



Shadow and Betrayal

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In a remote mountain academy, the politically expendable younger sons of the Great Houses study for an extraordinary task. Most will fail, some will die, but the reward for the dedicated few is great: mastery of the andat, and the rank of Poet. Thanks to these men - part sorcerers, part scholars - the great city-states of the Khaiem enjoy wealth and power beyond measure, and the greatest of them all is Saraykeht: glitteringwel of the Summer Cities. There are those in the world, however, who envy such wealth. There are great riches to be had in the Summer and Winter Cities, and only the threat of the andat unleashed holds the enemies of the Khaiem in check. Conflict is brewing in the world. Alliances will be broken and friends betrayed. The lowly will be raised up, the mighty will fall and innocents will be slaughtered. And two men, bound to each other by an act of kindness and an act of brutality, may be all that stands between the civilised world and war. War and something worse . . .

Shadow and Betrayal Details

Date : Published January 1st 2010 by Orbit (first published October 1st 2007)

ISBN : 9781841496122

Author : Daniel Abraham

Format : Paperback 593 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, High Fantasy, Epic Fantasy

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From Reader Review Shadow and Betrayal for online ebook

Soho_Black says

For some reason, fantasy and Sci-Fi epics tend to be written as trilogies. However, Daniel Abraham has chosen to do something different and make his "The Long Price" series into a quartet. "The Long Price, Book One: Shadow and Betrayal" is an omnibus volume of the first two parts of this quartet: "A Shadow in Summer" and "A Betrayal in Winter".

The world we are introduced to is largely controlled by The Cities of the Khaiem; city states ruled by a controlling family headed by the Khai. The reason for their power is that each has an *andat*; a magical being created and bound by thought and word, each controlled by the poet who has bound them. These *andat* are feared by many of the other countries of the world and have prevented the Cities of the Khaiem from being attacked, as their enemies fear the retribution that could follow, such is their power.

In the first part of the quartet, "A Shadow in Summer", the Galts have seen a way to unsettle the city of Saraykhet, by disposing of the poet Heshai. They and the *andat*, Seedless, have found Heshai's weak point and plan to take advantage of it. However, plans are interrupted by an unlikely group; an elderly overseer along with a trainee poet who has recently come to study under Heshai, a labourer who is keen to keep much of his past a secret, and the woman who is to become the lover of both men.

The second part "A Betrayal in Winter" is set some years later, in the Northern city of Machi. The Khai of Machi is very ill and nearing death which, in Khaiem tradition, means his sons will kill each other until the last survivor becomes the next Khai. Some of the other families aren't happy with this and, with support once more from the Galts, one family is determined that it is their turn. There also happens to be a convenient scapegoat, unless a couple of familiar characters can unearth the truth.

With so much potential intrigue and fratricide, you might be expecting an exciting and fast-paced read, but that isn't the case. The society is quite formal, with a well-defined hierarchy and formal forms of address that remind me a little of old Japanese society. This gives the writing quite a formal tone, so it doesn't flow as well as you might expect. There are some unexpected moments of writing so good it is almost poetry, but mostly it seems to pass sluggishly and it's difficult to get caught up in the story.

This isn't helped by some of the other aspects of the society. The money they use is described only in "lengths" of copper or silver and there is a system of communication that resolves around formal poses. There is little explanation of either of these systems, which makes things seem a little over complicated and with very little you can relate back to familiar situations, this also keeps the reader slightly distanced from the story.

For me, the major issue is that much of the story is taken up with political, as well as actual, posturing. The whole story seems to be building to a massive climax that never materialises. Admittedly, the second part was better than the first and as this is a quartet, it may be that the climax is somewhere in the future, but this is a book that promises much, but takes a long time to deliver very little. It reminds me of a written version of the most recent "Star Wars" trilogy, which took too much time with the politics and too little time on the fighting.

It's not that this is a poorly written book by any means, despite the formal tone and the slow pacing. The central ideas are sound and the idea of powers constrained by thought and poetry is an intriguing one, if

perhaps left a little unexplored. It's just that it this book has more potential than actual excitement and it's tough to get enthused by something that hasn't happened, especially when it keeps you waiting for so long for it.

I may change my mind once the rest of the quartet has been published, assuming it explores things further and brings more matters to a conclusion, but I expected more from an author who has worked with and comes recommended by George R. R. Martin. Given his enthusiasm, this may be an acceptable read for fans of Martin, but I wouldn't recommend this, as "The Long Price" is a long read, but ultimately unrewarding.

This review may also appear, in whole or in part, under my name at any or all of www.ciao.co.uk, www.thebookbag.co.uk, www.goodreads.com, www.amazon.co.uk and www.dooyoo.co.uk

Meran says

3.5 stars, for each book. (There are two in this volume: A Shadow in Summer and A Betrayal in Winter.) I find the idea of the *andat* very intriguing! Slow to read, for some reason. I still would recommend the series.

Review later.

Ken says

A Shadow in Summer was my third book club read with Fantasy Faction, the first book in The Long Price Quartet by Daniel Abraham. Since I purchased the omnibus edition with the first two books, this post will be a review of both A Shadow in Summer and A Betrayal in Winter.

The thing I love the most in A Shadow in Summer is the amount of world building and the attention to detail. The Khaiem has a very strong Oriental feel. First, the school that Otah Machi attends reminds me very much of the Shaolin temple where they prepare the students both physically and mentally. Second, the people address each other using honorifics, similar to Japanese. Also the poses that people take to emphasize their feelings adds an extra layer to the exoticness of the story but at points they feel overused.

The magic system is unique and I like it a lot. The magic comes from humanoid beings known as *andat* and each has a strong connection with its wielder. The wielders are known as poets because the words they use to bind the *andat* must describe the thought perfectly and the resultant description is like a poem. However *andats* are unnatural beings and all they want is to be unmade and set free, so there is a constant struggle of power between the *andat* and the poet.

