



The Shadow Queen

Anne Bishop

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In her national bestselling *Black Jewels* novels, Anne Bishop's "surefire spell craft...leave[s] readers' hearts pounding." Now her "feverish pacing and terrifying twists" are showcased once again. In a tumultuous world ruled by witches and warlocks who wear their power as jewels, one Queen's chance at redemption is the last hope for a desperate people...

Dena Nehele is a land decimated by its past. Once it was ruled by corrupt Queens who were wiped out when the land was cleansed of tainted Blood. Now, only one hundred Warlord Princes stand - without a leader and without hope...

Theran Grayhaven is the last of his line, desperate to find the key that reveals a treasure great enough to restore Dena Nehele. But first he needs to find a Queen who knows Protocol, remembers the Blood's code of honor, and lives by the Old Ways.

Languishing in the Shadow Realm, Lady Cassidy is a Queen without a court, a castoff. She is not beautiful. She thinks she is not strong. But when she is chosen to rule Dena Nehele, she must convince bitter men to serve once again.

Theran's cousin Gray is a Warlord Prince who was damaged in mind and body by the vicious Queens who once ruled Dena Nehele. Yet something about Cassidy makes him want to serve - and makes him believe he can be made whole once again.

And only Cassidy can prove to Gray - and to herself - that wounds can heal and even the whisper of a promise can be fulfilled...

The Shadow Queen Details

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Author : Anne Bishop

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From Reader Review The Shadow Queen for online ebook

Mitticus says

2009: 2 stars

2011: 3 stars

2018: 4 stars - Made me cry. I'm getting attached with this one.

Mucho PTSD en este libro.

The Shadow Queen is part of the Black Jewels 'verse. Two years after the cleansing storm to get rid of the wicked witches or the bad Blood: bad queens and badder priestess, Terreille is almost in ruins. The population were wipe out for the aforementioned and the posterior war between Blood and landens (not magical jeweled people) sick of the abuses. Now, Theran Greyhaven of Dena Nehele, the last survival Warlord Prince of his house, saved by many others as last hope, get the idea of bring back a new Queen of the Old Ways to rule and prosper again.

Meanwhile, Cassidy is a Rose Jewel Queen. Not beautiful, not very strong in Craft. (No. I mean it, is not a 'she is not pretty nor powerful but...'; she really isn't. Imagine that!!) And she is without a court b/c ... reasons. She is really insecure, and don't trust very much in herself because of that. Guess who Witch is sending.

This is a SECOND CHANCE kind of plot. And how you could use or not.

Oh, and Theran? he is total moron, and a jerk. And I really really mean it. Thank the Lady he is not the main interest.

"All women may look the same in the dark, but all men don't feel the same. In fact, a woman will find out more about a man's true nature in the dark than she'll ever see in the light of day."

Gray, the cousin, is a damaged young man. He was tortured when was captured thinking he was Theran. And again, with damaged I talking about the kind of traumatized and stuck-as-kid-mentality here. And oh, Cassie and Gray made cry

He woke up with his heart pounding, on the verge of tears. He wanted to wear that coat. Had been born to wear that coat. But he didn't know how to change to make it fit.

, and Saetan too made cry.

Is all about war and abuse and vengeance and fall into darkness of soul and mind, damaged people, scars - more mental than physicals, rape, and... well this is dark fantasy. But only is mentioned in case you are wondering. Also there is a lot of sex talking, specially of the Janelle/Daemon variety. And gardening.

Despair and disappointment all around. But a promise of a treasure and maybe Dena Nehele could be saved. If some people can really see beyond.

I like it.

The next book, Shalador Lady is the second part of this book, but it did not end in cliffhanger.

Lucivar is still my favorite:

The Eyrien took a step closer. "The first law is not obedience. The first law is to honor, cherish, and protect. The second is to serve. The third is to obey."

"But if you don't obey, you get punished."

The Eyrien studied him. "Everything has a price. You take a chance of being punished, even killed, for challenging a Queen even if you're doing it to protect her, but you accept that risk and do what you should. If the Queen is truly worthy of your loyalty, she'll understand the reason for the challenge and back down. Doesn't mean she'll like it or be happy with the man, but she'll back down."

ok, you have to read the book to understand :P

Wealththeow says

This is not a good book. It is, however, incredibly engaging on a very specific level. If you're looking for reasonable human beings, beautiful turns of phrase, thoughtful politics or believable dialog, this is not the book for you. BUT. If you want melodramatic wish-fullfillment crack, then the only series more suited is Lackey's The Last Herald-Mage.

