



## The Road to Jerusalem

*Jan Guillou, Anna Paterson (Translator)*

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## **The Road to Jerusalem** Jan Guillou , Anna Paterson (Translator)

The hero of this phenomenally successful historical trilogy is Arn Magnusson, born in 1150 to an aristocratic Swedish family. THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM covers his childhood and education at the Cistercian monastery of Varnhem. There he is taught the best of spiritual and worldly learning, as well as being trained to become a master archer and swordsman by the giant Brother Guilbert, a former knight. At seventeen, equipped to become a monk or a warrior, Arn returns home, a young man and yet an innocent in the ways of the world. Two sisters cross his path: one seduces him, while with the other sister, Cecilia, he falls deeply in love. In loving two sisters he has committed a crime punishable by both civil and clerical authorities, and he is sentenced to serve 20 years as a Knight Templar in the Holy Land.

## **The Road to Jerusalem Details**

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Author : Jan Guillou , Anna Paterson (Translator)

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## From Reader Review The Road to Jerusalem for online ebook

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## Amanda Klich says

First off, if you want a non fiction history book about the Knights templar, the crusades, don't read a fictitious novel expecting to get a history lesson. But if you want a great trilogy about fictitious knights templars and the crusades, then this book is for you. The writing style is simple, and this is a quick read. I have barely been able to tear my eyes away from it, and I'm extremely picky with my books. I'm that person who won't finish a book if I know I'm not into it, no matter how far into the book I am, I'd rather not waste my time. So for me, this is a great book. I'm looking forward to the other 2, which I ordered while I was only 100 pages into this book. Before I found this series, I had done a lot of research on the actual knights templar. I read a lot of good books that helped me to separate fact from fiction.

**Tazitazitazi says**

je 3. skandinavski autor (nakon i ) s kojim se susre?em u zadnje vrijeme i moram priznati da su me zainteresirali za skandinavsku književnost, jer su stilom i žanrom razli?iti (ne padajte na reklamni slogan "Jo Nesbø je novi Stieg Larsson"!).

"Put u Jeruzalem" je jedan u podužem nizu povijesnih romana koje sam pročitala u zadnje vrijeme (mislim da mi treba barem kratka pauza), pa se ne mogu oteti potrebi da ga usporedim s i .

"Put u Jeruzalem" i "Bijelu kraljicu" povezuje narativan karakter i iscrpni opisi; ali to "Put u Jeruzalem" ?ini usporenim, a "Bijelu kraljicu" dosadnom. Ovdje ide i velika zamjerka izdava?u (Znanje za sve 3 knjige) da

stražnja strana korica otkriva prevelik dio prije što meni umanjuje užitak čitanja (u "Putu u Jeruzalem" i sam rasplet!).

"Put u Jeruzalem" i "Raskol" povezuje tema samostanskog života koja je prikazana iz 2 suprotna kuta.

"Raskol" prikazuje samostane kao izvore razvrata i dekadencije, a "Put u Jeruzalem" kao svjetionike znanja i humanosti u barbarskom svijetu. Međutim, upravo su opisi samostanskog i svakodnevnog života najzanimljiviji dio "Putu u Jeruzalem". Vrlo su detaljni, pa i poučni. U vrijeme kad nas tehnika u potpunosti okružuje vjerojatno ne razmišljamo o tome kako skladištiti meso bez zamrzivača, osigurati higijenu bez vodovoda, graditi bez cigle, pisati bez papira... Ovo nije prva knjiga koja to opisuje, ali to radi na vrlo dobar način.

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### **Dawn says**

It's an uncomplicated read. Often boring. Sometimes interesting.

The extreme naivete of Arn is not my most favorite trait in a main character. While later in the story he has a more 'in the world but not of the world' quality that stems from his religious upbringing, it wasn't enough to make up for the earlier naive innocence that annoyed me so much.

The characters had no real depth for me. They haven't been fleshed out to real people, just distant foreign historical figures thrown into a story. I did like Arn's mom, though how she magically seems to make money and be innovative with everything she does, seems a bit much at times.

The best part of the book is that the Scandinavian history is very clear. It's not just another medieval story that could technically be set anywhere, this one is very involved with its backdrop. I think I would prefer a non-fiction work from this author though. His mix of too much fact and not enough story didn't work in this fiction setting, though I do really like the history, the location and the era.

The writing comes across as very simple, childish and choppy throughout. I'm not sure if this is from the translation alone or has been carried through from the original text.

The author has tried to create a story *from* medieval times, not just *of* medieval times and I appreciate that, but it didn't catch my imagination enough to read the next volume.

