the price it is worth?

**Woman:** Eightpence perhaps.

**Miles Hendon:** Then this boy need not die.

**First Constable:** He will be publicly flogged!

*(The SECOND CONSTABLE drags EDWARD off and prepares him for a flogging.  
The THIEVES jeer).*

**Miles Hendon:** I will buy the pig off you Madam. Here is eightpence.

**Woman:** Eightpence? It is worth three shillings!

**Miles Hendon:** But you swore, on oath, it was worth only eightpence!

**Woman:** To save the boy's life!

**Miles Hendon:** So you lied on oath! Constable! This woman has broken an ancient English law.

**First Constable:** Has she?

**Miles Hendon:** Sir I'm sure, even as village constable, you'd have some training in legal matters? Enough to know the law of 'Cur mihi non pares, stultior es quam asinus'?

**First Constable:** Oh! Of course, yes.

**Miles Hendon:** So you, like me, know that the punishment for breaking that particular law is DEATH!

*(FIRST CONSTABLE takes hold of the WOMAN)*

**Woman:** Oh...I...

**Miles Hendon:** Although, the same law states all charges are dropped, if the guilty party drops the original accusation. *(He gives her back the bundle and puts his money away).*

**Woman:** On second thoughts I was a little too far away perhaps, to say for certain that this boy was the thief.

**Miles Hendon:** Here is your pig. Go and sell it at the market and get a good price for it. *(The WOMAN exits).* All charges have been dropped. The boy is free to go. There is no show for you to see now! *(Murmurs of displeasure as the CROWD begins to disperse)* If you want to hang some real thieves... *(addressing CONSTABLES)*...just look around you.

*(Exeunt the THIEVES pursued by the CONSTABLES).*

**Edward:** You saved my life again.

**Miles Hendon:** You might even say 'thank you' this time!

**Edward:** A King never thanks his subjects.

**Miles Hendon:** Ah, you haven't given that up then?

**Edward:** That law you mentioned...

**Miles Hendon:** 'Cur mihi non pares, stultior es quam asinus'?

**Edward:** You made it up, didn't you?

**Miles Hendon:** I never thought my schoolboy Latin would prove so useful!

**Edward:** "Why do you not obey me? Am I more stupid than an ass?"

**Miles Hendon:** That's a perfect translation. (*surprised*) How do you know any Latin?

**Edward:** My father would speak to me in French on Tuesdays and in Latin on Fridays.

**Miles Hendon:** (*wearily*) Of course!

**Edward:** If he were still alive he'd make you a Lord for rescuing me. On TOP of me making you a Knight. How did you know where to find me?

**Miles Hendon:** Someone told me you were with that strange creature in that hut. We went into the woods to look for you but I came back and followed those thieves who took you away.

**Edward:** I won't be hanging around with them in a hurry!

**Miles Hendon:** (*Throwing EDWARD a bundle*) This time I won't be letting you out of my sight!

**Edward:** What's this?

**Miles Hendon:** The clothes I went to buy for you on London Bridge.

**Edward:** Oh yes, I never told you my size.

**Miles Hendon:** Let's hope they fit then. I'm not going back to change them. And now, back to my inn for some food and then, to Hendon Hall! (*They exit*).

#### SCENE 6 - AT HENDON HALL

(*LADY EDITH is sitting quietly, reading; she is a beautiful richly-dressed woman. Her maid ANN enters in a flap*).

**Ann:** Lady Edith! Oh mistress.....

**Lady Edith:** Ann, whatever is the matter?

**Ann:** A man at the door, your Ladyship, asking to see you. Someone I recognize from years ago!

**Lady Edith:** Who is it?

**Ann:** Your Ladyship, The man is your husband's brother, Miles Hendon.

**Lady Edith:** It can't be! Miles is dead! He was killed in Spain, long before I married Hugh.

**Ann:** Your Ladyship, the man at the door is no ghost!

**Lady Edith:** My husband received a letter. "With regret, your brother has died on the field of battle, serving his cause with courage and honour". *(incredulously)* And now, here is some deluded soul, years later, pretending to be him.

