



## Grail

*Stephen R. Lawhead*

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**Grail** Stephen R. Lawhead

**A great king faces the ultimate challenge: a dangerous quest through realms of magic and the undead toward a confrontation with his destiny**

Drought, plague, and war have left the Isle of the Mighty battered and its heart, the beloved Arthur, grievously injured—until a secret relic is brought before the dying King; a Holy Grail that heals his wounds and restores his vigor.

But soon evil enters the royal court in the guise of a beautiful maiden; a soulless, malevolent force capable of seducing the King's loyal champion, confounding the sage whom some call Merlin, and carrying the sacred Grail—and Arthur's adored Queen—off into the dark unknown.

## GRAIL

“Suspenseful . . . soulful, philosophical . . . engagingly drawn . . . Arthurian Britain is invoked with robust verisimilitude.” —*Publishers Weekly*

## Grail Details

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## From Reader Review Grail for online ebook

### Rusty says

Seven years of war with the Saecens are followed by an Vandali invasion while the country reels from drought and plague. Arthur's tired host defeats the Vandali but Arthur is seriously injured. The wounds are great and he is taken to Ynys Avalach where Charis, a queen of the fair folk resides. It is hoped that her nursing skill may help him. There a miracle occurs and Arthur survives. That miracle is the Grail brought from its hiding place to heal the Pendragon. Arthur realizes that the Grail is a holy relic that could bring peace and health to Britain and builds a great shrine for it. And, as Arthur has predicted friends and enemy alike come to view and be healed by the Grail.

Meanwhile, Morgian schemes to lure Arthur's champion, Llenlleawg, to become her spy and help bring about the fall of the Pendragon, his queen, Gwenhwyvar, and Myrddin, his bard and counselor. Her goal is to destroy all of Britain and kill the three. Her minions steal the Grail, murdering both guardians and pilgrims in the process. Knowing that his arrogance was the root of this problem, Arthur falls into a deep depression. Myrddin at last is able to bring Arthur to his senses and the host pursues Morgian's followers in the hope of recovering the Grail.

The final battle occurs in a place of Morgian's choosing, Llyonesse, where her powers are strongest. Arthur and his host have no recourse but to take up the challenge. Thus begins the major action of the tale as Arthur and his men travel through Llyonesse where Morgian uses her evil magic to raise dead warriors, beasts and create horrible illusions to defeat the host.

For me, the first part of the book seemed to be disjointed and to drag on but when the Grail is stolen, the author seems to hit his stride and the story flows rapidly to the end. From that point, I could not put the book aside until I finished. The narrator is Gwalchavad, Lord of Orcady, with parts prefaced by the words and thoughts of Morgian, the Queen of Air and Darkness. All in all, the book is worth your time!

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### Julie says

J'aurais eu énormément de mal à clôturer la lecture, invoquant tous les moyens possibles pour ne pas avancer dans les trente dernières pages. J'étais ennuyée ? Non, pas du tout. Je n'arrivais juste pas à me dire que cette saga serait définitivement clôturée pour moi.

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### Molly says

Esta é uma das sagas mais belas que tenho tido oportunidade de ler. Depois de ter lido os anteriores através da biblioteca, foi com grande prazer que descobri este exemplar na Feira do Livro de Setúbal há uns anos, sendo assim o único de seis livros fantásticos que se encontra nas prateleiras. E, depois de tanto tempo há espera, este exemplar foi lido.

Depois do quarto livro, Pendragon, e do final misterioso e um tanto atordoador, fiquei num hiatus entre a leitura desse e deste, Graal. Ainda bem, porque tornou este livro ainda mais "doce". Foi como um elixir de

beleza de encanto que me veio parar às mãos e tornei a embrenhar-me naqueles bosques, naquelas intrigas tão bem elaboradas e escritas com uma grande beleza e reencontrar personagens tão brilhantes como Artur e Merlin.

