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The #1 New York Times–bestselling sequel to *A Discovery of Witches*, book two of the All Souls Trilogy—“as enchanting, engrossing, and impossible to put down as its predecessor” (Miami Herald)

J. K. Rowling, Stephenie Meyer, Anne Rice—only a few writers capture the imagination the way that Deborah Harkness has with her New York Times–bestselling All Souls trilogy. *A Discovery of Witches* introduces reluctant witch Diana Bishop, vampire geneticist Matthew Clairmont, and the battle for a lost, enchanted manuscript known as Ashmole 782.

Picking up from *A Discovery of Witches*' cliffhanger ending, *Shadow of Night* takes Diana and Matthew on a trip through time to Elizabethan London, where they are plunged into a world of spies, magic, and a coterie of Matthew's old friends, the School of Night. As the search for Ashmole 782 deepens and Diana seeks out a witch to tutor her in magic, the net of Matthew's past tightens around them, and they embark on a very different—and vastly more dangerous—journey.

Shadow of Night Details

Date : Published July 10th 2012 by Viking Adult

ISBN : 9780670023486

Author : Deborah Harkness

Format : Hardcover 584 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Paranormal, Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Vampires

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From Reader Review Shadow of Night for online ebook

E.L. James says

What a wonderful, vibrant, rich exciting thriller/mystery/love story this is.

Loved how the supernatural is woven through the story as Diana and Matthew journey through Elizabethan Europe.

A cracking read, and a worthy sequel to DoW. Can't wait for the next one.

Frances says

I was fairly eager to read Shadow of Night after reading Discovery of Witches. I didn't hate it. I didn't love it. While I certainly had my qualms about the first book (you can read my review to see about that), my review of Shadow of Night is equally ambivalent, but for different reasons.

SPOILERS AHEAD!!!

First, the good:

- Harkness finally utilizes her skills as an Elizabethan historian for more than painting a sentimental picture of Oxford. Taking her characters into Elizabethan England was smart because it allowed her to create a more vibrant setting than before, borrowing from a vast knowledge of tiny facts and details to transport the reader to 1590s Oxford and London. I especially enjoyed reading about Diana's wardrobe and her initial difficulties mastering the dialects of the time.

- In Shadow, Harkness creates a version of Diana that is MUCH more likable than the first. Unlike the first book, she is not ceaselessly crying, nor does she seem as attracted to Matthew's more Edward Cullen-ish controlling tendencies. Instead, she creates a woman who is much more believable as a strong, capable, bright academic--one who is willing to stand up for what she wants and who doesn't let her husband bully her as he did in the first book.

- The witchcraft writing is definitely stronger in this book than the last. I enjoyed the weaving elements, if the time travel was a bit weak. We finally get to see Diana demonstrate some mastery of her craft and learn from witches who can do way cooler stuff than either of her aunts. The fire Drake could be a seriously fun character in the future. Although Harkness takes a while to get to these scenes in the book (about halfway through, actually), once she does, the plot really starts to take off.

- Oddly, the fathers are the best new characters in the book, which is sad because they are both dead in the present time. Steven Proctor is delightfully foppish, and I love that he takes the time to embarrass the hell out of his vampire son-in-law. I wish there was a way we'd see him again, because he might be my new favorite character. Phillippe is also a vibrant new character whom I like most because of his arrogance. He is larger than life in a way I think Harkness meant Matthew to be in the first book, but didn't quite attain. I'm sad he won't reappear in the third book (at least, it's unlikely unless somehow Diana and Matthew changed time enough to save his life...hmm...not impossible).

The bad:

- Harkness still needs to work on her character building. A lot of people have remarked that they are not really in love with the characters, and a big part of that is because of their inconsistencies. Diana's fear of her own magic made a little sense when she was a crybaby (although that never really jibed with her success as an academic--I'm in that world, and it's competitive). Now that she's abandoned the tears for the second book, it makes no sense that she is still scared of learning about her own magic and the world from whence she comes. She's a HISTORIAN OF ALCHEMY, for pete's sake! She's the definition of someone who should be bending over backwards to learn how to use magic.

- Matthew, on the other hand, seems to fade into the shadow after which he is nicknamed. Despite the fact that we learn so much more of his backstory in this book, it often felt like he was a spectator in the scenes he was in rather than a protagonist. As a result, the more emotionally wrenching scenes between him and Diana seem to come out of nowhere. He was a crabby old man for the first half of the book, often absent on unexplained "spy work," and then suddenly he turned back into Will Darcy. His dialogue often came out of nowhere, and his body never seemed to do more than stand at windows and run his hands through his hair.

- "The moon between my thighs." Enough said.

- Too many of the secondary characters collapse into one another. The School of Night all essentially had the same personalities, the most irritating of which was Kit Marlowe (I still don't understand why Matthew didn't just kill him). All of the secondary vampires talked the same and looked the same, male or female. Francoise, Pierre, Gallowglass, Hancock, Benjamin...does it really matter? Just write "INTIMIDATING VAMPIRE" and be done with it.

All in all, I think your ability to enjoy this book and the series as a whole depends on your willingness to cast a blind eye at the stuff you don't like on a regular basis. For me, the escape of the story provides enough to want to read it and finish the series. I mostly just want to know what the writing is in the mysterious book. I also wouldn't mind meeting their kids. But if you're a stickler for things like pretty prose, stable character development, and sensible time-travel writing, this may not be the book for you.

M says

This book was unbearable. I wrote a really lengthy review then lost it before saving, but I have so many problems with this book that I honestly don't feel like writing them up again.

