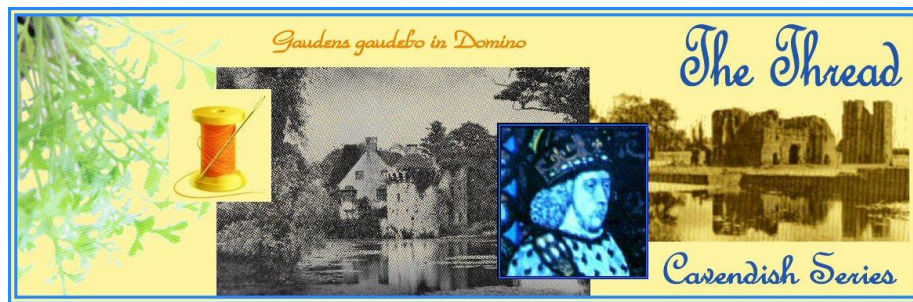




SYNOPSIS – SHORT SUMMARY

Finsbury UK:TV is producing an episode of their very popular “My Heritage” series for prime-time television. This episode centres on the English Wars of the Roses, most particularly on Sir Giles Cranthorpe (friend and advisor of the Earl of Warwick, who is also known as Richard Neville).

This yarn has three levels:

- Events taking place in and around the UK:TV production, often filmed in a documentary fashion.
- The production itself, based on Professor Danton’s findings. In the four acts, any speeches made during the actual production are highlighted in BLUE.
- Events taking place for real in (or around) 1470. These events explain how mistaken were the conclusions drawn by Professor Danton.

George Danton’s son (a Professor of History) uncovers what he believes to be a tranch of fair copies penned by the Earl of Warwick’s chief spy Sir Giles Cranthorpe.

Geoffrey Bevan’s grand-daughter Marl Cavendish joins forces with Sir Giles’s descendant Jason Cranthorpe-Massey to journey back to a world of court intrigue and danger-filled espionage taking place during the Wars of the Roses.

King Edward IV was a real person, as were his brothers George and Richard. And yes! It is quite true that BOTH brothers married the daughters of the Earl of Warwick. King Henry VI and his wife Queen Margaret were also real.

The Earl of Warwick was real, but most of the details surrounding his life (as depicted here) are quite fictional. Other than that, all the characters are made up (refer to Dramatis Personae). The events described are all make-believe, except that the battles actually took place. As far as I know, Richard Neville was his own man, and masterminded his own exploits without recourse to advice.

SPECIAL NOTES

The background scenes work because the Wars of the Roses provide too grand a subject to populate one film. I can have my characters (Cedron, Brian, Jodie and Sarah) encapsulate the very arguments that I myself would put forward: we did not get to cover even one tenth of the subject matter pertaining to the Wars.

But they also provide a means to humanize the subject matter. The by-play and interaction between the Finsbury staff members are entertaining. In short, the film provides a highly watchable panoply of action, romance and dungeon-drama. Then, on top of that, we see how it REALLY was for the folk, who just wanted to get on with their lives in spite of the soldiers who were enmeshed in what were simply baronial wars.

By using Dennis and his roving camera, I was able to get into the film and provide quick potted background notes without clogging the works.

As a rule, the actors playing parts in the Finsbury UK:TV program are quite separate from the actors we see in the REAL Wars of the Roses scenes.

There are two exceptions, however.

Jason plays Giles in the Finsbury production, but it is a very minor part. In the main, Jason is more of a narrator in that arena. On the other hand, in the "real" shots, Jason plays the comatose Giles, who then believes that he is called Roger.

The other exception is rather interesting. Captain Mather is one of William's dinner guests. He is killed at Barnet, but his body is seen in the Finsbury UK:TV scene, alongside the body of Giles, and

nearby to Warwick's dying form.

This is my favourite. I still tear-up when Withie is told that Warwick and Giles have been slain at Barnet.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Only 2 of the "The Thread" players spend time in both "now" and "then".

