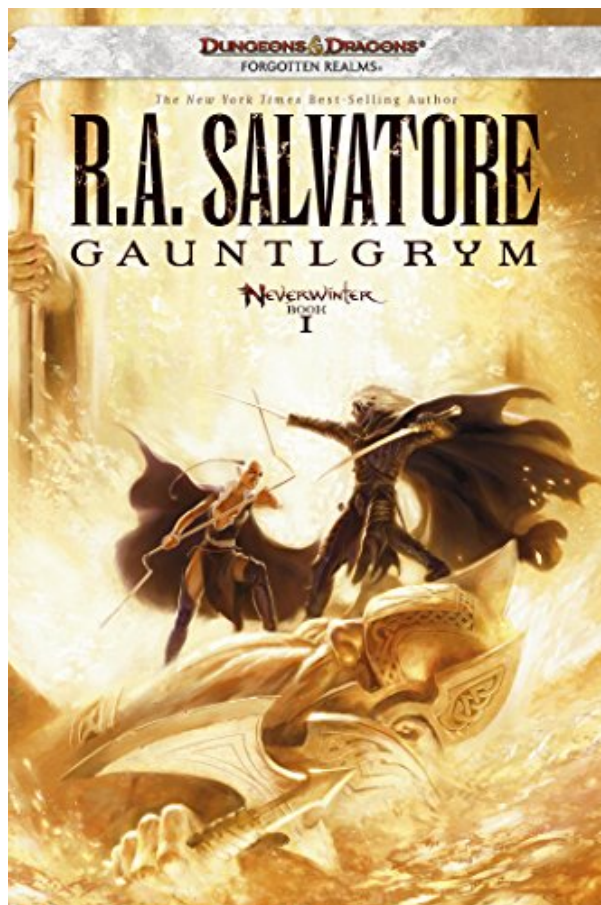
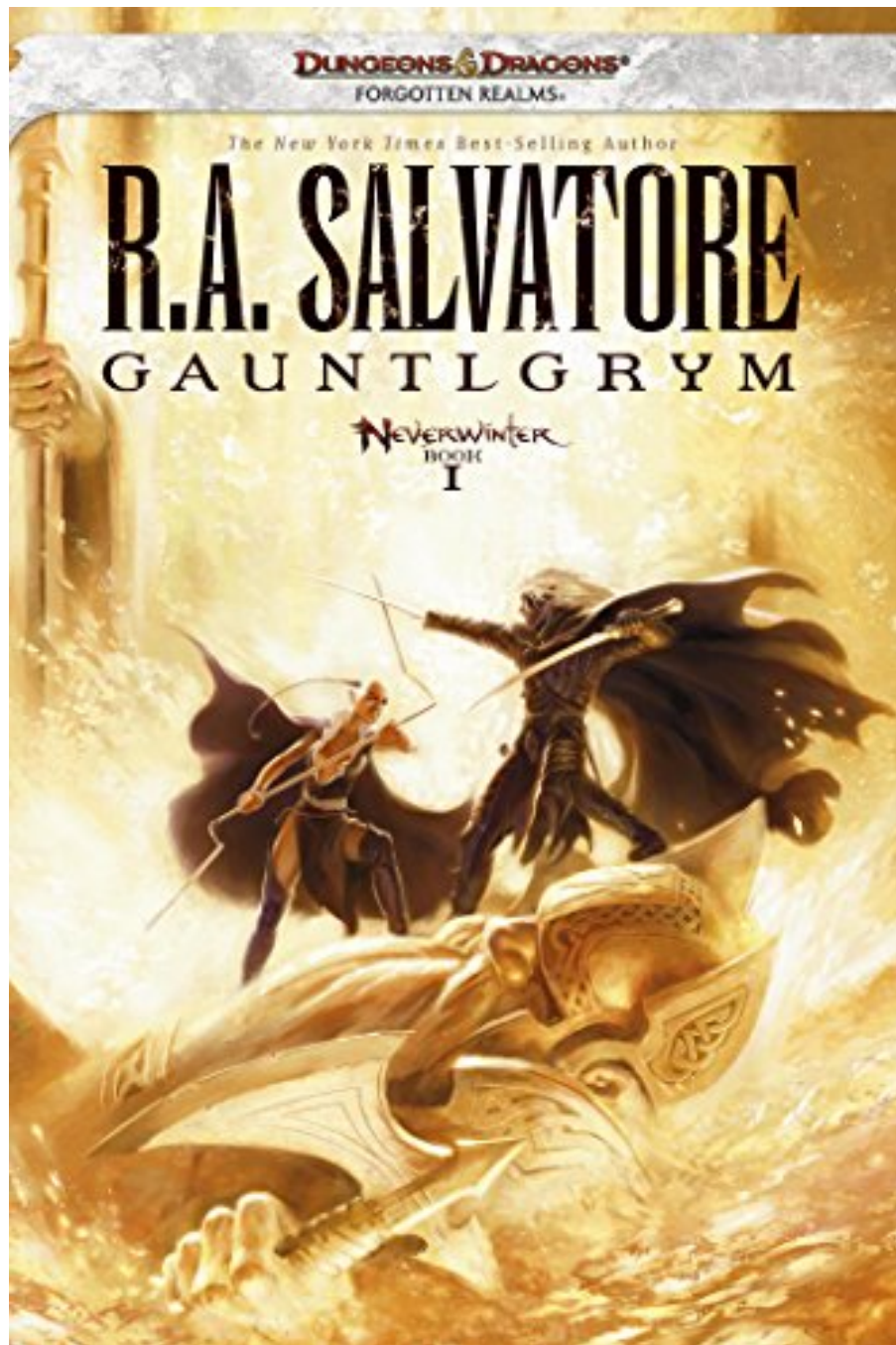


