



Shatterwing

Donna Maree Hanson

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Deliciously Dark Fantasy

"Shatterwing has all the fantasy ingredients I love: tormented heroes, a truly twisted villain - and a brand new take on dragons!" Glenda Larke, (award winning author of The Stormlord Trilogy)

"Dark and compelling, with strong characters and a sense of grim inevitability that pulls you along with the story." Craig Cormick, (award-winning author of the Shadow Master Series.)

The world of Margra is a desolate wasteland after one of its moons shattered. Factions fight over resources as pieces of the broken moon rain down, bringing chaos, destruction and death.

Dragon wine is a life giving drink imbued with the essence of dragons. It is what keeps people alive. But the prison vineyard where Salinda works to grow grapes is in jeopardy. Not only does the Inspector, the sadistic ruler of the prison vineyard, make her life and the life of others a misery, he wants to rule the world by hoarding all the dragon wine. But Salinda has a secret power, an ancient gift called a 'cadre', that may one day save the world.

When the Inspector suspects that Salinda has secrets, she may have to die to protect the cadre from falling into his hands...

Shatterwing Details

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Author : Donna Maree Hanson

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From Reader Review *Shatterwing* for online ebook

Dave Versace says

Shatterwing is the first half of Donna Maree Hanson's Dragon Wine series (digital release from Momentum Publishing) and to be very clear, it is very much the first half of a single story. While both its main threads are brought to intriguing points of climax, neither is resolved in this volume. That will presumably have to wait for *Skywatcher* (Book 2, due out on the 9th of October). Severing the story is an interesting publication choice, but not one that I'll go into here; I'll save that for a review of *Skywatcher*.

Let's get the important bits out of the way first – *Shatterwing* is brutal. If you need trigger warnings for torture and sexual abuse, consider yourself warned. I hesitate to use the expression “grimdark”, mostly because I'm yet to see a satisfactory definition of the supposed subgenre, but it is grim and it is dark. The setting alone is post-apocalyptic – one of the moons has shattered and left the world of Margra a devastated meteor-blasted wasteland. Wild dragons prey on incautious survivors. A brutal dictatorship controls the only commodity that matters any longer – dragon wine, which has restorative properties and might be the only thing keeping humanity alive. Violent rebels use terrorist tactics to wrest control away from the governors. And political prisoners are kept in slaves camps to tend the dragon wine vineyards.

Salinda is a vintner in a prison camp ruled by the Inspector and a sadistic cadre of guards. Salinda avoids the most savage treatment meted out to the prisoners partly by virtue of being a skilled wine maker, but mostly by pretending to be diseased so that her guards won't rape her. Brill, a new prisoner assigned to her as an apprentice, is tortured by the Inspector for information on a rebel faction. The first part of the story concerns their fight for survival within the camp and the revelation that both are guarding powerful secrets.

A second narrative thread concerns an explorer from an underground city who has been in life suspension for hundreds of years, emerging to explore a world in complete ecological collapse. A third concerns a trade delegation from an order of astronomers that goes badly awry. Both storylines are interesting but are more set up than resolved in this volume.

Rape, along with every other conceivable form of torture and maltreatment, is a constant threat throughout this book. To be clear – protagonist characters in this book are raped, tortured and threatened with abuse and death. It is rough going – while there are moments of optimism and even some sly humour, the characters of *Shatterwing* suffer terribly. Strange powers and secret knowledge do not protect them from horrific abuses at the hands of their captors.

Shatterwing is not so much a brutal fantasy as it is a fantasy about surviving brutality. The characters endure horror and loss, but they keep going, hanging on to life with a death grip. The story looks at the different ways that humans respond to horror, whether through grim resolve, pragmatism, denial and a desire for justice or revenge. For all that the brutality was not an enjoyable read, the honesty with which the characters respond to the brutality is a strength of this book.

