

Review

Stefan Vučak's passion for writing science fiction truly comes natural to him as he has written numerous intriguing novels involving extraterrestrials and space travel, and he also hits on the hot topics of politics and religion versus science. Stefan creates magic when the pen hits paper and he does not disappoint in *Shadow Masters*. His imagination and creativity amaze me because his novels are like no others out there that I have read before; they are completely genuine and unique. I love the use of Stefan's descriptive words and the depth of his characters. I could feel the suspense and terror all around me and could hardly set this book down.

Readers' Favorite

Books by Stefan Vučak

General Fiction:

Cry of Eagles

All the Evils

Towers of Darkness

Strike for Honor

Proportional Response

Legitimate Power

Shadow Gods Saga:

In the Shadow of Death

Against the Gods of Shadow

A Whisper from Shadow

Shadow Masters

Immortal in Shadow

With Shadow and Thunder

Through the Valley of Shadow

Guardians of Shadow

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SHADOW MASTERS

By

Stefan Vučak



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Note:

This is a work of fiction. All names, characters, places, and events are the work of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to real persons, places, or events is coincidental.

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Dedication

To Roman ... when reaching for faith

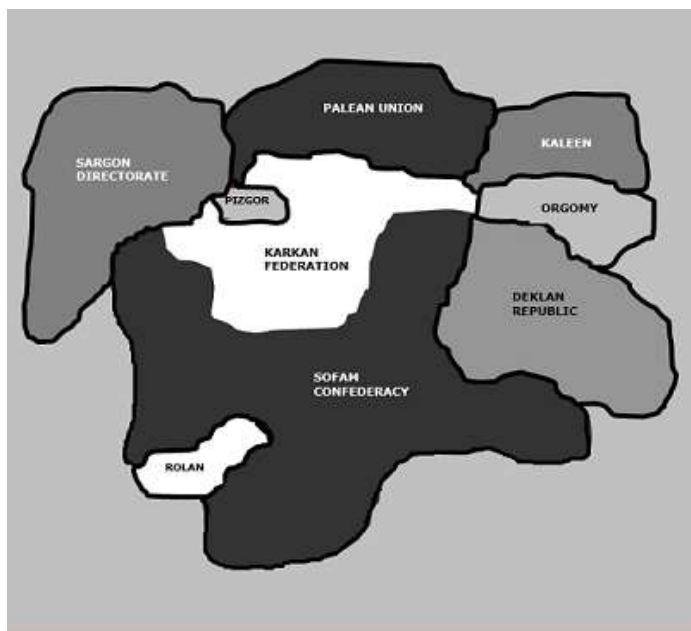
Acknowledgments

Mystic Mountain Nebula – Credit: NASA, ESA, and M. Livio and the Hubble 20th Anniversary Team.

Cover art by Laura Shinn.

<http://laurashinn.yolasite.com>

Map of the Serrll Combine



Composition of the Serrll Combine

The 247 star systems that make up the Serrll Combine is an association of six interstellar power blocks, split between two rival camps—the Servatory Party and the Revisionists. Each star system has a single representative in Captal’s General Assembly from which members are elected to the ruling ten-seat Executive Council. Seats are based on a percentage of systems occupied by each power block in relation to the total number of systems in the Serrll Combine.

Name	No of Star Systems	Percentage of Total	Executive Council Seats
Sofam Confederacy	83	34	4
Deklan Republic	19	8	1
Palean Union	28	11	1
Karkan Federation	46	19	2
Sargon Directorate	32	12	1
Independents:		15	1
- Kaleen	8		
- Rolan	5		
- Orgomy	6		
- Pizgor	3		
- Other systems	17		
General Assembly	247	100	10
Outposts	40		
Protectorates	34		

Principal political blocks:

Revisionist Party:	Palean Union Deklan Republic Sofam Confederacy
Servatory Party:	Karkan Federation Sargon Directorate Nonaligned Independents