**GAUNTLGRYM: NEVERWINTER SAGA,
BOOK I (THE LEGEND OF DRIZZT 20) BY
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About the Author

R.A. Salvatore is the New York Times best-selling author of more than forty novels, including the popular Forgotten Realms® series The Legend of Drizzt. He's an avid gamer, father of three, and loyal citizen of Red Sox Nation.

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GAUNTLGRYM: NEVERWINTER SAGA, BOOK I (THE LEGEND OF DRIZZT 20) BY R.A. SALVATORE PDF

Drizzt joins Bruenor on his quest for the fabled dwarven kingdom of Gauntlgrym: ruins said to be rich with ancient treasure and arcane lore. But before they even get close, another drow and dwarf pair stumbles across it first: Jarlaxle and Athrogate. In their search for treasure and magic, Jarlaxle and Athrogate inadvertently set into motion a catastrophe that could spell disaster for the unsuspecting people of the city of Neverwinter—a catastrophe big enough to lure even the mercenary Jarlaxle into risking his own coin and skin to stop it. Unfortunately, the more they uncover about the secret of Gauntlgrym, the more it looks like they can't stop it on their own. They'll need help, and from the last people they ever thought to fight alongside again: Drizzt and Bruenor.

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About the Author

R.A. Salvatore is the New York Times best-selling author of more than forty novels, including the popular Forgotten Realms® series The Legend of Drizzt. He's an avid gamer, father of three, and loyal citizen of Red Sox Nation.

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Gauntlgrym by R. A. Salvatore

