



Elidor (Essential Modern Classics)

Alan Garner

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The much-loved classic, finally in ebook.

Roland, Helen, Nicholas and David, four Manchester children, are led into Elidor, a twilight world almost destroyed by fear and darkness.

On a gloomy day in Manchester, Roland, Helen, Nicholas and David are lured into a ruined church, where the fabric of time and place is weak enough to allow them into the twilight world of Elidor. It is a place almost destroyed by fear and darkness, and the children are charged with guarding its Treasures while a way is sought to save the dying land.

Then the evil forces find a path through to this world...

This new edition of Alan Garner's classic includes a special "Why You'll Love This Book" introduction from bestselling author, Jonathan Stroud.

Elidor (Essential Modern Classics) Details

Date : Published April 15th 2013 by HarperCollins (first published 1965)

ISBN :

Author : Alan Garner

Format : Kindle Edition 208 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Fiction, Young Adult, Adventure

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From Reader Review *Elidor* (Essential Modern Classics) for online ebook

Ian Kirkpatrick says

When I was nine (back in the dim, distant past that we'll refer to as 1968) I had a teacher called Mrs McEke. She was a strict disciplinarian but she probably needed to be given that her class was full of little oiks from the local council estate (like me!). Mrs McEke used to spend the last half-hour of every school day reading to us. She loved language and was a wonderful orator, bringing the stories to life through the strength of her vocal delivery.

Given that we were only nine she made some fairly ambitious choices; *The Hobbit*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The Silver Sword*, *The Railway Children* and even John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos* (definitely left-field). However I will always be indebted to her for choosing to read Alan Garner's *Elidor*.

Elidor had only been published in 1965, so at that stage it was a fairly contemporary novel. Although Garner was ostensibly writing for children the book had some very adult themes. It was a brave Mrs McEke that tried to illustrate symbolism to a bunch of largely disinterested nine year olds. However she would probably be delighted to learn that some forty-four years on at least one of her pupils still remembers the symbolic importance of the sword, the spear, the stone and the cauldron.

I was completely entranced by the tale of four children and their rusty relics, which opened a gateway to another world. It seemed like a cool and edgy version of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" but set in the real world, or at least a world that I could identify with.

We used to have a travelling library van that visited the estate every Monday evening, and I managed to obtain a copy of *Elidor* and raced through it in advance of Mrs McEke's reading so that I was always one step ahead of her. Garner's writing was a revelation to me and he became one of my early heroes as I worked my way through his other books.

Characterisation is not really his strong point as a writer, although his dialogue is an object lesson to any aspiring writer, exploding like little emotional depth charges on the page. As ever with Garner it is the power of myth which is his main fascination.

As an adult I do have a few gripes with the novel which weren't as apparent to me when I first read it. Overall the tone is cold and distant. There is very little to engage the reader in *Elidor*'s plight, and therefore very little sense of empathy. The ending seems horribly rushed, almost as if Garner had grown tired of his tale and wanted to finish it up and move on. However these minor gripes aside *Elidor* will always have a special place in the memories of my childhood.

Bionic Jean says

Elidor is a short novel, a favourite from late childhood. Timeless, visionary, a tale of magic and myth, of hope and despair, it was a dark antidote to the happy Blyton bubble. In Alan Garner's world, reality had teeth and an edgy urban feel. Parts of his world were dark, malevolent and twisted. Primal forces were at work

here and there was an impending sense of doom.

Having said this, much of the novel has humour and a sense of fun. Many years later, a reader inevitably has a different perspective rereading a favourite novel. It is a tribute to Alan Garner's writing that he can switch from powerful fantastical scenes to humdrum family life in a suburban home of yesteryear - and carry the reader with him.

This novel was originally written by Alan Garner in 1965, from his own radio play. It features four young teenage children, David, Nicholas, Helen and Roland, who inadvertently break through the fabric of time and space at a weak point, to find themselves in another universe. The plot moves to and fro between the sprawling city of Manchester, and Gorias, the gateway to Elidor. Elidor is, as it sounds, a magical fantasy world; a world of beauty and goodness, a golden Utopia, as described by one of its inhabitants, Malebron, but a world which is under threat from evil forces.

At the start of the novel, the family is in Manchester, in the process of moving house. The children are therefore left more or less to their own devices. It is a typical gloomy day, and our protagonists go into the city centre, to find something to do to relieve the boredom (and naturally avoid being given jobs to do). A mechanical street map provides a few minutes' diversion, and on impulse they agree to find a road picked apparently at random.