The world building in *Shatterwing* is also a strength. I could happily have read an entire novel about the intricacies of combining dragon physiology and wine making, not to mention the various hints that crop up about strange magic powers – or technologies indistinguishable from magic. This first Dragon Wine volume raises a raft of interesting questions that I want to see paid off. Understanding how this broken world works – and how these characters might put it back together – has got me intrigued to read the concluding volume.

I'll steel myself for what the characters might have to go through to get to the end though.

Tsana Dolichva says

Shatterwing by Donna Maree Hanson is the first book in the Dragon Wine series. It's a secondary world fantasy with dragons (as you may gather from the series title) and more astronomy that we usually see in a fantasy book. I've previously reviewed a couple of Donna's books, Rayessa and the Space Pirates, and Bepelled. What strikes me most about Donna as a writer is how flexible she can be. These three books have very little in common stylistically or even thematically, yet she pulls them off.

The blurb is a bit deceptive in that it only covers about half the book. And I mean that in the most literal sense; part two breaks from the first set of characters to follow a new group of characters. It could almost have been published as two separate books and the structure really highlights how this is only the first book in the series. Having said that, the first section ended in a fairly conclusive way that didn't leave me so desperate to get back to those characters that I couldn't pay attention to the new characters. If anything, I'd argue that the first part was a bit more conclusive than the second, which ended on a minor cliffhanger.

But enough about structure. The most obvious thing to note about the content of this book that's not necessarily obvious is that it's dark fantasy. Dark as in brutal or "grimdark". There is rape and there is violence. Most of the worst rape happens off the page, but there's enough on the page that if you don't want to read about rape (or molestation or brutal beatings), then probably give this series a miss. The characters can be more or less divided into main characters and other "good guys" and "horrible men that don't think women are real people". And, I suppose, miscellaneous bystanders who are afraid of witchcraft.

I really enjoyed the story but there were times when the brutality got a bit much for me. Mainly this was towards the end of part one where Salinda, our first main character, is being brutally tortured. It's not that it's not relevant to the plot, but it wasn't fun to read (nor, I think, should it have been). Then, in part two, I was probably a bit over-invested in a new main character, Laidan, not being raped and it was a nail-biter for a while there. (I won't spoil which way it went.)

Anyway, the main thrust of Shatterwing is setting up the world and the overarching plot for the series. The worldbuilding is quite nice, with two moons in the sky, one of which broke up hundreds of years ago (called the "Shatterwing" because it's shattered and looks like a wing). There's some historical background that remains mysterious for the time being and I look forward to learning more about that in subsequent books. There's also the matter of the dragon wine, which has magical properties, and which is apparently the main thing keeping the human population alive. How did this come to be? I'm not sure, but I'm looking forward to finding out.

Shatterwing is not for everyone and I wouldn't recommend it to people who wish to avoid reading about violence. However, I would recommend it to fans of dark and grim fantasy. The world may have dragons that eat people, but the real monsters here are other people.

4 / 5 stars

You can read more of my reviews on my blog.

Kat says

##2.5 out of 5 stars##

*** I received this book from the Publisher in exchange for an honest review ***

I give this book

I struggled reading this book, I kept putting it down, starting something else then I would have another crack at it.

So I have put off writing the review for a while so I could deliberate how to write this review.

So I have decided to split it into 3 parts:

First the Writing style...

With me struggling with it when I like to read Fantasy/paranormal I have come to the conclusion that part of the problem was the way its written. I think the Author has gone for a more complicated dialogue, I am assuming because its set on another world but the first part of the book and plot was often dragging, and not much is happening, other than the characters tending the vines or being tortured. I could only manage to read a chapter or two and then I would need to stop, and this leads me to part 2.

The Plot...

Well I wouldn't have said yes to reviewing this book if the plot line hadn't intrigued me - BUT and I know I am not the only reviewer that has expressed this... There is TOO MUCH RAPE in this book, its not necessary, and to be honest after the first passage I put the book down and didn't read it for another few days.

But I don't like not reading a book I have been given for free to review and I also needed to know what was going to happen, why Salinda was continuing at the vineyard, why she stuck up for Brill.

