



A Breath of Frost

Alyxandra Harvey

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In 1814, three cousins—Gretchen, Emma, and Penelope—discover their family lineage of witchcraft when a binding spell is broken, allowing their individual magical powers to manifest. Now, beyond the manicured gardens and ballrooms of Regency London, an alluring underworld available only to those with power is revealed to the cousins. By claiming their power, the three cousins have accidentally opened the gates to the underworld.

Now ghouls, hellhounds—and most terrifying of all, the spirits of dark witches known as the Greymalkin Sisters—are hunting and killing young debutante witches for their powers. And, somehow, Emma is connected to the murders...because she keeps finding the bodies.

Can the cousins seal the gates before another witch is killed...or even worse, before their new gifts are stripped away?

A Breath of Frost Details

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From Reader Review A Breath of Frost for online ebook

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

Actual rating: 3.5

Her aim was so true that each bolt was hit and turned into a boiled beet that exploded all over the cousins. Red pulp splatted into their faces, hung from their hair, and stained their dresses. The other girls couldn't help but laugh. The cousins stood in the middle of the ballroom, dripping vegetable matter and wondering why anyone would want to be a witch in the first place.

My gosh, they don't come much sweeter or cozier than this book. If you like your Regency-era light romance seasoned with a dash of witchcraft and mystery, with a delightful trio of female friendship, this will definitely do the trick.

I know I have a reputation of being a reader who critically eviscerate books, I kick babies and I punt puppies and all, but man, this book turned me into a warm, mushy mess.

IT WAS ADORABLE!!! ADORABLE!!!! Regency balls and tea parties and witches and shopping and spells and cute footmen and ghosts and a magical boarding school and secret wizarding orders and goblin markets and a dullahan! A DULLAHAN! You don't see that every day. Granted, he only appears a brief moment, but I love the dullahan and so rarely do I see one in literature that I feel the need to squee. I squee'd a lot in this book.

A man cantered down the middle of the street on a giant black horse, holding his own head under his arm. The eyes were staring balefully. His cloak billowed from his shoulders and the stump of a neck shadowed the collar of an old-fashioned frock coat. A whip hung from his belt, knotted and white, and made from a length of human spine. More bones were knotted into the horse's mane.

Rest assured, I have my criticisms, but there is nothing that I hated about this book.

My Main Criticism: The plot & pacing. **This book is far, far too long.** For the first 30% of the book, I wasn't sure where the plot was headed, because we were in one place, then another, then another. **Then there were all the different characters whom I had to learn.** I had to keep track of who was Emma, who was Gretchen, who was Penelope. I had to know their lives, I had to learn their personality, it was hard not to get lost. And there were so many additional characters besides the 3 cousins. There's Cormac, Moira, Daphne, Margaret...etc. My head spun with the effort of keeping track of all of them.

The plot is often sprinkled with some very charming segments on attending balls, going shopping, casting some love spells, etc. that unnecessarily elongated the book and didn't add much to the plot at all. But man, overall this book was too adorable for me to complain much about it. The book may be very long and unnecessary in parts, but it was never a pain to read.

If you wanted danger, honestly, there's not a lot to be found here. I said this book is cute, and it truly is, but the point is that everything is so sweet that while there is a lot of action, a lot of excitement, I just couldn't feel any danger in this book. And that's not a bad thing at all, sometimes you just need a light, fresh read, and

this book definitely does the trick.

The summary: It is 1814, Regency Britain. Lady Emma is at a ball, along with her cousins, Lady Gretchen, and Penelope. All is well as it can be at a Regency ball, namely saying that Emma is bored out of her mind, until a bloody girl stumbles in from a garden. Sadly, the bloody girl is by no means the strangest thing to happen at that party. There's a fire, there is a torrent of rain that's not so much a gentle sprinkle British downpour as it is someone dumping a massive bucket of water all over them.

The sky opened overhead like a broken water jug. Rain pattered over the roof, soaked their dresses and tangled their hair like seaweed. In moments, the gardens were a maze of ruined silk, mud, and slippery stone. A balding duke slid on his perfectly polished shoes right past them and into a hedge. A dowager who usually limped on a diamond-studded cane gathered up her hem and darted over the lawn, her wrinkled knees bare.

Needless to say, that was a fucking awesome ball, man!

Sadly, that was just the beginning. That dratted perfume bottle actually released the Greymalkin witches---a deadly trio of sisters---into the world. Emma, Penelope, and Gretchen are literally forced down a dark hole in the ground, where they not only get way too close to each other for comfort...

*"Ooof," Emma wheezed. "Someone's elbow is taking liberties."
"Sorry, sorry." Gretchen shifted. "But if Penelope's left foot gets any closer to my cleavage we'll have to read the banns."
Penelope squirmed and spat out what felt like a wad of lace. "I sincerely hope that was someone's petticoat and not a rat,"*

Before they know it, the cousins are plopped into a goblin market, one of them is kidnapped (and forced to walk the plank!). And finally...they end up in the dreaded....finishing school? But not just any finishing school!

