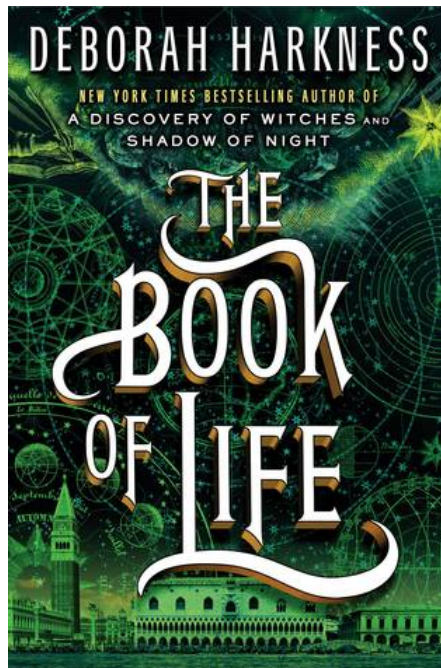




The Book of Life

Deborah Harkness

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The #1 *New York Times* bestselling series finale and sequel to *A Discovery of Witches* and *Shadow of Night*

Bringing the magic and suspense of the All Souls Trilogy to a deeply satisfying conclusion, this highly anticipated finale went straight to #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. In *The Book of Life*, Diana and Matthew time-travel back from Elizabethan London to make a dramatic return to the present—facing new crises and old enemies. At Matthew's ancestral home, Sept-Tours, they reunite with the beloved cast of characters from *A Discovery of Witches*—with one significant exception. But the real threat to their future has yet to be revealed, and when it is, the search for Ashmole 782 and its missing pages takes on even more urgency.

The Book of Life Details

Date : Published July 15th 2014 by Viking Adult (first published July 1st 2014)

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Author : Deborah Harkness

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From Reader Review The Book of Life for online ebook

Dianna says

While I enjoyed this book, I felt it was very disjointed. I mean, don't get me wrong, I got into it, but I felt bothered by her lackadaisical approach to resolving the basic plot points of the world she created. Much like the last novel, I felt like the characters went and did things without rhyme or reason, often inexplicably ignoring the things they should do, to go and drink wine somewhere else. After more than 1500 pages, I felt like she didn't invest much in the climax either-which really, given everything the characters have gone through, wasn't much a climax at all.

*****Major Spoilers Ahead*****

Let's talk about the following:

1. What was up with the fireplace and the tree? And the heart?
- 1.5 Who was feeding information on their whereabouts to the Covenant people?
2. Gallowglass Love Triangle-I thought for sure she was going to set him up with the vampire witch lady-but really, after watching her his entire life, he's going to leave her alone without Matthew? And he's going to miss the twins baptism?
3. Does Diana still have a tree trunk growing out of her neck? Do her eyes still flash numbers-cause that's going to be inconvenient for her as an academic.
4. Who made the book and why?
5. Uh, in the novel, the book was meant to be evil and now it's not? Dude, it's made of people. Creepy. Does that mean an evil thing is living inside of her?
6. If familiars are meant to be set free and go to the place where they wait for their people-why did Goody Alden or whoever keep her shadow?
7. What happens to the book of life when Diana dies?
8. When does she go back and visit Phillipe?
9. Instead of focusing on saving the witch Ben was raping and torturing, why did they go and hang out at Yale?
10. Blood Rage? Treatment? If so, what was the point of going to Yale?
11. Didn't Diana already say she wasn't going back to her academe life? I mean, doesn't the most powerful witch of her age have stuff to do?
12. Why are she and Matthew so special when they are other vampire/witch creatures?

I don't know the answers to these questions.

Jessica ? says

Update June 2017: Upon further ruminations on where the story could have gone, I assembled an alternative ending. (Not a story -- just a synopsis of *what would have made me feel better*.) Go to the spoiler at the end of the review to read.

What just happened?

I was so disappointed. I adored *A Discovery of Witches* and *Shadow of Night*, but I feel like this book did not tie up any loose ends, answer any questions, or really provide any satisfaction for the build-up of the previous two novels.

A few of my main concerns:

Ashmole 782? (view spoiler)

Diana and Matthew and the covenant In the first two novels, their love is made out to be some intense taboo a la interracial couples in 1950s Mississippi. But as the novel goes on, no one seems to care. Yet repealing the covenant seems to become the new focus of the series, now that Ashmole 782 is pretty much forgotten and moot. Who cares? No one seems to be enforcing the covenant, and they don't seem shy about being married at any point, let alone her being pregnant with his babies.

Father Hubbard Is he a good guy or a bad guy? Why are they such jerks to him? He seems like a pretty stand-up guy.

Time travel EMT service? (view spoiler)

What was the whole point, anyway? Would this series have ended differently if Diana and Matthew had never discovered Ashmole 782 and had just started dating for the same reasons anyone else starts dating the person they eventually marry?

Hopefully we get some good fan fiction with an alternate third book that provides some answers.

Sad day.

What happened in my alternative world that makes me feel better about the amount of time and obsession I poured into the earlier books:

(view spoiler)

decafJess

Kari says

*****UPDATE 01/09/2014*****

We have a cover & excerpt!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Eeeeeeeek, I'm so freaking excited!!!!!!

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/bo...>

Just read the excerpt & it gave me chills, CANNOT FREAKING WAIT!!!!!!

*****Update 11/26/2013*****

Some pre-order updates for THE BOOK OF LIFE. The Nook edition of THE BOOK OF LIFE is now up for pre-order in the US on Barnes & Noble. You can find it by searching under my name and the title. B&N does not yet have the hardback pre-order option available. I imagine it will soon. (additional publication details are in my 10/28 post on this subject, so please read that before you ask more questions about foreign translations, etc.)

A few of you have written because your hardback order of TBOL through Amazon.co.uk was canceled. That's because the US edition was mistakenly put on line, and they can't sell you that so they canceled the orders and will start over. So far, they haven't fixed the situation.

Ladies and gentlemen: we are still months away from July and there are going to be these hiccups in the vast computerized pre-ordering system that exists online. Different vendors upload data at different moments. This is not a sign a) that there is a publication delay or b) it will *never* be available for pre-order through your chosen vendor and in your chosen format or c) we don't care about you. This is a sign that life is a process--and retail life during the pre-holiday season for a book that doesn't come out until July is doubly so. You know what Matthew would say: PATIENCE. Isn't he aggravating??

You can of course circumvent all of this by calling your local bookstore and placing a pre-order. Or you can exert Matthew-like control and pretend you are a vampire and, thus, have all the time in the world... Meanwhile you can scroll down to my earlier post, listen to some nice music that captures the character of Philippe and look at the pictures from Diana and Matthew's journey to France.

