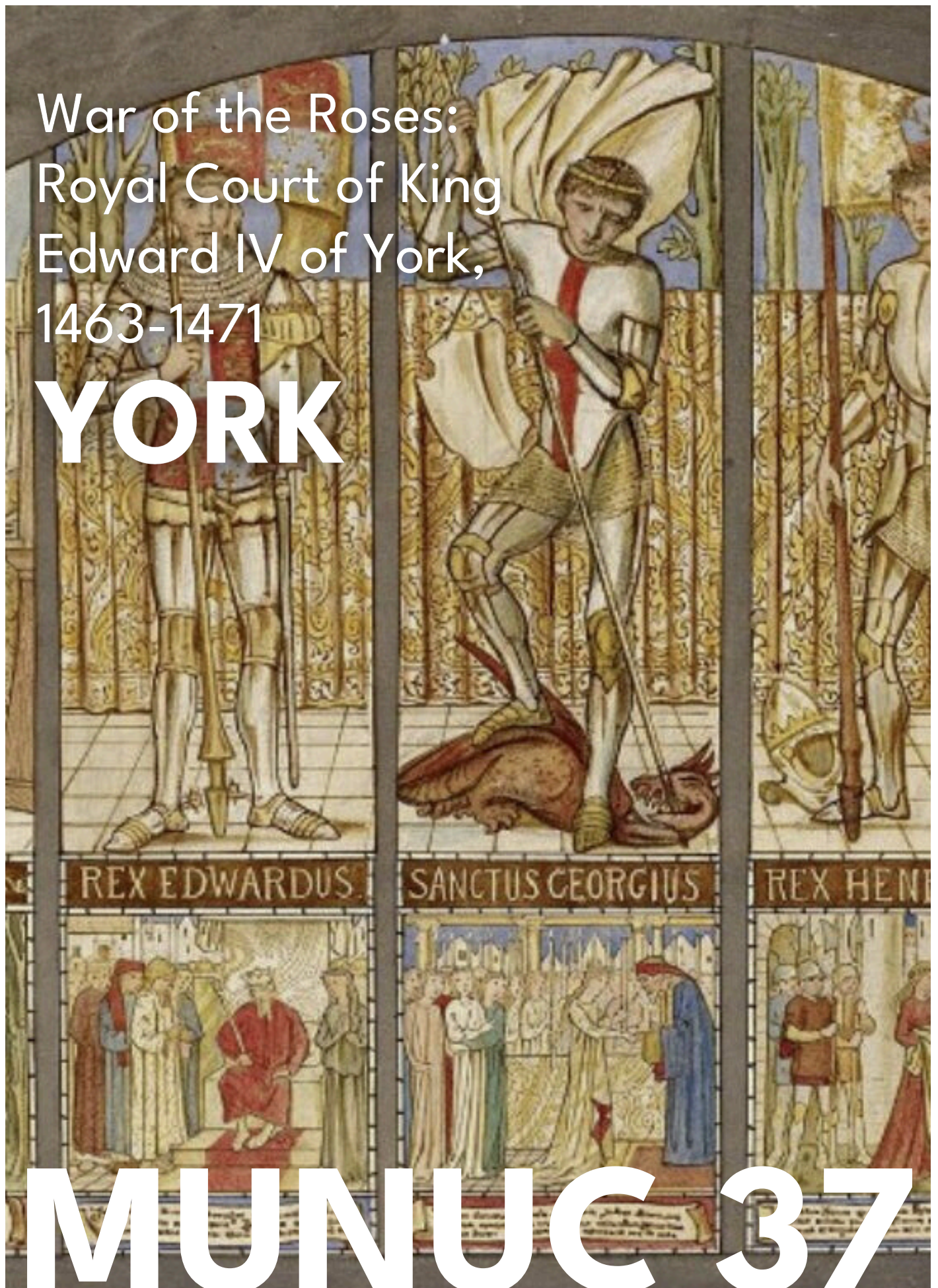


War of the Roses:  
Royal Court of King  
Edward IV of York,  
1463-1471

**YORK**



**MUNUC 37**

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

## CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MUNUC 37! My name is Daniela Estrada, and I will be your Chair for (drum roll please...)

War of Roses: Royal Court of King Edward IV of York, 1463-1471.

Before we dive into the exciting details of our committee, allow me to share a bit about myself. I am from Southern California, residing in a not-so-popular city that you probably wouldn't be able to guess—it starts with “Los” and ends with “Angeles”. That's right, L.A. I am currently in my fourth year at the college (yes, I'm old), pursuing a double major in Public Policy and Media Arts and Design. Many of my Public Policy classes are centered on understanding the formation of educational and racial disparities, in addition to analyzing the effects of former/current policies. As for my other major, I pretty much get the opportunity to create animated projects, where my only restraints are my skills. Outside of academics, I have formally been involved in COUP with Pietro, our lovely CD, where we planned and hosted big events for the university, as well as OLAS, one of the university's organizations for Latin American students. I hate to admit this, but now I'm on that fitness grind, so you'll see me running, playing sports, or slowly transitioning into a gym bro.

That's enough about me though, as I know you're excited to learn about our committee and expectations. In the months leading up to the conference, I highly recommend diving into our background guide and familiarizing yourself with the concepts of crisis notes, character arcs, and directives. The background guide will follow England and the two families vying for the crown. It is your responsibility to persuade the royal court that your preferred ruler is best fit to address England's needs. We are excited to see how you tackle the economic, social, and political challenges that have arisen in England during this pivotal and unstable period. We encourage

you to take notes on aspects of the background guide that catch your interest and further explore those ideas to develop your arc and bring your character to life.

Pietro and I will help familiarize everyone with the formatting of a crisis structure so that everyone is able to participate in our crisis committee. I will specifically be covering frontroom skills such as speeches, writing directives, and demonstrating leadership and collaboration in groups. Our ultimate goal is to create a committee experience that is both enjoyable and engaging for each and every one of you. To ensure this, we kindly ask that everyone maintains a respectful demeanor both inside and outside the committee as we are committed to fostering a comfortable and inclusive environment where everyone's voice is heard and valued. If at any point something doesn't feel right, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Your Chair,

Daniela Estrada

[danielae@uchicago.edu](mailto:danielae@uchicago.edu)

## CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTER

Dear delegates,

Welcome to MUNUC 37! My name is Pietro Juvara, and I'm so excited to be serving as your Crisis Director for the War of the Roses: Royal Court of King Edward IV of York, 1463 - 1471 committee!

As a little background information on me: I'm a fourth-year at the University of Chicago studying Law (the official name for the major is "Law, Letters, and Society," but it's just Legal Studies basically) and Gender Studies. Our wonderful Chair, Dani, and I have a bit of a rivalry because she's from southern California but I'm from the obviously superior northern California (San Francisco, to be exact). Outside of classes, I work as an advisor to UChicago's many student organizations and clubs, and I'm currently studying to go to law school. I absolutely love Model UN, but I'm actually a bit of a late bloomer in discovering my passion, this is my second MUNUC ever. I remember exactly how exciting it was to be diving into the world of Continuous Crisis structure—but also how overwhelming it can feel too. We're all in this together though, and Dani and I have prepared this background guide to help prepare you to excel in this committee!

Throughout the weekend, you will serve as royal advisors and nobles in the court of the newly-crowned King Edward IV of York, and help keep the realm stable throughout this time of crisis! You will forge political alliances, enact elaborate schemes, and work to extend your influence over the court...

As you prepare for MUNUC 37, I encourage you all to familiarize yourselves with the basics of crisis arcs and crisis notes, although we'll be making sure everyone's on the same page as we go into the weekend itself. As the CD, I'll be overseeing the "backroom" side of the committee, and I look forward to responding to all of your crisis notes! Throughout this process, Dani and I are here to support you, and our goal is to create an exciting opportunity for you to grow your skills and have fun!



If you have any questions at all, please feel free to reach out!

Your Crisis Director,

Pietro Juvara

[pijuvara@uchicago.edu](mailto:pijuvara@uchicago.edu)

## SENSITIVITY STATEMENT

Dear Delegates,

As we delve into the complexities of antiquated English rivalries, chivalry, and medieval diplomacy, we expect plenty of strategy and betrayal along the way. However, it is important to ensure that our committee remains a respectful and inclusive environment—accordingly, the following are not merely guidelines but strictly enforced MUNUC rules.

While historical context will play a significant role in shaping your debate, please understand that certain behaviors are not acceptable in either the frontroom or backroom of this committee. There is a zero tolerance policy for racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, or any other form of discriminatory rhetoric and or behavior. Though you may be portraying characters from a distant historical period, modern standards of respect unequivocally apply to your role as a YORK delegate.

And while medieval society placed emphasis on class and hierarchy, your role as delegates does not permit using discriminatory language or actions based on someone's background, gender, or social standing. That is, historical accuracy is not an excuse for crossing lines of basic respect.

Ultimately, we aim to foster an environment where every delegate feels safe and empowered to participate, grow, and explore their creativity in both their public speeches and private arcs. If you are ever uncertain about the appropriateness of certain actions or language, do not hesitate to reach out to your Chair, Crisis Director, or any available MUNUC staff member for that matter. We are, above all, here to help guide you and ensure a positive experience for all.

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS

This committee will be in the continuous crisis format and will therefore contain both frontroom and backroom mechanics. While the Chair will be facilitating frontroom discussion and considering your directives, each of you will also be writing backroom notes to the Crisis Director (CD) and Assistant Chairs (ACs) to develop your own character arcs over the course of the weekend.

In frontroom, the public-facing side of the committee, delegates will be working as part of His Majesty's Privy Council, a group of trusted advisors, nobles, merchants, and ambassadors. King Edward IV has only just ascended to the throne, and the young monarch is facing many crises that the Council will have to solve by debating various plans, giving speeches, and working together to take action. The King is much too important to be attending the meeting himself, of course, so your Chair, Daniela Estrada, will assist your progress as the Clerk of this Privy Council. Daniela holds a sworn duty to take your directives and bring them to His Majesty personally, who will follow your thoughtful advice... usually. And since King Edward IV will implement these policies as committee progresses, you can very well gauge the efficacy of your ideas in real time.

As you will see, fellow members of the Privy Council come from a diverse array of backgrounds, each holding different priorities and perspectives. However, few things are more important to Medieval society than etiquette, chivalry, and duty. In the frontroom, your duty is to the King and to the realm—you'll have to work with others to tackle the problems facing England. However, the best delegates in continuous crisis are not only able to collaborate and lead in the frontroom, but also advance their own private character arcs in the backroom. If your character owes a debt to the Lancasters, you may secretly scheme against the King; if your character is a commoner, you may seek to covertly establish democracy. And while background information on each character

is included in this document, this merely serves to guide your ambitions. This is to say that, on balance, your character arc lies in your own hands.

