

1

00:00:00,438 --> 00:00:17,956

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

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00:00:17,956 --> 00:00:22,475

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily

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00:00:22,475 --> 00:00:26,475

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

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00:00:27,475 --> 00:00:33,474

Five hundred years ago, it is said two young princes, one heir to the throne of England,

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00:00:33,474 --> 00:00:37,473

were murdered in the Tower of London.

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00:00:37,473 --> 00:00:46,472

Their uncle, Richard the Third, the last English king to personally lead troops into battle, was accused.

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00:00:46,472 --> 00:00:48,472

Others hold this to be slandered.

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00:00:48,472 --> 00:00:52,472

Richard they say was the most valiant, most virtuous king.

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00:00:52,472 --> 00:00:57,471

Which was true? Was Richard the murderous villain of Shakespeare's imagination?

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00:00:57,471 --> 00:01:01,470

Plots have I laid. Inductions dangerous.

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00:01:01,470 --> 00:01:10,469

By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams, to set my brother Clarence and the king in deadly hate, the one against the other.

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00:01:10,469 --> 00:01:14,469

Did Richard have his nephews murdered to gain the crown?

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00:01:14,469 --> 00:01:22,468

The answer to this mystery may yet be found in the Tower of London.

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00:01:33,467 --> 00:01:40,466

Beside the Thames River flowing through the city of London stand the grim stone walls of the Tower of London.

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00:01:45,465 --> 00:01:55,464

On the ruins of an ancient Roman fortress, William the Conqueror ordered construction of a huge castle in the year 1078.

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00:01:55,464 --> 00:02:01,463

It would dominate the landscape and intimidate the local inhabitants.

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00:02:01,463 --> 00:02:09,462

Over the centuries, subsequent kings made it one of the strongest fortifications in all of Europe.

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00:02:10,462 --> 00:02:18,461

It has withstood siege, bombardment and the great fire that destroyed London.

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00:02:24,460 --> 00:02:33,459

For 900 years it has served as a fortress, a royal palace, a dreaded prison and a treasury for the

crown jewels.

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00:02:34,459 --> 00:02:42,458

The crown of England, the pinnacle of power. It cost the lives of many ambitious noblemen.

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00:02:42,458 --> 00:02:50,457

The quest of it dimmed honor and loyalty. Richard the Third was accused of such an obsession.

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00:02:50,457 --> 00:02:56,456

The adversary Henry Tudor burned with the same desire.

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00:02:56,456 --> 00:03:02,456

Peter Hammond, Tower Historian

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00:03:02,456 --> 00:03:11,454

I think what most people know about the Tower is the time when it was a state prison, a place where important political prisoners were kept.

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00:03:11,454 --> 00:03:21,453

There were many famous people in the Tower and most of them came to unfortunate ends, beheaded or disappearing mysteriously.

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00:03:22,453 --> 00:03:32,452

Prisoners were often brought to the Tower by riverboat, the fate of many to have their heads impaled on the spikes of Tower Bridge.

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00:03:32,452 --> 00:03:36,451

Few who arrived here ever left.

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00:03:36,451 --> 00:03:45,450

Stairways led to secret passages and torture chambers deep within the walls where terrible screams were often heard.

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00:03:45,450 --> 00:03:50,450

Beneath these stones the earth was once soaked with the blood of Queens.

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00:03:50,450 --> 00:03:55,449

Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard, wives of Henry VIII.

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00:03:55,449 --> 00:04:04,448

Sir Walter Rolly wrote his history of the world during his 12 year imprisonment here before he too was beheaded.

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00:04:04,448 --> 00:04:12,447

One sad tale is that of Lady Jane Gray, guiltless herself but a victim of her family's ambition.

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00:04:12,447 --> 00:04:17,446

She was executed after being Queen for just nine days.

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00:04:24,446 --> 00:04:31,445

One of the most interesting, fascinating mysteries in the Tower is what happened to the two young princes.

