



## Court of Shadows

*C.N. Crawford*

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## **Court of Shadows** C.N. Crawford

A girls' night out means three things to me: drinking whiskey with my best friend, keeping my magic hidden, and trying not to kill anyone. A supernatural gladiator like me isn't supposed to exist anymore.

But my Friday night takes a bad turn when a lethally gorgeous fae--Ruadan--tries to assassinate me. He's taken a vow of silence until he's slaughtered the outlaws on his kill list. Outlaws like me.

Ruadan lets me live on one condition: I have to earn my place at the Institute of the Shadow Fae. As a powerful demi-fae, I can take the competition.

But things fall apart when I'm given an impossible choice: betray my mentor Ruadan, or my best friend dies. Now, I face a quandary my gladiatorial past did not prepare me for.

*This book is from the Demons of Fire and Night world.*

## **Court of Shadows Details**

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## From Reader Review Court of Shadows for online ebook

### Rickey Morris says

Court of Shadows CN Crawford

Years after the Angel Wars have ended, we open with Arianna in a bar she works at with her friend Ciara and at this time in history, the Shadow Fae have sent all supernaturals back to their Realm's, locked them in to ensure no more attacks and wars are fought on the human world. There are still some Supernaturals left, but they are supposed to stay to their own places, and not enter the Human Bars, nor the other way around or the Shadow Fae deal out swift and final justice. Arianna saw one Intoxicated Vampire enter, and she quickly and physically stopped him from taking her friend Ciara with him for a quick bite. Another came in and although she got them to leave, they knew she was not a normal human and were intent on informing the Shadow Fae. This story takes many different levels of adventure very quickly starting with the abandoned building that Arianna lives in with several other drifters, one in particular a bit strange, but her old Enslaver Baleros forced her into becoming an Apprentice at the Shadow Fae Towers to train and survive to join the ranks of enforcement, and to steal a key or he would kill her friend. I don't want to give too much away, but this was easily one of the most enjoyable books in a series by CN since her First book at the Tree. With her Trainer, being a Demigod, and the magic she must learn, and the fights she must survive I put the book down once, and I normally don't read straight through. If you miss Court of Shadows, you'll be missing one of the best books this year.

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### Ruelle Darkwood says

**This book jumps right into the action**, I am ALL FOR the opening chapter, hells yes! I love Arianna, she kinda gives off this sort of Juliet Sterling / Jessica Jones vibe; she's sultry in a cute-but-unhinged lollipop girl way, but also has demons from her past that she's battling in the form of sarcasm and poor life choices. Oh, and she's lethal as fuck...*when* she gives a fuck. A quick *swish swish* and you're D E A D, and never saw it coming.

**I love the different characters, the worldbuilding, relationships, pacing, dialogue, IT**

**WAS...\*indiscernible noises\*!** I could totally see this playing out like an action film. The action bits were badass, the sexy parts were irresistible, and there's enough mystique that will make you impatient to know more about the characters and their backgrounds. When you read this you will want for nothing. OKAY, I LIED. You'll want for nothing except maybe *to never see Uncle Darrell ever, ever again*. For the love of all that is holy (hole-y?), please go away Uncle Darrell, I beg you.

To be honest, the only thing that *really* bothered me about this book is how often random dude's junk are brought to our attention, and not in a sexy way, **IN A REALLLLLY WEIRD WAY**. I mean, maybe it's a type of British humor that was lost on me, and this is coming from a person with a very odd, inappropriate sense of humor. I'm usually the one weirding other people out, so that was new. After a while you kinda get used to it and it's less of a shock factor and more of a **WHAT THE FUUUUCK WHYYYY** moment. The more you read it, the funnier it gets, promise. Fair warning though, if you don't enjoy vulgar or highly sexual content, then I'm not so sure if you'd enjoy this book.

At the end of the hall, I slammed through the door into the bathroom. I tried to ignore Uncle Darrell, who was hanging out in a towel and flip-flops on the edge of the bathtub. I often found

him here in the middle of the night. "Have I ever told you what I do on the weekends?" he began. Please don't. "I connect to the power of the earth," he went on. "Bury my manhood in the fresh forest soil." Vomit. "How about we don't have this discussion?" "My shaman says it's gotta be the whole ballsack and not just the shaft. It's quite the commitment, going out into nature." "Could you not just use a potted plant in the comfort of your own living room?" No idea why I was prolonging this conversation. He scratched his chin. "I'm not sure that would work, but I'll try it."

She had it right; VOMIT.

