



## Sea Priestess

*Dion Fortune*

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*The Sea Priestess* is the highly acclaimed novel in which Dion Fortune introduces her most powerful fictional character, Vivien Le Fay Morgan a practicing initiate of the Hermetic Path. Vivien has the ability to transform herself into magical images, and here she becomes Morgan Le Fay, sea priestess of Atlantis and foster daughter to Merlin! Desperately in love with Vivien, Wilfred Maxwell works by her side at an isolated seaside retreat, investigating these occult mysteries. They soon find themselves inextricably drawn to an ancient cult through which they learn the esoteric significance of the magnetic ebb and flow of the moontides.

## Sea Priestess Details

Date : Published June 1st 2003 by Weiser Books (first published 1935)

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Author : Dion Fortune

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Genre : Fiction, Fantasy, Occult, Religion, Paganism, Magic, Spirituality

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## From Reader Review *Sea Priestess* for online ebook

### T.D. Whittle says

NB: Should you choose to read this book, I do not recommend the Kindle version pictured here (published June 1st 2003 by Weiser Books). The publisher put almost no effort into producing this, which is a shame and disrespectful to the author. Judging by the outcome, I assume a manuscript was scanned and then word-recognition software was used to translate it. The formatting is a muddle and it's full of typos, some of which are so mutilated that I struggled to figure out what the words should have been: Imagine if the auto-correct function on your phone wrote a book for you; it's like that.

\*Warning: Plot Spoilers Ahead!\*

*The Sea Priestess* is a novel about Pagan spirituality, ritual magic, and the archetypal Goddess representing the "divine feminine", whose passions reveal themselves through the ever hypnotic Moon and the Sea in her infinite mystery.

*And I saw in my imagination all the life that is behind the sea, and it seemed to me that there was intelligence behind it; a mind not unlike our own, but vaster, and vastly simpler. The life of elemental nature differed from our life in degree, but not in kind. It had the same kind of corporate being as a hive or a herd, which is not embodied, but overshadowed.*

It is a lively and engaging read that made me feel a bit dizzy by the end with all the atmospheric goings on. I say "lively" and, while that is true, it's also full of long passages of philosophical musings that not everyone will like. As I am a bit given to musing myself, I enjoyed it, but I would add that how you feel about *The Sea Priestess* will largely depend on your world view and whether you take it seriously as a spiritual text. I read it as fiction but the author meant for it to be much more than that.

Dion Fortune's (1890-1946) novels were a medium through which she shared her spiritual beliefs and practices. She was a highly successful Jungian analyst, an occultist, a priestess of a pagan religion which worshiped the "old gods" as the embodiment of nature's elemental forces, and a ceremonial magician. If you don't know much about her, it's worth perusing her Wikipedia page: *Fortune is recognised as one of the most significant occultists and ceremonial magicians of the early 20th century. The Fraternity she founded survived her and in later decades spawned a variety of related groups based upon her teachings. Her novels in particular proved an influence on later occult and modern Pagan groups such as Wicca.*

I learnt of Dion Fortune because I read a lot of Phil Rickman novels, which frequently involve the pagan elements and rituals of pre-Christian Britain, many of which seem to have carried on into modern times. Fortune, unlike Rickman, was writing truth (as she defined it) masked as fiction, I found some of the beliefs and practices sinister and disturbing. If you have ever seen the old 1973 cult film *The Wicker Man*, you will have a good idea of what I mean.

Our hapless protagonist, Wilfred, feels himself to be a bit of a loser. He lives in a small English town in Somerset, near the coast, where he looks after his mother and sister in the family home, his father having died some years earlier. Wilfred runs an estate agency and, in turn, is run by his mother and sister. At the novel's opening, he is a self-described mother's boy who quarrels endlessly with his pushy sibling. Watching him change to embrace his manhood and its attendant virility as the novel progresses is satisfying in some ways and disturbing in others. (There is a phase in Wilfred's development in which he becomes, for a while,

an obnoxious drunk and a bit of a lout; but he overcomes this by the end of the novel.)

