

Edward is a bombshell; for the nature of Destiny and Fate, and the truth about Tudor history. Here are the Holy Grail, the Sword and Druid Glass; amongst love and death, in the midst of real danger. The author lifts the veil on a history more than five hundred years old, and the emotions he finds within himself. It isn't just what lies under History; the question is, what to do with magic and reincarnation?

Edward

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EDWARD

A novel



Mike Joyce

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Contents

The Beginning	1
Duke Henry	15
Edward	25
The Way of the World	35
A Kaleidoscope	49
The Kings of England	67
Marbles and Hawks	87
Edward and Eadie	103
Christmas	115
Peterborough	131
Changes	141
Wales	157
Unhappy Differences	179
Separation	197
Sarah	213
Penshurst and Cambridge	225
Abigail	247
Celebration	265
Growing Up	275
Father Joseph	297
Meanings	317
Goodbye	333

Mike Voyce

Of Life and Death	341
Lincoln	357
Endings	369
The Box.....	385
Note from the Author.....	403

The Beginning

(Past)

First there was the light, warm and scintillating, then the courtyard, with its dirty earth floor. To my right was the massive dressed stonework of the castle, in front the lower wall and the heavy oak door leading to the kitchen garden. In the village below was bustle and noise and the stench of life, I paid it no attention. Facing me, not ten paces away, stood my tutor, Sir Thomas, sword in hand.

Everything had a sharp, more than real quality, and there was something strange in me, an excitement, an exhilaration. The jerkin I wore was of the best leather our tanners could make, 't wasn't fear sent the blood rushing through my veins.

I re-balanced the sword in my own hand, trying to get the pressure grip Thomas taught me, to stop the blade flying away when I came to the attack.

Circling cautiously, that I not be pinned to the castle wall, I stepped forward - and the image faded.

My hand shook as I lit a cigarette. My whole world had gone, sliding sickeningly away, to leave me pitch-forked into the vision of that courtyard. Not a jot of the car I sat in, or anything of the Real World, had remained. Coming back was easier; at least I knew where I was.

The smells and sounds and the sharp clarity of sight of it stayed with me. I don't know how long it lasted; its power filled me all day. I kept noticing little things like the wicker basket behind Thomas. Everything stayed with me: as I started the car and drove on, as I stopped at Scotch Corner to telephone my apologies and give instructions, as I drove through the increasingly heavy traffic on the A1, and as I

Mike Voyce

worked through the back-logged messages and appointments when finally I reached my office.

It must have been tiredness; maybe some strain from driving that caused such a vision, something in the harsh light of that August morning, or the previous night's wine and the effort to understand Sarah.

It wasn't like daydreaming, in that there's always some sense of unreality, so you know there's an ordinary world still waiting. This was like some vision of the saints, yet there was no hint of religion in it. I'd seen such images before, but not since childhood.

I remembered, of that childhood, one particular timeless image. I thought of that morning, lost in a dream, almost lost in time.

I must have been eleven years old; I awoke with a silent scream. All the house was in perfect stillness. My parents, in their room down the landing never stirred.

(Past)

Sharp at the front of my mind was the scene of my own death; sharp as the axe man's blade, with the trace of my blood on it. Slumped and still oozing, my torso lay over the block at the executioner's feet. My head lay face down, I could see no features. As the dull ache at the back of my neck receded, I departed, to the right, ever higher above the ground. The scene at Tower Hill remains clear in every detail, just like the scene in that courtyard.

As my spirit drifted off some whimsy caught it and drifted it along the river, to Holborn and the Law courts. There were lawyers rioting, there were gowns flapping and stones flying and buildings burning.

“They've killed the Duke! There was no pardon.”

My soul smiled for I knew all had been made well.

And the image faded.

Edward

But even in my childish state, as I woke from that dream, I knew all had not been made well. There was a terrible rot that survived that day and was now eating the World. A sense of dread took hold of me, and has never quite been dispelled.

How did I know it was Tower Hill? I never questioned it. At the time the sight of my own death hadn't frightened me; it made me think death needn't be so bad. There was nothing of near death experiences, where the departing spirit leaves through a tunnel. For me there was only that gentle drifting off in the clear morning air.

I still could make nothing of it. But now it wouldn't leave me alone, spinning in my head with the vision of the Courtyard.

There was so much the same, about these two. The style of dress, the very feel of the air, even the quality of the light was the same. Isn't it strange how the mind works? I'd not thought about that dream in so very many years.

What would have happened if I left the lid on this Pandora's Box?

How would life have gone if I let the Courtyard drift away as once I let slip the vision of my death?

But I couldn't do it.

The weight and power and speed of the sword were things I touched and felt. It was an extension of my own arm, a creature in its own right, like a bird ready to fly. I've never worn a sword but it was days before I got used to not having one at my side. I even bought a cane to compensate, but it wasn't the same and I rapidly discarded it.

I was in shock, sitting in my office, the day of that vision. Please don't think me foolish, I didn't dare admit the enormity of my feelings. For this was something I really didn't

Mike Voyce

understand. I had to find out, why? Why it so shook me and what it meant.

So now it's time to tell you about myself, and about Sarah.

I didn't know what to make of her, like a gypsy from a bygone age, almost mystical. Her eyes would fix on far horizons, and then she'd look at you, with that trick of opening her great, green eyes wider still.

