

Joseph II

*Past Life Recollections of
Marie Fox O'Brien*

A List of Books

Marie's Story - An Extraordinary Odyssey

Channeled Books

Martin's Original Writings

Revelations

The Divine Nature of Man

Lessons

A new Endeavor

Concepts

Prayers

Past Lives

Moses

Zorah

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Joseph II

Edam the Elder and Saleh

and Inga - Pala - Bana

Peter and Ann

Romulus

Remembrances-The Holy Family

Martin's Life Remembered

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Friday, 5/29/92 6:40PM

I needed above all to know the joy of total devotion to the cause of man's salvation. I knew the errors into which he had fallen, the departure he had embraced from a life of love and idealism to lives of idleness and intolerance, of anger against his oppressors, of cruelty to his fellow man. I knew that this departure from the path of righteousness signaled a deterioration in both spiritual and material well being which threatened the very fabric of society. It was essential, I knew, to persuade my brothers that this was not the path that they were destined to follow, that at all costs they must see the error of their ways and revert to the spiritual values that had sustained their progenitors and which, having been abandoned, needed to be rediscovered and read-opted by all men.

This, then, was my motivation. At all times I sought to lead my people into the paths of righteousness so long abandoned. It was not an easy task to persuade them of the error of their ways, but I was aided in this by the pervasive sense of

incompleteness that underlay the surface of their lives, by the vague hunger that each man knew for the love he sensed he needed and so lacked. Not all men were lost in the pursuit of earthly pleasures, but many were, and those who strove to resist were enticed by the seeming advantage of money, comfort, the accouterments of physical well being. Rivalry among brothers for earthly wealth took precedence over fellow feeling. There was little awareness among those who strove for earthly treasure and pleasure of how empty their strivings were until they succeeded in their quests, and only in the flush of material success did they realize how empty their souls were, how elusive the feelings of achievement and satisfaction they felt.

I did not, at first, know where to start. I looked about me and I saw this devotion to material things. I saw its failure to bring the pleasure it promised, its inadequacy in the human equation. Knowing little of the world outside, I had only a microcosm of society to study. Only a small fraction of humanity was within my realm of knowledge, and yet I was uniquely privileged to study this microcosm and to try to understand

its complexities.

From the time I was very young I sought to do this, and to a certain extent I quickly succeeded. There was little that was denied me ever. There was nothing I needed or wanted that was not instantly granted to me, and so I knew from a tender age the emptiness of material demands and satisfactions. Indeed there was a certain pleasure for me when I was very young in demanding for the very sake of demanding, in pushing, as it were, the very limits of material possession. I was not aware, at that point, of my motives, nor was I in any way disciplined, but I learned very early that man was born to need more than external satisfaction, that the hungers of the body did not satisfy the hungers of the spirit.

There was little I could or wanted to do in those early years except to enjoy my privileged station, except to demand and receive the approbation that I thought was my just due, to be regarded as a child to be pleased at all costs, to be indulged, tolerated at all times, to be totally undisciplined and spoiled. My character was early thus molded, and with each passing year I began to be aware of the need I felt for more than material splen-

dor and indulgence. I began to know myself.

Wednesday, 6/3/92 7:05AM

In the midst of all the activities of my mother's coronation I was more than a bystander. As her eldest son I was expected to participate in a more meaningful way than my younger brothers and sisters, and yet I was not old enough to know at that time the overwhelming responsibilities that my mother was about to assume. She was a woman of great strength and integrity. There was little chance of her being at any time overwhelmed by her responsibilities, although in the years to follow she would be sorely tried over and over again.

As it was on that day no one was unaware of the demands that this elaborate day of ceremony was making of her. From early morning she was rigorously tested in her ability to withstand physical discomfort. She was constantly that day deprived of the strength she drew from her beloved husband, my father. Her sense of majesty compelled her to appear before her people as their sole ruler, not a woman first, but a ruler first, a ruler of great strength whom her

God had chosen to lead her people in the paths of peace and prosperity. My mother had, above all, a strong sense of self. She was and had been since her birth strong willed. She had been raised with the awareness that at any moment she could be thrust into the center of the world's attention as the empress of a vast nation, and on that day I speak of, that demand had been made on her, that she assume the enormous responsibilities of leading her nation without abandoning all the responsibilities she so willingly embraced as a wife and a mother. There was no question of the joy she found in these two roles. Her love for my father was beyond question even in the confines of the court where the slightest peccadillo on the part of the consort of the queen would in time to come cause whispers and then grow in significance as it passed from one idle tongue to another, but at the time of my mother's coronation, her marriage had gone unscathed by the irritating, to her, innuendoes it was to know after.

From my birth I had adored my mother. I knew her importance. When I was very young I was instructed in the lines of inheritance and I knew

from a very young age that when my mother became ruler of her people I was her successor and that I would one day take her place. While I was in no way anxious for this to happen, the prospect was intoxicating to me, a mere child treated as the future king. My mother was greatly troubled by the way in which I was treated. I was overindulged by those who sought to please me, both because I was the child of the future queen and because they regarded me as a toy, an object on which to bestow all the affection and indulgence that had no other outlet. After my mother's coronation and ascension to the throne this situation was aggravated and I grew even more intolerable to my mother, who watched carefully over me at all times and sought to curb the influence of those who so overindulged me. That day, though, as my mother endured the elaborate ceremonies required of her as the newly acknowledged ruler of a mighty empire, I watched in awe what I was permitted to observe. I had seen this aspect of my mother only in a small way at court ceremonies and entertainments. I knew that she was treated at all times with the utmost respect, even veneration. I knew

her strength at all times. I knew that she had a strong sense of responsibility. But knowing all these things I was still overcome with pride as I watched her comport herself and assume the burdens of rule that even at such a young age I had been taught were totally demanding, if not overwhelming.

All too soon for me, the ceremony was completed, and as I was taken back to the other children I remembered the words of my mother as she spoke to her people for the first time as their queen. They were words of conciliation and determination, of strength and devotion, of promise and petition. In all ways her words were pleasing to all who heard them, and they augured well, it was agreed, for this young ruler come to the throne so prematurely, so recently bereaved, so surrounded by those who loved and sought to protect her.

When she was free, my mother came to see us children, and although she was at all times even handed in her handling of all of us, equally loving, equally generous with her time, she called me aside and asked me to walk with her for a while. I was pleased with this attention. As we

walked she spoke solemnly to me of this day. She asked me if I knew the importance of this day to me. With great assurance I began to recite what I had been taught of the lines of succession, and she laughed as she hugged me to her.

"Oh, Joseph," she said, "you are too young to know at all what I am asking you." She looked at me with those piercing eyes and added, "but you will learn, my son. You will have no choice. I will need your help, Joseph, at all times. You will be expected to grow up fast and to resist the temptations of overvaluing yourself. It will not be easy, but above all you will be my oldest child, my son, my first born who has always given me joy."

I did not know what to say in that moment when my mother spoke to me so gravely. I realized for the first time how much I loved my mother and what a source of strength she was for all of us. I did not realize at that moment how much would from then on be demanded of this strength, but I did know that this was a solemn moment for both of us. I did not know the words my mother expected of me, and so I bowed my head in the obedient submission I

had been taught, and when I did, she cupped my chin in her hand and raised my face until my eyes met hers. She smiled at me with the smile I knew well from birth and loved to see.

There were no more words between us that day of the responsibilities that were now hers and would one day be mine. We returned to the nursery and my mother embraced all of the children she so loved and spoke to them movingly of this love that, she said, would always be first in her heart. I listened with joy to her words, and I looked at the faces of my brothers and sisters and saw joy there as well. My mother's love had always sustained us, strengthened us, made us aware of the pleasures to be found in her and in our father and in each other. We were a family first.

Saturday, 6/6/92 8:08AM

It was glorious growing up as I did, within the confines of royal existence to be sure, but even more importantly in a family bound closely together by love and devotion. In all ways we were

a family first and a royal family second. There was never a moment that my mother and my father were not concerned first of all with their children and all they did.

Each day began with an awareness of our duties to our parents and our duties to each other. My mother insisted on kindness among us, on helpfulness to each other, upon performance of certain duties that could easily have been done by servants. It was important to her that we be disciplined in many ways. She chose those who cared for our physical needs carefully and determined that each one of our caretakers was affectionate by nature, religious in orientation, and strong of character. At no time were we permitted to believe that these servants obeyed us. They obeyed my mother, and of course my father as well when he concerned himself with our affairs.

The love that existed between my parents was at all times evident to all of us children. Indeed our very existence in such numbers was testimony to this love. They had eyes for each other only. There were times when their fidelity was sorely tried through the years of their marriage, but of

this we children were totally unaware. My mother and my father were as gods to us, to be loved, honored, and obeyed without question at all times.

As the eldest I was the object of much attention from all. Had I been a girl I might have been even more spoiled. Despite the efforts of both my parents to curb indulgence to their children, I was constantly aware that I had powers of my own, and I took a secret pleasure in being demanding when I should have been yielding, in being unyielding when I should have been generous, in demanding at all times that I be treated as the heir to the throne, the king presumptive. I knew it would not be many years before I would be asked to assume some responsibilities in my royal position and so did those who surrounded me and tried to teach me the skills I would need so badly in the years to come. In essence, looking back, I was a young tyrant. How this could have happened in the face of my mother's efforts to keep all of us aware that we were first of all her children and only secondly royal children, I am at a loss to understand. There was never a time when my mother approved of any one of

us feeling or acting superior to those who served us. While my parents were at all times majestic in their dignity, they were never arrogant. I was arrogant. I was encouraged in this arrogance by many who served me, and my mother grew increasingly disturbed with this failing in her first born son, with this unwillingness to know the wisdom of loving kindness.

In the end, of course, my mother's overpowering example and influence dominated my thoughts and actions. In the end I outdid her in my zeal to bring the world to a state of perfect peace and love, but during those years after her coronation as I was maturing into a young man, I presented many problems for my mother, and she dealt with each one as though it was the single most important problem that faced her.

Never, in her overwhelmingly demanding existence did she cease to be concerned with me, her first born son. Never did she cease in her efforts to mold me in her image of a ruler at all times benevolent, at all times considerate, at all times responsible, at all times loving, at all times tolerant. It was not easy for her. I did not make it easy for her. But I knew in all modesty that she

succeeded.

My mother, the queen, was at all times a mother first, a queen second, to her children, and her influence on all of us was total. We grew enveloped by her love and the love of our father, and we grew in her insistence that we know at all times the love of God, the ruler of us all. Never was there a moment that my mother was not totally aware that her power was at all times and in all ways superseded by the power of the Almighty God she revered and loved. It was at all times a source of great strength to her and a comfort that she wanted all of her children to know.

We were raised to be devout in an atmosphere within the court of reckless abandonment of belief in the laws of God. We were raised to know that at all times we were answerable to Him. Secretly, though all of us learned to love our God, it was difficult to imagine a higher or more demanding power than that of our mother. She was, in an immediate sense, our God during most of our childhood. It was she we strove to please, and it was her standards of behavior we sought to emulate. God was remote, his power

reaching us indirectly if at all, we felt. Our mother was immediate, her power dominating every second of our lives. In time, we learned, each of us in individual ways, to distinguish between these two Gods.

Saturday, 6/13/92 5:53AM

In the course of time I learned a great deal. I learned first of all the insidiousness of flattery. My vocabulary was not such that I gave it that appellation, but in time I grew to feel that insidious was the exact word. All children are vulnerable and responsive, sometimes beyond reason, to the words of those older than they. Age, even by a few years, is greatly magnified when one is very young.

There was never any question of flattery from my parents. They were totally honest in their dealings with all people and above all with their children. They spoke the truth to us and they expected the truth from us. Not so those others who surrounded us. Some, of course, respected the wishes of our mother, who demanded of

her servants at all times the degree of loyalty that respected her wishes at all times. She closely supervised our care in the nursery and insured that each of us was held to the standards of behavior by those who cared for us that she demanded of us herself.

There was never any question in any of our minds about this from the days of our infancy onward. All of this discipline was accompanied by a love that softened its effect on us. We were aware at all times of our parents' concern that we grow to be responsible and responsive adults, that we remain at all times aware that all the privileges we enjoyed were just that, privileges, not rights, and that we must prove ourselves worthy of the generosity which our God dealt with us. Never for a moment were we expected to forget that our first allegiance was to Him, that we must love Him fully and gratefully and express this love in religious practice. My mother was the most religious of women, and her devotion to her God knew no bounds. Born a Catholic, she remained totally enfolded in the beliefs of the Church all of her life. There was nothing of the pretender in my mother. What she said she be-

lieved. What she believed she said. Consequently all of us children were instructed in religion from the time we were first able to comprehend what was being said to us. We prayed together. We attended Mass together, usually under watchful eyes which noted any lack of reverence and reported these lapses to my mother, for it was I, the eldest, who was most likely to find himself in difficulty, both in and out of church.

As the eldest son and heir apparent, I was singled out for special treatment at an early age. I was given into the hands of teachers whose task it was to teach me all the facts that I could absorb in a variety of disciplines, and I was expected to learn the manners and customs of court life, the responsibilities of sovereignty, and the demands that royalty could make on each other. In all of this, I was treated not as a child in the nursery but as a future king, a treatment sharply contrasted with what I had been accustomed to under my mother's supervision.

It was an exciting experience for me to first know the power that lay within me, and I fear to say that it took full possession of me for a while. I had been taught to be yielding when demands

were made of me that were just but not pleasant to respond to. Now I learned that if I refused to yield, if I refused to admit error or in any way conform to what I was asked to do, those in charge of me would yield to me, rather than I to them. I learned that not all of my elders were as clever as I had thought, that in some cases I could outwit my teachers and make them look foolish. I exulted in this power. I learned that when I rebelled, others cowered. I learned that no one dared reprimand this young heir to the throne, that my power knew no limits with those who surrounded me. And so I grew obnoxious. It did not take long for this to happen. Instead of reprimand I learned to expect praise and flattery no matter what I did, no matter what I said. I knew the joy of absolute power over those who served me. I grew intolerant of any contradiction, of any demand I was reluctant to meet, of any person who was not willing to debase himself and acknowledge my superiority.

Looking back I search in vain for an understanding of how this could have happened to me so quickly. I had, as I said, from the cradle responded willingly and obediently to all that was

asked of me. I was at all times aware of my importance as the eldest son of the queen, even before my mother's ascension to the throne, but under her watchful tutelage I knew at all times the behavior that was expected of me. Perhaps it was this iron control that accounts for the heady sense of freedom and self will that possessed me once I was free of these early restraints. Perhaps I was given this freedom too abruptly. Whatever the reason, I handled it poorly, and for a length of time all the lessons of the nursery in obedience and humility were unlearned, or at least forgotten, with amazing speed. I was, as it were, transformed into a willful, demanding, egocentric young lad, whose every wish was gratified, whose every word was respected, whose every act justified and praised, and who was the object of abject adulation by all who surrounded me.

This change in my nature and in my behavior did not go unnoticed by my mother, although in her presence I always exhibited the loving respect I knew to be her due, but her ears were everywhere in the court, and she was disturbed by the growing number of reports she had of my in-

creasing arrogance. She spoke gently but firmly to me of this once or twice, and when she spoke I listened carefully to all she said and promised to remember her words. I might have for a day or so, but that was all. I loved the adulation and the flattery I had come to expect, and when I did not get it I demanded it by my actions and my words. All who surrounded me knew how to please me, and although I am sure that they spoke among themselves of my failings, they spoke to me of my worth, of my brilliant promise, of my importance as the future king, and each made it clear that I was in all ways justified in my feelings of absolute superiority and my demand that I be treated as a near god.

Monday, 6/15/92 5:08 AM

In the early years of my mother's reign she was beset by problems that no one anticipated. The affairs of state which she tried hard to understand completely from the very start of her sovereignty were complicated and confused by the vying for power that went on constantly among both sovereign nations and those seeking power

within these nations. In her own court the power struggle never ceased.

At all times my father stood by my mother's side ready to do all within his capacity to ease the burdens of rule which were hers, and to a great extent he aided her. In discussion of the problems that demanded solution his was a voice that spoke reason, and on his logical analysis my mother grew to depend more and more. There was little evidence of my father's influence on the decisions my mother made and the actions she took in those early years, but there was no question in my mother's mind as to the identity of her truest advisor. Beyond my father, there were others in the court on whose steadfast loyalty she grew to depend, those whose concern was for the welfare of the young queen, not for their own vaulting ambitions.

Those first years were marked by the absolute need to unify the scattered remnants of the empire my mother had inherited as her responsibility into a unified whole, to ease the concerns and petty jealousies and rivalries that existed among various factions in the separate entities that composed the Austro-Hungarian empire.

My mother was at all times methodical, and she set about meeting her responsibilities in governing her subjects just as she set about any other task. First of all she sought to learn. She surrounded herself with those few advisors who had her trust and her respect as statesmen. She spent long hours closeted with these men who came to respect as well as to love this young sovereign whose first wish was to conserve and truly unify the empire that she felt God had given her to govern.

She sought at all times to satisfy the needs of her subjects in every way in which she had control. By her example she hoped to persuade her royal underlings to treat those under their royal authority with fairness and generosity in all things. When it came to her attention that there was rank injustice, she dispatched a trusted emissary to go to the offender and speak of her sovereign displeasure. It was not long before all ranks were aware of the young queen's demand that justice prevail in her kingdom, and it was agreed among those who spoke of such things that this persuasion had widespread effect. The people adored her, both as a queen and a

mother. Removed as they were from direct knowledge or any contact with my mother, they relied on stories of her goodness and her caring and her earnest desire to be queen of all the people and to exercise her power on behalf of the lowliest of her subjects, to improve his lot in as many ways as her power allowed. Some of her efforts met with stubborn resistance. The lower level of royal authority hugged their authority to them, jealous of each prerogative, each shred of power. They had little thought, often, for the welfare of those they ruled. They chose to ignore the needs of those who depended on them in the smug assurance of their royal right to rule without regard to the welfare of any but themselves. The absoluteness of this selfishness was a source of great irritation to my mother. She felt that this failure to feel concern for those ruled was both immoral and short sighted, and in every way she could she made her disapproval clear to these offending royal representatives. In some cases she dispatched troubled advisors to investigate rumors of gross misrule and to report back to her, and this very act was enough to bestir the offenders into at least a semblance of reform. In other cases where the offending ruler

was less responsive, she sent a permanent emissary to stay on the scene and by his constant presence and constant communication with my mother pressure the offender into making the changes in his administration of power that his queen desired.

In all of this my mother was discreet, but there are no secrets in the court, and word of her determination to improve the lot of the common man spread rapidly and in itself this word had salutary effects.

Wednesday, 6/17/92 5:45 AM

By the time I was ten, I was put into the hands of a harsh taskmaster. My mother's concern for my well being had increased with the passage of time. She felt strongly that my willfulness, which she regarded as wholesome when rightly directed, was becoming a failing, and she had been increasingly troubled by reports of my unkindnesses. It was true that I was growing more and more insensitive to the feelings of others, that I had so enjoyed learning of the power of my will

that I was exercising it in a way that was far from admirable.

It was typical both of my mother and the court custom that my taskmaster was a priest, learned in many ways but singularly insensitive to the needs of a boy ready to listen to reason and emotional appeal but singularly resistant to the strictures of absolute discipline. There was a resistance that seemed a very part of my nature to all that this man represented. His harsh authoritarianism was so alien to all I had experienced that I sat at first in sullen silence in his presence, answering when I was forced to answer, any questions posed to me, but no more. My teacher was not concerned with my attitude beyond its outward manifestations. Silence he took for respect.

In the end I had a grudging admiration for this man. His learning was extensive, but without profoundness, bound as he was by the beliefs he accepted without question. He was not, I am sure, without feelings, but all of his teaching and perhaps his basic nature led him to be both serious and objective at all times. If he was capable of passion in any way he did not show it. He was

thorough in all he did. Never did he permit me to escape finishing every detail of every task he assigned me. Never did he accept carelessness. Never did he accept flimsy excuses for lack of perfection in all he demanded of me. His sense of authority was absolute, and never for a moment did he permit me to forget or even momentarily disregard this authority, bestowed, as he felt, by his God, and, as I knew, by my mother.

As time went on, my attitude softened, and with the change in my attitude real learning began. There was much I knew I needed to learn, and although even then I longed to break free of the limitations imposed by the curriculum so rigidly imposed on me, within those rigid boundaries I learned much that would prove to be of value to me later in my life. I learned too the desirability of a disciplined mind. My teacher had spent many years finely honing his mind, and he was in every sense of the word a scholar, highly informed, totally disciplined. His was not a searching mind as mine was. Even at that age I hungered to have questions answered that I was not permitted to verbalize to anyone. My father

might have understood this hunger for knowledge of things outside the narrow curriculum I was expected to master, but at that time my father was a remote figure to me, and I was unaware that much of my mind resembled his. It was not that I did not see my father often. It was not that in any way he showed disregard for my welfare. In the years to come we would share great intimacy. But at that time I was considered, as were all the children, my mother's responsibility, and when it came to shaping my character she turned to a trusted scholar to do this.

