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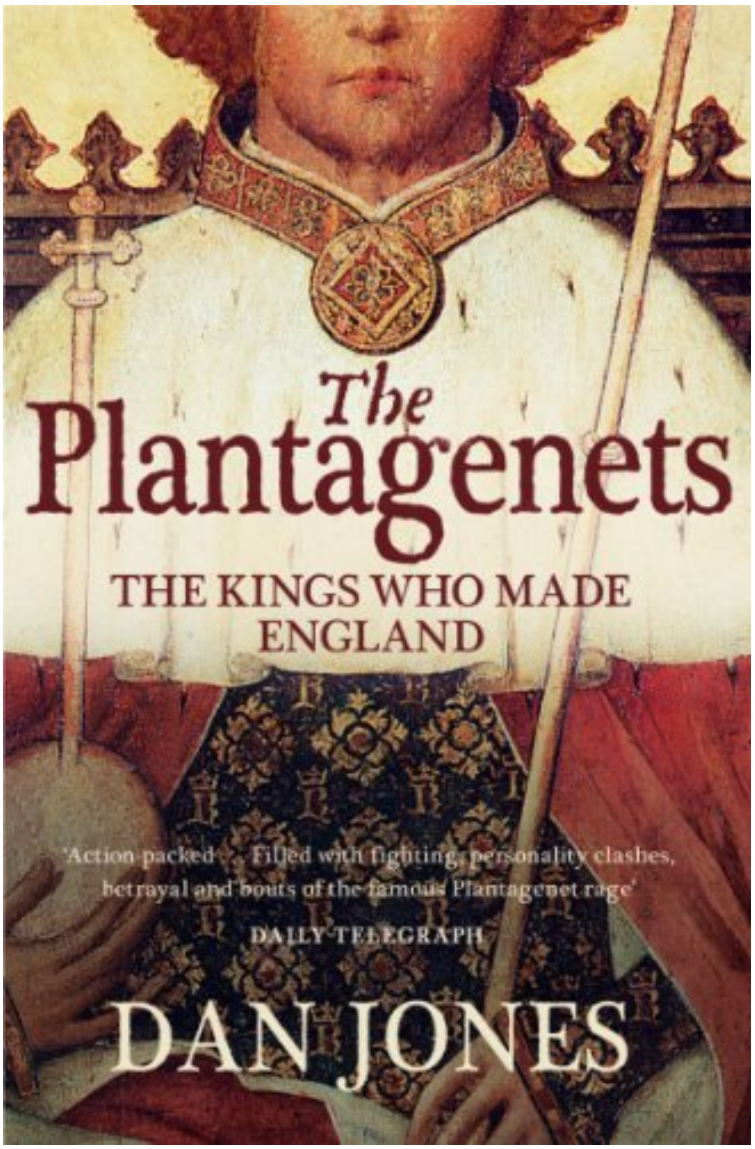
The Plantagenets: The Kings Who Made England



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Par Dan Jones
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[Free pdf] The Plantagenets: The Kings Who Made England

Par Dan Jones : The Plantagenets: The Kings Who Made England before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Plantagenets: The Kings Who Made England:

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurEight generations of the greatest and worst kings and queens that this country has ever seen from the White Ship to the Lionheart, bad King John to the Black Prince and John of Gaunt this is the dynasty that invented England as we still know it today great history to appeal to readers of Ken Follet, Bernard Cornwell, Tom HollandEnglands greatest royal dynasty, the Plantagenets, ruled over England through eight generations of kings. Their remarkable reign saw England emerge from the Dark Ages to become a highly organised kingdom that spanned a vast expanse of Europe. Plantagenet rule saw the

establishment of laws and creation of artworks, monuments and tombs which survive to this day, and continue to speak of their sophistication, brutality and secrets.Dan Jones brings you a new vision of this battle-scarred history. From the Crusades, to King Johns humbling over Magna Carta and the tragic reign of the last Plantagenet, Richard II this is a blow-by-blow account of Englands most thrilling age.ExtraitAge of Shipwreck(11201154) It was as if Christ and his saints were asleep.The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle The White ShipThe prince was drunk. So too were the crew and passengers of the ship he had borrowed. On the evening of November 25, 1120, nearly two hundred young and beautiful members of Englands and Normandys elite families were enjoying themselves aboard a magnificent white longship that bobbed gently to the hum of laughter in a crowded harbor at Barfleur, in Normandy. A seventymile voyage lay ahead across the choppy late autumn waters of the Channel, but with the ship moored at the edge of the busy port town, barrels of wine were rolled aboard, and all were invited to indulge.The prince was William the Aetheling. He was the only legitimate son of Henry I, king of England and duke of Normandy, and Matilda of Scotland, the literate, capable queen descended from the line of Wessex kings who had ruled England before the Norman Conquest. His first name, William, was in honor of his grandfather William the Conqueror. His sobriquet, Aetheling, was a traditional Anglo Saxon title for the heir to the throne. William was a privileged, sociable young man, who conformed to the time honored stereotype of the adored, spoiled eldest son. One Norman chronicler observed him dressed in silken garments stitched with gold, surrounded by a crowd of household attendants and guards, and gleaming in an almost heavenly glory. He was pandered to on all sides with excessive reverence and was therefore prone to fits of immoderate arrogance.William was surrounded by a large group of other noble youths. They included his half brother and half sister Richard of Lincoln and Matilda countess of Perche, both bastard children from a brood of twenty four fathered by the remarkably virile King Henry; Williams cousin Stephen of Blois, who was also a grandson of William the Conqueror; Richard, the twenty six year old earl of Chester, and his wife, Maud; Geoffrey Ridel, an English judge; the princes tutor, Othver; and numerous other cousins, friends, and royal officials. Together they made up a golden generation of the Anglo Norman nobility. It was only right that they traveled in style.The White Ship belonged to Thomas Fitzstephen, whose grandfather Airard had contributed a longship to William the Conquerors invasion fleet. Fitzstephen had petitioned the king for the honor of carrying the royal party safely back from Barfleur to the south coast of England. Henry had honored him with the passage of the princes party, but with this duty came a warning: I entrust to you my sons William and Richard, whom I love as my own life.William was a precious charge indeed. He was seventeen years old and already a rich