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No Such Thing as Dragons

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Philip Reeve's latest novel returns to the territory of his **Arthur**: a quasi medieval time, where legend and reality interact perplexingly and the strange shapes of humankind's fears and hopes are open to cynical manipulation. The boy Ansel can hardly believe his luck when Brock, the dragon slaying knight, purchases him from his cruel father. He basks in the reflected glamour of his master's trade, but gradually realises that Brock had reasons for choosing as his squire a boy who is both mute and illiterate. For Brock has never seen, let alone slain, a dragon. Brock makes a living and enjoys his enviable, but precarious and lonely, status through the credulity of peasants and the political expediency of their rulers. A local landgrave, an educated man as worldly as Brock, who wishes to calm his people's fears, commissions the knight to climb the mountain and slay its resident worm, although he no more believes in it than Brock. In a desolate and frozen landscape, accompanied by a friar who has been preying on the peasants and a girl who has been chained to a tree as dragon food, they face a creature who is the impossible embodiment of their worst imaginings. As you would expect, the battle on the mountain is heart stopping. And there is plenty to exercise the mind, too. This is Reeve in a relatively sombre mood, recreating the atmosphere of medieval story in which terror and doom, and their dreadful supernatural manifestations, are ever-present possibilities; acknowledging, too, the human frailty and venality that gives birth to such fears and profits from it, and the heroism and sacrifice that it can inspire.

Running Order:

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