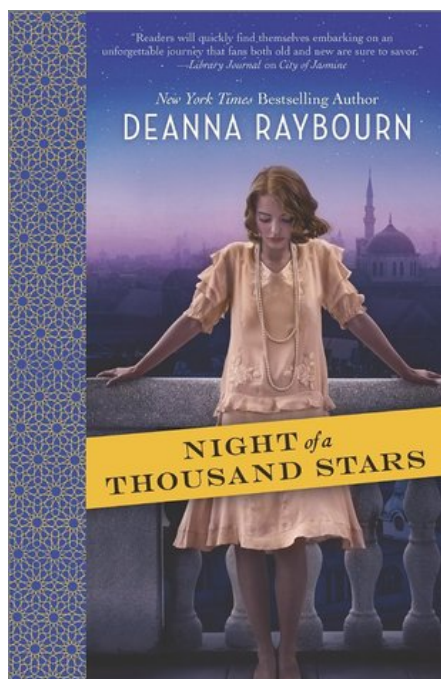




## Night of a Thousand Stars

*Deanna Raybourn*

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# Night of a Thousand Stars

*Deanna Raybourn*

**Night of a Thousand Stars** Deanna Raybourn

**New York Times bestselling author Deanna Raybourn returns with a Jazz Age tale of grand adventure**

On the verge of a stilted life as an aristocrat's wife, Poppy Hammond does the only sensible thing—she flees the chapel in her wedding gown. Assisted by the handsome curate who calls himself Sebastian Cantrip, she spirits away to her estranged father's quiet country village, pursued by the family she left in uproar. But when the dust of her broken engagement settles and Sebastian disappears under mysterious circumstances, Poppy discovers there is more to her hero than it seems.

With only her feisty lady's maid for company, Poppy secures employment and travels incognita—east across the seas, chasing a hunch and the whisper of clues. Danger abounds beneath the canopies of the silken city, and Poppy finds herself in the perilous sights of those who will stop at nothing to recover a fabled ancient treasure. Torn between allegiance to her kindly employer and a dashing, shadowy figure, Poppy will risk it all as she attempts to unravel a much larger plan—one that stretches to the very heart of the British government, and one that could endanger everything, and everyone, that she holds dear.

## Night of a Thousand Stars Details

Date : Published September 30th 2014 by Harlequin MIRA

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Author : Deanna Raybourn

Format : Kindle Edition 400 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Mystery, Historical Romance, Adventure, Historical Mystery

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## From Reader Review Night of a Thousand Stars for online ebook

### Holly says

Another great novel by Deanna Raybourn! I loved the characters and the story. She's become a must read for me!

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### Caz says

#### AUDIO VERSION:

**I've given this a C- for narration and an A- for content at AudioGals. I'm sticking at 3 stars, although honestly, it's not an audio I would recommend.**

I read and loved this book last year, so I was delighted to see that it had recently been made available in audio and eagerly snapped it up, even though the narrator is not someone I have listened to before. **Night of a Thousand Stars** is one of Deanna Raybourn's set of three loosely connected novels set in the 1920s, and in fact links back to her *Lady Julia* books in that the heroine is the daughter of Julia's youngest brother, "Plum" – a fact revealed early in the story and which may have caused just the slightest squee from yours truly upon reading.

As an audiobook, however, **Night of a Thousand Stars** is a very different prospect, and I struggled to finish it.

You can read the rest of this review at AudioGals.

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### Barb says

I've read the majority of Deanna Raybourn's novels and I loved the first four books in the Lady Julia series. But was disappointed by the last one, it had a lighter quality than the others and the headstrong clever protagonist somehow became flakey and wimpy. It left me wondering if the series had seen the end of the line (for me, at least).

I was please to find 'A Spear of Summer Grass', published last year, more in keeping with the author's earlier work and I hoped 'Night of a Thousand Stars' would have the same style as the other novels I'd enjoyed from this author. Unfortunately 'Night of a Thousand Stars' reads like a typical romance novel with events that are unlikely, improbable and silly dominating the storyline.

I enjoyed the setting, the story unfolds in 1921 and the period details were well done and added to the interest of the story. I enjoyed the family backlash in response to Penelope's leaving her betrothed at the altar, as well as the rekindled relationship with her father, Plum March. I was hoping we might get to spend some more time with Plum and the other March siblings because I've enjoyed them in the past. Unfortunately Penelope hares off to Damascus on a far-fetch adventure without their company.

I hoped I could stick it out with the heroine after she got off the ship in Syria but instead of becoming more believable the storyline devolved from there. I threw in the towel when mysterious (and handsome) man number four crossed her path. I could see that this wasn't going to be something I was going to enjoy reading at that point and abandoned it for something that didn't set my teeth on edge.

