



## The Firebrand

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THE FIREBRAND is Bradley's re-rendering of the ILIAD as seen by Cassandra of Troy. The mighty and doomed city, like a battered toy, is tossed and torn by cruel, childish gods and misguided, lustful, and greedy men. Cassandra, priestess and Amazon warrior, linked to her twin, Paris, through her power of Sight, relates the events leading to the fall of Troy.

In this, a story that has come to be a standard for the heroic deeds and strivings of doomed men brought low by the beauty of a woman, Bradley shifts the premises: Here it is the women who are the true heroes--and victims. Like Troy, the women of the story are buffeted by the changing winds of politics, subject to the whims of gods and men, ravaged, stolen, sacrificed, and used. Indeed, the men fail to evoke the reader's sympathy: Proud, arrogant, inconstant, and cruel, it is the men who lead as Troy marches to its doom.

Like THE MISTS OF AVALON, THE FIREBRAND depicts a world in transition, at the end of the worship of the great earth goddess and the beginning of the dominance of men, who reject the female value of harmony with nature. Bradley's faithfulness to her source is evident, although she takes some startling liberties with Homer's work. Yet her theme, rendered artfully and gracefully in the earlier novel, becomes tiresome with repetition.

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