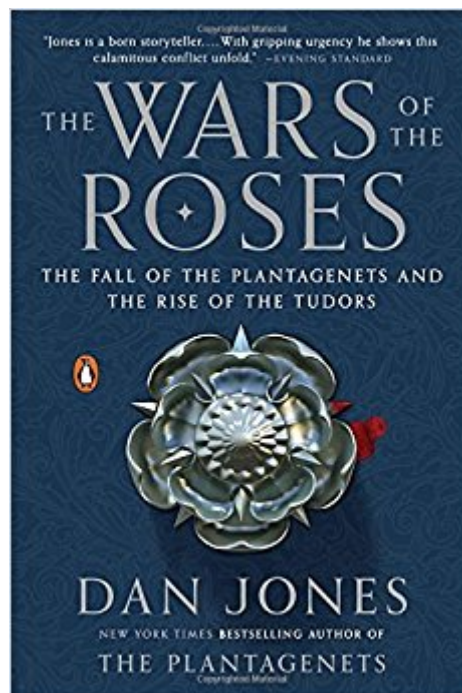




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The Wars Of The Roses: The Fall Of The Plantagenets And The Rise Of The Tudors



Synopsis

The bestselling author of *The Plantagenets* and *Magna Carta* and presenter of Netflix's *Secrets of Great British Castles* offers a vivid account of the events that inspired *Game of Thrones* and Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Richard III*. Discover the real history behind *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses*, the PBS Great Performance series of Shakespeare's plays, coming December 2016, starring Judi Dench, Benedict Cumberbatch, Sophie Okonedo and Hugh Bonneville. Also look for Dan Jones' *The Templars* in September 2017!

The crown of England changed hands five times over the course of the fifteenth century, as two branches of the Plantagenet dynasty fought to the death for the right to rule. In this riveting follow-up to *The Plantagenets*, 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 of history were thrown together in these turbulent times, from Joan of Arc and Henry V, whose victory at Agincourt marked the high point of the medieval monarchy, to Richard III, who murdered his own nephews in a desperate bid to secure his stolen crown. This was a period when headstrong queens and consorts seized power and bent men to their will. With vivid descriptions of the battles of Towton and Bosworth, where the last Plantagenet king was slain, this dramatic narrative history revels in bedlam and intrigue. It also offers a long-overdue corrective to Tudor propaganda, dismantling their self-serving account of what they called the Wars of the Roses.

"If you're a fan of *Game of Thrones* or *The Tudors* then Dan Jones's swashbucklingly entertaining slice of medieval history will be right up your alley. Every bit as entertaining and readable as his previous blockbuster *The Plantagenets*." —*Daily Express*

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Customer Reviews

Praise for *The Wars of the Roses* —“Exhilarating, epic, blood-and-roses history. There are battles fought in snowstorms, beheadings, jousts, clandestine marriages, spurious genealogies, flashes of chivalry and streaks of pure malevolence. . . . Jones’s material is thrilling, but it is quite a task to sift, select, structure, and contextualize the information. There is fine scholarly intuition on display here and a mastery of the grand narrative; it is a supremely skillful piece of storytelling.” —*The Sunday Telegraph* —“Jones’s greatest skill as a historical writer is to somehow render sprawling, messy epochs such as this one into manageable, easily digestible matter; he is keenly tuned to what should be served up and what should be omitted. And he still finds rooms for the telling anecdote and vivid descriptive passage. It makes for an engrossing read and a thoroughly enjoyable introduction to the Lancastrian-Yorkist struggle.” —*The Spectator* —“If you’re a fan of *Game of Thrones* or *The Tudors* then Dan Jones’s swashbucklingly entertaining slice of medieval history will be right up your alley. Every bit as entertaining and readable as his previous blockbuster *The Plantagenets*.” —*Daily Express* —“Jones is a born storyteller, peopling the terrifying uncertainties of each moment with a superbly drawn cast of characters and powerfully evoking the brutal realities of civil war. With gripping urgency, he shows this calamitous conflict unfold.” —*The Evening Standard* —“Jones tells a good story. That is a good thing, since storytelling has gone out of favor among so many historians. . . . He admits that the era is at times incomprehensible, yet he manages to impose upon it sufficient order to render this book both edifying and utterly entertaining. His delightful wit is as ferocious as the dreadful violence he describes.” —*The Times* (London) —“A fine new history . . . Tautly structured, elegantly written, and finely attuned to the values and sensibilities of the age, *The Wars of the Roses* is probably the best introduction to the conflict currently in print.” —*The Mail on Sunday* —“It’s not often that a book manages to be both scholarly and a page-turner, but Jones succeeds on both counts in this entertaining follow-up to his bestselling *The Plantagenets*. . . . He sets a new high-water mark in the current revisionism of the Tudor era.” —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review) —“Jones authoritatively sets the scene for the 15th-century succession crises . . . valiantly pared down for fluid readability.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

Dan Jones is the author of *The Plantagenets: The Warrior Kings and Queen Who Made England*, a #1 international bestseller and New York Times bestseller, and *Wars of the Roses*, which charts the story of the fall of the Plantagenet dynasty and improbable rise of the Tudors. He writes and presents the popular Netflix series "Secrets of Great British Castles" and appeared alongside George R.R. Martin in the DVD for *Game of Thrones* to discuss its historical antecedents. He is also the author of *Magna Carta: The Birth of Liberty* and *Summer of Blood: England's First Revolution* and is working on a history of the Knights Templar due out in September 2017.