This one is probably going to be best for readers who enjoy romance novels.

Thank you to Harlequin Mira publishers and the Amazon Vine program for a copy of this book given in exchange for an honest review

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## Jaclyn says

*Night of a Thousand Stars* is a historical fiction adventure, and unfortunately for me, I was a reluctant adventurer. While there were some elements that really worked for me, I had a really hard time finishing this book as it simply didn't capture my attention.

Poppy Hammond is on the brink of marriage to a wealthy aristocratic; a comfortable life awaits her. But, Poppy wants more; she doesn't feel like marriage is the right decision and she wants an adventure. So with the help of an unusually accommodating curate, Poppy jilts her groom. Determined to thank her rescuer, Sebastian Cantrip, Poppy heads off to London, only to discover that Sebastian has disappeared, and is really known as Sebastian Fox. What could have happened? After a little bit of digging, Poppy discovers that Sebastian traveled to Damascus. Convinced that Sebastian must be in trouble Poppy follows, finally embarking on the adventure that she always wanted.

Despite the fact that I'm not normally a fan of this author's style, I wanted to read this one because the premise sounded amazing. I loved the idea of adventure in a foreign land, and after reading other reviews and quotes of the book, I was intrigued. And while I loved the descriptive setting and the humour, I personally, just didn't enjoy reading about the main character, Poppy.

Poppy is impetuous and comes across as rather immature in her desire for an adventure. On the one hand, the reasoning behind Poppy's flight from the altar is solid. She explains to Sebastian that she would be stifled as a future Viscount's wife:

*"I realised with Gerald, my life would always take second place. I would be his wife, and eventually Viscountess Madderley, and then I would die. In the meantime I would open fetes and have his children and perhaps hold a memorable dinner party or two, but what else? Nothing. I would have walked into that church today as Penelope Hammond and walked out as the Honourable Mrs. Gerald Madderley, and no one would have remembered me except as a footnote in the chronicles of the Madderley family."* (p. 13)

I think Poppy's lack of individuality and need for recognition speak to the concerns of women of the time, as well as today, for that matter. I expected this need for action to manifest in a way that demonstrated that Poppy controlled her own destiny, instead she seemed to blunder into an adventure that I don't feel actually changed her character. Further, Poppy continued to be identified as someone extraordinary by those around her, and while in some cases this was a subterfuge, this extraordinary quality was never really effectively conveyed. Why is Poppy so spectacular? It is because she's pretty, intuitive? Beyond that I never really got much of a sense of what really made her so worthy of the attention that she received throughout the book. And because of this weak exploration, Poppy's adventure never fully captured my attention.

What was really well developed in *Night of a Thousand Stars* was the luscious sense of place and the great

humour.

I loved the exotic setting of *Night of a Thousand Stars*; this is a great example of armchair travel in fiction. Poppy's experiences traveling and the way that this was described is stunning and evocative. Take Poppy's first sighting of Damascus as an example:

*Long rays of sunshine slanted over the city, gilding the stone and causing it to shimmer on the flat plain. Mount Hermon, newly carpeted in soft green on its lower flanks, rose to snowy heights in the distance, and I could smell the mingled scents of freshly turned earth and fruit blossoms and smoke on the air.* (p. 101)

Whenever the setting is discussed, the author excels at presenting a sensual picture of the place rather than a visual simulation. This style of description brought a strong sense of place to the novel, and I feel that it is the strongest element to the novel and it is because of this that I would recommend it to fans of exotic locales; it is these readers that will appreciate this level of detail.

Second to the setting, I also liked the humour in the *Night of a Thousand Stars*. While I found the first third of the book to be hard to get into, when Poppy once again meets up with Sebastian I found that the humour really stood out. The one-liners between these two put a smile on my face:

*We'd been riding for hours, and although I would have died rather than admit it to Sebastian, I was thoroughly exhausted. I gave a sigh of impatience and dropped my head to his back. He jerked, nearly throwing himself off the horse. His sudden lurch irritated her and she tossed her head, crossing her feet sideways.*

*"For God's sake," I muttered irritably, "What's the matter with you? Anyone would think you were the Gothic heroine."* (p. 234)

Poppy is quite willing to dish it out to Sebastian and I found this interactions highly amusing. But, since there is a strong romantic current in the novel between Poppy and Sebastian, I was surprised that the witty banter didn't move forward into something a little more reliant on character development. My impression of Poppy and Sebastian's relationship is that they had the romantic tension, but not the depth of emotion that you expect in the romance genre. I realize that *Night of a Thousand Stars* is not a book that would be found in the romance section of the library, but since it does feature in the book, I feel that it could have been further developed.