Delegates will interact with backroom and advance their arcs through notes written in-character. These notes are in the form of letters to two specific individuals that your character may have some connection to, although your creative liberty to this end cannot be overstated. In your notes, you will ask each the recipient, i.e. your childhood best friend and present-day-merchant John Smith, to carry out actions that advance your goals. In the frontroom, every delegate will begin on equal footing, but in the backroom, each character's background alters the unique approach of your letters. For example, John Smith the merchant may have wealthy colleagues or control an important export. But say that you decide a different role for John Smith—perhaps he's a noble with access to armies or connections to the Lancaster forces, or a representative of Parliament who can spread gossip quickly amongst the people, or the ambassador to France and Burgundy with the ears of foreign monarchs—then your respective requests will be tailored to such background.

Our Crisis Director, Pietro Juvara, and our ACs will be overseeing the backroom and responding to all of your notes in-character. Notably, your letters can advance a goal that directly undermines your King or your allies, as delegates will not be permitted to enter the backroom at any time to preserve secrecy. Given that you have two notepads, it follows that while one of your notepads is being responded to, the other is yours to utilize. After a commensurate amount of time, your CD and ACs will come to the frontroom to deliver a response to one of your letters and pick up the new one that you have written. If the backroom believes that one of your notes or character arcs would impact England enough to reach the Privy Council, they may weave your decisions into the next crisis announcement in the frontroom, which is called a crisis break. Crisis breaks, typically live action skits performed by backroom staff, make use of notes that are inventive, well-written, and reasonably pertinent to the flow of committee.



The committee will begin with a crisis break that must be addressed in the frontroom, but what ultimately sways the evolution of the Wars of the Roses are your solutions as a Privy Council and your private notes. After a crisis break, delegates will often shift into a moderated caucus, giving timed speeches with potential solutions to the crisis. These solutions are collectively distilled and written into directives, which delegates can collaborate on in an unmoderated caucus once speeches conclude. In an “unmod,” you are encouraged to form blocs with others and combine ideas to craft layered, comprehensive directives. Upon voting procedure, the Privy Council will vote by majority on which directives will be passed onto King Edward IV, thereby becoming his official decrees. Once committee has passed its directive(s), the next crisis break will explain the consequences of the King’s latest decrees, and the entire process will repeat as the Privy Council responds to the newest developments.

## Statement of the Problem

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Lords, Ladies, and Nobles of His Majesty’s Most Honourable Privy Council, the year is 1463 and King Edward IV of York, leader of the royal House of York, has recently ascended to the throne of England. While the young king has little experience outside of the field of battle, his family has been seeking the throne for nearly a century.

King Edward IV’s great-great grandfather was King Edward III, the lauded king of a long-lasting, uncontested dynasty under his royal House of Plantagenet. King Edward III’s oldest son, his favorite and his heir, Edward “the Black Prince,” tragically died before he could inherit the throne, plunging the realm into a sudden succession crisis. The Privy Council debated whether the Black Prince’s infant son, Richard II, would be the new king, or whether the crown should pass to one of King Edward III’s other surviving sons. The latter, known as the Duke of York and the Duke of Lancaster, are brothers characterized by their power-hungry and ambitious

nature. And accordingly, the warring brothers split the family into two rival branches, the Yorks and the Lancasters amid this familial contention.

In 1399, the royal House of Lancaster would take the throne by murdering a young King Richard II in cold blood, provoking the Yorks into battle and throwing the people of England into chaos. The York symbol of the white rose and the Lancaster symbol of the red rose would give this ongoing conflict its name: the Wars of the Roses.

After decades of Lancasters on the throne and several York uprisings, the Privy Council and England are more divided than ever. Many of your families have served the Lancastrian dynasty faithfully, while others have secretly been supporting the northern House of York with their competing claims to the throne. Two years ago, in 1461, the York armies rallied around a man named Edward, the young leader of House York, who fought the Lancaster King Henry VI and his forces at the Battle of Towton. With over 8,000 common folk dead, this was the bloodiest battle ever fought on English soil.<sup>1</sup> Edward's right-hand man, Richard "Warwick" Neville, made ingenious strategic calls during battle and together, the two men won a decisive victory, ending the Lancaster dynasty. King Henry VI of Lancaster fled up north to Scotland, where he remains to this day.

After taking the throne, the newly crowned King Edward IV of York stripped the lands and titles of 14 noble families on the Privy Council that supported the Lancasters.<sup>2</sup> These were once your friends and colleagues in the court, and it is certain that any members of the nobility that refuse to bend the knee to the new king will be removed too. Warwick, who is now officially the High Admiral of England and the hand of the King, has since advised King Edward to make peace with the nobility, so he has pardoned many of you for supporting the

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<sup>1</sup>Christopher Gravett. *Towton 1461: England's Bloodiest Battle Campaign*. Vol. 120. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing (2003)). p.7

<sup>2</sup> Christine Carpenter *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, c. 1437–1509*. Cambridge University Press. (1997). p.67

Lancasters, though this could prove to be the young king's downfall. Even still, acting against the king openly is sure to result in execution, and it would be unwise to forget you are in Warwick's debt.

The Lancasters in Scotland and their hidden supporters in the court are not the only threats to King Edward IV. England has just emerged victorious from the Hundred Year's War against France, and there is little love between the two nations. The kingdoms of England, France, and Burgundy are all currently meeting to establish alliances with each other, and it seems as though whichever two nations cement their partnership first through a royal marriage will certainly conquer the third. Edward leans toward an alliance with Burgundy while High Admiral Warwick is advising an alliance with France.<sup>3</sup> The advice of the Privy Council will surely affect the King's decisions, and by extension, the fate of England.

Additionally, the Wars of the Roses and the Hundred Year's War have left England's economy in ruins. England is a feudal state, with lords and dukes who collect taxes from the commoners living on their lands. The King collects a percentage of that tax to fund the crown and strengthen the nation. Unfortunately, this economic depression that some are calling "The Great Slump," means the nation is facing mass shortages of silver, and English exports are down over 35%.<sup>4</sup> This has caused many problems, including the formation of merchant conglomerates with so much money that they have been able to buy their way onto this Privy Council. For the first time in English history, the economy is moving from feudalism to mercantilism. The nobles are facing the reality that their historic power could be stolen from them by new money, while the merchants are seeking to legitimize their newfound influence in court.

The common people of England are tired of the political schemes of the Wars of the Roses and have grown used to a Lancaster on the throne. The Yorks were well-respected in the north, but their victory came at

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Ross. *Edward IV*. University of California Press. (1974) p.91

<sup>4</sup> Michael Hicks. *The Wars of the Roses*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. (2012) p.51

the cost of thousands of deaths. With the economy at its worst thus far in history, a revolt from the peasants is all but guaranteed unless the crown can act fast and raise support for the King. While some of you may celebrate at the thought of the King being overthrown, a revolt from the people will not discriminate between Yorks or Lancasters, all members of the nobility will be at risk. The people usually voice their opinions through Parliament, so High Admiral Warwick has appointed some of its representatives to the Privy Council as well.

The nation has been weakened by war, famine, and poverty, but the new King also represents the dawning of a new age for England. Your job as members of the Privy Council is to advise the King's actions and prevent the dissolution of the crown of England. You will have political rivals you seek to eliminate, specific causes you have promised to bring to the Council's attention, and alliances to form...and break.

*Delegates, where will your loyalties lie?*



## History of the Problem

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### A Brief Introduction To English History (42-1377 B.c.e.)

In 42 B.C.E, Roman Emperor Claudius ordered the invasion of a large island north of France called “Britannia.” The land was predominantly inhabited by Celtic tribes called the Britons, lending the name to this new Roman Province.<sup>5</sup> The Romans settled in Britannia for nearly 500 years, establishing, among others, the cities of London, York, Worcester, Manchester, and Lancaster. The militaristic advantages of this remote location are very well showcased by such titles, as English cities ending with “-chester, -cester, or -caster” derive from the Latin *castrum*, meaning “fort.”<sup>6</sup>

By the 5th century, the Roman Empire was in decline, as many Roman troops and citizens were called back towards Rome to consolidate power. In the Romans’ absence, local Celtic tribes began to war with one another to fill the power vacuum in the region. Certain tribes formed alliances with the *foederati*, Anglo-Saxons who arrived to Britain under treaty with the Romans. These mercenaries were made up of three Germanic tribes: the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes. The *foederati* spoke a language called Old English, which could best be described as a mixture of modern-day German and English. When the Anglo-Saxon mercenaries arrived in England, they decided to simply conquer it themselves. Together, the Anglo-Saxons established seven kingdoms: Kent, ruled by the Jutes; Essex, Sussex, and Wessex, ruled by the Saxons; and further north, East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria, ruled by the Angles. The Seven Kingdoms, also known as the British Heptarchy, pushed the native Celts west into the region of Wales.

In 911, “The Danes,” Viking raiders from Denmark, invaded Paris and obtained land from the King of France. This created the Duchy of Normandy, as the Danes who settled in Normandy would be called

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<sup>5</sup>Joshua J. Mark and Roger Osborne. “Ancient Britain.” *World History Encyclopedia*, 27 June 2023.  
<https://www.worldhistory.org/britain/>.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph Maciamo, “Brief History of England.” *Eupedia*, 2005.

“Normans.” Meanwhile, the Seven Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms fought until they were eventually unified into one kingdom of England, although the north remained independent as the region of Scotland. And in the same breath, the Celts remained in control of Wales.<sup>7</sup>

In 1066, then-Duke-of-Normandy William the Conqueror brought 12,000 soldiers to England and killed the Anglo-Saxon king, Harold. William then took the throne of England, a seat on the throne his descendants have kept to this day. During this period, French became the official language of England, while the Anglo-Saxon Old English gradually combined with French to become modern English. Under William the Conqueror, England, Normandy, and the French province of Anjou all came to be ruled by the crown. William the Conqueror was succeeded by his son, Henry I, who himself only had a single heir, his daughter Matilda. Matilda married Geoffrey, the Duke of Anjou, whose family crest is the Scotch Broom flower:

The Scotch Broom is known as *planta genista* in Latin, and the son of Matilda and Geoffrey, King Henry II, decided to adopt the symbol into the name of his Royal House: Plantagenet (planta-je-NAY).<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the Plantagenet Dynasty ruled for the next 200 years without major challenges to their as the ruling family of England.

In 1214, King John, a status figure that inspired the evil Prince John in Disney’s *Robin Hood*,<sup>9</sup> lost the territories of Normandy and Anjou to France in a devastating battle. To compensate for the loss in land, King John elected to raise taxes, causing a group of his Barons to revolt against him. In 1215, the rebellious Barons forced John to sign the Magna Carta, one of the first legal documents in history. The Magna Carta has grown to become a symbol of democracy in the modern day, although the original document lent most of its advantages to

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<sup>7</sup>Mark Cartwright. “The Impact of the Norman Conquest of England.” World History Encyclopedia, 23 January 2019.

