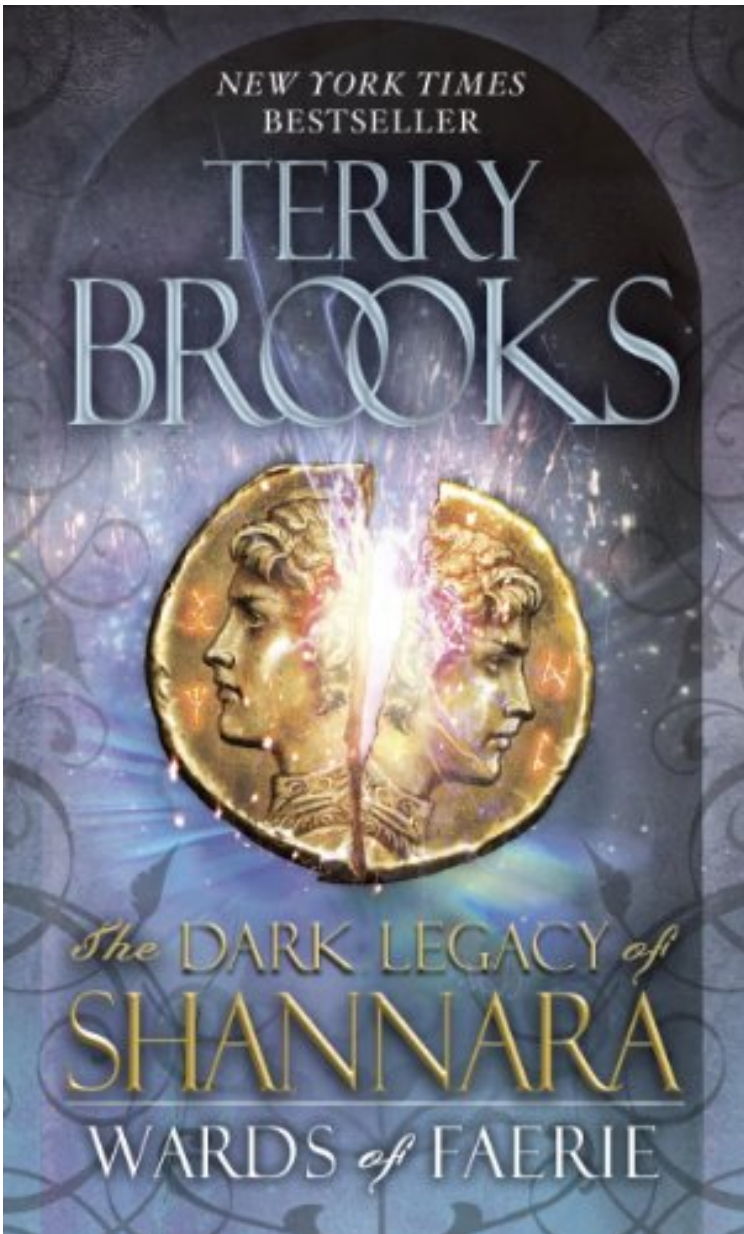


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Wards of Faerie: The Dark Legacy of Shannara



Par Terry Brooks
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurSeven years after the conclusion of the High Druid of Shannara trilogy, New York Times bestselling author Terry Brooks at last revisits one of the most popular eras in the legendary epic fantasy series that has spellbound readers for more than three decades. Tumultuous times are upon the world now known as the Four Lands. Users of magic are in conflict with proponents of science. The dwindling

Druid order is threatened with extinction. A sinister politician has used treachery and murder to rise as prime minister of the mighty Federation. Meanwhile, poring through a long-forgotten diary, the young Druid Aphenglow Elessedil has stumbled upon the secret account of an Elven girl's heartbreak and the shocking truth about the vanished Elfstones, which once warded the lands and kept evil at bay. But never has a little knowledge been so very dangerous as Aphenglow quickly learns when she's set upon by assassins. Yet there can be no turning back from the road to which fate has steered her. Whoever captures the Elfstones and their untold powers will surely hold the advantage in the devastating clash to come.

BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from Terry Brooks's *Bloodfire Quest*.

It was almost one year to the day after she began her search of the Elven histories that Aphenglow Elessedil found the diary. She was deep in the underground levels of the palace, sitting alone at the same table she occupied each day, surrounded by candles to combat the darkness and wrapped in her heavy cloak to ward off the chill. Carefully she read each document, letter, or memoir in what had taken on the attributes of a never-ending slog. It was late and her eyes were burning with fatigue and dust, her concentration beginning to wane, and her longing for bed to grow. She had been reading each day, all day, for so long that she was beginning to think she might never see Paranor and her fellow Druids again. It was dark each day when she began her work and dark when she ended it, and aside from an occasional visit from her sister or her uncle, she saw almost no one. She had read through the entirety of the histories, including their appendices, and had moved on to the boxes and boxes of other writings donated by prominent families over the years. These papers were intended to supplement, embellish, or correct what was considered the official record of a history that stretched back thousands of years. She had found little that she didn't already know or was in any way useful, yet she had persevered because that was how she was. Once she started something she did not give up until the job was finished. And now, perhaps, it was. A diary, written by a young girl, a Princess of the realm living in the age of Faerie, had caught her eye just as she was on the verge of putting everything aside and going off to bed. It was buried at the bottom of a box she had finished emptying, small and worn and stiff with age, and she had glanced at the first couple of pages, noted the girlish writing and the nature of the entries, and been prepared to dismiss it. But then something had stopped her--curiosity, a premonition, a quirk in the way it was written, and she had paged ahead to the final entries to find something unexpected.

23, month 5
Something both terrible and wonderful has happened to me, and I can tell no one. Today I met a boy. He is not of our people and not of our moral and ethical persuasion. He is a Darkling child of the Void, but he is the most beautiful boy I have ever seen. I am hopelessly in love with him, and even knowing that it is wrong of me to be so and that nothing good can come of it, I want to believe that it might be otherwise. I was down by the Silver Thread, deep in the woods seeking bunch lilies and ardwed seeds for the shelter, when he appeared to me. He came out of the trees as if born of them, a lovely mirage given substance and form. So striking was he, so perfect. Blue skin (I have never seen such a depthless blue), golden eyes, hair of midnight black and stars, his voice as soft as the ending of a summer rain when he greeted me. I loved him at once, in that first moment. I could not help myself. Even when I knew what he was and that he was forbidden to me, I could not turn away from him. I like to believe that there was something more than physical attraction that drew me to him. I had enough presence of mind to be able to warn myself against what I was doing. But after we talked and I heard what he had to say about himself and his people, I knew I could not change things. It is said that the most ancient of our race frequently found love at first sight and seldom through lengthy consideration. Perhaps I am a throwback, for that is what happened with this boy and me. We sat in a quiet glade and talked for hours; I cannot say for how long. By the time our encounter ended, twilight was approaching. I left him with a promise to meet again. No plans, no details, but I know it will happen. I want it to happen.

26, month 5
Today, unable to help myself, I returned to the forest to try to find him again. I was not back in the glade for more than the half split of an hour before he reappeared. Again, we sat and talked of our lives and our hopes for the future. I feel so free with him, so able to be open about my life. He is the same with me, and I am reassured that the love I feel for him is not built on a foundation of false expectations but on real possibilities. While the prohibitions cannot be changed, I see no reason why they might not be ignored for a time. So I tell myself. So I am persuaded.

