



The Shadow of the Soul

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DI Cass Jones is still dealing with the fallout of uncovering a conspiracy within his own police station when a terrorist attack rocks London and he finds himself called on to help with the investigation. Cass also has his own investigation to worry about: young people are dying, apparently committing suicide.

The Shadow of the Soul Details

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From Reader Review The Shadow of the Soul for online ebook

Neil Ford says

An absolutely amazing book. Bad shit happens, people get fucked with and you are left with desperately wanting to know what happens next.

Read this in a day I was that engrossed. Can't recommend this series enough, it's that good.

Joy says

I usually find the whole fallen angels theme boring but this has continually strung me along; with hints, enigmatic acts and other strange creatures, that I been draw into the mystery. The actual goals of these world ruling beings has yet to play out and poor Detective Cass has been hung out to dry, framed for murder. On to book three and hopefully some answers.

Marcus Wilson says

A satisfying crime novel that combines with elements of a near future dystopian science fiction novel. There are plenty of supernatural mysteries left to be solved, and that's enough to bring me back for part 3.

Librariasaurus says

The Shadow of the Soul was not as good as Matter of Blood for me, but this was still a pretty decent book.

I think that Sarah Pinborough is now a bit of a mainstay for me. She's a great writer and I absolutely love Cass Jones as a character. I really think someone needs to look into turning this series into a tv show.

Through Pinborough's writing I have found a new favourite genre. I really hope the last book rounds off the series well, I've not read many series that have been finished well, I find they all usually go downhill. Regardless though, boy am I obsessed with supernatural thrillers now. This is the start of something big I think!

The subject this book was awesome, it's very dark and is an awesome exploration of the psychopathy of humans and their willingness to kill to protect even the smallest of secrets. Amanda is a creepier character than I've read in ages. On characters too, I actually really like Armstrong as Cass's new partner. He didn't have one in Matter of Blood but it's a testament to Pinborough's writing that she has woven him in so well when it seemed that Cass was destined to be a lone wolf.

Bring on book three!

Lucian Poll says

Note: This review contains spoilers for "A Matter of Blood" (albeit nothing you wouldn't find in the blurb).

"The Shadow of the Soul" is book two of Sarah Pinborough's "Dog-Faced Gods" trilogy (also known as the "Forgotten Gods" trilogy in the US) and continues the story of Detective Inspector Cassius Jones following the dramatic conclusion of "A Matter of Blood".

Six months have passed since that climactic shootout, London is recovering from a string of recent severe bomb attacks, and Cass Jones is investigating a series of unusual student suicides, each linked by a single bizarre phrase: "Chaos in the darkness". He has a new partner in tow that he can barely stand, his testimonies against fellow coppers attract suspicion and resentment from many of his colleagues, and he finds his messy private life and family history further entwined in the machinations of the mysterious Mr Bright and The Bank.

Specifically, it turns out that Luke, the nephew he had thought murdered, was not the biological son of his brother, Christian. A switch at birth had taken place, and one that Christian had grown to suspect. It does not take a giant leap of logic to suspect Mr Bright's involvement, particularly when Cass finds the man in age-old family photographs looking not a day younger.

We are introduced to a new character, Abigail Porter, security operative for the Prime Minister. When CCTV footage reveals a large fat man in the vicinity immediately before each bomb blast in London, it becomes evident that they are seeing the same person each time, something that should not be impossible when the bombs were all detonated simultaneously. When Abigail spots the same figure in the crowd prior to an official engagement she chases him down into a tube station. He looks close to death and, when he touches her hand, her mind is filled with bizarre images and sensations. He leaves her with a single word, "Interventionist", before hurling himself under a train with a big grin on his face.

Meanwhile a fear of death permeates the cohorts of The Bank. They are supposed to be eternal, otherworldly beings, and yet several of their number are finding their lifeforce, their "Glow", on the wane. While Mr Bright is convinced it is all a state of mind - that they have simply grown tired of living for so long - the fear among the ranks is proving enough to stoke a rebellion. It is the last thing Mr Bright needs. The first of their kind remains comatose, and the way home across the Walkways is proving as elusive as ever.

For anyone who thought "A Matter of Blood" dragged a little (particularly in regard to Cass Jones' home life) let me put your mind at rest. "The Shadow of the Soul" thunders along like a speeding freight train. With the (ahem) dead weight cut from Cass' overarching story, the pages turn thick and fast, helped in no small part by a healthy dollop of Even More Plot. Yum!

Sometimes when completely new characters are crowbarred into established stories it can be quite jarring and off-putting. (I finally lost track of how big Tony Soprano's extended family became by season six, for example.) While the temptation would have been there to plonk Abigail Porter into the story simply as a means to further Mr Bright's storyline, this has been largely resisted and results in a great, fully-rounded and kick-ass character: perhaps my favourite of the trilogy.

