



Never Deal with a Dragon

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Sam Verner is a star researcher for Renraku Computer Systems at the corporate headquarters in Tokyo, but when his sister goblinizes into an Ork, he is transferred to the Seattle arcology in disgrace. His life takes another turn for the worse when the commuter flight from the airport is hijacked by shadowrunners (Sally Tsung, Ghost, Kham, Dodger). Sam's cooperation with the runners earns him the enmity of another passenger, security specialist Alice Crenshaw. When Sam discovers that the runners were manipulated into releasing a lethal virus inside the arcology, he is able to convince them to undo the damage. They insist he accompany them, however, and though they are successful, Sam is forced to shoot a security guard in self-defense. Though the runners advise against it, Sam decides to stay with Renraku.

Never Deal with a Dragon Details

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From Reader Review Never Deal with a Dragon for online ebook

David Sarkies says

Welcome to the world of 2050

7 February 2012

Well this is the first of the Shadowrun novels, and not surprisingly, the first one that I will review. There were a few of them written, and I did read some of them, however, as I have said previously, in these later stages of my life the role-playing game spinoffs novels have ceased to impress me, and the Shadowrun books are no exception. They tend to be poorly written and rushed and their only real purpose is not only to continue to make money from successful product, but to also give some atmosphere to the role playing world in which the novel is set. The major catch with that is that a lot of GMs may like the world, but will change aspects to suit their own style, which means that when one reads the novel, the aspects that that particular GM dislikes and cause it to be a little jarring at times.

I will not go into details of these particular novels, but will rather explore aspects of the Shadowrun world as I visit each of the novels that I have read. For this one I will give an overview of the roleplaying world.

Shadowrun is set on Earth beginning in the year 2050 (aligning with 1990, the year that the system was first released - Shadowrun is always 60 years ahead of the year in which a supplement is published). This world is a vastly different place to the world that we know, and a simple definition would be 'Cyberpunk meets Dungeons and Dragons'. The world is a world of the dark future (see Blade Runner, or Neuromancer for an idea of what the world of the Dark Future would look like, though there are a lot of other books and films that could do the same job) where governments have become impotent and the corporations have risen to positions of great power.

Much has changed since our world though, and there is a reasonable time line outlining the events that brought about these changes. The most important change is that magic has re-entered the world, and along with magicians we also have magical beasts, diseases, and new races into which a minority of humans have metamorphed (or goblinised as Shadowrun calls it). Discrimination has moved away from skin colour to simply looking different, and it turns out that orks and trolls, the more uglier of the goblinoids, tend to find themselves at the bottom of the social pile. Along with all of this, dragons have also made another appearance (as the title of the book suggests), which is not surprising because one cannot have a science-fantasy world without dragons.

The idea of the game is that magic is not a new thing, but rather a reawakened reality. For some reason magic left the world centuries ago (most likely because all of the practitioners were killed off) and the magical forces went into remission (and creatures such as dragons went into hibernation). However, in the early 21st Century the Native Americans rose up against their oppression, and in a desperate battle, one Native American released a reign of destruction on the American forces. This pretty much turned the tables and the United States was forced to break up, and much of the West was handed back to the Indians, while the east was split into UCAS (the United Canadian and American States) and the CAS (the Confederated American States).

Most of the action is set in Seattle (I wondered why it was not set in Los Angeles, but I guess the developers may have been more familiar with Seattle), which is an independent city state (governed by the UCAS) that is surrounded by Native American Nations. I suspect that they develop Seattle this way as a means to create a frontier city, sort of like the Wild West meets Cyberpunk.

One of the things that I did not like about this book is that the Shadowrunning team that the protagonist encounters turns out to be the team that was used in the rule books as an example of how to create various types of characters. This I found to be very corny - it just did not sit all that well with me. To an extent it made it appear that they were trying to push the marketing aspect of the game a bit too much.

David says

This was an interesting book, set in a world I've never read about or even played in (it is a role playing game setting- I have the main book of rules for it, but have never even explored it more than just leafing through it)

Shadowrun seems to refer to being a mercenary that runs outside of the usual law and in a world corrupted by megacorporations, torn by corporate wars, and now two worlds exist- the corporate world and the underground (shadow) world. In addition to this, Magic, along with Elves, Orcs, and Dragons, has returned to the world.

