

# DARKTHORNE CHRONICLES SHADOW OF THE SOUL BLADE



The first installment of the Darkthorne Chronicles in the all new world of Ashana, follows a group of unlikely heroes fated to save the world from the ultimate evil waiting in the realm beyond the shadows.

**AUTHOR:** Jay Roland **PAPERBACK:** 979-8-218-13077-0  
**EMAIL:** Author@jayroland.com **EBOOK:** 979-8-218-14439-5  
**GENRE:** Epic Dark Fantasy **WEBSITE:** www.jayroland.net

An ominous darkness intent on corrupting the world of Ashana lies in wait, just the other side of a dimensional rift. Its agents take actions, stirring the attention of a few unlikely champions, who would otherwise be strangers to each other and the rest of the world. Join Bastian, the feral Selece, as he ventures forward from his indigenous homelands, in search of his people's stolen relics. Read through his first adventure, to watch his path collide with foes, turned friends, and align with unlikely companions to recover the stolen relics of the selece people, and in doing so, uncovers a greater plot, fating them to save all of Ashana.



## About the Author

Jay Roland is an up-and-coming author in the Dark Epic Fantasy genre with the recent release of best-selling novel "Shadow of the Soul Blade". The first of the Dark Thorne Chronicles.

Jay is a devoted, caring husband of 16 years to his wife Nyssa, and loving father to their five wonderful children. As a lifelong table top RPG gamer and storyteller across many platforms, he's often found weaving intricate tales of intrigue, or impending doom for his family and friends.

During the day, Jay is a technology professional, leading teams and departments to overcome unique technical and logistical challenges. But now, after decades of telling stories around the gaming table, he has finally decided to craft the first of many books to come.

## What inspired you to write Shadow of the Soul Blade?

Nearly twenty years ago, I created a new world for a new roll playing game with the help of some friends. We built the world and completed the game, but never got it published. Ever since then, I've been using that world to create campaigns and run gaming sessions. Eventually new stories just started coming to mind, so I wrote them down. Over time, they strung together into a larger tale, the results of which became this book.

## Why are you self publishing?

This story, and these characters, are very important to me. To maintain the authenticity of my writing, I refuse to hand over my creative control to some corporate publishing company who will try to tell me what to write, or how to write it. I'm publishing these to take fellow travelers on this adventure with me, and that journey won't be authentic if I give up my creative authority.

## LOOK INSIDE



"Lookout indeed." A voice came from beyond the tree line on the path ahead.

Moments later, a tall stranger stepped onto the trail. Half a head taller than Reinhardt, the lithe figure donned a long grey cloak, hood pulled back revealing a shoulder-length mane of dark wavy hair streaking white. The stranger's pale skin intensified the piercing gaze of his bronze eyes flecked with ruby. Beneath the grey cloak, he wore a black tunic over green pants held by a black leather belt.

Strutting forward, the stranger brandished a pair of well-kept black leather boots, matching his belt. "What are you..." The stranger paused to inspect the travelers. "...tender feet... doing so far from civilization?"

Xander began to approach. "We're on a quest to restore the sacred relics of Theshana, and—"

The stranger's words echoed in a thick baritone, lowered from age and the occasional pipe. "A quest? How noble of you. Your quest ends here." The words were laced with sufficient authority to stop the mage in his tracks. After pulling a long steel from under his cloak, he pointed the blade in the direction from which they'd traveled. "Turn back now before someone gets hurt."

Xander's hands came together, eyes half closed, focusing his will to bring forth the Asha within.

Bastian advanced, placing a hand on Xander's shoulder. "Save your strength, mage." He sauntered forward, addressing the stranger, "You will not stop us." The heat in his growl was palpable.

"Certainly." Reinhardt nudged his way past the Selece. "But this one's mine." Pulled from its ornate sheath, Reinhardt's long steel rang. His breathing slowed with his pounding heart. The blood flowing through his veins surged. Falling leaves drifted to a gentle glide before hanging in midair.

Reinhardt lunged, slashing deliberately short of his target. The stranger intercepted the attack, binding their blades. Reinhardt broke free, stepping wide to find an opening in the cloaked swordsman's guard. The stranger thrust his tip toward Reinhardt's head. Reinhardt swiped the long steel clear. With his feet in perfect position, spine straight, elbow high, the young noble thrust forward and hit nothing but air.

Ducking low, the stranger shifted his foot behind the young swordsman's ankle and surged forward with a shoulder. Reinhardt flew off his feet with a gasp, slamming to the ground with the flat of his back, abruptly forcing any remaining air from his lungs. With a firm thrust, the tip of the stranger's blade flew at Reinhardt's head.

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Shadow of the Soul Blade

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