
Walter Scott

Ivanhoe (Waverley Novels #5)



Title: Ivanhoe (Waverley Novels #5)

Author: Walter Scott

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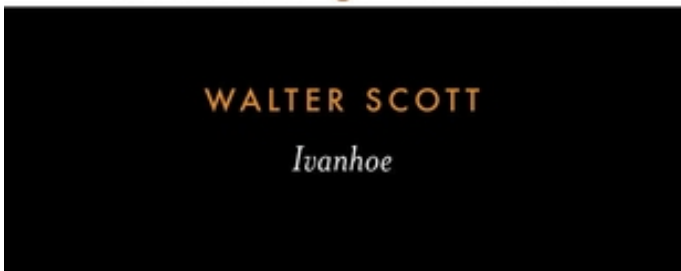
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Description

Set at the time of the Norman Conquest, this novel discusses Ivanhoe's return from the Crusades to claim his inheritance and the love of Rowena and his involvement in the struggle between Richard Coeur de Lion and his Norman brother John. It is structured by a series of conflicts: Saxon versus Norman, Christian versus Jew, and men versus women.

Insightful reviews

Jason: Oh, this was very good. I'd read that Woolf loved Scott, and when I told an academic mentor that I was going to read it, she exclaimed, "I had SUCH a crush on Ivanhoe! I'll lend you my copy!" I went into it with high expectations and it delivered. Yes, it's full of lengthy description, but there is action and adventure, romance and politics, and is generally a thrill. I had to skim it, and ended up breezing through a lot of Scott's descriptions of clothing or setting, but as Allan Massie wrote in *The Telegraph*, "Scott wrote fast and often carelessly, and he should be read in the same way. He is a novelist for greedy readers, not for dainty ones."

Jasmin: This is my favourite book of all time. It took me just over a month to complete it the first time back when I was in school; and I read at least a chapter every day! But I was studying for my classes too... nowadays it doesn't take me that long to get through it.

Every time I read it, it reawakens the joy of first discovery. The legend of Robin Hood is about as exciting as turning on a lightbulb when compared with the saga of Ivanhoe, which, to continue the simile, is like lighting a firework. One of those enormous gold ones which light up the sky in a shower of sparkles that keep fizzling for a long time after the initial bang.

Meaning this book is brilliant from the first page, and the story stays with you for a long time after you complete the finale chapter. Epic chivalry at it's greatest; when men were MEN, and wielded swords and battle axes, and women were WOMEN, demure and beautiful with an inner core of steel. It has everything a book needs; war, vengeance, a rich/poor divide, disenfranchised peoples, romance, religious issues, honour and true courage in the face of despair. What more could you ask for?

Jessi: It took me a long time to read this despite being very diligent about it. I rented it from the library, and woe, I had to re-check it out after 2 weeks. It was frustrating because I originally started reading it in order to take up the time it would take for the library to get in the other books I wanted to read. The problem wasn't the story, it was the old-ish language used. The fact that the book was insanely thick with small print didn't help matters either. I do have to say I have grown very fond of the word knave. I will randomly say things like, "What saidst thou, knave." My family probably thinks I'm nuts.

Now for my thoughts on the story. I really liked the way the book incorporates the four stories of the Jewess (another word I have grown to like a lot), Ivanhoe, the king, and Cedric. They flow in and out of each other nicely. Rebecca is the most awesome woman in the book. She defends her chastity with her life. Who among us would do the same? To be honest, I don't think I would.

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