



Dark Lord of Derkholm

By Diana Wynne Jones

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Mr. Chesney operates Pilgrim Parties, a tour group that takes paying participants into an outer realm where the inhabitants play frightening and foreboding roles. The time has come to end the staged madness . . . but can it really be stopped? Master storyteller Diana Wynne Jones serves up twists and turns, introduces Querida, Derk, Blade, and Shona and a remarkable cast of wizards, soldiers, kings, dragons, and griffins, and mixes in a lively dash of humor. With all the ingredients of high fantasy, this unforgettable novel will delight fans old and new.

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Dark Lord of Derkholm By Diana Wynne Jones Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

If, next door to our ordinary world, there existed a world full of magic, wouldn't you want to visit it? That's the situation that Diana Wynne Jones explores in *Dark Lord of Derkholm*, and she makes an effective and comical tale of it.

Groups of tourists, called Pilgrim Parties and organized by the cold-hearted profiteer Mr. Chesney, take a portal to the magical realm, where they are shepherded about the countryside by a wizard guide. Mr. Chesney sets the rules, such as that all wizard guides must have long white beards--even 14-year-old Blade--and every Party gets to "slay" the Dark Lord. No wizard wants to be chosen as the year's Dark Lord, because Mr. Chesney demands large battles that cause great devastation in the local villages and farms, and he doesn't pay very well, but he does have a captive demon to enforce his will. This year, things are going especially badly for the chosen Dark Lord, Derk. He can't seem to keep his evil forces on the right track, despite help from his son Blade, his daughter Shona the bard, and his griffin sons and daughters. His chief aide, Barnabas, is drinking heavily and muddling his spells. And the dwarfs are taking their baskets of gold as tribute to the one they say is the real Dark Lord--Mr. Chesney.

Jones spoofs many of the trappings of fantasy epics, while at the same time portraying a family, with its surface squabbles and underlying love, through a rollicking and somewhat unwieldy story. Her messages about exploitation and responsibility come through clearly. Although not as tightly focused as some of her earlier novels, the galloping pace makes *Dark Lord of Derkholm* a quick, fun read for her numerous fans. --
Blaise Selby

From Publishers Weekly

On a par with Jones's best (*Charmed Life*; *Fire and Hemlock*), this expansive novel manages to be both an affectionate send-up of the sword-and-sorcery genre and a thrilling fantasy adventure in its own right. Something is decidedly rotten in the enchantment-laden world in which teenage fledgling wizard Blade has grown up. Each year, the country's magical agrarian economy is disrupted by the Pilgrim Parties?tourists from a world much like ours, come in search of Tolkienesque adventure. Organized by the sinister and implacably bureaucratic Mr. Chesney ("A Dark Lord's citadel must always be a black castle with a labyrinthine interior lit by baleful fire?you will find our specifications in the guide Mr. Addis will give you"), the Pilgrim Parties are in fact highly choreographed package tours. The local population is bullied, cajoled and paid hard cash to participate, all because of a deal struck with a demon some 40 years ago. This year's appointee to the onerous post of Dark Lord (who must act as chief villain and tour-coordinator) is Blade's mild-mannered father, Derk, who would far rather spend his time creating marvelous new animals (he already has flying pigs, talking horses and clever geese). When an encounter with a dragon puts Derk out of commission, Blade's entire family?including his five griffin siblings?must help. As elaborate charades are staged for the tours, a deeper magic also emerges which (in combination with some hilariously banal legalities) offers the hope of release from Mr. Chesney's domination. Thought-provoking and utterly engaging, this tour-de-force succeeds on numerous levels. The marvelously characterized griffins are a particularly noteworthy pleasure. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up-An alternate world full of wizards, dragons, and other wonders is controlled by the ruthless Mr. Chesney. He operates a lucrative business in which tourists from his world enjoy staged adventures, and he

holds the magic world at the mercy of a powerful demon he controls. When Derk, a goodhearted but apparently bumbling wizard, is chosen for the key role of "Dark Lord," the "Pilgrim Parties" begin to veer sharply from the script. Derk shares his duties with his unusual children; two humans and five griffins (created from a mix of cells, including his own and those of his enchantress wife). The chaos that ensues is exciting, mysterious, and hilarious. Myriad plot twists and undiscovered schemes are slowly unveiled as the seemingly invincible Mr. Chesney gets his just reward. The characters reveal the workings of their world in a delightfully well-paced, and roundabout way. For all of the magic and intrigue, however, the growth and development of Derk's unique family is really at the heart of the novel. All of his children have distinct personalities, and the family relationships are changed and strengthened as the various crises unfold. The griffins are delightful characters who experience the same adolescent concerns as Derk's human son Blade, an eager but uncertain young wizard. Mr. Chesney's power and heartlessness loom throughout the story, keeping a suspenseful edge to all of the fun. Fans of Jones's previous books will not be disappointed, and Dark Lord could also be an excellent introduction to high fantasy for other readers.

Steven Engelfried, West Linn Public Library,
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Doucet:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or even read a book titled Dark Lord of Derkholm? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have additional opinion?

Bessie Barrett:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be revise about what going on or facts even knowledge to make them keep up with the era which is always change and progress. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know which one you should start with. This Dark Lord of Derkholm is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Charles Buffington:

This book untitled Dark Lord of Derkholm to be one of several books this best seller in this year, honestly, that is because when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit onto it. You will easily to buy this book in the book store or you can order it by way of online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more easily to read this book, because you can read this book in your Smartphone. So there is no reason for you to past this book from your list.

David Scott:

In this particular era which is the greater individual or who has ability to do something more are more special than other. Do you want to become considered one of it? It is just simple way to have that. What you have to do is just spending your time not much but quite enough to have a look at some books. One of the books in the top checklist in your reading list is actually Dark Lord of Derkholm. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Inclines can get you closer in getting precious person. By looking upwards and review this guide you can get many advantages.

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