



Roger Zelazny's Shadows of Amber

John Gregory Betancourt, Roger Zelazny (Series creator)

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"Fans of the late Roger Zelazny's popular Amber series should flock to this.... Betancourt captures the fantastic nature of the original and peppers his story with Amber-familiar terms such as Logrus, that mystical gift which enables its holders to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks and travel vast distances instantly; Trumps, the illustrated cards that assist those with Logrus to travel and even to foretell the future; and Courts of Chaos, the center of this pre-Amberian world."

-Publishers' Weekly

"Betancourt creates a thrill-a-minute series ... that should appeal to longtime fans of the previous series." - Library Journal

At last, Dworkin has created the magic Pattern, and Amber has been established with its own myriad of shadow worlds. Now, King Oberon works on repairing Castle Amber after winning his epic battle with the forces of Chaos. And his world is at peace ... until he is attacked by a nightmare creature that refuses to die, while everything in its path withers and turns to dust.

Oberon leads the monster away from Amber, on through an almost infinite number of Shadows, and still the creature presses ever closer. At last, Oberon travels to the world of the Pattern itself - his source of power - to make a stand against it. His fight, from the center of the Pattern, rips the world asunder - even damaging the Pattern itself. But Oberon manages to defeat the deadly monstrosity ... and the Pattern repairs itself.

Still, much time has passed, and much damage has been done. Among other things, when Oberon returns to Amber, his father tells him that the Pattern has been magically transported to the bowels of the castle. Further examination reveals that the original Pattern remains where it was drawn, and Castle Amber now possesses its identical double.

But more damage than that may have been done. In a single evening, Oberon discovers that Amber hosts another race of creatures - a whole civilization living beneath the ocean in a mirror duplicate of Amber. He learns that it, too, has had a copy of the Pattern appear in its depths, that the Queen of the undersea kingdom knows all about him and desires him to get rid of the Pattern from her realm; and that she has plans for him ... and the powers to perhaps make her wishes real.

JOHN GREGORY BETANCOURT is an editor, publisher, and bestselling author of science fiction and fantasy novels and short stories. He has had over 36 books published, including the bestselling Star Trek novel, *Infection*, and three other Star Trek novels; a trilogy of mythic novels starring Hercules; the critically acclaimed *Born of Elven Blood*; *Rememory*; *Johnny Zed*; *The Blind Archer*; and many others. He is personally responsible for the revival of *Weird Tales*, the classic magazine of the fantastic, and has authored two critical works in conjunction with the Sci-Fi Channel: *The Sci-Fi Channel Trivia Book* and *The Sci-Fi Channel Encyclopedia of TV Science Fiction*.

ROGER ZELAZNY authored many science fiction and fantasy classics, and won three Nebula Awards and six Hugo Awards over the course of his long and distinguished career. While he is best known for his ten-volume *Chronicles of Amber* series of novels (beginning with 1970's *Nine Princes in Amber*), Zelazny also wrote many other novels, short stories, and novellas, including *Psychoshop* (with Alfred Bester), *Damnation*

Alley, the award-winning The Doors of His Face, The Lamps of His Mouth and Lord of Light, and the stories "24 Views of Mount Fuji, by Hokusai," "Permafrost," and "Home is the Hangman." Zelazny died in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in June 1995.

Roger Zelazny's Shadows of Amber Details

Date : Published October 1st 2005 by iBooks (first published October 31st 2001)

ISBN : 9781596871182

Author : John Gregory Betancourt , Roger Zelazny (Series creator)

Format : Hardcover 202 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Science Fiction

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From Reader Review Roger Zelazny's Shadows of Amber for online ebook

John Hurst says

The series is pretty good, I enjoyed all the books, wanted to read the fifth book, but he never wrote it, and found that he was adequate in creating settings, and better with characters, but he definitely is not Zelazny. His writings lack the style that I would associate with anything Zelazny wrote, and while Betancourt writes good characters and interesting plots, his best in this series never lived up to any of the Zelazny Amber books. All in all I recommend reading the books, and only add the caveat don't expect to really believe you have learned more about Zelazny's worlds.

bkwurm says

This feels like it was intended to start a new series. Certainly it starts trying to make connections with the original series. However, these feel somewhat forced. Rebma, for example, appears here as Caer Beatha under Queen Moins. How Caer Beatha appears when the shadow was originally empty is not explained or even addressed. How the name change will come about will presumably be explained in a later book (if that ever happens).

What remains unclear is why no one else in Chaos has, like Dworkin's family, gone into the shadows to find kingdoms of their own. With his pressing need for allies, you have to wonder why Dworkin, Oberon and the rest of the family do not try to find the others using their trumps.

(view spoiler)

Mike says

After reading the first Amber prequel, "The Dawn of Amber", the next book I could quickly lay my hands on was this, which is from a follow-on set after the "Dawn" trilogy was completed. Here, the familiar world of Zelazny's original Amber series is beginning to take shape. Unlike the prior book which felt like it started off slowly (despite opening with battles and night attacks), the pacing of this one seemed faster and edgier. We are shown how it was that the Pattern ended up having alternate copies (not why, just how) something that is important because of the role the alternates play in other novels. Here, they are more of a setup piece to allow a further volume to continue with sub-plots.

Not having read the intervening two books, I was left wondering about some of the "facts" that are present in this one, but the author throws enough backwards references (refreshingly lean and few) that one does not feel out of touch. All things considered, I consider this book to be significantly superior to Mr. Betancourt's first effort. I would give it a strong "3.5" or "3.75", but think it falls just a bit short of a "4". I did find myself making time to read pages, rather than doing so only when convenient as with "The Dawn of Amber". I can only hope that every book after the first will make me feel that same way.

Thomas says

I discovered Zelazny's Amber series in my teens and devoured it. The cosmology was interesting, the characters were well-drawn (although sometimes a little lacking in depth), and the plot was engaging. I enjoyed the later Merlin novels, although perhaps not quite as much as the original Corwin series.

I was interested in seeing what Betancourt had done with the franchise after Zelazny's death. Overall, I'm pretty disappointed. The characters don't have much depth; where Zelazny may have done that with the supporting cast Betancourt does it with the main characters. I found the prose repetitive, particularly in its descriptions of the Courts of Chaos. The first three books sped along, carried on a reasonable but unremarkable plot that draws to a close in the third novel. The fact they're such quick reads and a sense of nostalgia are the main reasons why I finished the first three novel.

I picked up the fourth book hoping it would improve, that Betancourt would find some balance between nostalgia and original work and perhaps find his own voice in the series. To my great disappointment, it got much, much worse. The same characters are even more two-dimensional. One wonders how the main character actually manages to survive to the Corwin series based on his apparent lack of forethought in anything he does. But fear not, for every time a problem arises an unlikely solution surfaces no more than a few pages later to resolve the issue. We get carried through a few locations from the original series that Betancourt hadn't yet visited, and the result is totally unsatisfying. The whisper-thin characters and lack of plot (compelling or otherwise) reduce it to nothing more than window-dressing on earlier The Visual Guide to Castle Amber.

Fans of the original series may enjoy the first three novels for nostalgia. If that's the case feel free to indulge, but I recommend stopping there.

Alex says

False

Oliver says

Too episodic, more setup for the Zaleazny books
