



Royal Blood: Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes

By Bertram Fields

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Royal Blood: Richard III and the Mystery of the Princes By Bertram Fields

Notoriously immortalized by Shakespeare and historians, he is history's most infamous royal villain: Richard III, king of England from 1483 to 1485. Crazy with power and paranoia, he is generally supposed to have killed the youthful Prince of Wales and the aged Henry VI, drowned his brother in a vat of wine, poisoned his wife, and, worst of all, murdered his two young nephews, the older of whom was the rightful king--a reign of terror ending only with his own cowardly death on the blood-soaked field of battle.

But is all this true? Modern revisionists, citing the unreliability of Shakespeare's sources and the political agenda of historians in Richard's own day, have offered a far different portrait. A brave and valiant soldier, a loyal brother, and an intelligent, able king popular with his subjects and defeated only through treachery, their Richard is the victim of a deliberate campaign of slander devised by his Tudor successors to the throne.

In this comprehensive, meticulously researched book, renowned litigator Bertram Fields outlines and evaluates the arguments of both sides, sifting through five hundred years of legend to apply his highly successful courtroom techniques to the available evidence. Clearing away the dust of time, Fields reconstructs one of the most dramatic and turbulent episodes in history, analyzing the motives and machinations of the many players and emerging with the most definitive account yet of this most fascinating figure--and a powerful argument against acquiescing to common belief.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Prominent entertainment attorney Bertram Fields uses his legal expertise to analyze the life and times of Richard III in *Royal Blood*, shining a light on that most ambiguous and important period of English history, the years of the 15th century between the War of the Roses and Richard's bloody death at Bosworth Field. Rebuking traditional historians who have immortalized Richard as the treacherous usurper--the vile mastermind behind the deaths of his brother, nephews, and friends--as well as revisionists who treat him as the courageous victim of treasonous allies and Tudor power, Fields cross-examined all the earliest accounts, including Thomas More's history (which would serve as the basis for Shakespeare's play), exposing the geographical, political, and cultural influences that have shaped previous interpretations of Richard's career.

Among the many surprises is Fields's suggestion that Richard did not commit what is widely understood to be his most atrocious crime: the murder of his nephews, the Woodville Princes. With a lawyer's zeal for establishing doubt, Fields boldly entertains several possibilities for the princes' fates, arguing that other powerful contestants for the English throne, like Richard's Tudor successor Henry VII, could have been responsible for the deaths of the boys--or that the infamous killing might not have even taken place. Fields also speculates on what might have happened had Richard not become king. Would England have remained Catholic? Could the First World War have been prevented? Such conjectures may raise an eyebrow--they are as delightfully provocative as the rest of *Royal Blood*. --James Highfill

From Publishers Weekly

Shakespeare (a Tudor playwright, after all) said Richard III did it. Contemporary mystery writers such as Josephine Tey and Elizabeth Peters would argue the reverse. And historians have weighed in on both sides. In another salvo in the bookish battle over whether or not Richard III killed his royal nephews in order to consolidate his power, Los Angeles entertainment attorney Fields offers a remarkably thorough and intricate history. After reading Fields's examination, readers will find themselves regarding British icons--Hastings, the Tudors, Dorset, etc.--with new appreciation. Fields sprinkles this erudite look at 15th-century England with enough informative asides to make the complexities of the Wars of the Roses a little less overwhelming (e.g., the swashbuckling Sir Edward Brampton was the first Jew ever to be knighted). Fields also presents an interesting portrait of Sir Thomas More, one that makes him out to be as misleading as Shakespeare when it comes to Richard's villainy. The book ends with a "what if" chapter that posits an entirely different world had Richard III stayed on the throne. It's easy to see why Fields is such a successful lawyer--his account is masterfully argued and expertly researched. It may be a little much for the casual reader, but then Ricardian revisionists rarely are casual readers. (Nov.) FYI: Fields, who writes Hollywood thrillers under the name D. Kincaid, started this book after his father asked when he was going to do something serious with his life. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From [Booklist](#)

This investigation into the possibility that the fifteenth-century English king Richard III murdered his two young nephews differs from others in that Fields is a prominent entertainment lawyer; and it is from the perspective of a practicing attorney that he assesses Richard's guilt. Richard III, as the reader will remember, was the younger brother of Edward IV; on the latter's death, his young son naturally succeeded to the throne. But Uncle Richard deposed the boy king, incarcerated him and his brother, and assumed the throne for himself. Tradition has maintained that Richard murdered the boys and buried them on the Tower of London premises, and the issue has been hotly debated for centuries. Although at times as dry as a legal document,

and despite reaching only the middle-of-the-road conclusion that "an objective analysis of the facts known today does not allow for certainty or even near certainty as to Richard's innocence or guilt," Fields' exposition contributes a new approach to the literature of the period. *Brad Hooper*

Users Review

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