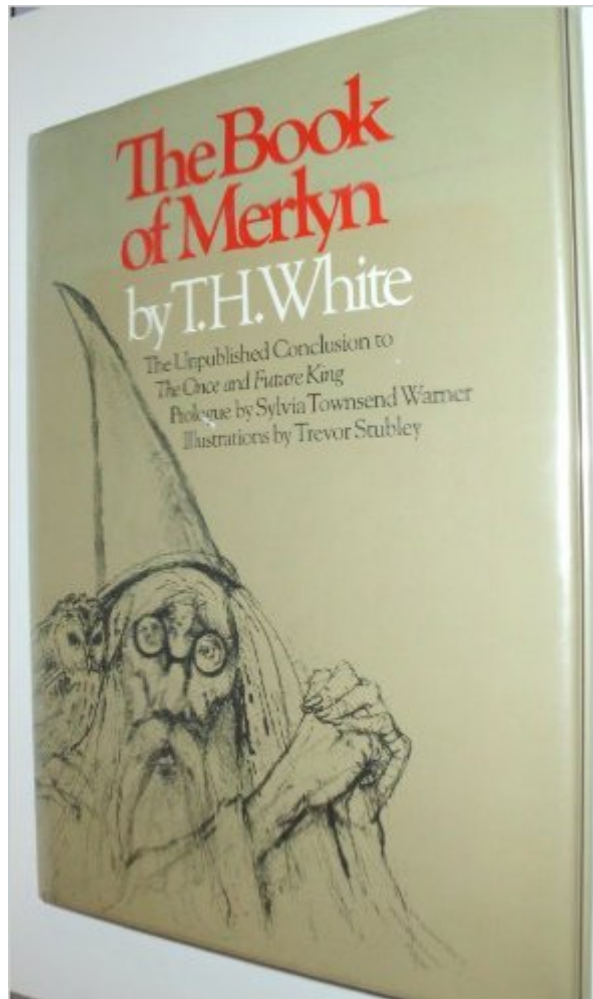


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The Book Of Merlyn: The Unpublished Conclusion To The Once And Future King



Synopsis

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Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Book of Merlyn was an incredible book, once again proving the genius of T.H. White. This book is the only sensible conclusion to the Once and Future King and should have been included in the original printing. In The Book of Merlyn, we revisit King Arthur on the night before his final battle with his son, Mordred. Feeling dejected and alone, Arthur's mentor, the lovably eccentric and ingenious Merlyn, returns and whisks the king away to learn two final lessons from the animals he knew as a child. This book is not merely a childish fairytale, but rather an in-depth dissection of human nature in which the human condition is explored in depth and the ever-elusive meaning of life is hinted at. A book for the serious reader or any serious fan of Arthur and Merlyn, The Book of Merlyn is a masterpiece from the mind of one of the greatest writers of the past one hundred years.

If you like the Once and Future King as an amazing story, then watch out, this book is not for you. Here White elevates his discussions to probe humanity's own lack of humanity. Having witnessed the horrors of World War II, White brilliantly exploits the Arthurian legend to analyze and discuss humans: are we as grand as we think we are? Is there hope? Are King Arthur's efforts (or, archetypally, the efforts of any human who is engaged in helping out the human race) fruitful or simply futile? This is a humanistic work that dares to challenge the assumptions of humanism.

Merlyn uses strong polemic to not only argue that humans are bad for nature (this is an incomplete understanding of the text) but that we have less "humanity" than virtually all other animals. This view seems to be in direct conflict to Arthur's wish to salvage humanity. Yet Merlyn does not see it as a fatalistic view, he very much still shows hope. The Book of Merlyn is a top-down, ideological examination of humanism enveloped in the archetypal Arthurian myth. It is not a bed-time story. It is not about lovely castles and romantic imagery. It is about humanity.

