



Children of the Knight

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An orphan boy. A mysterious stranger. A city in crisis.

When 14-year-old Lance is saved from death, his life is forever changed. For starters, his savior claims to be King Arthur, the once and future ruler of ancient Britain. Lance has met lots of weirdos on the streets of L.A., and they claim to be many things. But this “king” not only reeks of sincerity, he wears armor, rides a gorgeous white horse, and lives in the storm drains underneath the city! Arthur has a throne, old-school clothes, and weapons up the wazoo. Swords, daggers, bows and arrows—the kind Lance has only seen in movies.

Turns out this Arthur guy wants to start some kind of revolution. He plans to collect other cast-off kids like Lance—even teen gang members—and create a New Camelot of Knights to gain more rights for youth and shake up the out-of-touch politicians who run Los Angeles.

Lance is all for helping kids like him. He’s spent his entire life in and out of the system, and it sucks. And he wants to believe in Arthur, but doubts even a king can accomplish such lofty goals. Despite these uncertainties, Lance readily accepts the position of First Knight—youth leader of Arthur’s new army—thereby setting in motion a crusade of tsunami proportions. When the children rise, will the city fall?

The Lance Chronicles begin...

Children of the Knight Details

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From Reader Review Children of the Knight for online ebook

Sammy Goode says

4.75 stars

Powerful. This novel, Children of the Knight by Michael J. Bowler is powerful. Steeped in legend, King Arthur returns to discover a nation that has abandoned its own future. Reaching into the desperate streets of modern day Los Angeles, King Arthur sets out to save any child who will hear his call. It sounds fantastical-contrived and yet....this was one of the most impacting novels that I have ever read that focuses on the plight of the youth of today.

Page after page we meet one child after another who have been discarded to roam the streets. We are introduced to gang members who have been incarcerated from the age of 14. We meet young gay teens who have been kicked out of their homes by intolerant parents only to land on the streets where they sell themselves in order to survive. We learn of upper middle class children who have turned to destructive behaviors such as selling drugs in order to finally capture the attention of their disengaged parents. One by one these young men and women discover the power of love delivered from the once and future King, Arthur.

How Arthur came to be in the city is a mystery even to himself. One day, he simply was, complete with clothing for his knights, weapons, gold and a horse. When he discovers young Lance running from two bullies who have been sent by the drug lord known as Mr. R, Arthur knows he has met his true First Knight. The two of them set about finding others to take in and care for, to train in the way of the knight from sword play to bow and arrow, and, of course, the code of chivalry. Their numbers swell daily as more and more street kids find their way to the underground lair.

However, all good knights must have a quest and before long, Arthur reveals to his ragtag group that theirs will be to take back the city and reclaim their rights, one peaceful step at a time.

This novel was stunning. As each chapter unfolded, I found myself able to accept the idea that children would be so starved for adult influence--for love and care, and to feel worthy enough to be loved that they would follow this charismatic stranger just about anywhere. Arthur's sincerity and passion to restore these kids to their rightful place poured out from every page. Yes, this was definitely fantasy, but the underlying message was so very real. As a nation, we are making our children disposable, writing them off as nothing worth saving and treating them like adults in a judicial system riddled with corruption and, worse, a simple lack of caring.

At its heart, Children of the Knight was a social commentary wrapped in a fictional fantasy. At its core, this novel was also a warning. A clear message that we cannot continue to write off the poor and disenfranchised, the street gangs, the youth who prostitute themselves, for they are the future of this world. There were times when this novel simply broke my heart. When the teacher, Jenny, realized that she no longer liked the very students she taught, and it was revealed that our schools are failing to educate those whose days are spent on the streets merely trying to survive, I felt real shame. You see, as a teacher in Washington D.C., I know this to be true...sadly, so very true.

And so, page after page, Michael J.Bowler weaves a fantastical story that keeps you engaged and riveted, while time after time challenging you to think of what is truly right outside your very door, homeless

children who are desperate for love and stability. This novel is gritty and casts an unblinking eye on the social ruin that lives in our midst--a ruin we have created.