*"I'm the headmistress here. Welcome to the Rowanstone Academy for Young Ladies."
Emma set her teacup down with a jostle. Tea sloshed over the rim. "I was kidnapped by a finishing school?"*

The cousins learn magic, navigate the treacherous waters of their Season (those pesky boys trying to glare down their gowns are in for a surprise). There are a multitude of problems to be examined and solved, among them...

*Four: her father was no help at all.
Five: she'd grown antlers.
Six: the gates between the living and the dead had been opened.
Seven: which was her fault.
Eight: they needed to be located and locked.*

Not to mention the mystery of the murdered girls.

This ain't your ordinary Season.

Did I say this book is cute? IT IS CUTE!

The Characters & Their Friendship: **So many books these days have female characters who are completely snide and bitchy to others girls. This book is not one of them.**

There is a wonderfully sweet friendship between the three cousins. Emma, Gretchen, and Penelope love each other, they get along with each other, however different their personalities.

"I wonder where the library is," Gretchen said.

"I wonder if there are any handsome young men willing to dance a waltz?" Penelope added hopefully.

"I wonder if we can hide under the tablecloth," Emma put in.

Emma is the main character, the main narrator, and I found her to be a delight. She is not perfectly smart, she loses her focus, she slaps herself when she finds herself thinking of something stupid, and I love her for it. She may be a lady, but she is a strong one; Emma has a considerable amount of inner strength.

"I wonder where the library is," Gretchen said.

"I wonder if there are any handsome young men willing to dance a waltz?" Penelope added hopefully.

"I wonder if we can hide under the tablecloth," Emma put in.

There is not a lot of complexity to their characters, but they are individually charming. Even the side female characters are not stereotypical snippy bitch tropes, the "mean girls" have a different, caring side to them, too.

The Romance: Blissfully free of insta-love, love triangles, or douchebags. One of the main love interest can be a jerk initially, of the "I WILL HIDE ALL RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE FROM YOU" sort, but he is never, ever abusive. He is never, ever cruel, he never mocks her, and he turns out to be pretty charming and humorous outside of his ironclad visage once we get to know him.

"Shouldn't you at least be clutching me out of fear?"

She turned to look at him. "Why? I'm not afraid of the dark, Cormac."

He sighed theatrically. "But girls clutch at me out of fear all the time. Apparently I am a great defender against bees, spiders, moths, and suspicious-looking scones."

Charming. Sweet. Adorable. Completely cute and inoffensive in every way. Recommended.

Nara says

(series review)

The Lovegrove Legacy so far has been quite the fun read- strong female leads, magic, romance, mystery, drama...it's certainly full of elements that make for a fantastic combination together.

The characters in particular, I think, are quite well developed. The two books so far centre mostly on Emma, Gretchen and Penelope, a group of three cousins who are descendants of a long line of witches. The relationship between the three is a strong one, where it's clear that they're both family and friends. The various romances are probably less solid; although they're not instaloves or love triangles or anything overly annoying, they're also not quite as well developed as I would have liked.

While it had a lot of positive aspects, I do feel like there was an element of it being superficially entertaining, and not really going any deeper than that. There's nothing particular outstanding about the books and the plot isn't overly memorable.

This series is one that you'd tend to read more if you're looking for something quick and fun.

Ratings

Overall: 6/10

Plot: 3/5

Romance: 2.5/5

Writing: 3/5

World Building: 3/5

Characters: 4/5

Cover: 3/5

Rashika (is tired) says

**** *This review has also been posted on The Social Potato*

WARNING: The word ADORABLE has been used in excess

It was winter and I had been having a bad week; I was angry, sad, paranoid and detached, then along came A Breath of Frost and **warmed up my black heart**.

I read Haunting Violet in 2012 and fell head over heels in love. The book was incredibly fluffy and made me feel like I was floating on clouds. When I found out that the author was writing a new book that was set around the same time but instead of ghosts had witches, I knew I had to get my incredibly grabby hands on a copy.

A Breath of Frost did NOT let down. It was adorable and fluffy and just.... It's hard to actually say anything about the book when all I want to do is post a bunch of quotes to prove how wonderful the book was.

Emma was **a great female lead. She had her priorities in order (kind of), had not morphed into some sob story even though her father was an ass and also managed to be a lot of fun and was overall a very positive person.** Things weren't always good for her, people feared her because of her mother and where always quick to point their fingers when something went wrong, she grew a pair of antlers and let's not forget, people were dying and she had just found out she was a witch.

Surely, she had priorities and they had nothing to do with the feel of his arms around her.

Girls wearing antlers instead of bonnets probably didn't get many chances to flirt.

The best thing about the novel was not in fact the world building but the relationships. They were the highlight of the novel. The relationship between the 3 cousins was just heartwarming. They were always **supportive of one another and would do anything for each other.** From the opening scene where they get all huffed and puffed when an asshole called Penelope fat, to where they would go out their way to be protective of Emma when it came to Cormac.

"I'll be better when I've planted my boot up Cormac's backside,"

They could always rely and fall back on one another. They **would comfort each other without being asked to. They were so close knit and the three of them were just ADORABLE.**

"I wonder where the library is," Gretchen said.