28, month 5
We met again today. Our conversations were of ourselves, but also of the strife between our peoples and the terrible toll it was taking on all our lives. He told me he did not see all of his people as bad or all of ours as good. It was not so simple in his eyes, and I was quick to agree with him. The war is ongoing, centuries old, a struggle that has its roots in the beginnings of all our Races and of the world itself, and it will not end in our lives. We are its children, but we feel so apart from the war when together and alone. If only we could keep it that way. If only we

could shelter what we feel for each other so that no one could ever destroy it. Before we parted, he told me how he had come to find me. He was delegated by his elders to spy upon the city from the particular vantage point into which I had ventured. He was not to interfere, only to observe and report. He hated what he was doing, but it was his duty and his parents would be shamed if he failed. Yet when he saw me, he found he no longer cared about anything else. He had to reveal himself. He had to talk to me. By now I am no longer thinking of anything but how to hold on to him, how to make him mine forever.², month 6

When he came to me on this day, our first day of meeting in the new month, I gave myself to him. I did so freely and with great joy. We did not speak while it was happening, did not even pause to consider. We simply did what we had wanted to do from the first time we had met. It was so wonderful, and the feelings I experienced while in his arms are with me still and will be so forever. It was my first time, and he is my first real love. I could not ask for anything more wonderful. I have been made happy beyond my wildest expectations. Now that I have taken this final, irrevocable step, there is no going back, nothing more to consider. I am his.³, month 6

We met again today. I couldn't help myself. Nor, I think, could he. We are so in love. We are so happy.⁵, month 6

Again. Another sweet time.¹², month 6

Such agony! Mother kept me busy all this week with studies and housework, and I could not go to him even once. Today was our first time together again in an entire week. He says he understands, although it is hard for him, too. I will not suffer such separation again!¹⁵, month 6

Even three days is too long. I was in such despair, and he was so wild with worry and so in need when we met. Oh, how I love him!¹⁷, month 6

Just when I think matters have returned to normal and we will be left to our regular meetings, something else has intruded. I must go to visit my grandparents in the city of Parsoprey across the Dragon's Teeth and down onto the plains of the Sarain and so will be gone for two entire weeks. I cannot go to him to let him know--we are to leave at once! I think I shall die!², month 7

Home again at last. I went straight to the glade and took him to our home and into my bed. It feels so right to have him there. I told him everything of where I had been and what I had been forced to endure and he, sweet boy, told me he understood and forgave me. He worried that I had forsaken him and would not return. But I would never do that. He must know this, I told him. I will love him until the day I die.²², month 7

I take him to my bed at every opportunity, no longer content with our time in the forest glade. I want him close to me. I want him with me always and constantly, but I must settle for what I can have. I choose times when I know the house will be empty. I live for those times. I am consumed by my need for them. I want them to go on forever.¹⁰, month 8

Today I did something that may have been foolish. I spoke of the magic that keeps the Elves safe. I revealed too much of what I knew in an effort to impress--though only after he had done so first, speaking of the magic that keeps his own people safe. We spoke in general terms and not of specifics, but I am troubled nevertheless. We spoke of magic in the course of our frequent discussions on how the war between our peoples might be brought to an end. If there were no magic, there might be less cause for fighting, we reason. He sees it as I do, and so we speak of it openly. It is only talk, and nothing much could come of it. When we are together, what does talk of magic and conjuring and endless conflict matter anyway? Nothing matters, save that we are together. But now I wonder. Because even though we spoke mostly in generalities, I did once speak in specifics. I told him about the Elfstones. "Aphen, are you still down there?" She looked up quickly from the diary. Her uncle. "Still here," she answered. She shoved the diary under a pile of papers and took up something else as if she had been looking at that instead. She did so out of habit and instinct, aware not only that was she forbidden to remove anything from the archives but also that she was constantly watched in her comings and goings and never certain who it was that might be doing the watching. Mostly, it was Home Guards stationed at the top of the basement stairs, but it could be anyone. She liked her uncle and was close to him, but to the larger Elven community she had been a pariah for so long that she never took anything for granted. A candle's dim light wavered its way down the steps from the level above, and her uncle appeared out of the darkness. "The hours you keep, dear young lady, are ridiculous." Ellich Elessedil was the younger of the two brothers who had been in line for the throne many years ago and, to her mind, the one best suited to the task. But his older brother, her grandfather, was the one who had become ruler of the Elves on the death of their parents. Now her grandfather's son, Phaedon, was the designated heir apparent and, as her grandfather continued to weaken from his chronic heart and lung problems, increasingly likely to be King soon. Aphen's mother was Phaedon's much younger sister, and her refusal to become involved in the business of the court allowed Aphen to remain comfortably clear of family and state politics. Not as far clear as she would have liked, however. Her choice to become a member of the Druid order had put an end to that. Her uncle took a seat on a stool she was using for stacking notes, moving the papers aside without comment. Though he was actually her great-uncle, Aphen found the

