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The Shining Company (Sunburst Book)



Synopsis

Life is secure and peaceful for young Prosper, second son of Gerontius, until the day Prince Gorthyn arrives with his hunting party. Prosper's unusual daring in the hunt catches the prince's attention, and he promises to make Prosper his shield-bearer when he comes of age. Two years later, three hundred princes are summoned to the king's fortress at Dyn Eidin, where they will prepare to fight the Saxon forces which are gaining strength in the east. Prosper, with Conn, his bondservant, leaves his father's lands to join Gorthyn in the rigorous training for battle. With the coming of spring, word reaches the Three Hundred Companions that the Saxon leader has taken yet another kingdom. They set out at once for the Saxon stronghold of Catraeth, where Prosper must face the greatest challenges of his life. Adventure and heroism against impossible odds create a moving, robust tale set in Britain in the eighth century and based on actual events.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Britain in 600 A.D. forms a vibrant backdrop for this gripping action-adventure tale concerning the son of a feudal chieftain. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 7 Up. The uniting of the disparate kingdoms in early Britain in an attempt to ward off the threat of Saxon invasion forms the core of this sweeping historical adventure. Heroism, camaraderie, and sacrifice all come shining through in a stirring tale of glory and treachery, told in demanding yet hypnotic prose. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The author has an engaging, interesting style of writing. Her characters are real, and she creates a good whiff of history. Good for adults too.

The Gododdin is a poem many Dark Age history buffs are familiar with, very little is known about the actual events that inspired its making. While many historians have tried to piece together the details of this legendary battle; Rosemary Sutcliff does this in a way that is wildly entertaining and also makes much more sense than some of the crackpot theories I've read over the years. She also demonstrates a thorough knowledge about the tactics, motivation, and culture of the Dark Age Britons as well as their Saxon foes. I loved this book so much and if you're a fan of this era in history, you will not be disappointed!

Excellent

Sutcliff is called Britain's preeminent historical fiction writer, and anyone that has read her work (Eagle of the Ninth is another favorite) would know why. This is a retelling of a Medieval version of a Viet Nam-like war (pointless, and costly) that did happen. Sutcliff puts you into the Middle Ages and makes sure you don't get lost.

I found this book to be a greatly entertaining and informative work. It is based on the "Gododdin" (pronounced Godothen), the oldest written tale to come out of northern Britain. It is written as a narrative, told by a shieldbearer in the service of an aging king. This king wishes to reform the "Celtic Arrow", an elite fighting force consisting of 300 knights and their respective pair of shieldbearers in order to repel the encroaching Saxons. If you like history and/or tales of the sword, this is a must read...Enjoy!

fine

It seems harder and harder to find a story where you truly care for the protagonist. Even with an expert storyteller like Sutcliff, I found it difficult to be invested in the fate of Bjarni in *Sword Song* (Sunburst Book). When I began reading *The Shining Company*, I did not expect the story to grip me as it did. I was caught up in the story of Prosper and the companions. I was moved deeply when came a bittersweet ending, and the story lingered on in my mind. To me, a story that has the power to move your emotions, and keeps you reflecting on it even after you've put it down, is a truly good

story. I was actually pretty surprised with how empathetic the characters were. With just a snapshot for each character, Sutcliff made me feel like I knew them--and the characterization was well varied. Without much elaboration, Sutcliff had me following many different lives and it made me sad to see so many go. I knew nothing about the Gododdin going into the novel, so I was in for something of a shock with the direction of events. But in hindsight, the course of events was laid out from the beginning...Conn, an empathetic character in the story, concluded of the bard Aneirin's tales, "I do not think you can be changing the end of a song or a story like that, as though it were quite separate from the rest. I think the end of a story is part of it from the beginning." I believe Sutcliff was commenting on her own craft, and it's obvious in the book. She cleverly wraps up the story so that it ends where it begins, not so literally as metaphorically. And it's totally satisfying. On a separate note, the novel was very atmospheric. Sutcliff is a master of recreating the 'feel' of a time and place, but it especially shows in *The Shining Company*. From light hillsides to warm halls to dark and dreary forts, I could picture each spot as though I was there. This made the story all more real, which is quite a feat for one so far removed from our era. I'd have to say this is one of Sutcliff's best, and a shining example of a good story. Recommended for any fan of British history, '300' tales, or stories that captivate you from the beginning to the end.

I am going back to many of Sutcliff's books now in my mid 60's. This is a new favourite of mine. Deeply moving. Sutcliff speaks to honour and fidelity in nearly all her books but here, she shines a brighter light than ever on these important values. There are moments when I had to book the book down as my tears prevented me from seeing the words. She claimed that she wrote for all children from 8 - 88. So true. So if you wish to escape to a time when people would die for their friends and live for their truth, then this is a book for you. Made all the more remarkable that RS was a woman who was confined to her bed and a chair for much of her life. I am thinking now that this world of boys and men, living in changing and often dark times, relying on horses and big dogs and in a natural out door setting was her real life. How wonderful that she wrote nearly 60 books and was writing on the morning that she died.

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