

# enemy of god bernard cornwell

Enemy of God Bernard Cornwell: A Deep Dive into the Historical Epic

**enemy of god bernard cornwell** is a phrase that instantly resonates with fans of historical fiction, particularly those who appreciate vivid storytelling set in the dark and turbulent times of early medieval Britain. Bernard Cornwell, renowned for his meticulous research and gripping narratives, brings to life the era of the Arthurian legends with his novel *\*Enemy of God\**. This book is the second installment in his *\*The Warlord Chronicles\**, a trilogy that reimagines the mythic story of King Arthur through a realistic and gritty lens.

If you're curious about what makes *\*Enemy of God\** stand out, or if you want to understand Bernard Cornwell's unique approach to historical storytelling, this article will explore the novel's themes, characters, and historical background. We'll also touch on the author's writing style and why this book is a must-read for fans of historical epics and Arthurian lore.

## Understanding Enemy of God Bernard Cornwell

Bernard Cornwell's *\*Enemy of God\** takes readers on a journey through a Britain struggling for survival after the fall of the Roman Empire. Unlike many Arthurian tales that are steeped in fantasy, Cornwell's work is grounded in realism, portraying Arthur as a warlord navigating political intrigue, tribal wars, and religious conflicts. The novel's title, *\*Enemy of God\**, refers to the harsh realities faced by characters who are caught in the crossfire between pagan traditions and the rise of Christianity.

## The Historical Context Behind the Novel

Set in the 5th and 6th centuries, *\*Enemy of God\** explores the chaotic period when the Roman legions had long since departed Britain, leaving a power vacuum. This era, often referred to as the Dark Ages, is poorly documented, which gives Cornwell the creative space to weave history with legend. The novel delves into the tensions between native Britons, invading Saxons, and the emerging Christian church, painting a complex picture of loyalty, faith, and survival.

## The Plot and Its Intricacies

The story continues from the first book, *\*The Winter King\**, focusing on Derfel Cadarn, Arthur's loyal warrior and narrator. In *\*Enemy of God\**, Derfel faces new threats from both external enemies and internal strife. Cornwell keeps readers engaged with a balanced mix of battle scenes, political maneuvering, and personal drama. The narrative explores themes like honor, betrayal, and the clash between old beliefs and new religions, making the novel much more than a simple retelling of Arthurian legend.

# **Bernard Cornwell's Writing Style and Narrative Approach**

One of the standout aspects of *\*Enemy of God\** by Bernard Cornwell is the author's ability to combine thorough historical research with a compelling, accessible narrative. Cornwell is known for his vivid descriptions and fast-paced storytelling, which keeps readers hooked from start to finish.

## **Realism Meets Myth**

Cornwell's portrayal of Arthur is grounded and human. He strips away the magical elements commonly associated with Arthurian tales — no enchanted swords or mystical wizards here. Instead, the focus is on believable characters shaped by their environment and the brutal realities of their world. This approach appeals to readers who prefer historical fiction that respects historical accuracy without sacrificing drama.

## **Character-Driven Storytelling**

At the heart of *\*Enemy of God\** is Derfel, whose perspective provides an intimate look at the events unfolding around him. By choosing a warrior as the narrator, Cornwell offers insights into the culture and mindset of the time, making the historical period more relatable. The character development is nuanced, with complex relationships and moral dilemmas that add depth to what could otherwise be a straightforward war story.

## **Thematic Exploration in *Enemy of God* by Bernard Cornwell**

Several themes run through *\*Enemy of God\**, enriching the narrative and prompting readers to reflect on larger issues beyond the battles and politics.

### **The Conflict of Faiths**

One of the most compelling themes is the tension between paganism and Christianity. Cornwell vividly illustrates how the spread of Christianity disrupted traditional ways of life and how both belief systems vied for power. This religious conflict adds layers of complexity to the characters' motivations and the societal changes taking place.

### **The Nature of Leadership and Loyalty**

Leadership is another central theme. Arthur, as depicted in Cornwell's novel, must balance the

demands of warlordship with the fragile alliances that hold his kingdom together. Loyalty is tested repeatedly, not just on the battlefield but within Arthur's own circle, making the story rich with political intrigue.

