

# Unveiling the Secrets of the Dark Ages: A Journey through "When Christ And His Saints Slept"

In the collective imagination, the Dark Ages evoke images of a time lost to history, a period of chaos and decline that followed the fall of the Roman Empire. Yet, within this perceived darkness, there lay a vibrant and complex world, one that Sharon Kay Penman masterfully unveils in her epic historical novel, "When Christ And His Saints Slept."

Through the eyes of three unforgettable characters, Penman transports readers to the tumultuous era of the 7th and 8th centuries. We witness the rise and fall of kingdoms, the clash of civilizations, and the indomitable spirit of those who lived through it all.



## When Christ and His Saints Slept: A Novel (Plantagenets Book 1) by Renee Gladman

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

|                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Language             | : English   |
| File size            | : 1704 KB   |
| Text-to-Speech       | : Enabled   |
| Screen Reader        | : Supported |
| Enhanced typesetting | : Enabled   |
| Word Wise            | : Enabled   |
| Print length         | : 770 pages |
| X-Ray                | : Enabled   |



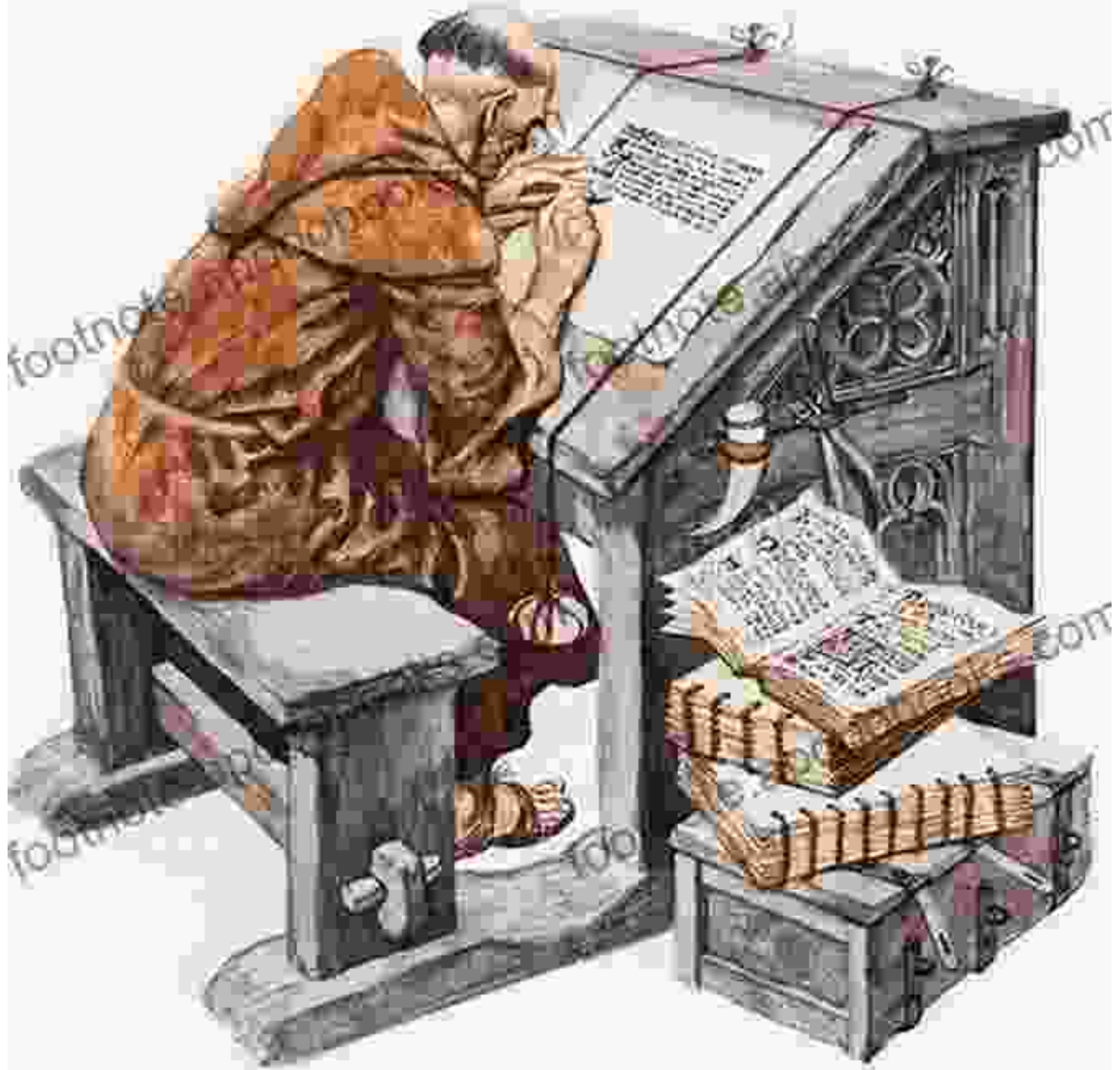
## The Characters



**A hunchbacked knight, Giselbert is a paradox of physical deformity and unwavering strength. Despite his affliction, he becomes a renowned warrior and a loyal companion to his lord, Charlemagne. His journey epitomizes the resilience and determination that permeated this era.**



**A woman of extraordinary intelligence and ambition, Judith is the daughter of a Bavarian duke. She becomes the wife of Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's son and heir. Her life is a testament to the power and influence of women in a time often seen as dominated by men.**



**A humble monk and scholar, Einhard becomes the chronicler of Charlemagne's reign. His writings provide invaluable insights into the events of the era and the complex personality of the great emperor.**

### **The Setting**

Penman's novel spans the vast landscape of the Dark Ages, from the war-torn kingdoms of France and England to the Byzantine courts of

