



Cloak and Spider

David Dalglish

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"Every king must have his heirs, and I will have heirs worthy of my legend..."

Thren Felhorn is a legend of the underworld, the leader of the powerful Spider Guild, father to the Watcher of Veldaren, and the most feared man in a city flooded with crime and death.

Cloak and Spider contains six stories chronicling Thren's tutelage under the fearsome Darkhand, his bloody rise to fame, the creation of his infamous guild, and the birth of his son, Aaron, who would grow up to be a legend all his own.

Word count: 29,100

Cloak and Spider Details

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From Reader Review Cloak and Spider for online ebook

Sandra says

good prequel.

Vicki says

Wow! These novellas are absolutely amazing! I loved them! I decided to read these first before starting the Shadowdance series and I was blown away at the writing talent David Dalglish offers his readers. The story's though short were fast paced and completely enthralling. I cannot wait to start Shadowdance!

ken says

Good story ,

Good charismatic character's story structure is nice ,easy to relate with .I normally do not write these had the author not asked for review's.

Reader73 says

My first Dalglish book, interesting, I will read more soon.

Merideth says

Shadowdance

I have read the Shadow Dance Trilogy and when I saw that the author was doing the backstory to one of the main characters I had to read it. I loved the book, it definitely explained the trilogy books a lot better as far as who Thren Felhorn is.

Stefan Fergus says

DNF.

I know this is a series of short stories, but after the first one and a dull beginning to second, I'm done. So many things I didn't like, or though nonsensical and illogical. Very unlikely that I'll try the novels any time soon. A pity, as so many others seem to love them. I will say that the author's prose is pretty good. But plot, etc., seriously and fatally let this down for me.

Mihir says

Full review over at Fantasy Book Critic

ANALYSIS: When it comes to David Dalglish's books, I always set aside some extra time because I know once I start reading, I won't be able to stop until I complete the story. His Shadowdance series has become an alltime favorite of mine with its complex story of politicking between thief guilds, squabbling cities and ultimately a battle of wills between a father and his son. When it comes to Haern, he is by far the favorite character of most David Dalglish readers. I happen to enjoy his tale too but in my opinion, the more fascinating character is Thren Felhorn, a Guildlord who is ruthless, far-sighted and a swordsman extraordinaire.

This novella traces his origins and reveals half a dozen pivotal movements in his life which have lead him to become the fearful character that we meet in *A Dance Of Cloaks* and the remaining books. I'll be listing each story and talking about it briefly:

- 1) Stealing Spoons - The first story introduces Thren as a nine year old orphan in the city of Mordeina who faces a cruel person named Muzien the Darkhand while trying to steal a pair of silver spoons. Thren and his bosom buddy Grayson are then cornered into coming to a Sun guild meeting where a strange game of "And Then There Were None" seems to be starting and Thren and Grayson will have to pit their wiles against forty hardened killers.
- 2) Stealing Hearts - This is the second novella and it features Thren, and Grayson when they are young men making a name for themselves. The target is one of the Trifect and a family heirloom, however they have strong competition from someone who is as tough as them and has a deft advantage as well.
- 3) Stealing Crowns - The third novella shows Thren and Grayson's induction into the thief guild culture in the city of Veldaren. Thren is pitted against the leader of the Spider guild as they race to see who is the better thief. This is the first story wherein we get to see Thren's ruthless streak arise and it is a chilling one.
- 4) Stealing Life - Stealing Life focusses on the birth of Thren's son Aaron and it is a heart-warming story. Perhaps the only light story in this entire collection and even then it has its share of darkness to it. I very much enjoyed this story as it showcased a different side to Thren.
- 5) Stealing Memories - The penultimate story in this collection is the cruelest one of the collection and easily the most riveting one as well. This tale looks at a covert battle between guilds namely Thren's Spider guild and Carr's Scorpion guild. After the light hearted nature of the previous story, this one is entirely gut-wrenching as it shows what happens when Thren's plans don't awry. The first cracks in mental facade are shown and even then he's cold-hearted to the extreme. This story bears a lot of importance for the events happening in the forthcoming *A Dance Of Shadows* (book 4 in the Shadowdance series) and therefore is the most significant one of this collection.
- 6) Cloak And Spider - The titular story of this collection is a folktale which Thren narrates to his son Aaron, when asked about what is Aaron's role in the Felhorn family. This story almost reads out like a prophecy and should be interesting for readers to draw their inferences in regards to the Shadowdance series. From a

narrative point, it is a smooth story that ends on a sombre note as it easily leads into the events that make up the prologue of *A Dance Of Cloaks*. A terrific finishing short story to round off an intriguing collection about a character who perhaps rivals Tywin Lannister in his calculative maneuvering and ruthless persona.

Cloak And Spider is a fascinating prequel novella to a series that itself is a prequel series to the author's self-published debut series. However this novella effectively stands on its own due to the tight narrative focus on Thren Felhorn and his legendary but infamous exploits. The stories are tightly written with each one opening and ending swiftly but not before a crucial facet about Thren is revealed to the readers. These stories also reveal a lot about his orphan friend Grayson, the love of his life and the mother of his children. This collection while being a must read for all David Dalglish fans, is also a good starting point for all new readers who do not wish to invest a whole lot of time to his longer works.

CONCLUSION: To all those new readers, I would heartily recommend reading this novella collection as it elegantly illustrates all of David's writerly plus points, while also giving a compelling omniscient view into the first half of Thren's lifestory. I can vouch that once you read this collection, most readers will ever be curious to know more about Thren and what happens next in his life in *A Dance Of Cloaks* and the rest of the *Shadowdance* series.

Rob says

Good start intro to the series, time lapses maybe should have been explored or explained more, but liked it.

Lucinda says

This is an excellent collection of short stories that "flesh-out" the character of Thren Felhorn from the "ShadowDance" Series.

Kevin says

It was ok, but I really hope that his novels are much better written. I don't think he would have gotten a passing grade in any English class with this story.

Joe says

Really good back stories for the series. Well worth the read. More would be better.

Jordan Petersen says

Interesting book, but I was sort of disappointed by the "novella" style that it is written in. You are introduced to some of the most powerful characters in this fantastical world, and then (without warning) they vanish

only to never be mentioned again as soon as the chapter ends. If this were three times as long and explained some of the transitions between scenes/motives for the character's actions, it would be 10x better!

Nicole Kapteyn says

Really interesting collection of stories. It was really fun to read some more about Thren Felhorn, and it was neat to learn a bit more of his history. The stories were a bit short for me, but David did a good job with the word count he used and still fleshed out Thren's character very nicely. Hope to read more of Thren in the future.

Nyssy says

I have been reading A Dance of Cloaks but it seemed there was another beginning and to my delight there was. I didn't want to go forward until I read the beginning, though I'm finding out this was written after it.

I enjoyed it. A nice book to read while relaxing in the evening.

Cassiopeia's Moon says

Oh I loved reading this novella! You really get to see another side on *Thren*, which was the point, without him becoming... too soft really.

I love Thren as a character and I think he is really well written in the Shadowdance series. Even though he doesn't appear that much in after the first book and almost not at all in A Dance of Mirrors he is always a presence you respect and kind of is a bit afraid of. But he is presented as a kind of one dimensional character - pure evil (I think it will change in A Dance of Ghosts though).

To get his backstory, even if it is only 108 pages of backstory, gives you a new understanding of him. And as I said, I'm so glad he didn't become soft.
