



The Tomb of Horrors

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Kaerion Whitehart was once a mighty paladin, but sins of the past have cast him far from the light. Together with an elf mercenary, he now survives by the might of his sword alone.

In exchange for a hefty purse, the two friends agree to accompany a band of patriots into a tomb haunted by fear and legend. They soon find the mission growing beyond their control. As warring factions vie for the ultimate prize of a long-dead wizard, Kaerion finds himself caught between death and redemption.

"The Tomb of Horrors "is the latest title in the Greyhawk Classics series, a set of novels that revisits the most popular adventures of the original Dungeons & Dragons game.

The Tomb of Horrors Details

Date : Published February 1st 2002 by Wizards of the Coast

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Author : Keith Francis Strohm

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From Reader Review The Tomb of Horrors for online ebook

James says

A great dungeon crawl that ends with the redemption of a paladin. A very epic tale that I found very enjoyable with a decent open ending.

Dave Gonzalez says

I read this out of a sense of boyhood nostalgia. This book is related to a 1978 (!!!!) D&D adventure that earned the tag "infamous" - it was designed to be way too hard, killing off all players via hidden traps before they even get to the "fun part" of the undead demi-lich that also is guaranteed to kill them. It was adventures like this that made players think "The DM hates us."

Anyway, the novelization was a fun distraction but seemed to be paced oddly... Too much set-up and then it raced through the dungeon adventure. On the positive side, I didn't die.

Jed says

This is a fantastic read! I return to it time and again for a return to the brighter side of mankind in the midst of the chaos of those who seek selfless goals. There are friends who lead our hero in the right direction even when he does not know what the right direction is. This book will remain on my bookshelf.

Derek says

Why do I keep doing this to myself? It seems that no matter what promise I make to myself about reading the rest of the Greyhawk Classics series, the pain and disappointment from the previous has just enough time to fade before the next book appears in front of me.

Like all the Greyhawk Classics line, the story serves two masters: the natural progression of the characters and plot, and the expectations of the eponymous structure or feature. In hindsight I can't fault Strohm for structuring it such that the Tomb only makes its appearance at around page 200. Reading the blow-by-blow of a pure trap-and-monsters dungeon crawl isn't particularly interesting if you have a good idea of how things are going to play out. Especially given that a certain number of set pieces--a certain green devil face, for example--are required to appear.

In all, it was a trudging journey. The characters all develop in completely expected ways with relatively expected outcomes.

Dayne says

I really enjoyed this book. This was my first book of 2015, and I'm sad to admit that it took almost 5 months to finish reading it. By the end of the book, I felt that I had gone with, and shared the hardships of the characters. Although, this might be because it took roughly the same amount of time to read the book as how long the journey of the characters took.

Overall, I would definitely recommend this book to others.

Dennis says

A good read (surprisingly so). An amusing feature - the adventure party is bringing along guards. Yes, that's right - their armor wasn't explicitly referred to as "red", but it might as well have been...

While D&D novels that I've read in the past have been an unimpressive lot, but this is part of a series of books (unrelated, except the general world setting) based on classic AD&D dungeons that have been quite good so far.

Marcio Barros says

Cliché? True to the very mark! But fun to the last page ...

Eric says

The Seventh in the Greyhawk's Classics series follows the adventure of fallen paladin Kaerion Whitehart and his friend Gerwyth as they are pulled into a quest to clear the fabled Tomb of Horrors. Like the other books in the series it is based on a classic D&D adventure module of the same name. In general this is a good book that tries to create characters of interest while staying true to the story line of the module. Its one of the more serious in tone books as the Kaerion address his fall from grace, his significant drinking and his inability to accept forgiveness for what he did in the past.

While there is other character development, Kaerion's is the main focus of the story. While his fall from grace is eventually resolved, the manner in which it is seems half hearted. The story builds towards an epic redemption story only to go with a more benign 'you were never fallen, you were tricked' resolution. While this doesn't take away from the overall story line....it does lessen the impact a bit.

PickinDavis says

I actually thought this is one of the better D&D books I've ever read. I've never been through or read the original module - maybe my opinion would change if I had - but D&D books on a whole are really pretty terrible reads, and I found myself not entirely disappointed by this one.

It is a shame the dungeon itself doesn't present itself until the last 1/3 of the book, and the characters are painfully thin, but all-in-all I actually enjoyed it.

Dennis Friedrichsen says

Unless you're intimately familiar with the real Tomb of Horrors and its history, I wouldn't bother. The Forgotten Realms/Greyhawk books are fun if you appreciate them for what they are, but I couldn't bring myself to recommend these books to anyone.

Sean Helms says

A good entertaining read about redemption in the face of great evil. Kaerion Whiteheart, once the greatest of all paladins in service to Heironeous, years ago fell from grace and wandered the world selling his sword along with a single companion. Ten years have passed since the paladin's shame and although he doesn't know it, an opportunity for redemption under the eyes of a stern cleric of Heironeous and his own is surprisingly presented by his friend. Along the way he will face an evil as great as that which defeated him years before, but he is determined to never again fail his mighty master the Valorous One. Very good story with likeable characters and a powerful hero who is someone readers can sympathize with as he fights his inner demons to again be the virtuous knight he was born to be.

