

Lovereading Reader reviews of Skin by Ilka Tampke

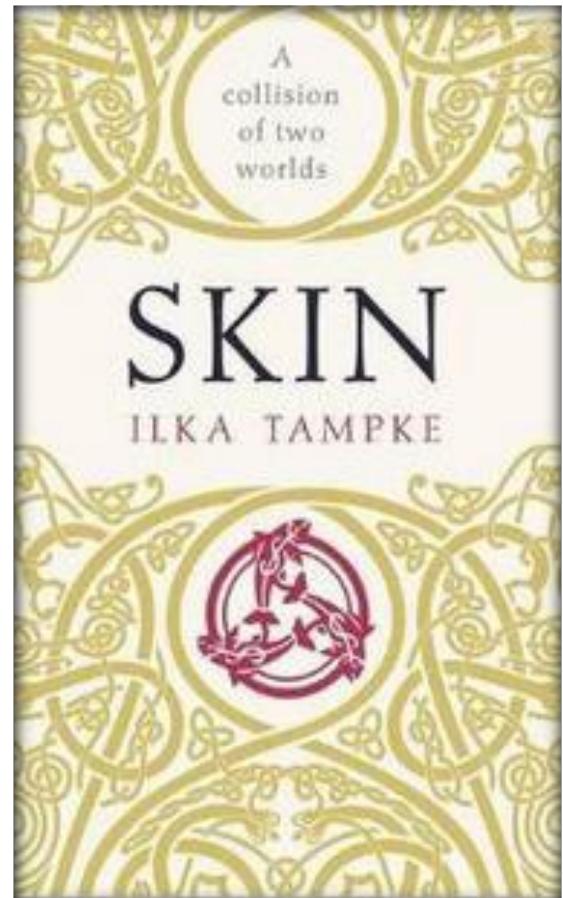
Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.

Vikki Patis

Wow. It's not often that I'm lost for words, but with this book, it's hard not to be. I devoured Skin within hours, sneaking chapters between meals and forsaking other things just to get a little bit more.

Tampke writes with confidence; her prose is beautiful, her story compelling. Alilia, our skinless protagonist, is a mixture of all things that make us human - doubt, despair, desire to learn - and I loved her utterly from the first page. The mystical setting of Iron Age Britain is wonderful, full of magic and wonder and beauty. **It's everything I love in a historical fiction.** And it's set in the south west, a place I will always call home.

Not that this is an award you'd put on your mantelpiece, but I do believe that Skin is my book of the year. Sequel, please!



Anne Rhodes

This truly is one of the best books I've read in a long time! Gripping, intriguing from the first page. The story is set in the small town of Caer Cad, in Iron-Age Southern Britain, just as the threat of a Roman invasion is about to affect all their lives. Thus the time is AD 43.

The pagan people of Caer Cad and surrounding areas believe strongly in the ties with their ancestors, through the spirit of animals and the care of their land. This link, this totem of each spirit, was their 'skin', which was gifted to them at birth through their mother. There were a few who had no skin – who for whatever reason had not been so gifted – and Ailia was one of these.

Ailia's future is uncertain, and there are many things she is not allowed to be

part of, not allowed to learn, but what happens to her, and those around her, pushes her to the belief that even without a 'skin' name to protect her she must make the journey to 'the Mothers' – the spirits of their ancestors. She is brave spirited, intelligent and curious and those she meets as she makes her journey play a very important part in her life, especially the enigmatic handsome Taliesen.

Angie Rhodes

Wow!! I can not praise this book enough!

It's Celtic Britain, AD 43 and Ailia is born with out "skin" which means she has no lineage or identity, but this doesn't stop her.

War is coming from the Romans, and Ailia has to be strong, to save her people.

Going into the forbidden Old Forest, is something that Cookmother has forbidden her from doing, only saying and doing are two completely different things, especially when there is a man involved, Taliesin is that man, or is something a little different?

This is for everyone who loved Jean M Auel's Cave Bear books, and everyone who wants a really great read, just hoping there's a sequel.

Janet Gilliard

This is a literary novel set in Celtic Britain in AD43. Ailia is an outcast without a skin name who needs to gain the knowledge to protect her people from Roman invaders. I struggled with this novel which is well written but just not my thing but I am sure it will be enjoyed by readers who like well written historical fiction.

Alan Brown

Celtic Britain in Somerset before the Roman invasion. A great story told from the perspective of tribal Britons. A rare viewpoint and an excellent read.

This is a different story about Britain before the Roman invasion. Told from the perspective of Britons which is rare but the story is enlightening and encased in a framework of fact.

The story also brings more understanding of stories by others of the same age

but from the Roman viewpoint.

The story is well written with clarity and easy sentence structure. At no time was I tired of the story. One of the best books I have read recently.

Kathy Howell

I really enjoyed this book and will look for others by this author.

The story is set in Britain before the Roman invasion. It is about Ailia who was a foundling, which means she has no skin and is, therefore, unable to access learning or take part in village rituals. She has learnt herbllore from the woman who raised her and is very skilled. The village is threatened by divisions between those clinging to the old ways and those turning to the future, the Romans. The village is looking for the Kendra who will lead them. Ailia shows special gifts and, despite her lack of skin, is accepted to travel to the spiritual world for training. Time is warped as she learns and travels and she returns to her village as the Kendra with the Romans just days away, and the village divided as to whether or not to fight. Ailia's skin is revealed to her near the end of the book and too late to help her protect her village.

The book is beautifully written and really evokes the magic surrounding Ailia and the spirits in which her society believes.

Vanessa Wild

An absorbing and gripping tale about the mystical world of Druids, with their beliefs and rituals, and the coming of a new age.

