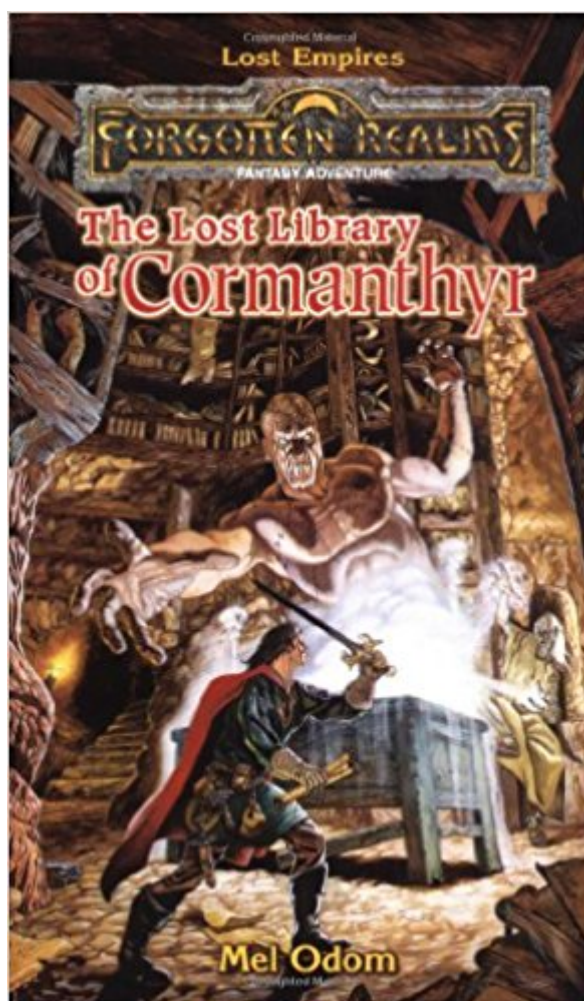


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The Lost Library Of Cormanthyr (Forgotten Realms: Lost Empires, Book 1)



Synopsis

The Lost Library of Cormanthyr Is it just a myth? Or does it still stand . . . somewhere in the most ancient corners of Faerûn? An intrepid human explorer sets out to find the truth and what starts as an archaeological expedition soon becomes a race against time as an undying avenger is determined to protect the secrets of the ancient, xenophobic elven empire of Cormanthyr. Lost Empires is a bold new series that uncovers the secrets of the lost, ancient Forgotten Realms world.

Book Information

Series: Lost Empires

Mass Market Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Wizards of the Coast (January 1, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786907355

ISBN-13: 978-0786907359

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 4.2 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 17 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #679,615 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #285 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Gaming > Dungeons & Dragons #10076 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy #37567 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy

Customer Reviews

This novel is the first book in the Forgotten Realm Lost Empires series and it was a FANTastic Adventure!! I am currently on a fantasy reading quest where I am reading in chronological order (FR Time) the entire Forgotten Realm series of books. This was my first reading experience with Mel Odom and frankly I was very impressed as an educated adult reader. I had read the reviews prior to delving into it and was literally stunned at some of the reader criticisms. I decided to defend the author's vantage point since most authors' usually fear reprisal from that with their readers. EHM wrote - "At the end of this epilogue, the author gives us the hint that these characters are going to return to the main story, but this never happens." I believe the critic was referring to the Prologue which is dated 600 years prior to the main story and characters. It is simply to set up the back drop to the entire book or prize if you will from an archeologist point of view. Also take into account that the author is giving you this for an elf historic reference which can be pleasant or despicable depending on what history book you're reading (Victor vs. Conquered). Jaeleen was a fly by night

character that would pop in and out of Baylee's life. If you are honest with yourself, we all have those type characters in real life; I believe the author's character trait of disappearing was spot on. As far as the "One hit-one Kill" comment, well in real ancient battles a person's life expectancy was literally less a few seconds on the front line in a very intense fight for their lives. In response to a-nonym's criticisms, I believe the main character was flawed not by the idea that he was an expert weapon specialist that made a choice of not carrying a weapon, but rather that he made that choice in an unforgiving fantasy world. I thought that was an enormous character development trait provided within the genius behind the main character himself. As far as the bat is concerned I disagree, it was a companion or familiar if you will and it was simply that, it is a bat. It is hard to influence people of Faerun when you're a bat, even a great creature character like Xuxa. Her influence was grounded in the main character's traits and behaviors. If you are looking for a different style of read (Indiana Jones Action Mystery) within the confines of the Forgotten Realm books, then I believe you will enjoy this book VERY much. I think most of all the criticisms come from various readers who tend to think that the Evil side of things does NOT have character flaws because they know what they want. Especially when it comes to the infamous Drow or even a very powerful Lich that might not be focused on one person but rather a collective of priorities over an extended periods of time where you are borderline insane in the first place. Remember people that the AD&D Lich is on the verge of lunacy no matter your affinity to it personally!

Reasonable entry to the Forgotten Realms line. The hero is nicely realized, and the idea of a scholar treasure hunter is a nice one that I'd like to see again. The secondary characters were all really nice too - as was the Drow villain - SHE is a character I'd have liked to see a lot more of. I think this book would have worked better as a trilogy - because there was some real meat on the bones which could have been further explored.

