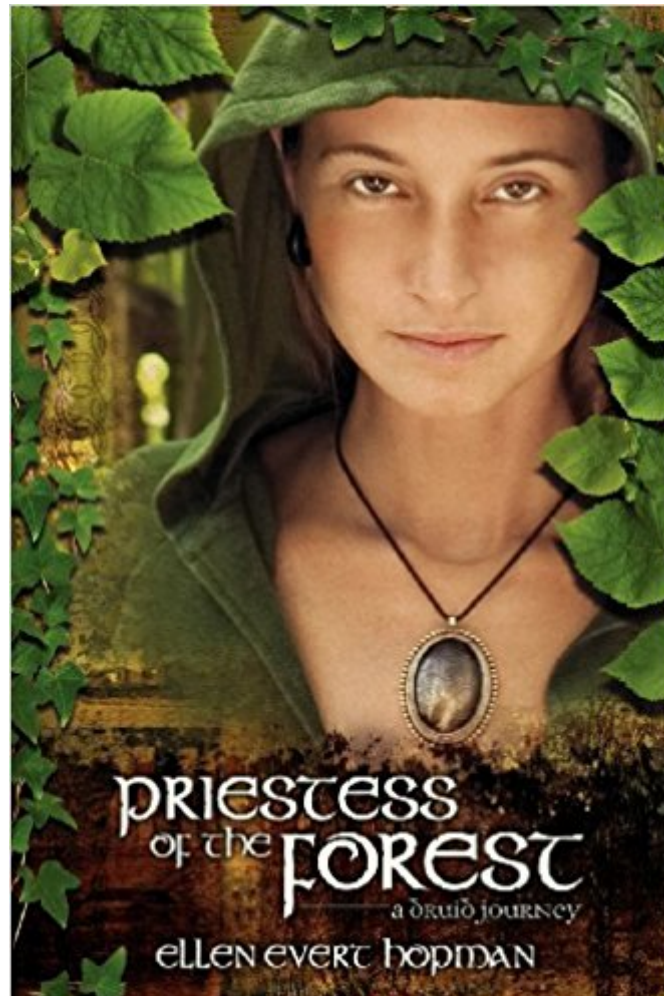




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Priestess Of The Forest: A Druid Journey



Synopsis

In the tradition of Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Mists of Avalon*, Ellen Evert Hopman weaves Druid history and spirituality into an engaging love story. This Bardic teaching tale is set in a fictional third-century Ireland when Christianity is sweeping across the Celtic Isles. During this time of crisis, love blooms between Ethne, a Druid healer, and her patient, a Fennid warrior. Their passionate affair suffers a tragic blow when Ethne is called upon to become the high queen. Told from the Druid perspective, Hopman recreates the daily life, magical practices, politics, and spiritual lives of the ancient Celts during this historic turning point. Druid holy days, rites, rituals, herbal lore, and more are brought to life in this Celtic fantasy—illuminating Druidic teachings and cultural wisdom.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This narrative is a beautiful glance back at pagan culture, Druidic practices and rituals, and daily Celtic life. It makes one yearn for the connection with the earth that we, in our modern day and age, seem to have lost. It reads easily and weaves Druidic teachings with a touching love story." -- Andrea Connell "Historical Novels Review"

Ellen Evert Hopman (Massachusetts) has contributed to several Pagan journals and is a popular author of Druidry-related titles. A former teacher at the Grey School of Wizardry, Hopman has been active in American Druidism since 1984. She is a member of the Grey Council of Mages and Sages, co-founder and former co-chief of the Order of the Whiteoak (Ord na Darach Gile), a master

herbalist, and a registered herbalist of the American Herbalists Guild. Visit her online at www.elleneverthopman.com or at <http://witchesandpagans.com/Herbalist-s-Path/Blogger/Listings/ellen-evert-hopman.html>. ã ã

I really liked this book. It is very informative about Druid practices and beliefs. I liked the characters and the story, too. That said, I'm giving it only 4 stars because I've been spoiled by Diana Gabaldon's (The Outlander Series) writing style. I wanted the kind of visceral experience of ancient Ireland that I get of 18th century Scotland from Diana's books. I wanted the smells of the bracken and oak in the forest, and the tang of people and animals living closely in the rath, the acrid smoke from the fires and how the smoke stings your eyes. I wanted to feel and smell the wool and leather on my skin. I wanted to experience the characters love for each other. I realize that this is entirely unfair to Ellen Evert Hopman. Her writing is good, just not as...juicy? as Diana's. Moving along from that, it DID keep my interest, not an easy thing to do these days. I admit that I start many books, but often lose interest when I spot inconsistencies, glaring anachronisms, or just bad writing. I identified strongly with the main character and learned a few things about Druid principles and practices. I also saw parallels to our current political/religious/environmental/economic issues. Overall a good, entertaining, thought provoking read. Looking forward to the next one in the series!

