



Winter of Magic's Return

Pamela F. Service

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Convinced that a new age of magic is about to begin in the wake of the nuclear holocaust, a young resurrected Merlin and two friends set out to bring King Arthur back to the land.

Winter of Magic's Return Details

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From Reader Review Winter of Magic's Return for online ebook

Genevieve says

This is one of those books that I loved when I was a kid and that I'd be afraid to go back and reread now in case it is not that good. At a certain point in my reading career, however, this book blew my mind: the desolate post-nuclear winter English landscape, cold and snowy and inhabited by strange mutants; the medievalish culture built on the ruins of the present; the reawakening of magic... Probably, this is not, objectively, a great book. But it certainly captured my imagination to the point where I read it over and over, and may well have had a formative influence.

Apparently there's a sequel, which I never read because the library didn't have it.

Julie says

One of my favourites from childhood.

After the nuclear devastation, magic reclaims the world.

Okay, the main characters are three misfit kids at boarding school... but the similarities end there

This is part of the blurb:

The nuclear holocaust is history. The survivors have a name for it: the Devastation. At boarding school in what used to be called Wales, three...kids eager for adventure form a secret society. Welly, Heather, and their new friend Earl, a foundling with no memory of his past.

...Everything changes when a striking woman arrives claiming she is Earl's aunt. Earl senses she is evil, and in his attempt to escape her he receives a blow to the head which restores his memory of all the centuries of his past. Welly and Heather join him on a magical quest to find a pre-Devastation king of England, a friend whose name happens to be Arthur...

Stick that in your bookshelf and read it!

Liana says

The book is kind of like an apocalyptic/dystopian Aurtherian story, featuring two children and their friend Earl - who is actually the wizard Merlin! I WANNA BE FRIENDS WITH EARL TOO!!! And kick Morgan's butt with him, he's so cool. Merlin is basically a teenage kid again, but still has his wisdom of his older self. It was funny picturing him acting so old and wise while really, he's just a young kid like Heather and Welly. Heehee.

One of my favorite things about this book was the character's adventures with Earl, and the random discoveries and comments they'd make about our old world before the 'Devastation' happened. The story takes a little while to start, but after about 100 pages, the questing begins! Yay! Morgan is a great villain by the way, and I really liked the magical battle scene with her and Earl near the end.

Tara says

I loved this book when I read it as a kid and intend to read it again so I can put a real rating on it. My young self would have enthusiastically given it 5 stars.

Aelvana says

It's been several hundred years since nuclear war has destroyed most life and the earth has sunk into nearly constant winter. But what life remains has gone on. Welly and Heather attend Llandoylan School and, as mutual outcasts, enjoy what friendship they can. Their lives change completely with the inclusion of Earl Bedwas, a strange older boy who has no memory from before he was found seven years earlier. As Earl's mysteries unravel, Welly and Heather find themselves part of a grander adventure than they dared imagine, one whose conclusion could well remake their world.

I first discovered this book many years ago, and time has dampened none of the appeal. The events that caused a nuclear war are only briefly mentioned; the focus is on life as it is now, well into the aftermath. As seen from the viewpoints of Welly and Heather, who are young enough to appreciate the possibilities of their own lives, there is still much to be hopeful for. But for Earl, it is a sad reminder of all that has been lost.

I like how gradually the story moves into bigger and bigger things. This isn't a story about saving the world, but somehow that's what they end up trying to do anyway. Although there is a force of great evil, mostly what comes through is the sorrow of a world not quite dead yet not really alive, and the question of what can be done in such a place.

It's hard to say more about the plot without giving some of the best pieces away. Overall it's a beautiful story and one I have enjoyed time and again. I rate this book Recommended.

S.M. Carrière says

This book is genuinely delightful.

My keyboard is being an ass and typing extra a's for no reason, so I'll keep this brief!

Apologies if extras a's sneak in without my notice and don't get corrected.

