



Shadow Puppets

Orson Scott Card

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A Sequel to *The New York Times* Bestselling *Enders's Shadow*

Bestselling author Orson Scott Card brings to life a new chapter in the saga of Ender's Earth.

Earth and its society has been changed irrevocably in the aftermath of Ender Wiggin's victory over the Formics--the unity enforced upon the warring nations by an alien enemy has shattered. Nations are rising again, seeking territory and influence, and most of all, seeking to control the skills and loyalty of the children from the Battle School.

But one person has a better idea. Peter Wiggin, Ender's older, more ruthless, brother, sees that any hope for the future of Earth lies in restoring a sense of unity and purpose. And he has an irresistible call on the loyalty of Earth's young warriors. With Bean at his side, the two will reshape our future.

Here is the continuing story of Bean and Petra, and the rest of Ender's Dragon Army, as they take their places in the new government of Earth.

Shadow Puppets Details

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From Reader Review Shadow Puppets for online ebook

Maria Dobos says

Plăcut?, dar nu atât de incitant? ca primele două volume ale seriei.

În ciuda intrigilor pe care le-a ȳesut ȳn favoarea Chinei ȳi care au condus la cucerirea Indiei de cȳtre acesta, Ahile este ȳntemniȳat. În acelaȳi timp, ȳncercȳnd sȳ medieze conflictele militare care macinȳ planeta ȳi ameninȳȳ echilibrul precar de dupȳ ȳncheierea rȳzboiului cu "furnicile", Peter Wiggin devine Hegemonul Pȳmȳntului, un titlu ce ȳi oferȳ mai mult prestigiu decȳt putere. Dupȳ ce aflȳ cȳ Peter plȳnuieȳte sȳ-l elibereze pe Ahile din mâinile chinezilor pentru a-l aduce ȳn faȳa unui tribunal internaȳional, Bean ȳi Petra se hotȳrȳsc sȳ se ascundȳ, ȳncredȳnȳȳ cȳ acesta ȳȳ va urmȳri rȳzbunarea.

ȳemȳndu-se cȳ modificarea geneticȳ ce a declanȳat uluitoarea sa dezvoltare intelectualȳ va fi transmisȳ ȳmpreunȳ cu toate consecinȳele ei ȳi copiilor sȳi, Bean refuzȳ la ȳnceput propunerea Petrei de a-ȳi ȳntemeia o familie, dar acceptȳ pȳnȳ la urmȳ sȳ se cȳsȳtoreascȳ cu ea, cu condiȳia ca toȳi embrionii viitorilor copii sȳ fie testaȳi pentru *Cheia lui Anton*. Dar nici Ahile nu stȳ degeaba ȳn acest timp, reuȳind sȳ acapareze Hegemonia, sȳ-l determine pe Peter sȳ fugȳ pe o platformȳ spaȳialȳ ȳi sȳ captureze cinci dintre embrionii lui Petra ȳi ai lui Bean. And so the fun begins.

Spre deosebire de volumul precedent al cȳrui accent cȳdea pe situaȳia geopoliticȳ globalȳ, *ȳmbra Marionetelor* ȳi urmȳreȳte ȳndeaproape pe Bean, Petra ȳi Peter. Bean, al cȳrui timp se scurge ȳncet, ȳncet ȳi ȳncercȳ sȳ ȳȳ gȳseascȳ ȳelul, folosul vieȳii, Petra, a cȳrei evoluȳie ca personaj m-a ȳntristat ȳi Peter, adolescentul care ȳncȳ ȳncearcȳ sȳ se elibereze de umbra succesului fratelui sȳu. Mi s-a pȳrut puȳin deplasatȳ ideea de a-i defini pe oameni prin urmaȳii lor, de a reduce scopul ȳntregii existenȳe la procreare. Perspectiva creatȳ de Orson Scott Card asupra lumii islamice dupȳ ce a trecut de extremismul religios este destul de interesantȳ, mai ales ȳn contextul actual.

3.5 ★

Randy says

Not as bad as the majority of reviews would have you believe, but there are some valid criticisms to be made. OSC's finest efforts in this series are likely behind him (Ender's Game, Speaker for the Dead, Ender's Shadow) while this volume more closely resembles the remainder. Trite dialogue, over-writing, long dull stretches, and confounding and baffling leaps of logic drag the story down. It is said that this book and Shadow of the Hegemon were originally one book but were split in order to allow the story to be expanded (or possibly to sell more books?); they probably should have been condensed back into one book for purposes of clarity and brevity.