"real-life" CHARACTER	"dream sequence" CHARACTER
Marl Cavendish	Withie Venervels
Jason Cranthorpe-Massey	Sir Giles Cranthorpe

"real-life" CHARACTER
Exulted British actors playing the UK:TV characters: Warwick, his brother George Neville (the Lord Chancellor), Queen Margaret, Edward IV and Henry VI
Cedron's Sidekicks: Rani, Joe and Pete.
Geoffrey Bevan, Lord Cavendish
Cedron Dynesflytte (Producer/Director)
Brian Ogelvy (assistant to Cedron)
Garth Wainwright (assistant to Cedron)
Dennis O'Brian (roving camera)

Jodie Stanford (research assistant to Cedron, English History specialist)
Lena Jackson (technical and research assistant to Cedron and Brian, read Renaissance Britain at Oxford)
Sarah Callow (research assistant to Cedron, English History specialist)
Jack de Jong (assistant to Cedron)
Carl Moisson (actor playing Kent)
John Pearce (musical director, actor playing Sir Ralph Percy)
Gary Fordyce (actor playing Hastings)
Tizzy Tisdale (wardrobe mistress)
George Tisdale (armourer, and husband of Tizzy)
Philip Glamis (actor playing a guard)
Keith (actor playing Norfolk)
Ben (actor playing Shrewsbury)
The late Professor Howard Danton
Beatrice Danton (nee Bevan): half-sister of Geoffrey, and mother of the late Professor Howard Danton.
Other UK:TV actors and crew.

"dream sequence" CHARACTER (from 1469 - 1470)

Sir William Venervels

Lady Rosena Venervels
Peter, servant to Sir William
Lucy & Lionel Margrave and new daughter Lorna
Marjorie & Harvey de Witte and the "little chaps": William and Harvey Jnr
Mary de Witte (widow of Harvey's brother, Desmond)
Cornelia Venervels unmarried cousin of the sisters
Sir Roger Montacute, cousin to the Venervels, and also kinsman to the Earl of Warwick.
Captain Mather, La Boye and Trent: officers of the Lancastrian Army.
The "real" King Edward IV
The "real" Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick.
Cook, servants, soldiers.

The MAIN CHARACTERS

THE CHARACTERS OF CURRENT DAY	
Marl Cavendish	Grand-daughter of Lord Geoffrey Cavendish. An Australian, she is very well educated and stylish. Same actress plays the part of Withie.
Jason Cranthorpe-Massey	Descendant of Giles Cranthorpe, and current owner of Deepdene Manor. A "jock-strap" whose macho exploits are covered by most respected magazines. He is on the list of Britain's top 10 bachelors. Same actor plays Sir Giles Cranthorpe. He also plays Sir Giles in the UK:TV episode (as required).
Geoffrey Bevan	Lord Cavendish is now a very elderly gentleman, cared-for by his widowed daughter, Beatrice. His death awaits Marl's adventures in 15th century England; an adventure prophesied by Sir Digby in film #1. As a poignant touch at the very end of the film, Geoffrey reappears in his guise as Snarr.
Sarah Callow	With her well-modulated voice and good looks, she is a natural for television. Like Marl, she is an Oxford scholar.
Jodie Stanford and Lena Jackson	The girls are assistants to both Cedron and Brian. They are virtually interchangeable, in that they battle with Brian and Garth. They are both friends of and concerned

		about Marl.
	Cedron Dynesflytte	Well-mannered, scholarly; a benevolent father figure.
	Brian Ogelvy	Marvellous, edgy, charismatic, charming yet demanding. The perfect foil for "Cedron's Girls".
	Garth Wainwright	Serious, precious: a perfectionist.
	John Pearce	A renowned historian of the music of the European Middle Ages and Renaissance. He literally begged for a gig in the 4th installment of "My Heritage" and scored the important role of Sir Ralph Percy in this episode. Also, naturally, he is in charge of the music for the production.
	THE CHARACTERS OF 1470s	
	Withifreda Venervels	The youngest of the sisters. Pretty, bright, headstrong, compassionate.
	Sir Giles Cranthorpe	An upright, Christian knight, whose friendship with Warwick leads him into the secretive world of espionage. He is incarcerated at Deepdene Manor during his convalescence, during which time he is suffering from amnesia.
	Lucy Margrave	Second of the Venervels daughters. A well-to-do young matron: self-important but kind nevertheless.
	Marjorie de Witte	The eldest of the sisters. Clever, self-important, used to having her own way.

