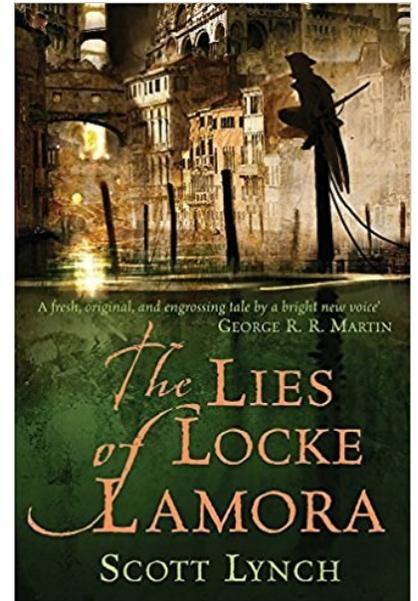




# BOOK REVIEW

Book Title	<b>The Lies of Locke Lamora</b>
Author	<b>Scott Lynch</b>
Date	<b>April 2018</b>
Stars	★★★★★



Scott Lynch succeeds in defining one of the hardest areas of Fantasy; he vividly evokes the atmosphere of his imagined world. Camorra is equally as much of a character in this novel as Locke, Jean or the Grey King.

There are numerous Grimdark elements to this world. It opens with a vivid picture of orphans being mistreated, a world without sympathy, tolerance or any kind of help. It's a jungle. Admittedly, a city-state jungle filled with dark alleys, violent people and heat. The latter offers equally as much oppression as the aristocracy in their elderglass towers and the gangsters below.

This is a story about survival. Where death waits on every dark corner, or in its shark-infested waterways or at the hands of so many gangs you lose track of who they all are. Yet Locke Lamora, from a very early age, displays the ability to con people into doing what he wants. This ability is honed by Father Chains, a Dickens-style version of Fagin who trains his young apprentices in ways to fit in to high society – and bleed them dry of their money. Locke and his co-apprentices forge a brotherhood of crime over time so that as the story launches in earnest, they are very rich men.

The narrative does not have a simple linear development. It is interrupted by lots of 'Interludes' which fill in the background of the story. In less capable hands, this could rob the narrative of its flow and energy, but instead Lynch succeeds in adding to the tension that steadily increases like the heat on a summer's day in Camorra. These interludes provide the rich background of the city and its inhabitants and they mark this work's originality.

As I said, Camorra is another character. As others interact with it, they suffer and die or strive to do whatever is required to stay alive. It is heartless, stifling and brutal. It reminded me of what Venice would have been like five hundred years ago.

I struggled to engage with the story at the start. A friend of mine gave up after a few chapters because of the density of its evocative description. You must persevere because you're not just being given description, you are being hauled in to this world. The reward is to engage at an emotional level. There is one point where shock physically and emotionally affected me – I had to put the book down for a moment. That's why it's worth persevering.

Scott Lynch evokes a world so rich, so luxuriant, you will want to savour it.