



# Shadowdale

*Scott Ciencin*

Download now

Read Online ➞

# Shadowdale

*Scott Ciencin*

## Shadowdale Scott Ciencin

An all-new digital version of one of the key titles in the entire Forgotten Realms novel line.

At the time of its original release, this series presented key events that impacted the entire Forgotten Realms world, and the effects of those events are still felt in current novels. This re-released series will have a cohesive cover design and all-new art. This title was originally released underneath the author pseudonym Richard Awlinson.

When the gods are banished from the heavens, they must travel through Faerun in the guise of mortals.

When four companions, last survivors of the Company of the Lynx, find themselves in possession of a mysterious amulet, they must escape death at the hand of Bane, god of murder.

When magic itself runs wild, no one can say that the most innocent of spells will not destroy the world.

## Shadowdale Details

Date : Published December 13th 2011 by Wizards of the Coast (first published April 1989)

ISBN :

Author : Scott Ciencin

Format : Kindle Edition 352 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Dungeons and Dragons, Forgotten Realms, Fiction, Role Playing Games

 [Download Shadowdale ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Shadowdale ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Shadowdale Scott Ciencin**

---

# From Reader Review Shadowdale for online ebook

## David Sarkies says

### Novelising the move from 1st to 2nd edition Dungeons & Dragons

24 March 2012

Back in 1989 it was decided by TSR that it was well and truly time to reinvigorate the AD&D system, and to be honest it was sorely needed. The game was about 20 years old at this stage and it had been evolving continuously with more complex and complicated rules being forever thrown on top of the pre-existing ones. The original game has come out as what was then known as the basic set, and had then moved onto more advanced rules. In describing these rules as advanced the better description would be complex and incredibly clunky. As such, in their infinite wisdom, TSR decided that a complete rewrite of the rules was needed, and thus out came 2nd edition (and every ten years since they have moved to further upgrade the rules, though I must admit that I am still quite happy with 3rd edition).

However, due to the extensive changes and reworking of the rules, the creators decided that they needed to bring in a huge change to the worlds as well, and at this stage the standard AD&D world was The Forgotten Realms. Thus they created a world wide event that would coincide with the new rules, and the result was a series of three novels and a series of three adventures dealing with the period that has come to be known as 'The Time of Troubles'.

The story is about a couple of the evil gods who decide to steal an artifact which in turn angered the great god Ao. As a result all of the gods were cast out of the heavens and into the Realms as punishment and were to wander around until the culprit stepped forward (which, being evil gods, they did not). As the gods wandered around the world they, as can be expected, came into conflict with each other, as well as setting themselves up in their favourite spots. Some of them even died, though there was a catch – if a god dies, they die quite spectacularly, and usually in the form of a nuclear explosion.

This was not going to leave the people of the Realms safe, because not only do they have these gods wandering around, but all of the magic has gone completely haywire, so as it turns out (surprise, surprise) a group of adventurers decide to go off and attempt to solve this problem. In the Realms, if a solution to a problem is needed, then one travels to visit Elminster, which is what the adventurers do, and which is why this story is called Shadowdale (namely because that is where Elminster lives).

I will continue my discussion about the series when I move on to the next book in the series, and will discuss my thoughts on this particular trilogy upon reaching the third one. Needless to say, I will flag at this point that I would not be recommending this trilogy to anybody: it is a simple waste of time and energy and was written purely to provide a bridge between 1st and 2nd edition AD&D. While it may have been fun at the time, currently, as far as I am concerned, 20 years after the event that triggered these novels, they are pretty much obsolete and really only for those die hard Dungeons & Dragons fans who want a bit of nostalgia, and even then there are much better books out there than these ones.

---

## Senshi says

No esperaba mucho de esta novela y el resultado ha sido peor. Sin contar la mala traducción que empaña todo el libro, nos encontramos ante un grupo de adolescentes hormonados en cuerpos de adultos queriendo salvar el mundo. La historia no es muy allá, los personajes son muy planos y el final es una chorrada.

Si eres un rolero intensito de 15 años te flipara en colores.

---

## A.M. Werner says

My love for fantasy fiction was truly challenged with this offering by Richard Awlinson (Pen name for Scott Ciencin). Shadowdale: Book One of The Avatar Trilogy is difficult to review because there was so much I disliked. I'm still unsure why I finished reading it - and because I finished it, I gave it two stars. And as hard as it is, I'll try to evoke the past and replay some of it to write a proper review.

Ao, the Maker of All Things, informs without warning, a handful of lesser gods that the Tablets of Fate have been stolen and he's holding them responsible - as well as having been 'a millennium of disappointment'. Ao banishes these lesser gods to the Realms where they were previously worshiped so they may live as a human. Ao transforms them into mystical lights that must find and possess a human.

