



Solomon's Thieves, Book One

Jordan Mechner , LeUyen Pham (Illustrator) , Alex Puvilland (Illustrator)

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A group of renegade knights, back from the Crusades, band together to pull off the greatest heist the medieval world has ever seen.

Join Solomon's Thieves for a swashbuckling, medieval action-adventure, based on the true historical events of the order of the Knights Templar.

Solomon's Thieves, Book One Details

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Author : Jordan Mechner , LeUyen Pham (Illustrator) , Alex Puvilland (Illustrator)

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Download and Read Free Online Solomon's Thieves, Book One Jordan Mechner , LeUyen Pham (Illustrator) , Alex Puvilland (Illustrator)

From Reader Review Solomon's Thieves, Book One for online ebook

Joe says

I can't tell if this book was meant for a younger audience or if it's just a little confused.

Some of the art style is OK, but some of it looks straight out of Scooby Doo. I swear that one of the characters towards the end of the book looks like a medieval Shaggy with beard.

And I had a hard time following the plot as it bounced back and forth between a historical account of the Templars and the individual escapades of a group of ex-Templar scallywags who spend more time drinking and thieving than doing God's work.

Eh.

This is just Volume 1, and it's not a bad story, but it's not that great either. If I had the subsequent volumes in hand, I would probably finish them, but I would not seek them out.

Kara says

Despite the setting of a massacre, the beginning and the description made it seem like this was going to be a medieval style heist story – lots of planning and robbing the rich and beating complicated security and quips.

Nope.

It's all set up – an entire volume and *nothing happens*. The impetus is the destruction of the Templars, but besides that horrible historical moment, it's just an elaborate introduction of characters and maybe a little tantalizing glimpse of plot.

Doesn't stand on its own, and not worth pursuing further.

Tony says

First of all, I guess I should fess up that I'll read pretty much anything published by First Second -- I completely trust their editorial and artistic choices. Which is not to say I love everything they put out, but that I will give it a chance, and generally come away satisfied. This particular book jumped out at me because the cover art seems to indicate the kind of swashbuckling sensibility I have a weakness for, and it has to do with the Crusaders. I grew up the Middle East and have visited a ton of castles and other Crusades-related sites, so things of that ilk tend to interest me. (I'm not, however, generally interested in the whole Templar conspiracy thing, which seems to have grown from a cottage industry into a full-fledged multinational, multimedia juggernaut.)

The story here takes place among a group of French Templars, living in the Paris Temple on the outskirts of the city. One of these is Martin, who is down in the dumps after setting eyes on his old flame (she married another man 12 years earlier, prompting him to join the holy brotherhood). His two pals convince him to sneak into the city after hours for a little R&R to soothe his pain, and it just so happens that while they're away, a royal edict to arrest all Templars is carried out, leaving them some of the few free Templars in France. The rest of the story is more or less devoted to Martin's attempts to keep out of the clutches of the king's men, while also telling the history of how the kings of France and England moved to squash the power of the order and seize its sizable assets.

The book is the first of a projected trilogy, and as such, it has to do the heavy lifting of establishing the setting, characters, etc. This can make things a bit awkward at times -- for example, Martin's two Templar friends are very important in the first half of the book, but then pretty much disappear for rest of it. Their place is taken by another pair of similarly rougish allies. Along the same lines, a rather conventional subplot involving Martin and his former flame starts to develop and then also disappears -- presumably, like his first set of friends, to show up later in the trilogy. The whole framing of the book as part of a trilogy is kind of problematic in general since there's nothing on the outside of the book gives to tell the prospective reader/buyer that it's the first in a trilogy. In fact, the jacket copy is totally misleading. It reads "A group of renegade knights, back from the Crusades, band together to pull off the greatest heist the medieval world has ever seen." The thing of it is, the heist doesn't happen in this book -- it's going to be the second book!

Finally, while I recognize that this is a work of fiction, and thus gets to play fast and loose with truth, it's a slippery slope when the plot is built around real events. The jacket copy quoted above states that the heroes are back from the Crusades. The book opens with a section showing the fall of Acre in 1291, and then skips ahead to Paris, 1307. Martin and his friends are shown in these early pages walking the streets of Paris complaining that they ate better food while overseas. But Martin elsewhere says he joined the Templars 12 years ago (ie. 1295), which is after the Crusades were effectively over (the fall of Acre is generally regarded as the nail in the coffin), so the chronology doesn't really make much sense.

But truth be told, these are all quibbles -- the story is meant to be a swashbuckling adventure in the tradition of Pere Dumas, and it certainly is. The artwork is bold, the coloring vivid without being gaudy, and the paneling flows quite well. My only true complaint is that the story is broken into thirds, so that we have to wait several years for the rest of the trilogy. I can understand from a publishing perspective why it's done that way, but I like my historical adventures to be self-contained epics, rather than small bites.

