



The Skybound Sea

Sam Sykes

Download now

Read Online →

The Skybound Sea

Sam Sykes

The Skybound Sea Sam Sykes

Lenk and his companions must finally turn away from fighting each other for their own survival and look to saving the entire human race. A demon has risen from beneath the sea and where it came from thousands could follow. And all the while an alien race is planning the extinction of humanity.

The Skybound Sea Details

Date : Published December 27th 2012 by Gollancz (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780575090378

Author : Sam Sykes

Format : Paperback 495 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Science Fiction Fantasy

 [Download The Skybound Sea ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Skybound Sea ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Skybound Sea Sam Sykes

From Reader Review The Skybound Sea for online ebook

Ross says

In a word: annoying.

I may have missed it on the previous novels, but Mr. Sykes has an annoying habit of creating false tension by starting many of his chapters with unknown characters. The constant use of "he" and (more rarely) "she" for at least a page (often for longer) before identifying known characters, is irritating. By the time the reader figures out (or are told) who the character was, the reader doesn't really care or relate to many of the details in the previous page(s).

Another annoying feature is limited use of dialogue tags. The worst example is a conversation between Sheraptus and the Mouth. Conversation dragged on for paragraphs, broken up by limited actions (movement, a thought, etc.). The lack of tags was beyond confusing such that the reader has to work the dialogue in reverse and forward to figure out which character is speaking.

By about 50 pages in, these (and other) annoyances made me want to throw the book out. From sheer stubbornness, I finished the book.

Looking back, my wife reminded me I had issues with the previous books. My opinion and rating on those still stand, but those, too, should probably be lower.

All said, Mr. Sykes has fun and quirky dialogue (for most of the part). Based on Aeon's Gate, I'd not bother with his novels for a while. I WOULD, however, consider watching something he wrote(per great dialogue and okay story).

Oh, and Characters were ok in the first book, but barely changed and constantly annoying by the third installment.

Joseph says

And so the Aeons' Gate trilogy comes to a suitably bombastic close on a series of islands on an uncharted sea, complete with portals to demon realms, at least three separate (and mutually hostile) armies and some of the nastier villains I've come across in a long time.

And having said that, much as I enjoyed the pyrotechnics, what really makes the book are the characters, all of whom are desperately trying to project an air of unromantic cynicism to cover (with varying degrees of success) their own massive doubts and insecurities, and the dialogue.

I look forward to seeing what comes next ...

Beth Cato says

Sykes brings his epic trilogy to a bloody, violent conclusion in *The Skybound Sea*. Lenk and crew must figure out how to stop a nasty tentacle monster from being released from captivity by her worshipful 'children,' even as other forces seek to kill her--and everyone else. I was especially happy to see how Lenk and Kataria's relationship developed, but really, all of the character have strong arcs, some of them quite heart-breaking.

Nathan Washor says

In writing *The Skybound Sea*, Sam Sykes has skillfully closed out his carnage strewn adventure while leaving himself the option to write more in his dripping wet universe. This tome is filled with Lovecraftian stylized horrors that sulk about the deepest places urging to drown the world in mucus and blood, all for another taste of their mother's milk. If you are in anyway squeamish of bodily fluids, the *Skybound Sea* will desensitize you forever. This is one wet work.

Sykes writes like a T-Rex, howling and ripping fetid entrails loose with each keystroke he mashes. In his world, magic drains its wielders of their very life force, the gods seemingly don't give a damn for their followers, and invaders from another world are hell-bent on releasing the mother of demons all in a quest to kill her. Our mighty heroes constantly dream of each others' demises in between epic battles where their foes are eviscerated, decapitated, and emboweled spewing forth every biological liquid known to originate in man or beast. Oh, and there are jellyfish. You know what they say to do if one stings you, right?

The Skybound Sea is the culmination of an adventure that our heroes set off upon two books ago. Along the way they have battled countless humanoids, beasts, and demons of all shapes, sizes, and of course colors. From the green shicts to the purple netherlings, Lenk and company have perspired and persevered only to become stranded on the isle of Teji. Our adventure continues as they search for the hidden island of Jaga to stop the Abysmyth hordes from reuniting with their mother. What do they get for all their trouble? Do they all perish in a world flooded by the *Skybound Sea*, or do they accomplish the goals they set out toward in book 1: to retrieve the Tome of the Undergates thus keeping the kraken queen sealed away in hell? And what is their reward for success or failure? Well, that would be a spoiler and I don't write those.

