

Background Guide

Fate of the Vikings: The Battle of Stamford Bridge



JACKRABBIT MUN VIII

L.B. POLY - MAY 23th, 2026

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CO-HEAD CHAIR LETTERS

Hello Delegates!

My name is Annali Bojorquez, and I will be one of your chairs for Jackrabbit VIII, Fate of the Vikings. I'm a junior at Poly High School, and parliamentarian of our Model UN Club. Along with MUN I am president of California Students for Justice, Vice-President of UNICEF, and in charge of visuals for the Poly Filmmaking Club. I play varsity soccer and I love to ski. I like to spend time reading, baking, hiking and I really enjoy art. My favorite book is The Picture of Dorian Gray and my favorite artist is Francisco Goya. I have been in MUN since my sophomore year and it is definitely my favorite club. Personally, I prefer crisis to GAs, so I am very excited to chair this room and see what you all do with the topic.

The Battles of Fulford and Stamford Bridge were so interesting to research, and their historical significance is so overlooked. I think there are so many routes that could be taken in this room, and I'm sure it will be so much fun. I can't wait to see how you all balance your character goals, nation rivalries, and the fate of the Vikings and the English crown. If you have any questions feel free to send me or Ari an email, and we look forward to meeting you all in May.

Sincerely,

Annali Bojorquez

Viking Council | Co-Head Chair

amariebojorqz@gmail.com



CO-HEAD CHAIR LETTERS

Hello delegates!

My name is Ari Glatstein, and I am your other chair for Fate of the Vikings at Jackrabbit VIII. I am a senior at Poly, and although this is my first year in MUN. I will be joining the trip to New York for NHSMUN, which I believe says something about my competence. I am Vice-President of the Climbing Club at Poly and President of Thrift & Trade club. I play varsity tennis at Poly and enjoy indoor rock climbing as an extracurricular sport. My hobbies include camping and going to art museums with friends and family. My favorite band is currently Oasis, and my favorite movies include: Almost Famous, Raiders of the Lost Ark, and Gladiator.

I have been deeply interested in the history of Vikings since I watched the anime Vinland Saga, and I have cultural roots in Denmark. It has been an outstanding experience to research the details of the Battle of Fulford and Stamford Bridge. I am eager to see how the diverse power dynamics and relationships manifest in debate, and I hope you all enjoy this as much as I will!

Sincerely,

Ari Glatstein

Viking Council | Co-Head Chair

ariglatstein@icloud.com



VICE-CHAIR LETTER

Hello delegates!

I'm Rosa Mallach, your Vice-chair for Jackrabbit VII. I'm a junior at Poly who's relatively new to MUN but has been specializing in crisis rooms for both management and participation. Outside of MUN I'm a Varsity soccer player, chamber harpist, and co-captain of our robotics team! I love music, anthropology, history, research, and crisis rooms!

Having prior knowledge of Vikings and their history made my placement in this room even more amazing! Through more research I've discovered the specifics of things like the Battle of Stamford Bridge and Fulford. I can't wait to watch how delegates will deal with this room, I look forward to watching it all unfold. I can't wait to meet everyone!

Sincerely,

Rosa Mallach

Viking Council | Vice-Chair

Rosamallach@gmail.com



CRISIS LEAD LETTER

Hello delegates!

My name is Rylan Gonzalez, and I have the honor to be your room's crisis lead. I am a junior at Polytechnic high school, and this would be my second year in Crisis for Jackrabbit MUN. I'm Vice-President of the Jackrabbit Representatives club. I'm a part of a youth organization called EM3, as I also work a part-time job making ice cream. I enjoy passing time by cooking, listening and playing music, and I would say I'm just an all-round hobbyist (I hyperfixate quite a bit). I enjoy 90s coming-of-age movies like *Mid90s*, *Dìdi*, and *Snack Shack*.

