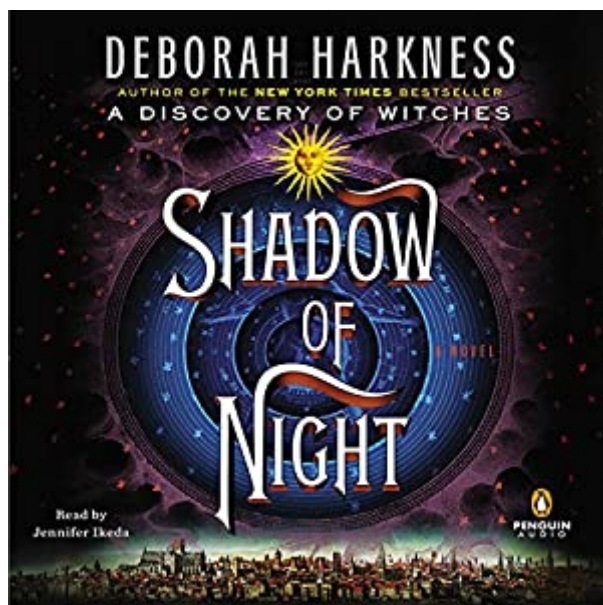


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Shadow Of Night



Synopsis

"Together we lifted our feet and stepped into the unknown." (From the thrilling sequel to the New York Times best seller *A Discovery of Witches*) Deborah Harkness exploded onto the literary scene with her debut novel, *A Discovery of Witches*, Book One of the magical *All Souls Trilogy* and an international publishing phenomenon. The novel introduced Diana Bishop, Oxford scholar and reluctant witch, and the handsome geneticist and vampire Matthew Clairmont; together they found themselves at the center of a supernatural battle over an enchanted manuscript known as Ashmole 782. Now, picking up from *A Discovery of Witches'* cliff-hanger ending, *Shadow of Night* plunges Diana and Matthew into Elizabethan London, a world of spies, subterfuge, and a coterie of Matthew's old friends, the mysterious School of Night that includes Christopher Marlowe and Walter Raleigh. Here, Diana must locate a witch to tutor her in magic, Matthew is forced to confront a past he thought he had put to rest, and the mystery of Ashmole 782 deepens. Deborah Harkness has crafted a gripping journey through a world of alchemy, time travel, and magical discoveries, delivering one of the most hotly anticipated novels of the season.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having started the series with a library book, I had to buy this one because the waiting list at the library was too long. I'm glad I didn't wait; it was worth the purchase price to continue the story of the witch Diana and vampire Matthew. It has everything the first novel had plus time travel, and begins immediately where the first novel left the reader - as Diana and Matthew begin their journey

back in time. Harkness successfully continues the characters' story and immerses the reader in Elizabethan England. The reader is introduced to many famous historical figures from both the political and artistic communities. Fans of timey wimey stuff (that is a Dr. Who reference, by the way) will get their fill in both this novel and the conclusion of the trilogy...what alters timelines, when do characters meet in the past and what happens to their present day selves as a result of those meetings? In addition, the romance continues, as do the fantasy aspects of witches, vampires, and alchemy. Add in suspense of the race to find the mysterious book, and what that book will reveal about all of the different creatures who inhabit this world, and you have a novel you will stay up to finish. And yes, you will want to get the 3rd one and finish the series.

Warning! This review contains minor spoilers for the first book in the All Souls Trilogy, *A Discovery of Witches*. *Shadow of Night* is one of those books that is very hard for me to review. I really enjoyed it, but there is so much to talk about with the historical details, the large cast of intriguing characters, and the overall experience that I don't want to overdo the gushing. The last time readers saw historian and witch, Diana Bishop, and her vampire husband, Matthew, they were off on a journey to 16th century England. The reason for this time travel adventure is to find a witch to help Diana learn about her unique powers and to find clues to the location of the missing manuscript, Ashmole 782. Like with *A Discovery of Witches*, Diana and Matthew are the center of the book and they pretty much control the success of the story. Thankfully, both of them are interesting characters who are a great combination of likable and flawed. They each have their own journeys to complete and do so with a unique spin. I will admit that I had a few issues with Matthew's overbearing nature and Diana's recklessness, but these instances were rare and they did always learn from their mistakes. The romance (while not the main storyline) is interesting and fun. These two may have declared their love for each other in the first book, but it becomes obvious that their relationship is still new and continues to grow. Most of the book takes place in the 16th century which is a fun difference than the first book. Readers get to meet a ton of historical figures and see them interact with Diana and Matthew. Some of my particular favorites were Christopher Marlowe, Edward Kelly, Emperor Rudolf II, Mary Sidney, and, of course, Queen Elizabeth I. Diana and Matthew travel from England to his father's keep in France and even to the Holy Roman Empire. I am a history geek so this was an absolute blast for me. I also enjoyed the introduction of Matthew's nephew, Gallowglass, and that we finally got to meet Matthew's father, Philippe. Some of the book does take place in the present-day with Ysabeau, Marcus, and others finding hints of the time travel in the current time which was interesting. As I mentioned, there is a lot going on in this book and I don't want to give

much more to avoid major spoilers. I will say that it takes some time to get used to the writing style and readers do have to go through quite a bit of detail, but the story is so well-crafted that it is worth the time and effort. I also will say that this would not make a good stand-alone story due to the worldbuilding and character development. I was impressed though with how easy it was to slip back into the series after going more than a year between books. I highly recommend this series and can't wait to see how it ends with *The Book of Life* which was just released this month.

There is a lot to like about this sequel to *A Discovery of Witches*. Harkness, like Connie Willis and Hilary Mantel, does an excellent job of recreating an historical era, in this case the Elizabethan, and of integrating her protagonists, Diana and Matthew, into that world. Some of the characters are truly memorable, particularly Matthew's father Philippe and Kit Marlowe. Harkness adds a lot to her richly imagined mythology of vampires and witches, particularly witches, as we learn that Diana is a weaver, one of the witches who creates spells. Unfortunately, very little actually happens in this very long book and while we get a rich sense of the sights, sounds and smells of the time, we don't get a real sense of how people lived and thought. The killings of witches in Scotland are alluded to, but how much richer the book would have been if Diana had been separated from Matthew and forced to take shelter with those women. There was a real opportunity to explore the era of witch burning in England that was sadly missed. And I can't be the only one tired of the subplot of willfully obtuse 21st century Diana trying to understand her moody, tortured centuries old husband. Harkness needs to stop channeling Emily Bronte and Matthew needs to stop clutching his roguish curls, beating his manly breast and develop a more humorous approach to life. I would think that living forever would enable you to develop some bemused detachment toward life, but apparently not. This was a very long book, beautifully described if somewhat wordy and academic. I am interested in the third book but it is at the bottom of my "to read" virtual stack and I am not inclined to move it up.

This book just streams as if it was just another chapter from "all souls" I could not put it down. Reading in such detail of life in 16th century England felt as if I was there. This author takes her talent as an historian and mixes it with a magnificent story.

This is the second in the All Souls Trilogy but could almost be a stand alone book. The author does a great job of filling in enough of the previous details without retelling the entire first book. It was interesting to read about historical figures from a slightly different perspective. She did a great job of

weaving all of the characters and all of their various story lines together. The parts of the book that dealt with Diana's powers as they related to the genealogies of the different witch lines was also very interesting and well written.

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