



Sharpe's Revenge

Bernard Cornwell

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Sharpe's Revenge Details

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From Reader Review Sharpe's Revenge for online ebook

Bill says

Marking time with this series by this stage - bring on Waterloo!

Jane says

So as not to spoil things, all I'll say about why I've rated this one so much lower is that I didn't like how a certain character developed. At all.

Rob Trans says

In some cases it's nice to see characters evolve, but in the case of Sharpe, his evolution makes him more human, but also makes him weaker and less heroic. He has become more introspective, worrying about death and honor. He is more impetuous allowing his temper to get the better of his judgement. He continues to make poor alliances with women. He allows them to manipulate him and take his money.

The main attractions for me in these books are an accessible description of the battles and wars of the time, the weapons and tactics of the soldiers, the way they lived, and the effect the wars had on the population. As Sharpe has been promoted, the books have veered away from these topics and focused more on Sharpe and his personal life.

I found the conclusion of the book somewhat disappointing. Sharpe's fears come true. He finds himself useless with the end of the war and his friends have all departed through death, to return home, and acrimoniously. (view spoiler) C'est la vie.

I've read everything now except Waterloo.

Dawn says

This is not one of the best of the series. I think it focuses far too much on Sharpe's personal woman woes and not enough on the intrigue and fighting. I could also be holding against the book that one of my favorite characters is killed right at the beginning and that Harper has such a small part but on the other hand I'm pretty happy about which woman he ends up with so, I think it's just not as good as the others.

Barbara says

This episode in Sharpe's adventures is probably as good a story as most of the rest. I was uncomfortable with all the deviations in characters' behavior and choices. Perhaps Cornwell wanted to illustrate that, whereas we

all know that war changes persons, peacetime does as well. However, for me it didn't float.

Trina says

I'm reading these all out of order... Oh, well. The last one I read was set in India, at the beginning of Sharpe's adventures as a rifleman in the British army, while this book is set toward the end of the Napoleonic wars. I have no idea how Sharpe acquired a wife, or got promoted to Major, for that matter, tho' I can guess thanks to the author's adroit storytelling. Here, Sharpe finds himself ironically pursuing the enemy after peace is declared--and the Emperor's treasure chest has gone missing. The idea of Sharpe chumming up to the French so quickly struck me as a little improbable. Wasn't he just shooting the bastards, as they say?

Sho says

3rd from last... I'd say this was the weakest, plot-wise of all the Sharpe books. Certainly it would be the last one I choose to read.

Graham says

An atypical Sharpe outing, in which characterisation takes precedence over plotting. The resultant book is one with an extremely brief and thin plot, which barely gets a look in when there's so much going on elsewhere: the introduction of a pivotal French family in the supporting cast, an epic and seemingly climatic battle at Toulouse, the frenetic climax and the emphasis on romance.

In short, SHARPE'S REVENGE marks an attempt by Cornwell to get to know his characters at a greater depth as he looks at what makes them tick and what drives them to do what they do. Sharpe, Harper and in particular Frederickson are all explored at length, which makes for engaging reading, while Sharpe's wife Jane gets a subplot all to herself and a new character, Lucille, brings freshness to the pages.

Add in returning characters Nairn, Ducos, Bampfylde and Calvet, and you barely have time for any storytelling. Not that that's a problem; it just means that this novel flies by and seems to be over almost before it's begun. There's enough going on here, though, for the novel to have been twice the length it is.

Katya says

I don't even know where to start with this one, though I admit that some of the issues might be things I would've ignored if not for the major things that had already made me irritable and sensitive to other flaws.

I wish Cornwell had stuck to the war and intrigue, and not tried to add romance to the novels, especially since he apparently didn't want to write ongoing romance, but was seemingly only interested in the chase. At this point we have (at least) three fridged women in Sharpe's past — a wife and two lovers — and then in

this book we have Jane's characterization completely altered just to provide angst and room for a new romance. (And I'm not even going to get into the degree of selfishness required to bang the woman your close friend is hopelessly in love with. Or the hand-wave-y, "It's better this way. It never would have worked because he doesn't make friends of the women he's with," when the actual narrative of the book showed Fredrickson having shared interests with — and being friends with — her.)

The more minor things that irritated me:

1. Why didn't Sharpe tell the tribunal where the telescope came from? It was a gift from a woman (admittedly a French spy, but the war is over now) who bought it from a soldier and gifted it to Sharpe long before Napoleon's gold and gems were supposedly stolen. She could attest to when he received it. (She's not dead, is she? I don't remember her dying, but having come into contact with Sharpe's penis of doom, she might well have been randomly slaughtered and I missed it in the general carnage.) Why didn't he even **think** about suggesting they ask her for corroboration, even if he then decided it wasn't practical for whatever reason?
2. The thing with the missing fingers is so dumb I can't even. It seems to only exist in order to be a part of the misunderstanding that leads to "certainty" about Sharpe's guilt (because fingers cut off post-mortem wouldn't even vaguely resemble fingers lost in battle weeks before, and even Ducos would know that), but there's no way that Ducos could have predicted the misunderstanding would happen; it's purely there so Cornwell can prop up a shaky plot.

At this point I kind of want to just stop listening to the audiobooks, but the compulsive part of me is pointing out that there are only two left, and that I should at least finish the series, even if I never read anything by Cornwell again.

