

DRAMATIS PERSONAE OF *THE TRAGEDY OF RICHARD III*

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Later King Richard III. (Oct. 2, 1452 – Aug. 22, 1485.) Richard usurped the throne from his elder brother King Edward IV's twelve-year-old son, Edward V, and it is widely believed that Richard was responsible for the boy's death. King for just under 26 months, Richard III died fighting during the Battle of Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485. His forces were defeated by those of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who became King Henry VII. Richard was the fourth son of Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York (1411-1460) and Cecily Neville, Duchess of York (1415-1495). He had three sisters: Anne, Duchess of Exeter (1439-1476), Elizabeth, Duchess of Suffolk (1444-1503), and Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy (1446-1503); and three elder brothers: Edward IV (1442-1483) Edmund, Earl of Rutland (1443-1460), and George, Duke of Clarence (1449-1478).

George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence. (1449-1478, executed.) George sided against his elder brother Edward IV for a time, allying himself with Warwick the Kingmaker. After Edward IV's restoration to the throne in 1471, he and Clarence reconciled, but in 1476, they fell out again over the widower Clarence's desire to wed Mary, Duchess of Burgundy. In 1478, Edward IV accused his brother of numerous crimes and treasonous intent, Parliament duly passed a bill of attainder, and Clarence was secretly executed in the Tower of London.

King Edward IV. (April 28, 1442 - April 9, 1483.) Edward was the eldest son of the powerful nobleman Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York and Cecily Neville, Duchess of York. His brothers were Edmund, Earl of Rutland; George, Duke of Clarence; and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III. Edward had two sons by his queen, Elizabeth (née Woodville): Prince Edward and Richard, Duke of York. (These two are the famous "Princes in the Tower" whose murders Richard of Gloucester is conjectured to have ordered to ease his way to the throne.) Edward IV reigned twice: the first reign stretches from 1461-1470, after which there followed a brief interlude in 1470-1471 when the Earl of Warwick's rebellion placed the Lancastrian King Henry VI and Queen Margaret of Anjou back on the throne. The second reign runs from 1471-1483, in which year Edward died of an illness, only to have his brother Richard of Gloucester usurp the throne from twelve-year-old Edward V.

Duchess of York. (1415-1495.) Cecily Neville, widow of Richard, 3rd Duke of York (1411-60). Cecily, sometimes called "the Rose of Raby [Castle]," was also the aunt of Richard Neville, the 16th Earl of Warwick—the powerful "Warwick the Kingmaker"—whose daughter (Cecily's great niece) Anne Neville would briefly be Queen of England as the wife of Richard III. Cecily was also related to the powerful Percy clan, and was the paternal granddaughter of Edward III's third surviving son John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster) by his third wife Katherine Swynford. Had her husband Richard, 3rd Duke of York not been killed in pursuit of his claim to the throne (through his mother Anne Mortimer, the great-granddaughter of Edward III's second son Lionel, Duke of Clarence), Cecily would have become England's queen. In Shakespeare's *Richard III*, the Duchess of York speaks with great experience of the intricacy and violence of England's great dynasties.

Queen Elizabeth (née Elizabeth Woodville). (1437-1492.) Elizabeth Woodville, daughter of the sometime Lancastrian and later Yorkist Richard Woodville, 1st Earl Rivers (1405-1469) and Jacquetta of Luxembourg (1416-1472), was married to Sir John Grey of Groby from 1452-1461 (who died fighting on the Lancastrian side at St. Albans in 1461), and (secretly at first) to King Edward IV from 1464-1483, when the king died. Elizabeth had two sons by Sir John Grey; namely, Thomas Grey, 1st Marquess of Dorset, and Sir Richard Grey (Shakespeare's "Lord Grey").

Anthony Woodville, 2nd Earl Rivers. (1440-1483.) Queen Elizabeth Woodville's brother, and the uncle to her two sons by Sir John Grey. Along with one of these nephews, Sir Richard Grey, Anthony Woodville was arrested while bringing the young King Edward V and his brother Richard to London under armed guard. Richard of Gloucester had Woodville, Sir Richard Grey, and Sir Thomas Vaughan executed on June 25, 1483.

