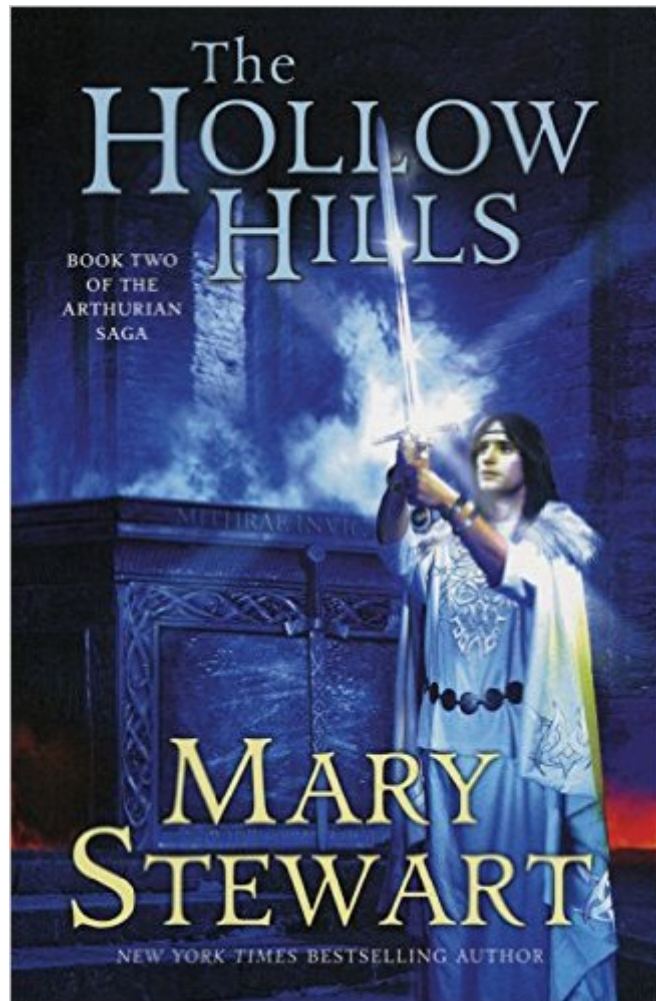


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The Hollow Hills (The Arthurian Saga, Book 2)



Synopsis

Keeping watch over the young Arthur Pendragon, the prince and prophet Merlin Ambrosius is haunted by dreams of the magical sword Caliburn, which has been hidden for centuries. When Uther Pendragon is killed in battle, the time of destiny is at hand, and Arthur must claim the fabled sword to become the true High King of Britain.

Book Information

Series: The Merlin Series (Book 2)

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (78 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I started this book with the expectation that it would be equal to it's mediocre prequel. I soon found, however, that Mary Stewart's book "The Hollow Hills" far outdoes "The Crystal Cave". Though both books follow the legend of Arthur fairly well "The Hollow Hills" has more action and the ending is much more satisfying. "The Hollow Hills" continues right from where "The Crystal Cave" leaves off. The main character is the powerful and wise sorcerer, Merlin. The book follows his struggle raising the young Arthur and helping Arthur rise to the position of High King of all Britain. All throughout this there are spies and bounty hunters hired to kill Arthur before he reaches the age he can claim the crown. This book shows a unique view on the Arthurian legends. Instead of following a knight of the round table or the king himself, as in many of the books about King Arthur, it follows a character who appears in most every legend about the infamous King. This book gives Merlin's perspective on all of the events that made King Arthur's life into legend. The book follows Arthurian legend well. Of course, there can be no story that perfectly follows the legend because there are thousands and thousands of legends pertaining to King Arthur. Even though they cannot be all represented in a

single interpretation, "The Hollow Hills" follows as many of them as possible without contradicting itself. It does, however, go against some of the more well known legends such as the origin of Excalibur. Mary Stewart is an incredible writer. She describes everything very well without becoming annoyingly detailed. The world that she creates for this book is beautifully sculpted with her masterfully chosen words.

A long time ago, I read Mary Stewart's Merlin Trilogy, which consists of three books: The Crystal Cave, The Hollow Hills, and The Last Enchantment. I had last read the trilogy back in the mid-1980s, back when I was in high school. So, recently I turned back to these old favorites, and found myself enjoying the tale once again. Here's a brief background of the story, without spoiling it too much for potential readers. England is suffering under fractured leadership following the departure of the Romans, some time before. England is broken up into several small kingdoms, with a High King to hold them all together, and to try to repel the Saxon threat already encamped on the shores. Into this time, Merlin is born, the bastard child of a local princess. The trilogy tells the tale of his life. In the first book, Merlin is first a small boy in Wales, where he finds his tutor in magic and the gods and medicine, and is touched by the prophecy which will shape his whole life's work. He flees Wales, for his own protection, and his subsequent actions inexorably lead to the conception of a child: Arthur, the future High King. In the second book, Merlin is charged by both the High King, Uthur, and his god to keep Arthur in his care, and to train him for his coming challenges. The story closes with Arthur assuming the mantle of leadership, following the passing of Uthur. In the third book, Arthur and Merlin work to end the Saxon threat, found Camelot, and close with Merlin's final destiny, as he had long since foreseen...almost. The tale is told in the first person: Merlin. In this fashion, the story feels personal in a way that few other Arthurian fantasies ever have.

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