



Red Seas Under Red Skies

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After a brutal battle with the underworld that nearly destroyed him, Locke and his trusted sidekick, Jean, fled the island city of their birth and landed on the exotic shores of Tal Verrar to nurse their wounds. But even at this westernmost edge of civilization, they can't rest for long — and are soon back to what they do best: stealing from the undeserving rich and pocketing the proceeds for themselves.

This time, however, they have targeted the grandest prize of all: the Sinspire, the most exclusive and heavily guarded gambling house in the world. Its nine floors attract the wealthiest clientele — and to rise to the top, one must impress with good credit, amusing behavior... and excruciatingly impeccable play. For there is one cardinal rule, enforced by Requin, the house's cold-blooded master: it is death to cheat at any game at the Sinspire.

Brazenly undeterred, Locke and Jean have orchestrated an elaborate plan to lie, trick, and swindle their way up the nine floors... straight to Requin's teeming vault. Under the cloak of false identities, they meticulously make their climb — until they are closer to the spoils than ever.

But someone in Tal Verrar has uncovered the duo's secret. Someone from their past who has every intention of making the impudent criminals pay for their sins. Now it will take every ounce of cunning to save their mercenary souls. And even that may not be enough...

Red Seas Under Red Skies Details

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Author : Scott Lynch

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From Reader Review Red Seas Under Red Skies for online ebook

Bookdragon Sean says

Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee, Jon Snow and Samwell Tarly, FitzChivalry Farseer and The Fool, Locke Lamora and Jean Tammen: eight men of fantasy who without their counterpart would be nothing.

Indeed, without Jean at his back Locke Lamora would have no chance of success. Both men provide the other with what he lacks, and together they make a deadly, silver tongued, thieving duo that are best summed up in two words: awesome bastards.

A deadly scheme on the high seas!

It was a big surprise to me that in the prologue Jean betrays Locke. It's obviously not real, and there's obviously a reason for the farce; it is, no doubt, a charade for the benefit of their mark. But, either way, it made me storm through the book to discover exactly why it had happened. This was a bit of an underhanded move to those that the trick was played on. It worked quite well and gave me a strong reason to read this book even if I felt a little duped.

The plot of this book is fast and exciting. I'm not quite sure how the duo manages to pull it all off. I mean they juggle a casino heist at the same time as being manipulated by a devious Archon; then to top it off they even find time in the middle for a pirate adventure. It's quite remarkable really because just when you think their luck has run out they seem to conjure up an incredibly clever, and improvised, plan to save their hides. These two are literally two of the most scheming, ingenious, bastards that ever existed: they are the definition of lovable rogues. They grow on me with each book.

A clever partnership

They know each other so well, and only because of this do they manage to defeat the odds time and time again. They have secret hand gestures and code words so they can tell the others motives in tricky situations. Locke provides the ability to worm himself out of any trap and Jean provides the muscle along with a moral thievish code. Together they are brilliant, apart they are vulnerable. Their history together keeps them alive and allows for the most outlandish of plans to develop into a truly intricate plot.

"When you can't cheat the game, you'd best find a means to cheat the players."

I do think the author's writing has improved in this novel. He still uses the same eloquent descriptions, but the superfluous and convoluted information about the scenery are kept to a minimum. In the previous book it felt he'd spent paragraphs describing inanimate objects and irrelevant places; I was glad to see a more concise approach to his writing. I think he has got the balance just right in this novel and I can easily see this developing into a really strong series. I can't wait to see where the author takes this in the future.

Gentleman Bastard Sequence

1. The Lies of Locke Lamora- A good solid 3.5 stars
2. Red Seas Under Red Skies- A thieving 4 stars
3. The Republic of Thieves - A poisonous 4.5 stars

Ginger says

Welp, seldom has a book made me waver on how much I felt about it. I definitely went into this sequel with high hopes because I loved *The Lies of Locke Lamora*!

At the beginning of the book, *Red Seas Under Red Skies* seemed to be heading in the same way. And then it got weighed down. I like when a book has tons of twists and plots so I stayed with the course. But there were sections that got tedious and I struggled, especially with the nautical information that Jean and Locke had to learn. Also, the details of the double crossing and all the players in the story took a bit to get into as well.

But then half way in the middle of the book, the sun rose and all the tedious details gave to the real story! Argh matey, they be pirates! And it was awesome!

Once Lynch had everything in place, it came together for a fun and exciting adventure on the high seas. The new characters worked so well with the Gentlemen Bastards and I fell in love with them all. Pirates, some romance, adventure, an epic battle, a tragic death, and some double crossing, this book as you can see has it all for an epic fantasy.

The buildup took too long to get to in this book and the details were a bit tedious, so that's why I have to give this 4 stars instead of 5. But overall, a fantastic sequel!

Oh yeah, that cliffhanger at the end?! Gah! You are fucking brilliant Lynch because I have to read the next book in the series. Bravo you crafty bastard.