Wilfred's catalyst for change comes in the form of a beautiful and mysterious woman who goes by the name of Vivien Le Fay Morgan. A long-term client of Wilfred's real estate firm, the two meet after many years of doing business solely through letters. Wilfred, to his surprise, finds a young, vibrant, and magnetic female instead of the ninety-year-old granny he should, by rights, have encountered. He is immediately drawn to her as representing everything his life lacks: beauty, sex, vitality, strength, courage, and unconventionality. To be sure, Wilfred had been waiting for something or someone like Vivien his whole life, never having been content to go along with the mindless herd, whom he sees as beneath him. One also feels that he needs to give himself in subjugation to an object of worship, and Vivien is more than happy to receive his veneration. Wilfred's faith in Vivien nurtures the Sea Priestess image that they both hold of her, which calls to them from their remote shared past and from the "fourth dimension" which is accessible to them only in dreams and visions.

The relationship between the two, while fascinating on a spiritual level, ends up being frustrating for Wilfred. In short, Vivien will not only not marry Wilfred, she will not even have sex with him. Frankly, I found this prudish and ridiculous and not what one would expect from a pagan priestess. She is willing to "sacrifice" him, or at least use his life force to her own ends, to feed him well, and to put him up for the weekends in her refurbished fortress by the sea; but hands off, little man! The priestess is a cold fish who does not sully herself on the physical plane! Poor Wilfred. He really is kind of a loser in life. Nevertheless, he persists, and the two become intimate emotionally and spiritually, if not physically.

*There is a curious power in silence when you think alike without word spoken and each knows the other's thoughts. As long as nothing is said, the thing you are thinking remains in another dimension and is magical, but as soon as you speak it, you lose it. It is the old story of the jewels bought in the goblin market, which you must only look at by moonlight or you find them to be a handful of dead leaves.*

Over the weeks that follow, as Wilfred paints sea murals over the interior walls of the temple he has redesigned and refurbished for his goddess, from the remains of an old fort, the two spend many hours together, basically getting high on the elements. They spend evenings staring into fires made of particular woods that bring about visions. They stand on slippery rocks at the edge of the sea, beneath the full Moon, and let the sea water lap at their ankles. They are able to confirm through a series of visions manifested during ceremonial magic that they have been together in a previous life, she as the Sea Priestess and he as her sacrificial victim. Once this knowledge is certain and Vivien feels that Wilfred is ready, all that is left for them is the playing out of an ancient ritual, in which Wilfred loses not his earthly life but certainly his reason for living. The Rite of Isis completed, Vivien leaves him cold, and he never sees her again.

Don't worry though. Things turn out okay for Wilfred in the end. He marries a lovely and perfectly decent young lady and moves her out to the old farm down by the abandoned temple (at her insistence), where she begins to speak to the Moon and turn herself into a priestess, just as Vivien had been.

There are some really ludicrous ideas in this book, as you may have gleaned. Taken as fantasy, it was fun; but then, I am not into the woman-as-goddess mysticism, as a spiritual belief system or even as a useful metaphor. Also, several of the plot elements and their implications just irked me. Firstly, why do people who believe themselves to be reincarnated insist on being some character of legend or, at the very least, an important figure in history? In this case, Vivien is meant to be Morgan Le Fay (but of course!). One wonders if Dion Fortune thought herself to be a reincarnation of someone fabulous and legendary. Probably yes.

Regarding that "Probably yes": Gareth Knight *is one of the world's foremost authorities on ritual magic, the*

*Western Mystery Tradition and Qabalistic symbolism. He trained in Dion Fortune's Society of the Inner Light, and has spent a lifetime rediscovering and teaching the principles of magic as a spiritual discipline and method of self-realisation. (Source) I read this blog essay he wrote about The Sea Priestess. One of the comments which follows says:*

*I truly believe that Dion Fortune was a reincarnation of Morgan Le Fay, I am sure they were from the same soul group and even Dion's style for red dresses long cloaks all reflecting her past soul connection to Glastonbury and this area of the Earth. I wonder if Dion realized that she was in affect channeling her her soul origins, and her origins as a high priestess of Isis. Even the land she lived on in Glastonbury is the same land that Morgan Le fay lived on, as she was able to awaken the land and work with and its magical properties. Its a shame that as I walk past that land now it seems sad, like it holds many secrets, also that it has many tales to tell.*

I don't know whether Fortune believed herself to have been the mythical Morgan Le Fay, but it appears that at least some of her fans believe it.

Secondly, the sacrificing of oneself to these elemental pagan gods really creeped me out. The earlier scenes describing men who were drowned in caves as offerings to the sea goddess were disturbing enough. (Oh but they are blessed because they will pass into the temples of the gods, under the sea, and live happily forevermore!). Talking men into killing themselves by promising them good fortune in the realms of the dead reminds me of Islamic suicide bombers who are told they will be blessed with virgins in heaven. It's deeply perverse and profoundly wicked.