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### **Anna says**

Det händer ingenting i nästan hela boken utan allt händer de sista 50 sidorna. Hoppas att de andra böckerna i serien är bättre!

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### **mohab samir says**

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**Amber Cooke says**

I cannot put my finger on exactly why I loved this book so much. It's something about Arn. He is such an ideal hero: skilled and courageous, innocent and honest, ethical to excess, but with a tragic weakness for human love. What is not to admire? I was drawn to read the series by the cinematic adaptation, but in the old proverbial way, I enjoyed the book so much more. This first installment is all about Arn's upbringing and the social/political climate that formed his education. I like the character even more when seeing him in contrast to the less brave, less congenial, and less trustworthy, (in short, more mortal and human) members of his family and community. He is a sort of moral superhero and I am anxious to see more of how he grapples with the broader world. The style of prose is so straightforward that it seems wholesome and hearty like buttered bread for the brain. It feels good to read something so simple, but not entirely predictable, just complex enough to keep the reader curious. A satisfying read, and I have book two in queue.

## Ahmed Al-Emadi says

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## Noah Degenhardt says

This book was fantastic. It has the proper historical accuracy that a historical fiction should have. Jan Guillou is a fabulous, well-versed author who can paint the world with his words, tickle the senses with his diction,

and transport you into a world of love, betrayal, pain, sin and spirituality. If you're a reader who even has a passing interest in history, i would recommend this book to you. But we warned: the story is very complex and moves fast. Simply be careful and try to look at the bigger picture, rather than simply through Arns (the main character) eyes.

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### **Dan Ryder says**

A lovely book. Unlike some other reviewers, I found the distinctive writing style to be quite delightful. Guillou can move effortlessly from the point of view of the naïve Arn, to that of a timid mother in law, to a wise priest, to a calculating nobleman, all in the space of a few pages. It must be admitted that the character of Arn seems almost drawn from a fairy tale, but the encounter of such a character with the (historically accurate) political complexity and occasional brutality of medieval Scandinavia proves to be highly entertaining. I very much enjoyed rooting for Arn while at the same time laughing at his naïveté, and I look forward to reading the next book in the series when his newfound knowledge of the real world will no doubt continue to transform him.

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### **Jud Tirawieh says**

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### **Laura says**

Kindly sent by my dear friend Bettie. Just arrived today!!

The first book of a trilogy but I wasn't really engaged into the plot. I am not sure I would read the rest of this trilogy. 2,5 stars.

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### **Ibrahim says**

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**Howard says**

The Crusades Trilogy tells the saga of Arn Magnusson in the late 12th century. The story of Arn itself is fascinating although entirely fictional. Written history of the Northern people in that time period is extremely sparse leaving much wiggle room for Jan Guillou to create a fantasy-like tale set in an extremely vivid period of history.

Although I only rated the first book "The Road to Jerusalem" with two stars I gave books 2 & 3 a better rating. The greatest strength of the trilogy is its ability to seamlessly bring the reader close to the history surrounding the story of Arn (the Crusades mixed with the struggle for power in what is now modern day Sweden). At many times I felt as though the main characters were actual people.

Even though I found reading this series to be worth my time I was overall disappointed in the writing. Mr. Guillou tends to dull one of the most interesting periods in history with a monodrone style of telling events and facts as is it were a history book. The style of writing was so off-putting that is took me half of the first book to simply adapt to it. The book is about 90% narrative and description with 10% dialog and action thrown in for trimming. Thus Mr. Guillou has an ever-annoying style of telling the story & characters instead of SHOWING it. This makes the reading especially hard in the first book. There are also a few events and scenes in the series that come across as extremely coincidental or glaringly contrived.

Jan Guillou does do an excellent job however of putting the crusades into a context that simplifies/reduces (in a good way) a very touchy and not-so-simple history. I was especially impressed with his handling of the events that take place in the Holy Land at that time. It also gives the reader a great feel for what life was like not only in the Holy Land but in medieval Scandinavia as well. There are times in the series when the differences between the monks and the native Northmen are a bit exaggerated and strain author's credibility but on the whole it was decently accurate.

Overall I would recommend these books to any persons interested in the people or events of the time period (approx 1150AD to 1225AD).

## **Mohammed Orabi says**



## Fiona says

First Read: 22.11.12

Re-read: 5.6.14

I re-read this in preparation to finish the trilogy seeing as I have entirely forgotten most of the story! I'm glad I had otherwise I'd have been very confused by the second book. I wish I could remember more details when I read books. Anyway. I enjoyed it still just as much but have changed it from a 5 star to a 4 star. Whilst it is still very good and high up there with many books, I'm nowadays trying to reserve 5 stars for those that I find exceptional. Sometimes I get a bit carried away though when initially having finished a book. I can be more objective on a re-read, I think.

