

Shatter Dark Newsletter

Formerly “Rogue Pollyanna Review”
– by R. Graeme Cameron

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HOW TO PURCHASE SHATTER DARK?

In theory, you should be able to go to any bookstore and ask them to order the book for you. All you need to provide them is the title “Shatter Dark,” author name “R. Graeme Cameron,” and the ISBN “978-1-998703-10-4.”

Otherwise, you can order an epub or print-on-demand version via the sources listed in the ad at the end of this newsletter.

HOW'S IT GOING, EH?

Pretty good. In the first two months of availability, I've met my minimum expectation. In the 2-digit range. I'm hoping to reach a 3-digit number (a minimum of 100 sales) by the end of the first year of publication.

Why so low? When you consider that the average novel published in North America sells less than 20 copies, and that in Canada a sale of 3,000 copies is considered a best seller, I think my expectations are reasonable and realistic.

I have so far benefited from an initial surge of buyers consisting of relatives, friends, and people acquainted with what I've accomplished elsewhere in the industry. My publisher is bringing copies to sell at the *When Words Collide Festival* in August. Hoping that will constitute a second surge.

But to be washed over by the tsunami of my dreams, I've got to figure out how to market the book myself. I don't drive, and my income is limited, so I guarantee I won't be conducting a publicity city-by-city tour Canada-wide. Besides, I don't have the stamina for that kind of thing.

Furthermore, I don't want to waste what little money I have down the rabbit hole of endless promotion. For one thing, there's no proof any of it actually works. This is why marketing is pretty much the most common topic of conversation between writers. Everyone is desperately seeking the winning formula.

Even worse than the amount of money you gamble on marketing, is the amount you can waste hiring people to tell you the secrets of their expertise. Sometimes it is legitimate advice from successful professionals which may or may not apply to you, and often it is advice from scammers who make all of their income from fleecing the gullible.

That said, I have received lots of advice from professionals I trust. I will be crafting a publicity campaign based on whatever is cheapest to accomplish and yet attractive enough to stir up interest. I have yet to accumulate enough sales to cover my costs. Consequently, I am reluctant to spend any money if all it does is put me further in the red.

Nevertheless, "you have to spend money to make money" is a truism of sorts, but also the quickest route to declaring bankruptcy. It's a matter of spending money wisely, of making the best choices, and learning to take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

Ultimately, I know that word of mouth and luck will decide the fate of my book. I just need to figure out how to nudge it in the right direction.

CRITICAL REVIEWS BEEN GOOD?

Some of them, as you can see from those I quote in the ad at the end of this newsletter. I sent ARCs, or advance review copies, to a number of professionals I know, in hope of obtaining useful blurbs. About half liked my book. About half definitely did not. Fortunately, they don't want to bust the bubble of my achieving my childhood dream, the number one item on my bucket list for nearly six decades, and have chosen not to write negative reviews. I am most grateful for this.

I was delighted to receive the following note:

“I was impressed by the book; I was afraid it would be dreadful, and I’d have to figure out how to be noncommittal if asked about it, but you surprised me. It was fun, witty, and moved along quite spryly (despite your age, ha ha!).”

Needless to say, looking forward to this chap’s review when it comes out.

WHY DID SOME REVIEWERS DISLIKE THE BOOK?

A cynical satire making fun of human shenanigans throughout history is not everyone’s cup of tea. Especially the premise that our nature will never change and that we shall always be both the best and the worst of what we are capable of being.

I know fans who still believe in the Gernsbackian vision that technological progress will eventually solve all the world’s problems. I don’t think so. Some problems, yes, but new ones will be created by the evolving tech.

I know others who cheerfully anticipate the world will be at peace once everyone lives up to international law. My extensive reading of history convinces me nations abandon international law whenever it is deemed inconvenient. Besides, Trotsky once said “You may not be interested in war, but war is very interested in you.” Whether or not there is war isn’t dependent on your viewpoint. It’s up to the psychopaths currently in charge.

I know idealists who seem to believe that if politicians were as dedicated to knowledge, rationality, and common-sense curiosity as Carl Sagan was, there’d be no ignorance or corruption in government. Probably true. Unfortunately, his type is in short supply. We seem to elect people who tell us what we want to hear. Not necessarily a good thing. In fact, I think most politicians suffer from imposter syndrome, make it up as they go along, and simply pretend to know what they’re doing in order to get re-elected. Image is everything. Nothing else is as important.

I could go on and on. Basically, a good many SF fans believe in the promise of the future, that the future will inevitably be a better world, and that this is a goal all humanity craves. We have only to make it so, and it will be.

