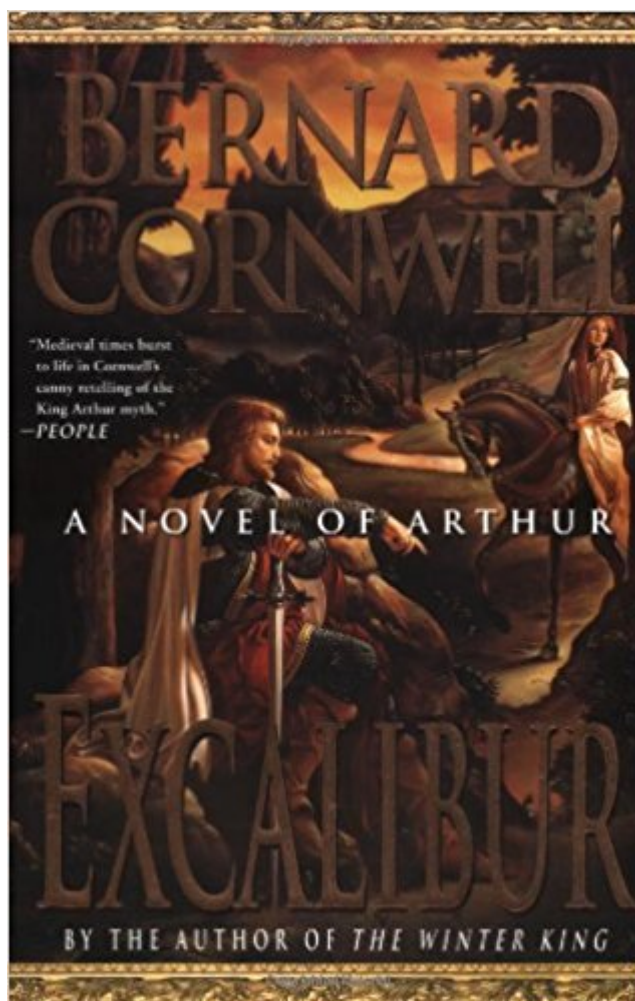


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Excalibur (The Warlord Chronicles)



Synopsis

In *The Winter King* and *Enemy of God* Bernard Cornwell demonstrated his astonishing ability to make the oft-told legend of King Arthur fresh and new for our time. Now, in this riveting final volume of *The Warlord Chronicles*, Cornwell tells the unforgettable tale of Arthur's final struggles against the Saxons and his last attempts to triumph over a ruined marriage and ravaged dreams. This is the tale not only of a broken love remade, but also of forces both earthly and unearthly that threaten everything Arthur stands for. Peopled by princesses and bards, by warriors and magicians, *Excalibur* is the story of love, war, loyalty, and betrayal—the work of a magnificent storyteller at the height of his powers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The third novel in the *Warlords Chronicle*, *Excalibur: A Novel of Arthur* immerses the reader in the Britain of the Dark Ages. Merlin, the greatest of the Druids, believes that the ancient gods are deserting Britain, and that the invading Saxons can't be defeated without the gods' help. Mordred reigns with a brutal hand, and Arthur sees his dreams of peace evaporate. The author provides exciting descriptions of swordplay and battles, interspersed with somewhat gruesome depictions of ordinary life in those days--greasy, waist-length beards serving as napkins, lambs bloodily sacrificed before festivals, and rampant lice. But at the heart of *Excalibur*--what makes the Arthurian legends eternally fascinating--is the larger-than-life company of heroes, from Sagramor the warrior to Taliesin the bard, Guinevere, Lancelot, and Arturus Rex himself. Cornwell treats them all with warmth and dignity, revealing their human qualities without unnecessarily reinventing them. This

three-part saga of magic and bloodshed will grip readers from the first page of *The Winter King*, through *Enemy of God*, to the last page of *Excalibur*. --Blaise Selby --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Readers of Mallory and other sources of Arthurian lore may be struck by their conflation of bloody savagery and Christian pieties. In his new Arthurian novel, Cornwell (*The Winter King*) dramatizes the confrontation of Christianity?here depicted as the political tool of self-righteous brutes, opportunists and hypocrites?with the old religion of the Druids. Chief among the Druids are Merlin and his nemesis, Nimue, who cast spells and preside over rituals of fire and human sacrifice in order to bring about a return of the old gods, saving Britain from the Saxons. Priestess Nimue wants to sacrifice Arthur's son Gwydre to this end, but Merlin resists, as do Arthur and his warrior friend Derfel: for this they suffer terribly. The tale is told by Derfel, now an old monk in the service of an illiterate and sadistic bishop who would punish Derfel if he knew what he were writing. This frame works well to flavor and deepen the whole. The book is a military tale?alliances, strategies, battles, betrayals?and is stirringly told as Arthur routs the treacherous Lancelot and his Saxon backers. It is also the tale of the reconciliation of Arthur, honest to a fault and tortured by his wife's betrayal, with Guinevere, extraordinary in her bravery, wisdom and forthrightness. Equally central is Derfel's devotion to his mate, Ceinwyn, for whose life he sacrifices his shield hand, averting Nimue's curse. The action is gripping and skillfully paced, cadenced by passages in which the characters reveal themselves in conversation and thought, convincingly evoking the spirit of the time. Ways of ancient ritual, battle and daily life are laid out in surprising detail. One feels the element of fantasy only in the incredible integrity of Derfel and Arthur, men who sacrifice all for a vow?but our reluctance to believe may be only a sign of our times. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bernard Cornwell is a masterly writer and story-teller. As soon as you start this, the third book of the Arthur trilogy, you are hooked. His descriptions of warfare are unique and compellingly detailed. His use of words are spellbindingly woven to a point of genius. He could give lessons to Shakespeare and to the best of editors. You care about the people he weaves within his books, including those that you wish the most horrid endings; and it is those that survive that you want nothing but a lifetime of pain. This book, along with the first two volumes, are magnificent. You get caught up and carried along as you marvel how incredibly his words flow and capture you. Despite its length, I read "Excalibur" in three days. I think this third volume, though, was the best. He brings you to the end of