I'm just going to lay out some general reasons why you shouldn't read this book:

Most of the new characters are either boring or annoying. Matthew also becomes immensely annoying with his constant desire to keep secrets and treat her like she is incapable of understanding him.

If a character is annoying the author will make sure they appear often.

The treatment of time travel is so illogical that I can't look past it no matter how much I wanted to like this book. First, Matthew's former self simply disappears from the past when they arrive. This would imply that going back changes the past such that when they return, things will be dramatically different. They then proceed to do countless things that would seriously alter the future. Despite that, nothing appears wrong when they return way too late into the book (only two chapters of them back in the present). Add on top of that, the fact that they could have time traveled to another period the second the setting no longer seemed

favorable but didn't was ridiculous. Instead, they proceed to do a massive number of unnecessary things that could have been avoided if any character in the story had simply been smart enough to remember that the main character can time travel whenever she wants to.

Furthermore, the book doesn't stay true to the characters. The fact that Matthew didn't kill Kit on multiple occasions throughout the book was completely untrue to the character. Especially the final time when he kidnaps Diana and talks about how he wants to cut out her eyes. Which further highlights how Harkness was fighting to find things to fill the pages when this book would have been better if it was shorter.

The main character may grow stronger in terms of controlling her power, but she remains mentally weak. That's fine for a first book, but it's a really bad sign for a second book. This lack of development also shows up through Matthew's constant withholding of the truth. On top of that, for some reason her magic is different when she travels back in time. The fact that the time travel likely caused this is mentioned often, but I still can't grasp why such a change was in any way necessary or for that matter desired for any reason beyond extending the plot when it was already so out of whack.

On top of that, the author didn't spend enough time making sure the plot made sense. There was no reason for them to stay in the 16th century. This isn't some "the portal will open only on this day so and so months from now" book. The main character can time travel whenever she wants to, to whatever time or place she wants to if she has the right items. The fact that they didn't leave makes about as much sense as the fact that she can't time travel to the present that she left so as to avoid any time from passing in the present. Instead, when they return roughly a year has passed. But, I guess that does enforce the trend of Harkless being consistent in her attempts to make sure that time travel makes absolutely no sense at all in this book.

Please do not read this book. Read the next one when it comes out. Put this at the end of the list. If you're desperate, it's okay for you to read it. If you're not, just don't.

This is only one of three books I have reviewed of the 250 on my read shelf. The rest I only rated. That is how much I dislike this book. I'm also going to remove it from my kindle and am legitimately weighing whether or not to permanently remove it from my kindle account so I never have to see it again.

Kyla says

I wish I could give this book more than 3 stars. To be honest it's receiving three only because I it piqued my interest just enough to finish it.

I was so excited to read the second installment to Diana and Matthew's journey after reading The Discovery of Witches a couple of years ago and absolutely adoring the first book!

This book, I found, was too long with too many unnecessary characters. Yes I became aware after reading the book that there is a glossary in the back of the book....but on a Kindle you do not see that glossary or know about it until you reach the end of the book! LOL

The first third of the book I found to be incredibly slow. It involved the 2 main characters sitting around with other members of history simply spending time in a house babbling and arguing over "what to do next?" over and over while the author kept adding in more and more tid bits of history that did not advance the plot or build characters at all. It began to read much like a history text book.

The plot I found disorganized throughout the book, it always felt like there was something that I missed

somewhere along the way. It almost felt like rules kept getting changed as the author wrote the book so to suit her needs and the "plot's" needs which left everything choppy and disjointed. I may very well be wrong, but that was the feeling I had while reading.

I also became frustrated with the lack of character growth with Diana and Matthew. There was a few cliched and contrived "profound" moments, but they felt forced and a little bit eye-rolling in a way.

The way things were described became slightly repetitive after awhile, if I have to read "and my witch's third eye opened" again I will cringe lol and I always pictured a literal eyeball opening up in the middle of her forehead...weirdness!! Along with the whole world being draped with embroidery floss and bits of ropes and string, it became more ludicrous than anything else to me. I understand that it was maybe a way to write something different that no one has really written before in regards to vampires/witches/time travel etc, but it came across as more funny than effective. Too many ideas written weakly than focusing on one or two and creating a really strong atmosphere throughout the book.

Sadly overall I was disappointed with the book. It was far too long with too much "extra writing" that did not have anything to do with characters/plot which could have made the book far shorter and faster paced. (I know, I know, please don't throw stones! LOL) it's just my opinion, and only that, I did truly love the first book!

The redeeming character in this book was Phillippe and I do wish he had played a bigger part or that there is some way to re introduce him in the third book. Somehow? and kudos to the author as it did hold my interest long enough to want to know ultimately what happened and read through to the ending.

Kristi says

I'm bored out of my mind and just can't read another page. I've been reading this book for over a week, hundreds and hundreds of pages, and virtually nothing has happened. There has been so little forward progress, it's astonishing. Too many boring, insignificant characters have been introduced. The amount of historical information and intricate detail is remarkable, but also mind-numbing. So many times I wanted to scream "Just get on with the story already!". Farewell Diana and Matthew. I hope you get your happily ever after.

Update: It's two days later and I'm even more angry about not being able to finish this book. I love long, engaging epics. Why, why, WHY couldn't this be one of those?

Bradley says

Re-read 12/17/17

I didn't dislike this novel any on a re-read. Indeed, knowing what's going to occur in the next novel actually improved the overall plot for me.

I originally came to the conclusion that most of the historical plots were relatively inconsequential. After all, aren't we playing tourists with the time-travel bits? But no. The plots and the carry-through with a large cast of characters both vampire and other feels entirely justified on the re-read.

