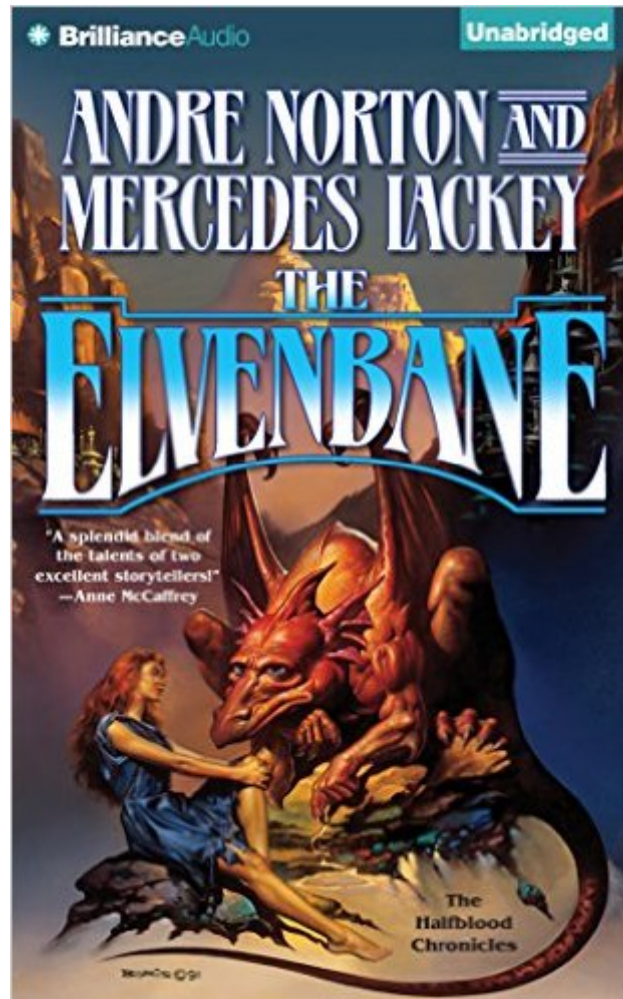


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The Elvenbane (Halfblood Chronicles)



Synopsis

Two masters of epic fantasy have combined in this brilliant collaboration to create a rousing tale of the sort that becomes an instant favorite. This is the story of Shana, a halfbreed born of the forbidden union of an Elvenlord father with a human mother. Her exiled mother dead, she was rescued and raised by dragons, a proud, ancient race who existed unbeknownst to elven or humankind. From birth, Shana was the embodiment of the Prophecy that all-powerful Elvenlords feared. Her destiny is the enthralling adventure of a lifetime. A brisk, glittering yarn that packs as much action, suspense, and twisting of conventions into one novel as many writers invest in whole trilogies.

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Book Information

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Authors, A-Z > (L) > Lackey, Mercedes #2002 in Books > Books on CD > Science Fiction &

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Customer Reviews

The Elvenbane (1991) is the first novel in the Halfblood Chronicles. The Elves are aliens from elsewhere. They are long-lived and have great magics and, long ago, they conquered Earth. Now the humans wear slave collars and take orders from Elven overseers. The Elves and humans can interbreed; the resulting child usually has Elven magic and the mind powers of the humans. These halfblood Wizards are reluctant to obey the Elven Lords and eventually rebelled in the Wizard's War. Ever since, it has been a killing offense for a human to become pregnant by an Elf. The Elves and humans unknowingly share the planet with the dragons, who came during the Wizard's War. Dragons are shapeshifters and their shamans have the power of mind speaking and reading the thoughts of others. They can also play with the lightning and create gates between worlds. The

dragons despise the Elven Lords and cause confusion and anger whenever they can. One of their favorite ploys is to spread the prophecy of the Elvenbane, a halfblood who will free the human from Elven tyranny. In this novel, Alamarana is a shaman and pregnant. She is traveling across the world, shifting her shape and becoming one with the planet. For a while, she impersonates an Elven maid and leads an Elven Lord into a marriage agreement just before she vanishes from his manor. Then, as she is meditating in a body of stone, a human slave, also pregnant, literally stumbles across her. Serina Daeth had been the chief concubine of Lord Dyran, but another concubine managed to make Serina fertile with the Elven Lord and so now she is fleeing for her life. Alara almost abandons Serina in the desert, but decides to help deliver the child. When the mother bleeds to death, Alara takes the girl child home with her.

Escapist fantasy at its best! "Elvenbane" is a wonderful ride, well-written and absorbing. You're swept up at once in the world of the story, and carried along relentlessly to its end. This is a page-turner in the best sense -- you always want to know what happens next! As others have said, the real fun of this book is the way it turns our expectations on their head. It takes a fairly standard fantasy set-up -- a prophesy foretells that one of the despised and hunted half-bloods will become the savior of humankind -- and quickly subverts it. Nothing is as it seems. As soon as we think we're safe in a standard fantasy cliché (such as the wise and kindly dragons who take in the orphaned child, or the half-blooded wizards in their hidden fortress in the forest who will become the heart of the fight against the elves) -- boom! It evolves (or perhaps I should say devolves) into something else entirely. There are no pure and good-hearted heroes in this book. These characters are real people -- grumpy, bad-tempered, and petty, as well as kind-hearted and brave. Even Shana, the main character, has a sharp temper and a tendency towards self-centeredness (in my opinion, anyway). These flaws make the characters more realistic; I cared about Shana and her foster-brother Keman, and I wanted them to win. As for the reason why I gave this book four stars instead of five? Norton and Lackey spend so much time establishing their world and characters, that by the time the action picks up, they've run out of room! The ending felt greatly rushed to me. It's true that the end brought no real surprises, but the fun is in seeing the story play out, and I felt a little cheated by all the scenes I felt were missing.

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