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Mammoth Boy



Synopsis

It's around 15,000-12,000 BC, the Late Stone Age, and an orphan boy is surviving on the fringes of a hunters' camp. A passion to find mammoths has been ignited in him by Old Mother, the ancient crone who guards the camp fire and cares for him. In his travels to find the mammoths, he is adopted by a mysterious hunchback, Agaratz, who lives alone in a cave and is perhaps the last of a vanished people. Urrell learns survival and instinct as a stone-age hunter as well as gaining insight into the meaning of the cave paintings of deer, bison, mammoths and other creatures. The story culminates in a long journey to the Great Meet of the Clan Groups where rites de passage are held in caves, goods traded and mates secured. Time sometimes slips, and when the powers that Agaratz holds are transferred to Urrell, they will be a match for those of the leader of the rites, the horned shaman and his acolytes. But who will win? Mammoth Boy recreates the semi-magical world of the cave paintings seen through the mind of a boy growing into manhood. It was inspired by an archaeological course in Spain and will appeal to young adults interested in archaeology and recreative pre-historical fiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Despite that I'd never read this (or any of Hart's work) I picked it up for my son because it was on the Children's Literature shelf in a local store right alongside the works of Roald Dahl. I hoped for something of a "boy's adventure" story. While my son was preoccupied with some other books I decided on a whim to check the book out for myself. Throughout the reading I felt alternately engrossed and repulsed. The writing itself was moderately smooth, although occasionally laden with abrupt leaps to one side. Being a long-time fan of Robert Holdstock the proto-fantasy aspect was no

problem for me when it arose. What was a major problem for me was the hurried feel, most especially near the end -- which felt more rushed than almost may be described. Rather than being left with a haunting feeling which most often accompanies such books as delve into proto-fantasy, I was left with a distinct sense of "Huh?!?" This was not because I was incapable of imagining what was going on, but because it felt less spirited into being by a skilled author and a LOT more haphazardly thrown onto the page in an effort to both culminate an author's initial idea for an ending and to just get the writing the hell over with. Ultimately I felt the author had attempted something Holdstock accomplished before his own death: To not only see the Dreamtime / Peyote Dream / Call-It-What-You-Will, but to touch it and enter it. Sadly, Hart failed in this endeavor. It's a shame, because the characters began with SUCH potential, only to descend all rapid-spiral into gross predictability and a super-human unbelievability which spoke less of preternatural ability born of an ancient time and archaic, arcane knowledge...

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