



## Heritage and Exile

*Marion Zimmer Bradley*

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*The Heritage of Hastur*: Nominated for a Hugo Award, and described as “Bradley’s best [Darkover] novel” by *Locus*, *The Heritage of Hastur* is a brilliant epic of the pivotal events in the love-hate relationship between the Terran worlds and the semi-alien offspring of the forgotten colonists who peopled Darkover. This is the complex and compelling tale of the early life of Regis Hastur, Darkover’s greatest monarch. But *Heritage* also spins the terrifying and heartbreaking story of those who sought to control the deadly Sharra Matrix and tells how Lew Alton met and lost his greatest love, Marjorie Scott. This is the unforgettable showdown between those Darkovan lords who would bargain away their world for the glories of Terran science and those who would preserve the special matrix powers that are at once the prize and the burden of the Darkover.

*Sharra’s Exile*: The most dangerous magical implement on all of Darkover was the infamous, legendary Sharra Matrix. Embodying the image of a chained woman wreathed in flames, it was the last remaining weapon of the Age of Chaos—an era of uncontrolled *laran* warfare which had almost destroyed all life on Darkover. The Sharra Matrix has been exiled offworld to one of the far-flung planets of the Terran Empire, in the protective custody of one who had suffered gravely from its use: Comyn Lord Lew Alton. But when Lew was called back to Darkover to contend for his rights, he had no choice but to bring this dangerous matrix back with him, and once Sharra Matrix was back, her flaming image spread far and wide, setting in motion events which would change the lands, the seven Domains, and the entire future of Darkover.

## Heritage and Exile Details

Date : Published April 1st 2002 by DAW (first published 1981)

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## **From Reader Review Heritage and Exile for online ebook**

### **Laurie says**

I enjoyed both books for the compelling storytelling and well-rounded characters. But both were overloaded with repetition that bogged down the narrative. These are classics in the genre, but my first pass at reading them. I will go on to the next one, Exile's Song, and hope one of Bradley's editors got to it before it was published!

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### **Esther says**

I find that my view of MZB has now been changed by the knowledge of her husband's past and her daughter's accusations. And really, I think her strength lies in her imaginings, not her writing. Truthfully, she isn't that great a writer. Too many instances of laziness in word choice, in reiteration of the same stuff we just read twenty or thirty pages ago. And yet. Darkover is something precious, and she gave it to us.

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### **Gail says**

I read both these books before, but decades ago, possibly when they were first released. The Heritage of Hastur is the story of how the ancient Sharra matrix was discovered and misused centuries after it was first created. Sharra's Exile is about what happened to Lew Alton when he was exiled from Darkover with the Sharra matrix, how and why they returned together, and what happened after the return. Both stories are classics of science fiction and still good reads.

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### **Daniel says**

What an amazing series, what an amazing set of novels. Marion Zimmer Bradley's works continue to impress me. Her Darkover novels will appeal to Sci-fi and fantasy lovers. Her books were ahead of their time with regards to issues in society, the second novel in this book (Sharra's Exile) would fit right in with the marriage equality topic in today's political spectrum---in a very positive way. Each book can stand alone, but also works well if you read them all. Highly suggest, if you haven't already, to check out this great series.

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### **Ratforce says**

If you appreciate Anne McCaffrey's unique blend of science fiction and fantasy, as well as her skill at building fantastic worlds, be sure to look at Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover novels. The novels are all connected, but can be read in any order and many critics agree that The Heritage of Hastur is one of her best.

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## Tom says

Two novels under one cover. *Heritage* is a scattered and repetitious mauling over what it means to belong or to be an outsider, on political, personal and sexual levels, and how the concomitant anger born of rejection transmits across social strata via the intersection of the actions of the individual. This summary makes it sound deeper than the author actually manages to go. Oh, and if I ever read "There's a saying..." or any variation on it again, I think I'll stab myself in the eye. I'm only a few chapters into *Sharra*, but it's already much, much better.

