



# The Wars of the Roses: The History of the Conflicts that Brought the Tudors to Power in England

*Charles River Editors*

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- \*Includes pictures
- \*Profiles the leaders and tactics of the battles
- \*Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading
- \*Includes a table of contents

“King Edward told me in all the battles which he had won, as soon as he had gained victory, he mounted his horse and shouted to his men that they must spare the common soldiers and kill the lords of which none or few escaped.” - Philippe de Commines

Today, roses are a sign of love and luxury, but for over 30 years, they provided the symbols for two houses at war for control of England. Thousands of people died and many more were injured fighting beneath the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster, and the noble families ruling England tore each other apart in a struggle that was as bitter as it was bloody. Though what followed was a period of strong rule under the Tudors monarchs, it ultimately came at a terrible cost, and even then, it was through Elizabeth of York that the Tudor line received its legitimacy. After all, while Henry VII won his throne in battle, Elizabeth of York was the daughter of King Edward IV of England, a Yorkist monarch.

Despite their limited social and economic impact, the political and personal dramas of the Wars of the Roses have ensured that they are well remembered and still part of the popular imagination. The most famous depictions of the period came from Shakespeare, whose earliest plays included Richard III and the three parts of Henry VI. Naturally, Shakespeare dramatized the tensions of what he presented as hugely destructive events, and his account, which showed the damage done by corruption and weak rule, and which turned Richard III into a popular villain, aimed to please the Tudor dynasty still in power at the time. Of course, it also played to a popular interest in high drama and the sort of personal and political conflicts that lay at the heart of the war.

Meanwhile, excitement over the real history of the period reached a peak in late 2012 and early 2013 when Richard III's long-lost remains were found by archaeologists. The once proud king was found beneath a parking lot after the church in which he had been buried had been destroyed. This provoked a new rash of books about Richard, as well as a dispute over where his remains should be reburied. Centuries later, passions can still run high about the House of York.

The Wars of the Roses are brought more literally to life by the hundreds of people who dress up in military costumes of the period and refight its battles in displays every summer. Both politically dramatic and visually interesting, the Wars of the Roses are one of the most popular periods for British reenactments. However, the most popular cultural response to the Wars of the Roses is not a work of history or historical fiction but one of fantasy; George R R Martin's Game of Thrones books, and their TV adaptation, are hugely influenced by the Wars of the Roses. Martin has taken the core of the conflict - a political and personal struggle between two medieval dynasties - and depicted it on an epic scale. Though his version contains monsters and magic, it also contains many incidents based on those of the war, as well as characters based on

its protagonists, most notably the noble houses of Stark and Lannister. The Wars of the Roses may have ended centuries ago, but they clearly remain fascinating to this day.

The Wars of the Roses: The History of the Conflicts that Brought the Tudors to Power in England traces the history of the crucial civil war between the Lancasters and Yorks. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the Wars of the Roses like never before, in no time at all.

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