Slim and supple, full of energy, she moved with a conscious grace, but something about her troubled me. I learned, long ago, to tell affectation; the disarranged hair perfectly placed the casual clothes it took hours to choose. When I was young I loved such a woman, a ballet student, modelling in her spare time. It was a stormy relationship and I hardly wanted to be reminded of it now. But it wasn't fair to make such a comparison, and besides, it was something more than affectation which troubled me. It disturbed me that I couldn't put my finger on it, till I realised; it was she who caused me to see the courtyard.

I'd driven 250 miles, from Peterborough to Cumbria, to see her. Then I had to drive back; nothing settled, nothing decided, my mind no clearer.

You see, I'd devised a research project,

“An Enquiry into Guilt, Motivation and Dangerousness of Serious Offenders Using Examination under Hypnosis.”

I had once been an academic, but at the time all this happened I was senior partner in a law firm. In fact the project grew out of a case in my office, a very difficult, unhappy case, the conviction for murder of an innocent boy.

I undertook that project out of guilt that I'd refused to act in the trial, simply advising the boy's father how it should be handled. The defence team didn't handle it that way; all the

obvious, effective things I'd recommended were left undone, and the boy was convicted. That's when I agreed to act.

But at that stage it was too late, the judge had made a good and workmanlike job of it, and you could only win an appeal if the judge made a mistake. But the boy was innocent; I proved it by hypnosis, using one of the country's most respected hypnotherapists, a Home Office consultant and a fellow of the Royal College of Medicine. It left me with a problem, my client had been fairly convicted and neither the courts nor the government would accept evidence from hypnosis.

I remembered the friends I'd known in university, I made phone calls, and took advice. Why shouldn't we create a framework, using hypnosis, to test the guilt of a defendant's mind? Even more, we could use it to tell whether convicted criminals had changed enough to be safe to release back into Society. I was sure I could prove, by research, how you can use hypnosis to do this.

Given how much it costs to keep 'lifers' in prison, the Home Office was interested. If I proved my case they might, indeed, change the rules and listen to evidence about my client. But I needed a hypnotist to help me.

It was our mutual friend Angharad who introduced us. I'd known Angharad for years, first as a client, later as a friend. I'd come to trust her opinion. I listened as she praised Sarah, giving her excellent credentials; Sarah the hypnotherapist who worked with disturbed criminals, Sarah, the bright star at the cutting edge of trauma therapy, Sarah who could meet my most demanding needs. Even then I was unsure.

It wasn't just that my mind had been so much taken up with Sarah when I saw the courtyard. There had been a crackling tension all around me ever since our dinner the previous night. It had built into a blinding headache as I drove

Mike Voyce

up into the Yorkshire Dales. It had been this that made me pull the car in to the side of the road, and when I covered my eyes to shield them from the sun, it had been then the vision struck me.

We first met at Angharad's house for lunch. But it seemed Sarah had wanted to talk to Angharad privately, some personal problem, with her partner, a cinematographer. It sounded most exotic. I'm sure she resented my presence, an intrusion into their friendship. I excused myself, faining an interest in Angharad's collection of art.

When I did get the chance to explain my project the conversation strayed to many things. Lunch stretched into the rest of the day, as we adjourned to a pub.; it's not the way I choose to deal with serious subjects.

Sarah was good at her job, and at raising support, but I had to put a brake on her talk of "curing" offenders, her job wasn't to cure anyone; it was to show whether the minds of murderers and rapists can be tested, to see if they would commit such crimes in future. To see if they committed the crimes for which they were convicted in the first place.

I remember my exasperation,

"Why do you think you can do so much better than the Prison Service?"

I hadn't wanted to take the shine off her enthusiasm but it worried me. Some very good work is done by prison psychiatrists, what made Sarah so confident?

Perhaps I should have been more on my guard. I tried to keep her mind on the picture of an innocent boy, sitting in prison, a boy who needed no cure, a boy who would only be released if we persuaded the Government to change the rules. Despite my best efforts, somehow, she just didn't come to terms with it.

Sarah needed to write up a methodology; how she proposed to test offenders, a competent assessment proposal for referees appointed by E.S.R.C. (a major research funding council), but she wouldn't do it. It left everything down to personal charisma, Sarah has plenty of that. I met her this last evening to find out why she hadn't written the proposal, to get her moving.

She took me out into the country, to a restaurant owned by friends of hers; leading me darting and skittering over the narrow fell roads to get there. We came to an old and picturesque farmhouse, in spectacular scenery and full of ancient beams and shadowy spaces. In the flickering romance of candlelight we dined excellently; but it wasn't why I'd come to Cumbria. How much better to have eaten a simple sandwich in Sarah's surgery; there I could have held her to the point of my visit.

She was evasive, yes, she would put "something" in writing, but I was left to guess exactly what. I wanted a simple set of questions for each offender, but she couldn't even do that. She assured me; each person is different and needs to be treated individually.

"Could other hypnotherapists do this work? with concepts you give them? Can we create a scheme for other hypnotists to follow with all offenders?"

"Oh yes, if they know what they're doing."

I was relieved, but it was always this way with Sarah, verbal fencing, as if there were some hidden agenda, but I was left grasping at empty air whenever I tried to guess what it was.

Angharad didn't understand why I wouldn't take Sarah at face value or, doubting her, find someone else. She thought I must be attracted to her personally, even physically. What drew me wasn't so simple. To be honest, I resented

Mike Voyce

Angharad's easy assumption. Underlying Sarah's wide-eyed, extrovert appeal was a flexible mind, I really did believe she could make a difference.

