



# Shadowed By Wings

*Janine Cross*

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## **Shadowed By Wings** Janine Cross

The Dragon Temple Saga continues as Zarq Darquel embarks on a trial by fire, defying Dragon Temple scripture by undergoing the rigorous training of an apprentice dragonmaster, while desperately searching for the doctrine that allows women permission to participate in the battles at Arena.

Yet Zarq's difficulties pale in comparison to her craving for the hallucinogenic dragon venom, and her desire to understand the dragons themselves-both of which make her a vessel to receive the ancestral memories of the great beasts. And now, eager for the knowledge only Zarq can uncover, Temple has her imprisoned and subjected to starvation and torture-all to make her reveal the dragons' deepest secrets...

## **Shadowed By Wings Details**

Date : Published April 3rd 2007 by Roc (first published 2006)

ISBN : 9780451461025

Author : Janine Cross

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Dragons, Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy

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# From Reader Review Shadowed By Wings for online ebook

## Doris says

I picked this book up somewhere at a discount but still think that I spent way too much on it. It isn't badly written just bad writing. The storyline apparently picks up (this is book 2) as our female character is entered as a sort of dragonmaster apprentice in a kingdom where women aren't even second class.

The back cover sounded good. Actually it sounded really good. So much for truth in advertising.

We had our heroine being whipped, tortured, raped by a dragon, starved, forced into manual labor, threatened with all sorts of punishments, and haunted by a ghost. She was then forced to slave for a dragon and act as a whore for it (and she enjoyed that?!?), all the while supposedly working towards controlling the beasts.

Not a story I will ever reread, nor do I recommend it for anything but lining the bottom of a birdcage.

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Someone told me I was mistaken about the story.

I wasn't but now I want to add that the writing was repetitive and sloppy: the author used the same phrasing over and over to describe similiar actions.

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## Anberlin says

People who are squeamish about all the sick and twisted things in the world should steer clear of this book, any R21 movies and change channels whenever they happen across TV documentaries of such violence and perversity, especially those tribal ones.

Am I horrified by the disturbing stuff that goes in in it? Yes.

Do I get off on such things and agree with the stuff in it? Hell to the no.

Then, why, you might ask, do I give it a high rating? Because of the ending, the unconventional way it is written, the reasons for it, and the guts to do it.

In this second installment, Zarq is now an apprentice to the dragonmaster, and as the only girl there the odds against her are sky high. She struggles with her addiction to venom and while I am disappointed in her all too willing acceptance of it and disgusted at how she doesn't seem to act on anything other than self interest and survival, I do understand that the book's culture is different and she's just a lonely, average girl desperately seeking a home or comfort...However, I like how she manages to triumph against such impossible circumstances as a normal person, not as a heroine or saint or noble being. The part about the fight for gender equality rights despite the sickening consequences is pretty amazing as well, and really opens up your perspective on things.

The ending, especially, is the best part of it all and does not disappoint. It makes me curious as to whether Zarq will ever make any real friends that stay with her and if she will ever try to overcome her venom addiction after accomplishing her goals. If you read with an open mind and can get past the grotesque stuff,

this book is a raw gem.

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### **Sarah says**

Keeping it real, dragon style. More venom, violence and dragon-sex... but this time I was ready for it.

An online review said it was like "Lord of the Rings set in the Middle East ruled by the Taliban"

Close enough.

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### **Shaunesay says**

This is not a pretty story! It's well done, but it's dirty, gritty, violent and full of despair, yet triumphing against impossible odds. It's one of those stories that you know it's well done, but you're just not quite sure how you feel about it!

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### **Steven Allen says**

This was a good book with a fast pace. The development of the central character, now in her early 20s, was interesting and brisk enough that I did not find myself skimming pages.

The author's world is a little different than your average fantasy, Tolkien-inspired world. Some of the names, places, holidays, and functions are a bit awkward to pronounce. I wish that the author (or her editor) had included a pronunciation guide.

If you are offended by slavery, homosexuality, bestiality, and pervasive drug use, this book is not for you. If you are looking for Conan-style butchery and page turning action, this book is not for you. There is some action, but the book is not action-packed. Most of the story is told from the perspective of the central character, so there is very little back story of the geo-political climate, and history. The story is fairly simple and straightforward, with little or no side tangents or other story lines for the reader to keep straight. Some might dislike the simplicity of a single central character with only a handful of supporting characters.

