

Edward

A Novel



Mike Voyce

Edward

EDWARD

A novel



From National Portrait Gallery

By Mike Joyce

Edward

Copyright © 2011 Mike Voyce

ISBN 978-1-60910-719-2

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Printed in the United States of America.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, with the exception of Angharad and the author's daughter, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2011

First Edition

Edward

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my wife, my daughter, the memory of Angharad, and all those who have helped in its production.

Thanks to Bobbie Crawford-McCoy for “*(Past)*”, as it appears throughout this book. It is part of the story that visions of Edward mix with thoughts about him, and with my own life. Perhaps this will help separate them.

Thanks to “The Medieval Technology Company” for the sword image used on the front cover of printed copies of this edition.

Contents

EDWARD	
Dedication.....	iii
Contents	iv
The Beginning	5
Duke Henry	17
Edward.....	26
The Way of the World	35

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 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.

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 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 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 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 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?

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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?

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 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 hiere 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.

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 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 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 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 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.

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 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 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 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,

"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.

The Way of the World

How strange to dream while perfectly wide-awake. It was late on Friday afternoon, when I got back to the flat. Everything was hushed and peaceful and I was just sitting, relaxing. I must have closed my eyes for a moment, I must have channelled all by inadvertence.

(Past)

The first thing wasn't sight but sound. Someone was calling me but there were no words.

Next there was a little girl, a toddler, maybe two years old, running towards me crying "Dada".

Behind her; at some slight distance, stood a girl in her late teens; she was slender and willowy. Her dark, thick hair fell around her shoulders in soft curls; it softly framed the pale, translucent skin of her face. But what really struck you were her eyes; startling, green eyes. She moved not at all, she just stood there watching her daughter. She possessed an ageless look, there was a tension, a sensual vitality; was it something in the curve of her mouth, the way she held her head?

The scene was in the country. In the middle distance was a large building but it wasn't the castle I saw that day on the road. This was somehow lighter, more like a large manor house. There was stonework here but brick also, with tall chimneys, and a great oriel window; the effect was altogether different. The girls were barefoot on a soft carpet of grass, there was sunlight and bird song and fresh blossom that made you think of spring.

The little girl's blond curly hair bounced as she came running towards me. Laughter lit up her face, love shone from her eyes. Her dimpled bare arms stretched out

towards me, I bent down, my own arms outstretched; muscles ready to lift her as I've done so many times with my own daughter. Then the whole scene snapped shut.

It didn't fade like that vision of the courtyard; it vanished suddenly, like a bubble incontinently burst. I felt such a fool to try to touch an imaginary child. I didn't know what to do. I stood up and paced the length of the room, as if looking for that lost little girl. I sat down again, flummoxed.

This was some days after those scenes of Edward's rescue, in the lull in my channelling, which followed Edward's leaving the monastery. I shouldn't have told you about it now. I've told it when it happened, but it doesn't fit with the story yet. I beg your patience, for now I was as bemused by this little girl as you might be.

The last chapter went pell-mell, I told it without regard to my ordinary life. I kept order in that life, distracting myself with work and business meetings, letting Edward out slowly. I'd managed it, so I thought, so that no one knew what seethed inside me. I must have relaxed my guard, at the end of the last chapter, and this little girl jumped out at me all unexpected.

Now I had to put all this away, I had a long car drive in front of me. I had to be in Stafford on Saturday, and there remained the rest of the chapter to experience. It's time to tell you more about my life, and about my weekends.

Creating a business isn't easy and I'm not the first person to find it cost a marriage. When things went wrong at home, at that time I needed to open the Peterborough office, there was Frances. She was already training in the Law, I took her under my wing and I put her into my new office. I did a great deal more than that, and lived to regret it.

She was such an apt student and I saw in her what I wanted to see, I planned to spend the rest of my life with

her. When finally I was forced to accept the truth I was shocked, it was like a bereavement; Frances was only interested in her own career. After the care, patience and love I'd given, her selfishness was a slap in the face. I would have liked her to have no part in this story. For the time being it's enough that we mostly lived apart and I was determined to keep it that way.

When Frances left Peterborough she went back to our house, and my office, in Stafford. She went in pursuit of her career but she kept her place in my firm and she expected me to come to her for Saturdays and Sundays. It was difficult to avoid; there were all my other commitments.

I'd flown from Stafford, first for love and now for sorrow at the loss of the very same love. Yet there were still these weekends to pretend all was as once it had been, Frances and I would meet, each Saturday, for lunch at the 'Lord Nelson', just two doors away from the office.

Mornings were leisurely. Clients would come to see me with no particular thought of time, nor did I think of billing that time; they were like old friends and the morning would simply slide off the clock. The afternoons were peaceful, Frances would have gone home and I'd stay to read or wander round the shops or just potter. But first came lunchtime.