Humans (or any creatures) being sacrificed to ancient gods is evil, in my opinion, and cannot be justified. But the sex rite that completes the story was somehow even worse, to my mind. By the end of the book, Wilfred and his lovely new wife, Molly (who is no siren like Vivien but a very sweet and capable girl) have offered themselves up to the Moon Goddess, who represents ALL goddesses. In Fortune's religion, all gods are one god, all goddesses are one goddess, and the masculine and feminine energies come together, physically and spiritually, in an eternal dance of give and take. These elemental gods and goddesses are ruled over, themselves, by the One, who is the great Initiator of all creation and whom, as I understand it, Dion Fortune believed to be Christ. Oddly, Fortune did consider herself to be a Christian, albeit a very unorthodox one, and considered both Christianity and the ancient Pagan religions of the West to be the right and proper traditions for the Anglo Saxon peoples. She believed it to be spiritually unhealthy and unwholesome to take on other races' and cultures' gods, saviors, rituals, and traditions.

Anyway, back to the sex rite. The upshot is that Molly offers herself sexually to her husband, Wilfred, after both of them have already offered themselves spiritually to the Moon Goddess. This takes their lovemaking to a whole new level, one in which they are no longer simply themselves but representative archetypes of All Men and All Women. In a shared vision, Molly and Wilfred make love in a pagan temple while the nature gods watch on with approval, and the elemental forces of the universe flow through them. This is supposed to be an awesome blessing from the gods, but it bothered me on a visceral level.

Why would anyone want to offer themselves, body and soul, to these supposedly sentient embodiments of Nature? For these beings are never depicted as sympathetic to and nurturing of our species. In fact, I kept recalling the opening paragraph of H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*: *Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us.*

To be fair, I do not understand women who need to envision themselves as goddesses or as figures of myth

and legend. I mean, I can understand enjoying the fantasy for as long as the book or film lasts,\* but not embracing this as one's personal truth. Why isn't being a human being, a real woman in the real world, sufficient for us and for our men? I am absolutely sure that my husband would not want to take me to bed whilst imagining some crumbling old god leering over us and nodding approval. Peter Beagle\*\* said, *The grave's a fine and private place ...* and, to us, so is a marriage bed. It's a microcosm made for two and inviting onlookers would be a corruption, turning the sacred profane.

Here's an excerpt from the sex rite:

(Molly speaks)

*"Lo, I receive the gifts thou bringest me  
Life and more life-in fullest ecstasy  
I am the Moon, the Moon that draweth thee.  
I am the waiting Earth that calleth thee.  
Come unto me, Great Pan, come unto me!  
Come unto me, Great Pan, come unto me!"*

(Wilfred reflects while watching Molly)

*I knew that she was exercising her ancient right and giving me the mating-call in the name of the moon, far truer to Nature than any convention of duty and modesty. And I knew why Morgan had said that on the inner planes the woman is positive and should take the initiative, for the Astral Plane is ruled by the moon and woman is her priestess; and when she comes in her ancient right, representing the moon, the moon-power is hers and she can fertilise the male with vitalising magnetic force. And the answering power awoke in me from the very deeps of my being, far deeper than the overflow of desire that comes from a physical pressure; for she called up from me the reserves of vital force and brought them into action—the reserves that the law of our nature guards against the great crises when we fight for life itself—the things that give the madman his strength and the poet his creative frenzy. Not until these things are called up by the call of the beloved can we be said to have mated to the depths of our being. They are not called forth when the man woos the woman because he feels like it, but they are called forth when she comes to him in the name of Great Isis and bids him worship the goddess with her and through her.*

Interestingly, Fortune herself seems to have been more like Vivien, who, as a priestess, did not indulge in sex. Fortune married once but was ... well, unfortunate. From what I can glean, sexual chemistry did not spark between Dion and her husband, and he sought partners elsewhere, which led to their divorcing. She seems to have been rather prudish sexually, which explains a lot about this book and her philosophies. Pagan priestess or not, Fortune was born in a time when bold female sexuality belonged only to whores. So perhaps she had to make something grand, cosmic, and sacrificial out of lovemaking, because she could not appreciate it in its (natural and human) right.

