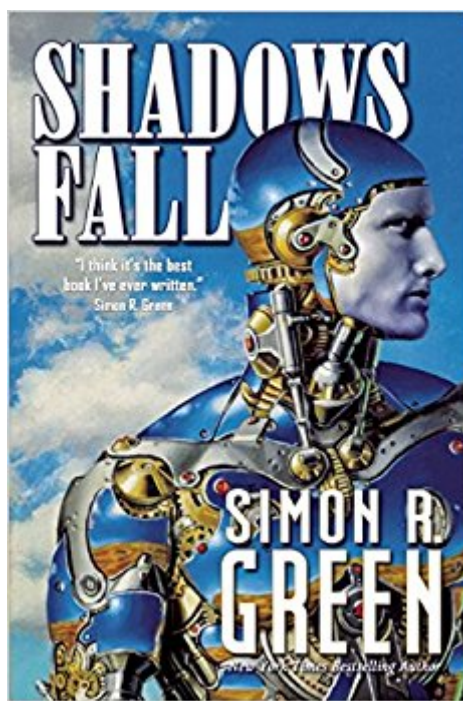


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Shadows Fall



Synopsis

Considered by the author to be his finest work yet, this is a novel of realistic detail, heartfelt emotion, and dazzling imagination that builds a world readers won't want to leave and spins a tale they won't want to end. In a town of amazing magicks, where the real and the imagined live side by side and the Faerie of legend know the automatons of the future, Time sees all—but even he cannot escape the prophecy of James Hart's return, which can only mean the death of Shadows Fall.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Shadows Fall is the first novel in a loosely connected set of urban fantasies. The town of Shadows Fall is "where dreams go to die. A place where nightmares end, and hope itself can rest ... You can find all sorts of things in Shadows Fall. There are doors that take you to anywhere ... Mostly, though, it's a town where people go to die. People, and other things." In this novel, it is Carnival once again in Shadows Fall. Leonard Ash stands alone watching the people come and go. He has been dead, a revenant, for three years now, but he is still not quite ready to go through the Forever Door. He hasn't talked to the Mayor, Rhea Frazier, since his death and he takes the time to do so now, discussing various people, including Lucas DeFrenz, who was killed in a freak traffic accident and then came back possessed by the angel Michael, God's Assassin. As they are talking, Suzanne Dubois interrupts them with a message from Richard Erikson, the Sheriff, to come quickly. They find Lucas DeFrenz lying dead in Suzanne's shack. Someone has killed God's Assassin. A few weeks later, James Hart returns to Shadows Fall after his mother and father have died in a car crash. He has been gone for twenty-five years and doesn't recognize anything. He watches the daily dogfight

between World War I biplanes (the English pilot crashes and burns this time), walks down a Parisian street and then one out of the European Dark Ages, and finally sits down on a wooden bench in a park. There he meets Leonard Ash, tells him his story, and receives some answers to his many questions. When they go to a bar, the sheriff joins them and remembers Hart's parents, telling him that his parents were linked to some sort of prophecy concerning the destruction of the Forever Door and they had packed up and left shortly thereafter. The sheriff recommends that Hart ask Old Father Time about the prophecy and his parents, but has to leave to quell a disturbance between overweight pixies and biker grizzly bears. Ash volunteers to accompany Hart to see Old Father Time and they cross the park to the Sarcophagus, converse with their dopplegangers just leaving the slab of stone, and then enter through a snowdome into a blizzard and hurry through the open door to get out of the swirling snow. Before reaching Time, they have to traverse through the Gallery of Bone, an unsettling experience in itself, and then pass Madelaine Kresh, Time's assistant. Time is currently a gaunt man in his late fifties or early sixties, dressed in Victorian finery. Old Father Time doesn't really explain the prophecy, but states that, since his return, Hart is at the heart of the matter. Hart also gets to meet Jack Fetch, a scarecrow with a carved turnip head, who has incredible strength and is fascinated by Hart, finally bowing to him. Doctor Mirren performs autopsies on all seven victims -- to date -- and finds nothing helpful. When he tries to raise the spirit of the last victim, he receives more than he expected and barely gets rid of it. Something very powerful has ensured that the dead tell no tales. Sean Morrison, resident bard, troublemaker and Sidhe groupie, visits Suzanne Dubois, seeking advice. He is thinking of asking the Unseeli Court, the rulers of Dark Faerie, to investigate the murders. While he is at Suzanne's shack, Lester Gold, an old hero from a canceled comic, drops by to get her advice as to how he can help. Suzanne suggests that the two team up to visit the Unseeli Court. This novel is a mystery quest of sorts, with more twists and turns than a mountain goat path. After accepting the underlying premise, one begins to be curious about the ever expanding cast and the bouncing ball plot. Then one begins to wonder how all these threads are going to be reconciled. After that, the hook is set and one is committed to finishing the book. The story really starts rocking around the half way point and turns into an action adventure about three-quarters through. In some ways, this story is the fantasy equivalent of Farmer's Riverworld. Somewhere/somewhen in *Shadows Fall* may be every character from every story that was ever told, published or filmed. The primal fears of the cavemen are probably wandering around the town right now! Highly recommended for Green fans and anyone who likes an urban fantasy story with elements of a mystery quest during a bloody invasion.