ALSO the synopsis doesn't tell you that there are actually 2 separate story lines in this book and when I got to Part 2 I finally got interested, and the writing style got much easier to read, maybe because now there was something happening other than brutality, rape and drudgery??

But all too soon, we end up with our MC's being captured and awaiting more heinous atrocity's to happen, and then we are left with lots of unanswered questions and needing book 2.

And onto part 3 of my review.

The Characters...

Salinda - our first character we get to know, shes surviving any way she knows how, but I still could not feel any empathy for her - in fact I couldn't get to feel anything for any character, which is very unusual for me.

Brill - he is the son of a Rebel leader, and honestly what the Author does to him was hard to read, but still I didn't feel anything for him.

The Guards and Inspector, the sadistic ruler of the prison vineyard, well he was as sadistic as you can imagine - and boy has the author got a vicious imagination when it comes to torturing and raping her characters, and I read Dark Romance books so I have read some dark stuff, but this was just Rape for Rapes sake, I feel that it was entirely unnecessary and the story could have been just as interesting if the Editor had cut out these scenes all together.

My favourite character - THE DRAGON! why Salinda didn't tell the dragon to eat The Inspector I do not know!

In Part 2 we meet Nils a long lost inhabitant of an underground city who had been imprisoned in a Cryo-sleep chamber and who wakes up thousands of years later instead of his actual prison term, he finds that his entire race is now extinct and sets off to find out what happened to the world while he slept, on his travels he meets Salinda and helps her.

We also meet Garan a 'Sky Watcher' who is tasked to rescue a girl (Laiden) that his order have deemed extremely important and needs to be brought to the Sky Watchers for the good of the world. Now these characters I got more into, for once the Fantasy of the lost civilization was described with more depth and feeling. But all too soon the story takes a more violent turn.

In conclusion:

Overall, this was an okay book if you do not mind your fantasy with a good dose of Rape and constant violence against women and the weak, the World that the Author has described is a good setting for the fantasy to evolve on, but the constant violence to the main characters are enough not to make me give this book a 3 and I am not sure I want to read SkyWatcher.

Many thanks to Momentum for giving me the opportunity to read this book.

Steve says

I received this ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

This book has so much going for it. A well laid out setting with unique landscape. A comprehensive history. Great Fantasy elements. Character building is very well done. Even the fringe characters are well fleshed out. I enjoyed so much of this book. However, it's the parts that I did not enjoy that brought this book down. Where this really suffers, in my opinion, happened early in the writing stage. Somewhere, either an early proof reader or editor just couldn't give honest feedback. With so much going for it, this story did not need to have every character raped, repeatedly. It is this sexual brutality that is a blight on an otherwise well written story. The other negative that I found with this book is that nothing was resolved. Instead, you must wait for the next book to see if anything happens. There are so many cliffhangers and unanswered questions that it is a lot to ask of a reader to return again after so little closure.

Jason Duby says

The world of Margra has been dealt a devastating amount of damage as one of its moons. Ruel has been shattered. The moon is now in two major pieces, Rueline and Ruelette, but a belt of lunar chunks also exists. It's from this debris field, known as Shatterwing, that meteors fall from and rain devastation on the land below. Civilization is failing, and it's in this fantastic setting that several characters try to survive and accomplish their own goals, from restoring vitality to the world to learning about the age and the role that dragons have to play in this critical time.

Donna Maree Hanson has created one of the most unique fantasy settings that I have run across in my recent reading. The book has different plot threads that start to interweave in this environment, each one involving different characters. As the tales continue, the reader learns more and more about the world and the danger that it suffers in its current state. The ideas presented are ambitious and are very reminiscent of the writings of Anne McCaffery. The main characters are developed well, though it becomes obvious that this world is not a kind one very quickly.

My main contention with this novel is that it is indeed a start to this tale, but there's no real resolution at the end of the book. Obviously there are more books in this series, which explains why things stop in the middle of a couple of different arcs. Personally I wish that there had been even a temporary sense of resolution at the end, and I have to wonder if people who start in the middle of this series will have all the information required to catch everything. But the book is worth a reading and some consideration, based on that environment alone.

