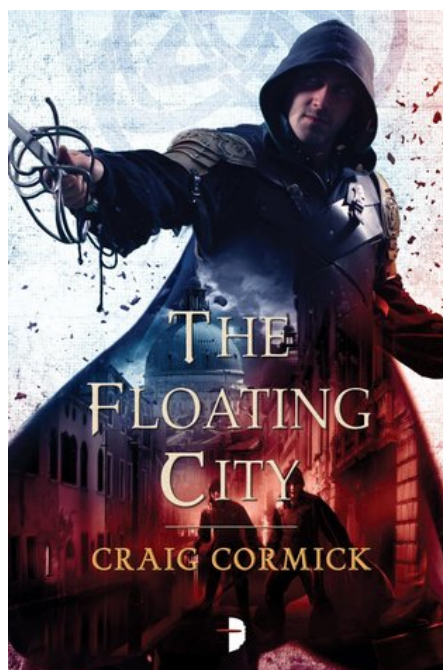




The Floating City

Craig Cormick

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The Floating City is in turmoil. The magical seers who protect it are being killed by fearsome Djinn that rise out of the canals at night. Members of the city's Council of Ten are being assassinated by masked fanatics. Refugee ships are arriving, bringing plague. Othmen spies are infiltrating everywhere. New power blocks are battling for control of the city.

And the three Montecchi daughters, Giuliette, Disdemonia and Isabella, are struggling with love and loss – and trying to write their own destinies. And moving amongst them all is the mysterious and deadly Shadow Master, who seems to be directing everyone like players in a game. But some things in this game may be beyond even his control.

The Floating City Details

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Author : Craig Cormick

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From Reader Review The Floating City for online ebook

Yzabel Ginsberg says

[I received a copy through NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review.]

Last year, I read the first installment of this series, *The Shadow Master*. I liked it and found it really confusing at the same time. I'd say that things are a little similar here, but that knowing the works that the author plays with (*Romeo & Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*...) helps in guessing a few things... and being misled when it comes to others, in a good way. I could both anticipate and still be surprised in the end.

This novel is more intricate than the first one, since it weaves the stories of the three Montecchi sisters along with those of the Shadow Master and Vincenzo, a young scribe with a strange power of making events happen differently by (re)writing them, a really powerful ability in its own right. These retellings from Shakespeare's plays—and from the tales that inspired them—were fairly interesting: close enough, yet also subtly different, with a dash of humour as well. Mostly it worked for me, although there were a few instances in which the dialogues were, oddly enough, "too" Shakespearian, and clashed slightly with the way the characters spoke in general.

The city itself felt very present, much like in the first book. The atmosphere was more magical and poetic this time, through the depiction of a Venice-like city kept afloat by the powers of four couple of mages called the Seers, facing strange creatures in its waters, a plague, the looming threat of the Ottomans (Othmen), and a shady group of assassins taking down the Council members one by one. This is mostly where things felt confusing sometimes, because a lot was at stake, and the explanation at the end behind those events was too hasty, too convenient, perhaps. This is also where I would've liked the novel to be longer, to expand more on the Seers, on how their magic worked (pretty shady as well in its own way!), and on some of the "background characters", so to speak.

However, paradoxically, the events surrounding the Shadow Master and Vincenzo, as confusing as they may seem, started shedding some light on events and characters from the first novel—especially when a certain couple was concerned. Though I may be mistaken, I have a gut feeling that the author is building *something* here, something far bigger than I had suspected at first: a sort of network of plots meant to collide at the very end, with the Shadow Master acting both as a hero/assassin and a storyteller, gifted with abilities that go deeper than suspected at first. I cannot deny, too, that the Shadow Master sometimes had a Fool's flavour to him (as in a Shakespearian Fool), which I don't doubt was totally on purpose. If only for that, combined to how I enjoyed the story, I shall make it a 3.5 stars, bumped to 4. I definitely hope my hunches are correct.

