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The Barnes Noble Review

In the second installment of Alex Archer's Rogue Angel saga, which features protagonist Annja Creed (spiritual descendant Joan of Arc and her fated successor as "champion of the good"), the intrepid archeologist sets off to find Solomon's Jar, an invaluable biblical artifact that King Solomon allegedly used to entrap the numerous demons he used to build his temple in Jerusalem.

With the help of her enigmatic mentor, a centuries-old man named Roux, Creed sets off to verify if the Jar -- believed to be forever lost at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea -- was in fact recovered. Following leads from Peru to the Netherlands to Israel to Brazil, Creed struggles to stay one step ahead of gun-toting factions (including Russian mobsters, English cultists, and the fanatical followers of a charismatic kabbalist) bent on finding and exploiting the Jar's supernatural powers. But once Creed locates Solomon's Jar, will its intrinsically evil powers influence her resolve to do God's will?

Solomon's Jar Details

Date : Published September 12th 2006 by Gold Eagle

ISBN : 9780373621200

Author : Alex Archer (pseudonym) , Victor Milán

Format : Paperback 346 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Fiction, Adventure, Paranormal, Action, Mystery

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From Reader Review Solomon's Jar for online ebook

Casia Courtier says

Okay, I was actually very disappointed with this one. Rogue Angel is a series of scifi/fantasy books that come bimonthly. It's kind of like the scifi/fantasy version of a Harlequin romance only you get the same main character and a different adventure with every book. I read the first book, Destiny, and fell in love with the female archaeologist sword weilding badass. Seriously, she's like modern day Joan of Arc meets Lara Croft meets Indiana Jones. Pretty badass.

Well, this book was a bit more bleh than the first. The first book had a French mythological creature mystery. This one dealt with the more religious and spiritual aspect of Annja Creed's job. Now, this isn't something that bothers me. What bothered me was just the basic story.

Annja was great, sure a bit stereotypical or maybe too perfect, but I like that about this series. It isn't supposed to be some kind of great fictional work. It is fiction meant to entertain and she entertains me. She may not for others, but she does for me.

What I had serious problems with was the convoluted way Annja traveled from Point A to Point B, etc. It felt choppy and not seamless. I found myself flipping back a few pages to see where the destinations were even mentioned. I'm not saying that the characters needed to announce everytime they were to fly to another exotic place, but it felt like for this story, it would have made following it easier. I felt if we had stayed in one location, not four or five, the book would be easier to follow and more enjoyable.

Aside from that, it wasn't too bad of a story. I couldn't get into any of the "bad guys". They seemed to just be there for the sake of her needing to use her sword. The action was good, but felt like a Michael Bay movie at times... explosions! So, yeah, wasn't happy about this one.

I feel that if you were to continue this series or even start it, skip this book. It wasn't worth it for me. Now, am I going to stop the series because of this book? No, I like Annja. I want to see more of her.

Ithlilian says

I thought this series had everything: mystery, action, intrigue, and strong characters. I couldn't have been more wrong. Solomon's Jar is full of action, and that is it. There is a plot, but it is so thin it can barely be considered a plot. Solomon's Jar surfaces, the main character goes to find it and keep it safe. Along the way people try to kill her. That's it. No mystery about ancient civilizations, no character growth, just one long chase scene. I was bored from the first 5 page long action sequence. Beating up bad guys is not enough to make a novel, not by a long shot, and I am extremely disappointed after loving the first book so much. This novel just feels like a cheap imitation of Destiny. Actually, it barely even feels like the same series. I see that there are more books in the series, but I will not give it another chance.

Joy says

I know it's not PC to say a book appeals to a gender but I really think the reason the stars are so low with female reviewers is that this is a female hero written for a male audience. Annja is very much a Lara Croft without the money and gadgets.

Except for the magic sword of Joan of Arc she doesn't have a were-animal/vampire boyfriend and she doesn't go gun blazing with some supernatural every other chapter or fall into bed with one. There ARE a lot of gun battles (which I found too predictable in their construction and annoying.) The quest has so far been plotted around one magic antiquity and there are no supernatural characters but there is some magic. Annja is only coming to terms with being chosen to fight evil and is faced continually with the dilemma of when to call in the sword for slaughter and when to just use her extensive martial arts to get away.

