



# The Lady of the Sorrows

*Cecilia Dart-Thornton*

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**The Lady of the Sorrows** Cecilia Dart-Thornton

Though her memory remains clouded, Imrhien must take vital news to the King. As always, changes of fate and fortune occur and dangers threaten her very life.

## The Lady of the Sorrows Details

Date : Published 2003 by Tor (first published April 24th 2002)

ISBN : 9780330489560

Author : Cecilia Dart-Thornton

Format : Paperback 611 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, High Fantasy, Romance

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# From Reader Review *The Lady of the Sorrows* for online ebook

## Marie Winger says

The second in the Bitterbynde trilogy this was a little better than the first. Halfway through it was like someone else wrote the book. Much tighter, less of the endless descriptive lists. I think maybe she got a new editor. Why they didn't go back and redo the first half I can't fathom. Anyway most of this volume was a lot of wandering around having adventures or not. But we do finally get the main characters story. She has about 4 different named throughout the series so I'm not sure what to call her.

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## Christine says

The writer of this book is definitely talented, but was too enamored of her own powers of description for my taste. Many of the descriptive passages were beautifully poetic, but I often found myself admiring her turns of phrase while wanting her to get on with the story already! Yes, Cecilia, you're a poet and you know it, but did you really have to bring the story to a halt while you spent a whole page on exactly how the light fell on a pool of water, or listed all 263 tools in a character's workshop? Some reviewers were annoyed by the dozens of Celtic stories and myths crammed into the plot, but I didn't mind that too much because that's an interest of mine. But I agree that sometimes it appeared that Dart-Thornton wanted to use every story she'd ever been told or unearthed in her research, without regard to how they affected the structure of the book. I do think a discerning editor could have vastly improved this book by curbing Dart-Thornton's excesses, while keeping enough of the poetic language and the grounding in Celtic mythology to elevate the book above others of the genre.

Also, I listened to it as an audiobook, and the reader mispronounced so many not-so-uncommon words I wanted to scream. I wouldn't have minded mispronunciations of the Celtic or made-up words as much, but I was annoyed by the frequent mispronunciation of standard English words whose pronunciation could be checked in dictionary. I wish I'd kept a list, because now the only ones I can remember are "ebullient", which she pronounced "EB-yuh-lent", and "demesnes" which she pronounced "de-MEN-ses" (over and over, aargh!). I realize that neither of those are good examples of standard English words that a professional reader should know how to say, but trust me, there were many others.

I think I'd have liked these books better if I'd read instead of listened so that I could have skimmed the song lyrics and over-long descriptions, and so I wouldn't have been constantly irritated by mispronunciations. After skimming the reviews of the third book in this trilogy, I've decided not to bother with it at all.

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## C. says

I'm giving up on this series. I wanted to re-read it because I loved it a lot the first two times I read it (when I was still in my fantasy stage of reading), and I needed to read something that didn't require any thought, but wow, it's boring.

The author seems to think that writing in a deadpan, old-fashioned style studded liberally with uncommon words makes for beautiful prose. I beg to differ. She also spends inordinate amounts of time describing food,

clothing, furniture, banquets and other such things, in a most repetitious fashion.

The plot's not *bad*, as such (actually I was pleasantly surprised), and neither are the characters - though why do people always become boring as soon as they find beauty and wealth? The Irish fairy tales sprinkled throughout the plot are interesting, but often there are just too many of them, and when combined with the yawn-inducing pages and pages of description, there's just not enough happening.

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## Erica says

Warning: this review contains spoilers for the first book, *The Ill-Made Mute*.

Wow, what a difference one book makes! This second part of the Bitterbynde trilogy is a much better effort than the often rather wordy and plodding first part. Where in book one the prose was frequently needlessly complicated and frustratingly obtuse, in this book the language is rich and powerfully evocative. It is still complicated, but the author seems to have found her voice and come into her stride, and I found this a gripping read from start to finish.

In book one we were introduced to Imrhien, a mute youth with a hideous face scarred by a plant called paradox ivy, and no memory of anything that happened before waking up in the bowels of Isse Tower. Midway through the book it was revealed that the lad was in fact a girl, and the book finished when she reached the one-eyed witch whose knowledge cured her facial disfiguration, which also restored her voice. Thus presentable and able to speak her piece, Imrhien must travel to the royal court to inform the King-Emperor of the vast treasure she and the adventurer Sianadh discovered in book one. To remain inconspicuous she dyes her – very rare – blond hair, changes her name to Rohain and uses her newfound wealth to set herself up as a lady from a faraway region. In this disguise she gains audience with one of the king's most trusted men, and the treasure is recovered, gaining Rohain a privileged position at the court. This in turn gives her the opportunity to try and find out what happened to Thorn, the brave Dainnan knight who protected her throughout the latter half of the first book.

