

# Synopsis

A party conflict arises between the elite and wealthy houses of Lancaster and York for the possession of the Crown of England. The funeral of King Henry V of Britain brings together the dukes and lords, each clamoring for power in the new government. They conspire to take advantage of the child king, Henry VI, to advance their own interests. While they bicker over leadership, many of the lands Henry V had won and colonized in France are lost, by inspiration of Joan de Pucelle (Joan of Arc), the commoner who is later captured by the English and burned at the stake in 1431.

In England, Richard, the Duke of York, the richest aristocrat in Britain, connives for power with the Duke of Somerset, of the House of Lancaster. This started in motion a long and bitter civil war. The Duke of York goes to Parliament demanding his claim to the throne. The civil war for the crown escalates despite the pleadings of King Henry VI for peace. The Lancaster symbol became the red rose. The white rose was plucked as the symbol for the House of York.

King Henry VI consents to marry the daughter of a wealthy Earl, who offers a large dowry the nation could use. Lord Suffolk, however, is smitten by Margaret of Anjou of France. He convinces King Henry VI to marry Margaret, despite her lack of a dowry, thus opening the way for Suffolk to control, not just the new queen, but the entire nation. This only exacerbates the enmity between the various court factions.

The competing nobles, along with the Cardinal, unite to oust Humphrey Gloucester, the uncle and protector of King Henry VI. They are aided by Queen Margaret, who is anxious to get unlimited control of her weak husband. They undermine Gloucester's position by accusing his ambitious wife, Eleanor, of witchery, and he of hoarding funds for his own use. Eleanor is tried and banished. Gloucester is forced to resign his position, then cruelly murdered by secret orders from Suffolk, and the Cardinal. Suffolk is discovered and executed; the Cardinal dies of despair. Or was he poisoned? The Cardinal's sudden death drives the now religious zealot, King Henry VI, towards his mental breakdown. Finally, a son is born to Queen Margaret and King Henry VI...Prince Edward.

To assuage the ambition of York, King Henry VI dispatches him to end a rebellion in colonized Ireland. However, York uses the opportunity to raise an army and returns to claim England for his own. Along with his sons, he defeats the House of Lancaster and goes to London to take the throne. King Henry VI, frightened, promises the throne to the House of York but begs to keep his kingship until his death, thus breaking the Lancaster line. Outraged that her son Prince Edward will not be the next King, Queen Margaret leaves her husband and with help from France, leads a battle for the Lancastrians. The Duke of York and his youngest, Rutland, are killed in battle, leaving his three sons, Edward, George of Clarence, and Richard, to carry on the Yorkist claim to the throne. Soon, aided by the powerful Warwick, they are victorious; and York's son, Edward becomes King Edward IV. Henry VI is imprisoned, and Warwick hastens to France to arrange an advantageous marriage for the new king.

King Edward IV, a known womanizer, falls in love with Lady Elizabeth Woodville, a widow and mother, and secretly makes her Queen. Together they have three daughters and two sons. Warwick is incensed because Queen Elizabeth is a member of the Lancastrian family and therefore an enemy to the Yorkist faction. Warwick changes sides and unites with Margaret. Together, they wage a war to remove King Edward IV from the throne. They fail. King Edward IV sends Henry VI to the Tower where he is murdered by Richard. Margaret is banished and her son, Prince Edward, is murdered by Richard. King Edward IV has his brother, Richard, murder their own brother, Clarence. King Edward IV dies. To become King, Richard murders his brother Edward's two sons in the tower. The Yorks had been in successful rule for a quarter of a century. They would have continued their rule had King Richard III not murdered the two boys, 10 and 13. Henry VII of the Lancasters, marries Elizabeth of York, the true successors of each house. Peace reigns for many years. 1485....The War of the Roses ends.