



Life in Tudor Times

1. How the Tudors Rose

NARRATOR: Ah, The Tudors, their awe-inspiring name once feared and revered the world over, now the subject of many a primary school history lesson. The Tudor dynasty produced some of the most famous kings and queens England has ever seen. The legendary Henry the VIII, perhaps most famous for the treatment of his many wives, divorced, beheaded, died, di... well you know how the song goes.

HENRY VIII: Those were different times.

NARRATOR: And Elizabeth I. Perhaps most famous for her defeat of the Spanish Armada.

ELIZABETH I: Good show. Yes, indeed. You should do a whole episode about me.

NARRATOR: So why are we here in a seemingly random car park in the city of Leicester? Well, believe it or not in 2012 a body was discovered here. The body of King Richard III. See, the Tudors weren't always the rulers of England. Before them came another dynasty: the Plantagenets. King Richard III, the last Plantagenet king was buried here over five hundred years ago, after he lost a battle to Henry Tudor. It wasn't a car park at the time of course. The battle took place at Bosworth Field, not too far away from our car park, and is now known as the Battle of Bosworth. The battle was fought at the end of a turbulent period in English history filled with civil revolts, bloody battles and many, many dead kings, princes, knights and nobles.

HENRY VIII: Ah! just like me.

NARRATOR: Oh, yes Henry, but let's take it back to King Richard III shall we?

HENRY VIII: Ah fine, but I'm way more fun.

NARRATOR: So, after thirty long and brutal years of battles and power changes, Richard III claimed the throne, but, and it's a very big but, Richard wasn't very popular with his people. He seized power from his young nephews and had them imprisoned in the Tower of London.

RICHARD III: It was for their own good.

NARRATOR: It was supposedly for their own good. But then his nephew's mysteriously disappeared. The sudden disappearance of Richard's nephew sparked outrage because people assumed that King Richard must have been responsible. Enter our soon to be Tudor King, Henry. His claim to the throne was fairly weak, but the people's dislike of King Richard made his cause easier. Intending to take the throne, Henry marched his army to Bosworth. After an intense battle Henry's forces won, Richard was killed, and his body was moved to a friary, where it was hastily buried in a shallow grave. In time, the friary was demolished and eventually replaced by our car park and Richard's grave was lost to history, until that momentous day in 2012. Now, you might be wondering, with Richard dead and buried, what became of the victorious Henry Tudor? Well, Henry Tudor became King Henry VII.



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HENRY VII: Haha! Long live me or I? long, liveth your King, Henry VII.

NARRATOR: Indeed. King Henry wasted no time founding the Tudor dynasty, that would last a whopping 118 years. He married Elizabeth of York, a close relative of Richard III and united the two great families that had for so long been at war over who should rule the country.

HENRY VII: Oh, what a kind and loving wife she was, my Elizabeth. We had two sons, our eldest well he, he...

NARRATOR: Well yes, their eldest son, Prince Arthur sadly died. We'll get to that. After Henry married Elizabeth, he ruled his kingdom in a much wiser fashion than his predecessor. Henry's eldest son Arthur was in line to become king. But, as we now know, he died before he could inherit the crown. After twenty four years on the throne, Henry VII also died and his next surviving son peacefully inherited the crown.

NARRATOR: Huh, Henry VIII.

HENRY VIII: Yes! Finally! I mean, sad about Dad and Arthur of course, but now it's my turn!

NARRATOR: And that...

HENRY VII: oh oh

NARRATOR: was how...

HENRY VII: Hang on!

NARRATOR: Henry VII...

HENRY VII: You're not going to include me?

NARRATOR: ...established the legendary Tudor dynasty.