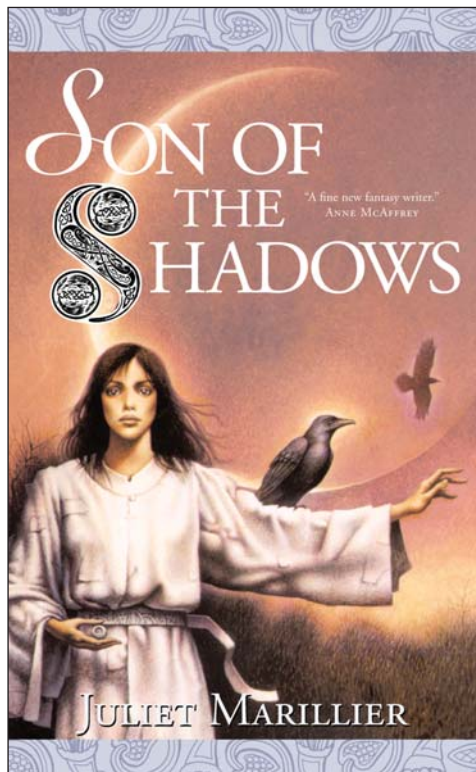




Juliet Marillier

Son of the Shadows



608 pages • 0-765-34326-6

"I enjoyed it immensely....
For an Irish resident, familiar with the mores
and customs, *Daughter of the Forest* had
special meaning and relevance. Juliet
Marillier is a fine new fantasy writer—and
what trials does she put her characters
through in the next book?"

—ANNE MCCAFFREY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Juliet Marillier was born in New Zealand and raised in the town of Dunedin, which is known as the "Edinburgh of the South," which explains her love of Celtic mythology. Juliet holds advanced degrees in music and languages, and now lives just outside of Perth, in Western Australia, where she is the mother of two daughters and two sons. Her first book, *Daughter of the Forest*, was published in 2000 to overwhelming critical and public acclaim.

IN HER OWN WORDS

"Fantasy is escapist: sometimes we don't much like the world we live in, so we bury ourselves in a genre which conjures a multitude of worlds. And fantasy can be a substitute: in an age of scientific rationalism and dwindling religious faith, it demonstrates clear moral codes; basic choices between good and evil, explorations of light and dark.

Still, that doesn't explain the fascination tales of the unreal, the imagined, and the Otherworldly have held for folk since well before Spenser or Mallory set quill to paper. Celt and Norseman had their epics of magic and mystery, heroism and romance. The Dreaming stories of Australia's indigenous people and the Icelandic sagas, the Maori creation myths and the lore of the druids hold universal themes; they make sense of the relationship between man and nature, between man and his own kind. They are our key to the world around us.

Once, we'd have heard these tales around the fire after nightfall. This shadow time was for listening and reflection, and though the world could be confusing, the tales helped explain it. Folk understood their symbolism as they understood the patterns of planting and reaping, storm and calm, birth and death. In the stories, the very pattern and purpose of existence were encapsulated.

Times change. The fantasies we read are now highly developed, cunningly crafted, drawing not on a single shared culture but on our multiplicity of backgrounds. Yet at their heart there are the same universal messages; their symbolism is that of our ancient folklore, a powerful code which we still crave, for all our apparent sophistication. Yes, they entertain and divert; we read them for fun. But in the best of them we recapture something almost lost; a map for our own journey forward.” —JULIET MARILLIER

ABOUT THE BOOK

In this second enthralling book in the Sevenwaters Trilogy, author Juliet Marillier ushers us back into the lush green forests and misty glades of ancient Ireland, to a time of great and sweeping change, when the old ways are forced to retreat in the face of the coming Christianity. Here, in this land of rugged beauty, the age-old battle for humankind’s destiny is fast approaching its turning point, as the Fair Folk spin their wild magic and the prophecies foretold so long ago come bursting dangerously to life.

In the first volume of the Sevenwaters Trilogy, *Daughter of the Forest*, the courageous young woman Sorcha was forced to defeat a sorceress’s curse, sacrificing herself to save her family. In *Son of the Shadows*, Sorcha now has a family of her own, including a daughter, Liadan. Like her mother, Liadan is both gifted in the arts of healing, and a storyteller of uncommon ability; she is also blessed—or cursed—with visions of great power.

