



Renaissance (Rogue Angel, #1-3)

Alex Archer

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Destiny

The myths of the past lead Annja Creed to France, where the terrifying legend of the Beast of Gevaudan hints at the unimaginable. What she discovers is shattering: an artifact that will seal her destiny; a brotherhood of monks willing to murder to protect their secret; and a powerful black-market occultist desperate to put his own claim to centuries-old blood money.

Solomon's Jar

Rumors of Solomon's Jar, in which the biblical King Solomon bound the world's demons after using them to build his temple in Jerusalem, are followed with interest by Annja. Her search for the truth about the vessel leads to a confrontation with a London cult driven by visions of a new world order. Annja embarks on a relentless chase to stop humanity's most unfathomable secrets from reshaping the modern world.

The Spider Stone

In the remains of an old Underground Railroad tunnel, a strange, encrypted stone reveals a dark secret of Africa's ancient past. Intrigued by the mysterious artifact, Annja opens a door to a legend bound by a terrible force. She is not alone in her pursuit of the impossible. Annja's odyssey into the Senegalese jungle becomes a desperate race to stop those eager to unleash the virulence of the Spider God.

Renaissance (Rogue Angel, #1-3) Details

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Author : Alex Archer

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From Reader Review Renaissance (Rogue Angel, #1-3) for online ebook

Janice says

Third story is complete and the series redeemed itself. Or maybe I was just in a weird mood when I read the second one. Anyway, back to being a very enjoyably read. Continuing on soon.

I've read the second story now and it's lost a star over all. Solomons' Jar wasn't bad, but the first story was better. One more to go in this set. Hopefully it heads back up, because the reason I picked this compendium up to begin with is I ended up with like, book 20, 'cause it sounded really interesting. 18 more like the first story would be fine. 18 more like this one would become work.

Well, hmm... I read the first of the three stories in this compendium, but I'm not going to read the next two immediately, so I guess I'll leave it on the currently reading shelf for now. At any rate, I enjoyed this more than I expected. Which is an odd reaction to have since no one was twisting my arm to make me read it. Although there are elements that might make me "shelve" this as fantasy, I think it's going to end up on the "action" shelf. It has more in common with Indian Jones than Tolkien. An enjoyable, fast-paced read with a solid plot and strong characters. I should get to the other two stories soon. I hope...

Melissa Robison says

This lists as Renaissance but really is a compilation of the first three books. I started the series in the middle and always wanted to get the beginnings read, too. I love this series. Action, adventure, occasional slight romance, mystical crap. Nothing to get hung up about. Reading equivalent of a good bag of popcorn. Enjoy it for the moment but nothing to think about later on.

Beth Knoll-Casey says

I loved this book. I would've liked to have seen the main character, Annja Creed, develop more of a relationship with another character, but perhaps that will come in another book in this mighty series. This book was action-packed and full of adventure with battles between the forces of good and evil and a dash of history. I enjoyed every page. I look forward to the next book in this series.

Samantha says

I love Annja and her adventures. You truly never know what's going to happen next. Her human connection with other characters is awesome. At spots it got a little slow, but hey archeology isn't all about running for your life every second!

Emily says

Combining the three first books, and I had already read the first, so I just skipped right through to #2. Ok adventure tale, same with the third book. I think I'm done with this series, though. The writing just isn't quite tight enough and it's fairly predictable.

Talizmyn says

I found the series while looking through Chapters in early December. The cover looked interesting, and the description on the back cover caught my attention. There were three or four books on the shelves, with no numbering on them, so I opened one up to figure out just what was available... It turned out that the book in my hands was one of the most current in the series, somewhere around number 30 or so. That in itself could be taken as a good sign for the series - something that's gone on for so long is sure to have *some* success.

Later that day I decided to look up the author and series on Goodreads, and perhaps order the first book, as an eBook. There is just *no way* that I would have room for a series that currently spans over 30 books!. It turns out the first books are not available anywhere, but I did come across Renaissance... which just so happens to be a "Collector's Edition" of the first three books, for the price of one. *Not bad at all*, I thought.

Through my searching I also found out that Alex Archer is the *house name* for the Rogue Angel series, and published by the Harlequin. (Hmm..) After the eighth book in the series it seems authors change, as well - I can't comment on that, though, as I have only read the first three, as a collection.

I find it easier to review each book separately, as I go.