My verdict on *Night of a Thousand Stars*? Fans of Deanna Raybourn will like this new book; it has her signature wit and quirky characters, and those will continue to appeal to her fans. While there were certain elements that I didn't care for as a reader, I maintain that this is a book that will go over with many audiences.

Review originally published with similar reads on The Book Adventures.

\*Review copy provided by the publisher via NetGalley.

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## Aoi says

This book is frightfully silly.

*Possible spoilers below*

Poppy Hammond decides she's had enough of high society life and decides to make a run for it. On the day of her wedding to a staid and proper lordling, she tries to escape through the window.

Enter mysterious man #1: A curate who aids her dash to freedom and drives her to her estranged father. In a shiny fast car. Who is kind and dashing, an excellent companion and has a sense of humour.

After depositing her with her father, he promptly disappears the next day. Our heroine chases after him , discovers that he keeps an alias and it leads her all the way to Damascus. Don't ask.

Mysterious man #2: Poppy's employer's valet. Astonishingly handsome. Has moonlit waltzes with her on the ships' deck.

Mysterious man #3: Poppy's host's son. Also astonishingly handsome. Woos her rather aggressively. Something about him puts Poppy off.

All de rigeur as in an old gothic novel. Except in those, the author builds upon the characters', their motives and heightens the suspense. Here, it all fizzles out quickly.

Poppy, this silly chit has no sense of self preservation. Creepy encounters intended to scare her off, she thinks it's all a 'grand adventure'. Bullets flying left and right, murders happening; and she's super excited. I found her self absorption quite shallow and stupid.

The book ends her getting recruited as a special agent for England. On basis of her handlers' observation of her on the mission. She's shown zero common sense and lack of any spy-worthy skill altogether. Except her adeptness at lying, which is explained away as a by-product of her boarding school education. Special snowflake syndrome, anyone?

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## **QNPoohBear says**

### **4.5 stars**

I'm not sure how to summarize the plot without giving it away so read at your own risk! Penelope "Poppy" Hammond can not bring herself to marry Gerald Madderly, the crushing bore her mother has chosen for her, it would be too too Victorian. Poppy hoped they could be compatible but it is not meant to be, so she leaves the church by way of the window assisted by the affable curate, Sebastian Cantrip. Along the way to her estranged father's cottage in Devon, she makes a full confession. Poppy then meets her father, Eglamour "Plum" March (Lady Julia's brother) for the first time and finds him lovely, but is bored. When she heads back to London, accompanied by her maid, Masterson, to find Sebastian and thank him properly, she discovers that all is not as it seems. Sebastian left in a hurry for the Holy Land and left a precious possession behind. Poppy feels he's in trouble and it's up to her to rescue him. She manages to find a way to get to Syria, under her real name, Poppy March, with Masterson following discreetly behind. In Syria she discovers a wild, wonderful land filled with twinkling stars and fragrant Jasmine blossoms. There's also danger afoot as the Syrians are making a bid for independence from their French rulers and a half-French Comte tries to seduce her. Then there's Hugh, her employer's valet, who makes impassioned speeches and kisses her without emotion. When Poppy is reunited with Sebastian, the adventure she has longed for finally begins. She discovers that with adventure comes danger and the passion she's always longed for.

There, I hope that summarized things properly without giving it away. The next part is telling you how I felt about this novel. It. was. amazing! I could not put it down. My favorite part of this novel is Deanna Raybourn's beautiful prose. She describes the Middle East so vividly, I can imagine away the present images of conflict in Syria to see the land the author seems to love so much. Certainly Poppy fell in love with it. I also love all the literary allusions. The title refers to Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens by J.M. Barrie. The stars play an important role in both stories. There are also Austen allusions! The heroine and hero have both read and enjoyed Miss Austen's novels. There are lots more literary references to be found here. A for literary geekiness! Then, there's the plot. There's almost non-stop adventure and intrigue that kept me turning the pages long after I was nodding off. I finally had to stop the first night but stayed up too late the second night to finish. I could not put it down. I was really shocked at some of the plot twists and surprised at how some turned out. Others I wasn't surprised at all. I pretty much figured I knew who the villain was and I was certain I knew that all was not as it seems with Sebastian, but there's plenty there to keep the story interesting. I was so happy to catch up with the Marches but sad to learn some of them are no longer living. (The story takes place in 1920, making Julia 60ish and her siblings elderly). I was SUPER excited to learn (view spoiler) There's a love story here that feels a little cliched but I enjoyed it. The love scene comes at the perfect moment and is implied rather than shown. The middle of the book reads like a YA novel but then the sexual tension amps up and the action gets violent. The violence was too much for me. I learned a lot about the different cultures in Syria. There's a bit of political commentary, I tried to highlight some passages but my PC screen is finicky like that. I'll try to do it on the iPad and add them in later. It's very important to understand the political background of Syria for not only is it relevant today but it plays a huge role in the story.