Neste volume a história é narrada por Gwalchavad (Galahad, noutras histórias arturianas), ainda parente de Morgana, é um dos amigos leais de Artur. Depois das guerras com os povos invasores, da recuperação milagrosa de Artur e da seca, este e os outros amigos vêm-se a braços com uma nova aventura: dar a conhecer o Graal a todos e protegê-lo, inaugurando assim o Reino do Verão, o grande objetivo de toda a saga, profetizado por Taliesin no primeiro livro. Porém, cedo começam a ver que algo está estranho e a outra narradora da história começa a tecer a sua teia, se bem que não apareça diretamente no livro: Morgana.

Personagens maravilhosas, ricas e complexas, que é sempre um prazer reencontrar, ajudaram mais uma vez a criar uma história fantástica. Nesta história deixam-se de lado as guerras mais mundanas e o foco principal passa a estar relacionado com o Graal e todos os seus poderes. Não há tantas personagens como nos outros livros, mas as que estão presentes continuam no seu melhor: Artur, Merlin, Avallach, Charis, Morgana... todos elas estão muito bem, mesmo que nem todas tenham o mesmo destaque que outros livros da saga. Artur e Merlin continuam no centro de tudo, com especial atenção para Llenlleawg (Lancelot) e Morgaws.

O enredo é mais dado ao mistério e à magia. As personagens partem numa demanda perigosa pelo meio de caminhos obscuros e repletos de misteriosos e horrendos desafios, que vão aparecendo de repente e que muito servem para demonstrar a capacidade imaginativa do autor, bem como a sua audácia quanto ao mistério e ao suspense. O clima de suspeita e mistério está presente durante todo o livro e o dei por mim sempre na expectativa, a querer saber o que vinha a seguir e a estabelecer teorias.

As descrições continuam perfeitas, transpirando harmonia e beleza, mas também uma força assustadora nos momentos mais tensos. Mais uma vez, o autor cria o ambiente certo, faz as descrições certas, através de uma linguagem rica e elaborada, épica. É como se o leitor estivesse junto das personagens.

Em suma, é mais um belíssimo romance fantástico de Stephen Lawhead. Recomendo sem reservas a todos os que gostam de um bom livro. Para quem gosta das lendas arturianas então é um autêntico doce que se derrete na boca.

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## Ashley says

This was the best book of the Pendragon cycle by far. The order of the books is kind of confusing if you don't read them all together. Some of the events are overlapping throughout some of the series.

I really liked reading the book from Gwalchavad's perspective. That is one thing I really enjoyed about this series is that you hear some of the same events but from other perspectives. It blends together everything as a much greater story.

I was really surprised that the one person who is the traitor turned out to be Llenlleawg who is Arthur and Gwenhyvar's champion. He is seduced by the mysterious Morgaws who turns out to be the daughter of Morgain. Morgain's part in the story is interestingly added to the story in italics at the beginning of some of the chapters. Out of all the characters, I sort of thought that Gwalchavad would be the one that turned on author since the story is from his perspective. Amazingly he seems to be the one who is able to overcome

evil the most.

I was also really relieved that Bedwyr, Cai, and Cador end up being alive at the end. The part where Arthur and his friends find them dead in a big oak tree was heartbreaking.

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### **Jessi says**

Well, this is another book I'd put before book 3 of Arthur. Actually, I am reading the last book again. I feel that I need some sort of closure to wrap up the whole series.

I didn't really think about Gwalchavad much in the previous books, but he makes a very good narrator to this tale. I also love how Morgian's thoughts are all in italics. The best quote in the whole book, I think, is, "*Forget swords and spears-children's playthings. I taught you better than that, Morgaws. I suckled you on venom and bile, girl-use it!*" I don't know why, but I just love it.

This book gets really freaky during the climax. You never know what will happen next. It was very intriguing.

Oh, I also love the peon type characters like Peredur and Gereint. These young men are so full of honor and servitude. In fact, if Gereint was real, and I wasn't already married, I would totally want to marry him.

