



Plague of Spells

Bruce R. Cordell

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Lovecraftian Horror in Faerûn!

Blue fire sears the face of Faerûn, leaving the twisted and mutilated dead in its wake. But a rare few escape death--and suffer some mystical mutation. Raidon Kane is one of those who survives, the wake of blue fire burning the sigil of the amulet he wears into his chest and binding him with all the power and responsibility it entails. With everyone he knows and cares about dead, Raidon must find within himself the strength to lead the fight against the rise of an elder evil the likes of which would be the end of mortal kind.

Award-winning game designer Bruce R. Cordell depicts the rise of a monstrous nation of elder evil as only he can in this brand-new trilogy Abolethic Sovereignty. Dedicated to showcasing one of the most fascinating new aspects of the changed face of Faerûn, this trilogy is packed with the exciting battles, wizardry, and monsters that are the hallmark of **Forgotten Realms** novels as well as introducing a new never-before-seen element of Lovecraftian horror to Faerûn.

Plague of Spells Details

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Author : Bruce R. Cordell

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From Reader Review Plague of Spells for online ebook

Steve says

After a week of not knowing the book was out, then another week putting it off thinking I might get it as a gift for Christmas/Hanukkah, and then another week putting it off, as it has been on-and-off snowy, and I don't have a car anymore, and then another week putting it off being sick, I finally got Plague of Spells. It was a pretty random occurrence. Me and Rin needed to kill some time before seeing Slumdog Millionaire (An excellent movie, by the way. I recommend it to everyone. It will certainly be influencing "Crazy" Ali), so after getting some candy, and then dinner, and then beauty supplies (can you make something that is already perfect even better?), we stopped off at the bookstore. As many of you know, I've been waiting for this book. I finished it within the day, and collected my thoughts to write this review. So, without further ado...

I usually start these talking about the characters. In Bruce Cordell's past books, the characters were the bright spots for me. Be it Kiril Duskmorn, or Raidon Kane, Guge the thief, or even Guggari, I've always felt that Bruce's best asset was his ability to make interesting characters (Think Raidon Kane), or characters who become interesting because of circumstances thrust upon them (Think Kiril and Angul). At parts, I felt that Plague of Spells had interesting and compelling characters. The Lord of Bats was a very interesting Fey entity. Japheth the Warlock was not. It's good to see that Cloak from Cloak and Dagger has a kindred soul in Realmspace, though. Nogah the Kuo-Toa was interesting. Anusha was not. The "deal breaker" was Raidon Kane. As others know, I like the character. He's a Half Star Elf Half Shou Monk. That appeals to nearly every single one of my sensibilities. Sadly, though, Plague of Spells made me like the character less.

This is somewhat related to characters, but...Has anyone noticed a growing trend in Forgotten Realms novels, as of late. Think of this: The Twilight War trilogy has a Kraken. The Abolethic Sovereignty trilogy has a Kraken. The Twilight War trilogy has a drug-addict character. The Abolethic Sovereignty trilogy has a drug-addict character.

Concerning the plot, the iffy part, I will say that, at times, I was interested, while at others, I wasn't. It's unfortunate that, through much of the book, there are more or less two groups: A group consisting of characters that I didn't care for really, and a group consisting of characters that I cared for somewhat. If I said that, when the action focused on the characters I didn't really care for, I skipped ahead, I'd be lying. But, it wouldn't be lying if I said that, in those parts, I just trudged on, in the hopes that the limelight shifted to characters that I did like.

There are a couple of random, miscellaneous points that I'll bring up now, while doing my review. Firstly (but this is a minor point), Bruce writes that Elminster was a famous character, on page thirty-five. That he was an individual of "common knowledge". As we know, this isn't true. He isn't a famous celebrity. With lead authors and designers including information like this, though, it's pretty apparent while others who aren't as knowledgeable in the setting as many of us here are think that this is the case. Another random point: Spellscars, apparently, can do anything. We have some Spellscarred individuals being the bane of aberrations, we have some Spellscarred individuals gaining super strength (and then dying), we have Spellscarred individuals turning trees into "super trees" and rocks into "super rocks", we have Spellscarred individuals turning into phantasm-like specters while dreaming...Spellscars do everything, apparently.

