



Greatshadow

James Maxey

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Greatshadow is the primal dragon of fire, an elemental evil whose malign intelligence spies upon mankind through every candle flame, waiting to devour any careless victim he can claim.

The Church of the Book has assembled a team of **twelve battle-hardened adventurers** to slay the dragon once and for all. But tensions run high between the leaders of the team who view the mission as a holy duty and the super-powered mercenaries who add power to their ranks, who view the mission primarily as a chance to claim Greatshadow's vast treasure trove. If the warriors fail to slay the beast, will they doom mankind to death by fire?

Greatshadow Details

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Author : James Maxey

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From Reader Review Greatshadow for online ebook

Petra says

This was my first ever dragon book, it is also the first book in a four-part series called The Dragon Apocalypse. But it works perfectly fine as a standalone.

Told in first-person, the narrator isn't the protagonist, making this quite an original way of relaying the story. Stagger, the narrator, actually dies right at the start of the story. Following his long-term companion around in ghost-format, Stagger tells the story of Infidel, a super strong female mercenary, and his secret love interest.

I really enjoyed Stagger's perspective. He was funny and endearing although he had basically been a drunk and a scoundrel most of his life.

The plot itself is a fairly typical action-adventure quest featuring a group of incompatible rogues setting off to slay a powerful dragon, Greatshadow, the dragon of fire. As I'm generally not a huge fan of fantasy epics, I appreciated that this was fast-paced action and entertainment rather than loads of dry world building. Characters were introduced with sufficient history and they, as well as the setting, were described thoroughly enough to make it easy to imagine the island, the dragons, the immortals, the orcs etc.

The rather mixed bunch of characters surrounding Infidel were all likeable and fun despite the expected tension within their group. I really enjoyed the "romantic" elements of Infidel's story as well although some of it was getting very close to being cheesy. Still, the arc about Stagger and Infidel's relationship, which neither of them had honestly and fully appreciated until Stagger wasn't alive anymore, was an interesting addition to all the sword wielding action. Overall, this was humorous, close to silly at times, but a lot more entertaining and fun than I had expected from my very first dragon fantasy book.

Being honest here, I wouldn't have sat down to read this in book-format. It's just not my thing. But listening to this was phenomenal and so much fun. Jake Urry brought the characters to life in a spectacular fashion. His dragon voices were scary, his portrayal of The Three Goons was wonderful, in particular No Face. I like how Jake makes female characters sound believable and not like cartoon-type characters. There was a large cast of characters involved, but it was always clear who was talking due to Jake Urry's differentiation and tones.

AudioBookReviewer says

My original Greatshadow audiobook review and many others can be found at [Audiobook Reviewer](#).

Stagger and Infidel are bounty hunters searching for highly prized dragon bones. While chased by pygmies, Stagger accidentally stabs and kills himself with his bone knife, and is transformed into a ghost tied to his knife, he must go where it goes. Infidel, the beautiful warrior with impenetrable skin and unnatural strength, mourns his death, not knowing Stagger is still following her. She joins a strange band of magical warriors and priests to slay the elemental dragon, Greatshadow, to free the world of his control of fire.

This is an extremely complex story with imaginative characters and demons. Maxey paints a richly detailed world of magic and adventure: impenetrable armor that only exists as long as 300 monks pray for its existence, a deceiver who can change reality by convincing others of his lies, a mercenary who can change into an animal from the tattoos on his body, an ice priestess who can freeze anything with a touch and many,

many more. The story's originality and fresh ideas alone are worth the visit, but it is the richly developed characters that will keep the listener enjoying the ride.

The plot is far too complex to describe here. Each character has his or her own reason for searching out the elemental dragon, Greatshadow. One wants to kill it for king and country, others just for the money, another as an enslaved magician and Infidel to bury her grief. It is an epic adventure that will satisfy fantasy lovers.

Jake Urry performs the story magnificently. He brings the story to life with his exceptional voice and character portrayals. A beautiful dance of narrator and story and a pleasure to listen to.

Greatshadow is a thoroughly entertaining action adventure fantasy. It even throws a bit of philosophy into the mix about when messing with nature is going too far. It is book one in the series, but stands alone as a complete novel. You'll definitely want to listen to book two when it is available. If you enjoy fantasy at its best, this is a must listen. Highly recommended.

