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Homicide detective Adam Garrett is already a rising star in the Boston police department when he and his cynical partner, Carl Landauer, catch a horrifying case that could make their careers: the ritualistic murder of a wealthy college girl that appears to have Satanic elements.Â

The partners make a quick arrest when all evidence points to another student, a troubled musician in a Goth band who was either dating or stalking the murdered girl. But Garrettâ€™s case is turned upside down when beautiful, mysterious Tanith Cabarrus, a practicing witch from nearby Salem, walks into the homicide bureau and insists that the real perpetrator is still at large. Tanith claims to have had psychic visions that the killer has ritually sacrificed other teenagers in his attempts to summon a powerful, ancient demon. Â

All Garrett's beliefs about the nature of reality will be tested as he is forced to team up with a woman he is fiercely attracted to but cannot trust, in a race to uncover a psychotic killer before he strikes again.

Book of Shadows Details

Date : Published June 8th 2010 by St. Martin's Press (first published 2010)

ISBN : 9780312384715

Author : Alexandra Sokoloff

Format : Hardcover 320 pages

Genre : Horror, Mystery, Thriller, Fantasy, Paranormal, Fiction

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From Reader Review Book of Shadows for online ebook

Melissa says

Murder/ copy story with a witchy twist. Pretty good writing and a strong start precede a descent into lame.

Terri says

Police find a girl murdered with ritualistic carvings and a missing head and hand. They are drawn into a strange world with Satanic/Demonic threads. Grant asks for help from a local Wiccan who he is not sure he can trust.

I did enjoy the story a lot, though I sometimes felt I was getting diverted by the occult themes from the actual mystery. The information on Choronzon was fascinating and the question of what was real or not due to the influence of drugs left lingering questions for the main character - I liked that.

Bookaholics says

Book of Shadows by Alexandra Sokoloff

Suspense/Mystery- June 8th, 2010

5 stars

Book of Shadows by Alexandra Sokoloff is a mystery with paranormal, suspense and thriller elements. It is well written in a style that is educated, understandable, and creepily believable.

Homicide Detective Adam Garrett of the Boston Police Department is assigned to investigate the murdered remains of a young woman. She was found grievously dumped at the city landfill. The post-mortem mutilations have the markings of an occult ritual. She is later identified as a socialite Erin Carmody, a sophomore at Amherst University.

The profile provided by Dr. Frazer is a match to the disturbed satanic follower, Jason Moncrief. He is another student from Amherst and was in a relationship with the murdered co-ed. The testimony of their friends, evidence collected from the scene and his vehicle, and even his actions point at him being guilty. Garrett could claim finding and arresting their suspect so quickly was due to his good investigation skills, but the ease to find him is nagging. Who will follow-up on his suspicions when his girlfriend, Carolyn Davenport, assistant DA for Suffolk County, and his boss, Lt. Malloy are riding the forth-coming conviction into stardom?

Tanith Cabarrus arrives at the station. Is she right? Is Moncrief innocent? Does he dare believe her? Demons, possessions, witches? Garrett's attraction to her might be part of a con, but what if the perk believes in all this supernatural stuff? Does Garrett believe? No, but he has enough doubts to continue searching. Alone, he follows the clues, because doing nothing, the alternative is impossible. If Tanith is right, there is a killer hiding, waiting to strike again on Samhain or Halloween when the veil between life and death is thin.

Book of Shadows is a well written, detail orientated mystery novel. I expected to be bored, but instead was quickly caught by her story line. Yes, she does take liberties (like I really don't think an officer can take evidence into an uncontrolled environment), but I accepted the stretch as necessary for the novel. It is better than any CSI show because she tells the investigation in real time. It is not your one-hour television show.

I liked the characters. They were well developed and motivated. I've read other law enforcement/forensic novels, and put the books down because the jargon and vocabulary was over my reading comprehension because the author's big words had left me floundering. However, in Ms. Sokoloff's novel she blends their vocabulary into language, setting the scene so I could understand.

Near the end of this book, I checked her list of published novels. I've missed one and wanted to read it. After this one novel, I realized there is one book of hers that I have not read. I've got to get it!

Reviewed by Jackie from the Bookaholics Romance Book Club

Natasa says

Loved this book. My third from this author.

Lynn says

Strictly speaking this isn't mere horror as it's more paranormal. And who better do take on this mantle but Ms Sokoloff!

Her writing is always atmospheric and empathic and creates a wonderfully filmic narrative throughout her books and The Book of Shadows is a great example.

I have mentioned before that I was reading this on my kobo therefore not a format I prefer but I carried this with me in my bag for those occasions when I have a spare 15 mins to read, having finished my other reads I'd got to a stage in Book of Shadows that I've spent my morning in excited anticipation as to what was going to happen. I really love Alexandra's books and this is another 5 star title now on my virtual bookshelf.

Kiera Healy says

This is a mediocre supernatural thriller. The main character is a cop investigating a murder with what appear to be ritual elements. Uh-oh! I enjoyed the police procedural elements, but the supernatural stuff, mostly involving witches and grimoires, was hit and miss. One cop doesn't believe that the sexy witch is a witch, so she cuts her finger and makes him suck it. That is the weirdest way of introducing yourself to people - I know, I've tried it, and it NEVER works in real life. Magic!

