



Knight Crusader

Ronald Welch

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Philip d'Aubigny is a young knight in the kingdom of Outremer and can't wait to prove himself. His chance comes when he rides into battle to defend his home from attack by Saracen leader, Saladin and his army. But after a disastrous campaign, Philip is taken prisoner by the Turks and must work as a servant-and all the while he is plotting his escape.

At last his opportunity arrives and Philip flees, joining Richard the Lionheart in his victorious Third Crusade before finally travelling to Britain to claim his family's estate. Only when he arrives, he finds he must once again go into battle . . .

This exciting tale has captured the hearts and imaginations of young readers for many years and was the winner of the prestigious Carnegie Medal. This edition features the original black and white illustrations throughout which perfectly evoke the atmosphere of the story.

Knight Crusader Details

Date : Published June 1979 by Oxford University Press (first published 1954)

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Author : Ronald Welch

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From Reader Review Knight Crusader for online ebook

Yoshi says

At first I found this book to be pretty boring and I didn't particularly want to read on, however as I turned more of it's pages and read the words that it had to offer, I started to enjoy it and was thrilled by the battles and thoroughly enjoyed it's story.

It is about a young squire called Philip D'aubigny who lives in Israel. He comes from a pretty high up family and has a rare amount of money. Although he lives in Israel, he is a Christian and Jerusalem the capital is owned by the muslims, meaning he must keep a good distance from the city.

War is coming though, and him and the other Christians must build a Crusader army on the city. All ends in peril though when Philip's father, cousin and uncle are killed. Things get even worse when him and his friend are both taken as servants and are put in different house in the city.

Escape is a devastating option but it seems necessary when a young knight gives him a message that the English and the French are building another crusader army and they want him and his friend Gilbert to fight. They both small or the city, but are caught by assassins and are set free again but must kill whom they are asked to kill our they will be killed.

The second crusade is much more successful as they have Richard of England fighting along their side. Philip is one of the strongest fighters and is recognised worldwide for it. They make a truce with the muslims, the muslims can still have Jerusalem, but Christians can still live there and visit.

Phillip decides that he wants to live in England, I am old castle belonging to his family line. However the castle has been taken over, and Philip must stop them. With much success,he takes over the cattle and lives there.

Micah Erskine says

I loved this book as a kid and was delighted to receive a used copy as a birthday gift recently.

The author was a teacher or headmaster at an English school and set out to write a series of novels which were both entertaining and historically accurate.

With Knight Crusader and it's main character Philippe d'Aubigny I believe he succeeded admirably.

Paul Barnes says

Thanks to Goodreads I was able to identify and re-read this, which I'd loved as a boy. Historical fiction based on the events leading up to the third crusade. The 1950s era writing shows, but I really enjoyed it all the same. Really conveys a sense of life as a medieval knight.

Emily says

Fantastic book about the Kingdom of Jerusalem! The crusaders during the time of Saladin is a fantastic

setting for this very exciting story. This is the 3rd time I have read it through and it is just as engaging as when I first read it 11 years ago.

Gill says

I had vague but fond childhood memories of a book about a young knight's adventures at the Crusades and in the Welsh Marches. The power of the internet! A quick Google and Essex Libraries' handy online reservation system led to my rediscovery of Knight Crusader.

Set in 12th century Jerusalem, Philip de Aubigny is a young squire in his father's castle, Blanche Garde. We follow his elevation to knighthood and the shock of ruthless battle against the army of Saladin. Written in the 1950s there is almost inevitably the occasional racist undertone, but overall Welch shows great respect for the Saracens, and the customs of the Middle East are portrayed as being far more advanced and civilised than those of medieval Europe.

As a geeky 9 year-old, I was fascinated to learn about armour and surcoats, helms and lances. As a geeky 40 year-old, I was far more aware of the absence of female characters, of the graphic but not gratuitous violence.

That this book stuck in my mind for over 30 years is testament to its quality as a damn good read! Although I had conflated it in my mind with Welch's The Gauntlet, so that one's next on the library reserved list.

Exrex says

Fiction for young boys from Ronald Welch, the story of a young knight in Outremer at the time of the third crusade. I read all of Ronald Welch's books when I was young, I think they contributed very much to my love of history.

The details are pretty accurate and the overall history is too. Kind of like Henty, but from a later period.

Rob Markley says

The first of the fantastic Carey novels. Establishes all that come to expect in this series. Worthy children's writing prize winner - wouldn't even get a nomination today

Anthony says

One of my top three must read books. Though supposedly a 'children's' book, I have read it a number of times, and still find the characters superbly drawn. The dated portrait of Richard the Lionheart does not diminish it's readability even now.

Suzannah says

For nearly a hundred years, the Crusader kingdom of Outremer—carved from Muslim-held territory in 1099—has kept its tenuous grip on the Holy Land, ruled by kings from Jerusalem. But now as Philip D'Aubigny grows to manhood, mutters of war come from the east; the knights of Outremer dwindle away, and charismatic but incompetent King Guy of Lusignan appears ready to be swayed by any counsel. Then the great Saracen general Saladin attacks Outremer and besieges Tiberias, and the chivalry of Outremer muster to their final battle at Hattin.

