

Arthurian Fiction

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. To search for more novels and other works based on Arthurian legend, include "Arthurian" and "adaptations" as terms in your library searches.

Marion Zimmer Bradley, *The Mists of Avalon* (DelRey/Ballantine).

A massive novel using the conflict between the pagan and the Christian religions as a backdrop for the story of Arthur. The story is narrated, for the most part, by Morgaine (Morgan le Fay).

Bradshaw, Gillian. *Hawk of May*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980. Print.

---. *In Winter's Shadow*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982. Print.

---. *Kingdom of Summer*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981. Print.

Three Arthurian novels set in a Celtic country, each narrated by a different character: *Hawk of May* by Gwalchmai (Gawain), *Kingdom of Summer* by Rhys ap Sion, Gwalchmai's servant, and *Kingdom of Summer* by Gwenhwyfar. The third novel presents one of the starkest depictions of the collapse of Arthur's kingdom in modern fiction.

Chapman, Vera. *King Arthur's Daughter*. London: R. Collings, 1976. Print.

---. *The Green Knight*. London: Collings, 1975. Print.

---. *The King's Damosel*. London: Collings, 1976. Print.

Each of Chapman's novels focuses, with the exception of *King Arthur's Daughter* on a traditional Arthurian tale. Lynette, after a traumatic experience and an unwanted marriage, becomes the king's sole female courier. *King Arthur's Daughter* depicts a version of the aftermath of Arthur's defeat.

Bernard Cornwell, *The Winter King*.

---. *The Enemy of God*.

---. *Excalibur*.

An exemplar of the historical/militaristic Arthurian novel of the late 1980s and 1990. The novel and its sequels focus on the political and religious tensions attendant on Arthur's attempts to forge a kingdom despite recalcitrant territorial leaders. The focal character is an orphaned Saxon who rises through the ranks to become one of Arthur's officers.

Godwin, Parke. *Beloved Exile*. Toronto ; New York: Bantam Books, 1984. Print.

---. *Firelord*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980. Print.

Firelord is another of the newer "archaeological" retellings, this time suggesting that Arthur is part Pict. The work is interesting in its narrative tone and anthropological speculations about the relationships between Romans, civilized Celts, and the remnants of the nomadic tribes. The sequel, *Beloved Exile*, narrates Gwenhwyfar's life after the catastrophe; both novels make Gwenhwyfar Arthur's equal in forcefulness of character.

Hume, M. K. *The King Arthur Trilogy: Dragon's Child*. New York: Atria Books, 2013.

Print.

---. *The King Arthur Trilogy: The Bloody Cup*. New York: Atria Books, 2013. Print.

---. *The King Arthur Trilogy: Warrior of the West..* New York: Atria Books, 2014. Print.

---. *The Merlin Prophecy: Battle of Kings*. New York: Atria Paperback, 2013. Print.

---. *The Merlin Prophecy: Death of an Empire*. New York: Atria Books, 2013. Print.

---. *The Merlin Prophecy: Hunting with Gods*. New York: Atria Books, 2013. Print.

Hume's work is grounded in the narratives and the scholarship of the Arthurian legend, with special attention to the surviving Roman elements in British culture. The three "Merlin" novels follow the character from his birth as the illegitimate son of a princess and a brutal castaway, through his medical education and wanderings (even as far as Byzantium), to his coerced service to Uther Pendragon. The "Arthur" novels follow the king-to-be from early adolescence to his final battle.

Lawhead, Steve. *Arthur*. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1989. Print. The Pendragon

Cycle ;; Bk. 3; Variation: Lawhead, Steve.; Pendragon Cycle ;; Bk. 3.

---. *Avalon: The Return of King Arthur*. New York: Avon-EOS, 1999. Print.

---. *Grail*. New York: Avon Books, 1997. Print. Pendragon Cycle ;; Bk. 5---. *Merlin*.

Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1988. Print. The Pendragon Cycle ;; Bk. 2; ---.

Pendragon. New York: W. Morrow, 1994. Print. The Pendragon Cycle ;; Bk. 4;

Variation: Lawhead, Steve.; Pendragon Cycle ; Bk. 4.

---. *Taliesin*. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1987. Print. The Pendragon Cycle ;; Bk. 1.

Lawhead's novels focus on the slow triumph of Christian culture in Roman Britain. The ruling Celts, whose power is fading, are constructed as survivors of the lost culture of Atlantis. There are strong resonances with Parke Godwin's Romano-Celtic novels.

McKenzie, Nancy, *Queen of Camelot* (incorporates two novels, *The Child Queen* and *The High Queen*)

---. *Grail Prince*

These novels are another contemporary series focusing on, and narrated by, Guinevere. Strongly influenced by the novels of Mary Steward, a debt McKenzie acknowledges, the novels provide a positive view of Mordred. A third novel, focuses on the career of Lancelot's son, Galahad.