(I voluntarily read and reviewed an advanced copy of this book from Romance Authors That Rock. All thoughts and opinions are my own.)

Donna says

This was a NetGalley find that I was on the border on when it came to requesting it but did it anyway. It intrigued me just enough to hit that button.

Well. I'll start by saying I liked the concept of SHATTERWING and I liked the world that Hanson started to develop here, rather barren, Mad Max without the leather, people reduced to baser instincts, all while watching a moon continue to fragment and destroy them. There's a lot to work with here and it's what really got me through the book. I liked the concept of creating this drink called dragon wine that had healing properties, on which humanity hinged itself. I liked the notion that Salinda is the last bastion of knowledge in the world, carrying a secret she must keep or risk her life all the while being a slave toiling in a vineyard. She's a great character with a pretty level head thanks to a ton of training and she really knocks Brill into place, who's a spoiled little brat that doesn't know what he's gotten himself into. But there was a really big cloud blocking out the shine with this book.

It appears that the only way the stock character villains can subjugate people and put them in their place is by rampant sexual assault i.e. rape by a myriad of means, sodomy, fondling of someone in a catatonic state. It was disturbing and the more I read it the more it seemed like it was rape for rape's sake. Look. I'm all for putting characters through the wringer. It's when an author does that that their true personalities start to shine

through. But every major character whose POV I read from was raped in this book. All three of them, two female and one male. And all for . . . rape? There are other means of torture and humiliation and dehumanization but all there is in this world is sexual assault and it really hurt the book for me. I know the author was trying to show how brutal of a world this place was but really, fade to black a little bit or get more creative with your torture techniques. This was excessive.

Another thing that really bugged me was how fainting damsels the women were. Yeah, sure, they had smart mouths and they were able to survive in the world up until this point but they suffered the most and required rescuing of the male order from every scenario. Held down by men and rescued by them. It's a rather odd position to be in when reading a book where the two female protagonists are supposedly stand on their own as strong women. However they were rather shrinking and faint when the crap started to get stuck in the fan blades.

What the blurb doesn't touch on in Part 2 of SHATTERWING and I think that's doing it a disservice. The female protagonist's name in Part 2 escapes me at the moment but I liked her as much as Salinda (minus the rape) and they're two similar characters that I could get on board with. Not to mention it's the other half to this story and once you're in to Part 2 it starts to wrap around itself and a bigger picture starts to form. To mention one part and not the other is lacking, I think.

The underground guy who emerges after over 1,000 years of stasis is interesting too. Again, his name escapes me too and it's a part of the story only touched on but it made the world a bit bigger and a bit fuller beyond the rape wasteland that surrounds people in this world.

I like this world with its moons and Shatterwing slowly dying and the dragons. Of course the dragons! And the magic and the blooming history. But the sexual assault. My god. Once would have been sufficient to paint the world in a solid picture. But three times and it's just rape porn and I'm really hesitant now to read further in the series because I don't want to read more rapes. Show me gore and war and fighting and even various degrees of torture but it's only just rape here, and abject women shaming (severe Madonna/whore issues in this book from an in-world societal standpoint) and it just kills it for me. I just don't want to read that.

2 1/2

Elizabeth says

I received a copy from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.

Originally published at West Coast Book Reviews

This is a difficult review for me as I'm rather torn about this story and it's hard to say exactly why without dumping in a pile of spoilers but I will try.

Overall, for me this is a 3.5 star read meaning I rate it higher than "I like it" but some plot design choices kept me from saying "I loved it." That said, the author's website says the next instalment will be out as early as October so I hope all the loose ends will come together soon.

First, I'm a fan of dragons. All kinds; shifter dragons, pet dragons, smiling animated dragons and even the

hungry, fire breathing, world dominating dragons in Shatterwing.

