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Those Rowdy Royals!
by Laura Resnick
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First published in Alien Pregnant by Elvis!; DAW Books, June 1994

Fictionwise Contemporary
Science Fiction/Alternate History

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THE MEDIEVAL TIMES, c. 1152
"An Annulment Is Announced"

After long and detailed negotiations, the Queen Consort and His Royal Majesty Louis VII of France have resolved to annul their marriage. The Queen Consort is expected to wed Henry, Duke of Normandy, before the end of the year -- a less-than-stunning match, according to royal analysts.

For an incisive study of the effect these events are expected to have on the stability of the florin against the dinar, please turn to the financial section.

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THE NORMAN RAG

"Queen Claims: Those Children I Bore Weren't Mine!"

Having been caught in flagrante delicto with that rogue the Duke of Normandy, Eleanor of Aquitaine (rumored to be thirty years old, despite her claims to the contrary) has filed for an annulment. Can we expect His Holiness the Pope to overlook the veritable herd of children Eleanor has borne to her hapless husband, the King of France? Can the royal couple reasonably claim non-consummation with so many of their heirs playing Crusaders 'n' Saracens in the back yard? Is the heir-apparent to the throne of France really the son of the castle chimney sweep? And will the Duke of Normandy, barely nineteen years old, really fess up and marry the Queen Consort?

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THE ANGLO-SAXON STAR

"Caught In The Act!"

Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry of Normandy were caught being more than a little careless while vacationing at an exclusive seaside resort near Calais last week. Recently separated from King Louis, Eleanor was supposedly resting in seclusion while awaiting her annulment papers.

Instead, one of the Star's most reliable artists found the soon-to-be-former Queen of France lounging fountainside with none other than the handsome Duke of Normandy himself. As you can plainly see from the exclusive drawings below, this relationship is most clearly a consummated one!

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THE EVENING JESTER

"Palace Promises Purge!"

Sources at the French court report that King Louis suffered an uncharacteristic fit of rage upon seeing yesterday morning's edition of The

Anglo-Saxon Star, in which exclusive drawings (whose veracity has not yet been confirmed) depict the Lady Eleanor (surely, no lady) and the young Duke of Normandy performing exactly the same act that Eleanor claims not to have performed with hubby Louis, despite the many children she bore him during their marriage.

King Louis has publicly threatened to cut off Eleanor's allowance. Will the Duke of Normandy still buzz around this aging blossom when her pollen dries up? And will the taxpayers still meekly sweat and toil in the fields of France when they realize that they're the ones financing these shenanigans?

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THE MEDIEVAL TIMES, C. 1153

"A New Heir Is Announced"

Henry, Duke of Normandy, has been acknowledged by Stephen as heir to the throne of England.

For an analysis of how this will effect the ducat, please turn to the financial section.

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THE COURTLY CHRONICLE

"We Have A New Heir!"

Having finally made an honest woman of Eleanor of Aquitaine last year, Henry of Normandy finds himself in the headlines once again. The brash young duke has recently landed on the shores of England and forced Stephen (remember him?) to acknowledge Henry as his heir.

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THE NORMAN RAG

"Alchemist Predicted It All!"

In a late-breaking story, one of the Rag's top journalists has learned that Alphonse the Magnificent, formerly of "Merlin's Travelling Circus and Sideshow," predicted the succession of Henry to the throne of England, as well as his marriage to the former Queen of France.

What does this wizard see in his crystal ball regarding the royal couple's future? For an exclusive prediction of the volatile pair's destiny, clip out the attached coupon and send it with one ha' penny to the Rag's London offices.

Offer void where void.

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THE MEDIEVAL TIMES, C. 1154

"Duke of Normandy Crowned King of England:

Henry II Promises Prosperity"

The stock exchange will be closed today in honor of the Royal Coronation.

For an analysis of King Henry's economic plans, please turn to the financial section.

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THE ANGLO-SAXON Star

"Bishop Seduces Goat At Coronation Feast!"

In pursuing the tradition of first-rate journalism which our readers have learned to expect, a Star reporter disguised himself as the Duke of Bilberry and managed to sneak into the Royal Coronation Feast.

Our fearless Star journalist left no stone unturned, no nook unsearched, no cranny uninvestigated. For an exclusive story about the bishop caught in a compromising position with a goat, please turn to page three.

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THE EVENING JESTER

"King Attacks Bishop, Goat Gets Away!"

In a follow-up story to this morning's Star headlines, a Pope who prefers not to be identified has told the Jester that a frightful row erupted when the King found a certain bishop with his favorite goat at the Royal Coronation festivities.

The palace has since instigated a search for the goat, which disappeared while His Grace King Henry II was throttling the bishop. Jester

sources suggest that members of the British Union for the Rights of Beasts (B.U.R.B.) may have spirited the animal away during all the confusion.

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THE COURTLY CHRONICLE

"Coronation Climaxes in Chaos!"

Despite an auspicious beginning, the Royal Coronation was marred by a brawl between certain Church factions and a raid staged by a left-wing animal rights group.

The palace has issued a statement denying any knowledge of goat abuse.