Other than that, I pretty much squeed all over again because of the mightily researched and loved past of 1590. Add a ton of real personages and give them so much life and verve and it feels like I just nerded out.

And the straight UF experience is only enhanced. :)

Oh, and let's be honest here. It's a romance. No matter how I try to deny it, it's all romance. :)

Original Review:

The inner English Lit fanboy in me went squee many times as I read this one. I was teased and thrilled and thoroughly amused by being plopped into Elisabeth's England and Austria and France, meeting all of the fascinating characters of the time. Shakespeare was always an inconsequential flop in the background and Kit was suddenly thrust into the limelight like I thought he always ought to have been.

The novel took a sharp turn from urban fantasy into historical fantasy, rich and detailed and a pure delight to behold. And yet, we all know language is always going to be a problem so I didn't really mind that late middle English was seamlessly translated into the modern English. It allows us the joy without any of the hardships. Indeed, the whole novel was some of the easiest complicated tales I've ever had the pleasure of staying up all night to read. I loved the first novel, but this one tickled a lot of fancy bones for me.

The plot in this or the previous novel is relatively inconsequential. The people are much more important, and the care and detail put into them is pure magic. Of course, magic is fun while the stormclouds slowly encroach upon the sunny day, but we can feel the raindrops forming and the time for preparation is slipping away.

I'm a big fan of this novel. Magic isn't much of a crutch, but the developments are enough to push the reader through a few of the snags. That being said, I had a great time reading it and have no regrets about the directions it has taken. I'm thoroughly invested.

Bonnie says

My rating: 2.5 of 5 stars

Shadow of Night picks up ?? immediately after A Discovery of Witches ends (and I do mean immediately with little to no refresher. This was my second attempt at reading and I attribute my success at completing it solely because of this recap I found online which was an immense help.) with Matthew and Diana traveling back into the past to search for Ashmole 782 and to seek Diana help with her powers. For those that don't remember??: Ashmole 782: the bewitched alchemical manuscript that Diana found in Oxford's Bodleian library. After the local witches, daemons, and vampires begin targeting Diana in order to find out how an unskilled witch was able to obtain the manuscript that they believe contains important information about the creation and future of all supernatural creatures.

??Considering the fact that I loved A Discovery of Witches I was beyond ecstatic when I snagged an ARC copy of Shadow of Night. Diving into it right away in hopes to devour it whole I realized immediately that that's not how this was going to work. Positively rife with historical detail regarding the Elizabethan era and historical figures as well (Christopher Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh, John Dee, William Shakespeare and of course Queen Elizabeth I), this is one that will take some time to get through not just because of the amount of pages. The historical tidbits were interesting but I felt they lacked any sort of purpose and ultimately

overpowered the true story making it much more dense and longer than it should have been. The name dropping, while interesting, caused a bit of an eye-roll for me because, did Matthew not have a single uncool friend that failed to make it into the history books? Apparently not. I can appreciate the obvious extent of the research the author conducted but including every interesting person from the time period felt a little like 'everything but the kitchen sink' and should have been scaled back a little to focus more on Matthew and Diana.

Shadow of Night definitely had a case of middle book syndrome. Add to that there's a real non-ending that will likely cause some grumbles. There was progress in the storyline but mostly things of little consequence. My favorite aspects by far were the slight glimpses of the present day and how Matthew and Diana's actions were inevitably changing the future. It was extremely interesting but those passages were so few and far between that I kept hoping for more. The evolution of Diana's powers was the most fascinating. Going back in time only resulted in throwing them into chaos and the slight control she did have over them dissipated but discovering the full extent of her powers was truly shocking.

Shadow of Night was definitely my least favorite of the trilogy so far but I'm looking forward to some resolution and seeing how everything turns out. I plan on picking up The Book of Life soon in case Harkness continues her non-recap trend.

7/22/2014: *sigh* Holy shit. I did it. 24 hours of audio is rough. Review to come.

7/6/2014: Re-try. I couldn't get through this the first time I tried reading mostly because there's very little recap and I was having a hard time remembering what occurred in the first book. Found a fabulous repap (<http://allsoulstrilogy.wikia.com/wiki...>) and am now ready to try this again! Except this time on audio. :)

This? Totally made my day. Or year.

Update: *cries really flipping hard* I got my hopes all up and everything.

This title is currently available for librarian, bookseller and long lead media requests. All other requests will be approved closer to the publication date.

On Netgalley!

I think I'd offer up a kidney in exchange for this if I thought it'd do any good.

Natalie says

Cannot believe this book has 4 stars??? Have you read the same book I just suffered through?? (actually listened to as a 24 hour long audiobook!! should have been my first warning) I don't even want to read the 3rd book I'm so turned off by this LONG, confusing sequel. I can't imagine how she will be able to close the

MANY loose ends she has floating out there. And by the way, did anyone else follow that crazy weaver business? Two more of many pet peeves about this was the lame jack be nimble, jack be quick- really? And the pointless last chapter, it was like she had to slap that in there to justify the title. How about focusing on a story next time. Just because you can write 600 pages doesn't mean it all needs to be published. Shame on the editor that let this slide through. At this point I could care less what happens to these creatures, as I smile wolfishly...is there any other way to smile?

I suggest reading some of the other 1 star reviews for a more accurate description of this book's flaws. I have no idea what the 4-5 star reviewers read, maybe they got a condensed readers digest version. Right now I'm just so annoyed that I paid for this book.

To end on a positive note, the actress who read the story did very well considering what she had to work with.

Anyway, if you are insistent on reading it, good luck.

