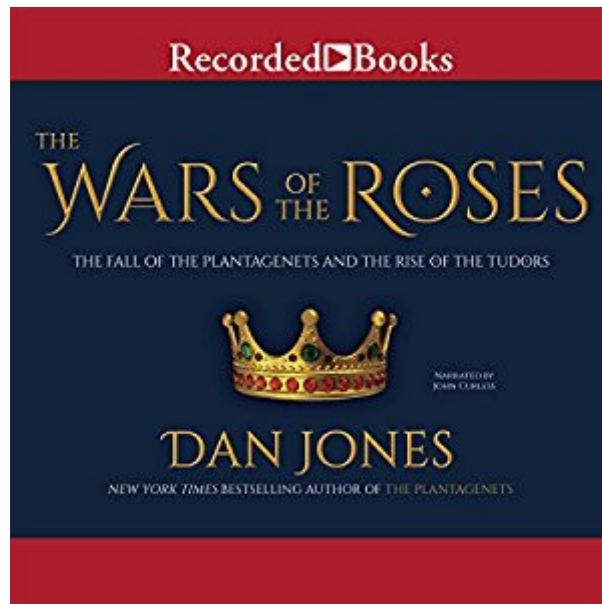


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The Wars Of The Roses: The Fall Of The Plantagenets And The Rise Of The Tudors



Synopsis

The author of the New York Times best-seller *The Plantagenets* chronicles the next chapter in British history - the actual historical backdrop for *Game of Thrones*. The 15th century saw the longest and bloodiest series of civil wars in British history. The crown of England changed hands five times as two branches of the Plantagenet dynasty fought to the death for the right to rule. Now, celebrated historian Dan Jones describes how the longest reigning British royal family tore itself apart until it was finally replaced by the Tudors. Some of the greatest heroes and villains in history were thrown together in these turbulent times - from Joan of Arc and Henry V, whose victory at Agincourt and prudent rule marked the high point of the medieval English monarchy, to Richard III, who stole the throne and murdered his own nephews, the princes in the Tower. It is also a period of headstrong and resilient women - Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville, Margaret Beaufort - who were not afraid to seize power and bend men to their will. With vivid descriptions of the battles of Towton and Bosworth, where the last Plantagenet king was slain, this is a bold and dramatic narrative history that will delight listeners who like their history with a healthy dose of bedlam, romance, and intrigue.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a title that is labeled as non-fiction and a valuable reference but can read at times as a brilliant historical novel. Mr. Jones has presented his audience with a "sequel" to the *Plantagenets* and moved focus to another branch of the illustrious family tree- the Tudors. But before we long time armchair enthusiasts of the past or those just finding an interest in 15th to 16th-century English and

French history can understand the rise of the Tudors and the significance of the bloody events that brought a name from obscurity into infamy. Mr. Jones first wants the reader to understand the fall of the direct Plantagenet line and centers this non-fiction work more on building against the notion that the Wars of the Roses were a straightforward network of wars and battles concerning the White Rose (for the House of York) and the Red Rose (for the House of Lancaster). Current trends of modernized and amplified history and the slew of fiction titles appearing on the heels of the recent discovery of the remains of Richard III will have the unfamiliar learner believing that the Wars of the Roses were a dramatic series of wars that simply entailed a family's power struggle for the crown of England. Not so and Mr. Jones makes this clear in the introductory that there is more to the events that led to and the maelstrom of blood soaked timelines that created this ultimate political instability of the Kingdoms of England and France during the 15th and 16th centuries.

From Henry V to Henry VII, Dan Jones hits the highlights one of the most famous conflicts in English history. We are introduced to such famous characters as Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou, Edward IV, Elizabeth Woodville, the Duke of Clarence, Richard III, and more. Jones seeks to complicate the popular idea of the War of the Roses as the red rose of Tudor against the white rose of York, or even the idea of Lancaster against York. Jones uses language that is active and exciting. This history moves quickly and hits the high points. It doesn't go into extreme depth anywhere, but it is also very accessible. As expected, I perked up about halfway through the narrative when the Woodvilles shows up because it added some personal drama into the mix. Seeing Warwick thrown off his high horse, even if we're only given a brief description of him, is still satisfying. Still, I wish there's been more character building around those involved in the conflict. He does this excellently with Henry VI, Edward IV, and does a bit for Margaret of Anjou and others. With the use of quotes from primary sources throughout I'd hoped there'd be letters in collection somewhere that would give us an even closer look at the personalities of some of the big players. Additionally, I know that I have a harder time keeping track of people, especially when they're referred to as their titles, when I don't know basically anything about them. Jones gives us a lot; I'm just greedy and want even more. He's good at painting the picture of the action, and I want even more insight into the people behind those actions. Jones doesn't necessarily take a stand on anything in the War of the Roses. His goal seems to be to offer a quick, cursory overview of the main events, and players of the War of the Roses.

Jones writes with a novelist's flair, making history entertaining and accessible. In this excellent

overview of the background, conflicts, and resolution of the Wars of the Roses, Jones outlines the series of problems that beset England after Henry V's untimely death, problems that snowballed with the passage of time into endless conflicts that only rolled to a stop with Henry VIII, a man who combined the personal authority of kingship with legitimate blood. Along the way, he colorfully brings to life the central characters of his narrative: the shambling simpleton Henry VI, he of the limp and vacant personality; the ambitious, tough, but even-handed Richard of York; the bold, well-intentioned, sometimes naïve Edward IV; and the progressive yet paranoid Richard III. Jones is the ideal antidote to dry academic lectures more dead than the people they discuss. He starts with England's slide into ruin after the death of Henry V, when a lengthy minority followed by a weak king deprived the nation of the authority and competent direction it needed to cope with domestic and foreign crises. Richard of York's attempt to restore good governance further destabilized the realm by a shattering blood right, leading to decades-long strife. The account clearly dispels the Tudor myth that the wars were simply a feud between two rival houses. Jones clearly puts the blame for the wars on Henry VI's inept leadership. Richard of York is defended, and Richard III generally treated with understanding. His motives taking control of young Edward V are presented as reasonable given the power of the Woodville faction rather than part of a murderous scheme to usurp the throne.

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