



## The Reaver

*Richard Lee Byers*

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## **The Reaver** Richard Lee Byers

In the 4th book of the multi-author Sundering series launched by New York Times best-selling author R.A. Salvatore, Richard Lee Byers introduces Anton Marivaldi—a renowned reaver with an insatiable thirst for bounty and a moral compass that always leads him toward the evil he’s never tried.

Endless, pounding rain afflict the Sea of Fallen Stars and the coastal regions surrounding it. Harvests are failing, travel and trade are disrupted, and civilized forces are giving way to the deluges caused by the storms. In panic and despair, many have turned to the goddess Umberlee, Queen of the Deeps, offering her sacrifices with hope that they will be spared the inevitable reckoning of her perpetual tempest.

Evendur Highcastle, undead pirate captain, risen from the depths to assume the mantle of Umberlee’s Chosen, takes advantage of the people’s desperation to strike for both spiritual and temporal power in her name.

Vying with Highcastle for the hearts and minds of the people is Stedd Whitehorn, a little boy and the chosen of a god thought lost to time: Lathander, the Morninglord. In a time of such upheaval, Stedd’s message of renewal and hope runs in stark contrast to the savage ethos of Highcastle and his waveservants.

When Anton captures the boy in order to collect Highcastle’s considerable bounty, the reaver is quickly caught in the riptide caused by the sundering of worlds.

## **The Reaver Details**

Date : Published February 4th 2014 by Wizards of the Coast (first published January 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9780786964581

Author : Richard Lee Byers

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Dungeons and Dragons, Forgotten Realms, Fantasy, Fiction, Role Playing Games

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## From Reader Review The Reaver for online ebook

### Kelly says

'The Reaver' by Richard Lee Byers is book four in the multi-author event, 'The Sundering'. Set during the Era of Upheaval, each novel tells a smaller story, which often include beloved characters and some of Faerûn's iconic heroes. 'The Reaver' takes us to the Sea of Fallen Stars where a small boy is trying to be the voice of a god everyone believes has passed. It's a good time for the return of Lathander, also known as the Morninglord, an aspect of Amaunator, god of dawn, renewal and spring. The Great Rain seems endless. The lack of sun has crops failing and, well, everything is wet, all the time. It's a miserable existence.

Not everyone is averse to endless rain. The evil sea goddess Umberlee likes it just fine. As the sea rises, so does her influence or so the waveservants say. Small acts of evil endear ordinary folk to the Bitch Queen, pitting friends and families against one another as they struggle to survive misery and starvation. Understandably, Umberlee would like Stedd, the prophet of Lathander, dead. As Stedd is one of the Chosen, the preferred method of disposal is ritual sacrifice. With a hefty price on his head, Stedd quickly learns he can trust no one, not even the servants of more benevolent gods. Worshippers are jealously guarded, after all.

Enter Anton Marivaldi and Umara Ankhlab, the reaver and the red wizard. They are just two of the agents attempting to capture the boy in order to exchange him for the reward. Anton's motivation is primarily pecuniary, Umara is driven more by duty. She identifies as an envoy of Szass Tam, who I understand is one of Byers' regular cast of characters.

Thrown together by circumstance and individually beguiled by the boy, Stedd, Anton and Umara become unlikely allies. Together, they battle their way east. Separately, they each vow to take the boy to complete their own quest. But as Stedd's power grows, the good within each is illuminated. They stick by him through the proverbial thick and thin, battling friend and foe, Chosen and their gods, and the remnants of the Spellplague, so that Stedd might realise his true potential and purpose.

Again, I slipped seamlessly into another world. The authors of the 'Forgotten Realms' write well, really well. 'The Reaver' is devilishly easy to read. The story takes off from the first page, quickly gaining momentum before settling into a easily deciphered adventure that combines elements of 'The Sundering', Byers own characters and the surrounding lore of Faerûn.

