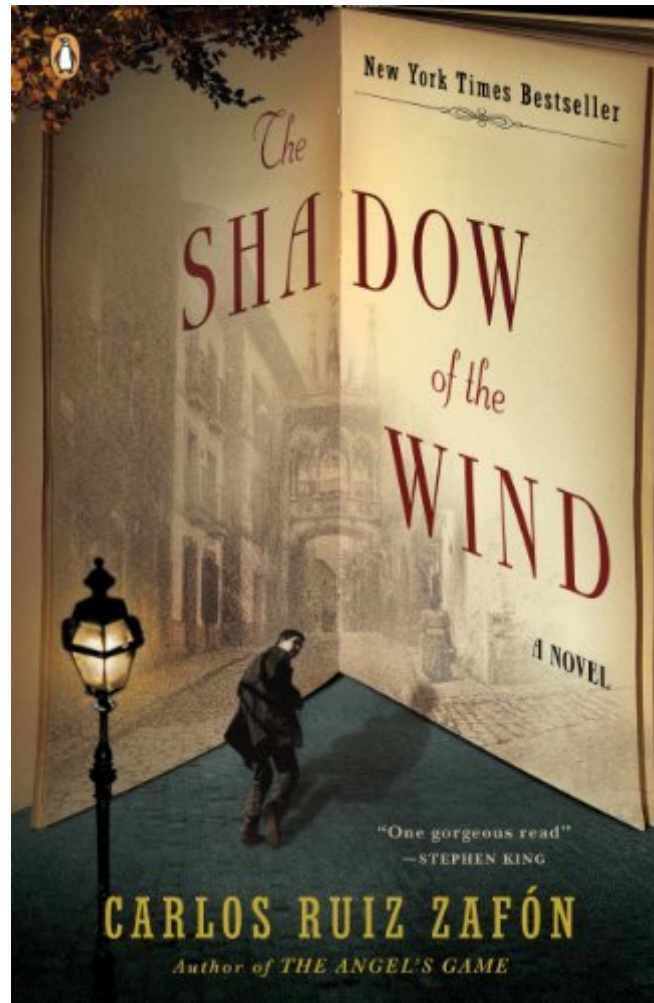


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The Shadow Of The Wind (The Cemetery Of Forgotten Book 1)



Synopsis

"Gabriel Garc a M rquez meets Umberto Eco meets Jorge Luis Borges for a sprawling magic show." --The New York Times Book Review
A New York Times Bestseller
Barcelona, 1945: A city slowly heals in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, and Daniel, an antiquarian book dealer's son who mourns the loss of his mother, finds solace in a mysterious book entitled *The Shadow of the Wind*, by one Juli n Carax. But when he sets out to find the author's other works, he makes a shocking discovery: someone has been systematically destroying every copy of every book Carax has written. In fact, Daniel may have the last of Carax's books in existence. Soon Daniel's seemingly innocent quest opens a door into one of Barcelona's darkest secrets--an epic story of murder, madness, and doomed love. Anyone who enjoys novels that are scary, erotic, touching, tragic and thrilling should rush right out to the nearest bookstore and pick up *The Shadow of the Wind*. Really, you should. • --Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post* "Wonderous... masterful... *The Shadow of the Wind* is ultimately a love letter to literature, intended for readers as passionate about storytelling as its young hero." --Entertainment Weekly (Editor's Choice) "One gorgeous read." --Stephen King
From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

That it's so tempting to read *SHADOW OF THE WIND* is a tribute to clever marketing. Comparisons to Marquez, Borges, and Dickens mix with gushing tributes from Stephen King and references to best-sellerdom in Spain. The literary come-on is hard to resist. In the end however, the way you respond to this book will depend on what expectations you bring to it. If you anticipate a reading experience worthy of those heady literary comparisons, you'll be sorely disappointed - Zafon is little closer to Garcia Marquez than Stephen King is. The closest he comes is having the temerity to give a minor character, a boyfriend of Beatriz Aguilar's, the family name Buendia, the prolific clan from *ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE*. If you plan, however, on a fantastical romp through a mid-century Barcelona converted wholesale into a gothic swamp of ghosts, shadows, haunted houses, malevolent, revenge-seeking, jilted lovers, swooning virginal maidens, improbably picaresque characters, unbelievable coincidences, parallelisms, and twists of fate, and a host of pseudo-Freudian relationships, you'll love every minute. The story line of *SHADOW OF THE WIND* is so complex and convoluted, it's nearly impossible to relate in less space than the book's own 487 pages. Suffice to say, the premise is drawn from the search of a teenaged boy named Daniel for the truth about the fate of Julian Carax, the author of a mystery story (also named "Shadow of the Wind") that Daniel has adopted and read after his bibliophilic father takes him on a "coming of age" excursion to the aptly metaphorical Cemetery of Forgotten Books. Carax has apparently written a number of other books, all of them commercial failures, yet someone has been traveling Europe to find and burn every extant copy of Carax's works.

Reading "The Shadow Of The Wind" was both a delight and a disappointment. This novel had the potential to be excellent literary fiction. At times Carlos Ruiz Zafon's writing reminded me of both Gabriel Garcia Marquez's and Jorge Luis Borges' work. My expectations rose dramatically as I began to hope for more than a good read. Instead of great literature, however, the novel became an overlong and predictable bestseller, with a most original premise, some brilliant passages and many flaws. Sr. Ruiz Zafon's extraordinary idea of creating a Cemetery of Forgotten Books, a labyrinthian library where each book awaits someone to choose it and give it another chance to live by making it part of the new owner's life, gave me chills. There existed a possibility, as I read the first chapters, that I might be able to list this as one of my favorite works of fiction. Unfortunately, my disappointment when reaching the novel's conclusion overshadowed the book's many positive elements. Daniel Sempere is a young boy who fears he has forgotten the image of his dead mother's face. His compassionate father, an antiquarian book dealer, introduces him to the book cemetery.

Daniel and Sr. Sempere are both memorable and unusual characters, as are many of Ruiz Zafon's other figures. Fermin, a former Republican agent who becomes a second father to Daniel, and Julian Carax, the author of the book Daniel selects, are both extraordinary men. Daniel's choice of books ultimately determines the course of his life, as he tries to discover if the author is still alive and solve the multitude of mysteries surrounding him. The setting, post-WWII Barcelona, is fascinating and Zafon depicts a brooding city in mourning as a result of the atrocities of both civil and world wars.

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