



The Camelot Kids: Volume One

Ben Zackheim

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Here it is! The complete collection of The Camelot Kids Parts 1-4, with new illustrations and extra story.

The Camelot Kids is a series that tells the story of Simon Sharp, a 14-year-old orphan. Simon isn't a normal teenager. He's a kid on a mission. He's determined to find a place to belong.

If you ask him how his parents died, he'll tell you King Arthur killed them. They died looking for proof that Camelot is real.

An estranged uncle flies Simon to Scotland for room and board. The fourteen year old soon discovers someone wants him dead. But who cares about some outcast teenager from America?

When a grumpy, 3276 year old Merlin shows up to protect him, Simon finds that the answer is an epic adventure away.

Packed with surprises, The Camelot Kids is a fresh take on the beloved myth.

The Camelot Kids: Volume One Details

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Author : Ben Zackheim

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From Reader Review The Camelot Kids: Volume One for online ebook

Jemima Pett says

A fascinating and mind-booggling adventure through Arthurian legend with a totally modern twist. Review to follow.

J says

Starts good, but seriously starts to drag after arriving in Camelot and I just got bored with all the downtime.

Charissa Wilkinson says

I received this book as part of the Goodreads' First Reads Program for the purpose of a fair and honest review.

Overview: Simon Sharp doesn't believe in the legends concerning King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. That's too bad, because a troll, a wizard-in-training, and Merlin himself all have some special news for him. It's a doozy too. He is Sir Lancelot's heir, and Camelot needs him. Can this get any worse?

Likes: What can I say? Part of my attraction to epic fantasy is the magic that permeates the whole storyline. This is no different. Maille Rose and Merlin both keep the magic running well. Especially since Camelot seems to run on it.

Dislikes: Why did we have to get involved with the idea of reincarnation? It really doesn't work in this instance. Then there is Simon's relationship with Maille and Gwen. Can we even read a young adult novel without getting into romantic subplots, if not outright love triangles? And Simon's relation status with Lancelot didn't make much sense for me.

Conclusion: Epic fantasy is a hard sell. It's attraction is the massive world building and immersive story telling. It is also easy to overdo it. That's what I think happened here.

Lanise says

I received this book for free from the author and TLC Book Tours in exchange for an honest review. Now I have to tell you upfront that I'm not a major fan of young adult (YA) novels. It's not that I don't like YA. It's just not a genre I read a whole lot of. So I when I was asked if I would review The Camelot Kids series by Ben Zackheim, I took one look at the book and said sure, why not. The artwork looked cool. And, boy, was I surprised. I really liked this YA fantasy for its wild and whimsical world and its wacky characters. I had

some slight issues with the storyline but it was still a fun read all around.

The Camelot Kids begins in New York with the main character Simon Sharp as he's dealing with foster parents that care nothing for him, bullies at the orphanage that only want to use him as a punching bag, and a generally hard life for a fourteen year old who has lost his parents because of King Arthur. Now, I have to admit when I came across the mention of King Arthur, I stared at the page with a raised eyebrow. Apart from Simon's time at the orphanage, which starts the story off a bit slow, things do pick up as Simon finds out he's not alone in the world after all.

After his parents died in a plane crash while in search from archaeological evidence for King Arthur's existence, Simon is later rescued from the orphanage by his only living relative. A rich uncle living in Scotland that has a massive, cold castle and even colder personality. So Simon arrives in Scotland, gets picked up by his chauffeur named Hector and goes to meet the uncle he barely knows. And what does his grumpy old uncle do? He sends Simon off to a new school in Scotland where faces more bullies, a pretty girl who ignores him, and a cowardly kid named Red that befriends Simon.

Although, everything is not as it seems and Simon discovers his uncle's castle holds secrets, magic, and clues to his parents' death. While in Scotland, Simon meets an odd girl named Maille who carries a magical bat. When Maille is introduced early on, I wasn't too fond of her since a lot of what she does and says didn't make a whole lot of sense at first. But as the story progresses, she seems less unpredictable and things, like her bat which is a wand, makes more sense.

Between figuring out Maille and issues at school, Simon gets into more trouble when his teacher is murdered and everyone in the school believes Simon did it. But with the help of Red, Simon escapes the school grounds and ends up trying to find Maille for help. Only, Simon and Red run into a pair of monsters along the way. One of these monsters is my favorite character in the book. A troll named Caradoc. Caradoc is a big ugly lug but his loyalty and willingness to help do the right thing was endearing.

