



Sharpe's Gold

Bernard Cornwell

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With Wellington outnumbered, the bankrupt army's only hope of avoiding collapse is a hidden cache of Portuguese gold. Only Captain Richard Sharpe is capable of stealing it—and it means turning against his own men.

Sharpe's Gold Details

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Steelwhisper says

4.5 rounded up, clearly one of Cornwell's earlier books.

Rick Brindle says

This came after Sharpe's Eagle, so a hard act to follow. It does a pretty good job, but you only realise Bernard Cornwell's winning formula when you realise there's a crucial bit missing, and that's a massive battle at the end that only turns into a victory thanks to Sharpe. Plenty of other good bits in this one though, nice to see Tom Garrard again after India.

Jason Koivu says

It's a treasure hunt and everyone's invited!

British army officer Richard Sharpe is sent on a secretive mission in Spain, almost a fool's errand, to obtain rumored gold. This is gold that belongs to the Spanish, but is needed by the British, who certainly don't want it to fall into the hands of the French! Many of the nation's involved in the Napoleonic wars are represented in this ally-vs-ally-vs-enemy-vs-etc book, even the Germans show up for some fun!

Sharpe's Gold is fun and would be considered inconsequential but for Sharpe meeting (view spoiler) Teresa Moreno, who would (view spoiler) Aside from that, all the gang's here - stalwart friend Sergeant Patrick Harper and wily spy Major Hogan - and there's plenty of intrigue and fighting. Just what you came for!

Bernard Cornwell is often cited for the historical accuracy in this particular series. However, *Sharpe's Gold* is one of Cornwell's more "inventive" novels. Whereas others in the series rely upon actual history for the backdrop of Sharpe's adventures, *Sharpe's Gold* is almost entirely fabricated. But who cares? It's a rollicking good time!

Rob says

Number 9 in the Sharpe Series.

I just love the Sharpe series. Real history wrapped up in entertaining fiction.

The real history is the events that happened at Almeida in Portugal 1810.

The British army is struggling to maintain a foothold in Portugal and is running out of money. If the army is to survive it need gold and lots of it. There is a horde of Spanish gold that the British army has heard about and the army decides to help themselves to it. The problem will be getting it from the Spanish.

This is where Captain Richard Sharpe and his small company come in. Sharpe has been given orders to get the gold come what may.

Sharpe has to contend, not only, with the French but also the Spanish guerrillas who won't give up the gold without a fight.

When Sharpe is on a mission, the only thing that will stop him is death it's self.

This makes for lots of thrills and spills.

Thoroughly entertaining and informative.

Highly recommended for lover of historical fiction.

Deanne says

Reading these books makes me want to watch the series again, it's one of those periods of time that I am drawn to. Love the whole Napoleonic wars era, though I prefer Nelson to Wellington.

Anyway back to the book, it's still the peninsular wars with Britain trying to retain their foothold in Portugal and Spain. Things are going badly and funds are low, but there's a hidden stash of gold that could come in handy if only we can get our mitts on it. There's also a man Wellington has in mind for the job.

Shane says

This has to be the worst of the Sharpe series. Aside from the abrupt ending to an already short novel, there are inconsistencies with the consistency of Cornwell's writing and characters. Sharpe and Wellington are both amply out of character here. While both are motivated by an unrelenting desire to succeed, the actions taken in this installment go beyond their previously established value system. There are also plot holes such as how did Hagman and his 3 get out of the village after providing overwatch from the bell tower in chapter 13? How come none of the partisans were shot by Hagman and his group when they left the village?.

There's a drastic difference between the first set of books that were written and the rest of the books that were inserted into the story later. The later books are polished to perfection and Sharpe's character is infinitely more compelling. It makes one wish that Cornwell had perfected his trade on some other series before coming to Sharpe.

The Sharpe series still remains some of the best historical fiction out there, it's just that half of the series (Rifles, Eagle, Gold, Company, Sword, Enemy, Honour, Regiment, Siege, Revenge and Waterloo) is dampened by seeing what it could have been when compared to the later novels (Tiger, Triumph, Fortress, Trafalgar, Prey, Havoc, Escape, Fury, Battle, Skirmish, Christmas, Ransom and Devil).

Ensiform says

Sharpe, immediately after winning accolades for capturing a French Eagle, is ordered by Wellington to steal a fortune in Spanish gold. This is in the care of El Catolico, a devious and selfish Spanish partisan, who wants it for himself. Naturally, Sharpe means to take it – and El Catolico's fierce, beautiful lover, of course.

Cornwell surprised me in this book: Major Kearsey, the strict, rather uptight official whom Sharpe has difficulties with, did not, to my great amazement, turn out to be traitor, merely somewhat of a boob. I got the

sense that Cornwell did intend Kearsy to be a traitor, but a shrewd editor told him that Sharpe had faced a few too many traitors in a row, so he rewrote the character a bit – though El Catolico is, in some ways, a traitor, since he's nominally a British ally – so Cornwell got a turncoat in after all. Whew! In any case, whether it's the less formulaic characters, the rather questionable morality of Sharpe's mission, or just the exciting climax during the siege of Almeida, this is the first Sharpe book in a while to hold my interest from beginning to end.

David says

The second book in the series - chronologically the ninth - Sharpe's Gold tells of a daring mission behind enemy lines to retrieve a hidden cache of gold in the Portuguese mountains.

