



A Gathering of Shadows

V.E. Schwab

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Continue V. E. Schwab's *New York Times* bestselling *Shades of Magic* series with *A Gathering of Shadows*, now in a beautiful collector's edition with exclusive features. Open a door to the epic fantasy trilogy that took the world by storm--a classic in the making. With a revamped cover and reading ribbon, this edition will also feature the following bonus material:

***End papers featuring stunning fan art**

***An updated glossary of Arnesian and Antari terms**

***Original (never before seen!) short story from within the *Shades of Magic* world**

It has been four months since the mysterious stone fell into Kell's possession. Four months since he crossed paths with Delilah Bard. Now, while his own city is caught up in the pageantry and thrills of a cross-empire magical competition, a once-lost London is returning to life. But the balance of magic is ever perilous, and for one city to flourish, another London must die.

A Gathering of Shadows Details

Date : Published March 12th 2019 by Tor Books (first published February 23rd 2016)

ISBN : 9781250222060

Author : V.E. Schwab

Format : Hardcover 542 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Fiction, Magic

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From Reader Review A Gathering of Shadows for online ebook

Kai says

The prince shrugged. "Who needs magic when you look this good?"

This book set fire to my feelings and shattered my mind. Tore my heart into pieces and stole my soul. I am officially and utterly dead.

Victoria Schwab worked her magic like a genius. This book was flawless, from start to finish. From cover to characters, from plot to setting, from language to imagination. And while I thought *A Darker Shade of Magic* was amazing, it was only the tip of the iceberg. Nothing can compare to *A Gathering of Shadows*. (...well. Harry Potter can. But, I mean, please...)

(view spoiler)

The ending was - minor spoiler here - a stab in the chest. A Cliffhanger. Meaning endless waiting time for the sequel. How will I survive this?

Find more of my books on Instagram

Ben Alderson says

THIS SERIES IS EVERYTHING TO ME..

THIS SEQUEL WAS AMAZING

ELEMENTAL CONTROL..

YES

..

YES..

GIVE ME MORE

MORE

I SAID

more

PLEASE

I'm crying

i need the next book..

omg

Jessica ☀️ ➡️ Silverbow ➡️ ☀️ Rabid Reads-no-more says

Reviewed by: Rabid Reads

4.5 stars

Authors of series like to do this thing where they give you a first installment that while, *of course*, leaving unanswered questions, still manages to conclude nice and neatly.

You can't wait to get your hands on the next book, but only b/c you love the story and are desperate to see what happens next.

You feel safe when you finally get the next chapter.

The tension that plagued you while reading the prior installment, coming ever closer as you neared the end, like footsteps speeding up behind you, making you curse your stupidity for taking a walk alone at night in an unfamiliar city . . . That tension isn't there.

You've developed a trust, a camaraderie . . . an *understanding* with the author.

You have been duly warned.

When we last left Lila and Kell, they were parting ways. We were sad, but we expected no less. After all:

"I'm not going to die," she said. "Not till I've seen it."

"Seen what?"

Her smile widened. "Everything."

Kell can't go with her. He has responsibilities . . . PLUS, you know, there's *that thing* that happened, *that thing* that tied him even closer to the royal family . . . The royal family he's meant to be part of . . . The royal family that instead treats him like a commodity . . .

Lemme tell you, people--it gets WORSE.

Lila, on the other hand, is having the adventure she's always dreamed of. On a PIRATE ship. *coughs* I mean, privateer ship. She got her position by killing another crew member. *shakes head at Lila* Buuuuut it turned out they didn't like the fellow much anyway, so it all worked out.

A little *too* well, actually.

Lila develops a sort-of friendship with the captain. She earns the respect of the crew. *Worse*, she begins to feel like she herself is a true part of the crew.

Can't have that.

So when Captain announces his intent to return to Red London and participate in a prestigious wizards' tournament, Lila decides that she won't be going with them when next they leave.

And she doesn't.

But not for the reasons she anticipated.

You: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?!

Me:

And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Things happen in A DARKER SHADE OF MAGIC, and those things have CONSEQUENCES. CONSEQUENCES that you will not believe until you see them for yourself.

What does it mean that Kell's life is now tied to another's? What will happen now that a living being from Grey London has permanently crossed over into Red London? And what would you say if I told you that you only *think* you've seen chaos in White London?

Last year, A DARKER SHADE OF MAGIC made my Best Books of 2015 list. This year, A GATHERING OF SHADOWS is already a strong contender for the #1 spot. If you have yet to check out Schwab for yourself, what are you waiting for? The woman is GENIUS. This world and the characters that populate it are one of the most unique I've encountered in ages. I love it. Even as I'm screaming at Lila to THINK before she acts. For once. Even as my heart is breaking for Kell, b/c he can longer ignore the charade of his circumstances. Even as all the Londons hover on the edge of DOOM . . . I love it.

Highly recommended.

My other reviews for this series:

A Darker Shade of Magic (Shades of Magic, #1)

A Conjuring of Light (Shades of Magic, #3)

jessica says

okay. i knew this was going to be good, but i didnt expect it to be *that* good. oh sanct, that ending. im giving this five stars for the last 100 pages alone - my heart is RACING. and im beyond happy the third book is already out because i dont know how people managed to be patient enough to wait.

so where i thought the first book excelled in its world building by introducing the four different london's and their histories, i found the sequel gave amazing insight into the characters, more of their development was prevalent, and it even introduced some new key people. both aspects are important, but together they make one heck of a story. what really impressed me was how this didnt feel like a filler book, which many second books tend to be. but rather, this felt like a seamless, yet crucial, part of bridge that connects all three books.

again, this was a little bit of a slow burner, but it was much easier for me to get into because i felt like there was a little more going on. i really wish the games had taken up much more of the book - i found them so interesting - but i cant complain because the last 25% or so gave the reader so much. and the writing was on point, as always.

there is no question in my mind as to why this series is as loved as it is, so let the binge reading continue!

