



## Mark of the Black Arrow

*Debbie Viguié , James R. Tuck*

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A vast darkness is spreading. If left unchecked, it will engulf the world, and so Richard the Lionheart must depart England on a holy mission. In his absence, the safety of the realm is entrusted to his brother, Prince John.

When the king departs, black sorcery begins to grip the land, threatening noble and peasant alike. Horrific creatures stalk the forests, yet the violence they commit pales when compared to the atrocities of men. A handful of rebels fight back, but are doomed to fail unless they can find a hero to lead them.

## Mark of the Black Arrow Details

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Author : Debbie Viguié , James R. Tuck

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# From Reader Review Mark of the Black Arrow for online ebook

## Lanie says

"Robin Hood: demon's bane" book 1: "mark of the black arrow." It odd mix of epic fantasy, paranormal, and Robin Hood.

This book pits our usual band of heroes against a power mad Prince John, a greedy prideful bishop, and a demonic sheriff. Demons, magic, outlaws! Oh my....

Oh my god, what did I just read?!

This book had so much potential. It could have been great. In the right hands, this idea could have been something epic, something grand, something that would make me jump up and down in the bookstore, doing fan girl squeals when the next book came out. It could have been a welcomed addition to my collection, joining my list of favorite Robin Hood tales, such as "the outlaw chronicles" "hunter of Sherwood" "Scarlet" "Sherwood's doom" "the forest lord" and "the tales of Rowan hood".

Now it sits on my special Robin Hood books only shelf, a grim reminder that I wasted 15\$ on this piece of shit pretending to be a novel.

What was so bad about it, you ask? Pretty much everything. The writing. The characters, the point of view changes every few paragraphs, the lack of explanations about magic, how long it was, the total lack of setting, again the lost potential!

Anything I liked about it? The idea was good, just destroyed in the execution. & I liked this once scene where Robin stands in the road & tells the bad guts they've pissed off the forest.

That's it. Nothing else was even remotely good.

Let's look at all these bad things individually, shall we? I like sharing my disgust, my hatred in a neat little list. >:D

The writing: good god. It was awful. Choppy, painfully stiff, confusing. I had to go back and retread things several times to understand what was said. There are no details. I have no idea what anyone really looks like, what the castles or homes or rooms look like. & it reads like the worse rough draft to a bad sci-fy network movie. You know, those straight to TV movies with the b actors & million dollar budget with crappy cgi? Problem is, I've actually seen a Robin Hood just like that. "Beyond Sherwood Forest" complete with dragons and creepy wolf things from another world, and it was still better then this train wreck.

Characters: Most of our usual cast is here. King, Prince, Robin, Marian, and all the gang. But they're little more than names. Flat cardboard cutouts of people. There is no character development. No reason to like or care for any of them. Robin loves the forest even though everyone else thinks it's haunted. He's hated by his family. Why? Never really explained. All I know about will is that he likes fancy clothes. He's supposed to be charming, but really he's just a snore. Friar tuck is just some fat holy man. Nothing more to him than that. Marian is kind & smart, loves horses, can fight, she's basically a special snowflake gal & is just plain boring. Alan plays music & is friends with tuck, but it never really says how. The Prince is evil. Why? I don't know! Simply because that's his role, apparently. Prince John is bad, King Richard is good. That's all we need to

know because that was how it works in the stories. Fuck originality. Fuck giving anyone real motivations or personality. For something that should bring something new to the Robin Hood lore, it certainly relies very heavily on the classic character roles. It's like we're automatically supposed to know who these people are, who's good who's bad, without let them stand up on their own. I'm automatically supposed to hate the sheriff & Prince because that's their role. Love Robin and Marian because they're good and that's their role. Because, again fuck originality. Let's play it safe! -- never mind the fact that it turns all the characters into bland cutouts that I can't give a fuck about. I can't hate or love anyone here because there is nothing for me to love or hate about them. Even the evilness is lost because there's no motivation. Bad guys are just evil because they can be, because they HAVE to be. People were getting hung by the bad guys. Children. & I couldn't care less about any of it. What does that tell you?