The weak link in the story is the main characters, especially Poppy. Poppy is very innocent and naive. She blunders along in a dangerous situation without thinking. She's a much younger version of her Aunt Julia and more annoying. I found it hard to believe she didn't notice that not all was what it seemed with Sebastian. After all, she was told certain things, she was warned away and she refused to believe anything other than her first impression of him. (view spoiler) Sebastian summed Poppy up nicely by comparing her to a particular Austen character. Sebastian is one of those chip-on-his-shoulder outcasts who does his very best to be noble and do the right thing. He's willing to fall on his sword for Poppy and trying his hardest to be noble and not act on his feelings. It's perfectly obvious and she doesn't see it. His high-handed actions are more typical of a Victorian man with Poppy pushing his patience to the limit. Poppy doesn't appreciate what he does for her. Sebastian isn't as swoony as Brisbane but I hope they get to meet Aunt Julia and Uncle Nicholas (now the Duke of Abadour) some day so Nicholas and Sebastian can compare notes and roll their eyes over their impetuous loves.

The secondary characters are great. I want to know more about Rashid and Demetrius and especially the famed aviatrix. She has her own book, *City of Jasmine*, which I fully intend to read next.

I think that's all I can say without giving away too much.

Read this if you love Deanna Raybourn's other novels. Adult fans of The Agency series by Y.S. Lee will probably like this too.

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## Jenny Q says

I'm a huge fan of Deanna Raybourn, particularly of her Lady Julia Grey series, and her three latest stand-alone novels are taking readers to some exciting, exotic new locales for historical fiction. *Night of a Thousand Stars* starts off in London, shortly after the end of World War I, as we witness our intrepid heroine, Poppy, who, much to my delight, is the niece of my beloved Julia, climbing out of a window to flee

a marriage she does not want just moments before it is to take place. She is aided by a seemingly humble church curate, Sebastian Cantrip, who volunteers his rather flashy sports car as her getaway ride and inadvertently finds himself in the middle of a melee when the bride's family and jilted groom track them down. Then, just as suddenly as he appeared, Sebastian disappears, leaving a trail of maddeningly curious clues for someone who was supposed to be a simple man of the church. Questioning what she wants out of life and convinced that an adventure is just what she needs--and that Sebastian is in need of rescuing and she is just the person to help--Poppy becomes obsessed with finding him. And thus begins her trek across the globe as traveling companion to an elderly soldier with his handsome valet and her stalwart maid in tow.

With a copy of her Aunt Julia's memoirs and a trunk full of travel guides, Poppy embraces life on the road and relishes the new sights and sounds around her. But when her party arrives in Damascus, she begins to realize that nothing is quite what it seems. She suspects their hostess, the beautiful Comtesse de Courtempierre, and her son, the smooth and charming Armand, are hiding darker secrets. Hugh, the valet, has set his sites on wooing Poppy, but her skeptical nature suspects he has an ulterior motive, and even her maid, Masterman, seems far too adept at subterfuge and ferreting out information. As political unrest mounts and whispers of a long-lost treasure swirl, she discovers that Sebastian is far more than a curate, and she becomes even more convinced that he is in danger and in need of rescue. But there are those that will stop at nothing to deter her, and she becomes intimately acquainted with the more sinister side of the enchanting city of Damascus. But her real adventure doesn't begin until she finally comes face to face with Sebastian again, and Poppy finds herself on an epic journey across a foreign land facing a brewing civil war, tested in ways she never imagined, and confronted with life-altering decisions she never anticipated.

*Night of a Thousand Stars* has a little bit of everything I love in a good novel: adventure, history, intrigue, betrayal, and of course, romance. Poppy is a lot of fun. She has the March zest for life in spades, and it was wonderful to watch this new generation of the family while catching up with those we met in Lady Julia's novels. Poppy always speaks her mind, and that makes for some pretty zippy exchanges between her and Sebastian that had me laughing out loud. And she's a smart cookie, which I really appreciated. She was not easy to fool in her quest. The mystery had me burning through the pages, the descriptions of Syria and Lebanon in the 1920s had me fully immersed in those lush lands of contradictions, and the push-pull between Poppy and Sebastian kept me on my toes as I tried to figure out how it could all possibly end well in the face of such adversity. But end well it did! I found some of the final revelations to be a little over-the-top, but that last scene was totally swoon-worthy and had me shedding a tear of happiness and closing the cover in complete satisfaction. Another great read from Deanna Raybourn!

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### **Audra (Unabridged Chick) says**

I am the newest member of the passionate Deanna Raybourn fan club. This historical novel, set in 1920, has the snappy banter and flirtatious manner of 1930s screwball rom coms with the bouncy, breezy intrigues of Lauren Willig. Add a dash of Indiana Jones, and you have this delightful novel.