**Hugh Hendon:** *(LADY EDITH'S husband and MILES'S brother, enters)* Edith.

**Lady Edith:** Good husband...the man at the door?

**Hugh Hendon:** I have spoken to him.

**Lady Edith:** What can he want?

**Hugh Hendon:** A share of the house - of our money. No doubt he's a scam merchant of some kind, who wants to trick us. Ann! Tell him to go away.

**Lady Edith:** No! I want to meet him!

**Hugh Hendon:** What, a common fraudster?

**Lady Edith:** It's raining, he'll be soaked. Ann, show him in. *(ANN exits)*.

**Hugh Hendon:** *(nastily)* You dream of his return every day don't you? That he will ride into Hendon Hall on a white horse and fulfil the vow you made to him when you were sixteen.

**Lady Edith:** Hugh, all this was long ago.

**Hugh Hendon:** Your father always hated Miles. You had no choice but to marry me. But you haven't stopped dreaming, have you?

*(ANN enters with MILES HENDON and EDWARD who is now decently clothed and has a sword at his belt).*

**Miles Hendon:** Lady Edith. *(She turns her head away, recognizing him instantly)*. You recognize me, I can see that you do. My brother here - he refuses to accept that I am Miles.

**Lady Edith:** We received a letter...

**Miles Hendon:** A mistake! *(Looking at HUGH HENDON)* A forgery maybe!

**Hugh Hendon:** Edith, don't upset yourself. *(To MILES)* Sir! You are a liar and an impostor. Get out of my house!

**Miles Hendon:** YOUR house! You know that this is rightfully my house and that Edith is rightfully my wife!

**Hugh Hendon:** I'll call the guards.

**Miles Hendon:** Let me speak to her properly! Let *her* see who I am!

**Lady Edith:** *(nervously)* Sir, I swear I don't know you.

**Hugh Hendon:** Ann, what about you? You have worked here as a maid since I was

a boy.

**Ann:** (*timorously*) Sir, I swear this man - he's not your brother, Sir!

**Miles Hendon:** You think I'm mad don't you? I can see it in your faces. Edith, how can I persuade you?

**Edith:** (*almost whispering*) Listen, stranger. My husband is a powerful man. You are claiming his title and possessions. He will not look on you kindly for that.

**Hugh Hendon:** Leave now, while you can!

(*EDWARD draws his sword. HUGH regards him with contempt.*)

**Hugh Hendon:** And who might you be?

**Edward:** I am Edward, King of England.

**Hugh Hendon:** And I am Christopher Columbus! (*laughing*) Put your sword away, Edward King of England. You might hurt someone with it!

**Edward:** This man saved my life.

**Hugh Hendon:** (*drawing his sword*) Let him save it again then!

**Edward:** He is who he says he is!

**Hugh Hendon:** Oh yes! (*contemptibly*) Your Royal Highness!

(*They skirmish briefly until EDWARD flicks the sword from his amazed opponent's hand.*)

**Hugh Hendon:** You can fight well.

**Edward:** My teacher was one of England's greatest crusaders.

**Hugh Hendon:** You are as big a dreamer as this fraud.

**Edward:** (*He thrusts his sword at an imaginary opponent.*) He fought the Saracens at the gates of Jerusalem.

**Hugh Hendon:** (*calling*) Send for the Captain of the Guards!

**Lady Edith:** Hugh, no!

**Hugh Hendon:** (*angrily*) Quiet woman! You have nothing more to say!

**Miles Hendon:** Edith, one last time...I beg of you!

(*HUGH shoves him out of the way; EDWARD tries to intervene but HUGH fights him off*)

**Edward:** You will hang for this!

(*Two GUARDSMEN enter, disarm EDWARD and MILES HENDON and prepare to take them away.*)

**Hugh Hendon:** Take these two fraudsters away to prison. This man claims he is my brother and the boy thinks he is the King of England! They will be flogged and kept in the cells for as long as I think necessary!

