



Lucifer's Harvest

Melvin R. Starr

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Lord Gilbert Talbot must provide soldiers for Prince Edward's battle in France. He wishes his surgeon--Hugh de Singleton--to travel with the war party to tend any injuries. Among those on the road is Sir Simon Trillowe, Hugh's old nemesis, who had once torched Hugh's house.

Finding himself in the same war party, Hugh resolves to watch his back in the presence of the knight, who is still holding a grudge. But it is Sir Simon who should not have turned his back....

When Trillowe's body is found, many suspect Hugh has wreaked revenge on his adversary. To clear his name, Hugh must once again riddle a reason for murder.

Lucifer's Harvest Details

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From Reader Review Lucifer's Harvest for online ebook

Mieczyslaw Kasprzyk says

I enjoy Mel Starr's Hugh de Singleton books; they're an easy, relaxing read, a sort of candy-floss for the mind but not so cheap and nasty. Starr tries very hard to create a realistic representation of Mediaeval life but there are times it comes across, to me, as some sort of historical reconstruction; Twentieth Century people in fancy dress. I know all this sounds like harsh criticism and have to stress, straight away, that it's not meant to be. Starr is the man I turn to to enjoy at a leisurely pace. The "mysteries" within have almost foreseeable outcomes (we know Hugh will be alright and will get the nasty villain) and we know the story will have touches of historical reality - just like that Viking walking down the road outside the Jorvik Experience. It's fun walking or riding alongside Hugh as he encounters unpleasant individuals, wondering about the true meanings behind the Church's teachings, curing the odd sickness and carrying out the odd bit of surgery. I would like a little bit more of the smell and the dirt and the unhealthiness, a lot more of the cruel class system and superstition... but this is Mel Starr. Fun, history and only an acceptable touch of reality.

Gayle Pace says

I've read several other books by Mel Starr and I have enjoyed them all. I find Surgeon Hugh to be a considerate and understanding man. He also has a humorous side. A hero he is not, or at least I felt so at first. No he's not the knight in shining armor but he does do what he says he will. The author goes into detail of the surgeon's way of surgery. Usually Hugh's family is part of the story but in this book, they aren't a part of it. If you've read Starr's other books, you may miss the family in this one. They just seem to be an important part of everything the surgeon does. The author describes the smells, the characters, the surroundings with such vivid detail that you can picture yourself in this Medieval setting. You get a picture of what life was like for the soldiers and the civilians. With this book the story is set in France not England so many of the characters that you know from the other books, aren't in this one. The author gives you a mystery with history added in. He takes you slowly into the time period and not only gives you either the good or bad, but both. The book is a little shorter than the others which leaves less room for the twists and turns that a reader of Mr. Starr's is used to. I'm hoping if there is another book that we'll get to know the characters a bit more. A little more depth, a little more insight into their characteristics and their lives. I would definitely recommend starting with the first book and going from there. You may get a little insight into what is going on. Read the above section on about the book to get an idea of the contents of the book.

I received this complimentary copy of this book from the author, Mel Starr and Kregel Book Tours and voluntarily decided to review it.

Gregoire says

Une novella d'à peine 148 pages pour une aventure de Hugh assez succincte malgré la traversée de la Manche pour venir reprendre Limoges aux Français
Cela se lit d'une traite mais il manque à mon goût plus d'analyses et de détails sur ce passage historique qui aurait mérité un travail d'écriture en profondeur

Ma note est sévère car j'attendais mieux de l'auteur De plus, j'estime que c'est un récit plutôt pour jeunes lecteurs ...

A novella of just 148 pages for a rather succinct adventure of Hugh, despite the crossing of the Channel to retake Limoges to the French

I read it in one go but it lacks - for my taste - more analyzes and details on this historic passage that would have deserved a deep writing job

My rating is rather severe because I expected much better from the author

Moreover, I feel that it is a story rather for young readers

Vera Godley says

I have read several in the Chronicles of Hugh de Singleton, Surgeon by Mel Starr and found each to be entertaining, enlightening as to the historical aspects, and refreshing. I was looking forward with delight to another Hugh de Singleton read and romp through the paths and over the streams of medieval England. That was not the case in this shortened episode in the ongoing tale.

