

“The Kid Who Would Be King”

By Helen Lutz

Reading used to be a major source of enjoyment for kids as well as board games and playing outside until the street lights came on. I read all the classics, sometimes twice, and one of my favorites was “King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table.” The kids of our neighborhood would find sticks and pieces of scrap wood and pretend we were knights – yes, we all read the book and it was much better exercise than a video game. Despite my grandmother’s warnings, no one ever lost an eye.



With the story of King Arthur having been told in so many movies, it is delightful that the tale of King Arthur is reintroduced by writer/director Joe Cornish in “The Kid Who Would Be King.” He brings it to the big screen for a new generation which addresses problems encountered by our younger generation like unpopularity and bullying – being a general nerd. Set in England we meet young Alex (Louis Ashbourne Serkis) living with his mother. He is a good, sweet, middle class kid. He tries to mind his own business, but many times is called upon to defend his best friend Bedders (Dean Chaumoo) who is constantly bullied by Lance (Tom Taylor) and Kaye (Rhianna Dorris). His defense of Bedders makes Alex a good target for the bullies as well.

While running to escape Lance and Kaye, Alex and Bedders stumble upon an excavation site. In the middle of the site is a large stone with a protrusion. That protrusion appears to be a sword. Alex grabs the sword and easily removes it from the stone. Off he and Bedders run with their prize in hand. Once home, the boys ask ‘The Google’ translator what the words on the sword mean only to discover that it is Excalibur, the sword of King Arthur. But why is the sword surfacing now?

The world is in chaos. Civil War in the Middle East; Childish War in the U.S. Congress; and England faced with Brexit. Cornish doesn’t attempt to make political statements with the movie, he just suggests that the world is not spinning in an orderly fashion. It’s the perfect time for King Arthur’s evil sister Morgana (Rebecca Ferguson) to make her debut and claim the world as her own – she’s the rightful ruler after all and merely requires possession of the sword to invoke her fiery army to seize what is rightfully hers.

Unfortunately for Morgana, Alex and the knighted Bedders have different ideas especially after meeting a young Merlin played by Angus Imrie who tries to ‘fit in’ and has the amazing ability to turn into an owl and fly away at a moment’s notice. Alex knows he needs help and turns to his tormentors Lance and Kaye. While they may be mean, they are also strong and he hopes that the code of chivalry will kick in once they are knighted. Only those who are knights can see and battle Morgana’s minions; those not knighted simply disappear.

Saving the world from an evil, magical force is not an everyday occurrence for a school boy and it will take an army to withstand her evil magic. Turning his school into a fortress and the students into soldiers is fun to watch. “The Kid Who Would Be King” is sure to delight the young and young at heart. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give it THREE HARTS. This film could have taken so many roads, yet Cornish takes the upper road saving the world and creating heroes. I love Merlin’s characters, both young and older (Patrick Stewart).