## **Survival in a Harsh World**

The brutal reality of life in post-Roman Britain permeates the novel. Survival is a constant struggle, shaped by the environment, warfare, and shifting loyalties. Cornwell's attention to detail in describing the hardships of the time helps readers appreciate the resilience of his characters.

## **Why Enemy of God Bernard Cornwell Appeals to Readers**

The novel's appeal lies in its blend of historical authenticity, compelling characters, and gripping plot. Fans of historical fiction often praise Cornwell for his ability to transport them to another time and place, making history feel immediate and relevant.

## **For Arthurian Legend Enthusiasts**

If you love Arthurian tales but are tired of the same old magical retellings, *\*Enemy of God\** offers a refreshing alternative. It presents the legend as a story of real people facing real problems, which can be both surprising and satisfying.

## **For History Buffs**

Cornwell's detailed research shines through in his rich descriptions of weapons, tactics, and social customs. Readers with an interest in early medieval history will find plenty to appreciate in the authenticity of the setting.

## **For Fans of Action and Drama**

The novel is packed with thrilling battle scenes and tense political drama. Cornwell's pacing ensures that the story never drags, keeping readers eagerly turning pages.

## **Additional Works by Bernard Cornwell that Complement Enemy of God**

For those who enjoy *\*Enemy of God\**, exploring Cornwell's other works can be rewarding. His *\*The*

Warlord Chronicles\* trilogy, which includes \*The Winter King\*, \*Enemy of God\*, and \*Excalibur\*, provides a complete narrative arc. Beyond this series, Cornwell's \*The Saxon Stories\* also delve into early medieval England, focusing on the Viking invasions and the rise of Alfred the Great.

## Expanding the Arthurian Experience

Reading the entire \*Warlord Chronicles\* trilogy is the best way to fully appreciate the depth of Cornwell's Arthurian vision. Each book builds on the last, deepening character relationships and expanding the political landscape.

## Exploring Cornwell's Historical Accuracy

Bernard Cornwell is often praised for his commitment to historical accuracy. Readers interested in the real history behind the fiction can find numerous interviews and articles where Cornwell discusses his research methods and sources, shedding light on how he reconstructs the past.

## Tips for Reading *Enemy of God* by Bernard Cornwell

If you're diving into \*Enemy of God\* for the first time, here are a few tips to enhance your experience:

- **Start with *The Winter King*:** Since \*Enemy of God\* is the second book, reading the first installment will help you understand the characters and plot context.
- **Keep a map handy:** The novel references many locations in Britain, and having a map of post-Roman Britain can help you visualize the setting.
- **Be patient with the language:** Cornwell uses period-appropriate names and terms, which might seem unfamiliar at first but add to the authenticity.
- **Focus on character motivations:** The story's emotional depth comes from understanding what drives each character, beyond just the historical events.

Exploring \*Enemy of God\* by Bernard Cornwell offers a remarkable journey into a world where myth meets history, and where the line between hero and enemy is as blurred as the mists of time. Whether you're a longtime fan of Arthurian stories or new to the genre, Cornwell's vivid storytelling promises an unforgettable experience.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the plot of 'Enemy of God' by Bernard Cornwell?

'Enemy of God' follows the story of Uhtred of Bebbanburg as he navigates the political and religious turmoil of 9th-century Britain, focusing on the conflicts between the Saxons and the invading Danes.

## Where does 'Enemy of God' fit within Bernard Cornwell's series?

'Enemy of God' is the second book in Bernard Cornwell's 'The Saxon Stories' series, continuing the adventures of the protagonist Uhtred.

## What are the main themes explored in 'Enemy of God'?

The novel explores themes such as loyalty, faith, power struggles, and the clash between paganism and Christianity during the early medieval period.

## Is 'Enemy of God' based on historical events?

Yes, Bernard Cornwell blends historical facts with fiction in 'Enemy of God', incorporating real historical figures and events from 9th-century England.

## Do I need to read the first book before 'Enemy of God'?

While 'Enemy of God' can be read on its own, it is recommended to read the first book, 'The Last Kingdom,' to fully understand the character development and background story.