I liked the world Hanson built from the magic astronomy of the Skywatchers to the plain old down to earth gardening (I typed dragoning probably because of how dangerous it is growing grapes a hair's breadth away from a dragon colony. Then I had to correct it).

I also liked how magical learning is something that can be passed down and am intrigued by the folks who lived under the earth. So many unique components were put together in this story and caught my attention.

My challenge with Shatterwing lies in the fact that most of the story wasn't resolved. All the players are in place... and then the massive cliffhanger. I know if I wasn't enjoying the book so much, the cliffhanger wouldn't have had me yelp when I realized I was on the last page. I get it, I understand it, and wow, for a cliffhanger to sting me like that means I was into the book.

Did I mention the next instalment next month? I'll be there.

One point I would have loved to read more about in Shatterwing without waiting for Skywatcher is (view spoiler)

Overall, yes I liked Shatterwing and will move on to book 2.

Summer Peterson says

Ugh.

All the sodomy was not necessary. This author reminds me of another author that loves to write about brutalising women.

Shari Mulluane says

Source: Publisher

Original Review: Dragons, Heroes and Wizards

A moon shatters and a world is plunged into chaos as falling chunks of the moon destroy entire cities. Dragons appear. From where noone knows, but they are linked somehow to mankind's survival. Meanwhile a young vintner/prisoner/slave may hold the key to the planet's salvation -- but only if she learns how to use her powers in time.

♦ **My Thoughts.** Shatterwing is a unique blend of secondary world with both magic and evidence of lost technology. Plus it has dragons. The mix reminds me a bit of Pern only these dragons are not the nice variety. On this world, humans are on their list of food sources.

This is also an apocalyptic world which is an unusual read for me. Note I said apocalyptic and not post-apocalyptic. The apocalypse on this world is still ongoing and I get the impression it is far from over.

Now there is a reason why I normally avoid dystopian books. They depress the heck out of me. Oddly, this one did not have the normal depressing effect. Not sure if it was because this is obviously not our world so it allowed me to keep my distance or because it has dragons. Personally, I'm leaning towards the dragon theory. Give me dragons and I can ignore a lot...

♦ **What I Liked.** There are several distinct storylines in this tale and they all intertwine. There is the story and backstory of Salinda and Brill. They start off together, but eventually their storylines will split. There is the mysterious story of Nils, who has awoken from a sleep which spanned generations only to discover that he is the last of his race. Eventually his storyline will merge with another's.

And that is only Part One. Part Two is even more interesting.

In Part Two we meet the Skywatchers who hold powers that frankly caught me offguard. Plus we meet another young lady whose fate may be just as important as Salinda's. Again storylines will split apart, merge back together or intertwine with previous storylines. Reminded me of the Spirograph I spent hours playing with as a child. Loops within loops and no end in sight.

My favorite part of all was the survivability of the characters. This is a harsh, cruel, apocalyptic world full of brutality, uncertainty and death. But the players in this drama are survivors, not victims. Do they suffer from self doubt and helplessness at times? Of course. Do they still pick themselves up, brush themselves off and forge ahead? Yes, yes they do. Giving up is easy. The mark of a true hero is getting back up after being beaten, broken and demoralized. This story does not lack in true heroes.

♦ **What I didn't like.** This is definitely one of those books where you'll need the sequel on hand. It ends in a major cliffhanger. Several really. So far there are mysteries galore with barely a hint much less an answer. The writing could have been a bit tighter. There were too many repetitions of core information to suit me. Not a deal breaker but worth a star demotion. I hate it when my dogs look at me funny while I rant -- out loud -- "Hey! We know this already, lets get to the good stuff..."

Kind of like my readers do while reading my reviews...

There is also a huge amount of violence and a lot of it comes in the form of rape and torture. In this case, it did not bother me because the brutality fit the degradation of the world in general and the treatment of slaves in particular. This is not a pretty world and to pretend otherwise would be misleading.

In my opinion, the rape, torture, verbal and emotional abuse may be commonplace, but they are handled well. They are only as detailed as they need to be. They are not used for shock value. Instead abuse plays an active role only when it shapes the character in question. However, the abundance of rape and torture will bother some people. If you are someone who is easily offended by heavy doses of brutality, it will not take you long to DNF this book.

