

NAXOS
AudioBooks

H.E. Marshall

OUR ISLAND STORY VOLUME 2

THE
COMPLETE
TEXT

UNABRIDGED

from the Magna Carta to Queen Elizabeth I

Read by **Anna Bentinck** and **Daniel Philpott**

JUNIOR
CLASSICS



NA541012D

1	Chapter XXXV	John Lackland – The Story of Prince Arthur	4:43
2	Chapter XXXVI	John Lackland – The Story of the Great Charter	14:01
3	Chapter XXXVII	Henry III of Winchester – Hubert de Burgh	7:57
4	Chapter XXXVIII	Henry III of Winchester – Simon de Montfort	9:01
5	Chapter XXXIX	Henry III – The Story of the Poisoned Dagger	6:15
6	Chapter XL	Edward I – The Little War of Chalons	5:40
7	Chapter XLI	Edward I – The Lawgiver	7:37
8	Chapter XLII	Edward I – The Hammer of the Scots	8:28
9	Chapter XLIII	The Story of King Robert the Bruce and Bohun	9:59
10	Chapter XLIV	Story of the Battle of Bannockburn	5:41
11	Chapter XLV	Edward III of Windsor – The Battle of Sluys	6:19
12	Chapter XLVI	Edward III of Windsor – The Battle of Crécy	14:15
13	Chapter XLVII	Edward III of Windsor – The Siege of Calais	13:07
14	Chapter XLVIII	Edward III of Windsor – The Battle of Poitiers	7:14
15	Chapter XLIX	Richard II of Bordeaux – Wat Tyler's Rebellion	12:59
16	Chapter L	How King Richard Lost His Throne	4:27
17	Chapter LI	Henry IV of Bolingbroke – Battle of Shrewsbury	6:48
18	Chapter LII	The Story of How Prince Hal was Sent to Prison	4:46
19	Chapter LIII	Henry V of Monmouth – The Battle of Agincourt	8:04
20	Chapter LIV	Henry VI of Windsor – The Maid of Orleans	10:58

21	Chapter LV	Henry VI of Windsor – Red Rose and White	10:48
22	Chapter LVI	Edward IV – Queen Margaret and the Robbers	5:13
23	Chapter LVII	Edward IV – The Story of the Kingmaker	8:11
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25	Chapter LIX	Richard III – Two Little Princes in the Tower	5:38
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28	Chapter LXII	Henry VIII – The Field of the Cloth of Gold	12:44
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34	Chapter LXVIII	Mary I – How a Candle Was Lit in England	4:51
35	Chapter LXIX	How the Imprisoned Princess Became a Queen	6:20
36	Chapter LXX	Elizabeth – The Story of a Most Unhappy Queen	8:16
37	Chapter LXXI	How England was Saved From the Spaniards	8:11
38	Chapter LXXII	Elizabeth I – The Story of Sir Walter Raleigh	7:20
39	Chapter LXXIII	Elizabeth I – The Story of the Queen's Favourite	10:40

Total time: 5:32:43

H.E. Marshall
OUR ISLAND STORY VOLUME 2
from the Magna Carta to Queen Elizabeth I

The *Magna Carta* – the Great Charter – was a milestone in the social and political development of England. King John was forced to admit that he didn't have total supreme control and that his subjects were entitled to have a say in things too.

The great event at Runnymede on 15 June 1215, when the *Magna Carta* was signed by King John, gives us a vivid picture of a time when the barons supported the rights of the people.

However, we know about the past not only through major political events, wars, the passage of kings and queens, and official records such as the Domesday Book. We also gain much information through the art of the times – not just paintings and sculptures, but the written word, architecture and music too.

Our Island Story, first published in 1905, is an enjoyable summary of Britain's history by the children's writer Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall. This recording covers the reign of England by two families: the Plantagenets and the Tudors. Henry II was the first Plantagenet king when he came to the throne in 1154; and the dominance of the family lasted until

Richard III died in the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, more than 300 years later.

The victor on that day was Henry IV, the first of the Tudors. The reign of *his* family didn't last for three centuries – in fact, it lasted for little more than one century. Queen Elizabeth I was the final Tudor sovereign, before King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England in 1603. He was the first of the Stuarts.

Artistic life changed quite a lot in those four and a half centuries. The Plantagenet reign took place in the medieval period, and the Catholic Church was a dominant force in artistic life. It was a time when the great Gothic cathedrals were built: those in Gloucester, York, Wells, Ely and Durham, for example. These large and magnificent building projects were ambitious for the age and costly to build. Each incredible example of tall, shaped stone, thrusting up to the sky, could take as long as one hundred years to complete.

