

# Research paper on henry vii and his struggle to maintain power after

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## **His Victory at Bosworth Field**

Henry VII and his Struggle to Maintain Power after his Victory at Bosworth Field

Knowing well that his hold on the English throne was feeble, Henry VII was primarily concerned with securing his position as King of England after winning the battle at Bosworth. His security as a monarch had already been further threatened by his victory at Bosworth. The country had been in the state of civil war for almost a century, known as the War of the Roses. King Richard II had been dethroned by Henry Bolingbroke, who then crowned Henry IV as king. Violent and armed rebellions had grown since. It was much later in 1455, that the First Battle of St. Albans took place, marking the official beginning of the War of the Roses. On 22nd August 1485, Henry VII won the battle of Bosworth Field, effectively ending the hundred year war. One of the most important benefits that Henry VII saw after the battle at Bosworth was the absence of most of the contenders to throne who had mostly died during battles in the War of the Roses. Others had been assassinated by kings preceding Henry VII. He married Elizabeth of York on the 18th of January 1486 at Westminster, in honour of a pledge that he had made in 1483 on Christmas. This union brought together the Houses of York and Lancaster, thereby strengthening Henry VII's kingship. Further, it also ensured that his descendents – his children – would also have a strong claim to the throne . The union of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York is symbolized by the famous Tudor Rose, which is a blend of the white rose and red rose, which were originally the symbols of the Houses of York and Lancaster respectively.

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Although King Henry VII had a really tenuous claim to the throne, he was none the less the rightful heir of the House of Lancaster. Considering that the House of Lancaster was lower to the House of York with reference to the line of succession to the kingship, King Henry VII post his victory at Bosworth Field, had taken the throne by right of conquest. With the plausible death of the two young Princes within the Tower of London, their sister Elizabeth of House of York was currently the rightful heir of their father King Edward IV . King Henry VII, well aware he had to wed Elizabeth so as to secure his own stability and survival on the throne, moreover to weaken any claims of living members of the House of York .

However, he wished to make it utterly clear to everybody, that he dominated by right of conquest, not as Elizabeth's husband. He had no intention of sharing power along with her. With this concern on his mind, Henry VII had the Titulus Regius repealed right away, that had declared King Edward IV's wedding as invalid and his offspring illegitimate, as he did not wish the legitimacy of his spouse or her claim as inheritor to the late King Edward IV to be brought into question. This repeal legitimized once again offspring of King Edward IV and recognized the succession of Edward V as king after the death of his father.

King Henry VII's ascension had been symbolized by the placing of the crown on his head directly post the Battle of pitched battle, he was formally appointed King on 30th October 1485 at Westminster. His wedding to Elizabeth of House of York on the other hand, did not happen till 18th January 1486. Both Henry VII and Elizabeth were descendents of John of Gaunt, which means they might not marry in the absence of a pontifical

Dispensation as a result of blood kinship. An application had been sent to the Pope post the triumph at Bosworth, however it was not till 16th January 1486, that Henry learned from the pontifical emissary, of Pope Innocent VIII's intention to grant the dispensation. Two days later they were married at Westminster.

The view that Henry has deferred his marriage to signify that he had not gained a right to the throne due to his spouse being the heir of King Edward IV, instead solely through conquest, accustomed be the point of view of most historians , however it seems not to be the case any longer. They currently seem to hold the perception that it had been owing to his anticipating the dispensation. However, there will is to be logic behind the initial perception and may not be disregarded out of hand. If the two had been married before he was appointed King, most observers would, in fact, have still assumed he had attained the kingship through his wife, Elizabeth of House of York. This belief is and most likely would have been terribly dangerous for him. Elizabeth had four sisters all of whom would marry and have kids. The country had been torn apart by war for nearly a century. Though the Wars of the Roses is believed to have started begun in earnest in 1455, there had been numerous armed clashes since 1399. Once Elizabeth's sisters had offspring, there would then be many potential pretenders to the throne. They might be of Yorkist descent, Henry was of Lancastrian descent. It may have resulted in to a volatile scenario, particularly if Elizabeth and Henry failed to give birth to a male heir to the throne.