I used to believe that. Not anymore. What changed me?

History in the making. A lifetime of observing history in the making. And a growing understanding how history is manipulated during and after its creation. History is rewritten every generation. I don't mean in the history books, but in the situational awareness of the popular memory of past events. Context is quickly forgotten.

For example, the American civil war remains relevant and controversial even to this day. Some Americans support the North, but others, the South. Both "sides" tend to attribute a vision of glorious unity for the true cause, whichever that be. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Did you know that one out of ten Union soldiers deserted? That one out of seven Confederate soldiers did the same? That some southern states were so enamoured of states rights that their politicians fought the "federal" Confederate government tooth and nail, refusing to recognise its "tyrannical" authority? Which is why Confederate President Jefferson Davies was never able to establish a Supreme Court for the Confederate justice system. The majority of southern politicians, including his own Vice-president, opposed his proposal, viewing it as an attempt to establish a dictatorship. And what about the fact that most soldiers on both sides died from disease rather than from combat? Not much glory there, methinks.

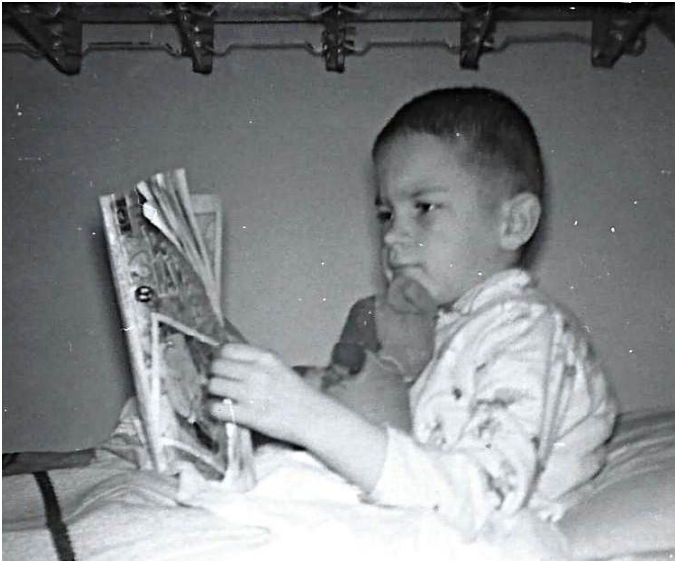
Is reading history the antidote to idealism? Well, yeah. But just as the devil is in the details, so too, the angel of human decency. It's amazing what doing the best one can to survive brings out. Not everybody is a dormant monster waiting to be triggered by hateful demagoguery. Some people turn out to be innately decent. They are the hope for our future.

So, while my book makes fun of human constructs like governments and belief systems, I feel it's offbeat humour and character studies reflect an acceptable reality, that all of us are just trying to survive and are happy to do so. It's unlikely you can save the world, but maybe just maybe you can save yourself and those you love.

Sure, life in the future era I describe is as short, callous and brutal as it has always been throughout most of our history, and in that sense is more realistic than many a novel, but I believe my message is fundamentally optimistic. We shall always be human. Overall, that's a good thing.

It may be that my premise is too bleak for some. But I designed my book to be an easy, fast read full of surprises. I like to believe many readers will find it intriguing and entertaining. Including you.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES



Here is a photo of me taken in late 1958. I am seven years old and indulging in my favourite activity, reading in bed before going to sleep. What am I reading? I think it is an oversized British comic book. In the upper left of the cover a large seahorse or small dragon seems to be confronting a long-legged, bearded chap wearing a loin cloth and clutching a stave. Centered in the angled rectangle a figure with glowing eyes peering out from within a helmet appears to be clutching the neck of a monster, or

possible it's a tree branch. Whatever the zine is, it is definitely stirring my sense of wonder. It looks well-thumbed. Not the sort of thing my older brother collected, but possibly he'd borrowed it from a friend. Or maybe my dad brought it back for us from one of his overseas trips on behalf of the RCAF.

Cradled in my arms is "Puppy," a plush toy dog given me when I was still using a crib. I licked all the fur off, and forever after its skin was the basic cloth it was made with, albeit frequently repaired by mother whenever its seams began to split. Puppy was my boon companion. I loved that doggie. I knew it loved me. True puppy love.

WHAT I WILL BE DOING AT THE WHEN WORDS COLLIDE WRITERS FESTIVAL

Takes place in Calgary in mid August. I have so far been scheduled for the following:

Saturday, August 16th, 4:00 PM: *Pathways to Publication.*

"Exploring pathways to publishing via conventional publishing, self-publishing, and independent "Indie publishing. Panelists share their experiences, pros and cons, on these diverse pathways to publication in the North American Marketplace."

