



The Warrior Queen

Lavinia Collins

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"Finally, a new literary treatment of this fabulous heroine." Beth Simmons, Cork

"The Warrior Queen drew me into an enchanted world I didn't want to leave, can't wait for the sequel."

Claire Jackson, Neath

"Arthurian Legend at its best..." Mark Stone, Kentucky

A sumptuous romance based around the life of Guinevere and Arthur's Court.

Never before has the magical world of Queen Guinevere, King Arthur and Lancelot and the knights of the Round Table been so deeply explored than in this warming saga of passion, duty and infidelity. Drawing on a rich seam of historical sources Lavinia Collins has created a fictional masterpiece, and epic romance that will stand the test of time.

The Warrior Queen is the first full novel length instalment of the Guinevere Trilogy. A Champion's Duty and The Day of Destiny will be released by Spring, 2014.

The Warrior Queen Details

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From Reader Review The Warrior Queen for online ebook

Sarah Foxen says

Sexy re-imagining of King Arthur legend. Lots of compelling characters, well written, and with lots of sexually charged scenes. Recommend to anyone who likes historical romance in vein of Philippa Gregory etc.

Emma says

A sumptuous romance based around the life of Guinevere and Arthur's Court.

Never before has the magical world of Queen Guinevere, King Arthur and Lancelot and the knights of the Round Table been so deeply explored than in this warming saga of passion, duty and infidelity. Drawing on a rich seam of historical sources Lavinia Collins has created a fictional masterpiece, and epic romance that will stand the test of time.

When Lavinia asked me to review this book I was delighted, I love re-tellings but this one of a type that I have never read before and found it interesting as it is the retelling of King Arthur and The Knights of the Round Table. What I love about this book is that it hasn't been modernized like most re-tellings, it is just the same but from a different point of view.

The story is written from Queen Guinevere's point of view and brings old characters to life. It is interesting to see a story from this time from a woman's point of view as they were not equal's and their opinion didn't really matter, so it is nice to be able to see the events that unfold and the emotion that comes with them through Guinevere's eyes. It is a beautifully written novel which any fan of King Arthur and his court will love. I found the story so much more enjoyable than the original as it is told from a whole new and unique perspective.

I don't want to ruin the story for anybody that is unfamiliar with King Arthur, but he demands Guinevere as his wife after defeating her people, in a war which resulted in the deaths of her mother, brothers and the man she was supposed to marry. She unwillingly leaves her kingdom and elderly father behind and goes to Camelot to marry Arthur, who although she has never met him, she hates. At first being a Queen is a whole new experience for her and although she was a Princess in her kingdom she never had to act like one, but she eventually learns to enjoy her new role and even fall in love with Arthur.

I would definitely recommend this if you are looking for an old story made even better, or even if you are just looking for a quick fascinating read. This is the first in a 3 part series and I cannot wait to read the next two.

9/10

Laura says

Originally posted on:> <http://lauraslittlebookblog.blogspot....>

When I was first asked to review *The Warrior Queen* by Lavinia, I was a little put off by the cover, but as soon as I saw the words King Arthur and Lancelot in the synopsis, the cover no longer mattered and I knew I had to read this book.

I love historical novels, I really really do, especially medieval ones and *The Warrior Queen* has sparked my love of them all over again. The knights of the round table, going into battle, the legends, Arthur, Lancelot. And not only that, it also had the medieval magic of Merlin and ah just loved it!

Guinevere is a strong female character that I instantly liked and *The Warrior Queen* tells her story of how King Arthur, after winning the battle against her Father demands that she be his bride. You really feel for her as a character and hope that she will be alright. But as I mentioned, she isn't one to cower in the background and do as she is told despite women in that era being subservient to men. And also Arthur doesn't quite turn out to be the man I thought he would be and it pleasantly surprised me.

I managed to get so completely lost in this story. I really felt like I was in Guinevere's shoes and when Lancelot came in on the scene I really was immersed in her world.

At first I was annoyed with the ending, but then I saw on Goodreads that it is a series! I definitely definitely want to read more about Guinevere and Arthur and Lancelot.

An immersive, pleasantly surprising and enchanting medieval tale that has had me begging for the sequel!

Charlie Gs says

I picked this book up on a cold wet day and it certainly warmed me up! It is a compelling, engrossing, not to mention steamy, version of the Arthurian legend. It draws the reader through a world of ladies fair and their knights, of witches, magic, love and duty in such a way that it is not surprising it is difficult to put down.

Guinevere is believable and relatable and Collins allows you to see her journey from princess bride to Warrior Queen as a journey of herself as much as circumstance. She captures the essence of being a woman in a way that makes it hard for any reader, male or female, not to relate to her.