Sykes' writing style is unique. Lenk's internal dialog is the definition of madness while the battle cries and dying screams of our heroes' foes reverberate in glory and pain. From the truly amazing first chapter, to the glorious final battle that spans countless pages, the action and wittiness that is Syke's hallmark never lets up. It all works out to a captivating, fast paced read.

I am pleased to give this book five stars and I look forward to reading future works by Mr. Sykes. I also wanted to thank him for the advanced review copy he graciously provided me. I wish I had time to get this review out before the US release, but life sometimes has a way of messing up our plans. At least I beat the UK hardcover release which I pre-ordered months ago to place next to my "Tome" and "Black Halo" copies.

Jason says

4.5 Stars

4-4.5 Stars for the series...

The third and final book of the Aeons' Gate trilogy was the best of the bunch. The action has all led up to this point and Sykes does not disappoint. I found that I really how Sykes pulled it all together and that I was not let down by the ending.

This book made me really appreciate two other characters other than our main hero Lenk. The First character to mention is the scum bag rogue Deanos. I liked him from the very first page that we meet him, but by the end of this book, I really loved him. His character is complex, bad ass, and filled with more... Much of this book was centered on him, on his past, and on his actions, and he did not disappoint. To me, he had the most growth of all the protagonists, and his chapters ended up being my favorite. Make no mistake; Denaos is a bad man and a really good killer. What glimpses of his inner psyche that we are treated to make him seem so real.

The second character is the young wizard Dreadaeleon. He was always a lesser character that did not bring much to these books other than some cool ice and some hot fire magic. In this final installment we get so much more of him and about him and it worked. I loved all his talk about the nether about the heretics, and about magic too. I like his inner doubts and the hilarious banter that he coughs up...A conversation that he has with Asper:

““I saved you, you know.”

“With vomit. I saw. Very impressive.”

“You weren't supposed to see that part. Sorry.””

He played a pivotal role in the outcome of the plots of this book and made the book a better one at the same time.

Lenk was his best when he was his craziest. His internal monologues were some of my favorite scenes in the book. For a hero, he worked best as a broken man...

““I'm insane.”

“You think you are.”

“I'm having a conversation with a body of water.” He furrowed his brow contemplatively. “For the . . . fifth time, I think?” He looked thoughtful. “Though this is only the fourth time it's talked back, so I've got that going, at least.”

“It's only insanity if the water isn't telling you anything. Is this not a productive conversation for you?”

“To be honest?”

“Please.”

“Even if I could get past the whole 'standing on the ocean talking to the ocean' . . . thing,” he said, “I've had enough conversations with voices rising from nowhere to know that this probably won't end well. So just tell me to kill, make some ominous musings, and I'll be on my way to kill my friends.””

““Sorry, I was just distracted,” Lenk said, gesturing over the reef, “what with the giant invisible sea of flying fish that should not be, and all. Have you seen this kind of thing before or . . .”

“It was impressive to begin with, but now I’ve seen it,” Kataria replied. “I’ve also seen giant snakes, lizardmen of varying sizes, giant black fish-headed priest-things, seagulls that look like old ladies, I could go on.” She shrugged. “I mean, this is weird, yeah, but we’ve seen and done weirder.”

“I was eaten by a giant sea serpent,” Gariath offered.

“Gariath was eaten by a giant sea serpent.” Kataria nodded, gesturing to him. “You don’t see him getting distracted.” “...

The series is a dark and twisted anti-hero adventure that should not be missed by fantasy lovers. It is extremely action packed, fast paced, and filled with witty humor. I really look forward to more from Sam Sykes...My highest recommendations!

Lisa Balestrieri says

Pros: Sophisticated writing style and fancy words- this author owns a thesaurus.

Very well edited without any noticeable typos or grammar issues.

Humor mixed into serious moments.

A few of the characters were likable and I was invested in finding out what happened to them.

Cons: Extreme pacing issues.

The plot did not grab my attention at all. It was more introspective than anything.

The antagonists were not scary and the protagonists were not heroic. A lot of dumb luck situations.

Constant angsty bickering between characters and elementary school style romance.

An overwhelming amount of potty talk.

Overall it was kind of painful, but I would give this author a second chance if he writes something else.