It's at this point in the story that Simon meets the old wizard Merlin. And the old legends about King Arthur and his knights of the round table really come into play. Merlin takes Simon to the land of New Camelot and reveals that Simon is a descendant of the famed Sir Lancelot. Maille is Merlin's apprentice in training, and there are many other descendants waiting to serve when King Arthur returns.

Surprisingly, the kids from Simon's school also appear to be descendants from legendary people and everyone seems to know about their heritage except for Simon. His parents never told him because they supposedly never knew. But as time goes on and New Camelot runs its town fair, more trouble blooms.

Merlin reveals that King Arthur does have a descendant and it's none other than the biggest bully from Simon's school in Scotland. Chester the bully is not the brightest bulb and doesn't make the most desirable king even though he desperately wants the position. Of course, he and Simon don't get along and to make matters worse, the pretty girl from school that Simon has a crush on is Chester's sister, Gwen. And she has a role to play in the legend too. Gwen turns out to be Guinevere.

Not only are Simon's schoolmates involved in the legend but Hector, the chauffeur, turns out to be Hextor a lead knight, Red turns out to be Lancelot's worse enemy, and Merlin has some mischief up his sleeve too. Eventually, Simon learns from his uncle that his parents are not dead but are being held as prisoners by some evil forces. New Camelot comes under fire from multiple enemies, including an army of dragons, Red's Shadow army of Mordred, and Merlin's evil ex-apprentice.

With all that is happening towards the end of the book, things become a bit confusing. There seemed to be a bit too much info dumped in at the end to try to tie off loose ends. Mind you that I was happy that a good deal of my questions were answered but it seemed like those answers were a little rushed.

One issue I had was when Simon's meets his father. Sure, it's good his father is alive and all but I would have thought Simon would have been more shocked about the revelation. Then when his father tells Simon that he is not a descendent of Lancelot but he is actually Lancelot reincarnated, I was left scratching my head.

The theme of reincarnation was an issue for me. I had no problem with the idea of Simon being a descendent of Lancelot but the next step, that he somehow was reincarnated or holds the same knowledge as Lancelot and had the same skill set seemed a bit too convenient. Simon doesn't have to work to be a hero since he already is one. He already knows how to fight, wield a sword, and strategize in combat, etc. because these skills come naturally to him since he's simply remembering what he already knows from the past. I just found that concept too easy for Simon. I mean, why work hard to gain knowledge if you're already born with it?

Then again certain occurrences that happen to Simon don't make sense or add up to me. Like, Simon accepts a lot of things without questioning them because they can be attributed to magic, so they need no explanation. And I have to say that the number of times that characters are winking or smiling at Simon really started annoying me.

However, I did like how the book incorporates artwork into some of the chapters. It adds a nice visual touch. And overall, I liked Simon as a character. His desire to have his own family and help his new friends was admirable. Many of the descriptions of New Camelot were cool, such as the fighting toy knights and the description of The Spell shop. I even liked the evil, mutant faerie that brought Simon good and bad luck.

In the end, the book left me with a lot questions, but in a good way, and I hope the answers will be revealed in the next volume, since it's quite clear that this story is not over yet. Some of New Camelot's enemies have been defeated but there are still other foes out there that I'm sure Simon and his friends will be facing next time. With that said, this book is not perfect but I would definitely read the next volume to see what happens next. Of course, this book is intended for a younger audience, kids and teens, but I still enjoyed the read.

Jennifer says

I received this book from the author in exchange for a honest review.

This was a great book. It was fun and quirky and provided a new spin on the Camelot tales. I would recommend this for young adults and middle school aged children. I plan to let my step-son read this after he finishes the series he is currently reading. Highly recommend.

Rebecca Douglass says

First things first: I "met" the author through Goodreads, and have shared space with him in the Bookelves Anthology projects. I have also reviewed and totally loved his Shirley Link mysteries for middle-grade

readers. That said, I was honestly thrilled to win the giveaway, and my review reflects my honest opinion.

I also want to clear up something that had me confused, a little. This book combines four books into one volume (and one continuous story, to be fair), which explains the high page count, as well. Now for the review:

I loved it. I'll confess to just a hint of trepidation as I went into this, because I've gotten kind of tired of the "ordinary kid discovers he's something else in a fantasy world" model (see Percy Jackson, for example). I think Ben nailed it. He certainly swept away my doubts in fairly short order, leaving me free to dive into the world of New Camelot and enjoy myself.

Simon's world, both before and after he discovers New Camelot (or is dragged there, kicking and screaming), is vividly painted, with visuals that I found clear and compelling. Simon's challenges as an orphan are believable, with just a hint (in retrospect) that there is something more to him. And the characters he meets along the way have depth--often a great deal more depth than Simon imagines.