I was sucked in from the first page, and completely taken with our impetuous heroine, exotic locale, and yummy romance. The story opens with Poppy March Hammond attempting to crawl out a church window in her wedding dress, having realized she absolutely cannot marry her fiancée, the dullish but rich Gerald. A handsome and mostly sanguine clergyman, Sebastian, helps her out by whisking her away to Devon, where she shelters with her estranged father. There, she learns her paternal aunt, Lady Julia Grey (yes, that one!) was a detective and spy, and Poppy is inspired. Deciding to seek out Sebastian to thank him for his help, she discovers he wasn't quite what he implied, and *that's* when the real adventure starts.

Setting off for the Middle East as the companion to a retired Colonial working on his memoirs, Poppy

embarks on some amateur sleuthing, helped by her extremely capable and mysterious lady's maid, Masterson. She's flirted with heavily by a variety of hot men, and gets whisked into some serious hot water with her investigation.

Everything about this story worked for me, and it was a playful, frothy read that was perfect for sleepy nights after work and busy weekends -- I could dive in and escape when I needed. I laughed out loud more than once: Poppy is delightfully snarky, a lovely mix of ingenue and flapper, and Raybourn gives Poppy and her men some wonderfully flirtatious banter that I just lapped up.

The setting couldn't get any more exotic and escapist -- the Middle East in the 1920s -- and Poppy is the perfect companion to travel with. Admiring everything, open and curious, she plunges into life with vim I wish I could channel. (On a more serious note, I'll add I appreciated Raybourn's handling of attitudes about colonialism in this era. It would have been inauthentic to have a cast of characters who understood why the divvying up of the Middle East by European powers was bad, but unapologetically pro-colonialist attitudes would have rang oddly in a novel like this. Raybourn manages to recognize, name, and present the pro-colonialist sentiments through her characters while having our heroine feel uneasy about those attitudes -- all without seeming anachronistic or heavily whitewashed. It's a real skill to manage that -- respectful without getting preachy -- and it made me really able to appreciate the story.)

While loosely connected to Raybourn's previous novel, *City of Jasmine* through a minor character, and in the same universe as her Lady Julia Grey novels, this is a delicious standalone that one can dive into without being familiar with the other books (as I was).

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## Allison says

Ah, Deanna Raybourn, I love you. Please don't stop writing. And please find a way to come back and write more about Julia and Brisbane. This book made me miss them so much! I want to know more about the Vespiary! There's so much more there, I know it.

*Night of a Thousand Stars* was yet another enjoyable, light, romantic historical adventure. I enjoyed seeing how Poppy ties in with Julia, and how the mad March legacy continues. But it also made me homesick for the old friends. I still don't want to say goodbye to them for good. And I want more 1920s Middle-Eastern treasure hunts now, too. Everything I read just makes me want more.

So, this one is 4.5 Stars because it didn't quite manage to match up to *City of Jasmine*. I loved the wedding escape at the beginning - that was hilarious. And Sebastian won me over pretty much instantly before he disappeared. I thought Poppy was really blind and stupid about him at times, but she was also impulsive, smart and stubborn, and I liked her spirit.

The adventure wasn't as adventurous as the one in *City of Jasmine*, but Poppy isn't an intrepid pilot, and this is her first adventure. So I'm cutting her some slack for not always knowing how to handle it and not always seeing what's going on. And honestly, more treasure would have been nice, too.

It was fun, and I loved it. I want more. Raybourn remains on my list of authors whose books I will actually pre-order - a very short list indeed. I have yet to read a book by her that I didn't love, and I only have one left that I haven't read so far. I'm eagerly anticipating her new Victorian mystery series starting this Fall with *A Curious Beginning*. I'm sure that I'll end up loving that series too, once I can get my hands on it.

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## Cheryl says

I am a fan of this author's. While I really miss Lady Julia Grey. I have enjoyed this new path that the author has taken with her last couple of books in the historical fiction genre, A Spear of Summer Grass and City of Jasmine. So I was looking forward to read her newest book, Night of a Thousand Stars. Despite the mention and some reference to Lady Julia Grey, I had a really really hard time wanting to stick with this book. The beginning was fine. Nothing too interesting about the characters but the background/time period was good. I put the book down after about six chapters thinking it was just my current mood. I came back to the book later and thought I would give it another chance. I was hoping that the story and the characters would grab me once Poppy started her grand adventure. This did not happen. In fact, I grew even more bored and finally gave up on this book. I can't even remember a thing about it. Bummer.

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## Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

Raybourn will forever be my go to author for a fabulous historic read with just the right amount of detail, mystery, paranormal elements and of course, a swoon worthy romance to make every single craving of mine complete.