I will focus on my novel, *Shatter Dark*, and how I got published followed an unexpected and very different path from what I had originally planned.

Sunday, August 17th, 9:00 AM: *Live Action Slush Science Fiction*

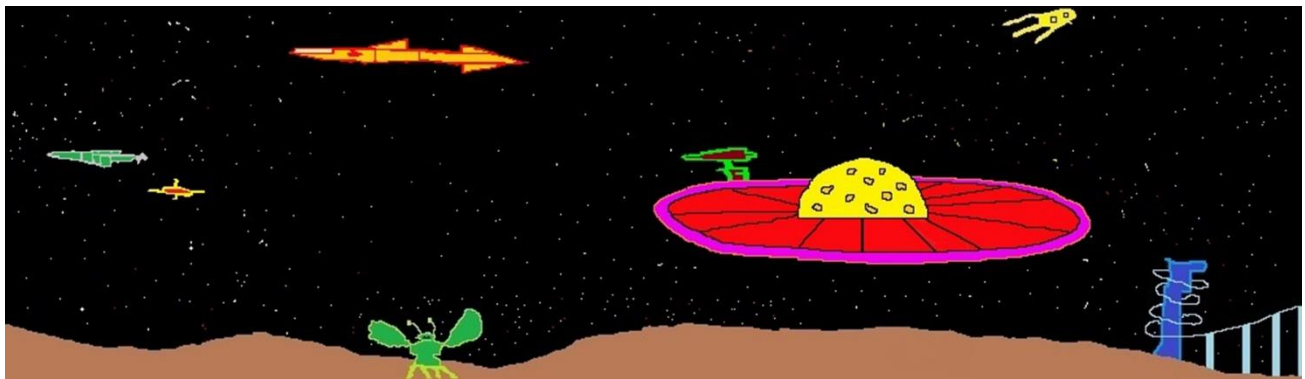
A reader will read aloud the opening pages of submitted short stories till the panel of editors raise their hands to stop the reading. They will then critique what they have heard. I am involved as editor of *Polar Borealis*.

The off-the-cuff critiques are meant to offer serious advice. The basic idea is to determine if the story is polished enough to be worth submitting. Nevertheless, slush readings are generally a lot of fun and quite entertaining, plus very useful for beginning writers to grasp what editors are looking for.

Sunday, August 17th, 4:00 PM: *Pantser vs. Plotter—Which One Are You?*

“Are you a scribbler who writes by the seat of your pants? Or maybe you don’t start penning a work until you have a complete chapter-by-chapter outline? Find out what kind of writing style works best for you, and the strengths and weaknesses of each method, with authors who have been on both sides of the Pantser/Plotter spectrum.”

Over nearly six decades of occasional attempts at writing novels as a tireless plotter, I never got published. Then I switched to a 100% Pantser approach, and the result was snapped up quickly by a publisher. Even better, from the point of seniors attending the panel, my particular Pantser approach is specifically designed to aid aging seniors like myself.