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THE MEDIEVAL TIMES, C. 1170

"Vatican Dollar Drops Drastically"

Thomas A Becket met his death in Canterbury Cathedral yesterday. Assailants unknown. The palace denies rumors that King Henry may have used ill-considered means to end, once and for all, his on-going quarrel with the Archbishop.

All members of the financial community have gamely issued public statements in support of His Majesty, mindful of the dangers of internal political chaos so near the end of the financial quarter.

"Remember," said Lord Savile, who asked not to be quoted, "those Scots are a lot closer than you might think."

For a detailed analysis of the effect the assassination has had on the economic salubrity of the Papal States, please turn to the financial section.

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THE COURTLY CHRONICLE

"Murder In The Cathedral"

King Henry can rest easy at last, since his arch nemesis, the Archbishop of Canterbury, lies cold in his grave. Yes, poor Thomas is dead, killed as he knelt at prayer, slain by infidels who slipped into the country disguised as Italian sausages.

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THE ANGLO-SAXON Star

"Courtly Chronicle Crushes Credibility"

The Courtly, known to be a mere tool of the Plantagenets ever since Henry first started bullying Stephen (remember him?), was caught printing unverified information about the identities of Thomas A Becket's assassins.

It is now known -- checked and double-checked by the reliable staff of the Star -- that Becket was slain by aliens. The same ones who built those pyramids and invented haggis.

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THE EVENING JESTER

"Henry Has Hemorrhoids!"

King Henry has continued to deny all rumors linking him to the murder of the Archbishop of Canterbury, claiming a chronic scatological disorder as his alibi.

Employing the responsible methods our readers have learned to expect, a Jester reporter disguised himself as a chamber pot to verify the King's story. We are pleased to be the first news service in Britain to report that Henry II, by the grace of God, King of England, does indeed have hemorrhoids and thus cannot be guilty of the Archbishop's murder!

For an exclusive account of the three days our star Jester journalist posed as the King's chamber pot, please turn to page three.

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THE NORMAN RAG

"Public Pressure Mobilizes Monarch!"

Despite the famous Chamber Pot Defense, the King has been unable to mitigate rumors that he ordered the assassination of Thomas Becket. Consequently, His Grace will do public penance and make a pilgrimage to Canterbury.

Now! For the first time! You, too, can live this historic event! Stay with us each day as, reporting live, we take you inside the true story! Get wet and muddy with Henry as he rides to Canterbury. Feel the sweat of

the King as he approaches Becket's final resting place. Experience the ice cold stones of Canterbury Cathedral under your knees as the Rag takes you there! Thrill to each lash of the whip as it licks Henry's skin!

This is a once-in-a-lifetime offer, folks! The chance won't come again, so be there!

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THE MEDIEVAL TIMES, c. 1173

"Civil War Threatens Britain"

At the instigation of their mother, Her Grace Queen Eleanor, King Henry's three eldest sons, Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey, have launched a full scale rebellion against our sovereign king.

For an analysis of the effect these events have had on the ha' penny, please turn to the financial section.

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THE NORMAN RAG

"Those Rowdy Royals Are At It Again!"

As if it weren't enough that the Queen moved her own court to Poitiers on account of the King's many infidelities (including fruit of a particularly forbidden nature if the Star and Jester are to be believed), now Her Grace has incited those three rowdy princes, Harry, Dickie, and Geoff, to launch a civil war against their father the King! What will future generations think of these royal peccadillos?

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THE COURTLY CHRONICLE

"Peace Breaks Out!"

After unfortunate family disputes which, incidentally, cost thousands of lives and brought whole sections of the country to a standstill, the Royal family has resolved its differences.

The palace announced yesterday that the Queen has gone into seclusion to rest after the harrowing events of the past year.

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THE ANGLO-SAXON Star

"King Throws Queen In Jail!"

Though the rebellion was a family affair, the King has responded harshly. Yesterday he locked up the Queen and threw away the key.

Posing as a chamber maid, a Star reporter managed to sneak into the Queen's quarters for an exclusive interview. Please turn to page three.

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THE EVENING JESTER

"Queen Claims: I Was Only Trying To Help!"

According to an exclusive interview printed in this morning's Star, Queen Eleanor claims that King Henry completely misunderstood her intentions when she and her three eldest sons raised an army and launched an attack against him.

Richard "Dickie" the Lion Heart was not available for comment, having gone off to some other country to slaughter people who never did him any harm. However, Prince Harry had this to say: "Well, um, my mom told me to do it."

Geoff was also not available for comment, as he was babysitting brother John at the time of this reporter's interviews at the palace. Too young to have participated in the war, Johnny stayed at home and pulled the wings off flies.

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THE MEDIEVAL TIMES, C. 1189

"King Dies: Long Live the King?"

King Henry II died yesterday afternoon, and the succession remains uncertain. Might as well turn to the financial section.

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THE COURTLY CHRONICLE

"Henry Heads Heavenward!"

His Grace King Henry II is survived by: his wife Queen Eleanor, eleven years

his senior; his son Geoffrey, who is quoted as saying, "Finally! I thought the old bugger would never die!"; his mistress, the young Princess Alais who has been affianced to nearly all the King's sons at one point or another; and his sons Richard and John who could not be reached for comment at the time of the King's death, as they were busy rebelling against him again.

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