



## A Play of Shadow

*Julie E. Czerneda*

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What would you risk for family?

The truthseer who won Jenn Nalynn's heart, Bannan Larmensu, learns his brother-in-law was sent as a peace envoy to Channen, the capital of the mysterious domain of Mellynne, and has disappeared. When Bannan's young nephews arrive in Marrowdell during a storm, he fears that his sister, the fiery Lila, has gone in search of her husband, leaving her sons in his care.

The law forbids Bannan from leaving Marrowdell and traveling to Mellynne to help his sister. At least, in this world.

As a turn-born, Jenn Nalynn has the power to cross into the magical realm of the Verge—and take Bannan with her. Once there, they could find a way into Mellynne, if they survive.

The Verge is wild and deadly, alive with strange magic. Dragons roar and kruar wait in ambush, and the powerful turn-born who tend their world do not care for Jenn Nalynn. But Jenn is willing to try. Their friends Wisp and Scourge -- and the house toads -- offer their help.

But what none of them know is that Channen is rife with magic, magic that flows from the Verge itself. And not even a turn-born will be safe there.

Play of Shadows won the 2015 Aurora Award for Best Novel.

## A Play of Shadow Details

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Author : Julie E. Czerneda

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## From Reader Review A Play of Shadow for online ebook

### **JB Lynn says**

A nice wrap-up to this duology. I was worried about how the clothing of the main characters had changed so much on this cover, but there's a good reason for it. I loved spending more time in Marrowdell, and could feel the warmth of all those who lived there wrap around me. Although it's been several years, I can't help but notice that while the ending of this book wrapped the story up nicely, there's still some delicious potential for subsequent books. It makes me hope that perhaps Julie Czerneda might be convinced to return to this magical world she's created for more tales.

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### **J.M. Frey says**

As always, Czerneda delivers. This books is both adventurous and domestic, all about the joys and importance of hearth and home, and the desperate lengths people will go to protect both... especially those who are NOT trained in the arts of adventuring.

I was so pleased to return to Marrowdell -it felt like a sunlight-soaked homecoming - with the sound of Wisp's grumbles and the scent of Peggs' pie waiting for me.

Jenn is my kind of heroine, the kind of heroine I always hope I will be. Scared, but brave enough to venture out despite her fear; kind, and all the more dangerous for it when you threaten those she loves; and clever, in that she knows when others are wiser or more experienced than her and will take their advice.

To avoid spoilers, there are two new villains that I hope we haven't seen the last of. Oh, please, Julie! One more adventure Marrowdell, with Jenn and Bannen. I'm not ready to go home yet.

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### **Scott Williams says**

A Play of Shadow is the kind of charming fantasy I wish had been around for me to read in my mis-spent youth. As a young kid I was an advanced reader. Fantasies written for kids were unsatisfying and those written for adults were often forbidden by my parents for containing too much sex or violence. Czerneda's latest work strikes a perfect balance.

I LOVE the House Toads and was glad to see much more of them in this sequel. It felt like this book was more action-oriented than the first and I quite enjoyed it.

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### **Roberta says**

Julie Czerneda's work is exceptional. Her writing creates the glow inside me that only the best fantasy writing does. It's hard to describe, but I have a hard time putting her books down to do necessary things, like go to sleep, or go back to work from break time. She treats magic the way I imagine it; just a step away , or a

turn around a corner and you're immersed.

A Play of Shadow is a sequel, so make sure to read A Turn of Light first. You'll find yourself totally absorbed in her world of magic, both sensible and homey, and ethereal and breathtaking.

The adventures of Jenn Nalynn, a villager of Marrowdell are so much fun, as she tries to balance her life in the village and her relationships with her family and loved ones and her forays into the magical world that is just a hair's breathe away.

I'm such a fan, and I'll read anything more that Julie produces! It is almost painful to come to the end of one of her books.

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### **Ryan says**

A Turn of Light, which this is a sequel to, was fascinating for how it inverted a lot of classical fantasy tropes. This book inverts the inversion, somewhat, but in a way that maintains a compelling and interesting story. I enjoyed the first book enough that the thought of sequels made me nervous, but Czernada continues to craft a story and universe that is just fascinating.

