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League of Archers

Tessa McMillan

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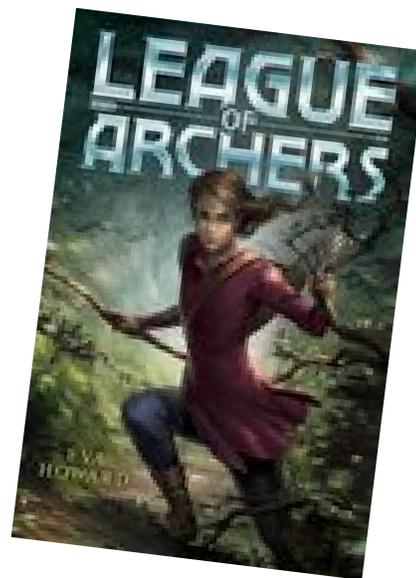
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Book Review

Title: League of Archers
Author: Eva Howard
Reviewer: Tessa McMillan
Publisher: Aladdin
Year: 2016
ISBN: 9781481460378
Pages: 288
Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding



Review

Elinor Dray can't handle being a novice nun. Mercifully, the Reverend Mother uses Elinor's archery skills to supplement the nunnery's scarce provisions. Escaping the abbey, Elinor rejoins her friends, the League of Archers, to hunt and daydream about Robin Hood's deeds. One night, Elinor meets a mysterious archer who is shot by a poisoned arrow. While the man dies in the abbey, Elinor learns he is Robin Hood and the Reverend Mother is Maid Marion. As if planned, the constable arrives to arrest Marion (still a wanted criminal) and take Elinor to Baron Lord de Lay's castle. The baron spreads the falsehood that Elinor killed Robin, which causes everyone to shun her. Wanting to clear her name and help Marion, Elinor escapes the castle. With the help of the League, Elinor searches for the remaining Merry Men to free Marion. Finding Friar Tuck, they raise a small mob to storm the baron's castle and rescue Marion from execution. Now wanted criminals, Elinor and her League take up Robin's cause.

There are many stories based on what happened after Robin Hood and his men finished their excusable plundering days. Most stories have clumsy structures based more on Hollywood fluff and less on the actual Hood legend. League of Archers, however, is a successful exception. Howard shows the real price you pay when playing a thief, even if it is done for righteous reasons. Trust and communication are lost when you are constantly stealing from others. Whether they like it or not, Elinor and the League must learn from Robin's mistakes as they slowly begin slipping into his dangerous lifestyle. Only by building on the solid foundation of friendship and integrity can they have a chance at surviving. League of Archers is a suspenseful, stunning start to a new middle-grade series.