To say more of the plot would give away too many major revelations, but as before the book is rich with creatures and stories of Celtic legend, and these are often interwoven with the main tale or interrupt it briefly. About halfway through the book takes a major turn in a completely different direction, which is confusing at first but makes sense once you get to the end of the book. It is an unexpected twist, and it brings the scope of the book up considerably, compared to the first one. In a way it feels like the author wasn't entirely sure where she was headed in the first book, and it only became clear in the second book.

I personally very much enjoyed this book, but it isn't for anyone who likes their reading light and fluffy. The language is too complicated, often too old-fashioned to be easy going, and I could have done with a few less prithees and gramercies. I also suspect that I had an easier time with the world itself, as I have some background knowledge of many of the faerie creatures encountered throughout. Still, if you do not mind encountering unknown words and are ready for a very rich world of endless forests, vast stretches of landscape inhabited only by creatures both seelie and unseelie, and are ready for a story that keeps taking things up a level, this is a good book for you. You'll just have to work your way through the plodding first book first, or you won't have a clue what's going on.

More reviews at [Silk Screen Views](#).

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## Waterfall says

The second book in a trilogy, *The Lady of the Sorrows* sets an even faster pace than *An Ill-Made Mute*. Some quests and questions from the first book are resolved, and at the end of the book both the reader and the character finally has a complete understanding of the beginning of the trilogy. :~D Several throwaway references have gained a deeper meaning by now, and the ending promises a truly exiting finale.

There's also a very sweet romance, oodles of action, and several pieces of witty dialogue. I especially enjoy the way Irish-type fairy tales are interweaved through the book, and how these tales are usually quite relevant to the plot. It may look long, but this book just sucks you in and won't let go... as evidenced by my finishing it at 01:30 last night.

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## Rita C says

Another story with way too many words wasted on descriptions and characters telling horror stories of the fae. Another story ending with a cliffhanger. This trilogy could probably have been condensed into a single story with some decent editing.

Another weird thing - in the first story the heroine is somehow wise and makes smart choices. In this story she keeps making stupid choices. It's like her whole character was changed when she got her face and her voice back. I wish I had known this was a story about the fae before I bought it. I would have saved my money. There are no happy stories about the fae.

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## Mat Francis says

3 1/2 stars

I really enjoy the storyline and it's what's keeping me going with the series, I just wish there was more push for the story itself to build instead of every minute detail of just about everything that doesn't really matter. Yes there's a call for building up the world in novels, but to have to go nearly a page or 2 full on just describing one room with all it's decorative's and colours. It gets tedious at times trying to push past the over-descriptive parts, but if you get past them, or are a fan of all that detail then the story itself is great.

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## Deborah says

I read book 1 and was curious enough to start book 2 so I could find out who the main character was. Unfortunately, I just couldn't finish. The writing is so bogged down with random and unimportant details that it just become exhausting to continue. Additionally, the writer really loves commas!

Here's an example:

"All over Erith, in hovels and bothies, in cottages and crofts, in cottages, marketplaces, smithies, and workshops, in barracks, taverns, malt-houses, and inns, in manor house, stately homes, and Relay Tower, in halls and keeps, castles and places, the set holly garlands on rooftrees, ivy festoons around inglenooks, sprays of mistletoe about the doors and strolled wreaths of pine and fir and spruce on every available projection."

Aren't you just exhausted after reading that? And this book is filled with lists and scenes of where inconsequential things happen. The author certainly wanted to make sure that nothing was left to the imagination.

Then to make things worse, one of the main characters begins speaking with Thee's and Thou's midway through the story. Really? Evidently this indicates royalty. And the main character suddenly becomes someone else - not just in name, but in behavior. In book one she seems to be very young, but by book 2 years must have gone by because although the plot hasn't moved forward much, she is now quite mature.

If the author had spent more time working on character and plot, and less time trying to fit in everything that entered her mind, the story would have been a fun fairytale. As it is, I decided that finding out the who and why of the main character just wasn't important enough to compel me to read any further.

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### **Melissa says**

I would have liked this book more if it was 200 pages worth of description shorter. I think this one is worse than the first. The writing is overly flowery and filled with lists of descriptions that become hard to wade through. The middle lagged a lot and I thought I might give up. But overall the story is pretty good and has some interesting parts that can really hold your attention if you can make it through everything else. I'm debating whether to read the third. Maybe after a really long break.