In another age, my needs would have been met differently. As it was, I learned much from my teacher, but there was little understanding between us, no warmth, no open communication, and so to a certain extent I learned the judiciousness of silence. Perhaps this was a valuable enough lesson in itself, but I learned more than that, and this man's overpowering authority served as a constant reminder to me that I needed to remember the advantages of rank and to respect the rights of others in the exercising of my rank. To this man I was no rank save that of student.

It was an experience I needed at that point in my life, and although I chafed at the imposition of his clerical and royal authority, I learned not to betray my impatience. I learned to do as I was told without questioning his right or my responsibility to obey. I learned that my mother was a wise woman in the handling of her willful son. And I learned some things of a scholarly nature which I later found useful. My grudging obedience became habitual obedience and lost its resentment. I came to a fuller understanding of the nature of my teacher and the discipline of the Church which he so completely personalized, and I came to admire both his intellect and his faithful devotion to his God and his queen and, in the end, to me.

Thursday, 6/18/92 6:15 AM

Our family grew steadily. My mother was at all times a loving wife. She was at all times a loving daughter of her God. She was at all times a willing mother. It caused wonder in the court that she could at all times serve two masters, her husband and her kingdom, and do it with equanim-

ity and grace. I never saw my mother impatient either with her children or with bearing them. Each infant came into the world welcomed as a unique blessing, and in each case this welcome was shared by us all.

There was little reason for petty jealousy among us ever. Although the harmony was not a perfect harmony in the nursery it was a constant. Each time a new child arrived it was cause for rejoicing by all. Each time a child arrived there was solemn consideration of the name proper for this infant. I look back and realize the cajolery that was involved in persuading all of us children that we had indeed chosen the name of our new brother or sister when the truth was that we had been led into this choice, each and every one, by the clever contrivance of our mother. It must have amused her each time to see the solemnity with which we considered each appellation and the childlike acceptance of her unspoken direction in our decision. There were times, of course, when there would be a stubborn hold out until the very end. I was guilty of this on occasion, but eventually there was sweet agreement about the choice, and we would feel at the chris-

tening, which all children attended each time, that we had indeed played a large role in determining what name the priest would intone over the head of our newest brother or sister.

During her confinements, my mother carried on the business of state without interruption. She thanked God each time for the blessing of this child, thanked Him for its safe delivery, and prayed that this newest son or daughter would grow in goodness and wisdom. We older children joined her in her prayers often, and we grew accustomed to the fervor with which our mother addressed her Lord. Her faith was complete and comforting to all of us who saw in it evidence of a power so benevolent that it exceeded that of my mother, and her power seemed to us children to be unlimited. She answered to none but this God she taught us to love and revere, and her example provided all of us with the strongest teaching possible. We were raised to be unthinking in our faith, unwavering in our acceptance of the Church as the true and only source of doctrine, and to be at all times accepting of the power and privileges of the clergy. At no time, we were told as soon as we

were old enough to know obedience, were we ever to fail to honor these men of God whose lives were devoted to the serious business of saving our souls and guiding us through a world full of temptation to the warm embrace of our God when He chose to take us to Him.

Friday, 6/19/92 5:50AM

In the fullness of time I was allowed to speak my mind to my mother on the affairs of state that were her responsibility and soon would be mine. This did not happen overnight, but my mother began to arrange for me to participate in conferences with her advisors, at first as a silent observer. Only later could I speak and then only when I was spoken to. My mother had never lacked the natural authority that was so necessary to a monarch. She had always assumed that she was the supreme authority in any group in which she found herself, and far from making her unattractive, the very naturalness of this sense of royalty enhanced her attractiveness.

It was a wonder to me at first to see my mother

as my queen. I had gained some sense of her royal presence on the day of her coronation, and I knew at all times the respect in which she was held by all who surrounded her in the court, but to see her actively engaged in weighty negotiations was a revelation to me. My mother's habit was to elicit advice from those whose ability and wisdom she acknowledged. Indeed she sought out the best minds to give her advice, and she gave full credit and attention always to these individuals, but she was rarely totally persuaded in her decision by these advisors. She listened intently, questioned extensively, proposed counter arguments, and listened once again, and then announced that she must consider further all that she had learned and that she desired to meet again with all present.

In the beginning I wondered at this habit of my mother's. I knew that it was her nature to make quick decisions, not to dally and not to hesitate to speak her mind once a decision had been made. Yet in these state parleys her habit was constantly to play for time and to postpone announcement of her will. Her reason, I learned when we spoke of this, was two fold. There

were times, my mother told me as we walked one day from a meeting that had lasted well over two hours, when she needed to be more certain of the repercussions of the acts she was proposing. She knew that her advisors had her best interests at heart and were aware that her concern was always with the preservation of the peace and the well being of her subjects, but, she said, these men of power were sometimes more concerned with power for the sake of power and that their thinking and their advice was often single minded. It was her responsibility, my mother reminded me and one day it would be mine, to make decisions for their wisdom, not their power, in the best interests of her people.

There was much, she said, that needed to be considered, and, she added conspiratorially, she relied on the perspicacity of her husband in many cases to point out to her any possible implications or results of a royal decision that might not have occurred to her. It was rare, my mother said, that there was any need for haste, and that even in those cases when she had firmly decided on a course of action she chose not to announce her decision until some time had

passed.

This was the second consideration. All those involved were forced by her postponement of her statement of what she proposed to do to rethink their positions and their arguments. In the event, they reasoned, that the queen's decision was not to their liking, they needed to be prepared to further persuade her of their correctness. In all, my mother said, it was part of wisdom to listen carefully to all those whose ability was dependable, to consider carefully opposing points of view, and then to make no immediate decision, but to let time work its wonders. In this way, my mother concluded, a hasty decision could never be made and therefore never regretted. This was something, my mother confided in me, that she had learned from her father and that she regarded as one of the soundest of rules.

Saturday, 6/20/92 5:17AM

One of the things I learned very early about my mother was of her indefatigable energy. She seemed always galvanized for action. She needed

no sleep, it seemed to us children. Hers was the last face we saw at night and the first face we saw in the morning. She seemed to all of us a whirlwind, here, there, everywhere, making certain that her small world was functioning as well as her larger one. Not one of us ever hesitated to go to her when we were troubled or in need of comfort or advice. The same equanimity she showed in the councils of the court she showed in the councils of the nursery.

As I have said, she chose those most directly responsible for our care and supervision with great concern for their characters as well as their abilities, and she trained them so completely in knowing what she desired of them that when my mother was not directly involved in the affairs and activities of the nursery she might as well have been. Her will was at all times there, and there was never any doubt in any of our minds as to the absoluteness of this will. In all ways my mother sought to persuade us that we had responsibilities as well as needs, that we must learn the values of industry and the dangers of idleness. Although we were all allowed time for play, even our play was strictly organized. Each hour

of each day followed a routine that was almost entirely predictable. The routine varied, of course, with the age of each child, but rarely was there a departure from the schedule of activities my mother deemed desirable for each age.

Necessarily we children had to learn to get along with each other, from birth almost, and this was not a simple matter. There was in each of us something of our mother, and in each of us her strong will seemed to prevail. There were, therefore, struggles among us even as very small children for power, and in a sense, domination. As the eldest I felt I was owed a measure of authority over my younger brothers and sisters and often tried to get my own way at their expense. Sometimes I succeeded, but as I grew older and wiser, so did they, and there was increasing resistance to my insistence on my authority as the eldest child. The result was often open conflict. I was willful and they learned to be.

Any disagreement among us children was met with instant disapproval from those who cared for us. We did not dare argue in the presence of our parents, and so we would bide our time and smother our antagonisms until we were alone

with our servants or our teachers, and then the smoldering resentments would break forth and conflict was underway. I was quick of tongue and did not hesitate to use words as weapons, and I took a certain delight in their effectiveness in wounding my younger siblings. I have said that I was obnoxious during much of my childhood and this was never more true than when I engaged in nursery warfare.

These outbreaks, as I said, met with instant disapproval from our caretakers and we were instantly punished. Each of the warring parties was forced to sit, face to the wall, and consider his sins. Each was permitted to leave this position of punishment when he or she was prepared to apologize abjectly to his opponent and to give the kiss of peace. We were a stubborn group and all of us spend much time contemplating the walls of the nursery as we contemplated our failings and our sinful behavior. I learned early, though, that there was little advantage in sincerity in these apologies, that my stubborn belief that I was right and my erring brother or sister absolutely wrong was rarely shared. In truth I think I was probably in error

most of the time in this childish warfare, but at the time I knew that beyond a certain time it was to my advantage to pretend remorse, to apologize profusely, to simulate whatever emotions would win me favor and to seem to be ending the argument. For these peaceful overtures I was given much credit. In truth I had rarely forgiven or forgotten. I had simply got tired of looking at the wall, and was not in the least discouraged from further argument when the time came.

When my mother came to the nursery each night and demanded to be told the events of the day, she at first praised me for my willingness to admit error. This was my pleasure for some time. Then she began to look askance at me when further reports of nursery warfare indicated that far from learning not to argue I was increasingly involved in disputes, increasingly the first to admit error and therefore win praise. I was not learning not to fight. I was learning how not to lose. My mother was wise enough to see this pattern, and for a long time she tolerated my deviousness hoping, I presume, that I would tire of it, but I did not at all. I enjoyed the triumph of admitting error and pretending remorse and winning praise

for my play acting, and so my mother had to exercise her imagination in creating new solutions to our disputes which would not permit me to pursue my devious methods. She did this with great cleverness. She held that in the future the punishment for arguing among ourselves would be determined incident by incident, and that she would make this determination case by case. She did so with close regard to what each of us would find most unpleasant but which in each case would be the most constructive.

I spent a lot of extra time doing work in the garden as a result of my involvement in these disagreements. There was no need, my mother had decreed, to assign responsibility for arguments among the children. All parties involved were deemed equally responsible. And so under this new regime I was deprived of the joy of confessing error and feigning remorse and receiving praise. My defeat was total. I did not enjoy my punishments. I missed the praise. I argued less.

Sunday, 6/21/92 6:07 AM

Through all the years I was growing from childhood into young manhood I had little opportunity to know anything of society beyond the palace walls. My early years were totally shielded from the harsh realities that most took for granted. I learned from my reading and the words of my teachers of the social order as it had prevailed through history and prevailed at that time. I had studied the history of ancient civilizations. I knew of their accomplishments and their shortcomings. I learned the unchanging nature of the society into which I had been born and had no doubt about the inequities of existence as society was then constructed.

There was little that was disturbing to me in this society as I learned of it. There was an order in the social structure which I accepted as desirable for several reasons. I was taught that each man differed from his brother in his capacities and in his needs, that the lowest of those in the social order were created in such a way as to fulfill the needs of society for the roughest of labor. I was taught that their minds were incapable of self direction, that they were little more than beasts of burden, and that they were incapable of

higher achievement. I learned and accepted without questioning it that it was in the nature of creation that God permitted such creatures in order to satisfy the needs of those they served, that they were incapable of feelings taken for granted by those who controlled them. They were, in essence, an essential part of the social order, but a part that required only that they serve without protest and without reward from the day of their births to the day of their deaths.

It is not to my credit that at the time I was learning about the society I would some day govern I failed completely to question my instructors or my parents about the inequities of society. I forgive myself in part for this passive acceptance because of the total ignorance I had for all of life outside my very narrow area of acquaintance. There was never any mention of discontent or suffering or need on the part of those lowest in our social structure who were born to a life of bondage and labor with no hope of ever escaping. It was not that I was ever told that these serfs happily embraced life and lived in joyful acceptance of their lot, but I was never told of the seething discontent that marked their ex-

istence. I was never told of children younger than I at the time working from sun up to sun down and dying before they reached maturity without ever knowing childhood. I was never told of the abysmal conditions under which these people lived, of the hopelessness with which their lives were imbued. Most of all I was not told, though I should have known, that these children of God had feelings as finely attuned as the rest of God's creatures. In essence, then, I was not told the truth about a large section of our people, of those I would one day rule.

There were other things lacking in my education. I was never told of the harsh realities of life outside the palace walls, even for those higher in the social order. I did not know that such a thing as hunger existed. I did not know that education was reserved for those born to wealth and position. I did not know that religion served more as a palliative for those whose needs were not being met than as an inspiration. I did not learn any of those things until I was old enough to travel and observe, and when I discovered these abysmal conditions I was disturbed, beyond reason according to my peers. The social order seemed

sacrosanct to those who existed in the security of wealth and position. It was God's will, they argued, that they enjoy security and privilege or it would not be. It was God's will that society be served by the lower orders or it would not be. It was God's will that at all times man accept the position in the scheme of things that was his by birth, and that there was neither need nor desirability in change of any kind.

I listened to these arguments in defense of the status quo, but I was not persuaded by them. I did not, however, have any quick or easy solutions to offer. I did, however, determine that I needed to learn more, to discover for myself the truth or untruth of what I had been taught about the nature of the society I would one day govern, and I determined to use every resource at my disposal to augment my knowledge. Thus began a lifelong learning, a learning never completed, but a learning which led me to reconsider all I had been taught about the inevitability of the existing social order.

Monday, 6/22/92 5:15AM

All of my experiences as a young man led me in one direction only. The more I saw and experienced the more I realized that I had been sent to this life and given the powers that would be totally mine in time and which I had partially early in life for the purpose of easing man's passage through life. There was rank injustice wherever I looked. The wealth that our privileged classes possessed as if their divine right was enormous. Their lives were marked by ease and luxury. Their minds rarely turned to consideration of the plight of all those who did not enjoy their material advantages, all those who were born to servitude and poverty instead of to rank and wealth.

I strove in vain to understand how all those in power could fail to realize the obligations that were theirs. I failed to comprehend how they could rest assured that all that was proper was reflected in the social order. In truth I think that most of my noble acquaintances and those who surrounded them regarded their positions as sacrosanct, their privileges as deserved, their

wealth as inherently correct, and their responsibilities limited to enjoying their material resources with no thought at any time of those subservient to them.

I spoke often of my concerns to my mother, and she was sensitive to my feelings. Her awareness of the need for change in the social order surprised me when we first spoke. She had never mentioned her awareness of the needs of the poor, the oppressed, the downtrodden. Indeed in all the councils I had attended the focus had rarely been on those issues I regarded as central to good governing. My mother tried to explain to me the difficulties involved in forcing change. She tried to explain that there was need for balance in all things, that all change must be effected slowly enough for acceptance by all. She stressed that she shared my concern for the barrenness and hardships of the lives of those in the lowest social orders. All of her subjects, she reminded me, were according to her faith children of God, possessed of immortal souls. There was a limit, she stressed, to human understanding of God's plan for man. There was a limit to what she as a reigning monarch could or

perhaps should do to alter this plan. Certain inequities in life, she told me, had always been inevitable. Look, she said, at the inequities in nature. Not all men were born equal. Not all were equally clever, Not all were equally talented. There was a divine order in society that we must to some extent respect and preserve. It would not do, my mother said insistently, to demand and effect sudden change. The country would suffer, she felt, the peace would be disturbed, and it was her responsibility to preserve both peace and order.

Her objections did not answer my questions. Her solutions were to me inadequate. She proposed, when I asked insistently how she could ignore pressing social needs, to improve the lot of the lowliest of our nation by example, by persuasion, by royal largesse. If all who served the queen were treated with kindness and consideration then all her royal subjects would follow her example and their servants, handmaiden and serf alike, would see their lots improve. She would speak publicly, she said, of this need for humane treatment of all the lower classes, of the absolute obligation to treat all men with a measure

of respect, to meet their physical needs adequately, to meet their spiritual needs at all times with priestly administration.

Beyond that, my mother said, we must wait for divine guidance. If God wanted her to do more, God would tell her so. She relied on her religion in every way. Of that I was always aware. She listened closely to the men of the Church in all things, and she had spoken to her religious advisors about this very subject, she said. They had advised her that she should in all cases exercise personal charity, and that she should persuade all others under her control and influence to do so. Christ had advised this giving most strongly, and all those who called themselves Christians should live by His words and their acts should reflect this faith in all that Christ said of giving. Beyond this they counseled respect for the order of things. They reminded my mother that this earthly life was but a preparation for the next and that God had decreed each person's station in life. It was her responsibility to respect God's plan, to do what she could in the scheme of things to correct gross inequities, to demand humane treatment for all her subjects at all times,

and by her example inspire her subjects to the love of their fellow man that was the ideal that Christ taught. And so, my mother reasoned, it was against nature, against the will of God to change radically the social structure that had been handed on to her to preserve in peace. She sought always, she said, to serve all of her subjects, but her power to effect radical change was limited and that she was not persuaded of either the need or the rightness of such change. All that could be done to alleviate misery she was in favor of doing, but not at the expense of disruption of the society that she ruled with strong regard for tradition and stability.

I knew after several of these talks with my mother that we differed widely in our perception of the obligations of the monarch, and I began to look about me carefully at each opportunity to determine the weaknesses and needs of the country I would one day govern, and to formulate both a philosophy and a plan. There was no way I could persuade my mother to do all I yearned to do. I would continue to press awareness on her of the direst needs, but I knew I would have to be diplomatic in my approach to

my queen when I spoke of things she did not want to hear. It was important to me to preserve the harmonious relationship that I had always enjoyed with my mother. There was little about her that I did not regard as perfect, but I could not let alone these nagging concerns.

Thursday, 6/25/92 5:50 AM

Among those who were instrumental in shaping my character and determining the course of my later life was a man rarely blessed with vision and virtue. He was not a teacher by training but by nature, and he sought at all times to live and to speak in such a way as to bring enlightenment to a world badly in need of it. This man was my father.

He had from birth known privilege and adulation and it had provided him with a strength that served him well at all times. His marriage to my mother served the purposes of the state, but it was a love match rare in the ranks of royalty. He adored my mother and she adored him, more with each passing day of their life together. He

was her consort officially. He was the love of her life unofficially. And at all times he was exemplary in both roles.

It was not an easy life he led. It was not easy for a man of his strength and masculinity to be at all times the public servant of his wife. His upbringing had prepared him for such a role. Nevertheless it must have been at times difficult to play this role without ever betraying impatience or any feeling of superiority. In public, my mother ruled supreme and alone. In private, she depended upon my father in every way. This is not to say or suggest even in passing that my mother was not herself a person of strength and determination. Every official act, every official word, her official demeanor reflected this strength and determination, along with the complete devotion required of her as ruler of her people.

At all times, though, when released from the responsibilities of ruling her nation and hidden from public view she became quite simply the wife of Francis, mother of his children, and love of his life. Her love was returned in full measure at all times. In all of my years in the nursery I

never heard an angry word pass between them. I never heard either of them reproach the other in any way. Sweet harmony marked their lives, and all of those who served them loved each of them and both of them. There were times when those in the court could not accept the possibility of such faithful love existing between the monarch and her spouse. Indeed it was a rarity in royal circles, and perhaps for that very reason my mother closely guarded her privacy at those times when she was released from the immediate responsibilities of rule and public life.

My father was a quiet spoken man at all times and in this very quietness his inner strength was displayed. He never had to raise his voice to have the complete attention of anyone he spoke to. As children we learned this early, and our love for him was at all times evident in the manner in which we waited at all times in his presence for the blessing of his words. He was never lavish in his praise, but each of us treasured each word of approbation that passed his lips. There was never any doubt of that in my mind or in the minds of any of my brothers and sisters.

While he was not as immediately involved as my

mother was in the day to day minutiae of our upbringing, he was always a presence, and he took it upon himself to spend much more time with us children both singly and collectively than most fathers of that time and that class. Indeed as children we were not aware of how rarely privileged we were in this regard, but each of us looked at our father with eyes of love and admiration, and he returned this childish love with total devotion to each and every one of us. He was aware always of our achievements and spoke words of praise. He was aware always of our shortcomings and spoke words of approbation always gently, always constructively. He never made any of us cry with his remonstrances, and when our eyes filled with tears that threatened to overflow he took us gently in his arms and comforted us. The miscreant became the favored child for the moment.

I was often this miscreant. As I have said, my willfulness was a besetting sin very early, and when this willfulness was encouraged by those who sought to please me and win my favor, I was often led into reprehensible behavior. I often saw disappointment in my father's eyes.

This above all I dreaded. I wanted at all times to see approval there, and I might have gone even further astray than I did in my willful behavior had it not been for the mental picture I carried with me of my father's eyes when he learned of my shortcomings. I never grew comfortable with displeasing my father. He never preached, but I knew at all times what he expected of me, as did we all, and I knew that any momentary satisfaction I received in performance of those acts that would disappoint him was lost as soon as I faced him and admitted my disappointing behavior.

In a sense, it is perhaps fair to say, my father served as a restraint to me during those years in which I was maturing. There were many times when he must have despaired of his first born son's ever being worthy of serving as the monarch of the nation he so loved. There must have been times when he spoke to my mother with despair and disappointment in his voice of me, the son from whom he and all the world would expect much in the years to come. If he felt despair and disappointment, as I am sure he must have, he never betrayed it to me. Never did he show anything but a steady faith in me and all

his children. Never did he exhibit any disapproval of us, simply temporary disappointment with some of our actions, some of our words, some of our failures to act in love of one another.