Composition of the Executive Council:

Security Council	Bureau of Colonial and Protectorate Affairs Bureau of Defense Bureau of Cultural Affairs
Administrative Council	Bureau of Administrative Affairs Bureau of Justice
Economics Council	Bureau of Economic Affairs Bureau of Technology and Development
Central Planning Council	Bureau of Central Planning and Development

Chapter One

Sheeva broke through the dark cloud layer and buttery sunlight streamed into the nav bubble, bathing the command deck with a diffuse golden glow. Below them, bunched white cloudbanks cleaved the horizon beneath a brilliant blue sky. Sensing freedom, the M-1 surged up, ripping the thin atmosphere blanket in its wake. No one heard the rolling boom of its passage. A tinge of violet colored the planet's curve before darkness descended and stars glared back with cold indifference. Earth rolled beneath them as the scoutship shifted course and accelerated toward a gray crescent moon.

Terr lounged back in his seat and let out a satisfied sigh. Everything felt right with the world, almost. He'd dodged the chop over the C-32 and his two unwelcome charges were safely back where they belonged. Admittedly, armed with knowledge of the Serrll, unavoidable under the circumstances, but all in all, not too shabby. Still, the Bureau of Colonial and Protectorate Affairs desk drivers might not view his actions in the same glowing light, but right now, he would not allow the prospect of possible future bureaucratic entanglements spoil his day. Besides, Anabb had forgiven him his little trespasses, however grudgingly. Right now, the only thing that mattered.

Okay, nosing around the American carrier group might not have been the wisest thing to do, seeing how it got him shot down, but if Sariman had bothered to warn him of Earth's bi-static laser radar capability, it would have avoided the ensuing complications. Anyway, the canal worm got his butt in the crack properly when he violated the agreed comms protocols, which inevitably led to all the subsequent unpleasantness. Did

Sariman expect Dhar to leave Lauren behind to die at Comalcalco with their primitive medical facilities to care for her? Because she would have died had he not taken her. What his brother did was not merely correct, but honorable.

At any rate, Sariman should have known better than kowtow to someone like Laraiana with her caustic behavior and vindictive personality. Serves him right what that got him. Foremost a Scout Fleet officer, he should not have crawled to her, only to get stomped on. The woman was an opportunistic user and didn't care who got trampled along the way to her version of success, whatever that might be.

Hindsight is such a wonderful tool.

As Earth shrank behind him, Terr swiveled his seat and grinned broadly at Dhar. "I never thought I would say it, Nightwings, but I'm glad to be away from that nutty place."

Dharaklin checked the status displays with a quick sweep and leaned back onto the couch, pleased to see Sankri happy, given the things that had gone wrong. He did not know which was worse, downed by that Aegis cruiser's point defense system, or recovered by the Russians. Both were grim items at many levels whose repercussions, he figured, were still to be fully resolved by everyone involved, including Earth. Territorial rivalries colored and absorbed so much of that planet's energy. When he thought about it, were Serrll's rivalries any different? Despite some difficulties, the mission completed successfully and they were homeward-bound. The future now for them to write.

"I must confess to a level of relief myself, my brother," he said comfortably, his voice deep and resonant. "Although—"

Terr raised a hand and winced. "I know. You don't have to remind me. As jobs go, not my finest moment ever, but post-mortems can wait."

Dhar suppressed a smile. "Far be it for me to criticize my superior officer."

"Your unflagging support shall not go unrewarded," Terr

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said dryly.

“Comforting, but what I wanted to say, my brother, when I brought Lauren and Bill to the Moon Base, I violated a number of standing regulations.”

“You did the only possible thing,” Terr said promptly, giving Dhar a hard look. “Never doubt it. I would be extremely disappointed had you done otherwise.”

“It might have been the correct thing to do and I thank you for your words, but it caused you a major problem with Anabb.”

“I wouldn’t fret it. He’ll get over it.”