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### **Lucy Werner says**

Gripping, the story gets better. Very cleverly written and I'm straight onto the next one now :) great series

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### **c a t h e y says**

Overall, I really enjoyed The Lady of the Sorrows. The story got a lot better towards the end - the storyline actually moved somewhere. The author was under the impression that using long and mostly unused words and listing huge paragraphs of what someone was wearing, or the food that was being served etc. contributed to the story. Well, suffice to say, it didn't. I found myself skimming over whole paragraphs, just to get to the actual story.

I did like the references to mythology, and the legends told throughout the book were captivating. The twists were mainly unpredictable, and I couldn't see them coming.

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### **Aaron Carson says**

This series utterly blew me away. I was already impressed with the first volume, but Thornton, takes us into a completely different context and setting in her second book, and manages to keep the same level of

complexity and atmosphere. I actually think this book was more of a challenge to create the atmosphere. Being predominantly in an enchanted wood, the first book was already predisposed to be enchanting, but the second book takes place almost entirely around the complexities of court politics, and yet still manages to be quite enchanting. Some people might find Thornton's use of adjectives and obscure archaic nouns a bit cumbersome, but I generally found she used them in a descriptive capacity, which ultimately served to weave the tapestry of the world into vivid immediacy. What I find so refreshing about Cecilia's work is that she does not use the theme of prophesy, which I ultimately find to be a conceit. The heroine is simply living her life, is somewhat adrift in a bewildering set of circumstances, and has no clear notion of what she is meant to be doing. For me this created a greater feeling of suspense as to what was going to occur. The drawback of prophesy, is that it also tends to be a bit of a spoiler. If the hero is destined to save the realm, there's a good chance he's going to pull it off in a fantasy novel. Celia leaves us in the dark as to what will happen to the heroine, and for me personally, she got me to care about the main character, which I rarely do.

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### **Michele (Mikecas) says**

Da: <http://www.webalice.it/michele.castel...> Quando e' uscito il primo dei due romanzi, La Ragazza della Torre, il mio naso mi ha indotto a lasciarlo perdere. All'uscita del secondo, pero', un po' attirato dalla presentazione molto entusiasta, e da una trama che, sempre dalla presentazione, sembrava abbastanza complessa, ma forse ancora maggiormente dal fatto che con un paio di euro in piu' delle solite edizioni in brossura si poteva avere un libro simile ai vecchi libri "rilegati", una edizione, insomma, che dava l'impressione di fare anche una sua figura "libresca", li ho acquistati entrambi. Probabilmente facevo meglio a dare retta al mio istinto iniziale. La presentazione dice che l'autrice e' un'esordiente australiana (strana questa abbondanza di autori australiani, ultimamente). Che sia esordiente lo si capisce dopo poche pagine. L'ingenuita' nel narrare, la narrazione che avanza a scatti, una certa ristrettezza di linguaggio... tutti aspetti che si trovano spesso negli autori esordienti. La trama si indovina poter essere ricca, ma, onestamente, se avessi voluto leggere una raccolta di leggende della Gran Bretagna del nord, avrei preferito un libro dedicato a questo in modo esplicito, e non camuffato da romanzo. Perche' in realta' i personaggi di questo libro passano la maggior parte del loro tempo a raccontarsi storie, le piu' conosciute o le piu' inverosimili, che l'autrice ha estratto, per sua ammissione, da un nugolo di vecchi libri. Storie di folletti, del popolo fatato, di esseri immortali, benevoli o maligni, mescolate a storie piu' banali, di furbizie e di incantesimi. Mentre la storia che pensavo di dover leggere evolve a fatica. E se queste lunghissime pause di racconti nel racconto appesantiscono la narrazione, poi succede che le azioni della storia principale avanzino di fretta, quasi di corsa, senza una adeguata descrizione, senza ragionevoli giustificazioni. I personaggi sono scolpiti in modo grossolano, con pochi aspetti fondamentali a caratterizzarli. I sentimenti sono estremizzati, come se passati attraverso un amplificatore messo al massimo. Il secondo volume e' leggerissimamente meglio, ma, se anche la storia principale avanza un po' piu' speditamente, l'obiettivo principale dell'autrice sembra rimanere quella di presentare una raccolta completa di leggende, fiabe e aneddoti, spesso molto ben conosciuti anche dal pubblico italiano. Il finale tronco del secondo volume sembra ovviamente indicare che ci sara' un seguito. Credo proprio che mi imporro' il sacrificio di non sapere come la storia va a finire.