As I matured, I grew to know much more about this complex man my mother loved so intensely all the days of her life, and as I learned more of my father I understood more completely the intensity of the love she felt for him and he for her, and to realize how rarely privileged we all were to grow in the warmth of this love.

Friday, 6/26/92 5:40AM

In the midst of life at the court it was difficult to imagine that hardship or poverty could exist. We knew plentiful comfort at all times. We knew extravagance in our pursuit of pleasure and in the creation of beautiful surroundings. There was nothing that any of us children desired that we could not have. As I have said, my parents strove at all times to keep us from being so totally indulged as to become totally spoiled, but indeed

this was a difficult endeavor. We were at all times obliged to partake of manual labor and material pastimes to remind us of the worth of work, but each of us was aware that this was an effort only on the part of our mother to teach us the value of time well spent and a form of discipline meant to strengthen our characters.

It was amusing to many in the court to see the royal children doing servants' work, but it was gratifying to my mother, and that is what counted. At no time did any one of us equate labor with money, with the food we ate, with the clothes we wore, with the comfortable surroundings in which we lived. Not one of us was aware that there were children our ages who got up with the dawn, worked unremittingly all day until dark, and often knew the gnawing pangs of hunger. We were simply ignorant of such hardship and deprivation. We were privileged, and by contrast with the bulk of humanity our servants were privileged. Even those we saw at a distance only led a life of relative comfort by our standards.

Never, to our awareness, was there any ripple of discontent among my mother's subjects. When

she appeared in public, as she rarely did with her children, we saw crowds respectfully gathered to applaud their queen and to bow as her carriage passed in respect and obeisance. In truth, my mother was loved by all her subjects. It is a paradox to my thinking that the most deprived of her subjects thanked her for what he did have but did not blame her for what he did not. Perhaps it is for this reason that my mother did not see the need for action to ease the lot of the lowliest of her subjects. She did, as I have said, at all times set a good example in the treatment of her servants and her serfs, and she made it clear that she expected her nobles to follow her example, but she did not feel the necessity of going beyond that, and indeed in defense of my mother, I must say at this point that when she traveled through her kingdom much was shielded from her. Beggars were not allowed to be visible to the royal eyes. The sick and the maimed and the depraved were carefully excluded from those flocking to greet their queen as she passed among her subjects and on occasion stopped the royal procession to speak with them. For my mother considered herself a queen with close ties to her subjects. She sought at all

times to maintain peace and prosperity, and she regarded this effort as her primary responsibility. And her subjects gave her no cause to doubt the soundness of her rule. Always she was met with wild displays of affection, even adulation, and she was carefully shielded from the harsh realities of the everyday lives of some of her subjects.

There were occasionally untoward incidents. Once her carriage passed along a road in the country and she spied a child lying on the side of the road. She stopped her driver and sent one of the servants back to see to this child. The child was dead, the servant responded when he returned. My mother was distressed and demanded that someone be dispatched to find the family of this child, to know the cause of this child's death, and to do all that was necessary to help the bereaved family. Such was her concern that we children who accompanied her on this journey in her carriage grew alarmed at the distress my mother felt and showed at the death of a child she never knew. I do not know what she learned of this incident, but it was clear to me that her feelings were in no way affected by the

fact that this was a child of low origin. It may be that it moved her to learn more of the lot of the children under her rule, but to my knowledge she took no further action.

On another occasion when I was with her an old man emerged from the crowds by the side of the road, brandishing a large stick, shouting unintelligibly, and began beating on the side of the carriage. My mother was alarmed, as were all those traveling with her, and the old man was quickly seized and subdued. In that case, the royal procession was stopped until my mother was satisfied that this man, clearly deranged, would not be maltreated. Then we proceeded, and my mother spoke to us as we drove on of the need to care well for those not able to care for themselves and to understand the need for kindness in their treatment. She was not as disturbed by this incident as she had been by the dead child, but in both cases it was clear that my mother's feelings were in no way callused. She was clearly distressed by the misfortune of others, the lowliest of her subjects as well as the highest, and it was her earnest desire to ease the lives and improve the fortunes of all.

As I grew I sought to understand more of my mother's attitudes and actions in this, but it was not until I was old enough to travel independently that I realized the enormity of the job that needed to be done to distribute more equitably the wealth of our land.

Sunday, 6/28/92 4:40AM

In the fullness of time I spoke to my father about the need I had to see more of the empire that would one day be my responsibility. At first he was reluctant to speak to me of the future I faced as successor to my mother, but he was willing always to listen, and when I pressed upon him the fact that well in advance of that day I would have duties that required a deeper understanding of all that pertained to the governing of the nation he agreed to share in my education.

My father had traveled far more widely than had my mother. He had seen much of the world before their marriage and had many opportunities afterward to extend his horizons. At all times my father was a thoughtful man, and I was aware

that I could learn much in discussion with him of all that he had observed on his travels. He agreed, furthermore, to consider permitting me to accompany him in the future on travels he thought appropriate. My age and education he felt warranted such exposure to the varied lands that comprised our nation.

I was more than pleased by this prospect. For me such travel would have a two fold advantage. First of all it would give me a chance to know my father better and to see him apart from the environment of the court where his behavior had of necessity to be restrained and circumspect and of the nursery where his role was that of father and nothing else. In addition I was able to see these lands through eyes I knew were experienced and reliable. My father often said little and observed much. He was at all times intensely aware of his surroundings, keenly sensitive to the feelings of others, sharp eyed in his observations of physical details.

When we first spoke to my mother of my desire to meet frequently with my father and to accompany him on future travels there was not a moment's hesitation about the first and little about

the second. My mother said that if my father was willing to have me at his side at any time it pleased her, but that I should be aware that at no time did this addition to my schedule release me of the responsibilities that were already mine. I would have to continue my regular studies without any decrease in what was expected of me, and I would have to complete all the other labors required of me. In the event of a journey of some duration a tutor would accompany me and exact the application to my studies necessary in his eyes. While I was not pleased with the prospect of diminishing in any way the experience of a shared journey with my father, I would have agreed cheerfully and instantly to any conditions my mother and he placed upon such a privilege. So it was agreed with little discussion that a new phase of my education would begin.

At the time when we first spoke of this desire of mine to learn more of my people, I was without means of any kind. All that I needed was provided for me, as it had been since birth, and within the confines of palace living there was no need for anything further. It was important to me, I told my father when we first met in this

new venture, that I have at my disposal when we traveled funds that I could dispense for reasons that seemed important to me at the time. It was the mark of a child, I felt, to be constantly the receiver. I had a hunger at that point in my life to be a giver. I wanted that power and I needed to convince my father of its importance to me prior to departure on our first journey.

He questioned me closely when I first brought up the subject of an income of my own to use at my discretion, and without making judgment of any sort himself promised that he would add his voice to mine when we spoke of this to my mother. He counseled waiting to broach this subject until the time when we were preparing a journey. In the meantime, he said, my energies should be directed toward learning from him all he had to teach me.

So began a new phase in my education and one which brought me both knowledge and pleasure. It brought me knowledge of the fine mind I knew my father possessed but which I had never know in its depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding. We met often, sometimes in the solitude of his study, sometimes walking about

the palace grounds, pausing occasionally to sit amid the splendor of the gardens. In each of these conversations, my father sought to answer all the questions I posed to him about this land I would one day rule, about all he had seen, all he had heard, all he thought about what he had seen and heard. In a sense I think my questioning approach was a source of pleasure to my father. His was a questing mind, and I think he saw in me much of himself as a young man.

Beyond facts I learned much about the nature of this man that had given me life, and I was pleased with the thought that I would one day possess his wisdom and thoughtfulness. In all our conversations there was an undertone of awareness of the problems that needed to be faced and solved in this great land that was my mother's responsibility and an acknowledgment that both of us could be of greater help to my mother in the future. She relied for many things on my father, but she was at all times aware that hers was the primary responsibility for rule and that as her consort her husband had only limited power. As her minor son I had no power, but the day was rapidly approaching when power

would devolve on me and she knew that I would need even more when that happened the good counsel of my father.

My admiration for my father had always been great. As I grew to know him intimately during these years it grew to be unbounded. I grew too to know my own mind more completely and to begin to know the complexities and the realities of the land for which even then I felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility. There was much pleasure for my mother in this new closeness between my father and me, and she would often demand to know in mock majesty what her two favorite subjects had been discussing. My father would always insist that I be the one to speak and to show to my mother my new found awareness. It pleased me to speak of what I was learning from my father, and it pleased both of them to hear my earnest declamations. I think in a sense that they were relieved to know that I was no longer a mere child, that I was at long last exhibiting the maturity and curiosity so essential in their eyes to effective learning.

Monday, 6/29/92 10:25AM

Before long my father told me that we would be embarking on a journey of some duration and that I should speak to my mother of my desire to have an income to dispose of as I saw fit. He assured me that he would be present when I spoke to her of my request but that he would remain silent and that I must depend entirely upon my own persuasive powers. I was not alarmed at the prospect of speaking of this to my mother. She had never failed to respond with love to any request she deemed reasonable, and I had no doubt that she would so regard my petition. I needed, in addition, my father said, to receive from my mother as my queen permission to make this journey, and I needed as her child to learn what further she would require of me while I was gone in pursuit of my education.

It was not easy to set a time for this meeting. My mother was always busy with the affairs of state and of the nursery, and my father warned me that our meeting might take some time and that I should so forewarn my mother. In retrospect I know that this itself was a lesson. My father was

instructing me in the knowledge of petitioning a royal audience. I was asking primarily to speak to my queen on a matter of state and only secondarily to speak to my mother on a personal matter.

I had no idea how to go about this. I went first directly to my mother and she sent me to her secretary. I went next to her secretary and he sent me to one of his assistants. I went to his assistant and he said I must prepare a petition. I went back to my father and told him of my experiences. I asked him how to prepare a petition. He asked me why I had not asked that question of the secretary's assistant.

I was dumbfounded. It had not occurred to me to betray my ignorance to this man, to suffer the indignity of asking him for help. I began to see the reasons for my father's demand that I arrange our audience. And so I returned to the secretary's assistant, little more than a clerk, but a man of impeccable manners and great kindness. I told him of my need and begged his help. He was nonplused but compliant, and he showed me how to phrase a petition for an audience with the queen and explained that when I

had completed it I could return it directly to the queen's secretary, that I had no need to return it to him directly.

I did all that was required of me in writing this petition and showed it to my father before returning it. He did not comment, but simply shook his head in silent approval. When I handed the petition to the queen's secretary he bowed to me before examining it carefully and pronouncing it acceptable. He assured me that he would present this petition to her majesty along with all the others he had received and that I would receive formal notification of her decision.

It was hard for me to keep a straight face that evening when I spoke to my mother. Something told me not to make light of my petition, not, in fact, to mention it at all, and I heeded this inner voice. I kept expecting my father to mention it, and I stole glances at him that evening hoping to catch his eye and find a conspiratorial wink, but his glances in my direction were, as always, pleasant and affectionate, nothing more.

It was a week before I received formal written acknowledgment of my request for an audience

with my mother. The notification said that in all probability it would be a matter of weeks before the queen's busy schedule would permit me an audience, that of necessity pressing matters of state took precedence in her schedule and the notification counseled patience and advised continued allegiance to my queen.

At first I was alarmed. I knew that my father contemplated departure on this journey in a matter of weeks. Then I began to realize that while I had not been the victim of a hoax, I was being taught an elaborate lesson. When I next saw my father I handed him the formal response to my petition. He read it slowly and I thought I saw the sides of his mouth twitch, then decided I was wrong. When he finished he handed it back to me, assumed a doleful expression, and shook his head slowly and sorrowfully from side to side. My heart sank. I had expected him to reassure me that he would see to it that it was placed higher on the list of petitioners. I had expected reassurance. I had not expected pity.

My father was able to control his mirth for several minutes as we discussed this unexpected setback, and then he could control himself no

longer. He dissolved in laughter. I was totally taken aback. Then slowly it dawned on me that I had indeed been the subject of a hoax, but that even more I had been taught a lesson I might otherwise never have learned. I had been forced to play a role I could never otherwise have played, that of the humble petitioner to the crown. I had been taught a measure of humility.

Eventually my mother agreed after my earnest arguments in my favor to grant me a small income to use as I saw fit, but she demanded a careful accounting of all that I spent, an accounting to be made not to her but to my father, and she gave her blessing to my journey with my father. She did not even demand that a tutor accompany me on this trip, but she warned me that this did not establish a precedent, that this first adventure with my father she regarded as a special case, and that I should be free to spend all my time learning what I could from him and all that I saw and heard. And so, the adventure began for me a lifetime of learning.

Wednesday, 7/1/92 5:55AM

Beyond all the material preparations that needed to be made for our trip, my father felt that he should spend much time preparing me for fuller understanding of what I was to see. His mission was to visit a minor nobleman who had petitioned aid from the crown in handling insurrections among his serfs. As I have said, my mother's chief concern was to preserve the peace, but beyond that she had a concern about the well being of all her subjects, serf and prince alike, and she chose my father to go to investigate the causes of this rebellious behavior. He planned to take with him a goodly company of men, some of them fully armed, since he had been warned that there could be danger involved in traveling through this part of the land.

I was thrilled by the possibility of danger and made little effort to hide my excitement when my father spoke of it. He reminded me gently that our journey was not an adventure for the sake of adventure, but a serious mission for our sovereign queen and one which involved the royal trust. It was an ideal first journey for me,

my father said, since it would give me a true picture of the difficulties that could arise under the most benevolent of rulers. I quickly assumed a more serious demeanor and listened carefully as my father spoke further of the area of our country to which we were going.

He spoke of the duke who was experiencing this difficulty and described him as a man not cruel but inept in his governing, with a reputation for poor execution of his duties as a representative of the queen, but he cautioned me not to make any premature judgments. He was sharing with me, he said, all that he had been told by my mother's advisors and he hoped that I would take this information and use it effectively. He expected me, he said, to form my own opinions with no guidance from anyone about the situation and what needed to be done to restore order and to appease the serfs should their grievances prove to be justified. He warned me that I should not speak to anyone but him of what I saw, felt, or heard, that I was a silent partner in all we did. He emphasized the word "silent." He would seek my opinion, my father said, when he had formed his own, and together we would ex-

plore each other's thinking to come to a final report to our sovereign queen.

I could not believe my good luck. First, I had an income. Next, I was to travel as a man with my father on an adventure that promised danger. Finally, I was to be consulted on the affairs of state and participate fully in reaching a decision and formulating action. I was vain enough to feel certain of the value of my contribution to the final deliberations and naive enough to think that should my father and I differ widely in our conclusions I would be able to persuade him of the rightness of my conclusions and suggestions for solution. I did not, of course, express this confidence, but I must have seemed full of self importance as we met with my mother to make our farewells.

I had hoped that we would be dispatched with official fanfare, fancying myself a knight without armor answering a call for help from distressed subjects, but instead my mother spoke softly to me the night before our departure of the need I should feel to represent her wisely and well at all times and to conduct myself in a way that must be regarded as faultless. She reminded me of my

father's generosity in permitting me to accompany him and of the trust he was showing in this espousal. Finally, she reminded me that my reason in all of this was to learn rather than to enjoy, and that upon our return she would expect me to share with her and with those of my brothers and sisters old enough to listen all that I had observed. To this end she advised me to keep a daily record of all I saw, said, and heard, and she presented me with a small volume of blank pages for this purpose.

And so, our preparations complete, our instructions from our queen and mother having been given, I retired that evening barely able to suppress my excitement. My sleep was full of dreams of dangerous encounters and villainous serfs, and always I was the hero. I woke before dawn and forced myself to say the prayers my mother had taught us to start each day before leaping from my bed. The day was cold and clear, perfect for the beginning of an adventure, and as I dressed I tried to imagine what lay ahead. As it happened I was not even close to the truth in these imaginings.

Thursday, 7/2/92 5:25 AM

On the morning of our departure there was indeed a bit of fanfare. The company that was to go with us was assembled in the courtyard, the soldiers smart in their uniforms, the horses snorting and stamping their feet. All my brothers and sisters were lined up in a row, and my father and I solemnly kissed each one on the forehead. Each one murmured words of love and well wishing, first to my father and then to me, and at the end of the line my mother stood, tears in her eyes, ready to bid us Godspeed. She held me briefly in her arms and kissed me, and then turned to my father for a long lingering embrace. He spoke gently to her as he dabbed at her eyes with the tip of one finger, and she smiled at his clumsy effort and held him to her again. Much of the household was assembled to bid us farewell. Never had I felt so important.

My father had arranged for us to travel first by horseback and then when we tired of that to travel by carriage, and an equerry who was to ride with us helped hoist me onto my mount's back. I had been accustomed to the milder gen-

tlar horses which we rode for pleasure, and I felt with a shudder of excitement the power of the shuddering beast I mounted. He pawed the ground impatiently, and I made a show of controlling him. He calmed for a moment, just long enough for my father to raise his hand in the signal to all that we were ready to proceed. The soldiers were assembled in the order of march and they set off at the head of the column that wended its way across the courtyard and through the gate to the open countryside. I glanced at my father and found his steady gaze on me. I smiled reassuringly as I patted my horse's neck in affection and encouragement, and my father returned my smile and finally shared that conspiratorial wink I had been waiting for. We took our place in the ranks and were finally underway. I was sorely tempted to turn for a last look at my mother and my brothers and sisters and the safe security of home, but I kept my head resolutely straight ahead and decided that in this as in all things I would follow the example of my father. We rode for some time in silence, my father in front of me and our equerry behind me. Then my father turned in his saddle and gestured that

I should draw abreast and ride by his side. The day was warm and clear and the woods on both sides of us lush and green. There was no sound but the clip clop of horses' feet. I had never felt so peaceful, and as I rode by my father's side in a silence that seemed fitting in such hushed beauty as that which surrounded us, I had time to consider my good fortune all over again. I vowed, as I had many times, that I would justify my father's faith in me, as well as my mother's, by my conduct at every step of this journey. Never would I complain. Never would I speak out of turn. Never would I be demanding. Never would I seek to know more than my father chose to tell me. Never would I give my father an instant of regret that he had permitted me this trip. I looked back on all the days past when I had caused both my parents concern, and in my new found independence and self assumed maturity I regarded my former self as a mere child. I knew now the stirrings of manhood, and I prided myself that I would indeed be a credit to my father in every way he expected, now and always. My heart was full of joy that morning as I entertained these thoughts and made these resolutions, and it seemed to me next to impossible

that life could ever again be less than perfect.

Friday, 7/3/92 8:00AM

As we proceeded, I became more and more aware of the enormity of this land my mother governed. I had seen some of it before when we traveled as a family from place to place, but we had always been obliged to travel by enclosed carriage, and there was an entirely different sense of space from that vantage point. As it was, I chose to stay mounted on my horse long after my father stopped the procession to enter one of the carriages that followed us. I begged his permission to continue riding in saddle and he agreed. The equerry remained closely behind me. I wanted to request him to ride at my side, but I was unaware of the court etiquette on this point and resolved to ask my father that evening.

We paused for lunch in the early afternoon and I ate little, eager as I was to continue our journey. I had asked my father before we left how long it would take us to reach our destination. He said that barring unforeseen delays we would be there

within five days. Our provisions had been arranged with this duration in mind. On our return we would depend upon the largesse of our noble host for equal supplies.

I cannot describe the peace I felt as I rode through those verdant forests and rolling hills for the first time. There were, it seemed to me, very few subjects to be governed. We saw hardly anyone that first day. Occasionally in the distance there would be small specks moving among the green of the fields, but that was all. Animals scurried away at our approach, and occasionally I would see a pair of startled eyes blinking through the foliage. The birds were bolder and seemed to be scolding us shrilly for invading their sacred precincts. Occasionally one would swoop near my head as if to emphasize his outrage and his determination to be rid of us all.

Once my father stopped the procession to give the men a rest and to water the horses, and I dismounted and went back to talk to him. He knew I was enjoying myself. My face was flushed with pleasure. He cautioned me about spending too many hours in the saddle the first day out, but I

demurred and said that I felt truly comfortable riding and that I chose to continue. I was later to know his wisdom, but at that moment I could not imagine being confined to a carriage, and as we resumed our journey I returned to my mount, now less vivacious than he had been in the early morning, but steady and responsive to my touch. I was growing fond of this animal and determined that I would ask that he be used as one of our riding horses on our return. Little did I know then what a blunder I would be making with this request.

And so the day passed quickly. As I rode and drank in the beauty of the countryside I had much time to think. My thoughts turned to my mother, and I knew how much she would be missing my father's strong presence. My thoughts turned to my brothers and sisters and I knew that they would not be missing me as much as I would have liked. I was more agreeable in my dealings with them than I once had been, but I am sure that they did not regret a vacation from my heavy hand as the oldest brother. My thoughts turned to my father and I realized again my good fortune. I knew I would spend

long hours talking to my father and even longer hours observing him in his dealings with others and learn much from both. Finally my thoughts turned to the future, to the day when I would be ruling this lovely land, far vaster than anything I had imagined. To look at a map is a far different perception of space. To know a square mile is different from perceiving that same square mile and measuring it with the eye. I knew at the end of that day that I had seen only a small part of the land that was mine by birth, and I realized anew the enormity of the responsibility that was mine by birth.