The two main characters are very human and they do the best they can based on their impulses much like young people do. You can't really judge them on the decisions they made as there is no clear answer. However the two protagonists were completely overshadowed by the *andat* Seedless who I think was the real star of the story. Here was a character with a real motivation to do what he did and I found myself wishing him to succeed in his plans.

As for the plot, it's very gripping but at the same time it feels not much has happened. In other stories you may find a few high points littered throughout the book but in A Shadow in Summer the level of excitement

is at a constant level till the end. At the end of the book, conflicts are resolved but I feel a little let down because I was expecting a more dramatic finish. At the moment it feels like only the end of Act Two and leaves you wanting much more.

The second book, *A Betrayal in Winter* is set mainly in Otah's hometown of Machi. His father the Khai of Machi is dying and his brothers are murdered one after another. Otah is blamed for their deaths and Maati has taken it upon himself to prove Otah's innocence.

This book focus more on the relationship between Otah and Maati and how they have grown since they last met decades ago in the previous book. Both had more time to deal with their mistakes and have now taken further steps to continue with their path. There is a new andat introduced in this story but he doesn't outshine the protagonists like the previous andat, Seedless.

The same amazing world building is found here and Abraham couldn't have done a better job in creating a city that is vastly different to Saraykhet. Where Saraykhet is hot and full of life, Machi is cold and filled with a level of sorrowness.

The story like the previous book is exceptional but I can't help to think that the ending wraps up too neatly. Everything fell into place and the perpetrators are caught for their misdeeds. Nevertheless, *A Betrayal in Winter* has really stepped up its game and I look forward to see how things unfold in the second half of the quartet.

(Reposted from <http://www.paperlessreading.com/2011/...>)

KostasAt says

Except from Daniel Abraham's collaboration novel *Hunter's Run* and some comics I hadn't had the chance before to read one of his solo works. So, this is, essentially, my first book that I read from Abraham and I must say that, although it's definitely not perfect, he has made a very nice and interesting world.

The world of this series is heavily influenced from a medieval Asia, and more from the Japanese culture, and Abraham here brings a more different style than the usual in the Fantasy genre, that I could say it reminds me a little of Guy Gavriel Kay's.

In this world the people use different poses with their hands, poses that sometimes are used to show obedience and respect to the higher ranks, and other times to show agreement or to ask for forgiveness. However, it is also a world full with intrigues, machinations and betrayals and all that creates a very special tone for the story and the characters, as it brings unrest to those who are fighting for strength and power.

The story is set in the Cities of the Khaiem, the epicenter of the "new" Empire, since the only thing that's left from the Old Empire is the ruins of a forgotten world, and where trade is now the greatest power. "Poets" are trained and create ideas-spirits (called andat) that can control some element of nature; and when they bind them, they use them as slaves for the wealth of the trade and the interests of the Khaiem.

Of course, not all of the andat can sustain the "binding" and are always trying to find a way, with any means necessary, to be released from the "poets".

On the other hand, the Khai, even with all their power, they may have many children but only three of their sons can have the claim for the throne and, through their tradition, only one will prevail in the end. The

“lower” sons, in order to not be killed, are cast out from the line as soon as possible and are sent to become “poets”; in a training system though that is very hard and rigorous.

A Shadow in Summer

In the first novel the story follows Otah, the 6th son of Khai Machi, who is training to become a “poet”. But when he accepts to wear the black robes and be required from him to impose on the new students, forcing him to do things that he never wanted, he will understand that he can’t take part in the way of the “poets” and their system; and that will put him in a difficult, and lonely, path in a journey of survival.

However, in the city Saraykeht, the center of the Summer Cities and of trade, things are much stranger as Amat, the overseer of House Wilsin, will discover accidentally something she shouldn’t have seen and will find herself entangled in machinations and betrayals that could cost her life, and even bring the destruction of the city.

Somewhere in there comes Otah who, as he’s still trying to find himself in the world, will try to save those he loves from the city’s turmoil but in the end it may prove too late to do the same for the city itself.

The story in this novel, despite its small size, it is pretty slow and has, also, very few action scenes. But nevertheless, Abraham manages, as he builds through the world and the characters, to hold the interest with only using the machinations and betrayals.

On the other hand, the writing, even though it has some problems, I found it good enough for this, introductory, first part to keep me going. Though, in the end Abraham leaves you with a feeling as if this was only "half" the book, but I can’t say that it disappoints entirely too. **7/10**

A Betrayal in Winter

In the second novel Abraham takes us a few years after the first one, in the winter city Machi, with the Khai now being gravely ill and with the city itself being in turmoil for the succession of the throne. But when Biitrah, the eldest son of the Khai, gets killed in an unclear incident rumors will begin for the return of the long-exiled Otah coming to take back what was denied from him.

Maati will get a task to go to Machi, giving him also a second chance after the events in Saraykeht and to prove that he still deserves to become a “poet”, and to discover if rumors are, indeed, true or if someone else has started its own games for power.

However, for Otah his path in the world after Saraykeht was not easy and his return to his birthplace will prove even more difficult as, while he will try to protect those he loves, he will find himself entangled in machinations for the power of throne and it might, not only cost him his own life but could also bring the beginning of a war.

In the second part, Abraham seems considerably improved as he manages to make a stronger story, although the pace is still a bit slow as with the previous one, though with more machinations and twists this time; and also focusing better on the characters themselves.

Abraham’s writing here flows much better as he manages to connect the two novels together very well, and giving a feeling as if they’re only just one story, which, personally, I liked that a lot; while the finale ends very well and leaves you with a lot of promises for what’s to come next in the series. **8/10**

Overall, I must say that in these two first parts Abraham has managed to make a very good introduction to this world and, despite some problems, it’s definitely worth reading for anyone who’s looking for something more different.

Ελληνικ? κριτικ?:
(view spoiler)

Jacob says

(Repost from <http://drying-ink.blogspot.com/2011/0...>)

I recently mentioned that the best SFF doesn't leave its world unchanged. For me, a story that ends 'same-old' falls far below one which explores the plethora of changes - not just 'new-king-on-the-throne' change (and he'd better not have been a farmboy...), but social change. Societal change. Magical change. Technological change. Fantasy in the Industrial Revolution? All for it.

