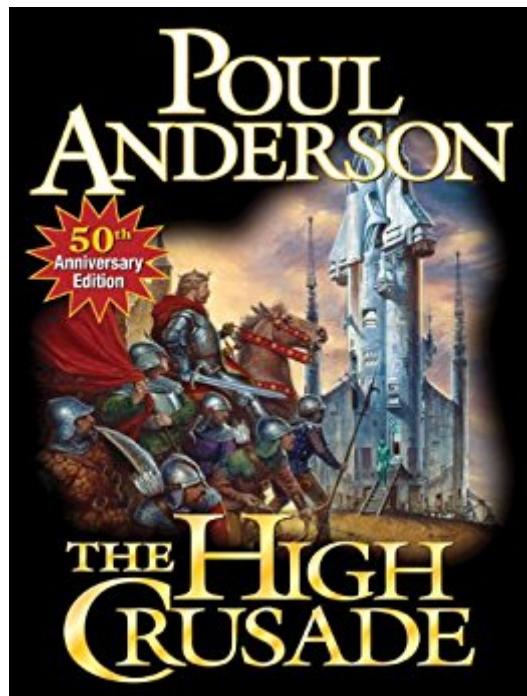


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The High Crusade



Synopsis

In the year of grace 1345, as Sir Roger Baron de Tourneville is gathering an army to join King Edward III in the war against France, a most astonishing event occurs: a huge silver ship descends through the sky and lands in a pasture beside the little village of Ansby in northeastern Lincolnshire. The Wersgorix, whose scouting ship it is, are quite expert at taking over planets, and having determined from orbit that this one was suitable, they initiate standard world-conquering procedure. Ah, but this time it's no mere primitives the Wersgorix seek to enslave— they've launched their invasion against free Englishmen! In the end, only one alien is left alive—and Sir Roger's grand vision is born. He intends for the creature to fly the ship first to France to aid his King, then on to the Holy Land to vanquish the infidel. Unfortunately, he has not allowed for the treachery of the alien pilot, who instead takes the craft to his home planet, where, he thinks, these upstart barbarians will have no choice but to surrender. But that knavish alien little understands the indomitable will and clever resourcefulness of Englishmen, no matter how great the odds against them...At the publisher's request, this title is sold without DRM (DRM Rights Management).

Book Information

File Size: 468 KB

Print Length: 192 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Baen Books; 1 edition (September 1, 2010)

Publication Date: September 1, 2010

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00APA19NC

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #102,618 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #100 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > Science Fiction, Fantasy & Scary Stories > Science Fiction > Time Travel #107 in Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction &

Customer Reviews

One of my absolute favorites in Science Fiction, I am happy to have this on kindle also now. Aliens land in King Edward III's England with plans to take over. They are counterattacked by the local English Knights, and good English longbowmen, who easily cut them down. Lead by the amazingly brave and clever Sir Roger, Baron de Tourneville the English decide to take the air boat across the channel to fight the French. Thus starts one disaster after another, while Sir Roger brilliantly manages to turn things around to his advantage and the safety of his people. Just wonderful, especially as you see the action through the eyes of the humble village priest who is continually being shocked by the outrageous claims of the alien. This contrast between the heroic but very medieval beliefs and the villainous but very scientific modern aliens is totally delightful. The best.

This is a classic alien invasion story that stands the genre on its head. The Wersgor invade earth with all the bells and whistles any invader could hope to want. Unfortunately, they land outside an English Lord's castle just as the Baron, Sir Roger, is about to join his liege in the Crusade to free the Holy Land from the paynim. At the first lick of a ray-gun Sir Roger's men storm the vessel in anger before the airlock is secure and take it. The writing is excellent and very funny. More of the same ensues as Sir Roger is haplessly forced to take the fight back to the Wersgor Empire in a reverse invasion. Poul Anderson's High Crusade has become a classic that does not fade. Unfortunately, there was a farcical and very bad Hollywood version filmed (with some fine actors) that did not and can not come close to honoring the book, and what could without a George Lucas and a Star Wars budget to do the story justice? I heartily recommend the book. I suggest you avoid the film.

"The High Crusade" holds its place as a classic because of when it was written, and its peculiar topsy-turvy approach of medieval arms successfully waging war in space. Oh, it borrows from the Guinevere/Lancelot theme, which puts a patina of seriousness over the thing, but it is essentially a farce that must be read as such. It mostly works, though Poul Anderson appears to be having fun with seeing how far he can stretch the Grail Crusade in space and is not interested in the kind of realism a more modern author might apply to the tale. This was a great book back in the day, but nowadays it is only a good one.

I read this book for the first time in like 1966 and remember writing a book report on it. What an enchantment when I picked it up last week, my wife was totally neglected for two days. Sadly the book was over but luckily in time to save our marriage. It's a great read and goes way beyond the usual sword and sorcery genre. I do believe Poul Anderson was explaining how the English managed to create their earth empire 300 years later.

This is the Fiftieth Anniversary printing of this book and it is fabulous. I originally read this in hardcover in the mid-eighties and I immediately fell in love with it. It is filled with action, humour, and a lot of classic speculative fiction that demands to be read. I love the characters and the story and I love the ending. If you're a Poul Anderson fan, buy this book it is well worth it. My only fault with this edition is all the appreciations expressed at the beginning of the book from authors who were friends with Poul Anderson. It was nice to see that the book impacted on these authors but I'd have rather gotten into the story first and read the appreciations later. Other than that a great book.

really Good

to recommend

This book has been around for decades and was the inspiration for the SCA. Spawns a genre of similar plots (warriors kidnapped by aliens and used in combat against other species).. David Drake has placed 1st century Romans and medieval English knights in his (very enjoyable, very readable) variations. There are others. I still love it when Anderson's alien came out of the ship with ray gun blasting, only to be hit with a few dozen cloth yard shafts. Wonderful!

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