Matija says

The magical battle school children and Achilles are at it again. The character of Achilles has jumped the shark several books ago and is even more ridiculous in Shadow Puppets, succeeding in basically kidnapping

the world government for himself, despite the fact that he has no support left anywhere in the world.

The geopolitical stuff with the war in Indochina is fairly interesting (now the Muslim coalition is entering the fray), as are Peter Wiggin's attempts to reclaim the Hegemony for himself. However, that is about all that is worth it in this book.

The rest Card dedicates mostly to espousing the Mormon point of view on life. Mainly, to marry and have as many children as possible is the ultimate achievement of any human being and apparently even gay scientists who have been single all their lives eventually come to this realization. As does everyone else who is a good guy in this series. Also, non-implanted, possibly unfertilized eggs in a tube are children, in case you didn't know.

Since this is the case, battleschoolers Bean and Petra are of course compelled to make some babies, like good little Mormons. Despite the fact that they are two of the most brilliant minds left on Earth, they go about it in such an unbelievably incompetent way that the embryos are kidnapped from under their nose in a completely transparent heist. You have exactly one guess who is responsible for this.

It seems to me that with every book Card gives up a little on making the series a well-rounded science fiction story and focuses a bit more on preaching his religious beliefs. At this rate two books down the line we will probably have a transcription of the Book of Mormon.

Chris Friend says

This was quite a relief.

I'll admit that I'm growing a bit tired of the "Enderverse" as it's so often called. The cast of characters Card created are great, but I'm growing a bit tired of having so many books covering the same people. The Shadow series was a nice change of pace, but the previous book had been a bit slow in the action, feeling like the author was treading water.

Card got a fire lit under his butt. This book makes up for lost time and moves through events quite well. There are a number of crucial moments in the plot that excited me simply because I had no idea how they would turn out, and each time they did so perfectly logically, as though there was no other possible outcome.

Card is great at explaining situations and revealing plot points at just the right moment, providing readers with the right information at the right time, to ensure that the suspense and pacing are moderated exceptionally well. This story is a fantastic example of his abilities. Enough characters are involved, enough plotting is being discussed, and enough ploys are put into motion that it's all quite interesting and even nail-biting-worthy. The characters have senses of humor that had me laugh out loud on several occasions, and the end of the book is quite rewarding, making the book simply **feel** like it was worth reading.

This was certainly my favorite book of Card's since Ender's Shadow, and I think this one pulls more adeptly at the emotions. While I didn't cry here (like I did for Ender's Shadow), I certainly cared what happened to each of the characters. I had respect for them, I was sad for them, and I laughed with them, all in turn. An awful lot is revealed about a number of the characters who have been in the stories for quite some time, and the revelations alone are enough to drive the story on. The fact that there are so many twists and turns involved make it that much better.

For Card to take such a large cast of characters, such a broad playing field, and such a variety of situations and work them together so smoothly into a series that is already so full of scenarios and surprises is impressive, admirable, commendable, and entirely worth experiencing.

Erin says

This book would be how Orson Scott Card would novelize watching Bella and Edward play Risk. So, you know, if you're into that kind of thing it's really gonna be your cup of tea. I skimmed over all the "zomg baaaaaaaaaaaaabeeeeeeeeees" angst and just read the political/military strategy sections. Not the strongest book in the series.

Nicholas Karpuk says

I gave up on this book about halfway through. I seem to recall saying I'd give up on the Shadow books after the last one, but this was loaned to me, so I have that comfort at least.

This book is uncomfortably fixated on breeding. The opinions espoused on passing on genetics in this book rival the weird rantings from Xenocide when it comes to sheer needless ranting. Unfortunately, this book lacks the solid plot buried beneath the blather.

Card is still playing a game of Risk with world powers, and so little is done to properly develop these characters that at times only the names remind me that there's been a change in scene.

A big chunk of the plot is about Bean breeding. So essentially it's a discussion of teenagers having children. I can't help but find this disconcerting. Card has gone from a ranting Neocon throwing his opinions into a story where they didn't necessarily fit straight into creepy old man territory.

Seeing as I've already read the two award winning books he wrote roughly two decades ago, it feels like a fine time to call it quits on this particular author.

Kent says

Ender's Game is one of most favorite books. It was so good that Card managed to tell the same exact story all over again from a different angle (with Ender's Shadow) and still make it fantastic. Shadow of the Hegemon was fine.

But this--this is a miserable book. It made me physically ill. He took the characters that I knew and loved and made them spout hetero-normative bullshit and "BABIES BABIES BAAAAAABIES," said Petra.