C.G. Drews says

I DON'T EVEN HAVE WORDS TO EXPRESS HOW MUCH I ABSOLUTELY ENTIRELY COMPLETELY ADORE THIS SERIES. There are books that I *love* in this universe. And then there are books that I really really really really really really really really really really *love*. **THIS SERIES IS THE LATTER.** I mean, I do think *The Lies of Locke Lamora* was better. But this still had everything I absolutely demand of a book and of a sequel.

Stop being so PERFECT, Gentlemen Bastards. My heart cannot handle.

(Also it's so hard to review books you adore to pieces?!?! Like what can I even SAY except for "I loved this so freaktastically much" and "go read it now or I will devour you with hummus and crackers" or "this series is more perfect than the sun and I will marry it at dawn". How do I do words????)

I don't want to give too much of the story away: but it is a quite different style of heist to the first book. But in a GOOD way. It was fresh, but it still had so many of the con tricks that I'm here for. It steal features our dear Gentlemen Bastards going after a Big Nice Haul. Although this time they get caught up in political parties that want (A) them to work for them, (B) or they'll die, and (C) everyone is playing off against everyone else and **IT'S A BRILLIANT TANGLED WEB OF LIES.** So so so many lies going on. **Locke and Jean are using SO many identities in this book it's brilliant and also exhausting.**

Plus: **PIRATES!!!** Can I sum up my love for pirates??? NOT UNLESS I USE ALL CAPS AND MANY !!! EXCLAMATION !!!! POINTS!!! And better yet: there are fearsome lady pirates. And cute cats. And sea fights. And epicness. (This doesn't come in until about 50% through but it was the highlight of my life.)

SMALL LIST OF OTHER AWESOME THINGS THIS BOOK CONTAINS:

- plot twists that will knock your socks off
- devastation
- hurting of your soul and heart and left elbow
- obsession (me) to this series (surely healthy)
- very very very clever plot lines
- a huge barrel of characters
- excellent writing where the pacing is constantly perfect
- so much sass
- Locke getting smacked in the head repeatedly because he likes sass
- abseiling
- horribly unfortunate events
- poison
- epic badass women
- epic badass POC women pirates
- actually fantasy worlds without sexism???
- a very cute kitten Locke is NOT getting fond of (but yet he is)
- an epic friendship between Locke and Jean that is not only goals but also THE MOST FABULOUS AND AMAZING AND HEARTFELT THING OF EVER
- they love each other and also want to kill each other #family
- although lowkey think that Locke is gay but whatever
- ships SHIIIPS SHIPPPPS!!! The pirate kind and also the cute romance kind
- death
- murder
- bleeding
- swearing
- punching
- sass
- pirates
- plot twists that not only hURT but RUIN MY LIFE

FYI I am NOT okay with how it ended. So unokay I could cry?!?!?? But lucky for me I have book 3 already ready on my ipod to devour the audio at dawn. But then I have to wait for APRIL!?!?!? for the next one and I'm unokay. Very unokay. ALL THE UNOKAY. This book **excels at breaking its readers into a thousand bits and then laughing.** Although there is one person who dies who I KNEW was going to die. It still broke my heart? But I called it.

And there are a LOT of characters here. I may or may not have gotten confused a few times.

But otherwise it was flawless and perfect and SASSY and so so clever. I can't even get over how clever the plots are?!?!?! And how much I absolutely *adore* Locke. He must be my favourite character of ever. How can someone even be so witty and intelligent and clever and yet make the worst mistakes of ever ALL THE TIME?? Bless you Locke. Please keep stealing the world. I need this.

#NewFavouriteSeriesOfEver

Matthew says

This book is 1/3 this:

And 2/3 this:

Quite a fantastic and epic story! A casino caper and a swashbuckling adventure combining action, deception, romance, and humor - this book has it all. Very well written. Even with the length of the story, I never felt that it had gone on too long. Definitely no filler.

This is a sequel and I think I like it better than the first. That is saying a lot because the first was great! In this case, I will say something I don't usually say - I think you could read this one without reading the first and be just fine. While they do bring up some events from the first book, the author does a great job making this book it's own.

So, do you like epic awesomeness? Crossbow battles? Death by poison? Wild pirate sex? Baskets full of cats? Then look no further!

That's right, I said BASKETS FULL OF CATS!

Patrick says

I'll be honest, when I first read this book, years ago, my reaction was kinda "meh."

Or rather, I *remember* it being that way. It was a long time back, and I can barely bring to mind what I ate for lunch yesterday. So I'm not terribly reliable that way.

I also vaguely remember that it wasn't as talked-up as Lies of Locke Lamora. There wasn't the same excited buzz about it when it came out, so I remember feeling reasonably justified in my "meh" feeling.

That means reading through it again a second time was an interesting experience. Because now I have passed through the fiery hell that is Publishing The Second Book.

Don't get me wrong: first books are hard, especially in secondary-world fantasy. You have to introduce an entire world. You're constantly walking the knife-edge between boring people by explaining too much, and confusing them by explaining too little.

But on the plus side, in a first book (or movie for that matter) everything has the benefit of being shiny and new. Every revelation is fresh and exciting. Every character is a mystery unfurling.

