



Wings of Dawn

Sigmund Brouwer

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This wholesome, fascinating fictional work is clearly Christian, yet appropriate for seekers or nonbelievers. Join the fiery adventure as ancient secrets are unearthed, Thomas's fragile faith in God is tested, and as he faces a diabolic conspiracy that has ruled the land for centuries.

Wings of Dawn Details

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From Reader Review Wings of Dawn for online ebook

Hope says

I found a copy of WINGS OF DAWN at a local book exchange store, and thought "Why not?" Since then, many friends have shared that it is one of their favorite books - also out of print!

Sigmund Brouwer writes with simple yet elegant prose, weaving a tale of mystery and intrigue. WINGS OF DAWN follows the journey of a young orphan, Thomas of Magnus, in the dark ages of Europe. Thomas embarks on a quest to save England with a string of companions - he doesn't know until the end who is truly on his side. Will Thomas find his origins? Will love find him in the process? Cross history with an unsung hero while he tries to uncover secrets long buried and a destiny awakened.

As Christian fiction goes, it doesn't get much better than this. I would suggest this to readers of any age for the simple, clean writing...while still maintaining a page-turning story. The historical twists make the plot plausible, and the characters are relatable. This is a book to treasure, and will end up in my dream home library someday. Happy reading!

Neil says

I love this book! If I can find a hardback edition [or even one of the soft covers] of the book 'Magnus' I'll purchase them as well. It is a wonderful book! [Perhaps 'wonderful' is too strong a word, since I gave it only four stars as a rating, but a part of me wants to move it up to five stars. Perhaps after the next time I read it I may bump it up.]

It is a piece of historical fiction that takes place around 1310 - 1315 AD. The 'hero' has been taught to believe he will rescue the population and gain control of a secret castle called Magnus. He has been taught advanced knowledge from an early age and is well versed in how to use this knowledge [to the detriment of his opponents]. He frees a knight from being hanged, but during his 'entrance' he is interrupted by an old man who tells him to free the other two prisoners. He demands they be freed as well and then proves himself to the knight in such fashion that the knight is beholden to aid Thomas [the young man] in his quest. He encounters a young woman said to have survived horrible burns as a child wrapped in rags before being thrown into jail. They [Thomas and the knight] eventually manage to escape from the jail and Thomas enacts his plans to gain control of the city [via the fulfillment of a twenty-year old prophecy]. Shortly after Thomas gains control of the castle-fortress, the knight leaves. In the course of the following year, he consolidates his power, befriends the Earl of York, and is called upon to assist the Earl of York in fighting a medium-size army of Scots. After coming up with the winning stratagem for the battle, he returns to Magnus only to find the Earl of York has returned to Magnus to arrest him for the murder of four monks [from the nearby abbey where Thomas grew up as a child]. Claiming trial by ordeal to prove his innocence, Thomas is able to momentarily avoid losing power in Magnus, but his trials increase as (view spoiler) prophets claiming to be the One True Followers of the Holy Grail enter Magnus (view spoiler). Because of the actions of the priests, Thomas must flee for his life. Having learned that the Earl of York has been arrested, he visits his former friend and pledges to free the Earl. His plans are thwarted, however, and he is captured again by his Enemy, only to be set free by Robert Hood and Hood's band of Merry Men [after having been captured by Hood and Co. in a clever ambush]. He then travels to Portugal before traveling to the Holy Land to try and discover the answers to the questions and mysteries surrounding his life, his upbringing, and Magnus. Along the way, he

encounters his former friend the knight that he had previously saved [in the Holy Land]. He is then captured by Arab bandits while traveling with a caravan to Jordan/Nazareth, is set free by one of the bandits shown an act of mercy by Thomas while hiding as a slave in the caravan, and discovers misdirection that makes him believe he has been betrayed. He then encounters a survivor from the slave gang from the caravan with which he had been traveling; this bloke claims to be his father. More confusion and mistrust sets in, and Thomas comes up with a plan to determine, once and for all, who his enemy truly is and who is his friend. All goes well, his plan succeeds, and he and his friends then go on to find a massive treasure in the desert. They managed to escape from Mameluke soldiers by distracting the soldiers with a false trail of treasure; this allows them to make it back to England. While in England, Thomas is AGAIN arrested and put into chains by the King's right-hand man, the Duke of Whittingham. Unable to break Thomas, the Duke arranges for Thomas to escape and follows Thomas back to his old abbey. There, the tale comes to an end.