Those of you who know me, you know that I wanted to like the book. The rating that I am giving it isn't because it's a Bruce Cordell novel, or because it's a novel that takes place in a Forgotten Realms that I don't

consider as actually happening in my Forgotten Realms, or because it has aberrations, or whatever else. I am rating this novel based only on how I think of it as a novel, plain and simple. I will end this on a note that Bruce Cordell himself penned into his novel. According to page thirty-five, and I quote, "History lessons were hard. It was all so dry and...pointless! Everything before the blue fire was irrelevant to how things were today". In other words, having read the books, it didn't feel like the Forgotten Realms. It felt like some other generic fantasy setting.

Gianfranco Mancini says

Nice story and very good characters with their inner demons. Had a blast coming back to the Realms after years, missing a lot friday nights spent playing Dungeons and Dragons with my friends after reading this book :(Raidon Kane is the fantasy version of David Carradine in "Kung Fu" and Kuo-toa are cousins to Lovecraft's Deep Ones, but there is more action than horror. Bruce R. Cordell is a game developer and you can see it, story is basically a D&D quest. A trilogy for high-fantasy and Role Playing Games lovers.

Drizztl says

5.5/10

Anusha and Japheth story was interesting, the monk Kane side of story was too quest like. End was as I expected, hopefully it gets better moving on.

Shawn Fairweather says

Wasnt a fan. At times it seemed to read like Power Point bullet entries, which provided flow issues. At other times grammar issues such as poorly constructed and run-on sentences made it difficult to read. The entry which was the first of the series gave little introduction to the characters or for any of the surroundings or monsters etc. This for someone new to either the genre of a DnD novel will make it extremely difficult wrap their arms around. Apparently Mr. Cordell is a DnD game writer which makes the nature of how this was written a bit more understandable. I myself do not play DnD however I do enjoy the lore to it, if that makes a difference. I am sure that there are some folks that did not have the issues as I had reading this, so I would suggest reading samples first before delving in.

Robert says

The following review was taken from <http://beezermn.laethyn.com>. I recommend this site for reviews of this and other fantasy authors.

Plague of Spells by Bruce Cordell is the first novel in the Abolethic Sovereignty Trilogy. The second book is titled City of Torment and is scheduled for release in September, 2009, the third book in the trilogy is titled Key of Stars and is slated for release in August, 2010. Mr. Cordell currently has two other novels set in the Forgotten Realms; Stardeep and Darkvision. He has also penned a short story for the Realms of War anthology. Fans of the Forgotten Realms will be especially interested in this novel in relation to the Spell

Plague and the new 4th Edition Rules. Most new Forgotten Realms books are picking up 100 years after the Spell Plague. Not so with this one. This novel has some of the initial Spell Plague and then picks up a mere 10 years later. I am pleased to find a book set during this time frame. Based on that aspect alone, I think this is almost a must read for most Forgotten Realms fans. Here are my thoughts on the novel as a whole.

The plot of this book is not your typical, linear plot. It is actually several plots, and perspectives, mixed together. This allows the story to take on a larger feel and cover more elements. There are three separate plots that are separate for some of the book before slowly being drawn together by a common theme. The first is that of Raidon Kane and his quest to find lost friends, a lost artifact, but more importantly finding himself. The second plotline focuses on an artifact being found by a Kuo-toa and just what powers it has, and if it is more than what it seems. The last major plot revolves around a small group of people who are drawn into the larger plot listed as number two in this list. Strictly speaking on the plot, I really enjoyed it. I like how the reader is given some background information on the Spell Plague and how it has effected, the people, lands, and other systems in the world. It flowed well and the pacing between each of the plots was well done. None of the different plot lines seemed to dominate the book at any time, conversely none of the various plot elements were lost either. There were a couple parts of the plot that felt slightly contrived and a little forced, such as how all three plot lines come together, but overall I enjoyed the plot quite a bit.

