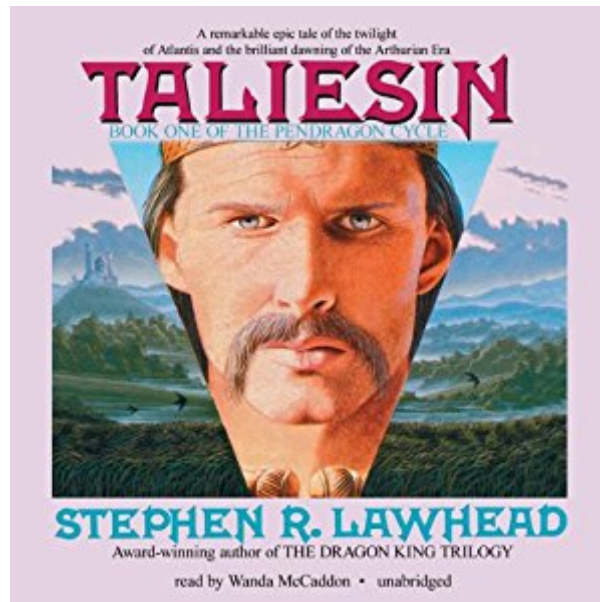


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Taliesin: The Pendragon Cycle, Book 1



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 --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 19 hours and 17 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.

Audible.com Release Date: October 19, 2000

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B0000545AV

Best Sellers Rank: #90 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Arthurian #481

in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Myths & Legends #787 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Epic

Customer Reviews

Stephen Lawhead added his own twists to Arthurian legend, in a Christianity-friendly, mythic-realism retelling of the years leading up to the tales of Arthur and his knights that we know and love.

"Taliesin" takes place before the time of Merlin, starring Merlin's parents. Charis is a pampered young princess of Atlantis, a seemingly idyllic civilization reminiscent of Greece. The only jarring note is a blind, seemingly mad prophet who predicts doom will soon fall upon Atlantis, and that the island will sink into the sea. Charis initially doesn't believe him, but upon the sudden, emotionally-scarring death of her mother, she leaves her family and becomes a bull dancer in honor

of one of the Atlantean gods. (The scenes where she dances around and over the bull are breathtaking) But a serious injury prompts her and her well-trained team to retire, and she returns home to find her father Avallach seriously ill, and married to his sly-eyed nurse. Charis now has a younger sister, Morgian, a creepy child heavily influenced by the family advisor, whose initially pleasant personality is sinking deeper into melancholy and darkness. And Charis begins to believe: Atlantis is going to sink. Meanwhile, as Charis struggles on Atlantis, a famously unlucky young man in Britain finds a baby caught in a fishnet; he hails this as the beginning of his good luck. When he finds a disgraced wet-nurse for baby Taliesin, he falls in love and marries her; his luck continues. Taliesin grows to manhood, intelligent and wise -- and gifted with strange and wonderful powers. Charis barely escapes Atlantis with her family, arriving on the strange shores of Britain.

Stephen Lawhead's storytelling is certainly ambitious. In Taliesin, he has proposed nothing less than a fanciful, fluid blending of three mythologies into a single epic history - the twilight and final cataclysmic collapse of the fantastic empire of Atlantis; the inspiring life of Taliesin, Celtic bard and shaman, thought to be father to Merlin, during the withdrawal of the Roman Empire in Britain and the onset of the Dark Ages; and the endlessly repeated (and despite today's protestations to the contrary, never proven) legend of Joseph of Arimathea's carrying the Holy Grail to Britain accompanied by the dizzying, wildfire spread of Christianity throughout Europe in the centuries following Christ's crucifixion in the Holy Land! No doubt about it ... Lawhead's prose is certainly up to the task! His evocative, mellifluous descriptions of exotic settings include sight, motion and sounds in abundance. The pages seem to exude even smells with an uncanny sense of realism: "And the smells - a pungent perfume concocted of the thick, greasy scent of food cooking in heavy olive oil; the rich, earthy odor of the cattle stalls beneath the stadium; the light, airy tang of sun-warmed salt air off the sea." The almost effortless creation of a seamless chronology is achieved by the telling of a series of linked shorter tales - the Atlantean princess Charis' years spent dancing in the bull ring; the inspiring transformation of the Celtic son, Elphin, from luckless bumbler to respected king and feared warlord; and, Taliesin's relentless love for Charis in the face of overwhelming opposition from her father, Avallach.

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