I really liked this book; it has been the best I have read of Odom. I felt it was an excellent story. Yes its true there are several areas that could be flushed out a bit more, and it definitely gives you're a thirst for more. There are some areas characters are used briefly and disappear but I feel that these help develop the main character and the story. This was fun read that kept me glued to the book. I have read a lot of Wizards novels, primarily Forgotten Realms area. Too many times the books are set up in a way that the main character (the underdog) ends up going against the odds and saving the entire realm. This book is different. You have a ranger, which by gaming standards is not an easy class to obtain, trying to find a big treasure, in this case a library. Once he finds it he tries to

save it from being lost. The realms are not being taken over and there is no great evil trying to dominate the country side. Don't get me wrong there is an evil but its ambitions are the same as the main character, to get/keep the library. I would really like to see Wizards/TSR bring the main character back in a series and answer all the openings this book created and left open. All in all I highly recommend this book. It has a nice cast of characters and it not difficult to follow. If you like Indiana Jones, you will like this.

ok

The Lost Library of Cormanthyr is the first in a series of four novels (known as the Lost Empires series and which includes Faces of Deception, Star of Cursrah, and the Nether Scroll) that deal with the secrets of four of Toril's long lost ancient civilizations. The book describes the adventures of an archaeologist ranger named Baylee Arnvold who, along with his azmyth bat familiar, tries to find out who killed his mentor, Fannt Golsway, in the city of Waterdeep. His efforts lead him from adventure to adventure before he has to face a powerful undead which in its quest for power is set on magically transporting one of Faerun's oldest and most magnificent libraries to the Astral Plane so that it may protect its contents from interlopers as well as unlock Toril's secrets without the threat of that many adventurers interfering. Mel Odom does a good job of acquiring and presenting essential knowledge relevant to Faerun, including customs, religion and the history of the peoples of Toril e.g. "The city had once been called Rainydale, known as Selarrynm in the elven tongue, and had been one of the larger trading posts outside of Myth Drannor proper." (p.256) Additionally, the author does a wonderful job of describing the Legend of the Sleeping Kings (pp. 47-48) as well as the sacrificial altar dedicated to the god Vaparak, a deity worshiped by trolls and ogres alike. (p.46) Moreover, on page 133 he provides very good descriptions of the fireball and web spells, while on pages 267-268 he does a good job in his portrayal of hook horrors. Furthermore, Mel Odom is on the ball when the baelnorn utters: "In truth you are all humans, and I would care less if you all die in this endeavor. Myth Drannor and its environs should never have had to suffer the presence of humans, dwarves, or any other barbarian species that came into the City of Songs and drew her down." (p.284) Finally, the author succeeds in keeping the reader focused with phrases such as "Trollkin are known for their appetites. Human flesh is thought of as a delicacy by some." (p.49) On the negative side, the author repeatedly fails in providing an accurate description of the drow and instead treats them as if they were mere kobolds (!) e.g. "The dark elves had more lies than truth, and absolutely no honor. To enter the Underdark was to walk into death itself," (p.70) while on page

274, Baylee tells the dark elves "You have a chance at living. Take it and run," and... they actually fled (!) before Caleban, the wizard, added "You can't trust even a drow's cowardice." You have got to be kidding me! Moreover, in Chapter 12 Mel Odom shows what apparently are 1st level characters picking off drow who die after a single blow!!! In truth, the dark elves would have pulverized these humans without even breaking into a sweat. In short, the fight against the drow described on pages 270-274 was just sad! Additionally, there were silly and wholly unnecessary mistakes e.g. Fellhammer is more a dwarven family name than a dark elf's; it's elementary! To that one should add that a Bag of Holding does not transport troops. Also, Mel Odom refers to a dead drow male on page 273 as "the dead man" and then goes on to say "...then heard a man scream in agony: `My eyes, my eyes.'" Really? In Common? I seriously doubt that. Furthermore, a lich does not only NOT scream in pain when thrown ordinary caltrops, but is actually unaffected, so to have this be THE highlight is highly inappropriate to put it politely. So it's silly mistakes like that that take away from the overall enjoyment. Other drawbacks include Xuxa, the azmyth bat, which was just not interesting at all and the mystery behind Jaeleen; one moment she is part of this novel and the next she just vanishes. Finally, Mel Odom could have done a much better job of describing how and why the dark elf got involved with the lich and why one of the most amazing libraries of all times was not protected with traps or mythal that would have kept it both fire-proof and lightning-proof. I wish more novels would be set in never or little-before covered areas of Faerun, namely Hillsfar, Zhentil Keep, Thay, Chessenta, Threskel, Unther, and Mulhorand to name a few, as opposed to the usual, Waterdeep/Sword Coast or Western Heartlands locations. If it's Myth Drannor you long for, try and get your hands on a copy of the Ruins of Myth Drannor accessory/adventure (it is Second Edition AD&D, out of print and it will take a bit of searching, but it's well worth it). In conclusion, The Lost Library of Cormanthyr will provide for a fair amount of entertainment though it could have been so much better. 3 Stars The author purposefully provides room for a sequel, though I am not sure there is a demand for it (at this point it's been years since the book was published and I do not believe the sequel ever materialized).

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