

Eli: Hello, and welcome to Queer as Fact. My name is Eli.

Alice: I'm Alice.

Irene: I'm Irene.

E: We are a queer history podcast coming out on the 1st and 15th of every month, talking about people, places and things from around the world and throughout time. Today we are talking about the 14th-century king of England, Edward II.

So in terms of content warnings for this episode, the only really big scary one is that we have a bunch of executions, and the details of those executions are somewhat relevant. Apart from that there's some period-typical homophobia, there's children getting married in a "we're nobles" sort of way, and there's one swear.

I: [laughs]

A: Okay.

E: So if any of that sounds like something you'd rather not listen to, we have plenty of other episodes with different content, and hardly any of them have executions.

Also there are quite a lot of people to remember in this one – quite a lot of different names – so I'm gonna make a little cast of characters and stick it up on social media when this episode comes out, so if you're listening to it, you can go and find it now, and if you get a bit confused you can just refer to that.

So the background to the world that Edward II is born into is the reign of his father. Any guesses as to what his father's called?

I: Edwaaard?

A: The first?

E: Yes!

A: Yay!

I: Yay!

E: Good job. That sounded super rehearsed.

[laughter]

I: It really did.

[laughter]

E: So Edward I was very well thought of at the time, and generally continues to be so. He's really the image of the contemporary idea of what a king should be. He was very well respected, he was a little bit frightening, he was this very imposing man, both in terms of his personality and his physicality – so he was like over six feet tall, and he's very military focussed, so he goes on the Crusades, he spends a lot of his later life trying to conquer Scotland.

I: Ah yes, that Edward.

E: Yeah, that Edward. I mean, also the next Edward is also that Edward.

I: Yeah.

E: And he is also the king who finally gets conquering Wales squared away, so he does that in 1283, and he starts building a castle at Carnarvon to symbolise this, and while it's still being built – while it's kinda like half constructed – his son Edward is born there, on the 25th of April 1284. He's not the first son, but he's the

only who survives to adulthood; the others die quite young, so he knows from like childhood that he's gonna be the king one day. He does have five sisters. The children of the couple are so beautiful that Henry III, who's Edward I's dad, gives Edward's wife Eleanor, like, extra money, because of how good-looking her children are.

[laughter]

E: "Good job!"

A: So he's just like, paying her to have attractive kids.

E: Yes.

A: Cool.

I: Is Edward II also very attractive, or just the sisters.

E: No, they're all just babes.

I: Alright.

E: Yeah.

A: Okay.

E: Not to kinda spoil Edward too much, but there's often a comparison made between what Edward looks like on the outside, and what he's really like, so he looks like that image of an English king – he's like tall, and fair-haired, and strapping – and then he's just like not very good.

[laughter]

I: Awww.

E: Yeah.

A: Does this hold up in artwork of Edward? Is he very attractive in the medieval artwork?

E: I don't think that any medieval artwork really depicts people in a realistic fashion enough for us to know, and also...

I: True.

E: ...a lot of the works that I know of that are like of Edward are like, "thought to be Edward II" so...

A: So there's no portrait where we can look and be like, "Yeah, I would pay your mum."

[laughter]

E: "Pay your mum"!

A: That sounded more inappropriate than it was supposed to.

I: That sound way dirtier than you thought, yeah...

[laughter]

E: That was uncomfortable, Alice.

[laughter]

E: Anyway, to sober this conversation up a bit, his mother dies when Edward is six in 1290.

[laughter]

A: Okay. Yep.

E: So Edward grows up travelling around to different castles and then staying in the same place in winter; as he gets older he starts to go to London when Parliament is sitting to sort of start seeing how it goes, because he's gonna have to run Parliament. When Edward I goes away on campaign he becomes regent for the first time, when he's 11, which is very cute to picture frankly. He's got like his seal that he's putting on documents, and he's...

I: Awww.

E: ...like signing things, but obviously he doesn't actually like have any real power 'coz he's a child! And apart from that he's very interested in tournaments and breeding dogs and horses.

I: Do you know that names of his dogs?

E: No. I do know that he had two falcons and he named that after like, two of his friends who were in his court.

[laughter]

E: Which sounds frankly quite confusing.

A: What if I had two falcons called Eli and Irene?

[laughter]

E: We have like a letter he writes to his sister Elizabeth asking her to send her white greyhound to him so he can mate it with one of his greyhounds "for we have a great wish to have puppies from them".

I: Aww.

A: Aww.

E: When he's 15 he gets betrothed to Philip IV of France's daughter Isabella. She is four years old.

A: Cooooool...

I: That is quite small.

E: Yes. Yes it is.

I: [laughs]

E: And Edward I marries Philip's sister Margaret. They're very like, allied with France at this time.

I: Weird.

[laughter]

E: Weird? I mean if you're...

I: Yes.

E: ...fighting the Scots, you need to have the French on your side.

I: This is true. Yeah.

E: Like not with you, but just, you know, like not actively attacking you.

I: Not... yeah, this is true.

E: 'Coz they're not that great at attacking the Scots, even without the French.

[laughter]

E: Edward grows up with a circle of young male companions around him, so in 1301 he has about 10 of them, they're there to like, get educated, and to be his companions. Among them is Piers Gaveston, who...

I: Ohhh. This guy!

[laughter]

E: Yep. Why do you say "this guy"?

I: I've heard his name before.

A: In what context?

I: Maybe a gay context.

[laughter]

E: Do you remember when we went and saw that play of Edward II?

I: Yes! Yes!

A: Yeah.

E: We did.

I: Yes!

E: The three of us went and saw.... it was like a modern adaptation, like a loose adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's Edward II, which is pretty gay.

I: It was quite gay, yes.

E: Mm, like the current one was quite gay; I'm pretty sure they like, simulated sex on stage...

I: Yes...

A: Yep.

E: Yeah, there was definitely like, we were in like the second row and there was definitely a naked man like two metres from us, but like, even the Christopher Marlowe one was like, pretty overtly gay, so yeah, you might have like, spoilers a little bit for some of what's gonna happen here depending on how well you remember this play we saw like three years ago.

A: [laughs]

I: I remember that it ended horribly.

E: Yeah!

A: That's why we had the content warnings. [laughs]

I: Yes. Oh yeah.

E: We did warn for like, five executions.

I: [laughs]

E: So Piers Gaveston is the like, lowest-born of them – sometimes people kind of talk about him as if he's just some like, guy who wandered in off the street, but he's still a noble, he's just like...

A: Yeah.

E: ...quite a low-born noble. He's the only one who doesn't have a private tutor. The also Gilbert de Clare who was later the Earl of Gloucester, and Hugh Despenser – just flagging them now, because we'll mention

them again later. Piers' father was a landowner from Gascony, so like, horror of horrors, he's foreign. His father had fought for Edward I a few times and he'd been held hostage and he's escaped to England in 1296, and that's probably when Piers came to England as well.

A: Wait, so his father was from...?

E: Gascony.

A: And had fought...

E: Well I...

A: ...against Edward the...

E: No no no. No no. He'd fought *for* Edward I when he was conquering Wales.

A: Okay.

E: And then because he was a nobleman he was captured and held captive.

A: Yep.

E: And then he escaped, and he ends up in England around 1296, and that's when we first see Piers in England as well.

A: Yep, yep. Okay, I understand now.

E: Yeah. So Piers doesn't have any land to inherit, so he's main shot at advancing in life is getting royal favour.

[laughter]

I: Well...

E: And he does. Edward I decides to place him in the household of his son, Edward, at Carnarvon, and then they become very close.

I: [laughs]

E: [laughs] A chronicler tells us, and I believe this is like, significantly after the fact, but you know, to get an idea of what was...

I: Yep.

E: ...thought, that "When the King's son saw him, he fell so much in love that he entered upon an enduring compact with him, and chose and determined to knit an indissoluble bond of affection with him, before all mortals."

A: So they're married now.

I: [laughs]

E: Okay.

I: Yes.

E: Alright.

A: [laughs] I mean "an indissoluble bond before all mortals" is pretty much married.

E: We'll come back to Piers Gaveston, but just to talk a little bit about Edward's life during the reign of his father – so as I said, Edward I, and also Edward II's reigns are full of constant engagement with the Scots.

I: Yep.

E: So there's essentially... there's just constant campaigns against the Scots, and I was at a loss of how to structure this episode that didn't just have me every five minutes being like, "Alright, we need to pause things, because they're gonna go up and fight the Scots for a year and like, not achieve anything, and then come back."

I: [laughs]

E: So we're just gonna talk about the Scots now. So basically they'll go and they'll fight the Scots until it's winter, or until they don't have any money, or until there's a treaty, or until they're like, "Nah nah nah, we've totally conquered the Scots now," then they'll go home until they have money, or it's summer again, or the treaty runs out, or the Scots are like, "You don't own me," and then they repeat this again for like, decades.

I: Okay, yes.

E: Yeah. But some like, more notable interesting things about their Scottish campaigns – so at one point when Edward I thinks that he's done it, he takes the coronation stone away from Scone Abbey and puts it beneath the English coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, which is just so degrading! And it stays there for 700 years, until some students from the University of Glasgow show up in 1950, and nick it.

A: I'm so proud of them.

E: Yep.

[laughter]

E: Yeah. And in like, pulling it out from under the chair they drop it and it breaks in half. And then they're like, "Ohhh..." and they carry it out. There's two cars that they've brought, and there's two people in each car, and they each take one half of this rock, and two of them – a man and a woman – are sitting in the car, and there's like a police officer who comes over to see what they're doing and they're like, "Oh, quick, make out!" and they make out.

[laughter]

A: That's so good!

E: With the stone in back seat!

