



Raiders of Gor

John Norman

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Tarl Cabot, Norman's heroic Gorean Tarnsman, descends into the depths of Port Karthe darkest, most degenerate port city of the Counter-Earth. There, among pirates, cutthroats and brigands, Cabot learns the ways of Kar, whose residents are renowned for the iron grip in which they hold their voluptuous slaves.

Raiders of Gor Details

Date : Published August 12th 1985 by Del Rey (first published September 1971)

ISBN : 9780345331090

Author : John Norman

Format : Mass Market Paperback 312 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Science Fiction, Fiction, Adult Fiction, Erotica, Science Fiction Fantasy

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From Reader Review Raiders of Gor for online ebook

Grey Wolf says

Raiders of Gor was the best of the Gor books in my opinion, helped by a largely static geographic focus, and on a setting that resembled medieval Venice in many ways.

Malum says

When Tarl Cabot has an existential crisis, shit gets real!

This book serves as something of a soft reboot to the Gor series, and readers who have read to this point will either love it or hate it.

Remember the woman traveling with Tarl at the end of the last book? Well, forget about her. Remember the woman Tarl has been searching for for almost the entire series? Forget her, too. Remember Tarl's duties to the Priest Kings? Yep, throw that right out the window. Remember the boy scout Tarl Cabot who traipsed around Gor, freeing slaves left and right and helping anyone and everyone he came across? Wave bye bye to that fella'.

Tarl has a bit of an existential crisis (and, even though I like this book, the reason behind it was handled VERY poorly and so out of character that it is laughable) and decides that money is what he wants in life and so he becomes a pirate (arrrrrr!). Tarl suddenly has no problem with torturing the shit out of captives. He also has no problem with keeping lots of slaves and pimp-slapping them at will and going beast-mode on them at the slightest infraction.

Despite the big tonal shift, I actually liked this entry into the Gor canon. Although much of the old recipe is still in effect here (Tarl meets woman. Woman and Tarl are shitty to each other. Tarl and woman eventually fall in love after woman realizes how awesome slavery is. Tarl finds a random tarn to tool around on. Big battle scene. The end), there is enough newness with Tarl's new anti-hero status to keep it fresh and interesting.

The main problem with this book is that same problem with all Gor books: soooooo much exposition! In this volume, we are told how Goreans make paper, how they make ships, how ship sailing and combat works, information on different types of ships, information on ship oars (did I mention there is lot of information about ships in this one?), the differences between longbows and crossbows including what types of people would choose to use which weapon and why, how to make slave collars out of material other than metal, how to train slaves (of course). We also get more exposition on units of time and distance measurement (as if we haven't had enough of that in previous volumes).

But, despite all of that, this is probably my favorite Gor novel to date. It is bloody, mean, and fun! And, hey, who doesn't love pirates?

Alex says

There is no way to review this book without spoilers. So first a general review, then a warning, then more

review (with spoilers).

This book is a departure from the first five books. In each book the writing and style evolve (for the better), but this one makes a bit of a leap. In the last few books I complained about Tarl being one dimensional or at least not growing as a character. That changes here. Tarl undergoes a transformation very early on in the book which changes everything in the way he approaches life. Its sort of like in professional wrestling when the Hero turns into the Heel. Its the same person suddenly free to explore all sorts of "bad" behavior.

Other than Tarl's transformation, the rest of the book reads much as the rest of the Gor books so far. Norman backs off his literary ambitions from Assassins and returns to a more focused and localized story. Norman continues his pattern of story telling interspersed with detailed explanations of how to train a slave, how to make a long bow, how to train a slave, how to make a ship, how to train a slave, how to fight naval warfare, how to train a slave,... did I mention how to train a slave? When reading these detailed accounts you may tend to think they go just a little too far, but when it comes time to read the action of bow combat or a naval battle, you realize the vivid picture that has been painted for you before you got to the action. It is a little painful to read the 10 page explanation of how ships are built and how they fight, but when the naval battle is upon you it moves much faster and more vividly because you know every detail of every ship, how it is built, how it moves, etc. It works.

The book is very good. Not great, but with the change in Tarl it is very entertaining. Like any good book in a series, the question is; does it make you want to read the next one? I bought the next one immediately as I finished this one and read the first chapter. So Raiders succeeds.

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SPOILER ALERT - DO NOT READ PAST HERE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW TOO MUCH!!!!!!