\*About the setting\*

My favourite part of the book was the setting. The old abandoned fort sitting atop a promontory facing the vast and lonely sea is a romantic image. Wilfred undertakes to repair and redesign the fort as a temple for his goddess, sculpting bridges and arches festooned with sea creatures, painting wild sea murals on interior walls, replacing bricks with wide panes of glass to open up a panoramic view of the sea, and creating gothic arches over the windows to soften the stark facade. The setting was based upon Brean Down, which is described as follows in Wikipedia: *A promontory off the coast of Somerset, England, standing 318 feet (97 m) high and extending 1.5 miles (2 km) into the Bristol Channel at the eastern end of Bridgwater Bay*

*between Weston-super-Mare and Burnham-on-Sea.*

*Made of Carboniferous Limestone, it is a continuation of the Mendip Hills. Two further continuations are the small islands of Steep Holm and Flat Holm. The cliffs on the northern and southern flanks of Brean Down have large quantities of fossils laid down in the marine deposits about 320–350 million years ago. The site has been occupied by humans since the late Bronze Age and includes the remains of a Romano-Celtic Temple. At the seaward end is Brean Down Fort which was built in 1865 and then re-armed in the Second World War.*

*Brean Down is now owned by the National Trust, and is rich in wildlife, history and archaeology. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to both the geology and presence of nationally rare plants including the white rock-rose. It has also been scheduled as an ancient monument.*

Image Source

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\* Admittedly, I kept grabbing hold of the rubbish bin lid and yelling "shield!" to my husband for weeks after seeing *Wonder Woman*. I blame Robin Wright for being so fabulous in that movie.

\*\* As my GR friend, Richard, points out, Beagle is quoting Andrew Marvell's poem *To His Coy Mistress* but, honestly, I was thinking of Beagle and had forgot Marvell when I wrote this so I will leave it as is.

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## **Carolina Montague says**

Estate agent Wilfred Maxwell, stricken with asthma, assists mysterious Le Fay Morgan by transforming an old fort by the sea into a villa for her to inhabit. As he bumbles through this task, he is assaulted with memories of being drowned in a sea cave underneath the fort and agrees to revive occult the practices of Atlantis with her.

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## **ryn says**

the old ways were passed on in stories such as these. a woman, a man, a temple, the sea, the moon: nothing more is needed, but more can always be said, and the added details are specific to an age and its people, and make the deeper truths the more real--the more *useful*, the more applicable to their own lives--for them. evoking a series of vivid images that bring to life the workings of a particular sort of magic, this book accomplishes for the reader what its characters, in its pages, set out to do for themselves.

i haven't read much occult literature, so i was perhaps more surprised than i should have been at the sophistication and currency of the magical perspective illustrated in this story. (classics are classic for a reason, after all.) especially nice were the hints and brief forays into the other realms that did not play major roles in this tale--those of the sun, and other elements, and other gods.

in meta matters, i particularly liked the way Fortune, in her introduction, tells us flat out that her narrator will vacillate between "curt, brief Anglo-Saxon" and high poetry, as his mood and circumstance warrant. as covers for authorial inconsistency go, it's a keeper, but the admission also served to make me more aware of those shifts, and i found them almost always well matched to the timbre of the scenes.

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### **Tracy says**

While I wouldn't say this book is a page-turner or the best literature, it's an enjoyable book to read, especially for those interested in the occult and the western magickal tradition. It was originally published in 1935, so you're not going to find any sultry sex magick here, but the gender dynamics are n't as heavy handed as they could be--Fortune talks about dynamics, rather than totally essentializing--so that's nice. Also, Fortune is a female author, and therefore, respects women--something which was missing from Aleister Crowley's Moonchild. One similarity between the books which I appreciated was how the characters in both truly created immersive environments to invoke the energies/deities with whom they were working (the moon/the sea). I also appreciated how the story did not just culminate in the ritual, but showed how the magical training could be incorporated in Maxwell's life about town, and with other characters that appeared. I feel like that gives the readers more of a realistic expectation than simply fantasizing about their own version of a Sea Priestess appearing in their lives.

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### **Judy Croome says**

Originally written (and self-published) in 1938, this novel is filled with wonder and wisdom. Wilfred Maxwell as a character is a superb representation of human nature at its most paradoxical. From his on-going battle with his narrow minded, domineering sister, to his passion for the mysterious Vivien Le Fay Morgan and his tenderness for the young Molly, Wilfred's spiritual growth is as fascinating as his sly wit is hilarious.