and successful young man. He had been married in 1119 to Matilda, daughter of Fulk V, count of Anjou and future king of Jerusalem. It was a union designed to overturn generations of animosity between the Normans and Angevins (as the natives of Anjou, a small but important province on the lower Loire, were known). Following the wedding, William had accompanied his father around Normandy for a year, learning the art of kingship as Henry thrashed out what the chronicler William of Malmesbury described as a brilliant and carefully concerted peace with Louis VI, the Fat, the sly, porcine king of France. It was intended as an education in the highest arts of kingship, and it had been deemed effective. William had lately been described as rex designatus (king designate) in official documents, marking his graduation toward the position of coking alongside his father.The highest point of Williams young life had come just a few weeks earlier, when he had knelt before the corpulent Louis to pay homage as the new duke of Normandy. This semi-sacred ceremony acknowledged the fact that Henry had turned over the dukedom to his son. It recognized William as one of Europes leading political figures and marked the end of his journey to manhood. A new wife, a new duchy, and the unstoppable ascent to kingship before him: these were good reasons to celebrate, and that was precisely what William was doing. As the thin November afternoon gave way to a clear, chilly night, the White Ship stayed moored in Barfleur, and the wine flowed freely.The White Ship was a large vessel, capable of carrying several hundred passengers, along with a crew of fifty and a cargo of treasure. The Norman historian Orderic Vitalis called it excellently fitted out and ready for royal service. It was long and deep, decorated with ornate carvings at prow and stern and driven by a large central mast and square sail, with oar holes along both sides. The rudder, or steerboard, was on the righthand side of the vessel rather than in the center, so the onus on the captain was to be well aware of local maritime geography; steering was blind to the port side.A fair wind was blowing up from the south, and it promised a rapid crossing to England. The crew and passengers bade the kings vessel farewell sometime in the evening. They were expected to follow shortly behind, but the drinking on board the White Ship was entertaining enough to keep them anchored long past dark. When priests arrived to bless the vessel with holy water

before her departure, they were waved away with jeers and spirited laughter.As the party ran on, a certain amount of bragging began. The White Ship contained little luggage and was equipped with fifty oarsmen. The inebriated captain boasted that his ship, with square sail billowing and oars pulling hard, was so fast that even with the disadvantage of having conceded a head start to King Henrys ship, they could still be in England before the king.A few on board started to worry that sailing at high speed with a well lubricated crew was not the safest way to travel to England, and it was with the excuse of a stomach upset that Williams cousin Stephen of Blois excused himself from the party. He left the White Ship to find another vessel to take him home. Dismayed at the wild and headstrong behavior of the royal party and crew, a couple of others joined him. But despite the queasy defectors, the drunken sailors eventually saw their way to preparing the ship for departure. Around midnight on a clear night lit by a new moon, the White Ship weighed anchor and set off for England. She [flew] swifter than the winged arrow, sweeping the rippling surface of the deep, wrote William of Malmesbury. But the ship did not fly far.Whether it was the effects of the celebrations on board, a simple navigational error, or the wrath of the Almighty at seeing his holy water declined, within minutes of leaving shore the White Ship crashed into a sharp rocky outcrop, which is still visible today, at the mouth of the harbor. The collision punched a fatal hole in the wooden prow of the ship. The impact threw splintered timber into the sea. Freezing water began to pour in. The immediate priority of all on board was to save William. As the crew attempted to bail water out of the White Ship, a