Writing is a bit choppy with missing seques that could help make the transition between actions clearer. Still I'm giving this a chance and moving to book 3.

Choko says

*** 4 ***

A movie in your mind indeed!!!

Annja Creed, our adventurer archaeologist who also wilds the sword of Joan of Ark for the "Good", has come to believe that the rumors of the discovery of Solomon's Jar are for real. This fabled jar is the one in which the biblical King Solomon bound the world's demons after using them to build his temple in Jerusalem, according to some traditions. So, she sets on its trail, but ever since she has been chosen to be a warrior for the Good, she seems to be a beacon for bad guys and evil doers, who would love nothing more than to erase her from existence. However, our young lady is much more resilient than she should be, having something to do with the magic sword giving her some more strength, endurance and some luck:)

There are some pretty gruesome scenes, a lot of action and the requisite myths and legends, which the authors get to spin their way eventually. I love it and would recommend it to all who want just some fun and entertainment, no angst, deep characters or very much to ponder over. :):):)

I wish you all happy listening - if you are going to do audio books, it does not get any better than the Graphic Audio Productions:)

Ruthie Cynside says

I mainly read this book because I liked the first one so much. Scenes from the first book was like stepping back in time and watching Buffy on TV for the first time.

I know, I know, a LOT of people say the series was awful; you'd wonder though, where are all the people who used to watch it? Well, I was one of them, and I enjoyed it - - well, some seasons were good, others were downright deplorable. But I was a teen, and you know what they say: the young have terrible taste. But they certainly know how to have a good time.

So, I opened this book and expected the same vibe, same flow, and I have to say I was thoroughly disappointed. It was all I could do to keep reading.

The story felt disjointed and empty. Some scenes would start out running, and bam! High kick there, punch there, slash here, and in the middle of all this commotion, I wanted to either riffle back and check whether I was actually on the right page OR flip forward toward the end of the, err, swashbuckling. The hitting and kicking and slashing went on and on. Yet, not even Annja's internal dilemma and emotional musings could put much motivation or color into the aftermath.

Then there was the pale English rose, uh, thorn, urm, boy. What? Was he just along for the ride? He threw nary a single punch, not a bit of intelligence, excuse me, information, I mean. And yet, she liked him. An adorable terrier companion that talked would have been better. And adorable. And understandably incapable. I mean, ruff, ruff.

Now, the plot. It was right there. Like a two-man stand up comedy act, the first one already set up the joke, all it needed was the second to give the punchline. Then, pffft. If one were to think about it. The essential plot was good, the twists nifty. However, the scenes were handled quite awkwardly that the plot was hardly identifiable. No, wait, it was narrated by the short, stocky Russian at the end.

I've just started the next book as I'm determined to give this series a chance. Despite all my rantings, it is my hope that the next reader will enjoy what and see what I failed to see.

Al says

Pretty much a simple plot. Annja wields the sword of Joan of Arc so she fights evil. Chasing after Solomon's Jar for no apparent reason. People stand in her way, some she kills, some she doesn't. Fun pseudo-history and throw-away villains.

Again the Graphic Audio stuff is annoying with their loud, obnoxious, background noises. Fight scenes are especially bad with generated people yelling in the background and music adding to the idiocy. Seriously, stop!

Ines says

Annja Creed seems more comfortable in her skin as God's chosen new holder of Joan of Arc's sword. She still struggles with believing in the supernatural, but she decides to try and find the Solomon's jar, which appears to have been found at sea. This search takes her to the Netherlands where she meets a British archeologist, and they are not the only ones in search for the jar as they fight off the Russian mafia, cultists and other fanatics that want to get their hands on the artefact.

I liked this story better than the first, probably because the plot was clearer. Nevertheless, I felt it ended in a odd way and too fast after so much time running after the jar. I enjoyed that Annja had a companion for this story that kept her company and helped her feel more secure of herself. As always, the audiobook by Graphic Audio is awesome.