This, then, was the first day of the first great adventure of my life. When we stopped for the evening I was ready to dismount and hand my horse to willing hands to be cared for and fed and watered. I petted him fondly on his lathered neck before he was led away. Then I joined my father for our evening meal and a brief conversation before he advised retiring early for a start on the new day just after dawn. I thought I was too excited to sleep, but it was not more than a minute after retiring that I was sound asleep. My sleep was deep and dreamless, and it seemed that

I had not slept at all when the call came for the new day.

Saturday, 7/4/92 5:27AM

The second day was much like the first. We passed through several small villages, however, and it thrilled me to see so many people bow in respect as we passed by them. My father waved in greeting and I followed his example. There were murmurs of approval as we passed and several pointed to me in apparent approval. Some of the young children cheered and waved frantically, but observing my father's restrained response, I resisted the impulse to wave frantically and enthusiastically back at them. Seeing the children reminded me of home, and I momentarily lapsed into melancholy. I had not expected to miss my mother and brothers and sisters, and I was both surprised and pleased to find how much I did. I wondered if they were missing me.

That day my father and I spoke more as we rode. He asked me to tell him of my impressions so

far, and I did so. I did not have a great deal to say. I spoke of the vast expanses of land seemingly unoccupied and of the beauty of this land. Nothing untoward had occurred and nothing out of the ordinary had caught my eye, so my response to my father's questions was simple and brief. He asked if I had noted the loyalty to the crown that was evident in the response of the people to our passage. I was surprised at the question. It had not to that point occurred to me that the subjects of a sovereign ruler would have any other attitude in response to the royal presence. I said as much.

My father began to speak then of the qualities my mother had always exhibited as a ruler and of the love and affection that her subjects felt for her. He reminded me that I had done nothing to earn the respect and affection that had been shown me by all who saw us pass and that this was respect and affection earned by my mother and passed to us as her husband and son. He said that there was great interest in seeing me because I was the heir apparent, the future ruler, and that this curiosity the populace had about me was well founded. Not every ruler, my father

said, was beloved of his or her subjects. I knew some of these cases from my studies, but my father's words brought new light to me on this subject. He spoke in very specific terms of the needs of a subject people for a minimum, at least, of physical well being and a minimum, at least, of spiritual well being. He said that it was the duty of a monarch to insure both these rights to the fullest extent possible, and he spoke at length of the difficulties involved in this duty in a far flung kingdom.

It was important, my father said, that I know of this primary duty that faced me, and he stressed that this journey was a good example of this royal duty. We would be seeking an answer to the rebellious behavior of some of our subject people and it was our royal responsibility not so much to restore order, although that might necessarily be the first step, but to seek to know the causes of this discontent and rebellion. It was not a foregone conclusion, my father warned, that these people were being mistreated and protesting this mistreatment in ways that seemed reasonable to them. Nor was it a foregone conclusion that the noble whose petition we were

responding to was guilty of poor rule. The truth was yet to be revealed and we must, he emphasized, approach this problem with no hint of prejudgment.

I listened carefully to all my father had to say. I longed to interrupt him with questions time and time again, but I held my tongue and waited until he had finished to address these questions to him. How, I asked would he proceed to discover where the truth lay? Whose words would he believe? What response would the duke have to criticism? Would he really talk himself to the serfs? Were there leaders in this rebellion? The questions tumbled from my lips, and my father listened with a quiet smile playing around his lips. I saw the fond approval in his expression and in his eyes that always pleased me so. When I stopped, he spoke again. All of my questions were apt, he said, but all of them would find their answers in the actions he took when the time came. He asked me to formulate answers of my own to all my questions and to determine what I would do were I he in this mission. Only after I had done this would he speak further on the matter.

He spurred his horse and quickened the pace. I followed suit and as I rode beside him I became lost in the fantasy that I was indeed my father, that I carried with me the royal responsibility for solving this problem for my queen. I tried to visualize all that lay ahead and to assume the wisdom to deal with each aspect of the problem. It was not as easy as I thought it would be to answer my own questions. By nightfall I had made some progress, but I had no ready answers. I told my father this and he clapped me on the back in approval and said that he was well pleased with my thoughtfulness and that we would speak further after a good night's rest.

Sunday, 7/5/92 5:12 AM

On the third day of our journey my education began in earnest. We set out early in the morning, as we had each previous day, in the same order of rank and I was riding alongside my father. Each of us was lost in our own thoughts as we cantered along. The night had been extraordinarily peaceful, and I had awakened to the sounds of song birds and the scurrying of

young animals. As I lay there in the darkness waiting for the first glow of the rising sun, I thought once again of home and tried to calculate the days when we would be at this exact spot heading back to home, our mission completed. As I lay there musing, I heard a noise close by. I could see nothing, but I tensed and waited for further sound. There was none for an instant, and then I knew with absolute certainty that there was a stranger nearby. I did not know what to do, so I lay there, my senses heightened, and waited to know more of who this intruder was.

As my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, or perhaps it was the start of the dawn, I could see a shape moving about the room, and I watched, transfixed, as it continued to search through my belongings. There was little to examine. Suddenly I heard a groan, and the intruder turned quickly and left. I was more curious than frightened and slowly and stealthily got out of bed and, careful to make no sound, followed this stranger. He paused in the doorway and looked in both directions before proceeding. It was getting light enough so that he could see me if he turned, but he did not, intent as he was.

I followed him down the hall, and just as he reached the outer door he roused the guard, who had been less than alert, apparently, when the intruder had entered the inn, but now, fully alert, he seized the boy, for he was little more than that, and told him to be silent. The guard did not see me at first, and spoke quietly but with great urgency. When it was clear that the boy was compliant, I emerged from the doorway and spoke to the guard. He himself was little more than a boy, a few years older than I, and it was perhaps the first time for each of us that our courage had been called upon. Not that either of us had been at all in any danger, but my heart was thumping nonetheless and I thought perhaps that his was as well.

As for the intruder, he was by now on his knees, his head bowed, his hands clenched together. In a voice that was little more than a whisper he begged for mercy, begged to be let go. He had done nothing, he said. He was merely looking for food. I was prepared to believe his story without question. He was thin, dirty, and ill kempt. His clothing was thin and ill assorted and his appearance was disheveled. The soldier

snorted his derision at the boy's story, but said nothing. I had the feeling that he did not know what to do next. No one else was awake, and the decision he faced was a difficult one. Was he to admit that this bedraggled young boy had managed to pass the guarded entrance and threaten the safety of the royal personages, or should he take it upon himself to let the wretch go with no harm done? I watched from a distance the tableau before me -- the young guard standing over the kneeling figure, his authority for the moment supreme, neither of them aware of my presence.

Suddenly I was aware of another presence. I turned, and my father stood behind me. Before I had a chance to speak, he passed by me and spoke sharply to the soldier, requiring an explanation of him. At the appearance of my father, the kneeling boy began to whimper piteously, and as the guard spoke, my father observed him closely. He told him to rise to his feet and explain his presence in the inn. The boy was too terrified to speak. Observing his fear, my father's tone softened and he urged him to speak in his own defense.

Slowly, with many pauses to gulp and grasp for words, the lad described his vagabond existence. He was without family, he said, without a home. He slept where he could. He ate when he could steal. He sometimes found kindness from a stranger, but more often he encountered suspicion and hostility. He sought only food, he said, or a trinket or two that he could exchange for food. He meant no bodily harm to anyone. He was still totally unaware, I felt sure, of whom he spoke to.

It was light enough by now so that I could see my father's face soften as his tone had. He told the guard to see to it that the lad had something to eat, that he should be given provisions enough to last for a few days, and that he should be sent on his way. The boy trembled with relief and grabbed at my father's hand to kiss it with gratitude. My father patted him on the shoulder and bade him go with the guard.

After they left, my father turned to me and asked for assurance that I was not harmed. He did not know my part in this incident and I explained what had happened, that I had been little more than an observer in all of this. He nodded when

I had finished and said no more. Later, I knew, he would speak to the guard. I wanted to hear his words, but I did not and I wondered afterwards if he had rebuked him for his initial negligence or congratulated him for keeping a cool head. I suspected a little of both. My father was a kind man above all.

Monday, 7/6/92 4:50 AM

By the time we reached the castle of the noble duke, I felt like a seasoned traveler. There had been no incident the last two days of our journey worth noting. My father and I continued to enjoy a pleasant camaraderie, and we spoke more often of home and my mother the longer we were away. It was a revelation to me to realize the constancy and depth of the love and admiration my father felt for his beloved queen and wife. I should perhaps place "wife" first in this coupling of titles since clearly this relationship was the primary one, but my father was acutely aware at all times of my mother's royal position. He was particularly aware of it during this time of official responsibility.

I had always known of the love that existed between my parents. Indeed it was a constant in all of our lives, but it was also something that I had accepted from birth without feeling the need to understand. Now as my father spoke of his wife, I began to know her better through his eyes. His admiration for her was unbounded, and as he spoke of her character and accomplishments his voice mirrored the pride and affection that marked his love. He spoke too of his hopes for me, of his desire that I mature into a worthy successor to my mother. This was not the first time that he had spoken of my identity as the heir apparent. This was an identity I had known since birth almost, but it was the first time that he had referred to my mother's mortality, and it was almost painful for him to do so. Indeed the depth of his emotions was almost more than I could bear, and it was painful to me to hear in his voice the distress he felt at the thought of being separated from his beloved by death.

Looking back I am sure that the birth of each child was to him a threat as well as a blessing, that he feared more for the well being of my mother through each birth that he did for the

child he did not yet know and love. It simply had not occurred to me that my parents, either one, would feel such anxiety as my father did. He did not say that he regarded each of my mother's confinements as a threat to her life, but it was clear to me when he referred to her mortality that this was his reference.

There was a sober silence between us for a while as my father pondered all he had said, and I tried to understand his concern for my mother's well being. She had always seemed to bear children as easily and cheerfully as she performed all her other duties, and it shocked me, in a sense, that I had been totally ignorant of the element of danger in childbearing for so long. There was no way in which I could comfort my father, although I wanted to badly, but I needed comfort myself in this new awareness. I had always assumed that the day when I would succeed my mother was in the distant future. It was a shock to contemplate any other possibility.

Finally I could not bear the silence. I asked my father if he had any cause for alarm at that moment. I knew that my mother was part way through a pregnancy, but she seemed as happy

and healthy as she always had. I dreaded to hear that my father had knowledge which I did not have of something amiss. When I questioned him he turned to me with a smile and shrugged. He should not, he said, have burdened me with his concern and assured me that there was no reason for alarm any more this time than there ever had been, but that with each child the joy became more mixed with concern for my mother's safe delivery. She was a remarkable woman, he said, in every way, and her capacity to carry and bear each child as she had for so many years was a source of amazement to him. He was not alone in his admiration for my mother in this, he said, but perhaps he was alone in his worries. His love for her made him vulnerable, I suddenly realized, and he felt as I did that the world without my mother would be no world at all. He assured me, without my questioning further, that there was no more cause for worry with this coming child than there had been with any other, that my mother was aware of his worry and made light of it. My relief was great at his words, but although we spoke no further of this, I was left with a nagging concern I had not known before.

Tuesday, 7/7/92 4:45AM

We were well received by our noble petitioner. He received us himself along with his household and those of his family then in residence. He was a man of some age, and his wife had died some years earlier, but he was vigorous in his manner and more youthful in his appearance than I had expected. My father had told me enough of the history of this duchy as we rode so that I had some expectations. I knew that this was a man of enormous wealth, for example, who had increased his inherited fortune over the years. I knew that his children had married well and that his eldest son closely resembled his father in business acumen.

The duke insisted that we rest immediately upon our arrival, and we were shown to lavish quarters. Servants were present in abundance to meet our every need. Our retinue was treated with similar consideration, we learned later. My father and I were placed in adjoining suites of rooms. My quarters were much more luxurious than those I was accustomed to, and I was, in a sense, made uncomfortable by their very luxuriousness.

There was no opportunity for a private conversation with my father before we were each enclosed in our private quarters to bathe and then to rest before dinner.

After the servants withdrew, I lay down, but immediately grew restless. I felt no need to sleep, and so I arose and for several minutes walked about my assigned rooms and examined the art and the furnishings. While the furnishings and decoration were lavish, they lacked the kind of warmth I was accustomed to in our palaces. It was hard for me to determine exactly why this was so, and I decided that perhaps it was no more than familiarity. This was, after all, the first time in my life that I had been treated as an adult guest, and a royal adult guest at that.

I was tempted to go outside and walk around a bit to familiarize myself with other rooms, but I was not sure that this license was within my right, and so stared out the window and hoped that I would see some activity that would be distracting. I was disappointed in this. There was no sound, no movement. It was as though there was no life in this place. Again, I contrasted the hushed atmosphere with the hurly burly activity

that generally marked the place where my parents were in residence with all of us children. While we were not permitted to be wild and raucous, we were all lively and there was always the hum of activity and evidence of childish energies. This was the difference, I decided. Lack of children. But as I pondered I knew it was more than that. The servants I had seen were solemn faced, almost somber, and all of the household staff had an air about them of seriousness that was almost oppressive. Even the members of the noble family had greeted us with unsmiling faces. Their manners were flawless, but their general demeanor lacked warmth entirely. It was as though every single person in this household had modeled him or her self on the old duke, who was known for his pretentiousness and solemn self importance.

There was no life in this place, I decided with youthful impetuosity. It would not be a joyous stay, to say the least. Then I remembered my father's final admonition as we were drawing close to our destination. He reminded me that this was not a pleasure trip, that we were not seeking to enjoy ourselves but to inform our-

selves, and that it was important to keep this purpose in mind at all times during our stay. With this admonition in mind, I took out the notebook my mother had given me and recorded my impressions of the duke and his household and the place in which they lived. I felt more industrious after I had finished writing all that was on my mind. I tried very hard to be totally objective in my descriptions, but still I would not have wanted curious eyes to read what I had written, and I went to some pains to hide my notebook. Then I went again to the window to look for signs of life. There were none.

Wednesday 7/7/92 5:17AM

That evening we learned a little more of the duke and his household. The dinner we shared with him was a dull affair. He pontificated throughout the meal on all subjects that occurred to him without regard to the responses of my father or any of the rest of the company. It was clear to me that this was the pattern of all meals in this place. Those who resided with the duke made no pretense of paying attention to

what he said. Some of the time they were silent, their eyes dull as they regarded the duke as he spoke. Most of the time they spoke quietly among themselves, an indistinguishable murmur that seemed to serve as background to the strident mouthings of our host.

At first my father made an effort to respond to the duke's statements, but the futility of trying to carry on a dialogue with him was quickly apparent, and my father lapsed into silence, gravely regarding his host, his face not betraying in any way his feelings. As for me, I grew quickly bored with this monologue. There was no wit in this man and little wisdom. He rambled on about the thanklessness of those he governed, about the futility of trying to please them, about the absurdity of their assumptions, about the absolute need to put down any stirrings of rebellion among them with a force that would discourage any further outburst. He spoke endlessly of the nobility of his ancestry, about the traditions he had inherited and was attempting to maintain unchanged. He spoke with pride of his huge fortune and of the cleverness with which he had accumulated so much wealth. He grew black with

rage when he spoke of the threats to his wealth and well being represented by those who demanded from him those concessions which threatened this wealth.

Through all of this, the young duke sat silent. He regarded his father gravely and seemed to be listening closely, nodding his head in agreement as though he were hearing all these things for the first time, although young as I was and as inexperienced as I was I knew that he must have heard his father say these things hundreds of times. Perhaps he was not listening at all, I thought. Perhaps he was lost in his own interior dialogues and was simply skilled at the pretense of listening closely and agreeing completely.

The meal seemed endless. The food was generous and dull, somewhat like our host it seemed to me. When the last plate had been removed from the table, my father rose, and, pleading weariness, begged to be excused. I followed his example, and the duke reluctantly rose to his feet and bade us a good night. A servant accompanied us to our rooms and as we followed him, my father asked if I would like to share an early morning ride with him. I was more than pleased

at the prospect and agreed enthusiastically. My father asked the servant to send his equerry to him, and after the servant had left he turned to me with another conspiratorial wink and said that we would speak of the duke and what we had learned of him in the morning. In the meantime, he said, I should not forget to write of all I had learned thus far. He said that he was dispatching a packet to my mother and that she would be pleased to find a message from me in it. It would be an excellent way to pass the hours before sleep came, my father said with mock solemnity, and again the wink that made me feel that we were sharing the same thoughts.

I longed to speak at length to my father. There was much I had concluded about our noble host and I was anxious to know if my father in his wisdom would find my opinions perceptive. We wished each other a good night's rest and parted. I found my quarters even more gloomy than I had earlier and took my pen in hand to write of all I thought, oppressed by my surroundings. When I wrote to my mother I forced myself to be cheerful, but my journal clearly reflected the melancholy nature of my surroundings and of

this noble house.

Thursday, 7/9/92 4:54AM

The next morning I awakened with the dawn and dressed. I waited impatiently for the knock on the door that my father had promised, and in the growing light I looked once again through the windows to see if there was anyone about. I was not disappointed this time. I saw servants in the courtyard, raking and tidying, and to my pleasure I saw our equerry standing at the foot of the staircase. With him were two grooms each holding a horse. Neither of the mounts were the horses we had ridden here, and I was to learn soon enough to my sorrow that the duke had insisted that his hospitality extended to his providing us with horses from his stable to ride about his grounds. There was a possessiveness about the man that seemingly knew no bounds.

When my father finally signaled his readiness I joined him with pleasure, and my first question after bidding him good morning concerned the choice of horses. My father was not aware of

the duke's insistence and spoke briefly of this to our equerry. I think he was tempted to rescind the duke's orders. He was as fond of his mount as I had grown of mine, but after a few moments' conversation decided that he would for this time at least accept the duke's insistence on our mounts for the morning ride. The equerry briefly described to my father the riding paths with which he had familiarized himself the previous day and asked my father if he wished him to accompany us. To my pleasure, my father told him that it was not necessary, that we would stay close enough to the castle to avoid all possibility of danger in this unknown territory and all possibility of getting lost. I was disappointed to hear these words. I was prepared for an adventure and was learning that our ride would be nothing more than a cautious meandering about the castle grounds. And that was all it turned out to be.

It did not take me long to realize that my father's motivation was two fold. His first consideration was to speak to me in the privacy that allowed complete openness. We began to speak as soon as we were out of earshot of the equerry who stood and saluted smartly as we

rode off and the gardeners who were tending the gardens about the entrance to the castle. My father turned to me with a quiet smile and asked if I had slept well. I had to admit that despite the gloominess of my rooms and despite a certain mustiness I had become aware of in the bed dressings, I had slept deeply and dreamlessly. I asked my father if his rest had been similarly satisfactory and he nodded, not too convincingly. For a while we rode in silence. The grounds through which we passed were truly beautiful in their plantings, and every so often we would pass a gardener working on maintaining the manicured beauty of his plantings. The duke did not stint on his attention to his magnificent gardens. I held my tongue with difficulty as I had promised myself I would and waited for my father to speak further. Finally he did. He said that he knew that the dinner we had shared with the duke had not been to my liking in any way and he congratulated me on not betraying my dismay at any point during the evening. I had not been aware that my father was observing me that closely and silently thanked the inner spirit that had kept me from betraying my true feelings,

from yawning with boredom, from twitching with impatience. Then my father asked me to tell him what I had learned as I listened. It was not difficult to speak at some length on this, and as I spoke my father nodded his agreement from time to time. When I had concluded, he asked me of what relevance all I had spoken of had to our mission.

I thought a moment before replying that in a sense the society in the palace was a microcosm, though a privileged microcosm, of the duchy, that the duke's total and complete self-centeredness cast a pall over all who served him and even over all those who were served with him. I said that I thought his total lack of sensitivity and total lack of interest in the opinions of others was bound to limit his understanding of the needs of those he governed.

I knew that my father was waiting for me to go too far and to conclude from what we had learned of the old duke's unpleasant personality that he was indeed in error in his governance and that his rebellious subjects had right on their side. I was careful not to do this and to point out that I would like to know more of the actual

conditions under which the rebellious peasants lived and worked before making any final judgment. 'This seemed a simple enough observation to me, but it seemed to please my father. He asked how I would go about doing this. Observe, I said without thinking. I would choose to go among these people and talk to them, to learn their minds, to see how they lived, to know their desires. Only then, I said, could I judge. My father said nothing for a moment. Then he asked me if I thought that these people would trust a royal personage, knowing the duke as I did. I was not sure that I was not speaking out of turn when I said that I would choose to go about them not as a royal personage but as a stranger, perhaps a stranger lost and seeking his way. Again my father was silent for a while. He asked if I would be fearful going among these rebellious peasants. That had not occurred to me and I said so. Never had I cause to fear harm to my person. The concept was new to me. Even the intruder at the inn had not caused me to fear harm to my person. My father said nothing further on this, but agreed to speak with me later in the day to discuss what we would do.

By that time we had completed our circuitous route around the castle grounds, and when we arrived back at the courtyard the grooms were waiting to take our horses from us. The horses had been pleasant enough mounts, but I hoped that my father would insist on using our own mounts in the future.

