



The King's Gold

Arturo Pérez-Reverte

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From the international bestselling author, the fourth adventure of Captain Alatrisme

With *The King's Gold*, bestselling author Arturo Pérez-Reverte continues to enthrall readers and critics with his heroic seventeenth-century mercenary, Captain Alatrisme. The fourth adventure picks up in Seville in 1626. After serving with honor at the bloody siege of Breda, Alatrisme and his protégé, Iñigo Balboa, accept a risky job involving a dozen swordsmen and mercenaries at their command, a dazzling amount of contraband gold, and a heavily guarded Spanish galleon returning from the West Indies. The job offer comes from the king himself, for at stake is nothing less than the Spanish Crown, and its dominion over the wealth of the Americas. But for Alatrisme, a very personal surprise awaits him on that galleon.

The King's Gold Details

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Author : Arturo Pérez-Reverte

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From Reader Review The King's Gold for online ebook

kostas vamvoukakis says

για μια απλ? ενεδρα γρ?φει 300 σελ?δες... φλυαρο και μ?τριο

Joyce Lagow says

Fourth in the Captain Alatriste series, set in early 17th century Spain.

Superficially, the series looks like a variation of the swashbuckling action-adventure reminiscent of the pirate scene. Captain Alatriste, the protagonist, is anything but. He is a professional swordsman,an, sometimes soldier of the king of Spain, often a hired sword for whatever dirty work requires violence. He is also a devoté of the theater and friend of poets. An introspective man, he says little but stands fiercely by his friends--and his honor. The stories are narrated by Íñigo Balboa, the young son of a soldier friend killed in one of Spain's endless wars.

At the time of this installment, 1625, Spain "owns half the worlds and is at war with the other half." Because of the ferocity of Spain's soldiers, "the name of Spaniard made the earth tremble." But in reality, Spain's empire, which straddles both the Old and the New Worlds, is in decline. Only the gold from the New World keeps the soldiers paid, the wars going. And corruption, the reluctance of the Spanish to work (everyone wants to be a nobleman), and the lavishness of the court of Philip IV, means that Spain is being drained.

Alatriste and Balboa have returned to Seville after the Battle of Breda in Flanders. Alatriste is approached by an old friend, a confidante of the king, to intercept the theft of one of the treasure ships that is about to make landfall at Seville. It's a tricky business that will involve nasty fighting with not a great promise of success.

That's the plot. But what is really the story is that of Spain and its culture--and especially the lives of the soldiers who upheld the empire.

Since Íñigo is now 15 and a true veteran of war, he is starting to grow up, and beginning to understand just what Spain is about. He's writing as an old man, looking back on his life--but the viewpoint is still that of a young man (they grew up fast in those days), learning about the life he has chosen and the culture to which he belongs.

I find the series fascinating because Perez-Reverte finds the era fascinating and is able to communicate the richness of the times and place. This is one of the shorter and in a way, more straight-forward installments in the series, but absorbing and entertaining. Highly recommended.

Metodi Markov says

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Ensiform says

In the fourth Alatrisme volume, the captain and his ward Inigo Balboa return to Seville after fighting in the siege of Breda. The very first scene shows them sailing into a home port festooned with English corpses. The slain enemies, fruit of a failed Anglo-Dutch attack on Cádiz, hang like "bunches of grapes ripe for harvesting, except that these grapes had been harvested already." It's a war-torn, exhausted and corrupt Spain, but Alatrisme clings to it loyally, having no other choice.

The gold at the center of this novel has been smuggled from the West Indies and is destined not for King Philip's treasury but for "private pockets," perhaps even for the coffers of Spain's enemies. Pérez-Reverte succinctly explains the political and economic background, which we discover along with Alatrisme as he learns the details of his mission: with a band of brigands and robbers, to recover the king's treasure from a ship off Seville. Not for glory or patriotism – both sullied terms in Alatrisme's world – but for the gold itself. Amidst all this corruption, Alatrisme's dented moral compass still steers him toward loyalty and a man's word. The tone of the adventure is not triumphant but exhausted and dark. "War is at least clean," Alatrisme observes, whereas the business of empire is extremely grubby. With old enemies popping up, historical authenticity, crisp prose, complex characters, exotic settings and plenty of sanguinary action, this is another solid episode in the series.