Point of view shifts: this can work. Many of my favorite book series change points of views. Like "the wheel of time" or "the unwind dystology" but the thing is, they didn't do it every few pages, sometimes even paragraphs. It was whole chapters with them, sometimes several. It's a good idea, letting the readers see the story through different eyes. Letting us get to know different characters. But it can't work if it happens so much that I can't get to know anybody. In fact, a lot of the time, it took several paragraphs to even figure who's head I was in. It hurt my brain! :(

Lack of explanation with the magic: tons of magic & Demons & witches. K. That sounds really bad ass. Mixed with Robin Hood, it could be awesome. But when nothing is explained, it's just a confusing mess. Like the witch in the prologue. Seems she should be important. But as from a couple of passing mentions, she's never really explained. Or how about the magic & witches in general. The story is supposed to take place in England, yes? During the 3rd crusade I believe. Idk. It's not very clear. Total dark age time. But everyone seems weirdly ok with the magic. Like, even the ones who are scared of it or don't believe in it all seem to have a very "meh" attitude towards it. Even the holy men. We're talking about a prince who uses dark magic & has a demon sheriff, but no one seems quite as freaked out as they should be. ./ maybe it would have been better if they'd simple set it in another world entirely instead of England. That might have helped. but I doubt it. I mean, I know so little about this worlds magic. We have potions, spell books, symbols, hedge witches, necromancers, witches Animals, some fairy creature, mind control, mentions of period blood magic (ew.) Really. There is a shit ton of magic. But nothing is really explained. It doesn't seem to have any rules or boundaries or limitations. Just whatever might be cool in the moment. If your going to use magic, you have to make rules & follow them. You can't just toss stuff around & expect me to go along with it simple because "magic". It's world building 101. You choose what kinda magic or powers people can have & make rules & limits and fucking follow it. Explain how or why. Who can use magic? Are you born with it or can anyone learn? Why, how does Prince John get a demon?! What's up with Alan & the Druids? I don't need to know everything, cause that would take the magic (lol) out of it. But I DO want to know how things work & why things are they way they are. It's not addressed or explained properly, any of it! What could have been cool is just a confusing mess.

How long it was: it was hell reading this. Really. It takes a 100 pages to get Richard set off on his crusade. Nearly 200 for John to start taxing the peasants & hanging people. & it's only after 272 pages that we FINALLY get to see Robin Hood doing the whole outlaw thing. ./ I get that it is a first book in a trilogy. That it's attempting to set up this world and characters & plot for this big finish. And I GUESS it could have worked. Had it not been so boring and hard to read. It's a fucking Robin Hood book. It should not take that long to actually feel like a hood book.

& last!

Lack of setting: I get that it's supposed to be England. In the reign of King Richard the Lionheart. But that's it. There's no dates, no places named or described. Sure, France & Scotland & the holy land are all mentioned, but that's it. Just mentioned. There's a Sherwood & a Longstride manor. A monastery. But I can't tell you what anything really looks like. I guess a forest & big buildings? We have a "sheriff of Nottingham" but I can't even tell you if this IS Nottingham or if it's London or Loxley village or where. The castle is simply called the castle, except in one instance where it's called "Lionheart castle" wtf? There are no dates or references to anything historical beyond a very vague sense of crusade/medieval times. Barely anything mentioned of knights or the rifts between class systems. There are remarks made about Marian not having much influence because she's a woman, but that's about all the feeling of sexism we get. It's very sad, what's been done here. This beautifully chaotic, barbaric politically unstable time has been torn apart & dumbed down to the vaguest, barest ghost of England. The whole thing makes it painfully obvious that no research was done at all for this book. Maybe I could forgive it for its lack of historical context. If it were good. My favorite teen & children's Robin Hood books "Scarlet" "Tales of Rowan" & "Shadow of the Wolf" aren't exactly overflowing with dates & historical accuracy. But those books offered up great stories, rounded characters I could care about. (and even the magic while not always explained was more coherent & feared & all around better than in "Mark of the Black Arrow.") Again, maybe I could forgive it if it was intended for a younger audience. I mean, it's pretty hard to show the brutality of 1100s England to young readers. But this novel is intended for adults. (Why else would it be in the adult fantasy section of Barnes and Noble?) even with a more fantastical edge to it, I think a bit more effort could have been put into this. Some dates? Mentions of battles? Maybe some more descriptions of what things look like, how people are dressed, what food is served or grown?

