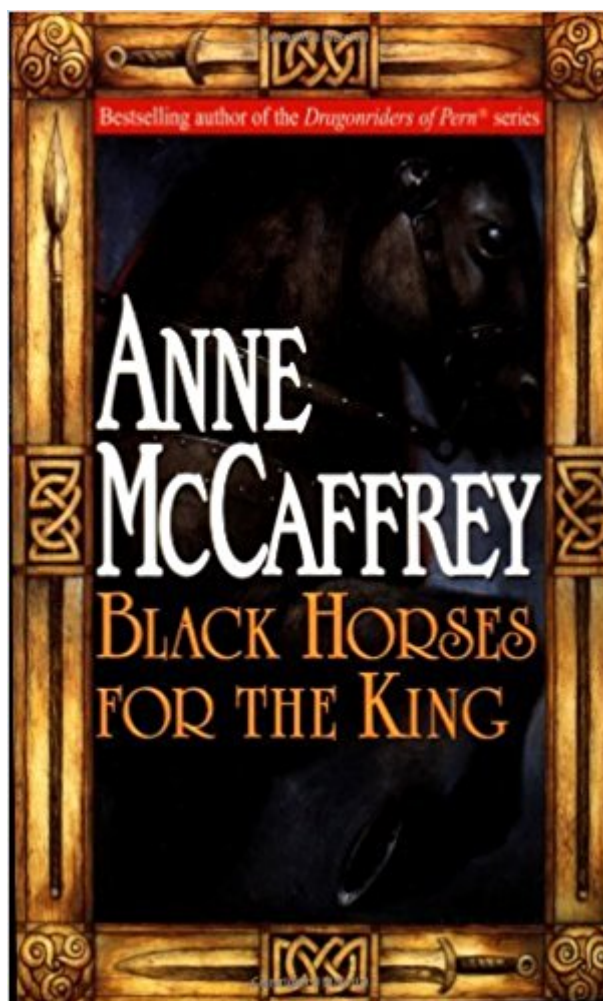


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Black Horses For The King



Synopsis

Lord Artos--later to rule as the legendary King Arthur--knew he could defeat the Saxon invaders if only he could find a race of horses swift and strong enough to carry warriors in full regalia fast and far. And so he set out for the Continent, in search of the famed horses of the desert. The key to Lord Artos' plan was the young runaway Galwyn Varianus, whose gift for horse-trading was second only to his skill with horses. What no one expected was how crucial Galwyn would be to the upcoming battles--as he mastered the secrets of the iron shoes that would protect the desert horses' delicate hooves . . . This fast-moving historical fantasy by bestselling author Anne McCaffrey--the story of King Arthur as it has never been told before--is about the beginnings of the British cavalry, as recounted by a boy growing up in exciting and perilous times.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Anne McCaffrey is back with this precious, well-researched yarn that follows a Celtic lad in service to King Arthur. Set in fifth-century Britain, McCaffrey's first historical novel for young adults rejects a fantastical, Hollywood treatment of King Arthur in favor of realism and solid storytelling. Take away the Round Table and the usual knights-in-shining-armor hoo-hah, and you're left with an engaging, endearing chapter from the life of Artos, Comes Britannorum, a young war leader in search of horses strong enough to carry his armored warriors into battle against the savage Saxons. The story is told through the eyes of polite, earnest young do-gooder Galwyn Varianus, who has fled the service of his cruel, brutish, seafaring uncle to take up with the charismatic Artos. Galwyn quickly proves his value with his affinity for languages and horses, and he accompanies Artos and the

Companions (proto-Knights of the Round Table) as they execute their plan: acquiring and then breeding a handful of fabled Libyans, the horses of the book's title, and then mastering and disseminating the knowledge of horseshoe-making. The action revolves around Galwyn's role in this plan and never rises above the pace of, say, an after-school special. But rich details, McCaffrey's obvious love of the subject matter, and involving characters go a long way to make up for the story's slow trot. (In particular, you'll find yourself waiting eagerly for the comeuppance of one character, a sneering rider named Iswy, Goofus to Galwyn's Gallant.) --Paul Hughes

McCaffrey steps out of her niche as a Hugo and Nebula award-winning fantasy writer to tackle her first historical novel for young adults, retelling the Arthurian legend-minus the Round Table, Guinevere and Merlin-through the eyes of Galwyn Varianus. A Roman Celtic youth, Galwyn helps the future king of Britain, known here as Lord Artos, acquire the legendary Black Horses of his legions. The author's tender reverence for equine history (she raises horses in Ireland) makes for vivid descriptions of frightened steeds in the hold of a ship across the English Channel; it also allows an undue amount of horsey jargon. A teenage boy interested exclusively in horseshoes rings not quite true, yet the well-drawn story moves along at a compelling trot, climaxing in a battle in which horses help Lord Artos reclaim Britain for future mad cows and Englishmen. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

First off, the first few pages are written rather clunky and I initially put the book away after trying to figure out what was going on. But after running out of other new books to read, I picked it back up. Secondly, this is not about King Arthur in the slightest. I had an idea that this wouldn't deal much with King Arthur, but I was surprised how little it did. This book could have been better set in its own fantasy world rather than trying to make it about a legend that it barely contains. As far as plot, there is very little conflict. Galwyn has a few minor run-ins with a jealous stable-boy type which culminates in an anti-climatic fight over a few sentences at the end of the book. Nothing bad happens to Galwyn. Everyone loves him and he is given favor by Artos instantly despite being a young sailor boy on his uncle's ship. Galwyn is amazing with horses, riding, and blacksmithing. And despite never being taught to fight with a weapon, easily wins the fight with his "enemy". The lack of conflict throughout the book and Galwyn's perfection made for a boring read. Would also be better labeled a textbook on the history of horseshoes and early horse care than about King Arthur.

A good book for adults, but hard to read out loud, and difficult for children under 13.

Like other books written by Anne it was an excellent read, she didn't need a lot of violence like so many writers use to hold a readers interest. I don't LIKE a great deal of unnecessary violence when telling a story. I've read all her Pern series, and many of her other books and she is as great a writer as MM Auel at creating a universe and peopling it in very great detail. Preteens, especially boys can read Black Horses for the King and enjoy it. Looking forward to the new book due out this coming spring.

This is part of my 12yo son's SonLight Curriculum reader list. The author makes her distaste for the popular tales of King Arthur and Camelot clear in her forward, no real danger of disappointment for those that take the time to research. While it starts with lots of action and appears to be a good read for boys, it quickly slows to an almost textbook like feel at times. The author thankfully keeps a little bit of angst and conflict limping along but not enough to keep my son reading at an enjoyable pace. Even my eyes were sleepy at times reading it. My daughter (then 12 also) thoroughly enjoyed it, but she adores horses and mammal related science - perfect match.

Anne has created a great story as usual

Do you love horses and historical fiction, fun read for middle grades through adult if you love the time of King Arthur or horses or plucky heroes.

I have read almost every book she has written. This is for a younger reader but I enjoyed it.

Beautiful! Still my son's favorite after 25 years.

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