

On Murder And Misadventure In Medieval England

The medieval period was a time filled with turmoil, uncertainty, and, as in any era, its fair share of grisly crimes. Murder and misadventure were not uncommon, with stories of treachery, betrayal, and mystery capturing the imagination of many. In this article, we will delve into the dark underbelly of medieval England and explore some of the intriguing tales of murder and misadventure that have left a lasting impact on history.

The Ruthless World of Medieval Power Struggles

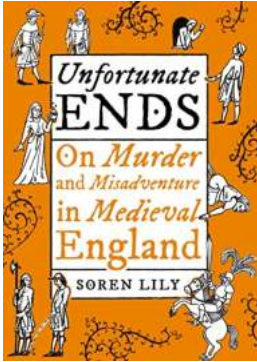
Power struggles were a common thread in medieval England, with ambitious individuals vying for dominance and control. These battles often spilled over into brutal acts of violence. One such notable case was the murder of Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1170. Becket's disagreements with King Henry II ultimately led to his brutal assassination within the walls of Canterbury Cathedral, shocking the nation and igniting debates about the authority of the church.

Another infamous incident was the murder of Edward II at Berkeley Castle in 1327. Edward's controversial reign faced several challenges, including rebellion and accusations of adultery. His death remains shrouded in mystery, with theories ranging from forced suffocation to the insertion of a red-hot iron rod into his rectum—a gruesome end leaving behind a legacy of intrigue.

Unfortunate Ends: On Murder and Misadventure in Medieval England by Barbara McDermott (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English



File size : 480 KB
Text-to-Speech: Enabled
Screen Reader: Supported
Print length : 148 pages



The Puzzling Cases of Unsolved Murders

Not all murders in medieval England reached a resolution. Some cases continue to baffle historians, leaving unanswered questions and countless theories. One such case is that of the "Princes in the Tower." The young sons of King Edward IV mysteriously disappeared in 1483, presumably murdered to secure the throne for their uncle, Richard III. Their fate remains a mystery, and their disappearance continues to captivate the imagination of countless would-be detectives.

Another unsolved case is the murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey in 1678. Godfrey, a prominent magistrate, was found dead on Primrose Hill under suspicious circumstances, triggering a national frenzy known as the "Popish Plot." The investigation into his murder yielded no definitive answers, leading to countless conspiracy theories and raising questions about the integrity of the English justice system.

Violence and Crime in Everyday Life

While high-profile murders were headline-grabbing, medieval England was no stranger to violence and crime in everyday life. From petty theft to domestic

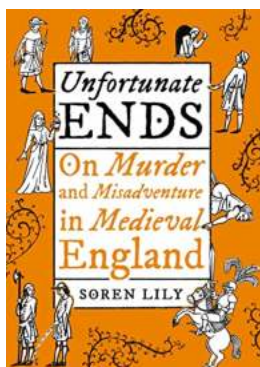
disputes, the streets were filled with dangerous encounters. Such acts of brutality often went unpunished, with society grappling to maintain a semblance of order.

One particularly gruesome example is the tale of the "Blackfriars Massacre" in 1278. A quarrel between wealthy and influential families escalated into a street battle, resulting in the deaths of eighteen individuals. The incident shook the city of Oxford to its core, highlighting the fragility of societal harmony and the consequences of unchecked violence.

The Legacy of Murder and Misadventure

The tales of murder and misadventure in medieval England have left a lasting impact on the collective consciousness. They have inspired numerous works of literature, plays, and films, proving that the fascination with these dark chapters in history endures.

Crime has always been a part of human civilization, and the medieval period was no exception. By exploring these stories of murder and misadventure, we gain insight into the complex tapestry of medieval England—a world filled with power struggles, unsolved mysteries, and everyday violence, ultimately shaping the course of history.



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Thomas, son of Henry Robekyn, died 1286 after cutting off his left foot and then his left hand in a frenzy.

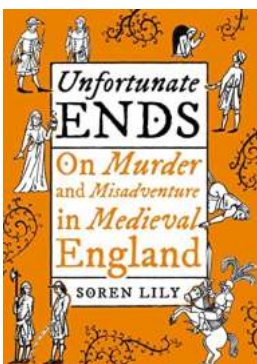
Henry Debordesle, died 1343. Long sick with diseases, smote himself in the belly with a knife worth one penny.

On 11 August 1267, Henry Constantin is driving a horse-drawn cart of wheat through the field of Tweedscroft. His feet slip and he falls upon 'a certain pole' of his cart 'so that it penetrate[s] into his fundament'.

From the creator of Twitter's Medieval Death Bot comes *Unfortunate Ends*, an illuminating collection of in-depth looks at some of the most interesting cases from medieval coroners' rolls.

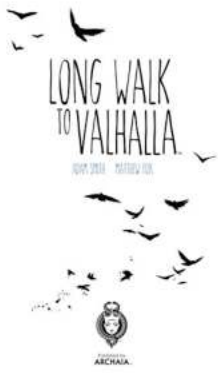
From the bizarre to the mundane, each death tells a tale from a dangerous time to be alive, and even to die. Coroners' rolls list every inquest held for a death by misadventure – or accident – as well as grisly murders, some witnessed by others, some only coming to light when the hidden body was found.

A handful of these deaths rise to the top, their tales too ridiculous or heartbreaking to not be spun again for the modern ear. Through death, *Unfortunate Ends* gives us a rare, first-hand look into everyday life for the common people of medieval England.



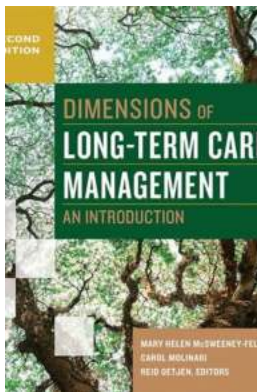
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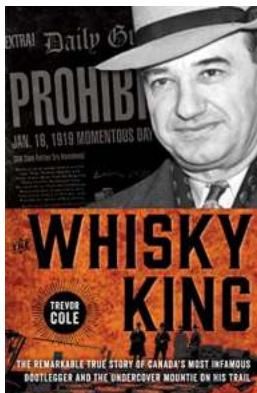
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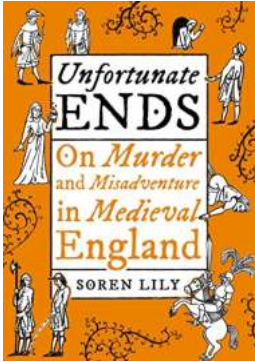
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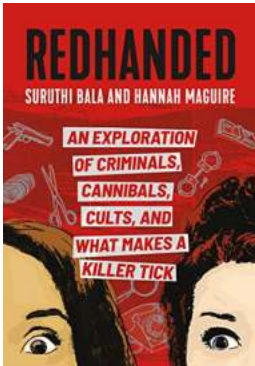
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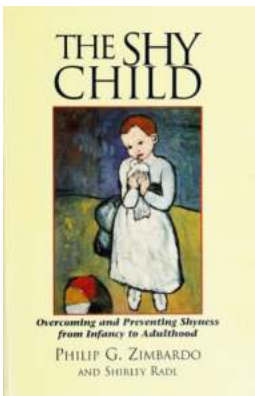
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