Zero f—ing stars. I did not enjoy reading this and I will not be continuing the series. I do not recommend reading it either, unless you'd like to see for yourself just how bad it is. The review part was the best part of reading this ;)

Actually, if you really want a more fantasy take of the Robin Hood legend I would suggest trying "Shadow of the Wolf" by Tim Hall.

Ps. Sorry if my ramblings & ranting was confusing. I wrote this at 2 in the morning after 2 pots of coffee, so I'm running on hate & caffeine. :D hopefully my next Robin Hood read is better!

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## **Felix says**

A new twist on the legend. A entertaining read with great characters in new careers.....

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## **Blodeuedd Finland says**

This book takes history and changes it. Richard the Lionheart still leaves for the Holy Land, Prince John still takes over. But, he has a dark sidekick, dunno what the Sheriff is, but it is not good. They have dark magic, dark beings, and will cover the land in darkness. After of course they have taxed the people to death. Grrrrr, I hate prince John.

So there is the story. I must say, I was not that keen on Robin. He was never really in focus before the end. Yes, he was there, but it was like his POV was limping along. Maybe he was meant to grow into the role as a

hero (well duh), but I would still have liked to like him before more.

We also have Marian, who to me has a much bigger part. I liked her. And will Scarlett, liked him too. Friar Tuck, well yes the whole gang is coming together.

Much of the book is leading up to the whole Hood thing. We do not jump right into that. Instead we are shown how shitty life gets when John comes, oh how I still hate him. The whole demons, witches and magic thing, and so much death.

But I wish that Robin had been a bit more in the forefront, cos I ca not honestly say if I like him yet.

Robin Hood, a legend in the making. A damsel not in distress. Magic, death and an evil king.

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### **Navjit Kaur says**

I'm not sure how accurate the novel was in terms of the stories of Robin Hood but I can say that this was a highly enjoyable read. It was brimming with magic, mystery and a touch of sass all enveloped within an intensely dark and suspenseful plot .

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### **Kylie says**

I have said this once and will say it again goodreads you need more stars! This book was fantastic, it is co-written by Debbie viguie and James R Tuck. This story features the Robin Hood classic tale, but with a super natural theme. Dark magic is at work in Nottingham, the sheriff is not human? He has dark furry creatures who lie on around his neck, size of a dog or big cat! They had demons and witches, wizards to create the poxs. We even met the fey within sherwood towards the end, which was very intriguing to read about. This book is written in 3rd person, however we get a variety of different people view points which aids in telling the story from a variety of angles and people.

Now, Debbie Viguie is my favourite author for many reasons, one I love her written style, two she keeps readers guessing and finally she creates the most likely characters in her books who I not 2d and do lots of character development within her novels/series. She is also a lovely person who listens to her fans. When I heard Debbie was cowriting a Robin Hood themed book I was so excited, I am from the UK and actually live near Sherwood Forest - so Robin Hood is a classic legend for me! When I started this book I was right away on the edge of my seat, involved in the mystery, high fantasy and magic it created for us. I also have to say I didn't notice from the writing that this book was written by two different authors, which is great it all mixed together very well. I do hope there is a book 2, how can we have an ending like that as I need to know more about these dog soliders! What is the sheriff, what is the symbol on the prince johns guards weapons and how is prince John controlling the demons, through the sheriff? Lady Glynna is pregnant with the sheriff's child, she is also a witch???!

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### **Korina says**

I got halfway through the book and then gave up. I might finish it one day, but it isn't high on my priority

list. Robin, Marian, and other characters all get chapters in from their point of view which is interesting but bogs the story down. As each character needs to be introduced, it feels like you are several chapters in before the plot actually starts to develop. The fantasy aspect of dark magic is interesting but kept mysterious and doesn't add much. Interesting story idea, the development not so much. Sad as I always enjoy a new Robin Hood adaptation.

