

1

00:00:03.420 --> 00:00:07.240

William FitzHerbert's election to the archbishopric was set against the

2

00:00:07.320 --> 00:00:10.200

backdrop of intense political tensions.

3

00:00:10.260 --> 00:00:13.800

England was in chaos. A civil war between King Stephen and

4

00:00:13.900 --> 00:00:16.320

Empress Matilda had torn the kingdom apart.

5

00:00:16.560 --> 00:00:20.480

The Archbishop of York wielded great spiritual and political power,

6

00:00:20.940 --> 00:00:24.520

so it wasn't long before the election process became embroiled in a

7

00:00:24.600 --> 00:00:28.250

similar battle for power. The canons of York, who aligned

8

00:00:28.380 --> 00:00:32.259

themselves with King Stephen, elected William, but his opponents,

9

00:00:32.381 --> 00:00:35.920

including the Cistercians, believed that the Crown should not be

10

00:00:35.960 --> 00:00:38.580

involved in elections to a religious position.

11

00:00:39.010 --> 00:00:42.860

They accused William of buying his way to power and made repeated

12

00:00:42.960 --> 00:00:46.600

representations to the Pope opposing William's election.

13

00:00:46.680 --> 00:00:50.290

They had powerful advocates, including Bernard of Clairvaux,

14

00:00:50.740 --> 00:00:53.700

then one of the most influential churchmen in Europe.

15

00:00:54.000 --> 00:00:57.680

Determined to remove William, they travelled all the way to Rome to appeal

16

00:00:57.690 --> 00:00:58.720

directly to the Pope.

17

00:00:59.640 --> 00:01:03.320

Meanwhile, Bernard wrote letters to the Papacy declaring William

18

00:01:03.680 --> 00:01:07.320

“a man rotten from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.”

19

00:01:08.560 --> 00:01:12.160

Some of William's supporters, outraged at the opposition of the

20

00:01:12.200 --> 00:01:16.100

Cistercians to William's election, set forth to Fountains Abbey

21

00:01:16.120 --> 00:01:19.840

in 1146 and burnt it to the ground. For several

22

00:01:19.940 --> 00:01:23.810

years, William remained embattled, in position, but without

23

00:01:23.920 --> 00:01:27.720

confirmation from the papacy. William anxiously awaited the

24

00:01:27.780 --> 00:01:31.220

arrival of the pallium, a narrow white band of cloth

25

00:01:31.520 --> 00:01:35.500

worn around the neck that, alongside the ring and the mitre, were

26

00:01:35.560 --> 00:01:37.800

symbols of his office as archbishop.

27

00:01:38.380 --> 00:01:41.760

But before William received the pallium, everything changed.

28

00:01:42.110 --> 00:01:45.960

The Pope died, and in 1145, a new pope, Eugenius

29

00:01:46.040 --> 00:01:49.460

III, sympathetic to his enemies and himself a

30

00:01:49.500 --> 00:01:51.820

Cistercian, ruled against William.

31

00:01:52.620 --> 00:01:54.800

He was stripped of his archbishopric.

32

00:01:55.220 --> 00:01:59.070

In his stead, the Abbot of Fountains, Henry Murdac, was elected

33

00:01:59.220 --> 00:01:59.960

archbishop.

34

00:02:01.060 --> 00:02:04.900

After this, William travelled far from England, even reaching the court of

35

00:02:04.940 --> 00:02:08.920

Roger II, King of Sicily. Eventually, William returned

36

00:02:08.980 --> 00:02:10.880

to Winchester, his childhood home.

37

00:02:11.140 --> 00:02:13.840

There, he appeared ready to fade into retirement.

38

00:02:15.120 --> 00:02:18.640

Meanwhile, William's successor, Henry Murdac, found himself

39

00:02:18.880 --> 00:02:22.480

deeply unpopular in York and never entered the city as archbishop.

40

00:02:23.070 --> 00:02:25.380

But history was not finished with William yet.

41

00:02:25.980 --> 00:02:29.000

His story was about to take another dramatic turn.