She has an amazing ability to be able to paint a picture so vivid you feel as if you are watching the very scenes unfold in your mind. You see, feel, smell and experience it all for yourself right along with the characters, it truly feels as if you are there right along with them.

I fell in love with her Julia Grey series and my love for her work just escalated after each new release, each new book and each new series. To have elements from all her books and characters, together, in this one read, is truly amazing and was quite the gift. She pulled it off beautifully, she blended the old with the "new" and it was flawless.

I don't even know where to begin to describe this other than to tell you that I loved Sebastian and Poppy almost as much as I love Brisbane and Julia, which is no small feat.

The blending of the two worlds, two eras really was seamless and reminded me all over again why I am a fan of Raybourn's and will continue to be one as long as she is writing, which I hope is for a very long time.

I am so very excited about where this series is headed, where everything is headed. My only regret is that Nicholas and Julia weren't in this right along with Sebastian and Poppy. I would have loved to see them all together out there solving the world's mysteries, I can only hope it will happen at some point in the future.

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## Wendy says

I love each book that Deanna Raybourn has written and, once again, she has outdone herself with "Night Of A Thousand Stars".

Another great story with Poppy as our funny and gutsy heroine determined to find her hero and have an adventure. After abandoning her fiancé at the altar she secretly flees (with the help of a friendly curate) to visit her father whom she hasn't seen in years, then leaves for the Holy Land in search of the man who helped her escape believing he is in trouble.

With references made to the Lady Julia Grey series Raybourn was able to blend two eras rather seamlessly. A captivating, wonderfully written story with extraordinary characters I hope to one day meet again!

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## Misfit says

*"I say, if you're running away from your wedding, you're going about it quite wrong."*

*"There it was, in black and white for all to see. Viscount's Heir Jilted By American Society Girl."*

**The girl:** Poppy Hammond decides at the last minute not to marry into a stodgy, boring life with some blue-blooded aristocrat and seeks refuge at her father's house (long story, she was raised in America by her mother and step-father, hasn't seen her real father in years).

**The guy:** As Poppy plans her escape, she's conveniently aided by the ever-so-helpful (and handsome!) curate Sebastian Cantrip. The resourceful curate gets her out, to her father's and leaves her there and promptly disappears without a trace. Oh, and Cantrip's not his real name either...

*"Have you never heard the word before? A cantrip is an old Scots word. It means a witch's trick, a spell. The very word means deception."*

Hmmmm. What's a plucky heroine to do but go after her mystery man and make sure he's OK? He could be hurt and dying somewhere and desperately in need of Poppy to rescue him. And the adventure begins and Poppy and her intrepid maid are off to Damascus for whatever adventures might await them.

I loved every second of this book. Lots of ups and downs and twists and turns. Some delightful baddies and a surprise visit from a character in the previous book City of Jasmine. Oh, and plenty of laugh out loud lines as the relationship between these two shake out.

My only disappointment is that it appears there aren't going to be any more of these, I hear the author's going back to Victorian era mysteries again. There's so much potential at the end of this for more more more.

\*pouts\*

Kindle copy obtained via library loan.

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## Lady Vigilante (Feifei) says

**4 stars!!**

This was such a FUN book to read!! And I mean it was a total escapism kind of book...reminded me of the old days where I'd be sucked into movies for hours and tune out reality. Starting with the Lady Julia Grey series Deanna Raybourn's forte has always been her ability to richly describe the setting, a skill that's absolutely necessary for any author in the historical mystery genre. Written with romantic undertones, Night

of a Thousand Stars is a must-read for any historical fan with a penchant for adventure, mystery, and political intrigue.

This book had my attention right from the start – Poppy is fleeing from her wedding to Society’s darling Viscount by climbing through a window. She meets Sebastian who ends up helping her escape unnoticed and delivers her to her family in the country to let the gossip die down. After some time, she returns to London and the first thing on her mind is to thank Sebastian for his help...only she can’t because he’s disappeared. No one has ever heard of him or seen him, and pretty soon Poppy realizes Sebastian has duped her – lied to her about who he is and what he does. With the help of her resourceful maid, Poppy finds some clues about where he might’ve gone and sets out to unearth the mystery that surrounds him.

I honestly cannot say much more about the book plot. The rest is the grand adventure Poppy embarks on to find Sebastian and to spoil one part would reveal the rest and what fun is the mystery if I unravel it for you? ;) The things I *can* talk about are the character descriptions. Poppy has got to be one of the BEST heroines, especially when I compare her to other heroines in historical books. She’s instinctive, audacious, and bold, traits that normally do not belong to historical heroines. Her adventurous spirit actually reminds me of Beatrix from *Love in the Afternoon* by Lisa Kleypas. Sebastian is the exact opposite. His line of work requires stealth, intelligence, ruthlessness, and knowledge in combat. Some of their interactions are so serious and some hilarious – the author really knows how to inject wry humor in their conversations. And what I appreciated most of all is that underneath the adventure lies a thought-provoking story that makes the reader constantly question roles and motivations, and inspires desires and thoughts that define these characters but are deemed unacceptable by Society’s measures.