Researching about the Battle of Stamford Bridge and the events that lead to it was vastly interesting to read about. I'm excited to see how this room grapples with this crisis, and I am equally excited to be able to help portray the skits. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to our chairs, Annali and Ari, VIA email (I probably won't respond until next leap year). Feel free to stop me and chat, I'd love to get to know you guys. We're all excited to meet you all in May.

Sincerely,

Rylan Gonzalez

Viking Council | Crisis Lead

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POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

- Position Papers are due at 11:59 PM on **Sunday, May 17th**.
- Delegates **must** submit position papers to be eligible for **research AND committee awards**.
- Position Papers can be submitted through a Google form:
 - <https://forms.gle/H3ruhahP2SQUEPs38>
- At the top of each paper, include your character/country name, first and last name, school name, and appropriate committee.
 - United States
 - First Last
 - School Name
 - Viking Council
- Papers should be emailed as a PDF file if necessary
 - Paper content should also be copied and pasted into the body of the email so it can still be graded in the event of any technical difficulties
 - Please name the file and subject line of the email [Committee_Character]
 - Ex. **Viking Council_HaroldGodwinson**
- Papers should be 1-2 pages in length with an additional Works Cited page in MLA format
- Papers should be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font and include no pictures or graphics
- Please include the following sections for each committee topic:
 - Background & Historical Situation
 - Position of your Character
 - Possible Solutions

If you have any questions or concerns, please email one of your chairs.



COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

The committee will begin on **January 23, 1066**, two days before the historical Battle of Stamford Bridge occurred, with an update from our staffers. The committee will then continue as usual, with periodic updates from the crisis staff depending on the directives received in both the front room and back room.

At the beginning of debate, the committee will begin with a round robin with a time voted upon by delegates. We would strongly encourage a few moderated caucuses before going into an unmoderated caucus, so please keep that in mind. In committee, please refer to other delegates by their last names. Additionally, please note that at Jackrabbit, we do not allow delegates to kill one another, and no delegate can be rendered completely unable to participate.

While this is a historical crisis committee and the staff at Jackrabbit MUN pride themselves on producing committees that are as historically accurate as they are interesting, we do not condone **any form of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, or any other bigotry. This includes but is not limited to genocide, ethnic cleansing, the creation of concentration camps, hate speech, and use of nuclear weapons. Even if these actions are accurate to the real event, any promotion of these ideas will be approached with extreme gravity.** Failure to comply will result in penalties ranging from verbal warnings to being banned from any future Jackrabbit MUN event.



TOPIC SYNOPSIS

The date is September 23, 1066—earlier this year, in January 1066, King Edward the Confessor of England passed away, childless and without a definite heir, leaving England with a power struggle between his three potential successors: King Harald Hardrada of Norway, Herald Godwinson (the current King of England), and Duke William of Normandy. By September of 1066, these tensions led to the eruption of a battle between the Norse Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons in the province of Yorkshire: The Battle of Fulford—where Hardrada's Viking army (strengthened by reinforcements from Tostig Godwinson, the traitor brother of Harold Godwinson) faced and brutally defeated Edwin, Earl of Mercia and Morcar, Earl of Northumbria in a muddy battle less than two miles south of York. Having established a Viking stronghold in York, Hardrada awaits Godwinson's response—and rumors suggest he is armed to invade London. With Hardrada's army threatening York in the north, and rumors of the Duke of Normandy threatening invasion in the south. King Harold—currently based in London—is faced with enemies on all sides, and the decision of whether to meet his foes to the north or south, and how to deal with the repercussions of either choice. His current plan to meet the Vikings at Stamford Bridge—although a bloody battle is assured with that choice. With enemies on all sides, and his young reign under threat, Godwinson must choose who to face, and quickly. The rest of the world looks on as the fate of England hangs in the balance, and with it the future of the Vikings and Normans. Will this conflict lead to destruction or prosperity?

In this committee, delegates representing all sides of the conflict will have to determine the outcome of their dominions through alliances or bloodshed. And with



tensions high, factions from Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Viking must determine who is truly fit to wear the crown and lead England into a new era.