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### **Becky says**

I truely enjoyed this book, it was from a voice I wasn't expecting to hear from, but enjoyed. Gwalchavad was a great person to hear the story from especially with Morgian's veiw sporatically added in. In this series I will admit my favorites were when Emrys was the voice, but I felt Gwalchavad was a okay substiute. While it is a great story, the series as a whole still feels unfinished. Since much of the seires skipped around in time, this book really falling in the middle with Arthur being the end, I felt confused at times. But the illisions Stephen created were complete and I believed all of them heart and soul, to the point of morning losses of beloved characters! I thank my Husband for buy's me this series for I don't know if I would have bought it myself, but am glad I read it!

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### **James Wirrell says**

This is the fifth installment in the Pendragon series, and like the fourth book, Pendragon, it takes place within the time period of the third book, Arthur. On reflection, I think that there are two important things to note about this series: first, I think it is targeted at young adults, and second, Lawhead seeks to give it a Mabinogian-like feel. And do, I recall reading this series as a young adult and thinking the heroes were the best. Now my impression is that while they might be stout and true, they aren't the sharpest tools in the shed. The reader can spot the villain a mile away, and they practically walk around with a neon sign proclaiming "I am the evil villain", but Arthur's comrades and his wise counselor Myrddin, give them full access to the inner court. You kind of wonder what might have been had there been a clever spy master to advise Arthur. Be that as it may, this book does have echoes of Celtic legend and Lawhead has been one of my favorite authors over the years.

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### **Jodi Woody says**

Last book of the "Pendragon Cycle" series, "Grail" shows more of the story from the evil side of things. I feel the same way about this one as I did about "Pendragon", because they are out of sequence, and there isn't a real clear timeline, I found myself thinking, "was this before this event??" So I really liked it, though I loved Taliesin, Arthur, and Merlin. I was kind of hoping that this one would solve the mystery of what happened to Arthur, but I guess, we will never know. That is part of the appeal of the Legend. Lawhead is a gifted writer and I enjoy his books. Like Tolkien, never light reading, you have to know you are in for the long haul and that you will have to keep your mind sharp. No casual reading here. As a series, I loved it! This is by far my favorite series about Arthur and I love the legend, partly due to the fact that Arthur, his men, and Merlin are all followers of Jehu, and the whole affair between the queen and Lancelot is missing. For "Grail" as a stand alone, again great, as part of the series not my favorite one, but still a wonderful part of the Arthurian Legend. I give it 4+ stars.

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### **Laurie says**

This series has been a roller coaster ride. I will really like a book or a section of a book, and then I will move into a section that just rubs me the wrong way. "Grail" was like a downward spiral. It started off well, but it took a nose dive. Lawhead has done a decent job throughout the series of weaving in threads of the historical, the miraculous, and the fantastical. Not so with "Grail." It started off pretty believable (well, as believable as fantasy gets), but once the company entered Lyonesse for the second time it dropped all pretense of historicity. It was very poorly crafted in that way. It left us with no solid ground to stand on, though in all fairness, when dealing with the subject of the Grail we are going to be working with more mystical material than the previous books (barring the sinking of Atlantis).

Furthermore, Lawhead takes a pretty strong spiritual tone in these books. Far be it from me to criticize that; everyone has their own personal spirituality, but Lawhead's spirituality does not resonate with me. At least, he doesn't present it in a way that resonates with me. I find it overbearing at times, and most especially in this book.

Finally, Morgian turned out to be quite the Bond villain in this book. In all fairness it's not like elaborately villainous plots are anything new. They happen all over literature, but it just struck me in this book.

Ranking them from favorite to least favorite: Pendragon, Taliesin, Arthur, Merlin, and (wah wah) Grail.

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### **Tatiana says**

Simple. easy to read. Entertaining.

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## **Molly Murphy says**

I have been waiting FOREVER to read Grail! The narrator, surprisingly, was Galahad (Gwalchavad in the novel), a character much less explored. Lawhead took an uncommon road in making him the brother of Gwalcmai (Gawain) rather than his brothers being Gaheris, Agravain, and Gareth. I didn't know that in some old Welsh tales, they were brothers, rather than Galahad being Lancelot's son. I would have liked to see Gwalcmai appear in the novel, since he is my favorite of the Arthurian characters, but I can see the backstory Lawhead weaves for him and though Grail is the only of the Pendragon cycle I read, I have a feeling that Gwalcmai has appeared in previous books.

