



# Shadowrealm

*Paul S. Kemp*

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**Shadowrealm** Paul S. Kemp

The stunning conclusion to the Twilight War!

One of the **Forgotten Realms** world's most compelling villains--the Archwizards of Shade--have come down from their flying city with their sights set on the merchant realm of Sembia. They come in the guise of allies, but have invasion and empire as their ultimate aim.

The fate of Sembia may be sealed, but Erevis Cale still has a shocking destiny that will end in his destruction--if he's lucky. This trilogy brings about major changes to the **Forgotten Realms** setting.

## Shadowrealm Details

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Author : Paul S. Kemp

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# From Reader Review Shadowrealm for online ebook

## John Hayes says

This book is absolutely amazing. Every book in this series is great though.

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## Maris says

Goodreads asks the question - What did you think (about the book)? - And I say -I think it's a Masterpiece! This is how you write trilogies and conclude them! This is the work of a Master! And his name is Mr. Paul S. Kemp. This man can write story that is so good, that even knowing how all ends you still are enthralled into reading it, and you don't really care about the end - but more on how it all came to it. I accidentally had spoiled myself the end of the story and the destiny of Mister Cale (and I will not spoil anything here), and it has happened to me more than once - there are friends of mine who are dumbfounded as to why I even bother reading then if I know the end, but I say to them - no spoilers will hinder a great story! And I was 100% right about this one too!

This book, and all of the Twilight War trilogy, is how you do the storytelling right, how you make novels, that transcend above everything else, and how books are still the best media that there is! No movie budget would suffice recreating what Mr.Kemp's mind brought to life in these books of his! Some might say that - but look - Lord of the Rings is an excellent movie adaptation, and I will nod in agreement, but LotR is a bit different - it's more primitive and simpler, and older, not in a bad way - it's just here - there is so much more, and the scale is - I loathe this word due to the contemporary usage of it, but nevertheless I think it is more appropriate here than any other word I know - epic. It's a story of epic proportions and scale. And it has its right to be so even if you are not known to the DnD and the realms of Faerun. And this is the next best thing about it - fault of many good tales, or less so, that are set in this setting, lies in the fact that they feel like promo material for the DnD pen and paper games, their campaigns in the Forgotten realms setting and their value to unenlightened in the lore is diminutive. But this, together with the previous trilogy about Mr.Cale's tale of life changing events that plunged him deeper into the shadows of multiverse, has more to it - they are simply great stories that catch you from start to finish. I like to read my books slowly, savor them like the oldest wine, but sometimes their taste is so good I can't resist and empty the whole bottle as fast as I am able. 'cause it has the taste you don't want to let go and the only thing you wish for - that it lingers a bit more, and more, and then again.

But everything will end - echoing words said in the book, I shall say no more (or maybe a tad more in the end) and simply suggest you reading this trilogy, but before it - The Erevis Cale Trilogy - so you know what is what.

I really hope that this was not the pinnacle of Mr.Kemp's work, and his next work will elevate his mastership even higher -but if not - then it was just like the dwarfs in Forgotten Realms have the ability to craft a one-time piece of something great, where they put all the effort and soul into it and create the Masterpiece, which is usually given to someone dear. Thank you Mr.Kemp for giving us it. Your readers.

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## **Laura says**

I love this book SO much. Granted, it was a bit difficult for me to get into, never having read the erevis cale trilogy beforehand and at times Shadowbred was jarring to me, but it got better in Shadowstorm. However, Shadowrealm was by far the best in style, characters, plot, everything! I especially like the fight scenes (and I think Shadowrealm was loads of conflict and fight scenes) made it great. I also liked the shifting views of the second fight between Kesson Rel, Rivalen, Riven and Cale, shift to Regg and company, shift to Mags, shift to Furlinastis, (awesome dragon). For those who finished this, I suggest you read the first few pages of REALMS OF WAR because Mr. Kemp writes about how Rivalen killed his mother, how Brennus found the necklace and how Vara fled the Shadowstorm and how Mask hid his power...which was mentioned at the end of Shadowrealm. I only have one qualm after reading this book...I only hope the new author for Godborn is as good or better than Mr. Kemp. If not, I will gather all the minions in the realms and do things which shall not be named until they remedy the situation! UPDATE...good news...although I'm late in the game, Kemp announced 2/22/10 that he will be continuing THE CYCLE OF NIGHT....yay!