For those in the US, I wish you a happy, safe Thanksgiving with your loved ones. Real-time reading posts will continue throughout the holiday weekend, so if you are stuck in an airport you can always check in here and see what's happening in the 16th century (when there was no such thing as an airport delay...)

*****Update 11/6/2013 "The Book of Life"*****

The All Souls Trilogy began with A Discovery of Witches (2011). The second volume, Shadow of Night, was released in the US, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand on 10 July 2012.

October, 2013: An update on the third book in the trilogy, The Book of Life:

THE BOOK OF LIFE—coming 15 July 2014 in hardback, e-book, and audiobook in the US, UK, Canada, and Ireland. As foreign translation and Commonwealth/Formal Commonwealth dates become available, I will announce them.

The book is currently available for pre-order. Here's the description as it appears in catalogue copy:

“After traveling through time in SHADOW OF NIGHT, the second book in Deborah Harkness's enchanting series, historian and witch Diana Bishop and vampire scientist Matthew Clairmont return to the present to face new crises and old enemies. At Matthew's ancestral home at Sept-Tours, they reunite with the cast of

characters from A DISCOVERY OF WITCHES—with one significant exception. But the real threat to their future has yet to be revealed, and when it is, the search for Ashmole 782 and its missing pages takes on even more urgency. In the trilogy’s final volume, Harkness deepens her themes of power and passion, family and caring, past deeds and their present consequences. In ancestral homes and university laboratories, using ancient knowledge and modern science, from the hills of the Auvergne to the palaces of Venice and beyond, the couple at last learn what the witches discovered so many centuries ago.”

Still to come:

the cover

the foreign translation dates

the tour dates

and last but certainly not least, all of you having the book in your hands...

Thank you for your patience and dedication to Diana, Matthew, and their story in THE ALL SOULS TRILOGY. May the rest of your Halloween week be magical!

XO, Deb

*****Update!!! 02/15/2013*****

I compiled a list of Deborah’s favorite and inspirational books & music! This was not all in one place but spread throughout her website. If I missed anything please feel free to comment. The books are in alphabetical order by author’s last name, easier for you to print and look up at the book store.

Thanks & enjoy, I know I will.

Viva la All Souls trilogy!

Janet Arnold, Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d: a sumptuous glimpse into female fashion of the time through the lens of the queen’s wardrobe accounts and a careful examination of contemporary depictions and material remains.

Elias Ashmole, Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum: Don’t be put off by the Latin title. This is a collection of English alchemical texts that were gathered by Elias Ashmole. The missing alchemical manuscript that Diana finds in the Bodleian library is not among them, alas, but if you are interested in the subject this is a fascinating glimpse into the mysterious texts that she studies as a historian.

Marion Zimmer Bradley, The Mists of Avalon

Janet Browne, Darwin’s Origin of Species: Books That Changed the World: Browne is not only a great scholar, but a superb writer. A highly-regarded biographer of Darwin, here she turns her talents to writing a “biography” of his most famous book—and one of Matthew Clairmont’s favorites, as well.

A. S. Byatt’s Possession

Deborah Crombie’s Duncan Kincaid and Gemma James series, starting with A Share in Death

Owen Davies, Grimoires: A History of Magic Books. If you are

interested in the history of magic and witchcraft, Davies' description of the development of magical spellbooks will provide insights into how ideas about magic, science, and nature developed over the centuries.

Dorothy Dunnett's six-volume Crawford of Lymond series, starting with *The Game of Kings*

Dorothy Dunnett's eight-volume House of Niccolò series, starting with *Niccolò Rising* (note: the action takes place BEFORE the Crawford of

Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander*

Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*

Edward Eager's *Half Magic*

Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*

Jasper Fford's Thursday Next series, starting with *The Eyre Affair*

Carol Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England*. Diana Bishop is descended from a long line of witches. You will find out more about some of those witches—the Bishops and the Proctors—while reading this classic interpretation of what happened in Salem in 1692.

Laurie King's Mary Russell series, starting with *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*

Brian Levack, *The Witch Hunt in Early Modern Europe*: a lucid yet scholarly introduction to the witch hunts between 1450 and 1700.

Bruce Moran's *Distilling Knowledge: Alchemy, Chemistry, and the Scientific Revolution*. This marvelous book is not only deeply learned but extremely readable. Touched with Moran's sense of humor and his compassion for his subject's tireless efforts to understand the natural world, you will come away from this book with a new appreciation for the alchemists.

Daniel O'Malley's *The Rook*

Iain Pears's *The Instance of the Fingerpost*

Liza Picard, *Elizabeth's London*: an informative overview of the city, its people, and the main events of the period

Anne Rice, *The Witching Hour* (the first in the Mayfair Witches series)

Alexander Roob, *Alchemy and Mysticism*. Diana Bishop is an expert on the enigmatic imagery that is used in alchemical texts. Many are included in Roob's book, along with other illustrations from mystical and magical traditions.

Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany*. This scholarly book was important to me as I wrote *A Discovery of Witches* because it helped me understand how the belief in witches influenced the imagination. Many of the notions we have about witchcraft today have their roots in these terrifying fantasies.

J. K. Rowling, the Harry Potter series, starting with *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

Francine Segan, *Shakespeare's Kitchen: Renaissance Recipes for the Contemporary Cook*: you could read an Elizabethan cookbook, but Segan's book updates ingredients, measurements, and cooking methods to fit modern kitchens.

Lymond Series, but it is a prequel and should be read after)

James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England*. Sharpe's book is an ideal starting point if you are interested in the history of witchcraft beyond Salem or Germany. One of his most controversial arguments focuses on the role that women played as accusers—not just as victims—in the witchcraft trials.
Elizabeth George Speare, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

John Stow, *A Survey of London*: historian John Stow (ca. 1525 – 6 April 1605) compiled this contemporary account of the city, its customs, and notable landmarks.

Bryan Sykes, *The Seven Daughters of Eve: The Science That Reveals Our Genetic Ancestry*. I was fascinated by the combination of history, genealogy, and science in Sykes's work. The book provides an introduction to the study of genetics, and to the legacies that are carried from generation to generation among the population.

Danielle Trussoni, *Angelology*

Connie Willis's *Doomsday*

Multiple authors

Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm-Davies, *The Tudor Tailor: Reconstructing Sixteenth-Century Dress: insights into the construction of period clothing, with suggestions for how to make your own garments*.

