

Shadowy heroes

Reviews by EIBHLIN LIM, 15

Radiant Shadows

Author: Melissa Marr
Publisher: HarperCollins
352 pages

In the fourth book of the beautifully crafted Wicked Lovely series, the story of the Faerie Court resumes with two characters who don't really belong in either the Dark Court or High Court.

Fourteen years ago, Sorcha, the Queen of the High Court, ordered Devlin to kill a Hound halfling, Ani. Devlin, persuaded by a sleepwalker, Rae, spared the halfling. Now, Devlin is inexplicitly drawn to Ani.

Intertwined with the fate of the future existence of Faerie, can Devlin and Ani use their indifference and gifts to stay alive?

To further dissect the books reviewed, some bibliophiles settle down for a chat:

Which part of the book "spoke" to you the most?

Eibhlín *: From the moment Devlin meets Ani in the Crow's Nest, she has his Faerie heart. I love the part where out of being over-protective Devlin unconsciously follows Ani into a strictly women's room and Ani said, "You can't follow me into the ladies' room. Out."

Jeannette *: I liked the description of Devlin's creation. It gave me good goosebumps. "Order and Discord made him as if carved of stone... Together, they'd made him a thing of extreme cruelty and extreme beauty. And then they'd fought over his loyalty."

Which character was most endearing?

E: I like the new character Rae. She was so willing to sacrifice herself for Ani.
J: I liked Devlin. I could empathise with him - I often feel like I am being pulled in two directions myself.

Did the ending please?

E: I hope there is a fifth book in this series. I want to know all about Bananach reactions when she is sealed in the mortals' realm.
J: I think there will probably be more. We still don't know what happened to Jillian (Ani's mother)! There's so much left to resolve!

Who would gush over this book?

E: If you have already read the first three books, you would want to get your hand on this one.
J: If you want a love story, don't read this. Despite Ani and Devlin being drawn to each other, *Radiant Shadows* is not a love story.



And the cover?

E: It's wickedly lovely. She totally looks like a fey with a dark secret and a wild character. Guys, watch out!
J: Mhmm, and I love the wolf tattoos on her arm!

Sum up the book and rate it!

E: The book was so spell-binding that I completely forgot about my homework and after I set the book down, it was hard to shake the story off and comprehend which was my real life.
(★★★★☆)

J: It was slightly confusing at the beginning - too many names! I didn't like any of the characters enough. I found myself missing Aislinn (from the first book). (★★)

Note: Although, this book is rated age 12 and above, parental guidance should be applied for those below fourteen.

Heroes of the Valley

Author: Jonathan Stroud
Publisher: Corgi Childrens
400 pages

Halli is different from most of the boys his age. He enjoys listening to tales from the days when the valley was a wild and dangerous place, terrorised by bloodthirsty Trows.

Instead of looking like his tall and attractive blonde siblings, he is short, stumpy, and enjoys picking fights.

One day, a practical joke he plays rekindles an old blood feud. He sets out with Aud, a stubborn and brave girl, beyond the wall that has kept the Trows out of their valley. What he learns on his epic adventure is that the stories he grew up listening to might be true after all. Heroes do exist and so do Trows...

Which part of the book "spoke" to you the most?

E: The chapter where Halli and Aud first

sets out into the land no one dared to tread on, outside the wall. The thought of Trows springing up and grabbing them at every sentence kept me at the edge of my chair.

Abel *: For me, it was the part when Halli was holding the knife above Olaf and realised that he could not bring himself to kill Olaf. This reminds me that sometimes, we think that we want something so much but in actual fact we don't.

Which character was most endearing?

E: Aud! She is everything I'm not in real life. She is amazingly brave for a girl, adventurous and not afraid to explore beyond boundaries, not to mention very pig-headed. Proof - she indignantly said, "I'd rather die than live with that".

A: I like Svein! He was lucky, brave, witty and a natural born leader and although the tales about him are highly unlikely, he was still my favorite character in the book.

Did the ending please?

E: Most tales starts with a hero on a quest and of course, the hero always wins in the end. This applies in this book.

A: But hey, the twist at the end was really unexpected!

Who would gush over this book?