By Travis Eisenbrandt

Gauntlgrym by R. A. Salvatore- This is the first book in the Neverwinter trilogy as well as the twentieth novel in The Legend of Drizzt series. The next two books in the trilogy are yet to be named at the time of this review. The Legend of Drizzt series contains a number of trilogies and series and it all takes place in the Forgotten Realm universe of Dungeons and Dragons. The Dark Elf Trilogy (Homeland, Exile, and Sojourn), The Icewind Dale Trilogy (The Crystal Shard, Streams of Silver, and The Halfling's Gem), Legacy of the Drow (The Legacy, Starless Night, Siege of Darkness, and Passage to Dawn), Paths of Darkness (The Silent Blade, Spine of the World, Sea of Swords), The Hunter's Blades Trilogy (The Thousand Orcs, The Lone Drow, and The Two Swords), and Transitions (The Orc King, The Pirate King, and The Ghost King) are all apart of The Legend of Drizzt series. Some other characters in the saga are found in The Sellswords trilogy (Servant of the Shard, Promise of the Witch King, and Road of the Patriarch) and The Cleric Quintet (Canticle, In Sylvan Shadows, Night Masks, The Fallen Fortress, and The Chaos Curse). R. A. Salvatore has also written a few other books set in shared universes. He has written two Star Wars based books, Vector Prime and Star Wars Episode Two: Attack of the Clones, and he has also written a book based on Tarzan called Tarzan: The Epic Adventures. R. A. Salvatore has also written a few books in his on created worlds, Ynis Aielle (Echoes of the Fourth Magic, The Witches Daughter, and Bastian of Darkness), Spearwielders Tales (The Woods Outback, The Dragon's Dagger, and Dragonslayer's Return), The Crimson Shadow (The

Sword of Bedwyr, Luthien's Gamble, and The Dragon King), Demon Wars (The Demon Awakens, The Demon Spirit, The Demon Apostle, and Mortalis), Demon Wars: Second Saga (Ascendance, Transcendence, and Immortalis) and the Saga of the First King (The Highwayman, The Ancient, The Dame, and The Bear). He also co-wrote The Stone of Tymora (The Stowaway, The Shadowmask, and The Sentinels) with his son Geno Salvatore. Along with all that, he has written a few short stories. Gauntlgrym was released in October 2010 and is published by Wizards of the Coast.

Years have passed since Drizzt Do'Urden's life changed. His love, Catti-brie, is dead, along with his friend Regis. The dwarven kingdom of Mithral Hall's peace treaty with the orcish Kingdom of Many Arrows has held over the years and a peace is found in the land. His other friend, the king of Mithral Hall, Bruenor Battlehammer, is nearing the end of his life. However, Bruenor still has the fire in him to find the lost dwarven kingdom named Gauntlgrym, so he brings Drizzt, the battlerager Pwent, an orc named Jessa, and a gnome alchemist named Nanfoodle along with him. Years upon years pass by with no luck finding the place. Even after Jessa and Nanfoodle pass away, Drizzt and Bruenor continue the search. However, another group stumbles upon the forgotten city. A Thayan named Dahlia is searching for what powered the Hosttower, a treelike tower that housed wizards in Luskan before the cities fall. Her search for answers leads her to Jarlaxle and his dwarven friend Athrogate. Little do they know that it was Gauntlgrym that produced the Hosttower. Unknown to the group, unleash a primordial and with it, devastation. After years pass after the devastation, Drizzt and Bruenor are still on the search for the ancient dwarven stronghold. However, they may need the help of Jarlaxle and Athrogate to find it.

Criticisms:

1) Time Jumps. This is my major issue with Gauntlgrym, as well as any other book I read. I loathe time jumps. I am not a fan when a story jumps forty some odd years. I would have liked to see some of the adventures that Drizzt, Bruenor, Jessa, and Nanfoodle undertook, I do hope that somewhere down the line there will be a short story involving one such adventure. I would have liked to see more of Drizzt and Bruenor failing at finding Gauntlgrym or their brief search for finding Catti-brie and Regis. I would have liked to see this, or even a chapter about some of these things. Now, I wouldn't have an issue if it was two or three years pass. I wouldn't even have that big of an issue with just one time jump. However, Gauntlgrym has two jumps. Two jumps that forcefully progress the story. While the first jump was about fifty years, the second is a more reasonable ten or so. However, this still bothered me. We never really see Dahlia's consequences for her actions she took in Gauntlgrym. We never see how Athrogate is effected, nor Jarlaxle. We do have little snippets, but there is so much more to be said. These jumps just make the story seem as though it was rushed. We have a lot of things happening, but nothing to really show for it aside from a line or two.