Robert Hutchinson, *Elizabeth's Spymaster: an introduction to the dangerous world of subterfuge and intrigue that was the Elizabethan 'secret service.'*

Robert Kehew, Ezra Pound, and W. D. Snodgrass, *Lark in the Morning: The Verses of the Troubadours*. Matthew is a very old vampire, who has slightly old-fashioned views on love and romance. You might be surprised at the love poetry of his early life, and come away with a

whole new appreciation for “old-fashioned.”

*****Music*****

Music that Inspired

I always write to music—and generate playlists for the book that span the chapters. Below is my playlist for A Discovery of Witches. The songs appear in the order of the book, i.e. from chapter 1 to the final pages. I listened to these songs over and over again as I wrote, and they provided me with plenty of inspiration along the way. I hope that you enjoy them, too (maybe as you’re reading the book or rereading it!), and discover a few new artists to support as well as some old favorites.

Song/Artist

1. November/Azure Ray
2. Frost/ Rachael Sage
3. Book of Love/Dar Williams
4. Aim Snap Fall/The Spill Canvas
5. Sunsets and Car Crashes/The Spill Canvas
6. Not a Pretty Girl/Ani DiFranco
7. Uninvited/Alanis Morissette
8. I Will Possess Your Heart/Death Cab for Cutie
9. Blinding Light/Immaculate Machine
10. Secret Oath/The Spill Canvas
11. By and By/Lay Low
12. Rocket Man/My Morning Jacket
13. You and Me/Lifehouse
14. Catch the Wind (EP Version)/The Spill Canvas
15. By Dream/Daniel Martin Moore
16. Pull of the Moon/Jodie Manross
17. Old Soul/Thea Gilmore
18. Born/Over the Rhine
19. All Hail the Heartbreaker/The Spill Canvas
20. Eric’s Song/Vienna Teng
21. The Night Will Go As Follows/The Spill Canvas
22. Living In Twilight/The Weepies
23. Drunkard’s Prayer/Over the Rhine
24. Breathe Me/Sia
25. I Will Remember/Over the Rhine
26. Where We Belong/Daniel Martin Moore
27. Who Will Guard the Door/Over the Rhine
28. Elephants/Rachael Yamagata
29. Fire Sign/David Berkeley
30. Give Me Strength (Acoustic)/Over the Rhine
31. Stillness/David Berkeley
32. Come Home/Wil
33. All the Stars/Eastmountainsouth
34. So Much The Spill Canvas Sunsets & Car Crashes
35. If You Find Her Future of Forestry Twilight
36. I Am Stretched On Your Grave Kate Rusby Hourglass
37. He Lays In the Reins Calxico & Iron & Wine In the Reins – EP
38. Nothing Is Innocent Over the Rhine The Trumpet Child

39. Hush Now (Stella's Tarantella) Over the Rhine Drunkard's Prayer
40. We've Got Company Civalias You.Me.We – EP
41. Drink You Pretty Placebo The Bitter End – EP
42. This Is for Keeps The Spill Canvas One Fell Swoop
43. In Love Tina Dico A Beginning, a Detour, an Open Breathless Emm Gryner Songs of Love and Death
44. Valiant The Spill Canvas One Fell Swoop
45. Latter Days Over the Rhine Good Dog Bad Dog
46. Farewell Rosie Thomas When We Were Small
47. Let Myself Fall Rosie Thomas Only With Laughter Can You Win
48. The Part Where You Let Go Hem Home Again, Home Again – EP
49. The Maker Emmylou Harris & Daniel Lanois The Bridge Collection
50. Name The Goo Goo Dolls A Boy Named Goo
51. White Flag Dido Life For Rent
52. All I See Tina Dico A Beginning, a Detour, an Open
53. I Want You to Be My Love Over the Rhine Drunkard's Prayer
54. The Matador David Berkeley After the Wrecking Ships
55. Just a Dream Great Northern Trading Twilight for Daylight
56. Gray Stables Iron & Wine Woman King – EP
57. Beautiful Things Can Come from the Dark Azure Ray Saddle Creek 50
58. 100 Years (Acoustic Version) Five for Fighting 100 Years – Single
59. A Moon Song David Berkeley The Confluence
60. The Body Is a Stairway of Skin Over the Rhine Films for Radio
61. Glow Tina Dico A Beginning, a Detour...
62. Awake Secondhand Serenade Awake
63. Each Coming Night Iron & Wine Our Endless Numbered Days
64. Bad Moon Rising Thea Gilmore Loft Music
65. Low Is a Height Great Northern Trading Twilight for Daylight
66. Helpless (Live) Over the Rhine The Cutting Room Floor
67. Waking the Witch Kate Bush Hounds of Love
68. City of Sleep Great Northern Trading Twilight for Daylight
69. I Will Not Eat the Darkness Over the Rhine Good Dog Bad Dog
70. Stray Age Daniel Martin Moore Stray Age
71. The Devil's Feet Azure Ray Hold On Love
72. Walls Tina Dico A Beginning, a Detour...
73. Haunts O+S O+S
74. Gravity Vienna Teng Waking Hour
75. Holly Tree Dar Williams Promised Land
76. Lonely Soul UNKLE Psyence Fiction
77. Amergin's Invocation Lisa Gerrard & Patrick Cassidy Immortal Memory
78. Minnow & the Trout A Fine Frenzy Live Session (iTunes Exclusive) – EP
79. Changes Come (Live) Over the Rhine Changes Come (Live)
80. Not As We Alanis Morissette Flavors of Entanglement (Deluxe)
81. Night Vision Now It's Overhead Dark Light Daybreak
82. Witchy Woman Elaise Piper Eagles Tribute
83. Blackbird Sarah McLachlan Rarities, B-Sides and Other Stuff
84. Spark Over the Rhine Drunkard's Prayer
85. The Gloaming Radiohead Hail to the Thief
86. Gold Dust Woman (EP Version) The Spill Canvas Honestly, I'm Doing Okay – EP
87. Someday You Will Be Loved Death Cab for Cutie Plans (Deluxe Version)
88. I Will Do These Things Azure Ray November – EP
89. (Nothing But) Blood This Mortal Coil Blood

90. Duet Rachael Yamagata Elephants...Teeth Sinking Into Heart
91. The Only Fault (Hidden Track) Rachael Yamagata Elephants...Teeth Sinking Into Heart
92. Saved (Acoustic) The Spill Canvas Honestly, I'm Doing Okay – EP
93. I'm an Animal Neko Case Middle Cyclone (Bonus Track)
94. Etcetera Whatever Over the Rhine Good Dog Bad Dog
95. Woman King Iron & Wine Woman King – EP
96. Learning How to Die Jon Foreman Limbs and Branches
97. I Will Follow You Into the Dark Death Cab for Cutie Plans
98. Better Days (Acoustic Version) The Goo Goo Dolls Better Days (Acoustic Version)
99. At Dawn Sarah Fimm Cocooned
100. Little Wonders Rob Thomas Meet the Robinsons (Soundtrack)
101. The Parting Glass The Wailin' Jennys 40 Days
102. So Are You to Me Eastmountainsouth Eastmountainsouth
103. You Fisher The Lovely Years
104. Everything Lifehouse No Name Face
105. Firefly Over the Rhine Drunkard's Prayer
106. Season of the Witch The Stone Coyotes Situation Out of Control

Music that Inspired Shadow of Night

Like many writers, listening to music is an essential part of my creative process. I create a playlist as I write, and will often listen to a song more than a hundred times in the course of writing the book.

