



Adam Runaway

by PETER PRINCE

'Adam, with all his bawdy romps and exciting adventures, emerges as a very modern hero. A must-read for any lover of thrilling historical romance' *Daily Mirror*

Adam Runaway

PETER PRINCE

BLOOMSBURY

To the memory of my friend Peter Conboy,
this story about a promising young man
is dedicated

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A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

Peter Prince's novels include *Play Things*, winner of the Somerset Maugham Award, *The Good Father* (which was filmed starring Anthony Hopkins), *Waterloo Story* and *The Great Circle*.

A NOTE ON THE TYPE

The text of this book is set in Linotype Stempel Garamond, a version of Garamond adapted and first used by the Stempel foundry in 1924. It's one of several versions of Garamond based on the designs of Claude Garamond. It is thought that Garamond based his font on Bembo, cut in 1495 by Francesco Griffo in collaboration with the Italian printer Aldus Manutius. Garamond types were first used in books printed in Paris around 1532. Many of the present-day versions of this type are based on the *Typi Academiae* of Jean Jannon cut in Sedan in 1615.

Claude Garamond was born in Paris in 1480. He learned how to cut type from his father and by the age of fifteen he was able to fashion steel punches the size of a pica with great precision. At the age of sixty he was commissioned by King Francis I to design a Greek alphabet, for this he was given the honourable title of royal type founder. He died in 1561.

To the traveller who was fortunate enough to first approach it by water, the city that existed three decades and a half before the famous devouring earthquake of 1755 appeared like a lofty amphitheatre. Palaces, convents, houses, churches, rising tier upon tier from the edge of the Tagus river, and all of them seeming large and cleanly built, many in white marble. From this favoured point of view, there was nothing mean, dirty or criminal in sight.

The city began then on the western side at the Alcântara gate, near which was a harbour for the King's ships, and a small fort; the eastern end terminated at the market for slaves. A person walking at three miles in an hour could have gone from the west gate to the slave bagnio in an hour and twenty-seven minutes. Halfway along, his route would have passed through the great square before the royal palace, where the city's principal merchants and financiers met to do business, where the customs house was, and where great spectacles were held: bullfights and bull-runnings, army exercises, the erection of triumphal arches.

A quarter of a mile behind this was another extensive piazza. This was the square of the people, where the hospital was, and a multitude of small shops and outdoor markets, and where the most obstinate heretics were burned alive in front of the Palace of the Inquisition. Or – if they were less hardened, and the servants of the Holy Office inclined to be merciful – strangled before they were burned.

The climate is agreeable, tempered by sea breezes; the view from the battlements of the castle of St George sublime; on summer evenings the scent of lemons and oranges wafts in from the numerous groves beyond the city, and fills its narrow streets and broad avenues alike with a cool sweetness.

'Quem nunca viu Lisboa, nunca viu uma coisa boa,' the natives used to say.

'He who never saw Lisbon, never saw a fine thing.'

*From A Visit to Portugal in the Time of King João V,
by a Pennsylvania Merchant (Philadelphia, 1771)*

BOOK ONE

Gomes

Gomes woke at exactly ten minutes before dawn, just as he always did. His first action, also his daily habit, was to drive from his bed the girl who had shared it with him in the night. There was always a girl – without her presence, whoever she might be, Gomes found it difficult to sleep. Last night he had used the new one, Doroteia, a skinny wench who thought she was aged thirteen or fourteen, she wasn't sure, who had arrived in the city from the Trás-os-Montes a couple of weeks ago. Gomes – whose duties as head clerk in the firm of Hanaway's also encompassed the supervision of the household – preferred to hire new serving-girls from that or another part of the kingdom distant from Lisbon. This pretty much removed from the realm of possibility the danger that he would be visited by irate masculine relatives, demanding satisfaction or reparation for the loss of their daughter's or sister's innocence.

Last night's wench had pleased him very much. There was a quality of outraged modesty about her, and an unavailing resistance to him, that had excited his ardour and caused him to perform prodigiously upon her body. Bartolomeu Gomes had an iron rule that none of the serving-girls was allowed to stay with the household for more than two or three months. He was too aware of the danger that sloth and slovenliness, both at her housework or in bed, could easily infect a little *puta* who felt herself too secure in either part of her employment. So after two or three months she was invariably shown the door and left to shift for herself thereafter. The same thing ought to happen with this Doroteia. But lying in bed, waiting for dawn to finally break, Gomes thought seriously that he might allow this wench to stay well beyond the usual time. Even as long as four, five, even six

months. So much had she pleased him in the night, as she had wept for him to desist, not to do that, oh please, senhor, don't do *that* . . .