Friday, 7/10/92 5:08AM

Before the end of our first full day was completed we were made sharply aware of the duke's indifference to the welfare of those who served him. It was early in the morning as we rode that we first became aware of the large numbers of servants about the palace grounds. They seemed to be everywhere, tending to the plantings, sweeping pathways, carrying heavy loads to and fro. Not one of them looked directly at us as we rode. Most touched their foreheads in a gesture of respect and obeisance, but rarely did they raise their heads as they did so. This seemed strange to us, accustomed as we were to the friendliness of those who served us at home.

When we were served breakfast in one of the smaller dining rooms we were the only ones eating at that early hour, and those who served us had the same furtive manner. My father, while not familiar with those who waited upon him, had a friendly manner and was perplexed when he spoke to the serving maid who brought our food to us. He inquired about her health. When he did so her eyes grew wide and she gasped in fright, begged to be excused, and then fled the room. My father and I spoke after she had left and we were alone of this strange behavior. I was as puzzled as he. The girl had seemed terrified for no reason at all. We continued our meal and were served by a different individual, older but equally silent and somber.

I was beginning to be oppressed by this strange atmosphere and I said as much to my father. He counseled patience and said that he would meet with the duke and his son as they had planned that morning and try to pierce this veil of silence that seemed to prevail. I asked my father if I had his permission to walk about by myself as he met with the duke and he readily assented. He retired after our meal to his rooms to ready the

packet to be sent to my mother and I went to my rooms to fetch the letter to her that was to be included. I had written briefly to my brothers and sisters and asked that this missive be sent as well. That being accomplished, we parted and I set out to explore.

I walked first through the building itself, frequently getting confused about my route, trying to learn more of our host by knowing more of his home. His pride in his ancestry was evident in the great number of portraits that lined the walls and in the documents he had prepared for viewing which described the war like achievement of each of these ancestors where that was relevant. There was a strong family resemblance in many of the portraits to the old duke and his son. Indeed some of them could have been painted directly from each of them. Only the manner of dress differed.

I found myself descending a staircase in a far corner of the palace and unwittingly came upon a group of servants enjoying their morning meal. They froze when they saw me and not one spoke. They stared intently, not moving. Finally I spoke and excused myself for interrupting their

repaſt and retraced my ſteps. I was more confuſed than ever by this ſtrange behavior. I left the palace and walked through the courtyard determined to find ſomeone who would ſpeak to me. I knew I would have to find ſomeone young and unwary, and as luck would have it, as I ſet out on the path we had earlier ridden I came upon a lad cleaning brush. He was intent on his work and I ſtood by his ſide a few minutes before he was aware of my preſence. He worked ſoundleſſly and unſmilingly as did all the others, but I had hopes that his youth would permit him to be more approachable.

When he became aware of me, he roſe to his feet, and I feared that he would ruſh away, but he did not. Neither did he ſpeak. I bade him a good morning and aſked his name. For a moment he heſitated, and then in a ſingle word told me that he was known as Tom. I aſked his age. At this he blanched and ſaid nothing. When I preſſed him, he confeſſed that he did not know his age, that he had never been told and that he had no one to aſk. When I expreſſed ſurpriſe at this, he ſhrugged and volunteered that he was not different in this regard from the other lads. I

asked if he lived with his family and he said with his father and one brother, that his mother had died some years before and that he could not remember her. His tongue having been loosened, Tom was eager to talk. I asked him what other duties he had beside cleaning brush, and he said he sometimes worked in the fields, that he did as he was told, and that from day to day his duties varied. He said he rose with the sun and worked until dark as did all the others.

By this time I was getting confident of learning from Tom the reason for the silence that prevailed among all those in service to the duke, and so I asked him directly. At my question he seemed to be reminded that he was in error, and began to gather the twigs and leaves he had piled up into a bundle. He did not answer my question, and when I urged him to trust me with the truth he said that it was a strict rule of the duke's, that no one in his service was permitted to speak without the direct permission of a superior, that all conversation was to be initiated by those of superior social standing at all times and that those who were subservient were to observe absolute silence unless words were absolutely

necessary to convey necessary information. It took many questions to elicit this information in bits and snatches. What, I asked, was the method that the duke used to enforce this rule? Tom refused to say more than that the punishment was severe, that all the servants feared the wrath of the duke and those who represented him. And as if reminded of this interdiction anew, Tom picked up his bundle and hurried away. I watched him go and tried to imagine what it would be like to live in silence and fear of words. I could not place myself in this position. Even in my imagination I could not tolerate this rigid control. As I walked on I saw no one else I thought fit to approach with questions.

Saturday, 7/11/92 4:42AM

I returned to the palace even more puzzled than when I had set out. It was totally beyond my comprehension why the old duke laid down such stringent rules for those who depended upon him for livelihood. It caused to me wonder if this oppressive rule extended throughout his kingdom and explained, at least in part, the re-

bellious behavior which threatened the peace of the duchy. I dismissed the idea that he could impose a rule of silent obedience throughout his lands, but I wondered in turn what other manifestations we would find of the old duke's iron hand. I wondered too what means he used to enforce his will. It was clear that all those we had been exposed to since our arrival were filled with fear, that their behavior in each case lacked warmth and spontaneity entirely, that no matter how different they were in age, station, or basic personality they acted in a similar fashion. They were silent, cold, mistrustful, and wary. There was an air about them of futility.

As I waited for my father to return from his meeting. I penned my thoughts in my journal. When I returned to the room two servants were just completing their cleaning chores, and as soon as I appeared they bobbed in respect and scurried away. Not a word passed their lips. They did not look at me or at each other. I noted this as well and speculated without recording my thoughts about several aspects of this puzzle. Had this always been the manner in which the duke treated his household staff or was this one

aspect of his behavior that had to do with advancing age? Was I being precipitous in thinking that this oppressive rule had to be the basis of the outbursts that were threatening the peace? What was the duke's motivation, his *raison d'être*, so to speak? What satisfaction did it bring to him to so dominate every aspect of the behavior of all those who were directly related to him in their everyday lives?

I knew that we would have to go beyond the palace grounds for all our answers, and I was anxious to hear of my father's experiences with the duke and his eldest son. My patience was almost exhausted when I heard a knock on the door. A servant stood there and said in a voice barely above a whisper that my father required my presence in his rooms. She was gone before I could thank her. I took my journal with me. With each addition to my observations I wanted less for any one to read what I had written, and I wanted to be ready should my father require a report from me on all I had recorded of my thoughts.

My father was standing with his back to the door after I entered the room with his permis-

sion. I waited expectantly just inside the entrance for his words.

"Come here," he said quietly. "There is something I want you to see." I hastened to his side and tried to follow his glance. It did not take long to realize what he wanted me to see. In plain sight in the courtyard a young man knelt, his shoulders slumped, his head bowed. His back was to us, and standing over him was a burly man, much larger than the boy, with a whip in his hands. As we watched, he beat the boy on his back, dealing him a series of vicious blows. We could not hear any sound, but it was not hard to imagine the intensity of the pain inflicted. Blood began to seep through the boy's shirt, but the blows continued.

I looked at my father. He was white with anger and his hands clenched the edge of the window. I knew he was restraining himself with difficulty. I wanted myself to dash from the building and seize the whip from the hand of this great bully. No matter the offense, the punishment was not warranted. Finally, it ended. The man with the whip turned and left abruptly after gesturing to the lad that he should get up and go. We

watched in silence as the boy crumpled to the ground and lay there motionless for a few moments. I feared he was dead and started to say so. My father silenced me. We watched as the boy began to stir, got laboriously to his feet and then turned his head and seemed to be looking directly at us. I knew I was imagining this, but his gaze seemed to stop at the exact window where we stood. I realized with a start that this was Tom.

Monday 7/13/92/92 5:50 AM

It was not up to me to speak further of what I thought until called upon by my father to express myself. I watched with horror from the window as Tom limped away, but I said nothing. My father was unaware of my encounter with Tom. I could see how profoundly disturbed he was by what he had just witnessed. In an age when peasants were often treated less well than their animals by some, my father never failed to remind us children, and my mother as well, that each man, woman, and child was one of God's creatures and deserved to be treated as such.

He walked away from the window and seated himself in a chair, his face dark with anger, his hands tightly clenched. I watched in silence. It was clear to me that my father was making a great effort to control himself. I did not think I had ever before seen him so disturbed. I stood a respectful distance away in total silence. My eyes never left his face. I wanted to go to him, but I did not. I feared that I was too old to act as I wanted to. I wanted to be held in his embrace like a child seeking to comfort and to be comforted all at the same time.

So I waited. It did not take as long as it seemed, but eventually my father's face cleared and he seemed to lose the rigidity that had marked his posture. He turned to me and said that he regretted the necessity of my seeing this instance of man's cruelty to man, but that it was part of what I had to learn. I told him about my earlier encounter with Tom, and his face darkened once more.

"I wonder...." he started to say, and then his voice trailed off. To that point I had made no connection between my encounter with Tom and the beating we had just witnessed. It was cu-

rious too that the beating had been so open, so visible. Surely the courtyard was not generally used for such a purpose. Slowly I began to think that there was a connection, and that there was a reason for Tom's having been beaten under our very eyes. I remembered how his gaze had seemed to search the windows of the palace and how they had seemed to stop and focus on the one where we stood.

I spoke to my father and asked his permission to tell him my thoughts. I described to him the spot where I had come upon Tom and told him of all Tom had said. I noted that we could easily have been observed, though I was not at the time aware of being observed. I speculated that perhaps this punishment was designed not only for Tom, but for my benefit as well, to discourage me from further attempts to speak to those commanded to be silent. The more I considered this possibility the more likely it seemed.

My father listened carefully as he always did, without interruption, and when I was finished he said that all I had described as my speculation jibed well with all he had learned in his meeting with the old duke and his heir. The old duke

came close to rebellion himself, my father said, in refusing to answer questions put to him by my father, official representative of the sovereign queen, emissary with all the power and authority of the crown. The duke had been stubbornly insistent, my father said, that it was his right to expect royal assistance in putting down any disturbance involving rejection of noble authority that was a right by birth, sacred in its possession. When my father suggested to the duke that noble authority was accompanied by noble responsibility, the duke insisted that he had at all times met his responsibilities. He attributed this series of rebellious acts as the sedition of a few rabble rousers, a few madmen bent on destroying royal rule as well as noble rule. My father said that he made it clear to the duke that no action would be taken against these insurgents until his understanding was more complete, and he urged the old duke to appoint a person of his court to meet with my father and answer his questions. In the event that this person did not have the knowledge required to answer the questions posed, he would be expected to get these answers from the duke and convey them to my father.

There was little use, my father said, of his speaking any further with the old duke and no more with his son, who gave every indication of being blind to both his father's shortcomings and the tyranny of his rule. He spoke, my father said, only when his father required him to confirm the statements that the old duke had made. My father concluded by saying that his meeting had made it clear that it would be necessary to gather the necessary facts by direct observance and that we needed to speak further on this subject, but that he felt just then a great need for fresh air and that he would like me to walk with him. Perhaps we would see Tom again, he said, though he added that he considered it unlikely.

Friday, 7/17/92 4:03AM

My father and I spoke seriously that day of what we could do to learn more of the beating of Tom. It was obviously not possible to ask directly of the duke or his son. My father felt certain that there was no possibility of honest exchange with the old duke about his treatment of his subjects and he felt that the young duke

would be equally uncooperative. At the same time, it was clear that none of the uncommunicative servants would speak to us even if they knew of the beating and its designated purpose.

I was not, I am afraid, of much help to my father in this consideration. The only person I could imagine speaking to us of this was Tom himself, assuming that he had not been coerced into silence by the brutal way in which he had been treated. I tried to put myself in Tom's place and tried to imagine what course of action I would choose to take under similar circumstances. I realized even as I tried that it was not possible for me to imagine the workings of Tom's mind, to know completely how he must have reacted to his beating. I reasoned that he must have felt anger at his oppressor, both the direct and indirect oppressor, for certainly the authority for such treatment as Tom had experienced had to come from the duke himself. I wondered if the beating had had the desired effect of frightening Tom into compliance with the duke's interdiction about speaking to strangers or whether Tom's youth gave him the resilience to feel a resentment that could express

itself in defiance of this authority which had so abused him. I had the feeling, without being sure, that this was not the first beating Tom had experienced.

My father and I had agreed that the very public nature of Tom's punishment was designed to communicate to me the folly of speaking to servants and causing them to defy their master's orders. We were agreed that this very element in the situation made it incumbent upon both of us to seek to know more of Tom's plight. To do this, my father said, we would have to seek out Tom and speak to him directly. I protested in a respectful manner that this would further jeopardize Tom's physical well being. If this beating had been equally punishment and warning, would we not be responsible for any further harm coming to Tom if we encouraged him to speak to us further? My father assured me that he would take steps to see that Tom's safety would be assured.

We were in no way certain that we would be able to find Tom, but the very boldness of his beating suggested to my father that the old duke and his underlings would not bother to hide Tom

from public view. Indeed in their arrogance they would, my father felt, be persuaded that the treatment of Tom would serve as fair warning to all the other workers within the palace household and holdings and that we would be persuaded of the absoluteness of the duke's control over those within his rule.

My father suggested that we postpone the search for Tom until the following day. He said that we would go together on our morning ride and that this time we would have our equerry accompany us. I did not understand the reason, either for postponing the search or for our being accompanied by our equerry, and I did not feel that I should ask. My father was still clearly upset by the incident and asked that I indulge him by withdrawing to my rooms for an hour or so and give him time to think and to write of all we had learned and of all we proposed to do. He encouraged me to do the same, and I left as he asked.

When I got back to my rooms, I surprised a young man I had not seen before. He was not one of the regular servants I had seen before, and at the time I did not question the reason for

his being in my quarters. I assumed that he was about his duties, and he had already left when I had cause to wonder if he had been in my rooms for some other reason.

Saturday, 7/18/92 3:40AM

Dinner that evening was a repetition of the first evening. The company was the same. The food was equally lavish. The duke once more stridently dominated the conversation, if it can be called that, and his son dutifully echoed his sentiments and confirmed the truth of all his father professed to believe in. This time my father made little effort to respond to the statements of the duke and his son which clearly offended him. He remained silent and expressionless. It was not even possible for us to converse, seated as we were too far distant from each other to permit quiet exchange.

For a while I listened closely to all the old duke said, intending to write a detailed account of his expostulations, but soon I found my mind wandering. I thought of home and longed for the

pleasantness of a dinner with my brothers and sisters. I longed for the gentle kindness of my mother and for her words and her gentle touch. As I mused I caught my father's eye and I realized that he knew my mind was elsewhere. I straightened in my chair and nodded my head and tried to look attentive. For a while again I listened closely and then once more the voice of the duke became nothing more than background sound and my thoughts drifted elsewhere.

In my mind's eye I saw once again the scene of Tom's beating. It had been like a pantomime, and I tried to imagine the cruel sound the whip must have made as it landed sharply on Tom's back. I wondered if he had cried out in pain or if he had managed to maintain stoical silence. Only then did I realize the strangeness of there not being another person in sight in the courtyard at that time. Prior to the beating and after the beating the area was filled with activity. Had all these servants quietly withdrawn knowing what was going to happen? Had they watched too as this cruel punishment had been inflicted, silent, and observed accepting it as inevitable, unprotesting? Had they felt a sympathy they did not dare ex-

press or were they so accustomed to such treatment that they accepted it as inevitable? How about 'Tom? Was he accepting? Resigned? Resentful? I longed at that moment to speak to him.

Once more I looked up to find my father's eyes upon me, but this time he winked, unmistakably winked. His expression did not change. There was no smile, but that wink made me smile. My companion to my right chose that instant to turn to me and begin to engage me in conversation. I knew that she was a distant cousin of the duke, an elderly lady who visited often. She had told me of herself early in the meal and then turned away to speak to her neighbor on her right. I made no effort to listen to their conversation. It held no interest for me, but now she turned to me and caught me smiling quietly and demanded to know the cause of my mirth. I begged her to excuse me, and said that I had been recalling an amusing incident. That was all. She demanded that I relate it to her and permit her to share in the amusement. She longed, she said, to smile. I was trapped. I cast about in my mind for a reply and with some effort recalled an incident in

which I had been unceremoniously unhorsed in front of a large group of people. I described my embarrassment as I scrambled to my feet and brushed myself off, and the quiet concern of my father for my safety. I went into some detail. She tittered as I spoke and I found myself exaggerating to heighten her amusement. I began to be aware that I had some talent as a story teller, or at least that I was capable of amusing a thoroughly bored old lady. It was not much of a triumph, but it was my only diversion that endless meal.

When the meal was completed and we withdrew, my companion expressed her pleasure in all I had said and confided that she had quite enjoyed herself and was hopeful that she would be able to hear more of my exploits before our departure. I wondered fleetingly if this lady might be a source of information for us and determined that on our next encounter I would try to seek out her feelings about the old duke and his treatment of his subjects. I had the feeling that she would not be a great source of information, but that it was worth the effort to find out.

I was abnormally pleased with myself for having

been entertaining, and I recounted to my father my entire conversation. He smiled quietly recalling the event himself, and asked what had happened to my royal dignity. For a moment I thought his question serious. Then again, a wink. We spoke agreeably for a while before we parted and my father reminded me that we would be rising very early in the morning for our ride. He counseled early retirement and a good night's sleep. I heeded his advice and lay in bed before I slept, once more seeing in my mind's eye the kneeling figure of Tom and the rise and fall of the whip.

Wednesday, 7/22/92 6:40 AM

For a while we rode aimlessly, not speaking much, but at each moment both of us searched the sides of the road for a glimpse of Tom. Once we saw a figure that resembled his, but when we drew closer it was clearly not he. For about thirty minutes we traveled over the same paths as the day before and had almost concluded that we would have no success in our search, when our equerry suggested that if we

were not too weary of riding we try a path he had explored on arrival which he had found most pleasant. My father thanked him and looked to me for agreement. I nodded my head, and my father told our equerry to lead the way.

He turned his horse sharply to the left and led us down a path much narrower, much more overgrown than the one we had been on. For a while we had to avoid overhanging branches as we progressed, and the equerry called out warnings as to this overgrowth. After a few minutes of this rugged terrain, the path widened, and we came upon a vista of great beauty. We were on a slight rise at the edge of the thick forest, and before our eyes stretched the gently rolling hills of the duchy. The sun was suddenly intense, and the green of the hills seemed to shimmer.

We drew up to admire this beauty and sat astride our horses in silent appreciation. My father complimented our equerry on his discovery and asked what else of beauty he had uncovered in his surveys. He said that this was the most dramatic, but that there were countless other pleasantly winding paths that were well worth exploring, and he suggested returning to the cas-

tle in a roundabout way to see and enjoy one of these routes. We readily agreed, though I had to admit the beginnings of hunger and a certain anticipation of a hearty breakfast. Once again the equerry took the lead, my father followed, and I brought up the rear.

We were well into the woods once more, although this path was wider and less hazardous with overgrown brush, when we came upon a group of peasants, trudging along the path, their tools carried on their shoulders. They moved respectfully to the side of the path when they heard us approaching, but did not look up as we rode by. I was almost positive that one of them was Tom, although I could not see his face, but his build and size seemed almost if not totally identical. I did not know what to do, and after I passed them I drew abreast of my father and told him what I suspected. He did not slacken his pace, nor did he say anything for a few moments.

It was clear that we could not go back and examine the group in search of Tom without creating the kind of disturbance that would quickly reach the ears of the duke. As we pulled further

and further away, my heart sank and I yearned for words from my father. He advised me to be patient and said that we had achieved a kind of success in discovering Tom and that he had a plan for following up this discovery.

I had to be satisfied with what my father said and promised, and I knew that he never promised lightly. As we rode I tried to think of a stratagem that I would choose to employ to make contact with Tom. I devised and discarded several before we were finally back at the castle, surrendering our horses to the grooms and heading for the room in which we knew our meal awaited us. My father said that we would speak further that morning of what we must do, that out of courtesy with no expectation of accomplishment he would meet with the duke's representatives as he had requested. He was hopeful of answers and information, he said, but feared that he would be disappointed. He said that if I wished I could sit silently in this meeting. I agreed with great enthusiasm, but wanted even more to know what my father planned to do about Tom. I was not to be disappointed that day.

Friday, 7/24/92 4:05 AM

Before we proceeded further, my father said when we spoke of Tom after our arrival back at the castle, we must determine on a larger plan. He said that since it was clear that the duke had not considered it necessary to hide Tom or to spirit him away from the castle grounds, we had the leisure to plan carefully what we would do when we found him once more. It would be of little use, my father continued, to speak to Tom and to hear all he said without knowing more of the duke's practices beyond the single incident of Tom's punishment. To this end, the duke's practices must be as fully revealed as possible, and to this end, my father added, it would be advisable to know more of the living conditions of all the peasants on the duke's estate. He reminded me that I had said that I would have no fear in going among the people serving the duke as a stranger, lost and seeking my way.

My heart started to race when I heard my father's words. At last, I said to myself, true adventure on this mission. He would arrange, my father told me, for me to have clothing suitable

for this attempt to pass myself off as a harmless stranger, and he would make such arrangements as were necessary to insure my safety. I did not ask and he did not tell me what such arrangements were. It would be up to me, my father advised, to use my ingenuity in this quest for information. He suggested that I plan on spending the entire day seeking this information, and said that he would make excuses for my absence from the noon meal should anyone inquire.