4.5 stars

destiny ??? [howling libraries] says

#1 A Darker Shade of Magic ★★★★★

#2 A Gathering of Shadows ★★★★★

#3 A Conjuring of Light ★★★★★

I cannot believe that I waited nearly a *year* between the first book and this one, but here we are, and now I'm convinced that Victoria sacrificed an unhealthy number of virgins for her writing skills, because this series is absolute magnificence. I loved *A Darker Shade of Magic* so much that I was nervous to see if the second book would hold up, but let me tell you, it absolutely did, and now I am both horrified and desperately in need of seeing how it all ends up.

"I am Delilah Bard," she thought, as the ropes cut into her skin. "I am a thief and a pirate and a traveler. I have set foot in three different worlds, and lived. I have shed the blood of royals and held magic in my hands."

I only thought that I loved the characters of this series in the first book, but that was nothing compared to the feelings that I have for them by this point. There's Lila, who took me a little bit of time to be won over by in *ADSOM*, but who has me utterly captivated in this installment. Her brash, headstrong, clever nature is only magnified even further as she comes into her own in the world of Red London, and while she still feels this evident need to prove herself and to come out on top, her entire attitude has been tempered—if only slightly—by the pains that her previous actions have caused. She's also still determined to avoid dealing with her feelings towards a certain redhead Antari, which lends beautifully to the *incredible* slow burn of the brief romantic undertones to these books.

"I do not know why you two are circling each other like stars. It is not my cosmic dance. But I do know that you come asking after one another, when only a few strides and a handful of stars divide you."

Precious Kell, on the other hand, is still my favorite; I'm constantly torn between being amazed by his skills and abilities, and wanting to jump in and protect him from the cruelty he faces, not only as one of the last remaining Antari, but as the neglected adopted son of the King and Queen. My years of reading fantasy novels have taught me that it's difficult for me to relate to "lawful good" characters who rely so heavily on their virtues and honor, as Kell does, but Victoria writes him so flawlessly that it never grows stale or predictable. On top of everything else, his relationship with his brother, Rhy, is one of the most wholesome, pure, and *precious* things I have ever seen in my entire life.

Rhy held Kell's pain in his hands, while Kell held Rhy's life in his.

Rhy Maresh is, I think, one of the most lovable fictional characters who has ever been written. I don't know if I have ever met a fan of this series who does not adore him at least a little bit, especially upon getting to know the quiet self-loathing that resides under his charisma and charm. He broke my heart so many times during his struggles with the lengths Kell has gone to in order to save him, and the fact that he values his own presence in the world so little is crushing, yet nevertheless, Rhy is a constant source of drama, amusement, and sweet brotherly love in a world full of violence and fear. The fact that both of these princes would so readily give up everything for one another is perhaps my single favorite aspect to this gorgeous series thus far.

"Fix your crown, my prince," he called back as he reached the door. "It's crooked."

Of course, this review would be wholly incomplete without taking a moment to talk about the utterly fantastic addition to the cast: Alucard Emery, privateer, playboy, magical aficionado, and captain of the Night Spire crew. He is hilarious, delightful in every way, and an absolute deviant who never fails to keep you guessing. I love his entire presence in the story, and though I am left with a million and one questions about his past and how it relates to the lives of the Maresh family, it is easily one of the things that I am *most* excited about tying up in *A Conjuring of Light*.

*"Magic is tangled, so you must be smooth.
Magic is wild, so you must be tame.
Magic is chaos, so you must be calm.
Are you calm, Kell?"*

Besides the wonderful cast of characters (including one special individual who I'm not going to mention here for fear of spoiling anyone, but let me say that I am absolutely ecstatic to see things through his perspective on occasion, and terrified to see what he will do next), there's also the fact that, once again, Victoria proves her writing prowess through incredible action scenes and magical world-building. There is a tournament featured in this installment that never grows stale or dull; despite its potential for repetition, as is frequent with "trials" in books, not once did I lose the feeling of gripping the edge of my seat.

"I gave him my life, but you cannot ask me to stop living."

This sequel also delves much further into the history of Red London and its surrounding lands, as well as the political climate between the kingdom of Arnes and its allies and potential enemies. It was such a fantastic buildup of information, but I can't help but wonder how it can all possibly be addressed in the finale. That said, I have no doubts that I will be pleased with how everything turns out (and it doesn't hurt that I know there are further books coming along in the future, too!).

"They crashed into each other as if propelled by gravity, and he didn't know which one of them was the object and which the earth, only that they were colliding."

I don't think I can say too much more without spoiling any of the twists and turns in this installment, so I'll end this review on this note: if you enjoy fantasy worlds with lovable characters, a brilliant (yet never

overdone) magic system, world-building and history for days, and enough twists and turns to never let you find a moment's rest, I cannot recommend this series highly enough—and I cannot wait to read the final piece to the story!

Buddy read with Terry and Julie! ♥ ♥ ♥

You can find this review and more on my blog, or you can follow me on twitter, bookstagram, or facebook!

Alienor ✖ French Frowner ✖ says

laughs hysterically

choking sound

Why, thank you, Victoria Schwab. Please don't mind my heart.

No, really. Feel free to *crush* it. I don't do holding grudges.

Much.