<sup>8</sup>“How Did The Plantagenet Dynasty Rule For 331 Years?” HistoryExtra, 13 January 2023,

<sup>9</sup>Reagan Smith, et al. “Disney’s Robin Hood (1973) | History.” High Point University, 5 November 2020

the Barons rather than commoners. King John's son, King Henry III, would negotiate with the Barons throughout his entire reign, which only further emboldened potential rebels. This compelled King Henry III to establish an early version of Parliament, where the people could make official requests to the Crown regarding their needs.<sup>10</sup>

After King Henry III, the throne passed to King Edward I in 1272. Relative to his predecessors, Edward seemed a military savant. During his reign, he conquered Wales, defeated and nearly conquered Scotland, and remained quite popular among the nobility.<sup>11</sup> However, his eventual passing in 1307 granted his son, Edward II, the keys to the throne. This marked a distinct contrast in reigns. Edward incessantly partied amongst the common people and imprudently married Princess Isabella of France to fix the relationships between England and France. The nobility, however, took a strong aversion toward his love life, and eventually a Baron murdered an alleged lover of Edward's due to the individual's exclusivity to the king. And eventually, this spurred a second civil war between the crown and a group of Barons.

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<sup>10</sup>John Maddicot. "Magna Carta and the Origins of Parliament." *The Historian*, 2015

<sup>11</sup>The Royal Collection. "Edward I 'Longshanks' (r. 1272-1307)." *The Royal Family*, 2006,



*An early portrait of King Edward I, c. 1597 - 1618.<sup>12</sup>*

This civil war highly strained the relationship between the now-Queen Isabella and King Edward II, a dynamic that snapped altogether when King Edward took a new male companion who the Queen loathed. That is, Isabella did not take this lightly – she traveled back to France, took her own male lover, formed an alliance with the Barons in England, returned to court, overthrew King Edward II, and crowned their son, Edward III in 1327 – as it’s no wonder she is nicknamed the “She-Wolf of France.”<sup>13</sup>

King Edward III took after his grandfather, Edward I, turning England into one of the leading military powers in the world. After finally defeating Scotland, he turned his eyes to France. His mother, Isabella, had been

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<sup>12</sup> World History Encyclopedia. Unknown artist. 2019. *Portrait of King Edward I of England*. Image. *National Portrait Gallery*. <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/11605/king-edward-i-of-england/>

<sup>13</sup> Adam Weir. “Queen Isabella: She-Wolf of France, Queen of England.” London: Pimlico Books, 2006.



a Princess of France, so King Edward III argued that he should have a claim to the throne. He invaded the country – starting the first phase of what would come to be known as “The Hundred Year War” – and won several pivotal victories for England. The fighting stopped with the Treaty of Bretigny, where France signed over much of their land to England in exchange for both peace and a formal renunciation of King Edward III’s claims to the throne. Satisfied with his conquests, the King concurred with this arrangement. In 1373, King Edward signed a treaty with the Kingdom of Portugal, which is the oldest alliance in the world still in force today.

Unfortunately, the one major obstacle to King Edward III was the Bubonic Plague, which killed between 40-60% of the *entire population* of England, including his favorite son and heir, Prince Edward, who would have been the original Edward IV (you only receive a numeral if you sit on the throne of England).<sup>14</sup> In 1377, King Edward III died with no clear heir, bad blood with France, and two bloodthirsty sons who desired to be crowned King, setting the stage for the coming Wars of the Roses...

## The Region

The setting in which this committee will take place is in the 1400s British Isles. In modern times, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) comprises England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with the former three located on the landmass of Great Britain.

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<sup>14</sup> Ole J. Benedictow. *The Black Death 1346–1353: The Complete History*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press. (2004) p.342-53



*A Contemporary Map of the United Kingdom.*<sup>15</sup>

During the reign of King Edward IV, however, the British Isles were much more divided and much more hostile. The province of Wales is where the Celtic tribes had first fled after the migration of the Anglo-Saxons into the British Isles, establishing their own language (Welsh), customs, and mythologies. Prior to becoming part of England, Wales was ruled by an alliance of Welsh princes who each controlled various territories. The Welsh princes were defeated by King Edward I in 1284, establishing the crown's control over the western portion of Great Britain. However, Wales would not be officially annexed into England until the 1500s. During the reign of Edward IV, it was subservient to the laws of England, but it was still considered a distinct nation.<sup>16</sup> The Welsh have a deep resentment towards the English, and when King Edward III died in 1377, the succession crisis that would start the Wars of the Roses actually caused a full-scale rebellion in Wales too.

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<sup>15</sup> Wikimedia Commons contributors. "File:United Kingdom labeled map9.png." Image. *Wikimedia Commons*, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:United\\_Kingdom\\_labeled\\_map9.png&oldid=451944190](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:United_Kingdom_labeled_map9.png&oldid=451944190)

<sup>16</sup> Ben Johnson and Sean Davies. "The English Invasion of Wales." (2021) Historic U

In 1400, a Welshman named Owain Glyndwr crowned himself the Prince of Wales and declared the region of Gwynedd as independent. At the time, the Lancasters controlled the throne of England, and they responded to the uprising brutally. The Glyndwr Rebellions were violently ended, and Wales was officially reconquered, although many of the Welsh still refuse to bend the knee. By the reign of King Edward IV of York, skirmishes with the Welsh were common, but there seems to be little threat of a second rebellion unless the Lancasters, who are despised by the Welsh for the defeat of Owain Glyndwr, retake the English throne...

The Kingdom of Scotland was originally formed after the retreat of the Roman forces from Great Britain by a Gaelic tribe from the neighboring island of Ireland known as the Scoti. Over time, Scotland gained its own royal family, the House of Alpin, with its own contentious politics and crises of succession. By 1371, the last king belonging to House Alpin died without an heir, shifting power to the House of Stewart. In 1461, the time of King Edward IV of York, House Stewart had been ruling uncontested for nearly a century. There is much bad blood between the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland (although they would obviously one day unify into the Kingdom of Great Britain), but neither kingdom has been able to successfully conquer the other.

Currently, in 1463, the Kingdom of Scotland is ruled by Queen Mary of Guelders, who has generally remained neutral with England. However, when King Edward IV of York overthrew the previous King Henry VI of Lancaster in 1461, Henry and his family retreated to Scotland for safety. The Lancastrian forces have been amassing in Scotland, and many exiled nobles who had remained loyal to the Lancasters have also moved north. Queen Mary has allowed the Lancasters to remain in Scotland safely, forming an alliance with Henry VI in exchange for power, land, and a claim to the English throne if he is successfully able to retake the throne. The Scots have lent their forces to the Lancasters, and there have been frequent violent battles at the northern border between Scotland and England.

Ireland was populated primarily by Celtic tribes, specifically the Gaelic, who began to mingle with Scandinavian Viking raiders in the early 8th century, developing a complex culture and technology. When the Normans invaded Great Britain in 1066, they eventually reached Ireland as well, beginning a long and brutal relationship between the English and Irish. From 1169 to 1300, English occupation in Ireland expanded until almost the entire island was under the jurisdiction of the English crown. The House of Plantagenet created an additional title for the King of England after 1171: The Lord of Ireland, although this title would be mostly symbolic. Each king appoints a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to oversee most of the administration of laws, along with many English nobles who oversee smaller counties.

Throughout the 14th century, England's sphere of influence over Ireland decreased as the Black Plague and wars with Scotland diminished resources. There was a massive rise in Gaelic culture and nationalism at this time, and many Irishmen fought violently against the British forces. In 1366, the English passed the Statute of Kilkenny, which criminalized aspects of Gaelic culture in English-controlled areas, albeit in vain. As the English lordships became increasingly Gaelicized and made alliances with native chiefs, whose power steadily increased, crown control slowly eroded. By 1450, English control over the region had decreased to a small perimeter around the city of Dublin, known simply as "The Pale."<sup>17</sup>

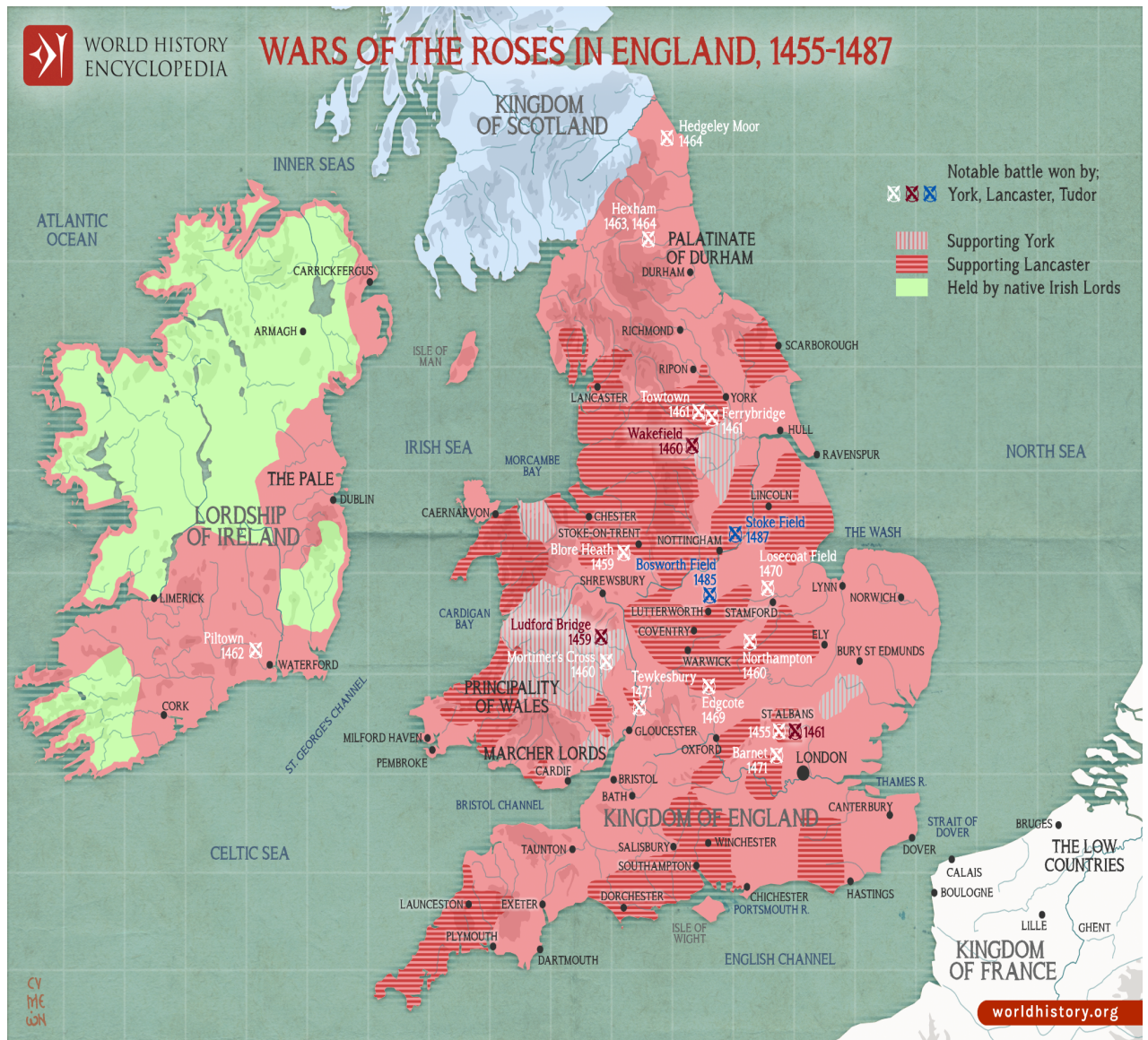
During the early years of the Wars of the Roses, before this committee takes place, Richard, the Duke of York and leader of the Yorks, was appointed as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland by the Lancasters in an effort to remove the Yorks from England and weaken their support. Ireland remained mostly neutral outside of the Pale, although Dublin became a seat of power for the York family. While the Irish have supported the Yorkist movement and provided refuge to King Edward IV's family in the past, they have not actively participated in the

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<sup>17</sup> Steven G. Ellis. *Ireland's English Pale, 1470-1550: The Making of a Tudor Region*. Boydell & Brewer (2021) p.224

military campaigns or battles. Rather, the Irish are honed in on providing opportunities that would allow Irish lords to assert their autonomy and rely less on English rule.