## Additional Resources

Enemy of God Bernard Cornwell: A Deep Dive into the Historical Epic

**enemy of god bernard cornwell** stands as a significant installment in the acclaimed author's series on the Arthurian legends. Bernard Cornwell, renowned for his meticulous research and vivid storytelling, delivers a compelling narrative in this novel that blends history and myth, inviting readers to explore a turbulent era through the eyes of richly drawn characters. As part of his Warlord Chronicles trilogy, *Enemy of God* not only advances the saga begun in *The Winter King* but also deepens our understanding of the political and cultural complexities of post-Roman Britain.

## Contextualizing Enemy of God within Bernard Cornwell's Oeuvre

Bernard Cornwell has built his literary reputation on historical fiction that is both immersive and grounded in reality. *Enemy of God* continues this tradition by situating its story in a Britain

struggling to redefine itself after the Roman withdrawal. Unlike many retellings of Arthurian legend that veer into high fantasy, Cornwell's work remains anchored in plausible historical settings, emphasizing the human and political dimensions of the period.

*Enemy of God* is the second book in the Warlord Chronicles trilogy, which reimagines the Arthurian narrative through the viewpoint of Derfel Cadarn, a warrior and confidant of Arthur. This perspective provides a gritty, realistic lens, avoiding romanticized portrayals and instead focusing on the warfare, religious strife, and shifting alliances that characterize the era. For readers familiar with Cornwell's Sharpe series or *The Last Kingdom*, *Enemy of God* offers a similarly robust blend of action and historical detail, albeit in a different temporal and cultural milieu.

## Historical Authenticity and Narrative Techniques

One of the most striking features of *Enemy of God* by Bernard Cornwell is the author's commitment to historical authenticity. Cornwell extensively researched the late 5th and early 6th centuries, a period marked by the decline of Roman influence and the rise of various British kingdoms. The novel captures the political fragmentation and the struggle for power among warlords, giving readers insight into how Arthur's legendary status might have emerged from real historical circumstances.

Cornwell's use of Derfel as the narrator is a masterstroke in narrative technique. Derfel's straightforward, often sardonic voice grounds the story, providing an eyewitness account that feels personal and immediate. This approach helps demystify the mythic elements, presenting Arthur not as a flawless hero but as a complex, sometimes flawed leader. The inclusion of religious conflict, particularly the tension between pagan traditions and the spread of Christianity, adds layers of depth, illustrating the cultural upheaval that shaped the age.

## Key Themes and Character Development

*Enemy of God* by Bernard Cornwell delves into themes of loyalty, power, faith, and survival. Central to the novel is the exploration of leadership under pressure. Arthur's efforts to unite the disparate British tribes against external threats, notably the Saxons, are portrayed with nuance, highlighting the difficulties of forging unity amid diverse and often conflicting interests.

The novel also examines the role of religion as both a unifying and divisive force. The clash between druids, representing the old ways, and Christian missionaries underscores the broader social transformations underway. Cornwell does not shy away from depicting the brutality and intolerance that can accompany religious zeal, adding realism to the narrative and avoiding simplistic moral binaries.

Character development is a cornerstone of *Enemy of God*. Derfel's personal journey, from a warrior grappling with his own beliefs to a key player in Arthur's campaigns, provides a human anchor for the epic events. Arthur himself is rendered with complexity, neither saintly nor villainous, but as a leader shaped by circumstance and ambition. Supporting characters, including Merlin and various nobles, contribute to a rich tapestry that reflects the intricacies of loyalty and betrayal.

# Comparative Analysis: Enemy of God vs. Other Arthurian Retellings

When compared to other Arthurian novels, *Enemy of God* Bernard Cornwell stands out for its historical grounding and narrative realism. While authors like T.H. White or Marion Zimmer Bradley incorporate fantasy elements and romanticized portrayals, Cornwell's work is more aligned with authors such as Mary Stewart or Jack Whyte, who emphasize historical plausibility.

This realistic approach appeals to readers interested in the 'real' Arthur, stripped of magical embellishments. Cornwell's focus on the military and political aspects of the era complements his reputation for vivid battle scenes and strategic detail, elements that fans of his other series will recognize and appreciate.

Moreover, *Enemy of God*'s integration of religious conflict adds an intellectual dimension often absent in more mythic retellings. This makes the novel not just an adventure story but a thoughtful exploration of the forces that shaped early medieval Britain.