Kyle McCreary says

I don't often read graphic novels these days. But when I received a copy of Solomon's Thieves through the "First Reads" drawing, I immediately slipped it close to the top of my "to read" stack. I've always been a sucker for a good Knights Templar tale. And this first offering of a new series certainly did not disappoint.

Writer Jordan Mechner did a wonderful job of taking the history of the downfall of the Temple of Solomon (the Knights Templar) and weaving a personal, individual tale into that historic story. Plenty of action, intrigue and even a hint of romance are intertwined with historic facts to make a marvelous tale, and the artwork does nothing but enhance this wonderful story. The artists' style and attention to detail (architecture, clothing, armor and weapons) immediately pull the reader into the period.

I'm hooked. I will be checking this weekend to see when the next installment of this story will be available!

Online Eccentric Librarian says

More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>

Solomon's Thieves is the latest title in the :01 First Second series of graphic novels aimed mostly at teen to adult readers.

Author Mechner says in the afterward that he wanted to tell a tale about the ordinary men who joined the Templars and then were later betrayed by the King of France over politics and greed. This is the first in a trilogy by the author of the Prince of Persia games - you'll follow the main character as he battles power struggles and various greedy men while finding his own redemption from the woman who jilted him and caused him to become a Templar out of grief. The story has a nice lyrical quality and events of the past and present contribute greatly to the structure of the middle and ending of the story.

The spirit of Solomon's Thieves is very much in the old serialized newspaper comics of the 1930s and 1940s (e.g., Prince Valiant) but with a more modern 'square jaw' stylization of the old fashioned artwork. Sample artwork can be viewed on the MacMillan website. Those who enjoyed the Prince of Persia storylines will see similar parallels here - a good man, a strong woman, researched historical setting, and a betrayal/misunderstanding separating the romantic interests. It's a historical milieu we don't normally read about - which makes it that much more interesting.

The first volume ends at an appropriate breather but leaves you ready for the next two books in the story. The inside is full color throughout.

Reviewed from an ARC.

Shane says

So I got this from the Amazon Vine program because I thought my 11-year old son might enjoy it. He read it in a day and gave it the "meh". It gets a little better from me but not a lot. It's kind of light hearted and silly but does tell the story of the templars so it gets pretty dark sometimes once the inquisitors get involved.

I was a bit surprised that this was marketed as a young adult book but early on one of the templars calls the king's soldiers "a bunch of pussies". Later some mentions "...when you were sucking at your mother's tit". I mean these aren't dispicably filthy phrases but it just seemed like they would be more worried about parents being angry. I definitely don't use those words in front of my son and don't expect him to use those words in front of adults. Looking at the amazon page now though I don't see anything about YA.

Anyway the guy gets points for mentioned Umberto Eco's Focault's Pendulum (one of my favorites) but I think I would rather read this story in novel format with a much more adult tone (hopefully including many dispicably filthy phrases).

Harold Ogle says

This is a compelling graphic novel telling the first part of a story set during the end of the Templars at the dawn of the 14th century. In telling the story of a few Templars who escaped the persecution, we see the larger story of the blacklisting first of France and then the Pope. It's a tidy introduction to the history, as well as being an adventure story and showing the beginnings of a heist story to boot. The artwork is evocative and expressive, the emotions conveyed well (aided considerably by great coloring by Hilary Sycamore). I found the whole package compelling enough that I'd gladly read any book that followed it...unfortunately, it seems that the next volume was never published separately. Instead, I'll need to find Templar, which is a larger graphic novel volume that tells (hopefully) the whole story.

Robyn Hawk says

Using the dissolution of the French Templar's as the beginning premise this tale takes off from the start...swashbuckling adventure, a woman betrayed, and a vow of revenge...so of course I loved it!!!

The art work is rough and dramatic and though set in the 1400's the dialog would be easily followed by teen readers. Fan's of First Second's Prince of Persia and the gamers Prince of Persia Collector's Edition: Prima Official Game Guide (Prima Official Game Guides) will find this telling of the story of Martin and his loss - between the loss of his brothers of the order and the loss of the woman he loves - a compelling read.

Lover's of the adult books about the Templar Legacy will love introducing this exciting era to their kids through Solomon's Thieves, Book One, did I mention that this is book one of a trilogy? It carries the same mystery, ancient religion, and drama of the DaVinci Code or Steven Berry Cotton Malone Series.