The style of the novel is a free-flowing and deep as the sea itself. When one remembers that it was written in the early part of the 20th century, it's all the more remarkable for the forward- thinking philosophies and topics it touches on. And yet the wisdom contained in those philosophies are as ancient as ocean from which all life emerged.

The first 70% of the story swept me along with vivid imagery, excellent characterisation and profound ideas which are often lacking in today's stories.

There was a section near the end of the story – where the occult rites were described in a lecturing tone, rather than a story telling one – where my interest waned, but in the last 10% of the novel, dealing with the aftermath of Wilfred & Molly's experience with the mysterious Priest of the Moon, the pace picked up again.

The strength of this novel lies in Fortune's compassionate understanding and insight into human nature. Her esoteric knowledge adds depth and imagination to a most unusual and interesting read.

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## **Sarah says**

Haunting. I am new to Dion Fortune. Her books were recommended to me by a tarot reader on a forum. I am also a tarot reader & I can't believe that it's only now that I have discovered her. So interesting to hear her language from the time. Very quaint. But also interesting to see how she inserts magical instruction in the framework of a story.

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## **Taryn Stroud says**

I rarely give books five stars (at least mentally, this is my first official review on the site), but the Sea Priestess warrants it. It left a lasting impression on me, and one so rarely comes across such books in one's lifetime more than a couple of times - if you're lucky! The quality of the book I'd say overall is a 4/5 stars, but I felt it deserved the extra star.

There is a lot of talk in the book about the duality of male/female or giving/receiving forces, but there is another dualism present in the characters of Wilfred and Morgan which in some respects impressed me more and which has little to do with ethereal direction of force. You have Wilfred who is wry, snarky, and a bit of a skeptic, and then you have Morgan who is whimsical and mysterious. In Wilfred and Morgan I see two forces fighting within me; the hesitant skeptic and the starry-eyed dreamer. I see from Dion Fortune's other occult writings that she comes from a background in psychology, as I do, so I see in her a kind of kindred spirit. So I wonder if Wilfred and Morgan are to Dion these two forces fighting within - the skeptic and dreamer? We may never know, but they make good character foils either way. At any rate, having dabbled in both science and magic, I could relate to both characters. Dion Fortune has such a good grasp on the underlying assumptions of her craft that she can give nuance and depth to both characters - they really are great characters and they carry the book well.

When I realised the book would be entirely in first person perspective in journal format, I was hesitant - but it works well (other than the spelling errors of the ebook edition, but that is no fault of Wilfred's!). The only downside is that Wilfred tends to waffle on about his miserable life - but it makes a good contrast for when Morgan comes into the picture. You can really feel a change in his life and perspective, and it carries over to the reader's experience as well (at least mine). That waffling of Wilfred's is the main reason I'd give the quality of the book 4/5 stars, but it really highlights the mundane nature of his life before Morgan.

I appreciated that Wilfred has asthma and that this bore relevance to the plot. I also have asthma, though thanks to modern medicine it does not require morphia to be stable. I do, however, have other auto immune problems which have been disabling. This book gave me a new perspective on my illness that was quite welcome, given disabilities can be so difficult and disheartening at times. I won't say what that insight was because it's plain in the book, but I just wanted to touch upon this aspect of Wilfred's character.

The setting was magnificent. It was possible that writing so much about the ocean might get repetitive and boring, but Dion Fortune made it wonderful instead. I personally don't care much for Atlantis but I felt in this book the emphasis was on the ideas and philosophy more than the content itself, so it was all right in the end.

Dion Fortune's occult writings emphasise that occult science is an extension of psychology for it deals with understanding the mechanisms and philosophy of the metaphysical aspects of consciousness. This is a rare thing to find in modern New Age texts, whose focus is often on positive affirmations and feel-good mantras

often without adding any knowledge or insight into the human condition. My point is, even as a work of fiction, which I've read Dion uses to pass on her knowledge (and why not? I understand her reasons - how else would you get an audience for something so obtuse?), she has an impressive grasp of her subject matter and it make the magic easy to follow.

The great thing about this book is that even if you don't believe in magic, Dion Fortune is so good at putting it onto the page that you can clearly delineate where you are willing to suspend disbelief. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in paganism, mysticism, the occult, or even just philosophy.

