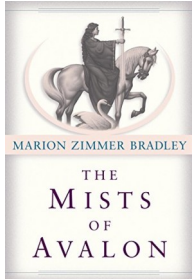




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



The Mists of Avalon
By Marion Zimmer Bradley
Discussed September 2001

Discussion Questions

1. The book deals a lot with the nexus of various forms of power and of responsibility. Who among the characters most exhibited responsibility in relation to the power they wielded?
2. Is Arthur a "good" king? In what ways is he a failure? In what ways is he a success?
3. How does Bradley's interpretation of the Arthurian legend compare with others you have seen or read?
4. Much of the symbolism and tension in the book comes from the conflict between the "old ways" and Christianity. Does Bradley paint an historically accurate picture of pre-Christian England? Does she paint an accurate picture of Christianity and its handling of older customs? Who are the villains here?
5. Bradley chooses to take the friendship between Arthur and Lancelot further than many of her predecessors. What did you think of her handling of their relationship. Do you think, in a different social setting, their relationship would have been different?
6. At numerous points in the story, it is impressed upon Arthur that he must guide the morality of his people and must bring them all to Christianity. What are your thoughts on the idea of a political leader as spiritual guide/driver?
7. Dualities play a significant role in *The Mists of Avalon* - male/female, Christian/Pagan, youth/age, etc. How effective are these dualities represented? What characters seem to represent these different polarities and in what ways?
8. Is Gwenhwyfar a sympathetic character? Is Morgaine? Is Kevin? How is the concept of physical beauty treated by Bradley?
9. Underneath many of the actions is the conflict between fate and free will. How trapped are the characters by fate? Do they truly have choices given who they are and the situation around them? Could there be a resolution that all would have found satisfactory?
10. Historically, did the spread of Christianity really lead to a diminishing of tolerance? Does the Goddess have a place in today's world? Did Christianity ever hold woman as the principal of evil?

11. How has *The Mists of Avalon* changed your perception or understanding of the Arthurian legend? How has it changed your perception of women's roles in the making (and telling) of history?