



Shadows of Sherwood

Kekla Magoor

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The night her parents disappear, twelve-year-old Robyn Loxley must learn to fend for herself. Her home, Nott City, has been taken over by a harsh governor, Ignomus Crown. After fleeing for her life, Robyn has no choice but to join a band of strangers-misfit kids, each with their own special talent for mischief. Setting out to right the wrongs of Crown's merciless government, they take their outlaw status in stride. But Robyn can't rest until she finds her parents. As she pieces together clues from the night they disappeared, Robyn learns that her destiny is tied to the future of Nott City in ways she never expected.

Kicking off a new series with an unforgettable heroine, readers will be treated to feats of courage and daring deeds as Robyn and her band find their way in this cruel, new world.

Shadows of Sherwood Details

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Author : Kekla Magoon

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From Reader Review Shadows of Sherwood for online ebook

Emily says

Overall, I sincerely enjoyed this book. Told in third person, but focused on our heroine, Robyn. Fast pace, keeps you on your toes, and an interesting crew of kids that help out where they can, and a heroine, Robyn, who's struggling to figure out her next step while searching for her parents AND avoiding being scene by the fashionable sheriff. Perfect read for kids and teenagers. I'd classify this as a sci-fy, adventure, action, teen/juv., and a sprinkled lightly with fantasy.

Now I obviously have a few problems with spelling and grammar, but I can't hold that against them since I got an "advanced uncorrected proof". Obviously this is a Robin Hood spin so there's going to be similarities between the classic, but it only held the major plot points... Sort of. The only thing that really bothered me were that some characters entered the scene but then vanished and never to hear much about them again. Like I get it, a few were there to help with Robyn find out an answer to her mission, but how its executed just bugged me. I guess I simply wanted more of an explanation of why/what, but since I don't know what the author is planning for the next one, I'm going to wait and hope for more clarity next time.

I look forward to the next one.

Heather says

I give this 3.5 stars

But I know a ton of students will love it and probably disagree with my rating.

This is a retelling of the classic Robin Hood Adventure, told in a sci-fi, futuristic setting. Robyn is a tinkerer. And this is actually what saved her, the night the entire city changed. She was searching for scraps and gadgets the night her parents and other authority figures were kidnapped and the evil governor took over.

Robyn becomes part of a rebellion and is joined by some quirky characters (see if you can notice the connections to the classic characters, like Maid Marian, etc). It's a fast-paced action adventure ride. And you'll be cheering for Robyn and her friends as they take back what the evil government has stolen from the people. Will the Robyn be able to lead the people to take back the city? Will she find her parents?

I had high hopes for this book, bc I love the premise and I was sucked in immediately. What threw me off was the moon lore element. I agree with this GoodReads review, "...the moon lore element of the story just didn't seem to fit together with everything else. For me, it didn't mesh with the futuristic sci-fi elements. In a way, I am glad that the author took the destiny aspect the way she did by not making Robyn the only Chosen One in that the prophecy goes around and comes around through history. "

If that aspect had been left out, I would have enjoyed it much more.

Another note is that this is the 1st in a series.

Kellee says

An suspenseful and action-packed dystopian retelling of Robin Hood.

Josiphine/Tessa says

I'm so disappointed.

My biggest problem with this book was the moon...stuff. This is a dystopian retelling of Robin Hood. It did not need a weird moon religion subplot to make it interesting. Every time it started to draw me in and get me interested, it would start talking about the moon lore and lose my interest. And I kept wondering why it was even there. It felt really incongruous.

Another issue was Robyn herself. I really didn't like her. She was willing to let her "friends" take risks for her but she wouldn't tell them her secrets. She was extremely selfish. As far as I could see, she didn't have a single redeeming quality.

The other characters were okay. I liked Scarlet and Key; Laurel got on my nerves. Tucker-the-seminary-student (aha) was my favorite. Also, Scarlet was obviously Will Scarlet and Merryan was Maid Marian, but who was supposed to be Little John, Laurel or Key?