Within England itself, the King rules from Windsor Castle, situated on the western outskirts of London. The Privy Council also convenes at the monarch's residence, which means that YORK will take place in London. The warring Lancasters and Yorks are descendants of two Dukes, each overseeing the cities of Lancaster and York, respectively. York is the primary city of the county of Yorkshire, located in the center of England's northern region. Lancaster lies north-west of York, along the coast of the Irish Sea. Many noble families control land throughout the region, with their neighbors serving as either their closest allies or most long-standing enemies.



*Wars of the Roses Map*<sup>18</sup>

## The English Monarchy

Like many other monarchies in Europe, England's crown is hereditary – it passes from one monarch to another through familial relation. There are numerous royal families across the world, usually known by their surnames. For example, the current British monarch, King Charles III, and his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, both

<sup>18</sup> Simeon Netchev. 2023. *Wars of the Roses in England*. Image. *World History Encyclopedia*. <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/17973/wars-of-the-roses-in-england-1455---1487/>

belong to the royal family of Windsor. Royal families use several synonymous notations. Using Windsor as an example again, "The Royal Family of Windsor," "The House of Windsor," "Windsor House," "The Windsor Dynasty," and "The Windsors" all refer to the members of the Windsor royal line.

In the 15th century, customs dictate that family names only pass through the male lines of a monarchy, although a claim to the throne can still come from female lines. If a royal lady were to marry a man with a different surname, their children would still be royal but would belong to a new royal house bearing their father's surname. When King Henry I of House Normandy (1068-1135) died, his only heir was female. Princess Matilda married Geoffrey of Anjou, a French duke, and their children adopted his surname, changing England's royal dynasty from the House of Normandy to the House of Plantagenet. Dukes and other nobles also pass their titles hereditarily, but their lines are not referred to as a "House" or a "Dynasty" unless they sit on a throne.<sup>19</sup>

The Wars of the Roses began from a single house, the House of Plantagenet, which had been England's ruling family for over three centuries. When King Edward III of Plantagenet died, his sons competed for the throne. In order to distinguish themselves as rival families, the warring sons chose new House names based on the regions where they ruled as Dukes: Lancaster and York, creating the House of Lancaster and the House of York, respectively.

In the Wars of the Roses, the Lancasters, Yorks, and the nobility are also dealing with France, which is governed by King Louis XI of the House of Valois. There is also the small region of Burgundy, which is ruled by the House of Valois-Burgundy (it used to be a part of Valois, but they adopted a second name to distinguish themselves as separate).

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<sup>19</sup> Van Coppenolle, Brenda; Smith, Daniel (2023). "Dynasties in Historical Political Economy." *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Political Economy*

The members of a royal family comprise only a minuscule portion of the nobility. As delegates, many of you will belong to other important families that have been granted hereditary titles and powers by the crown through the system of peerage. When William the Conqueror first established the English monarchy in 1066, he divided the land into estates and distributed them among his closest allies in exchange for their service to the crown. The appointed nobles made the administrative task of managing England significantly easier, and the King frequently convened them in the "Privy Council" for advice.<sup>20</sup> And over time, the nobility has evolved into a complex system of ranks, based on the quantity of land each noble oversees and their relationship to the monarch. Regardless of rank, every noble in the peerage system is a member of the House of Lords in Parliament, granting them political influence and a voice in government affairs.

At the top of the hierarchy is the Monarch—the King or Queen—who can assign and withdraw royal titles at their discretion. Then come Dukes and Duchesses, who oversee the largest amounts of land ("Duchies" or "Dukedoms") and hold the highest level of authority outside of the monarchy. King Edward III introduced Dukedoms, initially reserving them only for members of the royal family who were not sitting on the throne, such as the King's children and siblings. During the brief reign of King Edward III's young grandson, King Richard II, the title of Duke was expanded to other members of the nobility. In practice, nobles occupy very similar roles in government and the administration of their land, but Dukes are usually chosen for their military accomplishments to ensure the protection of their duchies. Some sovereign countries were once duchies of other nations, so their rulers retain the title of Duke, even if they function as Kings or Queens. During YORK, the nation of Burgundy is ruled by Philippe, the Duke of Burgundy.

Next on the hierarchy of British Peerage are Marquesses and Marchionesses, although this title did not exist during the Wars of the Roses. In more recent history, the famous ally of Alexander Hamilton, Marquis de

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



Lafayette, was a French equivalent of the Marquess title. After Marquess come the Earls and Countesses (there are no Counts in England). The title of Earl is actually the oldest in English history, predating William the Conqueror and originating from the Viking term "jarl."<sup>21</sup> Earls function very similarly to Dukes, with their own lands to oversee and armies sworn to their service; however, these lands ("Earldoms") are typically smaller than Duchies. Many Earldoms were not initially hereditary, only belonging to an individual for their lifetime before reverting to the crown for reassignment. By the Wars of the Roses, however, the majority of Earls were hereditary. Beneath Earls and Countesses are Viscounts and Viscountesses, and lastly, Barons and Baronesses. Typically, these nobles belonged to the families of higher-ranking peers but did not own large estates themselves.

During the Wars of the Roses, all hereditary titles, including the crown itself, passed down through the laws of agnatic primogeniture.<sup>22</sup> Agnatic means that it passes through the male line; women, unfortunately, could not hold a title on their own outside of marriage to a titled man. Primogeniture refers to the first-born child through a legitimate marriage. English Medieval society was bound by laws and customs, and children born out of wedlock were not eligible to receive any hereditary titles or land unless the monarch or the Privy Council voted to legitimize them.<sup>23</sup> If a noble had only female children, the title would pass to the oldest male grandchild from a legitimate marriage. If there were no legitimate male grandchildren, the title would pass to the noble's eldest brother.<sup>24</sup>

This is how royal Houses remained in power for centuries: it was practically impossible for a title to pass to someone outside of the line of succession. If a King were to die without any obvious heirs or relatives, the Privy

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<sup>21</sup>J. Enoch Powell and Keith Wallis . *The House of Lords in the Middle Ages: A History of the English House of Lords to 1540*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson. (1968) p.6

<sup>22</sup>Chris Given-Wilson. *Building Legitimacy: Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimacy in Medieval Societies*. Boston, MA: Brill. (2004) p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p.93

<sup>24</sup> From Agnatic Succession to Absolute Primogeniture: The Shift to Equal Rights of Succession to Thrones and Titles in the Modern European Constitutional Monarchy

Council would elect a new monarch from the same royal House, even if they had to go back several generations to find a suitable candidate. The strong cultural emphasis on a single royal family stemmed from "the divine right of kings," a belief among the people that God had chosen their monarch.<sup>25</sup> If the Privy Council elected a monarch who did not belong to House Plantagenet, House Lancaster, or House York, the people would undoubtedly revolt.

Currently, King Edward IV is unmarried and has no son, so the next person in line for the throne is his oldest younger brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, followed by his second oldest younger brother George, Duke of Clarence. In the event of King Edward IV's death, the Privy Council will not elect a new monarch; the crown will pass automatically to Richard.

For much of Medieval England, the common people had little influence over the crown or the nobles who managed their lands. However, the establishment of Parliament has given the people a new voice that must be respected. Commoners cannot inherit land without being named as a peer by the monarch, but they can draft legislation in Parliament that will be sent to the House of Lords, comprised of many nobles on the Privy Council, for approval.<sup>26</sup> Parliament acts as a court of final arbitration in disputes over property, setting levels and methods of taxation, and trying cases of treason. Most law originates from petitions: written requests from anyone addressed either to the king personally or to the commoners collectively.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the common people of England vastly outnumber the nobility, so the most significant threat to the status quo would arguably be a large-scale rebellion.

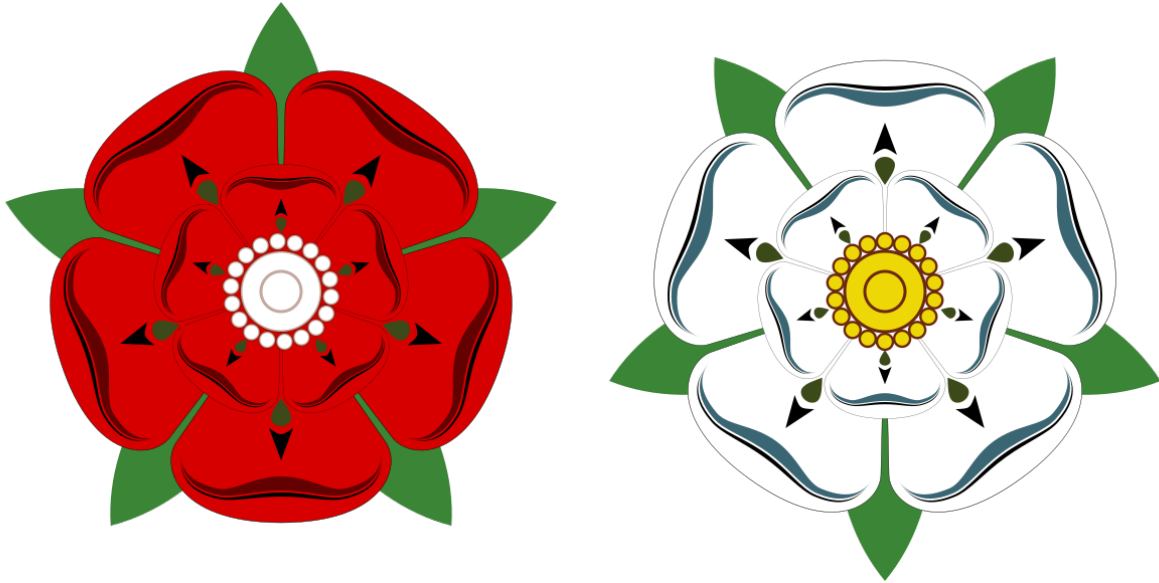
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<sup>25</sup> [Divine right of kings | Definition, History, & Facts | Britannica](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Parliaments in the Fifteenth Century - Wars of the Roses](#)

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

## The Wars of the Roses



*The Lancaster (red) and York (white) roses, the emblems of each respective house.<sup>28</sup>*

### The Initial Conflict (1377-1399)

In 1377, King Edward III died of a stroke at the age of 64, beginning the Wars of the Roses with a cataclysmic succession crisis. His eldest son, Edward “The Black Prince” had been the heir apparent to the throne, but Prince Edward died young, likely of the Bubonic Plague.<sup>29</sup> Prince Edward had a son, Richard, so the laws of primogeniture indicated that the crown should pass to Richard. However, the Privy Council of 1377 was concerned because Richard was only ten years old and his uncles were powerful Dukes with lands and knights who were loyal to them. Ultimately, the laws prevailed, and the boy was crowned King Richard II.

