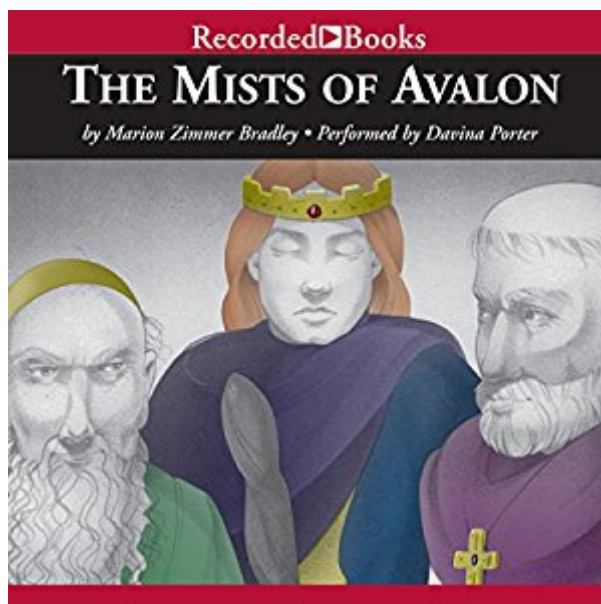


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The Mists Of Avalon



Synopsis

A posthumous recipient of the World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement, Marion Zimmer Bradley reinvented - and rejuvenated - the King Arthur mythos with her extraordinary Mists of Avalon series. In this epic work, Bradley follows the arc of the timeless tale from the perspective of its previously marginalized female characters: Celtic priestess Morgaine, Gwenhwyfar, and High Priestess Viviane.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Marion Zimmer Bradley's "The Mists of Avalon" is one of my favorite versions of the Arthurian legend. I first read the novel in the early 1990s, right after its publication. I reread it recently and was surprised at how much I enjoyed this extraordinary novel the second time around. I turned the pages more slowly and took more time to savor Ms. Bradley's excellent narrative and fresh version of the legendary saga of the rise and fall of Camelot. Her take on the classic characters gives them new depth and dimension. She tells her tale from a feminine perspective, and while the King and knights of Camelot dwell on war, battles and keeping their golden city and realm safe, along with focusing on chivalric honor, the women have different priorities and concerns. The tale is told from the points of view of the much maligned Morgaine, (Morgana Le Fey), Priestess of Avalon and Gwenhwyfar, (Gwynivere), Christian princess and future queen of Camelot. Although most of the events of the traditional Arthurian legend are presented here, it is extremely interesting how the tale, told by men, changes when viewed through the eyes and experiences of a woman. This is also the important story of the political and religious conflict between the new Christianity and the "old ways"

of goddess worship. Believers of each religion seek to control the throne, but ultimately Christianity ascends to be the organized religion of the land. Since Morgaine is a Druid High Priestess, it would explain why she received such a bad rap in Christian civilization. The reader also views other famous female characters from a different vantage point, including Igraine, Morgaine's and Arthur's mother, Ms.

Many of Marion Zimmer Bradley's books are rather fluffy fantasies, fun and light. This is not the case with the mystical, magical "The Mists of Avalon." This splendid book is a retelling of the King Arthur legend from the point of view of the women involved, principally, Morgaine, King Arthur's half-sister and Priestess of Avalon, and Gwenhwyfar, the Christian princess and future Queen of Camelot. Although "The Mists of Avalon" has been criticized as being a "feminist" book, I don't think this criticism holds up. Yes, the author chose to focus on the conflicts and emotions of the women involved, but their gender is far less important in the book than is their religion. Morgaine, as a Druid and Priestess of the Goddess, is struggling to keep her dying religion alive against the growth of Christianity and Gwenhwyfar. The main character in "The Mists of Avalon" is Morgaine and we follow her from childhood to her rise as a priestess on the mystical Isle of Avalon, the home of the druids of the Old Religion, the religion of the Goddess. Avalon, as can be deduced from the book's title, is surrounded by swirling, protective mists that cause it to be invisible to all but the initiated. Morgaine's life, down to its very core, is shaped both by her desire to serve the Goddess and by her despair at seeing the Old Religion being tossed aside in favor of Christianity, by royalty and the common people alike. The book also focuses on Gwenhwyfar, and we are privy to her first meeting with Arthur when, as an innocent child, she crosses through the mists of Avalon to the other side. As Queen, she is a guilt-ridden figure who turns to Christianity in her desire to bear a child and begs Arthur to do the same, thus bringing about the fall of Camelot.

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