“I cannot put it out of my mind. Despite his assurances, there could still be trouble over this with the BCPA.”

“Maybe, but I don’t believe it,” Terr said with more assurance than he felt. The BCPA took its protectorate responsibilities seriously, and Anabb’s Diplomatic Branch umbrella might not be wide enough to shield him should they decide to get unpleasant. Ah, to the pits with all of them. “Look at it this way. After capturing Tanard, we’re heroes, remember? It wouldn’t look good for the government to mess with us right now.”

Dhar raised a questioning eyebrow. “It might not look good, but it does not mean they would not do it. Besides, those Capital busybodies have long memories,” he added darkly. “They will find a way to even the score.”

“You worry too much. We’ll handle it, if and when,” Terr growled and stretched his arms. “What can they do? Drum me out of the Fleet? Somehow, I don’t think so. Right now, all I want is to pack our stuff and get back to Taltair. On the other hand, should those chair experts decide to give us trouble, I can always sweet-talk my uncle to drop the matter.”

“Unless he is after your hide himself,” Dhar commented candidly, but a twinkle of amusement lit his eyes.

Terr sighed and shrugged. “There is always that.”

Dhar stared at his brother for a speculative moment, curious how Sankri could brush off the problem so easily, then

turned to check their approach. At one-fifth boost, the Moon got visibly larger. They were in no danger of auguring in, and SC&C would override if that were the case. He just did not want to appear sloppy.

Although Sankri appeared unruffled regarding the conduct of their mission, he suspected his brother secretly feared Anabb would see it as a shoddy operation; certainly more so than worry about any Bureau of Colonial and Protectorate Affairs repercussions. Dhar knew how important it was for Sankri to create a favorable impression with their boss. Regardless of any mitigating circumstances and Anabb's forgiving manner, as a first field test, the job left something to be desired.

"We did get the C-32," he said gently, reminding his brother that despite everything, they *have* completed their mission. That had to account for something.

Terr gave him a wry smile. "So we did. Things can't be all bad, even if we did leave a trail of confusion in our wake."

"And we learned something more of Earth's detection capabilities. That should be good for a footnote somewhere," Dhar said gravely and Terr grinned at him.

"There you are! They'll pin a medal on us. Still, if Anabb is going to have us doing more of these hair-curling crazy stunts, I can see this undercover crap will take some time getting used to."

"You are not regretting joining the Diplomatic Branch, are you?"

"Tah, the gods will tell," Terr said gravely. "It's somewhat wrenching to realize we're no longer Scout Fleet, where the only thing I had to worry about is missing report schedules and bending *Ramora*. Although we did bend it pretty badly in the end, didn't we? I do miss her, a sweet ship. One thing, though, working for Anabb certainly beats the hell out of routine patrol duty." He cocked an eyebrow at his brother. "And you?"

"So far, it has not been dull, I must give him that."

"A strange first assignment, all right," Terr agreed moodily.

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“Second, if you count *Zavian* and bagging Tanard. He is some piece of work. You know, I almost feel sorry for him.”

“He took out his M-3 and wiped out innocent merchant ships, my brother,” Dhar reminded him sternly.

Terr nodded. “Yes, he did. What’s more, I can understand why he did it.”

“There is a world of difference between understanding and condoning. That’s what the Paleans were doing, condoning open piracy.”

“Well, he’ll have plenty of time to reflect on Cantor. Talking of reflection, we left Earth with a lot to reflect over as well.”

“The C-32’s data? Hard to imagine that somehow we left the ship behind,” Dhar mused and shook his head.

Terr grinned. “Yeah, and there’s no one left to blame now. I wonder what Earth will make of their download? They’ve got so much potential, yet still so tribal and territorial.”

“Not like us at all, are they?” Dhar added softly, pointing out the illogic of Sankri’s argument.

