



## A Perfect Gentle Knight

*Kit Pearson*

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## **A Perfect Gentle Knight** Kit Pearson

Kit Pearson's long-awaited new novel tells the story of the six Bell children, each of them coping in various ways in the aftermath of their mother's death. Set in the 1950s and seen through the perspective of the middle child, 11-year-old Corrie, Pearson's story illustrates how a rich fantasy life both helps and hinders children trying to cope with loss, loneliness, and growing up. While elder sister Roz is growing up and out of the desire for fantasy games, eldest brother Sebastian, who fancies himself Sir Lancelot in their Round Table game, continues to need them as much as ever,

## **A Perfect Gentle Knight Details**

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Author : Kit Pearson

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## From Reader Review A Perfect Gentle Knight for online ebook

### **Sarah Thornton says**

Oh Seb.

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### **Shonna Froebel says**

This tale of eleven-year-old Corrie Bell and her family takes us into a tale of a family coping with loss. Corrie's mother died in an accident three years ago, and she and her siblings have found comfort in a fantasy world of the Round Table, where they abide by the rules of knights. Their father, always absent-minded, has retreated into his work as a Shakespearean professor and a succession of housekeepers does the basics of what the house requires. Corrie and her older siblings, Roz (13) and Sebastian (14) manage the schedules of all the children and arrange the things that need to be arranged, like meals and dentists.

While Roz is finding a life outside the Round Table, Sebastian is making it more and more the center of his life. Corrie is torn between a new friendship and her family responsibilities and loyalties and struggles with the large responsibilities placed on her.

I really enjoyed this family story and know my young niece will as well.

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### **Meaghan says**

When I was younger, I used to look for a new Kit Pearson book every time I went into a bookstore. I did this for many years and never found one. I finally started forgetting to look. Imagine my happiness when I started my children's lit class in January and found this!

I hadn't read any of her work in years and I had that moment of wondering that I always feel when I go back to something I liked a long time ago: will I still think this is good or was I just young? In this case, I still think Pearson is great.

This is an extremely sad book, but in a beautiful way. I very much liked the main character, Corrie, and really felt for her. She's put in a terrible situation by her family. The fact that she's totally overwhelmed and barely coping comes across very well in the book, but she's never whiny or self-pitying.

The descriptions of "home" and the family are lovely, especially the part about Christmas, which gave me that nice Christmas feeling.

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### **KeirSilver Griffin says**

Weird...

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### **??? ??? says**

A perfect Gentle Night by Kit Pearson. This book is about the 6 Bell children and how they cope after their mothers death. Even though 2 years have passed since she has died, The father- who the children call Fa- has locked him self into his one realm being sadly oblivious of his children. The eldest Sebastian has begun the game of knights of the round table, but soon every body becomes caught up with this game and lets go of reality, 11 year old Corrie has no friends, Sebastian is being bullied, the twins, Juliet and Orly, get into trouble on a regular bases, and the second oldest Roz is slipping from her family trying to get back her life. When Meridith comes- a new girl from Calgary- Corrie starts to see this game differently while every body- but Roz and especially Sebastian- just go on with the round table like they always did. When Sebastian falls in love with Jennifer everything changes. He becomes oblivious of everybody and everything, while Corrie and Meridith and sometimes Roz ban together to tie there family back together. Soon Sebastian is convinced that Jennifer is a reincarnation of Gwenavie and when his heart is broken he goes into shock.

I think the best thing about this book is that it is so real it seems as if it could happen although I doubt it would. I like Roz and Corrie's characters both, I like Roz because when the book starts she's as into the game as everybody else but then she realizes 'Hey this isn't normal for a 13 year old girl to do this game is to young for me' So she becomes somebody else and I like how she grows. I like Corrie because she is so desparate to keep her family together and she knows she can't do it with out Fa although she is to scared to ask him for help.

I didn't like Sebastian. I think he becomes to obssessed with this and I think its kind of odd since he's 15 also he doesn't seem to care about his family much.

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### **Sarah says**

A good book, very sad. I felt SO sorry for poor little Corrie, trying so bravely to deal with way too much responsibility for an 11-year-old. The story covered a lot of deep issues like mental illness and coping with the death of a parent in an interesting and realistic way, and I loved the characters and the writing style.

However! I did have issues with two things.