Kristina says

Request to Readers of This Review who LOVED the book

Please stop NOW & do not read this review. Based on the ridiculous & repetitive comments left by lovers of this trilogy, many of you cannot handle opinions that do not conform to your own & feel the need to call me stupid, tell me I have no right to read this book, & other nonsense. If you feel that way, FINE. Just stop telling me! I don't care! I don't troll lovers of this trilogy & tell them they are morons for liking the books, so I'd appreciate it you'd return the favor. I've been REALLY patient for years, but I'm kinda over that now. Thanks!

Because this is such a long book (too long), I'm going to give periodic reviews--every 100 pages or so--then write an overview of the book that wraps everything up about the book I hate. I already say hate because it's apparent from the first 97 pages I've read that Harkness makes all the same mistakes/repeats all the same themes from the first book. Warning--my review will have spoilers. I mean, I will try not to divulge really important events (if they actually happen, ha ha) but I may discuss things that you the future reader of this book may not want to know.

As for the first 97 pages of this novel, nothing happens. Matthew and Diana arrive in late 16th century England (1590) and we meet Christopher Marlowe, Walter Raleigh, Henry the duke (who I assume is also a historical figure) and assorted other characters, some of whom are daemons and vampires (Christopher Marlowe is a daemon whose nickname is "Kit"). They spend a whole lot of time talking and trying to figure out why Diana is so weird (apparently the two brainiacs Matthew and Diana are surprised that her 21st century American mannerisms, speech and personality are out of place in Elizabethan England) and when it is revealed she is a witch and a time-spinner (I think that is the term used), a cover story is created to explain her sudden appearance in Matthew's life and where she came from. What kills me about this story is that it is impossibly complicated, bizarre and unbelievable and any good liar knows that the more complex a lie, the harder it is to remember. So Diana (who has yet to impress me with her intellectual abilities) is struggling to remember her life story, how to write the Elizabethan way (the description of her practicing her script is ridiculously long and boring), and trying to convince everyone that yes, she is a witch (ha ha).

Eventually Matthew decides to get to the business that brought them to this time period: finding a witch professor for Diana so she can learn to be a witch. Their whole method of going about this is idiotic. Wouldn't you think they would have searched history (before leaping into the past) looking for a witch professor? Diana's a witch and a scholar--wouldn't she know who in the past would have been a great teacher for her? Matthew *lived* in this time period so wouldn't he know? I mean, he seems to freaking know everyone else historically important of that time period. No, they went into the past with no idea of who could help her and so Matthew decides to put out what amounts to a 16th century craigslist advertisement. This is what Diana says about that: "The late 16th century really isn't a good time to openly ask around for a witch, Matthew." Ha, you think so? The interview with the witch (who resembles the cartoon version of a witch down to a wart on her nose) goes as well as everyone expected--that is, it's a complete disaster. So now the witch (to protect herself from being labeled as a witch) is now claiming that Diana made her sick, yadda yadda yadda and while some members of this over-peopled household are worried about the rumors, Matthew is arrogant and says, "Eh, it's just gossip. It'll blow over." He is supremely stupid for a vampire who has lived through many ages and has seen what village gossip can do--it can get his wife burned at the stake. So someone (who knows which character because there are too damn many of them) says, hey, the village elder and religious leader are coming to accuse Diana of being a witch (which is hilarious because she is the most useless witch *ever*) and Matthew is like, eh, no biggie, and they all sit around bantering and exchanging witticisms as if they are at a cocktail party. At the end of this chapter, Matthew is summoned by his father to visit him and Diana goes too (of course). It is also revealed that not only is Matthew a vampire extraordinaire, he is also a: member of the Congregation, a member of the Order of Lazarus *and* a spy. I'm a little foggy on the spy stuff because I just didn't care and the explanation made no sense to me--something about Protestants and Catholics blah blah blah.

Thus, it is already obvious to me that this sequel is following the same path as the first book: lots of extraneous details about clothes, Diana's writing practice, food and the idiotic conversations between the characters which I'm guessing the author thinks are amusing (they aren't); Diana is still the most awesome-ist witch ever...who can do nothing practical; when trouble finds them, they change location; and now apparently Matthew isn't just a highly intelligent vampire, he is also friends with anyone who matters and a member of two (at page 97) powerful secret organizations AND a spy. My oh my he is a busy guy. No wonder he hasn't had time to have sex with his wife yet. I don't know why the author has to make these two characters so incredibly powerful and (at least as far as Matthew is concerned) influential. They are like super-paranormal-heroes whose fatal flaws are their incredible stupidity (and inability to plan ahead).

So from page 97 to page 298 guess what happens? A whole lotta nothing. Well, nothing that moves the plot forward, whatever the hell the plot *is* in this book. Here are a few noteworthy events:

1. Philippe, Matthew's father (who is also a vamp), marries them again. There are pages of the pre-wedding ceremony, the wedding, the wedding party...and for those of you waiting with breathless anticipation (I don't know who you are, but you will be bummed) for their passion (ha ha) to be consummated--it is! And it's the most boring sex scene ever. Total snoozer. These two have about as much passion and chemistry as worms mating. Say what you will about the **Twilight** series, but at least Bella and Edward had passion.
2. Diana kills a witch. Whoopsie. Guess we have to relocate. Again.
3. So, I'm more thrilled by this...the reappearance of the stretchy black pants! Woo! How did this happen in 16th century England you ask? Well, Matthew (who is a tailor among all his other fantastical skills) cut up and then sewed together a pair of his hose so she could have something resembling her beloved stretchy black pants. I'm so happy for her.
4. I have a problem with this sentence: "Matthew considered telling me that it was a secret but wisely refrained" (page 222). The book is being told from Diana's perspective, so how does she know what Matthew is thinking? How does she know he wisely refrained from speaking? This is poor writing and equally poor editing.
5. Another nitpick (I could do this more because the book is full of stupid sentences but I'm selecting the

ones that really irritate me): Diana is in London and comments that the carriages she sees in the streets look nothing like the carriages in Jane Austen films. Oh, Diana, you scholarly moron. Maybe that's because Jane Austen was born two centuries later (late 18th century) and the movie people did their research and used carriages appropriate to the time. *Sigh*.

