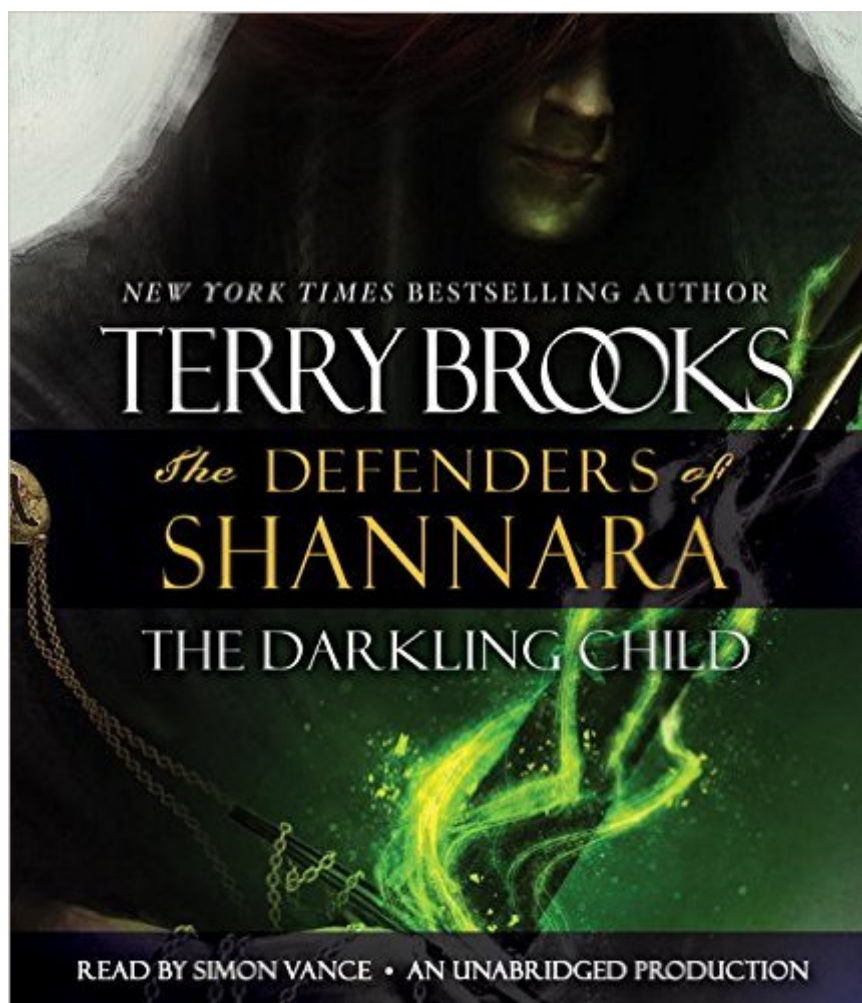


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# The Darkling Child: The Defenders Of Shannara



## Synopsis

From New York Times bestselling author Terry Brooks comes a thrilling stand-alone novel in his legendary Shannara series—the perfect place for new readers to begin. After taking up his enchanted sword against the dark sorcerer Arcannen, Paxon Leah has become the sworn protector of the Druid order. Now a critical hour is at hand, as a beloved High Druid nears the end of her reign and prepares to pass from the mortal world to the one beyond. There is little time for Paxon to mourn his friend and benefactor before duty summons him. For in a distant corner of the Four Lands, the magic of the wishsong has been detected. Paxon must accompany a Druid emissary to find its source—and ensure the formidable power is not wielded by the wrong hands. But danger is already afoot in the village of Portlow. Gentle traveling minstrel Reyn Frosch possesses the uncanny gift, and curse, of the wishsong. And now his coveted abilities have captured the malevolent interest of none other than Arcannen—whose quest for power is exceeded only by his thirst for vengeance. The lone survivor of a brutal assault on a notorious pirate city, the sorcerer is determined to retaliate against the Federation's elite military guard—and use the devastating power of the wishsong as his ultimate weapon.

**Praise for *The Darkling Child***

“Brimming with magic . . . a bubbling cauldron of fantasy and intrigue. This novel shines best through a full-bodied embrace of its most wildly imaginative magic and artifice, which is careful not to overshadow the story's greater half, fueled by a complex but well-constructed manifold of motives. The intrigue, grounded in a world that strays just enough from a traditional fantasy universe to elicit delighted curiosity, guarantees a solid fantasy read, especially for those already drawn into Brooks's vast world of Shannara.”

**Booklist** “Brooks's fans and those who prefer their fantasy on a smaller scale will appreciate the more personal but still high-stakes turn in this famous world.”

**Publishers Weekly** “Praise for Terry Brooks” “The *Sword of Shannara* is an unforgettable and wildly entertaining epic, animated by Terry Brooks's cosmically generative imagination and storytelling joy.”

Karen Russell, New York Times bestselling author of *Swamplandia!* “If Tolkien is the grandfather of modern fantasy, Terry Brooks is its favorite uncle.”

Peter V. Brett, New York Times bestselling author of *The Desert Spear* “I can't even begin to count how many of Terry Brooks's books I've read (and reread) over the years. From *Shannara* to *Landover*, his work was a huge part of my childhood.”

Patrick Rothfuss, New York Times bestselling author of *The Name of the Wind* “Terry Brooks is a master of the craft and a trailblazer who established fantasy as a viable genre. He is required reading.”

Brent Weeks, New York Times bestselling author of *The Night Angel Trilogy* “The *Shannara* books were among the first to really capture my imagination. My daydreams and

therefore my stories will always owe a debt to Terry Brooks.ââ "Brandon Mull, #1 New York Times bestselling author of the Beyonders and Fablehaven series  
From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Another semi-stand-alone Shannara novel, the slow-paced Darkling Child picks up after The High Druid's Blade, following some of the surviving characters, most notably Arcannen and Paxon Leah. We get Brooks' tried-and-true formula of a coming-of-age magic-bearing scion of an ancient family, a dastardly irredeemable villain, bumbling good guys, and a love interest (or two). This formula usually makes for a pleasant (lightweight) read, but this volume just plods. Consistently, what Brooks writes really really well is action, magic, and the sight of otherworldly scenes. What he writes more weakly is conversation and character-development. Unfortunately, this book is heavy on the latter category. While it reads easily, the characters seem "off", and it's hard to care about any of them. (\*\*lightweight spoilers ahead) We spend lots of time with Arcannen, but never get a sense of either malice or drive, and there's no discussion of his background. He seems extremely evil but mild-mannered, super-powerful but doesn't use his magic for anything mundane. Some authors could weave those elements together, but instead we get an Arcannen who seems nothing like the one in the previous book, and is more boring than deadly (except in one or two chapters). And there's the usual highly-placed Federation bad-guy, who is utterly one-dimensional. There's repeated (like 10-15) hints about something odd about the female love interest Larianna, but Brooks never goes anywhere with that idea. We briefly see several druids, but all but Alphenglow are barely

developed.

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