Shadow's Fall is one of those books that defines genre labeling, so it often gets overlooked by mainstream readers. It's a neat little story, combining elements of a modern fantasy, which reminded me of a meeting between Bradbury's "Something Wicked This Way Comes", and Baum's "Oz" stories. The mythical universe of Shadow's Fall comes alive in this book and the reader experiences the best feeling that one could have when reading such a book: you wish you could go there and visit the place for yourself. Higher praise is simply not possible. Green is better known for his fun, romping Deathstalker stories, but this one shows that the author can branch out and write a less traditional story (although in one of the Deathstalker books, there's a couple of chapters which reminded me of Shadow's Fall). All in all, a good story and highly recommended.

...I'm afraid I can't quite bring myself to do that. Simon R. Green is one of those authors who writes like few others: his plots are highly original, his characters are unique and memorable, and the dialogue is nothing short of brilliant. Shadows Fall continues the reality established in Green's Nightside series, with mostly successful results. Like the Nightside, Shadows Fall is one of those Middle America towns that is populated by literal legends and myths, much like the gods Neil Gaiman has written of in his recent novels (beings essentially brought into reality by belief), and ordinary people who seem to have wandered into the town when they were guided by destiny's hand. At the start of the book, a serial killer is roaming the town and striking out from the shadows. The first significant victim is known as God's Assassin and is supposedly possessed by at least a portion of the archangel Michael. Shortly after this, James Hart's return to his childhood home seems to coincide with a prophecy that nobody seems altogether too certain about. James is only the first of a slew of main characters (something fans of the Deathstalker series will be immediately familiar with) to step into the spotlight, and each one of them is instantly likeable and, well, inherently cool. The plot starts to follow an epic path within the first 50 pages and introduces its readers to (amongst others) superheroes from cancelled comic books, a lecherous-but-loveable brotherly duo who work as gravediggers but know more than they let on about the town, a dead man who still lives with his parents, and elves who use weaponry straight out of Star Wars against psychotic Christian militiamen. As bizarre as this all sounds, it all works and ties together in ways that only Green could pull off. The entire novel is electrifying, especially once the true evil haunting the town reveals itself, and Green's fans will most likely devour the book within a day or two. My only complaint is that all the plot's conflicts are resolved within, literally, the final 2 or 3 pages. As much as I hate to say this, it seems that Green painted himself into a corner in regards to the plot's final battle and didn't know how to get his heroes out of trouble without resorting to the solution he

does. While it works, it still feels like a bit of a cop-out and might leave some readers disappointed. As a result, *Shadows Fall* is an amazing entry into the adventure and fantasy genres with an ending that might leave some folks a little disappointed, but that's only in comparison to Green's normal literary brilliance.

Very, very few books can make me get that "choked up" feeling at all, but this one managed to do it within the first chapter. That in and of itself is an accomplishment. Simon Green paints *Shadows Fall* as a wonderful way station between here and the hereafter, a place where anything is possible. He makes it a wonderful place where we would all like to visit... and then tears it apart. There are lots of intricate plots weaving around each other, and he doesn't pull any punches with the story, either - good characters don't make it all the way through the book. But it's okay, because it's done well. This is easily one of my favorites that Simon has done, and I wish I could read more about this strange and wonderful town....

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