-----First Review

I really, really really enjoyed this book. It is simply a good story and it came at a time when I wanted a good historical novel that wasn't too heavy or high brow. The Road to Jerusalem is a Swedish historical novel.

The style in which it is written may not suit some as it broke the rule of 'show and not tell'. Guillou instead used very little dialogue and instead reported what happened in a rather relaxed narration. It is from the perspective of an author who already knows the outcome and is merely relating the story to the listener.

The story reminds me a little of The Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett, with the monks, Christianity and mention of stone masons from Briton! It also reminded me of Brethren by Robyn Young, as both books are quite similar in storyline. Both books are the first in a trilogy that starts off in a monastery, that is about the Crusades and the Templar Knights and also involves a forbidden love.

The difference is that Brethren is a load of drivel and whilst The Road to Jerusalem may not have the most elegant style of writing, at least Guillou did not resort to maidens dressed in white, transporting apples around in her skirts who then dropped them right in front of the hero of the story.

What I liked about this book mainly is seeing a part of history from a different country's perspective. Sweden is of course not Sweden as we know it today and part of what this novel sets up is the battles between the men who are vying to become King and unite the lands of Götaland and Svealand.

Guillou created a historic world that felt real and believable. Of course, I do not know a great deal about Scandinavian history so naturally I do not know how accurate this is as a historical novel – but it felt believable. I felt as if I was in medieval Scandinavia and I believed in the characters. I enjoyed both the religious and the political aspects of the story.

I think that historical novels should adhere to history as much as possible, but of course it is impossible to always be accurate. For one thing authors are not historians and there has to be an element of dramatic license, at least in presenting a likeable main character whom an audience can relate to and a world easy and simple enough for most readers to understand without needing to be historians themselves.

I reached the end with my heart bursting to read the second novel, which I have since ordered and can't wait to get my hands on. I am terrible usually with series because it can take me years to get around to reading the next in line – but I am determined that this won't be the case with these books. I want to find out what happens next to Arn.

There is a movie based on this trilogy which I haven't seen yet. In fact, it was the film that lead me to finding out about this book. I look forward to seeing how it translates to film, especially as one of the actresses is Sofia Helin, from the Swedish/Danish TV crime series The Bridge.

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### **M.L. says**

\*Brilliant depiction of medieval times, centered in the land that would become Sweden\*

Caught between the turmoil resulting from the crusades and the medieval rivalries of kings and church, a young man discovers his inheritance and sets out to realize his destiny.

In fulfillment of a promise made to God, a woman of noble means, commits her young son to the care of the Cistercian monks. The boy is Arn, and at first he is crushed to be torn away from his family. But his natural brightness, intelligence, and curiosity soon have him excelling at everything the monks teach him. Brother Guilbert, a master swordsman, recognizes Arn's natural gifts of speed, balance, and dexterity, and teaches him about swordsmanship, archery, and horsemanship.

As Arn grows to adolescence, the monks realize Arn needs to experience life outside the monastery if he is to ever find out what his destiny may be. However, his sequestered life has left him completely unprepared. Honest and without guile, Arn has no idea about ulterior motives, manipulation, or political intrigue. Nor does he know he comes from a titled family. In this innocent state of mind he is sent on a homeward journey and of course immediately gets in trouble.

He encounters a bride running down the road, fleeing the oaf she must marry, and is then surrounded by the pursuing groom and his drunken friends who accuse him of being a bride robber; they are ready to cut him down. Trained in submission and prayerfulness, Arn bows his head and prays for his would-be murderers' souls. Feeling sorry for the lad, someone tosses him a heavy iron sword. Arn tries not to fight, but with his lightning fast reflexes two men end up dead. Before the bridal party can take revenge, an emotional priest runs up claiming it was a miracle, that he saw the Angel Gabriel guiding Arn's sword. Arn is allowed to leave but he is mortified at what he's done, and even after later confessing to the monastery prior, Father Henri, he is filled with remorse.

This is an example of Arn's character - a harsh judge of himself who seeks to be nonjudgmental of others. He is honest, brave, and generous - and in time he will become a brilliant knight.

When he finally arrives home, his father and brother welcome him but soon avoid him for his lack of "manly" traits, such as drunkenness, gluttony, and general rowdiness.