5. Gallowglass calling Diana "Auntie" is annoying as hell.

I can't figure out this book. There's just no logic to it. Diana and Matthew and their entourage of extraneous characters move from city to city while she shops and learns to be a 16th century woman and Matthew does whatever he is supposed to be doing. I'm so bored with this book. I detest both of the main characters because they are written completely without depth--they don't have enough character in their characters for me to be interested in them or care about them. They are vapid and boring and annoying. And I don't understand what kind of vampires inhabit Harkness's world. They apparently can eat and drink human food/liquids, stay out day or night, don't necessarily have to drink human blood...I mean, they just aren't very vampire-y. The mythology of the creatures (witches, vampires, daemons) is so poorly defined that I don't know what they are supposedly capable of/what their powers are. I'm about half-way through the book and I don't see that the story has even started yet. Is this the world's longest prologue?

A Few More Bitchy Nitpicks and Overall Opinion of this Crappy Book

I wasted a few hours of this partially sunny Saturday morning finishing up this book so I could be done with it. Hell, even **50 Shades of Idiocy** is better than this book. First, a few more nitpicks:

1. My confusion regarding the role of supernatural creatures in the world (past and present) continues. It seems that almost everyone (that is, humans) know these creatures exist, but for some reason the creatures are concerned about keeping themselves undetectable, but most humans seem to know they are around. Huh?
2. Supposedly witches and vampires so powerful and scary, yet Matthew and Diana (and their crew of assorted humans, daemons and vampires) allow themselves to be bullied and ordered around by humans. Queen Elizabeth orders them to Prague, they go. The Emperor of Prague (or whomever Rudolf was) pushes them around and they allow it. I don't understand this. These are the most ineffectual supernatural creatures in popular fiction.
3. In keeping with the above complaint, the long, drawn-out nonsense of their visit to Prague is mind-boggling stupid. Rudolf wants Diana (because, along with all her other talents, she is scrumptious eye candy) and neither Diana nor Matthew like that. So Rudolf pursues and she resists...but why didn't they use this to their advantage? He has the Ashmole manuscript they want, he wants Diana. You're telling me they couldn't have used his desire against him, tricked him and gained the book from him? Oh, right, that would presume planning and cleverness on their part, skills they particularly lack. Plus Diana didn't finish her witchy training since they went to Prague when she started learning how to weave her magical threads.
4. This whole declaration grosses me out: "After all my searching, I discover that I am who always was: Matthew de Clermont. Husband. Father. Vampire. And I am here for only one reason: to make a difference" (page 479). Well, goody for you, Matthew. Make a difference in what? *Eye roll*.
5. That whole "oh, no, Diana's in trouble again but this time she saves herself" load of bs near the end was meaningless. Kit (Christopher Marlowe) and Louisa (Matthew's sister) try to kill Diana but eventually the idiot remembers she's a witch with a fire-drake living in her gut so she saves herself. This whole scene is forced. First, Kit has betrayed Diana to other witches over and over again. Why is he even still with them? He's in love with Matthew (of course) and it's clear he wants her gone. Matthew is so quick to remove anyone who endangers Diana, even friends, but he allows Kit to remain? And Diana, who knows Kit is perpetually up to no good, willingly follows him to an area where they are alone and is surprised when he wants to do her harm. Everything about this confrontation is false and dumb and for what purpose? For us to know Diana can save herself? Who cares.
6. Another first person/third person screw-up: "*And there's no chance my going any faster, Matthew thought...*" WTF. First, the obvious--if the book is told in first person, you know only the thoughts of that person. That's why it's called "first person." If Harkness had wanted us to know what Matthew is thinking,

she should have written in third person omniscient. And the two times she's made this idiot error it's to reveal thoughts that aren't significant or interesting. Matthew's thought above is about how he can't possibly drive the car any faster. Who knows why readers needed to know this but the book is full of stupidity so nothing surprises me.

7. I'm not sure what the point of the last chapter was. I found it to be a rather uninspiring and boring way to end the book. I'm guessing Harkness wanted to show how her character Anne ends up being in Shakespeare's household. Is this Anne supposed to be the Anne he marries? Anne Hathaway was about 10 years older than Shakespeare and they married when he was 18...but whatever. Harkness could also be implying that she didn't think Shakespeare wrote his own material, that Christopher Marlowe at the very least inspired some of it. This theory makes me crazy (because it's been disproven over and over again), but again, whatever. The author is making use of "artistic license" here so who am I to complain?

This book has been a nightmare to read. The first book had at least a story of some sort to keep me reading and Diana and Matthew (at least in the beginning) were interesting and likeable characters. This sequel is awful. Diana and Matthew are idealized creations--they have all the best talents, they are supremely unique, they will affect the future, Matthew knows everyone and is involved in all sorts of intrigues, plus he has time to be an architect and romance the Queen of England. They are too perfect and have no real obstacles to overcome.