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## **Marcus Regnander says**

För den som inte redan vet det har jag de senaste åren intresserat mig allt mer för ickematerialistiska frågor, meningen med livet, finns gud, varför skaver existensen i hjärtat på så många moderna människor, och så vidare. Inititerat av den livskris föräldraskapet inneburit för mig, och kryddat av en komplicerad underbensfraktur som gett mig kroniska smärtor. Den flitige bloggläsaren vet det redan. Men jag läser alltså också en hel del grejer som ännu inte visat sig i bloggen, annat än i mina reflektioner kanske. Exempelvis ligger Bibeln och böcker av Nietzsche och Carl Jung också på mitt läsbord. Jag fascineras, och har nog egentligen alltid gjort (även om jag under några anarkistiska år förträngde det totalt) av religion, tro och andlighet. Men till skillnad från då jag var indienresande hippie letar jag inte längre efter en tro/religion att anamma, jag letar efter vad som känns rätt för mig, och skiter i vad det betyder för andra. En 'kosmisk anarkist' som min käre vän Simon vist kallade det. Klivet var därför givet till ockultism och esoterism (dessutom hade ett liv i hårdrock och metal redan smörjt upp banan för mig genom att ha grundat mig med retorik, symboler och begrepp).

Detta ledde mig iallafall fram till Dion Fortune och hennes författarskap. Hon har skrivit mer teoretiska böcker om kabbalah och tarot, som jag inte läst, men är också känd för att ha gestaltat ockultismen i sin litteratur och gjort praktiken tillgänglig. Fortune var yngre men halvt om halvt samtida med Aleister Crowley, de bägge delade mycket, rörde sig under en tid bägge i Golden Dawn (det esoteriska nittonhundredtalssällskapet, inte det nutida grekiska nazistpartiet) även om de också skiljer sig markant åt i sina läror. Fortune var också en kontroversiell figur, bröt med flera sällskap utvecklade egna och höll låda. Fortune såg hur hårt samtiden dömde Crowley för hans utsvävningar kring sexualitet, och gömde sig därför delvis i skönlitteraturen. Men i sina verk har hon vävt in sina erfarenheter från ett liv i ockultismen, och som jungiansk analytiker. "The Sea Priestess" handlar inte om ockultism, ockultismen är själva handlingen. Boken ska, hos mottagliga, ge samma resultat som esoteriska ordnars initiationsriter, och Fortune fick skit av otaliga mystiker för att genom sina böcker ha gjort hemlig kunskap tillgänglig för vem som helst som kan läsa.

Boken handlar om Wilfred, en ung och ekonomiskt oberoende man som plågas av astma och tillvarons ytlighet och monoton. Genom sitt arbete som delägare i en mäklarfirma (ärvd från sin far) kommer han i kontakt med den mystiska kvinnan Viven Le Fey. Vivien drar honom till sig, både sexuellt, emotionellt och spirituellt och hon blir hans esoteriske vägvisare. En stor del av boken utspelar sig sedan i det halvt förfallna slottet vid Atlanten som Le Fey köper från Wilfreds firma, en underbart fantasieggande miljö som ramar in samtalen och dynamiken mellan Wilfred och Le Fey.

"I judge a personality not so much by what they say, or even by what they do, but by the way they affect you. For a person may do a lot in the world by virtue of the start he has been given in life, or because he has got something that is wanted at the moment, but that does not constitute a personality as I use the word. A

personality fetches a reaction out of you of one sort or another, and it need not necessarily be a pleasant reaction.”

Fortune målar en värld med en skapar gud/gudinna (Isis?), och samtidigt flera andra osynliga men verksamma krafter. Exempelvis blottar hon vårt vetenskapliga paradigm genom nedanstående citats olika syn på naturkrafterna (har är det ju spännande att minnas exempelvis hur gravitationen fortfarande är en ockult kraft. Vi vet att den finns, men egentligen inte hur den fungerar)

”Only in Its works is It known to us, and from these we deduce Its nature, and Its nature is Nature. Primitive man personified Its powers and called them gods; modern man depersonifies them and calls them forces and factors. Both are true,” said she. ”but neither is the whole truth; for the gods are forces, and the forces are intelligent and purposive, being exoressions of the nature of the One.”