From there on, we have an enormous story, so enormous I felt the author was having difficulty controlling and conveying it to the reader. There were many characters, gods and humans and worshipers alike and none of them was interesting or well-written. They are often referred to, not by name but by an attribute.

The Realms meanwhile had magic but it was made unstable by the fall of these gods. The fallen gods, however, possessing humans, still possess quite a bit of their previous godly skills - and still they prove to be extremely incompetent.

The four so-called heroes were not heroic and I wasn't drawn to any of them or their purposes. Nothing seemed to matter but getting to the end of this book. Pretty sure I'll not read the rest of the trilogy although I hear from some that the third book is better.

---

## Danijel says

*Ah, taj divni svijet Zaboravljenih kraljevstava...*

Prilikom preslagivanja starih knjižica naišao sam na ovaj zaboravljeni dragulj iz moje srednjoškolske povijesti i nisam mogao izdržati ponovno ga ne pročitati. Izdao ga je dvano propali nakladnik Strijelac koji se specijalizirao za izdanja **Forgotten realmsa**, svijeta Dungeons and Dragons svijeta igara na ploči, kao i mojih nikad nadmašenih all-time video-igračkih favorita Baldur's Gate i Icewind Dale. Dječaci snovi Eda Greenwooda obistinili su se krajem osamdesetih kad je kreirao svijet Forgotten Realmsa i stvorio cijeli niz licenci od igara na ploči do romana...

Originalno trilogija, koja je kasnije porasla na pentologiju, služila je kao tranzicija prilikom prelaženja scenarija Realmsa s prve na drugu ediciju AD&D pravila (primarno igre na ploči). A napravljena je i kao modul za igranje pod istim nazivima. Prvi dio nosi naziv Shadowdale, po regiji mitskog Faeruna kojom je vladao lik čarobnjaka Elminstera. Iako je kao autor naznačen Richard Awlinson, to je zapravo pseudonim Scotta Ciencina, kao i ostalih koji su bili uključeni u stvaranje trilogije.

Roman se događa u **Vrijeme nevolja**, kad su bogovi Faeruna hodali Kraljevstvima, protjerani od vrhovnog boga Aoa zbog krađa Tablica Sudbine. Prognani su svi bogovi osim Helma koji je ostao čuvati Nebesa. Već po klasičnom obrascu FRP igara stvara se družina junaka koja će krenuti u misiju pronalaska izgubljenih Tablica. Družinu čine ratnik Kelemvor Lyonsbane, svećenik Adon od Sune, čarobnica Midnight i redovnik Cyric. Kako je Midnight bila obdarena darom Mystre, božice magije, na njezin nagovor, s junacima kreće prvo do prvo nebeskog stepeništa gdje bogovi uvide da je povratak na Nebesa za njih zatvoren zauvijek. Tu misija ne staje jer si junaci uzimaju za cilj vratiti ponovno mir u Faerun i bogove na nebese. A u tome će im

pomoći mag Elminster. Magija u tim vremenima je nestabilna i avatari Bogova hodaju zemljom. Glavni antagonisti su Bane, bog rata i Myrkul, bog mrtvih.

Pravo fantasy džepno izdanje s dobrom i tešnom pričom, zanimljivim likovima, akcijom, preobratima i fino spredanom mitologijom u pozadini. Samo me podsjetilo koliko fantasy znam biti dobar. Strijelac je propao prije negoli je dovršio trilogiju, a kamoli pentologiju... Dajem peticu, ne samo zbog nostalgije, nego zbog toga koliko predivnih svjetova je ljudska mašta sposobna osmisлити. Ah još jednom...

---

## **Daniel Millard says**

After hearing so much about this trilogy, I came to it with (probably unreasonably) high expectations, and was definitely let down.

The only really good parts of this book involve Cyric, his interactions with other characters, and his internal struggles. Kelemvor is interesting, but the clumsy writing often makes him come across as a stupid brute that's incapable of thinking outside the box.

Most everything else is quite heavy-handed. Descriptions are often crude, transitions abrupt, characters rather one-dimensional, and the entire atmosphere quite juvenile. Powerful characters like Bane, Mystra, and Elminster succumb to anime-isms, and by that I mean: they're SO POWERFUL that the only way to break them is for things to get EVEN MORE DRAMATIC AND POWERFUL. This is a frustrating and eye-roll inducing way of writing, and unfortunately became tiring very quickly.