Talizmyn says

Solomon's Jar begins on a stronger note than the first book, and a lot of that is due to having the groundwork already prepared, from the first novel. The writing quality may have taken a few steps up, as well, but that could easily be my own imagination. There is definitely more focus on describing locations,

but that's taken almost to excess as well. (It's just not that interesting.) I also want to note that this sequel is a bit more *graphic* when it comes to violence, than the first novel - there is a lot more blood and death. If that's not your cup of- well, "cup of tea" really wouldn't be the most appropriate phrase to use here, would it?

We start off with **Mary** Annja running for her life - she is being chased by various goons just like in *Destiny*. The Bad Guys are bad, because we are told they are, and that's about the extent of their personalities. The plot itself, too, feels more like a movie script; the motivations of Mary are mystifying at best. She hears about Solomon's Jar and off she goes to find out more from the person with the jar, who lives in the Netherlands, for a reason that seems very close to "just because". While there she gets attacked, once again, after walking into a shop. And again shortly after that when visiting a home, as a guest. It's definitely getting that "Monster of the Week" feel to it all.

I say the novel feels like a movie script, and the main reason for that is that... it's action placed over a tissue paper plot. It's all about Mary showing off her body and Elite Fighting Skillz (that she obtained from some place or another.) Fight after fight she is proving she is sexier, deadlier, and can best all of these big trained professionals while she Saves the World. There is also repeated mention on her lack of being out of breath while doing all of these activities, while everyone else seems to be tiring and struggling to keep up. Nothing can go wrong for Mary!

I do find it odd that the main character has **changed so much** between the first and second novel. In *Destiny*, Mary was very much against killing the Main Villain, despite how he tried to kill her on multiple occasions. In Solomon's Jar, she's waving that sword around like an expert, killing off random lackeys as she sees fit, and all without even an afterthought. Here's one example..

"She knew she had every right to take their lives if they raised their weapons against her."

And all I can think is "What?! Who did *Destiny* Mary get replaced with?" This is her line of thought regarding random protesters from Jerusalem that (for some reason) began chasing her down. Seriously, this book is all random trivia, chase scene, fight scene, talking of Solomon's Jar, and then repeating the process ad infinitum. She has Joan's sword but when did that give her the right to kill anyone? I'm sick of being constantly reminded of her perfection and flawlessness.

Mary Sue is perfect, and Mary Sue is boring.
Convenient Plot Device is written off as being "her destiny."

There are some phrases and situations I found so genuinely funny that I laughed aloud. It's unfortunate that those situations were so few, and the plot so heavily garnished in graphic fights and walls of text that do nothing to move the story along and keep interest. I found myself skimming over so many pages of fight scenes or what felt like textbook pages about Solomon's Jar that it seemed like such a waste of time.

So.. if you buy this book as *Rogue Angel: Renaissance*, where you're getting three books for the price of one.. go for it.; It's a good deal if you want to check out the series and see if it's for you.

I won't be coming back to it, though - I didn't even finish the last book in this trio. It's just not for me.

Samuel McCord says

Lost momentum to finding more of the series.

Sarah says

Rogue Angel: Solomon's Jar is the second book in the Rogue Angel series, which is written by a team of authors known as Alex Archer under the Harlequin label. At the time of this writing, there are 43 books in the Rogue Angel series - quite the fruitful reading journey if you enjoy series!

In Rogue Angel: Solomon's Jar, Annja Creed (who is Joan of Arc's descendant, or successor) is on a mission to track down the real Solomon's Jar, of which rumors had said it was last spotted somewhere in the Middle East. Since Annja is on a mission of God (or for the good of mankind, as Annja often says), she hopes to claim the artifact to prevent it from falling into the hands of a person interested in using the jar to summon demons for personal gain.

On her journey, Annja encounters members of a cult and other religious zealots who try to obtain Solomon's Jar, but also befriends a few allies that share Annja's same interests for the good of mankind.

Annja's character is like a female Indiana Jones on crack. Her background as an archaeologist, as well as her fighting skills (not to mention Joan of Arc's sword she can pull out of another dimension on demand) make Annja the ultimate bad-ass. Rarely does Annja find herself in a predicament she can't fight her way out of. Also, Annja's unmatched beauty, intellect, and adventurousness is reminiscent of Tomb Raider's Lara Croft.

