



The Shadow of the Gauntlet

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A high-tech fantasy, in which young Thomas Scargen finds himself deeply entangled in a centuries old magical war while trying to discover the truth about his father.

On the eve of his graduation from New Salem High, Thomas Scargen awakens from an all-too-real nightmare depicting his father's mysterious disappearance. Before the boy can regain his composure and slack back into his familiar world of artifs and hologames, Thomas is torn away from his home and hastily ushered into a secret world of magic. He quickly begins to discover his magic potential and grasp his manifesting abilities, but he lacks perhaps the most important component: control.

Yareli Chual, Spirit Summoner and member of The Council of Mages, has been dispatched to recover the boy and bring him to The Council. There he can find the discipline he needs and the answers he seeks, but getting him there alive will be anything but easy. Yareli is not the only one searching for the Scargen boy.

Along his journey, Thomas will ride atop a teleport dragon, duel a High Demon of the Depths, run with the Lions of Sirati, outfox a spirit ghost, race a vampire, and quote Shakespeare with a whiskey-swilling werewolf—all the hope of discovering the truth about his father.

This quest will be fraught with darkness and malevolence far more unyielding than anything Thomas has come across in his fantasy books. Armed with his newly realized powers and his unlikely companions, Thomas Scargen will have to face this pervasive evil without being entirely consumed by The Shadow of the Gauntlet.

"The novel covers well worn, well loved territory, but puts a fresh spin on the magic, tech, and fantasy that we've all grown up loving." —Geekadelphia.com

The Shadow of the Gauntlet Details

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From Reader Review The Shadow of the Gauntlet for online ebook

Mike says

Hard to believe that a story with dragons, vampires, robots, werewolves (and many more creations of Caracciolo's own mind) could work together, but they sure do. I must admit, this guy knows how to tell a story.

Thomas Scargen's adventures are what I think many of us once wished in our wildest dreams to be our reality. It made me laugh, made me sit whiteknuckled on the edge of my seat during badass mage battle scenes, it pulled on the heartstrings a bit (didn't see that coming) and it takes you out of this world into a killer imaginary world. It's everything a fantasy story should be. Stoked for the next one!

Clawcoof says

If you're looking for a book to get lost in this summer, I highly recommend The Shadow of the Gauntlet. The world of Mages sucks you in from the very beginning, and before you know it you're 100 pages in and read through dinner time. As a main character, Thomas Scargen is a great guide through this new and uncharted world, since much of the reader's discovery is his own. The story takes on many points of view - from Thomas to a dragon to two troll henchmen to the commander of the evil forces - giving insight and back story into every character (their lives and personal family histories) lending an interesting perspective that many novels lack. Every character has layers of good and bad which allow the reader to not only understand the "bad guys" but empathize with them at times. It goes beyond a typical fantasy story, causing the reader to think deeper about morals and what really is good and evil. Caracciolo's imagination is something to marvel at as you travel the world with Thomas and his motley, magical and mythical crew.

Wes Scheffler says

Narsh! I remember spending a brief moment at Megacon, shortly after purchasing the book, and pondering what this word scribbled on the front page by the author was supposed to mean. Now, I realize it is the perfect description for this book.

While the book starts off a bit awkward, finding its pace and groove, everything really clicks in place once we are thrown into this world of magic and science. Particularly when the author seemingly throws out a bad joke he heard at a bar once..."Hey! Did you ever hear the one about a dragon, gremlin, a Shakespeare quoting werewolf and his vampire twin brother, a boy, and his robot walk into a bar?" Did I mention, the author, Casey Caracciolo moonlights as a bartender when not writing and attending conventions, according to the bio at the end of the novel? Maybe that's why it feels so at ease and starts to become truly enjoyable at this point in time. It could also explain the amount of bars they visit/drinks they consume in the book haha.

Thomas and his snarky humor eventually delivers - with a hadoken to the face. The majority of this book is narsh! I just had a few personal complaints about the beginning, but this is not the only book with that issue. Many great books have trouble starting. The book and the protagonist have this in common, so maybe it's intentional. If so, kudos. But stop it!