These cathedrals needed sacred music for the monks to sing. In the early medieval period, before the Plantagenets, the choral

music was quite simple. There was Gregorian chant: nobody knew who wrote it and all the monks sang it in unison. But as the centuries went by, the music became more complex, with different lines being sung by different voices. For the first time, the names of individual composers began to emerge: John Dunstable (c. 1390–1453) lived in the reign of Henry VI; and Robert Fayrfax (1464–1521), born during the reign of Edward IV, lived into the reign of Henry VIII.

There was also secular music – music which was not for religious purposes. It was by ordinary people *for* ordinary people, because music has always been an important part of everyday life. It was played in towns and villages by local musicians and travelling minstrels. But generally the music was not written down – people played by ear and passed on tunes from generation to generation. So we can only guess what it sounded like from the few pieces of written music (in quite simple notation) that survive.

There was travelling theatre, but most of the plays were based on religious stories; or if they did involve ordinary life, there was always a moral at the end. People liked laughing, of course (life was hard but not always miserable!), and there were entertainers such as clowns, acrobats, dancers and animal

trainers. We know about all these mainly through passages and illustrations in books.

Books were rare, precious and expensive – but they did exist. The written word played an increasingly important role in the medieval world. This was despite the fact that before the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, all books were copied by hand.

Sometimes, in the big monasteries, there would be large rooms where one monk would read from a book and lines of other monks seated at rows of desks would write down what they heard. Many of these books would also be beautifully illustrated, with tiny drawings of animals or people decorating a letter at the start of a paragraph.

The books were mainly religious, containing stories from the Bible or writings of monks. Some great folk tales from the past were written down, like *Beowulf*, and some poems. Increasingly, just as composers did, individual authors began to emerge. One of the first whom we know about was William Langland: he wrote *Piers Plowman*, the story in verse of a humble ploughman, in 1362.

At the end of the 14th century Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340–1400) wrote his long poem *The Canterbury Tales*, which gives us one of the most colourful pictures of medieval life in England.

Books, and reading, became more widespread after 1474 when William Caxton (c.1422–1491) started printing books in England. Two of his first books were Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

As the circulation of books grew, they began to play a major role in society's development. Many more people started to think for themselves, and not just do what they were told to do by the Church and their lords and masters. This marked a new period in European history called the Renaissance (which means 'rebirth'). A keen interest in the arts and education spread across Europe – and that included England.

The arts themselves changed too. Composers still wrote music for the Church despite battles between the Catholics and the Protestants. In the reigns of Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I, composers such as William Byrd and Thomas Tallis wrote beautiful, lofty choral music to be sung in church. But they, and many others, also wrote secular music that has survived through the years – because music, like words, was printed and distributed around the country. There was music for the organ and other keyboard instruments, and for small orchestras. Other composers such as

John Dowland wrote songs for lute and voice.

At the Tudor court, words, and their inventive and gracious use, were prized. Courtiers, and explorers such as Sir Walter Raleigh, wrote poetry. And it was at this time that great dramatists emerged. Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) wrote *Dr Faustus*, *Tamburlaine the Great*. Then came William Shakespeare (1564–1616). His great plays – *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth* and many others – form one of the most important bodies of work ever to be produced by one man. Theatres, such as the Globe in Southwark, were built specifically for such plays to be performed.

Shakespeare didn't only write plays. As he produced one masterpiece after another, he invented many new words. Most people who speak English throughout the world will probably say words invented by Shakespeare a few times a week – though they may not realise that he invented them. Among 'Shakespeare's words' are 'lonely', 'fixture', 'torture', 'advertising', 'blanket' and 'birthplace'. It is said that he invented some 1,700 words which we use regularly.

Castles and cathedrals are the main medieval buildings that have survived, as well as some grand banqueting halls. But among

the most distinctive Tudor buildings are the wooden houses seen in Shakespeare's home town of Stratford-upon-Avon; the big country houses such as Hatfield House (where the young Elizabeth was told that Queen Mary was dead and she was now Queen of England); and very ornate chapels such as the one in Kings College, Cambridge.