On top of this, exposition is drip-fed into the narrative in mostly the right places and really helps draw you into the story. If you hadn't quite guessed who or what the cohort were by the end of book one, for example, you'll be in little doubt by the end of this one.

There are issues to overlook, however. We have the re-emergence of Guess The Login Password, which, as my previous review mentioned, is a plot trope that should suffer the editor's red pen the world over. Luckily this time it's not as integral to the plot. There is also the usual riddle-talking and copious amounts of I-know-something-you-don't-know from Mr Bright that can become rather tiring.

There was another thing that niggled me throughout the series, though I fully admit this may have been just me. I am aware that the author used her former pupil's names for characters in her earlier books. For this trilogy she appears to have name-checked several fellow authors and editors in the field: Ramsey (Campbell), (Jo) Fletcher, (Steve) Rasnic (Tem), Brian Freeman, (Stephen) Jones, (Paul) Cornell and so on. On the one hand this is a nice gesture, and yet, once I noticed it happening, I must say every fresh nod bounced me a little out of the story.

Otherwise I was looking at an entertaining read in "The Shadow of the Soul", and one that satisfactorily ratchets things up from "A Matter of Blood". Recommended, but make sure you read the first book!

4/5

Richard Wright says

Picking up not long after *A Matter of Blood*, the middle part of the Dog-Faced Gods trilogy does exactly what a fulcrum instalment should – it delivers more of the same, while realigning the whole structure to end in a very different place from where it started. As such there are more conspiracies and corruptions within an increasingly dystopian alternate near-future, what appears to be a serial killer at large, and a deepening of the intrigues linked to the bloodline of the principal character DI Cass Jones.

In the end though, the author reveals that she has been building a house of cards only to sweep it away and construct something wholly new from the constituent parts. That this presents as evolution, and is barely noticeable until you step back to see it, attests to just how engrossingly the story is told. By the end of the book, not only have the characters been exposed to extraordinarily harsh twists, but the background mythology that has been alluded to through the trilogy to date are starting to peek through, adding fantastical elements that throw the grim realities of the framework into even starker relief. This is shaping up to be a trilogy quite unlike anything else on the shelves.

Henrik says

Not as good as the first one. Still enjoyable and intriguing, though.

Terry Weyna says

Warning: This review contains spoilers for the first book in the FORGOTTEN GODS trilogy, *A Matter of Blood*.

As *The Shadow of the Soul* by Sarah Pinborough opens, Cass Jones has been through six months of interviews, arrests, statements and the backlash from his discovery of rampant corruption among his fellow

police officers (as set forth in the first book of the FORGOTTEN GODS trilogy, *A Matter of Blood*), and it isn't even close to over. It's hard for him to care about anyone thinks about him, though, because all he has to do is remember the sight of his dead partner's body at the bottom of the stairs of the Paddington Green station to feel that they all had it coming.

There's a shortage of personnel now, worse than ever, because of all the officers who have been relieved of duty, so Cass is kept busier than ever. His latest case is a suicide that doesn't seem quite right. It's definitely suicide, not murder in any ordinary sense, but the dead college-age girl said something very strange just before she died: "Chaos in the darkness." Soon this suicide is not the only one on his docket; a number of college kids have died with the same words on their lips or written in their own blood on a nearby wall.

Cass is also still dealing with the deaths of his brother and his family, and the odd news that his brother's son Luke was switched at birth with another baby, and that Luke is out there somewhere, very possibly in danger from The Bank and Mr. Bright, villains familiar to us from *A Matter of Blood*. It isn't long before Cass begins to think there is a connection between The Bank and the suicides, and he sets out to discover what it is despite massive resistance by his superiors and a distinct lack of evidence.

But the cases on which Cass is working are only a small part of the chaos that has gripped London. Terrorism is on the rise; a bus, a car and a shop have just been blown up at Ealing Broadway, and there have been at least three large explosions in the Underground. The injuries, death, smoke, damage and confusion have caused enormous fear among the population. And the CCTV tapes show the very same man present at all the explosions, which is impossible as they all took place at the same time. Alison McDonnell, the Prime Minister, is losing control of the situation, and one of her bodyguards, Abigail Porter, is charged with keeping her safe regardless of the circumstances. But Abigail isn't a typical woman, and her conduct as the terrorism investigation unfolds is puzzling and then frightening. When her path crosses Cass's, one begins to perceive of the wheels within wheels behind what is happening in their world.

This perception is accelerated when we get our next view of Mr. Bright and his cohorts. They're dying of eminently human diseases — pancreatic cancer, for instance — and that isn't supposed to happen to them. We don't yet know who these people are, but it is obvious by now that they have their fingers in almost all human events of national or global significance. They are desperately looking for a way home, whatever that might mean, and if humans must die for them to find the way, that's a price they are willing to pay.