**NOW, LET'S TALK ABOUT RUADAN.** Somehow, the fact that he doesn't talk does SO MUCH for his character, the sexy was just rolling off of him. Instead of knowing him through dialogue, we are acutely aware of his body language, physical power, and actions - and he remains oh so mysterious. **OH YES PLEASE.** You can cut the sexual tension between him and Arianna with a knife, **AND I AM LIVING FOR IT!** I want to know what he's thinking, dammit! I wanna know it all!!!

Also, you know how when you're reading, the characters magically have their own voices in your head? When we finally do hear him speak, Ruadan sounded like...for lack of a better comparison because I can't quite place it...**a very sensual Batman.** You read that right.

I read through this *fast*. I love the directions the characters go, and all of the different interweaving sub-plots. We get just enough tidbits of information to kinda connect the dots, but **THERE ARE SO MANY POSSIBILITIES, AND I HAVE QUESTIONS.** I love the antihero vibes and their pure satisfaction on falling an enemy. This is life or death, and they aim to survive. I am all YES, YES, YES, over these snarky Chaotic Neutral killing machines. Onto the next book!

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## Gigi McBride says

### Great characters and storyline!

I really enjoyed Court of Shadows and had a really hard time putting it down. Finished it in two days.

The main character Arianna is strong and likable. She's had a rough life but has managed to retain a sense of humor. She doesn't pity herself or feel sad about her situation, but instead has acclimated to surviving in tough situations and dire conditions. She has an internal struggle because she hasn't become completely jaded, so a part of her wants love and friendship but her life so far has told her to trust no one and question everyone's motives. With her past this seems realistic. The author does enough character building with her to have a clear sense of who she is but also keeps parts of her mysterious. I really liked her character which was refreshing. I loved her interactions with Ruadan. There was a lot of chemistry and it got steamy at times but was also unpredictable. I like how their relationship has been progressing.

The storyline moved at a good pace. There was a good mix of dialogue/action and internal dialogue. I've found with too much dialogue/action you don't get enough sense of the character and with too much internal dialogue the story can drag and feel repetitive or boring. The author did a great job of incorporating just enough of both to keep the story moving along at a good pace.

Overall I thoroughly enjoyed this first book in the series and am off to start on the second one! I highly

recommend this book!

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## Lily says

4.5

I don't even know what to say! This is a very solid urban fantasy with a heroine who is so lovable that she melts your heart right out of your chest.

Arianna is a former prized gladiator trying to recover from her captivity while keeping her head down. She has been forced to become a ruthless fighter and while she never forgets all the necessary tools for survival she has learned, she never loses her sense of honor or her vulnerability.

I already knew that this author has skill in writing urban fantasy, but Arianna really pushed it over the top for me.

The premise of the story was interesting, although I wish it was explored in more detail. The romance was great. Arianna's interactions with the other female characters were also a bright spot. And the story was surprisingly funny while still delivering that emotional depth that I crave.

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## Book Addict says

Wow...just wow! Once again CN Crawford has started off s new series with a bang! I throughly enjoyed reading Court of Shadows and as soon as I started my attention was fully captivated and was completely invested in Arianna's life. And what an interesting FMC she is! Powerful, cunning, vulnerable and a fighter! You learn a bit about her in this book and about her past but I still have so many questions about her and who she actually is! And then let's add in Ruadan...now he is so intriguing, silence does not stop the reader wanting more from him, he is a great character that I cannot wait to see more of in book 2!! I also loved the scenes with Bael and Caine and am excited to see them more in the series! This is a great first book, written by very talented authors, that is full of action, mystery and magic! Highly recommended.

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## Yuki Yuki says

Rating: 4.5/5

The story is set in the same world as some of CN Crawford's previous series, though it offers a different perspective. I must mention that straight off the bat, it reminded me of their "Spy Among the Fallen" series: a fae girl in an apocalyptic world who is forced to infiltrate the enemy forces. In the end, the plots diverged and I must confess that I prefer this series. This heroine comes across as more rational.

Arianna (MC):

A strong, mysterious heroine. She has scars from her past, but she draws strength from them. As the book unravels, we get hints into her past. Arianna makes rational choices without being boring. Moreover, while

we get to see her kick (sometimes literal) ass, she isn't overpowered. I liked how she never quite bends to the male hero.

**Plot:**

It started off slow and it was predictable until it wasn't. There were a couple of twists I didn't see coming and the last ~20% was kept me on the edge of my seat. I enjoyed the "mind-games" with her enemy.

**Humor:**

Quite subtle and strangely enjoyable. Uncle Darrell is really something. The odd details here and there, in my opinion, were the cherry on top.