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## **Seregil of Rhiminee says**

Originally published at Risingshadow.

Have you ever thought of what it would be like to read a slightly different kind of an adventure story about Robin Hood in which Robin Hood fights against supernatural evil? If you have, now you'll have a chance to read that kind of a story, because Debbie Viguié and James R. Tuck give a fresh twist to the legend of Robin Hood by writing about supernatural evil that threatens to engulf the world.

Mark of the Black Arrow is the first part of Robin Hood: Demon's Bane series and will be followed by The Two Torcs (August 2016) and Sovereign's War (August 2017). It's a successful and well written retelling of the legend of Robin Hood with dark fantasy elements.

Mark of the Black Arrow was a nice surprise for me and I was impressed by its entertainment values. I thought that it would be almost impossible to write new and fresh adventure novels about Robin Hood and his men, but I was wrong, because this novel is proof of the fact that there still seems to be quite a lot to write about this legendary and well-known hero and his deeds. The authors have created a fast-paced story that brings thrilling darkness and freshness to the old legend of the hooded hero, but stays true to its roots.

Here's information about the story:

- In the prologue, Finna is trying to escape to Sherwood. She knows that there are creatures in the forest that would help her, because old magic hasn't disappeared from the world. Before she reaches the forest, she is caught and sentenced to burn as a witch. Before her death, she tells her lord that a great evil is coming to the land...
- After the prologue the focus shifts to Robin who is hunting food in the forest for a starving family. He meets his cousin, Will, who has been asked to bring him to the king's feast. In the castle, Marian is getting ready for the feast and wonders why the feast will be held.
- During the feast Robert of Lionheart announces that he will be travelling to Jerusalem on a holy mission to free the city of the darkness that is threatening to overtake it. He entrusts his brother, John, to care for the land and watch the throne.
- At the same time, dark rituals are performed by men who want to take control of the land. When Robert departs England and John becomes the acting king, supernatural evil begins to take hold of the land...

This is the beginning of one of the most entertaining fantasy adventure novels of the year.

The authors have managed to weave an interesting and gripping story, because they focus on what happens among different people and how their lives change when Prince John and his Sheriff begin to spread evil

around them. Reading about the monks, Marian, Will, Robin, Prince John, the Sheriff and other characters is interesting, because their lives and fates are connected to each other.

Characterisation works well in this novel, because the main characters are interesting and the minor characters add depth and fascination to the story. It was fascinating to read about what the characters were like and what they did, because the authors revealed intriguing things about them and their family relationships.

Robin is a fascinating and well-created protagonist. The authors reveal how he becomes the man he is and how he interacts with his family and other people. He is being described as a man who doesn't respond well to being told what to do and can be stubborn. He has strong opinions about many things and he dares to do things that others wouldn't do. He also may say what's on his mind unless he can control himself. He's a man who has to mature and take responsibility for his own actions and for the actions of those who follow him, because it's his destiny to become a hero.

Marian is an interesting character, because she has a sharp mind and she is curious about things. She lives in the castle and is concerned about the strange happenings that take place soon after the departing of King Robert. She notices all kinds of disturbing changes and tries to find out what's happening.

Will is an important character, because he's Robin's friend. He wears good clothes and takes care of his looks, but there's more to him than good looks and manners. I won't reveal what he does or what kind of person he truly is, but I'll mention that he plays an important part in the story.

One of the most intriguing minor characters is Robin's mother, Glynn, because she doesn't like her son. Her relationship with Robin is not an ordinary kind of a mother-son relationship, because she thinks that Robin is a changeling due to him being unlike any of her other children (what she saw during Robin's birth terrified her). She's interested in spells and uses them to protect her.

I enjoyed reading about Robin's respect for nature and his love for the forest. He has spent lots of time in the forest and loves it. For example, when he hunted animals, he took many things into consideration and didn't want to leave fawns without their mother.

