



Blood of Kings

Billy Wong

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An action-packed new take on Arthurian legend from the eyes of an unexpected protagonist.

Illegitimate Mildred "Mildy" Pendragon wants just one thing: To prove to Camelot that she's as much a warrior as her daddy, King Arthur. With her cowardly Greek squire Ares and metrosexual best friend Lance at her side, she strives to prove her legendary bloodline through knightly deeds. But no matter what she does or who she beats, she cannot seem to win over chivalric society.

On quest to save the fey from destruction by an evil mage, Mildy meets the mother she has never known and learns the bitter truth of her incestuous birth. She continues to fight for good despite her disillusionment, but accidentally kills Arthur's favorite knight and makes a bitter enemy of her father. Can she defy fate and save her family from imploding, or is the saga of the Pendragons destined to end in tragedy?

Blood of Kings Details

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Author : Billy Wong

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From Reader Review Blood of Kings for online ebook

Tina says

This is an awesome twist on the knights of the round table and the story of Arthur. Mildred is a female knight in an era of proper ladies. She discovers her twisted heritage and fights her way to the throne. She then has to defend it. She has her side kick and they help the Faeries. Her adventures then lead her to a battle that has a surprising outcome.

Billy Wong writes about strong female warriors and I really enjoy his writing. This is the second book that I have read of his and I am so very impressed. I look forward to reading more of his books.

Therese Arkenberg says

I received a free ebook copy through a LibraryThing giveaway in exchange for an honest review. I signed up for the giveaway because I've followed Wong's short fiction casually for years (not least because we've frequently wound up in the same places, such as Firefly in Amber etc etc). While his style is fine for short fiction, where it's of the essence to be concise, I struggled through this novel.

An in media res opening perplexed me, especially because the characters were introduced with so much telling (rather than showing) that I wondered if this was a sequel. Perhaps I should already be familiar with these characters and the curt introductions were only to refresh my memory. Lady Mildred, a knight and rumored daughter of King Arthur, and her Greek squire Ares were both novel and interesting characters, and I found myself liking them despite the awkward introduction, but they're so novel and interesting that it seems a shame to present them so blandly.

The prose remains lax and the tone uneven throughout. Without evocative language, it's hard to feel sense of wonder at the faeries and magic, awe at Mildy's feats of strength, or grief or horror at the many deaths, some of characters I really hoped would survive. There's a lot going on in this story, including lots of refreshing twists on the original Arthurian legends, but reads more like the detailed outline of a story instead of a finished product.

The voice and dialogue can also get jarringly modern. Surely this is the first time Morgan le Fay has ever been anybody's "Mom." This despite the fact that she has been distant enough from both her children, Mildred and Gawain, that I could buy her being called "Mother" anyway. Overall, a lot of the dialogue just wasn't working for me.

I was glad to see some new twists, since a faithful retelling of Arthurian legend seems superfluous at this late date. We've had more than five centuries of that. The first plot twist, of course, is that Mordred has become Mildred. I don't think switching the gender of the protagonist impacted the plot as much as it could have: Mildred faces some derision, overcomes some prejudice, and juggles contrasting visions of proper behavior for a woman, but this is more flavor text than thematic (my distinction is that a theme guides the writer's choices in plot events, characterization, and even setting--it's not just a paragraph or two of characters wondering aloud). She's a warrior first and a woman third. This is fine, too--not every story about a woman needs to be about *being a woman*--but given this story is billed as being about a warrior woman, I wouldn't have minded a little more development of that idea. And there is one line about Mildy refusing to wear a

helmet because of "feminine vanity" which made me shake my head.

The plotting is very tight from the beginning, although things start to get complicated when Nimue appears with her dubious plans, and Mildred briefly gets sidetracked from her Grail quest and growing conflict with her father by falling for Galahad. It doesn't last--and the sudden, brutal, and completely unexpected way that relationship is ended permanently makes Mildred's feud with her father completely believable. More so because this is Morgan le Fay in one of the most sympathetic representations I've ever seen of her, a victim of rape by her brother. The best we can say for King Arthur is that he didn't know it was his sister at the time. But by being the sort of man who violates a vanquished enemy just because she's female (I'm grateful that, unlike some would-be "gritter" writers, Wong chooses to show this as an exception among the knights, who may be jerks and may be violent but are not all rapists), he's firstly veered very far from the classic ideal of King Arthur, and secondly sealed his fate. Mildred's power is rising, and the son of a bitch is going down.