That's not the case in a second book. In a second book, you still have that problem. PLUS you have the problem that some of your readers read the first book two days ago, and some of them read it two years ago. Some of them haven't read it at *all.*

On top of that, a lot of people want nothing more than for you to write your first book over again... because that's what they know and love. But you *can't* do that, because you only get one beginning.

When you write the second book in a series, the honeymoon is over. Now you're in a whole different type of relationship. And love is harder to maintain than infatuation.

That's why, in my opinion, shifting gears from first book to second book is THE most difficult part of being a new writer.

Given all of this, I can see why people in general and me in specific might have been a little "meh" on this book. We were all butterflies-in-tummy tingly after reading Lies of Locke Lamora. We loved it, and we wanted to see the same thing again.

Which I now realize is silly. I don't think I knew that then.

I mention all of this because this second time through, I found myself wondering what my problem was the first time. Because honestly, the book is good.

We get to explore a cool new piece of the world. There are characters that I know and love, being very true to themselves while still growing and changing and coming into conflict with each other and the world. There is wonderful craft here. And brilliant dialogue, as before. Wit and humor both.

It's true, that this book might be a little less Ocean's Eleven and a little more Grifters. But that's okay. Because sequels *need* to change and grow a bit, otherwise a series stagnates and dies.

And this book made me cry a bit, which the first one didn't. So that's a mark in its favor.

So...yeah. Simply said, I really enjoyed it.

Did I enjoy it as much as Lies? No. But not every book can be on your top-ten list.

Did Seas suffer from a bit of a sophomore slump? Yeah. A bit. But you won't find me bitching, because the only thing I could say was something along the lines of, "O! Woe is me! I was expecting pure untrammelled brilliance and all I got was mere shining excellence! Also, they didn't have any loganberry cream cheese at the café this morning, so I had to have blueberry instead! Alas! I shall now weep and write poetry in my journal!"

Yeah. I don't want to be that person. Nobody wants to be that person.

That said, the ending leaves you hanging. So I'm *really* fucking glad the next book is out.

Speaking of which, I think I'm going to wander over to the bookstore and buy a copy of that right now...

Charlotte May says

“We can slide down chimneys and slip locks and rob coaches and break vaults and do a fine spread of card tricks...but I hate to tell you that the one class of criminal we really haven’t associated with, ever, is fucking pirates!”

Still thoroughly enjoying this series! Locke and Jean are on another impossible mission to swindle the rich out of their money. What they don’t bargain on is the Bondsmagi come for their revenge, using a wealthy man as their means. Locke and Jean end up coerced into doing what this man says, in the hope that he won’t follow through and kill them.

This task involves piracy. Something Locke and Jean know nothing about. So they hit the high seas, with all the trouble, violence and superstition that comes with it.

All the while Locke’s mind is stirring up ways that they can still come out on top. I’m always blown away with the level of detail and thought that goes into Locke and Jean’s missions. Double and triple crossing - it’s amazing he can keep track of which character he is playing at which time!

These books are exciting and thrilling, albeit quite complex at times. I will definitely be picking up book 3.

“I want to hug you. And I want to tear your gods-damned head off. Both at once.” ‘Ah,’ said Locke. “Near as I can tell, that’s the definition of family right there.”

Celeste says

Full review now posted!

This review and more can be found on Booknest.

A buddy read with my loves: Petrik and Sarah.

In my humble opinion, pirates make everything better. When I was six or seven, my favorite Saturday-morning cartoon was Pirates of the Dark Waters. (Which so didn’t age well, but nostalgia covers a multitude of sins.) In junior high, I went through a phase where I researched every famous pirate I knew of, just because I found them fascinating. I’ve loved every single one of The Pirates of the Caribbean movies, including those that some people considered flops. I had a poster of Jack Sparrow over my bed in high school, but that wasn’t because I loved pirates; that was because I had the hots for Johnny Depp in eyeliner. Anyway, moving on!

Fantasy is my favorite literary genre, but I’ve always found it sadly lacking in pirates. Yes, I know there are a few wonderful exceptions. But all in all, pirates are scarce in fantasy. So imagine my delight when the sequel to one of my favorite fantasy novels, The Lies of Locke Lamora, featured a heavy dose of piracy! And the aspects of piracy, from the hierarchy and camaraderie between the crew to the way battle is waged on the open sea to the ships themselves, were presented in such a captivating way that I could feel the wind against my cheek and smell the salt in the air. Just based on that fact alone, this book would have made me happy. But there was so much more to love here.

As in Lies, the character development is incredible. Even supporting characters who only appear in a scene

or two feel like real people. Main supporting characters are even more realistic, inspiring a plethora of emotions in readers. But then there's Locke and Jean. This is the best friendship I've read in any book, it truly is. And I don't say that lightly. There are other literary friendships that I adore, and that mean a lot to me. Sherlock and Watson, Harry and Ron and Hermione, Legolas and Gimli, Wax and Wayne, and so many more just pale in comparison to Locke and Jean; at least, they do for me.