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## Lisa (Harmonybites) says

Marion Zimmer Bradley is best known for *The Mists of Avalon*, which spawned a number of sequels, mostly (if not entirely) by other hands. I don't care for them. Then comes *The Fall of Atlantis*, two enjoyable if fairly forgettable books posthumously marked as backdrop for the *Avalon* books. Inexplicably, if I go by Goodreads, her next most popular book is *The Firebrand*, about the Trojan War, which I found absolutely unreadable. Yet I do consider myself a fan of MZB's but that rests almost entirely on her *Darkover* books, of which she wrote 18 in her lifetime, although there were some further (some posthumous) collaborations. *Darkover* is a "lost colony" of Earth that devolved into a medieval society ruled by a psychically talented aristocracy and after centuries is rediscovered by a star-spanning high tech federation, giving the series a feel of both science fiction and fantasy. The series as a whole features strong female characters, but it has enough swashbuckling adventure to draw the male of the species, and indeed this series was recommended to me by a guy (when we were in high school!)

Although some books are loosely connected, having characters in common, they were written to be read independently. *Children of Hastur* contains two novels, *Heritage of Hastur* and the sequel *Sharra's Exile*. *Heritage of Hastur* makes a fine entry point into the series, and many consider it MZB's finest novel. Certainly Lew Alton, Regis Hastur and Danilo Syrtis are among her most compelling characters. The *Darkover* books were written out of sequence too, and I don't actually recommend you read them chronologically. The first chronologically, for instance, *Darkover Landfall*, is more fun if you read other in the series first, then this origins novel to see oh, so that's where that came from! Also, some books early chronologically were early in Bradley's career, when she was still learning her craft, and it shows. In fact, *Sharra's Exile* is a rewrite of a very early book published in 1962, *The Sword of Aldones*. She conceived that book in her teens, and as a mature writer felt the theme deserved a better treatment than what she was capable of back then. I've read both versions, and this is definitely the better book, even if I don't think it quite hits the high mark of *Heritage of Hastur*, but together they certainly make a great read.

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## David says

The two books were excellent, fast reads. *Heritage of Hastur* was a revolutionary book, when it was first published. This was the first book that featured gay protagonists, treating them as human beings. It was a coming of age novel, as well as a coming out novel.

One of the most horrifying actions to occur, was when Dyan Ardais, one of the nobles of *Darkover*, mind

raped Danilo Syertis. Dyan was a cadet master, and Danilo was a guardsman.

There were many themes to this book, aside from the homosexuality of Regis Hastur. Darkover was a lost colony of Earth, and the Terran Empire had only discovered Darkover recently. This was a conflict between technology and feudal customs of Darkover. The ruler of Darkover, Danvan Hastur wanted a slow change, but member of the Comyn Council(the equivalent of a Parliament, or Congress), wanted a quick changeover.

Lew Alton is sent to Aldaran, a territory outside of the Comyn Council, by his father, because Terran weapons are being traded to Darkovans. Danilo Syrtis is kidnapped by Aldarans. Regis Hastur searches for Danilo. Lew Alton meets and falls in love with Marjorie Scott.

The Aldarans form circle, forcing Lew and Marjorie, to raise Sharra. The city is burned, and Marjorie dies. Lew is horribly wounded and disfigured. Regis and Danilo escape.

Sharra's Exile is a direct sequel to Heritage Of Hastur. It also broadens the Darkover customs, as it shows Darkovans in the Terran Empire.

Regis Hastur becomes the ruler of Darkover, and gains the mystical powers of his heritage. Sharra is destroyed. Lew exiles himself from Darkover. Regis brings the Terrans and Darkover into closer ties.

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## **Josiah says**

I had more than a few issues with this book, least of all that it became quite ponderous at times. Especially the second of the two books suffered from pacing issues. Events were described with great urgency and import, and then in terms of the plot or other characters, nothing would happen and no one would react even when moments before they had been frantic with how dire their situation was.

But now on to what really rankled.

