

0. A LOOMING SHOWDOWN - Story Preface

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Immediately after she is crowned Queen of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Sibylla crowns her new husband—Guy of Lusignan—as King. This 15th-century illumination is from *Estoire de Eracles*, maintained at the BNF in Paris, where the 15th-century manuscript is known as MS Français 2629 f. 300.

People in the Kingdom of Jerusalem were divided between those who wanted to fight against Saladin and those who didn't. Making the matter potentially more divisive, the current king - Baldwin IV - was in trouble by 1174. A young but effective ruler, he was dying of lepromatous leprosy.

Raymond III, Count of Tripoli (one of the three fiefs created at the time of the Crusader conquest), was regent for Baldwin IV. (Raymond had a home in the nearby town of Tiberias and, in the film *Kingdom of Heaven*, he is called by the name of that town not by his actual name.)

When the ill king could not perform his duties, Raymond - who advised against military engagements with Saladin - filled in.

A truce between Saladin and the Franks was reached, then broken by the Franks. Saladin, affronted by the breach, raised an army.

Baldwin, by now too ill to lead his men, gave the command of his army to Guy of Lusignan, a knight from Aquitaine (in southwestern France). To better enhance his future, Guy met - then quickly married - King Baldwin's sister, Sibylla.

Now the king's brother-in-law, Guy was named Baldwin's regent, replacing Raymond. But Guy, shadowing the Muslim army, refused to fight Saladin.

Despite his illness, Baldwin was outraged by Guy's perceived cowardice, and removed him as regent. Wishing to secure his succession, the dying king proclaimed his young nephew Baldwin (Sibylla's son by a prior marriage) as Baldwin V. He then appointed Raymond of Tripoli as the young king's regent.

Leprosy killed Baldwin IV in March of 1185. He thought he had put in place a plan for good government, before his death at age twenty-nine. He even dictated what would happen if his nephew, the new king, died before he reached age ten - and all the nobles swore an oath to uphold his wishes.

But the best-laid plans can go awry - especially with a little help from conspirators - and Baldwin V died (some say of poison) in 1186. He was eight years old and had been king barely a year.

Instead of following the protocol Baldwin IV had instituted for appointing a new king, if his nephew died too soon, Sibylla and her husband Guy of Lusignan, staged a coup. Sibylla, sister of Baldwin IV and mother of Baldwin V, was crowned queen; she then crowned her husband king-consort.

Most of the nobles reluctantly agreed to accept Guy as king, but Raymond of Tripoli did not.

Upset that Raymond was following his own counsel, Guy threatened the former regent who had returned to his lands in Galilee (where the city of Tiberias was, and still is, located). Undeterred by Guy of Lusignan's actions, Raymond made a deal with Saladin. By agreement, concluded between the two men, Saladin would protect Raymond's lands.

That alliance would lead to Saladin's greatest victory and, ultimately, to the loss of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-LOOMING-SHOWDOWN-Kingdom-of-Heaven>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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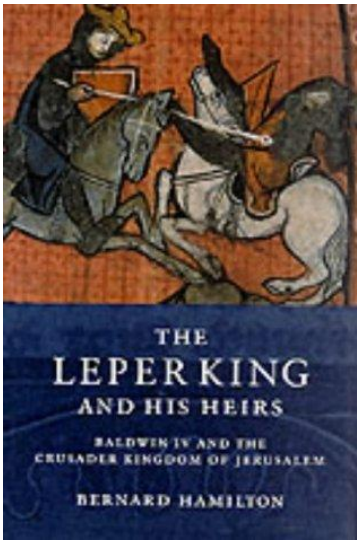
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Sibylla Crowns Guy of Lusignan

BNF, From the *Estoire de Eracles* (MS Français 2629 f. 300). Public Domain.

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