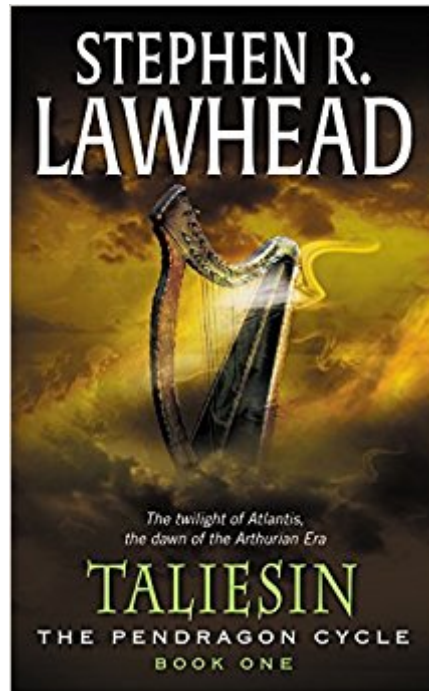


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Taliesin (The Pendragon Cycle, Book 1)



Synopsis

A magnificent epic of cataclysmic upheaval and heroic love in a breathless age of mythic wonders! It was a time of legend, when the last shadows of the mighty Roman conqueror faded from the captured Isle of Britain. While, across a vast sea, bloody war shattered a peace that had flourished for two thousand years in the doomed kingdom of Atlantis. From the award-winning author of THE DRAGON KING TRILOGY comes a majestic tale of breathtaking scope and haunting beauty. It is the remarkable adventure of Charis—the courageous princess from Atlantis who escapes the terrible devastation of her land—and of the fabled seer and druid prince Taliesin, singer at the dawn of the age. A story of an incomparable love that joins two astonishing worlds amid the fires of chaos, and spawns the miracles of Merlin . . . and Arthur the king! TALIESIN—“Reminiscent of C. S. Lewis . . . Highly recommended.”—Library Journal

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While the druids of the Isle of the Mighty predict the coming of one whose song will change the world, a young priestess in Atlantis foresees the destruction of her homeland. The love story of the bard Taliesin and the Princess Charis begins a new series for Lawhead ("The Empyrion Saga" and the "Dragon King Trilogy"). This graceful combination of Atlantean legend, Celtic myth, and Christian messenger reminiscent of C.S. Lewis is highly recommended. JCCopyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Highly recommended."--Library Journal

"Taliesin" is the first of five books in "The Pendragon Cycle". I found this retelling of the familiar Arthurian legend interesting because this book focuses entirely on Merlin's parents and the lost city of Atlantis. The author spent a significant portion of the book focusing on Atlantis to include the cities, buildings, governing system, a civil war, and a touch of religion focusing on the worship of Bel. Unfortunately, all of this was effectively thrown away when the ocean rose up to swallow the island state of Atlantis. There were several aspects of the book that I struggled with including Taliesin's origin, the age differences between Merlin's parents, and the mix of Christianity with pagan gods. I realize Christianity and the worship of the old gods were rival beliefs during England's rise to power in the early centuries, but I found it hard to believe a druid could worship the one true God while still using magical powers (e.g., spells, walking in the Otherworld, etc.) derived from the old gods. It seemed to be a bit of contradiction because Christianity would eschew these pagan things. I've seen and read Arthurian stories where druids, and Merlin in particular, had great magical powers, where they were shams relying on illusion and tricks, and where there were no magical abilities involved. This is the first time I've seen an author mix Christianity with magic. On the positive side, this retelling was clean as it didn't include sexual scenes, profanity, or violent/graphic battle scenes. There were skirmishes, but they were well done as to not focus on the blood and gore aspect. There was also a bit of a love story as this becomes an underlying theme throughout the book driving Merlin's parents together.

The concept of this book makes it worth the read for those who like Arthurian legends, but the plot development was slow and the story overall lacked traction or complexity. This is a love story first and foremost, so those looking for a more action and adventure oriented story won't be satisfied. I was hoping that if an Arthurian Legend series was so bold as to start with Atlantis, well before Arthur was even born, that the story and immersion in myth, geography, and character would be a bit more challenging, deep, and enriched. It was not. It was fairly simple and I kept wondering when the plot would "take off." The broad concepts in this series are common to many King Arthur series, the pending external threat, the cultural and religious transitions, the rise of heroes, and are all included, and while they present drama, the writer presents these concepts as either too little, background mentioning, or too much, several exhausting pages of a character's cognitive process in dealing any particular drama. And though I only give it three stars, considering that this series has a good reputation, I am willing to pick up the next book, Merlin.

All of the most enduring legends and myths have roots in small kernels of truth. Atlantis, Arthurian legends, these are the stories we can't get enough of. Why? Because, the unanswered questions call out to us, haunting us. There have been other attempts at telling and fleshing out these tales, but none compare to this series, written by the modern day bard, Stephen R. Lawhead. His book, TALIESIN, is the beginning of a haunting journey back into the past, unraveling some of the mystery. Along the way, you will find magic, tragedy, joy, love, healing, and more, all woven into a fresh, yet timeless story. And, once you read TALIESIN, you'll crave more. Read it, and then read...MERLIN.

As the Pendragon Cycle goes, so goes Stephen Lawhead; his prose borders on the lyrical, his command of character persona flawless, his descriptive verse unmatched. Following his story line and witnessing the smooth meshing of various points of view is a pleasure. If the author possesses one flaw (albeit a miniscule one) it is his over-reliance of Christianity to narrate the tale at times---would have preferred the druid POV considering the timeframe.

I had some difficulty getting into this book, and struggled for the first third of the book. The chapters alternate between two separate storylines until the last third, and this can be a little disorienting. For me, jumping between storylines made it harder to connect with the characters. For a time I had to turn back a chapter to reacquaint myself with what had happened previously. Normally I would have set aside a book like this, but I kept reading because it came highly recommended. I am glad I did. The character development is in depth, the landscapes are vividly portrayed and the story really comes together in the last third of the book. The range of emotion the main characters travel through had me up late and unable to go to sleep after I finished. I will be reading the rest of this series and other Stephen R. Lawhead books.

amazing book should be a feature film

Stephen Lawhead has created a beautiful retelling of the Arthur/Merlin story. The depth of the characters and the heart breaking things that they go through make the story come alive. I highly recommend it!

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