

The Avalon Chronicles

by Scarlet Crystal

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A new kind of magic is emerging. The great power that all in Britain once believed in is fading into the background. Strange men, with vast strength, come from a place called Rome. I know not how to fight them.

My wand was broken years ago; but I am still here. It was not the finite piece of wood that gave me power, but my inner strength and truth. I am more than a witch; but they do not understand. The Goddess is with me. The Raven is a part of me. We are one. They thought they knew magic when they took me to Hogwarts and showed me the use of herbs and incantations. But I have found them wrong.

Magic is no more limited to a thin wooden shaft than it is to you or I. Magic is a force, a power that courses through my veins and keeps me alive. It rests in me and with my sisters.

They broke my wand to teach me a lesson. Instead, they gave me a vision, a premonition of what I was destined to do. I do not think of myself as a Seer. But I have seen and known the Goddess. She is with me as I write this, though a long shadow is cast across my brow as the fire fades and dies down to nothing. That premonition has changed my life more than any magic.

It came in a dream, as visions and apparitions are apt to. A woman that seemed somehow familiar to me carried to me my wand, her long green cloak covering her hands. "Avalon," she said. "Avalon will hold you." Then I saw a beautiful island on a lake, hills and herbs and people in a sweet night that radiated a feeling I could not name.

I could not share my amazing dream with anyone but my sisters. The two of them sat in their long cloaks on the ground with me. We formed a circle under the moon as I told them of our destiny, for I knew they would share it with me. Viviane bowed her head and held my hand. Her wand had been broken that day. My other sister, Igraine, held my other hand with soft eyes; hers had been broken less than a moon after mine.

Together we let our sorrow leave us and disappear forever into the everlasting night; we would not need it where we were going. Moments later, we were rode away from that confining castle with our eyes forward. We would find Avalon.

The night wavered, and day arrived. We rested in a small groove of trees. Viviane disappeared for a long time while I sat, my palms resting softly on my knees as I waited for the Goddess to speak to me again. My eyes did not close until Viviane returned bearing a rare herb that I knew little of. However, I inhaled it and went into a trance.

The Goddess returned to me, though she did not carry my wand. Instead, a new wand lay on her covered arms. I looked to her face and saw wisdom that I never saw in my

professors. This was true beauty, true knowledge. I awoke and led my sisters onward.

We travelled for weeks without finding anything. I searched for lakes that and hills and herbs that I recognized from my dream. At last, I found the lake. It was a clear day and I saw clearly the tall Tor that I had seen. We spent days making our way around, nearly being captured by fairies and brought into their hallucination.

We had to leave our horses behind and arrived, three women with little besides the long cloaks shrouding their bodies. However, we were not alone. A man awaited us. He called himself Merlin. We sat before him in wonder. Was this the true Merlin? The answer came swiftly: he was a true Merlin. The first Merlin had come many lives before. The Merlin we saw was his successor. He smiled a weary smile to us and took my hands.

"You have seen the Goddess, and she has brought you to Avalon," he said. His voice was deep yet sustained.

I did not understand. "Anyone could have seen Avalon from the lake," I replied. "And why has the Goddess brought me here?"

Merlin held a steady gaze, looking out over the hills. "There are two islands here, but they exist at once, holding the same space. Not everyone sees Avalon. Others see a dull island with little grass and thick trees. But you have come to Avalon. The Goddess has led you here."

Igraine and Viviane were amazed once more. I had led my sisters to a truly magical place. This was where I would get my true wand.

I grew to love Avalon as I learned its ways of plants and life. Merlin taught me more of the magic and I saw the Goddess many times. A great stone basin was built out of the Tor for Seeing and my sisters learned to See as I did. Their power was not as great as mine, though they helped me to learn things I never would have discovered on my own.

Merlin had a wand of his own, one which I never dared touch. As I gathered herbs one day, a strange thread of mist trickled over the hills and drew me deeper into the thickets of trees and growth. I do not know how long I walked, but that when I came to a great clearing the Goddess was waiting for me.

"My daughter," she spoke, "you must have this wand. It contains herbs that are found once in a blue moon and only after a dry winter. Here, you will harness your power." She handed it to me. I closed my eyes and felt the warm wood under my hands. When I gazed around the clearing once again, I was alone with the whisper of the trees.

