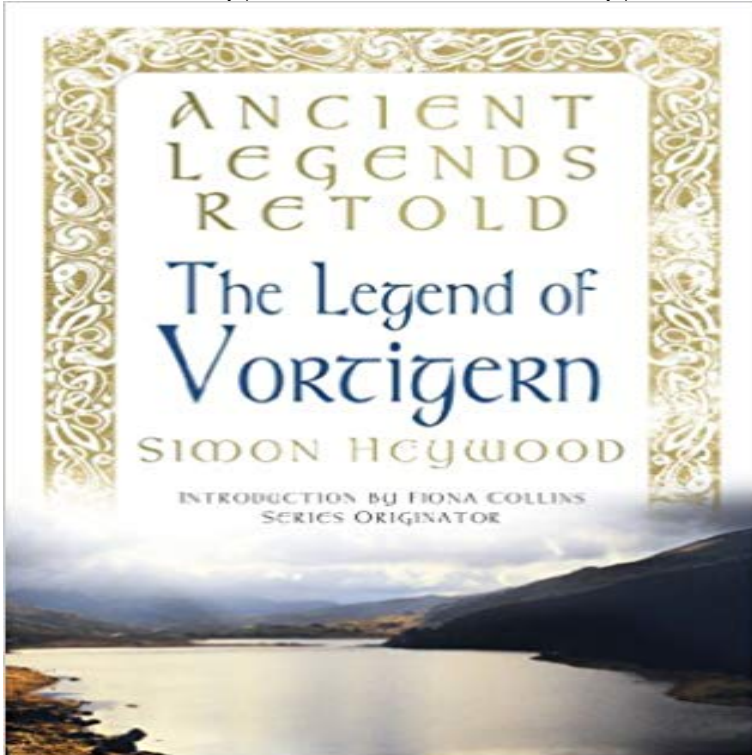


Ancient Legends Retold: Vortigern - Early King of the Britons



The tragedy of King Arthur is one segment of a vast cycle, the Matter of Britain, stretching across generations of early British kings. Vortigern is central to this cycle. King two generations before Arthur, he opens Britain to the Saxons, ancestors of the modern English. Rising from humble roots, he takes centre stage at court in a crisis moment, plays and loses a vicious game of Dark Age power-politics, and is driven into exile in mountain wilderness, there to encounter dragons, demons, prophecy... and a child who turns out to be Merlin. He meets a hauntingly violent end at the hands of Arthur's future father and uncle. Like the stories of British heroes such as King Lear, Vortigern is a tale of courage, cowardice, glory and crime, tragedy and treason. But he is virtually forgotten by modern readers - until now.

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