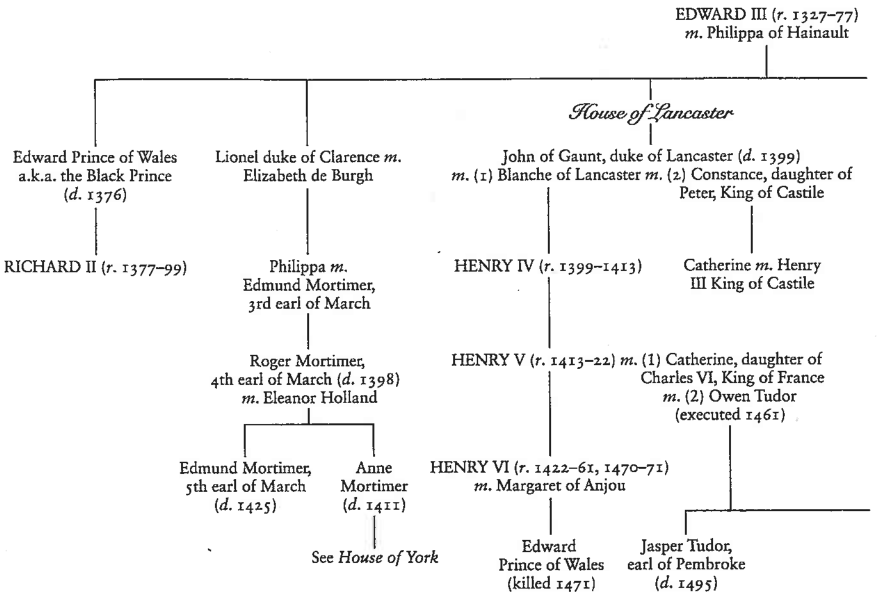
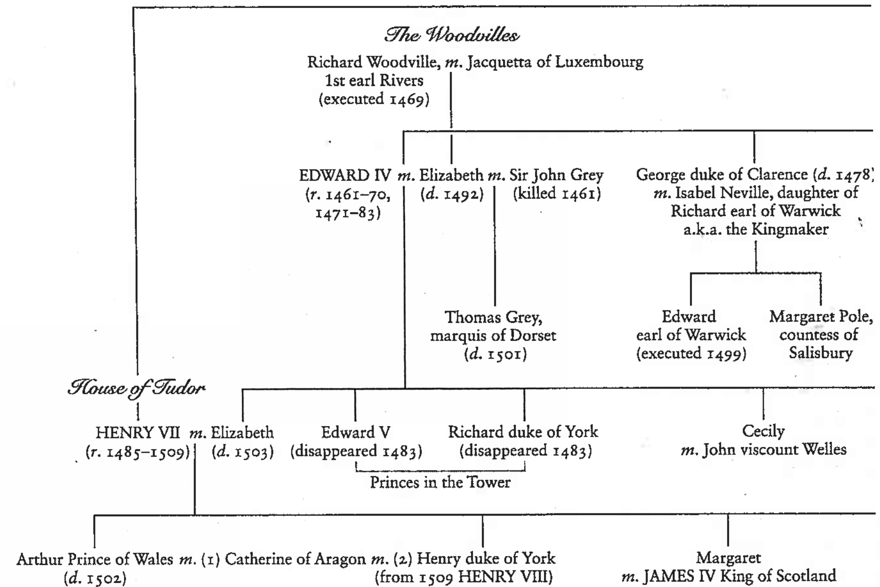
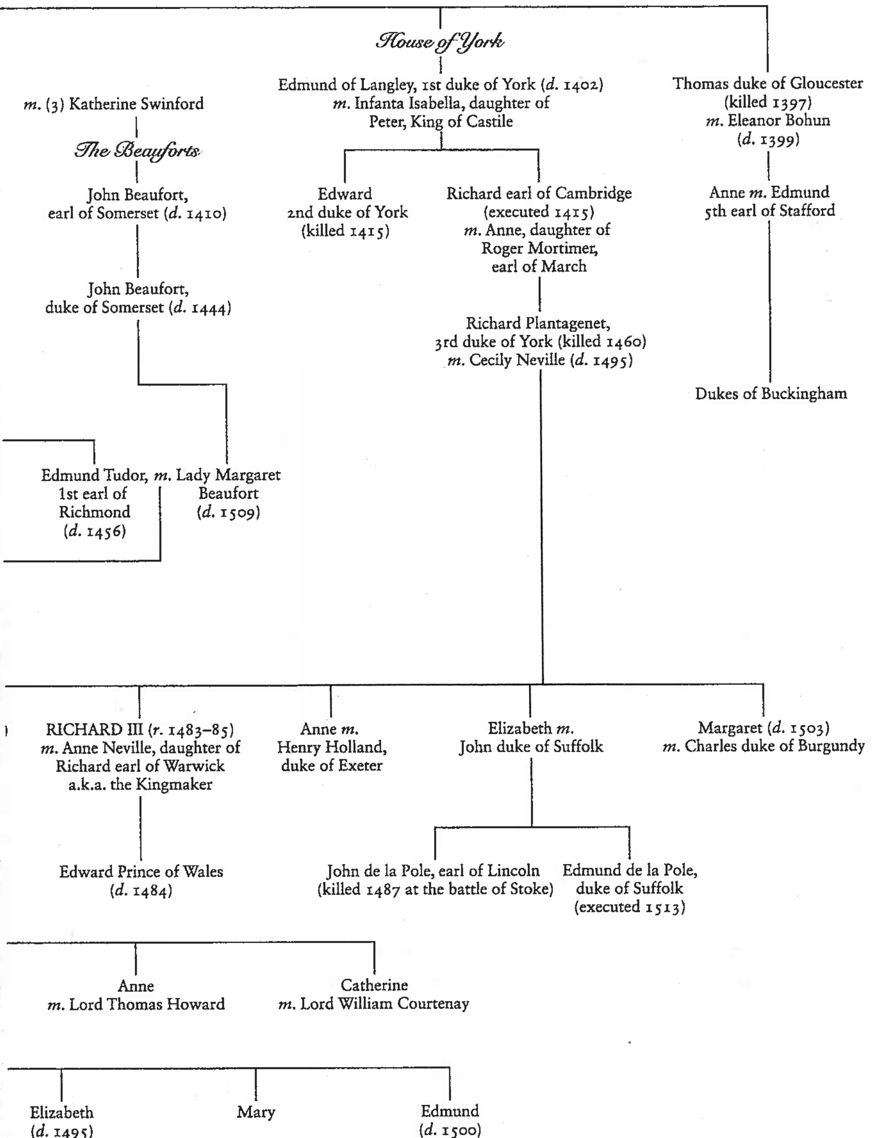
Houses of Lancaster and York, and the House of Tudor