This is the latest book in Bishop's Black Jewels series. The world is split into two classes: the downtrodden landen (basically serfs) and the Blood, who do magic and have ruled the world for centuries. Blood operate in a very structured hierarchy: those with more magic rule over those with less, and every member of society grows up knowing exactly what their place is. Territories are ruled by Queens, who have a tangled sort of feudal relationship with their Courts of male Blood. Over the centuries, this hierarchy became twisted and malformed, and many people lost their lives or sanity to the sadistic whims of those in power over them. The heroes of the first trilogy, Lucivar, his half-brother Daemon, and their Queen, Jaenelle, all suffered through torture and slavery before finally destroying the most dangerous members of the Blood. Two years later, they are still dealing with the fall-out. Daemon has never quite recovered his sanity, and Jaenelle no longer rules. And despite Jaenelle's best efforts, many territories are still in revolt against the Blood.

Dena Nehele is a provincial backwater, but when the descendent of Jared (from The Invisible Ring) requests help, Jaenelle makes sure to send the person best suited for the job. Cassidy is not beautiful, magically powerful, or aristocratic, but she is a Queen, and she has the right instincts for the job. Her journey toward becoming a true ruler, and her Court's journey to accepting her rule, takes up much of the book.

The usual problems with Bishop apply here. Her books rely upon gender essentialism to an almost unbearable degree. People have inborn rank and power, and going against it is a terrible travesty. Sexual violence, slavery, and violence are talked about on every page, although everything happens either off-screen or before the book begins. The plot is wrapped up poorly. The romance is nontraditional (and actually, about as sketchy as Daemon and Jaenelle's) and not that believable. And yet somehow, I couldn't take my eyes off the pages.

Laura says

Buddy Re-Read with Iain. Because we love Gray!!!

No matter how many times I read this book, it will always be a 5 stars for me.

I love it to pieces!!!

Cam says

9 Apr 09- Thus far Theran is not as likable as his ancestor Jared due to his uncouth manner shall we say, I'd have to agree with Satan that this certain 'puppy' needs to brush up on his manners.

But Unlike the reviews I've read I (at this point) don't mind the side plot of Daemon and Jaenelle, I like seeing what became of those two since the end of the Blood war with the two queen bitches.

It saddens me that Prince Talon grew old and died without a family, I rather liked him and hoped that at the end of The Invisible Ring he would be given the chance to wear the gold.

14 Apr 09- My bad, Talon was married, I'm glad that he DID fall in love.

Theran was an ass to begin with and was still an ass, albeit an enlightened ass but still an ass in the end. I'm guessing it was to contrast him with Grey who ends up as Cassi's consort to be though it's not explicitly stated it's obvious that's where things will go. Ironical though that her triangle consists of all the Greyhaven men- Theran as first escort, Talon (someone who KNEW Jared, Lia and the original cast) and Grey who's name is actually Jared Blaed.

I loved the development of Grey most of all, scarred and traumatized but he is more a warlord prince than his cousin and doppelganger Theran.

Unlike the amazon reviews, I understood how Cassidy's story linked with the SaDiablos although there was definitely more Daemon and Jaenelle than Cassi and Grey which I lament but rejoice at the same time, confused? Me too. Also enjoyed how this novel tied in very well with the Dreams Made Flesh anthology.

I heard there are to be two more Black Jewels novels and I cannot wait, maybe there will be more Cassi and Grey mentioned there because the readers are basically left with the beginnings of Cassi and Grey's relationship.

N.K. Jemisin says

No. (Sorry, that's all I can think of to say here.)

Kim says

Whenever I read a novel by Anne Bishop, I always find myself wondering what issues she may have with men, because the gender dynamics of the worlds she creates are so interesting. That she has much to say about relations between the genders is perhaps most obvious in her Tir Alainn series, the villains of which are guilty of just about everything that has ever been done to oppress women, from female genital mutilation to burning witches. In the Black Jewels universe, in my opinion Bishop's finest work, the situation is more complex. Males remain physically stronger, but use that strength (for the most part) to defend and protect the females, who rule. So it feels like you get to have a female dominated society while getting to keep the alpha males so popular in romance (though usually not with me). It also feels like the way I've heard some describe our own society: with women holding the most power because of what men are willing to do for them. Ah, but I always ask, what if you're the sort of woman for whom a man won't even say "bless you" when you sneeze?* Does that leave you utterly powerless and how do you cope?

