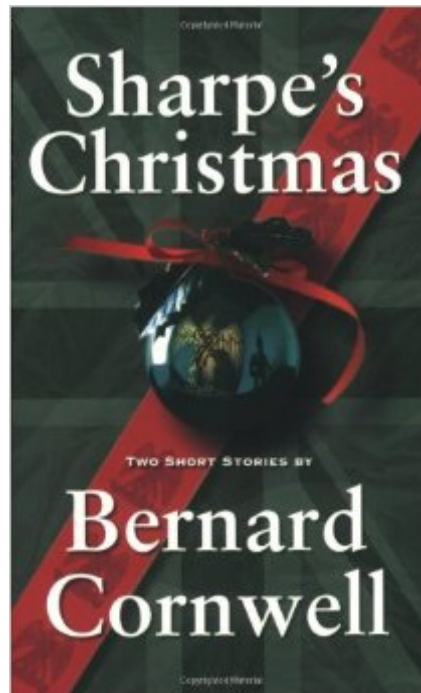


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Sharpe's Christmas: Two Short Stories (Richard Sharpe's Adventure Series)



Synopsis

'Sharpe's Christmas' contains two short stories. In the title story Richard Sharpe, commanding the Prince of Wales's Own Volunteers, finds himself in a high, hard place with an enemy brigade on one side and a desperate force of Frenchmen fleeing their defeat in Spain on the other. The second story, 'Sharpe's Ransom', is set in France, after the wars, when old enemies take Sharpe's woman and child hostage.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After reading the whole Sharpe series twice I decided to go ahead and purchase this book. At first I didn't know what to expect, I figured it would be over just as quick as it started. This is the case, 60 pages takes maybe an hour to read. But the story, like always, grabs you from the start and keeps you reading. These books are pretty much for Sharpe fans only, little about Sharpe is given away through these books. It is just a quick Sharpe adventure. I particularly liked Ransom. These two stories are a must for any Sharpe fan out there. 5 Stars.

Unlike other publishers, this one numbers white pages, the copyright page, etc. There are 87 pages of actual text. Like Sharpe's Skirmish, this volume contains stories that were rewritten and republished as a fundraising effort. The price is somewhat high, but consider it a contribution to a worthwhile cause. They were originally published as Christmas stories in the "Daily Mail." The stories are very good, the first taking place on Christmas 1813 on the border between France and

Spain. The second takes place in Normandy on a Christmas Eve following Waterloo. While the first story deals with military action against the French, and Sharpe meets an old acquaintance from India, the second deals with the conditions in France following the war, when unemployed soldiers became marauders. Sharpe deals with an old enemy that he previously allowed to live, and finally settles in, at least for a time, on a farm in Normandy. In a way, the second story deals with the question of disbanding armies after a war that lasted over 20 years. What do men do when they no longer have military employment?

I'm like an addict for Cornwell's Sharpe series. Like 'Sharpe's Skirmish' before it, this is previously released material now presented in book form. Here we get two (very) short stories, both taking place at Christmas. In the first ('Sharpe's Christmas'), Major Sharpe is given the task of blocking the retreat of a French garrison, as another French brigade approaches from the rear. Blood and mayhem ensue, but so does some rare French/English amity. The second story, 'Sharpe's Ransom', takes place shortly after Waterloo and Sharpe has retired on half-pay to the French farmlands of Normandy with Lucille. Some French Hussars take Lucille and their boy, Patrick, hostage. How Sharpe rescues them and at the same time wins over the reticent village fills the rest of the story. Once again, reading these stories was like visiting with an old friend. There's nothing really new here, but it warms the heart.

This book actually contains two short stories by the creator of Richard Sharpe, Bernard Cornwell. These stories were originally published for the Christmas edition of an English newspaper but have been rewritten due to a "number of words" restriction in the original publication. The two stories, "Sharpe's Christmas and Sharpe's Ransom" are written with the usual Sharpe's appeal and both relate in some round about way to the Christmas Spirit present even in tough guy Richard Sharpe. Both stories were extremely likeable and after reading all the Sharpe novels these were a pleasant addition to the saga. Anyone who is a fan of the series will like these two tales. The only drawback is that they could have been novelettes instead of short stories. Len Brandenburg Cincinnati, OH

To begin, this is definitely for Sharpe fans only. But, for those, it is a must have. I gave it three out of five stars, but have done so conditionally. Sharpe's Christmas consists of two short stories originally published in the Daily Mail. The first story, Sharpe's Christmas, I could only give two stars. It is Sharpe warmed over. The second story, Sharpe's Ransom, is well worth the price of admission. I would give it four maybe even five stars. Having read all the books, I found it is much more

enjoyable visiting with the retired major on the farm than following him back to Spain.P.S. - let's see Sean Bean in Sharpe's Devil

Two short stories written for a newspaper, The Daily Mail, at Christmas time. The first story takes place in December 1813. Britain has defeated the French in Spain and wants to prevent them from retreating back into France to rejoin Napoleon's army. Richard Sharpe and 422 rifles are assigned the unenviable task of defending a tight pass through the hills at a small village called Irati, made up of mostly shepherds. The retreating French, over 1,000 strong, are led by Colonel Jean Gudin, a man with whom Sharpe actually fought with in India, and came to deeply respect. Gudin is despised and opposed by his own Colonel Caillou, who believes Gudin to be a soft-hearted coward for refusing to leave women and children behind in their retreat. The 2nd story takes place in December 1815, after the war, when Sharpe is now living with the French widow Lucille Lassan on her farm in Normandy. While out hunting foxes, Sharpe notices 6 men approaching his farmhouse. By the time he returns, they have taken his wife and son hostage. They are former French soldiers who know about Sharpe having stolen back Napoleon's gold after it had been first taken by the ruthless French spy Major Pierre Ducos. Sharpe doesn't tell them he didn't keep the gold, but leads them to believe he still has it so he can find a way to overpower them and save his wife and son. In doing so, he enlists the help of the town who has been spiteful and rejecting of an ex-English soldier living among them. Both short stories are vintage Bernard Cornwell, one of the finest writers of today. His plots are intelligent and engaging, his heroes are likeable and inspiring, his villains are despicable, his stories are unpredictable and creative, and his endings are always satisfying.

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