That night she talked about reincarnation and past-life regression. Did she say it to startle me? I remember she spoke, as if quite casually. I listened carefully to all she said, I'm sure it was just that, I listened to help me decide about her. I'd asked, once, the hypnotist we used in the murder case, what he thought about past-life regression, and he scoffed at the whole thing. I'm sure it was no more than that, a way to help me decide.

"You've lived many lives before, we all have."

Sarah looked distracted, her long, thin fingers playing with her wineglass, painted nails making tiny chinking noises as she turned the stem.

"You won't remember them, but each time you learned something and the final aim is that you don't 'come back'..."

It was a surprise, her assurance; so diffident about procedures in the project; and now so confident over what most people feel foolish to mention.

"..You have to come back till you've learned all you need. Some souls are more developed than others and some are held back by old problems. That's why hypnotherapists are interested. I've seen many, many old problems hold people back, life after life, in the same old karmic trap..."

Her glass was still now; she set it firmly back on the table.

"...Many problems come from your current life, say from early childhood, but there are older problems. You reach these by going back beyond birth; regressing into the life which caused them."

Sarah was no longer distracted; she was looking at me directly with those penetrating green eyes. I smiled at her

Edward

sincerity; it took away all the affectation, leaving a child, innocence shining in the candlelight.

“...How do you know where to look? Well, problems present themselves. The subconscious mind throws them forward - if you let it.

...Yes problems show up as illnesses or mental blocks, that's why people come to me. But you don't always know you've got a problem; people bury them - put them behind screens - so you don't even know they're there.”

Sarah was still looking at me and I said nothing. It looked as if she might be taking a professional interest in me, and that wasn't what I wanted. As silence stretched on, embarrassment made me change the subject, but it didn't stay changed.

“Problems don't just go away. That's the mistake. Problems will never be under control while they're behind screens; they'll always come back, till you've faced up to them. Once you've gone through them, once you don't need them any more, then they go away.”

As she was leaving Sarah said just one more thing to stick in my mind. Her words, as I handed her into her light summer coat, lingered in the air as they still linger in my memory today.

“If you need to enough, with practice, you can pull the screens away. Once your eyes are open you'll see.”

These last words wouldn't leave me. By some inexplicable and ineluctable association they linked Sarah, my project and the courtyard together.

I realised, mortifying and improbable as it seemed, I'd been hypnotised. Had she done it to distract me from her methodology? Surely she realised how badly I react to being manipulated?

Mike Voyce

As I thought about it later it became certain, the chinking glass, the tone of voice, yes I'd been hypnotised. But why should she do it! I wouldn't have given reincarnation a thought but for that night, now I couldn't leave it alone.

Had she meant what she said about past-life problems? If these visions were memories of a past life, very well then, let's make the first question, Who?

As to that, an immediate second question, how do you find out?

I could have asked Sarah, I felt a dark foreboding and abhorrence at the thought. She'd used her words like weapons. They'd done more than take away the pressure to explain her lack of performance. From now on I'd tread most circumspectly around her. If there were to be any more visions they would be at my choosing. Did I tell you I thought Sarah attractive? Did I say I thought her emotionally dangerous?

In Peterborough I lived alone. I used that now for quiet contemplation, going over and over that vision. Whenever I thought about it there was an excitement, a glamour. Whatever Sarah had intended, I was hooked.

The result of this was reading, a whole library of strange and arcane books; stumbling and inexperienced self-hypnosis, reading, divining with a pendulum, which I copied how to do from a book, more reading and so on..

The date was the third of September. I came back to reality with a certainty.

Over the last several weeks I'd painfully, slowly, taught myself how to meditate. More than that, I learned techniques which would help me pull visions out of my head. Now, at last, my efforts had paid off.

Edward

I wrote the following names and dates on a piece of paper, I even made a copy and posted it to myself, just to prove I'd done it.

Thomas Lewkenor	-	?	- 1497
Aletia Fowler	-	?	- 1497
Eadie (Edith) Fowler	-	1479	- 1497
Abigail	-	1493	- 1497
Edward de Stafford	-	1478	- 1521

Penshurst and Thornbury.

I didn't know who these people were. You shouldn't think it was easy to learn even this. I was amazed at it; and excited too. But beyond this was a sense of foreboding, about the year 1497. I should have left it there, but I had to know, were these people real? Had they lived at the time my meditation said they did?

'Channelling' information from meditation is all very well. How do you know if it's true? You check it. In public records offices we have nothing short of free historians. The coincidence of the name 'de Stafford' with my hometown of Stafford seemed made-up and fantastical, but it was easy to check, I could phone the Staffordshire county archivist. Eventually, a little reluctantly, I made the call.

The idea of phoning interrupted my thoughts all morning, as I dithered; what if it were true, if these people were real? What if they weren't?

I got through immediately, to a very friendly, helpful man. He was pleased someone took an interest in his love of the past. Trying not to sound foolish, I told him what I wanted, holding my breath against my worst fear, that the archivist couldn't help.

Mike Voyce

We couldn't trace Thomas or Aletia, Eadie or Abigail. Parish records only go back to the 1530s and they were all dead by then. We couldn't even trace the birth of Abigail. I gave Edward's name with my fingers crossed.

"Oh, you mean the third duke."

The archivist took it quite for granted I knew what I was talking about.

"The third duke?"

"Yes. The de Staffords were dukes of Buckingham. Edward was the third and last of that family. They had, of course, earlier been the earls of Stafford and the family kept that title too, but Earl Edmund married a princess and their son was made a duke. Of course that was well before Edward's time."