[laughter]

E: And they end up like hiding it in a field for a while, and when it's discovered missing it's the first time the border between Scotland and England has been closed in 400 years.

A: Ohh, I didn't know that!

I: Wow.

E: Mm. So they get it to Scotland and they hire a stonemason to mend it, and in the middle of it they put a brass rod with a piece of paper that says... something. We do not know to this day.

[laughter]

E: And then the next year the police are tipped off and they find it in an abbey and they take it away, and they find out who did it and they question them but they decide not to prosecute them because like, this is a political nightmare.

A and I: Yeah.

E: It was returned for real in 1996, except for when the English need it for coronations, so it's still the situation that the English are gonna get coronated on top of the Scottish coronation stone, so I'm really keen to see politically how that's handled in...

A: Ohh!

E: I mean, I'm not like... hopefully not that soon – God save the Queen – but...

[laughter]

E: Like, we'll probably...

I: Yeah...

E: ...find out in the fairly near future when we have to transport it from Scotland back to England in order to coronate someone on it.

A: Yeah, that's true.

I: I have questions though – there's been much speculation that because of Brexit they're going to have another go at the Scottish independence referendum.

E: Mm.

A: Mm, what happens then?

I: Do they just keep the stone after that? I mean, presumably.

E: Yeah. I mean, if I was the Scottish, and they were like, "Hey, can we like, have that back again to coronate someone on?" I'd be like...

I: "No."

E: "No." [laughs]

A: I've heard a story – and this is not backed up in any way – that the stone they got back was not the real stone.

E: I've heard that too.

I: Yeah.

E: And I think there's just like a bunch of points in its history where we're not sure if it's been swapped.

A: Yep.

E: Like when the English took it, there's a theory that they hid it, and there's rumours... there's like legends that they put it in the river, and things like that, and they gave them a fake one and stuff, so like, the continuity of this stone is already pretty dodgy.

[laughter]

I: Yep.

E: And the other thing I wanted to mention is just that this is the wars that William Wallace is leading forces in.

I: Which one of the Edwards is Longshanks?

E: The first.

I: The first.

E: Edward Longshanks, six foot two.

I: Oh yeah.

E: Yeah. But yeah, I just wanted to mention it because Edward II is in *Braveheart*.

I: Ah.

E: Yeah.

A: I've never seen *Braveheart*.

E: Yeah, don't. It's just known for being like, wildly historically inaccurate.

A: Mmhm.

E: It was literally like, second or something like that on a list of like, like, most historically inaccurate movies of all time.

I: [laughs]

A: I wanna know what movie number one is.

E: I dunno. Yeah, he's in *Braveheart* as this like very effeminate, like, obviously gay-coded...

A: Mmhm.

E: ...sort of, minor villain basically. I...

I: That's... alright.

E: Yeah. They were criticised for it, for making him this like, gay caricature and they were just like, "Eh."

[laughter]

A: Okay.

E: Yeah. So I'm not like recommending anyone see this movie. I saw it in high-school in my like, history class. I don't actually remember if it's any good, but it has offensive queer representation and Mel Gibson in it, so like, eh... It also has William Wallace have an affair with Isabella of France, Edward's bride, who is like four years old...

I: Who is like four years old.

E: ...at the time. [laughs]

I: Yes.

E: But in the movie she's an adult woman who doesn't like her gay husband and wants this objectified Scotsman. In 1300 Edward is 16, and he goes on campaign for the first time. So he was one of four commanders. He has like the rear force where he can't really like, do anything, but you know, he's there.

A: I know it was normal at the time, but just imagine being like a soldier who'd been to Scotland every year for the past like, 30 years, and this random 16-year-old being in charge of you. [laughs]

E: I think at this point – and for like the next few – he has like, very seasoned military commanders who are pretty much like, "I'll be calling the shots here." But yeah, like, monarchy isn't very good.

A: No, it's...

[laughter]

A: ...bad. A bad idea.

[laughter]

E: So they besiege a castle and they capture the castle, and then the Scots just kind of like, melt away into the landscape and avoid further...

I: Yeah.

E: ...conflict, as they tend to do, and the campaign achieves very little, as they tend to do. In 1301 he becomes the Prince of Wales, and the Earl of Chester, so this is kind of like, recognising his achievements and also trying to set him up for some responsibility, so he spends several months travelling around and having people swear fealty to him. Which again, just this like, 17-year-old showing up and being like, "Kiss me ring."

A: Picture all the 17-year-old boys you know, like, how obnoxious would that be.

E: His powers are still quite limited though. People are sending him like, petitions being like, "Make this judgement," and they're being like, "We're just gonna redirect that to like, someone who knows what they're doing."

They go back to Scotland in 1301 – so this what the campaigns are like, it's literally like, "The campaign of 1300", "The campaign of 1301", "The campaign of 1303"...

I: And nothing happens every time?

E: Yeah, I mean not really. Like, there's like back and forth, like there are times when they nearly conquer Scotland...

I: Yeah.

E: ...but then they like leave, and the Scottish are like, "Well we're still here, so we're gonna reassert control," and then there's a whole bunch of times that they go up there and then they just like achieve nothing, yeah. But yeah, they go back to Scotland in 1301, and now he has his first independent command, so they're like, attacking from both the east and the west, and so he has control of the whole western arm of the English forces. He's like, little gang of young men go with them, so Piers Gaveston is here – just keeping Piers in our minds.

[laughter]

E: But again the Scots avoid direct conflict and they leave.

I: Alright.

E: Yeah.

I: Yep.

E: So he's very clearly being groomed for command, but that doesn't mean his dad likes him very much.

A: Ohh...

E: In 1304 they quarrel – maybe because Edward insulted a man called Walter Langton, who is one of Edward I's like, chief advisors.

I: Okay.

E: So Edward I takes away a bunch of Edwards funds and reduces the size of his household, and this means that a bunch of his companions are set away, including Piers.

A and I: Oh no!

E: Yeah, tragedy. When Edward is crowned Edward II one of the first things he does is to dismiss Walter Langton

I: [laughs] Petty.

E: Petty as hell. And then in 1307 they fight again, and this time Piers, individually, is sent into exile. Records at the time say it is because of "certain reasons"...

[laughter]

I: I see.

E: [laughs]

A: Gay reasons.

E: A later chronicler says it's because Edward asked for Piers to be given a county and, like, this is later, so this isn't like a real direct quote of Edward I, but he has Edward reply, "You low-born son of a whore."

A and I: Oooohhhh.....

E: "Do you want to give away your lands now, you who never gained any?" And then he threatens to disinherit him, tears out a bunch of his hair, and throws him out.

A: Oh my God!

E: And they don't speak for several months.

A: Wow.

E: Yes.

I: I feel like calling your own child "son of a whore" is like... not that great an insult.

[laughter]

E: Why would you treat Eleanor of Castille this way, Edward?

I: Exactly.

[laughter]

E: Yep. So Piers is sent into exile, but he's sent away with like, ample time to like, make arrangements and leave and he still has an allowance, and he gives him a bunch of presents, so it doesn't seem like Piers is like, the problem – Edward's being punished, but...

I: Yeah.

E: ...it's to do with Piers, clearly.

A: Yep.

E: I think the way this is generally treated is that this isn't specifically Edward I isn't like, "I know that you're gay with my son. Get out of my country," he's just like, "You're not very well-reasoned regarding this man."

I: Mm.

E: "Stop giving him huge tracts of land."

[laughter]

I: Fair enough.

E: Yes. So 1306, Robert Bruce declares himself King of Scotland, and Edward I is like, "Hang on... *I'm* King of Scotland."

I: Really, Edward.

E: And so they go off to war. Yep.

[laughter]

E: Edward is knighted first, along with like, tonnes and tonnes of other men. It's very lavish, it's compared to like, the coronation of King Arthur.

I: Wow, okay.

E: Yeah. Yeah. This includes Piers Gaveston, before he's exiled, so he's a knight now.

A: Wait, so have we gone back to before his exile?

E: In between exiles he's made a knight.

A: Okay.

E: Edward is by this point intended to like, pretty much be running the Scottish campaigns because Edward I is 68 and he can't really travel on horseback or anything like that – he's really past his campaigned age, but he's...

A: Yep.

E:very into conquering Scotland.

A: Mmhm.

I: Okay. [sighs]

E: You can...

I: Okay Edward. [laughs]

E: ...verbally abuse Edward if you want to at this juncture.

[laughter]

I: I mean I don't think I have anything to say that'll be like, particularly constructive.

A: [laughs]

E: We should probably mention at some point that we're all like, varying degrees of Scottish.

[laughter]

E: So Edward's like, riding on ahead of him and they have a couple of years of back and forth, and they're not really achieving anything, and then Edward I dies.

I: Does he just die, like, he's old?

E: He's old, yeah.

I: Yep.

E: Edward is down south, and he like, rushes up north to get his father's body. Edward I had wanted his body to be carried with the army going forth, so he could keep like, conquering stuff after he died.

[laughter]

I: Oh my God! Edward, chill!

[laughter]

A: Did he put like, an end date on that, or was he just like, "The English army should carry my corpse around from now on"?

E: So I saw one source that it was until the Holy Land was conquered, and another that it was until Scotland was conquered.

A: Okay.

E: And I didn't like, check the source for this, frankly.

A: So he did at least have like, an end-point on this.

E: Yeah.

I: It was like, "Finish my campaigns, and then you can stop carrying my corpse around."

E: Yeah, yeah.

I: Yep.

E: And Edward II is like, "Yeah, I'm not doing that."

[laughter]

E: Basically.

I: Fair.

