



## Tuck

*Stephen R. Lawhead*

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"Pray God our aim is true and each arrow finds its mark."

King Raven has brought hope to the oppressed people of Wales--and fear to their Norman overlords. Deceived by the self-serving King William and hunted by the treacherous Abbot Hugo and Sheriff de Glanville, Rhi Bran is forced again to take matters into his own hands as King Raven.

Along the way Friar Tuck has been the stalwart supporter of the man behind the legend--bringing Rhi Bran much-needed guidance, wit, and faithful companionship.

Aided by Tuck and his small but determined band of forest-dwelling outlaws, Rhi Bran ignites a rebellion that spreads through the Welsh valleys, forcing the wily monarch to marshal his army and march against little Elfael.

This epic trilogy dares to shatter everything you thought you knew about Robin Hood as Stephen R. Lawhead conjures an ancient past while holding a mirror to contemporary realities. Filled with unforgettable characters, breathtaking suspense, and rousing battle scenes, Stephen R. Lawhead's masterful retelling of the Robin Hood legend reaches its stunning conclusion in "Tuck."

## Tuck Details

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Author : Stephen R. Lawhead

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## From Reader Review Tuck for online ebook

### Erika says

I'm not sure where to start with this review since I didn't make time in the past couple of years to review *Hood* and *Scarlet*, but the only reason I kept reading this trilogy was because of Robin Hood.

I love Robin Hood and I love this series. I don't love the writing of these books. Except, there's something that kept me reading and that was the need to get to the end and find out if *this* version has a happy ending.

I don't want to ruin it or anything, but, it does.

Lawhead includes a pronunciation guide with each book that's either useless, addicting (me), or frustrating, depending on your sensibilities. In his version of events, Robin Hood is really Bran ap Brychan, wayward Welsh prince of Elfael (pronounced Evile). If you've read as far as *Tuck* (and even if you haven't, I'll spoil it anyway), then you know Bran's a bit of an orphan. With his father dead, Bran has become king, but Evil King William II (son of The Conqueror) has reneged on his promise to restore Bran to his rightful throne. Bran's land and people are overseen by a nasty Bishop, Sheriff (Glanville, not Nottingham), and Marshal Guy de Gysburne; Robin's band of Merry Men--Will Scatlocke (*Scarlet*), Iwan (Little John), Brother Aethelfrith (Friar Tuck), Mérian, Alan a'Dale, and many others--manage to push their luck and best them at every encounter.

If the historical cast of characters seems almost familiar it's because they're almost the same as the typical Robin Hood interpretation, but not quite. Lawhead has created an 11th century historical context for the reality that could possibly have been the *real* Robin Hood, or, Rhi Bran y Hud (King Raven the Enchanter). And to give the appropriate mythos to his recreation, Lawhead wove Celtic mythology (King Raven) and even Celtic vocabulary to make his story even more believable.

*Tuck* is broken up into 5 parts and an epilogue, each preceded (except the epilogue) by a set of stanzas from a really catchy poem that reads a lot like Middle English and nothing like the style Lawhead has used for rest of the narrative. I flipped through the front and back pages trying to find out if he had taken this from someone else and I was just missing the citation, but I didn't find it. The writing style was lyrical and rhythmic with rhymes and catchy lines--really lively and wonderfully light. In short, it was nothing at all like the halting, awkward dialogue I think Lawhead meant to be archaic, but that came out too purple when it wasn't truly funny or touching. Unfortunately, the real moments are few despite the obvious amount of work and research that went into this trilogy.

I was never really sure in what direction Lawhead wanted his audience to go with these books. There are times, like certain deaths or climatic events, that are strangled of emotion and left me dismissing the situations with the same care Lawhead attended to his writing in these moments. At times funny, the narrative was also adventurous, but the elements never quite came together in a unison that would have spun this novel (and the other two) out of its element and into something much, much greater. It's not too much to ask for a dynamic, unhurried myth that is as much adventure as it is a tale of human triumph and tragedy. But I don't think *Tuck* and the King Raven Trilogy in general were meant to be anything more than an entertaining Fantasy read with a strong historical context for the casual reader to become engrossed in the would-be reality of a familiar myth.

