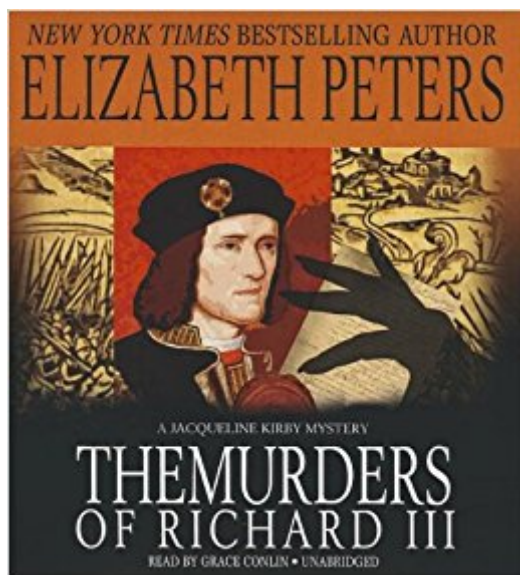


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The Murders Of Richard III (Jacqueline Kirby Mysteries)



Synopsis

In a remote English country mansion, modern devotees of the infamous King Richard III, immortally villainized by Shakespeare, have gathered for a grand weekend of role-playing and Ricardian scholarship. Jacqueline Kirby, an attractive American librarian attending the festivities, anticipates only one mystery to be raised: the five-hundred-year-old question of whether Richard truly killed the little princess in the Tower of London. Jacqueline is amused at the group's eccentricities--until history begins to repeat itself. A dangerous practical joker recreates famous fifteenth-century murder methods: beheading, poisoning, smothering, and even drowning in a butt of malmsey. As the jokes become more and more macabre, one at last proves fatal. Racing to untangle the murderous puzzle, Jacqueline puts all her observations together for a dazzling solution that will surprise even the most attentive listener.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A mixture of American and British characters fill this living room style mystery in which a joker's increasingly dangerous pranks parallel the more interesting historical events of the era of Richard III and the two princes in the tower. Though Carmen Lynne Williamson's awkward rendering of the American accents detracts from the listener's ability to identify with the intelligent, independent character Jacqueline Kirby, one still enjoys Peters's (The Last Camel Died at Noon, Audio Reviews, LJ 5/15/92) easy humor. History buffs will enjoy the author's grasp of the details and suppositions of this medieval period. ?Danielle D'Ottavio Harned, San Francisco Copyright 1995 Reed Business

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Highly entertaining. --New York TimesHistory buffs will enjoy the author's grasp of the details and suppositions of this medieval period. --Library Journal --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Jacqueline Kirby moves closer to the center stage in this book. I like that I was brought up to speed about Richard III and the alternative opinions about what his actions must have been. Perhaps he wasn't the scoundrel that the Tudors (and therefore Shakespeare) made him to be. There's a nice mystery within the story, beyond the mystery of who killed the young princes. There were paths I was led down, but the author played fair. All the information to solve the mystery was there. And I loved the oh-so-typical English house party location. While it is nice to read the series in order, this book stands alone should people want to start here. If you like cozy mysteries or are interested in English history, I think you'd like this book.

Elizabeth Peters is going to be missed by this reader. She always blends mystery, history and some humor into her writing which keeps the reader fascinated, entertained and informed through each of her novels. I loved Amelia Peabody, Vicky Bliss, and Jacqueline Kirby is my new favorite character. The stories always help to expand my interest in her subject matter. I'm a life-long learner, so the background knowledge displayed in her books adds so much interest in my ongoing quest for knowledge.

I've read The Daughter of Time and when I was reading about Josephine Tey, this book was mentioned. I've been reading mysteries for a very long time and I have read several of the Amelia Peabody books. The characters are interesting and there is enough action so that it takes some time to sort through the cast of characters to figure out the who and the why and to also understand the motivation and the real reason why the events were escalating. All on all, it was an enjoyable read and there was enough action to keep the pages turning.

I have read this book several times. I wanted it on my Kindle. I also wanted to reread it, given that Richard's body was found. Still relevant and still good. Favorite author.

Josephine Tey used the delightful idea of having modern people judge the character of Richard III

by his melancholy portrait and then wove Richard's story into the modern plot, a mystery within a mystery, in her marvelous "The Daughter of Time." The gimmick is used again in Peters' "The Murders of Richard III" but it was already old hat in 1974 when this book was written. It's not Peters' fault, of course, that the guesswork about Richard's physical appearance is no longer guesswork. We have his skeleton with the backbone's severe scoliosis and we can accurately judge that one of Richard's shoulders was higher than the other but under his clothes the slight deformity would not be noticed. Peters mentions the higher shoulder but we've come a long way in our information about Richard since she wrote the book. Nevertheless, all told, Peters' novel does not compare with "The Daughter of Time" which has remained on the list of the 10 best mysteries of all time. The trouble is, if you've read them both you can't help comparing them and "The Murders of Richard III" comes up wanting. The meeting of guests in a stately home where of course a murder will occur has been done a million times and I have to admit I do love that genre, but I found Peters' novel to be contrived with the plot being wrenched to fit Richard's life and times and at the same time fracturing any credulity. The whole enchilada is too much of a muchness. (Pardon mixed metaphors). Britisher Thomas Carter invites Sleuth Jacqueline Kirby to a Ricardian party while she is visiting England. All the guests portray a character in Richard III's life complete with an appropriate costume. There are a lot of players and we have to remember not only their real names but the name of the character he or she is impersonating. As a special treat host Richard Weldon promises to reveal a long lost letter purporting to completely clear Richard of the murder of his nephews, the Princes in the Tower. To add spice and eventually terror to the Ricardian party a practical joker begins staging the deaths of the various role playing contemporaries of Richard. The pranks are very complex such as the re-creation of the Duke of Clarence's death by drowning in a butt of Malmsey (Madeira) wine. Poor "Clarence" (aka Thomas Carter) is hoisted up with the pulley with his head above (luckily) an empty wine barrel. Like the other victims he is knocked senseless by the prankster so the joker can't be identified. Other types of popular executions such as smothering and beheading are staged, and eventually one caper goes too far with a resultant close fatality. How the prankster manages to put together exceedingly complex scenes involving one Ricardian role player each time stretches the credulity of the reader. Jacqueline Kirby as a character isn't realistic either. She has flaming red hair, emerald green eyes. is sexy, quick with the repartee, a highly knowledgeable librarian who often puts on her glasses, the author telling you each time. Apparently Peters feels the glasses give added weight to Jacqueline's brain and she is not just another pretty face. This mystery is interesting enough to keep your interest but I feel it is Josephine Tey lite. IMHO Elizabeth Peters made a large mistake using Tey's premise of fitting Richard's life into a modern situation. The whole thing doesn't

quite gel.

An entertaining re-hash of the arguments in favor of King Richard III not being as black as he's been painted, served up as an "English Country House Mystery". A group of disparate characters have gathered in a somewhat isolated house, for a meeting of an offshoot of the Richard the Third Society. Mayhem and deaths ensue. The case in favor of Richard isn't as fully presented as in Josephine Tey's "The Daughter of Time", but some good points are made. Made somewhat more current by the fact that Richard's skeleton was recently unearthed in Leicester.

It was too complicated to try and remember the characters and the characters they were playing from the period of Richard III. If you know the history or like that kind of thing, you'll love it but I found it tiring to read. I don't want to work that hard to enjoy what I expected to be a 'fluffy' kind of mystery/suspense story.

Another great book. I have read most of Elizabeth Peters' books and have enjoyed them all. This book was a little slow at the beginning but as is always the case, turned out to be a really good mystery.

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