E: He doesn't really care about Scotland all that much, and so he brings his father's body down south to bury him at Westminster. At this point everyone's feeling relatively positive about Edward becoming king; he's been pretty well prepared, you know – he's been acting as regent.

I: Yep.

E: And sitting in on Parliament and doing campaigns, and is good-looking.

I: This can't possibly go wrong.

E: Yep. So his lords come and swear fealty to him, and everything's great, and then one of the first things that Edward does is to recall Piers Gaveston, and he arrives in England in early August, so about a month later, and Edward makes him the Earl of Cornwall on August 6, possibly without like, telling him about it first. So Cornwall is very wealthy because of its tin, so it's like, quite a gift – it's only really meant for the royal family, even up to today.

I: It bothers me that like, we can still give Cornwall as a gift...

E: Yeah.

I: ...today, like...

E: Me too. Trust me.

I: Yeah.

[laughter]

E: So it really should have gone to one of Edward's like, younger half-brothers, and instead he's giving it to this random Gascon.

I: Why does Edward have younger half-brothers.

E: 'Coz his father married Margaret, the sister of the King of France.

I: Oh yeah, that's right.

E: And then they had children, as one does.

I: Yeah, that's right. No, I forgot about the remarriage part.

E: Yep. They're around, they don't really like, do anything though.

I: Yep.

E: Edward also arranges a marriage to his own niece, Margaret of Clare. So he's essentially created a situation in which he's like a part of the royal family now. And he also gives him just like a bunch of gold and a castle and all this stuff, and everyone's very angry about this because it's just hugely excessive and also there's a bunch of like, classism and xenophobia happening there 'coz he's lower-born, and not from England.

I: Yep.

E: Also Edward's reign quickly becomes quite problematic, because he just has very little interest in doing any work.

I: Relatable.

[laughter]

E: So his dad dies in early July, and then he goes up to get his body, and he like, just kind of hangs around until early September, before he goes back to England to arrange his marriage and the coronation and the funeral.

A: Do you mean to arrange Piers marriage?

E: No, his own marriage.

A: To arrange his own marriage, okay.

E: It's time for him to get married to the no-longer-four-year-old.

A: Okay. Yep.

E: She's 12 now.

A: That's not okay.

E: Nooo. I mean, they're not gonna have children for several year or anything.

A: Yeah.

E: So like, it's not okay, but like, it could be worse. He just generally won't do anything in any kind of timely manner, so people will be like, "This is a very urgent decision!" and then he'll just like leave for a week. He'll postpone meetings, or he just like, won't show up to Parliament and things like that; when presented with a series of options he generally just does whatever's easiest; he often does whatever the last instruction was to him.

I: [laughs]

E: So if a bunch of people are telling him conflicting things the last person he's like, "Ohh, ahh, I'll do that one" and he just generally relies far too much on other people to make all the important decisions for him. He's also just very impulsive; he's very easily bored; and basically he's just not at all suited to be king of a country. It's created the situation where people are able to – and like, kind of forced to – take power from him.

A: Mmhm.

E: So the kingdom becomes increasingly unstable under his reign, and I feel like he is basically capable of running it, he just kind of like chooses not to.

A: Mmkay.

I: I mean, this is also the problem with monarchy.

E: It is. Anyway, also, his hobbies...

[laughter]

I: Okay.

E: It's noted that he has a passion for things like rowing and swimming and breeding animals and digging ditches.

[laughter]

I: That's a weird one!

[laughter]

E: Yeah.

A: That doesn't sound like a fun hobby.

E: And also, just generally, like he pays a lot of attention to the specifics of the castles he's building in a...

I: Ah, yeah.

E: In a like, very minute way. And basically the reason why these things are focussed on is because they're considered to be very like, rural occupations that aren't befitted a man his status.

I: Okay.

E: Yeah, so he likes to hang out with like, oarsmen and singers and things like that, and people like, make a big deal out of this...

I: Yeah, yeah.

E: ...to be like, "Well, you're like, not a fitting figure to be king, because you know, you want to dig things...."

[laughter]

E: He at one point a bit later in his reign was things aren't going so well for him, he just like withdraws from politics for a little while and he finds this little building within the precincts of Westminster Abbey called Burgundy and he just kind of like retreats there to like, renovate it, and he... it is said that he prefers to be called the King of Burgundy than the King of England.

A and I: Aww....

E: Yeah. And he's expected to keep attacking Scotland, and he just kind of doesn't really have any interest in doing it.

A: I respect that.

I: Feel like that's fair – it hasn't really gone anywhere yet.

E: Yeah, yeah.

I: Like, why waste your money?

E: Ahh, there's enormous pressure to do so.

I: Yeah.

E: Especially because some of the lords have like, lands that are kind of nominally theirs in Scotland, or in the very north of England...

I: Oh yeah.

E: ...that keep getting attacked and taken from them, and they want the income from that.

I: Mm.

E: So there's this huge pressure to go and keep conquering Scotland. So occasionally – well, like, quite often really – he makes his like token attempts at dealing with Scotland, but it doesn't really progress under his reign. Like if it's not gonna progress under Edward I, who is really fixated on this for like the whole end of his life...

I: Yeah.

E: ...it's not gonna progress under Edward II, who doesn't care. Also his army's weaker because sometimes his lords just like, refuse to go with him, either because they have too much admin to do, or because they just hate Piers so much that they won't be on a campaign with him.

I: What's wrong with Piers? Do they... is this just a, like...

E: He's a young upstart who doesn't deserve anything he has and has too much sway with the king.

I: So they're really they're just kind of jealous that Edward is giving stuff out to him all the time.

E: Mm, yeah, basically.

A: When you said they have too much admin to do is that just like part of the standard work of being a lord, or is that a like, they have to run the country 'coz Edward sure isn't doing it?

E: Well they create this kind of big admin task for themselves that I'll talk about in a sec.

A: Okay.

E: So, yeah.

A: Cool.

E: But it's just, they're just kind of like, "Oh, no, I've like, I've got stuff to do. I'll... I'll... um... I'm washing my hair."

[laughter]

I: "Come conquer Scotland with me!" "Sorry, I'm washing my hair that day."

E: Yeah. [laughs] Also once they get to Scotland, when they are campaigning, he's like, not very good at leading the campaigns. So once he gathers this huge army, but he makes them go, like, enormously quickly up to Scotland so when they get there and they're ready to fight a battle they're all exhausted, so they do badly. There's one instance in 1313 where they go to besiege Stirling Castle, which is a Scottish stronghold at the point, and the Scots come to meet them in battle and the English cavalry gets all bogged down; the Scots rush in and just kill a bunch of them, and they don't really have the organisation or the time to get their archers or their infantry in there, and then Robert Bruce lines all his non-combatants up on the hill so it looks like he's got another army, and the English just freak out and leave.

I: [laughs]

E: Edward, to his credit, I guess, refuses to like, abandon his troops until one of his men is like, "Nope, you're gonna die, I'm grabbing your horses reins, and we're leaving."

A: Okay, no I respect that.

E: Yep, like he seems to have been personally like, reasonably compassionate and not cowardly or anything like that, he just like, he just shouldn't have this position. [laughs]

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

E: A lot of them drown in the river that's there.

A: Hmm...

E: All of their stuff is left for the Scots to plunder.

A: That's bad.

E: Yes. But the real big problem with his reign is Piers Gaveston. We've already seen how he favours him...

I: Yeah.

E: ...very overtly. One chronicler said that there were two kings, one in name and one in reality. So that's...

A: Okay.

E: ...and idea of like, how much influence Piers is seen to have. He's understood to be very arrogant because he's seen to have been like, risen way above where he's meant to be in life...

A: Mmhm.

E: He's only successful because the king likes him, etc. etc., and he's seen to be a bad influence, like, who's just leading the king into all of these vices of gluttony and all of that, and away from listening to his nobles who he should be listening to. Piers, on the one hand he kind of seems pretty legit – like when he gives him like, administrative positions or military commands, he generally just kind of like, gets it down reasonably well.

I: Okay.

A: That's good. Maybe he should have been the king.

E: I think he would have been a better king than Edward – like, sometimes Edward gives him tasks to do or decisions to make because he doesn't want to...

A: Mmhm.

E: ...and then he just kind of like, gets them done. He also, however, does kind of exacerbate the situation in some ways. He is hated by the nobles because he gives them all insulting nicknames.

I: Okay Piers. Go on.

E: So he calls the Earl of Gloucester a cuckold's bird...

I: Mmhm.

E: He calls the Earl of Warwick a black dog. So he goes off to France to marry Isabella in 1308...

I: Oh yeah.

E: ...so he's like been king for like, six months. She's 12, as I said. And while he's gone he makes Piers regent, which is seen as completely unacceptable. It would have again, made more sense for him to leave one of his half-brothers as regent. And then they come back and organise the coronation. So it's this massive affair – they set up all of these temporary buildings; there's like 40 ovens; there's fountains of red, white, and spiced wine.

[laughter]

A: I want a fountain of spiced wine.

E: I too. And... you know, like, that... it sounds quite good from that, but then also no-one's really like, supervising anything. No-one's really making sure everything stays on track, so it's just a complete mess. It's just chaos. There's also a temporary wall that falls down and crushes and kills a man.

A: Oh.

I: Oh no.

E: Yeah.

I: That... I mean, still happens to this day.

A: Yeah, and it's still bad...

I: Yeah.

A: ...and a result of poor supervision.

E: Yep, I feel like that's a non-controversial opinion.

I: Yep.

A: Yep.

E: At the coronation, it's customary that various items of the king's regalia is brought in by one of his lords, or like...

I: Yeah.

