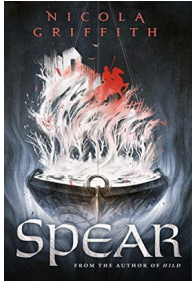




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Spear
By Nicola Griffith
Discussed October 2022

Dramatis Personae

- Spear/Ber-hyddur/Peretur (Dawnged – “gift”; Tal – “payment”)
- Elen, her mother
- Companions: Llanza (Lance), Cei, Bedwyr, Andros, Geraint
- Madron, village innkeeper
- Angharad, daughter to Madron
- Nimuë, the Lady of the Lake, current chief counselor of Arturus/Artos
- Manandán, Celtic deity; Spear’s father
- Myrddyn (Merlin)

Discussion Questions

1. Did you enjoy reading *Spear*? If so, what made it an enjoyable reading experience for you? Is there anything that made it less-than-enjoyable for you?
2. Have you read any of the other fictional re-tellings of “the Matter of Britain” that Griffith cites as influences? (Listed below questions.) If so, how does *Spear* compare?
3. Is there anything about *Spear* that made it seem to you like a “realistic” or “reasonable” depiction of 6th Century Britain?
4. What do you think about Griffith’s changes to the Arthurian legends? Such as her “reinterpretation” of Myrddyn (Merlin); racial diversity among Arthur’s Companions; the changed relationship between Myrddyn and Nimuë; the love-triangle of Arturus, Gwenhwyfar, and Lanza; the “curing” of Gwenhwyfar?
5. Were there any aspects of *Spear* that reminded you of *Lord of the Rings*?

6. What did you think of Griffith's depictions of magic and the supernatural? For example, Peretur communicating with bees, horses, and plants; the magical doors and paths to the Lake; Elen's concealment spells; the inclusion of Manandán, a Celtic god?

7. Arthurian legends often link knights with quests. Does Spear show that Peretur is on a quest? If so, what do you think Peretur was searching for?

8. What's your opinion about the gender-bending and LGBTQ+ content in Spear?

9. Are there any other aspects of Spear that you think we should discuss?

Arthurian novels cited by Griffith as influences:

- Henry Treece – The Great Captains (1956)
- T.H. White – The Once and Future King (1958)
- Rosemary Sutcliff – Sword at Sunset (1963)
- Mary Stewart – The Crystal Cave (1970), The Hollow Hills (1973), The Last Enchantment (1979)
- Gilliam Bradshaw – Hawk of May (1980), Kingdom of Summer (1981), In Winter's Shadow (1982)
- Jack Whyte – The Skystone (1992), The Singing Sword (1994), The Eagles' Brood (1994), The Saxon Shore (1995), The Fort at River's Bend (1997), Metamorphosis (1997), Uther (2000)

Other Books by Nicola Griffith:

- Hild (historical fiction)
- So Lucky (fiction)
- Ammonite (SF)
- Slow River (SF)
- "Aud Torvingen" mysteries/thrillers
 - Always
 - Stay
 - The Blue Place