



Under Plum Lake

Lionel Davidson

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Children's fantasy which begins when Barry Gordon nearly drowns swimming round a Cornish cliff. Returning to the scene later he goes down a cliff path and finds a cave, and a boy waiting for him, beckoning him into a tunnel that goes under the water.

Under Plum Lake Details

Date : Published 1980 by Bantam Books

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Author : Lionel Davidson

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Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Young Adult, Childrens, Science Fiction

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From Reader Review Under Plum Lake for online ebook

Ben says

The most memorable SF book I read as a child. Extremely thought provoking story of a boy who visits a secret undersea city populated by advanced humans. Explores complex themes, such as the nature of death and relative concepts of intelligence.

Cheryl says

I might have liked this more when I was a tween. Or I might not have. Describing all the adventures and scenery took far too many pages, and then the foreshadowing took a bunch more. The meat of the story, the melancholy yearning for another world, would have made a decent short story. The art is good, the characters are cardboard, the SF science is unlikely, and so in balance the story was just barely 'ok' / just barely two stars.

Patrick says

I read this when I was a kid, and really really loved it. I actually remember where I read it (My Grampa's house in Janesville, on his guest bed.) It stuck with me for a long time, so much so that I bought a copy I found at a used bookstore.

It's a little dated, but still strangely compelling. Old me didn't like it quite as much as old me did, but I don't want to hold that against the book, as it wasn't written for old me.

Still, highly recommended.

Rachel says

Sorry Nicole! This book didn't live up to a reading by an adult. I think it would be a fun book for kids (which is when you read it) but from my perspective it read like something written by someone who took a lot of LSD :-) Maybe also it would have been better as a short story than a book?

Wesley Acheson says

I remember getting this out of the public library. I'm not sure about the year.

What I do remember at the tender age of 8 - 11 whenever I actually read this book, It enthralled me.

Lionel painted such vivid pictures of this subterranean world, with its futuristic amusements and inhabitants.

To be honest today it isn't so clear in my mind, but I do remember the haunting ending which is quite remorseful. Which even today raises questions whether it better to remember fully, half remember or forget wonderful events which you can never repeat. I'll freely admit I don't know.

I wish I could find it again and see if it is as good as I remember I really do, but I can't.

Briget Murphy says

I bought this book for several tweens, and read it when it arrived in the mail. It had been recommended by *Atlas Obscura*. Like several other reviewers, I felt like I was reading about someone else's acid trip. Actually, one acid trip after another, after another, etc. The book describes mushroom-shaped buildings, candy cane striped sky scrapers, breathing under water, a purple lake, giants, powerful frozen violet-flavored candy, fanciful extreme sports, feel-good gasses in the air and drinks that make people happy. If you miss hallucinogenic drugs, I suppose this book is the next best thing to "being there". :-) I'm passing it on to the tweens now, I hope they enjoy it. I just hope that they don't look back years from now and think, "Why did she have us read that book about tripping?"

Zach Milan says

While impossible to find these days, Lionel Davidson provides an interesting novel with the plot revolving around two boys having fun.

Barry was lost for 3 days in a cave near his parent's summer home and can only just remember the details through dreams. As he writes them down the plot unfolds. The fascinating thing about *Under Plum Lake* is that the plot arc is just "two boys have fun, have more fun, have more fun, have more fun," etc. This would seem to make for a horrible book, but because Davidson is creating an entire world in which to have fun, the reader is transported in and feels exactly like Barry does.

An immensely fun, quick read if you can find it.

Kathy says

This is one of my favorite childhood books.

Heather says

Read this in 4th grade during a series of detentions held during gym. For those of you who know me, this was more a blessing than a punishment. And those nuns thought they were so crafty :)

It is sci-fi fantasy in it's rawest form. A truly unique book that I reread a year or two ago just for fun and it still grabbed my imagination like it did so many years ago.

The perfect rainy day read. Although, it may be a bit hard to find in a bookstore, it is available online.

Elisabeth says

I read this as a tween and it changed my life. I began to feel that if I didn't eventually find a secret world underground or meet some space aliens or have an extraordinary life experience, that life would just be too boring to continue. Luckily, the immediacy of that feeling wore off...

KareBare says

I began reading this book when I was in 3rd or 4th grade. My dad had checked it out from the Library and I didn't get to finish it before it was time to be returned. When I tried to renew it, the librarian said I couldn't be cause I was too young. I was so mad, and had to leave the book unfinished.

Years later, with the aide of the reference librarian where I work, we located the book (I could only remember vague details, the cover of the book, and that the word plum was in the title). I happily placed a hold and waited for the day it arrived.