I'd already given the dates for the others, now I gave Edward's dates, still taken aback by talk of "the third duke".

"Well, you know I can't say anything for the others, but for the Duke, let me see..."

There was a pause for several minutes.

"Hello, are you there... Yes you're quite right. He was born at Brecon Castle in 1478. Died... Yes died... He was executed for treason in 1521: there are records of property for confiscation, made by the king's surveyors under an Act of Attainder. They're quite lengthy."

The archivist chatted away cheerfully.

"There are some records for Penshurst Place. It's a manor in Kent. Kent County Council might help you more, they may have some papers in the archives there; though we've been most fortunate, we inherited..."

The archivist babbled on for several minutes.

Edward existed!

It was quite a thrill.

Edward

Smile, if you will, at the vision of me dancing round my office. No one could see, and an awful lot of effort had gone into that meditation. It had worked!

Now I would need no one else to prompt visions for me, I could do it for myself.

Duke Henry

The next questions were what? And why?

I tackled these in the same way as before. That night, at home in my flat, I sat in my armchair, quietly, and meditated. With my mind clear of everything, I relaxed and simply took thought. It much annoyed Angharad, later, when I told her about it, but it works. In fact all I've had to do to learn this story of Edward is to sit in my chair and take thought, 'channelling' as Angharad calls it. It is just like daydreaming and sometimes it's hard to tell the difference.

The lounge in my flat is a long room. I sat in my chair, at one end of it; the door and a settee to my left, a window, another chair and a bookcase to my right: in front, a desk and television. Surrounded by soft greens and browns I'd drift off into another world. Whenever I think of meditation it's this spot my mind turns to, for it was here I sat down to take thought when first I got to know Edward.

(Past)

"I'm scared Papa, and I'm cold...

I don't like this place."

"Hush boy; be at peace. You trust your father don't you?"

"I love you Papa. I don't want those men to get you!"

"God willing, boy. God willing we both may live.

Come sit by me Edward.

Some day you may be a duke. You must listen to me now and be very grown up. I don't know if you can understand but you must try. Will you Edward?"

"Yes, Papa, I'll be good. I don't want those men to get you."

"Good, then listen.

The present king is a bad man; though I have served him well enough to my profit. Be that as it may, I have declared

Mike Voyce

against him and raised our musters for that cause. The king killed his nephews, your cousins, boy, the Princes in the Tower, and now he's killed our friends whose crime was loyalty to us.

Morton taught me to raise England and I tried. Our men fought, and for me they died. King Richard is not a forgiving enemy; whoever wears the de Stafford colours is being killed.

I thought... with Morton I thought that, with Richmond behind me, the country would rise. Not even all our own estates, who owe us loyalty. The nobles were cowards, they've seen too much blood spilt by Richard, and they kept their soldiers mewed up and quiet. Still, we might have done something but for "Buckingham's flood". Even now they're calling it after us. You saw the swollen streams, boy, we're cut off from the friends we have... and with Tudor failing to land with his army from France... Maybe, despite Bishop Morton's blessing, it is the Will of God.

Edward, it took six weeks, just six weeks, to sweep us up. That Tudor didn't land leaves hope for England and for us too if we can get away to him... If we're not betrayed.

I had to bring you with me, my son; you're the de Stafford heir. Richard killed his own nephews; he wouldn't stop at you.. Listen, Edward, I am afraid for you. If those men take me run boy, hide. Tell no one your name till you know you're safe among friends.

Whatever happens to me you are to live. Do you understand? You are to live! You are de Stafford's heir and maybe England's too.

Do you understand?"

"Yes Papa. I promise. I don't want you to die Papa, I'm scared here, I'm frightened."

"Hush.

Edward

Hardly anyone knows we're here, only two or three of our own servants. We're safer here, hiding in a storehouse, than we would be on the road. We must trust our own."

...Said very quietly, "How can I run carrying the boy?"

"Come, Edward, we shall play a game."

"Yes, Papa..."

"Listen Papa! I hear noises."

"Quiet!"

Terror stalked outside with heavy boots before the door came crashing in.

"Run boy, hide!"

A cool voice spoke out of a large figure, framed by daylight from beyond the door,

"Too late, your Grace, for you and the boy.

By your Grace's leave my duty's to the King. In the name of King Richard, Henry de Stafford, sometime duke of Buckingham, I arrest you for treason by these officers, in execution of this warrant."

"Your pocket to the king; your duty's to me!"

"Take them. The King's warrant and reward."

"Not the boy. The warrant's not for my boy, nor any of my kin. Take him to safety... For your duty man! The Tudors will pay, Henry Tudor, earl of Richmond... For pity's sake!"

"Take the Duke."

"Papa!"

I came back to reality with a sense of anguish still trailing its tattered hem through my mind. In sight of my modern furniture, in my modern room, lingered the parting of father and son.

Mike Voyce

So now you know the name of that boy I told you about at the first. Edward de Stafford, the son of a duke and a traitor, hunted by the agents of Richard III.

I saw with an adult mind, through a five year-old's eyes, the betrayal and arrest of Duke Henry. You couldn't know and I, who felt it, can't tell the depth of Edward's grief. I wanted to tell Henry how much his son really loved him; Edward never again got the chance.

There were so many things I didn't know; how that perfidious servant persuaded the Duke into the wood store, so that he might more easily be taken prisoner, or where it might be. I do remember the smell of the sawdust and the bench facing the door, the bench Henry and Edward sat on. I remember the affection between father and son and the strength of it brings tears to my eyes even five hundred years later.

