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The Player King

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Lambert Simnel’s life has been spent slaving away in a filthy tavern. This all changes when Brother Simonds buys Lambert and whisks him off to meet the Earl of Lincoln. Lambert resembles the missing Prince Edward, true heir to the English throne. The two men believe they can transform Lambert into a convincing prince and use his influence to challenge the new king, Henry VII. Lambert’s newfound power makes him unwittingly ban Simonds from his presence. Lincoln takes Lambert to Ireland where he is crowned king. An army is quickly established behind Lambert and they invade England. However, Henry’s larger forces quickly quell the rebellion. Lambert is brought before Henry, where he learns Simonds confessed the false-prince-scheme to the king. Lambert admits he was used by the two men and confesses his loyalty to Henry. Henry forgives Lambert and places him on his kitchen staff.

In his Author Note, Avi reveals Lambert Simnel was a real person used as a false royal to challenge Henry VII. But the real beauty of Avi’s creativity comes from telling the story from Lambert’s perspective. Very little is known about the young man who played such a unique part in English history. Through Avi’s addictive writing, Lambert Simnel comes vividly to life as readers gain a glimpse of what might have been going through his head while he dramatically rose to a flicking spark of power. How would power feel to someone who has never had it? What lines would someone cross to stay alive while deceiving others? These unique perspectives still prove Avi is a master at giving historical events a fresh, new life through thought provoking narratives.

*Contains mild violence.