Collins style is real, gritty and sensual and I cannot wait for the sequel.

Elma Grove says

I loved this book. At last, we have a Guinevere for our time, yet one who is also firmly rooted in the medieval world of the narrative. Without anachronism, Collins gives us brilliant access to the queen's thoughts and emotions, her keen intelligence, strength, and compelling human responses to those surrounding her and to circumstances both within and beyond her control. The author has summoned into being a world and characters I found truly absorbing. This book is a page-turner, thanks to Collins's pacing, storytelling, and intoxicating prose. I can't wait for the next book in the trilogy!

Jillian says

I am mystified by the praise and adoration in these other reviews. Did these other reviewers read a completely different book than I did?

Basically, all of my issues with this book can be summed up in three major complaints that, combined, cause it to fail miserably. Made it halfway through and abandoned. I've read many books on Arthurian legend, and this is the worst rendition of it that I've read.

****minor spoilers****

1) Sloppy, inconsistent, and inexcusably inappropriate character development.

ARTHUR - Arrogant, ignorant, and uninspiring. How did such an idiot become the king of all Britain?

The morning after the wedding night, Arthur plays a cruel joke on Kay for apparently no reason, where he pretends to not be in his room. Because they are all (even Arthur) still suffering from PTSD with regard to the recent war, Kay interprets this as Arthur having been murdered by his new bride. So, what does Kay do? Breaks down the door, which Arthur thinks is, like, totally amusing! Arthur knew something like that would bother Kay, so why didn't he just answer the door, especially when he is always jumpy himself and must know the panic Kay would be feeling and could predict what his reaction would be? I guess it's supposed to be a funny scene meant to build Kay's character as a hothead or something, but it makes no sense and is just not funny at all—mostly, I just felt sorry for Kay.

Arthur doesn't know how to read, or has only just learned to read and still struggles with it. I cannot see how that is realistic at all. Even before everyone realized he is to be the king of all Britain, Arthur was a foster boy who grew up in a lord's house and was treated like a true son by those who lived there, so the idea that he would not have been given at least some tutoring in how to read and write makes no sense to me. I am not sure what point of this is. Is it setup for a future plot point? Is it supposed to add to the child-like appeal the author seems to be trying to generate? It is supposed to give Arthur a "flaw"? I can't imagine him doing all the things he has done, yet being unable to read, because that would leave him open to being taken advantage of, or ignorant of, important information and dealings. You cannot be the king of all Britain and be unable to read. It just doesn't mesh.

Arthur forgets the name of his own sword. Are you kidding me? I am pretty sure that if I pulled a sword out of a damned stone, I'd remember the sword's name, regardless of whether I could read at the time. I got the idea that this fact was supposed to endear him to us somehow, like it's another strained attempt at giving him a "flaw" so he seems more human or to show how nonchalant he is about having a sword like that and accomplishing everything he has done at such a young age. Plus, right after he says that, Guinevere thinks in her mind that no villager (likely over half of whom wouldn't be able to read themselves, so being unable to read isn't an excuse for Arthur's lack of memory about it) ever forgot the name of the sword, which just makes Arthur's statement that he can't remember it even more absurd. You can't be an idiot and do what Arthur has done. Again, it just doesn't mesh.

The whole reason Arthur decides to marry Guinevere is unclear. Marriage for him in his situation would have been no joke and not something to take lightly, yet it seems that he really put no thought into it at all.

She is already past her prime (more on that later), there seems to be no political benefit to the match, she is not very likeable or smart, and it's not like Arthur had no choice in whom to marry--he could've had any woman in his whole kingdom, yet he picks this Guinevere for a reason that seems not just selfish (he gives some lame excuse about his past and somehow Guinevere is going to protect him from the incestuous mistake he made) but silly. I don't get it, and there hasn't really been a further explanation of this even 50% into the book.

Arthur would not even see Guinevere the first day she arrived, even though she was supposed to marry him the very next day. It wasn't like he was enduring war-related activities, meeting other delegates, or tending to an emergency. Nope. "Sorry I couldn't meet you, but I wanted you to help me with this thing that happened in my past because I sense you are magical." Okay... but that still doesn't explain why he childishly hid from her or what the benefit is to him and his kingdom in marrying her, so it came off more like a contrived circumstance to create suspense.

GUINEVERE – Weak, inconsistent, and not very intelligent. Not queenly or warrior-like at all.

I do not admire or like Guinevere at all. She has no redeemable qualities. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: If I cannot relate to, respect, or even like the protagonist on any level, I have no interest in what happens to them or what they might accomplish.