Merlin brought me young girls, and sometimes boys. I showed them the true ways of herbs and magic and taught them to See in the great basin. At first, they could not remember what they saw, but under the guidance of me and Merlin, they, too, harnessed their power. Few received wands from the Goddess, though they learned more quickly than I would have assumed a silly child could.

I did not notice the passing of time until my sister Viviane moved into the next life. I saw her once after that, but it was only in a dream right as I joined her and Igraine, who followed her shortly. The Merlin, too, died, though he spent many years training a successor.

I withdrew from my pupils, using my wand to create true magic and experience its power. However, I began to feel anguish over the loss of my dearest companions. I'd taken lovers, of course, and bore a daughter. But even she was already a woman, though I did not seem to age.

Suddenly, some of my students did not satisfy me. It began with one of my attendants preparing a false healing salve from the herbs of Avalon. I turned my wand upon her and nearly ended her life in my annoyance. Thereafter, I decided that I must mark the students that exemplified true magic the best.

The first moon-shaped tattoo was given to me by the Goddess. She marked my forehead with her magical blue ink, proving me her daughter. In a way, I was the Goddess. I was her earthly form. I took her tools and used them to mark my students.

Still, silly children unprepared for true magic arrived. I grew angrier and punished students on a whim, sometimes hurting them seriously. One night, I cursed the lake so that it would always be shrouded in mist, making it even more difficult to reach Avalon.

Skies were never completely grey in Avalon, save for when a healing rain fell upon the earth and made the herbs grow. Sometimes, I used my wand to bring rain, though the Goddess brought the rain with much more power than I.

My own daughter grew old as I watched, though my power continued to grow slowly. A new Merlin took the place of the old one; I bore him a child. The moon of blue ink remained my symbol and I marked my pupils with it.

But times changed outside my world. I ventured forth occasionally, wondering if the world was ready for true magic. But no, the old school that I had attended so long ago was still in existence. Something else was different this time. I was forced to hex a group of passing soldiers who dared bother me. They were not of Britain. Where were they from and why had they come here?

It seemed that my old home had wavered and been conquered by distant leaders. This was unacceptable. At the same time, old enemies from the north with their thick voices and dark songs were attacking at will. My land was not at peace.

I went to Hogwarts and told the headmaster, a man named Wense who could have been a Merlin, of Avalon. He seemed mystified by my life and magic. I almost coaxed him into a union between us, but he would not accept my ways as true magic. I showed him my wand, but still he hesitated. I left in a fury and brought a fire to the old forest on the edge of the grounds.

I was forced to go to people of non-magical descent. They were in awe of my power, but would not believe it was true. The old ways of magic had long become legend to them. They had a faith to guide them now. I could now dissuade them.

Still, I would not give up on the land in which I had once been part of. I realised how much I'd missed my old home. I then took my daughter and other great pupils with my mark and bid them farewell. I needed more routes in the outside world.

Many marriages were arranged; heirs were conceived. The new generation was ready. But, for the first time, I felt my power falter.

I had outlived everyone I'd ever known. How could it be that just when I had a great task, I was unable to achieve my goals? I angrily searched for an apprentice, going out and visiting the heirs of the women I'd sent from Avalon. Luckily, a young girl named Naomi was coming of age. I took her from her family without a thought and journeyed home to Avalon.

A strange thing happened as I neared the lake. For a moment, I glanced through the mists I had cursed the lake with and saw not Avalon, but the dull island the Merlin I had first known spoke of. On it was a tall building with a cross at its crest. This was the new power I'd sensed in the people. It was my enemy, I knew.

Once in Avalon, I set about to train Naomi in my ways. She learned to See quickly. She was visited by the Goddess at such a young age that I was made envious of her. Her wand was exceptional, and she was very capable. However, I felt a sort of love for her, though sometimes I turned my wand on her in my fury. I never hurt her; she believed in true magic as much as I did and I had marked her with the blue moon.

I was pleased with her. I taught her everything I could as my power faded. It decreased so much that my wand was useless to me.

Finally, the day came where I performed my last great magic. As a tribute to my land and Avalon, I vowed to create a weapon of so much strength that it would bear down its enemies by pure magic and power. Naomi was not as temperamental as I and agreed to help me craft such a thing.

We left Avalon and journeyed to the old druid caves that were long since abandoned. They contained metal ore with great properties. Naomi removed it from the wall with her powerful wand and built me a place to work on my power-wielding weapon.