Nothing happens in this novel. Diana and Matthew float through its pages and allow things to happen to them, but they never take charge and make anything happen. I don't see how they are any different at the conclusion of the novel than they were at the beginning. Diana knows a little more witchcraft, their marriage is stronger (so the author says but I don't see any difference) but nothing substantial has changed. They didn't learn anything from the Ashmole book except that the material it is made from is particularly gruesome. They didn't seem to gain any knowledge or experience worthwhile the whole time they wandered around the 16th century. This book is just one long description of food, scents and clothes. Which may have been okay if the author knew how to bring historical scenes alive, but she doesn't. This is a semi-historical book with supernatural creatures thrown in.

The number of historical figures who make appearances in this book is overwhelming. The historical name-dropping is annoying. Making Christopher Marlowe a daemon and Walter Raleigh a knight in the Order of Lazarus added nothing to the novel. In fact, the addition of *all* the historical figures did nothing for the novel whatsoever. They didn't move the plot forward (again, what's the plot?) and these historical people popped up so often it became a game of Historical Whack-A-Mole. I hated how Harkness tied these people into her characters' lives. Like much of the novel's contents, there was no need for it.

With this novel, Harkness seems to have created her idealized version of an extended family (the overly sentimental scene at the end had me gagging), her idealized version of herself and her perfect mate, and as a historian she of course added into the novel all of her favorite historical figures. (Well, maybe she didn't like Christopher Marlowe since he was such a jerk.) But she stuffed the novel with a multitude of meaningless events, too many forgettable characters and pages and pages of boring food and clothing descriptions. What she neglected was a compelling plot. Harkness seems to have written this novel merely to please herself and her interests and forgot about her readers. This is a self-indulgent book written by an author who is spoiled by a lack of editorial oversight. An editor with any sense and skill could have shaped this shapeless lump of a novel into a compelling, suspenseful read with intriguing characters. Instead we got this mess. There's no way in hell I will suffer through the next novel. Life's too short to read another one of Harkness's bad books.

P.S.

I feel as if I should add something about the time travel part of the book. It bothered me when I was reading it, but so much of the book is wrong that I completely forget about it when writing this review. I've read a certain amount of time-traveling books but I don't really pay too much attention to the mechanics of it (which is funny since I am a huge sci-fi geek) as long as it seems to make some kind of logical sense (within the

novel). In this book, I was okay with the current Matthew disappearing and his place being taken up by future Matthew however the idea that when he and Diana leave events will flow on as before, unchanged, left me banging my head on my desk. Huh? Won't someone notice that he's missing a wife? Won't the 16th century Matthew come back and wonder what the heck's been going on? That made no freaking sense to me at all. You can't just have your characters pop in, change things up, then pop out again and expect no one to notice or for them not to change future events. *Everyone* with a brain knows that. Again, more evidence that Harkness had no freaking idea of what the hell she was doing with this book. At her author presentation I attended, someone asked her how she wrote the book and taught and promoted the first book all at the same time. Well, yeah, you can see how she did it--the book reflects how little thought and re-writing she put into it. Where oh where was her editor?!!!!

Addition:

Despite my above statement that there is no way in hell I will read the last book in the trilogy, I did. I didn't hate it, but I didn't love it either. Here's the link: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Erica says

I received an advanced copy of this book through NetGalley, thanks to the helpful comments from friends here on GoodReads. Following is my review of the book.

This story begins at the same point where *A Discovery of Witches* left off, with Diana & Matthew landing safely in Elizabethan England. Diana is enthralled with the idea of “living” the historical events she has spent her life studying, and is a bit nonplussed by the fact that even with all her knowledge of the times and people, she is woefully unprepared for the smaller details of daily life. Not to mention, it is obvious to everyone around that she is not from there and does not belong (though they assume she is from another place, not another time). It takes her awhile, and not a few missteps, to become more familiar with customs and habits, but with the help of friends and family she eventually passes for a woman of the times.

Of course, what good romance novel would be complete without a little relationship drama, and this is no exception. Though they have known each other only a short time, and were married only a few days before traveling back in time, Diana believes she knows Matthew better than anyone else. She assumes he will remain the same man she knows from modern times, and is surprised by the changes in his personality and behavior in this period. This provides for some drama-filled scenes of major mis-communication, but also allows for the relationship between the two of them to grow and mature, ultimately bringing them closer.

I will admit, I found it difficult to immediately delve into the story, as the first several chapters introduce new characters based on historical figures some of whom I am only dimly aware, but who I felt I should know better based on how they were presented. I was reading the galley on my Nook, so it wasn't until I finished reading the whole thing that I found there is a glossary of characters included at the END of the book. Of course, when you're reading a digital copy, you rarely think to skip all the way to the end to see what's there (that feels like cheating!), so I didn't know about it when I needed it.

However, this detail aside, I enjoyed the twists and turns in the plot, and the development of continuing characters as well as newly introduced ones. I soon sorted out who most of them were and what their roles were, though there were still some places where my brain would have trouble keeping some of the tertiary characters straight. Also, there is a short scene of amusing meta-fiction towards the middle of the book that will give fans of paranormal romance something to chuckle over.

There were a few plot lines that were not totally cleared up and tied nicely in a bow at the end. I was left with questions. But I have faith in Harkness' ability to do again as she did here and pick up the story where she left off, answering all my queries in the third installment. May it come soon, for I am not exactly known for my patience (especially when it comes to really good books)!

Cindy says

I've read some of the comments and "reviews" on here for the book and I just have to start out by saying that with the advent of blogs, review pages, etc, there have been many folks who believe that they would make excellent book reviewers. I have to say the long commentary on here of them moaning and groaning and being annoyed by an author makes me want to go stick a pencil in my eye.