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<sup>28</sup> Wikimedia Commons contributors, “File:Roses-Lancaster victory.svg,” Image. *Wikimedia Commons*, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Roses-Lancaster\\_victory.svg&oldid=811094144](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Roses-Lancaster_victory.svg&oldid=811094144)

<sup>29</sup> Ole J. Benedictow (2004). *The Black Death 1346–1353: The Complete History*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press. p.342-53

The reign of King Richard II was disastrous. His first years were marked by the influence of his uncles, the Duke of Lancaster and the Duke of York, who acted as regents while Richard learned how to rule.<sup>30</sup> King Edward III had invaded France during his reign, starting the Hundred Years' War, which plagued the young King Richard greatly as he attempted to establish his legitimacy. Nearly all of the land won by King Edward III was lost, and England nearly became a client state of France until Richard agreed to a future betrothal with the infant Princess of France. To recover the immense debt on the crown from the war, Richard II raised taxes, angering many lords and commoners alike. After only four years on the throne, there was a major rebellion as attempts to collect taxes turned violent.

In 1381, a wide spectrum of rural society, including many local artisans and village officials, rose up in protest against the monarchy, burning court records and opening the local prisons.<sup>31</sup> The rebels sought a reduction in taxation, an end to serfdom, and the removal of King Richard II's senior officials and law courts. Emboldened by the fact that their king was only 14 years old (*he should've done MUNUC instead*), the rebels advanced into London, destroyed the palace, set fire to law books and buildings, and killed anyone associated with the royal government.<sup>32</sup> The following day after their arrival, Richard met the rebels and agreed to most of their demands, including the abolition of serfdom. Meanwhile, rebels entered the Tower of London, killing the Lord Chancellor and Lord High Treasurer, whom they found inside.<sup>33</sup>

Not long after the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 had been quelled, several members of the nobility, calling themselves the Lords Appellant, seized power and placed King Richard II under house arrest for two years.<sup>34</sup> Once

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<sup>30</sup> A. L. Rowse (1966). *Bosworth Field & the Wars of the Roses*. Wordsworth Military Library. p.14-24

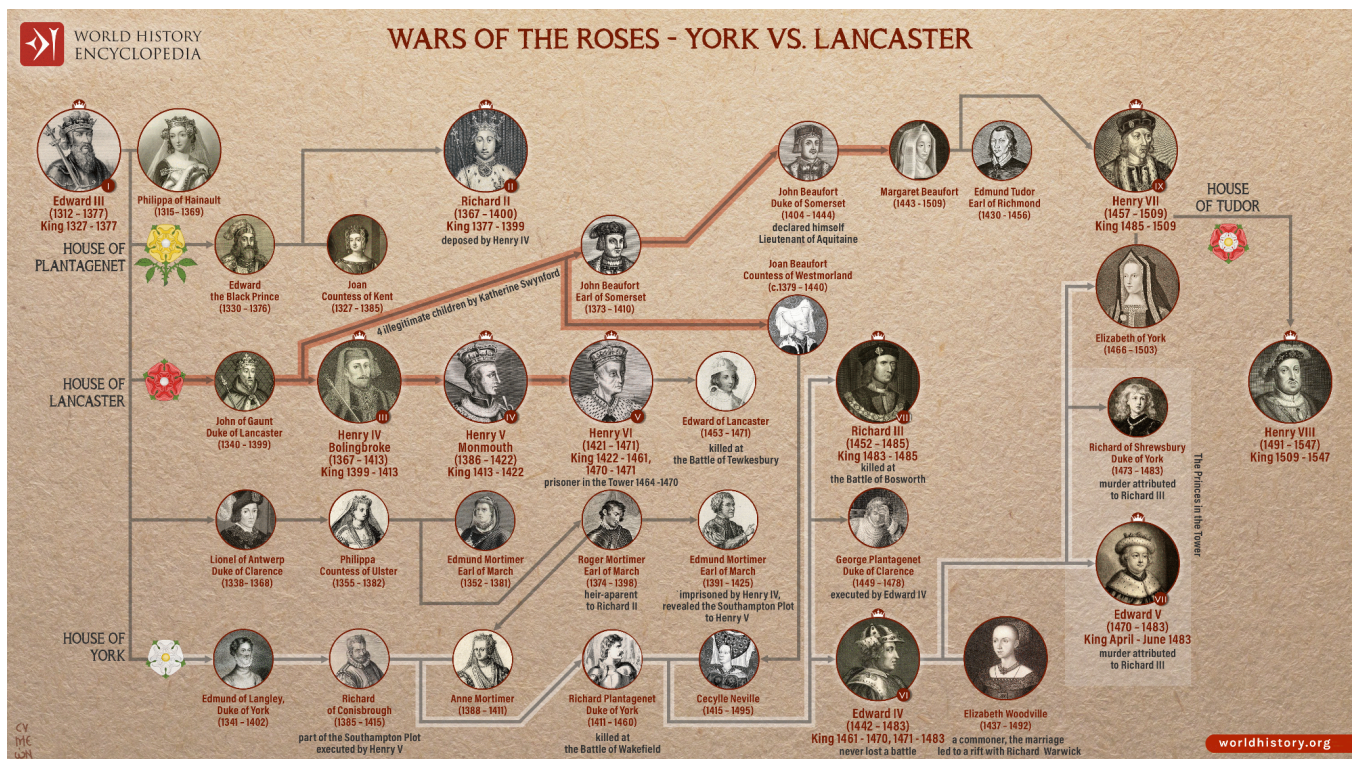
<sup>31</sup> Alastair Dunn (2002). *The Great Rising of 1381: the Peasants' Revolt and England's Failed Revolution*. Stroud, UK: Tempus. p.74

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p.77

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p.89

<sup>34</sup> Anthony Goodman, (1971) *The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant under Richard II*, University of Miami Press. p.13

the young King regained control, he executed many of the nobles, including those who had not taken part in the revolt. Many historians have debated whether King Richard II went insane in the last few years of his reign or whether the young king suffered from a hereditary personality disorder.<sup>35</sup> In 1399, Henry Bolingbroke, the son of the old Duke of Lancaster and cousin of Richard II, forcibly seized the throne while Richard was away in Ireland. When Richard returned, Henry imprisoned him in the Tower of London, where King Richard II starved to death. The country was in shock, but King Henry IV was crowned in 1399, becoming the first Lancastrian king and beginning the Lancastrian Dynasty.



*Wars of the Roses Family Tree*<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Was Richard II mad? | The National Archives

<sup>36</sup> Simeon Netchev. 2020. *Wars of the Roses - York vs. Lancaster*. Image. *World History Encyclopedia*. <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/11846/wars-of-the-roses--york-vs-lancaster/>

## The Lancastrian Dynasty (1399-1461)

The Welsh had been supportive of King Richard II, and the news of his deposition at the hands of the Lancasters triggered another large-scale revolt, led by a Welsh prince named Owain Glyndŵr. Glyndŵr's Rebellion, as it would be called, would outlast Henry IV's reign and would not end until 1415.<sup>37</sup> The Welsh were not the only ones concerned by the Lancastrian takeover, however. Many nobles who had been loyal to the Plantagenet dynasty rebelled against the Lancasters, and King Henry IV spent the rest of his lifetime fighting challenges to his crown.<sup>38</sup> In 1413, Henry IV died, and his son, Henry V, was crowned King of England.

To effectively cement his position as king both domestically and internationally, King Henry V turned the crown's attention back to France, hoping to win the Hundred Years' War once and for all. There had been relative peace with France while Richard II had been betrothed to the French princess, but the Lancasters' seizure of power and murder of the young King Richard had reignited the conflict. France had been funding the Glyndŵr Rebellion, giving King Henry V the reason he needed to declare open war once again in 1415.

On the evening that Henry was set to depart for France, the original Duke of York's son, Richard of Conisburgh, attempted to assassinate the Lancastrian king with a small group of loyal nobles.<sup>39</sup> Henry discovered the plot and executed Richard and his allies, beginning a violent feud between House York and House Lancaster that would only grow over time. Richard of Conisburgh had a son, Richard of York, who was only four years old when his father was executed. Since the young Richard had no part in the plot against the king, Henry V allowed him to inherit the Dukedom of York.

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<sup>37</sup>BBC Wales. "History - Themes - Chapter 10: The revolt of Owain Glyndwr." BBC, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Philip J. Potter. *Monarchs of the Renaissance: The Lives and Reigns of 42 European Kings and Queens*. (2014) McFarland.

<sup>39</sup>HLB. "The Southampton Plot – Hampshire History." Hampshire History, 5 September 2013,

In France, King Henry V had an extremely successful military campaign. After decisive victories in the regions of Harfleur and Agincourt, the English forces had wiped out the majority of the French nobility. In 1420, King Charles VI signed the Treaty of Troyes, which married one of Charles' daughters, Catherine of Valois, to Henry V and acknowledged their future sons as the next legitimate successors to the French throne.<sup>40</sup> The Treaty of Troyes was a massive victory for England and cemented the Lancastrian dynasty as legitimate in the eyes of the commoners and nobility. In 1421, Catherine of Valois gave birth to a son, Henry. Everything seemed to be going well for the Lancasters, but unfortunately, in the very next year, King Henry V died unexpectedly of an illness, leaving his nine-month-old son as the next monarch.<sup>41</sup>

While Prince Henry grew up, the realm fell into internal conflicts as various counselors and advisors fought for power. Overseas, France had united around Joan of Arc and regained much of the land that King Henry V had won. And so emboldened by its victories, France broke the Treaty of Troyes in 1429 and crowned Charles VII as king. In turn, England crowned King Henry VI at just seven years old, declaring he was instead the rightful king of France. The nobility in England thus split into two factions: those who sought peace with France through renewed negotiation, and those who sought to increase military campaigns in France and retake control by force. The militant nobles were led by a now-grown and charismatic Richard of York, the son of Richard of Conisburgh, who had attempted to assassinate Henry V.<sup>42</sup>

Richard of York was the commander of the English forces in France, but King Henry VI was terrified of violence and instead negotiated a temporary truce by agreeing to marry Margaret of Anjou, a distant relative of King Charles VII of France.<sup>43</sup> Richard was deeply critical of this arrangement because England had agreed to give

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<sup>40</sup> Christopher Allmand "The Coronations of Henry VI". *History Today*. (1982) Vol. 32, no. 5,

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p.212

<sup>42</sup> Ralph A. Griffiths. *The Reign of King Henry VI*. University of California Press. (1981) p.467-468

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p.512-24

up the provinces of Anjou and Maine as part of the truce. Once Margaret and Henry VI were married in 1444, Richard was stripped of his command and appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in an effort to remove the York influence from the royal court. It was during this time that King Henry VI began exhibiting symptoms of psychosis and mental instability.