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## **Mike says**

Full review at my blog!

Shadowrealm is the third and final volume of Paul S. Kemp's excellent Twilight War series. The deadly shadow storm rages across the Sembian country side and Chosen of Mask Erevis Cale finds unlikely allies in his fight against Kesson Rel. Kemp continues his trend of great action and strong character development here but the finale is unfortunately marred by the nature of "shared universe" fiction.

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## **Travis says**

Shadowrealm by Paul S. Kemp- This is the final book in The Twilight War trilogy. It picks up directly after Shadowstorm, with the events that are occurring in Sembia. The story centers around Erevis Cale, Drasek Riven, Magadon, Rivalen Tanthul, and Abelar Corrinthal and their trials and fight against Kesson Rel. The first book is Shadowbred and the second is Shadowstorm.

As I mentioned above, the this part focuses mostly on Erevis Cale, Riven, and Rivalen's attempts to stop Kesson Rel and the Shadowstorm from destroying Toril. While Abelar and Magadon faces inner turmoil.

Negatives:

- 1) Confusion between Riven and Rivalen. When they group up, there were spots and saying in which something that Rivalen would say would come out of Riven's mouth. I guess the problem was that they are so similar in name that Paul S. Kemp or the editor didn't really notice these slight problems.
- 2) Abelar and Jiriis. The "love interest" plot between them didn't work out at all I felt. It felt forced and not really interesting. Basically, I thought it was just there to move parts of the story along. But not once did I think that they "loved" one another. It was just very poorly executed.
- 3) Cale and Riven "sharing a look." I wasn't a big problem, but after seeing it within each chapter in the earlier books and seeing it in here, it just got a little repetitive and stale. How many times can two people share a look? Apparently not enough.

Positives:

- 1) Cale, Riven, and Abelar. I liked how each of these characters were the main focus in the story. You really see the friendship that forms throughout this trilogy between Cale and Riven. The eminent growth of these two's personalities and traits is just outstanding and at the same time, amazing. Then the struggle Abelar goes through is wonderfully done and believable. I really could try to understand what he went through.
- 2) The last 100 or so pages. The fast pace makes it unbelievably exciting. I really didn't put it down, or want to put it down in the closing pages. Paul S. Kemp really draws you into the action and doesn't really let go. I was just that impressed.
- 3) Ending. I won't give anything away, but how everything ended, I liked. The only thing I wanted to know is what happened to the Lathanderians and Abelar. But the "cliffhanger" at the end, makes me just want more and more. It was exciting, closed a lot of questions, yet opened others that would be worth exploring in the future. The end just was near perfect.

Overall: 5/5

\*Exciting, fast, well-developed characters, and the overall quality of the story made it near perfect. The biggest problem was the "love interest," it just need more information or developed a little farther. However, Everis Cale and Drasek Riven just made the story perfect.\*

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## Joel Flank says

Shadowrealm, by Paul S. Kemp, is the conclusion of the Twilight War series, set in the Forgotten Realms. While it shares most of the traits of the first two books, I liked this one both more and less than them. It finishes the story of Everis Cale, the Chosen of Mask and his dealing with the Shadowstorm as prophesied.

I'm still not happy about the focus being shifted away from Everis and his friends to deal with lots of the new characters who, for the most part, are even larger pawns in the game being played by gods and powerful spellcasters, and don't have a lot of impact on the story at large. I do see how the paladin of Lathander's fall links thematically with Everis' history, but the entire subplot throughout the series still seems tacked on. I'm also still disappointed that the inclusion of Talmin and his seduction by the worship of Shar - I don't see this in his character from the previous books he was in, nor do I buy the rest of his powerful family accepting being written off scene the entire series and not doing something about the situation.