The protagonist keeps talking about how "Irish" he is, which serves as a reminder that that word means something completely different in the US from what it means here in Ireland. I wish they would get their own word!. In particular, both he and the witchy love interest are described as "Black Irish." In Ireland, that would mean, logically enough, a black person who is Irish. It appears not to have the same meaning over

there, although it's unclear as the love interest's skin is described as olive at one point and super pale at another, so who knows what's going on? Magic!

Oh, and the protagonist keeps getting erections the whole time. God, he hears this chick say one word on the phone, and he's pitching a tent. It's not even a sexy word like "spooge" or "buttplug". He's hard for like half the novel. He ought to see someone about that. Or maybe it's just the sexy witch. Magic!

The Cats Mother says

OK police thriller about a maverick Boston cop investigating a murder with links to witchcraft. I got it free on Amazon without knowing much about it - I have a bunch of books on my kindle for when I'm travelling or can't sleep, so picked this somewhat at random. I'm not really into books about the occult and wasn't sure whether this was going to turn out to have supernatural elements or be a basic serial killer plot line; it wasn't bad, but the hero is an idiot, led by his penis for most of it, and the ending rather weak.

Alisha Marie says

I totally should have loved this book. I mean, it's a mystery and I love mysteries. In fact, there's only one thing I love more than I love mysteries and that's everything and anything to do with witches. I'm serious. This all started with my anything but brief obsession with Charmed when I was 11 years old (and Charmed was in its first season). Ever since then I have been drawn to books about witches (whether it be fiction or non-fiction) and books about the occult. I just think that it's a fascinating subject. Book of Shadows was a mystery with a paranormal aspect to it. Lots of magic, lots of witches, and lots of suspense. Plus, I've read three of Alexandra Sokoloff's books; two I really loved and one that I thought was just okay. So, this book had "ME!" written all over it. Yet, I didn't really love it like I expected to.

Book of Shadows reminded me a bit of The Unseen in that it started a bit slow. It took about an hour to get through the first twenty pages because I kept falling asleep (although that could've been because I was just really, really, tired). It got better after that and I was intrigued 200 pages and then the book started dragging a bit again. It was just a bit repetitive, especially that whole thing with Garrett and Tanith. Garrett is stumped by something. He goes to Tanith for help. She explains the situation to him. He's skeptical and doesn't believe. He concludes that she's crazy. Now this is all fine and dandy...the first time. But then Garrett keeps going to Tanith for help and then keeps concluding she's crazy when she explains the unexplainable to him. This happened like three or four times. And that led me to conclude that Garrett...yeah he's a bit of an idiot...and annoying.

Besides the slogging and the idiocy of the main character, I did like Book of Shadows overall. It's pretty obvious that Sokoloff was meticulous in her research of the occult. Again that's a subject that has always fascinated me so my favorite parts were when Tanith (who oddly enough reminded me of Paige from Charmed with the whole dark hair, dark eyes, but pale as hell complexion thing that was described of Tanith) was describing the whole thing with the demon and what the triangle meant. I love crap like that.

So overall I think that Book of Shadows was an okay read. It wasn't my favorite book from this author (The

Price was), but it wasn't my least favorite either. I think that the subject was great, but the execution was a bit less than stellar.

P.S. Kick-ass cover!

J.D. says

Alex Sokoloff blew me away with her first novel "The Harrowing", and she's just gotten better and better with every book. She writes what I like to call "whatdunnits": mysteries and thrillers with a supernatural overtone in which the main characters (and the reader) are trying to figure out if their enemy is a particularly evil human or...something else, something Other. This is a brilliant example of that style, with some added eroticism to spice things up. Sokoloff is an deft, assured writer with a real gift for putting your head right into the scene using all the senses. She can really bring the shivers, both the sexy and the scary kind. Highly recommended.

Melinda says

This is one of those books that started out good, or at least perfectly fine to keep me entertained during my breaks at work. Unfortunately, it quickly disintegrated to a cross between CSI and Charmed.

The writing was about as good as the plot in a porno movie. Without the porn. All the women who had interaction with the main character, Garrett, were lusty and willing, and Garrett seemed to be sporting a hard-on every time he talked to a woman. Of course, there were no plain women in this book. They were all extraordinarily gorgeous. Need I go on?

Parts of it were just downright silly. An experienced detective, while meeting a woman who states she is a witch, challenges her to cast a spell on him. She cuts her finger and asks him to suck the dripping blood off. And he does it. Really? I don't care how beautiful, how sexy a woman is, to do something like this would be ridiculously out of character. Of all people, cops and nurses are very aware of the risks of blood borne disease. Oh-- and all this took place in the station with all of his coworkers looking on! Whatever. In another part, a girlfriend (who knows this detective sleeps with his gun at his bedside)lets herself into his apartment and is walking around in the kitchen in the dark. When she ends up with him pointing his gun at her, she is amused. And the witch. Don't get me started on that. I'll just say she could do almost anything. Her powers would make any stage magician jealous.