Sitting in the 'Nelson', uncomfortable on a hard chair and unhappy in spirit, I listened to Frances, the day after that vision of the little girl and her mother. She was telling me how she could increase my failing business.

Frances is dark haired, tall, thin and angular, a little younger than I. The more unkind of my friends called her gaunt, but it hadn't been her appearance which first attracted me, but the quickness of her mind. I'd found in Frances someone frustrated and under using her talents. Her uncle was a senior judge, but she had followed a commercial career, one that left her ill and disappointed. I'd introduced her to the practice of Law and trained her in

my office; wondering, it's true, why her uncle had never done something similar. She was eager to learn.

This Saturday I sat silent, looking at a plateful of food, suddenly unwanted, as she told me how my business should be run.

"I only have to be nice to them. I'll give you more business than your little office can handle. There's a lot of money in the hunt."

I pictured her on horseback, absorbed in the trappings of chasing a fox. I saw her turning even that pastime to venal ambition, simpering to certain sorts of farmer and social climber.

"The unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable."

I murmured it with more unkindness to Frances than to fox hunters. Mine is not the oldest profession in the World, yet. I'd no wish to prostitute it to her fantasies.

She left shortly after, bitter at my rejection. At least it was a relief when she went.

I think she resented the distracted way I dismissed her proposal. You see, I'd been thinking about that little girl at the beginning of the chapter, she so reminded me of my daughter. Was there a correspondent to Frances? If so I had yet to meet her. When first we came together I'd a sense we'd known each other always. How wrong I was; at least I was blessed with a good and loyal staff, to keep track of her.

From an easy chair, I studied the depths of a glass of whisky, turning it slowly in my hand. If only Frances could believe in the goals I took for granted. I'd given all I could, but what when you're able to give no more or when you no longer want to? What when the one you love plays power games and mistakes giving for weakness?

It wasn't just this sucking up to these hunting friends that wouldn't do; I no longer had a taste for the game.

Everything around me had been the child of my own invention; the office, Frances' position in it and even my project with Sarah. And what of her? I wondered if her

ambitions were any better than Frances'. I conjured Sarah in my mind's eye, balancing her against the shallow success Frances so much sought. She turned and turned with the whisky in my glass, her affectations weighing against her.

One of the few bright points, the few highlights of these weekends, was Angharad. It was at this time she came to take a greater, almost protective, interest in me. Her invitations took in my daughter, for Debbie has a gift for acquiring people and Angharad's daughter was about the same age. On this occasion there was a houseful, and so it was, that Sunday afternoon, I found myself debating the Universe.

A digression dear reader, if you want you can skip a few pages, for those who want the first part of the key to how all this works, read on. Here's something you don't find in a novel, it's a novel novel. The novelty is to reveal what lay in my mind.

John was Angharad's son in law, a part time university lecturer, a research physicist and altogether a bright young man, a man of hard science and facts. It pained me to hear him so dismiss Angharad's sensitive care for all living things and her abiding faith in spirit.

John actually said, if you can't touch it, or test it in the laboratory, it doesn't exist; if he so dismissed Angharad's beliefs what would he make of my visions?

"What about Art, Religion and Philosophy? Or is Religion just 'the opiate of the masses'?"

"These are just responses to what we see; Man's attempt to make sense of the World, ideas he invented before Science."

A tired answer to a tired question; but even plants and the very rocks of the Earth have souls (don't take my word for it, read Giordano Bruno). I wouldn't leave it there.

"We live in the material universe; we place ourselves in it by co-ordinates of length breadth and height. These

dimensions describe all of space; together with a sense of 'When' they're our entire reference in the Space/Time continuum. And you would say that's all there is to it?"

"In ordinary Space, yes."

"But you see Space and Time are just part of our World."

John laughed. I had, after all, spoken nonsense.

"Physics gives the laws for all of space. Find something that doesn't obey these laws and you've gone outside Space/Time. Start with Entropy; Newton's law that all concentrations of energy break down."

John nodded.

"According to this rule, the more energy is concentrated the faster it dissipates. So, at the very start of the Universe, with all energy squeezed together; you have the unimaginable explosion of the 'Big Bang' when everything flew apart. This was the first example of Newton's law. Because of it, anything you can make, anything you find in nature, always loses energy. We can never put things back together again; we can never go back in time. The law prevents us concentrating the energy again as it used to be."

"Yes." - John was on safe ground here.

"We only seem to beat this by putting things together, organising and make things; we can take iron ore and turn it into steel and turn the steel into motor cars: but everything we do takes energy from elsewhere, and the more we build something up the more energy it takes and the more it decays and breaks down."

John beamed, as at a stupid child.

"That's right; of course it all happens on a very big scale."

