



The Greener Shore

Morgan Llywelyn

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At last, the haunting sequel to Morgan Llywelyn's phenomenal epic *Druids*. *The Greener Shore* unfurls the story of a brave and mystical people who learned to manipulate the forces of nature—in order to control magic.

As druids in Celtic Gaul, they had been the harmonious soul of their tribe, the Carnutes. But when Julius Caesar and his army invaded and conquered their homeland, the great druid Ainvar and his clan fled for their lives, taking with them the ancient knowledge. Guided by a strange destiny, they found themselves drawn to a green island at the very rim of the world: Hibernia, home of the Gael.

Here they would depend for survival on an embittered man who had lost his faith—and a remarkable woman who would find hers. Burning with hatred of the Romans, Ainvar can no longer command his magic. But his mantle falls on unexpected shoulders. In a beautiful, war-torn land of numerous kingdoms and belligerent tribes, Ainvar and his beloved wife, Briga, struggle toward an uncertain future. Their companions include the volatile Onuava, widow of their fallen chieftain; Lakutu, Ainvar's dark and mysterious second wife; Ainvar's son, Dara, who seems more drawn to poetry than to combat; and the "Red Wolf," the young warrior who is as close as kin and is determined to find Ainvar's missing daughter.

Other forces are at work in Hibernia as well—the spirits that haunt the island, forces older than even the magic of the druids. Through them Ainvar seeks his redemption . . . as Briga seeks her rendezvous with history.

Filled with the deep feeling, stunning detail, and rich characters that made *Druids* a masterwork, *The Greener Shore* is a superb saga of an amazing world and its wondrous ways—a much-awaited novel that will delight all the devotees of this admired author.

From the Hardcover edition.

The Greener Shore Details

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Author : Morgan Llywelyn

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From Reader Review The Greener Shore for online ebook

Sharon Karson says

A beautiful book!

I deeply enjoyed this book. It was a wonderful celebration of an ancient culture. The characters were believable and endearing. The pace kept me engaged with plenty of twists and turns. If you love well-honed characters, beautifully -crafted relationships, an adept understanding of the human condition, and an engaging story line, you will enjoy this book.

Cathy Smyth says

This book is a good listen to catch up on my Irish history before I travel to the Emerald Isle

Sharon Skinner says

I was really going with this story until the end. I enjoyed the author's take on the Druids and their magic. And the characters were well-drawn and believable. Unfortunately, the POV shift in the final pages was incongruous and disturbing.

Kat Hooper says

ORIGINALLY POSTED AT Fantasy Literature.

Chief Druid Ainvar, his three wives and their children, and about 15 other survivors from their Celtic clan are sailing west to Hibernia after years of hiding in the forests of Gaul after the Romans destroyed their clan and Julius Caesar murdered their charismatic leader, Vercingetorix.

Ainvar, who relates their adventure in the first person, expended his druid magic in their last fight against the Romans and he knows how weak his tribe, the Carnutes, is. But the Romans are determined to wipe them out, so their only hope for salvation is to leave Gaul. When their little band arrives in Hibernia, they are at the sufferance and mercy of the Celtic clans who already inhabit the island. They must find a way to fit in with these Celts who have different beliefs and customs.

The Greener Shore is a beautifully told historical fantasy. Morgan Llywelyn's language and characters are deep and vivid. Her female characters are particularly strong, wise, and believable. Ainvar himself is a thinker (we are often privy to his interesting inner musings on the nature of man and society) and he's gentle except when the subject is Julius Caesar. Then he suddenly spouts delicious thoughts like these:

* The Romans kept coming. Tendrils of a poisonous weed, they extended their reach until at last we realized their true and deadly intent. Led by someone called Gaius Julius Caesar — a

figure of walking excrement that needs three names to make it feel like a man — the Romans meant to steal everything from us, even the land on which we lived.

* With the splendid and shining Vercingetorix leading the united tribes of Free Gaul, we defied the despicable Caesar and his army of clanking dwarfs, and very nearly won.

* Druids read the future in entrails. The odious Caesar was only interested in spilling entrails for personal gain. He left the bloody ruin of an entire nation strewn across the lovely face of Gaul.