BACKGROUND

VIKING/NORMAN AMBITIONS IN ENGLAND

Tensions between the Vikings and Anglo-Saxons have extended as far back as 793. Viking raids on British lands were originally motivated by wealth, but began to transition towards conquering as time wore on. As Anglo-Saxon monasteries were wealthy and easily accessible by sea, early Viking raids proved very successful. As their confidence grew, Vikings began to set their sights further inland. Success of early efforts to expand inward inspired greater armies like the Great Heathen Army in 863 under Halfdane and Ivar the Boneless. This continued Viking aggression lasted centuries, well into the 1000s. Harald Hardrada of Norway was not the first Viking king to set his sights on the English, but his relationship with King Edward prior to Edward's death led him to believe he had a supported claim to the throne of England.

The Norman nation was originally an offshoot of early Scandinavian Viking settlement in France. Unlike the Vikings, they did not have a long history of conflict with England; English and Norman history was marked by diplomatic and dynastic ties. Throughout their history, Normans were known to be opportunistic, inserting themselves into conflicts often for material benefit. They had long held diplomatic and military relationships with France, beginning with Rollo, the first Duke of Normandy's marriage to the daughter of the King of France. Despite its history of unity, Normandy remained an independent nation, often serving as the diplomatic bridge between the French and English.



THE DEATH OF THE CONFESSOR

Edward was the son of King Elthered “the Unready” and Emma of Normandy. As the seventh son, he was not expected to take the throne. His childhood was tumultuous because of constant viking raids, and in 1013 Sven Forkbeard seized the English throne, forcing Edward, his mother and his brother Alfred into hiding in Denmark. He spent his formative years in exile across Europe, much of the time in his mother’s home country of Normandy as exiled Prince of England. During this time Edward became very religious, his devout Roman Catholicism leading him to not marry or sire children at any point in his life. When Forkbeard was succeeded by his son Cnut the Great, Edward’s mother Emma of Normandy married him to solidify his claim and combine English and Danish power. The couple had Harthacnut and Gunnhilda, Edward’s half-siblings. Cnut was succeeded by Harald Harefoot, his son from a previous marriage. Harefoot would kill Edward’s elder brother Alfred, moving Edward up in the line of succession. After Harefoot’s death in 1040, Harthacnut–Edward’s half brother–took power. This made Edward second in line for the throne. During his rule Harthacnut made a treaty with King Magnus the Good of Norway, saying that if either died without a successor the other would take their kingdom. This treaty was what Harald Hardrada would call upon as his claim to the English throne in 1066. Harthacnut ruled for two years before his death in 1042, after which Edward became king.

Early in his reign Edward showed much Norman favoritism and established William of Normandy as his successor, abandoning his predecessor’s treaty with the Norse Vikings. As his rule wore on, Edward’s relations with the Earl of Wessex, Godwin, and his family grew. The Godwins were incredibly powerful in England, and Edward would go on to marry the Earl’s daughter Edith, solidifying their alliance.



Later in his rule he ceded much of his power to Godwin, allowing him to rule alongside him, and named his son Harold Godwinson (Edward's brother-in-law) his successor.

Edward was childless at the time of his death, and Harold Godwinson would become the next king. Despite Harold having been named successor by Edward, William of Normandy and Harald Hardrada would challenge this claim, citing earlier declarations and treaties.

THE BATTLE OF FULFORD

After the events of King Edward's death, Hardrada formed an alliance with Harold's estranged brother, Tostig Goodwinson, and launched a large Viking invasion of northern England in order to seize the throne. The new allies crossed the north sea and met the Earls of Northumbria (Tostig's former position) and Mercia on September 20, 1066. Their forces defeated the northern English Earls near York at the Battle of Fulford. The battle took place in a low lying area bordered by marshland and the River Ouse, which made movement difficult and shaped the strategies of both sides. The English armies of Mercia and Northumbria initially held strong defensive positions along the firm ground between the river and marshes. Their formation allowed them to block the Vikings' advance toward York and take advantage of the narrow terrain. However, they were overtaken by the Vikings and the battle was lost, with both earls defeated. Their control of this vital city to the north of London left King Harold Godwinson—currently located in London—with a new threat very close to home.



