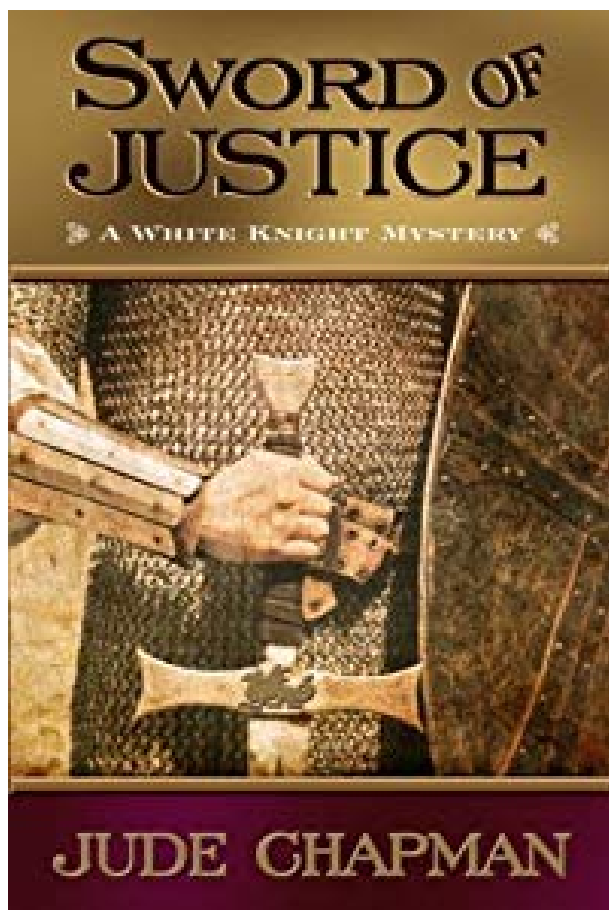


Sword Of Justice



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| Author: | Jude Chapman |
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Alternate cover edition available here. Mixing action, adventure, mystery, and romance, *Sword of Justice* opens in the year 1189 as Richard the Lionheart prepares to ascend the throne of England and soon thereafter embark on a Holy Crusade to Jerusalem. Having recently been dubbed knights by King Richard at Winchester Cathedral, Drake fitzAlan and his twin brother Stephen are lavishly fêted in a tournament on the grounds of their father's castle. Before Drake can test his bravery as a fledgling knight, he engages in sword play with a rival who questions the purity of his betrothed. The clash turns ugly when Drake is thrown from his horse and knocked unconscious. Moments later, he awakens to a gruesome sight. His rival has been impaled and eviscerated, and Drake is gripping the killing sword. After being captured and beaten by a posse comitatús out for blood, Drake barely escapes the hangman's noose. Branded mutilator, murderer, and outlaw, he faces a grim choice. Either clear his name or forever be banished from everything he holds sacred: home, family, country, and king. Rather than tuck tail and flee England, he defies his father's order and makes a pact with Stephen. Posing as his twin, Drake stays behind in England to hunt down the true killer while Stephen sets sail for the continent in the guise of Drake, there to await word of his brother's exoneration. After donning Stephen's clothes, strapping on Stephen's sword, and riding Stephen's horse, Drake blends in with the underbelly of Winchester society. Townspeople, country folk, barons, fellow knights, guardsmen, moneylenders, mercenaries, gamblers, loose women, and cutthroats don't see much difference between a notorious outlaw and his twin brother, but Drake manages to escape detection through guile, finesse, and at times, brute force. His quest to ferret out the slayer takes him on escapades and adventures, chases on and off a

horse, fights with and without a sword, and lovemaking in and out of bed. Along the way, Drake fends off bloodthirsty foes and handsome women using swords, fists, and romantic trysts. His journey of discovery leads him on a trail of power, divided loyalties, betrayal, treason, and greed where the stakes are high, not only for him but for the destiny of a king and his kingdom. He fools some people with his disguise, but not all, including his father, the deputy sheriff of Hampshire, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, and in particular, the comely daughter of an alewife known for renting out her room a half-night a throw. Since Aveline Darcy pegs all fitzAlans as scoundrels and liars, she vexes him with thorny words while tending his many wounds of flesh and pride and feeding him advice along with good cooking. The stakes are raised with a series of additional murders that implicate Drake. In the end, his wits more than his sword will help him uncover the killer, avenge the victims, protect his family, defend the king, and become the man he wants to be instead of the boy he's been until now. When at last he and Stephen are reunited and prepare to join Richard at Canterbury Cathedral before sailing for the Holy Land, Drake has one last act to perform... before God and king... which could cost him his life. The first in the White Knight Series, *Sword of Justice* will carry you away to a time when legends were born.