Lynch's descriptive powers are phenomenal. Just as I grew to love Camorr, dark side and all, I grew to love and hate Tal Verrar, and would envision its streets and docks and Sinspire just as well as I could Camorr's canals and temples. In both books, the cities themselves played a large part in the cons Locke and Jean planned. The cons themselves, and the way bits and pieces of them are revealed throughout the story, are always a pleasure to read. Never in my life have chairs inspired so much curiosity in me.

Something else I really loved: there's not even a hint of sexism in Lynch's writing, which is refreshing in fantasy. Modern fantasy writers are getting much better at portraying female characters as women instead of props, but Lynch is one of the best I've ever read in this regard. His women are real. And women populate every profession in the books with equality to their male counterparts. Women are guards and soldiers and pirate captains, and I love how no one ever questions a woman's ability to fight as well as any man.

There is romance in this story, romance that will make your heart bleed and your teeth ache with the sweetness of it. There are triumphs and betrayals and plots within plots. More than any other fantasy I've read, the first two Gentleman Bastards books have shocked me and inflicted severe emotional trauma. But they are also among the funniest books I've ever read. The dialogue is second to none. Some of the funniest lines I've read in my entire life came from the pen of Lynch. Here are just a few lines from the numerous that I highlighted in this book:

"Any man can fart in a closed room and say that he commands the wind."

"Maxilan, darling." Locke raised one eyebrow and smiled. "I knew you were driven, but I had no idea you could smoulder. Come, take me now! Jean won't mind; he'll avert his eyes like a gentleman."

"You're ten pints of crazy in a one-pint glass."

"You needed a bath," Jean interrupted. "You were covered in self-pity."

"You'd have to take your shoes and breeches off to count to twenty-one!"

There are many, MANY more, but I feel that I can't repeat them in polite company. (That last one I probably shouldn't have included either, but it's one of the funniest things I've ever read and I couldn't help myself!) Which means you'll just have to pick up the book to read the best lines! If you do, I promise you'll find one of the funniest, most heart-wrenching books you'll ever read. This is a series well worth reading. I'll leave you with a quote from Jean, about what it means to be a thief:

"Look for us in history books and you'll find us in the margins. Look for us in legends, and you might just find us celebrated."

Natalie Monroe says

EDIT 22/1/2017: Saw Scott Lynch's reply to a reader who complained that a **black, middle-aged badass pirate mom was "unrealistic"** and now I love this series more than ever (Underlined parts are the criticism):

Third your characters are unrealistic stereotypes of political correctness. Is it really necessary for the sake of popular sensibilities to have in a fantasy what we have in the real world? I read fantasy to get away from politically correct cliches.

God, yes! If there's one thing fantasy is just crawling with these days it's widowed black middle-aged pirate moms.

Real sea pirates could not be controlled by women, they were vicious rapists and murderers and I am sorry to say it was a man's world. It is unrealistic wish fulfillment for you and your readers to have so many female pirates, especially if you want to be politically correct about it!

First, I will pretend that your last sentence makes sense because it will save us all time. Second, now you're pissing me off.

You know what? Yeah, Zamira Drakasha, middle-aged pirate mother of two, is a wish-fulfillment fantasy. I realized this as she was evolving on the page, and you know what? I fucking embrace it.

Why shouldn't middle-aged mothers get a wish-fulfillment character, you sad little bigot? Everyone else does. H.L. Mencken once wrote that "Every normal man must be tempted at times to spit on his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats." I can't think of anyone to whom that applies more than my own mom, and the mothers on my friends list, with the incredible demands on time and spirit they face in their efforts to raise their kids, preserve their families, and save their own identity/sanity into the bargain.

Shit yes, Zamira Drakasha, leaping across the gap between burning ships with twin sabers in hand to kick in some fucking heads and sail off into the sunset with her toddlers in her arms and a hold full of plundered goods, is a wish-fulfillment fantasy from hell. I offer her up on a silver platter with a fucking bow on top; I hope she amuses and delights. In my fictional world, opportunities for butt-kicking do not cease merely because one isn't a beautiful teenager or a muscle-wrapped font of testosterone. In my fictional universe, the main characters are a fat ugly guy and a skinny forgettable guy, with a supporting cast that includes "SBF, 41, nonsmoker, 2 children, buccaneer of no fixed abode, seeks unescorted merchant for light boarding, heavy plunder."

You don't like it? Don't buy my books. Get your own fictional universe. Your cabbage-water vision of worldbuilding bores me to tears.

As for the "man's world" thing, religious sentiments and gender prejudices flow differently in this fictional world. Women are regarded as luckier, better sailors than men. It's regarded as folly for a ship to put to sea without at least one female officer; there are several all-female naval military traditions dating back centuries, and Drakasha comes from one of them. As for claims to "realism," your complaint is of a kind with those from bigoted hand-wringers who whine that women can't possibly fly combat aircraft, command naval vessels, serve in infantry actions, work as firefighters, police officers, etc. despite the fact that they do all of those things-- and are, for a certainty, doing them all somewhere at this very minute. Tell me that a fit fortyish woman with 25+ years of experience at sea and several decades of live bladefighting practice under her belt isn't a threat when she runs across the deck toward you, and I'll tell you something in return-- you're gonna die of stab wounds.

