



Shy Knives

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Shaia "Shy" Ratani used to be a member of the most powerful thieves' guild in Taldor—right up until she cheated her colleagues by taking the money and running. The frontier city of Yanmass seems like a perfect place to lie low, until a job solving a noble's murder reveals an invading centaur army ready to burn the place to the ground. Of course, Shy could stop that from happening, but doing so would reveal her presence to the former friends who now want her dead. Add in a holier-than-thou patron with the literal blood of angels in her veins, and Shy quickly remembers why she swore off doing good deeds in the first place...

Shy Knives Details

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Author : Sam Sykes

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From Reader Review Shy Knives for online ebook

Doyle Stricker says

This is a reading of an Advanced Uncorrected Proof of, Shy Knives. I won a copy for pre-reading (I think I'm supposed to mention this in the review, so... I did).

I should also mention that I have been playing tabletop RPGs for a large portion of my life. Of the RPGs I have played, PathFinder is my favorite.

While both of these aspects should influence how I review this book, it will not.

I do not review very many books on Goodreads because I have a problem with the five star rating system. I also have a problem with rating all books within the same category (i.e. all literature as equal). My review of this book, should be considered a review of the book inside the subgenre of books that exist within the RPG community. I say this, because personally, some books with a 3-star rating are actually a one-star (when compared to long standing works of art... if we are to consider all literature equal. I do not.).

Although I only gave this book three stars, it is probably one of the more enjoyable books set within a gaming system/campaign. I would not consider this a Grim Dark, sub genre of fantasy. I would, however, consider it to be close to Grim Dark within the gaming community's novels.

I thoroughly enjoyed the aspects of Shy (main character), and her attitude and violence that persisted throughout the novel. For me it is refreshing to see the novel (within a gaming community) that is more towards an adult style of theme/game play in RPG settings.

However, it still reads like a novel set inside of a campaign setting. Sometimes you have a desire to read serious literature, and there are also times when you just want to read something to be entertained. This would be that kind of literature... kind of like the difference between having a four-course meal and just enjoying some popcorn while watching a movie. This is popcorn. Microwave popcorn while watching a show at home...

Devin says

A fun tale set in the (new to me) Pathfinder fantasy world. Quick read (< 300 pages), with a fun female lead and all the trappings of a fantasy role playing game campaign - centaurs, double crosses, complex villainous schemes, wine, whiskey and the stabbing of necks. So many necks stabbed in this story. Wouldn't mind reading more of Shaia's adventures.

Bart Vervaet says

the story was good, but the writing style not so.

Patrick says

Some of the narrator's inner discussions were frankly hysterical. a fun read.

Joel Flank says

Shaia "Shy" is an irrepressible con artist, thief, sometimes assassin, and looking out for herself. She also has, certainly not a heart of gold, but a heart which loves gold, and might have a only slightly tarnished bit of silver in it. She at least has a soft spot for those in need, if it doesn't require her going too far above and beyond.

So when she's offered a chance to investigate a murder for a slightly down on her luck minor noble, it sounds like easy money, and a way to line her pockets with much needed gold at little risk to herself. Little does she expect she'll get embroiled in a plot against the city involving rebel centaurs and dark magics. Armed with a fast quip and faster dagger (preferably used in someone's back, which makes it far easier than a fair fight), and some manipulative schemes, can Shy survive her "easy job" with her life and (lack of scruples) intact?

I'm always a fan of clever likable rogues adventures, and *Shy Knives* delivers a fun romp of a story, and manages to still pack an emotional punch in a few places as Shy does some self-examination as to her own nature. It's also refreshing to see a story like this featuring a female protagonist, as this particular style of adventure tale almost always features sly male rogues. It's good to see women adventures continuing to break the glass ceiling and not being limited to sexy sorceresses and chain mail bikini clad barbarians.

Matthew Marchitto says

Shaia "Shy" Ratani is one messed up and broken person. She's a rogue to the extreme, and will spill your guts in a heartbeat. When she's hired by a Yanmass noble, Dalaris, Shy finds herself having to face her own emotional hang-ups in order to get the job done.