Bill Patton says

Excellent, as are all the Alatrisme novels so far...
High adventure in time period depicted in "The Three Musketeers".

Caro says

Para el resto de la serie de *Las aventuras del capitán Alatrisme* , pica en las portadas:

Lector Gafapasta says

La cuarta entrega del Capitán Alatrisme va a ser mi última lectura de la saga por el momento, tengo que hacer una pausa con ella para no sobresaturarme.

Es un libro que cuenta cómo Alatrisme vuelve de Breda y desembarca en Sevilla, ciudad famosa en el siglo de oro por ser centro del comercio de América. Por allí circulaban todas las materias importadas de América y

ello propició la piscaresca y el oportunismo.

En ese ambiente Alatríste recibe una misión un tanto suicida en la que tendrá que reclutar algunos mercenarios.

Un libro de aventuras que entretiene, como los anteriores de la saga.

Jay says

Excellent yarn. The best so far in the series. Perez-Reverte's reveries on the soul of Spain, expressed in the observations of Inigo Balboa, are poignant and beautifully woven into the fabric of a story of greed and honor. And, of course, some graphic passages of sword-fighting.

A hidden bonus that emerges from immersing one's self in these stories is the subtle incorporation of certain expressions from the period into everyday speech. Now, when some f-stick cuts me off on I-4 at 80 mph, my response to the affront is a more satisfying "By my troth!" or "God's teeth!" instead of the cheap, vernacular. Gracias, Capitan.

Dale says

This is the fourth in the *Captain Alatríste* series by Perez-Reverte. After their return from the war in Flanders, Alatríste and the narrator find themselves in Seville, with little money and no prospects. They are soon approached by an old friend, an undercover emissary from the King, and offered a dangerous but somewhat lucrative assignment.

As in the other novels in the series, Perez-Reverte manages to convey a sense of the profound corruption and dysfunction of Spanish society in the early 17th century. It was a society in which 'nobles' were freed from the obligation of work and taxes; commerce and labor were disparaged; and the stolen colonial wealth was diverted to the elites, and thence to Spain's many creditors. It was an entirely unstable situation, as events were to show.

This is an exciting book, both for its historical and social commentary, as well as for the swashbuckling adventure. Alatríste is himself a fascinating character, one with no illusions, no hope, and yet no despair.

Ben Peek says

Shortly before N. and I took off, I found a copy of Arturo Perez-Reverte's *The King's Gold* for five bucks in a bargain bin. Hardly the first in a series--it is, in fact, the fourth--I had heard about his books based around the character Captain Alatríste and figured I'd give it a go if I ever came across one. According to what I'd heard, they were pretty enjoyable, and had a great use of history.

Perez-Reverte's series begins with Captain Alatríste and has proceeded through what I believe is seven novels, becoming an increasingly successful series based in the 17th Century to a backdrop of Spain's slow,

crumbling power and corruption, and the rise of the British. Without wanting to diminish the adventure aspect of *The King's Gold*, there is no doubt in my mind that the plot and, perhaps, yes, the characters, take a backseat to the recreation of historical Spain, a subject that Perez-Reverte has a fine and easy grasp of, and lets run in the background of his book like a wild, half mad behemoth that will, ultimately, be the death of all. It's fairly glorious, to be quite honest with you, and I am not going to lie that one of the big draws for me when I hunt down the earlier and later parts of this series, is that setting.