The only course of action left for him to choose, would be to deny that any inheritor of the House of York, together with his own wife, could lay any valid

claim to the throne. Having concerns such as these may obviously have influenced his choice to delay the wedding till post his ascension to the throne. Although King Henry VII's wedding had taken place for political reasons, it turned out to be a really productive one. Elizabeth was quite happy to stay within the background and did not interfere in politics. Elizabeth and Henry VII were bestowed with their first child, a son, in September 1486. They named the child Arthur. Henry was very fond of Elizabeth, however despite their happy married life; Henry could not let his wife be crowned as queen till 25th November 1487. Henry consolidated his triumph at the Battle of Bosworth, by appointing himself King immediately from the day before the Battle of Bosworth Field, which eventually implied that those who would be fighting against him in favour of King Richard III would effectively be guilty of treason.

The Act of Attainder was applied to all such persons under which they were declared traitors without having been charged for their guilt by any formal court of law. Although King Henry VII did not personally sign these Acts, he used them as an extremely potent and effective warning against the Nobles. If they revealed any degree of unfaithfulness towards him they might then be killed and their property confiscated from their family and relatives. On the other hand, if the Nobles maintained loyalty to the King then the Act of attainder would not be applied .

The intention so, was to force the Nobility to be wary of what the implications of treachery truly meant. Now that it had been protected by the law, it had been made absolutely clear, that any noble whom Henry did not even trust, might be killed. He additionally got Parliament to pass laws of livery and

maintenance in 1487, that made it unlawful for the Nobles follow of getting high numbers of retainers, who wore the badge or uniform of their Lordships, so forming potential personal armies .

In 1504 Parliament passed another Act that forced the Nobles to buy a licence from the King if they wished to retain a high number of servants. They may then be penalised if they did not abide by the Act. He divided the Nobility and undermined their power, particularly through the forceful use of bonds and recognisances to secure loyalty, by that an individual would bind himself to a specific act before a court of law. The King may forcibly make landowners sign agreements during which they would conform to pay a massive fine, if they dishonour that agreement .

Over following few years King Henry VII had to cope with many rebellions. the primary one occurred in 1486 after Viscount Lovell and also the Stafford brothers marched an armed rebellion against the King. However, it had been a complete disaster. Lovell chose against open disloyal and fled to Burgundy. During the time that King Henry was in Northern England, the Stafford Brothers continued with the rebellion in Worcester, where the King had widespread support. When he arrived at Pontefract in Yorkshire, Henry realized that, what he had believed until that time to be a rumour, was indeed actually happening. When Henry sent an army to Worcester, Humphrey and Thomas Stafford escaped and took Sanctuary at Culham, Oxfordshire .

King Henry VII decided to capture The Stanford brothers so as to make an example of them. He determined to challenge the traditional right of the Church to supply Sanctuary to traitors, by ordering his men to enter the

sanctuary and arrest them. They were then taken to City of Westminster and tried on charges of treason. Although it had been a minor insurrection that completely failed, it had been extremely important. For example, it showed that there was still plenty of resistance to King Henry VII. A precedent had been made on the continued use of Sanctuary. It established however the King was resolute to take control of the administration his Kingdom, and if necessary, he would do so by force .

Humphrey Stafford based most of his defence on the violation of Sanctuary. a prolonged duration lots of hesitation from the judges, they came to their conclusion, when they were told of the King's wish. Nobody may plead Sanctuary in cases of treason. The reason presented was that treason, as a crime, fell under the jurisdiction of the common-law. Hence, even the Pope had no jurisdiction over those who had been found guilty of treason. The right to pardon treason was reserved by the king while Sanctuary could only be offered as temporary protection to traitors. Humphrey Stafford was killed in July at Tyburn. His brother Thomas was granted pardoned by the King. The Pope, Innocent VIII understood Henry's reasons for violating Sanctuary and refused to take any offense from Henry's action. He issued a decree in August in condemnation of the most common abuses related to Sanctuary. Church properties may currently be closely watched so suspected traitors would inadvertently be handed over to royal officers after a period of forty days. It went further by stating criminals, who left the state of Sanctuary with the sole intent to commit further crimes, might be forcibly removed and would not be granted Sanctuary ever again. The next year the Pope

superimposed the decree by decreeing that Sanctuary would not be offered to deceitful debtors.

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