



Deadly Sweet

Lola Dodge

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Anise Wise loves three things: baking, potion making, and reading her spellbooks in blissful silence. She might not be the most powerful witch, but enchantment is a rare skill, and her ability to bake with magic is even rarer. Too bad no one wants witchcraft on their campus. Anise's dream of attending pastry school crumbles with rejection letter after rejection letter.

Desperate to escape her dead-end future, Anise contacts the long-lost relative she's not supposed to know about. Great Aunt Agatha owns the only magic bakery in the US, and she suddenly needs a new apprentice. Anise is so excited she books it to New Mexico without thinking to ask what happened to the last girl.

The Spellwork Syndicate rules the local witches in Taos, but as "accidents" turn into full-out attacks on Anise's life, their promises to keep her safe are less and less reassuring. Her cranky bodyguard is doing his best, but it's hard to fight back when she has no idea who's the enemy. Or why she became their target.

If Anise can't find and stop whoever wants her dead, she'll be more toasted than a crème brûlée.

Who knew baking cakes could be so life or death?

Deadly Sweet Details

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From Reader Review Deadly Sweet for online ebook

Candace Robinson says

There was a whole lot of food talk for me in this one! Given the blurb and the cover, I should have been expecting this! But still!!

Aimee Ferguson says

Digital ARC provided by Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. This review can also be found here, on my blog!

I didn't really know what I was getting into with this book, it was kind of an impulse request because I liked ~~the cover~~ the premise of a world with magical bakeries. Also the fact that she has this very concrete goal (pastry school) and a very interesting obstacle (rejection because of witchcraft).

I absolutely loved the world. I think I was expecting more of a fantasy style world with some sort of bias against witches? Instead, we were given more of a urban fantasy style real world with witches recently emerging from the shadows. It kinda followed on from the idea of witches in the middle ages, with the idea that until very recently it was criminalised to practise witchcraft, but now they are (very very loosely) protected. This allows exploration of discrimination despite 'acceptance' and was a really really interesting backdrop to the story.

I liked the witch bubble (vortex) that Anise ended up moving to, where the witches collect around a solid supply of power, and tourists and other curious people come to see them. But... I don't know, there was so much potential in the first setting (away from the witches, trying to survive among non magic people) I wish she'd come back to it.

I think I was expecting a slightly older feeling book, with the MC being uni aged, but tbh if I hadn't known how old she was I think she would have read to be more like? 15? I don't know, I mean everyone is different and university doesn't necessarily = maturity, but something about her voice struck me as quite young. I think this mostly came down to her naivety, which may also be due to her upbringing and separation from the witch world...

That aside, I did like Anise as a character for the most part. I really really liked that she had a goal in life, outside of getting a boyfriend, and that this goal was related to a hobby she actually spent lots of time on in the book. It's easy to say oh x character likes y hobby, and then never show it, but I mean this book was all about it. And magical baking was such a cool hobby?? It kinda reminded me of that Spanish book 'Como agua para chocolate' where she bakes her emotions into food, although with a lot more intention and a solid process for how that happens.

Also, Anise was a very real sort of witch, if that makes sense? Like she was a good one, with lots of potential and a talent, but it wasn't some limitless power, or some chosen one thing. She was important because of her great aunt, and she was protected because of it... but she also wasn't the only one deemed important in the book, which is sadly quite uncommon in YA. I get that we want to read about the action, but I'm so sick of the MC being the only person in the world that is important.

I diiiidn't like, though, her relationships with the guys around her. It felt a big middle school the way she rejected someone who literally had his life bound to protecting her, just because he was grumpy about it (I would be too, given how much she complains about being driven places and him needing to follow her around). Her other love interest was gooby, and I wasn't a big fan of his at all. I mean, she hated one guy for one thing and then swooned when the other guy did that same thing. Her huuuge crush on him also read pretty middle school, because she really had no reason to like him as much as she did.

