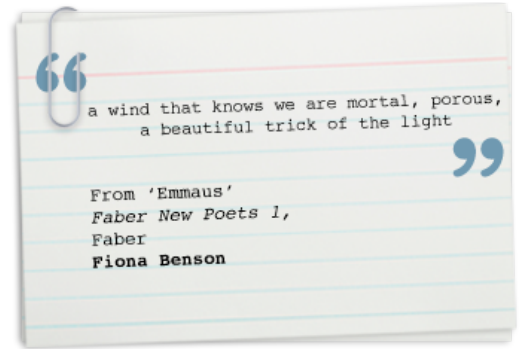




Good Morning! It's Thursday on September 01, 2011.

Literature for everyone in the South West



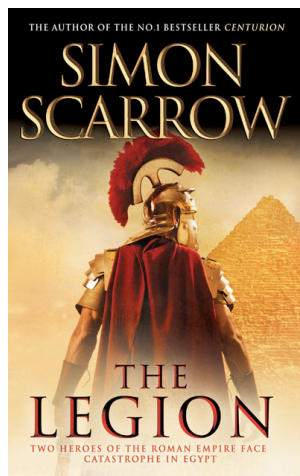
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book of the month

The Legion
by *Simon Scarrow*



The Gladiator, the ninth novel in Simon Scarrow's Roman series, was on the *Sunday Times* hardback bestseller list for several weeks, reaching the No. 2 position, and *Centurion* was a number one bestseller in hardback and paperback. Simon Scarrow's novels have sold in excess of 1 million copies through BookScan.

The bestselling author of *Centurion* and *The Gladiator* returns with another action-packed Roman adventure, *The Legion*...

When the actions of a rebel gladiator in Egypt threaten the stability of the Roman Empire, Prefect Cato and Centurion Macro know he must be stopped. The locals are holding the Romans responsible for the attacks Ajax and his crew have been making along the coast and now Egypt is dangerously volatile. Tasked with tracking and defeating the renegade, Cato and Macro are soon hot on Ajax's trail, determined to destroy the enemy. But will the strength of a psychotically fatalist gladiator and his new-found allies, hell-bent on destruction, defeat the Roman warriors.

Cyprus Well caught with Simon Scarrow recently to ask him about his work ...

Cato and Macro have come a long way since 'Under the Eagle'! Can you say a bit about why their story and the era more generally continue to have a hold on you?

What's not to like about the First Century? The Romans are constantly at war with someone, somewhere and that means that I will never be short of a plot! As far as the series' point of view goes, I had read a lot of fiction set in Rome but the vast majority of it told tales relating to the elite. What I wanted to do was break away from that and give a 'worm's eye view' of proceedings.

Can you say a bit about the joys and challenges of maintaining their story over 10 books?

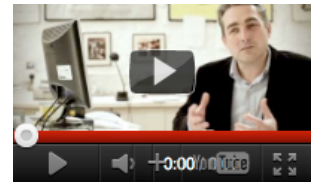
Calendar

South West
What's On



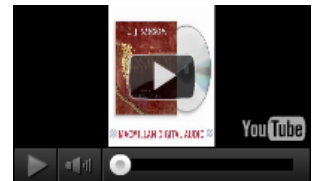
Book of the Month Clips

The Redeemed by M.R. Hall



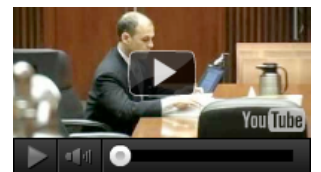
Dissolution by C.J. Sansom

Pan Macmillan



Innocent by Scott Turow

Hachette Book Group



Dark Matter by Michelle Paver

Pan Macmillan

The Death of King Arthur by Peter

Ackroyd

Penguin

The main challenge is keeping it fresh and giving them something new to do. The fact that Macro and Cato run their own lives these days means that they are constantly surprising me with what they get up to and I guess that is the joy of the thing, for me as much as the readers.

Could you describe your approach to researching the specific era and details for each Macro and Cato book and then incorporating period features into a story? How important is factual accuracy?

Factual accuracy tempered by the need to tell a good story is the object of the game. Most of the research is done through reading, some through talking to re-enactors, and some through walking the ground where the novel will be set.

You've also been writing the Wellington and Napoleon Quartet – how was it to switch timezones?

Like a bit of a holiday to be honest. I have always been fascinated by the impact of the French Revolution and it was a huge pleasure to research and write the novels.

Can you describe your writing environment and practice – do you have a particular place where you write, or time of day, number of words, for example?

I work between a very messy office and a spartan place on the coast where most of the writing gets done. I am not a regular writer but tend to work in intense bursts of activity because I get so caught up in the story I am telling and find it hard to stop. On a good day I can write 6000 words. The best day topped out at 9000 words but that was from 9am through until 4am the next day.

When you have a germ of an idea for a novel, how do you begin to plan for the writing stage. Do you map events in advance, for example, or do you simply begin?

I sketch out a few ideas and then write a half page synopsis. It's far more fun to let the tale grow by itself rather than to herd it through a set of pre-arranged gates.

Do you have any advice for our readers who may wish to see their work published?

Well, it's very tough getting published but the main thing is to read a lot and write a lot. Other than that there is no short cut - unless you are a celebrity and can afford a decent ghost writer.

At Cyprus Well, we are keeping an eye on developments in the digitising of books, Ipads, Kindles, etc. As an author, how do you view these developments?

Naturally I am concerned about this since I am not yet convinced that the publishing industry has got its mind round copyright protection in this new field. Personally, I love books. They are a brilliant piece of kit with unlimited battery power, bullet proof data storage, and a high degree of resilience. Frankly you can't beat the Abook.

Thank you, Simon!

Book of the Month Archive

June 2010 Derek Landy: *Skulduggery Pleasant Dark Days*

July 2010 Scott Turow: *Innocent*

August 2010: Julia Green: *Drawing With Light*

September 2010: C J Sansom: *Heartstone*

October 2010: Of Love and Hope

November 2010: Michelle Paver *Dark Matter*

December 2010 Peter Ackroyd *The Death of King Arthur*

January 2011 Andrew Taylor *The Anatomy Of Ghosts*

February 2011 Jill Mansell *To The Moon And Back*

March 2011 Aminatta Forna *The Memory of Love*

April 2011 M.R. Hall *The Redeemed*

May 2011 Jussi Adler-Olsen *Mercy*

June 2011 Philip Marsden *The Levelling Sea*

July 2011: Imogen Robertson *Island of Bones*

