

The Daughter of Time (Josephine Tey)

Shock horror! History is written by the victors! Read all about it!

This is history not a novel. The detective story format is a pathetically thin disguise - and actually rather annoying. I presume that, had it been written as serious history it would not have got published. Not due to any intrinsic lack of merit, but merely because of academic snobbery, especially in the early 1950s. This was not the first time that anyone had tried to argue that Richard III was, contrary to popular belief, actually a Good Guy (notably one Clements Markham in 1906 according to Professor Wiki). However, thanks to the novel format it was the first time that the idea had been promulgated to the public.

But what about the princes in the tower (namely, Edward, Prince of Wales - not to be confused with his dad, Edward IV - and Richard, Duke of York - not to be confused with our hero, Richard III)? Surely Richard III was a Bad Guy 'cos he killed them, *n'est pas*? A key argument of the book is that the princes were, in fact, still alive at the time of Richard III's death. The evidence that they were dead is claimed to be scant, and what little there is to be unreliable. The usual supposition is that Richard acquired the throne by murdering the princes, Edward IV's male heirs. Thus, as Edward's surviving brother, Richard became king (noting that his elder brother, George, had been executed and attainted, thus disqualifying his heirs).

But if this is so, why did Richard go to the trouble of enacting the *Titulus Regius*? The *Titulus Regius* was a 1484 statute of Parliament by which the title of King of England was given to Richard III. It was the official declaration that describes why Parliament had found, the year before, that the marriage of Edward IV to Elizabeth Woodville had been invalid, and consequently their children, including the princes Edward and Richard, were illegitimate and, therefore, debarred from the throne. Thus, since Edward IV was deemed to have no legitimate male heirs, Richard III was proclaimed the rightful king. Since the *Titulus Regius* was certainly enacted, there was no reason for Richard III to bump off the princes - they were not valid heirs in any case.

Who, then, did profit by killing the princes? The answer, according to Josephine Tey, is Henry VII, he who rose to the throne by killing Richard III at the battle of Bosworth Field. Why so? Well, because his claim to the throne was virtually non-existent apart from having killed the previous incumbent. Yes, he claimed descent from Edward III, but that was 10 monarchs and over a hundred years back in time. Likely dozens of nobles could claim such descent. With his legitimacy so easy to challenge, Henry VII was keen to establish a more valid link to the line of descent. He did so by marrying Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville. But for this to carry any force Elizabeth would need to be considered legitimate. Consequently Henry VII had the *Titulus Regius* repealed. Whilst this successfully gave Henry VII a wife who was now a legitimate daughter of Edward IV, it also gave him a ticklish problem. It made the princes Edward of Wales and Richard of York (assuming they were alive) heirs to the throne ahead of himself. So, he would need to bump them off, wouldn't he?

That is the burden of the book's argument. And not a bad argument, especially since the passing of *Titulus Regius* by Richard III would seem completely pointless if the princes were already dead. Of course, if the marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville was valid, Richard III would have been acting fraudulently (in fact, treasonably) in enacting the *Titulus Regius*. So I don't see that Richard comes out of it exactly smelling of roses (white ones, obviously).

That the Tudors had a vested interest in trashing the last Plantagenet cannot be doubted. Henry VII came to the throne only by defeating Richard III at Bosworth Field. The smearing of Richard III must have been a political necessity in the Tudor court. Hence Thomas More's 'history', based on the dubious testimony of John Morton, was a document intended to reassure his royal patron, Henry VIII, that Daddy was pukka. And in like vein, old Shakerag's

play was necessarily aimed at reassuring *his* royal patron, Elizabeth, that Grandpa was just tickety-boo and those Plantagenets were nasty pasties, right enough.

Sir James Tyrrell was indeed the man named by More, and thence by Shakespeare, as the murderer, though perhaps not by his own hand. But it really is suspicious that this accusation came twenty years after the supposed event. It is convincingly argued that Tyrrel was just another victim of Henry Tudor. Cecily Neville, known as "the Rose of Raby", really was the mother of Richard III (and so also of Edward IV and their mutual brother George). And, yes, there have been a number of books of that name, though none by Evelyn Payne-Ellis as far as I could discover.

Arrow Books must have had some premonition to re-print this 1951 book in 2009 ahead of the discover of what has been claimed to be Richard III's remains on 25th August 2012. The story is truly remarkable. Historical research suggested a location for Richard's body. It was discovered, with miraculous ease, in a car park in Leicester, the site of a medieval Franciscan friary - the Franciscans being known as the Grey Friars, giving the current street name: Greyfriars Street. The human remains were of a man with a distinct spinal curvature.

Mitochondrial DNA is passed unchanged from mother to child. Hence an unbroken female line from Cecily Neville, Richard's mother, provides the basis of a DNA test. Two such all-female line descendants have been identified: a Canadian woman whose son is Michael Ibsen and who is believed to be Cecily's great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandson. The second person has not been named. The comparison with mitochondrial DNA taken from the buried remains is shown below. I don't have the expertise to interpret it but they look remarkably similar to me.

Richard III cries out for the Hilary Mantel treatment. If she can rehabilitate Thomas Cromwell's character, she can do it for Richard. Score: 6 out of 10 (not really a novel).

PS: I recommend "Daughter of Time" by Colosseum with Dave Clempson on guitar and Dick Heckstall-Smith on sax.

Mitochondrial DNA Test Results