Wynn was my favourite, though I wish we'd gone more into his story. I mean, what is he exactly? His tendency to sleep made me think of him as some sort of cheshire cat esq person but in a human form, which made me more fond of him... but I really don't know. Why did he sleep so much? I get that the book is one of a series so maybe this'll be a future plot?

The villain was sooo easy to see coming that I genuinely thought it HAD to be a red herring. Like, I called it from the moment they appeared and usually that means you're going to be shown more sides to them so you can be either fooled into trusting them or lead wrongly into suspecting them because of a bad first impression but... they just were the villain. And they didn't even have a strong motivation, like I'm still not sure I understand why they did what they did?

That plot, combined with a few confusing points (like (view spoiler) just meant this book fell a little flat for me. Don't get me wrong, it's not a bad book? Just not my favourite, and I've been reading quite a few really good ones recently, which makes it harder to stand out.

Still, if you're in the mood for like cake boss style food envy (I wanted to eat all the food so badly) and a good magic meets real world read, it's a quick, nice read?

Eve (Functioning Insanity Reviews) says

<https://functioninginsanity.blogspot....>

I received a copy from NetGalley for an honest review.

Rating: 5 Cherry Pies

Deadly Sweet is about baking, witches, and everything in between. Anise loves to bake and using her magic in it but being a witch is a bit hard outside of certain areas where you have to hide what you are. So when Anise ends up with a chance to study under a long-lost relative who owns the only magic bakery in the US, she is more than excited for the chance. Upon arriving for her dream apprenticeship she learns that it won't be as simple as she thought. She has lots to learn from pastry school and oh yeah the last apprentice went missing under mysterious circumstances and there may or may not be a reason for her to have a full time security detail. But for a dream job what's a little danger?

This book appealed to me on so many levels. First witches and intrigue are always fun but when you add in baking....magical baking. I'm all for it. I love to bake and as I read I may or may not have wrote down some new treats I want to try in the near future. Also the kitchens described may or may not have stirred up a lot of kitchen envy as well. There is a clear love for baking in the writing which comes through vividly and made me connect to Anise. She wants this with all that she is and is willing to go through hell to make it happen.

Aside from making me hungry and itch to bake (and seriously step up my decorating game) I enjoyed the way magic was woven in. There are different types and levels to work with. I loved how the little things could impact the overall product. There are still many questions to uncover in this world for sure but it is so full and vibrant. I love the contrast from growing up moving around to keep their secret and the open town that everyone human and witch are out and about normal as breathing. I loved seeing Anise adjust from one norm to another and what being open meant for her not only as a witch but as a teenager. To be yourself and be able to make friends, honest friends, was amazing. A little assassination attempt here or there is hardly worth giving that up.

The characters really lit up the page. I could see Wynn scowling even before I read it after a few encounters. He is very...mysterious. There is a lot more I want to know about Wynn and what drives him; more about Shields in general as the series continues but still as little as he said I totally feel I know him. Same could be said for her new friends and the other ladies of the Syndicate. It is a small town vibe to it and I enjoyed the way Anise was both welcomed in and accepted while on the same side thinking they know you based on the family name. I found that very true of a small town.

Overall this is a great start to a new series and I will be adding it to my auto-buy list for sure because I need to know what happens next. So much has happened in one book but there are so many characters and stories to explore yet. Power to be learned and many many more goodies to be baked! I highly recommend this book...and maybe something for the sweet tooth this will activate!

Kristy Mauna says

Deadly Sweet was a fun, magical read! Its beautiful cover completely captivated me, and I was happily pleased with the story being surrounded by baking yummy (magical) treats!

"No matter how much people hated me for being a witch, my magic was the most me thing about me."

I really enjoyed reading inside this world where magic is legal but not completely accepted. It was interesting to compare it with our own world and relate to it on a certain basis.. And the characters within were just as great.