The one flaw in his arrangements was that his master, old Felix Hanaway, was starting to show signs of curiosity lately at the steady stream of young provincial girls that passed through his house. Last time Gomes had reported with regret that the latest was failing in her duties and would have to be replaced, the old *bugre* had said, 'My goodness, we have no luck at all with our servants, do we?'

Gomes, after experiencing a moment of unease, had pointed out that indeed their other servants – Inês who supervised in the kitchen, Sebastiana the housekeeper, Álvaro who used to drive Old Felix's coach-and-four in more prosperous days when the household had boasted such a luxury – had all proved most satisfactory for several years.

'It's just these girls, Sir,' Gomes explained. 'They come off their father's little farms where they've been worked like mules all their lives, and they get to Lisbon and think they will take it easy from then on. At our expense,' he complained righteously.

'Well, that will never do,' Old Felix had nodded. 'Carry on as you see fit then, Bartolomeu. D'you think you can find a replacement soon? Mrs Hanaway will be staying here a couple of nights next week and I should like to see that we have a full complement of staff by then.'

'I'll do my best, Sir,' Gomes promised.

As he had told the old fool, it was only the serving-girls that always had to be replaced. Gomes had no intentions of dismissing any of the upper servants. Each in his or her way was of use to him. Inês, a fine, big woman of thirty, knew it as part of her duties to come to his bed when they were between serving-girls, or whenever he had a taste for riper flesh and more experienced love-craft than the average girl in her teens could offer. Sebastiana, though too old and fat herself to excite any man's appetite, had excellent connections among the stews and brothels of the Remolares district next to the water, and was the conduit by which these country girls were diverted from beginning a whore's life – for a

couple of months at least – and sent to the Hanaway house to become servants.

As for Álvaro: by rights, having lost his occupation as coach-driver when the coach had to be sold, he should have been dismissed and the few trivial tasks that remained to him turned over to a boy who would do them for a fraction of what he earned. But he had come to an agreement with Gomes whereby, in return for being allowed to stay on in Old Felix's employ and household, and to spend his days in near complete idleness at the tavern next door, he turned over a quarter of his wages to the head clerk.

Gomes turned on his side as the first rays of light came in through the window that he always left unshuttered. He wanted to see dear São Bartolomeu – his own, his name saint – first thing, and give him thanks for his easy life, and for the new girl, and everything else. But this morning the saint, in the shape of the woodcut in its golden frame that he had purchased for half a *moeda* off a stall under the arches of the Rossio, regarded him not. Only the back of the frame – which, too late, Gomes had discovered to be made of tin, lightly covered with gold paint – was on view from its perch on top of the chest-of-drawers.

For a moment, he panicked, thinking that somehow the *beato Bartolomeu* had become angry with him, and had in the night turned himself around so that he would no longer have to look at Gomes. Perhaps he had witnessed once too often his child's favourite way with the serving-girls, his preference, as it were, for the less travelled path. Gomes wanted to assure the *beato Bartolomeu* it was only with the bitches that he diverted himself in this way. He was not a damn *maricão*, a queer, a dirty *sodomita* – even though it was a man, the Captain Merriweather, who had introduced him to the practice years ago, forcing his long English cock nightly into Gomes' youthful hindquarters.

Well, in time he had paid the Captain in full for that service. What he had done to him certainly ought to have been enough to have convinced the saint that he was serious in his hatred for the foul congress of men with men. But perhaps it hadn't been sufficient punishment after all – as Gomes had begun to fear? Really he was growing frantic. He was on his knees. He even

thought of promising the blessed one that he would take no more serving-girls to his bed, or at least if he did he wouldn't use them in the way the saint obviously disapproved of. Fortunately the words did not pass his lips, for Gomes knew that it was a habit he'd have had much more difficulty giving up than, say, the drinking of wine, or the smoking of *charutos*, and abandoning it would have placed a great strain on his affection for São Bartolomeu. He was saved from this rash step by a sudden memory – which must have been temporarily expunged by the pleasures of the night – that it wasn't the saint who had turned his countenance away from Gomes, but Gomes who, as a punishment, had turned the saint around himself, so that he would no longer have the luxury of gazing upon a pleasant room, decent furniture, and a window that looked out on to a tree-shaded courtyard, but was forced every hour of the day to stare at a blank wall.

