



The Second Book of Lankhmar

Fritz Leiber

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Witty, gripping and urbane, Fritz Leiber's Lankhmar books are among the best loved of all modern fantasies

The Second Book of Lankhmar Details

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Author : Fritz Leiber

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From Reader Review The Second Book of Lankhmar for online ebook

Stuart Lutzenhiser says

An omnibus edition containing Sword of Lankhmar, Swords and Ice Magic, and Knight and Knave of Swords. Writing was better than I remember, but much more ribald. I can't recall it being so risqué when I read them before. Perhaps I just didn't understand the references. That's my story and I'm sticking with it anyway.

Derek Pennycuff says

Here's an actual sentence I encountered while reading this book:

A week later, the evening being unseasonably balmy and Witches Moon at first quarter near the top of the sky, a hemispherical silver goblet brimful of stars and scattering them dimmed by moonwine all over the sky as it descended toward the lips of the west, drawn down by the same goddess who had lifted it, Afreyt and Fafhrd after supping alone at her violet-tinted pale house on Salthaven's northern edge were minded to wander across the great meadow in the direction of Elvenhold, a northward slanting slim rock spire two bowshots high, chimneyed and narrowly terraced, that thrust from the rolling fields almost a league away to the west.

The earlier stories aren't exactly high art. But I'm wondering if they went through an extra round of editing compared to the later stories in this second collection. Even at their best I feel the stories in this volume could be told at least as effectively with half as many words. If you can make it through passages like this without a heavy sigh or eye roll then maybe you'll enjoy this book more than I did.

It's taken me most of 2014 to slough through these 2 collections. And while I can't say I regret reading them I've got tons of stuff waiting to be read that will be a much more rewarding investment of my time.

Ignacio Senao f says

Las espadas de Lankhmar (3/5): un comienzo prometedor a bordo de un barco, con bastante humor y situaciones de pura fantasía. Y tras llegar a la ciudad la fantasía no para, pues un ejército de ratas (de ratas tal como las conocemos) armadas, quiere hacerse con el poder. Me ha recordado mucho a Gotreh y Felix, son una copia de los de Leiber.

Espadas y magia glacial (3/5): metemos un poquito de juego de los dioses que se aburren y putean a los guerreros como si fuese un juego de mesa. La Muerte está deseando de acabar con ellos y ellos viajan a islas como si nada pasase. Demasiado me recuerda a Mundo Disco.

El caballero y la sota de espadas (2/5): una narración extremadamente pesada, por momentos ponía el piloto automático y tan solo leía. Se excede en pensamientos y explicaciones. De poco me he enterado de esta historia.

No sé si la valoración es injusta, pero en un futuro lo sabré pues creo que lo releeré a pesar de lo poco que me ha gustado. Casi nada de espada y brujería he visto, está a años luz de lo palomitero de Conan y lo venden como tal. Pero algo me dice que es debido a que no era mi momento para este libro. He notado mucha pesadez en la prosa y exceso de explicaciones, se va mucho por senderos que nada tiene que ver con la aventura y es casi más filosófico.

John Devlin says

Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser are great heroes, and Issek of the jug ranks right up there with Made of Meat as one of the best laugh out loud stories I've ever read.

Max says

The first book collected in this volume is quite good. The subsequent ones are different from Fafhrd and the Mouser's previous adventures, and while they are still good, they are not quite as good as the previous novels.

Ross Lockhart says

This omnibus, collecting the last three of Leiber's Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser books (THE SWORDS OF LANKHMAR, SWORDS AND ICE MAGIC, and THE KNIGHT AND KNAVE OF SWORDS), finds its author approaching, in the time-honored tradition of aging SF authors, full-blown dirty-old-man-mode (at least Heinlein was able to attribute his latter-years satyriasis on a brain tumor). True, Leiber's duo of heroes, unlike, say, those of Tolkien, exhibited active libidos from the start, but here one can chart a sort of crescendo of kink, starting with the relatively chaste, but nudity- and sex-filled nonetheless, THE SWORDS OF LANKHMAR (1968), but escalating rapidly in the last two books, as Leiber explicitly indulges the Mouser's ephebophilia and sadism ("The Mer She", from THE KNIGHT AND KNAVE OF SWORDS, for example finds the Gray One repeatedly binding an adolescent stowaway to his shipboard bunk), and both heroes develop a Tourette's-like tendency to drop c-bombs (and other misogynistic interjections) in casual conversation.

But even a priapic Leiber could write rings around most authors (indeed, the penis mightier than the sword), and this collection is filled to overflowing with the wild romance, strange adventure, perilous plotting, memorable characters (Kreeshkra, the ghoulish girl from THE SWORDS OF LANKHMAR, being particularly fun), and clever banter that have been hallmarks of Leiber's Lankhmar tales since 1939's "Two Sought Adventure."

"But one certainly cannot fault the little darlings for their occasional itch for each other, since their taste is so exactly like my own." -Mouser

Ken says

While I always love Lieber's writing, my rating on this book Vs the first collection suffered due to the author's overdependence on sexuality in his tales, some of which dipped strongly into pornography, as well as a slower, more domestic pacing. For sheer joyful adventure and classic fantasy, stick with the first volume. This volume is for die hard fans only, imo.

Angela Randall says

We own this as Return to Lankhmar (Books 5-6) and The Knight and Knave of Swords (Book 7).

Dearg Glas says

Perhaps not quite as good as the first collection, but still thoroughly engaging, wildly imaginative, and funny. Classic.

Kat Hooper says

Ho, Fafhrd tall! Hist, Mouser small!
Why leave you the city Of marvelous parts?
It were a great pity To wear out your hearts
And wear out the soles of your feet,
Treading all earth, Foregoing all mirth,
Before you once more Lankhmar greet.
Now return, now return, now!