It's a complicated, suspenseful tale; Pinborough keeps an enormous number of balls in the air without losing any of the detailed characterization or philosophical and religious musing that this tale requires. Given that this is the second book in a trilogy, Pinborough's job is to muddy the waters further, and place her hero in jeopardy, and she does both excellently. Yet at the same time, she provides a satisfying conclusion to some of the subplots — for instance, explaining the "chaos in the darkness" suicides — so that the novel does not read like mere filler between the beginning and the end of the trilogy. Indeed, I'd go so far as to say that this is one of the most skillful middle books to a trilogy I've ever read.

I unreservedly recommend this trilogy to anyone who enjoys horror fiction. It is deftly plotted, written with assurance in clear, compelling prose, and offers a puzzle as complicated as any horror novel or series I've ever read. The sense of impending doom permeates the novel and gets into your bones. Don't miss this one.

Originally published at <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/reviews/>

Bandit says

Wow, my memory must be really going. Read and really liked the first one in this Pinborough trilogy back in June and couldn't remember a thing about it. Had to read reviews, plot summaries and still limited recall. And make no mistake, these are not stand alones, the books are very much integrated and meant to add up to one cohesive whole. In retrospect I wish I'd have waited till all three parts were out and then read them all in a row, but Pinborough is so talented and her books are such a treat, the wait would have been much too difficult. The Shadow of Soul continues in the dark, bleak and depressing Britain of near future. Detective Cass Jones is still looking for answers and mysterious Mr. Bright is still operating all the strings from behind the curtain of The Bank. From what I remember the first book had a stronger individual plot lines, this one is more of a set up for a grand finale, more questions are asked than answered. I can only imagine how bombastic the 3rd book will be with all the reveals. Pinborough's writing is as strong as ever and she blends detective procedural with supernatural elements with a steady hand and constantly impressive skill. And it looks like this might be adapted to television by BBC (they do the best fiction to tv adaptations ever). How awesome is that. Great book. I only hope I'll remember it by the time the third one comes out.

Recommended.

Kim says

I couldn't finish this, despite giving it much longer than it really deserved. I didn't know it was part of a series, but I don't think that mattered too much since the plot was easy enough to pick up. The main problem was that the writing was so cringeworthy. Not for me at all.

Brian Taylor says

Liked the first book better. This one takes a bit to get going and the ending wasn't as satisfying for me as the first. It's more of a to be continued where I felt the first wrapped things up in a better way. Other than that, more of what you'd expect. I'll be reading the third book in a bit.

Mike says

The Shadow of the Soul is the second book in the noir/horror series The Forgotten Gods/The Dog-Faced Gods by Sarah Pinborough. Ace Trade is releasing the books here in the US a couple of months apart from one another as each was previously published in the UK between 2010-2011. The Shadow of the Soul picks up almost exactly where A Matter of Blood left off. DI Cass Jone has met with some success in his past cases but that success has cast a harsh light on the corruption within the London police force; a fact further ostracizing him from his peers. To make matters worse the lingering court cases resulting from his work in A Matter of Blood have left him with a boring case load. Of course that won't remain the case as a series suicides hits London's student body all linked by the mysterious phrase "Chaos in the Darkness."

Pinborough seemingly took all the things that were great about A Matter of Blood and distilled them into a near perfect form in The Shadow of the Soul. A Matter of Blood was a fast read but The Shadow of the Soul

moves like lightning. This was a book that, even more than its predecessor, I simply could not put down and I ended up devouring it in a little over a day. Pinborough peels back more layers to the dark currents of the supernatural that ran through the previous novel. We learn a staggering amount of information about the players involved in The Bank. Yet, at the same time, Pinborough manages to be quite cagey about the details. We learn enough to form impressions, to get ideas, but we don't really know anything for certain. It is an utterly brilliant tactic that hints just enough to be unsettling.

Cass' predicament in *The Shadow of the Soul* is tied heavily to the revelations regarding Cass' nephew and brother from *A Matter of Blood*. Cass was told to keep his nose out of anything dealing with the Bank but the nature of those previous revelations have set him on an nigh unwavering path of conflict; plus it seems the Bank didn't get the same message about meddling. Pinborough does a fantastic job a obfuscating the way in which all of the novel's parts fit together until the very end. I was initially frustrated by this fact early in the novel but Pinborough manages to slowly conjure a sensation of both convergence and unraveling as the novel moves on. It is a curious effect that is greatly underscored by the increased reliance on the weird.