Read the rest of my review at my blog, [In Which I Read Vintage Novels](#)

F says

So nice to come across a children's author whom I had not previously met and I enjoyed this story of the Crusades. Not completely convincing - having been captured by the Assassins and then released and sent on their way, Philip and his friend Gilbert arrive at Krak des Chevaliers and their story of being lost in the desert is instantly accepted - but they were clean, well-fed, rested and bathed whilst with the assassins, so I am sure they did not actually look as if they had been lost in the desert - but I am nit-picking. So refreshing to read a book in which so far there are absolutely no female characters - no mothers, sisters, maidservants - just the thing for adolescent boys.

MrsER says

Very modern dialogue, plus the Hospitaliers portrayed as a bunch of fanatics--as if the ones they were fighting were not! Not my style of book.

P.D.R. Lindsay says

If you want boys to grow up enjoying history and understanding the importance of knowing about their and others' history then this book is where you start.

Ronald Welch wrote a marvellous series of books about the Carey family taking in history from the Crusades to WWI and it's all good history. The stories are realistic adventures, the male MCs are young men with flaws and faults who grow up through their adventure and the books are great to read aloud at bedtime.

Knight Crusader takes the reader through the horrors of what a Crusade is really like and then how a Crusader used to the luxury life of the Outremer took to the bleak cold climate and drafty castles of England! There are villains and adventures a plenty before the first Carey settles in Wales and it really is a cracking good read. An adult wanting to catch up on British history would do well to read these novels. Anyone wanting a realistic look at life in Jerusalem before the 'infidels' overran it will learn a lot.

The books are being reprinted. I wish the publisher would get them into e-book format for those reluctant boy readers who love techy things.

David Conroy says

I thought it was really fun. Even though it probably is not 100% historically accurate as you have to take liberties with fiction I really liked how the politics worked in the world.

Tim Roast says

“Knight Crusader” was originally published in 1954 but has been re-published due to popular demand. It is aimed at 14+ year-olds and this is because of the bloodthirstiness of it, although the book is by no means gory, and nothing that the modern child has not seen already in a video game (the original Assassin’s Creed game being set at the same time as this novel) or movie.

The book takes place at the time of the Third Crusade and features figures such as Richard the Lionheart. It follows Philip d’Aubigny on his journey from “excitable, impulsive, scatter-brained young squire” through to becoming “one of the greatest barons in Outremer,” and finally his coming to Great Britain after longing to after hearing great things of the “green country” where “the trees are everywhere, heavy with leaf, and the valleys are deep and moist.”

Outremer is the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem and the Christians and the Turks are fighting for it. It is where Philip is from, being the son of a great knight Sir Hugo. Philip as a 17-year-old becomes a knight himself after proving himself in a duel. Then he is straight into proper battle as “Outremer was in deadly peril; at any moment invasion and total destruction might descend upon the Christian states.”

That battle he partakes in is the battle of Hattin and it is interesting to read the tactics involved and see how they played out during battle, plus the point when the realisation dawns on the Christians that they will lose.

Being on the losing side Philip is taken as a slave and that ends part 1 of the book. Part 2 has his escape from Damascus and his allegiance to King Richard of England as he takes part in the successful battle of Arsuf. And Part 3 sees his coming to England to inherit the fief of Llanstephan, although he must first oust the current occupant De Braose who will not give it up without a fight.

All-all-all then a book that is interesting for its military tactics, and its historical content as it is based on real life events of the time, the author being well-versed through his career as a history teacher.

Mary says

"Knight Crusader" by Ronald Welch won awards when it was first published in 1954. It is an excellent fictional story of a young knight who grows up in the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the late 12th century. After almost a hundred years in the kingdom known as Outremer, the Christians who settled in the Holy Land after the success of the First Crusade are experiencing a serious threat from the Muslim forces united under the charismatic leadership of Saladin.

Philip D'Aubigny is our young hero, and a hero he becomes. He fights bravely at the disastrous battle of Hattin, which saw the destruction of the Christian army. He is then kept as captive of a benevolent Muslim scholar who is grateful to Philip for a good deed Philip had performed for his son. After four years of captivity, Philip escapes with his fellow knight Gilbert. They are captured again, this time by the cult of the Assassins. Finally Philip and Gilbert make their way to a castle held by the Hospitalers. They join the army of Richard the Lionheart who is trying to restore the Christian kingdom. Finally Philip goes to his ancestral home in England to try to start a new life as a baron.

While the story is written for young readers, it does not talk down to them. The complicated story of Outremer is presented coherently. The Muslim characters are presented in a fair and even admirable light. Philip's life is necessarily violent, and the story does not shirk from presenting this violence. But it is also not sentimental. This would be an excellent novel for readers interested in learning about the Christian occupation of the Holy Land during the Crusades. It would be a good complement to the Ridley Scott movie "Kingdom of Heaven", which covers some of the same time period.