Introduction

Henry VII ruled England for almost a quarter-century, from 1485 to 1509. During his reign, the civil wars that had convulsed the country for much of the fifteenth century burned themselves out. By its end, he had laid the foundations for the dynasty that bore his name: Tudor. He was a man with a highly dubious claim to the throne, who seized power and passed it on in the first untroubled succession in almost a century. Yet, wedged between two of the most notorious monarchs in English history – the arch-villain Richard III and the massive figure of Henry VIII – Henry VII remains mysterious, or as his first biographer, the seventeenth-century political thinker Francis Bacon put it, 'a dark prince'.

In English history, Henry VII's reign is still widely understood as a time of transition, one in which the violent feuds of the previous decades gave way to a glorious age of renaissance and reformation. This was the myth that the Tudors themselves built. The later Tudors referred to Henry VII as we now see him: the unifier of a war-torn land, a wise king who brought justice and stability, and who set the crown on a sound financial footing. Nonetheless they were unable to eradicate the lingering sense of a reign that degenerated into oppression, extortion and a kind of terror, at its core an avaricious Machiavellian king who inspired not love but fear. In calling him a 'dark prince', Bacon's emphasis was on the sinister as well as the opaque. Henry VII, he wrote, was 'infinitely suspicious' and he was right to be so, for his times were 'full of secret conspiracies and troubles'. Perhaps the most telling verdict of all is that of Shakespeare, who omits Henry VII altogether from his sequence of history plays – and

not for want of material but, one suspects, because the reign was simply too uncomfortable to deal with.