From now on the foreboding seems to increase. The children walk along increasingly deserted back streets, parts of the "slum clearance", feeling more and more apprehensive as they notice the difference from their own comfortable suburban home. The reader is not sure whether it is the unfamiliarity which is putting the children on edge, or something else, something more sinister. There seems to be more squabbling, but then perhaps this is part of the gritty realism of a typical family, rather than the more familiar descriptions in children's literature from the period, of idealised families. The children discover a church in ruins, and an old football. Inevitably during the game which follows, someone kicks the ball through one of the church's remaining windows, and the glass crashes into splinters. From that chilling moment, everything in the children's world changes as they discover the strange, mystical and mysterious world of Elidor,

"Round, and round, his voice went, and through it came a noise. It was low and vibrant, like wind in a chimney. It grew louder, more taut, and the wall blurred, and the floor shook. The noise was in the fabric of the church: it pulsed with sound. Then he heard a heavy door open; and close; and the noise faded away. It was now too still in the church, and the footsteps were moving over the rubble in the passage downstairs. 'Who's that?' said Roland. The footsteps reached the stairs, and began to climb."

As one by one the children are lured through the portal into the twilight world of Elidor, we view this through Roland's eyes, and feel what he feels. Roland is the most sensitive, the one we identify with. He is the one in the group whom nobody else will listen to, but is proved to be right. All the children are sensible and courageous, but only Roland remains clear-thinking and loyal under almost intolerable peer pressure. All the children must make choices and take on responsibilities far beyond anything their parents could understand. And here again is an irresistible tacit assumption made by older children's books, that the adults have closed minds. Adults may be cruel, stupid or risible - mere figures of fun. They may on the other hand be kind and sensible. But they are always, without a doubt, unimaginative and clueless.

Alan Garner here has made the parts where the four children are back in the dreary world of Manchester, a welcome relief; amusing sections, probably based on his own experience. Who can remember parties gone to under duress? Or duty visits to friends approved of by parents? Probably quite a few readers will recognise and chuckle at some beautifully drawn cameo roles. The inept but well-meaning father, the long-suffering

but patient mother might also raise a smile. The aspirations of the parents in moving to somewhere just outside Manchester, the description of poverty-ridden slums, and post-war bombsites with ongoing demolition still awaiting construction, all set this story firmly within the late 1950's or early 1960's. It was a world and a time where children could go off and play in such places, where children were expected to devise their own amusements for much of the time, where even lower-middle class parents such as these were not overly concerned if the children walked back on their own late at night from a party.

There is now a nostalgic element to all of this. At the time it felt realistic - my own childhood sat somewhere between these children's and those in the back-to-back housing which was being cleared away and replaced by highrise tower blocks. I belonged to neither group, but knew children in both. I had discovered Alan Garner for myself and loved his writing. He seemed to speak to me alone. I loved his lyricism, his poetry; the way he could convey the beauty of a sound, an image, something unknown and intangible, and almost indescribable.

Yet his was also a grittier world than the cosy reality of most approved children's writers. He had an "edge". He had the imagination of C.S. Lewis - but his was a darker, brooding, gutsier world altogether. Think of a pagan version of Narnia, and you're almost there. I read several novels by Alan Garner, but later discovered that after the first four, his reality became increasingly darker than my own.

The amusing domestic episodes may come across to a modern young reader as almost historic. The technology seems ancient, from the days before everyone had computers. The talk of mechanical maps, radio signals, the horizontal and vertical holds on the television and the tiny white dot on the television screen getting smaller and smaller as it was turned off. At the time of publication they served to disperse the tension, and also make the reader yearn to be back in the fantasy world of Elidor. Perhaps they still do.

Although the children use slang from a bygone age, which may make a modern reader grimace or wince a little, these are no mere simpering characters, but a believable family. In the Watson family as any other, there is competitiveness, quarrelling and minor squabbles. Much of the narrative deals with the children's difficulties with parents and teachers, and the sheer impracticality of concealing their other-world responsibilities from their daily life in Manchester. But Elidor crashes through normality,

"The sound of air being torn like cloth burst on them, a dreadful sound that cracked with the force of lightning, as if the sky had split, and out of it came the noise of galloping hoofs. There was no warning, no approach: the hoofs were there, in the mist, close to the children, just ahead of them, on top of them, furious ... All about them was hoof and mane and foam,"

With writing like that, the readers long to be back in the world of Elidor. It is a magical land, seen only in glimpses. The powers of evil seem to probe into the dreariness of Manchester, yet there is Elidor, whose very name seems to conjure up light and hope. But Elidor is all but dying, and overrun by evil. It is up to the four children to guard four treasures from the dark forces, but since their true nature is not apparent in their home world, their experience in Elidor becomes more like a dream, a dream which just occasionally bursts through into their comfortable yet ordinary life.