Lady Cassidy is a queen without a court. She doesn't have great magical power, she isn't of noble background, and, to some, worst of all, she isn't pretty. When her entire court deserts her for a younger, prettier queen, she is devastated. Yet the land of Dena Nehele needs a queen, and Cassidy has the knowledge of protocol to make her an eligible candidate. But with her lack of confidence, beauty, or magical skill, can she command the kind of loyalty she needs from her court? Judging from the example of Theran Grayhaven, the very man who recruited her, maybe not, but Cassidy finds an unexpected ally in his cousin, the damaged, somewhat childlike Gray.

I would highly recommend not reading *The Shadow Queen* without reading the previous books in the Dark Jewels series, as it ties in to both the original trilogy and the stand alone novel *The Invisible Ring*. Dena Nehele needs a new queen due to the machinations of the evil queens Dorothea and Hekatah in the original trilogy, who are also responsible for the abuse suffered by Gray which has left him as much boy as man. There are also many appearances of characters from the earlier books, which ends up being rather problematic. When I read the first trilogy, I loved Daemon and Surreal, liked Saetan and Lucivar, and tolerated Jaenelle; you would think I'd be glad to see them show up in *The Shadow Queen*, too. However, Daemon and Jaenelle have a really annoying story line involving possessiveness and his sexual past; there's plenty of sex, but it doesn't add much to the story, in my opinion. And mercifully briefer but no less annoying is a subplot involving Saetan added near the end of the book. As much as I loved these characters, it's time for them to back away and leave this novel to the new kids.

Speaking of the new kids, what did I think of them? Well, I wanted to defenestrate Theran at times, but I'm fairly sure I was supposed to. Bishop doesn't do subtlety when it comes to her villainous characters, and while I'm not sure Theran is a villain, he certainly isn't very pleasant. And Cassidy I liked; given her history, she could be a sad sack shrinking violet type, but she ends up overcoming her self-esteem issues and genuinely trying to become an effective and worthy queen. Gray seems like a real sweetheart, and I will be interested to see who he becomes as he and Cassidy grow closer and he heals from the trauma of his past. I am definitely looking forward to the next book in the series, though I really hope there are fewer subplots and that the presence of Jaenelle, Daemon et al. becomes much less intrusive.

Juliana says

I really need to stop reading these things.

Tani says

I am having a terrible time writing this review. The problem is, I've been having a bit of a mediocre reading year, and this is only the third book that I've rated at 5 stars. And objectively, it's not really a book that deserves 5 stars. As many other people have commented, these books are pure id-driven wish-fulfillment, and the relationships that they portray are really not terribly healthy. I know this, and yet. The original Black Jewels Trilogy was one of those formative reading experiences for me, and the style that these books are written in is still one that I find absolutely addictive. I read the majority of this book in a single sitting. The only reason I stopped was because good sense asserted itself, and I decided to go to bed and make sure I could function at work the following day.

The gender politics in these books are terrible. They twist things so that women are simultaneously stronger and weaker, and so that men are more dangerous, more subservient, and more protective. It's often very black and white, and although a small part of me really enjoys the idea, I would never want to see it in real life. Things are ever so much more complicated than these books want to make them. But while I can acknowledge that the views presented in this book are not at all healthy, I also find them strangely addictive on a limited basis.

With those details in mind, I suppose I can actually review the book. This book and its sequel take on the situation of the people of Dena Nehele, a land that was previously featured in *The Invisible Ring*. I think I would say that *The Invisible Ring* was probably my favorite of the earlier books, so I guess it makes sense that I would really be drawn into this one. I also really liked that we had a brand new character to follow in Cassidy, although, of course, many old favorites make frequent appearances.

On the bright side, this book shows more societal depth than most of the other books in the series. First, Cassidy wears a jewel so light that the earlier books probably wouldn't even have bothered to mention it. Second, the book addresses the landens, albeit in a still fairly limited fashion. It also deals with the Shaladoran people, a minority who have been relegated to reservations. If you've read prior books, you should know that this is a lot of depth for these books, and I definitely appreciated it.

In general, I felt like this was less about epic battles between good and evil, and more about rebuilding after those epic moments, which is a theme that I tend to really enjoy. Probably another reason that I enjoyed the book so much. A lot of the focus is on societal mores and the ways that the characters are able to use Protocol to influence each other, rather than hurting feelings and pride by just saying what they want.