Though this is a standalone story, I loved that characters from previous books made an appearance or were mentioned. Reading a book from this author has always been a pleasure for my mind and senses as she really knows how to write a good book combining historical elements, suspense, mystery, and a little romance. Her books always make me feel like:

And once I’m finished with her stories, I feel a bit sad that the journey is over. Recommended read.

ARC provided by Harlequin via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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## Caz says

**I've given this an A- at AAR - but it very nearly squeaked an A, so I'm leaving it at 5 stars.**

You know how sometimes you read the opening line or two of a book, and not only does it hook you immediately, but you can just tell it’s going to be a great read? Well, **Night of a Thousand Stars** is one of those books.

It opens with Penelope Hammond, step-daughter of a rich American industrialist running out on her wedding to a stodgy viscount’s heir with the help of a rather attractive and delightfully unflappable curate. He introduces himself as Sebastian Cantrip, and agrees to drive her to her father’s house in Devon. On the way, Penelope explains that she prefers to be called by her nickname “Poppy”, and that her last name isn’t actually Hammond, because her step-father has never legally adopted her. Her actual last name is March.

Which is where I might have squealed, just a little bit.

Because – as anyone who has read any of the books in Ms Raybourn’s series of Victorian mysteries will know – March is the maiden name of the eponymous Lady Julia; and as Poppy’s father turns out to be none other than Eglamour, or “Plum” March, it makes Lady Julia Poppy’s aunt.

Having safely deposited Poppy with her father, the obliging curate leaves the following morning, which, for some reason she can’t fathom, leaves her feeling a little flat.

Poppy’s parents are divorced and while her step-father treats her as one of the family, she has never really felt as though she belonged. She was the same at school, her quick wit and adventurous nature getting her into trouble more often than not. She tries to live up to her mother’s expectations of what a young lady should be and gets engaged to a worthy – if dull – young man, but no matter what she does, she just doesn’t do “conventional”. Reading her aunt’s journals (the first of which is entitled **Silent in the Grave**), something finally clicks for Poppy, and she determines it’s time to be herself rather than try to fit in with other people’s expectations. She wants to have a “little adventure”, and decides to start by going to London – where she will have to put on a brazen front to brave the gossip – in order to find Mr Cantrip so that she can thank him properly for his assistance.

Returning to the church from which she ran away, she is disturbed to discover that the curate is in fact a Mr. Hobbs, who tells her that the name Cantrip is actually an archaic Scottish word meaning “trick”. Something is obviously not right, which makes Poppy – who has started to believe that perhaps Sebastian is in some sort of trouble - even more determined to track him down.

Her investigations eventually lead her to discover that Sebastian – whose real last name is Fox – has travelled to the Holy Land and Poppy must find a way to follow him there.

**Night of a Thousand Stars** is a companion story to Ms Raybourn’s previous book, *City of Jasmine* although it’s not necessary to have read that first in order to understand this one. To say too much about the plot will spoil it, so I’ll just say that it’s an eventful, fast moving adventure in which the author expertly balances danger and treachery with humour and deadpan wit. It is a little frustrating that the central characters spend a large portion of the first half of the book apart, but there is much to enjoy in Ms Raybourn’s attention to detail, which is very impressive, and in the writing, which just sparkles with wit and has a real “twenties feel” about it – by which I mean that it’s infused with that zest for life and desire to push boundaries that seems to have been commonly felt by so many young people after the horrors of the First World War.

The descriptions of Damascus –the sights, sounds, and smells of the souks and streets – bring the city vividly to life, and the author also includes relevant details concerning the precarious political situation of the time, which are both relevant to the story and interesting in their own right.

There is, of course, a nice dash of romance running through the story. The reunion between Poppy and Sebastian is splendidly tongue-in-cheek, with Sebastian turning up looking like a desert prince, all billowing black robes and tall boots (swoon!) ... The guy is Errol Flynn, James Bond and Indiana Jones rolled into one and is, for my money, the sexiest Vicar ever written! The dialogue is full of humour and the couple bickers in the manner of the best screwball comedies. But it’s also clear that they trust each other implicitly and will do whatever is necessary to keep each other safe. Ms. Raybourn doesn’t write explicit sex scenes, but the sexual tension between the pair is tremendous and done without repetitious mental lusting over exposed muscular body parts. (Not to say there isn’t any... it’s just not overdone.)