* As far as I was concerned, they were all Romans and equally guilty — maggots swarming over the corpse of Gaul

Morgan Llywelyn's language is most beautiful when describing the events that came before the Carnutes' exodus: the shining glory of Vercingetorix and the horror of Roman ambition. Thus, *The Greener Shore* reads like an extended epilogue — all of the tension, action, and excitement have already happened and this is the last section that usually just explains whether or not they lived happily ever after. So I found myself thinking that Ms. Llywelyn should have written about Vercingetorix and the Romans instead. *The Greener Shore* is beautiful stuff, but it's anti-climactic. The infrequent bouts of tension are quickly resolved and it feels like things are constantly winding down.

When I went to post this review on the page I made two years ago for Morgan Llywelyn's historical fantasies, I realized my mistake. *The Greener Shore* is an epilogue. It's the sequel to *Druids*, which is a story about — you guessed it — how Vercingetorix and the Celtic clans of Gaul almost defeated Julius Caesar. I found *The Greener Shore* at Audible.com and incorrectly assumed, since it was the only Llywelyn book available, that it was a stand-alone.

So I'm happy to report that *The Greener Shore* is a gorgeous novel that's completely readable by itself, but it is the last act of what was likely a better story. I will read *Druids* someday and hope that it features less frequent reflections on The Source of All Being, The Pattern, The Balance, and Sacred Mother Earth, and will instead be full of dynamic characters, lots of action, and plenty of Morgan Llywelyn's lovely language.

Rachel Lightfoot says

Enjoyed this one more than the first (*Druids*). It gave me a similar sense of magic, but lacked the elements I disliked most in *Druids* - well worth the read!

Phyllis Handy says

Enchanting story

I loved most all of this book. It told the story of a people long ago. It was a beautiful love story as well. I highly recommend it.

Greg says

For fans (or those just interested in) druids and the druidic life, this is an excellent novel. Well written and engaging. For those who aren't as interested, it is still a really good book, but it lacks a little something. I enjoyed it, but...

Thus the 4 and not 5 stars.

J.L. Hilton says

Over the past 20 years, I've read several of Morgan Llewellyn's books, including "Lion of Ireland," "Bard," "Grania," "1916," "1921," and the companion novel to "The Greener Shore," the book "Druids." I have always admired her ability to weave fact and fiction, using the latter to flesh out the former into compelling reads that really make you feel as if you're there and can understand the characters, the landscape, and the times.

This novel, however, disappointed me. There is material in this that is drawn from historical, archaeological, scholarly, and literary sources. However, there's also MUCH poetic license taken. Please don't read this thinking you're getting any kind of accurate portrayal of the ancient druids. This is a fantasy story, like "Mists of Avalon" or "Lord of the Rings."

And, even as stories go, it was less a story and more a spiritual credo. It had a kind of "Celestine Prophecy" "Bridge Across Forever" quality to it, as if the novel were simply a vehicle for expressing a particular set of (very modern New Age) beliefs. The writing was saturated with repetitious talk about "the pattern," "the Source," the sanctity of nature, the experience of death, reincarnation, etc., not in a way which engaged the reader nor furthered any plot, but as an end in itself.

The novel is written in the first person, from Ainvar's point of view, and most of it takes place entirely in his head as he ruminates over past failures, current failures, possible future failures, the nature of the universe, the perfection of nature, the magic which has seemingly abandoned him, crises of belief, and the hatred he has for Caesar and the Romans. But very little actually HAPPENS. Ainvar is little more than a spectator watching as various, disconnected activities, triumphs and tragedies, swirl around him. There are characters who seem terribly important to him -- such as Red Wolf, his wife Briga, his lost daughter Maia, and the fairy spirit woman of Ireland -- but these characters are mostly absent from the novel and the promise of their importance never plays out, other than as macguffins for sparking Ainvar's metaphysical and mental meanderings.

Cheryl says

Began slowly for me. Then began to captivate me. In the end, it humored, charmed and reminded me. A good tale!

Marlowe says

In this sequel to *Druids*, Ainvar escapes from a Roman-ruled Gaul to the shores of Hibernia. Once there, he must learn the ways of Eriu, a strange woman who speaks to him from the Otherworld. As he forges a place for himself and his large family among the Gaels, he manages to tread on the toes of some locals. Unfortunately, his druidic powers have deserted him since the battle of Alesia, leaving him vulnerable. Meanwhile, Cormiac Ru must find the long-lost Maia, whom he believes himself destined to marry despite the fact that she was stolen and sold into Roman slavery as an infant.