...And at its heart, the Long Price Quartet is uniquely about change. It's the tale of two men - Maati and Otah - who change the world for better and worse, and simply different. It's a story, however, that starts off slowly - with *A Shadow in Summer*.

The cities of the Khaiem are decadent. Technologically backwards, bound by tradition... The list goes on - but they are fabulously wealthy. And untouchable. The reason?

The cities of the Khaiem have the *andat*.

Abstract concepts 'in a form which includes volition' - in layman's terms, the *andat* are concepts such as 'Seedless' and 'Water-Flowing-Down' bound into slaves, allowing the poet control. Take Seedless, for example - who the city of Saraykeht uses to remove the seeds from cotton. Seems pretty mundane, but it allows the cities of the Khaiem to stand untouched. Who, after all, would attack a city with the power to turn a country's stone to water?

Maati is a poet: sent to prepare to take up the binding of the *andat* Seedless. Otah is a porter with a lover, Liat. And with Seedless conspiring against his binder, Otah and Maati renewing their friendship, and the warloving nation of Galt seeking a weapon against the *andat*... Well, the two friends are about to find themselves shaping the city's future in their struggles. *Shadow* is a slow novel - it introduces you to a rich culture, and the climax isn't as changing as we hoped. Nevertheless, it's only the start of the quartet as a whole, and it's in *A Betrayal in Winter* that we really see the scope of the series. Conspiracy, intrigue, the *andat*, and the succession - it's all made profoundly human. Tragic at times, this is not a series where you'll get an unequivocal happy ending.

The setting of these books is incredibly rich. The Khaiem seem to come alive, their inspiration exotic - incorporating honorifics such as 'kvo' and 'kya' after the fashion of Japanese and similar languages, this is not your typical novel. There's no 'quasi-European' fantasyland here, and I for one find it a very welcome change! Similar to Rothfuss' *Adem*, there's also a system of 'poses', indicating emotions and attitudes. Contrary to Pornokitsch's love of them (sorry! :P), I actually find them a little overused in sections to replace description or inference, though they definitely add to the image.

Onto the key component: characters. And this is where Long Price really shines: Otah and Maati are human, and make a wonderful pair of central protagonists. They do what they think they must, and what they'd like to. What's necessary - and what's human. Both fail and succeed - and do both simultaneously, and this is the series' crowning glory: they're grey. There's no black and white here, although there might at first glance seem to be.

There is, however, one disappointment in this: the female characters don't seem particularly strong to me,

with one exception. Nevertheless, I think that Liat needed more in Shadow to define her - though in later books this is, admittedly, amended.

The ending, likewise, isn't entirely satisfying, but definitely completes the character arcs - and is very, very apt. It ends as it started - with Maati and Otah, two men who change the world. This is a must-read: a fantasy of merchants and social change, not of heroes. It's slow to start, but well worth the wait, and if you're looking to broaden your fantasy horizons (and let's face it: who isn't?) this is a must read. And a masterpiece.

9/10

Jakyro says

“Shadow and Betrayal” is the first omnibus of two in the Long Price Quartet series. It contains the first two books in the series: “A Shadow in Summer” and “A Betrayal in Winter”. Both books will first be discussed separately and afterwards I'll give an overall conclusion.

A Shadow in Summer:

The first book mostly plays out in Saraykeht, the dominating city of the Summer Cities. It has immeasurable wealth and a lot of this wealth comes forth from an andat named Seedless. It's a creature made by the poet Heshai, most often described as an 'idea given volition'. It's Heshai who also controls the andat and he will do so until he dies and/or another poet takes his place. Together the poet and the andat not only ensure the wealth of the city, but also its safety, mostly from the Galts in the west who would like to conquer Saraykeht. This means that before the Galts can conquer Saraykeht they will need to remove Heshai and his andat. They already have the perfect plot to accomplish this ...

I have to say that the story starts off pretty interesting with the prologue; it starts at the school where young children (sons of the Khai) are trained and educated in the hope to finally be chosen by the Dai-kvo to become one of the future poets. What follows next are some interesting chapters at first, following the main characters in Saraykeht, but unfortunately it doesn't take long before the story starts to drag out. The pace goes down quickly and overall there isn't all that much happening.

Luckily the story has several aspects going for it. The characters are solid and the relationships among them make out an interesting and important part of the story. The story also has good world building; the society and its structure are nicely described and the world is also fleshed out nicely. On top of this the magic system with the andats is very different from what we're used to. It also provides a satisfying ending with great consequences for Saraykeht and its future.

In the end I feel this was mostly an introduction to the world and the characters and a setting up for the next books. It certainly isn't an action packed story, it's more about the intrigue and the character relationships. A decent read!

Rating: 6.8/10 (3 Goodread stars)

A Betrayal in Winter:

Contrary to what I expected the story in the second book doesn't continue in Saraykeht. We only get some glimpses of the fate of Saraykeht after the events in the first book. This time the story moves about 15 years into the future and is mainly situated in the north, in the city of Machi. Again the Galts try to manoeuvre the city politics in order to gain some advantage from it; they are responsible for the assassination of one of the sons of the Khai and with this they have set in motion the succession war for the Khai's throne in Machi.

I felt that this one started off pretty strong as well, just like the first one. And although this one was also a

slow burner, I felt it was more interesting as a whole. We again have a lot of intrigue and heart-breaking betrayals and in the centre of this are some of the characters we got to know in the first book. We learn what has happened to them these past years and how their lives have developed.

As with the first book the main strengths also lie in the characters; probably the most interesting new characters are the young poet Cehmai and his andat Stone-Made-Soft. I thought the concept of the andat and how it was controlled was also more interesting in this book. The character development and relationships were again greatly done, as was the world building. The story itself is slow placed, but provides some more interesting scenes than the first book does. In the end I also feel the second book is slightly better than the first.