Audiobook was provided for review by the narrator.

Mo says

This is the best book I've read in a while. Perhaps because I was hungry for some good old fashioned sword and sorcery, perhaps because this book does sword and sorcery in a unique way. The characters are drawn perfectly for my tastes, without too much told or too much left out. The unique narrative perspective is well done. I personally enjoyed the religious undertones (and overtones), from the Zen-like grandfather to the overbearing, ridiculous religious zealots. Maxey is deft with the religious characterization and while I found myself thinking more deeply about the Tao I don't think Christian readers will peer too far into the text and emerge on the other side with a bitter taste.

Don't let the cover art (in my opinion, the art is awful and not a good reflection of the book in any way), the mention of dragons, or anything else dissuade you from reading this. If you are a sword and sorcery or fantasy reader this book is honestly not to be missed. This is my first novel by this author and I have four more of his books now at the top of my stack.

BookLoversLife says

Whilst being chased through the jungle by pygmies, Stagger and Infidel have no choice but to jump off a cliff into the water. Unfortunately Stagger accidentally stabs and kills himself with his knife. He then becomes bound to the knife and has to go where it goes. Infidel, is distraught but gathers up his knife and flees. She needs a job so joins a quest to slay the mighty Greatshadow, but the gang of unlikely accomplices have their work cut out for them trying to slay an elemental Dragon.

I have to say that I did not expect to love this as much as I did!! The author has created a very vivid and intrinsic world and one I absolutely adored! There is so much happening within the pages that it was impossible to put down. The world the author created was extremely well crafted and pleasantly unique.

Character wise, we have a wide variety of them but each was well written and developed. We have a warrior

whom is nearly indestructible, a priest who can sense lies and other untruths, he is also powerful in his own right, we have a deceiver who can make you believe anything, a man who can bring armor into being just by opening a book and more, plus we have dragons!!! It was amazing to read about them all.

The plot was fast paced and so entertaining. The quest they set out on is impossible because everyone who has tried has failed, plus, how can you defeat the Dragon of fire? I also loved how the story was told!! It was told via Staggers POV, even though he is a ghost!! It was a refreshing way for it to be told and I thoroughly enjoyed Stagger!

In all, an intriguing, exciting and adventurous tale and I'm so glad it seems to be a series. I want to know more about the world and characters!!

Jake Urry surpassed himself with his narration here. Every book I've listened to that he has narrated has been a 5 star narration, but this one was even better. The sheer amount of tones and voices he had was phenomenal! He was goofy and silly when needed (the goons) and tense and serious when called for. His voice for the dragons were amazing and he nailed the performance of the whole book. Amazing narration!!!

I was voluntarily provided this audiobook for free from the author, narrator, or publisher. This in no way affected nor influenced my thoughts.

Ranting Dragon says

Greatshadow is the newest offering from James Maxey, best known for Nobody Gets the Girl and The Dragon Age Trilogy. It's the first installment in The Dragon Apocalypse, with book two, Hush, scheduled for June of 2012.

Our protagonist is Infidel, a magically overpowered woman working as a mercenary and occasional thief. She has super strength and is impervious to most damage. When her closest friend dies, she decides to take one last big job so she can retire in style. Her best chance is to join a team of heroes heading out to kill the primal dragon of fire, known as Greatshadow. His horde is legendary, and it'll take everything Infidel and her companions have to get it.

Pure and unabashed sword and sorcery

On the surface, this is a tale about stereotypical heroes straight out of 1980s fantasy pulps. You've got a group of inhumanely talented people, some of whom have never really been challenged in their adult lives. I'd expect a book like this to be rather dull and emotionally uninteresting. Where's the challenge, after all? However, Maxey does a fantastic job with this. First, the book is told from the point of view of Infidel's dead companion Stagger. He's a relatively average guy, for a ghost, and is a far more relatable as a narrator than Infidel would have been. Additionally, for all their super powers, this is a group of deeply flawed people. The paladin archetype is a fanatic who can't see the forest for the trees. The strong man isn't as dumb as you might think, but his deformities (which cause a speech impediment) limit his ability to interact with the other characters. I could go on, but I think you get the idea. For all their powers, they aren't gods.

