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The Swan Knight: A Medieval Legend, Retold From Wagner's Lohengrin (Ancient Fantasy)



Synopsis

The lights dim, and a weighty silence falls upon the audience. From all over Europe and America, these fifteen hundred men and women have come to spend many days in this small German town and many hours in this theater. Some are merely curious. Some are there because it's the fashion. But many have come out of devotion to the musical dramas of a composer they revere, almost worship -- a composer who himself designed and built the theater they sit in. To them, this theater is a temple, and their journey a pilgrimage.Â For a full minute or more, they wait solemnly in the dark, barely daring to move, their attention resting on the curtained stage below. Then the first musical notes float up and surround them -- high, soft, sustained notes of strings and woodwinds -- from an orchestra entirely hidden from view.Â Â The composer's devotees know what vision this shimmering music is meant to impart: the descent from Heaven of the Holy Grail, the drinking cup of Christ at the Last Supper. In their minds, they watch it draw nearer to earth, as the music grows louder and deeper and louder still, at last bursting out in horns, tympani, and cymbals. Then the Grail ascends once more, the music gradually softening until strings and woodwinds lead out as gently as they led in.Â Â And now the curtains part, and the audience knows it will soon meet the knight who serves that Grail. . . .Â For ages 10 and up. Not

illustrated!Â ////////////////////////////////Â Aaron Shepard is the award-winning author of "The Baker's Dozen," "The Sea King's Daughter," "Lady White Snake," and many more children's books. His stories have appeared often in Cricket magazine, while his Web site is known internationally as a prime resource for folktales, storytelling, and reader's theater. Once a professional storyteller, Aaron specializes in lively retellings of folktales and other traditional literature, which have won him honors from the American Library Association, the New York Public Library, the Bank Street College of Education, the National Council for the Social Studies, and the American Folklore Society.Â Cover artist Wendy Edelson has applied her award-winning skills to a wide range of illustration projects, including picture books, pet portraits, posters, puzzles, and fabric design. Her clients have included Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo, the Seattle Aquarium, the Pacific Northwest Ballet, the U.S. Postal Service, and the American Library

Association.Â ////////////////////////////////Â SAMPLEÂ "Frederick," said the king, "are you certain you wish to accuse this girl?"Â "Her dreaminess can't fool me," said Frederick. "I have a witness to her crime. But my word alone should be enough, and I'm ready to defend it with my sword."Â "Then God alone must decide," said the king, "in trial by combat. To the just he will give the victory. Elsa, who will fight for you?"Â "The knight from my dream," said Elsa. "As his reward, he shall take all my father's lands -- and myself as wife, if he'll have me."Â At

the king's command, the herald called, "Let him who will fight for Elsa of Brabant come forth!" But no one stepped forward. Elsa told the king, "He must yet be far away and not have heard. Please call again." The king assented, and the herald called again. "Let him who will fight for Elsa of Brabant come forth!" But still there was no response. Elsa knelt in prayer. "Lord, tell my knight I need him now! Show him to me, just as he appeared before." Then shouts went up from men by the river's edge. "Look!" "A swan!" "It's pulling a knight in a boat!"

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 6

Customer Reviews

COMMENTS ON THE ANCIENT FANTASY SERIES "Shepard's Ancient Fantasy series retells portions of epic narratives sure to pique kids' interest. He cannily selects episodes likely to grab the attention of a wide range of middle-graders, [while] his storytelling voice varies to hint at the style of the original. These mini-novels would make fun classroom readalouds, too. No dumb-downs . . . Rated S for Snapped Up." -- S. C. Poe, Route 19 Writers (blog), Apr. 4, 2012 "What a wonderful way to expose and broaden the minds of our young people and adults. To be transported to another place and time. To experience stories that have lasted for centuries . . . These books have taken my grandsons away from their video and DVD games." -- Sandra Heptinstall, Whispering Winds Book Reviews "Aaron Shepard does for folklore and epic poems

what Charles and Mary Lamb did for Shakespeare in the 1800's -- produces short, exciting, plot-centered adaptations that make the originals accessible to readers young and old, and that may tempt you to dip into the real thing someday." -- Susan

ChapekÃ ///////////////////////////////////Ã SAMPLEÃ "Frederick," said the king, "are you certain you wish to accuse this girl?"Ã "Her dreaminess can't fool me," said Frederick. "I have a witness to her crime. But my word alone should be enough, and I'm ready to defend it with my sword."Ã "Then God alone must decide," said the king, "in trial by combat. To the just he will give the victory. Elsa, who will fight for you?"Ã "The knight from my dream," said Elsa. "As his reward, he shall take all my father's lands -- and myself as wife, if he'll have me."Ã At the king's command, the herald called, "Let him who will fight for Elsa of Brabant come forth!" But no one stepped forward.Ã Elsa told the king, "He must yet be far away and not have heard. Please call again."Ã The king assented, and the herald called again. "Let him who will fight for Elsa of Brabant come forth!" But still there was no response.Ã Elsa knelt in prayer. "Lord, tell my knight I need him now! Show him to me, just as he appeared before."Ã Then shouts went up from men by the river's edge.Ã Ã "Look!"Ã Ã "A swan!"Ã Ã "It's pulling a knight in a boat!"Ã

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and his friend from bullies -- if only now he can keep it under control.Â Â

This was a lovely. short read about the Swan Knight (apparently a folk story which inspired Wagner.) As with most folk tales, I do wonder why, when the brother returns and the kingdom is secured, she doesn't go after him to the Grail Palace and live happily-ever-after. But, of course, women in these stories never do that. *sigh*

Read very fast, thankfully. Use your imagination to fill up the story, because the author is far from having Ms. j. R. Rowling's talent in the tale telling department...

If you love Wagner and Lohengrin then get this ebook. It helps to understand and appreciate the legend.

I have always loved reading legends, they always have a moral to teach behind the story, and the swan Knight just fits in the picture. The best things happen when we are royal to those we say love.

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