Anyway- THE BOOK. The grail heals an injured Arthur and many other people, but it is stolen by Morgaws and Llenleawg (Lancelot) and the Cymbrogi (Arthur's men) must find it. I was so devastated when Tallaght died, but loved everyone, especially Cai (Kay). Lawhead constantly makes you think something tragic has happened, leaving you having to read more. I also like how he kind of mixed the Green Knight with David and Goliath in Merlin's song. And the grail scene itself! Entrancing! (Though Galahad is very bold to argue with an angel the way he did.) Really devoured this book.

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## **Cheryl says**

This book was much better written, more exciting, and with more believable sorcery from Merlin and Morgian than "Arthur". That being said, I am confused about the layout of the two books "Arthur" and "Merlin" as their timelines overlap which took away the suspense and emotion of important characters dieing when you know that they must live and be present for Arthur's final battle. Also, it did not at the end connect Llenleawg's final fate as a banished and disgraced traitor to his status in the previous book "Arthur" as his champion. And I don't recall the post-"Grail" timeline portion of "Arthur" including any mention of his betrayal. And what about Gwenhyvar's betrayal? Supposedly she was kidnapped but the stable boy and the witnesses saw her as being complicit in Llenleawg's stealing of the Grail. And didn't Arthur mention some of the surviving Cymbrogi going to search for the Grail after Arthur disappears? Why would they do that if they knew he had given it back to Avalach? The story just didn't hold together own its own or paired with the previous book in the series "Arthur". It was painfully obvious that Lawhead didn't plan out "Grail" before writing "Arthur". I would've preferred a more chronological telling of the Arthur story or at least a better planned collaboration between the two books. Again, this was such a disappointing take on a much-loved story so full of opportunities for literary gold.

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## **Debra says**

I just finished (mostly on audiobook) the five-book *Pendragon* series by Stephen Lawhead. (These were all "Rex Quondam"--he's apparently done a "Rex Futurus," *Avalon*, semi-detached from the series, but I haven't read it yet.)

Lawhead's is a strongly Celtic Christian orientation and considering that the first book, *Taliesin*, was published in 1987, four years after *The Mists of Avalon*, I can't but wonder if his series wasn't in some sense a Christian "answer" to Bradley's pro-pagan, anti-Christian take on the Arthurian legends. It's been a while since I read Bradley, but with both series the ideology occasionally gets in the way of rounded characterizations, particularly of the villains, which in both series are usually (always?) of the "other" persuasion.

Having said that, Lawhead's writing is often gorgeous, especially dealing with description, atmosphere, and sense of place. And I appreciated that he re-imagined the Lancelot/Guinevere adultery melodrama, which I usually hate.

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### **Tara says**

#### **Favorite Quotes**

...when he smiles it is as if the sun itself has come from behind a cloud to light the dreary shadow-crowded way with dazzling warmth.

...to speak of her is to demean with words what is best expressed in a song; a wordless melody of the kind oft stroked on the harp of Myrddin's hand is the best description, I do believe, for when the harp strings sing and the heart shed's it's weariness and rises to the eternal dance, that is what it is like to behold [her].

Elegance finds its meaning in her movements, and to hear her speak is to know how heaven's bright citizens address their immortal kind.

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### **Laura says**

Los dos anteriores libros de esta saga se me habían hecho bastante pesados. Batalla tras batalla interminable, siempre contra un enemigo más fuerte y numeroso que el anterior pero por suerte este fue totalmente diferente. Volvió un poco al espíritu que tenía Merlin donde la magia está presente. Morgian por fin toma protagonismo y nos muestra de lo que es capaz.

Gwalchavad me gustó como narrador, le agregó algo distinto a la saga, siendo su voz muy diferente a la de los demás narradores que tuvimos.

Siento que con este último tomo la saga se redimió. Muy recomendable!

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