Note: I found some typos here and there; however, the copy I got was an ARC, therefore not the final one, and I'll assume those few defects will have been ironed out by now.

Johnno says

What a great read! I loved this book - and I particularly liked the way the author took the three 'Shakespeare' plots and wove them together into something new. Though I think a lot of the other reviewers have missed the point that the author didn't actually use Shakespeare's plays as his sources, but rather the Italian folk tales that Shakespeare adapted into his plays - as is explained at the back of the book. That gives the author more room to play with them I guess. The elements of magic in the book and the Djinn and assassins and that mysterious Shadow Master (will we ever find out more about him??) are new though - and not adapted from

either Italian stories or the Bard and are something unique to this world. I would have loved the book to go on longer and I hope the author gives us more like thisCormick CraigThe Floating City.

Augustus says

Weaving some of the stories that are familiar to us from Shakespeare into a magical re-imagining of Venice to produce a multi-layered fantasy.

A lovely collection of characters and a smattering of misquoted Shakespeare lines make for an enjoyable, sometimes funny tale. Just spoiled a little by too many impossible escapes and happenings.

It might be fantasy, but it has to be believable.

Maureen says

I am a judge for the 2015 Aurealis Awards. This review is my personal opinion and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of any judging panel, the judging coordinator or the Aurealis Awards management team. To be safe, I won't be recording my thoughts (if I choose to) here until after the Aurealis Awards are over.

Jasper says

Originally posted at: <http://thebookplank.blogspot.com/2015...>

Last year Craig Cormick published his first venture into the fantasy genre, The Shadow Master, which was an exciting Alternate History story with a lot of different influences taking place in the time of Galileo and Leonardo. It had a lot of detail of the surroundings and a most interesting plot and twist in the end that of the famed Shadow Master. And as I said in my review of The Shadow Master I really wanted to read The Floating City, luckily I got my hands on an early copy.

Just a note upfront the story of The Floating City takes place at a different venue and with a completely new cast of character with the exception of of course the Shadow Master himself. The scenery is changed from the Walled City to the Floating City. A city who is currently in disarray. The reason of this becomes apparent from the very first chapter actually the very first sentence: "The story starts with a murder". I knew from this that it would an exciting story. You learn that terrible creature hunt in the canals of the Floating City, attacking everyone and in particular the important people of the Council of Ten, the rulers of the city and the Seers, powerful mages. In this introduction you also meet Vincenzo the scribe who is writing down these events for his patron Signor Montecchi, Vincenzo actually wants to write about the history of the city and current troubles it face instead of writing the family history, for which he was hired.

After this introduction the perspective is split into multiple views, that of the Montecchi daughters, Disdemonia, Isabella and Giuliette, who each want to leave their impression on the world. They are of an age when they see more in men then just friends. Each of them have a guy that they like more than just like. But their father is strict and it becomes obvious that he doesn't want let his girl loose to soon. So now they become more rebellious in trying to pursue the things they love, but with the city in disarray, it becomes a

perilous journey and sometimes a cost has to be paid. What they do not know is that their fates have been predetermined and that they play an very important role in the eventual fate of the Floating City.

Next to the three Montecchi daughters, another perspective is added by that of the Shadow Master (I had a big smile on my face when I read this) and that of Vincenzo. The Shadow Master recruits the scribe to record the events. But not just simply recording as Vincenzo has to power to change things with his writing. The history that he records is true. I really liked this concept especially by the fact that Vincenzo doesn't simply write down "and they lived happily ever after". It's much more complicated than that. Together with Vincenzo, the Shadow Master hovers over the city like a hawk to lead everything into the best waters, but even the Shadow Master with all his powers finds it hard to control everything by himself.