(view spoiler)

I thought it was a good book, overall. I liked the last section of the book, which has the written form of 'Easter Eggs' whereby the author explains various things introduced in the book. Everything in the book could have happened as written; events, technologies, tactics, herbal uses/remedies, poisons and counter poisons and antidotes and whatnot were based upon the science and known knowledge of the time[s] [including knowledge from foreign lands]. It was some very good speculation on the part of the author.

Some of the book did become a little repetitious while reading; I had forgotten that from the last time I read the book. At the same time, it did not really take away from my enjoyment. I think the whole 'who's a Druid/who's a Merlin?' mystery could have been wrapped up sooner. I liked the logic games and guessing games the characters engaged in throughout the book; I think it helped maintain [some] level of suspense throughout the course of the story.

Even though the time period is three hundred years later, the book kind of reminds me of 'the iron lance' by Stephen Lawhead. They are similar in some respects, yet quite different in others. At the same time, I liked the 'religious message' behind each one. Each author does a nice job of having his main character 'discover'

Christianity and what it means to be a Christian without being 'pushy' about it. I also liked how Katherine was most definitely a strong female character in this story and able to hold her own in some respect[s]. It was a nice change of pace and added to the story; it also ensured she was the right 'choice' for Thomas.

I thought the character development was well done for each character. I did not feel like any character was a stereotype or a cardboard cutout. Each character felt essential to the storyline; even the minor secondary and tertiary characters were well done. Granted, some of them were more 'cut out' in nature, but that is how it goes. They did not need very much character development to let us know they were jerks or thieves or murderers or cutthroats or whathaveyou.

May the Fourth be with you! :)

Hannah says

Aha!! No wonder "Magnus" was impossible to find! The title has been changed to a far more common-sounding and uniformed type of title(as has the cover art). But no matter, it does not diminish the fact that this book is excellent. Not to much of the overly lustful physical attraction found in many Christian books but just a touch of romance. I can see why some people were annoyed by a bit of overexplanation but I still adore this book and have read it several times.

Amber says

While there were many good elements in this story, the author is very abrupt in his writing style. One moment the character is in one place and in the next paragraph he is somewhere else. He also doesn't spend a whole lot of time on descriptions. For example: the main character's love is often disguised as a cripple with bandages around her face. While he hints to the fact that she may not truly be scarred, he never actually comes out and describes what she actually looks like. This frustrates me, but I am also a reader who appreciates detail. It was a good story, but I didn't like the way it was written.

Jocelyn says

Not a terrible story idea but poorly executed. His writing style was so painful and repetitive of the same information I wanted to pull my hair out. The book could have been much shorter and better for it if he could have expected us to remember something simple like that he was an orphan raised by someone named Sarah instead of continuously repeating it. Also blaaaah "Oh my gosh, can we trust him? No, he might be a druid! Oh my, you betrayed us!" "No! you betrayed me! You might be the druid!" How many times did they really need to go through all that crap? And talk about the boringest love story. How very convenient that Katherine happened to actually be beautiful and wonderful at everything. We couldn't possibly have the hunk fall in love with a burn victim....no that'd be too noble of him. Again, not an awful story, I just wish I hadn't needed to waste so much time reading this overly long book.

Bethany B. says

An amazing book!

What a breath of fresh air. This book shows a realistic view of the medieval world through a complicated and wonderfully woven plot.

My first ever Sigmund Brouwer read. I've gone back and read it so many times!

Frode says

Fun, fun, fun. I read this book in the mid-90's and passed it on to a number of young folk. Over time it disappeared from my collection. It was later republished as *Wings of Dawn*. Currently having read the first three installments of the *Immortal* series, a retelling with other back stories of Magnus, I went on a hunt to find a copy of the original *Magnus*. The internet is a marvelous tool. I found a used copy in Florida, ordered it, and enjoyed it immensely. There some *Deus ex Machina* type points in the book, but the story is full of intrigue with Thomas jumping from the frying pan into the fire again and again. Brouwer unfolds the story as one peels an onion, layer upon layer of secrets are revealed. Who should read this book? Young teens and anyone else who likes a good story with a mixture of adventure, love, and mystery. Enjoy!

Katherine Maxwell says

This book is my favorite of all time.. I read it in its original form, *Magnus*,(which I must say I prefer the name and the cover art than to the newer version) and met the author when i was in the third grade...since then I have read it at least once a year..I am now 24 years old..I have destroyed several copies and now that it is out of print, again, I have purchased every copy I can get my hands on so that I will have some for my kids.