4.5 stars . Truth is, when I started A Gathering of Shadows, one of my best friend asked me if I thought she would like, and strangely, I wasn't able to answer straight away. Color me surprised. How comes this series holds such a strong grip on me and still I am hesitating when recommending it? I understood, then. These books? **They sneak up on you.**

There's honestly not that much action in the first halves of BOTH of them and yet you're never bored. You're enchanted, mesmerized like a child reading HP for the first time (YES, I'M GOING THERE), **your eyes widening at the sight of this wondrous, original world served by its fascinating and real characters for whom you can't help but care deeply, including :**

✓ **a kickass thief who's giving strong female-lead a new name** (that's Lila, by the way) : Remember my complaints about Feyre in A Court of Thorns and Roses? I expressed how tired I was of the *beloved* (GAG) pattern implying that the only reason women fought was for their families, as if women couldn't, for the life of them, be badass for the *thrill* of it. **Lila made a liar of me. Thank you, Lila.**

"Delilah Bard had a way of finding trouble.

She'd always thought it was better than letting trouble find her, but floating in the ocean in a two-person skiff with no oars, no view of land, and no real resources save the ropes binding her wrists, she was beginning to reconsider."

✓ **a loyal magician** whose doubts and outbursts make you want to both smack and hug him (but mostly,

hugs). Eaten by guilt, confused by his sudden thrives for darkness (am I bad to love that part?), in need to adapt to his bond with his brother, so freaking alone and *caged*, **Kell stays one of my favorite characters because he's flawed and brave and endearing and oh, yes, often wrong.** (MY FROWNING BOY!) (in redheads I trust) (←how could I NOT love him now tell me?)

"You could at least pretend to be grateful."

"And you couldn't have picked something a little more...I don't know...imposing?"

"...A bloody handprint?" retorted Rhy. "Oh, what about a glowing black eye?"

Kell glowered.

"You're right," continued Rhy, "I should have just drawn a frowning face. But then everyone would know it's you."

✓ a **deceptive Captain** who may or may not be a pirate (how's this for awesome?). Okay, okay, I have to admit that he made me narrow my eyes several times at first. What? I come from a loyal bunch (frowning boy, remember?). But in the end, his character added so much wit and fun to the story that he won me. Also, *that* development? YES YES YES.

"Alucard had shaken his head, exasperated. "The accent of a royal and the sensibilities of a thief."

But Lila had only smiled. She'd said something very similar once, to Kell. Before she knew he *was* a royal. And a thief, for that matter."

✓ a **lost prince** who's endlessly trying to keep darkness at bay : Oh Rhy, Rhy, *Rhy*. I cannot say that I always agreed with his choices, but the complicity between him and Kell - the loyalty - prevents me from holding any grudge (if I was into grudges, that is)

"There was a new restlessness to his motions, a taut energy that mirrored Kell's. And yet, Rhy's was different. Manic. Dangerous. His moods were darker and their turn sharper, cutting the span of a second."

✓ ... Oh, and *those* assholes (you know who I mean) (there're plenty to choose really)

As for the **plot**, although I was more than excited to come back into this world, and that Kell and Lila own a special place in my heart, I have to admit that I spent the beginning feeling *restless* because I longed for them to be together - not necessarily romantically (WHO AM I KIDDING) (THE CHEMISTRY!! GAH!), but really, their interactions? They're the best, and they both balance each other's perfectly. Separated, they lose a little bit of their charm in my opinion.

But.

Now that I finished the book, I understand why Victoria Schwab made this choice and the last 40% ? **Brilliant, exhilarating, and as far as I'm concerned, PERFECTION.** There's something to say about a

fantasy plot that stays **unpredictable**, because trust me, when you read a lot of fantasy, it becomes rarer and rarer. **This** is why I'm rounding up my rating.

? Give me thrill, give me peril, give me gasps, and I'm the happiest reader of the world.

My heart, though.

For more of my reviews, please visit:

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

LOOK

I got to read more of the bad arsed, Lila Bard and Kell and Rhy! Yay!

I loved the beginning of this book with Lila. People for me, this was the best part of the book with what all Lila did to that crew! Holy crow!

I am Delilah Bard, she though as the ropes cut into her skin. I am a thief and a pirate and a traveler. I have set foot in three different worlds, and lived. I have shed the blood of royals and held magic in my hands. And a ship full of men cannot do what I can, I don't need any of you. I am one of a damned kind.

I also fell in love with Lila's captain aboard the Night Spire - Captain Aluccard Emery. He's so awesome! He is a little bit of this and a little bit of that and a whole lot of coolness =)

Not a whole lot goes on in the book after the fun stuff in the beginning. I feel it's just another set up for more things to come in the next book.

At some point though, magic welders come together in The Element Games called **Essen Tasch**. Some people I didn't expect were in these games and against each other. It was pretty damn cool!

I loved reading about Kell and Rhy together again. They are so funny and caring. They are so close in everything they do and it was so wonderful to see them fighting for each other. To read the things that only love for someone you consider your brother can bring to your heart. Rhy wants Kell to compete in the games but Kell doesn't want to for certain reasons.

"Kell. My greatest fear in life isn't dying. It's being the source of someone else's suffering. I know you feel trapped. I know I'm your cage. And I can't--" His voice broke, and Kell could feel his brother's pain, everything he tried to smother until dark and drown until morning. "You will do this," said Rhy. "For me. For both of us."

Kell held his brother's gaze. "All right," he said.

And Lila and Kell get to see each other again. And Rhy too, the whole gang. It was so great! And then . . . that ending!

Something Wicked This Way Comes

MY BLOG: Melissa Martin's Reading List

Victoria Schwab says

“I know where you sleep, Bard.”

She smirked. “Then you know I sleep with knives.”

*

It's hard to believe that A GATHERING OF SHADOWS comes out in less than three months!!!

karen says

congratulations! semifinalist in goodreads' best fantasy category 2016!

