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AUTHOR OF HORRIBLE HISTORIES

**TERRY DEARY**



**TERRIBLE  
TRUE TALES  
TUDORS**

Inside illustrations by Helen Flook

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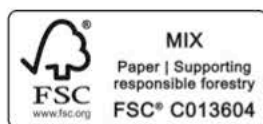
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*The Prince, the Cook  
and the Cunning King*



# Chapter One

## The Cold Kitchen

We stood at the palace door and shivered. The wind was wintry, the grey walls gloomy. I was afraid.



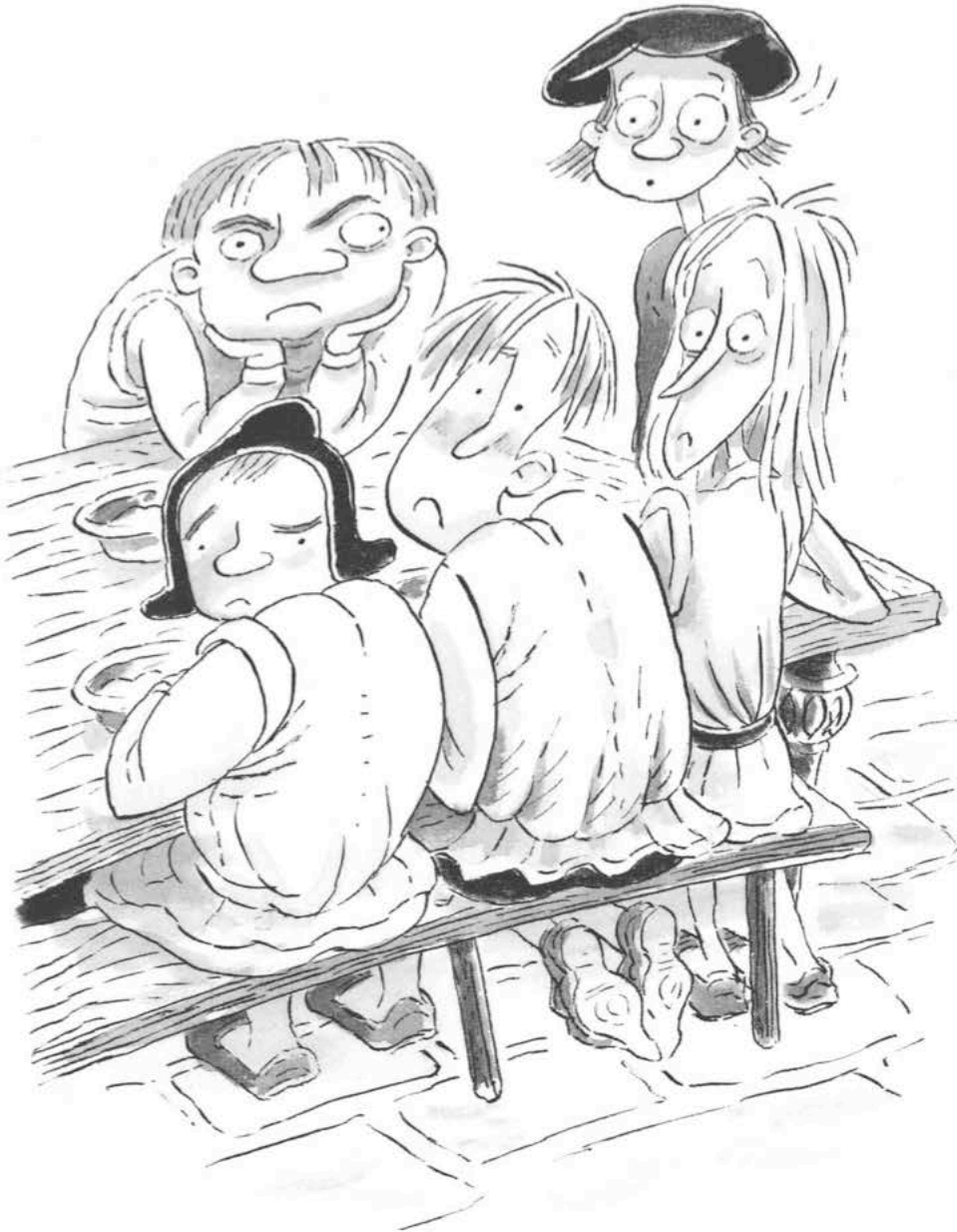
My mother was just about to knock for a second time when the door was tugged open and I found myself looking into the castle kitchen.

A dozen dirty faces stared at me. The servants were sitting round a large table with wooden bowls in front of them.



“Shut the door!” someone moaned.  
“It’s cold!”

My mother pushed me into the kitchen  
and the door slammed behind us with a  
boom like the sound of doom.



The dozen pairs of eyes followed us  
into the cold kitchen.

There was a huge fireplace with copper pots, iron pans hanging down alongside dead rabbits and geese, and a shrivelled side of bacon. In that fireplace a miserable fire smoked under a small black pot full of pale and pitiful porridge.



A man lifted the pot off the fire and placed it on the table. The servants passed it round and spooned out the watery mess. They ate silently.

The man turned to look at me. He was the most terrifying man I'd ever seen. He had little, watery eyes and his neck was like a bull's. When he smiled you could see bits of food caught in his teeth, which were yellow-green and broken. His greasy apron smelled nearly as bad as his breath. He put a hard hand under my chin and tilted my head up. "So, you're the new kitchen maid?"



“This is Eleanor – Ellie,” my mother said. “Say hello to Cook, Ellie.”

“Hello to Cook, Ellie,” I muttered.

The clatter of wooden spoons in the sloppy food stopped. Twelve servants at the table held their breath. Cook’s eyes almost vanished in a scowl. Then he grinned.



“A lively lass, eh? Makes a change from this miserable lot!” he said, looking round at the servants who started eating again.

He nodded to my mother. “Leave her with me and I’ll take care of her.”

My mother left the bundle with my spare clothes and hurried to the door. She opened it and looked back, worried.

“Shut the door!” someone moaned.  
“It’s cold!”

She left me. Alone.