The story is such a great mix of Medieval intrigue, romance, and history. It also brings faith into the mix so quietly that you almost dont notice it until its touched you.

Megan says

There was a lot that I enjoyed here, especially once the plot got going. I'm a Christian who tends to not particularly like Christian fiction, so I was pleased that the faith was plot-important and authentic but not forced or obnoxious. I think where the book fell short for me, though, was in two places.

First, the "is he a Druid or isn't he?" got a little old. It's a long book and I got frustrated that so much of the plot was due to people changing their beliefs about someone's loyalty. (Although I was impressed with how that all was eventually resolved. I cheered when someone was taking smart, proactive action to resolve that!)

Second, I felt that the book had too much recap. In a longer book or series with a more complicated plot I

can understand the necessity of having to stop every so often and remind the readers what's going on. Here, though, I didn't think it was necessary to the degree that it happens. It felt like every five minutes the characters were stopping to say "Now, what's going on again?" and it tended to take me out of the story.

Overall, though, I did enjoy it and am glad it was recommended to me!

James Ackerman says

One of my all time favorite series. Great for young readers as well as old.

Bill Krieger says

Wow, the first 300 pages of *Wings of Dawn* are a fun 4-star romp. The book is set in medieval England. There's tons of action with heroes and villains and peasants and knights and the whole deal. It's very fast-paced, chockful 'o action. This is not detailed historical fiction that places you in the time period with elaborate narration or anything. It's meat and potatoes, baby. Which is good. Count me in!

Alas, the book dies a pretty horrible, twisted (and disappointing) death over the last 150 pages or so. The lead character leaves England for the Middle East (WTF?), and the whole thing gets completely bogged down. Each plot device seemed to get used twice or more. For example, on multiple occasions people fake imprisonment to spy on someone else. Or someone's escape is faked, so that they can be followed. It got really silly by the end. Also, when he left England, Brouwer had to dump in a whole new lot of characters just to keep the thing churning, but it crossed the finish line as flat as a pancake.

Oh well. It was a fun read and worth it. So close to more than that though. He he.

Dayna says

This book has been published under different titles, and I think maybe even as a series. I originally read it under the title "Magnus" which is the title I prefer ... but when I went to purchase it this is the only one that I could find it under. It sounds like some dumb romance. It is one case where you really can't judge the book by the cover. It is such an enjoyable read!

It's about a young man named Thomas and his journey as he discovers ... well ... as he sets out to fulfill his life destiny. It's a really great adventure, going all through Britain and Europe and on into the Middle East. Real history and real historical characters (as well as characters of legend -- like Merlin) are woven into the story. In the back of the book there is an appendix of sorts that explains what the people (or simply Europeans) in the Middle Ages thought of as "magic" was only something that they did not or could not fully comprehend ... like the use of gunpowder. It is listed by chapter, and explains each "magical" happening as logical and as scientific as it really is.

It's a GREAT good read! (Though it might be enjoyed more by the preteen or young adult set of readers).

Emily M says

It's strange--after pre-reading so many contemporary YA books for my kids, it's shocking to read one that is so clean it feels like middle grade. Yeah, some treacherous people die off screen of poison and such, and there are some battle scenes where I guess people die, but it's way less intense than a Harry Potter or Percy Jackson book. No language, no raunch, and the romance is largely so subtle as to be a bit boring (but will probably be plenty for my eleven year old boy, who is more of the intended audience). I guess this is because this is a Christian book, but there was little of the preachiness and insta-conversions so prevalent in the Christian fiction my mom tried to steer me away from as a child. In fact, the mentions of God and the Merlins' faith seem almost to be afterthoughts. Maybe I was skimming for a page or something, but it surprised me that suddenly Thomas was saying he'd started believing in Katherine's God. This was so clearly secondary to recapturing Magnus. And after that, the references to faith or prayer were quite few and far between. While the Druids and Merlins (whose official group name we don't find out til way into the book) are clearly Evil versus Good, there doesn't seem to be much spiritual significance to their battles. They both use knowledge and technology, not the supernatural, and I'm not sure that faith is a prerequisite to be on one side or the other. Logically, it should be, but the emphasis is much more on education and the almost-forgotten knowledge of the precious books. So this wasn't exactly what I expected.

