



November 5, or Guy Fawkes Night, is when British people remember the "Gunpowder Plot" to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605.

Every November, British people light **bonfires** and set off fireworks to remember the day when the Houses of Parliament, and King James I, were **almost** blown up by terrorists. In a rather **ghoulish** tradition, children make "guys" to burn on the bonfires: effigies of Guy Fawkes, who came to symbolise the Catholic **conspiracy**. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were marked by a lot of religious conflict in Britain. Successive monarchs supported Protestantism or Catholicism, and generally persecuted people who didn't agree with their choice. James I was Protestant, and a group of Catholics decided to protest against the persecution in a very dramatic way.

The conspirators bought 36 barrels of **gunpowder** and hid them in the **cellars** under the Houses of Parliament. The plot was actually led by an aristocrat, Robert Catesby, not Fawkes. He was just a simple soldier who was **caught** with the gunpowder by the parliamentary guards on 5 November. Fawkes was arrested, tortured and executed.

Help:

- **gunpowder** (n): an explosive powder used in cannons.
- **bonfires** (n): big fires outside for celebrations.
- **almost** (adv): here, it nearly happened; it was possible, but it didn't happen.
- **ghoulish** (adj): macabre.
- **conspiracy** (n): a group's secret plan for criminal activities, a plot.
- **cellars** (n): part of a building which is underground. It is traditional to keep wine in a cellar.
- **caught** (v, preterite of catch): here, arrested by the army or police.