designation awkward and called him simply Uncle, mostly as a term of endearment because they were so close. He was tall and lean and as blond as she was, although his hair was beginning to go gray. "It's getting on toward midnight, you know. Whatever's keeping you here could wait until morning." She smiled and nodded. "Nothing's really keeping me. I just lost track of time. Thank you for rescuing me." He smiled back. "Find anything of interest today?" "Nothing." The lie came smoothly. "Same as always. Every morning I think that this will be the day I discover some great secret about the magic, some clue about a lost talisman or a forgotten conjuring. But each night I return to my bed disappointed." He looked around the room, taking in the shelves of books and boxes, the reams of papers stacked in their metal holders, the clutter and the scraps of documents and notes. "Perhaps there is nothing to find. Perhaps all you are doing is sorting documents that no one but you will ever read." He glanced back at her. "I'm not trying to discourage you, not after all the work you've put in. I am only wondering if this is a fool's errand." "A fool's errand?" she repeated. Her blue eyes flashed. "You think I may have spent the last three hundred and sixty-four days on a fool's errand?" He held up his hands in a placating gesture. "That was a poor choice of words. Please forget that I spoke them. I don't know enough about what you are doing to be able to question it with any authority. I only ask because I care about you." "You know why I am here, Uncle," she said quietly. "You know the importance of what I am doing." "I know that you believe it to be important. But if there is nothing to find, if there is no magic to be found, no talismans to be recovered, then what have you accomplished?" "I will have made certain of what you clearly suspect," she answered. "I will have eliminated the possibility that something has been missed. A lot of time has passed and a lot of history been forgotten or lost. We are an old people, after all." He shrugged, leaning back on the stool. "Old enough that we are no longer the people we once were and probably never will be again. We have evolved since the Faerie Age. We do not rely on magic as we once did--or certainly not the same kinds of magic. We share the world now with other, different species. The Faerie that served the Void are locked away behind the Forbidding. Now we have humans to deal with instead, a less imaginative people, and the need we once had for protective magic no longer exists." *Revue de presse* Terry Brooks is a master of the craft and a trailblazer . . . Required reading (Brent Weeks, Author Of The Night Angel Trilogy)I can't even begin to count how many of Terry Brooks's books I've read (and re-read) over the years. (Patrick Rothfuss, Author Of The Name Of The Wind)Wards of Faerie is the best novel Brooks has written in years . . . It's full of hair-raising escapes, twists to established traditions and set pieces familiar to Shannara fans and characters, interesting magic and monsters and diverse relationships (A DRIBBLE OF INK)The design of the Shannara books spreads the story line across centuries, yet also makes it easy for new readers to jump in at any point . . . a grand example of the best of the best in the genre (Washington Post)Terry Brooks has been my constant companion over a lifetime of exploring my beloved fantasy genre. I say with all honesty I would not be writing epic fantasy today if not for Shannara. If Tolkien is the grandfather of modern fantasy, Terry Brooks is its favorite uncle (Peter V. Brett, Author Of The Painted Man)If you haven't read Terry Brooks, you haven't read fantasy (Christopher Paolini, Author Of Eragon And Brisingr)Terry's place is at the head of the fantasy world -- Philip Pullman, Author Of The Golden Compass