

Eliza Rose

I began to yawn and stretch myself, but suddenly the thought of the cold was banished from my mind. 'Henny!' I said urgently. 'Have you forgotten what day it is?' 'It's Tuesday, my love,' she said, now with her back to me, pulling down the blanket we pegged over the window to keep out the worst of the draught at night.

'Henny!'

Her shoulders twitched. An instant too late I realised that of course she knew perfectly well that today was my birthday. She turned round with a broad smile.

'Gah!' I said, making a fist and tugging at my long braid. She had caught me out. But I could not help grinning back. A new thought struck me as I tossed my messy plait back over my shoulder. 'Henny, does my father want to give me a present?'

'I don't think so, not at this hour.' My father wasn't very good at remembering things like presents anyway. But Henny could be relied upon to have got me a sugar mouse or a new pair of velvet slippers.

'Well, what then?'

'What a question! As if his lordship would discuss such a thing with me.'

I laughed. 'Oh, Henny, he knows you're one of our family!'

'Nonsense, child. Now hurry.' She turned away quickly as if to stir up the miserable little fire in our great, gaping stone hearth. But she was too late and I'd detected that she was beaming.

Henny was my nurse, but really I was far too grown-up to need one. I called her instead my 'tiring woman', who helped me to get dressed or attired. Unfortunately Henny herself kept forgetting about her new status, and when I reminded her, she would usually say that I was the tiring one, and that I quite wore her out with my questions, my constant demands for new stories ('not *that one*, we had it last week') and the mess that I made of my clothes.

Despite Henny's efforts with the fire, it was so cold that the tiny glass panes of my window were beaded with moisture. I snatched my toes back from the freezing floor and burrowed round in my bed for a pair of woollen stockings I had taken off last night. It had been too chilly to get out of my bed to return them to their proper place in the chest. As I threw off the coverlet and the rather threadbare linen sheets, Henny

handed me my heavy velvet robe with the fur trim. It was a sumptuous garment that was sadly disfigured by a great stain down the front. Nothing in our house, Stoneton – a snake of ancient grey towers running along the top of a hill – was quite as grand as it seemed at first.

I did up my robe as quickly as I could. Catching a glimpse of freezing fog outside the window, I grabbed a shawl to go on top. I had hardly finished swathing myself in fabric when Henny prodded me towards the door. 'All right, all right!' I grumbled. There was never usually this level of urgency in our early morning routine, even on a birthday.

Henny shooed me down the uneven floor of the long gallery, and we passed by the door to the best bedchamber. It always stood empty, being saved for important guests who never came. Next to it hung a tapestry showing a forest in full leaf, which actually concealed a tiny little hidden door. This led to the sally port, the secret staircase, and my favourite part of our house. The winding steps led upwards to the walkway that led around the high defensive walls, and downwards, they took you to the hidden entrance from the garden. I would often steal away to the secret stairs myself, looking for a place to hide when my father was in a bad temper. Henny spotted my hesitation by the secret door.

'You're not in trouble this morning, you know,' she said, giving my shoulder a little squeeze.

Eliza Rose by Lucy Worsley

Questions

1 Which of these words is **not** a synonym of 'banished'?

dismissed ejected vanished expelled [1 mark]

2 What is the 'sally port'?

[1 mark]

3 What was the girl's velvet robe trimmed with?

[1 mark]

4 At what time does the extract take place? Find **two** pieces of evidence from the text to support your answer.

[2 marks]

5 '*Nonsense, child. Now hurry.*'

Find and copy **two** other phrases which support the idea that Henny is encouraging the girl to move quickly.

[2 marks]

6 Why do you think the girl hesitates by the secret door?

[2 marks]

7 '*...miserable little fire in our great, gaping stone hearth.*'

How does this phrase support the idea that nothing about the house is as grand as it seems?

[2 marks]

8 The house is described as '*a snake of ancient grey towers running along the top of a hill*'. Explain what this suggests about the appearance of the house.

[1 mark]

9 Towards the beginning of the extract, Henny turns her back on the girl and pretends she doesn't know that it is the girl's birthday. Find and copy another quote where Henny tries to hide what she is feeling.

[1 mark]

10 Find **two** pieces of evidence from the text that suggest that the girl's father can be a difficult man.

[2 marks]