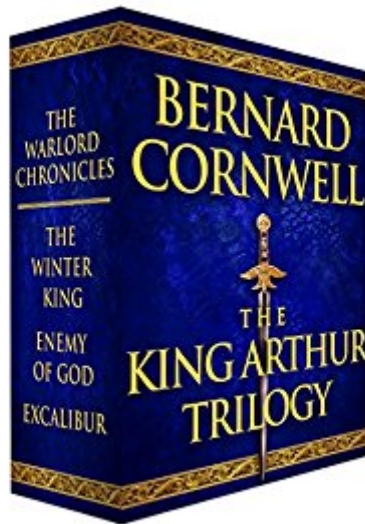




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The King Arthur Trilogy: The Winter King, Enemy Of God, Excalibur (Warlord Chronicles)



Synopsis

It takes a remarkable writer to make an old story as fresh and compelling as the first time we heard it. Bernard Cornwell's Internationally bestselling King Arthur Trilogy tells the mythic saga of King Arthur and is the work of a magnificent storyteller at the height of his powers. **THE WINTER KING** The novel is set in Dark Age Britain in a land where Arthur has been banished and Merlin has disappeared, where a child-king sits unprotected on the throne, where religion vies with magic for the souls of the people. It is to this desperate land that Arthur returns, a man at once utterly human and truly heroic; a man who loves Guinevere more passionately than he should; a man whose life is at once tragic and triumphant. **ENEMY OF GOD** Having defeated the last holdouts of civil war in southern Britain, Arthur has secured Mordred's throne. But he must still face raging conflicts between the old ways and the new, as well as foes more powerful and more dangerous--because they pose as friends. **EXCALIBUR** The unforgettable tale of Arthur's final struggles against the Saxons and his last attempts to triumph over a ruined marriage and ravaged dreams as forces both earthly and unearthly threaten everything Arthur stands for. Peopled by princesses and bards, by warriors and magicians, Excalibur is the story of love, war, loyalty, and betrayal.

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Customer Reviews

I've read almost all the depictions of the Arthurian Legend, and a lot of Cornwell. I'll discuss the legend first, then Cornwell. Arthur: For me to say this is the best ever, I'm basing that statement and evaluation on all the other Arthurian sagas I've read. They range from the courtly, romanticized and mystical--most of which have a distinctly medieval atmosphere. Arthur, if in fact he existed, lived in the Dark Ages, circa 500 A.D. It wasn't called the Dark Ages for no reason. The Romans had abandoned Britain 150 to 200 years before, leaving behind now-crumbling architecture/technology, a rudimentary concept of class structure, and several religions; most notably Christianity. Now the barely civilized native Britons faced a new, (also barely civilized) steadily encroaching enemy, the Sais (Saxons). This version of the Arthurian Legend is true to the time period. It presents life as it very probably was in that region of the world. It was dirty, it was short, it was brutal, it was conflicted, it was superstitious. It was not kind, it was not glamorous, it was not colorful or joyful. It was hard. It was the Dark Ages. Cornwell's rendering of the Arthurian Legend presents a story centering around CONFLICT FOR POWER. The conflicts are three-fold. 1. Paganism (Druidism) vs. Christianity. 2. Britons vs. Saxons. 3. Briton kings vs. Briton kings, and Saxon kings vs. Saxon kings. As far as the Dramatis Persona go, we have the usual suspects in the Arthur tale. Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, Merlin, Vivian/Nimue, Galahad, Morgan, Mordred, Uther, Gawain, etc. NONE are as we have seen them before. And they are all given life and deep character development by the narrator, one Derfel, a shield bearer for Arthur. Cornwell As I mentioned, I've read a lot of Cornwell. And I have to say this trilogy demonstrates how much he has grown as an author. He has always been one of the best of the British historical novelists, but I have always been put off a bit by his desire to present lengthy and detailed battle sequences. I know there are historical battle buffs galore, but I've never been able to get my head around them. That's just me. Yes, there are lengthy battle sequences in this version of the Arthurian legend, but for once, I wasn't tempted to skim them too much. That's due to overall craft of this mature author. If I could, I'd give this trilogy a 10 star rating, it's that good.

I enjoyed this series. I really like Bernard Cornwell as a writer and storyteller. My only complaint was that I read it immediately after his Saxon series, and there was a lot of similarities. So I would recommend spreading his works out and not reading them back to back.

Bernard Cornwell is a master of the time period and the best battle writer there is! And, I don't even

like battles. But the descriptions are in such detail as to make the events glorified in their gore. I can feel the trepidations as the contenders approach the field and wonder who's going to strike first. The blood and guts, the weight of the armor, the gratification in lasting to the bitter end - I can feel it all. I am thoroughly enjoying the first of this trilogy. I love the characters and can't say that I have a favorite because they are very well developed. Each chapter tempts you into the next with surprises that are not really surprises, and he puts a twist on the events and people that are unexpected. Like the transformation that Arthur undergoes during his battles. His dichotomy is brought out from the gentleness towards his friends and even foes to the merciless focus of his executions in the battle scenes. I'm only half way through and don't want it to end. A Great, great read.

Writing this review mainly to bring to prospective buyers' attention that this Kindle version, with all three books in one, does not accommodate the use of X-Ray on Kindles. Seeing as it is hundreds of pages long and spanning three separate books, this tool would be very handy as various characters with unfamiliar and sometimes similar-sounding names keep popping up; remembering who all of them are (unless you can read this in one or two sittings) can be a slight pain. Otherwise, while far from being my favorite Cornwell series, it's an interesting read, as other reviewers have captured well.

This was a fascinating retelling of the Arthur legend, and easily worth five stars to all readers except me, because I deducted a star for magical realism. Perhaps a legend cannot be told, particularly one which includes Merlin, without use of magic and sorcery, but the fortuitous intervention of Gods instead of men to further the plot or resolve issues is a weakness to me. However, in this era of superheroes and villains, I know my taste for realism over magic and superpowers places me in a distinct minority, and I recommend this trilogy to all who enjoy historical fiction.

Personal choice only, but I much prefer his writing in the traditional historical novels. I've had this trilogy on my Kindle for a while, and because of the genre put off reading it until recently. I'm a huge fan, having read over 30 of his novels, and usually when I finish a Bernard Cornwell book I look forward to the next installment, however, with this one, after three books I felt the story was done. Again, not the author's fault, just a personal preference.

A good read, although the Arthurian legend doesn't take the Cornwell style as well as I'd hoped. Trying to fit the story into the legend feels extremely forced (and thus a bit tedious) at times. Not as

good as Agincourt.

Beautifully written and such a skillful expansion of the story we all thought we knew.

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