Of course, you can still get a bit of that. Jaenelle and Daemon have a very strong presence in the book, and the two of them get their own side story that's present throughout the book. Personally, I could have done without that, but it wasn't a terrible addition. The drama is more overblown with them, as is normal, so I guess it can at least serve to give you that dose of the dramatic that you probably enjoy if you like these books.

In short, even though I loved this book, I don't feel comfortable recommending the series, or even this book in particular. If you've already read books in the series and know what you're getting yourself into, then go right ahead and dive in. Otherwise, perhaps it's best to steer clear.

Lightreads says

What?! With the – and the -- *what*?!

If I wanted to read terrifying outpourings of personal id vortex, full of gender essentialism and staggeringly bad portrayals of PTSD and everyone acting like badly mismanaged three year olds who fuck and slaughter each other at a moment's notice, I'd spend more time at fanfiction.net, where at least I don't have to be appalled that someone got *paid* to write it.

All I can say is, when I read the first chunk of the series last year during my 2L exams at the end of the semester of triumph and sleeplessness and espresso vodka, I was clearly far closer to a psychotic break than I realized.

Chris says

ja it was very gut

Debrac2014 says

Wonderful story! Cassidy is a great character, good Queen! I hope Gray becomes the man he could have been! .

Shawwna says

When I read the first chapter of *The Shadow Queen*, I was sure that I would end up hating it. I thought that the new characters would be pale representations of the Blood that I had fallen in love with and was upset to think that I might have to stop reading Anne Bishop's novels in order to retain my pleasure in the *Black Jewels Trilogy*. I'm happy to report that I was wrong, wrong, wrong! The new characters meshed perfectly with the old because they weren't expected to *be* like them... matter of fact, they were nearly the opposite.

And the old characters? Oooh, thank you, Ms. Bishop, for bringing them back in all of their dark glory! I loved the insight into Saetan and Daemon, the problems that they encountered, the realizations that they came to... and the humor that is always lurking beneath the surface.

The two vastly different worlds - that of the lighter jeweled Blood and the darker jeweled Blood - were meshed so perfectly that I have no complaint other than that I wish the book had been longer. In highlighting the differences between the new and old characters, Ms. Bishop was able to satisfy a persons longing for a return to the "old Blood", but still carry on the story of a world that is still healing.

I feel that this story is not finished, since Gray and Cassie never achieved a true resolution. I can't wait for the next book to come out so that I can see what happens with them!

Marcia says

This one was much better. Really enjoyed it! I wanted to dropkick Theran a lot though ... that boiiiiiii. Loved everyone else <3

Gwen (The Gwendolyn Reading Method) says

This series is brilliant. One of the greatest things about it is that the plots are never formulaic and the characters will always keep you guessing. The previous book in this series was an ode to a genre piece gone slightly wrong, but this one gets everything back on track. I can't wait to pick up the next one!

Jensownzoo says

Not too many authors give me that electric thrill of excitement when I have one of their books in hand, but Anne Bishop and her Black Jewels books are always one of them. In this book, the main story is focused on a few new characters, but also contains a great deal of supporting plot threads with all the old, favorite characters from the original trilogy. Was a little disappointed that the story ended where it did (I need more, I tell you, MORE, MORE, MORE!!!) but I could see the dramatic value of it.

Caroline says

This story was a great mix of all of the previous Black Jewels novels and some new and very interesting characters. I loved that this resolved a lot from The Invisible Ring, as well as some from the actual trilogy. This deals with the descendants of the characters from The Invisible Ring, as well as the cast that readers of the series know and love from the trilogy.

I had some issues with Theran Grayhaven, the descendant of Jared and Lia. He's not a very likable character for most of the novel, whereas the queen, for me, was immediately likable. Something about a very "plain" girl in comparison to all the glamorous characters that normally are in Bishop's story was very refreshing. I loved watching her story unfold, and seeing Theran develop into less of an annoying prick.

I loved the balance between the old cast and the new. A lot of this story is actually about Jaenelle, Daemon, Saeton and Lucivar, not just Cassidy and Theran. I wish she had spent a bit more time concentrating on the new characters, since at times the story of Jaenelle really did seem to overpower the new story, but it worked well and I loved the entire story.

This was a story that really hooked me and kept me reading too late into the night, all while I was trying to prolong it as long as possible! While this could be read as a stand-alone, I can't see readers getting as much enjoyment out of it if they haven't read the previous novels (with the exception of Tangled Webs, which there's one little reference to it in this entire novel so it could be skipped) since there are so many references and inside jokes.