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### **Brenton says**

I'm not sure what happened here. It's like her writing suddenly got really bad, because I don't remember the first book being like this. The writing was so trite, filled to bursting with metaphors and rambling lists, insipid dialogue...argh. I do want to finish the trilogy because the story at least is still interesting, but this

book has got to win a purple prose award of some kind. It actually reminds me of the things I don't like about Tolkien: way too much scenery porn, overly flowery dialogue, very little complexity, and reading through it just feels like a slog with little reward.

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## **Macha says**

maybe it was just me; at the moment, patience isn't my best thing. i'll get the third in this trilogy, and the first in the next, anyway. i sort of can't not, given her subject matter. but i'm not nearly as enchanted at this point.

maybe it's because the heroine isn't very interesting at this point. okay, why? she loses a lot of color, and a lot of value, to me. gets her face fixed up (bigger priority than the people she says she cares about), and lies to upgrade her social status and then hobnobs with a bunch of posers she wouldn't have given tuppence for impressing before. okay, learning experience, livelong dreams, shallow end, i get that, but i also stopped liking her. valid, but it's better if the author actually intended that to happen, and see, i just don't think she did, which means she lost control. then of course her longlost love turned out to be king, resulting in yet another status upgrade, and he did more bestowing, and... i thought, what, is she then Cecilia's Mary Sue? of course, now she's penniless again, so onward to Book Three, where perhaps her character will have correspondingly improved. though it's hard to tell exactly what stage of evolution she's even at, at any given moment, because she's in danger of losing her memory as often as an afternoon soap star.... but i'm provisionally concluding that for Rohain, penniless is better. {g}

maybe it's because she managed to make Thomas the Rhymer boring. which hey, to me, tsk, the very definition of a bad gambit...

and then the style. what she's up to here, she's taking bits out of different folktales and sticking them in. Celtic stuff. this is that thing she does. and did in the Ill-Made Mute too, mind. but this time, i dunno, she doesn't seem to have assimilated the sources she's using. you get a story, lifted wholecloth out of a source. i usually recognize the sources, maybe that's the problem: i know how much heavy lifting she's really doing? she does biblio them, though, in the back, which is unusual in a work of fiction and might usually be said to cover all the ground.

but the trouble is, there's no narrative to speak of, so there's no point to the stories, pretty much, nothing to incorporate them into. she meets someone, a story ensues. not particularly relevant. someone else enters stage left, another story. not much tale of her own in the interstices. it's irritating. like a folklore collection masquerading as a novel.

note caveats above: also, no patience, right? so what does this mean?

- she's lost the narrative, she's only got the footnotes?
- typical second novel paralysis (well-attested phenomenon)?
- she's writing a simple romance in this trilogy, and all the stuff i think is neat about her work is really only meaningless filler?

who knows? i'll read two more, see if it helps. but currently, i'm thinking, all this lovely material, what a shame that me and this writer aren't getting along any better than this. and also: who would have thunk it was possible to reduce Thomas of Ercildoun to a socialite?

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## Matthew says

(This is a joint review for the entire trilogy. No spoilers)

So, the first book in the trilogy is titled *The Ill-Made Mute*. I highly recommend it. Now, a large part of the book is very hard to wade through. I would not be surprised if this woman had earned a doctorate in pre-Industrial Celtic and Anglo-Saxon folk tales and legends. She incorporates almost every known folk tale from these cultures as a bona-fide part of her world. The Great Hunt rides at night, seelie and un-seelie wights await at every turn, and more or less every superstition is held as gospel. The woman uses a few Gaelic terms here and there, and much of the spellings, and many of the names, are Celtic.

This can get very distracting.

There will be long, drawn out 20 page passages where she basically just retells a folk tale for the reader, without any of the book's characters participating, just listening to the tale be told, or she'll even pause the action entirely to give this as a 20 page aside. And when words like Fithiach, Imrhien and Each Uisage are used at whims, the book can sometimes be hard to wade through.

But, the tale was amazing, and she is perhaps the best author I've read at being able to make the world around you seem alive. Never before have I read a book where the author evokes in me the thoughts and feelings I had as a child going camping. Every odd noise in the woods was some animal, or a sprite of some kind just out of sight, playing games with our fears. The world is truly alive around you. This was a whole new type of fantasy writing.

