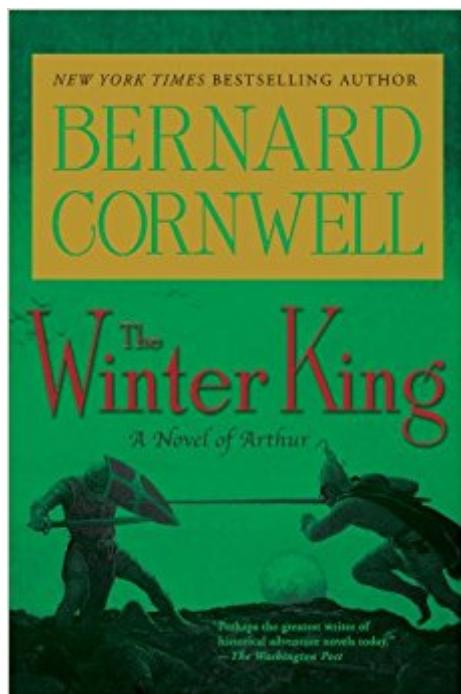


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# The Winter King (The Arthur Books #1)



## Synopsis

It takes a remarkable writer to make an old story as fresh and compelling as the first time we heard it. With *The Winter King*, the first volume of his magnificent Warlord Chronicles, Bernard Cornwell finally turns to the story he was born to write: the mythic saga of King Arthur. The tale begins in Dark Age Britain, 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 of honor, loyalty, and amazing valor; a man who loves Guinevere more passionately than he should; a man whose life is at once tragic and triumphant. As Arthur fights to keep a flicker of civilization alive in a barbaric world, Bernard Cornwell makes a familiar tale into a legend all over again.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Essentially this is a modern political thriller, told in flat American diction. Narrated by Derfel, an ordinary, likable man who rises through the ranks to become Arthur's friend and advisor in peace and war, the story doesn't follow the traditional patterns. Mordred is Uther's infant grandson, the legitimate king; Arthur is one of Mordred's guardians, sworn to hold the kingdom against the Saxon warlords until Mordred comes of age. Warfare is incessant. Arthur's dream of peace and unity seems unattainable. Derfel's own story--his strange origin, his love for Nimue, his worries and his triumphs--parallels Arthur's as he fights for and beside him. Bernard Cornwell downplays the magic that enlivens the traditional stories, depicting it more as a combination of superstition and shrewd wits. I recommend this with reservations; though it's absorbing to read, the emphasis on battles and

politics means that this will greatly appeal to some fantasy readers, but disappoint others.

Arthurian literature may be a worldwide cottage industry, but Cornwell, author of the Sharpe series of historical military adventures (Sharpe's Battle, etc.) stands out from the crowd with this exemplary kickoff to a trilogy about the legendary warrior-king. Cornwell's Arthur is fierce, dedicated and complex, a man with many problems, most of his own making. His impulsive decisions sometimes have tragic ramifications, as when he lustfully takes Guinevere instead of the intended Ceinwyn, alienating his friends and allies and inspiring a bloody battle. The secondary characters are equally unexpected, and are ribboned with the magic and superstition of the times. Merlin impresses as a remarkable personage, a crafty schemer fond of deceit and disguise. Lancelot is portrayed as a warrior-pretender, a dishonest charmer with dark plans of his own; by contrast, Galahad seems the noble soldier of purpose and dedication. Guinevere, meanwhile, no gentle creature waiting patiently in the moonlight, has designs and plots of her own. The story of these characters and others is narrated forcefully and with dry wit by Derfel Cadarn, one of Arthur's warriors, who later becomes a monk. Cornwell knows his history?the battle scenes are particularly fine?but not once does it get in the way of people of flesh and blood meeting on a darkened field of combat. Author tour. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

When it comes to historical fiction, Cornwell is one of the best, and the Warlord Chronicles is my favorite of his numerous series. I have read and re-read this trilogy to the point of the books falling apart. Few characters like Arthur and Merlin capture the imagination in such a powerful way, and to have it written as if it could have actually happened, is far more interesting than some fantasy story. The Audio book is simply stunning. Because there are no movies or established voices based on this book, Jonathan Keeble is free to bring them to life with no pre-conceived notions of what they should sound like. And he NAILS it. It helps that the writing style is done as a first person narrative, as it lets Mr. Keeble take what could be flat narration, and make that an integral part of the story. He uses his voice to convey the emotions of Derfel (main character), and make you truly believe this is an old man telling his story. I highly recommend this, particularly to those of you that have already read and loved the books.