Miles, Rosalind. *Guenevere* .: New York: Crown Publishers, 1998. Print.

---. *Knight of the Sacred Lake*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2000. Print.

---. *The Child of the Holy Grail*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2001. Print.

Miles novels, set in a Celtic culture in the time of the warrior queens, of which Guenevere's mother is the last exemplar, focus, respectively, on Arthur's queen, on Lancelot, and on his son, Galahad.

Newman, Sharan. *Guinevere*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981. Print.

---. *Guinevere Evermore*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. Print.

---. *The Chessboard Queen*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. Print.

These novels focus on Arthur's queen as the much-indulged child of a British Roman family who is at the same time associated with the native fairy-folk. Newman enhances the traditional tale with cultural and archeological details.

Paxson, Diana L. *The Book of the Cauldron*. New York: Avon Eos, 1999. Print. *The*

Hallowed Isle: Bk. 3

---. *The Book of the Spear*. New York: Avon Eos, 1999. Print. *The Hallowed Isle*: Bk. 2;

---. *The Book of the Sword*. New York: Avon Eos, 1999. Print. *The Hallowed Isle* : Bk. 1.

Paxon, who is also the literary executor for the late Marion Zimmer Bradley, has also written these three young-adult novels, which focus on the young Arthur, the early careers of the Saxons who will be his opponents, and the final days of his kingdom.

Stewart, Mary. *The Crystal Cave*. New York, Morrow, 1970. Print.

---. *The Hollow Hills*. New York, Morrow, 1973. Print.

---. *The Last Enchantment*. New York: Morrow, 1979.

---. *The Wicked Day*. New York: Morrow, 1983.

Stewart, prior to the publication of these novels, was best known as the author of popular Gothic novels. There is, in these Merlin-focused novels (although Mordred is the protagonist of *The Wicked Day*), an unacknowledged debt to Sutcliff, but Stewart's researching of some of the more obscure episodes of the legend is superb.

Sutcliff, Rosemary. *Sword at Sunset*. New York: Coward-McCann, 1963. Print.

Along with T.H. White's work, *Sword at Sunset* is one of the two greatest Arthurian novels of the century. Sutcliff uses only such material from the legend as is clearly British in origin. Her settings meticulously follow the Arthurian milieu as constructed by archaeologists. The book has been reissued by Ballantine.

---, *The Light Beyond the Forest: The Quest of the Holy Grail* (Penguin/ Puffin).

--- *The Sword and the Circle* (Penguin/Puffin)

---*The Road to Camlann* (Penguin/Puffin).

These novels are Sutcliff's retellings for children, but they are very good introductions to the whole Arthurian legend for any reader. Her prose is impeccable, the narratives are straightforward, and the Grail story is the only full modern retelling.

T. H. White, *The Once and Future King* (Berkeley).

---. *The Book of Merlyn* (Berkeley).

White's first novel, originally published as four separate novels, is probably the best-known modern version (pirated by Disney as the film "The Sword in the Stone"; also adapted by Lerner and Lowe as "Camelot"). The second book was discovered in the 1970s in the University of Texas archives. It was intended to be part of the first, the books of which were originally published separately a few years ago.

Whyte, Jack. *Metamorphosis: The Sorcerer*. New York: Tor, 1999. Print.

---. *The Eagle*. 1st ed. New York: Tor Books, 2007. Print.

---. *The Fort at River's Bend*. New York: Tor, 1999. Print.

---. *The Lance Thrower*. New York: Tor, 2004. Print.

---. *The Saxon Shore*. New York: Tor, 1998. Print.

---. *Uther*. New York: Tor, 2001. Print.

---. *The Singing Sword*. 1st ed. New York: Forge, 1996. Print. Camulod Chronicles 2.

---. *The Skystone*. 1st ed. New York: Forge, 1996. Print. Camulod Chronicles 1.

Whyte's work provides another exemplar of the historical/militaristic Arthurian novel of the late 1980s and 1990. *The Skystone* (and its sequels) build a historical saga of late and post-Roman Britain, with a focus on the struggles of former Roman legionary settlers to maintain and rebuild British civilization. Arthurian material is introduced very slowly into the extended narratives.

Woolley, Persia. *Child of the Northern Spring*. New York: Poseidon Press, 1987. Print.

---. *Guinevere: The Legend in Autumn*. New York: Poseidon Press, 1991. Print.

---. *Queen of the Summer Stars*. New York: Poseidon Press, 1990. Print.

A trilogy focusing on Guinevere from her "tomboy" childhood as a Celtic princess to the end of her story.