I really enjoyed this book. It has a dark, sarcastic sense of humour that appealed to me. Told in first person, Shy has a strong voice and her personality bleeds through the page.

Embroidered in noble politics, the mystery takes a few unexpected twists and turns. It's helped along by the Pathfinder setting, which allows for some moments of batshit crazyness.

Also, the centaurs are badass.

I'm not overly familiar with the Pathfinder Tales world, but I don't think you need to be to enjoy *Shy Knives*. It's a stand alone book. After reading this I'm definitely going to check out Sam Sykes's other work.

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

4.5 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum [https://bibliosanctum.com/2016/10/18/...](https://bibliosanctum.com/2016/10/18/)

While this is only my third venture into the world of Pathfinder Tales, I swear the experience is only getting better with each book. And my latest read, *Shy Knives*, just completely stole the show.

Backing up a bit though, I was excited when I first learned that the wickedly funny Sam Sykes had been asked by Paizo to write a novel for them and that he would be joining the Pathfinder fun, but I think I would

have jumped on this book even if I hadn't been getting into the series already. I knew I was going to enjoy myself, but still—I had no idea just how much!

Shaia Ratani, Shy to her friends, is a scrappy young scoundrel who specializes in the kind of jobs that no one else can handle. For one thing, she's not afraid to work outside the law. For another, she's also not above getting her hands dirty. She has cheated, stolen, maimed, and killed—and though she doesn't exactly condone or relish doing harm to others, it's not like she can afford to regret her past decisions either. Sometimes a job is just a job, and nothing personal.

One day, Shy is approached by a young noblewoman with an interesting case. The Lady Dalaris Sidara is the sole remaining heir to a destitute house, her already precarious future shattered by the death of her betrothed just days before their wedding. They said that her fiancé had simply been in the wrong place at the wrong time, overseeing his family's trade business at a caravan stop when it was attacked by a marauding band of centaurs, but Dalaris suspects that there is more to the story. With the other nobles watching her like a hawk, she needs someone resourceful like our protagonist to poke around and shake out the truth. Some jobs may require heroes, but this one definitely calls for a rogue.

I loved the characters in this book. Shy's voice is as delightful as they come, with her sharp mind and sharper tongue. Sam Sykes did a wonderful job with her personality, finding that perfect balance between "hardened criminal" and "rogue with a heart of gold" so that Shy came across as lovable protagonist without being too mawkishly sentimental. She also won me over from the very first page with her clever wit and hilarious anecdotes and one-liners. I could probably fill a dozen pages with my favorite quotes, easy. In multiple places, this book literally had me laughing out loud.

Then there's Dalaris. My favorite description of her comes near the end, from an observation by Shy herself: "There are two types of people in this world: tough people beneath a layer of tears and teary people beneath a layer of toughness. Dalaris, thankfully, was the former." Despite the relationship getting off to a rough start, this unassuming and ostensibly meek noblewoman ultimately earns Shy's respect and friendship, and it's easy to understand why once you get to know her strength (as well as some mind-blowing revelations about her past).

Now that I have three Pathfinder Tales novels under my belt, I'm also struck by the variety of stories. Despite them all taking place in the great wide world of Golarion, the setting for many of the events in the Pathfinder RPG, my reading experiences have vastly differed each time. I liked that Shy Knives doesn't take itself too seriously, keeping a light tone and injecting a healthy dose of dry humor (which even includes several tongue-in-cheek jibes about D&D groups/adventuring parties). I wanted a fun, swashbuckling good read, and that was exactly what I got. At the same time though, the book is also a testament to the increasing quality of media tie-in novels. Their popularity is a growing trend, and nothing to be sneered at. I think entertaining well-written books like this one will keep helping the genre gradually shed its stigma of being disregarded as derivative, unsophisticated, or too commercial.

The nice thing too about Pathfinder Tales is that you can pretty much jump in anywhere, as most of the books in this series are written to be standalones (even though some authors will occasionally return to their previously established characters for more stories). While I have no idea if more Pathfinder novels are in Mr. Sykes' future, if he does decide to do another one I hope he'll consider bringing Shy back for another adventure. I just adored her character. Her humor and charms made Shy Knives an absolute pleasure to read, though I wouldn't hesitate to give this book high marks just for being so damn enjoyable and addictive—so much so that I devoured most of it in one sitting. If I thought hard about it I could probably come up with some flaws, but quite frankly, I was having too much fun to care. Bottom line, if you've been curious about

Pathfinder Tales, wait no longer—Shy Knives is the one you've just got to, have to, need to read.