For anyone who has seen the TV adaptation, be warned: the novel only holds a passing resemblance. It's also typical Sharpe fare: the hero taking on both his own side and the enemy. This is also the novel that introduces us to the Partisan Teresa, who later in the series becomes his wife. As usual for Cornwell, real events are woven into the plot of the storyline: in this case the destruction of Almeida that occurs towards the end of the novel, although, I have to say, that I felt this portion of the story was almost 'tacked on' and not really necessary.

So, to sum up: Sharpe is sent on a dangerous mission, ends up fighting both his own side and the enemy, gets the girl and eventually succeeds in his mission. And yes, I realise I could be describing virtually any of the novels!

Joseph says

Another enjoyable romp through the Napoleonic Wars. This time, not so much as fighting the French as the Spanish Guerrillas. After all, even your allies get a little upset when you steal, sorry, rescue their gold. Even if it is at the command of the Duke of Wellington! It all climaxes with Sharpe becoming trapped in a siege and being ordered by the city commander to return the gold to the Spanish and Sharpe's novel solution to his problem...

Ed says

Taking place in 1809, this is the ninth book chronologically in the Richard Sharpe series. In my opinion it is the worst of the nine.

Sharpe, as usual, has more problems with his own people than with the French enemy. In this story he encounters an arrogant provost, a religious zealot, an unsympathetic General and a Spanish ally who wants him dead.

Also, as usual, he meets a beautiful woman whom he falls in love with but can never have because he is a soldier and must move on.

He survives numerous wounds and is twice rescued as he faces almost certain death.

While these are elements in all of the previous books in the series, in this tale they come across as formulaic rather than spontaneous thereby ruining the fun and the suspense.

If I could, I'd give the book 2 and 1/2 stars rather than three: "barely worthwhile reading". I plan to read the next volume, "Sharpe's Escape" and I hope that "Sharpe's Gold" was an anomaly and that Cornwell can recapture the exuberance and excitement of Sharpe's adventures.

Algernon says

Sharpe's Gold picks up the story of the freshly appointed, yet unconfirmed, Captain Richard Sharpe soon after his famous capture of a French regimental Eagle at the battle of Talavera (I think 1810, but I'm not very good with numbers). The fate of the British armies in Portugal is in Dire Straits (I've always wanted to find a way to insert the name of this rock band in one of my reviews) , and General Wellington's last resort is to send the unorthodox but highly effective Sharpe deep into enemy territory, where he has to retrieve about half a ton of gold in Spanish doubloons.

Both the ownership of the treasure and its role in salvaging the British troops remain questionable. Sharpe has to fight both the French patrols and the Spanish guerrilleros as his small band of riflemen is chased across the no man's land between the larger armies. Strongpoint of the novel are several battle sequences and the personal conflict between Sharpe and El Catolico, guerilla leader and spurned lover.

Speaking of love, I'm getting real tired of the author's insistence in providing a nubile, fiery tempered and easily seductible woman in every single novel in the series, no matter how rough the setting and improbable the conquest. My other complaint is the evident bias towards the British armies, and towards Sharpe in particular, to the point where adversaries are ridiculed and his own soldiers are praised to heaven and beyond. Realism takes a step back when faced with hero worshipping, sometimes going so far as to find excuses for war crimes (view spoiler)

The book was a pageturner as usual, I've blown through it in two sittings, so don't take my complaints too seriously. The actions scenes were excellent, but I hope in the next installments I will see more of the larger Napoleonic conflict and less of these sidequests.

Eric_W says

Sharpe's Gold by Bernard Cornwell is another enjoyable volume in Cornwell's Napoleonic War series featuring our hero, Richard Sharpe. I found this one particularly interesting not just because it's a good story that proposes an unusual solution for the cause of a huge explosion that destroyed the fortress at Alameda, but also because of the huge ethical dilemma that Sharpe creates for himself. To my way of thinking, Sharpe doesn't linger long enough on the ramifications of his act, which kills hundreds, in order to release himself from the order of a superior officer so that he can fulfill the order of another, Wellington. The general had ordered Sharpe to take his company into enemy territory and steal 16,000 gold coins from the Spanish, ostensibly a British ally. Wellington insists the gold is needed to save the war for the British. Sharpe succeeds, of course, after the usual narrow escapes and plunges into manure piles and beautiful women, but I found the decision he makes to get out of his dilemma totally disturbing.

Dawn says

While this is book #9 in the series, it is only the third Sharpe book I have read.

Sharpe is asked by Wellington to complete a task to save the war from being lost. At first it seems all too simple and is soon made complicated by bad information and incompetent superior officers. Despite the involvement of the Spanish freedom fighters and a beautiful girl, Sharpe manages to complete his mission with the aid of the Polish lancers sent to assist.

I have always loved heroes who prevail against all odds and Sharpe is one of those types. He has a great cast of supporting characters, including the returning Sgt. Harper and Cpt. Hogan.

I have heard much about the formulaic style of the Sharpe series and with my third book I am seeing the pattern but while this may not work for me all the time, in this series it does.

Paul Downs says

Hardly a revelation at this point that this series is a decent read, with some interesting history tacked onto a somewhat improbable hero.

Jon says

So far my least favorite of the Sharpe series. I'll avoid spoilers, but Sharpe's solution to his seemingly intractable problem was appalling and indefensible. Cornwell did a poor job of selling the problem and the solution, and so I think I'll just have to forget this ever happened if I'm to enjoy the rest of the series.