Terr could not say anything, afraid if he started picking at it, examining the rivalries between the Servatory Party and the Revisionists, the looming Sargon/Palean merger, Deklan’s religious fundamentalism, raiders plaguing shipping corridors, he wouldn’t like the inevitable conclusion. Technology always magnifies a society’s moral and ethical shortcomings.

Surface Command and Control guided them in and the little scout glided over jagged peaks that hid the Serrll Moon Base in perpetual northern polar darkness. With the base installations spread across the crater floor like a toy erector set, the ship hovered for a moment, then settled on the softly glowing landing ring beside a brooding M-3. An access tube immediately slid from a gray wall and connected with a muffled clang when the clamps engaged.

Terr slapped his thighs and stood up. “Might as well get this over with. We could get lucky and leave without getting noticed.”

"I like your optimism," Dhar said, doubting they'd be able to simply slink away, but the prospect of leaving the Moon Base and its internal byplays felt good. He looked forward to an assignment where they would not need to use the hand of Death, provided Anabb kept them together. It would be unsettling working without his brother at his side, although he knew a day would come when that might be necessary. He thought about it, but never quite got around to deciding how he would react. It won't be pleasant, he knew that much.

Tah, whatever the gods decided.

They took the cable-tube down to the main deck and proceeded to the access tube hatch, then a short walk through the brightly lit tunnel to the other end. Terr stood at the entrance and tapped a brown sensor pad. It pulsed and the hatch opened at the SMB's launch level. Sweet, acid, rancid smells assaulted him as he strode into the base and his face wrinkled with distaste. He still found it hard to ignore the ambient odors. A familiar figure waited for them in the corridor.

"Sir!" the young Deklan officer barked and stood to.

Terr smiled affably at the boy's stiff features. The kid had gone through a lot and probably enjoyed little of it.

"Doing penance, Mister?"

Dreading this meeting, Third Scout Tembel allowed himself a small grin. "No, sir. The executive officer has requested that you see him at your convenience."

"First Scout Patrlin?"

"Yes, sir." Tembel tried to cover his embarrassment and his face colored. "With Master Scout Sariman under close arrest, Mr. Patrlin is in temporary command."

"I see. Very well. This is a convenient time as any. Lead the way."

Tembel's blush deepened and he cleared his throat, wishing he were someplace else. If only the deck would open and swallow him.

"Sir...I want to extend my personal apology to you and Mr.

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Dharaklin for everything.” The image of two humans sauntering into the chamber that housed the C-32 and Sariman suddenly standing behind him, quietly ordering him not to report it, still haunted him. He knew it to be wrong, but Sariman was his superior officer and he only a lowly Third Scout. He carried out orders! It didn’t help him sleep better.

Terr patted the boy’s shoulder. “Don’t worry about it. Not your fault.”

“That’s the point, sir. I think it was,” Tembel said miserably, his large wide-set eyes tragic and lost. Mr. Terrlls-rr ended up gravely wounded as a direct result of what he did and the Earth woman almost died. He shuddered to think of the political consequences set into motion by his seemingly innocuous act.

“It took courage to say what you did, Mr. Tembel,” Terr said softly, sympathizing with the boy’s dilemma. “If you’re ever placed in a similar position again, you’ll know how to refuse an illegal order.”

“Yes, sir,” Tembel squeaked, turned and marched stiffly toward the nearest cable-tube. Disobey an order? Not so easy when you were on the bottom rung of a career ladder. Still, he felt relieved the Diplomatic Branch Head of Mission didn’t seem to hold the incident against him. A negative report from him would have been an effective career gasper.

Terr stared after the boy, shook his head and walked after him. He hoped the experience hadn’t scarred him too much. Well, the kid would just have to learn to deal with it. In adversity the spirit grows. Sometimes, though, there was too damn much adversity.

The ride up taken in uncomfortable silence. When the cable-tube hatch opened, Tembel hurried toward the base commander’s door. The two translucent panels parted with a hiss and he stood to.

“Diplomatic Branch Mission, sir!” he snapped, glanced at Terr and hurried off.