"I wonder if there are any handsome young men willing to dance a waltz?" Penelope added hopefully.

"I wonder if we can hide under the tablecloth," Emma put in.

Her cousins were just a lot of fun, from **Gretchen who may or may not have had a streak of violence to Penelope who was a romantic through and through to the not really there Gordic who was a delicate flower** (in comparison to his twin sister, Gretchen).

I was also pleasantly surprised by the fact that **at least one out of the four had great parents.** The little moments with Pen's mom were really fun and I am so glad that after seeing only parents who wanted to marry off their kids in historical books, we finally had **parents who told her daughter there was enough money for her to live off of should she wish to not get married.** Hell her parents actually encouraged her to not get married.

Let's not forget Cormac's (who I will get back to later) sisters. Cormac was the only one in the family without magic but as a keeper he had to work twice as hard to prove himself. **His sisters of course would never let their big brother go about trying to get himself killed and almost always tried to come to his rescue.**

"You don't want the Order of Iron Arses to know your baby sisters saved you"

Cormac was a wonder though. When he was first introduced I was so worried he would turn out to be one of those annoying bad boys who treated the female lead like shit. **I needn't have worried because Cormac was absolutely adorable.** Of course he would probably punch me in the face for saying that but how can a guy who says something like

She tilted her head. "I'm not afraid of the dark, Cormac."

He sighed theatrically. "But girls clutch at me out of fear all the time. Apparently I am a great defender against bees, spiders, moths, and suspicious-looking scones."

not be adorable? What I liked most about Cormac; however, was that **he respected Emma as an individual. He didn't see her as some damsel in distress that needed saving, he saw her as a person, a person he was**

hopelessly in love with and therefore would do anything to protect.

“I suppose it makes a strange sort of sense,” Cormac allowed. “And he did save your life.”

“You both did.”

“You saved yourself just as much.”

The romance was just... it made me wish I could stuff my face with cotton candy. Cormac and Emma **are such a cute couple**. And thankfully, **Emma tries her best to not spend the whole time drooling over him**. She realizes he could be dangerous seeing that he was perfectly willing to hand her over to the order.

For some reason, Cormac kept turning her into an idiot.

And at some point, preferably before it killed her, she would have to remember that he was only kind to her for his own secret.

It did take a while for the two of them to come to their senses but there were so many sweet moments in between that it didn't even matter that it took Cormac a while to man up.

Cormac just shrugged. He knew better than to say that he found Daphne boring. In fact, he was finding every girl he met who wasn't Emma, boring. He'd never live it down if word got out. Never mind his friends, his sisters would be merciless. “Any news?” he asked.

One of the biggest drawbacks for me was Ewan and Theodora. While I didn't mind Ewan, **Theodora really got on my nerves** and their **romance really did NOT do anything for me**. It came off as **insta-romance** and the way Ewan **called her princess** ... was kind of **creepy** for me.

I cannot say much about the **plot because while it wasn't lacking, it wasn't what grabbed my attention and made me feel warm and tingly inside**. **The characters and their relationships were so obviously the highlight that I didn't pay much attention to the plot**. Although I have to say, the cousins had some of the best reactions to finding out they were witches. Em asked if she could fly (I forgot to save the quote)

Pen:

“That's something out of a gothic novel, Em. Well done. Are we tragic and misunderstood, doomed to wander unloved over the moors?”

And Gretchen:

“What if we don’t want to join witching society?” Gretchen asked. “I don’t like the rules I’ve already got, thanks very much. I’m not keen on learning new ones.”

Gordic just got himself drunk because the ghosts scared him.

I still have quotes I wish I could share because really, **this book was just so GODDARN ADORABLE. If this book were candy, I would gorge on it.** With a world full of witches, warlocks, balls, magic and Harvey’s magic, **this book was fluffy and worth every minute I spend reading it.** The only thing I ask of the sequel is for Cedric and Penelope to get together.. but since the sequel looks like it’s going to be Gretchen’s story, I am just going to have to wait a little bit longer.

Bec says

This review first appeared on Readers in Wonderland

Major Selling Points:

Historical Witches

Do you know how long it's been since I read a YA historical? DO YOU? It actually hasn't been that long honestly but it has been a while since I read a historical set in one of my favourite eras in London. And it had witches with all kinds of different magic! And finishing schools for witches! And ghosts and other paranormal creatures! And many other awesome things.

Friendship is magic

Emma, Penelope, and Gretchen are cousins that have grown up together and it certainly shows. They know each other so well and their relationship becomes important to parts of the plot. Though there are many times when the girls seem to be separated from one another, when push comes to shove you know they all have each other's backs.

Swashbuckling:

A BREATH OF FROST was a hell of a lot of fun. Sure the plot is dark at times (murders and warlocks and revenge and such) but over all it was a really light hearted book! Well, for me. My "light hearted" doesn't always really match other peoples. There's funny, ridiculous scenes to break up the murder, mystery and action. Everything develops logically too so you're not jarred from a scene where a character just died to a scene where you're pissing yourself laughing.