The French realized that without Richard of York, the English forces in France were scattered and unfocused. Henry VI had no military experience, and his unstable state allowed France to win a brutal victory in the region of Formigny in 1450.<sup>44</sup> Soon after, France took back the Dukedom of Normandy. By 1453, England had lost all of its possessions in France, officially losing the Hundred Year's War. Henry VI suffered severe mental health issues and withdrew from court completely. In his absence, the two most powerful noble families, the Nevilles and the Percys, began to fight over territory in the northern region of England.<sup>45</sup>

Amid the chaos, Richard of York was able to return from Ireland and reestablish himself in London. To the Lancasters' dismay, the Privy Council appointed Richard as Protector of the Realm in 1454 so that he might end the Neville-Percy feud. Richard of York allied himself with the Neville family and became close friends with Richard "Warwick" Neville, the Earl of Warwick. However, King Henry VI miraculously recovered from his breakdown in 1455 and forced Richard to go into exile. Despite this development, Warwick and many of the other nobles who had grown loyal to Richard of York began to campaign for his return to court. Opting to charge Richard with treason and execute him once and for all, King Henry VI gathered his own allies, and the Yorks and Lancasters prepared for battle.

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<sup>44</sup> John A. Wagner. *Encyclopedia of the Wars of the Roses*. (2001) ABC-CLIO. p.34

<sup>45</sup> Trevor Royle. *The Road to Bosworth Field*. London: Little, Brown. (2009).p.207-208



In May of 1455, the Yorkist forces intercepted the Lancastrian forces in St. Albans, north of London. There were fewer than 200 casualties in the Battle of St. Albans, but it was a decisive victory for the Yorks.<sup>46</sup> The head of the Percy family was killed in the battle, much to the satisfaction of Warwick (a Neville), and King Henry was taken into custody, where he further suffered from mental health issues. The Yorks then returned to London, where Richard was reestablished as Protector of the Realm and Warwick was placed in charge of establishing connections with the nations of Burgundy and France. However, in 1458, King Henry VI again recovered from his personal obstacles and once more dismissed Richard.<sup>47</sup> Richard, who was still the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, returned to Dublin with his oldest son and heir to the Duchy of York, Edward.



*The Yorkist Flag*<sup>48</sup>

To combat the growing Yorkist forces, the Lancasters allied with the Percy family and gathered a large army in the north with support from Scotland, which agreed to support King Henry VI in exchange for lands

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<sup>46</sup> Goodman, Anthony *The Wars of the Roses: Military Activity and English society, 1452–97*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (1981) p.24

<sup>47</sup> A. L. Rowse. *Bosworth Field & the Wars of the Roses*. Wordsworth Military Library. (1966). p.136

<sup>48</sup> Wikimedia Commons contributors, "File:War of the roses Yorkist flag.png," Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:War\\_of\\_the\\_roses\\_Yorkist\\_flag.png&oldid=745101425](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:War_of_the_roses_Yorkist_flag.png&oldid=745101425)

along the Scottish-English border. In 1460, the York and Lancasters clashed in the Battle of Wakefield, where Richard of York was killed in battle. Edward took up his father's position as leader of the Yorks and quickly took the city of London with support from the commoners, who preferred the charismatic 18-year-old Edward over the older and mentally unstable Henry VI.<sup>49</sup> In 1461, Warwick and Edward led the York forces to Towton in the north to confront the Lancastrian army.

The Battle of Towton was the bloodiest battle ever fought on English soil and resulted in a decisive victory for Edward and Warwick.<sup>50</sup> Many of the Lancastrian allies were killed, but King Henry VI and his wife, Margaret of Anjou, were able to flee to Scotland to safety.

Victorious, Edward returned to London, where he was crowned King Edward IV of York, shifting the crown to the House of York for the first time. King Edward IV then appointed Warwick as High Admiral of England and the Steward of the Dukedom of Lancaster.<sup>51</sup> And now, as awaited, King Edward IV has convened his Privy Council of advisors and nobles to both govern England and end the air of instability spurred by the Wars of the Roses thus far...

## The Privy Council of King Edward IV

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Now that you have the history and background information of the Wars of the Roses, the following sections will outline the unique challenges facing the Privy Council of King Edward IV of York. The realm has been suffering for nearly a century: the Hundred Years' War with France, the constant changing of monarchs, and the bubonic plague – the Kingdom of England is in turmoil. As you work to guide it towards peace, it is important to remember the context of your character within the world of York.

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<sup>49</sup> Desmond Seward. *A Brief History of the Wars of the Roses*. London: Constable & Co. (1995). p.97

<sup>50</sup> [The Battle of Towton - Historic UK](#)

<sup>51</sup> A.J. Pollard. *Warwick the Kingmaker: Politics, Power and Fame*. London. (2007). p.77-80

## The Nobility

Chivalry in the Middle Ages was a code of conduct that governed warfare and defined the behavior of the nobility from roughly 1100 to 1500. It began with knights, who were originally just armed servants, and quickly spread as they acquired lordships, earning the title of nobles themselves. This code set standards of behavior for knights, linking it to aristocratic life while also displaying chivalry, pushing families into earning noble status through accumulated wealth.

The laws of chivalry applied only to nobles and knights, setting up the divisions of social hierarchy within society. Consequently, it became closely tied with the concept of noble "estate," which is a knight's social status, property rights, and public responsibilities as a member of the nobility. By incorporating chivalry into their social norms, nobles became responsible for providing military support to the crown and royal family; in return, they enjoyed rights over land and dominion over the people who lived on their property. Often, the responsibilities and obligations of nobles were politically based, with the expectation being to attend council meetings regularly and participate in discussions on matters brought to the council, providing information about their states. This information was hidden from the public and kept secret as deliberations prioritized the king's national affairs.

While nobility was shaped by chivalrous practices, it also highlighted the exclusivity of the elite class because it was extremely difficult to attain. Instead of building character and teaching chivalry to commoners, nobles attempted to retain their power by keeping it amongst themselves, often through marriages. During the Middle Ages, marriages were less about love and more about political and economic alliances; families typically arranged these unions, viewing them as investments to build their reputation and power. They were essentially viewed on a contractual basis, resembling business arrangements more than ceremonial gestures of love. By carefully selecting spouses for their children, families managed their assets and exploited their children to

incentivize better potential suitors. Consequently, marriages illustrated public allegiances by securing loyalty and unifying both families, making them a huge tool in the war.

## The Commoners

Commoners made up most of the population and participated in agricultural work, building local communities, and following the feudal system. For most commoners, life was predominantly rural, with most of the population living in small villages and working on the land. Agriculture maintained the economy, meaning that it needed extensive maintenance and required peasants to actively engage in farming to produce food for themselves and their lords. Because the tools utilized during this time were not as advanced, work was labor-intensive, often requiring the efforts of entire families. Consequently, this meant that agriculture kept the towns alive. But upkeeping the land was difficult with the unpredictability of the weather affecting crops or illnesses depleting the workforce, inevitably minimizing the production of harvest.

Within the feudal system, commoners were at the bottom, with many being serfs. More rarely were commoners freemen; these people enjoyed greater liberties and could own land or engage in trade, although still being subject to the feudal hierarchy. However, the relationship between commoners and their lords was reciprocal because the lords provided protection in exchange for monetary compensation and labor. Often, a local official was elected by villagers to oversee the lord's interests and ensure that dues were collected, and obligations met. While the system they followed was simple, it created instability for commoners during the war because the battles disrupted communities in various ways. For instance, it required an abundance of armed men for battle, leading to a depletion of labor productivity, promoting less agricultural development and destruction of land altogether.

On a more local level, the continued successions that commoners endured led to rising taxes that funded the war, burdening the people. While disapproval was high, the villagers had little say in these political affairs. The

two different factions among the noblemen meant that commoners could be caught in conflicts between rival factions, sometimes forced into service or punished for their lord's political stance. Economic conditions continued to deteriorate as trade was disrupted, making markets unstable and contributing to the rise of inflation. Noblemen, however, continued to ignore the wants of the people, increasing frustration around villages, making it apparent that noblemen disregarded the suffering of the masses. As a result, there was support for uprisings and movements that emulated the people's needs.

## The Economy

During the late 14th century and extending into the 15th, England's economy went through a period of deep recession called The Great Slump. This recession was the product of a variety of intertwined complex factors and may have been quite difficult to solve. The most significant cause was the dramatic decline in population due to the Black Death, which first struck England in 1348-1349. This devastating plague reduced the workforce, leading to labor shortages and increased wages. While this initially benefited peasant, it strained the economy as production costs rose and agricultural output fell.

England's over-reliance on the wool trade further exacerbated the crisis. Wool was the backbone of the English economy, exported mainly to Flanders and other parts of Europe. However, the Hundred Years' War with France disrupted these trade routes, causing a sharp decline in wool exports. The conflict also drained the kingdom's treasury, further weakening the economy. The slump was intensified by the Flemish Revolt in the late 14th century, which disrupted the wool market and diminished demand for English wool.

Climatic changes during this period, often referred to as the Little Ice Age, also played a role. Poor harvests and food shortages resulted from colder and wetter weather conditions, which reduced agricultural productivity and caused grain prices to soar. This not only increased the cost of living but also led to widespread famine and social unrest.

The financial troubles of the monarchy also contributed to the Great Slump. The extravagant spending of King Henry VI and his predecessors left the crown deeply in debt. To finance ongoing wars and a lavish lifestyle, the monarchy imposed heavy taxes on the population, further burdening the already struggling economy.

London continued to grow, dominating the southeast. Elsewhere, the development of the woolen industry brought major changes. Halifax and Leeds grew at the expense of York, and the West Riding at the expense of the eastern part of Yorkshire. Suffolk and the Cotswold region became important in the national economy. As the cloth trade grew in importance, so did the association of the Merchant Adventurers.

## Foreign Affairs

One of King Edward IV's primary objectives is to secure an alliance with Burgundy, a powerful and wealthy state in what is now modern-day France and Belgium. The Duchy of Burgundy, under the leadership of Duke Philip the Good, is a critical player in European politics. Burgundy's extensive commercial networks and political influence make it an essential ally for Edward IV, especially given Burgundy's historical antagonism toward France. An alliance with Burgundy provides Edward not only with military support but also with economic advantages through increased trade and financial backing. This alliance is seen as a counterbalance to the pervasive threat posed by France, which traditionally supports the Lancastrian cause. By aligning with Burgundy, Edward seeks to strengthen his position domestically and internationally, asserting his legitimacy and consolidating his power.

France under King Louis XI is another major concern for Edward IV. Louis XI is a shrewd and ambitious monarch who harbors ambitions of expanding French influence and power across Europe. The French king's support for the Lancastrians poses a direct threat to Edward's reign. Louis XI provides sanctuary and support to Lancastrian exiles, including the deposed King Henry VI and his formidable queen, Margaret of Anjou. Margaret

is an ardent and unyielding opponent of Edward IV, determined to restore her husband to the throne. With French backing, she has the resources and political clout to wage a sustained campaign against Edward. Louis XI's support for the Lancastrians is not merely a gesture of goodwill but a calculated move to destabilize England and extend French influence. For Edward, this necessitates a careful and strategic approach to counteract French interference and neutralize the Lancastrian threat.

