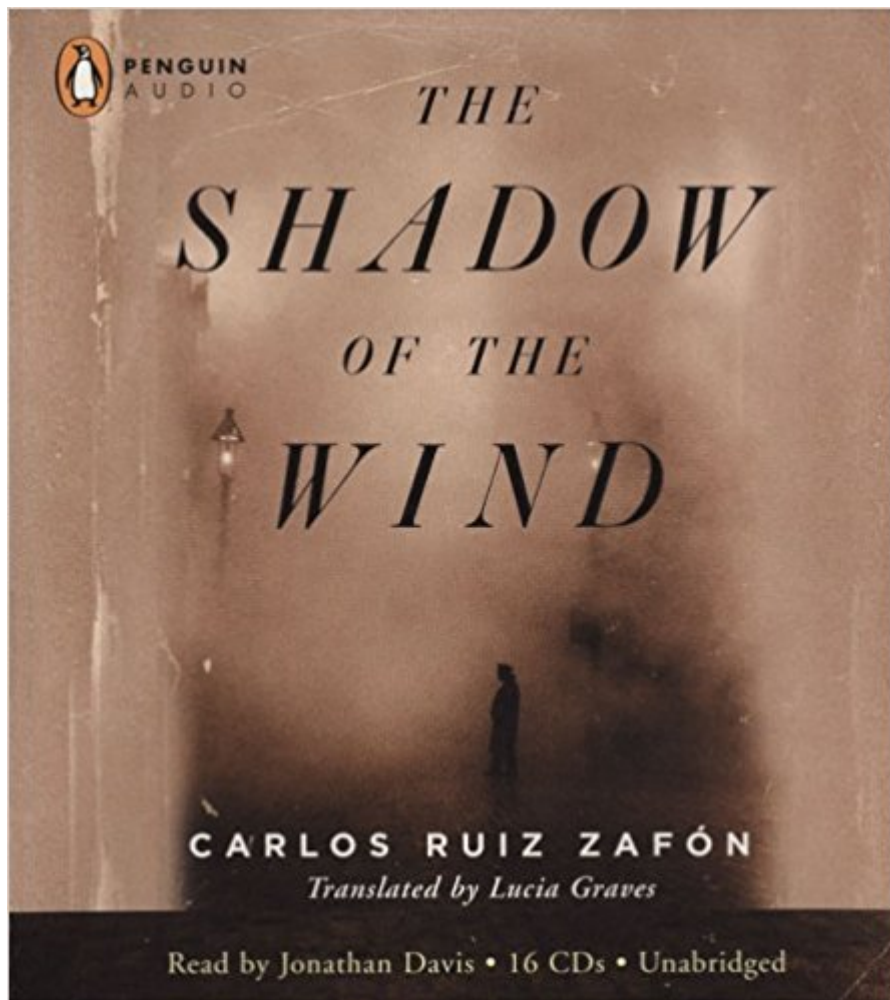


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Shadow Of The Wind



Synopsis

Hidden in the heart of the old city of Barcelona is the 'cemetery of lost books', a labyrinthine library of obscure and forgotten titles that have long gone out of print. To this library, a man brings his 10-year-old son Daniel one cold morning in 1945. Daniel is allowed to choose one book from the shelves and pulls out 'La Sombra del Viento' by Julian Carax. But as he grows up, several people seem inordinately interested in his find. Then, one night, as he is wandering the old streets once more, Daniel is approached by a figure who reminds him of a character from *La Sombra del Viento*, a character who turns out to be the devil. This man is tracking down every last copy of Carax's work in order to burn them. What begins as a case of literary curiosity turns into a race to find out the truth behind the life and death of Julian Carax and to save those he left behind. A page-turning exploration of obsession in literature and love, and the places that obsession can lead. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Ruiz Zafón's novel, a bestseller in his native Spain, takes the satanic touches from *Angel Heart* and stirs them into a bookish intrigue à la Foucault's *Pendulum*. The time is the 1950s; the place, Barcelona. Daniel Sempere, the son of a widowed bookstore owner, is 10 when he discovers a novel, *The Shadow of the Wind*, by Julián Carax. The novel is rare, the author obscure, and rumors tell of a horribly disfigured man who has been burning every copy he can find of Carax's novels. The man calls himself *La Sombra del Viento* - the name of the devil in one of Carax's novels. As he grows up, Daniel's fascination with the mysterious Carax links him to a blind femme fatale with a "porcelain

gaze," Clara Barcel ; another fan, a leftist jack-of-all-trades, Ferm n Romero de Torres; his best friend's sister, the delectable Beatriz Aguilar; and, as he begins investigating the life and death of Carax, a cast of characters with secrets to hide. Officially, Carax's dead body was dumped in an alley in 1936. But discrepancies in this story surface. Meanwhile, Daniel and Ferm n are being harried by a sadistic policeman, Carax's childhood friend. As Daniel's quest continues, frightening parallels between his own life and Carax's begin to emerge. Ruiz Zaf n strives for a literary tone, and no scene goes by without its complement of florid, cute and inexact similes and metaphors (snow is "God's dandruff"; servants obey orders with "the efficiency and submissiveness of a body of well-trained insects"). Yet the colorful cast of characters, the gothic turns and the straining for effect only give the book the feel of para-literature or the Hollywood version of a great 19th-century novel. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Call it the "book book" genre: this international sensation (it has sold in more than 20 countries and been number one on the Spanish best-seller list), newly translated into English, has books and storytelling--and a single, physical book--at its heart. In post-World War II Barcelona, young Daniel is taken by his bookseller father to the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, a massive sanctuary where books are guarded from oblivion. Told to choose one book to protect, he selects *The Shadow of the Wind*, by Julian Carax. He reads it, loves it, and soon learns it is both very valuable and very much in danger because someone is determinedly burning every copy of every book written by the obscure Carax. To call this book--Zafon's *Shadow of the Wind*-- old-fashioned is to mean it in the best way. It's big, chock-full of unusual characters, and strong in its sense of place. Daniel's initiation into the mysteries of adulthood is given the same weight as the mystery of the book-burner. And the setting--Spain under Franco--injects an air of sobriety into some plot elements that might otherwise seem soap operatic. Part detective story, part boy's adventure, part romance, fantasy, and gothic horror, the intricate plot is urged on by extravagant foreshadowing and nail-nibbling tension. This is rich, lavish storytelling, very much in the tradition of Ross King's *Ex Libris* (2001). Keir GraffCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

