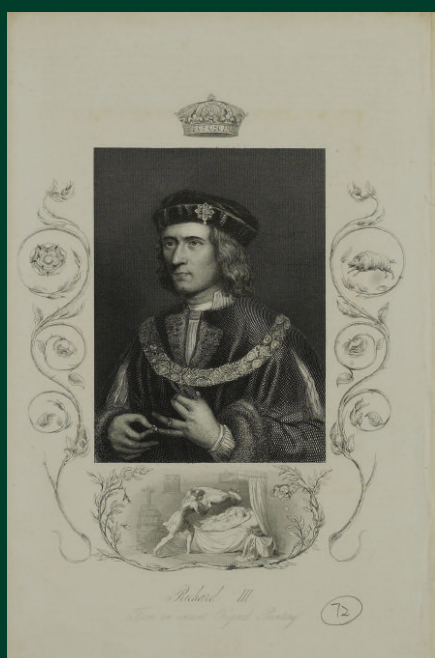


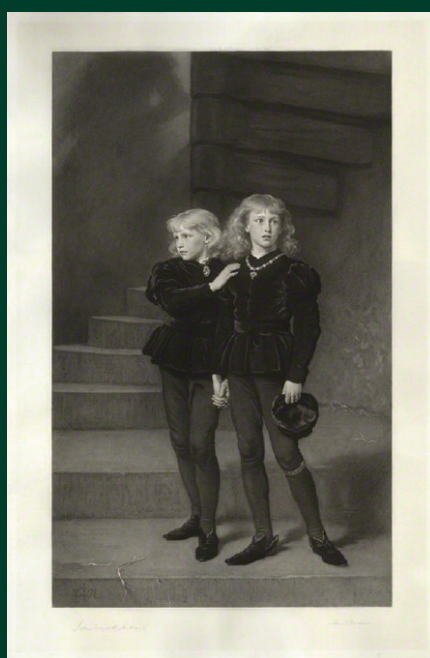
Princes in the Tower

The Princes in the Tower

There were sightings of the young princes during the summer of 1483 but these gradually diminished and they were not seen in the later months of that year. We do not know what happened to them but the association with their disappearance and assumed subsequent murder tainted Richard's reputation.



Detail of the Princes in the Tower smothered with a pillow.
Source: Northamptonshire Record Office.



The Princes in the Tower, published 1878.
Source: National Portrait Gallery.



Tower of London.

Did Richard kill the princes?

The Case For

Richard was a battle-hardened soldier who had been ruthless in eliminating his enemies. Richard could have arranged their deaths: he would not have had to kill them himself. They could have acted as a focus for opposition to Richard.

In 1483 Richard's own son was still living – he died in 1484. He would presumably have wanted to ensure his own son was acknowledged as the heir to the throne, so would not want his nephews alive as rivals to him.

They were in the Tower of London under Richard's control. He would have had ample access to them and been able to ensure orders to kill them were carried out.

How could he have kept them hidden for two years without anyone seeing them?

The Case Against

The children had already been declared illegitimate: what was to be gained by killing them?

Richard was reputedly a devout Catholic so it is unlikely he would have committed murder.

He had been loyal to his brother Edward for many years. Would he really have turned against his own nephews?

Richard was well known. Is it likely he could have killed the princes or ordered their deaths without this being widely known?

Henry VII, who took the throne from Richard in 1485, would have had as much reason to eliminate the Princes as his predecessor.



Have their remains been found?

We simply don't know! There was a rumour that they had been killed and buried under a stair in the White Tower. Two skeletons found buried in the White Tower in 1674 have been assumed to be those of the Princes but modern forensic analysis has proved inconclusive.