The marvelous 5th book of T. H. White's incredible Arthurian saga. This one, in its complete lack of swordplay and thrill, is set apart from the preceding four. Ok, the first four--definitely the Story is the major priority. Focal characters: Arthur, then after "The Sword in the Stone" the focus shifts to Lancelot and the queen, and to a lesser extent the Orkneys, etc. In the final chapter the reader is brought back to Arthur, whose musings on the nature of Man and War also smears our noses in these two essential elements, whose dissection was an important objective in the story for White. Yeah, yeah, anyone who's read the book knows that. But what about the "Book of Merlyn"? Well, picture drawing aside the glitter and pizzazz of the storyline that has won over so many people to focus on that teaming world of philosophy and abstract thought that Merlin had shown Arthur as a young king. Take "The Sword in the Stone", a primarily whimsical book in which I believe White first lay the groundwork for the "Book of Merlyn", return an aged, experienced and almost broken Arthur to this sort of setting, and...tada! bring back Merlin and the animals (or rather bring Arthur back to them). There now follows that dissection of War and Man we were talking about. Yup, the whole book is essentially White's essay on these two subjects, given in a long philosophical discussion between the animals, Merlin, and an older Arthur in the comfort of the Badger's underground burrow (Nimue's cave, ha ha!). Now for those who are thinking, "Ye gods, the horror!", I gotta admit, in part, you're right. If you're thinking of reading this as the conclusion to "The Once and Future King" in a steady, smooth stream, you're in for a bumpy ride. Think about it, the book was published posthumously--there are structural problems and stuff (why I rate it 8 and not higher), the most blatant of which is the episodes as the ant and the goose from "The Sword in the Stone" properly belonged here originally, so you bump over that. Bump. Next, like I said, Story has taken a decided back seat to Essay. That's a bump for those who loved "The Once and Future King" for the laughter and the tears, a...MAJOR...bump. BUMP. But for those who can accept Story's new position in the scheme of things, you'll really dig this. Because White returns to someone he has really neglected in favor of Lancelot and Jenny and all that other stuff--Arthur. Arthur's back and he's gonna get a little attention, undergo a little development. This is a must for you people. There is also now this

beautiful circle to White's saga. And, getting down to the dirt, you are gonna love that Essay I was talking about. It...is...BRILLIANT. For those who like this sort of thing, you will LOVE it, and for those who don't like this kind of stuff normally, you'll LOVE it anyway because of the original way White did it. People who dug the "Tao of Pooh", you will LOVE this. Kids doing an assignment on the underlying symbolism and whatnot of the "Once and Future King", you will LOVE this--it'll be so much help, it's almost cheating. And. Finally. T.H. White fans everywhere. Read "The Book of Merlyn". In the end, this is what he's all about.

Professor/author T.H. White wrote a powerful work that provokes inquiries from the reader. The complex characters serve as backboards for the major themes that vary from war to humanity resorting to primitive ways. White constructs a simple plot and adds layer upon layer of wordplay, philosophies, political views, and much more to transform the basic premise into something magical. The most warped character of all, the bumbling eccentric Merlyn, serves as White's voice throughout. The weary Arthur's gripes seem so genuine that the reader may empathize with the lonely soul. White's work contains some of the only material that can be compared with that of fantasy master J.R.R. Tolkien. Tolkien and White both utilized dead Anglo-Saxon languages' roots and base words to the maximum, mixing Old English prefixes with Norse suffixes. This is a brilliant work, I highly recommend it.

as i said in my title, this book is very different. if you're looking for an arthurian read with a plot, stay away. because this book has no plot. it is set just before arthur leaves for his fatal battle with mordred. merlyn and all of the animals he learned from as a boy have gathered together and are pondering different things, and the morals of the lessons merlyn teaches. arthur is taken on more journeys with the animals, with the ones of the geese and ants repeated (there are also additional ones). it really makes you think, and it delves deeper into the arthurian legend and its morals. this is a wonderful book, and should be read directly after the once and future king for the full effect.

In this often forgotten conclusion to the King Arthur legend, White recaps his thoughts and ideas about humanity, misery, hope, trust, where we have gone astray and why there is still hope. Subtle, bitter-sweet, and profound, this book is worth its price 10 times over.

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