Children of the Knight is an incredible story. So why not five stars? Well, there was, for me, the matter of King Arthur's speech, replete with doth's and thee's and thou's. I accepted that he spoke in the language of the historical period in which he was born but on more than one occasion he lost that affect. Had there been a reference to his speech patterns changing--growing more modern, I could have overlooked this problem. However, in absence of any explanation, the resulting seesaw effect of his slipping from more modern speech patterns and then back into historical began to wrench me from the story line and became bothersome on more than one occasion.

Children of the Knight is a novel that challenges us all to look beyond ourselves and see those who are truly becoming the lost generation before it is too late. It is a marvelous story and one worth your attention.

Michael Bowler says

This is a review from Neil in Morgan Hill that amazed me. Don't know if he's on Goodreads, but thank you, Neil!

Wonderful "What-If" fantasy set in modern day LA focused on lost children, June 25, 2013

By Neil in Morgan Hill

Amazon Verified Purchase(What's this?)

This review is from: Children of the Knight (Kindle Edition)

a 5-Star rating for Children of the Knight by Michael J. Bowler. The message is timely and the challenge is real!

This modern day story combines the recreation of Camelot by a time displaced King Arthur who creates a supportive environment for lost teenagers and gang members in LA. The underling message is all children need to be loved, nurtured and given what they need to succeed.

The author has had extensive experience including a teacher, volunteer for various youth related organizations and probation departments. Michael's bio gives more extensive detail of his many achievements.

The story can be enjoyed by teenagers as it is hopeful and uplifting with a positive message. Mutual respect and acceptance of others is another central theme. On the flip side, adults are challenged and given a wake-up call that we have failed the children of our society for some time and we should be ashamed.

As a 60-year old gay man, I may not be the target audience, but as an adult and a citizen, I come away from the story having to own the guilt as I too have not stood up and demanded that the legal and education systems be revamped to serve and meet the needs of our youth.

I recommend this story to teenage and adult readers. Recognition of gay youth and respect for individual differences is a central theme. Though younger people should be aware of these social issues and values, teenagers are well aware of these issues as they are faced by their classmates, friends and possibly his/herself within their own lives. It is most difficult to read this novel and not feel the need to speak-up and take action. I know I have a heavy heart and bear the shame of being a member of society that has failed so many

children.

On a personal note: As I too have been a teacher and have worked in programs to assist economically disadvantaged youth, I concur with the author's description of how youth are being abused and used due to the misguided and dysfunctional policies and procedures within the legal, educational and social service institutions. The challenge is huge and I too feel overwhelmed and powerless.

Shambhawi P. says

It has taken me a while to get my thoughts in this book sorted out to write a proper review. Bowler has penned a powerful fantasy with so many sides to it and I must admit the book has left a lasting impact on me. This book is different from all of the young adult fantasy crawling in the bookstores these days and for someone like me who is tired of the same washed up story being told again and again - different is definitely good.

I have always enjoyed reading Arthurian Legends. You can blame that on watching the Disney movie 'The Sword in the Stone' one too many times when I was a kid. So an Arthurian story based on Los Angeles in midst of violent gang environment? I was intrigued. And not let down.

The book deals with many serious issues. It deals with child abuse mostly, also with prostitution, gang violence and society's aversion to non-conformity. There is a somber edge to the narration along with a hopeful one. The major theme of the story seems to be acceptance and mutual respect and Bowler has handled that wonderfully. Arthur's efforts to create a utopia for children to be themselves and away from harm is commendable and the way Bowler has presented it is smooth as well as believable.

This book raises two very important questions. Who is to blame for the various problems that children face - at home, at school or in the society at large? And in the real world where there is no King Arthur to swoop in with his round table of knights who is to help them?

Usually, some books try to touch a lot of issues concerning the society and fail to address them all. This book does not. It is a beautiful, thoughtful story written wonderfully that anyone can read, enjoy and ponder upon.

4 Stars

This ebook was provided to me by the author in exchange of an honest review.