lifeboat was put over the side. William clambered aboard together with a few companions and oarsmen to return him to the safety of Barfleur. It must have been a terrifying scene: the roar of a drunken crew thrashing to bail out the stricken vessel, combining with the screams of passengers hurled into the water by the violence of the impact. The fine clothes of many of the noble men and women would have grown unmanageably heavy when soaked with seawater, making it impossible to swim for safety or even to tread water. The waves echoed with the cries of the drowning.As his tiny boat turned for the harbor, William picked out among the panicked voices the screams of his elder half sister Matilda. She was crying for her life, certain to drown in the cold and the blackness. The thought was more than William could bear. He commanded the men on his skiff to turn back and rescue her.It was a fatal decision. The countess was not drowning alone. As the lifeboat approached her, it was spotted by other passengers who were floundering in the icy waters. There was a mass scramble to clamber to safety aboard; the result was that the skiff too capsized and sank. Matilda was not saved, and neither now was William the Aetheling, duke of Normandy and kingdesignate of England. As the chronicler Henry of Huntingdon put it, instead of wearing a crown of gold, his head was broken open by the rocks of the sea.Only one man survived the wreck of the White Ship, a butcher from Rouen who had boarded the ship at Barfleur to collect payment for debts and been carried off to sea by the revelers. When the ship went down, he wrapped himself in ram skins for warmth and clung to wrecked timber during the night. He staggered, drenched, back to shore in the morning to tell his story. Later on the few bodies that were ever recovered began to wash up with the tide.King Henrys ship, captained by sober men and sailed with care and attention, reached his kingdom unscathed, and the king and his household busied themselves preparing for the Christmas celebrations. When the awful word of the catastrophe in Barfleur reached the court, it was greeted with dumbstruck horror. Henry was kept in ignorance at first. Magnates and officials alike were terrified at the thought of telling the king that three of his children, including his beloved heir, were what William of Malmesbury called food for the monsters of the deep. Eventually a small boy was sent to Henry to deliver the news; he threw himself before the kings feet and wept as he recounted the tragic news. According to Orderic Vitalis, Henry fell to the ground, overcome with anguish. It was said that he never smiled again.The sinking of the White Ship was not just a personal tragedy for Henry I. It was a political catastrophe for the Norman dynasty. In the words of Henry of Huntingdon, Williams certain hope of reigning in the future was greater than his fathers actual possession of the kingdom. Through William the Aethelings marriage, Normandy had been brought to peace with Anjou. Through his homage to Louis VI, the whole AngloNorman realm was at peace with France. All of Henrys plans and efforts to secure his lands and legacy had rested on the survival of his son. Now it was all in vain.The death of William the Aetheling and the fortuitous survival of his cousin Stephen of Blois would come to throw the whole of Western European politics into disarray for three decades.Revue de pressePraise for The PlantagenetsLike the medieval chroniclers he quarries for juicy anecdotes, Jones has opted for a bold narrative approach anchored firmly upon the personalities of the monarchs themselves yet deftly marshaling a vast supporting cast of counts, dukes, and bishops. . . . Fast-paced and accessible, The Plantagenets is old-fashioned storytelling and will be particularly appreciated by those who like their history red in tooth and