	Sir William Venervels	Father of the 3 sisters, and husband of Rosena (his 2nd wife). A decent member of the gentry.
	Lady Rosena Venervels	A natural worrier. An attractive matron whose role as lady of the manor suits her very well.
	Roger Montacute	A nervy, willful relative of the Venervels.



BACKGROUND

In the first script for the Cavendish series, 5 schoolboys from Whitefriars travelled back in time to fight at the Battle of Hastings. One of these boys was George Danton. Another was Lord Cavendish's own son, Geoffrey.

As a grown-up, George became a teacher at Whitefriars. He married Geoffrey's sister Beatrice. One of their sons became Professor Howard Danton.



About three years ago, some rough copies were discovered at Deepdene Manor. They had been hidden behind panelling in the oldest part of the Manor (unearthed during restoration work). The copies were made in order to produce the genuine letters: forwarded to Richard Neville (Earl of Warwick). Thus the letters date from the time of the Wars of the Roses. Professor Danton worked on the copies, which he decided were written by Sir Giles Cranthorpe for Warwick. Sir Giles was a background figure who was charged with the task of appreciating the military and political situation.

The truth is that during the majority of this time, Sir Giles Cranthorpe lay in a bed at Deepdene Manor, seriously wounded. While Sir Giles hovered between life and death, five of the ladies in the Manor conspire to steer the Wars of the Roses in a direction more propitious for themselves and their families. To say true, Sir Giles did not write either the copies or the genuine letters. The television show is in fact basing its authenticity on forged material.

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The Finsbury UK:TV company is producing a world-class television series whereby current celebrities present historical reviews of their famous relatives. The story behind the Cranthorpe papers provides a fertile ground for an episode of this series. Cedron Dynesflytte directs.

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To sum up: we have television show which is under production. We meet everyone behind the scenes and in front of the camera. This provides loads of entertainment.

However, the show is based on historical information which turns out to be fake. Only Marl Cavendish (the heroine) and her hero Jason Cranthorpe-Massey realize this.

And us (the audience).

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It is Withie who cares for Sir Giles. Withie is Marl. And Sir Giles is Jason. It does not take long for the two (Marl and Jason) to fall for each other. But things are difficult ...

## SYNOPSIS

### **Relating to the Venervels Family and Sir Giles Cranthorpe (beginning in 1469).**

*The actress who plays Marl also plays Withie.*

*The actor who plays Jason also plays Giles.*

Withie is running through Deepdene Manor at night in mid-April 1469. She run along the corridor, holding the reel of thread as she chases Cornelia.

William Venervels (her father) has chanced upon an attack perpetrated against a gentleman by two others. The unknown gentleman is mortally wounded and is so large that William had struggled to lift his body into his dray. Upon arrival at the Manor, Withie, Peter and Cornelia assist William, who has brought with him the man's superb roan gelding.

Withie tells William that there are soldiers encamped nearby, before she rails her father on bringing home this man who is little better than a corpse, so injured is he. Withie's sister Lucy is in residence, awaiting the birth of her first child. Other family members are also asleep at the Manor: this kindly step by William is most ill-advised.

William eagerly orders Withie to care for this poor dying man, and Withie gives to Cornelia the task of stabling the gelding out of sight. There is a huge danger to the family, Withie feels, in taking in this wounded gentleman (whoever he might be) with so many soldiers wandering about.

William and Peter carry the man to a small bedroom off the narrow staircase.

The concern is that the patient needs to be identified, even despite his probable demise during the night, and his residence at the Manor must be kept secret. Withie is advised by William to listen for any mumbled words and to write them down. To add to Withie's worries, Lucy goes into labour.

In the patient's tiny bedroom, Withie and Peter kneel to pray for Lucy and her newborn baby, when the patient mumbles: "Featherbridge at noon".