(Past)

Once the Duke had been dragged away and the soldiers departed, silence fell in that small room. Edward was left utterly alone. Shock turned to grief and that finally gave way to terror. The wood store remained in unrelenting stillness.

When Edward finally regained his voice he shouted,
"Papa!"

He rushed outside as if to see his father still standing there. All around was emptiness. In the woods and the fields nothing stirred except a lone songbird proclaiming its territory.

Edward sat down and at last he wept. Sobs welled up from the very centre of his being, a cry that could neither be controlled nor comforted. So he stayed until the first faint trace of dusk brought the first owl hoot and Edward looked around him. A sense of danger brought him to his feet and made him stumble into the woods, always looking around him for the return of the soldiers who had taken Papa.

Edward

As full night fell Edward found what warmth and shelter he could amongst the trees. The autumn cold and damp shook his body till at last exhaustion set in. When the first light of morning came he would search for Papa and for friends to guard his life.

There is a postscript to this. I wanted to know what happened to Edward, but I shall hold back, at least for this chapter, the road to Edward's feelings has painful potholes of black depression and I shall circumnavigate them as best I can. There is another route, through books. I read about the Buckingham Rebellion. It's not a well-known part of history.

Historians don't know why the Duke of Buckingham rebelled; that he blamed Richard for the disappearance of the Princes in the Tower is just one explanation. It is certain the Duke took his eldest son with him, that they went into hiding when the rebellion failed, and that, while the Duke was captured, young Edward miraculously escaped. From meditation and research, I will tell you how the rebellion came about, but not yet; for now my interest was in what happened to the Duke, and what became of little Edward.

As to Duke Henry, he was beheaded at the market place in Salisbury on Sunday 2nd November 1483, without trial and without Edward ever seeing him again. Henry asked to see the King, he admitted privately he would have killed Richard if he got the chance, but his request was turned down. The whole business was brought to an end in an unseemly rush. For any execution, let alone of a duke and a defeated rebel, to be held on a Sunday, with no trial, was extraordinary. You would expect the Duke's body to be paraded in state, it wasn't; it was hidden in the yard of a common public house, 'The Blue Boar'. When Edward became a man it gave him great trouble to recover his father's body, to give it proper burial.

Mike Voyce

There's no doubt Richard was furious at Duke Henry's treason, the House of Stafford was scattered, there were executions indeed, there was a manhunt for Edward and the Duke's estates were confiscated.

What happened to Edward for the next two years is also a mystery (albeit one I shall reveal to you) but it is recorded, on the 21st August 1485, Henry Tudor became king of England, so ending the fear for Edward's life, at least from King Richard.

After Richard's death, Edward became the ward of Lady Margaret Beaufort, Henry Tudor's mother. You will learn much more about that lady and how she abused her position. Nevertheless, Edward was cared for almost as a prince, almost, but never quite. He would hardly have understood his position, as Duke Henry's son, now Henry Tudor was king of England. Let's say the King at least seemed to honour his debt to a friend, which not all rulers do.

There are so many questions about Richard, questions that brought about the 'Richard III Society'. You may have believed Shakespeare's play, why should he lie? Yet, perhaps he would, to serve a Tudor queen or to keep his own head on his shoulders. Maybe Shakespeare believed what he wrote; he relied on Polydore Vergil and Sir Thomas More, immensely respected figures, who told the most remarkable lies, to please Henry VIII. The truth is, the most extreme and ruthless campaign of propaganda ever mounted against anyone was mounted against Richard III, it started as soon as Richard came to throne and continued even after Shakespeare.

It wasn't until the sixteen hundreds that anyone dared speak for Richard. That first Ricardian was Sir George Buck, one time Master of the Revels in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I – in today's language, official state censor. Sir George had

Edward

access to secret papers, from the descendants of the Stafford family, now lost but enough to convince Sir George. Since then, Ricardians have exposed lie after lie, yet the pendulum of doubt still swings through all sorts of opinions. It leaves you to wonder about the truth of any history.

At first it was interesting to compare scholars' accounts with my vision; scepticism assured me the truth would be different from what I saw. But as I read, and more and more points of my vision were confirmed by history, I felt a rising sense of enormity. It began to dawn on me I actually had heard Duke Henry talking to his son.

As to the Princes, little Edward's cousins, I'm sure Duke Henry believed King Richard killed them (but you'll have to wait to find out why). As to the Duke's arrest, for all I felt his fear of betrayal, I read that it was the taking of food to the storehouse which gave him away. I latched on to this as one particular, at least, in which my vision was wrong.

All I knew of this period in history, before my vision, had been year nine lessons in school, and I'd paid little enough attention to those. How could all this have been lurking in my head? Yet, everything except the question of whether Henry was betrayed or discovered turned out to be true. Every word Duke Henry said to his son, even down to "Buckingham's Flood", was exactly as the historical duke must have known it. Imagine me turning from one text to another, searching for anything to deny that vision. Never before had I cross-examined a piece of evidence more ruthlessly. Even the "Bishop Morton" Duke Henry spoke of turned out to be Henry Tudor's spymaster and later his chancellor, in effect, his prime minister. How could this be? How could I have known these things? What had I to do with this medieval lord and his family?

Mike Voyce

I was awed by it, I shied away from it. This channelling isn't like normal daydreaming, you get emotionally involved. It was painful and confusing. Having put so much effort into it, I got cold feet; I wanted to run away from it. I felt a fool.