Lila shrugged. "Everyone's immortal until they're not."

this is one of those crossover dealies that isn't marketed (or priced, unfortunately) as YA, but there's no reason for it not to be in the YA section, from a reader perspective. from the publisher's perspective, obviously it's always better when you can set your cover price in the ten bucks higher adult-market range, but since this is such a pretty book, i'm okay with that THIS TIME, even though it's such a fast read, you'll tear through it like you're at a cookie party. (please invite me to cookie parties)

i was not crazy about the first book in this trilogy. it was fine - i liked the world in which it was set, and i loved the character of lila, but it seemed to be doing a lot of buildup and stage-setting without delivering much actiony payoff. however, when i read the synopsis of this one, promising an international magic-based tournament, i thought, "oh, yes - that will have some action for sure!"

and it's great - it starts off great and it continues to be great the whole way through. need more details than me mumbling "great" through a mouthful of cookies? fine.

this one makes with the action right away, in an opening scene revealing lila in a perilous situation, and loving every minute of it. kell was the primary focus in the first book, but here, lila has sidled her scrawny ass into the limelight and she's not giving it up for anything. kell and rhy will get their POV-time, but lila steals the show, as well as everything else that isn't nailed down.

there's just something about her i love. sure, she's the archetypal badass chick whose hardscrabble background has taught her that no one's coming to her rescue, emotions are liabilities, and knives are wonderfully persuasive, which tough-girl attitude should be totally cheesy:

Tieran fixed her with his gaze. "Has anyone ever told you that you're too sharp for your own good?"

"Too sharp. Too loud. Too reckless. I've heard it all. It's a wonder I'm still alive."

but for some reason, i just adore her. with her wolfish smile and her terrible decisions and her knack for getting into and out of danger, everything she's done to leave behind her unsatisfyingly grey life and launch herself into a world of magic and adventure - she's neither infallible nor completely guarded, and there's a perfect balance to her character - she's able to walk away from someone without looking back, but she'll still daydream a little.

and she gives herself awesome daenerys-caliber pep talks:

Dangerous.

Reckless.

Foolish.

Mad.

A chorus of doubt so loud her boots took a step back of their own accord.

In one of the other stadiums, the crowds cheered as an Arnesian emerged victorious.

Lila retreated another step.

And then she caught sight of the flag - *her* flag - in the stands, and her steps ground to a halt.

I am Delilah Bard, she thought. Pirate, thief, magician.

Her fingertips began to thrum.

I have crossed worlds and taken ships. Fought queens and saved cities.

Her bones shuddered and her blood raced.

I am one of a kind.

she definitely is one of a kind (view spoiler)

lila aside, there are excellent developments in the rest of the world. that thing kell did in the last book for rhy has consequences both physical and psychological, and has caused a great deal of tension in his relationship with the king and queen. kell spends a lot of this book moping around in a daze of "why are 'mommy' and 'daddy' so mad at me and will i ever see lila again and woe woe woe," until rhy comes up with a wonderful diversion for him, to take his mind off of his emo crap and also relieve a lot of pent-up aggression. (and please tell me there is rhy/kell fanfic out there, because there needs to be, right?)

we also get a better, more focused view of the politics of red london this time around. in the first book, we were bouncing around between the various londons and learning about their relationships with each other, but here we get a more detailed look at red london - its history and the rivalries between the different cultures and lands making up the kingdom, and the intricacies of its power structure, which playboy rhy will one day have to navigate

"Ruling is a delicate affair," his father had chided. "Every gesture carries purpose and meaning. This tournament is not only a game. It helps to maintain peace with our neighboring empires, and it allows us to show them our resources without implying any threat. The king had laced his fingers. "Politics is a dance until the moment it becomes a war. And we control the music."

the tournament itself is fun, but lower-stakes than i had anticipated. this isn't The Hunger Games or Battle Royale; it's more diplomatic; it's *entertainment*, and the participants are carefully selected and matched to deliver a good show without killing anyone, like a magical pageant designed by jane austen. however, that careful plan has had a monkeywrench thrown in by a couple of dark horses. and kidnapping. there's always gotta be some kidnapping.

we get a new character in alucard, who - despite that stupid gothy name, is very likable. not so much to kell - there's some history there, but to me. and to lila.

oh, and what will become of lila and kell?? will there be unbearable tension?? will every time they say "hello" read like barely-restrained pornography, like in those very rare moments when felicity lets down her emotional guard on *The Americans* and a touch of the hand comes across as unspeakably intimate? will lila finally find a dress to wear?

"What's wrong with black? It's the perfect color."

"For hiding. For blending into shadows. For storming castles. Not for balls. I let you go to the last one in black, and it has bothered me all winter."

"If that's true, you don't have enough things to worry about."

Calla tsked and turned toward the collection of dresses. Lila's gaze raked over them, and she cringed at a yolk-yellow skirt, a velvety purple sleeve. They looked like pieces of ripe fruit, like decadent desserts. Lila wanted to look powerful, not *edible*.

woe to the person who tries. this is a girl with many knives strapped on under her gowns.

while all this is taking place in red london, we get some hints of what's been happening in white london since the events of the last book. trouble is a-brewing. this book ends on a corker of a cliffhanger, and i'm so glad i kept on with this series, because i am eager to see what happens in book three.

bring it on!

this one is SO MUCH better than the first book. what a relief! thanks for making me stick with it, machalo buddies!

come to my blog!

Petrik says

It's unbelievable how I started this book with the lowest possible expectation and it still managed to disappoint me. I know this is a beloved book in the YA community, you might wanna stay away from reading this review if you're easily offended. Seriously stay away.

I think it's better for me to start off with the parts I like about the book first, there's only a few anyway. First, Holland, every single appearance from him made the plot and the book so much better, despite his appearance being rarer than the amount of Hinduism in my city. Second, the last 50 pages of the book were actually quite good, with some flaws but at least it's captivating. Finally, VE Schwab's prose remained great to read as always. Holland is literally the only character that pushed me into finishing this trilogy cause I need to know more about him and his fate.