In addition to being jam-packed with action and adventure, Rogue Angel: Solomon's Jar is chock-full of accurate and descriptive details about history and archaeology. The amount of research and knowledge invested in the writing of this novel is evident, which is surprisingly unexpected given the series' Harlequin label (the king of mass-production).

Overall, this novel is fun, entertaining, and full of extensive knowledge on mythical and historical entities.

For more book reviews, please visit <http://dreamworldbooks.com>.

Robin says

Yes, yes, yes, it's predictable. Yes, yes, yes, it's fluffy and full of fighting and a fair to middling level of violence. No, it's not always believable and no, it's not a meticulously researched piece of historical or archeological fiction.

It's not supposed to be, nor does it make any claims to be and critiquing it for being what it is is akin to going to MacDonalds and giving the Big Mac and fries a bad review for not being flawlessly prepared sirloin.

Really?

This is only the second instalment in a series just beginning to discover whether or not it has a stride to find,

never mind finding its stride yet. The main character at least acknowledges the very the preposterousness of being the spiritual successor of Joan of Arc and struggles with the notion that she is somehow a Champion of a Power of Good, nevermind God, she has been rather determinedly and politely ignoring since leaving the Catholic convent where she was raised.

Less quippy and less supernatural than a Buffy (a comparison acknowledged in the book itself - hardly surprising since one of the original writers who falls under the house name of "Alex Archer" is Mel Odom, who has written for the Buffy the Vampire Slayer novel series) but less cool, confident and rich than Lara Croft, the main character of Anja Creed is painted as something of a more approachable heroine. Let's face it, however - character development is secondary to action, and happens largely through exposition through the course of plot reveals and action across books written quickly by various authors over half a decade.

If you're looking for deep, why in the world would you pick up a serial adventure fantasy that's published with lightening speed? If you do, and are disappointed, you have no one to blame but yourself.

This does not mean, of course, that there is no lesson to be learned - as one of the Grande Dames of Fantasy one pointed out, one of the reasons that Sci Fi and Fantasy remain so popular is perhaps because they are one of the last bastions of literature in which Good and Evil do overt battle and - generally, if after some hum-dinger knock-down-drag out altercations, Good more or less wins the day and limps off into the sunset, ready to battle on in the next tale.

In that sense, the Rogue Angels series delivers - a woman with a religious history who has essentially turned to academia and a secular notion of personal ethics is pulled into a series of conflicts which essentially demonstrate the historical but ongoing (and one must presume) eternal and supreme grapple between Ultimate Good and Ultimate Evil in which the smaller ethical and moral behaviour choices of human kind may or may not truly figure. In the midst of violent melees, Creed ruminates on the revulsion-fuelled nausea her sometimes violent calling brings on her, and questions her moral rights and obligations (the good of the many vs. the good of the individual) even as she's cleaving gummy organ bits from their former possessors' rapidly cooling and suddenly deceased earthly containers.

Action, check. Gore, check, check...occasionally several more checks. Moral quandaries and fibre, check, check, check. Some moderately accurate introduction to basic history and mythology? Check. Male writers writing about sexist males who are verbally put down by a woman? Check.

As adventure brain candy goes, Rogue Angel gets the job done, most of the time. What does it lack, IMHO? Contextually flowing humour. Where many of the heroines in the Paranormal/Urban fantasy genre seem to be almost too snarky, too quippy, all of the time to the point of using humour as a weapon, Anja Creed is so uptight she verges on dour. Like her counterparts in other P/UF series, it's partly the chip-on-the-shoulder factor, but sometimes this character seems wound so tightly one wonders that she doesn't push the carbon remains of her food so quickly through the entire sedimentary process in her own body, that she ends up pooping diamonds enough to fund her archeology research.

Surely in Spider's Stone, with trickster Anansi, even with the dark powers which must come to bear (if the Sword and Anja are doing to be needed) there will be some humour???