Merely scratching the surface of Henry VII's reign exposes troubling questions about his right to the crown and about the way he held on to it. From the very outset, Henry faced challenges to his rule. Unable to eradicate the taint of illegitimacy that hung around his throne, or to master a world in which the compromised loyalties and political traumas of civil war persisted, he constructed around himself a regime whose magnificence concealed the fact that it was contingent, temporary, a sustained state of emergency. And, sixteen years into his reign, just when he thought that he had laid his demons to rest, a family catastrophe left him newly vulnerable, wrenching the dynasty off the course that he had planned for it, and setting it in a new and unexpected direction, his hopes resting no longer on his first-born son but entirely on his second: the boy who would eventually succeed him as Henry VIII.

Unsurprisingly, when the seventeen-year-old Henry VIII inherited the throne in the spring of 1509, he had a difficult circle to square. His coronation was accompanied by an outpouring of praise which presented him as his father's successor, while at the same time distancing him from the disturbing years that had just passed. Court poets reached for Plato's tried-and-tested idea of the Golden Age: paradise, the first of epochs which, like the seasons, would return. This glorious young prince represented a metaphorical spring, a second coming, seemingly as unlike his father as could be.

It was a model that had been used before – in living memory, in fact. Back in 1485, Henry VII had evoked the Golden Age to define himself against the king he had defeated and called a usurper, Richard III. But in 1509, court poets portrayed Henry's own reign as a sterile landscape, one in which bears roamed and wolves howled, a time in which the natural order had been subverted – but which, mercifully, was rightfully restored in the shape of his son. In other words, if Henry VIII was the spring, his father was the winter.

This is a gripping and largely untold story. The late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were a volatile time of change and possibility and, as with periods of flux, its energy and vitality are seductive. The medieval worlds of chivalry and intense piety mingle with new political

ideas, spread by the printing press and enforced by gunpowder. Dynasties and states struggle to be born in a war-torn Christendom that is still – in theory – unified by an unswerving obedience to the pope. Fleets of merchant ships, their trade routes to the East blocked by the Ottoman Empire encroaching on Europe's south-eastern frontier, sail west across the Atlantic and discover a new continent.

It is a story which stretches from the remote regions of England to the courts and chancelleries of Venice and Rome. It is traced through merchant banks and accountants' ledgers, courts of law, the pageantry and brutality of court and tiltyard, diplomats' dispatches and the reports of spies and informers. It concerns high ideals and family loyalties; honour, realpolitik and grubby self-interest; deep-rooted traditions and beliefs; and new ways of understanding the roles of princes and governments. All these elements come together and are transformed in the febrile world of Henry VII's household and court.

The last, claustrophobic decade of Henry VII's reign, with an ageing, paranoid king and his dynamic young son at its heart, forms the focus of this book. It is one of the strangest episodes in English history. An atmosphere of fear and suspicion radiated from the royal court into the streets and townhouses of London and throughout England's far-flung estates and provinces. Established forms of rule and government were bent out of shape, distorted in ways that people found both disorientating and terrifying.

But these are also the dawning years of a dynasty. They see the coming of age of Catherine of Aragon, the young Spanish princess who would become Henry VIII's first wife, and of Henry VIII himself – or rather, Prince Henry, as he is here. To explore these precarious years, and to gain a sense of how and why Henry VII behaved and ruled in the way he did, is to reveal much about the house of Tudor, the family that would, over the course of the sixteenth century, dominate and transform England.