*(EDWARD and MILES HENDON are bundled away).*

**Hugh Hendon:** Well, how like my brother he was, in appearance - and how like the King the boy was! Don't you agree, Edith?

**Ann:** *(nervously)* My Lord, you have actually seen the King?

**Hugh Hendon:** We were at a banquet at the Guildhall in London a few days ago. Edith remembers what the boy looked like. He came into the building a Prince and left as King, hearing his father had died. You have a sister in London, Ann. She will be able to see him crowned.

**Ann:** Sir, she will.

**Lady Edith:** Ann - leave us please.

*(ANN curtsies and exits).*

**Lady Edith:** It WAS your brother, you know it was!

**Hugh Hendon:** It wasn't my brother, any more than the boy was the king.

**Lady Edith:** I recognized him; Ann recognizes him too!

**Hugh Hendon:** Why did she not say then?

**Lady Edith:** Why d'you think? *(HUGH HENDON touches her; she flinches away).*  
He was right, that letter we received, you forged it!

**Hugh Hendon:** How dare you!

**Lady Edith:** And now you've condemned him and that poor boy, whoever he was, to some wretched prison.

**Hugh Hendon:** You've been reading too many stories.

**Lady Edith:** Thank God my father is no longer alive. If he saw for himself the man you have become...

**Hugh Hendon:** Edith! The boy was obviously not the King, even though he looked very like him. By the same token the man was obviously not my brother. He had done his research, been told by someone who knew him that he looked like him, simply to steal from us and to upset you. Now, isn't it time you stopped dreaming?

*(He leads her back to her seat, and puts a book in her hands which she opens, but she looks neither at the book nor at HUGH HENDON. Instead she stares into the middle distance as the scene ends).*

SCENE 7 - IN PRISON

(A JAILER enters jangling his keys and pushing a group of prisoners in front of him. One of the prisoners is EDWARD. He remains standing as the remainder settle down in the communal cell).

**Jailer:** (*nastily*) Come on then you scum, you've had your fun! That was a good show you saw just then! Now get back to the cells, all of you!

**Edward:** I never want to see anything like that again.

**Jailer:** You will, boy - and worse besides!

**Edward:** How long did it take for those poor women to die?

**Jailer:** Who can say; you can't see anything through all that smoke...

**Edward:** I saw the look on their faces. It's a horrible way to kill someone.

**Jailer:** The older one was a witch. She deserved that and more.

**First Prisoner:** She'll be in hell, now!

**Second Prisoner:** Still burning - for eternity!

**Edward:** How did people know she was a witch?

**First Prisoner:** It didn't rain all summer, the crops were wrecked; that was her fault!

**Second Prisoner:** Then she caused a pox that wiped out all the animals!

**Edward:** But droughts and disease could be caused by anything; why blame a poor old woman?

**Third Prisoner:** (*exasperated*) Oh, take him away, jailer. Do us all a favour!

**Edward:** Doesn't anyone care about all this injustice?

**Third Prisoner:** How much longer will we have to put up with him?

**Jailer:** That's for Hugh Hendon to say. In the meantime, I've got the boy's friend to deal with. (*exits uncurling a whip*)

**Edward:** My friend has been sentenced to six lashes. All because his brother called him an impostor in his own house! The filthy liar! It's HIM that should be flogged not Miles!

**First Prisoner:** What about you?

**Edward:** I'm going to get four.

**Second Prisoner:** You'll beg for mercy!

**Edward:** I won't. I won't beg for anything!

**Second Prisoner:** You told me your person is sacred and no-one's allowed to hit you!

**Third Prisoner:** (*mockingly*) You should have a whipping boy! To take the lashes for you!

**Edward:** Back home in the Palace, I do!

**Third Prisoner:** Ah! You're the one who keeps claiming to be the King of England.

**Edward:** I don't claim to be the King, I am. Being flogged won't change that.

**Third Prisoner:** Of course. See him over there? Thinks he's Julius Caesar! And her? She thinks she's Catherine of Aragon!