Here are a few to get started. They appear in the proper order to coincide with the action of the book:

1. Bells, Jane Siberry
2. Take Me Back in Time, Idlewild
3. Welcome to England, Tori Amos
4. This Place in Time, Colleen
5. Your Song, Kate Walsh
6. And the Boys, Angus and Julia Stone
7. Lately, Kate Rusby
8. Girl with One Eye, Florence + the Machine
9. Wolves (Song of the Shepherd's Dog), Iron & Wine
10. Accidental Babies, Damien Rice
11. Poison & Wine, The Civil Wars
12. Near Life Experience, Lifehouse
13. Ancient Sea, Elephant Revival

*****01/22/2013*****

Still stalking this book, no news YET! Here is what Deborah posted on her website about this gem!

The Third Book

... ..

Yes, I'm working on it! No, it's not finished yet. As a result, I don't know when book #3 is going to be out. It doesn't even have a title yet.

My US publisher, Viking, sets the release date for the US and then other dates will be set for book #3's

release around the world. I actually don't have much to do with it, except for one big thing of course: I must finish the book before Viking can design, edit, otherwise produce it AND set the release date.

Creativity is not a linear process, unfortunately. It requires inspiration. It doesn't adhere to schedules. It foils your best-laid, most reasonable, geometrically perfect plans. It doesn't necessarily thrive in solitude or a boot-camp environment, so the advice to "drop everything and write constantly for the next 2 months" won't work.

I know exactly what happens in book #3, so you don't have to worry about that, but the devil is always in the details. New people crop up unexpectedly—and you want them to because so far those unexpected characters include Gallowglass and Hamish. My muse habitually ignores me when I have loads of free time on my schedule, and pesters me incessantly when I'm busy. So when on my way to Canada for the International Festival of Authors, I wrote five pages in the airport in about one hour. One week earlier, when I was at home with acres of blank space in my calendar, I rewrote a single chapter (in its entirety!) three times and am still not satisfied with it. So you are going to have to be patient. I know many readers want the book YESTERDAY. Trust me, I will tell you when I have more information to share. When details about the final volume in the trilogy are available, including the title and release date, they will be announced here.

I want this book more than anything! I will sell you my soul right now for just a chapter!

Bradley says

Re-read 12/18/17

Much of all the esoteric stuff I loved from the first read was just as enjoyable the second time around, but this time I focused more on the people and the relationships a bit more.

Ben, for example, was something of a mystery and less a bogeyman. I may have gotten a bit annoyed with the babies this time, all the focus on them, but to each their own when it comes to that. And then there was a few slow parts that annoyed me but not by much. There was enough really fantastic stuff going on here, from extra science, from Apolo's discoveries and Diana's hunting for truth, that I never lost interest.

Indeed, it's the full extent of the tale that makes the entire book shine. We've been building on the previous two pretty gloriously and there are very nice carryovers from both as well as tragedies, but it's the final payoff of including everything in the alchemical mixture that makes the final potion work wonders.

I think this UF is probably one of the very best, smartest, and emotional works ever to rise out of the popcorn pile. Indeed, it's more of a serious work of literature. It stands out. BUT only as a trilogy.

Original Review:

I enjoyed this one almost as much as I enjoyed the previous two, but for different reasons.

Surprisingly, I enjoyed it for none of the reasons that I was expecting. Firstly, I enjoy not just symbolism but

the symbols themselves. They weren't just blazoning on the page, after all, they were blazoning in my mind. None of it was particularly complicated or ominous, just relevant to the tale in both the obvious ways and the not so obvious ways. I tried looking at the books from the point of view of the symbols, and the tales become as crisp as Christmas Morning. It is really quite nice to have new fiction that can turn alchemy into alchemy.

Secondly, I enjoy themes that speak to the heart of the world and why we're living in it without becoming some broken down biological soup or a bunch of creatures standing around holding hands and singing "we are the world". Sure, a little bit of both happens in the novel, but I noticed something. Life goes on. Life always goes on. The goddess Diana or Artemis always knew this. It's not about hunting or justice, after all. It's also about Apollo who's notoriously absent from all three novels except from the pages of the alchemy. Life goes on. There's no conflict between the gods. There's no tension, and indeed, there never was. Brother and Sister were twins, after all.

Sister night was one of the main characters across the trilogy, from within Diana and her being a chimera, to the entrance of the goddess herself, to the overwhelming overabundance of female witches except for her father and Peter, to the title of the second book, to the arrow at the end. Nothing was as simple as a direct one-to-one correlation, here. It was the deeper themes that really sparked my imagination.

That and the novel also happened to be a fun urban fantasy romp. The issues at hand were on a deeper level than the action, and although there was a little action and a little romance thrown in, they were all in service to a greater power and not gratuitous.

All said, I am very impressed. Thank you!

Trish says

This marks the conclusion of the *All Souls* trilogy and I couldn't be happier. From the first book on, this had become my new favourite story about witches and other supernatural creatures.

In this third volume, Diana and Matthew are home from their timewalk in the past. They had to leave loved ones behind, which is never easy, and had to discover that disaster had struck in their original timeline as well.

Not to mention that Diana is pregnant (with twins no less!) and the enemies are closing in from all sides, some even remaining in the shadows until the second half of this book, with some astonishing twists that I hadn't expected.

We also get to meet more of the family (kept in the dark until now thanks to Philippe's meticulous planning so as not to create a time paradox) as well as the history of creatures.

What I still adore about this author's style is the vividness of places she conjures up. Especially whenever witches are gathered to work magic, I felt this coziness! However, it was also the life and uniqueness she gave every single character that drew me in - not only the secondary characters were fantastic, but the tertiary ones as well!

Ysabeau will probably always be my favourite but I've come to appreciate the entire ensemble (except for Baldwin, no matter how much he developed throughout this third book).

Add to that some pretty exciting locations, this time in the present, as well as the on-going but never boring mystery of Ashmole 782 that combines history/mystery with solid pieces of science, and the mad dash to

keep everyone safe from mad vampires and closed-minded witches.