Praises:

1) Drizzt. Let me be honest here for a second. It's my opinion that after twenty-some books, Drizzt Do'Urden has grown a little stale. Don't get me wrong, he still is great, but he never really seemed to undergo a major change that seems to last for an extended amount of time. Sure there were times where he let his savage side take over (The Hunter's Blades Trilogy) and the life changing event that he underwent in The Ghost King. But for the past twenty-two years, he has hardly changed. That being said, Drizzt does undergo a shift in personality, albeit subtle. In fact, I barely noticed any major change until Jarlaxle pointed it out. Before, Drizzt only killed when it was necessary. Now he seems to enjoy it. It's almost like the 'Hunter' in The Hunter's Blades Trilogy, but with more control. It's almost like he's becoming more 'Drow'. It is nice to see that everything that Drizzt went through in his life thus far is finally affecting him. He may seem like the Drizzt we all know and love, but now there seems to be something more, and darker, growing in everyone's favorite drow.

2) Jarlaxle. Jarlaxle really surprised me. I knew that Jarlaxle does have a somewhat noble streak to him, but I

am utterly at a loss for words about what he does. Sure, he's still the pragmatic drow that we've known from before, but now there seems to be more to him than what meets the eye. He seems to be more disparate and uncontrolled. The best example is his one on one interactions with Drizzt. To put it simply, Jarlaxle yells at Drizzt for being what he's become. I never would have thought that Jarlaxle would do such a thing. But that's just not all he does. There were other things in the story that I would have never have thought Jarlaxle would do. It was just a nice surprise to see more character depth to Jarlaxle.

3) Forward. I do like where the series seems to be heading. Now it seems like there will be little reminiscing of the past, and the legend of Drizzt is going in a new, exciting direction. I'm just excited to see what happens next.

Side Notes:

1) Valas Hune. It was nice to see one of the my favorite characters from The War of the Spider Queen series make a brief cameo.

2) Barrabus the Grey. I hope this isn't who I think it is. If it is, all I can say is that I'm disappointed.

3) Cover Art. The first thing I noticed about the cover art is that it's bright. It really catches your eye and draws it in. After so many recent Dungeons and Dragons based books having darker coloring, it's nice to see something bright. The action scene between Drizzt and Dahlia is pretty epic looking, although it doesn't happen in the novel. That kind of bothers me. It would have been wonderful to see Drizzt and Dahlia fighting one another. The only major issue I have is that Dahlia looks horrible. She doesn't look the least bit attractive. In fact, her face just doesn't look quite right, almost as though everything is just squished together. However, the cover art is definitely a nice, bright change and I do like it.

Overall: 4/5

Final Thoughts:

Gauntlgrym is good. I wouldn't really expect any less from a Drizzt novel. However, there is one problem that I still can't get over. I hate the time jumps. I absolutely hate it when things are skipped over that could have made an interesting couple of chapters. In fact, I would have rather have had this book as the second in the trilogy. The first book could have been some of the events leading up to Athrogate pulling the lever. Dahlia seemed to need a little more development, and we could have had some time getting to know Jessa and Nanfoodle. That said, the rest of the story was great. It's nice to finally see everything impacting Drizzt and a new, unexpected look at Jarlaxle. I'm really liking where this story is taking Drizzt. So should you pick it up? Yes. Definitely. Even if you're not a fan of Drizzt, it's well worth a read. However, you should have a little prior knowledge before jumping in.

25 of 28 people found the following review helpful.

New beginnings for Drizzt

By DI

The need to write or read a review of any of R.A. Salvatore's Drizzt books is somewhat moot for those who have read the earlier novels. By now, I am sure that anyone who is familiar with the story of the Dark Elf Drizzt will want to continue reading the latest adventures of his life. Overall, the entire saga of Drizzt is amazing, and Gauntlgrym is no less than excellent. The book takes place 100 years after the events of the Ghost King, and while some choose to write a book summery in these reviews, I choose not for two reasons: 1. you can read a plot summery on the cover, and 2. these always lead to just being spoilers of the book (which means they are only useful for those people that have already read the book- thus have already formed their own opinion and have no need for the review).

