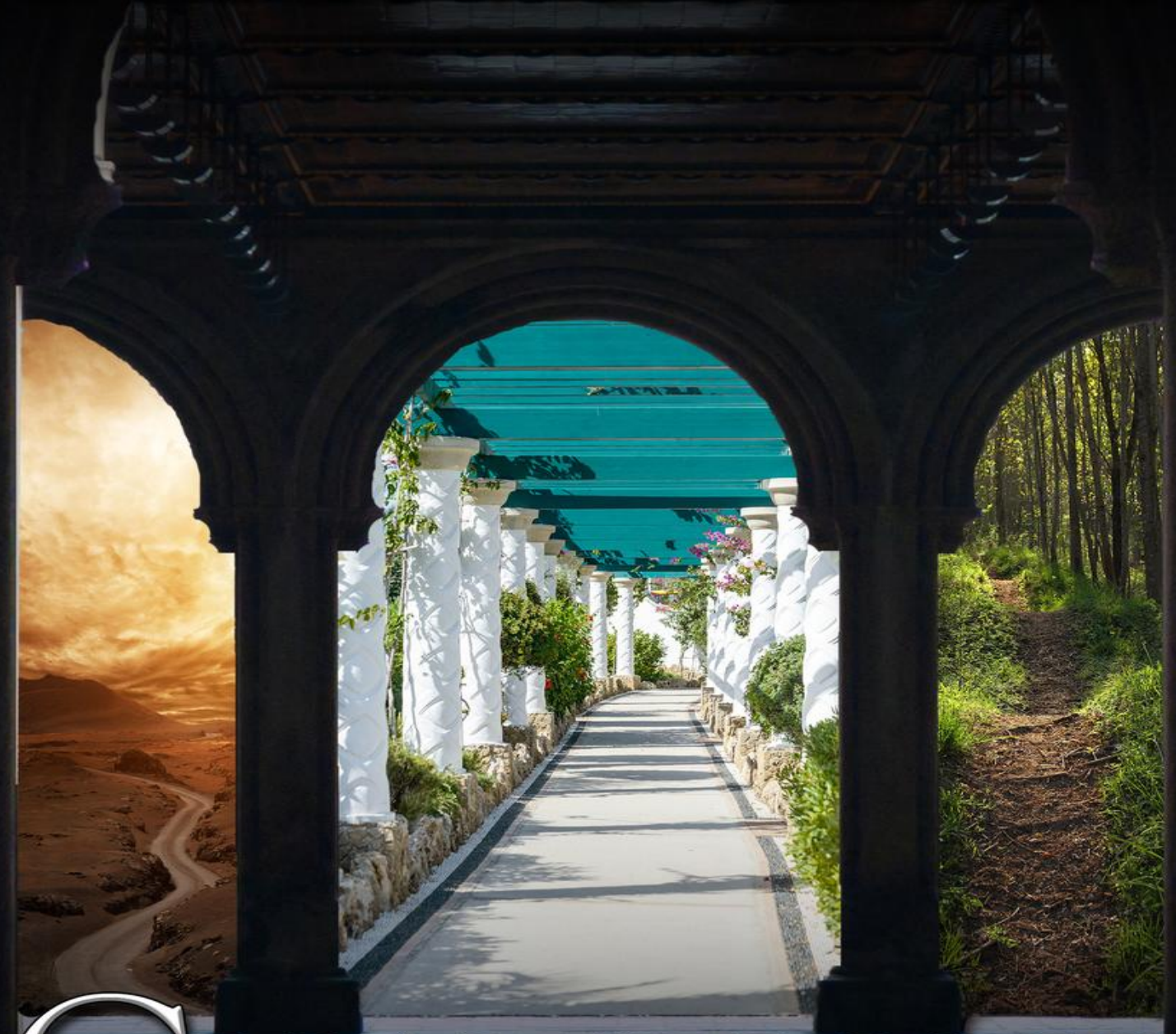


SARAH WOODBURY



CHAMPIONS
of TIME

The After Cilmeri Series

Champions of Time

The After Cilmeri Series, Volume 13

Sarah Woodbury

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CHAMPIONS OF TIME

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Table of Contents

[Dear Reader](#)
[Chapter One](#)
[Chapter Two](#)
[Chapter Three](#)
[Chapter Four](#)
[Chapter Five](#)
[Chapter Six](#)
[Chapter Seven](#)
[Chapter Eight](#)
[Chapter Nine](#)
[Chapter Ten](#)
[Chapter Eleven](#)
[Chapter Twelve](#)
[Chapter Thirteen](#)
[Chapter Fourteen](#)
[Chapter Fifteen](#)
[Chapter Sixteen](#)
[Chapter Seventeen](#)
[Chapter Eighteen](#)
[Chapter Nineteen](#)
[Chapter Twenty](#)
[Chapter Twenty-one](#)
[Chapter Twenty-two](#)
[Chapter Twenty-three](#)
[Chapter Twenty-four](#)
[Chapter Twenty-five](#)
[Chapter Twenty-six](#)
[Chapter Twenty-seven](#)
[Chapter Twenty-eight](#)
[Chapter Twenty-nine](#)
[Chapter Thirty](#)
[Chapter Thirty-one](#)
[Chapter Thirty-two](#)
[Chapter Thirty-three](#)