Speaking of closed-mindedness: the author touched on some really big topics, too. From the homosexual couples throughout the trilogy (Sarah and Em, Hugh and Fernando, ...) to "interracial" relationships that the congregation wanted to prohibit, women being introduced into certain circles - there were a lot of social topics cleverly interwoven into the fabric of a classic fantasy story that included drakes and ghosts and magic and lively pets (especially a certain dog in this volume). Usually when authors do this, it throws me off, because whenever bad-ass females are introduced gentlemanly manners must be sacrificed for some reason (which is utterly stupid and ridiculous) - not here though! The author managed to perfectly combine the old-fashioned with the modern.

The entire trilogy is done perfectly, with the author showing her skills as a researcher and scholar (the only criticism I can utter is about the linguistic errors and especially some pronunciations in this latest audiobook) and I think this really helped transporting the reader to several university campuses, libraries, laboratories, castles, a former KZ, several countries of 1590/1591 as well as modern-day Venice.

Last, but certainly not least, this is a love story. A love story done right.

Matthew and Diana are flawed creatures that know about their shortcomings, even fear to expose their imperfect sides to one another, but love the other unconditionally. They are full of devotion for one another while letting others into their hearts and lives nevertheless.

But it's not only about Matthew and Diana, although those two are the center (*without beginning or end*) of course. It's a love story about family; the families we make for ourselves (which often means people we aren't related to by blood); the friends we keep close; of always being faithful, no matter how hard it may be. Honour as well as integrity and sacrifice play big parts, too, and that definitely speaks to me.

Phrynn says

I had a moment's panic when I started this book because there were so many characters everywhere and I didn't remember any of them! But I persevered and many of them disappeared never to be seen again. The rest fell into place and their identities became apparent. Matthew and Diana however seem to have had character transplants. Overnight they have changed from young lovers to old fuddy duddies and I barely knew them any more. They also spent the entire book overreacting to every event and rushing off to various other countries for no real reason.

In fact this book is a bit of a mess. Not a lot really happens and what does go on goes nowhere in explaining things like *The Book of Life*. At the end I still do not really know what it contained, why it ends up where it does and what that means for the future. And the description of Diana's appearance (trying for no spoilers here) is kind of weird. In fact it is really weird.

This probably sounds as though I did not like the book. In truth I was just disappointed in it because I had hoped for so much more. I loved the first book of the trilogy and now I wish the author had made it a stand alone book. The story really did not hold up through three volumes.

Lyndi W. says

I'm disappointed that so many people are refusing to read this book because it's taken so long to come out. Shit happens that pushes publication dates back. Lots of shit happens. And some of you guys are acting like it's a personal affront and the author is just trying to piss you off. You're acting like children. No wonder authors hate reviewers. The book hasn't even come out yet and you're already talking trash.

Emily says

I'm truly shocked that this book recieved such great reviews. Ms. Harkness still spins a great tale, but I thought the whole of this novel was poorly constructed and lacking substance. The conclusions were tenuous stretches at best and she had a lot of trouble tying everything up at the end given the complexities she'd introduced. As a result of her difficulties (and profitability), it's quite clear from this book that there will be additional novels to join what was to be a 3-book series. This book was extremely disappointing.

Melanie says

I am looking forward to this novel with much anticipation and joy.

To all the naysayers and fair weather fans out there, I have a few things to say to you.

1) D.H. is a novelist. While she may blog and update frequently, she must not be treated as an on demand writer. As a reader, it is hard to wait but novelists should be regarded for what they do so well. Let's not treat our dear author as a blogger or fan fictionist.

2) Waiting is part of being a reader. JK Rowling also made readers wait and Harry Potter was still a huge hit. Let's not even get into The Game of Thrones.

3) Another beautiful part of being a reader is reading other books and falling in love with other characters. Let other worlds overtake you and return to All Souls in a few short months with renewed excitement.

4) Re-re-re-reading is pretty awesome!

After waiting and imagining all the possible endings, I finally held the Book of Life in my hands. Much to the dismay of my family, I hid myself away in plain sight and completely devoured every single page. Unlike other trilogies or series, I feel satisfied after finishing this book and do not feel like I've been left hanging or that anything was rushed. The story was well put together and completely thought through.

My only criticism is that there are so many characters I want to know more about. They were left just on the surface, were mentioned too quickly, and disappeared just as fast. So many things make up for this and as I already mentioned, I feel satisfied and I can't wait to read this series again and again.

Liz says

Ok. Ugh. Sigh. Ok. Here's my issue: the first book in this trilogy was SO GREAT, in no small part because I felt like I KNEW Matthew and Diana. There were goings on, and plot , but those things served to further tell me about the characters. In Shadow of Night, and even more so in The Book of Life, the characters exist solely as pawns to move the plot points along. It wasn't until the end of this book that I really felt like we got back to Diana's voice, that this was her story.

Also, I feel like the author strayed from what she knew- in DoW, I could sense that she knew wine, rowing, academic research, mythology. Those elements of the story came alive, and those elements of the story were rich and involved. In these last two books, the history is impeccable but not much else feels real. Diana is pregnant but the only mention is a throwaway line about pants not fitting, restricted travel, and a headache? I knew more about how Diana felt about the different flavors of tea in her kitchen than how pregnancy impacted her. It was so weird, to have these characters morph from fleshed out fascinating beings into just passerbyers on the page. Honestly, at this point, these books don't even feel part of the same series

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

What a huge let down this book was. I'm talking EPIC proportion let down.

First of all, I am shocked at all the positive reviews I'm seeing. I feel like we didn't read the same book.

A Discovery of Witches was one of my favorite reads of 2011. I wasn't as much into reading then, and I stumbled across this one while randomly perusing my library for books. I fell in love with the story, the characters, and the *magic* of it all. I felt like the story was building up for something important, something powerful.

The second book was also pretty successful for me. It was lovely in the way that I find historical fiction is pleasurable. I also have a deep love of time-travel books, so I was practically guaranteed to fall head over heels.

A lot of time has passed since the second, and my expectations were sky high for the third. Unfortunately, the careful world-building fell to crap in the final installment. **I'll try to break down my main issues with the story without giving away any spoilers.**

1) The POV switches: I have very specific opinions about lots of POVs in the a story: Namely, I hate them. This book had at least 5 different points of view, which irritated me to no end. Why not just two? Those extra points of view just seemed lazy to me, just a way for the author to do some "telling" and less "showing" about the characters. To make matters worse, the author switched from 1st to 3rd person throughout the book! Talk about a headache. It was a terrible choice, in my opinion.

