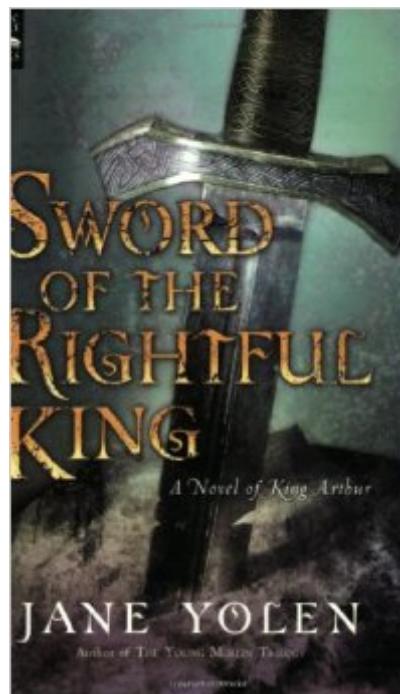


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Sword Of The Rightful King: A Novel Of King Arthur



Synopsis

The newly crowned King Arthur has yet to win the support of the people. Merlin must do something before the king is betrayed, or murdered, or--worst of all--gets married. So Merlin creates a trick: a sword magically placed into a slab of rock that only Arthur can withdraw. Then he lets it be known that whosoever removes the blade will rule all of England, and invites any man who would dare, to try to pull out the sword. But then someone else pulls the sword out first. . . .

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Jane Yolen is one of those authors who can effortlessly give a new spin to an old story. Here she makes a rather worn area of fantasy seem new, in "Sword of the Rightful King." There's magic, treachery, a bit of romance and plenty of suspense and humor. Arthur has been king of all Britain for four years now, but not everyone is willing to accept him as their king. The most dangerous among these is the North Witch, Arthur's half-sister Morgause, whose four elder sons are heading to Arthur's court -- and there is an assassin among them. (Gawain seems very loyal but might be bewitched by his mother; his brother Agravaine is almost insanely aggressive, and the twins are ditzy). What's more, the old mage Merlinus encounters a young boy in the forest who has a mysterious past and a grudge against Gawain. So Merlin concocts a means of solidifying Arthur's kingship -- a sword embedded in a stone, that can only be pulled by the true king. Arthur pulls it

from the stone, and everyone accepts him as king. Simple, right? Except that the North Witch is still spinning her spells, and she plans to get her hands on the sword first -- no matter what. Though there's no real connection between the two books, I felt like I was reading a sequel to Yolen's previous novel "Dragon's Boy." Perhaps it was the portrayal of Merlin and Arthur -- they have a sort of father-son bond, and even though Arthur often doesn't listen to Merlin they obviously care about each other. And Merlin, although a bit decayed physically, is still the sharpest knife in the drawer. Though this book has magic (including a homicidal dagger) and the other didn't, it felt very much like a follow-up. Yolen's writing is quick and fast-moving, with excellent dialogue and some very good descriptions of things like the eerie May Queens. She carefully presents what was very touchy at the time, such as the unacknowledged rivalry of old religions like Mithras-worship and the newer Christianity. And she mixes in the more medieval stuff with historical details, such as the Picts. Arthur is a likable guy here -- not perfect, but nice and friendly and honest. Gawain is similar in personality; Gawen is never less than endearing, and his secrets turn out to be... well, a lot different than anyone would suspect, especially when you consider who gets married at the end. Agrivaine seemed a little too nuts at times, but he was supposed to be that way. Merlinus is the lovable old mage who knows how the world works; Morgause is nasty and cold-hearted, and Yolen isn't afraid to show her at work. For an old tale told a bit differently, "Sword of the Rightful King" doesn't even falter. Expect to be surprised by quite a few aspects of this story, and to enjoy the humor and poignancy. Thoroughly enjoyable.

This is the story of a newly crowned Arthur. As usual, too many are unsure of him and others desire the crown for themselves. Merlinus plays a major role in plotting Arthur's success with the "sword in the stone." However, there are a few twists along the way. Did someone else pull the sword out of the stone before Arthur? Has the sword been enscorelled by Morgause? Who is the newcomer to Arthur's kingdom? Is he really what he seems? These questions and more are entertainingly answered with many surprises. I bought this book knowing it was for young adults, which I definitely am not, hoping for an alternative and entertaining story that was fresh. I didn't think it could be done (I've read hundreds of Arthurian Literature books) and certainly didn't expect the surprise this book turned out to be! Additionally, I believe some of the words in this novel would be difficult for many adults, let alone young adults to understand, so keep that dictionary handy as you are reading. Buy this book and read it! It is extraordinary!

Most people seem to have some familiarity with the legend of King Arthur but it won't help them with

this completely fresh version of the story. Arthur is the High King of all Britain but there are some lords who do not recognize him as such. Among these is Pendragon's widow Morgause. She wants one of her boys to be on the throne, possibly her eldest Gawaine. Although Arthur is a fair and just king it will take more to win over some. Merlinus (Merlin) comes up with an idea to cement Arthur in his position. An idea involving a stone and a sword. In Cadbury (Camelot) much is going on. Gawain and his brothers are arriving, Gawan has arrived and become Merlinus's helper, word has it that Morgause is sending an assassin, and a shepherd finds a mysterious stone with a sword sticking out of it. You may have thought you knew the story but this version is fresh and full of surprises. A wonderful fantasy full of magic and intrigue.

Midnight by the bell. The churchyard was deserted in darkness. By the front door, which was but a black rectangle in a blacker mass, a large square was marked off on the ground. In the square's center stood an enormous stone, which- if the moon had been shining-would have reminded any onlooker of a sleeping bear. A dead bear obviously. For in the bear's back was thrust a great sword, its haft pointing slantwise toward the night sky. That is how the book *Sword of the Rightful King* pulls you in, bringing you laughter, surprise, and question as to what will happen next. Jane Yolen did a wonderful job of creating a different story of the *Sword in the Stone*. In this story, Arthur is a kind smart young knight who looks to his mage Merlinus, with things he can't understand. Like how some people in Britain don't believe he should be king. Some people like his half sister Morgause, queen of the Orkneys. The four older of her five sons were sent by their mother to go to King Arthur's castle. Among them she sent a spy, so she could have one of her sons as King. Merlinus made a sword in a stone saying who ever pulled the sword from the sword would be king. Morgause wanted to be sure that one of her sons pulled the sword, but would he spells be able to outmatch Merlinus'? The big day came when Arthur was to pull the sword from the stone, but someone already had. I liked this book because of the surprises in every chapter and the detail making it seem as if you were there. It was a little slow moving, and complicated, like how the names were alike, but everything unfolded in the end. I didn't like how she made it seem like the whole book would be about Gawaine the eldest son in the beginning, but ended up being more about Arthur and those around him. Some people might not like it because the answers aren't right in front of you, and she jumps around to places sometimes, but I think she did that at the right time. At first I didn't really want to read this book, but then it turned out I didn't want to put it down.

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