Gomes got to his feet. He felt such relief at remembering this, and gratitude too that he had not pledged himself to give up a practice he loved, that he was almost moved to relent towards the *beato Bartolomeu*, and turn him to face the room again. But then the memory of why he had punished him in the first place returned and hardened his heart. The saint had a long way to go before he earned his remission, for the offence he had committed – the bringing of the young Englishman, another fucking snooping Hanaway, into Gomes' life – was very serious.

Today was Wednesday, the day appointed by Felix Hanaway for the young man to appear at the house, and be permitted to see his uncle. Gomes still had no idea what the result of that interview would be. It was true that Felix still bore a great deal of ill will towards his late brother and because of him towards all his family. And why should he not? Gomes thought piously, for had not the older brother through his folly and misrepresentation made substantial inroads into the younger brother's fortune too? Gomes felt personally involved in this disaster. For Felix's being so much less wealthy today than he was eighteen months ago meant there was that much less available for Gomes to steal.

Knowing Old Felix's current aversion to the London-based Hanaways and all their members, living or dead, Gomes confi-

dently expected him to show anger when, last Saturday, he had brought his master the news that a runner waited below with a message from his nephew, this Adam Hanaway, who had apparently fetched up in Lisbon after all. One might have hoped that, since previous letters to Felix from the same source had been ignored, the little *filho da puta* would have got the idea that he would not be welcome here.

Old Felix had certainly frowned and blown out his cheeks, and had shaken his head.

‘Shall I tell the man to go away, Sir?’

And for just a moment Gomes was certain that this was what he would hear, and so he would go back down, and dismiss the runner with the words ‘No message’, and the whole threat would be blown away in a moment.

But Felix said, ‘No, I can’t do that to Adam,’ and Gomes’ heart sank.

His master had turned and strode across to his own room. He was in there for forty minutes by the office clock. At one point, curious as to what he could be doing, Gomes had walked past the open door and looked in. Old Felix had the office Day Book open on his desk and was studying it with furious concentration. It didn’t bother Gomes much. He had learned his craft from good masters and the first rule of business – the thieving business – was that there were always two sets of books. Old Felix could study the Day Book before him as long as he liked. Reality was in the other book, and that was the one Gomes always kept to himself.

At last the old man had quitted his office and had said to Gomes – not exactly the words the clerk had absolutely dreaded to hear, not an order to write out an immediate invitation for the nephew to appear in this house – that he should send instructions for the boy to attend him in a few days’ time. In other words young Hanaway still had his chance to worm his way into his uncle’s favour – that is, if he was feeble enough not to resent this discourteous, almost contemptuous treatment.

‘Try and make the invitation as kind as may be,’ Felix asked of him. ‘As far as the circumstances permit.’

‘I’ll do what I can, Sir.’

And Gomes went into his own office and wrote out the message, made it as cool and unwelcoming as it could be, short of outright rejection, and took it downstairs to the runner who was growing pretty restless and clearly expected he should be compensated for his time of waiting. Gomes advised him to seek any such favour from the fellow who had sent him hither, and dismissed him from the premises. And between that hour and this morning, Gomes had not been able to do much to affect the situation one way or another. He had done what he could in bringing to Old Felix's attention certain hitherto unnoticed costs and losses in the accounts, which could be directly traced to the disastrous influence of his chief's late brother, father to this unwanted new arrival. Gomes had sat up till late at night inventing these transactions and working them into the office Day Book and Ledger. But, when he showed them to his employer the next day, the old *bugre* had hardly glanced at them. It had been a waste of time and skill.

Other than that there was only one more thing that Gomes could come up with. But it was a serious step and he had to think hard and long before doing it. In the end he could see no alternative. The *beato Bartolomeu* had never hesitated to do Gomes wrong if he was displeased with him. Now the shoe was on the other foot, it would be weak of him not to show the same stern countenance to the saint. Having come to the right decision, the job was done in a moment. Which was why São Bartolomeu was now staring at the wall, in which posture he was able to contemplate his cruelty towards his beloved child, without any distractions at all.

Adam

1

At the end of the infamous bubble year of 1720 my father Matthew Hanaway, for many years a leading merchant in the City of London, had the misfortune to break to the tune of ninety-two thousand pounds. Within a few months the condition of his family was changed utterly. I, his only son, was removed from my studies at Oxford University; my mother and two sisters were found dubious shelter in a cottage in the woods near the village of Bromley in Kent where Mother had grown up; and Father himself was dead as a result of what I shall maintain until my own dying day was an accident that befell him while he was cleaning his guns.

