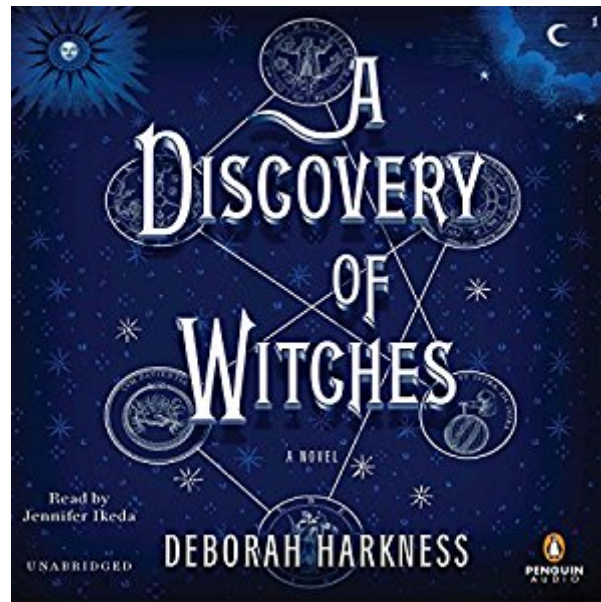# A Discovery Of Witches

Synopsis

A richly inventive novel about a centuries-old vampire, a spellbound witch, and the mysterious manuscript that draws them together. Deep in the stacks of Oxford's Bodleian Library, young scholar Diana Bishop unwittingly calls up a bewitched alchemical manuscript in the course of her research. Descended from an old and distinguished line of witches, Diana wants nothing to do with sorcery; so after a furtive glance and a few notes, she banishes the book to the stacks. But her discovery sets a fantastical underworld stirring, and a horde of daemons, witches, and vampires soon descends upon the library. Diana has stumbled upon a coveted treasure lost for centuries - and she is the only creature who can break its spell. Debut novelist Deborah Harkness has crafted a mesmerizing and addictive read, equal parts history and magic, romance and suspense. Diana is a bold heroine who meets her equal in vampire geneticist Matthew Clairmont, and gradually warms up to him as their alliance deepens into an intimacy that violates age-old taboos. This smart, sophisticated story harks back to the novels of Anne Rice, but it is as contemporary and sensual as the Twilight series - with an extra serving of historical realism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In A DISCOVERY OF WITCHES Harknes takes all the urban fantasy romantic tropes and...uses them. Main PoV character Diana is smart, orphaned, stubborn, beautiful-though-she-doesn't-know-it, and a powerful witch. Her vampire love interest Matthew is almost perfectly thoughtful, impeccably dressed, brilliant, rich, and well connected. The antagonists

resent their blossoming romance because vampires and witches 'just don't mix' (Really! It's never happened before!). There's the trendy locales (Oxford, France, upstate New York), the wine/books/artifacts only a centuries old vampire could have, the tension between the supernatural races. If you've read your share of urban fantasy, you've seen all this many times over.The issue isn't that Harkness uses these tropes over again--they are tried and true for a reason--it's that it's her first novel and you can tell. Her foreshadowing lacks subtlety. Last-minute contrivances fix issues. Too much time is spent on the minutiae of eating/traveling/clothing. Expository conversations are used to forward the plot. And the plot itself is bogged down with irrelevant information. You know, the kinds of things any writer's workshop would explain are problems because they affect flow and readability.But do these problems ruin the story?For most urban fantasy readers, those are issues that won't impede their enjoyment of the love story. However, while I enjoyed Harkness' blending of ideas and the magic, even if they aren't exactly groundbreaking, the execution made it hard for me to enjoy it on a level that would make me give an unhesitating endorsement.The story starts off with a problem: why does everyone want Ashmole 782? Diana is a Ph.D.

I've been trying to read "A Discovery of Witches" -- it looked fun and had come highly recommended by someone I thought I trusted -- but here's a paraphrased, conglomerated conversation between the main character, Diana, and her love interest:~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ "Oh, Matthew de Clairmont! You must remember that I'm an independent and strong 35-year-old, tenured, Oxford professor! I don't need your help just because you are a thousand-year-old vampire who looks like a 30-something and smells of spices and has long elegant fingers and a chiseled jaw and broad shoulders and mesmerizing eyes and such masculine energy and impeccable taste in wine and cheese and mushrooms and ...... *swoons*....oh, all that MONEY!""I know, Diana, my love, my goddess. You are the strongest witch I've ever known! You row and run every day and your body is just...SCHUH-WING! You are so much stronger than I am! I tried so hard not to love you, but I am drawn to your power and your light! NO! Wait! I mustn't! I am so ....dangerous...so dark...! I can't bear the thought of accidentally attacking you.""Oh Matthew, you know I will love you no matter what. I know I can handle your wild beastliness!""No, Diana, I am telling you I could kill you if I lose control! I am so brooooooody and daaaaaark!""Oh, you silly! I know you love me! We've known each other almost 3 weeks now and I just KNOW you could never, ever give me the hurtsies and booboos! And will you please show me how to use my magic that I have always known was there but just couldn't awaken without you? *simper* NO! No, WAIT! I don't WANT to be a witch! I've

always known I have such power and I'm the most special witch that ever was, but I'm just too afraid to use my vast powers!

This is not your ordinary story about witches, vampires and daemons!Diana Bishop's famous ancestor was executed for being a witch. As a heart-rending consequence of Diana's parents' mysterious deaths, Diana has vowed she will live totally as a human, denying her identity as a witch with both usual and unusual powers. Dedicating her life to logic and ordinary living, she is now a history scholar doing research on alchemy texts in the Bodleian library at Oxford. Upon receiving a requested text called Ashmole 782, she realizes either the book is spellbound or there is something about this book that connects with her hidden witch powers. Add to that the reactions of suddenly appearing witches, vampires, and daemons whose animosity and threatening looks and words make Diana's wish for normalcy an illusion she can no longer ignore.Into the midst of this reality arrives a handsome, extremely intelligent and old vampire, Matthew Clairmont, who is supposedly pursuing his own research as a geneticist. Initially disliking and avoiding his presence, Diana finally begins to realize he is protecting her from direct attack by the hordes of persons appearing daily in the library who are insisting she recall the text they are desperate to obtain. Then he begins to appear during her running and rowing exercises which seem to be the only way she can stop her natural abilities from emerging with perilous effects on herself as well as others.Why is Matthew so attracted to Diana and what is behind the interest so many have in this mysterious text lost for centuries which has appeared and again disappeared after Diana's innocent unbinding of its pages?

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