♦ **Conclusion.** This is a plot-driven story. The characters, while either admirable in their tenacity or horrible in their cruelty, are not the main focus. This book's greatest draw lies in its ability to make almost every aspect a deep mystery. With every page you turn you get another piece of the story but no answers. It is a giant puzzle and I loved almost every minute of it. Almost. I would have liked something, anything, conclusive, but since I have the sequel in hand, I'm not too worried. The answers I seek will be revealed in book two and I'm really looking forward to them.

Janet says

I really despise half written books. It just seems extremely mercenary to start a story and then stop it at a climax without resolution. The characters, setting, and conflicts are all well thought out and creative. Even though there is a lot of ugliness in the story, the story drove the reader to continue despite it. I did not enjoy the choppiness and abruptness that threads of the story ended, and new ones began. I imagine if I were to purchase the next book perhaps the threads would begin again and entwine. However it is against my principles to allow a book to manipulate me into purchasing the next. This was not a cliffhanger. I understand the idea of a cliffhanger. This was just a pause in what I imagine is a complete story. If I actually got the complete story perhaps my opinion would have been completely different.

Dana Wood says

Didn't finish. Got half way through. Just not my cup of tea I guess. Too dark. Too brutal.

Judy Burke says

Don't think I'll be reading the rest of the series. Tired of poor sad helpless 16 years olds being raped and brutalized or almost raped and brutalized and the big strong handsome male saving her. Too much like real life. Sorry.

Amanda J Spedding says

I'm actually giving this 3.5 stars. I enjoyed it, and it was an easy read, although it took me longer than I liked to connect with the characters.

From the cover, *Shatterwing* is a book with dragons, but dragons form only part of this story. At its essence, this is a story about a world on the brink and how society (or what's left of it), deals with an apocalyptic world – not well, I have to say. The white cover and golden wings are a great juxtaposition for a tale that firmly sits on the grim-dark side of things.

Read full review here: <http://amandajspedding.com/2015/08/01...>

Shaheen says

Shatterwing is the first novel in the Dragon Wine series, which is set on a world which used to have two moons until one of them (called Ruel) broke and crashed into the planet. Now there is one moon (Belle), and fragments of Ruel span the sky and occasionally fall out of orbit to impact on the planet. Intelligent life has regressed, partly because of the devastating effects of the planet-satellite impact, and partly because the impact seems to have introduced a species into the world: dragons.

Salinda is a prisoner who is forced to tend the vineyards used to make dragon wine. She was trained by her master and knows how to use the 'essence of dragons' to make sure the wine is impeccable each year. The arrival of young Brill to the prison sets things in motion for Salinda, who quickly becomes embroiled in the very politics and danger that she's successfully avoided all her life.

I liked Salinda and Brill (full name Brilliant) - they're likeable protagonists, although a bit on the stereotypical side. Salinda and Brill are only half the story, however.

My issues with the book have to do with how it is executed, and especially the stylistic decisions that went into it. It is split into two related story-lines, and the blurb does nothing to prepare readers for the shift in protagonists, focus and geography about half way. We leave Salinda and Brill at exciting points of their stories (and I really would have liked to stay with Salinda for longer), and we are introduced to Laidan and Garan.

Laidan travels with her mentor, collecting information about civilisation after the fall of Ruel, while Garan works as a Skywatcher. That's right, Garan is an astronomer! Getting to see Garan and the rest of the Skywatchers use telescopes to watch the Shatterwing and track any stray bits that might be hurtling towards the earth was really cool.

Both story lines have magic and mystery in common, and it looks like they'll eventually come together. They also have brutality and sexual violence in common: the prison Salinda and Brill are in is run by The Inspector, who likes to over-power his enemies in every way he can, and Laidan is captured by an equally sadistic man early in her storyline. The rape and sexual brutality made me uncomfortable, and I don't recommend this book to readers who are sensitive to these themes. Although the sexual violence was in keeping with the dark themes of the novel, I question the author's decision to make every 'bad-guy' in the novel a sexual predator. My opinion is that there are other ways to show how evil a person is.