2) The number of characters: This book was like a who's who from the previous two books. I swear, no one was left out. There were so many people re-introduced that I had a hard time keeping track of everyone. The story felt so... cluttered. All of these extra people and their minor storylines weighed the plot down so much. It became sort of jumbled and confusing. I'm not sure why the author didn't just keep her focus on the main characters.

3) The lack of secrecy: I'm so confused! In the previous books, Diana and Matthew guarded the secret of their relationship, the quest for the book, and the secrets of Matthew's family fiercely. In this book? They let it alllll hang out. They tell everyone EVERYTHING! Everyone seems to know what they are searching for, that Diana is pregnant, simply everything! I have no idea why this had them throwing caution to the wind. They freaking told an entire class of students what they were researching. It was madness. Then they are looking for the person "leaking their secrets"... it could be the pizza boy for all they know! It was truly bizarre.

4) Diana's familiar: I won't say too much about this topic so I don't give away any spoilers, but I was utterly confused about the change in the firedrake's personality throughout the story, especially towards the end.

5) The haphazard plot: It honestly felt like the author didn't think this trilogy through very well. It was like the author had a brilliant idea for the first book and then had no idea how to carry it through. The third book had to reveal some mind blowing things to fit with all the buildup, but instead it was a collection of jumbled tangents. The main characters jumped from location to location, doing a series of things that didn't really make sense. They seemed like chickens with their heads cut off. The book didn't seem *planned*. It was almost as though the author was making it up on the fly.

6) The blood rage thing: I hated this plot point. Blood rage was supposed to be this crazy thing, but some deep breathing and zen meditation seemed to snap all the characters out of it?? I was so confused as to why it was this big issue to begin with if it was that easy to control. I would have preferred it be a mindless, insane thing instead of the nuisance it was made out to be. It was a poorly fleshed out concept that could have been more powerful.

7) The Book: Okay, what is the deal with that book? We never truly get answers. I still am left wondering who created it and why. If you are reading this book thinking that something wondrous will be revealed, don't hold your breath.

8) Plot inconsistencies: There are so many plot elements that make no sense or are left dangling. I don't want to go into them all because I want this review to be spoiler free, but there were many instances where the book contradicts itself.

All in all, this book was a huge bummer. I give it 2 stars, mainly for nostalgia because I was happy to visit with these characters again.

Oh, and can Gallowglass get his own book? Pretty please?

****Copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review****

Kristina says

I guess the good news about Deborah Harkness's *The Book of Life* is I didn't throw it across the room in disgust. I couldn't—it's too damn dumb to make me angry. Mostly I shook my head in bewilderment at the overwhelming idiocy. This last book in the trilogy is pretty much the same as the first two: excessive details, wandering plot lines, horrible pacing, paper-thin characters, and fang-less boring vampires. When I finished reading all 561 pages, I thought: what the fuck. How can something this awful be a bestseller? But now I've at least satisfied my curiosity about how Harkness wrapped everything up (not satisfactorily), so let the shredding begin.

The Book of Life begins where *Shadow of Night* ends. Matthew the vampire and Diana the witch return to Sept-Tours, the de Clermont ancestral home. She is pregnant with twins and they are married, two facts they would like to keep from the Congregation. Aunt Emily is dead and even though we (the readers) learned of her death in the previous book, Harkness didn't explain what happened until now. Emily supposedly died of a heart attack when two other witches were questioning her about spells she was casting. Matthew and Diana don't believe this and vow to discover the truth. They also have to deal with Matthew's blood rage, find missing pages torn from the Ashmole 782 manuscript (aka *The Book of Life*) in order to retrieve the whole manuscript from the Bodleian Library, confront the Congregation and stop Benjamin, Matthew's very bad son, from doing more very bad things.

Many—way too many—things happen in this book. In order to keep this review under a million words, I'm going to hit the highlights of Things That Made Me Roll My Eyes. First, however, I'll start with what I liked. It's a very short list: 1) Continuity. Considering how stuffed all these books are with details about *everything*, Harkness does an amazing job of connecting actions, people, and places from the last two books with this one. In chapter three, Diana is surprised to find a book she used in the 16th century to practice her handwriting still around in modern day Sept-Tours. I laughed because I remember that scene well from the second book only because it was so damn boring—a very long passage describing her efforts to write the 16th century way. I thought that scene was stupid in the second book and I think it's stupid to bring it up in the third book, but wow—gold star for continuity. 2) The Bishop family house. The house is the best character in the books and I am disappointed it makes only a brief appearance in this book. For a short while, Matthew and Diana and their band of merry followers stay at the house. It's playing Fleetwood Mac records nonstop. Even though I don't like any of these vampires or witches, they have my sympathy here. Fleetwood Mac sucks. 3) Harkness's writing seems to have improved between books two and three. While I still find this book deplorable, it actually keeps my attention. That's fairly amazing considering how dumb and scatterbrained it is. Oh, and the artwork for the book cover is pretty. There's that.

Now I can bitch. There are too many unnecessary details. About everything. We have specific descriptions of the characters' voices; Fernando (who is a gay vampire but Harkness has so little imagination his character is stereotypically gay down to his fussiness and talented cooking) has a voice "as warm and cultured as sherry aged in oak barrels" (6). We know what all the characters smell like. In chapter 7, there's a detailed list of all the kitchen appliances and their uses. Diana also goes grocery shopping and meets up with some fellow witches. The whole scene is unnecessary, but it's this sentence that makes me crazy: "I fumbled and nearly dropped the paper bag of apples grown on a nearby farm" (105). It's the "grown on a nearby farm" that makes me incoherent with rage. Who gives a shit? Is it really that important to know that Diana, as well as being so awesome in every other aspect, is also concerned about buying local produce? WHAT THE FUCK, EDITOR. Idiotic shit like this is why the book is so damn long. There are many pages devoted to the scientific analysis of Matthew's DNA, Diana's DNA, the DNA of one of the Ashmole pages...who cares? Very little of it is actually relevant to the plot (whatever the hell the plot is).

