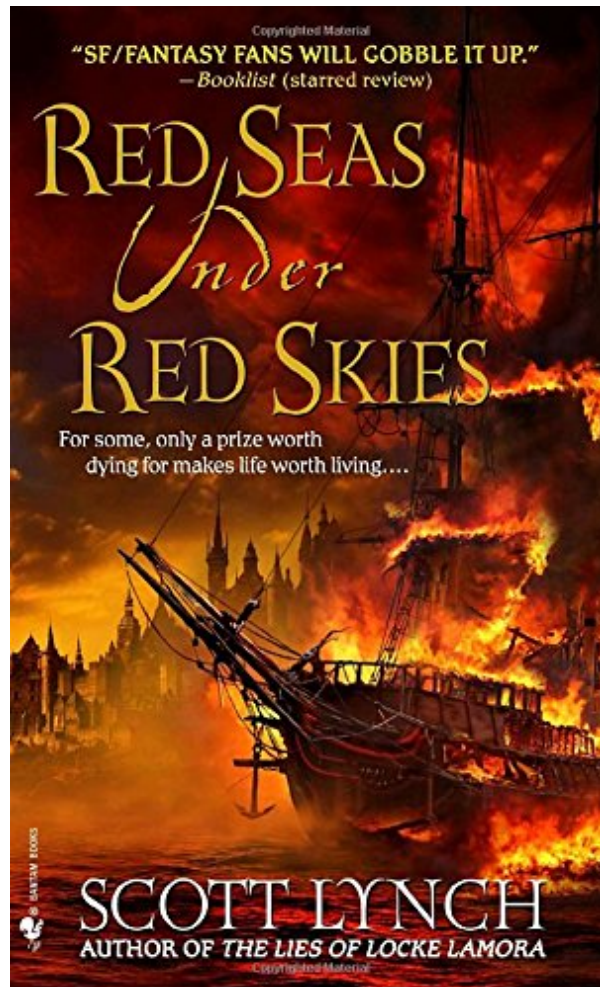
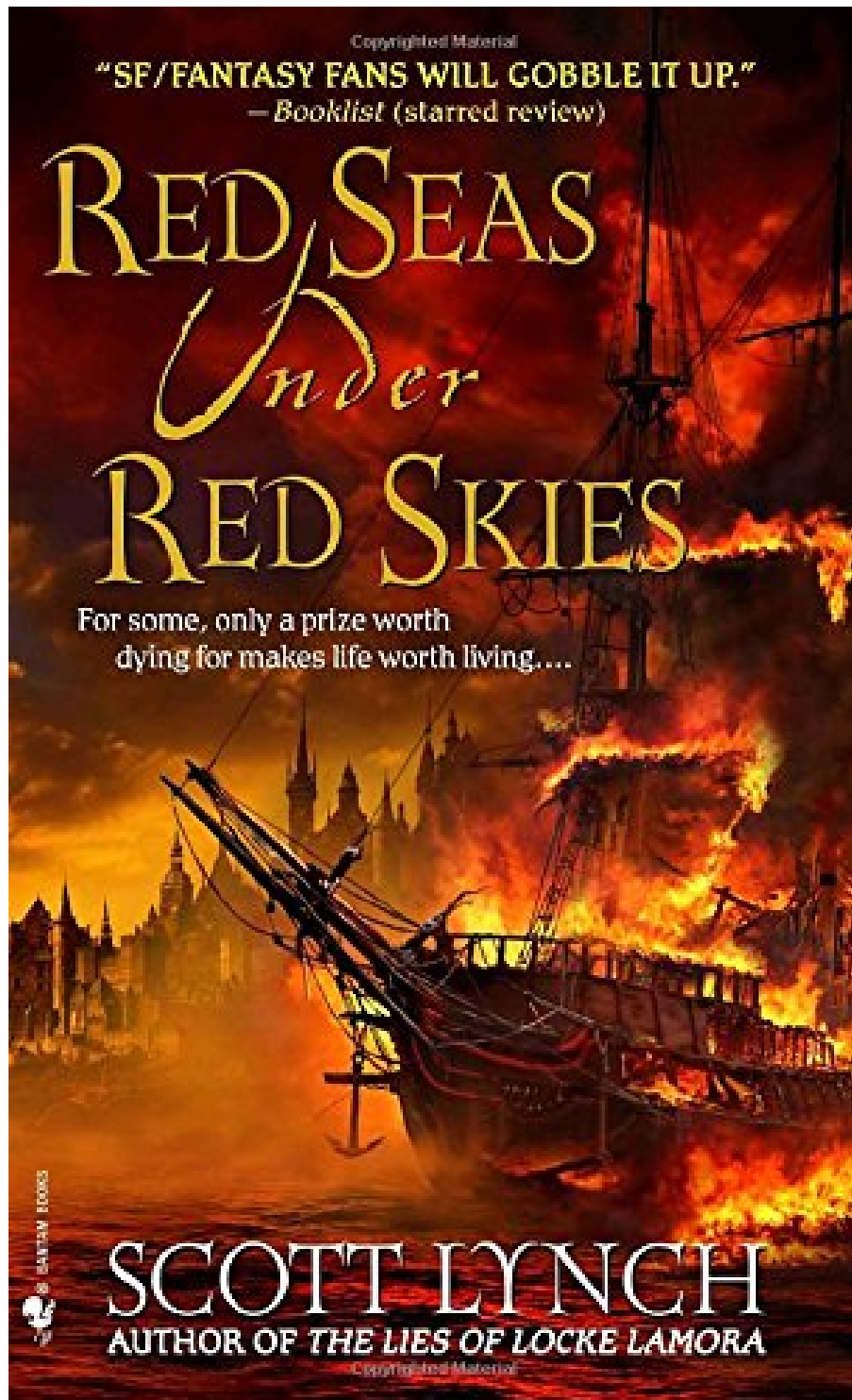