1. I didn't think the 1950s setting added anything. In some ways it made sense, but in others it didn't really work. The book was too short to really establish the setting properly - I kept forgetting it was supposed to be set in the past and then being confused when Corrie referenced things like Elvis and saddle shoes.
  2. I thought the ending was a bit TOO conveniently perfect and happily-ever-after. I suppose in a book aimed at kids 11 or younger you don't want it to be too miserable or grim, but then it's quite a mature book for that reading age anyway in terms of the issues and writing style, and Corrie's thoughts. I think a slightly less idyllic ending would've still worked.
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### **Andrea Wall says**

I first read this book in Grade Six or Seven, which is what age this book should be read at. I remember crying and being all impacted and whatnot by this book. I have to say that it lost some of its "shocking-ness" now that I'm older, but that does not mean this isn't a great book!!

This book looks a lot of big issues, and a lot of deep stuff and keeps it simple. I guess that's what I like about it. Sometimes things can be complicated and not complicated at the same time. This is how life is for Corrie. Everything around her is confusing and stressful, but sometimes simple things like a great Christmas or a baseball glove make everything better. I think this is something all kids can do and a lot of adults forget.

I liked how Pearson didn't need big words or grand ideas to make her point known. I was captivated by the simpleness. The real (very real) characters. The sadness with the not sad.

I really think this should be a book middle grades should all read. I think there is a lot more value to it than the crap they actually made us read.

Although I didn't cry this time around, I did when I was 12. This is a book from my childhood I'll always love :)

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### **Jane says**

There are many things that can tip me towards buying a book when I am on browsing, and on this particular occasion that thing was a picture of an elderly border terrier, sitting on the lap of the author. I thought of my lovely Pip, who turned just as white as Kit Pearson's lovely Poppy, and I told myself that a story of a large family of children who imagined themselves to be Knights of the Round Table was exactly what I needed. Because border terrier people understand. It was – and she did.

In the early fifties the six Bell children lost their mother. Their father, a Shakespearean scholar who had named each child after a character, coped by retreating into his study, immersing himself in the writing of a book in the hours when he wasn't sleeping or teaching. His children were supervised first by a much loved aunt and then by a succession of housekeepers. The house was big, the children were aloof, and so in fact there was little supervision at all.

It was the eldest child, Sebastian, who began the game of Knights of the Round Table. It brought the children together, it made them feel a little more secure in a world that had, with their mother's death, become horribly uncertain. Form of security in their scary world. The game became all-consuming; a quite glorious secret.

I saw the wonder, but I also saw the dangers, all beautifully and sensitively portrayed.

I also saw that the author so clearly understood, empathised with, everything she was writing about.

It was, of course, inevitable that things would change. Roz, the second eldest began to develop other interests. She wanted to spend more time with her school-friends, to try out as a cheer leader, and she began to pull away from her siblings and their game.

perfectgentleknightThat left the third eldest, eleven-year old Corrie in an uncomfortable position. She knew how much the game meant to Sebastian and their younger siblings, and she loved the game. But she also wanted to spend time with Meredith, her new school-friend. Corrie loved visiting Meredith's home where two parents were interested and involved with their only child, and ready to welcome Corrie and her younger siblings; and Meredith loved the freedom, the space, the company when she visited Corrie.

But Meredith wasn't part of the game. And Sebastian forbade Corrie from saying anything about it. Anything at all.

Corrie saw things that worried her, and she began to realise that Sebastian was lost in his role as Lancelot, that he was losing touch with reality. She struggled to do her best for him, to look after the house and the other children, and to hold on to her friend and live her own life. She wanted to fix everything, but she wasn't sure that she could.

I loved Corrie; she was an utterly believable eleven-year old. She was old enough to understand much, but she was still a child. I could understand her, admire what she was trying to do, but I also feared for her.

All of the children were as well drawn, and the complex family dynamics were captured perfectly.

I was charmed: by a world so beautifully realised, by lovely storytelling, and by such wonderfully drawn characters. And I appreciated that difficult themes – of grief, of mental illness – were dealt with sensitively and intelligently, and in a way that would speak to both children and adults.

At first I read this simply as a story of children, but as the story progressed I thought a little more that this was a book for children. I think that given the way the story played out that was inevitable. And that this is a story for children in the tradition of some of the great writers from the earlier years of the twentieth century.

... a beautifully executed and deeply touching story.

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### **Lindsay says**

I have been a fan of Pearson since I was a child, and thought I had read all of her books until I came across this one in the elementary school library I work at. It was very well written, and a great story of family bonds and overcoming hardship and struggle.