What you're really complaining about isn't the fact that my fiction violates some objective "reality," but rather that it impinges upon your sad, dull little conception of how the world works. I'm not beholden to the confirmation of your prejudices; to be perfectly frank, the prospect of confining the female characters in my story to placid, helpless secondary places in the narrative is so goddamn boring that I would rather not write at all. I'm not writing history, I'm writing speculative fiction. Nobody's going to force you to buy it. Conversely, you're cracked if you think you can persuade me not to write about what amuses and excites me in deference to your vision, because your vision fucking sucks.

I do not expect to change your mind but i hope that you will at least consider that I and others will not be buying your work because of these issues. I have been reading science fiction and fantasy for years and i know that I speak for a great many people. I hope you might stop to think about the sales you will lose because you want to bring your political corectness and foul language into fantasy. if we wanted those things we could go to the movies. Think about this!

Thank you for your sentiments. I offer you in exchange this engraved invitation to go piss up a hill, suitable for framing.

Original review:

"You are thieves. I am offering you a chance to help steal history itself."

How to write a badass fantasy sequel, a list:

- An actual plot
- Fantasy Las Vegas
- Plenty of skullduggery
- Witty dialogue
- Stealing, catfishing, and grand heists
- Bromance
- More bromance
- Pirates
- WOMEN Pirates
- A kickass new love interest
- A kickass new PIRATE love interest
- Silk parasols
- Double-crossing
- Schemes layered like cakes
- Locke being awesome
- Jean being awesome
- Humbling Locke the way BBC Sherlock's creators never humble Sherlock
- Cats (very important)

"I'm not resigned, Jean. I'm angry. We need to cease being powerless as soon as possible."

"Right. So where do we start?"

"Well, I'm going to go back to the inn. I'm going to pour a gallon of cold water down my throat. I'm going to get into bed, put a pillow over my head, and stay there until sunset."

"I approve."

My review of *The Lies of Locke Lamora*

My review of *The Republic of Thieves*

Samantha says

4.75 stars! Finally the pirate book I've been craving. This is basically *Ocean's 11* meets *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

Ridley says

After reading a Tumblr post Where Lynch responded to a reader's complaints about "political correctness" in this novel, I am intrigued.

Why shouldn't middle-aged mothers get a wish-fulfillment character, you sad little bigot? Everyone else does. H.L. Mencken once wrote that "Every normal man must be tempted at times to spit on his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats." I can't think of anyone to whom that applies more than my own mom, and the mothers on my friends list, with the incredible demands on time and spirit they face in their efforts to raise their kids, preserve their families, and save their own identity/sanity into the bargain.

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You don't like it? Don't buy my books. Get your own fictional universe. Your cabbage-water vision of worldbuilding bores me to tears.

James Tivendale says

I probably enjoyed this book more than the first of the Gentleman Bastard sequence. It starts as fast paced as the previous book ended with Locke & Jean already knee deep in a con involving this worlds equivalent of a Casino known as the Sinspire. The start of the novel flips between this section and also what the characters have been up to since they sailed away from Camorr at the end of book 1. This section showcases a cool transition period which shows the Gentleman Bastard's as less than their elegant best including an alcoholic Locke!!

After the first 200 pages or so - things get very complicated. Locke and Jean playing 3-4 personas depending on who they are talking too. This tale is mixed with poison, trying to rob a vault at the casino, pretending to be pirates, love, and quite a few deaths again.

There are a lot more characters in this book than the first that I cared about. So much going on including the divisions of pirates, mages still after Locke & Jean, assassination attempts etc... As I mentioned this is very fast paced and I think the human qualities of the main characters shine - they are not superheroes and are just likely to make mistakes during the long cons. Also - Jean and Locke have the best bromance ever! Can't wait for the next book.

James x

Ps. I am pretty sure I got lucky and bought the first edition of this book for £1.00 from a charity shop! Woop.
x

?Luna? says

5/5

“Who’s the biggest, meanest motherfucker here? Who’s the best bruiser in the Brass Coves?”

Buddy read with my fellow ship mates Petrik & Celeste.

THIS BOOK WAS SO GOOD!

Seriously, it was incredible. I can't even explain how happy I was to be back in this world. I went into this book with lowish expectations because, I heard it was the weakest in the trilogy. However for me that wasn't the case, this book was as good as The Lies of Locke Lamorr, honestly I can't decide if I like this one or the first one better, so I'm going to say they are both equally amazing. I found the writing this time around to be much easier to follow and still love the way the chapters are set, past and present. BUT I still hated the long arse descriptions that go on and on, the world building is wonderful however I found the descriptions to be

over kill. The action in this one doesn't stop, its like a horrible roller coaster that your not allowed to get off, instead of vomiting, I came close to having a heart attack..