The story of The Floating City as you can see from above is more than a highly eventful one. For me the story felt different than what I had read in the first book of Craig Cormick. The Floating City for me was more of a sort of poetry story. By mixing the two storylines of Vincenzo and the three Montecchi daughters stories of love gained and love lost, and other troubles produced a great setting in the lines of a modern poetry, without the verses. The writing of Craig Cormick was clear and to the point, however Craig Cormick didn't compromise in exposing his world, I loved the whole world building. In his first book Craig Cormick produced for a realistic Italian feeling, insofar as I have understanding of it and he does so once again The Floating City reminded me most of Venice, also with the canals. As I already said Craig Cormick doesn't compromise, when he described the canal scenes it felt like I was right there next to the Shadow Master.

Next to the whole ambiance of The Floating City, the characters are also reminiscent to those seen in the classic Italian style. You can simply give them Italian sounding names but that doesn't complete a character and this is precisely what Craig Cormick shows. I loved the three daughters: Disdemona, Isabella and Giuliette, each of them had their own thoughts and own idea's and of course what comes with that age a certain degree of stubbornness. As for the Shadow Master, we knew him from the first book though only in the later parts, now with a whole book devoted to showing his action he comes in a much brighter daylight for the better. You learn that he holds a lot of power, he can do plenty of things with the blink of an eye. Vincenzo is a remarkable character as well, I liked how he was transformed by the influence of the Shadow Master and came to, in the end, understand what made The Floating City float.

I already said that the book is highly eventful, a lot of actions are set into motion by discussion, either the Montecchi daughter or by the Shadow Master and Vincenzo but you also have the Seers from the Floating City and the various Othmen envoys, and of course the Djinn-Slayer. All these latter players really are just plain cool, the things they do, with magic flinging it at their opponents and the sword of sword action. It's all top stuff. Though I do have to say that the ending of the book, the climactic ending was for me a bit over to soon the battle had a great introduction but then it was over in a few paragraphs I would have liked to have seen it spread a bit more, but luckily for me the wake of the battle wherein everything was revealed gave me a huge grin on my face, Craig Cormick made it all up in the end.

With The Floating City, Craig Cormick has nicely outdone himself. The Shadow Master had a lot of cool things working in it's favor which he shows once again in The Floating City but much better. The surroundings of The Floating City itself felt vibrant and alive and with the creatures lurking in the canals very deadly. Added to this comes a very diverse character cast that readily takes the story further and produces by their personalities and actions a very engaging story. Now the thing that make this book really cool for the big idea of Vincenzo the Scribe writing the history or is it changing history or writing the story of The Floating City, there is a saying: "The pen is mightier than the sword" I guess this goes with a reason.

Craig Cormick produces with The Floating City a story of modern poetry, including lovers gained and lost, and changing the fate of something big.

Michelle Hauck says

I'm not sure what to make of this story. The author takes three of Shakespeare's famous plays and makes the heroines into sisters and sets them into the same time and place-- a Floating City (Venice). So we have Disdemona, Isabella, and Giulietta. The city is protected by four sets of seers but a murderous beast in the waters is killing the seers and slowly sinking the city. Meanwhile there's a whole political spying, infighting going on with assassins taking down the city council.

Much of the plot follows the plot of the Shakespeare plays. Giulietta has her forbidden romance with Romeo. Disdemona loves her Moor, but he is beguiled and befuddled by the lying Ipato. It borrows from the plays so closely at times that I knew exactly what would happen next.

And mixed in between everything and everyone is the Shadow Master, apparently trying to help the scribe Vincenzo save the city, by having him rewrite the future. I had the hardest time with this point of view chapters as I couldn't really distinguish what was real or what they were actually doing.

I did like how well the author swapped from one point of view character to another and wove the massive undertaking into a cohesive story. There must have been over ten different characters' perspectives, almost none interacting with any of the others and yet put together it gave the whole picture of the events taking place in the Floating City. That was masterfully done.

I'm afraid since I didn't read the first book, I couldn't form a clear picture on the Shadow Master and his motives. He truly remained a shadow to me all the way through the story. Nor did I ever care overmuch for the characters or the fate of the city. I did want to see how it would turn out, but I wasn't overly concerned on whether the city sunk or survived. Well written and very different from anything I've read lately.

I received a copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.

