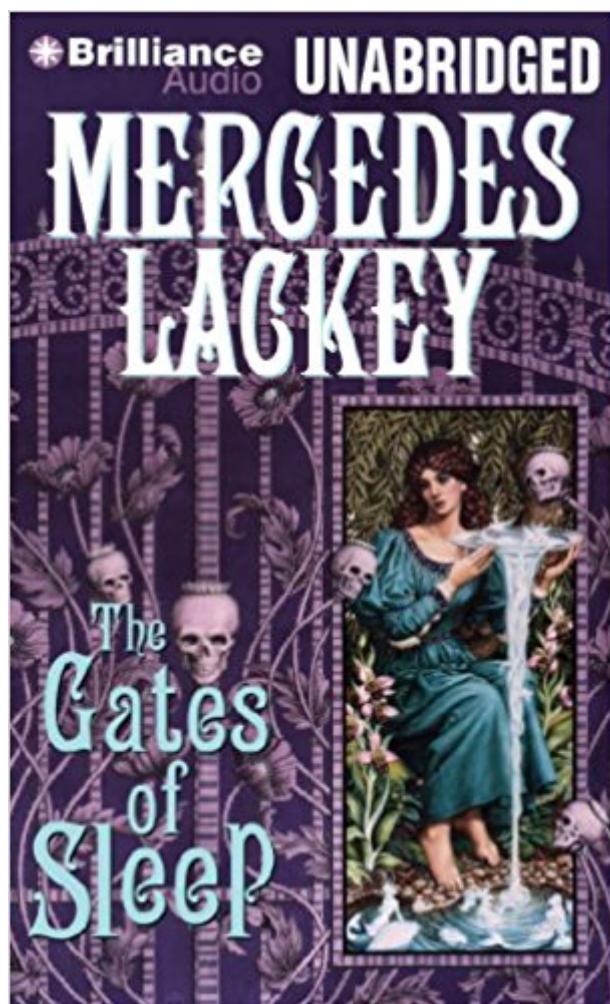


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# The Gates Of Sleep (Elemental Masters)



## Synopsis

In the tradition of her acclaimed fairy-tale-inspired novel, *The Serpent's Shadow*, bestselling author Mercedes Lackey re-imagines *Sleeping Beauty* "as a dark and enchanting Edwardian fantasy. Marina is the cherished daughter of the wealthy Roeswood family, practitioners of Elemental Magic. But evil portents have warned her parents that Marina will be killed before her 18th birthday" by the hand of her own aunt.

## Book Information

Series: Elemental Masters (Book 3)

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 105 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,003,103 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > ( L ) > Lackey, Mercedes #3101 in Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy #7470 in Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers

## Customer Reviews

Putting a fresh face to a well-loved fairytale is not an easy task, but it is one that seems effortless to the prolific Lackey, best known for her Valdemar series (*Arrows of the Queen*, etc.). In a brilliant twist, the author sets the classic story of *Sleeping Beauty* in Edwardian England, imbuing her characters with the power of elemental magic, including the cursed child herself, Marina Roeswood. In an uninvited visit to her christening, Marina's evil aunt, Arachne, arrives in a puff of smoke and delivers a deadly curse, which is mitigated by the blessing of a family friend who imparts one last gift on the baby. Marina's guardians spirit her away to the Devon countryside to grow up. When we next see her, Marina is galloping through her 17th year, pursuing her magical training, though her guardians have tragically kept her ignorant of the curse. The inevitable triggering of said curse, when she turns 18, pits Marina's intelligence, cunning and magic skills against the full force of satanic evil. Beautiful phrasing and a thorough grounding in the dress, mannerisms and history of the period help move the story along gracefully. Marina's character, along with those of her

guardians, her friends and Arachne, are fully fleshed out and credible. The fact that a teenage half-trained water mage would even dare to take on a 40ish satanist may be a bit implausible, but only on second thought. This is a wonderful example of a new look at an old theme. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Adult/High School-Fanciful and winsome, *Sleep* is a fantastical version of "Sleeping Beauty" set in England at the turn of the 20th century. Taken care of by family friends since infancy and surrounded by mages, Marina lives a charmed life. Befriended by water sprites, nymphs, and the like, she slowly comes to know why her loving parents sent her away. Tragically, just before her 18th birthday, they die in an "accident," and Marina is ripped from her idyllic country home by her coldly beautiful Aunt Arachne. The woman is controlling and harsh, yet even to the magically gifted she doesn't appear evil. Despite the lack of evidence, Marina's instincts gnaw at her, and fortunately she listens. A visit to one of her aunt's pottery factories provides unpleasant revelations both physical and metaphysical. Old-fashioned manners, dress, and speech set the tone in this pleasantly escapist novel. Mixed in are light touches of modern issues such as feminism and eco-awareness. YAs who liked fairy tales as kids will enjoy Lackey's spin on an old favorite. Sheila Shoup, Fairfax County Public Library, VA Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I've been enjoying the Elemental Masters books' retelling of classic fairy tales. This one is based on *Sleeping Beauty*, and it's charming. The unconventional artists' cottage, Marina's warring desires of running free and the pretty dresses of society, and the controlling and menacing figure of Madam -- they all pulled me into the story at once. The actual romance part seemed rather tacked on and rushed, but I enjoyed the rest of the story.