Karen says

I'm finding it hard to believe that she can't seem to go anywhere without having someone try and kill her. I don't think there is a single location in the entire course of this book that she left without some fight forcing her to disappear before the authorities arrive. The fight sequences are very detailed and imaginative and she seems to get as much as she gives in some of them so it's not like she's this awesome fighter that no one can beat, it's just that she spends so much of the book doing it.

I'd also like to see more of her research. In this book she spent all this online research time on an individual and I enjoyed learning about that character through her research, but so far in these two books her research on historical situations and artifacts comes almost exclusively from newsgroups (which, much like Wiki, must be verified by additional sources to be considered valid) and from individual accounts from mystical characters that just happen to come in contact with her. As an archaeologist, this is a fairly one-sided way of doing research. I understand it's boring in such an action packed book to throw in hours of research time, but I enjoyed it in *The Historian*.

It escaped my original notice that these books are put out by a romance publisher so I'm happily surprised that there is very little in the way of steamy scenes.... so far. I worry that like a few other series I've read in the past that this will change as the series goes on.

I think I'll read at least one or two more books to see if there is anything I can enjoy further in the series, but so far I haven't found any over-arching story line that seems to be pulling on me which could lead to the books becoming formulaic as she races from one mystical artifact to another fighting "Evil" along the way.

Timothy Mayer says

The Rogue Angel series continues with *Solomon's Jar*. In this episode, It begins with Annja Creed outrunning mercenaries in South America. The novel opens with her archaeological research in an isolated village near the Amazon. Men With Guns show up and threaten to kill the entire village unless they reveal Annja's location. Before the desperadoes can get to work, Annja summons her sword and swings into action. Plus points for coming up with the most disgusting mercenaries this side of the Katanga succession. Naturally, Annja escapes and carries on her work.

After a brief meeting with her mentor Roux, she's off to Isreal in search of the legendary Jar of Solomon. Legend has it that King Solomon imprisoned a group of demonic beings in a magical jar and forced them to build his temple. Irregardless of the truth of it, someone has found a jar which resembles the one of history and someone else is willing to kill to get the artifact. Annja soon ends up in Amsterdam, where she meets an Englishman named Aidan Pascoe who spends the rest of the book with her running after/from the bad guys.

The book turns into a splatterpunk novel at a few points with gruesome descriptions of the killings carried out by the adversaries. Annja is in the thick of it again. She's threatened by Deep Ecological Extremists, pursued by Russian Mobsters, and squares off against New Age Zionists. In the middle of the book, we are introduced to a kabbalistic Jewish lady named Tsipporah from New Jersey, who just happens to be residing in Israel. She serves as the commentator for the action at the middle point.

Solomon's Jar wraps in a Brazilian metal fooundry. All the major factions introduced manage to end up in

one location and shoot it out. The action is so over the top that it saves the novel. Just as one faction gains an upper hand, another shows to supplant it. I have to give the "Alex Archer" collection plus points for creativity in the remaining few chapters.

The second novel in the Rogue Angel series breaks no new ground, but it is a fun read. Exactly what was intended.

Dianne Owens says

Given my appreciation for the first book in the series and desire to read an action/adventure with mild supernatural themes, I figured that it was time to read the second Rogue Angel book.

GIST

Annja Creed has been the newest avatar of good for the past few months, but is still getting used to the workload associated with her destiny. When she learns that a bunch of morally questionable folk (including some nasty demons) are looking for King Solomon's Jar, the means to bind demons to one's will, the dangers will go beyond the physical.

THOUGHTS

As with the first book, Solomon's Jar is fast-paced and filled with its share of action sequences. This time around, the fights get more bloody and often fatal for those involved. Annja is posed with numerous moral dilemmas as a result, with the added involvement of Demons (new territory for her) allowing her to perceive levels of evil.

Annja is also accompanied by a well-spoken English Archaeologist for a good portion of the story, offering up a love interest and allowing her to see that one's attempts to work good in the world can often cause more harm. We also meet Sappora, a rather cool New Jersey Qabalist woman living in Jerusalem. She helps answer some of Annja's questions and offers put into perspective the words of wisdom that her immortal mentor Roux had offered soon after starting on her search for the jar. We also get the first glimpse into what Roux's former male apprentice is up to since Annja put the sword back together in the first novel.