Upon me alone now rested any hope that the family would ever again rise in the world. Whatever ambitions for a polite or distinguished career I (and my parents) had once entertained for me all had to be set aside now, of course. Money was what was needed, and soon at that, and it seemed the only hope of getting it was for me to follow in Father's footsteps into trade. It was resolved after several anxious conferences between my mother and myself – assisted at all times by Mr Solomon Marks, who had formerly been my father's trusted head clerk – that it were best my entrance on to the scene of commercial life should not be in London where the collapse of the firm of Hanaway's was too fresh in men's minds. I had an uncle, my father's younger brother, who was established in business in Lisbon, and it was decided at last that my career should begin in that city. Several letters were sent to Uncle Felix warning him of my early arrival.

Within the month I had followed the letters. My Uncle Felix

welcomed me to the Portuguese capital, without much enthusiasm, it seemed to me, and rather grudgingly too accepted me into his firm in the informal position of apprentice clerk. This half-hearted attitude pained, but did not really surprise me. My father in the latter part of what can only be described as his stock-buying frenzy was not only purchasing as much of the South Sea and other companies' subscriptions as he could lay his hands on, but was recommending them to all his friends and colleagues and relatives. I knew Uncle Felix had taken some of this paper – so soon to be nearly worthless – perhaps a great deal of it, and had also lost greatly therefore when the bubble broke. It was not quite fair for him to blame me for this disaster, who had no hand in creating it, but yet as I say I understood.

Thereafter six days of my week were consecrated to hard work in the great customs house of Lisbon, the Alfândega. The seventh day was spent by me mostly in exhausted sleep in a room on the fourth floor of a house in the Rua do Parreiral, which was in that part of town which is called the Baixa. I shared this room with a Portuguese fellow called Bento, who was employed as a general labourer in this and several other tenement buildings in the street, and who I rarely saw. I remember this time, in fact, as one of almost unrelenting toil. Apart from my principal and official duties, which comprised the keeping of a true written record at all times of our firm's goods – their numbers, quality, provenance, destination, etcetera – as they arrived first at the wharves, then in the customs house, I often found myself being told off by Senhor Gomes (my uncle's head clerk, a Portuguese, who generally supervised me) to lower myself to the condition of a mere labouring man, working alongside the casual hands who were hired by the day every morning outside the Alfândega's front gates. Many of these fellows were freed negroes from Portugal's colony in Angola, dubbed 'snowballs' by their white fellow-workers. I worked beside these black fellows too, my coat off my back, sometimes without my shirt, the sweat pouring off me in the summer heat, heaving great bales of cloth or rolls of tobacco or whatever it was from the shelves to the floor, where they could

be assessed by the customs officers, then from the floor to the storage areas that my uncle rented in various nearby warehouses.

I am not complaining now, nor did I then – or not very much – at this hard life I was living. Always before me was the spectacle of my poor reduced family at home and how I must raise them back up to a decent mode of living by my own exertions here in Lisbon. This was my holy grail, and I thought I would endure far greater tests of my resolve and strength than what I did in order to lay my hands upon it.

In this time of constant labour, I can recall very few particular incidents that separate themselves out from the surrounding darkness. Such as there were seem in my memory like mountain peaks rising above a dark and endless plain. I do certainly remember the first true encounter I had with Allen Hutchinson, for that was a surprising and, for me, an uncharacteristic moment. I had learned from my new landlord almost as soon as I had arrived in his house that an apartment on the second floor of the building was occupied by an elderly fellow-countryman of mine, a Mr Hutchinson, who lived there with his daughter. I had passed an old gentleman on the stairs a few times who I thought might very well be the man my landlord had spoken of. We had exchanged polite nods, and I might have stopped to speak with him except I was always rushing to be at the Alfândega or else dragging myself upstairs to my bed, too tired even to be civil.

But about a month into my stay, one Saturday evening, I was out in the Rua do Parreiral in search of food at one of the cheap *tabernas* or the food carts that lined this street. I could hardly though concentrate on what I was doing for I was so conscious of having just made a fool of myself. My Uncle Felix, possibly feeling that his distant attitude towards me was not really worthy of the natural obligations of family, had been kind enough to ask me to drop in at his town house at dinnertime to meet a few people he would like me to be known by. I accepted the invitation very gladly. I had grown increasingly hurt by Felix's behaviour. He had not yet, for instance, asked me out to his country house, his *quinta* as they called it here, where his wife, my Aunt Sarah, and their two daughters dwelled.