I like Anton. I get the feeling he would outwardly disdain such a comment, but be inwardly pleased. He's the bastard with a heart of gold. Umara is more difficult to like, but I think she would appreciate that comment as well. With her shaved head and tattoos, she has spent some time perfecting her façade. The woman within is easy to connect with, however. Though Stedd inspires Anton and Umara to help him, they stay true to character throughout. Umara is a red wizard and Anton is a reaver and they use what they know to prevail: dark magic and piracy.

'The Reaver' is epic fantasy at its best. Swords and sorcery, swash-buckling action and illusion, twisting and turning politics of men and gods. Combat is fast-paced and some of the battles are truly grand in scale. Byers makes great use of all the tools available to a 'Forgotten Realms' author, peppering his pages with fantastic creatures and stunning magic. He definitely makes each his own, however. His characters felt truly unique in a world governed by archetypes.

The plot of 'The Reaver' was fairly simple, which is refreshing. The shifting alliances and motivations of the characters and the twists in the purpose of certain situations provided all the complication necessary to give the story a weighty feel. It also adds a great chapter to the Era of Upheaval, and advances the general plot of

‘The Sundering’.

Richard Lee Byers is the author seventeen or so novels for ‘The Forgotten Realms’. From what I can tell, Anton is a new character. I found mention of his name in ‘Queen Of The Depths’, which is from another multi-author series from ‘The Forgotten Realms’. Anton is written so confidently, I was sure I’d find a series about him. I’d like one now, please. The further adventures of Anton and Umara would do nicely.

Written for SFCrowsnest.

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## **Bookwraiths says**

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths Reviews

*The Reaver* is book four of *The Sundering*: a world changing event, transforming the Forgotten Realms. Each book in the series is stand alone and only loosely tied together by the events transpiring across their pages. While the first three novels of the series focused on established characters like Drizzt Do’Urden, Erevis Cale, and the Brimstone Angels (Farideh and Havilar), this fourth installment introduces a treasure trove of brand new faces: Anton Marivaldi (reaver/pirate), Stedd Whitehorn (boy prophet of the god Lathander), and Umara Ankhlab (Thayan Red Wizard). Together, these unlikely comrades are used by author Richard Lee Byers to craft a classic, sword and sorcery tale.

As the story begins, Marivaldi and his crew are searching for a boy named Stedd Whitehead, who has a huge bounty out on him. This youth is rumored to be a prophet of Lathander, the Morninglord; a god believed to have been lost through time and whose demise helped unleash the endless rain that falls over the lands surrounding the Sea of Fallen Stars. A downpour that has killed the crops in the fields, caused the sea level to rise and flood low lying towns and docks, unleashed hunger and bitterness among the people, and resulted in large portions of the disheartened to turn to the worship of the dreadful goddess of the sea, Umberlee. And it is Umberlee’s chosen (an undead pirate named Evendur Highcastle) who wants Stedd Whitehorn so that he may sacrifice him to Umberlee.

But even as the gold loving reaver Marivaldi seeks this boy prophet, others are also looking for Stedd. Szass Tam, lich-lord of the Thayans, has his own minions scouring the Sea of Fallen Stars. Among the lich’s servants is Umara Ankhlab, who follows her vampiric master across the lands learning necromancy and magic while providing her teacher the blood to sustain him. While Umara finds her lot in life horrible, she holds onto the fact that this is her only avenue to rise above her mortal heritage and become someone of note in her undead ruled homeland.

And as for our Chosen of Lathander, young Stedd is a good hearted youth, too trusting in his belief in people’s altruistic motives, and determined to accomplish his god given task - proclaim the re-emergence of Lathander and announce that soon the endless rain will cease! A task that not only serves as the central plot of the adventure in *The Reaver* but also illustrates the true nature of the physical effects the Sundering is having on the whole world, as the gods vie for power and the planet’s environment shifts in response to the powers unleashed upon it.