The plot, always, was fascinating and streamlined enough that I forgot the awkwardness of the writing that

sometimes threatened to take over the tone of events. Even though I wasn't excited about Lawhead's writing, I really did love these books, and *Tuck* in particular; our mythical heroes are finally together, shooting arrows from out of the green towards unsuspecting evil-doers like the Sheriff and his cronies.

In this final installment, Bran and the Grelon (the folk he protects) are dejected and walking back to their forest sanctuary. King William II has just gone back on his promise leaving Bran the king of a ragtag band of survivors and refugees, the overload of a patch of forest surrounded by clever woodland lures and traps. His people are tired of unfulfilled promises and some would rather take their chances under the direct rule of William's men than suffer further disappointments following the hopeful and frustrated dreamer, Rhi Bran ap Brychan. Sure that his mission would be better served by staunch supporters and true believers, Bran allows those who want to leave go without reservation. Now halved in their numbers, Rhi Bran decides to travel north and ask for the help of his mother's relatives despite Mériān's suggestions to seek the aid of her father (within a day's riding distance) and the armies at his disposal.

And there is where the plot begins. Mériān goes to see her father by herself while Bran discovers his minor royal cousin, Gryffydd King of Gwenydd, has been jailed by another monarch and to even barter for the support of his extended family, Gryffydd (Griffith) must be rescued. Add to this roadblock Mériān's imprisonment by her brother who now presides over their dead father's realm and disbelieves his sister's accusations of kidnap at the hand of his in-laws. Rhi Bran's got quite a mess on his hands if ever he wants to bring peace to his Cymry home, but it involves a manhunt, a pack of wily mongrels, a sin-obsessed King, and whole lot of hand-crafted arrows.

Stephen Lawhead has added a unique perspective on the Robin Hood myth. After reading the entire trilogy, I can't imagine the mythos without this concrete historical context. I don't believe Lawhead's interpretation is the *only* and penultimate translation of myth-to-man version of Robin Hood, but, true to the belief of Thomas a'Dale, grandson of Alan a'Dale:

“so long as the singer took care to adapt it to his listeners: dropping in names of the local worthies, the places nearby that local folk knew, any particular features of the countryside and its people--it all helped to create a sense of instant recognition for those he entertained, and flattered his patrons.”

Stephen Lawhead, *Tuck*, hardcover first edition, p. 432.

And there, at the end of Lawhead's Robin Hood, the legend of the freedom fighter rises beyond the words of this novel, of this series, and meets the ghosts of Nottingham, Prince John, and Sherwood Forest--one adaptation among many, but the one we recognize the most and can therefore finally connect to Lawhead's Rhi Bran y Hud, King Bran the Enchanter.

PS For those of you into that kind of thing, Lawhead responds to hand-written letters and is a very, very kind man. :)

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### **Jade says**

This was a wonderful series! A little slow to start, but it was well worth it.

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### **Flora Smith says**

This is the third and final installment in Lawhead's retelling of the Robin Hood story. I enjoyed this one just as much as the first two. I love the way Lawhead puts this in a historical context and brings it to life in a way that it could have happened.

Tuck picks up right where Scarlet left off. Rhi Bran Y Hud and his followers are still on the run and trying to regain their realm. In the process there are skirmishes as well as undercover dealings that are filled with thrills and humor. There are no dull moments from start to finish. Friar Tuck works tirelessly in his quest to gain peace for Rhi Bran. His prayers for peace are definitely heartfelt and genuine. He is truly a man of God and for his people working to heal them body and soul.

Tuck can be read alone as you are caught up along the way as the story is told. But as the others are great reads I would recommend them all. Tuck, along with the others, is a great retelling of this story full of thrills, humor, sadness, and great deeds. If you enjoy a great fun read check out this series.

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### **Werner says**

With this volume, Lawhead brings his King Raven trilogy to a rousing conclusion! The general comments I made on the first two books apply here, too; but the emotional impact of this book nudged it into five-star territory. This is outstanding fiction of its type --a worthy capstone to a thoroughly excellent series. Lawhead has done himself proud here.