E: ...several of his lords, and Piers gets to carry in the crown, and he's walking right in front of Edward. He also gets to put the spur on the king's left foot – so the right one is put on by the brother of the king of France, so gives you an idea of the like, status this implies. He's also dressed in like, purple, and he's got pearls everywhere, even more lavishly than the king.

A: Okay.

E: Edward has tapestries made for this that bear both his arms and...

A: Okay, so there's no like, reasonable justification for him doing that.

E: No.

A: Okay.

E: No. It would have been expected, maybe, that he'd have his arms and Isabella's.

A: Yeah, that would make sense, given that they are in fact married.

E: Yeah. The lords are absolutely outraged by this. The queen's relatives go off back to France in a rage, believing him to be more infatuated with Piers Gaveston than they are with his new queer.

A: I feel like based on the evidence available to them that's...

[laughter]

A: ...fair enough.

E: Yeah, that was.. they were correct, yes.

I: Yeah.

E: Isabella writes to her father complaining that she's being neglected for Piers Gaveston.

A: Mm.

E: And the nobles protest in Parliament – they say that Piers is committing treason by alienating the king from his lords and all of this other stuff, and Edward starts to prepare for civil war.

A: Ohh!

I: That's a very like, this situation where they've gone, "He's too in love with you! That's treason."

[laughter]

E: Yep. And...

A: I feel like, he could have like, got out of this situation quite easily if he'd just calmed down a bit. Like, you didn't need to dress Piers in these purple robes and put his arms on a tapestry. Like, you could form a solid relationship without doing that.

E: Yep. And well, what he does is he relents and he allows Piers to be sent into exile for like, the third time!

A: Maybe he should just set him up on like, a nice island somewhere with like a very nice house, and just like, go and visit him.

E: I feel like if he'd been a little bit more moderate this would have all been much more reasonable.

I: Yes.

A: Yeah.

E: It's also the thing where the way Piers is generally thought of by historians isn't that he was like, very greedy and constantly like, bugging Edward for more power – that he was just like, very close to the king, and as a result of that kept getting power.

I: Mm.

E: So, I just like, Edward, stop it.

A: Yeah.

E: Yeah. So what Edward does, now that he has to go into exile, is he makes him the governor of Ireland, and gives him all of the income from that country.

I: Okay.

A: So...

[laughter]

A: When Piers goes into exile, where does he go?

E: Ireland.

I: Ireland.

A: I mean...

E: He's the governor. Of Ireland.

A: I would believe that an English monarch could make someone the governor of a place where they were not.

E: Yeah, that's true. But basically the lords feel like they've kind of been tricked because they've gone like, "Oh, send him away," and he sends him just kind of like, round the corner, and gives him a tonne of money, and a really prestigious position.

A: Yep.

E: So they're quite embarrassed by that. At this point the Pope excommunicates him.

A: [laughs]

I: For... just....

E: Just being a bit much.

I: Yeah.

[laughter]

I: "Sorry Edward, you're too extra."

A: No.

E: Not Edward, Piers.

I: Oh, sorry, yeah.

E: Yeah.

A: If the Pope had excommunicated the king of England, you'd know about it.

E: [laughs]

I: Yeah, I was gonna say. I mean, they excommunicated a lot of people.

E: Yeah.

A: So can we assume that's a thing where like, the lords of England wrote a letter to the Pope and were like, "Can you do something about this situation?"

E: Yeah, the Pope kind of keeps intervening in this. I don't have much about it, because it didn't really result in a tonne.

A: Mmhm.

E: But he has times where he just sends Edward letters and is like, "Can you calm stuff down with Piers?"

[laughter]

E: Piers, meanwhile, is in Ireland, proving himself to be like, quite a competent military governor, so...

A: I quite like Piers.

E: Yeah, I like Piers too.

[laughter]

A: He seems...

E: I feel bad for Piers. [laughs]

I: Yeah.

E: Like, don't fall in love with kings in the medieval period. Just don't do it.

A: No. No.

E: And even before he leaves, Edward is thinking about how he's gonna get him back. So he spends all this energy making alliances with men who he feels are like, able to be brought over to his side of things; he writes to the Pope; he negotiates with all of his lords to carry out tax reforms that they want done in order to get him back. So he can get stuff done, is my point in saying this.

I: Ah.

E: He's perfect able of achieving a goal, he just never bothers unless it's like...

I: ...about Piers.

E: ...personal stuff that he wants.

I: Yeah.

E: And he succeeds in mid-1309, his exile is repealed, and he's like, un-excommunicated. Edward had pre-empted that this was gonna happen, and he has Piers back a month early.

[laughter]

A: You made a mistake, Edward.

E: And they're really really happy, and they spend Christmas together and it's great.

A and I: Awww....

E: Yes. And then the nobles are mad.

[laughter]

E: And they request that a council of 12 ordainers be appointed, who are able to issue Ordinances, with a capital 'O' to just kind of like fix whatever they think is wrong. And Edward is like, rightly quite suspicious of this, but he essentially has to say yes.

A: Mmhm.

E: And they end up selecting 21 men, not 12, and they pick a lot of people who had served Edward I as his ministers, and exclude any man who had relied on Edward for political advancement.

I: Yeah.

E: And they start work on these Ordinances, which is basically like, this massive list of like, everything they feel Edward is doing wrong, in March of 1310. So this is the thing where people are being like, "Oh, we've really got some admin to do. We can't come to Scotland."

A: "We're writing a list of all the things you've done wrong."

E: Yeah.

A: "But it's taking a long time."

E: "We're too busy talking smack about you..." So they complete them in August of 1311, and essentially they're just this massive list of ways that they want to limit his power. They're trying to get rid of people – people who are influencing him negatively, so like, Piers.

I: Yeah.

E: They want him exiled by November 1st. They wanted all of Edward's income to go to the treasurer who then decides what it should be spent on. Edward is forbidden from making war, leaving the country, appointing a regent, appointing ministers, using his seal without Parliament's permission...

A and I: Mmhm.

E: Now I kind of feel like frankly this would be, like, a good deal for Edward. He doesn't wanna do this work. Just be like, "Nah nah nah, like you can have whatever you want, just let me have like, a castle to renovate, and my boyfriend, and I'll just be a figurehead." [laughs]

A: Yeah.

E: But he's furious, and doesn't want this at all and he kind of just ignores it. Like, these pass.

I: And he just ignores it.

E: And he just ignores it. Yeah. Piers is exiled. He goes off to France, but because the French royal family hates him, because their daughter's husband is in love with him...

I: Yeah.

E: ...it's very hard for him to be in France, and so he ends up just like, back in England by Christmas time.

[laughter]

E: And the lords are like, "Alright, that's it. We're capturing him."

I: [laughs]

E: And so he and Edward are in this castle, and then a bunch of lords, led by the Earl of Lancaster, show up and attack the castle, and quickly take the castle and they have to flee in a boat. And Isabella is essentially just left to flee herself.

A: How old is Isabella at this point?

E: She's like about 16, 17.

A: Okay. Okay.

E: Edward and Piers go off and hide in separate castles. Within two weeks Piers has to surrender because he doesn't have any supplies.

A: Mmhm.

E: And the Earl of Pembroke comes to escort him to another castle for safekeeping. The other castle actually belongs to Piers, and it might be the case that the Earl of Pembroke is being paid by Edward.

I: Oh, okay.

E: So this is kind of okay at this point.

A: Mmkay, so he's run out of supplies and he's come and he's gonna take him elsewhere, but it's not...

E: Yeah, yeah. So they're travelling, and then he's left alone in the house for a little bit, and then the Earl of Warwick hears he's nearby, and gathers like 140 guys and shows up and is like, "You're coming with us."

I: Alright.

E: And Piers is like, "I'm... coming with you, I guess." [laughs]

I: Yep.

E: And so they take him to Warwick Castle, and a bunch of his enemies gather and they do a kind of like mock trial, and they declare him a traitor, and they execute him, and he's beheaded.

A: Oh!

I: Oh.

E: And Piers is dead.

I: Oh. Goodbye Piers.

A: Ohh!

E: Yep.

A: I really liked Piers. I feel he was a pretty good guy.

E: I'm sad for Piers.

A: Yeah.

E: I thought we might pause here and have a bit of a like, gay chat about this.

[laughter]

E: Just about how historians have reacted to his and Piers' relationship in terms of like, were they a couple or not. So obviously the case for them being a couple is that they're just excessively close and Edward is giving him everything. Chronicles say that he loved him "beyond the bounds of moderation", they describe their relationship as this unique and excessive love. Pretty much the one like, key argument against them having been in a homosexual relationship is one that was made by a historian called Pierre Chaplais. He thinks that we place, kind of too much focus on this potential homosexuality, and not enough on the fact that Edward and Piers get called "brothers" a bunch of times in the chronicles. So we have times where one chronicler, for example, calls him his adoptive brother, another similarly says "they have killed a great earl, whom the king had adopted as brother". So he says, you know, this could be a figure of speech, but also to him it seems like it's more than that, and he argues that what is happening here is like a formalised contractual blood-brother relationship.

The reason why I bring this up is because I looked at about like, half a dozen different biographies just to get an idea about like, what was out there about Piers. More than half of them, like maybe four or five of them, said, you know, this seems homosexual, however Pierre Chaplais has said this, so maybe it's not.

A: Mmhm.

I: Yep.

E: So this is a very prominent argument in the field. So obviously the whole blood-brother relationship is like, two men who aren't related, kind of, swearing to figuratively be brothers, and it means that they would be loyal to each other, and they'd share booty in war, and they'd look after each other's spouses if one of them died, they'd ransom each other, and things like that. And so his argument is that, well like, that would explain all the stuff he does. And he gives a bunch of examples about other blood-brother relationships. So he...

I: Yeah.