Swords Against Death is the second collection of stories about Fafhrd, the big northern barbarian, and The Gray Mouser, the small thief from the slums. For the past three years, the two have grown so close that they are now (as Neil Gaiman suggests in his introduction to the audio version) like two halves of the same person. They've been traveling the world together... Read More: <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

Tristan says

Printed in the "Fantasy Masterworks" series, this is volume two of the collected Lankhmar stories. It contains the following books: The Swords of Lankhmar (first published as a novel in 1968 with part publication in 1961), Swords and Ice Magic (first published as collected stories in 1977) and The Knight and the Knave of Swords (first published as collected stories in 1988).

Lankhmar is the only novel in the entire series and it is a very enjoyable read (score 4/5). I had read this novel independently a long time before this particular omnibus.

Ice Magic is a collection of short stories and one novelette, Rime Isle, published between 1973 and 1977. Fun, but increasingly a self-parody, especially Rime Isle where my interest wavered completely (score 2/5).

Krzysztof says

The first Book of Lankhmar was pretty decent. Nothing stellar, bland - yes, uninteresting at parts - yes, uninspired - mostly, but certainly readable. This one was very hard for me to get through, however.

There are several reasons for this. First and foremost, there is a major problem with logic and the seams that hold the whole thing together. During the course of a single story, different things happen, but some of them don't really have any connection to the plot, and are just there as filler. Some events have no weight or bearing on anything that happens or on the characters, and yet the author pays a lot of attention to them. The plot points are only vaguely connected, and some plot lines start deus ex machina, and end the same way - suddenly and with little explanation. It's all a jumbled mess.

Secondly, by this time, the duality of the whole series became intolerable for me. Whatever happens to Fafhrd, you can be sure something will happen to the Mouser as well. They will, of course, both have a woman to sex up. In one story, they both learn that they have children. In another, they are both hit with a somewhat similar curse. It makes the whole plot very predictable, and just adds to the general mediocre-ness of the thing.

Thirdly, Lankhmar is an awful attempt at creating a fantasy world. It's largely painfully generic, uninspired, and has only a handful of ideas which are worth mentioning - with some others being just laughable and non-fitting at all.

Leiber is called the father of sword&magic and is often compared to Robert E. Howard, and the Swords stories compared to the Conan stories. Well, I just want to say, that comparing one to the other is like comparing a chaotically painted piece of cardboard sprinkled with some random spices, and having yourself the best burger and fries in your life. Yes, the latter is still burger and fries, but at least it has a taste, and it's pretty damn good!

I can't recommend this book to anyone apart from die-hard fantasy fans who want to see how you shouldn't write fantasy. If you absolutely HAVE TO read a Fafhrd/Gray Mouser story, pick something from the First Book of Lankhmar.

This gets Two stars and not One only because it had some merit, and the first story (the one with the rats) was somewhat decent, if tiresome at times. The other two though, especially the last one, were on the scale from weak to terrible, never going any higher than "Barely alright".

Rubén Lorenzo says

Excelente libro de fantasía heroica, de los clásicos del género, aquellos que trascienden a las luchas de espadas y los malos muy malos. Cargado de ironía, he leído más de un capítulo con una sonrisa de oreja a oreja.

El estilo de escritura, con sus frases kilométricas, su vocabulario excelso y sus acertadas comparaciones y metáforas, ayuda a crear un ambiente especial. No son los protagonistas héroes al uso, sino pícaros que deshacen entuertos por pura suerte o por jugar bien sus cartas.

Especialmente buena es la primera historia, "Las espadas de Lankhmar" con la amenaza de una plaga de ratas con características humanas y su sugerente y traicionara ama Hisvin. En esta historia hay numerosas imágenes muy potentes, como también en la siguiente. Por ejemplo, merece mención especial la escena de Muerte eligiendo a sus víctimas.

Habría dado cinco estrellas a este estupendo libro si no fuera por la última historia, la más larga, pues se me hizo tediosa por momentos (si bien es cierto que hay una escena lésbica y sadomasoquista de lo más sugerente).

En resumen, un libro imprescindible para amantes del género y muy recomendable para quien quiera disfrutar de literatura de calidad.

James Oden says

Wow, I couldn't put it down. The word that comes to mind after reading this compendium of Fahfard and the Grey Mouser books is "endearing". Somehow, though no one would ever call these two rogues nice guys, they work their way into your heart. Another interesting point is that while I wouldn't call these two heroes, I wouldn't call them anti-heroes either. They really do walk this fine line between being good, but not too good, and bad but not too bad.

Antonis says

3 / 5

The Second Book of Lankhmar is, as the title suggests, the second omnibus tome with the adventures of Fafhrd and Gray Mouser, written by Fritz Leiber. It continues, in a way, from where the first book of Lankhmar ends, though the stories are as always self-contained and there's usually no need to read the previous ones. In this one, Leiber appears grown and changed as an author, being (mostly) in much better control of his pen and abilities and show-casing improved literary skills especially with descriptive passages. Sadly though, story-wise, things are not so smooth. Many stories are not so interesting, with the adventurous duo getting into silly troubles that are hardly entertaining. Pacing is bad as Leiber often appears content to describe in minute detail environs and circumstances that are not vital to the main plot. Another annoying thing that appears more and more as the books and stories progress is that everything appears to happen in double. It's like reading the same thing twice per page, one for the Gray Mouser and once again for Fafhrd. The erotic elements are also much more prominent and common in this second book, a thing that was a minor negative for me but may and could appeal to other readers. All in all, this is not a bad book. If you liked the first book of Lankhmar then you should also read this one. It's just not as good as the first one.

3 / 5