The two worlds merge at unexpected times. Roland has strange glimpses - some of which fill him with fear, but of course nobody believes him, and this is a trigger for him to push and push until ultimately the inevitable happens. Roland has personal integrity and responsibility. He knows he cannot be blameless for any terrible events which may be caused by his actions. He is a real hero, not a cardboard figure. But he is the only one in the end to hold to the promise all four made; the only one to stay true to the memory as time passes. He never becomes blind to the sinister portents, picking up ominous signals and clues; vague dark

shadows in space, a cryptic design, and a rhyme on an old broken piece of pottery. He never forgets their immensely important task of guarding the treasures. It is Roland alone, who remains constant in his awareness of their destiny, and their part in the struggle to hold back the terrible darkness by fulfilling the prophecy.

After a humorous episode in which the children are either excruciatingly bored, or squirming with embarrassment, we become aware that they are in real danger. The tension is cranked up unrelentingly as, pursued by dark forces, they,

"... ran from pool to pool of the street lamps and sometimes they glimpsed a shadow, and sometimes there was a tall silhouette; and there was always too much darkness. When they turned the corner the white fluorescence of the railway station at the end of the road was like a sanctuary. They drove themselves toward its glass and concrete, as if ...danger of spear-edge and shield-rim would be powerless in the neon glare."

And the conclusion of the novel is a masterpiece of terror, leaving the reader wanting more - yet dreading what it might portend. For there is never an easy, happy ending, in a pagan myth.

Alan Garner's writing stems from myth and fantasy, but he invariably chooses the darker side of Faery. Two of his natural successors are Philip Pullman and Graham Joyce, although both authors conform to the present taste for longer novels. Philip Pullman has also created an "other" universe which does not always adhere to conventional moral precepts. Graham Joyce's novels have a similar pagan feel to Alan Garner's.

The origins of this particular novel are from a Welsh folktale, whose title can be translated as *"Elidor and the Golden Ball"*. In it, Gerald of Wales, *"Giraldus Cambrensis"*, described his 1188 journey across the country in a medieval account, *"Itinerarium Cambriae"*, or *"The Itinerary Through Wales"*. In the account, Elidor was a priest who, as a boy, was led by dwarfs to a castle of gold. This castle was in a land which, although beautiful, was not illuminated by the full light of the sun. Alan Garner develops this idea, making the golden walls of Gorias contrast with the dull sky in Elidor.

Reading the novel resulting from Alan Garner's script, it is possible to envisage how atmospheric the play must have been. The language is almost mystical in parts when read aloud, and with today's opportunities for excellence in cinematic special effects, it seems surprising that it has never been filmed.

This time round I listened to the text, and also read it on the page. It still had the magic. Even with 21st century eyes and a great deal more experience, I still found Alan Garner's writing very evocative, imaginative and powerful. And I still found the part when Findhorn finally appears almost unbearably poignant.

All things have their note, and will answer to it.

Bookguide says

When this was published, quality over quantity was still in evidence, and imagination prevails over description. Given the length of most fantasy books nowadays, with trilogies and series appearing more often than not, it's surprising that Alan Garner managed to pack so much tension into such a short book. As mother to a child who will always pick the shortest book on offer, and is therefore often left reading something which has no plot and little imagination, I've already advised him to try some of these older books to

improve his experience of reading.

In spite of the unicorn on the front cover, which turns out to be a latecomer to the story, this turns out to be an intense and creepy fantasy story where most of the action actually takes place in the real world. This would be a great book to get confident readers interested in fantasy. I'm sure Alan Garner's *The Owl Service* was one of the books which sparked my first forays into the genre when I was twelve or thirteen. Recommended for children and adults who enjoy some suspense and magic, but are not prone to nightmares. This is no horror, but it does build on childhood nightmares.

'The darkness grew,' said Malebron. 'It is always there. We did not watch, and the power of night closed on Elidor. We had so much of ease that we did not mark the signs - a crop blighted, a spring failed, a man killed. Then it was too late - war, and siege, and betrayal, and the dying of the light.'[...]

'There is no hope but you.'

'Me,' said Roland. 'I'm no use. What could I do?'

