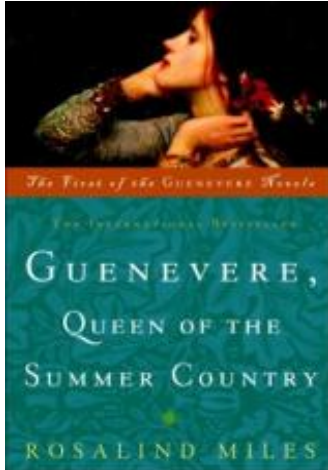

Guenevere, Queen of the Summer Country (Guenevere Novels)

by Rosalind Miles



About the Book

Last in a line of proud queens elected to rule the fertile lands of the West, true owner of the legendary Round Table, guardian of the Great Goddess herself . . . a woman whose story has never been told -- until now.

Raised in the tranquil beauty of the Summer Country, Princess Guenevere has led a charmed and contented life -- until the sudden, violent death of her mother, Queen Maire, leaves the Summer Country teetering on the brink of anarchy. Only the miraculous arrival of Arthur, heir to the Pendragon dynasty, allows Guenevere to claim her mother's throne. Smitten by the bold, sensuous princess, Arthur offers to marry her and unite their territories, allowing her to continue to reign in her own right. Their love match creates the largest and most powerful kingdom in the Isles. Yet even the glories of Camelot are not safe from the shadows of evil and revenge. Arthur is reunited with his long-lost half-sisters, Morgause and Morgan, princesses torn from their mother and their ancestral right by Arthur's father, the brutal and unscrupulous King Uther. Both daughters will avenge their suffering, but it is Morgan who strikes the deadliest blows, using her enchantments to destroy all Guenevere holds dear and to force Arthur to betray his Queen.

In the chaos that follows, Arthur dispatches a new knight to Guenevere, the young French prince Lancelot, never knowing that Lancelot's passion for the Queen, and hers for him, may be the love that spells ruin for Camelot.

Discussion Guide

1. When Arthur comes to raise Guenevere to the Stone, she immediately accepts him as her champion, although she has never met him before, and has other knights who would champion her. Is she too hasty? Is there any reason she should be wary of his intentions? Can you think of a situation in current events that has echoes of this scene?
2. The Lady of the Lake tells Guenevere, "Those who follow the Goddess can always enter the dream. May you awake

from yours, and become that which you have dreamed." What is Guenevere's dream, and why does the Lady think she should awake from it? What has Guenevere dreamed that she should become? How does King Arthur and their impending marriage figure into the dream?

3. Why is Merlin so eager for Guenevere and Arthur to be married at Caerleon? Guenevere insists on her right to be married from Camelot, the center of her kingdom and of the Goddess-worship. What is Merlin's ulterior motive, and what does this say about his relationship with Guenevere, and Arthur?

4. Why does Queen Morgause send her sons to be King Arthur's knights? Is King Pellinore right to fear them when he tells Guenevere that "Blood will have blood. This is the vengeance no man can refuse?" Or is Morgause's gift of her sons meant to heal the rift between Queen Igraine's daughters and King Uther's son?

5. It was not uncommon for kings to send their daughters to convents in order to avoid paying their dowries, or, as with King Uther, to lock them away so they could not be a threat to their rule. Women like Morgan formed "a sisterhood within a sisterhood" where they practiced black magic and made the kings "pay for speaking up against the Mother-right." All over the world right now, women are treated in a similar manner, although they don't have black magic at their disposal. What methods, if any, do women have to exact revenge today?

6. Lancelot tells Guenevere that "You are the woman of the dream; you are the love I have longed for all my life. But you are married; you are the wife of the King! Oh lady, what does it mean?" What does it mean that the Mother has brought them together despite the fact that Guenevere is married? Is it right for her to follow the time-honored tradition of taking a new champion, as her mother did? Would she behave differently in the 21st century?

7. Why does Guenevere reconcile with Arthur? She says that: "Morgan could not have taken you from me if our love had been strong. I failed you then." Is she right to reproach herself? When Arthur says "In your country, queens may change their consorts when they need a better man. I will do whatever you want that will make you happy" should she have jumped at the chance to leave him and be with Lancelot?

8. Can you think of a present-day marriage with similarities to Guenevere and Arthur's? Is the Clintons' marriage at all relevant? What about JFK and Jackie Kennedy's?

9. How are we meant to view Merlin? Is he Guenevere's ally or enemy? Is his relationship with Arthur a positive influence or a negative one?

Author Bio

Rosalind Miles is the author of the bestselling Guenevere trilogy, as well as the Tristan and Isolde trilogy and **I, Elizabeth**. A well-known and critically acclaimed novelist, essayist, and broadcaster, she lives in Kent, England.

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