[Chapter Thirty-four](#)
[Chapter Thirty-five](#)
[Chapter Thirty-six](#)
[Chapter Thirty-seven](#)
[Chapter Thirty-eight](#)
[Chapter Thirty-nine](#)
[Chapter Forty](#)
[Sample: The Last Pendragon](#)

A novel from the *After Cilmeri* series

Champions of Time

by
Sarah Woodbury

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April 1294. With David returned from Ireland and Anna from Avalon, the time has come to confront the traitors who sought to assassinate David and take his throne.

But before that can happen, David is tested yet again by his inability to account for everything or everyone in his life—and especially the magic that surrounds him.

Champions of Time takes place immediately following the events of *Outpost in Time* and *Shades of Time*, the previous books in the *After Cilmeri* series.

Complete Series reading order: *Daughter of Time*, *Footsteps in Time*, *Winds of Time*, *Prince of Time*, *Crossroads in Time*, *Children of Time*, *Exiles in Time*, *Castaways in Time*, *Ashes of Time*, *Warden of Time*, *Guardians of Time*, *Masters of Time*, *Outpost in Time*, *Shades of Time*, *Champions of Time*.

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To my Carew

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Dearest Reader:

While many of you will have a better recollection of the events of the previous books than I do, some readers might be joining us only now (note, if that's you, you might consider starting with the prequel to this series, *Daughter of Time*, which is *free* in ebook at all retailers! <https://www.books2read.com/daughteroftime>) or be struggling to recall some key events from the previous books. If that's you, read on!

The *After Cilmeri* series begins with Meg, a young, troubled modern American widow, who, at a moment of catastrophic danger, falls through time and into the life of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the last Prince of Wales. A strong and charismatic leader, he saves her, and she in turn saves him, thanks to her knowledge of future events. Although powerful forces seek to divide them, by working together, Meg and Llywelyn navigate the dangerous and shifting alliances that constantly undermine his rule and threaten the very existence of Wales.

But before they can create a future which avoids Llywelyn's predetermined death at Cilmeri, Meg is ripped from his world and returned to her own—in time to give birth to their son, David.

In *Footsteps in Time*, David and his older sister, Anna, as teenagers, return to the Middle Ages to save Llywelyn yet again. As Meg warned him they would, Norman lords have lured him into the fateful ambush at Cilmeri in eastern Wales. Without warning, David and Anna are thrown into a world they do not understand, among a people whose language and customs are totally unfamiliar. Ultimately, David is recognized as Llywelyn's true son, and he and Anna begin to make a life for themselves in the Middle Ages, culminating with David's crowning as King of England (*Children of Time*).

Over the course of fourteen books, it becomes clear that the medieval world is actually an alternate universe, and Meg, Anna, and David (and ultimately his son, Arthur) time travel when their lives are in danger. In the process, many new characters, both medieval and modern, are introduced. These include Math, a distant relation of Llywelyn, who marries Anna (*Footsteps in Time*); Ieuan, David's captain, who travels with him to the modern world, also known as *The Land of Madoc* or *Avalon* (*Prince of Time*); and Lili, Ieuan's sister, who becomes David's wife (*Crossroads in Time*).

From the modern world comes Bronwen, an anthropology graduate student who marries Ieuan; Callum, an MI-5 agent suffering from PTSD, who attempts to prevent Meg and Llywelyn from returning to their world (*Children of Time*); Cassie, a Native American woman, who was plucked from the mountains of Oregon in the wake of Meg's plane crash (*Winds of Time*) and must survive on her own in medieval Scotland (*Exiles in Time*); a busload of twenty-firsters, who make the mistake of traveling on the same bus as Meg and Anna and end up in their alternate universe (*Ashes of Time*); Meg's family, including Christopher, David's cousin (*Masters of Time* and *Shades of Time*), and three twenty-firsters, George, Andre, and Sophie, who work for David's new ally, Chad Treadman.

All the while, the combined efforts of Anna, David, and their family and friends are transforming the medieval world. Not everyone appreciates the burgeoning equality, universal education, and democracy, however, and throughout the books, the twenty-firsters face threats both from outside their inner circle and from within it.

Champions of Time picks up where *Shades of Time* and *Outpost in Time* left off.