Rating: 7.2 /10 (3 Goodread stars)

Conclusion:

I can say that the book has good writing, interesting and good developed characters, nice world building and intriguing magic. The story itself is good but not very exciting; it doesn't have much action. The excitement there is mostly comes from intrigue and tension between characters. So in the end I can say that Daniel Abraham does a lot of good things in this book, but he doesn't do anything extraordinary. My overall feeling is that this was just an ok read.

Does this mean that I wouldn't recommend it to anyone else? Not necessarily! In the end it all depends on what you want from a fantasy novel. If you are satisfied with a lot of intrigue, solid characters and good character relationships, an interesting world with a different kind of magic ... then this book could be something for you. If you absolutely search for a lot of action and you prefer epic fantasy with large battles, I think you'd better pass on this one. I myself don't need a full action packed story, but in this case the book really was way too slow for me to enjoy it a lot. It did get more interesting in the end, but by then I just wanted to be done with it and move on to my next read. That's also the reason I'm currently reading something completely different before heading into the second omnibus.

Finally, I want to emphasize that "Shadow and Betrayal" certainly isn't a bad book, overall I still liked it, but it just wasn't exactly what I want from fantasy (or at least not at this moment). From what I understood things will improve a lot in the second omnibus which contains the final two novels in the series; there should be a lot more excitement to come. I'll be delving into this once I've finished my current read.

Rating: 7 / 10

Petrik says

3.75/5 Stars

Full reviews of this omnibus:

A Shadow in Summer: **3.5/5 Stars**

A Betrayal in Winter: **4/5 Stars**

Shadow and Betrayal: **7.5/10 Stars**

Aditi Warriier says

This book took a while to grow on me. I found the phrase "took a pose" very distasteful at first, but by the end, I loved it.

Megan says

(Re-posted from <http://theturnedbrain.blogspot.com>)

There was this fantasy series I loved like a mad thing when I was about fourteen or so, but I won't say which one as I don't want to spoil anyone. There was one character in particular I was very fond of, a dashing young prince. The trilogy, among other things, followed Prince Dashing on various adventures until he saves the land and his lady love and lives happily every after.

But the author did not stop with just this trilogy, he went on to write many (many, many) more set in the same universe, one of which was set seventy or so years after the original trilogy. This new trilogy opens with a courier announcing to a country town that the Prince from the first trilogy had died. At 80. By falling off his horse. Over ten years later and I still remember the specific details.

When you think about it, dying of natural-ish causes at 80 is pretty much the most anyone can ask for. And yet, I was gutted. It took me a long time to bring myself to return to the new trilogy, and I never was able to enjoy it fully. It was just too sad, seeing the characters I had loved so much become old and weak. In my mind Price Dashing had existed in his prime, but now that memory was replaced by 80 year old dead Prince Dashing. I just couldn't shake the feeling of melancholy.

Which brings me to Daniel Abraham's Long Price quartet. I've seen a lot of words getting used to describe these books: Underrated, amazing, masterpiece. And I'm not suggesting that those words aren't apt, because they are, but for me only one descriptor truly applies; melancholy. Because like mystery author of my youth, Danial Abraham also employs the big jump forward. An average of fifteen years passes between each of the Long Price's four volumes, so the characters we are introduced to as teenagers in volume one are nearing the ends of their lives by the last.

I mean, yes, these books are amazing. The world building is nothing short of stunning, and the prose is just beautiful. More than once I was stopped in my tracks by the sheer elegance of a metaphor or line of description. But it's just so sad, watching the characters grow old.

Watching how time ravages not only their bodies but also their relationships with each other. Sad, but also pretty damn impressive. I myself have little experience with growing old, but it feels like Abraham nailed it perfectly. Writing from the point of view of a much older character isn't exactly groundbreaking, but it carries more gravitas in the Long Price. The older character watching the younger character making the same mistakes they did carries more weight somehow when you were in that characters head while the made the mistakes. I don't think I really understood the folly of youth v. the wisdom of age before.

It might be easy to think, with all this talk of aging, that the books lack excitement, (which is exactly what I would have thought, if I'd known about the time jumps before hand). But it's not the case! Set aside the fact that Abraham's skill grows viably with each book, and so to does our bond with the characters strengthen, the

plot of each book just gets more and more thrilling. The stakes are upped in each volume, so where the first books deals primarily with the relationships between the characters, by the fourth volume empires are crumbling. The third volume, *An Autumn War*, was my personal favourite of the bunch and an excellent example of how to build suspense, and how to build it damn well.

Overall, these books are bittersweet. It's a unique experience to stick with characters well into old age, (at least in this genre), and watching them age is very sad. But then we also see the birth of new characters, and new hope, which balances out that sadness out. Kind of like real life, I guess.

So, is the Long Prince quartet an easy read? Not even a little bit. But you'd be mad to pass over it.

Antonis says

4 / 5

Shadow and Betrayal, by Daniel Abraham, contains the first two books of the Long Price Quartet, namely the books *A Shadow in Summer* (SiS) and *A Betrayal in Winter* (BiW). After reading BiW, it is my impression that SiS is the weaker book of the two and functions mostly as an introduction or prologue to the series. That is not to say that SiS is a bad book, only that it's not as strong as BiW. BiW shows Abraham in his stride, showcasing his great narrative and storytelling skills with excellent descriptions, a very tight and tense plot and amazing characterization. While the end of SiS left some questions unanswered and plot-threads unresolved, the end of BiW tidies up all loose ends and gives a satisfying end to the general story arc presented in *Shadow and Betrayal*.

I'm very curious and excited to see where and how the story continues on to the next 2 books of the quartet. Needless to say, I highly recommend this book to most fantasy fans and not only!

4 / 5

Rob Damon says

The first two books in a four part saga.

This is an unusual but interesting and well written saga set in a time and place that is not of this Earth (I don't think). The main characters (Maati and Otah) lives are bonded together but go their separate ways while intersecting at numerous points as they both grow and learn and get caught up in a devious plot to topple the leader of a city.