Naturally, the story begins when these forces all converge together, but that is just the start of the fun here. For soon, this tale of Lathander’s Chosen becomes filled with even more tension, as unlikely people become companions, sword fights and sorcerous duels ensue, gods and goddesses are unleashed, and good versus evil eventually meet in a climactic clash for all the marbles.

If you relish a fine sword and sorcery novel then *The Reaver* is just what you have been looking for. It might be traditional fantasy faire, but it still enjoyable, fueled by its fast-paced story and swash-buckling fun, and it even provides a reader with a message of hope and redemption.

Great addition to The Sundering saga!

I received this book from Netgalley in exchange for a fair and honest review. I'd like to thank Netgalley and the publisher for allowing me to receive this review copy and inform everyone that the review you have read is my opinion alone.

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### **Sean says**

This is a fast-moving tale that very much feels like it's part of the Forgotten Realms. Also, the characters definitely have the feel of being in a D&D combat much of the time. So if that's what you're looking for, the book really succeeds. Personally I had trouble buying Anton's change from reaver to hero, but the other characters seemed pretty believable. The book was interesting enough that I might check out Byers's other works in the future.

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### **David Williams says**

Last year a major new even began in the Forgotten Realms. The Sundering is a world changing event that is ushering in new changes to the Dungeons and Dragons gaming system as well as the world of the Forgotten Realms novels. The first three novels dealt with established characters. Some are relatively new and some have been around since the beginning of the Realms. Now in the fourth book bestselling author Richard Lee Byers introduces us to a new character: Anton Marivaldi. Marivaldi is a reaver, a pirate known for his bloodthirsty ways.

The novel opens with Marivaldi and his crew searching after Stedd Whitehorn, a boy who appears to be a prophet of Lathandar, the god of the dawn who was believed to have been slain. After capturing the boy Marivaldi's crew turns on him and takes him prisoner as well. The wily Marivaldi is able to escape with Stedd. During this time the entire Sea of Fallen Stars is experiencing a major environmental disaster. The rain has fallen almost without a stop for a year. Crops are almost non-existent and the people are hungry and scared. Into this void has come the worship of Umberlee, the dreadful goddess of the sea. Her chosen is a former pirate Evendur Highcastle who she raised in undeath. Now Umberlee wants the blood of Stedd Whitehorn to increase her power. Szass Tam, the lich-lord of the Thayans wants the blood of Stedd Whitehorn. Stedd wants to preach the return of Lathander and help bring an end to the rains. Before the book is finished strange companions will come together as allies in the battle between the Chosen of Umberlee and the Chosen of Lathander.

Anton Maribaldi is a great new character. He comes from an honorable past, but has fallen to a low station. No matter how hard he tries to stay bad the young Stedd keeps talking him into doing the right thing. Normally I am not fond of stories where characters go from murderous rouges to honorable characters. Most of the time the transformation doesn't make sense. Somehow Byers is able to make this transition believable. So much so that we almost forget about the bloodthirsty actions in the beginning of the novel.

As the Sundering moves towards the finish we see change coming to the world. Old gods thought dead seem to be returning. The Spellplague seems to be coming to an end. Hope is returning to the world. Where will

the future of the Forgotten Realms take us? I don't know, but I can't wait to make the journey.

After reading *The Reaver* I certainly hope that the future of the Realms holds more Anton Marivaldi stories. The book is well written. The characters are well rounded and interesting. This is great, classic sword and sorcery fiction. If you enjoy a good fantasy adventure novel then stop here and enjoy *The Reaver*. Afterwards, do what I plan to do. Go buy more of Richard Lee Byers novels and read those as well.

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### **Josh Barron says**

When reading this book I certainly had high expectations as Richard Lee Byers' last entry, *The Brotherhood of the Griffon*, in the Forgotten Realms was among his best. I didn't think he could top such beloved characters and the subject matter was just so gritty and horrific at times. Well fans, rest assured. Byers has created a whole new cast that is strong in their own right and very believable. They are grounded in a way that you can really understand them once the layers of their psyche are peeled away for us all to see.