Terr gave him a passing nod of encouragement and walked into the office. Still hot and humid as he remembered. Patrlin stood behind the matte black desk, waiting for them. Behind him, a floor-to-ceiling window screen provided a dark Moon-scape backdrop. The Karkan hissed and extended his arm at the formchairs before the desk.

“Please be seated, and thank you for seeing me.”

“No problem. I planned on doing so anyway before departing,” Terr said formally and settled himself into a chair. The Karkan’s demeanor cold, his body language hostile, and Terr wondered what soured his milk today.

“Quite.” Patrlin’s tongue flickered.

The green scales shimmered when he tilted his head. With Sariman under arrest, he expected to take over the SMB permanently, a natural reaction given his seniority and experience with Earth. Not to mention a year on this barren rock. Not getting the coveted promotion was a source of intense personal irritation, and what he considered a blight on his record. Didn’t Sector TACOPSCOM trust him to do the job? It was a First Scout billet anyway. He wondered if this young pup sitting before him had anything to do with it. Probably not, he decided grudgingly. The boy didn’t appear to be the type to involve himself in service politics, at least not yet. Besides, they’d hardly seen each other. Terr had no reason to sabotage his career. Ah, Laraiana? She represented a much more realistic possibility and something to be looked into. He had rubbed her the wrong way. Stupid female! Did she expect him to fall at her feet because of her powerful Capital connections?

“With destruction of the C-32, I take it your mission here is now officially concluded?” Patrlin grated with forced politeness.

Terr suspected that more lay hidden behind those seemingly innocent words, but right now, he couldn’t be bothered figuring it out. There would be enough explaining of his own

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once he got to Taltair, to worry about the Karkan and his problems.

"It is. I am recalled and I intend to lift immediately we clear our quarters."

"And the Diplomatic Branch does not anticipate any adverse fallout from its unorthodox disposal?"

The temporary SMB commander might be concerned that Earth was now contaminated by information gleaned from the C-32's computer, but Terr didn't think so. The Karkan probably wanted to cover his own position, worried what effect Earth's heightened security posture might have on future Serrll overflights.

"I cannot say, First Scout. The BCPA will undoubtedly carry out an evaluation to make that determination."

"Of course." Patrlin curled his lips and gave a slow hiss. "An awkward situation with Master Scout Sariman, Agent Terr. Awkward and embarrassing. For a senior officer to have done what he did..." he trailed off and shrugged. "Due to your imminent departure, TACOPSCOM considered that you carry Sariman back to Salina. Fortunately, and I agree with them, COMROLOPS vetoed the idea. Besides sparing you any personal discomfort at having him on board, this is an internal Fleet matter and of no concern to the Diplomatic Branch."

"I wouldn't have consented to the plan regardless of any suggestion coming from TACOPSCOM. Not without orders to that effect from Taltair," Terr said stiffly, annoyed at the very idea. The thought of having Sariman underfoot for two or three days was, how would he put it, distasteful.

"Yes, certainly. This is somewhat awkward, but I have a request from Scholar Laraiana."

"Oh?" Terr's face fell at the thought of confronting the woman again. He'd hoped he had seen the last of her. A blanket of darkness hung over her like a menacing thundercloud, ready to stab forth lightning at everyone around her. What brought him within her range, he couldn't tell. Surely the GS-4 shuttle's

loss couldn't be the cause of her evident deep-seated enmity. Because he refused to click his heels before her? "What's *her* problem?"

Clearly uncomfortable, Patrlin winced. "I am not insensitive to the fact she casts a frosty pallor over everything near her, but in this case, it would be better if you heard it from her," he said by way of sidestepping an imminent explosion and tapped a pad on the inlaid console in his desk. "Mr. Tembel, please ask Scholar Laraiana to come in."

"Yes, sir."