Prologue

Red Rose, Avenger of the White

On the afternoon of Sunday 7 August 1485, off the westernmost tip of Wales, seven ships appeared from the south. Heading for the great natural harbour of Milford Haven, they nosed around the headland's sheer, sandstone cliffs and, just before sunset, dropped anchor. Smaller boats came shuttling back and forth, quickly and purposefully, bringing horses ashore, heaving munitions, armour and cannon onto the beach. Many languages and accents could be heard: Scots, Welsh, Breton mixing with French, and English of various dialects. When they swarmed up the hillsides to the small castle commanding the bay, the soldiers found it abandoned, its garrison long gone. Nobody, it seemed, was expecting them – not at that remote place, anyway.[1]

From one boat, a knot of nobles disembarked and waded through the surf. One of them, a wiry man in his late twenties, sank to his knees and clasped his hands in prayer. '*Judica me, Deus*', he began, muttering Psalm 43, 'Judge me, O Lord and favour my cause'. He kissed the Pembrokeshire sand and made the sign of the cross.[2] Exiled first in Brittany, then in northern France, since the age of fourteen, Henry earl of Richmond – or, as the reigning king of England, Richard III, referred to him bitterly, the 'bastard Tudor' – had returned after another fourteen years at the head of a motley band of two thousand political dissidents and mercenaries. With rapidly dwindling support from his French backers, his invasion was furtive and anxious. That he was there at all was an extraordinary circumstance, the latest convulsion in the series of dynastic feuds and turf wars that had torn England apart over the previous half-century, and which would later become known as the Wars of the Roses: the red rose of Lancaster against the white rose of York. This man, who had crossed the

Channel to claim the throne of England and who would father its greatest dynasty, was never meant to be king.

Henry earl of Richmond was born on 28 January 1457 in the fortress of Pembroke Castle, a few miles away from his eventual landing-place. He entered the world during a traumatic time. Sporadic clashes between the armed factions of Lancaster and York were threatening to boil over into civil war. The plague that had ravaged southern Wales late the previous year had carried off his father, Edmund Tudor, imprisoned in a Yorkist dungeon; his mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, had just turned fourteen. The birth left her damaged. She would have no more children.

England in the 1460s was a mutant, double-headed kingdom. In a raging blizzard on 29 March 1461, Palm Sunday, the two sides had clashed outside the Yorkshire village of Towton: involving some fifty thousand men, it was the biggest battle ever fought on English soil, and one of the bloodiest. Yorkist forces routed the armies of the passive and mentally unstable Lancastrian king, Henry VI, slaughtering nine thousand of them. Three months later, Edward IV, a charismatic giant of an eighteen-year-old, was crowned the first king of the house of York.[3] Both families, Lancaster and York, traced their line back to the great Edward III – but the Yorkists claimed to bear his name of Plantagenet.

For the powerful Lancastrian clans of Beaufort and Tudor, the defeat at Towton was a disaster. The child in whom their families met, the four-year-old Henry earl of Richmond, was now a wealthy prize. Torn away from his mother, his lands parcelled out among the victors, he was presented by Edward IV to a prominent Yorkist, Sir William Herbert, and brought up among the Herbert children at the castle of Raglan in south Wales.

On both sides of his family, the young Henry's lineage was entwined with the house of Lancaster. As half-blood relatives of the Lancastrian kings, the Beauforts shared with them a magnificent forebear, the house's founder John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster – but their descent was through Gaunt's mistress and they were bastards. The Beauforts were subsequently legitimized – but, as their detractors were quick to

point out, they had been barred, by Act of Parliament no less, from ever claiming the English throne. Nevertheless, the Beauforts had gloried in the reign of Henry V, France's reconqueror and the victor of Agincourt, before his son Henry VI had squandered everything. The Tudors had also attached themselves to the house of Lancaster and, despite their tenuous hold, were rising fast: during the troubled 1450s Edmund Tudor, half-brother to Henry VI, had been high in royal favour. The mother they had in common was Henry V's young wife, Catherine of Valois, daughter of the French king. But Edmund's father had been a charming, fast-talking Welsh chamber servant of Catherine's: the pair had fallen in love after Henry V's death and had married secretly. Royal blood, then, ran in the veins of the young Henry earl of Richmond, but it was irretrievably tainted.

