



For centuries Clan Cumming was one of the most powerful families in Scotland, bound closely to the monarchy and controlling large estates throughout the land. Known also as the Comyns, the Clan are descended from a Norman knight, Robert de Comyn, who fought alongside William I in his conquest of England. In reward for his valour, he was made Earl of Northumberland in 1069. His grandson, Richard Comyn, was invited to Scotland by David I, who made him Chancellor and granted him land in Roxburghshire. By the 13th Century the Comyns exerted great power, holding the three earldoms of Menteith, Angus and Buchan, and the Lordship of Badenoch. The Comyns had a double claim to the throne, through their bloodline's link to the Celtic King Duncan, and by the marriage of the Black Comyn into the Balliol family. The Balliol claim to the Scottish throne was upheld with John Balliol being crowned King of Scotland in 1292.

When Balliol abdicated in 1296, Scotland was without a king, and there were many contenders for the throne. With the infamous English monarch Edward I as overlord of Scotland, it was a time of great pressure and politics for all those who wished to rise to fill the empty crown. The strongest claimants were Red Comyn, Lord of Badenoch, and Robert the Bruce, Earl of Carrick. Each was a man of ambition, and the two nobles developed an enmity as they vied to become King. In 1306, as the drive for Scottish independence gained momentum, Bruce attempted to win Comyn over to his side. The pair met in the church at Dumfries, but there was to be no reconciliation between two men of such calibre. An argument developed, and in the heat of the conflict, Bruce

stabbed the Red Comyn to death. For such a heinous crime, Bruce was excommunicated, but Bruce still had himself crowned King. Robert the Bruce succeeded in his claim and went on to defeat the English at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. The fruits of Bruce's victory were not tasted by the Cummings. Bruce had his old enemies outlawed and confiscated their estates, thus breaking one of the most powerful families in Scotland.

The Clan Cumming are of tenacious blood, and other branches of the Clan continued to flourish throughout the centuries. The old spelling of Comyn changed through time to Cumming, although there are still several variations on the name. The Clan crest is of a lion rampant with a dagger in its paw, and the bold motto reads "Courage". The 22nd Chief of the Clan Cumming is Sir William Gordon Cumming who resides at Blair's House, Altyre, Forres in Morayshire.

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