



The Land of Terror

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WHO IS DOC SAVAGE?

To the world at large, Doc Savage is a strange, mysterious figure of glistening bronze skin and golden eyes. To his amazing co-adventurers - the five greatest brains ever assembled in one group - he is a man of superhuman strength and protean genius, whose life is dedicated to the destruction of evil-doers. To his fans he is one of the greatest adventure heroes of all time, whose fantastic exploits are unequalled for hair-raising thrills, breathtaking escapes and bloodcurdling excitement.

A VILE GREENISH VAPOR was all that remained of the first victim of the monstrous Smoke of Eternity. There would be thousands more if Kar, master fiend, had his evil way. Only Doc Savage and his mighty five could stop him. But the corpse-laden trail led to a prehistoric crater and mortal combat with the fiercest killing machines ever invented by nature.

The Land of Terror Details

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Author : Kenneth Robeson (House Name) , Lester Dent

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From Reader Review The Land of Terror for online ebook

Ed Wyrd says

This is the 8th book in the Bantam paperback series from the late 1960s, but was really the 2nd Doc Savage story published back in the 1930s. The story is unusual in that Doc Savage is portrayed as this cold-blooded vigilante who is killing criminals, unlike later stories where he does his best to avoid directly being responsible for their deaths. He also uses guns quite a lot, again, unlike later stories where he actually eschews the use of weapons, feeling they make one too reliant on them. The story also feels as though one of the other house Kenneth Robeson wrote it and not Lester Dent, but I didn't research it to know for sure. Overall, probably one of the more forgettable Doc Savage adventures. Although, it is good for a few laughs when the gang is stuck on Terror Island battling T-Rexes that hop like kangaroos, angry carnivorous stegosaurus, and giant beavers.

Craig says

The first Doc Savage story appeared in 1933 and the series ran in pulp and later digest format into 1949. Bantam reprinted the entire series in paperback with wonderful, iconic covers starting in the 1960's. Doc was arguably the first great modern superhero with a rich background, continuity, and mythos. The characterizations were far richer than was common for the pulps; his five associates and their sometimes-auxiliary, Doc's cousin Pat, and the pets Chemistry and Habeas Corpus, all had very distinctive characteristics and their byplay was frequently more entertaining than the current adventure-of-the-month. The settings were also fascinating: Doc's Fortress of Solitude, the Hidalgo Trading Company (which served as a front for his armada of vehicles), and especially the mysterious 86th floor headquarters all became familiar haunts to the reader, and the far-flung adventures took the intrepid band to exotic and richly-described locations all over the world. The adventures were always fast-paced and exciting, from the early apocalyptic world-saving extravaganzas of the early days to the latter scientific-detective style shorter works of the post-World War Two years. There were always a few points that it was difficult to believe along the way, but there were always more ups than downs, and there was never, ever a dull moment. The Doc Savage books have always been my favorite entertainments... I was always, as Johnny would say, superamalgamated!

Michael Prier says

I knew who Kar was from the get go. Descriptions of dinosaurs were pretty interesting. Doc Savage was vicious in this book. And what happened to the pig?

Jeff says

The search for a mysterious villain called Kar and the source of his deadly invention, the smoke of eternity, leads Doc Savage and his crew to a South Seas island so lost in time that dinosaurs still roam the place. There was something about the plot that I figured out early on, but I won't give it away. A fun read.

Phil says

Doc Savage's second adventure (according to the serial publication date, rather than the novel series') is a lackluster one. It starts off interestingly enough, with an acquaintance of Doc Savage falling victim to a mysterious assassination, his almost completely dissolved by an unknown substance. While action packed, the story and characterization that follows is sleight, even by pulp fiction standards.

One weakness is that the heroes don't reach the titular Land of Terror until literally halfway through the book. The first half mostly involves Doc Savage and his crew dealing with thugs led by a shadowy villain known as Kar. Savage discovers their hideout, a cheesy pirate ship museum, fairly early on, but for some reason he ends up making multiple trips to this same location, rather than dealing with the criminals in one fell swoop. While there are some exciting set pieces (including the classic situation where a sidekick is trapped in a chamber slowly filling with water), it feels strange that Savage keeps returning there.

Things pick up when Savage and his friends finally end up at the Land of Terror (that's actually the name used for the island in the text). As the cover reveals, the place is a "Lost World" filled with aggressive dinosaurs.