Despite the overwhelming victory of Towton, Yorkist rule struggled to take root. With the deposed Henry VI still alive, it was a time of queasy uncertainty, in which self-interested manoeuvring, internecine feuding and struggles for power and land could all be justified by invoking the claim of whichever king best suited people's circumstances. First and foremost, Edward IV had to establish his dynasty, and the great men who had brought him to power now sought to arrange his marriage to a foreign princess, of Burgundy, perhaps, or Castile. But, 'greatly given to fleshly wantonness', Edward wanted a cold, lynx-eyed beauty called Elizabeth Woodville. When she refused to sleep with him, he married her clandestinely and made her his queen. It was unwise. The widow of a Lancastrian knight, Elizabeth was a commoner; her large clan rushed to court, scrabbling for royal favour, titles, land and rich marriages. Pushed to one side, the Yorkist nobles whose ambitions Edward had wrecked through his impulsive marriage watched the arriviste Woodvilles basking in his affections.[4] Gradually, the nobles' discontent and jealousy turned to betrayal, and they joined forces with exiled Lancastrians. In October 1470, Edward IV was forced to flee to the continent, to the Burgundian Netherlands, and the helpless Henry VI was brought out of his place of incarceration in the Tower of London.

To the young Henry of Richmond, his uncle's brief, inglorious second coming was memorable. Taken to London, he was reunited briefly with the mother he had not seen for years, before returning to

south Wales, this time in the company of his Tudor uncle Jasper. Six months later Edward IV returned to England, and people again weighed their loyalties in the balance. As Edward's army approached London, Henry VI was paraded, bewildered, through the city streets dressed in an old, faded blue gown, the archbishop of Canterbury leading him gently by the hand. Days later, Edward entered the city unopposed, then, marshalling his forces, exacted decisive revenge in two savage battles: north of London at Barnet and, rampaging into the southwest, in the flood plains of Tewkesbury. Those leading Lancastrians not killed in combat were executed immediately afterwards: they included Lady Margaret Beaufort's cousin the duke of Somerset, hauled out of sanctuary and beheaded, and Henry VI's son and heir. Henry VI himself, reincarcerated in the Tower, was murdered. The house of Lancaster had been all but exterminated.[5]

Still in her twenties, Lady Margaret Beaufort had become an astute political survivor. She and Jasper Tudor, a constant thorn in Edward's flesh over the preceding decade, well understood the heightened significance of her son's half-blooded lineage. That September, Jasper and the fourteen-year-old Henry fled Pembroke Castle, where they had been holed up against the Yorkist armies, across the sea to the traditional Lancastrian refuge of France. Storms took them west, to the north-western tip of mainland Europe, the embattled duchy of Brittany. There, Henry became a pawn in a different game.[6]

Duke Francis of Brittany, who had no sons, received Henry kindly and treated him well. But he also knew the boy's value. As dynastic conflict flared across northern Europe, the French king, Louis XI, was spinning a web round territories that France claimed as its own but which, like Brittany, remained stubbornly independent. Now, in Henry, Duke Francis had a bargaining chip: a commodity desired not only by England but also by France – which wanted Henry in order to keep its island neighbour at bay.

Amid rumours of English and French agents and plots, of kidnap and murder, Henry was transferred from fortress to fortress, never settled, always ready to move at a moment's notice. Dependent on the whims of others, he learned to think like the fugitive he now was: to

watch and assess loyalties, to sift information from rumour and, caught in the wash of European power politics, to understand how they affected his own fortunes. He developed an exile's patience, inured to a life in which stretches of empty time were punctuated by sudden alerts, moments of danger in which logical clear-headedness meant the difference between life and death. Once, in November 1476, Duke Francis temporarily succumbed to Edward IV's offers of funds and military aid in exchange for the nineteen-year-old Henry's extradition. But at the port of St Malo, Henry gave his English guard the slip, feigning illness and dodging into sanctuary. When he made it back to the Breton court, Francis was all contrition.[7]