Anise isn't your typical YA heroine and for the most part.. this felt refreshing. But there were a lot of times where I was frustrated with her thoughts because *I* personally wanted to know more about something.. So I just wanted HER to know more also and not always accept things so easily based on what others told her was true or false.

There's great girl friendships in this book which is always the best for me! A good mom and daughter relationship, too. And honestly there isn't much romance.. I mean there is but I wasn't for it (you'll see why). BUT there's potential for more romance in the next one so I'm crossing my fingers on that! :)

The only downfall for me was the way the magic was explained throughout the story.. There were some parts where I thought maybe I missed something? Because it felt like it was already explained when it actually wasn't. I needed more detail on things but there wasn't always any. It would have been fun to read more on how the spells worked within the sweets, too.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. I'm a huge fan of Lola Dodge's writing and it has only improved since her previous works! I'm invested in Anise's journey and I'm looking forward to where the series goes from here.

Carrie says

Deadly Sweet by Lola Dodge is the first book in the new Spellwork Syndicate series. This one is a bit of a young adult/new adult fantasy/paranormal read mixed with a bit of mystery. The main character is a young kitchen witch who bakes spells into her goodies but after moving to a new town finds herself the target of an assassin.

This was a nice enough opener to this series introducing readers to Anise who is a witch and wants to attend pastry school but keeps getting rejected. After a witchy accident she learns of a great aunt that will take her to a more witch friendly town and teach her to bake. The only problem is this puts Anise on a hit list with many attempts on her life.

I didn't find the mystery too particularly difficult to figure out in this one as the story went on. Also, what I kept wishing for while reading this one was a bit more into the magical side of things. I think the story focused a bit more on dessert than magic most times which left me wanting to know about the powers and witchcraft. But even with being a tad on the predictable side and not going very deep into the magical world it was still a light and fun young adult read.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress....>

Mayumi says

3 STARS

This book had so many candy references it almost gave me a toothache - or maybe that was from me devouring too many cookies while reading this so I didn't feel left out...

Okay so I need to get this out of the way - even though the main characters are supposed to be around 17-18 years old I felt like this book belongs under the juvenile fiction category because of the way it was written. It was a bit predictable and really PG, but also a quick, fun read.

Our main character Anise Wise is a witch.

'A w-w-w-witch, no. Witch, yes.'

A very misunderstood witch, atleast to mortals. She loves baking and has a talent for it but can't seem to get far with her tertiary education in order to pursue her dream of opening her own bakery. When Anise runs into trouble after failing to control her growing powers, estranged Great-Aunt Agatha steps in with a chance to apprentice at her bakery. Little does Anise know that the road ahead isn't as easy as it seems to be.

I liked Anise, she was constantly working hard to prove herself, she was resilient, and she was kind. I liked

watching her make friends after being alone - with the exception of her mom - for so long. I liked watching her hone her baking skills. I liked watching her bicker with her bodyguard, Wynn. But, I didn't love her. Maybe it was because I found her actions predictable, but I just couldn't seem to care *that* much about her?

I really liked Great-Aunt Agatha though. She was pretty badass, like that really cool grandma you've always wanted, except with some powerful magic. And even though she mostly came off as strict, she was a patient mentor to Anise.

"Enough."

'Agatha legit Force-choked him, lifting him by the neck from across the room with tongues of purple lightning.'

The supporting characters were entertaining too. I loved how Anise's mom's friends stuck together through everything, and how Anise's growing relationships with their daughters seem like they'll have a similar outcome. Wynn and his constant rudeness and protectiveness over Anise was amusing. The only character who was semi-important but I didn't care about was Seth. I just found his story too cliche, and once again way too predictable so I couldn't bring myself to care about him.

Finally we have the candy references. I loved it. There's so many dessert related puns, insults, compliments, and even descriptions of the baking processes. I. Loved. It. I'd give an entire star just for this to be honest.

'I was pulling out my notebooks and lining up my pens when someone slid into the seat next to me. Him. My chocolate mousse.