As I melted the metal and shaped it, I muttered spell after spell. Naomi fetched countless herbs for me in the forest nearby. I burned them or crushed them or dissolved them into the ore, which I continued to work.

I did not eat or rest for a moon. The work consumed me; I visited the Goddess and saw flashes of the future. A great hero would come one day. He would save Britain, though he needed my power and sword as well as the magic of Avalon to do it. This kept me alive as I poured my life force into my work. Naomi stayed always by my side, doing everything I demanded as I worked, filling every atom of the weapon with strength, protection, and even love.

My life was played back to me as I worked endlessly. I knew that I had never really loved anyone. I'd treasured my sisters, children, and even sometimes my various lovers, but the only true devotion I'd ever exhibited had been to magic and the Goddess. She had consumed me. She had taken up my soul and entire being. She had given me life and strength that outlasted any I'd ever seen. I wished then that I had cared more for the world outside. I should have shared the secret of Avalon with the magic people in the outside world. I should have worked for the greater good of the land I knew now that I loved. I should have helped my students. I should have used my powers to heal, not hurt, which I had often done in my frustration. There were so many things I should have done that I became overwhelmed.

However, I could not stop. Towards the end, I could not even see Naomi or the old druid caves in which I worked. I only saw the past and future. Or I saw the sword. The Goddess was bearing it in a sheath I did not recognize, though it, too, radiated power as my wand once had. She walked with another shrouded figure who I did not recognise, yet I knew it was a man that felt so familiar to me. He was only part of my vision, but he must have been one with the Goddess and true magic. Who was he? The great hero, perhaps? I longed to tell Naomi of what I'd seen, to share with anyone the last things I saw and knew it must be told if I was to save my land.

But the weapon was almost done. The power was almost panned out. I could barely feel anything and still could not see Naomi. I tried to speak to her through my mind, throwing out my thoughts in as wide a range as possible, hoping she would receive them in some dream on a dark night in August. I had a feeling she did, but I was never certain.

I became exceedingly aware of the cycle of magic and life. This was not the first time a hero would be needed. He would come again, in different lives and times, to save the land he loved. I knew it wasn't a new story. I knew it had happened before and would happen again. I felt small in the great scope of things, but I knew I had stumbled upon the great power that I had been longing to harness through my true magic. I had never imagined its extent and force. It was capable of creating and destroying all. It needed protection, just as the people one loves need protection.

Suffering is only meant for some. The great hero would suffer, and he would bear it. He had to bear it, or all would fall. A dark age would take a hold on the earth and its life. Who knew how long it would take for the Goddess to reach another mortal who could save everyone? It was too great a risk. The hero needed the weapon I was forging. I pushed the last of what I had into sealing and binding what had become a sword. It would be the mighty sword of Avalon, holding all its power and lending it to whoever used it.

It was greater even that the sword of Gryffindor, which I had glimpsed only once. It had lent him power. I was reminded once again of the great cycle; that sword was once as powerful as the one I was crafting now. One day, my sword would do things as great, if not greater, than the deeds accomplished by Godric Gryffindor and his ancestors.

Suddenly, it was done. I felt my body fall away from my workplace, though I barely felt anything. In a moment, I saw the Goddess fully for the first time, smiling at me. She reached for my hand, and I saw behind her my sisters, waiting for me to join them. I smiled, as tears ran down my face. I took the hand of the Goddess and left my body in that life, knowing I would return one day. Gripping the sword, I walked with the Goddess past Naomi, whispering that I loved her. She bent over my abandoned body, weeping. I smiled and placed my hand on her brow. Life felt like a cool mystery under my hand, and she ceased her tears and sat, gazing in new understanding of where I had formerly resided.

The Goddess and I took Naomi by the arms and stood her on her feet. I held the sword out in front of her, kissing the blade once before thrusting it into the ground by Naomi's feet. She knew her task. She would find the hero, and I would be with her in spirit. I would guide her when I could. However, I would be with the Goddess and my sisters.

All of my living fears and worthless shames fell away, and at last I felt nothing but true magic coursing through my spirit. I felt a new kind of power bring me to Avalon, where time was speeding up. The sun rose and fell. Unfamiliar people collected herbs and leaned over the Seeing basin, gazing in its depth and looking upon wondrous things. I sighed and turned to leave. The Goddess was waiting for me, a smile still on her face as we walked together into the late sun.