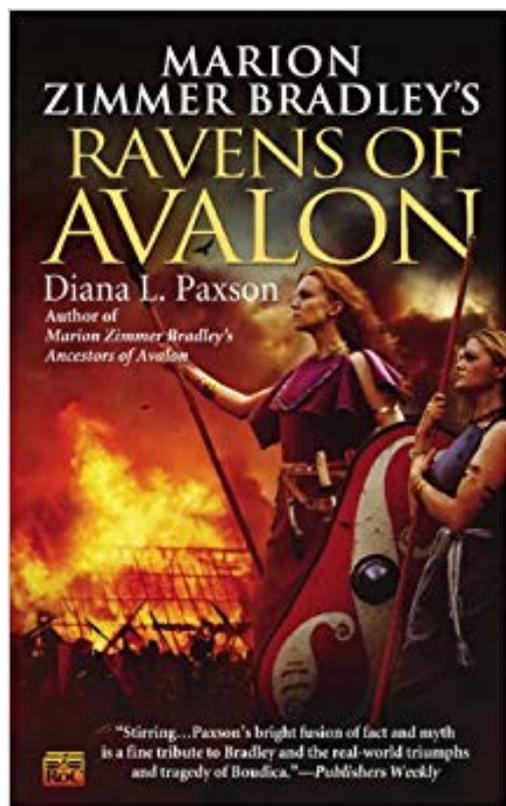


## Marion Zimmer Bradley's Ravens of Avalon by Diana L. Paxson



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Epic in its sweep and peopled by the remarkable women who have always inhabited Avalon, *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Ravens of Avalon* expands the legendary saga that has enchanted millions of readers over the years and is sure to please Bradley's loyal readership and anyone who loves wonderfully told stories of history, myth, and fantasy.



## Reviews of the Marion Zimmer Bradley's Ravens of Avalon by Diana L. Paxson

Kerahuginn

"The Ravens of Avalon" by Diana L. Paxson is a sweeping blend of legend, history, and magic of the Roman conquest of Britannia. The story expands on Marion Zimmer Bradley's Avalon series. The story is told from the perspective of two women. Liannon is a serene and powerful priestess trained on the isle of Mona. Boudica is a strong-willed and defiant Celtic princess sent to the isle of Mona to learn the ways of the Druids. The story spans almost two decades from when Emperor Claudius invades Britannia in 43 AD to 60 AD when Boudica unites the Celtic kingdoms to rebel against the

Roman Empire. After Rome's Invasion in 43 AD, Lliannon becomes entangled in the rebellion led by Caratacus. In contrast, Boudica marries the Iceni King Prasutagos and lives in relative peace as a wife and mother under Roman rule. But when King Prasutagos dies, the Romans brutalize Boudica and her daughters. In rage, Queen Boudica unites the Britons and rebels against the Romans. Lliannon and Boudica again reunite in a heart-breaking but poignant ending.

Diana Paxson skillfully weaves the historical and mystical aspects that has become expected of the Avalon series. She captures the mysticism of the war goddess Morrigan to explain Boudica's brutality and rage as she battles the Romans to expel them from her beloved homeland. Both the loving and hateful aspects of Boudica are explored as Lliannon helps her find balance. I highly recommend this book to readers who love historical fantasy and the Avalon series.

Ausstan

I bought this book thinking it was the same caliber as the others, but I was disappointed to discover that the only match for "Ravens" is "Priestess". I read it, but I cannot guarantee that I will keep it.

I'm not entirely sure that Diana re-read "Forest House" (or any of the other books of the series) because there are a few discrepancies. I don't mind the fact that the priestesses regularly go to Avalon for initiation rituals, despite the fact that Caillean is the first of the priesthood to ever discover Avalon (as seen in "Forest House"). What *really* bugs me though, is the free use of magic at the beginning of the book. Not only are the neophytes allowed to use magic randomly (despite the fact that in Marion's books, neophytes are the "chop wood, carry water" sort, like in real life), but the Druids use magic like they're Sith Lords! (Am I the only one who had flashes of Darth Vader when Helve and Lugovalos froze throats?!)

I was going to give 3.5 stars, but after writing this, I've changed my mind. Half a star off for using Avalon too early and another whole star for the unrestrained and uncalled for use of magic. Three stars...and beware of the Dark Side!

Varshav

I agree with the reviewer who says the writing is flat...I simply don't find any characters to care about. The interior monologues are perfunctory, and we don't have a sense of anyone's deep spiritual life or galvanizing, life-changing moments. There are no goose-bump passages -- when any person, place or thing flickers alive for a brief moment, it's due to transference and memories from the earlier books. (Even the sex scenes are pale and lifeless.) Passionate as I am about this series, I couldn't not buy the book -- how I wanted to (once again) care about the land and its energies and the keepers of the ancient traditions. The previous books, which I typically stayed up all night to read, were grounded in the land itself as well as the bodies, minds and spirits of the brave women who defended it...Bradley created a seamless fictional world that stands right up there with Narnia and Middle Earth. All the seams show on this book...reading it felt like paddling the boat in circles seeking admission to Avalon, but finding nothing but echoes, mist and shadows. I had to make myself finish this.

Gabar

One of the least sensational and most plausible takes on "The Killer Queen of the Iceni", a woman who came close to defeating the Roman conquerors of her country. Takes the time to explore Boudicca before her marriage, loss, and rebellion.

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