In England, meanwhile, the uncertainty of the 1460s had given way to order under the self-assertive magnificence of Edward IV. He and Elizabeth Woodville had ten children, including two surviving sons, and his dynasty seemed assured. When the forty-year-old king, a man of insatiable and debauched appetites, died grossly fat on 9 April 1483, the older of his two sons, the twelve-year-old Edward Prince of Wales, was named his heir. But Richard duke of Gloucester, the younger brother of the late king, had other ideas. Elizabeth Woodville's clan, he felt, had got too close to the heart of power. Arresting and executing leading members of her family, and inveighing against the perversions of his brother's rule, he placed the two princes, his nephews, in the Tower, then crowned himself Richard III in the name of the 'old royal blood of this realm'. That summer the princes, previously observed 'shooting and playing' in the Tower gardens, disappeared into its depths, never to be seen again.[8]

Elizabeth Woodville and her daughters had withdrawn behind the high walls of Westminster Abbey seeking sanctuary. Secretly that summer, on behalf of her son, Lady Margaret Beaufort opened communication through agents – priests, an astrologer the two matriarchs favoured – who were able to pass unchallenged through the heavily guarded gates. A pact was agreed. Henry earl of Richmond would return from Brittany to claim the throne, and he would take as his queen Elizabeth of York, the oldest of Edward IV and Elizabeth's daughters. The families of Beaufort and Woodville – or, if the point was stretched somewhat, the houses of Lancaster and York – would be united; so too would England. Heralds and historians were good at these

genealogical sleights of hand. On their brilliantly illuminated parchment rolls, coats-of-arms, badges and portraits were erased and cut out; others appeared in their place. A dynasty that had been eradicated could blossom miraculously like a rose in winter, its lineal descent fully formed, its succession inevitable. Now, with the merging of the red rose and the white, Henry was presented as the successor to Edward IV, the king who had all but obliterated his family and had only narrowly failed to do the same to him. While the logic was flawed, the symbolism was irresistible.[9]

Meanwhile, away in the Welsh castle of Brecon, Richard III's right-hand man, the duke of Buckingham, had been co-opted to the new alliance by the suggestive promptings of a prisoner that the king had unwisely entrusted to Buckingham's care, an experienced political operator, Bishop John Morton of Ely.[10] Conspiracy brewed; agents slipped out of the country to Brittany, working to coordinate uprisings in England with an invasion force led by Henry and backed by Breton funds. That autumn of 1483, Woodville loyalists rose in rebellion along the south coast from Kent to Devon, Buckingham marched out of Wales at the head of an army of retainers, and Henry prepared to set sail from Brittany. But the weather that October was foul, and he left late. Sailing into the teeth of a storm, his fleet was scattered. By the time he appeared off the south Devon coast, there was only one other ship in sight. He turned back.

He was lucky not to have made landfall. Richard III had already quashed the uprisings. Buckingham's forces were routed, the duke beheaded. Besides which, the motives of Buckingham, a vain man with Lancastrian blood, had been opaque; possibly, he had wanted the crown for himself. Pursued by a vengeful Richard III, the leading Woodville rebels fled, in time-honoured fashion, to the continent – to Brittany.

That winter, even in London where gossip and information were rife, people knew little about the shadowy figure who was now claiming the crown as his by right. Arriving in Brittany, the Woodville exiles found a sallow young man, with dark hair curled in the shoulder-length fashion of the time and a penchant for expensively dyed black

clothes, whose steady gaze was made more disconcerting by a cast in his left eye – such that while one eye looked at you, the other searched for you.[11] He was, in the words of the Burgundian chronicler Jean Molinet, a 'fine ornament' of the Breton court, a man who worshipped Breton saints, spoke immaculate French and whose courtliness had a distinctly Gallic tinge. The soft politesse concealed a sharp observer, a gleaner of information, cool under pressure and used to having to think several steps ahead: a leader, the Woodville fugitives perhaps sensed – but then again, they had little choice.