I cannot tell you how wonderful it was to finally get to finish a story I started some 20 odd years ago, but it captured my attention as completely at now as it did when I first began to read it. I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys the abstract!

Pam says

This book was not good. It was on a list of books people read as children, and remembered years later! I read the summary on the list and the person who posted this book actually said he had used it in a college class, and no one could finish it without being in tears! I was all set for the meaning of life revealed...and what I got instead was terrible writing structure, no plot, very little in the way of action and lots of weird substances being introduced to the 13 year old main character. I hated it!

I think that thing that bothered me the most was that the main character (a young teenager) kept trying out mind altering substance, such as when he licked the gum "stardew" and the roof of his mouth felt like it rose to the height of a cathedral and he was "drinking violets"...sounds like an acid trip, and so inappropriate for a young teenager...what the heck was the author thinking??? And again when they breathe in the ragusa gas and can't stop laughing...this book is a drug induced example of boring writing for sure.

I wouldn't recommend it to anyone!

Thomas M. Burby says

A strange, alarming read. I purchased this book because I heard about it on Reddit as one of those books people have read as a child that always haunted them. These books, I like to call them Biblioghosts, should be a sub-genre of literature, I think. Anyway, this book is about a young man who is unhappy with his home life and is sent away to a distant island off Wales. He feels a calling to explore the world at night and steals a boat and finds a cave with an entrance into a strange underworld. He is met by an inhabitant of the underworld - and the rest of the book reads like a travel guide into a fantasy realm. In my opinion, the entrance he finds isn't into an 'underground' world at all, but a parallel world, one similar to ours but highly advanced. The boy is treated like a pet in this world and the inhabitants are kind enough to him. He is happy there, even though he is treated like a pet, because his 'owner' treats him very well. The world is a utopia in so many respects- but all good things must come to an end. I won't spoil it for you, but I will say that the way the writer moved the plot forward was very matter-of-fact - "I saw this, I saw that." Not much actually happens! The end left me sad and discouraged, but I can see why people include it as a Biblioghost. It leaves you longing for the hope that we might someday have such a world - even though all we have when we return is this one.

Denzil Pugh says

I had to take my Grandmother to the doctors (she'd broken a small bone in her arm when she fell in the front yard. Nothing major, just sore.), and so I picked up a kid's book I found several months before. Under Plum Lake, and I found I literally could not put the book down. While I waited to pay the bill at Waffle House, I read pages of the book.

When I finished it, I went immediately for the Internet to find out more about the author and his work. What marvels of sci-fi and fantasy might be actually hidden on bookshelves just waiting for me? The answer is, none. Lionel Davidson is most known for Israeli-Middle East Spy novels. His few children's books are written under a different name (David Line) and are reality based adventure books. There's a distinct pattern here. I can name quite a few Mystery/Thriller authors that write one amazing children's fantasy novel, which reach right into the core of Faerie, to the magical unknowns of the subconscious world, and then for some reason, never write another. My prior review of The Magicians by Grossman, talks more about that.

I wish I could describe the intensity to which I flew through this book. It tells the adventures of a boy, Barry, and his discovery of an underwater realm where people are giant, live hundreds of years, and experience every type of fun and pleasure available. His guide through the world is Dido, the son of the ruler of Egon. But that's all I'm gonna say about it, because you have to experience it for yourself.

I've read more than one review that likens the book to a wild LSD trip. I won't disagree with them. The book is a sensory overload with sparse language and very bare emotions. So very well written, and it is an utter shame that Davidson only wrote one book that fits into the science fiction genre. And doubly so that the book is out of print. There are accounts of people (prior to the Internet) searching for a copy for years, making it one of their most prized possessions. I can understand why. Now you can order a copy (at Borders.com) easily, and have a copy of your own. I wanted to share the book with people. Order copies and say, "Here, you must read this book!!" And so I will tell you, "You must read this book!!"

GoldGato says

This was a book I picked up while working in a bookstore many years ago, and I still have dreams about it. Rather, I don't have dreams about picking up the book but dreams about the story and the water in the story, always the water, which is dark purple or plum. A boy finds a ledge leading to an underwater world and adventure ensues.

The book earned its place on my bookshelf (yes, each book must earn a spot) because of its inventive story and for the lovely understated drawings by Muriel Nasser, which begin each chapter. Published in the 1980s, it was a book that was written for the young adult crowd, who didn't have Harry Potter yet. However, parents who bought it always told me their little ones loved it also, so I took their word for it. Teen, pre-teen, and child will all enjoy this tale.

And when I wake up and see the water on "Quake Days" (humid and still), I know it will be Plum.

Book Season = Summer (hit the water)