The most bizarre and original and interesting element to these stories are the manifestations of ideas into physical beings called Andats which are controlled by Poets. Maati trains to become a poet and helps Otah claim his inheritance after his father and brothers are murdered.

The text is a joy to read, almost poetic. The characters have deeply emotional lives and the interactions between them are civilized and brutal at the same time. On the whole it was a strange but wonderful read.

I will look out for the final two stories.

Tanabrus says

A shadow in summer:

Con questo libro (in realtà la prima parte di uno dei due volumi che raccolgono la quadrilogia) comincio la lettura della saga di Daniel Abraham, *The long price quartet*.

Una saga fortemente sponsorizzata da Tintaglia (che, in effetti, mi ha passato i due tomi lo scorso anno per farmela leggere, da brava spacciatrice di testi).

Devo ammettere però che, alla fine, questo primo libro è stato abbastanza deludente.

La scrittura dell'autore è ottima, e tiene il lettore incollato alle pagine.

L'ambientazione che è stata costruita è ottima, con una serie di regni che si sono elevati al di sopra e al di fuori dal resto del mondo, forti del possesso di un'arma invincibile che gli ha garantito una pace senza precedenti dal tempo della caduta del Grande Impero: gli Andat.

Entità semidivine che vengono materializzate e schiavizzate dai Poeti, persone dotate di particolari qualità mentali e psicologiche, addestrate alle antiche grammatiche e alla storia per poter descrivere pienamente l'entità che vogliono materializzare e incatenare al loro desiderio.

Entità che sono poco più che idee, rese reali dal potere del Poeta... Poeta che però rimane anch'egli legato al suo andat per tutta la vita, con l'andat che in ogni modo, come gli antichi Genii, cercherà di trovare falle nella sua descrizione per potersi liberare e vendicare, esigendo il proprio prezzo per il Poeta che fallisce.

Questi regni divisi in caste, tra cittadini del regno e mercanti.

Le usanze barbare dei re, dei Khai, che prevedono molteplici mogli, e una guerra fratricida tra i primi tre figli maschi per ottenere il titolo di successore del padre. Mentre gli altri figli maschi vengono mandati a fare i poeti: chi riesce diventa un poeta, chi non riesce viene comunque marchiato e non potrà ambire mai a rientrare nella famiglia, al proprio posto.

E' interessante anche la storia, che ci mostra un giovane apprendista poeta che decide di andarsene dalla scuola quando viene scelto per essere un Poeta vero e proprio, disprezzando gli insegnamenti ricevuti dai suoi maestri, e deciso a vivere in incognito la propria vita per non essere ucciso, partendo dal basso e conducendo una vita semplice e felice.

Finché non incontra Maati, un suo vecchio studente alla scuola. Maati che ora è apprendista del Poeta di una città, un Poeta sfortunato che si è legato a vita a un Andat con un contratto orrendo e masochista... un Andat dotato di intelligenza e libero arbitrio, un Andat che complotta apertamente per distruggere il proprio Poeta. E alle spalle di tutto questo, un lontano impero guerriero sta cercando un modo per togliere di mezzo gli Andat e poter così invadere i regni ricchi e pacifici che stanno dominando il mondo grazie alla loro sicurezza.

Il problema di questo libro è che la storia alla fine pare fine a sé stessa. E come stand alone non dice granché questa trama.

Mentre per inquadrarla all'interno di una quadrilogia, mancano elementi forti che ci diano un quadro più generale, che ci facciano assaporare l'idea di uno schema più grande all'interno del quale inquadrare gli avvenimenti del primo libro.

Si intuisce qualcosa, ma è troppo vago, troppo piccolo, troppo in sordina per catturare realmente la nostra attenzione. Addirittura nessuno se lo fila, alla fin fine, neppure all'interno del libro. Neppure tra i protagonisti.

E questo rende meno piacevole l'intera storia.

Vedremo se il secondo libro riuscirà a risollevarne l'interesse, e come il tutto comincerà a collegarsi.

A betrayal in winter

Secondo libro della saga The long price quartet.

La storia comincia un po' di anni dopo gli eventi di A shadow in summer, e ritroviamo Otah che ha accettato la proposta ricevuta nel primo libro, diventando così un corriere.

Riesce bene nel suo lavoro, è ben visto e ben voluto. Ha una relazione con Kiyan, una locandiera. Tutto procede per il meglio, per lui... ma su nel nord, nelle regioni fredde e remote da cui proviene lo stesso Otah, qualcosa sta accadendo.

Il vecchio Khai Machi sta morendo, e i suoi figli -in maniera anomala- ancora non si sono uccisi a vicenda. I fratelli di Otah.

I tre figli maggiori hanno condotto in pace la loro vite, prendendo mogli, avendo figli.

Ora si ritrovano a doversi uccidere a vicenda per ottenere il titolo di Khai... con la minaccia fantasma del sesto figlio che era fuggito dalla scuola dei poeti, senza ricevere il marchio. Otah.

Quando il primo dei tre fratelli viene ucciso col veleno da una nostra vecchia conoscenza, i restanti fratelli pensano a Otah e chiedono aiuto al Dai-kvo per capire chi sia dietro questo omicidio. E il sommo Poeta manda Maati con loro, dato che è l'unico a conoscere Otah e a poter dire se sia lui dietro a questo omicidio, ed eventualmente catturarlo.

Il caso vuole che Otah venga spedito a Machi come corriere, per ottenere informazioni su ciò che sta accadendo.

Quello che accade dopo è abbastanza ovvio: Maati che crede alla sua innocenza, lui che si consegna al Khai per evitare ripercussioni sull'amata (che, saputa la verità, lo ha cacciato per timore che i suoi fratelli la trovassero e la uccidessero per vendetta), i Galtici dietro a questa macchinazione di nuovo.

Già, i Galtici precedentemente salvati dall'omicidio di Otah, ora sono interessati alla biblioteca di Machi.

