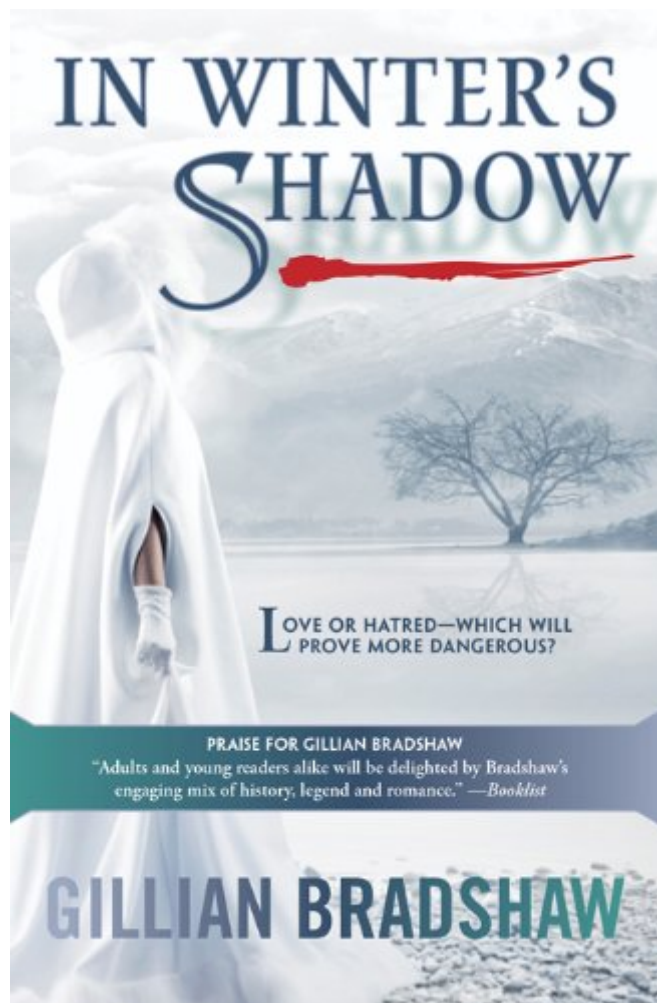


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# In Winter's Shadow (Down The Long Wind Book 3)



## Synopsis

Praise for Gillian Bradshaw: "A welcome new light on the horizon of popular Arthurian legend." Book list Vows broken. . . Friendships betrayed. . . The fate of heroes finally revealed. . . As powerful enemies attack the throne from inside the kingdom, Arthur, his queen, and his greatest warrior Gwalchmai will be put to the ultimate test. Never faltering in her loyalty to the king, Gwynhwyfar has stood at Arthur's side through rebellion and war. But one desperate decision could cost her all they've built. With the kingdom crumbling around them, following the Queen's heart could be the greatest threat of all. ..Praise for Bradshaw's Hawk of May series "Compelling ... splendid ... vibrant ... exhilarating ... a novel that seduces us into accepting sorcery and sanctity in King Arthur's England." New York Times Book Review "Will appeal to those who have enjoyed Tolkien's works." Library Journal What readers are saying: "One of the most emotionally compelling novel retellings of this classic story." "If you like this legend-this is a must read. This collection will never leave my bookshelf!" "The author has a gift for creating ... beautiful, heart-stirring prose."

## Book Information

File Size: 980 KB

Print Length: 423 pages

Publisher: Sourcebooks Landmark (October 1, 2011)

Publication Date: October 1, 2011

Sold by: Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B005V2AJJ4

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #197,494 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #104

inÂ Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Arthurian #350 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle

eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Fantasy #693 inÂ Books > Science Fiction &

Fantasy > Fantasy > Myths & Legends

## Customer Reviews

This was an amazing take on the Arthurian legend. The language was beautiful and flowed perfectly. While I found myself wishing at first the story was written in someone other than Guenevere's voice, the character soon won me over and I found myself unable to put the book down.

Another ripper

This book is very interesting and carries the readers interest throughout. The story is very compelling and it is hard to put down.

It has been almost 25 years since I picked up the second book in this series and must say that I enjoyed it more this time round. Gillian Bradshaw has taken the ages old tale of Arthur and his knights and added a new dimension, one which happily combines history and fantasy very well. In this tale the story is taken from the point of view of a farmer turned servant, Rhys. The adventures, political intrigue and mystical confrontations are handled with skill. Gillian Bradshaw decidedly shows her ability to handle such a story with skill and a refreshing outlook. Anyone reading this and the other books in the series will not be disappointed.