Terr exchanged a questioning glance with Dhar, who shrugged. Well, at least she made it a request, he conceded, not a demand. Coming from her, it might be hard to tell between the two, he decided somewhat uncharitably. He could not shake off the fact the woman irritated him unbearably. Like having sand in his underwear.

"Did she tread on *your* toes?" he asked and Patrlin hissed, clearly not relishing having the acerbic scientist around.

"When you decided to return the Earthman and his woman without first consulting her, she came raging to me, insisting I hold them, ignoring the fact I had no jurisdiction."

"I regret any inconvenience—"

"Not your concern, Agent Terr," Patrlin said heavily. "I told her if she had a problem with the Diplomatic Branch Head of Mission, she can file a complaint to the Branch Director, which I suspect she already did, and received scant support for her trouble."

The door panels slid into the walls and Laraiana strode through, surrounded by a cloud of coldness, a shield against the world. She carried herself with her usual haughty bearing and imperious authority, impatient of underlings, expecting to get her own way. Her pale blue eyes scanned the office occupants like mapping sensors. Of medium height, her one-piece dark blue coverall hid a curvy figure. It could be a block of ice for all the warmth it held, Terr reflected. His defenses came up with

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an audible clang, an instinctive reaction.

Laraiana glared at Patrlin. The man had thwarted her once. Would he do it again?

“You told him?”

“Given I have no authority over Agent Terrllss-rr, I thought it advisable that you made the request yourself, Scholar,” Patrlin said stiffly, not at all awed or intimidated by her presence. While he sat in this seat, he made the rules here and she can make a complaint to the BCPA if she didn’t like it. Even if she *had* already complained, he would not repeat Sariman’s mistake by deferring to her.

Laraiana bit her lip in frustration and filed away the insult. Clearly, the Karkan would not be manipulated, at least not directly. However, another word or two in the right ear at COMROLOPS, certain that Patrlin’s uncooperative attitude would change smartly—if he valued his career. She would not be interfered with, least of all by the bovine military or male underlings. Expect deference and you will get it.

“Very well.” She turned to Terr, annoyed the boy sat in her presence. Another score to settle later, but right now, she needed to remain focused. She swallowed her resentment and took a deep breath. “First Scout, after your thoughtless destruction of my GS-4 shuttle, Salina Tactical Operations Command grudgingly sought fit to provide me with a replacement. This is great news as it means I’ll be able to resume my research program with a minimum of delay caused by your, ah, clandestine operation. Fortunately, it won’t be dispatched for another five days.”

“Fortunately?” Looking at her, Terr suppressed a smile. The woman cannot help herself. Push and grind until something gives way. Still, he was intrigued enough to listen. It could be amusing watching her crawl to him cap in hand, so to speak.

“Yes. You see, this gives me a perfect opportunity to check out the shuttle’s systems and have Salina make the necessary modifications that would otherwise have to be done here,

which would further delay my research program. To do that—
„

“You must get to Salina,” Terr finished for her, knowing what was coming and not bothering to hide the irony in his voice.

“Precisely. Since you’re going—”

“Scholar Laraiana, I hate to spoil your day, but I’m not going to Salina,” Terr said, relishing prolonging her discomfort. She was too easy a target and he really should not be baiting her.

She waved her hand with an impatient gesture. “I understand. It would be a minor detour on your way to Taltair to take me there.” She swallowed her chagrin, hating having to beg, especially before this boy. She would rather eat glass, but then, she had a mission to consider, for now. “I am asking that you please transport me to Salina.”

Terr nearly laughed at her expression, a mixture of loathing and pleading, knowing full well what it cost her to ask. Grudgingly, he admitted it was a reasonable request. For a pleasant moment, he savored the temptation to hide behind a façade of officialdom and tell her to go through channels, a fleeting indulgence. Although it would give him momentary satisfaction to see her rage at him, he did not have a valid reason to refuse her. Besides, when the dust of acrimony settled, he could be in for a reprimand from the BCPA *and* Anabb. Personal satisfaction or not, she simply wasn’t worth it. BCPA’s rancor he can handle, but he didn’t want to give Anabb another reason to be upset with him. Not right now, at least.

