

“THE DARK VERSE VOLUME 1: FROM THE PASSAGES OF REVENANTS” (Book Review)

Written by John Porter

Saturday, 03 April 2010 09:54



Getting into the worlds of M. Amanuensis Sharkchild's THE DARK VERSE VOLUME 1: FROM THE PASSAGES OF REVENANTS is difficult. The language is ornate, antiquated and can occasionally leave the reader scratching a head in wonder. His word choices tend toward the obscure, and the book is best read with a dictionary within easy reach.

I confess that my initial attempt to peruse these short stories was not successful, until it dawned on me that Sharkchild's work was originally conceived for his bi-weekly podcasts, and the stories should be heard rather than read. I thought about tuning in to one of his podcasts (at www.thedarkverse.com), but as this review needs to concentrate on the written word rather than the spoken, I decided to focus on the stories in that sense.



Several of the tales didn't fly with me. Many of them are told from a first-person perspective, and rather than letting the details reveal themselves, the author chooses to tell us what happened rather than show us. I'm a big believer in allowing the reader to get lost in the world of a narrative, and in these miniature portraits that's often hard to do.

However, having said that, Sharkchild has come up with several entries that hooked my attention and made me want more. In fact, if he ever decides to turn the two-part story "The Changing Feyth" into a novel, I will be first in line to purchase a copy. This pair creates a fascinating world, with its own set of rules and strange creatures, and is completely enveloping.

But as with any collection, there will be a difference of opinions as to which stories work the

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best. That’s a question each individual will have to answer. Which brings up another query: What kind of parents would name a child “Amanuensis,” anyway? Well, fear not. Mr. Sharkchild did not have to bear the cross of carrying around that moniker in middle school. The word dates back to the 1600s, and means “a person employed to write what another dictates or to copy what has been written by another; secretary.”

In a sense, he is telling us that he is a vessel of sorts, writing out words dictated to him by someone—or something—else. Whether that is a higher power or some outside source from the Lovecraftian universe, we’ll have to see.

The superior artwork is provided by John F. Stifter, and the book is available from Amazon in both a limited edition by Armored Publishing and in Kindle form. It’s also available directly from the author at www.sharkchild.com.

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