This book was given to me by someone who extolled it's importance as a groundbreaking fantasy novel--one of the first mass-market fantasy novels to feature a gay protagonist. And here's why I have a problem with that claim: while it features many gay characters and characters that have sex with men, none of them are ever portrayed in a good light or are able to come to terms with their sexuality. Even the supposedly gay protagonist has sex with multiple women in order to produce heirs, though he refuses to marry them. One of the main characters, Regis Hastur, is romantically and becomes sexually involved with his friend Danillo, but even at the end of the second book, he treats Danillo as nothing more than a friend outside of the bedroom and makes constant comments about how he can never find love and how no woman has ever loved him the way he sees them love other men. Meanwhile, Danillo is utterly devoted to and is forced to put up with taunts and leers from Regis's disapproving grandfather--and Regis never intervenes. Their romance is closeted. And Regis gives no consideration to the hurt he causes Danillo by constantly looking for a woman to make his wife and bedding them for heirs.

Soeaking of Danillo, let's talk about the man who molests him: Dyan. Oh, that's right. One of the major characters in these books is an admitted child molester, a fact everyone else seems to know and just glosses over because he's "a good man" he just has certain proclivities. Proclivities that lead to one of his victims committing suicide rather than continue to be victimized. And after Danillo is banished for standing up to his

molester, what's the apology he gets? He gets adopted by the man who molested him and is made to act as his heir and 2nd in command. Yeah, that's right. His reward is to be forced to spend his life living with and working in close proximity with the man who tried to rape him. The character of Dyan is essentially a rape-apologist. Except he never really apologizes for his actions or is held remotely accountable. Which starts to make sense if you know what the author, Bradley was married to a man whom she knew was, and approved of, having a relationship with a 14 year old boy (she admitted this all publicly when he was arrested after molesting another 12 year old boy. Only when he was arrested and his actions became public knowledge did she divorce him).

Then in the 2nd volume, you have the character of Lerrys, who is described as a dandy and a fop, a coward and a traitor who kidnaps his sister and lies to her and her husband in order to ensure they divorce after a harrowing still-birth. He eventually flees the planet and leaves them all to their fate when disaster seems imminent.

Yeah. Real positive representations of gay characters.

And I haven't even gotten started on women who are for the most part treated as heir-producing-wombs, with no rights or considerations, and *if they're lucky*, wives. The few women who have real power in this fictional world are forced to live as virgins because having sex is too dangerous and might interfere with their work. None of the women Regis impregnates seem to be particularly bothered by the fact they've been left holding a baby by a closeted gay man who refuses to marry them--it's ok though, he'll pay for the children's education and will recognize them as his bastards!

I could go on and write more about how Lew Alton's vaguely homophobic father may have himself had a closeted relationship with Dyan when he was younger, or innumerable other ways I found this novel's treatment of women and lgbt characters problematic and offensive, but as it is I already feel stabbed. So instead I'll just sign off here with the assertion that I have no interest in reading any of Marion Zimmer Bradley's other works.

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## **Rachel says**

Definitely the plottiest Darkover novel of those I've read. So many seem to be about one character's discovery of the world and their own talents in it (returning to Darkover and discovering heretofore unknown laran powers seems to be a popular theme) that it's fascinating to see the politics at work for one born into it. I always liked Regis as a character when I encountered him in later novels (I've ready them ridiculously out of order) and I enjoyed seeing how he began and the conflicts that shaped everything at that time.

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## **Artemisa says**

This is an omnibus and has 2 books.

I have read the first one.

I liked Regis more than I liked Lew. They are the main characters. I think they are alike in a dual way, and they end up having kind of dual destinies. Regis ends forced to live the "royal" heritage that Lew is kind of trying to get (he doesn't want to rule, but he wants to be accepted by the council). And Lew ends in exile, in Terra, and Regis dreams of knowing Terra and travels through the Terran Empire become children's dreams.

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## Jimmy says

THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR: Regis Hastur is the male Hastur heir, but he has no laran. He has unknowingly put up barriers of his own to block his laran. It will take a rare catalyst telepath to unlock his laran and break down those barriers. In addition to all of this, Regis is hiding more than just his laran from himself. He will be forced to face and acknowledge this in order to take his place as Hastur heir. Regis truly dreams of taking off in the powerful and impressive spacecrafts and traveling off world, across the galaxy. (view spoiler)

Empire citizens are selling blasters in the market place of Caer Donn, (a renegade Domain exiled from Comyn generations ago). This black market selling is in direct violation of the Terrans agreement to Darkovan's Compact. With political power struggles, no one takes responsibility to right the problem. Lew, (Kennard's half-Terran son and the only one of his two sons recognized by Comyn), will travel to Castle Aldaran to confront Lord Kermiac about this violation. (view spoiler)

This fantastic book tells the great growing up adventure of the young Regis Hastur. I'm looking forward to reading about the rest of his rule, and to find out how he will continue to interact with Lew and Danilo, considering his acceptance and barriers are broken and he is at peace with that.