In all three books of the series, Bran ap Brychan --Rhi Bran y Hud-- is the central figure, the linchpin of the story. But as we saw much of *Scarlett* through Will Scarlet's eyes and he plays a key role in the plot, so here, our good-hearted and rotund title character often gives us our viewpoint, and plays a crucial role in the denouement. The author breathes new life into the familiar figures of all these characters of the legends, and more (including Maid Merian); he's also done his historical homework, to bring us a number of real historical personages made flesh under his pen. King William Rufus (who actually did lead his army into Wales) is an obvious example; but Baron Bernard Neufmarche (who really did rule in Hereford, and expand his territory into Wales), William's justiciar and adviser Cardinal Ranulf Flambard, and the northern Welsh king Gruffyd also step from the pages of dry history into vivid fictional life in these books. The interspersed "folk" ballads about "Rhyban Hud" in the text and the epilogue are Lawhead's own compositions, but they clearly reflect a good knowledge of the actual ballad tradition and how it was created and transmitted. And though I went into the reading of the trilogy convinced that no one could ever really know when Robin Hood lived (if indeed he did), I came away convinced that Lawhead's Welsh theory is actually the right one.

All the satisfactions of the best action-oriented historical fiction are here: an exciting, fast-moving story with genuine danger and suspense, told in accessible prose; strong characters that you connect to emotionally, clean romance, moral and spiritual sensibility and a clear sense of social justice, basic historical accuracy and well-integrated period detail, and a vivid sense of time and place. It does not exaggerate to call this trilogy a work in the tradition of *Ivanhoe*; if Sir Walter Scott were still alive, the publisher could probably have gotten him to pen some praise to quote on the book jacket!

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### **Vanna says**

I have to say, this is one of the most fantastic, well written books I have ever read! I've liked the rest of the series, but this book did a really great job of concluding it. I was quite fascinated at all the history behind it, and I think Lawhead researched the time period extremely well. As I was getting to the ending, I was so excited to know what happened next that I found myself reading till three o'clock in the morning and still convincing myself that I wasn't too sleepy to read another chapter or two. The suspense drove me crazy, especially when both sides were fighting continuously with only ten fighters on Bran's side and thousands on the other using different battle tactics. One of the things I have to say that really pleased me and separated this from a lot of Robin Hood interpretations was that Bran wasn't afraid to do what he had to. In a lot of Robin Hood stories, Robin Hood is sort of, well...a wimp, by being "noble" and trying so hard to never do anything to hurt even the worst of enemies to help the people. Bran had actually killed many Ffreincs, captured the sheriff, and was willing to take risks when he had to, but ultimately wanted peace and did what he knew was good for his people. This made him a very three-dimensional character that I could imagine. In fact, I thought the series fleshed out all the main characters, such as Tuck and Merian, and even some minor characters such as Baron Neufmarche and Lady Agnes tremendously. This is just a wonderful, wonderful book; I recommend this book and the entire series to everyone and would definitely say this would remain one of my favorite novels of all time.

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### **Liz Dean says**

Like the previous in the series, it's beautifully evocative of the forests of 11th century Wales. Lawhead places the Robin Hood legend in this place and period because apparently the Welsh were the experts with the longbow. They basically used the longbow to engage in guerilla warfare against the French army.

The characters aren't super strongly drawn, by far the strongest is still Will Scatlocke/Scarlet from book 2. Book 2 was the only book narrated in the first person by its main character, and Scarlet had a strong voice.

I was surprised to read that this whole series was Christian fiction! Especially in this book, about a friar, there is a lot of prayer and reference to Christian teachings, but I would never thought anything of it if I hadn't read that it was published by a Christian imprint of HarperCollins. It seemed appropriate for a medieval setting to have explicit references to Christianity.

Overall I enjoyed the series but I think you have to be pretty interested in either Robin Hood or medieval British history to be motivated to read all 3.