## Strengths and Limitations of *Enemy of God*

*Enemy of God* Bernard Cornwell benefits from several strengths that contribute to its critical and commercial success:

- **Historical Depth:** The novel's rich detail and accurate portrayal of the period enhance its credibility and educational value.
- **Complex Characters:** The nuanced depiction of Arthur, Derfel, and others allows for a multifaceted exploration of leadership and loyalty.
- **Engaging Narrative:** Cornwell's storytelling prowess ensures a gripping plot with well-paced action and intrigue.
- **Thematic Richness:** Themes of faith, power, and cultural transformation are woven seamlessly into the story.

However, some readers might find certain aspects challenging:

- **Dense Historical Detail:** The extensive political and cultural context may slow the narrative for those seeking purely action-driven stories.
- **Limited Fantasy Elements:** Fans of high fantasy or magical Arthurian tales might find the grounded approach less enchanting.
- **Character Focus:** The story's reliance on Derfel's perspective might limit insight into other characters' inner thoughts.

## Impact on Historical Fiction and Arthurian Literature

Enemy of God Bernard Cornwell has contributed significantly to the resurgence of interest in historically plausible Arthurian fiction. By stripping away layers of myth and focusing on the socio-political realities of the time, Cornwell has influenced both readers and writers to reconsider the legendary figure of Arthur through a more realistic lens.

The novel's success helped cement the Warlord Chronicles as a modern classic within historical fiction, showcasing how myth and history can be blended effectively without sacrificing either entertainment or authenticity. For scholars and enthusiasts of Arthurian lore, Enemy of God offers a valuable perspective that complements academic and popular understandings of the legend.

The book also highlights the potential for historical fiction to engage with complex themes such as religious conflict and cultural identity, demonstrating the genre's capacity for depth beyond mere escapism.

As readers continue to discover Enemy of God Bernard Cornwell, the novel remains a touchstone for those seeking a robust and thoughtful retelling of one of history's most enduring legends. Through its vivid portrayal of a world in flux, the book invites reflection on leadership, faith, and the power of storytelling itself.

## Enemy Of God Bernard Cornwell

**enemy of god bernard cornwell: Enemy of God** Bernard Cornwell, 1997 Arthur has won his bloody victory at Lugg Vale and the kingdoms are finally united. Mordred's throne is safe, Guinevere is to bear Arthur a child, and Lancelot is to marry Ceinwyn. After one last battle against the Saxons, Arthur will rule a peaceful, orderly land. But, unlike Merlin, Arthur has forgotten the Gods, who thrive on chaos. Merlin, weaver of charms, knows that if the Gods are to be restored he must bring together Britain's thirteen sacred objects. Derfel, the stalwart of Arthur's shield wall, is drawn into Merlin's intrigues and Arthur's plans are thrown into turmoil...

**enemy of god bernard cornwell: Enemy of God** Bernard Cornwell, 1998-03-15 Since the first volume in his magnificent Warlord Chronicles, The Winter King, now the basis for the British TV show, Bernard Cornwell established himself as the storyteller who could reinvent the legend of King Arthur for our time. In Enemy of God, Cornwell's magical re-creation continues. Having defeated the last holdouts of civil war in southern Britain, Arthur has secured Mordred's throne. But he must still face raging conflicts between the old ways and the new, as well as foes more powerful and more dangerous--because they pose as friends. Brilliantly written and peopled with the familiar faces of legend along with new ones, Enemy of God is an immensely powerful continuation of a modern classic.

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and truly heroic; a man who loves Guinevere more passionately than he should; a man whose life is at once tragic and triumphant. **ENEMY OF GOD** Having defeated the last holdouts of civil war in southern Britain, Arthur has secured Mordred's throne. But he must still face raging conflicts between the old ways and the new, as well as foes more powerful and more dangerous--because they pose as friends. **EXCALIBUR** The unforgettable tale of Arthur's final struggles against the Saxons and his last attempts to triumph over a ruined marriage and ravaged dreams as forces both earthly and unearthly threaten everything Arthur stands for. Peopled by princesses and bards, by warriors and magicians, Excalibur is the story of love, war, loyalty, and betrayal.