That being said apparently many people believe that the consummation section of the book should have been in detail. I'm here to say that I personally believe that leaving something to the imagination is a BEAUTIFUL thing. Fifty shades of grey is SMUT and to go into graphic detail in SON would have made me want to hurl. So thank you Deborah for not being super graphic.

I love historical based fiction and that is exactly what this book's structure tends to follow. Yes it is a love story and it is about witches and vampires, but guess what, it is the details that some folks are moaning and groaning about that really set the scene. Because of the way Deborah gives details I can vividly picture every part of the book in my mind. To me that is fantastic writing.

So if you are looking for a dirty romance novel go find Fifty Shades. If you actually want to read something that has substance/historical references then read this trilogy.

Samantha says

As soon as I finished *A Discovery of Witches*, I immediately went online to find out when I should expect the sequel. It was a long wait, but completely worth it. Harkness' view of Elizabethan London and Europe is just awesome, and the trip to Prague was an added bonus that I had not expected. Not only did the plot line get more compelling, but Harkness was also able to weave in the difficulties of the newly wed. I savored every minute of this novel, and I can hardly wait to get it on audio.

Audio was just outstanding and I think I will be a freak and listen to it again sooner rather than later :)

Bookdragon Sean says

So imagine you've written a story about vampires and witches who hunt for a mysterious book full of power and life. The story is set in the modern day with much of the action taking part in the city of Oxford along with many memorable scenes occurring in the Bodleian library. It all sounds pretty decent.

Your central character slowly falls in love with a vampire: the feelings are returned. The two decide to pool their resources as they are both working for very similar aims. Their hunt for the book appears difficult with many people getting in their way. The two appear dangerously close to achieving their aims and the plot feels like it is actually moving forward in a steady direction. Such was the first novel *A Discovery of Witches*,

a novel that had an interesting plot but was drastically hindered by its lacklustre characters and the lifeless romance.

So, as a writer, how do you make this even worse?

Randomly send the couple back in time, of course. The plot went shooting down the toilet at a dramatically high speed. For some reason it takes a huge sweepingly random back-step and transports the characters to the 16th century England under the reign of the Tudors.

I felt like the story was pushed to its absolute breaking point here. It's like she wanted to write a historical novel about the Elizabethan times, but had already started a fantasy series, so she tried to combine the two. It was weird. It was random. And it really didn't work. There was little suggestion that such a thing was even possible in the first book and the reasoning for it here, though painstakingly explained with caution and consideration, felt more like a justification than an actual logical reason. It was like she was trying to persuade me for the necessity of such a thing.

Trashy writing, and poor plotting

The series had some potential if Harkness tightened up her writing and gave us a little bit more substance. For me, it was a massive case of telling us how powerful and dangerous her characters were without actually showing it to us. Again, Matthew the all-powerful vampire had a chance to show us his worth which he failed so miserably at in *A Discovery of Witches*. He was a spy in a former life, supposedly cunning and delightfully skilful at subterfuge. He shows us none of these abilities. All he was good for was his knowledge of living in the Tudor times because he had already done it before, which only gave Dianne another reason to follow him around like a long lost puppy. So she's not the kind of woman I like to read about: she's her man's shadow.

There is also too much going on and as she tries to wrap up her story it's like one massive juggling act where all loose ends are forcibly tied off and made clean. There was no need to complicate what was a very straightforward narrative. It doesn't make the writing better. Instead, it just dragged out the story for another book. Personally, this would have been a stronger story if it had been contained to one book.

I read this back in 2014 and I'm still bitter about it. At that time I was still a little unsure about what books I liked, I'd not read much, but reading books like this helped steer me on the right direction into the kind of books I rave about on here today. So, as much as I disliked this book, it was not an entirely wasteful experience.

Merrie says

Worst. Sequel. Ever. I loved *Discovery of Witches* and couldn't wait to dive into the sequel, particularly now that they have traveled back in time to Elizabethan England. Unfortunately, this outing started out bad and just got worse. Harkness punishes readers with endless dialogue between Matthew's incredibly boring friends, who there are, like six of and all six of them are interchangeable and awful. Totally unnecessary characters could have been reduced to one or two friends, since they all have the same personality. Christopher Marlowe is probably the least likeable character I have ever encountered and I lost all respect for Matthew for repeatedly forgiving him for unforgiveable acts. Seriously, this guy had no redeeming qualities and I really started to question Matthew's love for Diana-- the Matthew of *Discovery of Witches* would have killed Marlowe after the first time he risked Diana's life at the beginning of the book.

The plot drags on and on and just goes in circles. And this is probably the clumsiest treatment of time travel that I have ever seen. The Elizabethan Matthew just disappears when contemporary Matthew shows up? Do you mean to tell me that Matthew's father somehow manages to silence all of the village at Sept Tours and all of London and all of Matthew's friends about the fact that Matthew is married so when Elizabethan Matthew returns he never finds out everything that transpired while he was in limbo? Harkness should have just proposed that Matthew and Diana were creating an alternate history. Instead she dumbly has their friends discovering traces of them in the future, which just makes no sense at all. Or she could've just had them keep a lower profile in the past. Totally amateurish and insulting to the fans, which is a shame because there is a great sequel in there somewhere.

Sanette says

"You gave your life to me Diana Bishop. It's time to make use of it."

This is a hard review to write. How do I sum up all the intense emotions and thoughts that this book conjured in me? So please forgive me if this review is not worthy of the book for this was truly an incredible story and like the first book, one I will have to read again and again.