Therese Arkenberg says

I have a confession to make: I already took one ARC from the free bin at WisCon, but I couldn't resist snagging this one, too. I picked it up and meant to page through it to pass the time before the auction, but then I could not put it down. The opening lines beat out a hypnotic rhythm. Gliding past them, I found myself in an oceanside slum near the home of an eldritch abomination. My inner Cthulhu fan's tentacles twitched pleasantly. I found I liked the characters at once. Unfortunately, the opening was more of a teaser and I didn't see a lot of them afterwards.

There will be some spoilers in this review, but spoilers don't actually decrease your enjoyment of the story. I'll keep them vague, anyway, with just enough detail to articulate what I liked and what nagged me.

Although this was the last book in the trilogy, I felt I was able to keep up with the action easily enough. After

all, this book is mostly action--people killing people, narrowly evading being killed by people, people summoning giant monsters, fighting giant monsters, fighting each other over how exactly to go about fighting giant monsters. The background mythology isn't one-dimensional, but the parts that are immediately relevant to the action are presented without slowing the pacing down and without being confusing (anyway, an air of not-fully-explained mystery is a perk in mythology building, especially mythologies including ineffable eldritch abominations).

Where I did start getting lost was the character's motivations. There's some sort of scheme-within-a-scheme going on with at least one of the villain factions--yes, there's more than one. Many more. They're usually able to be distinguished by the color of their skin. Whether it's green or purple, I mean. Actual PoC do appear among the heroes and sympathetic side characters, and Sykes also writes women perfectly well, which is refreshing in this testosterone laden subgenre. They're at least as complex as the male characters, and equally or more kickass, without being at all fanservicey. When fighting they can get downright unsexy. This does not mean they aren't kickass. Bless you, Sykes, for knowing the difference.

Back to that complexity, though--some confusion among the villains, I understand, is a feature rather than a bug, and Sykes seems to intend it that way. Maybe I really am not supposed to know what's going on, or if I'd read the previous 2 books I'd know. I appreciate that Sykes doesn't slow the plot down to spoon-feed these things to us (he has one teaser of a scene where 2 villains discuss their plans in front of a hiding character--the character, though, can't speak their language and misses out on such a great spying opportunity), but at times I wasn't sure whether I was meant to sit back and watch the blood splatter or piece together a puzzle. Maybe I should have done both at the same time?

This confusion reigns despite the villains discussing their plans, the heroes arguing about their plans, and a constant rich stream of inner monologue--which pops up even during action scenes. However, I think in this case seeing the character's thoughts helps. Without knowing who a character is and what they want, even the bloodthirstiest reader can't get that invested in them spearing, hacking, chopping, exploding, and otherwise demolishing other feeling, thinking beings. The main protagonist, Lenk, might genuinely be mentally ill--he brings the possibility up and it isn't dismissed. Although this raises interesting questions like, how does this world define mental illness? Is introducing "schizophrenia" into what is, eldritch abominations and sorcerers aside, a largely medieval fantasy world an anachronism?

This being the last book of the trilogy, I was privileged to see its end...such as it was. Because it wasn't much of an ending--instead we get a bigger revelation, the heroes' troubles are clearly not over, and the world may be in even greater danger no than it ever was. Anyone who had read through the entire series might be disappointed at the lack of resolution, and for all this story was pretty fun (not lighthearted in tone by any means, but clearly meant to be the literary equivalent of a popcorn-noshing action movie), it ends on a depressing note. Not because of character death, either--this is spoilery, but as I read I started to get distracted by how rarely anyone's death or apparent death proved permanent. Instead, there's just this feeling that all the heroes' work was for nothing, they are pawns in a cosmic game they cannot comprehend, and lots of other nihilistic musings. I'm tempted to draw a comparison with R. Scott Bakker's Prince of Nothing series, which also ends on an obvious hook for its sequel trilogy (which I'm currently reading). However, Prince of Nothing exhibits vast worldbuilding, on such an epic scale that multiple series within it seem inevitable. Sykes has some awesome images in his created world, including the titular Skybound Sea, but on the whole it's a Dungeons and Dragons campaign in writing. Then again, I'd expect plenty of DMs like to end each session with a hook for the next, so maybe that's what he's doing here.

Knowing how this trilogy ends, I'm not sure I'm interested in reading the beginning, but I'll definitely check out what else Sykes has written. And I'll probably wind up snagged again.

