



The Book Knights

J.G. McKenney

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When her parents are condemned to death by Morgan Fay for the crime of reading, Arti Penderhagen becomes a fugitive. Hunted by Mordred, the sadistic police captain who recites poetry to enhance his physical strength, Arti escapes to the Isle of Avalon, a sanctuary for outlaws. There she meets an old librarian named Merl who tells her about the Grail Tome, an ancient book in Morgan Fay's possession that can alter the course of history. Can Arti steal the book in time to save her family?

THE BOOK KNIGHTS is an Arthurian YA fantasy adventure in which knights wield words as weapons, librarians are wizards, and books can change the future.

The Book Knights Details

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Author : J.G. McKenney

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From Reader Review The Book Knights for online ebook

Rachelle (RavenclawRachelle) says

2.5 Stars

I received this book for free from the publisher through Netgalley in exchange for a fair and honest review.

The second I saw gender-bent King Arthur retelling revolving around books, I knew I wanted to read that story.

I found the magic system and the added element the written words power to be intriguing however I thought other aspects could use a little more polishing.

If you have any familiarity with the King Arthur legend you can see the direction certain relationships will take or how the endgame will play out based on everyone's roles in the original story; which I think is my biggest criticism of the work, the author didn't really take the story and make it her own.

There was a section in the middle of the novel where a controversial relationship begins to take shape that I just wanted to skip over, the instalove in that situation was just a bit cheesy and nauseating.

There were some threads I wish had been tied up that no explanation was given for and there were definitely areas of the lore or world-building which I wish had been elaborated on or explored further.

While the basic bones of this story has real potential, the execution left something to be desired.

Veselina says

Thanks for this book given by Netgalley and the publishers for a read just to give my honest opinion. It is one hell of a book.

The beginning of it is heart breaking for every book dragon like be/I can't call myself bookworm/. I won't reveal what it is exactly. You have to find for yourself.

The main idea of the book is soooo true. Words can change this world and there is people that want you to be ignorant and not to be a but read. You can say so much more just with words than by images.

So I don't really want to reveal too much for the book. You deserve to be surprised and read it by yourself. Enjoy and be prepared for the next one. I can't wait for it.

Meegy says

Loved this book to death. I don't know if this is a standalone or if it is a series. But I want to read more of Arti, Gal, Gwen, Lance and Merl.

The ending of the book left me intrigued, so I am really hoping there is more to this.

Hélène Louise says

(I thank Netgalley and NetGalley Co-Op for sending me the ARC in exchange for my honest review)

I didn't like much this book, but can't advise anyone against reading it, as it's clearly a case of "it's not you it's me".

The general idea is very good and should have been entertaining, but alas I was bored, finding difficult to read on, and stopped at 30% (as a rule I always try to push till the third of a book before deciding to give it up).

The characters are nice, but very classic, quite generic. I couldn't find them endearing at all. Reading on, I found many flaws in the story, convenient coincidences, characters' psychologies lacking depth, too much not very interesting information...

But still, the writing is good and enthusiastic, the story is thoroughly thought and told, and I'm sure that many readers will love this story. A shame I wasn't one of them!

Nildene says

DNF at 31%

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I tried to enjoy this book, but as I continued to read, I was unimpressed with the lack of intrigue the whole book had. I love the idea of retellings, but an Arthurian retelling with a dystopian twist just came across poorly. Nothing really fit, and I just couldn't continue without interest in it.

Unfortunately, because of my uninterest in the story as a whole, I couldn't push myself to a halfway point.

I guess the characters were okay – I didn't finish this book but the writing was good. I think it was the idea and plotline behind it that didn't interest me.

It's unfortunate but maybe one day I will give it another shot.

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2/5

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This was provided free from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Empress Reads says

In a world where reading and writing are crimes and books are contraband, Arti, the 15 year old main character of this quest must save the world. Seems like a lot to put on the shoulders of a teenage girl but why not?

I don't want to give too many spoilers but I enjoyed this story! I loved the character development and how true to herself Arti and her best friend Gal seemed. The old Librarian Merl was a relief once his true purpose was shown. Another thing I liked about this book is the setting. I'm unsure if it was a futuristic world or just a past world that discovered technology before our time. So it truly took this story to a separate place. The ending had me on the edge of my couch and I neglected homework to finish.

