



Tales of King Arthur: The Sword in the Stone (Books of Wonder)

By Hudson Talbott

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Tales of King Arthur: The Sword in the Stone (Books of Wonder) By Hudson Talbott

Except for the dragon-shaped constellation that appeared at his birth, there was nothing that suggested Arthur was destined for greatness.

Raised by the gentle Sir Ector, Arthur spends his boyhood exploring the Welsh woodlands, until one day a messenger arrives announcing a grand tournament to be held in London. Arthur's older brother, Sir Kay, insists they must attend with Arthur as his squire. After traveling the long road to London on horseback, Kay performs brilliantly in the contest, but it's young Arthur himself who ultimately wins the day.

The first volume of the Tales of King Arthur series introduces younger readers to the classic story known for over one hundred years as "The Sword in the Stone." Hudson Talbott has faithfully retold this heroic tale with humor and warmth, showing a human side to Arthur rarely glimpsed before. His vivid, richly colored paintings capture a crowded London at Christmastime and magnificent knights jousting on the field of battle, as well as the legendary sorcerer Merlin and the magical sword that reveals Arthur's destiny.

Alive with the drama of medieval England, this book will awaken young readers' interest in the legendary king who set new ideals for knightly valor.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The classic story of Arthur's discovery of his noble birthright under Merlin the sorcerer's watchful eye receives some contemporary touches in this attractive volume. The author/illustrator of *We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story* presents young Arthur as unprepossessing, content to attend to his duties as his knighted brother's squire, dazzled when he is brought to London, reluctant to forsake his adoptive father for the throne of England. The illustrations encompass a range of styles--street scenes bustle; pictures of tournaments surge with energy; depictions of public assemblies suggest the anonymity of crowds. A bit less successfully, a few ethereal or studiously reverent illustrations herald the future glory of Arthur. On the whole, however, the drama in Arthur's feat of removing the famous sword from the stone on Christmas Day is not merely preserved but heightened. All ages.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 3-5-- The highlight of this adaptation of the coming of Arthur is the illustrations--vivid watercolors ranging from small vignettes to richly detailed double-page spreads. Costumes, armaments, and crowd scenes are especially eye-catching. Unfortunately, the text is less impressive. For some reason, Talbott strays from Malory's original from time to time, as when Arthur goes in search of a sword for his brother Kay, and later when Kay tries to claim Excalibur for his own. Instead of Kay's having left his sword behind and sending Arthur grumbling back to locked lodgings to look for it, here it is Arthur's error. Later, Kay yields the magic sword because he fails to return it to the stone, not, as Malory tells us, because he refuses to lie to his father under oath. Kay's basic honesty is here reduced to petulance--a minor point, but puzzling all the same. Acceptable because of the high quality of the art and the dearth of other versions for this age level, but otherwise not a first purchase. --Barbara Hutcheson, Greater Victoria Public Library, B.C., Canada

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From Kirkus Reviews

An ``Afterword'' describes this retelling as more appropriate for younger children than such classics as Sutcliff and White, but it's not so much easier as more contemporary in language, more profusely illustrated, and shorter. Talbott takes Arthur from birth to coronation, centering on his unwittingly pulling the sword from the stone to give to his brother Kay for the tournament. Though not exceptional, the telling is lively and has some amusing homely touches (as well as such jarring anachronisms as ``Okay''). Of most interest are the dramatic illustrations, which have popular appeal--a romantic Arthur under a flowering tree, garbed in white for the coronation, or a double spread of knights on richly caparisoned horses, caught midcharge; they also exhibit considerable skill in their careful designs (especially in the swirling crowd scenes) and in their attention to medieval detail. An acceptable introduction to this heroic figure. (Folklore/Picture book. 7-11) --
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

George Clark:

What do you consider book? It is just for students because they're still students or that for all people in the

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Tammy Campbell:

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Dennis Bales:

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