

0. THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE - Story Preface

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7. WAT TYLER and the PEASANT UPRISING

8. EXECUTION OF WAT TYLER

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Detail of a miniature of the Wheel of Fortune (*Rota Fortunae*), with a Queen of Fortune at the top, from John Lydgate's *Siege of Troy*, c. 1457. The work is maintained by the University of Manchester's University Library. Click on the image for a full-page view.

In the Middle Ages, a knight's fortune (like that of everyone else) was subject to change, just like today. But during that time, the Wheel of Fortune was not a game show. It was a concept people actually believed - a kind of fate that was subject to the unpredictable "ups and downs" of life.

In a book that remained popular for 12 centuries, Boethius wrote of Fortune:

*I turn the whirling wheel and my circle spins. I am glad to change the lowest to the highest, and the highest to the lowest. Mount up if you will, provided you do so under this condition, that you will not maintain that I do you wrong though you descend down when the rules of my game require it.* (Quoted in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, at page 369.)

If a knight's fortune could be up one day and down the next, how would a peasant, who dared to lead a rebellion against his king (Richard II), survive life's vagaries?

For Wat Tyler, the answer to that question was swift and lethal.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-WHEEL-OF-FORTUNE-Knight-s-Tale-A)

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## Media Stream



### Rebellion Against the King

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