E per arrivarci stanno appoggiando un piano folle che prevede la morte di tutti i pretendenti al trono, così da far salire al potere una nuova casata, con i giusti agganci e una posizione forte di partenza grazie alla parentela con il Khai attuale.

Entra in scena il mercenario Shinja, che giocherà un poco il ruolo di deus ex-machina in questo libro grazie a un tradimento del tutto inaspettato che risolverà la situazione a favore di Otah.

E proseguendo con la storia, mentre la situazione si fa sempre più chiara appare lampante come ci sia un solo esito possibile per l'intera vicenda, l'incoronazione di Otah.

Meglio del primo libro, ma resta un senso di incompiutezza.

Questi due libri sono stati solo il prologo, i Galtici sono una presenza troppo costante e ingombrante per non essere il vero piatto forte di questa storia e con questo secondo libro la cosa è divenuta lampante e chiara.

Resta da capire come evolverà la vicenda.

Inoltre una cosa che non mi è piaciuta è la sensazione che Otah sia la prima volta di tutto.

La prima volta che un figlio di un Khai fugge senza marchio dalla scuola; la prima volta che uno studente dà un indizio a un altro bambino; la prima volta che i Poeti si immischiano nella politica; la prima volta che ci sono cospirazioni più ampie della solita carneficina tra fratelli; la prima volta per tutto quanto.

Che era essenzialmente la cosa che non mi era piaciuto del libro di Ishiguro, facendomi valutare maluccio malgrado la bella idea...

Ton says

This book (or rather, *A Shadow in Summer*, as I never got around to *A Betrayal in Winter*) never really took off for me. I made myself read through the first 192 pages, and then I was through. I put it down when 'life' got in the way, and I felt no inclination whatsoever to pick it back up and start reading again. That's not to say it's a bad book, but I just could not get into it. I appreciate what Abraham is trying to do by creating a Japanese-like culture (where the ubiquitous 'poses', a common complaint, actually factor in rather well), the adversarial magic-system and the different characters. I even like most of the characters. But not enough to stick it out. Mileage varies, and since I've heard a lot of praise for these books, I really wanted to like this first installment, but sadly I just didn't.

First Second Books says

Look, it's an epic fantasy series that's not set in a feudal Europe analogue! And it's got a relatively Campbellian hero-cycle plot that's not based on the premise, 'there is great evil in the land, I must fight it, though I am small/weak/young/reluctant/unprepared.'

Crazy!

The thing I'm finding most fascinating about this world are the poets – and therefore the use of language. Abraham creates a magical system that's based on people being able to accurately describe forces of nature – and therefore create/harness them to their will. How neat is that?

Carrie Mansfield says

Four stars for *A Shadow in Summer*

Two-stars for *A Betrayal in Winter*

My full review can be found on my

Shadow and Betrayal is actually a compilation of the first two novels of the Long Price Quartet (*A Shadow in Summer* and *A Betrayal in Winter* respectively). I was drawn to this series not only for the Asian influences (down to the style of the prose, which might feel familiar to those who have read *The Analects of Confucius* or another such work in translation) but because it promised to cover the entire life of its protagonist, Otah Machi, the sixth son of the Khai Machi. It's something you really don't see in fantasy. Usually you just get glimpses in their lives - a few years, maybe a decade or two at most.

One of the most remarkable things about *A Shadow in Summer* is that we spend a large chunk of the story following a woman in presumably the twilight of her life, which is great, and as an added bonus, she's smart and resourceful and has a sense of justice to her. Like everyone else in the story, she gets drawn to a girl named Maj; someone unfortunate to get impregnated by a noble and be used as a tool in a larger conspiracy resulting in her getting an abortion not only against her consent, but without her knowing what was going on

due to an inability to speak the language.

A story centered about abortion. When was the last time you saw THAT in fantasy?

In her case, she tries to unravel what happened and get her as much justice as she can. The other main protagonist is on the other side, dealing with a master roped into performing the abortion, even though it was the absolute last thing he wanted to do.

Although it has implications that will no doubt be long-term for the series, it ultimately still felt kind of like an intimate story, really focusing on the lives of the people who were impacted by this, even as Otah was almost more of a side character, than a main character. It was different, and it worked, and it was enough to make me keep on going when I really had planned on stopping.

Unfortunately, there was nothing near so unique in the second book.

Otah Machi is the sixth-son of the Khai Machi and he never renounced his claim to the throne. You know that at some point he's almost certainly going to get caught up in the fight for succession when he lives in a world where tradition dictates that the man who succeeds the throne is the last the son standing. And sure enough, the entire second book is devoted to that fight. There's mystery of who instigated isn't a mystery at all because we follow them as much as well follow Otah (who finally becomes a major player). And because this is a quartet, you can guess how it ends. After how different the first book felt, to find something so traditional feels like a real let down.

Finally, though the summary talks of the andat, they aren't as important in the first two books as you'd expect them to be. Seedless is definitely more interesting than Stone-Made-Soft, but could have just as easily been a courtier or a rival merchant as a magical being and Stone-Made-Soft just existed for me. Don't read the book for the andat, is all I'm saying.

I think this is series that had some definite promise and I feel like *A Shadow in Summer* might still be worth your time, *A Betrayal in Winter* is decidedly, almost painfully average.

I don't think I'll be picking up the other collection.

Ale says

The Long Price Quartet is a series that often gets recommended on reddit, for having very clear undertones of *Game of Thrones*; by which presumably they mean there is sex (and the author isn't shy about it), there is court intrigue and the worldbuilding is solid and interesting. Perhaps the best part of Abraham's work (also known as one half of James S.A. Corey and for works such as *The Dragon's Path*) is the fact that pretty much all of the main characters are not white. It's never really an issue, it's how things are and I was so happy to see the fact that the story isn't set in some faux-medieval proxy Europe.