**First Prisoner:** You should count yourself lucky. You've just got a FLOGGING to deal with.

**Edward:** Are they going to burn you at the stake then, like those poor women we just saw?

**First Prisoner:** No. They'll hang me. It's quicker, but the end result's the same.

**Edward:** What did you do?

**First Prisoner:** What's it matter? Look around you. Do you think anyone here is guilty of anything?

**Edward:** If someone's going to be hanged, there should be a proper trial.

**Second Prisoner:** A trial! You expect things to be fair? I found a hawk, that had escaped from its owner. I took it home, thought it was mine, but the sheriff took one look at me and said I stole it.

**First Prisoner:** We'll be side-by-side on the gallows boy, the day after tomorrow, waiting for the ropes to tighten around our necks.

**Edward:** It's inhuman!

**Second Prisoner:** It's English law.

**Edward:** Then it shames our country.

*(The JAILER enters with MILES HENDON who is in agony after being flogged. HUGH HENDON is with him. EDWARD stands).*

**Miles Hendon:** Sit down. I took your lashes for you.

**Hugh:** Your friend did a noble thing. He got ten, instead of six.

**Miles Hendon:** A flogging would have killed you. I couldn't have watched that happen.

**Edward:** *(genuinely humbled)* I won't ever forget what you have done. *(pause)* Thank you. I will make you my Lord Chancellor, one day. *(He helps MILES HENDON to sit).*

**Hugh:** Still dreaming, I see. It's strange, they say that the real King has gone mad, too.

**Edward:** The real King?

**Hugh:** Do you know the latest gossip from London is that he's spared the life of the Duke of Norfolk? King Henry was going to have him executed for treason!

**Edward:** He had no trial, like us. It was the right thing to do.

**Hugh:** *(quizzically)* This curious boy really is wise beyond his years. I find his knowledge of royal affairs almost - unsettling. *(boasting)* It may interest you to know that I am going to the coronation, tomorrow.

**Edward:** Tomorrow?

**Hugh:** I will be at the banquet afterwards, too! Perhaps I will even come back an Earl. The Lord Protector has dropped a hint.

**Edward:** What Lord Protector?

**Hugh:** The Earl of Hertford!

**Edward:** Since when has he been Lord Protector?

**Hugh:** Since last week! He will rule England until his mad little nephew is old enough for his feet to touch the ground when he sits on the throne!

**Edward:** He is a fool! My father's always telling me. *(to MILES)* This cannot be allowed to happen. We must go to London!

**Hugh:** *(patronizingly)* How nice! A visit to London, to see the King!

**Jailer:** Should I free them now, Sir?

**Hugh:** No. Tomorrow morning. Give them one more day.

**Edward:** *(shocked)* Another day?

**Jailer:** Very good, Sir.

**Hugh:** I must be off. I have been promised a room in the palace tonight, so I can be in good time for tomorrow's ceremony! *(exits)*

**Edward:** No - I must get to London, before that boy is crowned instead of me.

**Miles Hendon:** Not now, let me rest!

**Edward:** *(taking a letter from his coat pocket)* I've written a letter! You must take it to Sir Richard Marlow, at the palace.

**Miles Hendon:** *(recognising the name)* Sir Richard Marlow?

**Edward:** My sword-fighting teacher. The letter's in French, Latin and Greek, so he'll know it's from me.

**Miles Hendon:** I know a Richard Marlow.

**Edward:** Big fellow, a scar here, across his eyebrow. From fighting the Saracens!

**Miles Hendon:** We fought together in Spain for a while. He has a son, about your age.

**Edward:** Humphrey!

**Miles Hendon:** How on earth do you know his name?

**Edward:** He's my whipping boy!

**Miles Hendon:** Your - give me that! *(He snatches the letter from EDWARD).*

**Edward:** When Sir Richard reads that, he'll realise what a dreadful mistake has been made.

**Miles Hendon:** *(reading)* This Latin, the French, it's perfect; the Greek is perfect too! This letter could never be written by a simple boy from the streets.

