

Univerzita Pardubice

Filozofická fakulta

Bakalářská práce

2022

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Literary depiction of important figures of the Wars of Roses

Bachelor thesis

2022

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Univerzita Pardubice  
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Akademický rok: 2020/2021

# ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

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Osobní číslo: **H18324**  
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro odbornou praxi**  
Téma práce: **Literární obraz významných osobností Války růží**  
Téma práce anglicky: **Literary depiction of important figures of the Wars of Roses**  
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

## Zásady pro vypracování

Studentka se ve své bakalářské práci zaměří na literární obraz několika historických osobností období války růží. V teoretické části práce se bude nejprve věnovat obecně analýze literárního zobrazení historických událostí. Poté bude prezentovat kulturně-historickou analýzu vybraného období a především historické role zvolených osobností. Do literárního kontextu pak zasadí autora Conna Igguldena, jehož vybraná díla bude analyzovat v praktické části. Analýzy primárních zdrojů se budou opírat o fakta z teoretické části i o vlastní interpretace studentky.

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:  
Rozsah grafických prací:  
Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**  
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

**Seznam doporučené literatury:**

Iggulden, Conn. *Stormbird*. London: Penguin Books, 2014.  
Iggulden, Conn. *Trinity*. London: Penguin Books, 2014.  
Mauer, Helen E. *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England*. Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2004.  
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Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **1. dubna 2021**  
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **31. března 2022**

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V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2021

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## **PODĚKOVÁNÍ**

Tímto bych ráda poděkovala své vedoucí práce Mgr. Olze Roebuck, Ph.D., M.Litt. za odborné vedení, velkou míru ochoty a trpělivosti, a v neposlední řadě také za cenné rady, připomínky a lidský přístup při zpracování mé bakalářské práce.

## **ANNOTATION**

The thesis analyses a modern-day literary representation of the Wars of the Roses, and especially the two main figures allegedly responsible for the ignition of the Wars of the Roses, the Duke Richard of York and Queen Margaret of Anjou, and the depiction of their political role in Conn Iggulden's historical novels *Stormbird* and *Trinity*.

## **KEYWORDS**

history, Wars of the Roses, medieval England, civil war, historical novel

## **NÁZEV**

Literární obraz významných osobností Války růží

## **ANOTACE**

Tato práce analyzuje zpracování příběhu Války růží v historických románech Conna Igguldena *Bouře* a *Trojice* se zaměřením na dvě hlavní postavy, Richarda, vévodu z Yorku a anglickou královnu Margaret z Anjou, a především na jejich roli v rozpoutání Války růží.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

historie, Války růží, středověká Anglie, občanská válka, historický román

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## INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is the Wars of the Roses, which is an event of the English history responsible for many following changes in England's politics and government. The purpose of the thesis is to analyze two specific modern representations of this civil-war between two leading noble houses of the 15<sup>th</sup> century England which lead to a change in leadership as well as in gradual changes in the division of power in England. The historical novels in question are *Stormbird* and *Trinity* written by Conn Iggulden in the years 2014 and 2015.

The focus of the thesis is directed mainly at two important figures of the time, Margaret of Anjou, the Queen of England, and Richard Plantagenet, the Duke of York, as they are the two leading characters of Iggulden's books. The objective of the thesis is to analyze Conn Iggulden's depiction of these figures, and their role in the ignition of the Wars of the Roses as described in the two historical novels.

The theoretical part of the thesis first introduces the wider historical context of the Wars of the Roses by explaining the importance of bloodlines, succession rights, titles, and describing related historical events. Secondly, the theoretical part introduces Margaret of Anjou and how she is depicted in academic literature. The third and last part deals with the historical context of the Duke of York, focusing mainly on the development of his ambition, and on possible reasons or excuses he may have had for eventually raising an army against the king and queen.

The practical part contains a thorough analysis of Conn Iggulden's depiction of Queen Margaret and the Duke of York, focusing on several points. One of the main points is to identify and analyse the reason that Iggulden suggests were behind the ignition of the Wars of the Roses. Another point is to analyse Iggulden's division of the roles of the hero and the villain of the story, considering the benefits of the division for his storytelling as well as the negative influence it may or may not have on the historical accuracy of the novel.

The entire thesis focuses more on the years preceding the war rather than on the war itself, because based on my research, I believe the essential reasons for the Wars of the Roses to be rooted in the immediate years preceding the first battle as well as in much older Plantagenet history. There were many reasons for the conflict known as the Wars of the Roses, most of which meaningless had they not been combined together or preceded and followed by more. The reasons were political as well as personal, some of them were trivial, some were crucial, but the combination of too many of them at once resulted in the disastrous mix that ignited the armed conflict between the so-called Yorkists and Lancastrians.

The fact that there were so many reasons to cause this war is partially what makes it so interesting to me. History has always been one of my main interests, and especially the stories of powerful queens have always attracted my attention. And so, after reading Iggulden's books *Stormbird* and *Trinity*, I was a big fan of Margaret of Anjou, and naturally (as I will explain in the practical part of my thesis) I saw the Duke of York as the villain of this story. But after reading more about the Duke in academic literature, the man began to seem so much more interesting than Iggulden makes him to be. And thus it became my focus to search in Iggulden's books for signs of these interesting controversial parts of York's and Margaret's characters.

# 1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This theoretical part is focused on giving the general historical context to the events described in the analysed novels. Firstly, it introduces all the necessary general fact about the conflict known as the Wars of the Roses, including the explanation of bloodlines and noble family trees as well as events leading up to the Wars of the Roses. And the rest of the theoretical part explains the historical context of the two analysed figures, firstly Margaret of Anjou and secondly the Duke of York.

## 1.1 CONTEXTUAL INTRODUCTION TO THE WARS OF THE ROSES

The Wars of the Roses was more than a 30-year-long conflict of two houses both entitled to the throne of England. There were two phases of the conflict, which could even be perceived as two separate wars; thus explained the plural in the name *Wars of the Roses*. This thesis deals with the first phase, which was a power struggle between the House of York and House of Lancaster.

The name of the conflict arose from the emblems of the two contending houses—the red rose of the House of Lancaster and the white rose of the House of York. However, according to Dockray, neither the emblems nor the name of the conflict were actually used at the time, with the sole exception of the white rose which was one of many symbols used by the Duke of York.<sup>1</sup>

Although the civil war took place in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (most sources date it from 1455 to 1487), the animosity between these families of royal blood resulted from events older than even the oldest participants in the war could have witnessed during their lifetime. A majority of sources agree that the roots of the conflict can be traced back another century, to the death of King Edward III in 1377, or even more precisely, to the creation of a Duke's title.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Keith Dockray, *Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou and the Wars of the Roses: From Contemporary Chronicles, Letters & Records* (Bourne: Fonthill Media, 2016), <https://books.google.cz/books?id=d5VfDgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

<sup>2</sup>Suzannah R. G. Lipscomb, "The Wars of the Roses: The Real Game of Thrones." *Knowledge is GREAT*. Lecture presented at The British Council Lecture Series, posted September 13, 2017, YouTube video, 1:14:37, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLIDHhIRxIc&ab\\_channel=britishcouncilsg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLIDHhIRxIc&ab_channel=britishcouncilsg)

As Matthew Lewis explains, King Edward created the title in order to award it to his sons. His eldest son Edward became Duke of Cornwall, his second son Lionel of Antwerp became Duke of Clarence and his third son John of Gaunt became Duke of Lancaster. Unlike their older brothers, the fourth son Edmund of Langley and the fifth son Thomas of Woodstock were given the title of a Duke not by their father but by their nephew King Richard II years after Edward III died. For example, Edmund became the first Duke of York in 1385. Nevertheless, by the time of King Richard's deposition, there were at least five Dukes in England but the limits of a Duke's power remained an undefined territory.<sup>3</sup>

As Lipscomb explains, the only one who seems to have stood above the rank of a Duke was the king himself. With the king dead and no established laws of succession, there would be no one with enough authority to resolve a possible conflict of power between Dukes.<sup>4</sup> Lewis also argues that by receiving a title superior to nearly all others, the new Dukes came to believe that their superior ranks ensured superior lives.<sup>5</sup> In other words, they always believed to deserve more than they got. As long as there was a strong king on the throne, the Dukes would be the number one supporters and allies. However, without the highest authority to keep them in line, the Dukes' power would become quite dangerous to traditional succession of power.

And indeed, it did not take long before the succession disputes arose. Edward's eldest son and heir to the throne, the so-called Black Prince, died the year before his father's death, while his eldest son Edward died at the age of five. This made the Black Prince's second son the heir of Edward III's throne, prior to the Black Prince's brothers. This line of succession was understandably unpopular among the late king's remaining sons, and it left lingering claims to the Crown, which would eventually become one of the main causes for the Wars of the Roses.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Suzannah R. G. Lipscomb, "The Wars of the Roses: The Real Game of Thrones." *Knowledge is GREAT*. Lecture presented at The British Council Lecture Series, posted September 13, 2017, YouTube video, 1:14:37, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLIDHhIRxIc&ab\\_channel=britishcouncilsg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLIDHhIRxIc&ab_channel=britishcouncilsg)

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Suzannah R. G. Lipscomb, "The Wars of the Roses: The Real Game of Thrones." *Knowledge is GREAT*. Lecture presented at The British Council Lecture Series, posted September 13, 2017, YouTube video, 1:14:37, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLIDHhIRxIc&ab\\_channel=britishcouncilsg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLIDHhIRxIc&ab_channel=britishcouncilsg)

Despite his unpopularity, the Black Prince's second son was crowned Richard II, and ruled rather tyrannically for 22 years until 1399 when he was deposed by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke. Being the son of John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, and thus King Edward III's grandson, ensured Bolingbroke a claim to the throne strong enough to convince the Parliament to unanimously support him as King Henry IV.<sup>7</sup> The fact that Bolingbroke was able to depose the King of England by a plea to the Parliament based on his royal bloodline is the one of the first signs of the major changes that would happen in the following years. Firstly, the Parliament's position began to shift from simple advisors of the king to an actual constituent of government with actual power to depose or impose kings. Secondly, it demonstrates that unpopularity was becoming a very significant weakness, and that unpopular kings would be no longer tolerated in England.

