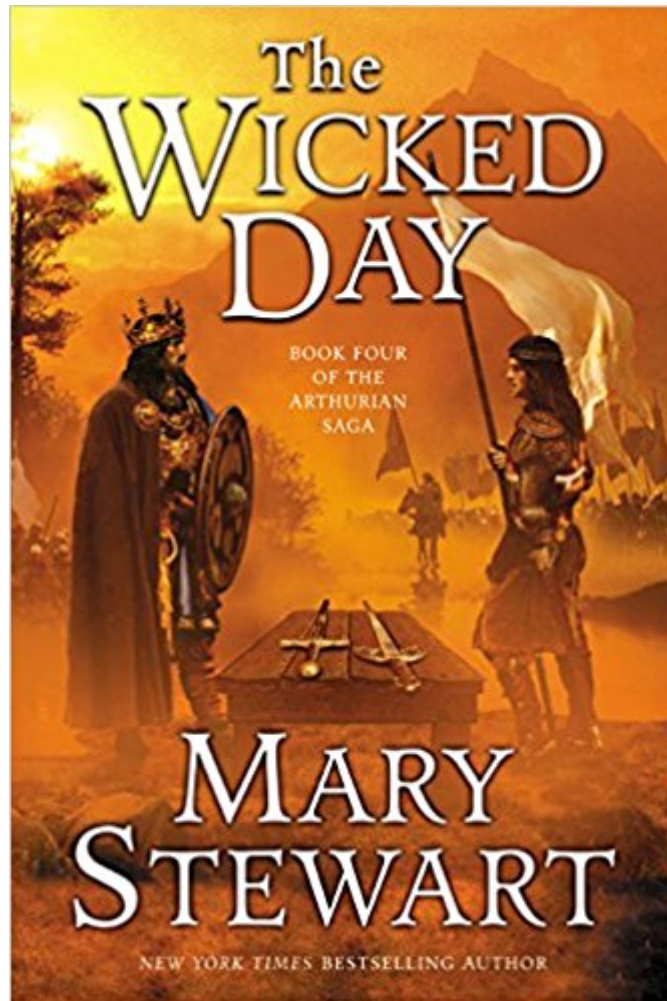


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The Wicked Day (The Arthurian Saga, Book 4)



Synopsis

Born of an incestuous relationship between King Arthur and his half sister, the evil sorceress Morgause, the bastard Mordred is reared in secrecy. Called to Camelot by events he cannot deny, Mordred becomes Arthur's most trusted counselor -- a fateful act that leads to the "wicked day of destiny" when father and son must face each other in battle.

Book Information

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Series: The Merlin Series (Book 4)

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (55 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

After having read Mary Stewart's Merlin trilogy, I was rather reluctant to read this book. Having pre-conceived ideas of Mordred's evil character, I didn't want to destroy the 'feel-good' warmth that I had at the end of the trilogy. But, having started Stewart's journey, I just felt I had to finish it, even though I knew it would not be a happy ending. How wrong I was!!!! This book threw all my expectations of doom and gloom out the window, and impossible as it may seem ... I actually ended up feeling good even if the end was rather tragic. It is extremely refreshing to see Mordred put in an entirely different light - a courageous, strong-willed and honest man, instead of the evil, greedy and conniving son in other more common versions. Unfortunately, in this book, it was circumstances and misunderstandings that went against him. The best part was - it was totally believable!!!! If you only want to know 1 version of Mordred's story, then this should be it.

Mordred, King Arthur's illegitimate son and nephew, has often been portrayed as a traitor who kills

Arthur and causes the downfall of Arthur's kingdom. In *The Wicked Day*, her fourth volume on the King Arthur myth, Mary Stewart challenges readers to reconsider the character of Mordred and his role in Arthur's demise. She traces the protagonist's ill-fated life from his beginnings as an orphan raised by fisher folk, to his rise to power as Arthur's trusted counsellor and regent and finally to the choices and circumstances that bring about the "wicked day" of destiny. The strength of the book lies in Stewart's depiction of Mordred as an intelligent and loyal person unable to escape his fate. After he discovers his identity, Mordred learns of Merlin's prophecy that he will one day become Arthur's bane. Queen Morgause, Mordred's mother and Arthur's enemy, endeavors to recruit her son to oppose Arthur. Nevertheless, Mordred vows to fight fate and the gods and earns the trust of his father. Only Mordred's ambition for a queen and a kingdom brings him to the brink of catastrophe where his choices mean the end or fulfilment of all his hopes and dreams. While readers will enjoy *The Wicked Day* by itself, I suggest reading Stewart's prior Arthurian novels first to appreciate established characters such as the wise yet weary Arthur and the devious Queen Morgause. Moreover, the other books will also show readers the deep-rooted seed of the Arthurian tragedy beginning with Mordred's parentage and bearing fruit in Morgause's family and Mordred's life. Finally, readers could also compare Stewart's Mordred with her books' other heroes such as the young Merlin in *The Crystal Cave* and Arthur himself in *The Hollow Hills*.

Often, when a fourth book is written after a successful trilogy, it tends to suffer in comparison to the originals. (see Ursula La Guin's *Tehanu* as a primary example of this) This book clearly avoids this syndrome and succeeds greatly as an alternative take on the story of Mordred. Just as the Merlin trilogy portrayed Merlin in a light not really seen elsewhere, Mary Stewart's take on Mordred comes at this normally-reviled character from an unexpectedly sympathetic point of view and succeeds on essentially every note. Just like other reviewers, I'd strongly recommend reading the Merlin trilogy first, but as soon as you've devoured those, tear into this one. You won't regret it.

I've read the Trilogy as well as the *Book of Mordred* and I think that "*The Wicked Day*" does not provide as much detail as the Trilogy, that's why it makes it seem a bit vague here and there. It's great how sometimes it leaves the reader wondering and wanting to know more but either the facts are revealed at the end of the chapter or it's not revealed at all (or maybe I'm not getting it =P). For instance, is Merlin still narrating the story? I know Merlin's disappearance or "death" if you'd like to call it, is mysterious so I wonder how he ends in Stewart's series... Mordred's search for Merlin and found him absent (especially at his hometown) can't really account for his end...oh well, just

something to leave you thinking =). However, one thing that it seems to consist more of, than the Trilogy is that it's filled with more intensity and the unexpected... I mean, when you read certain chapters and then finish it, I guarantee you'd be thinking to yourself 'wow, he/she actually did it!' or 'it was him/her all the time!?!' That's what I like in a story, it "strikes" the reader and gives you that surprised feeling! I'd also like to add to this review that the Trilogy was an impressive piece of work which gives an excellent description of Merlin's youth to adulthood as well as Arthur's. It's good how Stewart doesn't neglect to mention the Legends at the end to avoid confusion. Overall, brilliant stuff... just brilliant!! I highly recommend them all!

Mary Stewart completes her series of books on the King Arthur legend with this life-story of the knight who killed him, his son Mordred. She convincingly creates a redeeming psychological profile of the killer, rather than letting him be a cardboard villain. The tale also features portraits of Mordred's half-brothers, Gawain, Gareth, Agravaine, and Gaheris. As always, Stewart excels at exposition, with absorbing details of the medieval British countryside and daily life

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