I'm definitely looking forward to the next installment, especially with that cliffhanger of a final scene. I have a feeling that the sequel won't have the same issues now that his motley crew of immortals, dragons, samurai, and other mysterious and magical beings have found their niche.

Compulsion Reads says

Thomas Scargen is a pretty typical sixteen-year-old boy living in the future where wrist communicators, artifs (awesomely advanced robots) and holobooks are part of everyday life. Unfortunately for him, his life is about to become very atypical.

On the eve of Thomas's high school graduation he wakes up from a nightmare about his father, who is excavating artifacts in Egypt. Before Thomas is able to get his bearings and contact his father, he is attacked by shadowy creatures. With the help of a young Native American girl who has been sent to save him.

Thomas is about to discover that all of his favorite stories about magic, necromancers and other mythical beings are real. Shoved into this fantastical reality, he learns that he is destined to play a role in saving both the natural and the supernatural worlds from a deep dark evil that has been trying to take over since the dawning of time. Accompanied by a dog-loving dragon, a gremling (they don't like to be called gremlins), a werewolf, a vampire, a spirit ghost and a variety of other dynamic characters, Thomas is about to set out on the adventure of a lifetime and hopefully save us all.

The Shadow of the Gauntlet is an action packed, heartwarming, adventure story. Author Casey Caracciolo instantly pulls the reader in and takes them on a journey to meet a most amazing cast of characters. Each of Thomas's new friends, and there are a lot of them, were expertly crafted. I really appreciated the well-developed characters that played a role in Thomas's transition to this new world and acceptance of his destiny. Even the bad guys were written in such a way as to make your heart ache a little as Thomas continually evaded their attacks. It's rare to find an author who will take the time to thoroughly develop the supporting casts. I'm so glad that Caracciolo decided to invest the time and energy to do this, because it really brought the book to life.

Overall I loved this book. The one problem I had, which is entirely my personal opinion, is that I never really connected with Thomas. I felt like he was just too okay with all of the changes he experienced. He was very patient when he was learning to use his powers instead of insisting on finding his dad. There were a number of instances where I would have liked to see Thomas really lose his cool. I understand that Thomas had special attributes that allowed him to wield the Gauntlet, and those personality traits are why he was the ideal candidate to be the bearer of this burden, but I still would have liked to have seen a little more gusto in his reactions to this new world.

I think fans of the Harry Potter and Tiger's Curse series will really enjoy this book. Between the mythology, future gadgets and new friends you'll meet while reading The Shadow of the Gauntlet, you'll probably never want to leave the world that Caracciolo has created.

(This book was provided to Compulsion Reads for review by the author.)

Laura says

Well, I really loved the concept. I like the mix of sci-fi and fantasy. What I wasn't sold on was the dialog. It all seemed so, blah, predictable, trite. It felt like the dialog was the only thing propelling the story at times and the story needed only to be fleshed out. It could have been so much more if we really were able to get to know the characters a bit more. I felt at times that we were dictated the story instead of being immersed in it. Things were described very bluntly instead of immersing the reader in the setting.

Justin says

This book is awesome. If you liked percy Jackson then this book is right up your alley. He blends vampires, magic, tech, and other things to form an awesome and addicting read. I had trouble putting it down once I started. Definitely worth it to read plus the author is very nice. One of my favorite books for sure.

James Vernon says

I have to say, I might not have given this book a try at first glance, but I met the author at Philly Comic-Con and he certainly sold the story to me. If you get the same first impression that I did, DO NOT let it keep you from giving the story a chance.

First, the story is completely unique. Of course you have your good vs. bad, with sides clearly set from the very beginning. What isn't the norm is the excellent way the author blends sci-fi and fantasy without it feeling forced.

The main character, Thomas Scargen is as new to this blend of sci-fi and fantasy as the reader. Its interesting watching the story progress through his eyes as you feel more attached to him since he is seeing things for the first time just like the reader. The viewpoint switches at times between different characters, giving back story and providing information without any of it feeling like an information dump. All of the characters are complex and interesting and their side of the story never slows down the pace.