Narrated by Alatrisme's squire, Inigo, Perez-Reverte grabs an old pulp style of narration, having the story told long after the fact by an older Inigo who constantly makes references to the fate of characters throughout the book--going so far as to tell the death of Alatrisme himself within the first chapter, years later. It is the kind of narrative style that will not work for some people, but I like it, and I've always had a soft spot for that particular form--though I do think that Perez-Reverte lets it drop in places when he focuses on Alatrisme away from Inigo. They're good scenes, mind, and Alatrisme is a much more interesting character than his squire--world wearied, cynical, hard and dangerous with his own strange loyalty to the King--it did break with some of the consistency with the novel, I thought. Overall, however, it's not too much of a problem, and the plot of a ship full of gold and Alatrisme's employment to retain it moves pretty quickly and snappishly along the page.

There's not much else to it, outside that. Perez-Reverte tips his hat generously to Alexander Dumas and his *Musketeer* novels, but it's done with a lot of admiration, and never gets in the way of his own, Spanish built narrative, and the book is funny and daring and with touches of romance and an evil Italian, who I believe is a villain across the novels. But lets face it: if you have to have an Italian in your books, he really should be evil, shouldn't he?

Ultimately, it's an easy, light read, and Perez-Reverte doesn't try to sell you on anything else. The translation by Margaret Costa doesn't allow for the narrative to drop or become rough, and the biggest selling point, the 17th Century Spain and the historical characters, places, and atmosphere is maintained throughout the entire piece, making it well worth the time if you're looking for an afternoon's light reading.

MTK says

ηλα τα βιβλ?α του Ρεβ?ρτε με ?ρωα τον Αλατρ?στε ε?ναι πολ? καλ?, αλλ? απ? ?να σημε?ο και μετ? οι επαναλ?ψεις κουρ?ζουν. Καταλαβα?νω ?τι κ?θε βιβλ?ο της σειρ?ς πρ?πει να διαβ?ζεται μ?νο του, ?μως ?ταν σε ?να βιβλ?ο περ?που 200 σελ?δων το 1/4 αναμασ? ιστορ?ες απ? τα προηγ?μενα (? κ?νει αινιγματικ?ς αναφορ?ς στο μ?λλον, που τις ?χει ξανακ?νει απ? το πρ?το βιβλ?ο και σε ?λα τα επ?μενα), καταλ?γεις να διαβ?ξεις πολλ? κομμ?τια πολ? επιφανειακ?, αν ?χι να "πηδ?ς" σελ?δες.

Yu-Hsien Kuo says

It was overall a very enjoyable swashbuckler read, with quite a lot of background into Imperial Spain, just like the first three books. And just like the first three books, the expositions could have been less info-dumpy. I'm also not a big fan of poems in books, but Arturo P?rez-Reverte clearly is.

Algernon says

[9/10]

The story follows close on the heels of the Flemish adventures in **The Sun Over Breda** with Diego Alatrisme and Inigo Balboa returning to the homeland by galleon, just in time to witness a British attack on the city of Cadiz. The corsairs were looking for the Gold Fleet annual return with its holds full of treasure. This sets up the plot of the current episode in the ongoing saga of el Capitan, a swashbuckling thrill ride combining the classic style of Alexandre Dumas with the modern action tropes seen in **The Dirty Dozen**. The fabulous wealth coming from the colonies attracts around it predators from inside Spain and all over Europe, all trying to cheat the King and his accountants of his rightful share. The crooks have become so powerful that the King is forced to act secretly through soldiers of fortune in order to recover the gold and silver. Alatrisme is tasked with gathering a band of the most dangerous criminals in Seville and executing a commando attack on a galleon carrying undeclared cargo. The premise offers rich material for social commentary on the economic and social status in the early 17th century, portraying Spain as a victim of envious neighbors and of internal corruption:

If one were to believe their chroniclers, we Spaniards made war and enslaved people purely out of pride, greed, and fanaticism, while those who murmured against us behind our backs, they, of course, plundered and trafficked and exterminated in the name of liberty, justice and progress. But that, alas, is the way of the world.

One is tempted think the way of the world hasn't changed all that much in the next four centuries.

Most of the book is set in the city of Seville, with mentions of Cadiz, Jerez de la Frontera, Puerto de Santa Maria and Sanlucar de Barrameda, places I visited only last autumn and whose familiarity added an extra touch of interest to my reading. The Guadalquivir, The Torre de Orro, the Cathedral with its impressive Moorish tower, the Jewish quarter and the Alcazar Reales with its extensive gardens are still the most celebrated landmarks in Seville, and Perez-Reverte is very successful at integrating them into the story.