Henry IV was later succeeded by his son, Henry V, who is believed to be one of the greatest kings in British history. He is described as a very strong leader with many military successes resulting in significant economic development and expansion of land, but also a beloved and popular leader. Therefore, when he suddenly died, the expectations put on his 9-month-old son and heir Henry, were enormous. When young Henry VI finally came of age, England under the rule of his regents had already lost most of the glory of his father's era. Furthermore, his marriage to a French princess Margaret of Anjou, which was paid for with more French land so gloriously won by his father, made Henry even more gloriously unpopular from the very beginning of his independent reign.<sup>8</sup> With a weak and unpopular king in power, naturally, the other noble houses descended from the Plantagenet royal bloodline began to pose danger to the Lancastrian branch.

The long forgotten claims to the throne by the Houses of York and Mortimer, descendents of the younger sons of Edward III, came to life again through a figure representing both of them. Richard Plantagenet, the Duke of York, was the descendant of not one but two royal bloodlines. He inherited the title of the Duke of York from his paternal uncle, but he was also

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<sup>7</sup> Suzannah R. G. Lipscomb, "The Wars of the Roses: The Real Game of Thrones." *Knowledge is GREAT*. Lecture presented at The British Council Lecture Series, posted September 13, 2017, YouTube video, 1:14:37, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLIDHhIRxIc&ab\\_channel=britishcouncilsg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLIDHhIRxIc&ab_channel=britishcouncilsg)

<sup>8</sup> James E. Doyle, *A Chronicle of England B.C. 55 - A.D. 1485* (London: Edmund Evans, 1864), 380–381.

a Mortimer—a descendant of Lionel, the Duke of Clarence—through his mother’s side.<sup>9</sup> After the death of his maternal uncle Edmund Mortimer in 1425, he became the first in line to the throne by primogeniture. This, in the eyes of many nobles, would make for stronger claim than Henry’s.

Nevertheless, rooted another hundred years further in the Plantagenet history, the Wars of the Roses have outreached and long outlived the original conflict between Henry VI, resp. Margaret of Anjou, and the Duke of York, eventually turning into a power struggle between any nobles who still had enough funds to raise an army.

## 1.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF QUEEN MARGARET OF ANJOU

Margaret of Anjou was born in 1430 as a second daughter of René, Duke of Anjou and titular king of Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem. The princess was only 14 years old when her father betrothed her to the King of England in exchange for the return of his ancestral lands. Although she was all but 15 years old when she became the Queen Consort of Henry VI, Margaret was more than prepared to become the true monarch that England desperately needed. Kendall claims that she had been raised in a household led by women,<sup>10</sup> which inadvertently groomed her for the position she would uphold one day. Her father René of Anjou had spent most of her childhood as a prisoner of the Duke of Burgundy, while his wife and mother ruled over Anjou.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Margaret had great examples of strong and independent women in her mother and grandmother.

Margaret is described by most sources as rather intelligent and very well educated for a woman of her era. In Kendall’s *Richard the Third*, she is also depicted as strong-willed, decisive, or even proud and passionate.<sup>12</sup> Henry VI, on the other hand, is described in *A Chronicle of England* as “gentle, studious, and religious; evincing neither inclination for war,

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<sup>9</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), xvii.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 19

<sup>11</sup> Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 19.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 19.

nor capacity for government.”<sup>13</sup> Alison Weir even concludes her description of Henry’s character saying that “as a man he was virtuous and good, but as a king he was a disaster.”<sup>14</sup>

The entirety of Henry’s reign was marked by his gullibility and vulnerability to manipulation. Weir even suggests that “whoever controlled the King controlled the country.”<sup>15</sup> This meant further instability for a country that had spent 15 years under the regent rule of quarrelling nobles. Even with sources unanimous on this one, it is still safe to say that King Henry was a naively trusting religious man with little interest in politics. He was generous with those who were in his favour but also foolishly generous with his enemies. For example, Weir describes a royal pardon from Henry to conspirators who had attempted to kill him.<sup>16</sup> Michael Hicks in his paper on Henry VI agrees that his mercy towards his enemies was indeed unwise and dangerous. However, Hicks also argues that Henry was not completely incapable of ruling and that he in fact made decisions and initiated governmental actions himself.<sup>17</sup> Though it is questionable if his decisions were the best or if someone else could have navigated the situation better, the fact remains that Henry was most likely the one who made those decisions. His advisors probably tried to persuade him into deciding in a certain way, but in the end, the King himself must have allowed it.

Inarguably, Henry did heavily rely on his councillors, but as Hicks describes in another one of his works, it was not so uncommon for a king at the time. He explains that “only departures from the routine,..., demonstrate to modern historians the decisions that had been taken. Such developments are hard to detect and even more difficult to attribute to their prime-mover: to a minister, to the council, or to the king,”<sup>18</sup> and that “only a minority of signet letters and initialled petitions are traceable directly to the king. The problem is that actions in the king’s name need not indicate any personal involvement by the king. If it is too far to say that

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<sup>13</sup> James E. Doyle, *A Chronicle of England B.C. 55 - A.D. 1485* (London: Edmund Evans, 1864), 391.

<sup>14</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 6.

<sup>15</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 6.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Hicks, “Henry VI: A Misjudged King,” in *History Today* 1, no. 1 (January 2016).

<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Henry+VI%3a+a+misjudged+king%3f+Few+English+monarchs+have+such+a+poor...-a0247157203>

<sup>18</sup> Michael Hicks, “What was Personal about Personal Monarchy in the Fifteenth Century” in *The Image and Perception of Monarchy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Sean McGlynn, Elena Woodacre (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 11.

nothing was begun by Henry VI, the truth lies somewhere in between.”<sup>19</sup> This again proves that given the rather small number of available contemporary sources from this time there is no way of getting any closer to the reality of what King Henry or any other historical figures were really like.

As a woman of intellect that she is described to be by most historians, Margaret could most likely see her husband’s inability to govern and the dangerously unwavering trust he had for his advisors. And not only was Margaret almost certainly aware of her husband’s weak and trusting character, but she also seems to have realized that it made him vulnerable to manipulation by his friends even more than it made him vulnerable to his enemies. And so, unsurprisingly, Margaret was concerned about the loyalty of the king’s advisors probably since the beginning of her rule; some sources even suggest her distrust to be close to paranoia.<sup>20</sup>

Daisy Dean Dryden comments in a master’s thesis that “seldom, will one ever find two people more unlike than Queen Margaret and King Henry, her masculine talents and ambition forming a striking contrast to her husband’s meekness and timidity.”<sup>21</sup> And indeed, Queen Margaret was apparently the exact opposite of her husband. She seems to have understood the game of power that politics really is, and unlike her husband, she was rather wary with her trust. Nobles whom she considered trustworthy and loyal to her would become her closest advisors, while those she did not deem loyal enough would become her enemies. Namely, Kendall lists the Duke of Suffolk and the Duke of Somerset among Margaret’s allies, and claims her archenemies to be Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, Henry’s uncle and former regent, and Richard, Duke of York.<sup>22</sup>

Not long into her role as the Queen of England, she took it as her responsibility to protect the interests of the Crown. As Dryden claims, Margaret was “full pride, spirit, ambition and intelligence. She had the inclination to rule and from the first, King Henry was more than

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Hicks, “What was Personal about Personal Monarchy in the Fifteenth Century” in *The Image and Perception of Monarchy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Sean McGlynn, Elena Woodacre (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 11.

<sup>20</sup> James E. Doyle, *A Chronicle of England B.C. 55 - A.D. 1485* (London: Edmund Evans, 1864), 393–394.

<sup>21</sup> Daisy Dean Dryden, “Margaret of Anjou and Her Relation to the Wars of the Roses” (MA thesis, University of Illinois, 1916), 8.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 19.



willing to trust and in fact almost relinquish his rank as sovereign to his clever, lively and strong-willed wife.”<sup>23</sup> Alison Weir agrees that “Margaret quickly became the dominant partner in the marriage. She had energy and drive enough for two, and Henry accepted her tutelage without protest...”<sup>24</sup> And according to Dryden, “young and inexperienced though she was, she entered the game in the spirit which her supporters had wished.”<sup>25</sup>

Historians agree that she started to be personally invested in the state affairs much earlier than only upon her husband’s sudden deterioration of mental health in 1453. For example, Jacob Abbott claims that “after the death of the Duke of Gloucester, Queen Margaret was plunged in a perfect sea of plots, schemes, manoeuvres, and machinations of all sorts, which it would take a volume fully to unravel. This state of things continued for two years, during which time she became more and more involved in the difficulties and complications which surrounded her.”<sup>26</sup> According to Dryden, it was after her arrival to England that “Margaret at once began to take an active part in everything around her.”<sup>27</sup>

However, for a medieval queen, there were not many common ways to be involved in the government of the country, because as Weir describes, “according to the laws of England, a queen consort hath no power but title only.”<sup>28</sup> From the description of many historians, it appears to be obvious, that Margaret was in fact the figure behind many decisions made in the king’s name. This actually in a way confirms York’s propaganda which claims, as described by Alison Weir, that the king “had in a manner deposed himself by leaving the affairs of his kingdom in the hands of a woman who merely used his name to conceal her usurpation.”<sup>29</sup>

After King Henry suffered a complete mental breakdown in 1453, J. R. Lander describes a period of up to 8 month in which Queen Margaret secretly ruled in the king’s name, until

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<sup>23</sup> Daisy Dean Dryden, “Margaret of Anjou and Her Relation to the Wars of the Roses” (MA thesis, University of Illinois, 1916), 8.

<sup>24</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 8.

<sup>25</sup> Daisy Dean Dryden, “Margaret of Anjou and Her Relation to the Wars of the Roses” (MA thesis, University of Illinois, 1916), 9.

<sup>26</sup> Jacob Abbott, *Makers of History: Margaret of Anjou* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1902), 78.

<sup>27</sup> Daisy Dean Dryden, “Margaret of Anjou and Her Relation to the Wars of the Roses” (MA thesis, University of Illinois, 1916), 9.

<sup>28</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 11.

<sup>29</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 11.