I have very few criticisms of the book, but these were over-shadowed by the quick pace of the novel which never allowed me to feel bogged down. Some reviewers have complained about some gaps in the story, but I would suggest that these apparent "gaps" were simply a means for the author to avoid bogging the story down with rather boring scenes in what is supposed to be an action/adventure story. The pace also allowed for mild breathers to avoid combat fatigue as well oddly enough.

CONCLUSION

Folks looking for a fast-paced action/adventure book with mild supernatural themes will get their fill with this novel. There is more than enough threats for Annja to negotiate including the moral ones. We get character development, gun-play, melee and hand-to-hand combat, possession, Russian mafia (complete with idiotic minions), power-crazed Kabalist wizards, a smidge of romance, and more. It may not be immediate gratification, but it is one heck of a ride up until the conclusion.

Maria Dimitrova says

Very entertaining and untaxing story. In short it's perfect for a summer read :)

Annja is fun and courageous but still unsure in her newfound role. In that she reminds me even more of Buffy from the beginning of the show. The action sequences are well balanced by slower but in no way boring scenes that further the progress of the story. So if you're looking for something to help you unwind you should give Rogue Angel a try.

Terry Marine says

His second in the series. Lots of exciting fights, including a fight with a six-foot tall, hypnotized, blonde super-model. Oh, and she "beat up nerds." The end is corn, but the action is totally fun.

Mai-ana says

Oh why did I read this book. EVERY chapter her life is threatening and she has to fight her way out, and of course she is able to do even when attacked by more than one person holding a gun because they don't take aim! Worse one is when she is being attacked on the boat by a 'demon' possessed model who is a martial arts expert. Surely the noise of the fight would have caused the other person on the boat to come and investigate, but oh no that didn't happen. *apparently he was jumping off the boat as he knew it was about to get blown up and didn't want to save his model girlfriend*

The first book at least the mystery about La bête was interesting and kept my attention reading this book. This Solomon Jar mystery wasn't keeping my attention at all. One minute she would be in Israel and the next she would be in South America and I couldn't work out why! The mystery about the Monk that was hinted at at the beginning of the story sounded like it had more appeal than the Jar.

Again, she is just perfect at everything, do we need to be reminded of that every 2 minutes!

I am not sure I am going to bother with any more of this series

Shelly says

This seemed more disjointed than the first book in the series. At times I wondered how Annja knew where to go next on her quest because there would not be information given. She'd be one place. Something would happen. Then she'd be at another location with no explanation of how she knew that's where she needed to be.

Jordan says

This whole series has potential, but there's several big problems that just ran me off.

Problem 1: Annja is just too perfect. She's in her early to mid 20's and she is good at everything she does. She can fight with just about anything. She knows way too much history to be realistic and she is a renowned archeologist. The only thing she sucks at is shooting a gun. She is dreadful at shooting, probably worse than realistic, considering she has experience with guns.

Problem 2: Despite all the riveting action scenes, I just lost interest. It tends to get old after a while. She finds things she's not supposed to and people try to kill her for it. Same old same old.

Problem 3: Now, I normally don't care about the size of a series. The more the better. However, who writes a series with over 50 books in it. First off, wouldn't you get tired after a while. Many authors don't even write half that amount of books in their entire career. It just blows my mind. And wouldn't the audience get tired after a while. The same heroine in the same situations. I just... Can't.

This book is promising. I just can't do it. I'll most likely try again later. Maybe the rest of the series somehow changes. I don't know.

Cyndi says

Graphic audio? So cool! Thank you, Choko!!

Annja Creed is settling into her role as the new Joan of Arc. She is such a kick ass character!

In this book we have King Solomon's story entering. In the Tales of the Arabian Knights there are lots of stories about the jins and demons he trapped forcing them to do his bidding. Now Annja is trying to get to a jar o' demons before the Bad Guys get it.

Meanwhile she gets a new bit of romance.

Excellent book and I am so excited to hit the next one!
