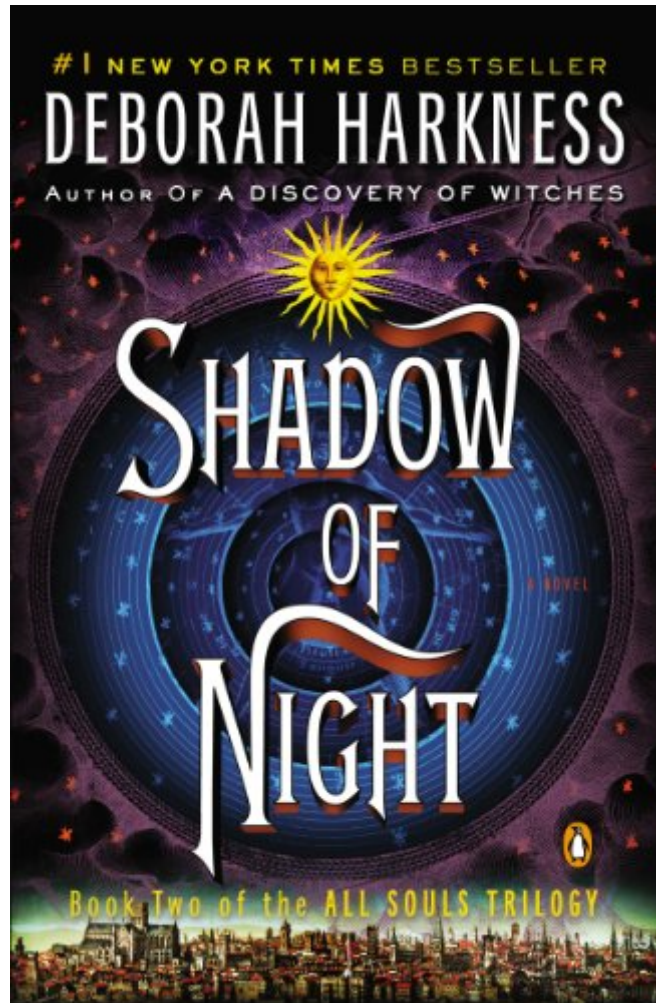


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Shadow Of Night: A Novel (All Souls Trilogy, Book 2)



Synopsis

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. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Shadow of Night picks up a second after A Discovery of Witches ends. We join Matthew and Diana in their time jump to the 1500s where their goals are to 1) find a witch to train Diana and 2) find the mysterious Ashmole 782. But instead of doing this and picking up where the story left off, the author gets lost in history instead and the story disappears. Within a few pages the reader is instantly thrown into a crowded and overwhelming sea full of famous literary characters and influential historical figures. In the very first chapter you meet famed playwrights and poets and others who have little to no purpose in the story. As much as it pains me to admit it, this book started out surprisingly dry and dull. I actually had to force myself through it. I rushed through the first book in the trilogy since I loved it so much, but not this one. Sadly, 100 pages into Shadow of Night and the story had yet to move forward. Matthew and Diana hadn't even come close to accomplishing what they meant to do when they went back in time. All they had done at this point is focused on Matthew's affairs during his life in the 1500s. This is when I understood why the book is 600 pages. Now, does that make this a bad book? No. Harkness is absolutely brilliant and her knowledge of history is highly impressive. There were a handful of interesting scenes and moments in the book, however, they had nothing to do with the main story. They were just written and plopped into a spot in the book with no point or purpose. They dragged the book down, dragged it very very far down. I stopped reading many times because I lost focus. Had those pages been removed, this book wouldn't be 600 pages, but half of that, and it would have been much better. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy history, but not like this.

Every so often, a book comes along. It's everything you imagine a great fiction to be. It evokes the tremendous joy of just being able to read, to immerse yourself in a book so fully, to jump into a journey where every sense in your body is heightened and your mind stimulated. Then the last page is turned, you sigh with sadness since you know you will not be able to find another book like this for a long, long time. Shadow of Night is such a book. I wrote these in my review of the first book of the trilogy: "The author has in depth knowledge not only about history, but also science, architecture, Europe, culinary delights and wine... The book immediately reminded me of 'The Historian' by Elizabeth Kostova, since both story took me to places in Europe that I've never been and historical periods that were so enlightening..... The story will be a delight for people who actually enjoy accurate scientific, historical, culinary and geographical information. The author has a wealth of knowledge and a unique style of writing and she's willing to share." The review still rings true for the second installment, and more so. For readers who disliked the first installment of the series due to the slowness of the beginning, you'll be delighted to hear that this book started right at the part

where the first book dropped off, and is a thrill ride all the way to the end. You can also find satisfactory answers to most, if not all the burning questions that you had after reading *A Discovery of Witches*. I know it's a gruesome wait for the second book in the series, but the wait is well worth it...this book surpassed everything I had imagined it to be.

I reread *A Discovery of Witches* to refresh my memory. Matthew and Diana are going back in time to find Ashmole 782 and find someone to teach Diana to better understand and control her power. Got it. Imagine my surprise when I started *Shadow of Night* and neither of those things happened until page 280, except in snippets that felt like tossaways to help the reader remember why the characters had traveled back to Elizabethan England in the first place. Oh, they weren't there to meet historical figures and notice every aspect of daily life and describe it in excruciating detail? Somebody should have told Deborah Harkness that. Like maybe her editor. My biggest problem with this book, however, was that I didn't like the characters anymore. It turns out Matthew is not an intelligent, urbane scientist who is every woman's dream guy. Nope. He's actually an impulsive, indecisive screw-up with serious anger issues (who has somehow managed to be friends with many major historical figures of the time, be an indispensable adviser to the queen, AND a member of The Congregation). Actual quote from the book: "Matthew was taking charge, which meant that things were about to take their usual turn for the worse." Page 295. I rest my case. He also suffers from an inability to let go of events that happened over a thousand years ago. But one conversation with Diana and poof! Problem solved. Spare me. Diana has become this meek, whiny airhead who is totally focused on fashion and minutia about running a household. And propping up her incapable husband, of course. Her major magical accomplishments in the first half of the book are making a quince shrivel and seeing colored lights in the corners.

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