Lord Grey (Sir Richard Grey). (1458-1483.) Son to Queen Elizabeth Woodville by her first husband, Sir John Grey of Groby. Grey was executed along with his uncle Anthony Woodville, 2nd Earl Rivers and Sir Thomas Vaughan on June 25, 1483.

Marquess of Dorset, aka Thomas Grey. (1455-1501.) Son to Queen Elizabeth Woodville by her first husband, Sir John Grey of Groby. Dorset survived the tumultuous end of Richard III's reign, and went on to have a somewhat ambivalent relationship with his relative King Henry VII, who never fully trusted him. (The distrust was warranted: initially, Dorset had opposed Richard III, but when he heard rumors about a reconciliation between his mother Elizabeth and Richard III, he switched sides.)

Prince Edward and young Richard, Duke of York ("The Princes in the Tower"). sons of King Edward IV and Queen Elizabeth. Born on November 2, 1470, Young Edward was nearly 13 at the supposed time of his death in late summer 1483, and his brother Richard was 9. There is no definitive proof that the boys were murdered, but suspicion alights on Richard III and the Duke of Buckingham, and according to some, on Henry, Earl of Richmond (Henry VII).

Lady Anne Neville, later Duchess of Gloucester, Princess of Wales, and, briefly, Richard III's queen. (June 11, 1456 - March 16, 1485.) Daughter of the famous 16th Earl of Warwick (aka "Warwick the Kingmaker") and Anne Beauchamp (daughter of the 13th Earl of Warwick). Anne's first husband was Edward of Westminster, Prince of Wales (son of King Henry VI and Queen Margaret of Anjou), making her Princess of Wales. The two were married in France, where her father Warwick had fled in 1470, after his second rebellion against Edward IV failed. Anne's sister, Isabel, married Richard of Gloucester's brother George (Shakespeare's "Clarence") in July 1469. Anne's status as Princess, however, didn't last long, as her husband Edward of Westminster, Prince of Wales, was killed by Edward IV's forces at Tewkesbury on or about May 4, 1471. Her father the Earl of Warwick died at the Battle of Barnet on April 14th of the same year. Richard, Duke of Gloucester married Anne after some touchy negotiations with his brother George of Clarence, husband of her sister Isabel, in the spring or summer of 1472. Anne probably died of tuberculosis, not as a victim of Richard III's evil designs.

Queen Margaret of Anjou and England. (March 23, 1430 - August 25, 1482.) Daughter of René, King of Naples and Isabella, Duchess of Lorraine. Even though Queen Margaret died in exile in France before the 1483 accession of Richard III, Shakespeare includes her in *Richard III* as a bitter, dramatic symbol of the devastation caused by the Wars of the Roses. As the frequently incapacitated Henry VI's Queen, the indomitable Margaret controlled England, engaging in fierce infighting with the Yorkists, and particularly with Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York, for the seat of power. This struggle between Margaret and the Duke of York is largely responsible for the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses from 1455-1487. Queen Margaret lost her husband Henry VI, her son the Prince of Wales, and almost everything she had to the victorious Edward IV. In 1475, the French King Louis XI ransomed her from prisoner status.

William, Lord Hastings (First Baron Hastings). (1430-1483.) Hastings was Edward IV's loyal follower, soldier, and Lord Chamberlain aside from other key offices he held. He married Katherine Neville, daughter of Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick, though this never affected Hastings's loyalty to Edward IV. He had trouble with Thomas Grey, 1st Marquess of Dorset, over their mutual mistress Jane Shore, and had an ambivalent relationship with the Woodvilles generally. All the same, Richard of Gloucester and the Duke of Buckingham charged Hastings, Jane Shore, and some of the Woodvilles with conspiracy against him, and after a trial, Hastings was executed on or around June 13, 1483. Richard must have believed either that Hastings had conspired against him or that as a loyal friend to Edward IV, he would not approve of Richard's plan to wrest the kingdom away from young Edward V.

Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham. (Sept. 4, 1455 – Nov. 2, 1483.) Son of Humphrey Stafford, Earl of Stafford and Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Stafford (1437-1474). Stafford was a ward of Edward IV in his youth, but when Edward IV died in 1483, he allied himself with Richard of Gloucester. However, in October 1483, he rebelled against the new king along with Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, and Tudor's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort (1443-1509; she had been married to Edmund Tudor from 1455-1456). This early rebellion failed, and a month or so later, Buckingham was executed for treason. Henry's father Humphrey died before his own father in 1458, fighting for the Lancastrian cause at the First Battle of St. Albans, and his grandfather Humphrey, the illustrious and soldierly 1st Duke of Buckingham, also died in battle, in 1460 at Northampton. Henry Stafford had a claim to the English throne since several ancestors were related to King Edward III's sons Thomas of Woodstock and John of Gaunt.

Lord Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby. (1435-1504.) In 1482, Thomas Stanley married Henry Tudor's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort. Thomas had relations and alliances on both sides of the York-Lancaster divide. He had been the husband of Eleanor Neville, the sister of the powerful Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick, sometime supporter (but also opponent) of the Yorkists, and his marriage into the Tudor clan constituted an important tie to the Lancastrians. His loyalties and his support were divided between both houses, but in the end, despite his service to Richard III, he supported Margaret Beaufort, Henry Tudor, and the Lancastrian army from France against Richard III.

Henry, Earl of Richmond. (Jan. 28, 1457 – April 21, 1509). The son of Edmund Tudor, 1st Earl of Richmond and Lady Margaret Beaufort, and later stepson to the Earl of Derby, Henry became the first Tudor monarch, King Henry VII, in 1485. A young supporter of the Lancastrian King Henry VI, Henry Tudor had to go into exile in Brittany after Edward IV again became king in 1471. After one failed rebellion in 1483 resulted in the execution of his fellow rebel Henry Stafford (2nd Duke of Buckingham), Henry, encouraged by his mother Lady Margaret Beaufort and others, returned from exile in France with an invading army in 1485, defeating King Richard III on August 22, 1485 at Bosworth Field to take power as Henry VII. He soon married Edward IV's daughter and heir Elizabeth of York, uniting the houses of Lancaster and York. By 1487, the savagely dynastic, decades-long Wars of the Roses were over, and Henry VII was able to pass along a stable kingdom to his son, who ruled as the unforgettable Henry VIII, father of Shakespeare's Queen Elizabeth I.

Sir William Catesby. (1450-1485.) A wealthy landholder and excellent attorney, Catesby was a major supporter of King Richard III. He was captured during the Battle of Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485 and executed three days later by the forces of Henry Tudor.

Sir Richard Ratcliffe. (died 1485.) A longtime supporter of Richard III, Ratcliffe was killed during the Battle of Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485.

Sir Robert Brakenbury. (died 1485.) A supporter and neighbor of Richard III who served as Constable of the Tower of London, Ratcliffe was killed during the Battle of Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485.

Sir Thomas Vaughan. (1410-1483.) The Welshman and supporter of Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, Sir Thomas first served King Henry VI, conveying his treasury by ship after Henry's defeat in 1461, only to have the ship captured by pirates. Ransomed by Edward IV, Vaughan served him loyally for many years in a variety of offices. Vaughan was the third man executed at Richard of Gloucester's orders on June 25, 1483 at Pontefract Castle, along with Anthony Woodville and Sir Richard Grey (Shakespeare's Lord Grey).

Sir James Tyrrel. (1455-1502.) James Tyrrel's father was among those beheaded for supposedly plotting against King Edward IV in 1462. James himself was knighted by the same king in 1471 for his service at the Battle of Tewkesbury. He entered the service of Richard of Gloucester soon thereafter, and became High Sheriff of Cornwall in 1484. By 1584, he was in France, and took no part in the Battle of Bosworth Field, during which Richard III lost his life. Henry VII pardoned Tyrrel when he returned to England in 1486, but later, in 1501, Henry had him arrested for treason for supporting the Yorkist claimant Edmund de la Pole, 3rd Duke of Suffolk. He was executed for treason on May 6, 1502. Sir Thomas More claims in his account of the life of Richard III that Tyrrel confessed under interrogation to the killings of the Princes in the Tower, but this remains uncertain.

