



Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Books Reviewed:

[Sir Gawain and the Green Knight](#) [1]

Issue:

[151](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Annabel Gibb](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Morpurgo, master storyteller, takes us into the 'mystical mists of... turbulent times' in this beautifully produced gift book. The writing is, as we have come to expect from Morpurgo, rich in structure and excellent in exposition, with occasional modern touches giving a sense of the oral tradition from which the story springs. The tale itself is a stunning one, of courage, self-reliance and chivalry, enthralling to the end. Foreman's illustration is as characteristic as Morpurgo's use of language. The many large one- or two-page set pieces are superb in colour, composition and mood: any of them would make fabulous prints for a child's room, evoking as they do chivalry, bravery, landscape and danger. Occasional vignettes - a boar's head, hounds, make reference to medieval manuscripts, and his evocation of the passing seasons is exquisite. Less successful, to my eye at least, are the more closely detailed scenes where faces predominate, along with golden browns, yellow and clear turquoise; these lack the assurance and conviction of the larger pictures. The book's design is not wholly successful: the buff pages with text printed in green is fitting enough, but a border motif intended to give a medieval feel weakens the effect by cramping the pages: the same motif is used much more effectively to frame the full spread illustrations. This is a great story, fittingly told; a volume to read aloud, pore over and treasure, and a beautiful souvenir of both Morpurgo's laureateship and his long association with Foreman.

Running Order:

39

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[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/sir-gawain-and-the-green-knight>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/151>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/annabel-gibb>