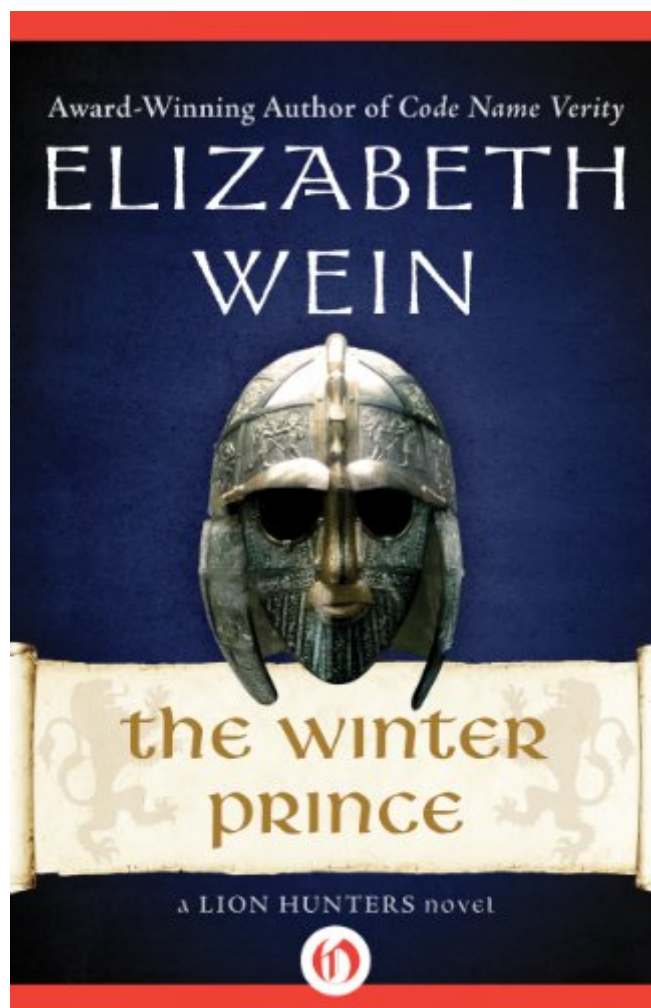


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The Winter Prince (The Lion Hunters Series Book 1)



Synopsis

Brave Medraut is a fitting heir to the throne—but he can never be king—in this fantasy retelling of the legend of Mordred from the author of Code Name Verity. Medraut is the eldest son of High King Artos, and would-be heir to the British throne—if not for an unfortunate circumstance of birth. Instead, his weak and unskilled half-brother, Lleu, is chosen as successor. Medraut cannot bear the thought of being ruled by the boy who has taken what he believes is rightfully his. Consumed by jealousy, he turns to Morgause, the high king's treacherous sister, who exploits Medraut's shame and plots to take over the throne. But when Medraut discovers Lleu's inner strength and goodness, he finds his battle is not just with the kingdom, but with the demons inside himself. Now he must choose where his allegiances truly lie. Perfect for readers of Robin McKinley and Jane Yolen, *The Winter Prince* is an "engrossing" novel that "fantasy lovers and devotees of Arthurian legends will enjoy" from an author who has won honors ranging from the Carnegie Medal to the Edgar Award (Booklist). This ebook features an illustrated biography of Elizabeth Wein including rare images from the author's personal collection.

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Customer Reviews

"Have you ever loved anything?" "Yes. Yes. All the wrong things. The hunt, and darkness, and winter, and you, Godmother." "This is a book I wish I had written. It is a first novel, and cool and sharp and glittering, like a heavy, hanging icicle. It is very dark, with just enough hints of the backstory to let you fill the rest in for yourself. It is an Arthurian retelling, focused on Mordred, in a version in which Arthur has legitimate heirs. The narrator, Medraut, is complicated and brave and oh-so-fallible, like his siblings and father, the other central characters. He addresses his narration to his mother-and-aunt Morgause, who is terrifying- sadistic and false and capable of cutting to the bone. The ending departed slightly from the subtlety of the rest of the book, spelling out the epiphany, but that's a minor complaint. The voice is intense, deliberate, engrossing. The Winter Prince is a short read, just over 200 pages, and a brilliant one. There are sequels, but they branch out further from the Arthurian setting and don't seem as good. This one stands alone, and is a masterpiece.