MENTIONED OR OTHERWISE IMPORTANT

Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York. (1411-1460.) Father of King Edward IV and King Richard III, as well as of George, Duke of Clarence and Edmund, Earl of Rutland. His claim to the throne was strong, and came to him through his mother, Anne Mortimer, who was a descendant of Lionel of Antwerp, Duke of Clarence, King Edward III's second surviving son. (The Lancastrians, by contrast, claimed inheritance through John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. He was Edward III's *third* surviving son.) Richard Plantagenet never lived to see his sons become sovereigns since he was killed along with Rutland at the Battle of Wakefield against Henry VI's Lancastrians in 1460.

Edmund, Earl of Rutland. (May 17, 1443 –December 30, 1460) was “the fourth child and second surviving son of Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York, and Cecily Neville.” He died at or around the time of the Battle of Wakefield against Henry VI's Lancastrian army.

Jane Shore. (1445-1527.) Born Elizabeth Lambert, daughter of the merchant John Lambert and Amy Lambert, “Jane” became one of King Edward IV's many mistresses in 1476. She married the wealthy banker John Lambert, but the marriage was annulled in 1476. After Edward IV's death, Richard III ordered Jane to do penance because he believed she was participating in a conspiracy between another lover, Lord Hastings, and the Woodvilles. The rest of her life was relatively uneventful.

King Henry VI. (Dec. 6, 1421 – May 21, 1471.) Henry VI, the infirm son of the great Lancastrian King Henry V, victor of Agincourt in 1415, either died or was murdered in the Tower of London on May 21, 1471 after having been deposed by Edward IV. Henry reigned twice, from Sept. 1, 1422 – March 4, 1461, and then briefly from Oct. 3, 1470 – April 11, 1471. This latter period corresponds roughly with what Richard of Gloucester in Shakespeare's *Richard III* calls the Yorkists' “winter of ... discontent,” with Edward IV returning to the throne as “this sun of York” in the springtime and summer. Since Henry VI was subject to frequent bouts of insanity, Queen Margaret was in truth England's ruler for much of his time as king.

Edward of Westminster, Prince of Wales. (1453-1471.) Henry VI's and Margaret's son and heir, Edward was killed at the Battle of Tewkesbury, England on May 4, 1471. He was 17 years old when he died, dashing Queen Margaret's hopes of a successor to her infirm husband. Edward was briefly married to Anne Neville, who would go on to marry Richard of Gloucester, becoming Queen of England when he was crowned Richard III in 1483.

Elizabeth of York. (1466-1503.) Elizabeth of York, Edward IV's daughter by Queen Elizabeth (née Woodville), was instrumental in the establishment of unity between the Houses of Lancaster and York. She married Henry VII in 1486, and reigned as England's Queen until her death in 1503.

Richard Woodville, 1st Earl Rivers. (1405-1469.) and Jacquetta of Luxembourg (1416-1472), Richard's father was Richard Wydeville or Woodville, chamberlain to the Duke of Bedford, and Joan Bittlesgate. The father was not, therefore, a man of high rank, which would create great trouble for the Woodvilles (and England) later on. The younger Woodville secretly married the Duke of Bedford's young widow Jacquetta in 1437—a match that was considered inappropriate by the greater nobility. Henry VI (whose

wife, Queen Margaret of Anjou, was the niece of Jacquetta's brother-in-law Charles du Maine) created him Baron Rivers in 1448, and Edward IV created him Earl Rivers in 1466. The meteoric rise of the Woodville clan to the throne of England was one factor spurring on the Wars of the Roses. For one thing, the Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick (aka the Kingmaker), saw the Woodvilles as upstart rivals to his own power, and when Elizabeth Woodville married Edward IV in May, 1464, Warwick was incensed and turned away from Edward towards an alliance with his former enemies the Lancastrians. After a Yorkist defeat in battle, Warwick had Richard Woodville and his son John executed at Kenilworth on August 12, 1469.

Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick. (1428-1471.) Richard, known as "Warwick the Kingmaker," was at first a supporter of the Lancastrian King Henry VI, but feuding with Edmund Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset over Glamorgan in Wales drove him into the orbit of Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York. After the Duke of York was killed during an attempted rebellion in 1460, Warwick helped put the Duke's son Edward on the throne as Edward IV in 1461, only to rebel against him over a number of frustrations (among them the king's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville) and briefly restore Henry VI as king in 1470. It was a short-lived success, however, and Edward IV's troops killed Warwick at the Battle of Barnet on April 14, 1471. Richard Neville's daughter Anne would go on to marry Richard of Gloucester in 1472, later (if only briefly) becoming Queen of England.