THE VIKINGS

The Vikings originated in Scandinavia, particularly in modern day Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. Infertile farmland, harsh climates, and population growth pushed many Scandinavians to explore, trade, and raid abroad beginning in the 8th century. The Viking Age is traditionally marked as beginning in 793 CE with the raid on the monastery at Lindisfarne, an attack that shocked Christian Europe and demonstrated the Vikings' naval strength and reputation for ruthless raids.

However, Vikings were not only raiders; they were also skilled traders who established extensive trade networks connecting Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Asia. Through these networks they exchanged goods such as fur, amber, slaves, silver, and weapons. Their success in travel and expansion was largely due to their longships, which were designed for speed and could navigate shallow waters. This design allowed Vikings to travel along rivers and coastlines, enabling them to conduct deep inland raids and create settlements across Europe, including in parts of England and continental Europe.

Over time, Vikings established permanent settlements and colonies in places such as Iceland and Greenland. Around 1000 CE, Viking explorer Leif Erikson reached North America, making the Vikings the first Europeans known to reach the continent. Vikings also became rulers in foreign lands. For example, William the Conqueror descended from Viking settlers in Normandy and later conquered England in 1066, an event that reshaped English History.

Vikings were also known to serve as mercenaries and elite soldiers abroad. One famous example is the Varangian Guard, a group of Viking warriors who served as personal bodyguards to the emperors of Constantinople. At home, Viking society was organized around local chiefs and kings and had a strong warrior culture. However, it



also included farmers, craftsmen, and traders who supported daily life. Viking communities held legal assemblies called “things,” where free men could gather to settle disputes, make laws, and participate in governance.

THE NORMANS

The Normans originated from Pagan pirates—likely Vikings—from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. By the year 900, they had solidified themselves as a presence on the Seine River, and were led by Rollo, a Viking renowned for his leadership and military capabilities. In 911 King Charles III of France made the Treaty of St. Clair-sur-Epte, granting them lands in Northern France which would come to be known as Normandy. Over generations, these Norse settlers became the Normans, adopting the French language, Christianity, and some Frankish ways. However, the region’s history would be marked by near constant conflict between the Norse and the indigenous Frankish, and the Normans retained some Viking characteristics—namely extreme courage and brutal warfare.

By 1066, Normandy had begun attempts to expand outward into Italy and Sicily, and some as far as the Byzantine and Arab empires. This culture of expansionism lent itself to the aspirations of Duke William and the English crown. William had worked for years to turn Normandy into a disciplined and militarized territory. Allying himself with Flanders and Anjou and defeating enemies from within Northern France, making him the most powerful king in the region. This combination of military organization and regional control established him as a dangerous force, and practically in England's backyard from just across the Channel.

The succession crisis triggered by the death of Edward the Confessor directly impacted Normandy, creating an opening for the control of the region William had



long hoped for. Beyond personal ambition, Edward had previously named William heir, and William swore Edward renewed his claim to the English throne and that Harold Godwinson had sworn an oath recognizing his claims while on a campaign in Brittany. Harold's assumption of the throne was in direct violation of this supposed oath, and William believed his right was to defend it. Simultaneous to Harald Hardrada launching his own invasion of England, William is amassing his armies. With England militarily weakened and distracted by the northern conflict at the Battle of Fulford, William has an opportunity to strike. While it is believed he remains across the Channel in Normandy, potentially preparing for an invasion, his armies could be mobilized at a moment's notice.

