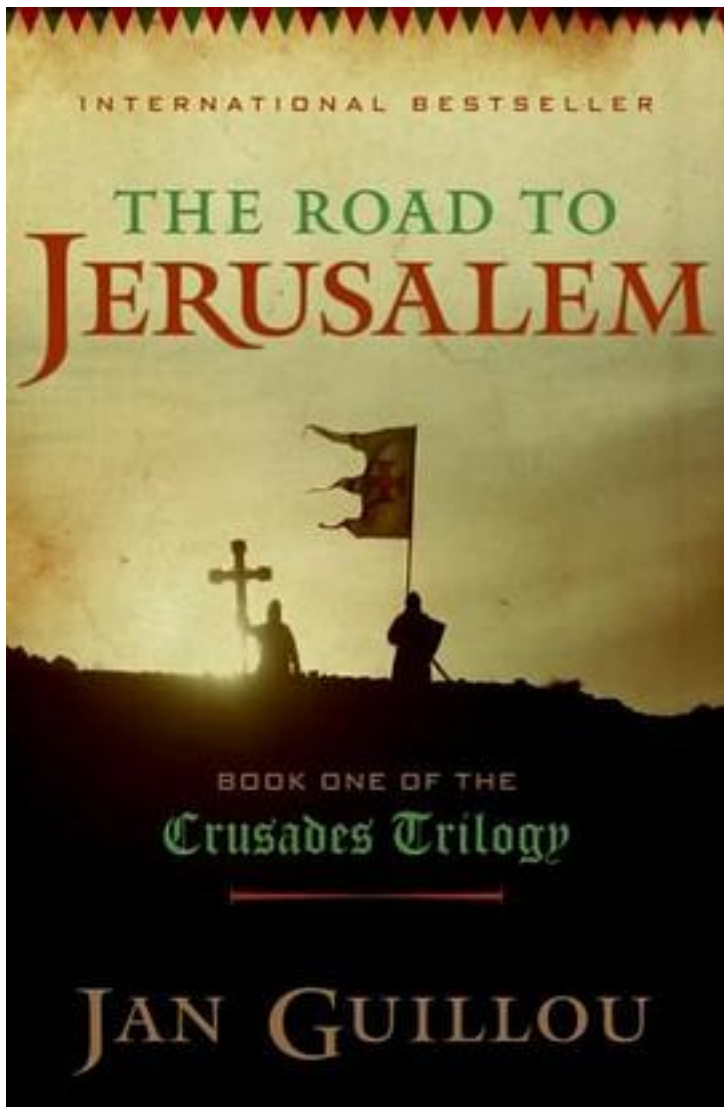


The Road to Jerusalem



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For power. For passion. For glory. The epic story of the knights templar. Born in 1150 to a noble family in the Kingdom of Western Gotaland, young Arn Magnusson is marked early on by a miraculous and fateful event. When the boy inexplicably recovers after falling from the parapet of his ancestral home, his mother finds herself beholden to a promise made in a moment of prayer. Arn, second-born son of Magnus Folkesson, will live his life in the service of God--sent from his family to do holy work and to prepare for a position in the priory. At Varnhem monastery, Arn comes of age under the tutelage of Father Henri, a Cistercian monk devoted to his aristocratic pupil's education. However, grammar, math, and logic are not the only lessons: Brother Guilbert, the monastery blacksmith and former Knight Templar, finds Arn adept at training of a very different kind. Observing the boy's extraordinary talent with horse, sword, and bow, Father Henri, trusting in God's will, sends his charge into the world to fulfill a destiny that lies beyond the cloister walls. Returning home, Arn finds his monastic habits at odds with his clan's old and tested ways. Yet his family soon discovers that Arn has learned more than poetry and farm work, and he proves himself useful at a time when he is needed most. The murder of a king has brought Western Gotaland into a whirlwind of intrigue, and cunning lords from East and West are vying for power. And, when Arn meets the lovely Cecilia, he discovers this new and dangerous world holds other surprises too. Before he can claim her hand, however, the headstrong and naive noble makes a fateful mistake that will wrench him from his love and send him to a foreign war--to the Holy Land to battle infidels for twenty years. From the frozen landscapes of Northern Europe to the bloody battlefields of the Middle East, Arn will face brave knights, powerful queens, and treacherous kings. The first book in the international bestselling Crusades Trilogy, this thrilling epic of betrayal, faith, blood, and love sets "a Shakespearian quest for power" ("Corriere della Sera," Italy) against the backdrop of the Holy Wars, witnessed through a vibrant, unorthodox lens.

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