So, there is much to love about this book. It is meant for the younger reader, so don't expect a sweeping prose and exquisite narration.

The female member of the group was, thankfully, not useless, as they are in so many other works (looking at you, *Over Sea, Under Stone*). She's bright and slays monsters with the best of them.

The one thing that bothered me, and again, take this with some salt, as it's a children's book, Welly seems upset he is chubby. In a world where food is scarce, it seems to me that being chubby would be an ideal as it's so very rare.

Still, this was a fun little book, and I really enjoyed it.

Elizabeth says

I liked the idea of this book but felt something missing in the execution. There was too much on the journey and not enough when the battle scenes were actually happening. It was a quick read, which was good, and I'll probably take a while before I read the next book.

CarrieLynn Reinhard says

I read this book years ago, like in middle school, and it bugged me that I could never remember what it was called. But it is a solid little scifi/fantasy tale combining the legend of King Arthur with a nuclear winter that is finally ending. It has good characters, good action, good description, and I could easily see it as a young adult movie in our current age of obsession with such things.

Brenda Pike says

I read the beginning of this in middle school, I think, and it stuck with me all this time. (I was into post-apocalyptic stories even then.) So glad that Sharon reintroduced me to it!

Sally Bozzuto says

I remember reading this as a kid and loving it! I would like to re-read it sometime as I can't quite remember all the particulars but I remember the contrasting combination of the futuristic post-nuclear holocaust setting with the ancient characters of Merlin and King Arthur being pretty fun and interesting.

Tym says

I read this book as a young boy in third grade. It completely changed what I expected from a book and helped gear my tastes in reading at an early age. This is the story of three kids living in a post-apocalyptic world. There are some standard tropes, the nerdy book girl who is very smart and turns pretty, and the strange separate child who is much more than he seems.

There are small humorous touches in this book as the children attempt to understand the world that comes before them, one of them even takes an old gothic romance at face value. My biggest problem with this book when I was young was the ending which was positive but it seemed to end just as things were getting really good and neither my local librarian or my bookword aunt knew of a sequel (there is one, and it doesn't disappoint). This book holds a special place in my heart but even with that aside I think this was a fun blend of science and fantasy so would recommend this to anyone interested in Arthurian legend or post-apocalyptic Earth.

Tonya says

I remember really liking this book as a kid in the 80's. It was so different from much of the fluff I was usually reading. I don't remember it enough to know if it would still be a great book, especially with adult eyes. But I have found enough memories of it to keep on my shelves for a few more years to see if my kids care to pick it up.

Katelynn says

A friend loaned this to me saying he'd really enjoyed it as a kid and since he knew I was such a voracious reader maybe I'd like to try it.

It was cute, but very juvenile. Definitely more middle grade level than anything else. It was interesting though to see some well worn tropes in this--though I suppose this is likely the predecessor given that it's from 1985. Middle grade and YA fiction have come a long way since then, and I'm glad. I don't know really think this holds up unless you're of the target age group, or rereading it for nostalgia I suppose.

Susan says

This is a good fantasy novel for children probably around 11 or 12. It's about the cold, dark world the few survivors of a worldwide nuclear war live in. Three misfits, Earl (age 14), Heather (age 11) and Welly (age 11) become friends, and when Earl is in trouble, they all start on a quest. It's a good adventure book about good triumphing over evil and light triumphing over darkness.

Jessica says

One of my favorites as a kid, and a book that I read several times. It introduced me to the part of the Arthurian legend that claimed he would come again to save England in her hour of greatest need . . . which would be when? In this book, it's after a nuclear war which has changed the face of the world. I mostly remember it always being overcast, bleak, rather feudal in social matters but with some technology. A pair of misfits at a boarding school befriend a charismatic new student who begins to regain memories of his past life . . . Merlin. The three set out to awaken King Arthur, fighting nuclear mutants and magical creatures alike. Such a great book!