I may have missed the point. Maybe this was meant to be a fantasy when I expected a crime mystery with paranormal elements. Oh well.

Debra says

Could have used more character development. At times interesting with good writing. Plot too predictable for me.

Sandra says

Look, if you are a woman, and your main character is a man, you've set up a challenge for yourself. I am sometimes astounded by the success of these authors. This author's solution was no solution; the character development in all her characters was very flat... two dimensional. The only character I was truly drawn to was the fetch, that was interesting.

The men were near idiots with very little capacity to control their primal nature. I'm not saying that they were written as pigs, though a little porcine bled through. Women had trouble controlling their emotions and enjoyed the power their gender allowed over these helpless men. See where I'm going here?

It might have been better if it were explained that intuition is simply a clarity of logic, but that would be too intelligent. None of the characters, with the possible exception of the Crone, was terribly intelligent. I say "possibly" because she really served an ancillary role.

I'm not a person to poo-poo formula books. Formula books can be very rewarding. the reason they are popular is that the Formula works. For a book to work, there has to be something in the formula that makes a book like this stand out and shine. Most successful formula books have outstanding character creation; we like or we hate these creations. They draw us in until we are immersed in the story. The best part of this read was the technical accuracy of how the Craft works, but again, the "why" was never explained.

Here we are digging up Crowley again and even he was two-dimensional. (Aleister Crowley, like Timothy Leary, is dead)

Alex is The Romance Fox says

After reading the first 3 books in Alexandra Sokoloff's The Huntress/FBI Thriller Series, which I really enjoyed, I was so looking forward to this one....but what a disappointment it turned out to be.

The Book of Shadows is I guess a mystery/paranormal/fantasy/murder story which just by the way started off okay.....but it soon lost its momentum for me.

I almost gave up halfway...but I hate giving up on books...so I perseveredbut hey....what a struggle it was to reach THE END....

The characters were so flat...and the whole witch angle....Aleister Crowley, Goths, blah blah blah.....boring boring boring!!!!

So not for me!!!

Monster says

Detective Adam Garret is on the fast track in the Boston police department when a terrible murder shocks the city. Garret leads the investigation, hoping to use it as a springboard to a promotion, as well as being driven to catch a predator stalking the streets. After solid police work leads to an arrest, Garret just has to take care of the paperwork. But when Tanith Cabarrus, a self-proclaimed witch, walks into the station proclaiming that the wrong man has been arrested, and that there are more bodies out there, with more on the way, Garret's world is turned upside down, and his Catholic upbringing runs straight into a supernatural world that he never imagined.

If Book of Shadows doesn't make Alexandra Sokoloff a household name, something is very wrong. It is one of the most compelling stories I have read in quite some time. I spent far too many nights staying up much too late, wanting to know where the story would take me next. Adam Garret is a wonderful leading man who dominates the book. He is a down-to-earth detective with high ambitions, as well as a lapsed Irish Catholic who begins to question what he knows of the world when the supernatural encroaches on his investigation. Garret's partner, Carl Landauer, breaks the mold of the stereotypical overweight, chain-smoking detective. He has his partner's back, even when he disagrees with what Garret is doing. Throw in an overbearing, ultra-religious boss, and a social climbing D.A. girlfriend, and Sokoloff has a great cast on the 'official" side of the story.

When Tanith Cabarrus is introduced, Sokoloff takes us from a well-written mystery novel into a slightly off-kilter supernatural thriller. Or does she? Sokoloff uses many tactics to make us question whether the "magic" we see is truly magic or just sleight of hand, hypnotism, and drugs. Tanith's natural spiritualism is a nice counterpoint to Garret's "real" world. Is Tanith really a witch, or is she a charlatan? Does she truly want to help, or is she insinuating herself into the investigation for her own underhanded reasons? Sokoloff keeps us guessing until the end.

Sokoloff beautifully depicts Massachusetts' autumn, as Halloween approaches. The descriptive passages flow smoothly, never slowing down the action. The language is poetic without being flowery, and I could almost hear the crackling leaves and smell the scents on the breeze. The action scenes are fraught with tension. I found myself holding the book tightly, flipping the pages faster and faster. Compelling barely describes the pace. Anyone looking for a good mystery, a good scare, great characters...look no further. The highest recommendation for libraries and, well, everyone.

Contains: Strong language, violence, some gore, and sexual situations.

Review by Erik Smith

Patricia says

I picked this up at the library because it is set in the Boston area and read it in two days. It's good, although I'm not all that into the occult/horror angle. The detectives were well-drawn and the premise was interesting. There were a couple of local howlers: McLean Hospital is and always has been a private, not a state hospital and no-one from this area would say "Highway 2", it's Route 2 (pronounced like "root"). Picky, picky but these things jumped out at me. Also the sex scenes read like something from a smutty romance novel - "throbbing shafts" etc. All in all I enjoyed it for the most part while I was reading it but it is not the kind of book I usually read so I probably won't look for any more. But if you like occult/romance/horror/mystery, go for it!