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### **Tori says**

Written for book club:

More desperate than ever to free his land from invaders, the Phantom Raven of the forest sets out once again to try his might against his adversaries. But with some surprising twists, and unanticipated hardships, can the group see it through to the end? The third and final installment of Stephen Lawhead's King Raven Trilogy, Tuck reunites readers one last time with Bran and his Grelon and their fight for freedom.

After King William turns traitor and refuses to give back Bran's throne, Bran realizes it must now come to war. But finding help for this new mission could be harder than he thought.

He first looks to his mother's family, helping them with their own kingship trials and troubles, and making some new friends on the way. But will they return the good favor, and lend some warriors to his aid?

Friar Tuck looks for a different and more peaceful way to end the fight. But it doesn't appear that their enemies are ready to give up just yet, as their plans are thwarted once again by the not so peaceful stewards of Effel. Can the Grellon stop a bloody war before it's too late?

While everyone else is off making and carrying out plans, Merion tries to pursue Bran to go to her father for help. Knowing her father has never liked her, and thinking this won't change after kidnapping his daughter, Bran refuses. But Merion stubbornly sneaks away to try her luck with it. But when she finds her brother on the throne instead, married to Bran's enemy Neufmarche's daughter, she finds a little more trouble than she bargained for.

The book has its ups and downs, its moments when I thought the author was brilliant and moments when I thought he shouldn't have done what he did. The plot is good, the characters deep and interesting, and twists that I thought good and not so good.

As always, the characters are what I look at in books. You can have a good plot, a good setting, and a good writing style, but if your characters lack, your book becomes flat and uninteresting. Much like a good movie needs good actors more than anything else, so a book needs good characters. Lawhead's characters bring the book to life. I felt I got a deeper look into Bran and Tuck, and the new characters that were introduced were all interesting and diverse. But in this book, I felt that he did some things with his characters that I deeply regretted.

For starters, he let some of the older characters fall by the wayside. Will and Odo, two of my favorites, were pushed nearly out of the book. After falling in love with them in Scarlet, the reader gets so little of them in Tuck that it was really a disappointment. To my surprise Merion and her adventures didn't get much coverage in the book. Then there was the issue of Baron Neufmarche, who in this book I thought completely unbelievable.

Other than the characters, there was the sprinkling of language throughout the book. Just enough to make me cringe every time I saw it. A completely unnecessary addition to a book.

Now, don't get me wrong, I thoroughly enjoyed the book and could see myself picking up the whole series again. There were a lot of great things in it as well.

For one, the themes. Justice, but mixed with peace when possible. Standing for what is right even when you're hope is getting lower and you stand alone. Forgiving your enemies even when they have caused you pain and loss. All of these are covered in the book, and are great lessons to be learned no matter what situation you are in. More than that, they are very Christian attitudes that are not only good, but necessary for us to understand and use in our lives.

Another great thing about the book besides good characters and themes is how it is written. It has a nice, steady pace and movement. Not an on the edge of your seat, I'm-going-to-die-if-I-can't-read-this-next-chapter-right-now type of book, but one that you regret putting down and easily pick back up again. And one that might very well be worth picking up again.

A quick, final overview of the trilogy as a whole: Great. Not amazing, not spectacular, but definitely better than just good, if you know what I mean. The King Raven Trilogy is worth picking up.

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### Nikki says

The conclusion to the King Raven trilogy is really no different to the other books of the trilogy. The strong point, for me, the thing I found most interesting, was the new interpretation of how the Robin Hood story

came about -- although I felt that the epilogue hammered that in maybe a little too much -- and not much else really grabbed me. Again, the writing is pretty good and once I settled down to read it I sped through Tuck in a couple of hours. If you want something easy to read and you like Robin Hood and you're not terribly threatened by a Welsh Robin, then this is definitely worth picking up. Lawhead's writing doesn't really come alive for me here, but nor is it terribly written. Beyond a couple of lines that made me cringe, anyway.