This story centers around the battle between English (Prince Edward) army and the France ending with the routing of the French from Limones. It is essentially the march of the English toward French after crossing the English Channel, the encampment, and the activities of the men in the entourage of the Prince.

Hugh de Singleton becomes embroiled in solving the murder of a soldier and is given latitude to try find the true murderer because of a certainty Hugh de Singleton did no murder. Singleton proceeds with his usual methodical analysis of location, people, and deeds and does come to the solution; and in finding out who did it, the cause becomes apparent. The deed was accomplished by and as a result of a perversion.

I was surprised that perversion was a part of one of these stories. It was handled well and as Singleton said, "You cannot escape death..... No man can do so. But you may escape sin. To those who confess their wickedness the Lord Christ is merciful, though men are not. The Lord Christ judges a man, I think, not by where he has been, but by where he is going - the way he faces."

DISCLOSURE: I received a complimentary copy from Kregel to facilitate an honest review. Opinions are my own. I was not compensated.

Andy53 says

A bit short at 155 pages but the story is excellent. Master Hugh is a genius

Jane says

My first foray into the Hugh de Singleton, surgeon, medieval mystery series and a very enjoyable outing. This novella was a simple story that kept me guessing, with a bit of a moral twist, as Hugh tries to live the injunctions of the Bible. Hugh accompanies his lord, Gilbert Talbot, to France, along with Prince Edward,

the "Black Prince", and we see the English army at the siege of Limoges. The dead body of Sir Simon Trillowe, no friend to Hugh, is found stuffed down a well, and suspicion falls on Hugh as murderer, so Hugh is out to prove his innocence and to find the real culprit through his sleuthing and forensic talent. I enjoyed the details of medieval life and surgery of that period.

Highly recommended. I thank LibraryThing for sending me this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Susanne says

This ninth chronicle of Hugh de Singleton, Surgeon, was very short compared to the previous mysteries in this amazing medieval mystery series.

Hugh has been married to his beautiful Kate for several years now, and with daughters Bessie and Sybil, they live in Galen House near Bampton Castle (a day's ride from Oxford) where Hugh is bailiff to the widowed Lord Gilbert Talbot as well as surgeon to the village of Bampton.

A message arrives one day in 1370: Lord Gilbert must provide soldiers to join Prince Edward in France. Hugh assumes that he will remain behind to administrate the affairs of Bampton Castle as he frequently does when Lord Gilbert lives in his other castle, but Lord Gilbert decides that Hugh's surgical skills may be needed on the battlefield, and he is compelled to go. Kate and the girls will move to the castle to run it in Lord Gilbert's absence, with the reeve taking on the bailiff's duties.

The long trek to Burgundy, then Limoges, is difficult, especially when Sir Simon Trillowe, who resents Hugh for winning Kate from him and also burned Galen House (and had to pay for its rebuilding), joins the soldiers from the area surrounding Oxford. Hugh must watch his back for sure. I'll leave the rest for you to discover, but Hugh also meets Prince Edward (later called The Black Prince) on a few occasions.

As always, this mystery is so well-researched and shows the unromantic realism of medieval life, especially for the peasants (this time, the peasants in the French countryside). Even the cadence and structure of the characters' speech possesses a subtle medievalism that is simply superb--not overdone nor underdone.

The glossary at the beginning of each book allows the reader to learn much about medieval life, from the ingredients to medieval dishes to the name for underwear worn in this time period.

Hugh himself is a compelling character: a humble man with some faults of temper and selfishness (like all of us), he is not a confident solver of mysteries so much as he is a careful one, a quality he has learned through experience. Hugh has earned the respect of Lord Gilbert, again through a proven track record of solving mysteries in and around Bampton, but now, in the French countryside ravaged by wars, Hugh is set to solve a mystery in order to save both his reputation and his life.

A brilliant mystery series, especially for those who thrive on details of medieval life; I just wish that there were more books available in the series. I only have one more to read, and then I'll be fully caught up and will have to wait for the publication of the next Chronicle of Hugh de Singleton, Surgeon.