As far as characters go, it was refreshing to meet several recurring personages: Angelica de Alquezar, Francisco de Quevedo, the Count of Guadalmedina, the eternal adversary, Gualterio Malatesta (what a great name choice for the bad guy). They give a sense of continuity to the series and help in revealing different aspects of the personality of the main heroes, Alatrisme and Inigo. If Alatrisme is the focus, the rock around which the others gravitate like satellites, Inigo Balboa y Aguirre is the one who evolves most spectacularly from novel to novel. Here, at sixteen years of age, he is already a man who has killed in battle and has earned the right to wear sword and dagger and to be treated as an equal by the dons of the underworld. His passion for Angelica is as fierce as ever, as is her fiery temper and general unreliability, strongly reminding me of the relation between Pardaillan and Fausta in another popular swashbuckling series by Michel Zevaco. The author is using a clever trick with Inigo, who is narrating his chapters as an older man reminiscing about his youth. The technique allows for insights and commentaries well beyond his actual life experience, and also provides some foreshadowing of events to come, wetting the reader's appetite for continuing with the series.

Alatrisme proves in this volume once again that he deserves to be the main character of the epic, a tragic figure of an intelligent man forced by society and necessity to become a killer:

Silent, solitary, and selfish, oblivious of everything except the clear-sighted indifference of one who knows the narrow line that separates being alive from being dead, of one who kills in order to keep himself, too, in hot meals. One who is reluctant to obey the rules of that strange game: the old ritual in which men like him have been immersed since the world began. Such things as hatred, passionate beliefs, and flags had nothing to do with it. It would doubtless have been more bearable if, instead of the bitter clarity that filled his every act and thought, Captain Alatrisme had enjoyed the magnificent gifts of stupidity, fanaticism, or malice, because only the stupid, the fanatical, and the malicious live free from ghosts and from remorse.

Passages like this one make the series one of my favorites for historical fiction, together with Perez-Reverte compact style that packs quite a punch for such a slim volume. If I were to find something to grumble about, it would be the slightly bombastic patriotism and the not always smooth inclusions of period poetry into conversations. I'm also wishing the series were already finished and gathered into an omnibus edition like The Chronicles of Amber, because I believe a reader with a poor memory for details and character names like me would benefit from reading them in sequence.

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José Antonio says

Me ha encantado. En mi opinión consigue genialmente describir la Sevilla del siglo XVII, las germanías y el hampa sevillana. Muy emotivo el guiño que hace el autor al gran José Saramago. La honra siempre resulta complicada de adquirir, difícil de conservar y peligrosa de llevar.

Mieczyslaw Kasprzyk says

It amazes me that the story is quite a simple one; the Captain is asked to put together a party of men who will act as a band of pirates in order to steal gold that has been embezzled by corrupt courtiers and return it to the king, its rightful owner. There, one sentence. But the book! A fabulous read that paints a glorious picture of the Spanish "underworld". It is amusing and fascinating. I loved the feast given in honour of the murderer about to be hanged, full of pithy quips and observations. Once again the story is told through the eyes of young Inago in a very relaxed manner so that, once again, you feel you are actually there with him. There are two momentary shifts away from this format which had a very interesting, almost surreal, impact on me. Arturo Perez-Reverte, and his translator Margaret Jull Costa, are magnificent!

Greg says

I suppose we could label this series as 'guy lit' (like MacDonald's Travis McGhee series or Fleming's Bond): adventure, fights, chases, thrills are first and foremost while the ladies are few and far between, but always fully respected, and often very powerful, in Perez-Reverte's world. This book opens with a spectacular, victorious, parade of royalty. And Captain Alatraste is becoming war/life weary while his ward, Inago, is approaching manhood. Something tells me Inago will eventually take care of Alatraste (while perhaps Inago marries into royalty and Alatraste finds the peace and rest so deserved). But oddly, I can't find an English translation of the fifth volume anywhere. Any hints, fellow readers? This is solid entertainment, nothing spectacular or literary, but purely enjoyable. As a side note, I just finished a 2017 chick-lit book, "The Book of Summer", review to come shortly.