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00:04:31,445 --> 00:04:41,443

Those two royal children, the sons of Edward IV, who disappeared mysteriously after the elder one lost the crown that was his by right

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00:04:41,443 --> 00:04:44,443

and his uncle Richard III became king and said,

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00:04:44,443 --> 00:04:47,443

what we know about it is not very much.

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00:04:47,443 --> 00:04:51,442

We know that the princes were in the Tower after their uncle Richard became king.

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00:04:51,442 --> 00:04:54,442

We know that they were last seen in the Tower.

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00:04:54,442 --> 00:04:59,441

We know that a couple of hundred years later the bones of two young children were found,

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00:04:59,441 --> 00:05:02,441

who may or may not have been the princes.

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00:05:02,441 --> 00:05:10,440

In writing we have stories about rumors of the princes having died, but nothing more than that.

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00:05:11,440 --> 00:05:17,439

There is only one recorded fact concerning the young princes entered into the records of the day,

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00:05:17,439 --> 00:05:24,438

that they were last seen in June 1483, playing at bows and arrows in the Tower yard.

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00:05:30,437 --> 00:05:32,437

They were never seen again.

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00:05:33,437 --> 00:05:42,436

The popular story has it that Richard plotted with one Sir James Tyrell to murder the princes.

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00:05:42,436 --> 00:05:48,435

Not content with being the young king's Lord Protector, he wanted to throne himself.

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00:05:51,435 --> 00:05:56,434

The opportunity came, it is said, when young Edward heir to the crown was placed in the Tower,

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00:05:56,434 --> 00:06:01,434

according to the tradition that all kings to be must reside there before their coronation.

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00:06:01,434 --> 00:06:05,433

His young brother was brought to keep him company.

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00:06:05,433 --> 00:06:11,432

Sir James obtained the keys to the Tower and one midnight, accompanied by two henchmen,

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00:06:11,432 --> 00:06:15,432

secretly came to the place where the boys slept.

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00:06:31,430 --> 00:06:42,429

As Tyrell kept watch at the door, the accomplices entered the chamber.

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00:07:02,426 --> 00:07:13,425

Whether the story is true or not, the children were never seen again.

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00:07:16,424 --> 00:07:21,424

Their uncle Richard is believed by many to be completely innocent.

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00:07:21,424 --> 00:07:28,423

One group, the Richard III society in London, has thousands of members in branches throughout the world.

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00:07:28,423 --> 00:07:31,422

Their spokesman is Jeremy Potter.

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00:07:59,419 --> 00:08:08,418

He was obviously an extremely courageous and extremely generous, I would say extremely straightforward person.

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00:08:08,418 --> 00:08:13,417

He did care about the less privileged of his subjects.

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00:08:13,417 --> 00:08:17,417

There would be no good reason for Richard wanting to kill the boys.

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00:08:17,417 --> 00:08:29,415

When Edward IV, the boy's father, died, he left Richard as Lord Protector of the realm and of the elder boy,

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00:08:29,415 --> 00:08:34,415

and the country did not wish for a boy king.

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00:08:34,415 --> 00:08:40,414

So Richard III was the adult heir to the Plantagenet throne.

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00:08:40,414 --> 00:08:46,413

He was accepted by the City of London, by the House of Parliament, as the rightful king.

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00:08:46,413 --> 00:08:52,413

Richard would have gained nothing out of the murder of the princes without anybody being certain that they were dead.

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00:08:52,413 --> 00:08:58,412

I think he was an ambitious man, and at this time he was a frightened man.

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00:08:58,412 --> 00:09:05,411

And one can see perhaps everything he did, and perhaps the murder of the princes as well,

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00:09:05,411 --> 00:09:10,410

as things that he did to save himself, to preserve himself from his enemies.

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00:09:10,410 --> 00:09:18,409

He had to make himself keen because that was the only way he was safe from the princes mother, Elizabeth Woodville, and her family,

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00:09:18,409 --> 00:09:23,409

who were after his life in fact, as he knew, it was a battle to the death between them.