The weird elements in *The Shadow of the Soul* are increased greatly over *A Matter of Blood* and I absolutely love it. Pinborough's ability to reveal new bits of detail that simultaneously reveal the depth of her world while providing a dark grist that can be further ground by the imagination is intoxicating. There are so many elements from *The Shadow of the Soul* that provide a greater insight into the shadowy figures behind the Bank that I'm not even certain what I can or should mention. Juicy tidbits like one of the shadowy figures behinds the Bank's comment that there are people "still willing to offer them their children" (which to me calls to mind the Ammonite god Moloch), and decidedly cryptic titles like the Architect, weird creatures and strange experiments create a suitably mysterious and enticing blend that mixes surprisingly well with the cynicism and troubled nature of our protagonist.

Even more than *A Matter of Blood*, *The Shadow of the Soul* relies heavily on providing the reader with only partial information about the supernatural elements of the world. This is an element that I absolutely love; the willingness to rely on the imaginations of the reader has always felt like a rare trait in the world of horror fiction but it is one that Sarah Pinborough seems to embrace whole-heartedly. While *The Shadow of the Soul* concludes with less decisiveness than the previous novel it also manages to end on a note that leaves me foaming at the mouth for the third volume *The Chosen Seed*. Sarah Pinborough has crafted a series that leaves me wanting more and a highly recommend fans of horror and dark fantasy jump on the *Forgotten Gods* series as soon as possible.

Yolanda Sfetsos says

After reading the first book in The Dog-Faced Gods Trilogy last year, I was really looking forward to reading this book! And let me start of by saying: *Wow!*

DI Cass Jones lives in a very dark future London, where most of the world is in financial ruin, crime is pretty much everywhere, diseases are more common and deadly, and most people lead impossibly hard lives. To add to that, London is rocked by a terrorist attack, which is later mirrored in two other cities around the world. Except, these aren't your average terrorists.

This might not be a case Cass is investigating, but he does get dragged into it. Even if he's too busy trying to figure out why so many university students are suddenly killing themselves and leaving behind this message: *Chaos in the darkness*. He also receives a message that his dead brother left for him, claiming that his child

(Cass's nephew) is still alive because 'They' took him.

At first none of these strange and bizarre events seem to be connected, but the more Cass finds out, the further he's dragged into the mess that's going on around him. And he starts to figure out that all of these events are not just connected, but all lead back to the one man: Mr. Bright.

But Mr. Bright isn't alone this time. There are more like him and they have plans for the world, while they play their mysterious and dangerous games of betrayal.

The characters in this book are amazingly real, and wicked. It's once again written in the shared POV of several of them, giving us a peek into what some of the other players are getting up to.

The Shadow of the Soul is an amazing book. I was instantly sucked into this bleak and hardened world, and got so caught up that the tension and danger at every point had me on the edge of my seat. I couldn't wait to see where everything was going to lead. Although there were a few crumbs of explanation, just like everything else about this trilogy so far, nothing is as it seems and I was left with more questions than answers.

I love the shadowy existence of The Bank, and now that we know a little bit more about them, I can't wait for the last book!

Jack Haringa says

The Shadow of the Soul continues the trials of Cass Jones and his connection to the Network, a shadowy conspiracy of supernatural origin, which began in A Matter of Blood. This is a strong, compelling novel that develops the characters, setting, and situations of the first book in the series. It does suffer from "middle book syndrome" in that it doesn't have a real resolution but rather a cliff-hanger ending that inevitably carries over to the final novel in the trilogy. Much happens here, including some good development of Jones as a talented detective, and not just an element in a game much larger than himself. I'm looking forward to finishing the series before the end of the year.

Samuel Tyler says

Many are the times that I have longed for a book that starts on pages one and wraps up the saga by the final page. However, as fantasy is one of my favourite genres, this is not usually the case. Instead the books are inevitably part of a series or a trilogy. Sarah Pinborough's 'Dog-Faced Gods' trilogy is a great example. It has been some years since I read book one in the series, but I remember it being good. However, if you wait this long to get around to 'The Shadow of the Soul', you may find yourself as confused as I was.

'Shadow' is Urban Fantasy and has more than a taste of 'Neverwhere' to it. Set in a world manipulated by ancient Gods, it features Cass Jones as a detective who is aware that everything is not as it seems, but just wants to be left alone to solve the common garden variety of murders. However, when someone who appears to have perfectly cloned themselves starts to drop bombs, this is easier said than done.

The first in the series, 'A Matter of Blood', was a great mix of crime noir and fantasy. It never delved too

deeply into the occult until the end and this gave the book a solid narrative and an ephemeral feel. 'Shadow' starts after this book and has left the supernatural door wide open, with no way to shut it. When the Gods played a hidden and secretive role in the story the book was intriguing, now that they are at the forefront, it is confusing. At times Cass is side-lined in favour of a bunch of super beings talking shop; all a bit dull really. Most of the momentum created in the first book is lost towards the middle of this one and only a daring conclusion opens up the series for better possibilities.