This review is cross-posted from Story Addict.

Felix says

Lenk's voices in his head lead him to the queen of the Kracken with his partner who can't decide to love or kill him? This wild ride comes to a end or does it?

Stefanie says

Sykes writes with humor and hijinks, so if you are looking for a rambunctiously gory fantasy, then this is the series for you. I struggled with this because I really wanted to like it, but I felt like none of the characters knew what they wanted, and so I didn't care about what happened to them any more than they did.

There was a lot of good buildup, but some of the explanations were so confusing I found myself reading sections repeatedly trying to get a grasp on what had just happened, or exactly how big Ulbecetonth is. I do want to read the sequel trilogy, but probably not right away.

Jane says

The first book of this series, Tome of the Undergates, was good enough to grab my attention with characters that suggested they'd be interesting and a plot that offered something different. The writing wasn't the best, but I can enjoy a book even if isn't a masterpiece. I gave it three stars - good but not great.

The second book, Black Halo, was a long boring mess for the most part. There were too many characters with too many thoughts in their heads. Too often I had to stop and re-read sections trying to figure out who was speaking. It felt as if the author had a need to spew forth words to make himself sound clever, but it didn't work. It only deserved two stars or maybe 2.5, though I gave it three just because I was hopeful that the third book would sort out the plot and things would improve.

It did - a bit.

The Skybound Sea was an improvement, but not by much. There were fewer voices in character's heads and the plot (finally) moved forward to a conclusion that I had fully expected. That was all good, however there were too many annoyances to give this book a decent rating. I gave it two stars to average out my too-high rating for the second book.

For starters, the author has a habit of changing POV characters in the middle of chapters without any warning. The reader spends pages in one character's head then suddenly they are in another one. No spaces, no markings, nothing to act as a transition. I can handle that on its own, but these changes were usually followed by multiple paragraphs (often entire pages) where there was no indication of whose head you were in. The reader is, I suspect, just supposed to figure it out. It would be easier to do that if the author didn't rely so heavily on pronouns. He likes using the word 'he', over and over and over, even when the 'he' could refer to several characters in the scene. Which 'he' is the author meaning? The POV character? The one who's speaking? The one being spoken to? The one in the character's head? The one in someone else's head? Entire pages can go by without a single name being mentioned. It isn't clever writing if the reader has to leave the story to figure out what the author is trying to say!

Then there are the places that missed being edited ... words missing or wrong tenses. In chapter 14:

"Powerful arms were folded across a more powerful chest, a frowned scarred across her long face..."

Frowned scarred? Perhaps 'a frown scarred' or 'a frowned scar'? Chapter 19: "With a snarl, the only she had spared ..." Did the author mean 'the only one she had spared'? In chapter 33: "He tore the heads free, lifed them,..." Pretty sure that word should be 'lifted' not 'lifed'.

There are lots more, but I'm sure you get the idea.

Too many pronouns, poor POV switches, too few name tags.

The plot of this book was an improvement over the lack of one in book two, but I can't reward that when there is so much else wrong with it. There is an inevitable fourth book to this series but I have no urge to read it.

Mark Medina says

A bit too long but a good ending.

While I still think these books are overly long, they are enjoyable and I like the characters. A satisfying ending to this trilogy, while setting it up for the next one.

Griffin Barber says

I was lucky enough to get an advance copy of this book, and I thoroughly enjoyed it! Sykes smoothly closed the trilogy, tying up the many character arcs in fine fashion.

The climax of Skybound Sea, without getting into spoilers, is much like Tome of the Undergates in that most of it takes place during a prolonged battle sequence. Few writers are able to convey such quality non-stop action and yet develop characters that are both believable and interesting. And Sykes is a smooth hand at making disparate, believable, despicable, desperate characters. So smooth is his writing and character development that the reader is drawn along, even made to feel concern for: various mass-murderers, the possessed, racists, religious nuts, Gods, Demons, and sundry homicidal sorts.

Through all the blood and gore, Sykes' has worked a deep vein of longing and strange, off-angle perception that is evocative of a modern-day Lovecraft, if Lovecraft were to have had a three-way brainchild with R.E. Howard and someone of more literary bent...

I am a fan of sword and sorcery. I am a fan of epic fantasy. This is something more, and slightly different, from both. I thoroughly enjoyed it, heartily recommend it, and can't wait to read additional work by this author.

