



Going Rogue

Drew Hayes

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Adventuring is a costly affair, and while the tolls are often paid in blood, gold can drain away just as quickly. The party's trek out of Solium and across the lands of Alcatham has left them with only a handful of gold between them. Fortunately, they have drawn near Camnarael, Alcatham's capital, where all manner of quests--and rewards--await.

But all is not as expected in the capital. Unusual occurrences have been happening throughout Camnarael: figures in the shadows making unsavory bargains, attackers harassing innocent parishioners, and adventurers from all over the land gathering to partake in a Grand Quest offered by the royal family. Most curious of all are the rumors that speak of a strange artifact serving as the reward for this rare and legendary quest... an artifact that sounds just a bit too familiar to the former NPCs.

Going Rogue Details

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Author : Drew Hayes

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From Reader Review Going Rogue for online ebook

Logan Horsford says

I had been looking forward to this book.

Unfortunately, it seems to have been rewritten by Mr. Plodding and Dull.

I don't know what the hell happened but it seems that the pacing of the book has slowed down so much that getting half way through the book felt like war and peace.

Yes, there seems to be some interesting stuff building in the background but getting there is none of the fun, all of the pain.

It's quite a pity since I enjoyed the first two books.

Cloak88 says

Third in the series and going on strong!

Our NPC Adventures are going strong, they are getting stronger and slowly hone their skills. But as it turns out: Adventuring is rather costly. For all the good they have done and the people they have helped there is one thing they haven't really done yet.... Questing. Now faced with a dwindling coin-purse they seek out Camnarael, Alcatham's capital the hub of all quest in the area and take on the time honoured activity of questing.

This novel felt near perfect. Mr. Hayes writes his characters with his usual flair for realism, humor and depth. Add to that a slice of life feel to the story and an interesting narrative and I was hooked from the first few pages. With the added bonus of some Meta Humor, I felt myself smiling from cover to cover.

A worthy third instalment in the series.

Mike says

Review of NPCs

Review of Split the Party

If I didn't know any better I would say that this book series (Spells, Swords, & Stealth) was written specifically for my sensibilities. Great concept, fantastic characters, compelling plot, excellent character development, and a really fascinating universe. It would have been very easy for the the idea behind this book series to run out of steam. But Hayes has shown quite clearly that this series isn't a one trick pony. We are well beyond the simple "What is NPCs had to pretend to be PCs in a universe that follow RPG rules?" and are now emotionally invested in the characters and now have a fascinating cross-universe conspiracy of some sort.

One thing I noticed in the previous book, *Split the Party*, was that everyone in the NPC group got some degree of advancement in their abilities and skills except for the rogue. Well, as you can guess from the title of this book, he gets his due this book. Hayes, thus far, has done a very nice job bring some characters to the front of action and letting others just do their thing in the background. Instead of giving every character an equal amount of space in each book his treatment of page space is very organic. Over the course of three books it has been a pretty even split, but within books Hayes highlights a few of his characters and lets them shine. In that way it reminded me of *Rogues of the Republic*, another fantasy series with a large ensemble cast.

Even though the series has gone beyond its initial conceit of NPCs caught up in a PC world, it has by no means left that behind. While our heroes have been adventuring for a while, they still haven't gotten used to the adventuring lifestyle. They are shocked by how much adventuring gear costs. A simple magic item might be worth as much as several decades of wages for a farmer or guard. Where they stand agog at it, adventurers/PCs are more than happy to many times that much on a slightly better set of armor. And where PC adventurers happily charge into battle (a battle that, at worst, would make them create new characters) the NPCs take a much more cautious approach to a challenge (and, hence, survive). Hayes does a nice, subtle job, shining the spotlight the weird way people run their RPG characters in these sorts of adventures.

Layered on top of all the typical adventuring hijinks is The Bridge: a strange artifact that appears to be capable of influencing events in our world. I don't want to spoil too much of this book, but we are shown a much wider conspiracy of some sort that really ups the stakes, both in the RPG world and ours. (Plus Mr. Peppers, the greatest boar in literature, appears to be more than meets (or doesn't meet) the eye!!!)

So, simply put, this book continues in the excellent footsteps of the first two books. It was an exciting and engaging read with a perfect balance of action, world building, and character development. I could ask for nothing more in fantasy series and would happily read this series until I am six feet under and pushing daisies.

Becky says

I'm just going to say it, I love everything Drew Hayes does. That being said, I think the NPC series is my personal favorite.

In this one, we get to see Eric increase his rogue skills while the rest of the party prepares for a huge boss fight. It was fun to meet Elora and all of that, but I'm particularly intrigued by the OOC stuff going on with the tabletop players.

Since the first book was pretty much an ensemble novel with the main focus on Thistle and the second one was mostly about Grumph and his mage skills and this one was about Eric and being a rogue, can we safely assume that book four will be about Gabrielle. I can't wait to see how that plays out, especially considering what happens to her in this book.

Bring it on Mr. Hayes, I'll be ready and waiting!

Jams says

This is a hilarious series. A good read for anyone nerdy enough to have played a table top game or two. There is some language that might be offensive to some.

