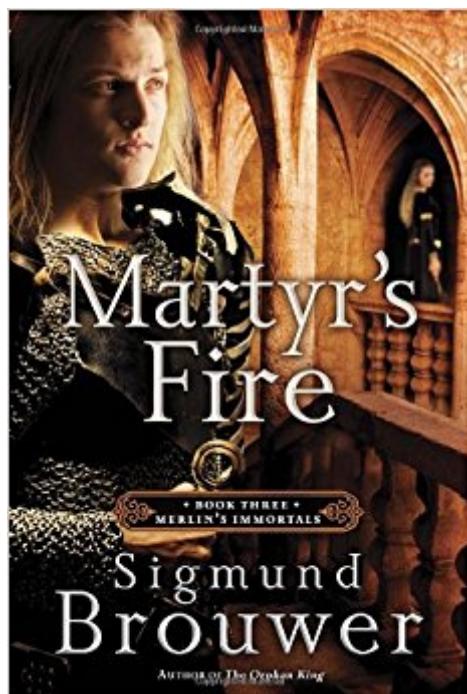


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Martyr's Fire: Book 3 In The Merlin's Immortals Series



Synopsis

Will this dangerous quest lead the outcast Orphan King toward an ancient secret—or to certain destruction? Posing as a beggar, Thomas escapes Magnus after fifteen men, who are calling themselves the Priests of the Holy Grail, arrive and take control of the castle through wondrous acts and apparent miracles. With the help of his longtime friend Gervaise, Thomas sets out on a journey that leads him to the ancient Holy Land. Unaware that Katherine and Hawkwood are watching over him, Thomas is tested in his beliefs and comes face to face with the ancient power that the Merlins and Druids have long been searching for. Enter the world of Merlin's Immortals, where ancient secrets and evil conspiracies take you on a breathless adventure of discovery, intrigue, and hidden knowledge.

Book Information

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Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

With more than three million books in print, SIGMUND BROUWER is the best-selling author of dozens of popular books for children and adults. Over the last two decades, his Rock and Roll Literacy presentation has inspired students and teachers at schools all across North America. Sigmund is married to songwriter and recording artist Cindy Morgan. The couple and their two daughters divide their time between Red Deer, Alberta, and Nashville, Tennessee.

ONEThe man that Isabelle faced was wealthy. And handsome, except for the stub where his left ear had been, now half-covered by hair. She could tell by the shift of his shoulders and the intensity of his gaze that he was enthralled by her, as indeed were nearly all men. Yet he was not Thomas. She spent hours dreaming that one day, Thomas, too, would be enthralled. The man before her now had been on his horse, crossing a pasture that overlooked the town of York, clustered behind the high stone walls that protected it. With occasional clouds throwing brief shadows as they crossed overhead, she'd waited in sunshine, knowing that this was along his regular path to York from hunting in the moors. She'd been sitting on a blanket like a woman of leisure, dressed in fine silks, a basket beside her. He was tall and slim, wearing the clothes of a nobleman.

He'd dismounted and looked around, as if wondering where her servants might be. She had risen from the blanket and now lifted the basket with food. "If you've been riding long," she purred, "you must be hungry. And I've been waiting for you." She set the basket on the ground and leaned down to lift out a piece of thick buttered bread and pieces of rich cheese. As she expected, he took it without hesitation. "You know who I am, then?" "Of course," she answered. He smiled with pride. He was Michael of York, the son of the earl who had enlisted Thomas's army to prevail against the Scots not so long ago. As he tore off a chunk of bread and stuffed it into his mouth, he looked around again. Not with the eye of a man wary of a trap, but with the sharp glance of a predator. She was in front of him and so alone. And he was a rich and powerful man, accustomed to being offered what he wanted—or to taking it whether it was offered or not. Obvious on her neck was jewelry that was worth a year's wages for a working man. If he had the heart of a thief, and she knew he did, his mind would have been on her apparent helplessness. Since no noblewoman should be alone in a field because the dangers were too great, the apparent helplessness should have made him suspicious. But men were fools. "Mead?" she asked, holding up a chalice. He took it without a word, as if he were entitled to it. He rammed some cheese into his mouth first, then washed it down with the honey wine. "You've been waiting for me," Michael said, with a grin that came too close to a leer. "With a message from those who watched you cut off your own ear." His smile froze, just for an instant. Then he laughed. "From anyone but a lady as lovely as yourself, I would take that accusation as an insult. And I would answer it accordingly." "It is a dangerous accusation," she agreed. "If your father ever had proof that you severed your own ear to force him to attack Magnus, you would be thrown in prison and disinherited." "You are very alone

