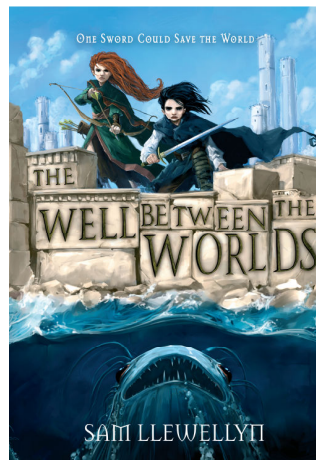


FROM DEEP WITHIN A UNIQUE IMAGINATION,
RISES A NEW KIND OF FANTASY...



MONSTERS OF LYONESSE
THE WELL BETWEEN THE WORLDS
BY SAM LLEWELLYN

PLUNGE IN... APRIL 2009

'Quietly superb prose and a memorable, unassuming hero make this Arthurian-flavoured world fresh and beautiful even when it's bitterly ugly... Llewellyn writes with a gentle hand, neither minimizing nor bombarding readers with moral interpretation...

A rich and unpretentious gem' *Kirkus Reviews*

'Sam Llewellyn is a brilliant writer. This man is destined to be big...

This book has magic and adventure and myth and environmentalism and intrigue and shady government affairs and war and strong families and laughter and sorrow AND a strong female character...seek it out' www.kidliterate.com

Long before King Arthur and the Round Table, in the land of Lyonesse, a sword stood plunged in a stone...

Once, Lyonesse was green and pleasant. Now the land is sinking, and the sea batters its walls. Lyonesse has become a place of poison and danger, and its people live in an uneasy truce with the monsters that inhabit its bottomless Wells.

Idris Limpet is an ordinary boy, until the day he is rescued from a terrible death and finds himself thrown into an astonishing new adventure. Can it be that it is his destiny to save Lyonesse? And can one boy and one girl stand in the way of a colossal evil with its roots sunk deep in ages of wickedness?

HOW I CAME TO WRITE THIS BOOK

BY SAM LLEWELLYN

“I was born into the watery world of the Isles of Scilly – a few paradisiacal crumbs of granite scattered over the turquoise sea thirty miles west of Land’s End. The islands are dotted with prehistoric tombs. At low water, the remnants of cyclopean walls can be seen snaking from island to island along the bottom of the sea. My mother’s family have lived in the islands for six generations.



MY CHILDHOOD WAS FULL OF TALES ABOUT A SINKING OF THE LAND THAT TRANSFORMED SCILLY FROM A RANGE OF MOUNTAINS INTO AN ARCHIPELAGO.

In the tales, it was not only Scilly that had sunk. In the mid-18th century, fishermen in the Atlantic trawled up window-frames that they assumed came from a drowned village. A petrified forest lurks deep under the sands of Mount’s Bay, to the south of Land’s End. These are the remnants of Lyonesse, the British Atlantis, that once lay green and fertile between Cornwall and Scilly.

Just as it was common knowledge on Scilly that Lyonesse had sunk, I knew as a child that Lyonesse had been the home of King Arthur, or Idris as he was called.

I was born in a room overlooking the body of water from which the sword Excalibur came, and into which it was flung. The first journey I ever took in this world was from Scilly to the mainland, through what were once the skies of Lyonesse. I grew up with the certainty that Arthur and Tristan and Morgan and the rest of them originated here and in the related Breton Atlantis of Ys in France. I believed in dragons, monsters, and the power of star and stone. While Lyonesse has featured as a springboard for the wilder type of fantasy, it has had no real chronicler. I decided that this was something I needed to put right.

In a properly constituted legendary universe Lyonesse cannot sink as a matter of mere geology. It is human vanity that must cause the inundation, and human virtue that must strive to keep it above water. Idris, I was assured since earliest years, was a good person because he saw that his actions had consequences for others; Murther/Mordred and his monstrous gang were evil because they were interested in the hoggish pursuit of power for its own sake, whatever the consequences for other people.

THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE DARK AND THE LIGHT LIVES STRONGLY IN MY HEART. SO DO THE STONES AND ISLANDS OF SCILLY THAT ARE ALL THAT REMAIN OF THE MOUNTAINS OF LYONESSE, AND THE SUN THAT STILL SHINES OVER LYONESSE, AND THE GALES THAT STILL BLOW THERE. I VISIT THEM OFTEN. I AM GLAD THAT I NOW HAVE A CHANCE TO TAKE YOU WITH ME...”

WHY I FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO TELL THIS STORY

BY SAM LLEWELLYN



Sam Llewellyn in Tresco Abbey Garden, the area which would have been the Sundeeps before the sinking of Lyonesse.

