



The Last White Rose: The Secret Wars of the Tudors

By Desmond Seward

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A brilliant new interpretation of one of the most dramatic periods of British history: The Tudor victory and their dynasty.

One of the most dramatic periods of British history, the Wars of the Roses didn't end at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. Despite the death of Richard III and Henry VII's victory, it continued underground into the following century with plots, pretenders and subterfuge by the ousted white rose faction. In a brand new interpretation of this turning point in history, well known historian Desmond Seward reviews the story of the Tudors' seizure of the throne and shows that for many years they were far from secure.

He challenges the way we look at the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, explaining why there were so many Yorkist pretenders and conspiracies, and why the new dynasty had such difficulty establishing itself. King Richard's nephews, the Earl of Warwick and the little known de la Pole brothers, all had the support of dangerous enemies overseas, while England was split when the lowly Perkin Warbeck skilfully impersonated one of the princes in the tower in order to claim the right to the throne. Warwick's surviving sister Margaret also became the desperate focus of hopes that the White Rose would be reborn.

The book also offers a new perspective on why Henry VIII, constantly threatened by treachery, real or imagined, and desperate to secure his power with a male heir, became a tyrant.

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Editorial Review

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After defeating Richard III in 1485, Henry Tudor seemed to have secured his claim to England's throne by marrying into the Yorkist party in the War of the Roses, according to *Elizabeth of York* (2013), a biography of the consort by Alison Weir. But not according to historian Seward. The first two Tudors fretted throughout their reigns over real and imagined conspiracies by surviving lineal descendants of the Plantagenet dynasty. In successive narratives, Seward depicts several genuine uprisings against Henry VII, including one led by an impostor (see *The Perfect Prince: The Mystery of Perkin Warbeck*, by Ann Wroe, 2003). Explaining popular discontents that would coalesce around a Yorkist pretender, Seward gives good account of the Tudors' political fears, which would be allayed by sending the Yorkist to the Tower and then to the block. But whereas Henry VII's fear of the former dynasty had a factual basis, Henry VIII's tended to be conspiratorial farragoes of his paranoid mind, as Seward negatively portrays it. In command of sources, Seward ably meets the unflagging popular interest in the Tudors. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

“Gripping and enthralling. No writer of fiction, however imaginative, could dream up more spell binding plots than what actually happened, so skilfully recounted here.” (Robert Hutchinson, author of *The Last Days of Henry VIII*)

“*The Last White Rose* is history as it should be written: without hindsight or embellishment, but with erudition and a sense of immediacy that makes it a gripping and original read.” (Jessie Childs, author of *Henry VIII's Last Victim*)

“An entertaining and valuable exploration of the early Tudor period.” (The Literary Review)

About the Author

Desmond Seward was born in Paris and educated at Cambridge. He is the author of *Richard III*, *The Last White Rose*, *The Demon's Brood*, and *The Warrior King and the Invasion of France*. He lives in England.

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