**Romance:**

Finally, the part you've all been looking for. I must say, I was unsure when I read that the male hero had taken a vow of silence. I mean... how are they going to flirt? Send each other love notes? Make kissy faces at each other? Nonetheless, CN Crawford did not disappoint. Without spoiling it, the romance was handled delicately. I love a good slow-burn.

**Cons:** The plot started off a little slow and the premise was similar to their previous book "Covert Fae."

Final rating: 4.5/5

P.S. I love that the next book comes out within a few days.

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## **Briana Washington says**

\*3.75\* i'm rounding up because it was a really, really enjoyable read! I loved the two main characters and I flew through this book! I'm curious to see how this story progresses in the next book

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## **Lynn's books says**

### **Oh my stars !!! Emoji star eyes even!**

What a fantastic fantasy fiction paranormal trip!!! I'm just in a storyline high! So so so so beyond happy I read this! I read the synopsis and at the time I didn't see too many reviews. I decided to jump in anyway and I'm loving ALL of it! Exceptionally creative and fast moving storyline but not a short story feel. It just keeps moving and while it keeps moving we are fed another piece to the puzzle. I haven't read anything like this so for someone who hasn't been exposed to a lot of demigod stuff, buckle up! What a trip. Also, I am compelled to talk about the characters. Of course you have your main characters, supporting characters and background characters but they were all so well written, real, and completely functioning to the story. Everyone of these characters had a tangible flavor. Arianna and Ruadan! Just thinking about them I need to just take a breather. Total opposites and yet two halves of the same cloth. Ruadan...deadly, fierce, complex, mysterious, wickedly handsome and full of dark suspense. I need more Ruadan. Also, my hats off to Crawford. Ruadan was so well written and I loved how we got to know him considering his initial "trait". It just added to his allure. Arianna...clever, cunning, ferociously brave, witty, broken, beautiful, strong and strong willed. My favorite trait of hers though, comical. Pure utter lol in your face flawless sarcastic dead pan humor. Oh how I went from suspense to full on belly laugh in a nano second. There isn't one thing I didn't like about it. Not one. I started Court of Shadows yesterday. It consumed me. I was so disappointed in myself when I couldn't stay

awake any longer and dragged myself off to bed (the wee hours of the morning). Equally bummed that my job got in the way of prime reading time. I just wanted to stop the world and read. It's that good!

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## Kylie says

'Court Of Shadows' is a book with unexpected twists and turns. While Arianna has her own problems about her past to untangle she is still trying to engage in the present with Rudan. With Arianna's sudden change in heart and realization about herself she figures out how to achieve her goals and stay alive. Rudan makes Arianna use all the skills she's got and push her past what she ever thought she could do. While defeating the 'villian' Rudan and Arianna create more memories and adventures for the reader to engage with.

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## Rhy Moore says

### Sympathetic back pains

These authors really need a different way to describe the physical sensations and responses their characters experience around magic. Take some time, sit down together, think about it, and make a list. You shouldn't stop until you have at least a dozen options on it you're happy with. Ideally more. But NONE of them should involve backs arching, okay? You've already incinerated that bridge. Seriously, you've used it way too much, and it barely made sense to start with. There are two of you, so watch each other try to act these scenes out. Or try it out in a coffee shop or something. In the middle of a conversation, arch your back, breathe heavy, then go on about your business. See that? Everyone is giving you side eye. Now do it another dozen times. The coffee shop is empty, the cashier is on the phone asking their manager for help, and if you haven't pulled a muscle in your back, it's sheer luck. Please, please stop using that phrase.

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## Ana says

*Thick, lush moss covered the floor, and honeysuckle climbed the stone walls. Wildflowers grew from the ceiling-bluebells, yellow wood -sorrel, and lavender orchids. The beds looked as if they'd been hewn from enormous oak trunks, with branches sprouting into the air around them.*

I received an **advance readers copy** from the author CN Crawford in exchange for an honest review.

This is just the second book I read from Ms. Crawford and I have to admit I'm really impressed. The way she described the setting was so enticing and magical that you want to be part of it. It definitely draws you into the story and stimulates you to keep on reading.

The story had a little bit of Dystopian flavor to it. Quoting the book, "**After the Angelic Apocalypse decades ago. The world had descended into a dark period known as the anarchy. Fae, demons, and humans battled to fill the power vacuum. In the end, humans agreed to let Fae nobility...act as enforcers(spell-slayer). They were supposed to keep the peace. All other supernaturals were locked.**"

The protagonist Arianna is a demi-fae (part fae - part something). She was supposed to be serving in the fae-realm enforcing the law but for some reason she was not. Until, Ruadan (fae/wraith) and Aengus (fae enforcer) recruited her to be part of the Institute of the Shadow Fae (otherwise known as spell-slayer). She

hated the institution her entire life, so at first she refused to be part of it. But some unfortunate circumstances made her change her mind, so the adventure begins...