The tale itself concerns a disfigured mute amnesiac (say that three times fast) who stumbles out of a collapsed mineshaft and is taken in by some type of scullery maid or something. The whole tale is told third person limited, so we only know of the world what this mute knows, which is nothing. It's a great way to introduce the world to us. And what a world it is. There's apparently 2 metals in this world not in ours, sildron and allium. Sildron has the peculiar magnetic property of repelling gravity. Allium, when placed between sildron and earth, nullifies this anti-grav effect. Thus, a whole culture of airborne messengers riding winged horses with sildron-shod feet arises. There are huge sailing ships, akin to the British Navy of the 1700s, with their external hulls lined with sildron, and movable allium covers (allowing them to change their amount of lift). Combine all this with a typical medieval fantasy world, and add in all the folk legends, and you have one helluva new world.

Despite what may sound like a few big flags and complaints on my end, I fully suggest everyone read it, if for nothing else than a look at a refreshing new fantasy world, and a completely different writing style than any I've ever come across before.

I liked it enough to want to buy the rest of the trilogy

Partly because of the novelty of her writing style, and partly because Book II (*The Lady of the Sorrows*) had a character named The Lady Dianella in it. So, back during my latest Barnes and Noble buying spree I picked up the second and third (*The Battle of Evernight*) books.

The cool thing is, about 3/4 of the way through book 2 (*The Lady of the Sorrows*), some very cool plot developments arise that make you realize she probably planned out and wrote all three books before anyone even saw 1 page of them, and that they are very coolly thought out and planned. And there is some exciting

action and interesting plot twists. Many kudos to her for a well thought out series. She also knows her geology and botany.

The problem, however, is that the 20 page asides have grow both in frequency and length, and instead of being a decent quest fantasy, it somehow rapidly turned into a harlequin romance. Or at least, a bunch of Victorian type damsels at court pining and wisting away in very flowery language over the same, graceful, exquisitely handsome (sorry, comely), sensitive, caring, and understanding man. There was even mention somewhere about a woman being proud that the one thing she was able to give to the man who had everything was the most marvelous gift of all, the once given and always cherished maidenhead. Yes, that was how she described it. Or maybe he described it that way. Either way, the books weren't what I bargained for. I found myself skimming 20, 30, 60 page passages at a time simply to getback to a plot and some semblance of a break from internal dialogues. This is the first time I've skipped chunks of a book since I tried to read Dr. Zhivago entirely in 1 night, for a quiz the next morning. (It didn't go well at all)

Also, the novel writing style she had in the first book becomes bloated and amplified, so that every description is a long string of alliteration, metaphor, and hyperbole, not to mention anthropomorphization. I mean, passages like, "the book of night opened across the sky, it's paragraphs written in constellations" can be very cool, but when that's the shortest, clearest, and most direct description of nightfall the woman can come up with (and believe me, there were many many more in the book, all of them long and pointless ways of saying "it was nighttime") - then there's an editor somewhere sound asleep at her desk, or just not showing up for work. This woman can make Robert Jordan's descriptive style seem sparse and insufficient.

Anyway, skipping to the end... In the paperback version I have of the third book (The Battle of Evernight), there is a one-page epilogue/Author's Note that says, in a nutshell, that when the first edition of the third book came out, no one could understand the ending. Not that they couldn't see how the characters could do whatever it is they did, but that no one was at all clear on what happened. Apparently, there was enough confusion about this that the author felt it necessary (in the paperback release) to include a few paragraphs explaining, in layman's terms, exactly what happened in clear and understandable language.

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## **Sappho Sue says**

Too much exposition, but plot is good, and the English mythology is well represented

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## **Cheri says**

This book is long winded but very well thought out. The combination of the loss of some side characters who were important to the main character with the gaining of her true past was fantastic. I was so sad to know that Thorn's son may have died and Thomas the Bard also, that was heart wrenching and now that Rohain knows who she is and why she is being hunted she get back to the origin quest she had as a child. The villains in this series now have more history and depth to them which is good. They aren't some evil unknown entity. Thorn and Rohain's relationship is so precious and cute. If you can endure long winded lyrical writing then this series is for you.

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## **Niki Vervaeke says**

Deel II in de Bitterbynde trilogie. Ja, eens begonnen moet men doorlezen want het is spannend!hervi  
In dit deel wordt het ware doel van het hoofdpersonage duidelijk en dit na en met het overwinnen van vele  
obstakels en gevaarlijke tochten.

Opnieuw fantasy zoals het hoort maar nu met een creatieve twist op basis van het verhaal van de  
rattenvanger van Haemelen.

Goed geschreven, vlot leesbaar en eentje dat je moeilijk kan wegleggen.

<https://www.leespleziervoorjou.nl/bit...>

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## **Rabeah says**

As with the previous book in the series, the story became much more interesting about two-thirds of the way  
in.

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