Those complaints being said, I did enjoy this book more when it focused on Everis and his friends, in part because it spent more time on them than the previous ones, and in part because, despite their power, it did an amazing job of showing how incredibly powerful beings like them could still face threats that were beyond them, and felt epic in scope and danger. In addition, there was a good page count left to deal with the fallout of defeating a quasi-demi-god, to wrap up lots of loose ends, such as saving Magadon's soul, dealing with conflicting promises to a god and an arch-devil, and other miscellany. It's always a disappointment after finishing an epic series to have the last two pages say "and they rode off into the sunset...the end."

As a final comment on the series, the very last bit of the epilogue confirmed that many of the elements I didn't enjoy seem to stem from Wizard's of the Coast's decision to blow up the Forgotten Realms and advance the timeline 100 years. This gives me faith that one of my favorite FR authors didn't stumble on his own terms, but instead was following the dictates of a (in my opinion) flawed corporate overlord. I'm happy to say that Mr. Kemp will be writing in the Pathfinder universe, and can't wait to see what he does there (especially with the much looser hand of Paizo not interfering with the stories he wants to tell.) So far, his book hasn't been officially announced, only that it's scheduled for sometime in 2011.

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## Robert says

The following review was taken from <http://beezermn.laethyn.com/index.php>  
I highly recommend this website for this and other fantasy author reviews.

Shadowrealm by Paul S. Kemp is the third, and final, novel in the Twilight War Trilogy. The first two books are; Shadowbred and Shadowstorm. If you have read the first two novels in this trilogy I also suggest that you read the short story "Continuum" by Mr. Kemp that is in the Realms of War anthology. While technically you need not have read it to understand anything that goes on in this story, there are a few side stories that are greatly enhanced by reading the short story. Plus, it's a great short story. Fans have watched, or should I say read, about Erevis Cale since the anthology Halls of Stormweather in July, 2000. The Twilight War trilogy is a continuation of the story of what a mere butler can become.

The plot of this novel picks up right where Shadowstorm left off. The Shadowstorm is spreading across Sembia and Cale and Riven are trying to stop it. The Shadowstorm is of course the main plot line. How much damage will it do, what will it swallow up before it is stopped, or will it be stopped at all. There are also numerous sub plots scattered throughout the book. Sub plots such as the political situation in Sembia, who is really in control of the area. There is the sub plot of the Shadovar seeking to gain control of the region through less than honest means. Mag's continued spiral into madness. There is also the deal that Cale made to the devil Mephistopheles and the consequences of that deal. There are a couple more sub plots that I can not really talk about due to spoiler material. If all of the above seems like a lot to be packed into one book, you would be correct. Much like Shadowstorm, Mr. Kemp successfully weaves together multi-layered plot lines with deft precision. Some of what occurs within this book attentive readers may guess, other things are beyond comprehension. No matter, this book is a stunning conclusion to the trilogy.

The characters, as can be expected for a third book in a trilogy, are largely carry-overs from the first two books. Familiar names such as Cale, Riven, Mags, Abelar, Rivalen, Tamlin, and Kesson Rel to name a few. There is a great deal of character development with these characters and a few others. Many of the questions that readers will have after the first two novels are answered in this novel. Things such as Cale and Riven's relationship with Mask, Abelar's fall from Lathander's light is expounded upon, Kesson Rel's plan is explained and many more. There is so much going on in this novel it is really hard to pin things down to write about and not write something that would be a spoiler. If you are a fan of these characters, and really enjoy character development then I have little doubt that you will thoroughly enjoy this novel. As with past Kemp novel, the characters are simply outstanding.

The only criticism I can think of for this novel is that maybe, just maybe, there was too much happening in the novel. Later on in the novel there are some scenes that jump back and forth between a multitude of perspectives. I found myself having to really slow my reading so I could make doubly sure I was following everything that was going on. It just seemed a little odd that I had to slow my reading down when I came to the climax of the story. This could have very well been me wanting to know so badly what happened that to slow down seemed wrong.

Some things I really enjoyed about this novel:

1 – The character development. I have read many novels that only one character really developed. That is not the case with this book. There are no less than half a dozen characters that have significant character

development. It is a fine line to walk between giving the reader too much and not giving them enough, Mr. Kemp toes the line perfectly and will leave readers satisfied and still wanting more.

