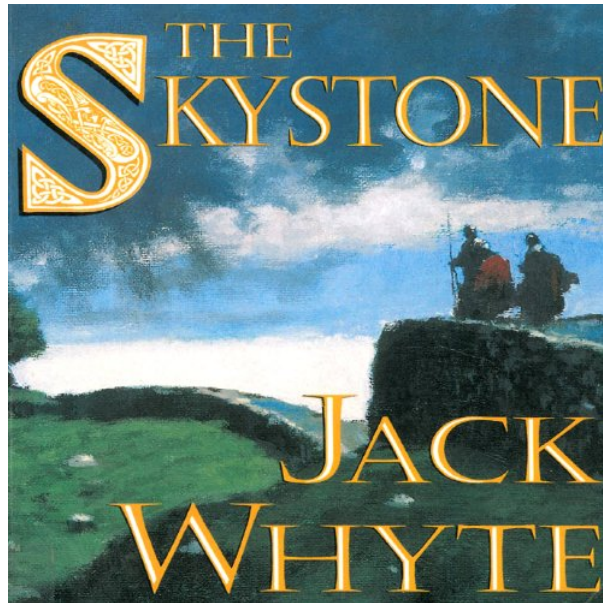
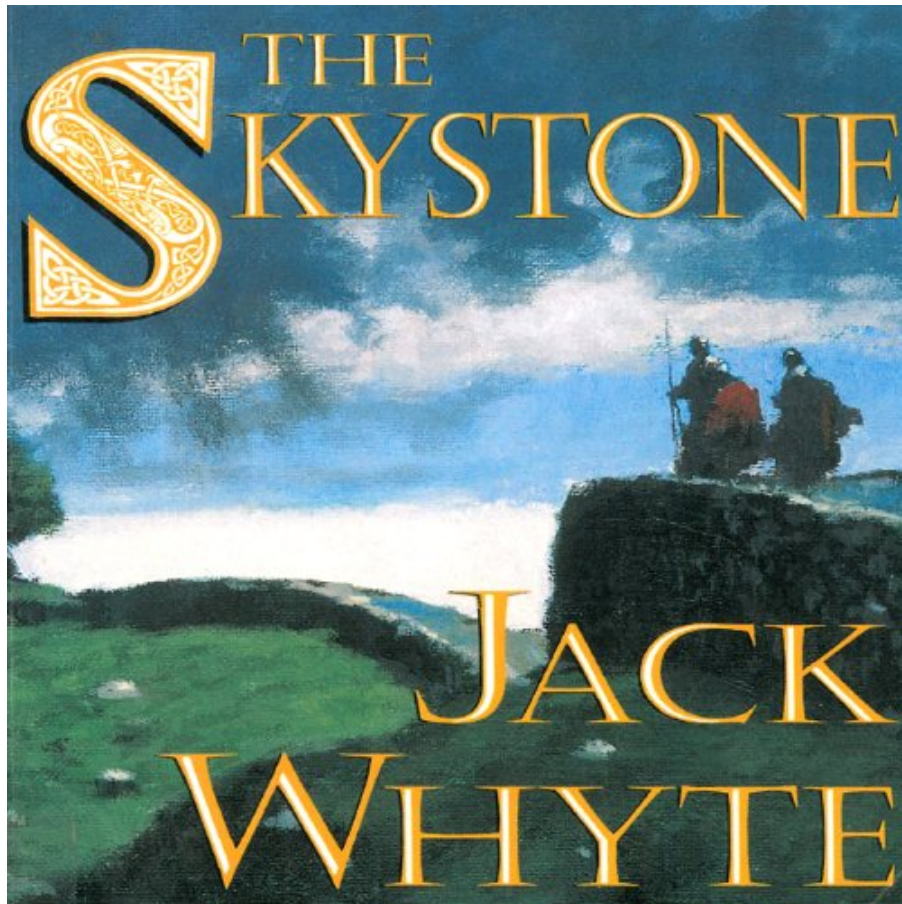


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# THE SKYSTONE: CAMULOD CHRONICLES, BOOK 1 BY JACK WHYTE PDF

Everyone knows the story-how Arthur pulled the sword from the stone, how Camelot came to be, and about the power struggles that ultimately destroyed Arthur's dreams. But what of the time before Arthur and the forces that created him?

How did the legend really come to pass?

Before the time of Arthur and his Camelot, Britain was a dark and deadly place, savaged by warring factions of Picts, Celts, and invading Saxons. The Roman citizens who had lived there for generations were suddenly faced with a deadly choice: Should they leave and take up residence in a corrupt Roman world that was utterly foreign, or should they stay and face the madness that would ensue when Britain's last bastion of safety for the civilized, the Roman legions, left?

For two Romans, Publius Varrus and his friend Caius Britannicus, there can be only one answer. They will stay, to preserve what is best of Roman life, and will create a new culture out of the wreckage. In doing so, they will unknowingly plant the seeds of legend-for these two men are Arthur's great-grandfathers, and their actions will shape a nation . . . and forge a sword known as Excalibur.

- Sales Rank: #18495 in Audible
- Published on: 2013-08-20
- Released on: 2013-08-20
- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Running time: 1263 minutes

Most helpful customer reviews

50 of 53 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent!!

