



2018

The Forest Queen

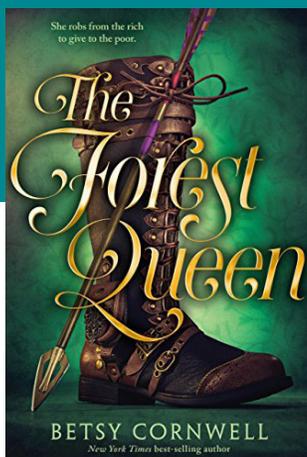
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Book Review

The Forest Queen

Author

Betsy Cornwell

Illustrator

Reviewer

Meagan Andrus

Rating

Significant Shortcomings

Level

Young Adult

Pages

293

Year

2018

Publisher

Clarion Books

ISBN

9780544888197

Sylvie is a noblewoman who loves the forest of Woodshire near her home and spending time in it with her best friend, Bird. When her older brother, John, becomes the sheriff of Woodshire, he plots to marry Sylvie off to some other faraway nobleman so he can maintain control of their estate at Loughsley. But Sylvie decides instead to run away to the forest with Bird and make her own destiny. Soon, they are joined by Little Jane, a girl with a tragic past and an unpromising future, a midwife named Mae Tuck, and a few prisoners who couldn't afford to pay the high taxes that John has imposed. In their forest home, Sylvie and her new family are happy. But John is willing to go to extreme lengths to capture Sylvie and put an end to her plundering of wealthy estates and homes in order to feed the poor of Woodshire and her forest community. It's up to Sylvie and her friends to right the wrongs her brother has done and see to it that justice is finally served.

This book is set up as a genderbent Robin Hood, which sounds appealing and intriguing. However, the poor writing, characterization, and plot make this book a big flop. The four main characters (Sylvie, Bird, John, and Little Jane) never really grow or change throughout the novel, and it's difficult to understand their motivations and desires for things. The plot is not cohesive and almost seems simplistic to the point of being aimed at younger readers, but there are several issues such as rape, abortion, suicide, and birth control that are briefly brought up which make the book inappropriate for younger readers. There is also a very weirdly veiled subplot of John being attracted to his sister Sylvie and wanting her to be with him romantically. All of these disasters came together in a poor execution of what could have been a fresh take on a beloved story, and readers would do well to pass over this book in favor of better options.

*Contains moderate sexual content and moderate violence.