Morgan Fay and her son, the Incendi captain could have used a bit more fleshing out. I was not impressed by the son at all, I cannot even remember his name.

Overall I loved it. This was my first ARC from netgalley and I'm so glad I got to read this book.
#TheBookKnights

Kate (BloggingwithDragons) says

I received this book for free from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Actual Rating: 2.5 stars

I really liked the premise of the The Book Knights—Fahrenheit 451 meets Arthurian legend. As a massive book nerd, The Book Knights was a dream to read, it offers a secret order of librarians, Grail Tomes, word fighting, and magical pens that rewrite the future. But while I really enjoyed the premise of the novel, I felt the execution was lacking. I found the portrayal of characters and the world building confusing. This book also felt more geared towards younger audiences than towards young adult readers.

I loved the portrayal of Arthurian characters in a modern world, which is definitely the biggest strength and appeal of the novel. The bond between main character Arti Penderhagen and her friend Gal (modern day Arthur and Galahad), was really special and something I enjoyed immensely. Arti promised to teach Gal how to read, something strictly forbidden in Morgan Fay's dystopian world, if Gal taught her how to survive on the streets, where Arti found herself after the imprisonment of her reading parents. I really adored how each character came to love books in their own unique journey—something that every reader experiences, but was more intensely felt in this dystopian universe, where books were outlawed and burned and its readers persecuted.

I especially loved the characterization of the villains of the novel. Morgan Fay sought to rid the world of the power of words, burning all books she could find in order to reach the final page of her Grail Tome. Once on the final page, Morgan could write the future to her own liking, which would be very, very bad for lovers of the written word and the rest of the general populace who would be forced to worship her. Mordred in this book, Morgan's captain of the Incendi police, was a very compelling villain. Mordred wielded words, known as the Verses, as deadly weapons and hunted for the Challenger—the one who could stop Morgan—Arti.

Arti and her (Book) Knights of the Round Table were all female except Lance, based on Lancelot. I felt it odd that that he was the only male Knight and thought he stuck out like a sore thumb. I am guessing the author made him male instead of female simply so he could have an eye roll inducing instalove with Gwen. I would have much preferred that the author kept with his motif of female knights and then just included a lesbian romance. Instead, this hetero romance felt like a cop-out. On the other hand, I was also expecting a love triangle as per the classic Arthur-Gwenevere-Lancelot tradition, but there was none, which also felt like a letdown. However, the fact that the Knight's Round Table was in a motorhome was so freaking clever and characteristic of the enjoyable quirkiness of the novel.

The decisions about the characters were not the only thing that confused me, I was also perplexed by the world-building in the novel. I was puzzled by the description of the areas in the novel. Even after finishing the book, I am uncertain whether the entire world took place in the Isle of Avalon, which may or may not have been just a city? Though the author states that Merl, the Merlin of this tale, travels far and wide to procure books, the details of which were not explained.

I did feel that the writing style of this novel was not as detailed or complex, and was in fact, a little cheesy and focused on telling, rather than showing. For instance, when Arti and Gwen finally start bonding, it is described as, "From that moment on, despite the four years that separated them in age, Arti and Gwen were like friends at a sleepover, whispering stories well into the night." I find this type of "telling" unnecessary, but it is something that younger readers may not mind. For older readers, it may be a turnoff. And though the book attempts to give each character a deep background with complex motivations, it feels superficial and like it only scratches the surface. This is something else that would not be as big of a problem for younger readers.

Similarly, I did not care for what I felt was an overly perfect ending, with Arti being almost magically reunited with her formerly imprisoned parents and the immediate adoption of Gal as her sister, but honestly, the epilogue sounded amazing! I would read the next book in this series, but know to expect a light, fun read that would be more suitably geared towards younger audiences.

Book Review Policy

Connect with Me:

Natalie says

Received from Netgalley. I like the simplicity of the cover artwork and how authentic it would feel. I was already in love with this book from reading the blurb. It's a tough challenge to take on something that already exists and make it your own, but this was done perfectly.

