



The Wars of the Roses

By Alison Weir

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Lancaster and York. For much of the fifteenth century, these two families were locked in battle for control of the English throne. Kings were murdered and deposed. Armies marched on London. Old noble names were ruined while rising dynasties seized power and lands. The war between the royal houses of Lancaster and York, the most complex in English history, profoundly altered the course of the monarchy. Alison Weir, one of the foremost authorities on British history, brings brilliantly to life both the war itself and the larger-than-life figures who fought it on the great stage of England. *The Wars of the Roses* is history at its very best—swift and compelling, rich in character, pageantry, and drama, and vivid in its re-creation of an astonishing period of history.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

YA?This book reaffirms Weir's mastery of English history. Like *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* and *The Princes in the Tower* (both Ballantine, 1993), this title is jam-packed with information. The narrative begins with a short history of the House of Plantagenet, more specifically the disastrous rule of Richard II, which is seen as sowing the seeds of the conflict, and ends with the Battle of Tewkesbury and the murder of King Henry VI. The author weaves the story of the magnate families involved in the politics and rivalries of the era, and makes it understandable, interesting, and readable. Included are the simplified genealogical tables of the families involved as well as extensive primary- and secondary-source bibliographies. Any student of English history will appreciate the ease with which the period is unveiled and the detailed information on the people and places of England from 1399 to 1500.?Debbie Hyman, R. E. Lee High School, Springfield, VA
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From Library Journal

In this prequel to her *Princes in the Tower* (LJ 1/94), historian Weir presents a well-written, entertaining narrative of the first phase of the War of the Roses. Accepting the Tudor view that the conflict originated with Richard II's deposition, she devotes half of the book to relations between Lancaster and York from 1399 to 1455. The second half deals with the period from the first Battle of St. Albans (1455) to the Battle of Tewkesbury (1471). Weir centers her narrative upon leading figures?Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou, Richard of York, Edward IV, the earl of Warwick?and others. Though the text lacks footnotes and the bibliography omits some recent scholarship (e.g., by Rosemary Horrox and P.W. Hammond), Weir uses a variety of printed primary sources and secondary works. Much here will be familiar to scholars, but the work is a stimulating discussion as well as a fine introduction for the general reader.?William B. Robison, Southeastern Louisiana Univ., Hammond
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From [Booklist](#)

On one side of the bloody dynastic struggle that plagued England between 1455 and 1487 stood the House of Lancaster, headed by the inept King Henry VI. The opposing team was led by King Henry's cousin, the duke of York, whose lineage gave him a better claim to the throne than his ineffectual relative. This period of conflict between royal cousins is known as the Wars of the Roses (tradition has it that for an emblem the Lancaster side of the family adopted a red rose, the Yorks a white). Weir, author of the perceptive and engaging *Princes in the Tower* (1993), again presents popular history at its finest in an account of the Wars of the Roses and its complicated antecedents. Weir goes back to the heart of the trouble, the disastrous reign of the childless Richard II, and gives witness to the Lancaster family toppling his administration; she then follows the course of the Lancaster dynasty as wearers of the crown through the reigns of three kings, to find out why and how their York relatives, after decades of sitting in the shadow of the throne they by strict rights of inheritance should have occupied, eventually and successfully evicted the House of Lancaster and ruled as the House of York. No history collection should do without this perfectly focused and beautifully unfolded account. *Brad Hooper*

Users Review

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