



Vagabond

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From *New York Times* bestselling author Bernard Cornwell, the sequel to *The Archer's Tale*—the spellbinding tale of a young man, a fearless archer, who sets out wanting to avenge his family's honor and winds up on a quest for the Holy Grail.

In 1347, a year of conflict and unrest, Thomas of Hookton returns to England to pursue the Holy Grail. Among the flames of the Hundred Years War, a sinister enemy awaits the fabled archer and mercenary soldier: a bloodthirsty Dominican Inquisitor who also seeks Christendom's most holy relic. But neither the horrors of the battlefield nor sadistic torture at the Inquisitor's hands can turn Thomas from his sworn mission. And his thirst for vengeance will never be quenched while the villainous black rider who destroyed everything he loved still lives.

"Cornwell writes the best battle scenes of any writer I've read past or present."—George R.R. Martin

Vagabond Details

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Author : Bernard Cornwell

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From Reader Review Vagabond for online ebook

HBalikov says

Amazing detail of a "new" slash and burn type of war. Continues the rush of action and character development of The Archer's Tale

Kaora says

He could hear the hoofbeats now and he thought of the four horsemen of the apocalypse, the dreadful quartet of riders whose appearance would presage the end of time and the last great struggle between heaven and hell. War would appear on a horse the color of blood, famine would be on a black stallion, pestilence would ravage the world on a white mount, while death would ride the pale horse.

I love this series.

The search for the holy grail continues with Thomas Hookton, a character I instantly connected with as he struggles to survive as an archer in some of the bloodiest battles I've ever read. I couldn't help but cheer him on as he searched for the relic and vengeance for those he loves.

Cornwell has definitely done his research and I love the tie in between real battles and the fictional characters he makes come alive.

On to the next!

Ed says

The second volume in the Grail Series, this story was not nearly as interesting or exciting as the first book in the series, "The Archer".

It opens with the 1346 battle of Neville's Cross in Northern England, which is peripheral to the main plot of Thomas of Hookton's search for the grail which is supposedly under the control of his family and has been hidden by his dead father. It ends with the 1347 battle of La Roche-Derrien in Brittany between the forces of Charles of Blois and the English occupiers.

In between Thomas struggles with his doubts that the Grail even exists and travels around England and Northwestern France while working off his guilt at not being able to save his two early travel companions from being murdered.

As usual, Cornwell's battle descriptions are as good as any in historical fiction. His description of this Middle Ages' environment is also excellent. I was particularly impressed with his analysis of the power and influence of the Catholic Church in those days.

The story does tend to drag, though, through the middle of the book. Nevertheless, I will continue with the

third book in the series, "The Heretic". I also recommend this offering. It's just not as compelling as some of his other books.

A.L. Sowards says

The Battle of Neville's Cross near Durham stretching all the way to page 130 was a little long, but the rest of the book made up for it. (Don't get me wrong—the battle was well written, but after about 100 pages I was ready for something else to happen.) I loved Robbie (maybe because of my Scottish ancestry), hated the Scarecrow, and of course cheered for Thomas the entire book. I liked Jeanette, too, even though in the first book I was kind of neutral about her. I've got my predictions about the grail—guess I'll read the next book and see if I'm right. As with the first book in this series, great history, great writing, and great plotting. Probably best for adult readers due to the violence and language. 4.5 stars, rounding up for Goodreads.

Vagner Stefanello says

Review in Portuguese from Desbravando Livros:

Vou começar bem direto: o 2º livro da trilogia é ainda melhor do que o primeiro! Mais batalhas, mais tramas e mais reviravoltas acontecem no segundo volume dessa trilogia. Desta vez, Thomas está mais interessado em procurar o Graal e volta à sua aldeia natal para procurar o santo objeto.

O que ele ainda não sabe é que novos pretendentes à relíquia aparecem a cada dia e a sua tarefa fica mais difícil. Neste livro, Thomas toma partido em lutas que não lhe dizem respeito, faz novos amigos e inimigos e também descobre várias pistas do que pode ter acontecido com o Graal.

