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Favorite Medieval Tales



Synopsis

In nine favorite tales from medieval Europe, characters such as King Arthur, Beowulf, and the merry outlaw Robin Hood weave a glorious tapestry of an enchanted time. Full color.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 860L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 96 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #554,352 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #90 in [Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Arthurian](#) #156 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Medieval](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

Customer Reviews

As Mary Pope Osborne tells the reader in her marvelous introduction..."In the beginning of medieval times in Europe, books did not exist. Most people were unable to read or write. Nevertheless, there were stories - stories of heroes and monsters, told by minstrels and poets, that were passed down orally from one generation to the next..." Eventually, these stories were written down by scribes, and Ms Osborne has collected nine favorite tales to share. From Robin Hood And His Merry Men, The Sword In The Stone, Sir Gawain And The Green Knight, and Finn Maccoul, to Beowulf, The Werewolf, The Song Of Roland, Island Of The Lost Children, and Chanticleer And The Fox, these engaging retellings are dramatic and entertaining, easy to read, and often better when read aloud. Meet monsters, knights, heroes, and dragons, and travel to faraway, mysterious, and enchanting places. Troy Howell's vivid, lush paintings, stay true to the medieval style, and add just the right touch to enhance each story. Ms Osborne and Mr Howell include informative reference notes on the stories, medieval story forms, people, time periods, language, chronology, and the art of the middle ages that is sure to peak the interest of young and old alike. Perfect for youngsters ten and older,

Favorite Medieval Tales is a masterpiece of intriguing storytelling that will whet the appetite, and send readers looking for more.

The reading level for this book is given as ages 9-12, but the fairytale-simplicity of the retelling of the stories makes this collection much more appropriate for the *under 9* age group. The stories are sanitary enough to read to very young children. The part of the collection I found most useful for my 12 year old who is currently studying the Middle Ages, was the notes in the back of the book. "Notes on the Stories" tells the background and time period of each story and a brief bio of the author (when known). "Story Forms of Medieval Times", "Some Early Peoples of Western Europe", "Time Periods", "Words Related to Medieval Times", and "The Evolution of the English Language" are all very brief (total of 3 1/2 pages for all) but informative.

I was taking a course on storytelling for children when I came upon this book. What first caught my eye were the old-style illustrations by Troy Howell. They were done in such a way as to enhance the book without distracting from the story. When I was able to peruse the book, I was impressed with the way the author chose and arranged the stories so that you could almost track the evolution of medieval storytelling (and quite possibly has one of the more easier versions of Beowulf that second and third graders could manage). The stories are short enough that they can be read out loud for a class or reading circle; yet have enough content to hold the children's attention. Another bonus to the book (for parents and teachers) is that Ms. Osborne in her introductions gives her reason why she chose the tales in this volume... and (for the kids, as well as parents and teachers) in the back there is a glossary of sorts-- notes to each story as to where it came from, and why it was written, brief writeups for the different cultures, story forms, time periods, and evolution of the English language. There's even a small section with words. This would be a good book to have in libraries for teachers and parents; for the children to be exposed to several different classical stories, as well as give them a variety to read and experiment with. It might encourage a love of history as well as a love of literature.

Well, I don't really like Osbourne's "Magic TreeHouse" tales, but don't judge THIS beautiful book by "those." THIS BOOK is very nicely done. All the representative tales from the middle ages are here, retold in a clear, easy to read (or listen to) prose that captures most of the original (in most cases.) The illustrations are captivating. Each tale includes a title page that has a short quote in the original language (with a modern translation) which will intrigue some children, and there is a fine time line

at the back of the book. We used this to supplement medieval studies in our homeschool for a second grader. A great resource.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this collection of medieval tales to my 4-year-old daughter. Though the illustrations are beautiful, keep in mind that, for the young, this is a text-heavy book. The author completely won over the amateur linguist in me in her introduction when she stated that as she compiled these tales, an intriguing subtext emerged: the story of the development of the English language itself. In a bow to that subtext, she begins each story with a cover page that has a single sentence taken from an untranslated version of the tale, followed by the modern English translation of the sentence. Fascinating! I was also impressed that she managed to collect stories that represented so many subgenres of Medieval literature: epic, *lais*, etc. The stories are wonderful and well-written; this is a book that parents and kids will return to again and again. Other top picks: SanSouci's *Young Merlin*, *Young Arthur*, *Young Guinevere*, and *Young Lancelot* books, all beautifully illustrated and exciting; and James Baldwin's *Fifty Famous Stories Retold*, which, aside from being a page-turner, is a book that EVERYONE should read for the sake of cultural literacy.

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