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So Tarl becomes a bad guy in this book. At least for a while, a real bad guy, but by the end of the book you see the old Tarl coming back partially. I don't mind this transformation, but I didn't like the way it was handled initially. Tarl is captured and he is forced to submit as a slave or be killed. He chooses slavery and that breaks his spirit. My problem with this is that there was no build up or cause to believe he would choose slavery. Its inconsistent with the series. He's faced death dozens of times, been in situations worse than he was in this book, and he never blinks an eye. Then in this book, in the space of all of 2 pages he is told to submit or die and he drops to his knees and grovels. I don't buy it.

In the first 5 books the dialog is like this:

[Tarl is captured and threatened with Death]

- Bad Guy: "You will die today."
- Tarl: "Perhaps."
- Bad Guy: "You will not escape, we will torture you and kill you."
- Tarl: "You will try."

[Tarl breaks his bonds and kills them all]

[Tarl is hopelessly outnumbered and has no escape]

- Bad Guys: "We will kill you."
- Tarl: "Perhaps, but not today."
- Bad Guys: "We will drag you in shackles to serve in the kitchen as a female."
- Tarl: "You will try."

[Tarl devises a plan and kills them all]

Then all of a sudden in this book,...

- Bad Guys: "Submit or we will throw you to the sea tharlarion."
- Tarl: "Please no, ok I'll submit."

This is the guy that battles giant ooze squid things and wins, rides war tarns in tarn races flying through razor sharp rings designed to decapitate you, and fought at the Siege of Ar against the greatest swordsman on all of Gor - and won. We're supposed to believe he got freaked out by a bunch of hillbillies in a swamp and begged for his life? He spends months in servitude groveling and begging, "please mistress," while he has a hundred chances to escape. No way.

The idea of turning Tarl into a Heel was a good one. The series needed a shake-up and it was the perfect time to do it and revitalize Tarl as a character. However the method was (possibly) poorly done (I need to see where the series goes to decide). It seems like we needed a build up and we needed a reason to believe Tarl would/could break. Maybe Norman was making a point which is there is no reason, and that is why Tarl cannot forgive himself - he broke for no reason. Maybe he broke too easily and that is the point. However it still seemed too easy to break a character that has been built up to be just short of a God of War and everybody's Savior.

In the end I'm glad Norman did it. Once you get past the "cheap trick" used to turn the series upside down, you realize how much fun it is to read about the bad guy and root for him (because you know the good guy is in there somewhere). At the very end Norman gives an explanation for all the drama and points back to the simple idea, "shit happens, get over it." Norman specifically writes; everyone has a hero and a coward in them, its just part of being human. So in the end it works.

The middle of the next book is where I stopped reading 30 years ago. So now I have no idea where this goes from here.

Shane says

****SOME MINOR SPOILERS, THOUGH NOT MANY AND I CAN'T BE ARSED TO GO THROUGH AND SEEK THEM OUT INDIVIDUALLY SO I'M TACKING THIS ON THE FRONT HERE INSTEAD!****

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Volume 6 of The Gor Chronicles and we see Tarl Cabot the great warrior originally of Earth becoming first a slave, then a pirate and a captain, and finally an admiral. It's all rather exciting stuff as Tarl assumes an alter ego, namely Bosk of Port Ka, which apparently is much like Mos Isley(from Star Wars) in that it is a veritable hive of villany and scum and pirates and so on. Oh, and it's also home to those great and respected slavers who *'know well how to treat their slave girls'*. Well, you can't argue with that then can you really?

So Bosk, as he now is chooses slavery over death and mopes about it a good deal afterwards and generally goes around feeling sorry for himself. Meanwhile he enslaves the woman who originally made a slave of him and then proceeds to treat her like less than nothing until, of course, he falls in love with her. He does that a lot it seems, almost to the point of falling for a different slave girl in each book. What gets me more than anything about this is that he was originally supposed to be searching for and rescuing his very first lover who's name I now forget due to him being so prolific in the treating-them-like-the-lowly-slaves-they-are-then-falling-for-them-department. Nobody's expecting him to become a monk while he searches for her of course but you'd think he might think upon her from time to time. In fact the only time he seems to think about her or even mention her at all is generally as an afterthought appended to end of the book, usually in the last page of so.

Anyway, I expected this one to be very heavy on the mistreatment of slaves since that's basically what the cover blurb hints at, and also because a number of the reviews I've read seem to have been complaining about just that. I can't say I felt it to be particularly harsh with regards to slaves, certainly no more so than almost any of the other books in this series so far, and in fact a good deal less than one or two.