Lingo:

The writing might have been the best part of this book, aside from the historical setting and witches. Why, you ask? SACASM. SARCASM EVERYWHERE. And I don't mean that my statement that the writing was good is sarcastic. I mean, A BREATH OF FROST is written in a fairly sarcastic voice. It was like reading something that had been taken out of my head (90% of any comments I make are sarcastic. Never trust me). In short: fan-freaking-tastic.

Crew:

Emma

Emma is the main main character of A BREATH OF FROST and I have surprisingly little to say about her. She's a nice character, and I liked being in her head, but I can't think of anything spectacular about her. Her magic was cool? But all the magic in this book is cool. Maybe her curiosity and determination.

Gretchen

Gretchen might be my favourite girl character. She's quick with her wit, hates the role society has given her, and has the potential to be a very violent person. She'd much rather be out there fighting with a sword than stuck inside with embroidery and preparing for balls. She seems to be the main character in the sequel and I can't wait!

Penelope

Penelope is the girl I wish to be. She doesn't fit society's standard of beauty but she doesn't care. She's happy with herself and her life and wouldn't change it for the world. It was so nice reading about someone who's confident in herself. Penelope isn't cocky either. She's a very, very kind person. More people need to be like Penelope.

Swoonability:

The romance was sort of weird because it was already complicated before the story began. Complications that made the characters sort of hate each other at the start which is my favourite type of romance to be honest (the bickering and stuff that changes over time). Overall I did like the romance, despite the fact that Cormac was ridiculously hot and cold and that some scenes were just so ridiculously cheezy I could not. THOSE THEODORA AND EWAN FLASHBACKS THOUGH. I could read a whole story about their relationship, not just three chapters or so.

Ships:

- Emma x Cormac
- Penelope x Cedric
- Emma x Antlers
- Theodora x Ewan
- Gretchen x Opportunities to kick ass

Aa'Ishah says

1814 London sees Emma, Gretchen and Penelope discover that magic runs in the family and that the cousins are, in fact, witches. This discovery, unfortunately, comes with something of a damper, as it seems they unwittingly opened up portals to the underworld. Among the foul and dangerous things coming through these portals are the spirits of the Greymalkin Sisters, dark witches who are now murdering young witches in a quest for more power. Somehow, it is Emma who stumbles upon each corpse. The cousins need to locate and seal the gates as quickly as possible, but someone is working against them to help the Sisters. It is only a matter of time before any hope or possibility of winning this fight becomes impossible.

This was a fairly solid read, although I admit this wasn't entirely what I'd hoped. Having enjoyed Harvey's Drake Chronicles I came with certain expectations. These were met in part and, with a little more work, it could have been even better. The bones were definitely there, and very promising. What seemed to be missing, however, were key points of explanation, parts of conversation; transitions were disjointed and causal points unclear. This improved over the course of the book, with the second half being stronger than the opening, and this is where I started to get more involved in events. The plot, such as it was, was not an overly complex one, but Harvey made it reasonably compelling nevertheless. I quite liked the portrayal of the Graymalkin Sisters, each suitably villainous and distinct in their own way. The worldbuilding in general, although in need of some improvement, was decent enough.

I'm not sure how attached I became to the characters. Certainly I liked our three leads, and I'm looking forward to seeing more of them. Amusing and feisty, they kept me entertained - Emma in particular, who took the forefront in this instalment. But it's hard to detect any deeper sentiment. Possibly part of the problem was the frequent jump between perspectives, which was split not only between the cousins but others as well. Even beyond that, though, I think there was something elusive that just prevented me from fully connecting. Still, there's sufficient time left for me to feel differently. What was good, beyond a doubt, was to see a good connection between these three girls. As family, as friends, they had a strong relationship. Romance was present in the book, but it was this relationship that took the focus more, I think, which was a nice change.

While not as promising as I might have hoped, *A Breath of Frost* was still a decent start to a new series by a well-established author. I have hopes that there will be improvements as the series goes on and, if so, this should turn out to be something truly enjoyable.

This review is also posted on my blog.

Alicia Batista (Addicted Readers) says

4 Stars

A BREATH OF FROST was a spiraling, spellbinding, magical world, with tons of magic and romance, that unfolded into a world filled of witches, warlocks, ghouls, hellhounds, underworlds, magical elements, spells, and a turmoil of murders and mystery! It was breathtakingly beautiful. Every last page had me compelled to read more. It truly was unlike anything I've ever read.

THE PLOT...

It's 1814 in the sparkling city of London, where witchcraft is unknown, and only revealed to those with

witchcraft lineage, and other deadly paranormal beings. It's beautiful, yet dangerous, and very deadly...

But for Emma, Gretchen, and Penelope, the only thing they know is the sparkling ballroom parties, fantasy dresses, and their noble name. But all that changes when Emma accidentally breaks a perfume bottle at the ball, or so she thought it was a perfume bottle. Emma actually broke a very powerful binding spell when she dropped that bottle. And now the 3 cousins, Emma, Gretchen, and Penelope's true destiny is finally revealed...

