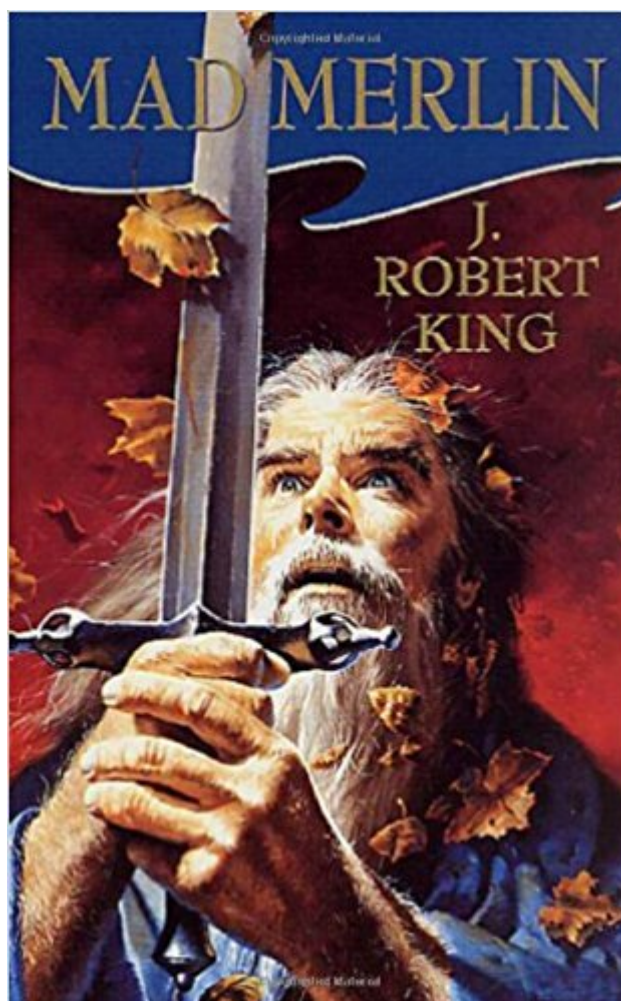


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# Mad Merlin



## Synopsis

We first see Merlin as a madman alleged to be cursed with the gift of prophecy. He is sent for by Uther Pendragon, who desires his supernatural counsel, thus setting in motion the legend of King Arthur. This is Merlin's story, a tale that unlocks the secrets of the magician's past, and his pivotal role in the destiny of both men and gods. As the story unfolds, Merlin comes to understand his true self and embraces the inevitability of the fall of the gods and the end of magic in the realm of men.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A prolific author of game-related fiction (Blood Hostages, etc.) gives a distinctive and often agreeable spin to the story of Camelot. Focusing his attention on Merlin rather than on the usual Arthur, King weaves his tale by combining bits of folklore and mythology with both sheer invention and historical fact. In this version (which begins before Arthur's birth), the wizard is actually the Roman god Jupiter--but, due to a curse, he can't remember who he is, and he can't tell reality from dreams. He knows, however, that there's a boy (Arthur) not yet born who can cure him. So Merlin arranges Arthur's conception and whisks him off to a distant kingdom. As Arthur grows into a man, Merlin does, indeed, regain his memory; along the way, the boy learns the art of kingship and prepares to claim his rightful place as the ruler of Britain. Much fighting--against King Lot, the Saxons, Wotan and nearly the whole Germanic pantheon--ensues. King's unconventional take will not please fans of more conservative Arthurian tales. Action fans, on the other hand, will thrill to his frequent and well-told accounts of battles, both material and magical. Creative plot twists abound--Guinevere, for example, turns out to be one of the Tuatha De Danaan, as well as Arthur's

footholder (meaning their marriage must remain chaste). Other characters with a distinctive flavor round out the story. This novel will appeal to those who like their Arthurian tales on the zany side. (July) Copyright 2000 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

From his involvement in the rise of Uther Pendragon and the birth of Arthur to the height of Camelot's power, the wizard Merlin labors under the curse of his destiny even as he seeks the truth of his identity. King's first nongaming fantasy relates the familiar tale of King Arthur as a background to his exploration of the enigmatic personality of Merlin. Drawing on ancient Norse, Celtic, and Roman myths, King crafts an unusual blend of history and legend that should appeal to fans of the Arthurian cycle. For most fantasy collections. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Well the title really says it all - as you will see right from the first pages of this book. A fascinating look at who Merlin may have really been, the origins of Excalibur (according to Merlin) and the boy who would heal Merlin, wield the sword and unite a great deal more than Briton. It's a fascinating look at the journey into manhood of Arthur and his companions, the deals made to keep him safe and hidden until it was time as well as the pact between this world and that of the Fae held in the person of Guinevere. It is a book that can't really be explained - simply read and then re-read and possibly re-read again just to make sure that you didn't miss anything in this detail rich wild ride of a novel.