"... Era um sinal, pensou Thomas, e ele não queria acreditar em sinais e visões, queria acreditar no seu arco. Pensou que talvez Eleanor tivesse razão e que o conflito com o seu vencedor inesperado era um sinal do céu de que ele devia entrar na cidade atrás do avant-coureur, mas também havia inimigos no alto da montanha e ele era um arqueiro, e arqueiros não abandonavam uma batalha. - Nós iremos para a cidade – disse ele – depois da batalha."

A narrativa do autor continua sensacional. Não tenho palavras para expressar o quanto fico feliz quando chego ao final de qualquer livro do Bernard Cornwell e me deparo com desfechos realistas e histórias muito bem desenvolvidas. Recomendo muito os livros desse autor para quem gosta de romances históricos e obras que contenham batalhas como cenário principal.

" - Arqueiros! – berrou Thomas, imaginando-se de volta à França e responsável por uma tropa de arqueiros de Will Skeat. – Arqueiros! – gritou, avançando até a borda do fosso. – Matem eles agora! Homens foram para o lado dele, tiveram um grito de triunfo e puxaram suas cordas. Agora era a hora da matança, a hora dos arqueiros."

Pontos fortes: melhor e mais intenso do que o primeiro livro!

Pontos fracos: achei que a trilogia continuaria sem um mapa para me localizar melhor, mas ainda bem que o autor pensou nisso e providenciou um excelente mapa para os leitores.

Stan Vlieg says

4.5 stars but the glass is half full.

Mister Cornwell delivers yet again. It's amazing how all of his book i read to this date have been pushing all the right buttons for me. He is very good in creating a world of history where the characters come to life. From torture to love, you can't help to feel for Thomas of Hookton. Although the recipe in his storys are quite similar it still keeps me on edge. It's a pleasant feeling to know i still have his Sharpe series (22 books) to entertain myself with.

Carmen says

Thomas of Hookton is back again. He's still searching for the grail, as his father's book is stolen and restolen by his enemy. Romance is found and lost as the story continues.

Felipe Barnabé says

Começou devagar, achei que não seria tão bom quanto o primeiro, mas o terço final do livro é muito bom. Os primeiros dois terços não são ruins, só não são tão empolgantes.

Hudson says

Actual rating 4.5

Bernard Cornwell is one of my favorite authors so please don't expect any kind of unbiased review here, I loved this book just like I love all his books. (According to GR I have read 22 of his books which puts him in 2nd place behind Stephen King. I don't think anyone will ever catch King.....)

This is the 2nd installment of the Grail Quest series and it takes place in France around 1350. Thomas of Hookton is an English archer and he's on a quest for, you guessed it, the Holy Grail. Lots of great bloody warfare and religious mysteries as well as an interesting back-story in this book. Evil enemies (and allies), castle sieges, love gained and love lost (butchered). Great stuff!

I really enjoyed all the info about the English archers of the day and how it made them such a superior fighting force. The siege weapons were fun to read about as well.

Highly recommended for any historical fiction fan!

Val Penny says

Bernard Cornwell, OBE was born in London, England on 23 February 1944. His father was a Canadian airman, and his mother was English, a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, WAAF. He was adopted at six weeks old and brought up in Thundersley, Essex by the Wiggins family, who were members of the Peculiar People. That is a strict sect who were pacifists, banned frivolity of all kinds and even medicine. So, he grew up in a household that forbade alcohol, cigarettes, dances, television, conventional medicine and toy guns. Unsurprisingly, he developed a fascination for military adventure. Cornwell was sent to Monkton Combe School which is an independent boarding and day school of the British public school tradition, near Bath, Somerset, England and as a teenager he devoured the Hornblower novels by CS Forrester. After he left the Wiggins family, he changed his name to his mother's maiden name, Cornwell. He tried to enlist three times but poor eyesight put paid to this dream and he went to the University of London to read theology. On graduating, he became a teacher, then joined BBC.