Pie Pie says

I had to read a different book, a quality book from a better author before I could come back to finish off this series. But like a multi-car crash on the highway I have just too much morbid curiosity to look away.

This is by far the worst book trilogy I've ever finished. And it's amazing.

Usually when a book is bad, it's because it's boring, one dimensional, unbelievable, or just has poor writing. Sam Sykes' trilogy though has NONE of those features. The books are interesting, worldly, truly enveloping, and incredibly well written (line by line at least, not as a whole).

The problem is the sum of the parts somehow adds up to a big fat zero. The last book in the trilogy has just as little plot and character development as the first two. The characters that I now love because of the way they are so elegantly presented are in pretty much the same spot as a few chapters into the first book.

For example, Kataria still follows Lenk and they both still think the other is going to kill them. Maybe not like *right away* anymore, but that tension is still there! But now, with how superbly written their characters are, I feel their love story is utterly repulsive. Imagine that! Their characters, the world they live in, and their companion's reactions are so real to me because of how well Sam Sykes created them that their final act of love made me sick to my stomach by how counter-culture it was. I found that emotion to be so amazing. I've never felt something in a book was that inherently *wrong* in the world in which it was created.

Now the ending of the book was pitiful as well. Yeah, ok they finally beat the big baddie. But there was no impact, no character development, no sense that the world was saved even for a little bit. At the end of a frigging trilogy, the author has the audacity to turn it into just another cliffhanger. There's no closure at all and even though I knew it was coming from the pace of the other books I was still left wanting for something that I now know will never come.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step and this book series has, quite contentedly, stood firmly immobile.

Idoru says

This review is for the entire trilogy, *Aeons' Gate*.

I'm always on the look out for good new fantasy – new to me, anyway. Twitter has turned out to be an excellent source for this. I believe I found Sam Sykes having followed Joe Abercrombie. Sykes is very entertaining on Twitter and I felt it was only fair to buy one of his books. So I did.

The first book in the trilogy, *Tome of the Undergates*, starts with a 200+ page sea battle with pirates. That's either awful or awesome depending on your point of view, and I thought it was awesome. Being thrown right into the action like that isn't something I've experienced before. Usually battles come after the characters have been introduced, when we know who to cheer for. Managing to make the reader care about characters we've only just met is hard, and here you do kinda care. Even more difficult is keeping the reader invested even after those characters have been revealed to be a bunch of scumbags and villains.

This opening is intriguing. We don't know why the characters are fighting pirates, why they're at sea, or even who our main cast is. All this information is revealed slowly, keeping interest high. Our intrepid gang comprises Lenk, the leader, Kataria, Dreadalion, Gariath, Asper and Denaos. In many ways they are the ideal AD&D group – leader, warrior, mage, barbarian, cleric and thief.

Tome, as the name implies is about a book. The kind that if it falls into the wrong hands Very Bad Things will happen. It's our group of adventurers' job to ensure that doesn't happen. Not because it's the right thing to do, but rather because they're being paid very good money. Our gang is not heroic or noble, with the

possible exception of Lenk, who at least tries. And yet you still root for them. This may be because they're real. They're flawed, they're vulnerable, they're petty, they have secrets, they've made mistakes and they want to atone for them, some of them have done terrible things, some of them are going to do terrible things. In short, they're human. Even the ones that aren't.

The other two books in the trilogy are *Black Halo* and *The Skybound Sea*. I'm not going to attempt to a precis of each of them – read them, they're great. Each book comes to a proper conclusion, but the story continues throughout.

The books are incredibly inventive. Sykes has created whole new races, complete with history, culture, beliefs and so on. The writing is stunning; by turns funny, exciting, gross, beautiful, moving, violent, disgusting and more. The final book ends with a great twist, presumably setting up Sykes's next book, *A City Stained Red*, which he is working on right now. When he's not on Twitter.

I genuinely loved these books. I even insisted my dad read them, and I never do that. His comment pretty much summed them up: "They're good, really good, but they're so weird." I'd take that as a compliment.

This review first appeared on my blog: <http://idoruknits.blogspot.co.uk/2014...>

Chris says

Very much a slash and hack series that I was glad to conclude. Rated as average as nothing really shone in any of the books and completing the set was more a labour of duty than any real sense of appreciation.