**Edward:** That's who they'll be crowning King of England tomorrow, though!

**Miles Hendon:** *(dazedly)* Is it true...are you really Edward Tudor?

**Edward:** Both of us know what it's like, don't we, to have people not believe we are who we say we are...

**Miles Hendon:** *(to himself)* It all fits. In London they think the King is mad!

**Edward:** That's not the King! That's a boy from Offal Court!

**Miles Hendon:** From where?

**Edward:** They must have been treating him like a prince. I wonder how he's doing?

*(EDWARD and MILES exit. The prisoners stand in a line across the back of the stage).*

#### SCENE 8 - CORONATION DAY

*(Cross-fade to the Palace. TOM is with the LORD CHANCELLOR and LADY FLEMING).*

**Tom:** *(to himself, and simultaneously with the last line of the previous scene)* I wonder how he's doing?

**Lord Chancellor:** My Lord, is anything the matter?

**Tom:** Oh, nothing. I was just thinking about a boy I know... *(correcting himself)* KNEW!

**Lord Chancellor:** You were talking to yourself!

**Lady Fleming:** Surely your majesty's illness is not returning?

**Lord Chancellor:** Today, of all days! When the crowds are ten deep, all the way to the Abbey!

**Lady Fleming:** How pleased they will be, to cheer their King on his way to be crowned.

**Tom:** Yes, I'm sorry. I'm quite all right, really. *(Recovering)* I asked you to bring some prisoners to the palace.

**Lord Chancellor:** I'm glad you remembered! *(Pause)* They are here.

**Tom:** I will see them now.

*(TOM and the LORD CHANCELLOR turn to the prisoners, who still stand rigidly in a line, and are "inspected" by TOM).*

**Lord Chancellor:** My Lord the King intends to mark the day of his coronation with an amnesty of prisoners. You have been brought here as representatives of the five thousand men, women and children who have been freed from prisons up and down the land.

**First Prisoner:** My Lord, your generosity is overwhelming. *(He bows deeply to*

TOM).

**Lord Chancellor:** The King has said his rule will be a generous one. Go and proclaim his Godly mercy on the streets of London! The People of England want to see their King crowned!

*(The PRISONERS move a coronation chair into position, centre stage, and then form part of the assembled crowd at the coronation, which begins to gather from this point. TOM, the LORD CHANCELLOR and LADY FLEMING exit. The scene echoes the start of the play as the stage fills with COURTIERS and PAUPERS each of whom enter in turn and deliver their line as they do. They occupy separate halves of the stage; "rich" and "poor". We are in Westminster Abbey and the coronation is about to take place).*

**First Pauper:** The doors to the Abbey were opened at three in the morning ....

**Second Pauper:** .... so that poor, untitled folk could fight for a seat.

**Third Pauper:** The galleries were lit with torches.

**Fourth Pauper:** It is something we will see only once in our lives: the coronation of a King!

**First Pauper:** Outside, the streets are already thronged with people ....

**Second Pauper:** .... waving banners and streamers, coloured crimson and gold.

**Fifth Pauper:** At daybreak there are fireworks over the Tower of London and the Abbey bells start ringing ....

**Sixth Pauper:** .... and we watch the rich as they arrive, dressed in their satin and lace and velvet.

*(There is a peal of bells; the COURTIERS now start to fill their side of the stage).*

**First Courtier:** The ladies are resplendent in different colours ....

**Second courtier:** .... and frosted with diamonds which glitter like stars.

**Third Courtier:** Some wrinkled, white-haired dowagers can recall the crowning of King Richard the Third, and the troubled days of that forgotten age ....

**Fourth Courtier:** .... but others are still beautiful young girls, with beaming eyes and fresh complexions, who wear coronets studded with jewels.