One of the dumbest parts of the book is the trip to the Bodleian library to steal the Ashmole manuscript. The whole heist is asinine. I'm already annoyed by this sentence: "It was every library patron's nightmare—that you were secretly being observed whenever you took a forbidden cough drop out of your pocket" (458). As a staff person at a library and a library patron, I wonder: what the fuck is she talking about? Shove a million cough drops into your mouth—we don't care. However, we do care about sugary, sticky drinks and gooey, greasy pizza. But no one should care because cough drops have nothing to do with the heist. Diana and her helpers (it takes three witches, two vampires and one firedrake to steal this damn manuscript) go to the Bodleian Library. After deactivating all the magical surveillance by using magic, Diana puts a halt to their illegal activities to call her sweetie pie. Getting this manuscript is supposedly *the most important mission they have*, but dumb ass has to call pookie-kins to let him know she's okay. Major fucking eye roll here. Not only that, but if their souls are so magically in sync, shouldn't he just *know* she's fine? Whatever. Now, even though the library is closed because of the Christmas holidays and they know that the pneumatic tube book request system is shut down, Diana and her crew of morons decide to fill out a book slip requesting the Ashmole manuscript and send it via tube. Now, I'm guessing that if you're going to steal a book from a library, you don't fucking submit a written request for that actual book. That's like handing the bank teller your ATM card and then saying, "This is a stick-up. Give me money." Wtf, Diana. But this isn't the best (or worst) part. The dumb fucks stand around waiting for *two hours!* for the damn manuscript to appear in front of them. What the fuck! Wtf???? That makes no sense. Why the hell would you have your characters do that, Harkness? What the hell is the point of that? Do you not understand pacing? So your characters stand around for two hours doing what? Playing hopscotch? Magical orgy? What? Finally, they decide the library is not going to send them the manuscript so Diana says, oh yeah, I'm a witch. Time to do magical shit. (If you're a witch, wouldn't *starting* with magical shit be your first move?) Eventually she does some magical shit and with the help of Corra, her unfortunately-named firedrake, she finds the fucking manuscript.

During all of this, the five jackasses are joking around and giggling. That's one of the weirder aspects of this book—everything is supposed to be all so dramatic and serious, but then Harkness sticks in these loony scenes with the characters tee-heeing and yee-hawing about the stupidest shit. (Also, in chapter five, the vampires greet each other with waves and cheerful calls of “Hi!” I want to stake them all.) It's another moment of bemusement at how weirdly out of place these scenes are; not only that, but the humor is not funny.

What is funny is all the secrets that aren't secrets. Humans aren't supposed to know about daemons, witches and vampires. They know. Even if they didn't know, Matthew and Diana are the worst fucking blabber mouths around. They are constantly telling people: oh yeah, I'm a vampire/witch. What's even more amusing is that as soon as one of them blabs, the human shrugs and says, effectively, “So what?” When Chris, Diana's human colleague from her university, shows up, she calmly informs him that her husband is a vampire—that's why he has such great hearing. Chris's only argument that Matthew *can't* be a vampire is because on the tv show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, girls who have sex with vampires never get “knocked up,” but Diana is pregnant. This dubious logic is followed by Chris stating the reason he is so calm about hearing this is “I'm a scientist. I'm trained to suspend disbelief and remain open-minded until something is disproved” (162). Yeah, I don't think Chris (or Harkness) has even the most basic understanding of scientific thinking. If his statement were correct, we'd still be back in the Dark Ages. If he really were a scientist, he'd ask her what proof she has that Matthew is a vampire (and that she's not nuts). There's a great (in a bad way) scene in which Matthew outs not only himself, but *all* supernatural creatures, to his Yale research students. They are working on his DNA analysis. There are a lot of lame jokes (students theorize that the DNA belongs to aliens and two of the students' nicknames are “Mulder” and “Scully”—oh, tee hee, Harkness. Stop now before I wet myself) but finally Matthew says: “No, I'm a vampire. And before you ask, I can go outside during the day and my hair won't catch fire in the sunlight. I'm Catholic and have a crucifix. When I sleep, which is not often, I prefer a bed to a coffin. If you try to stake me, the wood will likely splinter before it enters my skin. No fangs either. And one last thing: I do not, nor have I ever, sparkled” (196). The students' reaction: “Whoa, dude. How old are you? Over 1,500 years! Awesome, dude! High-five!” None of these so-called scientists says, “Um, yeah, right. Call campus security.” No one in the book (humans) *ever* responds with skepticism or laughter when told about these supernatural beings. Why is that? Well, Harkness does write stupid books about stupid people, but also: almost everyone in the book is a fucking supernatural being! I can think of only three humans in the book. That's it. So...what's the secret? Diana and Matthew also blab about their marriage (relations between supernatural creatures is forbidden by the Congregation) and her pregnancy (forbidden). When the Congregation sends them a note saying, hey, naughty naughty, you two are married and produced children, the two dumb fucks can't figure it out: “How'd they know? Who told the Congregation?” Um...everyone knows. You two are the Brangelina of this idiot trilogy. Same thing with Benji, Matthew's evil son. He was erased from the family tree and was supposed to be a deep, dark secret...guess what? Everyone fucking knows.

The Marty Stu/Mary Sue factor. Diana and Matthew are too perfect to be believable. Diana is the Best Witch Ever. She is the Most Beautiful Woman Ever. Everyone Loves Her (even Gallowglass reveals that his love for “auntie” is of the carnal variety). Everyone wants to help her. In one scene, we learn that Diana's awesome witch skills of the 16th century so inspired the London witches that they created a sort of shrine to her and she is now a legend. It's ridiculous. The same is true for Matthew. He's a very accomplished vampire. Granted, he's over a thousand years old, but c'mon. This is the list Diana compiles: scientist, warrior, spy, prince, assassin. The list doesn't include his musical talent and woodworking skills. And, according to the last book, he's also an architect. He's even so awesome that he can master his blood rage. This awesomeness extends to vampires in general and to the de Clermont family in particular. They are the oldest, the most impressive, the most influential...yes, they are the best fucking vampires ever. We get it. And when you have the best fucking vampire ever joining forces with the best fucking witch ever, you've immediately lost any kind of tension or suspense in the story. There's very little doubt as to the outcome. Will the Dynamic Duo (along with their adoring entourage) triumph over all the obstacles in their path? Of course. They can't fail. They're too perfect. And the obstacles aren't all that difficult.

What's also perfect is their passionate marital bond. Take notice, all married people: Diana and Matthew are the perfect soulmates. We are repeatedly hammered over the head with the message that *yes, they really do love each other*. These are a few quotes that grossed me out the most:

Page 15: (after hearing of Emily's death): "Gallowglass left Matthew and Diana twined together in an unbreakable knot, their faces twisted with pain and sorrow, each giving the other the comfort they could not find for themselves."

Page 30: "Here, within the circle of his arms, was all that he had ever wanted. A wife. Children. A family of his own." (A secure job in the family business. Two weeks of paid vacation every year. A lovely home with a white picket fence and one cat, one dog, and a fire drake. Awww. Such sweet, sweet dreams...for a vampire.)