Why the three stars? This contains a lot of what I'm looking for for my son--adventure, battles, spying and double-crossing, and a young hero who is special not because he's a special snowflake or has superpowers, but because he was well-educated by a loving tutor/nurse and read a lot of books (in Latin! Squeee!). Since we just studied this time period in our homeschool last year, I appreciated the historical detail, and it felt pretty accurate. The writing style is decent, though the plotting and transitions left much to be desired. The author relies heavily on the question of are-they-Druid-or-Merlin to create conflict between the main four protagonists, and it frankly goes on waaaaay too long, especially once you finally realize their real identities at the end of the book. And while it makes some sense that the older characters wouldn't tell the younger characters all the details of their organization to protect them in case they're captured and tortured, there has to be a point at which you decide to spill the beans to the next generation in case you're killed. I tend to dislike adventure stories where young people go off on quests without vital information that their mentors could give them to help them, and this was Thomas' predicament, times a hundred.

Along the same lines, the tricks that the two sides use to spy on each other are both repetitive (the bad guy who shows up everywhere in England and the Holy Land that Thomas goes, just to listen in on his conversations while imprisoned) and ambiguous. The POV shifts from Thomas to Katherine, and sometimes we know the trick ahead of time, while other times, the author seems to want to fool the audience along with the enemy. While I think the intention was to make the book even more exciting and surprising, I just found it muddled and confusing. There's a point mid-way through the book where both teams of good guys are planning a double cross on each other (because they still don't trust each other!), but the bad guys double cross them, and there have been so many times when the seeming peril of the good guys was just part of their plan, hidden from the reader, that I didn't actually believe they were really in trouble for a long time. If the author is pulling multiple Oceans Eleven-style incidents where the good guys were okay all along, he can't then turn around and expect the audience to believe the team is in real peril. We're just expecting Thomas to pop up and explain that this was all the long game (which he does again, multiple times).

It looks like this book used to be a series of several shorter books, and it was compiled into one longer one that I read. Maybe that explains the abrupt jumps in time or place. I found it jarring to have Thomas and the

Earl of York part as friends, only to have the Earl turn around and come to arrest him a few pages later. The whole third act trip to the Holy Land is fun from a historical perspective, but it really pulls the story off in a different direction. The King Edward portion seems like a long wind-down, partially because he hasn't been a presence at all in the story until then.

I liked the characters fine, though there wasn't much character growth throughout the book. Thomas does grow in wisdom, I guess, but the whole mistrust issue muddies that issue quite a bit. And I feel like this book shows its age when Katherine turns out to be beautiful and unscarred. It's nice that Thomas fell for her character and saw through the beautiful traitress, but how convenient that bandaged-up Katherine turns out not to be ugly. I feel like I've read enough YA written in the last couple of years where the person with the disfigurement/disability doesn't magically turn out to be beautiful and healthy that we can and should be writing stories that way nowadays. Particularly as a Christian, there's the emphasis that man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. I may be overly sensitive to this particular issue because I live in LA, where even my Christian SAHM friends have perfectly toned bodies (thanks to strict diets and workout regimens) and my kids are literally bombarded as we drive down the 101 with unrealistic billboard images of female beauty. So while I have no problem with book characters being physically attractive, I'm sad when all of them, even the seemingly physically flawed ones, are. It just feeds the cultural overemphasis on looks.

This wasn't twaddle, and there was nothing morally objectionable, but I am not immediately putting it on my reread list. I AM going to have my son read it because I do think he would enjoy it, but I'm not necessarily going to recommend it to friends unless they are looking for this specific type of story for kids who have already read all the 4 and 5 star classics and are looking for more. Mixed praise? Yes.

Judas Machina says

I don't write synopsis. Read the cover for that.

Theist meanderings and musings aside, this is an interesting read that contains all of Brouwer's slight of hand magic trick style protagonists.

An amazing, seemingly miraculous event occurs that is impossible....and then it is shown from the other side, and the mechanics of the staging told in such a way that you are excited to be fooled.

It's like a polite, non-foul mouthed version of Penn and Teller with a central morality tale with a good character arc and story that doesn't get bogged down in its preaching.

For me, that's tops.

M. says

One of my favorite books growing up. It has its shortcomings, but they are far outweighed by the intriguing story that demands your attention and won't let go until you find you're on the last page. Highly recommended for young teen readers. I can still think of very few books that have impacted me quite as much as this one and think that it should be read and shared by all.