Henry's pact with the exiles was sealed in the cathedral at the Breton capital of Rennes on Christmas Day 1483: they pledging their allegiance to him as king, he swearing to marry Elizabeth of York.[12] The dice, though, were still loaded in Richard's favour. While many thought him a usurper, he was nevertheless a crowned king of England. His opponent was a penniless exile who, as one of Richard's proclamations emphatically pointed out, 'hath no manner of interest, right, title or colour, as every man knoweth, for he is descended of bastard blood, both of father's side and mother's side'. Richard embarked on a charm offensive, dangling pardons in front of leading conspirators and offering political rehabilitation. Many refused, but when Elizabeth Woodville herself acknowledged the fact of Richard's rule, agreeing to come out of sanctuary and entrust herself and her daughters to his safekeeping, the resolution of some of Henry's fellow exiles started to crumble.

Travelling to Brittany, Richard's men struck a deal with leading counsellors around the ageing and infirm Duke Francis, pledging money and arms in the duchy's fight against an increasingly menacing France, in exchange for Henry. Warned of his imminent betrayal, Henry fled across the border. At the French court, the embattled faction struggling to retain control of the fourteen-year-old king Charles VIII was delighted to welcome this prestigious English pawn. There, bolstered by new arrivals, fugitives from failed uprisings in East Anglia and Lancastrian diehards escaped from the English enclave of Calais, Henry started to create another story for himself, his half-blooded lineage blurring into legend. No longer a fugitive, he was a king-in-waiting, whose line could be traced back into the mist and rime of British prehistory. No less a king than Cadwallader, forebear

of the mythical King Arthur, had prophesied his return, in irrefutable proof of which Henry had added to his arms a red dragon. In his letters into England, meanwhile, his signature of 'Henry de Richemont' was replaced by the poised regal monogram, 'H'.[13]

In the spring of 1485, with the threat from an English-backed Brittany increasing, France proclaimed lavish financial support for Henry's invasion of England. But by early July, as the Breton menace evaporated again, so too did France's enthusiasm, its promises now dismissed with a shrug of indifference. For Henry this was a shattering blow, and more bad news was to come. In an attempt to neutralize the political threat of the Woodvilles, Richard III arranged a marriage between one of his household knights and one of Edward IV's daughters. Indeed, it was whispered that Richard himself was paying close attention to the oldest of them: his sixteen-year-old niece, Henry's betrothed, Elizabeth of York. The rumours 'pinched Henry by the very stomach'. Scrambling to raise loans from financiers, he and his advisers worked to assemble victuals, arms and artillery, horses and transport. He bolstered his sketchy forces with a battalion of French mercenaries who, demobilized from France's recent wars in Flanders, were idly terrorizing the local populace.

At the French court, Henry had exchanged words with the diplomat and political theorist Philippe de Commynes, a man with a lifetime's experience in power politics. Commynes, who had first encountered Henry on his arrival at the Breton court fourteen years before, was unsparing in his assessment. Henry, he wrote, was penniless and his claim to the English throne non-existent, 'whatever one might say about it'. Henry was entirely self-fashioned, his reputation depending not on his lineage, but on his virtues, his 'own person and honesty'. And, he recollected, Henry's conversation was tinged with heaviness and resignation as he described how, since the age of five, his life had been an interminable sequence of suffering, evasion and prison. This was not, Commynes seemed to say, the talk of a king confidently expecting to recover his birthright, but of a man resigned to his fate.[14]

It was not hard to see why. A lifetime spent depending on the caprices and whims of others, the hopelessness and boredom of exile punctuated by false hopes, had culminated in an invasion whose

meticulous planning had been thrown into confusion by the scrambled events of the last weeks. But as his small fleet set sail from the northern French port of Honfleur on 1 August 1485, Henry knew that he was, at last, taking his fate into his own hands. Even defeat and destruction were better than the alternative: the slow death of endless, fugitive begging around the courts of Europe.[15]

The battle of Bosworth Field, fought in the English east midlands two weeks after Henry's inauspicious landing at Milford Haven, was in this context a miraculous, God-given, victory. There could be no other explanation. As Henry's forces marched through Wales and into northwest England, the heartlands of his stepfather's powerful Stanley family, the hoped-for support had arrived with reluctance. Lady Margaret Beaufort's third husband, Lord Stanley, an accomplished political trimmer, gave fair words but little commitment: the vast, well-armed Stanley retinues shadowed Henry's route southeast to the battlefield and waited, detached, to see how the chips fell.