Interestingly, the god's avatars are generally decent characters, and reasonably well-portrayed if, again, clumsily. The ending was poor enough that it has almost put me off reading the second entry, and the book in general dragged so much that it took quite some time to get around to finishing.

All that said, it's still worth reading...once, to get some sense of atmosphere around the Time of Troubles.

---

## **B.K. says**

This book tries to be two things at once. Fortunately, it does one of those things very well: it is a fun action romp that gets you interested in the setting and makes you want to play the D&D adventure of the same name (circa 1988). Unfortunately, it does a fairly poor job of being the first installment of an epic fantasy involving world-changing events. The real let-down, however, is that it fails to even be a serviceable fantasy jaunt with believable character development and an unbroken plot. While the author does a good job of making you believe the world is in chaos and gets you hooked into the characters, he just let's the ball roll downhill once it gets going. Character motivations are one dimensional, as are the cardboard cut-out RPG archetype characters. The most developed backstory is that of Kelemvor, and it's such a heavy handed element that the author all but asks for forgiveness for making him act in a completely unbelievable manner. We also must suffer through a journey of rapid character development so unwarranted the characters themselves seem confused by their actions. To make this worse what seems like a few days as you read the book ends up being a journey that spans a month! I won't spoil anything, but suffice it to say the ending of this book is nothing more than a set of contrived excuses to top it off with a large amount of action and makes you feel like everything you read before this should have been squeezed into a prologue. For a trilogy

that is supposed to cover one of the most ground-breaking events in the history of the Forgotten Realms, Shadowdale feels too much like a junior high D&D game transcript to do the backstory justice.

---

## **Miss Ryoko says**

I sort of have mixed feelings about this book.

The writing was redundant (seriously, how many times do I have to read blue-white (insert word here) or the same word two or three times in a sentence?) and at times very quick (as if the author got bored with writing so he just wrote some real quick junk to take the place of something that could have been good), the characters...well, there really wasn't any I cared for, and the story, for the most part, wasn't terribly exciting.

But.... I enjoyed the book. I was interested and read it fairly quickly (compared to the last book I read). Perhaps I was interested in the book because it is slightly educational for me... I am playing in my first D&D campaign so I was able to gain some gaming knowledge from the book.

So, despite my mixed feelings, the book was okay and I'll read the rest. I hope they get a bit more exciting as the story progresses.

---

## **Ranting Dragon says**

<http://www.rantingdragon.com/review-o...>

Shadowdale was first published in 1989 as the leading novel in The Avatar Trilogy, arguably one of the most significant series of Realms novels in terms of their effect on the setting. It was written under the pseudonym Richard Awlinson, which I always believed was to protect the actual authors (Troy Denning and Scott Ciencin) from the ensuing fallout. Shadowdale begins the tale of the fall of the Gods of the Realms. Chaos, destruction, and death abound as the Gods themselves walk the earth in mortal shells.

### **Even the Gods have Gods**

The premise of the story is this: the Gods and Goddesses of the Forgotten Realms themselves answer to an over-being called Ao. Ao summons all of the deities into his presence and informs them that the Tablets of Fate (which define and describe the individual duties of each deity) have been stolen, and their juvenile jockeying for power, instead of managing the world as they should have, has disappointed their master. As punishment, Ao forces them all into human bodies and casts them down to the Realms to, I guess, learn humility or something.

Naturally, they just continue their juvenile scheming and jockeying for power. This leads to a number of, frankly, ridiculous changes to the existing structure of Forgotten Realms geography, religion, magic, you name it. We're talking dead Gods, mortals elevated to Godhood, the introduction of "dead" and "wild" magic zones in the world, earthquakes, floods, and all the good bible stuff. It's such a fundamental change to so many things, done so early in the life of the setting that it makes one wonder just what TSR was thinking.

### **Some compelling characters**

Major plot element aside, here's the actual meat of this story: the adventures of a very typical D&D party

(composed of a fighter, cleric, mage, and thief, exactly how D&D was designed) are actually quite good. As much as I may disagree in isolation about the changes that were made to the Realms in this book, watching these characters deal with something as significant as Gods walking the earth was very engaging. They all have their own problems going on, were thrust together more by circumstance than choice, and experience plenty of conflicts among themselves; all this combined made for some really great storytelling.

One of the two most interesting characters is the party fighter, Kelemvor Lyonsbane, who suffers from one of the most original curses I've seen in a long time. Some early ancestor of his was a greedy jerk who fell afoul of some gypsies (as you do) who cursed him (as they do) such that he could only ever engage in selfless acts without any desire for compensation or reward. If he ever did something for his own profit, he would transform into a werebeast and kill people. However, somewhere down the line, the terms of the curse flipped around. Kelemvor can ONLY do things for his own personal selfish benefit. He needs to put a price on everything, and do nothing for the sake of the act. It makes for some really amazing scenes when the group is basically trying to save the world, and he's trying to negotiate a price for it.

