



Renaissance Murders: A History

Michael Hone

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This book is the bearer of horrendous events like the smothering of two children, King Edward V and his brother, in the Tower of London; the incredible story of the impersonators of Henry VII, which led to the deaths of hundreds and the end of one of the impostors by slow hanging. Slow hanging, evisceration, emasculation--all performed as the victims looked on--quartering and beheading, were specialties of the Renaissance. Cesare Borgia assassinated his brother and then his sister's beloved husband Alfonso. Countess Caterina Sforza saw her stable-boy husband's privates cut away and stuffed in his mouth. Pier Luigi Borghese had a rent-boy's throat slit outside his apartments to prevent blackmail. Beatrice Cenci murdered her incestuous father and Caravaggio killed Ranuccio over whores they disputed. Cellini stabbed the man responsible for his brother's death and Cortés massacred thousands by the sword, then millions with the smallpox he and his men carried. Henri III butchered thousands more during France's wars of religion. Very few people have ever heard of Astorre Manfredi, said to have been the most beautiful boy in Italy. He lived during these exciting times, home to the likes of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Lorenzo Il Magnifico, Cesare and Lucretia Borgia, all of whom he might have rubbed shoulders with, one of whom murdered him. And Juan Borgia, supreme in his skin-tight trousers, billowing white shirt and black pearl-studded doublet, the garments he was wearing when brought up in a net from the depths of the Tiber. Wars, girls seduced through incest, heretics burned at the stake, bacchanalias unknown since Ancient Rome. Poverty that condemned a generation to an early death--and wealth beyond measure--were part of everyday life during the Renaissance, and are the essence of this book, Renaissance Murders.

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