The one who knocked Wynn straight out of my brain.

His short-sleeved hoodie showed off more of his tattoos today - a whisk on one forearm and a knife on the other. A bad boy chef? ...

A bad boy baker? I couldn't be that blessed.'

My Overall Opinion

I wasn't too impressed by this book but did find it entertaining. Deadly Sweet is a quick, fun read for those who like baking, witches, with a tad of teenage drama.

★ *Thank you to NetGalley and the publisher for providing me with an ARC* ★

Cindy ☆? Savage Queen ? says

I received a free ARC copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

A pleasant, though slightly predictable, tale of a young, inexperienced magical baker trying to find her place in a new town where she can finally use her gifts freely.

The book itself is a bit more magical-realism rather than full-on magical hijinks, and also focuses far more on baking than magic. So if you are a foodie or you enjoy foodporn this is might be for you. Though if you are hungry, this may not be the best thing to read because you will just be envious of the delicious baked goods that are described but that you cannot have.

In terms of writing, the book was simple and rather straightforward. I found the first half to be a bit slow in

terms of plot development, but it did pick up around the 50% mark. The surprise reveal was not much of a surprise for me. Because I placed my bets on who the villain was going to be pretty early on. (view spoiler)

Overall, I liked the book but I did not find it was anything particularly new or memorable about it.

Inge says

No, I have nothing better to do than review a book on Christmas Day. #imsodicated

Deadly Sweet had lots of fun elements, but turned out kind of underwhelming as a whole.

PROS

+ **Baking.** I always love books that are filled with cake, and characters who love baking always feel more homey to me. Anise is a witch with baking magic, so there's a *lot* of baking in this, and I was down for all of it. So comforting!

+ **Witchery.** A witchy fantasy book usually means that there are a lot of badass women around, and *Deadly Sweet* was no exception. As an avid *Harry Potter* fan, I'm always here for reading about magic.

+ **MC is not a special snowflake.** Despite her unusual name, Anise is a very ordinary girl. She loves baking, worries about making friends, gorges on food at sleepovers, and falls in love with an idiot. There's plenty to relate to here. On top of that, she doesn't try to play the martyr and go after the bad guy alone. She knows she's not the most powerful witch out there, so she enlists the help of the entire Syndicate of witches (*lots* of badass women basically). Without them, she would be very dead.

CONS

- **Villain.** The villain was kind of a knucklehead, not to mention completely obvious? Their identity was supposed to be a big mystery, but I'd identified them right away. I also didn't find their motive very believable, certainly not worth killing for? Maybe that's just me. *basks in innocent Hufflepuff aura*

- **Meh?** You know, there are so many things to love about this book. But I just never fell *in love* with it, which I'm sad about. There wasn't much at stake, and the action scenes kind of lacked that *pizazz*.

Overall, not the most impressive story, but if you like magic, baking, and magic baking, I'd say it's still worth a try.

Thank you to NetGalley and the publisher for providing me with a copy

All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy

DEADLY SWEET's back copy immediately hooked me. I love cooking shows (there's something profoundly

soothing about sitting down and watching someone bake a cake), so combine that with magic, and I couldn't wait to start reading.

DEADLY SWEET kept me enthralled throughout an entire three hour airplane ride. I read it straight through and would have immediately downloaded the sequel if it were available. Anise is a delightful character with a cheerful but realistic voice. All of the cooking scenes were comforting. While DEADLY SWEET did have some flaws, I'll be picking up the next book when it's released at the end of the year.

Most of DEADLY SWEET is well-mixed, but there were some elements that didn't work for me. The villain and their goal will be immediately obvious to readers, even though Anise and her allies couldn't figure out who was trying to kill her or why. Details about the witch world were introduced but never fully explained (such as the rules of their magic), which came across as half-baked. While I'm sure those crumbs will be expanded on in the future, I craved more depth in the introduction to Anise's world.