This novel has a delicious dark fantasy flavour that is lacking from many other Robin Hood retellings. I was fascinated by the dark fantasy elements, because the authors blended historical and mythical fantasy with dark fantasy in an excellent way. The story is a fascinating combination of fantasy, myth, historical adventure, intrigue, brutality and dark happenings.

The descriptions of Sherwood Forest are beautiful and evocative. When you read about the forest and the myths related to its past and secrets, you can't help but be compelled by what you read. The authors manage to evoke a deeply mysterious atmosphere that surrounds the forest and its mysteries. I think that readers will especially enjoy reading about the forest and its secrets at the end of the story, because the authors reveal interesting things about the forest.

This novel contains harsh brutality and a few terrifying scenes in which the authors show that men can be beasts and are capable of doing brutal and vile deeds to others. Brutality and violence was intriguingly connected to Prince John and his Sheriff, because they were evil and caused suffering to other people. When they gained power, things began to change a lot all over the land and people were treated badly and killed. They were so ruthless that they used all kinds of methods to subjugate people.

Because I've always enjoyed reading the darker side of fantasy, I enjoyed reading about dark magic and sorcery. It was thrilling for me to read about how Prince John and the Sheriff used sorcery to further their own dark goals and searched for an artefact - a book with ancient Pagan origins - that was important to them.

There's a fascinatingly sinister and menacing atmosphere in this novel, because the coming of evil is handled well. The authors describe how evil poisons the land and how certain plants begin to decay and die as they react to the poison. The authors also write about how people notice changes around them and feel that something's wrong, but can't quite understand what's going on, except for a few individuals who are aware of old prophecies and know that powerful evil is coming.

I think that many readers will enjoy reading about what happens when people are pushed too far, because there are people who form a small group of rebels. The rebels begin to oppose Prince John and his cruelties. They know what they're doing is dangerous and they may end up getting killed, but they're devoted to their cause to stop the evil from spreading any further.

Although there's plenty of darkness in this novel, there's also humour which lightens the darker aspects of the story. Some of the dialogues are charmingly amusing and at times a bit sharp and stinging. The authors use humorous elements in the fashion of old adventure stories, but avoid overusing them.

I've noticed that on certain occasions storytelling in fantasy adventure novels is so entertaining that you'll find yourself temporarily transported to another place and time. That's what happens here, because when you begin to read the story, you'll find yourself immersed in it and ignore the passing of time.

The purpose of this novel is clearly to be entertaining and that's what it is. It's pure adventure entertainment from start to finish. It's an easily likeable and enjoyable novel with an emphasis on entertainment and adventure.

To be honest, it's been a while since I've read a fantasy adventure novel as gripping and entertaining as Mark of the Black Arrow. Once I had started to read this novel, I couldn't put it down until I had reached the final page, because the story hooked me. I look forward to reading *The Two Torcs*, which will be published in August 2016, because this novel was good entertainment (I think that readers who enjoy this novel can hardly wait to get their hands on the sequel).

There was something in this novel that slightly reminded me of Clifford Beal's historical fantasy novel, *Gideon's Angel*. I think that readers who have read Clifford Beal will love this story. I also think that those who are familiar with Michael J. Sullivan's *Riyria* novels and other similar kind of fantasy novels will enjoy reading it.

If you're interested in entertaining fantasy adventure stories that contain dark sorcery, mystery and intrigue, Debbie Viguié and James R. Tuck's *Mark of the Black Arrow* will most likely be of interest to you. It's a fluently written novel that will chill and thrill you in equal measure.

Good and thrilling fantasy entertainment!

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**Rhoda says**

This review was originally posted on <http://www.strupag.com>

First things first, prior to reading this book my knowledge of Robin Hood was purely from films and tv programs (anyone else remember Maid Marion & Her Merry Men from CBBC? I loved that show!). So while I know the general story of Robin Hood, it's more than likely that my knowledge is heavily skewed by Hollywood!

I know there are a few Robin Hood 'retellings' about - *Scarlet* is one I'm particularly keen to read sometime soon - but this has been my first venture into Sherwood Forest.

