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The Once And Future King



Synopsis

The complete "box set" of T. H. White's epic fantasy novel of the Arthurian legend. The novel is made up of five parts: "The Sword in the Stone", "The Witch in the Wood", "The Ill-Made Knight", "The Candle in the Wind", and "The Book of Merlyn". Merlyn instructs the Wart (Arthur) and his brother, Sir Kay, in the ways of the world. One of them will need it: the king has died, leaving no heir, and a rightful one must be found by pulling a sword from an anvil resting on a stone. In the second and third parts of the novel, Arthur has become king and the kingdom is threatened from the north. In the final two books, the ageing king faces his greatest challenge, when his own son threatens to overthrow him. In "The Book of Merlyn", Arthur's tutor Merlyn reappears and teaches him that, even in the face of apparent ruin, there is hope.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A grand and valued rendition of the Arthurian legend. White's classic version of King Arthur is creative, clever, witty and compelling. Sure to please. Follow young Arthur as Wart's coming of age with the magic and wizardry of Merlyn, the deceitful and perilous half-sister Morgause, his vision for a better world, the fabled round table, Guenever and Lancelot's disloyal relationship, son Mordred and the hatred for his father...it's all here. Coming in at 640 pages, this is a lengthy read...as are most well thought-out interpretations of King Arthur. Impressive and enjoyable.

This is one of my favorite books. I have read it four or five times already, since I was 13. Wanted to

read it again, and got a hardback copy from the library, but the type hurt my eyes. Reading it on Kindle software on iPad is a treat for old eyes. Anyway, the story itself. It begins when the young man who will become King Arthur meets Merlin, goes through his life, all the legends come to life, the sword in the stone, Arthur's eventually fatal misalliance with his sister, Lancelot and Guenevere's betrayal, the Knights of the Round Table, all told with wit, humor, compassion and sensitivity by the great T.H. White. My favorite parts will always be in the first part of the book, when Merlin tutors the young Arthur, or Wart, as he is nicknamed, in the ways of the world by changing him into a beast or a bird or a fish or an insect. Those little vignettes are so charming. Well, I am only halfway through this re-reading, Lancelot just met Guenevere, and, while I know how it will end, I am still absorbed and enthralled, all over again.

Since I first read "The Once and Future King", I have gone back to it again and again till the cover tore off, the page edges turned yellow and started to roll up, time to retire this puppy. Thank goodness for Kindle! Now I have a copy of one of my favorites books, and it won't wear out, get stained, water damaged and all those other injuries. Not to mention, now I can read it without wearing my glasses. I love my Kindle. OK, back to the book. This is a somewhat familiar tale of Camelot, but the author has focused on the people, the tragic triangle, the values and the realistic backdrop of the messy, violent and superstitious world Arthur theoretically lived in. (There is no definitive evidence there was an Arthur King of the Britons. There is an amazing musical called Camelot, but that's for another time...) And there's a wizard, too! This Merlin is part Zen master, seer, cranky old man and screw-up and lots in between. Like I said, real characters as conceived by an author familiar with the legends and committed to attaching humans to icons. This is not your childhood's King Arthur. There's a lot of humor, too, mind you. King Pellinor and his Questing Beast, Sir Ector, Merlin and more, are laugh out loud funny at times. I feel like I understand that time in history a little better for having read the book. I like it, I recommend it.

a must-have for adventure/fantasy fans. this is one of the ground-breaking great classics, up there with the hobbit. laugh-out-loud funny, and as the story grows, the maturity of the themes grow as well, so by the end of the book, you feel like the entertainment has naturally morphed into meaningful philosophy. this is more than entertainment (altho it is extremely entertaining); it's smart, life-affecting fiction.

This book transcends simply good reads. I read it as a child and many times since then. It is an old

friend that never disappoints. The writing matures with the character and still provides fresh insights every time I read it.

We are all Arthur, and Mordred. We are Lancelot and Gawain. We are Guenever and Morgause. The poet reaches truth through inspiration, the priest through revelation, and the philosopher through reason. Rarest, all three. White reaches and succeeds.

I've been wanting to read this book for a while now but didn't have the chance to until recently. It's one that requires more time than other novels, especially if you're not accustomed to reading 800 page volumes. I wasn't quite sure to expect but I must say that I was pleasantly surprised. White seamlessly and effortlessly weaves fiction, philosophical acumen, and political thought together to create a classic opus. As we follow the story of young Art who becomes a king we are introduced to some of the most beloved and rich characters in literary history: Whacky Merlin who challenges how we think about time, young Robin 'ood and his band of woodmen, and Arthur's best friend Sir Lancelot who struggles with his flawed greatness. I for one am glad that I took the time to read so a renowned and lasting story. And you should too!

This book has the same good humour as *The Hobbit*, and the first few Narnia books. I have read it many times, and am now reading it, in installments, to my grandson (well, just *The Sword in The Stone*--he's only 5.) It's partly history (though of the 1100s and 1200s, not the 300s, probably the real Arthur Pendragon's time). Merlin and his creations are pure fantasy, mixed with comedy and gleeful anachronisms. Some of the book is plain arts and crafts--you read about how to joust, how to make hay, how to shoot arrows, how to hunt with a hawk. In a way it's like a beautiful Book of Hours; Middle Ages folk at work and play, but without dirt, disease, and death. But you should above all read it for the characters--they are wonderfully realized. Even the nasty ones are human and recognizable. Of course, my favorites are the warm and generous Arthur, and his part-father, part-curmudgeon Merlin.

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