The story takes place in the Sea of Fallen Stars and finds a scoundrel pirate by the name of Anton Marivaldi, a Turmish cutthroat, who is looking for a specific target for chilling undead captain by the name of Evendur Highcastle. It is hard to not give spoilers and I certainly wouldn't want to ruin the book for anyone, but the target is a chosen of Lathander by the name of Stedd Whitehorn. The interactions that this boy and Anton have are simply well written. What I find most compelling is that even though Anton isn't the epitome of a perfect gentleman or goodly citizen he has qualities that make us still care about him.

It is the flaws in people that ultimately make the characters here so endearing. I could go through this review and talk plot, but it is the characters that drive such a plot. Byers has many plots moving into play and he flawlessly weaves them into a fine tapestry. The subplots do not get muddled and confuse the reader. The best thing about this book is that it is all about a group of unlikely heroes turn out to fight evil.

Like great battles that involve some top-notch sword fights? It is here. High adventure and excellent dialogue? Also here. Spell-slinging, swashbuckling action and chilling villains? It is all inside. The icing on the cake is that the antagonist Evendur is a chosen of Umberlee, which is the goddess of the Sea. She isn't usually covered in Realms fiction quite like this and I really liked the attention Byers gave to the subject.

In closing, *The Reaver* is a good, fun sword and sorcery tale. It features a unique cast of characters and all their motives come to a full head at once which is just enjoyable. I love to see all the subplots converge to one inevitable conflict. The Godborn did this as well and I love stories that do this. You know that an author has done his job well when the plot becomes not a plot at all, but just the characters getting thrown into interesting situations page after page, chapter after chapter, book after book. This is why *The Reaver* by Richard Lee Byers will have me craving for more of this cast of characters for future novels. It is the perfect tale of adventure, hope, treachery, and redemption.

This novel was provided graciously by NetGalley and the publisher for a completely honest review.

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### **Conan Tigard says**

*The Reaver* is another story that takes place during the Sundering. The world is being washed away and all

of the old gods are slowly coming back. Basically, the world of Forgotten Realms is going back to what it was before they made a mistake and jumped it forward 100 years. To do this, the world is being drenched, washing away all that came before. In the middle of this deluge is the character Anton Marivaldi, a pirate captain, or reaver, who decides he is going to hunt down the chosen of the god, Lathander. Stedd Whitehorn is a young blonde-haired, blue-eyes boy that had been chosen to spread the word of his god. The people of the land are sad, and hungry, and desperate. These people that have only seen rain for as long as they can remember and welcome the golden light of Lathander, as Stedd uses his power to bring food and the idea of tolerance to the starving people. But all are not happy, like the god Umberlee, and her chosen, Evendur Highcastle, an undead pirate captain. With the Red Wizard, Umara, by Stedd and Anton's side, the three flee from Evendur and other reavers who only wish to bring the boy before Umberlee for who knows what purpose.

Having been very disappointed with the previous book in this series, I waited a long time to read this book. In fact, I put the entire series on hold for about a year and a half. Finally, I decided it was time and picked up this book and began to read. What killed me in the previous book was the multitude of main and supporting characters. Plus, I never cared about the main character. This book is as different as night and day from *The Adversary*. I really liked the main characters: Anton, Umara, and Stedd. All three of them were characters that I enjoyed reading about and rooting for as they made their way over the land and across the sea. As for Evendur Highcastle, I remember him from *Drizzt Do'Urden* books, so I was familiar with him in his younger years when he captained his own ship. To see him in the state he is now, well, it was a shock. He used to be kind of a good guy, but no longer.