E: ...gives the example of, in the 7th century, the king of Mercia, and the king of Northumbria formed a blood-brother bond. He gives another example where there were these two men, Uhtred and Thurbrand. Now, Thurbrand kills Uhtred. In response to that, Uhtred's son kills Thurbrand.

A: Reasonable.

E: So we're in the cycle of violence now.

I: Yep.

E: So Thurbrand's son is like, "Uhtred's son, why don't we become blood-brothers and we'll end the cycle of violence." And they do that.

A: Mmhm.

E: And then he kills him anyway.

A: Ohh....

I: Oh, come on!

E: Yeah.

I: You were being so good!

E: Yes.

A: So that is a lot like a kinda political marriage?

E: Yeah, I was gonna say that it's very clear in the examples that he gives – and these aren't like, the only examples, to be clear, he says it's quite common amongst kind of like, lower nobility at the time, as a kind of like, safeguard – but these are the examples that he gives, and it's very clear that in these cases these two men have political motivation to forge a bond. There isn't a political incentive to forge a bond with Piers Gaveston. He is much...

A: Mm.

E: ...lower-born than Edward.

I: Yep.

A: Yeah.

E: There's only like this strong, personal attachment, that means that they hypothetically made a blood-brother arrangement, and then sure, maybe that's why he gave him all this stuff. But that still doesn't explain why the strong personal attachment exists in the first place.

I: Yeah.

E: Also, it very much reminded me about like, any number of other episodes we've had where like, a same-sex couple uses like, available social institutions to kind of form a stand-in marriage when they can't have a legitimate marriage.

I: Yes.

A: Yeah.

I: There's also... it's not that uncommon in a lot of the ones we've come across for people to call their partner "sister" or...

E: Yeah, yeah.

I: Yeah.

E: That's not that weird. I did even see a couple of historians who were like, "Well he calls him "brother", so that 100% rules out a sexual relationship, and I was like "That's..."

I: ...not how that works.

E: "...a stupid argument."

A: That sounds weird to modern ears, but...

E: Yeah.

A: I mean...

I: It even only sounds weird to like, modern Western ears I guess.

A: That's true too, yeah.

E: Yeah, yeah.

A: I think also just the level of unreasonableness in Edward's behaviour towards Piers – like the fact that he's put like, everything on the line and like, the stability of his kingdom on the line for Piers – I feel like that level of unreasonableness implies an infatuation that is not just like, "Hey, this is, you know..."

E: Yeah.

A: "...a convenient bond for both of us to have!" or "Hey, we're friends, and I feel like I should do some stuff

for you.”

E: Also, I think there's like, very explicitly a comparison to how he behaves to Piers and how he should be behaving to Isabella, his wife.

A: Mm.

I: Yes, like you had her – Isabella – and her family making that...

E: Mm.

I: ...you're neglecting her for Piers, sort of...

E: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Also interestingly, his big final statement at the end of the book is, “We might equally aim the same charge at David, who valued Jonathan's love more than he did the love of women.”

[laughter]

I: Yeah, we do.

E: And I was like, “Yeah, we... yeah, I hate to break it to you...”

[laughter]

E: He also has, like, very early on, he has this comparison where he's like, “Is this one of the fabled friendships among heroes – David and Jonathan, Achilles and Patroclus...”

[laughter]

E: “...or is it homosexual?”

[laughter]

A: Ohhhh nooo Pierre, we have some things to tell you.

E: Yeah. But there was also this quote: “The existence of such a bond” - that is, a blood-brother bond - “however, is supported by a great deal of circumstantial evidence, beside being a more plausible explanation for the preferential treatment than the gratuitous assumption that they were lovers.”

[laughter]

E: And I was just kind of offended by that.

A: I feel like Pierre Chaplais went into this with a bias. And I feel like we also went into this with a bias.

E: Yeah.

I: Yeah, no, like it's definitely possible that Edward and Piers are just really close and not having sex.

E: Yeah, and I think we should revisit this at the end, when like, further stuff has come to light, because a lot of the chronicles we have are written towards the end of his reign or after his reign, and like, stuff is gonna happen in his reign...

A: Mmhm.

I: Yeah.

E: ...that influences this. I think it's just also the thing like, what that quote really reflects for me is that tendency to kind of being like, “Let's think of literally any other option, and when we've dismissed those, then we can begin to consider...”

I: Yeah.

E: “...queerness.”

I: No, I see what you mean. It's that kind of, any time you see a close relationship, if it was a man and a woman, they would go, "Oh, they're lovers."

E: Yeah.

I: But when it's two men they go, "Oh, that's gratuitous."

E: Anyway, Piers is dead. Goodbye Piers.

A: Bye.

E: So obviously Edward is very very upset about this, but he doesn't really have much of an avenue for revenge yet. Incidentally, the Earl of Warwick not that long after this, just kind of gets sick and dies, so like, there's suggestions that he was poisoned by Edward.

A: Mmhm.

E: But, you know, mostly no revenge yet.

A: So nothing to back up those suggestions, that just seems to make sense.

E: No, it's just like, "Mm..."

A: Okay.

E: "You're a nobleman and you died in medieval England. Suspicious!"

[laughter]

E: But of course, this doesn't like, really calm matters down. Edward is mad and not particularly inclined to deal well with his lords now.

I: Mmhm.

E: He also just gets new favourites, the Despensers. So there's Hugh Despenser the Elder, and Hugh Despenser the Younger.

A: In what way are they related?

E: Father and son.

A: Okay.

E: Yeah. Hugh Despenser the Younger is the young and hot one.

[laughter]

E: Also, if I say Hugh Despenser, I mean Hugh Despenser the Younger. If I mean his dad, I'll specify, because Hugh Despenser the Younger is far more prominent and around.

A: Yep.

E: So it'll just be easier. The Despensers are considered by the rest of the lords as being much like Piers Gaveston. So they don't really have any inherent like, worth, or importance. They've just managed to raise themselves up by becoming important to the king. Hugh Despenser the Elder had served both Edward I and Edward II in campaigns, and the Younger had been a member of Edward's household since before he was king – so you remember at the beginning we mentioned his little circle of young men when he was prince.

A: Mmhm.

E: One of them was Hugh Despenser the Younger.

I: Yes, I remember that.

E: Yep. He is married to Eleanor of Clare, who is sister of the Earl of Gloucester, who is another one of Edward's young men.

So, 1314 through 1316 is just a mess. There's massive heavy rainfalls across Europe, and this leaves to shortages of food, which creates soaring prices, and therefore economic instability – this isn't just the case in England.

I: Yeah.

E: This is like, in a great number of places. We can't blame Edward for like, rain.

A: Okay.

E: We can blame him for how he reacts to rain, but this was difficult...

I: Yeah.

E:... in the first place. There's enough shortages that even Edward, as he's travelling around, sometimes struggles to have enough food.

A: Mmhm.

E: It gets even worse in 1315, and then because of this famine there's massive unrest throughout the kingdom, and crime soars, instability gets worse. There Scots are raiding them, because the Scots are likewise hard-hit, and that means they occasionally are like, obliged to go and deal with the Scots, but they don't have the funds to, and it doesn't really do anything. It just gets them into a worse economic position. So Edward is being thought of worse and worse by his people.

A: Yeah.

I: Mmhm.

E: Edward and Isabella and their household are at a banquet one day and they're watching all of these entertainers, and then a woman rides in on a horse wearing a mask, and hands him a letter.

[laughter]

E: And he's like, "This is hilarious! It must be part of the entertainment! Open it and read it aloud!" and...

A: Oh no...

E: ...it's this massive criticism about how he's a terrible king.

I: Oh no!

A: Oh no! I like that she came in in a mask.

E: Yeah, me too.

A: Good on her. Do we know who this woman is or is that never recorded?

E: So she's arrested and questioned and it's like, one of his lords...

A: Sent her?

E: ...decided to set this up. And she's like, let off. It's fine.

A: Okay.

E: Which I'm glad of, 'coz I think there's a real chance that they killed her.

I: Yeah, I...

E: But they didn't. They didn't kill her.

A: Good.

E: Yes.

A: I liked her.

E: Me too.

I: [laughs]

E: Chief among Edward detractors at this point is the Earl of Lancaster, who we've heard from before.

A: Yep.

E: Just in his role as like, not liking anything Edward does.

A: Mmhm.

E: He has this thing where he wants to have any lands granted since 1310 given back to their original owners. Many people are mad about this, 'coz they wanna keep their lands, and so this creates a rift with other lords that gets worse and worse, and the Earl of Lancaster, his rift with these other lords gets so bad that civil war is again threatening, which has pretty much been happening like, fairly constantly since Edward became king. The Earl of Surrey goes to the extent of abducting the Earl of Lancaster's wife.

[shocked laughter]

A: Ohhhh!

E: The chronicles say that she was pleased about it, because she doesn't like her husband.

A: I mean, maybe she doesn't.

E: Everything's v propaganda.

A: Mmmm.

E: In any case, the Earls are fairly united against the Earl of Lancaster. He starts refusing to attend Parliament unless Edward's courtiers are dismissed, and this just results in him being isolated off in his castle, 'coz...

I: I was...

E: ...they're just like, "No?"

I: Yeah I was about to say, what's that going to do for him?

E: Yeah.

A: Mm.

E: I feel like maybe he said that like, very angrily in public, and then they were like, "Alright," and he was like, "I'm leaving!" and then it was like, "Oh noooo...."

[laughter]

E: They have another attempt to go and fight the Scots, and Lancaster has his men block them from leaving. So the Earl of Lancaster is desperate enough about his position that he makes contact with the Scots, and a bunch of his men, with some of the Scotsmen, attack and rob a party of the king's men, which accidentally includes two cardinals.