Couldn't even make it halfway through. The beginning of the book made me grit my teeth about how the perfect mother with her perfect husband and her perfect baby resting in the perfect crib artfully created by the perfect friend who is perfectly holding a perfect conversation with another group of perfect friends.... I had to quit in absolute disgust. In addition, the voice actor for the Audio CD sounds just like a teen aged "mean girls" type personality, one who sneers at anyone who doesn't carry the latest fashionable purse that costs more than most people's first cars. Skip it.

Whimsical, imaginative, and Magickal (literally) retelling of Sleeping Beauty. Don't take that to mean that this is a boring fairytale, because there is NOTHING routine about this retelling. Definitely not what you're been reading your kiddies at bedtime, either. It has humor, whimsy, as well as plot twists that make it a good weekend read that could even keep a mystery buff engaged. One thing I have always enjoyed about Ms. Lackey's books (other than the story) is the authenticity and attention to detail inherent in her tales with respect to place, time period, and influences. Even the arcane references are historically and technically accurate for the most part, in my opinion. I love that, and the fact that she's from the same city as I am? Well, that's how I got started reading her stories, but it isn't why I keep going back. Great yarn by a great storyteller.

I have a particular fondness for books in which the author takes a well-worn idea and gives it a new twist. I thought this was a rather nice example. Mercedes Lackey combines an historical romance with the fairy tale of sleeping beauty and comes up with something really different. As far as I could tell, her research of England in the 1890s is very accurate. There were very nice references to William Morris and the Arts and Craft movement, pre-Raphaelite art, William Blake, and contemporary political issues such as child labor and votes for women that added to my enjoyment of the book. She does a marvelous job at breathing life into characters. The main character is a spunky 17-year old who seems natural and appealing. On the whole, I'd recommend this book to anyone who likes historical novels who is ready to try something a little different. Is it great literature? No. But it is a competent work and an enjoyable read.

All of Mercedes Lackey's Elemental Masters books are based on fairy tales brought into the latter part of the 19th and early half of the 20th century. This one is a take on Sleeping Beauty, and is about a young girl who, at her christening, is cursed by her aunt. Her parents, being fearful for her safety, send her away to live with friends to keep her safe. However, her aunt locates her and removes her from the custody of her guardians after the death of her parents. She has no idea of the threat she is living with, nor the fact that her aunt is a danger to her. All this time she is learning that she is a magician and quickly learning how to use her power.

You must realize that a 4 star Lackey book is better than 90% of the rest of what's out there. And this book is only a 4 star book in comparison with the previous one in this loose series, "The Serpent's Shadow." While that book is a genuine 5 star masterpiece, "The Gates of Sleep" is a little jewel. Don't let this confuse you. It is quietly full of marvelous things, like the description of the faun

at the shrine of Pan in the garden, or the description of Marina's bedroom frescoes. This loose series of books is based on fairy tales...this one is Sleeping Beauty, the last one was Snow White, and the previous one to that was Beauty and the Beast. But Lackey hasn't done a "retelling" rather she has written a terrific story using the plot of the fairy story. The "environmentalism" in the story feels just a tad too "modern" to be Victorian England, and the character of Marina becomes a little too grown up a little too fast without fully developing her, and the ending is a bit abrupt, even though the fairy story is, too. But these are minor quibbles, small kvetches. The characters are drawn well, three-dimensional, and realistic, even the villains. This book keeps Mercedes Lackey on my must-buy list. *Bananaslug*. at Baen's Bar

Don't get me wrong. I love nothing more than a complex plot rich with interesting detail. But not to the detriment of character development. There have been plenty of reviews about this book. So I'm not going to go into detail about everything. I liked it enough to finish it and want to read the next story. I did not like the romantic part of the story; it was rushed and felt a bit like an afterthought. Because of the story she was telling however it was a necessary part of the story itself. I wish she'd developed their characters a lot more. The "romance" was silly.

Good story line but not one of her best. Worth reading if you want to just escape for a while. I consider a 5 star to be one I can't stop reading, can't put down. Good book but she's got better!!

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