This story about the return of the old gods, about the world being reborn, about the sins of the last one hundred years, is a good one. The makers of Forgotten Realms realized that they made a mistake jumping the world forward approximately one hundred years. This caused all kinds of problems with the writers of series that already had their main characters set. In the *Drizzt* books, all of the drow's friends had to die, which really sucked, in my mind. Luckily, if you read the first book in this series, all of them have been reborn. Yea! Like Coca-Cola dumping their well-established Coke formula for New Coke in 1985, and then switching back to the original formula and renamed "Classic Coke," the world of Forgotten Realms jumped forward, and then had to wipe the world clean after the writers realized the mistake that had been made. I'm glad they made this choice.

Overall, *The Reaver* is a great story by Richard Lee Byers. He has done a wonderful job of creating characters that the reader will enjoy with a lot of fun action scenes that kept me gobbling up this book like a tasty Christmas dinner. Pass the turkey, please, I'd like some more. So, I am now looking forward to reading the rest of this series and relish the idea of returning to one of my favorite fantasy worlds, Forgotten Realms. If you love this *Dungeons & Dragons* world as much as I do, this is a book you are not going to want to pass by. I cannot wait to see what happens next in *The Sentinel* by Troy Denning. I hope it is as good as this one.

I rated this book an 8½ out of 10.

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## Ed says

Book Bout-Book Review of *The Sundering Book IV: The Reaver*

Originally posted on [www.throatpunchgames.com](http://www.throatpunchgames.com), a new idea everyday!

Book- *The Sundering Book IV: The Reaver*

Author – Richard Lee Byers

Price- \$19

TL;DR- An Ok Realms story. 73%

Basics- Set sail for adventure. The Reaver follows the story of Anton Marivaldi, former sailor turned pirate. Anton and his crew kidnap a boy prophet of Lathander, a formally dead deity. Anton is betrayed by his crew, and escapes with the boy. The two have different goals with one trying to sell the other and the boy trying to make his way across the world on a quest he doesn't understand, but they work together as they can't survive alone. Along the way they encounter the church of the evil sea god Umberlee, Thay wizards, a plan to save the Sea of Fallen Stars, and possibly redemption and rebirth.

Setting- The book does feel like it belongs in the Forgotten Realms. I've always considered the Forgotten Realms to be the "God" setting with much of what's going on having to do with evil gods making plans against the good people of the Realms. This story is entirely motivated by a good god plans to help the world, an evil gods power grabs, and a lich trying to become a god. 5/5

Characters- The book falters here a bit. Anton is the "main" character even though the book is an ensemble cast. He gets the most screen time, but he also tends to be the one I have the most problems with. He's a cold hearted pirate! But, then he decides to give it all up and help the boy. He says he's this monster stating every horrible thing he's did before the story starts, BUT, given the slightest provocation, he only does good, honorable things. It felt a bit disingenuous as if he was merely boasting. 3/5

Story- The book falters a bit here too. It runs a bit longer then it needs to. When you get into the story, it's not bad, but I found myself asking "Is this the end yet?" a few too many times. Also, the book is a bit hard to get into. You don't really like the main character for the longest time, and since you spend a long time with him, it's hard to get into the book. Brevity and trimming a few of the scene might have helped this story. That said, I also wanted a bit more in the end. The book kind of ends abruptly with the character making some quick plans and the book just ending. Everything is resolved, but I felt like it needed a bit more. 3/5

Summary- Of the Sundering books, this one is probably my least favorite so far. I'm glad I read it, and anyone who loves the Realms should sit down and read this too. But, if you want a good introduction to the world of the forgotten Realms, this might not be the best choice. It's not bad by any stretch of the imagination, but it's not the best book I've ever read. 73%%

Audiobook Bonus Round!- I listened to this book as an audiobook. That may have hurt my impression of this book. Eugene H. Russell IV isn't a bad narrator, but he has the habit of breaking into Shatner-esque diction. Some passages were amazingly clear, but others sounded as if a computer had read the passage with awkward pauses inserted between words. 3/5

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## Leeanna says

This review originally appeared on my blog, Leeanna.me.