Now, for all the shit, A Gathering of Shadows, where do I even begin with the problem in this one? Let's start with an easy one first. This book is majorly afflicted with the infamous 2nd book syndrome, the first 350 pages are painful to read, pretty much a pointless filler. A cow's opinion is better than these 350 pages and for god sake a cow's dialogue is literally only "moo" "moo" "moo", see how pointless that sounds? Well, that's how the first 350 pages are. It's about preparing for a magical arena tournament, which ended up being a huge copycat of Avatar: The Legend of Korra.

The battles in the arena itself are okay at best which made reading the 350 pages of nothing completely a worthless experience. Don't get me wrong, I love slow paced books, most adult fantasy books I read are slow paced and trust me, the books I love used these pages carefully. Building character developments, slowly building relationship, explain more on the world-building aspect etc. Not spending time brooding, doing insta-love, random making out and obsessing over Delilah fucking Bard, which I'll get into in a moment.

I'm also very disappointed with how much time the characters spent on Red London, seriously there are 4 London, make use of them please. What's the point of creating 4 London if the story is going to take place almost all the time in Red London?? What are you doing? Trying to make us see the color of apple in London? Every time the story shifted to White London (*scarcely*) it's actually so much better. However, the most significant problem I had with the book lies in one and one factor only. The damn characters, especially Lila fucking Bard or Lila fucking bad or Lila fucking Bald, whatever her special damned kind is.

Kell and Rhy spent all their time here fighting and whining over being saved? **“WAHHH WAHHHHH YOU SAVED MEEEEEE LET ME DIEEEE BUT I WANNA LIVE AND I’M SAD WAHHH WAHHH YOU PISSED ME OFF”**

Dude..... kill yourself... bite your tongue, chop your head off, climb the Big Ben like you belong in the Assassin Creed and jump yourself to death, I don't care just... stop whining over being saved. Seriously I can't stress this enough, other than Holland I seriously just want all these characters to die. BUT none of them can compare to the ultimate Mary Sue, Delilah fucking bard, the Wonder Woman, the alien, the predator, whatever she is cause she doesn't know too.

I was led to believe the main character of this series is Kell, I was wrong. It was Lila, the narrative treated the reader as if we're brain damaged or have short term memory. It will remind us countless times during everyone's POV that Lila is unlike most girls. I liked her in the first book and I can't believe how much I hated her in this installment. She's an ultimate Mary Sue, apparently 4 months is enough to become a fluent speaker in a new language, and become a magician, from a thief. In the first book she was just a thief. In this one she's a female Voldemort but wait... I shouldn't call her a female because she's one of a damned kind.

Here's most dialogues around Lila in the book, featuring me

Me: Hi Lila

“I am one of a damned kind”

Me: urmm okay? So how are yo--

“I am not most girls.”

Me:

“I am not most girls.”

Me: Okay I get it you're not most girl, you just said—

“I am one of a damned kind”

Me: Okay you fucking E.T I get--

“I am not most girls.”

Me: Hey-

“I am not most girls.”

Kell walking towards me with his endless angst and frown but then, seems like a random thought appeared in his head and he said:

“Lila is unlike most girls.”

Me: STTTTTTTTTTTTTTTAAAAAAA-

“I am not most girls.”

Me: HHHHHHHHPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP!!!

“I am one of a damned kind”

Drew Barrymore from the movie ‘50 First Dates’ would’ve remember Delilah fucking Bard for the endless repetition in the narrative to always remind the reader that she’s one of a kind, badass, can do shit, put Lila in a Star Wars and she’ll be the ultimate Jedi oh my lord.

“She bent most of the rules. She broke the rest.”

Yeah, including my brain for reading your stupidity.

Here’s one of the few trying so hard to be badass but idiotic dialogue.

“Everyone’s immortal until they’re not.”

No shit. What’s next? Everyone’s dead when they’re killed? Everyone’s alive when they have a heartbeat? You can clap if you have hands?

This is a book that should’ve been condensed by at least 300 pages and it would’ve been so much better. There’s way too many useless information that wouldn’t affect anything in the main story. Plus the ending left us in a cliffhanger just when the story FINALLY about to get interesting and now I have to continue because my momma didn’t raise a quitter and I’m not about to quit now. I’ve prepared some alcohol for my next read, I hope it could be better but my expectation for the last book is minus zero.

If you enjoy the book, I’m truly happy for you. I wish I could but I can’t.. not for this one. Also, if you’re

wondering why I'm reading this series, it's because VE Schwab tricked me completely into thinking that this will be an adult oriented book like her 'Vicious' (which I love) and IT'S NOT! If I knew what I'm getting into, I wouldn't have spent any money I worked hard for into this trilogy.

You can find the rest of my Adult Epic/High Fantasy & Sci-Fi reviews at BookNest

Emily May says

Delilah Bard had a way of finding trouble.

I just love everything about this world. Read it in a single day and I cannot wait for the next book.

I think I'm a bit of an unintentionally picky reader when it comes to fantasy. A lot of YA fantasy is heavy on the romance and low on the substance, which irks me, but I don't take much pleasure in overlong, dense, wordy adult fantasy series either. I want exciting world-building, strong characters and good pacing that doesn't sacrifice depth. And I feel like Schwab totally gets that.

The writing style is **detailed and evocative** - you can picture this world so easily, even though it is highly sensational, and you can feel the magic running through it. Schwab crafts scenes with both description and tension, firmly cementing her as one of my favourite fantasy authors.

It is a world for those who **admire imagination**. Alternate Londons, some with magic and some without, magic wielders, evil rulers, pirates and - in this installment - a magical tournament called the Essen Tasch. The author uses this tournament to draw the characters together, to create action and excitement, whilst behind it all there looms a dark threat.