An older sister (Marj) is shepherded into the bedroom to try and identify the patient. She hovers in evident disgust, and is unable to inform them of his name.

A relative by marriage (Mary) also comes to the bedroom, and displays great pity. She suggests that Cornelia (who is busy with Lucy and the babe) will know him.

In an enchanting scene, Lucy (supported by William and Cornelia) identifies the gentleman as Giles Cranthorpe, the right-hand man of Richard Neville, who is the Earl of Warwick.

After three days, Withie has managed to keep Giles alive. Five women (Withie, Lucy, Marj, Mary and Cornelia) meet in the room where Lucy is lying-in to discuss whether to let Giles's family and associates know that he is alive, and thereby alert the would-be killers that their job is yet to be completed. Or whether to persist with the illusion that he has died. Withie has found a paper amongst Giles's effects. Clearly, this paper (wherein the names are encoded for safety) was meant for delivery to Warwick.

The ladies come up with a plan which is the crux of this film. They will re-write the letter such that they achieve a mischievous aim (to advise a marriage between one of Warwick's daughters and the King's second brother) as well as to move the troops northward, away from the Manor. Mary is nominated as the forger.

Important note: Mary forges a new letter, keeping the original as found on Giles's person.

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The first letter has in part been misunderstood by Warwick: **MORE** troops have been sent to Sussex and are encamped at the very doors of the Manor. Some of the Lancastrian officers dine with the Deepdene gentlemen (William, Harvey and Lionel). As the dinner progresses, Withie spies on the gentlemen. She picks up the information that the officers only rarely see military action, and spend most of their time enjoying the hospitality of the local gentry and hunting with them.

Withie and Cornelia earn the wrath of Cook, since they are once again busy at making gruel for the "guest", whom Withie has rechristened Roger Montacute (in reality, a reprehensible cousin). Withie continues to tend to her patient, with Peter's assistance.

Once again, Withie spies on the dining officers. They cover the subject of Henry VI and his feisty wife. Then one of them japes, and they all fall about laughing. Mary whisks Withie away to assist with Rosena, who is supposedly apoplectic with regard to Sir Giles being in the same house as Lancastrian officers.

Far from being prostrate with fear, Rosena is needle sharp. She advises Withie to send a further letter to Warwick, advising him earnestly to dump the Yorkist King (Edward IV) in favour of Henry VI.

For a third time, Withie spies on the officers, and hears one of the officers speak of his wife, who is a seer. This woman has prophesied to her husband all the horrors which are to come in the Civil Wars (that is, the Wars of the Roses) and even the advent of the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII.

With much drama and colour, Withie and the ladies concoct a second letter which purports to have been penned by Sir Giles. Filled with obscure allusions and misdirections, the letter stresses the need for Warwick to support the Lancastrian king, Henry. Mary writes out the fair copy (complete with cross-outs and annotations), and then re-writes for Peter to deliver to the go-between Bishop Hobbin. Peter disguises himself as Sir Giles, even to the extent of riding the gelding.

To stir Withie up (as they had done when she was a child) the sisters sing. Later, at an outdoor gathering attended by the officers, the sisters sing again.

We learn that the forged reports in Cranthorpe's name are actually working. Isabel and Clarence are wed, the troops have moved on to the North, and Warwick is making overtures to the Lancastrian Queen Margaret.

Lucy and Marj must return to their own homes. A heated discussion follows between the ladies as to Withie's needs: Cornelia must assist her with Sir Giles and the gelding, and Mary must be on hand to forge the letters. Withie argues that this is not personal, but of importance to England. Lucy (much put-out) must make do with Marj's maid in the interim.

From the open dormer window in Giles' sickroom Marj and Lucy reprise the earlier song as they "serenade" Withie. Standing at the casement window, leaning on the sill, Withie sings along with them. Giles awakes suddenly, strongly grasping Withie's wrist. He asks where he is and why he is at this place. Withie simply tells him that he was all but murdered and Giles has a vivid flashback.

The clincher is now delivered: Giles has no idea who he really is.