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Previous books in *The Sundering* series have mentioned the Chosen: mortals blessed by the gods. In **THE REAVER**, we follow Stedd Whitehorn, Chosen of Lathander. Stedd's a young boy on his own, traveling across the length of Faerun. He's wanted by the evil sea goddess Umberlee, as well as Szass Tam, the

undead ruler of Thay. Almost everyone he meets has ulterior motives, from wanting to sell him to use his powers for their own gain. Chief among those is Anton Marivaldi, a pirate with a lust for gold and no care for good or evil.

I got a kick out of Anton. I typically enjoy characters that aren't all good, and Anton isn't. He lies to Stedd, promising to help him reach his destination, all the while planning to sell him. Naturally it's not that easy, for forces conspire against both of them. Anton loses Stedd, leaving the field open for Red Wizard Umara to sneak in for her own opportunity to take the Chosen boy for her masters. But once Stedd realizes what's up, he's not such an easy target, and tries to make both Anton and Umara think about their decisions. They all end up working together, Anton and Umara continually debating the goodness Stedd brings out in them.

**THE REAVER** is a fast-paced book, full of action scenes and character growth. Sometimes I have trouble imagining sword and/or sorcery fights, but I thought the author did an excellent job of describing blow by blow while keeping the fight scenes exciting. All of the characters experience growth. Stedd learns more about what Lathander has in mind for him while inspiring others to think about their own actions. Anton faces the mistakes that led to piracy, but isn't always ready to give up his bad ways. Umara reflects on the rule of undead in Thayan society, and wonders if they should remain in power.

In **THE REAVER**, we also get to see more of the Sundering's effects on the common people. The weather sucks — the Great Rain has flooded coastal villages and cities, preventing crops from growing. As a result, people are starving, and with the encouragement of Umberlee's priests, they'll happily kill each other for a scrap of food. Umberlee is one nasty goddess; I wouldn't want to be on her bad side.

All in all, I enjoyed **THE REAVER**. It's fun, action-packed, and a good tale. While Stedd's story concluded at the end of the book, I hope there's more in store for Anton and Umara.

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**Disclaimer:** I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

**See more of my reviews:**

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### Nicolas Carrillo-Santarelli says

I am not a native English-speaker, so please excuse any mistakes found here. A passage of Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy* I wholly identify with is the mention by one of the characters found in the novel that there are some books that despite not being academic or classical works are very enjoyable and entertaining and that it is a good thing to read them. Richard Lee Byers's *The Reaver* is among them: I really liked this book, and I can say that I share the feeling of two of its main characters (the reaver himself and a red wizard) about a feeling of emptiness once this adventure was over — a tease of further adventures may be hinted at the end-. To begin with, it can be said that the analysis of a *Dungeons and Dragons* novel can be conducted from different approaches, being two main ones the one that examines it purely in its value as a novel, and another one the one that seeks to find lore that provides inspiration or information about events in the campaign settings of DnD. As can be gleaned from some comments found on the internet, as in *Candlekeep.com* or some interviews, authors of the setting called the *Forgotten Realms* try to focus on characters. That is a good choice in my opinion, given how difficult it was to track everything that happened in settings as the *Realms*, but yet a selling point of those books has been precisely to see how it is a setting that evolves. Despite the (excellent) focus on characters, those who look forward to reading the book to see what has happened with

the Sundering storyline will not be disappointed.