With **rich, evocative storytelling, an original, fantastically-conceived fantasy world, and colourful, weird characters**, it's hard to complain. The book buzzes with magical secrets and new discoveries; like an adult version of Narnia, it is a way of walking through the wardrobe and facing all the wonderful and horrifying possibilities.

I enjoyed Kell's new experiences, as he comes to terms with the lasting effects of what happened in the last book. I enjoyed all the backstabbing, cross-dressing and thievery. But, most of all, **I just freaking love Lila**. She is the baddest badass of them all and she doesn't give a shit.

A Gathering of Shadows goes deeper, drawing us further into this world and developing all the characters. It ends with a promise of more horror and action in the next book. I can't wait.

*After all, you can kill people, but you cannot kill magic.
Not truly.*

Brittney ~ Reverie and Ink says

Wowowowow. If you have not picked up this series yet, pick it up now. Right now.

I feel I can't even put into words how I feel about this book - but I'm going to try anyway.

To start, I liked "A Darker Shade of Magic" (book #1 in this series) a lot - but I wasn't out of my mind in love. I liked the characters and the world building was so unique and engaging. The story was good- but it left me wanting more to happen to the characters (which was perfect, because I knew there was a sequel coming out.) And I'm not gonna lie... I wanted a spark between Kell and Lila. Sorry not sorry.

This book took the story to a new level. I mean- I was totally mind blown.

There are so many good points to hit on. Action. Magic. Pirates. Balls. Masks. Competitions. Serious chemistry. Yes you read that right. **Chemistry**.

AND DONT EVEN GET ME STARTED ON THE FEELS. DONT EVEN.

Just to break it down a little bit though...

Lila = Extreme badass extraordinaire. Heavens I love this girl.

Kell = Pretty much a saint. I can't explain it.. he's just wonderful, and tormented, and wonderful...

Alucard = I can't pinpoint him, and I LOVE that.

Rhy = King of banter... and of aggravating the living shit out of Kell in the most wonderful ways

The villian who shall remain unnamed for now = BETCHA DIDNT SEE THAT COMING.

The characters are so beautifully woven together. The plot is absolutely fantastically and horribly unpredictable. Oh and the writing - oh it was superb. Beautiful in every way.

"Politics is a dance until the moment it becomes a war. And we control the music."

Now I want to prepare you, my fellow readers. Lila and Kell are apart for a very good chunk of this book. **BUT I PROMISE** it is well worth the agony of seeing them apart. SO so so so worth it. Just you wait. Plus, there are so many great moments in their separate paths before they reunite.

"I know it's mad, but for a second I thought it was ..."

"Saints, you're seeing her in everyone and everything now, Kell? There's a word for that."

"Hallucination?"

"Infatuation."

I refuse to discuss the ending right now. I refuse. But I promise you this- there are some very fulfilling moments before the ending.

Superb. New favorite series. Now go read it so we can talk about it more because I am not satisfied with only writing a blog post!

Update Can we please just rave about how this series is about to get a TV SERIES?!?!?!

emma says

I'd like to propose a contender for the worst feeling in the world: going into a book with 100% certainty you'll like it, and then that confidence slowlyyyyy - almost imperceptibly - fading into hatred. Especially when the average rating of said book is a four-point-f*cking-three-five.

<https://emmareadstoomuch.wordpress.co...>

But I can't not hate this book. So much of this is nightmare scenario after nightmare scenario wrapped into one misleading synopsis. I was, quite frankly, SHOCKED by how quickly universally adored author V.E. Schwab introduced the not-like-other-girls trope, which you all know I abhor. At least buy a girl dinner first, Victoria. I'll set the scene: Liiiiilaaaaa (read that in a sarcastically loving voice, please) is at a market. Literally looking at knives because she has no personality traits or sense of fun. Anyway, ~~another stereotype on two legs~~ the captain of her ship says, for no goddamn reason except, I presume, his own terribleness: "*Most girls covet dresses.*" Bad enough, right? Already enough to make me cringe hard and dock at least a star or so? IT GETS WORSE. Darling Lila's response: "*I am not most girls.*" It literally cannot get any more blatant. I was so disgusted I read the scene aloud to my sister, and she **shuddered**.

In fact, it's kind of...strange how sexist this book is. The great thing about YA books is that a lot of them are written by feminists, but the subliminal messages here made my skin crawl. There's not just the not-like-other-girls stuff (or, as I call it, Sexism Lite: So Quirky Ladies Who Hate Other Women Can Still Claim to be Feminist). Every. Single. Female character is judged for her appearance. Strong women are stripped of their gender identity - a couple of times, characters question whether muscular women are truly women at all. Which, like, f*ck you forever. Are you kidding me? And don't forget the princess (from Vesk?). Her only character trait is boy-crazy. Instead of being a powerful female leader, she follows Kell around like a lovesick puppy...exactly, we are told, what she did to Rhy a couple years before. And don't forget the disapproving tone of the text when she's with any man. Subliminal slut shaming - cool! Oooh, and "*She looked like the kind of girl who would point to something — or someone — and say, 'I want one of those.'*" Wow! Please tell me more about how there are *kinds* of girls.

More fun stuff: I literally hate all of these characters. How often does that happen?! Like, don't get me wrong, I am completely just a heartless vessel designed to carry as much bitterness and anger as possible, but usually I'm at least *neutral toward somebody*. Not here. We follow four-ish main characters: Alucard, Rhy, Kell and Lila. (Putting Lila last because, if you couldn't already tell by the fury leaking through this, she is the crown jewel in my treasure trove of loathing.)

The fun thing about this book is we get two - yes, two! - characters fighting for dominance over the same piece of sh*t stereotype! Yeah, Schwab had so much success with one character in that dumbass role that she went two for two in this one. I'm talking about Rhy and Alucard, and I'm talking about the YA male character archetype that I CANNOT ESCAPE. The roguish, flirty, handsome societal elite, who's just soooooo tired of his hard-knock life of wealth and luxury and because of it can't even *stand* to live up to expectations or within social bounds. Also, we're always supposed to find these types funny, and I have

never cracked a smile at one of these dumbos.