E. Summers says

Children of the Knight is one of those rare books that has something for everyone. For teens, there is friendship, adventure, a quest, heroes, and a message of unity and tolerance and real valor and strength coming from doing what's right instead of blindly following someone else's example for no good reason. For adults, there are messages as well, and a call for a critical evaluation of a system that does little to set kids on the right path but is all too willing to treat them as adults if they stray off the path and commit crimes glorified not just by their immediate environment, but also by the entertainment that is pumped out to them by media conglomerates. It's actually nothing short of extraordinary that the author has managed to

intertwine these messages in such a way that one does not detract from the other.

Children of the Knight at times made me run a whole gamut of emotions. There were moments of true triumph and happiness, but also moments of profound sadness. I loved the way characters were brought to life and allowed to experience all emotions, including uncertainty, jealousy, shame, anger, happiness, and love. This urban fantasy is filled with memorable characters, starting, of course, with King Arthur and his first knight, Lance, but then continuing with Chris, Esteban, Jack, Mark, Reyna and others. All of them, and especially Lance, made an impression on me and I'm not likely to forget them anytime soon. The world portrayed in this book is no utopia, but it is a fabulous glimpse into what our world might look like if we all appreciated the kind of thorough diversity that the author portrays in his book.

The thing I loved best about the book is that it really made me think. It stayed with me long after I finished reading it, and prompted me to analyze and re-analyze my feelings about the authors' message. In the end, while I don't necessarily agree with all of the author's premises, I absolutely respect the position and I appreciate the introspection it prompted.

I give the book five stars and my enthusiastic recommendation because for me it was truly unique. I actually think this book should be mandatory reading for adults, especially adults in affluent neighborhoods, because it's far too easy for some of us to think of urban problems as something that only impacts other people, whom we don't and wouldn't want to know. The truth is that urban problems are all of our problem, and allocating resources to help the younger generations break the cycle of poverty and crime that is present much too often in urban neighborhoods will end up impacting us all positively.

It's only fair to mention that the book is not perfect. The author's writing style is complex, and it may be a little too difficult for younger kids to follow. There are also many subplots and characters to keep track of, and a lot of details are included that could probably have been edited out to create a more tightly focused story. I would have appreciated more of an explanation for why Arthur was there and how he got there, and I would have also appreciated less of the old English spoken by the king. I also thought that sometimes attitude that the adults in the story had towards the kids were disturbingly cavalier. Now, it's true that some of this can be explained by Arthur simply not being aware of all the dangers that can befall a young, depressed teenager out on the streets, but it seemed to me that even by the end of the book he still had not learned all that he might have. And last but not least - the ending. All I can say without spoiling the book is that I wish it had been written differently, although I appreciate and respect the author's vision for these characters. These faults, however, are very minor and subjective to me, and did not take away from the powerful impact of the book on me as a reader.

Children of the Knight was provided to me by the author free of charge in exchange for an honest review, which I provided above. I will definitely purchase the next book in the series when it is released and would highly recommend this book to all readers.

Kazza says

Children of the Knight has been read and reviewed by a new guest blogger this week. Thank you to Josh :) Review can be found at <http://greedybugbookreviews.com/child...>

Interview with the author - <http://greedybugbookreviews.com/inter...>

Now I want to read it.

And...now I have read it.

This book is different. It takes the Arthurian theme and places it in modern-day LA. It looks at disenfranchised, abused youth, including teens trying to come to grips with, and learning to like, who they are. Arthur brings hope and the importance of living by a code. Lance becomes someone who has excellent leadership qualities, someone who helps solidify a group, and Jack is a good soul who teaches Lance a thing or two about what it is to truly care about someone. That is okay. These children also learn what it is like to have others you can rely upon, not people who are out for themselves, or wanting to hurt you.

The first in a series, *Children of the Knight* is well worth a read for those who want something a bit different. A touch of the mystical in contemporary times with some harsh realities, and certainly a book that questioning or open teenage males, in particular, could identify with.

Huston Piner says

I will make this short and straightforward. *Children of the Knight* is one of the most spell-binding, heart-stopping, inspiring books I have ever had the great pleasure to read. From beginning to end, the plot is complex, the characters three dimensional, the writing powerful and elegant. Indeed, Michael J Bowler is a powerful writer with a gift unparalleled. I can't praise it enough.