As a fan of arthurian legend, you will find yourself humming in amusement to the hidden pearls of humor in this book. Mad Merlin is like reading through the looking glass and out the rabbit hole within the labyrinth of Merlin's mind>>>>you will not be disappointed, in fact this story has proved to be more enjoyable than I originally anticipated. Poor Ulfius.

A fantastic look at Merlin and Arthurian mythology altogether that mixes other mythologies into the work and a bit of humor as well.

Awesome book, good shipping:)

It's a good book but it was missing the first 10 pages. Wish I could of gotten a better copy for what I paid

As the child of someone who studied the King Arthur in great depth, I have been fascinated with Arthur, Merlin, and the whole lot. It is a story told and retold throughout time, and is rarely looked upon with such a fresh set of eyes. This is not the standard fare for an Arthurian Mythos; In fact, Mad Merlin is, in many ways, quite the departure. Fair enough. There are far more views of the legends than are adequately represented in the thousands of fiction stories. Gone is the Merlin who was the quiet orchestrator, the man with a plan who pulled the strings behind it all. In his place, we find an endearing and often humorous, yet tragic wizard. His memories are wracked by delusion, a madness to which he believes Arthur to be the cure. Merlin is haunted by delusions so intense he cannot separate them from reality, which leaves his memory in a fragile status. Had he really been there? Did he dream the past? Was he dreaming of his salvation, or were his visions true? Woven into his madness are gods and the God-Killing sword Excalibur, and the boy that would grow to save him. Through his visions, he orchestrates the birth of Arthur, and he and Ulfius train him so that he may one day become King. Ulfius is a practical man, while Arthur tends to follow "Grandfather" Merlin with awe, latching onto his delusions and fantasies all the while. The first half of the book deals with Arthur's birth through the beginning of his reign, as naysayers challenge the right of a sword-puller to claim the throne. It also deals with the recovery of Merlin's sanity, and his final memories--Both of his origin, and of Excalibur. The second half deals with the aftermath and the forging of the great Kingdom. J. Robert King has taken some brave (And sometimes brilliant) ventures out into left field where the mythology is concerned. He involves Deities of many Pantheons in one large cosmology, where a God is only strong as long as people believe. The Norse God of mischief plagues Merlin through his madness, and Wotan seeks Excalibur. Jupiter and the Roman Mythology are also present as is the Christian God (Often referred to as the Tetragrammaton by fearful pagans). Excalibur and Avalon take their place in this giant mythos, each afforded decent explanation. While I do admire this departure, it was both confusing and contradictory at points. Sometimes I think King got lost too deep in this subplot, when the characters could have used some more attention. It is a minor quibble, however, as the large part of this mythos was pulled off quite marvelously. King's style is quite intriguing. Even when I was uncertain about this book, something in the first few pages drew me in, and kept me reading. Seeing what twists he had in store was quite the treat. Some people will not be pleased by this book. Some people only want to see the story told in variations on one of the many themes it has been presented in. Others will enjoy the book for what it is--A fun read with interesting variations on an old theme, not a blasphemous slur of something Holy. While I would have liked to see more of the scheming Merlin we know from Malory, the mad mage was quite the enthralling character (He could

have done with a little Machiavelli for his madness, though). All in all, an entertaining read. I give it 4 1/2 stars, with the singular caveat that you may not like this book if you cannot look past the difference in the equation. If you love fantasy and unique storytelling, you'll be hard pressed to be disappointed in this book

Stories about King Arthur and the other people of the legend can be looked at as being similar to the same situation that is being addressed in the excellent TV show "Smallville". We know that Clark is fated to become Superman. We know that he and Luthor will become enemies. We know that Kryptonite will kill him, he'll have certain powers as an adult and that he will move to Metropolis and... Yet the delight in this show is its take on how Clark gets there. The stories the show tells are good on their own, but they hang together because of what we know will be. In other words, we don't really worry about why or how Clark is getting these powers because we know that he is supposed to. The references placed in the show to "their" future are an extra treat. We accept this interpretation of that future will come to be because we already know what that future is and the adventure is filling in the details and seeing how it all fits into what one day will "be". This story has to be looked at in the same vein. There are a lot of gods, goddesses, Celtic and Norse mythology and even some T. H. White thrown into this mix, all hung on the framework of what we "know" of Arthur. We know there's going to be a Mordred and that Morgan will bring him into being from her hate for Arthur because of what Uther and Merlin did. The story doesn't have to explain her motivation for that hate more than that because we know that hate exists. It is not a "classic" Arthur, but it fits within the framework. Jack Whyte's wonderful "Eagles Brood" series or Godwin's superb "Firelord" aren't "classic" either, but they do fit within the history and events of Arthur as we know them. Does the retelling under inspection remain true to the legend even if the details vary? As long as a story does this, it is OK to look at the legend through a different lens. This King does, and his take is marvelous. The other reviews talk a bit how he does this, but I will just recommend this book without reservation.

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