Alison says

One of the better installments in the series, this short book follows our surgeon Hugh to war, giving a

glimpse into the realities of medieval warfare in the process. The impact - on the knights, their serfs, and the French people they are invading - is well explained, and Hugh's musings provide for a chance for Starr to explore the impact of Wycliff's bible translation on faith. The plot itself ties nicely into the themes, while the shortness of the work limits it to a simple tale, avoiding the cumbersome complexity some of these books fall into.

Narita says

When Mel Starr writes a new book I cannot wait to read it! His books are unique to historical novels with settings in the 1400's. An era you rarely see written about in fiction especially Christian fiction. I never cease to learn something new. His research has yielded such detail about every aspect of that time that people come to life. I especially am fascinated my Hugh de Singleton's occupation as a surgeon and doctor. His mysteries continuously keep me guessing who the guilty party is and I never cease to be surprised! Also, his wonderful sense of humor adds even more entertainment.

Lord Gilbert Talbot, Hugh de Singletons' employer is always assigning him jobs that have nothing to do with medicine. Hugh must oblige of course. In this story, he is taken to battle with Lord Gilbert. In war someone with medical knowledge and skills will be needed. He does not want to leave his family and knows the risk he might not return is real. This is definitely out of his comfort zone.

A far different setting than his other books, gives readers an opportunity to see how battles were conducted during that time and the lives of soldiers. It is 1370 and Prince Edward has called all soldiers and knights to battle to reclaim British territory that the King of France has seized.

Hugh must not only be cautious about being so near the battle, but also watch his back from an old enemy, knight, Sir Simon Trillowe. Sir Simon hates Hugh and holds a bitter grudge. When Sir Simon is found dead, his father and friends point the finger at Hugh as the murderer. In their eyes no one else has a motive. Lord Gilbert supports him and believes in his innocence. As usual he sends Hugh to find the murderer, except this time he is the suspect!! Quite a twist!

Sleuthing is a bit more challenging for the surgeon this time, being unfamiliar with the new area and not knowing anyone. None the less he sets out with great determination to clear his name. It was interesting to also learn the affects war had on civilians during that time. I am always impressed with Hugh's commitment to God in all his conduct. He does not hesitate to treat and care for his enemies. I love his integrity.

My only complaint about this book is that it was shorter than the others. I would be happy if Mr. Starr would write one the size of "War and Peace", but that would just leave me wanting more books. At the end of the book was the first chapter of his new upcoming book "Deeds of Darkness". Looking forward to it! Another great book Mr. Starr! I received a complimentary copy of this book from the Kregel Publications. My comments are an independent and honest review.

Awallens says

The mystery seemed a little weak in this book. Although I didn't know who did it, there wasn't a lot of suspense either. Not my favorite in the series, but still good.

Tammy Flanders says

Not my favourite in the series but alright. As usual the author provides plenty of details to create a strong time and place (Middle Ages, England and France). Short quick read.

Amy says

This would have been a 5 star book as the rest of his series has been except that it's being advertised and priced as novel #9 when it is in fact (At 133 pages) the size of a novella. However despite it being half the size of the rest of Mel's books our friend Hugh de Singleton does manage to do quite a bit in those 133 pages. The story itself is just as riveting and entertaining as the rest of the series though most of this one takes place in a different setting. The ending was a bit sobering but not unexpected for that time period.

My favourite quote from this little book was "A man seldom gets in trouble for saying too little".

Patricia Gulley says

I've read this entire series, and sometimes wonder why. It just plods along at its own pace and I just can't help rooting for Hugh de Singleton. This time he is off to France with his master, Gilbert, who must fight in France with Prince Edward for the recovery of Limoges. The contract he makes with Gilbert before they leave for the protection of his wife and children was very interesting.

Sharon says

Mel Starr can't write these books in this series quickly enough for me! What meticulously researched 14th century intrigue! Every detail, down to the clothing worn by each class in medieval England, is just fascinating, in and of itself, and yet the murder mystery put before Hugh de Singleton, Surgeon & Bailiff, is just as wonderfully engrossing. Just loooooooooove this series of books.

Sari says

Wonderfully written, and well-researched. Historical fiction at its finest. Great story, endearing characters...very minor/petty complaint: I expected a little more book for my buck. For the price I would have appreciated more than 150 pages:(