"In the end it means universal decay; personal death in the short term and cosmic death in the end. And yet this isn't our experience in Art, Philosophy or Religion; in the mind and in nature, everywhere we're surrounded by teeming life.

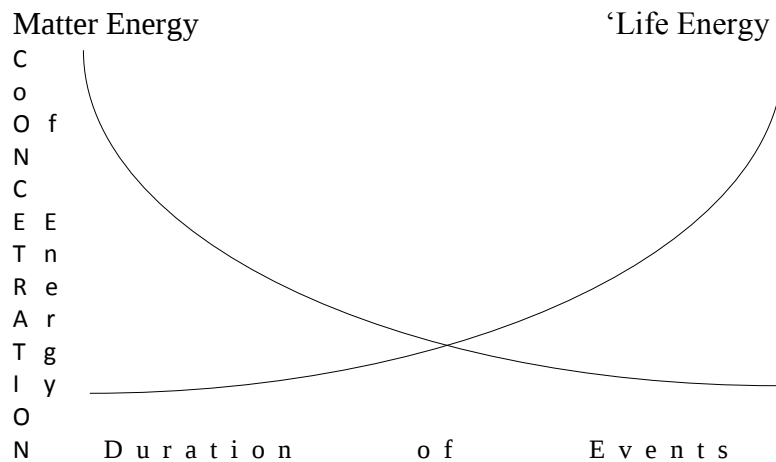
Haven't you noticed this, John?"

I don't know if he'd have answered, I gave him no chance.

"According to Darwin's theory of 'Natural Selection', the forms of life always grow stronger. According to Tielhard de Chardin, the great Jesuit anthropologist, Life as a whole always grows more organised. It gets stronger, more organised until it engulfs the World. The very opposite of Newton's law.

The same is true for our systems of Society, our Laws and culture, even your precious Sciences. They all grow stronger with the passage of Time. I could show you this on a graph."

And I did, dear reader, you can see what I drew, pointing out the gradients dictated by Newton; they apply to Life as much as Matter, but in reverse.



"What you see is a pattern of symmetry.

The two axes of concentration of energy and duration of events mean we show the physical world running on the downward curve, obeying Entropy. Life and ideas do the opposite; they are in dimensions or frames of reference that

can't be defined in space. Here you find the power of the mind and the power of life.

Life, Art, Religion Philosophy, all emotions and ideas, lie on the second curve. Not only are they outside your physical laws, they're moving ever faster and more powerfully as time goes on."

Was I demanding too much of John?

There was a pause, not a very long pause.

"Nothing exists outside your first curve. Everything exists within the law of Entropy and anything which appears to contradict this is just a local eddy."

These were staggering words. They stopped me in my tracks, was John really saying not just that Art, Philosophy and Religion are illusion but that his science, even Life itself, is just a local eddy? 'Tell that to a culture of bacilli', I thought, but I didn't say it. At least it wasn't just me but all life on Earth John dismissed.

A law is a law; it leaves no room for any "local eddy". Newton's law of Entropy is proved by the fact that you will never, not almost never, but actually never, find pieces of pot lying on the floor which form themselves into a cup and jump up onto a table. On the other hand, the reverse is quite frequently seen (Acknowledgements to Professor Hawking).

My anger at John's short-sightedness surprised me. It seems I was a believer in Spirit. The truth of what I said is obvious, but what it might mean for individuals is another matter. I can't prove that you or I will survive death, though, you'll appreciate; I was coming to think we might.

The time travel of H.G. Wells and Isaac Azimov surrounded my childhood. Only as an adult could I see the gradient on that 'matter energy' curve makes time travel impossible; things can never regain enough energy to go backwards through Time. The Mind, on the other hand, can. For life the future is always more powerful than the past. What about memory? I always assumed memory is something we carry with us, but maybe we don't need to.

Maybe we go back in time to pick it up, projecting images onto the screen of our minds, like a hologram. Maybe this is what I was doing with Edward. He needn't be part of my past; my mind was simply going back through Time to pick him up. Perhaps memory is nothing less than time travel.

I hardly had time for all this. The talk with John set a train of thought running, but it was Angharad I'd called to see. Eventually I cornered her in a private conversation. I wanted to ask her about Sarah.

How long does a holiday last? Angharad knew Sarah and knew the friends she went away with. If I were invited into a major project, far from extending a holiday I'd more likely cancel it. Sarah was an enigma. Was she always this casual? Was she uninterested? Did she understand what I was trying to do? In those days she discussed everything with Angharad. I was determined to ask her. Sarah had been away for six weeks and nobody knew when she'd be back.

"You have to know her. She is, actually, treating a patient; L..... has been suicidal for years, at last Sarah got through to her, she's taking the chance to reinforce her progress. Besides, she needs a break from the surgery."

What could I say? L..... was one of the rich friends she'd gone to stay with. But it's easy to be dubious about 'treatment' with a dozen other people in a Mediterranean villa. My face showed my thoughts.