He is an English author of historical novels. He is best known for his novels about Napoleonic rifleman Richard Sharpe which were adapted into a series of Sharpe television films. He started to write after his life changed in 1979, when he fell in love with an American. His wife could not live in the UK so he gave up his job and moved to the USA. He could not get a green card, so he began to write novels. The result was his first book about that 19th century hero, Richard Sharpe, Sharpe's Eagle. Today Bernard Cornwell has 20 Sharpe adventures behind him, plus a series about the American Civil War, the Starbuck novels; an enormously successful trilogy about King Arthur, The Warlord Chronicles; the Hundred Years War set, Grail Quest series; and his current series about King Alfred. The author has now taken American citizenship and owns houses in Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Florida, USA and two boats. Every year he takes two months off from his writing and spends most of his time on his 24 foot Cornish crabber, Royalist.

Vagabond is the first book by Bernard Cornwell that I had read. I was on holiday, had read the books that I had taken with me, so I borrowed this book from my husband. He has read many Bernard Cornwell books and enjoys them immensely. I was quite excited to read a book by a new author. The Grail Quest is a trilogy of books set in the 14th Century. Vagabond is the second book in the series. It starts in 1346 with the Battle of Neville's Cross in Northern England. While King Edward III fights in France, England lies exposed to the threat of invasion. The battle is peripheral to the main plot of the hero, Thomas of Hockton's, search for the grail which is supposedly under the control of his family and has been hidden by his dead father. Thomas, is a protagonist drawn quite pithily. He is an archer and hero of Crécy, finds himself back in the north just as the Scots invade on behalf of their French allies. Thomas is determined to pursue his personal quest: to discover whether a relic he is searching for is the Holy Grail. It is the archers whose skills will be called upon, and who will become the true heroes of the battle.

Thomas struggles with his doubts that the Grail even exists and travels around England and Northwestern France while working off his guilt at not being able to save his two early travel companions from being murdered. Cornwell's battle descriptions are as good as any in historical fiction. His description of this Middle Ages' environment is also excellent. I was particularly impressed with his analysis of the power and influence of the Catholic Church in those days. The sheer verve of Cornwell's storytelling here is irresistible. The reader is plunged into a distant age: bloody, colourful and dangerous. However, I found that the story did tend to drag a bit through the middle of the book.

Still, I really did enjoy this book. I recommend it and I will read more by this author.

U?itaj se! says

Povjesna trilogija Bernarda Cornwella prati Thomasa od Hooktona, fikcionalnog lika engleskog strijelca, kroz neke od prvih bitaka između engleske i francuske vojske, za koje se kasnije ispostavilo da su bile samo uvod u ono što će postupno prerasti u Stogodišnji rat između ovih dviju zemalja.

Radnja je napeta, ne samo zbog toga što Thomas iz jedne bitke ulazi ravno u drugu, već i zbog toga što on usput slijedi i put svoje zakletve i svako malo doznaće nešto novo i neobičljivo u vezi Harlekina i ukradene relikvije, zbog čega često upada u sukobe i izvan bojišta. Glavnina romana fokusirana je na nekolicinu glavnih likova, koji su sjajno okarakterizirani, ali jednako dobra karakterizacija odlikuje i one sporedne likove, pa čak i one koji se tek par puta pojave u ?itavom tijeku radnje.

Same bitke, kao i sve ono što im prethodi i što slijedi nakon njih, opisano je u svoj svojoj surovosti i realnosti: sve one pljačke, ubojstva, gramzivost i spremnost na najgroznija djela kako bi se u ratu profitiralo ili proslavilo. Cornwell se ne gnuša prikazati baš onako kako jest, a to (ponekad) nije nimalo lijepo za vidjeti. Kako sam autor kaže, namjerno je rat tako prikazao, kako bi ?itatelji mogli vidjeti da rat nisu samo bitke dvaju suprotstavljenih vojski, već on uključuje i masakr nevinih građana - staraca, žena i djece, i često posve nepotrebne okrutnosti.