By Shawn M. Warswick

When I first saw this book my initial reaction was "Not another take on the King Arthur myth!" Now that I've read it, I must say, this isn't just another take on the myth. This is the Arthur Myth in a whole new light. Jack Whyte presents Caius Brittanicus and Publius Varrus, the Roman forbearers of King Arthur and founders of Camulod. the novel starts off with the penetration of Hadrians wall by the Barbarian Hordes and takes us up to the end of the 4th Century. In it you will meet Picus Brittanicus, father of Merlin, and learn how Excalibur came to be. The characters are totally believable and real. Each one has his/her faults as well as his/her strong points.

What I loved about this book is the fact that Whyte took his time and painstakingly recreated the Roman World. His description of the battles, the Roman Army, Roman life... It was all fantastic. This is more of a historical fiction than a fantasy novel, so if you are looking for wizards and warlocks, you will be

disappointed.

I must say that some parts of this novel, and certainly in the ones that follow, contain "adult" themes. You might want to consider this before allowing young adults to read it.

Finally, the true measure of the first novel in a series is its ability to get you excited about the next installment. As soon as I finished book one I immediately picked up book 2, so it's a hit!

21 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

The Skystone: An Epic Work

By Candida Eittrheim

I recommend this book for the rich and colorful depiction of Britain during the 5th century, as well as for providing an intelligent version of Arthurian beginnings.

Full Review:

Having read just about every version of the Arthurian legend, I picked up Jack Whyte's book: The Skystone, hoping to find something more definitive and less magical. What I discovered, was an extremely well written and historically fascinating look at 5th century life in Roman occupied Britain.

Whyte did his homework, and it shows in so many ways. Not only does he evince a formidable knowledge and understanding of Rome's military men, but also of the impact the Empire had on the entire known world.

His explanation for the sword Excalibur's beginnings makes sense, and includes magic-if only for the way it appeared to primitive eyes. Whyte, like another author, Colleen McCullough, takes no shortcuts, nor opts for facile answers to the legend of Arthur, and the birth of Camelot.

Instead, he patiently builds, step by step, a plausible yet highly entertaining historical setting.

General Caius Britannicus is a brilliant and highly decorated Roman man, who was born in Britain. A man of deep insight and wisdom, he foresees the collapse of the Roman Empire. When not on campaign for Rome, he lives with his wife, children and widowed sister Luceia.

Publius Varro is General Britannicus' Primus Pilus, or senior aide. Their fortunes are inextricably entwined, and how the two of them grow deep in love and respect for one another, is the main thrust of the first book.

Varro, has a blade fashioned from what his grandfather described as a skystone. This sword has a sheen, and luster ordinary iron doesn't possess, and is much stronger than even bronze. Yet Publius has no idea where to find more of this strange metal. When he finally does find it, the answer fulfills many empty spaces left by less gifted writers.

The battle scenes are interesting, even to those of us who might ordinarily find them boring, mainly due to Whyte's deft handling of Roman military tactics. The enmities that develop through the events in this book, prove to have far reaching and unforeseen consequences.

The Skystone comes with a glossary, a pronunciation guide and maps of Britain, which prove helpful throughout the series.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book for its interesting and deep characters, all drawn with a loving hand, that understands human nature in all its dimensions so well. I recommend starting with The Skystone and reading the entire series. You'll be delighted and totally enmeshed in Jack Whyte's version of Arthurian times.

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

### A Different Take on the Arthurian Legend

By rzaster

Upon the completion of Jack Whyte's "The Skystone" I was amazed by the originality of the story. Many authors take the Arthurian story and just tell it again in their own words. This is not the case for Jack Whyte's epic. In fact, Whyte here starts his own Arthurian story as he starts from before King Arthur's time, in a time where the Romans are about to lose their control of Britain. Whyte's story is compelling and complicated and weaves like a lush epic.

The novel, which is the first in the epic series the Camulod Chronicles, by the way, is told in the first person through the eyes of Publius Varrus. Varrus is a Roman soldier and "The Skystone" tells his story during an important historical time for Britain. The book opens up with a raid against the British, and Varrus befriends military general Britannicus. With a group of soldiers they are on the run and get into many brawls. Varrus then takes his own path and goes to his hometown to take over his family business of metal working. Varrus is then on the move again and eventually falls in love with a woman. From the beginning to the end "The Skystone" entertains.

The greatest aspect of this whole novel is the realism of the events. Similar things did take place back during the ages when Rome was in control of much of Europe and this historical novel, or historical fantasy if you will, holds up to the first part of its name in being historical. The reader will learn much on the Roman army and how it functioned and much about Britain during this fascinating time in history.

The major thing that I didn't like about the book were the characters. I found most of the characters to be one dimensional, and while likeable, I couldn't care for any of them. Even though we are put into Publius Varrus' shoes, as the book is told in first person, there is still not any substance in which to develop any "bonding" with the character, and the other characters as well, for that matter. This is the reason that I detracted one star from this otherwise great novel.

This book is an Arthurian novel but doesn't even introduce anybody like Arthur or Merlin. This is the tale of Varrus, who is a grandfather of Arthur, and this is the beginning of how he and his men make the Britain that is the medieval setting of King Arthur's court. One interesting thing that Whyte touches upon is the Lady of the Lake. Whyte's view of this figure of Arthurian fiction is a very interesting one.

Despite its flaws "The Skystone" is a master of the historical novel. Jack Whyte weaves an interesting tale full of politics, intrigue, and a bit of adventure to keep you happily turning pages. This is a must for any fan of Arthurian fiction.

Happy Reading!

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