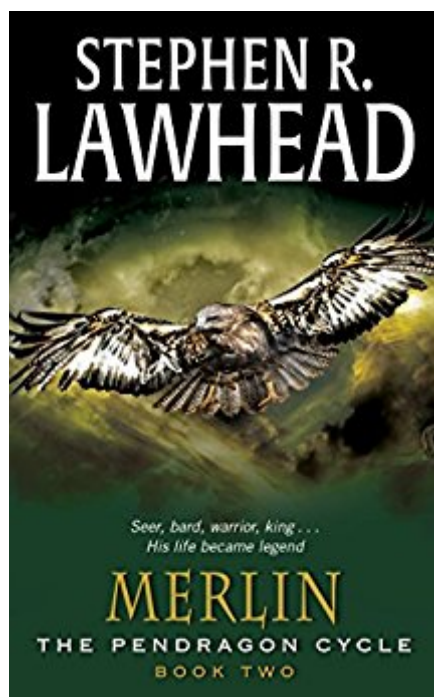


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Merlin: Book Two Of The Pendragon Cycle



Synopsis

A stunning saga of courage and destiny in a legendary time of chaos and kings. He was born to greatness, the son of a druid bard and a princess of lost Atlantis. A trained warrior, blessed with the gifts of prophecy and song, he grew to manhood in a land ravaged by the brutal greed of petty chieftains and barbarian invaders. MERLIN: Respected, feared and hated by many, he was to have a higher destiny. For it was he who prepared the way for the momentous event that would unite the Island of the Mighty—the coming of Arthur Pendragon, Lord of the Kingdom of Summer. MERLIN—entertains and tantalizes . . . an exciting and thoughtful addition to the ranks of Arthurian fantasy. • “Locus

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Customer Reviews

These books sold very, very well for the author in what can only be described as an impossibly crowded genre. It seems every fantasy novelist attempts, at some point, a re-telling and definitive edition of the Arthurian myth. It is the only subject more trampled and copied than Tolkien. It is also the genre that lapses in to the most astonishing absurdities. Lawhead, with these three books

(Taliesin, Merlin, and Arthur) has contributed something very relevant and very new to the genre. It gives the myth a burst of idealism and Christianity not seen since Tennyson with the Celtic traditions not seen since the Mabinogion. Sadly, with the publication of the latter three--and far lesser novels (Pendragon, Grail, and Avallon) the series is much damaged and diminished. We believe that Lawhead would've been far better served to let the trilogy stand on its own where it's not so intimidating and probably would've enjoyed subsequent reprinting. As it stands, our rating for this book is slightly tarnished by these later publications and endanger the proud work of a very, very good author.

WHO SHOULD READ: Readers who enjoyed Tolkien a great deal and who read Terry Brooks, Robert Jordan, and others searching for that same idealism will come closest to finding it here with Lawhead. Readers who enjoyed Marion Zimmerman Bradley's feminized version of the legend in *The Mists of Avalon* will find this work operating as a kind of opposite: Bradley employing the traditional pagan religious elements and feminism while re-working the French side of the myth while Lawhead invoking Christian theology and masculinity in the Celtic side of the myth. They are very interesting to read together. These books are excellent choices for teenagers for whom idealism is second nature.

In this second volume of his "Pendragon Cycle" series, Stephen Lawhead continues the story begun in "Taliesin" by telling the tale of Merlin, a remarkable warrior, king, bard, and prophet. Lawhead recounts his rise to kingship, his subsequent fall, and finally his important role as counsellor to kings. The story focuses on a time of great change in early Britain, as independent kingdoms under Roman rule vanish and become united under one High King. The transition from individual local kingdoms to one great kingdom under a great king remarkably parallels a similar transition in the Bible: from the anarchy and chaos of the Judges, to the unified rule under the Kings Saul and David. Merlin's role is much like that of the Biblical Samuel: the figure who ushers in this transition by his prophecies, wisdom and counsel. The parallels don't end there - for like Israel, early Britain is portrayed as a time of prophets (the druids), priests (the Roman Catholics) and kings. The world of upheaval in which Merlin lives is characterized by trials, tragedy and triumphs. Much like "Taliesin", the reader is treated to a vast array of human emotions described in most vivid details - from utter joy to utmost sorrow - and is subsequently tossed from the pinnacles of happiness to the pits of despair. But Lawhead does not delight in dragging his readers through gory details of bloodshed and death - in fact killing for revenge alone is presented as murder (p.314-5). Bloodshed for the sake of justice and truth has a clear purpose: the way is being paved to the "Kingdom of Summer" ruled by King Arthur where justice, truth and right will be defended and maintained

(p.108).

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