Iako pri opisivanju ratnih pohoda autor ne pristaje ni uz jednu suprotstavljenu stranu, već nam priča priča potpuno objektivno, za ovu bi se trilogiju moglo reći da je ona u biti oda engleskim strijelcima. ?injenica je da je Engleska mnoge svoje bitke uspjela izvojevati upravo zaslugom svojih strijelaca, koji su u povijesti postali poznati po svojim iznimno dugačkim lukovima, kakve nije upotrebljavala niti jedna druga vojska. Ti su lukovi često u fokusu ovih romana i autor se ne libi iskazati i vlastito divljenje strijelcima koji su ih rabili, a koji su bili u stanju izboriti pobjedu čak i protiv osjetno brojnijeg neprijatelja. Posebno je zanimljivo to što je upravo jednog engleskog strijelca Cornwell postavio u ulogu glavnog protagonista, zbog čega smo dobili priliku iz prve ruke vidjeti koju su ulogu strijelci imali u engleskoj vojsci i zbog čega su bili tako važni.

Ako uživate u ?itanju povjesnih romana, ova se trilogija svakako mora naći na vašoj listi za ?itanje. ?itajući, puno toga čete doznati što možda još niste znali o razdoblju Stogodišnjeg rata, posebno o ulozi engleskih strijelaca u njemu, a malo mitologije vezane uz Gral ovdje je da napetost održi cijelo vrijeme na visokom nivou. Tijekom ?itanja ove 2/3 trilogije bilo mi je teško knjige ispuštiti iz ruku, te jedva ?ekam da se prevede i posljednja trećina.

Skupna recenzija prve dvije knjige trilogije o Gralu je na FB stranici.

Stjepan Cobets says

The search for the Grail continues, Tomas of Hookton continues its adventure in the border of England and Scotland. King Edward the third sent him to find out whether there is truth to Grail. But this adventure brings him only pain and suffering because he is not the only one seeking the Grail. Continuation of the book is a bit more intriguing than the first part but still good.

Reggie Kray says

4.5*. I have not read a book from Cornwell that I have not thoroughly enjoyed. Is it possible this streak will be compromised? I doubt it. Time will tell.

Richard says

The second book of the Grail Quest series. It continues the quest to find the Holy Grail, but as seems to be the case with Grail stories, there are many other people after the same thing.

It continues the exploits of Thomas of Hookton an English archer, who has already fought for king and country against the French at the battle of Crecy, in the first book. He continues the quest and ends up at varying times fighting the Scots, French, Bretons, his own cousin, the clergy and sometimes the English baddies.

The battle scenes once again come thick and fast, superbly described in all its gory detail. I have always been fascinated by this period of history and Cornwell does not disappoint in his very detailed account of life (and death) during these times. I'm only glad i wasn't around at the time. If you do not have a strong stomach for violence, mutilation, torture, killing, etc, perhaps this may not be for you. But he does find time to add in a tiny amount of chivalry and romance.

If the rest of his books are half as good as the two I have read so far, I shall have a great time reading them in the future.

Justin Langlois says

Vagabond was a nice follow-up to The Archer's Tale. Thomas of Hookton continues on his quest to find the man who murdered his father and to find the "Holy Grail". Cornwell continues to impress me with his amazing attention to historical detail. I've learned more about Europe during the time leading up to the Black Plague then I ever thought I would!

Mike says

Master of battle scenes and the details of the soldier. It gets you thinking about life in the middle ages and how you might have survived the age. Couldn't put it down.

Susana says

Thrilling.

Louise Fielder says

Sequel to Harlequin.

Another fantastic book of early English battles, torture, death and victory.

The Holy Grail moves a little further forward in revealing its secret hiding place and unlikely friends band together to hunt it down while revenging family honours.

Again the characters are wonderfully portrayed and the book moves with ease through all the turmoil associated with the mid 1300's.

Can't wait to move on to the third and last book in this series " Heretic ".

kostas vamvoukakis says

αν και ?ργησα για τα δεδομ?να μου να το τελει?σω αποτελε? ?λλο ?να σπουδα?ο βιβλ?ο του συγγραφ?α... μικρ? δι?λειμμα και συνεχ?ζω με το τρ?πο μ?ρος... αιρετικο?

Puscas Mircea says

A fantastic book , I liked the way the battles were described.
