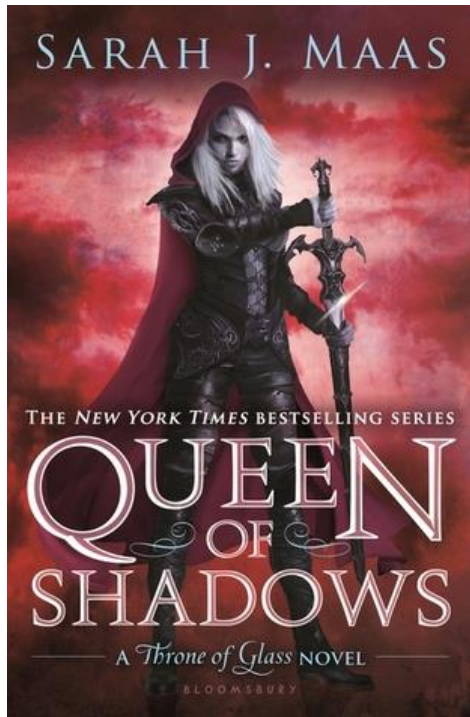


New Friends in Dark Places

Celaena Sardothien is clever, quick-witted, and an all-around bad ass, but she still has moments



Queen of Shadows by Sarah J. Maas
Bloomsbury USA Childrens Press
656 pages
[Buy it here!](#)

of vulnerability and emotion that make it easy to relate to her.

Anyone who appreciates high fantasy and well-written female protagonists will enjoy Sarah J. Maas' *Throne of Glass* series.

In the series' fourth installment, *Queen of Shadows*, we explore what her acceptance of her title as Aelin Galathynius really entails for her, and how she intends to reclaim both her own throne and help Dorian reclaim his.

Much like its predecessor, *Queen of Shadows* is written from many different viewpoints. In Adarlan, the reader will experience narration from Aelin, Rowan, Chaol, Lysandra, and (heartbreakingly) Dorian. Meanwhile, the parallel Blackbeak Witch storyline contains narration from Manon, Elide, and Kaltain. While this may initially seem like a narration overload,

Maas does a great job of seamlessly weaving these points of view into a cohesive story, giving the reader the perfect glimpse into the mindsets of the characters.

The novel opens with Dorian, who, with the first line, sets the tone for the rest of the story:

“There was a thing waiting in the darkness.”

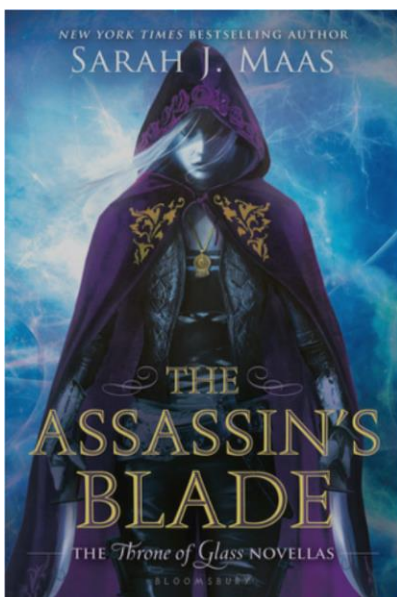
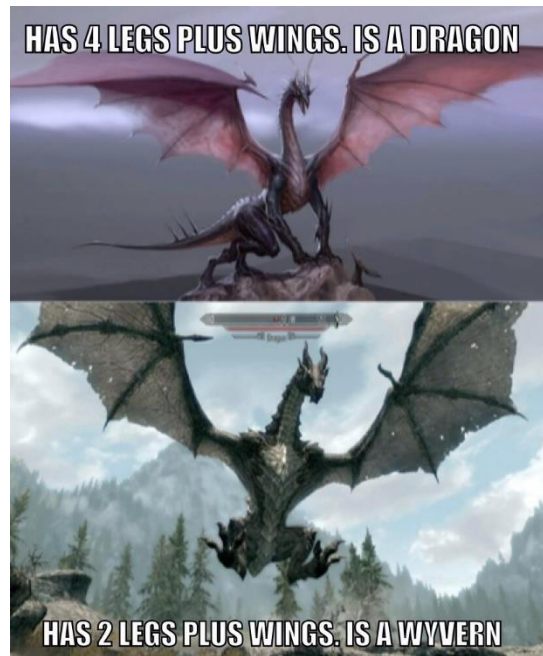
Throughout the novel, Dorian is struggling against the demon prince trying to take over his body, but there are dark things waiting for all the characters in the story. Aelin, with help from her cousin and her lover, is trying to free magic, Dorian, and the kingdom without ending up demons themselves. Chaol has taken over as the leader of a group of rebels working to alleviate some of the pain the king of Adarlan started raining down on his kingdom. In Morath, Manon has earned her title as Wing Leader, but

discovers that her grandmother, and the king, have more devious plans than a coven of wyvern-riding witches. To make matters more complicated, she has discovered two new players beneath the mountains: a young servant girl with a mutilated leg and interesting heritage, and a young woman trapped in her own body. Manon will have to struggle against both her upbringing and her grandmother to keep her coven safe.

One of the best things about this book is the amount of development Maas puts into the female friendships. Up until this point, we have known Celaena as a fighter and assassin, and Manon as a strong-armed, powerful witch. But they have been relatively isolated from other female companionship. In this novel, Maas opens up those doors and brings some more women and camaraderie into the fold, allowing the reader to see a bit of the more gentle side of our otherwise steel-faced characters.

I have only two complaints with this book. The first being Chaol. For about the first half of the book, he seemed hardly recognizable as the Chaol we grew to know and love in the first two novels. No matter how hard she tried, Chaol would not hear any of Aelin's reasoning for her actions. He kept pushing her away and pointing blame instead. And while some of that can probably be attributed to the fact that the woman he thought he loved was part fae, his best friend is now possessed by a demon prince, and he has a lot of pressure on him as the leader of the rebels, this doesn't add up to the mostly level-headed, collected Chaol I saw in the first two novels.

My second complaint is that *Queen of Shadows* relies a lot on the information given in the novellas. This might be just a personal thing, but when I read a series, I read the novels, and then go back to read the novellas to



make connections to the main story arc. While *Queen of Shadows* is still understandable without that background knowledge, having read the novellas adds a lot more depth to what is written in *Queen of Shadows*, and I personally wish more of that information had been included in the novels themselves.

Overall, this was a very satisfying addition to the series. Many of the original ideas constructed were fulfilled: Aelin's storyline has greatly developed, and most of the people included in her immediate relationships have reached a near-conclusive point in the series. There is, however, room for more books, as the Blackbeak storyline is just beginning to open up (Maas talks a bit more about future plans in [this interview](#)). Manon, with the help of her Thirteen, is working to change the ways of an immortal race, which will definitely not be easy. It is actually the Wing Leader who supplies the perfect summary to the novel: "'She did it for herself.'"

The characters in this book are not all good or all evil; they do not make their decisions based on moral standings or other abstract obligations. They make their decisions because they finally have the chance to take a stand and decide for themselves who they want to be, and that, ultimately, is what makes the story great.

Bio

Ryann Crofoot has several poems published in SUNY Oswego's Great Lake Review, where she works as head poetry editor. She currently pursues two degrees in English and Creative Writing. Ryann is very active in her community, planning events for children and teens, and currently works as a tutor at SUNY Oswego's Writing Center