York was made Protector of the Realm.<sup>30</sup> According to Dockray, with Henry's illness still unimproved the following year, Margaret even pursued the role of his regent. However, as Jennifer Wards points out, she was the only one to do so in the entire medieval history of the Queens of England.<sup>31</sup> And so she was clearly bound to fail, as she did. Dockray describes that instead of Margaret becoming the Queen Regent of England, the Parliament appointed a Protector and Defender of the Realm, who would rule until either Henry regained his senses or Margaret's new-born son Edward came of age.<sup>32</sup>

For Margaret, Richard Plantagenet, the Duke of York, was one of the most dangerous people to hold this position. According to Kendall, York was acquiring more and more supporters every day, despite the fact that he hadn't even openly pursued his claim to the throne at this point. However, Kendall also describes that upon York's appointment to the office of Lord Protector, he swore an oath of allegiance to Prince Edward as the rightful heir to the Crown, and when Henry suddenly regained sanity, the Duke of York retired "quietly" to Yorkshire.<sup>33</sup>

When Kendall analyzes the Duke of York, he deduces that the queen's distrust and enmity could have been the cause of York's later betrayal, and not the other way around.<sup>34</sup> This suggests that the queen's fear of being betrayed might have been the very cause of this fear eventually coming true. Kendall even claims that "by treating him as an enemy, the Queen had turned York into one".<sup>35</sup> There could be many causes behind the Queen's distrust of York and we can only guess her motives and reasons. To explain the most likely reasons, we must go back to York's childhood.

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<sup>30</sup> J. R. Lander, "Henry VI and the Duke of York's second protectorate 1455–1456" in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 43, 1 (1960), 47. <https://doi.org/10.7227/BJRL.43.1.3>.

<sup>31</sup> Jennifer Ward, *Women in England in the Middle Ages* (London: Humbledon Continuum, 2006), 134.

<sup>32</sup> Keith Dockray, *Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou and the Wars of the Roses: From Contemporary Chronicles, Letters and Records* (Bourne: Fonthill Media, 2016), <https://books.google.cz/books?id=d5VfDgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 19.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 23.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 23.

### 1.3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF RICHARD PLANTAGENET, DUKE OF YORK

In his detailed account of the Duke of York's life, Matthew Lewis explains that Richard Plantagenet inherited the title of a Duke at the age of four from his childless uncle Edward, the second Duke of York, after his death at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. His father and Edward's brother, Richard, Earl of Cambridge, also died that year, which might lead one to believe that he fell alongside his brother at Agincourt. But looking at the dates more closely, it is quite certain that the Earl of Cambridge was already dead when Henry V left for France in August 1415.

York's father, the Earl of Cambridge, was apparently dissatisfied with the way he was being treated by King Henry, which is not surprising, considering that his brother was the Duke of York while he only became Earl of Cambridge in 1414. Thus, understandingly, he was not very inclined nor financially equipped to follow Henry to war. And so, after conspiring with Sir Thomas Grey and Edmund Mortimer to depose Henry V, Richard of Cambridge was executed on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1415 for his planned attempt on Henry's crown. The attempt was crushed by Mortimer's confession to the king before they even had a chance to put any plans into motion, and Richard's head ended up on a spike, suffering the same fate as his son would only 45 years later.<sup>36</sup> Thus, in 1415, the four-year-old Richard, now the third Duke of York, lost his father and his uncle within months from each other while also becoming responsible for the legacy of the York family.

According to Lewis, York was, until the age of 11, under the protection of a Lancastrian knight, Sir Robert Waterton, who was also in charge of prisoner-keeping of the French nobles captured at Agincourt. Therefore, though there is no actual proof of this, the young Duke may have come into contact with, as Lewis calls it, the French "chivalry and code of honour" during his stay with Sir Waterton. After King Henry V suddenly died in 1422, the 11-year-old Duke was put into the care of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 3.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 3.

This patriarch of a very powerful family with Lancastrian allegiances, dating back to their support of Henry IV's assumption of power in 1399, used this opportunity to its full potential. When the Duke inherited more possessions in 1425, this time the vast lands and funds of the Mortimer family through his maternal uncle, he became a gold mine for the Neville family. With the inheritance of Richard's uncle Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, also came a rather strong claim to the throne as the Mortimers were descended from Edward III's second son Lionel, even though the descent was through a female line of Lionel's daughter Phillipa. This was the perfect time for Ralph Neville to unite the Nevilles and the Yorks through a marriage between the Duke and Ralph's youngest daughter Cecily Neville.<sup>38</sup>

However, Ralph died later that year, and so the safekeeping of still-under-age Richard Plantagenet was then entrusted to Ralph's wife Joan Beaufort, half-sister of Henry IV. This can be deduced from the Calendar of Patent Rolls which records an entry from 26<sup>th</sup> May 1426 that funds were assigned to Countess Joan for "having the custody of Richard, Duke of York". It also explains that these funds were allocated from Richard's own inheritance, the possessions once belonging to his late uncle Edmund Mortimer, "which are in the king's hands".<sup>39</sup> These had been, according to Lewis, placed by the Parliament of April 1425 under the management of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, King Henry VI's uncle and regent.<sup>40</sup>

In 1428, according to Lewis, the now 16-year-old Duke was slowly approaching the end of his minority, which would at last ensure him a full access to his immense wealth and power, making him one of the most powerful people in all of England.<sup>41</sup> It is impossible for us to know in what kind of a mindset York was in his teenage years, and since he was being raised far away from the English court, the Crown would also have no way of knowing York's allegiances. Probably as a result of this realization, Lewis describes a letter written in the name of the infant King being dispatched to summon York to join the royal household in London.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps the reason behind it was a simple desire to examine the true nature of York's character before he comes of age. Or maybe, as the old saying instructs, to keep a

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<sup>38</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 3.

<sup>39</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls: Henry VI A.D. 1422 – 1429*. (Norwich: "Norfolk Chronicle" Company, Ltd., 1909), 343.

<sup>40</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 3.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 4.

<sup>42</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 4.

friend close but an enemy closer. Whatever the reason for the King's summons was, Duke Richard was kept really close indeed.

Calendar of Patent Rolls lists several occasions on which the Duke was given significant executive power. For example an entry from 20<sup>th</sup> January 1430 describes York being tasked to supervise a duel, and "in the absence of John, Duke of Bedford, to act as constable of England".<sup>43</sup> Also, according to Lewis, York was present at both coronations of King Henry.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, Alison Weir notes that he was knighted alongside with the King himself.<sup>45</sup> If he was not in the favour of the Crown at this time, as some sources like to claim, this evidence suggests otherwise. But then again, they may have been keeping an enemy closer.

Due to his father's history of treason, it is possible that prejudice, assumptions and distrust arising from his father's attempt to depose Henry V may have caused the third Duke of York to be viewed as a potential enemy of the Crown. At this point, it is vital to contemplate the true meaning behind this use of the term "Crown". Under usual circumstances, it would simply be a synonym to the King. However, in a situation where it is obvious that the king in power is not actually in power, the term would symbolize anyone and everyone with any executive power at the highest level. To identify individual players behind the scenes would have been difficult even then, not to mention over 500 years later. But their identity and their motives are key information for understanding the actual reasons behind the famous events. To understand the psychology of a king is rather a long run, but trying to understand the psychology of a whole army of lords is a never-ending marathon.

Multiple minds are bound to produce multiple ideas and opinions, which could be why there are so many contradictions in the behaviour of the "Crown" towards Duke of York. The contradiction could be in the lords' inability of collective agreement. Or maybe the main contradiction is simply in the presentation of individual historians. As in every other academic field, the so-called human factor can be an impediment when trying to impartially assess information. And especially historians, whose job is to balance their scientist and writer side

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<sup>43</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls: Henry VI A.D. 1429 – 1436*. (Norwich: "Norfolk Chronicle" Company, Ltd., 1909), 38.

<sup>44</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 4.

<sup>45</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 5.

in order to write an objectively true account of history while making it readable to general public, have a tendency to be writers more than scientists.

Examples of these contradictory tendencies can be widely found in the literature written about the Duke of York. Talking about the attitude of the Crown towards Duke Richard during his childhood, Matthew Lewis claims that there were no attempts to confiscate York's inherited wealth, which Lewis recognizes as an inclination to "rehabilitate the young boy" and to raise him without the presumption of becoming a traitor like his father. Lewis also describes that York was awarded with an important role of the Constable of England<sup>46</sup> However Alison Weir sees it from a different perspective. She claims that after reaching majority, York was kept from governmental positions and any executive power, which would have been common for a Duke to hold. Instead, he was being tasked to travel far away from England for the military positions he was given.<sup>47</sup> Despite the inconsistencies between sources when describing the Duke's early years, which could suggest unreliability of the sources in this matter, there is rather a unified consensus that York did serve the Crown loyally for many years of his majority.

In 1432, as Weir describes, Richard of York at the age of 21 has finally come of age. Thus, at last, the Parliament agreed to grant him access to his inheritance in its full extent, with a small catch of having to pay an extensive amount of money to the King in order to get it.<sup>48</sup> Weir never explains the purpose of this "inheritance fee", but according to T. B. Pugh, York was simply asked to repay a debt that he had also inherited from his uncle, the second Duke of York<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, suddenly, the boy with no family became the man who owns the better part of England.

With the war in France quickly draining the English royal treasury, York was soon to become richer than the King of England. Whatever York's character was like, this alone would make him a threat for the Crown, which the Council was surely well-aware of. Weir explains that as

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<sup>46</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 5.

<sup>48</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 5.