I feel like I can't goddamn escape these goons of late. They're the Will Herondales, the what's-his-name from Heartless (the jester guy who wore eyeliner), Adrian from Bloodlines (will I ever finish that series?), one or more of the 8000 guys from Throne of Glass (literally can't remember). Sorry I spaced on some of the names, but there's an epidemic of these bozos and they're SO unmemorable. But to have TWO of the same stereotype?! In the same book?! Extraordinary. I've never seen anything like it (and pray I never will again).

Now...Kell. There is no way on God's great green Earth I can fill a paragraph talking about Kell. He is the most boring character to ever boring up his way through a trilogy. Does the boy have any traits? Does he have a sense of humor? Fun, maybe? No? He's just going to grumble around for 500 pages and be in love with Lila for no reason? Okay.

And...here we go. The moment I've been waiting for since approximately page 17 of this book. Talking about why LILA SUCKS UP A STORM. The gal's a prime example of a really annoying factor of bad character-writing: telling and not showing. How many times are we TOLD, "Lila is smart. Lila is a quick study. Lila was born with the magical talent of the Chosen One, but maybe if we don't use that term then you won't notice and write about it in your reviews. Lila is brave. Lila is strong. Lila looks for trouble." Now, compare that to how often it's actually *proven*. Rarely, if ever. It's annoying and boring and makes me want to sign V.E. Schwab up for an intro to creative writing class.

But that's not where my problems end with ol' Lila. No, it takes a bit more than that to end up on my most-hated characters list. Lila's an annoying, bossy brat with a death wish, an inferiority complex, and the impenetrable belief that she knows better than everyone else. She knows better than her captain: when she is so insubordinate that Alucard has to remind her "*I am your captain! You are my crew,*" she thinks, "*The barb struck with unexpected force.*" NOT A BARB, LILA. YOU ARE NOT IN CHARGE. YOU ARE A PETTY THIEF ABOARD A SHIP. GET OVER YOURSELF!

She does the same to the head-magicky-guy (I kind of never paid attention to the terms in this book). At one point in the last book, I guess, he told her he thought she had magic within her.

Lila latches onto that and uses it as her justification for making a metric sh*t ton of bad decisions that could have extraordinarily negative impacts on her, her loved ones, and the entire goddamn world(s). When Chief Inspector Magic tries to prevent her from making one of these many dumb choices, she responds, "*You told me that I had magic in me. Now you don't think I have what it takes?*" Um, you're untrained and a full-on dumbass and you want this guy who actually knows his stuff to fan your already-enormous ego and tell you you can win a huge magic tournament?

And she does it again, to Kell, who knows more about her and more about the kind of magic she wants to do than ANYONE. And she's just a total bitch to him and he's all, "yeah ok" and kisses her stupid face. Ugh. I'm getting so angry AND putting off math homework that's due in 37 minutes. It's time to stop talking about Lila and try to wrap this shindig up.

So much of this book is just...cliche to me. That moment when Lila is talking to the man at the mirror stall and he calls her Lila and she goes, all quasi-spook-ily, *It wasn't until after I left that I realized I had never told him my name*..... or whatever? Made me GAG. And it wasn't even *for* anything! That guy never comes back. We never get more info, really, on the mirrors or on the shopkeeper or any of that. It's just a dumb cliche being used for a dumb cliched manner of foreshadowing. Like, omg, does she *want* the dark power slash thing she is entirely uneducated about?! Even though she shouldn't?? Even though the big strong experienced man warns her not to do whatever said thing is? Oh my god! I have never read anything like that before! Except, like, you know...The Winner's Kiss, Divergent, Siege and Storm, Throne of Glass, The 5th Wave, Passenger, Rebel Belle, Alice. I could definitely go on. Because that is one of my least favorite tropes that also manages to be super boring in every instance it is used. Seriously, shall I ever cease to be astounded by the untouched realms of young adult fantasy this book doth discover?

And after all that, it's not even fun. I wanted to read about a magic tournament, but it took 350 pages to get there and only lasted about 100 (generously). The rest of the book is a carbon copy of the events of the last book. I don't want to spoil anything, but the grand cliffhanger of the book happens in the exact same way at the exact same event as the last book. It is, in other words, a snoozefest.

Bottom line: clichéd, sexist, teeming with some of the worst characters I've ever read, misleading, repetitive, occasionally illogical, and boring. Does that sum it up? Bleh.

Hannah says

My spoiler discussion is now up on my channel!: <https://youtu.be/jTE6aTbosjU>

THAT ENDING DESTROYED ME SOMEONE GIVE ME THE NEXT BOOK RIGHT NOW

C.G. Drews says

Reread July 2017:

Ohhhh good book is GOOD the second time round too. Who'd have though, right?!? I'm so glad I'm rereading this series as it's basically my FAVOURITE and I am trash for anything Schwab writes. Also can she please chill on hurting the precious magical children. I love them. And it's raining on my face.

Smol List Of Loves In The Reread:

- basically Kell x Lila refusing to acknowledge they have FEELINGS
- so adorable. ship it
- also Older Protective Brother Kell™ is my favourite
- i have so much love and respect for the world building in this book...it is so fine. The Londons just seem to SPARKLE OFF THE PAGE and also just the details that make the other countries stand out is really great writing
- I want to take a moment to acknowledge Tirin (sorrry I have no idea how his name is spelt #audiobookproblems) and how the prince brothers are giving him grey hair and all he does for them

- Rhy being a sassy little bucket is the best.
- Rhy and Kell being moody but sassy and aggressively caring for each other is also the best.
- TOTAL LOVE for how Schwab writes her characters. I care about them so much and they really carry the entire story and make my heart so full.
- ALSO FEELINGS = HURT.
- Loved it.