I haven't disliked a book this much in recent memory. 2/3rds in and I couldn't finish it.

Kat says

The Post-Bugger war for control of Earth grinds on, but Card's main interest seems to lie in philosophizing at length--mostly about the innate, evolutionary need of humans to reproduce, whether they like it or not, and he uses formerly-interesting characters Bean and Petra as his mouthpieces. The villain, Achilles, becomes even more of a ridiculous bugbear, and less of an actual character.

I have a great deal of respect for Card as an author, but the "Shadow" series, after such a magnificent start in *Ender's Shadow*, is increasingly looking like a good idea gone horribly awry.

Spider the Doof Warrior says

Petra- I want to have your babies, Bean, even if you have a fatal genetic disease that might pass down to the kids and kill them painfully at a young age.

Bean-I don't want you to have my babies because I have a fatal genetic disease that might pass down to the kids and kill them painfully at a young age and anyway, I'm not human.

Anton-Even though I'm gay, I'm going to marry a woman and have babies with her because you can't be gay and be part of the Web of Life. You have to marry someone of the opposite sex, even if you don't love them and have babies, so have babies because that's the whole point of life is to just have babies, babies and more babies.

Bean-Ok, I will have babies.

Other stuff happens.

There. Saved you money. Man, I hate this book.

OK. I'm sorry, but Orson Scott Card is GROSS. Do you have any idea how young these characters are when they get married and decide to have babies even though none of their relationship is believable? SUPER MEGA UNDERAGED! UGH! You have a gay dude lecturing them about marrying people of the opposite sex and having babies, but how the hell is being two legal gay people together such a bad thing but two CHILDREN marrying such a good thing? Never mind that them having kids didn't even make any kind of logical sense in this book? In fact the whole plot is people doing something stupid and bad things happening as a result. I hate that kind of plot SO MUCH!

Ross_E1 says

This book is

Buckets says

This is the first truly bad book I have read by Card. The story from the political standpoint is not terrible. It is just a "what-if" future political thriller in the Enderverse. However, Card is basically telling you that you should have babies, and that babies are the most important thing in the world, and if you don't have all the babies you can have by the time you die you are selfish and stupid and don't really know what life is all about.

OK. I get it, Orson. You like babies.

I think my thoughts on this book are tainted by the author's often annoyingly one-dimensional religious philosophy, on which he has written numerous essays and such.

Stephen says

AND LET ME MAKE THIS PERFECTLY CLEAR...

For those of you interested in learning to make hand "shadow puppets" or reading more about the movie starring "James Marsters," I invite you to check out their entries in Wikipedia for more information. For those interested in the origin and history of the band consisting of Alex Turner of the Arctic Monkeys and Miles Kane of The Rascals...well...you should be ashamed of yourselves and I will not be an enabler for you.

For this review, we will be discussing the book by Orson Scott Card...

4.5 to 5.0 stars. This is book three in the Shadow series, following Ender's Shadow and Shadow of the Hegemon. For those that have not read the Shadow of the Hegemon, there may be some spoilers below as the plot summary deals with the consequences of the previous book. Otherwise, I will try to avoid all but very minor spoilers regarding this book, though I do assume that if you are reading this you have some general familiarity with the Ender series and role that Ender's brother plays in the series.

Anyway, this story picks up shortly after Shadow of the Hegemon with Peter Wiggin now the Hegemon of Earth. Despite the title, Peter is really nothing more than a figure head as the major power in the world following the events of the previous book is the Chinese Empire. As with the previous book, the plot unfolds as a massive game of "Risk" with Peter, Bean and their allies trying break the Chinese power bloc and create conditions for a truly peaceful and unified Earth. Standing in their way is the massive Chinese army and the central villain of the Shadow series, Achilles.

In addition, an important subplot of the book involves Bean and Petra's growing relationship and their attempt to cope with Bean's "condition" while staying on the run from Achilles and his global network.

While not quite as good as Shadow of the Hegemon, I still thought this was a FANTASTIC book and

certainly worthy of 5 stars. The writing is great, the tactical/strategic plot elements are superb and the dialogue between the "gifted" characters continues to be incredibly well done. I am looking forward to reading the last book in the series and seeing how everything ends. Highly Recommend!!

Nominee: Locus Award for Best Science Fiction Novel.