<sup>49</sup> T. B. Pugh, "The Estates, Finances and Regal Aspirations of Richard Plantagenet (1411–1460), Duke of York" in *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England*, ed. Michael Hicks (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), 71.

soon as he came of age, it would have been customary for a Duke to assume a place on the King's Council or to be appointed to a position in government. Instead, York was only involved in military positions and mostly forgotten. However, that was until Duke John of Bedford who had been in charge of the English lands in France died in 1435, and the Council decided that York would be a suitable replacement.<sup>50</sup>

This is where the Crown appears to have created one solution for two pains – the threat of York growing out of control in England and the upkeep of an expensive war that no one really wants to lead. With the Council's decision to send York to manage the situation in France, they successfully removed York from the public view and at the same time secured a benefactor for the war expenses. Both Weir and Lewis agree that after multiple defeats by Joan of Arc, and with no more support from Burgundy, England's main ally for most of the war, York was basically assigned to sustain something that had been a lost cause before he even arrived.<sup>51</sup>

Despite his complete military inexperience up to this point, the time that York spent in Rouen as the Lieutenant-General of France turned out not to be a complete failure. But it was significantly more advantageous for England than for him. Lewis claims that though not successful in acquiring any further lands for the English, York showed useful skills in dealing with the Norman aristocracy, managing to quiet the tendency of the Normans to support the French cause, and thus succeeding in the preservation of English rule in Normandy. But with the English Crown bankrupt from years of unfruitful war, York was forced to finance his French campaigns out of his own pocket.<sup>52</sup> Thus, despite being one of the wealthiest men in England, with no wages or rewards for his job well-done, there was probably little to no motivation to do more than the absolute necessary. Most likely, he was ready to happily return to England after his one-year-long service. The war in France was, however, becoming more and more impossible to maintain without the wealthy Duke to fund it.

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<sup>50</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 5.

<sup>51</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 4.

<sup>52</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 4.

According to several sources, England was lacking funds as well as soldiers to further their cause. But as Lewis points out, with Henry VI already crowned King of France, it was now impossible to abandon the war. In addition, it was apparently a public knowledge that York had not been paid the wages for his position.<sup>53</sup> That is obviously not something attractive to potential candidates for replacement, and thus, finding a willing lieutenant-general to replace York was probably not an easy task.

Due to this situation, according to Lewis, York was asked to stay extra 6 months to prevent another “power-vacuum” created by the absence of a leader. However, with his appointment to office ending officially in April 1437, he would be essentially powerless for the remaining time there. Lewis suggests that York was not given any choice in the matter and was forced to stay.<sup>54</sup> Weir, on the other hand, claims that York was angered by the continual lack of support and he returned to England despite his orders.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, both of these historians agree that he was able to leave France in a better situation than he had found it at the time of his arrival.

Richard of York arrived in France as a 25-year-old rookie and left only one year older, but he was now experienced in warfare and diplomacy, and intimately acquainted with the Crown’s miserable financial situation. While apparently still fully loyal to Henry VI, York was becoming dangerously well-experienced and generally popular. At the same time, Weir describes a crisis of power in the Council, which was corrupted and divided into factions, quickly becoming completely inefficient. This crisis resulted in Henry VI, who was 16 years old at the time, proclaiming himself to be of age and assuming power to resolve the squabbles between the noblemen of his Privy Council. After the King was finally in power, the Council, while still operating with some executive power, was now forced to consult the King on every major decision, which meant the end of their 15-year-long autonomy.<sup>56</sup>

After spending his time in England trying to take control of his lands and estates, York was soon shipped away again. Weir describes that York was once again sent to France as the

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<sup>53</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 4.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 4.

<sup>55</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 5.

<sup>56</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 5.



lieutenant-general in 1441,<sup>57</sup> only this time with two significant changes. Firstly, as described by T. B. Pugh, it was no longer a one-year-long position and York was assigned to stay until 1445. Secondly, unlike his previous term, he was finally getting paid for his job. T. B. Pugh in his analysis of York's finances notes that with the generous wages for his position, this was the golden times of York's wealth. But after he returned from France in 1445, the loss of this major income quickly led to a depletion of his resources. And as Pugh claims, "it is difficult to believe that York's growing financial problems did not influence the part he played in English politics..."<sup>58</sup>

Only a year after his return from France, as Lewis notes, York was tasked to assume the place of the Lieutenant of Ireland, being the perfect candidate for the task due to the title Earl of Ulster which he inherited from his uncle Edmund Mortimer.<sup>59</sup> However, as Dan Jones explains, he managed to delay his departure for so long that in the end, he only spent one year in Ireland. This turned out to be a time mostly advantageous for him, as he was able to gather many supporters among the Irish. And when he returned from Ireland in 1450, he showed up with an army of 5000 troops marching towards London. Though really rather for show than for war, York's troops aroused distrust.<sup>60</sup>

This demonstration of power was a breaking point in York's behaviour towards the King. A loyal subject mostly obeying orders for all his previous life, York suddenly marches to London making demands. Dan Jones uses letters between York and King Henry to deduce that after serving as Lieutenant of France and Ireland, York decided it was time for him to gain more power in England as well. According to the letters quoted by Jones, York is asking to be given "command of England in a moment of crisis".<sup>61</sup> However, considering the loss of Maine and Anjou in exchange for Queen Margaret in 1444, the loss of Normandy in 1449, and the corruption of the King's Council, Jones suggests that England was not exactly in its

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<sup>57</sup> Alison Weir, *Lancaster and York: The Wars of the Roses* (London: Random House, 1995), 5.

<sup>58</sup> T. B. Pugh, "The Estates, Finances and Regal Aspirations of Richard Plantagenet (1411–1460), Duke of York" in *Revolution and Consumption in Late Medieval England*, ed. Michael Hicks (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), 74–75.

<sup>59</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Richard, Duke of York: King By Right* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 4.

<sup>60</sup> Dan Jones, *The Wars of the Roses: The Fall of the Plantagenets and the Rise of the Tudors* (New York: Penguin Group, 2014), 8.

<sup>61</sup> Dan Jones, *The Wars of the Roses: The Fall of the Plantagenets and the Rise of the Tudors* (New York: Penguin Group, 2014), 8.

best shape.<sup>62</sup> And thus, York, though being rather aggressive about it, could have been actually trying to save England from the corrupt government.

Furthermore, we can only assume that having spent so much time and resources on the war in France, the loss of nearly all English lands in France must have been rather personal to him. With Duke of Sommerset being the one responsible for the losses in France, York was probably not very happy to see him in London, especially at the exact same position that York would have most likely imagined for himself. And so as Jones says, “tension between the two men would dominate politics over the course of the next five years.”<sup>63</sup>

As reads the opening of *A Plain Statement of the Conduct of the Ministry and the Opposition towards His Royal Highness Duke of York*, “it is an observation as ancient as civil society itself, ... , that no characters are so obnoxious to unjust reproach as those of the great; and that the pedestal upon which public characters are raised into more conspicuous view, renders them, at the same time, more assailable objects of envy and malignity.”<sup>64</sup> While the text has no connection to Duke Richard of York, as it was written in 1808 about Duke Frederick, the opening does transcend time and can be applied universally. And especially, it reflects the ambiguity of approaches to the assessment of Duke Richard’s actions leading up to the Wars of the Roses.

Some authors, like Conn Iggulden in his novels, tend to depict York as a traitor consumed by ambition and greed, who died trying to usurp the kingdom for his own selfish motives. On the other hand, some sources (e.g. Kendall) argue for a much nicer version of York with intentions a bit more pure, suggesting that his actions were mostly the product of his circumstance and him being a victim of prejudice and unfounded distrust was possibly the grounds for his later actions. There is evidence for and against both of these theories, which makes it essentially impossible to assume which of them is more likely. Nevertheless, the Duke sealed his label of Queen Margaret’s enemy at the First Battle of St. Albans in 1455.

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<sup>62</sup> Dan Jones, *The Wars of the Roses: The Fall of the Plantagenets and the Rise of the Tudors* (New York: Penguin Group, 2014), 8.

<sup>63</sup> Dan Jones, *The Wars of the Roses: The Fall of the Plantagenets and the Rise of the Tudors* (New York: Penguin Group, 2014), 8.

<sup>64</sup> *A Plain Statement of the Conduct of the Ministry and the Opposition towards His Royal Highness Duke of York* (London: B. McMillan, 1808), 1.

James Doyle in *A Chronicle of England* describes that in 1455, after Henry's miraculous recovery, the Duke of York, accompanied by the Duke of Norfolk, and Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, who had gathered their armies at Ludlow Castle, began to march towards London. At the same time, King Henry was taking advantage of his regained senses and marching with his army north. The two armies met in St. Albans on May 22, 1455.<sup>65</sup> Doyle suggests that while York was marching towards London on purpose, the conflict at St. Albans was more of a coincidence than a planned battle.<sup>66</sup> However, most other sources suggest that Henry's army was not in fact on its way to Wales, as claimed by Doyle, but it was intentionally trying to block York's advance, in an attempt to prevent a potential battle of London.

One way or another, as Lander describes, York was victorious in the Battle of St. Albans, and his victory created likely one of the most peculiar situations of all the battles in the Wars of the Roses. Some nobles serving on the King's Council were killed in the battle, including Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland, but King Henry himself was captured by the Yorkist army, only to be returned on the throne immediately after.<sup>67</sup> Surprisingly, after his victory against the Royalists, York still claimed to be loyal to the King, explaining that his fight was with the corrupt advisors and not the King himself. Dan Jones explains, however, that it was a "crucial component of the Duke's political campaign to argue that he was fighting for and not against the king."<sup>68</sup> 134. This suggests that in fact he may not have been as loyal to the king as he needed to appear for his political purposes.

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<sup>65</sup> James E. Doyle, *A Chronicle of England B.C. 55 - A.D. 1485* (London: Edmund Evans, 1864), 402.

<sup>66</sup> James E. Doyle, *A Chronicle of England B.C. 55 - A.D. 1485* (London: Edmund Evans, 1864), 402.

<sup>67</sup> J. R. Lander, "Henry VI and the Duke of York's second protectorate 1455-1456" in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 43, 1 (1960), 50. <https://doi.org/10.7227/BJRL.43.1.3>.

<sup>68</sup> Dan Jones, *The Wars of the Roses: The Fall of the Plantagenets and the Rise of the Tudors* (New York: Penguin Group, 2014), 134.

## 2 LITERARY DEPICTION OF MARGARET OF ANJOU AND RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK IN CONN IGGULDEN'S NOVELS *STORMBIRD* AND *TRINITY*

The strongest memories we have after reading a book are those of the book's mood. When reading fiction, it is usually a matter of first few pages to know who the hero is and who the villain is. Sometimes the book takes special interest in hiding the villain's identity, but generally, the mood of the book is meant to hint the villain throughout the book. And so, even without remembering exact details of the story after finishing the book, you do remember who the villain was.