“It will be a pleasure, Scholar,” he said at length. “Please be ready to depart within the hour.”

“Why...thank you,” Laraiana forced herself to say after overcoming her surprise. She fully expected him to be obstinate and was ready to threaten him, but wasn’t prepared for this quick acceptance. Perhaps the boy had more sense than he

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showed. Nevertheless, this in no way deflected her determination to ruin his career. He had it coming to him. "I shall be ready," she said stiffly and walked out without a backward glance.

"A hard personality to warm up to," Patrlin muttered with a rueful shake of his head as the door panels clicked shut. "You were wise to accede to her request, Agent Terr."

Terr's smile was grim. "It'll give me a chance to throw her out the lock."

Patrlin stared, then hissed with amusement, his tongue flickering. "Perhaps a better outcome. As for the GS-4, I must inform you that a formal inquiry will be held into its loss and both of you will be required to provide affidavits, supplementing the SMB's SC&C sensor logs."

"I understand," Terr said, a standard procedure and to be expected. He gathered Dhar with his eyes and stood up. "If there is nothing else, First Scout, we shall be on our way."

Patrlin rose and glared at Terr with obvious dislike. "There is one more thing, Mister. What Master Scout Sariman did to frustrate your mission cannot be condoned, but if the Diplomatic Branch intends to conduct another one of its operations around Earth while I am base commander here, don't you be part of it. Is that clear?"

Terr's mouth twitched, but without humor. "I shall keep it in mind."

Karkans!

Rit!

About the author

Stefan Vučak has written eight Shadow Gods Saga sci-fi novels and numerous contemporary political drama books. His *Cry of Eagles* won the coveted 2011 Readers' Favorite silver medal award, and his *All the Evils* was the 2013 prestigious Eric Hoffer contest finalist and Readers' Favorite silver medal winner. *Strike for Honor* won the gold medal.

Stefan leveraged a successful career in the Information Technology industry, which took him to the Middle East working on cellphone systems. He applied his IT discipline to create realistic storylines for his books. He also spends time as an editor and book reviewer. Stefan lives in Melbourne, Australia.

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Twitter: [@stefanvucak](https://twitter.com/stefanvucak)



Shadow Gods books by Stefan Vučak

In the Shadow of Death

An extraterrestrial craft is discovered in an ancient Mayan pyramid and the knowledge throws Earth into social and political turmoil. As a new agent in the Diplomatic Branch, First Scout Terrllss-rr is tasked to destroy the craft before international tension throws Earth into open conflict.

Against the Gods of Shadow

Facing economic sabotage by Palean raiders, Pizgor pleads for help from the Serrll government. Second Scout Terrllss-rr is tasked to find the raider base and expose Palean's duplicity. Terr is forced to battle a Fleet ship that leaves them both badly damaged and leads Terr to confront forces that threaten to destabilize the Serrll itself.

A Whisper from Shadow

An extraterrestrial craft is discovered in an ancient Mayan pyramid and the knowledge throws Earth into social and political turmoil. As a new agent in the Diplomatic Branch, First Scout Terrllss-rr is tasked to destroy the craft before international tension throws Earth into open conflict.

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With his mission on Earth completed, First Scout Terrllss-rr is returning home, only to be intercepted by an Orieli Technic Union survey ship. The encounter sends ripples of consternation throughout the Serrll Combine. In an attempt to establish a link between a raider network and the AUP Provisional Committee, Terr's cover is compromised. To extricate himself, he has to raise the hand of Death.

Immortal in Shadow

On his way to a prison planet, Tanard, a renegade Fleet officer, escapes and vows vengeance. He is recruited by an extremist Palean group to raid Kaleen worlds. First Scout Terrllss-rr must find the secret base that is supporting him before the Wanderers rise up and unleash Death's wrath on the Serrll.