here. He gestured at the open pasture. "You would be wise not to anger me." He placed his right hand on the hilt of his knife, hanging from a sheath on a gold-studded belt. "And you would be wise to listen to me," she said. "After all, your father already questions your loyalty, does he not? After the trial by ordeal, did he not leave Magnus believing that Thomas is an ally and that you had deceived him?" Michael's face pinched. He was beginning to suspect a trap. But his next words suggested that he believed the trap came from the earl. "I will speak to you as I have repeatedly spoken to my father: I do not know the men who attacked me and cut off my ear. All I know is that I was given a message to deliver and told it was from Thomas. Obviously, those who cut off my ear were the ones deceitful about Thomas. Not me. Go back to my father and tell him this." "Your father did not send me," she said. She tossed him a heavy ring. "Look closely at the symbol. Those of the symbol are the ones who sent me." He caught it in his left hand and studied it. He glanced at her and closed his fist around the ring. He kept his right hand on the handle of his knife. "I don't believe you." His words were certain enough, but not the tone. "Let me repeat what you were told by those of the symbol. You were promised that if you delivered a letter to your father, along with your ear, pretending it was a letter from Thomas, that your father would go to war and take the castle of Magnus. And that Magnus would be yours." Isabelle knew this was truth. She had been hidden behind trees, watching the discussion, seeing greed cross this man's face as he calculated what small price it would cost for him to obtain a kingdom. His deception and his ear. "Lies," he said, smiling. "The man who made you that promise," she said, "was my father. Richard Mewburn, who ruled Magnus until Thomas took it from him." She watched his smile fade as he thought through the implications. This was not something that a person could guess. It was proof to him that she knew for certain. And if she knew of that secret conversation, then she likely knew much more. Michael lifted his hand away from his knife. "Please tell Lord Mewburn that I had no intention of harming you." "Of course not," she said. "We are just having a conversation. So tell me. If my father were to deliver York to you, would you, in return, help him secure Magnus?" "York cannot be mine while my father is the earl," he answered. It was an oblique answer. Nothing in it openly suggested disloyalty. Yet it was an invitation to continue. "A man who is willing to cut off his own ear is a man hungry for power," Isabelle said. "This time, however, what we ask of you will be far less painful." Michael's face reflected obvious relief before once again contorting into dismay.

“But I was already promised that Magnus would fall. It did not. The trial by ordeal that Thomas faced and survived.” “Nothing will be asked of you until Magnus falls,” Isabelle said. “But believe me, it will. Very soon.”

While I would rate the series overall as 5 stars, this book isn't quite as good as the first two. I think I wasn't the only reader left with the impression this was going to be the concluding book in the series. The bad news is, you aren't going to find out how it ends with this one - the good news is that there will be more of Thomas' adventures to read. I wish they would tell us when the next one is coming. I'm a little worried because Sigmund Brouwer once took 5 or 6 years to writing the concluding book in a series (The Last Disciple series). Sure hope it is coming sooner this time, but so far, no word.