**Fifth Courtier:** Then there are Earls and Barons ....

**Sixth Courtier:** .... Dukes and Bishops ....

**Seventh Courtier:** .... Ambassadors from Europe, and Princes from the Orient.

**Eighth Courtier:** Together, they await the arrival of the King ....

**First Pauper:** .... who arrives at the door of the Abbey at ten o' clock, splendidly dressed, on a white horse, whose rich trappings reach almost to the ground.

*(TOM enters, dressed in his coronation robes; there is a flourish of trumpets. The LORD CHANCELLOR and the EARL OF HERTFORD follow behind him at a respectful distance. A young GIRL approaches TOM, and kneels in front of him).*

**Girl:** Welcome, O King! As much as hearts can think; welcome, again, as much as tongues can tell. God thee preserve, we pray, and wish thee ever well.

*(There is a general shout from the crowd, as TOM goes to sit on the coronation chair, flanked by the LORD CHANCELLOR and the EARL OF HERTFORD).*

**Crowd:** The King! The King! The King!

**Tom:** And all these wonders and all these marvels are to welcome me. Me!

*(Another flourish of trumpets. The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY approaches him, accompanied by a young BOY who carries a crown on a velvet cushion. They reach TOM. The ARCHBISHOP Of CANTERBURY takes the crown and places it above TOM'S head, ready to crown him. At that moment, EDWARD enters).*

**Edward:** *(shouting)* Stop! I forbid you to place the crown of England on the head of that fraud!

*(There is a gasp from the crowd. Several GUARDS leap to pull EDWARD back).*

**Tom:** *(Stands)* Leave him alone! He is the King!

**Earl of Hertford:** Seize that boy! *(The GUARDS hold EDWARD firmly).*

**Tom:** No! Don't touch him!

**Edward:** Let go of me! *(struggling)* I am Edward, King of England, and my person is sacred.

**Tom:** What he says is true!

**Lord Chancellor:** *(frantically)* The King is ill again! Fetch his nurse!

**Earl of Hertford:** No! The Royal Physician!

**Lord Chancellor:** There will be no coronation today. Clear the Abbey!

**Tom:** *(firmly)* If you still say I am the King, then you must listen to what I'm telling you. *(He moves forward).* For the last time, I order you to let go of that boy!

*(The startled GUARDS let him go. TOM addresses EDWARD).*

**Tom:** It IS you!

**Edward:** Of course it's me!

**Tom:** You've turned up just in time. *(He kneels in front of EDWARD).* O My Lord, the King, let poor Tom Canty be the first to swear faithfulness to you.

**Edward:** Ah! Some proper respect at last!

**Tom:** *(rising)* You said you'd only be gone a couple of hours! *(He begins taking off his magnificent robe)* This is yours, I think.

*(He hands the robe over to EDWARD who puts it on. As the action continues they exchange more of their clothes).*

**Lord Chancellor:** *(To TOM)* My Lord.

**Edward:** Yes? I think you mean me.

**Earl of Hertford:** What's going on?

**Edward and Tom:** *(together)* The rightful King of England is preparing to ascend his throne.

**Lord Chancellor:** But ....

**Tom:** We exchanged clothes. That morning in the Palace gardens.

**Edward:** It was meant to be a game!

**Lord Chancellor:** A game?

**Edward:** You got to play at being a prince.

**Tom:** And you got to play in the mud beside the river, by the looks of things! *(Pause)* That's why everyone thought I'd lost my memory. I haven't, though. I really AM Tom Canty, from Offal Court. All this time, you've been treating the wrong boy as a Prince.

**Earl of Hertford:** I don't believe you. This is a plot! By the French!

**Lord Chancellor:** Or the Spanish!

**Earl of Hertford:** Or the Scots! We will have the Abbey cleared.

*(The GUARDS step forward, swords drawn, encircling the group at the centre of the stage).*

**Edward:** No. There is no need for any of that. What you've just heard is true. Ask me a question, if you need proof of who I am. One which only the true King can answer correctly.