Cast of Characters

Anna—Time traveler, Princess of Wales
Math (Mathonwy)—Lord of Dinas Bran, Anna's husband
David (Dafydd)—Time traveler, King of England, Anna's brother
Lili—David's wife, Queen of England
Llywelyn—David and Anna's father, King of Wales
Meg—Time traveler, David and Anna's mother, Queen of Wales
Christopher Shepherd—Time traveler, David and Anna's cousin
Callum—Time traveler, Earl of Shrewsbury
Bronwen—Time traveler, Ieuan's wife
Ieuan—Lili's brother, Bronwen's husband

Mark Jones—Time traveler, MI-5 agent
Livia Cross—MI-5 agent
Chad Treadman—Avalonian mogul
Andre—Time Traveler, Chad Treadman's employee
George—Time Traveler, Chad Treadman's employee
Sophie—Time Traveler, Chad Treadman's employee

Humphrey de Bohun—Earl of Hereford, Constable of England
Edmund Mortimer—Earl of the March
Roger Mortimer—Edmund's brother
John Balliol—King of Scots
Robert FitzWalter—Lord of Beeston Castle
Matha O'Reilly—Irish ambassador
Samuel—Callum's companion
Bevyn—David's companion
Venny—one of David's soldiers
Constance—Lili's bodyguard
Cador—Archer, Constance's husband
Hugh—Venny's father
Rhys—one of Math's soldiers

Mathew—Venny's friend

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Chapter One

Dinas Bran
24 March 1294
David

David stepped into Dinas Bran's receiving room and immediately came to a dead halt as the various members of his family who were present looked at him. "Uh oh. This looks like trouble."

Mom patted the chair next to her. "No trouble at all—or at least, not more than you already knew about."

"So why are you all looking at me?"

Anna picked up one of the balls of yarn Bronwen was crocheting into a hat for Catrin and threw it at his chest. It bounced off and hit the floor.

"Because you walked into the room, silly."

He tossed the yarn back to Bronwen, who caught it, and then sat in the chair his mother had indicated. "I don't believe you."

There was a pause as the various members of David's family—Dad, Mom, Anna, Math, Bronwen, and Ieuan—looked at each other, silently communicating in some fashion that resulted in Mom turning to speak to him again. "You're right. We were talking about you."

"Specifically, you becoming King of Scots," Anna said.

"I knew it." David slapped his hand on the table. "The answer is no. Besides, any idea of me claiming that throne is premature. While its current occupant has invaded England with an army, at the moment he still wears the crown. John Balliol was elected democratically. I don't have the power to dethrone him."

"You do, actually," Anna said.

David didn't know what it was about her latest trip to Avalon that had done it, but in the few days since she'd returned, it was as if the real Anna had been unleashed. She said what she thought more than ever without worrying about anyone's sensibilities. He was willing to bet quite a large portion of his treasury that it was she who'd called this meeting.

Mom shot her daughter a quelling look. “Regardless of what happens over the next weeks and months, Balliol incited a rebellion against you. You can’t let him keep his throne.”

Anna nodded. “Give us a chance to explain. We need you to listen to Mom.”

David’s father had been the first to push David to take England’s crown, and while he’d accepted the mantle out of a sense of desperation, he wasn’t sorry about being King of England now. Similarly, the High Kingship of Ireland had been thrust upon him by events that had careened out of control. And as his father’s eldest son, he was the heir to the Kingdom of Wales. He would accept that crown because, if it was anyone’s birthright, it was his.

Scotland was another matter entirely. It had a long tradition of choosing its own rulers, and David’s claim to sovereignty there was beyond tenuous. The fact that, according to Uncle Ted, he did have a blood descent from Avalon’s King Alexander was beside the point. This was Earth Two, so that connection meant nothing.

But because it was Anna who’d spoken, David held back a further retort. She was certainly right that something had to be done. Some had hoped that Balliol would fold his tents, apologize for conniving with wayward English barons, and fall back into Scotland from his current position at Barnard Castle, his family’s seat in the north of England. David had not been one of those optimists. Balliol would not be able to stand the resulting loss of face.

Thus, with as studious an expression as he could muster, David prepared himself to be lectured. His mother usually knew what she was talking about.

“In the past, English kings have aspired to the thrones of all four countries: Wales, England, Ireland, and Scotland, either by force of arms or by claiming the right through a fictive or mythic past.”

“Sometimes dating back to Rome,” Bronwen said, “but always including King Arthur.”

“Who was Welsh anyway,” Anna said.

The three women were on a roll, but Mom made a gesture, asking not to be interrupted. David had no doubt they’d discussed what they were talking about at length before he’d arrived.

“In Avalon’s Middle Ages, which is really the only time we care about at this point, King Edward came the closest to achieving the goal of uniting