Destiny by Alex Archer

From Goodreads

An ancient order tied to the Vatican . . . A blood fortune buried in the caves of France . . . A conspiracy of power, greed and darkest evil . . .

Archaeologist and explorer Annja Creed's fascination with the myths and mysteries of the past leads her to a crypt in the caves of France, where the terrifying legend of the Beast of Gevaudin hints at the unimaginable. What she discovers is shattering: an artifact that will seal her destiny: a brotherhood of monks willing to murder to protect their secret; and a powerful black-market occultist desperate to put his own claim to centuries-old blood money. Annja embarks on a high-tension race across Europe and history itself, intent on linking the unholy treachery of the ages with the staggering revelations of the present. But she must survive the shadow figures determined to silence her threat to their existence.

Well, for starters, the beginning of this book is very off-putting. It's one of those series that I can tell the writing style is going to bug me *endlessly*. The writing itself, too, was very awkward at times and often *told* me who Annja was, rather than *show* me through her actions. In this way I found it condescending, almost as if this book were intended for a much younger, and less intelligent, audience. As an added bonus, Annja is

the Maryest of all Sues. She has some type of martial art skills, can sense thugs tailing her, and was, apparently, taught most of this by nuns. All of this is told within the first few chapters, but none of this is really explained in a way that flows or makes sense. Half the problem is that we get the hefty dose of Exposition whenever she gets a moment in the midst of battle. 'Cause, you know, *breaking* up the fight scene for a little bit of Boring is the best thing to do when you want to keep your readers interested! Woo!

Another issue, and perhaps it is due to being in eBook format, was the odd word spacing in some places. At the start of a new section or chapter, there would be three or four words capitalized, and sometimes there would be a space after the first letter in the sentence. But not always. I got the sense that the main letter(s) may have been of a fancier font in the printed version and yet no one cared to fix it later on when made into an eBook. The thing is, though, it also appears in the middle of sentences. All of a sudden I would come across a word with a ran dom space added in the middle, making the reading slow and awkward. Plus the tense changes and weird use of is/are littered throughout... Ugh!

There are even a few instances where I wondered whether or not the author(s) were aware of their writing/voice. It's like I am being told a story buy someone who thinks both that they are clever, and that no one else can see the obvious path their story is taking. There is one instance where a sword magically disappears. I figured out where it went right away -it's not the first time it's been used in a story- but the characters hadn't a *clue* and argue about it for a time. Later on, while Annja is in a taxi, she starts to fall asleep and pictures herself holding the sword and.. The sword is in her hand!

I had to stop reading for a bit, there. Am I supposed to find that Not Completely Obvious? It's just getting silly. And what is with the exclamation point? I can't help but wonder what the story would be like told from her point of view, in her voice. It has to be *better than this*, right?

Annja herself is, as I mentioned, a Mary Sue. I have seen her in many, many stories and she has not changed at all. She is still perfect in mind and body, and turns the heads of every male in a hundred mile radius. Everyone wants her, and her goal is to correct the wrongs of the world. The supporting cast, Roux and Garin specifically, are not too much better. Their goals, even when expressed, are still not very clear. As with Annja, their personalities are quite flat - there seems to be little consistency in their actions.

Oh, and for anyone wondering about any Romance in the novel... there isn't even a kiss scene. Unless you count that one character who woke up surrounded by naked ladies. There was nothing going on there, though, so.. it doesn't count.

Anyway, I hope Annja and her entourage find each other a personality in the next book because.. this is just awful. I think that's why I am still reading this.. it's like a disaster in progress I just have to watch.

Solomon's Jar by Alex Archer

From Goodreads

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 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 *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.

Peter says

I read this sometime in 2013 and I'm throwing this into the mix, just to show what a one-star rated book looks like from my perspective. This is actually an omnibus of three books. The first book, *Destiny*, is a solid two-star book. Annja Creed inherits the sword of Joan of Arc along with the burden of being its wielder. There's two old guys who knew Joan of Arc and a wild hunt group. And it's a problem that the second two volumes get worse. The volume is collectively flat.

The villains or artifacts are plucked from the annals of history and are often dull as plot devices. The setting is 21st century urban fiction where the author uses Annja as a vehicle to peddle his likes. And I've never read violence so boring in my life. The action scenes are overwrought and over-depicted. I can not recommend this book to anyone with anything else to do.

Daniela says

It was a fun read - I don't know why so many people complain about her learning martial arts from the nuns in New Orleans. I clearly read that she took lessons and one old nun came with her to learn Tai Chi. Very very different.

