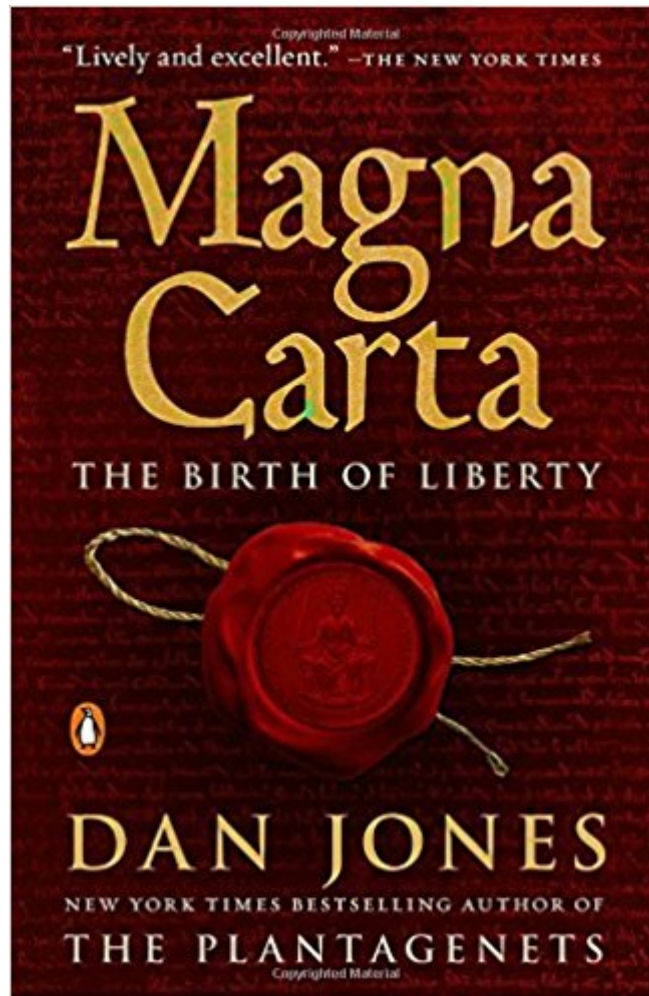




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Magna Carta: The Birth Of Liberty



Synopsis

"Dan Jones has an enviable gift for telling a dramatic story while at the same time inviting us to consider serious topics like liberty and the seeds of representative government." —Antonia Fraser From the New York Times — bestselling author of *The Plantagenets*, a lively, action-packed history of how the Magna Carta came to be. Look for Dan Jones' *The Templars* in September 2017! — *The Magna Carta* is revered around the world as the founding document of Western liberty. Its principles — even its language — can be found in our Bill of Rights and in the Constitution. But what was this strange document and how did it gain such legendary status? Dan Jones takes us back to the turbulent year of 1215, when, beset by foreign crises and cornered by a growing domestic rebellion, King John reluctantly agreed to fix his seal to a document that would change the course of history. At the time of its creation the Magna Carta was just a peace treaty drafted by a group of rebel barons who were tired of the king's high taxes, arbitrary justice, and endless foreign wars. The fragile peace it established would last only two months, but its principles have reverberated over the centuries. — Jones's riveting narrative follows the story of the Magna Carta's creation, its failure, and the war that subsequently engulfed England, and charts the high points in its unexpected afterlife. Reissued by King John's successors it protected the Church, banned unlawful imprisonment, and set limits to the exercise of royal power. It established the principle that taxation must be tied to representation and paved the way for the creation of Parliament. — In 1776 American patriots, inspired by that long-ago defiance, dared to pick up arms against another English king and to demand even more far-reaching rights. We think of the Declaration of Independence as our founding document but those who drafted it had their eye on the Magna Carta.

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Customer Reviews

"Lively and excellent." *The New York Times* "By putting the Magna Carta in its proper historical context, the brilliant young historian Dan Jones triumphantly answers the questions he poses in his Introduction, about how it came to be granted, what it meant at the time, and what it should mean to us today."

Andrew Roberts, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Napoleon* "Excellent and very well-crafted."

The New York Review of Books "Dan Jones has an enviable gift for telling a dramatic story while at the same time inviting us to consider serious topics like liberty and the seeds of representative government."

Antonia Frasier "Lively and clear-eyed."

The London Review of Books "An insightful, satisfying history of a beloved. . . icon of freedom."

Kirkus Reviews Praise for *The Wars of the Roses* "Tautly structured, elegantly written, and finely attuned to the values and sensibilities of the age . . . The best introduction to the conflict currently in print."