The only reason this isn’t a straight “A” book is that the denouement seemed a little too “pat”. Many loose ends are tied up, and co-incidences explained, but it didn’t quite work for me – perhaps because it’s just too

perfect. I suspect I may well be in the minority in that one, and I certainly enjoyed the way Poppy turned the tables on Sebastian at the end.

**Night of a Thousand Stars** is a thoroughly enjoyable read, and the characterisation is excellent all round. Poppy is probably the most strongly drawn character, but then it's her story and hers is the greatest emotional journey as she gradually learns to believe in herself and takes charge of own life. I loved the book, and have no hesitation in recommending it very highly indeed.

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## Giedre says

A bit silly, really. Even the connection to the Julia Grey books couldn't save it. In fact, it kind of made it worse.

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## Christal says

### 4.5 stars

*See this review and others like it at [Badass Book Reviews!](#)*

Deanna Raybourn has solidified herself as my favorite historical fiction author and **Night of a Thousand Stars** is a perfect example of why. It had colorful characters, mystery and intrigue, an exotic setting, and just the right touch of wit to pull everything together. It was more of a romp than the *Lady Julia Grey* novels, but I loved the little Easter egg of the characters in both books being connected.

**Night of a Thousand Stars** was just plain fun to read! We are introduced to our heroine, Poppy March (yep, Julia Grey readers... I said March), as she is fleeing from her wedding. Beautiful white dress, perfect hair and makeup, hundreds of people and one groom waiting for her... and Poppy is trying to climb out of a window. She also manages to rope clergyman Sebastian Cantrip into her runaway bride act and they are soon driving off into the sunset. This is just the beginning of the story though...

Poppy has realized she doesn't want the boring life society has planned for her. She knows she owes Sebastian a debt of gratitude for helping her and, when he appears to go missing, she bounds off to the Levant to find him. Along the way, Poppy connects with a slew of new characters and finds herself being pulled deeper and deeper into the life of Mr. Sebastian Cantrip... if that's even his real name! With only her loyal lady's maid for backup, Poppy is determined to learn the truth of the mystery and to see herself and Sebastian safely back to London.

I absolutely loved this story. Everything was so beautifully detailed and described that you felt you were there by Poppy's side. Our plucky heroine was continuously getting into scrapes and close calls that would send anyone else running for home, but she held her own and successfully came out the other side. Sebastian was mysterious and dashing... when he wasn't being grouchy and reticent. The mystery was layers deep and Poppy, as well as the reader, had no idea the complete truth of the matter until the very end. **Night of a Thousand Stars** captures you from the start and doesn't let you go. Though the situation could be pretty bleak and scary at times, the humor and the interaction between Poppy and Sebastian kept things balanced throughout. I found this to be an excellent read and am just sad to learn it will be a one-off. I could definitely see this as the beginning of a fascinating new series... there are just so many places that Poppy and Sebastian could go!

*Thank you to Harlequin MIRA and Netgalley for providing an ARC copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Mary says**

Shortly after the first paragraph, this book veered into ridiculousness, but I still found it immensely entertaining. I think the author herself called it part "screwball-comedy," which is not a description I would normally find appealing, but worked well with these quirky characters and their humorous exchanges.

If I had a criticism, I would say this was too similar to her previous book *City of Jasmine*. So much so that I kept getting the characters confused! And, it lended a feeling of "been there, done that" to some of the plot points. On the other hand, if the author were to continue with the *Lost Boys* storyline as a series, I admit, I'd probably be first in line to read them. I can't seem to help myself. Raybourn's characters charm me every time! I was tickled to discover how the characters from *Night of a Thousand Stars* tied into characters from all her other books, including the *Lady Julia Grey* series. Fans will love it.

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### **Joanne says**

Adorable! Just what I needed to get me out of a reading slump. Grabbed me from the first page and delighted me until the the very end. (I loved all the little surprise appearances from her other books.) Deanna Raybourn fans are going to gobble this one up.

4.5 stars

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### **Jewel says**

3.5 stars

This was fun, full of adventure, espionage and funny dialogues and lots of interesting characters.

Poppy is such a fun herione, strong in a away but still there is a femininity about her and a little bit of rashness.

She goes to thank a man who helped her escape her marriage only to discover that he is not who she thinks he is and also that he disappeared!

On impulse she follows clues to find him thinking he is in danger and ends up following his trail to Damascus with her lady's maid.

Then she is pulled into a series of events that lead to many discoveries.

I totally enjoyed it, but it fell a bit short on the fact that the main plot lines reminded me so much of *City of Jasmine*, it was like reading another version of it, Gabriel Starke even makes an appereance. I just wished it could have maybe a different sitting or a different background!

I liked how the characters from Deanne Raybourn other books connected with this one.

*This review is for a free copy courtesy of Harlequin via NetGalley.*

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