On more then one occasion, I found myself talking to the book, begging for my favourite bromance ever to stay safe & friends, I even cried. Like there was some really heartbreaking parts in this book. The pain Locke & Jean felt at the start, the strain on their friendship & most importantly the death of my ultimate ship. *The pain in my heart, was also real.*

I must also admit, it definitely wasn't as fun to read as the first. This book is a lot darker then the first and has a lot of heartbreak and anguish. It was less humorous then the first but definitely wasn't lacking for banter and still had some really funny moments. **It also had a ROMANCE, Yay.** I totally love romance in stories, only when the romance isn't the main focus. It had me feeling all gooey inside. I just loved everything about this book.

“Pretend I’m a barrel, then.”

“Barrels don’t have br—”

“So I’ve heard. Find the nerve, ___.”

“You want me to pretend that you’re a barrel so I can tell you what I was telling barrels back when I was pretending they were you.”

“Precisely.”

Only one word to describe this book and that's BADASS. As you all know I love criminals, deceit, backstabbing, bromance, swearing (my inner hillbilly loves all the swearing), thievery & tough people. Well folks this book has all of the above, like could this series actually be the bible of badassery? **Truth be honest, it is the holy grail of badassery & I'm currently making a temple to worship the thirteenth god, the Crooked Warden.** I swear this book was written for me. We were made for each other. It was even educational. I learnt a lot from this book, it taught me how to lie, steal, cheat, the fact that you must take cats to sea for luck, to kill people & also this new insult *“I’ll fuckin’ kill you later, you cabbage-brained pig-rapist!”*

The story is a continuation of book one after Locke & Jean escape from Camorr. This time around we have two broken men, who are trying to get established in the underworld in a new city. The job itself is to steal something precious from the Spinspire casino. I found the plot in this book more complex then book one, there was a quote in the book that describes it perfectly; *“This web of lies was growing so convoluted, so branching, and so delicate that a moth’s fart might knock it to pieces—”*

The lies that Locke & Jean weave are so complex, I have no idea how Scott thought of half the stuff that happens in the book, some of the situations the bastards got out of or should I say lied themselves out of were so insane. This book was full of heisty goodness, it was like Oceans Eleven only with **PIRATES! Did I just say pirates? Yes I fucking did.** I don't know about you, but Pirates are my favourite criminals ever, so I was an extremely happy camper while reading this book. I found the pirate terminology easy to follow because well let's face it, I'm a pirate and fluent in pirate language. I also didn't know pirates loved cats?! I AM THE CRAZY CAT LADY so I loved all the mewing and pawing around. **So much cat talk. I'm in cat heaven.** *“We must have cats. A basket of cats, for the Red Messenger. We need what luck we can steal. All gods as your witness, you must not fail to have cats at that ship before we put to sea.”*

But I'm faced with a new issue & it was worst then all the heartbreak.. I can't pick a favourite character and I always need a favourite. Im indecisive on who I like more, I love them both for different reason, Jean because his the toughest motherfucker ever, *“I’m the meanest motherfucker here. I’m the biggest bruiser*

in the Brass Coves.” . But then I also love Locke because his a clever, little crafty bastard & the best thief ever *“You snake-souled, dirty-minded son of a bitch! I hope a shark tries to suck your cock!”* . So I've decided they can both join my harem. I truly adore Locke & Jean, they're bromance is amazing, honestly the best bromance ever & their banter is something else, the sass is so strong with these two perfect thieves. **If I could have two book best friends id choose Locke & Jean, hands down.**

fanart by Tolmancotton.

Can this series be made into a movie now? Please. My action loving self is craving to see my bastards kick arse on screen.

“Surely you boys can do simple sums,” he said. “One plus one equals don’t fuck with me.”

I'd recommend this to all fantasy lovers 15+. I also think this series would be a great introduction for someone wanting to read adult fantasy.

Ps. Currently training to be a gentleman bastard. See all you suckers when I'm snatching your purse.

Here's some cat quotes from the book that gave me the giggles;

“but you’d better pray in your cabin tonight for one thing.”

“What’s that?”

“Cats falling from the bloody sky.

-

OF COURSE, no convenient rain of screeching felines was forthcoming that night,”

I wish this every night aswell

“But...can you imagine those poor bastards grappling their prey, leaping over the rails, swords in hand, screaming, ‘Your cats! Give us all your gods-damned cats!’”

Kelly says

Although I was prepared to bite my thumb at anyone who had a problem with this book up to about 200 pages in, over the course of the 500 pages after that, I began to slowly, reluctantly and finally in complete exasperation, change my mind.

Scott Lynch begins his novel at the same level of quality as his fabulous first novel, *The Lies of Locke Lamora*. His characters are dealing with the events of the previous novel, in a mostly believable fashion, in a believable time period- its kept from becoming episodic, or his characters from seeming hollow. I very much enjoyed the first 200 pages as they both try to move on and deal with the past- and the explanation of how they got where they are when the novel opens- two years on from the events of *Lies*. A+ character

development, A+ banter, A+ action sequences, A+ for inventiveness, loved the relationship between Locke and Jean, and it had mostly well done plot development, as Locke and Jean embroil themselves in yet another high flying *Oceans Eleven* style con.