Jacob says

March 2010

Previously: Shadow of the Hegemon

It's been, oh, some amount of time since the ~~Buggers~~ Formics were defeated and Ender was exiled from Earth. A lot has happened since. Peter Wiggin is a nearly-powerless Hegemon working in Brazil; the great powers are doing whatever the hell they want; Achilles, the great mastermind behind it all, has been freed from the Chinese and taken to the one place he hasn't had an opportunity to screw over yet; and Bean is in love. Or so we're told. What we aren't told is how old Bean is. Last time we got numbers, at the start of Ender's Shadow, Bean was four. Approximately. And now he's holding hands and kissing and talking about marriage and babies. What is he, eight?

Nonetheless, Bean is a married boy man, and his wife (*wife?!*) Petra wants to have babies. Bean's babies. But Bean doesn't want babies, because Bean is a genetically altered super-genius who won't live past twenty and doesn't want to doom his kids to the same fate. But Petra wants to have his babies. And so on.

Meanwhile, the balance of power shifts a few times in Asia, Peter Wiggin discovers he was a fool to trust the one person everyone else knew not to trust, and a final showdown between two old enemies changes the world very little. But none of that matters, because family is the most important thing, and children are special.

I think I know where all this is going.

Next: Shadow of the Giant

Bailey Kleinberg says

As the Ender series progresses each book gets significantly sadder. I thought Ender's Shadow was brilliant, I love the parallel novel and I love Bean.

This book had some fatal flaws however. What happened to Petra? When did she become a character whose only desire is to pop out a couple of kids and take the minivan to soccer practice? Was she not the best sharpshooter in the whole Battle School? It's as if Card redefines her entire life by the fact that she was the one who cracked up there on Eros so many years ago. She cracked because Ender pushed her hardest (besides Bean who we know is a genetically altered super human who could take it). So she breaks down, so Bean has to take care of her and all of a sudden she's reliant on him to support her in all things, she's degraded to role of wife and mother and nothing else. All she snivels about is her babies, not the fate of the world. In fact, the theme of women stopping work or contributions to the world and just having babies is

mentioned to EVERY female character including the brave Virilomi and Mama Wiggin. But I digress...

The worst of it was the painfully obvious speech by ::gasp:: gay character Anton who basically says "it doesn't matter if I'm gay, I'm going to marry this woman and make some babies (ew, icky, lady parts!) because that's the only way to be a part of society that matters. Okay, so we have aliens, space travel, and a gay couple can't get a surrogate and have as many babies as they want? I guess that technology disappeared.

Final verdict: if you are a completist like me and just want to read the whole series then you have to do it. If you can let go, do it. This shames the previous books. I could seriously write a book about how he destroyed Petra. I need a drink....

Sarah Capps says

Well, Card basically destroyed Petra. At one point she was one of the best and only female battle school kids. Now all she wants out of life is babies, apparently, but this isn't a strange character shift because making babies is the deepest desire of all women, or so Card would have me believe. Also, Card needed to pick up a thesaurus and find a word synonymous with 'babies.' I also felt the extent to which a lot of the characters feared Achilles never seemed to be supported in the work. Whenever he had lines they just came across as ridiculous. All in all, a preachy story without much real action.

Sean says

The single worst reading experience of my adult life.

If you're like me and blissfully ignored Orson Scott Card's personal politics and enjoyed both the Ender and Shadow series, your ignorance ends sharply with Shadow Puppets. Card's views on homosexuality, abortion, and Muslims are not only apparent, but central to the plot line, despite no relevance to the previous books. And what makes it even more unbearable is that after going out of his way to fit all of these into Bean's story, very little even happens in the book at all. It's completely devoid of action, and don't get me started on the George Lucas-esque romance dialogue.

I was tempted to stop reading, but I finished it just to confirm what I already knew. There was no redeeming aspect to Shadow Puppets, just unrecognizable characterization, overwrought dialogue about battle philosophies for battles that never take place, and lots of preaching. I don't care how many of his beliefs you agree or disagree with, none of those things had a place in this story, and it is sadly the last book I will read in the Enderverse.

Alex says

I've got to speak some truth to power: This is a lousy book.

Ender's Game was pretty cool. The other three books in the Enderverse were progressively less good, but still all right. The first two books in the Beanverse (or whatever we want to call them)... not so great, but kind of fun, I guess? But this one. Oh my.

Why did I finish this? I admit that I read half of it six months ago, was so bored with it that I put it down again, and then just recently finished it up because I didn't have anything else I was willing to commit myself to.