Scotland also poses a significant challenge for Edward IV, as the Scottish King, James III, aligns with the Lancastrians and provides refuge to Margaret of Anjou and her son, Prince Edward. This northern threat requires Edward to keep a watchful eye on the border and engage in diplomatic maneuvers to prevent Scottish incursions or support for Lancastrian uprisings. The alliance between Scotland and the Lancastrians forces Edward to consider the possibility of a two-front conflict, which could stretch his resources and weaken his control over England. The Scottish threat is further compounded by the historical animosities between England and Scotland, making diplomacy a delicate yet essential tool in Edward's arsenal.

In 1463, Edward IV successfully negotiates a truce with Scotland, known as the Treaty of York, which aims to neutralize the Scottish threat and limit their support for the Lancastrians. This treaty marks a significant diplomatic achievement early in Edward's reign, helping to stabilize his position on the throne. By securing peace with Scotland, Edward can focus his attention and resources on other pressing matters, both domestic and foreign, demonstrating his ability to navigate the treacherous waters of international diplomacy and secure agreements that benefit his reign.

However, Edward IV must remain vigilant against continuous Lancastrian plots, often backed by foreign powers. Despite their defeat at Towton in 1461, the Lancastrian faction remains active, seeking support from various European courts. Margaret of Anjou is tireless in her efforts to garner support for her cause, traveling across Europe to secure allies and resources. Edward's vigilance proves crucial in preventing these plots from

gaining traction and threatening his rule, as the constant threat requires him to engage in a delicate balance of diplomacy and military readiness, ensuring he can respond swiftly to any emerging threats.

In addition to these immediate concerns, Edward IV remains aware of the broader geopolitical shifts occurring in Europe, such as the rise of the Ottoman Empire and the consolidation of power in France and Spain. The intricate web of alliances and enmities among European powers also has implications for England, and Edward must navigate these complexities, seeking to position England in a way that maximizes its security and influence. As a result, his foreign policy is characterized by a careful balancing act, as he seeks to forge alliances that strengthen his position while avoiding entanglements that could prove detrimental.

Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville in 1464, although outside the initial period of his reign, also has significant foreign policy implications. While the marriage is controversial and alienates some of Edward's key allies, including the powerful Earl of Warwick, it also opens new diplomatic opportunities. Elizabeth's large and influential family can be leveraged to strengthen Edward's position, illustrating the intricate interplay between domestic politics and foreign policy, as well as Edward's ability to use personal relationships to advance his strategic goals.

Throughout this period, Edward IV demonstrates a keen understanding of the importance of foreign affairs in securing his reign. His efforts to secure alliances, manage hostilities, and neutralize threats reflect a strategic approach to governance that prioritizes stability and strength. By understanding the complexities of international politics and leveraging his diplomatic skills, Edward works to create a secure and prosperous future for England.



## CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

### Nobles

#### George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence

Born into the powerful House of York as the brother to King Edward IV, Plantagenet was immediately rewarded with nobility when Edward claimed the throne. He was appointed as Duke of Clarence in 1461 and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1462, making him a strong opposition. Despite these honors, Plantagenet loyalty was to his wife, Isabel Neville (daughter to Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick). The Neville's were able to manipulate Plantagenet into secretly supporting an uprising in northern England that conspired against Edward, and when Edward discovered Plantagenet's betrayal, he fled to France with Warwick, seeking refuge. His experience in exile, and the instability of the Lancastrian rule, convinced Plantagenet to seek security forcing him to reconcile with Edward. By 1471, Plantagenet returned to England, fighting for the restoration of Yorkist rule, alongside his wife.

#### John Neville, 1st Marquess of Montagu

John Neville was Richard Neville's younger brother, who fought alongside him in the War of Roses. Like the other members of his family, he feuded with the Percy family over the northern land of England, with both houses supporting different kings. When Edward took the throne, he promoted John with Earldom, becoming the Earl of Northumberland. However his brother, Warwick, grew increasingly dissatisfied with Edward's rule, leading John to rebel against Edward. Initially John encouraged Warwick to de-escalate his actions, but Warwick refused. Thus Edward grew hesitant in trusting the Neville's, leading him to strip John's title of Earl, reducing him solely to the Marquess of Montagu. Consequently, John became greedy by wanting more land and power, so he fully began supporting his brother throughout the remainder of the war.

## **John de Mowbray, 4th Duke of Norfolk**

When John Mowbray was young, he became a ward for King Henry, and was placed under the Duke of Gloucester, Humphrey's regime, and together they went to France campaigning. His father died in his youth, so he inherited his title, becoming the 3rd Duke of Norfolk, and owning all of his father's estates. He married Eleanore Bouchier, which leads him to have problems with northern lands, thus beginning a rivalry with the de la Pole family. As the war between Yorks and Lancasters continued, Mowbray changed sides, and began supporting York, which became beneficial as they mutually distrusted the de la Pole family. He died shortly after Edward became King, but his son, John de Mowbray, the 4th Duke of Norfolk inherited his will, titles, and estates.

## **Henry Bouchier, 1st Earl of Essex**

Prior to Henry Bouchier becoming the 1st Earl of Essex, he held the position of Lord High Treasurer of England, during turbulent times. Although there were several economic challenges that threatened England, like a massive famine, he was well liked by the public and nobles alike, being reappointed various times. He married Isabel of Cambridge, the sister of Richard Plantagenet, making him the uncle by marriage to Edward IV, reinforcing his loyalty to the king. He also inherited the title of 5th Baron Bourichier in 1433 from his cousin Elizabeth Bourichier, and became the 1st Viscount Bouchier in 1446. During his military career, specifically throughout the Hundred Years' War, he served in France under the Duke of York as lieutenant general, and later fought for the Yorkist cause in major deciding battles in the War of Roses ie. the battle of Towton and the battle at St Albans. His military recognition earned him the title, Knight of Order of the Garter, in 1452; and his military success provided him an abundance of people who were willing to fight under his command.

## **Sir William Parr**

Although the Parr family had strong connections with Yorkist rule, when Edward first became king, William was solely aligned to Richard Neville. As such during his early reign, they were both willingly supporting

him as King. Sometime after Edward's marriage to a Woodville, Warwick manage to instigate conflicts, creating turbulent for Edward, causing him to look incompetent. As a result, many people were conspiring against him, with his main opposers being Warwick himself and George Plantagenet. Parr fell for the propaganda that the Neville's were spreading, convincing him to go against Edward. Edward forgave Parr, because Parr saw that it was in his interest to serve Edward, bringing him 600 men into battle for him. His loyalty got him both pardoned for the early betrayal and rewarded for his loyalty through enormous land grants. Later in his career, he held the positions of Comptroller of the Household and High Sheriff of Cumberland, giving him more territorial power and respect from other noble men.

### **Humphrey Stafford, 1st Earl of Devon**

A distant relative of the Earls of Stafford, Henry Stafford became the largest landowner in Dorset through a series of inheritances, which included estates held by his grandfather after the original heir died childless. Unlike the majority of his family, Henry did not side with the Lancasters, fighting alongside the Yorkists after having been recruited by Richard Neville. Soon after Edward took the throne, he knighted Stafford and had Parliament recognize him as the Lord of Southwick granting him more privileges over land. Edward continued to grant him more nobility by making the Lancastrian family forfeit their estates in Devon to Stafford. However in 1469, Warwick became upset over Stafford's recent Earldom over Devon, creating tensions between the two. Shortly after, Stafford was sent to dissolve a rebellion that Warwick was leading against Edward—further illustrating the growing tensions between both men.

### **Thomas Butler, 7th Earl of Ormond**

The Butler family consisted of John, James, and Thomas and their two sisters, Elizabeth and Anne. Each brother became the Earl of Ormond, with Thomas inheriting the title last. Thomas was brother-in-law to John Talbot, the 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury, who married Elizabeth. His sister Anne was contracted to marry Thomas

FitzGerald, the 7th Earl of Desmond, with their families becoming well acquainted, however the marriage never took place. They remained cordial and in good standing maintaining amicability, with each being able to rely on one another. His brother, James, though recognized as a coward in battle, fought alongside Richard Neville, ultimately giving his life fighting for Edward. Because of James, Thomas felt sympathy for Edward and quietly supported him as an ally. Having grown up in Ireland, he was expected to serve in the Irish Parliament, but having been close friends to Henry VII, Thomas was hired and relocated to serve in the English Parliament. For political advice he looked up to Walter Chamfleur, who taught him how to navigate issues regarding charters and other legal proceedings, which allowed him to maintain his wealth.

## John Fogge, Sir Fogge

John Fogge, coming from a noble background was given his family's inheritance over land in 1447. By 1450, he established himself as King Henry's squire playing a crucial part in shutting down the Jack Cade's Rebellion, which highlighted the king's incompetence and public disconnect. Fogge's political career began to shift shortly after the rebellion, as he began to align himself with the Yorkist cause, supporting Edward in major battles like the Battle of Towton. He was appointed as Treasurer for the Edwardian household and became a prominent royal associate in Kent. His unwavering loyalty proved beneficial as he was rewarded greatly by Edward, with grants of land and privileges, including a grant of several years for gold and silver mines in Devon and Cornwall. Soonafter, Fogge forges close ties with the Prince of Wales, helping build an alliance for York. He eventually marries Alice Haute, who not only is closely related to the Woodville lineage, but also grew up alongside Elizabeth Woodville. Her marriage prompts Fogge to dislike the Neville's continuing the feud between both families.

## Thomas Stanley, 1st Earl of Derby

Thomas Stanley served as a squire to King Henry VI in 1454. In 1459, when Henry was having an episode he was deemed unable to command, and as Queen, Margaret de Anjou took lead ordering Stanley to attack against the Yorkist Earl of Salisbury. He was conflicted on this matter as the Earl was father to his first wife, Eleanore Neville. His relationship with both families prevented him from fully acting on Margaret de Anjou's order; instead Stanley chose to refrain from fighting by refusing to send his troops into battle and staying miles away. Edward took note of this act, and to show repayment, he rewarded Stanley by making him Chief Justice of Cheshire in 1461. His large influence and power in Northwest England and Wales, aided Edward in increasing his likability as King. While Edward grew to trust Stanley, Stanley loyalty was not reciprocated. Edward's marriage marked Richard Neville's (Earl of Warwick) betrayal leading to Stanley shifting sides and encouraging the restoration of Lancastrian rule. Stanley lent his army to Neville's, upsetting Edward. When Edward succeeded into royalty again, Stanley repaid his loyalty and earned pardon by going on a French expedition in 1473, where he managed to seize land from Richard, Duke of Gloucester and Edward's brother. Consequently this led to Edward expanding his dominion, giving him access to a Scottish border town known as Berwick-upon-Tweed. Stanley continued as an influential figure, but Edward remained wary of him because he was made aware that Stanley was outwardly supporting him but conspiring with Richard III, to have his kids married off.