Product Description From Amazon:

On the run from the law . . . in 14th century France

Life as a Templar Knight returning from the Crusades is dull— bread, beans, and lots and lots of walking. But after Martin stumbles upon his lost love (now married—to someone else), things begin to get more interesting very quickly. There's a vast conspiracy afoot to destroy the Templar Order and steal their treasure. Soon, Martin finds himself one of the only Templars out of prison—and out for revenge!

A swashbuckling story of betrayal, adventure, and an epic swindle, Solomon's Thieves is the first volume in a trilogy written by Jordan Mechner (the creator of the acclaimed Prince of Persia video games) and illustrated by LeUyen Pham and Alex Puvilland.

Arnela says

I'm not a huge fan of books in the religious genre [unless we're talking historical accounts of actions written by the most unbiased party one can find], I just feel like they get a little preachy at times.

But I really love this comic, in that it depicts the knights as people; though they joined the holy order they

are still very much human, with needs and wants and thoughts that don't always coincide with the what the order wants their men to behave like.

It clearly depicts how easily corruption can occur among the justice system, and how easily people become scapegoats, and also how people can be worn down by hard times. It doesn't do that whole, I'm not corruptible, I won't falter, I won't this and that by god, calm down, relax, you're only human. You're not supposed to be perfect, you're just supposed to be good.

We've got this trio of guys that aren't perfect, by no means are they perfect, thieves, drunks, blind-eye turners, but they are good, deep down inside they are good and they are going to fight for what they believe is right. I really appreciate the way the protagonists have been handled, though I am a little iffy on the antagonists [they're dressed in very dark colors, they look really mean, and like traditional bad guy cliches in terms of appearance [it makes me wanna do some research on what the French uniforms were for the Paris Guards and the king's religious adviser, cause it just feels like those colors wouldn't be it].

I really recommend this version of the story because I feel there is, at least, an attempt to make the characters more human than their legends.

Sheila says

Solomon's Thieves by Jordan Mechner, LeUyen Pham, and Alex Puvilland is a graphic novel about the Knight's Templar. It begins with the siege and destruction of Acre by the Saracens during the Crusades. Returning to France things do not go well for the Templars. King Phillip has decreed that the Templars are to be arrested on trumped up charges and their properties given to the crown. Martin and two of his friends have left the Templar headquarters in search of wine, women, and song and are not rounded up with the others. Martin turns to an old friend who betrays him and he is thrown into prison to be tried with the others but he is able to escape and rejoin some of his brothers, hoping to exonerate the Templars.

Solomon's Thieves is fantastic! The art work reminded me of the DC and Marvel comic books of the 50's and 60's. It is very detailed in each panel. The backgrounds are as important as the people are in the forefront. The story is realistic and I hated when it ended. Now I need Book 2 to see how it turns out.

While it is a quick read, there was a lot of research done on the Templars and that time period. Solomon's Thieves is well-done and worth reading.

Erik Eckel says

Just this summer I discovered First Second, the publisher of many wonderfully drawn and narratively compelling graphic novels. I've read approximately six of the publisher's titles to date, and I've loved most every book. More sophisticated than a comic and each an omnibus equivalent, the graphic works often prove a welcome respite from a hectic work schedule, demanding life responsibilities and even seemingly relaxing traditional novels.

Solomon's Thieves, Volume One, is no exception. Written by Prince of Persia video game creator Jordan

Mechner and drawn by the team of LeUyen Pham and Alex Puvilland, the fast-paced, action-packed graphic novel educates the reader about Templar Knights and the Order's history, all while taking creative liberties with a few compelling characters. Quickly I found myself drawn into the story, curious to learn more of the Templar movement and ready to purchase volume two.

Cindy Hudson says

Solomon's Thieves is a new graphic novel that takes the reader back to medieval times and the story of the Knights Templar. The Templars came into being to protect pilgrims on their journey to the Holy Land. Over the years they became strong and wealthy in their own right, and kings began to see them as a threat. When the king of France accused them of corruption and heresy, he forced the Pope's hand into disbanding the entire order. Many Templars were executed.

Solomon's Thieves tells of those who escaped immediate capture and went into hiding. Many were determined to clear the Templar name, and sought to be reunited with their brethren who were also in hiding. Used to being treated as noble and heroic, these Templars chafed at being cast as outlaws.

There were also rumors of great treasure amassed by the Templars, a treasure that has never been found. The remaining Templars considered it their solemn duty to protect it from being discovered.

Solomon's Thieves illustrates this moment in history through the story of Martin, who joined the Templars and went on crusade after his childhood love was forced to marry another. This is the first book of a planned trilogy, and includes an afterword from author Jordan Mechner about the history he conducted and more on the Templar story. Illustrations by LeUyen Pham and Alex Puvilland richly evoke the darkness of the times. I recommend Solomon's Thieves for mother-daughter book clubs with girls aged 14 and older.