The story is pretty much the traditional Robin Hood, just a bit embroidered with details about Welsh conflicts, Welsh lords, Welsh places (as a travelling bard would have told/sung it if he made his way to Wales, I suppose!). If Lawhead intended this to be an entirely realistic story he should have departed further from the legends, because the things Robin gets away with are unbelievable. Which is, I suppose, some of the attraction about Robin.

The characters still fall relatively flat for me. I didn't feel any particular grief for the deaths, or gladness for the triumphs -- which is odd, considering that these are my people triumphing! For once. There was something very appealing about seeing the Welsh win the day, but... I much prefer it when books make my heart twinge a little, and I didn't get any of that here.

Still, it's a good conclusion to the trilogy, and I'm glad I read it.

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### **AndrewP says**

The third book in the trilogy and probably the best. As you can tell by the title, the most important character in this book is Friar Tuck. Although he plays the most important role in the events, it's still the story of Bran/King Raven/Hood and his small group of followers.

The story is completely wrapped up at the end of this book and the epilogue explains how this 11th Century tale became a legend associated with a later age and in a different location. i.e. Nottingham and Sherwood Forest.

I have to give Mr Lawhead credit for taking what little historical evidence there is and weaving a tale around it in the correct time period. This conflicts with usual tales of Robin Hood but actually makes a lot more sense. The location change to the march of Wales also works, as after all the Welsh were renowned for their archers for hundreds of years. Throughout the books he never uses the name Robin Hood. His Welsh name and title in these books is 'Rhi Bran y Hud', which one can easily imagine ending up as the familiar name.

Worth noting is that although this book is set in Wales, the language is kept fairly simple so there are no incomprehensible Welsh names. Sure, there are quite a few but they are all easy to handle. For purists, there is a pronunciation guide for all the odd spellings. Overall, a great series for history fans.

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### **Alex Telander says**

In Stephen R. Lawhead's conclusion to the King Raven trilogy, readers get to enjoy it from the viewpoint of the jolly and redoubtable Friar Tuck, who has been around since the first book, Hood, and on through the

second, Scarlet. But little has been seen in the abilities of this clergyman, until now, who is bravest and shines brightest at his most important moment.

It seems the Normans simply won't give up, and King Raven, also known as Rhi Bran Hood to the people of Wales, must muster not only his skilled foresters, but incite an entire revolt from his people, based mainly in his kingdom of Elfael. With the treacherous Abbot Hugo and the evil and bloodthirsty Sheriff de Glanville, it will take everyone working together to bring these Normans to their knees once and for all and send the firm message to King William the Red that King Raven and his Welshmen will not be crushed.

Lawhead rounds out the trilogy in a great way, bringing it all to a satisfying close, but still with plenty of action and subplots and complex goings on. Again blending the history with the Welsh mythology, it is a very enjoyable read seen through the eyes of a new character. If Hood was the tasty appetizer, and Scarlet the delicacy of a main course, then Tuck makes for a delicious and perfect dessert.

Originally written on March 12, 2012 ©Alex C. Telander.

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### **Kara says**

It seems a bit of a stretch to name this book after Tuck – here he is *a* main character but by no means *the* main character.

Still, he does contribute quite a lot to the plot, both with brains and brawn, and after some great stick wielding fight scenes, he manages to save the day by, of all things, giving the king a basic Accounting 101 lesson.

Robin Hood comes into his own as the merry trickster as he spends most of the book pulling off a hilarious con on a particularly bad tempered baron, complete with a lot of costume changes and bad accents.

Alan a Dale pops up to help out and I liked this version of the bard, losing and gaining accents, languages and looks at the drop of a hat, depending on what will work with his current audience- exactly as a wandering minstrel who wants to eat would.

Urgh - and then there is Marian.

Marian spends most of the book running around like a toddler on a sugar high yelling “*I'm helping!*” and managing to make things worse. Urgh.

Disappointing to her character not put to any use, but overall the story holds together.

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### **Rusty says**

Enjoyed this read a great deal but not as much as Scarlet. Tuck is a gentle, pious man who believes in justice and fairness. He tells the story in his own way. I felt that Lawhead had a little trouble getting into this character. Perhaps it's my imagination but I thought that he seemed more attuned to Will Scarlet! It was fun to read about the battles and how the long bow could stand against knights with swords and horses. Thank you Mr. Lawhead for more information about that topic at the end of the novel. However, anyone who reads this series should certainly finish with Tuck as it wraps up the story so delightfully well.