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00:09:23,409 --> 00:09:29,408

And once the princes were in the tower, it wasn't safe even to leave them alive,

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00:09:29,408 --> 00:09:37,407

because their names could be used by any rebels or conspirators against Richard, as indeed was to happen.

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00:09:37,407 --> 00:09:42,406

So to preserve himself, I think he had them done away with.

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00:09:48,406 --> 00:09:53,405

At Westminster Abbey, head librarian Howard Nixon added his view.

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00:09:54,405 --> 00:10:08,403

The evidence of Richard III's complicity was based almost entirely on Sir Thomas More's history of the reign of King Richard III,

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00:10:08,403 --> 00:10:15,402

in which he was quite convinced that Richard was a double-dyed villain,

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00:10:15,402 --> 00:10:21,402

and that he was entirely responsible for the murder of the princes.

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00:10:22,401 --> 00:10:31,400

But Sir Thomas More was a very biased witness, because he was in the service of Cardinal Morton,

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00:10:31,400 --> 00:10:36,400

one of Richard III's greatest enemies.

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00:10:36,400 --> 00:10:50,398

And although in his account, More writes as if he was personally present when this story was being unfolded,

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00:10:51,398 --> 00:10:57,397

in fact, he was a boy probably under six years old.

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00:11:08,396 --> 00:11:12,395

The part of Shakespeare's Richard III has always been incredibly popular with actors.

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00:11:12,395 --> 00:11:19,394

David Garrick made his reputation with it, Edmund Keane, one of his favourite roles, Irving Olivier,

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00:11:19,394 --> 00:11:24,394

and whatever people actually think was the true nature of the historical Richard,

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00:11:24,394 --> 00:11:32,393

I don't think you're ever going to get rid of this image of him as the bottled spider, as the rey de king, as the evil, evil monster.

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00:11:32,393 --> 00:11:36,392

Shakespeare was a writer of fiction, he was a writer of historical fiction,

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00:11:36,392 --> 00:11:41,392

and he made up the plots in order to suit his particular characters.

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00:11:41,392 --> 00:11:50,391

And of course he based them on some historical facts, but he accepted the Tudor version of Richard III,

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00:11:50,391 --> 00:11:55,390

because it was very strict censorship at the time, and if he had not, his play would never have been performed,

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00:11:55,390 --> 00:11:57,390

and he would have been thrown into prison.

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00:11:57,390 --> 00:12:01,389

Not content with creating one of the most villainous characters in literature,

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00:12:01,389 --> 00:12:08,388

Shakespeare makes Richard deformed physically. He gives him a hump, he gives him a withered arm.

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00:12:08,388 --> 00:12:14,388

Shakespeare makes Richard lay bare his character, his motives and his intentions in the very opening speech of the play,

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00:12:14,388 --> 00:12:17,387

when he turns to the audience and he says,

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00:12:17,387 --> 00:12:24,386

Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by the sun of York,

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00:12:24,386 --> 00:12:29,386

and all the clouds that lured upon our house in the deep bosom of the ocean bedded.

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00:12:29,386 --> 00:12:33,385

Grim-visaged war had smoothed his wrinkled front,

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00:12:33,385 --> 00:12:39,385

and now, instead of mounting barbed steeds to fright the souls of fearful adversaries,

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00:12:39,385 --> 00:12:46,384

he capers nimbly in his lady's chamber to the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

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00:12:49,383 --> 00:12:57,382

That I, that I am not shaped for sportive tricks, nor made to court an amorous-looking glass,

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00:12:57,382 --> 00:13:04,381

I, that I am rudely stamped and want love's majesty to strut before a wanton, ambling nymph,

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00:13:04,381 --> 00:13:10,381

I, that I am curtailed of this fair proportion, cheated of feature by dissembling nature,

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00:13:10,381 --> 00:13:15,380

deformed, unfinished, sent before my time into this breathing world scarce half made up,

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00:13:15,380 --> 00:13:20,380

and that so lamely and unfashionable that dogs bark at me as I halt by the...

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00:13:20,380 --> 00:13:27,379

The medieval mind thought that a deformed body indicated an evil person that deformed mine.