THE ANGLO-SAXONS

The Anglo-Saxons were Germanic settlers who existed in much of England and Scotland primarily in the Early Middle Ages. The Anglo-Saxons period in Britain began around 450 AD with the migration of Germanic tribes such as the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes from Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands after Roman withdrawal. Their interactions with the Romano-British culture there led to the formation of their cultural identity, known as *Englisc*. Old English was the most widely used language in this region during the Anglo-Saxon period. Early Saxons were identified as North Sea raiders, and many described them as maritime pirates before they established settlement. In the 360s and 370s there was a massive raid of Britain by the Saxons, and although they took control of much of the area, officer Count Theodosius was able to take most of it back under Roman control. Around 410, another large-scale invasion of Britain was enacted by the Saxons, as well as the Picts and Scots, and Roman defense was only somewhat successful.



During the 450s, an unidentified tyrant, sometimes known as Vortigern, led the Saxons to help defend Britain from the Picts and Scots, and these Saxons were known as *foederati* soldiers. Answering this call, the Saxons from Germany, Jutes from Denmark, and Angles from the Netherlands settled Britain. Around this time, the War of the Saxon Federates occurred between the Saxons and the locals, who were led by Ambrosius Aurelianus. After the war, Saxons were able to receive tribute from the peoples of Britain, the Britons divided into small tyrannies, and Anglo-Saxon culture was widely adopted by everyone in the area.

In 595, Augustine of Canterbury was sent by Pope Gregory the Great to spread Christianity throughout Britain and convert Anglo-Saxons from their original religion of Paganism. Æthelberht was the king of Kent at the time, which was a very rich region of Britain, and he began the circulation of coins for the first time since the Anglo-Saxon invasion. After Æthelberht's death, a series of powerful kings took control of various British kingdoms, such as Humber, Bernicia, and Deira, further spreading Christianity. 626–821 AD was a time of Mercian Supremacy, which referred to the many kingdoms and tribal areas in the middle to lowland Britain, and larger kingdoms began to dominate the smaller ones during this period. The primary kingdoms at the time were Kent (the Jutes), Mercia (the Angles), Northumbria (the Angles), East Anglia (the Angles), Essex (the East Saxons), Sussex (the South Saxons), and Wessex (the West Saxons). Mercian military policy is what made them so successful, as they violently ravaged surrounding areas who refused to pay tribute.

From 660–793 AD was the Golden Age of the Anglo-Saxons, where learning, education, law enforcement, and monasticism was promoted. During the period after the Golden Age is when the Anglo-Scandinavian Wars took place, in which the Vikings raided and fought against Britain, eventually settling the region known as Daneslaw.



Over the course of the 900s, West Saxon kings, notably Edward the Elder, took control of the entire Kingdom of England. Alfred the Great was an important Anglo-Saxon figure who defeated the Vikings in multiple instances, began the early formation of the English navy, and commissioned the writing of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. On October 18, 1016, Cnut was able to become King of England after the Danish army was able to defeat the English.

PAST SUCCESSION CRISES

The succession crisis faced by England in 1066 is far from the first event of that kind. Succession crises have occurred throughout history, and all have demonstrated different paths for future succession crises to follow.

After Alexander the Great died in 323 BCE, his last words on who should be his successor was “the strongest.” Alexander’s only child would be born months after his death, and without a clear heir named at the time of his death, a huge succession crisis was triggered. This led to multiple wars, and the eventual division of the Macedonian Empire into multiple nations. One potential outcome for the crisis of 1066 would be the division of England amongst the claimants to the throne.

The crisis of the third century occurred in the Roman Empire when Alexander Severus was assassinated in 235 BCE. His armies elected a low born soldier–Masimus Thrax–to succeed him, but his lack of support from the Senate and massive instability led him to die at the hands of his own men. In less than 100 years, 24 emperors ruled and fell in quick succession. These conflicts were finally resolved with The Tetrarchy (rule of four), in 293 CE, where the nation was ruled by four emperors of equal power. From this example, a potential outcome for the English throne could be shared leadership amongst the warring kings.



COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

This committee will begin on September 23, 1066. As delegates, you will receive various crisis updates throughout committee, where our dais or crisis staff will deliver new information pertinent to the events of committee. Time jumps may occur. **Since this committee begins on September 23, 1066, we understand that critical events within several character's lives may not yet have occurred, and some information has not yet been revealed to the public. Nonetheless, please abide by your character's original historical timeline. Also, this committee is set in an alternate timeline, and any character actions may diverge from the historical timeline.** We recommend making a basic timeline for your character that you can refer to during debate.

When it comes to directives, we allow group (also known as joint private), personal, and committee directives, as well as communiques and press releases.

At JackrabbitMUN we use a digital directive system, so you will submit your directives via a Google Form and get responses from Crisis Staff in a digital crisis notebook (a Google Doc). This decreases response time, allowing delegates to submit far more directives—at previous JackrabbitMUN editions we've averaged a response time of less than ten minutes. Committee directives should be written on a Google Doc and shared with the Chair, who will send them to the Crisis Staff.

In addition, on the day of the conference, you will be given a folder with a portfolio power. These portfolio powers are secret—only you will know what your portfolio power is—and include two major things: plots and powers. Plots are secret objectives a delegate is trying to accomplish or secret information that only one delegate or a group of delegates would be privy to. For instance, an example of a plot is



how in our past “Red Scare” room, multiple delegates were Communists and plotted with each other to overthrow the United States. Powers are special actions that delegates can take. These can range from the ability to “OBJECT!” to another delegate’s speech to a secret task force of spies and analysts that a delegate can command to gather intelligence on their adversaries to the ability to call a general strike and cripple key infrastructure.

Please be advised that at JackrabbitMUN we have a policy of not killing your fellow delegates. Therefore, please do not submit directives attempting to assassinate one another. We also will not entertain directives that involve genocide or nuclear weapons. Thank you so much for signing up and we look forward to meeting you on the 23rd!



CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Harold Godwinson

The son of the Duke of Wessex, Godwinson grew up incredibly influential in English politics. His sister's marriage to King Edward solidified his position as one of the king's closest advisors, and Edward's refusal to father children made him a clear heir to the throne. After Edward's death Godwinson assumed the throne and was immediately faced with threats from all sides. His family's strength is great, but is it enough to save a kingdom?

Harald Hardrada

Born Harald Sigurdsson, son of a powerful chieftain of the Uplands, Hardrada earned his name because of his strong and often severe leadership. His life was spent as a military leader with battles ranging from Jerusalem to Constantinople before returning to claim the Norse throne. He has his ambitions set on the English throne and a powerful Viking army behind him. His success could ring in an entirely new age not only for England but for all European nations.

William Duke of Normandy

The bastard son of Duke Robert of Normandy, William had never been unfamiliar with adversity. As a young ruler in a turbulent duchy where his legitimacy was constantly challenged, William gained a reputation for effective and sometimes ruthless leadership. His longstanding ties to England through Edward the Confessor's mother and their political alliances made him a strong contender for the throne, but his course of action is as of yet unknown.



Tostig Godwinson

Brother of Harold Godwinson and Earl of Northumbria, Tostig was born and raised in the same powerful English dynasty as the current king. However, his severity made him far less popular, and a revolt in his lands caused him to be ousted from power. Having served Duke William and King Harald Hardrada, Tostig has deep ties to every part involved in the conflict, and loyalty to none but himself.

Olaf Harraldson (Olaf Kyrre)

As King Harald Hardrada's son and heir, Olaf Harraldson's loyalty lay with his father. Having crossed the ocean to fight at his father's side, he was young but quickly gaining experience. He stands to inherit whatever comes of this invasion, good or bad, and represents the future of these warring nations.

Bjørn Asøx (The Berserker of Stamford Bridge)

Although his name was lost to history, the Berserker of Stamford Bridge was one of Harald Hardrada's greatest warriors. Having risen in station from humble origins, he represented the Viking force and their long history of military prowess. It was through soldiers like him that Hardrada's armies became some of the most threatening in Europe.

