



The Goblin Tower

L. Sprague de Camp

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King Jorian was rather attached to his head. Hence, he felt his promise to steal the Kist of Avlen, a treasure trove of ancient manuscripts containing magical lore, was a small enough price to pay for a chance to escape his own beheading. But when the quest pitted him against one peril after another - a murderous wizard and his giant squirrel, a castle full of executioners, a marauding troupe of ape men, and a voluptuous 500-year-old princess who was also a serpent - Jorian began to wonder whether he'd made such a good bargain.

The Goblin Tower Details

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Author : L. Sprague de Camp

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From Reader Review The Goblin Tower for online ebook

Stephen Brooke says

As De Camp goes, this is one of the better efforts. The story is pretty good, certainly a cut above what reads in a typical fantasy adventure, with inventive ideas thrown in that do help bring this invented world to life. And the writing is serviceable. A slightly more archaic or formal tone is adopted and it works well enough. At times, the descriptions — which can become of the laundry list variety — distract from the tale.

The author does sometimes exhibit what I like to call Mark Twain Syndrome, the idea that everyone in the world — save himself and maybe his protagonist — is an utter idiot. It is not as evident in this novel as in some of De Camp's other work, but you still get that sense of implied superiority. His usual humor is there and, for the most part, as heavy handed as ever. It is not a book that would make much of anyone laugh aloud but it can be amusing.

That humor, which occasionally detours into the absurd or even preposterous, also gives the “The Goblin Tower” a bit of a split personality. There is a little too much caricature for realism, yet at its core, 'Goblin' is straight-forward adventure, not satire.

Still, a decent read, some interesting observations on the human condition, a bit of action, a dash of sex — yeah, I can recommend this one.

K. Axel says

This was the first book that I ever read from L. Sprague de Camp, a good and solid fantasy story in the tradition of the old Sword and Sorcery genre. It is also somewhat comical at times, which I didn't mind.

I dont rate it higher because it didn't offer me anything new.

G. Salter says

L. Sprague de Camp uses the Sword & Sorcery formula Robert E. Howard invented - fast action, exotic foes and locations, drastic plot changes - and refines it a little. Drastic plot changes are explained or used for humor, and the action and adventure are very exciting. There aren't any real themes or deeper symbolism, but as an adventure story this book holds together quite well.

Stuart says

An intelligently written and cleverly composed tale of swashbuckling and adventure. I've been reading quite a bit of L. Sprague de Camp's work, and I feel like he really hits his stride in this series (not that The Fallible Fiend wasn't also delightful).

Georgi Nikolaev says

its just too retro

Danielle Miller says

I last read this back in the 80s as a teen, and remember quite enjoying it. Coming back to it now, it is all rather dated and too much purple prose. The author tried too hard to show off his vocabulary, the dialogue was turgid, and the characters basically ciphers. While there is a heavy-handed, slapstick humour running entwined through the ambling adventure, it became almost annoying. Was contemplating going through the rest of the trilogy, but have now lost interest.

Abby says

This book was a fairly light, entertaining read. The action keeps up fairly well and humorous situations are continuously popping up. However, at the end of the book, I am still not entirely sure that I know the main character, Jorian. I would say the characters, while not exactly flat, could definitely use some fleshing out. Also, Karadur, the old wizard, was much too often letting a tear trickle down his cheek which really started to get annoying.

Entertaining, and I would consider reading more of the series, but I feel the need to find something a bit more meaty for in-between.

Ashley Lambert-Maberly says

What a terrific surprise! I expected (no longer sure why) a generic fantasy, and instead got a delightful, slightly satirical, charming little story. It's very similar to the tone of the Matthew Hughes *Archonate* books, if you're familiar with them. It's quite episodic, as the protagonist Jorian travels from society to society and has adventures everywhere he goes.

I suspect if it were written today there would be less emphasis on hot women throwing themselves at our hero, and of course there's no evident gay characters, etc., but diversity aside it's really an engaging book.