RED SEAS UNDER RED SKIES (GENTLEMAN BASTARDS) BY SCOTT LYNCH



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"SF/FANTASY FANS WILL GOBBLE IT UP."
— *Booklist* (starred review)

RED SEAS *Under* RED SKIES

For some, only a prize worth
dying for makes life worth living....

SCOTT LYNCH
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SCOTT LYNCH
AUTHOR OF *THE LIES OF LOCKE LAMORA*

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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....

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From the Hardcover edition.

- Sales Rank: #24840 in Books
- Brand: Scott Lynch
- Published on: 2008-07-29
- Released on: 2008-07-29
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.90" h x 1.30" w x 4.20" l, .95 pounds
- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
- 760 pages

Features

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Most helpful customer reviews

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Too Many Competing Plot Lines

By Robin Snyder

I really enjoyed the first book in this series but Red Seas Under Red Skies was a bit meh for me.

Don’t get me wrong, the dialogue between Locke and Jean is still amazing and I love the utter devotion those two have for one another. But the story was a little all over the place and I think my biggest issue is probably that the flashbacks were to a time not that long ago instead of when they were growing up gentlemen bastards. So things got a little but jumbly

“Know something? I'd lay even odds that between the people following us and the people hunting us, we've become this city's principle means of employment. Tal Verrar's entire economy is now based on messing with us.”

And therein lies the problem. They aren’t between a rock and a hard place but A Rock, A hard place, A cliff and an erupting volcano. There are too many adversaries and sub plots and side scams and....well I think you get what I’m saying.

I found myself getting really distracted. I’d read a little bit and then I’d wonder off into another book or three before I remembered to come back to it. It took me forever to get through the section that involved learning

how to fake being a pirate.

? The + side ?

☞ - Locke and Jean are ever entertaining. They have a great bromance and even though they have been through some tough times they are still like brothers.

☞ - There are always strong women in this and I was happy to see that the pirates are equal opportunity employers and there were a fair share of deadly female pirates.

☞ - The world building is really wonderful with all the alchemical concoctions and such as well as the deadly and cruel games that the nobility of different lands like to play. I will never look at a chess game in quite the same way after this.

? The - side ?

☞ - Took way too long to get anywhere in the story. With far too many overlapping plot lines. It was a little hard to follow who was on whose side and how they were messing with Locke and Jean.

☞ - There was no Sabatha. Look we didn't really get to see her in the first book but I was thinking she is Locke's long lost love and I keep thinking she is going to pop up sometime....but she didn't. I wish I would have known that going into this book.

