

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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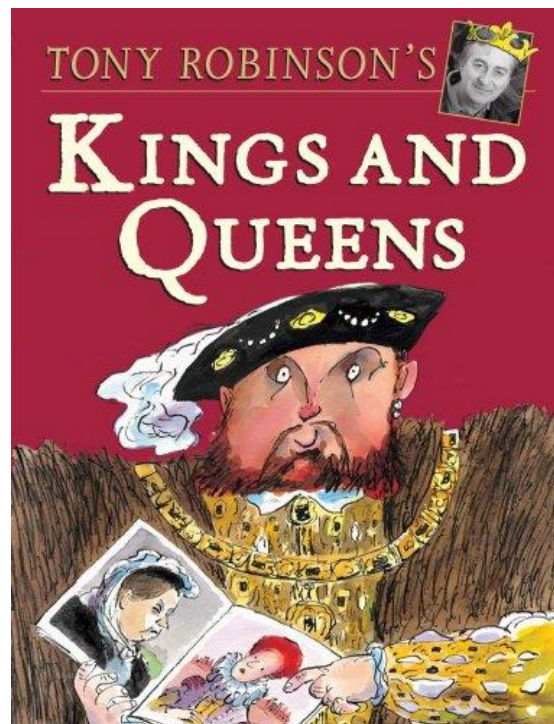
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Robinson, T. (1999). *The Hutchinson book of kings and queens*. London: Hutchinson.





Richard the Third

Born 1452 Ruled 1483 – 1485

IF THERE WAS A COMPETITION FOR unpopular kings, Richard the Third would win hands down.

Compared to him, even bad King John seems like a gentleman! Yet Richard was very talented; he was clever, brave in battle and other kings were impressed by him. But he made one big mistake. On the death of his brother, Edward the Fourth, Richard became guardian to his two nephews, Edward the Fifth, the new young king, and his little brother, Richard. But instead of looking after the two princes, he had them murdered! This upset everyone. (Even though there was no proof of his guilt, the evidence against him was very strong and most people believe he was to blame.) It was also thought that he murdered Edward the Fourth's chamberlain and the previous queen's brother, but people weren't so bothered about that.

Richard tried hard to make his subjects like him. He promised he wouldn't raise their taxes, and told them that from now on, the laws of the land would be fair to everyone, but people didn't care. They just couldn't forget those two little boys.

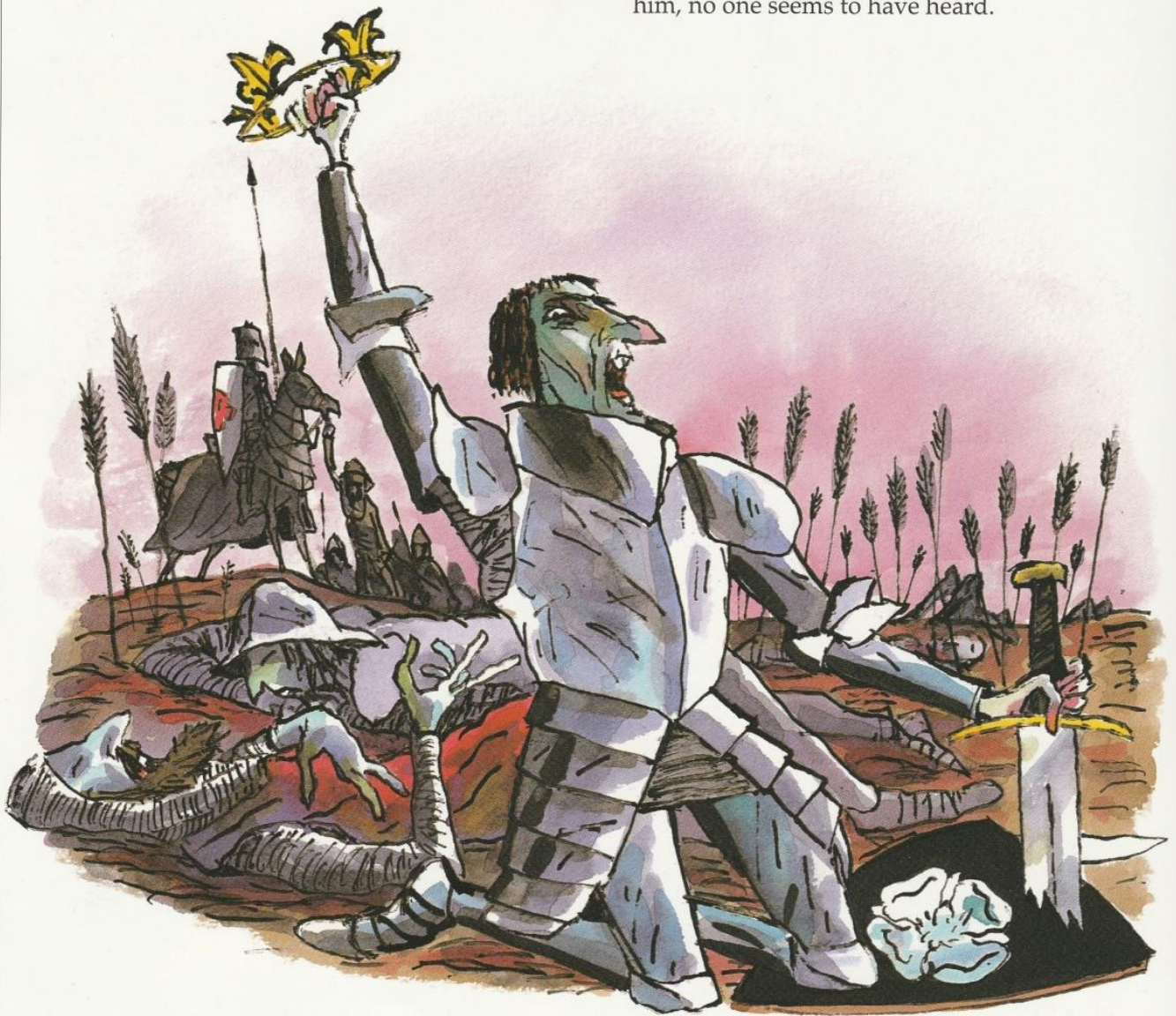
The Battle of Bosworth

Richard's only real rival for the throne was a distant cousin called Henry Tudor who had been banished to France. But two years after Richard was crowned, Henry landed in Wales with a small army. People rallied to him. There was a battle at Bosworth Field in Leicestershire. Richard fought bravely but was killed. In fact most of the old nobles from

the families of York and Lancaster had wiped each other out by now. The Wars of the Roses was over. A new family ruled England: the Tudors.

What a swap!

There is a legend that during the battle Richard's horse was killed under him and, as it's very difficult to do battle on foot, he offered to swap the whole of England for another mount. 'A horse! A horse!' he cried. 'My kingdom for a horse!' Unfortunately for him, no one seems to have heard.





Richard the hunchback

William Shakespeare wrote a famous play about Richard the Third in which the king is a villain with a withered arm and a hunched back. In fact he is often known as Richard Crookback. But although it's true his shoulders were a bit uneven there is no reason to think he really had a twisted body. The Tudors hated Richard and wanted everyone to think badly of him – and who did Shakespeare write his play for? The Tudor queen Elizabeth the First.

Dead and disrespected

Kings, even really bad ones, were usually treated with honour once they were dead. But not Richard the Third. The clothes were ripped from his body. He was trussed up like a sheep, tied to a horse and taken to a remote church to be buried. A few years later his grave was smashed up and his remains were thrown away, never to be found again.