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00:13:27,379 --> 00:13:32,378

It was to the interests of the tutors to suggest that he was a villain,

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00:13:32,378 --> 00:13:37,377

and they therefore made up a physical deformity in order to back this case.

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00:13:37,377 --> 00:13:44,377

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover to entertain these fair, well-spoken days,

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00:13:44,377 --> 00:13:50,376

I am determined to prove a villain and hate the idle pleasures of these days.

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00:13:53,375 --> 00:14:01,374

Plots have I laid, induction's dangerous, by drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,

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00:14:01,374 --> 00:14:07,374

to set my brother Clarence and the king in deadly hate, the one against the other,

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00:14:07,374 --> 00:14:14,373

and if King Edward be as true and just as I am subtle, false and treacherous.

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00:14:14,373 --> 00:14:21,372

This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up about a prophecy which says that G of Edward's heirs,

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00:14:21,372 --> 00:14:23,372

the murderer shall be.

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00:14:23,372 --> 00:14:29,371

This was entirely invented after his death, and also the story about the withered arm.

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00:14:29,371 --> 00:14:36,370

Well, now how on earth could a man with a withered arm ride a horse and wield a bat-leg?

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00:14:37,370 --> 00:14:42,369

Barely two years after gaining the crown, Richard was forced to fight to keep it,

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00:14:42,369 --> 00:14:49,369

and Retutor exiled in France, landed on English soil and raised an army to lay claim to the English throne.

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00:14:52,368 --> 00:14:56,368

Richard's forces met the tutors in the field at Bosworth.

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00:14:58,367 --> 00:15:05,367

At a critical moment, Richard, famous strategist in battle, the Fighting Lord of the North, made his decision.

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00:15:07,366 --> 00:15:12,366

He spurred his horse and charged headlong into the midst of his enemies.

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00:15:22,365 --> 00:15:27,364

Right sound, headbeams, shoot down!

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00:15:37,363 --> 00:15:43,362

At the battle of Bosworth to save his crown, Richard III thundered into the midst of his enemies,

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00:15:43,362 --> 00:15:46,362

seeking to bring down his adversary, Henry Tutor.

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00:15:46,362 --> 00:15:51,361

But one of Richard's closest allies, Lord Stanford, defecting at the last moment,

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00:15:51,361 --> 00:15:55,360

intercepted Richard within sight of his goal.

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00:16:07,359 --> 00:16:12,358

Not even Richard's enemies ever claimed that they had a chance to defeat him.

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00:16:12,358 --> 00:16:17,358

The only thing that was left of Richard's army was the fact that he was the only one left of his army.

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00:16:17,358 --> 00:16:22,357

The only thing that was left of Richard's army was the fact that he was the only one left of his army.

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00:16:22,357 --> 00:16:27,357

The only thing that was left of Richard's army was the fact that he was the only one left of his army.

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00:16:27,357 --> 00:16:32,356

The only thing that was left of Richard's army was the fact that he was the only one left of his army.

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00:16:33,356 --> 00:16:39,355

Not even Richard's enemies ever claimed that he lacked courage or skill in battle.

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00:16:42,355 --> 00:16:47,354

But treachery within his own ranks brought him down.

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00:17:03,352 --> 00:17:08,351

If Richard had killed to gain the crown, now it was all for nothing.

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00:17:08,351 --> 00:17:14,351

In the two years of his short reign, he had lost his much beloved son, his wife,

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00:17:14,351 --> 00:17:18,350

and now his kingdom and his life.

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00:17:21,350 --> 00:17:25,349

His last cry was treason.

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00:17:33,348 --> 00:17:40,348

On Richard's death, Henry Tudor became king, and a strange silence fell regarding the fate of the princes.

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00:17:40,348 --> 00:17:45,347

Twenty years later, Henry ordered the execution of Sir James Tyrrell for treason.

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00:17:45,347 --> 00:17:52,346

Afterwards, he even waited a further two months, then suddenly said that Tyrrell had confessed to the murder of the princes at Richard's command.