My seventh or eighth book by this author. I almost stopped reading this book.....I love historical fiction but am fully aware that King Arthur while possibly a real person is most likely a

conglomeration of characters....Just finished this book and will start book two today.Well written, informative, (get a map of England) and fun to read. I say get a map because not being born in England my knowledge does not stretch to OLD name places in the British Isles.

I read this trilogy over 10 years ago and was totally absorbed from beginning to end! Just couldn't put the books down and was actually disappointed when it all came to an end in 'Excalibur'. I wanted still more on the era! I've always enjoyed books about the legend of Arthur but Cornwell's trilogy exceeded them all. His version of the legend is so much more entertaining and even believable compared to many other versions. Wish HBO would do a similar series on this trilogy like they are doing with 'Game of Thrones.' So glad to see the trilogy now is in a Kindle version. I've clicked on 'I want to read this book on a Kindle' several times in the past. Now I'm ready to read it again! Even those who may not be interested in the Arthur legend might enjoy it for its historical value. I've enjoyed all of Bernard Cornwell's books but the Warlord series was, in my opinion, the best of his work.

I bought the Arthur Trilogy because I have recently become a fan of Bernard Cornwell (picked up 1356 on a whim and was hooked). Most people are familiar (and love) the 'classical' Arthur legend. I am one of them. I was very slow to embrace Cornwell's representation. This story does not follow the recipe of other Arthurian tales. The reader has to get past that 'prejudice' to finally enjoy and appreciate the tale as Cornwell spins it. The Winter King is book one (of 3) and mostly takes the reader back to life in mid- 5th century southern England. Cornwell does a great job of representing the life, times and struggles of the populace while introducing us to his version of some familiar character - Uther Pendragon, Merlin, his sister Morgan (I have always known her as Morgana) and others. The story is told by Derfel Cadarn - an aged monk who lived the story as a soldier and confidant of Arthur and the other principle characters. Arthur does not make an entrance until the last chapters. This story has a ring of immediacy and reality to it.. through all 3 novels. The leading characters are - mostly - far from the noble folk in classic tales of Arthur's times and struggles. You may find this story a bit difficult at first because it is Not a comfortable one based on your expectations. However, once you set aside those prejudices and become immersed in this tale of England leading up to 500 AD, you will love the adventure.

FANTASTIC!This was a bit more difficult than many of the other books I've been reading recently, so I had to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the language.I recently read and highly enjoyed

Outlaw, the first book of Angus Donald's thrilling retelling of the Robin Hood mythology. Every review of that book at some point referenced The Winter King. The Outlaw series is less eloquent, and is more of a fun, quick read, but both books are equally enjoyable, although The Winter King's writing makes it a bit more rewarding. I was always curious about the Arthurian legend, and I thought this was a great way to learn about it. It was really wonderful. It was written from the point of view of one of Arthur's knights and closest friends. This level of distance allowed the author to compare the well-known legend of Arthur with what "really" happened. The book is well researched, and though the tale took place during the Dark Ages and little is actually known about the era, Cromwell tried to use real locations, which are listed in the beginning of the book, along with their modern-day names. The characters were very likable, the action was cinematic, the twists were unpredictable, and I found the whole experience very gratifying. I will definitely read the rest of the trilogy, and I will also check out Cromwell's well-known Sharpe series. I would recommend this to someone who enjoys swordplay action, or is interested in Arthur and Merlin, as well as anyone who enjoyed Ken Follett's heavily-researched historical fiction.

**SOUNDTRACK RECOMMENDATION:** Recomposed by Max Fisher - Vivaldi Four Seasons Fit the tone of the book perfectly. On at least five sittings, I listened to this album while reading this book, and it enhanced my experience. [http://www..com/Recomposed-Max-Richter-Vivaldi-Seasons/dp/B00IERJQXS/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1419283287&sr=8-1&keywords=vivaldi+recomposed](http://www..com/Recomposed-Max-Richter-Vivaldi-Seasons/dp/B00IERJQXS/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1419283287&sr=8-1&keywords=vivaldi+recomposed)

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