The characters in this book are a mix of new and old. Fans of the novel Stardeep will be pleased to know that Raidon Kane makes a return as does another character from Stardeep, but I will let readers find that one. Most of the characters are new, and most are rather interesting. Characters such as Anusha, Japheth, Thoster, Nogah, and Seren. Of all the characters in this book, I found Japheth to be the most interesting. There are multiple layers to who he is and why he does what he does. Unlike in Stardeep, Raidon was much more interesting in this novel. That could be because of the setting, and circumstances but either way I found myself interested in his plight and his calm quiet demeanor. There were two characters that I didn't really care for however. Nogah and Anusha. Nogah primarily because I was simply never able to really connect with her on any level. To me her character felt more like a way to advance other characters and plots that really being her own entity. Anusha I didn't care for because of a different reason. She experiences a great deal of, shall we say change during the novel. The issue I had with this is not so much the actual change, but the speed at which it happens and the ease at how she deals with the change. It just seemed unnatural and too easy. Aside from those two things I thought the characters were well done. The dialogue gave each character their own voice, especially Seren. For the most part all the characters were easy to connect with and understand, making the novel enjoyable and interesting.

A couple criticisms about the novel:

1 – As I mentioned above, the development of Anusha. It just seemed rushed and almost forced to make sure that the rest of the story happened as intended. I thought it was interesting, but I would have liked it to have taken longer than what it did. (I know that's vague, but I don't want to ruin anything for anyone)

2 – I would have liked for the 'final battle' to be longer and more engaging. As it is, it seems there is a great deal of build-up to it. A lot of apprehension from the characters and then the actual scene was a little disappointing to me.

Some things I liked about the novel:

1 – I loved that we are finally seeing glimpses of the much talked about Spell Plague and what the consequences are for it happening. I also like that this novel takes place 10 years after the Spell Plague and not the 100 years like most novels. While it doesn't answer all the questions about the Spell Plague, it does

give the reader a good idea at what things are like.

2 – Normally I tend not to like cliffhanger endings. However the ending of this book fit the novel perfectly. It finishes the book off, but it also leaves so much left to be decided in the next two novels.

3 – The prose in this novel was well done. It has a nice even flow to it, and the descriptions are near perfect. Visualization in novels is almost always a key component to the author really giving the reader his vision. Mr. Cordell succeeded in showing the reader his vision with this novel.

Some readers may remember my some what critical reviews of Mr. Cordell's first two novels. However, I like to give credit where credit is due and this is one of those instances. While there were a couple things in the novel that didn't really work for me, overall I enjoyed this novel quite a bit. In my eyes Mr. Cordell has improved quite a bit as an author. I am still under the impression that he would make a great Eberron author given his love of using gadgets and such, but is a very solid Forgotten Realms novel. Fans of the Forgotten realms should definitely read this book. Especially those who have been critical of the switch to 4th Edition just so they can see what those changes really entail. Readers looking at getting into the fantasy genre may be better served by getting other novels under their belt, if for no better reason so they can understand some of the things that occur in this novel. When all is said and done I can easily see myself recommending this novel to Realms fans. I certainly enjoyed it and am eagerly looking forward to the next installment.

- BeezerMN

Max says

Fairly entertaining. I liked the characters, and along with reading the rest of the trilogy, reading this makes me want to read more about the Keepers of the Cerulean Sign in other novels. The one issue, which isn't necessarily Cordell's fault, is that it's clear to anyone who's read the Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide that the Abolethic Sovereignty is going to rise and the protagonists will fail.