a great saga. I didn't want it to end, but end it must. You feel enriched as a reader and will shake your head. This book is a WOW!

Great trilogy, although I think it is more a story of Lord Derfel than Arthur. The history of this period and Arthur's existence is sketchy but Cornwell does a good job representing the overall time period and what could have been Arthur's true role. It has led me to look for a little more historical perspective of Arthur versus the legend that was created beginning in the late 1100's. In this last book Derfel and Arthur face the destruction of the peace Arthur had worked so hard to get throughout England and to be united against the Saxons. The Saxons are united and preparing for invasion; the Kings of England are living in a fragile peace and plotting behind the scenes for greater power; and Nimue and Merlin are on a quest to bring back the pagan gods. Derfel and Arthur must face each of these challenges to survive and maintain peace. Cornwell weaves these stories together and brings them to a conclusion consistent with some historical perspective. Very enjoyable.

Cornwell writes about culture wars and battles for existence of those cultures. His battles are not from the perspective of the the generals, rather he puts you in the front lines. His characters are tough, smart and strong. This book closes the Arthur and the Round table trilogy. Don't read this until you have finished the first two books. If you thought that the knights in shining armor is Arthur, think again. I really enjoy Cornwell 's writings. The Arthur trilogy is one of the better almost historical reading you will find out there. Ancient battles come to life, enjoy.

This is a review of the trilogy as a whole, The Winter King, Enemy of God, and Excalibur (the Warlord Chronicles). I had a hard time getting into The Winter King, the first book, but the pace picked up through the Enemy of God, and by the middle of that book I was fully involved with the characters and story. I've read many versions of the legend of Arthur, and this one was the most "different" and off track of the popular, romantic legends. However I saw it more as Derfel's story than Arthur's; you don't get Arthur's thoughts and mindset and feelings like you do Derfel's. Also, I see many parallels between Derfel and Uhtred, the hero of the Saxon Tales series, although 400+ years separate the time and settings of the two series. I'm glad I stuck with the series, which I did because I knew from reading all seven of the Saxon Tales books that once you start a Bernard Cornwell novel, you can't help but find yourself engrossed in the story without even realizing it. There comes a point that you can't stop or turn back until the end and that is the mark of a truly

great storyteller. Anyone who likes medieval historical fiction and doesn't mind the graphic violence will enjoy this book.

Third and final book of the Warlord trilogy. This Trilogy is more realistic and adventurous than any other book on the Arthurian legends, and far more historically accurate on that time period. Characters and their actions were so realistic compared to the romanticized versions we've seen in movies or read in other books. Excellent read!

Sorry to end this series. Derfel and I spent some quality time together.....I continue to very pleased with Cornwell's writings. I do fact check him often.... both on my Kindle Fire and later with online research. I know this is historical fiction but I also am aware that he is attentive to details. Usually I find his research on topics to be accurate. History can be alive and Cornwell proves it over and over.

I do love Bernard Cornwell's historical novels. The Warlord series, starring Arthur, Guinevere, the necessary narrator--in this case Derfel--and the rest of the characters do not ensnare me in the way that the Uhtred series has done. But I enjoy reading this kind of historical fiction and prefer Cornwell, even 2nd best Cornwell, to most others in the genre. I am really giving 3 1/2 stars, but the system does not seem to allow for that or I do not know how to add a half star, and this is closer to 4 than 3. I gave it the extra half star because some of the plot twists are really fun, as well as character development far from the usual versions of the ARthur legend. Thank you, Bernard Cornwell!

The trio of the Warlord Chronicles brings a realistic interpretation of Arthurian legend in a way that is addictive. Not the romance which gilds from T.H. White or Sir Thomas Mallory... But a gripping saga of what might have been. Superb!

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