“I have read stories from the Arthurian canon in three languages, and in translation from Welsh. One of their many great delights is the way different versions of the same story contradict each other and take on a life of their own. I allowed myself to surmise that they all point back to a common source. And I decided that I would shamelessly invent that common source, using materials that have lain in my head since earliest childhood.

But there is no point in merely telling fairy tales. Good Arthurian stories have always had points to make, and proto-Arthurian stories are no different.

I have lived all but five years of my life in remote rural areas, and I am at all times acutely aware how beautiful the world is, and how people are trying to wreck it for reasons they are too greedy to let themselves understand. In the end, a plasma TV merely makes viewers desire more stuff like plasma TVs. In the end, a monsterpowered pump clearing water from sinking Lyonesse admits more water than it removes.

It is fair to describe me as deeply Green, in a waste-not-want-not way. For instance: if I want to eat meat I don't mind killing the animal myself, if I must. And if I want vegetables I am happy to grow them. And if I want to eat fish, I will catch it, or at any rate check that it has not been trawled out of the wreckage of our seabeds. I own a fifth-hand TV, a fifty-year-old guitar, and my newest boat was built twenty years ago. I ride an electric bike, and I would rather sail than anything else, because sailing uses only breeze and tide, and there is plenty of both for everyone.

I believe children are intelligent beings, and families are good, and people should be allowed to decide for themselves, and local democracy is a wonderful thing. I believe that telling stories, whether with pictures or music or words, is the summit of human achievement. I believe that the existence of man on earth is a story, and I want it to have a happy ending.

Having said all this, a story has got to be about people. The thought that made me start transferring *The Well Between the Worlds* from my head to paper was this:

MOST BOYS KNOW DEEP INSIDE THEM THAT THEY ARE THE RIGHTFUL KING OF SOMEWHERE. MOST GIRLS KNOW THAT THEIR CLOSEST MALE FRIEND WOULD INDEED BE THE RIGHTFUL KING OF SOMEWHERE, IF HE WOULD ONLY DO WHAT THEY TOLD HIM.”

ABOUT SAM LLEWELLYN

"I live with my wife, Karen Wallace, herself an award-winning writer of children's books, in a medieval farmhouse on the edge of the Welsh mountains. My son Will is married to Katy Moran, yet another children's author, just nominated for the Carnegie Medal. My son Martin is a scientist studying Chagas disease, and is often in the remote rainforests of the Upper Amazon. I spend a lot of time looking after ten acres of jungle garden and a large collection of boats.

I love writing; I've never done anything else, except for brief spells as an editor in London and Toronto, and an even briefer spell at Sotheby's the fine art auctioneers. I have written (among other stuff) about a dozen adult thrillers, most of them set on or by the sea, and two historical novels about the Isles of Scilly. Five years ago I felt that I had killed off too many people in my books, and I wanted to write something purely insane, right off the top of my head. The result was *Little Darlings*, a counterblast to twee, mimsy Peter Pan.

I REALISED THAT WRITING FOR CHILDREN IS JUST AS INTERESTING AS WRITING FOR ADULTS. THE BOOKS I WRITE ARE MOTIVATED NOT JUST BY A DESIRE TO TELL STORIES, BUT BY A STRONGLY CONSERVATIONIST VIEW OF NATURE AND TRUTH.

The *Monsters of Lyonesse* books have always been lurking in the back of my mind. They draw on my Scillonian heritage. But they also contain stuff that is a result of the family having lived in a castle in Ireland for three years, and of my working for a short but deeply memorable time as a professional eel fisherman, and of my acute fear of heights, and the shanty towns on the breakwater at Manila harbour in the Philippines, and my love of river travel and wooden buildings and larksong and daisy-starred clifftop turf and blacksmiths' forges and standing stones.

When I'm writing a book I start at seven in the morning, stop for breakfast, and carry on till six in the evening, with pauses for gardening and maintenance work, and long, strengthening walks up Hergest Ridge, home of a ghost by the name of Black Vaughan. I write for perhaps eight months of the year. The rest of the time I spend doing research, which is nearly as much fun as writing. It can mean sitting in a dusty library, looking at a manuscript unexamined for five hundred years. Or it can mean traveling by freighter to distant atolls in the far Pacific, discussing the pirate problem with local politicians. And it certainly means months every year spent sailing the seas of northern Europe, visiting the homes of rare plants and birds and falling into long conversations with total strangers.

As well as writing and researching, I spend as much time as possible in schools and libraries, encouraging people of all ages to read and write. I write stories for broadsheet newspapers, and have columns in yachting magazines and in *Hortus*, the world's most distinguished (and least illustrated) gardening magazine."

For further information about *The Well Between the Worlds* and Sam Llewellyn, or to discuss an interview, feature or event, please contact Alexandra Richardson at Scholastic Children's Books on 020 7756 7779 or arichardson@scholastic.co.uk