The pacing is really nice--it's fast-moving, but the action isn't so non-stop that you get dizzy watching it. It's exciting, but I believe well within the bounds for elementary-aged children--the violence is less than in Percy Jackson, and though people die, the gore is kept to a minimum, and the reactions to their deaths feel genuine.

The book is impeccably edited, and the illustrations by Ian Greenlee are fascinating, though at first I found them a little dark. They have a complexity that yields to study, though, so I think are a nice addition to the book.

I am eagerly awaiting the next installment.

My Recommendation:

For kids from about 9 up, who like fantasy, and for anyone who loves the Arthurian legends. I have to confess that my own studies of the earliest stories--Mallory's *Morte d'Artur* and the *Lays of Marie de France*--are too long ago for me to offer much check on how the Ben used the material, and I never did read T.H. White's books. But this is a great addition, if readability and interest count!

Kitty_ranma says

Reminiscent..."

I enjoyed this even though my first thought was when did *Kyo Kara Maoh* become a book on tape. The ending had me thinking the same but about Disney's *Avalon High*. I listened to this all in one day, it's a lot of fun.

Great narration, instantly drew me in.

A keeper I'll definitely be listening to it again and I can't wait for the next part.

I received this audio book at my request by the author, publisher or narrator. For a unbiased review.

Reasons I enjoyed this book:

Action-packed, Easy-to-read, Entertaining, Funny, Great world building, Informative, Page-turner, Tragic, Twisted, Unpredictable, Whimsical, Wonderful characters.

Lindsay says

The Camelot Kids by Ben Zackheim The Camelot kids is packed with adventures and action. It great for all ages of kids. Simon finds out his parents died. Simon want to find a place to belong. He starts to have dreams. A place named Camelot. Is there really a place called New Camelot?

Someone is trying to find him and wants him dead. Who could want him dead? He meets up with several different kids and is thrown from one action to another. He seem to be trying survive. Who could be King Arthur, Lancelot, many others? There seems to be more questions then answers.

What all will Simon be dealt with and understand. He makes friends and loss some as well. Their seems to be a mystery around the corner of each paged turned. I had a little bit of a hard time getting into it at the beginning of the book. Once the action started and the adventures. I was able to read it and understand it. It then seem like King Arthur and Round Table.

Pictures are done well. I really enjoyed looking at pictures. Images or pictures are colorful. I was looking and staring at the pictures for a short period of time. Children would love it. This is good for children ages 12 and up.

ee says

I won this book in a goodreads giveaway.

The book is aimed at kids so I probably shouldn't have entered. Regardless, it was an easy read and fairly enjoyable. Would recommend for ages 8-12, or as a bedtime story for younger ones.

Belle Wong says

The first half does lag – we get a lot of information during the first half, none of it in infodump format, thankfully, but while it is interesting, it isn't of the page-turning, what happens next variety. The second half manages to do both (trust me, a lot goes on in the second half). I would have also liked the main villain to have been more credible in his/her/its role (keeping you in suspense here!). And more made of what finally happens with Excalibur. Overall, this is an original middle grade read that kids who like fantasy, especially of the Arthurian legend variety, will likely enjoy.

[Read my full review here.](#)

Noa Bash says

The Short:

I don't think I have had such a fun time with a book since I read Percy Jackson. To put this simply: I loved this book. It was very well paced, and the world was magnificent. I am just blown away. Throughout the book there are illustrations of things that are particularly hard to imagine, and they were all beautiful. I do

know somethings about Arthurian legends, and this book just made me want to read more about King Arthur. This book was just great.

The Good:

Like I said, the illustrations in this book were beautiful, and easy to understand. I am really impressed with the artwork that was put into this book, and it just really enhanced the story.

This was just a good story. There were no real flaws with its plot, and I really appreciated that. It did take a little bit to get into the book, however, but after the story picked up, and Simon moved to Scotland, it got very hard to put down.

I really liked most of the main characters, and the author did a very goos job of creating them. The thing that really got me about this story was how in depth you got to understand the main characters.

I loved the world. I really liked how everything was described, and that there was a lot of incorporation of the Arthurian legends. I did learn some about King Arthur's reign, and that was cool. Another great thing along these lines was that they made some histories up. It was not all classic King Arthur, but there was some details about the world and the History of Camelot that was long after Arthur's reign, and I really appreciated that.

Just the magic in this story was so cool! It was just everything that you could want in a magic system, and a magical world: dragons, spells, knights, elves, trolls, and wizards. I just thought it was great.

