



# Humble Tom's Big Trip: A Tudor play; Cruel Times: A Victorian play

Books Reviewed:

[Humble Tom's Big Trip: A Tudor play](#) [1]

Books Reviewed:

[Cruel Times: A Victorian play](#) [2]

Issue:

[146](#) [3]

Reviewer:

[Andrew Kidd](#) [4]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

These two plays are ideal for classes exploring historical and literacy topics in key stage 2.

**Humble Tom's Big Trip** is a comic play with a Tudor setting, suitable for class reading or performance. It explores the world of King Henry VIII prior to his meeting with the King of France at the Field of Cloth of Gold. Two narrators observe and comment on scenes with Henry and his courtiers as well as commoners such as Humble Tom, the shepherd boy who yearns to travel with the King to France. This entertainingly farcical play raises numerous issues concerning life in Tudor times, including the roles of men and women.

**Cruel Times** brings Victorian London and its people to life. Sissy is in her first job as a kitchen maid in a large household. Her mother desperately needs the money she earns to support her younger siblings. Unfortunately, accident prone Sissy is threatened with the sack. With Sissy's brother feared killed in the war in the Crimea, there is a bleak outlook for Sissy and her family until a dramatic encounter with Charles Dickens brings a change in fortune.

Both of these illustrated plays have useful introductions, which outline the historical settings and provide ideas for staging, costume, props and make suggestions regarding the casting of parts.

Umansky is a writer with a wealth of experience as a teacher specialising in drama and with many plays to her credit. She is best known as the creator of Pongwiffy, the 'witch of dirty habits'.

Running Order:

45

**Links:**

- [1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/humble-toms-big-trip-a-tudor-play>
- [2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/cruel-times-a-victorian-play>
- [3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/146>
- [4] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/andrew-kidd>