Oh, Guinevere, a warrior you are not. There are women warriors, they can be badass, and I've read books about just such things! But this author did not build Guinevere's character up in a way that was even remotely convincing in that direction. The first thing that happens in the book (after a painfully artful description light filtering through Guinevere's eyelashes because she, of course, fell asleep in the forest, which is what all warrior women do, I guess) is that we learn that Guinevere's mother went off to fight Arthur, leaving Guinevere and her father behind. The mother subsequently, and predictably, dies. There is no explanation of why her father does not go to war or why it was all up to her mother to save their village. So, now her father seems weak and unlikable and I'm preoccupied with the confusion over Guinevere's supposed warrior mother. There is this contrived circumstance to explain why Guinevere sees herself as such a "warrior," but the author couldn't take the time to actually explain its significance and background to root it more firmly in our minds so it is believable. It's like the author had an idea of what she wanted Guinevere to be in her mind, and kept assuming that we have all the information she does, and so therefore never fully realizes Guinevere's character for us in this area—even though this whole book is about Guinevere being a WARRIOR queen. Because of this, I did not believe Guinevere going off to war and her fighting next to Arthur was realistic, either from a historical perspective, a changing-things-up perspective, or a character-building perspective. I quit reading when she predictably got injured by being underfoot.

Guinevere is a few years older than Arthur (I got the idea that maybe Guinevere is 19-20 and Arthur is 16-17). This isn't realistic. I can't imagine Arthur marrying a woman who is already past her prime, particularly when he needs heirs. This is hundreds of years ago, even over a thousand years ago, depending on which versions of the myth you look at. A woman in her late teens/early 20s in that day and age was basically middle-aged by then and likely had already given birth to most, if not all, of the children she was going to have--assuming she lived through the births at all.

The endless contradictions and waffling centered around Guinevere and her very changeable nature, which is mostly centered around her "feelings" for Arthur, all of which were negative until she found out he was (arguably—the sex scenes were numerous but “meh”) a good lover. Since Arthur hid that first day, they had only known each other for a few hours before it was time to consummate the marriage, and in that time Arthur did nothing meaningful to change her mind about who he is and he still basically killed all of her

family and her entire village with his war. Yet, after bitching and moaning for days and days (maybe weeks—who knows because, like I said, I couldn't keep track of the passing of time in this book) that she has resolved to hate Arthur because he is a child and a murderer, Guinevere is seduced by him after one kiss, and sleeps with him three times their first night together and again the next morning. In five minutes, she falls into his bed, falls in love with him, and completely falls out of line with her own values and beliefs. How is that a strong woman, to basically forget who you are so easily? The strained attempt to build sexual tension by not seeing each other that first day or with the scene of them battling what wits they have before they sleep together for the first time was obvious, painful, and failed utterly. I'm not saying that growing to love (or at least tolerate) Arthur eventually wouldn't have made sense, but the author did not have the patience for a realistic transition of Guinevere's feelings, so Guinevere comes off as weak and easily manipulated.

When Merlin killed the baby and sealed her womb from other children, I was just like WTF. First of all, she just laid there and let it happen. I am not a mom, but I couldn't imagine just lying there placidly while someone kills my unborn baby, particularly after they just announced that is what they are going to do! Second of all, why is Guinevere stupidly wandering ALONE around the castle, anyway, in such a vulnerable condition when she knows there are people--witches!--around who don't like her?

2) Poor timing and pace make this story disorienting and patchy to read.

It reads like the sex scenes were written first, then they decided to add an Arthurian theme to make it sell and filled it in around the sex. I don't mind sex scenes, but in this book many of the sex scenes don't make sense, felt disingenuous, and they are used to carry the whole book. Which is probably why the world-building attempts failed for me entirely, like they were an afterthought, which made the story completely lack charm.

The first 25% of the book seemed to happen in two days, but then all of a sudden Guinevere's reminiscing with Arthur that they've been together four days, and I was like, Where did the other two days go? I only remember them sleeping one night. Or, when Guinevere travels to meet Arthur, it seems like she was in a boat for a few hours after riding a horse for a few hours, but then they talk about it later as if it was supposed to have been an arduous journey of many weeks.

The first 50% reads as if it had to be told in 20,000 words or less, like the author is hurrying to tell the main basics of the traditional story and get that out of the way so she can get to her own interpretation. Huge plot points and key parts of the legend kept happening just to happen and did not fit together, or were hastily explained as having already happened to fill in gaps, like the author wrote something and was like, "Darn I didn't explain that other thing before talking about this thing, so I'd better explain that other thing now." All of this culminates in it feeling like a bunch of short stories plopped into chapter form with no transitions.