The other thing that saves this book is that it doesn't take itself too seriously. Infidel is the type of girl you don't touch in a bar. She might take exception, rip off the arm that's groping her, and beat the offender with his own severed limb. There's a part of me that appreciates the dark humor in that image. On the other hand, this isn't an innately humorous book. It's more what would happen if you had a group of people role playing

these twelve characters: stupid, crazy stuff. Every once in awhile I'd read something that would make me giggle, and then I'd move on to the rest of the action feeling reinvigorated.

Not terribly predictable

Okay, so it's a sword and sorcery book. You have a group of heroes, they go out to slay the dragon, some of them die. After all, what would be the fun if they all walked away without a scratch? What made this fun for me were the twists and turns Maxey took to get there. Dead didn't mean dead, right from chapter one when Stagger dies only to haunt his knife for the rest of the book. I was entertained to see just how some of these characters died and how some of them managed to survive. And with so many characters there for different reasons, whose ultimate goal is going to the one that is fulfilled?

This book also has a secondary plot line (which you could argue may actually be the main plot line), which is the relationship between Infidel and Stagger. They both have a lot of thinking to do on what their relationship was, and what it could have been. This is made more complicated by Stagger struggling to come to grips with the fact that he's a ghost, and his inability to affect anything in the physical realm. It's Stagger's growth as a character that really fleshes this book out, and keeps it from becoming just another sword and sorcery tale of dragons and heroes.

Why you should read this book?

Two words: it's fun. In fact, I think this is the most fun book I've read in months. It plays with archetypes, it's intense with just a bit of silly, and there's a nice romantic arc. In short: win. Lots of win. Can it be June so I can read the next book now?

Scott says

If you like fantasy, dragons, and a band of rogues with a mission, I think you will enjoy reading or listening to "Greatshadow" which is the first book in "The Dragon Apocalypse" series. The book is written by James Maxey and the audiobook edition is skillfully performed by Jake Urry. Take pieces of "Lord of the Rings", "NeverEnding Story", "The Da Vinci Code", and "Ocean's Eleven" and you get a small taste of what you can expect in Greatshadow. Strap on your seatbelt as this is an action-packed fantasy tale that takes a well-worn idea and makes it new, exciting, and interesting. The physical book comes in at about 360 pages and the Audible audiobook is nearly thirteen and a half hours long. The story is complex, the characters are fragile, the task is impossible, and the consequences are the lives of our band of adventurers; potentially the entire world. One thing that sets this book apart from many others is that although it is a series, the book can be read and enjoyed as a stand-alone work. I'm not sure if that will be the case for future books or not. The story is not only about defeating a grand and powerful dragon. It is also a battle for not only treasure, but truth as well. If this sounds interesting, I recommend you pick up a copy and dive into this majestic adventure. What's stopping you, the book has dragons in it!

Although there were times I was briefly lost when the story shifted from one plot line to another, it was easy to pick back up and get on track. In many ways, the story's complexity made it feel larger and more substantial, but I highly recommend setting aside time to read and enjoy it. It requires focus; this is not a book you can listen to while performing tasks requiring your attention. I enjoyed the author's use of aptronym when naming his characters. In some ways, such usage reminded me of "Pilgrim's Progress"; for those familiar with the book you will understand what I mean. The book's character names often fit or reflected their overall personalities. I appreciated the detailed writing and storytelling style giving me a better view into this new and rather strange fantasy world. Even though the book was packed with action, such as

with the opening scene, the author did not fail to include some deeper and important aspects that brought the characters to life. There were scenes that included both deep emotional aspect and even some light (at times crude) humor. I felt the book was well balanced by keeping me on a rollercoaster ride emotionally. In a day and age where nearly every main story characters are invincible, like super heroes, this book's characters were more life-like because each was flawed and needed to depend on the other characters strengths to survive. It was like the relationships of Gilligan's Island placed in a fantasy world.

The book had a few of the standard fantasy tropes one would expect, but it also included some new and unique creatures, powers, and magic systems. I liked the concept of the Wardolls giving the story a bit of a futuristic or steampunk feel at times. Many of the main characters had rather strong backstories so you could better empathies when they struggled. The band of characters are quite a unique as most of them would often be repelled by each other if not for the central goal of hunting the dragon. What surprised me most about the book was the perspective from which it was told. I do not want to give any spoilers, but needless to say I was caught off guard, but once I got used to it, I enjoyed it quite a bit. As intense as the story was, the author provided relief through the use of humor, many times when it was needed. I had to laugh out loud when one of the characters favorite foods is monkey and their favorite color is black. The author pulls from details shared at different times and surprises the reader with them much later in the book. I liked the many surprises.

