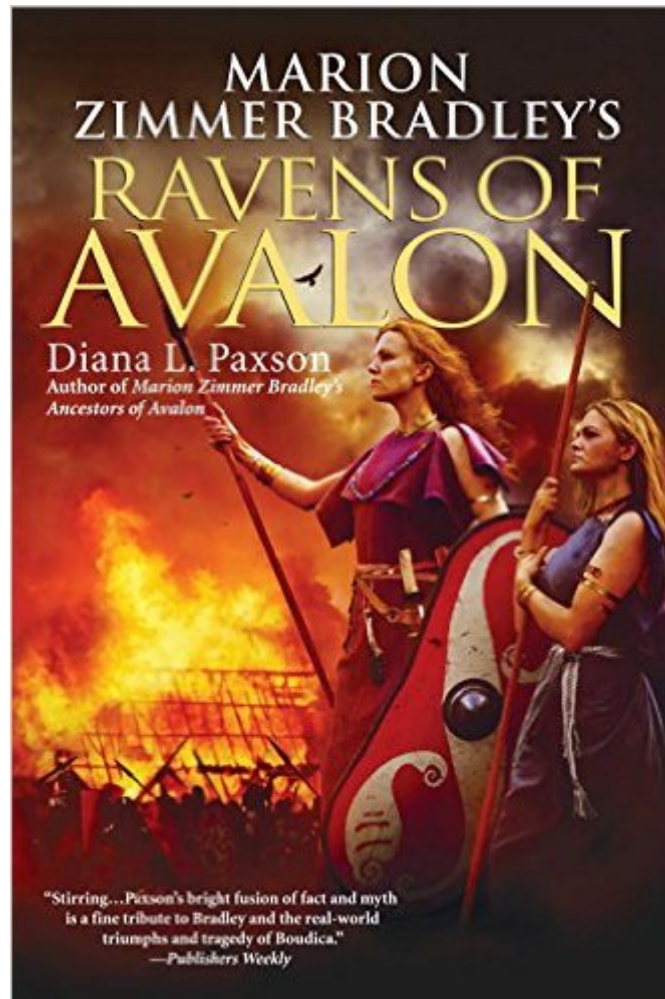


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Marion Zimmer Bradley's Ravens Of Avalon



Synopsis

Marion Zimmer Bradley's beloved Avalon saga continues in "a fine tribute to Bradley and the real-world triumphs and tragedy of Boudica." (Publishers Weekly) Epic in its sweep and peopled by the remarkable women who have always inhabited Avalon, Marion Zimmer Bradley's Ravens of Avalon expands the legendary saga that has enchanted millions of readers over the years and is sure to please Bradley's loyal readership and anyone who loves wonderfully told stories of history, myth, and fantasy.

Book Information

Paperback: 394 pages

Publisher: Roc; Reprint edition (August 5, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0451462114

ISBN-13: 978-0451462114

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.9 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (45 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #360,193 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #131 in Â Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Military #155 in Â Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Myths & Legends > Greek & Roman #1978 in Â Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Fantasy

Customer Reviews

RAVENS OF AVALON is a prequel to the Avalon series by the late Marion Zimmer Bradley. Diana Paxson was a longtime collaborator with her and therefore the Avalon universe well. A mixture of history, myth, magic and a touch of romance, the book touches on many genres. In this story, we learn about Queen Boudica and the conquest of Briton by the Roman legions. Trained by Lhiannon as a druid priestess, Boudica decides to help her clan by marrying a Briton King. At his death, the Romans refuse to acknowledge her as Queen, beat her and rape her daughters. To say this doesn't sit well with her would be an understatement. She raises an army imbued with the power of the druids and attempts to oust the Romans. While the premise sounds wonderfully exciting, the actual writing left me flat. I thought the book rather boring. There was no life to it. The majority of the book concerns eighteen years of Boudica's and Lhiannon's lives. The writing technique was good and the editing excellent. But the pacing was slow, almost to the point of stoppage. Although there was

more excitement in the end, getting there was like wading upstream against a torrent. This is an unfortunate problem with many prequels that are written well after the series. It's as though the author is attempting to get in as much background information as possible. It's why editors cut out back story in many novels. It's just not as interesting as the main story. Fans of the Avalon series will want to read this so they have more information on the world, but if you've never read any of the Avalon series, I wouldn't start here. Yes, it does add good background for the rest of the Raven books, but wading your way through the pages is not my idea of a great read. Reviewed by Vicky Burkholder 08/14/2007

I bought this book thinking it was the same caliber as the others, but I was disappointed to discover that the only match for "Ravens" is "Priestess". I read it, but I cannot guarantee that I will keep it. I'm not entirely sure that Diana re-read "Forest House" (or any of the other books of the series) because there are a few discrepancies. I don't mind the fact that the priestesses regularly go to Avalon for initiation rituals, despite the fact that Cailleán is the first of the priesthood to ever discover Avalon (as seen in "Forest House"). What *really* bugs me though, is the free use of magic at the beginning of the book. Not only are the neophytes allowed to use magic randomly (despite the fact that in Marion's books, neophytes are the "chop wood, carry water" sort, like in real life), but the Druids use magic like they're Sith Lords! (Am I the only one who had flashes of Darth Vader when Helve and Lugoalos froze throats?!). I was going to give 3.5 stars, but after writing this, I've changed my mind. Half a star off for using Avalon too early and another whole star for the unrestrained and uncalled for use of magic. Three stars...and beware of the Dark Side!

While I have enjoyed many of the transitional books written by Diana Paxson since Marion Zimmer Bradley's death (and before) in the Avalon series I take a small exception to this one. Let me explain why: Boudica is an actual historical figure who did something incredible and remarkable as a queen on behalf of her daughters, herself and her people against overwhelming odds. She did NOT employ any sort of 'magic' to do it - only courage, rage and her absolute belief in the rightness of what she was doing and why she was doing it. Normally, I like the incorporation of historical figures into fiction - it lends the feel of authenticity and opens up the possibilities of "what if". This is the reason I am a big fan of the sci-fi and fantasy genres. But there is a danger in this particular depiction. Today's generation of young women have grown up in a time where feminist goals and ideals have been incorporated - for better or worse - into much of everyday society. They are either unaware or uncaring of how hard fought those battles were every single day in every place by

ordinary women to gain ground for the equal treatment of women. To "magicalize" the already great accomplishments of historical women like Boudica is to actually MARGINALIZE and somewhat trivialize depictions of the well documented accomplishments of just how magnificent we as women can be - EVERY woman. Of course, the motivated reader has a great deal of information at their fingertips to research the well documented facts of people like Boudica. The problem I foresee is that very many people are no longer motivated to do such research - especially (and sadly) the youngest of us who could use such real life role models today. I'm hopeful that the author keeps this in mind in future books where she might employ other such great female historical figures.

In this book, we read about Boudica, sent to be trained as a priestess but who chooses to go back to her people, marry & become Queen of the Iceni. This British Queen has a monument built to her but little is known of her. And while she was Queen of only one tribe, she almost united all of Britain in a rebellion against Rome. In a time in which men lead armies, a woman, Boudica was forced by brutal Roman rule to take up arms & try to drive this invader from her homeland. She was publically whipped and her daughters raped by Romans in such a animalistic way to cause her to take on leadership of an army to protect her people from Roman brutality. I found this book a fascinating read. There are all the magic and mystical elements you would expect from this series but the battle scenes are vivid and written with a realism that makes you feel as if you are there. Let the story of Boudica be told, woman, Queen and warrior !

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