Evanne Lorraine says

I loved this book, in fact I'd have a hard time picking a favorite from this series.

Olga Godim says

2.5 stars

Not a bad fantasy novel but not a good one either. The writing was professional, but the plot, the characters, and the world-building didn't ring true. Of course, it is #7 in a series, but I'm not tempted to read the first six novels. Neither the world nor its denizens attracted me.

Bishop's world is ruled by wizards and witches, but for some reason, she calls them Princes and Queens. They are a volatile race, with lots of magical powers but not much of humanity or decency. The story is centered on them, while simple non-magical people are hardly mentioned at all.

These Queens and Princes constantly jockey for power and dominance. Their tempers explode, their passions collide, but I wasn't impressed. I didn't sympathize with their plight. Instead, I wanted to puke from all their posturing. They were all repulsive. The Princes and Queens in this story were supposed to be good guys, but I disliked them immensely.

From the backstory, of which there is a lot in this book, I'm guessing that in the past six books, their power plays almost destroyed the world. This book is an aftermath. The main plotline focuses on a territory (a country, a kingdom or a village, I'm not sure) that needs a new Queen. Why? Again I'm not sure. All their previous Queens were evil bitches and were destroyed by whatever cataclysm happened in the first six novels. Now Prince Theran brings home a new Queen, Cassidy, from another realm.

Cassidy is not beautiful, nor powerful. Nobody wants her there. Nobody trusts her. She is unsure of herself, with a bunch of insecurities, and Theran despises her too. But he has to serve her. Again, why? I'm not sure. So he acts like a prick and sabotages her every move.

Theran's cousin, Gray, is a broken man. When he was fifteen, he was captured and tortured by the evil Queens for two years before he was rescued. Now, he can only work as gardener. His mind and body are not what they could've been if he was whole.

Of course, Gray and Cassidy meet and fall in love. They plant flowers too. In the process, they are both redeemed, healed, yada, yada, yada. Theirs is not an original story but it is the best one this book offers. Because of their story I finished reading the novel instead of throwing it away in disgust after the first 50 pages.

The second subplot of the book has nothing to do with the main story. It is all about other Princes (the protagonists from the previous books of the series) and it has to do with their sex lives. Multiplied by their tremendous magical powers, this subplot was distasteful to the extreme.

Overall – really blah.

Anita says

Book 7 in the Black Jewels traditional fantasy series, this story would not make much sense out of order, so I highly recommend reading these in the correct sequence. This story is set two years after the end of book three (when Janelle unleashes her full power to eradicate all the bad Blood.) It also takes place a couple hundred years after book 4, where we learned the story of Lia and Jared. The setting is the same land that Lia ruled - Dena Nehele - but the bad Blood who ruled the land for the last couple hundred years nearly destroyed it. Between the horrors inflicted by the bad Blood, the killing of the bad Blood by Janelle, and the year long war between the Landen (normal humans) and remaining Blood (magic users), there are no queens left that could lead the land.

Theran, Lia's last remaining descendant, is desperate for help, so he goes to Daemon to cash in a favor owed to his grandfather, Jared. Daemon and Janelle find a queen for Dena Nehele (Cassidy), but it's not the queen Theran wanted or expected. Most of the story shows Cassidy's struggle to gain the respect of her new people.

There are also plenty of side stories interwoven, so you spend nearly half of the pages with Janelle, Lucivar, Daemon, and Saetan. There are also some laugh-out-loud moments involving kindred (magic using, highly intelligent animals.)

This is one of those series that suck you into its world - you end up caring about the characters long after you put the book down. I'm generally an urban fantasy fan, but this traditional fantasy series is one of my favorites. I'm dying to read the next one, which is supposed to be a continuation of Cassidy's story.

Lee says

Bishop needs confidence in her new characters. I loved Lady Cassidy and Gray and wanted more of them, but felt that the constant need for Damian and Lucifer. In fact, Bishop insisted on inserting a completely needless subplot of yet another attempt to seduce Damian by a vicious witch. Why? Oh, why?

Lady Cassidy and Gray, two people in emotional pain, find comfort and solace in each other's company as they bring a garden to life. The readers receive a glimpse of Cassidy's earthy leadership style, but not enough to truly cement her as a major character in the Black Jewels series. If Bishop had more faith in the two main characters, perhaps they would have garnered demand for a sequel.

Instead, I'm just hoping she writes another book in order to finish telling the story - the ending is unsatisfying and abrupt.