The book starts off exactly where *A Discovery of Witches* ended, Matthew and Diana have traveled back to Oxford 1591 in search of a witch powerful enough to teach Diana how to use her magic and a sacred book, Ashmole 782, the book of origins. But all does not go according to plan and once back in Oxford, Diana and Matthew are caught up in his life at the time and the *Shadow of Night*, the group of academics who all make a huge mark on history. In 1591 England, Matthew is a spy for Queen Elizabeth and a member of the Congregation and one of the instrumental people in the slaughter of many witches in Scotland and other parts of Europe. But The Matthew Clairmont that has returned to this time with Diana is a very different Vampire, and naturally his view of Witches has changed greatly. So right off the bat we watch as Matthew struggles with having to carry out the actions of his past self, wanting to right the wrongs he committed, but fearing he will alter the future in some terrible way. The aspect of time and how every little action affects the future left me feeling unsettled because I was looking back on my past actions and questioning what would my life have been like had I changed even one thing.

Diana on the other hand gets caught up in trying to fit in in 1591 England. She talks funny, is taller and skinnier than the women of this time and if that's not all, she has to contend with a bitter and jealous Christopher Marlowe and his love for Matthew and hatred for her. Then to top it all off, her magic is acting all sorts of weird. So for the first part of the book, Diana's magic and Ashmole 782 are kind of put on hold while my favorite couple deals with adjusting to the past. While this might have annoyed some readers, I found Harkness ability to bring the characters of the past to life so exciting that I too forgot the real reason they had traveled back in time. But once we leave part 1 and head into the depths of Harkness's second book, we are taken on an incredible, emotional and thought provoking journey.

After thinking about this book for a few days I realized what really moved me about it. She broke the book up into parts and each section had it's own message that really stuck with me. In part 1 I felt frustrated because of the tension between Diana and Matthew but upon reflection I felt it was because they were trying to reconcile who they were individually with who they needed to become as a unit. Their inability to properly communicate and their lingering insecurities are something a lot of new couples go through and part 1 ends with a lot of unsettling emotions, leaving you and the characters questioning everything.

However, part 2 calms some of those fears as it focuses on love, forgiveness and healing. The growth of Matthew and Diana's relationship was incredible as they finally consummate their relationship and you begin

to believe that everything is perfect with them, they have overcome their demons but just like in real life, consummating your relationship does not wipe out any lingering insecurities and while we end with a positive feeling about the direction of Matthew and Diana, like all couples they still have hurdles to cross individually and as a couple. Part 2 was special for me in other ways, for it was not only love that was central in this section but forgiveness and healing. It was the growth of Matthew and Ysabeau that really made this part special for me, well that and Philippe who was an incredible character and one I will miss in the coming book. Both are broken characters and through the events of this section begin to forgive themselves which leads to the beginning of healing what's long been broken inside. I left this part in tears as it really moved me and made me think about the act of forgiveness and the toll that self-hatred can take on one's life.

Part 3 was equal parts exciting as it was sad as Diana finally gets to use her magic and confront her fears but her and Matthew must battle a shared loss and learn how to cope with it together. While in part 2 Matthew confronts his demons, part 3 is about Diana facing her own, for she is still afraid of her power and herself and with the help of some fantastic characters she is finally able to confront those fears. This is where part of the verse that begins *Discovery of Witches* comes into play as Diana must battle with herself and her fears that what she is might be evil or wrong. It is here that she must break down the walls she has spent her life constructing and come face to face with the real Diana living inside her. What comes of this revelation is absolutely spectacular and left me thinking a lot about the universe. Harkness' ideas about the threads of life that connect everything around us really had me thinking a lot about my own beliefs. In college I wanted to expand my mind and hallucinogenics was the route I took so when Harkness begins to describe the universe as different colored threads I could see what Diana was weaving as though it was I handling the threads of life. Since I first stepped into that other world back in college I have always believed that we are all connected and that our every action is connected in some way to everything around us. Part 3 really left me thinking about the universe and our connection to everything within it.

Part 4 had me wringing my hands with frustration as I hated the Emperor but it also brought a lot of questions to mind about evolution and power and the destruction of too much knowledge. I am always seeking out answers about the universe, but what if you know too much? how does that affect you as a human, can you move on or will it consume you? These were the questions I have always had and this is what I felt in part 4 when they learn more about Ashmole 782. Watching how the book affected those it came in contact with, including Diana and Matthew brought all those old ideas and questions of mine to the surface and left me feeling a little uncomfortable, but this was also the section that Diana and Matthew truly become one and after everything that has come before it, I felt that they had finally evolved as a solid and unbreakable couple.

The final two parts where the perfect wind down with Diana fully embracing her fire-drake (and being the ass-kicking witch we know her to be), getting to spend time with her father, going on an actual date with Matthew, and saying goodbye to all of her friends before heading back to her own time. We get a glimpse of how her and Matthew have changed things in their present day and the sense that while Harkness has taken me on a graceful and gentle decline after the emotional and thought-provoking roller coaster that I had been on, the sense of bigger things yet to come still lingers in the air and has stayed with me these past few days.

*"It begins with absence and desire
It begins with blood and fear
It begins with a discovery of witches."*

The All Souls Trilogy filled an absence in my reading life, a desire for more knowledge, a need to understand the secrets in the blood that travels through my body, and a fear that I might be permanently changed by what I learn. It began with *Discovery of Witches* and continued with a lot of questions, some answers and characters that I love and miss like dear friends. When it comes to Deborah Harkness's amazing ability to weave an incredible supernatural love story with history and science, who knows what it will end with.....