E: If you like a book set in cold North Europe and a storyline about young heroes with quests, prefaced with the usual elaborate maps on where each clan resides, this would be a perfect book for you.

A: Or, if you're bored of books with tall, dark and handsome heroes. If you want a fantasy novel with a touch of originality, read this.

And the cover?

E: Reminds me of a promotional movie poster for *Race to Witch Mountain* or *Clash of the Titans*.

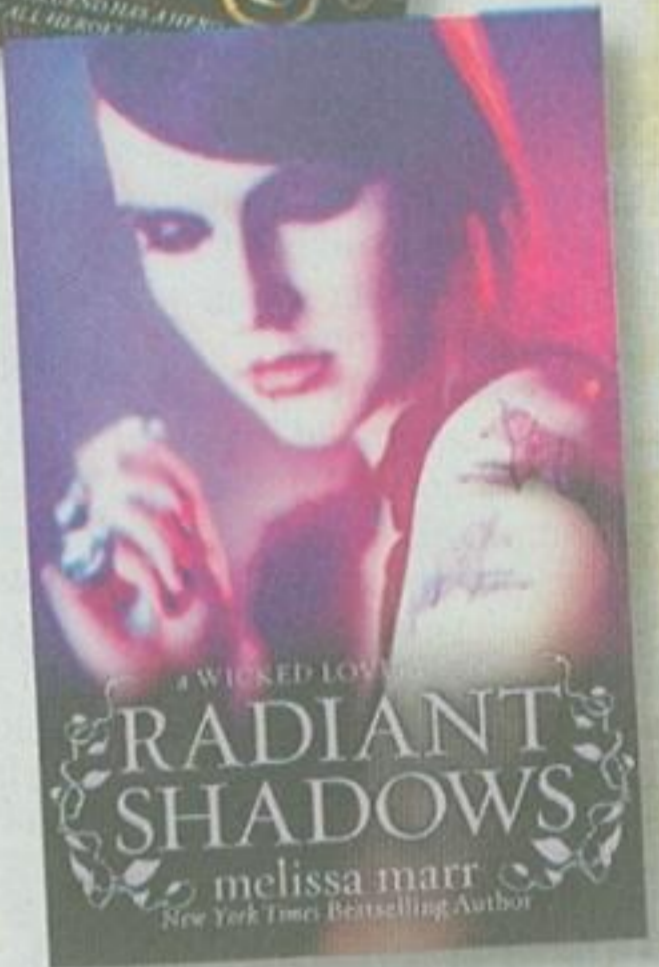
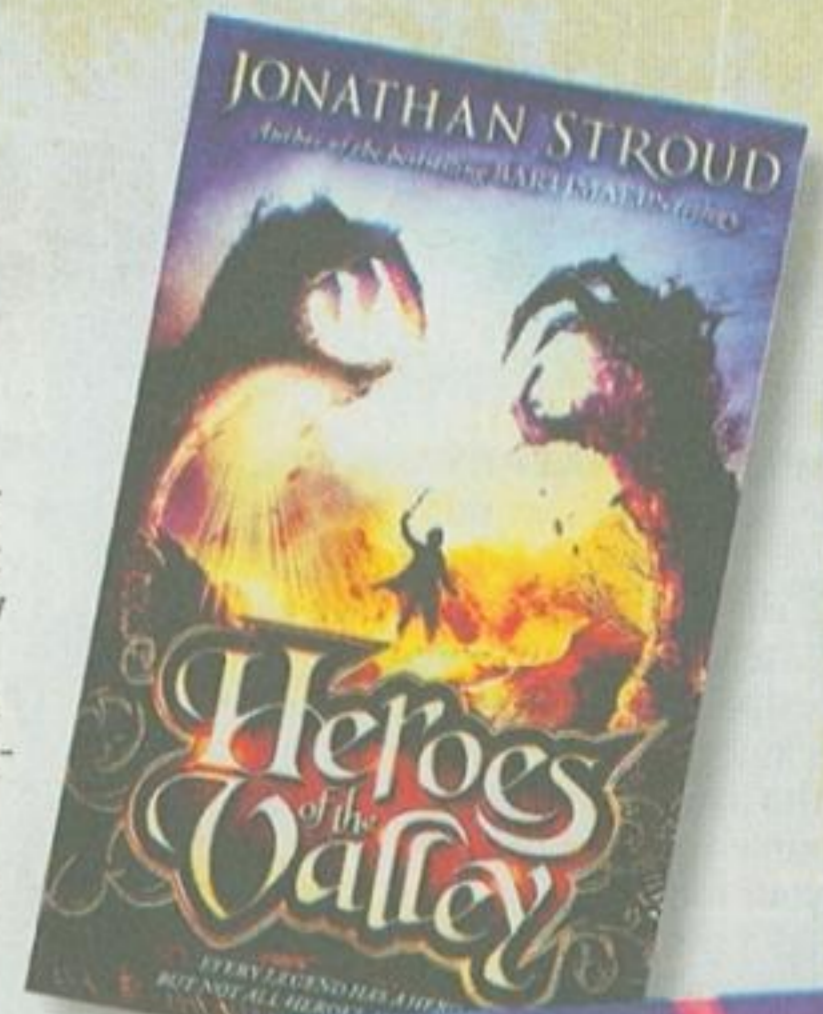
A: The phrase on the back cover "all legends have heroes but not all heroes are legendary" really caught my attention.