”The Sea Priestess” handlar mycket om hur solen ger livet, men månen styr det. Jag tyckte det kändes underligt, tills citatet nedan dök upp:

”She told me, too, that the moon had a profound effect on mental states and moods, as is well known to any who have to do with the mentally sick; and even we who consider ourselves nominally normal are more affected than we choose to believe.”

Och, till den som skrattar bort detta, kan jag säga att jag i jobbet (sjuksköterska) den 28e juli i år ringde polisen för handläggning av ett LPT (lagen om psykisk tvångsvård) kring en patient som blivit psykotisk och våldsam, och alfahannen som svarade sa ”vad håller ni i vården på med idag, är det blodmånen eller? Vi har femton väntande LPT-ärenden, och det är fortfarande bara eftermiddag.”

Det skulle gå att skriva kritiskt om det biologiska man-kvinnapolariteten som Fortune målar upp och gör gudomliga entiteter av, men jag har läst lite Jung och ser därför det snarare som arketyper som Fortune leker med, manligt och kvinnligt, där varje individ bär på olika mängder av bägge, oavsett biologiskt kön.

Samtidigt som jag tycker mig förstå varför kvinnan leder mannen genom boken, då kvinnor generellt har bättre kontakt med sitt känsloliv och således med vad som formar vår syn på världen.

Det skulle också gå fint att göra sig lustig över att Viven Le Fay visar sig tro att hon är en återfödd Morgan Lefay, alltså Merlins häxa, och hur hon ämnar bli en prästinna för det förlorade Atlantis. Men jag tar inte heller det helt bokstavligt, jag tycker det viktiga är perspektivet som Fortune gestaltar: Vi formar vår värld genom våra sinnen, men hur vi tolkar sinnesintrycken är beroende av hur vi kodar vår hjärna, och den kodningen kan man manipulera genom kunskap, ritualer, droger, genom att 'fake it til you make it'. Och vissa saker kan vi inte bevisa hur de funkar, men vi kan känna, se och uppleva att de gör det.

”Sometimes I think one thing about myself, and sometimes I think another. As long as I believe in myself I find I can do certain things. If I ceased to believe in myself, I think I should just crumble into dust, like an unwrapped mummy.”

Den vetenskapligt sinnande kan förklara det med att jag är mottaglig, skör, lever genom en medelålderskris, är liten och törstar efter en större mening med tillvaron eller whatever, men ”The Sea Priestess” är en magisk bok. Fortune blottar faktiskt en del av det kollektivt omedvetna för mig, det jungianska begreppet för den gemensamma delen av vårt inre, det som inte går att vetenskapligt bevisa, men som går att känna.

Oavsett, och det är detta är centralt med ockultismen för mig. Jag tar det som är värdefullt för mig, lämnar allt annat, och uppmanar dig till att göra detsamma. Jag skriver inte det här för att övertyga någon, utan för att dela med mig. Vi vet vetenskapligt att människor som tror på en större mening med tillvaron är

lyckligare, men vi kan ännu inte vetenskapligt varesig verifiera eller falsifiera det (även om kvantfysiken och matematiken verkar vara det på spåren). Men vi kan välja hur vi vill se på tillvaron, vår hjärna är exceptionellt anpassningsbar, så låt oss utnyttja det. Livet blir magiskt om vi väljer att se det så.

”And because it was real to her it became real to me and infected me with its emotion.”

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### **Althea Ann says**

This 1938 'novel of the occult' by the well-known psychic Dion Fortune (born Violet Firth), was initially self-published, which, I have to admit, gave me some serious doubts about its quality - but after reading it, I would have to say that her difficulty in finding a publisher was probably indeed due to its subject matter, not her ability as a literary stylist (the book has stayed in print, posthumously, until the present day.) This however, is not to say that a modern reader will find any of the events in this book particularly racy or shocking - standards have certainly changed over time.

The story deals with Wilfred, a young man in a strait-laced small British town, who feels oppressed by his family, his job, his sickly constitution, and his situation in general. But when his position as an estate agent (realtor) leads him to meet a beautiful and mysterious woman of uncertain age, he not only falls in love, but is led to a spiritual awakening, as the woman who calls herself Morgan Le Fay recreates the spiritual rites of Atlantis, communing with the moon and the sea and bringing Wilfred to the realization that life has more to offer than he knew.

This book reminded me a bit of Aleister Crowley's 'Moonchild,' (1929) although it's a bit less 'flashy' as far as its occult elements - but it has the same element of showing social non-conformists against a background of a restrictive society.