The other great character is the party thief Cyric. He's the best kind of burgeoning villain. Pragmatic rather than malevolent, he believes what he sees and not much else. He's cynical, suspicious, and rational. One of the early introductory bits of history about Cyric involves him directly facing the Goddess Tymora, to whom he did not tithe a proper amount of gold. When asked whether or not he believes in her, and whether that is why he would not sacrifice to her, the response is basically, "If you're not a goddess, you don't deserve my gold; if you are a goddess you have no need for it, so why bother?" In a world like the Realms where the supernatural is so commonplace, the logic and rationality is actually quite refreshing. Cyric becomes a much larger fixture in the history of the Realms as a result of actions that occur during this trilogy, and giving him such a relateable grounding helps establish him later in the series.

### **Some strong opinions**

The Avatar Trilogy turned out to be something of a polarizer for fans of the Forgotten Realms. It was once suggested to me by a source who will remain nameless that many of the changes these books made to the setting were done without much consulting with the other authors; a few works in progress had to be changed if not all but scrapped to account for the new state of things. This is where my almost certainly false idea about why the book was published under a pseudonym originates. It was also the catalyst for plenty of questions for various authors and other TSR staff at conventions for a few years following the publication of the series.

As a lifelong reader of the Forgotten Realms, I don't like a lot of what happened in this book and this trilogy. It just pushed so much existing lore out the window and replaced it for evidently no necessary reason. This is a lot like retconning a series to make a future mistake into truth. Instead they seem to be suggesting that they'd screwed up somewhere in earlier works and wanted to reset the world more to their liking, but the changes they went with remain very strange to me.

### **Why should you read this book?**

If you enjoy epic fantasy without necessarily having to slog through 10+ books and thousands of pages, this is a great book for you. The whole trilogy is only about 1000 pages end to end and all done in the classic action-oriented realms style that made it so popular. Not to mention, you have Gods battling over cities, magic going awry throughout the world, and an intrepid band of heroes facing impossible odds to try and save the world from utter destruction.

It also serves as one of the more integral "realms history" books in the catalogue. So much changes with how the Realms function as a result of this series that in order to really understand a lot of events of later works,

you need to understand what happened during this time. Many elements are referenced only obliquely from here on out, and if you don't read it here, you might find certain things confusing or hard to follow down the road.

Whether you like, dislike or don't care about the changes these books made to the setting, they are inarguably among the most important and impacting entries in the Forgotten Realms bibliography.

---

### **Ron Gastgeb says**

I recently read (OK, listened to) this book for the first time in twenty years. It's amazing how much nostalgia distorts one's memory, making the mediocre seem better than it was.

Such was the case with Shadowdale. The story being told, of the gods being banished to the mortal realm and the chaos that ensues, has the potential to be very good. Unfortunately, the story suffers in the execution. One gets the feeling that the author was handed an AD&D adventure module and told to write a novel to go with it. The author makes frequent use of AD&D terminology in this book, to the point that I wonder just how confusing it would be for a non-gamer.

As I mentioned previously, the story being told is actually good, and is quite an important one in the history of the Forgotten Realms. Unfortunately, if you know little of the Realms or if you're not a gamer, you probably won't enjoy this book. This is a 2.5 star book. The extra half star is for the gamers and Forgotten Realms junkies who will be willing to wade through the "converted module" prose to get at the story of the Time of Troubles.

---

### **Karmakosmik says**

Storia potenzialmente molto interessante, ma sviluppata in maniera non molto convincente. I personaggi del party principale sono ben caratterizzati, ma ogni tanto la storia s'incaglia in momenti di stanca, per poi ripartire all'improvviso di slancio. Ottima invece è la battaglia finale alle porte di Shadowdale.

---

### **Steve Ragusin says**

It's hard going back and reading these first books in the Forgotten Realms setting. I'm trying to judge these books based off my current reading and not factor in that this is the infantile stage of the world. These first books are classics, without doubt, but reading them today, they're just not that good. They rely too much on the gaming aspect. I do like the premise of this series however.

As of now I am continuing to read from the beginning of Forgotten Realms, and stuck in 1989.

Next up is the 2nd book in this series Tantras.

---



## Red Siegfried says

Well, I made two other attempts to get started on this book in the past and found it fairly dull but I guess I just needed to give it some more time to get started. So far so good, but it would be a bit more interesting if it wouldn't follow the standard TSR books formula of character introduction, a monster fight, character development, monster fight, character development, monster fight ad nauseum.

