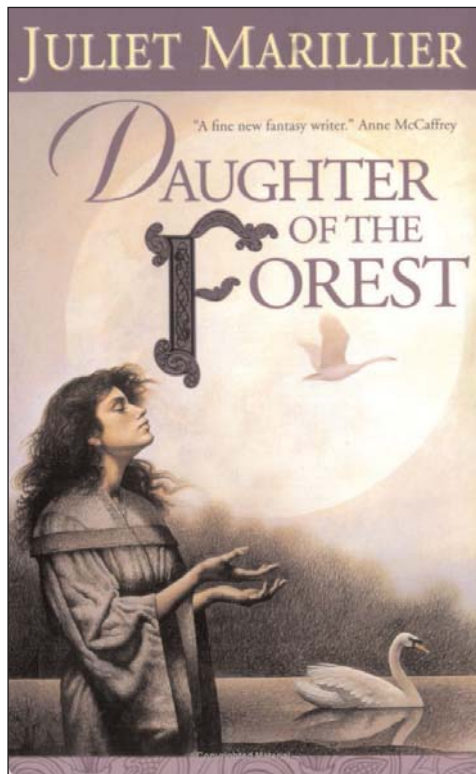




# Juliet Marillier

## Daughter of the Forest

BOOK ONE OF THE SEVENWATERS TRILOGY



560 pages • 0-765-34343-6

### 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.

“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

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

It is no easy task to take a story as famous and oft-repeated as the Celtic myth of the Swan Brothers, and imbue it with a new and powerful vitality. And yet, Juliet Marillier has done just that with *Daughter of the Forest*. Her richly imagined world and haunting prose cast an irresistible spell over readers, drawing us deep into the mist-shrouded forests and along the wind-swept shores of the British Isles, back into a time of savage brutality and surprising beauty, when the Fair Folk played their arcane games and magic still walked the land.

In the ancient forests of Ireland, Lord Colum of Sevenwaters guards his family and his lands from the ravages of the invading Britons, unaware that his greatest peril lies much closer, hidden in the guise of a newfound love. That danger will become clear only too late, when his six proud, strong sons are magically transformed into swans, and only his youngest child, the girl called Sorcha, can release them from their enchantment.

The task Sorcha must first complete is long and arduous, however, and when she is ripped from her homeland and taken into the heart of the enemy’s territory by a Briton lord, it seems her challenge may prove too great. Yet, in this foreign place, Sorcha finds a new strength, an unexpected love, and a deeper understanding of herself and of her people’s place in an inevitably changing world.

Hailing the arrival of a fresh and utterly compelling new fantasy voice, *Daughter of the Forest* is just the first book in what is sure to become a beloved Celtic fantasy trilogy.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The book begins with Sorcha as a child, naïve and innocent regarding the brutality of her father’s methods of safeguarding his realm. Not until the capture, and her subsequent nursing of the Briton called Simon, does she begin to see this harsh reality. How does this knowledge color her perceptions of her debt to Simon—and later, to Red—and how does it prepare her for the trials that await her?

2. The Lady Oonagh and the Lady of the Forest are likened to two sides of the same coin, just one of a number of dualities which are echoed throughout the book. Discuss some of the other examples and how they may reflect some of the author’s objectives in both plot and message.

3. Discuss the role of Nature in the book, not only as a source of healing, sustenance, and protection for Sorcha’s people, but as a character that contributes to both plot and action. Is the author effective in bringing the natural world to life, and if so, what conscious decisions do you think she made to achieve this difficult goal?

4. Once Sorcha is in the keeping of Lord Hugh (Red), how do the rumors spread by the local townsfolk about her compare to the claims about the inhumanity of the Britons by her own people? What is the author saying about prejudice, ignorance, and fear?

5. Discuss the characters of Sorcha’s six brothers, and describe the role each takes in furthering the plot. Are they fully-realized characters?

6. The Fair Folk are portrayed as powerful supernatural forces, godlike in their enchantments, but petty, jealous, and vain. How does this behavior reflect the belief system of the Celtic people? How does it differ from the fledgling Christianity that is shadowed in the book?

7. Discuss the various roles of the supporting women in the book, especially Lady Oonagh, Lady Anne, and Elaine. What traits do they all share? How does the author’s presentation of female characters compare to her portrayals of the main male characters?

## 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*