SHARRA'S EXILE: The end of *The Heritage of Hastur* resulted in (view spoiler)

With hopes that Terran medical science can help Lew regain his destroyed hand, Kennard tries to aid his son and Alton's heir. Lew finds some small comfort and starts to live once again when he and Dio meet on the pleasure planet Vainwal. At first Dio is completely turned off by Lew and his over the top meanness towards everyone and everything. But as Lew slowly allows Dio past his barriers, Sharra's hold on him diminishes when he confesses to her what happened to him in the Sharra matrix circle, the Lady Ridenow grows to love him.

Sharra's influence on Lew goes deeper than what he previously imagined it ever could. (view spoiler)

The Hasturs intend to inherit the Alton Domain, adding to the already immense Hastur power, because both Lew and Kennard are off world at the same time. The two have left the domain vacant for more six years. Will Lew return to Darkover to claim his right to rule the Alton domain, or will his brother Marius finally work his way into the Comyn with Dyan's help? Will Regis support his grandfather, when he plans to put Gabriel Lanart-Hastur on the Alton domain throne? How will the manipulated and dull-witted Prince Derik's big mouth bring an end to not only his reign as king, but bring an end to the Comyn's rule also? Ultimately, will Lew continue to battle and defeat Sharra, or will he choose to give up and die because the pain Sharra inflicts on him is unbearable?

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## Warren Rochelle says

I see why Darkover has sooooo many fans.

The Goodreads summary does the job as to plot, for this "first in a series of omnibus volumes of Marion Zimmer Bradley's best-selling Darkover series, *Heritage of Hastur*, and *Sharra's Exile*." That these two are considered by some to be "the two most powerful and important novels in this groundbreaking saga" does my heart in that I picked these to read first.

Heritage, "Nominated for a Hugo Award, and described as "Bradley's best [Darkover] novel" by Locus ... "tells the complex and compelling tale of the early life of Regis Hastur, Darkover's greatest monarch. It also spins the terrifying and heartbreaking story of those who sought to control the deadly Sharra Matrix, and of how Lew Alton met and lost his greatest love, Marjorie Scott."

Sharra's Exile is the tale of the "The most dangerous magical implement on all of Darkover . . . the infamous, legendary Sharra Matrix. The Sharra Matrix had been exiled offworld in the protective custody of Comyn Lord Lew Alton. But when Lew was called back to Darkover to contest his rights, he had no choice but to bring this dangerous matrix back with him. Once the Sharra Matrix was back, her flaming image spread far and wide, setting in motion events which would change the lands, the seven Domains, and the future of Darkover forever. "

This is my second read of Heritage, the first of Sharra's Exile. Heritage I read first when I was first exploring how gay characters are presented in fantasy. Then, as now, I found the love story of Regis and Danilo and the conflicted and tortured life of Dyan Ardais compelling. The also tortured life of Lew Alton proved fascinating, but in a different way and for different reasons.

Darkover itself is a character, along with its semi-feudal culture in conflict with the technologically advanced Terran Empire, and Bradley did an excellent in creating this other, yet human world below the Bloody Sun.

For those curious about Darkover and why it still has so many fans, this is a good introduction and a good read, no matter what.

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## **Manuel Antão says**

If you're into stuff like this, you can read the full review.

Saturnalia-like SF: "Heritage and Exile" by Marion Zimmer Bradley

(Original Review, 1980-10-22)

Boy, are you going to get answers to \this/ query! (Darkover tends to arouse very strong opinions). The Darkover stories comprise about a dozen novels and a few shorts by Marion Zimmer Bradley, plus a lot of (fortunately) mostly unobtainable fan fiction. Darkover is a harsh world with a few cities and a basically feudal/manorial social structure complicated by the presence of psionic faculties ("laran") in most of the aristocracy and many of the commoners.

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