Painting also began to play a prominent role in life. During the medieval period, most painting concentrated on religious subjects, and was relatively undeveloped. But as the Renaissance flowered during the early Tudor period, painting in England became increasingly sophisticated. That is why we have strong portraits of Henry VIII by Hans Holbein and portraits of other leading men of his day; and of Queen Elizabeth I and her court life. We even have exquisite miniatures by artists such as Nicholas Hilliard.

It was during the Renaissance, too, that people began to take a renewed interest in the great times of Classical Greece and Rome – their architecture and their writing. This also had a strong influence on poetry, drama and other art forms in Tudor times: we can see it in Shakespeare's plays, such as *Julius Caesar* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*.

So, artistic life developed considerably from the time of the *Magna Carta* and the

Plantagenets to the end of the Tudors and the beginning of the Stuarts. Religion continued to play a key part in music, the written word, the visual arts and architecture. However, the lives of ordinary people became increasingly reflected in various art forms, and this contributed to a broader and more lively development.

As Shakespeare writes in *As You Like It* (Act II, Scene VII):

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts...*

Notes by Nicolas Soames

PLANTAGENET MONARCHS

John reigned 17 years, from 1199 to 1216 A.D.

Henry III reigned 56 years, from 1216 to 1272 A.D.

Edward I reigned 35 years, from 1272 to 1307 A.D.

Edward II reigned 20 years, from 1307 to 1327 A.D.

Edward III reigned 50 years, from 1327 to 1377 A.D.

Richard II reigned 22 years, from 1377 to 1399 A.D.

Henry IV reigned 14 years, from 1399 to 1413 A.D.

Henry V reigned 9 years, from 1413 to 1422 A.D.

Henry VI reigned 39 years, from 1422 to 1461 A.D.

Edward IV reigned 22 years, from 1461 to 1483 A.D.

Edward V reigned a little more than two months, from April 6th to June 26th, 1483.

Richard III reigned 2 years, from 1483 to 1485 A.D.

TUDOR MONARCHS

Henry VII reigned 24 years, from 1485 to 1509 A.D.

Henry VIII reigned 38 years, from 1509 to 1547 A.D.

Edward V reigned 6 years, from 1547 to 1553 A.D.

Mary I reigned 5 years, from 1553 to 1558 A.D.

Elizabeth I reigned 45 years, from 1558 to 1603 A.D.



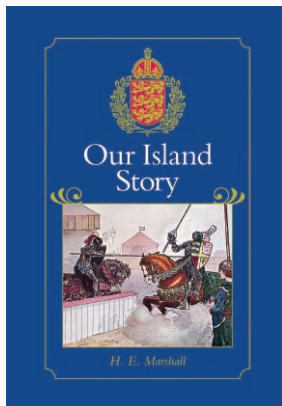
Anna Bentinck was trained at The Arts Educational School and has made over 800 broadcasts for BBC radio. Animation voices include the series *64 Zoo Lane*, and on TV she has played Mary Dickens in *Charles Dickens* and Mary Rutherford in the *Marie Curie* series. Her many audio books range from *Lyra's Oxford* by Philip Pullman and *A Little Death* by Laura Wilson to Queen Victoria by Evelyn Anthony. She has also recorded *Five Children and It* and *The Phoenix and the Carpet* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Daniel Philpott trained at LAMDA and, after success in the prestigious Carleton Hobbs Award for Radio Drama, has been prolific in BBC Radio and the Spoken Word industry. His theatre work includes numerous productions on the London fringe. For Naxos AudioBooks he has recorded *A Life of Shakespeare*, *Famous People in History – 2*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *Pygmalion*.

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The centenary edition of *Our Island Story*
is available from www.galorepark.co.uk
ISBN: 1902984749



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Our Island Story is a remarkable history book. It tells the history of Britain from its legendary beginnings to the death of **Queen Victoria** through the principal personalities. This volume covers two of the major reigning families: The Plantagenets, with the strong figures of **Edward III**, **Henry V**, and the villainous **Richard III**; and the Tudors, with the equally dominant sovereigns, **Henry VIII** and **Queen Elizabeth I**.

Within the accounts of their reigns are stirring stories and events: the Wars of the Roses, the Princes in the Tower, the battles of Crécy and Agincourt and the six wives of Henry VIII.

This is history at its most entertaining and engaging.



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CD ISBN:

978-962-634-410-1

View our catalogue online at

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Produced by Nicolas Soames
Recorded by Rupert Morgan at RNIB Talking Book Studios,
London
Edited by Arthur Ka Wai Jenkins

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Total time
5:32:43