Captivating historical fiction with a hint of fantasy!

A very imaginative and fascinating story set in Iron Age Britain just before the Roman invasion. It is told in the first person by Ailia, a young kitchen girl, who is left as a baby on the doorstep of the tribe queen of Caer Cad, one of the hill towns in Durotriga, now known as Somerset. She is brought up by the cookmother and is trained in the art of plantcraft. She yearns for 'skin', her totem or identity, without which she is not allowed to gain knowledge or marry, thus allowing her to be a journey woman. As Ailia grows up, she meets and falls in love with the mysterious Taliesin. She finds that she does, in fact, have certain powers and that she is destined to be a leader, the Kendra of her people.

This is an absorbing and gripping tale about the mystical world of Druids, with their beliefs and rituals, and the coming of a new age. It's captivating and

engrossing historical fiction with a hint of fantasy. It's beautifully written and vividly told. The superb research that has gone into the writing of this book deserves a mention, too! The characters are very believable and well drawn. It brings home the fact that sometimes things happen for a reason, as in the Roman invasion of Britain who brought the country civilisation of a type. A fantastic and engaging read which I can thoroughly recommend.

@Butterflybiblio

Catherine Jenkins

An historical novel that blends fact and fiction in telling the story of the clash between the pagan Britons and the invading Romans who threaten their way of life. By turns wonderfully magical and bleakly real, this is a book that really does get under your skin, refusing easy routes and favouring plots as twisting as Celtic knots in its journey through a period that too often gets overlooked.

Sue Wallace

I would recommend this book as a fairly easy read but one which is enthralling and gripping.

This book is set in Celtic Britain just before the Roman invasion. It tells the story of Ailia, who lives in the village of Caer Cad. For these people, skin is their system of organisation, almost like clans within the village - although I did feel that this is never clearly explained in the book.

Ailia is a foundling, born to unknown parents and raised by the Tribequeen's cook. Because of this, she does not have 'skin' and therefore is regarded as an outcast, who isn't allowed to participate in many of the daily activities of the village, including learning, marrying or joining in the religious rituals of the people.

And so Ailia sets off on a quest to find her 'skin' ...

This is Ilka Tampke's first novel and it is a good read. The story held my interest and I found it hard to put down. It also raises questions about the mysterious Druids, of which little is known, and about whom I would like to know more.

I would recommend this book as a fairly easy read but one which is enthralling and gripping.

Nicola Lowes

This was a very interesting book - I enjoyed it and empathised with Ailia, who is a convincing heroine.

This was a very interesting book. I loved the fact that it was set so long ago, just before the Roman invasion. We don't know so much about this historical period so it makes it interesting to read about the old ways of the British people.

Ailia is a strong heroine who longs to study and broaden her knowledge but cannot because she does not know who her family were (her "skin"). The story follows her growing up into a young woman doing her best to search for the truth about her origins as well as study as much as she can. She has two suitors and these relationships are drawn well.

I enjoyed this book and empathised with Ailia. She is a convincing heroine. I was, however, disappointed with the ending of the story in respect of her romance with Taliesin.

You can follow Nicola on Twitter: @NJlowes

Hazel Saegert

Ilka Tampke has skilfully crafted a beautiful, moving and inspirational novel about a fascinating and often forgotten time in British history.

I sat down to read this novel expecting to find the normal level of escapism that I always experience when reading historical fiction. What I didn't expect was to end up devouring the whole book in nearly one sitting and to be so utterly captivated with the bone deep characters and the magical, almost fantastical, world of Caer Cad. The rituals, the customs, the culture - everything about this novel was so vividly and beautifully written that I found myself becoming fascinated with a time and culture that I had never really considered before.

Hanging over this dazzlingly imagined world is the very real risk of Roman invasion, an event that threatens to shatter the lives of the Caer Cad and everything that they believe in. Throw into this already turbulent mix the story of Ailia: an outcast within her own society, born without 'skin' and denied the chance to learn the ways of her people. It is through Ailia's story that the truly wonderful blend of history and fantasy that Tampke has created really comes into full force.

*A beautiful and emotionally stunning book **that leaves me wanting more** from this debut author.*

Laura Gardner

A beautifully written world in which you can totally lose yourself. Lovely characters and an absolutely intriguing universe - really hoping for a sequel or series.

Firstly, I really enjoyed this book - I loved the way it was written, the characters and the rich beautiful world. I thought that the idea behind the 'magic' and the mythos of the world was a really clever one and really not as hard to believe as many other fantasy universes.

I had one, small, problem with the book and that was that it did take a long time to get used to the society and their beliefs; there was no real explanation, you had to learn it as you went along. But as I read the story I found that that wasn't a long standing problem because it was quite nice to be introduced to the concepts slowly and gently, to get to know the world as you get to know the characters rather than being spoon fed the history from the very beginning.

I loved the main character, she was an effective and well written hero who wasn't brought down by a lot of what female protagonists often are in fantasy. The supporting characters, too, had a wonderful 'reality' to them and it was easy to love, or hate, them depending upon each of their roles.

I'm really looking forward to either a sequel or coming series as I want to know much more about this world and the path that the main character takes. I'll definitely be re-reading this book before reading anything that follows as I think that it'll flow really nicely.

<http://www.petitmoi-bigworld.co.uk/>

You can follow Laura on Twitter: @petitmoi_laura

Kathy Martin

This is an interesting book - certainly different! To start with I was shocked by the brutality, then intrigued, then frustrated by some of the more fantastical parts, annoyed by the odd historical mistake, but glad I persevered, because it is a really original novel. The subject is one seldom written about, and this is refreshing. I found it well-written, but would describe it as historical fantasy rather than historical fiction.