However. And this is a big however- it felt like Scott Lynch suddenly changed his mind completely about what he wanted to write, and had a big Screw It moment, and decided to be completely self-indulgent. Which I'm sure was a lot of fun for him, but for the reader, it is a very confusing, ridiculous sharp disappointment. Somewhere along the way, he decided he wanted to write *Pirates of the Caribbean* fanfiction, stealing plot details (which kind of sucked even in the movies), settings, near direct quotes, and even little moments of action in battle sequences. His other influences were starkly obvious as well- there were strong, strong nods to *The Princess Bride*, moments out of the movie they made of *Zorro*, even. His characters fell victim to the most overdone of fantasy genre stereotypes (the fact that they didn't do this was one of my favorite parts of the first book), his plot was increasingly unlikely, and also became a ridiculous soap opera, and the quality of his writing went from laugh out loud to roll my eyes so loud you can hear me across the room.

I also felt that this book got incredibly preachy at points- which is kind of a killjoy for a novel that has two thieves for heroes. Lynch decided that he needed to push some kind of Robin Hood, working class agenda to make his heroes seem morally superior to everyone else. Nobody is reading this book for justice for the lower classes, Lynch.

It wasn't all bad- I appreciated the Lynch inserts women into professions all throughout his world mostly without preachy comment, I liked the character of the pirate Zamira, I enjoyed that Jean (who is still mostly wonderful) got his own independent storyline, I enjoyed how good his descriptive powers can be, and like I said, I enjoyed the first 200 pages.

But come on, this could have been much better.

ChopinFC says

Full review...

Another absolute slam dunk by Scott Lynch! Gentlemens Bastard 2 does the rare feat of improving on the original formula of the first novel!!

I was so impressed and entertained after the first go round of *Gentlemens Bastard*, that decided to go right into the second book without pause. In the first novel, Lynch introduces us to the 'guild of thieves' and multiple characters including the protagonist Locke and his best bud and confidant 'Jean'. The world building in the first book was awesome, and the city Cammor had a tinge of 'old Venice' interlaced with corruption, thievery contrasted by nobility of dukes and dignitaries.

In the second book, Lynch takes us to a whole new ride in the large city of *Tal Verrar*. Locke and Jean are much more closely bonded after all the adventures and mishaps of the first novel, so it's not surprising that the schemes and plotting are abundant from the very beginning.

Lynch is an amazing character-driven writer, and he does an awesome job developing Locke and Jean. New unforgettable characters are also introduced, including new villains who want to destroy Locke and Jean at any cost! (Actually they really want to destroy Locke who pisses everyone off with his witty, sarcastic way).

Lynch is damn funny and writes some really hilarious shit, the likes which almost made me piss in my pants! **The dialogue between characters are simply mind-boggling!!** And to no surprise, Locke wins the prize at the most memorable, funny sarcastic quotes:

“ Shut up...I want you to use your misplaced acorn of a brain before the squirrel comes looking for it again..”

Now, for the elephant in the room...**PIRATES!!** Boy, there are pirates galore in this book! Trust me, these are not the cheese type of pirates you see in ‘Pirates of the Caribbean’. These are **BADASS mofos**, rude and crass in their behavior, not afraid of a good ASSKICKING, and the occasional looting and disorderly conduct. Lynch again creates magic, in establishing a whole new ‘ecosystem’ for the book by introducing the pirates and mixing it all up with Locke and Jean!

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention about the audiobook version of this book:

THE AUDIOBOOK VERSION OF GENTLEMEN BASTARD 2 IS BRILLIANT IN EVERY SENSE!!

The book is narrated by the talented ‘Michael Page’, a British professional actor well known for his audiobook works in over 200 titles! Mr Page has actually won a ‘AudioFile Earphones Awards’ for the narration of Locke Lamorra! I kid you not, his voice-over acting is mesmerizing... the way he switches between each character (male and female) without dropping a note, is pitch perfect! The combination of Lynch’s witty, fast-pace dialogue and Page’s acting prowess made this audiobook a true delight to enjoy!

In conclusion I endorse this book for foes and friends of all ages(ok maybe not all ages, > 18 y/o).The book is witty, has loads of R-rated humor, improves on the ' bromance' between Locke and Jean and adds a whole new dimension with pirates and all baskets of fun associated with them!!

Again the audiobook version is a **MUST HAVE EXPERIENCE!** By far the most unique, entertaining audiobook experience I’ve ever had!

5 STARS!

Petrik says

Buddy read with these thieves: Celeste & Sarah

4.5/5 Stars

Contrary to the popular opinion that Red Seas Under Red Skies, the second book in the Gentleman Bastard Sequence series, is weaker than its predecessor, **I'm more inclined to say that it's not inferior nor superior but it's equally great with The Lies of Locke Lamora in a different way.** It retained some elements that made the first book rise to its fame and at the same time, replace some of them with some new factors to the series. I do, however, enjoyed reading the first book more.

