



In the Shadow of the Oak King

Courtway Jones

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From the building of Camelot to the tempering of Arthur's allies Gawaine, King Ban, and Lancelot, this tale of love, loyalty, and war reveals a fascinating world where battles are won by faith as well as force, and peace is as elusive as the mist of time itself. First in a planned trilogy. "A lively extension of Arthurian lore. . ."--Publishers Weekly.

In the Shadow of the Oak King Details

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Author : Courtway Jones

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From Reader Review In the Shadow of the Oak King for online ebook

Laurel Bradshaw says

An interesting retelling of Malory, which is neither medieval nor quite 5th century. While the author is a cultural anthropologist, this "reconstruction" seem more like a fantasy world to me. The Druids definitely come across as the bad guys here, with their human child sacrifices. The love story between Pelleas and Nithe falls quite flat, in my opinion. Otherwise, it is an okay read.

From Publishers Weekly

The narrator, Pelleas, bastard son of High King Uther Pendragon, is saved by master smith Myrddin from sacrifice by druids to the Oak God. At Uther's behest, Myrddin, his young ward, the girl Nithe and Pelleas take another of Uther's sons, the just-born Arthur, to the Scillys to rear him in secret. In the political turmoil following Uther's death, Arthur is presented as the High King's heir. The young king must soothe tensions among his Briton, Gaelic and Pictish allies, settle religious disputes between Christians and druids, battle Saxons who would overrun his realm, and uphold his legitimacy as ruler before an often skeptical following. He is supported by his half-brother Pelleas, a leader among the Picts. But Pelleas, chafing under court politics and believing himself spurned by Nithe, cannot abide the court snobbery and jostling for precedence, and he is determined to make his place among his people in Arthur's new kingdom.

Series info:

Dragon's heirs trilogy

1. In the shadow of the Oak King - read

2. Witch of the north

3. Prince in Camelot

Erin Germain says

Not technically a book about King Arthur, but more about some of the people who grew up and lived around him. I remember reading this (and the other two books in the trilogy) when it first came out, and was pleased because I shared a similar opinion of Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* that Jones does - Mallory's Arthur is spineless and whiny, Lancelot is much the same, women barely are treated as human, and the only character he seemed to like was Mordred. Jones took the basic framework of Mallory and turned it about so that the characters are actually human. Being a retired anthropologist, they also fit a bit better into 5th century Britain. The result is a pleasant afternoon read.

This book centered on Pelleas, older brother to Arthur (both sons of Uther, although Pelleas' mother is a Pict woman and Arthur's is Igraine, widow of Gorlois). He ends up helping Myrddin raise the young Arthur, but it then follows his path in freeing the Picts from the Saxons and Gaels. Nineve, who becomes the Lady of the Lake, also factors in, first as the ward of Myrddin, and later as a romantic interest for Pelleas.

If you know the characters already, and most of us do, this is a fun read. If you haven't met them yet, it still is enjoyable to see the unique spin Jones puts on this tale that "everyone knows".

Kara says

An off mix between the high fantasy of Malory, the sardonic tone of White, and the dirt and grit of Cornwell. It can't really decide which type of King Arthur story it wants to tell.

My favorite parts were the real world explanations behind the later myths and legends – I would have loved more of that. This was definitely a version of Merlin I could root for, unlike some other tales where Merlin tends to vary between Dr. Who's above-it-all and Rasputin's creepiness.

But for the most part, it swung wildly back and forth between horrific violence and laughing frolics. Very off-putting.

Michael D. says

Good story. Jones weaves an interesting story into Sir Thomas Malory's narrative.

Phair says

Read when this first came out. Really enjoyed this more historical view of the Arthurian story. Will not place a rating until I can re-read but it has long stuck in my mind as a favorite.

Liz DeMarco says

I had found the third book in this series for like 50 cents and thought why not. Then realized I had not read the first two which I still own, since they were published in the 90's. To refresh myself I decided to start at the beginning and read the three few. I am glad I did. Now I remember how much I enjoyed this retelling of the Arthur legend. On to book 2!

Sarah Davalt says

Loved it. See my full review at
<http://adventuresofabibliophile.blogs...>

Eric says

I just started this book a couple of days ago. It is an account of the growing up of King Arthur, as told from

Arthur's older half brother's perspective.

The first couple of chapters are definitely different than Disney's "Sword in the Stone". This telling of the story is set in post Roman Britton. There are no knights in armor, metal is scarce and there is no real central authority.

So far the author tells a good tale.