**Lord Chancellor:** Don't be absurd, this boy is the real King, isn't he? *(The boys have now exchanged clothes, and the LORD CHANCELLOR doesn't know who to address).*

**Earl of Hertford:** No, that's the one who says he's a boy from the streets.

**Lord Chancellor and Earl of Hertford:** *(together)* We don't know who anyone is any more! *(They hastily huddle together and talk).*

**Earl of Hertford:** Lord Chancellor, I think we should take up the boy's offer.

**Lord Chancellor:** History would never forgive us, if we made a mistake now.

**Earl of Hertford:** Ask him a question!

**Lord Chancellor:** Very well then. *(to EDWARD)* Where is the great seal?

**Edward:** That's easy! Go into my rooms. Look in the far left hand corner, and you will see a brass nail. Press it firmly and a door will fly open nearby. That is where the seal is kept.

**Earl of Hertford:** You are a clever boy, to know of that particular secret hiding place.

**Lord Chancellor:** But unfortunately, we know about it too, and the seal isn't there!

**Earl of Hertford:** We've looked!

**Lord Chancellor:** This is all a tissue of lies! Seize this impostor!

*(The GUARDS move forward again. They seize TOM).*

**Lord Chancellor:** Not him! This one!

*(The guards seize EDWARD and start to drag him away).*

**Tom:** No! Wait!

**Lord Chancellor:** What?

**Tom:** The great seal. Is it a large object, with letters and engravings on it?

**Earl of Hertford:** Yes!

**Tom:** I know where you put that! I found it when I was in your rooms! Cast your mind back to that afternoon when we exchanged clothes. You must have come out into the garden to read?

**Edward:** I had just finished my fighting lesson with Sir Richard. I saw the seal lying around and couldn't be bothered to put it away properly.

**Tom:** *(trying to get him to remember)* You hid it somewhere!

**Edward:** Of course! In the headpiece of a suit of armour! The one outside my rooms, which my father gave to me for my birthday!

**Tom:** And that's where you'll find it!

**Lord Chancellor:** Well go and look then, someone!

**Earl of Hertford:** *(He nods to the BOY who was holding the crown. He rushes off).*  
If it's there ....

**Lord Chancellor:** .... this boy must be who he claims to be!

**Earl of Hertford:** What have we done?

**Lord Chancellor:** What will become of us?

**Boy:** *(returning with the seal)* This is it! It was where he said it would be!

**Earl of Hertford:** *(takes seal and declares hesitantly)* Long live the King! *(with*

*more confidence*) Long live the King!

**Crowd:** Long live the King!

**Lord Chancellor:** Throw this boy into the tower!

**Edward:** (*drawing his sword*) No!

**Lord Chancellor:** My Lord, do you intend to kill him, here in the Abbey?

**Edward:** On the contrary. Tom Canty! Kneel in front of your King. (*Knighting him*) I dub you Sir Thomas Canty, Earl of .... where would you like to be Earl of?

**Tom:** Um - Offal Court, please!

**Edward:** Earl of Offal Court, and Lord High Marshall of the City of London. Now (*He sits on the throne*). Shall we get on with it?

**Lord Chancellor:** Very well. But no-one, no-one in this Abbey, will utter a word to anyone of what they have seen here today. This is something we DON'T need in the history books.

**Edward:** (*The ARCHBISHOP prepares to crown him*). Wait - there is one last thing.

**Earl of Hertford:** What now?

**Edward:** (*to TOM*) How did you know where the Great Seal was? Had you been using it for something?

**Tom:** Um - yes.

**Edward:** What?

**Tom:** (*sheepishly*) To crack nuts with.

**Edward:** Really? I thought as much. I've used it for that, too.

*(There is a flourish of trumpets; the ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY solemnly crowns EDWARD and then turns to the audience - and now assumes the role of narrator).*

#### SCENE 9 - EDWARD AS KING

*(Lights fall to a single spot, in which EDWARD sits, crowned King of England).*

**Archbishop:** (*narrating*) The reign of King Edward the Sixth became known as a merciful one for those harsh times. If some visiting dignitary argued with him, saying...

