

NORMAN KINGS

William I (The Conqueror): 1066-1087

Bastard son of Robert the Devil, Duke of Normandy. William took England by force, defeating Harold II at the **Battle of Hastings**. He was the father of ten children by his tiny wife (and cousin), Matilda of Flanders. Ordered completion of the Domesday Book and built the Tower of London.

William II (William Rufus): 1087-1100

Unpopular, violent king (although his father's favorite). Died in a mysterious hunting accident.

Henry I: 1100-1135

Was present in the forest when William II died. Immediately took the throne, although his brother, Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, should have succeeded him. He fathered twenty-five bastards and three legitimate children (one daughter and two sons). His two legitimate sons died on the White Ship, and he tried to leave the throne to his daughter Matilda.

Stephen: 1135-1154

Usurped the throne from his cousin Matilda. Eventually agreed that Matilda's son, Henry, could succeed him.

PLANTAGENETS

Henry II: 1154-1189

Son of Matilda and Geoffrey of Anjou. Married Eleanor of Aquitaine and thus became very rich in landholdings. **Declared that the church was subject to the law of the land, leading to the murder of Thomas a Beckett**. Of his five sons, only two survived, Richard and John, who both turned against him. **He was king during the time Marie de France was writing.**

Richard (Lionheart): 1189-1199

A great crusader who fought against Saladin. Had little interest in being king. Died without an heir.

John (Lackland): 1199-1216

Youngest son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine (hence his name). He was an unpopular king who may have killed his nephew Arthur to assure his own position as king. **His poor rule led to the establishment of the Magna Carta. He lost Normandy, furthering an inevitable split between French and Anglo-Norman nobility.**

Henry III: 1216-1272

More interested in arts than politics, Henry III was unpopular for bestowing positions to his French relatives. **His excessive spending led to the Provisions of Oxford.**

Edward I: 1272-1307

Established parliament. A great administrator, he was considered one of England's most successful kings.

Edward II: 1307-1327

One of England's most unsuccessful kings. Edward II was **more interested in his favorites than his**

country or his wife. Eventually, his wife took a lover, rebelled, and forced Edward II to abdicate. Killed by a hot poker up his backside.

Edward III: 1327-1377

an excellent king, like his grandfather, although late in life, after death of wife, his greedy mistress stole rings off his dead body; had seven children with wife Philippa, and three by mistress, Alice Perrers; his mother and stepfather ruled while he was in minority, but at 17, he took over, had Mortimer killed, and banished mother; claimed right to French throne and rights to land in Scotland, leading to 100 yrs War; created House of Lords; founded Order of Garter; had great hope that son Edward (the Black Prince, for color of armour) would succeed him, but Black Prince died, probably of cancer, after illustrious career in 100 yrs war; his offspring, fighting for throne, began War of Roses between houses of Lancaster and York. **King when Chaucer was a young man.**

Richard II: 1377-1399 king from 10-32; Richard was son of Black Prince, grandson of Ed. III; people feared that Ed. III's son John of Gaunt, who was very powerful, might usurp throne. He did not but was advisor while in minority; John was Chaucer's political patron; later, John's son, Bolingbroke, takes throne from Richard II and becomes Henry IV; In 1381, **Peasant's Revolt**, the young Richard bravely faced protestors, claiming "would you kill your king?"; married Anne of Bohemia, and they started new fashions, such as pointy cone hats and long, pointy shoes; they had no children; she died of the plague; married, as political move, 9 year old Isabella, daughter of king of France; later in life, rule became more arbitrary; after death of John of Gaunt, he banished John's son and took his inheritance; Henry returned, fought, imprisoned Richard, who died in prison, possibly of starvation. **Was king during much of Chaucer's life.**

Henry IV: 1399-1414

Angered that his cousin Richard II took his inheritance, Henry IV usurped the throne. His reign was troubled by rebellions and his affliction with eczema. **King at the end of Chaucer's life.**

Henry V: 1413-1422

Fictionalized as Shakespeare's "Prince Hal," Henry V died young, of dysentery, while at war against the French.

Henry VI: 1422-1461 and 1470 -1471

He was too scholarly to be king. Enjoyed a long reign but became insane. He was murdered in the Tower of London at the instigation of his cousin, Edward IV.

Edward IV: 1461-1470 and 1471-1483

A key player in the War of the Roses, taking the crown from his Lancastrian cousin. **He encouraged the instigation of the printing press in England by acting as patron to William Caxton.**

Richard III: 1483-1485

When his brother Edward IV died, Richard usurped the throne from his young nephew (one of the two brothers in the tower). Likely, he killed the two boys.