Page 118: "His wife—his heart, his mate, his life—stepped down off the porch and into his arms. Diana's eyes were the blue and gold of a summer sky, and Matthew wanted nothing more than to fall headlong into their bright depths, not to lose himself but to be found." Yes, we get it. Rainbows and unicorns and hearts full of love. Of course, since he's a vamp and she's a witch, she's going to age. He won't. Will their passion still burn so brightly when she's 60 and wrinkled? Or will he make her a vamp so he has centuries to be possessive and creepy? Whatever their future holds, I'm sure it will be perfect and shiny.

This is a fucked-up mess of a book. Viking, the publisher, apparently does not employ editors. All the other crap aside, it's basically a dressed-up romance novel. A very conservative romance novel. The supernatural creatures aren't very supernatural. The vampires are stripped of nearly everything that makes a vampire—and stripped of *everything* that makes them scary. They are fang-less on many levels. Matthew is a pious Catholic who says things like, "I leave that in the hands of God." He drinks wine, eats food, and wears a cross. He's about as scary as a paper cut. These vampires also breathe and have hearts that beats and circulate blood—so why does Diana constantly refer to Matthew's cold body? Matthew is a fine, upstanding man who just wants a family and to be the CEO of his own dynasty. Diana is a powerful witch, but she's reluctant to use her powers, even for good. She gladly submits to her husband because that's what good little wives do. They didn't even have sex until after their marriage (which very properly produced children). This novel is full of happy domestic scenes. Chapter 33 is all about Christmas. It's so delightful: "The babies' first Christmas was as loving and festive as anyone could wish" (449). Oh, *goody*. It's as if Harkness is starting a new genre: The "Cozy" Vampire: He Just Wants To Be Loved. Where's Buffy when you need her?

PS:

No mention of the stretchy black pants! I was so disappointed. Diana's pregnant with twins. Isn't this the perfect time for stretchy black pants?

Matthew gets Diana a six-slice toaster for Christmas. Holy shit. Yup, that's what she wanted and boy was she excited to get it. She used her oh-so-powerful magical skills to turn six (yes, only 6) strands of his hair gray. He's delighted and shows everyone at the big family vampire Christmas gathering. OMG. Could they be any more lame?

ALERT: All Souls Trilogy lovers and haters--BBC is adapting these shitty books for tv. I pity the screenwriter whose job it is to pull a half-way intelligent story from these books. Will I watch it when it airs? Oh, hell yeah.

NEW COMMENT: I have now visited and toured the Bodleian Library of Oxford (as of October 2017). Now that I've been inside (it's not just one big library as I thought), I want to reread parts of the books that deal with the library. I learned that the pneumatic tube note system has been discontinued for quite some time, so if Diana was sending a request via it, it never would have gone anywhere. Personally, I think she was too dumb to study at Oxford and be allowed to use the library.

Lucia says

"If you truly love someone, you will cherish what they despise most about themselves."

My Diana and Matthew:

Similarly as its predecessors, The Book of Life is another thoughtful and thrilling page-turner. In this final instalment, author will take you on a thought-provoking journey woven into a beautiful paranormal tale that will awaken your imagination and appease even the most demanding readers.

All The de Clermonts (and Bishops) are back in present time, together with their never-ending web of secrets and intrigues. Now mated and on a verge of forming family, Matthew is desperate to keep his beloved Diana safe and happy. But when all Matthew's past deeds and mistakes come to haunt him, will their love prevail? Is their bond strong enough to covet danger greater than Covenant itself?

"But you have become as vital to me as breath and blood. My heart no longer knows where I end and you begin. I knew that you were a powerful witch from the moment I saw you, but how could I have imagined that you would have so much power over me?" - Matthew de Clermont

I absolutely love romantic aspect of this story. Matthew's and Diana's love for each other warmed my heart and brought a smile to my face through out the whole book. I'm definitely going to miss them (and all supporting characters) something fierce now when trilogy is over!

The Book of Life is a story about finding peace and absolution, about accepting who you are. The depths author went in to describe characters and their thinking is mind-blowing and truly exceptional. It made all characters come alive and it is probably the main reason which make this trilogy so special in my eyes.

Do not hesitate to pick these books up. With The Book of Life, All Souls trilogy secured first place among my all time favourites paranormal series!

*"May the ranks of angels receive you,
and with Lazarus, once a poor man,
may you have eternal rest,"*

ARC provided by publisher as an exchange for honest review

MORE REVIEWS ON MY BLOG **Reading Is My Breathing**

Sue (Hollywood News Source) says

You can win The Book of Life's paperback, All Souls trilogy swags and Diana's commonplace book in Young Adult Hollywood.

In this final conclusion of All Souls trilogy, Diana and Matthew returns to the present time. In Sept-Tours, they reunite with their family, and together, they'll face the threat of danger, and search for the missing last pages of Ashmole 782.

It's always a sob-fest to see one of your favorite series come to an end. I've read A Discovery of Witches and Shadow of Night countless of times. I can quote it with my eyes closed, but really don't take my word for it. These books changed my life, and they will always have a very special place in my heart. No matter how many times, I've read this book, I will always shed a tear. This isn't an easy road for every reader out there, who becomes so attached to these precious characters.

All Souls Trilogy is a widely popular series. While some people think it's tedious and rather boring, I have always found it fascinating, and it intrigued me to no end. The Book of Life, like its predecessors, is a work of art, a true masterpiece. It's no surprise, that it is profoundly and gallantly written. Harkness explores the usual concept and themes of her books. The plausible steamy romance, the historical input, magic and rich world building

(view spoiler) We also get to meet some of the old characters who are returning in the present times like Gallowglass, and the other members of the De Clermont family. That was such a fun part! I couldn't help but crave more back story and while there are some twists that, I didn't anticipate coming, The Book of Life ended neatly. It went where I always thought it would go.

Deborah Harkness spellbinds her readers with the stunning conclusion of All Souls Trilogy, The Book of Life.

Listen to my The Book of Life fanmix on **8tracks**.
Review also posted at Young Adult Hollywood.

Nathan says

This book was flat out boring and a disappointing end to the series. I realized that the series lost it's charm when I was mid way through the book and basically nothing had happened to further the overall story from the previous two books.

The book is written in a mix of first person from Diana's POV and will randomly jump to third person, gets annoying rather quickly.

The menagerie of forgettable characters gets in the way of the overall story. This book felt like Twilight for adults, smothering love, inexplicable children...wait no not inexplicable, random explanations about vampire/witch genetics that act as the perfect deus ex machina.

Listen, I enjoyed the first book because it was a fun filled story with some new spins on supernatural creatures, the second book was enjoyable as well because we got some character progression. This book basically went no where until the last 15% of the story where everything gets nearly tied up and happy endings for all.