The cousins return from the ball with unknown powers, and uneasy feelings that their is more to their world then they once thought. But that's not all that happened when Emma broke that bottle. People are dying, but not just any people, witches. And for some crazy reason, the wind pushes Emma to the bodies, every single one of them. With Emma being at every murder scene, and her mothers defiance against the Order (The witch police), and her mothers insanity for her defiance. Emma becomes their number one suspect for the murders. But why are these witches being murdered, and why does the wind push her to every one? But then Emma desperately gets her answers. When she broke her mothers bottle, she not only unbound her and her cousins powers, but she also opened the gates to the underworld. And unknowingly, allowed the Greymalkin sisters to rise and enter the portals from the underworld, to their world. But the Greymalkin sisters have come with a purpose, to kill and drain witches for their powers, so they can build enough strength and power to eventually solidify, and become whole enough to reclaim their old life in their world to wreck havoc, and keep killing and draining witches...

With Emma now the Orders number one suspect, and the crazy things happening to her, like growing antlers out of her head...Yep, you heard me right, ANTLERS... Oh, and lets not forget about her attraction to the insanely seductive, yet dangerously alluring Cormac Blackburn. And also a member of the Order that is hunting her!! And while she battles her undying attraction to him, and he fights to keep the Order at bay from her, she also knows that he has vowed an oath to always put the Order first. So where does that leave Emma and him, since you know, they think she's a murderer and all??

Emma will go on a journey like no other, as she unravels secrets and horrifying truths that were never meant to be revealed. It's why her mother sacrificed her sanity by trapping her familiar in a bottle, thus driving her mad. And if these buried secrets ever came to the surface and were revealed, it could very well get Emma killed...

Emma will have to trust herself and her cousins, while building allies with madcaps, and secret allies with the handsome, yet dangerously alluring Cormac. All while trying to master her powers and unravel her families secrets, while evading the Order, and trying to stay away from all the murders that are literally pulling her to them. Oh, and staying out of the Greymalkin sisters paths, that she inadvertently can't stay a way from. Because Emma is treading on very dangerous territory, and one wrong move and she could meet her end, either by the Order, or the warlock Sisters, or the murderer on the loose aiding the warlocks sisters and killing witches. She's on her most deadliest adventure yet, and it may be her last...

Overall, A BREATH OF FROST was a magically enchanting, and highly addicting world that was more then enough to keep me glued to the last page, not wanting to do anything until it was over. It's definitely a series that I will read for many years to come! I can't wait to jump into book two and continue these cousins journey, because I have no doubt that Alyxandra Harvey will surpass A BREATH OF FROST and have me falling in love with a whole story, but from the same series!

NOTE: I received a physical ARC from Bloomsbury for reviewing purposes! All opinions express are my own and are not influenced in any way!

Elizabeth says

Source: I own a copy of this book but its being donated.

Note: These are my personal opinions. I received no outside person comments or opinions.

I started out reading The Drake Chronicles and loved that and then when I found out about this series I knew I had to read it, but I became disappointed in this book.

Plot Summary:

Three cousins discover they're witches when a binding spell breaks. Now murders of other witches rock the city, The Order is hunting them, and somehow the cousins have to fix it before another witch is killed.

Emma is a Lovegrove one of the most powerful witching families in existence. In order to keep her safe along with her two cousins, she is sent off to a finishing school to learn all she can about witchcraft and also about uncovering the truth about who she is and how to stop all the trouble blooming.

In the midst of all that chaos, there was a subtle conflicting love story between two characters which was beautifully written.

My Reaction:

For the time period that the book was written in, it was clear that Harvey did her research for the book. That aspect was wonderfully written.

The only problems I had in this book was that in the middle it lagged on a bit and the word aristocrat was used too much in describing things.

Overall, I did not finish this book. I thought towards the middle thoughts became scattered and it lost its flare.

Jennifer says

Funny thing about this book, it is actually in fact one of the very first books I put on my to be read shelves on Goodreads, I have been on goodreads for almost 4 years now and I should have read it 4 years ago. This book was truly a cute book.

I am pretty obsessed with the Regency era, thank you Mr. Darcy and the fact that this was a cute fantasy book that took place in the Regency era made this book that much more awesome.

This book does not contain any asshole dudes... I mean why would it it is the Regency era???? dudes had manners. ha!

That being said it was quite refreshing for a love interest to not in fact be an asshole. I loved that. Good guys don't have to be assholes in order to gain your affections. The characters were strong females that made mistakes, but when they made a mistake they did what they could to correct it not cry about it. I loved this

book and it was truly a great book, that if I had teenage daughters I would be forcing them to read this book.

Such a cute book and I will certainly read much more in this series and by this author, very well done!

~Tina~ says

4.5 stars

I've always been a huge fan of Alyxandra Harvey since her debut novel, *Hearts at Stake* and continued to devour the entire Drake Chronicles as well as her ghostly novel, *Haunting Violet* and fantasy fae novel, *Stolen Away*. So I was thrilled to see that Harvey has come out with an entirely new trilogy to love, and love it I did. **A Breath of Frost** has everything I love about reading. Whodunit mystery and murder, magic and maddens, witches and warlocks, witty characters, a blossoming romance, all set against high society historical London. Perfection!