It is a page-turner and the heroine is a badass chick who does not back down on any bad situation. I have read about so many badass heroines before (badass since seems to be a trend these days?), but for me Arianna stands out because there's this element of mystery in her and she has a big heart. I'm also intrigued with her relationship with the wraith, Ruadan. I can't wait to see how it'll pan out.

I give it 4 ?? out of 5 , I can't wait to read the next book and know more about Arianna. ??

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### **Vannessa says**

I received the ARC of this book from Christine and Nick but this review is all mine!

I loved this book! Completely! Arianna lives in a world in which supernaturals are banned and hunted down by the Shadow Fae. Supernaturals just like Arianna who is a demi-fae, half fae, half something else that she really doesn't want to remember! All she wants to do is keep her head down and buy that bottle of whisky she so loves!

Unfortunately some others start some trouble and that trouble leads to even more trouble for Arianna. She now has some choices to make - do what the Shadow Fae want, do what her old mentor wants or die! None of those choices are particularly enticing! Having a troubled background and secrets she doesn't want found out, Arianna takes the choice which may or may not give her some sort of freedom and might just get her what she really wants! But she has to be strong, ruthless and powerful to gain it, but can she gain the trust of the Shadow Fae who envelops her in fear just by being near her?

I loved these characters and Arianna was a great heroine. She made some choices that she knew were maybe not the right ones, but ones she had to make in order to keep fighting. Ruadan just seemed to ooze sexiness and I would love to see if any romance, rather than just lust, will blossom between these two in the next book.

A great start to this series and one I can't wait to read more of!

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### **Penny Noble says**

I just loved this book. I really like these authors and all the books I've read by them, but this book was just wonderful. Great characters, intriguing plot, hot chemistry, and action so exciting your heart might stop lead to a book that was extremely hard to put down. I enjoyed every minute I spent reading this book. I love the hints that there are some things about Arianna's past she needs to find out about, and I loved Ruadan, even when he didn't talk for most of the book. His eyes were so expressive. I can't wait to find out more about this couple, the Institute, and the secrets that are being kept. I can't recommend this book enough! I was provided a complimentary copy of the e-book which I reviewed voluntarily.

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### **Victoria says**

My take on the book:

I seriously love the world they have build throughout the different series, mentioning events that happened or characters popping over :)

Scenes and environments were described very well, making it easy to imagine the different settings.

Character development was good. We learn a lot about Arianna: her history, what drives her, what her fears are and her reasoning. Our brooding, silent Ruadan is still a delicious mystery. One I very much hope will be unravelled in the next instalment. The other cast members, Melusine and Aengus primarily, get a decent amount of time in the book and are given sufficient depth for now. Hope to see more of their backstory as well!

Pacing and flow were great! Enough downtime in between to catch a breath and then Arianna is kicking ass again :) There wasn't really any need for extensive setting of the stage so we got right into the action.

The book in itself was well written as what we can expect by these authors, with no (noticeable) errors. There is no sex in this book, though it was getting hot at times (if that is important to you).

I voluntarily read an advanced reader copy of this book and all in all another great first book to a new series. Still a lot of questions hanging in the air, cannot wait for the second instalment!

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### **Tara Syrnyk says**

I was so completely captivated by this book! C.N. Crawford has done it again. I swear each book and each new series just gets better and better and this one also takes place in the Demons of fire and Night world which is just icing on the cake! Arianna is a total badass FMC and I love it. Her story takes place some years after the Angel wars ( you do not need to read the other series to read this one... but you should!!). She is a take charge kinda gal, even when the odds are stacked against her, she doesn't let fear control her. She is clever, loyal and sassy, she's a freaking gladiator and I totally want to be her friend. In order to save her best friend Ciara, she has been forced to do a task that proves to be harder than she expected and riddled with problems. Ruadan, an assassin of the Institute of Shadow Fae is one of those problems. A silent, brooding, mysterious problem. Oh and hes gorgeous. I am definitely looking forward to learning more about him. This book was a wicked read. I loved it and I can hardly wait to read the next installment. There is fantastic blend of mystery ,magic, suspense, action and romance in a world that C.N. Crawford has built up so well. So grab some lollipops, get comfy and prepare to immerse yourself in this book, you will not be disappointed! I was given a copy for an honest review, given voluntarily. You really need to read this book!!

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