Some people might be disappointed by seeing Arthur as a bad guy, but it's not like there are enough heroic Arthurs out there. Heroic Mordreds are a little more rare, heroic Mildreds completely unprecedented. So I was eager to watch her confrontation with her father. Unfortunately, it barely lasts a chapter of this 88,000 word book. The actual war is about 2-3 paragraphs, with a little more for the actual confrontation scene. Then the last forth of the story or so documents Mildred's efforts to consolidate her kingdom. Realistic, and potentially gripping, but not in this particular narration. I did like how Ares, the squire, becomes Mildy's loyal and supportive right hand man--not necessarily a love interest, either. I'm sure it could go that way in the future, but they are first and foremost friends.

As I said, this is an 88,000 word novel (hardly short, if not epically long) and it's largely told in summary. This makes it dense and honestly a bit exhausting to read. I'm sure the style itself could be improved without making the story much longer, just by making descriptions more active, action more vivid, and using more period and tone-appropriate word choice. I say "period appropriate" because, although fantasy, this story is in a medieval sort of world, with allusions to Christianity (one of the villains is a religious fanatic who believes the faeries are unholy) and a pretty solid description of siege warfare.

I wish I liked Wong's style better, because the concept of stories like Iron Bloom look like something I'd enjoy a lot (warrior women, warfare/pacifism conflicts, and a side of romance for leavening).

A longer version of this review can be found at [Story Addict](#).

Sheri says

Blood of Kings by Billy Wong

Mildred "Mildy" Pendragon is the illegitimate daughter of King Arthur. When she meets her mother she learns the shameful and scandalous truth about her birth. She continues on her quest for good and justice, and ends up killing one of her father's favorite knights. This of course angers her father. Soon she is up for the battle of her life time.

I loved Blood of Kings. Mildy was one of my favorite characters from all of Billy Wong's books. I loved the very original story line with Arthurian characters, with Mr. Wong's fantasy/action/adventure writing. Once again he hits 5 stars with this fabulous read.

Shay Hardman says

*** I received this in the Member Giveaway on LibraryThing ***

I really enjoyed reading Blood of Kings. The story was captivating and refreshingly new. The characters were distinguished and I just loved Mildy! She was quite a riot to read. Her spirit and beliefs added so much to this book. Billy Wong did an outstanding job when creating her personality. I loved how it was set in Camelot with King Author, Merlin, Lancelot, etc..., along with a few characters that were new and complimented the story quite well.

Overall, I would recommend this book to others. My only real problem with the book was the pace. For me, it felt as if the story would be going along steady and then jump, steady, jump, etc... Not a big deal, but it was enough for me to comment on.

Caitie says

I received this book as part of the LibraryThing Member Giveaway program.

Let me start by saying that if you are a fan of strict Arthurian legend, you probably shouldn't read this book. While it does borrow heavily from legend it mostly falls far outside of the standard ideas of chivalry, which (for me at least) doesn't include rape, incest, and patricide. Although the idea of rape doesn't fall too far outside of Arthurian legacy (Arthur himself being the product of rape), it is a stretch for Arthur to have raped his half-sister Morgan le Fay, resulting in the birth of our lead character Mildred. Mildred (called Mildy, which is altogether much too close to 'moldy' for my liking) becomes an outcast knight who accidentally stumbles upon the Holy Grail while attempting to protect the fairy creatures that inhabit Britannia. She eventually goes to war with Arthur, her brother, and a Frenchman whose name is Tirant. Really? An enemy whose name is actually Tirant? A little too overt for my tastes.

Overall, I actually did enjoy this book. I wanted to know where the storyline was taking me and I wanted to know how it ended. I do love having a strong female lead, and I have even read other stories about female knights that I love. The writing style was decent but I found myself dragged along for pages of nonsense followed by rapid advancements in the plot. I also found many of those plot advancements to be quite predictable. That being said, I would be interested in reading more books by Billy Wong.

Maybe it is really just that the entire premise of rape and incest disgusts me at such a deep level, that I really couldn't get behind any of the characters in this book (even that I have had to type these words so many times is making me completely reconsider my rating). In fact, the only character that I actually liked was Ares, Mildy's squire. Had it not been for the more distasteful aspects to this book, I probably would have given it a 4/5.

As it stands, I give Blood of Kings by Billy Wong 3 stars out of 5.

