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There are two prequels to the "Gord the Rogue" series: Saga of Old City and Artifact of Evil

Sea of Death Details

Date : Published June 1987 by ACE Charter

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Author : Gary Gygax

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From Reader Review Sea of Death for online ebook

Dru says

The 3rd Gord the Rogue book, and the first one written after Gygax was fired from TSR. He continues the excitement, and really broadens the story to include more "outer plane" information. The trek across the desert was wonderful.

This is a great book for D&D players who wanted their game turned into a book!

Troy says

This was originally my introduction to the Gord the Rogue series, back in the early 90's. Surprisingly, it's still a good read. It's better than the first two books with a tight story and decent characterization. I really enjoyed the demon point of view parts of the book the most. Even if you never read another Gord book, this one is worth reading.

Derek says

As an author, Gygax makes a pretty good game designer. By the evidence of this book, at least. It only really came together at the points of adventure, when the characters were in an interesting and dangerous place--the subsurface of the Ashen Desert or the domed City Out of Mind--and they were doing the exploring and adventuring and fighting thing. You know, like the freaking game, right?

But whenever some characterization was called for, whenever someone needed to open their mouth, something stupid came out. The interplanar politics of the demons sounds like petty bickering at a PTA meeting gone weirdly awry. Gord and Leda didn't seem to know how people actually talk to one another. And the combat banter was long-winded and was essentially non-witty versions of "I kill you real good now!"

As a writer, Gygax seemed to be easily distracted by details. At one point the pantaloons (or whatever) of some combatant were lovingly described and related to his ethnicity. That opponent, of course, died within a page. Later, a pole arm comes into the hands of a protagonist, and Gygax felt compelled to describe it as a fauchard-fork-bill with (specific) modifications. It's never brought up again.

Still, in final judgement I can't call it bad. There was evidence that, paraphrasing Alfred Bester, Gygax was starting to run out of bad writing. After about 130 pages of indeterminable demonic bickering and Gord wandering through encounters with nomads, Gygax hits the reader with several pages of exposition about the history and ecology of the Ashen Desert. This, I felt, is where the book actually began. For some reason this worldbuilding material was not nearly as dry as it could have been (probably because Gygax could churn it out in his sleep), and it actually seemed to reset the quality of writing, or at least focus it on the plot and setting.

Max Lybbert says

Gygax didn't intend for this book to be studied in any serious literature class. Or, to put it another way, if you're looking for a story that will change your life, this book is not it (I would recommend "A Tale of Two Cities" and "War and Peace" for that).

I had some difficulty finding anything interesting in the chapters set in the Abyss, although I suspect that stems partly from not knowing knowing the various demons involved. I also found the Rexfelis scenes to have the same flavor as "Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser." But when the book finally moved from the setup to the actual story, I enjoyed it.

This book was written while Greyhawk was still in the "look at this great world I created for my personal games" phase. But the story is easy enough to follow while including enough plot twists to keep things interesting. Plus, if the goal was to make me want to run a campaign (partly) set in the Ashen Desert (which I suspect it was), then Gygax was successful.

Patrick L says

No this is not great literature but it is one of my favorites from my teen years. I lost my original copy of this book about 25 years ago and finally found a used copy a few days ago. It was pretty much as I remember it.
:)

David Monroe says

God bless Gygax; for someone so imaginative and innovative, he couldn't write his way out of a wet paper bag.

David Sarkies says

Set in a trackless desert

14 September 2012

Comments on this book seem to go form the fact that it is pulp fiction to Gary Gygax not being able to write his way out of a wet paper bag. Well, I must admit that I found Gygax's stories more entertaining and readable than those written by Ed Greenwood, so my question is, if Gygax is that bad, then where does it leave Ed Greenwood?

This story is set on Gygax's World of Greyhawk, the fantasy realm that he created for the Dungeons and Dragons game that he developed, though I am wondering whether this book was written after he threw in the

towel and left TSR (I believe it was). The one thing that attracted me to this book is that it is set in this huge trackless desert that sits on the otherside of a range of mountains, and it was one of those places that every time I looked at a map of the world I would always have attacks of imagination as to what adventure I would set there.

It is funny how the idea of the magically created desert was effectively stolen by Ed Greenwood when he created the Forgotten Realms, however I suspect that the difference between the Anaroch and the Sea of Dust is that the Sea of Dust is pretty much just endless tracks of sand (which is the impression that I get from this book), whereas the Anaroch has lots of different types of desert in it. However, I guess this is all a moot point because both of these places do not exist, and even then, I suspect that both ideas were based on the Sahara.

Timothy Boyd says

Good fantasy read by the creator of dungeons and dragons. Recommended