This is a little bit of a Retro Review for me, although not entirely. I just about burst with glee when I saw that THE WINTER PRINCE and A COALITION OF LIONS were back in print. Two reasons for this: 1) I needed a copy of THE WINTER PRINCE for my own and 2) Now I can spread the love more easily! If the last three books come back into print that will just be the icing on the cake. (Warning: do not read the fourth book until you have the fifth book handy.) Nowadays Elizabeth Wein is well known as the author of smash hit CODE NAME VERITY. But once upon a time she was Elizabeth E. Wein, debut author of an Arthurian retelling called THE WINTER PRINCE. Artos has three children. Medraut, the oldest, is illegitimate and cannot inherit. Lleu, the prince, is beautiful and fragile and talented and spoiled. Goewin, his twin, will not inherit either since she is a woman. The children love each other, but there's also a great deal of resentment and hurt feelings between them. THE WINTER PRINCE is written like a letter from Medraut to his aunt and mother, Morgause. She's a cruel woman with a terrible hold on her sons, but at the same time almost understandable as a woman trying to grasp all the power a woman can have. Medraut perhaps loves and hates her even more than her loves and hates Lleu. There isn't much of a plot to THE WINTER PRINCE. It's a book about a relationship, and two people coming to terms with who they are. It's wonderfully written, Wein's prose lending the book a fittingly seductive and sharp beauty. It's a little messy, just

like it's protagonist, and swiftly covers a great deal of time. It's one of those books that sticks in your mind long after you read it, and comes back to you immediately once you read the first sentence again. It's just everything I want out of a book on the Matter of Britain. And believe me, I'm an Arthurian geek and I want a lot. It has questions of honor and what makes a good ruler, family and romance, and it's all bound up in insane episodes of cruelty, incest, and violence. It holds its own with some of the greats of Arthurian legend, like Malory and Marie de France and Rosemary Sutcliff. Let's all give a big hand to Open Road for reprinting this under appreciated classic. They've done it quite nicely, with a biography of Wein in the back and illustrations prefacing each chapter. The illustrations have a nicely simple, old-fashioned look to them. Sadly, I couldn't find the credit for the illustrator.

I originally was going to give this book four stars. But I had to go with five for two reasons - one I could not forget the characters of Medraut and Llew and thought about their beautifully written love/hate relationship for months. It led me to picking up the next book in the series and ultimately to listing the five books as a favorite series. I listed this as historical because it is a very unique and unusual version of the King Arthur legend. Just very difficult to explain how this is done. The names are different and characters and portions of the story are left out. Perhaps I would not have recognized the connection to the legend had I not known before I read it. It is a play on Mordred, in this book named Medraut. It is the first time I have read a book that is told in the first person as if he were telling or writing it to a specific person, in this case Morgause. Although he calls her grandmother, she is his mother, sister to the King (Arto who represents Arthur in this story. Medraut of course is the bastard son born of incest. Llew is King Artos' legitimate son and Llew's twin sister is Goewin (another new character). This is really the story of Medraut and Llew and a very intriguing story of Medraut's deepest feelings as he is tortured by Morgause and yet loves her and cannot get away from her evil influence, resents and yet is devoted to his younger brother Llew who will some day be king. Medraut and his father Aros both know that Medraut is better suited for the role but it can never be. The development of the relationship between these two half brothers with Llew starting off as a sickly child unlikely to survive, the incredible sacrifices that Medraut takes to save and cure him, Llew's sometimes rudeness toward his half brother - well it is brilliantly done. I had a little trouble getting into the story at first, perhaps because I had a little trouble getting into Medraut telling the story to Morgause, but once into it I could not put it down. My copy is a small size paperback of 202 pages and a quick read. The last fifty pages or so had me so drawn in to the story I read into the early morning hours. Betrayal, cruelty, hatred, love - all wrapped up together between

these two brothers. Great but very intense reading. I had no idea how it was going to play out. Goewin - "If you don't bring Lleu back alive and unharmed I'll kill you, I swear it, surely, I will find a way to kill you." Medraut - "I fear you as little as you fear me, I whispered."

Unique Conglomeration of Arthurian and Welsh Myth. It's a short read, but even though it has sequels it can be read as a standalone. I am trying to read as many retellings of Arthurian myth as I can and I can honestly say I have never read one quite like this.

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