I: Whoops.

E: And the Pope just uses this as further evidence that Edward has no control over his country. Around this time a man shows up and says that Edward II is an imposter and that he is the true son of Edward I.

A: Oh!

I: [laughs]

E: He claims that Edward II is the son of a man who tricked his way into the household in order to make love to the queen, and therefore Edward is truly low-born, and this is why he's the way he is. E: Edward was apparently just quite amused by all of this, but everyone was like, "No you can't allow this to be going on", and they killed him.

A: How serious was this accusation taken at the time? Like, did people believe him?

E: No, I think the general assumption is that he's kind of mad.

A: Mmkay.

E: You know...

I: Yeah.

E: Like, this wasn't ever going to go anywhere. And saying like that quite outlandish story, he's just some guy, you know.

A: Yep.

E: But the fact that that kind of make sense in one way. Like, "Oh, you're lowborn, this is why you're bad at ruling and like to dig things."

I: Yep.

E: It kind of shows the climate of the time. But he just keeps promoting his favourites. He has learnt nothing from the death of Piers.

A: Edward! Why are you like this?

E: He makes Hugh Despenser the younger his chamberlain, meaning he controls access to Edward. Piers Gaverston had once held this position. There's like, just generally less historical analysis on whether or not Hugh and Edward were lovers.

A: I feel like it's not un...if we start from the the assumption that Edward and Piers were lovers, which I'm pretty willing to accept, I think it's like, very reasonable to assume that Edward and Hugh were lovers.

E: Yeah, I think that does tend to happen. And people just tend to be like, "Yeah, maybe this as well.

A: Yep.

E: I don't know. There's just not a lot on...there's also just not a lot of information getting in depth and really comparing Hugh Despenser and Piers Gaverston which I think would be very very interesting.

A: Comparing them as people, or their lives, or Edward's attitude...?

E: Both them as people, and specifically what roles they're given, and when, just generally. I think it'd be worth doing.

A: Mm-hm.

E: So, Hugh Despenser. He seems much more overtly power hungry, very actively trying to get as much land as possible, so Edward has given him a bunch of land. Gilbert Clare, the Earl of Gloucester, who we've mentioned a couple of times, had been the most powerful of the lords of the Welsh marshes, so that's like all along the Welsh English border, and he dies, leaving this like, power vacuum, where his land goes to his three sisters, and one of those sisters is married to Hugh Despenser, so he scoops that up, and then he is basically working and getting more through any way possible, and making his lands more profitable. Other lords are getting very distressed about this, among these are the Roger Mortimers – Roger Mortimer and

his nephew, Roger Mortimer.

A & I: [laugh]

E: Hugh Despenser is described as being the king's right eye, but an eyesore to the rest of the kingdom

A: It's interesting that they said his right eye, but not his right hand.

E: Yep.

A: Yeah, which is the normal way to say that.

I: I mean, presumably there's no such thing as a handsome.

A: Yeah, they were really set on that mediocre pun.

I: Yeah.

E: [laughs] So again, civil war, our old friend, it looms! So these Welsh lords are agitating. They get our good old friend the Earl of Lancaster on their side. Then there's also this situation where a Welshman named Llywelyn Bren led a revolt in 1316, and he was captured, and he surrenders and he says, "Do whatever you want to me, but just leave my followers alone," and he's quite well respected because of that. Mortimer urges that they pardon him. The Bishop of Hereford also urges pardon. That might be not how you pronounce that, but we don't have an alternative, and if you wanted us to pronounce your places right, you shouldn't've sent our ancestors here, so...

I: [laughs]

E: Several of the lords are urging that he pardon Llywelyn Bren, and then Despenser takes him off and kills him without trial and takes his lands.

A: Oh.

I: That was uncool.

E: It was uncool.

A: So you're right. He is bad.

E: [laughing] He is quite bad. I don't like him. I want Piers back.

A: Yeah...

E: And the various Welsh lords are quite angry about this, and they start to lay waste to the Despensers' lands.

I: I feel that's fair.

E: Yeah. SO they start attacking in 1321, and they take like a dozen castles very quickly, and they're absolutely just trashing their land. They're breaking in and destroying their possessions. Eli: And they're flying the king's banner while they do it, as kind of a symbol that what they're doing is for the king, and it's for the good of the realm.

Alice: Okay, okay.

E: So Edward our old friend doesn't know what to do, 'cause he never does.

A: Yup.

E: And some of his councillors tell him that he needs to go to war, and some of them say, no, invite them here and let them air their complaints and we'll have a discussion.

A: Mm-hm.

E: They agree to do the latter...

A: Good.

E: The Welsh lords, but they come heavily armed and it's all just very tense, and Edward doesn't really know what to do about this, so he tries to just sort of delay them by taking a really long time at negotiations.

A: Mm-hm.

E: He sends one of his men to go and check some castle fortifications in case they need to like flee and start being at war, and the guy just defects to the Welsh.

I: [laughs]

E: And then the king is essentially just putting it off and kinda hoping that it will resolve itself.

A: How does he picture that occurring?

E; I don't know that he has a plan here, Alice.

I: [laughs]

A: Okay.

E: He just puts stuff off sometimes.

I: Relatable.

A: Yeah, but you don't run a country.

I: Yeah this is true.

E: And...

A: Probably with good reason.

I: Yeah.

E: You probably shouldn't, Irene.

I: I don't intend to.

E: And the Welsh are really frustrated by this, obviously. And they threaten to set London on fire.

A: O.

E: And mediators kind of force Edward to accept terms. The Despensers are accused of any number of things, of restricting access to the king, making war, seizing too much power, which are all like, pretty true. And they are found guilty of these and they are banished. So the elder goes off to France, and the younger stays nearby in the sea off of Kent and essentially becomes a pirate.

A: [snorts]

I: [laughs] Okay??

A: Okay.

E: Like, he just traps any ships that come his way and just like, robs them.

A: So he is exactly a pirate.

E: He's a pirate, now?

I: Okay!

A: I did not expect Edward II to have a pirate boyfriend when this episode started, but okay.

E: Edward essentially just doesn't have any supporters now, but he keeps just ignoring the Ordinances. He's planning on overthrowing the banishment of the Despencers, and he summons a Church assembly to discuss the matter, and he along with these like, selected churchmen, decide that it was unlawful, and Hugh Despenser the younger is offered protection, then quite soon after, they're recalled.

I: Hadn't he literally been robbing ships though?

E: Yes!

I: But that's just fine?

E: Look...he's the king.

I: [laughs] Okay.

E: So what he's done by calling these churchmen is essentially avoided having to get Parliament's approval, because once he has this group of religious authorities who are like, "Yeah, cool", they can't really do anything about it. So again, he's pretty reasonable at getting stuff done when he can actually like, be bothered to get stuff.

A: So his major skill as a monarch is getting his boyfriends to come home.

E: Yes.

A: That's like the only thing he can achieve effectively.

E: He's achieved it several times.

A: Yeah.

E: He orders that the Welsh agitators get arrested, and this includes the Mortimers, Roger Mortimer and Roger Mortimer.

A: [laughs]

E: And they surrender and they're sent off to the Tower of London. Edward's army and the rebelling army meet in the Battle of Boroughbridge, and they win. And the Earl of Lancaster is captured and he declares him a traitor and beheads him.

A: The Earl of Lancaster was on the Welsh side at this point.

E: Yeah, so the Welsh had gone and got him on their side because they knew that he didn't like Edward and was pretty desperate. So now he kind of has some revenge for Piers. Two of the main guys who were involved in getting Piers killed are dead.

A: That's good.

E: That's nice.

A: I'm happy.

E: So he has a period of time now where he's actually kinda doing pretty well. He's wiped out some major opposition, he regains power, harvests are going better.

A: Oh, that's nice.

E: The Roger Mortimers are in the Tower. They've both been sentenced to death, and the older one dies in prison just 'cause like, being in the Tower of London is pretty rough. But the younger one manages to survive for a bit longer, and then his sentence is commuted to like in prison.

A: Okay.

E: Again, opposition to Edward and to the Despencers begins to rise, and this time it's led by Queen Isabella and the Bishop of Hereford, among others.

A: Yep.

I: Wait, Isabella his wife?

E: Yep. Isabella his wife.

I: She's just like, "No, this is enough, Edward, I'm bringing you down"?

E: Yeeees....Exactly that.

I: Okay.

A: Like that's not unreasonable. I feel like as his wife she's got a pretty bad position.

E: She had. She came over at twelve.

A: Yeah, and it hasn't like, done any good for her.

E: No.

A: Did they have children?

E: They did. They have like, three, I think? They have a son, who will become relevant, you know because he's gonna be king.

A: Did they name him Edward.

E: They did name him Edward.

A: Cool.

E: Ah, and I know he has at least two daughters, there might be others.

A: Okay.

E: And then this little faction, like Isabella and the Bishop and so forth, help the younger Roger Mortimer, now the only Roger Mortimer, escape.

A: Mm-hm.

E: So they drug the guards and he gets out into the kitchen, and he climbs up out the chimney, and then he gets off the roof by rope ladder, and they get him a rowboat, and he rows away, and then eventually he gets to France.

A: That was good!

E: Yep. So the Despencers at this point have all of their original lands and more, and they're getting even more. And some of this as we've touched on a little bit, is by criminal means, so for example, Hugh Despenser the younger kidnaps an heiress until her land is given to him, ah, and of course, people are not cool with this.

A: Yeah.

E: There's just been so much moving of lords around that huge areas haven't really been kept up effectively and everything like that. And so people generally begin to be more sympathetic to the Queen. Even some of Edward's old like, boyhood friends, are going over to her side.