Overall this was a highly entertaining story with a fresh look at two different genres. It was a fun and easy read and I'm looking forward to the next installment.

Farmer Dan says

This book was narsh. At first I was skeptical to keep coming across characters from all walks of the fantasy/sci-fi genre, but by the end was quite impressed how all the characters meshed together. Who would have thought that dragons and robots could operate within the same realm?

The plot was well crafted including some very emotional twists towards the end. As the first in a series it definitely sets the foundation for tons more adventure to come. Whether a veteran of the genre or a newcomer readers of all types will find something that resonates with them.

Khalia Hades says

If you enjoy sci-fi and magic, this is a novel for you. This is a classic battle between good and evil set in the future. The robots are awesome and the talking animals possess magic power. I could not put the book down, because I had to know what happened next. What really drew me into this book is the seamless blend of fantasy elements and science fiction tech. The book grabs you from the very beginning and doesn't let go until the very end, culminating in a fantastically depicted battle of good and evil. There were definitely nights that I was unable to put the down.

All in all, if you are looking for a great read that involves constant action, engaging characters and teleporting dragons, this is the book for you.

Krysta Halye says

I am giving this a 3 because it is a very good story concept, but the actual production of that story is awkward.

The paragraphs cause the reader to pause when the main character is referred to by name and then referred to as "the boy" in the next sentence. And the use of a written Cockney accent for everyone who is from the British Isles is a little hard to take.

Danielle Marks says

I have to admit, I was doubtful on this one at first, but the last ten chapters or so totally turned it around for me. If the author has a strength in anything, at least judging by this book, it's writing action scenes. The final battle was so vividly realized, I found myself wishing there was a movie I could watch after (this would make a swell animated feature).

The book is loooooong, and at times I felt like it was buckling under the vastness of the mythology the author was building, but I came together quite nicely in the end. I do wish we had spent a little more time with Thomas-the-boy before he was swept off to become Thomas-the-mage, but I had a decent enough sense of him in the end.

If you're thinking of reading this, all I can say is stick with it. The author really finds his stride at the end, and those final chapters had me super-excited for the next adventure.

John St.John says

I think that the best thing I can say is, I can't wait for the next book in the series. Great read, pulls you right into Thomas's world, to the point that you can really picture everyone you meet and everything you see while reading. Great villains too, makes you really pull for the good guys. I wasn't sure what to expect going in, but got to the point when I thought, "This book is really a winner". Can't wait to see how Thomas grows and matures in the next book. Bring on Book 2, I'm really looking forward to it.

Tentsu says

Amazing, I didn't expect much of this book, I mean magic and tech, teleporting dragons and robots fighting with spirits, trolls, and mages? it seemed like too much to pull off and still create a good story, but Casey Caracciolo brings it together! This man turned the skeptic into the believer. This is a fantasy epic worthy of any reader's attention.

Rachel says

I strongly believe in brutally honest criticism, so here goes.

Honestly, I hated this book until I started thinking about it like comic book without pictures, and even then it was only tolerable, not enjoyable. It kind of *was* a comic book in that it had a lot of action and very little character development and other such elements that make a book good. I would have given it two out of 5 stars if it hadn't been for the last three chapters, which had more emotion and were slightly better written than the rest of the book. Because of them, I am actually somewhat interested in the sequel. If only the whole book had been written like that. I probably would have enjoyed the ride rather than suffered through it. For starters, the writing was awful. I frequently found myself wincing at awkwardly worded paragraphs and speed reading to skip over the worst parts. There was even improper use of words and incorrect grammar, which, to me, is an inexcusable sin. For example;

"When he saw the dark man's face, it looked strangely recognizable." (p. 420) Here, the word "recognizable" is used incorrectly. It is used like "touchable" in the sentence "The stars looked strangely touchable." The stars look that way regardless of who has or has not touched them. They appear to have the property of touch-ability, and have not necessarily been touched by anyone. So basically, the author is saying that the dark man's face appears to have the property of recognize-ability, not necessarily that the boy recognizes him.