'Nothing,' said Malebron, 'without me. And without you, I shall not live. Alone, we are lost: together, we shall bring the morning.'

Sue Bridgwater says

In *Elidor*, the mythical and legendary sources of the motifs are clear ; the wasteland and the maimed King are from the Grail legend, and the adventure which opens the book is based on the story of Childe Roland. Garner believes that the force of the magical elements will be stronger if they can be seen to affect events in the objective world. He is aware of the significance of place, of the need to belong, to find the right place, to fit into and to accept oneself. Poignancy is heightened in Garner to a tragic pitch by his protagonists' ultimate failure to win the battle for self-acceptance and self-control. There is triumph at the end of *Elidor*, but it is qualified, mitigated by grief.

The book is very much concerned with Roland and his search for identity, meaning and purpose in his life; he agrees to go into the mound of Vandwy to recover the treasures of *Elidor* for Malebron; but he gets the courage for this from his sense of loyalty to others. His brother and sister are trapped in the mound, and he feels he has no choice but to rescue them. Hence any dedication to the cause of "Good" here is unconscious and bound up in the specific act of rescuing his loved ones. It is only later than Roland begins to conceive of himself as in some way allied with Malebron in the battle between light and dark forces in *Elidor*.

Nevertheless a quest has been undertaken, and in very traditional terms; to go into the Magic place – the place of death, the dark tower, the underworld – and rescue the good that is trapped there. In this quest, Roland is successful. He rescues Helen from the equivalent of *Elfland*, just as his original in the ballad does.

[13]

But this is a beginning, not an end, to Roland's story. It is no part of tradition for the hero to be followed into his future life in the real world and for the reader to see him struggling with the consequences of his commitment. Garner, in a book written so lucidly as to be accessible to a very young readership, gives us a protagonist who, on completion of his heroic quest, has hardly begun to come to terms with himself, with the negative and destructive side of his psyche, or with his place in the family that is the chief element in his social context. The conflict between good and evil that is happening in *Elidor* comes back with Roland into

the heart of the family.

Here Garner is making greater use of folktale technique than may be immediately obvious. He takes us back to LeGuin's assertion that Fantasy is about, that its actions take place in, the unconscious mind. [14] On one level of interpretation, Elidor is Roland's unconscious dimension. Malebron, the maimed King who rules in this wasteland, is the dark side of Roland. He has power, but is crippled. He is ambivalent, the representative of the light or good force in Elidor, yet demanding and manipulative of the children, uncaring of their individual needs. He is expressive of Roland's own sense of not belonging, of being odd, of being undervalued. (Note that Malebron tells him that here, in Elidor, he, the youngest and the weakest, is the strongest and most significant). This is clear evidence that the land of Elidor and the figure of Malebron are externalisations of the type used in folktale and in High Fantasy, of aspects of Roland. Garner then carries this externalisation over into our dimension. Leaving behind the Otherworld and its King, he next embodies Roland's disturbed state of mind in the peculiar happenings that take place around him because of the presence in our world of the treasures from Elidor. The burial of the treasure in the garden signifies Roland's attempts to repress his still unresolved feelings of self-doubt and resentment. The misbehaviour of the electrical objects in the Watson household becomes, according to this reading, a kind of poltergeist manifestation of Roland's strong repressed emotion. There is a good deal in Roland of the despised youngest son of three, who in fairy tales of the traditional kind would be fated to come out on top in a blaze of glorious self-justification. Less optimistically, Garner shows how Roland's desperate attempts to make himself important only bring trouble on himself and others. It is even partly true that Elidor is saved in spite of, rather than because of, Roland's efforts in the second part of the story.

Back in the real world, Roland becomes passionately enamoured of the idea of himself as the champion of Good, the ally of Malebron, dedicated to the salvation of Elidor. He sees himself, as it were, as the hero of a children's quest story, with a high destiny to fulfil. This runs up against obdurate reality in the face of the other children's cynicism about or fearful rejection of the otherworld experience. This is part of a pattern in his life;

"'Come off it, Roland. You're always imagining things.' That was a family joke."