A: I am more sympathetic to the Queen.

I: I'm just super impressed that we're about to have like, a civil war between the king and his wife.

E: I mean...you know you've not done too well as king at that point, don't you.

I: Yeah.

E: So the Despencers view Queen Isabella as being the source of the trouble at this point, and so they start trying to sow discord between her and Edward.

A: I feel like discord has already been sown.

I: I was going to say, yeah.

E: They're worsening it. Apparently they try to get the marriage annulled.

A: On any specific grounds, or just like...?

E: Well I know that part of what they do is they try to just like, spread propaganda against her as a Frenchwoman. So they say that well, if the French invade, she's gonna help them, and they can use her lands as a base, so we need to take her lands away.

A: Is there risk of the French invading.

E: No!

I: No they're literally allies aren't they?

A: Yeah, that's what I thought.

E: Well, I mean, look... They also do this thing periodically where they just arrest a bunch of French people because, you know, they could be traitorous.

A: Okay.

E: And she's very very upset and she writes to the French king about this, who by this time is Charles IV, her brother, instead of her father, who is now dead. And they kind of want to calm this down a bit, so they say, "Edward, come over, and make homage, and have some negotiations, with the French crown."

A: Yeah.

E: And he's like, "Look, I'm really busy, I'm gonna send an envoy," so they send some envoys, and it makes no progress, and they get sent back. And instead, Isabella's like, "I'll go."

I: [laughs]

E: And so she goes, and she does very very well. She does some very good negotiating, and her brother also says, "Look, I'll give you financial support if you need financial support you can live here." And she like, "Why thank you."

I: [laughs]

E: And they still want Edward to come over. And the Despencers are quite afraid that if he goes then everything will fall apart for them.

A: Yep.

E: And they go, "Don't do that, send your son instead." And he goes, "Oh yeah, okay." And then they send the heir to the throne over to Isabella in France.

I: How old is the son at this point?

E: He's thirteen.

I: Okay.

A: So Isabella's left with the heir to the throne.

E: Yep.

A: Cool.

E: Good job, Edward!

A: You're bad at this, Edward. You're bad at this job!

E: [laughs] So Edward II doesn't immediately realise that he's like, *really* screwed up, so he's just waiting for his wife and son to come home at some point, and then they don't. And then they send all their men home, and he's like, "Come back," and she's like...

I: "No."

A: Is he just not aware of how his wife feels about this situation at this time? Is he just too oblivious?

E: I think he's a little too oblivious. Yeah. He's not fully cognisant of, I think, what's at risk here.

A: Mmkay.

E: She writes and says that she knew that there had been attempts to destroy their marriage, and that she would return when the men responsible for it were gone. So, the Despencers. And until then she was going to consider herself to be a widow.

A: Ooh.

I: Ouch, yeah.

E: Yeah. Her brother would pay for her to live in France, or give her an army to invade if she wanted one.

I: [laughs]

A: Oh wow.

E: And Edward's like, "What? Why?? The Despencers have always been good friends to you! What are you doing? Leave my son out of this!"

I: Her brother is fantastic though. I like she goes to him and he's like, "Yeah, yeah your husband is quite bad. If you want to invade, look, I've got an army."

A: Yeah.

E: He writes to his son and is like, "Edward, come home! Don't marry anyone without my permission."

I & A: [laugh]

E: And all of the Bishops are writing to her like "Isabella, get back here," and she's like, "Nope, not doing it." And then she and her son are declared enemies and formally banished from the kingdom.

A: But, still married.

E: Still married.

I: And he's still the heir to the throne??

E: Yeah.

I: [laughs] Wow, what a mess.

E: And then she starts an affair with Roger Mortimer.

A: Oh! He's in France now?

E: Yeah, he went to France when they broke him out of the Tower of London. He just like, went to France.

A: That's right! He did run away to France.

E: And then she gets to France and is like, "Hey, I hear you hate Edward II. Shall we take this to the bedroom?"

[laughter]

A: That's a solid pick-up line, I like it.

E: And the Despensers really really stress this relationship in order to smear her reputation.

A: Mm-hm.

E: And that's very very effective. Charles, her brother starts refusing her help. He won't give her any more money. He bans anyone else from giving her any more money as well.

I: Aww.

E: And he goes, "Go back to England, go back to your husband." And she leaves, but she goes elsewhere, and she manages to raise an army, and a fleet.

A: Wait, where?

E: So she comes to England and is just like, "Hey, um, I'm the Queen, do you wanna like, be in my army?" And they're like, "Yes!"

A: Oh, I see, so she raises an army in England.

E: She manages to raise I think like, part of her army, beforehand, just from like other European allies that she has personally. And then she goes over there and she keeps raising one. Edward is panicking, and he tries... [laughs]

A: [laughs]

E: This is very funny to me, I'm sorry. He tries to get a fleet together, but because Hugh Despenser was basically a pirate...

I & A: [laugh]

I: Whoops.

E: They refuse! And he's trying to get an army together, and no-one wants to be in his army, and Isabella's just like, walking across England and picking up an army as she goes.

A: [laughing]

E: He goes to all the Londoners and he's like, "Will you be in my army?" and they're like, "Oh, look, we're gonna wait and see." And then Isabella shows up like "Do you wanna be in my army?" and they're like, "We would love to be in your army." There's just general chaos in London. Some Londoners just behead two of Edward's men.

I: Just random Londoners do this?

E: Yeah, I think so. They're ransacking the houses of anyone who's associated with Edward. They're breaking prisoners out of the tower, and so the Queen takes London. She has conquered London. And Edward flees.

A: [laughs]

E: And Isabella is taking lands and giving them back to previous owners. The older Hugh Despenser tries to

hold the castle, but the citizens who were like, living in that castle, side with Isabella, and just kind of hand him over, and he is captured and sentence to be hung, drawn, and quartered, and then that occurs.

I: Goodbye, Hugh Despenser.

A: Okay.

E: Yes. So that was the older.

A: Okay.

I: Okay, okay. So the pirate's still here.

E: The pirate's still here. Edward is still fleeing and trying desperately to raise an army, and failing to raise an army. I feel bad about how funny this ended up, because it's really about to get quite sad.

A: [laughs] I'm sorry, I'll stop laughing.

E: No no no...

A: But it's pretty hilarious.

E: And then he is captured, along with Hugh Despenser the younger, and like a few others who are with them. Hugh Despenser the younger is essentially put to a kind of mock trial, and he's also hung, drawn and quartered. His head is displayed on London Bridge.

A: Ooh.

I: That was a thing they used to do.

A: Yeah yeah.

E: They sure did. But it was always gross.

I: Yeah, it was.

E: At this point, Isabella has Edward's seal, and she's issuing documents, in name, from Edward.

I: [laughs]

A: Why doesn't she just come to an agreement with Edward where she just gets to run the country, and he can just go and like...

E: He never would've.

I: In this situation, I guess, where he isn't going to run the country, but he also has too much pride to let anyone else do it...

E: I think it's...we also do have to recognise that him just giving away a lot of power is quite dangerous for him.

I & A: Yeah.

E: It doesn't really seem like she's trying to depose him so much at this point. She just trying to like, get her standing back and get rid of the Despensers. But others of them were clearly like, "We're gonna depose the king." In January of 1327, nobles and churchmen all swear allegiance to his son, and they appoint a new government, and he's effectively been deposed. This is the first time this happens, in England.

A: Oh, okay.

E: Yeah. The fourteen year old is now Edward III, refuses to become king without consent from his father.

A: Oh.

E: A bunch of nobles go to Edward II, and they say, "Look, just hand in the crown." And he is dressed all in black, he's grieving, he's sobbing, and eventually he begs for everyone's pardon, and expresses joy that his son is going to be his successor and says, "Yep, be king." He just has, no choice. He has to say that now.

A: Is he grieving for...his kingship, or for Hugh Despenser.

I: Presumably for...yeah.

E: I'd say for the entire situation. His life is fallen apart.

A: Yeah, yep.

E: At this point, though, even though they have Edward captured and deposed, he technically remains a threat. So they're moving him around a lot. We don't really know how accurate the chronicles are, but they paint this very sad picture of him, as just kind of a broken man. He's not eating well, he doesn't really get to sleep very much, he's being constantly moved around. His lords keep him in a state of constant uncertainty by changing their attitudes towards him, so he doesn't know when someone comes in if they're going to be kind to him, or if they're gonna...be abusive.

A: Yep.

I: That's...yeah.

A: I do feel bad for him now.

E: Yeah. And then the news comes that the king is dead, or the ex-king is dead, I suppose, technically. And there's early confusion in the manuscripts about this. Several either say just that he is dead, with no further details, or they express doubt about what has happened. However, by the 1340s, the story that's being circulated about how he died is that he was held down, a funnel was inserted into his anus, and then a like, white hot metal rod was inserted into that.

A: Ohhh.

E: And it was twisted around until he died.

I: Okay. What – okay.

E: Yeah. So quite often the reason that has been given for this is that they didn't want there to be any visible damage to the body. So that if you stab the king in the heart, for example, then there's a stab wound in the heart. But this way they could plausibly say that he just died of illness, or whatever. Having said that, you can just put a pillow on someone's face.

A: Yeah.

I: Yes...

E: The other argument that scholars generally give is that this is in reference to the fact that by this point Edward has a reputation as a sodomite.

A: Mm-hm.

E: So there are direct allegations of him being a sodomite in the chronicles, but it's not until 1326 onwards, and these are generally understood to be part and part of this discourse that's going around about how he just fundamentally just doesn't embody the like masculine traits required for him to be a good king.

A: Mm-hm.