2 – The prose and pacing of the novel. It has been an absolute joy to read Mr. Kemp's novels and watch him grow as an author. This novel is, in my opinion, his best yet. It's tight, succinct, and the pacing is full throttle. It is almost as though he is challenging the reader to dare and put the book down.

3 – The ending. That's all I will say about that. Wow. Loved it.

Fans of the Forgotten Realms need to read this book. There are several things that occur within the pages that will have wide reaching implications not only with this particular story arc, but the Forgotten Realms as well. I highly doubt readers will be disappointed with this novel. If you enjoyed the Erevis Cale Trilogy, if you enjoyed the first two novels of the Twilight War trilogy then you know exactly what to expect here. A tight storyline with fantastic characters. The ending may very well leave you slack-jawed. This is a novel, and series, that I would have absolutely no reservations about recommending it to anyone. I simply can not wait to see what Mr. Kemp has in store for his next novel.

- BeezerMN

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### **Greg says**

Paul Kemp is on the level with R.A. Salvatore. Mask was and always has been one of the most intriguing Gods to follow and Paul has not disappointed. I just found the wrap of one one of the major driving points from the first two books not weak but almost forgotten. The overmistress and her build up seems for naught. I was also hoping there would be a third fourth and fifth of Mask. Although I guess Kesson Rel is technically the first chosen so only the fourth and fifth needed revealed. Riven seems on the Verge of becoming a focal point which is great because I like him the best of all the characters even though Cale was the main I think Riven is about to get his due.

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### **Alfonso Fernandez Santos says**

i want read the book

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### **Alan Dehaan says**

This tale filled my imagination in several places.

I have been reading the works of Paul S. Kemp from the moment he started the tales of Erevis Cale back in the Halls of Stormweather Anthology. In it he began an evolution of a character who perhaps had a chance to turn from his past, but went deeper and deeper into shadow. The distinction between me saying shadow and instead darkness is important, on several fronts.

This book is the end of the Twilight War series and is the 7th full fledged book devoted to Erevis Cale. the

10th published work, unless I have missed a short story or two.

In this book, Mr. Kemp takes on a variety of subjects, all while still staying within the bounds of the Forgotten Realms Shared World. And even more amazing, to me at any rate, he managed to make a piece of Realms Fiction that is meant to shake and shatter the status quo into a work of art.

Because in this, he focuses on characters. He understands that it is characters, not plots, that move forward. And so he delves deep into how each of the characters work, even ones whose only point of existence is to move the plot forward. He does his best to illustrate what guides them, without using an anvil to hit us over the head with it. For some characters, that last for the entire trilogy, we see some measure of evolution. For the ones that have lasted the entirety of these 10 published works, we see a major piece of evolution.

As I stated, he takes on a variety of subjects. There is Faith, as major characters follow the evil goddess Shar who enjoys naught but loss and the void that is to come the end of creation, Lathandar who is the Light where Shar is the Dark and the Nothing, and Mask the god of thieves and intrigue.

The gods each represent themes in the book. Shar represents the loss suffered by many characters. There is the loss of loved ones, the loss of friends, the loss of life. But also the loss of hope, and the loss of self. Every character ends up having loss define them in some way.

Lathandar represents the light that is in all humanity. The light of the soul, and how powerful that light can be. It is touched on quite well that the human soul is a vast receptacle that can be filled with great power. And that power can even come from within.

And Mask of course is about theft. And there is much theft in the plot of this, most of it about the theft of the power of Gods. Whether it be Kesson Rel's own theft from Mask, or Mask's theft that defines who he is.

When this series started, I had some characters I did not care for. The Paladin of Lathandar, Abelar, was to me trite and one note. By the end of this, his being stuck deep into my heart. I believe Mr. Kemp could have done better defining Abelar in the beginning, but his journey was very fascinating and heart wrenching.