Mira says

Very, very silly book. The plot is a mix of Shakespeare stories and The Shadowmaster. It's set in ancient Venice and there are monsters in the canals. There are about 100 super short chapters of a few pages each and a similar account of characters.

The Shadowmaster is basically an all-knowing, deus ex-machina personified so even if you did care about any of the annoying characters there was no sense of jeopardy. He even has a scriptwriter on hand to rewrite events so everything turns out alright.

There is no explanation of his special powers or anything to explain the tacky 80s kids cartoon style ending in which the survivors pat each other on the back and make small talk and SECRETS ARE REVEALED (but in a totally flippant and superfluous way.)

I suppose reading the first book in the series would fill in the blanks but nothing could persuade me to do that.

Anthonia says

This book was good but it needed some work on building characters in this story. The characters left me feeling flat like they really had no substance. It needs work in some areas other than that it is an okay book to read.

Shaaer says

Received the book as part of goodreads giveaway program. Thanks to the author.
Review to come once I'm done.

Brittain *Needs a Nap and a Drink* says

Book provided by Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

I'm so confused. So so so so confused.

Full review to come when I've comprehended some of this.

GONZA says

Completely different from the first book, in this second volume of the series appears only the Shadow Master, at least initially. It is instead set in Renaissance Italy and to be precise in a Venice called "The floating city" between gondolas and sea monsters.

Shakespeare and a bit of Homer, although the author cites three sources as ancient Italian writings later used by the Bard, to make us appreciate a story full of twists and magic.

Completamente diverso dal primo libro, in questo secondo volume della serie appare soltanto lo Shadow Master, almeno all'inizio. resta invece ambientato nell'Italia rinascimentale ed in particolare a Venezia tra gondole e mostri marini.

Shakespeare e un po' di Omero, anche se l'autore cita come tre fonti antichi scritti italiani utilizzati poi in seguito dal Bardo, ci fanno apprezzare una storia piena di colpi di scena e magia.

THANKS TO NETGALLEY AND ANGRY ROBOT BOOKS FOR THE PREVIEW!

Tiara says

TL;DR Review

3 stars, but I am still so confused.

More reviews @ The BiblioSanctum

Longer Review

Full Disclosure: A review copy of this book was provided to me by Angry Robot via Netgalley. I would like to thank the author, the publisher, and Netgalley for providing me this opportunity. All opinions expressed from here forward are my own.

This is very different from its predecessor. The only thing that has stayed the same is the Shadow Master himself. The Shadow Master is far from the Walled City in a place called the Floating City (Venice, basically). The city is being besieged by an enemy that sends monsters in the water who attack the powerful people living in the city, such as the seers who are magicians with immense power. The story begins with the writer Vincenzo who is torn as to whether he should write about the trouble of the city, as he feels led to do, or to do the job he is being paid for which is to write the history of the Montecchi family history, which largely chronicles the adventures of the Montecchi daughters. However, the Montecchi daughters and Vincenzo's urge to write about the troubles of the city begin to converge into a single story. Vincenzo also finds himself sort of a master of events to come when he becomes an accomplice to the Shadow Master who sets certain events into motion.

Cormick has taken the heroines from three of Shakespeare's plays--Disdemona (Desdemona from Othello), Julietta (Juliet from Romeo and Juliet), and Isabella (Isabella from Measure for Measure)--and essentially have made them sisters in this book along with a few other trappings from their individual stories. I have no problem with that. I enjoy retellings or stories that imagine familiar characters in different ways. I'm a huge Shakespeare fan, so there's a part of me that takes satisfaction in being able to point out things that parallel his stories in these books. Some things followed Shakespeare's plays so closely that you can easily predict certain dialogue and situations if you're familiar with these stories, especially Othello with its inclusion of Otello (Othello) and Ipato (Iago). Sometimes this works for the story and sometimes it doesn't.

