



A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century

Barbara W. Tuchman

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Barbara W. Tuchman—the acclaimed author of the Pulitzer Prize–winning classic *The Guns of August*—once again marshals her gift for character, history, and sparkling prose to compose an astonishing portrait of medieval Europe.

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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