Sexual Content: None

Erin Sky says

All Anise wants is to become a pastry chef, but applying to college isn't easy when you're a witch. Shouldn't magic make her life easier? In small ways, maybe. But baking a little happiness into cookies isn't the same thing as waving a magic wand and making all your dreams come true. Normal people are scared of her, and even her own mother—the only other witch Anise has ever known—would rather she didn't use her powers at all.

When Anise is assaulted at a local fair, her untempered magic comes to her rescue, incinerating the baking tent and leaving a trail of crime behind. Then, with superior witchy timing, Anise's great-aunt invites her to apprentice at the only witch-sanctioned bakery in the country, and Anise jumps at the chance. But things go from bad to worse as Anise discovers that finally embracing her power might come with a terrible price.

I just loved this read! I mean, spells and sugar? My two favorite things! Add a young woman trying to find her way in the world, and, yeah, Lola Dodge hooked me hard. The first chapter is one of my favorite first chapters *ever*, so I think I might have over-hyped myself for the rest of the book. (Can you over-hype *yourself* on a read? What do you think? Is that a thing?)

After that brilliant start, I wanted to see more of Anise's baking power. There was plenty of magic and plenty of baking, but I wanted more of the two together. I wanted to see magical baking. I wanted to feel it. And I wanted to read the spell books! What's in there??? WHAT SECRETS DO THEY POSSESS???

Ahem. Anyhoo (read that first syllable all drawn out, btw: "AAAAAAAAnyhoo"), the book was still a super fun read, and if it left me wanting more, hey, that's a good thing! The series promises to get deeper into her magical training later on, and Anise promises to get stronger and wiser over time. I'm looking forward to both, and I'll definitely be reading the next book just as soon as I can get my hands on it!

Annemieke / A Dance with Books says

Thank you to Netgalley and the Publisher for this review copy in exchange for an honest review.

The number one thing that drew me to this book was that cover. It is sickly sweet and yet there seems to be this sinister feel to it. I had to know what this was about. Turns out it is a magically baking book. Just what I needed.

Do not read this book if you are already hungry. There are so many delicious baked goodies in this and the descriptions and the love of our main character for baking are so good. I wanted to go bake or at least I wanted to eat all the baked goodies mentioned. I mean I am lazy. I'd like an Anise in my life who would bake all the things for me.

While most of this focuses on the magical baking as that is the talent of our main character and the world that she is taken into, there is a lot more to this world. There are various talents out there like necromancy. I felt that this was not developed enough in the background. There seem to be little talk about rules. There seem to be a lot of different talents but little shown of how they work. I just wanted to know and see more of that. We got to see so many witches and yet I got such little idea. The same of this goes for the guardians and their contracts. However I have gathered this is an element of the next book.

I have to say that the plot wasn't very special. Of course there was a villain that was after Anise. It was also way too obvious who that was going to turn out to be. With this idea of magical bakeries there was just so much more that could have been done I think.

Even so I liked Anise who was really just an ordinary girl who had to work hard to gain any approval. I am glad she made friends but it was kind of sad this was through her mother's friends to be honest. It would be great to see her make a friend that she made out of her own strength. Her interactions with her guardian were amusing but I did find her angry at him was misdirected. It wasn't like he had a choice at being her guardian. He was assigned.

Sarah Marie says

Deadly Sweet by Lola Dodge

First book in the Spellwork Syndicate series

3 stars

Anise Wise is tired of hiding from the humans of the world. It doesn't matter that witches are a well-known magical species, humans hate and fear them. All Anise wants to do is bake and create cakes that could allow her to have a bakery one day. The problem is that she keeps getting rejected from colleges and she and her mother are barely scraping by. When an incident arises and Anise finds herself in Taos to be an apprentice to her great-aunt Agatha. The catch? Agatha's last apprentice went missing and Anise finds herself the target of a powerful and out of control warlock. Dodge's newest series opener is a lot of fun. This is a fun witch novel that takes an interesting approach by making witches common knowledge to regular humans. This incites fear, but it also creates the dynamic of witches being seen as tourist attractions. It makes the story a little bit more complex than the run of the mill witch story, but this story doesn't go beyond that. It is a very simple story and it can be a bit predictable. While the story is predictable, Dodge attempts to

make Anise's passions the centerpiece of her magic- baking is at the story's centerfold. The baking makes this story unique and fun. Dodge isn't the best urban fantasy writer, but the story is fun and I'd definitely recommend it to fans of witch stories and characters who bake.

