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It was the day that changed my life. We were learning about Tudors at school, but this story really begins before that.....

I live in a cottage on top of a hill. No-one anywhere near. I lived with my brother, my mum and my dad. I used to hate that. I used to hate everything about my life - me, Lizzy. But this all changed on that one special day.

I was in school. This is what our teacher said:

‘Okay, class. Homework. You have to visit an interesting place linked to the Tudor era.’ These are the words that changed my life.

When I got home I told my mum what the teacher had said.

‘Well,’ Mum said, ‘we could go to Cotehele House. It’s quite far away, but it’s really interesting.’

‘Cool ! Good idea,’ I replied.

So, on the very next day, which was a Saturday, I was in the car on the way to Cotehele house. The day before, I had taken a book out of the library about the Tudors. The book was really interesting. Did you know, for example, that one of Henry VIII’s queens was his dead brother’s wife ? Or that Queen Elizabeth I was in love with the Earl of Essex, but stil had him executed ? By the time we got there, I had read it cover to cover.

When we arrived, I was surprised at just how big the house was. In my head it had just been a smll cottage.

First of all, we went into the grounds. There were steps down from the back door, with flowerbeds on either side. We went through a tiny door in a wall - a door so small it looked like a fairy door. The wall was covered in creepers. The creepers were red and looked as if they'd been painted on the wall.

The door led to a field with a pond. The pond was filled with waterlilies. I even saw a dragonfly, yellow and black.

Then we went inside. The first room we came to was the Great Hall. The Hall was massive. There was a table in the centre with pewter cups and plates.

'Hey Mum,' I asked, 'did you know that in Tudor times they didn't use forks?'

'No, I didn't,' she replied, 'I didn't. Did you learn that at school?'

I said no, that I'd read it in my book.

My Mum is short, with short black hair. I take after my Dad - tall and ginger. The last thing was another thing I hated about myself.

Anyway, in the Great Hall there were two whale bones - ribs - either side of the door. I don't know where it leads, and never will. There were carved wooden chairs that you weren't allowed to sit on. Next, we went into the kitchen. Here there were herbs and pigs and chickens hanging from the ceiling. There was a fireplace and an oven.

'Did you know that they used to throw flour into the oven, then judged how hot it was by how quickly the flour turned brown?'

Mum shook her head. 'No, I didn't,' she said. 'Is that from that book of yours?'

I nodded. I explained that I had read it from cover to cover in the car.

Next we went in another room. It had magnificent tapestries on the walls. I could look at them for hours and there would still be something I hadn't noticed. They were full to bursting with dogs, people and trees. All sorts ! They covered the walls with their once-vibrant colours that had sadly faded in the sun.

Then we went upstairs. We went into a bedroom. There was a four-poster bed. It had white sheets and white hanging and looked very cosy.

As we came to the next room, I could hear but only faintly what sounded like an orchestra playing. I could smell a herbal scent.

‘Can you hear that ?,’ I said.

‘Hear what ?,’ said my mother.

‘Never mind.’

When we went in we found that it was another bedroom with another four-poster bed. This one had red hangings and red sheets. There was a hole you go into - so I did. There was on the other side that mum went into. From there we could see into the Great Hall.

When I came back out I noticed that the hangings on the four-poster seemed brighter. I told myself that I must have imagined it. But I looked on the wall. There was a tapestry I'd never seen before. The colours were really bright.

Then a girl came into the room. The herbal scents became stronger, and I could hear the orchestra more clearly.

'Hell?', I said quietly. There was no-one else in the room.

'Hello,' she replied. She had long ginger hair. I was waist-length and slightly wavy. I had hair just like that! And she had freckles and brown eyes just like me.

'Who are you?', she asked nervously.

‘I am Elizabeth Caroline Edgecumbe,’ she replied.
‘Who are *you* ?’

‘I’m Lizzy Caroline Edgecumbe too. I was named after Queen Elizabeth II.’

‘We were both named after a Queen Elizabeth,’ she said. ‘But two completely different people.’

‘You mean Elizabeth I ?’

‘Yes I was born during her reign.’

‘But you can’t have been ! That would make you over five hundred years old. ‘That’s impossible !’

‘Let me explain. I am your great great great great great great great grandmother,’ she started. ‘You’re right, I am over five hundred years old. Well, I am actually only four hundred and eighty nine, but close enough. I am not exactly alive but not quite dead either.