Paul Thorfinnson

One of the two Earls of Orkney, Paul Thorfinnson represents a major strategic location for Viking and English fleets. As the elder brother, Paul is considered to be the de-facto leader of the two. Orkney does not owe loyalty to any side, although they have family



ties to Hardrada and the Vikings. Paul is a shrewd leader, and his loyalty lies in Orkney above all else.

Erlend Thorfinnsonn

The other half of the brother-earls of Orkney, Erlend is the younger, more reckless of the two. He is a strong leader just like brother, albeit more hot-headed. He too wields control over the Orkney archipelago and the naval capabilities of their people's fleets. His familial ties bind him to Hardrada, but his opportunistic nature may guide him to any side of this war.

Alan the Red (Alan Rufus)

The Lord of Richmond, Alan was a Briton nobleman and kin to William the Conqueror. Known for his red beard and his ambition, he is one of William's key allies. He does not hail from Norway or England or Normandy, but from Brittany. His Celtic roots and Briton perspective inform his decision making, and his perspective of this conflict is that of an opportunist.

Edith of Wessex

The widow of Edward the Confessor, Edith represents the last link to the late king's wishes. An incredibly intelligent queen who was married to Edward to further her father's ambitions, Edith was rich and controlled large swaths of English land her husband had gifted her. Although his piety left them childless, their relation did bring him an heir—her brother Harold Godwinson. With her husband gone and her brother precariously balanced on the throne, Edith is the last universally accepted monarch England has left.



Edwin of Mercia

Just three days past, on September 20, Edwin and his brother Morcar faced Hardrada and his Viking horde at the Battle of Fulford. The defeat of their armies forced them to flee Fulford, but they kept their lives and remained powerful lords. Edwin's loyalty is pledged to Harold Godwinson on behalf of his sister Ealdgyth of Mercia, who is Harold's wife. Family ties and bruised ego demand Edwin continue the fight, and Mercia's important geographical location ensures he is a powerful figure.

Morcar of Northumbria

Like his brother Edwin, Morcar is tied to King Harold Godwinson by blood. His sister's husband is the king on whose behalf he faced the Vikings at Fulford—where he lost. However, his defeat was far more personal. Recently selected to fill the position of Earl of Northumbria, Morcar is Tostig Godwinson's replacement. The king's exiled brother has a personal vendetta, and Morcar has a recently earned title to defend. Will he be able to keep his control of England's rugged north, or will the region face yet another political upheaval?

Bishop Odo of Bayeux

The Warrior-Bishop of Bayeux is one of the most important men in Normandy. Beyond his military and clerical positions, Odo's ties to power run in his blood. The half-brother of William of Normandy, he is one of his brother's most trusted advisors. He represents a common occurrence of the time period—powerful church officials who do far more than pray. His web of influence is vast, and his ties to the church connect him far beyond Normandy.



William FitzOsbern

One of Duke William's most trusted advisors, FitzOsbern was one of the leading voices in the Norman effort to conquer England. Convincing lords and warriors that this was the cause they should go to war for, and building great ships that he hoped would carry the Normans to victory. As Duke William's steward, FitzOsbern assisted him in matters of his estates, finances, and even war. If William is to become the next English king, FitzOsbern stands to gain a world of new opportunities.

Pope Alexander II

As the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Alexander II aimed to implement major reforms on the Anglo-Saxon Church. He was a big supporter of the Normans and had close ties with the Duke of Normandy, so naturally endorsed the invasion of England. Repeatedly, he publicly stated that the war was justified given that King Harold Godwinson was unholy and that England needed to be ruled under more moral terms.

Eustace II of Boulogne

One of the events leading to the Battle of Hastings was caused by Eustace II of Boulogne on his way back from visiting King Edward the Confessor when he caused a brawl in Dover, which resulted in the exile of Earl Godwinson. Over the following years, he made his stance clear as a strong opponent of the Godwinsons and an ally to William of Normandy. To aid in the invasion of England, Eustace provided the Normans with soldiers, ships, and resources.