Another aspect of the execution that troubled me was the writing itself. I noticed it a lot more at the beginning of the book, when I wasn't invested in the characters or world yet and certain things jumped out at me. The author tends to repeat things for the reader, which has the (unintended) side-effect of making her characters seem slow-witted. For example, Brill is put in chains when he is first brought into the camp, and Salinda keeps telling readers how his chains rattle and his steps are cut short and his mobility is limited, and I think many of those reminders were unnecessary. Sometimes Salinda tells Brill some aspect of making dragon wine only to repeat herself a few sentences later, apparently because Brill wasn't listening or is incapable of understanding. The repetition is not limited to just Salinda: Brill, Laidan and Garan all unnecessarily re-hash information readers already know.

My favourite aspect of *Shatterwing* is definitely the world-building. There are dragons and mysterious astronomical events and a hidden race with a showy agenda. I think it's a very clever blend of fantasy and post-apocalyptic elements, and I am looking forward to unravelling the secrets of this world in the next instalment.

Shatterwing will be enjoyed by readers of dark fantasy and grimdark stories. It's not a story for readers who dislike violence (especially of a sexual nature), but other readers will find something to like in this spirited characters and intriguing world-building. I liked reading it, and will be delving into the sequel, *Skywatcher*, soon.

You can read more of my reviews at **[Speculating on SpecFic](#)** .

Sonja says

When I try to think of one word to describe this book, the first one to come to mind is fascinating. The world built in this book is horrible, crazy and often times sick. But I couldn't help but be drawn in to find out how things were going to play out. **3.5 stars**

The book has two parts to it and the blurb only covers the first. Which also is more than half the book anyway. Salinda has been in this prison for ten years tending to the grapes used to make dragon wine which many don't even know, but the humans need it to survive. Before losing her mentor Mez, he bestowed upon her the cadre which he had been given as was given to that person and so on. She's still learning to control it when she is given Brill as a helper. He's young and determined which is all well and good but the inspector has need of him. And not in a good way. This book had some serious sexual brutality in it and the first time it came up shocked the hell out of me. I was not expecting anything like that in the least. But I suppose it's used to show just how horrible humans have become. The inspector is pretty much just a sick, evil man. After Brill returns to Salina tortured, she decides to help him escape to her friend Danton and his rebel army and agrees to follow him the next day. But things don't go as planned at all and she finds herself at the inspector's mercy. Set up by him to be burned as a witch she is rescued by Nils. The last of his race to be alive (apparently at least) he rescues her only to gain knowledge of the dragons.

Part two is about completely different characters, who will obviously be meeting up with the first ones eventually.

The story takes place on some planet who knows where that used to have two moons. One of the moons was cracking and for a while it was being held together by a powerful group of people. Then something happened and the moon completely broke apart. Remaining around the planet the pieces formed what the inhabitants called shatterwing. Amongst them is a group who is able to harness power in crystals and the skywatchers detect and destroy pieces as they fall if they were to cause harm to people. Garan is one of them and after a long night he is informed that he's to go to the city and rescue Laidan. Her master had been poisoned and she taken by the usurper prince. Despite his mixed feelings about his task and her he vows to bring her home alive. But things go wrong from the start, made worse when he finds her. When her master, Thurdon, died, he gave her *a gift*. A power that she was wholly unprepared for. It, coupled with the loss of her beloved master, put her into a near catatonic state where she couldn't move or think clearly. Thankfully when the danger was at it's most she was able to find herself again (more or less) and they were able to flee. They encounter one horrible thing after another until the end when it probably becomes the worst one yet. Leaving me thinking simply "Oh no."

I was a little surprised how much I liked this book, what with all the terrible stuff being done to people and all, but I really look forward to reading the next book.

Copy provided by publisher via Netgalley.
