

THE BOOK OF HOURS

Tender hands clasped me as I listened to the soft whisper of her gentle voice. Solemnly reciting the words inscribed upon my pages, I felt her grasp suddenly tighten as she glanced down at the etchings on the next page, her diamond encrusted gold rings scraping a cold chill, which tiptoed down my leather spine.

She murmured to herself, 'If you remember my love in your prayers as strongly as I adore you, I shall hardly be forgotten, for I am yours. Henry R. forever'.

This sentence made her palms clamp around me tighter and I could feel her pulse racing in her wrists. I remember as Henry placed his feather quill upon my pages and started scrawling words with such a flourish, not caring as his quill punctured the page and sent ink splattering across the beautiful image of the angel telling Mary she would have a son.

Anne stood up with me and crossed the room, her hands slightly trembling, with excitement or fear, I could not tell. Placing me on the hard oak-wood table she slid effortlessly into her chair, curled her fingers around her soft white quill and dipped it into the small pot of ink, carefully writing 'By daily proof you shall me find To be to you both loving and kind'. She paused, a droplet of ink fell onto the corner of my page, like a tear.

I gazed around as Anne hurried from her room. Thick stone walls displayed their magnificent paintings with pride, but the low ceiling seemed to imprison us. We reached the end of the corridor and she inhaled a deep breath of musty air and stepped outside of the castle into the warm Spring air.

Crossing the drawbridge, I could see glittering water with sparkling fish leaping out and splashing back down sending showers of droplets into the blue-green ribbon of the moat. Past the beds of

flowers which were resting their small buds amongst others. The lush emerald grass still had glistening crystalized dew upon it.

Anne came to her favourite place. Sighing deeply, she slid me into her pocket and sat down concealed within the roses. Dappled morning sunlight danced off her face as she sat immersed in her thoughts waiting for somebody.

It was not long before he appeared, Lord Percy himself. He was dressed as always in the latest fashion from the Court, and walked jauntily towards us, his sleek black cloak leaping behind him. The sunlight seemed to caress his body, as though he was a heavenly being. Anne fell into his arms, leaving me to fall to the ground.

All was not well. Lord Percy picked me up and searched through my pages until he came to Henry's words. 'You are his now, my love', he said to Anne, walking away.

By Alexandria Coen aged 11 (Year 6)