More thoughts about this book at <https://northerntomorrows.wordpress.c...>

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### **Erik Buchanan says**

A Play of Shadows (sequel to A Turn of Light) is a wonderful weaving of the mundane and the mystical. We see the truth and dangers of winter life in a remote mountain village and it even as we watch our leading characters struggle with magic, monsters, and mystical realms. The relationships between the characters are as deeply important to the book as the events that drive them to react. And though those relationships include mystical toads, a dragon and a horse that isn't, they are as believable and honest as any relationships in fiction.

And then there's the villains, political intrigue, turtles, and moths...

And no, I'm not saying any more. Read and enjoy.

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### **Jason says**

I really liked the first book. The second was ok, but it just didn't grab me as well as the first. I may be suffering from raised expectations, but I did find myself a couple times while reading the book where I was telling myself to go back and read it instead of eagerly looking forward to reading more. I'm not sure it was a pacing issue or if it was that the plot seemed a bit disjointed. Even with those feelings, I was still glad I read it.

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### **L says**

I love Czerneda's work. Just love it.

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### **Dr susan says**

I read until 3:45am because I was too enthralled to stop when I should have. I chose to skip rereading A Turn Of Light, and I now regret that decision. This world is so wonderfully complex and magical that I think I will be better able to appreciate Marrowdell when I read both books. Scourge, Wisp, the toads, and the other magical inhabitants of Marrowdell and the Verge have captured my heart. Lila, her husband, and her sons deserve their own book, full of magic, plots, and love. A Play Of Shadow is not all sweetness, love, and light. Danger, death, and sorrow get equal time, but my feeling on the last page was joy.

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### **Tari says**

The second entry into the Night's Edge series was, no surprise, a most excellent read. I was riveted throughout. My only complaint? I wasn't ready to leave Marrowdell yet! Another couple of hundred pages would have been great! (And no, I am NOT being facetious!)

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### **Carl says**

An excellent sequel to Czerneda's Fantasy debut Turn of Light. Czerneda's gifts are beautifully crafted prose marvelous dialog and an unrepentant romanticism that never quite becomes saccharin.

Her fantasies are all about the small people, townsfolk and craftsmen, artisans and dreamers, those who are usually in short shrift in fantasy novels filled with kings and usurpers, warriors and power hungry despots.

Her lone flaw, and a very small one, is that her characters never truly feel endangered, or endangered for any great length of time. True narrative tension does not abound here. In its place are truly great characters, scintillating words, and a love between two characters that is never overdone or sickly sweet and yet rich and fulfilling. A treat.

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### **Nicole Laverdure says**

Filled with Magic!

Beautiful sequel to a Turn of Light which I loved very much. This novel A Play of Shadows is a real page turner. It's very well written and nicely blended with charming characters living in a small village where magic does it's work! Lots of fun to read! Just take your time because it's a large brick filled with details. Enjoy! I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway! Thank You!

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## **Joe Slavinsky says**

A most excellent sequel, to Czerneda's first fantasy novel, "A Turn of Light", furthers the story of Jenn Nalynn, a magically "turn-born" woman, with mystical powers. I won't go into the story, as you should read, and enjoy it for yourself, but suffice to say that the sequel is as good, or better, than the original. Czerneda's forte is science fiction, but she may have found a second genre, at which she excels. She tells an excellent story, with lots of emotion, great characters, and a twisty plot, that makes the book very difficult to put down. Seriously, I'm not just recommending these books, I demand that you read them. You won't regret it.

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## **Bob Milne says**

As much as I loved *A Turn of Light*, and as much as I was looking forward to *A Play of Shadow*, I didn't really see how Julie E. Czerneda could draw a second tale out of such a small, self-contained world. The village of Marrowdell was a fantastic setting, but its magical seclusion hardly allowed for the outside world to intervene. Similarly, Jenn Nalynn was an amazing character, but her own magical essence hardly allowed for her to simply stroll outside the valley and take the story to the larger world. Yes, I wanted more of the magic, and more of Julie's subtle twists on traditional fantasy, but I was worried what kind of a shadow a less-than-stellar book might cast over the first.

