

Tudor tales

I stood at the palace door and shivered. The wind was wintry, the grey walls gloomy. I was afraid. Suddenly, the door was tugged open and I found myself looking into the castle kitchen.

There was a huge fireplace with copper pots and iron pans hanging down alongside dead rabbits and geese. In that fireplace, a miserable fire smoked under a small black pot full of pale and pitiful potatoes. A man lifted the pot and placed it on the table. Folds of fat almost hid his little, watery eyes and when he smiled, his breath stank. He put a hard hand under my chin and tilted my head.

“So you're the new kitchen maid?”

Over the next few days, I learned my duty as a kitchen maid. I made bread while my arms ached and I carried buckets of water until my shoulders were numb. My fingers bled, my nails cracked and my bare feet were black with the dirt.

One night, I planned my revenge! While cook was asleep in his chair by the fire, I took some yellow dock leaves carefully from the pantry. I rubbed the leaves between my hands and let the powder fall into his wine cup. I then waited...

King Henry sat at the top table in the Great Hall with his guests from France. Their rich robes of crimson and gold were as fine as ones I'd seen in paintings.

“My Lords! A feast fit for a king!” cook cried as he gestured at the food before him. Fish pie, roasted pheasants and suckling pig.

Suddenly, the smile slid from his face and silence fell on the Great Hall. He clutched his gut and let out the most disgusting sound I have ever heard.

“Pffffththththththth-tttttttttt...”

Cook rushed past us, smelling like a drain while his guts gurgled like one too and that was the last we ever saw of him as the guards carried him away!

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