However, Arn's prowess with sword and bow - and his excellent horsemanship - are gradually revealed to his family, kinsmen, and enemies alike.

As his reputation spreads, he grows in stature in their eyes - yet he is nearly undone by his own naivete and suffers greatly because of jealousy.

As events move toward the Third Crusade, Arn has learned many harsh lessons yet he is becoming as strong as the tempered steel of his sword.

This is a brilliant novel - political intrigues abound - as Arn comes of age amid medieval turbulence of clan, church, and king.

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### **Stephen Plank says**

By far and away the best trilogy that I have ever read. Having seen ARN, a movie that spun all three books into one movie - a gem, I had to read the books. The movie was the most expensive adventure that Sweden

had ever put into a movie according to Wikipedia and it was worth it with one exception - the third book was cut short in so many ways. This first book sets up the characters in what will become the nation of Sweden.

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## **Edith says**

Nordic or Saxon-based fantasy or historical novels, when written by those outside of the respective countries, tend to turn into a gamut of stereotypical scenarios involving ale and whore houses, lootin' and pillagin', and some booze fueled mano a mano manly combat, with some barbaric execution and torture practices thrown in for good measure. All this is supposed to exude that rugged sense of manhood and bonding and brotherhood that kept life going in the longhouses on the icy land. Instead these just present a crass, stereotypical view of life in the north. In today's post-Tolkien fantasy realm (such as Game of Thrones) where the audiences crave that "gritty, realistic" factor in their stories about heroes of bygone era, I'm happy to find a story that neither whitewashes the past, but also doesn't depend on shock value or lowbrow humor to please the reader.

Instead the story moves forward through engaging dialog between characters. Sometimes the conversations help characters develop their internal compass as they grapple with decisions. Other times the dialogues are more for the reader, helping them navigate the complex ties of politics, kinship, and Nordic customs as they are happening, without resorting to a clumsy info-dump. The quasi-omniscient perspective is also used well, and it explains events according to the worldview of the person witnessing it (such as when there is a "miraculous" event), but not in a way that's pushy to the reader, but rather helps them understand the mental process of the characters better. It's also used well to introduce humor into the story, when the characters thought one way but the reader understood otherwise.

As for the plot itself. I was initially interested in reading a historical novel set during the Crusades, and was grumpy to find out that this first volume takes place entirely in medieval Sweden, and mostly concerned the childhood and youth of the protagonist Arn, as well as the clan intrigues in the country before its unification. Bah, just a bunch of longboats, long names and family lineages, and drunken swordfights >.<. And it has a cast list in the beginning organized by clans and lineage. But the author introduced the complex political tangles and clan relationships and rivalries in an engaging manner. Even the main character's youth growing up in a Cistercian monastery (what I thought would be the slowest part of the story) is very interesting. The details of everyday life, the philosophical conversations, and the personality of the brothers brought the experience to life, and makes the reader identify with Arn's spiritual upbringing and the way it shaped his outlook in the base world beyond the walls. (But then I might be more enthusiastic about monastic life than most).

The ultimate tension in this volume was how this young man would fare out in the world, where his values acquired from the brothers from the simple, cloistered life would come into tension with the practices of his kinsmen in matters such as having to choose between the comparative evils of strategic murder or even regicide, or risk inflicting greater harm through civil war; and through the process the character grows up and reconsiders his point of view. (A contemplative, self-searching protagonist - something bildungsroman heroes don't do enough, as they typically just rage or mope). In the next volume, I'd imagine this tension between what he learned inside the cloister will be found deficient against the reality as he encounters the much maligned Saracens; and yet he would preserve what the wise monks [despite their own prejudices] taught him about how man will ultimately be held accountable for exercising his own free will in matters of judgment.

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## Christopher Taylor says

The first of a trilogy about a Templar crusader named Arn Magnusson, this story is about his parents and the circumstances that surround the birth and teaching the young man. Apparently a classic and one of the biggest sellers and most praised books out of Sweden, it is quite long and contains significant information about early medieval Sweden.

This is a period of moving away from the old ways, although fairly established as Christian, and Sweden's politics have much of the old system and its fights. This is a part of Medieval history I know little about, instead of France, Germany, and England. The young character is somewhat naive at this point having been raised in a Cistercian monastery, but is very skilled and gifted with combat in all its forms.

The book ends with him being sent to Jerusalem to fight along side the rest of the Templar knights, in a period of difficulty and struggle for the Outremer forces.

Its pretty well written, and well translated but at times drags a bit with side plots and political actions that are probably quite important to Swedish history, but I would have preferred a bit more tight a focus on young Arn and his life.

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