My excitement mounted as I listened to my father speak. It was hard for me to believe that I was being entrusted with so much responsibility, and I swore to myself that I would not fail to meet my father's expectations of me. I was filled with a sense of challenge and promise and felt that the day ahead would be richly rewarding. I waited impatiently when my father left his rooms, advising me that he would return shortly with the clothing I would need. As I waited I went over in my mind the areas which I was familiar with on the castle grounds in a vain effort to determine where I would first be likely to meet success. There was no logical starting point, I decided, and I determined to follow my

instincts on this search and hoped that they would serve me well.

My father returned after a short time with a set of clothing suitable for my purposes. They were nondescript, neither ragged nor showy, designed to attract no attention, drab in color and cut, perfect, it seemed to me, for my purposes. As I changed, my father advised me to use caution without abandoning the boldness that was my nature. He said that I should do my best to leave the immediate area of the palace unnoticed as far as possible and to try to determine if I was being followed or observed by anyone in the duke's employ. If I was definitely being watched and followed, he advised, I should simply walk about long enough to throw off suspicion and hope that I would cause whoever was following me to abandon his observation. If I failed to do that, my father said, I should return to my rooms and we would devise another stratagem for another time.

I did not know at the time that in this my father was testing my powers of observation since he had in his absence arranged to have me discreetly followed by two in his guard who would

at all times see to my safety. They had been instructed to keep out of my sight as completely as possible. My father further advised me to abandon my efforts at the slightest hint of danger to my person. I should not, he said, employ any tactics that were foolhardy or dishonorable. I was not sure what he meant by this admonition, but agreed readily, anxious to be on my way.

Thursday, 7/30/92 10:10AM

There was little need to be careful leaving the palace grounds. There were few about, and the servants I passed in the hallways and in the courtyard did not look directly at me as I went by, merely touched their hands to their heads in gestures of obeisance in some cases and in others merely stopped as I passed and bobbed their heads in courtesy. I was still puzzled by this total lack of communication between those served and those serving, but I shook off my concern about this aspect of the duke's household and set my thoughts to the task at hand.

On my right as I left the castle was a pathway

that I had not yet explored either on foot or on horse, and I set off in that direction knowing fully that if I found nothing there I had ample time to pursue other paths in my search. This was a pleasant walkway, carefully cultivated, and led to a small pavilion in a clearing. There was a deserted air about the pavilion, as if it had not been used in a long time. When I explored it carefully, though, there was evidence that someone else had been here shortly before. There were fresh footprints, or at least evidence of footprints in the vague outline in the dust, and bits of fresh earth. I stooped and felt the bits of earth with my fingers. They were still damp. I was puzzled by this. It had not rained since our arrival. Where the dampness could have come from puzzled me. Even in the dense undergrowth in parts of the forest there was not so much moisture as these bits of earth indicated.

I carefully wrapped a bit of this earth in a corner of my kerchief and decided to push further along in this direction. It was slow going past the pavilion. The brush had not been trimmed recently, and though the path was clearly marked it was not easy to traverse. It was clear, however,

that I was not the first to come down this brambly path recently. The undergrowth had been disturbed and the ends of branches were broken off or bent all along the way.

My excitement mounted as I progressed along the way. I strained my ears for any untoward sound, but I heard nothing but the songs of the birds and the occasional scurrying of an animal in the underbrush. The sound of my own footsteps, even muffled as they were by the spongy growth I trod on, seemed loud to my ears, and I knew that my approach would not go undetected by anyone ahead on the path. I proceeded thus, pausing occasionally to stop and listen, for perhaps ten minutes, maybe slightly more, and was almost prepared to turn back in despair when I came to a clearing. The path widened into a sort of dell, and through this dell ran a brook, narrow and shallow, but clearly a possible source of the moisture in the soil I had found in the pavilion. I told myself not to rejoice too soon, that this was not clear evidence that I was close to any discovery, but in my heart I knew I was.

I sat for a few minutes on the edge of the brook, both to enjoy the beauty of the spot and to try

to decide in which direction to go next. There was a choice to be made about the direction in which to follow the waterway. As I sat there musing, my eyes fell on what looked like foot prints in the earth beside the brook on the opposite side. That would explain the damp bits of earth, I thought to myself. Some one had crossed the brook and carried with him the bits of moist earth to the pavilion. My eye told me that the brook was shallow enough to traverse without getting very wet, and in addition the water was strewn with stones over which it bubbled along, and although undoubtedly slippery, these stones would serve as footing to get from one side to the other.

I sat a few minutes longer, my decision about what I would do next still weighing on my mind. I hoped that when I reached the other side I would be able to follow the trail of this mysterious stranger. His footsteps were clearly visible for a while, heading downstream, and I decided to follow them and hope that when they came to an end I would have further signs to guide me. I tried to judge the time of day. I knew I had not been gone from the castle for more than an

hour, and so I judged that it must be an hour or so short of noon.

Monday 8/10/92 4:30PM

Before I knew what was happening I was seized by strong hands. They grasped my shoulders and lifted me to my feet, then turned me round. I found myself staring into eyes that searched my face frantically, then faded into disappointment. He dropped his hands from my shoulders and clapped them to his face, covering it completely.

As I watched, totally puzzled, he dropped to his knees, his hands still shielding his face from view. His shoulders slumped and shudders shook his body. I realized that he was crying. Sobs of total anguish reached my ears. I stood riveted to the spot too shaken by the suddenness of the experience to think and react. I had never before seen this man, and yet I had the feeling that his anguish came from disappointment that I was not the person he expected me to be. He was dressed poorly. I judged him to be a worker of the lower orders, a woodsman, perhaps. I

longed to touch him, to give a measure of comfort or reassurance, but I feared to do so. His grief was so intense that I feared to aggravate it in any way.

Shortly his tremors lessened and the sounds of his sorrow subsided. He did not uncover his face for a few minutes longer, and when he did he looked at me once again and shook his head silently and despairingly from side to side. I judged it time to speak to this stranger, and I asked what I could do to help him in any way. For a moment he said nothing. He got to his feet as if in a dream state and took a step or two backward. Then he paused and began to speak.

The words came with difficulty, and he cleared his throat and began again to speak. He thought I was someone else, he said, when he first came upon me. This much I had assumed and I said as much. Why, I asked, had he been so disturbed to discover his mistake? He hesitated before replying, and when he did speak it was to ask my identity and to require of me an explanation of how I happened to be at this spot right now. I responded that I was a stranger gone astray, beguiled by the beauty of the woods to stray from

the path I had been pursuing and now looking for directions back to the main road. I was not a skillful liar and my words sounded suspect to me, but the man seemed to accept them as reasonable. He said he would be glad to guide me as I required, and begged my forgiveness for so startling me.

I could not pretend total lack of interest in the cause of his anguish and I begged him to forgive me for my curiosity but asked for an explanation. He sat down next to where I stood and gestured for me to sit beside him. I did so willingly and waited silently for him to speak. When he did speak it was to ask me what I knew of the owner of the land on which we both trespassed. I pretended total ignorance of this and asked him to continue, whereupon he proceeded to speak of the old duke in terms so deeply bitter that they took me by surprise.

He had been born a serf on this estate, he said, many years ago and had grown embittered by his lot and the lot of all those related to him by ties of love and friendship. From his earliest years he had been encouraged by his father to believe that one day he would escape the bondage into which

he had been born. His father, he said with a sad smile, was a remarkable man, beaten and embittered by life, but totally devoted to his children, who grew up with dreams of a different life, dreams born in and nurtured by the words of their father.

One by one they had run away, escaped from their drudgery and servitude, and each of them had evaded pursuers and established better lives for themselves in distant places. Most of them, he said, had lost touch with each other, but risked capture by coming back over and over again to visit the father who had given them their freedom by filling their souls with hope and their minds and spirits with determination. Each visit was a deliberate risk, a risk gladly accepted, for it afforded a chance to express the love and gratitude he and his brothers felt for their aging father and an opportunity to learn of the fortunes of these brothers lost to each other but bound in love through their father.

This was the spot, he said, where he always found his father when he came to visit. The old man made it a habit to come to this place a set number of times each month always at this hour

or close to it. Only rarely did he have a visitor, but when he did it was always a child, now a man, come in love. He had tried often he said, to persuade his father to join him in flight, but never had he succeeded. The old man protested that he could not leave with one son and lose the rest. As it was, he had said over and over, his joy in his life was knowledge of the freedom of his sons. His own freedom mattered little. He would stay and encourage others to rebel.

Lately, the stranger continued, word had come to him that his father, now old and tired, was in difficulty, that the duke, always harsh, had become a total despot, unforgiving and vengeful, and that word had come to him of his father's radical speech. He had heard that the duke had taken harsh measures against his father, but he knew no more. So he had come to find out, and when he had seen me sitting where his father always sat at the exact time of their infrequent rendezvous, he had not stopped to think, but that the intensity of the relief he felt had led him to the mistaken assumption that I was his father. There was not much difference in our builds, he said. His father was a small, slight man.

With all this I still did not understand how a simple error of this sort could be so fraught with emotion, and I dared to say so, hoping that I would not cause him additional grief. At my question he sighed deeply and turned his head to look straight into my eyes. I was young, he said, and I did not know the duke, so it would be hard for me to imagine the intensity of the concern he felt for his father's well being. Word had reached him that the duke, always harsh, had become brutally cruel with those who defied him in any way, and he felt an intense fear that his father might have come to suffer from the duke's cruelty. When he mistakenly assumed that I was his father, he said, the tension seemed to explode into relief. Then, when he discovered his error and knew with certainty that his father would not have failed to be at this spot without grave reason, all his fears returned and multiplied and erupted into the anguish I had witnessed. He knew, he said, he knew now that he had been right to come, that his father was in peril, that his father needed him.

I had the opportunity as he spoke to examine this stranger. He was younger than I first

thought, perhaps ten years older than I, no more, dressed much as I was, in simple clothing, unobtrusive. We were much the same build, much the same coloring. We could have been brothers. Struck by this curious resemblance, I determined that I would try to use it to advantage.

Friday, 8/14/92 8:30AM

I asked him gently what he next proposed to do. Perhaps, I said, he would permit me to go with him. Perhaps, I said, he would find companionship not unpleasant, perhaps usefully distracting. In my heart I hoped desperately that he would agree to my suggestion, that he would help me in my search as I offered to help him in his. He agreed, almost distractedly, and sighed repeatedly as he spoke further. He knew, he said, his father's dwelling place, but to go there was to invite discovery by the duke's minions, and he knew that discovery meant certain recapture and possible death. He proposed to lurk nearby covered by the brush and hope for a glimpse of one he knew to be friendly and in that way to secure

information about what had happened to his father. He repeated that his father would not have been absent from this spot had he in any way been able to be there.

Emboldened by his speech, I suggested that there might be significance in the footprints in the damp earth along the river bed, if river it could be called, narrow and shallow as it was. Risking exposure, I told him of my happening upon the pavilion, of my finding evidence that someone had recently been there, and I pulled from my pocket my kerchief and showed him the bits of damp earth I had picked up. He examined the earth closely, rolled it between his fingers, and smelled it. He said he felt sure that my supposition was correct, that someone had carried the earth on his shoes from this spot.

I presumed further and suggested that perhaps unable to come himself, his father has sent an emissary to wait for him and bring him news. At this suggestion his face brightened and he jumped to his feet. I followed suit and together we set off in search of the old man. After crossing the brook, we followed the footprints until they disappeared into the underbrush. There we

stopped and waited, noiselessly, hoping that whoever had come seeking my companion would make his presence known.

For what seemed an interminable time there was total silence except for the sounds of the forest. My companion's shoulders slumped in discouragement and his eyes clouded once again with fear and concern. He shook his head from side to side as he looked at me, and then slumped to the ground, his back against a tree, his knees bent, and buried his face in his hands. Not knowing what to do, fearing to make any sound at all, I stood and watched his silent anguish. Then came a clear sharp whistle, a moment's silence, then three sharp whistles. Then silence again. I knew it was not a bird.

At the first sound my companion raised his head in expectation. When the three sounds came, his face broke into a smile, and he put his fingers to his mouth and emulated this signal, for that is what it really was, I realized. There was no response for a while. Then again we heard a single sharp whistling sound, followed by silence for a moment, then four sharp whistles. At this my companion jumped to his feet and again emu-

lated the signal.

I watched, fascinated. He motioned to me to remain absolutely silent. I did so willingly. Then there was a rustling of leaves and from the leafy undergrowth emerged a young boy, perhaps my age, perhaps a year or two older, who made no sound and indicated that we should follow him. There was no hesitation on our part. He led us back into the thick of the forest with a sureness that indicated that he knew this path well. It seemed to me that we zigzagged a good deal for reasons I could not then comprehend, and once I was sure that we had doubled back on our path, but I was not as familiar as our guide with these woodlands, as I fully realized, and felt certain that there was reason in what he did.

Wednesday, 8/26/92 5:42AM

As we wound our way stealthily through the forest, I realized that if I had not been lost before I certainly was at that point. I remembered my promise to my father to be careful and cautious and wondered what he would say if he saw me

now. I thought of my mother and felt a stab of pain. The thought of never seeing her again brought tears to my eyes, and I wondered if my boldness had proved to be my undoing.

Just as I was about to speak despite the potential danger of sound, we came into a clearing. The boy who had been leading us stood and waited for us to stretch and recover from the hunching walk that the thick undergrowth had demanded. He himself seemed not to have been affected. He spoke quietly and urgently to my new found friend. He told him that his father was waiting to see him and that he would shortly be at the spot assigned. At the mention of his father's name, my new found friend heaved a sigh of relief and a torrent of questions tumbled from his lips. The boy shook his head and said that the time for questions would come later. The answers were not his to give. With that he disappeared back into the forest and we were left alone.

By now I had forgotten my fright in the excitement of the adventure. I asked my friend if he had ever been in this spot before. Had he recognized any of the route we took to get here? He replied that the woods on one part of this estate

were very much like all the rest, that he was not familiar enough to distinguish one part from the other. Obviously, he added, our guide had studied the forest to know its secrets so well.

I was beginning to be hungry and thirsty and comforted myself with the thought that this deprivation simply added reality to my adventure. At that moment my companion pulled a flask from somewhere in his clothing, took a long swallow, and offered it to me. Water had never tasted so good. I halfway hoped he had food secured somewhere on his person, but I did not ask, hesitant to reveal such a weakness as hunger.

We stood there for only a few minutes before the branches parted ahead of us and another young boy emerged. I judged him almost exactly the same age as the first, but this one was dark where the other had been fair. He greeted us gravely in turn and said that we were near the end of our journey. He too carried water and offered it to me first. I hesitated to be greedy, but my thirst had not been slaked, and I gratefully accepted his flask and put it to my lips. The water tasted more brackish, but I still drank

gratefully. My companion waved away the flask when it was offered to him and asked for his father. He asked for reassurance that he was well. At this the boy said he was not empowered to speak of this, that he had his instructions to meet us here and take us to another place. That was all he knew.

We set off once again. By now I was thoroughly confused. What was the sense in all this mystery? Why were the guides not more forthcoming? Was my companion too beginning to have doubts, to ask questions? I could not, I knew, voice these questions, and I reminded myself of what I was attempting to do. I knew I had only a few more hours before my father would begin to be alarmed. I knew the impossibility of his knowing how to help me should I need it, and this thought, rather than alarming me further, gave me new strength and fresh resolve not to disappoint my father or to alarm him in any way. When I thought of my love for both my parents, I felt full sympathy for this man's need to see his father and to know he was safe and well.

Sunday, 9/6/92 7:40AM

There is time enough, I thought, for me to spend at least two more hours before heading back to the castle, and so I followed my new found friend into the woods once more. We were led into a clearing barely large enough for us to stand together. Again, we waited. During this time there was no speech among us. I was tense with excitement and filled with both hope and dread. I had a feeling of foreboding. There had been little to reassure me about Tom, who was, after all, the direct object of my search, and now this feeling of foreboding was doubled when I thought of my friend's anguish about the fate of his father.

Again came the signal. Three clear bell like whistles evenly spaced. Our guide listened intently and responded in similar fashion. Then came a single long sustained trill, and at this he gestured to us to follow him once again. It was not long before we reached a widened path, obviously well used, and our pace quickened. Within a minute or two we saw in the near distance a gathering of men and women, perhaps twelve in

all, standing, sitting, strolling, obviously waiting. When they saw us, they looked expectantly toward us and one of them, clearly the leader, left the rest of the group and approached us.

He greeted us solemnly and embraced my friend. He gestured for our guide to leave us, and he melted back into the woods without a word. I stood back and listened as my friend explained my presence and asked about his father. At this the leader's face darkened and he put his arms about my friend's shoulders.

"Your father," he said, "is unable to be with us. He lives, but barely. He has been harshly treated, but his spirit is as strong as ever it was." It was necessary, he added, to be this secretive in guiding him to his father for the protection of all.

I watched my friend's face and saw it change in expression from hope to despair, from confidence to concern. He asked to be taken directly to his father. The other nodded and said that he would in time, but that first he must know what had led to his father's being so harshly treated and that these men and women were gathered here at some peril to themselves to relate to him the circumstances leading to this moment.

This concerned many, they said, when they began to speak, one at a time, of the onerous conditions which all those who were bound in servitude to the duke experienced. They told him that the saga of the freedom that he and his brothers had achieved and his father's part in bringing it about was told in each household and that his father was little less than a god in the eyes of those who suffered under the duke's tyranny. One by one other young men, similarly encouraged, had escaped from bondage and as their numbers grew, the duke's concern grew and his cruelty increased. There was no way to punish those who had escaped, but those who remained were punished in their stead.

The duke was aware, they said, of the power of the old man's words and attributed the flight to freedom directly to him. At first he was simply warned to end his encouragement to those who were ready to seek freedom. Later he was imprisoned in his own hut as a warning to all who dared think of rebelling against their lot. The number of guards increased everywhere and their ears heard all. The slightest hint of rebellion meant severe punishment. One by one the

members of the group related their individual experiences with the duke's wrath, and I could see the anguish in their eyes and hear the pleading in their words. I could see too the sympathy in my friend's face as he remembered his own days of servitude.

Finally the recital ended and my friend spoke.

Monday, 9/21/92 5:52AM

As I stood there I was aware suddenly of a scurrying in the underbrush nearby. No one but me seemed to notice the sound, but my eyes were riveted to the spot when a strange looking animal emerged. It looked part dog, part cat, quite the most unusual specimen I had ever seen.

Soon the other members of the group spied this creature and one by one they froze, as if to attention. This little creature approached the group and nonchalantly nosed about my legs. Seeing the behavior of the others, I did not move, but watched as he finished his investigation of me, wandered across the clearing, and disappeared once again into the underbrush.

There was an exhalation of breath as the little creature disappeared, and the leader spoke once more and said that we must be on our way. My new found friend clasped me around the shoulders as we set off once more. It took very little time to reach a small cabin, little more than a hut, and the leader motioned my friend forward.

"Have courage" is all he said to him. I followed my friend to the doorway and through it. It was dark inside, and it took a moment for my eyes to adjust to the dimness. Not so my friend. Immediately upon entering he rushed to the bed where an old man lay, apparently insensitive, a young girl by his side holding his hand. My friend threw himself to his knees and clasped the old man's other hand to his breast. His tears flowed freely, and the only sound in the room was that of the old man's labored breathing. We stayed thus for what seemed to me an eternity, but could not have been more than five minutes. Finally the old man's eyes fluttered open and he turned his head to look at my friend.

He uttered a strange sound, rather like that a distressed animal might make, and tried to sit up. The young girl arose and gently pressed him

down once more.

"Father," said my friend, "you are ill. I have come to take care of you. You must come with me. You must." By now his distress was acute.

Once again came the strange strangled sound. The old man's head shook from side to side in evident distress. Tears slipped down his face and he closed his eyes once more.

I was puzzled. Why didn't the old man speak? There was a noise behind me and I turned and saw the leader of the group standing just inside the doorway, clearly trying to control his emotions. My friend looked up and saw him too. His eyes mirrored his anguish and asked a question. "He cannot speak," he said to my friend. "They have mutilated him."

A cry like that of a mortally wounded animal escaped my friend's lips, and he reached across the bed and grasped his father as if to lift him and carry him off. Gentle hands disengaged his grasp. The old man moaned piteously. I moved forward and took my friend's arm in an effort to pull him to his feet. It was like tugging on a dead weight. Then the leader joined me in my effort

and together we succeeded in lifting my friend to his feet and leading him outside. He was a broken man, tears streaming from his eyes, his shoulders slumped in defeat.

Saturday, 9/26/92 8:35AM

I could not believe what was happening. My efforts to find Tom had taken me far afield, and this discovery was more horrifying than any I had anticipated. I wished desperately that my father were here to have seen and heard all I had and was hearing. I wished desperately for the wisdom to know what to do. I prayed. In the meantime I could find no words of comfort for my suffering friend. He stood and silently wept. There was no one else about now. Even the man who had led us here had disappeared, I hoped only momentarily.