After the fall of the great Empire, the great cities of the Khaiem use their poets and andat, their "thought made flesh and volition", to improve their standing and riches. Each poet is locked into a life of handling the andat and their various powers (for example *Removing-The-Part-That-Continues* removes seeds from cotton), allowing the summer city of Saraykeht to own and control the trade. The poets are part magicians and part scholars and their struggles to control the andat (who are always pushing to be free once more) are

set against a backdrop of intrigue, murder and far reaching consequences. The setting of the two books in this edition, *A Shadow in Summer* and *A Betrayal in Winter*, is in a society dominated by strict rules of behaviour; from honourifics that determine the level of familiarity to intricate gestures and poses, Abraham has built a world that engulfs you and keeps you reading well into the night. The poets all come from high ranking families, but they are not the firstborns and as they are exiled to the all male poet school, so they are removed from the fratricide that succeeds the death of a Khai.

The story throughout *A Shadow in Summer* follows the poet Maati, sent to the summer city of Saraykeht to train under the poet Heshai, the current owner of the andat Removing-The-Part-That-Continues or Seedless. However, there is a conspiracy afoot, people are not who they seem to be and Maati finds himself in a situation well beyond his control. Although the writing felt a bit longwinded at first and at times stilted, it was still a very well crafted story that made me want to keep reading. The characters, both big and small, all feel incredibly flawed and human and what I liked is that Abraham has a wide variety of ages in his lineup, so while some are teenagers, others are in the twilight years of their lives. They are also all flawed, with petty behaviours and envious actions. I found Seedless conniving but also incredibly interesting, in his inhuman nature and his sole focus on trying to free himself.

I don't want to say much about *A Betrayal in Winter* as there are recurring characters and I would be loath to reveal their identities. However, it is clear that Abraham's writing has improved, as the story moves along at a much better pace and the motivations are much clearer and better explained. Characters don't do something "just because" and Abraham does a much better job at portraying the hardships of being a poet without making all the andat seem the same; indeed, although both Seedless and Stone-Made-Soft want freedom, the former is far more upfront about it, scheming and plotting his way along, whereas the latter is far more content to simply plod along and keep pushing at the boundaries of his poets' minds. The romance in both books also feels natural rather than forced and although I would have wished for better defined female characters with more prominent roles, I also liked that they are complex, with a variety of motivations, secondary motives and desires. There is also a nicely struck balance between those who are evil and those who are simply naive; the time jump between novels is also nice, as Abraham shows the many ways in which his characters change.

Overall, I found both books to be highly entertaining, with a very well put together plot and world and I immediately picked up *Seasons of War* to see where he would take me next.

Jess says

(Both reviews originally posted on my blog)

A Shadow in Summer:

I'm more a fan of intricate, character-driven fantasy than sensational sword-and-sorcery quests; I'd choose Robin Hobb over David Gemmell in a trice. So when I was told that – despite the moody warrior on the front cover – Daniel Abraham's *The Long Price* belonged more to the former camp than the latter, I was intrigued.

I was right to be. Having just finished *A Shadow in Summer* (book 1 of *The Long Price* quartet, and the first of the two novels included in *Orbit's Shadow and Betrayal* edition), I can say that Daniel Abraham's series gets off to a promising start. As I had been told, it was more of a slow-burner than many modern fantasies; you won't find epic action sequences here, but instead you'll be rewarded with a carefully crafted tale that

focuses closely on a handful of characters, and in which the tensions shimmer beneath the surface rather than charging into the open. The bull has not yet entered the china shop.

A Shadow in Summer introduces us to Maati, a young 'poet' newly placed under tutelage of his master, Heshai. In Abraham's pseudo-Nipponese setting, 'poets' are men trained to capture and control the powers of spirits called *andat* – abstract ideas given material form. Heshai and his *andat* Seedless (slave, companion, ghost...) are posted in the city of Saraykeht, where Heshai wields Seedless's magic to aid the cotton trade. But trouble creeps into the city when a plot starts brewing, and Maati's is only one of the many lives affected by the consequences. Overseer Amat, her apprentice Liat, and Liat's lover Itani all become embroiled, and as their stories intertwine with Maati's and Heshai's their choices only become harder.

Abraham tells his tale with a refreshing delicacy, his prose detailed and evocative without lapsing into heavy descriptive passages; he conjures up the atmosphere of the 'summer cities' without choking the reader with it. A very nice touch is the way his characters communicate using formal poses as well as a speech – a seemingly simple addition, but which gives us a much better insight into the culture, its adherence to tradition and etiquette etc. Although it would have been good to get more insight into the practical workings of the poet-*andat* binding, which was left perhaps a little too vague. I'm all for leaving magic systems mysterious and loosely defined, but I felt that A Shadow in Summer would have benefitted from revealing a bit more on this score, seeing as it was such a central concern, and that the particular relationship between Heshai and Seedless played a crucial role in the plot.

The characters in A Shadow in Summer are skilfully drawn, each sympathetic in his or her own way, and with distinct desires, passions, and flaws. Seedless's scathing wit made me chuckle, Maati's youthful sincerity tugged my heart-strings, determined Itani roused my admiration, and jaded Heshai my pity. My favourite character, though, was definitely Amat. With her, Abraham succeeds in creating an unusual fantasy protagonist – a canny elderly woman with a bad hip – who nonetheless drives an exciting plotline – the most exciting in the novel, in my opinion. I didn't get on so well with Liat, unfortunately. Compared to the other characters, I didn't feel very in touch with her. I felt as though the author's hand was more evident in her storyline, and at times it seemed as though she was merely playing a convenient part in other characters' arcs. However, this sort of thing is very difficult to avoid entirely, and this was only a very slight lapse.

There are no true 'villains' in the book, only characters with conflicting motivations who make mistakes – some larger than others. While Abraham should be praised for his mature characterisation, this does mean that the sense of threat throughout the novel is rather lighter than it would otherwise be with a palpable, menacing bad-guy in the mix. Even though we are told the enormity and horrific nature of the consequences should certain events come to pass, I didn't feel any deep dread for the protagonists. Because of this, some of the characters' reactions were not entirely convincing; the novel didn't quite muster the level of peril needed to justify their distress. This is, though, an 'occupational hazard' that accompanies the type of plot Abraham chose to narrate, and I do not mean to imply that Abraham's characterisation is weak – indeed, as I have said, I thought it was extremely good. Besides, it is early days in The Long Price; I expect that the danger will truly be mounting over the course of the next book.