It is on this family tradition that the others rely. Nicholas falls back on the idea of mass hallucination, David on coincidence, as explanations of their experience. Helen simply tries to avoid the subject. This rouses Roland in two ways. The best side of him is inspired by the thought that he is the only one loyal to Elidor and the only one who can protect his unheeding family. He performs an act of self-giving love in order to bar the door between Elidor and his home, and so save his family from invasion and attack. At this point he does achieve a high degree of self-awareness and accepts that the existence of this door is his responsibility, that he has a duty to unmake it. Unfortunately, he is not mature enough to be aware of his own mixed motives or the dark impulses in himself. He believes he clings to Elidor for Elidor's sake; but partly he clings to it for reasons of self-validation, to make himself feel important. And it is the urge to be important in his sibling's eyes that leads him into an act of hubris parallel with Ged's in releasing the Shadow. Determined to make the other three see that he is right, he forces them to look at the partial Evil from Elidor. And the four children are trapped into becoming the means by which the men can enter this world.

"'I didn't mean it,' said Roland. 'I only wanted to show you – so you'd know.'"

Roland has allowed out into his relationships with the world and other people, something from the darkness of his inner self which is destructive and self-seeking.

There has been much discussion of the ending of Elidor. Elidor is gloriously safe; but Findhorn the Unicorn is horribly dead. Does this mean that Roland is irreparably damaged by his experience? Or is Garner saying that no victory is without its price? At any event, this is undoubtedly a book about the formation of the self-concept and about the changes and developments necessary in the individual if she or he is to cope adequately with relationships and events. To that extent it puts to Roland the traditional question; "What are you like?" Garner's presentation of a protagonist who cannot face up to this question, is his original and personal use of the traditional framework.

Jed Mayer says

Minor Garner, but notable for its urban/suburban settings. A thoughtful update on the Narnia motif, with a boldly bleak ending subversive of the escapist fantasy tradition.

Laura says

From BBC Radio 4 Extra:

Roland, Helen, David and Nicholas Watson have escaped to Manchester to avoid helping out at their house move. After a detour down a creepy backstreet, they come upon a derelict church and a mysterious fiddle player.

Little do the children know that chance didn't bring them there, but a prophecy hundreds of years old. One by one they realise that the church isn't all it seems, as the fabric of time and space opens and they are propelled into the dying and strange world of Elidor...

Episode 2 of 4

With his siblings disappeared into the Mound, King Malebron says only Roland can save them.

Episode 3 of 4

Roland's strong imagination threatens to draw the Evil towards the Treasures.

Episode 4 of 4

Time has run out for the Watsons and Malebron - can Helen help to save Elidor?

Alan Garner's classic fantasy adventure dramatised in four-parts by Don Webb.

Stars Mossie Cassidy as Roland, Raffey Cassidy as Helen, William Rush as Nicholas, Stephen Hoyle as David, Toby Hadoke as Malebron and Fiona Clarke as Mrs Watson.

Original music composed by Ian Williams

Directed at BBC Manchester by Charlotte Riches.

Made for BBC Radio 4 Extra and first broadcast in April 2011.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b010...>

Rose A says

A beautiful book that absolutely terrified me as a child yet compelled me so much that I read it several times over. It has stuck with me into adulthood and flashes of it come back at odd times. The violinist in the ruined church, the pull of the standing stones, the desolation of Elidor and the absolute terror of the shadowy figures melting through the wall into the real world. Alan Garner is such an underrated writer. I need to read this again!

Cliff says

I seldom give bad reviews to a book. I assumed that it was because my selection process comes through via recommendations that I trust. But recently, Elidor found its way into my view. I can't honestly remember where it came from...perhaps from an author's discussion.

This book is often mentioned as having to help start the Fantasy genre. And there are comparisons to be made to Narnia. However, I've commented on this before in one of my other reviews...writing has evolved tremendously in the last 50 years, much to the detriment of this novel.

Description...there is practically none (in that aspect, it is in sync with Narnia which is almost non-descriptive as well). Pacing is also non-existent. Characterization...again, none. Obviously, Roland is clearly the protagonist, but the other siblings could have been rewritten as a single character for all the distinct personality they showed. And what absolutely burned me was the LACK of any sort of explanation of why or even what drove these events. When I finished and realized that there was absolutely ZERO denouement, I immediately wanted the hours I spent reading this book back.

At no point did the children DO anything to further the plot. In fact, the majority of the challenge to Roland was convincing his elder siblings to even participate in the events. It's only as events unfold around them that they play any role.

If one wants to see how the early days of fantasy began, I suppose this book may be worth looking into. But storytelling has simply come so much farther since this book was written, there's no way any publisher would have approved this for print in this century.

Mark Lawrence says

In 1967 Stephen King first got the idea to write an epic series inspired by the poem "Childe Rowland to the Dark Tower Came" by Robert Browning in 1855. And Browning took the line from King Lear, written by Shakespeare in 1607 ... in which it is a line of nonsense from a man pretending madness.