Rob says

Executive Summary: As the title would indicate this book focuses heavily on rogues which is definitely right up my alley. This series continues to be a lot of fun, and I'm eager to see where the overarching story will end up.

Audiobook: Roger Wayne does another fantastic job as a narrator. He does a variety of voices adding that little extra something to the audio book that makes it a great option for reading this book.

Full Review

In D&D and most fantasy games, I've always favored Rogues. My stupid amount of playtime on my World of Warcraft rogue can attest to this fact. So it wasn't a surprise to me that I've enjoyed this book the most of the three so far.

The rogue training is awesome, and I wish my D&D rogue had done something nearly so interesting for his backstory. I'd love to see some aspects of this incorporated into class quest lines in WoW as well.

The writing is funny, with a lot of inside jokes to pen & paper RPG players to enjoy, that may go over the heads of those who haven't played. That shouldn't turn you away though, as Mr. Hayes has a great set of characters for you to love (or hate in the case of the Dudebro players).

The three interconnected stories with the notion of our world and the world of Spells, Swords and Stealth being connected by magic artifacts continues to scratch my cyberpunk itch, but in a largely fantasy setting.

Thistle & Co (The NPCs) continue to be me favorite story to follow, but Randal's group offer quite a bit to the story as well. And then there is our notorious group of asshole players, who I spent the entire book rooting against yet again.

There were some really interesting developments to the overarching plot-line that has me really looking forward to the next book in the series. I'm really interested to see where Mr. Hayes takes this next.

Mary Catelli says

The third book in the series. Spoilers ahead for NPCs and Split the Party.

It opens with Russell and his sister tracking down a booth at a convention. The booth has only a woman handing out modules to those on her list. Both of them are dumbfounded that he's on it; his sister admits for the first time she's starting to find it as weird as he does. Next chapter depicts our main team of NPCs deciding that, danger or not, the best route is to go into a city and find some quests to go on that will let them earn the gold they need for supplies. And the chapter after that depicts the three mean-spirited and vicious

players from NPCs acquiring a new GM and so a new game, even if they find it a bit odd. (No one else will take them on, they're that bad.)

So all three groups head to this city. Through minor quests and the prospect of the Grand Quest. Russell grows more convinced that the text in the module is changing through adventures that turn on Eric's getting properly trained, Thistle's immunity to poison, a mission to gather berries, cleaning rats out of a cellar, negotiating with a dragon, more of the artifact from before, and more. The whole interaction between our world and the game world looms larger, and we actually start to get glimpses of those behind it all.

Toomas Nigola says

This story is getting better with each passing book. Can hardly wait for the fourth book to be published.

Aaron Nagy says

I just couldn't wait for the audiobook any longer and I picked it up...and loved it. I feel like this might be the best one in the series yet. Drew Hayes seems to have really hit his stride on writing this series and it remains one my most anticipated light hearted fantasy adventures.

Lisa says

Mr. Peppers is back!!

What else do you need to know?

Kevin says

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NPCs (Spells, Swords, & Stealth #1)

Russell - DM
Terry, Glenn and Mitch - asshat players
Tim - novice player

Grumble - God of Minions

Grumph - half orc barte

May Dawney says

I have binged this series so hard! I can't wait for the next part to see what's become of our heroes! Still worth every star!

Miles says

3.75?

Nathaniel says

Disclaimer: I still think The Utterly Uninteresting and Unadventurous Tales of Fred, the Vampire Accountant is a better series.

I enjoyed the third installment in this series, although to some extent I think it shows the shortcomings of the brave, new self-publishing world. Namely: as the barrier to entry has been lowered, we're getting more talented voices out there but the quality of their craft is diminishing.

One of the mistakes I see self-published / alternative-published writers make is the kitchen-sink problem. The worst of all was Dennis E. Taylor in his *We Are Legion* (*We Are Bob*) series. By the end of the series, he had enough premises all being juggled at once to easily satisfy at least 4 different entire *series*. Don't get me wrong, the problem was also pretty amazing, those books were *fun*, but then he ultimately threw in the towel and just yanked the plug on the whole thing without a real ending.

Basically: self-published authors write a lot and never throw anything away. (An exaggeration, to be sure, but a directionally accurate one.) The end up with too many things going on at once. Some are great, some are just ok, and more often than not they don't really all mesh together or make sense.

There's some of that going on here. There's just *a lot* going on. In this book, we had three different *sets* of viewpoint characters:

1. A group of real-world, human role-players who are basically good guys (5 or 6 characters)
2. A group of real-world, human role-players who are jerks (3 characters)
3. A group of in-game NPCs (5 or 6 characters)

We're talking a dozen protagonists, and that's just the good guys. It's not just a diffuse cast of characters. It's also not really clear what the book is *about*. Drew has a lot of good idea, but I'm not sure they will all mesh together in one series or not.

Still, he's doing a really great job (so far) of holding things together, and I think the central plot-point he's working on might be strong enough to carry things through to the end. I hope so. I'm going to keep reading, for sure.

Timothy Boyd says

Nice wrap up to the trilogy with a good lead in for any future books. If you are a gamer you will enjoy this funny and entertaining series. RTecommended