So, another rollicking good adventure on Gor. I liked it well enough, although it's not my favourite so far by quite a margin. I think that honour is still held by the first book in fact.

Very enjoyable, though not quite so much as the others. Still very good though.

Giulia Napoli says

Everything comes apart here. Our hero becomes the antihero. The next 19 - 20 books are just more and more of the same "all women want to be slaves" idea. Books 1 - 5 are great. The rest can be used as fireplace starters.

Darth says

Maybe the deepest Gor book in the series to this point. I know that may sound antithetical, depp and Gor book, but in this volume our hero finds out a little more about himself and what it means to be human in general. The story is still inane, and the treatment of women VERY badly short of today's standards of political correctness, then again, that is the best part of this series ;-)

Robert says

The Gor books were great adventure books with some pretty repulsive "women are best as slaves" commentary. Then the commentary overtook the adventure and I stopped reading.

DKC says

The spoiler: My jaw dropped at the conclusion of the book. Seriously.

I floundered a bit with this installment in the series. Tarl is taken to places, physically and psychologically, that were quite unexpected at this juncture. This still being early in the long, long catalog of Gor books, I'm not quite sure where Norman is going to take his hero. But the direction this volume took kind of shook my affection for the character to the core, even while awakening a sense of sympathy that could not have been applied in the previous books.

Can the hero fail, even when he triumphs? This story made me say, "Yes." Can Tarl be more block-headed and blinded to his purpose? Apparently so. Does Tarl need a few sessions with Carl Jung? Oh hell, yeah.

I'm hoping the character arc swings back around, enriching the hero, not diminishing him - but that might be a few books down the road. The way Norman takes his time with plot developments, I don't expect Tarl's issues will resolve for a while, so I will have to grit my teeth and struggle through, waiting for enlightenment to dawn on our hero.

Mos Eisley or Port Kar? I'd take Mos Eisley, hands down.

Darryl Walker says

A writer doing detailed summaries of Norman's books on a Gor website prefaced his RAIDERS OF GOR synopsis with an astute quote. Up until RAIDERS the writer (nicknamed Socrates) pointed out:

"The stage appears to be set for many adventures in which Tarl, aided, abetted and occasionally hindered by Elizabeth, will foil the plots of the Others in city after city of Gor, while Tarl enjoys James Bond-like romantic encounters over and above Elizabeth's considerable charms and sees many a deserving and brave slave girl restored to freedom, escapes from hair-raising dangers and finds himself unexpectedly assisted by people much better clued-in than he about what is going on. He will surely make occasional progress towards the eventual discovery of his lost Talena, despite his many worries as to the fate of a defenseless woman on Gor."

That is a keen insight down the path the series could have gone, one many readers wish Norman had taken. I, too, would've loved another two or three books with Cabot still in good guy mode like he is in NOMADS or

ASSASSIN before Norman veered onto 'the road less traveled by.' But Professor Lange trekked into darker territory and murky emotional waters where Tarl Cabot undergoes a massive paradigm shift, reversing his former notions on the enslavement of women; gone is the squeaky clean firm-jawed boy wonder Cabot and in his place is a more believable and flawed character. RAIDERS is the springboard for the humble beginnings of Bosk of Port Kar, a shattered man in serious denial about many things, one of them claiming not to serve Priest Kings anymore while clearly doing so.

Norman sprinkled clues pertaining to future plot developments large and small early on in the series making obvious the fact he had a long range vision of Gor. He might not have had it when he penned TARNSMAN, but he certainly did once OUTLAW was finished. Cabot first hears of the Others (a major plotline many years and books down the road) in the fourth book, he gets a glimpse of a Kur in the fifth, but never meets one face to face till the ninth book, when the Others nomenclature is all but dropped from the series in favor of Kurii. All those Centurions, Vikings and American Indians traipsing about Gor make perfect sense in Norman's cosmic scheme of things too. The invasion of Ar by Cos and Tyros was also only an inevitable matter of time. On a smaller scale, Chenbar the Sea Sleen and Ivar Forkbeard (among others) are mentioned in conversation in books prior to their actual walking/talking debut on the page.

What makes RAIDERS OF GOR one of the most important books in the series is Cabot's character about-face in chapter three. RAIDERS is not as strong a work as the two previous titles NOMADS and ASSASSINS, but it is an absorbing read and an unpredictable change seeing the invincible dunderhead Cabot with the sandal on his other foot. Forthwith Cabot eschews his dunderheadedness after hundreds of thousands of previous words of prose and wakes up to smell the hot black wine.