I put my arm around my friend's waist and led him to a crudely fashioned seat which stood outside the hut. We sat side by side for a few moments before I spoke. I told him first that I wished to help. He shook his head from side to

side as if to say there was no help. He reached for my hand and gripped it fiercely and was obviously making a great effort to control his grief.

"There is nothing you can do," he said finally.

"There is nothing anyone can do now. My poor father." And with that word came a fresh flow of tears.

I waited a moment. I knew suddenly what I must do. When he seemed calm enough I began to speak. I told him that I had not been totally honest with him, that I was indeed a stranger, but that I was searching for much more than a way back to the main road. He lifted his head and looked at me, at first blankly, then with dawning curiosity in his eyes. I asked him if I could trust him with the truth of my identity. He shook his head in mute agreement. Then I told him my whole story. I told him that my father and I had come here sent by the queen to determine the truth of the duke's complaints about rebellion among his serfs. He had, I said, requested royal assistance in putting down rebellion and suppressing sedition and disloyalty to the crown.

As I spoke his eyes grew wide with wonder. I told him about the strange silence among the

servants that had puzzled us. I told him about my encounter with Tom and the beating I had witnessed. I told him about my father's agreement that I be permitted to seek to find Tom and learn more. I had failed to find Tom, I said, but I had learned much more than I had anticipated. Now, I said, the time had come for action.

My plan, as I outlined it for him, was to bring my father to this place and let him see with his own eyes the duke's treatment of one of his men. Then, I said, I would seek to know of Tom and to talk with him and let him tell us his tale. Finally, I said, I wished all those who had spoken in the woods to gather together here in one spot to retell their tale to my father. Anticipating his objections, I stressed that there was no danger in speaking to my father, certainly no more than in speaking to me and to him, that in fact my father could be instrumental in putting an end to the suffering we had seen and heard of.

All through my recital, my friend has not once interrupted. Indeed he seemed almost to have stopped breathing, so still was he. When I paused he asked if my father was indeed that powerful, that close to the queen's power. I real-

ized with a rueful laugh that I had indeed not identified my father fully, that I had said only that he was sent by the queen. I decided to leave it at that, and I assured him that my father had the queen's absolute trust and that whatever action he suggested to the queen would be implemented at once.

At this, my friend jumped to his feet, pulled me up, and clasped me to him. I saw hope in his eyes and I prayed that my father would not think me too bold in my proposal. He would, said my friend, arrange everything. He would persuade those who needed persuasion and perhaps find Tom for me. My heart filled with pleasure at the thought of seeing Tom again.

I proposed that someone be at the pavilion from early morning until noon to meet us and to guide us back to this spot. It would be easy for whoever waited to hide in the underbrush. There was instant agreement, and almost as if the woods had ears, the man who had led us to this place emerged from the trees. Indeed he had heard all I said and his eyes too glowed with new found hope, but "Let me take you back to the pavilion" is all he said. After saying farewell to

my friend, I followed him in total silence back to the pavilion where we parted.

Tuesday, 7/21/98 10:30AM

Before long Joseph realized the true nature of his obligation. In his youthful curiosity he had discovered secrets carefully hidden from sight by the old duke. He needed to inform his father of all he had learned. At the same time he needed to be careful about betraying all those who had led to his disquieting discoveries. He knew that his father would not in any way doubt his veracity, but he feared he might suspect exaggeration.

It was a simple matter for Joseph to agree with his new found friends on a time and a meeting place so that his father could see with his own eyes the true state of affairs in the dukedom. He had no doubt whatsoever of his father's response. With high hopes, Joseph set off for the castle, and as he wended his way through the wooded path he went over in his mind all that he needed to relate to persuade his father of the seriousness of the situation. He saw in his mind's eye the agony of the old man deprived of speech in the cruelest of ways, and he recalled his horror at the inhumanity that this cruelty bespoke.

When he arrived back in sight of the castle he was careful to assume a cheerful demeanor, for he felt that he was being carefully watched. His suspicions were confirmed when the young duke accosted him in the halls and with barely concealed disdain asked where he had been these many hours. Joseph affected an air of nonchalance and recounted the time he had spent exploring as an interest in the flora and fauna of the region. He was grateful for the young duke's lack of real interest, for he would have been hard pressed to go into detail. As the young duke moved off, Joseph felt a profound sense of distaste for all that he and his father represented as rulers and felt a strong sense of gratitude that his parents ruled so wisely and so well

Wednesday, 7/22/98 10:36AM

I did not expect such a severe reaction from my father. He commended me on my diligence in the search for truth about the duke's treatment of his serfs, but he spoke sharply to me about the risks I had taken to my person and therefore to the royal person in succession. Then his voice

softened and he confessed that the blame was primarily his to bear, that I had not been gone minutes before he had realized the folly of my not being in any way guarded from harm and he had sent one of his men to follow and find me, but to no avail. His instinct was at first to create enough of a stir to encourage an all out search, but his mistrust of the duke and those surrounding him stayed his hand and he had spent the day in prayerful waiting. When he was involved in discussion, my father said, his mind was elsewhere, and finally he begged to excuse himself from further meetings.

I was so full of enthusiasm for all I had discovered that I found myself incapable of feeling penitent. I had, after all, gone with permission, and I could not have stopped in mid-discovery. When I tried to explain this to my father, my words were inadequate but my father, seeing my excitement and knowing my intense concern, clapped me on the shoulder and said that perhaps he was overly protective in this case, but with a smile he spoke of how my mother might have reacted had I come to harm.

"Well," he said, "no harm has been done, and

now I am ready to hear."

Without further ado I spoke of my journey through the woods and my various encounters. When I spoke of the serf so cruelly treated my father's expression darkened and I noted that his fists were clenched. I told him of my promise to return with him. My father nodded. (10:50)

Thursday, 7/23/98 10:55AM

It was not an easy matter to escape the duke's scrutiny. All that day and well into the next, my father was occupied with conversations with the duke and his underlings. As my father reported it, there was no end to the old duke's complaints, and he claimed to fear the kind of uprising among his serfs that could spread like wildfire and threaten the crown itself. Though my father did not in any way take this as a likelihood, he kept his counsel and listened patiently hour after hour to the old duke's accusations. When finally he was free, we made plans.

My father, in his wisdom, suggested that we take our early morning ride as usual and that once

out of sight of the castle we leave our horses with the equerry and proceed on foot to the pavilion where watchful eyes would note our arrival. As we rode, my father maintained a silence so complete that I began to be alarmed.

"Is he upset with me?" I asked myself as I stole glances at his troubled expression. I chose to join him in his silence lest I say something untoward.

Finally we reached the pavilion and turned our horses over to the equerry. Then as he moved away, my father broke the silence.

"And now, Joseph?" he asked, "What now?"

I prayed that all I had planned would come to be, but at that moment all I could say was, "We wait here, Father. Someone will come." My heart leaped when a few moments later we heard the clear unmistakable signal, a whistle that sounded remarkably like a bird call but was not. Then silence. Then again three clear trills. I did not dare speak. The equerry stood to one side, having tethered the horses to a nearby tree and fetched them water from the stream. My father looked puzzled at the sound of what he took to be a repeated bird trill, but I could not conceal my ex-

citement.

"They are coming," I said, and almost before I completed the sentence there was a rustle in the bushes surrounding the pavilion and out stepped a young man I had not seen before. He spoke not a word, but gestured for us to follow him. My father looked at me questioningly, and in my excitement I grabbed his arm and pulled him to the edge of the pavilion. He gently disengaged himself and a smile played about his lips as he said, "I am coming, Joseph. There is no need for violence."

I did not dare laugh aloud at his humor, but my heart was glad and grateful. (11:14)

Friday, 7/24/98 4:55AM

Before long we reached the clearing in the woods where I had spoken with those I wished my father to hear. Our guide motioned to us to stay. I wondered at his absolute silence, but before I could say a word he disappeared into the woods. We waited, and I was beginning to be concerned, when suddenly several men and one

woman emerged from the woods and stood silently before us. There were a dozen all told and still not a word was spoken for several minutes. Their eyes were downcast and they clasped their hands in front of them almost as if they had rehearsed this scene. Finally my friend came into sight. He approached us and I held out my hand in greeting. He seized it gratefully and then bowed to my father.

"I am glad to see you," I began. "We have come to hear your stories."

Then one by one they spoke, still not looking directly at us, their voices low, their speech labored. Each story was one of abuse by the duke for offenses minor or imagined. Each one described in detail the nature of the punishment and I was hard pressed to keep my expression unaltered. I could not envision such sadistic behavior as I was hearing about. I glanced at my father now and again and saw that his brow was furrowed and again his fists clenched. When each person finished speaking he thanked him and the serf backed into the group and stood silent once again. At last the woman spoke, and her story was perhaps the worst. She spoke of

children born in pain and cherished in love who were cruelly taken from her when they reached the age of usefulness. The old duke had used them as gifts to those whose favor he sought. She was not alone in this, she said. It was more common than not. When a woman chose not to have children who could be taken away the duke sent one of his men to service her to insure procreation and a steady supply of pawns.

My father, by now clearly moved, asked my friend the spokesman how long this cruel treatment had been going on. The response was quick and definite. "As long as I can remember, sire, but it has got worse lately. We have no reason to live."

I was impatient for my father to see with his own eyes the full extent of the duke's inhumanity and asked that we be taken to the old man's hovel. Silently the spokesman led the way.

Saturday, 7/25/98 10:55PM

It was not long before we reached the entrance to the dismal dwelling of the old man so abused

by the duke. I stood aside and let my father enter first. He stood to one side as the rest of us followed. The room was hushed except for the rasping of the old man's breath. His daughter knelt by his side, clasping his hand in hers and occasionally burying her face in the bed covers.

My friend spoke haltingly, overcome by emotion. "Sire," he said, "this is what the duke has done to a brave and honest man. He wanted nothing for himself but he dreamed of a better life for his sons and to this end he encouraged us to defy the duke and to seek freedom. Had we known the price of our freedom we would not have embraced it so freely."

At this moment the old man stirred in his bed and turned his face toward us. He opened his eyes and fixed them upon my father. A smile lit his gaunt features and he uttered a strangled sound. It was his greeting, I thought to myself, and I struggled to hold back tears.

My father, a tower of strength always, moved to the old man's pallet and stood gazing down on him. The silence was absolute. Then my father spoke. "You have not suffered in vain," he said. "Justice will be served in time."

The old man blinked and held out his hand to my father. They touched hands in a way that moved all those who saw it. A promise had been made. I knew it would be kept.

As we left the room, I looked back to see the old man's daughter gently wiping away the tears that coursed down his cheeks. My pride in my father knew no bounds.

Wednesday, 7/29/98

It was a silent ride back to the castle. I knew that my father had been deeply moved and equally disturbed by what he heard from the lips of those the duke held in subservience. I knew that it would take a high degree of diplomacy to bring aid to those so sorely in need of it. I remembered the duke's arrogant nature and I wondered if he was capable of change and correction.

When we reached the castle and dismounted, my father turned to me and smiled.

'You did well, my son,' he said. "Let us proceed further in this business together."

I could not believe my ears. --"together"! --and I could not conceal my excitement.

"Yes, sir," I replied, my voice filled with joy. I had difficulty standing still. My father clapped me on the shoulder.

"We have much to consider," he said. "Let us begin at once."

I followed him through the dark and musty hallways to his assigned quarters. As usual, the servants skittered into hiding as we approached. The duke and his noble guests were nowhere in evidence. For this I was grateful. It would have been difficult to feign pleasure in greeting them. It would have been even more difficult to explain how we had spent our day.

In the end we did not see the duke until the dinner hour, and by then my father and I had spent time in earnest conversation about what we could do immediately. I listened with awe to my father's words. He spoke of the humane nature of my mother's rule, of her hope that each of her subjects would be treated as one of God's children, regardless of station. He cited examples of the power of the queen's example and persuasion and said that though the duke might

be both arrogant and stubborn he had no alternative to obeying the royal command. What that royal command would be it was easy for me to imagine, but I could not envision its execution.

"You will see," my father promised, "and you will thereby learn."

Thursday, 7/30/98 11:25PM

At all times I knew the wonder that my father was to me. He was my mother's greatest strength, and he, along with her, was a god to us children, at times distant and unapproachable, at others a kindly and supportive parent intensely concerned with our welfare. At all times he was a paragon of virtue and righteousness and a fitting companion and helpmate to the woman he loved regardless and at times in spite of her power and responsibilities. My mother depended entirely upon my father's good judgment when she distrusted all other advisors, and never did she doubt the rightness and helpfulness of his advice. There was no doubt in my mind as my father and I spoke of what must be done to

avenge and mollify the evil behavior of the duke that whatever my father advised would come to be.

We determined that we would advise the duke that we have learned all that was necessary to report to the queen the true state of affairs in the dukedom. I smiled as I thought of the extent to which the old duke would consider himself vindicated in the eyes of the queen when indeed the truth was quite the opposite. The duke insisted that one last night in his domain be marked by a dinner more splendid, he said, than we had known for some time. Inwardly I groaned at the prospect. Inwardly I smiled at his presumption. My father, always correct in his words and in his reactions, thanked the duke for his consideration and pleaded both fatigue and haste. He asked to be forgiven for his ingratitude but said that we must be underway as quickly as provisions could be assembled and as quickly as the duke would formally excuse us.

In time, despite the duke's protestations, our plans for departure were completed and we set off on our homeward course. I hoped as we left that we would spy one or another of those who

had so enlightened us as to the true state of affairs, but I was disappointed in this. If they watched our departure they were invisible. but in my heart I knew that we had left them and all those equally abused with a new sense of hope and faith. This was enough, though I truly regretted not having seen Tom once more.

Friday, 7/31/98 9:30PM

When we reached home at last there was a great fuss about our arrival. My mother glowed with pleasure at what she called her two "treasures" with her again and all my brothers and sisters seemed genuinely glad to see me, though I think that their enthusiasm about our return had more to do with our father than with me, but perhaps I am being unfair in this judgment. In any case, there was much evidence of family feeling and during the evening I was conscious to my mother's appraising examination of me. It was almost as if she knew I held secrets as yet unrevealed. I luxuriated in my secret knowledge and hoped that my father would let me be present when he spoke of our discoveries. Indeed that is

exactly what occurred.

I do not know of the exchange that night between my parents in the privacy of their personal quarters, but mid-morning I received a somewhat formal summons that my presence was required by my mother the queen. My heart began to pound and I hoped that I would do justice in reporting my experiences as to the gravity of the situation.

When I arrived in the room where my mother waited for me I was surprised by the absence of my father. I hesitated at the doorway, certain that I had to be in error arriving at this place at that time. One of my mother's courtiers stepped forward and escorted me to her side. I bowed before my queen also my mother and waited expectantly. My mother motioned all those in the room in dismissal and shortly we were alone.

My mother rose from her seat and embraced me and then bade me sit by her side.

"You have a report to make," she said.

I blushed and fumbled. "I?" I asked.

"Were you not sent with your father for this purpose?" she asked, and before I could answer, to-

tally confused as I was, she enveloped me in warm embrace once again.

"Oh, Joseph," she said, "your father has told me that you were a son to be proud of on your mission, and he advised me of the wisdom of hearing of your success from you first of all. I confess to a very unroyal curiosity about my son's capacities."

I was further embarrassed by this unexpected turn of events, but at the same time grateful for my father's kindness. So I began my tale. As I spoke I watched my mother's face carefully and I could see that she was as affected as my father and I had been at the details of the suffering imposed by the duke on those souls totally dependent upon him.

Saturday, 8/1/98 10:38PM

There was a long pause after I had finished my recital and an even longer one before I dared ask about what my father had said to the queen in his report of our experiences. I was taken aback when my mother said that she had not heard of

what my father needed and expected to report to her. He had, she said, deferred to me since mine had been the initial discovery of the duke's wily infidelity to all the crown demanded of its peers. My mother was pleased, she said, by all my father had reported of my behavior both within and without the castle and its grounds and she wanted me to feel pleased with myself in all I had done in her behalf.

My joy was complete. Still I was confused. Was this all? Was I not to know of what my father reported of his endless meetings with the duke and his supporters? Was I to be a part of the decision that was inevitable in what was needed to curb and correct the duke's inhospitable rule? As much as I appreciated my mother's full attention to my account of all I had experienced I could not escape the feeling that she was indulging me, that I would have no impact upon her consideration of what this crisis with the duke demanded of the crown.

As I stood there, confused and uncertain, the door to my mother's chambers opened, and I knew without a question before he entered that it was my father. No one else entered unbidden

and without permission. The sense of relief I felt was enormous. Now, now, I would understand the part I had played, the part I was playing. I knew that I was little more than a child, and yet I had been treated as a near equal by my father in our journey. I had no desire to be less, and my heart rejoiced when I heard my father's first words. He said, after greeting my mother, "Well, my son, we both look to you for advice. You have touched the hearts of these subjects of the crown and they look to you even more than to me and to your mother for an answer to their misery. What, Joseph, does your mind speak of this? You know the power of the crown. You know its limitations. Yours is a great responsibility in this matter. Tell us what you advise."
(10:56)

Monday, 8/3/98 4:25PM

As I sat there filled with pride I knew a sense of reverence for the power of the throne, a power that one day would be mine. I hoped that that day would be very long in coming. I had much to

learn and I could not even imagine being equal in devotion and wisdom to my mother. She was all things to all people -- revered, admired, loved. It was heady, though, to contemplate that far off day.

As I was thinking these boyish thoughts I momentarily lost track of the words exchanged by my parents, and it was only when there was a sudden silence and both looked at me questioningly that I was brought back to the present. I must have looked quite blank. Certainly I stammered as I tried to excuse my inattention. Fortunately both my mother and my father found it amusing and they exchanged a knowing look, much to my discomfort.

I still did not know what the question was. Then my father repeated his last words which I had heard while my mind was elsewhere. Even when I knew what was being asked of me I still did not know what to say.

"Perhaps," I began, "you can send forces, not to quell the unrest among the serfs but to quell the old duke and cause him to change his ways."

My mother smiled, "What," she asked, "could I do to persuade the duke to change his ways?"

What could my soldiers do?"

I knew I was getting into deep water.

"Well," I began hesitantly, "their very presence would cause the duke to fear the power of the crown. Could you not deprive him of his lands if he fails to change his ways?"

Both of my parents smiled gently at this suggestion. I began to feel foolish. Then my mother explained gently to me that whereas she did possess the power to forfeit lands and thereby wealth she needed to use that power wisely.

"What do you think, Joseph, would be the reaction of all the other peers?"

I began to see the sense of her question,

"They would not like it," I admitted, "but if they knew of the reason for your actions they would understand."

"Yes, indeed," my mother said. "We must take no action without fully informing the other peers of the realm, How should we do that?"

I knew that my mother was testing me beyond my capacity. I simply did not have an answer.

11:50PM

My audience with my parents lasted much longer than I had first anticipated. My parents, having tried me beyond all my abilities, relented in their questioning and I listened in total fascination as my father recounted to my mother those endless meetings with the duke and his hangers on, the hours when I had been banished and had found the true nature of the duke. I remembered the tiresome dinners in which I felt I had suffered cheerfully, and I wondered at the patience of my father subject to hours on end of the same boring self serving proclamations. I knew as I listened that in his efficient way my father was sparing my mother all unnecessary details, and I knew too with a great sense of self satisfaction that my recital to my mother had provided the necessary background for a reasonable and royal decision.

I was therefore pleased when at the end of my father's recital and my mother's close questioning I was once more the focus of their attention. I knew that each of them had decided upon a wise course of action, though I had only the

dimmiest idea of what that might be. I knew, though, that the germ of an idea had originated in my mother's questioning about the need to share knowledge of the duke's perfidy.

My parents were kind in not pressing me further. Yet I longed to say more. I waited patiently for a chance to speak.

"Could you not summon a congress?" I asked.

"Could you not speak in general terms of all you expect of the ruling class and in that way introduce the subject of the erring duke?"

My mother beamed with pleasure. "I think, Joseph, that you have the makings of a diplomat. That, my son, is the first and most essential characteristic of a successful ruler. You please me as you please your father in this endeavor. This will not be the last of your challenges."

Tuesday, 8/4/98. 10:40PM

It was not long before my life returned to normal and I was only infrequently aware of the affairs of state. Having been introduced to a role of great importance, I found it difficult to return

to being a mere boy. I found my tutor boring in his insistence that I master foreign tongues which I would never use. I found my younger siblings foolish in their interests and pastimes, childish in their conversations. In short, I found myself returning to that state of youthful arrogance I thought I had discarded some time ago. I was a fish out of water, so to speak, so briefly a part of the adult world of mystery and statecraft, so totally returned to childhood oblivion. Of course I recognized that I was being much too self pitying, but I was unable to dismiss my discontent with life. I wondered when childhood would end and the real business of living begin. Then when I was beginning to despair of being rescued from my new found discontent with my life came a summons from my mother to attend to her in her official capacity as queen. My confusion was complete. I did not know what to expect. For weeks I had been part of my mother's children and we had spent much time as a family. Never once did she refer to my adventures with the serfs of the wayward duke. Now, like a bolt of lightning, I was called to my queen, not as her child, but as --- what? I did not know. I did not

fear to learn, but I was in an agony of impatience. My father was no help. He did not betray any awareness of my mother the queen's summons, and I knew that it was inappropriate to ask.