As to the characters and the story, it is a novel with a strong piracy theme, and one that works quite well. As happens with good novels (reason why the Quixote is regarded as one pioneer novel and among the best ones), characters must undergo some evolution and changes in reaction to events and interactions. One of the main characters is a pirate, Anton Marivaldi or the so-called reaver, and the reason why he turned to piracy and misdeeds has an explanation that is provided in the book. Yet, he gradually abandons his ways in a way that does not seem forced at all, is not instantaneous but rather moving: even in the later parts of the book, his old ways show, but also a longing to change that may be unconscious to himself. The same happens with a red wizard who is very interesting and has a better nature hinted at at the beginning. Both of those characters change due to their relations with a boy prophet, Stedd, who is among the most likable dnd characters I have read about: neither omniscient nor perfect, he makes mistakes and blunders but has a somewhat naïve kindness and represents the hope of Lathander so well, being at the same time a normal boy. Because of this, one can think that the book achieves what Leo Tolstoy called a feature of good works of literature: having a message of hope and redemption and providing some interesting thoughts (in fact, his novel Resurrection has similar themes, and is regarded as among the best of the Russian author by some). Authors as Oscar Wilde may have disagreed with Tolstoy, putting more emphasis on art and style, and the work excels in this aspect too: the style is fluent and impeccable. That being said, there are a few (a tiny few) typos here and there, but as someone who just finished writing a book on international law, I can say that it is somewhat inevitable and I hope editors correct them.

As to the story, it is about how different factions, both religious (the church of Umberlee), national (Thay) and individuals (bounty seekers) vie to capture Stedd in order to increase the power of their deity or leader (or the gold in their pockets) –and how others try to either help him, as the Moonstars, and also to hinder him, as the church of Amaunator, with an interesting debate of heresy or not-. Thus, FR fans will be pleased to see different factions of the Realms at play. That being said, this chase element is only the initial part of the plot: from there, it evolves in a very interesting way, overcoming that, after it is shown is that the boy has a mission of his own that Lathander gradually unveils to him: to help people in need, who are starving and suffering due to many reasons, among them because of the problems of the Spellplague in the Forgotten Realms (SPOILER for FR fans: the Spellplague's end is partly shown, and a strong but not full return to the previous status quo is also hinted at). Afterwards, some naval battles and other logical aspects ensue, and I could not put the novel down.

This is truly a great book, and has an additional benefit: unlike previous Sundering novels (a line trying to show changes in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting), this one deals with characters who have not appeared in previous novels, and so it is more friendly to new readers, as will happen with The Sentinel if I am not mistaken (the next book to be released in the Sundering line). Moreover, it can be said that it has (intentional or perhaps not so intentional) echoes of what Tolkien and Lewis did with their LotR and Narnia books: some goodness inspiration.

Finally, I truly recommend reading this book: it is very entertaining, a pleasure to read, and provides both information and even non-dnd inspiration. I honestly could not put the book down. I look forward to reading new books of the author and of the Sundering storyline.

I was granted a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review by Wizards of the Coast.

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## **Adam Barnes says**

Pirates and the Lord of Light is a combination I didn't see coming, but it works. Avatars clash amongst raging waters in one riptide of a read.

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## **Adrian Breto says**

Definitely not my favorite Forgotten Realms novel. The main characters were an interesting pair, the title Reaver having more than his counterparts, but even so it feels rather simple. There was a problem, it was solved, little fanfare or anything to really get you invested beyond that.

Largely, I chalk this up to the audiobook narrator, who failed to put any inflection for different characters, or express their reactions in a way that made them different. The entire book monochromatic beyond the writing. For me, just a stepping stone to the final two books in the series.

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## **Margaret Fisk says**

Originally published on Tales to Tide You Over

Another enjoyable novel in The Sundering series from Forgotten Realms, The Reaver is a novel of antiheroes and the influence of hope. Like the rest of the series, this novel has a large cast with those working for the side of good and those working against it, but more so than any of the others, in this the heroes are more than reluctant. They're downright opposed to the idea.

It's an odd wander at the side of Anton, Umara, and others who are out to claim the reward offered for a Chosen boy by various interested parties. The greed and maneuvering within and between the various groups is a wonder to behold. Battles of arms and magic, both from mere mortals and those imbued with powers from gods or their natures (vampires for example) make everything more complicated. No one seems to hold onto the boy for long, or if they do, it's a loose grasp without a clear way of profiting.