Another one was Magadon, the mindmage and son of Mephistopheles. I enjoyed his first appearance in the Erevis Cale trilogy, but in this trilogy he seemed more of a whiny petulant child. That would be due to the loss of a greater part of himself, his soul. But it felt overwrought. But the epilogue, all told from his point of view, healed him greatly for me. I think for this character, using him in the first person rather than third, both hindered early on, but greatly helped at the end, an appreciation of him.

For those who follow the Realms, which I have stopped many years ago, the fates of some of the characters, and of the villains, would be no surprise. But to me, it was. Usually in Heroic Fantasy, Good wins. Even in Mr. Kemp's work, Shady good wins, but with a price. Here, it could be called a draw. And that is being favorable towards it. This may be considered a downside to some, but I found it a refreshing change of pace.

As for what I consider to be the two main characters in this book, despite one not being given any type of real billing in terms of focus, Erevis Cale and Riven shined. They began, way back in that first short story, as full enemies. Here they end as brothers. Both these characters, despite their shortcomings, make the book a wonderful thing to follow.

The ending was a mixed bag for me. It was very strong, and on its own merits I would give it a strong thumbs up. But we are all a mixed bag of biases as we read work. And as the Forgotten Realms setting is



shared, and it recently saw a new edition pile on it with several changes, seeing those changes put into the book made it less palatable to me. Not enough to ruin it, not in the least, but enough to make it not the Absolute Best.

Though to Mr. Kemp's credit, one such change he gave full attention to, rather than mentioning it in passing, and I went from a critic of that change to a supporter. This is an author to watch, plain and simple. What he has managed to pack in here, all the thought and care and pure character that he can create, points him to someone who could be a great critical darling...if the critics would come down from their towers and dare pick up a piece of Shared World fiction.

I recommend this entire trilogy to any who have even a minor interest in fantasy. You may be somewhat lost by the references of the Gods and places of the Realms, but it is worth a quick Google lookup or two to do it. As this book is in my top 3 that I've read this year.

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### **Abhinav says**

You can read the full review over at my blog:

<http://sonsofcorax.wordpress.com/2013...>

Just about a year and a half ago, I read my first ever books from Wizards of the Coast: Paul S. Kemp's excellent The Erevis Cale Trilogy (review). Set in WotC's highly popular Forgotten Realms setting, these books took me for a great ride through a setting incredibly rich with characters and diversity. It was a... bold new world for me to explore, as someone who had never read any Forgotten Realms novels before, and who was heavily invested in Games Workshop's Warhammer Fantasy setting. Paul's books proved to be a great turning point and they inspired me to read more from WotC, and I soon followed up his novels with various others, such as the War of the Spider Queen series and Erin M. Evans' Brimstone Angels series.

This year, I haven't read nearly the same number of Forgotten Realms novels sadly, but I've started to change that around. I read R. A. Salvatore's The Companions (review) just last month and a couple weeks ago I finished up Paul's second Erevis Cale trilogy, Twilight War, constituting the novels Shadowbred, Shadowstorm and Shadowrealm. This trilogy proved to be even better than the first, and I'm really glad that I read it. Now I'm finally caught up with this series, right in preparation for reading Paul's next Forgotten Realms novel, The Godborn, which is the seventh novel in this series and is the second novel that ties in to the current Forgotten Realms event, The Sundering.

Erevis Cale 04 Shadowbred Normally I would review each book in the trilogy separately. But that's somewhat of a long and laborious process especially when a lot of the strengths of these books are shared between each other and I don't want to rehash the same points further one. So I'm going to review this trilogy together.

When last we were with these characters, Erevis Cale, Drasek Riven and Magadon, they had just stopped a very powerful mage from unleashing some really dark sorcery on all of Faerun. But they had each suffered in their own way. Erevis Cale had lost much of his physical humanity and was now a creature of shadows. He had also become an agent of his god, Mask the Shadowlord. The same goes for Riven, who once used to be Erevis' opponent and rival but is now a friend. Of course, he is another agent of Mask by now, and both he and Erevis are two halves of a greater whole, serving Mask as the Shadowlord needs or requires them to be.

Seeing that friendship come about in The Erevis Cale Trilogy was most definitely a highlight of the omnibus. With Magadon, half-demon and half-human, that friendship extended even further, and together all three became a really solid and dependable unit of adventurers out to save the world.