**Dignitary:** (*one of the COURTIERS*) Sir! you are far too lenient!

**Archbishop:** He was able to come down from his lofty throne, and reply ....

**Edward:** What do you know of suffering? I know, and so do my people. Have you ever spent time with thieves? Been kept in a prison with common villains?

You know nothing of injustice! *(He moves to stand at the front of the stage).*

**Archbishop:** Soon after the coronation, Sir Miles Hendon was made a Duke and retained the royal privilege of being allowed to sit in the presence of the King.

*(Enter MILES HENDON. He kneels in front of EDWARD, who "knights" him with a sword).*

**Miles Hendon:** To think .... this was my "pauper"! That I thought he had never known anything but rags for clothes and offal for food! And there was me, wanting to make him respectable! *(Looking up at EDWARD)* Haven't we done this once before?

**Edward:** Yes, but this time it's for real.

**Archbishop:** Hugh Hendon, unmasked as the forger of the letter announcing his brother's death, deserted his wife and was never seen again. Through his generous spirit, the King allowed Miles to marry Edith in the splendid surroundings of Westminster Abbey.

*(Enter LADY EDITH. She embraces MILES HENDON. A peal of wedding bells. Applause from the assembled crowd. EDWARD throws confetti over the couple).*

**Archbishop:** Tom Canty was given a special title: the King's Ward. He lived in the Palace, as he had always dreamed he would. He grew up to be one of England's most senior lawyers, and the owner of one of the grandest houses in London. When he passed by on the street, the glorious clothes he wore led people to say ....

**First Pauper:** As good as royal, he is!

**Archbishop:** .... and whisper to one another ....

**Second Pauper:** Doff your hat! It is the King's Ward!

*(The TWO PAUPERS raise their hats to TOM, still seated, and retreat back into the crowd, as MRS CANTY enters with NAN and BETH).*

**Mrs Canty:** Tom saw that his mother and sisters were well cared for. He's always been a good boy, my Tom. I knew he'd make something of himself! All that reading and learning when he was young!

**Nan:** And look at us. Big houses and fancy clothes, like our brother.

**Beth:** Who'd have thought it! Just look where Tom Canty's dreaming got him.

*(JOHN CANTY and HUGO now enter, with HUMPHREY MARLOW).*

**John Canty:** John Canty, not surprisingly, was never seen or heard of again.

**Hugo:** He and I went on thieving and robbing as we had done when we were boys.

**John Canty:** Never knowing that once we taught the King of England to beg and steal.

**Humphrey:** Humphrey Marlow, formerly the whippingboy to Prince Edward Tudor, was appointed the King's Armourer, and Captain of the Palace Guard.

**Beth:** And so ends our story.

**Earl of Hertford:** It may be no more than a legend.

**Nan:** A tradition.

**Mrs Canty:** It may have happened.

**Humphrey:** It may not have happened.

**Archbishop:** But - it could have happened.

*(Cross-fade to a single spot which gradually focuses on TOM and EDWARD).*

**Tom:** What are they talking about? Of course it happened!

**Edward:** You were just getting used to being King. Weren't you?

**Tom:** All those servants.

**Edward:** I still haven't figured out what they all do.

**Tom:** I saw you yesterday. You put on some scruffy rags, and went outside.

**Edward:** I went for a walk, to Offal Court! I saw again how my people live. None of this would have happened, if you hadn't changed places with me that day.

**Tom:** It was your idea! You made me do it!

**Edward:** Aren't you glad we did though?

**Tom:** We wouldn't be friends, otherwise.

**Edward:** No. You're right. We would never even have known each other existed!

*(They shake hands - as the play ends).*

**CURTAIN**