Whimsical Writing Scale: 3

The main character is Anise. She isn't the most original character, but her love and passion for baking made me love reading her PoV because she had a purpose outside of hunting a big bad guy like most UF heroines. It made her dynamic. She isn't the most fleshed out character, but her passion is so strong that it makes her story fun to follow. Mainly, I'm just rooting for her because I want to see her bake more deserts.

Kick-Butt Heroine Scale: 3.25

There are two potential love interests in this story. One is a huge character, but I don't know if their relationship will blossom into more, but I'm betting that it will in later novels because of this guy's role in her life as a protector. The other well, he isn't a love interest anymore, but for the sake of not spoiling this incredibly short novel, I'll leave it at that.

Swoon Worthy Scale: 2

The Villain- I called this one from the moment this character was introduced. Mainly because (view spoiler) It made the story arc incredibly obvious and I wasn't surprised in the least.

Villain Scale: 3

The characters are all just kind of there. None of them feel concrete and I didn't feel attached to any of them and I feel like it is because there are so many characters being introduced and mentioned that the few that should've been fleshed out were briefly touched on, but not further expanded upon. I'm sure Dodge will expand upon the friendships that Anise made in the next novel, which I really hope she does because the character friendship could be a lot of fun.

Character Scale: 3

This is a fast, quick story that I definitely recommend if you are in the mood for a quick read to pass the time that doesn't require a lot of concentration and thought. Magical baking is really what sealed the deal for me when it came to this story and I think it will be a lot of fun for readers, especially younger readers who are

getting into the paranormal genre.

Plotastic Scale: 3.25

Cover Thoughts: I love this cover. It's purple and the cake looks scrumptious. I'm a definite fan of it.

Thank you, Netgalley and Inkmonster, for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review.

?Dani? ?Touch My Spine Book Reviews? says

I give this book 4 out of 5 Magical Stars! I really enjoyed this paranormal/fantasy that was mixed with a bit of mystery as well! From the beginning I felt at the edge of my seat with Anise being sought out by an assassin! I really enjoyed the main character and seeing her escape so many sticky situations was quite fun! The mystery was fun as well and enjoyed going through this story figuring out who was who. The only drawback for me was that I wish there was too much deserts and baking and not enough witchcraft like I have hoped. I still really enjoyed this read and will be looking forward to the next one in the series!
4 Star Review at touchmyspinebookreviews.com for The Xpresso Book Blog Tour!!!????? Thanks so much for providing me with an eARC in exchange for an honest review.

Nora says

Deadly Sweet surprised me with how much I really enjoyed it and how much I just wanted to keep reading.

Anise is a baker through and through and that was quite interesting to read about. I didn't know it would be possible to talk about baking so much no matter the topic, seriously in at least every other sentence there is some reference to baking. And more so surprised me that I wasn't annoyed by that in the slightest. I loved it actually. It made the book so cozy and wonderful. It is certainly the strong point of this book.

Now, the plot wasn't anything new, it was quite predictable and I knew fairly quickly who the villain was, nevertheless I enjoyed her journey. Again, it's not the plot that keeps you reading, it's the feeling you get while reading, the atmosphere.

The world of the witches is quite interesting and I'm actually really curious to learn more about it in the next book. We didn't get to see that much of the magic in this one. I'd love to know more about Blair's magic and about Anise's mother as well.

