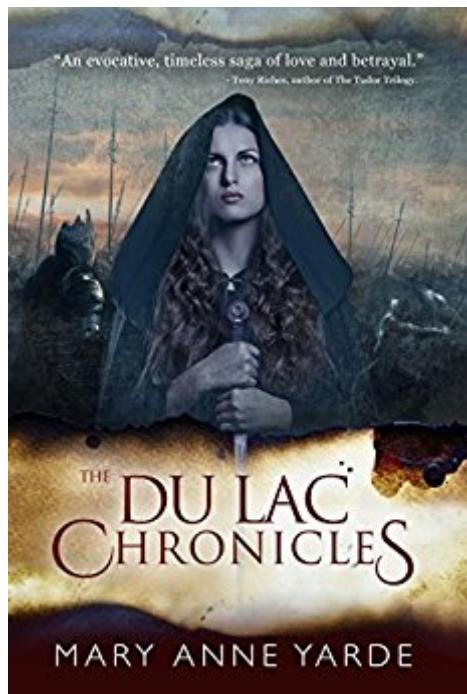


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# The Du Lac Chronicles: Book 1



## **Synopsis**

A generation after Arthur Pendragon ruled, Briton lies fragmented into warring kingdoms and principalities. Eighteen-year-old Alden du Lac ruled the tiny kingdom of Cerniw. Now he half-hangs from a wooden pole, his back lashed into a mass of bloody welts exposed to the cold of a cruel winter night. He's to be executed come daybreak "should he survive that long. When Alden notices the shadowy figure approaching, he assumes death has come to end his pain. Instead, the daughter of his enemy, Cerdic of Wessex, frees and hides him, her motives unclear. Annis has loved Alden since his ill-fated marriage to her Saxon cousin "a marriage that ended in blood and guilt" and she would give anything to protect him. Annis's rescue of Alden traps them between a brutal Saxon king and Alden's remaining allies. Meanwhile, unknown forces are carefully manipulating the ruins of Arthur's legacy. The Du Lac Chronicles has a recommended reading age of 16+

## **Book Information**

File Size: 2815 KB

Print Length: 319 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1519224435

Publication Date: February 28, 2016

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01CDK2MK0

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #327,771 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #81

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Historical Fiction > Medieval #152

in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Medieval #165 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Myths & Legends > Arthurian

## **Customer Reviews**

Book one of "The Du Lac Chronicles" is an outstanding historical fiction novel that is destined to be

a classic! Ms. Yarde weaves an epic story of love, deception, and survival set in AD 495 Wessex, Briton. This is one of those books where you are hooked from the opening chapter and you can't wait to discover what is going to happen next. I thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of this story. The main characters, Alden and Annis were the perfect couple. I found them to be very endearing and I adored the bantering between them. What was especially unique about this story were the insufferable adversaries. At times, I even wanted to like the antagonists, but Ms. Yarde cleverly concealed who could be trusted through the unfolding and alarming events up until the very end. Similar to others who have enjoyed this book, I am a dedicated fan and I can't wait to read the rest of the trilogy. I highly recommend this book.

This is one of those stories that stays with us, and we pass along to the younger generation, as we encourage them to read quality fiction. The writing is flawless and the story is timeless. The characters are well rounded and realistic; I was pulled into their world from page 1 and I didn't want to leave. Betrayed and hunted by Cerdic, King of Wessex, Alden and Annis race across the countryside, seeking sanctuary with Alden's brother, the High King. Along the way, they discover and embrace their love for one another; the romance and humor between them was charming and sweet. Each scene smoothly transitioned into the next, I didn't even notice the pages turning. I highly recommend *The Du Lac Chronicles*. This is one for my repeat-read list, and I'm anxiously awaiting book 2.

