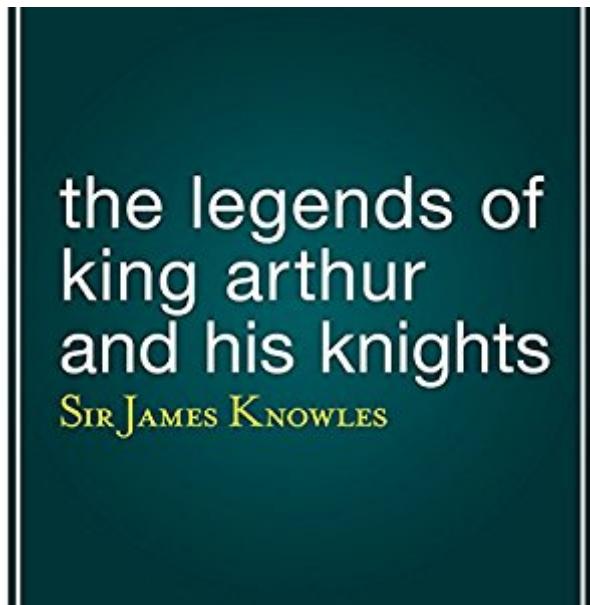


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The Legends Of King Arthur And His Knights



Synopsis

King Arthur was a legendary British leader of the late fifth and early sixth century who, according to the medieval histories and romances, led the defense of the Romano-Celtic British against the Saxon invaders in the early sixth century. This book gives an account of the life of this great legend of all times.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Who hasn't heard of King Arthur and the knights of his Round Table? In this book you meet them all - including the magician Merlin, and the brave knights Sir Launcelot, Sir Gareth, Sir Tristam, Sir Bors, Sir Kay, and Sir Galahad. All the old favorites are included - Arthur drawing the sword out of the stone, Arthur receiving the sword Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake, and Arthur's marriage to Guinevere. But this is just the beginning of excitement - followed by numerous quests and adventures of the knights, including the Quest for the Holy Grail. This book is chock-full of entertaining adventures involving knights in shining armour, damsels in distress, fierce jousting and sword fights to the death, battles against hoards of enemies and giants, tournaments and miracles. The medieval setting is painted in a rather idealized fashion, limited to the nobility and figures of the court, who embrace all that is beautiful, brave and noble. These virtues are sometimes portrayed rather simplistically, as unknown knights engage in mortal combat, and only after they have virtually killed each other do the introductions begin: "What is your name?" Behind this medieval mayhem is a heightened sense of chivalry more reflective of legend than fact, where

knights battle to the death for the sake of a woman - even one they have only just met. But isn't that what the Arthurian legends are all about? Nobody is under the illusion that they are to be taken too seriously. Journeying to Arthur's Camelot is a form of escapism - suspend your sense of disbelief, watch the flashing swords and fearful battles, and enjoy. That's not to say that the Arthurian tales do not reflect any reality. Arthur's world is in many respects a real medieval world.

It's curious to me that this is the best-selling version of the King Arthur story in the kindle store, because it's a singularly flawed collection, well-eclipsed by other variants that are also available for free online; I suspect its popularity is an artifact of the search engine, not the book's own merits. The author, Sir James Knowles, was an architect and friend of Tennyson, best known for founding the Metaphysical Society; this is, therefore, a very Victorian Arthur. In this case, "victorian" means "bowdlerized to the point of inanity." The story of Merlin's enchantment of Uther and Igraine to arrange Arthur's conception is almost completely elided ("When Uther, therefore, was at length happily wedded" -- yep, that's the whole story); Sir Tristram is apparently completely chaste with Iseult (King Mark just doesn't like him for some indiscernible reason) and even when Lancelot and Guinevere are caught together and the entire course of the story turns on adultery, such that bowdlerization was completely impossible, Gawain suggests that "it may well be that Lancelot was in her chamber for no evil." The story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is simply not included at all. I suppose that kind of bowdlerization might be acceptable in a children's version of the Arthur stories, but this edition isn't good for that either, for two reasons: 1) like many free kindle ebooks, all illustrations have been removed, and 2) it's a kindle edition, and who gives a \$250 ebook reader to a child too young to read a story with adultery in it? There are other problems also.

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