Lestat Bancroft says

I enjoyed this book allot more then I thought I would, many of the characters are different from your standard forgotten realms novel and it puts a lot of focus on sections of the realms which rarely receive that much attention, all while explaining it in a way that most readers regardless of the level of their realms lore can understand

Ken Hart says

Perhaps I was preconditioned to love this book, as I happen to like Dungeons & Dragons, warlocks, psionic manifestations, and huge Cthulhian monstrosities ... and "Plague of Spells" has them in glorious abundance. Cordell takes a rather unlikeable character (the aforementioned warlock) and, through a series of redemptive acts and a budding romance, has you rooting for him well before the novel's end. The novel's scope widens to a surprisingly huge amount, as befits its main villain -- a malignant, mind-controlling, super-intelligent, tentacled creature that by the novel's cliffhanger end... well, that would be telling. Suffice it to say that

Cordell mixes adventure, horror, fantasy, and romance so well that you'll be looking for the rest of the series.

Maris says

An enjoyable read that introduces you to the whole Spellplague induced changes into the world of Forgotten Realms. Be it environmental changes - pieces of fallen moons from other planes (along with the "guests"), distorted and ever changing landscape or surreal blue flamed imbued lethal traps, or be it creatures or other became-sentient beings - so called Plaguechanged - some that just get "Spellscarred" and get a certain magical attribute of unique and wizardry defying properties (dream-walking or becoming a walking bane of aberrations etc.), or creatures that are given sentience that lacked it before - like a gargantuan tree that can manifest itself into a talking avatar, or more hostile creatures that are so dis-configured that they have lost their sanity and rage on till they are put to rest. This is definitely the number one highlight of this book - an illustration of what has become of the world not long after the cataclysmic event in the Year of Blue Fire, 1385 - the Spellplague.

And then we have a cast of interesting characters whose stories are told in two parallel threads that do not intersect till a certain moment in a book. Raydon, the Monk, who had been imprisoned in a crystal for 10 years, after being caught in the Wall of the Blue Fire; Japeth, the Warlock who walked the Crimson Road and yet lives; and Anusha, the Dreamwalker - a daughter of noble who upon discovering her powers and true face of her brother deemed it necessary to leave the premise of her upbringing and go adventuring in a chest (literally) along the aforementioned Warlock. And also worth mentioning is a sentience that accompanies Raydon along his adventures and puts him back on line to fight aberrations - Cynosure. Along with other supporting cast of an enigmatic captain with a not-that-well-hidden-secret, a wizard who retrieved her lost arcane powers much sooner than the others after the Spellplague, an ancient Kraken who comes upon a relic of unimaginable power lured by the previous owner of it - a kuo-tao priestess who had freed the relic that will bring nothing good into this world - abominations from the Far Realms. All of the character are interesting and to some extent likable and, more or less believable given the setting and their personal agendas - some you want to spank, some you want to slap, some you want to grief along.

Mr. Cordell did a really fine job of writing this novel. It's not an epic or breathtaking, and by no means it is a "Lovecraftian horror in the Forgotten Realms" as it is advertised, nor it is introspective like books of R.A.Salvatore and his dark elf's wanderings, but certainly is a good book in the setting you like and love with likable cast and worthy of a title "fantasy adventure" with its premise. A rating of 4/5 "really liked" and would love to read the next book - City of Torment - as soon as possible!

Mike says

Plague of Spells is not a work without flaws and, for me at least, oscillated between frustrating and genuinely enthralling. The novel opens with the monk Raidon Kane as he returns home to his adopted daughter. The reader gets a brief introduction to the character, with the aid of his mother's amulet he hunts aberrant creatures; those things that D&D pilfered from the mind of H. P. Lovecraft. It isn't long before disaster strikes as the Spellplague rips through Faerun destroying everything in its path. Well, almost anything since Raidon somehow manages to be saved, thanks in some part to his mystical amulet of the Cerulean Sign. Unfortunately it is while before we see Raidon again and we bounce back and forth between several other characters before the monk makes his appearance. The monk is drafted, almost press-ganged, into a war

against a greater threat of an elder evil while at the same time he must shift through the ashes of his own past while trying to come to grips with the vastly changed face of Faerun.

Full review [here](#)

Rage says

Feels like a port of Kung Fu with David Carradine for a good portion of the book. It had a Dark Tower feel about it as well with the element of a lone man on a quest with random elements popping up. All in all a good read. I like any of the Forgotten Realms books with a warlock in them. Very creative elements to it, like the depictions of drug use without it becoming "adult content." I was really impressed with the originality of the descriptions of various creatures. The interpersonal relationships are mostly interesting. Lots of depth to the world and many areas as a reader I want to go back and explore more.