Sum up the book and rate it!

E: I was a little skeptical at first. I'm not a big fan of *Artemis Fowl* or *Eragon* and this book is somewhat like those.

But when I started reading, I realised it was actually interesting. Stroud did an amazing job with this book. The shadowy unclear descriptions of the Trows added more mystery and reason to fear them. The story had a solid setting even though it was set in a fictional world centuries before our time.
(★★★★☆)

A: Unlike E, when I saw the book and the author, I immediately wanted to read it. It



was Jonathan Stroud and I'm quite a big fan. The book was quite disappointing as the book had a VERY slow start but the ending was rather thrilling. In my opinion, the nicest part of the book was the short story at the beginning of each chapter.
(★★★)

* **Eibhlín Lim** first fell in love with *A Little Princess* and hasn't stopped reading since. Now, as a young teen with a voracious reading fetish, she can't get enough of young adult fiction novels.

* **Jeannette Goon** can't seem to remember that she's supposed to be all "grown up". She devours books, from Austen to Zane Grey, and occasionally cracks open the covers of her old Beatrix Potter books.

* **Abel Goon** reads what his siblings bring home, and more besides. He loves a good fantasy novel but has also been known to beg chick lit off his female classmates.

20% off

Get a 20% discount on *Radiant Shadows* (ISBNs: 978-0061994845, 978-0007346141) and *Heroes of the Valley* (ISBN: 978-0552557948) by presenting this coupon upon payment at any **MPH** outlet in Malaysia.

READERS' WRITE

I'm a "bookaholic". I prefer that term to "bookworm", thank you very much.

I'm a fan of Alice Hoffman, Amy Tan, Zadie Smith and Dan Brown. I love Hoffman's lyrical prose, Tan's reflective take on Asian identity and culture, Smith's idiosyncratic tales and Brown's... well... honestly, the only thing that comes to mind is *The Da Vinci Code*.

Now, I could give a million reasons why I love reading so much. But I suppose the most accurate single sentence answer is that I find solace through reading.

I could just lie on a cozy sofa with a

Books! I love them, love them, love them!

hot Milo on the side table and let the words take me on an adventure away from my mundane daily dilemmas! Reading really does take my troubles away.

So if you find that you're feeling stressed out, pick up a book. It's better than any anti-depressants out there. Seriously.

Chester Chin, 18, Selangor

If I could, I would live in a library. I am a bookworm. Every book takes me to a place I've never been. I get such huge satisfaction whenever I finish a book.

Who needs television when you have books? Sure, pictures seem more interesting.

But even in movies based on books, they always cut out the good parts.

I felt cheated when I watched *The Half Blood Prince*.

My favourite authors include J.K.

Rowling, J.R.R Tolkien, Cecelia Ahern, Garth Nix, Jane Austen and the list goes on.

Long ago, reading was a common hobby.

Now, not many people enjoy it. Many people would look at a book and say: "Lazy lah, too many words!" They don't know what they're missing.

Eileen Woo, Selangor