Early on the morning of 22 August, they watched Henry's well-drilled vanguard march determinedly towards the massed lines of the king's forces on the ridge above and, as Richard's artillery erupted and the armies engaged, saw them refuse to give ground. They saw nobles apparently loyal to Richard fail to advance against Henry – confused, perhaps, or reluctant to commit – and the king's desperate, impulsive cavalry charge thundering into Henry's household troops. In the carnage, monarch and pretender fought face to face, the heavy, painted canvas standards of Richard's sunburst and boar pitching and yawing against Henry's rougedragon and red rose. Then, as Henry's standard bearer had his legs hacked from under him, the Stanley forces, led by Lord Stanley's brother Sir William, piled in to his rescue. 'This day', soldiers heard Richard shout, 'I will die as a king or win.' He was swept away, battered to death so viciously his helmet was driven into his skull.[16]

By mid-morning, it was all over. Moving busily about the battlefield, Henry's soldiers stripped the dead and dying of their valuables and piled the bodies onto carts for burial. Richard's nearby camp, loaded with fine hangings and ornaments, was looted. On a nearby

hill, Lord Stanley, whose chief military action had consisted, ingloriously, of hacking down Richard's defenceless and fleeing troops, placed the dead king's circlet – picked up from where it had fallen, under a thornbush – on his stepson's head, to the shouts of acclamation from his troops. He was King Henry VII.

On 3 September, Henry's torn, bloody battle standards were carried through the suburb of Shoreditch towards London, a city still under curfew, armed patrols silhouetted against its battlemented walls. At Bishopsgate, the mayor and officials waited uncertainly in their scarlet finery to welcome with gifts of cash and gold plate the king they had unceremoniously dismissed weeks before as Richard III's 'rebel'.[17]

Of the details – Henry's flight to France, his invasion plans – there was no mention. Nor was there any detail of his genealogy, of precisely what his claim consisted in. And so it would remain: his fugitive history was chronicled in the haziest of terms by design as much as by accident. That was how Henry wanted it. He had appeared out of nowhere – an avenging king come to claim his kingdom from Richard III, who had murdered his nephews and wrenched the true line of the Yorkist dynasty off course. After the battle, the dead king's wrecked body had been slung over a horse, its long hair tied under its chin, then set on display at Leicester's Franciscan friary, naked except for a piece of cheap black cloth preserving its modesty, before a perfunctory burial – 'like a dog in a ditch', some said.[18] In the first flush of victory, the myths were already being written. 'In the year 1485 on the 22nd day of August', ran one poem, 'the tusks of the Boar were blunted and the red rose, the avenger of the white, shines on us.'[19]

The latest contender in the cycle of violence to be raised up, Henry was now faced with a profound challenge. He had to stop the wheel while he was at its highest point, to keep himself far above the private quarrels and vendettas of nobles, the world from which he had emerged. He had to create a 'new foundation of his crown', one which merged his family's name indistinguishably with the idea of royal authority. Through its power, its magnificence and its justice, his rule would need to ensure that, of all the proliferation of heraldic devices and badges that indicated which lord you followed and where your

affinities lay, the red rose commanded instant loyalty and the 'dread' inspired by a sovereign lord who ruled indifferently over all.[20] If he looked, behaved and ruled like a king, perhaps the exhausted, traumatized country of England would come to believe he was one.

At Henry's coronation in 'triumph and glory' at Westminster Abbey on 30 October 1485, Lady Margaret, reunited with the son she had not seen for fourteen years, 'wept marvellously'.[21] Her tears suggested not joy, but apprehension. With a precarious claim to the throne, no large family clan and little hereditary land of his own, virtually no experience of government and heavily reliant on the doubtful allegiances of a group of Yorkists whose loyalties lay with the princess he now courted, there was little to suggest that Henry's reign would last long, or that civil conflict would not simply mutate again. But if Henry knew little of government, his formative years had brought experience of another kind. As he set about creating a new dynasty, Henry would be haunted by the spectres of civil war, real and imagined. They would stay with him all his life and they would define his reign.