Emma Day has always hated high society parties and could never stand for the dull guest, and snobby proper ladies. Nothing exciting ever happens...that is till Emma accidentally broke her mother's old perfume bottle setting off a chain reaction of binding spelled secrets and opening a gate to the Underworld, unleashing nasty wicked undead creatures. Emma should have been more careful for what she wished for...

Wow! What a fun book! I was afraid I wasn't going to enjoy this book the way I wanted to since I'm not the biggest fan of historical and find myself easily lost. But Harvey totally put my mind at ease giving unique and refreshing touches to the plot and her characters and I was able to really appreciate everything and just enjoy the captivating world, fun filled plot and hilarious characters.

There is a lot going on here plot wise, and even though I felt slightly confused and overwhelmed at the beginning of the story, once I stopped asking myself endless questions about what's going on, I started to just let the story guide me along and soon enough I was able to sink into the world and just enjoy myself as the story unfolded.

This is told in four parts and several point of views and while I would usually find this distracting I actually liked being able to go inside the heads of the other characters. It provided a rounder view to understanding them and the story better.

There are *a lot* of characters. Cousins, and sisters and love interests and yes, it did take a little bit to get everyone and their family's straight, but everyone has such unique attitudes and personalities, it wasn't hard getting there.

We also have the history and mystery of Emma's mother's past and how it links to all the secrets of the Lovegrove sisters. I really enjoyed this part of the story since it connected us even more to Emma and was really the heart of the storyline.

Then we have the Keepers and the Order and all the Underworld creepiness soaking up the streets in historical London and causing mischief, chaos and murders. The creatures were all deliciously dark and disturbing. And every step of the way I adored Harvey's dedication to detail. The setting was fabulously vivid and rich with historical wonder and even the language was perfectly pitched. I loved the quick witted dialog and crisp banter and sarcasm. It was all beautifully amusing and constantly brought a smile to my face.

But my favorite part of the story is all the lovely twist and turns with every new chapter, I've always been a big fan of magic and witches but the way this story flows and bleeds together was incredibly constant, there was just always something new to learn and it was fun to discover everything this book had to offer.

I enjoyed all of these characters. They were all fantastically put together, likable and easy to connect with. I was invested from minute one till the very last page.

Emma, Penelope and Gretchen are cousins, sisters and best friends. They are all uniquely wonderful in their own ways but are all equally sassy, brave and fiercely protective, supportive and loyal to one another. They didn't know they were witches from the start and I loved how they each grew into their magical ability and learned this new world together. I also thought each witch having their own families (an animal that takes on the shape of their magic to protect them) was such a nifty idea. It's those little details that make this feel more real, refreshing and imaginative.

Cormac was a little hard to like at first since he was very hot and cold towards Emma. He's a conflicted creature who wants to prove himself worthy of the Order even though he lacks any magical talents and has feelings for Emma that he's not suppose to have. The romance isn't exactly forbidden, but it's slightly frowned upon given Emma's family magical background. But it doesn't stop Cormac and Emma from having an undeniable attraction to one another. I love all the little moments between them. The blushed cheeks, stolen kisses and hidden smiles, proving that you don't always need sexy-times to make a huge impact when it comes to love. It was warm and sweet and more real somehow and even more anticipated since their infuriating uncertainty and flirtatious dance was both comically adorable and maddening. I also loved all the other secondary character -the good ones and the bad ones- and enjoyed what entertainment they brought into the storyline.

All in all, I had a lot of fun with, A Breath of Frost. It's surrounded with all the wonderful qualities I love in my escape. Magic, adventure, love stories and old secrets that opened up a shinny new world and I can't wait to discover more! Another charming and amazing hit from Harvey! Loved!

Jolene says

I really should put off reviewing this until after I reread it, but I'm going through and doing reviews now and this one is next up on my list. Maybe I'll do a better review later, but for now, this'll have to do.

I borrowed this from the library last year and loved it enough to buy my own copy. I do believe this was my second favorite YA read of last year (the second book in this series was my favorite). The world building, characters, and magic system were all spot on. The story held my attention right from the get go. I devoured this 400 odd page book in less then a day. All three of the girls had distinct personalities that complimented each other. While Emma was the "main character" in this book, she wasn't a "Chosen One" cliché. The thing I loved the most about this story was the bond between Emma, Gretchen, and Penelope. So many YA titles, no matter the genre, are always pitting girls against each other. Even if a group of females are fighting for the same team, they're still fighting each other. Each of these girls are willing to admit another girl might be stronger then her in one way or another.

The second book in the series, Whisper the Dead, was even better then this title. Gretchen is the main focus in Whisper and I really look forward to spending more time with Penelope when the third title comes out

Nemo (The Moonlight Library) says

I'm listening to my instincts on this one.

I'm not abandoning it because most of the 'ff', 'fi' and 'fl' combinations are mysteriously missing from this ARC copy. I can figure out what they mean.