Finally the day came and the clock crept slowly to the hour. I dressed with care and was careful to be prompt, almost to the second. Then I approached. Two courtiers guarded the entrance to the queen's chambers. They knew full well who I was but did not betray the slightest recognition. One of them, with the blankest of expressions, opened the door, and without the slightest hint of the trepidation I felt, I entered my mother's official chambers. (10:55)

Thursday, 8/6/98 1:25PM

I could not believe my eyes. Assembled around my mother's seat of honor were a large group of advisors and noblemen, some of whom I knew by sight, some of whom I knew by name, others new to me in both respects. There was a slight murmur among them as I approached the

throne. Apparently I was as much a surprise to them as they were to me.

I kept my eyes upon my queen mother as I bowed before her. She reached out her hand and drew me to my feet. Still holding my hand, she said to the assembled court,

"All of you know my son Joseph as my heir and some of you know him as a remarkable young man in his own right. I have asked him to come here this day on a matter of state in the belief that his words are both relevant and unique in the matter at hand."

Then she relinquished my hand and drew herself up in the most majestic of poses. I stood quietly by her side waiting for the drama to begin. My mother had an economical way with words, and she spoke with great conviction and precision of the appeal for aid in quelling an insurrection among his serfs by one of the noble peers. She did not name the duke, and there was much gazing about by those present as if she might be speaking of one of them. My mother went on to explain my father's mission to establish the validity or lack of validity of the plea for royal force. Then, looking toward me, she continued,

"Quite by chance or perhaps by divine will, my son Joseph who accompanied his father on this journey made discoveries about the truth of the matter that must guide us in correcting a fearful and threatening situation."

Then she announced that I would speak directly to the assembled court of dreadful truth discovered.

My mouth was dry. I am sure my face was flushed. I drew a deep breath and began to recount all I had learned of the truth. At one point inadvertently I used the word "duke" and there was a stirring in the audience and further glancing about.

I had feared to be less than eloquent, but when I saw once again in my mind's eye the results of the duke's tyranny my tongue must have responded to the intensity of my feelings. As I spoke I saw horror on the faces of those before me and I knew that I had been persuasive when at the end of my story there was at first a scattering of applause, then a general outburst.
(1:45)

Saturday, 8/8/98 4:04PM

My mother was clearly pleased. She smiled at me and at all those present. She waited for silence. When it came she said that she needed whatever advice the assemblage chose to give to her now that the situation had been made so clear.

One by one they spoke and to a man agreed that severe measures were both advisable and necessary. To a man they agreed that the queen was well within her rights to exercise her royal prerogative in any way she chose and that their support would be complete. I was pleased to hear the loving support for my mother that she both deserved and inspired. Still no one had asked the queen to identify her rogue subject. I wondered at this lack of curiosity and then realized that it was not at all lack of curiosity but respect for their ruler. Should she choose to make this disclosure they would listen, but the choice was hers alone and she need say nothing further.

I chafed at the bit. I wanted a course of action clearly stated. When it was not I squirmed impatiently, and this childish reaction brought a frown of disapproval to my mother's face. Im-

mediately I ceased my squirming and tried to adopt a more mature manner, but inside I seethed with impatience.

When my mother rose to leave the room I followed her, finding it difficult to believe that the meeting was over. All those in attendance bowed in respect as their queen departed.

When we reached the family quarters my mother sat in a more relaxed manner and questioned me about what I had learned. I fumbled, hesitating to express disappointment but needing to be honest.

"I wish," I said, " that I had heard what was to be done to the duke."

My mother responded with a smile she tried to hide. "My son, you have not learned the first requirement of diplomacy. I have told you that diplomacy is a primary element in ruling. Now I tell you that patience is a primary element in diplomacy. Do you understand?"

I confessed that I did not completely.

"Well," my mother continued, "I would have severely limited my choice of action had I been specific in any way. What we were seeking in this

assembly was awareness of the duke's perfidy and agreement that strong action is needed. Did we get this?"

Sheepishly I admitted to the wisdom of all my mother said. Still I longed to know what was to come. For the moment I had learned a little about the essential nature of patience. I had much more left to learn.

Sunday, 8/9/98 4:10PM

In the aftermath of my conversation with my mother I had cause to wonder at my father's absence from the gathering in the queen's chambers. I knew that my mother must have been prompt in reporting to him all that was said. The next time we met, my father remarked on the speed with which we would be certain to correct the duke's ways. I ached to speak further and to pepper him with questions, but the time was not appropriate for further discussion and I exercised the patience I knew I had to make a habit.

Within a week, though, there was a chance for me to satisfy my curiosity. My father asked me to

walk with him for a time. We did not go far from the castle, but it was a pleasant day and the gardens, so beloved of my mother, were beautiful to behold. In a playful way my father asked me to identify several species of plants. I had in my growing years spent much time in work on the gardens, a task my mother felt appropriate and valuable for all her children, and so I had no difficulty in giving the correct appellation each time I was asked. The thought occurred to me that as a result of my mother's insistence on her children's serving their time in the gardens I might know more than my father in this field of knowledge. The thought pleased me.

Then, as we quickened our pace, my father asked if I had any comments on all that had occurred so far regarding the duke. I told him with as much modesty as I could summon that I felt I had been persuasive in my words before the assemblage and that it had pleased me that the support for my mother was so absolute, so firmly expressed. My father nodded and then stopped walking.

"Do you have further questions, my son, about what course of action the crown will take?"

I confessed that I was curious indeed but that I had one other question I was not sure I should ask.

"And what," my father asked, "is that?"

I told him that I had wondered at his absence from the meeting which the queen had arranged.

"After all," I said, "it was you who dealt directly with the duke."

With the utmost gentleness my father then explained. His was at times a difficult position. There were those among the nobility who were fearful and jealous of the extent to which the queen relied on her husband in matters of state.

"As your mother has pointed out to you, " he continued, "diplomacy is a vital ingredient in ruling. It was not diplomatic for me to attend the meeting. It was important that the facts be fully stated and your mother has told you how eloquently you did that. It is and always has been important that all her subjects realize that the queen is the sole ruler of the realm. In all cases it is important that she exercise all prerogatives that are hers by divine right. I want never to be seen as an undue influence."

I had no more to say except to thank my father for his wise words. I was still learning. (4:37)

Monday, 8/10/98 6:05PM

My learning continued in many ways. Apparently word spread among the great houses of my performance, so to speak, at the gathering of the queen's advisers and lesser peers. Indeed my mother remarked to me once that she had heard much comment about the concern I had clearly felt for those mistreated subjects. She reminded me that the more suddenly fame comes the sooner it may leave. I think that she was gently reminding me of the unfortunate tendency to be arrogant which I thought I had learned to control but which I feared lurked always in my nature.

My father took the occasion several times to ask me to walk about with him, and in his clever way he questioned me about various subjects, some general in nature, others particularly relevant to all that was occurring in our state and empire. My tutor had been at pains to see that I was

aware of past events and their impact upon our empire, and so think I acquitted myself well enough in these responses, but I think my general knowledge fell far short of my father's expectations. Certainly my mind held only a small fraction of the knowledge that my father could claim. Never was he impatient with me, never condescending, but I was left with both awareness of my own shortcomings and a fierce determination to apply myself more assiduously in my studies.

On the whole I was finding the transformation from childhood to young adulthood pleasurable, and in a sense I longed for the days to pass more quickly so that I would all the sooner be admitted to the world of responsibilities and privileges, of challenge and response. I determined over and over again to work as hard as I knew how so that one day my parents would feel the pride in me that I felt in them. (6:30)

Tuesday, 8/11/98 3:45PM

When I look back upon those wondrous years as

both child and adult, learner and teacher, I am filled with a sense of great gratitude to so many, but particularly to my mother and father. I regard the affair of the miscreant duke as a turning point in my life, a lesson I have never forgotten nor ever will. I had no hand in the actions taken against the duke, and indeed did not know of what was occurring until success was achieved and justice done. Then, once again, I was allowed to be aware and to share.

My mother the queen, I learned later -- altogether almost a year -- had moved swiftly and effectively to restore the dukedom to its rightful response to the needs of its people. She had sent a number of her soldiers to the dukedom in charge of one of the most trusted of her officers and advisers. He bore with him documents which left no doubt of the fact that he represented the queen and her absolute power and that his orders were beyond question or consideration.

The duke, not having been forewarned, welcomed the soldiers and their leader with open arms. It was only when the duke and his son were summoned by the crown's representative

for a private audience that the old duke and his heir learned the truth of the queen's response and the full extent of her outrage. At first the duke pleaded innocence under the baleful eyes of his son and denied completely all the charges brought against him as based on untruths. As soon as he uttered the words he knew completely his blunder in imputing dishonesty to the husband of the queen and the heir apparent.

The queen's representative listened in stony silence as the duke raved on and on, seemingly unable to curb his speech, about how he was driven to harsh measures by the ingratitude and disloyalty of the subject serfs. The more he said the clearer was his guilt, his distorted mind, his inability to realize what had gone wrong. Still there was no word from the young duke. I remembered how totally the son had defended the father during those interminable dinners my father and I suffered through and wondered if he had been aware of the degree of his father's cruelty. This question, I was told when I asked, was never definitively answered. In any case, it was irrelevant.

The queen's wish was that the old duke surren-

der his title to his son, provided that the son promised in good faith to right the wrongs of his father in very specific ways, ways which the queen had made conditional on the family's continued residence and rule. These conditions, I was told, were not revealed in that first meeting. The queen, speaking through her representative, simply delivered an ultimatum, and it was the duty of the old duke to yield to his son all his noble rights and responsibilities. If the old duke agreed to the queen's demand, then the son would be expected to accept with these rights and responsibilities, as well as the title, the conditions imposed by the queen, and he would be expected to promise faithfully and solemnly to do as the queen demanded without even being told exactly what was asked.

The first meeting ended at that point, and the duke and his son were told to come to a decision before the next day was out. They could choose to do as the queen asked or they could refuse.
(4:10)

Wednesday, 8/12/98 4:33PM

It was an abashed duke who arrived at the next meeting. Almost equally abashed was his son. The queen's representative was not moved to pity for this pair, but he felt a tiny twinge of regret that great pride had led to such a downfall. The process was pleasant for no one, including the queen, but there was no alternative to the stern measures about to be proposed, for it was clear from their demeanor that there was no fight left in either father or son. They were prepared to comply.

There was a silence as the three first sat, I was told, and only when the old duke shook his head from side to side indicating his inability or unwillingness to speak that the son said in almost a whisper, "We bow to the queen's will."

There was a further silence until the old duke was able to confirm the words of his son. Then the queen's representative drew out an official document attesting to the surrender of title, lands, and wealth by the duke to his son. He placed this document on the table and with a flourish handed the old duke an instrument to

use in inscribing his name, along with the date and place of signing.

The queen's spokesman then drew out a second document listing in detail the changes in the rule of the dukedom that the new duke promised to effect in a timely fashion. The young duke barely glanced at the list before signing with a flourish. A third document was drawn from the case, a copy of all that the queen wished. The young duke smiled wanly as he accepted this list and listened closely as the queen's representative explained that the crown intended to monitor closely all the changes that were promised. There were a few things, he said, that needed to be done immediately and he and his soldiers would stay in the dukedom until they were accomplished.

Friday, 8/14/98 5:37PM EDT

And so the queen prevailed completely. Freed from subservience, the new duke saw in his father's downfall a lesson to be learned. Equally he saw in the beneficence of the queen further

learning. He found himself changing in his attitudes and in his feelings in ways he could not earlier have imagined.

Chief among the promises he made to his queen was restitution as completely as possible to all those who had known suffering under the stern rule of his father. Above all he was to seek out personally the old man so cruelly deprived of speech and speak directly to him of the regret he felt for past cruelty. At first the new duke regarded this demand as unreasonable, as a degradation of his status, but shortly he was able to see the advantages of such an action. He could envision restoration of trust and an openness of mind. Indeed, when this finally occurred, and it was through the good graces of the queen's representative that the meeting was arranged, he was surprised to find himself genuinely moved and deeply regretful. As he promised, he arranged for the old man and his daughter to be comfortably housed. He further announced that any and all of his sons could visit him freely without fear of apprehension.

At first the suspicion of treachery disguised as kindness was universal among the serfs, but

when they understood from the lips of the queen's representative that the young duke acted under orders from the crown, their fear and suspicion lessened, though it did not disappear completely for some time. In turn, the new duke began to believe in the effectiveness of benevolent rule.

All the rest of the queen's demands followed. The duke's soldiers were strictly forbidden to indulge their carnal desires on unwilling females. Beatings were abolished for any reason. Slowly a new spirit was generated within the community of those who served the duke and trust was born. The very air changed, it seemed to the duke.

Sunday, 8/16/98 5:20PM

I longed to revisit the dukedom and see for myself how changed life had become for those who had bared their souls to me. I did not speak of this for a long time, for it seemed to me somewhat presumptuous. I knew that pride was a besetting sin of mine and I feared that this was my

motivation. Yet the picture of Tom bent in agony under the lash stayed as vivid in my mind as it was at first sight, and I could not dismiss the feeling that he represented to me a chapter in both our lives that needed closing.

This so preyed on my mind that I could finally not resist speaking to my father of my dream of finding Tom well and happy and in kind hands. My father was even more understanding than I had dared hope, and he promised to consider my need and to consult with the queen.

It was not long before I turned once again to my father and asked about the possibility of revising the dukedom in the company of those insuring the permanence of the changes demanded by the crown. I knew that there were frequent visits by those charged with such oversight, and it seemed to me that I was old enough to accompany them on one of their visits. At this second request my father counseled patience. He reminded me of the value of this virtue and reminded me as well of the love of my mother, a love that sought to please me in all ways that contributed to my welfare. He assured me that neither of my parents had forgotten my wish to

see Tom once again and that I would have a decision in good time.

You can imagine my astonishment when a few months later my father asked me to walk with him for a very important reason. That reason, as it turned out, was Tom. We were only a few minutes from the castle when I saw a boyish figure in the distance. It was not one I recognized immediately, but there was a vague familiarity about it. My father did not say a word about this figure as we approached but rather continued his observations on the state of the empire. My heart began to beat a little faster as we drew closer and I dared think that my dream had come true, and indeed it had. (5:40)

7:40PM

Tom took a few steps toward us and stood still. I could not restrain myself and exclaimed loudly. At the sound of my voice Tom responded in kind and we greeted each other like long lost friends. It was impossible not to notice the difference in Tom. He stood straighter. His voice

was confident. He had no hesitation in greeting us warmly. He was trusting. Perhaps this had always been an important part of Tom's nature. Even when he had much to fear he had trusted me, and his disclosures had led directly to the reforms that had so transformed him.

[At this point I was interrupted.]

11:58PM

[I told Martin I would be pleased if he would continue, and he did so.]

His news was totally cheering. He said that the queen's will had worked miracles. At first grudgingly, the new duke had effected reforms that had far reaching effects. At first he was unbelieving. He suspected that the peace that seemed to come about was superficial at best and simply masked the discontent that his father had seen as a precursor to violence. Then, gradually, his fears lessened and he began to realize the wisdom of all that the queen represented in beneficent rule. His father existed in the shadows, a bare reflection of the tyrant who had been deposed more

by his own hand than by any other's, and the son found in himself a new pity for the father he had feared so completely. He rejoiced in his new freedom and discovered within himself qualities in which he found great satisfaction. He realized each passing day the blessings that the queen's will had created in the dukedom, and each passing day brought fresh gratitude from those so newly freed from the cruelties of life they had known for so long.

In all, Tom was ebullient. He confessed that he had been totally puzzled when he was ordered to accompany the queen's men back to her presence. He recounted his interview with her and his wonder at the full extent of her concern at his well being. He confessed astonishment at learning my true identity and then awe and fear at encountering me once again. It was only the queen's quiet assurance that had brought him peace and confidence, and it was at the queen's urging that this meeting had been arranged.

When Tom finished explaining his presence, I was aware anew of the power of the crown and of the infinite goodness of the queen, my mother. In this blessing I counted my father as

well, and all I longed to convey to Tom who, I think already knew the perfection of love I found in my parents, they in each other, and the intensity of concern that involved all those subject to the royal responsibility. It was an awesome awareness I suddenly felt, and I hoped that I was able to convey at least in small measure its infinite generosity to one who had been so affected by it. (12:13)

Monday, 8/17/98 5:20PM

I could not conceal my pleasure in seeing Tom again had I wished to, and indeed there was no reason for me to disguise the joy I felt in sharing his joy. My father watched without comment our reunion and stood quietly to one side as we shared words. It pleased him, I learned later, to have been a major mover in the effort to find Tom and to bring him to this meeting. It was pleasing to me that my father had sensed so completely our need to complete what we had begun and for me to know how Tom's life had changed.

I asked question after question, and each answer pleased me more. When my curiosity had been completely satisfied as to all that had changed under the new duke's rule, a new thought occurred. What now, I asked myself, is to happen to Tom? Was he brought here just to please me? Would he be returned now to the duke's rule? I remembered with a pang that Tom had no family to return to, and of course, I could not help contrasting his lot with mine in this regard. Yet I dared not hope that anything had been planned that would make Tom a permanent part of my life.

In this I was to be indulged.

Tuesday, 8/18/98 11:15AM

My mother, as I learned later, had been much taken with Tom. She found his honesty engaging, and she was pleased that he felt no compunction about speaking to her as a friend as well as his sovereign. She wondered, she said, how many other bright young people born into serfdom were denied the opportunity to grow in

all ways desirable. It was easy for her to choose to give Tom the opportunities thus far denied him. She said nothing to Tom during their meeting, but she began to plan his immediate future.

Tom would, she decided, begin by working in the royal gardens where he would be closely supervised and encouraged to assume responsibility. At the same time she would arrange for him to learn to read and write and discover in this way how much aptitude he had for scholarly achievement. My mother always planned ahead. She said later that she could envision Tom progressing to a managerial position in the court business. How, exactly, she would determine later when Tom had time to orient and apply himself.

In this way Tom became a part of my life. I knew that we could never be equals in the eyes of the world, and I knew that some would frown at our friendship, but these considerations mattered not at all to me, nor did they to my parents. When Tom was told of my mother's long term plans for him he was at first disbelieving, then hesitant. He could not imagine being so privileged, he said later, and he was to some extent fearful that he would not be able to please and to

succeed.

I spoke to Tom of his concerns, and I think, without being immodest, that I succeeded in quelling his fears more than any one else could have. We were, after all, of an age. Tom knew that both of my parents had treated him in a more kindly fashion than he had ever known, but it was difficult for him to believe that the dream, for that is how he regarded the change in his life, would last. Finally he was persuaded that he would never be held at fault so long as he made the best effort of which he was capable.

And so began a new life for my friend, and my life was thereby enriched. (11:32)

Tuesday, 8/18/98 11:59PM

In all the years that followed, Tom grew in security and responsibility. His winsome personality won him many friends, and my mother took a kindly interest in his progress, though she made it clear that his success depended entirely on his effort and ability and not at all on royal favor.

All those who served my mother were at all

times aware of her total honesty and objectivity. Even her children were subject to this demanding sense of responsibility. Each of us was expected to perform to our utmost ability, always aware that our success in all ways depended upon ourselves. We could not fail, we were told repeatedly, if we tried at all times to live up to our inborn capacities. This was a precept that stood me well in times of uncertainty and crisis, and I think it so affected all those with whom the queen dealt in even handed justice and caring.

Tom and I found our paths diverging within a few short years, but, like my mother, I kept myself informed of his well being. All of us rejoiced when Tom established a family of his own, and it was our pleasure to hear occasionally of the loved offspring that lighted his life.

In all, I could not have fashioned a better life for Tom than he fashioned himself, beginning with the good graces of my mother the queen and developing with the perseverance and application that marked Tom's every act. Though I saw him only occasionally over the years, I was at all times grateful that I had been instrumental in

making this new beginning for Tom turn into a happy ending.

Wednesday, 8/19/98 8:00AM

My belief in the beneficence of my mother's rule increased with the years. She led by example, and in her example she exercised great power. My father was stalwart in all ways. There was never a moment when his support in all she strove to do was less than complete. In our parents all we children found the love and security essential to both happiness and growth. It was a rare gift, particularly among those privileged in material ways.

When the time came for me to rule the empire I found in myself strengths and convictions directly attributable to the gifts of love I had known through all the years of childhood and maturity. There was little that motivated me beyond a burning desire for just distribution of all of earth's bounty and an end to divisions among men. I longed to see the highest and the lowest in our stratified society embrace each other as

brothers in the full awareness of God's grace.

I found great joy in using my power to bring about a more just society. I needed little more to be pleased with life. There were those who approved of me and those who were appalled by me. I was pleased with the former and ignored the latter. Never for a moment did I doubt the rightness of all I tried to achieve. I knew that history would find me wanting in many ways, but I chose to disregard this judgment too. Never, I think, was I swayed by concern for the opinions of others. In this attitude my youthful arrogance stood me in good stead. (8:11)