Moose says

If I could give out half stars I would rate this graphic novel 3.5 out 5 but since that's not possible I simply rounded up. If I were about six to ten years younger this graphic novel would have definitely rated a solid 4 stars.

The plot is straightforward enough: manipulation of king leading to arrest of noble and good knights for their money leading to a few knights escaping leading to hidden treasure leading to mystery, adventure, and a quest to find and transport the treasure. It's a pretty basic formula for a lot of story lines, but what makes this one so interesting is how it's based on the facts of history. This isn't a fantasy story where the knights are fighting off dragons and witches; they are up against politics, bureaucrats, human greed, and a not so noble religious order.

What I really liked about the story was how easy it was to become engaged with. Since it's only the first book in the series a lot of the story was getting the plot set up and ready to develop, but the set up never became boring or tedious. Likeable, if predictable, characters were easy to identify and you can see the room they have to grow. Hopefully we'll see more character development and personality growth in the next book; I would like to see them come into their own.

The artwork was wonderful in its detail and style. It worked very nicely with the dialogue and expanded the written text. I've come across comics before where the story line was lost due to confusing panels and drawings, thankfully I was spared that annoyance with *Solomon's Thieves*.

The real beauty of this book is its dive into history. It's easy to follow along and I can see kids and teens who know nothing of the downfall of the Templars becoming curious and interested in the story and history. The writer does a wonderful job in the Afterwards of explaining a little more in depth the events taking place outside the storyline with a detailed reading suggestion list and bibliography.

I am definitely going to give this graphic novel to my younger siblings in middle and high school. It is a fun read that promotes having strength in your principles despite overwhelming adversity while at the same time bringing some history to life.

Heidi The Hippie Reader says

I almost flipped out over this series today because I went to request the second book and found that it was never published. Not to be deterred, I used my mad librarian skillz and discovered that, after the release of *Solomon's Thieves*, the publisher bound all of the issues together rather than releasing them one at a time. The continuation to this story is found in the graphic novel: *Templar*. Crisis averted. And what is this comic about?

Solomon's Thieves is a fun romp through 1300's Paris at the time of the Templar's disbanding and destruction. The focus of the story is on a knight named Martin. He was unlucky in love and joined the order to change his life, which he manages to do. But, on the Templar's return from an unsuccessful campaign in the Holy Land, after a wild night of drinking and some bad choice making in Paris, he ends up not being present when his brethren are arrested by the French king, Philip the Fair. The adventure really starts when the king's men discover that the fabled treasure of the Templars is not in their church/compound. Martin, after a series of misadventures and a chance meeting with some unsavory characters, decides to find out where that treasure is and steal it back.

Bit of trivia: the Paris Templars were arrested on Friday, October 13th, 1307. So, 709 years ago tomorrow. Now, you know.

From the introduction: *"From humble beginnings the Knights Templar rose to become the most powerful military monastic order of the medieval world. Pledged to protect pilgrims during the Crusades, the Templars become heroes to Christians everywhere. Their fighting prowess was legendary. ... But the Crusades were an expensive, blood-soaked failure. In 1291, after two centuries of warfare, the Muslims drove the Christian armies from the Holy Land once and for all. For the Templars, it was the beginning of the end..."* Goosebumps!

I'd consider this a PG13 level comic because of some rough language, non-graphic violence (dude sticks his sword through the chest of a guy in one of the panels, but there isn't blood everywhere), and some, again non-graphic, torture scenes.

The afterward by Jordan Mechner is fantastic. Not only does he give the actual history that he based the

comic on, but also the sources that he used to research it. Huge librarian thumbs up from me. :) *"Like Western gunslingers or Japanese samurai, their legend grew, and it attracted new recruits, donations, and privileges. By their peak in the thirteenth century, the Templars had grown into a religious, military, and banking organization whose assets, power, and reach rivaled any of the kings of Europe. They were the Jedi of their time. Their incredible downfall rocked the world. Its echoes reverberate to this day."* pg 135

If you enjoyed this comic, you may like: *The Religion* by Tim Willocks (regular book- not a graphic novel, very bloody, for adults only) or *The Knights Templar: Discovering The Myth And Reality Of A Legendary Brotherhood* by Susie Hodge (regular book also- non-fiction but in-depth examination of the templars).

B.C. says

I would probably give this 2.5 stars because the writer did a good job a story in the Templar world without it being some conspiracy that disproves Christianity. That was well done.

The art was meh, not bad, but not great.

The panels were not really used with purpose.

The writing was decent. I have no complaints.

The main value is the how the author used the historical setting as history teaches it (yes, I said it that way so any conspiracy theorists out there can have a hay day) for a story that is not Dan Brown.