I'm abandoning it because three major events happen in quick succession and the three lead girls seem

completely unfazed by the earthquake, the fire, and the frost. They don't care, and they're not reacting at all to these major events. One of the girls broke her only remaining keepsake of her mother and was only vaguely annoyed at the person who caused her to drop it. One of the other girls is supposedly very close to her mother, and when he mother asks why she's wet the girl brushes off the enquiry and doesn't mention said earthquake, fire and frost. Why write that stuff in if the girls don't react?

I'm also quitting because there's a surprise fourth point of view unmentioned in the blurb, and the prose is attempting to emulate Jane Austen wit and failing.

Allison says

I love Fantasy of Manners, that sub-genre that blends Jane Austen-ish social settings and romance with a magical version of the 19th Century. *A Breath of Frost* introduces a Regency world with a magical society hidden beneath the surface of all the polite society balls and soirees. Three cousins, debutantes, discover that magic is part of their heritage, and begin to learn about this world. And it's kind of strange.

Familiars that jump out of their witch's chests, gargoyles that animate to protect (or attack), portals to the underworld, earthy magic made with rowan berries, protections of salt and iron, stags in the forest, shifters, blood magic and evil warlocks back from the dead. This is not your average magical London. Or YA novel.

It did take me a while to get used to the strange assortment of magic and to the rules of the hidden society. But once I got into it and understood how things worked, I was intrigued, and I enjoyed the next book more.

Unfortunately, the publisher decided not to publish the third book, but the author kindly wrote a novella to bring closure to the series so don't let that stop you. There aren't enough of these types of stories out there, so if you enjoy Fantasy of Manners like I do, at least give this a try.

Sarah says

When Emma accidentally breaks her mother's old perfume bottle she also unlocks a family secret exposing herself and her cousins Gretchen and Penelope to a world full of magic and witches that had previously been kept hidden from them. Now the girls must get to grips with their new abilities before they risk exposure to the Order of the Iron Nail. As if that wasn't bad enough Emma also managed to open the gates to the Underworld, releasing the Greymalkin sisters who are now on a murderous spree attacking innocent young witches. Since Emma keeps being the first person to find the bodies she is under suspicion from the Keepers and at risk of having her magic taken away if they find her guilty. Can the cousins gain control of their power and figure out who is helping the Greymalkin before one of them become victims themselves?

As a huge fan of **Alyxandra Harvey's** Drake Chronicles series I couldn't wait to read **A Breath of Frost**, the first book in her new Lovegrove Legacy trilogy. This series starts out a lot darker than the Drake Chronicles and has a fabulous Regency London setting. I love reading books about witches and was hooked on this one from the prologue when you read about a young girl with a cat familiar breaking into a old witch's house to steal from a dead body! **Alyxandra Harvey** throws you straight into the action and then lets you gradually learn the rules of magic alongside the three cousins. Things unfold slowly and at times I was left feeling uncertain but that just helped me connect to the characters even more and my questions were all answered as the story progressed.

One thing this story definitely has is great characters. Emma, Gretchen and Penelope all have very distinctive and different personalities but I liked all three of them immensely. Emma is the calm and practical one, she is quiet and tries to avoid confrontation but she is very protective of the people she cares about. Gretchen is the most outspoken of the trio, she is quite a tom boy and hates the way women aren't allowed to do everything men can do, she doesn't like to follow the rules and is happy to jump into any possibility of adventure. Penelope is the sweetest of the three, she is kind and loving, very gentle and softly spoken but she has a core of steel so don't let her sweet nature fool you. I loved the way all three girls were so close to each other, they could easily have been sisters and they would all do anything to protect the others. The girls are intelligent and inquisitive so although they've been thrown in at the deep end when it comes to learning about magic they work as a team and have each other's backs no matter what.

I have to mention Emma's love interest Cormac too. It took me a while to figure him out and I wasn't sure if I liked him or hated him to begin with because the way he ran hot and cold with Emma made me incredibly irritated with him at times. Thankfully we get to see part of the story from his point of view so we understand exactly why he behaves the way he does and that makes it easier to forgive his actions. I grew to really love him as we learnt more about his background and I really hope that we'll see a lot more of both him and his sisters as the series continues. Cormac and Emma make a great team and although their romance wasn't at the forefront of the story I did enjoy the obvious attraction between them.

A Breath of Frost combines magical mayhem, a murder mystery and the high society of Regency London full of balls, afternoon tea and finishing schools with a difference. I loved the mystery surrounding the girl's powers and why Emma's mother had tried so hard to lock them away and I enjoyed getting to know the different characters and the rules they have to live by. I can't wait to continue reading this series and I think **Alyxandra Harvey** has another hit on her hands!

Melanie says

See more reviews at [YA Midnight Reads](#)

3.5 stars

I haven't read any historical fiction in a long time so this felt like a nice breath of fresh air for me. (HAH! See what I did there?) But seriously, this book was adorable. Everyone has said it already but I don't care because it simply is. There's no other word in the dictionary that can suffice. So if you love the adorbs, this book is totally for you. If you don't, this book is still for you. Because I said so. But then you'll all be like

So let me convince you.