E: So, these ideas that he really likes to dig ditches, and swim and look at architecture, and things like that, and that he's very gluttonous, and very lazy, and things like that, are all part of this wider image of portraying him as being just degenerate and not able to rule properly.

A: Yep.

E: And sodomy is a part of that image.

A: Mmkay.

E: So this is all very much contributing to painting him as...not man enough and therefore as effeminate, but I will just quickly note that effeminacy at this time...like, it today has this sort of inherent association with male homosexuality.

A: Mm-hm.

E: It didn't so much back then so basically any type of overindulgence is seen as feminising. So a man who is way too into women and spends way too much time seducing women is seen to be effeminate.

A: Okay.

I: That is odd...

E: And I think the idea is that that kind of morally undermines him. You know, you've got this idea of what a man is meant to be, and it's a very religious Christian idea, that's very much based on, you know, discipline and so forth, at the time.

A: Mm.

I: Yeah.

E: And that's very tied into, you know, you're able to do your duties as a government figure, as a military man, as a king, whatever, and if you're drinking too much, if you're hanging out with lowborn folk, if you're...you know, can't control yourself and are just off sleeping with women all the time, or of course, if you're involved in sodomy, then you're not gonna be able to do that, and therefore you're kind of unmanned.

A: Yeah.

I: Yep.

A: That makes sense.

E: Yeah, like, it's awful.

A: It has an internal logic.

E: It has an internal logic. [laughs]

I: I remember that's what we said about the Romans as well.

E: Yeah.

A: Yeah, yeah.

E: Queer As Fact – it has an internal logic!

I & A: [laugh]

E: So the earliest accusation of Edward being a sodomite that we have comes from the Bishop of Hereford, from October of 1326.

A: So, what year did he die?

E: 1327. So the Bishop of Hereford is said to have called Edward a tyrant and a sodomite, in order to subvert the status of Edward II, so that's pretty blatantly like, you know...the Bishop of Hereford did some propaganda.

A: Yep.

E: It's only really after this that it starts to appear more, later. So, a little while later there are chronicles that say, about the coronation, "The mad folly of the King of England rejected by God and men, was so overcome with his own wickedness and desire for sinful forbidden sex that he banished his royal wife and her sweet embraces from his side."

A: Okay.

E: And then by the 1390s there's very blatant statements that Edward took too much delight in sodomy.

I: Okay.

E: So it's definitely propaganda, it's very blatantly that this is propaganda, but that doesn't mean that it's a like.

I: No, exactly, I was gonna say, that could be, yeah, founded in fact that was just not a problem up until then.

A: Yeah, and also if you're looking for propaganda about someone and you look at someone who has had these male favourites and all this, then like...

E: Mm-hm. Yep. He could've been vulnerable to it, and that's why they exploited it.

A: Yep.

E: It is also worth noting that sodomy isn't a particularly clear-cut thing at the time. So right now we today would think of sodomy as being like, anal sex.

A: Mm-hm.

E: Generally between two men. But it wasn't as clear cut at the time, so a definition that came from an article I read by a scholar named Ormrod defined as "a category of sin and crime that encompassed many forms of non-procreative sexual practices".

A: Mm-hm.

E: So things like bestiality, and oral or anal sex between a man and a woman...And modern historians really take advantage of this ambiguity to basically deny that it has any reference to homosexuality whatsoever. But Ormrod argued and I am inclined to agree, that given there's this very public knowledge of his far too close friendships with men, which are a major reason why he's politically declined, and this general sodomy accusation and the nature of his death, combines to create this picture about him having certain preferences that were probably used to help depose him.

A: Yeah. I think that makes sense.

E: So there...there is lastly kind of the question of, was it that there was already this propaganda about Edward, and then he was murdered in this particular way in light of that, or was it that he was murdered because, this was the picture of him, this rumour, this lie about how he died was later formed.

A: Mm, that's true. I suppose we don't know that's how he was killed, do we.

E: No, not really. It doesn't appear immediately.

A: Mm.

I: It's a fairly outlandish execution. Like, I'd be inclined to question that a little bit.

E: Yeah, I'm not sure if that even would've been that beneficial for them, as a piece of propaganda at the time. Like that's a very cruel way to murder someone.

I: Yeah, and if they were going for cruel ways to murder someone, we've sort of already established, they have conventions for this. We've like, hung, drawn and quartered a bunch of people.

E: We sure have.

A: Mm, also it would seem, to murder him in that way, to make a point about his sodomy, but also obviously, if it didn't come out at the time, until later, to not make a public point about sodomy, it doesn't quite hold up?

E: Yeah. It was also noted by a couple of scholars that some chronicles say, it's not clear, that when Hugh Despenser was killed, they first cut off his genitals.

A: Mmkay.

E: Ah, and Ormrod kind of saw those things in conjunction with each other.

A: I mean, I guess it kind of makes sense if the problem that the people who killed these men had, or one of the major problems that they had was that they were having sex that they shouldn't've been having, then both those ways of killing them tie into that.

I: I don't know that "they were having sex that they shouldn't've been having" is really the problem there. Like the problem is the way that that relationship is affecting politics and things like that, and they've gone to the sort of sodomy accusations as a propaganda piece. That's not the root of the problem.

E: I think the root of the problem is that they see Edward as been being weak and insufficiently masculine to do his job, and he is therefore easily ruled by these other men, and both his political actions and this alleged "you're being sodomised in the bedroom" are essentially that narrative.

A: Mm.

E: So I think the whole "you're having the wrong kind of sex sort of is the problem, but I think it's just part and parcel of the wider way he's seen at the time.

I: Yeah.

E: Final impressions...? Yes gay, no gay?

A: Yes gay.

I: Probable gay.

E: Mm, yeah, that's more how I'm inclined to view it. I think it's a thing where our only real sources are the chronicles, and we need to keep in mind that the chronicles don't really know what he's doing.

A: That's true. I mean, if I somehow found out from some, you know, Edward's personal diary emerged...

E: [laughs]

A: And it was revealed that he was not gay and he was just super fond of these men in a friends way, I would be like, "Well, there was no actual evidence to the contrary," but I would be surprised.

E: It's one of those things where we had to have that conversation about like, "When we say 'Was it gay?', what do we mean?" You know? 'Cause I think it's possible that no sex ever happened. I'm inclined to think that Piers and Edward had a bunch of sex, frankly, but it's possible that they didn't. And we know that an established like, relationship between two young men in a blood brotherhood way, was normal, but at some point it becomes not normal, and they've crossed that. But I still think that like, quantifying what makes them a gay couple is hard. I dunno. That sentence went for too long.

I: Yeah, I was going to say, it's like, we can argue about whether or not they're gay, but they're still – yeah, they're having a relationship that's socially unacceptable.

E: Yeah. I think that was the big problem with the whole, like, blood brotherhood explanation, for me, is that it essentially posited this quite socially recognised, acceptable framework for their relationship.

I: And they're apparently just not doing that. They're apparently doing something that's is offensive to his wife.

E: Yeah, yeah, that this is so clearly, even if it was something that was at some point couched within that, was just...beyond the pale. Do you feel differently about Hugh Despenser?

I: I don't feel super differently about Hugh Despenser, to be honest. Like, he's a less...he's a more obviously bad person...

E: [laughs] Yes...

I: I think that might be a lot of the difference there is that the information we have about him is not the same kind of information. Like there's no coronation where he can put Hugh Despenser's coat of arms on his...

E: No... There's more obviously a case where Hugh Despenser's very power hungry and is actively trying to build a power base for himself. Do you think it's possible that this is something where he like, exploited Edward's potential feelings for him, or do you think there's something to indicate that they were like, a couple there?

I: Yeah, that's definitely possible, that he's sort of...there's that precedent with Piers and Hugh Despenser is taking advantage of that.

E: Mm-hm. Yeah.

A: Especially perhaps having grown up with Piers and Edward, and having viewed and understood the dynamic of that relationship. He may be more able to sort exploit that, and step into that role when Piers is gone.

E: It's why I think there should really be more work on Hugh Despenser, because there's this very clear kind of kind drawn from like, Piers and Edward, best friends in childhood, and then that kind of goes on uninterrupted until Piers dies. So they very much couch it as this kind of "friends from childhood" sort of thing. And then Hugh Despenser had that relationship with him as well, he was part of his household as well, but because he comes to prominence later in his life what I saw of him didn't really seem to construct his place in Edward's life in the same way, as being like, lifelong friend, who then kind of came to be the centre of his affections. Yeah, so I'd be interested to see, if you looked at all of the sources and then tried to put together a really like, unified arc of Hugh Despenser's life, what you ended up with.

I: Yeah...Because I just felt like a lot of it did kind of feel the same. Those sorts of, elaborate schemes to get him unbanished and that kind of thing.

E: Mm, I think Edward is pretty much thinking of him in the same way.

I: Yeah.

E: How Hugh Despenser felt about it and if we could make any kind of comparison between his relationship with Edward and Piers's relationship with Edward and contrast them in any meaningful I think kind of remains to be seen.

A: Mm, yeah.

E: Thank you very much for listening. We've been Queer As Fact. I'm Eli.

A: I'm Alice.

I: I'm Irene.

E: You can find us on Tumblr as queerasfact, on Twitter as queerasfact, and on Facebook as Queer As Fact. If you'd like to email us directly, we would love to hear from you. We're at queerasfact@gmail.com. We are also now on iTunes, so you can go and find us on there for easy listening. And while you're doing that, you

should give us a big five stars and a very positive review.

I: [laughs]

E: Or whatever you think we deserve. I've made my feelings known.

A: We'll be back on the 15th of January, when I'll be talking to you about Baron von Steuben, who has been called the father of the American army, and the gay dad of the American Revolution. We'll see you then.
Thank you!