POSITIVE: Llywelyn's writing style has not much changed in the years between *Druids* and *Greener Shore*. This new novel has most of the same strengths and flaws as its predecessors. While this can certainly be a negative (it would have been nice to see the author correct what had held em>*Druids* back from being a great novel), I found it a positive - if only because *Greener Shore* didn't suffer from the all-too-common sequelitis. This was not a novel released hurriedly in the hopes that it would ride its predecessor's laurels.

As in *Druids*, the beginning was rather painful, but the story soon picked up. I managed to fly through two-hundred pages in just a few hours.

NEGATIVES: There didn't seem to be much direction to the novel. *Druids* had the creation of the Gaulish federation and the defeat of Caesar, but *Greener Shore* lacked any kind of similar goal. Rather, the plot ambled along until it reached an epiphany, but this was done in a rather lack-luster way. Had the epiphany been very good, or had the journey been dotted with thought-provoking insight, this would have been fine. Unfortunately, *Greener Shore* lacked both. Those many sayings peppering the novel that were clearly meant to be "deep" were rather quite obvious and common to most books that seek depth. Those little surprising, funny, and interesting sayings that sometimes found their way into *Druids* were lacking here.

I also found exposition of what had happened in the previous novel to be rather heavy-handed. I wish Llywelyn had either sought to make *Greener Shore* a stand-alone part of a saga, or a straight sequel of *Druids*. Instead, she gave it a completely different feel (which is a completely waffly term, I know - but it's the best I can come up with) while constantly bogging it down with "as you know, Martha" moments where characters narrate the events of the first novel to characters who had been present! I raised a similar complaint when I read *Druids*. Llywelyn spends far too much time on exposition and simply does not seem to trust her readers.

The Greener Shore is only a sequel of *Druids* in the sense that it involves many of the same characters and takes place after the events of the early book. Yes, that sounds like the definition of a sequel, but *Greener Shore* is an entirely different book with a completely different story to tell. Change the names and strike out the cumbersome "in the last episode" passages and it would function perfectly as an independent novel. Those wanting more *Druids* will be disappointed. Those wanting more Llywelyn will not.

P.S.: If anyone can tell me why Ainvar keeps referring to Ireland by its Roman name instead of the name the Gaels use, please explain it to me. I would have assumed that he would be eager to accept just about anything *other* than the Roman designation. All I can think is that it was supposed to have some sort of symbolic significance when, at the end, he talks about remembering Eriu, but it just doesn't make sense to me.

Edna says

Reading this book makes me want to read the first book - "Druids". In this novel, the few surviving members of the Celtic clan sailed to Hibernia from Gaul after the Romans destroyed their clan.

ralph davis says

It touches you

While being totally entranced by what I was reading, I discovered myself in those very same pages. I shouldn't have been surprised. I was reading Llewellyn, after all. Then the fog lifted and I recalled the same thing happened to me when I first started reading Llewellyn's other works. I think it was *Druids*, that started it all. I believe the time to reread them all again has arrived.

Debbie Zapata says

This sequel to *Druids* is much more compelling, more personal, and more magical. We rejoin Ainvar some years after the conclusion to *Druids*, during a journey in search of a new home, one which has not been spoiled by the presence of Romans.

Ainvar is bitter and defeated, but still with the responsibilities of a chief druid, even though he no longer *feels* like one. His people still look to him for answers. Will he find them in the magical green land they settle in? Will he find answers for himself as well?

I got to know Ainvar better here, he seemed more real. And even though I did get annoyed with his attitude at times, I understood his despair as well as his attempts to deal with it.

I don't always find that sequels are better than first books, but for me this one definitely was. It would not be absolutely necessary to read *Druids* before *The Greener Shore*; but without reading that history you would not have a full appreciation for everything that happens in Hibernia.

jb Byrkit says

For some reason when I started this book, I did not realize it was part of a series. I will say there is enough background in this book it does not appear you have to read them in order. This book was a bit slow for. I really did enjoy the parts about Briga.

Phair says

Druids was one of my favorite books so this long-awaited sequel was a must-read. I was not disappointed. The writing was fluid and the story so interesting I never wanted to pause my reading. At the end I was not

ready to leave that world. I want more! There was just enough "magic" to give it that mythic feeling but what was most enjoyable was watching the practical blending of the technologies and cultures that came together and seeing the "roots" of the customs, laws, place names and legends that we know today.