Joshua says

Many of the Nineties DnD fiction novels remind me of Chipotle tacos. Sure they're fine, but they're nothing you really want to brag about having consumed. This book had some interesting parts - I enjoyed the redemption of the main character, but I couldn't really get around how all the other characters existed only to help the main character find that resolution.

If you are looking for an afternoon or an evening of fun mindless reading, then this book will help you through. If you were planning on running the Tomb of Horrors / Tomb of Annihilation then this book would probably add some fun insight. However, while I don't mind having read this I'm feeling the opportunity cost might have been too high, as I wonder what other (and better) books I could have been reading instead.

Samuel says

This book is a decent, quick read. It has a couple of major problems...

The first is, like the last book I read in the series (The Temple of Elemental Evil) there is very little character development. The main character has a tiny bit of growth, but it does mimic the growth of a character in a

D&D game, so it was a bit of fun.

The second problem is that the ending felt very rushed. They spend four-fifth's of the book getting to the tomb, and then only spent a tiny amount of time in the tomb. The most fantastical place in the book and it gets the smallest portion of it. The interaction between the groups (good guys vs bad guys) was kept to a very minimal amount, which was disappointing after such a long build-up.

The journey was pretty good and the juxtaposition of the "good guys" and the "bad guys" was well done. The reader gets a real sense that the evil group is pursuing and harrying the good guys every step of the way through the swamp. But the interactions, as I said, were very minimal in the tomb, which is what I was waiting for - a big confrontation! It never really happened, so it fell short.

The ending was so small/short that it felt truncated. It made sense, and it was fitting for the main character, but overall it was a let down after an extreme buildup with the main bad guy. I liked it a bit less than ToEE, but still give it three stars for the nostalgia. It's a quick read, but if you aren't a D&D fan, you probably won't enjoy it as much as I did.

Stefan says

Re-read this one after nearly 10 years and it was even better on audio. It brought back great memories.

Dru says

Tons of spoilers below.

This was the 7th and final book in the "modules-turned-novels" series that I'd read. I **really** wanted to like this book, since I was so familiar with the module, but parts of it just prevented the review from rising above 3 stars. Let's begin with the upsides:

- 1) An **actual D&D party** is used. No "orphaned kid" coming along on an adventure for high level characters. No "fairies and sphinxes" in the party. Just a nice mix of races and classes.
- 2) The Tomb crawl itself follows the module well
- 3) Most characters stuck to actual D&D abilities they had

Now the downsides:

- 1) It is well into page 200 of 300 before we get to the bloody Tomb!
- 2) The whole "evil party following a good party into the Tomb" thing was an unnecessary plot device
- 3) The whole connection to Tharizdun was also unnecessary
- 4) There were far too many times that characters did things that are NOT allowed in D&D:
 - a) A fallen paladin can NEVER regain his/her paladinhood
 - b) The soul-sucking power of a Demi-Lich has no defense. No save. No spell. Nothing should stop it. Yet the party's mage fights it off with some unnamed spell like power. Unless he was casting WISH as a defense, the mage should've found himself in Acerack's left eye diamond.
 - c) A single blow from a paladin with a holy sword will NOT destroy a Demi-Lich
 - d) "blunt tip arrows" are not a "thing" in D&D. Even if a DM allowed it, they would NOT do the kind of damage a hammer or mace would do!

5) There were incredibly important times when the author SHOULD have done something, but failed to do so, indicating the author was NOT a D&D player:

- a) Upon regaining his paladinhood, the main character should have LAID ON HANDS to heal the guy who was dying in the last few pages of the book
- b) The party followed Acerack's "poem" to solve the Tomb, UNTIL THE VERY LAST LINE which got ignored!!!! "You've left and left and found my tomb, and now your soul must die". The "left and left" part was SO INTEGRAL to finding Acerack that EVERY party EVER that I've DM'd through this module, relied upon it. The author wholeheartedly skips over the use of that clue, and we fast forward to them standing before the final resting place of Acerack like it was not difficult!
- c) The "false tomb" part of the module is HUGE! It's the make-or-break point for most parties that I've DM'd. Was that really Acerack? Did we win? Why do we feel like there was more to the Tomb? That whole part was skipped.

I'm putting this footer on all 7 of my reviews of "Greyhawk Classics", for consistency.

Note that I read them in LEVEL ORDER, not publication order. I wanted an overall review of the series of 8 in one spot, so here ya go:

- 1) (6th published) Keep on the Borderlands - Levels 1-3 : 2 stars
 - 2) (4th published) The Temple of Elemental Evil - Levels 1-3 : 3 stars
 - 3) (2nd published) White Plume Mountain - Levels 5-10 : 4 stars
 - 4) (1st published) Against the Giants - Levels 8-12 : 3 stars
 - 5) (3rd published) Descent into the Depths of the Earth - Levels 9-14 : 4 stars
 - 6) (5th published) Queen of the Demonweb Pits - Levels 10-14 : 3 stars
 - 7) (7th published) Tomb of Horrors - Levels 10-14 : 3 stars
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