My first impression from Conn Iggulden's books was that of the villain. Without a question, Richard, Duke of York is the villain in Iggulden's books, while Margaret of Anjou and her allies have the hero status. To a reader without a need for fact-checking, this would seem like an undeniable truth. Considering that Iggulden's books are historical fiction novels, there is absolutely no reason why he should not create a hero and a villain. However, to my surprise, many renowned historians in their academic writings on the Wars of the Roses tend to do this as well. Dan Jones or Paul Murray Kendall, for example, seem to oppose Iggulden as they put Margaret and Duke of Suffolk in the role of the villains<sup>69</sup>, while making Richard of York to be seen as a victim of circumstance.<sup>70</sup>

Iggulden uses many techniques to nudge the reader into believing something that he did not explicitly say. Original sources of information regarding events this far in the past, such as chronicles or administrative records, can tell us what, when, where and sometimes even why, but it is for a novelist to fill in the blanks of how it happened in detail. Thus, individual conversations that a reader can witness in these books are only the product of the author's imagination or, at best, their guess at what it might have really been like. Nevertheless,

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<sup>69</sup> Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third* (Bourne: George Allen & Unwin, 1955).  
[https://openlibrary.org/books/OL6194260M/Richard\\_the\\_Third](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL6194260M/Richard_the_Third).

<sup>70</sup> Dan Jones, *The Wars of the Roses: The Fall of the Plantagenets and the Rise of the Tudors* (New York: Penguin Group, 2014).

Iggulden uses many of these conversations and intimate moments to set a mood of the villain-versus-hero kind.

As per usual, the hero is let known immediately. Margaret of Anjou is introduced first, in the very beginning of the first book *Stormbird* and before the Duke of York. The reader first meets her as a 14-year-old princess, in a rather ordinary and familiar situation which anyone can relate to. Moreover, she is introduced as a smart and brave young girl, who is beloved by everyone that she meets. Details like that gradually make her into a likeable and relatable character, which is essential for a hero.

On the other hand, York is introduced later in the story with the mood immediately defining him as the villain. Iggulden provides him with “a stare that was full of disdain”<sup>71</sup>, and the reader learns within a few pages that it is “not wise to irritate a man of York’s reputation and influence...”<sup>72</sup> On various occasions throughout the first book, Duke of York is painted as an unpleasant man, who openly speaks against the King and the Council. For example, after Lord Suffolk’s trial, York says to the lords that “perhaps a man should not fear to talk of treason”<sup>73</sup> because “it seems it does not bear the sting it once had.”<sup>74</sup> On another occasion, he openly claims that “the king is a boy too weak and sickly to rule.”<sup>75</sup> York also appears to be proud and selfish, and even cruel, taking pleasure in ruining others’ lives.<sup>76</sup> All of this is undoubtedly necessary for a complete picture of a villain. However, to what extent it could have been also the reality of him is uncertain.

As I have already mentioned, the views of historians also differ when it comes to York’s status of the villain. However likely it might be, there is no real evidence to be found that would suggest York ever spoke openly against the King before they first met at the battlefield. Although there are cases known of other people speaking treacherously on his behalf, which could have been initiated by York, it is impossible to say with certainty if it was York’s doing. Iggulden in *Stormbird* makes York into the figure behind most unexplained events

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<sup>71</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 42.

<sup>72</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 45.

<sup>73</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 345.

<sup>74</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 345.

<sup>75</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 313.

<sup>76</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 46

targeted against the King. The void in York's public appearance in between his official functions and general lack of detailed information of his movements makes it easy to assume he was behind at least some of those. Without a question, a man like York, as described by most historians, was surely capable of organizing such acts.

Among other situations, Iggulden claims that York left his position in France against orders at one point.<sup>77</sup> Months before the King's wedding, when York was meant to be commanding the army in France, Iggulden describes him entering Windsor by force and demanding to speak to the King.<sup>78</sup> Though unsure whether the event in fact happened, the reasons behind York's irritation could have been the reality of York's mindset at the time. In *Stormbird*, York storms into the Windsor castle upon learning about a planned truce between England and France. Given the timing, the truce in question is surely the Treaty of Tours which turned out to be one of the disasters igniting the Wars of the Roses, as the truce was broken not long after taking effect. Considering the fact that York was the Lieutenant of France at the time, being left out of the negotiations for peace could have been reason enough to evoke animosity in the Duke.

In fact, this was not an isolated case. Only in *Stormbird*, Richard, Duke of York, was kept out of the inner circle decisions on several occasions, regarding rather important matters. According to Iggulden, after the violent visit to the Windsor Castle, which is not mentioned by any historians anywhere, York goes on to find out only after he arrives at the King's wedding that the King himself will not be coming at all,<sup>79</sup> and on top of it all, York accidentally learns about the cost of the Treaty, and thus about the true meaning of the wedding.<sup>80</sup> So even though in Iggulden's second book *Trinity*, Margaret and York appear to be the main initiators of the war, *Stormbird* makes it clear that even before these two people met, York had enough reasons to be aggravated at the King's Council and the King himself, and even at Margaret, as she was a symbol of the truce and the lands lost.

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<sup>77</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 65.

<sup>78</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 60.

<sup>79</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 82.

<sup>80</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 98.

Throughout the book, there are small notes that make a reader question everything that he has learned. For example, in the first half of *Stormbird*, York mentions to his wife that “they ruined the son of my king with their prayers and poetry.”<sup>81</sup> At first, it is easy to assume that he means Lords Suffolk and Sommerset, them being his archenemies at the time. However, considering the fact that in the very first scene of the book *Stormbird*, a reader meets King Henry praying in a chapel because “Cardinal Beaufort told me that the French can’t come while a king prays,”<sup>82</sup> it appears more likely that York’s words were targeted at Cardinal Beaufort, who was apparently indeed supporting King Henry in endless prayers. But as the two men allegedly become allies not so much later, it seems a little strange for York to be thinking of Cardinal Beaufort as the enemy.

On that note, Iggulden suggests that in 1450, York was the initiator of the accusations against William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, a close ally of the King and Queen.<sup>83</sup> Iggulden does make a good point saying that is rather obscure that nobody seems “to blame York for losing Maine and Anjou, though he had been in command at the time,”<sup>84</sup> and he also gives a really good explanation for it, claiming that “Richard of York had been quick to accuse the king’s supporters and, in doing so, had escaped criticism himself.”<sup>85</sup> Though, there is no official historical record of this, in *Stormbird*, York comes in person to interrogate Lord Suffolk after his arrest, alongside with Cardinal Beaufort and Sir William Tresham, the Speaker of the House of Commons at the time. The reader learns that “of the three, Beaufort was his true captor” and that “the presence of York was a clear statement of the cardinal’s loyalties.”<sup>86</sup>

In *Stormbird* as well as in reality, Suffolk ended up on trial, blamed for all the lands lost, banished from England for five years, but then killed before even leaving England; again, according to Iggulden, most likely on York’s orders or one of his companions’.<sup>87</sup> Iggulden even claims that “the scroll had been prepared by Tresham and Beaufort, no doubt with York

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<sup>81</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 105.

<sup>82</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 20.

<sup>83</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 336.

<sup>84</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 337

<sup>85</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 337.

<sup>86</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 311.

<sup>87</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 454.

looking over their shoulders and making suggestions.”<sup>88</sup> And after the trial of Lord Suffolk, Iggulden describes two factions forming in the Parliament, one around Lords Somerset and Scales in support of Suffolk, and the other around York who “strolled with the Neville lords to an empty room not far from the king’s chambers” and “Tresham and Cardinal Beaufort went with them, deep in conversation,”<sup>89</sup> which explicitly puts Cardinal Beaufort on York’s side.

However, it appears that at this point, still 5 years before the first battle, loyalties and allegiances were still shifting and changing. Another example may possibly be recognized after the battle of London during Cade’s rebellion. Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, who seems to unquestionably stand with York, came in person reporting to the Queen first thing in the morning after the battle. For a reader who might be quick to be wary with a Neville in the house, Iggulden even mentions that Warwick “hardly noticed how much his manner warmed to her, as the sun continued to rise over the Tower.”<sup>90</sup> There is no question to whether Warwick was a Yorkist or not, but before Yorkists or Lancastrians became an obligatory choice to make, Iggulden suggests that Warwick could have been just a young man loyal to his King and Queen.

Furthermore, Iggulden even suggests that York could have initiated or at least supported Cade’s rebellion in 1450.<sup>91</sup> This also does not seem completely unlikely, especially in the situation that Iggulden created in *Stormbird*. He claims that “the riots seemed to be spreading and those lords who supported the Duke of York were not working too hard to put them down. It suited his faction of lords to have the country up in arms, roaring their discontent.”<sup>92</sup> And the reader also learns that “the Neville faction could only gain from an attack on London.”<sup>93</sup> Though it is rather theoretical, once again Iggulden does have a point.

During the Cade’s attack on London, the Queen is warned to leave, but she decides to send King Henry to Kenilworth but to stay in London herself, to which she gets a reply from her

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<sup>88</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 336.

<sup>89</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 343.

<sup>90</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 432.

<sup>91</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 370.

<sup>92</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 370.

<sup>93</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 381.



advisor that “to stay is to hold the knife to your own breast” because “members of Parliament have made York the royal heir ‘in the event of misfortunes’.”<sup>94</sup> This means that York would be in line for the Crown should anything happen to the King. And with a king who is mentally and physically incapable to lead the country most of the time, all hopes are put on the Queen to produce an heir as soon as possible. This is most likely what Iggulden means when he claims that “if London was saved but Margaret lost, the Yorkist cause would be immeasurably strengthened. The Duke of York would then be king within the year.”<sup>95</sup>

Speaking of things strengthening the Yorkist cause, the main one to mention would be the Nevilles. Iggulden devotes a rather large amount of space in both *Stormbird* and *Trinity* to the relationship between York and the Neville family. York has been associated with them since childhood, but as Iggulden simply explains in *Stormbird*, “when York had married into that particular clan, he’d gained the support of one of the most powerful groups in the country. It had certainly not hurt the man to have the Nevilles behind him.”<sup>96</sup> In *Trinity*, it is mentioned that “a man standing with Nevilles could rise far, it seemed. Standing against them, poor devils like Somerset could not rise at all.”<sup>97</sup> This is confirmed on multiple occasions throughout *Trinity*, for example a noble saying about Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, that he does not “envy those who stand against that man, not with Richard Plantagenet on one hand and Earl Warwick on the other. Those three together could break the country in two, were they so minded.”<sup>98</sup>

And since apparently they were so minded indeed, they eventually did break the country in two, igniting a civil war in the name of protecting the king from the wrong advisors. Even on the battlefield, York still claims to be loyal to the king. He repeatedly stresses that he only wants to “free King Henry from those who hold him hostage”<sup>99</sup> and even reminds his companions that “our quarrel is with Somerset and Buckingham and Percy, not Henry of

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<sup>94</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 372.