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**enemy of god bernard cornwell: Enemy of God (Book Two)** Bernard Cornwell, 2017-02-28 From Bernard Cornwell, the creator of the No. 1 bestselling Sharpe novels. Arthur has brought a fragile peace to Britain - but it cannot last . . . Uniting the restive British kingdoms behind him, Arthur believes he can now hold back the Saxons threatening the country. Meanwhile, Merlin sets out on a quest to uncover the sacred Treasures of Britain, hoping they will prove decisive in the coming battle. But in a country where the cult of the Christians is spreading, Merlin's quest is divisive. And the ambitions of the rival warlord Lancelot threaten the delicate peace. Could even those closest to Arthur be moved to betray him? In the second book of the Warlord Chronicles, Bernard Cornwell brilliantly retells the Arthurian legend, combining myth, history and thrilling battlefield action. 'Wonderful and haunting' *People Magazine* 'Of all the books I have written these are my favourites' Bernard Cornwell

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**enemy of god bernard cornwell: Medieval Paradigms: Volume II** S. Hayes-Healy, 2016-09-23 This collection of essays in two volumes explores patterns of medieval society and culture, spanning from the close of the late antique period to the beginnings of the Renaissance. Volume 2 analyzes of forms of devotion, both popular movements and those practices and ceremonies limited to elite groups. The exploration of medieval paradigms comes to a close with a group of essays which follow the medieval patterns well past the Middle Ages, even into the present.

**enemy of god bernard cornwell: The Warlord Chronicles, Novels of Arthur** Bernard Cornwell, 1999-08

**enemy of god bernard cornwell: Warlord Trilogy** Bernard Cornwell, 2010-02

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(novel), *Stonehenge* (novel), *Sword Song* (novel), *The Fort* (novel), *The Grail Quest* (novel series), *The Last Kingdom*, *The Lords of the North*, *The Pale Horseman*, *The Starbuck Chronicles*, *The Warlord Chronicles*, *The Winter King*. Excerpt: *The Winter King* is the first novel of the *Warlord Chronicles* by Bernard Cornwell. It was published in 1995 in the UK by Penguin Group. The novel is divided into five parts. It tells the story of how Arthur became warlord of Great Britain despite illegitimacy to the throne. After being banished to Armorica by his father High King Uther, Arthur returns to protect the new king, his nephew the baby Mordred. However, he once more is put in a precarious position when, on the cusp of a united peaceful Britain, Arthur runs out on his engagement to an enemy nation's princess. His decision to marry Guinevere instead plunges the island into war with everyone baying for his blood but the book ends with his conquering the other armies and uniting all of Britain so that they can fight the invading Saxons in the next books. The Kingdom of Dumnonia is in chaos. The forces of Dumnonia led by the Edling (Crown Prince) Mordred and Arthur (the King's bastard) have defeated the Saxons at a battle beneath the hill of the white horse, but at a terrible price. Prince Mordred was slain, leaving the Kingdom without an heir. Dumnonia's only hope is for Mordred's pregnant wife, Norwenna, to give birth to a son. High King Uther Pendragon blames his son's death on Arthur and exiles him to Armorica. Norwenna is in labor, and there are fears that she and the child may die. Norwenna, a Christian, has insisted that only Christian midwives be present. High King...

**enemy of god bernard cornwell: A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes** Willem Pieter Gerritsen, A. G. van Melle, 1998 The different cultures from which the middle ages drew its inspiration are represented: Cu Cuchulainn from the Celtic world, Apollonius of Tyre from Greek romance, Attila the Hun and Theodoric the Ostrogoth from the struggle of the Roman empire against the Barbarians. Each entry gives an outline of the story, how it spread through Europe, its modern retelling and appearances in art, and a selective bibliography.--Jacket.

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**enemy of god bernard cornwell: The Grail Legend in Modern Literature** John Barry Marino, 2004 The Grail legends have in modern times been appropriated by a number of different scholarly schools of thought; their approaches are analysed here. This study shows how modern (including postmodern) adaptations of the Grail legend correspond to trends in the scholarly community and how the legend has been appropriated by competing world-views. There are three parallel trends in Grail scholarship and modern adaptations of the legend: controversy over Christian or pagan origins, secularization by way of humanism, and esoteric mysticism. These three trends reflect movements in popular culture. Relativism and multiculturalism influence Christian--pagan cultural conflict in the adaptations. Mythographers maintain the legend's appeal in a humanist culture by considering the Grail metaphor rather than material actuality; modern adaptations then transform the Grail from a particularly Christian symbol to one with universal application in an increasingly secular society. Modern esoteric spiritualities allow the Grail actuality with flexible meaning. This study, then,

demonstrates how the Grail legend is transformed and adapted from medieval to modern cultures and continues to evolve today. JOHN B. MARINO is adjunct instructor, Maryville University and Saint Louis University.