Jake Urry has a deep and rich narrating voice which adds to the weighty and heavy feel of the book. The multiple characters were all well and uniquely voiced along with their many different accents. Although there were a few slight volume inconsistencies, they were only noticeable if you listened very closely. There were no observable audio artifacts while I listened. Even though he does not have a large number of narrations released on Audible (at the time of this review), I have already enjoyed a few of his other works and he has quite a diverse category of genres he voices.

For parents or younger readers, this book contains some crass and childish humor, light use of vulgar language, along with some adult subject matter of a sexual nature. At times, there are references or dialogue around specific bodily parts and a scene describing passionate romantic love which may be a bit more intense for younger readers. If you are at all offended by any of these, I would recommend to not read this book.

In summary, the book was overall enjoyable yet at times quite complex with some time travel, flashbacks, etc. that could have you feeling lost or confused. Stick with it and you will find a tale that is full of twists and turns, intrigue, and strong relationships. If you can get past a few of the language issues pointed out above, I would recommend picking up this book. Although it is a series, remember it can be read as a stand-alone novel. What would it hurt by dipping your toes into this first book of what is to become a much bigger story?

Disclaimer: I was voluntarily provided this review copy audiobook at no charge by the author, publisher and/or narrator.

David says

I really enjoyed this one. On the surface, it's a classic fantasy romp, with an inventive cast of characters, each of which has a special skill of some kind, on a quest to slay a dragon. Even just at this level, the book is great fun, and really well told, with a lot of good action and clever turns. The magical system of the world, however, provides philosophical depth to an otherwise light-hearted romp. Members of different religions

and sects see the world differently, and can thus perform different magic. Often their beliefs conflict with each other, however, leading to situations where the one who believes the strongest, or can convince others, gets to determine what is real. It's a world where any belief really can be true, suggesting that its reality consists entirely of a shared delusion, which those of strong mind can alter. Some thought-provoking background that made this fun adventure story richer.

Luc Reid says

Sword and sorcery superheroes

Narrated by the ghost of a deceased drunkard, *Greatshadow* shows off the strengths I've come to expect in James Maxey's writing: it gushes with cool ideas brought to life; it moves at speed through unexpected and intriguing plot turns; and it features sympathetic characters who are larger than life and twice as flawed.

Some of the phenomena in this book rank with the most fascinating I've seen in any story anywhere: a chamber constructed of false matter, invulnerable armor made of the unceasing prayers of an abbey full of monks, a ghost tied to the knife that accidentally killed him, a priest who makes things true by saying they are, and much else.

My main complaint about this book is its setting, which sometimes seems to be assembled from fragments of a variety of centuries. I never quite get my footing in Maxey's world beyond the things he describes directly. I also wince at the "pygmy" tribes, who are treated collectively and with far less care than Maxey seems to show for his taller characters. Even in a section where their lifestyle is championed, it's a human of full-height who makes the argument.

Yet these complaints don't prevent the story from being engrossing and meaningful. Frankly, I'm bringing them up mainly because I didn't want you to think that I enjoyed *Greatshadow* as much as I did due to not viewing it with a critical eye: on the contrary, Maxey's novel defies any effort on my part to dismiss or forget it by pushing characters I like and sometimes pity into a meat grinder of marvels.

Thimbleberry says

I was lucky enough to receive a copy of this from a giveaway at The Ranting Dragon for their June book club. I say 'lucky' both in winning the drawing, and because I might not have read it otherwise. I won't tell you how long my backlog of books-to-read is, but since this was sitting on top of the pile I was able to actually get to it :)

While this isn't a book that will change your world, it was vastly entertaining. Take your usual cast of quest characters in a world with some interesting non-human folks and dragons, add a dash of 'Warbreaker' by Brandon Sanderson, and sprinkle liberally with humor on par with A. L. Martinez. Enjoy!

Melissa Hayden says

*I was given this free review copy audiobook at my request and have voluntarily left this review.

