



A Distant Mirror: the Calamitous 14th Century

barbara tuchman

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The fourteenth century reflects two contradictory images: on the one hand, a glittering age of crusades, cathedrals, and chivalry; on the other, a world plunged into chaos and spiritual agony. In this revelatory work, Barbara W. Tuchman examines not only the great rhythms of history but the grain and texture of domestic life: what childhood was like; what marriage meant; how money, taxes, and war dominated the lives of serf, noble, and clergy alike. Granting her subjects their loyalties, treacheries, and guilty passions, Tuchman re-creates the lives of proud cardinals, university scholars, grocers and clerks, saints and mystics, lawyers and mercenaries, and, dominating all, the knight-in all his valor and "furious follies," a "terrible worm in an iron cocoon." Praise for A Distant Mirror "Beautifully written, careful and thorough in its scholarship . . . What Ms. Tuchman does superbly is to tell how it was. . . . No one has ever done this better."-The New York Review of Books "A beautiful, extraordinary book . . . Tuchman at the top of her powers . . . She has done nothing finer."-The Wall Street Journal "Wise, witty, and wonderful . . . a great book, in a great historical tradition."-Commentary

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