



The Fatal Crown: A Novel (The Queens of Love and War Book 1)

By Ellen Jones

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Against the seething political intrigues of twelfth-century Europe, two royal heirs surrender to passion as they vie for the English throne.

At nine, Maud, an English princess, was sent to Germany to become the bride of the Holy Roman Emperor—a political alliance with a man her father's age. At twenty-five, the widowed Maud must marry once again, this time to fourteen-year-old Geoffrey Plantagenet. But it is with Stephen of Blois, Maud's fiercest rival for the British throne, that the headstrong princess discovers the true meaning of desire.

Stephen, a descendant of William the Conqueror, believes absolutely in his God-given right to rule. Torn between his illicit passion for Maud and his own towering ambition, he knows he must choose. Stephen's decision will wrench him from the arms of the woman he loves, ignite civil war, and lead to a shattering act of betrayal that, decades later, will come full circle and change the course of English history.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this cumbrous historical novel, Jones postulates a turbulent love affair between the English princess Maud (born 1102) and her cousin and rival to the throne, Stephen of Blois--their passion complicated by political strife. Granddaughter of William the Conqueror, the historical Maud was wed at nine to an aging Holy Roman Emperor, later recalled from Germany as a widow of 25, named heir to the crown of England and married to 14-year-old Geoffrey Plantagenet. The novel dramatizes Maud's purported adulterous liaison with Stephen, who, despite their passionate involvement, angrily challenges her right to the throne when her father dies: their rivalry did in fact erupt into a devastating civil war; Stephen won, reigning until his death in 1154, whereupon Maud's son acceded to the throne, becoming the skilled administrator Henry II, husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine. As depicted here, Maud is a temperamental romance heroine, manipulated by male chauvinists--feudal barons; her father, Henry I; her domineering, priggish husband, Geoffrey. Jones packs her fiction debut with factual passages that read as turgidly as a textbook, brightening the narrative with lust-filled interludes in royal bedchambers and a rustic forest lodge. The many hunting descriptions indicate inadequate research--a huntsman on the field would never feed his dogs raw boar meat--yet the period color and romance carry the tale to its bittersweet ending. 100,000 first printing .

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Review

"Jones packs her fiction debut with factual passages . . . brightening the narrative with lust-filled interludes in royal bedchambers . . . the period color and romance carry the tale to its bittersweet ending." —*Publishers Weekly*

About the Author

Ellen Jones was born in New York City and raised in a family of history teachers and musicians, who exposed her to a variety of ideas, cultures, and lifestyles. After graduating from Bennington College, she spent a few years studying drama in graduate school, which led to her first writing efforts. After getting married and while raising two young children, Jones wrote two plays, one set in eighteenth-century Vermont and the other based on Japanese history. These two works were performed by the Honolulu Theatre for Youth in Hawaii. Jones and her family then moved to England, where she fell in love with London and its colorful history. During her five years in England, Jones was able to explore the country; she also traveled throughout Europe, including a visit to the French region of Aquitaine. Her travels deepened her interest in history and the seeds of her novels began to take root. Jones made her fiction debut with *The Fatal Crown* (1991), a historical novel about the twelfth-century British princess Maud. This launched Jones's trilogy about three strong, passionate, and self-willed founders of the Plantagenet empire: Maud, Henry, and Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Jones:

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