Andy says

what could of been a very good idea in the Forgotten realms turned out poorly . very much a lovecraft ripoff story wise with a horror older than the gods in the deep places of the sea . not a dungeons and dragons book I would advise anyone new to the books to read as it tends to jump around a bit without giving much away in back story . I may be bias in this as I dont really enjoy the changes to the game system and lore at this time . Im hoping the next book fleshes out the back story some more. having said that I did enjoy some of the well written combat scenes .

Travis says

Plague of Spells by Bruce R. Cordell- This is the first book in the Abolethic Sovereignty, with the second book called City of Torment and the third and final book called Key of Stars (due out in November of 2010), all set in the Forgotten Realms universe. Bruce R. Cordell is the author of other Forgotten Realms novels and has contributed a few short stories to various anthologies. His other Forgotten Realms novels include; Stardeep (which is part of The Dungeon series of stand-alone novels), Darkvision (which is part of The Wizards series of stand-alone novels), and Lady of Poison (which is part of The Priests series of stand-alone novels). Some characters from the novel Stardeep also appear in this trilogy.

The story follows three different story lines that intersect at the end of the story. We are first introduced to a monk named Raidon Kane, who is returning to his adoptive daughter after killing an abomination as dictated by an amulet he wears called the Cerulean Sign, which can sense aberrations. During his trip home, he becomes trapped in a Spellplague outbreak, holding him in a cocoon like structure for a decade. Upon breaking free, he discovers that the amulet is not a tattoo on his chest and allows him to 'feel' aberrations. After finally returning home after ten years, he finds his daughter has died. He then embarks on a quest of revenge, with the aid of a voice called Cynosure, who is a sentient golem pledged to the Cerulean Sign. The second story line focuses on a kuo-toa named Nogah and her discovery of an artifact called the Dreamheart. After learning some tricks of the Dreamheart, Nogah rallies some of her people to join her cause but it turns bad in the end. A kraken named Gethshemeth, takes the relic from Nogah. And Nogah wants it back. The final story line follows a young woman named Anusha and a drug addled warlock named Japheth. Anusha

learns she has a unique gift to 'dream-walk' while she is asleep. After finding out that her step-brother means to hold her up in one of the family estates, she decides to run off on a ship in which her step-brother is employing the warlock to act as his proxy on a deal that could make the step-brother wealthy beyond belief. But how do these story lines come together?

Negatives:

- 1) Nogah's Scenes. These are a chore to read through. I didn't care for the character nor the story she had. To me, it was just filler and it felt like it. It's even worse when the other story lines are much more interesting. However, later in the story, they are a little more bearable, mostly due to the fact that she isn't the focus of the story. I didn't like the character because she was boring and just bland. Just thoroughly uninteresting.
- 2) Jumping Actions. This is a little more hard to explain. Every so often, there are times when there was a 'jump' in the action, but I'm not talking about the physical action. It's more like a lack of observations, but it makes things disoriented and a little confusing. For example, when we learn of Raidon's daughter has died, there wasn't any big moment of remorse or shock. Yes, there is some emotion shown but it feels wrong. I don't even read how Raidon learns of this devastating news, and that would be much more emotionally driven and powerful. Then there are lacking observations. Usually these are smaller little details that are easily missed, but it feels weird reading them.
- 3) Word Choice. Usually, I don't mind using 'big words' in a story. Usually, I can figure out what they mean within a few minutes. But here, there are so many awkward words that, for the life of me, I couldn't explain what they are. It doesn't help that almost every sentence has one such word. Also, these words were constantly used in everyday conversation, which doesn't seem to fit well with some of these characters. It honestly feels like someone had a field day with a Thesaurus.