This book was exciting enough and full of plenty of action and double-dealing. It obviously began as a particular role-playing campaign as it really is more like a series of adventures. While the adventure was fun and could provide a really cool idea for a Game Master to run a Role playing game, as literature it was just standard pulp fun.

A better knowledge of the setting might also have added some enjoyment, as some of the curse words used would be germane to that world and lack a very good corralary.

I enjoyed the book, but had to work hard to stay with it. Not one of my favorites, but I did not hate it either.

Eli says

One day at work, I had a craving for a salad. Events conspired to keep me from going out to get one until well after an hour past my usual lunchtime. By then, I was so ravenous as to be almost beyond rational thought. I went to the salad bar across the street and loaded my big plastic bowl with every single ingredient from the bar that, individually, I enjoyed having in a salad. It was several forkfulls in that my hunger abated enough to permit me to process the input from my taste buds. That input was not good: even though I liked each flavor in and of itself, the combination created a riotous, aberrant gestalt resulting in a thoroughly unsatisfying experience I soldiered through out of sheer stubbornness.

Categorical discrepancies notwithstanding, the only difference between that salad and this book is that I would have given the salad two stars for at least serving its most basic purpose of providing nutritive sustenance.

Kathryn says

Wow, it has been a LONG time since I read this. I have fond memories of the *experience* of reading the book: getting it for Christmas (back when I was young enough that getting a new paperback was a BIG deal for me), reading it over the holidays, picking out favorite sections to read again (I especially liked the parts featuring the blond mercenary woman and her feathered-serpent henchman). The actual story? Not so much. I've never been able to get into Shadowrun. The behind-the-scenes machinations were way over my head, and I had a hard time really sympathizing with most of the characters. I've slightly regretted over the years not picking up any of the sequels, but after seeing that the author has written forty or more books in the same

series? Yeah, no thanks. Xanth was the last series where I gave the author the leeway to wear out a concept THAT much. Never again.

Dan says

This was a very interesting story set in a creative and intuitive world. I found the play upon the classic Oliver Twist to be clever, but it was really the author's vision of this future/fantasy world that sold me. He detailed the rise of mega-corporations to parity with nations, the creation of massive archologies to house and control corporation's employees, the resurgence of the Native Americans with the return of magic, and others. Only those familiar with the Shadowrun universe are aware of this, but the Matrix movies were modeled after the Shadowrun internet, called the Matrix. The Shadowrun Matrix was entered by connecting a computer cable directly to a jack on a person's head, and then the software allowed people to do all the cool things that you saw in the movie. Anyway, really an incredible book and universe.

Steven says

It was a fun read but was bogged down by too many things going on. Needed better editing.

Drift says

Ok, I am a Shadowrun junkie. This book was decent but you probably wouldn't care for it if you didn't like Shadowrun. I enjoyed it because it was set in my favorite scifi-fantasy world. I appreciated the book because it gave me another persons perspective of the Shadowrun world. That perspective helps me create my own stories when I GM a Shadowrun RPG.

I have read another of Charrette's books. It was also a Shadowrun book and I would rate it the same. Never Deal... stood out to me because it told the story of a wageslave becoming a Shadowrunner. That's cool because it gives you a little more flavor for the life of an average person on the Shadowrun universe.. One aspect of Charrette's writing that annoys me is that it seems as though he has used the thesaurus to add fancy words that he is really not used to using. Instead of making his work sound better it sounds a little contrived. The level of his writing doesn't match some of the obscure vocab he uses.

This is the first Shadowrun novel in a series.

Jirka says

P?i?etl jsem k hodnocení jednu hv?zdi?ku navíc, že jsem fanda starého Shadowrunu. Ti co nejsou by nemuseli knížku takto hodnotit :-)

Wastrel says

Despite my nostalgia - this was one of my earliest adventures in reading - I really can't recommend this book very highly. It's just... not very good. In fact, it's arguably the worst book I've read in the last couple of years.