4.5 stars

A cool addition in listening to the audiobook for me, we get small sound effects! There's a noise that matches the waterfall, lightly in the background to give us the feel of the story with the narration. I enjoyed the sly or laid back, knowing voice of the clientele at Black Swan that he used. Very fitting of the characters! I found I really enjoyed Jake as the narrator for this book. He felt to bring life to the words and characters as he spoke. When listening to audiobooks, sometimes a wonderful thing happens - you don't even know you are listening. Yep, it happened here. Jake told the story with what felt to be the characters personalities and lived in their emotions. This brings a book to a whole fourth dimension that's enjoyable for us.

We start off with seeing Stagger and Infidel in their full character as they escape a lava pygmy temple. How they escape says a lot about their personalities and friendship. Also gives us a action start to bring us into the world with them. I totally loved it. I was sold on the daring characters from the opening.

Infidel is one brutal woman! I love it! She's magically strong and seems to have no fear with her strength as she does withstand some heavy events and keeps on going. Infidel comes to a realization early in the book and grows from it as we move through events. Infidel feels to have been a person in need of healing, and didn't realize it until she lost one person dear to her. Wonderful writing for Infidel and her growth.

I very much enjoyed the story from the beginning. It's told from Stagger's view of things happening. I was pleasantly surprised at how well everything fits as we watch and experience with him. We interact with many different beings from Ogre to dwarf and magic inclined people. And of course, dragons. Very interesting world.

The story plot has an overall slower pace like traditional fantasy. But it's what happens in those moments that are amazing. Even though the plot is slower, the story is far from it. We get to see the world and know the characters through adventure and danger. There is magic and different beings present that we get to meet through actions. I even found I got to smile and chuckle at this story. When you meet Reeker and get to witness what he can do, you'll be smiling too. lol.

I found it interesting how the characters on the journey to kill Greatshadow have their lives intertwined with this adventure. We learn a great deal about them and face dangers as we journey, and I didn't realize that we were still working to get to the dragon. I didn't feel as though the book needed to skip ahead or anything. I truly enjoyed the story from the view point we got it.

Bob Milne says

Greatshadow, the first book of The Dragon Apocalypse by James Maxey, reminds me in so many ways of the TSR quest-driven novels I cut my fantasy teeth on so many years ago. More specifically, it reminds of Forgotten Realms adventures by the likes of R.A. Salvatore, Ed Greenwood, Troy Denning, and Douglas Niles. Before anybody takes that the wrong way, let me assure you that's absolutely not a criticism or a complaint - I have fond memories of those adventures, and Maxey rekindled that same kind of wide-eyed enjoyment.

The writing is fresh, the characters intriguing, the action frantic, and the story line deeper than you might originally suspect. I must admit, it took a while to get used to having a ghost narrate the novel, but there's purpose to Stagger's narrative role that goes far beyond mere novelty. He's a coward and a scoundrel, a greedy, drunken adventurer with questionable ethics, but one who is loyal and sincere where it counts. I

definitely warmed up to him over the course of the novel, and I quite liked the way Maxey gave his story closure towards the end.

Infidel, his magically endowed, super powered partner in crime seemed a little thin at first. She reminded me too much of the characters at the heart of the Runelords saga, a series where the novelty wore thin long before the final pages of the first book. Fortunately, Maxey has an entertaining backstory for her that is slowly unveiled over the course of the novel, slowly adding layers of humanity to her impervious exterior. Of course, it helps that she's entirely aware of her role as a sex-object within the genre, something she takes great joy in subverting. There's a scene where Infidel explains to Aurora, high priestess and frost giantess extraordinaire, just how deep her superhuman strength runs, and why she could never doom a man to the throes of orgasm, that will leave you laughing and crossing your legs at the same time.

Where Maxey breaks away from the style of those Forgotten Realms adventures of 20+ years ago and cements his place alongside his genre contemporaries is in his sheer unpredictability. This is one of those novels where nobody is safe, where good and evil are not absolutes, and where truth and lies are simply a matter of perspective. For such a small band of adventurers, a lot of main characters die along the way, and not all of them in the grand, heroic fashion you might expect. There's an element of realism here - or, as much as there can be within a swords & sorcery tale - that acknowledges the fact that things don't always work out simply because we want them to.