The boy, Stedd, is chosen by Lathander, the Morninglord, who everyone has thought long dead. Stedd doesn't know what his purpose is exactly. Lathander offers glimpses and hints, along with power when requested, and Stedd tries to figure out what he's supposed to do, aided...or hindered...by those around him.

The way Lathander, through Stedd and circumstances, manages to turn the least promising event to his own purpose is wild. The novel is based on acts of gods, plural, and they're working against each other. It's a crazy series of coincidences but because you know a god is behind everything, it's fun to guess how the next twist will come about rather than feeling like the story is a series of puppeteer moves. Even more, the nature of the people involved and their choices are a critical part of the events rather than having things occur despite them, though I'm sure Anton would protest the truth of that statement.

Stedd's dedication and simple faith is a factor the other gods and interested mortals hadn't really considered when they set forth on their plans. He has a way of reminding those around him of better days and times when they felt like they were better people. This is the real strength of the story. It's watching a peasant boy's influence on pirates, mages, common, and uncommon folk alike who had given up. He helps them learn to hope again and to think better of themselves and better themselves. Even the good folks are made stronger, happier, and healthier by meeting Stedd, but to do so sometimes requires force, other times persuasion, and still other times happens so quietly that a person thinks they're pursuing selfish aims only to make a hundred tiny choices they can explain away but which add up to a complete change in how they see themselves and the world.

I enjoyed both the positive message and the way redemption was made possible but required active participation. Not all who interact with the boy improve, but those who do feel the benefits wholeheartedly.

P.S. I got this book from the publisher through NetGalley in return for an honest review.

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## Curtis says

I feel like with each new installment in *The Sundering* series I find myself raving about how it's a great reintroduction to *Forgotten Realms*, especially for someone like me who has drifted a bit from following major story developments in that world over the past several years. And this time is no exception.

*The Reaver* introduces readers to some new characters in the continuing saga of the upheaval of Faerûn. Anton Marivaldi is a merciless reaver and pirate who is wanted up and down the coast of the Sea of Fallen Stars. When Evendur Highcastle, the risen Chosen of Umberlee, Queen of the Depths, puts out a bounty on Stedd Whitecastle - a young boy though to be a prophet of Lathander, the Morninglord (a god thought to have been lost through time), Anton rushes out to make himself rich. But there are other forces at play and rivals seeking the boy for their own devices. When Anton finally tracks him down, he finds that kidnapping and turning over a child might be a bit more challenging than he expected.

This story was very well-written. It reads as an epic adventure in itself as part of the overall *Sundering* saga. The twists and turns and the build kept me hanging on as I flipped from page to page. I'd venture this one is right up there with *The Companions*, the opening book in the series by R.A. Salvatore. I definitely hope there is more to the story of these characters going forward.

(eGalley provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.)

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## A.E. Marling says

If you have d20's on the brain then you'll love *The Reaver* by Richard Lee Byers. This swords-and-sorcery adventure crosses through the *Forgotten Realms*, the destination of choice D&D campaigns. Aficionados of character sheets will have much to recognize and relish, especially the spells.

Read my full review on Fantasy Faction.

<http://fantasy-faction.com/2014/the-r...>

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## Paul says

This is a face-paced book set in the *Forgotten Realms*, the 4/6 of the *Sundering* Series set to kick off the epic changes in the *Realms* universe of books. I really enjoyed reading this book and Byers has a good style that keeps you turning the pages.

\*SPOILERS\*

Prepare yourself for a lot of action in this installment of the *Sundering* series. The story starts out with the Pirate Captain Anton Marivaldi's search for another of the *Forgotten Realms*' Chosen, a young boy named Stedd, Chosen of the Morninglord. After finding the boy to deliver him to the church of the Goddess of Umberlee, the adventure really starts. They make an unlikely duo and encounter many people who want to

capture and/or kill the boy for their own purposes. Soon they are on the same side with a Red Wizard of Thay named Umara and have to travel to where Stedd's reborn deity has pointed him to help the people of Anton's homeland, where he is wanted for atrocious crimes.

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