claw. Mr. Jones tackles his subject with obvious relish.The Wall Street JournalDelicious . . . Jones has produced a rollicking, compelling book produced a rollicking, compelling book about a rollicking, compelling dynasty, one that makes the Tudors who followed them a century later look like ginger pussycats. . . . The Plantagenets is told with the latest historical evidence and rich in detail and scene-setting. You can almost smell the sea salt as the White Ship sinks, and hear the screams of the tortured at the execution grounds at Tyburn.USA TodayJones has brought the Plantagenets out of the shadows, revealing them in all their epic heroism and depravity. His is an engaging and readable accountitself an accomplishment given the gaps in medieval sources and a 300-year tableauand yet researched with the exacting standards of an academician. The result is an enjoyable, often harrowing journey through a bloody, insecure era in which many of the underpinnings of English kingship and Anglo-American constitutional thinking were formed.The Washington PostBrilliant and entertaining . . . a set of fine vignettes relating dynastic life, death, war, peace, governance, and palace intrigues. The result is a history book that frequently reads like a novel and can be opened to any chapter.Tampa Bay TimesBlood-soaked medieval England springs to vivid life in Joness highly readable, authoritative, and assertive history.Publishers WeeklyThey may lack the glamour of the Tudors or the majesty of the Victorians, but the Plantagenets are just as essential to the foundation of modern Britain. . . . The great battles against the Scots and French and the subjugation of the Welsh make for thrilling reading but so do the equally enthralling struggles over succession, the Magna Carta, and the Provisions of Oxford. . . . Written with prose that keeps the reader captivated throughout accounts of the span of centuries and the not-always-glorious trials of kingship, this book is at all times approachable, academic, and entertaining.BooklistA novelistic historical account of the bloodline that stamped their mark forever on the English imagination . . . Perhaps Jones regular column in the London Standard has given him a different slant on history; however he manages, its certainly to our benefit. . . . For enjoyable historical narratives, this book is a real winner.Kirkus sOutstanding . . . Majestic in its sweep, compelling in its storytelling, this is narrative history at its best. A thrilling dynastic history of royal intrigues, violent skullduggery, and brutal warfare across two centuries of British history.Simon Sebag Montefiore, bestselling author of Jerusalem: The BiographyThe Plantagenets played a defining part in shaping the nation of England, and Dan Jones tells their fascinating story with wit, verve, and vivid insight. This is exhilarating historya fresh and gloriously compelling portrait of a brilliant, brutal, and bloody-minded dynasty.Helen Castor, author of She-Wolves: The Women Who Ruled England before ElizabethThis is history at its most epic and thrilling. I would defy anyone not to be right royally entertained by it.Tom HollandJones has written a magnificently rich and glittering medieval pageant, guiding us into the distant world of the Plantagenets with confidence. This riveting history of an all-too-human ruling House amply confirms the arrival of a formidably gifted historian.Sunday TelegraphEntertaining and informative . . . Jones has produced an absorbing narrative that will help ensure that the Plantagenet story remains stamped on the English imagination for another generation.Sunday Times (London)Traditional narrative history at its best.The SpectatorJones, a protg of David Starkey, writes with his mentor's erudition but also exhibits novelistic verve and sympathy. . . . This is a great popular history, whether you are au fait with the machinations of medievalism or whether Magna Carta mystifies you. . . . The Plantagenets is proof that contemporary history can engage with the medieval world with style, wit and chutzpah.The Observer (London)This action-packed narrative is, above all, a great story, filled with fighting, personality clashes, betrayal and bouts of the famous Plantagenet rage. . . . Jones is an impressive guide to this tumultuous scene. . . . The Plantagenets succeeds in bringing an extraordinary family arrestingly to life.Daily TelegraphAn excellent book . . . The Plantagenets is a wonderful gallop through English history. Powerful personalities, vivid descriptions of battles and tournaments, ladies in fine velvet and knights in shining armour crowd the pages of this highly engaging narrative.The Evening Standard