



The Serial Garden: The Complete Armitage Family Stories

By Joan Aiken, Andi Watson, Garth Nix, Lizza Aiken

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"In a singularly important publishing even, the first complete collection of Aiken's 24 beloved Armitage cycle of stories appears here for the first time. The family who dwells in and out of magical worlds transcends fantasy and enters the world of classic, entrancing literature. Belongs on every child's bookshelf. For all ages."

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"For sheer charm it's hard to beat these wonderful, dead-pan comic tales about one family's adventures—nearly always on a Monday—with ghosts, witches, time travel, the Furies and every sort of magic."

—Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post Book World*

"Buy it to read to your kids, and you'll find yourself sneaking tastes on the sly; a little Aiken is a fine thing to have in your system at any age."

—*Salon.com*

"Joan Aiken's invention seemed inexhaustible, her high spirits a blessing, her sheer storytelling zest a phenomenon. She was a literary treasure, and her books will continue to delight for many years to come."

—Philip Pullman

"The best kind of writer, strange and spooky and surprising, never sentimental or whimsical."

—Kelly Link

"Gathered under one cover from several Aiken collections, the magical, eccentric and very British Armitage family reappears in a collection of 24 stories, four never before published. The Armitages' wacky magic (usually a Monday occurrence) and that of their fantastical town, a place filled with witches and magical beings, rises from the pages when matters go slightly awry, in the manner of Edward Eager and E. Nesbit."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Readers of all ages have the opportunity to enjoy some of the best writing by one of the most superb and timeless fantasy writers."

—*Green Man Review*

"The Armitage's world grows richer as it is extended. This is a collection of stories which allow—in fact demand—the reader joins in with their own imagination and remakes the story inside their own head. Aiken's pragmatism shows through in her stories. Instead of remaining in or reflecting upon the past like some of her contemporaries, they show an author making the best of the world and coming out ahead with humor and imagination."

—*January Magazine*

"Each of the tales brims with old-fashioned adventure and charm. An excellent way to show Harry Potter fans that magic can come in small doses too."

—*Author Magazine*

This is the first complete collection of Joan Aiken's beloved Armitage stories—and it includes four new, unpublished stories. After Mrs. Armitage makes a wish, the Armitage family has "interesting and unusual" experiences every Monday (and the occasional Tuesday). The Board of Incantation tries to take over their house to use as a school for young wizards; the Furies come to stay; and a cutout from a cereal box leads into a beautiful and tragic palace garden. Charming and magical, the uncommon lives of the Armitage family will thrill and delight readers young and old. Includes Joan Aiken's "Prelude" from *Armitage*, *Armitage*, *Fly Away Home*, as well as introductions from Joan Aiken's daughter, Lizza Aiken, and best-selling author Garth Nix. Illustrated by Andi Watson.

Best known for *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, **Joan Aiken** (1924-2004) wrote over a hundred books and won the Guardian and Edgar Allan Poe awards. After her first husband's death, she supported her family by copyediting at *Argosy* magazine and an advertising agency before turning to fiction. She went on to write for *Vogue*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Vanity Fair*, *Argosy*, *Women's Own*, and many others.

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Editorial Review

Review

What a thrill to discover this gem from the witty and endlessly inventive Joan Aiken -- Chris Riddell Joan Aiken's invention seemed inexhaustible, her high spirits a blessing, her sheer storytelling zest a phenomenon. She was a literary treasure, and her books will continue to delight for many years to come -- Philip Pullman She was a consummate story-teller, one that each generation discovers anew -- Amanda Craig The Times A writer of wild humour and unrestrained imagination Oxford Companion to Children's Literature A delightful whimsical set of stories about young Mark and Harriet Armitage and the fantastical things that just happen to them, where if the lawn is full of unicorns you can count on their father to rush out and try to stop them eating the roses. These stories are funny and often unexpectedly poignant. They also don't have a wasted word or scrap of information. They're both charming and genuine in a way that few things manage -- Jo Walton Inexhaustibly imaginative, Aiken was one of the twentieth century's greatest children's authors. Witty, zany and entirely sane, this is a necklace of diamonds -- Amanda Craig New Statesman Often bonkers stories, always written with cut-glass precision ... Aiken is a superb storyteller The Times A writer of wild humour and unrestrained imagination Oxford Companion to Children's Literature A delightful summary of one side of Aiken's talent: whimsical, funny, a series of brilliantly imaginative ideas stitched together with dream logic... It is the mixture of irrepressible gaiety and invention with the tragic that makes Aiken one of the great children's authors...impossible to calculate the number of people who have enjoyed her books - who have had some magic injected into the mundane Sunday telegraph Joan Aiken is a superb storyteller who refusal to skimp on sophisticated language, and the Armitage parents' droll indifference, is guaranteed to give children and parents a Ready Brek glow The Times, Children's Book of the Week

About the Author

Best known for The Wolves of Willoughby Chase, Joan Aiken (1924-2004) wrote over a hundred books. After her first husband's death, she supported her family by copyediting at Argosy magazine and an advertising agency, then began publishing fiction. She went on to write for Vogue, Good Housekeeping, Vanity Fair, Argosy, Women's Own, and many others.

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