However King was not the first fantasy writer to draw inspiration from the line and write a book whose hero, Roland, engaged in an epic struggle. Alan Garner (under-sung giant of fantasy literature) published Elidor in 1965. The Shakespeare quote is printed on its own page immediately before chapter one, and Roland, the youngest of three brothers and a sister, is the hero of this piece.

I thought I'd read this book as a child, but no - reading it to my daughter Celyn this week has convinced me that I just remember passages of it from drama classes in my primary school when I was very small.

I did read some Alan Garner books as a child though, and they stuck with me because the man is a remarkable wordsmith. He uses the language to its full power, especially in descriptions, bringing every scene to life with prose that treads the outer borders of poetry.

Alan Garner writes (yes writes - he recently published the third book in the Tales of Alderly series after a 50 YEAR gap!) in the way in which I try to write. Much of his work looks to me like mine would if I were better at it.

Anyway, to the story. It's a short book, probably around 45,000 words, but a lot happens. It's a story rich in themes, rather less rich in characters. The children never become that much more than name tags with a bit of sibling interaction and a nice slant-ways glance at life in a suburban family in 1960s Manchester. The real interest is in their passage to Elidor, and on their return their struggle to keep the treasures they been given safe and to play their role in restoring life to the doomed world that seems to intersect ours at the fringes of society.

I enjoyed the story, it's full of imagination and no small amount of dark threat. Celyn enjoyed it too, though the passage of 50 years, combined with her own limited experience of the world, did require me to explain a number of things.

A book well worth pointing an intelligent child at, or using a child as an excuse to get to grips with just for the pleasure of the imagery Garner paints on a page.

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Miriam says

I think I was mistaken and did not actually read this as a child. I'm not positive, though, some of the elements seem familiar...

Fiona says

I wanted to read this because for some reason it sounded familiar. Maybe I watched the TV series a long time ago, I cannot remember. I think I might have started the book once but I don't think I ever finished it. Or if I did I have totally forgotten it.

I found it rather lacking in magic, for a book about another world.

Why should I care enough about Elidor to care about these children trying to save it? I'm afraid I didn't give

a hoot. Elidor featured for merely a chapter or two - then the story follows the four children as they run around their new home and through Manchester trying to conceal the 'Treasures' of Elidor - disguised as odd bits of junk. I got fed up with the constant discussion of the 'Treasures' until the mere word began to annoy me all by itself. Why should I care about these 'treasures'?

What I did like was the fact that it is quite an old story - written in 1965. The door to Elidor opened in a ruined Church in a bombed out part of Manchester that was being flattened to make way for new houses. (The horrible concrete blocks they built in the 60's are now a complete eye-sore!). The children who would have read this book when it first came out would have been entirely different people. They'd have had parents who would have lived during the war, it wasn't something like it is to us - England was still scarred by the bombed out buildings. My Mum was a child during the 50's and a YA during the 60's and she remembers the bombed out cottages still lying around.

I did like the fact that it was set in Manchester - not down south, or somewhere posh (like the Narnia series was) so perhaps it felt more accessible to other readers.

I liked the writing style of Garners - it is more readable then C.S Lewis in my opinion. I could never get into the Chronicles of Narnia because of that silver spoon wedged in their mouths. However, the story I felt just fell entirely flat.

A pity perhaps, but maybe not my last of Alan Garners.

Alison says

The language and descriptions of landscapes are beautiful, but the characters of the children are not particularly vivid. I prefer Weirdstone.

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David Manns says

There's a case for saying that Alan Garner is the finest children's author of the late 20th century, but that does him a disservice. His books appeal to children and adults alike and Elidor is a fine example of his work. Set in Manchester, this is the story of four children who accidentally stumble into the dying world of Elidor and are set the task of safeguarding the four Treasures of Elidor against the forces of darkness that threaten to overwhelm it. But those forces find a way into our world and the children find themselves in a race to find the mysterious Findhorn, whose song will bring salvation to Elidor.

Garner's skill at building atmosphere is very evident here as the mundane becomes charged with mystery. In a sense this is the opposite of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. Garner sets his action very much in this world, and Elidor is, right up until the very end, shown as a world almost destroyed by fear and darkness.

Note to JK Rowling: Read this and see how it's possible to tell a magical, involving story in 20 chapters and 200 pages. You don't need 600 odd pages and if you think you do, you need a good, brave editor to tell you otherwise.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Elidor, Alan Garner

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