Malcolm III of Scotland

Ruling over the majority of the nation, Malcolm III of Scotland hoped to have his lineage in charge up until at least the late 1200s. With the goal of expanding Scotland into the territories of Cumbria and Northumbria, he launched multiple attacks in England. He made strong alliances with Edward the Confessor and Earl Godwinson to maintain stable and peaceful borders while still putting himself in a militarily advantageous position.

Robert of Mortain

Half-brother of William of Normandy, Robert was made Count of Mortain after former count William Werlenc was banished in 1049. He was entrusted with securing Normandy's southern border with Brittany and Bellême. Robert was at the Council of Lillebonne in William's inner circle and later agreed to provide 120 ships to aid in the invasion of England.

Archbishop Stigand

The Archbishop of Canterbury served as an advisor to Emma of Normandy before her fall from grace, and was well known throughout King Edward's reign. Originally Bishop of Elmham, then of Winchester, Stigand was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1052 under King Edward. Despite being one of the most powerful men in England, his ties to the Antipope Benedict X led to his excommunication and strained ties with the church.



Archbishop Ealdred

Originally a monk in Winchester, Ealdred rose to Bishop of Worcester in 1046 and was named Archbishop of York by Pope Nicholas II. A seasoned diplomat, he had negotiated on behalf of King Edward's brother, Edmund, with the Holy Roman Emperor and traveled as far as Jerusalem. As Archbishop of York, his lands were taken by the Viking force in the aftermath of Fulford.

Edgar Ætheling

At only fifteen years old, Edgar was Edward the Confessor's closest living male relative at the time of his death. The great-nephew of the former king was never named his official heir, but the title Ætheling signified his position as Anglo-Saxon prince and heir apparent—a position of increasing power in the aftermath of Edward's untimely death.

King Sweyn II of Denmark

As the nephew of King Cnut the Great, Sweyn inherited a legacy tied deeply to England, a land once ruled by his family. Though driven from Denmark in his early years, he fought tirelessly to reclaim his throne and secure his authority. With a keen mind and strong naval tradition behind him, Sweyn watched the unfolding succession crisis closely, ready to assert his claim if the moment proved advantageous. He is a patient man, but one who understands that hesitation can mean losing everything.

Matilda of Flanders

As the wife of William of Normandy, Matilda of Flanders is far more than a noble's spouse, she is a political force in her own right. The daughter of powerful Count of



Flanders, Matilda brought prestige, alliances, and legitimacy to William's rule. Known for her intelligence and strong will, she played a crucial role in governing Normandy during William's absences, demonstrating her capability as a leader. Her marriage ties one of Europe's most influential regions to Normandy's ambitions, strengthening William's claim to the English throne. Matilda represents the stability and continuity behind William's campaign. Should he succeed, her influence will help shape not just a kingdom, but a dynasty.

Gyrth Godwinson

The younger brother of King Harold Godwinson, Gyrth was made Earl of East Anglia, Cambridgeshire, and Oxfordshire. He represented the widespread power of the Godwinson family, and the loyal English vassals who backed Harold's claim. A strong military leader, he helped protect his brother's claim to the throne with steel.

Eystein Orre

A Norwegian lord and respected amongst the Vikings, Orre was betrothed to Harald Hardrada's daughter, Maria. A close ally and friend to the Norse King and their family ties made him a steadfast supporter of his claim. He fought alongside Hardrada across Northumbria and was entrusted to protect their ships at Riccall.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Who does your character think deserves the English crown?
2. Which king would benefit your character's position most?
3. Does your character favor a unified or divided kingdom?
4. Does war benefit your character (economically, socially)?
5. Is your character motivated by power/money/honor/religion?
6. Is your nation directly involved in the conflict?
7. Will selecting one of the warring kings bring peace or continue instability?
8. Are the three claimants the best options for England or is there a better choice?
9. How will the outcome of this war benefit your people's or your personal legacy?



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