Martyr's Fire by Sigmund Brouwer is the third book of a series about Merlin's Immortals. I haven't read the other two books that came before this, so I probably would have gotten more out of this one if I had read the others first. I should also add that I rarely read fiction. There's just so much non-fiction that interests me that I have no need to delve into the world of make-believe, as I find real life is pretty interesting. This book was still easy to read without having read the two proceeding novels. The characters were well developed and interesting. There is some magic in the plot, so some Christians and others who find "magic" the work of the devil might want to stay away from this series. Even though it's the use of science and diversion to make the pretense of magic, it's still reliance upon the belief in a dark power. I don't care either way, but some people might find it offensive to their beliefs. The book is recommended for those age 12 and up, and I think this holds true. There are battles but they aren't gory or gratuitous. There is also a love triangle in the book that while not unusual for tweens or teens, might also be off-putting to some. Overall, this book was a quick read and would hold the interest of a 12 to 15 year old reader. Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this book in exchange for completing a review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinion here is my own.

Martyr's Fire by Sigmund Brouwer is the third book in the Merlin's Immortals Series. (You can read my reviews of books one and two [here](#).) In this book, Thomas has control of the city/castle Magnus which is located in northern England but quickly loses it when the Druids arrive. Since he still doesn't think there is anyone he can trust, specifically Katherine and Hawkwood, he tries to figure out by himself what to do next...without being used by either the Druids or the Immortals. My main

criticism of this series is that there are too many mysteries. Thomas doesn't know who he is, why taking control of Magnus is important, who the Immortals are, etc. Finally, finally, at the end of this book, some answers are revealed. Honestly, all of the deception is wearying. It would be nice if Katherine and Hawkwood would be truthful with Thomas instead of trying to conceal as much as possible from him. Did I like this book? It was okay. Will I read the next one? I don't know. Do I recommend this series? Only if you like this period of time fictionalized beyond recognition. I want to thank WaterBrook Multnomah for my review copy of this book, but my opinions are my own.

I have read books 1 & 2 in Merlin's Mortals series. And to be honest Sigmund Brouwer is one of the only authors that I can or even care to read in this kind of genre. I think it's his way with weaving a story and making the words have action and belief. In book one we met the Orphan King and then book 2, The Fortress Mist, the Orphan King with the help of others in the kingdom is beginning to "come into his own." Now in Martyr's Fire, the third book, Thomas must remain in hiding but then 15 priests claiming to have the Holy Grail come and take over. Thomas disguises himself as a filthy beggar with eye patch and all! He must find out what is going on! Lady Katherine is one strong and feisty lady! and Thomas can't trust anyone except his faithful friend, Gervaise! The action! The lords and ladies! The castles! The mystery & intrigue! Oh! What! A! Story! I'm not sure that it is a "must!" for one to read the previous two books before reading this book but I strongly suggest reading the first two because then the relationships and all that is transpiring will not be too confusing for the reader! This read is labeled young adult but as an "older" adult I loved it and found it quite fascinating! *This book was provided for review by Waterbrook Press*

(Summary and My Rating) for "Martyr's Fire" by Sigmund Brouwer
BOOK SUMMARY: "Will this dangerous quest lead the outcast Orphan King toward an ancient secret--or to certain destruction? Posing as a beggar, Thomas escapes Magnus after fifteen men, who are calling themselves the Priests of the Holy Grail, arrive and take control of the castle through wondrous acts and apparent miracles. With the help of his longtime friend Gervaise, Thomas sets out on a journey that leads him to the ancient Holy Land. Unaware that Katherine and Hawkwood are watching over him, Thomas is tested in his beliefs and comes face to face with the ancient power that the Merlins and Druids have long been searching for. Enter the world of Merlin's Immortals, where ancient secrets and evil conspiracies take you on a breathless adventure of discovery, intrigue, and hidden knowledge."
MY RATING: Stars: 4/5
Pro's: Kept me on my toes! Exciting, interesting, entertaining.
Dramatic. Not confusing if you haven't read the other books in the series. Not as gory as the

title/cover may inflict upon your minds eye (of course, ever dependent on the difference between your and my version of the definition of "gory"). Con's: This book isn't the conclusion to the series, as some have thought. But the fourth book is out soon! SUMMED UP: Overall, I enjoyed the book. Recommend? Probably. I received this book for free from WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group for this review.

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