Kevin says

Not a bad book. The prose was kind of wooden, and the main character is basicly perfect, but the plot was mostly engaging and the historical details were interesting (weather or not they are accurate). I might read more of these, but I have no particular desire.

Gypsie Holley says

I've read the first two book in this book. I just haven't read 3 yet. I will get to it eventually. I liked the first two and will have a ton to read when I continue. I think this series is up in the 30 something books now!

Woodrow says

This was a very frustrating book, and not just because of the writing style.

There's a thread of thought that says that having a Strong Female Protagonist is all you really need, and

things are awesome. that's not true, and this book ends up showing why. For all of Annja's gifts, she's more than once, esp. in the first book, described in such a way as to be more model than adventurer -- and not in the same way one might write about, say, Doc Savage.

And the 3rd book in this compilation -- oi! People in Africa, and of African decent, portrayed as thugs and mystics, with hardly a person I'd recognize in the midst. All the "mysteries" of Africa, solved by white people! And many of these same tropes pop up in the prior book, as well.

There's some interesting and potent ideas in this series. I esp. really liked how they shaped some of how she gets empowered. But they get more than impacted by the lack of care and thought placed into the hero's world, and how she is portrayed.

Cristina says

I liked it. It certainly reminded me of the adventures of The Librarians. Characters are a bit thin, and leave a lot of questions. Loved the Buffy the vampire Slayer reference in Solomon's Jar! But mostly I love a strong woman who knows how to kick tail!!

pdarnold says

I have completed book 1 & 2. I really enjoyed book 1 - Destiny. Book 2 - Solomon's Jar not as much. Hopefully things pick up again in the 3'd book the Spider Stone. I will edit this when I finish.

Destiny - book 1: I began this back in August. At first I was beginning to think I had run into yet another story of a vampire. Thank goodness (at least so far) this is not the case. I love that people, moments and artifacts from history are the basis to each book. Giving a adventurous romantic supernatural twist is great fun. Thus far, the romance is light and not bawdy like some others.

Solomon's Jar - book 2: I read this in October. Not as fun as the first, I'm not sure of the reason. The story seemed somewhat choppy for lack of better description. Still a fun read when you just want to escape and kick some butt in the process.

Spider Stone - book 3: Completed. However, I forgot to finish my review. So from what I am able to remember of the story...

Yes, much improvement from book 2. A thrill to read. The adventure takes you to Senegal, end up with a witch doctor of sorts, several other new characters, etc. It's a wee bit of Indiana Jones, mixed with - should the evil guys win then, the world will change to a dystopian like society. Don't mistake me, it is not a dystopian story at all. It's just there as a hint of "what if". A fun quick read when you just want to escape into a thrill ride of an adventure.

Erin says

I keep picking up these trios, packaged into one book. In this case I think that's probably for the best, because

I don't know that I would have kept going through the third book. After reading the blurbs on the back cover, I had these hopes that the stories would be Indiana Jones- or The Librarian-like, action and adventure and a splash of humor. The books definitely have these things in them, but they are presented in a very uneven manner. The writing improved from the first to the third story, but it was definitely hard going at first. The plot moves along like a string of beads, with pockets of detailed action and movement connected by long thin strands of explication. By the time the third story rolled along, the beads were closer together and with less string between, which helped the ease of reading immensely.

Archaeologist Annja Creed comes into possession of a special item, which leads to her becoming a "champion of the people" of sorts. Between her job and her calling, she gets involved in unusual circumstances and meets some interesting people. I suppose I had looked forward to some interesting historical tidbits, but it seems fairly obvious that even the history is generally fiction built up around a grain of truth. Some of the characters seem to exist strictly to advance the plot by explicitly laying out the situation and available options, which is not always my cup of tea - I prefer my characters (even my secondary characters!) to have some mystery, some personality, and to feel as though they belong to the story and weren't just inserted because somebody's editor was confused on how we got from point A to point B. If you're a fan of vigilantes, historical artifacts, and exotic locales, this may well be worth your time. The story ideas are solid, and the execution of those ideas is evolving well over the course of the series.

Sarah says

An incredibly fun, fast paced book full of adventure. The history aspect really adds something to it. However, at times I thought the book went too fast. Sometimes I wasn't sure how Annja had gotten to where she was. I will definitely be checking out more of the series.