☞ - The ending. Well it was unexpected that things played out like they did. I will give Scott Lynch that but idk it made most of the story seem a bit pointless to me.

Overall:

The writing and dialogue is really good I just don't think I liked the story all that much. But this is maybe a story that you like better the second time you read through it since you knew where things are going.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

If nautical nonsense be somethin' you wish...

By The Mad Alchemist

I bought this book when I was less than 200 pages into The Lies of Locke Lamora. I adored it; the world, the characters, the intricacies of the cons. It was something I didn't know I was looking for until it was in my hands.

I'd regard the second book as highly if the story that was built up within the first 200 pages is the story we got. The first chapter was brilliantly written, and spurred me to shirk my adult responsibilities as I was drawn deeper into the narrative. Fans of the first book knew there was plenty of room for raising the stakes, and it seemed as though Red Seas Under Red Skies would deliver on that.

Unfortunately the main plot - as well as all the characters I'd grown to care about - were told to bugger off around 300 pages in while Locke and Jean meandered out to sea.

I'm torn. I don't hate everything about the middle section of the book, and though I wish the story had gone in another direction (primarily because there were too many plotlines and too many things that weren't followed up on or not given nearly as much development as I'd have liked), I can see why Lynch went in the

direction he did.

The book's biggest problem is that you could cut around 200 pages of content and wind up with a much stronger product. All the time spent on explaining sailing and nautical terms and this and that was time I'd have rather spent reading about the intricacies of a new con, or delving deeper into Locke's backstory.

It didn't help that time skipped about however it wished. There's a particularly bad instance at the beginning of chapter eleven where the narrative jumps forward by several hours following the last chapter, but then the second scene goes right back to the end of the last chapter without warning, and it took me a minute to figure out what was happening. Confusion mixed with long passages about things I don't care about do not make for a pleasant time.

I'll say this - Lynch did a marvelous job of describing things I don't care about. He simply couldn't make it interesting in a context where it ground the main plot to a halt.

I can't help but get the feeling he felt so much pressure to up the stakes following a first novel where things went to hell in fantastic fashion that he went too far with this one and couldn't keep the plot focused as a result. It's not a bad book by any means, but the best parts largely copy the formula from the first book, and the second act lull is long and dull enough I had to flip back to earlier pages to remind myself what was going on when the plot kicked back into gear.

If you haven't read *The Lies of Locke Lamora*, pick it up. It's well worth your coin. If you enjoy the banter between Locke and Jean, *Red Seas Under Red Skies* is worth a look. The dialog is as sharp as ever, and despite my overall feelings about the tale, I love the characters more than I did going into it.

If you enjoyed *Lies* more for the con, the consistent pacing, the gradual escalation of the main threat, and the steady build that led to an explosive (and immensely satisfying) conclusion, you'll find some of that here, but it's not going to thrill you half as much as the first book. You could skip from chapter seven to chapter thirteen or fourteen and not miss much of importance.

Lynch is a solid writer and world builder. He has a great vision for this series, but for whatever reason things didn't quite gel in this entry. I'm going to read the third book despite seeing several middling reviews because the characters and the world are strong enough to keep me hooked despite the flaws, but I have to admit parts of *Red Seas Under Red Skies* were slogs nearly on par with the sections of *Lord of the Rings* where Tolkien was so charmed by a particular arrangement of stones or trees he had to write about them for several pages, or have characters sing for whole chapters. This isn't a book for the casual *Locke Lamora*/fantasy enthusiast.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Pretty good

By Heather M. Head

For me, this was a let-down after the first *Locke Lamora* book. Where the first captured and held my attention from the first moment, this one was slow to gain speed, and, once it did, was so full of complexities and plots within plots and characters within characters that I had a hard time staying with it. Once the main characters get on the ship and develop interesting relationships with the interesting characters there, it speeds up and becomes interesting, but it takes half the book to get there. And then, before it's over with again, the reader is forced to return to the mind-exhausting complexity of plots within plots in order to make sense of the ending.

I still give it 4 stars because I love this character and several of the secondary characters, and the good parts

were worth wading through the meh parts. However, I will probably not read the third book, as I fear it is likely to be equally or even more complex, and ... I'd rather spend time with characters than plot twists.

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