Brandon says

A decent story.

Kevin says

A fantasy beach read... entertaining and enjoyable

Brannigan says

Previously published at TheQwillery.com

Sam Sykes has joined the Pathfinder world. I know there are a lot of readers out there excited to find this out. Sykes brings his humor that has won him many fans in the past to a gripping who dunit mystery set in the Pathfinder world entitled Shy Knives.

Shaia 'Shy' Ratani, a thief with a heart of bronze who hasn't quiet decided to turn away from her roguish ways is hired by Dalaris, a grieving woman whose betrothed was murdered. Everyone says he was murdered by centaurs, but Dalaris believes there are hidden forces working against her and her now dead fiancé. It becomes Shy's job to find out who really killed him and why. As is common in most of these murder mysteries dealing with the upper class, nothing is as it first appears, including the characters.

Sykes does a wonderful job making Shy a truly engaging rogue. Her wit is always on point and often gets herself into trouble as she has no filter on what she says. This is where the majority of the famous Sykes' humor comes into play. I also enjoyed the fact that Shy was still and foremost a rogue and wasn't afraid to look after herself and break and bend rules to get the job done. Dalaris is also a wonderfully complex character who at first doesn't appear to have a lot of depth but then you learn she too holds her secrets.

My only complaint is a personal one. I have never been a fan of first person narratives. I know this is a personal preference. For me it's harder to get immersed into a story. It also makes me always wonder if I can trust the POV of the character. Another part of this story that might be an issue for other readers is the humor. It's not a comedy by any means, but Sykes's humor is unique and I can see if you don't like his style you might find the book irritating. Some readers like their fantasy dark and serious, so take that into consideration.

Shy Knives is a perfect rogue's tale. Sam Sykes knows how to write an interesting and humorous fantasy murder mystery. If any of those things are interesting to you, I would highly suggest you read this book. There are minor adult situations, language and violence so I would recommend it to older teens and adults.

Emily Woodbeck says

Sam Sykes at his finest. Shy is imperfect in a way that makes her lovable. There are centaurs, magic, plots, and the signature humour that cuts through all the feelings.

Aidan says

Shy Knives provided me with everything I expect from a good sword & sorcery novel: great action, an engaging quest, and interesting set pieces. Sometimes it even goes above and beyond that with its intricate relationships between well-developed characters. This isn't Sykes' breakout novel—he already had that with *The City Stained Red*—but it is proof that Paizo's commitment to bringing established and exciting young writers to the Pathfinder Tales line is paying dividends. With all its referential humor, Shy Knives might work a bit better for readers familiar with Dungeons & Dragons and Pathfinder, or tabletop gaming in general, but even newbies will find a novel that's punchy and tough to put down. As for me? I'm hoping this isn't the last time Sykes sets foot in Golarion.

Full review: <https://www.tor.com/2016/11/10/book-r...>

Paul Turkstra says

Not bad for my first Sam Sykes novel. The story was great throughout and had me laughing a lot. The ending was a bit anti-climactic but overall a great read.

Matthew says

Sam Sykes does it again.

Shy Ratani is a thief and a killer. Someone who lurks in the shadows, while just as often spouting witty insults. She's hired by a down on her luck (and funds) noblewoman, to find her husband's killer.

And so, Shy stumbles into a hot mess. Running from murderous jilted lovers, infiltrating centaur herds, breaking free OwlBear creatures, and getting involved with beings from Heaven and Hell alike.

This book is pure fun. With a lot, and I mean a lot, of neck stabbings.

4.75/5

John says

The humor in the book sometimes went a bit heavy on the "this would be this... except NOT, because I'm awesome" style of narration. But the action was pretty good, and I liked the characters. Definitely one of the

most rogue-y depictions of a fantasy rogue that I've read, but in a way that didn't feel cheap or artificial, which I liked quite a bit. Overall quite good.