“Difficult” and “impossible” are cousins often mistaken for one another, with very little in common.”

Two years after the end of the first book, we continue straight off with The Gentleman Bastard trying to, again, pull off another biggest heist they ever attempted. The plot started with Locke & Jean camouflaging as professional gamblers in an opulent casino named Sinspire executing one of the necessary steps for their heist. However, again, the heist gets so much more complicated than what they planned.

The whole setting of the book took place in a completely different place than its predecessor, this time taking place in the island city of Tal Verrar and the Sea of Brass. Although I miss the city of Camorr for its beauty and resemblance with Venice, I do think that Tal Verrar and Sea of Brass gave the necessary new atmosphere to the book and series as a whole.

Picture: Tal Verrar

The entire narrative is still told in the same storytelling method as the previous book, by shifting between present and past time frame. The past sections this time are called **“Reminiscent”** and it's there to bridge the 2 years gap before the beginning of the book. These **“past”** sections are there only for the first half of the book, it's different from the previous book where it lasted from the beginning up to the end and honestly speaking, I prefer it to last all the way since it worked so well before. However, the entire **“Reminiscent”** sections explored how Locke deals with the aftermath of Camorr and how he'll set up their plan for the biggest heist of their career, which remained captivating as always.

The most enthralling part of the book for me will have to be the questions **“How the hell will they get out of this situation?”** & **“How will they execute their schemes?”** that were present through the entire plot line. It's ingenious how Scott Lynch implemented the lies, heist, all the moving parts and schemes after schemes filled with humorous, crude yet eloquent dialogues which I can't ever seem to get enough of.

“Any man can fart in a closed room and say that he commands the wind”

Imagine what Kvothe the Arcane would say to that? Locke would probably fart and said he knows The Name of the Wind if they ever met.

All the parts I discussed just now are more or less the same as the greatness we received in The Lies of

Locke Lamora and so come up the question: **“what makes this book so different from its predecessor?”**

Pirates, the last half of the book took on a completely different atmosphere with its seafaring, piracy, and naval warfare. Don't get me wrong, despite being on a ship most of the time, there are still a lot of lies and schemes going on and I admit, I'm not too fond of being in the sea too long since there's nothing to look at in the world-building during this duration other than, you know, the sea. However, Scott Lynch managed to make it so fun to read with the never-ending problems that arise the longer the Gentleman Bastards are there. Plus, the amount and quality of the actions piece in this book are superior to the previous book in my opinion. Thrilling actions during the naval warfare and great climax scenes are all there and they, in my opinion, killed the boredom that should've been caused by the setting completely.

Picture: Locke Lamora in Red Seas Under Red Skies (Chinese edition cover)

Now, let's talk about the best part of the book, the characters. **With the second book finished, let's just say Locke and Jean has become one of my favorite book duo/bromance of all time.** Their friendship, loyalty, banter is without a doubt the best part of the book or maybe the series itself for me, even more than the schemes and heists. Their banter and interaction completely give life to the book.

Whether it's the humorous interactions,

“Worst of all, the inner vault is guarded by a live dragon, attended by fifty naked women armed with poisoned spears, each of them sworn to die in Requin's service. All redheads.”

“You're just making that up, Jean.”

Or the heartwarming one.

“I want to hug you. And I want to tear your gods-damned head off. Both at once.”

“Ah, near as I can tell, that's the definition of 'family' right there.”

The Gentleman Bastards aside, all the other characters are replaced with a completely new cast of characters. This doesn't mean that the new characters are poorly written though, Zamira Drakasha and Ezri Delmastro are both a fantastic addition to the story with them being the strong and compelling female characters which the first book don't really have.

Slightly third person omniscient, the writing is the same as before and honestly speaking, an omniscient narrative is actually my least preferences of narrative but ever since the first book, Scott Lynch managed to do it without losing any of the characters personality through the abundance fantastic dialogues. Sadly, this brought me up to the same minor problem I had with the first book. By doing this kind of narrative, the world-building sections are can get really info-dumpy at times. This is especially true during the first half of the book where the explanation lasted much more than necessary and it's really hard for me to pay attention

during these parts. Luckily, again, it doesn't diminish my overall experience too much but it's still a minor problem I have with the series and why I didn't rate it a full 5 stars.

Overall, Red Seas Under Red Skies once again proved Scott Lynch's capability in writing a great book with unique high fantasy story, compelling main characters and beautiful settings. It's another must-have addition to the Gentleman Bastard Sequence series and in my opinion, equally great with the first book. I know it's been almost 10 years since the release of this book but hey, better late than never right? So chop-chop for those of you who haven't started yet, time to read this series!

I highly recommend this to anyone who's looking for a unique high fantasy full of swashbuckling, friendship, hilarious and captivating dialogues, heart-wrenching and thrilling moments yet at the same time remaining highly fun and enjoyable to read.

You can find this and the rest of my Adult Epic/High Fantasy & Sci-Fi reviews at Booknest