<sup>95</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 381.

<sup>96</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 344.

<sup>97</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 63.

<sup>98</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 86.

<sup>99</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 189.

Lancaster.”<sup>100</sup> However, Iggulden also suggests that York has been interested in acquiring the Crown for himself at least since he had to give up the title of the royal heir in 1454.

In *Trinity*, a scene in which the Duke of York as the Protector of the Realm at the time must sign a document that awards the title of Prince of Wales and royal heir to Henry and Margaret’s son Edward reveals an insight into the Duke’s mind. He appears to be aware that “if King Henry passed from the world before it was signed and sealed, York was at that moment the royal heir”<sup>101</sup> and that “only his own signature lay between himself and the Crown.”<sup>102</sup> And it is also revealed that “it was too early to declare for the throne, Salisbury had convinced him of that.”<sup>103</sup> This creates a contradiction in what York thinks and says, and while Iggulden clearly uses it for perfecting York’s portrait of the villain, it also makes York’s character a completely unreliable narrator, which needs to be taken into consideration for any further analyses.

This also suggests that Margaret distrust of York and even other lords is not entirely misplaced. Margaret’s doubts about the loyalty of the King’s noblemen are well-expressed in a conversation with one of Henry’s advisors, to whom she says that “it would be a rare man who took no advantage from a king who trusts him so completely.”<sup>104</sup> As fitting as these words are, it is not likely that she ever actually said them. But they do seem to be an appropriate representation of her mindset.

And it is not a mindset completely out of place, all things considered. Iggulden even has the same advisor say about the king at one point that he “could get him to say yes to anything”<sup>105</sup> and even admit that “trouble is, so can anyone else. He’s weak like that.”<sup>106</sup> This suggests with a great amount of certainty that the queen was not the only person in the inner circle of King Henry’s advisors who was aware of the nature of the king’s character, and also not the only one who was afraid of the influence that others may have on the king. In a way, this

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<sup>100</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 189.

<sup>101</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 63.

<sup>102</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 63.

<sup>103</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 63.

<sup>104</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 190.

<sup>105</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 17.

<sup>106</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 17.

proves the theory that whoever gained King Henry's trust essentially gained control over the country. However, as Margaret is painted out to be more or less the hero of the story, Iggulden never forgets to stress, explicitly or implicitly, who is the evil-whisperer and who is the one with the right kind of advice. So naturally, the queen is always depicted as the one who means well.

Along the course of the book *Stormbird*, Margaret develops from a little girl into a powerful queen. For example, at her coronation, there is a glimpse into her mind, which informs that "at least she had no vow to remember, as a wife and queen. The safety of the realm was not her responsibility to protect."<sup>107</sup> At this point, she has not yet properly met her husband and thus she cannot know exactly what her new role would eventually require from her. However, about 5 years later, during the siege of London by Cade's rebels, another glimpse into the young queen's mind shows a significant change. This time, Margaret has already accepted as her responsibility that "London and her husband had to be made safe before anything else."<sup>108</sup> And also that "King Henry was not at her side and for a time the city was her responsibility, her jewel, the pounding heart of the country that had adopted her."<sup>109</sup> According to Iggulden, Margaret has had significant influence on King Henry since the very beginning, even before Henry's mental breakdown. Within 5 years after her wedding, Margaret has already become the true protector of the realm, and one of the closest advisors to King Henry.

Throughout both Iggulden's books, Margaret appears to be in charge of the king's well-being as if he was a little child. Many times in *Stormbird* alone, Margaret explicitly realizes her husband's incapacity to govern and sometimes even openly admits it. For example, one of her first impressions of her husband is that "he is most amenable"<sup>110</sup> and "agreed to anything she wanted"<sup>111</sup> but she "frowned to herself at the thought"<sup>112</sup> suggesting her wits to be sharper than the King's. On another occasion, Margaret even tells the steward that "the king will need a cloak. Be sure he puts it on before going into the rain."<sup>113</sup> The absurdity is deepened even

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<sup>107</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 173.

<sup>108</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 371.

<sup>109</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 439.

<sup>110</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 187.

<sup>111</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 187.

<sup>112</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 187.

<sup>113</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 457.

more by an additional note by the steward, who later gets “pale with frustration, knowing he would hear all about letting the king stand in the rain.”<sup>114</sup> Repeatedly, Iggulden even describes situations in which the king acts obediently towards his queen Margaret, even apart from the time periods of his illness. Among other examples, this scene from the very end of the first book *Stormbird* shows it perfectly:

“Henry put down his spoon suddenly, rising from his place. ‘I should go out to them, Margaret. As host, I should wish them good luck and good sport. Have the boars been sent out?’

‘They have, husband. Sit, it is all in hand.’

He sat once more, though her sternness faded at the sight of him fiddling with his cutlery, for all the world like a boy denied the chance to run outside. Margaret raised her eyes, amused and indulgent.

‘Go then, husband, if you think you must.’

Henry rose quickly, leaning forward to kiss her before leaving the room at something close to a run.”<sup>115</sup>

This particular scene depicts King Henry as childish and incapable of making his own decisions even in situations as mundane as this one, which is the general picture of Henry that Iggulden is apparently trying to paint throughout both of the books. The notion is supported by a few more examples such as the very first scene introducing King Henry, in which he discussing the Treaty of Tours with Lord Suffolk. He seems to pay nearly no attention when Suffolk keeps explaining to him the details of the truce, and only interested in details of the wife that comes with the deal. The king’s answers are so out of place that the entire conversation resembles something like an absurd comedy.

“‘Your Grace, there are English subjects living in both Maine and Anjou. They would be evicted if we give them up. I wanted to ask if it isn’t too high a price to pay for a truce.’

‘We must have a truce, Lord Suffolk. We must. My uncle the cardinal says so. Master Brewer agrees with him – though he has no beer! Tell me of the wife, though. Is there a picture?’

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<sup>114</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 460.

<sup>115</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 457.

Suffolk closed his eyes for an instant before opening them.

‘I will have one made, Your Grace. The truce, though. Maine and Anjou are the southern quarter of our lands in France. Together, they are as great as Wales, Your Grace. If we give such a tract of land away...’

‘What is her name, this girl? I cannot call her “girl” or even “wife”, now can I, Lord Suffolk?’

‘No, Your Grace. Her name is Margaret. Margaret of Anjou.’

‘You will go to France, Lord Suffolk, and you will see her for me. When you return, I shall want to hear every detail.’

Suffolk hid his frustration.

‘Your Grace, do I have it right that you are willing to lose lands in France for peace?’

To his surprise, the king leaned in close to reply, his pale blue eyes gleaming.

‘As you say, Lord Suffolk. We must have a truce. I depend on you to carry out my wishes. Bring me a picture of her.’”<sup>116</sup>

While the conversation does suggest that Henry possesses some amount of ability to give orders, it also makes him into a complete moron. Which even Iggulden admits explicitly is not the case, claiming that “Henry was not stupid, for all his strangeness.”<sup>117</sup> However, whether the king was stupid or not, his primary weakness was that his enemies believed that he was and he did nothing to prove them wrong.

In *Stormbird*, York even explicitly says that “King Henry is a simpleton.”<sup>118</sup> If the king was strong and capable, it could be a good thing to make his enemies believe that he was weak. But with a king as weak as Iggulden portrays King Henry, in a time like this, any noble with enough royal blood could get interested with a first public notion of his weakness. In *Stormbird*, the king’s advisors seem to be aware of the danger arising from the king’s weakness. When searching for the best way to arrange the royal wedding, it is said by one of the advisors that “Henry can’t be allowed to speak to the French king. Just a short chat with

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<sup>116</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 21–22.

<sup>117</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 21.

<sup>118</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 104.

the lamb and they'll be blowing their own bloody trumpets and looking across the Channel.”<sup>119</sup> This is also stated to be the true reason behind the proxy wedding.

So apparently, there were not many people close to King Henry who did not know about his incapacity to rule. And as it is safe to assume that most of them were not in his service out of pure love for him, it becomes clear that the political situation at the time was a game of power very similar to what politics is today. In the modern world of democracy, populists are willing to promise and do anything in order to get votes from people, and thus stay in power. The only difference in the 15<sup>th</sup> century is that men in power are willing to do anything to become one of the king's favourites and gain his trust, but again in order to stay in power. Although 15<sup>th</sup> century people would have been very different from us in many ways, I suppose that some things never change.

As it can be subtly witnessed throughout the first book *Stormbird*, and much less subtly in the second book *Trinity*, the more incapable the king gets, the more powerful Parliament becomes. In *Stormbird*, and most likely in reality too, York is also well-aware of this. He creates and uses many valuable connections throughout the entire Parliament, counting nearly a half of the Lords Temporal and among others the Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir William Tresham, who essentially becomes York's tool in eliminating his enemies, such as for example arresting Lord Suffolk, and later a tool in gaining more power. Iggulden gives a very good example of the Parliament's rising power by Lord Tresham telling York that “all things are possible, my lord...with enough votes.”<sup>120</sup> Especially given the fact that, according to Iggulden, they were discussing the possibility of naming a royal heir, in which, as mentioned before, they actually succeeded, it clearly demonstrates the power of Parliament thriving under a weak, childless king.

In 15<sup>th</sup> century, a queen consort without a child heir to lend her more power, and without a strong king to stand beside, has very limited influence and even relevance. However, by the time the queen finally gives birth to her son, Prince Edward of Westminster, in 1454, the situation has significantly changed, and the birth of her son is not enough to secure her. The

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<sup>119</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 56.