Did I mention the monster fights just kind of happen ... seemingly they're thrown in after the story is written to break up annoying things like dialog and plot progression.

Not a terrible book, and it is growing on me. Hopefully I can make it through the next two books of the Avatar Trilogy.

Now that I've finished it, I found the final two or three chapters more exciting, what with there being a big battle and all. I'm still giving it two stars due to the cardboard cutout characters with secrets syndrome this book seems afflicted with, and it's uncanny ability to go for what seems like several pages without any actual dialog. Finally, in the very last paragraph of the book, what seemed to me like a really unnecessary cliffhanger occurred. Perhaps I'll find out if this anything to do with the overall plot arc in the next book of the trilogy - Tantras.

---

## Michael Shurtleff says

Oy, beyond oy, vae and gevalt! I came across this paperback, in near-mint condition, on a used paperback rack at a gas station somewhere in Kansas. I thought I had scored a find. But...well, this story is awful. Pace is about the only thing it has going for it. Both dialogue and narrative are a hodgepodge of fantasy genre tropes and gender equality posturing that is shallow enough to be an insulting facade. The plot is no better. The characters are all inconsistent and bipolar, randomly doing and feeling things with no discernible motive whatsoever (apart from exposition, I mean.) The protagonists are unsympathetic and without depth. The main antagonist comes across as someone straight out of a 1980's Saturday morning cartoon. I counted no less than three glaring instances of deus ex machina. It is also never a good thing when game mechanics can be discerned throughout a story; this one doesn't even try to hide them. The author even name-drops several spells, straight out of the AD&D 2d Edition Player's Handbook! This story could have been so much more than it is. At least none of the protagonists is a Mary Sue...

---

## Alexander Stormborn says

I enjoy the Forgotten Realms setting, especially the diverse pantheon. *Shadowdale* was the first Forgotten Realms novel I read, primarily due to my fear of the novels destroying my vision of the Forgotten Realms setting and what it would be. I wanted my own interpretation of the setting to paint the canvas of Forgotten Realms, rather than an author trying to sell a book. Going into this, I was concerned, but I decided that due to my appreciation of the Forgotten Realms' Pantheon, that if I were to read an Forgotten realms book it should be from the *Avatar* series.

*Shadowdale* was a bit of a disappointment. The gods were much more flawed than I thought they should be. Because of the overload/high god, Ao, mentioned early in the prologue a picture is painted which shows that

the realms will never change, that good nor evil will ever truly overcome one another and that the fight between good and evil will be kept in balance as to not favor one side over the other because Ao will never allow it. Ao is pissed because of the theft of his Tablets of Fate, yet when the theft was clearly done by the hands of evil gods, Ao takes no sides and punished both good and evil without a second thought.

The only thing which made this book enjoyable was the comical relief of Adon the Sunite. The other three of the four main adventures, we already know are destined to one day become gods themselves. For characters bound to become gods, I felt that their stories and personalities were a bit weak.

I will not throw out any spoilers, but Kelemvor's *secret*, is fairly weak and random. Midnight, who is destined to become the future Mystra had potential to be more interesting, yet her romance and sudden feelings for the womanizing, apparently self-serving, and disrespectful Kelemvor is also random and does not come off as being natural and true, but felt forced. Cyric was alright, but he needed something a bit extra to drive him.

And well, do not even get my started on Elminster, who does appear in this book. He is unimaginably obnoxious, unrelatable, and unrealistic even in a fantasy setting that I legitimately became furious at this book for how they had this wizardly jackass breeze through this story, showing up just to remind people he is as powerful as the gods themselves with little to know burden felt upon him despite the wild struggles of everyone else in the world.

This is a quick pace, shallow story which is difficult to relate to, possessing characters with no significant quirks or depth. If it were not for the cleric of Sune, Adon, this book would have felt flat. *Shadowdale* is not a horrible book, and I likely will read the rest of the books in the trilogy plus the Cyric trial books for completeness, but it certainly is not a series I would recommend, and it has left me pessimistic regarding my expectations of future Forgotten Realms novels.

Overall, my real rating for *Shadowdale* would be a 2.5/5 rather than a flat 2/5.

---

## **Katrin says**

I do like the dragonlance series and have read so many books in the forgotten realms. So of course I did enjoy this one merely because of the world it plays in. I must say though, that I have read much better stories. I know that these books are often based on role playing books or campaigns and that gives them a certain direction. I don't like it though if this is all too obvious and you can basically replay the battles and scenes in a pure rpg structure. The characters did become a bit familiar although I could not really bond with any of them. A good story and gripping tale, but details could have been better.

---