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00:17:52,346 --> 00:17:58,345

Although there's no evidence of such a confession, it became the source for the stories of Richard's guilt.

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00:18:03,345 --> 00:18:07,344

But if Richard was not guilty, who was?

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00:18:10,344 --> 00:18:19,343

Henry VII had very good reason to have the princes murdered, because he'd become king by battle, by beating Richard at Bosworth.

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00:18:19,343 --> 00:18:24,342

His claim to the throne wasn't very good, and the princes had a better claim.

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00:18:24,342 --> 00:18:30,341

So Henry Tudor, who became Henry VII, may well have found the boys alive and murdered them himself.

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00:18:30,341 --> 00:18:39,340

He did have other people who were in the royal line put out of a way in the tower, imprisoned, or even executed on trumped-up charges.

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00:18:39,340 --> 00:18:47,339

The only thing that makes me think that perhaps he was innocent is that maybe the princes weren't alive for him to have been murdered when he came to the throne.

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00:18:47,339 --> 00:18:53,339

Before you have a murderer, you have to have a murder, and there is no evidence that the princes were murdered.

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00:18:53,339 --> 00:18:56,338

They may have been. They simply disappeared.

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00:18:57,338 --> 00:19:01,338

And so the story rested for almost 200 years.

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00:19:01,338 --> 00:19:09,337

Then in 1547, some workmen found what appeared to be the bones of two children under a stairway at the base of the tower.

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00:19:09,337 --> 00:19:18,335

Believing them to be the remains of the princes, King Charles I had them sealed in an urn and placed in Westminster Abbey.

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00:19:18,335 --> 00:19:24,335

Ironically, in the Chapel of Henry VII, who might well have been their murderer.

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00:19:27,334 --> 00:19:35,333

Nearly two centuries later, in 1933, the urn was opened and the bones were examined by experts.

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00:19:35,333 --> 00:19:50,332

We've got some pictures of the bones here, and there is the almost complete skull of the elder child, and this shows the rather more broken one of the younger boy.

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00:19:50,332 --> 00:20:04,330

Here are the thigh bones of the two children, and you can see that one is longer than the other, and the jaw bone of Edward VI.

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00:20:04,330 --> 00:20:08,329

The examination of those bones in the Abbey nearly 50 years ago proved nothing.

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00:20:08,329 --> 00:20:17,328

It didn't prove the sex of the children. They could be female. It didn't prove the century which they lived, and it didn't prove their age.

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00:20:17,328 --> 00:20:24,327

And I hope that there will be another and more scientific investigation. Certainly we're pressing the dean and chapter to have them reexamined.

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00:20:24,327 --> 00:20:36,326

Once somebody has been buried in the Abbey, been given Christian burial, they are in a slightly different position from bones preserved in a museum.

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00:20:36,326 --> 00:20:45,325

And you cannot keep on poking into bones that have been given Christian burial inside a church.

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00:20:45,325 --> 00:20:52,324

I think they're reluctant to reexamine them because they're reluctant to disturb royal tombs, but the whole question here is whether they are royal tombs.

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00:20:52,324 --> 00:21:00,323

Are the bones in the Abbey those of the princes? Were the princes murdered at all?

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00:21:00,323 --> 00:21:06,322

If so, is Henry VII, who gained and kept the crown responsible for their deaths?

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00:21:06,322 --> 00:21:13,321

Is Richard the most maligned king in history? Or truly Shakespeare's arch-villain?

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00:21:13,321 --> 00:21:24,320

Perhaps new dating methods or a forgotten scroll in some dusty library may eventually give the answer to this intriguing mystery of the Tower of London.

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00:21:24,320 --> 00:21:35,319

The waters at the tower say that sometimes in the early dawn, the figures of two small lost boys walk anxiously and in hand on the tower green.

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00:21:35,319 --> 00:21:39,318

Are these the princes? And for whom do they search?

00:22:13,314 --> 00:22:16,314

The History Channel, where the past comes alive.