



Merlin's Gun

Alastair Reynolds

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When Sora's swallowship is taken out by a swarm during the war she is rescued by Merlin, a legendary man who has allegedly discovered a super-weapon built by the Way creators; a gun so powerful it is said to have stopped the previous war. Sora is sceptical, though, for Merlin has been missing for ten thousand years, yet he has not aged a day. As the current war between aliens and humans intensifies, the need to find this weapon becomes unquestionably urgent. They must find the gun before the enemy does and incinerates them. Can their quest to save humanity and end the war be achieved with Merlin's gun?

Merlin's Gun Details

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Author : Alastair Reynolds

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From Reader Review Merlin's Gun for online ebook

Alan says

A few years ago I was in my favorite science fiction bookstore (plug for Borderlands Books here), and I asked who was new in space opera that I might be interested in trying. Upon their recommendation I bought and read *Revelation Space*, and well I was underwhelmed to be polite.

But, I had meant to try Reynolds again. I thought part of the issue might be that *Revelation Space* was his first book.

After *Merlin's Gun* I believe the above might be right. Billed as a novella, but really a short story, this is classic space opera with modern sensibility. The flaw is lack of characterization, but there isn't sufficient room to do characterization, or well a lot of it.

I enjoyed both *Sora* and *Merlin*. The hints that are given into their respective personalities along with the small bits of world building (cohort, and Huskers, the Way, and Waymakers). All much better executed than in *Revelation Space* (where some exposition drops would have greatly helped out the, for me, failed world building).

Also, in *Merlin's Gun*-E.E> Smith level destruction.

Looking forward to more *Merlin*, and maybe more recent Reynolds novels.

Andre says

Alastair Reynolds just does not stop to amaze me.

Merlin's Gun is a very short novella, but its premise is huge.

It's like the author casually opens a tiny door to allow you a small glimpse into a universe so big you could fill ten books with their stories. He opens the door a crack and you can just see enough to know you want more. Much more! I believe there are some 'follow-ups' to *Merlin's Gun*, so will definitely check them out.

"Any fan of hard scifi should be reading Reynolds!"

Micah Sisk says

A perfect short story that blends all the great aspects of Reynolds's deep space sagas: well-drawn characters, imaginative setting, compelling story, a bit of action and intrigue, all topped off with a satisfactory conclusion. It's a New Space Opera micro-burst that manages to feel much longer than it is. Great quick read, especially for those already familiar w/Reynolds.

Josh says

Rounding out 2016 with some novellas that were on my list, which also help me reach my reading goal, haha. Anyway, I had read this one before years ago as part of a compilation, but with a new Merlin story coming out I wanted to refresh myself on his character. If you read them in publishing order, then this was the first one, but if you want to reach chronologically and avoid some spoilers, you should save this one for last. It's great, very much an Alastair Reynolds space opera on a very epic scale. I really like his character and I wish he had gone into more detail in novel form with him. Hopefully he will keep writing more Merlin stories in the future.

Alex Damianidis says

beautiful beginning to end

Pablo Padilla says

Such a delightful read. Holy molly it was a slap-in-the face read: quick, engaging, and utterly valiant. I loved it and would absolutely recommend it. The imagery is stellar, quite obvious this author excels in his craft. One of my favorites of this month. In terms of the story being longer.... weeeeeell. Yes, maybe I would've enjoyed to know more about Sora, the main character. Merlin appearance and the lack thereof was just enough, but perhaps I could've enjoyed more about the main character and her quest to... oh, sorry, I do want to avoid spoilers. Never mind. Any way, if the story would've been longer then perhaps knowing more about the Huskers and the weapon... crap there I go again. Just read it. I can't avoid spoilers while writing this review. You'll enjoy it, even if you hate the author for having given you such a small dose of brilliance.

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lee d woolsey says

Short and sweet

Classic Reynolds, I disagree that it is derivative, I enjoyed the storyline and the characters. I will definitely search out the rest. If it is over 5\$ then I would agree too expensive for a short.

Jan Kroken says

Since I had it, I read it, but out of all available literature in the world (including the authors other works), there's no reason to spend ones time on this

Csaba Kota says

Hopes fulfilled, expectations met. These are the feelings I have right now that I have finished this short story. I embarked on a journey searching for a new voice capable of filling the void left by the late Iain M. Banks. And it seems like Alastair Reynolds might be able, capable of doing it. At least he is the first contestant I'm checking out for this purpose, the next being Peter F. Hamilton.

About the story. It's a journey, a search for something that has been a subject of legends, and might be capable of saving the human race, in the meantime itself turning into legends. All this against a backdrop of a war spanning a galaxy and millenia of time.

Greg says

MERLINS GUN IS a high tech blast through deep space on the hunt for the ultimate weapon. The reader only learns the nature of the weapon right at story's end but it is a sure thing that you won't mind because the fun in this short is in the journey – just like life itself. Alastair Reynolds has been a BIG name in sci fi for years and this short introduction to his geniutic (!) imagination is no exception. The writing is fast and fluid (which matches the pace of the story) and the characters themselves are adorable and full of life and realism. A sad moment happens near the end but that makes this short tale all the more remarkable for the strength of the emotional attachment you have made. So I give this story full marks. Excellent stuff from Mr Reynolds, and more excellent stuff from the legendary sci fi publishers, MAMMOTH BOOKS.

“Gideon” Dave Newell says

This early novella of Reynolds has some of the world elements later seen in his ‘Revelation Space’ series, although it is a distinctly separate universe. Like that series, there is internecine war being waged over long centuries (‘kiloyears’ is thrown around here). As in Reynolds’ later novella ‘Beyond the Aquilla Rift’, a long-vanished advanced civilization has paved the road for humankind to travel the stars via an unapproachably complex technology which the bravest exploit. Another familiar element seen here is a traveler, far removed from their own era and locale, skipping across vast distances and sleeping away the centuries between adventures, something necessitated by Reynolds’ familiar refusal to write anything that utilizes FTL travel. While it allows for terrific drama and perspective robbed from stories that do use it, here it mainly provides a McGuffin. There are some terrific mysteries introduced that beg for additional stories in this world, and there is plenty of room both before and after this story in the narrative timeline ripe for setting them, should Reynolds ever opt to take on the challenge.

Claudia says

Merlin's Gun (Merlin #4)
by Alastair Reynolds

LE: there are four now, here in chronological order: <https://www.goodreads.com/series/2131...>

A short story, set in a different universe than *Revelation Space*, but with the same potential to become another vast space opera.

However, I felt that something was missing and with a bit of research I found out that this one is the last of three stories featuring Merlin and his quest during the tens of kiloyears war with the Huskers.

The other two can be found, among others, in the collection of stories Zima Blue, the 2009 UK edition from Gollancz. The chronological order is: Hideaway, Minla's Flowers and Merlin's Gun.

Though, one good thing, by reading this as a standalone, was having the chance to read the introduction done by editor Mike Ashley, in which he said about Reynolds: "***He writes as if that technology already exists.***" . Couldn't have been said better.

And here I go, starting Zima Blue...

Ian Bull says

Wishing there was more

A fairly simple story with a mild twist, but nonetheless enjoyable. Left me wishing there was more to the story.

Sam Schneider says

Ok. Not nearly as complex or twisted as some of his other work. Not reading the sequel.

Robert Spencer says

Pretty much fulfilled my expectations - a short sharp shot of Reynolds, which is what I felt the need for after reading so few "hard SF" novels over the last couple of years. Good fun, the ending felt a little pat and anticlimactic, but that was probably inevitable in such a short story dealing in this kind of scope.