3) Nonsensical plot changes that aren't supported by either the timing or the characters.

All that stuff with the table, give it a rest! A magical table... that you lay on... and make wishes on... We had to hear about it over and over and over. I still don't really get that, particularly the wishing part of it, and most particularly when Guinevere says something like, "Oh, my feelings about Arthur have changed, but I'm not yet willing to take back my wish about wanting him dead." Whhhuuut. Later (but who knows how much later because I couldn't keep track of time in this story), Guinevere takes her wish back and does it within Arthur's hearing, basically admitting to him that she had previously wished for his death on her wishing table--and he is TOTALLY OKAY with it and doesn't say a word. I guess this is supposed to show how much he loves her, that he will forgive her anything, including basically committing treason, and have nothing to say about it. Instead of showing me how far their relationship has come, it just made me roll my

eyes. I'm guessing Merlin and Morgan hate Guinevere so much because they knew she would wish for Arthur's death and her wish will come true in the end and it's all Guinevere's fault that Arthur dies. And if THAT wish comes true on the wishing table, then why was her baby killed by Merlin (while she is resting on the magical table itself, even!) instead of being born healthy when she had wished for a healthy baby on her magical wishing table? And if the table is the whole problem, why don't they just get rid of it or destroy it?

In other versions I've read, Arthur's inability to meet with her that first day (for political reasons) is what introduces Guinevere to Lancelot and that is how their courtly romance starts, but in this version it is Kay who goes to fetch her, and so now she appears to be interested in Kay. So far we have an Arthurian legend book... without Lancelot. Is this seriously Arthurian legend without Lancelot, and instead it seems that Guinevere might fall for the king's foster brother? Unfortunately, even though I'm kind of curious about that part, I cannot subject myself to any more of this series to find out if Lancelot enters into the book later or to see if she sleeps with both Kay and Lancelot, in addition to Arthur. I almost wished Guinevere would sleep with Kay even if that has never happened in any other version of Arthurian legend I've read just so I could stop hearing about how she is drawn to him (and maybe she does, but, again, I'll never find out because I can't stand another moment of this book).

Tried way too hard to be magical and mystical and never got to the point of it all. So much talk about the "Otherworld" and isn't Kay delightful but also dark and scary and forbidden because he is Otherworldly, flutter-flutter. Despite the fact that this is being built up as some sort of major plot point, I was halfway in and I still didn't know what the Otherworld nonsense is really about or how Guinevere can supposedly protect Arthur from his past mistake with her Otherworldly magic, which she hasn't even displayed as having yet (unless all the nonsense with the magical wishing table is her displaying her Otherworldly magic).

Marianna says

A well-written and thought out epic romance based around Arthurian Legend and centring on the love life of Guinevere, her loyalty to Arthur and love for Lancelot. First in the series, looking forward to the others.

Becky Nicholls says

This is a titillating read! Saucy yet subtle, with a hefty dollop of magic and a host of fabulously crafted characters. I can't WAIT to see more from this author! I'll be the first in line when the sequel comes out.

Leta Hawk says

A bit of a different take on Guinevere. Most of the books I've read feature Guinevere as a pampered princess type, beautiful, but not always that intelligent, not much personality...

In this book, Guinevere is a complex character who has her own mind and her own opinions on many things. The author did a nice job with showing us Guinevere's struggles as she adjusted to a new country, a new position in life, and new rules. The only thing I didn't like was the whole Lancelot thing; I still felt as though she played out as a victim, helpless to fight her growing feelings for him.

Still, I would recommend this book for anyone who enjoys Arthurian literature.

Drako says

I have a love for the story of King Arthur that started back in my childhood and has never gone away. I've never been overly fond of the Guinevere character. I was more of a fan of Merlin, personally. This is a much different telling of the story of Guinevere, and makes her infinitely more interesting and likeable than the original tales as well as some stories I've read from other authors. She's a bit of a wild thing, and definitely her own person. Forced into a role she doesn't really want, she grows accustomed to thing and falls in love with Arthur, at least. As always, there must be the affair with Lancelot, which is generally what made me dislike her in the first place. But the telling of the story is great and the story itself, a much different version, compelling enough for me to want to read on in the future.

Morgan Dhu says

There are so many different ways to approach the Matter of Britain. One can take one's cue from the medieval romances, with chivalrous knights, or take any one of several historical approaches, from Arthur as Welsh warlord to Arthur as Samartian cavalry commander to Arthur as Romano-British dux bellorum. One can create a world much like our own, but not completely so - one in which our imaginings about ancient peoples make the rough world of the Britons, Saxons and Picts a more interesting place. And of course, there's always the question of whether or not to bring into the story the element of true magic.