**enemy of god bernard cornwell:** *Redefining Modernism and Postmodernism* Sebnem Toplu, Sebnem Toplu, 2010-06-09 Literary and cultural studies in the later twentieth century were very much shaped by debates about modernism and postmodernism as labels for successive periods, but also for different competing interpretations of recent cultural history. In the twenty-first century, the shock waves that were sent through the global system on political, cultural, economic, and ecological levels by terrorist attacks, regional conflicts, poverty, the financial crisis and the threat of environmental disaster raise anew the question of how and to what extent the tradition of modernity can be newly defined in a situation where the problematic aspects of these ideas have rightly been exposed, but where they nevertheless appear to be crucial for any responsible assessment of contemporary world culture and its future perspectives. *Redefining Modernism and Postmodernism* offers a collection of critical articles that resulted from the International Cultural Studies Symposium at Ege University, Izmir, Turkey in 2009. Scholars from around the world have contributed to this volume reflecting the current perspective on modernism and postmodernism, shedding new light on literature, literary theory, philosophy, politics, religion, film and art. Providing an account of this field, this book enables readers to navigate the subject by introducing essays on transformations of modernism and postmodernism in the twenty-first century, and the debates beyond the modernism/postmodernism dichotomy.

**enemy of god bernard cornwell:** *Merlin* Stephen Knight, 2018-10-18 Merlin, the wizard of Arthurian legend, has been a source of enduring fascination for centuries. In this authoritative, entertaining, and generously illustrated book, Stephen Knight traces the myth of Merlin back to its earliest roots in the early Welsh figure of Myrddin. He then follows Merlin as he is imagined and reimagined through centuries of literature and art, beginning with Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose immensely popular *History of the Kings of Britain* (1138) transmitted the story of Merlin to Europe at large. He covers French and German as well as Anglophone elements of the myth and brings the story up to the present with discussions of a globalized Merlin who finds his way into popular literature, film, television, and New Age philosophy. Knight argues that Merlin in all his guises represents a conflict basic to Western societies-the clash between knowledge and power. While the Merlin story varies over time, the underlying structural tension remains the same whether it takes the form of bard versus lord, magician versus monarch, scientist versus capitalist, or academic versus politician. As Knight sees it, Merlin embodies the contentious duality inherent to organized societies. In tracing the applied meanings of knowledge in a range of social contexts, Knight reveals the four main stages of the Merlin myth: Wisdom (early Celtic British), Advice (medieval European), Cleverness (early modern English), and Education (worldwide since the nineteenth century). If a wizard can be captured within the pages of a book, Knight has accomplished the feat.

**enemy of god bernard cornwell:** *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity* Marion Gibson, Shelley Trower, Garry Tregidga, 2013 *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity* explores how the mythical and mystical past informs national imaginations. Building on notions of invented tradition and myths of the nation, it looks at the power of narrative and fiction to shape identity, with particular reference to the British and Celtic contexts. The authors consider how aspects of the past are reinterpreted or reimagined in a variety of ways to give coherence to desired national groupings, or groups aspiring to nationhood and its 'defence'. The coverage is unusually broad in its historical sweep, dealing with work from prehistory to the contemporary, with a particular emphasis on the period from the eighteenth century to the present. The subject matter includes notions of ancient deities, Druids, Celticity, the archaeological remains of pagan religions, traditional folk tales, racial and religious myths and ethnic politics, and the different types of returns and hauntings that can recycle these ideas in culture. Innovative and interdisciplinary, the scholarship in *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity* is mainly literary but also geographical and historical and draws on religious studies, politics and the social sciences. Thus the collection offers a stimulatingly broad number of

new viewpoints on a matter of great topical relevance: national identity and the politicization of its myths.

**enemy of god bernard cornwell: Then Arthur Fought (colour)** Howard Wiseman, 2015

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