<sup>120</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 345.

king, her husband, suffered an unknown kind of mental breakdown in late 1453, and became completely incapable of communicating, much less governing the entire country. And though the young queen is without a doubt ready to take his place, the Parliament stands firmly in her way.

Although, in *Stormbird*, and even in reality according to J. R. Lander, Margaret exercised her husband's power and acted in his name for months on her own when her husband was already incapacitated.<sup>121</sup> Lander even claims that “according to a letter written at the time, the queen, by mid-January, had already drawn up plans for exercising the regency herself.”<sup>122</sup> And though she was, obviously, unsuccessful in reality, Iggulden in *Stormbird* does not even entertain the idea of this rather important part of her story. *Stormbird* ends with the queen present at Westminster, while Parliament chooses Richard of York to be the Protector of the Realm, but according to Iggulden, Margaret is not even allowed to enter the chamber and hear the discussions, much less to present a proposal herself.<sup>123</sup>

A female regent would probably seem like a normal proposition to Margaret who came from a family of strong women essentially ruling themselves. However, to the conservative English noble lords, allowing a woman alone to rule England was at the time a notion completely unacceptable. In addition, as Iggulden says, “England had a long history of regents for royal children – Henry himself had needed good men to rule in his stead when he'd inherited the throne as a child. Yet there was no precedent for madness...”<sup>124</sup> And thus perhaps it should not be at all surprising that such an unprecedented situation created such a mess in England.

As Iggulden describes her in *Trinity*, Margaret has apparently grown used to ruling the country during Henry's incapacity. Iggulden explicitly describes her mixed feelings after the king's recovery, when “she felt resentment as well, much as she tried to deny it. For all the time her husband had been helpless, she had worked to keep his authority alive, yet the

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<sup>121</sup> J. R. Lander, “Henry VI and the Duke of York's second protectorate 1455–1456” in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 43, 1 (1960), 47. <https://doi.org/10.7227/BJRL.43.1.3>.

<sup>122</sup> J. R. Lander, “Henry VI and the Duke of York's second protectorate 1455–1456” in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 43, 1 (1960), 47. <https://doi.org/10.7227/BJRL.43.1.3>.

<sup>123</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 469.

<sup>124</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 36.

moment he woke, he was off with men like Buckingham and Percy, leaving her behind.”<sup>125</sup> The said lords even go as far as to reminding her that “King Henry has the noble heads of families to advise him when he wakes...”<sup>126</sup> But Queen Margaret would not be left behind anymore. Later, she vows to herself that “they would find her in their path, whichever path they took,”<sup>127</sup> and even speaks up to the lords, reminding them of her importance as her husband’s “voice when he had none...”<sup>128</sup> And these are only two of many examples of Margaret’s courage and decisiveness, which lead to a subtle notion that Margaret was more capable than King Henry, and that she possibly could have been a better king than her husband.

However, there is a short period of time, shortly after his recovery in late 1454, when King Henry appears to be stronger in mind than ever. He is suddenly decisive, takes action and gives out orders without hesitation, which is quite the opposite of the amenable and weak king that Iggulden presents throughout most of the story. This new Henry takes no time to regain power from York and undo his work. Henry even proclaims in public upon meeting York that “by my order, those you have bound will be freed. Those you have freed will be bound!”<sup>129</sup> To a man of York’s position and pride, after more than a year of successfully protecting the country, getting disrespected by such a proclamation from the king would have been a great insult.

However, Iggulden describes that by speaking against York, King Henry displays more of strong will than he ever has, which actually makes York respect Henry as the king for the first time. But Margaret claims in *Trinity* that she does “not doubt York remains a threat”<sup>130</sup> because “such men who have tasted power will always long for it again,”<sup>131</sup> and she is not wrong.

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<sup>125</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 114.

<sup>126</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 118.

<sup>127</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 122.

<sup>128</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 119.

<sup>129</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 111.

<sup>130</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 121.

<sup>131</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 121.



At one point in *Stormbird*, Iggulden suggests that the main reasons for Margaret's hostility towards York were that she "still blamed York for the death of Lord Suffolk"<sup>132</sup> and "she suspected him of involvement in Cade's rebellion".<sup>133</sup> This would mean that the Queen's hatred towards the Duke was based mostly on two unconfirmed accusations. But that was before the First Battle of St. Albans in 1455. York's attack on the king's army and the deaths of Somerset and Northumberland then gained him a permanent status of the villain, at least in the queen's point of view.

Though, as Lander claims, there is no official record of Henry falling ill ever again after his miraculous recovery in 1455,<sup>134</sup> Iggulden makes Margaret into the sole hero of the second book *Trinity* by adopting the theory that Henry's mental breakdown reoccurred after the First Battle of St. Albans. As Lander describes as well, York's victory in the First Battle of St. Albans was followed by a second era of his protectorate, which in *Trinity* is also reinforced by the fact that King Henry becomes once again mentally as well as physically incapable of opposing him. In addition, after the death of Queen Margaret's two major allies, Edmund of Sommerset and Henry Percy of Northumberland in the battle, the queen is rendered even more powerless as she most likely used to depend on Sommerset to provide her with access to the Privy Council. But as the kind of a strong woman she has become at this point, Margaret now views herself as the only true protector of her husband's and son's throne, and she acts accordingly.

In *Trinity*, Margaret truly becomes the she-wolf that Shakespeare claimed her to be. Iggulden paints her into a warrior queen who rides out into battles with the Queen's Gallants, her own army counting more than 8,000 men, though Iggulden also never forgets to add intimate moments that show her in a more pleasant and familiar way. But on the other hand, Iggulden describes her using the King's Seal to carry out orders in the king's name while the king is in no mental state to actually give such orders, and that proves the very accusation upon which York has build his campaign. And so, even Iggulden's strict division of heroes and villains appears to be faltering occasionally.

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<sup>132</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 454.

<sup>133</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Stormbird* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 455.

<sup>134</sup> J. R. Lander, "Henry VI and the Duke of York's second protectorate 1455-1456" in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 43, 1 (1960), 50. <https://doi.org/10.7227/BJRL.43.1.3>.

This notion can be supported by more examples, such as the fact that on multiple occasions in *Trinity*, Iggulden claims that York as the Protector of the Realm actually “ruled in the king’s name for more than a year with neither disasters nor invasion from France...”<sup>135</sup> and that “the duke was managing the vast and complex business of state with rather more skill and understanding than King Henry ever had,” and even King Henry after his recovery admits that “Richard Plantagenet had not ruined the kingdom, that he had not beggared her with a war. From the comments of his lords, it seemed York had not suffered rebellions or riots, or much of anything, while Henry drowsed and dreamed in Windsor.”<sup>136</sup> And thus once again, it becomes questionable whether York really is such a villain, even if he is explicitly called so when, in *Trinity*, Lord Percy says to the newly recovered king that “this is a day I’ll long remember, Your Highness. The day you came home to rule, casting out snakes and villains.”<sup>137</sup>

The Duke of York repeatedly claims innocence of treason throughout Iggulden’s books. On one occasion, he is recorded to say that his “line may come from King Edward, but the sons of John of Gaunt stand before mine. I have not desired the throne. All I have done is to keep England safe and whole, that small thing, while her king dreams.”<sup>138</sup> And so, when being threatened with the title of a traitor, he claims that they will “have enough to take arms against them, if they make traitors of us.”<sup>139</sup> But at the same time, the King’s Council and Margaret plan for a potential battle in the same spirit, Henry claiming that “I shall go north in peace, but I shall answer him with war if he stirs on step from his fortresses”<sup>140</sup> and explaining that “if York and Salisbury challenge us then, they will be met by armies, by thousands who will stand in their way.”<sup>141</sup>

This final example gives the definite proof needed to proclaim with certainty that Iggulden aims for a notion that the Wars of the Roses were a situation like the one with the chicken and

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<sup>135</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 61.

<sup>136</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 109.

<sup>137</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 112.

<sup>138</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 62.

<sup>139</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 133.

<sup>140</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 141.

<sup>141</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 140.

the egg. Just as it is impossible to say which existed first, the egg or the chicken, it is also impossible to determine the main driving force behind the ignition of the Wars of the Roses. From what Iggulden suggests can be assumed that Margaret and York indeed did ignite the Wars of the Roses, but they did so in cooperation, and so neither is less guilty than the other.

### 3 CONCLUSION

The aim of my thesis was to present and assess the way Conn Iggulden in his novels depicts the events leading up to the Wars of the Roses, identify the main reasons for it as described in the books, and analyse the literary characters representing the two major figures allegedly responsible for the conflict, Queen Margaret of Anjou and Richard Plantagenet, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of York.

The major reasons that I have identified can be summarized into 5 main points. Firstly, the Duke of York's bloodline and the superiority of his claim to the throne in comparison to the king's created the very basis for the Wars of the Roses. Then, King Henry's incapacity to effectively rule England inspired the Duke to act on his claim. Thirdly, the political and military failures in France made King Henry, Queen Margaret and all their advisors very unpopular with the people of England, which created an opening for the Duke to put out his claim on the throne. Fourthly, his wealth combined with the support of the most powerful noble house of England at the time, the Nevilles, made him better equipped to lead a war than King Henry ever could be. And finally, the rivalry between York and Somerset, a close ally of the king and queen, as well as the rivalry between the Nevilles and the Percys became the driving forces for the first battle.

I have abandoned the original second aim of the thesis to analyse the historical accuracy of the novels, and I did so for many reasons. Firstly, I have learned during the process of primary research that even historians tend to sacrifice accuracy for readability, secondly, it soon became obvious to me that with so little contemporary records, it is nearly impossible to measure accuracy even of academic literature written about this era. And most importantly, thirdly, I have deduced that Iggulden has deliberately abandoned the effort for accuracy in order to support his division of the roles of the villain and the hero of the story, which would mean that such an analysis of accuracy would be rather pointless.

However, another aim has risen from this deduction and that is the analysis of Iggulden's division of villains and heroes, and the search for the supporting evidence of Iggulden's tools

for displaying the division of these roles to the reader. On this note, I have identified Queen Margaret to be portrayed as the hero with the Duke of York as her counterpart, the villain of the story. There are multiple occasions and multiple tools that Iggulden uses throughout his books to highlight the roles of individual characters.