As it turns out, I had absolutely nothing to worry about. In continuing the story of Jenn and Bannan, *A Play of Shadow* not only expands upon the magic of Marrowdell and the Verge, it does successfully finds a way to take us beyond that world - all while honoring the rules and limitations of *A Turn of Light*. In all honesty, even though this second volume lacks the novelty factor of the first, I do think I enjoyed it more. It's broader in scope, more magical in every way, and benefits from what I think most readers will agree is a more even, more exciting pace.

The story opens on a quiet note, reacquainting us with the characters and their world. Despite what we might have expected, the romance between Jenn and Bannan has progressed slowly, so don't expect any sudden leap towards wedded bliss. No sooner are we reacquainted, however, and we're just as quickly separated. Bannan is accompanying a trade caravan out of Marrowdell, while Jenn is off to visit Wisp and Mistress Sand in the Verge. While the lovers are soon reunited, both learn new secrets and new insights into the magic of Marrowdell and the turn-born, setting up some interesting conflicts and introducing some new threats to both their worlds. When Tir makes a winter return, near-death and with Bannan's nephews in hand, the story takes off in exciting and unexpected directions.

There's so much magic and wonder to be discovered in this world, I'm hesitant about saying more. Suffice to say, the scenes within the Verge are absolutely stunning, with little touches and major flourishes that really bring that magical realm to life. The journey to Channen, a canal town of magic and magicians, is a very nice addition to the tale - it adds another traditional fantasy element to the tale, and opens it up to some deeper, darker political machinations. I will say that we do finally get to meet Lila, Bannan's sister, and her appearance on the scene is well worth waiting for. Otherwise, Wisp and Scourge get to take on some new roles, while the house toads take on a whole new significance to the tale . . . as do their turtle cousins.

*A Play of Shadow* is everything I could have hoped for in a sequel, complete with the one thing the original

book lacked, and that is a villain . . . or villains. Yes, there are two core conflicts here, one involving Jenn and another Bannan, and they serve to round out the tale. Rest assured, however, that while this second volume does add to the tale, it doesn't sacrifice any of the sweetness, the magic, or the wonder of the first. Definitely recommended.

*Originally reviewed at Beauty in Ruins*

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## **Briar's Reviews says**

A Play of Shadow by Julie E. Czerneda is a fantastical novel packed full of action.

I will admit that this book was hard for me to get through. My best bet is because I haven't read the first novel in this series, so I just didn't know half of what had occurred before this novel. That doesn't mean this book isn't good though! It was just very hard for me to push myself to read it. It almost felt like a chore because I couldn't comprehend some of the past experiences of the characters. I did look up some information on the last book, but it didn't help me. That being said, I don't recommend jumping into this series without starting from the beginning.

This book did feel fantastical though! Julie is a truly mesmerizing author and I love her talent. I felt like I was reading a Lord of the Rings or Game of Thrones styled tale. It's full of fantasy, action and lore that was truly interesting.

I did like Jenn and Bannan together. They felt like a real couple and the were truly lovable. I found their development to be my favourite part of the story. I fell in love with them instantly despite not knowing what happened to them in the previous book. Shout out to Julie for doing so well with them!

The magic in this book was also fun to experience. It didn't feel like the typical dramatic magic I've seen in romance novels (which is where I commonly see magic), so I enjoyed Julie's spin on it.

Overall, not reading the first book really screwed me over with this book. I think I would have enjoyed it a lot more if I read it in order the way it was intended. I think big fantasy lovers will enjoy this book way more than I do. I like to dabble in fantasy, but it's not really my scene. Those who love fantasy will devour this book so quickly and will truly love it. I'm just not made for this type of novel! So I do truly think this book is amazing, but in my opinion it doesn't do it for me as a reader.

Two out of five stars - since it was really hard to get into and really hard for me to get invested in.

I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

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