



The Fires of Merlin (Merlin Saga)

By T. A. Barron

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Wings of Fire, the sleeping dragon, has awakened, threatening to loose his terrible wrath on all of Fincayra. Only young Merlin, grandson of the great wizard Tuatha, can stop him, though the price may well be the young wizard's life. But before he can face the dragon's fires, Merlin must endure fires of other kinds—including those within himself. He must face the evil, batlike kreelikes who exist only to destroy magic; the mysterious Wheel of Wye; and the sorceress Urnalda, who holds the treasured Galator. Most challenging, young Merlin must discover not the power but the source of his own magic.

In this the third story in his Arthurian epic, T. A. Barron adds a thrilling new dimension to the legend of Merlin.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-9-This third installment in what is slated to be a five-book "epic" finds the still-untried Merlin battling the great dragon Valdearg, who was put to sleep by Merlin's grandfather many years ago. The young wizard hopes to save the magic island of Fincayra from the wrath of this creature who is awakened when someone destroys the eggs containing the last of his offspring. According to an ancient prophecy, Merlin will perish in the battle, but he persists with the help and hindrance of a varied cast of characters. To make matters worse, he seems to have lost his magic. Still, he perseveres. There are no surprises here, but that is precisely what will appeal to fans of the series. Sometimes the prose is overwritten in an attempt to sound properly grave and ends up reading a little like a parody of the genre, but the constant action and flow from one predicament to another keep the story going. Because the frequent references to prior events will confuse those who haven't read the previous titles, this book is best read in conjunction with the others.

Carrie Schadle, Beginning with Children School, New York City

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 7[^]-10. With each book, Barron's Lost Years of Merlin saga just keeps getting richer in characterization, ambience, and Celtic lore. Taking up where *The Seven Songs of Merlin* (1997) left off, the third book sees young Merlin meet even more challenges, particularly as the dragon Valdearg, the last emperor of the dragons, awakens to once again threaten the entire land of Fincayra. Gulled into thinking that Merlin is the one who had slaughtered his dragon hatchlings, Valdearg searches for the young, unproven magician. Fire plays a heavy metaphorical role in the story, with Merlin facing the incomprehensible burning of his newly crafted harp, the fire of lava, and the awakening fire of passion within himself as well as the dragon's flaming breath--all of which leads to Merlin's eventual discovery of *a power still higher*. The plot is complex, involving not only Valdearg but also the treacherous enchantress Urnalda; the ancient sorceress Domnu, with whom Merlin becomes a reluctant ally; and an enigmatic, primordial oracle. Also, who has been breeding Kreelixes, unnatural beasts that feed on the magic of others, and has set them against Merlin? Fans will definitely be clamoring for more. *Sally Estes*

Review

All the elements of a classic here....A wonderfully fanciful tale, colorful and suspenseful. -- *Robert Redford-10/1996*

How wonderful! An extraordinary journey of mind, body, and spirit--both for Merlin and for ourselves. This first book of The Lost Years of Merlin epic leads all of us to look forward eagerly to the rest. -- *Madeleine L'Engle-09/1996*

In this brilliant epic, T.A. Barron has created a major addition to that body of literature, ancient and modern, dealing with the towering figure of Merlin. It is, as well, one of the richest and most significant, illuminating the dark mysteries shrouding the childhood of this greatest of enchanters. Barron combines the wellsprings of mythical imagination with his own deepest artistic powers. Through the ordeals, terrors, and struggles of Merlin-to-be, we follow an intense and profoundly spiritual adventure. Barron has found Merlin's lost years for us, and a great deal more. -- *Lloyd Alexander-08/1996*

T.A. Barron transforms the early years of the mythical wizard's life into a vivid, action-filled fantasy, replete with deep forests, ruined castles, and evil spells...While Barron is careful to show that Merlin is still

physically a boy, readers are left with a vision of a more confident, compassionate hero, prepared to confront the joys and sorrows that await him in future volumes. -- *Kirkus Reviews-09/1996*

The Lost Years of Merlin is deeply moving, full of meaning. It's also T.A. Barron's most inviting, flowing, and lyrical work yet. -- *Robert Coles, M. D.-09/1996*

With each book Barron refines his grasp of the very best that the genre of fantasy can offer a reader. In The Fires of Merlin he has woven together a thrilling tale with memorable characters, not the least of whom is a dragon hatchling. His meticulous and thorough research into Celtic, Welsh, and Arthurian lore provides the exquisite warp and woof for this richly colored tapestry of story. But Barron's understanding about human relationships and the needs of the human spirit give living substance to the literary elements so that the book glows with a true and magical light. -- *Barbara Kiefer, Associate Professor, Teachers College, Columbia University, 5/98*

Users Review

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