The flow of the story was effortless, old legends rebuilt in a new and intriguing world. Number one place I wouldn't want to go. No reading or writing? Burning books? Such a cruel world. It's a story of adventure, magic and friendship, with new characters from old legends, genderbent, reinvented and kick ass.

Favourite character in this one, I would have to say Mordred. Out of all the characters he stands out the most, being the most experienced and bad ass relentless on his mission.

I like how the magic is woven in this one, new and exciting yet at the same time subtle. I thought the story was wrapped up perfectly and then there was that epilogue. More to come? I hope so. I thoroughly enjoyed this one.

Kaya says

Review copy provided by the publishers via Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review. I thank them greatly!

"To Gwen, books were doorways into worlds of wonder, every work possessing its own magic, it's own reason to risk everything to visit its pages..."

Stars, I love that quote. I mean, let's be honest, if I had to choose between certain life and reading I think we all know which one comes first!

The Book Knights is an Arthurian tale, complete with all the characters you know and love. Reading is banned in this world

*cue gasps of outright horror

However Arti's parents have a secret library. When they are captured by the Incendi, Morgan Fay's fiery lackeys, she seeks a way to bring them back while also discovering her own destiny.

Some absolutely fantastic aspects I loved:

~ **The diversity!** Gal was described as having dark skin, and there were people of different economic classes involved.

~ **Female friendships!** This is such an underrated thing in YA which is ridiculous but I'm happy to report there was none of that nonsense here. Gwen and Arti are at first wary of each other but they become fast friends and bond quickly.

~ **Mashup of magic and technology**

I very much enjoyed the almost science fiction aspect as there are vid links and cars but also magic is prevalent in the story, and they work flawlessly together.

~ **The focus on words**

Poems and verses are the "magic" in this story which I love. Reading is something that's lost in this world, and the author heavily implies just how much the written word truly means to us.

I do have some complaints, however. I felt a LOT of the writing was mediocre, and a bit cliche. I also felt the relationships were a bit rushed, as well as the characters. Also the plot. Basically, the entire book was rushed leaving me with a shallow feeling at the end. The world building wasn't great, it wasn't developed but somehow kinda info dumpy?

Despite these problems, it was a creative concept and I think this author shows promise. The story just needs

more meat, and the writing some more editing, and this will go places!

If you like any kind of Arthur tale, maybe give this one a go?

Also, The Lunar Chronicles, while obviously being very different, also has a similar feel to it. Technology, an evil "queen", and so forth.

Hope y'all enjoyed the review!

Grace says

Fahrenheit 451 AU of the King Arthur story.

The cover art for this is fabulous. The book itself is very... odd. The setting, this type of modern-but-not-modern *Fahrenheit 451* dystopia, is very strange, and I never fully understood the world. They talk about different countries and other places, but both Morgan Fay's realm and "the Isle" seem about the size of Manhattan. Yet, somehow the fate of the world hangs in the balance? Why does the Grail Tome care if Morgan Fay is burning all the books in her little city? Aren't there millions of other books in the world, whose existence should hold off the coming of the apocalyptic "last page"? There clearly are plenty of books just across the river on the Isle.

The writing seemed clunky, and most of the characters I felt like I hardly knew by the end. Arti and Gal had the only relationship with any weight. They were good, but everything else felt a little off. Even most of the Arthurian riffs ("whoso pulleth these words from this tome") seemed mostly awkward. The most intriguing part was the epilogue, but I think I would probably pass on a sequel.

Shelby M. (Read and Find Out) says

My Video Review

Lauren says

The introduction to this book's world broke me and I do not ever wish to ever travel to this world at that time. The beautifully descriptive writing makes this world an easy to imagine and makes the opening that much harder hitting (no spoilers!). But reading is a crime in this world! (not a spoiler)

The Book Knights is an Arthurian tale with all the characters you know and love with wonderfully inventive name play (the myths and legends geek in me laughed and loved them). The story was effortless to read, the old myths and legends that I enjoy being rebuilt in a captivating new dystopian world with new characters and old characters being reinvented was so exciting for me.

shout out to the author J.G. McKenney for managing to get all the facts and small details together perfectly in this story, for me anyway. This book is everything I could ever hope for in a good story, it made me laugh, cry, and cheer. I honestly cannot say enough good things about this story and if you love fantastical tales or fantasy read this book.