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### **Cindywho says**

Zarq's saga continues, even a little more violent and crazy and venom-addled than before. I got a little confused on who was who at times, but they were all running for that big dragon ...

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### **Sadie Forsythe says**

I wasn't sure I was going to bother reviewing the second and third book in this series. I just wasn't sure what

I'd say. I liked the book? I hated the book? These books left me reeling, cringing, demoralised and strangely vitalised at the same time? How does one express that?

In reading others' reviews, I sense I'm not the only person struggling to find the appropriate balance. I see a lot of middling reviews, indicative of a lot of emotionally confused readers. I can completely relate. That's where this book shoves its reader, right into the middle on 'how should I feel about that?' The problem is that while it's occasionally obvious, a lot of time it isn't. Not because the things that happen aren't horrid and denounce-able in the extreme, but because so many really, really bad things happen that some bad things just don't seem to rise to level of atrocity anymore (even though in isolation that would definitely be). It's rare for a book to transport a reader there.

A major theme of this book (these books) is the abuse of the powerless by the powerful and it's amazing ability to remain socially invisible to otherwise good people. As an outsider it's hard to imagine how it's rationalised, but it is...everyday. Here, it's just made a little more obvious. We deal with a strict caste system, a violent patriarchy that allows women NO influence in their own lives, slavery, the marginalization of a native populace by a conquering people and the resulting institutionalised racism, economic entrapment, social stigmatisation, a dangerous and far reaching religious organisation, and a ruling class that can no longer understand their duty, blinded as they are by their perceived superiority. This leaves a lot of powerless people, many powerless on numerous fronts, and a myriad of ways for victims to be victimised...traumatised.

In the middle of all this is Zaraq, a young powerless woman who trips along and by dint of simply surviving the MANY horrors of her own life and being the right person in the right place at the right time manages to almost accidentally start a revolution. (Ah, the transformative power of even one person willing to sacrifice their all for the greater good!) And she does survive and witness horrors. Thus, the reader deals with them too. Beyond just the basic hardships of poverty and austerity (she spent 10 years in a remote convent as a child) there's kidnappings, rapes, battles, betrayal, attempted assassinations, loss and pitifully few moments of relief. It's all hard on the readers psyche.

The book also treats sex as amazingly mutable. I actually really liked this about it, but we all know sex can tie people in knots faster than just about anything. We deal with consensual and non-consensual (a lot of the latter, though blessedly vague on details) sex of both the hetero- and homosexual (both M & F) variety (In fact, this is the clearest case of institutionalised rape I've ever seen in a book), incest, pedophilia, and even bestiality (though there's no interspecies penis/vagina contact). I can readily imagine a whole host of readers being put off by any one of those, let alone all of them in one text.

So in the end I'm left wondering what I thought of *Shadowed by Wings*. I certainly didn't enjoy reading it, but having finished it, I'm really glad to have read it. I recommend others do the same.

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**Yune says**

Strangely, I was getting nostalgic for those days when, in Korea, I rarely got my hands on the books in a series in order. Maybe I missed the frantic mental coloring-in one has to do when faced with gaps in characters' pasts. Reading things chronologically is so, y'know, passé.

Anyway, I picked up this second book because I'd vaguely heard of the series, and the first few pages that I flipped through had the protagonist being whipped. I can appreciate an author who doesn't spare the rod when it comes to her characters.

Cross might take this to extremes. Zarq is training to be a Dragonmaster despite being a woman; this involves trying to arouse a dragon with your body while he tries to kill you, so that he's in the proper state to go breed with a female. Um. Yeah. There's also drug addiction, (more explicit) bestiality, rape, serious psychological slavery... And these aren't treated as horrors. They're bad things, but they're events that apparently are supposed to just be dealt with, moving on to the next crazy violent disturbing occurrence.

Meanwhile, for some semblance of an overarching plot, Zarq is being haunted by the spirit of her mother, who wants her to find her half-sister -- whom she's sure is dead.

No, I didn't find this sufficient recompense either.

Kind of weirdly fascinating, as in, *Did the author really write that? Ugh!*, and not terribly written if you just look at the use of the English language, but I'd avoid it. I'm certainly not going to hunt down the other books in this series.

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### **Jeff Youngstrom says**

(December 30, 2006)

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### **Chez Nash says**

Sarq sure gets dragged through the mud and then some.

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### **Silver Savage says**

I really have nothing to say about this book... There were some good parts but... for me, nothing mager.

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