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### **Shawn Bird says**

This book seemed to have an identity crisis. The main character is 11, and it read a lot like a children's book, but it was set up as a baby boomer memoir, casually referring to events and objects that would be foreign to 11 year olds without any context or explanation. The themes are big: loss, mental illness, coming of age. I think perhaps they are too big for this 164 page format, and too big for 11 year old Corrie to do justice to on her own. I would have loved to see this story twice as long so the characters could have been more finely drawn, the dialogue used more to advance the plot, and to create more of an immersion experience. It felt like the story moved in thick chunks, rather than flowing. I think 60 year olds who grew up in Vancouver would find this a lovely nostalgic book, but I think it misses the mark as a kids' book, which is a shame, because it could have been fantastic if 1950's Vancouver could have become as real as, say 1900's PEI is in the Anne books.

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## **Emily says**

I first read this book in 2009 when it was nominated for the OLA's Red Maple award. I remember loving it, but A Way Lies North was also nominated that year, and that was the one my friends and I voted for. However, I still think about it over the years, not quite remembering how the story went. The novel turned out to be about loss and grief and the things we do when we're looking for something to hold on to. This follows a family in the 50s who've lost their mother. They play a Knight of the Round Table game, but for Corrie's eldest sibling, Sebastian, it's more an anchor than a game. It follows Corrie as she, alongside her family, has to pick up and put the pieces back together after their mother's death. I'm not sure how well this would do now, there are a lot of references that kids now wouldn't understand without some help from parents (or grandparents) and some googling. I actually don't remember having any trouble with it myself, proof that the words many parents might deem too difficult for their child might just be them underestimating them. Anyways, I loved it, but ironically like the Bell children discover within the novel, the magic and excitement was lost in this novel for me 9 years later. Instead, I read a book about sad children, which may have a hit a bit too close to home at times.

3.5/5 stars.

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## **Rebecca says**

When I was younger I read Kit Pearson's Awake and Dreaming and practically absorbed it I read it so fast. This is my second book of Pearson's and she had me hooked again. Her characters are so real and I feel so much empathy for Corrie I could almost see it play out before me like a play. The dialogue was more mature for children I often forgot that this was a children's book.

What I love about this book is how it delves into the possibility that imagination and pretending can hinder a person from facing reality. In this age we all encourage imagination but what happens when it becomes a person's world and real everyday life is neglected?

With looking after the family from the time of his mother's death, The Knights of the Round Table was a brilliant idea for Sebastian, the eldest of 6 to get away from the reality of his mother's death. His younger siblings blindly follow; especially Corrie who idolizes her older brother. But when Sebastian starts becoming a recluse and insisting he is the reincarnation of Lancelot- things start to go out of hand.

Compelling, poignant, and heart-felt, it deals with very real psychological issues that many people face and boldly depicts the challenges of growing up.

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## **Monika says**

This was one of Kit Pearson's grittier novels and one that I found uncomfortable but important. I loved her exploration of grief and I admire her ability to delve into topics that aren't commonly talked about. Sebastian's portrayal in particular pulled at my heart strings. I can't imagine what it would have been like to be Corrie who was desperately trying to be everything her family needed her to be.

Despite this story being told in Kit's familiar style, I found it hard to warm up to the characters. Maybe it was

because the focus was on the development of the family as a whole. The resolution at the end felt unnatural and abrupt, as much as I love a "happy" ending, and I would have liked to see Sebastian's character explored a bit more. Unfortunately this book isn't one that I'll be reading frequently but I'll try it again in a few years to see how it sits with me then.

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### **Becca says**

\*sigh\* This book is so comforting to me. It was given to me by a relative for Christmas years ago and I've re-read it nearly every year since then. I may have been a teenager when I received it, but it feels like one of those books I've owned and read since I was a little kid. It has that nostalgic factor.

This book is definitely one of my all-time favourites, and there are therefore many things I love and appreciate about it. It's a fairly simple book, in both how it's written and the message it's trying to get across (i.e. the plot/story/themes). I believe it's geared towards younger teens or tweens, but I still am able to take something away from it, even though I'm in my early twenties now.

I really love and admire the characters in the book. They're described simply, but they have a depth to them. They feel real to me. Corrie, who is sort of the main character in the book, and her older brother, Sebastian, are my favourites, though I love the whole Bell family.

The setting really stands out to me, particularly during this read-through. The book is set in the late 1950s, and the way Kit describes certain things and references trends and popular items of the time definitely adds character and realisticness to it. I suppose it also helps that it's set in Canada as well. ;] (That makes me like it more too. :P Though I guess that makes me biased!)

Overall, 5/5 stars and I'm sure I'll be giving it another re-read in the near future!

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### **sarah says**

This is my favourite book of all time. I think it is soon time for my annual reread. I love this story with my whole being, this book shaped who I am today.

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