What makes this book *awful*, even amongst the relative standards of Orson Scott Card (who is not exactly a spry writer), is the *writing*. The *entire book* consists of one unrealistic, idiotic, poorly-written dialogue after another, where two "geniuses" decide to hash over strategy again and again and again. There's about 10 minutes of action in the entire book, and absolutely *zero* new, interesting ideas. (And heaps, heaps, and heaps of crazy-ass neo-conservatism.) The strategy is dull ("We'll attack them, then these other guys will roll in, and then those guys will switch sides!"), much of it is entirely predictable, and, my God, the endless hashing over the joy of babies... WTF?

Ender Scott Card has officially made me hate the word "baby." Baby, baby, baby. The characters just can't shut up about babies for the last quarter of the book. It's a curious thing for all of the world's super-geniuses to spend their time hashing over. Yes, yes, it serves the slow-as-mollasses plot, technically, but jeez. Enough already!

The worst is when Card tries to write pillow-talk and love-talk. Did he grow up on the set of a Lifetime movie? The dialogue *reeks*. And goes *on and on and on*.

If I had been the editor, I'd have named it *Sock Puppets*, because that's about as much individual personality as any character has in this stinker, and you could, without any difficulty, re-enact the entire contents of this book as a series of dull conversations between socks-on-hands.

So this book is where I draw the line. Goodbye, Enderverse! I should have quit while you were ahead. Probably shouldn't have started the Beanverse. But definitely should have stopped before *Shadow Puppets*, which is one of the few complete one-stars I've given a book. Totally boring and totally stupid.

Also I was really surprised that he cites *Guns, Germs, and Steel* as some kind of "inspiration" for the strategic discussions in this book. Don't let Mr. Card's endorsement keep you from reading *GGG* — it has absolutely nothing to do with anything that is said in this piece of crap.

Zachary Flessert says

Fundamentally, I don't think I can understand Orson Scott Card. Even if Bean is able to get into Achilles' head, I don't get why Card is writing such awful novels. He should have ended it all after *Children of the Mind* (which should have been annexed into *Xenocide*). Ender's Shadow may lie as the only exception.

The book is shallow, shamelessly upholds and proselytizes Christian values but you don't think about it because Card is using an atheist character to do it. While *Speaker* and *Xenocide* dealt with interesting science and went fairly deep philosophically (considering the type of book and market they had), this was just a flop. A mere jog to keep the Enderverse alive.

The dialogue is flat. The whole banter between Peter and his parents is so corny. The whispering between Bean and Petra induces high rpm eye rolling.

I'm done with the Enderverse. I may bookshelf *Game*, *Speaker*, *Xeno*, and *Shadow* for read-overs.

Moving on!

Mandie Mc says

I used to be the sort of person who prided herself on not quitting a book. Much as I flit from one project to another, leaving things unfinished, books and movies deserved my full efforts, no matter how abysmal they might seem in the beginning.

Thanks to a run of bad novels, I've changed my mind. Life is too short to finish a book that doesn't grip you. It's *definitely* too short to finish a book that makes you roll your eyes, chapter after chapter.

I trudged through the first hour or two of this audiobook with little interest. A rambling quasi-love story, it kept my mind busy while I did my duties as domestic engineer. However, I rarely thought about the story after I'd put it away, and it didn't draw me back in, enticing me to do my chores the way pretty much all of OSC's other books have done. This should have been my first clue that it wasn't worth it.

Then came the preaching.

Orson Scott Card, of whose religious and political beliefs I was blissfully unaware until after my first reading of the original Ender saga, claims not to preach through his fiction, unless he says he is (as in the Alvin Maker series, which is based loosely on the life of Joseph Smith). I could give him the benefit of the doubt, but that would just mean he is *painfully* unobservant of the underlying messages in his own writing.

From a diatribe against gay marriage (the character given this not-so-subtle soliloquy decides that, even though he's gay, he'll marry a single mother and use his pension to support them. Seriously.) to anti-abortion rhetoric that is pounded like a nail again and again, I just couldn't stomach it anymore.

So I've given up. I've got a to-read list a mile long, and I'm sure most of it deserves more attention than this drivel.

Anna Dalvi says

....and here Orson Scott Card goes off the deep end, and uses his characters to push the agenda of marriage being sacrosanct and between one man and one woman only.

I had heard he was opposed to same-sex marriage, but as the issue wasn't addressed in the books, I had thought he kept his writing separate from his political views. But dialogue in this book degenerated into a multi-page rant about a man marrying a woman is the meaning of life. Procreation is the meaning of the union, although he 'generously' allows that "even old people beyond mating" and people unable to have children can be "woven into the fabric".

Apparently we all have "...a deep hunger to find a person from that strange, terrifyingly other sex and make a life together."

Ugh.