If ever you wanted to study Druid's or even understand the old teachings of respect for the land, trees and animals, and you wanted to see and read it in an everyday environment, with smatterings of the old ways, this is the book you should try first. It is a fictional story but that is where the fiction ends, the teachings of the Druid to their students are gentle, factual, and work 100% according to the environment that they are teaching in. It is honest, respectful information about the land we live on, and the nature that surrounds us and how it can teach us, heal us and feed us - if we work in harmony with it. I have deep respect for author and her writing, so much better than a text book that becomes dry and boring. The love story in the story is a bonus.

I am a practicing solitary witch and am attracted to stories of Gaels from England, Ireland, Scotland and perhaps France. I have been wanting to read these novels for some time now and was able to purchase the first one. I believe the author when she tells that these spirits were telling her their stories. Without revealing the ending, I can say that the end helped to release me from guilt of a past life. I was a druid or priestess during the Roman period, when they came in and an act I performed is what attached me to this guilt. I now understand what I did and now can feel free and move on in

my life. I will not examine the writing style for a novel of this nature is not focused on this, in my opinion. I feel it is a story the bards would tell and those of us that feel at home with this culture from long ago, will find healing and validation. I look forward to reading the next books and also her books of herbalism and such that I am attracted to. Blessings to those who read this review, may you find the words and ideas that will help you make a decision to read this novel.

I liked this book so much I bought the other two and liked them as well. These books helped me decide to pursue further Druid studies.

In "Priestess of the Forest: A Druidic Journey," author and druid Ellen Evert Hopman relates a bardic tale that alludes to the cycle that is life and trends that pass in and out of history. Hopman's message is one of environmental significance. She begs her readers to honor the earth and its gifts even if in doing so one goes against the popular viewpoint--be that religious or scientific. In pre-Christian Ireland, Ethne lives in the forest. A Druid healer, she enjoys a life that is one with nature. She revels with the pulse of the earth, learning from the seasons, the birds and other wildlife about the cycle her own life will inevitably take. As a healer, she is "on-call" for those who need her. Her routine changes dramatically when a young Fennidi warrior named Ruadh is brought to her for care by his companions. Almost fatally injured during a wild boar hunt, Ruadh requires extended care and remains in Ethne's forest house long after his companions have departed. As the winter's days lengthen towards spring, Ethne nurses Ruadh back to vigorous health and together they recognize within each other the other's soulmate. As change is inevitable, Ethne soon finds herself summonsed back by her elders to the civilization of the tribal king's court where the wisdom of the druids is challenged by the intrusion of Christian monks and priests hell bent on abolishing traditions and cultural beliefs that usurp the control over the people that they covet. Reluctantly, Ethne finds herself far from the nurturing comfort of her forest home; setting aside her personal desires, she is thrust into the political intrigues that govern the court and the survival of the Druids' council. Hopman's personal spiritualism rings true throughout this tale of Ethne and her Ruadh. The understanding that with the advent of Christianity, the druid teachings and way of life regarding living within the fellowship of the earth and Nature would be supplanted by a focus on the Church's agenda is cushioned by the knowledge that all things must pass and eventually, the wisdom of the druids would again see the light of a new dawn. Hopman liberally sprinkles her work with small albeit lovely doses of poetry, song and philosophy that are sure to appease the pantheist in all who seek the solace of the trees and the life of the forest Ethne so cherishes. However, I would not say that

Hopman's "Priestess of the Forest" has as much impact as Marion Zimmer Bradley's great classic "The Mists of Avalon." Indeed, both stories do focus on the increased influence of Christianity in post-Roman Britain. Bradley's tale is much more a character study, for indeed, her Morgaine shadows the good and bad in all of us in addition to relating some details of pagan culture. Hopman's main characters, Ethne, Ruadh, Crimthann and Gaine are not as nuanced as Bradley's Morgaine, Ygraine, Arthur, Taliesin and Viviane, but then again, Bradley's novel spans over 1000 pages and has the time to develop not only its people, but its time and place. At less than 400 pages, Hopman cannot even hope to compete, yet manages to convey the lifestyle and angst of the druids when faced with the onslaught of Christianity. She follows "Priestess" with two other stories, which, invariably will elaborate on themes of cycles and waiting. Bottom line? In "Priestess of the Forest: A Druid Journey," author Ellen Evert Hopman comments on her desire for mankind to return to the ways of the forest, respecting the earth and its mysteries while honoring each other as creations of the One. She leaves us with the symbolic "going back to the forest" where her main characters wait out the trend and await a renaissance of their personal spiritualism. Recommended, although Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* details this idea with much more passion and nuance. Diana Faillace Von Behren "reneofo"

This novel vastly exceeded my expectations. It is beautifully written, imaginative and compelling. I take off a star only because I'm a fan of complexity, and certain things are wrapped up too conveniently to ring true. Overall, though, it is a book rich in history, details of various rituals and practices, and imbued with a respect for the natural world and those who live their lives attuned to its cycles.

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