Arthurianmaiden says

The Book Knights is a surprisingly good and cute (and small) book. I say surprisingly mostly because I haven't read good new arthurian books in ages, so that's on me, not on the novel.

The Book Knights is a dystopia (it gave me shadowrun vibes) where Morgan le Fay rules (through her Corporation) over the world, banishing writing and reading, destroying books through fire. Arti (the clear king Arthur character) is a young girl who has to run away from her home when her parents are jailed for possessing books.

The story is a mix of fantasy (the words on the books do have real magical power), nice arthurian winks and an original world. It was an incredibly enjoyable read (and other arthurian character in the novel are Mordred, Guinevere, Vivian, Merlin, Lancelot and my favourite, the young girl called Gal who is clearly Galahad and was the most complete character of the story, in my opinion).

My only negative comment is that I would have loved to know more about the world and each newly introduced character and the story seemed a bit rushed, but I am only nitpicking.

Jessica says

Where to begin with this review? I won't deny that I had high expectations for The Book Knights. The fact that this story promised to merge together a dystopian world where readers are banned, and Arthurian legend, had me really excited. Can I please profess that I secretly loved every second a new character was introduced in this story? Their names were perfection and, set against the backdrop that McKenney created for them, they had me in their thrall. I was ready for an adventure, and I definitely had one.

Let me go ahead and start with the characters, since I've already touched on that. As I mentioned, each character has a name that ties them into the Arthurian legend that this book lovingly pulls from. Arti Penderhagen, our protagonist, is a reader who is forced to flee her family home during a book raid. She instantly peaked my interest. Here was a young girl, taught to read from childhood, out in the world on her own. I was fascinated as I watched her navigate this new world, where being a reader is a death sentence. I think Arti was the easiest to connect with, because we were kindred spirits. Readers forever. It helped that she got the most face time here, since I really got to know who she was. While I loved all the other characters as well, I never got to know them as well as Arti. There wasn't time. I would have loved some background into their personalities, and gotten to know more about their views on the world they live in.

As it stands, this is a very quick moving book. Characters are introduced in a way that feels natural, which was nice, but the plot moves along so speedily that I never quite felt like I had my footing in Arti's world. I had so many questions about Morgan Fay's motives. I wanted to know more about the general public, and what their opinions were on the world at hand. I also desperately wanted to know more about the Book Knights as whole, since the book had to give a whirlwind explanation in order to move back into the action. While I enjoyed this whole plot, I just honestly wished that the story was longer so that there was more time to get into the the thick of things. I like closure, and I crave world building. The Book Knights was a little shaky on both counts.

I suppose it all comes down to the fact that I just wanted more from this book than I received. The writing was great, the characters were well rendered even if they didn't have as much depth as I wanted, but I missed out on the sturdy world building that I'm so used to in Fantasy books. Arti's world was one that fascinated me, mainly because of how close we might actually be to living in it. I would have loved to see more background established. I wanted more details to help me understand why Arti's destiny was so important, and really color in the full picture.

As it stands, I'm happy to give this book a solid three stars. I enjoyed my time reading it immensely. I accidentally left this book when I went home to visit, and was absolutely devastated until I got it back and was able to finish it. That, my friends, is the mark of a good story. I eagerly await more.

Carrie Dooy says

I received a copy of The Book Knights from Net Galley and have to say, I absolutely loved it!

It is a King Arthur retelling, which took me longer to realise than I care to admit! However once I did realise everything clicked into place.

It follows our main character Arti, who's parents are arrested for being readers and for having a hidden collection of books, which in this world is completely punishable. Arti goes on the run and meets Gal, a young street smart girl. And together, along with some characters you meet later, they embark on an adventure to save the world from the impending doom.

I really loved this book. I thought the characters were all developed well and I really became fond of them whilst reading. For some reason I kept picturing Merl to be similar to Radagast from LOTRs which I think increased my love for his character!

The story was a lot of fun to read and the pacing was good. I was quite worried when by 75% of the way through the book the “main event” so to speak hadn't happened, however the ending didn't feel rushed at all thankfully!

Overall I loved this book and would recommend to anyone who likes fantasy, magic or just a good story!