There are lost days in everybody's life. It isn't that nothing happened, there was just nothing memorable. So life went on, with my project taking more time than I wanted, with less result. I couldn't talk to Sarah about that, any more than about Edward de Stafford. She was away on holiday in the south of France and completely out of reach.

It became clear we'd have to bring in an institute of higher education, to handle the administration it was increasingly obvious Sarah wouldn't do, and to cross check and support her work. At least here I was successful. I spent a happy time trawling through academia till I found a university which would give it a good home. I remember one delightful afternoon, lost in conversation with a professor at 'All Souls' in Oxford. I felt, if only I were to knock a little harder on their door, the academic community would let me back in, as one of their own. That is, they would if I abandoned staff and clients and all else I'd created, to work on my project. It ended, as it was bound to do, with my business partner coming to wag a finger at my hour and a half on the phone, neglectful of fee-paying clients.

The university I eventually settled for was famous for its psychology research, but not yet for its work with criminals. It was handy for Sarah; she had a daughter studying there. But as to everything else, it seemed to be grinding to halt, not only my work with Sarah, the business in my office, everything.

Everything except Edward de Stafford.

It was at this time a strange fragment came into my hands. It happened one day when I was walking through Stafford, I

Edward

found myself outside ‘the William Salt,’ the privately funded local history library. Why I went in I don’t know, I didn’t know what I was looking for. The history books left more questions than they answered; perhaps I was just looking for something more personal. I looked without much expectation, yet there it was. To me it was truly remarkable; it’s about Duke Henry, see what you think.

“The plaine old Duke his life to save
Of his owne man did souccour crave
In hope that he would him releive
That late much land to him did give

Base Banester this man was nam’d
By this vile deed for ever sham’d
‘It is’ quoth he ‘a common thing
To injure him that wrong’d his king’

Thus Banester his maister sold
Unto his foe for hie of gold
But mark his end and, rightly see
The just reward of treachery.”

A contemporary ballad.

So the Duke was betrayed after all! It was my vision that was right, not the books. I pictured the figure from my vision, the man framed in the doorway, as “Base Banester”. Though I didn’t know what became of him, “the just reward of treachery,” somehow it cheered me to think of ordinary people taking the Duke’s side. Most of all, it ended my last doubt, I could no longer pretend I had not witnessed Duke Henry’s arrest.

Mike Voyce

One day I went to see Angharad. She wanted to know how I was getting on with Sarah. It was difficult to hide the doubts I felt about that woman, but it was also difficult to decide whether I was unhappy with Sarah because of her lack of work or because she caused my visions. Having drunk too much of Angharad's whisky I admitted as much, at least I told her about the courtyard and about the duke's arrest. I don't know why I told her this, or what I expected her to say. She paused, looking at me for a moment; she asked me if I believed in the spirits of the past.

She exhorted me to follow my story and 'channel' my spirit guides.

"What are you afraid of?"

Just because it's different, you can't look it up in your Law books, is that any reason to go into hiding?"

I bridled at that, and scoffed at 'the spirits of the past'. Yet, when I turned to other friends, they gave me a book of 'psychic' investigations.

My darling daughter, aged nine, pestered almost constantly about Stafford Castle, which lies a mile or two from where she lives. It was now almost four years since the separation and divorce and the time my wife and our daughter went to live in their present home.

It was more than a month since I'd seen the vision of that courtyard and nearly two weeks since I saw Duke Henry's arrest. I was still haunted by the memory of each of them. They, everything, drew me back.

It was said, dear reader, by Thomas à Kempis, many years even before Edward was born,

"Man proposes but God disposes and Man's destiny is not in his own hands."

Let's face it, I didn't have a choice.

Edward

I'd started with the boy in the courtyard, and now I needed to go back to little Edward and what happened to him after the arrest. Again, in my comfortable chair, one evening as dusk began to fall, I did it.

In the background was a sense of the ominous presence of Richard III. Yet still I doubted that Richard was a bad man, it wasn't him I felt but little Edward's fear of the "bad king". Somewhere in the Buckingham rebellion things were horribly wrong. It was part of the whirlwind that first threw up and then threw down Richard III as king of England, and threw out of sight his nephews, Edward and Richard, the Princes in the Tower. But the vortex of evil that touched our little Edward was so much more immediate. The scenes I saw lasted long after I got up from my chair and tried to go on about my ordinary life. Somewhere in my mind a pit had opened and whenever my thoughts were idle images would arise, like foul vapours that took days to clear.

(Past)

I can see as Edward saw, almost lying on the ground, half covered by leaf mould, shivering and clinging to a tree; on that night of running from the wood store. It's as if my own little fingers were clutching into the hard tree bark, till it filled my World; silently repeating, over and over,

"Don't let Papa be gone!"

It was like a prayer, permitting no other thought all that long night.

At another time there are local men, hollering to each other, their breath hanging in the damp air. It's as if they're dragging through the woods to find me. I see it all, crouching down in some bracken, brown and dripping; I can smell the

Mike Voyce

damp earth, and feel my own body shivering like a frightened rabbit. Then, eyes tight shut as they pass nearby, breath freezes in my lungs, willing them to go away. It takes ages before they go, out of sight, still hollering and calling to each other. Papa would be pleased. I can still hear him saying,

“Run, boy, hide till you know you’re safe amongst friends.”

A thought hangs in the air, left in place of those searching men,

‘Perhaps, if I’m very good, Papa will come back.’

Who can say if they were Richard’s men or friends with Papa? Just try and try the very best and the World must come right again.