Dan Jones, who gave us a first class account of the Plantagenet line of English kings, now turns his attention to the sprawling, difficult history of two main lines of English royalty, the house of Lancaster and the house of York. This takes up half of the fifteenth century, from 1420 to 1471. It is a terribly involved story, with many Edwards and Henrys, with brutal battles on remote moors, with beheadings and even some of which were marred by cleavers that missed their target, imprisonments, chicanery, and deceit. Almost nowhere do we read of a strong king who was able to draw the country together, to move on from its constant obsession with the concept of conquering pieces of what is now France, to lift the country on to a higher economic and cultural plane. Those efforts came later, beginning soon with the ascent of the Tudors, most importantly with Henry VIII and his daughter, Elizabeth I. Despite the high level of action and even suspense, this story is not at the level of Jones' previous book on the Plantagenets. It suffers, annoyingly in this reader's opinion, from a total disinterest in making the story easy to follow. There are detailed geneology charts but the blood lines are difficult to follow and, in some cases, use different names for the same individual. In no case are there any dates on any of the charts. This is a period of English history that is riotous and confusing and it is not made any more transparent by these charts. But let us put this aside. Mark it as a mild objection but not anything crippling. The main story is terrific and when Jones gets his history rolling it is nothing short of gripping. We are led through Henry V's stirring battle at Agincourt ("we happy few, we band of brothers"), Henry VI presiding over Parliament at the age of two, Jean d'Arc's rescue of the French army before her destruction at Orleans, the loss of France, Richard III fighting unsuccessfully at Bosworth Field and thus ending the weakening hold on the crown held by the Plantagenets since 1154. Think of this: the Plantagenets and their two main branches of descendants, the Lancasters

and the Yorks, for all their weaknesses, had guided Britain for more than 300 years, taking it from the Middle Ages to the brink of Britain's surge to greatness starting with Henry VIII. I liked this book because it says so much about the drama of English history. On the other hand, reading this book is frustrating for anyone not intimately familiar with the convoluted family tree of English royalty in the 15th century. There are very few hints as to the full dates that are being discussed, very little help in identifying the procession of English monarchs in one easy to read chart, with dates and very little to say about the country itself - its culture, climate, geography, economy, or laws. Overall, it is a worthwhile read but it can be a frustrating read.

In few histories can one see the truth that 'to the victors, belongs the history' in such clarity as Jones reveals. Jones has winnowed the knowable facts from triumphalist biased history. The "War of the Roses" sounds like a romantic event except it was invented by a 19th century revisionist. You'll quickly see that there's nothing romantic here. The book begins with the obscure story of Plantagenet extinction. It's an irony that a Tudor Henry VIII would deliver a grizzly 10 whack beheading to a demographic 'ancient' and last of the Plantagenet blood royal in 1541 ... 100 years after York victory at Bosworth Field. The Plantagenet dynasty so exits corporeal history in the person of Henry VIII's great-great-grandaunt. This is the story of a mighty family tree gone to war as notional 'roses'. Plantagenet House Lancaster and House York simply annihilated themselves. Circumstances and peculiarity left an outsider standing. A 'Tudur' from Wales of low noble origin emerges as king. It's the time of the Tudors and the end of dynasty. Jones telling is rooted in the personalities of the kings, queens, and princes amped up by a supporting cast of doubly rough counts, dukes and bishops. The telling is necessarily complex. The story is as bizarre, pivotal and bloody as any fiction. As the publisher advance material correctly claims, 'The Game of Thrones' fiction is no match. Ultimately, this is a story for a modern reader to consider 'kingship' from a time not so distant. A monarch's lapse of common sense tears through a king's powerful subjects, variously assembled in cabals of self-interest who are willing and able to field formidable forces to challenge the person of the king and exterminate bloodlines. Modern warfare among cartel kingpins is no match in wrath and scale. Consider the mutilated remains of the last Plantagenet king, Richard III, buried shallow, nameless and long forgotten beneath public parking ... only discovered in 2013 and 550 years after his death in a royal history absorbed society. Perhaps there's still the chance of finding Jimmy Hoffa. Discussions with friends who have read both 'The Plantagenets' and 'War of the Roses' reveals a split opinion. It's a matter of history reader preference. Do you like high fidelity history (a lot of names, personalities, interactions, dates and places) or narrative entertainment?

This is hi-fi history on a grand scale. Jones repeatedly sends the history buff to wiki to explore for more.

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