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### **Monica Davis says**

Tuck is the third and final installment in the King Raven story. The first book Hood was a solid 4 stars; the second book Scarlet was bit better, perhaps 4 1/4 stars. Tuck was a well deserved 4.5 stars. I thoroughly enjoyed the entire King Raven series; it's a nice treat when a series improves as it goes along. Lawhead is a gifted storyteller who weaves the tale of Robin Hood and his Merry Men into its own wondrous legend of adventure, heartbreak, passion, and determination within the early Welsh culture. It is truly a memorable work.

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### **Ashley \*Hufflepuff Kitten\* says**

I really don't have much to say for this book, except that Stephen Lawhead is an incredible writer. I actually choked up at the epilogue. And the Author's Note is very interesting -- this guy really does his research and, thankfully, seems to love what he does. As with most trilogies I loved, I immediately feel the need to go back and reread the first book.

Now off to watch one of my favorite versions of the story!

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### **Rachel says**

If you had told me this is how it all would end back when I was reading "Hood," I probably wouldn't have believed you. I probably would have laughed. Because that book was so dark, I almost quit reading it halfway through and gave up on the series even though I had probably a dozen friends, on and off the internet, telling me the series was awesome.

Yeah, my friends were totally right. The ending? SO good. I was pleased.

Anyway. This series still isn't my favorite Robin Hood retelling, but I did enjoy it. Yay! It was nifty having this book focus a lot on Friar Tuck, because I've always liked him a lot in basically every version of Robin Hood I've seen or read that includes him. But I think I liked "Scarlet" a little bit better.

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## **Jackie says**

The King Raven trilogy gets rare 5 stars from me. It was *that* good.

Suffice it to say, this is no run of the mill Robin Hood story. Richer, deeper, and well thought out. Lawhead did a fantastic job. I liked it far better than his Pendragon series and I really liked them too. This was better. Much better.

There are characters to love, characters to hate and even some you loved and hated at the same time. It felt natural to connect to the character and slip into the story itself.

I can't say much without giving spoilers and I'd rather not do that. This is a story that should be unfolded as Lawhead planned. I cannot in good conscience ruin that for anyone, even though I'm practically bursting at the seams to tell you *everything*.

Do yourself a favor, read this trilogy, you won't be disappointed. In fact, you will love it. I sure did.

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## **Justin Tyme says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was a satisfying conclusion to the "Hood" series. If you read it, don't stop at the conclusion, but take time to read the afterward. It lends credence to the historical background to the original Robin Hood story.

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## **Anthony Chavez says**

Definitely the best book of the trilogy.

I admit the trilogy was a bit hard to read at times, I am not a complete fan of Lawhead's writing style, like Ken Follett, it can be a bit long winded at times and get to be dry reading, but the story itself, the meat of it, the research and history infused into the classic tale, that's what kept me reading. And Lawhead, like Follett and the Pillars books, does it well, from the pronunciation guide at the beginning of the books to his author notes where some of the history behind his bringing this Robin Hood trilogy to be set in the Welsh lands comes out, you can tell the man did his homework and I am thankful for it.

But one of the best things about this trilogy to me is the main character of each story, from Rhi Bran to Scatlocke to Aethelfrith. It wasn't exactly like a story told from their perspective, but it focused on their perspective more than the rest of the Merry Men or Grellon.

My favorite touch of this third book that Lawhead adds is poetry. Tuck is broken up into 5 parts and each section begins with a very interesting catchy poem that, as your reading, continues a story that parallels the trilogy almost. The poem itself seems written in Middle English or is similar to it, and to me I kept wondering, who wrote this poem? Is it an actual early poem/song about Robin Hood or did Lawhead write it? It definitely didn't sound Lawhead-esque. It rhymed and was lyrical and really made the story more entertaining, and once you reach the end you realize it also foreshadowed the epilogue.