It must take some authorial courage to skewer and reinvent a hero on the Tarzanic level of Tarl Cabot and transform him into a fairly unlikable chap. Cabot suffers mental duress in RAIDERS that will greatly impact all the Gor books to come, where both protagonist and planet get meaner and grittier. The next book CAPTIVE takes another huge leap in outlook at the less kind and gentle doings on Counter-Earth.

Then HUNTERS, MARAUDERS and TRIBESMEN rear their awesome heads with the DAW brand and rival PRIEST KINGS, NOMADS and ASSASSIN in quality, storytelling and plot resolution. After those only a few Tarl Cabot novels could even stand in their shadow: BEASTS, BLOOD BROTHERS, PLAYERS and, maybe, REBELS.

Keith says

Tarl Cabot becomes a bit more Gorean in this book, a bit less of a good guy, but still there is a lot of adventure, this time involving warships.

AndrewP says

I read the first 5 of these books way back when and remember them being rousing adventure stories. 30 years on this one does not seem to have the same thrill as the ones I remember. Either this volume is not as good, or more likely, I have read a great deal of better fantasy in that time.

Christopher Walls says

I read this whole series in a marathon session, while stationed in England. The depth and volume of the stories is humbling for any writer and I consider this series very influential in my own approach to writing and world building in general; generic post for all the books in this series as I am finally getting around to recording my reading list in Goodreads.

Charles says

After the very slight downturn of "Assassins," Norman turned up the heat with "Raiders." This is my second favorite of the Gor novels and is really the book where Tarl Cabot finally "becomes" Gorean. Again he is made a slave, and nearly broken.

I really enjoyed this book, but in retrospect I can see that this is probably where the books begin to take a slight turn toward the over focus on sexuality to the exclusion of adventure. My judgment on this one, though is:

Not sexist.

Christian West says

Ahoy me hearties, it be Talk Like A Pirate Day and I be finishing reading me book.

Badly, me book turned into bilge water. Arrr. That thar Tarl Cabot becomes a slave to a wench to save his lubber neck. He then loses his pride and becomes an emo pirate after about 5 minutes of being a slave. Arrr.

Him be a scurvy dog for the rest of thar book, and him be abusing them thar wenches all over thar place. Tarl Cabot be an arrrrrse. Arrr.

Worst book so farrrr.

Grace Troxel says

This review originally appeared on my blog, Books Without Any Pictures:
<http://bookswithoutanypictures.com/20...>

John Norman's Gor series is one of my guilty pleasures. It's set in a world where the men are big and brave and half naked all the time, and the women are content to be sex slaves, which should offend me, but instead I find myself sucked into the story and craving more. The world of Gor values honor and glory, and beneath its outward appearance, it's secretly ruled by a race of insectoid aliens. Basically, when I'm having a rough day, this is my go-to series of books.

Based on reviews that I've read, most people who stop reading the series stop with this one, and I can see

why. In *Raiders of Gor*, the protagonist, Tarl Cabot, transforms from a noble hero to what can best be summed up as a bad rendition Hayden Christensen in the *Star Wars* prequels.

Tarl Cabot is on his way to the pirate city of Port Kar, but he is ambushed in the marshes and taken prisoner. He's given the choice between death or slavery (albeit to a sexy warrior chick), and he chooses the latter. Unfortunately, that decision messes with his pride, and he feels like he violated his warrior codes by choosing to grovel rather than die. This pissed me off for so many reasons. I can deal with a fictional world where all the women are happy sex slaves, but I can't stand Tarl Cabot being a frickin' baby when what goes around comes around and he gets a taste of his own medicine. And yes, he escapes pretty quickly, but his experience changes him for the worst. He gets super emo, and decides that rather than following the rather interesting plotline with the Priest Kings, he'll just say fuck it and get rich instead, and then he starts acting like a dick. Well, a more honorable dick than most of the people who rule Port Kar, but since Port Kar is basically Tortuga from *Pirates of the Caribbean*, that isn't saying much. And I'm just like dude, cut it out. Let go of your stupid-ass ego and step up to the plate and save the world and all. Wanting to stay alive no matter what it takes is part of being human, and the fact that you made what you perceive to be a big mistake shouldn't mean you can't pick yourself back up and get on with your life.

I'm still determined to get through the whole series, but this one was rough. A big part of the appeal of the sword-and-planet genre is having heroes who are heroic, and Tarl Cabot just wasn't cutting it this time.