Ms. Yingling says

E ARC from Edelweiss Above the Treeline

Robyn likes to go adventuring, climbing out of the window of her room in her parents' mansion and frequenting junk yards where she can get outdated technology. After one foray, however, her parents are missing. Nott City, where she lives and her parents were involved in Parliament, has been taken over by Ignomus Crown, who has turned the place into a police state and has barred the poor from going into the woods. Robyn doesn't know what to do-- she can't use her Tag to get groceries or supplies, and she can't go home because the government has taken it over. She does have a map and a hologram from her father, as well as some stories that he told her. She also finds Laurel, a street urchin with more survival skills, and eventually meets up with Key, who has a well stocked fort in the woods where he allows them to stay. Other helpers along the way include Eveline, who has a magnificent braid similar to Robyn's, and who instructs her on moon lore, which seems to be an integral part of Robyn's father's stories and survival strategy. When Robyn tries to help some people, they are arrested. Feeling guilty, she breaks them out of jail and embarks on a mission to bring good to the disenfranchised, always taking credit so that others don't get into trouble on her behalf.

Strengths: Magooon is an excellent writer, so reading this was quite fun, and the twist on the Robin Hood legend is a good one. It's nicely diverse, with Robyn's father being black and from the poverty stricken district that he has been trying to help out, and her mother being white. This is hard to find in middle grade fiction, much less in FANTASY books. If the dystopian setting didn't make this fantasy, the moon lore certainly does.

Weaknesses: There was so much going on in this that the moon lore wasn't necessary. The book bogged down for me on these sections, although I can see why Magoo included them. It would have been a tighter book with just the dystopia and government unfairness.

What I really think: I need to reread some Robin Hood tales and figure out who all of the characters are supposed to be. Who is Key in the original? Made me think.

Liviania says

I love the concept of a futuristic Robin Hood story, with many of the main roles being women instead of men. Robyn Loxley is a girl living in the rich sector of Nott City when her parents are disappeared by the Sheriff (also female in this story). She barely manages to escape, and has to figure out how to live life on the margins with the help of some others who have been managing: Laurel, Scarlet, and Key.

It's right up my alley, but SHADOWS OF SHERWOOD never quite gelled for me. Robyn's parents apparently followed a moon lore, an old religion that seems like magic. It's a good way to add a folklore tie to the story, but I felt like the dystopia and fantasy elements didn't mesh very neatly. The moon lore mostly seemed like a way for convenient things to happen.

There's also use of villainous point of view, which I find is difficult to pull off well. The Sheriff's passages give some hints about Governor Crown's dastardly deeds but otherwise add little to the story. Since this is a Robin Hood retelling it is particularly egregious, because everyone knows where the story is going. Even younger readers can be assumed to know at least one version of the story, if only the Disney movie.

I think the class conflicts were done well, which is important since they are a central part of the legend. Robyn has been part of the upper class and is now learning how bad everyone else in the city had it. Rescuing her parents is a top priority, but she's learning that innocent bystanders could get hurt in her activities against the Sheriff - which leads her to question how she can help.

SHADOWS OF SHERWOOD has some nice heist scenes and an appealing cast, but it left me cold. I'm just not sure the biggest departures from the traditional story worked for me. It felt like a separate story welded on that didn't quite fit. Does Robin Hood need a prophecy? No, not really.

Teresa Scherpding Moulton says

Robyn regularly sneaks out at night while her parents are asleep to break into the junkyard and find pieces of electronic gadgets to take apart. But on one fateful night, Robyn returns home to missing parents and signs of a struggle. Realizing quickly that she's in great danger, Robyn flees into the woods, only to be caught by military police and thrown in jail. She soon learns that Governor Crown has quickly and quietly gotten rid of any political opponents - including Robyn's parents - and taken full control of what was once a democratic government. Robyn believes that she's alone in the world, with only a few small clues left by her father that may tell her what to do next. But with the help of a new friend, Robyn will soon be on the run as a fugitive, depending on her own wits and the teamwork of others to survive. Little does she know that something big is happening in Sherwood and that she is at the center of it. This retelling of the classic legend of Robin Hood will have you cheering for rebels, outlaws, and the power of young people to fight injustice.

Okay, this is pretty much my ideal pleasure reading book, so I'm not sure if I can evaluate objectively whether this is right for everyone. But if you're excited about the idea of a futuristic Robin Hood retelling with a biracial female Robyn, then I think you'll enjoy this. The writing reminded me of Tamora Pierce, also, so if you're a fan of hers you might want to pick this up. I will admit, there is a lot going on here, and since this definitely reads as the first book in a series, it's hard to say if all of it is necessary or will pay off. This is ambitious world-building, and it's hard to say if the questions I'm left with after reading this are intentional or not. But I had a lot of fun reading this, and I'd definitely read more.

