



Richard Revisited

Els Launspach , Laura Vroomen (Translator)

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For centuries Richard III counted as the villainous murderer of his young cousins and usurper of his brother's throne. But how much of this reputation was born of the facts, and how much of political urgency?

Within the frame of the recent discovery of the king's remains, Richard Revisited, a novel offers a poignant image of three inquisitive minds caught up in an age-old struggle. The statesman Thomas More; master of the revels George Buc; and lastly Jennifer Simpson, witness in the Trial of Richard III broadcast in 1984. In their efforts to be true to themselves, each risks either humiliation or loss of integrity.

In the same vein the novel questions the sources Shakespeare used while writing his play about Richard III. To what extent did the dramatist falsify the facts?

Richard Revisited Details

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From Reader Review Richard Revisited for online ebook

George says

Quite an interesting look at Richard III. Good story

Jana says

For fans of Richard III.

Interesting but definitely in Richard's favor. Nice fictional representation of what could have happened. Long inventory of personages at the end.

Elizabeth Bailey says

I just finished this book - the translation. I found it absorbing and interesting. It's erudite, very literary writing, but rather dry and I felt I had to plough through it in places. But the concepts held me and I wanted to get the whole picture. I'm one of those who believe Richard was a lot more complex than we knew from history, and never wholly believed he was a ruthless ambitious murderer, so this was very much up my street. Great book.

Terri Ehrlich says

Having read The Daughter of Time last year, I was hoping for this book to be as good. It wasn't. The ending left me feeling rather unsatisfied. The premise of the book was a different one, but the execution left much to be desired.

Kathy says

Richard Revisited, by Els Launspach and translated by Laura Vrooman.

I bought this book because the price was right, and I'm glad I didn't spend a lot of money on it. It is one of many books that have been written about Richard III since his remains were found. Unfortunately, too many of them read like little more than some kind of Ricardian fan fiction, often delving into the realms of fantasy and/or time travel, and featuring some kind, understanding female who knows just how to make R3 feel good.

Thank goodness this wasn't one of those. It is, in fact, nothing more than the usual arguments defending R3 wrapped up in a novel, with three historical sections book-ended by a present-day story.

The first section takes place during the reign of Henry VIII and focuses on Thomas More, presenting the reader with a fictional account of More, imprisoned in the Tower and nearing his end time, reconsidering what he wrote about R3. For me, this was the most interesting section of the book.

Part 2 is composed of a series of fictional letters written by George Buc to his patron, the Duke of Norfolk. George Buc was an English antiquarian and historian who wrote, in 1619, one of the earliest defences of R3.

The letters are lengthy analyses of Shakespeare's play with bits of Buc's personal life sprinkled throughout. I found this section to be overlong and boring, and confess to having ended up skimming through most of it.

Part 3 brings us to 1984 and a fictional account of a TV trial of R3, on the order of the real BBC program "The Trial of King Richard the Third" that found R3 not guilty of murdering his nephews.

I found this and the present-day bookend stories (all of which feature the same female character, Jennifer) the least satisfying. This is where I got the feeling I was reading some kind of better quality Ricardian fan fiction, with Jennifer being the staunch defender of R3, and her emotional turmoil over the events of 500+ years ago struck me as a bit over the top.

The bookending sections bring us forward in time to find it a decade or so later, and Jennifer is dying, her husband at her bedside and wishing his wife will live long enough to learn that identity of the remains found under the Leicester car park are confirmed as Richard's.

Overall, I'd give the book something along the lines of a C+, or maybe a B-, because of the unevenness of the various story lines
