



Merlin and the Dragons (Picture Puffin Books)

By Jane Yolen

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Young King Arthur, troubled by nightmares, doubts he is the rightful king of England. One rainy night, the wizard Merlin tells Arthur the story of dueling dragons and a fateful clash between good and evil, which reveals the surprising secret of the boy king's true legacy. Li Ming's arresting oil paintings breathe fire into this magical offering from Jane Yolen. "The legend comes alive on a grand scale, the dramatic narrative and well-wrought dialogue heightening the theatrical effect and inviting a fast-paced read-aloud." -- *School Library Journal*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Merlin tells young Arthur a tale of a boy who prophesies a dragon duel. Dramatic oil paintings match the story's epic scale. Ages 5-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 3-5? Drawing once again upon Arthurian legend, Yolen has created a stirring tale within a tale. Young Arthur wakes one stormy night from uneasy dreams and seeks out the company of Merlin. Sensing the boy's readiness to learn of his legacy in claiming the crown he wears without conviction, Merlin tells him of another fatherless boy, Emrys, who dreamed baffling dreams of dragons and crumbling stone towers. When the cruel Vortigern attempted to take over all of Britain, Emrys's dreams became prophetic and catalytic. Merlin ends his tale cryptically, as a certain knight advances toward Vortigern's tower. When Arthur cries out for a proper ending, Merlin draws him into the story and it becomes revelatory? at last he is able to call the crown his own. Yolen goes beyond her sources? folklore and history? and moves expertly into the realm of invention. Matched with arresting oil paintings, the legend comes alive on a grand scale, the dramatic narrative and well-wrought dialogue heightening the theatrical effect and inviting a fast-paced read-aloud. Some of Ming's illustrations are magnificent, those of the dragons in particular. One can sense this talented artist's respect for these creatures as he brings them fully to life? terrifying, violent, beautiful. So, too, does he paint Arthur with great sensitivity, a figure bathed in light, his face complex, thoughtful, and full of wonder. Although all the pictures serve the story well and elevate the drama, some seem a bit flat and overexplicit, without the pulsing life and radiance that characterizes those that are invested with emotion and are remarkable for their power.

Susan Powers, Rock Creek Forest Elementary School, Chevy Chase, MD

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 3⁺-8. Young King Arthur, troubled by bad dreams and by doubts about his right to be king, seeks out Merlin, who unfolds a tale of young Emrys, another lonely boy whose troubling dreams foretold the defeat of cruel King Vortigern by Uther Pendragon, Arthur's true father. When a battle tower Vortigern had forced the Welsh to build collapses three times, Emrys, hauled before the king, reveals his vision of two dragon stones sleeping beneath the mountain. Unearthed, a red dragon and a white one rise in fierce battle. When the white prevails, Emrys knows that it symbolizes Vortigern's coming defeat. In this picture book for older readers, double-page spreads provide a broad field for Li Ming's handsome oil paintings. He achieves drama both through changing perspectives and by contrasting the somber grays and browns of the mountain and stones with reds and golds in the firelight of Merlin's tower room, in Vortigern's red dragon banners and livery, and in the splendid scenes of the battling dragons. Yolen's text evokes both the enchantment of the tale and wry humor. While satisfying in its own right, this tale within a tale also enriches young readers' understanding of Arthurian lore by weaving the familiar sword-in-the-stone story with threads of Merlin's own youth taken from Welsh legend. *Linda Ward-Callaghan*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jose Callender:

Here thing why this Merlin and the Dragons (Picture Puffin Books) are different and dependable to be yours. First of all reading a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content of the usb ports which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. Merlin and the Dragons (Picture Puffin Books) giving you information deeper as different ways, you can find any e-book out there but there is no publication that similar with Merlin and the Dragons (Picture Puffin Books). It gives you thrill reading through journey, its open up your eyes about the thing that happened in the world which is possibly can be happened around you. You can bring everywhere like in park, café, or even in your way home by train. When you are having difficulties in bringing the printed book maybe the form of Merlin and the Dragons (Picture Puffin Books) in e-book can be your alternative.

Krystal Harris:

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Richard Forbes:

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