I would recommend this book for grades 4-9, especially those who like fantasy or science fiction, tough heroines, stories of rebellion, and/or the Robin Hood legends. Readalikes might include Tamora Pierce books like the Protector of the Small series or other fantasy adventures like The Ascendance Trilogy by Jennifer A Nielsen. This is really a blend of science fiction and fantasy, though, so I think sci fi fans would enjoy it also.

Lori says

I'm very torn about this book. On the one hand, I really enjoyed Robyn and her journey to find friends and her purpose and a way to help others who needed it. I really liked the Robin Hood parallels I saw in this part of the book and the others she joined up with along the way who were also on their own for their own reasons. I liked seeing them depend on each other and learn to trust each other after all being on their own for so long. But I was not a fan of the moon lore parts. The book dragged quite a bit for me during those sections and I had a hard time really understanding why it was in there. The book would have been enough without those parts. Maybe we'll find out more about how it'll help her save Sherwood from Crown or get her parents back in later books but I feel like it took something away from what could have been a great story about friendship and trust and family and working together and helping those in need. I still enjoyed it overall but I didn't love it.

Emma says

Grade: C

This e-galley was provided by Bloomsbury USA Children's in exchange for an honest review.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Well that was...something. Shadows of Sherwood was a book with which I had to suspend a lot of disbelief. These were kids (Robyn's twelve, Key is said to be a year or two older, Laurel's younger than Robyn), and they're pulling off grand heists with very few problems. There's also lots of discussions about moon lore and a prophecy and all of that was confusing and felt a bit disjointed in the plot.

I loved the idea of another genderbent Robin Hood retelling, especially one with a biracial protagonist. Speaking of Robyn being biracial, there's a weird moment towards the end of the book where something connected with the moon lore becomes a metaphor for the color of her skin and it left a weird taste in my mouth.

The other characters didn't interest me too much. Key seemed almost like a love interest, although he never was. I did like Scarlet, but I don't remember how old she is and her computer and technological skills were a bit unbelievable. The point-of-view jumps between Robyn and the Sheriff didn't work well for me. Their only purpose was to share information that Robyn could've learned herself later on.

The Verdict: Kind of fun, but a bit slow-going and there were weird plot threads.

Lauren Stoolfire says

Robyn Loxley has to learn to take care of herself the night her parents disappear. Her city has been overthrown by the governor and his supporters. After escaping with her life, she throws in her lot with a rag-tag group of misfits, each with a talent for trouble. Robyn and her new found friends make names for themselves as wanted outlaws by doing what they can for those being crushed by the new regime. As Robyn continues to piece together the clues surrounding her parents disappearance, she realizes her destiny is tied to the future of the city.

Shadows of Sherwood by Kekla Magoon is fun, fast-paced adventure story. I really like the idea of going back to the beginning with a younger (and female) Robyn than I've ever seen. It's a great way to introduce middle grade readers to the legend, especially if they aren't already familiar with it. Pairing those elements up with a futuristic setting is also a pretty cool new direction. Robyn, the most well-developed character in the story, is brave and strong, but also childish and selfish at times (then again she is twelve this time around). I also liked being able to see which classic characters are featured in this new interpretation: Tucker, Friar Tuck; Merryan, Maid Marian; and Scarlet, (female) Will Scarlet. While the story is about Robyn, I felt like the supporting cast should have been fleshed out a little more than they were.

There were two other things that could have made this story better: archery and the exclusion of the moon lore. Whenever I think of Robin Hood in any incarnation, I always think of the iconic bow and arrows, so I was stunned to see that there isn't a whisper of that (aside from the sketch she uses as her calling card). Then again, maybe the author thought that would be too odd for the futuristic setting. Then again, we could have have a scene somewhere along these lines, minus the robots:

On that topic, the moon lore element of the story just didn't seem to fit together with everything else. For me, it didn't mesh with the futuristic sci-fi elements. In a way, I am glad that the author took the destiny aspect the way she did by not making Robyn the only Chosen One in that the prophecy goes around and comes around through history.

Overall, I enjoyed this new interpretation of the legendary Robin Hood. It left me with plenty of reasons to return for the yet-to-be named sequel.