I will say what I do like about the Drizzt story, in order to entice anyone who has not read any of Salvatore's books to begin reading. That is, if you like fantasy and have tried several authors - they simply use the same formula for each book. That is, "there is some underdog who discovers he is supposed to save the world and

somehow beats a dark lord against all odds". There is only one author that successfully pulled that off - and that is Tolkein himself. Therefore, if you are longing for a fantasy novel that is not the old broken storyline that several authors try to revive - look to the legend of Drizzt.

I would suggest not beginning with this novel in the Drizzt saga, however. I suggest going back to the chronologically first novel "Homeland" and read all the books in chronological order. With that being said, if you don't want to take the time to do that, this is the best book to pick up with the life of Drizzt (as he moves into a new chapter in his life). The pitfall of doing this is much of Salvatore's writing successfully attempts to tug at the reader's emotions, and without a historical background of the main character, a new reader in the series will not feel the emotion the author is portraying.

All that being said, this book is a solid read and does not disappoint.

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

The past is gone but not forgotten

By Doc

In *_Gauntlgrym_*, Salvatore has changed his method of writing *Forgotten Realms* novels. While those in the past have focused on short periods of time in the grand scheme, the story has never had significant breaks. This book has breaks of decades between the intro and Book 1, and another decade between Books 1 and 2. A number of characters have returned, but only those of races possessed of long lives. Bruenor and Drizzt are the only survivors of the famed Companions of the Hall, and they wander the north seeking the ancient Dwarven homeland, but like a classic sitcom, though they seek and seek in the right area and pass it by many times, they never seem to find. Enter some other familiar faces, at times antagonists and other times allies of convenience, sharing the Dwarven and Drow ancestry, and the sitcom parallel is completed. Jarlaxle and Athrogate find the ancient Dwarven homeland and play an unwitting part in releasing a terrible secret at its core.

A number of new characters are introduced, including an elf woman warrior serving Thay, a sorceress vying with her for favor of Thay's master, a tiefling (that is, a half-demon) warlord of Netheril wielding a familiar red sword that leaves trails of ash in its wake, and a gray-skinned assassin in the tiefling's thrall. The assassin and the elf are enemies though they both share their lack of control of their own fates, being essentially enslaved to their various masters.

Drizzt and Bruenor appear less than the others, but are clearly the linchpins with Drizzt's familiar essays opening the different sections of the novel. His behavior, though, is not as reminiscent of the Drizzt of old as the readers might like, with his lost friends always in his heart and battle the only way to avoid their ghosts in his thoughts. Bruenor is aged and it seems at times that only the quest for the ancient city keeps him going, for he is older and has shared those same losses.

Inevitably, all roads lead to the ruined city and combat on a scale not printed since the dark elves assailed Mithril Hall some dozen books past. Divine intervention meets hellish devils, while elementals fight primordials. Truly, Salvatore elevated the degree of combatants beyond the superheroic drow and dwarf characters so well-known by this point.

The story keeps the pages turning. The two thralls carry out their orders, while the two drow/dwarf pairs pursue their own agendas for different reasons. Toss in a lot of undead and Salvatore's characteristic fight scenes, and the book's a winner. However, it's not as much in the vein as the old books in the series, now over two decades since *The Crystal Shard*, since most of the supporting cast has passed on. They longer-lived are faced with genuine feelings of loss and the reader feels those losses along with the characters, most

poignantly early on when they visit Icewind Dale seeking Catti-brie's and Regis' shades in a rumored magical wood (see *Realms of the Dead* for Savatore's short story that sets this up).

The book has its disappointments in a few places, but it's a solid read. For those new to the series, the issues with antagonists presenting a real challenge to Drizzt won't matter a whit, while for old grognards like me it might niggle a little. I recommend it for all on either side of the fence, it sure kept me engaged from the start. I'm hard-pressed to recall any book that made me cry more than once, but this one gets the highest of marks for doing so. While the next book will be markedly different from any before, it will have to do quite a bit to measure up to this one.

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