Angharad took my arm and sat me down.

"Don't always be so impatient. You think she's the right person don't you? The research hasn't actually started yet has it? It can actually wait can't it? If she's the right person keep it open for her."

I agreed. Reluctantly, I agreed.

"I won't be a minute."

She was off to root in a draw somewhere in another room, coming back with an armful of photographs, some in albums, some loose, many quite old.

“I want to show you Sarah.”

Angharad had collected a life story in that mass of photographs. There were pictures of Sarah and of both of them when they’d been nurses together as teenagers, of their weddings, of their children growing up, graduations and christenings. There were pictures of Sarah’s estranged husband, of cars and houses, photographs of their life histories.

There was one of Sarah’s wedding in the late 1960s, showing her black, cascading curls arranged neatly under a large brimmed hat; her short, waist less coat emphasising her long legs. What I noticed was her self-consciousness.

Angharad gave me a commentary for each picture, it took quite some time. Sitting on the floor amongst the clutter, I never knew what a great deal could be contained on just so many pieces of card.

In all those pictures Sarah seemed to be trying so terribly hard. Well we all looked gauche when we were young, and it made me smile to hear Angharad sounding so protective, there was something about Sarah that made you want to protect her.

She had married young and stayed married for a long time, separating after more than twenty years. Her husband was portrayed to me as a brute; amongst all his other faults he was against her career as a hypnotherapist. This was the last straw and final cause of their separation, at least according to Angharad.

There was something about that wedding photo. I was reluctant to put it down. I listened to Angharad, but there was something in the image of that young bride, an echo of the teenager in my vision of the toddler and her mother. Was it her eyes that reminded me so much, or something in the curve of her mouth and the way she held her head?

When the thought came to me I pushed it away, unwanted fantasy.

Once again the demands of others shaped the day, our privacy was invaded and the photos. were all put away. Angharad had done her best.

Sunday's the day I see my daughter and the rest of my time was spent with her. I rounded her up from some distant part of Angharad's house and we set off, to make the most of our limited time together. Debbie is such a joy; her spontaneity drove away all my cares, even John's intransigent stupidity.

The way back from her mother's house leads passed Stafford Castle. Maybe I stopped at the castle gates just to ruminate on the day. It was early autumn, the nights were drawing in and the first leaves were falling. The air was damp and cold but it wasn't just this which made me shiver.

There's a long avenue of trees leading up from the road to the castle keep and leaf mould and the demolition rubble of centuries bound the hard earth track between. The path itself has been much cleared by would-be historians from the local secondary schools. As I walked under the dripping shade of those great trees, I wondered what I thought I was doing.

Walking, alone in the dusk, I should have been walking back through Time. There was every reason to time travel in my mind's eye, with all that was spinning round my head, but too much of the present adhered to the castle drive and too much of the day still stuck to my mind. I saw the rubble and felt the damp when I should have felt for the past.

I was walking over nine hundred years of history. The original Stafford castle was part of the town but, not long after the Norman Conquest, rebel Saxons burnt it down. A new and vast military complex was built here, a little out of the town, not just to control Stafford but the whole of central England. As the danger of resistance faded it was

given to one of William the Conqueror's lieutenants, the first of the Staffords and Edward's ancestor.

Over the centuries stone replaced the first wooden palisades and the military centre became a family home. As the Middle-Ages wore on it became rooted in the land and its people.

Parliamentarians demolished it during the Civil War, seeking to erase the traditions for which it stood. I remember a civil engineer once telling me what a good job they did and what problems it made for later builders. For all that, the castle has been rebuilt and twice demolished again since then, and successive families have lived in it since Edward's time.

The present ruin has little to do with the de Staffords and no sense of Edward clung to its walls. There is no doubt he would have lived here, some times, but this was not his real home. For him you would have to look elsewhere.

I stayed long enough to smoke a cigarette and admire the commanding view of the countryside. It really is a superb site.

What else could I expect? Yet, I did come back, much later, with very different experiences. Then my mind walked back in Time to a time that seemed to be long, long ago, to the unrecognised image of a girl, her face looking down from a castle window, wistfully smiling. Maybe she was looking down at Edward. I don't know. But on this damp, September day I retraced my steps to the car and left without a backward glance, depressed and frustrated.

"EDWARD explores an exceptional paradigm,
-steeped in history and mysticism--a story that
will entertain readers from beginning to end!"
-Bobbie Crawford-McCoy, *Nurture Your Books*™

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 a World dominated by the most
dangerous woman in Europe.

The veil is lifted on a 500 hundred year old
story, and on the author's emotions. It isn't
just what lies under History; the question is
what to make of magic and reincarnation.

Should the author change the past?
And can it be done?
Say what you think, go to:
www.edwardstafford.co.uk