When Twilight War begins, we see how the goddess Shar, the Lady of Loss, is beginning to use her agents throughout Faerun to unleash the Shadowstorm. An event of biblical proportions, its only purpose is to reshape Faerun according to the whims of Shar, a world where death and misery rule supreme and are the two constants. Bit by bit, Paul teases out his characters as they set on the path to stopping Shar and her agents, specifically a human devotee who worships Shar at the cost of her humanity and the other being a Prince of the Shadovar, creatures of shadow and darkness much like Erevis has now become, but a fallen civilisation from ages past who still hunger for world ascendancy.

The political intrigue in these novels is superb. Comparable easily to the detailed political machinations that I saw in C. L. Werner's Black Plague #1: Dead Winter (review) last year, a novel that I regard as one of the best that Black Library has put out in the last five years, at the least. Initially, I disliked the heavy focus on all the politics, and the characters engaged in them. For one, it was all fairly predictable how events would fall out and second, I wasn't interested in them in the first place. At least, until I finished Shadowbred I wasn't interested. But by the time I was moving through Shadowstorm and later on into Shadowrealm, I was really enjoying all the political intrigue. I was now familiar with the characters, with the chess board of pieces that Shar had set in place and was playing off against each other. And I welcome all these political dealings. I enjoyed the slide into damnation that characters like Tamlin Uskevren and Mirabeta Selkirk were going through. It made for some really charged, excited reading.

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## David says

The final book of the Twilight War trilogy is a climactic end, not just to this series, but is also one of the steps that led to the end of Faerûn as we know it (i.e. transition to D&D 4th Ed.).

As with the books that star Erevis Cale (this and the previous trilogy), the book continues immediately from book 2. The whole plot is epic right from the get-go. I had thought the action in the initial half of the book would be a false climax, but I was wrong. It was epic in scale almost the entire way, with a tight pacing to match.

We see how Erevis struggles to reconcile his dual nature, and his dual promises. We see Riven making his own impact as a Chosen of Mask, and as a man. We get bits on the two Shadovar Princes tasked with dominating Sembia. We see Magadon struggling with what happened to him at the end of book 2. Abelar Corrinthal gets the spotlight too, as we see both his strength and weakness faith; a strong counterpoint to Erevis. We also see how Tamlin Uskevren fared - I'm really disliking this character, so it was rather fitting that he got what he deserved. These are all characters that are beautifully brought to life.

I don't want to summarise or allude to the multi-layered plots and reveals that the author so superbly threaded through. Suffice to say, if you're a Realms fan, this is simply superb writing and story-building; you need to read this series. The epilogue is actually building a bridge to the changed Faerûn, but Paul S. Kemp managed to do it in a way that feels very fitting and very well done.

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## Drizztl says

7.5/10

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## Steve says

Ah, Shadowrealm. If you ask me, and so many other people, this book has been a long time coming. It sucked a whole bunch when it was pushed back from its tentative First Quarter 2008 release. Things have changed considerably concerning my view and opinions of the Forgotten Realms, but in retrospect, pushing the novel back is a welcome thing, now. As many of you know, I'm not particularly vocal in my dislike of where the authors and designers have taken the Forgotten Realms in the 4e era. Paul Kemp's Twilight War trilogy is one that I still consider "classic Forgotten Realms", and might just be the last current Forgotten Realms novel I purchase.