I loved that all the women were so supportive of Anise and really tried to genuinely help her.

Now there were some dramatic, higher action, higher stakes scenes, but I didn't find them to be really dramatic. That might sound negative. But it is not. At least not for me. That wasn't what this book was about in my opinion. This is more in the cozy mystery style with magic mixed in.

Deadly Sweet is the perfect book if you don't have much time, or not the mind to read a long and heavy book. This is fun, cute and original. But be prepared to be hungry after reading this!

Lili Marcus says

Told from a first POV of a young witch name Anise (such a great name), I was introduced into a whole new world of magic, of witches and of weirdness. Like in all other witch stories, Anise has a problem with mortals. Though it is a general knowledge that witches exist, still she can't just be who she is. She's misunderstood, along with the whole population, to put it lightly. But all she wanted is to study culinary and then succeed in it. But rejection after rejection of college applications, she turned to the person she should be associated with - her great aunt, Agatha Wise and is owner of the most magical bakeshop in the world. As if fated, Agatha needs an assistant, and so Anise went to her after a little mishap with mortals. Now here comes the magical world. Taos, New Mexico, where witches live - peacefully? Arriving in the bakeshop, her Aunt tested her skill and said she's not on the level she wants her to be so she got to go to school. Seemed like a dream come true, right? But no, bad, mysterious, dangerous things start to happen. Anise also learned about the disappearance of the previous apprentice. Suddenly, her life is in danger and achieving her dream is not really that easy. Like always in her life.

Though I enjoyed reading this and found that I love many aspects of the book, there is always an annoying **BUT** in the tip of my tongue.

I love the MC Anise she seems really cool and definitely not a quitter.

BUT sometimes, I do see her as weak and lame. I don't actually know how to explain this better. All I can say is that, she was too uninformed about many things in the book, maybe it added to the mystery of the whole but Anise is not doing anything about NOT-KNOWING. Like accepting that she has a bodyguard, yeah, she somehow complained a little but that's it. And when others don't allow her to know more about the situation, she didn't repulse or something. AND SHE has the right. Even after several danger happened to her, she's still uninformed about many things. That makes her seemed controlled. A character should be the one in control of the story/plot not the other way around. That makes that character weak and lame as she just get along with the things happening in the book.

I love the characters, most of them seemed believable and this is a magical story so that's a plus point. **BUT** I also find them cliche or stereotyped. (*Shame on you Steff*)

I love the world/magic. The idea was just brilliant and has really huge potential. I mean in Anise's world, the witches and magic are somehow legal. Not totally accepted but legal. **BUT** even though there are many interesting aspects of the magic, upon finishing the book, I still don't understand the foundation of the it that the author is trying to introduce to me. There is this vortex that not everyone can get near and God knows why. And the magical, useful jewels. How do they work exactly and how are they made?

Maybe I just missed that part.

And the **Shields and Servants and Hands**. If they were explained more , maybe the foundation of the Anise's world aren't filled with plot holes in my mind. For example, they get to bake sweets with magic and people just eat them? Ahm, no. Is it safe, really?

I just really wish Anise could be more curious about everything so I, the reader, know more. But no, like I

said, Anise seems to just accept everything and ask less because that's what people told her. I know she's still naive and new, and inexperienced but still. In the end there was no definite character development too.

I'm still gonna read the next book but hopefully I get more than I get from this first instalment. I guess the main problem here is the MC. She lacked the will of real heroine. I'm not saying that all heroines should all be strong but this is told in her POV, so everything that the readers know depends on what she says and how she acts. If she would've been more driven to know about everything, maybe there will be no plot holes, maybe I already understand the foundation of magic, maybe I'd be more excited the next book because I already know the world I'm jumping in. Like I said, she just get along.

Overall, I still recommend this book especially to those who love baking (because there's too much of that in here). Also this is a clean YA, so definitely recommendable to younger YAs.

Thank you for reading until here. :)