One final note on this book, I thoroughly enjoyed Maxey's take on religion. The Church of the Book is an interesting concept, both a satiric parody of organized religion and an almost logical mythological construct. The idea of a Book that contains the complete story of the universe, but which cannot be read except by the arrival of long-anticipated Omega Reader, is brilliant in its absurdity. Similarly, the duelling magics of Father Ver and the Deceiver is both ridiculous and inspired, with the magical outcome of their respective 'truths' and 'lies' dependant solely upon the belief of those around them.

It's been a long time since I've had the pleasure of enjoying a good, old-fashioned, straight-up quest adventure, complete with magical artifacts, inhuman races, and truly epic dragons. He amused me, entertained me, and amazed me on several occasions. Much to Maxey's credit, he maintained both my interest and my smiles the whole way through, more than ensuring I'll be back to discover what happens with Hush.

Originally reviewed at Beauty in Ruins

Donna says

Between the set-up information and the slightly clipped prose style, it took me some time to get into this book. I totally loved the middle third, about high-powered heroes making their way through a hostile landscape while dealing with the tensions among their group. The ending wrapped things up very neatly, but felt a bit overcomplicated to me.

I liked the heroine, Infidel, though I wish she'd been a little less objectified. All of the secondary characters were really interesting, and I wanted to spend more time with some of them. There were some great abilities on display in the group, and I liked the organizational and political details of the various factions.

I do have to say that I didn't care for Stagger much. Don't get me wrong, the idea of a dead, alcoholic narrator is freaking fantastic, and Stagger fills the role well when his mind is on the job. Unfortunately, he behaves in a creepy, proprietary way towards Infidel, including invisibly sitting in on private conversations and intimate moments. His stalking and spying didn't exactly make me sympathetic towards his romantic intentions. It was even enough to make me feel bad for poor, shiny Tower. That guy was a total goof, but he seemed like he'd been messed up by the same system that Infidel barely escaped. And at least he was straightforward.

Despite my issues with the squick-factor of Stagger's characterization, I really liked the adventure parts of the story. I'll probably try something else from the author in hopes that I'll like a different protagonist better.

(Yet again, I really wish we could do half stars. This one was better than many of my other three-star reads, but I can't quite bring myself up to a four.)

I won this book as a Goodreads giveaway.

Mieneke says

The first in a new series by James Maxey, *Greatshadow* managed to be both a very original book and a rather familiar one. Let's start with the original part. The book had a very original take on the narration. While the protagonist is Infidel, she is not the narrator; no, that place is beholden to Stagger, her erstwhile – and currently very dead – partner. This approach is one I hadn't seen before and one that's very effective in keeping us apprised of happenings Infidel couldn't have known about. Told in first person with Stagger referring to himself as I, *Greatshadow* is actually mostly a third person story as Stagger relates Infidel's story. I really enjoyed the way the book was narrated and Stagger is a very funny point of view.

Now for the rather familiar part: the characters surrounding Infidel. The cast of people along with Infidel on her quest is very cool and I really liked them, but if you squint hard enough at them you can just assign them their relevant D&D classes and you have a relatively traditional adventuring party. However, this only occurred to me after finishing the book, so it might just be nitpicking. My favourite members of Infidel's group were the Three Goons, Relic and Aurora. The Three Goons were just really funny and interesting, Relic rather creepily mysterious and Aurora is just a wonderful character, whose background as a high priestess to the primal dragon Hush was very interesting and also key to the story.

Infidel is completely kick ass. She's an intriguing juxtaposition; despite being physically mostly invulnerable, she's still very human and emotionally breakable. Her back story is awesome and very well done, we slowly learn more about where she comes from and how she acquired her magical protections. I loved how she only realised how she felt about Stagger after she lost him and hits herself over the head for it. So yes, there is a sort of romance in the book, but definitely not of the traditional kind. Infidel also showed growth during the novel, going from a rather barbaric artefact looter to wanting a more 'normal' life. I'm curious where Maxey will take this in the next book.

While the basic plot of the book is rather linear – a group of people get together and go off to slay the dragon – it's the side plots and the characters' motivation that make the story captivating. The world building, while relatively limited – we're on an island – is interesting. We get enough glimpses of the world off island to not feel too isolated, but Maxey mainly focuses on the Isle of Fire itself. We do meet some interesting races and learn some excellent dragon lore. This book mainly focused on Greatshadow, the primal dragon of fire, but

in the next book we'll meet Hush, Rott and Glorious and I imagine we'll meet others in the third book, *Witchbreaker*. I can't wait to learn about other parts of this world and more dragon lore in the coming books.