Positives:

- 1) Characters. I really didn't enjoy the characters for the most part, except for a few. Raidon was a very intriguing character. His fighting skills were, for the most part, amazingly written. Not only that but at times you can really feel his despair towards his lost daughter. It was touching and sad. Anusha and Japheth, were interesting in another way. They become close to one another and that's written very well. It almost becomes believable at times. As for themselves as separate characters, they are still enjoyable. With Japheth, the more interesting of the two, his addiction and how he deals with it is very interesting. I can't really give that much away from his story, needless to say it is really enjoyable. Anusha, however, is kind of more generic. The only thing I enjoyed was her naïve attitudes towards everything and her 'dream-walking', with the latter being the more interesting aspect. Then you have the supporting characters of Captain Thoster and Seren. They are both have unique aspects about them, but not as interesting as the others. Still, they are well written and have distinct personalities.
- 2) The Two 'Other' Story Lines. They were good, but more enjoyable to read than Nogah's. I'm not going to say much about them, but they were just much more engaging and interesting. I really couldn't wait to read more about Japheth and Anusha or Raidon after their chapters ended. While Japheth and Anusha's story was a little more straight forward, Raidon's jumped around a lot. They just enjoyable to read about.
- 3) The Ending. The ending was action packed, exciting, and just good. The battle with the corrupted kuo-toa was really well written that it was so easy to follow and comprehend. Yes, it ends on a cliffhanger, but it makes you wonder what happens next. And I'm ready to dive right into City of Torment.

Side Notes:

- 1) Anusha. How is she suddenly able to understand her talent? It didn't make much sense that she would just be okay with it.
- 2) Traveler's Dust. This is what Japheth's addiction is and it does seem really deadly and kind of frightening at times.
- 3) Cover Art. It's interesting, it does catch your eye with the cooler colors and the psychedelic look of the

thing behind the person. I just don't know who it's meant to be. I think it's supposed to be Raidon, but it is a little hard to tell. Regardless, the cover is eye-catching and good.

Overall: 3/5

Final Thoughts:

This story really should deserve a 4, but it just doesn't cut it. The Nogah scenes felt too long and I just didn't care to read them. Then I felt like sometimes things didn't really flow too well with jumping around and skipping things to make some of the actions go by faster. And the Thesaurus words were at times unbearable to read. At least most of the characters were interesting and really engaged me, and that the other two main story lines were wonderfully done. Even the cliffhanger ending is making me want to jump into the next book as soon as possible. But honestly, I don't really think that this story warrants a 4/5 rating, maybe a rating of 3.5 but I don't use decimals.

Kuro_no says

Lovecraftian action in Faerun!

What might have been a good read is ruined by Wizards of the Coast gaming company change of the DnD rules from 3rd to 4th edition, and in particular they've decided to make this transition in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting by assigning this duty to some writers and game designers. Bruce R. Cordell's Abolethic Sovereignty trilogy is such a transitional work, adapting elements from the new edition of the game and make them as part of the story.

The story begins with the main character, a traveling monk, belonging to an ancient order whose purpose is the hunting and extinction of aberrations, as he returns home after ten years of exterminating abominations to see his adopted daughter. Right then tragedy strucks and the world is covered in magical blue fire. This is the Spellplague, an event that triggers the change from 3rd to 4th edition in the Forgotten Realms and is happening because the goddess of magic is murdered, and magic itself is malfunctioning (good hint of what I've mentioned in the first paragraph). We then have a magical 10 year time skip, where Raidon (the monk) wakes up in a much changed world from what he remembers and seeing that his amulet, a family heirloom, has been fused into his flesh as a magical tattoo called a spellscar. After Raidon searches for his lost child and finding out that she has perished he becomes overcome with grief.

At this point other characters and story elements are introduced, such as a kuo-toa priestess (a kind of fish people) whose race hunts her for preaching against their deity, after she finds a very ancient artifact which bestows upon her many powers and thus branding her as heretic, before it gets stolen from her. Another part of the story is comprised of a group of characters led by a pirate captain and his ship and crew who are sent to meet with this priestess and learn what she has to offer, at the behest of a corrupt noble, who wishes to attain some sort of leverage that could grant him control of his city's council which his family already belongs to.