## Richard Woodville

While serving in England Richard Woodville obeyed King Henry VI's command, abiding by his rules and eventually being rewarded with the title of Baron Rivers as well as the Knight of the Garter for the Lancasters in 1450, solidifying his status as a noble. Although Woodville began as a loyalist for the Lancastrian rule and fought against the Yorks in the battle of Towton, he eventually became closely tied to King Edward IV. He quickly shifted alliances, becoming Captain of Alençon for York, after having been defeated in Towton. He was

fined for failing to acquire a marriage license with the widow, Jacquetta of Luxembourg. His daughter, Elizabeth Woodville, was secretly married off to Edward in 1464 upsetting the Warwick family who had priorly arranged a marriage for Edward, making Woodville hated by the Warwicks and other nobility. Despite not being liked, his proximity to Edward cemented his and his family's place in positions of power. Under Edward's rule, he became both the treasurer of England (1466) and the 1st Earl Rivers (1466) and supported developing alliances with Burgundy because of Jacquetta's ties to the land.

### **Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland**

Under King Henry VI reign, the Percy family thrived as one of the most powerful houses in northern England, rivaled only by the Nevilles. When the War of Roses was erupting, men were sent to fight, including Henry Percy, the 3rd Earl of Northumberland, the leading Lancastrian commander who died at the Battle of Towton. His son Henry Percy, the 4th Earl of Northumberland and Warden of the East and Middle marches, struggled after his fathers death due to Yorkist confiscating the Percy estate causing him to lose his fortunes. Despite this setback, Percy was able to regain his power under Edward, winning his trust. Although difficult, he convinced him to return him to his noble status, pleading his loyalty and freeing him from prison. The position of Earl of Northumberg was revoked from John Neville, and re-given to Percy further emphasizing the rivalry between the two houses. Loyalty meant little for Percy, as he was being suspected for treason against Edward.

### **Anne Stafford, Duchess of Buckingham (a.k.a Anne Neville)**

Anne Neville was an English noble, who became the Duchess of Buckingham through her marriage to Humphrey Stafford, 1st Duke of Buckingham. She was born into the Neville family as the daughter of Ralph Neville, 1st Earl of Westmorland, and Joan Beaufort, making her a granddaughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and a great-granddaughter of King Edward III. Anne's marriage to Humphrey Stafford united two of England's most prominent noble families, strengthening the Stafford family's claims. As Duchess of Buckingham,

Anne managed her husband's estates ensuring that he is politically and socially liked by the public. Initially this was difficult as Humphrey had previously fought to keep the Lancasterian reign, but being a Neville, Humphrey's prior allegiance was overlooked. Despite her familial ties, she adopted her husband's distaste for her family, hoping to restore the Lancasterian rule in secret.

## **John de la Pole, 2nd Duke of Suffolk**

William de la Pole was the 1st Duke of Suffolk, who fought in the Hundred Years' War for King Henry. His remarkability was commended by the King, even being called his "favorite." William helped govern the young Henry, making diplomatic choices for him to increase his political expansion. In this though, he negotiated the Treaty of Tours, which contained secret clauses that ultimately affected his reputation. Consequently, his son John de la Pole, had a more difficult time in reaching noble status as his father's actions tainted his name. Despite difficulties, he married Elizabeth of York, making him Edward's brother-in-law. Although having married into wealth, de la Pole's ascension into nobility did not increase his finances, being regarded as the poorest English duke. Throughout the War of Roses, de la Pole attempted to stay neutral, although outwardly aligning with the Yorkist movement, and staying out of the Neville and Woodville feud.

## **Baroness Margaret Clifford**

During the War of Roses, John Clifford was a Lancastrian soldier whose father was slain by Yorkist supporters in the 1st Battle at St Albans. Shaped by his father's death, he despised not only the Yorkist rule but also the Neville family, thus pledging his loyalty and support to Margaret of Anjou. Despite this loss, he had several other victories that led him to command a powerful army full of knight allies. In 1453, he married Margaret Bromflete, who supported his political choices. Together they were known for aligning themselves closely with the Percy family, in their feud against the Neville family. In times of peace, they would attempt to ambush Neville and Yorkist lords, displaying their hostility toward Edwardian rule. Bromflete, as his wife, keeps Clifford from

hastily moving, acting as a voice of reason, ensuring that he follows her orders, making all social and political decisions.

## Ambassadors

### Mary Valois-Burgundy, Duchess of Burgundy

Mary of Burgundy was born in 1457 as the only child of Charles the Bold, inheriting his territories after death. Many noble men took interest in her with the intention of occupying her land. Among them were Louis XI who volunteered his son Charles VIII, who was too young, and the Duke of Clarence, George Plantagenet, who was supported by Margert of York, but denied by Edward IV. Ultimately, she ended up choosing to marry the Archduke Maximillian of Austria, to prevent Louis from taking claims on her land. Their union kept Burgundy intact and shifted the dynastic allegiance from the House of Valois to Habsburg, although later falling under French control. Under the wedding contract, the couple agreed to co-rule together, but if one were to die their offspring would be heir to their lands, rather than the remaining spouse. Despite attempts to bypass the contract, to get either ruler to inherit land, it was unsuccessful.

### Henry Holland, 3rd Duke of Exeter

Henry was the son of John Holland, 2nd Duke of Exeter, and Anne Stafford, the daughter of Edmund Stafford, 5th Earl of Stafford. He served King Henry, playing a significant role in the war by acting as a Lancastrian Commander for several battles. Although having married Anne of York, Edward's sister, he refused to serve under him. Despite losing the war, he stayed loyal to the Lancasters, causing the Yorkist to strip him from his land and titles. Eventually after Henry came out of exile, he volunteered himself for an expedition to redeem himself by proving his loyalty to Edward. While his intentions seemed noble, he was notoriously known by many to have been cruel, savage, unpredictable, and even dangerous, so the people he was accompanied by were unable to trust him. Even so, the Neville family eventually resolved their feud with him and collaborated on rare occasions.



## **Sir James Strangeways, Speaker of the House of Commons**

Sir Jame Straneways was an English nobleman, who showed his support for the Yorkist cause by fighting in the 1st battle of St Albans. He was born into the Yorkshire family with his father, Sir James Strangeways Senior, serving as Chief Justice of Northern Wales. Like his father he was heavily politically involved, owning the titles of High Sheriff of Yorkshire (for three separate years) and later Speaker of the House of Commons, under King Edward reign. Using his power, he put into practice the controversial law of Scandalum Magnatum to maintain the Yorkist regime. Yorkists were known to abuse this law as it allowed for an arrest if accused of spreading lies or violating patent laws in manufacturing, making him less liked by the public. In 1464 and 1466, Edward sent him on missions to secure peace with the northern borders of Scotland, depicting his loyalty to Edward. While serving Edward, he quickly became well acquainted with the Neville's, often partaking in Richard Neville's politics. Despite being connected to both he remained and continued to serve Edward.

## **John Faukes, Clerk of Parliament**

John Faukes served as a Parliament clerk during Edward's reign, playing a crucial role in maintaining records by ensuring that documents were preserved and procedural work done correctly. He helped reform the House of Lords, taking on several apprentices, like Baldwin Hyde, who protected the property rights of St. George's College in Windsor. During his career, Faukes familiarized himself with how to successfully navigate legislative work keeping counts on elections, measures and bills. His job focused on ensuring that documents were recorded for historical evidence, but also choosing which bills to present aloud and discuss for approval, purposefully acting as a middleman for the commoner and lords. He was known for representing the public's wants to people of higher nobility.

## Merchants

### John Twynyho

Twynyho was a merchant who partnered with John Tame to establish a wool industry. Together they expanded their business by acquiring more land in Fairford to make space for their sheep. Many nobles took notice of their success and invested in them. Their apparel was so popular that they became the preferred vendors for the royals. Business was difficult to maintain as the Hundred Years' War damaged the wool industry, with taxes being levied leading to an overproduction of cloth. This was damaging to the company and wool merchants alike as they had to sell their items at a cheaper price. But before establishing himself as a wool merchant, Twynyho was a renowned lawyer, member of Parliament, and former attorney general to Edward (before he became king). His former political career granted him a strong and wealthy clientele with nobles figures being his biggest buyers.

### Jane Shore

Born as Elizabeth Lambert, Jane Shore is most famously known for being the mistress of King Edward IV. She grew up in a wealthy family, with her father being a silk merchant. He was able to get her educated, allowing her to be in frequent contact with people of high social status. He arranged a marriage for her with William Shore, a goldsmith and banker, but his incompetence led to her pursuit in nullifying the marriage by the church. Rediscovering freedom, she comes to meet Edward, through one of his advisees who equally fancied her known as William Hastings, the Lord of Chamberlain. Despite his admiration for her, she craved a relationship with Edward becoming one of his favorite mistresses. Edward respected her so much that he was known to have let her influence his judgments, even so having him secure his protection for her family. Although having a close relationship with Edward, rumors circulated that she was not only conspiring against him but using witchcraft.

## Jane Langton, Silk Merchant

As the Silk Road opened up to European markets, they grew to appreciate the high-quality material. However, attempts to produce silk were almost impossible as the worms could not survive the harsh winters. Along with the difficulties of maintaining the worms, the silk-making process was tedious and labor-intensive; requiring it to be wind, spun, and cleaned, contributing to the high cost of silk. This did not prevent Jane Langton from entering the market, as she quickly became a merchant making a deal with Genoese traders. By networking with them she financially secured herself a relationship with Italy and introduced silk to the English market. At the time, the Medici family held control over Italy, requiring many processes to be overlooked by their officials, leading to Langton also developing close ties with this family. Although she was seemingly successful and served Lancasterian royalty, rumors were being thrown around about a decree to ban the import of silk goods in favor of domestic production, leading to her feeling fearful about job instability.

## Agnes Bugge

Women who entered the brewing industry more often failed, needing to rely on men for success. Consequently, couples who entered the industry together were better in managing their business. Agnes Bugge thus marries Stephen Bugge and starts a brewing company in London. However, there was a competing faction that held a monopoly on breweries and was favored by city authorities. Although Bugge's was bothered, this did not stop her from succeeding as brewers often aligned themselves with the Crown by providing military men with beer. Eventually Bugge's faced legal charges with the Mayor of London suing, however she was not only wealthy enough to win, but her guild provided her with protection. In 1478, the Common Council allowed for beer to be sold freely in order to offset the monopoly, expanding the market to counter the high ale brewer prices.

## William Caxton

William Caxton began his career as an apprentice to Robert Large, a wealthy merchant and the Lord Mayor of London. After his death, Caxton moved to Brugge, where he became an influential figure in the trading community, eventually serving as governor of the “English Nation of Merchant Adventurers.” His proven success in both the Flander and Holland communities caught the attention of Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, who supported his work. As a result, she enlisted him as a financial advisor for her household causing him to step down as governor. However, his time there was short-lived because although he was working for Margaret, she ultimately encouraged Caxton to establish a printing press. He returned to England becoming the first English printer, translator, and publisher.

## Thomas Alvard

Thomas Alvard specialized in selling dairy products in Ipswich, Suffolk. As a result of having been more urban and commercialized than other localities, Suffolk became a major trading center for both domestic and international commerce. Leveraging his positionality, Alvard took advantage and expanded his inventory to include other items such as grains, wool, and leather to successfully compete in the market. Although Alvard was financially stable, Suffolk’s economy excused other townsmen from invading other people’s land as there were no strict boundaries on property. The lack of oversight meant that Alvard had to occasionally deal with people stealing from him without anyone facing repercussions.

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