Greatshadow was a fabulous read, which kept me turning pages and just finishing one more chapter before doing whatever I was supposed to do. Besides, any story that can legitimately clothe its main character in a chain mail bikini and make it functional can only be genius! If you like straight up adventure novels, kick ass heroines and dragons – lots of dragons – then you can't miss *Greatshadow*. I know I'm already impatient for the second book in the series called *Hush*, planned for release in July. *Greatshadow* is out from Solaris Books this week.

This book was sent to me for review by the publisher.

Terry (TBC) says

Audio

Not my usual genre but I enjoyed this.

Fantasy & always moving story.

Jake Urry as always did a great job narrating and keeping the story flowing with life.

Elena Alvarez Dosil says

Greatshadow, who dwells in the Isle of Fire, is one of the called primal dragons. His power is the power of fire, which he can use to spy on men, control them, and even kill them. The Church of the Book has decided to send a mission to slay Greatshadow, and has enlisted twelve member on this quest, but their backgrounds are so diverse, that tensions grow amongst the group.

Even though I like fantasy, I am quite picky with this genre, and I found that many fantasy books do not fulfill my needs. When I came across this book though, I knew I was against something different, something special, and later I discovered that it was just not due to the story, but also because of how it was told. The book is told from the point of view of Stagger, a bounty hunter which is always seen in the company of Infidel, an indestructible and super strong woman, who doubles as Stagger's friend and bodyguard. The curious thing is that Stagger dies on the first chapter of the book, but he continues to be the narrator of the story in the form of a ghost.

There quite some characters (just the company is formed by twelve members). A tip for this is writing down the names and main characteristics so not to get lost. The characters are varied and interesting, and their relationships create a dynamic driving the story forward. The most developed characters are Stagger and Infidel, and we will discover new things about them along the story, like peeling layers upon layers.

There is adventure, action in this book, but also humor, love, and mystery. Listening the story from the point of view of a dead man was sometimes heartbreaking. A good sign of how well developed the characters are and how well the book is written.

The most amazing thing of this book is the world building. The events happen on the Isle of Fire. I am not sure what is beyond this Isle, since only the Silver City was mentioned, and it was not clear to me if it was on

it. I especially liked the description of Common Ground, a village made out of docks and ships on a bay. This part totally made me think of 'The Secret of Monkey Island', and it left me wanting for more. I would also like to learn more about the Vanished Kingdom and how evolved their society was.

Again, with this kind of book I would appreciate having a map on hand. I ignore whether the printed and the ebook versions have one. It is a pity that audiobooks get ignored regarding this. Since audiobook distributors do not include a map, I think it would be a great idea for the authors to include this on their website.

The main story arc is complete, but the book ends on a kind of a cliffhanger and opens a door to new adventures. Nevertheless the end gave me a feeling of closure in a way that I was not annoyed by the cliffhanger. I was mystified by the Black Swan, and I suspect that we will hear a lot more from her in future books.

One of the reasons for the success of this book is Jake Urry's great narration. His deep voice and interpretation skills trapped me from the start in a way that I could not let go. I finished this 13-hour book in just two days, so this shows how this book got me hooked. Each character had a unique voice and style, which helped in bringing them to life. I was surprised at first at hearing a British narrator for an American book, but after some minutes through the story I realized that Urry had the perfect voice and skills for this book. No one else would have been the same. The audio production was spotless. I have to mention that in the first chapter, when Stagger is still alive, there are some sound effects not present in the rest of the book. I wonder if this was intentioned. They were okay but I am happy that Urry did not use them for the rest of the book since I found them a bit distracting. I think they add an extra dimension to the story, but since this is not often used in audiobooks, it mainly distracts me from the story. And adds more "interferences" to the background noise outside (sometimes I listen to audiobooks while walking on the street or taking the metro).

It was a very enjoyable listen, and I am looking forward to the sequels and other audiobooks narrated by Jake Urry.

I received this audiobook as part of my participation in a blog tour with Audiobookworm Promotions. The tour is being sponsored by Jake Urry. The gifting of this audiobook did not affect my opinion of it.