Technically a 4.5 but I'm rounding up because of it so exceeded my expectations!

(Note: 5 stars = rare and amazing, 4 = quite good book, 3 = a decent read, 2 = disappointing, 1 = awful, just awful. There are a lot of 4s and 3s in the world!)

April says

Silly, full of doubtful poetry and storytelling and quite ribald at times but actually kind of fun if not as uproariously funny as I expected. Don't expect laugh out loud humor, just a couple of grins but it is a lighthearted romp for all of that.

Attila says

A sword-and-sorcery fantasy - rather sword than sorcery - about an adventurer who must steal a magical artefact on the orders of a wizard. He gets into all kinds of random adventures, most of which are not related to the search for the artefact in any way. The plot is simple and linear, and for the most part it goes nowhere.

Brandon Bundy says

The Goblin Tower offers a curious world of magic and monsters. I found Jorian to be a bit hard to sympathize with, and his knack for going on winding tales of yore, while interesting enough for the overview into the history of the lands, nevertheless felt off-putting given their regular occurrence. I was impressed by the sexuality raised here however, as this is the first fantasy series I've read to be so bold about sexuality outside of A Game of Thrones.

One of my biggest complaints is that the danger which Jorian finds himself facing each time after the headman's axe does not feel genuinely threatening. He always has some little skill up his sleeve(or in his belt, be it the lock pick pins or his... manhood).

On the whole this is not a bad book. It just isn't the strongest I've picked up in the past year and a half, and while it does have some fun areas and some entertaining and interesting thoughts to tell, there are others which fall flat for me.

I will however seek out the sequel as time allows.

James Rickett says

A fun look at an alternate universe, with an odd peek back into this one.

Dale Mccoy says

In all my years of reading, once I pass a certain point in the book (roughly 100 pages in), I finish it. Heck, once I read an entire book that I knew I wasn't going to enjoy just because it was the third in a trilogy and I wanted to finish it.

This is the first time that I put down a book well past that 100 pages mark. Even worse, I was within 20

pages of the end of the book. Reading those last 20 pages just was not worth my time. That is how awful this book is.

It starts off rather exciting. The king is about to be executed (for reasons they explain later) and he escapes. Its a great start to the book and all through the book you are waiting for it to get back to that level of excitement, but it never comes close again. It meanders. A lot! You keep thinking, "Oh here we go, we're about to get to an exciting part," and it lets you down. Again and again. Even worse, there are long stretches of text that are so mind-numbingly dull that you slog through figuring that it will get better soon. It doesn't.

The most exciting and funny parts, oddly enough, are the times the main character goes off and tells a story. Yes, you are literally reading a section of text that has nothing what so ever to do with the "plot." I put plot in quotes because this book just does not have one. Hell, we don't even get to the goblin tower until the last 30 or so pages. The entire previous part of the book is going from one random event after another (like making a D&D campaign using only the random encounter table). Once we do finally get to the tower, its ... nothing exciting. We get a multi-page speech about politics. Not even politics that could be applied to our world, but one about wizards of their world. Think that could be exciting? It is like listening to John Kerry, Mitt Romney and Jeb Bush all rolled into one at their most boring. Right where the climax should be. You know, that part of the book that we SHOULD have been building towards the entire time (but weren't), it just isn't there.

If I could give this book negative stars, I would.

Sawyer says

Not unreadable, but the story just doesn't lead anywhere.

It seems like the writer always finds out what to write on the next page while he's working on the previous one.

It's not completely unenjoyable, but for me this book is not enough. It lacks a real story, also lacks a real, lifelike character in the main role.

Michael says

I've been searching for this book for YEARS!! I read it as a child, but I couldn't remember the title. I'd been looking for "King Jordan", thinking that was the name of the character and book, but "King Jorian" is what I should have been looking for. It took an obscure search of "King beheaded after 5 years" to find it - thanks Google!

I remember the book with fondness, so I hope it lives up to my memory (which is rather shady, so it will not take much).