Lavinia Collins' Arthurian novel, *The Warrior Queen* - first of the "Guinevere" trilogy - presents us with a story that does not fit easily into any of these styles. It has the shape and storyline of many of the romances, but tends toward the more truly historical in terms of everyday detail, and adds a full measure of magic. Arthur is a leader of knights, who wins his crown by drawing the sword from the stone, and goes off to conquer the Roman Emperor. But Guinevere is a Celtic war-queen from Brittany, who worships the old gods and not Arthur's Hanged God Christ. And there are witches here - Merlin, Morgan and Nimue - and some others with enough witchblood to sometimes do true magic, including Guinevere herself.

Collins includes all the fateful love affairs of the romances in her tale - Arthur and Guinevere, Guinevere and Lancelot, Arthur and Morgawse, Lancelot and Elaine (although she adds an interesting twist to this traditional pairing). But her interpretation of Guinevere is her own, and an interesting variation on the legends.

Tnt Reviews says

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

The Warrior Queen is a King Arthur Story from Guinevere's point of view. The tale is told in an unexpected way that depicts the struggles Guinevere endures to become the unwilling wife of the conquering King Arthur.

In her father's kingdom she was allowed to skip all princess formalities and run wild, go hunting on horseback and wear practical everyday clothes, while her unruly hair blew loosely in the wind. Now as the

wife of Arthur, refined clothes and tempered behavior would be her life.

The book starts off as the typical, legendary, medieval tale one would expect, but it quickly becomes clear that mentioned genre doesn't apply here. Guinevere meets Arthur for the first time when she walks down the isle. He is not the brute savage that she expected of a man with such a long list of slain enemies. Despite a vow to herself, she falls in love with him and so does the reader. That's why the sudden appearance of Lancelot engrossed me to both love and hate the attraction that, despite their obvious attempts at denial, becomes stronger with each passing day. Guinevere doesn't stop loving Arthur throughout the book. Her inner conflict was heart wrenching to witness.

I thoroughly enjoyed The Warrior Queen and I highly recommend it and can't wait for the next book in this trilogy.

4-Bombs

Reviewed by Soreta

Liz Meldon says

I loved this book. Loved it. The only thing that stopped me from giving it a full 5 stars was that I found it to be a little slow in the build-up... Sort of the... mid-beginning to middle half of the book seemed to drag on a little. However, all that aside, I simply adored this book. I loved all the characters, even the less personable ones. Everyone was unique and on point. This is actually the first Camelot-inspired book that I've read, and I think these characterizations will stick with me for all future books. The romances were great, the smut was tasteful and not overbearing, and Guinevere was stunning as the narrative lead.

What I liked most, I think, was that the author didn't go out of her way to make Arthur a brute. Readers didn't need to be spoon-fed why our leading lady's eye might start to wander. Arthur wasn't portrayed as some jerk, but rather a good leader and a good king, and a husband who could use a little tweaking here and there. Lancelot is also my kind of hero, so I was happy with his personality too.

I can't gush about this book enough. I was a little unsure, like I said, with the slow-ish beginning, but then all of a sudden I just fell in love. Even the ending worked for me, especially since I knew there was more to the story. Can't wait to tackle the next two books in the series.

Fun fact: I initially thought this book was YA. ... I don't know WHY or HOW that crossed my mind, but the first smutty scene definitely put it into perspective.

Fizza says

An interesting and enthralling re-telling of Arthur's legend. The story is written from Queen Guinevere's point of view and brings old characters to a new life. It is a beautifully written novel which any fan of King Arthur and his court will love. The story is told in a light and fun way which keeps the readers interested from start till end.

After the Boy-King Arthur defeats Guinevere's people, in a war which resulted in the deaths of her mother, brothers and fiancé, he demanded to marry her. So she lefts her father and kingdom behind and goes to a

strange land to marry a boy she hates. Things doesn't turn out as she had expected and she finds that she may not hate Arthur as much as she thought. As she tries to learn the customs of this new kingdom and be a Queen she also learns to like Arthur.

The story gives a unique perspective to an old tale. I found it extremely enjoyable read. Its a 5-star read. I hope the next two books will be as good as this one.

Lena Abel says

I liked this book a lot! It was a quick read and I thought Guinevere was a great character. It was sexy and fun but the sex wasn't overwhelming. The only thing that I didn't like about it was that I wished it focused more on Guinevere's life before Arthur and on Merlin, but overall it was a really fun and interesting read.