Withie relates that Sir Giles (still believing himself to be Roger Montacute) is returning to himself. He has recalled many incidents from the Battle of Towton. [Note that the historians were unsure if Giles was at Towton, as they (unlike Marl) had not seen what really happened.]

William assists Sir Giles to sit out in the garden and promises that Withie will read to him.

But rather than have Withie read to him, Giles wants to know more about himself. He is irked by the name Roger Montacute and wonders about his former life as a soldier. With his knife, Giles hacks off two metres of gold thread and insists that his REAL initials are embroidered as Cornelia prescribed, not R. M.

In the kitchen, staring at the fire, Giles begins to come out of his amnesia.

Giles then happens upon Mary's fair copies of the letters as he wanders about the house. Marj, Withie, Mary and Cornelia try to reason with him, but Giles is unbelievably angry (and not just at being duped). He spits out that the only hope for him now is to hide out in France.

On Giles leaving in such anger, Withie weeps despondently into Marj's lap, inconsolable.

In the ostelry of an inn, the real Roger Montacute challenges Giles, who neatly knocks him out. Giles tells the ostlers and stableboys that this man is Giles Cranthorpe, and his unconscious body should be delivered-up to the authorities for a reward.

Giles deals very prettily with the army officers. Giles has put the jerkin on Roger and presented him as "Giles Cranthorpe" for the reward, stating that he will keep Crathorpe's horse as part of the deal.

He thanklessly receives the four gold coins as reward and leaves. As Roger Montacute, he earns the captain's distrust.

The Earl of Warwick has become suspicious. Rumours that his friend Cranthorpe has been murdered have proliferated. If these rumours are true, then who is delivering the letters to the bishop and by whom were they written? Giles and Warwick are dramatically reunited and discuss political trends.

Giles most earnestly advises that King Edward be privately slain while he is under capture, whereas Warwick wants to go into battle and finish the Yorkists off holus bolus. Giles orders Peter to insist that Withie cease her letter-writing.

Months later, Withie is found to be heavily pregnant. In a lovely comic scene, her father must (by the law of God and the law of man) chastise and punish his unmarried daughter for her shame.

However, he merely taps her hand as the women around him weep.

~~~~~ The Battle of Barnet. ~~~~~

There is a momentous battle, of which we only see the last stanzas.

The REAL Roger Montacute (in his role as Giles) lies dead, with the dying Warwick on top of him.

King Edward deals the death blow without any emotion, without compassion. *[This will contrast dramatically with the more beautiful rendition of UK:TV on this subject.]*

Edward orders that Warwick's corpse be carted to London for the wonderment of the populace. This is quickly achieved.

It is then essential NOT to know the identity of the man who creeps onto the battlefield to view the last remains of the supposed Sir Giles. (It is Giles himself, but this must be hidden from the audience). He whispers a Latin motto, filled with sadness.

Sobbing, Peter returns to Deepdene Manor, in order to deliver the heart-breaking news, which must be passed-on by Marj to new mother Withie. Withie is devastated by Giles's supposed death.

Peter and Withie gather chestnuts. To Withie's horror and shock, Giles calls to her and proves that he is alive.

Giles did not get to the battle, even though he was desperate to have fought side-by-side with Warwick. He was instead chained to a wall, writhing in despair. (Giles's horse fell lame, which precluded him from joining his companions, and then he was taken up under attainder as Roger Montacute.) The escape from his chains was effected when a rabble of Lancastrian soldiers freed the

prisoners to help with the fight. On his way to what was left of the Battle of Barnet, Giles heard that he (himself) was dead.

Withie accepts Giles's offer of marriage and then scolds him for getting her pregnant. On closer questioning, Withie tells Giles of their son. He seems overcome with emotion.

The baby has been named Richard Giles William Cranthorpe: named for the Earl and for his father and for William. Giles is overjoyed on holding his son for the first time. Giles decides that he will have to escape to the Continent, and that when they marry, he will have to use a fake name. Withie comes up with "Jack Digby".

Some years down the track, Withie sits in the orchard, pregnant with her second child, smiling as she reads a letter from Giles.