

LoveReading Reader reviews of War At The Edge Of The World by Ian Ross

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Sarah Musk

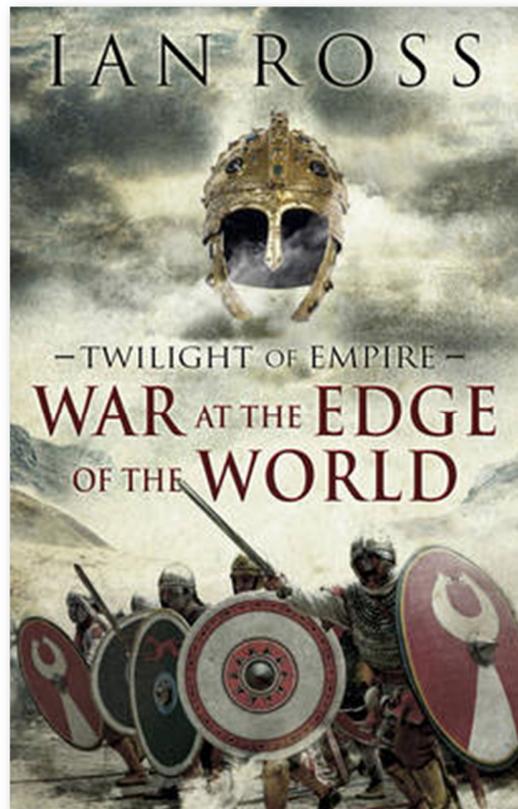
An exciting, entirely believable book set beyond the Roman wall in fourth century Britain. If you love Roman battles and warfare you will love this book.

If you love Roman soldiers, lots of fighting and barbarian hordes then this is the book for you. I love all the above and thoroughly enjoyed reading this book.

The main character, a stolid centurion called Aurelius Castus is a strangely compelling character since from his description he is not a particularly glamorous or handsome character and is not your typical hero. He is quite straight and is what you would call a career soldier - obeys orders, does as he is told and is respectful of women. It is, however, refreshing to have an ordinary hero, one who makes mistakes and is well intentioned.

The descriptions in ancient Scotland, beyond the Roman wall are scary and convey well how the Roman soldiers must have felt marching into a strange, unknown land. The story is set in late Roman times - a time when, arguably, the Roman Empire was past its peak - a time and place which is not so frequently written about.

Ian Ross writes brilliant accounts of hand to hand fighting and vicious battles. The toughness of the Roman soldiers and the Picts are very believable and realistic accounts are given about life in 4th century Britain at the edge of the Roman Empire. This is the first instalment in a sequence of novels and I look



forward to following the exploits of Aurelius Castus, a believable, real, human soldier of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen.

Pam Kennedy

Wow, fantastic. There aren't enough words to describe this book.

I absolutely loved this book I really do hope there are more books to follow. This book was for me a great read. I loved Castus (if the author happens to read this I am sure Castus has a lot more to tell), the historical information about ancient Britain and about the mighty Romans. I do like it when we get to know bits about the Romans: what they wore, ate, did in their relaxation periods. I cannot praise this book enough, I was sorry that I had finished it, for me it had everything. As a great fan of Simon Scarrow and his Roman books, I feel that Simon might have to up his game. A great fantastic enjoyable read. Thank you Ian Ross.

Les Warriner

I loved this book!

Set in the declining years of the Roman Empire, our hero, Aurelius Castus is introduced as a legionary at the battle of Oksa in AD 298. His heroism saves the day for Rome and he is awarded a torque of honour by Caesar Galerius.

Seven years later he is a centurion seemingly serving out his days trying to turn labourers into soldiers in the frontier fortress of Eboracum. His work met with some success for on the death of the High Chieftain of the Picts he is charged with the task of accompanying an envoy north of the border to represent Britannia and Rome at the gathering of the Pictish clans to elect a new High Chieftain.

The tale then plunges into a web of intrigue, with plots and subplots within and between all parties involved. The action is often breathless, (even allowing for the fact that transport is either on horseback or on foot), and always barbaric.

I was both captivated and fascinated by the rapid progress of events, and the seeming ingenuity of the methods of war and death. I found the book impossible to put down at times, and look forward to the second volume of what I am sure will be a very successful series.

Magdalena Vidgen

The Roman exploits in Britain just before and during the reign of Emperor Constantine are not commonly known. Well, it wasn't the time of heroic battles and great adventures - Britain was at the edge of the world and in the background of history at the time.

Ian Ross portrayed this well, showing boredom and tediousness of life in the Roman garrison. But when the war came their way, soldiers were not prepared, some of them had never even seen the battle before.

The main character is Centurion Aurelius Castus, a soldier promoted to his position for valour in battle in faraway lands and later transferred to Britain. He is sent past Hadrian's Wall as an escort to a Roman envoy. But in the lands of Picts nothing goes according to the plan. Envoy dies, his soldiers are slaughtered, he is taken captive and later escapes to witness the war and destruction brought by Picts upon people south of the Wall. And even after Rome is victorious again, he feels like he failed...

Scarce knowledge of the era could and should have given the author a poetic licence to create a broad and fascinating picture, full of intrigue and colourful characters, but... he failed to take this opportunity. I am sorry to say, Castus is a dull character, with honour as his only redeeming quality. He knows nothing and understands even less. Other characters are also of little interest.

Overall, the book is not what it might have been. I found it boring and very slow going.

Janet Gilliard

This is not my usual read but I thoroughly enjoyed it. Aureus Castus is a very likeable hero. Once an elite soldier he has been sent to Hadrians Wall. I learnt a lot about this period of history and would recommend this book to readers who may not be familiar with this historical period.

Ray Orgill

The scene is set in the early part of the 4th Century AD when Rome is still powerful but these powers are beginning to wane and there is much turmoil in the rulers of the Empire. Aurelius Castus had gone to the Persian Wars as an ordinary soldier in the Roman Army. His devotion to Rome and her Emperor coupled with his extreme bravery and courage, earned him a field promotion to Centurion and a gold torque to wear around his neck to show his standing in the Roman World. However he is now posted to the North of Britain together with his much depleted Century which is part of the Third Cohort of the Sixth Legion

*in order to act as escort to an envoy to the war-like Picts. No wonder then that Castus feels somewhat slighted and as though his days of glory are done. However he is adamant that they will quit themselves well in this simple duty and his task is to toughen the sinews and hearts of his men. He soon begins to see that his allotted task is not so simple and is filled with treachery and treason from his seniors. Meanwhile the Picts are starting to rise up in rebellion against the Romans. The actual uprising leads to pitched battles with horrendous brutality between the Picts and the Romans. **This story is both fast and furious with fortunes swaying first one way and then the other and nothing is quite so simple as we have been lead to believe.***

Jane Macleod

A realistic and absorbing story about power, politics, and the everyday soldier in a period of Roman times in Britain.

Right from the word go the story hooks you in to the Roman era and the determination to conquer the world. The central character is Centurion Aurelius Castus – he is portrayed as a good commanding leader who also is in tune with the wellbeing of his soldiers and how they are prepared for the potential close up battle with the Picts.

The hierarchy and order of the Roman army really comes through, and it highlights the sheer determination and allegiance of the lower levels of the roman soldier.

The story is loaded with historical names and places and truly absorbs you into life in the Roman army.

If you enjoy historical novels with a large chunk of action, if you enjoyed the film 300 then this is for you.