When reading or watching anything related to Robin Hood I oftentimes find myself searching for THE memorable characters that crossover from one to the next, the Little John's, Merian, Friar Tuck, etc. In this series after the first two books I was thinking to myself, "shucks, I guess Alan a'Dale isn't going to make an appearance in these stories..." then BAM! Out of nowhere he shows up, I have to admit it took me by surprise and I got a little giddy, he is a remarkable character and Lawhead did a beautiful job of writing him.

All in all Lawhead has added his unique perspective and twist on my favorite legend, that of Robin Hood. After reading the entire trilogy, I'm very glad to have read the historical gems he adds at the end, breaking down how revolutionary and deadly the longbow was at the time (especially when wielded by the Welsh). I can't imagine the story without it. The epilogue was also great, you have the trilogy, the meat of the legend and how it was created, and then the epilogue is how that legend lives on. Through Thomas a'Dale, traveling bard and songster, grandson of Alan a'Dale, the story travels to Nottingham and Sherwood Forest:

“so long as the singer took care to adapt it to his listeners: dropping in names of the local worthies, the places nearby that local folk knew, any particular features of the countryside and its people--it all helped to create a sense of instant recognition for those he entertained, and flattered his patrons.”

Stephen Lawhead, *Tuck*, p. 432.

Beautifully done, we see one adaptation among many that a minstrel plays, playing to the crowd, adjusting the story so the nobles would like it, but this is the one we recognize the most and can therefore finally connect to Lawhead's Rhi Bran y Hud, Bran ap Brychan, Robin Hood.

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### **Emmanuelle says**

The third installment in the King Raven Trilogy, *Tuck* did not disappoint. If anything, it was even better than the other two. This book is focused on Friar Tuck and the major role he played in the war.

Acting as the voice of reason, Tuck is seeking for peace, his only desire is to stop the blood bath that has been caused so far and to come in this war for the Vale of Elfael. And you know this is their only way out because of the few men they have on both sides. Even Marshal of Gysburne is ready to compromise to some sort of peace to save his men. And that's what I liked about this book.

First, you have Bran finding out a way to raise more men for his cause and he goes so far as planning the escape of the king to help him. You have nothing without nothing. Twice Bran has used this methods and twice he has been disappointed in the end. You cannot help but be angry at those two kings for not honoring their part or at least give back what was given to them. Their throne.

But what I loved most about this trilogy was that not everything was black or white. It's all about politics, about a misplaced pride, about who will rule Elfael. Between Abbot Hugo who doesn't want to give up his power and King William who doesn't want to appear weak in front of his subjects, many people has to suffer. And I cried tears of sadness and joy at the very climax of this book.

The best examples of this grey area in the book is probably Marshal Gysburne who didn't appear as evil as I believe he would be and King William, in spite of his hateful behaviour, is able to show mercy and he did. Those characters that you came to hate while reading the trilogy, are redeemed by their actions at the end of

the book. Not all of them are redeemable, of course. Some will remain evil and won't accept the resolution of the conflict as much as we might.

Anyway, *Tuck* is full of twist and turns, new characters are introduced (hinting at Alan A'Dale), full of suspense and tensions. You should really pick it up and read the entire trilogy because it's worth it and you could probably like it.

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### **Alicia says**

A thrilling conclusion to a most thrilling trilogy it was all I hoped it would be! I finally got all of the POVs straight (struggled with all the changing narratives in the first book, and somewhat in the second). This book tugs at the heart with emotions ranging from joy and admiration, to grief and despair and all the annoyance and frustration with some characters, and pity or loathing for others.

The plot was masterfully executed and hardly slowed down. The forest and its inhabitants came to life through Lawhead's vivid storytelling. I would have wished to have seen more of Scarlet, loving the previous book as much as I did (probably my favorite of the three). But Tuck, of course, deserves all the honors in his namesake book, my favorite friar to be sure:) Deaths were expected but not the characters I would have thought of, (making them all the more tragic). Overall I highly recommend the series and encourage any slogging through the first book (as I did) to persevere!

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