



AUTHOR'S NOTE



This is an historical novel based on a character whose own biographer predicted that the life would be impossible to write because of the lack of information. Luckily for all of us, historian Michael Hicks found much valuable material about Anne Neville despite being hampered by the usual silences that surround women in history.

What we know from Hicks and from other historians is that she was related to most of the great players of the Cousins' War (only called the Wars of the Roses centuries later in the 1800s). What I suggest in this novel is that perhaps she was a player in her own right.

She was the daughter of the Earl of Warwick, known in his lifetime as 'the kingmaker' because of his extraordinary role as puppeteer to the claimants of royal power in England. First he supported Richard Duke of York, then his son and heir Edward, then the second son George, then their enemy Henry VI. Warwick died fighting for the House of Lancaster, having lived his life as the great supporter of the House of York.

Anne, although a young woman, moved with her father through these twists and turns of loyalty. She attended the coronation dinner of the new queen of the House of York and witnessed her father's gradual exclusion from the court, which became dominated by the Rivers family and adherents. As the



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novel describes, Anne fled with her father into exile in France, returning to England as his new candidate for queen, at the head of a Lancaster army, married to their Prince of Wales, and in little more than a year was married into the house of her enemy: York. It is at this point that I suggest that the young woman, who had lost her father and her husband, and whose mother had abandoned her, took her life into her own hands. Nobody knows the true story of how Anne escaped from the protection or imprisonment of her sister and brother-in-law. We have no reliable account – but some wonderful versions – of her courtship and marriage to Richard. My version of these stories is to put Anne at the heart of things.

It was fascinating to me as a novelist to portray the York court as a centre of intrigue and a source of fear for the Warwick girls. Part of the joy of writing this series based on rivals and enemies is turning the page upside down (as it were) and seeing a totally different picture. As an historian the known facts looked very different when I changed my viewpoint from my favourite, Elizabeth Woodville, to my new heroine, Anne Neville. The confused conspiracy around the death of Isabel and the judicial murder of George suddenly becomes a far darker story with Elizabeth as the villain.

Another reputation which I have had to address in this story is that of Richard III. As I suggest here and in *The White Queen*, I don't subscribe to the Shakespearean parody that has blackened his reputation for centuries. But also I don't acquit him of usurpation. He might not have killed the princes but they would not have been in the Tower without the protection of their mother except for his actions. What I think might have happened to the two royal boys is the subject of my next book, the story of their sister and Richard's secret lover, Princess Elizabeth of York: *The White Princess*.

I list here the books which have been most useful to me in writing *The Kingmaker's Daughters*.