"They were in a narrower hallway now, but just as tall." (p.422). The author's meaning in this sentence does come through, but his meaning and what his grammar says are different. The grammar says that the two people are just as tall in this hallway as they were in the last one, which made me laugh. I was surprised that this slipped by the "editor," since it is such an obvious mistake.

While I have only bothered to provide two examples, I assure you that there are many, many more throughout the book.

Another problem I had with this book, which I have mentioned before, is the terrible skill with which the characters were handled. The worst example is the way the author handled the main character, Thomas's, feelings about his missing father. Early in the book, Thomas's father goes missing, and Thomas is sad. But he only occasionally dwells on this, which I understand. He is busy fighting evil and has little time to spend grieving. He seemed to find plenty of time to crush on his female compatriot, but that's another matter. Anyways, the readers are left to assume the bond between father and son (or something) that colored the little emotion that Thomas did show. It was like a horror movie without the music. The viewer understands that it must be scary to be stuck in a closet while heavy footsteps sound outside, but without the music the

emotion is not transferred from the character to the viewer and the effect ends up rather comical. That was another problem, the author was no good at transferring the emotions of his characters onto the readers, leaving them to stretch to imagine what the characters must be feeling, rather than feeling it in their own guts as a result of the skill of the storyteller.

Also, this book had the worst textual imitation of a cockney accent I have ever seen. Clearly the author is not accustomed to hearing cockney accent. That, or he has heard only one person speak it, and has built all his cockney characters off of that person's odd way of speaking cockney. I found it hardly bearable to read the cockney characters' speaking bits.

As much negative criticism as I have offered, I have to say that I liked the story. It was fun and interesting. Since the story is the most important part, that means a lot. Even if it is the book's only redeeming quality, it is an important one, and I would recommend it to people based on that. I would still warn them about the other stuff, though, because, damn.

I really think this book should have been written as a graphic novel. Based on the drawing on the cover page, the author is pretty good with cartoons, and the comic book genre allows for all the important elements that were missing from this book to be missing, since, in comic books, they are perks, not expectations. If it is not too late, I would recommend the author re-release this as a graphic novel and continue the series in that vein.

Now I am willing to admit that I may be a book snob. I mostly read canon literature, so this book is a far cry from my normal read. It is possible that few of the people who read stuff like this book will feel the way I do, but I stand by everything I've said.

Erin Miller says

So my partner picked this book up from one of the conventions she sells her art work in. This and the sequel to it anyway. When she came back, she handed me the book saying, "You'll probably like this. You read faster than I play through video games." Anyway, she was right and I did like this book a lot.

So let's get on with the good and the bad, starting with the bad first.

The cover of this book could be better. The simple design is nice but since books are still judged by their covers, it needs a better cover. Of course, that's just my aesthetic opinion on the matter and I shouldn't say anything about it since the book does have 52 reviews at the time of this blog post.

I also felt it was too short, but that's not a bad thing at all.

Moving on to the good...

What can I say about this book that will make it more awesome? Absolutely nothing! It's a standalone on its awesomeness.

So what's this bloody thing about anyway?

Cue in Thomas Scargen, a chronic slacker that somehow manages to graduate high school. He has a robot that takes place of a nanny. (Clearly, this is set in the future.) Eventually, he wakes up from a nightmare and everything stems from this. Yareli, a Native American girl, helps him escape from some villains.

Okay, so it sounds like a typical fantasy story right? Throw in a whiskey drinking, Shakespeare quoting werewolf, a day-walking vampire, a teleport dragon, a gorilla bartender, a robot with autism, a fox spirit, mechanical midgets, and more. Intrigued yet? This review doesn't do this book any justice. Just please pick it up and read it for yourself. It's a new spin on fantasy and scifi. A must read for fans of these genres.

With that said, I'm going to tell my girlfriend to let me read the second book and possibly go stalk the author

and find out when he plans to release more books.