At its heart, *The Du Lac Chronicles* is a love story. Forced together by the rash yet fearlessly daring decision of a young girl, our hero and heroine brave certain death by sword, arrow, dog, wolf, starvation, hypothermia, fratricide (I've probably missed a few) sometimes simultaneously. I was drawn into the book by the action and pace from page one, and the developing complexities of the story held me until the very end. I'm not particularly fond of the romance genre, but even so I found myself cheering for the boy to get the girl the entire time, laughing out loud at the sometimes subtle, other times outright wit of the characters. The plot of the book is well thought out and well executed. Telling the tale of a king who has lost his land and failed his people, we journey along with Alden Du Lac as he is given a second chance to right the wrongs he feels he caused, and for which he bears the burden of shame. There were times in the reading that I found myself confused by references to events occurring off page, and by bits and pieces of back-story. I wondered if I had missed something in my hasty reading because I was so carried along by the plot and simply not paying enough attention. (I do this a lot in movies too.)

Figuratively shrugging my shoulders, I kept at it, assuming my questions would be cleared up at some point. And slowly but surely, I was right; my confusions cleared up. As the pieces came together, I discovered the true masterpiece in this book: the beautiful blending of a new story with the threads of a lovely, and very old, legend. I loved Alden from the beginning. He breathed off the page immediately as a strong man, able to take brutal treatment from his captor with good humor even while in a state of despondency. He carries the weight of his responsibilities heavily, never being quite willing to release them, always wanting to redeem himself for the mistakes he insists he made. And then there is Annis. Dear, dear Annis... There were times I wanted to throttle her. Oftentimes emotionally unstable, she repeatedly questioned the ability of Alden to be true to his word. "He loves me, he loves me not" echoed in many different scenes, and I wanted to slap her silly for it. That being said, when taking into account Annis' life up until the point we meet her in the book, the cold, uncaring, and abused life she lived growing up, one can totally understand, from a psychological perspective, why she harbored so many insecurities. I may have been annoyed with her, but her reaction to the world and to her relationships was totally and utterly believable. She is a flawed character, and Ms. Yarde wrote her beautifully. There is a cast of other supporting characters "kings and queens, retainers, servants and sympathizers. Each of them serves a purpose in knitting the story together, and of dropping hints about the back-story that I thought I had missed. Careful attention to these individuals and the stories they tell hint at the deeper parts of the plot if one is paying attention. Perhaps the best supporting character is Merton, a character I am told will take center stage in the next book. What we learn of him in this first novel suggests an entertaining next book! I love historical fiction, but I also love fantasy. This book easily fits into both camps as it contains bits of historical fact woven through with folklore, even taking a step beyond the traditional telling of the story and asking what might have come next. I'm excited to see where Ms. Yarde takes these characters and their stories in future installments.

I was excited to read this novel, because I love stories set in the Middle Ages, and particularly in the early medieval period, as it has such a bittersweet, melancholic charm to it for me. Some of the historical novels are hard to get into, but this one had my attention from the start, and made me intrigued to read on, until pages flew by, and I couldn't let go of the book for two straight days. It's a romance between king Alden and Annis, a daughter of his enemy who saves his life, and therefore, binds their fates forever. I found the love story between the two classically romantic. It got me in that special mood of my teenage self that dreamt of brave knights coming to my rescue. Though it happens in the dark times of our history, it has plenty of light and positivity,

because it's written from a gentle woman's perspective and revolves mainly around honor, love, and devotion. I liked that the author spiced the tense scenes with humor, and that the characters have a good chemistry the whole time, and share fun-to-read dialogues. I highly recommend it to anyone who, like myself, enjoys romantic medieval stories.

Alden Du Lac lost his kingdom to the ever ambitious Saxon, Cerdic and is about to lose his life. Enter Cerdic's daughter, Annis and thus we are thrust into a powerful story of loss, betrayal, torment, and above all, the love that sees them through. Annis is young and inexperienced having been sheltered and basically ignored, by her father. Alden, a son of Lancelot, is/was a king and is haunted by what he feels is his betrayal to his people. Book one of this series, follows them on an uncertain, tortuous path, firstly to escape the wrath of Cerdic and eventually to prepare to confront him. I found myself immersed in the time and place as the author skillfully interlaces an emotion filled love story with the actions of ruthless and ambitious men, and the history of Cornwall. I love a good Arthurian tale, and while he is already dead at the time of this one, I welcomed this 'it could have happened this way' take on the aftermath of his demise, and am looking forward to book two. 4.3 stars

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