Jan says

I received this book for free in exchange for agreeing to provide and honest review.

Mildred Pendragon known as Mildy to her friends and Dread Lady to her enemies is the illegitimate daughter of King Arthur. Not your typical lady of that era she bullied her father into making her a knight. She loves to fight in the battle contests competing against a field of men. She always holds her own and sometimes wins.

I truly enjoyed this book. There are a lot of violent fight scenes in the book but they are not just thrown in to titillate the reader. They are an integral part of the story. It's nice to see a woman from that era portrayed as strong instead of swooning and calling for her smelling salts. The language and the usage of today's slang add an amusement factor. A well written beautiful fantasy worth reading more than once. Billy Wong, the author has been added to my list of "must read authors".

Derek says

I'm a sucker for anything Arthurian, so I had to check this out. It's a neat premise: Arthur and Morgan le Fay have a child — as they do in many versions of the story — but it's not Modred, it's Mildred!

Unfortunately, the story can't decide whether it's going to be satirical, à la The Dragon and the George or serious. At some times it's downright fluffy, at others it's deadly serious.

And the continuity problems! "*I've never seen any evidence of him using magic, except perhaps to enter our sanctuary*" says the faery, Laerin, of the evil knight. Well, of course not! He's already told us he's never seen him before. Merlin starts acting oddly, and while people notice, they don't even discuss it, let alone do anything about it. Then the same happens with Morgan. And after making Nimue a major character, she just disappears after just one in a series of defeats.

So, three stars because it is a good tale, and Arthur has been done a million times but Wong's actually found a fresh approach, but it could be a much better story with better editing.

Brenda says

I normally don't read books that have fairies, unicorns and such in them but I was already into the book Blood of Kings by Billy Wong, that I had to go on anyway. It is about a female Knight, which I have never heard of before. Female warrior, yes, but Knight, no.

Using many of the King Arthur characters and a few fairy folk and friends are included in the story. But also rape, incest, patricide, blood, lots of blood and battles. These things make up most of the story.

It was an okay read but I didn't automatically become a Billy Wong fan. Might be I need to read another of his books to become one.

I received this book as part of the LibraryThing Member Giveaway program.

Tywyl says

Ambitious endeavor, however, the execution was lacking. Though the author assuredly had his own imaginative spin on Arthurian legend, the lack of period appropriate dialogue and actions is what really lead me to disappointment. The main character had more of a modern mentality than those during Arthurian times would, saying, "Crap" and "shut up." She was embarrassed about being a virgin, thinking it was a product of loneliness and undesirability. Jabs were made at Lancelot for possibly being gay. Her birth being the product of incest and later her committing patricide were brought up into common conversation again and again. All the aforementioned things were not mentalities of the time nor topics one would blather on about in broad daylight as if they were nothing.

The author mentioned in the end pages of the book how they loved strong female characters. Mildy was a bit overkill. It was hard to believe how time and again, this scrawny 20 year old could take down giants that fell Lancelot and other foes who all other knights could not defeat. How she could survive dead-dealing blows, even without the grail. Her having visions only 2 in the span of the story did not leave her much room for credibility.

As far as how the story was told, there was more telling than showing, a lot of infodumping, misspelled words, scenes that didn't make sense, and pointless deaths. I hate to be so negative, but there really wasn't much good I could point out, with the except of Lancelot and Ares. They were the only things in the story I could dub somewhat enjoyable. Maybe I'm just not fond of too much deviation from classic Arthurian lore. If the story was more period accurate, I probably have been more receptive to it.

Note: I won this book on Library Things and received a free copy from the author for a review.

Angie ~aka Reading Machine~ says

Arthurian Legend come to life. Mildred "Mildy" Pendragon is Arthur's daughter and an outcast too. She only wants to be recognized as Arthur's daughter. Mildy has spent her life as warrior trying to do the right thing all the time. Mildy finds herself in situations sometimes of her own making and not of her own making. Mildy along with her faithful squire Ares at her side do the best they can together. Can Mildy prove her worth? Will Arthur accept Mildy as his daughter? Your answers await you in Blood of Kings.

I'm a big fan of Arthurian Legend as well as fantasy epics. Billy Wong writes incredibly strong female characters which I happen to love a lot. I'm always impressed with his writing and stories. The characters and story are raw, real, honest, down to earth, gritty, complex, unique, bold, and rich in nature. I look forward to my next adventure with this author. Happy Reading!