3.5 stars, Originally posted at Fantasy Literature. In *Winter's Shadow* is the final book in Gillian Bradshaw's *DOWN THE LONG WIND* trilogy, an elegantly written historical fantasy about King Arthur that's inspired by the Welsh legends. While the first two books, *Hawk of May* and *Kingdom of Summer*, have focused on Gwalchmai (Sir Gawain), this last novel is written from Gwynhwyfar's perspective. You certainly don't need to read the previous books to fully appreciate *Winter's Shadow*, but if you're a fan of the time period or the legends, you'll probably want to read *Hawk of May* and *Kingdom of Summer* at some point. They are lovely historical stories. In *Winter's Shadow*, Gwynhwyfar gives us some of the history of the Roman Empire and its relationship to Britain. She tells of how when Rome left, the petty kings of Britain squabbled amongst themselves and were in danger of being overrun by the Saxons until Arthur declared himself emperor and forced them to unite. She also gives some of her own backstory: how she hates women's work, prefers to study, and was her father's pet. She spends her days working tirelessly to advance Arthur's kingdom while he's away on campaign. She runs her household, manages supplies for Arthur and his soldiers, and extracts taxes from the petty kings and the church. It is hard to deal with a war-torn

country, plotting kings, and resentful clergy. Gwynhwyfar desperately wants a child who will be Arthur's heir. So far she has miscarried the children she's conceived. She fears that Arthur will divorce her, but he refuses. She is jealous of Medraut, Arthur's bastard son whose mother was the evil Morgawse. Medraut's presence at Camelot reminds Gwynhwyfar of her barrenness. It frustrates her that Arthur has a son out of that hateful relationship with his stepsister, but can't get one out of love with Gwynhwyfar. Medraut is still disrupting the unity of Arthur's band and Morgawse haunts Arthur and Gwynhwyfar's relationship. Thus, Morgawse, even though she's dead, still threatens to bring Arthur and all of Britain down. All of this is a lot of stress for Gwynhwyfar, which explains why she makes a couple of REALLY BIG mistakes, and why we, the readers, feel empathetic toward her even as we realize she's being REALLY STUPID. The consequences of Gwynhwyfar's sins are severe and instead of making Arthur's reign more secure, she ends up destroying everything. Though the story is slow and repetitive at first, *Winter's Shadow* eventually takes off and becomes quite compelling. Gwynhwyfar faces several moral dilemmas that are just as relevant today as they were back then. Is murder ever justifiable? What about adultery? When our leaders fail to act, when is it okay to take matters into our own hands? *Winter's Shadow* is tragic and painful. It's a disaster story. It's the story about how well-meaning people can royally screw things up. It's about the end of personal relationships and the end of an empire. Gillian Bradshaw succeeds in making both seem equally tragic. Once again, I listened to Nicole Quinn's narration of the audio version. She has such a beautiful voice and I especially liked her in this book because it's told from a woman's perspective.

AudioBook Review Stars: Overall: 4 Narration: 5 Story: 4 Carrying the story forward, the story is now told by Gwynhwyfar or Guinevere as more commonly known. Bradshaw has managed to bring us to the end of days for Camelot, with the final battles, the death of Mordred, Gwalchmai's death and her own roles and guilt for her part. Again managing to re-invent the story of King Arthur using Bretonized forms of the names and presenting unique perspectives on the events, with points of view that were left untold or unimagined in the originals, Bradshaw has managed to neatly pull all of the threads together and wrap this series with a conclusion that is both refreshing and satisfying. What stands out prominently for me is Bradshaw's ability to present her characters in a way that both feels unique yet holds true to their own internal dialogue as they explain, tell and share their parts of the story. From Gwalchmai's guilt about his lost love, to

the very well-reasoned and completely real sense of "what is right"™ that Gwenhwyfar presents as she wraps up the series, this reads as if the characters are real and palpable, giving readers the ability to commiserate, empathize, learn from and enjoy each person as they appear. Narration is again provided by Nicole Quinn who manages to present the arcane and archaic place and character names with a smoothness that never falters. That is a quality of major importance, as the names and places are often tongue twisters, and the flow of the story would be greatly impacted if the pronunciation faltered or varies. Additionally, her narration of the many moods of Gwenhwyfar, and the addition of simple adjustments in accent, tone and pace as she presented the other characters not only were easy to distinguish, but added to the enjoyment and impact of the story. Touches of Wales and Scotland, as well as a bit of the "Northern"™ accent all add to the story, and her seamless transitions in this well-produced performance are a wonderful addition. I received an AudioBook copy of the title via AudioBook Jukebox for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility

I first read the Gwalchmai trilogy when it came out in paperback--the first time--and I wanted it for my Kindle so I could read it again without fetching down the hardcovers from a high shelf. And then I couldn't stop reading. I have to admit, both times I have read this book, I have hated Gwenhwyfar by the time I was halfway through. And loved and respected her by the book's ending. She makes the downfall of Camelot something more than passion indulged, a tragedy of the unavoidable rather than a betrayal. And I am so very, very glad that Gwalchmai was able to know his son. He deserved it. It's just sad that there's no way the Arthurian story ever gets a happily ever after ending. (Yes, I cried. Again.)

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