Finally there is a new thing called the Abolethic Sovereignty (which despite being the title of the trilogy is not explained well here) that apparently is a gathering of aberrations called aboleths, which came from another dimension and have settled in an ancient city that dwells the Eldest of their race "sleeping" (got what it refers to?).

The pacing varies, from very slow in the Raidon scenes, to just ok in the middle of the book, until the final

part of the book where it speeds up. So although half the plot is as simple as "go there and do that" it also shows a different world and the opportunity to know that world and characters. Let's take a look:

Raidon Kane, the protagonist who's a recurring character from another novel is a peculiar character. He is the closest this story has to a good guy(in fact he was but that's the point now the word is changed maybe he's also changed), therefore making him the "hero". His main focus is the grief for his lost daughter and otherwise he's not really interesting. He has almost no personality and the most interesting thing about him is the artifacts he bears, making him ultra-powerful. Despite at the beginning wanting to be left alone and mourn he's kind of interesting and you could sympathize with him(he's a father who lost their child), a sentient magical construct ally takes the guide role in order to drive Raidon away from the despair he's sunk and give him a new purpose in this new world. It teleports Raidon from place to place at the needs of the plot, all the while making him search for information and tools to fight a new threat, as it's slowly revealing a bit of cryptic information at a time.

The new characters are more interesting such as Japheth, a warlock whose addiction to a kind of drug that enhances his senses but will eventually cost him his life forces him to make a pact with a mysterious fey entity known as the Lord of Bats, granting him many dark secrets and supernatural abilities. He is underused and just for development of the story in the next novels unfortunately.

Anusha, a noble girl and sister to the corrupt noble who funds the mission. She becomes affected by the blue fire and slowly developing the ability to create a "dream form" while sleeping and walk away from her living body, as well as, creating things from her mind in that form. I understand she is the young girl going in an adventure for the first time and being the closest thing to the audience, however she is not done well and she is unimportant.

The secondary characters all hide something but are very enjoyable. Thoster, the captain of the ship in which part of the story transpires, has a secret lineage and goals he refuses to share with others of his team. The ship's sorceress, hides something from her past but is kind of sassy and could be more interesting if developed further.

Like the main character the antagonists are weak. The noble has no personality to speak of despite being thirsty for power and being the instigator for the plot to go on. Japheths' patron Neifion is sorta interesting and intimidating. There is another "behind the scenes" villain who appears in the middle of the story and despite being not interesting besides being mysterious, she is set as the villain.

So, despite the slow pacing, the mediocrity of the characters and the need to rip off Lovecraft the book still has some merits. It has a great dark atmosphere and the unknown factor of what we are dealing with, from dark fantasy(which I personally love both of them). Its battles are not especially dragged(except the final one) and in spite of me not liking the protagonist his battles are described very well (Cordell being a martial artist himself) and the enemies are indeed creepy. However it fails to deliver and by that I mean it's ripping off Lovecraft and not doing something innovative with it, while not focusing in the horror element but on the action instead. And although some of the battle scenes are really nice (and even has a kinda plot twist in the end) I would prefer the story to be more character-centered than plot-driven. For example during the final part of the novel there are great scenes that could be further explored if not for the raced pacing and wasting pages at unnecessary things, such as the romance between two characters and having Raidon visiting random places to prepare for his "mission".

Stephen says

I started this series with skepticism due to the fantasy-trope expectations I had. However, I was interested in the Forgotten Realms stories, as I am an avid player of D&D in my personal life. Once I began this series, I was hooked almost immediately. Even after scrutinizing the writing, I found the author's choice of words, the slow and natural build up of story, and the feeling of being thrown into a torrential pull of intrigue that made up the story made this series unforgettable. It doesn't feel necessary to have read other books in the series to appreciate this group. If you enjoy fantasy novelizations, or if you are a player of D&D, you will most likely appreciate this series. I look forward to reading the next series and immerse myself more into the Forgotten Realms.
