



# **Europe in the High Middle Ages (The Penguin History of Europe)**

William Chester Jordan

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The world of mediaeval Europe continues to haunt us: its great works of art, its cathedrals and castles, many of its institutions - and yet this is a civilization from which we are fundamentally cut off. The uniquely terrible "fire break" of the 14th century - the famines, plagues and wars -meant that the Europe that slowly built itself in the 15th century was a very different place from the brilliant, confident world that had built Chartres cathedral or summoned up the passion for the Crusades. In what should become the standard work on the subject, Professor Jordan re-creates the values and achievements of this lost world with a mixture of broad sweep and precise detail that allows readers to appreciate a society that had emerged from the chaos of the Viking, Hungarian and Muslim invasions and soon began to measure itself confidently against the lofty achievements of the ancient Roman Empire. Above all, Europe in the High Middle Ages was a fervently Christian society and it was the power and ambition of the Church, and the extensive support it enjoyed, that provided the great motor for dynamic and aggressive innovation that marks the era.



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