Brent Ecenbarger says

Sharpe's Revenge was an average (pleasant, enjoyable) story for most of its length but took a surprisingly sad turn at the end that felt very true to the series and rescued it from becoming one of the more forgettable Sharpe adventures. The biggest hindrance to my enjoyment of this book was its similarity to the plot of *Sharpe's Honor*, beginning with a duel and proceeding through a false imprisonment which Sharpe must go rogue to clear his name. Unlike that book, here Sharpe had Patrick Harper and Sweet William Frederickson to keep him company and assist him throughout.

Plot spoilers for the first quarter of the book

The Peninsula War against Napoleon ends abruptly near the beginning of this book, leaving Sharpe, Harper and Frederickson to discuss how they want their post-war lives to play out. Shall they stay in the military? Retire? What of their wives and friendships? Before anything can be resolved, Sharpe and Frederickson and framed by his longtime enemy Pierre Ducos, he of the French intelligence. After the court-martial, Sharpe and Frederickson escape to clear their name, by tracking down the one Frenchman who can clear it. Upon their arrival, the man has been murdered and the two of them are framed for it. Harper of course tags along with the adventure, even though he has nothing to gain and everything to lose doing so.

Meanwhile, Sharpe also becomes paranoid that his wife Jane is taking advantage of him. When her letters become infrequent, he also notices she has withdrawn all his money from the bank with no explanation.

Cornwell has a dual plotline with Jane explaining what takes place, and also introduces the French widow Lucille Castineau who has a significant impact on at least one of the English heroes.

More than any other book in the series, this book spotlights Sweet William Frederickson. Prior to this, he had been a bit of a cliche character; much like Dan Hagman (the old sharpshooter rifleman), William seemed to be present so that once a book Cornwell could write something about how William removed his eyepatch and false teeth to scare the enemies prior to going into battle. Make no mistake, we still get that in this book (twice by my count), but Cornwell also tells us much more about what sort of a man he is and where he is most vulnerable.

A few of the other characters in this book also do things that could substantially change our view of them. Sharpe himself acts all too true to his biggest weakness, but Jane also will likely surprise readers who have been following her since her first appearance. As far as villains go, I've never been a huge fan of Pierre Ducos whose created all of his own problems by continuing to go after Sharpe and never being successful. He'll always be a distant second to Obadiah Hakeswill, the worst of the worst Sharpe villains. There is another French general (Calvert) who was everything I like in an opposing officer. Instead of being evil, he is competent, zealous, and an even match for Sharpe.

There are only two Sharpe novels and a short story left, and the end of this book already feels like it could be a goodbye to several beloved characters. While there's no Duke of Wellington, Greencoats at war or new gear/rank added to Sharpe's repertoire, two major relationships for Sharpe are possibly ended and our characters will be starting out in fresh territory for the first time since they got out of Portugal/Spain. I'm as excited as ever to keep reading this series, but now that the end is in sight I'm also getting pretty sad about the thought of being finished with these adventures.

Rebecca says

Bernard Cornwell can do no wrong in my eyes. Another Sharpe adventure and this time Ducos is behind it. Sharpe's personal life is falling to pieces and all-in-all I enjoyed this tale. It did not quite have the swashbuckling feel that others had, but I think that reflects on Richard's character development. He is older, he wants his quiet little house in the country, there is less time for the humour, laughing in the face of danger and not caring. Because Sharpe does care and though Jane - as I knew she would from the series - betrays him, he finds love enough again. Sweet William is a great character and it does pain me to learn what happened in the end - but as Cornwell wrote in his notes, he could not stop Sharpe. Few can.

I have gotten so much joy from these books, so many adventures, that I am trying to space out reading the last two - but I will not succeed. All good things must come to an end, even Sharpe.

There were quite a few humorous moments - the friendships feel like your own and who would have thought Sharpe would end up fighting for Napoleon? These are stories I will visit again and again.

Marko says

The first run of Cornwell's Sharpe novels continues to entertain. Unlike the author's late additions to the series in the late 1990s and early 2000s, these novels still have a good sense of adventure and

characterisation - a soul, in short.

Revenge is a unique book in the series, in the sense that most of it concentrates on the Peace of 1814 when Napoleon has been exiled to Elba. Sharpe's main goal is to clear his name and search for his longtime enemy, but the story gives plenty of time to characterisation and especially to a character called Frederickson. The friendship and its development between the men is described wonderfully as the men share their dreams and fears of their lives after the war.

Overall, an enjoyable story and one of my favourites of the series.

Kyle says

My least-favourite so far of the Sharpe novels. This one seemed to lack the usual sense of fun and adventure in all the novels of the series.

Robert says

No Wellington, no Greenjackets, no large battles - just Sharpe, Harper and Fredrickson droning on about women; plus several terrible passages were Jane takes front and center in the story. Love and heartbreak are fine b-plots but are not the reason people read these (or at least not the reason I do). Plus, distracting as it is, leaving Jane's story unresolved is a big disappointment, and the resolution with the main enemy - while definite - is less than satisfactory and far to reminiscent of the fate of Sharpe's former adversary Hakeswill.

Jim says

Bernard Cornwell's Richard Sharpe novels seem to get better as they go. The scene here is the Battle for Toulouse, which was actually fought after Napoleon had surrendered -- but French Marshal Soult, charged with defending the city, did not know or believe that to be the case. After the battle, one of Wellington's most hard-fought victories, Sharpe is blamed by one of his arch-enemies, Major Ducos, for stealing Napoleon's treasure. He makes a plausible case and points all the evidence Sharpe's way, while he himself decamps to Naples. But Sharpe is on the trail -- and he meets up with one of Napoleon's generals, Calvet, who like him had risen from the ranks. Calvet is one of Cornwell's most likable characters, but I'm not about to give away the ending of this action novel.