There's some attempt to play up the "mystery" surrounding Kar's identity, but that plot thread is fairly limp. I suspect most readers paying a modicum of attention to the story will pick up on it.

One issue I noticed in the first story returns in the second as well: Doc Savage has too many friends. The bickering between the apish chemist Monk and the prissy lawyer Ham continues to entertain, but Doc Savage's other three traveling companions (Renny, Long Tom, and the Other Guy) still don't have any memorable (or even distinguishing) qualities, nor do they contribute much to the plot apart from serving as kidnap victims.

While not a bad story, this volume was uneven and merely OK. Hopefully the next installment is closer in quality to the first book.

Forrest says

I've been a fan of Doc Savage for many years, but I've only read a smattering of the novels before now. Recently, however, I came into possession of a nearly complete set of the Bantam paperback reprints, which not only gives me a chance to fill in the gaps, but to read the stories *in their original publication order* (which Bantam's numbering does not follow at all -- this book, #8 in Bantam's series, was originally the second issue of the mag).

I'm finding these early stories to be very rough-edged. The characters don't have all their mannerisms set yet, the pacing isn't quite there, and the scene-writing and dialogue are frequently stilted, even by Doc Savage standards. The action is more brutal as well. There are no anesthetic "mercy bullets" in Doc's guns yet, just lead. And that lead brings down a lot of bad guys. Villains die left and right, shot, hacked, crushed, or melted to death by Doc's grim justice.

The story here is a good yarn, although I wish the lengthy New York sequence had been shorter and not chased its own tail so much. And if you haven't figured out who the mysterious Kar really is by the halfway point, you just aren't paying attention. Things pick up once the "land of terror" aspect kicks in, but that doesn't happen until the novel's final third. Still, it's an enjoyable bit of pulp madness.

Solitaierose says

Technically, the 2nd Doc Savage story this novel shows that while many of the elements of Doc were in place, there was still a little ways to go. The formula is already in place as a criminal has a fantastic device (this one is a mist that dissolves matter), is planning a series of crimes and Doc and his friends go into action to stop him.

As a pulp novel, the writing is quick, a bit clumsy and suffers from trying for a breathless pace, but often seems clumsy and definitely overwrought. This is to be expected from a pulp novel from the 30's, and to want more means you aren't paying attention to the genre. The plot moves at a brisk pace, with a lot of action, fun ideas, and a spotlight on Doc Savage himself, who is one of the first Super-heroes. The character interplay of Doc's team is fun, albeit brief.

The mystery isn't that much of a mystery, but that's now why you read a pulp novel. You read it for the gimmicked pirate ship, the car chases, the fights, the volcano filled with dinosaurs and hearing about how incredible Doc Savage is. This was a lot of fun, even if it is ragged around the edges, creaky with age and with phrases so poorly written at times you shake your head.

Stormcrow says

Random thoughts on this book:

This is actually the second Doc book ever written and it shows in that Robeson / Dent is still finding his way. For me, the most interesting aspect of this book is that Doc is practically a murdering machine. They haven't yet created the mercy bullets that render foes inert and there's a few times Doc, though always in some form of self-defense, just drops henchmen in their tracks.

I was looking forward to this book because of the dinosaurs, but they're only in the last third and it's not all that exciting.

Probably the most interesting scientific aspect is when Doc muses over the splitting of the atom, something that wouldn't actually occur for more than another decade.

While certainly a fast book to read, I can't say it was very exceptional in any way. Plenty of better Doc adventures out there.

Trevor says

The Land of Terror isn't one of Dent's best Doc Savage novels, but it is certainly strange enough to warrant a reading. The story, involving pirate ships, dinosaurs, prehistoric beavers, a villain named Kar, and Kar's mysterious "Smoke of Eternity"--which has the power to dissolve any known matter save a rare metal substance--is about as insane as it sounds. True to form, Dent chooses to set the action of the first half of the novel in New York City before transferring the setting to the perilous Thunder Island, where evolution never took hold. It isn't smart, it isn't even surprising, it's exactly what you'd expect a Doc Savage novel to be.

Keith Bell says

5 for nostalgia. The second DS novel written and it shows. Robeson was still establishing the characters personalities, and while the basics are there they are still different.