Following the death of her parents, Maid Marion has been brought up by her uncle, King Richard. She's a valued member of the court and often taken into her uncle's confidence. However, evil is threatening the church abroad and King Richard leaves England on a crusade to tackle the threat, in his place leaving his brother, Prince John who had formerly been exiled to Ireland.

This much, at least, I knew.

The twist comes when Prince John enlists the help of a seemingly non-human Sheriff of Nottingham. The Sheriff uses dark magic and shadowy creatures to break the common people and aid John in usurping King Richard.

While Prince John's tyranny starts with raising taxes, it's not long until he and the Sheriff unleash disease upon the common folk, resulting in death and despair.

This is where our heroes come in - Robin Hood, Maid Marion, Will Scarlet, Friar Tuck... they all band together to try and protect the people in King Richard's absence. When it becomes apparent that they are fighting evil, dark magic they realise they might just have to do things a bit differently.

Honestly, I struggled with the start of this book. I think it was the scene setting, getting introduced to characters etc. While it was probably perfectly well done I was just waiting for the action to start. I felt it dragged a bit and consequently it took me longer than I'd have liked to "get into" the story.

That said, once things got going I really enjoyed this read. It does very much read like the first book in a series, which is obviously what it is. It feels like it's setting everything up, slowly building the story. By the end of the book though I was absorbed, enjoying it and wanting to get on to the next one... unfortunately there's a year to wait for that though.

One thing I particularly liked about this book was the way that legend and folklore were intertwined in the story. My heart skipped a beat when I saw Gaelic being used in the book (more than once) and reference being made to folklore I grew up with. I genuinely really enjoyed this aspect of the book, it felt thorough and well researched, yet natural to the storyline.

All in all, once I got into this, I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed the twists on the Robin Hood stories that I'd been familiar with. Honestly though, I think the next two books are going to be where all the action is and I'm definitely looking forward to reading them!

If you'd like to get your hands on a copy of this book, there is currently a Goodreads giveaway running. I

believe it's open to the US, CA and GB and ends next week. You can enter here. This review was originally posted on

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## **Jordan says**

Dark days have come to Sherwood. King Richard has sailed for the Holy Land to do battle with the forces of darkness, taking with him the best of England's strength. In his absence, darkness has taken root across the land aided by the would-be king John and his right-hand, the demonic Sheriff of Nottingham. Those loyal to Richard and the forces of light face an uphill battle as they try and protect the innocent from the heavy hand of the usurper. A man can be killed for standing against the king, but a legend? A legend can inspire hope even in the darkest of times. It is time for the Hood to once more protect the people of England....

Just when you thought you'd seen every incarnation of the Robin Hood tales imaginable, Debbie Viguie and James Tuck pull this out of the hat. This time around John is no petty tyrant, concerned only with how much gold he can ring from the people and aided by cruelly efficient human agents. This time John is a servant to the forces of darkness, determined to break the spirit of the people and deliver all the world to darkness. Unless, of course, our heroes can stop him....Enter Robin Longstride, youngest son of Richard's right hand. He's more at home hunting in the forest than trying to fill his father's shoes, but with the elder Longstride off to the Holy Land Robin hasn't much choice. The only bright spot in being called to the castle is the chance to see the king's niece, Maid Marian. The king's ward since the death of her parents in a tragic fire, Marian was supposed to serve as an adviser to John in Richard's absence. John...has a different idea. Robin's cousin, Will Scarlet, is far more comfortable at court than in the woods, but his task is far more dangerous--to stay in the usurper prince's confidence, saying nothing while horrors are perpetrated before his eyes. The book walks a bit of a tightrope between dismissing and wholly embracing the power of the Church, but I think that is appropriate for the time in which it is set. There were undoubtedly good monks and church leaders, like Friar Tuck and the Cardinal, but there were also brigands hiding in their ranks. Then too, it is politically incorrect (not to mention historically inaccurate) to cast the Crusades as a struggle between Good and Evil. Not that this book is all that concerned with historical accuracy--it is far more concerned with staying true to the traditional narrative, which is deeply flawed in historical terms. King Richard spent little time in England at any time during his reign, and certainly little resembled his benevolent character from most Robin Hood tales. John did die in Nottinghamshire, but it wasn't his headquarters. He was just passing through when he took ill. I'm not saying this is necessarily a weakness to the book, or even that I'd take it a different direction if I wielded the pen, just that like most Robin Hood legend it smacks far more of fiction than it does history. It was an unusual tale, but very fun. I look forward to the publication of the rest of the trilogy with great anticipation.