D.K. Cherian says

The King's Gold is apparently a Spanish novel that has been translated into English for our enjoyment. The novel tells of the adventures of one Captain Diego Alatrisme narrated by his canine boy Inego Balboa, from his perspective.

It is unusual in that, while many novels are told in the narrative of some person, they are generally about that person who is narrating the tale. Here however it seems that Balboa is recounting fond memories of his hero Alatrisme. The perspective is unique. However the negative of this is quite often you wonder how Balboa is able to capture every detail of his master, thoughts and actions alike, when he himself is supposed to be preoccupied at those particular times - for example during the fight scenes, Balboa himself is busy trying to kill the heathens and he really has little or no time to occupy his thoughts with what Alatrisme is doing at that time, unless he is skilled beyond human levels in the art of multi-tasking.

The plot itself is quite thin, the entire novel can be summed up thusly - Alatrisme is hired to find out on which ship the King's gold is being held on and is then to board that ship and take charge of the vessel, killing the sailors who form part of the ship's company. The end. Very lacking and quite disappointing.

The positive is that the history is told from the Spanish point of view, a unique perspective where the English and the French are the villains and there is hardly a thought given to the Spanish slaves, the enslavement of native Indians for the purpose of mining gold and silver for Spain etc. It also narrates how the corruption and the greed in society and government has been causing a ruin to the Spanish empire.

The Author, Arturo Pérez-Reverte has written a few novels based on his Captain Alatrisme and I poked this one at random to read. Not too sure if I'll try to digest any of the others.

Mairi says

I think this is my favorite of the Alatrisme books so far. The bits and pieces hinted at regarding the future of the characters are becoming more and more compelling. It almost feels like a well-paced suspense novel in which the end of each chapter leaves you racing to the next and the next to find out what happens. Except the reveal isn't in the next chapter. It may not even be in the next book. You know what's coming but he won't give the details. Not yet. I couldn't put it down and picked the next one up right after.

Shari says

It is 1626. The treasure fleet is due in from the Americas. Laden with gold ingots and Spanish silver pieces of eight, Chinese silks, and other exotic goods from the Far East by way of the trade routes of Central America and the West Indies, it is learned that these ships, forbidden to anchor in any but specified stronghold Spanish ports along the sea routes, have been 'stopping off' at another port because of 'foul weather' and off-loading great amounts of the cargo onto Flemish ships which the Spanish nobles in charge of the fleet have provided. The gold and silver goes directly to Portuguese banks, the trade cargo goes to Flemish merchants.

King Philip IV is finding it very difficult to pay off his debts but this is the way of things in a country where a weak king hands over the governing of his realm to his nobles who take the opportunity to skim more and more from the treasure ships, even to the point of having ships built that are said to carry tons of cargo when in fact they can carry twice the purported amount. The lesson which Perez-Reverte gives in the chicanery of

the merchants and aristocratic opportunists who take gross advantage of the treasure ships to line their own pockets in very efficient ways is interesting and makes me want to revisit the methods of the Dutch merchanting houses which were the avatars of early European trade.

Perez-Reverte always presents, effortlessly, the social history of this period in his novels. While there is his solid exposure of the treasure fleets and their exorbitant hauls, much of which never saw the Kings treasure house, there is also the marvelous picture of the workings of the relationships and culture of the 'ruffians,' the criminal element that was so prevalent and common during this period of Spanish history. The whole temper of the Spanish people is unique in chicanery and bias and particularly strong in the protecting of their status clarified by the 'respect' shown to them by others. Tempers flare, blades flash, and bodies pile up for little or no reason. A simple and deadly solution to a mild problem. What was important to the people in this most Catholic country was certainly not the "Golden Rule." Taking care of and loving they neighbor had no cachet.