The Mail On Sunday "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 "Edifying and utterly entertaining. . . Jones tells a good story . . . His delightful wit is as ferocious as the dreadful violence he describes."

The Times (London) Praise for *The Plantagenets* "A real life *Game of Thrones*, As dramatic and blood-soaked as any work of fantasy. Like 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. Jones tackles his subject with obvious relish."

The Wall Street Journal "Outstanding. 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 Biography* "Jones has brought the Plantagenets out of the shadows, revealing them in all their epic heroism and depravity. His is an engaging and readable account itself an accomplishment given the gaps in medieval

sources and a 300-year tableau – and 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 Post – "Some of the greatest stories in all of English history . . . rich in pageantry and soaked in blood." – Lewis Lapham – "Delicious . . . 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 Today – "Jones 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 Telegraph

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 the 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 official HBO film exploring the real history behind Game of Thrones. He was closely involved in the British Library's landmark unification of the four remaining original copies of the Magna Carta to mark the charter's eight hundredth anniversary. He is also the author of Summer of Blood: England's First Revolution and is currently working on a history of the Knights Templar due out in September 2017. From the Hardcover edition.

This book by historian Dan Jones is a fine popular history of the background to, the granting of, and the legacy of Magna Carta. Jones write well. He is very clear. He presents an excellent, well-documented story of one of the foundations of Anglo-American political theory. However, he does digress some times. I'm not sure why he feels it necessary to go into details about the decisions of the Fourth Lateran Council for example. Still, a good, worthwhile read.

Excellent history of the Magna Carta and the era in which it was formulated. The duplicity of King

John is well documented and spares no criticism of his machinations. The Magna Carta was, if nothing else, the seminal issuance of the demands of the people versus the needs of the monarchy. The culmination of some points of the Great Charter was the American Constitution which epitomizes the rights of the people to be free of a totalitarian government. The author (Dan Jones) keeps the story moving and interesting. Very well done.

Very concise historical treatment of the conditions that lead up to the signing of Magna Carta in 1215. The author does a very good job of bringing together a lot of historical details pertinent to the document, but keeps things interesting and moving along. I appreciated the final chapters that trace the 17th century revival of interest in Magna Carta and how this gave to it a new significance for constitutional developments in both the UK and American Colonies.

Dan Jones does a great job here writing and narrating this historical account of the Magna Carta, the basis of this inspiration of our founding fathers, and so much of our important rights. Jones writing is clear and concise and his narration is clear and pleasant. I whole-heartedly recommend this book.

“When the chronicler Matthew Paris reflected on the fate of John’s soul twenty years after his death, he famously declared that “England reeks with John’s filthy deeds; the foulness of Hell is defiled by John.” “No clause of the charter mentions or was intended to promote anything that we would today consider “democratic”; indeed, the idea of democracy was alien and would quite possibly have been offensive to the wealthy, oligarchical, and largely self-interested barons who opposed King John in 1215. “Magna Carta” by Dan Jones continues his stories on the Plantagenets with this non-fiction book on King John and the Magna Carta. Mr. Jones writes in a way that immerses you into the past and makes it come alive. Even though the Magna Carta is looked up to around the world as a tool of democracy, Mr. Jones points out that it was not that way at all. It was so the rich barons and the church would not have to pay exorbitant taxes to the monarch. Another great tidbit I learned is that the original Magna Carta was not successful and King John after being forced to sign it continued his war with the Barons. The Pope at the time Innocent, condemned it. The barons decided the French King Louis would be a better King and joined him in trying to take over the country. King John died before the

war ended and his young son took over as Henry III. William Marshall took over as regent and was able to get the barons back on the young king's side. I think William Marshall was the real hero of this book and one who was steadfast in his support. I really enjoyed this book about King John and his reign. There is a lot of pre-John information and loads of stories on the Magna Carta today around the world. I recommend this book to anyone who loves history and the true stories of governments and how they evolved. I received this book from the Penguin First to Read program for an honest review.

Very enjoyable and easy to read. Not the dry, dusty versions of history that just gave names and dates. I particularly liked all of the political background given that provided a good foundation for why the Magna Carta was needed as well as it being the inspiration for future constitutions since its inception. Would definitely recommend this book to everyone, not just students of history.

A memorable glimpse into King John's reign looking back on his father's, Charles II, and grandfather's, Charles I reigns and forward to Charles III and brother, Richard's. This book has made them and their actions real for me, as well as the birth and evolution of the Magna Carta.

Great book. But you better be ready for a detailed history of what led to the Magna Carta. Well done and an enjoyable read.

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