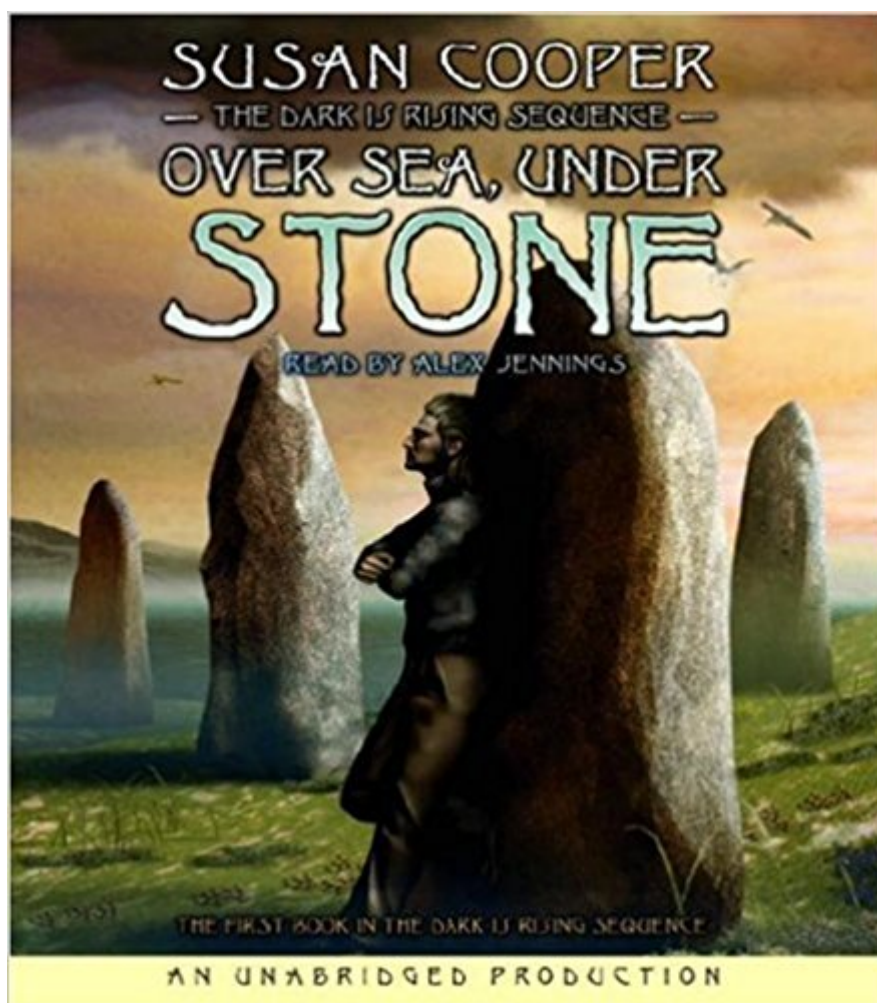


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The Dark Is Rising Sequence, Book One: Over Sea, Under Stone (Dark Is Rising Sequence (Audio))



Synopsis

On holiday in Cornwall, the three children discover an ancient map in the attic of the house that they are staying in. They know immediately that it is special. It is even more than that--the key to finding a grail, a source of power to fight the forces of evil known as the Dark. And in searching for it themselves, the Drews put their lives in peril. This is the first volume of Susan Cooper's brilliant and absorbing fantasy sequence known as *The Dark is Rising*.

Book Information

Series: *Dark Is Rising Sequence* (Audio)

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Customer Reviews

Gr 5-7-The charming beginning to Susan Cooper's series of five books, which comprise *The Dark Is Rising*, belie a series of sinister adventures. The Drew children Simon, Jane, and Barney find an old map in a hidden room while summering at the Grey House in Cornwall. Along with their Great-Uncle Merry, they become embroiled in a web of intrigue that surrounds an Arthurian legend. True to the original story (Harcourt, 1965), this audio version adds a dynamic vocal element from narrator, Alex Jennings. In the beginning the story seems a bit slow and tedious as the plot and setting are given their due, and the voices may be difficult to distinguish. After the first side of tape 1, they become more well defined. Jennings gives each child a distinct voice, yet keeps each connected to one another. Barney has the youthful vulnerability of the youngest sibling, Jane, the sensible and soft-spoken middle child, and Simon speaks with the assurance and bravado of the "older" brother. The rising tension created between the fight of good and evil gives strength and vitality to each character's voice. Listeners understand Mr. Hasting's loathing and fear of Great-Uncle Merry when

hearing the deep tone and resonance of every utterance. Jennings' ability is outstanding as he slips in and out of the numerous voices with the rapid dialogue as it approaches the climax. His training and experience as a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre give this story a vitality. This is an outstanding reading of a classic tale that all young listeners and adults will thoroughly enjoy. Tina Hudak, St. Bernard's School, Riverdale, MD Copyright 2001