I write about this book because I loved it, and I want to remember it. In writing, I am forced to reflect upon how much pleasure I derived from reading the book. It is a gothic tale set in 1945, Barcelona. Daniel, the bookseller's son, is introduced to The Cemetery of Forgotten Books, and makes

his selection of one book from the labyrinth to take home and care for. In doing so, he finds himself involved in a real-life mystery. You see, the book he selected was written by a man named Julian Carax, and very well may be the last book in existence by Carax. Someone has been finding the Carax works and destroying them. I love that it is a book about a book! I love the story, but I also love the writing itself, and how Zafon has a style that makes me want to keep reading. The man is a beautiful writer. The *Angel of the Mist* story that begins on page 233 is a haunting touch, as is Maria Jacinta's detailing of her encounters with Zacarias (begin on page 260), and the storyline of Daniel and Fermin visiting her in the asylum. I loved this first book so much that I immediately started reading the second book in the series, and I am about 200 pages in to *The Angel's Game*, right now! To think, I found this gorgeous read because of a visit to the Book Warehouse over the July 4 weekend, where I unwittingly purchased the third book in the series first!

5 stars In 1945 following Spain's civil war a man takes his ten-year old son Daniel to a library called the Cemetery of Forgotten Books. There Daniel must pick out one book. He chooses called *The Shadow of the Wind* by Julian Carax. What follows is a lyrical journey of Daniel's life and adventures throughout his lifelong search for more information about Julian Carax. On his journey through life, Daniel meets all kinds of interesting people including an individual named Lain Coubert (who happens to be the main character in *The Shadow of the Wind*), who is determined to burn all of Carax's novels. Is this person the devil? A demon of some sort? He reeks of burning and essentially has no facial features. He threatens Daniel and all that he holds dear for not turning over the Carax book. He also meets an evil fascist police inspector named Fumero who has people tortured and killed in the basement of the police station. He also threatens Daniel and his family and friends. He travels with Fermin, who works at the bookstore with Daniel and his father, to a school at which Julian attended. There they charm and trick one of the clerics who grew up with Julian to talk about him. They learn a great deal about him. Fermin does not miss the parallels between Julian and Daniel's lives. They also learn that Julian went to school with Fumero. They go to visit Penelope (Julian's lost love), nanny in a run down and filthy care home. She tells them the story of Penelope and Julian's aborted love affair. Fermin again notices the similarities between Julian and Daniel's lives. On their way home, they are set upon by Fumero and his thugs. Fermin receives a terrible beating. But this does not stop their search for answers. Daniel comes into the possession of a lengthy letter to him that was written by a woman before she died. And with this letter, the truth comes out; the whole sordid and awful

truth. This is my first Carlos Ruiz Zafon novel, but I can promise it won't be my last. I truly enjoyed this novel. It is very well written and plotted, and totally without any wasted words. That's a real achievement for a novel this long. The suspense and intrigue start immediately with this book, and the level of excitement continues throughout the novel. The use of language is beautiful and Mr. Zafon really knows how to turn a phrase, as it were.

A beautiful and timeless story with an amazing setting that functions as a living, breathing character. It's the kind of story that lingers...long after you've turned the final page. I loved the many nuances, layers, twists and turns, timing of revelations; the manner in which characters' lives unfold and then intersect; story threads that come together...I'm looking forward to reading more of the author's stories!

I really enjoyed this book. I knew immediately who the burned figure was but that was not the point. I even guessed why the father had gone ballistic (I am trying to not write spoilers here). None of that detracted from the story. It was beautifully written with excellent characters. If you are looking for a straight-up murder mystery or horror, that is not what this book is. It's about life and death, love and loss, regret, redemption, revenge, friendship and hatred, youth and old age, and last but not least, the power of the written word. Also, everyone is talking about Marquez (who, IMHO was uniquely brilliant with an amazing sense of humor) but this book made me think (correctly or not) of Perez-Reverte and Dumas. BTW, I suspect that use of a name from a Marquez book was homage, not ego.

Not my usual genre, but a friend recommended this book to me and I'm really glad she did. My favorite quote: "Bea says that the art of reading is slowly dying, that it's an intimate ritual, that a book is a mirror that offers us only what we already carry inside us, that when we read, we do it with all our heart and mind, and great readers are becoming more scarce by the day."

It is a remarkable, complex book full of wildly written characters you will not soon forget. I found myself wishing they were real, certainly they are drawn vividly with the author's descriptions. I feel as if I've seen Barcelona in the early 20th century. It's a beautiful, dark, thrilling, suspenseful tale of the power of books, of words, of family, and love (in all of its forms),

To me, this book seemed to have about three books crammed into one big, long book. The author is

an excellent story teller and he develops his characters well, however, there are so many characters and back stories that I feel like I'm constantly trying to keep things straight -- sometimes without success! A more compact version would have made me really like the book.

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