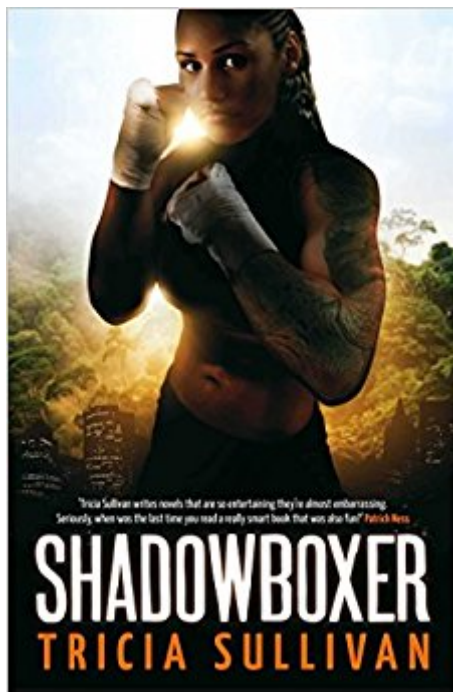


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# Shadowboxer



## Synopsis

Thai martial arts, international crime, celebrity and mythical creatures combine in this masterful new tale of two people facing incredible dangers, from award-winning author Tricia Sullivan. Nothing she's faced in the cage will prepare her... Jade is a young mixed martial arts fighter. When she's in the cage she dominates her opponents—but in real life she's out of control. After she has a confrontation with a Hollywood martial arts star that threatens her gym's reputation, Jade's coach sends her to a training camp in Thailand for an attitude adjustment. Hoping to discover herself, she instead uncovers a shocking conspiracy. In a world just beyond our own, a man is stealing the souls of children to try and live forever.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"deftly evokes the brutality and adrenaline rush of MMA and Muay Thai fights... Jade's strength and tenacity make her an appealing protagonist—and it's refreshing to see a black Latina lead, given their rarity in fiction for teens" (Kirkus Reviews)"In this adrenaline-fueled supernatural adventure, a young woman channels her anger into fighting, only to risk losing everything due to her lack of control. Jade Barrera, 17, is a rising star in the mixed martial arts (MMA) circuit, but after she snaps and hurts the wrong person, she's sent to regain her focus by training in Thailand, where she's exposed to new ways of thinking and living. Unknowingly, Jade becomes embroiled in a deadly conspiracy involving drug smuggling and slavery when a girl capable of walking between worlds and a magic-touched investigative reporter enter her

life. With a feral god watching over Jade and her newfound companions, Jade fights for her life inside the ring and out of it. SF author Sullivan (Lightborn) spins a kinetic, violent, and magical tale that makes excellent use of Jade's hard-edged voice. Sullivan brings to life the beauty of Thailand and the sweat and blood of the gym, infusing them with magic and danger."

(Publisher's Weekly) "Shadowboxer has fantastic fight scenes, the best: passionately written, intense and real." (Kate Elliott, best-selling author of the Spiritwalker series)

Tricia Sullivan was born in 1968 in New Jersey, USA and has been writing stories since the age of seven. She attended Music Program Zero at Bard College under the guidance of composer and philosopher Benjamin Boretz, receiving a B.A. in 1990. She also holds an M.A. in Special Education from Columbia University. She wrote her first novel, *Lethe*, while teaching secondary school in New York City, but by the time the book was published she had moved to London. Her science fiction novels include the Arthur C. Clarke Award-winning *Dreaming In Smoke*, *Double Vision*, *Sound Mind*, *Someone to Watch Over Me*, and the British Science Fiction and Arthur C. Clarke Award-nominated novels *Lightborn* and *Maul*. She also wrote an epic fantasy trilogy under the pseudonym Valery Leith. Her works have been translated into seven languages and praised by prominent critics. Tricia has a longstanding interest in martial arts, has herself trained for many years and now administers the mixed martial arts website of her partner, martial artist Steve Morris. Currently she is raising three children while writing and studying physics and mathematics full time with the Open University.

