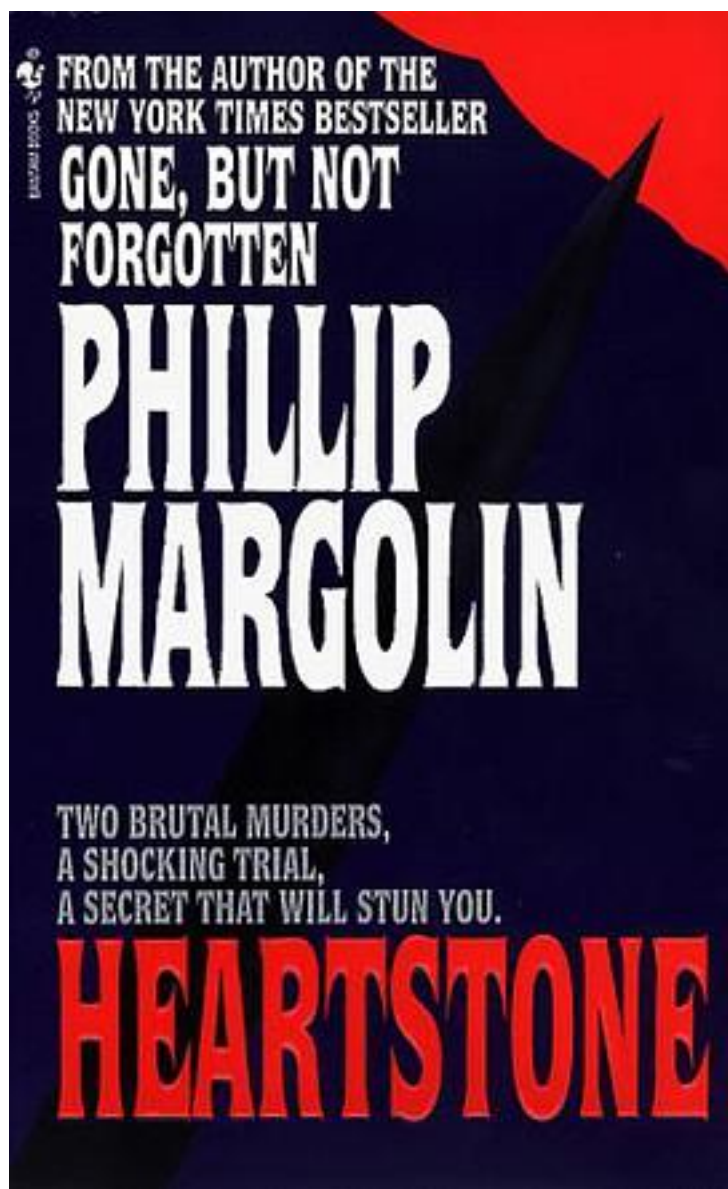


Heartstone



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著者:Phillip Margolin

出版者:Random House Audio

出版时间:2001-2-6

装帧:Audio Cassette

isbn:9780553527742

Amazon.co.uk Review

Many writers jostle for position at the top of the historical crime fiction tree, but for many aficionados one novelist has maintained an assured premium position for quite some time: the British writer CJ Sansom. His sprawling, exuberant and brilliantly organised novels featuring the wily hunchbacked lawyer Matthew Shardlake are particular favourites of those who seek something a little more ambitious in the field, and it's not hard to see why. Most of Sansom's novels (which include *Dissolution*, *Sovereign*, *Dark Fire* and *Revelation*) seem positively operatic in their sheer scale, and the vividness of which Tudor England is covered by the author makes most other writing in the genre seem footling.

At over 600 pages, the new book, *Heartstone*, is one of his most imposing, but after a challenging, slowish start (something frequently attempted by Sansom -- like many good writers, he often demands a certain patience from his readers), the customary comprehensive grip is rigorously maintained. The invasion of France mounted by Henry VIII has been a disaster, and, in retaliation, an imposing French fleet is making preparations to cross the Channel. At Portsmouth, the English navy is readying itself for the battle of its life, and at Henry's autocratic direction, a massive militia army is being raised. England, reeling under the debasing of its currency to pay for the war, is suffering crippling inflation and economic meltdown. (If the thought of Britain's involvement in controversial foreign wars while suffering an economic crisis might remind the reader of a few contemporary parallels, there is little doubt that is exactly what CJ Sansom intends.) Against this tumultuous backdrop, the lawyer Matthew Shardlake is presented with a difficult case via an elderly servant of Queen Catherine Parr which will plunge him into the labyrinthine toils of the King's Court of Wards. Shardlake's job is to look into wrongs which have been done to the young ward Hugh Curteys by a Hampshire landowner, and (as is customary with most cases involving Shardlake) violent death is soon on the agenda, as the threat of war looms.