My only note is that: I listened to the audiobook and have to admit...I didn't like it. This could be partially because I had a bad experience reading Well of Ascension which has the same male narrator?? I hated WoA (and got aggressively abused for my dislike of it on twitter) and so it was kind of flashbacks to that. Plus he gave Rhy this total SNOB voice and it was irritating. *But* the female narrator also annoyed me for making all the male voices so weird. Aaaanyway obviously it didn't dampen my enjoyment!! But definitely prefer the dude who did ADSOM why didn't they keep him omg.

ORIGINAL REVIEW: MARCH 2016:

So basically **I JUST READ THE MOST WONDERFUL STORY.** And by "wonderful" I mean "freakishly feels punching" -- BUT IN THE BEST WAY EVER. Like I actually expected to be *more* stressed out by it than I was? So either a) I'm more Vulcan than I thought, or b) I'm immune to stress because BOOKS KEEP FREAKING DESTROYING ME.

(But I love them for it. <33)

Ahhhhem. SO! Where do I even start with shrieking about this masterpiece?! first off: **I think it should be noted that this is more CHARACTER focused than plot.** Which I exactly loved. LOVED, I TELL YOU. AFJDLSAKFDJK. Characters are the *best*, and I love it when a book manages to weave an interesting but not overwhelming plot *and* focus on developing the characters. It also centers around this magician "game/tournament" thing, which isn't exactly original? But I still liked it. I'm a sucker for people punching each other magically I guess.

And since it was charactery (that's a word, shhhh) let's have a brief look at all the darling dangerous scary babies:

- **KELL:** Who is my UTTER favourite. I just adore how he can be kind of moody and sullen and always frowns (<3 I relate) and yet have grand moments of witty sarcastic banter...PLUS he is freaking DEDICATED to loving his brother. Do you know what always slays me? BROTHER BOOKS. I *love* it when brothers annoy the heck out of each other BUT STILL WOULD DIE FOR EACH OTHER. Kell = my favourite of mostly ever. And he is in *such pain* in this book. He's having a mid-life-Antari-crisis.
- **RHY:** Thank goodness to all that is Victoria and Schwaby that we get MORE OF RHY. He gets tons of POV chapters and ... dude is an alchoholic. Both he and Kell are really SUFFERING for what they did in A Darker Shade of Magic (little darling idiots) and it fairly covers everything they do. All the partying of Rhy and the quips and the flippant attitude? IT MASKS HIS POOR SAD SOUL. And I *love* how the book never fell into whiny/angst. MASTER. WRITER. ALERT. HERE.
- **LILA:** Ohhh, Lila. She made me HOWL with laughter. Is it possibly she's gotten more pointy?! She (sort of) got her pirate dreams and she's more mysteriously magical and OH. SHE IS A ROTTEN JERK AT TIMES. She is 100% in denial that she likes Kell. Hmmph. I *do* love Lila an enormous amount but sometimes her utter coldness was a bit hard? Like Kell isn't gooey sunshine either, but he still manages to

melt my heart. Lila just doesn't have a venerable side and I think that makes her harder to relate to?

• **EMERY:** So this is a new character! I get nervous at new-but-important characters being introduced mid series...BUT HE WAS AWESOME. He is very *very* mysterious and curious and it took me a while to know if I liked him but I most certainly do and I even ship (view spoiler)

Also, the King and Queen are mean melon heads to be mean to Kell. Just sayin'.

Also did VE Schwab *invent* a language for this series????? BECAUSE WOW.

There's quite a torturous cliffhanger... CRUELTY. Although I *did* think it'd be worse than it was. Ahem. IT's STILL REALLY HORRIBLE THOUGH. And the book *teases you* with what evil it's going to commit right at the beginning, so you can sit there reading these nice pleasant banter scenes between Rhy and Kell and know in the background SOMETHING IS GOING TO GO VERY VERY VERYYYYYYY WRRRRRRONG ERMAGERD SAVE YOURSELVES. But they don't. Because they don't listen to the reader. Idiots. #preciousbabies

Basically **everything was sickeningly perfect.** And I am in love with this series. Obviously.

The character development? ✓

Witty banter? ✓

Shippable moments? ✓

Screaming "ERMAGERD THERE GO MY FEELS" moments? ✓

Blood and guts and some glory? ✓✓✓

Suffocatingly good writing that keeps your eyes to the page at every second? ✓✓✓✓✓

Plot twists that have you despairing of ever breathing again? ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

Perfection? ✓✓ Probably ✓✓✓ Definitely ✓✓✓ YES OKAY?!?!? ✓✓✓✓

Ahem. If you haven't started this series: **GO DO IT NOW. OKAY?!?!** It is a MILLION percent worth it and. FANGIRLING. FEELS. ALL. OVER. THE. PLACE.

I FEEL LIKE BOOK 3 IS GOING TO BE TRAGIC.

I CANNOT WAIT.

(Also shout out to Maraia who patiently sat through my spam-load of shrieking texts. But then, she deserved it because she told me to read this series. <3)

** QUOTES**

"Well, Ister..." Lila backed away towards the curtain. "Do you just...stand here until I need you?"

The woman smiled and dug a volume from a pocket. "I have a book."

"Let me guess, a religious text?"

"Actually," said Ister, perching on the low couch. "It's about pirates."

"You tried to seduce me, for *information*."

"You can't hold that against me forever."

"It was *last night*."

"What brings you to my room?" he asked, relief bleeding into annoyance.

"Adventure. Intrigue. Brotherly concern. Or," continued the prince lazily, "perhaps I'm just giving your mirror something to look at besides your constant pout."

Kell frowned, and Rhy smiled. "Ah, there it is! That famous scowl."
