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The Lies Of Locke Lamora



Synopsis

An orphan's life is harsh and often short in the island city of Camorr, built on the ruins of a mysterious alien race. But born with a quick wit and a gift for thieving, Locke Lamora has dodged both death and slavery, only to fall into the hands of an eyeless priest known as Chains—a man who is neither blind nor a priest. A con artist of extraordinary talent, Chains passes his skills on to his carefully selected "family" of orphans—a group known as the Gentlemen Bastards. Under his tutelage, Locke grows to lead the Bastards, delightedly pulling off one outrageous confidence game after another. Soon he is infamous as the Thorn of Camorr, and no wealthy noble is safe from his sting. Passing themselves off as petty thieves, the brilliant Locke and his tightly knit band of light-fingered brothers have fooled even the criminal underworld's most feared ruler, Capa Barsavi. But there is someone in the shadows more powerful and more ambitious than Locke has yet imagined. Known as the Gray King, he is slowly killing Capa Barsavi's most trusted men and using Locke as a pawn in his plot to take control of Camorr's underworld. With a bloody coup under way threatening to destroy everyone and everything that holds meaning in his mercenary life, Locke vows to beat the Gray King at his own brutal game or die trying. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 22 hours and 3 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tantor Audio

Audible.com Release Date: May 13, 2009

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B0029XKX0I

Best Sellers Rank: #60 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fantasy > Epic #169 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Epic #408 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature

Customer Reviews

THE LIES OF LOCKE LAMORA is a fairly-well-hyped fantasy debut about the charismatic leader of a gang of con artists in a city that does (or tries to do) for renaissance Venice what PERDIDO

STREET STATION did for Dickensian London. Overall, I enjoyed it - the prose was technically proficient, the plot hummed along efficiently, the setting was considerably more interesting than the usual plate-mail-and-offal-carts business, and there was a good deal of welcome humor. As debut novels go it's a promising start. On the other hand, it really doesn't amount to much more than an entertaining confection. The book's apparently been optioned for a movie already, and I can see why: the dialogue's relentlessly effervescent, occasionally stretching credulity past the breaking point (characters have one-liners for every occasion even while collecting broken bones and concussions like trading cards) and the screenplay-friendly three-act structure is too often embarrassingly visible underneath the flesh of the story. It's difficult to articulate my feelings on books like this. On the one hand, Lynch's technical talent clearly elevates him above the great gormless herd of modern fantasy writers already. And there's no denying that the book is very likeable indeed, while it seems unfair to fault it based only on what it could have been. On the other hand, it's just **too damn safe**. Lynch is going to be a major player in the genre - that much is obvious already - but he has it in him to do something Seriously Good rather than settling for being the next RA Salvatore. But it's not gonna happen until he gets over his fear of failure.

When I read this, I eventually found myself turning pages quickly, and with anticipation. The story's about a rogue, his past, his surroundings, and his adventures. He's a grey character, a morally-mixed tragic hero, and an interesting one to get to know. He's very far from perfect, which makes him more believable as a hero, and eventually you understand why there's a book about him. What makes the book stand out creatively, in my opinion, are how the author weaved the complex schemes our rogue would engage in, which are far more than petty pickpocketing. They're genuinely clever, well thought-out schemes on the part of the rogue and his party. Additionally, the book jumps backwards and forwards in time, chapter by chapter, in an organized way, ever more tightly weaving Locke's past with his present; this keeps things moving with anticipation as you learn about him. This, however, brings me to my first criticism of the book, which is that the introduction to the fantasy world Locke inhabits seems to go on and on, in a static fashion, with weak context. Proper names of builds, towns, rivers, regions, people, and the list goes on, are introduced in a suffocating way, sometimes in rapid-fire. I understand what the author was doing -- he was creating a Lord of the Rings or Dune-like world that opens up to the reader, pumping energy into the fabric of a world which made possible what eventually becomes a story. Well, it was a noble effort, but he overdid it.

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