CONTENT: Strong, occasionally disturbing violence. Some crude language, mostly PG-13. Moderately-explicit sexual content. Strong occult content, from demons to necromancy.

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## **Michael woods says**

When Titan Books asked whether I wanted to read the first two books in the series I accepted straight away because they sounded like something I would really enjoy. However after reading the first one I'm left a little disappointed. The first half of the book started off with such promise but then it fell a little flat before picking up a little at the end.

A vast darkness is spreading. If left unchecked, it will engulf the world, and so Richard the Lionheart must depart England on a holy mission. In his absence, the safety of the realm is entrusted to his brother, Prince John. When the king departs, black sorcery begins to grip the land, threatening noble and peasant alike. Horrific creatures stalk the forests, yet the violence they commit pales when compared to the atrocities of men. A handful of rebels fight back, but are doomed to fail unless they can find a hero to lead them. Sherwood Forest is a place of magic, and Prince John and his allies are demons bent upon ruling Britain. The solstice draws close, and Prince John and the Sheriff hold Maid Marian, whose blood sacrifice will lock the prince's hold on the kingdom and the crown. Unless Marian can reach Robin with a magic artefact coveted by the enemy and entrusted to her by the Cardinal, the ritual will occur.

The first half of the book started off with such promise but then it fell a little flat before picking up a little at the end. I think the main problem I have with this book is that there is not enough Robin Hood. The title of the book has his name in it, so you would think that he is the main character, but he is not in the book as much as I hoped. Robin Hood is mentioned and you do get chapters with his POV but because the chapters are split between other characters you don't get much of Robin, and what you do get isn't very exciting apart from the end.

Apart from the lack of Robin Hood as a character and the slow middle section of the book, I did enjoy reading it. Both of the writers make you hate Prince John and make you love characters such as Maid Marian and Friar Tuck. This is my first time reading anything written by Debbie Viguié and James R. Tuck and I did enjoy the writing. The way they described some of the scenery and the forest was beautiful to read, and the way the action scenes were written kept me glued to the page.

Even though I didn't fall in love with this book, I did enjoy it and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to read an enjoyable fantasy book. I have the second book in the series so I will be definitely be checking that out soon. I hope that there is more Robin Hood and a more exciting middle section.

I rate this book 3/5 stars

\*\*\*I was sent a copy of this book by the Publisher to review. Everything in this review is my own honest opinions.\*\*\*

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## **Kathryn says**

I love the story of Robin Hood. I have a hard time picking up books that re-write the story (though, really, they are pretty rare, unlike movie adaptations). I managed to find one series I adored, so I was a bit hesitant to pick up this one. Rather glad I did.

This book was different from the first one I mentioned in that it is truly fantasy-based. I admit I had some stumbling moments over some of the character names (Robin wasn't Robin of Locksley in this book), but once I re-associated, I felt the pull and flow. The different characters all stand out, strongly, in their own way. While there is definitely a main character, the other characters are just as fully developed and strongly portrayed as the main characters. This is true even of the known characters (Little John) that see little actual page time in this first installment. The addition of a supernatural element to the story of Prince John is an interesting take, and one done well.

I definitely enjoyed this book and plan on continuing the series.

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## **Becky Lewis says**

Electrifying, Terrifying Story of Good vs. Evil...

A tale dark as Sherwood Forest itself, Robin Hood-Mark of the Black Arrow is full of the blackness of supernatural evil, lust for power, witches and demons. There are those who know the right, but will they stand up quickly and strongly enough to stop its spread before all of England is overtaken and eventually, the world?

