

RECOMMENDATIONS: READ & TBR

Hi, my name is Arleigh! You'll find more than 150 reviews here, book news, quotes, new releases, classics and author guest posts and interviews. My favorite author is Jean Plaidy, also known as Victoria Holt, Philippa Carr and 6 other pseudonyms. I own most of her 200+ books and run, [Royal Intrigue](#), an everything Plaidy site. I'm a proud member of [The Historical Novel Society](#) and review books for HNR magazine.

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"And there were no days, only the long endless night, with rough hands to tend him- and sometimes laughter at the foibles and follies, the childish inanities of a man who had once been their King. No light... only darkness... no understanding... only fleeting pictures... vague memories that mocked him and ran from him when he sought to catch them like mischievous boys in a royal nursery."

- Jean Plaidy, *Victoria in the Wings*

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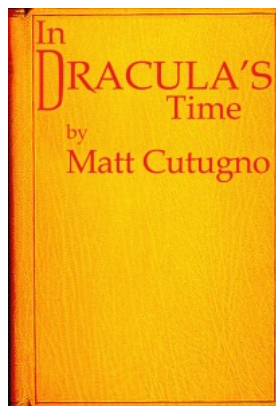
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guest post: The Birth of Invasion Literature by Matt Cutugno

by [ARLEIGH](#) on JUNE 4, 2012 · [LEAVE A COMMENT](#) · in [GUEST](#)

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Matt Cutugno, author of *IN DRACULA'S TIME* has written this article about influential invasion literature, citing several well known works and some lesser known, though interesting, books you may want to research.

[Further info on the author](#)

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The Birth of Invasion Literature

It is well understood that warfare between nations has far reaching consequences beyond the battlefield. Less appreciated are the effects of war on literature. Besides the obvious influence on writers' subject matter, the effects of martial conflict on readers' preferences can create literary genres.

Such was the case in the late 1800s, and it came directly as a result of the Franco-Prussian war, which raged for a year starting in the summer of 1870, pitting the great state of Napoleon III against that of Otto von Bismarck.

At that time, France was arguably the preeminent power in continental Europe. A series of events prompted it to declare war on Prussia, which was then allied with other German principalities. Despite the arrogance of France's Second Empire in starting the war, it soon became apparent that Prussia was more technologically advanced.

Their railroads were the finest in Europe, and with them they quickly and efficiently transported their troops to various battle fronts, and kept them well supplied. In addition, it was the Germans who developed breech loading artillery, which gave them a clear advantage in firepower. When, at the Battle of Sedan, Emperor Napoleon III and his entire army were captured, France sued for peace. That proud nation was humiliated and forced to give up their valued territory of Alsace-Lorraine.

2012 Reading Challenge



Arleigh has read 23 books toward her goal of 50 books.

23 of 50 (46%)

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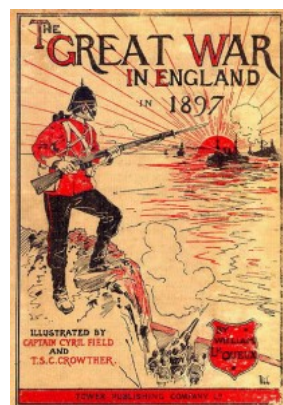
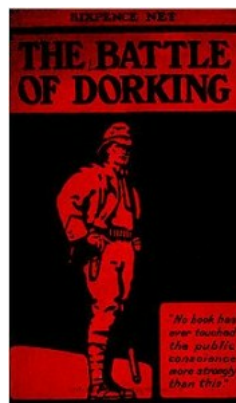
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The speed with which upstart Prussia defeated France shocked Europe, and the way the victors used technology to their clear advantage spread fear to all of Europe and to England in particular. Just after the war ended, a short story was published there that gave name to the new literary genre of Invasion Literature.

Entitled “The Battle of Dorking,” it was written by George Tomkyns Chesney, and published in 1871. This fictional account of a German invasion of England was immensely popular and started the craze that aroused imaginations throughout Victorian society of struggles against a technologically superior enemy. It was even to shape foreign policy in the years leading to the First World War.



In 1894 came “The Great War in England in 1897”, which was written by William Le Queux. This novel described an invasion by forces from France and Russia. The invaders made progress early on, but British patriots eventually managed to turn the tide. This work influenced others, including H. G. Wells’ “The War of the

Worlds” in 1898. In Wells’ book, as in Le Queux’s, a relentless enemy (this time from outer space!) makes a devastating surprise attack and penetrates to the heart of London.

It has been judged that between the end of the Franco-Prussian War and the onset of World War I, some 400 books were published in the genre of Invasion Literature. Readers were hungry for tales of brave resistance to fearsome foreign invaders.

Even Bram Stoker’s “Dracula”, published in 1897, and perhaps the most famous horror story ever written, has been classified as Invasion Literature. In it, the elegant but venomous Count Dracula has plans to buy real estate in London and move there, that is, to invade. The dedicated “vampire hunters” led by the intrepid Professor Van Helsing are desperate to stop the invasion.

Fear of the unknown has often proved to be a powerful tool

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that writers utilize in attracting readers. The dark side of the growth of technology fueled fears that made for entertaining literature.

Matt Cutugno, Indio, California, 6/2012

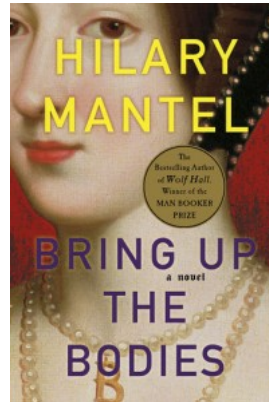
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review: Bring Up the Bodies by Hilary Mantel

by [ARLEIGH](#) on MAY 28, 2012 · 1 COMMENT · in [16TH CENTURY, ENGLAND, NEW BOOKS, REVIEWS](#)

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Bring Up the Bodies

by Hilary Mantel

Continuing the fascinating portrayal of Thomas Cromwell from her award winning novel, *Wolf Hall*, Hilary Mantel seamlessly begins where the former left off: en route to Wolf Hall, the Seymour family home, where all are aware of the king's budding desire for

Jane, the meek and quiet daughter of the house. Anne Boleyn's star is falling, and though many believe she was the making of Thomas Cromwell, readers will find that is not quite the case, nor does he need her support to continue in his own career path. The religious aspect of the reformation is not his primary focus, but rather the monetary gains, restructuring the law and guiding England to prosperity. This prodigy is the Cromwell that Mantel presents—not a power-hungry blacksmith's son, but an experienced and self-educated lawyer who'd rather have dinner with his mixed lot household of extended family members, orphans and hangers-on than sup with the King of England.

Slights are remembered, though revenge is not the foremost important factor in Cromwell's devising of Anne's downfall. Following the king's wishes and looking to the good of the realm, Cromwell realizes that curbing Boleyn ambition will not only open doors to other persons and families—including his own—for positions close to the king, but perhaps give England its desperately needed heir. Because there is doubt over Elizabeth's paternity, Anne must be thoroughly divorced and then executed to tie up any loose ends. Events, however, fall a little too neatly to Cromwell's will and it seems to the reader that it's not so much a scheming Master Secretary that fells the queen, but the impropriety of her behavior and those around her. This novelization does not invent or infer—to make Anne Boleyn guilty—but interposes known facts and lays them out in the panoramic view of Cromwell and his familiars. Old adversaries become allies and opposing factions entwine to this most important task of ridding the king of his

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