



The Doom That Came to Sarnath

H.P. Lovecraft

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H. P. Lovecraft was one of the greatest horror writers of all time. His seminal work appeared in the pages of legendary Weird Tales and has influenced countless writer of the macabre. This is one of those stories. It was first published in The Scot, a Scottish amateur fiction magazine, in June 1920.

The Doom That Came to Sarnath Details

Date : Published (first published June 1920)

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From Reader Review The Doom That Came to Sarnath for online ebook

RustinCrow says

I love everything Lovecraftian. Although I have a few collections of his works. This one stands out, having north of 35 tales. Each one better than the last. The print is quite large, the binding is stunning the paper quality surprisingly elegant for such a large collection, and a great price if you get it from Amazon.

"Cthulhu still lives, too, I suppose, again in that chasm of stone which has shielded him since the sun was young"

Mizuki says

It is one of the better stories from Lovecraft's Dream Cycle. It reads like a dark fairy tale and the foreshadowing of the deadly curse is played out rather nicely, so 4 stars.

Miriam says

I can't believe I dog-paddled through that swamp of putridly purple description just for a final paragraph of madness born of horror unendurable.

Howie, you tease, you're all build up and no delivery.

This is the third of the Dreamlands story cycle.

The White Ship <--previous | next --> The Cats of Ulthar

Roland says

This story really drags in the middle with its descriptions of how awesome the town is, but the payoff is decent. These dudes sound like real assholes and got what was coming to them.

StoryTellerShannon says

A tale of how humans wiped out an advanced race of reptilian humanoids.

This is more for mood than story/plot.

OVERALL GRADE: B minus.

Oleksandr says

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Amy (Other Amy) says

[I was totally cheering for the fish people from the word go (hide spoiler)]

Patrick says

This one was awesome!!

Alexander Sjödin Lundholm says

How many times do I need to read that the stone and metal were unknown?

David says

A morality tale and a vivid description of the land of Mnar and Sarnath, but not really that scary at all. The description of the city was neat, at least. More of a myth than a 'Lovecraftian' horror.

Thor The Redbeard says

7/10

A.N. Mignan says

Again a myth without any plot where the author only describes a faraway exotic landscape. Not the best of Lovecraft, just an additional painting to his long portfolio

Baal Of says

A simple story of human eradication of another species, because they are other, the slow build of magnificent empire, and then their destruction by those they thought they had wiped out. Flowery language, and a very fairy-tale feeling in the opulence of the city.

Gray says

First published in 1920, this is the third story in Lovecraft's **Dream Cycle**. It tells the tale of the ancient city of Sarnath and its rise and fall. More mythic-fantasy than horror, this tale has been compared to the works of Lord Dunsany. As with many Lovecraft stories, this one is filled with passages of purple prose like these:

"Of polished desert-quarried marble were its walls, ..."

"The houses of Sarnath were of glazed brick and chalcedony, each having its walled garden and crystal lakelet."

"And in most of the palaces the floors were mosaics of beryl and lapis lazuli and sardonyx and carbuncle and other choice materials, so disposed that the beholder might fancy himself walking over beds of the rarest flowers."

As this is the third Dream Cycle story, I'm going to go back to the beginning and follow the publication order from now on. Next up is *Polaris* (1918).

"Polaris" (1918)

"The White Ship" (1919)

"The Doom That Came to Sarnath" (1919)

"The Cats of Ulthar" (1920)

"Celephaïs" (1920)

"Ex Oblivione" (1920)

"The Quest of Iranon" (1921)

"The Other Gods" (1921)

"What the Moon Brings" (1922)

"The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" (1926)

"The Silver Key" (1926)

"The Strange High House in the Mist" (1926)

"Through the Gates of the Silver Key" (1932)

*(These tales are considered to be the core Dream Cycle stories. Wikipedia lists a further ten.)

? Irena ? says

3.5

Ten thousand years ago in the land of Mnar there used to be a glorious city of Sarnath. It's gone now. Before humans came the land of Mnar was the home of lake creatures, the beings of Ib. They worshipped a

sea-green stone idol chiselled in the likeness of Bokrug, the great water-lizard; before which they danced horribly when the moon was gibbous.' When humans came they killed them all and destroyed their city of Ib. As a proof of their power they took their green idol to their city. There is a bit overly descriptive part of the story that shows how much Sarnath had progressed since the destruction of Ib that might pull you out of it, but it's not a big deal if you are familiar with Lovecraft at all. I can forgive anything in his case.

Since the title is in itself a spoiler, it's not surprising that the creatures and their lizard-god got the last laugh. Nothing in the story makes me feel sorry for the humans.

Bill Kerwin says

Although this early imitation of Dunsany—first published in the amateur journal *The Scot* in (1920)—reveals the Irish writer's influence in every line, it is also characteristically Lovecraft, a harbinger of things to come.

Written in ornate, mannered prose, the story itself is simple: the men who built the new city of Sarnath—a city destroyed ten thousand years ago—hate the older city of Ib, and therefore lay waste to it and kill every one of its inhabitants, preserving only the statue of Bokrug the water-lizard god, which they carry to Sarnath in triumph. But Bokrug will not be mocked, and eventually doom comes to Sarnath too.

If Dunsany had written this story, he would have emphasized the ancientness of Sarnath and hinted at destroyed cities and moribund gods even more ancient than Ib. It would be a prophet's tale, fortelling the death of another city built ten thousand years after Sarnath, and the prophet would also speak of the destruction of cities not yet built, the death of gods not yet imagined. A wistful and melancholy tale, a quintessentially Celtic meditation upon the great mystery of time.

But Lovecraft writes a different sort of story, in which fear of the other—the alien, ancient other, these creatures with “bulging eyes, pouting, flabby lips..., curious ears, and...without voice.” —may turn to hatred and violence, but that no amount of violence can eradicate the old fears, that the gods of the unfathomable past will inevitably reassert their presence, that those gods will indeed return to enact their revenge.

Joshua Shioshita says

Another fantasy tale from Lovecraft. This one deals with revenge and curses. He loves to make descendants pay for the crimes of their ancestors which is pretty messed up. Apart from that though I'm just not a fantasy guy, and it's hard to get into it.

Mike MacDee says

80% of this story is basically a tour of Sarnath itself, an ancient city which is admittedly awesome, barring the tragic and despicable thing its people did to the beings of Ib early in their history. Of actual story there is very little, so I didn't much care for it: HP gets too carried away with the setting itself.

That setting IS vivid and amazing, though, so I can't rate it lower than 3 stars. I would say A Princess of Mars by Burroughs is a much better example of how to establish a cool setting AND tell a story at the same time.

Netanella says

A fun and flowery read about the rise and fall of the doomed ancient city of Sarnath.

José Monico says

I couldn't get past the overly descriptive middle section of this story. Lovecraft has a way with engulfing a person into his enchantment. However, I think it was a bit overdone. While the Sarnath vividness was relished towards the end, perhaps it could have been better composed? To be blunt, it got boring. It's obvious one is not supposed to know what are the geographical details of "Mnar", or "Ib"; or the personal stories of the great warriors, and many kings and nobles. But the information-attack was overwhelming at times; and it distracted from the fanciful story.