Ahoy there me mateys! So do ye like strong female Dominican-American protagonists, MMA, Thai mythology, crime novels, Muay Thai, and cats? If so this novel might float yer boat. I first heard about this book from John Scalzi's 2014 Big Idea post, which is where the author does an interview with Scalzi that discusses the inspiration for the novel. Among these inspirations were men being condescending to women fighters and the author's frustration about it. Now this novel is way out of me normal genre range of martial arts, urban fantasy, and crime elements. But the ideas behind the author's impetus for writing stuck with me and the book continued to sit in my ports for plunder list. A little over two years later, I finally bought the novel and gave it a chance. One of the interesting things about the novel is that the beginning of the book alternates chapters between Jade's story (the MMA fighter) and the story of Mya, a little girl caught up in the supernatural. Now the Big Idea post did in

fact use the phrase “supernatural bent,” which I of course had ejected from me brain. It did not mention Mya or the non-fighting aspects of the novel at all. So I found myself highly confused the first time the novel switched perspectives. It felt like two completely separate novels for the majority of the book which some readers might dislike. But I loved both and found the switches back and forth to me taste because each character was so compelling. And of course the two halves come together as a whole later on in ways that were unexpected and fun. I loved Jade and her bad-ass nature and her growth and her relationship with her family and the other fighters. I adored Mya and her spunk and determination. The novel was compelling and offers glimpses of cultures and ideas way outside of me normal day-to-day life. The only minor gripe was that Jade did not sound like a 17 year old. So overall I consider this book a major success. Side note: At \$1.99 this book was a bargain. Also the author apparently has won awards for her science fiction. More books for the ports to plunder list!

A very entertaining novel, with a variety of characters good and bad, all well depicted. I especially liked the protagonist, and it took me back to my own days in martial arts. The Thai chapters were splendid, full of mystery and magic, but very specific rather than vaguely Oriental. I shall watch for this author's books in the future.

The setting in this book draws you right into an almost alien world. The characters are well drawn, the action fun and engaging. The plot keeps the pages turning. All in all, a good read.

This was one of my 2015 favorite reads. A unique paranormal story with cool mythology, and a fantastic and strong main character.

Imaginative and fast paced-- a great read

Jade is one of the toughest heroines I've read in a long time. She's damaged from a life of poverty and abuse and she is incredibly angry. She brings this anger to the MMA Cage where she can go into a blind rage until she beats her opponent into submission. Unable to control that rage, she takes it out on the wrong person and is sent to a training camp in Thailand where her life takes a very unexpected and dangerous turn. In spite of the contemporary YA feel to this piece, it's also very much urban fantasy - with the emphasis on the urban. The author takes us from ghettos and domestic abuse to Thai lady boys and exotic jungles. It's an exhilarating adventure. The MMA

aspect was completely foreign to me, but absolutely fascinating. Although she's tough, Jade is still very much a girl. She's just a girl who could beat you to a pulp if she wanted to, while still sighing over a handsome guy. There's a tiny bit of insta-love, but it takes some very unique and dark turns. Simply put, I loved this book, was sorry that it ended, and would read more in a heartbeat. \*ARC provided by Netgalley for review purposes.

2.5 Stars Shadowboxer is one of those books that had so much potential and had the two main story arcs been separate books and then later intertwined, it probably would have worked better. Instead, these two stories don't line up like they should. It feels like two separate books. When the stories come together, it feels contrived, forced, and messy. That being said, I liked the stories as separate entities. Give me a badass female character who speaks her mind, knows how to throw a punch, and doesn't let anyone push her around. Jade is loud, bossy, take charge, and ready to jump in any fight for what she believes in. Jade has worked so hard to get where she is and strives for excellence in her martial arts. She's abrasive, rude, crass, wholly herself, and doesn't apologize for who she is and that makes her someone you can respect, even if you don't like her. Despite these awesome qualities and the story that goes with them, I didn't particularly like Jade. Sure she's overcome a lot, she works for everything, and has super big dreams, but the girl is catty and rude and a mess. She doesn't even shell out the respect she gets. The pacing is abysmal. Jade has a strong voice and stuff happens but it's so slow and takes ages to get to the second story arc where they merge together.

You'll wonder as chapters alternate what exactly is going on and why it matters. Not knowing in some ways pushes you to read more and in others makes you forget everything as you struggle to piece it together. The second story arc in Thailand is excellent. The scenery is diverse and rich and colorful and there's so much life in those pages.

You'll feel like you're transported. It's not always pretty, but it's real and raw and sucks you in. The soul stealing. When I read this book, I didn't bother with the blurb-I almost never do-and so I read those sections without knowing what was happening and it kind of added to the mystery. There's this cool shadow realm that full of Thai lore and spirituality. It's fascinating and engaging. You'll want that poor little girl to escape her fate. Overall, Shadowboxer was interesting but easy to put down and forget about. It was complicated, packed with info, and voice, but dragged too much to keep attention.

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Shadowboxer

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