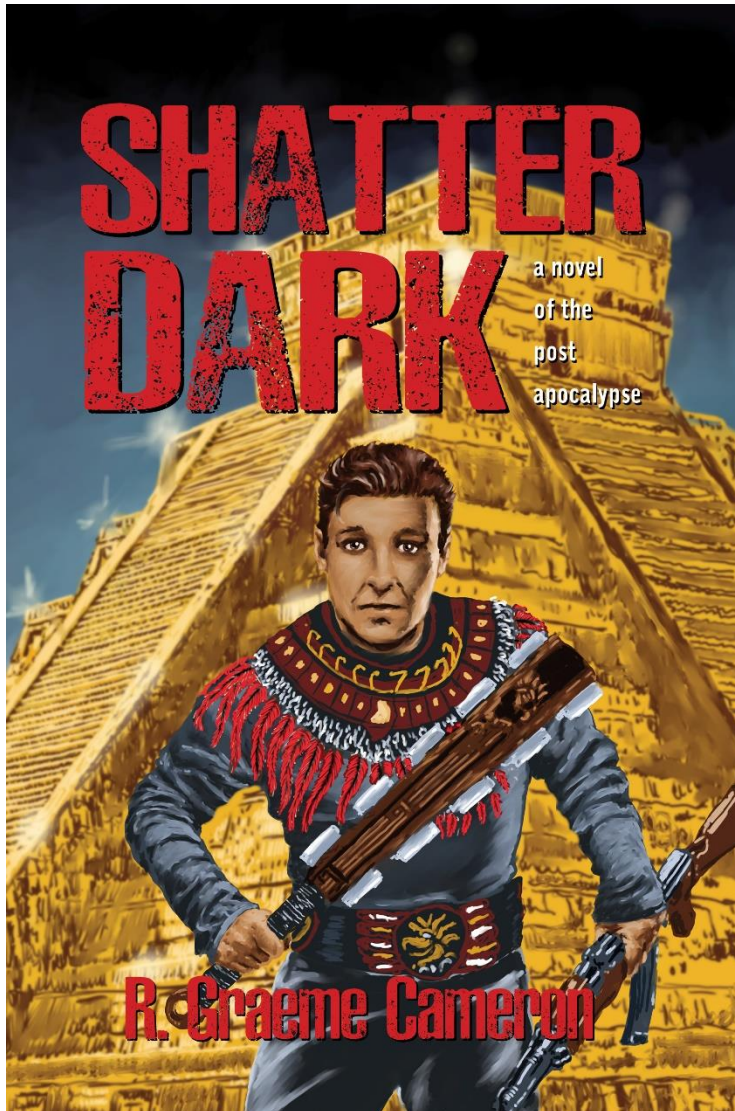


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SHATTER DARK

by R. Graeme Cameron

IS NOW AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE



“*Shatter Dark* is inventive, fresh, and clever, and Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame member R. Graeme Cameron has a wise and witty narrative voice. Bravo!” – **Robert J. Sawyer**, Hugo Award-winning author of *The Downloaded*.

“*Shatter Dark* is a delightful romp of nonstop action through a future plagued with misconceptions and stone age chaos. Rudwulf the Smiter is swept up in a cascade of disasters. As oligarchs and dictators attempt to revive lost civilizations in their bid for control, Rudwulf manages to stay one step ahead. *Shatter Dark* is wildly entertaining.” – **Colleen Anderson**, Rhysling Award and SFPA poetry contest winner.

“*Shatter Dark* completely captivated me. Love the writing style.”
– **Arlene F. Marks**, author of *The Earthborn* and *Weekends can be Murder*.

“*Shatter Dark* is a hilariously clever read. It’s a science fiction story full of cynicism, satire, and post-apocalyptic absurdity. Rudwulf’s inner snarl and Buddy-bod’s snide AI commentary keep the tone biting and brilliant.”
– **Rhea E. Rose**, poet, educator, and editor of *Polar Starlight Magazine*.

Humanity endured limited nuclear war, climate warming, and the rising of the oceans. Turned out that was easy compared to what happened next. For the first time in centuries, survival depends on humans making the right decisions. Trouble is, we've forgotten how.

Enter Rudwulf, the Smiter. He alone knows how to save the human race. His reputation is that of an amoral mercenary who never fails. The perfect civil servant. No wonder he's in demand.

Alas, his methods are unpopular. Even worse, the rulers desperate to employ him are unaware he's incompetent. If they ever find out, they'll kill him.

Necessity compels Rudwulf to focus on survival. As a result, he hates his job and wishes he'd chosen a different profession. Too late now.

Maybe, too late for everyone.

Where to purchase Shatter Dark:

Sources for E-publication Purchase

E-pub Shatter Dark is currently priced at \$3.99 USD or \$5.99 CAD.

AMAZON USA – [Amazon.com: Shatter Dark eBook : Cameron, R. Graeme: Kindle Store](#)

AMAZON CANADA – [Shatter Dark eBook : Cameron, R. Graeme: Amazon.ca: Kindle Store](#)

APPLE – [Shatter Dark by R. Graeme Cameron on Apple Books](#)

BARNES & NOBLE – [Shatter Dark by R. Graeme Cameron | eBook | Barnes & Noble®](#)

DRAFT2DIGITAL ASSORTED – [Shatter Dark | Universal Book Links Help You Find Books at Your Favorite Store!](#)

FABLE – [Shatter Dark by R. Graeme Cameron – Fable | Stories for everyone](#)

KOBO – [Shatter Dark eBook by R. Graeme Cameron – EPUB | Rakuten Kobo Canada](#)

SMASHWORDS – [Shatter Dark](#)

Sources For Paperback Purchase

It is available via Amazon. Currently priced at \$14.50 USD or \$19.73 CAD.

AMAZON CANADA – [Shatter Dark : Cameron, R. Graeme: Amazon.ca: Books](#)

AMAZON USA – [Shatter Dark: Cameron, R. Graeme: 9781998703104: Amazon.com: Books](#)