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September 2018

I first encountered the series in 2015 and was amazed at Bowler's mastery of the writing craft. Every one of his characters is fleshed out, distinct, and believable. His ability to frame a scene, describe the setting, and draw the reader in unrivaled. I cannot recommend this book more highly. Recently revised, the series is worth every second the reader spends with it.

Children of the Knight, the first of a five volume series, is at first blush a curious book. Should it be considered a modern fantasy? Is it a teen coming of age story? Is it a young adult adventure with prominent gay characters? It is, at once, all of these and more. In this book, and the series, Michael J Bowler has crafted a spellbinding, passionate, masterfully told saga that is both heartwarming and heartrending in its execution. The main character is a homeless Latino teen named Lance Sepulveda. We learn that Lance was abandoned by his mother as a young child and has been living in the street ever since he was nine years old. He still attends school – occasionally, is very intelligent, a fervent skateboarder, and a loaner.

One evening, Lance is saved from the clutches of two bullying older teens by a medieval knight who declares himself to be King Arthur. Naturally cautious, and suspicious of the knight's motives, Lance agrees to go with Arthur and is surprised to find that Arthur has a whole medieval complex, including armor, weapons, and clothing, in a hub of the Los Angeles flood tunnels. Arthur reveals that he has awoken to find himself in southern California with all the items needed to form a new Round Table with Lance as his First Knight. Arthur plans to start a crusade to salvage the abandoned children, enlist kids from gang membership, and through his teachings of chivalry guide them to transform the city. The recruitment of his young Round Table knights in the unfolding struggle against the resistance of the city's police, politicians, and the opposition of the drug dealers and gangsters. That is the essence of the story, but the execution of it is a breathtaking emotional adventure, with a wide cast of diverse characters, that touches on child abandonment, gang violence, puberty and sexual orientation, the rights of minors, civic corruption, drugs, friendship and loyalty.

The story is told in the third person omniscient voice, which is very hard to do without leaving the reader confused about who's thinking what. Bowler's narrative is clear, powerful, and immersive. His descriptive ability is superb and his ability to reveal the inner emotion of his characters is unsurpassed. There are numerous scenes that will grip the reader and perhaps lead to tears (they did me).

Make no mistake, *Children of the Knight* is a moving, edge of your seat adventure that defies what must strike some as ridiculous (King Arthur in Los Angeles?) but will reward every reader who dares to open its pages. I first encountered the series in 2015 and was amazed at Bowler's mastery of the writing craft. Every one of his characters is fleshed out, distinct, and believable. His ability to frame a scene, describe the setting, and draw the reader in unrivaled. I cannot recommend this book more highly. Recently revised, the series is worth every second the reader spends with it.

Jo Ann says

I do not usually write reviews, I generally find something I like in every book I read. Every once in a while though something comes along that just grabs you, holds you, and will not let you go. This is one of them for me. The premise of this novel; King Arthur, the Children and what Mr Bowler does with the story-line is just, to me, amazing. It is SO needed in today's society! Who, but the children, fight FOR the children! If I could make this required reading in all schools, colleges, book clubs, etc.. I would in a heartbeat. My 15 year old son is reading this now and it had raised so many questions from him, questions I am so happy he has asked. He has been sheltered by his 5 older siblings but has always been open to the gay community via friends and family members, but the combining of this with the drug, homeless, abuse, general apathy of adults in positions that COULD help but do not situations, has really opened his eyes and his heart to what really is out there. Any book that can do this for a teen.....well, Thank You Mr Bowler!!!!

Billy Buttons says

This book was recently entered and was a gold winner in The Wishing Shelf Book Awards. This is what our young readers thought:

FEEDBACK

Author: Michael J Bowler

Title: Children of the Knight

COVER: 10/10

The readers loved the cover. They thought the image of the girl holding the sword was apt for the story and genre and the lettering easy to read. They also enjoyed the blurb, pulling them into the book.