I really did like the sisters, though, especially as their roles became clear and their stories started to make a real impact. You also see much more of the Shadow Master and his machinations in this book, which helped in understanding him a bit better than in the last book. Okay, maybe "understand" is a strong choice of words, but there's more to him this time around. There are many characters and many point of views in this book aside from the sisters, and funnily enough, few of these POVs actually end up merging together. What's interesting though is that they do fit together to make an overarching story with Vincenzo acting as the Shakespeare of this story along with the Shadow Master to reshape the story that is taking place. However, so many POVs might be a major turn off for some people who may see it as too overwhelming to follow so many characters, especially some who don't seem that important in the grand scheme of things. This book is very busy, and the reader will ultimately have to decide if these things make much sense to them or not.

I'll admit that I am largely still confused by some of this story. There's still way too much that seemed pointless and just befuddling to me. It's not badly written, and some of the ideas that are set forth are interesting. I'm starting to see these books as Shakespearean retellings that add more magic, political

intrigue, and assassins. I'm going to give it three stars for that because I don't feel it's fair to keep giving him question marks when there are things I do like about this overall--especially compared to that last book. I feel like these might be the kind of books that I may need to sit down with one day and reread them with a different way of looking at things, especially now that I am absolutely sure that Cormick means for these to be some type of Shakespearean tragedy with a puppet master pulling the strings. I thought this book was and wasn't much easier to follow than the previous book, but I just... my brain still hurts after reading this. My husband said this aptly describes my face after finishing this book when I just sat there looking off into space while my brain tried to process this.

There were less euphemisms this time around, which I was thankful for. I'm coming to the conclusion that maybe this just isn't the series for me, though. Maybe I'm not smart enough for it. If you're smart enough to understand, please explain it to me. I am lost. I need help.

Caleb Hill says

Nothing like its predecessor, which is both a good thing and a bad.

Full review to follow.

Angela Burkhead says

I'm not incredibly sure what to write about this book so I'll just start typing until I get out what I'm trying to say.

The Floating City is a Shakespearean Fantasy... yeah, that sounds right. The story is a mixture of Shakespeare's greatest tragedy's, to which we all know the ending, all happening within the Floating City that is facing its greatest challenge.

The city is sinking into the deep waters below, being attack by their enemies, the Othmen who continue to send powerful creatures of evil to destroy the council members holding the city afloat. The people are terrified and their council's are falling to doom. The situation seems as hopeless as the Montecchi girl's marriages, two of which have already ended in death.

First, I'll say this book was very well written. It keeps you on your toes and begging for more... but only because you are so confused and want answers. I'm still not sure what the story was really about... Nope, I have no idea what happened in this book.

I chastised myself for about a week thinking perhaps if I were a more intellectual reader, or if maybe I had tried to pay attention when my teachers taught Shakespeare then maybe I would have understood this book... But I'm done blaming myself. It's not me, it's the book.

I was given this book for review by Goodreads, First Reads Giveaways

S.J. Garland says

I like a bit of fantasy mixed in with my historical drama and so I was really looking forward to reading, The Floating City by Craig Cormack. I have to say it was a hard slog for me to get into the story, but the characters and their personal plights finally drew me in about a third of the way through. Perhaps there was just a bit too much bouncing around in the first section for me to become attached to any of the storylines.

For me I think the big problem was the Shakespeare references to many of the storylines. The use of Shakespearean tragedies to tell the tale of the floating city, or Venice by my reckoning, provides each person with a whole set of characteristics with little intervention from the author. I felt myself feeling disconnected from each of them as I thought I knew what was going to happen. If you enjoy the angst and machinations of Othello and Romeo and Juliet, this is the book for you.

The Venetian Ottoman war in the beginning of the 16th century looks to be the backdrop for the story. I like the way the author has incorporated elements of actual history to bring the characters very real feelings of alienation from their enemies to life. The feelings of fear, contempt and rejection come through in the citizens of the Floating City against the Othmen.

Since I have come into the whole story with the second book in the series, I think I missed the point of the Shadow Master. But I am interested enough in Cormac's work to go back and read the first book in the series. I look forward to reading other work by this author.