Readers of CJ Sansom will know exactly what to expect here, and all the usual pleasures afforded by this massively talented writer are satisfyingly on offer. If *Heartstone* is not quite vintage Sansom, that is perhaps because the author has set (and maintained) such a high standard. But what the novel provides in terms of reach and achievement is streets ahead of most of his contemporaries. --Barry Forshaw

Review

'CJ Sansom combines a knack of getting us to experience the past with a talent for warmly memorable characterisation and skilled plot construction. We are as fond of the canny but vulnerable Tudor lawyer Matthew Shardlake and his macho sidekick Barak as we are of Patrick O'Brien's Aubrey and Maturin or Terry Pratchett's Lord Vetinari and Sam Vimes...As well as expanding familiar characters, Sansom enjoys literary experiment...Thank goodness for every one of the 600 pages, Sansom's fans will say.'

--The Times - Christina Hardyment

'Sansom's attention to historical detail is rightly praised: he scrupulously avoids the Jung-ho military jingoism common in other authors of historical fiction. One wonders if a modern-day version of Shardlake would be a useful man to have around the

Pentagon. Yet it is the rich characterisation that really brings this series to life, none more so than Shardlake himself, a beguiling hero with a bent body but a strangely modern mind.' --Financial Times, Robert Orr

'Heartstone, as bristling as its predecessors with outlandish deaths, suspicious behaviour, jeopardy and plots of fiendish deviousness, plunges you into catastrophic upheavals caused by Henry's foreign policy. Throughout, Heartstone is a rousing tour de force of period re-creation, testifying to Sansom's fascination with history...Like all the Shardlake books, Heartstone winningly shows Sansom's crafty flair for hoodwinking even the most hawk-eyed reader.' --Sunday Times Culture, Peter Kemp

'A great attraction of CJ Sansom's series of novels set in the reign of Henry VIII lies not merely in the authentic background but in the personality of the main character - that persistent seeker after truth, Matthew Shardlake, Sansom's intelligent hunchbacked Tudor lawyer... Sansom brilliantly exploits the hindsight we bring to the historical novel, for we turn the pages with bated breath, waiting for the inevitable, wondering who will survive. Life aboard the ship, top-heavy, crowded with soldiers and sailors, is rivetingly described. It's a long struggle for Shardlake, but the hill of truth is well worth climbing.' --The Independent, Jane Jakeman

'At once compulsively readable and highly satisfying...Sansom handles a large cast and a complex narrative with great skill and his set piece scenes, the sinking of the Mary Rose, for instance are simply stupendous. An entirely engrossing novel with an intriguing twist.' --Daily Express

'Murder, mystery and turbulent history are expertly twisted together in Sansom's fifth Tudor crime novel.' --Sunday Times 'Culture' Magazine

'Shardlake and Barak are one of the best double acts in historical fiction...If you haven't yet discovered the Shardlake series, you're in for a treat...'

--Lancashire Evening Post

'Murder, mystery and turbulent history are expertly twisted together in Sansom's fifth Tudor crime novel.' --Sunday Times 'Culture' Magazine

'...the pace and tension hot up splendidly as Shardlake's inquiries take him to the Hampshire home of a family with a great deal to hide. A wholly unexpected twist takes us to a superb denouement aboard the doomed warship Mary Rose - terrific stuff, for both fans and newcomers to the series.' --The Guardian

'The best crime fiction depends at least as much on character, atmosphere and sense of place as on plot, and Heartstone is no exception... This is good writing and it should be read.' --The Spectator

'Sansom... is superb at evoking the atmosphere of the time, from the anxiety of the populace about the debased coinage to pay for the king's recklessness, to the very fear that the French threat inspired. The historical detail is finely drawn and, as in the previous books, the voices of the characters strike just the right balance between accessibility for the modern ear and period flavour.' --Eastern Daily Press

'As in many good crime series of whatever epoch, the central character evolves from novel to novel... Shardlake is feeling his age, and the double isolation of his physical disability and his religious disbelief puts him constantly on his guard' --TLS, Ruth Morse

'CJ Sansom's Tudor-set legal thrillers have been an astounding success due to their period detail, careful plotting and deft characterisation... Sansom writes evocatively about Tudor London' --Catholic Herald

'CJ Sansom writes with verve and conviction, drawing the reader into the heat and terror of the summer of 1545.' --The Daily Express

'Sansom's resourcefulness is on display here in all its glory...another lesson in history for all of us.' --Oxford Times

'Sansom is completely in control of his material and paces his yarn perfectly. Sly comments on Henry's unwise expansionist ambitions have modern echoes, but Sansom's own attempts at expansionism need not cause concern - you will speed through this novel like King You-Know-Who devouring a capon.'

--Daily Telegraph

作者介绍:

C. J. Sansom was educated at Birmingham University, where he took a BA and then a PhD in history. After working in a variety of jobs, he retrained as a solicitor and practised in Sussex, until becoming a full-time writer. He lives in Sussex.

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