CONTENT 10/10

Our teenage readers very much enjoyed this story. They loved the central premise of King Arthur returning to present day L.A. and attempting to help forgotten children. The readers liked the fact that the story was a mix of fantasy and adventure but also had a strong moral undertone: that everybody is deserving of a second chance and everybody, even the smallest child, should be seen. One reader (girl, 15) put in her feedback,

‘This was a fantastic story. I liked Lance very much. I thought he was different to the normal hero in a book. I really enjoyed following him on his adventure and his friendship with Mark and Jack.’

EDITING 9/10

The readers thought the book was well edited and discovered no glaring problems with grammar, punctuation or spelling. They did feel the odd paragraph a little difficult to follow but, apart from that. One reader (boy, aged 14) put in his feedback, ‘This story has very good pacing but I still got to know the characters.’

STYLE 10/10

The readers liked the style of writing. They liked the complex plot the author created and the way he developed the characters in the story. They also liked the balance of adventure and character/setting description. They also felt the author worked well with dialogue although a few of the readers thought it was difficult to always follow what the king was saying in old English. One reader (boy, aged fifteen) put in his feedback, ‘This story was really great. I loved how Arthur saved Lance at the beginning from the three yobs, particularly when he cut Dwayne’s trousers and they fell to the floor. The author got the speech right too. So many writers seem to be frightened of writing rude words in a book for teenagers which is odd as we say them all the time.’

TO SUM UP 39/40

STATS

Of the 28 readers:

28 loved the cover.

28 would like to read a sequel.

14 felt the best part of the book was the clever plot.

5 felt the best part of the book was the central premise: King Arthur in L.A.

8 thought the pacing was the best part of the book.

1 thought Lance was the best part of the book.

2 thought the way the king spoke was a little difficult to follow.

‘A wonderfully written, exciting story with a powerful moral message. Highly recommended and a GOLD MEDAL WINNER’ The Wishing Shelf Awards

Giovanni says

“Children of the Knight” is an amazing book. Both during and after reading this great book you will be filled with mixed emotions. There were times where I felt anger, happiness, excitement, and sadness because I remembered things that happened to me as a child and I even felt like crying.

Once you get started in the book it will be hard to put it down. You will always crave more. I got in trouble at work because I went overtime on my break or lunch because I would say to my self “just one more page” (after 4 to 5 pages). LOL. By the way, did I mention that I got lost on the bus on several occasions while reading this book?

The life style of a gang member as well as that of a homeless child is nailed right on the dot. This book couldn’t say it any better about how our “justice” system works and how the Department of Children and Family Services operates. The stories of some characters even triggered flashbacks to my own horrible childhood in both of those abusive systems.

As a former gang member and D.C.F.S. “owned” child, this book made me feel less alone to know that I was not and am not the only one who suffered such abuse physically, mentally, and sexually within that system. There are also some characters that explain why kids join gangs in the first place, and I could very much relate to that part, too. Growing up, I knew far too many kids just like the ones in this book. I was one of them. These characters are real and heart-rending.

If you would like to see, feel, and live the life of abandoned, neglected, and rejected kids/teenagers this is the book for you. It will leave you with tears down your face just as it did me. It will inspire you to take action against the way this country fails to protect our future – the children. Take the time to read this book, meditate on its message, and look around and you'll see that there are far too many lost children in need of rescue from this corrupted and hypocritical society. Adults talk the talk about protecting and nurturing kids and then throw them away like yesterday's trash. Shameful!

This is a must read for everyone who cares about kids and wants to get to know some amazing characters. Check out this book – you won't be disappointed.

Jerry says

4.5 stars

Learn to be brave by saying what's in your heart. You may not have the chance to say it before its too late. I think there is every human emotion packed into this story. This is the first in a series and it is amazingly powerful. As a resident in LA during Mayor Villarygosa's term in office it was a unique fantasy. The fantasy set up of the novel is extraordinary and the delivery is triumphant. I cannot wait to read the continuation!