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"Beautifully told...superbly written." -- "New York Times" on The Dark Is Rising Sequence --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I'll skip any summary of this book or of the series; dozens of reviewers have done that quite well. I assume that you are familiar with these books, probably have read this volume, (likely more than once), but now wish to have the book available as an audio CD. Perhaps a long car trip is in the offing? Good for you. I am happy to report that, at least for me, this audio version gets high marks across the board. First, I can hear it and understand it. No mushy sound recording. No odd imbalance in volume that requires you to keep turning the volume up and then down. All of the spoken words are crisp and clear. Second, there are no sound effects or such folderol. Third, there is a single reader. This is not a play for voices and is not read by a number of different character actors. Fourth, Alex Jennings is a marvelously effective reader. His approach is dynamic but not overly dramatic. He is never coy or arch, and does not ham up any of the big scenes. In the first chapters he can be a bit tentative in distinguishing among the major characters and is inclined to give short shrift to minor characters, but after that he settles into the various roles and adds a distinct and recognizable identity to each character. Finally, the reading is very respectful. By that I mean the book is not read as though it were just some silly children's book. It is treated as the triumphant work that it is and this adds greatly to its weight and impact. Please note that there are 7 discs. Runtime is a bit under nine hours.

This series came to my attention after I read a poem about Winter Solstice by Susan Cooper. I was so delighted with the poem that I looked up her works. I bought these for my granddaughters, but indulged myself by reading them before I gave them to the kids. They are based on the Arthurian legend, and combine wonderful descriptions of the Cornish countryside with fantasy and with touchstones to the development of accountability, courage, and kindness that every teen faces.

I agree with the reviewers who have called this sequence well-written and imaginative, and I defer to their analyses of Susan Cooper's excellent books. I just wanted to let other buyers know that, although the artwork on the cover is lovely and appropriate, the binding itself isn't the greatest. The cover is crazy-thin cardstock, and the pages are quite delicate. I'm not sure that this copy is going to survive many readings, and you certainly don't want to try reading it in the bathtub. It's a shame, but on the other hand, it is nice to find such a reasonably priced collection of all of these stories together!

I read *The Dark is Rising Sequence* to my son when he was young and he loved it, so I gave it to my grandson hoping he would love it as well. Susan Cooper's writing is so good it's almost poetry. Anyone who loves J.R.R. Tolkien will love this series. I highly recommend it.

My daughter will soon be 9, and couldn't get into these books. She tried the first few chapters of the first two books, but was not compelled to continue. Maybe they don't really appeal to modern kids.

I started reading this series because my fiance had purchased the movie "The Seeker" from a discount bin. I thought the movie was ok with the potential to be interesting so I read the credits to find if it was based off a book, which it was. It lead me to this series. The movie is based off the second book however. This book reminded me of a cross between the *Chronicles of Narnia*, with a group of children being the main subjects solving the mystery. It also reminded me a little of the *Goonies* because they find a map and follow it's clues while being persued by the bad guys. I loved the idea that this is a children's quest for a grail, and that it involved Arthurian legend. I thought the simple twist of Merry's real name was something that would intrigue a child. The book starts out when Simon, Jane, and Barney Drew arrive in Cornwall with their family for a holiday. Great-Uncle Merry, or Gumerry, has rented the Grey House for them to stay in. They spot a beautiful white yacht in the harbor immediately and are intrigued by it. On a rainy day the children go exploring in the huge house and find a mysterious map in a corner of the attic. Simon, with his limited Latin, makes out "Mark and Arthur" on it. After debating which adult they should confide in they decide to include Great-Uncle Merry. Merry explains to them that fairy tales are based off of real things but muddled with time. With his help they decipher where to start looking. Off on the quest they go!

This has been, and always will be, one of my favorite novels. I read this for the first time when I was

seven and I was immediately pulled into the world and characters. The Dark Is Rising is actually even better than this novel, but this one is a great setup to the sequel. It has a 'Goonies' type feel to it as these children move to this new house that all sorts of secrets hidden within its walls. They find a treasure map and begin to hunt for what is marked in the map. It has some great clue hunting scenes and run-ins with 'darkness' that keeps the suspense going throughout the entire novel. I feel like this series should be read by every young kid because it instilled a sense of wonder in me. If you are a fan of the Book of Three, you'll like this series.

I discovered these books when I was around 9, I think, in my local public library. (Support public libraries!!!!) I've read reviews claiming that the book doesn't let Will do enough. I think that these people are forgetting that most children of Will's age are in fact children. He is permitted to be a child in the books, and not just a short adult. That's actually a good thing, and people forget that these books were written long before certain other 11 year old heroes ever existed. Will is Will, not anyone else, and comparing him to anyone else is silly. The book shows a glimpse of an England I'm not sure still exists, and a family I'd like to join. There is magic and adventure, but also love and patience and faith.

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