Doc is more ready and willing to take a life here and demonstrates a little more personality. No great mystery to the ID of the villain either, as it is pretty obvious. Fun to read either way though.

Benn Allen says

A fun, action-packed pulp novel that's not without its flaws. It's kinda hard to believe Doc Savage doesn't figure out who the villain is earlier in the book, for one thing. Then there's Doc's five companions. Given how flawlessly perfect Doctor Clark Savage is, it's hard to understand why he really needs help from Monk, Ham, Johnny, Long Tom and Renny. They basically seem to exist for Doc Savage to rescue. I also have to admit that after awhile it gets annoying how superior Savage is. (But then, Savage seems to have been a prototype superhero.) Doc is so superior that after coming out of lake we're told the water does not linger in his hair or on his skin. (!?!). On the other hand, his skin does glisten with sweat later on... :T Overall, it's best to ignore the flaws and just enjoy the adventure. It does keep you interested.

Tim says

From April 1933, this second Doc Savage story is rough and unpolished as a chunk of concrete. So early in the 181-issue run of Doc Savage Magazine, the prose is at its most pulpy and bloated and stilted, the characterizations of Doc and his crew not fully formed. Doc, in fact, far from being the merciful do-gooder who would avoid killing at almost any cost, is a dreadnaught of violence. Granted, Doc has just seen his beloved mentor disintegrated by the vile Smoke of Eternity.

So it's a crude adventure. And yet ... there's frickin' dinosaurs!

Doc and the boys eventually find themselves at a hidden island near New Zealand that, cloaked by cloud-cover, teems with reptilian mostrosities. Fun as hell, though it takes wading through some woody prose to get there.

"The Land of Terror" has a special place in my heart because it was the first Doc Savage novel I ever read,

my 15-year-old eyes bugging out when I saw those dinosaurs on the book rack. Love at first sight and forever.

Rex says

The paperback lists this book as the eighth Doc Savage title, but it is really the second story published about Doc Savage (see Doc Savage magazine published April 1933).

In the story Doc and his motley crew end up on Terror Island, which is inhabited by dinosaurs. Besides eventually subduing the villain there, they spend a large amount of their time in adventures where they avoid being eaten. The secret and surprise ending of who the villain, Kar, is had so many clues dropped early in the story that I had figured it out half way into the book. Also the continued worship of the super human Doc Savage is distracting and gets annoying due to its repetition.

Maybe if they had gone instead to Monster Island where Godzilla, Gamera, Godzuki, etc. live the story could have gotten two stars. Godzilla is like a super human and worshiped [in Japan] too. Think about it, Doc and Godzilla have a lot in common. Both are well known and tough. Doc and Godzilla could have bonded and then ganged up on Kar. It might have created a better story and ending...

The original cover for The Land of Terror from the Doc Savage magazine in someways is better than the book's cover (e.g. the cover can be found by web search). Its color is brighter and it gives a better feel of the situation and action occurring on Terror Island. Interestingly in the 1933 cover version Doc Savage does not have the widows peak and has less of a weight lifter build.

Tim Schneider says

Let's face it...most pulp fiction was not great literature. There are clearly exceptions, but they are indeed exceptions. And serial literature is less likely to be great. If you're looking for that in Doc Savage...you're looking in the wrong place. What you are going to get is page-turning adventure.

This was the second published Doc super-saga. Lester Dent and company were still finding their footing. There is, perforce, a lot of repetition. As a publisher, every issue of Doc Savage was likely someone's first issue. So you had to introduce the characters, their idiosyncrasies and their dynamics in each issue. And as this was very early on the characters are still settling in to their roles. This is a significantly more bloodthirsty Doc than we'll see in times to come.

This one also has the writing ticks that are either endearing or exasperating depending on your perspective. Every time that someone "ejaculates" an excited utterance...there is probably going to have to be a titter. Doc's training regimen, particularly with regard to his auditory and olfactory senses is pretty darn silly.

In this saga, Doc and the boys end up in a Burroughsian Lost World complete with dinosaurs and giant mammals coexisting (in a very small ecosystem) and a carnivorous stegosaurus. It's early on. This is admittedly a fairly weak early entry. But in the best of pulp fashion, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Frank says

Good Doc Savage adventure read in 1975.