Reasons to read A Breath of Frost:

1. The relationships in this book are the highlight. Emma, Gretchen and Penelope are a trio of tightly knit cousins, they recently discovered their family lineage of witchcraft after a binding spell was broken, making the cousins now in danger. I love how the three are always looking out for each other and are ready to kick butt at anyone. They were basically triplets, and knew exactly how to lighten each other's mood. For instance:

"He called me fat." [Penelope]

Emma hissed out a breath. "I beg your pardon."

"It's nothing, really." She forced her voice not to wobble. "He embarrassed me, that's all."

"Think how embarrassed he'll be when I wrap his smalls around his fat head."

[...]

"Why does Emma look like she's swollen a bee?" Gretchen asked when her cousins pushed their way toward her.

"Mr. Cohen called Penelope fat," Emma replied.

Gretchen's smile faded. "Did he, now?"

"It's nothing." [Penelope]

"I hope he wakes up swollen like a balloon," Gretchen muttered.

2. There is an extremely likable lead character. We do get to touch in with quite a lot of people's perspectives however the author mainly narrates from Emma's point of view. People steered away from her due to her mother's condition and she did not have much of a significance. Still, she had a bright nature and was eager for adventure, a strong protagonist in and out.

3. There's none of that romance crap. Sure, we have a main focal romance in A Breath of Frost but there's no love triangle, heavy angst or instant-love. There's no irrelevant drama and nothing overly cheesy. The romance is sweet and fluffy, just like this book. While I did not like Cormac at the start--the way Emma had portrayed him made me want to slap him every time he appeared but soon we find out his real intentions and everything makes sense. Cormac had always wanted to do what was right for both of them.

4. The writing transported me back to the 18 hundreds. Man, this lady knows how to write in this time period. She describes everything elaborately--perhaps a little too elaborate at times (it's freaking 500 pages O_O)--Alyxandra knows exactly how to use the English language effectively. Posh, sweet and descriptive, I will be going through to read more of Alyxandra's books because of this. Let me share an example:

Extensive windows and a curved glass ceiling held in the warmth of hundreds of flowers. The marble pathway wound around pots of daffodils, lilac branches in glass vases, and blankets of lilies pressing their white petals against the windows. She tried to see the stars through the ceiling but mist clung to the glass, obscuring the view. Instead, she contented herself with

wandering through the miniature jungle, listening to the faint strains of a waltz playing from the ballroom.
It wasn't all she heard.

[and]

The sky opened overhead like a broken water jug. Rain pattered over the roof, soaked their dresses and tangled their hair like seaweed. In moments, the gardens were a maze of ruined silk, mud, and slippery stone.

Tell me your secrets, Alyxandra! How do you write so magnificently?

5. The world building. Along with the writing, it was easy to digest and was not thrown at the readers all in one heap.

So yeah, if you won't read it for the adorbs, read it for those 5 reasons.

The reason why I didn't give this book 5 stars then? I struggled at times in this book due the the length. 500 pages. FIVE HUNDRED OF THEM. This book could have done perfectly well with less. Much less.

I could go on quoting this book for hours but I won't because that would just ruin the enjoyment for everyone else. I highly recommend this book for people who want a good historical fantasy.

Melanie, out.

~Thank you Bloomsbury Australia for sending me this copy!~

Amelie says

3,5 Sterne

Es ist nicht so, als wäre A Breath of Frost nicht gut gewesen. Es war gut, das war es wirklich. Tolle Charaktere, eine süße Liebesgeschichte und jede Menge Background. Insgesamt hat mir das Buch gefallen. Allerdings muss ich auch sagen, dass mir hier bei der Liebesgeschichte dieser Sog gefehlt hat. Vielleicht liegt es daran, dass sie in der Vergangenheit spielte und es sich da ja nicht so sehr schickte sich schnell nahe zu kommen? Vielleicht auch einfach daran, dass es hier mehr als in jedem anderen Alyxandra Harvey Buch eine Liebe auf den ersten Blick gewesen ist. Nicht auf den ersten Blick, aber man hatte das ganze Buch über immer so ein wenig das Gefühl, als wären die beiden schon längst zusammen. Vielleicht dadurch, dass sie sich schon vor dem Buch kannten und irgendwo auch schon davor etwas füreinander empfunden haben? Auch fand ich die Perspektivwechsel, die Harvey hier eingebaut hat, zum ersten Mal störend. Keine Frage: Gretchen = Best character ever und ich freue mich auch schon unheimlich auf Whisper the Dead, aber trotzdem. Gerade auch Moiras Sichtweise fand ich echt unnötig. Hinzu kommt, dass ich nicht so der riesige Fan von Hexen bin und auch nicht so der riesige Freund von Geschichten, die in der Vergangenheit spielen. Vieles war hier auch vorhersehbar.

Wenn ich das so aufzähle, dann klingt das als hätte mir das Buch nicht gefallen. Das stimmt nicht! Es hat mir gefallen, aber es war eben auch nichts besonderes, so ich das von Harveys anderen Büchern kenne.