Constantinople. The reader is immersed in a world of castles and monasteries, royal courts and battlefields. The vivid descriptions transport us to a time of upheaval and change.

## **The Themes**

Beyond its captivating characters and gripping plot, "When Christ And His Saints Slept" explores profound themes that resonate with our own time.

## **The Struggle for Power**

The novel delves into the relentless pursuit of power, both within kingdoms and on the international stage. We witness the ambition and treachery that drive kings, queens, and popes alike.

## **The Role of Religion**

Religion played a central role in the Dark Ages, and Penman portrays its influence both as a force for good and evil. We see the rise of monasteries as centers of learning and spirituality, but also the manipulation of religion for political gain.

## **The Resilience of the Human Spirit**

Despite the hardships and violence of the time, "When Christ And His Saints Slept" celebrates the indomitable spirit of the human heart. The characters face adversity with courage and perseverance, reminding us of our own capacity for resilience.

## **Historical Significance**

Sharon Kay Penman is renowned for her meticulous research and attention to historical detail. "When Christ And His Saints Slept" is no exception. The

novel draws on a wealth of sources to create a vibrant and authentic portrayal of the Dark Ages.

Through the stories of Giselbert, Judith, and Einhard, Penman sheds light on a period often forgotten or misunderstood. She challenges popular misconceptions and reveals the complexities of a time that shaped the course of European history.

"When Christ And His Saints Slept" is a masterpiece of historical fiction that transports readers to a forgotten era. With its unforgettable characters, gripping plot, and profound themes, the novel offers a unique and evocative glimpse into the Dark Ages.

For anyone interested in history, adventure, or the human spirit, Sharon Kay Penman's epic tale is a must-read. It is a novel that will captivate the imagination, inspire reflection, and challenge our understanding of the past.



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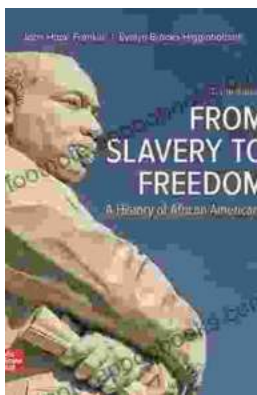
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