Without a thorough analysis, the roles of the villain and the hero seem to be strictly divided with no room for development. However, after a closer examination, it appears that Iggulden's novels occasionally do capture the thin line between heroes and villains, and although it appears for most of the books that Richard of York is positioned as the villain, there are enough hints to prove that Iggulden does not forget that nothing is black and white.

Despite not all historical details being accurate, as I have mentioned before, on most of the essential occasions, the novels do follow the real course of history as described by contemporary and non-contemporary historians. But as Iggulden himself admits in the historical notes in *Trinity*, "when researching historical fiction, one of the joys is occasionally coming across scenes that are simply wonderful – and even better when they are not well known."<sup>142</sup> In other words, a historical event that is mostly unknown in its details presents a great opportunity for a writer of historical fiction, because it offers many blanks to fill with fiction that fits in with the narrative that they follow.

The more texts and books a person reads on a subject, the more complicated the subject becomes. When questions arise from one book, we turn to another for answers, finding more questions and no answers, so we turn to another and then to another, only to find more and more questions. And so in the end, despite perhaps reading nearly everything there is to read and learning everything there is to learn about the subject, it becomes even more confusing and complicated than in the beginning. And so perhaps the main thing to be learned in the process is to find the right questions, not the right answers.

We can't know the actual reality of the past, even though we do know the correct dates of events, names of people or places where they lived. We assume we know what really

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<sup>142</sup> Conn Iggulden, *Trinity* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 473.

happened and why, because we assume that the people of the past were just like us. Recreating history, we put our own thoughts and motives, the thoughts and motives of present-day people, into the heads of people who lived centuries before us. We think about what we would do in certain situations and we assume that they were the same people as we are with the same reactions and psych . But how could the mentality of an ordinary 21<sup>st</sup> century woman be similar to a 15<sup>th</sup> century Queen of England.

This is a great challenge and a rather common problem of modern-day representations of the past. Often, despite getting all the details right (such as dates, places, detailed descriptions of battles), authors, even some historians, tend to treat history as if it was happening to modern people. Most of us know that 15<sup>th</sup> century England would not have electricity, cars or same-sex marriages. However, we seem to forget that culture, views and public knowledge at the time, even when it comes to very-well educated people, was significantly different than it is in the modern world. Thus, the reason why people did what they did when they did it can hardly be explained or understood without considering the way people thought at the time.

However, when a modern reader entertains a book about historical events, be it a historical novel or academic writing by a renowned historian, it is the first instinct of us all to feel closer to the people that we read about. We do that by choosing to see rather the similarities than the differences. And that is absolutely fine for a reader. However, the more authors try to give readers rather the similarities than the differences, the more we lose of the “real” history.

Lately, even scientists seem to be forgetting the main point of science which is discussion, and actually listening and considering other opinions. In the same way, historians tend to forget that nothing can be absolutely black and white. History is just a set of more or less real stories, and no “real” story has a villain and a hero set in stone. People change, their minds change, their intentions shift, and thus the roles of villains and heroes can actually be intertwined.

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## RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce na téma literárního obrazu ději se zabývá literárním zpracováním významné události anglické historie známé pod názvem Války růží. Jedná se o občanskou válku mezi dvěma předními šlechtickými rody Anglie 15. století, Lancastery a Yorky, vedenou na základě sporných nároků na trůn, která má na svědomí mnoho následujících změn v politice a vládě Anglie. Práce analyzuje moderní reprezentaci tohoto konfliktu v historických románech *Stormbird* a *Trinity* napsaných Connem Igguldenem v letech 2014 a 2015, se zaměřením především na dvě významné postavy té doby, anglickou královnu Margaret z Anjou a Richarda Plantageneta, vévodu z Yorku, kteří byli údajně zodpovědní za vyvolání této občanské války. Cílem práce je posoudit způsob, jakým Conn Iggulden zobrazuje tyto dvě hlavní postavy ve svých knihách, jejich vzájemné vztahy a jejich roli v rozpoutání této války.

Text práce je rozdělen na dvě hlavní části, a to část teoretickou a část praktickou. Teoretická část práce se pak dělí na 3 podkapitoly. První kapitola nejprve uvádí do širšího historického kontextu Války růží vysvětlením významu pokrevních linií, nástupnických práv, titulů a popisem souvisejících historických událostí. Tato kapitola se zabývá především příčinami Války růží zakořeněnými v událostech ještě dávnější historie, jako například vznik titulu vévody za vlády Edwarda III, a vysvětluje, jakým způsobem tyto události mohly ovlivnit rozpoutání Války růží. Dále pak tato kapitola popisuje a podrobně vysvětluje význam pokrevních linií a jejich vliv na rozdělení moci ve Středověku.

Druhá kapitola teoretické části představuje královnu Margaret z Anjou a její obraz v akademické literatuře opírající se o soudobé zdroje, a tak vytváří historický kontext k analyzované literární postavě Conna Igguldena, která představuje královnu Margaret v jeho knihách. Tato část popisuje především vlastnosti a schopnosti královny, tak jak ji představují historické prameny, a vývoj jejího charakteru v průběhu let její vlády. Tato kapitola souběžně s královnou také představuje jejího manžela, mentálně nemocného krále, který je jejím primárním handicapem, ale zároveň také jejím zdrojem moci.

Třetí a poslední kapitola této části práce přímo navazuje na kapitolu předchozí a zabývá se historickým kontextem vévody z Yorku. Tato kapitola sleduje vévodu z Yorku od dětství až po jeho vrcholné období. Soustředí se především na vývoj jeho ambicí v průběhu času a na možné důvody a podněty, které ho mohly později vést k sestavení armády a vedení války proti králi a královně Anglie.

Praktická část práce s názvem *Literary depiction of Margaret of Anjou and Richard, Duke of York in Conn Iggulden's novels Stormbird and Trinity*, který lze přeložit jako *Literární obraz Margaret z Anjou a Richard, vévody z Yorku v románech Conna Igguldena Stormbird a Trinity* pak obsahuje důkladnou analýzu postav královny Margaret a vévody z Yorku v knihách Conna Igguldena *Stormbird a Trinity*. Tato část se soustředí na vývoj charakteru těchto postav a na jejich vliv na rozpoutání Válek růží. Součástí této části je především posouzení popisu situace vedoucí občanské válce v Anglii se zaměřením na analýzu motivace jednotlivých postav k jejich činům.

Ačkoliv se praktická část nedělí na jednotlivé kapitoly, zaměřuje se na několik individuálních bodů. Jedním z hlavních cílů praktické části je identifikovat a analyzovat důvod, který podle Igguldena stál za rozpoutáním Válek růží. Těchto důvodů Iggulden uvádí několik, nicméně všechny tyto důvody spolu vzájemně souvisí a jsou tedy rozebírány souběžně v závislosti na jejich vzájemném propojení. Jako příklad lze uvést nadřazenost pokrevní linie vévody z Yorku v porovnání s linií Lancasterů, z níž pochází vládnoucí král Henry, slabost samotného krále, neoblíbenost jeho poradců a mimo jiné také politické a vojenské neúspěchy, které vyústily ve ztrátu většiny anglického území ve Francii.

Druhým z hlavních bodů praktické části je analýza Igguldenova rozdělení rolí hrdiny a padoucha. Tento bod posuzuje přínosy tohoto rozdělení pro Igguldenovu tvorbu příběhu a zároveň také studuje do jaké míry Iggulden přizpůsobuje či nahrazuje historické fakty pro účely vytváření dojmu hrdiny a padoucha. V tomto bodu je zahrnut také potenciální negativní vliv, který může mít rozdělení postav na hrdiny a padouchy na historickou přesnost. Upravování reálné události, tak aby se po všech stránkách hodila na dané místo v příběhu a současně dávala smysl, není snadná záležitost a může dopadnout nevalně, avšak Iggulden se jí

zhostil bravurně. Až na výjimky, žádná z jeho editací historie není tak zásadní změnou, aby ji nebylo možné odpustit ve jménu čtivosti.

Iggulden po většinu příběhu utváří dojem, že role padoucha a hrdiny jsou striktně rozděleny. Zpočátku používá mnoho různých nástrojů a příležitostí pro utváření a zdůrazňování rolí jednotlivých postav. Již na začátku první knihy lze identifikovat královnu Margaret jako hrdinku a Richard z Yorku se zdá být postaven do role padoucha. Nicméně, po bližším prozkoumání je zjevné, že Iggulden, ačkoliv velmi nenápadně a většinou jen v náznacích, zachycuje tenkou hranici mezi hrdiny a padouchy, a přestože se po většinu času zdá, že Richard z Yorku je postaven jako padouch, existuje dostatek náznaků, které dokazují, že Iggulden si moc dobře uvědomuje, že nic na světě současném ani minulém není černobílé.

V několika vybraných situacích se praktická část zabývá také otázkou historické přesnosti analyzovaných děl, což bylo jedním z původních hlavních cílů práce, které jsem se rozhodla omezit na vybrané situace, a to z mnoha důvodů. Zaprvé, kvůli zjištění, že i historici mají tendenci obětovat historickou akurátnost čtivosti. Zadruhé, během primárního výzkumu začalo být brzy zřejmé, že s tak malým počtem soudobých zdrojů z tohoto období není možné určit míru historické přesnosti dokonce ani u akademické literatury. A především, za třetí, kvůli dedukci, že Iggulden záměrně opustil snahu o historickou přesnost, aby mohl fikcí podpořit své rozdělení rolí padoucha a hrdiny. Z čehož vyplývá, že v tomto případě analýza přesnosti až na výjimky postrádá smysl.

Nicméně, navzdory tomu, že ne všechny historické detaily jsou naprosto přesné, ve většině zásadních situací se romány skutečně drží skutečného běhu dějin, jak jej popisují soudobí a moderní historici. Iggulden využívá k vykreslení hrdiny a padoucha především situace, které nejsou historiky detailně popsány, případně imaginativní scény, které nemají žádný historický základ, a tak se jen minimálně odchyluje od historiky popsaného kurzu dějin. A v případě, že se odchýlí od kurzu, jedná se ve většině případů o lehký přestupek odpustitelný i historikem.