The Early Tudors. (13th-century Wales through the Tudor dynasty.) The Tudors were a very large aristocratic family associated with the village of Penmynydd in Anglesey, North Wales. This family at times intermarried with Welsh kings, and became powerful in Wales. A few early Tudors who were upset with the overthrow of the English King Richard II, whom they served, joined with the Welsh rebel Owen Glyndower. But it's Owen Tudor that we look to today as the founder of what would become the Tudor dynasty. Owen (1400-1461) secretly married King Henry V's widow, Catherine of Valois, and the couple had two sons: Edmund Tudor, 1st Earl of Richmond (d. 1456), and Jasper Tudor, Duke of Bedford and Earl of Pembroke (d. 1495). These two were therefore half-brothers of King Henry VI since Henry's mother was Catherine of Valois. Edmund married Lady Margaret Beaufort (1443-1509), daughter of the Lancastrian John Beaufort, 1st Duke of Somerset and Margaret Beauchamp of Bletso. Edmund and Lady Margaret had a son, Henry Tudor. When Richard III was king, Henry's mother made an alliance with certain Lancastrians and Yorkists, among them the widowed Queen Elizabeth (née Woodville), to bring Henry back from Brittany and then from France to take the throne from Richard. The second attempt succeeded, and Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond became King Henry VII in August, 1485. He died peacefully in 1509 and was succeeded by his son Henry VIII (reigned 1509-1547), Edward VI (reigned 1547-1553), Queen Mary I (reigned 1553-1558), and Elizabeth I (reigned 1558-1603).

King Edward III. (1312-1377.) The great King Edward III's "surviving sons" (i.e. the ones who survived to adulthood) were as follows:

1. Edward the Black Prince, Duke of Cornwall, Prince of Wales. (1330-1376.) Edward was the first surviving son. His son became King Richard II.
2. Lionel of Antwerp, 1st Duke of Clarence. (1338-1368.) Second surviving son. His daughter Philippa married into the powerful Mortimer family. Her son Roger Mortimer, 4th Earl of March, was King Richard II's heir, but predeceased him, leaving his son Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March (1391-1425) as heir presumptive. Young Edmund, in spite of his name being caught up in a rebellion against Henry IV and being confined during that king's reign, remained loyal to his son King Henry V and never pressed any claim to the throne. He died of plague in Ireland in 1425, where he had been sent as lieutenant for King Henry VI.

In 1460, Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York, claimed the throne through his connection to Lionel of Antwerp: his father, Richard of Conisburgh, 3rd Earl of Cambridge (1385-1415, executed by Henry V for treason), was husband to Anne de Mortimer, whose father, Roger Mortimer, 4th Earl of March (mentioned above), was the grandson of Lionel of Antwerp. Richard, named as heir by Henry VI, was killed by Henry's Lancastrian forces during the Battle of Wakefield in December, 1460. Two of his sons would go on to become kings: Edward IV and Richard III.

3. John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster. (1340-1399.) Third surviving son. His son by Blanche of Lancaster, Henry of Bolingbroke, became King Henry IV, followed by his son Henry V, and grandson Henry VI. John of Gaunt's legitimized heirs—his descendants by sometime mistress and later wife Katherine Swynford—were the Beauforts. Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond's mother Margaret Beaufort (Gaunt's great-granddaughter through Katherine Swynford) had married into the Tudor family, so Henry's claim to the throne was partly through John of Gaunt.
4. Edmund of Langley, 1st Duke of York. (1341-1402.) Fourth surviving son, and father of the York line.
5. Thomas of Woodstock, 1st Duke of Gloucester. (1355-1397.) Fifth surviving son. His daughter Anne married into the Stafford family, including Shakespeare's Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham.

***Note:** In this guide, I have drawn freely on the accounts in Wikipedia and on other fact-centric sites. The guide is intended merely to provide a limited amount of supplemental information about Shakespeare's cast of characters since there are many interesting and sometimes vital connections between the royal, aristocratic, or otherwise noteworthy individuals who populate Shakespeare's history plays.