With Shadow and Thunder

The Orieli are caught in an interstellar war and now they are about to drag the Serrll Combine into it. Betrayed by his Wanderer brother Dharaklin, First Scout Terrllss-rr crashes to Earth in a sabotaged ship. He now has a whole world after the secrets he holds.

Through the Valley of Shadow

Bent on revenge, Terrllss-rr pursues his Anar'on brother to the fabled world of the Wanderers—and face judgment by the god of Death. On their frontier, the Serrll Combine is plunged into a savage encounter with a Kran invader, showing them a glimpse of a dark future.

Guardians of Shadow

Having destroyed a Kran invader, Terr, Teena and his brother Dharaklin, head for Orieli space where they will begin their cultural exchange mission. In a devastating Kran attack, Teena is taken and Terr seeks to rescue her. To win a war that threatens to consume the Orieli and the Serrll Combine, the fabled Wanderers must march against the Krans wielding the hand of Death.

Other books by Stefan Vučak

Cry of Eagles

2011 Reader's Favorite silver medal winner

Iran's nuclear capability represents a clear national threat to Israel, but the United States and Europe do nothing. A Mossad black ops team sabotages a refinery complex in Galveston, plants evidence that incriminates Iran, confident that an enraged America will strike back in retaliation. But the Mossad team makes one small mistake, which the FBI exploits to uncover the plot before America vents its wrath on Iran and plunges the world into political and economic turmoil. An award-winning thriller that will leave you at the edge of your seat.

All the Evils

2013 Eric Hoffer finalist

2013 Readers' Favorite silver medal winner

A researcher in the Secret Vatican Archives uncovers a papyrus that claims Jesus was John the Baptist's disciple and the second Messiah. To prevent the tractate from becoming public, the Vatican secret service engages an assassin to silence anyone who has knowledge of the papyrus. It is up to an FBI agent to unravel a series of murders and prevent the assassin from killing him.

Towers of Darkness

A Wyoming mineworker discovers a human hand bone embedded in a forty million year-old coal seam. An anthropologist, Larry Krafter is sent to recover the bone and unearths a human skull. Instead of receiving acclaim when he publishes his discovery, vested establishment interests seek to discredit him, using murder to do it.

Strike for Honor

2013 Readers' Favorite gold medal winner

In a joint exercise with the Korean navy, Admiral Pacino's son is one of the casualties from a North Korean missile strike. Enraged that the President is more interested in appeasing the North Koreans, forgetting the lost American lives, Pacino decides to make a statement by bombing military facilities in both Koreas. His court-martial puts American foreign policy under public scrutiny.

Proportional Response

2015 Readers' Favorite finalist

The Chinese populist faction, the Tuanpai, plan to trigger a global disaster that will devastate America. In the aftermath, the FBI identifies China as the culprit, but don't know if this was a rogue operation or a government plot. Fearful of American retaliation, China invites U.S. investigators to find that proof. Under a cloud of mutual suspicion, America readies itself for a military confrontation. A mind-bending expose of international politics!

Legitimate Power

What happens when a person living on the outskirts of Jerusalem digs up two ossuaries and finds a strange crystal the size of a smartphone able to repair itself when scratched and turns into a perfect mirror under laser light? When the crystal is put on the shadow gem market, suspecting that it is not natural, an American collector buys it, wanting to tap into its hidden potential. When the Israelis learn what it is, they want it back...as do the Chinese...as does the American government, which sets off a race to get it, no matter what the cost in shattered lives.

Lifeliners

When everybody is against them, it is tough being a lifeliner, as Nash Bannon found out. Lifeliners are ordinary people...almost. They can draw energy from another person; they live longer and are smarter. Scientists claim that Western high-pressure living and growing sterility in developed countries has triggered the rise of lifeliners, and *homo sapiens* will be replaced by *homo renata* within ten generations. So, what's not to like about lifeliners?