The humor in this was lovely. All the sarcasm was well placed, and very well done. You were never really prepared for what was going to come out of Merlin's or Maille's mouth next, but whatever it was, it was always entertaining.

The Bad:

The amount of times that someone winked at Simon was insane. It was as if every time someone looked at Simon, they winked at him. I didn't really notice it as first, but after a wink every other page, it was hard not to notice it. If I got a dollar for every time someone winked at Simon, I could buy myself the second book.

I really wish we got to see more of the side characters. I hope in the next book there will be more characterization of the rest of the heirs to the Knights of the Round Table. Even Josh and Russ who were not that minor of characters didn't get much of a personality. I am really curious to see if the other heirs will act a lot like their more famous predecessors.

There were a few problems that I had with the pictures. Yes, they were beautiful, but I just wanted a few more of them. They were very well spaced, but it would have really helped the novel to have added even five more pictures. Also, some of the pictures were placed incorrectly. There would be a random picture and then five or so pages later it would have been relevant and would have made sense.

I really wish the author did more with the whole Arthurian legends thing. He did incorporate it a ton, but it could have been more, and I think I would have appreciated the story a whole lot more if I would have been learning about the Knight of the Round Table while reading this epic quest.

Tia Bach says

What a fun, entertaining read!

Simon is a descendant of Sir Lancelot, but he's just lost his parents and not ready for Merlin to recruit him to a teenage New Camelot. Yet, he's pulled in and the adventure begins.

Late elementary and early middle school students, in particular, will enjoy these characters and adventures. It reminded me of Percy Jackson and the Rick Riordan series. Plus, the illustrations inside the book were amazing and reminiscent of Harry Potter illustrations.

Although it's quite long (just over 500 pages), I felt engaged and interested. It never felt burdensome or too long. Plus, the words on the page are bigger than most books. In addition, I plan to read it to with my fourth grader, who I think will really enjoy it.

Oh, and I loved that there were equally memorable boy and girl characters.

Note: I received a complimentary copy for review purposes. A positive review was not requested or guaranteed; the opinions expressed are my own.

S.W. says

A great tale of adventure

I read this book as it was originally released (in 4 parts). I have posted separate reviews for each part, however, I offer the following comments in summary.

Simon's tale is underpinned by the search for the truth behind the disappearance of his parents. Zackheim has created a wonderful world that lies beyond the realms of the real world. The characters are likeable and each has their own unique history, which is the essence of how they all come together. The question readers will want to know is... Does Simon find the answers to all his questions? Read it to find out.

In a nutshell

An entertaining read, which I recommend you read as a complete book, rather than separate parts 1-4. Great for fans of adventure with mystery and a little magic thrown into the mix.

FYI - Ben Zackheim is a fellow BookElf. We are a group of MG/YA authors who occasionally collaborate in MG fiction. I purchased my own copy at my own choice. I was not approached by the author to read and review this book.

Please drop by my site at www.swlothian.com for more of my reviews.

Note: I don't claim to be a pro-reviewer, I am a reader. My reviews are based on my personal thoughts around the story that the book is trying to tell. I try to focus on the story (which is the reason I read) rather than dissect the book and pass comment on typos, writing style or structure.

Kimber Wheaton says

I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review

The Camelot Kids is a fun adventure perfect for both the middle grade and YA audience. Fast-paced, featuring wonderful illustrations, this book is sure to please fans of fantasy and Arthurian Legend.

The story starts out rather sad, with the death of Simon's parents in a plane crash while searching for proof of Camelot. Simon's life as an orphan was far from easy. When he's taken in by an estranged uncle in Scotland, things take a turn for the weird.

Simon was quite easy to relate to, and I think most kids would like his personality and independence. I enjoyed the myriad of characters, both human and fantastic-- especially Maille Rose. When she first appeared, everything she said seemed so nonsensical-- it made me laugh. The plot featured lots of twists and turns, along with a few shockers.

I enjoyed the rich imagination that shone through on every page. The story is full of action and adventure, perfect for a younger YA audience.

Michael Dally says

Won this book through a goodreads giveaway.

Ended up reading this book to my 8 year old daughter and we both really enjoyed it. I think for a child reading alone this book would probably be more suited for a middle school aged reader, but as far as content goes it's suitable for most ages. There is a small amount of violence, but nothing graphic. I would definately put this on the same level as the early Harry Potter books as far as an imaginative world, exciting plot, and great writting style. The story line is very original with likeable characters and a well portrayed world. Both my daughter and myself look forward to reading the next book in this series!