Then there’s an orchard full of apples, with the sun streaming into it, as the last of the morning mist curls away from between the trees. The shining dew makes it seem like fairyland and there must be elves behind every tree. Yet there’s no one here and there’s a tight knot of pain in my stomach. Then I think of Papa and remember he’s gone.

I felt little Edward’s pain entering my body, when he could no longer believe in Papa coming back; behind it washed the aches of forty eight hours in the open without sleep. He might have wept with the sharpness of it, and I would have cried with him, but by now he was too sunk in misery. You could call the drops that leaked down his pink cheeks tears of despair; Edward had no name for them. Days of wandering had left him totally lost and helpless.

He would find Papa. He would. He Would!

Some sense of purpose made him set out to search the scattered buildings in that country landscape. And some other sense told him he needed food for the searching. There was

Edward

the mounting tension of fear before stealing into a farm kitchen where Edward thieved a pie. He stole it for Papa. Not till later did hunger force him to eat it himself.

The countryside was still sodden from the rains. There was nowhere to find dry shelter and the cold and damp were penetrating. Edward shivered almost constantly. I see him crouched down behind a dry-stone wall on a hillside with open grass fields all around him.

There's no one around, anywhere I look, only me. There's the pie, I tried to carry it in my tunic but it stuck to the wet wool and it's left a soggy mess in my clothes. Carrying it in my hands it's crumbled and I shan't be able to give it to Papa, and I'm hungry.

On the other side of the wall it goes downhill and you can see for miles. If I sit against the wall I can look up to the woods but it hurts my back. The stones are hard and shaking makes me bump into them. Away from the wall the wind blows me and it's cold and I feel dizzy. I wish I could lean on the wall and not bump into the stones, just sit here and think about Papa. It wouldn't be wrong to eat half the pie, would it? Papa would make me eat it if he knew.

The pie was in Edward's hand and there was torment in his whole being. Cramps knotting his stomach warred with guilt as he ate it all, knowing he'd left nothing to give to Papa. It burned in his mind as the indigestible pastry burned in his belly.

In all these scenes there was a running from all human life, and bile that was the bitter taste of fear. Exhaustion dulled the mind, from the strain of starting at every sound. It was amazing that one so young could show such wariness, like

Mike Voyce

some wild animal, some hart pursued from its ground by the chase.

Edward's only thought was to find Papa. He didn't know how or where to look nor who to ask.

It must have been exhaustion that finally ended it. It's truly amazing that one so young could have evaded capture so long.

One day Edward lay down on the soft moss of a woodland clearing, stretched out in the warm sunshine, he fell asleep. He meant only to rest but the warmth of the autumn sun lulled him and time passed dreamlessly away. When he awoke a man was kneeling over him. The man smiled as he picked him up. Edward was too weak to struggle, almost too weak to cry. His heart pounded and his eyes fixed on the man's face. He couldn't speak, knowing it was over.

Later Edward was on the floor of a cart. A herdsman was sitting over him, a great big man, the leathers he wore making the small space below the sacking cover stink of animal. Edward could just see, through a flap in the cover, the man who picked him up; he was walking his horse by the side of the cart, using a whip to guide the ox that pulled them. The cart moved ponderously on, falling into every pothole along the road. Every bone in Edward's body jarred, yet he could barely feel it for dull stupidity, the senselessness of loss. The journey went on forever.

Later still there's a cottage. It's more than a cottage, a fair house, yet secluded in remote parkland. There's a large, smiling woman, she welcomed Edward with open arms.

"This is Mistress Elizabeth More. She is servant to Sir Richard Delabere."

She gave Edward a bowl of porridge. It was hot and sweet and he wolfed it. It burned his mouth and his throat as it went

Edward

down. When he fell asleep she tucked him into her own bed and he slept deeply, a dreamless sleep, the first time he'd lain in a bed since Papa was taken away.

There was no sense of time, no order, in these scenes. They rose up as feelings, an image to put to fear, another to put to exhaustion and so on. I only knew such forceful feelings must be true; there was such vividness, as if every ounce of personality was stripped away and what came to me was the pure experience of being.

Mistress More was plump and reassuring. She reminded Edward of the nurse he still remembered from when he was very young. In time the strain began to leave him and he cried and began to talk a little instead of just nodding and shaking his head. The man who found him was still there, strong and kind.

I saw him as Edward first saw him, in the woodland clearing; the sun behind his head shining through his hair, highlighting the planes of his cheek. There was kindness even then. That big face looking down from just a few inches away was one of the first images. Was it Thomas? I'd seen Thomas in that vision of the courtyard. I couldn't be sure but I thought it must be him.

“This is Kynnardsley Park, whose master serves the King, but by Mistress More Sir Richard will keep faith with King Richard's enemies.”

There was a twist of irony in Thomas' smile as he spoke to Edward.

“I shall leave you with her while she gives you fitting disguise.”

And with that he was gone for days and weeks to prepare their escape.

Mike Voyce

For as long as King Richard lived there would be danger but it must have seemed greatest so soon after the rebellion. The news that came was of arrests and searches, of threats made if rebels were not surrendered; though little was said of it in Edward's presence.

Edward's first disguise was to have his long blond hair shaved to his head and be dressed as a girl. It was so, in long curtil and mounted side-saddle; he rode out of the park with Mistress More, in the broad light of day.