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### **Inara says**

Although this book is a "classic" in spiritual novels and I was spellbound by the description of moon magic, mythology, rituals and the great occult wisdom by Dion Fortune I found it sometimes.. long-winded. But if you have made it through the boring description of Wilfrid's life and the mysterious Vivien arrives it gets better and more interesting. The writing style of the author and the way of thinking and the behaviour of the characters appear often antiquated to me (it was written around 1930). Nonetheless it's a worth read if you are interested in occult wisdom in the form of a novel but honestly – it didn't sweep me of my feet.

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### **Dee says**

Yes, the book is about Morgan, but it's really about Wilfred, our narrator, who starts off the book as a self-described "mother's boy", directionless and hating his life. Morgan turns his life around completely. The book features some gorgeous poetry and ritual centered around the Great Goddess Isis. I had to keep reminding myself this book was written in the 1930's because so much of it has influenced contemporary writing on Magick, Witchcraft, and the Occult!

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## Mckinley says

Fun read for a lark. I like this sort of stuff.

This book spells out some of Fortune's thinking and beliefs. Fortune reported visions of Atlantis at a very early age and later developed psychic abilities. Drawn to the occult, she joined the Theosophical Society. Sea Priestess and another book Moon Magic, became influential within Wicca.

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## Diamond says

See the full review here-- <http://diamondlovestoread.blogspot.co...>

Review: I loved this book. After thinking of my feelings of this beautiful novel I kept having trouble in a way I hadn't before. This novel causes a lot of introspection and it's very spiritual and New Age. I had to continually remind myself it was written in the 1930s. So if I were to write a review about how this book made me feel and what it did to me-- I'd be revealing the most intimate aspects of my soul. And well, I love you all but I'm just not comfortable with that. Suffice it to say that I found the ideas presented as nothing short of amazing. I am in love with Dion's hero, Wilfred Maxwell. She mentions in her introduction that she wrote him with flaws because her characters are more real that way. I loved him with his flaws, his temper and funny way of dealing with things endeared me to him quite a bit. He was magnetic. His love for the sea priestess, Morgan Le Fay was so heartbreaking and enchanting. She reminded me of myself a bit. Their dynamic and relationship can be summed up in a song that has been playing in my mind ever since I finished the book. It perfectly matches what their relationship is and I just find it actually jives really well with the book in general. Now I have never simply played a song and the lyrics for a review before, but it seems like a cool idea and it's my blog so I can do these fun things. I'm so glad I picked this book up at the library bookstore. Ill forever cherish it and read it again. If you want a book that provides insight about spirituality and the duality dynamic between male and female, and speaks of goddesses-- while all the while establishing the origins of what we call New Age now..read this book. 5/5 stars. A new favorite.

Music video-- Rihanna's Stay feat. Mikky Ekko

Here's the link it's not letting me embed the video--- <http://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=pl...>

Oh, and you know what's super crazy? This song Stay, resonated so much with me and the meaning of this book. Then I looked at the cover image on iTunes for her album, and see a magnificent photo of *Rihanna showing the Goddess Isis under her breast*. I was like **HOLY CRAP** no way! Coincidence? I don't know. Then again who has a tat of Isis, and sings a song that corresponds with a book based on the Goddess Isis and her embodiment in all women? One major point the book made was that as a woman if we channel the connection we have to ALL women, well...that's where the magic happens. Seems like this could be more than a coincidence. I swear I didn't know she had the tattoo when I linked the book to this song. I'm not too into rihanna before this. I like her, now I love her. Here are some pics of the amazing tattoo.

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### **Jane says**

I had to read this for a Seminar "The Occult in modern literature" and therefor it was interesting, no doubt, but in the reading it wasn't much fun. So, if you are interested in the Tradition of Western Occultism this is an interesting lecture, but if you are searching for a good novel - choose something else.

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### **Manfred Manfred says**

I read this book a long time ago and really loved it.

Dion Fortune was a famous occultist from the 1930s and learnt all that Qabalistic stuff from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn so all of that ritual and Philosophy is in her novels.

I prefer her last book Moon Magic but this book also provides many of the keys to the Hermetic arts. Apart from the Hermetic side, the novel has a very strong female protagonist in the Sea Priestess Lilith Le Fey.

Its main strength is that the book bridges the world of fantasy and reality and joins them magically together. Well worth looking at

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