Trouble comes to Sevenwaters with word of a band of fearsome mercenaries led by the mysterious Painted Man. Some whispers claim the fighters are half-man, half-animal, able to move without a sound and killing all in their path with a cold and brutal efficiency. In a stunning twist of fate, Liadan falls into the Painted Man’s hands, only to find a warrior as fearsome as his legend, and a man far more troubled and complex. As their destinies intertwine with the great changes afoot in their forest sanctuary, Liadan and the Painted Man form a bond that will grow into something more, setting them inescapably onto their paths in the ancient prophecies.

Rich in detail and imagination, *Son of the Shadows* is a powerful continuation of one of today’s freshest and most exciting fantasy trilogies.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The relationships between the sexes is a prominent theme throughout the book. Discuss how the following characters relate to the opposite sex: Eamonn; Niamh; Iubdan; the Uí Néill; and Bran, both before and after meeting Liadan.
2. Appearances are often deceiving in *Son of the Shadows*. Which characters are most unlike what they appear to be? How do the outward appearances of such characters as Bran and Niamh influence the story?
3. Before Liadan’s arrival among them, the Painted Man’s band of fighters lived by a rugged warrior’s code, preferring to die rather than survive a grievous wound with a body left unable to fight. How does Liadan change this perspective? Does her influence strengthen or weaken the group?
4. Storytelling is featured throughout the book, as a means of imparting wisdom, giving strength and hope, and offering a safe way to challenge or criticize the status quo. What impact does Liadan’s storytelling have on the mercenary band? Why does Bran allow her to continue spinning her tales?
5. Lies play a critical role in the story, with such characters as Niamh, Ciarán, and Bran having had their lives shattered and savagely reformed by lies or half-truths. Yet, even such a noble character as Liadan uses deception to achieve a greater good. What is the author saying about Truth? Is there a difference between an outright lie and the truth withheld?
6. Of the many looming conflicts in the book—military, religious, and familial—which is potentially the most damaging to the people of Sevenwaters? Discuss the pitfalls of each, and suggest ways you might have handled each conflict.
7. While the qualities of sacrifice, courage, and perseverance characterized the first book in the Sevenwaters Trilogy, *Daughter of the Forest*, what are the overarching themes of *Son of the Shadows*?
8. Has the portrayal of the Fair Folk changed from the first book in the trilogy? How? What might the author be trying to say about the old beliefs? How is the coming of Christianity treated in the book? Could this story be told from a Christian perspective?

PRAISE FOR JULIET MARILLIER

★“Sterling characterizations, perfect pacing, appropriately marvelous fairy subplots, and vivid descriptive passages make for a flawless launching of a fantasy trilogy whose next volume this book’s readers will eagerly await.”

—*BOOKLIST*, STARRED REVIEW

“4½ Stars! Historical Fantasy at its best. The Sevenwaters saga is an intriguing mix of folklore and history, set in a time when mysticism and magic formed a real part of daily life.” —*ROMANTIC TIMES BOOKCLUB MAGAZINE*

“Marillier is a fine folklorist and a gifted narrator who has created a wholly appealing and powerful character.”

—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

“Ms. Marillier’s ability to use so well such a known legend and make it both logical and exciting is an outstanding gift. I am now, of course, eager to see ‘what happens next’ and that interest is what every writer hopes to arouse in the reader of a trilogy.” —ANDRE NORTON

“The author’s keen understanding of Celtic paganism and early Irish Christianity adds texture to a rich and vibrant novel.” —*LIBRARY JOURNAL*

“Marillier’s powerful writing and attention to detail bring even the minor characters of this novel alive ... a must-read for anyone who enjoys the power of myth.”

—*CHARLESTON POST AND COURIER*

“A nicely wrought and well-detailed historical fantasy, and an excellent first novel.... If the rest of the Sevenwaters Trilogy proves to be equally powerful, Juliet Marillier will indeed be a welcome addition to the field.” —*LOCUS*