There was Sir William Knivet there on that ride; he had been one of Duke Henry's counsellors, and William ap Symon, one of Henry Tudor's agents. They had all sought sanctuary in Kynnardsley, and all rode out to Hereford now, to make their separate escapes. They went at a forced, leisurely walk, as if a family party with no business more serious than a family holiday. Every time strangers greeted them, or soldiers stopped them in the road, there was the temptation to set spurs and break into a full gallop. Even little Edward felt the tension of that journey, but Thomas would be waiting for him in Hereford.

After that there was constant movement, sometimes in covered wagons, sometimes walking, dressed as an urchin in rags. A long roundabout route was taken to come finally to a Welsh monastery, in Brecon, just a little way from where the rebellion had started.

It was just a few days after Christmas when they arrived. The pure, golden glow of the candles complimented the singing of the monks as they called the faithful to vespers.

Tell me this is all imagining!

There's nothing to these images at all like that vision of the courtyard. I started by deliberate channelling, it gave me

Edward

Duke Henry's arrest; yet so much of this was just there in my head. Surely I must have made it up, mustn't I?

And yet...

I felt a sense of panic when I let myself think about it all. Yet, if I were to take the advice of friends, if I were to "pull back the screens", then I must go on, gritting my teeth and persisting, trying all the while to carry on my normal life.

(Past)

The monastery was too small to boast an abbot and there were no more than a dozen of the brothers, ruled over by a bent old father, but they were generous and gentle to Edward. The whole place was less than two acres in size, and it was sparse and worn, but it was built on a hillside and caught the winter sun. The monks took time to show Edward the healing herbs in their kitchen garden and the apothecary's shop and how to milk goats and their pride and joy, the illuminated texts in their great bible.

The kaleidoscope of these scenes, spinning between each other and shifting into each other brought every attempt at ordered meditation to confusion. There was no firm ground at all for Edward, nor for me, till he came to the monastery. Only then did the World begin to spin round his head more slowly. Some coherent sense of this place did stick to my mind, and so it should, for it is here Edward spent his time in exile, away from the wrath of a king. Here winter turned to spring, then to summer and finally to a full year, while the outside World followed its course.

Edward's exile went far beyond anything I'd imagined when first I started channelling, and still I was no nearer knowing what it meant; the monastery remained as if in a

Mike Voyce

mist. Images of it receded into the distance, in stately procession.

Yet two pictures stand out. For the most part days merge into each other and images dance away from me whenever I try to catch them. They leave a sanctified reassurance, stuck like a plaster over an awful, aching loss. Yet these two remain.

(Past)

First was Thomas. He spoke little to Edward before he left; yet I remember him talking to one of the brothers.

“You will hold England in your hands.

I charge you, Joseph, by your vows.

Treat him as a brother, your own special brother.”

The monk listened solemnly, but when he spoke his face lit with a smile.

“You know me. You trust our brotherhood; none here shall fail the boy or the man.”

And he clasped Thomas by the hand and shook it firmly. After that Thomas left.

This monk was still very young, yet he had a presence and authority you wouldn't expect. It was as if Thomas transferred his cares to him, for Joseph gave up all other work to watch over Edward.

Brother Joseph made Edward feel a child again, indeed special, no longer alone. They would play together at marbles and he'd let Edward win. When bad dreams would shake Edward's sleep Joseph would comfort him, he would listen to all Edward's childish hopes and fears. Yet, after leaving the monastery, Edward would forget him, for a long time, like all the rest.

Second was a tall, distant and beautiful noblewoman. But before her presence there were letters between her and the monks. The brothers would argue almost for days about what

Edward

they should send to her; then pour avidly over her replies. There was much talk of whether she should come, whether the danger would be too great, of diplomacy at court, and if she should come how and when.

She, herself, had run. After the rebellion she'd been captured at Weobley and taken to the Tower of London. Only now had she been released and she was still nervous of the King's men.

As further weeks passed in peace, eventually, she came. I can see her still, standing cool and tall, still in her riding habit, framed by the arch of the refectory door. There was a moment of stillness and silence before Edward ran to her, to be folded into his mother's embrace. When she left she took Edward with her.

There!

Surely the pit in my mind should now be dry and empty. I'd seen Edward on the run and what became of him.

Yet, it's such a fragment of his story.

Can you imagine how I felt, having gone through all those pictures of sorrow? There should have been relief to see the duchess, his mother, take Edward away. I could even pick out her name, it was Lady Katherine. Could I at last return to real life, my work and even my project with Sarah?

Yet...

I was sure there was more to the monastery than my dull wits had shown, some meaning I missed. So little had been explained: not the vision of the courtyard, not Richard; nor what any of this had to do with me. It left me unsatisfied. I kept remembering the words Thomas spoke to Joseph,

"You will hold England in your hands."

What had he meant?

Or the words Duke Henry spoke to his son,

Mike Voyce

“You are to live! You are de Stafford’s heir and maybe England’s too.”

I thought of the Richard III Society; all those people interested in these times, all these centuries later. It sent a shiver through me, but still there was no answer.

As Edward’s rescue came to me less and less, a hush descended. It was like the tension at the eye of a storm and I began to realise there would be more to come. As the days passed, with no further sign of Edward, a sense of expectancy grew in the air.

Edward is a bombshell; for the nature of Destiny and Fate, and the truth about Tudor history. Here are the Holy Grail, the Sword and Druid Glass; amongst love and death, in the midst of real danger. The author lifts the veil on a history more than five hundred years old, and the emotions he finds within himself. It isn't just what lies under History; the question is, what to do with magic and reincarnation?

Edward

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