One big problem is that this is a story in its own right, AND the first part of a trilogy, AND the first of a franchise of novels, AND the first novel to introduce the pre-existing Shadowrun RPG world. As a result, sometimes it feels weighed down by exposition and sightseeing, and at other times too much is left unexplained. Worst example: the main character spends a chapter or two in a vehicle that I suspect was flying but it's never made entirely clear (or if it was, I didn't get it). I'm guessing that in Shadowrun it's made clear that 'panzers' can fly, but not having played in the setting, this confused me. [Or maybe it's just bad writing and it wasn't flying at all?]

The plot is rambling, and the pacing and structure ill-judged. Never really seems to come together, although some parts of the ending are good. The prose is not dire, but is generally uninspired, and there are some really bad moments. Character development is minuscule, character motivation almost non-existent, and the central characters are very boring.

That said, I still sort of like it. Some of the supporting cast, while shallow and static, are surprisingly vivid and engaging, and the fanstasy-cyberpunk setting - while frustratingly unexplored and never stunningly original - is appealing and sometimes intriguing.

I really wanted to like this book, and despite myself I didn't hate it. And hey, I still remembered a lot of it from my childhood, which is more than I can say for some things I read back then. It's more original than a lot of pulp fantasy. It is, however, still pulp fantasy. The best I can say about it is that if you want an easy pulpy read to fill some empty time, and particularly if you want a bit of a twist from your usual D&D settings, you could do worse than this. But you'd have to WANT to enjoy it, I think - nobody's going to end up liking this book on literary grounds despite not normally liking pulp science fantasy.

Fuller thoughts [HERE](#).

Ellana Thornton-Wheybrew says

I got through this so quickly, and I loved every moment of it.

I have a fondness for *in media res* anyway, but this just grabs you by the collar, drags you into the world kicking and screaming, and refuses to let go. I love it. This might be my favourite book of the year so far.

Brett Dunst says

I read this in the 90s and loved it. I was just a kid, though. Evidently my tastes have changed.

It starts off with a bang, but nearly 20 years of out-of-printishness can't fix what is, at the core, a muddled, convoluted, and confusing plot.

Gotta give it props for being so in-your-face with all of the callbacks to the source material, though. I used to play Shadowrun back in the day so I knew what level of nuttiness I was in for.

At one point I started to question whether every group of runners really needed to include a decker, a mage, a rigger, a street samurai, yadda yadda...or whether the author was just throwing in the kitchen sink because this first Shadowrun novel could have ended up being the only one.

Anyway. Not horrible. My 14 year old self was a huge fan.

Nikola Bornova says

Příběh knihy se odehrává ve světě deskové RPG hry Shadowrun, která v sobě originálně míchá kyberpunk a magii, která se "vrátila" na Zem.

Mě se knížka líbila, ale jsem fanyntka Shadowrunu. Jinými slovy - na poměry knih tohohle žánru (příběhy ze světa Forgotten Realms z D&D, Warhammer 40 000, Starcraft atd.) je to mírný nadprůměr, takže už to možná dosahuje kvality, kterou by mohlo snést i normální fanoušek scifi.

Bernardo Mozelli says

The absolute apex of cyberpunk elves n dragons fiction

Nils says

Gut zu lesender Rollenspielroman, der einen spannenden Einstieg in die Welt von Shadowrun bietet. Manchmal allerdings etwas zäh und manchmal etwas unübersichtlich

Olethros says

-Otro desarrollo bajo franquicia.-

Género. Ciencia ficción (desde premisas de Fantasía, claro).

Lo que nos cuenta. En el futuro, lleno de tecnología y virtualidad, se ha producido un fenómeno conocido como El cambio que ha traído a la vida la magia y criaturas fantásticas como los elfos, los orcos, los dragones y muchas otras. Sam trabaja para la corporación Renraku, su hermano está mutando y él ha sufrido una operación relacionada con las conexiones informáticas virtuales. Durante su traslado a la sede de la compañía en Seattle es secuestrado, junto a otros empleados, por un grupo de delincuentes con un plan. Libro desarrollado en el trasfondo del juego de rol Shadowrun y primer libro de la trilogía Los secretos del

poder.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>
