

THERE WAS SNOW WHEN ARTHUR'S TALE BEGAN. IT WAS A LIFETIME AGO, IN THE LAST YEAR OF HIGH KING Uther's REIGN ... HOWEVER YOU COUNT THE YEARS IT WAS LONG AGO, ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A LAND CALLED BRITAIN, AND I WAS THERE.

Derfel, once a captain in Arthur's warband, recalls the dramatic days of wilful Guinevere, arrogant Lancelot, abstracted Merlin and intolerant Bishop Sansum, vying for mastery amid faction and bitter chaos. But, above all, he tells the story of Arthur, royal bastard, unwise lover and inspired warlord, the only man who can hold Uther's throne for its infant heir and unite Britain's squabbling kingdoms against the enemy at their gates.

Evoking the human realities behind the legends of romance and chivalry, Bernard Cornwell weaves a brutal, magnificent epic of war and love, magic and politics, as the old gods retreat before the spread of Christianity, and the Saxon invaders reach deeper into the heart of Britain ...

'Spellbinding realism' - THE TIMES