Mia Kerick says

I don't have much time to read for pleasure anymore. I'm usually either writing or editing or promoting my books. When I do decide to read, and subsequently review, a novel, it is usually for a specific purpose; in this case I sought out Children of the Knight because I had “met” the book's author, Michael Bowler, on Facebook and I had quickly become impressed by his compassion for children and his overall positive view of life. I wanted to know how he would express himself as an author. And so here I will endeavor to review his novel that profoundly changed me.

Children of the Knight is an epic novel. Yeah... it is truly larger than life.

While reading:

I fell in love with characters—many times over.

I had no use for several other characters...only to shrug and change my mind about them further into the novel.

I got angry, as in, all fired up—enough to make me perspire—if you must know.

I questioned myself in a “what would I have done?” manner...and I'm still doing this.

I thought deeply about the characters, and their lots in life—about life's fairness and unfairness. About parenting, in general...about my parenting, in specific.

I pondered my own behavior as a world citizen.

And I'm just gonna say it straight out—I cried a lot.

My reaction to Children of the Knight was powerful, confounding even.

And none of what I experienced as I devoured Michael Bowler's young adult work, Children of the Knight, I suspect, will be departing from my heart or mind any time soon. Which I know is a positive thing.

In any case, after I finished reading, I needed to do some additional thinking about this complex novel before I could discuss it publicly in a review. And since I do my best thinking in the shower, well, I headed upstairs. You see, Bowler's novel contains an abundance of important themes; I couldn't possibly mention them all. And, yes, while shampooing, the themes that affected me most somehow became clear:

*Give a child a purpose and you give him a pathway to his future.

*Place your focus on how we (human beings) are alike, rather than on the ways in which we are different, and we will come together as one.

*The greater good is not always more important than an individual's need for love and attention.

*Don't allow important convictions go unspoken.

*A family need not be formed by blood; family members can be chosen.

The above are the themes that spoke loudest and clearest—with the most vibrancy—to me. I can almost guarantee that these will not be the themes to which you fall asleep, their echoes ringing in your ears, as the novel's themes are many and varied.

Do you want to have this significant experience with a book? For the record, I do not believe it is an experience you can or should expect to have with every book, or with most books, even. In fact, it is one of my goals as an author to provide my readers with this experience once, possibly or twice, in my writing career, while subsequently entertaining them, and keeping them breathlessly turning the pages.

In Children of the Knight, Michael Bowler has created a work that is neither light-hearted nor consistently easy to read. But it is important and interesting, and maybe even mandatory. It is also very human and real, while still being somehow fanciful—and engaging to all ages. Highly recommended.

V.A. Dold says

This novel has lessons and messages that we can all stand to hear. We can often forget that all children even the street children who have been forgotten are a blessing.

This is King Arthur returned to present day LA. He is rebuilding the round table and his Knights are the street children and gangbangers. He teaches them chivalry and how to be knightly. The message is use Might for Right. When given the choice many of these children who have never been loved and accepted jump at the chance to be a part of something good.

Each individuals story will wrench your heart and have you cheering. I literally was brought to tears twice and not just a single tear but all out gushing and sniffling. The ending is heart rending and triumphant all at

once. I won't tell you more than that because I would ruin the story for you.

Yes you will read about the horrors these young people experience on the streets but it is done in a non explicit way so fear not lords and ladies, you may pick up this book and expect an epic adventure of unexpected heroes and you will enjoy yourself as you dig deeply into your own thoughts and reactions.

Blaze says

What some children go through no one should have to. It was interesting to see the fantasy mixed up with the real. I liked that the legend was used as a positive. I felt great sadness as I read. I did cry but I liked the hope that was given and I felt attached to all of the characters. I want to read more now. I hope the writer does write some more.

DJ says

I was lucky enough to receive a copy in exchange for an honest review.

In this unique take on the tale of King Arthur, we find Arthur faced with a new world Camelot where he must lead a crusade of unwanted kids. This is a heartbreak story of a world where kids are just tossed to the side. Arthur takes it upon himself to make sure all kids regardless of their background is accepted and loved. This is not an easy book to read because each chapter introduced us to more discarded children. It was hard to cope with the idea that people could simple throw out kids. This is story is an incredible mix of fantasy and real world. The characters were in a fictional land but the issues they dealt with are very real.