The first thing I'll touch on will be Abelar Corrinthal. I think it's safe to assume that this character has had a 'profound' influence on my on D&D playing. One of my favorite characters- perhaps my favorite character- Alton Honeywell was created after reading Shadowstorm. While Alton, a Morninglord of Lathander, isn't a copy and paste job of Abelar, Abelar certainly inspired the character, and how I played him. I was very distraught (as one can be over fantasy novel characters) with his "fall", his sudden rejection of Lathander at the end of Shadowstorm. The character, I thought, was a "welcome change", brining a metaphorical and literal light to the cast of protagonists in Forgotten Realms novels of late. While compelling and interesting protagonists are always good, it's nice to see a "classic good guy" every once and a while, and this was a role that Abelar seemed to have, until he became an apostate. For much of Shadowrealm, I think this development hurt the character. Abelar seemed, to me, to be a fish out of water. I didn't know where he was going. He, himself, didn't know where he was going. As I was talking to my beautiful girlfriend about, an Abelar without Lathander, I personally feel, is akin to...a dog without a tail, a cat without whiskers. Abelar's character was defined, I felt, by his connection and service to Lathander. Take that away from the character, and you've more or less taken away the character. By the way that Abelar seemed to be floundering around until the end, when he reaffirmed his faith, I believe that was confirmed. I think it's a bit of a shame that he died, but at least he died "correctly". That is, he died fighting the foes of his comrades-at-arms, wielding the holy power of Lathander. I, personally, liked better the concept that I had been developing in the interim between Shadowstorm and Shadowrealm- Abelar Corrinthal acts as the light that rises over Sembia to cast out the proverbial and literal darkness. But, we can't always get what we want.

Interestingly enough- and I don't know if this was intentional on Paul Kemp's part or anything- I felt just the opposite with Prince Brennus Tanthul. With Abelar, something was removed and I felt that detracted from the character. With Brennus, something was added, and I felt that it detracted from the character. When, at the end of "Continuum", the short story in Realms of War, Brennus said, "Discovering things is my specialty", I gained a great deal of respect for Prince Brennus. Beforehand, to me, he had just been one of the more or less nameless and detail less Princes of Shade. To have Brennus discover the fate of his mother, to have him discover that his father, and Hadrhune (another Shadovar who was seemingly killed and brought back) knew that Rivalen had killed her, and to have him act so "out of character" because of that knowledge detracted from the character, I thought. Though I certainly hopes that Brennus would divine what happened to her, the scenes dealing with this seemed very forced to me. And, not that I have too many problems with Paul Kemp's novels- he is probably the best Forgotten Realms author who is around currently, including Ed Greenwood himself- the Shadovar binding Mephistopheles (How is that pronounced? :P) seemed a little

“silly”. I mean, if Asmodeus, the Lord of the Ninth, is akin to a Greater Deity in terms of power, I’d expect the Lord of the Eighth to be not that much far behind- though, power is certainly relative. I have the same complaint when Riven “kicked his ass” after the death of Erevis Cale.

One of the parts I liked best about this book was the “final battle” scene(s). Novel protagonists being “kick ass” characters is nothing new. I don’t have any problems with that. Novels are “their” stories, of course. I found it very refreshing that, in the “final battle” scene(s), ordinary Lathanderites had a decent role and accounting for. Take comic books, for instance. Spider-Man is always running around defeating super villains, saving innocents and so on and so on. Where is the NYPD? They don’t make a very good showing of themselves too often. “Regular Joes” are often forgotten in stories that “move and shake” things. To see- and have various paragraphs and subchapters dedicated to- “ordinary” Lathanderites standing up against the great evil and threat that Volumvox/Kesson Rel was, was very refreshing and another demonstration of Paul Kemp’s ability to “get things”. The various Lathanderites- Regg, Trewe, Jiriis, and others- standing up and fighting alongside the “superheroes” against the “supervillain” was very nice to see. As plenty of people have problems with balancing in their D&D games, or their view of the world, the “little guys” matter too.

Hmm...A couple of other interesting points. Shar and Mask being multispheric deities, with Mask being Shar’s herald? Pretty cool. I was digging Shar (and Mask) being multispheric since the Erevis Cale trilogy. Mask’s real name being revealed as Lessinor? Doesn’t matter too much, but an interesting tidbit. I also found it interesting, in retrospect, to look back at how much Magadon changed, going from “normal guy” to “insane killer” and then back to being relatively normal again. Unfortunately, the ending of the novel taking place in 1,479 DR left a bad taste in my mouth.

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### **Billy Rodriguez says**

Some great moments in this one, and now I need to read the next one. And, I was set to start one of my Christmas presents. Oh well.

I’m certain we will see more of Cale, Riven, and Mags, but I hope to see Abelar return, as well. That was a particularly good scene.

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