Lanie says

Robin Hood meets dystopian future. Very cool idea. 3.5 stars.

"Shadows of Sherwood" has been rated PG by the nerd association of Lanie for some mild violence.

It's a good, fun adventure story. good for a 1st novel & I expect some cool things for the next book. Robyn is an interesting character & I love the idea of a female Robin Hood. (Especially since the last couple of books

I read with girl hoods didn't work out so well.) it does require a good amount of suspension of disbelief. (like pretty much all kids books. what is it with thinking its a good idea to put children in charge of saving the day.) but I've always been good at that. if you can get past that it's lots of fun. Seriously, lots of pretty big stuff goes down, like a jail break and a couple of danged impressive heists, and it takes some imagination to think that a Ragtag bunch of kids could do this stuff. But don't all books demand stretching the imagination?

The writing & dialog is pretty good, if a bit lacking in the description department. The pacing is good. And I had fun picking out characters from the legends.

Tucker= friar tuck

Merryan = maid Marian

Scarlet= will scarlet (but as a girl)

Robyn Loxesly = Robin Hood

Robyn is the most rounded character in the book. She's strong and brave, but at the same time a little self centered. Which we must expect with her coming from a very wealthy background compared to the others. she doesn't always make the best decisions. Pretty childish moves. But that's good because she IS a kid. And it gives the other characters a chance to call her out on her crap (which I love) and move the story / her personal development along.

There isn't a whole lot of archery and other traditional Robin Hood stuff going on. Mainly just the names and the whole "giving to the poor" thing connect to the old stories . But maybe that's a good thing. It lets the story be a bit more original. (Love the bit with the sticky notes.)

There were a few issues I had with the book, lowering my rating. The moon lore for one. A weird old prophecy felt out of place in a future world of tags insta scanners and no money. & the lesser characters. They were SO flat! Not bad, but flat. Like key and Lural. I liked them fine, but I know next to nothing about them. I'm sure they both have great back stories, but we don't get to see much of that. Maybe in the next book?

Other than those couple things, it was good. A few problems, but over all it's lots of fun. I doubt children in the intended age group will even notice.

Recommended for kids who like science fiction & dystopian fans. Maybe for kids who might like to read stuff like the hunger games and divergent, but are still a bit to young. (Hopefully parents are keeping track of what what their kids are reading.) & of course for Robin Hood fans. :)

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

I know a lot of people want to dismiss three star ratings as not actually having liked a book, but I'd urge you to please not do this with mine. Shadows of Sherwood is fun and fast-paced. There are so many clever twists on the Robin Hood formula, and Magooon clearly put a lot of thought into genderswapping much of it and moving it into a futuristic setting. Were I younger, say 8 to 10, I suspect I would have loved this much as I loved that Robin Hood's daughter movie with a young Kiera Knightley, which is to say quite a lot.

As an adult reader, I liked it and very much appreciated a lot of what it was doing. Still, I think Shadows of Sherwood doesn't work as well for an adult audience, which is not a huge criticism since we're NOT the

intended audience. I had some issues with the believability of it. Robyn is twelve, and that feels way too young to be the mastermind of this revolt against a huge scary government. She's gathered together her little gang of talented children and it's super cute but it's almost laughable watching the government declare them the most wanted criminals. How would the evil guys not just get laughed out of governing?

I'm not sure if I'll be coming back for the second book. I do rather want to know if Robyn is going to fall in love with Merryan, aka Maid Marian, because I would so come back for a middle grade lesbian ship.

Mary Ann says

My students are loving this, and I can absolutely see why. Fast paced, exciting, edge-do-your seat. Multifaceted character that kids can relate to. Her mixed racial identity works into the story very well. While it might seem a bit predictable to adults (or reminiscent of other stories), it will feel fresh and exciting to kids.

Abby says

Robin Hood gets a modern dystopian retelling with strong female characters, a biracial heroine and enough action to satisfy Rick Riordan fans--hooray!

Rick Riordan says

One of my favorite reads this month was *Shadows of Sherwood* by Kekla Magoon. I reviewed it for the New York Times Book Review, so I'll let you read the whole story there:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/23/boo....> Suffice to say the book was a fantastic middle grade adventure that breathes new life into the myth of Robin Hood. If you're looking for a page-turner for young readers, check it out!