A Shadow in Summer was certainly a good read, though not one for those who require a thrill a minute in their fiction. It could have been more exciting, but it was definitely enticing and I will be continuing on to find out what happens next. What's more, Abraham's writing is a cut above the average – a graceful, flowing narrative.

A Betrayal in Winter:

The second book of Daniel Abraham's *The Long Price* quartet – *A Betrayal in Winter* – continues the high quality of the first. Set fourteen years after the first novel, the quartet's second instalment not only offers readers a new tale of court intrigue, romance, and treachery, but also shows how the consequences of the first novel's events continue to reverberate through the lives of the two main protagonists – Maati and Otah – and to change the fates of those whose paths intersect with theirs. In contrast to the steamy setting of Sarakeyht, the summer city of the first novel, *A Betrayal in Winter* whisks readers to the winter city of Machi, Otah's original home. There, tradition dictates that the sons of the Khaiem should kill one another in order to secure succession to their father's throne. Otah wants to stay out of it... but events conspire to draw him into the struggle. It is left to Maati, his old friend and rival, to ferret out the truth.

It is safe to say that I enjoyed this book as much as I did the last episode of *The Long Price*. Abraham crafts his plots with a delicacy and intelligence which, whilst making them slow-burners, means that they are emotionally rich and satisfying, gathering tension and effect as they build to their climax. I actually thought *A Betrayal in Winter* was even more successful than *A Shadow in Summer* in this regard, the anticipation mounting more palpably than in the previous book.

A Betrayal in Winter introduces us to some great new characters too. The new poet-andat duo, Cehmai and Stone-made-Soft, form a nice contrast to Heshai and Seedless of *A Shadow in Summer*. In my review of book 1, I said that I'd liked to learn more about the poet-andat bindings, and in *A Betrayal in Winter* Abraham granted my wish. The binding of Stone-made-Soft, centring around a chess game that Cehmai plays with the andat each morning, sheds more light on how their magical relationship operates, and makes for a truly fantastic scene near the end of the book, where the tension really screams at you from the page.

Abraham also has a knack for creating strong and intriguing female characters. Idaan in *A Betrayal in Winter* is as different from Amat in *A Shadow in Summer* as it is possible to be, and yet she is another example of Abraham's ability to produce complex women with ambitious and uncompromising goals. Like a certain character in *A Betrayal in Winter*, it is hard to know where you stand with the elusive Idaan. Does she incite hatred or compassion – or perhaps a bit of both? Abraham does a stunning job revealing the conflicting drives within this character, whilst keeping the reader wondering as to what, at heart, her true affiliations are.

What's more, my affection for Maati as a character really blossomed during the course of this second novel. Abraham takes a risk by making his protagonist a quiet, un-athletic, scholarly figure, unsuccessful in life and in love – but he pulls it off with panache. Maati's unassuming competence and his helpless quest for approval and forgiveness from Otah make him a truly sympathetic character. I look forward to discovering what he and Otah's lives will bring them next...

To summarise: like the first book of *The Long Price*, *A Betrayal in Winter* is not one for those who require fast-paced storylines with sword-wielding heroes, but if you are searching for a well-written, thoughtful narrative that packs plenty of emotional punch, then you can't go far wrong with the bittersweet novels Abraham has crafted here.

Shaitarn . says

4.5 stars.

Shadow & Betrayal is the omnibus edition of *A Shadow in Summer* and *A Betrayal in Winter*, the first two books of the *Long Price* Quartet.

I'm not going to try to describe the story; it's simply too layered for me to do it justice. Let me just point out that it's set in a different fantasy world: it has the flavour of the far east and is a rich and different fantasy world with a language that uses physical forms as well as words to convey all its meanings, the scheming children of kings and 'poets' – the sorcerers who have the mastery of the *andat*, captive spirits given physical form that have great power.

I was thoroughly engrossed in this novel and highly recommend it.

Dee says

Two books in this, and they really are two almost completely different stories, including some of the same characters in the second book, a dozen or so years later and at the other end of the country. There are some themes that carry over, some that counterpoint.

First, let me talk the world and the rich, glorious detail of it that seeps through in the crack of every lovely sentence Abraham crafts. Because I'd read a hundred and more pages of this without any clear driving sense of the story, but the world was just so magnificent and interesting and rich that I didn't care. It's intricate and charming and ruthless and I could just marry the concept of magic through binding a concept in poetry. MARRY IT.

When I finished *A Shadow in Summer*, I was a little confused about how small and careful and gentle a story it was - a tale of how much a person can take and bend, or break, and what we'll do to avoid greater horrors. This isn't something you see a lot of in fantasy - fantasy tends to be *about* the greater horrors, about war and acts of fell enormity and magic that can change the fate of the world.

Having finished the whole thing, I look back and see that *Summer*, too, was a tale of self-authored personal tragedies. It's just that *A Betrayal in Winter* was a sweeping, blistering, *majestic* delivery of tight-bound, screaming-inevitability self-authored personal tragedies. It's Shakespearean. It's *Russian*. It's a thousand twists of the knife that cannot be dodged without changing, fundamentally, who the characters are.

I am so impressed.

So while I have absolutely no idea what could possibly transpire in the third and fourth books of the series - there's still no driving direction to the overall story, and it wouldn't surprise me to jump another dozen years and to another location with another character (I have my suspicions who) - I will be getting on board, because this is some great storytelling write up my personal-tragedies alley.

Vincent says

Two very good books.

The magic is original and the politics is viscous and believable.

The characters are well written, changing as they get older and experience more.

The endings are both good but the first one is better, Seedless steals the show.