This book is not the Debbie Viguié to which I am accustomed reading (and she does have a co-author, James Tuck). The horror parts reminded me of Ted Dekker's style. The language and some risqué scenes cause me to rate the book a PG-13, a new thing for me. With that caveat in mind, the book should appeal to a wide range of readers.

Reminiscent of today's music talent shows, at the end, I felt like a judge who rises to say, "Great job!! You've taken a popular song (in this case, well-known story) and truly made it your own!"

I love how Tuck and Viguié grow their characters to become a semblance of the legends we know, but so much more developed and complex. I was kept wondering, how are they going to tie all this together to make it into an acceptable facsimile of the tale from old? But skillfully weave together the various characters they do, from Maid Marian to Friar Tuck to Little John and Will Scarlet, etc.

The calling of Richard the Lion Hearted and Robin Hood and his helpers, and all who would fight evil, is best summed up by King Richard before he leaves: "Evil lives in this world, and every day it walks the earth, growing stronger. We have an opportunity. ...a duty to vanquish it now before it consumes everything. If we don't, the world will be covered in darkness, and there will be nowhere anyone can run to be safe..." "Every war is waged on three battlefields. The earth itself, the human heart, and the realm of the spirits. Every so often the three battlefields merge into one." This may be more true than we realize.

This is an electrifying, terrifying story of good vs. evil. Like many good stories, it is too involved for one volume, and necessitates volumes II and III to complete the saga.

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## **Katherine says**

Bringing alive the myth of Robin Hood with a setting of sorcery and dark magic was a lure that I simply could not resist. The idea of the sometimes child-friendly Robin and his men fighting against not just Prince John, but an evil that is backing him, is intriguing and something that holds promise for a great story.

The start of this was a bit of a slow build. The story is set just before Richard the Lionheart heads away on his famous Crusades, and we get to learn of each of our characters. They have very different life circumstances, and for the start of the book they sometimes have stories that don't even yet intersect. At times history of who they were and how they came to be had to be laid out. It was interesting but at times a little slow. It builds up a good set of what is happening and who is involved, but it does take a fair amount of

time.

Once things were settled in place and the action started things really took off. I was fascinated to see how the group would work and what they would do, and the story really just runs with the idea. I liked that this Robin was so untested and required both confidence to actually lead, as well as the learning how to excel in the situation he had been thrust into. I equally enjoyed that this book does not simply focus on Robin; each character is of importance and has their own story and their own role. From watching Marian and Will spy from within, to following how Friar Tuck and Alan worked out in the world, it was a woven dance of different people working to the same end.

I hope that the next book takes the time to clear up a few things. There was a setup in the prologue of Robin and how he had unusual beginnings, but we don't really ever learn about it again. As well, there were some characters mentioned and looked at that never seemed to find their place or truly contribute to the story yet. With any luck it is simply that these were story points that mad more sense to look into in the second book and I will soon get to see those things answered!

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### **Sarah says**

I love Robin Hood and I love fantasy books about magic and demons so combining the two should have created a book that I would automatically love. Come on Robin Hood fighting a demon Sheriff Nottingham, that sounds pretty epic right?

Unfortunately this one really didn't work for me and I'm left feeling really disappointed. I made it just over 120 pages in which in my opinion is giving the book plenty of time to grab my attention but it never did. Every time I put it down I was happy to walk away for weeks (or months!) at a time and I had to force myself to go back to it.

I think my main issue was how slow this was, I get that it's the start of a series but when it's taken over 100 pages for King Richard to leave on his crusade and we've still hardly had any information about the demon side of the story what have we actually been reading? Basically 100 pages of really long winded, drawn out detail on a story that most people are already incredibly familiar with.

None of the characters stand out and quite frankly I don't care enough to keep reading in the hope of finding the good part.

Obviously looking at other reviews of this book I'm in the minority here - pretty much everyone else has rated it 4 or 5 stars - so don't let me put you off trying it. Hopefully you'll be one of the many who enjoy it & I'll just stay here alone in my little corner of Goodreads wondering what I'm missing!

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