



The Poachers of Immortality: The Kilimanjaro Club Adventure Series: Book 2

Ron Lamberson

Hydra Heads Press (Aug 15, 2022)

eBook \$6.99 (435pp)

979-898520130-7

In the secret society-centered thriller The Poachers of Immortality, adventurers abroad face new intrigues and dangers.

In Ron Lamberson's thriller *The Poachers of Immortality*, an adventuresome group's trip to Beijing is complicated by drug smuggling schemes and an assassin.

In this series installment, Stuart returns to search for a missing friend in China. There, poachers of the endangered South China tiger are supplying underground drug makers, who plot to bring their aphrodisiacs to the US. Stuart and his allies try to stay a step ahead of grave danger, crossing paths with gang members, kidnappers, and a ruthless Texan businessman, too.

Dramatic and action-packed, the story follows the cast as they scale walls with grappling hooks, engage in gunfights, and escape from captivity. Its scenes are flamboyant to the point that they feel staged: one villain commands another to "release the ants," for example. The chapters are short, consistent, and brisk, though, and many end on cliffhangers, fortifying the book's tension.

The prose is heavily descriptive at all times, whether it's focused on explosions, details like the light that shines through a forest canopy, or how a map is folded. In one scene, a leather knife strap digs into a character's calf; in another, a guide appears to be "losing a wrestling match with a vehicle." But the book becomes dense with similes and flourishes, as of a person's voice sounding "like clove cigarette smoke," or with a rave that's compared to an eerie version of "It's a Small World."

In this follow-up title, the cast's backstories are established via intriguing references, as with mentions of an escape from an erupting volcano. The particulars of the Kilimanjaro Club are also hinted at: it has sites in various cities and a storied tradition. While such details pique interest in its members' fantastical worlds, wherein people tussle with tigers, the Club's nuances are just touched upon—as are contemporary social issues that weave into the Club members' stories.

The book's main characters include Stuart, Bailey, Parnell, and Prima; they are developed in terms of their personal histories and personalities, right down to their bar orders, but they are also somewhat archetypal. Those they contend with are quirky, even sympathetic: the book's villains fret and lament their situations, for example, even while trying to figure out how to escape from their messes. Twists, double-crosses, and random turns of fate move the bombastic plot along, pushing the Club members toward an engaging showdown that ably sets up the next series adventure.

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JOSEPH S. PETE (May 16, 2022)

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